

# Secret \$25,000 Fee Paid to Ham Fish By Foreign Power; U. S. Investigating

## *Failed to Mention Dictator's Sum in 1939 Tax Return*

By Dillard Stokes

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New York, Aug. 5.—Representative Hamilton Fish this week is trying to explain to the Government why he never paid income taxes on a secret fee of \$25,000 he got from Gen. Rafael L. Trujillo, dictator of the Dominican Republic, in 1939.

Fish did not report this fee when he filed his income tax return. He and the general kept their deal to themselves until a short while ago.

Now it is up to the New York Congressman to explain to the Bureau of Internal Revenue how he came to "overlook" a \$25,000 item, when his income from all other sources in 1939 was only \$22,000.

What Fish did or could have done for General Trujillo that was worth \$25,000 is something that nobody but Fish or the general can tell.

General Trujillo is the military dictator of the Dominican Republic and Fish is the ranking Republican member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives, which handles all legislation affecting foreign governments.

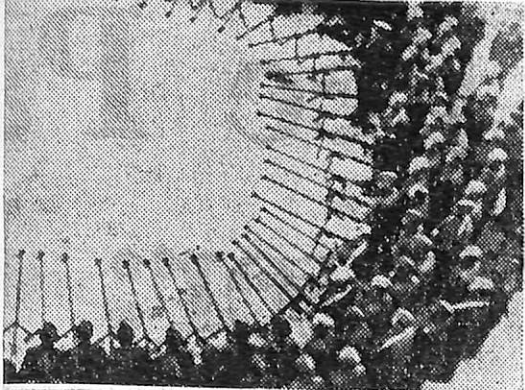
Fish got the money in the form of a credit, subject to his order, in the National City Bank here. The \$25,000 came out of a credit of \$300,000 which was established for General Trujillo through the Dominican Legation in Washington.

The credit was set up for Fish about the middle of July, 1939, just a few days after Fish made a fulsome speech in praise of the Dominican dictator and just a few weeks before Fish left on his now celebrated trip to Germany.

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Those were the days when Hamilton Fish was the loudest isolationist of them all. On the floor of the House every day or so and over the radio of nights Fish was heard denouncing any strong front against the Axis and execrating the President of the United States.

Just as he was about to sail for Europe Fish made a gesture toward returning the secret fee to General Trujillo, but it was only a gesture, for the \$25,000 remained in the National City Bank in New York, subject to Fish's order.

Fish went to Europe as a delegate to the meeting of the Interparliamentary Union in Oslo. But he paused in Berlin for a chat with von Ribbentrop, the foreign minister of the Nazi government, whose propaganda papers featured Fish as a great statesman, with photographs and extensive quotations.

### Suggested 30-Day Truce

The press next reported an interview, in which Fish called for liquidation of the Versailles Treaty clauses concerning German's eastern border. Germany's demands on Poland—said Fish—"were just."

Then, on to Oslo—in von Ribbentrop's private plane.

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HAMILTON FISH

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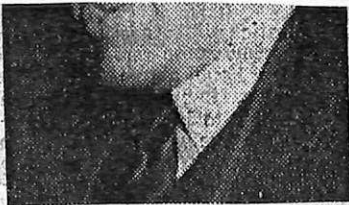
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There, among his other utterances, Fish greeted the approach of the war with a suggestion for a 30-day truce, for "arbitration" of the Danzig question. Fish said he would be happy to take part. For some reason, the proposal fell through.

Fish got back to America in September and plunged into a new isolationist campaign—centered about the National Committee to Keep America Out of War. Fish was chairman. A special Federal Grand Jury in Washington denounced this committee two weeks ago as one of the instruments of a gigantic con-



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More than \$8000 went to an oil enterprise—the Nepaug Oil Co. of Houston, Tex. Fish had dealings with the president, David D. MacDaniels.

During this period, Fish directed the National City Bank to transfer \$12,500 to the account of General Trujillo. Whether he was giving back half of his fee or whether it was a new deal is not apparent.

Fish was not always an admirer of the Dominican dictator. During 1937 there were reports that several thousand Haitians were massacred by General Trujillo's soldiers. On December 21 of that year, Fish took these reports to the floor of the House.

#### But the View Changed

"This is the most outrageous atrocity that has ever been perpetrated on the American continent," Fish thundered, as he employed the report to point up some carping remarks about President Roosevelt's good neighbor policy. Fish said also, "I should like to see the Government of the United States withdraw our recognition of the Dominican Republic."

And on January 24, 1938, Fish was back on the floor, inserting a magazine article, which purported to give an account of the alleged massacre, into the Congressional Record.

Sometime, and somehow, in the year that followed, Fish acquired a new and different understanding of the state of things in the Dominican Republic.

George Jamhar Djamgaroff, the White Russian mystery man who claims he turned down a Nazi offer of \$200,000 a year to handle their propaganda in 1935, was a friend of Fish, of long standing. Djamgaroff has explained that they were brought together by their common bitterness against communism.

Fish interceded for Djamgaroff in 1932, when the Russian's immigration status was under investigation. And when Djamgaroff filed his registration statement as the \$50,000-a-year agent of the Dominican Republic, in February, 1939, Fish was one of his references.

#### A Goodwill Junket

Soon after Djamgaroff got this job, he arranged for some American Congressmen and newspaper people to make a little goodwill visit to the Dominican Republic.

Fish went along.

This was in March, 1939. General Trujillo had given up his office of President the year before—after eight years in office—but was keeping his hand in by holding on as generalissimo of the Dominican army. (Reelected this year, the general is due to start his third term as President on August 16.)

The general, President J. N. Troncoso de la Concha and other high officials laid themselves out to show the visitors a good time. And in July, 1939, General Trujillo returned the visit, but as a "private citizen."

General Trujillo was the guest of honor at a banquet sponsored by the Pan American Society at the Biltmore Hotel in New York, on the evening of July 12, 1939.

There were pickets outside the hotel, displaying posters and giving out hand-bills which contained an article in which Gen. Hugh Johnson called the general a "blood-spattered bully" and other choice nicknames. They sounded much like the expressions of Fish himself had used on the floor of the House.

#### Golden Age, Says Fish

But the lumbering, florid New York Congressman was through with such language. He was the principal speaker at the banquet, and this is one of the things he said: "General, you have created a golden age for your country . . . and as I am proud and happy to repeat at this time to a United States audience, you will go down in the history of your country as a builder greater than all the Spanish conquerors together."

Less than a week later, the \$25,000 was deposited to Fish's credit.

And just three years later, when a great many questions began to be asked of a great many people, in connection with grand jury investigation of the activities of foreign agents, Fish's friend Djamgaroff was

called as a witness. Almost immediately, Fish recalled the \$25,000 and opened negotiations with the Internal Revenue Bureau.

These negotiations are still going on, but have been delayed by the primary campaign, in which Fish seeks renomination for his seat in Congress.

Disclosure of the investigation had an immediate reaction in the twenty-sixth congressional district, President Roosevelt's own, where Fish is seeking renomination. James H. Causey, chairman of an independent committee opposing Fish, issued a statement citing Fish's "outrageous record" as revealed by the inquiry.

Representative Fish said:

"I shall be glad to present the facts and the data to any qualified official of the Government. I consulted representatives of the Bureau of Internal Revenue and was informed that an 'agent' does not have to file tax returns. However, to be on the safe side, I filed, of my own accord, a statement of the entire transaction, realizing that a public official might be attacked for political purposes.

"To sum up:

"1. There never was any fee and I did not make any money out of the transaction;

"2. Acting as an agent, it is not necessary to file tax returns;

"3. There was a total loss of \$12,500 and therefore nothing to report. The balance of the credit was returned;

"4. No Government agent has ever requested information about it;

"5. This is a desperate eleventh-hour smear attack reaching the lowest level of personal abuse and villification and one which I believe will make me votes;

"6. It did not have the faintest connection with my trip to Germany; none of the credit was used until after my return and all that was used went into oil speculations which were unsuccessful.

"Personal Business Matter"

"7. General Trujillo is president of San Domingo, which was the first Latin-American nation to declare war on Germany;

"8. I was instrumental in getting him to admit several thousand refugees and I believe that the Dominican Republic was the only Latin-American nation to do so;

"9. The whole transaction was a personal business matter, having no connection whatever with politics, except to be dragged out as part of the smear campaign which has already disgusted the fair-minded voters in our congressional district;

"10. These contemptible tactics show to what extent some of my New Deal opponents will go to defeat me for Congress."

#### Half of Sum Returned

The Washington newspaper charged the money was paid to Fish before he sailed for Europe on a trip during which he paused in Berlin to visit the Nazi foreign minister, Joachim Von Ribbentrop. Fish said the money was used for speculation in wildcat oil, in which both he and General Trujillo were interested.

Representative Fish pointed out that half of the \$25,000 was returned to the dictator after two losing ventures in wells in Houston, Texas, and Oklahoma. He was merely an agent, Fish said, and, as such, he was not required

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to mention the transaction in his income tax return.

At the time of filing, Fish related, he was advised by representatives of the Internal Revenue that he did not need to include a statement of the dealings. He was told the same thing two months ago, he added.

"But I made an amended return anyway," he went on, "because in politics you are likely to be attacked from all sides and I just wanted the part I played in the transaction made clear."

As Fish explained it, he withdrew \$8,000 of the general's money for investment in the Nepaugh Oil Company at Houston and \$4,500 in the Sun Ray Company, somewhere in Oklahoma. Both were unsuccessful, he said, and he also lost \$4,000 of his own money but he didn't bother to deduct it from his 1939 tax return.

Fish met General Trujillo in March 1939, after he made a goodwill tour of the Dominican Republic, arranged by George Jamhar Diamgaroff, White Russian who claimed he turned down \$200,000 to propagandize for the Nazis.

#### Hailed Dictator

The following July, General Trujillo returned the visit, and Fish, at a banquet in the Hotel Biltmore here, hailed the dictator as the man who "created a golden age for your country." Less than two years before, however, Fish denounced as "an outrageous atrocity" the massacre of Haitians by General Trujillo's troops.

Explaining his 1937 attack on the Dominican Republic, in which he urged withdrawal of recognition of the Trujillo government, Fish said he "had not then met the general."