

Dies Does Another Job for the Axis In His All-Out War Against FDR

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WASHINGTON—When Martin Dies put the finger on Shirley Temple some years ago a lot of people of goodwill decided that henceforth he was more to be pitied than pushed around.

They were wrong.

Some well-intentioned liberals devised the theory that what Dies needed was the sober advice and spiritual guidance of straight-thinking people. They provided him with same, plus a few dosiers.

They were wrong.

There were also those who noted with lofty impartiality that some of the material circulated by the Dies Committee was true, and that high-minded protestations of innocence by known Communist agents were palpably untrue. So they concluded that in spite of "inaccuracies and mistakes," the Dies Committee was performing what was solemnly called a public service.

They were wrong.

Any lingering doubt about the Dies Committee's mission in life was shattered here by the newest "special report" secretly drafted,

hastily adopted without time for debate inside the committee and swiftly issued without public hearings for the accused.

IT WAS DOUBLE-TALK

This report was ostensibly an attack on the Union for Democratic Action.

It was actually part of the Dies Committee's continuing crusade against Franklin D. Roosevelt and those who support his leadership.

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The report was released in a week of grave military reverses
(Continued on Page Eleven)

(Continued from Page One)

for the Allies, in a week when anybody in American public life should have weighed carefully the possible impact of his words, in a week when all the resources of democratic strength were required to maintain the morale and conviction of our people.

Martin Dies chose this week to announce a "Communist-inspired" conspiracy to undermine Congress.

The substance of the plot seemed to be that too many people were criticizing Martin Dies.

I have no evidence that Dies is a paid agent of the Axis. Assuming that he isn't, he is undermining the living standards of those Axis emissaries who aren't supported by Congress.

This was the fifth column at work, creating fear, suspicion and confusion at a moment of serious national danger.

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At least some newspapers have put the facts on record. And Representative Jerry Voorhis, minority member of the committee, has embodied them in a minority report.

"THE KEY FACT IS—"

The key fact is that, in the scores of names irresponsibly libeled last week by the Dies Committee, there is not one man or woman who can be genuinely linked to the Communist Party.

The vast majority are men and women who have declared their opposition to the Communists, who have been pilloried in the party press and whose inclusion in this report will give aid and comfort to the Communists as well as to the Axis—because the Communists use precisely such performances to try to gain immunity from any criticism by liberals.

It is, as Voorhis pointed out, a matter of record that in April, 1941—two months before the Nazi attack on Russia—The Daily Worker described the leaders of the Union for Democratic Action as "bearing the poison of imperialist slaughter" and declared that "the working class and the American people must shun them as the fifth column of Wall Street empire."

This temperate effusion did not escape the notice of the Dies Committee.

It was ignored, however, because the committee is not primarily interested in discrediting the Communist Party, but rather is concerned about the survival of groups and individuals that have consistently aligned themselves with President Roosevelt.

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Much of the befuddlement about the Dies Committee's conduct stems from the popular picture of Martin Dies as a Texas ham actor with a big smile, a high forehead and a low I.Q.

MATTHEWS: A HISTORY

I don't know how Dies did in school, but the man who runs the Dies Committee is J. B. Matthews.

And Matthews learned his politics as a fellow traveler of the Communists in the era when cocktail parties were just beginning to serve ideological double-Scotches.

Matthews knows what he is doing.

He knew what it was all about when the Dies Committee engineered the defeat of New Dealers in the 1938 elections through neatly-timed smears based on knowledge acquired by Dr. Matthews through long and personal experience as a Communist ally.

The latest Dies Committee report makes much noise about the past connections of some UDA members with Communist-front organizations.

Where was Dr. Matthews when all these sinister fronts were being created?

Friends, he was organizing them.

The tragedy of all this is the continuing timidity and silence of decent people in Washington over the Dies scandal.

Apart from the Voorhis minority report—which in itself was phrased in terms of desperate defensiveness—only Mrs. Roosevelt has had the guts to stand up and speak her mind on Dies' latest dirty work.

When Vice President Wallace challenged an earlier diatribe by the Dies Committee against the Board of Economic Warfare, there was general agreement that his action had salutary results.

But the lead has not been followed.

HOW TO DOWN DIES

Too many people outside of Washington believe that Dies will destroy himself. Too many people in Washington are still paralyzed by the legend of Dies' invincibility.

The truth is that Martin Dies will be stopped only when he is fought as hard and imaginatively as Dr. Matthews is fighting for him.

When that happens he will be licked. But not until then.

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A few years ago Dies was linking Shirley Temple to the Kremlin. Now he has picked on Henry Luce.

It all is pretty fantastic. But it is a damn serious business, as you will quickly discover when you apply for a government job and hear your prospective employer ask:

"What will Martin Dies say if he finds out we've hired you?"

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I herewith submit a belated bouquet to the Navy Department for the appointment of Edwin A. Lahey, labor reporter and columnist for The Chicago Daily News, as labor advisor to Ralph Bard, assistant Navy secretary.

Lahey's appointment, in view of his oft-stated conviction that unions are not necessarily wrong, seems like a genuine gesture of goodwill. The Navy's labor relations in the past have been as enlightened as those advanced by the National Association of Manufacturers.

PEGLER CAN READ

One of Lahey's last reportorial acts, incidentally, was to write a column for The Daily News exploding any legend that Westbrook Pegler is a labor expert.

I am reliably informed that Pegler was very nettled by the document and even wrote a letter to the author. Pegler reads.

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For the benefit of those who believe that the rich are no longer with us, the AFL monthly survey has compiled an extended list of executive salaries for 1941.

I call special attention to the salaries of Eugene Grace, head of Bethlehem Steel, and Tom Girdler, president of Republic, since both these expropriated citizens will soon be protesting against any wage awards to the workers in Little Steel.

In 1941 Mr. Girdler received \$275,000 for his services to Republic Steel, as contrasted to a meager \$176,000 the year before. Mr. Grace, who lives on what the steel workers call Bonus Hill in Bethlehem, got \$357,724, an increase of 31.9 percent over 1940.

I know about high taxes and other burdens of life, but the boys aren't doing their own cooking yet.