



On Certain Loyalty and Security Hearings

IN the dialogue *Gorgias*, Socrates held conversation with Callicles, a politician who believed that the law of nature favors the strong, determined, and unscrupulous man who takes what he can get without regard for the rights of others. To Callicles, success lay in pandering to the prejudices of the people and in rhetoric that appeared to lead them when in reality it only followed the fickle whims of the Athenian Demos. But Socrates urged upon Callicles and his friends the conclusion that the highest thing in life is not to secure immediate pleasure or even success but rather to discover and to do the really good; and, he further urged, only the love of wisdom can teach us what is good.

In these present days of loyalty investigations and security hearings, it seems appropriate to read again the great myth of the judgment with which Socrates concluded his plea. When Zeus became lord of the gods, it seems that judgments regarding who should go to the Isles of the Blest when dead, and who to Tartarus, were made while men were yet alive. Pluto and the stewards of the underworld complained to

Zeus that wrong people were going to both places. Then Zeus said: "Well, I will put a stop to that. Cases are judged badly now because those who are tried come to judgment with their clothes on and invested with fine bodies and lineage and wealth, and when the trial takes place, many witnesses come forward to testify that they have lived righteous lives. So the judges are dazzled by these, and at the same time they are clothed themselves when they give sentence, their eyes, their ears, and their whole bodies acting as a screen before their souls. They have all these hindrances before them, both their own clothing and that of those on trial. . . . They must be stripped naked of all these things before trial . . . and the judge must be naked too . . . that his verdict may be just."

Nothing could be clearer than that our present procedures succeed splendidly in stripping away the last shred of concealment from the judged. The failure of complete justice to be done implies that the other stipulation made by Zeus needs also to be heeded.—B.G.

*Now, as we have been told so often in the past few years, a citizen has no right to a job on the public payroll. But he is entitled to protection against harrassment and loss of livelihood by executive department loyalty procedures that violate the essence of his constitutional rights. The independence of the elector draws the same clear boundary around the matters that may be legitimately inquired into by legislative committees. Officials and legislators who overstep this boundary are guilty of invading the integrity of the fourth branch of our government [namely, the sovereign citizenry, acting in its capacity as the electorate] and stand in contempt of the electorate.—GERARD PIEL, "Scientists and other citizens," *Sci. Monthly* 78, 131 (1954).*

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