

The Washington Post Outlook

SUNDAY, JUNE 10, 1962

EDITORIALS

Ho Hum

Want to know something? There were Communists in the Cleveland metropolitan area in the 1950s. This has now been almost definitely established through the exhaustive research efforts of the House Committee on Un-American Activities which, following its traditional investigative pattern, has beatified a professed ex-Communist, allowing her to damn a number of her former associates in public hearings this past week.

How many times has the Committee produced this dreary drama during the past quarter century? The "witness" names a list of obscure people; the people are hailed before the bored tribunal; they plead the privilege against self-incrimination which is taken as tantamount to confession and then they are sent home. One person exposed this week turned out to have been for the past eight years an undercover informer for the FBI. Perhaps the others were, too.

What conceivable contribution to Congress or to the legislative process is made by this punishment of individuals who years ago committed a political misstep? This is a degradation of the majestic investigating power of Congress for a meanly punitive purpose. Why does the House of Representatives let this sordid peepshow continue in its name?