

House Board Studies Alien Activities Here

2 Subcommittee Members Prepare for Hearings After Labor Day; Writers Project Faces Inquiry

Two representatives, members of a subcommittee of three of the House committee investigating un-American activities, met in executive session during the last two days at the Federal Building, Foley Square, to lay the groundwork of public hearings to be held in New York "some time after Labor Day."

The two investigators, Representatives John J. Dempsey, Democrat, of New Mexico, and J. Parnell Thomas, Republican, of New Jersey, are members of the committee headed by Representative Martin Dies, Democrat, of Texas, which completed an eight-day hearing in Washington on Tuesday on alleged Communist and Nazi activities in the United States.

The subcommittee is one of three which plan to hear additional testimony in the near future. The other two groups will meet in the Middle West and on the Pacific Coast. Representative Joe Starnes, Democrat, of Alabama, chairman of the subcommittee for the East, is not expected to come to New York until the public sessions are called.

"Communist Paradise"

Representative Dempsey, acting chairman, revealed yesterday that "about six" witnesses had been heard in the two days and that the subcommittee had started to "sift" evidence from thousands of letters and statements. He said that, following thorough evaluation by the subcommittee, only such material as gave proof of "subversive activities" would be presented at the open hearings.

Representative Thomas predicted, however, that the Federal Writers Project of the Works Progress Administration might be the major concern of the New York hearings. He said that evidence gleaned from investigation and hundreds of letters from W. P. A. employees indicated that the project was "a Communist paradise" and "more shot through with subversive activities than the Federal Theater Project."

The only known witness to appear before the subcommittee was Girolamo Valenti, who described himself as chairman of the Italian Anti-Fascist Committee with headquarters at 799 Broadway. Mr. Valenti gave the committee a prepared statement yesterday morning. In it he charged that agents of the Italian government were spreading Fascist propaganda in the United States through newspapers, the radio, schools, churches and the theater.

Italian Consuls Accused

He said he had evidence to show that thousands of American-born children of Italian parentage were being sent to Italy every summer to be imbued with the doctrines of Mussolini in camps conducted by the Balilla, Fascist youth organization, under the direction of the War Ministry of the Italian government. He also described the activities of Fascist Storm Troops known as "The Squadristi," which, he said, met at a camp near Morristown, N. J., comparable to the German-American Bund camp at Yaphank, L. I.

Mr. Valenti charged that the

Dies Subcommittee Holds Hearing in New York



Herald Tribune photo—Acme
Representative John J. Dempsey, of New Mexico, and Representative J. Parnell Thomas, of New Jersey, at yesterday's hearing in the Federal Building on un-American groups and activities

organization of Italian-American youngsters sent to Italy for training was directed by Italian consuls in American cities. He named a Professor Mario Gianl, director of the Dante Alighieri, and educational institution, with offices in Rockefeller Center, as the person who arranged and conducted the children's tours to Italy. Professor Gianl is now in Italy. Mr. Valenti also designated eight other Italian educational and cultural institutions in Brooklyn, Manhattan and the Bronx and charged that they were spreading Fascist doctrines.

"As far as I know," Mr. Valenti said, "no German or Russian officials dare direct in this country the activities of the agent propagandists of their respective governments, but it can be proved that the Italian consuls, consular agents and other officials, taking advantage of their diplomatic immunities, do direct and participate in the Fascist workings. I can cite scores of instances showing the Italian consuls participating in Fascist activities and attempting to coerce American citizens of Italian descent to accept and obey Mussolini's dictates. And I can prove this by producing the testimony of American citizens of high standing in the Italian-American communities, such as officials of fraternal societies, Catholic priests and Protestant ministers."

Mr. Valenti, who appeared in answer to a subpoena, was closeted with the subcommittee less than five minutes. He said, however, that the Representatives had shown interest in his material and had asked that he be ready for a call to appear at the public hearings. Most of the evidence presented to the House committee in Washington concerned Communist and Nazi rather than Fascist activities in this country.

No Charges To Be Made

Representative Thomas told reporters during an intermission of the session yesterday that Mr. Valenti's statement was only one of thousands submitted to the subcommittee. He warned that, since Mr. Valenti himself had made the statement public, the committee would not assume any responsibility for it.

"The committee is not prepared to charge an official of this or any other



Associated Press photo
Girolamo Valenti, chairman of the Italian Anti-Fascist Committee, who testified before the subcommittee yesterday

government, or for that matter, any individual with subversive activities," he said. "The evidence we find worthy of public attention will be presented at the public hearings later."

Representative Dempsey said that the work started by investigators for the Dies committee in the New York area before the Washington sessions opened, would be continued until the New York hearings start. He noted that tips sent to the committee had to be investigated because many proved to be only the work of people who disliked their neighbors.

John C. Metcalfe, who testified at the opening hearing in Washington on August 12 concerning the activities of the German-American Bund, accompanied the Representatives to New York as a special investigator for the committee. Mr. Metcalfe, who joined the Bund while working as a reporter for "The Chicago Daily Times," in order to write an expose of the organization, testified that the Bund had powerful ties with German Nazis. He said that he had gained the confidence of Fritz Kuhn, leader of the Bund.

Representative Dempsey said the executive sessions of the subcommittee might continue throughout this week but that no further witnesses were scheduled to appear.

Brooklyn Red Charges Denied By College Head

Lombardo Says Communist Students Are a Small, Militant Minority; Calls Accusations Ridiculous

Dr. Carrwyn J. Lombardo, a member of the Board of Higher Education and chairman of the board of trustees of Brooklyn College, challenged yesterday the testimony given Tuesday before the Dies committee in Washington by Professor Edward I. Fenlon and Earl A. Martin, of the college faculty, who said that "Brooklyn College is a hotbed of propaganda and Communist activity."

Professor Edwin Berry Burgum, president of the New York City College Teachers' Union, and Miss Mala Turchin, president of the Brooklyn College chapter of the American Student Union, joined Dr. Lombardo in challenging the committee to make a "truthful and unbiased survey of conditions that actually exist on the Brooklyn College campus."

Dr. Lombardo said, in a statement issued from his office at 48 King Street: "The statement that Communism in the classrooms at Brooklyn College is spreading so rapidly as to dominate the institution is perfectly ridiculous, as is also the implication that Mayor LaGuardia is in any way responsible for the conditions which Professors Fenlon and Martin say exist at the college."

"We do have Communists at the college, but they are a small, militant and articulate minority such as will be found in every college in the country. We have exactly eleven professed Communists on the faculty, but they do not teach subversive doctrines in the classrooms, for if they did we could and would dismiss them."

He also said that an intelligent and workable program had been formulated to combat the so-called "pink menace" at the college and that it would be tried this fall. "I can assure the public that the Board of Higher Education is likewise free of any 'pinks,' let alone 'reds,'" he added.

Dr. Burgum, in a statement to be published this morning in "The Summer Bulletin," undergraduate newspaper at the Washington Square College, charged that Professor Fenlon was "only applying to a local situation the general and now apparent object of the Dies committee—to use its investigation actually for the purpose of 'smearing' the New Deal."

He added that "Professor Fenlon's charges against the Teachers Union at Brooklyn College are calculated to distract attention from the union demand that incompetent department heads and political appointees be exposed and that municipal colleges become more effective educational institutions."

"If Professor Fenlon chooses to think that such a program is Communist, then Communism can scarcely be the bogey he seems to imagine it to be," he concluded.

Miss Turchin, whose student group was alleged to be under direct control of the Communist party, said she was convinced that Professors Fenlon and Martin were not called to testify as impartial, unbiased witnesses, but "because of their known anti-liberal policies and because the committee knew they would give the right answers."

"With such an urgent need to expand education, provide free textbooks, to increase student N. Y. A. [National Youth Administration] appropriations, we condemn this waste of Federal funds for the airing of stupid, false and demagogic views," she said.