

MORE SNAKES THAN I

Communists, Fascists, Nazis—those enemies who are working subversively in this country to undermine the spirit of American democracy! Now, revealing things never told before, the head of the Dies Committee gives you his own inside story of a history-making investigation

BY REPRESENTATIVE MARTIN DIES

Chairman of the House Committee on Un-American Activities

READING TIME • 20 MINUTES 25 SECONDS

Beginning this series in Liberty last week, Mr. Dies explained that he regards it as a duty to acquaint the American people with the facts about his committee's much-discussed investigation. Besides the testimony and the documents that are on public record, he has, he said, much confidential information. Alluding to threats to take his life or to kidnap his children, he said that in these articles he would not go into such purely personal matters, but would deal with attempts to "sabotage" the work of the Dies Committee.

He says the origin of his interest in the investigation of un-American activities was due to the defeat of bills he had introduced in the House to stop undesirable immigration and exclude alien Communists. Then, in March, 1937, Vice-President Garner asked him, he says, if he had the courage to speak in the House against the sit-down strike. He did so. His resolution to look into and condemn sit-down strikes was overwhelmingly defeated.

At the time, he says, he was also puzzled by the activities of Nazi and Fascist agents in certain organizations, and he had noticed a movement among a few reactionaries to make use of racial and religious bigotry for spreading the rumor the President was a Jew, and the New Deal a "Jew Deal."

All of which led him to introduce, on July 21, 1937, his resolution authorizing the appointment of a special committee to investigate. Not until the following May was the resolution reported favorably, and then it was so amended that the committee was to expire on January 3, 1939. Only \$25,000 was provided for a Herculean rush job. All the committee's members agreed that they were starting with two strikes called on them.

Mr. Dies says he wrote to the heads of the appropriate executive departments, asking them to assist. Their replies, he says, were simple refusals. These and other developments began to show him what he was up against; and he realized how much the good will of a President means to a congressman of his

party. Moreover, he knew President Roosevelt and admired him personally.

PART TWO—THE PROBE AND THE PRESIDENT

FINDING that it was impossible to secure any co-operation from the executive departments of the government, I proceeded to appoint four investigators. Much has been said by the critics of the committee with reference to the alleged unfitness of our investigators during 1938. Two of these investigators were employed by the committee as the result of the recommendations of three Democratic congressmen from New England, including John W. McCormack of Massachusetts, who was chairman of a Committee on Un-American Activities several years back. The other two were highly recommended by leading Democrats.

I merely mention this to show that the committee did the best that it could in view of its limited funds and its inexperience in work of this character. It must be remembered that no investigator would have been employed if the executive departments of the government had carried out the request of the House of Representatives as contained in the resolution creating the committee.

On June 28, 1938, I received a letter from one of the leaders of our administration, enclosing a memorandum expressing certain views as to the kind of investigation our committee should make. This memorandum, among other things, contained

the following advice: "For the Committee to allow itself to be drawn into an investigation of a domestic organization simply because some Communists are in it, or actively engaged therein, such as the C. I. O., would be, in my opinion, a grave mistake." The administration leader stated that it was submitted to him in confidence and that he was passing it on to me in confidence. While I did not agree to treat the matter as confidential, I desire to do so unless it should become necessary for me to prove the truth of this statement.

Upon the receipt of this letter and memorandum, which merely confirmed verbal hints which I had previously received from leaders of my party, it became very clear to me that I could expect no aid or co-operation from the departments unless I gave assurance that I would not expose Communism in the C. I. O. In my reply to this letter I made it plain that we intended to conduct a thorough and fearless investigation into Communist activities.

As I have said, this letter merely confirmed my conviction that the administration was very anxious to prevent the involvement of the C. I. O. in our investigation. As a matter of fact, after my resolution passed the House, Mr. H. C. Freming, who was president of the Oil Field, Gasoline, and Refinery Workers Union, which was an affiliate of the C. I. O., got me to go with him to see John L. Lewis in his Washington office. Lee Pressman, Mr. Freming, Mr. Lewis, and I were present at this conference.

The conversation opened with a discussion of the incident which had occurred in the Speaker's office a short time before, when Mr. Lewis had sent for Democratic members of the Rules Committee to ask them to grant a rule on the amendments to the Walsh-Healey bill. From this topic the conversation drifted to Communism, and I made it plain to Mr. Lewis and Mr. Pressman that I had no sympathy for Communism and that I did not intend to pull any punches. Mr. Pressman followed me to the door as I left the building and assured me that there was no Communism in the C. I. O., and that its leaders were not Communists.

After this conversation I wrote Mr. Lewis the following letter:

"Dear Mr. Lewis:

"The Committee to Investigate Un-American Activities will open its hearings in Washington on August 11

BEHIND THE SCENES IN THE

CAN KILL

in the Caucus Room of the Old House Office Building.

"As chairman of the Committee, I desire to extend to you an invitation to appear before us if you so desire and give us the benefit of such information or facts that you may possess with reference to Communistic, Nazi or Fascistic activities or propaganda in the United States. I know that the Committee will deeply appreciate any information that you see fit to give us and if you desire to appear before us, please advise me and I will arrange some convenient date for you.

"Very sincerely yours," etc.

This letter was written to Mr. Lewis before John Frey appeared before the committee. Mr. Lewis did not answer the letter, but his secretary sent an acknowledgment. The reason, in my opinion, that Mr. Lewis did not answer the letter or appear before the committee is because Mr. Lewis had made so many statements himself in 1924 charging that certain people were Communists that he would have been embarrassed. I do not believe Mr. Lewis can deny under oath the testimony that we have re-

NO MORE UN-AMERICAN ACTIVITIES



25. I also wish to acknowledge receipt of the charges you sent me with reference to Edward Sullivan which will receive the careful consideration of the Committee.

"I am advised that Mr. Sullivan will answer your charges in the near future. Whether there is any basis for your charges I do not know. But this I do know, that some of your statements are wholly without foundation. For instance, your statement that Mr. Sullivan is the 'ace' investigator of this Committee is, of course, without foundation. In the beginning the Committee appointed six senior investigators. Mr. Sullivan was employed upon the recommendation of three New England Congressmen. These Congressmen are among the outstanding Members of the House and certainly have labor records which even you have approved. The statement that it was through Mr. Sullivan that testimony was introduced with reference to Communism in the C. I. O. is wholly untrue. Mr. Sullivan had nothing to do with any witness that appeared before the Committee except Sobel and Halpern who testified in regard to the enlistment of Americans for service in the Loyalist Spanish cause. He did not testify before the Committee and all of the witnesses except the two either came voluntarily or were subpoenaed by other investigators.

"Likewise untrue is your intimation that there was testimony charging or inferring that Shirley Temple

ceived with reference to the Communists in the C. I. O., and this also may account for his failure to appear. I likewise wrote to Labor's Non-Partisan League the following letter, which is self-explanatory:

"Mr. E. L. Oliver
 "Labor Non-Partisan League
 "Willard Hotel
 "Washington, D. C.

"Dear Mr. Oliver:

"This is to acknowledge receipt of your letters of August 23 and August

All statements made and opinions expressed by Mr. Dies in this series of articles are his own, and Liberty disclaims responsibility for any of them. For his statement of his case, it has allowed him the fullest latitude within the laws of libel. As always, it will be happy, in any instance, to present the other side too.

was a Communist. There was no such testimony, as the record will reveal. In view of these mis-statements on your part, I am naturally suspicious with regard to your other charges. But, notwithstanding this, a careful consideration of all the charges made by you will be given as we have no desire nor disposition to do anything except establish the truth.

"I note that you have gone to considerable trouble in investigating one of the investigators of this Committee, but I am at a loss to under-

PROBE OF UN-AMERICANISM

stand why you have not devoted your time to the important question raised by the testimony before our Committee with reference to the charge that the C. I. O. had upon its payroll many organizers who were Communists. Mr. John P. Frey testified under oath that you have had upon your payroll numerous Communists as organizers. He gave the names of many of these persons. . . .

"Mr. Sullivan had nothing to do with these charges or with this testimony. The real issue is, therefore, whether this testimony is correct and not what the record of some investigator is who had absolutely nothing to do with the charges made against your organization.

BEFORE the hearings ever began, I invited Mr. John L. Lewis to appear before the Committee and give us such information and facts as he possessed with regard to subversive activities. He did not see fit to accept this invitation. Therefore, throughout the hearings I renewed my invitation to all individuals and organizations who had been attacked to appear before the Committee and refute such charges. Although grave and explicit charges were made against the C. I. O. in the form of sworn testimony from a responsible source, this organization did not see fit to appear and deny under oath this testimony and these charges. Instead, you have seen fit to attack an investigator who had absolutely nothing to do with the charges made against your organization.

"I think that perhaps an article written by Ted Le Berthon, which appeared in the Los Angeles Evening News on August 18, 1938, explains your tactics very clearly. Mr. Le Berthon was replying to the suggestion of Mr. W. R. Wilkerson, editor of the Hollywood Reporter, to the effect that Hollywood should investigate Sullivan. I am quoting from his article:

"After this high pitched beginning, Wilkerson forcefully suggests that Hollywood retaliate by investigating Sullivan, finding out how he gained his appointment, and what he expects to get out of it. With all due respect to Wilkerson, I think that what Hollywood needs is some far more intelligent counsel. His suggestion is the tack taken by every big corporation or wealthy individual who is ever accused of anything, and it is all too easy to see through. Always the idea is to put private detectives on the poor wretch who dared to lift his voice, find out if there ever has been any black mark on his record, or, if not on his, on his father's, mother's, sister's, brother's, son's, or daughter's. Always the idea is to find, somewhere, a skeleton in a closet, on the theory that few human beings prove to be without one if you can only delve far enough and long enough. Then the idea is to utterly break him, and while doing so throw up a dense enough smoke screen to obscure the original accusation against the wealthy individual or big corporation.

"It is well enough for Wilkerson to talk about "the government, cheap politicians, job seeking racketeers publicity bent," etc. It is all well enough to talk about investigating Sullivan, and finding out where he came from and how he got his appointment, "and what is in Sullivan's mind for a job for tomorrow." But it gets nowhere, and answers nothing. Because all Sullivan has to do then is to start a counter investigation towards finding out whether Wilkerson's motive is purely altruistic. . . .

"Mr. Frey stated that the overwhelming majority of the members of your organization are opposed to Communism and are good loyal citizens. He did make specific charges and gave names with reference to certain Communists who, he said, acted as organizers for the C. I. O. The Committee is only interested in finding out the truth. I, therefore, suggest that you spend some of your time investigating these charges and, if they are untrue, submitting facts to the Committee to prove that they are untrue.

"Very truly yours,
(SIGNED) "MARTIN DIES."

The League did not take advantage of this invitation because, in my opinion, they could not deny the testimony.

If I had needed any further confirmation of my belief that the administration was opposed to the investigation of Communism, that confirmation was supplied by the President himself, as I shall here relate.

Our investigation began on August 12, 1938, in the City of Washington. On August 13, John P. Frey, president of the Metal Trades Department of the American Federation of Labor, appeared before the committee to give us the benefit of information which he had gathered. I had gone over his material in advance and had satisfied myself that his sources of information were reliable and his material substantially accurate and authentic. In his first day's testimony he gave the names of Communists who were and are organizers and officials of the C. I. O. His testimony was carried on the front pages of most of the newspapers in America.

On the second day of his testimony I went to the White House with Senator Morris Sheppard to confer with the President in regard to the Rockland Dam project, in which my district was deeply interested and which had been pending for a long time. This project involved the expenditure of approximately \$12,000,000 and had been previously approved by the Public Works Administration, but funds had not been allocated for it. I had a letter from the President, written before the new appropriation for public works, stating that the project was meritorious but that nothing could be done until additional funds were appropriated. Upon the occasion of the visit of Senator Shep-

pard and myself to the President's office, which was after the new public works appropriation, I showed the President his letter, and he promised to give the matter careful consideration.

At the conclusion of our conference on the Rockland Dam, Senator Sheppard withdrew and the President brought up the subject of the investigation and asked me what I thought of John Frey's testimony. I told him that I thought Mr. Frey was substantially correct in his statements and that I was convinced that the Communists exercised considerable control over the C. I. O.

This did not please Mr. Roosevelt and he entered into a denunciation of the American Federation of Labor leadership and a defense of the C. I. O. He said that he had known Mr. Green, Mr. Frey, and some of the other leaders for many years and that as far back as he remembered they had been reactionary. He said that while some Communists might have gotten in the C. I. O. ranks, due to its rapid growth, it was unimportant and insignificant, and that the charge of Communism that was hurled at the C. I. O. was inspired by selfish interests. In substance, he said that the thing I should investigate was Fascism and Nazism.

There was but one construction that I could place upon the President's conversation and that was that he expected me to lay off the C. I. O. and to devote most of the investigation to Fascism and Nazism. Let me make it plain that I am not accusing the President of being sympathetic with Communism; I am merely relating the facts to show that the administration did not appreciate the seriousness of the Communist threat to this country. After I got back to the Capitol I told John Frey exactly what the President had told me.

It was now clear to me that if I persisted in my determination to expose Communism, especially as it existed in the C. I. O. and certain so-called liberal organizations, I would incur the wrath and displeasure of my own administration.

This was not long in manifesting itself. Administration spokesmen, such as Madam Secretary Perkins and Harold Ickes, began to ridicule the committee as "witch hunters" and "Red baiters." Newspaper columnists in Washington who are known to be close to the administration took the hint and joined in the campaign of ridicule and abuse which was largely directed at me. The whole radical press broke out in what appeared to be a concerted drive to destroy the investigation in the very beginning.

Because of the known opposition of the administration and the so-called liberal press and groups, we were unable at first to get many witnesses with firsthand information to testify. The Communists and their sympathizers, as well as certain public officials, had succeeded in discredit-

ing the committee in the eyes of many liberals. This frightened off many witnesses who would have testified but who were afraid that they would suffer a similar fate.

By sheer luck, the committee succeeded in getting J. B. Matthews to appear before it. In my judgment, Mr. Matthews is one of the best informed men in America on the theories and practices of the Communists. He had prepared for the committee a statement which was accurate but which was purposely conservative because he realized, as I did, that the country was not prepared to receive the whole truth. However, he did mention the fact, in illustrating the manner in which the Communist Party exploits the names of prominent people, that the Communists had succeeded in getting certain prominent movie stars, including Shirley Temple, to send congratulatory messages to the Communist newspaper, *Ce Soir*, in Paris.

THE mention of Shirley Temple's name was the break which Communists and their sympathizers and dupes had been impatiently waiting for. Many of the newspaper reporters fell over themselves with ill-concealed glee. The cry went out from all the radical camps that the Dies Committee had accused Shirley Temple of being a Communist. As a matter of fact, Matthews had carefully stated that he was not accusing any of the movie stars who signed the greetings to *Ce Soir* of being Communists, but a large section of the press was against the committee. This was due, in my judgment, to the fact that so many reporters and writers were affiliated with the Newspaper Guild, which is affiliated with the C. I. O.

As was discovered later by many editors, the Shirley Temple episode, as reported by some columnists and newspapermen, was a pure fabrication, but at the time it deceived many people and caused the committee a great deal of damage. What was so exasperating and unfair was the fact that administration spokesmen, like Madam Perkins and Ickes, repeated this distortion and thereby gave respectability to it.

What was very obvious to me was the fact that many so-called liberals were being led blindly by Communist leaders. It was a Communist who laid down the campaign strategy in every instance, and it became more and more obvious to me that the liberal movement in the United States, which is essential to orderly government and to a proper balance, was falling into the hands of members of the Communist Party.

I must frankly admit that the Shirley Temple episode knocked the breath out of me. For a time I thought that the situation was hopeless, but the thought came to me that it might be wise to speak to the people on the radio and to explain the facts. This I did, with the result that many people had their eyes opened for the first time to the clever strategy of

the Communists in the United States.

While this investigation has disclosed many startling facts which no one suspected and which appeared fantastic a year ago, nevertheless there are many facts which I know to be true but which unfortunately we have been unable to prove to this date. There are many people who are in a position to tell some necessary facts but who for various reasons decline to do so.

For instance, a high official in the Labor Department came to my office at the time we were investigating the Harry Bridges case. He told me that he was troubled about the whole matter, but that if his name was mentioned in connection with what he was going to tell me, it would mean



Mr. Dies on the air makes plain his intention to expose all three isms.

that he would lose his job, which he could not afford to do. He got me to promise that I would not divulge his name. He then told me that the whole Harry Bridges deportation case was a disgraceful situation. He said that the Labor Department had no intention of deporting Bridges and that every aid and assistance was being rendered Bridges. He said that Lee Pressman, acting as Bridges' attorney, was in constant conference with officials in the Labor Department.

I have even had government employees come to my home at night and tell me of Communist activities in the government. But in only a few of these cases have I been able to persuade the employee to testify before the committee.

Every effort was made by Fascist representatives and organizations to confine this investigation to Communism. From time to time leaders of these so-called patriotic organizations, which were Fascist in spirit and underlying principle, would undertake to confer with me with regard to Communist activities in the United States. I saw through their purposes, and I declined to hold conferences with most of them, and those I saw I met in the presence of an associate. It was very apparent to me that they were merely using the Communist issue to promote their own Fascist activities and propaganda and to spread racial hatred under the guise of anti-Communism.

Some of these Fascist organizations undertook to get their stooges employed by the committee as investigators. They would send to the committee unsupported charges and allegations with reference to Communism, but in no instance did they ever send any information regarding Fascist activities. They should have known from the very beginning of the investigation that I was determined to expose Fascist and Nazi activities, the same as Communist activities. I made this very plain in radio speeches and public announcements, and their efforts to shield themselves from exposure only strengthened my determination to give the public an accurate and thorough picture of Fascism and Nazism in the United States.

What deceived so many people was the fact that these Fascist and Nazi organizations masqueraded under laudable objectives and high-sounding titles, the same as the Communist organizations did. Many people did not seem to understand that American Fascism would be patterned along different lines than European Fascism. Manifestly, American Fascists would not adopt the swastika and the external forms of Fascism as it exists in Europe. This very fact made the situation more serious because, under the guise of patriotism and nationalism, American Fascists would be able to make much greater progress in this country in the direction of a dictatorship.

WHAT alarmed me was that some of our people were beginning to choose sides between Communism and Fascism. I regarded this as a false issue. The important task, as I saw it, was to convince the people of this country that Fascism and Communism were fundamentally alike and that the real issue was between Americanism on the one hand and alienism on the other. I saw also that it was necessary to publicize the fact that Americanism had nothing to do with racism or extreme nationalism, and that every person, regardless of race, religion, or economic condition, is an American if he loves this country and the principles for which it stands.

The greatest proof that Fascist as well as Communist organizations have been fearlessly exposed is that every Communist or Fascist organization is bitterly opposing the committee and attacking me in the most violent and unrestrained manner.

Is there more definite proof than this that Fascist as well as Communist activities—the former, in some cases, appealing from behind a mask of patriotism to racial and religious bigotry—have been exposed by the Dies Committee? You will be able to judge for yourself from the amazing evidence that Mr. Dies will make public in Liberty next week. He will also give, in detail, his own explanations of President Roosevelt's "unprecedented blasts" at the committee.