

DIES -- DETROIT

On November 20, 1939, Dies was interviewed by the press in Detroit and he said Nazi and Communist agents, "now across the ocean" had stolen "important information" of military value from Detroit industrial plants. Dies was in Detroit for a one day secret conference about such matters, the A.P. reported, and he said the primary purpose of his committee now was to break up foreign spies spying and prevent sabotage in industrial plants.

Dies also said much information was obtained from disgruntled Communist Party members. Dies said, "I intend to talk to approximately 10 of these informants today secretly. Of course, I cannot reveal their names but I can say that four or five of them are also members of labor unions." As proof of his statement that Communist and Nazi agents had stolen information and transported it across the ocean, Dies (quoting from an A.P. dispatch) "cited one case of a lecturer described by him (Dies) as a Nazi spy who was entertained by a patriotic society, given ready access to numerous plants, permitted to take pictures and to obtain extensive information about industrial processes."

It is there is nothing to indicate that Communists participated in the theft of any information of any such information or that it had been sent across the ocean by Communists. The "lecturer" referred to by Mr. Dies obviously is Dr. Colin Ross, a registered Nazi propaganda agent whose activities are well-known and concerning whom the Dies committee issued what it euphemistically calls a report. That report substantiates nothing that Dies says in the above quoted interview.

In any event one of two things must be true: either Congressman Dies has nothing to substantiate such serious charges of espionage by or on behalf of foreign powers or he is derelict in his duty because no place in the report made by his committee to Congress this year is such espionage or sabotage set forth.

(Also true re Chicago and Pittsburgh.)

References are to articles in Washington Evening Star, 11/20/39, page 6

DIES -- DETROIT

Chicago Herald American, 11/20/39, page 1

(This story appeared the day before the PWOC election in Chicago)

Dies charged that Nazi and Communist agents "now across the ocean" had stolen "important information" of military value from Detroit industrial plants.

The story then says, "How Communists set up a spy system of their own within ranks of some of the locals of CIO unions is detailed today in records of Representative Martin Dies' Committee investigating un-American activities."

DIES -- DETROIT

On November 21 Dies "planned a two-week hearing into the charges of spying and espionage by subversive elements." He said the full committee would sit to hear charges that Nazi and Communist sympathizers had stolen U.S. military secrets from Detroit industries and now were plotting sabotage activities.

He also said that about 3500 Detroiters were members of groups controlled by foreign governments.

(The above information is quoted from the Washington Daily News, 11/21/39, page 2, a U.P. dispatch)

It should be noted that such lurid and sensational statements are not contained in the report of the committee covering its activities for the past year.

DIES -- DETROIT

A special dispatch to the New York Times appearing in the issue of 11/21/39 on page 12 elaborates on the A.P. dispatch previously referred to and says that hearings by the full committee are "warranted by the extent of subversive activities in Detroit by foreign agents."

Dies said he would return to Detroit about December 1 and further question informants and prospective witnesses.

DIES -- DETROIT

The Daily Worker of 11/25/39 on page 3 carries a story dated November 24 reporting that Dies had returned to Detroit, that the Chrysler Corporation had again stalled negotiations with the Auto Workers Union, then on strike.

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The Washington News for 11/29/39, page 2, carries the announcement that the Dies Committee would "today" hear testimony from William Nowell, a Detroit Negro, concerning alleged "Communist activity in trade unions", etc.

Dies described Nowell as "one of the most important we have ever had."

The story says Nowell was scheduled to testify on the 28th but had missed his train.

(Note: The Daily Worker of 11/25/39 carried information that Nowell was a "company stool" and/was otherwise at the time of his a matter of record that Nowell was strikebreaking during the Chrysler strike.)