

Dies Tactics Shown Up as Political Trickery

UFW Journal 12/1/39

The recent attack by the Dies committee on organized labor, including the American Newspaper Guild, its international officers, the CIO, and other labor bodies as being "Communists" has brought sharp rejoinders and charges against Dies from the Guild Reporter, official organ of the newspapermen's union, and from nationally known news commentators who condemn the political skuldugery of Dies and his committee.

The Guild Reporter asks: "Why is he (Dies) stooping to such tactics?" And then answers by saying:

"He is putting on his biggest campaign so as to obtain from the next Congress a huge fund with which to operate in 1940. If he can do that he can hope to make his committee a powerful weapon in the election. In a word, he is now trying to win 1940 for the anti-New Deal element."

The Guild Reporter also quotes the late Paul Y. Anderson, commentator, who wrote shortly before his death concerning Dies and his committee and their purposes as follows:

1. To offset the LaFollette committee's disclosures . . . ; 2. to create an impression that the CIO is dominated by Communists; 3. to swell the torrent of lying propaganda against the National Labor Relations Board; and 4. to snipe at every exposed public official who had demonstrated friendship for organized labor or devotion to the Bill of Rights.

Which leads the Guild Reporter to say:

"Despite Dies' youth Garner helped him to obtain a place on the powerful House Rules Committee. He has made himself a prominent figure among the anti-New Deal forces in Congress. He was one of five Democratic Congressmen who as far back as 1937 helped hold back the wages and hours bill. He mobilized a group of anti-big city Congressmen to whittle away at appropriations for New Deal agencies, notably the Labor Board."

Raymond Clapper, Washington news commentator, writing about Representative Dies says that he is "Trying to raise national gooseflesh in order to get a big appropriation to establish that Communists infest the Roosevelt administration. He wants to 'reveal the identity of the parlor pets of Moscow who plot to overthrow of our government over their teacups.' He says, 'I do know that the federal government has Communists in key positions.' Nothing,

he adds, will deter him from exposing them."

Well, what's stopping Representative Dies from exposing these Communists? If, as he says, he knows there are Communists in key positions here, let's have the facts right out now and get rid of them. That would be the best service he could render. Chairman Dies thus has it within his power to root out overnight these Communist influences. Let him do that job and anything he wants is his. He doesn't have to beat around the bush. Public support for him would be overwhelming.

Chairman Dies may have the goods about Communists being in key positions around here. But he also may be a victim of his own imagination—or someone else's.

The tragedy of the Dies committee is that instead of concentrating on subversive aliens, it is wandering all about the lot and is trying to do the job which the Republicans tried to do in the 1936 Presidential campaign—hang the Communist label on the Roosevelt administration. The Dies committee has a great opportunity to strip off this hokum and make distinct in the public mind the difference between alien Communism and progressive and liberal democracy. Instead it is smearing liberal democracy with the Communist label.

What Dies is doing comes down to the same thing that Steinbeck complains of in *Grapes of Wrath* when an employer damns as a radical any

blankety-blank "who asks for 30 cents an hour when we are paying 25."

Kenneth Crawford, commentator, writing in *The Nation* on the subject of "Stalin's Boost to Mr. Dies," says the committee has "persisted in the practice of permitting witnesses to throw around accusations and political tags indiscriminately without supporting evidence." He also visions the recurrence of the attack on the administration through refusal of appropriations to be asked by the President of Congress, saying:

We shall be back where we were when Hitler diverted our attention by marching into Poland. Dies will have the authority and the money to carry him through the 1940 campaign. It is one thing for him to run down the agents of foreign governments, self-appointed and otherwise, but quite another for him to use his committee as a propaganda agency for reaction in a purely domestic political fight. To anyone who believes he couldn't or wouldn't do such a thing I recommend a rereading of the shameful testimony that helped to beat Frank Murphy and Elmer Benson in 1938. I further suggest some consideration of the Dies committee's recent condemnation of Murphy, Senator Robert F. Wagner, and others for daring to address a meeting of the American Civil Liberties Union. Finally, there is food for thought in Dies's repeated assertions that he has a long list of communistic New Dealers which for reasons of his own he has not yet made public.