

WHY HITLER'S GENERALS ARE DESERTING

*By Otto Strasser*

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OUR FASCIST ENEMIES WITHIN

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► A war-time follow-up on this writer's  
"Inside the America First Movement."

## OUR FASCIST ENEMIES WITHIN

By JOHN ROY CARLSON

IN A previous article I reported in detail how the America First Committee had been infiltrated and thoroughly polluted by support and actual adhesions from the most sinister pro-Nazi and fascist-minded groups in the country. Although most of this support was uninvited, it was largely tolerated even by the best-intentioned leaders and in many local chapters it took over control. Thus was created the distinctly totalitarian atmosphere in which the Committee found itself when the attack on Pearl Harbor put us into the war.

My article tried to differentiate sharply between the honest, principled isolationists and the hate-mongering elements acting as agents of foreign nations or misusing the movement as a convenient vehicle for their own special brands of fascist notions. America's entry into the war makes that differentiation even more important. Tens of thousands of yesterday's "isolationists" are today without reservation on America's side of the war.

The Committee itself has served notice of dissolution. Its former national director, General Robert E. Wood, writes me that "members of the National Committee are loyally supporting the war efforts of the nation." The same holds true, undoubtedly, for the great majority of the rank-and-file membership and unenrolled supporters. Some doubt about the quality of the loyalty, insofar as certain leaders are concerned, is raised by their own strange actions. Not content to let bygones be bygones, they seem to be going out of their way to carry over into war time the isolationist-interventionist issues of pre-war years.

For instance, preparations are evidently under way to revive isolationist bitterness in the next national elections. General Wood himself showed the way when he wrote to America First unit heads last December 15: "We hope that as individuals you will exert your efforts in support of those members of the Senate and House of Representatives who have so

bravely carried on this fight." Local chieftains, in transmitting the letter, often added their own exhortations to keep alive past quarrels. On occasion they did it as crudely as this, by Mrs. Edward W. Kimbark, chairman of the Evans-ton, Illinois, chapter:

We also hope that you will support the Congressmen who voted as we asked them to on various issues during the past year by working for their reelection. We must be loyal to them for they did our bidding.

Gratitude is a virtue open to question when it cuts so ruthlessly across a nation's solidarity in an hour of crisis. To an outsider, this attempt to perpetuate pre-war differences seems out of alignment with the America First pledge of loyal support of the war effort. Obviously, therefore, the formal dissolution of America First does not prove that its spirit or even its organizational cohesion have been eliminated. Nevertheless, the truly American sectors of the movement deserve every benefit of the doubt.

But what of the others? What of the raucously totalitarian groups which had channeled their activities and their emotions into the America First movement? What of the crackpot fringes of "shirt" organizations which had, likewise, found a cosy home in the environs of America First?

It is my disagreeable duty to report, on the basis of extensive investigation, that there has been no miracle of patriotic conversion among these elements. The collapse of a convenient band-wagon has left many of the hitchhikers and fellow-travelers stranded and confused. They are all in the throes of readjustment to the new war conditions. But they remain as numerous, as active and as dangerous as ever. Because their activities now provide direct psychological reinforcement for the physical attacks by enemy forces, these elements have become in a very literal war sense *enemies within*.

The chairman of the Americanism Committee of the California Department of the American Legion, Ben S. Beery, writes me that in his state "many of the people who were formerly in the America First movement are now working with other organizations whose sole purpose is to demoralize the people." This is a mild summary of the facts in all other states as well. I have at hand publications, bulletins, correspondence, all written since we entered the war, all reflecting the temper and hinting at the plans of the fascist cohorts within our frontiers.<sup>1</sup> In my own

<sup>1</sup> We have seen the originals of all documents quoted in this article and can attest their authenticity. — THE EDITORS.

view, they raise pertinent questions:

At what point does good-natured official tolerance become criminally complacent official negligence? Does the Bill of Rights exclude the application of common sense in respect to deliberate and malicious misuse of freedom of press and speech to aid the enemy in time of war?

An ardent America Firster, in a letter postmarked December 29, writes to a comrade across the continent:

For the time being we are in a state of quiescence, waiting for events to shape themselves. The trend of things already is less obscure. . . . You can be sure that very few of those who were with us before have changed their minds — although they may be cautious for the present.

Another writes on December 31:

We have already arranged to resume weekly meetings. We have a lot of ideas, are not in any way terrified and will not pull our punches.

The rest of his letter is taken up with an appeal for funds to enable him to carry on his struggle for "the truth." It was in the service of that "truth" — chiefly an extreme form of race hatred — that this patriot attended at least forty-three America First meetings:

The advent of war did not dis-

hearten the veteran Nazi propagandist, William Dudley Pelley, whose foreign policy line for America paralleled that of the German-American Bund. Just before he was hauled off to serve a prison term he sent out an enthusiastic war-time bulletin to his adherents, from Indianapolis, dated December 27. It read in part:

I am reshaping my plans to make 1942 the BIGGEST year of the Pelley publications since I set up this project. . . . I propose to get out a line of periodicals and books during 1942 such as no other concern in the country is printing;— books that the nation will simply HAVE to buy. And while I'm doing it, I am keeping my ear to the ground, watching and waiting for my opportunity to function in the convulsion of a great Peace Settlement. . . .

\* \* \*

THIS WAR IS QUITE ALL RIGHT! It is going to work the economic and social miracles that never could have been otherwise, *and all of us are going to be a personal part of them.* . . . Get over your doldrums if you have them. . . .

Pelley signed himself "Fraternally and confidently." The same confidence breathes through the fire-eating propaganda of the Crusader White Shirts in Chattanooga, Tennessee, headed by the redoubtable George W. Christians. A confidential memorandum addressed only to trusted "crusaders," dated January 1, 1942, outlines "a plan" for the war period:

It is very simple. Here it is. Since this Monstrous Civilization, based upon Gold and Greed, seems determined to commit suicide, I think we should all pitch in and help it do the job quickly and thoroughly.

Even in war time we are permitted to ask questions, so on the reverse side of this page is a list of them which are designed to finish the demoralization and disintegration of the existing order and create a REIGN OF TERROR.

The questions listed are typical products of the Goebbels propaganda mills: "Do Germany, Italy and Japan have the right to fight for freedom from our economic strangulation?" "Is Military Aggression more brutal or immoral than the Economic Strangulation of the Tyranny of Gold?" "Do we have enough Blood and Treasure to Determine the Destiny of all the People of the World?" "Are we fighting to make Roosevelt the Dictator of the World?" The essence of Crusader Christians' "very simple plan," geared for these war days, is in this exhortation:

When the MAD MOB gets in MOTION make sure that they dig all of the blood-sucking banksters out from under their piles of rock and steel. Line them up against a wall and SHOOT them. See that they run down all the Political Parasites. Don't miss a single Politician, big or little. Just HANG them to the nearest tree or lamp-post.

In a later bulletin, dated January 5, 1942, Mr. Christians is even more explicit:

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the World's Greatest Humbug. . . . Our Liberty and Security were stolen by Washington's Raw Deal. Now we are to give up our LIVES for the delusions of Grandeur of a Merciless Monster, FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT. SOME NECK — for a ROPE.<sup>2</sup>

Father Coughlin's weekly *Social Justice* is somewhat more subtle, but no less cynical in its defeatism and anti-American innuendoes. The very issue (January 5) announcing that periodical's investment of \$25,000 in Defense Bonds overflows with attacks on our war effort. In the aftermath of Pearl Harbor, while General MacArthur's forces were dying to hold off Jap invading hordes, Father Coughlin's mouthpiece declaimed sanctimoniously: }

In Japan there live 75-million persons. Japan is smaller than California. It is one-twentieth the size of Australia. Japan is almost barren of natural resources. Her people are prolific. Is there not another law, mightier than the "Atlantic Charter," which permits a people to expand to unused territories? Is it not true that the "earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof?"

\* \* \*

Any honest person will concede that Hitler and Hitlerism were protests against the old order dominated by Britain and the United States; were spearheads of a "new order" to overthrow imperialism. . . . This means that the signatories of the Atlantic

<sup>2</sup> The typographical vagaries, especially the prodigal use of capital letters, are characteristic of the crackpot fringe literature. — J.R.C.

Charter abhor Hitler's blood superiority but support the British and American imperial superiority.

It will take more than \$25,000 in bonds to disguise a voice of Hitlerism in our midst — unless we deliberately shut our ears to its inescapable accents.

## II

Enough lip service to the American war undertaking to placate the Department of Justice — and all-out sabotage of national morale. That is the war-time "party line" of American fascism. On the whole, it is remarkable for the boldness of its methods, the violence of its language and the candor of its motives. The milder, more timid members of pro-Nazi mobs are shying away from outright anti-war activities. But the chronically fascist elements — ex-Bundists, many varieties of Coughlinites, followers of Pelley and the Rev. Gerald L. K. Smith, adherents of the teeming "shirt" organizations, etc. — have embraced the war as their great opportunity to serve the Cause. Far from ending their subversive existence, Pearl Harbor has served as a signal for redoubled effort.

The ideal conditions for the operation of these groups are national crises, military reverses,

mounting taxes. In the warnings of both Roosevelt and Churchill that a long and difficult road lies ahead of us, fascist vultures smell the promise of carrion. Already one sees through their words that their mouths are watering for the victims. Every military upset for the democracies, and especially for the United States, will be the occasion for an invigorated internal assault on the civilian front. Simultaneous military and morale offensives represent a basic concept of Nazi war technique.

Since the dissolution of the America First Committee, the fascist rabble has been obliged to return to its former status — that of an unorganized, rebellious mass movement without central leadership and without "respectable" cover for its operations. The local rabble-rousers and national pace-setters are back in the saddle. Each of them contributes to the general program for the propagation of a defeatist mood, appeasement, distrust of the national leadership, anti-Semitism, indiscriminate red-baiting, anti-British propaganda, defamation of democracy as a way of life. Their frank major objective is "to win the peace" — to take control when the shooting is over and, as they assume of course, America has lost.

Three intensive years in the Nazi underworld of our country as an undercover investigator have made me a realist. I believe that 1942 will witness a resurgence of Nazi-fascist activity which will confound the smug and apathetic ones inside our government. It will alarm even those extremists of civil liberty who are now so sure it must be carried to the point of suicide for democracy. The sooner we break through complacency in regard to this danger, the better we shall be able to meet its threat. But let's return to the documents:

The leader of the misnamed Christian Front in New England, dissolved, is one Francis P. Moran. A few days after the Axis had declared war on the United States, he mailed a mimeographed leaflet to his followers in which he shrieked: "Mr. Roosevelt has sent our citizens to their deaths. . . . He is guilty of murder." He specifically called on his adherents to refuse to pay income taxes:

We advocate the refusal by all sincere and courageous American citizens to pay such taxes on the basis that they are unconstitutional, un-American and morally unjust. . . . Do not refuse to file your income tax reports. Place yourself on record honestly and then refuse to pay this unjust tax.

Soon thereafter, the same Moran asked for "a chance to prove his

Americanism by making speeches to sell Defense Bonds." Only the most gullible will be fooled by this horseplay. Anyone who knows Moran as closely as I do is aware that his "patriotism" is so much calculated strategy. It is in line with the *Social Justice* investment of \$25,000 in Defense Bond coloration.

In the January issue of *The Beacon Light*, an outspokenly fascist publication, William Kullgren, after predicting dire disaster for America, writes:

Nevertheless, we are its creators. The Synagogue of Satan could not have gotten control of our nation if there had not been a falling away from spiritual fundamentals. . . . In one sense 1942 is Judgment Day. >

Kullgren is a former associate of Pelley. His *Beacon Light* has touted all the standard wares of the Nazi forgery factories, and still advertises the notorious fake *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Adroitly, he resorts to "astrological prophecy" — a familiar Nazi device — in his latest issue to predict the early death of the President. One must read Kullgren's words as they would sound to a weak-minded fascist fanatic to grasp their horrifying implications:

If he [the President] carries out the indications of his chart he will set in motion forces that will destroy him. . . .

There is grave danger of assassination. . . . If the people fail to act I am satisfied that divinity will act, possibly through a stroke or something similar but it will be sudden. . . . Which of the two courses [death or impeachment] will take place I am not prepared to say. I prefer to paint the picture to show you the forces in operation and to leave the responsibility with you. . . . And you, will reap as you have sown: and the sins of omissions are as deadly as those of commission.

Now as always, here as in Germany and other countries, the whipping up of race prejudice is the chief Nazi weapon of national disunity. Witness the latest mouthings of Charles W. Hudson, the gentleman who won the nickname "Poison Cup" when he snatched a glass of water from General Moseley's hand, at a session of the Dies Committee, because "it might be poisoned." Here is a morsel from his writings under date of December 22:

Since any tyro knows who is behind prostitution, liquor, vice, dope and scrap metal businesses, it is time Christian Americans make their voices heard in Congress before it is too late. That is the best way you can celebrate Christ's Birth. Remember who crucified Him.

In line with this noble contribution to national unity is an article in *Social Justice*, issue of December 29, cynically titled "Let's Have Confidence." Its sarcasm is as vicious as it is puerile:

On all sides, as a result of the Pearl Harbor débâcle, unnecessary misgivings are cropping up about our ability to carry war successfully into the Orient. . . . We say to our readers — have confidence.

At the helm stands President Roosevelt, who is Commander-in-Chief of Army and Navy. Counselling him, when needed, he has Herbert H. Lehman. . . . Lehman is a capable banker, married to a sister of Frank Altschul, partner in the international banking firm of Lazard Freres. . . .

Mr. Roosevelt has the friendship and assistance of his close neighbor and Secretary of the Treasury, Henry Morgenthau, Jr. In turn, Mr. Morgenthau has for his head economist, Lawrence Seltzer. His chief consultant is Jacob Viner, of the University of Chicago.

Mr. Roosevelt has the fine counsel of Felix Frankfurter. . . . Mr. Roosevelt has, as his chief foreign ambassador, William C. Bullitt, whose mother was a Horwitz. . . .

The article goes on and on in this vein, mentioning Jewish names and implying "Jewish connections" for Stimson, Knox, LaGuardia and Cordell Hull. With such leadership, the tongue-in-cheek writer concludes, "victory and justice is in the offing." For initiated readers, it is no less than a frontal attack on the American war effort, and for the fanatic Coughlinites a direct order not to cooperate with the American government.

One more example must suffice. Here is Mr. Kullgren again, in a solemn, prophetic vein, gracefully retiring from the bloodshed once

he has set the butchery in operation:

Intelligent Jews will see the handwriting on the wall and there will be an unusual number of suicides and deaths. . . . The people of America will become Jew-conscious to a serious degree and much violence will result. . . . When that time arrives my work will be finished; I am an educator, not a butcher.

### III

Fascists attacks on communism mean as little as communist attacks on fascism. In both cases they represent tactics in the larger war on all democracy. It is therefore important to distinguish between criticism of communist ideology from democratic sources and this sort of rabble-rousing from the January 1 number of *Publicity*, a pro-Nazi sheet published in Wichita, Kansas:

Put none but Americans on guard and don't let the communistic politicians abolish the 1942 county, state and Congressional elections. . . . We must clean house in no uncertain manner. Communism and the father of communism must GO in 1942.

The Rev. Gerald L. K. Smith — registered in 1936 as Number 3223 in Pelley's Silver Shirts — was among the most voluble isolationists. His "Committee of 1,000,000" acted as host to leading America Firsters, besides carrying on its

own appeasement work. With the outbreak of the war, the reverend gentleman has switched all his resources to red-baiting of the typically fascist variety. In a recent release, pleading for funds, he screams of "the spread of communism . . . international propaganda, financed by international bankers, politicians and conspirators . . . plotters, communists, international racketeers" who "are already laying plans to turn our victory when this war is won over to foreigners and foreign countries."

And Father Coughlin recommends to his flock to entrench itself in the Office of Civilian Defense as a safeguard against communists:

If Moscow-minded misfits seek responsible positions in organizations at home while your sons, brothers, husbands and sweethearts are dying abroad, overwhelm them by your numbers and capture every office. Join up with the Office of Civilian Defense.

The anti-British *motif* in the new songs of anti-American propaganda is typified by this from the Crusader White Shirts:

Are we fighting to restore Europe to British Economic Bondage. . . . Winston Churchill, that Master of Hypocrisy and Hate, tried hard to inflame the Lust for Revenge against those who have broken British Economic Bondage. How the Political Parasites cheered. How they WISH the American people would swallow this Contemptible Contumely.

To which *Social Justice*, always more subtle and more poisonous, adds in the issue of January 5:

Nazi Germany required the leadership of Hitler and the assistance of millions of armed men to overrun Europe. Great Britain needed nothing more than the mercurial presence and golden voice of Winston Churchill to captivate — if not capture — the United States of America.

William Dudley Pelley's *The Galilean* offers a medley of all the motifs in the symphony of race hatred, defeatism and glorification of the Hitler idea. Printed on expensive paper, profusely illustrated, with a two-color cover, it fairly proclaims its prosperity. It would be useful, as part of our internal defense effort, to trace the source of its financial support. The publication is a mixture of mysticism, sedition and "clairaudient revelation," of a type familiar in Germany on the eve of Hitler's accession to power. It announces itself candidly as precursor of a New Order to be established on the ruins of the New Deal.

For the defeatists, *The Galilean* of January 5 provides ample encouragement of this sort:

Military history attests that when a major power grabs the initiative at the beginning of conflict, it proceeds to dictate the course of that war to the end. . . . There can be such a thing as a nation taking such terrific body

blows at the beginning of a fight that it never has an opportunity to repair the opening damage. . . . Within the twelve-month the United States may be bottled up on her own continent, blockaded on every mile of shoreline, impotent to smash the ring of her enemies.

The only solution this Cassandra sees is all-out appeasement:

The big thing at present is to rectify the New Deal diplomatic blunder and bring the war to a graceful conclusion with as little further loss to American territory and sovereignty as may be contrivable. . . . Every reverse that comes in the Pacific would appear to be but another smear of grease, preparing the chute for the slide. . . . The prospects are that the war will be brought to a fairly swift close, the moment the anti-Nazi fire-eaters can be excused politically from power. And that is a consummation devoutly to be wished.

Pelley, it must be said, does have the courage of his convictions. He says in so many words that the United States, not Japan, started the Pacific war, because our "provocative conduct" led to the bombing of Pearl Harbor! This, however, does not leave him, as an American, particularly sad. On the contrary, he glories in it all as prelude to a great change. Listen to *The Galilean*:

It is conceivable that six months of an utterly ruinous war might cause it to become most attractive to certain legislators responsible for the débâcle to retire and let others take over and see what order they can bring out of the

mess. *It has happened in other countries. It can happen here in America.* . . .

Two days after the Hawaiian attack, Herman D. Kissenger, of Kansas City, Missouri, wrote to Representative John B. Dingell: "I think it is the Congress and the President that ought to be court-martialed — that is, impeached. . . . The main responsibility for the attack by Japan rests on the shoulders of 'Grandpa Knox'!" Kissenger has been a Nazi propagandist since 1933. He contributed regularly to the Bund weekly, to *Social Justice, Publicity, National American*. In 1938 he furnished a mailing list of Americans to the American section of the notorious Nazi propaganda outfit, *World Service*.

At this writing, Kissenger, after brief detention, has been released to continue work for his chosen cause. Little wonder that his breed are quite optimistic about their chances of bigger and better Hitlerite propaganda even while we are at war with Hitler. Two of California's prime fascist agitators — Robert Noble, president of The Friends of Progress, and Ellis O. Jones, head of the National Copperheads — held a mass meeting at Embassy Auditorium, Los Angeles, on January 7. Their leaflets carried these boastful lines:

Remember: the US Attorney-General says we have a PERFECT RIGHT TO TALK — AND WE WILL!

Under the benign dispensation, there is a growing number of fascist publications. Of those issued before the war, the German-American Bund weekly and a few others have discontinued. The rest are still in business, with little if any change even in their window dressing. *America in Danger*, a fascist sheet published in Omaha, in effect admits publicly that it is subversive by displaying this warning:

NOTICE — If any soldier receives *America in Danger* bulletin, I did not send it. If any subscriber joins Armed Forces, advise me so I can remove such name from *America in Danger*. — Charles B. Hudson.

*Destiny*, put out by the so-called Anglo-Saxon Federation, with headquarters in Haverhill, Massachusetts, renewed a drive for membership and circulation immediately after Pearl Harbor. It took full-page advertisements in New York, Washington, Hartford and San Francisco. It is published even more expensively than *The Galilean*. There can be no doubt that the Federation has fat sources of income. The organization rests on as fantastic a "historical" lunacy as any issued from the subterranean chambers of Nazi science. The ten lost tribes of Israel are not lost at

all. They have merely migrated to Anglo-Saxon lands, leaving only "the tribe of Judah" in Palestine. It is in the name of true Israel, therefore, that this Federation wars on the remnants of Judah! Although the Federation has no "uniformed" members and no tangible program, it has played a fascist rôle in its violent racial propaganda and through its championing of General George Van Horn Moseley, whose pro-Nazi views are now a matter of public record. It is significant that the war should have served to intensify the work of this organization.

Another exemplar of the current techniques of national disunity is provided by *The X-Ray*, a half-literature sheet edited by one Court Asher in Muncie, Indiana — the city famed as Middletown. The weekly describes itself as "supporting the democratic principles of Thomas Jefferson." It is in Jefferson's name that its front page for January 3 "exposes" the V symbol for victory as just another Hebraic trick to snare the innocent. Having proved that much, Asher has no trouble at all proving that he would be "a Knave" or "a Willkie" if he failed to apprise his readers that it was "the secret manipulations of the Jew money powers" through the New Deal

"that brought this war about."

The leading editorial of *The X-Ray* before me is titled "I LISTENED TO CHURCHILL AND CURSED." Not content with current history, the issue delves into the past with a reprint of the famous canard previously published by Pelley and Coughlin, "Who Plotted Lincoln's Death?" You guessed it. Somehow or other Lincoln seems to have aroused the enmity of "the Rothschilds," who decided to have him assassinated.

*The X-Ray* ravings, original and reprinted from *Social Justice*, might be ignored for the pathological nonsense that they are, were it not that so many Middletown businessmen actually advertise in the publication. The sheet itself could be brushed aside, if it did not fit so snugly into the larger pattern of psychological offensive traced in this article.

The attitude of the Department of Justice in the face of this internal offensive has been one of sad resignation. Apparently it is assumed officially that the Bill of Rights leaves America without recourse to common sense.

That, however, does not dispose of the issue. Clearly even traditional concepts of civil rights must be adjusted to the facts of modern

"psychological warfare." Increasingly the American people are likely to ask fundamental questions: Must we submit to internal Axis attacks merely because they take the form of words instead of explosives? Shall the ideological agents of Nazism have the right of way at the very moment when Americans are making supreme sacrifices to defeat Nazism on the fields of battle? Does not the new fascist idea of war-making, extending military operations to the home front in terms of morale, call for adequate counter-measures?

I quote a passage from an address by the editor of the *AMERICAN MERCURY* on the Town Hall of the Air program recently:

We must recognize, right here and now, that every attack on the mind and nerves of America is as dangerous as an attack on its factories and cities. We must recognize that every preaching which sets group against group, race against race, section against section, is, at this juncture, an act of war. Those who would wreck our national unity are as guilty of sabotage as those who would wreck our industrial plants or communications. Those who place their private rights and special group interests above the common danger and the common task are delaying the victory and putting us all in jeopardy.



Withdrawal