

American Youth Congress
Capitol Park Hotel
Room 721
National 3900

November 30, 1939
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

YOUTH CONGRESS CAMPAIGNS
TO JUNK DIES COMMITTEE

Committee Undermines Youth's Faith
In Democracy, Executive Secy. Says

In a statement issued today Joseph Cadden, executive secretary of the American Youth Congress announced that the American Youth Congress has embarked upon a campaign to defeat the Dies Committee request for a new appropriation because its procedure "is undermining young peoples' faith in our American form of government".

The statement follows:

"After a period of fifteen months during which officers of the American Youth Congress have constantly requested an opportunity to answer charges made by incompetent witnesses before the Dies Committee, a former Chairman, William W. Hinckley, received a telegram from the Committee just fifteen hours ago, informing him that he would have an opportunity to be heard this morning.

"The Youth Congress is glad of this opportunity to bring the real facts before the Dies Committee. It must be pointed out, however, that the Dies Committee made up its mind about the Youth Congress in January, 1939, without having heard any of the facts. In reporting to Congress at that time, the Dies Committee included slanderous statements about the Youth Congress. It did this without having studied American Youth Congress activities, and without the testimony of a single officer.

"Who are the 'authorities' that gave the Dies Committee information about the American Youth Congress? Only yesterday the Committee accepted 'testimony' on the Youth Congress from an obscure young man, representing no one at all, who freely admitted that he had never worked in the American Youth Congress.

"Other 'authorities' on the Youth Congress have been Homer Chaillaux

of the American Legion who makes his living by smearing individuals and organizations with the stock label, 'communistic'; J. B. Matthews, a promoter, cast out of Church, labor and consumer organizations and now, a 'special investigator' for Mr. Dies by virtue of these qualifications; and Walter Steele, editor of an inconspicuous magazine.

"The fact that such people have been considered competent witnesses while the very officers of the American Youth Congress have never been invited, has discredited the Dies Committee in the eyes of the young people of America.

"Seeing that the 'sordid procedure of the Dies Committee is undermining young peoples' faith in our American form of government, the National Assembly of the American Youth Congress has passed the following resolution:

WHEREAS the American Youth Congress is pledged - as stated in its Creed - to work for the maintenance of civil rights guaranteed in the Constitution of the United States;

WHEREAS the Dies Committee threatens these civil rights by

- attempts to discredit trade unions and other American organizations under the cloak of a drive against "foreign agents";
- misuse of Congressional power - intimidating members and staffs of such organizations, seizing records improperly and serving faulty subpoenas;
- conduct of un-American and unjust hearings, acceptance of hearsay, slander and surmise instead of evidence and denial of adequate hearing to organizations and individuals attacked;
- provoking a war hysteria with witch-hunting methods;

WHEREAS such conduct on the part of the Dies Committee tends to discredit the work of all other Congressional Committees and weaken public confidence in the functioning of democracy;

RESOLVED that the Dies Committee be discontinued immediately.
RESOLVED also that we support careful, constructive investigation of activities detrimental to American democracy and urge public support and Congressional appropriation for the LaFollette Civil Liberties Committee.

"This resolution, published in the form of a petition is being signed by millions of young people throughout the land. At the same time these young people are pressing their Congressmen to discontinue the Dies Committee by voting against any further appropriations."