

# Film Stars Aided Reds, Jury Charges

T-H 8/15/40

## Tone, Cagney, March Accused of Backing Coast Communists

LOS ANGELES, Aug. 14 (U.P.).

Film stars were accused tonight in a county grand jury report of contributing money to and heading Communist infiltration into the motion picture industry.

A 192-page transcript of testimony included allegation that such top-flight celebrities as Franchot Tone, James Cagney, and Fredric March had affiliated with "study groups" for "safety and protection" so as not to be recognized as part of purely communistic units.

### Slaying Investigated

The testimony was given the jury last week as it investigated the 1935 harbor slaying of John Riley, seaman and reputed anti-Communist advocate. Six secret indictments were returned, none against a movie person.

District Attorney Buron Fitts indicated he would file no charges on the basis of today's report, but would use it in broadening inquiry of subversive activities throughout Southern California.

### Personages Listed

John L. Leech, former executive secretary of the Los Angeles Communists and a chief grand jury witness, testified that the following film personages contributed to the party:

Actress Jean Muir, Actors Lionel Stander, Franchot Tone, Fredric March, James Cagney, Francis

J. Edward Bromberg; Playwright Clifford Odets. Producers Frank Tuttle and Frank Davis; Mrs. Beryle La Cava, former wife of Director Gregory La Cava; Mrs. Tania Tuttle, the director's wife; Buddy Schulberg, son of Producer B. P. Schulberg; Writer Frank Scully; and Director Herbert Biberman, Writer Samuel Ornitz and his wife, Mrs. Sadie Ornitz.

**"Loyal Party Member"**

Leech, in contributing 150 pages of the report, testified that he has "known Mr. Stander as a loyal and trusted member of the party who has been, to the best of my knowledge, a member of the Communist Party in New York before he came to Hollywood."

(Stander last week denied any connection with the party, and went before the grand jury.)

Leech said Stander "definitely pledged" \$75 a month to the party; that Producer Davis agreed to contribute \$500 monthly during 1935 and was doing so until Leech left the party in 1936; and he "thought" Miss Muir contributed \$75 a month.

Leech said the study groups included scenarists, cameramen, actors and actresses, producers and directors, who met for discussion of party problems, affairs and theories of Marxism, Leninism and Stalinism.

HOLLYWOOD, Aug. 14 (U.P.).—Fredric March tonight said John Leech, who told the grand jury March was a Communist party member, was an "unmitigated liar."

"I have never contributed a single penny to the Communist or any other un-American cause," he said. "I will welcome the opportunity to meet Mr. Leech face to face and call him a liar."

SCHENECTADY, N. Y., Aug. 14 (U.P.).—Jean Muir, Hollywood actress now appearing with the Mohawk Drama Festival, emphatically denied early today that she had ever contributed any money to Communists. "I know nothing in the world about it," she said.