

# OPERATION ABOLITION

Don Moseley Show KCBS 2/14/61

Commentary: As a matter of fact, we  
suggested that the ~~you~~ <sup>you</sup>, well, sort  
of local ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~ten~~ <sup>ten</sup>

Some Facts and Some Comments

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## A STATEMENT

*Adopted by the General Board of the  
National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.  
Syracuse, N. Y., February 22, 1961*

The General Board of the National Council of Churches, having viewed the film *Operation Abolition*

- 1) deplors the provocation that led to the disturbances, as well as the disturbances themselves, which occurred in connection with the hearings;
- 2) reaffirms its opposition to and repugnance for Communism and the activities of Communist sympathizers and warns Christian Americans that in standing for their convictions, they not be confused by Communists or chauvinists;
- 3) expresses the conviction that the film does not contribute to a realistic understanding of Communism and its dangers in the U.S.;
- 4) adopts the following statement:

BECAUSE there are many serious questions being raised by responsible citizens and organizations concerning the sale and showing of the film *Operation Abolition*, and

BECAUSE of the effect of charges in the film reflecting adversely upon the reputations of students and upon their efforts to exercise active political concern in the future, and

BECAUSE of the pressures upon many congregations, ministers, and church groups to show this film, and

BECAUSE of the effect upon freedom of expression which this film produces by its implication that criticism of the House Committee on Un-American Activities must be Communist-inspired, and

BECAUSE of Christian concern for truth and justice in all acts of all agencies of government,

The General Board of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. expresses its deep concern about problems raised in the conflicting reports regarding the film *Operation Abolition*.

I. It notes that evidence in the film and statements and articles by responsible newspapers, journals, and journalists and by various eyewitnesses point to the need for answers to such questions as the following:

- a. What evidence, admissible in a court of law, links the Communists and alleged Communists named in the film with the students leading or participating in the demonstration?
- b. What were the actual incidents of violence, and who were responsible for them?
- c. What is the degree of responsibility of the students, police, Communists, and the House Committee on Un-American Activities in causing the regrettable incidents recorded in the film?
- d. What is the legal status of the film subpoenaed by the Committee and now being sold by a private profit-making firm?
- e. Are there errors of fact and interpretation included in the film as presently distributed?
- f. What is the responsibility of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, and of the House of Representatives itself, in respect to this film and the charges made in it against students and other citizens?

2. Until objective and convincing answers to these questions are provided by proper authorities not parties at interest in the film and not participants in the events recorded in it, the General Board advises its constituent communions and their members **not to exhibit the film "Operation Abolition" in churches unless a full and fair presentation of such facts as are available relevant to these questions is provided beforehand and reference made to the National Council's statement.**

3. The General Board authorizes the publication and circulation of "Some Facts and Some Comments" on the responsibility of their respective authors as information helpful in a discussion of the implications of the film *Operation Abolition*.

## INTRODUCTION

Many churches and church groups have been pressed to show the film *Operation Abolition*. The National Council of Churches has received numerous inquiries about this film from ministers, councils of churches, and denominational officials. "Some Facts and Some Comments" is a presentation of some facts on which there seems to be no serious disagreement, and a compilation of comments made by responsible newspapers, journals, and journalists, and reports by various eyewitnesses.

Some aspects of this subject have been presented in the film and in the following publications of the House Committee on Un-American Activities:

1. "Communist Target — Youth," by J. Edgar Hoover, 1960.
2. "The Communist-Led Riots Against the House Committee on Un-American Activities." House Report No. 2228, 1960. (The film *Operation Abolition* is made part of this report.)
3. "Committee on Un-American Activities Annual Report for the year 1960," House Report No. 2237, 1961.

(These may be secured from the Government Printing Office in Washington, D. C., or from the Committee which issued them.)

Additional aspects of this subject are treated in "Some Facts and Some Comments," which follows.

*The material in these pages is presented for the reader's information. The responsibility for the quoted material rests with the authors quoted. The following material is not to be construed as reflecting the attitudes or position of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.*

# OPERATION ABOLITION:

## Some Facts and Some Comments

### I. SOME FACTS

There appears to be no serious disagreement about the following events among the published accounts, tape recordings taken on the scene, or the film *Operation Abolition* itself.

#### A. The setting in which the hearings were held:

An HCUA [House Committee on Un-American Activities] inquiry into Communist activities of educators in northern California originally had been scheduled to be held in June, 1959. At that time, widespread opposition to those proposed hearings developed among teachers' groups, church organizations, civil liberties groups, and a few newspapers in the San Francisco area. Student groups to protest the hearings were organized at most of the colleges and universities in the area, including the University of California, Stanford, and City College. The subsequent cancellation of the proposed 1959 hearings left many of these groups and organizations inactive but intact. As a result, when the May 1960 hearings were announced, it required little effort to reactivate these opposition groups . . .

— J. Edgar Hoover, "Communist Target — Youth", p. 4.

[Mr. Hoover does not indicate that there was any subversive influence involved in this opposition in 1959.]

- B. On May 12, 13, and 14, 1960, hearings by the House Committee on Un-American Activities were held at the City Hall in San Francisco. They were announced as "public" hearings.
- C. Several hundred persons, mostly students, arrived at City Hall early on the morning of the 12th to attend the hearings. They waited in line near the room where the hearings were to be held.  
[This gathering will be referred to later as Group B; see page 13.]
- D. Just before the hearings began at 9:30 A.M. on the 12th, a large number of adults who had not been waiting in line were admitted on passes distributed to them by the Committee. Most of the "public" were not admitted to the hearing, and continued to wait in the hall.
- E. At noon a mass rally sponsored by the Students for Civil Liberties was held at Union Square, more than a mile away, addressed by Canon Richard Byfield of Grace Cathedral, Episcopal, and by two California Assemblymen, denouncing the House Committee on Un-American activities as a threat to civil liberties. After the rally, stu-

dents marched to City Hall and began to picket *outside* the building under the direction of "monitors" wearing arm-bands. They carried signs critical of the Committee.

[This demonstration will be referred to later as Group A; see page 12.]

- F. On Thursday afternoon, beginning before the hearing resumed, a group of subpoenaed witnesses lined up before the railing in the middle of the hearing-room and demanded that the doors be opened to their families and others waiting outside. Using a live microphone nearby, they proceeded to shout and chant until the Chairman of the Committee entered and had them ejected by police.

[This group, named in the film, will be called Group C; see page 14.]

- G. On Thursday afternoon, the waiting public again saw most of the seats in the hearing-room given to pass-holders, and some of them, mostly students, began to sing and chant and shout in resentment against this appearance of discrimination. [Group B]

- H. On Friday morning, many of the same people [Group B] were again gathered outside the hearing-room, hoping to be admitted. Again they were refused admittance, except for a handful, in favor of a large number of pass-holders. Again they expressed their resentment in shouting and chanting. The Sheriff of San Francisco, Matthew Carberry, talked with them around noon. They protested their exclusion from the hearing, and he agreed to talk to the Committee about having them admitted to the afternoon session, on a first-come, first-served basis, telling them they could wait again at the door for admission.

- I. But before he could return to the City Hall with the agreement he had obtained from the Committee lunching at a hotel, at 1:15 P.M. police again admitted adult pass-holders to the hearing room instead of the waiting students. The students again began to shout and chant.

- J. A few moments later, police turned fire hoses on the students in an effort to disperse them. When this did not succeed, they carried the students out bodily, arresting more than sixty. Charges were later dismissed against all but one, Robert J. Miesenbach.

- K. Several admitted Communists were present at City Hall, having been subpoenaed by the Committee to testify about the activities of the Communist Party in California. They tried repeatedly to disrupt the hearings, several were ejected, and a few carried signs for a while in the picket line outside, handed out leaflets on the steps of City Hall, or joined in the shouting and chanting inside.

[These persons, named in the film, make up Group C.]

- L. News photographers and radio reporters recorded the events in the hearing room and on the stairs of City Hall on film and tape. Some of these records were subsequently subpoenaed by the House Committee on Un-American Activities. Later,

“ . . . film footage of the riots in San Francisco taken by TV stations KRON and KPIX of that city and made into a documentary film by Washington Video Productions, Inc., was made part of this report [House Report No. 2228].”

— House Committee on Un-American Activities Report for 1960, p. 64.

- M. More than seven hundred prints of the “documentary” *Operation Abolition* have been sold by this private firm at a price of \$100 each. Corporations, veterans organizations, the U.S. Defense Department have purchased it and promoted its showing to schools, P-TAs, community groups, churches, etc.
- N. The film is officially known as “The Communist-Led Riots Against the House Committee on Un-American Activities in San Francisco, May 12-14, 1960,” and its message is mainly that the said demonstrations were inspired, organized, led by Communist agitators.
- O. Employees of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, and its Chairman, Francis Walter, have admitted that the film contains distortions and inaccuracies (such as showing Harry Bridges emerging from City Hall *before* showing the “riot” scenes, although Bridges arrived *after* the trouble was over). They insist, however, that these faults are small, and do not vitiate the film’s message.

## II. SOME PRIMARY SOURCES

The following are eye-witness accounts and analyses by participants, in some cases supplementing their own experience by conversations with other participants known to them.

All accounts, whether by students or police, are entitled to fair consideration on their merits.

- A. Christopher Bacon, British exchange student at the University of California, in broadcast by Station KPFA, Berkeley, California, June 25, 1960, of material recorded at the City Hall on May 14:

I got in for the last forty minutes of the first day's session, having waited from 8:45 A.M. till 3:30 P.M. On the second day, Friday, the 13th of May, I began waiting at 8 A.M., but once again the stalwart Daughters and Legionnaires with their white invitation cards were in first. So I was left outside the door at the head of the line when the morning session began, with about 150 people, mainly students, behind me.

After a while we began singing led by a guitarist, loud enough to be audible in the hearing room, but not loud enough to stop the proceedings . . . Soon Sheriff Carberry came and asked us to be quiet because we were disturbing other courts and offices in the building. We complained about the inequity of the white cards, but agreed to be quiet until the afternoon session, when, he assured us, we would be let in to this public hearing on a first-come, first-served basis. The Sheriff went to lunch and we waited behind the wooden barrier between two massive pillars ten feet from the door of the hearing room, which is on the first floor of the City Hall, up a splendid flight of fifty marble steps.

The time for the door to open approached. The students waited in an orderly line which they themselves had formed . . . while the white card holders gathered on one side. Tension mounted. Nobody knew *who* would get in first. At 1:15, the police opened the door and began to lead in the white card holders. On and on they filed past the head of the line within spitting distance of the students. The students restrained themselves. They only hissed a little. At last the procession ended and the policeman counted the seats left for those who had been waiting for over five hours. "Room for fifteen more," he announced. At this time there was a surge in the line, now numbering about two hundred. The wooden barrier pressing into my stomach was pushed forward about two feet and some ten students struggled to reach the door while policemen struggled back, not to prevent their entry but to let them in calmly. I have seen worse presses on the bus in rush hours. Then the door shut for the last time. "That's all," shouted a policeman and the barrier was put back in position. Once again, I failed to get in. The line now broke up; we were tired of lining up for nothing. A student in the center asked whether we wanted to demonstrate outside the building or on the spot. We all agreed to stay. So we stood behind the barrier and began chanting, "Abolish the Committee," once more. Our bargain with the Sheriff had been broken, the hearing room was full, the Sheriff was still at lunch.

The police inspector in charge called for reinforcements, and motor-bike patrolmen with white helmets and black boots converged on the City Hall like angry wasps. They took up their position between the barrier and the door and

glared at us as we chanted louder. Cops don't like being defied by college kids. After a few minutes they rolled out a hose. We sat down to show we were not violent and had no intention of moving. "You want some of this," yelled a policeman waving a nozzle about six feet away from me. "Well, you're going to get it." And we did. I saw the hose stiffening as it filled and then water splattered onto the ground for a couple of seconds before it got up to pressure and hit me full in the chest. I remained sitting but turned full around and covered the back of my head with my hands. The hose was not overwhelming in power and you could withstand it at a few feet range though it hurt if it hit you in the back of the neck or the kidneys. And it burst one man's eardrum. Several men stood with their backs to the hose and linked arms to shield the rest of the group which included many girls in flimsy dresses. I was wearing my best suit which is not of the wash-and-wear variety. After about five minutes of hosing, which dislodged only about half the group and made the steps too slippery for the rest to get down easily, the police turned off the water and charged, led by their inspector in plain clothes who is an ex-prize fighter and has shown little sympathy for students. We were forced back from the lobby outside the door down a few steps onto the landing at the head of the grand stairway. Then began the riot of Black Friday.

Fred Haines, reporter for KPFA provides a running narrative of the events as recorded on tape in the City Hall:

["Abolish the Committee"] . . . Rather brutally across the floor and were unable to keep their balance on the, in the flood of water on the marble flooring here and seemed to be badly hurt . . . [chant in the background] . . . but I see none of them now. Perhaps they've, or they're all better, they've all recuperated. Police are now clearing a way through the center of the students . . . [loud roaring] . . . police, police are hauling out a bearded student, a woman, a woman is protesting and they're dragging her out too . . . the police who left the upper floor here have suddenly reappeared on the lower floor and they seemed prepared to, to start hauling the students down the stairs from behind either one by one or in pairs. The . . . the major part of the students are kneeling, sitting on the upper stairwell, the police are on both sides of them . . . the police are . . . the kids are sitting down with their hands in their pockets or their arms crossed. The police are taking them by the arms, and hauling them bodily down the long stairway to the main floor . . . [screaming and yelling in the background] A girl is screaming, refusing to be taken . . . The principle here is apparently passive resistance, none of the students seem to be striking back . . . the students are now being taken out one by one and the students have started again, somewhat weakly, their chant of "We Shall Not Be Moved" [song heard in the background]. The police have grabbed a Negro by the ankle and are dragging him down the stairs on his, on his back, by the ankles . . . [chant heard] . . . People around the rotunda and the audience are now, now seem to be clapping. Apparently they are on the side of the police. Girls are being thrown down. The students are giving each other advice . . . "Let them drag you down, let them drag you down," . . . they have their arms linked together so that they can't be moved separately, they must be taken down in pairs . . . again the technique of the police seems to be to grab them by the ankles and to haul them down on their backs, down the stairway of some fifty or sixty stairs. One policeman is presently dragging three girls with their arms linked together . . . [Background: Girl: "No, get your hands . . ." Policeman: "Go ahead and go when I tell you; get out." Girl: "Get your hands off me." Loud roar from crowd. A girl yells: "No, no, no, no." . . . Yelling in the background.

Voice heard, "Don't understand it; I just walked into this place minding my own business" . . . Many voices all intermingled. Then: "Come on, let's go. Come on".]

A girl student has advocated that they all get up and leave and most of them have, there are about fourteen or fifteen left and they have gotten up and moved for the most part. Doug Wachter, the boy that was subpoenaed yesterday has just gotten up and moved out . . . [Constant shouting] . . . The police are helping one girl down who looks somewhat dazed . . . they let her walk down . . . At the present moment, all students have been removed, from the upper landing, a few of the boys and girls are going down the stairs, one or two are being dragged . . . the police are advising those who wish to walk down to hold onto the hand rail because the steps are running with water and very slippery . . . The, the crowd on the main floor seems to have grown some; they are not only removing the students from the stairway and from the upper landing, they are hauling them all the way out of the building. I see a policeman wrestling with a girl right now . . . another girl is fighting back; there goes the principle of passive resistance. Ah . . . the first girl seems to have been kicked . . . other people coming to their defense are also being thrown out . . . [A new voice: "What was that? What resistance? That the leader of passive resistance?"] There are still about half a dozen students sitting on the main floor; there are at present 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13 - 13 policemen surrounding them. They are trying to break them apart; they link their arms together so that they cannot be moved separately, but must be moved as a group or else broken apart to move.

Fred Haines interviews a student, Rick White, immediately after the police action:

RICK WHITE: We queued up in front of the main door to the hearing room, the center door—there were doors to the left and to the right of this door. Now, ah, the group of people who had been in, in the morning, were largely women, aged 40 and upwards . . . Lined up in front of the door to the right of the center door, and when time came to allow people to enter the Committee room, a policeman came up to the barricade which had been placed in front of the *main door* and said, "Everyone with white passes come over here," and ah, then they started passing these people through. Well, this was just what the Sheriff had said was *not* going to happen, and the condition of our not demonstrating was not met by the Sheriff. I don't know how much authority he had to start with, but he certainly made us a promise. So they let all these people through and then they let approximately five students in after this group with the white passes had managed to enter. And this was not what we had in mind as an equitable distribution of seats in the Committee room. So we decided that we would continue to demonstrate by singing songs and by chants just where we were, outside the center door to the Committee room. We did proceed to do this, and then someone suggested that we sit down. Ah, this was about, I should say, ten minutes after the hearings had been under way. So this happened, we sat down, a couple of us remained standing and led songs and things of this sort. Well, after we had sat down there was really no physical activity at all in the group. The motorcycle police appeared with hoses . . .

F. H.: May I interrupt here for a moment. It is just at this point, I believe, that Mr. James Farris of the San Francisco police maintains that the students jumped a policeman who was, as he said in response to my question, neither behind nor in front of the barricade, but at the entrance where they let the

people with the white passes through. He claims that the students mobbed a policeman and this has appeared in the San Francisco *Chronicle*. I, I can't ascribe this to Mr. Farris, but it has appeared in the San Francisco *Chronicle* that the policeman was trampled and struck with his own billy-club. Do you know of any event of this nature?

WHITE: I was quite close to the front of this queue I'm speaking of and I did not see anything of this nature going on. There was a *press*, at the beginning this was before even the white pass people had been let in, which was the only press that occurred. A student, I believe from San Francisco State, managed to stop this very effectively and ordered the demonstrators to queue up and they did queue up.

F. H.: Was he a tall boy with glasses?

WHITE: Dark glasses, yes. Wearing a dark green suit.

F. H.: He was described, I believe, by the police as being the ringleader who was urging them on to the barricades.

WHITE: It was just absolutely the opposite function which he was performing and throughout the day, the morning and the afternoon, he was a constant source of moderation and he was instrumental in quieting things down so that we could have a little question and answer period in the morning with the Sheriff of San Francisco County, so this is just an absolute false fact as far as I can see.

F. H.: Were there shouts to crash the barricades and force entry into the chamber as the police allege?

WHITE: No, there were no shouts to crash the barricade and force entry into the chamber that I heard, and as I say, I was in a rather strategic position being very close to the barricade itself. And if someone next to a policeman might have lost his head and shouted that I don't know, I can't answer for everyone in the crowd. There was certainly no general shout of this nature.

B. A group of Conservative Baptist clergymen have given this interpretation of what happened in the hearing-room before the afternoon hearing began:

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## EYE WITNESS ACCOUNT BY A GROUP OF MINISTERS OF SAN FRANCISCO RED RIOTS

(A joint statement by Dr. G. Archer Weniger, of Oakland, the Rev. Don Watson of Oakland, Dr. Roy H. Austin of San Francisco, the Rev. Robert F. Hakes of Alameda, Dean William G. Bellshaw of the San Francisco Baptist

Seminary, Dr. H. O. Van Gilder of the Western Baptist Bible College, and Dr. Arno Weniger of San Francisco.)

More than a dozen ministers were in attendance at the Congressional hearings of the House Un-American Activities Committee in San Francisco on May 12 and 13 in the Supervisors Chambers in the City Hall. What we witnessed was utterly fantastic. The shameful demonstration against law and order and against this duly constituted Committee of the Congress defies description. We sat in the rear of the room on a raised platform where we could easily observe the proceedings, right in the midst of the student demonstrators. We studied the crowd carefully for hours and could easily discern which were the masterminds of the mob riots. It is our certain conviction that this indefensible demonstration against law and order was conceived, planned, and directed by a few hard-core Communist agitators who were carrying out their textbook orders on insurrection with classic success. Leaders of the mob included faculty members and well-known leftist lawyers for the fifth-amendment Communists.

We were sitting where we were able to observe the giving of instructions by the riot leaders who had gained access to the room. The "Daily Californian," which was distributed widely at the scene, gave explicit instructions on the front page of the Thursday issue on exactly how to harass the Committee. They were told to laugh out loud at every incident that appeared to be amusing in order to make the Congressmen look ridiculous. These well-disciplined mobsters laughed on the dotted line and obeyed their masters to the last jeer. We watched a national committeeman for the Party line up a dozen Communists near the railing and throw every sneer, invective, abusive language, vile profanity, and fiendish charge at the Congressmen they could conceive. For nearly fifteen minutes at one point, this lawless crowd of students from the University, together with Party cadres, had the Chambers almost in their control. The students, comprising the rear third of the audience stood up on their seats and yelled, jeered, hissed, and scoffed at the Congressmen. It was almost complete breakdown of law and order. We witnessed more violations of the law in fifteen minutes than we have seen in fifteen years! The only criticisms we have of the police authorities were of allowing this element to make such a mockery out of law and order, without jailing every one of the leaders.

The height of their devilish hypocrisy was reached when they had the consummate nerve to profane the national anthem by singing it at the peak of their demonstration, and giving expression to their treasonable delight by singing "Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory of the Coming of the Lord." The depth of their deceit was reached when this mob element put their hand over their heart and pledged allegiance to the flag. We shall never forget the hiss and boos that greeted Mr. Arens when he first mentioned the name of God in connection with one who broke from the Party.

We are at a loss to understand how clergymen, such as Bishop James Pike, could give any aid and comfort to this lawless kind of activity by statements deriding the Committee, and by allowing his assistant pastor to address one of their despicable rallies.

We came away from this hearing absolutely convinced of the overwhelming necessity of continuing the House Committee on Un-American Activities. No free agent could view the hearings without being impressed with the fairness, justice, and dedication to a thankless, but positively necessary task. Chairman Edwin Willis was unusually temperate and patient. We have nothing but unbounded admiration for Richard Arens, Committee Counsel, whose skill and

understanding of this perilous conspiracy was a blessing to behold. We apologize to these devoted public servants from Congress for the devilish and deceitful conduct of an infinitesimally small but alarmingly arrogant segment of this area, who are willing to be tools of the Communist conspiracy which would make a shambles out of the liberty which marks this great nation as the land of the free and the home of the brave.

- C. A detailed analysis of the events is offered by Prof. John R. Searle of the Department of Philosophy of the University of California, both from his own experiences and interviews with numerous students; quoted from the tape dictated by Professor Searle.

The first thing I want to discuss is the question of Communist influence on the students. Now the film makes the charge that the students were led by and inspired by and duped by the Communists. This, in fact, is the main point of the film and, the most important charge in it. After investigating this charge in some detail, I must say that there seems to be no substance to it at all. First let me note that no evidence is given to support this charge in the film. The film does show photos of subpoenaed witnesses, most or perhaps all of whom are Communists. And it does show student demonstrations. What it does not show us is any evidence that the students were in any sense led by or duped by the subpoenaed witnesses. This is a mere unsupported assertion by the narrator and by the members of the House Un-American Activities Committee. According to the students with whom I have spoken, they were demonstrating against the Committee, not in support of the subpoenaed Communists. This is a rather crucial distinction. However, the fact that the film doesn't prove that the students were Communist-led is not in itself proof that they weren't.

In order to prove that they were not Communist-led, one must find out why they were demonstrating and who the leaders, if any, of the demonstrations were. This is a matter of some complexity, because there was in fact not one demonstration at City Hall but at least three different demonstrations occurring at different times and places and often with different people involved for different reasons.

#### GROUP A: THE STUDENT CIVIL LIBERTIES PICKET LINE

First, there was the peaceful and orderly picketing of the Committee that went on outside the City Hall. This began on Thursday morning and continued without incident through Saturday. At noon Thursday this group also held a demonstration at Union Square which was addressed by Canon Byfield and two State Assemblymen. Following this demonstration the group had a picket march back to City Hall where they continued picketing.

This demonstration was the most important from the students' point of view, but it received the least publicity in the press. It was organized by a group called the Students for Civil Liberties. The demonstrations were planned well in advance, were carefully organized, and were well monitored and orderly and peaceful from beginning to end. The leaders of the group were Gene Savin, Rick Chesney, Maurice Zeitlin, Mickey Steifel, Herb Mills, Aray Lenske, Boydan Dennitch, and Robert Martinson. None of these people are Communists. Nor indeed was there any outside leadership of this group, Communist or otherwise.

One person who joined the organization is accused of being a Communist. His name is Douglas Wachter and he is a subpoenaed witness. But he possessed no position of leadership or responsibility in the organization and he had no influence on its policy. This group opposed the Committee on civil libertarian grounds. It is now affiliated with the American Civil Liberties Union and has no connection with any Communist organization. One anecdote will, I think, reveal the attitude of this group toward the Communists. On the afternoon of the first day, that's Thursday, Merle Brodsky, one of the subpoenaed witnesses, approached the monitors, among them, Rick Chesney, on the picket line and tried to get them to cooperate with him in demonstrating inside City Hall. He was flatly refused.

#### GROUP B: THE PUBLIC AWAITING ADMISSION TO THE HEARING ROOM

The second group, that is the one inside the building, was, unlike the first, not planned in advance, but was completely spontaneous. It was not organized and had no official leadership, although some students tried to keep it under control. The reasons for this demonstration are completely concealed in the film. What happened was this: the Committee announced that it was going to hold a public hearing in San Francisco but in effect no public hearing was held. The students arrived at the City Hall in some cases hours before the hearing was to start and they queued up outside the door of the hearing room. But admission was not granted on a first-come, first-served basis. People bearing white passes issued by the Committee were admitted through a side door. And indeed the overwhelming majority of the seats were occupied by these pass-carrying friends of the Committee.

On the first morning about seventy-five people from the general public were admitted. But this is the maximum number ever admitted from the general public and in subsequent sessions the number declined steadily. The importance of this fact cannot be over-estimated in a study of the San Francisco demonstrations. It is incidentally concealed in the film in the following manner: The narrator says that the Committee issued one hundred passes. What he does not say is that on each pass it said Admit Three, Four, Five, or Six. (I know this because I was taken in by someone with a pass on Thursday afternoon on which it said Admit Five.)

Now this policy of stacking the Committee hearing with friends of the Committee produced a deep sense of indignation and frustration in the students who had waited outside the doors for so long. Not only did it seem to them that the Committee was unconstitutional but to them it also seemed that the Committee was resorting to cheap and unfair practices in "stacking" the hearing. They, therefore, began singing and chanting in protest on Thursday afternoon and this was the beginning of the demonstrations inside the building. There was no official leadership to this demonstration at any time.

Burton White, a graduate student at the University of California, to some extent acquired a position of leadership over the group; that is, he led the singing. He presented the students' side in a discussion with the sheriff. He organized the students into an orderly line on Friday and so on, in an effort to provide a "constructive outlet" for student resentments. Other students who assisted him in this were Kent Kitsch, Aryay Lenske, Chris Bacon and Jeff Berne, who Friday brought a guitar in order to accompany the singing. I know White and Bacon very well personally, and I can vouch that neither is a Communist. Nor is there any reason whatsoever to believe that any of the other student leaders here were Communists. No doubt at various times subpoenaed wit-

nesses were in this group. In fact, we know for certain that some of them were, but at no time was it under the control, direction, or influence of these witnesses, nor indeed of any other Communists.

The point that needs to be emphasized about this second demonstration is that it was a protest against the seating policy of the Committee as much as against the Committee itself. And secondly, that it had no official leadership, much less a Communist leadership. But what leadership did spring up spontaneously was from students who were not Communists.

#### GROUP C: THE ADMITTED COMMUNISTS AND OTHER HOSTILE WITNESSES SUBPOENAED BY THE COMMITTEE

(Except for Douglas Wachter, these were not students. Some are admitted Communists, others are accused by the Committee of being Communists. They include: Archie Brown, Merle Brodsky, Ralph Izard, Sally Attarian Sweet, Juanita Wheeler, Saul Wachter, Morris Graham, William Mandel)

These "hostile witnesses" denounced the Committee when called to testify, some joined in some of the singing, shouting, and chanting in the hearing-room and in the halls, and Archie Brown distributed literature and carried a sign in the picket line for awhile.

They also appear prominently in the film in a demonstration that occurred inside the hearing room when the Committee was not in session in the lunch recess on Thursday. It consisted of chanting "Open the door." This was followed by the singing of "The Star Spangled Banner" and the reciting of the pledge of allegiance to the flag and then repeated chanting of "Open the door." The film distorts the account of this demonstration on three major grounds.

1. First of all it conceals the fact that the Committee was not in session. It tries to give the viewer the impression the Committee was in session. There was in fact only one member of the Committee present in the room during all that time, at least only one whom I saw, that was Rep. Scherer, I think, who was sitting up at his desk looking out the window during the whole time.
2. Secondly, it conceals the immediate reason for the demonstration, which was this: the subpoenaed witnesses had presented a petition to the Committee asking them either to move to a larger room or to admit people on a first-come, first-served basis. The Committee refused to consider the petition.
3. Thirdly, as in demonstration two, the immediate reason for the indignation of the students was the seating policy, that is, the admission policy that the Committee had adopted—the fact that the overwhelming majority of the seats were occupied by people carrying white cards.

That is, to the initial opposition to the Committee was added the sense that the Committee, as one student put it to me, was "double-crossing" the students on the question of admission. And in the case of the demonstration inside the hearing room, there was further added the feeling that the Committee was denying the witnesses their constitutional right to petition Congress for redress of grievance. Now I saw this entire proceeding from beginning to end and I must say that in spite of the presence of the subpoenaed witnesses that the demonstration was not under their direction or leadership. The students took no orders from them, and had they been given, I doubt that they would have

been obeyed. The demonstration was directed against the Committee again, and not in support of the Communists. The singing of the national anthem was not derisive, as has been charged, but was an honest and intense protest by students who felt the Congressmen needed a reminder of their duty. The Communists at the rail joined in the singing doubtless for their own reasons.

(Incidentally, there was a fourth demonstration that had nothing to do with these three and had nothing to do with the House Committee on Un-American Activities. A group of pacifists conducted a peace march that passed a block or so away from City Hall on Saturday. This was organized as early as January by such groups as the Friends Service Committee and several other pacifist groups. It occurred the same day as the Committee hearing quite by coincidence. What happened is this: The Committee had announced that it would complete its hearing on the 12th of May and the peace march was scheduled for the 14th of May. However, the Committee then postponed its hearings two days so that the last day of the Committee hearings coincided with the day of the pre-arranged peace march. But the fact that they occurred the same time was quite coincidental. Any one who wishes to check about this can inquire of the Friends Service Committee in San Francisco. The only reason I mention this demonstration incidentally is because in the Hoover report, though not in the film, it is described as the "climax" of the Communist plot against the Committee.)

Now I wish to discuss the sequence of events that led to the arrests on Friday. And I wish to call attention to the following facts:

1. First, it should be noticed that *there were two police authorities in operation in City Hall and there appears to have been little or no coordination between them.* First of all, there was Sheriff Carberry and then working independently of him there was Inspector Maguire who was in charge of a large detail from the city police at City Hall. A good deal of the events at City Hall are explained by the fact that, as I am going to explain later, the Sheriff appeared to be working for one aim and Maguire appeared to be working for another, and the students were rather confused by this.

2. The second fact that I wish to call attention to is that the *students were told Friday morning by the Sheriff (not the city policemen and Maguire, remember) that on Friday afternoon they could wait in the hall and that he would try to arrange for them to be admitted.* The students not unnaturally took that as a promise from the Sheriff, and they were extremely disappointed when it was not fulfilled through no fault of the Sheriff. Now, fortunately for the record, this conversation between the Sheriff and the students is recorded on a KPFA tape which anyone can check.

3. The third fact I wish to mention is that *Inspector Maguire had clearly lost his temper on Friday* in a way that rendered him unsuitable for this type of police operation. As evidence for this let me cite the following: a friend of mine, Richard Albert, was standing at the side of the rotunda on Friday afternoon. He had a camera and was scrutinizing Maguire's behavior rather closely. Maguire approached him rapidly, hit him with his fist without warning and shouted, "You get over there with the rest of them, you commie," pointing to the assembled group of students in the center of the City Hall rotunda. My friend began to explain that he was only a spectator at the demonstration, but Maguire whirled from him, ran to some other police officers and shouted, "Okay, let's get them," referring to the students in the center. My source on this is Richard Albert.

4. Fourth, *attempts by the students to cooperate with the police at City Hall on Friday were refused.* Richard Chesney and Aryay Lenske, sensing the danger inherent in the situation at City Hall, made frantic efforts to contact the mayor or some other responsible city official. But no one was available. In desperation they approached Maguire and offered their help in cooperation. Maguire said to them, "Get the hell out of here." That is, as far as I know, a direct quotation. Chesney and Lenske will attest to the truth of this story.

5. Fifth, *there is considerable evidence that the hosing, clubbing, and subsequent arrest of the students by the police was planned in advance.* It is, for example, an established fact that ambulances and paddy wagons assembled at City Hall on Friday *prior to the hosing.* There are many eye-witnesses to this, but let me cite two: Richard Chesney and Boydan Dennitch. Another bit of disturbing evidence of police premeditation is provided by Dale Minor, a reporter for KPFA. This is printed on page 10, part 2, of the KPFA document previously referred to. I am quoting Mr. Minor here.

"Just prior to the noon recess, a member of KPFA staff overheard two officers discussing either something planned or anticipated in the afternoon. In the course of this discussion, the term "bayonet charge" was used. On returning from lunch, we passed a line of motorcycle officers parked at the southeast corner of McAllister and Polk, half a block away from City Hall. As we walked by, one of the officers was saying to his comrade, "We fix bayonets, charge, and, poofft, no more demonstrations." That, at any rate, is an accurate reconstruction of what I, myself, overheard."

6. The sixth point I wish to call attention to in regard to Friday's events is that contrary to what is stated in the film, *no general warning was issued to the students prior to the hosing.* I say no general warning was issued because I have heard some reports that individual students were asked by individual police to leave but no general directive was issued to the assembled students. What happened was this: The students, having been led to believe that they would be admitted on a first-come, first-served basis, formed a line outside the door to the hearing room, but as before the white card holders were admitted first. Now as can be imagined, this aroused considerable agitation on the part of the students, but there was some shouting of "Wait, Wait" to see what would happen next. Well, the white cards were admitted in and then the people first in the students line began, and about fifteen or twenty students were admitted into the room and then the doors were closed. There was, of course, general indignation and a sense of betrayal among the students. Burton White, trying to maintain order, took a vote to see if the students wanted to remain inside the City Hall and protest or go back to join the picket line outside. The vote was to remain inside and the chanting and singing began again.

At that point a squad of white-helmeted policemen moved up the stairs in a body and surrounded the students. The noise abated somewhat because the students expected the riot act to be read — that is to say, they expected the police at this point to make some general statement asking them to leave the building. But nothing of this nature was forthcoming and the police simply began uncoiling the hoses. The students, seeing the hoses, wished to demonstrate their non-violent intentions, so they sat down. Many students heard a policeman with a hose shout words to the effect, "So you want some of this, do you, well, you're going to get it!" The hoses were then turned on.

7. Seven, *the excuse given by the police for turning the hoses on the students is demonstrably false and indeed would have been irrelevant had it been true.* The police claimed that the violence started when one student, Robert Miesen-

bach, leapt over the barricade, approached a policeman, removed his club, and hit the policeman over the head with it. This they said triggered or touched off the hosing of the students and the subsequent assault on the students by the policemen with their clubs.

Now this is demonstrably false, because a photograph printed in *Life* magazine May 23, 1960, shows Miesenbach standing perfectly dry over against the side of the building watching the demonstration while the students are being hosed. (And as a matter of fact the police have subsequently retracted the story and I understand in the Miesenbach prosecution they are going to present a more limited charge of assault.)

At any rate, even if this story had been true it obviously would not have justified the police action. For remember that as an excuse for assaulting some two hundred students behind a barricade they present the fact that one student leapt over the barricade and approached a policeman and allegedly attacked him. This would have justified arresting the student, but not attacking the other students.

8. *Eight, there is considerable evidence of brutality and violence on the part of police but very little evidence of any violence on the part of the students.* Now to review this evidence let us go back to the point which I was discussing a moment ago when the police turned on the hoses. When the hoses were turned on, the students who had been sitting rose and tried to shield themselves from the hoses. Whatever the intention of turning on the hoses had been, it certainly failed, because eventually, of course, they had to be turned off and the students were where they had been, surrounded by the police. The police then moved in and began dragging the students down the steps and in many cases hitting them with their clubs. Now, there are an enormous number of eye-witness accounts of police violence here and I refer to KPFA documents on this matter and also to the reports by some of the reporters who actually witnessed the scene, especially George Draper of the *San Francisco Chronicle*. (Let it be remembered, of course, that most of the reporters did not actually see this scene. They were inside the hearing room at the time and the version which they subsequently published was one which they got from the police, not from actually having seen the events themselves.) I shan't try to repeat these eye-witness accounts as they have been published, but what I have done is to check up on the casualty list. Now, in the film, it is stated that students received minor injuries but that policemen required hospitalization. Here in fact seems to me to be the actual casualty list:

- a. Mary McIntosh received a cut on her mouth and cheek from being hit with a club.
- b. Tony Thomas had his eardrum ruptured when a policeman aimed a hose at his ear and succeeded in hitting him at that point.
- c. Kelvin McCoy received a cut over the eye which required eight stitches and was informed by the doctor that he very narrowly avoided being made blind in that eye.
- d. Danny Grossman had to have stitches in the top of his head from a blow he received from a police club.
- e. Ralph Williams received a back injury, and actually his case is of some interest. He had a bad back before the events of last May and when the police approached him he asked if he could walk down the stairs rather than being dragged down but the policeman insisted on dragging him down the stairs and in consequence he required an operation on his back.

f. Miesenbach was beaten so badly around the lower part of his face that he claims he couldn't move his jaw for some hours.

g. Aryay Lenske also received a blow from a club which broke the skin. In addition, there were quite a lot of students whose names I don't know who showed up at the Cowell hospital in Berkeley late that afternoon with various and sundry injuries.

Now on the police side there were two strokes and one heart attack. There were one or two wrenched backs and one bitten thumb. Now about these strokes and heart attacks two things should be noticed. First of all, they were received by the older members of the police force who were on duty at the time. I should mention here that the first group of policemen sent to City Hall on Thursday were the older members of the force who were on the verge of retirement and it was supposed that the operation at City Hall was going to be an easy nature and they were usually assigned to easy jobs. They were, of course, reinforced later on by the white helmeted motorcycle police. But at any rate, these injuries that I am referring to now occurred among these elderly gentlemen.

Incidentally, here I should note the man about whom so much is made in the film, Officer Dunphy. You may recall that in the film quite a bit of time is spent photographing him; it is stated there that he has had a stroke. Well, according to the police report in the Miesenbach case he collapsed from exhaustion.

Of the other injuries, that is to say, the backs and the thumb, I must say that only the bitten thumb seems to give any conclusive justification to the inference of deliberate violence on the part of a student.

That is to say, while the injuries to the police are extremely regrettable, it is hard to see how they provide any conclusive justification or evidence for the assertion that there was any extensive student violence. Assuming that a student did wish to induce a stroke or wrenched back on a policeman, it is difficult to know how he might set about doing this without producing some sort of other evidence of violence. Incidentally, it has been reported to me that the gentlemen who suffered the strokes and the man who suffered the heart attack were all back on the job doing full-time police work within three days of the incident. Now I haven't conclusively been able to check that, but at any rate that is the latest report that I have heard.

9. The ninth point concerns *two subpoenaed witnesses who were arrested*. It is said in the film that some Communists were arrested or that a few Communists were arrested. But at any rate an actual check of the people arrested reveals two who were subpoenaed witnesses and accused by the Committee of being Communists. Whether or not they were Communists, investigation reveals that they had very little part in the events leading up to the hosing. And I have taken the trouble to check their whereabouts at the crucial moment. Their names incidentally are Douglas Wachter and Vernon Bown. [See note at end of section] Now at the moment the hoses were turned on, neither of them was in the group of students assembled in the middle of the City Hall rotunda. Wachter was being interviewed by Mr. Fred Haines of KPFA over on the side of the City Hall and this fact can be checked with KPFA. After the hoses were turned on, of course, for whatever motive, he went back in and tried to get in the front line of the hosing, which he did, and was subsequently arrested. Now, Bown was on the stairs watching these events, and he got into the melee a bit later when he saw policemen dragging a boy student down the steps and, at any rate in Bown's opinion, exerting undue violence on this person. Bown attempted

to intercede — whether this interception was physical or merely verbal I don't know — but at any rate, Bown was arrested.

The point is, however, that both of these people about whom so much is made got into this phase of the demonstrations after the police action had begun. So their behavior can hardly be used to justify either the assertion that the demonstrations at that point were under the control of the Communists or that the police were provoked by a Communist riot. So much then for the events of Black Friday.

One thing that I'd like to say at this point is that I don't intend anything that I have been saying about these events as condoning the students' behavior. It does seem to me that a good deal of the behavior was improper. I consider it improper to make noise and create disturbances to this extent inside the City Hall. It's my belief, in fact, that the police should have put a stop to it on Thursday, and had they put a stop to it when it began on Thursday there would have been no further trouble of this sort. However, since I seem at this point to be passing moral judgment, let me say that the impropriety of the students' behavior such as it was pales into insignificance beside that of the police and the Committee.

Now I should like to discuss the original newsreel film taken by TV station KRON-TV in San Francisco, the original film upon which much of *Operation Abolition* is based. There were, of course, two television stations which took these films, KRON and KPIX. I have not seen KPIX's film; what I am now going to discuss is the KRON film.

One thing that should be noticed about this film is that in it I saw no scenes of police violence which were not shown in *Operation Abolition*. However, there were in this film several scenes showing injured students lying prostrate and apparently unconscious upon the floor of City Hall or else outside on the ground — several such scenes which were not shown in *Operation Abolition*. There definitely did seem to be some serious omission of this sort of thing from *Operation Abolition*.

And finally, I noted one serious distortion in *Operation Abolition* which has not previously been pointed out, and that is: most of the scenes in *Operation Abolition* showing the student demonstrations prior to the hosing, in fact, are scenes which occurred on Thursday. That is to say, they are films of the demonstrators taken twenty-four hours before the hosing. And the reason behind this seems to me to be that films showing the demonstrations on Friday are not very extensive and also they are not nearly as dramatic as the ones on Thursday and presumably then the two demonstrations were run together to heighten the dramatic effect of *Operation Abolition*. In this connection it must be stated that the claim made by Rep. Walter that the errors in sequence in this film are purely accidental must be regarded with some skepticism, since, according to the officials at KRON, every piece of film sent to the Committee under subpoena was carefully tagged as to the time and place and sequential order under which it was taken.

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NOTE: The following information on Vernon Bown is supplied by the Bay Area Student Committee, and can be found in greater detail in *The Wall Between* by Anne Braden (N. Y., 1958):

The film asserts, "One of the Communist professional agitators arrested is Vernon Bown, who was in 1954 among the notorious 'Louisville Seven,' charged

at that time with sedition, destruction of property, conspiring to destroy property to achieve a political end, and contempt of court." The truth is that the H.C.U.A. itself, in its Friday morning hearing, indicated that Vernon Bown is not a member of the Communist Party. Less ironic and more flagrantly defamatory is the statement about Mr. Bown's court "record." The film omits the vital background in the case. Mr. Bown was guarding the home of a Negro family which had been threatened by racists in a Southern state. The house was subsequently bombed by a group of segregationists in an automobile, and Bown was indicted for the bombing. The charge was sedition (to overthrow the Southern state), and the destruction of property with which he was charged was the destruction of the house he was attempting to protect. The film did not tell us that these charges were thrown out by the courts, and that Vernon Bown was never convicted of these "crimes." It is a sacred American principle that a man is innocent until proven guilty but the H.C.U.A., in its attempts to justify its own existence, disregards this principle. Furthermore, it is frightening that a branch of the House of Representatives, which is financed supposedly to discover "facts," would purposely distort the facts in a case in which the truth is a matter of public record.

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D. Mayor George Christopher, in an interview with Jack McCauley, January 18, 1961, as reprinted in the Congressional Record - House, March 1, 1961, pp. 2764-5.

There has been quite some controversy as to the authenticity of the film of the House Un-American Activities Committee meeting in our city. While I believe the pictures of the demonstrators speak for themselves, perhaps a further explanation would be enlightening. As Mayor of San Francisco, I want to be fair and certainly would not wish to point an accusing finger at someone unless there was, in my opinion, complete justification. I was an eye-witness to most of the episodes involved and believe I can speak with authoritative knowledge.

The House Un-American Activities Committee conducted the meetings in the chambers of our Board of Supervisors. These chambers have a seating capacity of about five hundred and are situated directly across the hall from the office of the Mayor. Long before the meetings began, the chambers were filled and hundreds more were standing.

Immediately, numerous attendants, some of whom were later identified as college students, began to chant, sing, stamp their feet, yell at the Committee and interrupted their statements incessantly. Led by several well-known Communists, they used every tactic to disrupt the orderly process of the hearings. Finally, when the chambers were filled to more than capacity, the doors were closed and a large crowd gathered outside the chambers. As room became available, however, inside the chambers, more spectators would be admitted. However, the spectators inside and the group outside began a systematic procedure of interference - shouting, singing, booing and in general prohibiting the orderly processes of the hearings. The City Hall was disrupted, courts were adjourned and business in general came to an abrupt end.

The demonstrators were warned many, many times. They were told to grant the hearings that privilege which they professed to espouse, namely our democratic processes and the right of peaceful assembly and the right of all parties to be heard whether you agree with them or not. But the young students, prompted by professionals, agitators and Communists, persisted in disrupting the meeting.

Those outside the chambers caused even more disturbance, being heard even on the fourth floor of the City Hall. Finally, the people outside the chambers who could not, in any event, see what was going on inside, were ordered to move outside the building. This they refused to do. They refused to move — but sat down, formed a circle, began to chant loudly, “We will not move, we will not move.” One person attempted to remove a policeman’s effects including his gun from his hip pocket. Another spat on a policeman, and there was a general challenge of the law. The jostling and turmoil that followed called for definite action. But the police were properly reluctant to use undue violence knowing as they do that oftentimes they are accused of so-called police brutalities. When some of the challenged policemen did try to show authority, there was an upsurge and sometimes the policemen were threatened. When some of the people challenged the policemen, one sergeant then removed the fire hose and told them that if they came any closer they would be sprayed. The sergeant then, not having any other alternative except to use his gun or his club or other forceful means, did spray them with water. Of course, I must confess that this was an unfortunate episode, but I must also realize that even police can lose their patience and, in this instance, the policemen did have their patience exhausted. And these men had to uphold the law — after all, because the violators were disrupting the entire City Hall including the courts.

The general commotion that followed is very evident in the film. Later I personally went to the street where a large crowd had gathered and there I tried to speak to them over the police loud-speaker. Again the deluded and duped followers booed. I replied as follows: “I have just returned from the Soviet Union. There I talked to thousands of students. Not one of them agreed with what I said about our free enterprise system, about our capital system, about our democratic process. But,” I said, “not one of these Soviet students booed their public officials either.”

And with this, five of the student ringleaders came into the office and I emphatically laid down the rules of procedure. No one, without exception, would enter the City Hall and stand outside the chambers as long as the chambers were filled. Any booing or other disrupting demonstration would be cause for the eviction of the entire assembly. Thus the meetings were concluded.

But, I believe the film speaks for itself. If these people had not disrupted these meetings, if they had not challenged the police, if they had not violated the law, there could have been no need for police action. Known Communists, and I repeat this emphatically, known Communists were in the lead of this demonstration. The students were dupes who joined some of these causers of agitation believing it an innocent and harmless expression of civil liberties, not realizing that while they are doing this they are at the same time violating every precept of the liberties they profess to cherish. As much as they may now wish to protest, I must say that these people did violate every rule of conduct and that the police were left with no alternative — other than perhaps to be real brutal and to do some of the things that would have happened had such instances taken place in countries such as the Soviet Union itself.

The pictures I believe speak for themselves. They are true. They are authentic. They tell the real story and, of course, at the same time, they are most unfortunate to say the least.

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NOTE: San Francisco newspapers of February 11, 1961 report that the Mayor has since modified this statement with reference to the commentary and the sequence of events in the film:

1. The San Francisco *Examiner*, Feb. 11, 1961, reports that the Mayor said the commentary was merely someone's opinion.

2. "... I don't think it matters in what order the various events are portrayed, nor what the commentator had to say."

— San Francisco *News-Call-Bulletin*, Feb. 16, 1961

Three clergymen who called on him asserted:

"It is apparent that the Mayor and we agree on two points. One: that the accuracy of the sequence of events [in the film] is open to question. And two: that the commentary in the film is an individual editorial interpretation of those events shown."

— *News-Call-Bulletin*, Feb. 16, 1961

### III. SOME QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

A. Roff and Willoughby in San Francisco *News-Call-Bulletin*, January 26, 1961.

The committee, on May 16 – hardly before the City Hall's marble was dry – subpoenaed all films of the demonstrations and hearing from local television stations, ostensibly for its own files. Instead, however, it turned the two-and-a-half-hour collection of celluloid, much of it repetitious, over to a small commercial studio in Washington, D. C.

The edited result is a 45-minute film, sold by the studio, Washington Video Productions, Inc., for \$100 a print. *Operation Abolition*, according to the firm's own figures, already has sold 700 copies and "the demand is still continuing."

That would be, so far, approximately \$70,000 earned on films taken free from local television stations.

The head of Washington Video, George Johnston, frankly told the *News-Call-Bulletin*, "The Committee delivered the film to us." He said his company "made the film on speculation," and acknowledges it's more than paid for itself.

Johnston said San Francisco TV stations weren't being reimbursed for the seized film, but added at the time the clips were subpoenaed, "no one objected."

He said the film is getting wide distribution all over the nation, and requests for it come from businesses, churches, schools and government agencies. The official or semi-official nature of many of the groups showing the film – in the Bay Area, for instance, the San Francisco and Oakland police departments – unquestionably enhances its prestige as a documentary.

Recently, however, a nucleus of protest, formed mostly by UC students involved in the Black Friday fracas, has burgeoned into questions and doubts from many parts of the nation.

Queries on the truthfulness and thoroughness of the film have come to this newspaper, Mayor Christopher, Sheriff Matthew C. Carberry and police, in increasing numbers.

Even police, who wholeheartedly indorse the film, concede it occasionally scrambles sequences and errs in one or two places.

Chairman Walter, too, has admitted factual error. He insists, however, "it's unfortunate, but honest and decidedly minor . . . three insignificant time sequence errors in splicing together thousands of feet of film that make up the picture." Walter sticks by his opening statement in the film:

"During the next few minutes you will see revealed the long-time classic Communist tactic in which relatively a few well-trained, hard-core Communist agents are able to incite and use non-Communist sympathizers to perform the dirty work of the Communist Party."

Every foot of film, every word spoken in the film underscores Walter's conclusions. However, a careful comparison with uncut clips shows *Operation Abolition* does:

1. Use film footage shot on Saturday, the final day of the hearing when school was out and picketing was heaviest, for events on Thursday, opening day of the committee's world-reverberating hearings.

2. Telescopes events actually separated by hours if not, in some cases, days.

But if the film was expertly put together to maximize the impression of Communist conspiring, the narrative — especially the formal statements of Walter and his two committee colleagues — is calculated to crystalize it.

Emotional words are used: “revolution,” “hostilities,” “dupes,” “elite corps,” “battleground,” “mob.” A background either electric with the songs and chants of the demonstrators, or funereal with a doomsday dirge, stitch the film into a coherent whole.

The clips from which *Operation Abolition* was made, subpoenaed from KRON-TV and KPIX-TV, are disjointed, four- or five-minute snatches of action.

No movies whatsoever were taken of the key moment of the tumultuous three days the committee was here: the explosion of riot.

Nor, importantly, do the full uncut, unedited clips show any evidence of possible police brutality critics say was deliberately deleted from *Operation Abolition*.

The films do, however, record the shocking scene when City Hall’s central stairway already was a running Niagara, and sitting students were skidding bumpily to the bottom.

Although *Operation Abolition* doesn’t visually show the start of the riot, verbally it’s startlingly vivid. In a voice taut and clipped, the narrator tells excitedly of the crowd “throwing shoes and jostling the police officers,” and continues:

“When one officer warns that fire hoses will have to be used if the crowd does not disperse, the demonstrators become more and more unruly. One student provides the spark that touches off all the violence when he leaps over a barricade, grabs a police officer’s night stick, and begins beating the officer over the head. As the crowd surges forward to storm the doors, a police inspector orders that the fire hoses be turned on.”

But no police report of the inflammatory incident tells of tossed shoes. Nor does the officer who says he was struck ever, in his official report or before the San Francisco Grand Jury, describe his attacker as leaping over a barricade or hitting him more than once.

The film’s critics frequently have quoted Sheriff Carberry as saying, “There was no act of physical aggression on the part of the students.” He denies ever making such a statement, and points out he wasn’t even in City Hall when rioting broke out.

The San Francisco police, the FBI and the Committee all quite emphatically agree Communists provoked and prospered from the demonstration in City Hall.

But critics of *Operation Abolition* bitterly resent its blanket accusation of students given voice by Red Ventriloquists. They weren’t witless or unwitting dupes, the students insist, and complain the film, by its wholesale branding, tries to obliterate legitimate criticism of the committee.

They point out, that while the Communist Party might have objected to the Committee’s coming, so did a wide range of respected and responsible community organizations. Among them:

Episcopal Diocese of California, First Unitarian Church of San José, San

Francisco Society of Friends, Berkeley YMCA, Northern California Board of Rabbis, the East Bay Jewish Center, the San Francisco Building Trades Council, the Central Labor Councils of San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties, the American Federation of Teachers.

In addition, more than seven hundred faculty members at UC, Stanford, San Francisco and San José State Colleges signed statements protesting the Committee.

The film takes no note of what many students say was their major grievance against the Committee: preferential admission to the hearing by invitation. It reports that two hundred students were admitted from the crowd of demonstrators Friday, but other observers estimate the number at about thirty in the morning and, police concur, no more than twenty in the afternoon.

Other inaccuracies are apparent from close scrutiny of all available film and records:

3. The film reports: "The Communist apparatus activated its trained agitators and propagandists in the San Francisco Bay Area months before the hearings."

Yet no announcement of the Committee's coming was made until April 25, 1960, eighteen days before the hearing.

4. The narrator continues: "The carefully organized protest campaign was climaxed by a student directive published just prior to the hearings on the front page of the official University of California student newspaper, *The Daily Californian*. The directive reads as follows:

"The SCCL plans to picket the hearings today. It has issued a call for students to attend the rally and hearings and suggests that people laugh out loud in the hearing when things get ridiculous."

One student made the suggestion in an open meeting of the Students for Civil Liberties. It was not adopted by SCCL. *The Daily Californian*, the *Oakland Tribune* and *Saturday Evening Post* have all corrected the record on this.

5. The narrator goes on: "Among the Communist leaders who had an active part in the San Francisco abolition campaign and the protest demonstrations was Harry Bridges, whom you see here being escorted out of City Hall by police, moments before the rioting."

Actually, Bridges was at lunch at the time, and was not at City Hall until the disturbance had been quelled. FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, in his report on the City Hall riot, contradicts the film on this and Walter concedes this was the movie's "minor error."

6. At another point, the narrator says: "Students enthusiastically join in on the refrains to the song 'Abolish the Committee, We Shall Not Be Moved'—lyrics to which are lifted from the old Communist *People's Song Book*."

"We Shall Not Be Moved," however, is an old religious spiritual. Well-known to people acquainted with folk music, it appears in hymnals and is the theme of sit-in demonstrators in the South.

The Committee and its adherents insist the errors are negligible and unimportant and in no way invalidate the film's revelation of "Communism in action."

Critics, on the other hand, maintain that a congressional committee, speaking to and for the nation, must be scrupulous with every fact.

Hadley Roff and Wes Willoughby in San Francisco *News-Call-Bulletin*, January 31, 1961:

San Francisco's Black Friday amply demonstrates the variety of forces sizzling electrically to the one confusing moment when tumult gives way to violence.

Unquestionably a few old-line Communists, familiar with loud arts of agitation, milled among the throng gathered outside the House Un-American Activities Committee hearing in City Hall, May 12-14, 1960.

Undeniably, the great majority of the demonstrators were sincere in their protest against the Committee, and were angered because they couldn't get into the hearing first-come, first-serve.

Understandably, police patience wore thin. Demonstrators taunted them mercilessly, shouting "goons," "blackshirts," "Fascists." And from the courts on the floor above the hearings came demands for order.

And always there were the mounting tensions restless crowds inevitably generate. Rumors rustled through the gathering. Songs burst spontaneously. Chants erupted.

The excitement of picketing and protesting and the frustration of not getting into the hearing scraped antagonisms raw. There was some apparently inadvertent pushing by persons, tip-toeing for better vantage, at the rear of the crowd.

Those in front were jostled into a wooden barricade. It skidded several feet, but was hastily restored by the ten or so policemen guarding the door.

The white-card holders, favored guests of the Committee, were again filing into the chamber. Only fifteen or twenty students were permitted to fill vacancies in the 350-seat room.

Suddenly, the agitation, the disappointment, the anger flaring within City Hall's corridors united in a flash seen around the world.

The students, who made up the vast majority of the demonstrators inside City Hall and in the continuous picket line outside, had taken steps to avoid such an outbreak.

Monitors, mostly student body officers or graduate students, diligently patrolled the picket line to insure order.

Handbills told pickets to be on their best behavior. [See note following.]

Spearhead behind this was the Student Committee for Civil Liberties, founded at UC avowedly to protest the Un-American Activities Committee as spend-thrift with its appropriation and extravagant with its accusations. The group overwhelmingly voted down the suggestion of one student to ridicule the Committee by laughing out loud.

A week before the House Committee began its hearings, SCCL leaders contacted San Francisco police and explained their plans for mass picketing and the circulation of petitions for abolishing the Committee.

Police, as they must, assured them of neutrality and said they'd protect the students' right to protest as zealously as the Committee's right to conduct uninterrupted, orderly sessions.

Their major concern, police said, was to keep order. And they firmly believe they bent over backward to be completely fair with protestants.

Sheriff Matthew C. Carberry, who probably more than anyone worked tirelessly to prevent the demonstrations from reaching the calamitous point of no return, lauds police for their restraint in handling probably the most grimly ticklish situation here since the waterfront wars of the nineteen thirties.

"Many could have been arrested Thursday," Carberry reports. "But police tried valiantly that day to avoid possible provocation to violence. Their forbearance, considering the insults heaped on them, was amazing. They acted only defensively."

But the strain of frayed nerves and the confusion bred misunderstanding.

At one point during the Friday noon hour, student leaders sought out someone in authority to speak to the crowd and reduce tensions.

They tell of approaching one police inspector who snapped, "Are you threatening me?" when told antagonisms were reaching the danger point. Because of his belligerence, they say, "We gave up."

Sporadically, slicing through the demonstrators' chants of "We want in" or "Abolish the Committee," would be cries for outright aggression. "Break down the door!" was shouted several times the first day of the hearings, and again that fateful Friday. No one's quite sure by whom. Students insist not by them.

Communists then? Possibly. The students, however, discount their influence. They were there, of course, most of them subpoenaed, a rowdy handful, all the more so when booted repeatedly from the hearing room.

Archie Brown, California's No. 2 Communist, according to the FBI, three times was ejected from the supervisors' chambers, and one time was observed ripping his own coat to give the impression of being manhandled by police.

But Brown and his hardcore cohorts, spotlighted by camera flash-bulbs, provided more of a sideshow than instigation, students say.

Their heavy-handed harangues, their aggrieved poses before cameras, their dreary dogma made them stand out, to be sure, but in much the same way a weaving alumnus sometimes wins indulgent guffaws from a football rooting section.

But aside from the film clips for the most controversial movie of the year, *Operation Abolition*, what else did the Committee gather in its three days here?

Thirty-six of the forty-six witnesses subpoenaed before the Committee were un-cooperative. Several disrupted the hearings with shouts and table pounding and were thrown out. Many tried to read statements contemptuous of the Committee. None revealed much more than his name and address, and when asked the inevitable, "Are you or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?", stood on the Bill of Rights and refused to answer.

Of the friendly witnesses, three spoke at length; Irving Fishman, New York Customs official charged with controlling the importation of propaganda, and Barbara Hartle, a former Communist, had both testified before. Fishman's testimony was almost identical to what he gave the Committee two years before in San Francisco.

Karl Prussion, the counter-spy and Committee's star-witness, was able to

amplify his San Francisco testimony a month later in the imperturbable calm of the sedate Old House Office Building in Washington, D. C., where fire hoses remained untouched in the cabinets.

But in San Francisco the memory of hoses splashing water and loud demonstrations inside City Hall will be a long time washing away.

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Reprints of its entire series on the "riots" are available from the *News-Call-Bulletin*, San Francisco, California.

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NOTE: *Rules of the Picket Line* reprinted from *The Stanford Daily*, May 23, 1960:

The purpose of the picket line is to protest the invasion by the House Un-American Activities Committee of privacy of individual belief and its free expression, and to gain support from the public for the abolition of this Committee. We strive to achieve respect for the dignity of man. Thus, we must act in accordance with this ideal if we want others to respect it. All persons who participate in this line are expected to show good-will and to be polite, calm, and reasonable to everyone, including the police, hecklers, the public, and other picketers. Do not show anger and do not use abusive language; do not respond to hoots, jeers, or derogatory language. Do not debate with the public. Questions about the group and its activities, especially from the press, should be directed to monitors, who are wearing white arm-bands initialed with a black "M". Monitors are in charge of maintaining the order of the picket line, and you are expected to carefully follow their directions. If you cannot abide by the decisions of the monitors or if you cannot remain nonviolent in character and in deed, please withdraw quietly from the line. All who wish to demonstrate against the H.U.A.C. are welcome to join the line. Remember, your conduct must reflect the ideals for which we are demonstrating.

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B. Representative James Roosevelt, in a letter written to all members of the House of Representatives, dated December 21, 1960:

The heroic campaign to make the nation safe for the Un-American Activities Committee has now led to the production of a motion picture, *Operation Abolition*, as a documentary of this House. The film concerns itself mainly with the demonstrations that took place in San Francisco last May against the Un-American Activities Committee. Its major thesis is that the Communists want to see the Un-American Activities Committee abolished; however, it never for one second acknowledges that others — many others — who are neither Communists nor Communist dupes, also are in favor of the same objective for thoroughly legitimate reasons and in a thoroughly legitimate fashion. The film never for one second acknowledges that the Committee, which has made repeated forays into California in the past, itself provided an opportunity and set the stage for a thoroughly unfortunate affair which reflects no credit on all parties concerned, including a Committee of this House.

C. Paul Jacobs, "A Movie with a Message," in *The Reporter* magazine, November 24, 1960:

The film itself opens without any of the usual credits. Instead, Congressman

Walter launches immediately into the main theme of the picture, which is to suggest that the demonstrations were Communist-inspired. . . . In the attempt to prove this assertion, both the narration and the way the film clips were edited deliberately distort a number of facts.

For example, separate sequences have been run together . . . to give the impression of mob action, and the film shows students displaying defiance after police warnings, although actually the demonstrations occurred at a completely different time. And the police use of fire hoses on the students is justified on the basis of the claim that the students attempted to rush police barricades inside the city hall, where the committee was holding the hearings. But no film accompanies the commentary about the alleged attempt. In fact, photographs taken at the time show the students seated on the floor and in the corridors when the hoses were turned on them. After the riots were over, the sheriff of San Francisco County said: "There was no act of physical aggression on the part of the students."<sup>o</sup>

Students at the University of California in Berkeley have prepared a detailed answer to the movie which they distribute wherever they can. William Wheeler of the House Committee staff has admitted on a Los Angeles TV program that there were distortions in the film. Some of the students may have misbehaved, but no evidence has been offered proving that their original demonstration was under the control of the Communist Party.

D. Editorial in *The Washington Post*, November 26, 1960:

The film warps the truth in two important respects. First, it suggests as its main thesis that the demonstrations were Communist-inspired and Communist-led. Diligent inquiry has led us to a conviction that this charge is wholly unjustified. It cannot be asserted, of course, that no Communists took part in the demonstrations. But the main body of students who picketed the Committee hearings in protest were inspired only by their own valid and thoroughly creditable indignation at the Committee's conduct; and they were led by fellow-students loyal to American ideals and acting in accordance with that loyalty.

Second, the film attempts to represent the rioting which followed the student protest as resulting entirely from student violence and disorder. In point of fact, the San Francisco police acted with altogether needless brutality, turning fire hoses on students whose protests were not flagrantly unruly. . . . In every respect — in its distribution for private profit, in its falsification of facts, in its whitewashing of the Un-American Activities Committee — this film makes a dirty joke of the congressional investigation power.

E. Dan Wakefield, in *The Nation*, January 28, 1961, p. 75:

The film makes no mention of the fact that the H.U.A.C. had been in San Francisco the year before, and what it had done there . . . to stir up an outraged public opposition. On June 11, 1959, the Committee subpoenaed 110 California school teachers, whose names were published in the press, and who were subjected to social and economic pressures — all without a chance to defend themselves in a hearing or a trial. Then, after an outcry in the San Francisco press against this harassment, the Committee called off its hearings and left town. The treatment afforded the teachers brought forth condemnation of the Committee in editorials or resolutions by the San Francisco *Chronicle*,

<sup>o</sup> This statement is recorded on tape.

the Episcopal Diocese of California, the California State Labor Federation AFL-CIO, the Southern California-Arizona Conference of the Methodist Church, the San Francisco *Call-Bulletin*, the Los Angeles *Mirror-News*, and the American Federation of Teachers.

One might suspect that all this had some connection with the fact that the Committee's return met with a certain amount of hostility in the San Francisco Bay area. But one would never know it from looking at the film. . . .

F. Robert W. Smith, editorial in the Minneapolis *Star*, January 2, 1961:

Distortion and half-truths are among the predominant elements in a so-called documentary motion picture being widely shown around the country, [*Operation Abolition*]. . . . It is made up of film clips patched together in such a way as to suggest sequences of action and cause-and-effect relationships which just did not exist. Just one example: the sequence of the films and the narration gives the viewer to understand that Harry Bridges, leftist longshoreman leader, arrived on the scene to help Communist party leaders get control of the student demonstrations. According to the film, all the trouble started after Bridges' arrival. Yet according to the FBI's own J. Edgar Hoover, "order had been restored" before Bridges arrived on the scene. And other sources provide a fact Hoover neglects to mention: Bridges appeared at City Hall "because he had been subpoenaed to appear in connection with a completely different case in another courtroom in the same building." Similar manipulations of the "pictorial record" appear throughout this distressing film, blowing up half-truths into implicit lies and almost completely obfuscating the facts.

G. Herb Caen, San Francisco *Chronicle*, November 20, 1960:

I object to a Government agency coming out so four-square for truth — and then distorting it. It [the film] is indeed a curious document. Although the Committee's technicians do their utmost to make the proceedings look portentous, there are no examples of violent action among the students — who were guilty of some. There are, however, many shots of the police . . . dragging unresisting students down the steps in a manner that can only be described, with great charity, as rough. And Chairman Francis E. Walter, pointing out the "trained hard-core Communists" in the crowd, says, "You will see Archie Brown, second in command of the Communist Party in California." That is true. You will see Archie Brown because he was subpoenaed. Judging from his tone, Representative Walter sees something sinister in Brown's presence. Anyway, who's kidding whom? Are these same old tired Reds, known like a book by the FBI for years, the only ones the Committee can dredge up? . . . What I object to most heartily is the attempt by the Committee to smear the students present as "Communist stooges." There is no more effective way of enforcing conformity and instilling fear, as the late Joe McCarthy was quick to find out.

H. Ray Jenkins, City Editor, Alabama *Journal*:

The crux of the complaint is that by lifting filmstrips out of context and rearrangement of sequences the movie implies that the students were duped by professional Communist organizers into rioting and defiance of police.

First came the picture of a surly longshoreman ranting before the Committee, then a real or suspected Communist leader. Then the camera would swing to the crowd of students, suggesting that they were demonstrating in

behalf of the person just shown. Beatnik-type students were always in the forefront; racial integration was shown whenever possible.

The film attempts to create the impression that a number of policemen were injured when students stormed the police barricades at the San Francisco City Hall, where the hearings were held. After the riots the county sheriff stated flatly, "There was no act of physical violence on the part of the students." The students maintain that they went there to demonstrate peaceably against something they sincerely believed to be a threat to liberty. And, despite the Committee's high-sounding name, there is serious question in the minds of many good Americans as to the service performed by that committee.

I. Marquis Childs, *New York Post*, January 26, 1961:

In what must surely be one of the most curious transactions ever to have taken place in the huge structure of the Federal bureaucracy, one branch of government is buying a propaganda film from a private firm that obtained the material for the film from another branch of government. The film in question is *Operation Abolition*. . . . This came to light when a Defense Department official sought to interest the Department of State in either borrowing the Defense prints or buying copies of their own. After looking into the circumstances, State Department officials said they were uninterested. A report on the film prepared by the general counsel's office in Defense said that the House Committee seemed to have encouraged the riots with the apparent end of showing how grave the opposition to committee hearings was.

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J. Hugo W. Thompson, in a letter published in *Minneapolis Star*, January 23, 1961:

This film is a striking example of the wrong way to go about an important task, and is itself the strongest argument I have seen for the abolition of the House Un-American Activities Committee under its present leadership.

Having seen the film, and puzzled over its internal inconsistencies, I made some inquiries. People in San Francisco, other than those identified with the Committee and its work, agree that the film is a fraud. News films have been cut, order of events changed, and a falsifying commentary added, which create a grossly and deliberately distorted interpretation of the event. When a committee will so lose its integrity as to create and sponsor such a project, it reflects on the integrity of Congress, of those groups and organizations which sponsor the showing of the film, and of all of us who let this go on without protest.

The event itself was important and raises serious questions. . . . The students were neither organized nor led by Communists, but by Americans who believe in liberty and see it threatened by the bungling of its professed supporters. The Communists did try to use the occasion. In this they were aided far more by the Committee than by the students. Communists were present, not by students' invitation but by Committee order. They used microphones set up not by students but by the Committee. They were permitted by the Committee to try to incite the students, and only after ample opportunity were they arrested by Committee order.

All this is in the film, if you forget the false interpretation of the commentator. The students did get noisy and refuse to disperse, but if you will look carefully again at the film itself you will see that the only violence was com-

mitted, not by students, but by the police, acting under orders and in the line of duty.

What then? We see a Congressional Committee bungling its job and then falsifying the report, students trying to stand up for the liberties which are the foundation of America, partly losing self-control and getting beaten up, and the Commies the only ones unscathed!

K. Adopted by Board of Directors of the Northern California-Nevada Council of Churches in session at the First Congregational Church, San Francisco, on Friday, February 3, 1961.

WHEREAS the film "Operation Abolition" which purports to be an accurate account of events surrounding the hearings of the House Committee on Un-American Activities in San Francisco, May 13 is being offered to our constituent churches and groups within the churches for showing; and

WHEREAS this film has no standard credits, and its producer is not identified; and

WHEREAS many responsible publications, including the *San Francisco Examiner*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *The Christian Century*, *The Washington Post*, *The Milwaukee Journal*, *San Francisco News-Call-Bulletin*, and others, have suggested this film in fact presents an inaccurate account of the events; and

WHEREAS the Churches, sponsoring a showing of this film, might seem to some to be accepting responsibility for the point of view there expressed;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Directors of the Northern California-Nevada Council of Churches strongly suggests that any member church which plans to show this film approach the project with due caution, making clear to the film's viewers that objections have been voiced to the film's accuracy, and that serious question exists as to the validity of the interpretation of the events described; and that, where possible, a speaker who has knowledge of the events be permitted to interpret the message of the film.

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Recalls Feb. 2, 1961  
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NEW VERSION

402 cop, 250 stickers  
New order price - look!  
by the pd  
Broken spindly - one copy  
Linneman - five  
Three films  
Polkman (guard)  
(Red arrow)

Printed copies of the 15,000 word report on OPERATION ABOLITION, "Some Facts and Some Comments" are available from the Office of Publication and Distribution, National Council of Churches, 475 Riverside Drive, New York 27, New York, at 50¢ per single copy.

- 2-49 copies . . . . . 25% discount
- 50-74 copies . . . . . 30% discount
- 75-249 copies . . . . . 35% discount
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Officers under new order have  
known the order - someone new!  
note: 5th. in book, finding books  
Starspangled - not show books  
Cut out with pocket slanting?  
Friday - Sat. - Sat. - Sat.  
People's Song Book  
No sound to book to be given?  
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(Me & Archie)

"Williston" by Lawrence  
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"The register" - working hard

Madison - how?

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