

Mr. Dies and His New Job

THE TIME has come for West Coast maritime unions to stop and do some serious thinking about what to do on the question of Congressman Martin Dies, the anti-“red” drive, and the attempt of American industrialists to get us into war.

Mr. Dies plans to come to the West Coast this month. Every waterfront worker knows why he is coming. They know Mr. Dies’ investigation of “subversive” activities is merely a blind by which he hopes first to smear, then to destroy, militant maritime unions.

Even such a reactionary as David Lawrence admits in his syndicated column (S. F. Chronicle, Nov. 1) that “The anti-Communist wave, which has been fostered by various interests throughout the country, is not entirely concerned with subversive activities . . . but is anxious to discredit, if possible, various labor union leaders as a part of the capital-labor quarrels of the hour.”

What MFP unionists should realize now, however, is the particular “labor quarrel” involved right now. The chief issue between capital and labor today is not alone wages, hours and working conditions—it’s whether or not America is going to keep out of war.

That puts a different and deadly serious light on Mr. Dies and the “anti-Communist” drive.

Last year Mr. Dies was interested in crushing unions for the ordinary reasons—industrialists didn’t want to pay union wages and meet union conditions.

Within the last month Mr. Dies’ efforts have been aimed at crushing unions to grease the way for America’s entry into war—and that implies crushing the civil rights of unions and their power to influence public opinion. And so now the employers’ drive against unions is far more deadly than it was before.

How else explain the fact that newspapers which last year laughed at Dies today praise his work—since the war began. How else explain the fact that Attorney General Murphy—himself once a Dies victim—and other New Dealers are urging him on—since the war began.

It matters not whether today’s wishers for war say—and perhaps sincerely believe—that we should help England and France. It matters not whether the industrialists personally want to see men killed for profits. The other fellow is out after the war profits and they will follow too—unless they are stopped!

It matters not whether they realize that a war boom will bring them disaster—industrialists have always proceed-

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ed as individualists, heedless of the chaos which they collectively know is ahead.

AMERICA IS ALREADY HEADED ON THE WAY TO WAR AND UNIONS MUST WAKE UP TO THE FACT. Take a look at the ship-owners-maritime commission deal to ship munitions in American ships by putting them under foreign registry (which doesn’t make a damn bit of difference, except that foreign seamen will be killed while we are dragged toward war instead of American seamen.)

The shipowners say: We have to have our profits, regardless of the risk of getting into war. So do the other industrialists. Quite the contrary. It

This doesn’t mean that war is inevitable. Quite the contrary, along with the doesn’t mean that labor unions are going to be crushed, along with the civil liberties of the people.

Every worker, small businessman, farmer and unemployed man and woman in America wants to stay out of war. We will stay out if labor unions and the people make their voice heard—and if they start stopping the drive towards war right now.

The first move is on—an anti-“Communist” move. No maritime worker should have to be told that this is but the first step—that if Communists are made legitimate game for outlawry, alleged “Communist controlled” unions come next. Remember, every militant water-front union in the country, as well as most all other militant unions, come under the heading of Communist controlled unions in the view of Mr. Dies.

After that, as was proved so well in Germany, come all liberals, all labor, democracy, the Bill of Rights.

What Mr. Dies and the reactionaries are after is everyone whose voice against sending America into war has influence, and that includes most of the people’s organizations. The Communists are merely the first game, and the easiest. They are “foreign agents,” etc.

We think most of you know this already, but the men and women uptown from the waterfront don’t. It does us no good to talk to ourselves. We’ve got to bring this issue to the rest of the people and show them what we—and they—are up against.

If we don’t—if we concentrate altogether on trade union problems, and on our own members, we’re likely to wake up gradually and find no trade unions to have problems about. As a first step, we can raise the roofs with a protest against Dies’ demand for two more years of dirty work.