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Stuart Chase and Red Scare #2, 1946-1954

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Stuart Chase and Red Scare #2
1946-1954
INTRODUCTION

I have written an academic piece, “The Marking of Stuart Chase As a ‘Red Accountant’--An Epic (1917-1921)” on Stuart Chase (SC) and Red Scare #1, 1917-1921. The current piece is a much more casual type writing and, hopefully, will be a part of the SC website. My purpose in this piece is to illustrate how SC was smeared in the Reece Committee Report of 1954 without any possibility of retort before the Committee. This piece might inspire a much more academic work on the Reece Committee--a rich topic indeed. This piece also shows that SC was a marked man by the FBI for a very long period of time.

The Reece Committee and its report had to compete with the Army-McCarthy Hearings and, as such, never received the attention that this attack on American academic research deserved. The Army-McCarthy Hearings destroyed McCarthy and this ended the Red Scare #2 period, which might be viewed to have started with the “Iron Curtain” speech of Winston Churchill in 1946.

The Eisenhower victory of 1952 swept the Republicans into command of both the U.S. House and the U.S. Senate. With this control Representative Carroll Reece of TN had passed a motion to establish the Reece Committee to restudy American Not-for-Profit foundations and see if they spent their tax-free dollars to foster “left-wing” “pro-Communist” “pro-internationalist” material. The Reece Committee was to expand the work of the 1952-1953 Cox Committee, which had studied America Not-for-Profit foundations--Ford Foundation, etc.--Reece was on the Cox Committee but almost never

attended (for family sickness reasons) but felt that there may have been not enough focus on the “left-wing” “pro Communist” “pro-Internationalist” bias of the studies of leading not-for-profits. (Please remember that SC was just one of the victims of this Committee.)

March 21, 1952 Speech by
Paul W. Shafer (R) of Michigan in
the House of Representatives

This speech is referenced here as Part II “Tides--The Movement in America’s Schools” in Shafer and John Howland Snow’s 1953 and 1956 The Turning of the Tides (New Canaan, CT: Long House, Inc.). Shafer quoted from SC’s Feb. 25, 1935 speech to the NEA in Atlantic City in which SC said: “Here again, the relevant question is not how to get rid of Government interference, but how to apply it for the greatest good of the greatest number” (p. 25). Shafer referred to SC’s May 1934 piece for the NEA Journal: “The same year, 1934, Stuart Chase declared that an abundance economy requires ‘the scrapping of outworn political boundaries and of constitutional checks and balances where the issues involved are technical’” (p. 61). On the page Schafer included this in the footnote: “Who’s Who in America lists Stuart Chase as affiliated with Unesco in 1949. He was for some years treasurer of the League for Industrial Democracy.”

1953 A. H. Hobbs’ Social Problems
and Scientism (Harrisburg, PA:
Stackpole Company)

Hobbs (Albert Hoyt) received a brief obituary in the NYTimes of Aug. 17, 1994.

The first paragraph was:

Albert Hoyt Hobbs, a professor emeritus of The University of Pennsylvania and a conservative sociologist whose views often put him at odds with his contemporaries, died on Aug. 9 at the medical center of the Quadrangle Retirement Home in Haverford, Pa. He was 83 (NYT obits. Website).

Most of us in academics have never met a conservative sociologist professor. No wonder. There are none. Apparently it was not that much different more than fifty years ago, when Hobbs published (perhaps self-published). Hobbs warned about the limits of social science: “Far from being an attempt to debunk sciences, my attempt is to influence people to respect it and to respect its limitations” (iv). ...”In the analysis which follows the claims of the zealots of scientism will be measured against the requirements of scientific method and in view of the general limitations of social science” (vi).

Once again, SC was reviewed in the milieu of the Fabians. Hobbs wrote:

...Never make a frontal assault, rather use Fabian tactics of withdrawal and harassment. Let your opponent make the positive statements because in this arena almost any positive assertion can be built up into a strawman and then whittled down to nothingness by multiple negatives, qualified statements, rhetorical questions, and universal negatives (p. 74).

Hobbs used SC’s 1948 book The Proper Study of Mankind as a key base for attacking the advocates of scientism. Hobbs started with some praise for SC.

Mr. Chase is a talented writer and The Proper Study of Mankind added another highly readable treatise to an already long list of his hortatory tracts. Since Mr. Chase’s previous writings have been characterized by their reformistic zeal rather than by their scientific caution, you might well wonder why social science research organizations not only lend their prestige, but actively encourage known reformers to promote their particular social programs. Such encouragement and endorsement are another index of the spread of scientism. ... (p. 112).

Hobbs’ views are best summarized by the threat that SC’s work presented to society. Hobbs wrote:

...Yet Mr. Chase recommends that we re-shape our society around a set of untested hypotheses. The many and obvious scientific limitations of these hypotheses make it doubtful that Mr. Chase and his advisors made any serious attempt to detect error (p. 114).

Hence, Hobbs viewed SC as being guilty of “scientism.” Hobbs wrote:

... You see, a fundamental motivation of the advocates of scientism is the unadmitted assumption that there is “good” scientific knowledge and “bad” scientific knowledge. Their own preconceptions about how people should be managed determine which knowledge is to be considered good, and which bad. Fragments of knowledge, no matter how atypical or exotic, and sketchy hypotheses, no matter how untested or far-fetched, are proclaimed as “scientific” if they support the prejudice. ... (p. 120).

Hobbs was clear about his political bias. “The techniques of liberal scientism, communism and socialism as well as the principles are quite similar. One of the most effective techniques is to attach the prestige of science to the program...” (pp. 138-139).

Backing up a couple of paragraphs allows us to capture Hobbs’ fear:

Even though there has always been a strong resemblance between the “scientific” conclusions of scientistic liberals and those of the Socialists, the “liberals” have technically escaped the designation “Socialist” because they did not include socialized industry in their program. This was more nearly a technical distinction rather than significant difference in philosophy, and now as succeeding demands of the scientistic liberals have been met they have raised their program to advanced levels. ... (p. 138).

SC was more vigorously attacked by Hobbs for SC’s 1946 book For This We Fought. Hobbs felt that the sponsor for this book, The Twentieth Century Fund, was the true culprit (p. 157). As this type of charge was going to entice people like Repr. Reece, it is not surprising Hobbs would become a key testifier before Reece’s Committee.

Perhaps because I was brought-up with the overwhelming topic of “Communism vs. Capitalism,” I found Hobbs’ book to be a delightful read. He certainly did a magnificent job in placing this topic into an intellectual frame.

1953 Paul W. Shafer and John Howland
Snow’s--The Turning of the
Tides (New Canaan, Ct: Long House, Inc.)

We already have reviewed the March 21, 1952 speech by Repr. Shafer. This speech was Part II of this 1953 book. Snow (I believe that the book could be the

derivation of the term “Snow Job”) wrote Pt. I “Currents: The Early Movement; Pt. III “The Flood: The International Movement”; and Pt. IV “The Turnings of the Tide: Accomplishment and Resolution.”

Snow referenced SC as being Treasurer of the League for Industrial Democracy (until 1921, the Intercollegiate Socialist Society [1905-1921]) in 1921 (p. 2). Snow also referenced the British Fabian Society (p. 3). SC was noted for his 1931 monograph Poor Old Competition, published by the League for Industrial Democracy (p. 174) and for participating in the Economic Series Lectures, under the sponsorship of the University of Chicago Press (p. 180).

1954 Tax-Exempt Foundations: Hearings
before the Special Committee to
Investigate Tax Exempt Foundations and
Comparable Organizations,
House of Representatives,
83rd Congress Second Session
on H. Res. 217 Washington: USGPO)

The fist of the hearings was “especially to determine which such foundations and organizations are using their resources for un-American and subversive activities; for political purposes; propaganda, or attempts to influence legislation” (p. 1). This charge to the Reece Committee was going to raise “hackles,” especially since the McCarthy/McCarron Red Scare #2 was coming to its end.

The Reece Committee confined its attention “to the work of Foundations in what are called the social sciences” (p. 2). I will severely limit my discussion to the relatively small part of the hearings dealing with SC. Readers are urged to study both the Hearings and the Report, as well as newspaper coverage, for a spectacular look at the end of the Red Scare #2 period. Since Senators McCarthy and McCarron did not focus specifically

on academics, the Reece Hearings and Reports need much more critical scholarship by civil libertarians. I would like to see a play written on this. There is tremendous raw material for this play, or farce, if you will.

Norman Dodd, Research Director for the Reece Committee, questioned teaching in the U.S. He wrote:

The purported deterioration of scholarship and in the techniques of teaching which lately has attracted the attention of the American public has apparently been caused primarily by a premature effort to reduce our meager knowledge of social phenomena to the level of applied science (p. 19).

Dodd, later on, attacked one of SC's groups. Dodd said:

The League for Industrial Democracy came into being in 1950, when it was known as the Intercollegiate Socialist Society, for the purpose of awakening the intellectuals of this country to the ideas and benefits of socialism. This organization might be compared to the Fabian Society in England, which was established in 1884 to spread socialism by peaceful means (p. 46).

In my view, Reece and his staff believed "brainwashing" was possible within the field of the social sciences. "Brainwashing" became a key topic in the U.S. when a few (seven, I believe) captured U.S. soldiers refused to come back to the U.S. and stayed in North Korea. Dodd testified in answer to a question from Repr. Hays (Wayne L., Dem., Ohio)--who was a classic protagonist to Reece and his staff.

Mr. Dodd. For these reasons, it has been difficult for us to dismiss the suspicion that, latent in the minds of many of the social scientists has lain the belief that, given sufficient authority and enough funds, human behavior can be controlled, and that this control can be exercised without risk to either ethical principles or spiritual values and that, therefore, the solution to all social problems should be entrusted to them (p. 49).

Hobbs testified and summarized his 1953 book (pp. 114-187). He was quite unhappy with the Kinsey Report (p. 112). Repr. Hays made this witty comment:

Dr. Hobbs. Stuart Chase, "The Proper Study of Mankind."

Mr. Hays. Did you observe that did not create much of a ripple among the reporters when you mentioned that book, but on the Kinsey book, they all made notes (p. 133).

Hobbs elaborated on SC. Hobbs testified:

...One question here is why was Stuart Chase chosen when his leanings were definitely known and why not pick some other person, or if you depict Chase, and a case could be made for picking him by virtue of his extremely good writing talent, if you do pick him, then you would have to be very careful that he did not slant the material too much in ways that you would know he is likely to (p. 135).

Hobbs answered a question from Hays about brainwashing in Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. Hobbs testified:

...But I would say that the Russians, and now they passed it on to the Chinese, have developed these techniques to a much more effective level. It, again, is a matter of degree, but I think they developed them to a very highly effective level (p. 141).

Repr. Hays and Hobbs had this interesting exchange:

Mr. Hays. Do you think Stuart Chase or Mickey Spillane has done more damage to America?

Dr. Hobbs. This is another area.

Mr. Hays. Well, of source, any other book except this one would probably be in a little different area.

Dr. Hobb. No; I am confining this to the influence of social science. Mr. Spillane, I think, does not pretend to be a social scientist (p. 146).

Hobbs included SC as one of those that pushing for the cultural lag social theory, which "...has appeared in many if not most of the sociology textbooks with the implication that we should abandon the traditional forms of belief about the family and religion. ... (p. 148).

The topic of the Fabians was also referenced by another witness, Aaron M. Sargent, an attorney from San Francisco. Sargent had this response to Repr. Hayes:

...When I talk about socialism in my testimony, Mr. Hays, I mean socialism of the kind advocated by the Fabians of Great Britain, which has ruined the economic system of that country, not individual projects which may seem wise for some purpose or other on their own merits (p. 199).

Repr. Jesse P. Wolcott (Republican, Michigan) made this statement about the Fabians. He stated:

...The real changes to the American system of government is Fabian socialism. If any of these foundations are engaging in practices paralleling the growth of Fabian socialism in the British empire, which resulted in the socialization of the British Empire to the prejudice of their type of democracy, then I think it is the duty of Congress, surely the members of this committee, to find out what is happening (pp. 236-237).

Eventually, Repr. Hays responded to the Fabianism this comparison between the Fabians and the KKK. Repr. Hays told Sargent:

...I would like to make an observation that he keeps talking about the Fabian Society and you said the Ku Klux Klan had no relevance to this hearing. I will tell you what it is. Both are dead as the dodo bird, so you can compare them on one basis. One was an extreme left-wing outfit and the other extreme right wing Fascist outfit. If we are going to have a course in ancient history, we ought to have all phases of it (p. 308).

In written testimony, Charles Dollard--president of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, defended SC. Dollard wrote:

It was said, "that there is not a balanced, presentation of ideas" in Chase's book. The opinion of 10 qualified social scientists who read the book in manuscript was unanimously to the contrary, as was the opinion of almost every social scientist who reviewed the book in a professional journal (p. 972).

I have decided not to review here the coverage in the New York Times for the hearings and for the report. The coverage was significant, although dwarfed by the coverage of the Army/McCarthy hearings. Another good source for the hearings and report is Rene A. Wormer's Foundations: Their Power and Influence (NY: Devin-Adair, 1958). Wormer was General Counsel for the Reece Committee. I reiterate the

importance of someone doing research on the Reece Committee was the prime attempt to stifle American academic researchers.

1954 Tax-Exempt Foundations:
Report of the Special
Committee to Investigate
Tax-Exempt Foundations and
Comparable Organizations,
House of Representatives,
83rd Cong., 2nd Session, on
H. Res. 217 (Washington: USGPO)

This report was much more harsh on SC than seemingly warranted by the hearings. The report seemed to use Hobbs' comments as a jumping off point to attack SC.

This Committee, like Dr. Hobbs, cannot understand why a man of STUART CHASE'S obvious leanings should have been selected to make a "chain and compass" survey of the social sciences. The book he produced with foundation support seems replete with what might have been expected of him, including Prof. Hobbs explained (Hearings, p. 135, et. sep.) a promotion of the completely false notion that the methods of the physical sciences can be translated to the social sciences (pp. 85-86).

SC was attacked for writing for The Twentieth Century Fund. (People associated in this Fund had received many citations by various researchers looking for communists and/or fellow travelers.) The report stated:

That one officer or one trustee of a foundation may have been cited 10, 15, 20, or more times by a Congressional Committee investigating subversive activities, for his associations and his affiliations with Communist Fronts, may not thereby establish the legal proof required in a court of law that he is a card carrying member of the Communist Party itself; but it would seem to this Committee that such a record would be conclusive evidence that such person was an extreme radical or a complete dupe and has no business serving in a position of trust (p. 110).

What was most significant was the inclusion in an appendix to the Reece Report of a file on SC listing the number of citations (See my Appendix A). Obviously, SC was

always a “marked man” by, probably, the FBI (See paper on SC and Red Scare #1).
WOW.

Conclusion

SC should have involved those who interviewed him in the 1970’s about this matter. Surely, SC must have been aware of this smear. Perhaps, SC wanted to let sleeping dogs lie. Perhaps, SC was not aware of vile attacks on him by John A. Stormer in None Dare Call It Treason (Florissant, MO: Liberty Bell Press, 1964). Stormer seemed to jumble up all sorts of sources in his attack on SC:

The Carnegie Corporation financed the writing and publication of The Proper Study of Mankind. Written by Stuart Chase, the book praised the communist agents, Harry Dexter White and Lauchlin Currie, and outlined an “ideal” society in which the individual is suppressed. Over 50,000 copies of the book were distributed by the Carnegie Foundation to libraries and scholars. One of Chase’s earlier books recommended that profit making be punished by firing squads (pp. 174-175).

SC was also attacked by Stormer for writing A New Deal (pp. 185-186). This attack is outside the scope of this paper.

Again, this paper is a result of a more casual style of research and writing. This paper is not intended for academic publication but is an attempt to get scholars to use these sources as a base for a scholarly treatise on the Reece Committee Hearings and the Reece Report. Stormer’s twisting of the Reece Committee Hearings and Report is a fine example of the dangers of using both as an example of fact.

Appendix

STUART CHASE

Stuart Chase signed a letter of the American Friends of Spanish Democracy to the President as shown in the "Daily Worker" of February 7, 1938 (p. 4).

"In 1937-38, the Communist Party threw itself wholeheartedly into the campaign for the support of the Spanish Loyalist cause, recruiting men and organizing multifarious so-called relief organizations***such as***American friends of Spanish Democracy," (Special Committee on Un-American Activities, Report, March 29, 1944, p. 82).

The Communist "Daily Worker" of January 21, 1938 (p. 2) named Stuart Chase as a member of the Advisory Board of the organization known as Descendants of the American Revolution; he was listed in the February 13, 1939 issue of that newspaper (p. 2) as a member of that organization; and a pamphlet entitled "Descendants of the American Revolution" named him as one of its sponsors.

The Descendants of the American Revolution has been cited as a "Communist front organization set up as a radical imitation of the Daughters of the American Revolution. The Descendants have uniformly adhered to the line of the Communist Party. *** The educational director *** is one Howard Selsam, an instructor at the Communist Party's Workers School in New York." (Special Committee on Un-American Activities, Report No. 2277, dated June 25, 1942, pp. 18 and 19.)

The Russian Reconstruction Farms, Inc., was cited by the Special Committee on Un-American Activities as "a Communist enterprise which was directed by Harold Ware, son of the Well-known Communist, Ella Reeve Bloor. It received funds from the Garland Fund." (Report No. 1311, dated March 29, 1944, p. 76) On a letterhead of the Russian Reconstruction Farms, Inc., dated March 20, 1926, Stuart Chase was listed as treasurer of the group.

He was a sponsor of two organizations which were cited by the Special Committee on Un-American Activities in its Report No. 1311 of March 29, 1944: The Consumers National Federation (from a pamphlet entitled, "The People vs. H. C. L.", dated December 11-12, 1937); and the Public Use of Arts Committee (as shown on an undated letterhead of the group).

Stuart Chase was a member of the Reception Committee for the four Soviet fliers who flew the "Land of Soviets" from Moscow to New York in 1929; the reception was arranged under the auspices of the Friends of the Soviet Union (see: pamphlet entitled, "Welcome, 'Land of Soviets'").

The "Daily Worker" of March 2, 1937 (p. 2) listed Stuart Chase as a member of the First American Delegation to the U.S.S.R. Stuart Chase's activities in Moscow as a member of the unofficial American labor delegation in 1927 are described in articles found in the "Daily People's

World,” April 3, 1953 (p. 7M) and the March 22, 1953 issue of “The Worker” (p. 3). The March 8, 1937, issue of the “Daily Worker” listed Stuart Chase as one of those who signed a “Call” for the “American Delegation to the U.S.S.R., sponsored by the Friends of the Soviet Union.

Friends of the Soviet Union has been cited as “one of the most open Communist fronts in the United States” whose purpose “is to propagandize for and defend Russia and its system of government. *** (It) is a section of an international movement directed from Moscow.” The Friends admit that they “Penetrate our industrial sections.” (Special Committee on Un-American Activities, reports of January 3, 1939, January 3, 1940, June 25, 1942, and March 29, 1944.) Friends of the Soviet Union was cited as subversive by the Attorney General of the United States in letters to the Loyalty Review Board, released December 4, 1947, June 1, and September 21, 1948. The organization was redesignated by the Attorney General, April 27, 1953, and included on the April 1, 1954 consolidated list of organizations previously designated pursuant to Executive Order No. 10450.

During testimony of Benjamin Gitlow, former general secretary of the Communist Party of the United States, before the Special Committee on Un-American Activities on September 11, 1939, the following reference was made to Stuart Chase:

“Then the party, upon instructions of the Communist International, started the work of organizing what was to be known as an impartial delegation of American trade unionists, who were not Communists, who would visit Soviet Russia, travel over the country, investigate conditions, and submit an impartial, unbiased report to the American people on what were the actual conditions in Soviet Russia. And all this preliminary organization work and how to constitute the committee and how to organize it, was done by the Communist Party in the United States. And the money involved for expenses, that was first raised through the furriers’ union by having them take \$500 out of their treasury, which was later supplied by Moscow, because the traveling expenses and all of the expenses involved in the organization of the delegation was paid by Moscow, and when its report was printed, the payment for printing the report also came from Moscow.”

Following the above statement, the Honorable Joe Starnes requested Mr. Gitlow to supply names of the members who went on that trip. The name of Stuart Chase appeared on the list, identified as follows:

“Director, Labor Bureau, Inc., and certified public accountant, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University, author, Tragedy of Waste, etc. (See: Vol. 7, pp. 4699 and 4700, Public Hearings before the Special Committee on Un-American Activities.)”

The name of Stuart Chase appears in a list of sponsors of a Dinner-Forum on “Europe Today,” arranged under the auspices of the American Committee to Save Refugees, the Exiled Writers Committee of the League of American writers, and the United American Spanish Aid Committee.

The American Committee to Save Refugees was cited as a Communist front organization by the Special Committee on Un-American Activities in its report of March 29, 1944.

The League of American Writers was cited as subversive and Communist by the Attorney General in letters released June 1, 1948, and September 21, 1948. The organization was redesignated April 28, 1953 and included on the April 1, 1954 consolidated list. The organization was cited previously by the Attorney General as “founded under Communist auspices in 1935” (Congressional Record, September 24, 1942, pp. 7685 and 7686). The Special Committee on Un-American.....

Activities, in its reports of January 3, 1940, June 25, 1942 and March 29, 1944 cited the League of American Writers as a Communist front organization.

The United American Spanish Aid Committee was cited as Communist by the Attorney General in a letter released July 25, 1949. The organization was redesignated April 27, 1953, and included on the April 1, 1954 consolidated list. The Special Committee on Un-American Activities, in its report of March 29, 1944 (pp. 82 and 138), cited the United American Spanish Aid Committee as a Communist front organization.

According to an article which appeared in the “Daily Worker” of February 13, 1937 (p. 2), Stuart Chase was one of those who signed the cable which was sent to the President of Brazil by the Prestes Defense Committee, “defending Luiz Carlos Prestes, leading Brazilian Communist and former member of the executive committee of the Communist International.” (Cited by the Special Committee on Un-American Activities in Report 1311 of March 29, 1944, p. 112.

Mr. Chase was shown in the October 1927 issue of “New Masses” ((p. 3) as Contributing Editor of that publication; in the January 1928 issue (p. 5) he was listed as a contributor.

“Probably no one who is acquainted even superficially with the New Masses Magazine would deny that it is the weekly publication of the Communist Party.” (Report No. 2277 of June 25, 1942, by the Special Committee on Un-American Activities). The publication was cited several times in the Special Committee’s report No. 1311 (pages 127, 139, 166, 75). The Attorney General cited the publication as a “Communist periodical” (Congressional Record, September 24, 1942, p. 7688).

Another Communist magazine to which Stuart Chase contributed was “The Liberator,” cited by the Special Committee on Un-American Activities in Report NO. 2277 of June 25, 1942. (See: “The Liberator,” June 1918, p. 24; July 1922, p. 11; and August 1922, p. 23).

Stuart Chase was the subject of an article by Ted Tinsley in the March 14, 1952 issue of the “Daily People’s World” (Magazine section, p. 2). The following is quoted from that article: “For a time Stuart Chase was left of center. Now he chases from centerfield to right, patting his glove and waiting to catch the next theory on the fly.”