

EMSPAK, Julius Communist
(Born 1906) leader

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Empak Found Guilty Of Contempt in Defying House Committee

Julius Empak, national secretary of the left-wing United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, today was found guilty of contempt of Congress.

District Court Judge F. Dickinson Letts ruled that Empak had failed properly to employ his constitutional privilege against possible self-incrimination when he refused to answer questions put to him December 5, 1949, by a one-man subcommittee of the House Committee on Un-American Activities.

At the two-day trial last week, Assistant United States Attorney Charles B. Murray argued that the union leader had failed to state his reasons for refusing to answer the questions of the subcommittee.

Murray Emphasizes Case.

Mr. Murray said the union official had only to "make himself clear" in refusing to answer the questions, which included whether he had ever been a member of the Communist Party, and if he knew certain individuals named by the House Committee on Un-American Activities.

However, David Scribner, chief counsel of the union, and Empak's principal attorney, contended the union leader had specifically mentioned the fifth amendment, which protects a person against self-incrimination, in listing for the subcommittee his reasons for refusing to answer.

Judge Letts said, however, "I find nothing in the records that the defendant expressed apprehension of criminal prosecution."

"Hostility" Is Charged.

The judge held that refusal to answer questions before such a committee for fear of possible self-incrimination must be done clearly and sincerely.

The jurist declared Empak showed "hostility" toward the committee when it was his duty to co-operate with it.

Although Empak was found guilty of 68 charges of contempt of Congress, the whole thing is to be regarded as one transaction, according to a recent decision by District Court Judge James R. Kirkland. The union leader faces a maximum sentence of a year in jail and a \$1,000 fine. He was committed pending sentence, for which no date was set.

See: "oral historical collection of
Columbia University" (1960)

(In progress)
(Personal interviews conducted
by the Univ.)