



Immorality in WPA Here Told Dies

Writers' Project Data Given by Woman

Sworn testimony that the much discussed WPA Federal Writers Project is riddled with both Communism and immorality was given to the Dies Committee here.

This was learned by The Examiner last night in the wake of the committee's local hearings on un-American activities, which were conducted by Congressman Martin Dies with James H. Steedman, chief investigator for the

IMMORALITY LAID TO WPA UNIT HERE

Writers' Project Activities Told to Dies Probe by Woman

(Continued from Page One)

... did you hold any official position in the party?

A.—Yes. I belonged to a professional unit and because I wouldn't operate either in the D. A. R. (to which she once belonged) or in my church or the P. T. A., I was given disciplinary work.

Q.—Can you give the names of project employees who did not turn in any work?

A.—Yes. Ruth Garrison devoted her time exclusively to the

Federal Writers' Project — 4



Course outline

Date	Topic
February 1	Introduction
February 8	The WPA guide to Massachusetts and related publications Contemporary tours in central and western Massachusetts
February 15	Preserving Black culture
February 22	Politics and the Federal Writers' Project
March 1	The Legacy of the Federal Writers' Project

Course materials are available on <https://queenlake.com/wise/wise-spring-2022/federal-writers-project/>

See also: [Bibliography](#)



Follow-up to last week's class

► Black press in the guides

- No mention of *Chicago Defender* in Illinois guide
- *New York Age* in New York City guide
- California lists Black and other minority-focused newspapers. See p. 116
- No mention of *Boston Guardian*, 1901-1950s
- Nebraska guide mentions two Negro newspapers, but without names, p. 222. Note of German-language paper, p. 232. Heminford had two papers, *Gleaner* and *Box Butte Rustler*. *Dairy Goat Journal* in Fairbury. Omaha had eight Black newspapers at the time.
- Ohio – a section on the press, but no Black newspapers mentioned

► What slaves ate and What Americans Eat

- We'll look at those topics next week.





The search for subversives in the New Deal



Committee on Un-American Activities

WISE Template 4

Note that FDR's response about the scope of the committee's actions is similar to the Republican response to the January 6 committee.

Film by radicalfilms

<http://www.radfilms.com>

Political-Historical Films & Videos by Robert Carl Cohen

Edited

HURLEY GIVEN FIRST COPY OF W. P. A. BOOK

Mrs Ellen S. Woodward, assistant Federal W. P. A. administrator, presented the first copy of "Massachusetts, a Guide to Its Places and People," to Gov Hurley yesterday afternoon. The book was recently completed by the Massachusetts writers' project.

In accepting the book, Gov Hurley said, "As Governor, and speaking for the people of the state, I want you to know that we appreciate the efforts and talents given to this project. I want to say in all modesty that as a member of the Civil Works Administration Board for this state I approved the first music project, which eventually grew into this type of project."

"Furthermore, I shall be delighted to recommend that the book be included in every library in the state and in every school."

- ▶ In August 1937, Governor Charles Hurley enthusiastically greeted the publication of the Massachusetts guide.
- ▶ Hurley rescinded the endorsement the next day.
- ▶ He and other politicians and business leaders, along with Boston newspapers attacked the guide as too left-wing because of its reports on Sacco-Vanzetti case and the Lawrence strikes and over the inclusion of Labor Day among official holidays.
- ▶ There are five references to Sacco and Vanzetti in the original Massachusetts guide.

Reception of the Massachusetts guide



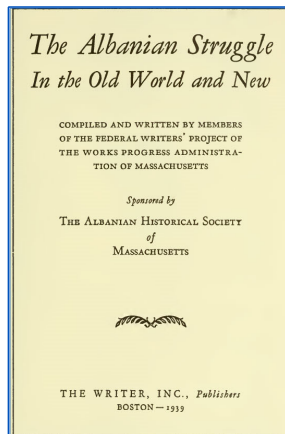
WISE Template 5

Boston Globe 18 August 1937, p. 19

In July 1938, Houghton Mifflin announced a "second printing" of the guidebook, edited carefully to rework the description of the two as anarchists while maintaining page counts, binding, and appearance.

Regional editor Frank Manuel wrote to Alsberg, "The new edition of the Massachusetts Guide has been on the stands for the past month. Nobody has apparently noticed the revisions and changes."

The controversy led to the appointment of a "policy editor" (internal censor) Louise Lazell who subsequently provided detailed information to the Dies committee.



- ▶ Why did we care about the Albanian government's opinion? It appears that we didn't want to complicate British interests in the region.
- ▶ "I cannot hide my misgivings that with each revision much of the zest of the original manuscript is being squeezed out." – Frank Manuel, writer

Alsberg removed the most interesting sections for fear of offending the Italian-fascist government of Albania.



WISE Template 6

See Mangione, p. 284

See Fischer, Bernd. "Albania and the United States during the Interwar Period: An Overview." Tirana Observatory, July 14, 2021.

<https://tiranaobservatory.com/2021/07/14/albania-and-the-united-states-during-the-interwar-period-an-overview/>.

- ▶ Marion Knoblach
- ▶ In 1940, while t
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- ▶ Knoblach comp
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Du Page



The Burch divorce case of 1860 brought the name of Naperville before the eyes of the country's newspaper-reading public. The trial, which took place in the courthouse from November 12 to December 10, attracted national attention because of the wealth and social prominence of Mrs. Burch's family. Mary Turner Burch, a niece of Erastus Corning—Congressman, wealthy merchant, and railroad man of Albany, New York—was accused by her husband of adultery with the Hon. David Stuart, a charge which she denied. As the Burches had lived in Chicago since their marriage, the trial had been scheduled for the Circuit Court of Cook County, but Mrs. Burch had been granted a change of venue upon declaring that her husband "had brought undue influence to bear upon the minds of the inhabitants of Cook County." Both sides engaged several of the best lawyers of the day, and 11 of the country's leading daily journals sent correspondents to Naperville for the trial. Orville Browning, chief counsel for Mrs. Burch, had served in the Black Hawk War and was a Whig politician. To him was given the credit for winning the case for the defendant, with the result that he became a national figure, appointed in 1861 to fill the unexpired term of Stephen A. Douglas as Senator from Illinois, and made Secretary of the Interior in 1866 by President Johnson.

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Guide

WISE Template

7

Mangione, p 243-44

VOTE TO WITHDRAW FUNDS FOR GUIDE

Madison — (AP) — The assembly concurred today in a senate bill repealing an appropriation of \$7,500 by the 1937 legislature for printing a Wisconsin state guide prepared by WPA writers.

Efforts to suspend the rules and send the bill to Governor Heil immediately failed, indicating an attempt may be to reconsider.

Assemblyman Peterson, Republican, Berlin, said the guide was planned to carry a thumb-nail sketch of Wisconsin history, but Progressives had made it a political bulletin. He objected mainly to references in the booklet to the Kohler Company strike.

Assemblyman Biemiller, Progressive, Milwaukee, declared the repealer "sets up a precedent for autocratic government through legislation." He argued the legislature should not attempt to "hush up" historic events.

The Wisconsin G



e, Sr.

Mangione, p. 341

Oshkosh Northwestern, August 16, 1939

Wisconsin State Journal, May 10, 1939

The work turned out by the project with which I, as a publisher, am most familiar, the Federal Writers Project, has been scholarly and effective, in many cases brilliant, and, from my knowledge of the other projects, I should say that the same standards apply throughout. It would be a disservice to the American people to take from them, at this time, the writers, musicians, artists, and actors who have, over the past few years, contributed so greatly to the enrichment of our culture. Increase the efficiency of the project, by all means -replace the incompetents-but don't drop something that in the long run is going to mean a great deal to all of us.

Bennett A. Cerf President, Random House

In support of WPA cultural programs – *New Masses*, January
1939



WISE Template 9



At its peak, the Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA) had 75,000 members.



WISE Template 10

1936 election poster: [Earl Browder](#) and James W. Ford (first Black on a presidential ticket)

Other sources have different numbers.

Klehr – 1937-48K, 1938-~60K

University of Washington – 54K [[Source](#)]

Particularly during the Depression years, many members did/could not pay dues.

Aid came from Soviet Union via Comintern.

Prior to 1932, most members were foreign-born. By 1937-38, most were American-born.

Blacks were recruited, but not always welcomed.

JULY, 1929

3

NEW MASSES

VOLUME 5

JULY, 1929

NUMBER 2

WALT CARMON, *Managing Editor*

MICHAEL GOLD, *Editor*

NATALIE GOMEZ, *Business Manager*

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS: Harbor Allen, Sherwood Anderson, Edmont Arens, Cornelia Burns, Em Jo Basche, Carlton Beale, Van Wyck Brooks, Howard Brubaker, Stuart Chase, Miguel Covarrubias, Adolph Dehn, Floyd Dell, Robert Dunn, John Dos Passos, Waldo Frank, Joseph Freeman, Wanda Gag, Hugo Gellert, Arturo Giovannitti, William Gropper, Charles Fata Harrison, Joseph Kalar, Freda Kirchwey, Louis Lozowick, I. Klein, John Howard Lawson, H. H. Lewis, Norman Macdonald, Claude McKay, Lewis Mumford, Scott Nearing, Samuel Ornitz, Lola Ridge, Boardman Robinson, James Rorty, Martin Russak, William Siegel, Upton Sinclair, Bernard Smith, Otto Soglow, Herman Spector, Rex Stout, Genevieve Taggard, Mary Heaton Vorse, Keene Wallis, Eric Walrond, Edmund Wilson, Jr., Robert Wolf, Charles W. Wood, Art Young.

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557

If someone was looking for Communists, they didn't have to look too far.



WISE Template

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new masses

VOLUME 8

FEBRUARY, 1933

NUMBER 7

Editorial Board: ROBERT EVANS, WHITTAKER CHAMBERS, HUGO GELLERT, MICHAEL GOLD, LOUIS LOZOWICK, MOISSAYE J. OLGIN
CONTRIBUTORS: Phil Bard, Emio Basshe, Jacob Burck, Whittaker Chambers, Robert Cruden, Jack Conroy, Adolph Dehn, Robert Dunn, John Dos Passos, Kenneth Fearing, Ed Falkowski, Hugo Gellert, Eugene Gordon, Horace Gregory, William Gropper, William Hernandez, Langston Hughes, Joseph Kalar, I. Klein, Melvin P. Levy, Louis Lozowick, H. H. Lewis, Norman Macleod, A. B. Magill, Scott Nearing, Myra Page, Harry Altan Pensonkin, Paul Peters, Walter Quirt, Louis Ribak, Anna Rochester, E. Merrill Root, James Rorty, Martin Russak, Esther Shemitz, William Siegel, Upton Sinclair, Agnes Smedley, Otto Soglow, Herman Spector, Bennett Stevens, Joseph Vogel, Mary H. Vorse, Keene Wallis, Jim Waters, Art Young.
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But, wait, there's more



WISE Template 12

Whittaker Chambers, former Communist and spy, testified against Alger Hiss in 1948, helping to bolster Richard Nixon's political career.

YOUNG FITCHBURG REDS

Testimony before the Dies congressional investigating committee tending to show that communists sought to gain control of youth organizations in this country recalls the experience of Fitchburg with a Youth Conference some time ago.

Perhaps a good deal of the testimony in Washington may be discounted as the product of too active imaginations or as the tactics of politicians and others who seek to make the "Reds" a scapegoat. The rabble-rousers long ago learned that the word "communism" has a power to stir deep feeling in many an American heart.

Delegates to the conference included representatives of young peoples' church organizations, and it was the reluctant admission of one of the religious advisers to the conference that the communists showed far more energy and greater skill in agitation and promotion of their ideas than the Christian delegates did.

Fitchburg (Massachusetts) Sentinel Fri, Aug 26, 1938





John Reed Clubs



A Century After “Ten Days” [Source]

WISE Template 14

About John Reed: International journalist, supported and reported on Russian Revolution. *Ten Days That Shook the World*, his coverage of the October Revolution, was published in 1919. In April 1918, Reed traveled from Russia to Finland; he did not have a visa or passport while crossing to Finland and was arrested. After a short prison stay, he was released and returned to the States, where he was arrested and tried twice for sedition and related charges. Both trials ended in hung juries. Arrested a third time, he was released on bail in October 1919. He returned to the Soviet Union using a fake passport. Reed died of typhus in October 1920. Given a hero's funeral, he was buried at the Kremlin Wall, one of only three Americans to receive that honor.

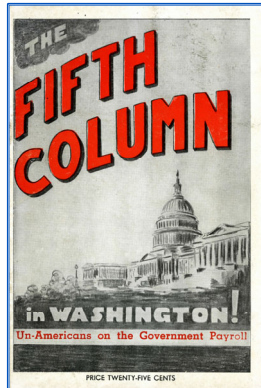
John Reed, '10, at Harvard: <https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2016/3/31/john-reed-scrut/>



WISE Template 15

"I asked for a definition of what was expected from the writers—books or political activity. Both, was the answer."

15



Aubrey

When Williams was in charge of WPA, as Deputy and Acting Administrator, some very significant things happened. Henry G. Alsberg, who admits a bowing acquaintance with Nicholai Lenin, little tin-god of modern Communism, became National Director of the Writers' Project; Katherine Kellock, wife of the Publicity Director of the Soviet Embassy, was given \$1,500,000 to spend on a National Guidebook, with some 4,500 workers under her direction; and Hallie Flanagan, Moscow-trained propagandist, who wrote "the best Revolutionary play ever produced in America," was placed in charge of the Federal Theatre Project which, with \$55,000,000 of the taxpayers' money, grew to be such a vehicle for Communist propaganda that Congress finally abolished it.

Constitutional Educational League



WISE Template 16

The Fifth Column in Washington. By Joseph P. Kamp. June, 1940
<http://www.lamoth.info/?p=digitallibrary/digitalcontent&id=4965>

WPA WRITERS COMMUNISTIC, DIES ASSERTS

**Chairman Says Project Is
Being Used to Foment
Class Hatred**

Washington, Nov. 25 (AP).—Chairman Dies of the house committee investigating un-American activities tonight disclosed charges of three government employees that the WPA federal writers' project is being used by radicals to disseminate Communist propaganda and foment class hatred.

Dies withheld the names of the witnesses, one of whom apparently was a woman. He said they are employed on the federal writers' project in Washington and "fear that they will be discharged if their identity

is disclosed at this time." Two of the three hold "responsible" positions, he said.

The witnesses charged that the propaganda efforts are directed through "Communist teachings and phraseology" inserted in various state guide books published by federal writers' projects.

The witnesses particularly were critical of the New Jersey guide book. One suggested that the committee subpoena galley proofs from the Viking Press, where the New Jersey guide is awaiting publication.

Has Some of the Galleys
"I have secured some of the galleys, which will be read into the record," Dies commented. "I sincerely hope that the federal writers' project will instruct the Viking Press not to go to press with these guides until they are corrected so as to remove from them propaganda and appeals to class hatred."

The witnesses said that some of the "Communist" phraseology was inserted by writers in the states and some by the Washington office.

Guide books for which material of this nature was provided were those for New Jersey, Montana, Tennessee,

"Communist" phraseology



[The Times](#), Shreveport, Louisiana Sunday, November 27, 1938

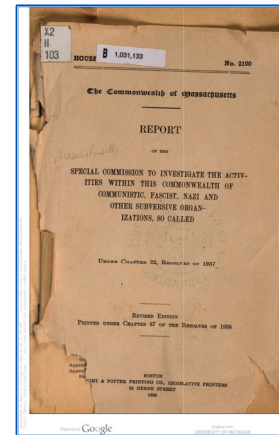
WISE Template

17

Chap. 87 RESOLVE PROVIDING FOR THE PRINTING AND SALE OF THE COMPLETE REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMISSION ESTABLISHED TO INVESTIGATE THE ACTIVITIES WITHIN THIS COMMONWEALTH OF COMMUNISTIC, FASCIST, NAZI AND OTHER SUBVERSIVE ORGANIZATIONS, SO CALLED.

Resolved, That the clerk of the house of representatives is hereby authorized and directed to cause to be printed five thousand copies of the report of the special commission, established by chapter thirty-two of the resolves of nineteen hundred and thirty-seven and revived and continued by chapter six of the resolves of the current year, for the purpose of investigating the activities within this commonwealth of Communistic, Fascist, Nazi and other subversive organizations, so called, printed as current house document numbered twenty-one hundred. The state secretary shall place said copies on sale at such price per copy, not less than the cost of printing, binding and paper, as shall be fixed by him. For the purposes of this resolve, there may be expended such sums, not exceeding, in the aggregate, two thousand dollars, as may hereafter be appropriated.

Approved July 15, 1938.



Massachusetts had its own “Little HUAC”



Among the E. R. A. and W. P. A. workers Communists organized the Workers' Alliance, the Artists and Writers Guild, White Collar Union, Councils of the Unemployed and other unions. Their aim and practice are summed up in the instructions issued by the Central Committee to Districts:

Works Progress Administration . . . to attack the whole program of the Roosevelt government reduction of the W. P. A., exposing the reactionary attacks on spending and assisting through agitation to build the W. P. A. union and to achieve higher wages.

All of these must be connected up with all local issues. The test of the vitality of local Party organizations will be their ability to link themselves with the immediate issues and to get out on their own initiative leaflets and other forms of agitation with regard to the above question, as well as the sales tax, the milk question, workmen's compensation, unemployment relief, etc.

Report of the special commission, p. 310



WISE Template 19

Report of the Special commission to investigate the activities within this commonwealth of communistic, fascist, Nazi and other subversive organizations, so called



Massachusetts Special Commission to Investigate the Activities of Communistic, Fascist, Nazi and Other Subversive Organizations



WISE Template 20

State Senator Sybil Holmes (R-Brookline) chaired the committee.
Not targeting WPA or FWP projects in the state



Meanwhile, ...



Federal Writers' Project - 3 21

[The Boston Globe](#) BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS
Thursday, October 28, 1937

Legislators Who Will Investigate Communism To Meet

Members of a special legislative committee named to investigate reported un-American influences in Florida were called yesterday to a meeting tomorrow night by Chairman Thomas H. Cooley, of Mount Dora, to fix dates and places for a series of hearings.

The committee is authorized to investigate reports of activities of communism, bolshevism, pacifism and other theories subversive to the democratic form of government.

The names of 10 Tampons already have been listed as witnesses to appear before the committee, and Cooley said his group intended to make a thorough investigation of reports and data it already had received of communistic activities in Tampa, Jacksonville and other cities of the state.

Besides Cooley, other members of the committee are Representatives Kelly of Nassau and Cray of Martin, Senators Tillman of Tampa, Holland of Bartow and Kanner of Stuart.

More "Little HUACs"



Tampa Tribune – June 13, 1937

Federal Writers' Project - 3

22

California, Ohio,

The Ku Klux Klan in the Northeast

- ▶ The Klan began targeting Catholics and ethnic minorities, notably, French-Canadians who worked in and around Barre, Vermont.
- ▶ The French-Canadians were often strike-breakers, used to disrupt the labor groups' activities.
- ▶ "In the end, the Federal Writers' Project also produced very empathetic views of French Canadians, especially under Mari Tomasi's pen."
- ▶ During the 1920s, Protestant Anglo-Canadian immigrants such as Cameron supported the KKK's efforts in New England – efforts that targeted French-Canadian Catholic immigrants in the region.



WISE Template 23

Lacroix, Patrick. "An All-American Town? Ethnicity and Memory in the Barre Granite Strike of 1922." *Vermont History* 88, no. 2 (2020).

Richard, Mark Paul. "'Why Don't You Be a Klansman?' Anglo-Canadian Support for the Ku Klux Klan Movement in 1920s New England." *American Review of Canadian Studies* 40, no. 4 (November 15, 2010): 508–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02722011.2010.519396>.



Rep. Martin Dies on immigration - June 1935



WISE Template 24



Rep. Dies blames aliens for unemployment, losses



<https://www.newspapers.com/image/524285799>
Pittsburg Sun-Telegraph February 2, 1936



Class Hatred – *New York Times*, November 25, 1938



WISE Template 26

Emerson, Thomas I., and David M. Helfeld. "Loyalty among Government Employees." *The Yale Law Journal* 58, no. 1 (December 1948): 1. <https://doi.org/10.2307/793350>.

To illustrate the success of Communist penetration in the Federal Writers Project, we wish to cite one instance. The committee received in evidence a book entitled "People's Front," by Earl Browder, which had been autographed by 103 avowed Communist Party members who were working on a Federal Writers Project, 6 of whom held positions as supervisors on the project. The total number of employees on this Writers Project was about 300. It is therefore astonishing to find that one-third of the total number of writers employed by the Government in this project were admitted Communists. We think that the explanation of the thoroughness with which the Communists have penetrated the Federal Writers Project is that they recognized this project as a splendid vehicle for the dissemination of class hatreds. The evidence is very conclusive that Communist activities were carried on openly in the Federal Writers Project. Even Henry Alsberg admitted on the witness stand that he had had considerable trouble with Communist activities in the Writers Project. He did not deny that a substantial number of the total employees were admitted Communists, and that they had been very active on the project, but Mr. Alsberg stated that he did everything within his power to stop these activities.

100
Gove



the U.S.

WISE Template

27

"He expressed fear that vital information about New York might have reached Moscow and Berlin through a book, 'Underground New York,' which had been prepared by the Federal Writers Project here. He said his committee had discovered that 114 Communists were employed by the Federal Writers Project and that some of them had turned over information obtained for this book to the Communist party."

Dies – The Daily Times (Davenport, Iowa)



WISE Template 28

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/302880043/?terms=%22Federal%20Writers%20Project%22%20communist&match=1>

In one Federal Writers' Project in New York, one third of the writers were members of the Communist Party. This was proven by their own signatures. Many witnesses have testified that it was necessary for W.P.A. workers to join the Workers Alliance – high-pressure lobby run by the Communist Party – in order to get or retain their jobs

Rep. Martin Dies, D-Texas
The Trojan Horse in America, p. 298



WISE Template 29

Dies, Martin. *The Trojan Horse in America*. New York : Dodd, Mead, 1940.

If communism
is destroyed I do not know what some of you will do.
[Applause.] It has become the most convenient method
by which you wrap yourselves in the American flag in
order to cover up some of the greasy stains on the leg-
islative toga.

Rep. Vito Marcantonio (D-NY)



Congressional Record, Vol 86, Part 1, p. 599

WISE Template 30

Congressional Record: Proceedings and Debates of the ... Congress. United States: U.S.
Government Printing Office, 1940.
Vol. 86, Part 1. p. 599



The Dies sub-committee on Nazi activities



Dies Committee appoints subcommittee to hearings on Nazi activities. Washington, D.C., Aug. 22. Members of the House Committee investigating Un-American activities met today and decided to appoint a subcommittee to begin hearings on Nazi activities. Chairman Dies said the hearings would be held in another city, but declined to reveal its location. In the photograph, left to right: Rep. Harold G. Mosier, Rep. Noah M. Mason, Chairman Martin Dies, Dr. J.B. Matthews, former communist organizer, who testified today; Stephen Birmingham, investigator; Rep. Joe Starnes, and Rep. J. Parnell Thomas, 8/22/38

WISE Template 31

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately this committee has not had time or inclination so far effectively to investigate such nationalist, anti-Semitic, pro-Nazi, or Fascist organizations as the following: The Silver Shirts; the American Nationalist Federation; the American Nationalist Party; the Ku Klux Klan; the American Crusaders; the American Coalition; the Christian Front; the Christian Mobilizers; the American Immigration Conference Board; the Black Legion; · the American Vigilant Intelligence Federation; James True Associates; the Paul Reveres, Inc.; Christian Defenders; Associated Farmers; American White Guards; American Patriot Guard; the Vindicators; Pelley Publishers; the White Legion; the Khaki Shirts; the Order of '76; the Christian Militia; the Crusaders for Economic Liberty; and the Awakener.

Rep. John Coffee (D-Wash.)



WISE Template 32

Congressional Record, January 23, 1940

For four years, Dies has been urged to investigate the Klan. His "investigation" occurred on January 27, 1942, and consisted of a "secret" hearing at which Klanleader Colescott appeared, as Dies later informed the press, voluntarily and without subpoena. It resulted the following week in a communication from Colescott to Klan officials and members throughout the country instructing them to support continuation of the Dies Committee!

The Klan was not alone in its support of Dies. Pelley, Fritz Kuhn and countless other perpetrators of un-Americanism have been vocal in their support of Dies and his Committee, as the documentation proves. The affinity of seditious organizations for Martin Dies is in itself sufficient to demand investigation; the roster of names of Dies' supporters and of the 26 named in the indictment shows astounding duplication.

The tactics employed by Dies are likewise the tactics of the seditionists.

Letter from National Federation for Constitutional Liberties to William Maloney, Assistant to the Attorney General, August 1942



WISE Template 33

[http://jfk.hood.edu/Collection/Weisberg Harold Dies Committee Files/Sedition Indictments 3-Ring Binder/Sedition 14A.pdf](http://jfk.hood.edu/Collection/Weisberg%20Harold%20Dies%20Committee%20Files/Sedition%20Indictments%203-Ring%20Binder/Sedition%2014A.pdf)



Wait till the Dies Committee Hears about This!



WISE Template 34

<https://www.visitthecapitol.gov/exhibitions/artifact/wait-till-dies-committee-hears-about-drawing-herbert-block-december-1938>

**J. Parnell Thomas Loses Bid for Parole,
Apparently Because \$10,000 Fine Is Unpaid**

WASHINGTON, July 24 (AP) — he was sentenced last Dec. 9. At J. Parnell Thomas, former New Jersey Representative who headed that time, Federal Judge Alexander Holtzoff directed that Thomas stand committed until the fine is paid.

William H. Collins, local attorney for Thomas, said he understood his client was unable to pay the \$10,000.

Charged with padding his office payroll, Thomas was sentenced to six to eighteen months. He has been a prisoner at the Federal Correctional Institution at Danbury, Conn., for seven and a half months. The United States Parole Board, as usual, gave no reason for rejecting his parole bid. Members noted, however, that no arrangements had been made for paying a \$10,000 fine imposed on Thomas when

The former Representative had made a direct appeal to President Truman several weeks ago for a Presidential pardon that would cancel the remainder of his sentence and also delete the fine. The Justice Department, Mrs. Thomas, at her home in Allendale, N. J., said she did not know whether her husband planned to make another appeal.

The New York Times
Published: July 25, 1950
Copyright © The New York Times

J. Parnell Thomas, R-NJ



Chief investigator for Dies committee
Later indicted for payroll

Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice
 New York, N. Y.

67C
 [redacted] XL
 9-570

November 2, 1959

6- Director
 Federal Bureau of Investigation
 Washington, D. C.

9

Att: Technical Laboratory
 67C

Re: [redacted]
 John Napack - Victim.
 Martin Dies - Victim.
 Extortion.

Dear Sir:

There is being forwarded herewith an unmarked envelope bearing a 1¢ stamp, addressed: "Mr. Martin Dies, Congressman from Texas, Washington, D.C. or Orange, Texas", containing therein a communication written in pencil beginning, "Mr. Martin Dies: Dies your a rat and go back to your sewer", and ending "You and Perkins must be tarred and feathered." 67C

Communist Kissin Dies
 Mr. Martin Dies:
 Dies your a rat and go back to your sewer. If ever you come over N.Y. stay down in the filth in your sewer. Keep out of our way. We on relief want on ① meal a day to scrape up 4¢ into each (on a max a day for ① week) to send telegrams to Washington to allow you \$100,000.00 to drink out our common, ending from our mother.

Martin Dies and the FBI



Dies also sought J. Edgar Hoover's advice on a library for his (Dies) papers.

"Representative Martin Dies is one of the few Americans who has consistently received highly favorable comments in Mr. Hitler's controlled press."

Steuart Henderson Britt and Selden C. Menefee, [\[Source\]](#)

Labeling activities and people as Un-American did little to sway public opinion. Tagging something as "communist" made a big difference.

Did the Dies Committee change public opinion?



WISE Template 37

The results for these experimental groups indicate that the effect of the Dies Committee's campaign against what it calls "Un-American-ism" may have been less than some observers have supposed. Nevertheless, the study indicates that pinning the label of "Communism" on anyone or anything disliked is quite effective. According to the present results, the Dies Committee of 1938 was probably successful in damning at least two well-known liberal organizations and one outstanding labor leader

TABLE I: Percentage of Approval of the 135 Members of Groups I, II, and III, of the 24 Experimental Items

	<i>Approval</i>	<i>Doubtful</i>	<i>Disapproval</i>
1. President Roosevelt	76	4	20
2. Representative Martin Dies	24	35	41
3. The Republican Party	52	14	34
4. The Communist Party	7	12	81
5. Herbert Hoover	46	8	46
6. Secretary of the Interior Ickes	54	25	21
7. The American Civil Liberties Union	27	64	9
8. W.P.A. Administrator Harry Hopkins	56	24	20
9. The American Federation of Labor	65	17	18
10. The American Legion	62	11	27

Did the Dies Committee affect public opinion?



WISE Template 38

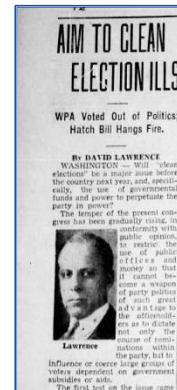
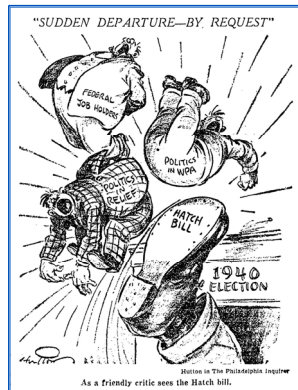
Britt, Steuart Henderson, and Selden C. Menefee. "Did the Publicity of the Dies Committee in 1938 Influence Public Opinion?" *Public Opinion Quarterly* 3, no. 3 (July 1939): 449. <https://doi.org/10.1086/265317>.

In brief, while Dies was not terribly popular, he was able to leverage the unfavourability of the Communist Party and communism in general to his advantage.

Politics and the New Deal

- ▶ Harry Hopkins, the director of the WPA and a Roosevelt crony, "had promised jobs and promotions within the WPA in exchange for votes in the U.S. Senate election in Kentucky.
- ▶ Passage of the Hatch Act, which prohibited federal employees from participating in campaigns
- ▶ See <https://osc.gov/Services/Pages/HatchAct.aspx>
- ▶ Employees may not campaign for or against candidates or otherwise engage in political activity in concert with a political party, a candidate for partisan political office, or a partisan political group.

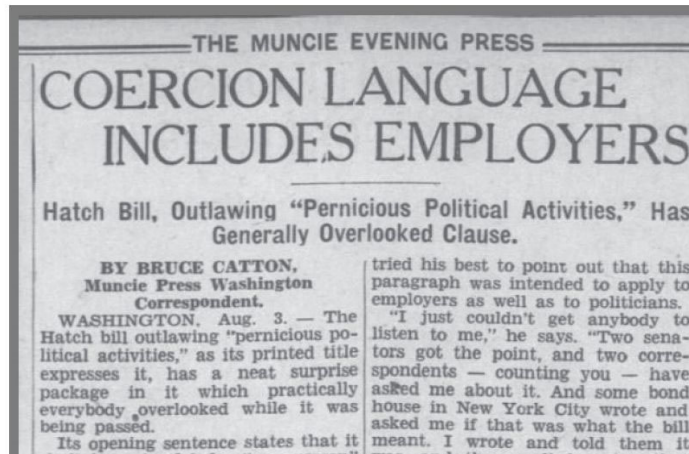




Hatch Act, "An Act to Prevent Pernicious Political Activities" passes in August 1939.




<https://ir.library.louisville.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1213&context=honors>
 "To prevent pernicious political activities" : the 1938 Kentucky Democratic primary and the Hatch Act of 1939.



Broader implications of election reform



<p>► Fear of the Dies Committee was still significant.</p>	<p>PREFACE</p>
<p>The compilation of research data which has provided the basis for this book was done for the Committee by a public agency which has asked that no credit for this assistance be given either to the two score research workers or to the agency.</p>	
<p>► Newsom agreed to publication of the book only if there was no mention of Program involvement.</p>	<p>For three years the compilation of research data which has provided the basis for this book was done for the Committee by a public agency which has asked that no credit for this assistance be given either to the two score research workers or to the agency.</p>
<p>The work continued</p>	
<div data-bbox="248 829 310 926">  </div> <div data-bbox="1235 877 1378 892"> <p>WISE Template 43</p> </div>	

Mangione 341-343

Guides that were underway received monies to complete the projects

Other unfinished or new projects had to find their own funding. Many did through local chambers of commerce, historical societies, and academic institutions. But it was complicated.

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Declaring he resigned after being demoted, Barrett said he believed the project administrators felt he was responsible for "exposing" some of its work. He said some of his manuscripts were "sabotaged" by insertion of "insidious propaganda" and named "Panorama of New York" and "American Stuff" as "reeking with class angles."

ing WPA was told today 60 per
cent of the supervisors of the

The investigations continued as well.



The Montana Standard BUTTE, MONTANA Tuesday, May 2, 1939

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Rep. Clifton Woodrum (R-Virginia), chair of the House Appropriations Committee, continued the investigation into communist influences in FWP

Local Publications

Local publications are often raised to the national level by being of such value and interest that similar publications can be undertaken by other State projects. Or the inherent interest of the subject itself attracts a Nation-wide reading public and merits national publication.

Hand-in-hand with publications of national interest go publications that, while of only local interest, and hence not capable of being made available to the Nation at large, are of prime importance in community life. These local publications are usually planned and distributed through the initiative of local sponsors, but are written according to a national plan and with the active cooperation of the national office. Among these local publications are county histories, elementary science readers, school bulletins, books dealing with colorful local aspects of American life, folklore, and ethnic groups, encyclopedic books on flora and fauna, compendiums of useful facts, pamphlets on civilian defense, etc.

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21st Century Federal Writers' Project

"Artists transform collective experiences into indelible work that holds the power to heal us. Congressman Lieu's work at the federal level complements our efforts in the state legislature to strengthen the arts economy with the California Creative Workforce Act (SB 628) and Save the Performing Arts Act (SB 805). With this coordinated state and federal leverage, we can empower a generation of writers to capture and amplify the diverse stories of the COVID-19 pandemic."

-California State Senator Ben Allen



Next week: The legacy of the Federal Writers' Project



WISE Template

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