

RED SESSION HERE HELD DEMOCRATIC

8 Observers Led by Muste Protest Senate Call to Dennis to Testify

Eight non-Communist observers asserted yesterday that the recent Communist national convention here was "democratically conducted." They reserved judgment on how far the party had achieved independence from Soviet domination.

The eight protested against a summons to Eugene Dennis, Communist national committee member, to testify before the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee in Washington today. They said this was continuing "the un-American practice of governmental inquisition into political opinions and activities."

The statement was released by A. J. Muste, secretary emeritus of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Mr. Muste had arranged for Communist invitations to the group.

In addition to Mr. Muste, the signatories—all acting as individuals, rather than organization representatives—were Dorothy Day, editor of *The Catholic Worker*; Roy Finch, chairman of the War Resisters League; Stringfellow Barr, lecturer; Lyle Tatum of the American Friends Service Committee; Bayard Rustin, executive secretary of the war resisters group; Alfred Hassler of the fellowship; and George Willoughby, director of the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors.

In response to questions, Mr. Muste said two other observers—Carl Rachlin and Lester C. Migdal of the New York Civil Liberties Union—had not been invited to endorse the statement. In fact, he said, it was initiated because of Mr. Rachlin's testimony last Wednesday to the Senate subcommittee.

Mr. Rachlin testified the convention showed no evidence of a Communist party break with Moscow and was only "fooling the public." Newsmen had been barred from the convention, held Feb. 9 to 12 at the Chateau Gardens, 105 East Houston Street, although official briefings were given.

The Muste group said "there were many indications that no individual or group was in a position to control the convention." There was "vigorous discussion of all matters brought to the floor," it added.

"We deplore the fact that the convention arrived at no clear condemnation of the military intervention in Hungary," the statement went on.

The New York Times

Published: February 25, 1957

Copyright © The New York Times