

Fish Denies He Helped Nazi Agent Knowingly

Admits He Knew, Respected Viereck; Calls Prosecutor's Statement a Lie

Post 2/21/42
Patriot Sentenced

LAURA INGALLS gets limit jail sentence of eight months to two years for failure to register as paid agent of the German Reich. Story on page 4.

Tangled Web

By Dillard Stokes
Post Staff Writer

Testifying under oath in the trial of the German agent, George Sylvester Viereck, Representative Hamilton Fish yesterday denied that Nazi propaganda ever went out of his office with his "consent and approval."

Fish also:

1. Admitted he had known Viereck 10 or 15 years.
 2. Called Viereck an American citizen of good standing.
 3. Called the prosecutor a liar.
 4. Said "I don't know" or "it could have happened," when asked about details of the charge of his former secretary, George Hill, that it was Fish who told him to send franked speeches for Viereck to Fish's private mailing list.
- Viereck is on trial before Justice F. Dickinson Letts and a jury of the District Court, on charges of violating the Foreign Agents Act, by concealing his use of Congressmen and their franks for his Nazi propaganda machine.

Dennett Refuses to Answer

Viereck's Washington operative was Prescott Dennett, a promoter of paper isolationist committees, who refused to answer any questions on the witness stand yesterday, pleading that he was afraid he would incriminate himself.

Hill said Dennett gave him manuscripts which Hill would get solutionist Congressmen to place in the Congressional Record. Then, with money from Dennett, Hill bought hundreds of thousands of reprints, which he sent with franked envelopes to Dennett.

Dennett mailed them out. Summoned by the special grand jury on Axis agents, Dennett hastily got rid of a ton of the material. Hill helped him and was convicted of perjury for denying it, and for denying he knew Viereck.

Decided to Tell Truth

Saying he had decided to tell the truth "because I am an American," Hill took the witness stand against the German agent yesterday before Viereck's propaganda operations.

When Fish was telling the House

Fish Denies He Knowingly Aided Viereck

AGENTS, from Page 1.

the same story that Hill told the grand jury which indicted him, Hill was then "my secretary." After Hill was indicted, Fish issued a statement in which he said, as he did in court yesterday, that the slight little World War veteran was "a clerk, not my secretary."

Hill's former boss appeared voluntarily yesterday, without being subpoenaed. Special Prosecutor William Power Maloney, who examined him, bore immediately into what Hill had said.

Q. Now, Mr. Fish, do you know the defendant, George Sylvester Viereck?

A. I do.

Q. How long have you known him?

A. I think I have known him 10 or 15 years.

Q. Did you in July or August, 1940, introduce George Hill to Viereck?

A. I did not have that recollection. If I did, until I read Mr. Hill's testimony. I was under the impression that Mr. Viereck had met Mr. Hill by himself in my outer office, but evidently, from his testimony—and I am not going to quibble with that—Mr. Hill claims I went outside of my office and introduced Mr. Viereck, and I see no reason—although I do not recollect it—I see no reason to deny it.

Q. You see no reason to deny it?

A. I do not see any reason to say it was not possible—I would rather put it that way.

Q. You would not say it did not happen, would you Congressman?

A. I would rather say it might very well have happened.

Q. Did you ever discuss with Mr. Viereck Senator Lundeen's speeches or their distribution?

A. That I don't remember.

Q. Is it possible that you might have?

A. I might have, yes.

Q. Did you give Mr. Hill permission, or direct Mr. Hill, to mail out Senator Lundeen's speeches to the persons whose names were on that mailing list of that committee?

(Hill said Fish told him to mail, for Viereck, a speech by the late Senator Ernest Lundeen (Farmer-Labor), of Minnesota, to the mailing list of Fish's isolationist committee. Two of Mr. Lundeen's employes had testified the German agent wrote the speech.)

A. I don't remember that at all, because as I told you I don't remember the meeting. I do not say that is not possible.

Q. And is it not a fact that you directed Mr. Hill to mail out Senator Lundeen's speech to that mailing list?

A. No, I could not say that at all; I have no memory of that at all.

Q. That might have been the fact, but you don't remember?

A. That might have been the case.

Q. You have no independent memory of it now?

A. I certainly would have no reason not to do it.

Viereck is being defended by Daniel F. Cohalan, jr., and Emil Morosini, jr., of New York. Cohalan cross-examined Fish.

Q. Were you in the habit of taking people out and introducing them to your clerk?

A. No, I was not.

Q. You state that you had a conversation in your office with Mr. Viereck on that day. That is true?

A. Yes.

Q. And you recall that he was in your office?

A. I do. Well, I cannot say that day or even that month. I am not going to quibble. Mr. Viereck was in my office and I talked with him.

Q. When you have seen Mr. Viereck, you have always had oc-

casional to have talks with him, is that true?

A. Oh, yes, I think Mr. Viereck was an intelligent man. He used to be a great publicist.

Q. In all those times did you ever hear Mr. Viereck make any statement that would give you the impression that he was not a 100 per cent American?

A. No, I have always considered Mr. Viereck an American citizen of long standing and good standing.

Q. Did you know that besides his activities in your office, he (Hill) was doing some extra work on the outside?

A. That is a very difficult question for me to answer yes or no. Mr. Hill was—I knew this—was a private contractor, sending out speeches, mailing them, employing women on the outside.

Prosecutor Maloney, conducted the redirect examination of Fish:

Q. Do you know, Mr. Fish, that in 1930, this good American citizen, Mr. Viereck wrote a book called "Spreading the Germs of Hate," in which he said, and I quote from page 55: "The objective of German propaganda was three-fold, to strengthen and replenish Germany; to weaken and harass Germany's foes, and to keep America out of the war." Do you know that he wrote such a book?

A. No, I do not. I have never read the book.

Q. Is it a coincidence that his views as a German agent coincide so closely with your view as a Congressman at this time?

A. No, it is not. How do you mean it? I don't understand that question at all. What do you mean by it?

Demands His Rights

"I have no further questions," said Prosecutor Maloney quietly, but Fish had. "Have I any rights in this court to be insulted?" he shouted.

Maloney rejoined: "I will have the reporter repeat it and I have no further questions." Official Reporter Horace Webb read the question from his notes and Fish half stood up to shout:

"The man who made that speech lies! The man who made that statement lies!"

Q. You are referring to the defendant, Viereck, are you?

A. I am referring to you!

Justice Letts said that Fish might

make a statement if he wished. Fish said:

"I suspected, of course, your honor, that, sooner or later this Attorney General, Assistant Attorney General, would make a statement of that kind. I have been in Congress 20 years, 22 years. Not one bit of Nazi propaganda ever went out from my office with my knowledge or consent at any time.

"Furthermore, I want it known, despite what is carried in the headlines of the press, these speeches of Lundeen were not over my frank, that they were not sent out from my office, or mailed from my office; that I never read one of those speeches; never saw one of those speeches; did not know how many went out; had nothing to do, nothing to do about it, and yet I see in the paper that I have sent out Nazi propaganda and that these speeches were franked from my office.

Hoped to Meet Issue

"I had hoped those questions would be raised.

"As far as what this gentleman has said here, I have no connection with Mr. Viereck except I only know Mr. Viereck as an American citizen, the same as any other American citizen. I did not know that he was registered as an agent of the German government or a foreign newspaper. I knew nothing of that sort about him. I didn't know he was a German propagandist. I never read this book. Mr. Viereck's acquaintance with me is the same as it is with Franklin Delano Roosevelt."

Prosecutor Maloney broke in, saying, "I object to that statement very strongly. I ask that it be stricken from the record. That is a public insult to a great American."

After a few lesser exchanges, Fish left for the House, where he told reporters he would make a speech in a few days, correcting "inaccuracies" in the two speeches in which he said The Post's revelations of Hill's aid to Dennett were "lies."

Hill told him "untruths" in this, said Fish, and his speech in the House was based on them.

Denies Franks Were Used

Fish also told the reporters that Hill's activities were "perfectly legitimate" but that Hill "never" used Fish franks.

Dennett did, however.

Prosecutors Maloney and Edward J. Hickey, jr., refused to vouch for the veracity of Prescott Dennett, Washington agent of the Viereck propaganda machine. Justice Letts called Dennett from the cell where he was held in \$3500 bail to insure that he would testify, as "the court's witness."

Dennett said he knew Hill.

Claiming that the answers would incriminate him, Dennett refused to say how long he had known Viereck or Hill, whether he gave Hill manuscripts to put in the Congressional Record, whether he discussed such manuscripts with Viereck, how much money he paid Hill, or anything about the isolationist committees under whose names he mailed out Viereck's propaganda.

Prosecutor Hickey called as the next witness Edward Corneby, former secretary to Mr. Lundeen.

Corneby said he resigned his job after remonstrating in vain over Viereck's being in the office. He confirmed other testimony that Viereck wrote speeches for Mr. Lundeen, including the one Hill said he mailed out for Viereck at Fish's direction.

Phoned Nazis for "Data"

Corneby said once Viereck, working in Mr. Lundeen's office, telephoned the German Embassy for data, and it was delivered in an envelope with the return address of Dr. Hans Thomsen, acting Ambassador.

Corneby called Viereck a "dangerous character" and a "vicious man" and said he was trying to protect "my country and my Senator" when he prided into Viereck's brief case without permission.

Mrs. Phyllis Posivio Spielman, former Lundeen secretary, said she too saw Viereck working on speeches with the late Senator and that once a Lundeen manuscript was sent to Viereck and came back wholly rewritten.

The court will not sit today or Monday.

On Tuesday the prosecutors expect

to conclude the evidence on which they seek a \$3000 fine or 2 to 6 years in jail, or both, for Viereck.

Hill's cross-examination will be finished then, having been put off so the defense could obtain copies of the speeches Hill said he had printed and sent to Dennett.

When Morosini demanded these yesterday, Maloney said he had only one with him, an extension of remarks by former Representative Jacob Thorkelson (Republican), of Montana. Tossing the speech to Morosini, Maloney taunted him: "It contained the remarks on one Hitler."

Viereck Subpenas Lundeen's Widow

Miami Beach, Fla., Feb. 20 (AP).—

Deputy United States Marshal Albert H. Hunt said today he had served a subpoena on Mrs. Norma Ward Lundeen, widow of the late Senator Ernest Lundeen, of Minnesota, to appear as a defense witness in the Washington trial of George Sylvester Viereck, charged with violating the foreign agents' registration act.

Hunt said Mrs. Lundeen was reported ill when he attempted to serve the subpoena Wednesday, but that she accepted it today.