

THE BOOKSHOP

May 16, 1941

A CONSUMER COOPERATIVE • A CONSUMER COOPERATIVE • A CONSUMER COOPERATIVE

• OWNED BY THE MEMBERSHIP, DEMOCRATICALLY CONTROLLED, ONE MEMBER ONE VOTE •

• A COOPERATIVE IS OPEN TO ALL REGARDLESS OF RACE, RELIGION AND POLITICS •

TO BOOKSHOP MEMBERS:

Today an agent of the Dies Committee appeared at the office of the D. C. Cooperative League with subpoena issued for David McCalmont, General Counsel for the League, demanding the membership list of the Washington Bookshop. Mrs. Charles W. Putnam, Chairman of the D. C. Cooperative League, who was present, tried to protect the list by taking it into her possession and trying to leave the Building. The Dies Committee agent pursued her and forcibly seized the list from her. The curious factors of the incident are these:

1. The Bookshop membership list was in the custody of the D. C. Cooperative League for the purposes of general mailings of Cooperative literature to all members of Washington cooperatives, and was merged with similar lists of the membership of Konsum, Rochdale, Farm Bureau Insurance, Cooperators' Properties, and others.
2. The Dies Committee subpoena was issued on David McCalmont, General Counsel employed by the League. He is a member of the Bookshop but has no official connection with it.
3. The Bookshop membership list had been segregated from the total alphabetical list of all members of the D. C. Cooperatives before the arrival of the Dies Committee agent.

After this incident occurred Mrs. Putnam went to the Dies Committee office to lodge a protest against the illegal procedure of the Dies Committee agent. It has become known that a small group of people headed by Mr. McCalmont have met several times to organize red-baiting action against The Bookshop. It is known that he had in his custody duplicate lists of Bookshop members, a breach of the trust which is implicit when one organization places its membership list in the office of an affiliate organization.

This episode makes it obvious that one or more people -- perhaps a small group -- in the cooperative movement are cooperating all too willingly in the increasing attacks on everything progressive and democratic in our cultural life. Added to the correspondence sent to members recently, this episode makes doubly clear the reason that the Board of Trustees of the Washington Bookshop decided to resign from the Cooperative League. In view of these events, an emergency meeting of the Bookshop membership is called for Tuesday evening, May 20, 8 P. M. at the Bookshop.

Sincerely,
Jules Yanover
JULES YANOVER,
Executive Secretary

A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION. SAVINGS ARE RETURNED ON A PATRONAGE BASIS

Bookshop

From Your

NEWS

| Sec. 582. P. L. & R. |

IT PAYS TO BE A BOOKSHOP MEMBER
 annual patronage refunds in case of a surplus

IT PAYS TO BE A BOOKSHOP MEMBER
 dividend on monthly book selections

IT PAYS TO BE A BOOKSHOP MEMBER
 six per cent savings on depositor's accounts

IT PAYS TO BE A BOOKSHOP MEMBER
 lectures every Friday at a reduced rate

IT PAYS TO BE A BOOKSHOP MEMBER
 15% discount on victor and columbia records

IT PAYS TO BE A BOOKSHOP MEMBER
 seminars and study courses

IT PAYS TO BE A BOOKSHOP MEMBER
 \$1.25 modern library giants—98c . . . 95c titles—79c

IT PAYS TO BE A BOOKSHOP MEMBER
 art shows in the gallery

BOOKSHOP STATEMENT ON THE SEIZURE OF ITS MEMBERSHIP LIST BY THE DIES COMMITTEE

The Dies Committee's roundabout methods of securing a list of the cooperative Bookshop's members are dime-novel detective nonsense. The Bookshop has nothing to conceal, and Mr. Dies himself is welcome to become a member if he is interested in literature to the tune of one dollar's worth. But perhaps Mr. Dies would decline membership, expressing himself as suspicious of such Bookshop programs as "From Bach to Boogie-Woogie".

In fact, the Committee's attack is an attempt at censorship of ideas--an attempt to determine for the reading public what they shall or shall not be able to buy from their bookshops. As a cultural organization, The Bookshop wonders what such censorship will mean to the future of democracy in America.

The Bookshop resigned from the D. C. Cooperative League on April 18 because the League (to which The Bookshop had contributed hundreds of dollars for cooperative education), through a few individuals, attempted to exercise control over The Bookshop in a manner which had no justification in the Co-op League constitution. This meddling with the affairs of an affiliate body, in an undemocratic fashion, led The Bookshop to fall back on its rights as an independent cooperative, and sever its relations with the League. The Bookshop was NOT expelled.

The business and cultural policy of The Bookshop has remained constant since its organization in the fall of 1938. As late as December, 1940, at the regular membership meeting, the membership unanimously endorsed the sentiment of a letter written by The Bookshop Board of Trustees to the C cooperative League criticizing attempted censorship of Bookshop mailings by the League; and, further, the membership affirmed the action of The Bookshop Board as being within the right of any affiliated cooperative to take. When the Cooperative League invited the Bookshop to become a member, it obviously found no objection to Bookshop policies. Apparently the League's conception of democracy, not the Bookshop's, has changed.

David McCalmont, without authority from the League, counsel for the Cooperative League, seems to have appointed himself--without authority from the League -- as a one-man smearer, in an attempt to discredit the activities of a cooperative organization of 1,200 members -- simply because he did not agree with some of the books sold on the Bookshop's shelves, or some of the statements advanced by the authors and artists who spoke at The Bookshop -- such eminent persons as Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, Erskine Caldwell, Langston Hughes, Sherwood Anderson, Ruth McKenney, W.H. Auden, and Rockwell Kent.

Mrs. Putnam, on the other hand, as President of the Cooperative League, felt that the Bookshop's membership list -- though in the custody of the League -- was its own property, and not Mr. McCalmont's to turn over to the Dies Committee. Though Mr. McCalmont readily assisted the Committee agent, Mrs. Putnam resisted his attempt to take the membership records, and fled with the list from the League headquarters. She was overtaken by the Committee agent, and the list forcibly seized despite her protests.

It is easy to understand, in these days of rapid movement toward war,

why the Dies Committee would readily attack freedom of thought and speech, but the Bookshop finds it difficult to understand the attack on a legitimate business enterprise, owned and operated by its members. Perhaps the business seemed less legitimate to Mr. Dies because it was cooperative -- an idea for which Mr. Dies has already shown abhorrence. Cooperation is part and parcel of democracy, and if we cannot have freedom of thought and cooperative enterprise in America -- or in Washington, D. C. -- then the American people are in for very sorry days indeed, unless they put a stop to such irresponsible marauding against the Constitution of the United States.

Jules Yanover

Jules Yanover,
Executive Secretary
THE BOOKSHOP