

F-#614/42

# 'Writer's War Board' Aids Smear Campaign

## Fellow Travelers Use Federal Aid to Push Congress Purge

By CHESLY MANLY

NEW YORK, June 3 (C.T.P.S.).—The Writers' War Board, which functions under the direction of the Office of Civilian Defense and uses the Government free mailing

frank of the "Executive Office of the President," is participating "unofficially" in the campaign of the Communists and other totalitarians to liquidate members of Congress and intimidate newspapers that are fighting to preserve the American way of life.

Rex Stout, goat-bearded writer of murder mystery stories, whose record as a Communist fellow traveler is one of the prize exhibits of the Dies Committee on Un-American Activities, is chairman of the War Writers' Board.

### Movie Star Involved

The WWB is affiliated with the OCD's Arts Council, which is headed by Melvyn Douglas, alias Hesselberg, the movie actor. Douglas also has been identified as a long-time associate of the Communists in testimony before the

Dies Committee, and it is reported reliably that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has a dossier on him.

At a meeting of self-styled writers in the Fulton Theater on May 18, which was called to receive a report from members of the WWB on its functions and purposes, Stout solicited the preparation of 15-minute speeches to be used in purge campaigns against pre-war non-interventionists in Congress, notably Senator Wayland Brooks (R.), of Illinois; Representative Stephen Day (R.), of Illinois; Representative Hamilton Fish (R.), of New York, and Representative William B. Barry (D.), of New York. Stout also approved suggestions for letter-writing cam-

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paigns against the Chicago Tribune and other newspapers which were denounced by floor speakers as "mouthpieces of Hitler."

The smear campaign discussed at the Fulton Theater meeting conforms to the pattern of a concerted movement in which alienated organizations and individuals are fighting for power both nationally and internationally under the patriotic guise of the country's war effort. Senator Brooks and the Congressmen mentioned at this meeting are among the three Senators and 26 Representatives on the purge list published by the Union for Democratic Action, a Communist front organization, and the left wing magazine New Republic.

Stout is a member and financial supporter of the U.D.A. Other members are George and Dorothy Schiff Backer, owners of the New York Post, and Morris Ernst, counsel for the Post, who were principals in the recent attempt to smear Senator David I. Walsh (D.), of Massachusetts, chairman of the Naval Affairs Committee and a leading pre-war noninterventionist.

#### Prominently Publicized

The U.D.A. purge undertaking was prominently publicized by the magazine Time, one of Henry Luce's publications. Luce is spokesman for a group of schemers for totalitarian internationalism under Anglo-American-Russian dominance. Dr. Felix Morley, president of Haverford College, who was a Rhodes scholar at Oxford University, characterizes Luce and his followers as American Nazis.

Also participating in the purge crusade, particularly against Representative Barry, is the New York Daily Worker, official organ of the Communist Party. Marshall Field's PM, otherwise known as the uptown edition of the Daily Worker, has inveighed against the Tribune and the New York Daily News and other pro-American newspapers, and currently is raging at Attorney General Francis Biddle for ruling that Harry Bridges, alien West Coast CIO leader, must be deported for joining an organization (the Communist Party) which advocates the overthrow by force and violence of the United States Government.

Other organizations participating in the purge-and-smear campaign include the Council for Democracy, which has been supported financially by Luce's publications; Friends of Democracy, headed by the Rev. Leon Birkhead, a renegade Methodist minister, and Freedom House, headed by Herbert Agar, which is the successor of Fight for Freedom, Inc., a pre-Pearl Harbor prowar outfit. Stout admits that he contributes to all these organizations.

#### MacLeish Fellow Traveler

Energetically aiding and abetting the purge-and-smear drive by making public speeches is Archibald MacLeish, Librarian of Congress and head of the Office of Facts and Figures.

MacLeish, a graduate of the Luce publishing house, is another long-time fellow traveler of the Communists. He was one of 23 signers of the call for a "congress of American writers" in 1937, at which the Communist Party organized the League of American Writers. MacLeish, who was elected vice president, presided and introduced Earl Browder, one of the principal speakers. The Daily Worker proudly reported that Comrade Browder spoke significantly and properly "as a Communist" and that, by so doing, he gave the "People's Front" meeting "a tone and necessary sense of direction."

Stout is a member of the League of American Writers.

The Tribune's account of the unreported Fulton Theater meeting on May 18 was obtained from three persons who were present and later substantially confirmed by Stout. According to the Tribune's informants, Stout told the meeting that the Writers' War Board is nonpartisan and nonpolitical but is as much concerned with "winning the war at home" as with "winning the war abroad." For this reason, Stout was quoted as saying, members of the WWB could not remain indifferent to the re-election of such men as Senator Brooks, Representative Fish, and other prewar noninterventionists.

#### Stout's "Fanatical Gleam"

"We are going to be very busy between now and November," was one statement attributed to him. Stout was interviewed at his country place near Brewster, N. Y. His long gray chin whiskers bristled against a scarlet shirt, and there was a fanatical gleam in his small brown eyes. He was like a grotesque caricature of a man.

Stout acknowledged making the statements attributed to him but insisted that he was speaking for himself and other members of the board as individuals. He said he told the audience repeatedly that the board as such could take no part in political campaigns.

Asked what he meant by the statement that the board members were as much interested in winning the war at home as in winning the war abroad, Stout insisted that he was not referring to any so-called class struggle or the war for communism in the United States. He said the United States lost the last war because Senators Lodge, Borah, La Follette, Johnson and others defeated Woodrow Wilson's proposal for a League of Nations to maintain peace. If we should defeat Germany and Japan and then fail to establish some international or-

ganization for "collective security," the present war would be lost, too, he argued.

Stout labeled himself a "pro-labor, pro-New Deal, pro-Roosevelt left liberal." He professed to be anti-Communist.

Reminded that the New Masses, official weekly organ of the Communist party, listed him as one of its owners and a member of its executive board in 1926, Stout said he "resigned" when he learned that there were Communists on the board.

The files of the magazine show, however, that he was listed three years later in 1929, as a contributing editor.

Stout acknowledged that he joined the American League Against War and Fascism in 1934 or 1935. This was one of the Communist front organizations named by Attorney General Biddle in his ruling against Bridges. Stout said he could not recall whether he ever joined the League of American Writers, but the records of the Dies committee show that he did.

#### Fadiman Speaker

Appearing with Stout as one of the speakers at the Fulton Theater meeting was Clifton Fadiman, the radio quiz program conductor, who is a member of the WWB. In his September 1932 issue of the New Masses, Fadiman's name appeared over an article in a symposium headed, "How I Came to Communism."

Present at the Fulton Theater meeting were members of the League of American Writers, the American Newspaper Guild, P. E. N., the Pen and Brush Club, and other unaffiliated writers. Stout told the meeting that the WWB functions as a two-way

clearing house where writers volunteer their services for war work and Government agencies request the services of writers for specific tasks, such as the preparation of speeches and radio programs.

The WWB has an office in the skyscraper Chanin Building, where New York branches of Government agencies are centered. The OCD furnishes the office space a paid secretary, two stenographers and a file clerk.

In the interview Stout denied that the WWB has any official status. Yet a questionnaire and an appeal for contributions signed by him on April 16 was distributed to writers under the frank of:

"Executive Office of the President.

"Office for Emergency Management."

"Writers' War Committee."

The appeal to writers, requesting their voluntary participation, stated that "much of the material thus produced will be published in the usual commercial mediums and will be paid for by them. In some cases you will be asked to donate material as a contribution to the common cause."

Senator Harry F. Byrd (D.), of Virginia, has asked the Post Office Department for a report on this apparent violation of the postal laws.

#### Members of Board

Stout said the WWB, originally called the Writers War Committee, was formed last December to carry out a request by the Treasury Department for assistance in its War Bond selling program. Besides Stout and Fadiman, members of the board are George

Britt, Sidney Buchman, Pearl S. Buck, Henry Fisk Carlton, Russell Crouse, Elmer Davis, Rita Halle Kleeman, Margaret Leech, John P. Marquand, William L. Shirer and Luise Silcox. Members of the advisory council are:

LOUIS ADAMIC

FRANKLIN P. ADAMS

FAITH BALDWIN

MARGARET CULKIN BANNING

STEPHEN VINCENT BENET

ROARK BRADFORD

LOUIS BROMFIELD

VAN WYCK BROOKS

KATHARINE BRUSH

HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

CARL CARMER

MARY ELLEN CHASE

MARC CONNELLY

NORMAN CORWIN

WALTER D. EDMONDS

EDNA FERBER

DOROTHY CANFIELD FISHER

ROSE FRANKEN

PAUL GALLICO

LEWIS GANNETT

JOHN GUNTHER

LANGSTON HUGHES

MARQUIS JAMES

OWEN JOHNSON

JOHN KIERAN

HOWARD LINDSAY

EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY

ALICE DUER MILLER

ROBERT NATHAN

CLIFFORD ODETS

EUGENE O'NEILL

WILLIAM LYON PHELPS

FLETCHER PRATT

MARJORIE KINNAN RAWLINGS

QUENTIN REYNOLDS

ELMER RICE

MARY ROBERTS RINEHART

KENNETH ROBERTS

FRANK SULLIVAN

DOROTHY THOMPSON

CARL VAN DOREN

HENDRICK WILLIAM VAN LOON

THORNTON WILDER