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Against the Dies Committee

REMARKS

OF

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OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, March 7, 1942

Mr. ELIOT of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, it was my intention yesterday, when a point of no quorum interrupted my remarks, to give the House an interesting picture of the emptiness of the work of the Dies committee. I was going to give three reasons—three big reasons—why the Dies committee should be discontinued.

First. I was going to analyze the committee's much-heralded Yellow Book, the report on Japanese fifth column activities.

Second. I was going to take up the matter which the gentleman from Texas dealt with so very eloquently on Wednesday. That is the question raised by the gentleman himself, when in earlier speeches here he claimed that the administration prevented him from making public information which might have prevented Pearl Harbor.

Third. I was about to deal with the plans of the gentleman from Texas to publicize the alleged Nazi "smear" campaign against President Roosevelt—and will show the extreme danger of such a course. It was unfortunate that these remarks were halted; for although they include some very unpleasant truths, they are the truth, and we should hear the truth.

Now, first, about the report on Japanese activities. I think we all realize fully the danger to our country in the Japanese fifth column. But does the Dies committee's report tell us anything new about it—or even anything important?

The report is interesting reading. It contains a good many pictures, and some maps. Much of the report is quite frankly background material. There are a couple of rather well-written essays on Japanese customs and religion. There is the famous Tanaka Memorial, published fifteen years ago. There is an account of the controversy over Japanese fishermen on the Pacific coast—a matter with which many Members of this House have long been thoroughly familiar.

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There is also some pictorial evidence of the fact that Japan is a part of the Axis. I had thought that that was something of which a judge would take judicial notice, but our committee helps make it very, very clear. They print, for our edification, 11 pictures of Japanese leaders meeting with Nazis and Italians. After looking at these pictures, we may be convinced that there is at least a working agreement between Japan, Germany, and Italy.

The report reminds us, too, of the presence of several hundred Japanese "treaty merchants" in this country. For some reason, about one-fourth of the bulk of the report is taken up by photostatic copies of the Justice Department's list of these treaty merchants. There is a general charge that these treaty merchants may be spies, but no evidence is given; and why the committee should waste all that paper printing the Justice Department's list of names remains a mystery.

This is not the only matter of which the Department of Justice obviously has cognizance. The committee's interesting account of Japanese language schools ends up with a statement that the United States Attorney has already taken appropriate action.

There are two sections of the report that may possibly contain new information. These deal with Japanese military organizations in this country, and the activities of the Central Japanese Association.

As to the former, there is some question as to whether the committee really did uncover anything. For instance, the head of the Japanese Imperial Military Veterans Association was arrested by the F. B. I. on December 7 as a dangerous enemy alien. Furthermore, apparently none of these military and naval societies made any secret of their aims and their offices were listed in a published directory in 1938.

With respect to the Central Japanese Association, there is a long account drawn from the report of this association. But its general activities, its money raising, and collections of tinfoil for Japan, must have been common knowledge in California for a long time. The Dies committee's report itself included many newspaper items about the transmission of funds and tinfoil to Japan.

That brings me to the two items in which the Dies committee appears to take special pride. The first is a map of the Pacific, which appears opposite page 1741 of the report. The committee heads this

section of its report, "Japanese naval map of the Pacific area." The committee says the "agents of espionage forwarded information to the headquarters of the Imperial Japanese Navy in Tokyo."

One highly significant compilation of such information was prepared in the form of a map of the entire Pacific area. This map in turn was placed in the hands of all those who were to play a part in the coming war. Agents of the committee obtained a copy of this map under extraordinarily difficult circumstances.

The impression, certainly, is that this is a secret Japanese naval map.

I was surprised, therefore, to find that this map was published January 1, 1935, by the Japanese magazine King, a popular magazine with a large circulation in Japan and outside of it. King is, or was, registered as second-class mail matter at the Los Angeles Post Office. Here are a couple of numbers of it, several years old; I cannot read Japanese, but I see here a picture of the late Lou Gehrig, and here the illustrations of what presumably is a love story, and so on. This is the magazine that published this supposedly sinister map, as a supplement to the January issue in 1935.

Incidentally the map is entitled "An Over-All View of National Defense in Time of Crisis." It says right on it that it was compiled on December 3, 1934, by the editorial board of King.

Why the publication of a map of the Pacific by a popular magazine 7 years ago should be of any importance now is not clear. Any magazine—Life, Look—any journal running an article on naval strength or national defense might publish just such a map. Furthermore the Dies committee report says that this map showed "in great detail positions and battle formations around Pearl Harbor." This is simply not so. Look at the map.

So much for section 2 of the report. Now turn the page to section 3, A Japanese Handbook of the United States Navy. The committee says:

The circulation of this 200-page book was naturally limited to those Japanese who were in a position to serve Japan by the possession of this highly important information. It was with great difficulty that the agents of the committee were able to obtain a copy of the volume.

The report then reproduces the covers of this volume and some presumably significant pictures in it—photographs and plans of our naval vessels.

If you look at the front cover, you will see a price tag and the words "Made in Japan." It would appear from this that the volume was for sale in this country.

It was, in fact, published by a well-known Japanese publishing house which publishes a popular magazine called "Sea and Sky," and doubtless sent this supplement to its subscribers.

Now, let me tell you of a personal experience of my own. With "great difficulty," like the Dies committee agents, I made a perilous crossing yesterday to the Library of Congress. With "great difficulty," because the indexing there is incomplete, I obtained this volume. If you will look at the picture of the *Saratoga* on the bottom of page 1746 of the Dies committee's report, and look at this here in my hand, you will see that the pictures are the same. On the opposite page in the committee's report are some plans of a destroyer. And here are the same plans in this volume I got out of the Library, where it has been for several years.

Turn the page again. The plans on pages 1748 and 1749 of the Dies committee's report are, believe it or not, identical with those in this column.

This sinister handbook, so hard to obtain! Way back in 1932 most of these photographs and plans were published, and there was no secret made of it at all. But our committee disdains drab facts and musty libraries, and goes in for melodrama and mystery, instead.

Our committee does not make much trouble for our enemies, the Japanese, but it makes a lot of trouble for our Government. Take a look at the very first sections of the committee's report, and you see a sorry picture of jealousy and conflict between the committee and the Department of Justice.

The report includes a number of newspaper excerpts—clippings from California papers about August 1, 1941. These newspaper clippings quote Chairman Dies as saying that he had gathered information and given it to the F. B. I., and if the F. B. I. did not act on it soon, he would proceed. You would think that that clipping would be included in the report only if it accurately quoted the gentleman from Texas.

Well, the Attorney General thought it quoted him accurately, anyway. So the Attorney General, on August 13, 1941, wrote the gentleman from Texas [Mr. Dies], asking him where this information was—this information which, he said, he had given to the F. B. I. The gentleman delayed his reply for 2 weeks, and then told the Attorney General that he had been misquoted, that he had not said he had given the information to the F. B. I., or intended to do so.

It is curious, is it not, that the gentleman from Texas claimed in August that the newspaper story had misquoted him, and yet now prints the same story in his report, apparently with full approval.

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It is curious, too, that he makes so much of a letter from Matthew McGuire, then Acting Attorney General, urging him not to hold public hearings. He even prints a photostatic copy of this letter. He prints it to back up his oft-reiterated charge that by preventing him from making his findings public in September, the administration contributed to the disaster at Pearl Harbor.

Mr. Speaker, there was nothing to prevent the Dies committee from publishing its report any time it saw fit. The administration merely discouraged the holding of public hearings by the Dies committee. The chairman assumes that this was because the administration did not want to offend Japan. We might more easily assume that it was because the committee's method of conducting hearings in the past led far more to headlines than to useful and accurate information. Counterespionage today is vital, and to be effective must be secret. A headline-hunting committee is therefore a dangerous bull in a china shop.

The committee was urged not to hold public hearings. But the gentleman from Texas has claimed that he was not permitted to make public the information he possessed. Here is what he said on January 28, 1942:

A fear of displeasing foreign powers and a maudlin attitude toward fifth columnists was largely responsible for the unparalleled tragedy at Pearl Harbor. In a few weeks our committee will release a full report on Japanese espionage and sabotage. This report will contain many official letters, and it will disclose that if our committee had been permitted to reveal the facts last September the tragedy of Pearl Harbor might have been averted. May I say that our committee had all the information in its files last September.

He says that he was not permitted to "reveal the facts" last September. But there is no evidence of that. The Attorney General denies it flatly. In a letter to me dated February 20, 1942, the Attorney General writes:

There was never any attempt or suggestion that the Dies committee was not permitted to reveal the facts last September.

My question, Why did not the committee publish the facts last September? remains unanswered. There is no answer.

Mr. Speaker, I recognize the great danger from a Japanese fifth column. I think we all do. Only the other day we voted an extra appropriation to the Department of Justice to combat it. That is the proper way to proceed. We rely on the Army and the Navy and the Department together to do the job.

But we are not protecting ourselves against the Japanese fifth column if we rely on the Dies committee. We voted that committee of ours \$100,000 a year ago. And here is the fruit of their work.

Most of this report could have been written without cost—"for no," as we say back home—in the Legislative Reference Section of the Library of Congress. Practically all the rest of it could have been compiled by going over the files of California newspapers, both English language and Japanese language, and by getting a few lists, which were not secret and some of which were compiled by the Department of Justice itself. One hundred thousand dollars—for this? One hundred thousand dollars to subsidize a committee that is just a fifth wheel in the fight against the fifth column?

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have one more point to make, more important than all the rest. In his remarkable speech on Wednesday, and apparently later to the press, the gentleman from Texas announced the forthcoming publication of still another report. This report is designed to show that the Nazis are organizing a smear campaign against President Roosevelt. Apparently, it will include a tremendous amount of documentary evidence of this, and the documentary evidence is the filthy, rotten smear literature recently seized by the committee.

O, Mr. Speaker, I hope and pray that in his enthusiasm, his zeal to defend the President whom he loves so well, the gentleman from Texas will burn this rotten stuff instead of publishing it. But I have little hope. The gentleman shows his love for the President in such curious ways. Am I wrong in assuming that it is his love for the President that leads him to criticize so freely the President's policies, the President's appointees, and even the President's wife?

I very much fear that in his unselfish zeal, the chairman of the Dies committee will revive all those rotten pamphlets, those anti-Semitic leaflets, those nasty lies that traveled about the country in 1936, and the years before and after. Fortunately they have been forgotten for some time. But now, it seems, he will revive them, and publish them, and send them out again across the land—now, when our Commander in Chief needs all the honest help that we can give him. How Goebbels must revel in the thought that in all innocence, and with the highest purpose, all the anti-Roosevelt lies are going to be brought to life again!

I plead again for the discontinuance of the Dies committee. For the chairman's announcement, if it means what it says, shows that however patriotic the motives of Mr. Dies may be, his contemplated actions will be the answer to a Nazi prayer.

After all, we must never forget that the gentleman from Texas is the man who has been quoted so frequently and so favorably on the propaganda broadcasts of our deadly enemies.