

THE RAVENS

By M.

(Translated by David Zablodowsky)

It is evening again—after a day that was like a long nightmare. Here in this obscure little island of Tura, where the greatest events hitherto have been the birth of a child or an old man's death, the air today has been smoldering with the most fearful rumors. We have already anticipated all the terrors of a World War, even before the War has actually broken out. The rumors burst forth upon us like a shower of meteors—erupting now from one overheated brain, now from another—and they have made the day as hot as a day in hell.

But now it is evening—a real evening of deep darkness, for the white nights are past. And night spreads her black protecting wings over the many tiny straits and islands here on the southern coast of Funen.

The healing darkness brings a calm to our spirits, relaxing them after their long excitement. People speak and move about in a hush, as if they were in a room where someone lay dying; and yonder on the road Katner's Anne is passing out of sight, weeping inconsolably. Her husband has been called to the colors, and now, she has been left behind with a horde of hungry children. She has been sobbing out her story the livelong day—and no one has heard her. Her little grief, too, the evening gathers up; now it has swallowed everything.

Out there among the straits lights suddenly appear and disappear again. Are they perhaps signal lights from foreign torpedo boats? Or only the usual coming and vanishing of eel lights and ships' lanterns? Maybe some man with a lantern is walking along the beach of one of the low islets? Or a boat is on its way to fetch the midwife?

Far out on the horizon there is a glimmer like a winking eye—at intervals a gleam of light soars up over the edge, to be hastily extinguished again by the darkness; now and then a hollow rumble comes over the water. Is it only the lightning—or a distant thunder? Or is a battle going on out there?

I am sitting on the slope under a century-old oak that leans heavily over the water; at my feet the waves are murmuring like a soft penetrating voice. And my heart beats in dull choking thumps—tonight I hear accusations in everything.

From the road above Anne's weeping still carries down to me. She already looks upon herself as a widow—and has she any reason to think otherwise? Millions of women are as inconsolable as she this night. It is humiliating to be a human being in this day of blood.

This then is the result of our great men's labors, of mankind's collective striving after culture, of our heaven-storming ideas and our all-embracing sympathy with the whole world: Meat! Humanity preparing to grind itself into chopped meat—to feed the beasts!

Hark, what strange chatter is that under heaven's black circling of cloud, like the flight of birds in autumn? Can it be angels—on

their way to afflicted mankind, bringing peace on earth?

No, it is only the ravens flying south. It is early this year for them to be darkening the nights thus. Quiet! Are they not singing?

*We are the ravens,
Man's guardian spirits,
Rulers of battlefields.
Fly! Fly!
Still caked are our feathers
On head and on throat
From the last feast of blood,
And already the call comes
From the Great-Gong' gong
To another flesh banquet.*

*Wide spread your pinions,
Wide be your wing-beats—
The journey is far!
Sing ye the praises
Of man, the godlike,
Who murders his brother,
His mother, his child,
And lays waste the whole world
To heap food for the ravens.*

*Thank him—and fly onward!
Strike out with broad strokes!
Hasten, oh, hasten!
Man's at his murder—
He cries out to Heaven!
We come, we are flying,
With the shadow of slaughter
Black in our wings.
Blacker our wings
Than black Night herself.*

A raven glides down and alights in the oak tree over my head. I hear his wings beat heavily as he gains his balance. Then his hoarse cry pierces the air. From the forest preserves beyond the little bay a young voice answers:

"What is it, War Raven?"

The old raven slowly flaps his night-heavy wings, "This way, this way!"

"Why should we fly south so soon?" the voice comes back. "It is still summer, and there is food enough here—what an abundant year this has been! The chicks are just beginning to taste good!"

"Come, I tell you! You shall have something better than chickens. You shall eat hearts—and livers and lungs—all from an animal worth more than its weight in gold. Come!"

"And what is this animal called?"

"Human!"

"Ha, ha, War Raven! You think you can fool me because I'm young. Don't I know very well that man prizes his flesh very highly, and that there is a death penalty for touching him? Man himself says it, and it must be so, for his body is destined for heaven where it will be resurrected in glory and splendor. His flesh is food for the gods, he says."

"Man says a great many things, my son. And when he has had enough of spouting



"When the mighty rulers of the earth drink of the altar and make their own cause the

sublime words, he gathers all his fine young men together in one great field and has them slaughter each other. First they shoot each other down, and, when the field is quite covered with corpses, they drive back and forth over it with horses' hooves and cannon wheels, until the whole field becomes a smoking mush. At Solferino I saw a valley between two cliffs that was like an enormous pot full of goulash, all cooked together with the blood and bones."

"And then did the gods come down and eat?"

"No, the gods had to stay in heaven to arrange quarters for all the human souls. Fifty thousand of them arrived together, wanting to get in. So they sent us ravens instead. When men offer up their great battle sacrifice to heaven, the gods always send the ravens to represent them. And that, my child, is why man is called the raven's prey and not the food of the gods. So, let us go!"

"But why go now? There's no War going on."

"Don't you hear the rushing in the air and the War-cry of our brothers? All the raven of Scandinavia are on their way southward to the great field of battle."

"Has the fighting begun already?"

"No, but it is imminent! So stop asking silly questions, and get started."

"And how do you know all this, Father War Raven?"

"When the mighty rulers of the earth d

SILVER SHIRTS

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young manhood as editor and publisher of country newspapers in small towns in that state and Vermont. He was with the Y.M.C.A. in President Wilson's unauthorized expedition to Siberia in 1917 and 1918. In 1929, to use his own words, he "cast aside his former occupation, that netted him \$25,000 a year." If Pelley made \$25,000 a year by means of adventure stories and a few unnoted novels, he was a great deal luckier than most popular fiction writers, even during the boom era.

His next move was a curious one, and throws a strange sidelight on the whole Silver Shirt movement. He organized the League for the Liberation, whose "surface purpose was metaphysical research." Pelley has always been interested in the metaphysical and the occult; he was editing the so-called *Philosopher Magazine* when he was only fifteen. The early numbers of *Liberation* are full of incoherent rhapsodies marked "psychically received." They are less frequent now as the organization grows more prosperous and more aggressive; but there still appears a page of dithyrambs beginning "My Beloved," and ending, cryptically, "PEACE," which is accompanied by the following remarkable words:

Out of the vastness of Cosmos, the Psychic Antennae tunes [sic] in a Voice. If the Word was made flesh and spake once to men, how much stronger may be its pronouncements when the handicaps of the flesh are perished? If we cannot believe this, to Whom or What shall we look for authority of commitments like the following?

The answer probably is, to William Dudley Pelley, and the implication, of course, is that the "message" comes straight from heaven. In a little booklet he got out in the early days of the Silver Shirts, he stated unblushingly that "the cold, stark, irrefutable fact remains that true clairvoyants have looked into the imminent future and seen it actually in effect" ("it" being his "Christ Democracy," his first name for the glorious state in which we shall find ourselves when the Silver Shirts have triumphed). In other words, his "Christian Protestantism" is strongly tinged with spiritism.

This will antagonize some persons otherwise drawn to him; but let it not be thought that the Silver Shirts are to triumph by persuasion alone. No, this "strictly Protestant Christian Movement for the protection of the Christ people in this nation" believes very firmly in force and violence. Nordic Protestants over eighteen years of age and in good health, who are "not afraid to risk life and limb for their country," are invited to join at a cost of five dollars a year for *Liberation*, ten dollars for the "complete outfit" of uniform, and whatever else they can spare to outfit less prosperous aspirants to membership. The chief feature

of the uniform is the Silver Shirt, "with the great scarlet 'L' emblazoned over your heart, standing for Love, Loyalty, and Liberation."

Silver-Shirted Cossacks

Just how much love, loyalty, and liberation are involved may be seen by the added information that "the Quartermasters Corps in Oklahoma City is primarily interested in outfitting the National Rangers [a subsidiary of the Silver Shirts for special appeal to the Southwest] for active service against the communist adversary." Anyone with a horse is especially invited to join the Rangers, and this invitation gives a grisly emphasis to the threat to "those who oppose us, who view us as un-American," that "before we are finished we shall ride you down."

"We leaders," says Pelley, "are risking our lives to write a new page in American history. . . . Within this coming year you are going to see the Silver Shirts loom large in the affairs of these United States. You will see their parades in the News Weeklies. You will hear about their activities at the National Capitol." [Perhaps the first fulfillment of the prophecy is the diatribe against the "Brain Trust" by Dr. Wirt, of Gary, Indiana.]

Anti-Labor "Socialism"

For a while Pelley seemed to have snared at least one Congressman, in the person of Representative Louis McFadden of Pennsylvania, who appeared openly in *Liberation*. Whether McFadden contributed financially to the sudden rapid growth of the movement is a matter which only he and Pelley know. But certainly he gave the appearance of close affiliation with them; and I know of several instances in which admirers of McFadden's policies joined the Silver Shirts on the strength of his articles. There is, of course, nothing unusual in this; in its heyday the Klan numbered many members of both houses and other high government officials among its supporters.

It is, in sober fact, a complete replica of the Nazi system, including even the semi-socialistic promises of Hitler's pre-election speeches. It protests that it is not military, yet its literature abounds with such phrases as "the thunder of thousands of Silver Shirt horses," "the open-challenge of an organization of the New Vigilantes." It speaks touchingly of its revival of "the great Christian forces of gentlemanliness and knighthood," while it repeats every vicious lie of anti-Semitism even to adducing the forged "Protocol of the Elders of Zion," for whose espousal Henry Ford once had to apologize publicly. It is aggressively militant, not only anti-radical but also anti-labor; it says truly, "here is a gesture that is already commanding the support of a growing company of affluent citizens." (Italics mine.)

Though the Silver Shirts specialize in anti-Semitism and anti-Communism they neglect no one of the objects of hatred of the Ku Klux Klan. They fulminate about "morality" and "the destruction of the family"; they write in an incendiary strain about the Negroes; and they are intolerant to any group that is not "pure Nordic Protestant." One Robert C. Summerville, writing in *Liberation*, informs us that "the Jewish system of high finance" "has created the 'pink' Socialistic Party and the 'red' Communistic Party. It 'put over' the NRA and its system of bureaucracies." All this is shown by "the Unwritten History of the World," which, since it is unwritten, it is not surprising that "the general public has not been permitted to study."

Imagine the effect of this sort of balderdash, uttered in a tone of assured knowledge, on some harassed worker or farmer without political understanding who for four years has heard his children cry for food and who is looking, unconsciously, for some scapegoat on whom to load his burden of bitterness and despair, some outlet for his desperate need to do something and do it quickly!

Join The Silver Legion of America

Become one of the Great Christian Militia that Propose to Uphold Our Constitution, Deport All Predatory Aliens, and Save America for Americans!

CITIZENS OF AMERICA! Wake up! Come out from under your anathemas! Know the truth about this lying, duping, hoodwinking, debauchery and betrayal of your Christ and your government—out from the standpoint of the alienist fanatic, but from trained, conscientious investigators whose lives are at stake for spreading what they have discovered.

The time is at hand to write a new page in American history and prove whether or not the Spirit of Paul Harvey, Ethan Allen, Patrick Henry, and William Lloyd Garrison is dead in this land!

There is coming out from under cover in these hectic days a great, aggressive, challenging organization made up of Protestant-Christian freemen:

It is time that you heard of the Silver Legion of America, and joined their ranks for splendid action against these traitors of America's honor and her Christian institutions!

The Silver Legion is under way in 48 of our defiled and debauched American States, organized to defend and perpetuate our sacred Constitution, to aid our American President in freeing himself from the international plunder-band, to preserve the integrity of our religious institutions, and to halt the wretches and defilers of American culture out of America—to stay out permanently.

These men are Christian patriots who have availed on the Home and are ready for action!

They and their leaders, their organization and their principles, are being vilified, buffooned, disparaged, and maligned—the end and aim that the American people may pay no attention to them and continue under their manufactured anathemas that all is well.

Meanwhile the alien hordes and betrayers hurry their work in secret, revolutionize our highest manner with their wicked sympathies, permeate our sacred institutions, and keep an abject censorship on America's agencies of publicity.

WORKERS OF AMERICA! Do you know there is a way out of this misery and distress that is neither Socialism, Communism, or the double sublimation to this foreign exel backed by millions of alien money?

Do you know there is an entirely new system of Government that does not abolish the single fundamental of our republican form of officials, entirely washed out in the most minute practical detail, whose limits are unassailable, and that for want of a better term to describe it has been called

THE CHRIST DEMOCRACY!

Do you know that with, and by, a few simple measures, without bloodshed, without undoing the slightest item of good work accomplished by the forefathers, there is a way for the aroused American people to forever tie the hands of the predatory foreign money-band, stop the Crime Wave, and return America to her home, hard working, Christian citizenry?

Why not face the terrible facts, and be quick to investigate this drastic and effective alternative to atheistic Communism before our beloved country is carried over the precipice?

If you fight for the life of your country in war, will you not fight for her in time of peace?

Will you not embrace this invitation to join with thousands of your fellow Protestants, become one of these Silver Knights, and present a mighty and terrifying front to these arrogant overlords of religion and economic debauchery who are laughing in their sleeves at Christian profitability?

The facts are known—they are yours if you are qualified to receive them—yet you get the most hidden and secret details of the alien conspiracy in all its grimness, and grisly attainable.

There is no fanaticism in this, no racial prejudice, no religious bigotry, however much the enemies of America may stimulate this phobias of Christian Defenders to the contrary.

There is nothing wrong with America but the Aliens who are debauching her!

Silver Shirt leaflet spreading Fascist Propaganda