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## The Dies Committee.

Fire has been directed against the Dies committee from many directions this week. Mrs. Roosevelt took a shot at it. So did the President. Sixty-two professors, writers, artists and actors signed a statement accusing the committee of planning, with the "support of influential newspapers," to suppress the civil rights of Communists and other "dissident groups." Even Leon Trotsky, from his Mexican retreat, blazed away at Chairman Dies.

Yet out came the Gallup poll with a report that 75 per cent of the voters believe the Dies committee should continue its work for another year; that 12 per cent think Congress should name some other committee to do the same work; that only 13 per cent oppose any further investigation of un-American activities.

Our own observation convinces us that Dr. Gallup's figures are about right.

This newspaper, for one, is emphatically against depriving the Communists or any other group of the liberties guaranteed to all by the Bill of Rights. The Moscow party-line tactics of the Communists are a sore trial to American patience. The sheer impudence of their cry that they are being persecuted when they are prosecuted for breaking American laws makes us pretty sick. But we defend their right to speak and print their opinions, the same as we defend our own.

And most Americans, we think, agree with that. But most Americans also are convinced that there is great need for someone to expose what Communists and others are doing, beneath the protection of the Bill of Rights, to undermine our democracy. They believe that the Dies committee, with all its faults and mistakes, is doing an essential job.

That it does have faults, and has made mistakes, is certainly true. A serious mistake was made this week when the chairman published a report charging that practically all consumers' organizations are linked to Communism—a report which was not the result of any public hearings, which other committee members say they had never seen, but which seems to have represented the personal opinions of the committee's research director. That was unfair and unwise, and it laid the committee open to criticism by the President and Mrs. Roosevelt and other liberals. We only wish all liberals had been as quick to protest when a committee they approved—the Black committee—adopted tactics equally unwise and unfair.

We hope the investigation of un-American activities will be continued. But we hope it will be conducted in a wholly American way, removing all basis for charges that it is an assault on the Bill of Rights. We think Congress should lay down, for all its investigating committees, definite rules of procedure guaranteeing protection for the rights of all witnesses and others who may be involved. Investigations are most useful when conducted fairly, and in that connection we want to say a word about—