

HOLLYWOOD

18 Hollywood Celebrities Called Communists or Party Contributors PM 8/15/40

HOLLYWOOD, Aug. 15. — Eighteen Hollywood celebrities—actors, actresses and authors—today were accused of being Communists or contributors to the party treasury.

They were named in a 192-page transcript of John L. Leech's testimony before an extraordinary session of the Los Angeles County Grand Jury investigating the slaying, five years ago, of John Riley, a seaman. Leech formerly was the executive-secretary of the Communist Party in Los Angeles.

The jury indicted six persons and two John Does in connection with the murder and deputy sheriffs were seeking them today. None of the Hollywood personages Leech named were connected with the slaying of Riley, it was emphasized.

Leech named: Jean Muir, Lionel Stander, Franchot Tone, Fredric March, James Cagney, Francis Lederer, Humphrey Bogart and J. Edward Bromberg, all actors or actresses; playwright Clifford Odets, producers Frank Tuttle, Herbert Biberman and Frank Davis, Mrs. Beryle La Cava, former wife of Director Gregory La Cava, Mrs. Tuttle, Buddy Schulberg, son of producer B. P. Schulberg, authors Frank Scully and Samuel Ornitz and Mrs. Ornitz.

March, Miss Muir and Bogart categorically denied the charges. Others were not immediately available for comment. District Attorney Burton Fitts, who conducted the investigation, said he would prefer no charges against anyone that Leech had named.

Leech brought up the names last week when he was giving the jury "background" in the killing of Riley. Fitts had charged that Riley, an anti-Communist, was beaten to death on the waterfront because he had threatened to reveal the plans of Communists to gain control of longshoremen's unions.

Stander appeared voluntarily before the jury last week to deny that he was a Communist.

Producer Davis was the largest contributor the party had in Hollywood, Leech said. He had agreed to contribute \$500 a month in 1935 and was still doing so when Leech left the party in 1936.

The Grand Jury was in recess today, having questioned more than twelve witnesses including Leech, Stander, Ornitz and his wife, and Biberman.—UP.