

Morale of Army Periled

by Fascist

Propaganda Booklet

DW 8/27/44

Official Manual Called Pro-Nazi

Fight for Freedom Committee Brings Tract to Attention of President

By ADAM LAPIN

(Daily Worker Washington Bureau)

WASHINGTON, D. C., Aug. 26.—Army morale has been coming in for a lot of attention in the press lately. But one of the most important aspects of this problem—the spread of fascist propaganda among the nation's new citizen army of 1,530,000 soldiers—has been virtually ignored.

The Fight for Freedom Committee has called to the attention of President Roosevelt the pro-Nazi character of a 15-page manual circulated to the soldiers of the Second Army who are now engaged in maneuvers in Louisiana and Arkansas.

Exposure of this manual highlights the fact that even some members of the Army's officer personnel seem to be bitten by the bug of anti-democratic ideas which can only disrupt Army morale and give aid and comfort to the Nazis.

IN GOEBBELS' IMAGE

In protesting to administration officials against the Second Army manual, Bishop Henry W. Hobson, chairman of the Fight for Freedom Committee, declared that this document "might well have been written by Goebbels."

Bishop Hobson pointed out that "the elimination of such materials from the Army curriculum would be of infinite value in improving the morale of the Army."

A fictitious conflict between Almat and Kotmk is the subject matter of the manual, and the avowed purpose of this little make-believe tale is to give the soldiers political background material which will make their maneuvers more "realistic."

There is, however, only a thin veneer of fiction over this parable of Almat and Kotmk. Kotmk is plainly identified as Nazi Germany, while Almat is described as France.

RIDICULES DEMOCRACY

The significant thing is that Kotmk is painted in glowing colors and its aggressive moves justified, while the trade unions and the democratic institutions of Almat are held up to ridicule and attacked.

Nothing in the manual contributes to that understanding of the necessity for defeating Hitlerism which can be the only genuine basis for strong Army morale. On the contrary, the manual can only confuse and undermine the morale of the Second Army.

Perhaps even more serious than this manual is the fact that recent steps taken by the War Department in an apparent effort to offset public criticism of Army morale do not appear to go to the root problem of halting fascist propaganda and improving political education in the armed forces.

Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson has appointed Frederick H. Osborn of New York as chief morale officer of the Army with the rank of Brigadier General.

But evidence available here raises grave doubts as to whether Osborn's record qualifies him for this difficult and important task.

For 17 years, from 1921 to 1938, the Army's new morale officer was a partner in the Wall Street banking and brokerage firm of Grayson M. P. Murphy & Co.

IN A FASCIST PLOT

And it so happens that Grayson M. P. Murphy was publicly identified several years ago as a key figure in a fascist plot by the late General Smedley Butler.

General Butler charged that Murphy had acted on behalf of an important Wall Street group in offering him substantial sums of money to lead a fascist march on Washington to seize the capital and depose President Roosevelt.

Osborn was at that time a partner in Murphy's firm.

It is certainly worth finding out whether he was involved in fascist activity, and to what extent he shared his partner's political and social views.

Osborn's background as a corporation executive and Wall Street broker does not in any event seem to equip him for the job of combatting anti-democratic propaganda and of building the morale of an anti-Hitler citizen army.

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The new morale officer is a director of such important firms as Intercontinental Rubber, Fifth Ave. Bank and Schieffelin and Co.

As far as can be seen, his performance here as chairman of the Joint Army and Navy Committee of Welfare and Recreation and as head of the deferment set-up of Selective Service has not been particularly distinguished.

Osborn showed none of the initiative and drive necessary for his new job, and seemed to serve primarily as an inactive and obliging front for some of the Army's more conservative and hidebound officers.

Appointment by Secretary Stimson of Major General John F. O'Ryan, retired, as one of three civilian advisers on National Guard and Reservists was also not particularly reassuring.

OUTSTANDING PRO-FASCIST

O'Ryan—who will advise Stimson on some of the morale problems of the National Guard and Reserves—has long been regarded here as one of the Army's outstanding reactionaries and pro-fascists.

When he was police chief of New York, O'Ryan had special classes in Elizabeth Dilling's Red Network conducted for his men.

The general's brief career in municipal government terminated shortly after it was discovered that Mayor LaGuardia was prominently identified as a "Red" in Mrs. Dilling's masterpiece.

During the Soviet-Finnish war, O'Ryan was active in the hysterical propaganda drive against the Soviet Union as head of Fighting Funds for Finland.

As recently as Jan. 2, 1941, O'Ryan, was named in the State Department's list of foreign agents as a result of his services for Japanese financial groups.

Men like Osborn and O'Ryan do not exactly seem to qualify as morale-builders of a democratic, anti-fascist army.

The necessity for prompt action to meet the threat of fascist propaganda in the armed forces is clearly illustrated by the Second Army manual.

Author of this pro-Nazi tract is Major R. A. Griffin of the Second Army.

But it is worth pointing out that the commander of the Second Army is none other than General Ben Lear, more popularly known as the Yoo-Hoo General.

LAUDS NAZI REGIME

Instead of pointing to Nazism's menace to all free peoples, the manual includes passages describing the Nazi regime in the most favorable light such as the following:

"The vigor of the young people of Kotmk was so pronounced that medical authorities all over the world held the Kotmk government's program up as the finest ever devised in the strengthening of the race."

That little phrase about "strengthening of the race" sounds strangely similar to the type of ranting which is so familiar to those who have dipped into Mein Kampf or other Nazi writings.

As against this glorification of Germany or Kotmk here is the manual's picture of France or Almat:

"There was rapid industrial development and within a few years various industrial abuses led to a powerful trade union movement that soon was largely taken over by Communist elements."

Throughout the manual the Communists and the trade unions are lumped together with the "strong party" or pro-fascist appeasement groups of Almat whereas the exact reverse was, of course, true in France as elsewhere.

Participants at rallies with Senator Speeler, head of Almat's "strong party" are Carrie Ridges, tactical adviser of Almat's Communist Party, and Brown H. Strewbis, president of the Amalgamated and Consolidated Workers.

In this passage, there is a thinly disguised and distorted attempt to draw a parallel with the conditions in the United States.

Prior to the outbreak of war between Almat and Kotmk, Premier Kodunkis (Hitler) of Kotmk makes repeated efforts to achieve a peaceful solution of what are pictured as his justified grievances. Responsibility for the war is placed primarily on Almat.

War Department officials here have so far refused to comment on this amazing manual distributed to the soldiers of the Second Army.

But it is obvious that prompt action by the President and Secretary Stimson are needed to prevent further infiltration of fascist ideas into the Army.