

WITNESSES.

3. Harper Knowles.

Knowles was the witness who came from California "at his own expense" to testify that the leading Democratic candidates in the State elections were either Communist party members or Communist-controlled.

Knowles professed to represent the "radical research department of the American Legion, but immediately after his testimony was promptly repudiated by the state commander of the Legion, who was widely quoted in the press as having stated that not even the Legion itself could escape the charge of Communism if the standards of Knowles and the Dies committee were to prevail, since it could be assumed that individual communists were members of the Legion.

The lengthy brief which Knowles presented to the Committee in the name of the American Legion turned out to be written entirely by Col. Henry R. Sanborn, Knowles' closest associate in the Associated Farmers, a Republican vigilante organization lately under investigation by the LaFollette Committee.

Sanborn admitted authorship of the "brief" in a statement to newspapermen published in the San Francisco Chronicle on Jan. 1, 1939, at the end of a two months chase by LaFollette committee agents who were trying to serve both him and Knowles with subpoenas to appear before the committee. Knowles, so willing to appear before the Dies Committee that he traveled across the continent at his own expense, was wearing dark glasses and a recently grown mustache when he was finally served after an automobile chase.

The Associated Farmers, of which Knowles is secretary and

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Sanborn an active leader, was organized in 1934 after the San Francisco general strike. According to published statements, it received large contributions from such organizations as the Southern Pacific Railroad, the Pacific Gas & Light Corp., the San Joaquin Light & Power Co., the Bank of America, The San Francisco Industrial Corp., the California Packing Corp., Union Pacific Railroad, Ross Packing Co., and similar organizations - including the California Chamber of Commerce. No public report on finances has been made since the date of founding.

Its program is openly anti-labor and anti-New Deal. It features such planks as: "We condemn the practice of the distribution of relief to able-bodied men and the maintaining of relief projects. . ." "We favor the complete exemption of agricultural labor from the Wages and Hours Act, the National Labor Relations Act, the Social Security Act, and similar legislation. . . We oppose any movement, either by initiative or by the State legislature, to repeal local anti-picketing ordinances now in effect in California or any legislation to prohibit the adoption of such ordinances in the future."

The Associated Farmers has lived up to its program by conducting campaigns of terror on the Pacific Coast to prevent labor organization. It threw all its resources into the Republican campaign against Gov. Olson and Sen. Downey. It filed an initiative in the state of Washington to deprive labor of all its rights, and it issued 50,000 appeals to its members in California to back the anti-picketing bill in that state, with instructions to "use every means to get behind and pass it."

Evidence as to its anti-labor activities is provided by one of the organization's own officers, L. O. Bird, Washington organizer, who testified before a National Labor Relations Board hearing ~~that~~ on the methods that he and his vigilantes used in breaking up a picket line during a strike: they "shot low so as not to hurt anyone . . . did not do a great deal of damage to anyone, but in shooting low they shot out some of the pickets' eyes."

Lawrence Tudor, a WPA worker, testified before the Labor Board that Bird said: "We have been fortunate up to this time in not having to use clubs. . . just the formulation of a pick-handle brigade in Selah put the fear of God into a couple of organizers."

Russell B. Porter, of the N.Y. Times, reported that the secretary of the Associated Farmers told him in an interview that "When we organize a county, we get in touch with the Sheriff or District Attorney. . . and offer to serve as deputies without pay" during labor disputes.

That the organization is composed of big landowners, rather than small farmers, is shown by the statement of its president, Col. W. E. Garrison, at a meeting in Litchfield, Minn., during an organizational tour. Garrison, himself one of the largest grape-fruit growers in California, explained that under the organization's dues set-up, "The man with a \$15,000 payroll pays more than the man with the \$5,000 payroll." When a farmer in the audience accused him of guilt in connection with the death of a baby during an Associated Farmers axe-handle raid in Bakersfield, Cal., Garrison is reported to have answered: "Perhaps a baby did die. Babies are born every day and die every day. What of it?"

The praise of Fritz Kuhn is another bit of evidence as to

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the character of the organization: "The informed Associated Farmers of California," says Kuhn's official journal, "are already promoting a nationwide organization of American vigilantes -- a posse comitatus -- specific legalization of vigilantism in a determined effort to save the republic."

The role of the Associated Farmers in the November elections is made clear by the fact that Philip Bancroft withdrew from his office of Vice President of the organization in order to run for U. S. Senate on the Republican ticket, against Sheridan Downey, whom the Dies Committee pilloried as a Communist.

(Source: "Equal Justice", organ of the International Labor Defense).

4. Minnesota Witnesses.

Not one of the witnesses who attacked Gov. Benson was a bona-fide Farmer-Labor Party member, ~~Minnesota~~ according to the FLP press in Minnesota. Ranging from stoolpigeons to disappointed job seekers, all of them had been discredited before their appearance before the Committee at the behest of Mark Gehan, former Republican mayor of St. Paul and an active campaigner for Stassen, Republican candidate for Governor. Gehan went to see Dies during the Detroit hearings, received six blank subpoenas from Dies, and was allowed to choose his own witnesses and then to coach them in a committee room during the testimony. Gehan, who is attorney for ~~Minnesota~~ the labor-baiting St. Paul Committee on Industrial Relations, did not himself testify, nor did he reveal in whose interest he traveled to Washington and who paid his expenses.

The proposal that Dies investigate Minnesota was first made

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at the Republican State Convention by ^{Rep.} Oscar Youngdahl, then a candidate ~~for~~ from the Fifth District.

Steve Gadler. This star witness was a member of the Stassen campaign committee and on the payroll of the Republican Party, according to affidavits filed by Farmer Labor Party leaders with the Dies Committee. During the primary elections, was campaign manager in Ramsey County for Hjalmer Peterson, ultra-conservative opponent of Gov. Benson. When Peterson lost the nomination to Benson, he went over, with Gadler, to the Republicans. Gadler, expelled from his local Farmer Labor Party organization, had previously been refused a seat at the Duluth convention of the Party.

Mrs. Charles A. Lundquist. Formerly secretary of the Farmer-Labor Women's Federation, she sold out to Stassen and the Republicans refused to give her or her husband a state job. She was rewarded by the Republicans with the secretaryship of the Republican controlled Independent Voters' League for Women.

Andrew Cooper. Former secretary of Ex-Mayor Thomas Latimer of St. Paul, and universally known as Latimer's contact and "collector" from the city's petty racketeers. Never played any role in the FLP. Was charged publicly by a state legislator with having threatened the latter's life because of the legislator's activities against the slot-machine racket.

John G. Priebe. Latimer's law partner, who faced charges before the Bar Association for unethical practices. A Stassen supporter.

Albert Kittock. Expelled from an unemployed organization as a stoolpigeon who sold information to the police.

Violet Johnson. For many years associated with Peterson and the right wing group of the Farmer Labor Party.

CALIFORNIA WITNESSES.

Joseph F. Hannon, alias J.F. Hudson, has a long criminal record with convictions for theft, fraud, and passing bad checks, as revealed by the court file in the Superior Court of the State of California. He was released from jail on parole in April, 1937, by Republican Judge Arthur Crum at the intercession of Harper Knowles, who wrote to the judge that he had "worked rather intimately with Hannon for the last several years".

Margaret Kerr, secretary-manager of the Better America Federation, an organization long known in California as an ~~organ~~ instrument designed to "smash everything liberal and progressive" in the state. At first set up as the "Commercial Federation of California", it was supported by huge contributions from big corporations. For instance, the Southern California Edison Co. donated \$3000 a year to its support during the 1920's, and the B.A.F.'s total income at that time was reported publicly as \$160,000 a year.

The B.A.F. claims credit for putting the Criminal Syndicalism Act on the statute books in 1919, and keeping it there since. In 1934 it had the Criminal Syndicalism Act written into the teachers' tenure law. The organization hounds liberal ministers and incites the congregations to drive them out.

The B.A.F. opposes the Initiative, the Referendum, and the Recall, as "subversive of democracy". It called public waterworks and public service commissions "Bolshevistic".

Senator J. M. Inman, speaking from the floor of the State Senate, has declared: "We see the Better America Federation at work using what control it possesses to serve the special interests.

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Under a false title . . . we find it being used only and actively in trying to aid these corporate interests in their endeavor to evade just taxation. These gentlemen are typically of the reactionary type, representative of 'Big Business' and ready to serve the big special interests in so primitive a form of special privilege as evasion of just taxes . . . They simply want big business to be free to engage in unregulated and unbridled exploitation of the people of our State."

Harry Markheim, who testified that Harry Bridges is a communist, has been accused in several affidavits of having accepted a \$500 bribe from Margaret Kerr, of the Better America Federation, for charging that Bridges was a communist. According to one affidavit, by a Los Angeles attorney, Markheim offered to ~~withdraw his charge~~ withdraw his charge if the CIO would pay him \$500 in return. When this offer was turned down, Markheim perjured himself before the committee by testifying that the attorney had offered him \$500 to flee to Mexico instead of appearing ^{before} the Dies Committee.

(People's World, Aug. 20, 1938)

John Keegan, Portland, Oregon, chief of detectives, is "notorious on the West Coast as a labor- and red-baiter, frequently stepping out of his role as a police officer in the last few months to cooperate with 'Americans Incorporated', which has distinct Fascist leanings. He has appeared frequently at public meetings sponsored by the organization". (N.Y. Post, Dec. 7, 1938)

Keegan presented affidavits of two men who said they knew Bridges was a communist. Both men are convicted burglars.

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Keegan (cont).

Keegan wrote a letter to a Portland attorney under date of June 8, 1938 in which he expressed condemnation of "Madame Perkins and her communistic activities and her protection of the radical alien element in this country." The letter, addressed to Thomas R. Mahoney, was reproduced in facsimile by the "Labor Newdealer", a Portland labor paper. The newspaper also charged that the ex-convicts who signed affidavits about Harry Bridges were induced to do so in exchange for reduced sentences in jail for offenses they had been arrested and charged with.

Edwin Banta.

The day he appeared before the Dies Committee, Sept. 15, 1938, the official organ of the German-American Bund, "The Deutscher Weckruf und Beobachter," carried a large advertisement announcing that Banta would speak under the auspices of the Bund on Sept. 20. Banta for a number of years had carried on activities with the Bund, having joined the Communist Party as a spy rather than to hold his job, as he claimed before the committee. A letter which Banta wrote to William Randolph Hearst proves that Banta lied in his testimony. The letter, dated June 22, 1938, says, ". . . I joined the Communist party to find out what it was all about. . . ." Banta was brought to the Dies Committee by Steve Birmingham, who had employed him as a stoolpigeon for three years.

(John L. Spivak, Daily Worker, Sept. 19, 1938)

DETROIT WITNESSES. 1.

The Dies Committee based its case against Gov. Murphy on the testimony of labor spies, perjurers, discredited and expelled union members, a vengeful Republican judge, and a number of policemen active in combatting organized labor.

Jacob Spolansky. Perjured himself when he swore before Dies Committee that he had never been a labor spy. LaFollette Committee records show that as an operator of an independent agency he was paid \$480 by General Motors for labor espionage. He is a former operative of the National Metal Trades Association, and a paid spy for Chrysler Corp. Spolansky was recently fired from his job as Wayne County detective for "obtaining money under false pretences", according to an Associated Press dispatch in the Washington "Star" of Dec. 12, 1938.

Ralph Knox. Expelled from his office of president of Briggs local, United Automobile Workers of America, on charges of immorality. Later he was expelled from membership entirely on grounds of embezzlement of union funds.

John W. Koos. Records of the LaFollette committee prove that Koos is a member of the Ford Service Dept., where he did undercover labor spying as chief investigator in charge of a crew of spies. Koos is also the head of a Republican Club in Dearborn, Michigan, which is active in election campaigns getting votes by means of promises to give jobs in the Ford plant.

Paul V. Gadola is the Republican judge who issued a court order ejecting sit-down strikers from General Motors plants, and later was exposed as a stockholder owning \$10,000 worth of stocks in the company.

John M. Barringer, former city manager of Flint, Michigan, voted out of office by city council as a result of his vigilante activities during sit-down strikes. In the presence of several representatives of the United Automobile Workers, including Robert Travis, an organizer during the strike, an examination of several Flint policemen was conducted at the request of Asst. Attorney-General Albert D. Wing of Michigan, at the Dresden Hotel, Flint, on May 27, 1937. Detective Buckley of the Flint Police testified that Barringer "approached me and asked me to go out and take care of those organizers. I said, 'What do you mean?' and he said, 'Go out and take care of them; bump them off.'"

Further, Det. Buckley testified that Barringer said, "Haven't you got a gun you could use?" and then he says, 'Here's my gun, take it and give me your gun. We'll exchange guns.' Which we did."

Buckley also stated that Barringer sent him to Charles Pratt, another Dies witness, who, although not a police officer, occupied an inspector's office throughout the strike. Pratt also told him, said Buckley, that he wanted the detective to "take care of the organizers".

This testimony was corroborated by Capt. Edward S. Tewkey, who testified that he told Buckley to "pay no attention to Barringer; he's crazy." (Record in LaFollette Committee files).

William P. Gernaey has a long record as an industrial spy who was sent into labor unions and other organizations by corporation auxiliaries. LaFollette hearings, V. 15B, p.5793.

Zygmund Dobrzynski, was removed as head of the Ford Organizing Committee and expelled from his local for "conduct unbecoming a union member".