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PRESS SERVICE

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CONTINUATION OF DIES PROBE NEEDLESS, A.C.L.U. REPORT CONTENDS

That the Dies Committee "has itself shown that there is no need for its further continuation," is one of the principal conclusions of an exhaustive report just released by the American Civil Liberties Union.

The 5000-word memorandum, covering an appraisal of the Dies Committee's work based on a reading of the entire record and all documents on the Committee, was prepared by a special committee of the Union headed by Raymond L. Wise, a member of the Union's board of directors and a former Assistant U.S. District Attorney in New York. The report has been adopted by the Union's board.

Recommending opposition to the continuation of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, the Union's report added:

"If, however, Congress decides that further investigation into the subject of action against our Bill of Rights is necessary, then such an investigation should be conducted preferably by a non-political fact-finding commission or by the Senate and House jointly. The joint resolution creating the investigating body should contain a clear and concise definition of the scope of the inquiry; specific and adequate safeguards to prevent a repetition of the improper acts and procedure of the Dies Committee; and provision for a membership... in which the public may place full trust and confidence."

Characterizing the latest report of the Dies Committee as "more temperate in tone" and in striking contrast to the "alarmist" statements of Chairman Dies himself, the Civil Liberties Union contends that the injury done to persons and organizations through the publicizing of unfounded charges against them "cannot be obliterated or atoned for by the subsequent issuance of a report which does not repeat such charges."

Expressing "valid and serious disapproval" of the resolution, procedure and methods of the Dies Committee, the Union's report charges that the Committee has frequently resorted to methods which endanger the democratic process.

"The Dies Committee's approach to its task has been biased and colored by the political, social and economic views of its Chairman and some of its members. This was rendered possible by the vagueness of the enabling resolution. These views include the belief that any organization containing any Communist is ipso facto 'subversive' and 'un-American'. This has led to the acceptance of unsupported testimony consisting wholly of conclusions of biased witnesses with ulterior motives. It has led to widespread public condemnation of the accused without an opportunity to be heard in advance or to reply. "More important, for similar reasons the Committee has refused to accept or omitted from the record testimony or exhibits which were offered. This makes the record unreliable as a sole basis for judgment of the work of the Committee. Much unnecessary damage has been done by the activities and speeches of Chairman Dies himself."

The Union's report strongly condemns the Committee for "grinding obvious political axes, and for having misused its vast powers to discredit the Roosevelt Administration. This was done, the report pointed out, by linking high government officials with alleged favoritism to Communists.

Conceding that "scattered through" the Dies Committee record is information to which the American people is entitled, the Union's report states:

"Whatever value there may be to Congress from the residuum of credible evidence which the Committee's records contain on activity which tends to attack the Bill of Rights, is overwhelmingly offset by

(more)

the injury to individuals and organizations and to civil liberties, which resulted from the Committee's work."

The report points out that in one place the Committee has brought together material which shows activity "by those who desire, often at foreign instigation, to destroy our democratic institutions or replace them with some form of Nazi, Fascist or Communist dictatorship." Some of the material, the Union finds, "may be of value when the time comes for Congress to consider legislation dealing with the use of arms, uniforms, and putative military organizations. This residuum reveals activities which are proper subjects of investigation." Material has been brought together, according to the report, which "gives the American people some idea of the extent--or lack of extent--of movements in the United States which are inimical to democracy."

ANTI-LYNCHING BILL PRESSED IN SENATE

As the House decisively passed the Gavagan anti-lynching bill this week, the American Civil Liberties Union called upon Senate leaders of both parties to get behind the measure to curb a "national disgrace."

In a telegram to members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, the Union declared:

"On behalf of thousands of friends of civil liberties who look to Congress to help end lynching, we urge you to exert every effort toward the passage of the Gavagan anti-lynching bill. The temporary decline in lynchings is little reason for abandoning such legislation. Nor can it truthfully be argued that the bill is sectional. Lynching has long been a national disgrace and should be met by national legislation. The Gavagan bill's passage, implementing a better public opinion, will go a long way toward complete abolition of mob murder by substituting jury trial."

CITIZENSHIP DENIED FORMER READER OF RADICAL PAPER

Because George Bogunovich subscribed more than seven years ago to the Croatian newspaper "Radnick", organ of the Communist Party, he was denied citizenship recently by Superior Judge James in San Jose, California. The California branches of the American Civil Liberties Union are considering an appeal from the ruling.

Bogunovich, a native of what is now Yugoslavia, has lived in this country for over thirty years. No evidence was introduced in the record to show that at any time during the past seven years the alien was in any way connected with a radical organization, even to the extent of reading radical literature.

CHICAGO BAN ON FILM, "GOOSE STEP", PROTESTED

The action of Police Commissioner Allman in upholding the ban on the motion picture, "Goose Step", by the Chicago Motion Picture Censors, has been condemned by the Chicago Civil Liberties Committee, which has appealed to Mayor Kelly. The film was formerly known as "Hitler, Beast of Berlin" under which title it has had tussles with censors in New York, Virginia and elsewhere.

The Civil Liberties Committee has also protested to State Attorney General Cassidy against refusal of a Springfield, Ill. hotel to accommodate Alderman Earl B. Dickerson, a Negro, while in the capital on business for the attorney general's office. The Committee has asked for an investigation into violations of the Illinois Civil Rights statute.

LABOR GROUPS FREED OF CONTEMPT CHARGES IN CALIFORNIA STRIKE

In an important decision declaring labor unions immune from prosecution for contempt of court for violation of an injunction against picketing, Judge Henry M. Willis of the Los Angeles Superior Court has freed the Congress of Industrial Organizations, the Los Angeles Industrial Union Council, and the Los Angeles Newspaper Guild in contempt proceedings filed against these associations arising out of the current Newspaper Guild strike against the Huntington Park "Bulletin". The Southern California branch of the Civil Liberties Union is cooperating in the defense of the Guild.

At the same time Judge Willis refused to dismiss the contempt charges against individual members and officers of the Guild and of the C.I.O. organizations. In a written opinion Judge Willis declared that voluntary associations cannot be made the subject of contempt charges since such associations are not under the law capable of committing a crime, and since contempt proceedings are criminal in nature.