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The Editorial Page

Bigoted and Benighted

It's a pity the U. S. Senate security subcommittee, under its witch-hunting chairman, Sen. Thos. J. Dodd, insists on making a silly fool of itself.

Its latest absurdity is an attack on the Pugwash conferences and their Canadian-born sponsor, Cyrus Eaton. At these meetings, held frequently since 1955, famous, Nobel prize-winning American, Russian, British and other scientists have discussed the dangers of atomic war, issuing both warnings and constructive proposals.

The fatuous Dodd and his friends have now brought out, as an official U. S. document, what they call an "evaluation".

They say that the scientific conferences were initiated by a man of "strong and un-concealed sympathy for Soviet policies," meaning Eaton. And they say that the Russian delegates, by taking a solidly Soviet line while the Western scientists acted as individual seekers after truth, managed to "exploit" the conferences "as a propaganda device". The implication of both statements is false.

The people Eaton first invited to Pugwash for intellectual communion were humanistic scholars. The idea of bringing atomic physicists together came from Einstein and Bertrand Russell. Eaton met his first Russian, first became concerned about

current thermonuclear dangers (which should concern all mankind), when this suggestion was adopted.

As to what went on at the meetings, always in camera, Dodd clearly has no knowledge. He wasn't there; and his picture of a Soviet phalanx standing firm and winning propaganda battles against Western individualists is sheer fiction. The Pugwash communiques did not reflect the official Moscow line. Sometimes, as on nuclear tests, they ran counter to it.

Dodd must have missed that fact; and he must have missed also the statement by Dr. Wallace R. Brode, scientific adviser to the late Eisenhower administration, about the Pugwash affairs: "Such meetings can result in more understanding between men than all the official talks at Geneva."

It's a tragedy that this so-called "evaluation" can appear with the U. S. Senate's authority. In a dark and dangerous world the Pugwash experiment has been an honest effort to shed a little light and bring some intelligence and goodwill to bear. But the reaction of the benighted bigots of Dodd's committee is to scream "Communism!"

It's very sad indeed. It's enough to make the angels weep. It makes one doubt if the human race has sufficient brains to save itself.