

DIES AND THE PRESS PERFECT THE ACT

*He Times His Shots to Hit Unions in Midst of Struggles,
It Edits His Performance to Make Every Aim a Bull's Eye
And Transforms His Opera Bouffe Into an Eerie Melodrama*

By NATHAN L. GOLDBERG

There are two essential factors distinguishing Martin Dies' activities from the buffoonery which is common among House committees investigating un-Americanism. One is Dies' timing. He now regularly bolts up with "evidence" of communistic influences when any big union is in the midst of a hard struggle. The other factor is the wholehearted cooperation he gets from the daily press through the voluminous front-page presentation and the grand opera dress it gives to his opera bouffe.

Here is the recent record of his timing:

Late last month the Packinghouse Workers in Chicago had pushed their organizing drive to the point where they were entering a Labor Board election at the plant of Armour & Co., key plant in the industry. Along came Dies. Apparently having no evidence even to meet his low standards, he gave out stories that he was planning to question officers of the CIO Packinghouse Workers Organizing Committee in "executive session." He even said loosely that the U. S. Attorney's office was cooperating with him in seeking "wholesale" indictments. The newspapers gave him page one play. The U. S. attorney, at the behest of the PWOC, promptly denied the indictment story. The PWOC exposed Dies' chief witness as an ex-convict, and the Congressman left town.

Auto Attack Fizzles

How the Chrysler Company tried every dodge to break the union in the recent Auto Workers' strike is known to every realistic newspaper reader. On Nov. 30, two days after the strike was settled, William O'Dell Nowell, a former Communist and former organizer for the United Auto Workers, was the Dies witness. He had just traveled down to Washington, at the committee's expense. His appearance had been arranged some time before, while the strike was at its height.

His appearance happened to coincide with that of Eleanor Roosevelt at the hearing, so much of his testimony against the Auto Workers' Union was pushed off the front pages. Mrs. Roosevelt said of Nowell's statements: "I was disappointed, I thought I would hear something new."

The National Maritime Union was negotiating a new contract with the shipowners when Dies opened up on it in Washington. The charges of Communism rolled along until it developed that one of the leading witnesses was a fugitive from a murder charge.

When the Steel Workers Organizing Committee began its negotiations for a new contract with the steel companies in Pittsburgh, there was Dies with the same old line.

Thus Dies is doing now against unions what he did against the leading progressive political candidates in the 1938 election campaign, when he used his committee as a sounding board for the enemies of Governor Murphy in Michigan, Governor Benson in Minnesota and Governor-elect Olson and others in California.

Dies' Real Purposes

These highlights from the record provide an effective index to the real purposes of the Dies Committee. A more comprehensive index, apparently inspired, is found in a Sunday feature article by Richard L. Stokes in the Oct. 29 Washington Star.

Stokes reports that Dies "claims that in 16 months the committee has achieved the following triumphs:

Paralyzing the influence of the left-wing faction of the Roosevelt Administration, which is

now declared to be conducting a quiet purge of radical elements. Discredited the Congress of Industrial Organizations, making it "the most unpopular body in the United States."

De-throned John L. Lewis as dictator of Congressional legislation; forced him to plan a thorough-going red hunt among C.I.O. officers and members. Defeated Frank Murphy for re-election as Governor of Michigan, through testimony representing him as condoning sit-down strikes.

Caused Inquiry Into NLRB Brought about Congressional investigation of the National Labor Relations Board. Led Congress to eliminate the

to avoid mention or keep to a minimum reference to facts that would give the reader the real atmosphere and flavor that permeate his hearings—a revelation that would make Dies the same laughing stock that his predecessors, Ham Fish and Sam Dickstein became. Fish and Dickstein were chairman and vice chairman, respectively, of earlier House committees investigating un-American activities. Fish never completely recovered from the newspaper stories of his raid on a Baltimore warehouse in search of Reds. The warehouse yielded cabbages.

Dies is a bigger and better clown than Fish was in his best days,

CIO?" he was asked, and this was his answer:

"The Newspaper Guild was controlled by the Communist Party." "How do you know that is true?" "Because I know if Morris Watson and Heywood Broun actually run the Guild—"

Theorizes About Broun

Malkin never finished his answer. He was interrupted by Committee Member Voorhis, who was anxious to know "whether Heywood Broun is a member of the Communist Party now?" Malkin didn't know, but he embarked on a speculative discussion of Broun's attitude toward the Russo-German pact and other matters, incidentally calling Broun the "national secretary."

No one at the ANG or any of its locals ever heard of Malkin. But that did not prevent him from testifying that he was "active in securing" the ANG's first contract, which he said was with the New York Post. The Post was the sixth paper to sign with the Guild.

Such statements were accepted by Dies and his colleagues without challenge as to authenticity. Then the newspapers put them into English, presented them seriously, as though they meant something.

Dies' Interpretations

Point 3 in the newspaper operation is to give tremendous play to anything Dies says that smears the Administration or the CIO unions, without any pretense of checking to see whether the statements are fair or honest. This means that Dies can put any interpretation on the strange conglomeration of "testimony" he accepts, and out it goes to the public in screaming headlines. The victims of this treatment can never catch up with the fabrications thus foisted on the public.

The supreme example of this technique was Dies' statement that he had possession of a long list of Federal officials and employees who hold membership in the Communist Party. The papers "objectively" carried this statement without further inquiry, or ever following it up. Dies never produced his list.

A. Typical Story

Characteristic of the newspaper display it got was this story in the Washington Times-Herald on Sept. 28:

A nation-rocking list of federal executives and employees alleged to be members of the Communist Party is being held by Representative Martin Dies and will be released unless the government makes a bona fide effort to get rid of them . . . Dies revealed yesterday.

"You would be surprised at the big executives and officials among the 2,850 Communists on my list," Dies said. "I have received word from the White House that the government will begin ousting them soon. The President has also notified John L. Lewis to clean out the CIO." The same day, INS carried on its wires:

In a move to strengthen its stand of strict neutrality in the current European war, the Administration has started to weed out all Communists from key federal positions, Representative Martin Dies said he had been "reliably informed" today.

Story Is Good Twice

On Oct. 7, little more than a week after the big splash, Dies seemingly forgot it and started back on the same tack, though a bit modestly as to numbers. On that day the headlines said, "Dies Seizes Data on Communists in U. S. Jobs." Dies himself made no statement, in itself a fact of great significance. The story came from Martin Chancey, Washington Communist Party secretary, who said he told Dies while being questioned secretly that there were 325 members in the local party and



'We'll Develop That Later'

Federal Theatre Project of the W.P.A.

Forced the resignation of Paul Sifton as deputy administrator of the Wage and Hour Division of the Labor Department; Sifton dragged down with him Elmer F. Andrews, administrator of division.

Destroyed the legislative power of the Workers' Alliance of America; compelled the demotion of its champion, Aubrey Williams, former W.P.A. assistant administrator.

Discredited Secretary of Labor Perkins for alleged laxity in enforcement of the deportation laws.

Offset revelations of the LaFollette Civil Liberties Committee as to labor-baiting practices of sections of big business and led Congress to cut its current appropriation from \$100,000 to \$50,000.

These, of course, are not all of Dies' "triumphs." He claims, according to Stokes' tabulation, also to have proved that the Bund and Communist party were agents of foreign governments, brought about the indictment of Earl Browder, etc., etc.

How does he do it? To anyone listening to his witnesses and his examination, or to anyone reading the printed record, that is a mystery. But the mystery soon ends when the record is compared with the stories that appear in the newspapers. The press has made itself a machine for putting over the Dies eyewitness.

Point one of the newspaper is

but only in an occasional comment by a Washington columnist or in a Sunday feature story is this fact brought out.

From the beginning until today, it is generally agreed, the committee's proceedings have set a new high in turbulence, not only legal and parliamentary, but mental and physical. Under a blinding glare of spotlights and a bombardment of photographers' bulbs, members shout insults at each other or at witnesses, who retort in kind. Spectators and witnesses exchange taunts. Not long ago policemen prevented Representative Starnes from assaulting a witness with his fists. It was Fritz Kuhn.

Take Witnesses Seriously

Point two in the newspaper treatment is to present the "testimony" and "evidence" seriously despite the obvious mockery of elemental rules for placing such material in the record. The recent testimony of Maurice L. Malkin, who told the committee that he helped organize the Guild and knew it was controlled by the Communist Party, illustrates the point.

The record shows that Dies, on Oct. 13, said to him, "All right, please get down to the Newspaper Guild. Did you help organize that movement?"

Malkin, who had described himself as a former Communist, answered, "Yes," and then proceeded to make mistakes about elemental facts in discussing it.

"Is the Guild affiliated with the

that none is a government employe.

In the meantime, the newspapers showered Dies with editorial accolades. Many noted solemnly that he now had restored himself in the popular esteem after last year's Shirley Temple episode. Some of the editorials talked of "purging" Reds from the CIO and "How do you know that is true?" "Because I know if Morris Watson and Heywood Broun actually run the Guild—"

In the period from mid-September to late October the number of editorials clipped daily by the Division of Press Intelligence increased from a half-dozen to 70. The division is a federal bureau which clips 400 newspapers in major cities for news concerning government.

Chance to Build Dies Up

Typical of the editorial comment was the San Diego (Cal.) Union on Sept. 29, which discussed "government plans" to "quietly dismiss 3,000 known Communists who have key jobs in federal positions." The McKeesport (Pa.) News proposed a "purge of Communists from the CIO in view of Dies' disclosures." The St. Paul Pioneer Press declared that "Communists should not be tolerated in government service." The Macon (Ga.) Telegraph found that the Dies Committee was "no longer looked upon with ridicule and contempt, it is now regarded as rendering a timely and valuable service." The editorial attacked New Dealers, particularly Mrs. Roosevelt, for speaking before "front" groups and "creating an alarming situation." The Memphis Commercial-Appeal said that "the once ridiculed Dies Committee has rendered the American people an extraordinary service."

Papers Back Plea for Funds

Dies was riding this wave, when on Oct. 16, he introduced a resolution asking the House for \$100,000 to finance him for another year. He said that there was urgent need for extended life for his committee because there were between 7 and 8 million "subversives" in the country. He singled out the National Maritime Union to say of it that 85 per cent of the leaders were Communists. The NMU then was negotiating with ship owners and struggling to save its members from unemployment due to the European war. More over, Dies said he had in his possession "vital information affecting our national defense."

From the papers of two days later, the Division of Press Intelligence clipped 12 editorials. Nine gave wholehearted support to the request for more funds. They were in the Indianapolis Star, St. Louis Globe-Democrat, Hamilton (Ohio) Journal, News, Detroit Free Press, Cleveland Plain Dealer, Buffalo News, Augusta (Ga.) Chronicle, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette and Scranton Tribune.

Two, the Newark Star-Eagle and Greenville (S. C.) News, praise the investigation and attack Communists but did not mention Dies' request for more money.

The twelfth paper was the New York Post, which suggested that the money be appropriated for the LaFollette Committee.

League Episode Hurts Dies

When the Dies Committee publicized the alleged list of government officials and employees belonging to the Washington branch of the League for Peace and Democracy on Oct. 25, there was widespread resentment and the committee doubtless lost some of the prestige the newspapers had built for it in the preceding months.

Some of the newspapers editorially joined in the criticism of Dies, but practically all gave him support by printing the list of names on their front pages and here again they protected him by failing to carry the story, spread throughout Washington, that Dies had altered the list before handing it out. In at least three cases he changed the names of some

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The Dies Committee And Press

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to those of their husbands. Mrs. Anna Witt was changed to Nathan Witt, secretary of the National Labor Board; Mrs. Soshane Garber Krivoños, to Fred Krivoños, Labor Board attorney, and Dorothy Walton to Stanley Surrey, Treasury Department attorney.

The original list taken from the league's offices noted parenthetically that Dorothy Walton was Mrs. Stanley Surrey.

The nearest approach to newspaper exposure of this fraud was in the Washington Daily News, in which Columnist Jerry Klutz noted that Witt was not a member of the league.

Nor did the papers catch Dies' direct lies in his answer to President Roosevelt when the President called the mailing list episode a "sordid procedure."

In a speech over a Columbia Broadcasting hookup on Oct. 28—widely printed in the papers—Dies said, in attacking President Roosevelt:

"When the list of leaders of the German-American Bund was made public by our committee, there was no charge of 'sordid procedures.' When the mailing list of William Dudley Pelley's Silver Shirts was spread upon the record, there was no charge of 'sordid procedures.' Why then this sudden fury of attack upon the procedures of our committee when the membership of more than 500 officials and employees of the federal government in the Communist-controlled American League for Peace and Democracy is disclosed to the American people?"

The Answer Ignored

The answer—which was not printed—is that the "list" of Bund members consisted of 28 names which had long been common in newspaper stories, and that the "mailing list of William Dudley Pelley's Silver Shirts" never was spread on the record.

The fact is that Dies or another committee member actually prevented their own investigator and attorney from spreading Pelley's mailing list on the record. This appears on the committee's record of Aug. 28, in the testimony of Robert B. Barker, committee investigator who told of the large quantities of pamphlets shipped from Asheville, N. C., by Pelley. The conclusion of Barker's testimony for the morning session was:

"These are the names of some of the largest shippers that got a considerable amount of these pamphlets. Do you want the names of these people in the record?"

The Chairman: Yes.
Mr. Thomas (Rep. J. Parnell Thomas of New Jersey): Before we get into that, from what you have already testified, the largest shipments have gone to the states of Oregon, California, Colorado and Washington.

Mr. Barker: Yes.
The Chairman: I believe it is 12 o'clock. We will suspend now until 1:15.

A Fast Play

That was the last heard of that mailing list, which was suppressed by what seemed to be a quick tackle by Representative Thomas.

During the afternoon session, Rhea Whitley, committee attorney, brought out through Barker that the post office at Asheville, at committee request, had checked Pelley's incoming and outgoing mail for the 30-day period from July 17 to Aug. 19. The record shows:

Mr. Whitley: Mr. Chairman, do you want some of the persons to whom this outgoing mail was addressed read into the record?

The Chairman: Well, I don't know. Do some of the names there connect up with the activities of the Bund or any of these other organizations?

Later Dies suggested to Barker that he read the names of "those that have been under investigation" but even that wasn't done.

Free Press Champion Asks Censorship Over Us

Elisha Hanson, counsel for the American Newspaper Publishers Association, who bases much of his attack upon the Guild on "free press" grounds, last fortnight attempted to clamp the lid on editorialism for the GUILD REPORTER.

Hanson suggested that the REPORTER be subjected to his censorship at the start of an informal discussion calculated to avoid an NLRB trial of charges that Publisher J. Noel Macy refused to bargain in good faith with the Westchester (N. Y.) Guild, fired a man for union activity and fostered a company union. Nothing came of the discussions, and the formal hearings were opened.

Editor & Publisher, too, took it on the chin from Hanson, who challenged the authenticity of its advertising and the reliability of its surveys and statistical data. And Publisher Macy revealed he has taken E&P—and the newspaper chains of the country—for a sleighride by accepting and keeping a prize for a chain promotion campaign that he said must have been awarded him in error, because, he contends, he has no chain.

The ANPA counsel made it clear that when he wanted to censor "any statement" he included reports made by Westchester Guild to its members through shop bulletins and to the ANG membership through the GUILD REPORTER. He wanted to blue pencil the reports, he said, because of the Guild's habit of making up lies about him.

Hanson made his statements about Editor & Publisher during the course of the trial. Although he expressed the highest respect for E&P, he insisted the person

responsible for inserting an ad, introduced into evidence by Daniel Baker, NLRB attorney, would have to take the stand before he would be satisfied as to its authenticity.

Similarly, when Baker introduced statistical data prepared and published by E&P, Hanson ob-



MAHOUT SQUELCHED

served that they didn't mean anything, since all such surveys disagree with each other. In both instances, Josef L. Hektoen, trial examiner, overruled his objections. Macy proved unkind to Editor & Publisher in his attempt to prove there is no Macy-Westchester chain of newspapers, something that is common knowledge, though inaccurate, according to Macy.

E&P's "international yearbook for 1939 lists the promotion award to Macy for a campaign by a group of newspapers under common ownership. Despite his contention he received it in error, Macy has kept the prize more than a year—and didn't indicate any intention of returning it.

The chain setup is a link in the NLRB's chain of evidence that Macy is in interstate commerce; therefore, subject to its jurisdiction.

Newhouse Police Club Plea Exposed

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Queens. Of course, these 800 families get decent wages, not Newhouse wages, the kind of wages through which Newhouse makes money by exploitation of his labor.

'Only Way' to Earn

I have information that Newhouse personally ordered this lie to be printed. . . . When he came to my office three years ago, he went on his knees and asked for police to beat up his reporters because the only way he could make money was to do it as he did in Staten Island (Staten Island Advance)—by paying low wages.

He said to me, "Let us use a stick on those fellows; how can anybody make money paying the wages they want?"

The Mayor accused Newhouse of double-crossing New York for the benefit of Newark, the editorial attack on the city airport being construed as part of the long fight between the two cities. New York recently won by taking over air-mail contracts and leaving Newark's hangars empty.

Newhouse's Denial

Newhouse's reply met the Mayor's accusations with the claim that they were "untruths." His statement said:

I have just been shown a copy of the statement attributed to the Mayor. It is full of untruths. Apparently the strain of dedicating the world's greatest airport was too much for the Mayor. I cannot believe he would have made such a statement if he had enjoyed some rest.

Any further comment about this matter should come not from me, but from the Mayor's physician.

He offered "to pay \$5,000, as designated by the Mayor, if the Mayor or anyone else can prove that I pay 'starvation wages' or that I ever went to the Mayor for anything."

Placement Service Gets Inquiries

Unanimous Guild approval of the expansion of the Guild Placement Service was indicated during the past fortnight by a daily stream of correspondence into ANG headquarters from all parts of the country.

More local Guilds, awaking to the opportunities of the service, appointed employment officers to give special cooperation. The service now is functioning for all Guild members in good standing, seeking jobs for the unemployed and better jobs for those employed who want them.

A campaign to acquaint all executives of the newspaper industry with the potentialities of the service is under way. Letters also are going out to employers whose employment needs call for workers with newspaper editorial and commercial training.

WALTER L. BUTLER

MONROE, La.—A blow to the newly-formed Monroe Guild was the death on Nov. 3 of Walter L. (Red) Butler, from complications following a spinal operation.

He was a charter member of the Monroe Guild, acting as its treasurer until his death. Butler was devoted to the cause of organized labor and was instrumental in bringing a Guild charter to Monroe.

His reportorial career covered a period of ten years with the Monroe News-Star and Monroe Morning News. He contributed to numerous trade papers and other periodicals.

A first lieutenant of Company G, 156th Infantry, Louisiana National Guard, Butler was accorded a full military funeral. Active pallbearers were officers of Company G, and his associates on the local papers served as honorary pallbearers.

Only members in good standing have the right to GUILD REPORTER space for their letters to the editor. Send us your letters, and pay your dues and assessments.

Election Campaign Lively in N. Y.

The first contest for president of the New York Guild is being conducted in a mail ballot with Oliver Pilat of the Post running against Carl Randau of the World-Telegram, nominee of the Representative Assembly. Randau succeeded Allen Raymond as president of the local in 1934 and has been unopposed since then.

Campaigners for both candidates have issued statements, office facilities and address lists having been provided by the local. Each committee paid for its own mail and did its own addressing.

Ballots were mailed Dec. 10 to 2,062 members in good standing as of Dec. 9 and must be received at a post office box postmarked no later than midnight, Dec. 20. The box will be opened by the elections committee on Dec. 22.

Union Breaks Dismissal Pay Ice in Textiles

CUMBERLAND, Md. — Severance pay is established for the first time in the history of the textile industry in a contract signed here between Local 1874 of the Textile Workers Union of America and the Celanese Corporation of America after a month's work stoppage involving 9,000 workers.

Although "separation allowances" are limited to dismissals due to technological displacement, the gain is important due to the rapid technical advances in the manufacture of rayon yarn.

A displaced employe may accept either seniority listing for re-hiring in some other capacity or severance pay in a lump sum ranging from two weeks' pay after two years' service, to ten weeks pay after ten years' service, although acceptance of the latter does not preclude re-hiring.

Cards for 1940 Issued by ANG

Membership cards and dues stamps for 1940 have been supplied to Guild locals by the ANG with advice to local treasurers concerning the revised system of accounting books and forms instituted by Arthur J. Seed & Co., the ANG's new auditors.

Under the revised system, the key reference on the books to members' records and payments will be by card number instead of by name, and renumbering of all membership cards will be necessary.

NISSAN WIESEN

Funeral services were held on Nov. 24 for Nissan Wiesen, assistant city editor of the Bronx Home News and a member of the New York Guild. Wiesen, who was 42 years old, had been ill for a year.

Wiesen was born in Austria, and was brought to the United States in 1905. He attended New York City public schools, City College of New York and New York University. He started newspaper work as a reporter in LaPorte, Ind., and worked on newspapers in Norfolk and Richmond, Va., before coming to The Home News in 1923. He became night editor in 1926, a post he held at the time he joined the Guild. He became assistant city editor in 1935.

Among the survivors are a sister, Mrs. Pearl Berg, an employe of the Jewish Daily Forward in New York City, and a brother, Arthur, of the editorial staff of the Washington Times-Herald.

ADOPT ANTI-WAR PROGRAM

SEATTLE—A program to aid in keeping the United States out of war was adopted by the Seattle Guild Auxiliary at its last meeting. The program calls for elimination of war profits, continuation of New Deal reforms and a vigilant fight for civil liberties.

Writers See 'Reds' In ANG

New Statements alleging that the American Newspaper Guild is in control of Communists or their "fellow travelers" made their appearance during the past fortnight. The charges came from the pens of Westbrook Pegler, Scripps-Howard columnist and a Guild member, Eugene Lyons, and Ben Stolberg. Ernest L. Meyer, whose "As the Crow Flies" appears in the New York Evening Post, replied to Pegler's charges.

Pegler wrote two columns, on Dec. 8 and 9, attacking the Guild in general and President Brown in particular for his "attitude toward Communism." Meyer, in his column on Dec. 12, pointed out that Brown was soon leaving his old paper to go over to the Post.

"Afraid to Quit
In his Dec. 8 column Pegler said that he knew many Guild members "who would like to quit" but fear to do so because they "might be robbed of all their professional advancement and barred for life from the only occupation they know." On the following day he said: "Suppose a group should resign by way of endorsing the American republic, rather than Stalinism. . . . The Guild then calls a strike as a political demonstration of solidarity with Moscow."

Pegler started both his columns by pointing to the attention paid to Mrs. Roosevelt for her interest in the American Youth Congress. And both times he remarked on the relative ease with which she could withdraw from an organization with whose policy she disagreed. Mrs. Roosevelt is a member of the Guild.

Answering Pegler's charges, Meyer wrote:

In six short years the Guild has won for many thousands of newspaper men and women some measure of security and advance in economic status. And this despite the sniping and sabotage, of men like Mr. Pegler, union-baiters who want to regard newspaper work as a "profession" and not a trade subject to collective bargaining. I am happy to report that Mr. Pegler has retained his profession. It is a very old one.

Though a member of the Guild, Mr. Pegler has functioned mostly in his consistent role of brick-tosser. I have searched my memory, and recall only one Guild meeting at which he deigned to be present, and that was only to line up with the stalwart faction during a crisis on the paper, when the cloak-rooms were combed for yes-men.

Eugene Lyons' reference to the Guild appeared in a Saturday Evening Post article, "It Was Smart to Be Red," on Dec. 9. It said:

Communist influence on the Newspaper Guild — symbolized by the presidency of Heywood Brown, with Milton Kaufman, an open Communist, as executive vice president — likewise gives the Stalinists a useful economic weapon in intimidation.

Brown, on numerous occasions, has publicly denied any affiliation with Communism, and Lyons' charge was answered by Kaufman in a letter to the Saturday Evening Post in which he stated:

I wish to deny completely that I am a Communist, open or otherwise.

Mr. Lyons seems to be bitter about an alleged policy of character assassination. It seems to me that his article is a perfect example of attempted character assassination.

The third of the recent attacks was written by Ben Stolberg in a series published in the New York Herald Tribune and other papers. On Nov. 29 he wrote: "They (the Communists and their fellow travelers) captured the American Federation of Teachers (AFL), the American Newspaper Guild (ANG) and the Book and Magazine Guild (B&MG) . . ."