

## MEET SOME JEW-BAITERS

By VIRGINIA GARDNER

Baltimore, Md.

*"When the present war is over, we do not at all intend to exclude active and real, straight and genuine cooperation with other nations whether they are at present our friends or enemies in the current war (1944)." — From the "Statement of Principles" of American Action, Inc., "nonpartisan movement."*

AT LEAST one of the committees which subtly disseminated anti-Semitism and warnings against so-called trends toward Communism and bureaucracy in campaigning for the candidacy of Tom Dewey is set up to continue operations. This Maryland committee, American Action, Inc., aims to promote a soft peace for our enemies. Its "Statement of Principles" plank quoted above, and conversations I have had with members make that clear.

Leaders of the group deny any connection with that leader of fascist ideology in America, Gerald L. K. Smith, just as they deny, with smirks, that their organization is anti-Semitic. But they have definite links with Smith, which I shall describe, and their literature reeks with anti-Semitic overtones.

Key figures in the corporation, Rev. Dr. Walter M. Haushalter, pastor of Baltimore's well-attended Christian Temple, and Eric Arlt, a sinister and mysterious character who has been mixed up in some of Baltimore's more flamboyant race-hate ventures, made conflicting statements to me. Both of them denied that the committee was connected with Smith. But Arlt declared that American Action, Inc., had held one meeting, in the Alcazar temple, on October 2 last, and I learned elsewhere on unquestioned authority that Gerald L. K. Smith addressed a closed meeting held in the Alcazar on October 2. It was attended by some 200 persons, among them, in front row seats reserved for honored guests, Messrs. Haushalter and Arlt. Questioned about an October 2 meeting of American Action in the Alcazar, Mr. Haushalter said, however, "I don't recall that we held any meeting at the Alcazar on October 2." "Do you recall any meeting held in the Alcazar?"

he was asked. "No," he replied. "But I don't care to make any statement about the committee." Asked whether Smith hadn't spoken at a meeting of American Action, he said positively, "We have no connection with Gerald L. K. Smith and he has never spoken at a meeting of American Action."

The meeting at which Smith spoke was not advertised as under the auspices of American Action. But it is interesting that of the three meetings addressed by Smith in Baltimore during the campaign, only at this one was it announced the collection taken at the meeting would not go to the national America First Party funds but would be used for local purposes. The meeting was not reported in the press, as were Smith's other two meetings. Arlt took pains to volunteer the information that Smith had spoken at only two meetings here—but this was not the only matter on which Arlt cheerfully looked me in the eye with his half-smile and brazenly departed from known facts.

The Baltimore Sun of April 14 last reported the formation of a Baltimore branch of the America First party the previous night in the Alcazar at a meeting of 500 persons, with Gerald L. K.

Smith speaking, and concluded with a paragraph reading: "Preliminary arrangements for the meeting were made in the name of the Citizens Good Government Committee by Eric Arlt, of Dundalk."

I failed to find Mr. Arlt in Dundalk, an outlying community of Baltimore, after a considerable search, but did locate him at the other side of town, in his bungalow at 709 Dunkirk Avenue. Arlt denied ever having heard of the Citizens Good Government Committee or knowing anything about its arrangements in behalf of the Smith meeting.

LET there be no mistake about it: American Action, Inc., is not a crude, hastily-organized sort of outfit such as the Christian Action Committee of Muncie, Ind., for instance. [See NEW MASSES of October 31 for Miss Gardner's expose of the Christian Action Committee.] The CAC was frankly organized to combat the CIO's Political Action Committee and help elect Dewey. Composed largely of old functionaries of the Ku Klux Klan, the CAC was run behind the scenes by an avowed admirer of Father Charles Coughlin and Gerald L. K. Smith, Clarence Benadum, who sat on the platform at an America First rally during the campaign. The CAC never enrolled more than a few disreputable members of the clergy with Klan backgrounds. The Baltimore committee, on the other hand, has an impressive letterhead. It has managed to mislead some prominent clergymen in Baltimore whose pacifism has made them perhaps more gullible than they would be otherwise. It also has enrolled as patrons and directors, however, persons well identified with the America First Committee. Haushalter readily admitted his own connection with the Baltimore branch of the committee, as vice chairman. "It was the old committee, a patriotic committee, not the political party. I had no connection with the party," he said piously.

Dr. Haushalter greeted me with a benign smile and an almost effusive



Eugene Karlin



warmth. When I had reached him by phone he had not asked me my business but, apparently assuming I was a lady in some spiritual distress, told me I might come right out. Bending toward me from his impressive six-foot or more height, and flashing his dark, theatrical eyes at me, he asked me at once: "Would you care to speak with me in my study? It's a little more secluded." I smiled up at him in gratitude and it was in this spirit that our *tete-a-tete* began, Dr. Haushalter facing me with a smile of encouragement. His fingertips together, he inquired in unctuous tones, "Now what can I do for you?"

"Well," I began dreamily, "I wanted to talk to you about American Action, Inc. Is it still going on?"

His manner cooled just perceptibly, but he said, "Oh, yes, yes, indeed. What was it you wished to know?"

"Why, I'm a writer with *NEW MASSES*," I said, "and I'm just looking into it."

But now the change in his manner leaped from the quantitative to the qualitative in a hurry. The light faded completely from those beautiful dark eyes, and the lips beneath the Ronald Colman-like mustache twitched with displeasure. He drummed his fingers on the arm of his chair. As we talked he gave increasing signs of agitation, his hands actually shaking. At one point he asked, "Do you really think they will write us up?" This must have seemed a little undignified to his own ears. "Of course, we have nothing to hide, we're out in the open. Anyone can shoot at us," he said, defiant now.

"Our purposes are all there in our statement of principles," he said. I said I had seen them. "We're just trying to promote Christian principles in government. No, we had no connection with either party, or the Communists or fascists [he pronounced it with a broad 'a']—in the campaign. We just urged voters to put all candidates through the sieve—to test them to see if they stood up to standards of Christian principles. We put on six or seven broadcasts before the election, the last the Sunday before, and we will put on others from time to time."

I ASKED him about the letter the organization sent to clergymen. The copy I saw was dated September 19. "Will you go into action with us for a more Christian America?" the letter asked in part. It was sent only to Protestants and Catholics? "That's right," he said, "it was sent to every Protestant

and Catholic clergyman in the state of Maryland." Why were Jews excluded? I asked.

"We thought it would be a little presumptuous," he said, regaining some of his composure and giving me a sickly-sweet smile, "to ask any rabbi to subscribe to Christian principles. Of course," he went on blandly, "if there were any Jews who felt they could subscribe to Christian principles—after all, they're mostly just those of the Sermon on the Mount—why, we would have no objection to their joining us. At the same time, we would have no objection to their organizing to promote Jewish principles in the government."

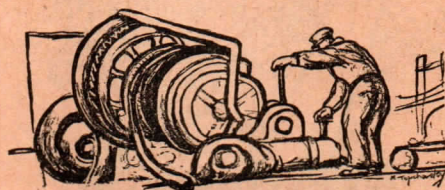
"And what are the differences, Mr. Haushalter, between Jewish principles and Christian principles?" I asked.

"Well, that gets us into an involved discussion, and besides, I would not want to be talking about committee policy until I see my board of directors," he said.

I told him I had read the text of one of his own radio broadcasts over WFBR (September 28) and the AA "principles" on the back of the letter to the clergy. "When there is such stressing of *Christian* all the way through," I asked, "don't you think someone might just possibly get the idea your organization was anti-Semitic?"

"I don't see how they possibly could," said Haushalter with exaggerated politeness, his eyes glittering, a faint smile playing about his thin lips. I failed to get the humor of the occasion, and I experienced this same feeling in an even more pronounced degree when I talked to Arlt—a sense that he could barely contain his laughter when he was saying politely, oh, how could devotion to Christian principles be considered anti-Semitic?

In his broadcast Haushalter had appealed to voters and said that AA, Inc., "comprises both Catholics and Protestants who earnestly desire that America shall return to Christian principles and constitutional government." He then said that "this Maryland movement called American Action is one of several similar movements now coming forward



Topchevsky

in various parts of the United States. There is a widespread feeling in all states of the union that something has sprung up on our soil that is hostile and alien to our American way of life and our American institutions. This hostile and alien thing offers a threat to Christianity and to all those sacred values known as constitutional government. Therefore you will find today in many different states American Christian and patriotic groups similar to our own, calling citizens into action. . . ."

But in speaking with me Haushalter vigorously denied that AA was connected with any single organization. Gerald L. K. Smith? "We are not connected with *any* group," he said. What did he feel about Smith? "I don't care to say," he replied petulantly. "He is an ordained minister of my church."

Was it true he had urged his congregation to attend a Smith meeting? No, indeed. (This was before I learned he attended.)

"You tell me your organization is concerned about both Communism in the government and fascism. Do you mean you think there are fascists in the government, too?" I asked.

"Well, no, in the government it is mostly Communism we fear. But I will have to consult with my board of directors."

AFTER repeatedly protesting someone was waiting for him, that he had an appointment, that I would have to excuse him, we emerged from the study to find the selfsame secretary and the church janitor alone in the outer room.

"Now if the *NEW MASSES* is planning to write this group up as a fascist organization," he said loudly, "as some other Communist organization here did—"

"Who was that?" I interrupted. "Oh, some CIO paper," he said, impatiently. "As I say, if the *NEW MASSES* wants to take on a fight with us, it is taking on a job against organized Catholic and Protestant churches of Baltimore."

When I called him back on the telephone later to ask if he had seen his board, he said, "I haven't had a reply, but I doubt very much whether they want to be written up by *NEW MASSES*. Very frankly I don't care to be interviewed by *NEW MASSES*."

When I pointed out he already had been and that I intended to quote him, he said in a voice shaking with rage, "Then, just put this down, if you have a pencil. That if *NEW MASSES* is going



# AMERICAN ACTION, INC.

811 MARYLAND TRUST BUILDING, CALVERT AND REDWOOD STREETS, BALTIMORE-2, MD.

\*\*\* A PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT TO \*\*\*  
Return America to Christian Principles  
Return America to Constitutional Government  
Return America to First Place in the Hearts of Americans

September 19, 1944

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#### Reverend and Dear Pastor:

All Catholic and Protestant Clergymen of Maryland, including your assistants, are addressed in this communication. The Board of Directors of American Action, Clergy and Laymen, request you to bring to the attention of your Congregation the proposals on the reverse of this letter-head. Please do this by sermon, address, notice, or announcement in your Church Bulletin, or by any other means you deem effective.

The members of American Action are alarmed at un-Christian tendencies in America. We propose concerted action by the Churches to inject Christian Ethics into our public affairs. Will you go into action with us for a more Christian America?

Our Radio Broadcasts over W F B R for the next six weeks follow:

Each Thursday evening, September 28th, October 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th, November 2nd, from 7:15 to 7:30 o'clock. Also, Sunday, November 5th, from 2:15 to 2:30 Afternoon.

Will you please announce these Broadcasts to your Congregation, urging your members to listen and give them wide publicity.

Faithfully yours,

The Board of Directors, American Action.

*Wm. C. Stockhausen* Chairman

*John L. Bazinet* Vice Chairman

*Walter M. Hausalter* Vice Chairman

Letter addressed exclusively to "Christians" from American Action, Inc., in Baltimore calling for "action" for "a more Christian America."

to tangle with us they'll tangle with powerful Christian influences in this country—"

"You made such a threatening statement the other day," I reminded him. "It's not a threat," he said chokingly, "it's just the way we feel about it. Goodby."

I was ushered into the Arlt home reluctantly by a buxom lady with a strong Teutonic accent, presumably Mrs. Arlt. She quickly retired to the kitchen but emerged periodically thereafter to declare, "Eric, you really must be excused now. You have an appointment, you know."

Eric himself is a personable figure—if you like the glacial type. He is trim and erect. His hair is graying prematurely and is set in meticulous waves close to his head. His eyes are opaque

and hazel and stare fixedly ahead. He has a chiseled mouth and fine teeth and a cold little smile hovers constantly on his alabaster-like countenance. The smile only makes it the colder.

"Pardon my appearance," he said, indicating his beautiful costume—a finely tailored, sports shirt of brown and white plaid, and brown slacks. Except for the uninspired interior background, he looked like an ad for Finchley's. That was quite all right, I said, indicating that I had selected the little number I was wearing solely because of the snow-storm I arrived in.

I told him I was trying to learn something about American Action, told him who I was, and asked him about the plank calling for collaboration with enemy countries. "Yes, but that's for after the war," he said in the sort of flat toneless voice many deaf people

have. "We believe that charity should begin at home but not end there. We're not for hatred. We're for a family of nations."

"Now let me get this straight," I said. "Is your organization for a sort of peace which would not be like Versailles—"

"That's right," he said. "We're for the sovereignty of our nation as well as all nations. Tolerance is a greatly misunderstood thing. True tolerance requires us to be tolerant even with our enemies, of course," he said, with the self-same smile, "we couldn't afford to take a position toward our enemies which might harm our country because of course we're a nationalistic group, committed to nationalistic principles. 'Return America to First Place in the Hearts of Americans,'" he chanted, "—you've probably read our literature. But of course from the Catholic point of view, there's only one international head, and all people are alike, even our enemies. That's in the religious sense. We haven't gone any farther than our principles say."

I asked him if there were other organizations elsewhere similar to American Action, Inc. "Oh, yes, the Four Freedoms Committee in New Jersey, and then there are others," he said with his glassy eyes staring in my direction.

"Eric, you really must hurry," said Mrs. Eric for about the third time. Eric seemed in no hurry. I asked about his own background. The Volke Co., which he heads, is a wholesale hardware concern. He was for years Americanization chairman of the American Legion, Hamilton post, one of the city's largest, he said. He is a board member of the Baltimore Association of Credit Men. He admitted having at various times held office in the shady Friends and Neighbors League, but declined to be more specific. He had belonged to Americans on Guard.

Elsewhere I learned that not only was Arlt responsible for bringing Gerald L. K. Smith to Baltimore for his first two meetings, under the name of a phony organization, but that he was interested in bringing Vivien Kellems, head of a Connecticut manufacturing firm, to Baltimore. Miss Kellems, who achieved notoriety by calling for a strike against taxes on the part of manufacturers, and by her correspondence with a Nazi agent, did address the Exchange Club of Baltimore and was scheduled to speak before the Credit Men. At a board meeting, however, some credit men protested her scheduled appearance



violently, and in the ensuing row, before the Kellems speech was cancelled, Arlt emerged as her champion.

I learned later from other sources Arlt was vice president, though possibly not as a matter of public record, and presided at the first meeting of Americans on Guard, headed by John Farrell. This was the group which before Pearl Harbor used to have meetings addressed by former Rep. Jacob Thorkelson, outstanding anti-Semite and pro-fascist of the period.

This charming character, Mr. Arlt, admitted he had been with the old America First Committee, but indicated he had taken only a modest part in it. There is some question about this, as there must be in general about a man who heads only a small concern but seems to be organizationally quite influential in certain circles.

When Mrs. Arlt finally succeeded in chasing me out, she asked if I would ring before I came again—if I came. I said I would be delighted if they would give me their number, which was unlisted. Eric hastily suggested that I just drop in if I wanted to return. It was a polite but chilly farewell.

**B**OTH Arlt and Haushalter spoke of former Mayor Jackson of Baltimore as "not a member, but a contributor and supporter" of American Action. Jackson was active in Democrats for Dewey, "though he wasn't on the letterhead or listed as part of the organization," Arlt conceded. Most prominent names on the American Action letterhead are those of Catholic clergymen. These include the Rev. John D. M. Barrett, active in parochial schools, and Dr. John J. Russell, active in the Catholic Big Brother movement, as well as Msgr. William A. Toolen, Msgr. Hugh J. Monaghan and the Rev. John L. Bazinet.

A majority of these priests may well be sincere but misguided or misinformed in the matter of American Action. Father Bazinet, however, is one of two vice chairmen. When I called at St. Mary's Seminary, where he teaches religion, and told the man on the switchboard that I wanted to see him about American Action, he refused to see me. Father Bazinet in turn wanted to know if I were a reporter. When I said I was, the reply was, "No statement."

Later, however, I reached Monsignor Monaghan on the phone. He is the pastor of St. Ambrose Church, and has participated in some activities in the Na-

tional Conference of Christians and Jews. I told him I was informed he was not anti-Semitic and wondered if he had read carefully any of the literature of American Action, which lists him, with the Reverend Fathers Barrett, Russell and Toolen, as "patrons." He said he had not, that all he knew about it was that Father Bazinet and Dr. Haushalter had called on him, explained its object "and it seemed very commendable—opposing anything that is undermining our American principles of government." I asked him if he could tell me anything of the background of Father Bazinet, who had refused to see me. Was Father Bazinet a follower of Father Charles Coughlin, as reputed?

"No," answered Monsignor Monaghan, "except insofar as he preached the doctrines of the Church—when he was on the air giving purely doctrinal sermons no one could object, but then he became more personal. I don't think Father Coughlin was anti-Jewish so far as race or religion was concerned, though. He was just against those who were anti-Christian. I admired the stand he took on Communism."

"Let me get this clear," I said. "Are you saying you do not think Father Coughlin was anti-Semitic?"

"No one had as many friends who



"Firm on my fat isolation,  
I've staked out my dry land location,  
Now the island gets smaller,  
The tide rolls in taller:  
I can't swim—what a snug situation!"

E. M.

were Jews as Father Coughlin in the beginning," said Monsignor Monaghan. "He was not opposed to the Jews as Jews but what some of them stood for—you know, they're Communists inside Russia and out. I am opposed to those who would undermine our democracy and the very things we are sacrificing for."

**I** THEN asked the aging Father if he knew of any anti-Semite who said he was against Jews as Jews. Did he condone Coughlin on the ground that there were more Communists who were Jews than were Christians? "Oh, no, but more outstanding leaders," he said vaguely. "I haven't time to keep up on these things," he pleaded. "I'm so busy with purely religious work." He then told me of making speeches with rabbis on programs to further tolerance. I said I knew he had done such things, but could he explain why there were no rabbis in American Action? He had not thought of that, apparently. I said I understood there were numerous former America First people on it. His answer was that "anybody would be for America first, that our main interest is our own country and for that we went to war," but that "our duty doesn't end there." I could see that he had swallowed the committee's platform at its face value. I told him about Arlt's interpretation of the committee plank on enemy nations after the war and his claims about the Catholic viewpoint. "There is no difference between nations so far as human individuals go, but when a nation has become anti-God, that is another thing. But it is those who are running it, not the people, who are anti-God."

He said he thought that the world owed a great deal to German culture and science and that we should be encouraged to take "the human, Christian attitude" toward the German people in the peace, "as the Holy Father expressed it so thoroughly in his recent message."

It is the continued activity of groups like American Action, Inc., that lend a sinister emphasis to the recent post-election letter to "gloaters" by Gerald L. K. Smith, in which he boasted that he and his crowd would win in the end. Who finances American Action and other such outfits is anybody's guess, but it ought to be the concern of an alert Department of Justice. Jew-baiting, whether of the crude Court Asher brand or polished and packaged in "Christian" wrappers, is a Hitler time-bomb.