

Is Sales Resistance Un-American?

BY REV. CLAIR M. COOK

Certain national advertisers think so and open fire on growing consumers' group

[Some say-so about the usages which surround getting and spending is among the democratic rights of a free people. Inside and outside the government, agencies have risen to protect our right to know what we are buying. Here is the devious story of how interested parties misused a Congressional committee to attack this growing consumers' movement.—The Editors.]

PERHAPS readers of the Dies report on the "red" affiliations of the American consumer movement failed to notice the peculiar lack of mention of the pioneer in this field, Consumers Research. On the other hand, its offshoot and now considerably larger rival, Consumers Union of the United States, a non-profit membership organization, was singled out by name for specific attention. Yet both organizations are engaged in reporting to members the results of scientific tests upon advertised products, together with a rating of their comparative quality. One would naturally think that both would be about equally "red" to the staunch bulwarks of modern business, the advertisers.

The explanation is a further revelation concerning the Dies Committee's methods. As *Equality* pointed out in *News of the Month* for January, the report was made public by a secretly self-appointed subcommittee of one, Mr. Martin Dies, without notice to any other committee members. At the "hearing" only the author of the report, Mr. J. B. Matthews, and the one-man subcommittee were present. Organizations attacked and committee members alike had no chance to offer rebuttal or even to attend, such were the conditions of the "hearing"—held, it is reported, at an unnamed place at six o'clock on a Sunday evening.

But it is not until one learns of the former connections of Mr. Dies' "research director" that the plot really begins to thicken. Mr. Matthews, until recently, was a top officer of Consumers Research, functioning in such capacities as vice-president and managing editor of its publication, *Consumers Digest*. His wife is currently reported to be still an employee of Consumers Research. Yet Mr. Mat-

thews, having been on the other side of the fence, now seems to be coming to bat for wealthy advertisers whose products have been debunked to the public not only by the "red" Consumers Union but by Consumers Research as well.

Mr. Matthews' recent associations have been noted by Drew Pearson and Robert Allen, who told in their syndicated column of a dinner at the home of George Sokolsky, attended by Matthews. Sokolsky they describe as having once received \$6,000 from the National Association of Manufacturers as ghost writer and pamphleteer. Present along with Matthews and founder F. J. Schlink of Consumers Research, was Robert Lund of St. Louis, a former president of the manufacturers' association and head of the Lambert Pharmacal Company, makers of Listerine. Listerine has from the beginning received considerable attention from both C.R. and C.U., until to their members it has become almost symbolic of wily advertising to mislead the public. Others at the dinner included "several other big manufacturers of household and consumer goods."

Hearst's lucrative monthly, *Good Housekeeping*—reportedly returning \$2,500,000 profit in 1938—has come in for some hard usage at the hands of Consumers Union along with the Consumers' Service Bureau of *Parents' Magazine*. As long ago as December 1938, C.U. warned consumers to "beware of consumer services operated by magazines which accept paid advertisements."

When the Federal Trade Commission indicted *Good Housekeeping* under the Wheeler-Lea Act, the *Consumers Union Reports* ran a three-page illustrated article, with a reproduction of a full-page Listerine ad from the magazine and an account of the F.T.C.'s "cease and desist" order against its makers.

With this in mind, it is interesting to learn that entire copies of the reports by Mr. Matthews "were distributed to advertisers by *Good Housekeeping* magazine before it was even received by many newspapers," according to Consumers Union whose italics give emphasis to the charge. The pleasure of the

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FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION
Washington

COMPLAINT

Hearst Magazines, Inc., 57th Street and 8th Avenue, New York, of which Good Housekeeping magazine is a wholly owned subsidiary, is charged in a complaint issued by the Federal Trade Commission with misleading and deceptive acts and practices in the issuance of Guarantys, Seals of Approval, and the publication in its advertising pages of grossly exaggerated and false claims for products advertised therein.

The complaint charges that each issue of Good Housekeeping contains

Listerine and other big Good Housekeeping accounts were represented at the confab at which the smearing of consumers' groups was planned. Above: Federal complaint against Hearst Magazines.

Hearst organization in the report is further reflected by the fact that Hearst's *New York Journal-American* ran a six-column illustrated advertisement for Hearst's *Good Housekeeping* — an advertisement aimed at restoring public faith in the "Seals of Approval"—on the page facing a lengthy spread on the Matthews' report headed "Red Control of Consumers Groups Revealed."

Obviously if it were possible for Mr. Matthews to attach the "red" label firmly enough to make it stick, he would be doing a genuine service to such as Mr. Hearst and his *Good Housekeeping*, Mr. Lund and his Listerine, and others who are disconcerted by the current attempt to enlighten the public on the wiles of advertising.

The charge of communism is based on the allegation that C.U. attacks all advertising as such and that attacks on advertising are a "strategy" used by the Communist Party for purposes of "utilizing discontent." But it has not been advertising as such that has suffered from attack by consumers' groups, but simply particular advertising abuses. To quote C.U.'s *Reports* again, if this is communism, "then *Printers' Ink*, *Advertising and Selling* and practically every other advertising and trade magazine is communistic; Consumers Union has not often said harsher things than they of bad advertising practices."

They continue: "If the condemnation of worthless, adulterated and misrepresented products is a communistic activity, then the Federal Food and Drug Administration, the Federal Trade Commission and the American Medical Association must be paid direct from Moscow. And if the criticisms that C.U. has made in its labor notes of the labor

policies of such companies as Ford and Remington-Rand are communist-inspired, then how will Mr. Matthews explain away the fact that in its technical reports C.U. has rated as 'Best Buys' products of these same manufacturers!"

And, of course, there is still the little matter of Mr. Matthews' past associations, which on its face would tend to discredit his impartial motivation. It seems that about four years ago, before the founding of Consumers Union, there was a good deal of discontent among Consumers Research workers. The minimum wage was \$13 a week, employment seemed insecure, and there was a consequent attempt to organize a labor union. After the firing of union officials, there was a strike. C.U. charges that "it was J. B. Matthews who acted as chief strikebreaker and aired threats of revenge against the strikers." C.R. refused to accept arbitration or to abide by the decision of the National Labor Relations Board in favor of the strikers. Consequently there was a wholesale withdrawal of Consumers Research employees. They founded the new organization on a more democratic basis, with pro-labor sympathies and with a more completely social—or according to the Matthews' report "communistic"—outlook.

Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes summed it all up pretty well when he said: "When we reach the point where consumers' services are damned as communistic in official releases of a Congressional committee simply because they dare to warn housewives of the claims of fake advertisers, it is time for us to begin to wonder whether a body supposedly functioning to protect the public from subversive influences isn't really being perverted to protect subversive influences from the public."

The Dies Committee and Anti-Semitism

BY HAROLD COY

The overly affectionate Pelley only one of leading Jew-haters to seek platform there; Is it not high time to recognize such rackets as subversive and ask why they aren't investigated?

I ADMIT very freely that I am anti-Semitic. I feel exactly as the Nazi Party in Germany in regard to our Jewish population."

With these words William Dudley Pelley, Silver Shirt leader, scoundrel, law-breaker, and racial agitator, came out of "hiding" to testify before the Dies Committee. The occasion for his testimony was the famous Mayne letters which linked Pelley and Congressman Dies, and which were placed in the Congressional Record by Congressman Hook. In testifying that the letters were forgeries, Pelley added the following to his defense of the Dies Committee:

"If the Dies group continues its work the Silver Shirt Legion will close up. And with my blessings."

Furore over the Mayne letters has tended to divert attention from more fundamental aspects of Congressman Hook's criticism of the Dies Committee. The famous letters and the forgery issue they raise may be summarized with this: Mayne has been an employee of both Pelley and the Dies Committee. At the time he was engaged in selling the letters, he was also having conferences with Rhea Whitley, former Dies Committee counsel. Either then or later he became exceedingly interested in embarrassing Gardner Jackson and his associate (who transmitted the letters to Congressman Hook). But the truth or falsity of the letters, and the motives which prompted Mayne, are less important questions than this: What has been the relation of the Dies Committee with the fomenters of anti-Semitism? Furthermore (and the Pelley testimony brings the matter to a head): "Why has the Dies Committee done nothing effective to expose the activities of the anti-Semites?"

Some Pertinent Questions

Decent people, both Jews and Gentiles, have begun to ask these questions. Congressman Hook's charges in Congress are merely an expression of them.

Why is it that the Dies Committee has not investigated the activities of Father Coughlin? Is the fomenting of racial hatred not subversive? And why, on the contrary, did Father Coughlin, the leading anti-Semite in America, agitate in the pages of *Social Justice* a short time ago for Martin Dies to be made President of the United States? Surely this is a question that reasonable citizens may reasonably ask?

Why did the Dies Committee not investigate the

An All-Too-Familiar Pattern

What made Haman an anti-Semite? According to the Bible narrative, it was a desire for personal revenge against Mordecai, who would bow before no one but God. And Haman was no god, or so it seemed to Mordecai, the Jew.

This made Haman furious. He hated Mordecai, the Jew. In fact, he hated all Jews. They're all a stiff-necked people who don't give a heil, not even to Haman, the Chancellor, to whom all praise is due. So they must all be exterminated! But how does one go about plotting a holy pogrom? A pretext must be found! Do not all clever politicians hide base motives behind the protecting mask of patriotism? So Haman thought and thought and presently hatched out of his fertile brain the first recorded red scare in history. Testifying before the King, even as a witness before the Dies Committee, Chancellor Haman declared: "There is a certain people . . . dispersed among the peoples . . . and their laws are diverse from those of every people; neither keep they the King's laws . . . let it be written that they be destroyed!" No opportunity was given the accused to testify in defense and rebuttal, neither were the motives and credibility of the accusing witness investigated. By way of emphasizing his own patriotism, Haman offered a sizeable monetary contribution to the King's treasury. Then, appealing to the people's blind faith in their government, and to their patriotic zeal, Haman dispatched orders in the name of the King to destroy the Jews on an appointed day (the thirteenth of the month of Adar) "and to plunder their property."

Thus we see how a hundred per cent Persian patriot, actuated by the noblest of motives, set about ridding his country of an un-Persian, subversive minority.

Good Reasons vs. Real Reasons

The practice of employing noble-sounding *good* reasons or pretexts to cover up ignoble *real* reasons or motives is of the very essence of anti-Semitism. Sometimes a deep personal hurt and a burning desire for revenge leads to wholesale Jew-baiting, as with Haman. Sometimes the motivating drive is failure and frustration, seeking comfort in blaming one's ills on a scapegoat. Most anti-Semites, however, cover up their *real* motives with *good*-sounding reasons. Thus Haman maligned a whole people to cover up his own base motives and machinations. Or take the case of Haman's spiritual kin, Herr Hitler or Father Coughlin. No aspiring Fascist demagogue admits openly that his aim is to bring about Fascism, with

himself as dictator. The method of the tyrant is first to make wild charges against a defenseless minority and to repeat these charges again and again.

And so the world's oldest and most scattered minority, with the longest history of persecution—the Jews—are singled out. What are they charged with? They are international bankers; they are international Communists. They are parasites; they dominate the cultural life of a country. They are inferior; they get all the prizes. They are clannish; they are aggressive. They rejected Christ; they brought Christianity to the world. They are different from their neighbors; they try to be like their neighbors.

Thus are evil designs, *real* reasons, covered up by a mask of morally-sounding *good* reasons. Hitler was fighting for the defense of the noble Aryan race against Communism—or so he claimed. Coughlin's racket is to defend "real Americanism and Christianity against atheistic, materialistic Communism." Does anyone doubt their *real* motives? By making the Jews a scapegoat for all the ills of society, they seek to divert the growing resentment of the unemployed, the insecure and the underprivileged, and at the same time harness the mass of people to their own program.

Fostering anti-Semitism also serves to eliminate competition in the professions, in commerce and industry, and it provides the Fascists (in the event that they seize power) with a ready excuse for confiscating the wealth of the Jewish people. Witness Nazi Germany today!

The Wolf and the Lamb

The whole history of anti-Semitism from Haman to Hitler reminds us of one of Aesop's favorite fables. It seems that a wolf, while drinking water from a running brook, espied a lamb astray from the fold. "Why do you pollute the water which I am drinking?" complained the wolf. "How can I do that when the water in the brook is running from you to me?" protested the innocent lamb. "Last year you grossly insulted me!" charged the wolf. "But last year I was not yet born!" bleated the lamb in a mournful tone. "But you feed on my pasture!" "No, good sire," replied the lamb, "I have not yet tasted grass." "You drink of my well!" "No," exclaimed the lamb, "I never yet drank water, for my mother's milk is still both food and drink to me." Tired of being refuted, the wolf seized the lamb and made a meal of it, saying, "I will not remain supperless, even though you refute every one of my imputations."

All tyrants in history have used pretexts or *good* reasons to cover up their *real* motives and designs.