

Deaf to Protests, Committee Backs Dies Feb 2/39 O.K.'s Fund in Spite of Evidence of Shield- ing Nazi Agents

By Adam Lapin

(Daily Worker Washington Bureau)
WASHINGTON, Feb. 2.—In a 15-minute executive session, the House Rules Committee today decided to ignore documentary evidence proving that the Dies witch-hunters had refused to probe the Silver Shirt Legion and other Nazi, anti-Semitic and un-American outfits.

Without opposition it rushed through a resolution continuing the Dies Committee for one year through to the House floor for a limited one-hour debate tomorrow. There was no roll-call vote taken.

Brushed aside in the hurried session of the reactionary Rules Committee was the detailed evidence presented by Rep. Vito Marcantonio, A. L. F., of New York, to show that Rep. Martin Dies had repeatedly squashed efforts to investigate the Silver Shirts and of Gerald Winrod, Nazi agent in Kansas.

The Tory dominated committee disregarded the testimony of all ten members of Congress who appeared during the two-day hearings to urge that the Dies Committee be discontinued.

IGNORE TELEGRAMS

Ignored were the 2,000 telegrams and 10,000 letters of protest against the Dies witch-hunt which Chairman Adolph Sabath of the Rules Committee said he had received during the past few days.

The only significant concession made by the powerful House body was to limit the time of the Dies Committee's activities to one year instead of the two originally spe-

(Continued from Page 1)

ified by Rep. Dies in the resolution he introduced.

Unless the Dies Committee's time is again extended, it will thus be unable to carry on as directly as it might wish a nation-wide political campaign on behalf of the Republican candidate for the presidency in 1940 similar to its activities in last year's Congressional elections.

Mobilized behind the drive to pass the resolution approved by the Rules Committee is a powerful array consisting of the entire Republican delegation in the House and a very sizeable number of Tory Democrats.

Opposing the Dies Committee is a small but growing number of New Deal and middle of the road Democrats who are convinced that its activities menace the entire liberal movement in this country and the Democratic Party as well.

CONSERVATIVE OPPOSITION

Even some conservative Democrats have decided to vote against the Dies resolution because they believe that it menaces their party.

Indicative of this trend was the testimony of Rep. Joseph B. Shannon of Missouri who appeared in response to the request of a Negro constituent that he answer charges against the National Negro Congress. Referring to Dies, he said:

"I have nothing against him, except that I'm a Democrat."

The liberal Congressman for the most part take the position that an investigation of un-American activities is a worth-while undertaking, but that the job ought to be done by a new committee.

Rep. Kent Keller of Illinois, one of the leaders of the fight against the Dies Committee, has introduced a resolution calling for a new committee with a membership of 11.

Failing this, they will press at the very least for enlarging the size of the Dies Committee originally composed of seven Congressmen, so that it may be somewhat more representative and include some liberals.

VACANCY TO BE FILLED

In any event should the resolution pass as it now stands, there is considered to be a good chance that Speaker William B. Bankhead, will be forced to appoint an outspoken progressive to fill the vacancy of ex-Congressmen Harold Moiser who was extremely active in the work of the committee after he was a 'lame duck' and had been repudiated by the people of Ohio.

One of the most significant facts which has emerged as a result of these hearings is that the powerful Rules Committee is still owned, lock, stock and barrel, by the same reactionary clique that dominated in the days when former Congressman John O'Connor was chairman.

The saddle are old guard Tory Democrats like E. E. Cox of Georgia, Howard Smith of Virginia and Dies plus Republicans of the stripe of

Hamilton Fish of New York who is an experienced hand at red-baiting himself.

While the new chairman, Rep. Sabath, is a staunch New Dealer, he is apparently ineffective and the Tories are riding him, wide and handsome, with Cox, who is probably without exception the most reactionary man in Congress, arrogating to himself many of the functions of the chairman as the ranking Democratic member.

The group that was today in such a hurry to clear the way for the Dies witch-hunt is thus in character and composition the same group that at the last session held up the wage and hour bill for close to a year.

GAG MARCANTONIO

Again and again Rep. Marcantonio clashed with Cox and the other reactionaries when he testified this morning. He held his ground so well that the committee was anxious to rush him off the witness stand and asked few questions at the conclusion of his testimony.

"It is my first contention," the liberal New Yorker declared, "that the committee heard witnesses who are themselves un-American and have engaged in un-American activities."

Refuting the denial of Walter Steele, editor of the patrioteering National Republic, to the effect that he was not a member of the Silver Shirts, Marcantonio said:

"He lied before the Dies Committee."

Marcantonio went on to cite an article by William Miller in the Cleveland Press of Aug. 7, 1937 to show that Steele was definitely linked with the Silver Shirts.

He quoted repeated statements by Dies promising to subpoena Miller and Miss Barbara Baker, former secretary to Miss Sussan Sterling, Cleveland Silver shirt leader.

The Congressman charged that these two witnesses were never called and "that this proves my contention that no real investigation was made of the Silver Shirts."

CITES SILVER SHIRT PRAISE

He quoted extensively from an article in the official publication of the Silver Shirts, "Liberation" praising the Dies Committee and boasting that the Silver Shirts were not and would not be investigated by Dies.

Then he read from the Dies Committee's record to show that on two occasions Dies had shut off his own investigator, John C. Metcalfe, when he was going to put into the record material concerning Winrod.

The first time Metcalfe was stopped was when he tried to insert in the record Winrod's anti-Semitic sheet, The Defender, and the second when he attempted to read from a Department of Justice report concerning Winrod.

Marcantonio was bitter in assailing the Committee for not even answering a telegram which he sent asking to be heard in refutation against charges made by Sam Baron, renegade Socialist, against himself and the International Labor Defense which he heads.

"The least I was entitled to was a reply," he declared.

In a lengthy refutation, Dies was extremely general and somewhat on the defensive, admitting that "mistakes" had been made.

"I assume responsibility for whatever mistakes were made," he said.

"CHIEF DEMAGOGUE"

Replying to charges that he had not tried to get Fritz Kuhn and other Nazi and fascist leaders down before the committee, he said:

"We wanted to get them to come, but they didn't appear."

Apparently he didn't think of using his power of subpoena on the Nazis.

Dies spent much of his time in a bitter attack on the LaFollette Committee. He also said that the

Department of Justice was investigating some of his witnesses.

The first witness of the day, Rep. Knute Hill of Washington who opposed the resolution on the grounds that Dies "had shown himself to be unfair and anti-labor."

"He has made himself the voluntary president of the demagogue's club and I believe that he has lived up to it," Hill said.