



Frayed Around The Edges

Looking Ahead

By Len De Caux

The Un-American Committee

COMMUNIST is one of those blessed words that can mean almost any blessed thing you like—or don't like.

In recent times it has been most generally used to describe anyone with whom a-tory disagrees.

It is the stock epithet directed against every active union man, having almost completely supplanted the old word, "agitator."

It is used to describe every supporter of the New Deal, every member of a liberal organization and every possessor of a progressive idea.

Among conservatives it is an even more popular term of abuse than the ascription of canine parentage.

Frey's Fantasies

But John P. Frey scorns even such small limitations on the meaning of the word Communist. To him it has an almost universal application.

Testifying before what is coming to be known as the Un-American Committee, he produced what he said was a list of 284 Communists on the CIO payroll.

A study of the names on this list will leave any searcher after truth more than a trifle dizzy.

To begin with, it includes far fewer than 284 names. Some of the names evidently appealed to Frey as so Communistic that he repeated them again and again, each time with a different union connection.

Demonstrating Frey's scholastic respect for his sources, his list carefully preserves the misspellings and other inaccuracies of a similar list printed long ago in the Chicago Tribune.

It includes Republicans, Democrats and Socialist party members with a fine impartiality.

It includes many names that were never connected with the CIO in any way.

It includes a president of an AFL state federation of labor and dozens of union officials who until recently were high officials of the AFL.

Here and there, to leaven the

list, Frey includes some who would call themselves Communists, but these are mostly people unconnected with the CIO.

But chiefly the list is made up of people who subscribe to only two isms, trade-unionism and Americanism.

The Trojan Horse

It is easy to make fun of the foolish Frey. But behind this pompous and pedantic clown there are more sinister forces.

Frey red-baits because it has become an obsession of his single-track mind, and because he is credulous enough to believe every illiterate stoolpigeon who comes along.

But the people whose purpose Frey serves do not red-bait for fun. They are the monied interests which have done everything in their power to smash the great union movement of four million Americans known as the CIO.

Now that their frontal attacks have failed, their purpose is to smear the CIO with slander and to disrupt it with internal dissension.

They have adopted what is known as the Trojan horse tactic. And Frey trails along simply as the rear end of this phony quadruped for carrying into labor's camp all the enemies of lies, slander, factionalism and stoolpigeonry with which it is hoped to disrupt from within the great unions of the CIO.

Frey himself exposes the plot by assuming to make a gift of his seasoned advice. Like the common labor spy and provocateur who spreads distrust among union men against their elected representatives, he first tries to smear trusted union leaders as "Communists" and then advises those of the four million CIO members whom he concedes to be non-Communists to turn on their leaders and oust them.

CIO members may be pardoned if they look such a gift horse in

the mouth, rather than being fascinated by the other end of it which Frey so ably represents.

Loaded Dice

Among other less polite nicknames, the Dies committee is earning the name of the Loaded Dies committee.

Its aim was supposed to be to uncover un-American activities. But all it has done so far is to play a crap game with loaded dice.

The Fascist purveyors of alien doctrines have been all but ignored, while stoolpigeons, Fascists and Freys have been given full leeway to make ridiculous and completely unsupported charges against the CIO, one of the most truly and distinctively American movements this country has known.

These worries have not stopped at the CIO, but have extended their slanders and attacks to include the LaFollette civil liberties committee, government officials and departments, and the whole New Deal.

If un-American activities are to be really exposed, the committee might do well to start by examining the motivations and machinations behind the recent disgraceful slander and smear campaigns directed against progressive labor unionism and against all other forms of modern democratic Americanism.