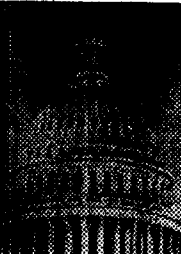


DW 8144

They're Saying In Washington By Adam Lapin



Rep. Starnes, Dies Disciple; Oklahoma Notes; Lewis Stooze in Hitlerite Rave

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REP. MARTIN DIES has properly won nationwide notoriety as Dr. Goebbels's outstanding disciple in the United States. We sometimes tend to overlook, however, the lesser but nonetheless diligent workers in the Dies Committee vineyard, including Reps. J. Parnell Thomas (Feéney) of New Jersey, Noah Mason of Illinois and Joe Starnes of Alabama. They do their best in their own small way to disrupt the war effort.

Take Starnes, for example. Next to Dies, he is the ranking member of the committee. And last week he made some statements for which the Axis propagandists would undoubtedly have been willing to pay generously. As far as is known, Starnes rendered his services free of charge.

It was at a radio forum on the poll tax which was held here last week. The program was already off the air, but the speakers continued to sit around a table and discuss the issue and the audience remained in the hall. Herbert Agar, the progressive Southern editor and publicist, emphasized the fact that the Axis powers were making much of the poll-tax and other forms of discrimination against Negroes in their appeals to the colored peoples of Asia.



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Starnes then came through with his contribution. "The colored people started this war," he said in reply to Agar. The audience audibly expressed its disapproval. "Whoever made that noise, can come up here and have his ears boxed," Starnes shouted.

The Alabama Congressman tried to alibi himself by saying that what he really meant was that "the Japs started this war back in 1931." But a moment later he added: "The Chinese are not fighting our war. We are not fighting the Chinese war."

As Herbert Agar pointed out before Starnes got under way, one of the main Axis propaganda objectives is to convince the colored peoples of Asia that they have no real community of interest with the United Nations. Joe Starnes certainly did his bit to promote that objective.

ON MARCH 16 an obscure Oklahoma Congressman called Wilbur Cartwright succeeded in breaking into the headlines. He got up in the House and he said: "Mr. Speaker, the prairies are afire in Oklahoma. John Q. Public is aroused as never before."

The prairie fire to which Cartwright referred was the synthetic Oklahoma campaign to repeal all progressive labor legislation and pass the Smith bill. Anti-labor newspapers liked Cartwright's speech, and he was a hero for a day.

On May 27 this same obscure Congressman got up in the House and inserted in the Congressional Record a resolution passed by the Unity Council of Oklahoma condemning as "nothing short of sedition" the repeated anti-labor campaigns by certain newspapers and radio chains. The Unity Council of Oklahoma, which was formed to promote all-out prosecution of the war, consists of representatives of the Farmers Union, the Oklahoma state CIO, the Oklahoma AFL, the Railroad Brotherhoods, the Veterans of Industry of America and a number of other organizations.

Cartwright got no headlines this time.

ORA GASSAWAY, appointed president of District 50 of the United Mine Workers, has for many years been sort of a personal body-guard for John L. Lewis. Unlike his boss, Gassaway is not known for his ability to express himself orally or in writing. He is proudest of his skill with his fists and at shooting dice. But in the latest issue of District 50 News, Gassaway achieves all the stylistic effects of a Westbrook Pegler by sheer display of venom and invective.

Gassaway devoted his weekly column in District 50 News to a thinly disguised incitement to violence against the Communists—apparently he uses the term in the broad sense to apply to all opponents of Lewis. Here are some gems from Gassaway's column addressed to the dairy farmer members of District 50:

"The Communist Party is a cancer on the throat of America and should be ostracized from our political system. Putting a banait in jail is not depriving him of his liberties as a citizen. . . . They (the Communists) are only scum that is allowed to exist because the health laws are not enforced. . . . The dairy farmers of the country should be on the lookout for the Communists' orators who are only too glad to start trouble in any community in the country. . . . We urge that you take appropriate action to meet any threats that the Communists might make."

Jerome J. McCormack, editor of District 50 News, usually writes Gassaway's column. Whether Gassaway or McCormack wrote this little masterpiece is relatively unimportant. The important thing is that there appeared in a so-called labor paper, controlled by Lewis, a piece of red-baiting which would be far more appropriate to Pegler's column, Col. McCormick's Chicago Tribune and Hearst's New York Journal-American.