

Like It or Not, Willkie Gets Night Shirt Backing

Hitler's Stooges in U. S. A. Are Swinging to Republican Candidate

Editor's Note: Hans Wagner is the nom de plume of a distinguished refugee German journalist who has spent the last year studying American politics and the Nazi effort to influence the outcome of the current Presidential campaign. Mr. Wagner was expatriated because of his political, not his religious beliefs. Following is the second of a series presenting the facts he has uncovered and the conclusions he has arrived at.

By HANS WAGNER

PM Nazi storm troopers stood at stiff attention on the dock in New York as Fritz Kuhn, Bund Fuehrer, and Dr. Karl Stroeblin, chief of Hitler's Foreign Institute, debarked from the Hapag liner *Deutschland*, on Oct. 2, 1936. A German band played martial music. It was a day of rejoicing in Yorkville. Pompous Fritz had received new instructions from Fuehrer Hitler and Germanization of the U. S. Government was about to start in earnest.

The Bund, up to that time, had been supporting Representative William Lemke of North Dakota, Father Charles Coughlin's candidate, for the Presidency. But someone had let Herr Hitler in on the secret that Mr. Lemke, whom he had been led to believe would carry the "German Middle West" and, with the help of the propagandizing radio priest, enough other states to win, did not, as a matter of fact, have much of a chance. Calling his sub-fuehrers together, Mr. Kuhn delivered himself of a pronouncement with the explanation that he was carrying out new orders from Hitler.

"After mature consideration," he said, "I have decided to withdraw my indorsement of the candidacy of the third party candidate William Lemke and to support, in the name of the Bund, the Republican candidate Alfred M. Landon. We trust that his victory will result in a more friendly attitude on the part of the American federal authorities toward our old Fatherland."

Welcomed Support

Mr. Landon and the strategists of his campaign welcomed this support. One Dr. Griehl, later exposed as a German spy, was established in Republican headquarters on E. 40th St., and became a regular speaker on Republican programs from station WWRL. Presently, close association between the GOP and the Bund attracted newspaper attention and Dr. Griehl was relegated to a less conspicuous place in the campaign. Such headlines as "GOP Sponsors Nazi Speeches" were not helpful even in 1936.

It was on Kuhn's return from Germany that the new Nazi political line for the U. S. A. was drawn. Behind it was the reasoning that the two-party system was going to survive and the Nazis, to gain influence in the Federal Government and ultimately control, would have to burrow into one of the major parties. With President Roosevelt in control of the Democratic party, Hitler's American agents had no choice but to adopt the Republicans. That is their policy in the current campaign. Mr. Willkie is their choice, whether he likes it or not.

However, he was not their original choice. The man they put up first and desperately wanted to elect was Homer Caphart of Indiana, music box manufacturer, impresario



On the night shirt front, left to right: Felix McWhirter, Indianapolis banker and former official of the Indiana Republican committee; Homer Caphart, the music box millionaire, whom he promoted for the Republican nomination before Wendell Willkie came into the picture, and George Deatherage, the Fascist revolutionary agitator who helped promote the Caphart candidacy while getting ready for Der Tag.

of grassroot Republican rallies in the Middle West and heavy contributor to Republican campaign funds. The Bund and affiliated organizations put on a vigorous campaign for Mr. Caphart in the winter of 1938, but his boom came to nothing the following spring when the Dies committee disclosed the nature of the organizations behind it. Mr. Caphart's friend, Wendell L. Willkie, had better luck.

In Dies Records

The story of the Caphart campaign is told in all its amazing detail in the records of the Dies committee. Unfortunately, the recital stops short of the point where Mr. Caphart passed the torch to Mr. Willkie. The circumstances leave no doubt that the torch was passed. Mr. Caphart was one of Mr. Willkie's earliest and most devoted boosters. It was he who arranged the home town notification ceremony and who sat at Mr. Willkie's elbow on the platform when the Republican nominee delivered his formal acceptance speech.

Mr. Caphart was "discovered" in 1938 by James E. Campbell, one of the leading peddlers of the native fascist propaganda in the U. S. A. and rightist revolutionary plotter. As early as July 22, 1938, Mr. Campbell wrote to an associate that "it might be a good idea to start selling him (Mr. Caphart) over the country as a 1940 potential." Accordingly, he started out by "selling" him to Felix McWhirter, Indianapolis banker and official of the state Republican committee, and to Dudley Pierrepont Gilbert, wealthy New Yorker and fascist agitator.

Through Mr. Gilbert, the whole motley crew of night shirt organizations were brought into the campaign—Kuhn of the Bund, George Deatherage, head of an organization called the Knights of the White Camelia, William Dudley Pelley of the Silver Shirts and Gen. George Van Horn Moseley, who was to be the fascists' Man on the White Horse. Several meetings were held in an attempt to weld the various organizations together into one unified party of the blond nordic elite—one of these meetings at the home of a Mrs. Uzell on Long Island, whose house was guarded on that occasion by storm troopers.

Secrecy

The maneuvers of the fascist crew were surrounded with an aura of college fraternity secrecy. Americans found them hilariously funny when the Dies committee brought them into the open. The newspapers were particularly amused by Mr. Gilbert's story that he had been told of a Jewish revolution plot by an unidentified waiter in a New

York club and that he was so alarmed by it that he was building a fortress retreat for himself and his family in the hills of Kentucky against the day of the revolution. The whole affair had its humorous aspects, but so did Hitler's nondescript gang in the early days.

There were some non-humorous, some ugly plans made by the night shirt men in 1938 and 1939. These plotters have now switched their support from Mr. Caphart to Mr. Willkie—but again I emphasize that there is no evidence whatever that Mr. Willkie has encouraged them.

As traveling salesman of the Caphart-for-President cause, Mr. Campbell set out on a secret tour of the U. S. A. in the fall of 1938. On Oct. 3, that year, Mr. Campbell reported to Mr. McWhirter that interviews with World War veterans on a 6000-mile canvass of the country had convinced him they had "a natural" in Mr. Caphart.

"I have a definite plan in mind which would result in his nomination," Mr. Campbell wrote.

Mr. Gilbert, upon receiving a similar report from Mr. Campbell, replied that "you and I are destined to lead America to . . . greatness." He added that he and Mr. Campbell would have to be prepared to be persuaded as Mussolini and Hitler were, but that they would come through in the end.

Plans to Organize

Plans were made to organize 15,000 Caphart-for-President clubs around the nucleus of the shirt organizations. These clubs or parallel organizations set up at the same time—it was never made quite clear in the correspondence—were to be trained for the serious business of violent revolution. Mr. Deatherage drew the preliminary blueprint for all this in a letter to Mr. Campbell on Dec. 14, 1938. He wrote:

"I believe as you do that it will take military action to get this gang (the Roosevelt Administration) out and, the organization must be built around a propaganda organization now that can in a few hours be turned into a militant fighting force. To my mind, we will have fascism, call it what you may, for there can be no solution for this except a disciplined force under central leadership, and an economic program that will put these millions back to work and keep them there. . . . I do not think that we can create a program under constitutional framework."

Mr. Campbell, in an answering letter, said he was "heartily in accord with your (Deatherage's) aims and purposes."

Meanwhile, arrangements had been made for Gen. Moseley to whip up reactionary

They Are Determined to Run FDR and The New Deal Out

sentiment throughout the country. He started his campaign with a highly inflammatory speech before the Board of Trade in New York on Dec. 14, 1938. All of the organizations in on the Caphart plan exchanged and disseminated fascist literature—particularly the speeches of Moseley and Father Coughlin. Mr. Campbell conferred with John D. M. Hamilton, then as now chairman of the Republican National Committee, and secured a Republican mailing list from him. Mr. Hamilton told the Dies committee he didn't know the nature of Mr. Campbell's work, however.

In all his speeches, Gen. Moseley more or less guardedly suggested military action and Mr. Deatherage continued to elaborate his plans for the coming revolution. In a letter to Mr. Campbell, dated Dec. 14, 1938, Mr. Deatherage suggested that Gen. Moseley make an effort to persuade reserve officers of the U. S. Army to take key places in the fascist army.

The clubs did not openly espouse the cause of Mr. Caphart at first and, lacking and kind of acceptable name, came to be called the tiddlywinks clubs. They seem to be spreading rapidly in the winter of 1939 until the Dies committee hearings put an end to the whole fantastic Caphart campaign.

Fascist Support

Whether Mr. Caphart fully understood the kind of backing he was getting was never satisfactorily established. But the record of the Dies committee does establish that certain lesser Republicans courted and got fascist support in the local campaigns of 1938. Roy Schulz, a former Bund member, told the committee how he and Bernard Arrow, a state Assembly candidate in Illinois, visited the local leader of the Bund and got a promise of Bund indorsement. The Bund leader, according to Mr. Schulz, promised at the same time to get his friend, the Italian consul in Chicago, to help the Republican candidate.

The committee disclosed that Deatherage estimated the total membership of "reliable" fascist organizations at 1,000,000. These organizations were listed as: The Militant Christian Patriots, American Nationalist Federation, American Vigilante Intelligence Federation, Defenders of the Christian Faith, American People's Party, Silver Shirts of America, Crusaders for Economic Liberty, Edmundson Economic Service, Washington's Bodyguard and German-American Bund. Some of them still are in existence and others carry on under changed titles. Close affiliation never has been effected because of rivalry among the leaders.

But most of the men who once dreamed of establishing Homer Caphart in the White House peacefully, if possible, but by force, if necessary, still are at large. (Kuhn, now in Sing Sing, is one of the exceptions.) Together with the Bundists, they are supporting Mr. Willkie—again, whether he likes it or not. Individually, these fascists are small potatoes, but collectively they have power and influence. Moreover, they find sympathy in a few of the high places of American business and finance. Hatred of President Roosevelt's brand of democracy is a strong adhesive for strange forces.

Tomorrow: Business appears back Mr. Willkie.