

FIFTH COLUMN VS. UNITED STATES

Dies CommitteeOfficially EntersElection Campaign

The powers and the money of the Dies Committee have been officially thrown into the Congressional elections, to defeat supporters of the administration in the Victory War Effort, to elect enemies of victory.

The official report filed this week (signed by four members) attacked the Union for Democratic Action, several newspapers and magazines, a number of organizations, because they have the temerity to take part in the current election campaign against (among others) several defeatist Congressmen. It is obviously only a first step. The effrontery represented by the report indicates even more open intervention in the campaign than in 1938, when Dies smears were used to lose Governorship elections for two administration supporters (Murphy in Michigan, Benson in Minnesota).

In essence the report says that the organizations, individuals, and publications mentioned, because they oppose the re-election, among others, of Dies, Joe Starnes of Alabama, J. Parnell Thomas of New Jersey (all signers of the Dies report), are Communists and must be suppressed. It happens that among those attacked are a number of persons who have rivalled Dies himself in red-baiting. But because generally these people support the administration and an all-out war effort they must be, to Dies and his gang, Communists.

The broad scope of the attack gives its purposes away. The report claims that election activity against Dies Committee members and their friends is an attack on the whole Congress. The position of the Dies Committee is that participation in election activity by organizations and publications opposed to them is subversive. But use of Congressional money and powers to attack the democratic process of discussion of election issues to help elect or defeat individual candidates for Congress is all right if it's Dies doing it.

Used for making this report have been: salaries for the Dies Committee staff, which come out of the \$110,000 appropriation, and the Public Printer, which is extra and does not come out of the appropriation.

Among the most vociferous supporters of the Dies Committee is Gerald L. K. Smith of Detroit, who is running for the Senate on a "defend Charles Coughlin" platform. In 1940, Smith came to the House Rules Committee with petitions which he claimed were signed by 400,000 persons, urging continuation of the Dies Committee. They had been collected, he said, by the "Committee of 1,000,000" of Detroit, which appears to be a National Workers League, Ku Klux Klan coalition, but certainly hasn't got any million members. This week, in an article in a national magazine Secretary of Commerce Harold L. Ickes linked Smith with Quisling and Laval, and named the "Committee of 1,000,000" as an organization with the objective of destroying our democracy. Naturally Dies never investigated Smith or his astronomical committee.