

The Cure for Delirium

By ROBERT TIDEMAN

Investigator: Are you or have you ever been a Communist?

Citizen: Which kind?

Investigator: Let's not be clever. There's only one kind. Are you or have you ever been a member of the Communist party?

Citizen: No, I haven't joined yet.

Investigator: What do you mean "yet"? Are you a communist?

Citizen: Which kind?

Investigator: Do you accept the Communist ideology, I mean.

Citizen: Do you mean there are two kinds of Communists?

Investigator: I'll ask the questions. Do you accept the Communist ideology?

Citizen: What's that?

Investigator: It's . . . it's . . . er . . . are you you a Marxist?

Citizen: I never could plow through Karl Marx, so I can't say I'm that kind of communist.

Investigator (impatiently): Well, what kind of a communist are you, then?

Citizen: A land communist.

Investigator: Now we're getting somewhere! Keep talking.

Citizen: What shall I say?

Investigator: As a starter, tell us what a land communist is.

Citizen: He's one who believes in the equal right of all men to their Father's bounty.

Investigator: Let's get this straight. You mean you want to take the land away from its present owners and divide it up?

Citizen: That would be impractical.

Investigator: Oh, really!

Citizen: Yes, I think so.

Investigator: But you admit you're a land communist.

Citizen: I proclaim it.

Investigator: The secretary is recording this.

Citizen: So I see.

Investigator: Very well, then . . . you're a land communist, but you don't want to divide the land. How do you plan to carry out your scheme?

Citizen: Not my scheme . . . God's.

Investigator (Bored): Do tell . . . and how do you help the Lord carry out His scheme?

Citizen: I support the traditional American property tax on land value. I oppose all taxes on labor or the products of labor.

Investigator: Please don't go off on tangents. What's that got to do with land communism? . . . Say! you talk like a single . . . Hm . . . that will be enough of your propaganda . . . that's all, thank you. (To the committee) The next two witnesses are associates of this man. Shall we adjourn? I have pressing business!