

# Lionel Stander Eager To Appear Before Communism Probe

*Stan 8/8/40*

## Film Comedian Denies Connection With Party Or Any Aid to It

By the Associated Press.

LOS ANGELES, Aug. 8.—Lionel Stander, deep-voiced film comedian, says he is "perfectly willing" to appear before the county grand jury in its investigation of communistic activities.

Appearing voluntarily at the office of District Attorney Buron Pitts, Mr. Stander said: "I want to make it plain that I never have been a member of the Communist party and never have contributed to that organization. It is ridiculous to have my name connected with a murder investigation."

Mr. Stander is one of several Hollywood figures subpoenaed in the grand jury inquiry, which is particularly concerned with the 1935 water-front slaying of James Edward Riley. Mr. Stander said he formerly belonged to the Hollywood Anti-Nazi League, which so far as he knew was composed only of "sin-

cere persons who long ago recognized the menace of Hitler."

### Arrest Made in Honolulu.

District attorney's deputies said one witness, John L. Leech, told the grand jury the Communist party created the Anti-Nazi League to dupe Hollywood Jews into joining the party. The executive board of the Hollywood League for Democratic Action, the former Hollywood Anti-Nazi League, issued a statement meanwhile denying any dealings with Leech and any connection with the Communist party.

At Honolulu police arrested Claude R. Smallman, machinist on the steamship Lurline, after being notified by Mr. Pitts by radio, they said, that Smallman was wanted in connection with the death of Riley.

Charles F. North flew from Portland, Oreg., to Los Angeles for the hearing. Detective Capt. J. J. Keegan of Portland said North was a "key witness" to the water-front fight in which Riley was slain.

### Jean Muir to Be Called.

William Simpson, district attorney's prosecutor, said Actress Jean Muir had been subpoenaed and would be questioned concerning a report that her automobile, wrecked near Merced, Calif., in 1936, was driven by a Communist.

Mr. Simpson said the district attorney's office did not wish to intimate or have any one believe that any motion picture people sub-

poenaed were accused of any direct connection with the Riley case.

"The acting profession, with a few exceptions, is composed of patriotic men and women," he added.