

Communists Formed Labor Defense, Dies Probers Are Told

Gitlow Testifies After Marcantonio Denies Tie-up

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By JAMES E. CHINN. Benjamin Gitlow, a former general secretary of the Communist party in the United States, late today told the House Committee on Un-American Activities that the party had organized the International Labor Defense in 1925.

Mr. Gitlow, who said he was one of the original founders of the I. L. D., was called to testify after Representative Marcantonio, American-Labor, of New York, who has been chairman of the I. L. D. since 1937, vehemently denied the organization had any communist affiliations.

Mr. Marcantonio insisted that a non-communist control policy had been maintained since he became chairman of the I. L. D., but declined to testify concerning policies and activities before he took office.

Mr. Gitlow read to the committee what he described as minutes of Communist party's executive committee meetings at which plans for organization of the I. L. D. were discussed.

Officers Chosen in 1925. He said the constitution of the I. L. D. was approved and the officers selected at a meeting of the party's executive committee in June, 1925.

At another meeting of the executive committee, Mr. Gitlow said, the Communists and non-Communists who would appear as sponsors of the I. L. D. were named.

He also read what he described as minutes of a meeting of the Communist party's three-man secretariat in October, 1925, noting that instructions were received from Mos-

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cow from the International Workers' Aid and the International Red Aid, directing the I. L. D. to hold meetings to protest against certain executions contemplated in Hungary.

Mr. Gitlow afterward said he could not understand how Representative Marcantonio could make a statement that the I. L. D. had not been a Communist organization since he took office.

"Since Mr. Marcantonio became Chairman of the I. L. D.," he declared, "Stalin has conducted many more frame-up trials than either Hitler or Mussolini." Twenty-four hours after conviction of these victims, he said they were "lined up against a wall and shot."

No Comment on Atrocities And despite that, he declared Representative Marcantonio, whom he described as a "lover of liberty in America," failed to make any comment on the atrocities in Russia.

Earlier, Chairman Dies sought to draw from Mr. Marcantonio confirmation of reports the American Labor Party is "getting rid of Communists in its ranks."

The witness said he would "rather not discuss" the party's policies, and added:

"I'm letting the boys back home do their own fighting."

Mr. Marcantonio was questioned about a resolution adopted at a convention of the I. L. D. in Washington last May which declared the organization would not defend any Nazi or Fascist whose activities were anti-labor or anti-democratic.

"Isn't it a fact," asked Representative Starnes, Democrat, of Alabama, "that the reason no resolution denouncing Communism has been adopted by the I. L. D. is that such a resolution would have about as much chance as a snow ball in the proverbial hot place?"

Reiterates Defense Aims.

Mr. Marcantonio reiterated the organization would defend any person deprived of civil rights but not if his activities were anti-labor or anti-democratic.

In the House, Representative Dickstein, Democrat, of New York charged that Gen. Walter G. Krivitsky, who said he was a former Russian intelligence officer, "was induced" to testify before the Dies Committee in order to give immunity from libel to publishers of certain magazine articles by Gen. Krivitsky.

Referring to Gen. Krivitsky as "nothing but a phoney," Mr. Dickstein did not say who had inducted him to testify.

Gen. Krivitsky, who said he was born "Samuel Ginsberg" in the Ukraine, testified before the committee last week. He said he formerly was chief Soviet military intelligence officer for Western Europe.

Appearing voluntarily before the investigating committee, Representative Marcantonio vehemently denied that the International Labor Defense is in any way identified with or influenced by the Communist party.

Mr. Marcantonio, only American-Labor party member in Congress, pounded a table with both fists for emphasis, as he declared:

"I accept responsibility for every act of the I. L. D. since I took office in 1937. I took office as chairman of the I. L. D. with the distinct understanding that this was going to be a non-Communist organization, and that policy has been maintained."

Calls Communists Victims.

Chairman Dies reminded Mr. Marcantonio that two Communists are officers of the organization, that it had never gone on record against Communism, and that it never had given aid to a "victim" of Communism.

"Let me nail that right now," interrupted the fiery New Yorker. "We never have had any cases of that type before us. The Communists have always been the victims. If tomorrow a case should be brought before us regarding the deprivation of civil rights by the Communist

party, by Josef Stalin, Earl Browder or anybody else, we would defend that person."

Mr. Marcantonio told the committee at the outset of his testimony that he was not a member of the I. L. D. before his election as chairman. He said the organization's governing board is responsible for all its policies and he is certain the board is "overwhelmingly" non-Communist, unless its members "conceal their identity." He also pointed out he passed on all the governing board's decisions.

Defends Rights.

"I am opposed to all declarations opposed to Communism, Fascism and Socialism," Mr. Marcantonio said. "But I do not believe in persecuting a person because he is a Communist or depriving him of his rights because he is a Communist. An American has a right to advocate Communism as long as that advocacy comes within the Constitution of the United States."

Chairman Dies asked Mr. Marcantonio if he considered a Communist anti-labor.

"No," he retorted. "I consider him a part of the labor struggle."

Meanwhile, declaring it had important information affecting national defense, the Dies committee has decided to ask the House for "ample funds" to continue its investigation of un-American activities for another year.

"Due to the international situation, the committee has hundreds of important leads which cannot be developed until it is given more time and funds," a committee statement said last night.

"The committee is in possession of vital information which affects our national defense and which the committee has just come into possession of, but which will take considerable time to develop and expose."

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Ben Gitlow testified to C.P. domination of I.L.D. denied by Congressman Marcantonio, who said that a non-Communist controlled policy had been maintained at least since he became chairman of the I.L.D. In attempting to disprove the Congressman's statement Mr. Gitlow give this reason: "Since Mr. Marcantonio became chairman of the I.L.D. Stalin has conducted many more frameup trials than either Hitler or Mussolini."