

Star 7/31/41

Investigator Links Coast Intellectuals To Communists

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College Professors and
Others Attended Parties,
Committee Is Told

By the Associated Press.

LOS ANGELES, July 31.—A former Government investigator told a legislative committee yesterday he had gathered evidence of Communist activities by intellectuals of the artists' and writers' colony at Carmel.

The witness, Charles G. Backs, told the committee investigating subversive activities he was employed by San Francisco ship owners shortly before the 1935 water-front strike there to look into Communist affairs.

In Carmel, he said, he rented a large house and, posing as a Communist sympathizer under the name of Capt. Charles Y. Sharkey, gave parties which were attended by college professors, school teachers, writers and professional men.

Kept Guest Book.

"I kept a guest book in which were listed the names of important Communists who visited me, and in every room of the house dictographs were installed to record their conversations."

At the instance of a group of college professors, he declared, Carmel writers were employed by the commissar for heavy industry of Amtorg, Soviet trade organization, to prepare Communist pamphlets.

"I obtained the confidence of party members and was able to visit the Soviet consul in San Francisco, where I listened in on short-wave conversations with Moscow, and where I saw secret cabinets stuffed with records of Communist operations in the United States."

"Signaled" to Crews.

As an evidence of his Communist sympathies, he installed a big electric star on the roof of his house to signal Communist crew members on ships at sea.

"The signaling was just to let them know they had friends ashore."

The witness told the committee he was a former operative of the Treasury Department, the Justice Department and the Burns Detective Agency.