

# Comment

*Social Justice 4/16/42*

## What Did Dies Really Say of Fr. Coughlin?

LIKE the famed question of what the governor of North Carolina said to the governor of South Carolina—or vice versa—the actual statement of Representative Martin Dies recently regarding Father Coughlin remained a point of uncertainty after its handling by the daily press.

The news accounts varied, and none that we saw carried Mr. Dies' complete statement.

Here, except for irrelevant passages, is what was said, according to the *Congressional Record*:

Representative John M. Coffee of Washington, addressing Mr. Dies, asserted that many people had inquired "why it was that Father Coughlin's organization had not been investigated."

Mr. Dies replied: "The answer to that is that Father Coughlin's organization has been investigated. We have in our files evidence with reference to him and with reference to other characters. Now, do you know what they are complaining about? Let me give you the facts.

"I want to give the House the facts. I am ready to answer any questions at any time.

"We had a number of letters urging us to bring Father Coughlin and subject him to questioning. I always suspected that those who were urging that were those who wanted to advertise Father Coughlin. We also had letters demanding that Gerald Winrod, a preacher, should be brought before the committee and be investigated, and other preachers. I took the position, and this committee supported that position—and I think that is evidence that it is a wise position—that whenever this committee brought to Washington any preachers or priests and undertook to examine them publicly and permit them to be held in contempt, which would have been the inevitable result, for if Father Coughlin had appeared before our committee, as shrewd a publicist as he is, and had done what others did, and had said, 'I refuse to answer any questions,' or demanded to make a speech and we had held him in order, then we would have been compelled to appear before this House and ask you to cite in contempt certain priests and preachers. If we had done that, from all over the country there would have arisen an outcry denouncing us as being against certain religions. What we did do, however, was to obtain all the evidence that we could possibly secure, and we have that evidence and we are now making preparations to give the American people the evidence; both the evidence we have obtained in the past and evidence which we secured this year."

It is obvious that Mr. Dies was not still referring to the alleged "evidence" against "Father Coughlin's organization" in the following passage:

"Let me say to the gentleman that we seek to be fair about this matter. As you will observe in our report, a great deal of evidence is an attempt to smear personally the President of the United States. I think when you read this report you will find that there has been a well-concerted plan,

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not to attack the President's policies, for that is the right of every citizen. In fact, I am one of those who believes that the greatest service that can be rendered to the President is to give him the benefit of honest, constructive criticism. If the House is not to do that, then why not just all quit and go home? . . . But this is a type of evidence consisting of Axis propaganda, directed at the person of the President, propaganda that has been distributed, millions of pieces all over the country, designed to undermine the confidence of the people in the personal integrity of the Chief Executive, knowing that if that is accomplished, the Axis powers will then be in a position to divide us from within."

### Precaution 'Inopportune'

THERE is a highly significant statement in a *New York Times* dispatch from Washington telling of the amazing revelations by Congressman Martin Dies of Japanese fifth column activities in this country.

It reads: "It was the story which the Committee sought to unfold at public hearings last August . . . but it was deferred when highest Government officials regarded such action as 'inadvisable at this time'."

"The result of this combined carelessness, optimism and dillydallying concerning the great menace was Pearl Harbor," declares the *Detroit Times*, which adds editorially:

"No time is 'inadvisable' to reveal to the public just exactly what is going on."

The parallel application of this official "shushing" of the Dies report on Japanese spies of last August, to underground activities of the Communists in the United States today, is clearly evident.

The publication of Red activities, too, are being shushed by official Washington as being "inadvisable" at this time—precisely the same way that Japanese boring, sapping and mining were shoved in the pigeonhole last August!

One of the recommendations of Chairman Dies, in his 285-page report on Japanese spying in the United States before Pearl Harbor is the following:

"Remove all present and former members or sympathizers with any subversive organizations from their jobs in the Government or war industries.

More than a score of such subversive organizations have been listed over and over again by the Dies Committee in its exposures of Communist-Comintern activities.

"Just precisely as the Government thought it 'inadvisable' six months ago to publish the Japanese report of the Dies Committee, it is now thought 'inadvisable' to publish the names of the 1,124 (and more) Reds and pinks which Chairman Dies sent to the President and the Attorney General nearly a year ago," the *Detroit Times* continues.

"These Reds and pinks and other varieties of Marxian revolutionaries and subverters are employed in every department of our Government, even in the executive offices of the White House!" the editorial charges.

"Our ally, Soviet Russia, does not permit the employment of a single person in her government, her war industries, or anywhere else in all the Russias, who believes in Jeffersonian democracy or in our American free enterprise system.

"The Administration is just as flabby today in its coddling of Communist plotters

as it was in regard to Japanese plotters . . .

"Every Communist newspaper and magazine in the United States is today bitterly opposed to the work of the Dies Committee.

"That ought to reveal to the thickest official blockhead in Washington what's going on under our very noses!"