

Report No. 2

“SINCE DEC. 7”

**Enemy  
Propaganda**

**IN SOUTHERN  
CALIFORNIA**



AMERICANISM COMMITTEE

17TH DISTRICT : THE AMERICAN LEGION : DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA

February 20, 1942

To: Commander Harold F. Bergan,  
17th District, The American Legion,  
Department of California.

In accordance with your order we have prepared and herewith present our report on Enemy Propaganda in Southern California since December 7, together with our recommendations.

Respectfully submitted,

Americanism Committee,  
17th District, The American Legion,  
Department of California.

Ben S. Beery, *Chairman*

F. Walton Brown   H. C. Heinritz   Henry Mayers  
John E. Eames   Dee Holder   Samuel H. Robinson  
Russell W. Starr

# I

## Tomorrow's Pearl Harbor?

The United States, by far the richest, most productive country in the world, is today fighting a tragic, delaying action against enemies of small comparative economic strength.

This is only because we lack the planes, tanks, guns and battleships, to say nothing of trained officers and men, to defeat our enemies quickly. Back of this lack, however, is a long, sad history of apathy, false sense of security, political shortsightedness, factional hatreds, and ideological confusion. Behind it all is the sinister story of skillful enemy propaganda that helped to hamstring and delay legislation for armaments, lend-lease and selective service. Enemy propaganda fanned suspicion, hatred, and confusion. Enemy propaganda working cunningly, tirelessly and ruthlessly scored innumerable victories in our very midst.

The American public was not wholly unaware of such activities prior to December 7. But the average patriotic American reasoned as follows: "These Axis propa-

gandists are permitted to operate because after all we are still at peace. They are well known to F.B.I. and other authorities. Our government knows that in modern war, propaganda is as important as planes, tanks, and bullets. Once American soldiers are in a shooting war, enemy propagandists, as well as spies and saboteurs, will be put where they belong."

We have now been in a state of all-out war for more than two months. Investigation of Axis propaganda in Southern California since December 7 reveals the following:

1. Southern California, key war production center of the whole United States, is spotted with subversive organizations aggressively spreading dissention, defeatism, obstruction to our war effort and open disloyalty to the United States of America.
2. Sincere but uninformed wishful thinkers have lulled us into a false sense of security by over-emphasis of the idea that "since Pearl Harbor we are a one hundred per cent united people." Few who make this state-

ment have taken pains to find out how the Axis is today continuing to use that section of our population which was openly or covertly pro-Hitler before December 7. The general public remains apathetic.

3. There is no adequate control of such

enemy propaganda in spite of the efficiency of the F. B. I. in this vital field.

4. There is at present a state of non-alertness concerning enemy activity on the propaganda front that is comparable to the non-alertness that led to the Pearl Harbor

debacle on our military and naval fronts. Details concerning the above situations

and recommendations for meeting them are presented in the following pages.

AMERICA FIRST — AMERICA FIRST — AMERICA FIRST — AMERICA FIRST  
 EXTRA Life Magazine has already asked permission to send photographers to take Pictures of this Event.

**THE PRESIDENT'S TRIAL IS NOW IN FULL SWING 'PRESIDENT' ROOSEVELT HAS BEEN IMPEACHED**

BY A PEOPLE'S CONGRESS WITH A VOTE OF 1038 TO 2

"HE" IS NOW BEING TRIED BEFORE THE PEOPLE'S SENATE, WITH THE CHIEF JUSTICE of the Supreme Court, Presiding. Speeches of Indictment have been made—Now we are ready for the witness—es with the real evidence against this man—Has he betrayed the American people?

The "Foreign Diplomatic Corps" has promised to attend in a body—dressed in their Official Uniforms of Office. Yes, the "President" attends in person—you must see him.

**BIG, MAIN-EMBASSY AUDITORIUM 9TH & GRAND—LOS ANGELES ONE MORE GALA EVENING THURSDAY, DEC. 11. 8:P.M.**

(EVERY PERFORMANCE DIFFERENT—DON'T MISS ANY)

MUSIC & ENTERTAINMENT STARTS AT 7:30

If you agree with Col. Lindbergh you must not miss this Big Show—Impeachment Procedure Conducted Just as it Should be done, in Congress, at Washington. Chief Prosecutor.

**ROBERT NOBLE**  
 CALIFORNIA'S FEARLESS ORATOR  
 Chief Justice of Supreme Court, ELLIS O. JONES

**ALL FREE** Come Early and Be a Member of Congress **ALL FREE**

Auspices, "FRIENDS OF PROGRESS"

If there was any Greater, Kinder, Nobler Thing, that we could be doing—We would be ashamed to be doing, what we are doing!  
 — Printed Co-operatively — In our own shop —

AMERICA FIRST — AMERICA FIRST — AMERICA FIRST — AMERICA FIRST  
 WE ARE STILL FOR AMERICA FIRST — LAST — AND ALL THE TIME.

**THE PEOPLE'S CONGRESS MEETS IN A BIG BILL OF RIGHTS CELEBRATION**

(OUR F. B. I. WILL PROTECT YOU)

**BIG, MAIN-EMBASSY AUDITORIUM 9TH & GRAND—LOS ANGELES THURSDAY, DEC. 18-- 8P.M.**

MUSIC & ENTERTAINMENT STARTS AT 7:30

Yes, we impeached the president — These are the most Sensational meetings in America. See "Look" Magazine—Current Feature Story about

**ROBERT NOBLE**  
 CALIFORNIA'S FEARLESS ORATOR

Who will tell you about our F.B.I. findings. WHY SHOULDN'T WE KNOW THE TRUTH **N O W**

LIFE MAGAZINE took scores of pictures of our Famous Impeachment Proceedings. THIS IS THE REAL NEWS CENTER OF OUR NATION!  
 Note:—After this meeting—We meet each Saturday evening beginning Dec. 27

**WE WILL NOT PULL OUR PUNCHES ——— EVER!**

BECAUSE WE ARE ON THE SIDE OF RIGHT & JUSTICE

**ALL FREE** Come Early and Be a Member of Congress **ALL FREE**

Auspices, "FRIENDS OF PROGRESS"

If there was any Greater, Kinder, Nobler Thing, that we could be doing—We would be ashamed to be doing, what we are doing!  
 — Printed Co-operatively — In our own shop —

**Sowing Disunity!** . . . Mock "Impeachment Proceedings" is an old Nazi propaganda trick. To incite hatred for the President of our country and Commander-in-Chief of the United States Armed forces, a series of "Impeach Roosevelt" meetings were commenced before December 7th and culminated December 11th, after war began, at a meeting at which a cheering crowd voted to impeach the President. Striving to attract as much as possible of the former "America First" audiences, one of the

circulars reads: "If you agree with Colonel Lindbergh, you must not miss this big show." Such handbills are widely distributed to unsuspecting crowds leaving various legitimate public gatherings. Enemy propagandists know that even though only a small fraction of those reading the circulars attend any of the meetings advertised, the remainder of the circulars still serves the purpose of stimulating suspicion and disloyal thoughts in some of those who read them.

## II

### What Is Enemy Propaganda?

Prior to December 7, the thoughtful citizen, if asked the question, "What is Axis propaganda activity in this country like?", would have answered:

"It's the spreading of false ideas . . . to make us believe that the Nazis are invincible . . . that Hitler is a great man . . . that the Jews are responsible for everything evil . . . that England started the war . . . that Roosevelt is the most vicious man on earth, etc., etc."

His answer would have been correct.

The same answer is true today. There has been no change in the basic Axis propaganda line for the United States. Today, just as before December 7, it is worth considerable to the Axis powers to have more and more Americans continuing to believe and continuing to spread those same preposterous ideas.

There has been only one change in the status of these Hitler legends since our entry into the war. Before December 7, they were merely "Axis propaganda." Today, they are ENEMY PROPAGANDA.

The organized spreading of these ideas may be termed "enemy action" on the propaganda front. Since December 7, anyone engaged in spreading such ideas regardless of his purpose may be termed an "enemy propagandist." It is in this sense that the terms "enemy propaganda" and "enemy propagandist" are used in this report. The word "subversive" is used in this report to refer to persons or organizations whose activities tend to undermine our form of government, to foment racial or class hatred, or to otherwise weaken the defense morale of our people in accordance with the Axis propaganda program.

# III

## Southern California— The Achilles' Heel

The Southern California area contains approximately three million persons, a large proportion of whom are directly or indirectly engaged in defense work. Within this area is concentrated a greater vital defense production than within any like area in the United States.

In addition, partly because of this defense activity and partly because of its geographical location, this area is an exposed and likely target for direct military action. It is likewise a most promising field for espionage and sabotage.

Southern California, particularly Los Angeles and vicinity, is certainly an area in which public morale is of vital importance. Morale admittedly has a direct relationship to defense production. It is also vital to civilian behavior in times of air raids, sabotage disaster or other emergency situations in which the type of panic created by the enemy during the invasion of France might conceivably be duplicated.

Public morale in this area therefore deserves the special consideration of all

thoughtful Americans. That such morale has in the past received the careful consideration of Axis agents bent on weakening it, is a matter of record. Today it is receiving the same careful consideration from enemy propagandists.

In this area there are many types of subversive organizations, some secret and some not so secret, devoted to spreading enemy propaganda. Some of these organizations are holdovers from pre-war groups—the rallying points for subversive elements from such groups as America First, National Copperheads, Christian American Guards and the Ku Klux Klan. Others are new organizations under such names as World Events Forum, Friends of Progress, United Minute Men and Women of America, The People's Church, and the like.

The larger meetings of these groups are skillfully recruited. Use is made of mailing lists of persons believed to be sympathetic to their ideas. Innocuous appearing announcements of such meetings are also circulated among the general public by other

means. They are even surreptitiously distributed on street-corners near churches of recognized denominations as the congregations leave their places of worship. As a result, audiences of from 400 to 700 who from time to time attend the larger meetings are not made up of the same people but new and different groups of persons are successively brought in and exposed to the influence of enemy propagandists who are speakers there.

Moreover, the full extent to which enemy propaganda is spread by these organizations is not truly pictured by the mere tally of their official meetings. At the larger gatherings the listeners are trained to form small individual cells in their own communities, talking at first cautiously with their immediate neighbors and later calling them together at home meetings to further the ideas they carry away from the larger meetings. The possibilities of this method of dissemination are unlimited.

It is not possible in this report to give detailed accounts of all of these meetings or even a substantial percentage of them. However, the next section presents some details concerning the character of a few of the larger groups meeting regularly.

### Why Do You Hate Hitler? and Has Bolshevism Come to America?

DISSEMINATED AT A PUBLIC MEETING  
HELD IN THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES  
JANUARY 14, 1942.



Read This Pamphlet  
and  
**SAVE AMERICA FIRST**

**Typical extract** from this widely distributed piece of enemy propaganda reads as follows: *"The public has been misinformed and misled to hate the German people, just as much as they have been led to hate the Japanese people. . . . Franklin Roosevelt's hate-Hitler program and love-Churchill and Stalin, is nothing more than a political Jewish method of getting the public mind off the Jew, and as a smoke-screen, placing the blame on Hitlerism."*

# IV

## Examples of Enemy Propaganda In Southern California Since December 7th

We are now fighting total war. This not only means that our total resources and spirit must be thrown into the conflict but also that defeat would result in total extinction of our freedom and, in fact, of our existence as a nation. Anything which detracts from morale reduces our total effort and thus aids the enemy. And yet there is being carried on a widespread campaign of enemy propaganda attacks on morale.

\* \* \*

High morale of our armed forces is essential to our success. Loyal Americans realize this and are untiring in their efforts to sustain and encourage our men who are so valiantly defending us. Yet, enemy propagandists continue to widely distribute the following appeal designed not only to obstruct recruiting and enlistment but also to destroy the morale of our armed forces:

*"Young Man, your lowest aim in life is to be a good soldier . . .*

*"A good soldier is not a man, he is not even a brute. A brute only kills in self defense. All that was human in a good sol-*

*dier, all that was Divine in him, all that constitutes the Man, was sworn away when he took the oath of enlistment.*

*"Young Man, you can't fall lower than to be a good soldier, it is the depth beneath which the human cannot go."*

\* \* \*

The same circular continues:

*"But remember, one who is drafted, does not enlist. And furthermore, a young fellow who enlists, usually does so because he desperately needs a job. Terrific pressure of economic circumstances usually causes it. Certainly we can't conceive of anyone joining up because he really wants to kill some one.*

*"Society then is to blame! But society is us! Society is made up of individuals just as we. We are responsible for our individual actions. This makes for the action of society. Therefore, let's individually swear to have nothing to do with war.*

**"WE CAN TODAY, CONSTITUTIONALLY AND LEGALLY, TAKE THIS STAND AGAINST WAR.**

*"I have taken it. Will you?"*

*"If I do this, and you do this, and we all do this, THEN THERE WILL BE NO MORE WARS. "How about it?"*

*(Write me and I will gladly send you full particulars of how you can individually (legally) keep out of the war effort.)"*

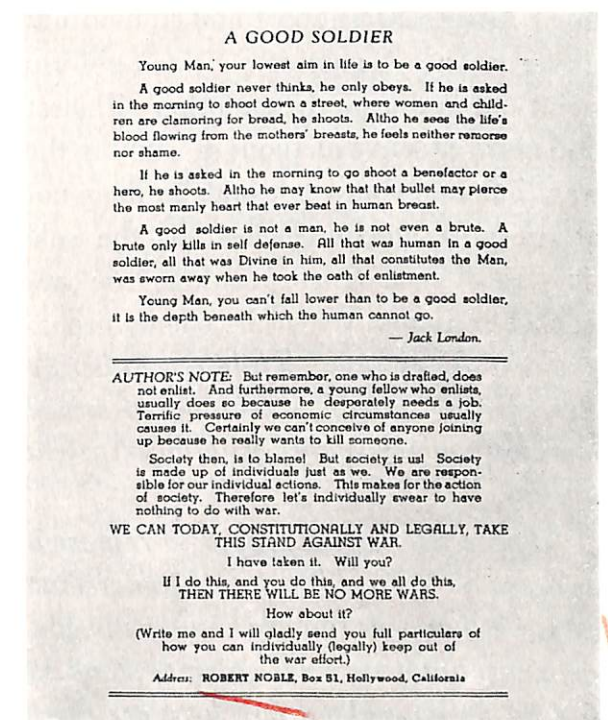
\* \* \*

To acknowledge the courage and bravery of our men is the least we can do. Yet, enemy propagandists at large public meetings in Los Angeles during January and February, 1942, declared amid loud applause that General MacArthur and his men are "not heroes but fools"; and said, "I tell you if you folks knew the things the Marine Corps is used for, and it is your money that is used to do it with . . . why you'd all stop paying taxes."

\* \* \*

Wholehearted financial support of our war effort is an absolute necessity. Throughout the land loyal Americans are buying and urging others to buy defense bonds and stamps. Yet, the enemy propagandist is permitted to discourage the purchase of these bonds and stamps by such statements as: "Don't let those reports the newspapers are publishing about Russia fool you either. Those are just being used TO FOOL YOU INTO SPENDING YOUR GOOD MONEY FOR DEFENSE BONDS AND STAMPS. Don't believe a word of it." Large audiences are repeatedly urged not to buy any defense bonds or stamps. The appeal is: "Don't buy bonds. For God's sake don't prolong this war."

Discouragement paralyzes the will to win, so the enemy propagandist declares: "What can we do? We haven't any material to ship . . . no ships to ship it on . . . and no place to use it if we had it. This war is finished right now." Also: "Yes, Sir! Things are coming out the way we said they would. War for five years? Ten years? Nonsense! THE WAR IS OVER NOW! There is no place to fight—and nothing to fight about.



**Obstruction to selective service and to recruiting for U. S. Armed forces** are suggested in this advertisement. Note the promise to send full particulars of how to "(legally) keep out of the war-effort." . . . Pertinent extracts from this circular are quoted in text of this and preceding page. The handbills attribute a portion of this text to Jack London, who, during his lifetime, vigorously denied being its author. Such insistent reprinting of documents repeatedly proven false is standard procedure in enemy propaganda technique.

FROM NOW ON, *the Orient is going to be run by the Orientals—Europe by the Europeans—and Americans MUST START LOOKING OUT FOR THEMSELVES, throwing out all those who have caused us to mess into the affairs of others.*”

\* \* \*

It is all very well to be partisan in politics, but where the salvation of our democracy and our way of life is involved, all loyal Americans support and uphold our government. A patriotic citizen should point out and urge the adoption of better and more effective methods of winning the war, but he should not and he does not attack government officials for the sole purpose of causing our people to lose confidence in them. Not so the enemy propagandists. They say: *“While remembering Pearl Harbor, don’t forget that our armed forces are honeycombed with incompetent upstarts.”* . . .

*“Those who are supposed to represent us do so no longer. We do not understand what has happened to our democratic government, but we are not going to stand by and do nothing about it. There are three ways that Congressmen and politicians have been controlled—by intimidation, bribery and assassination. We have got to clean house.”* . . .

*“Is Nazism coming to this country disguised in the robes of ‘defense of democracy’? . . . Do we have Fascism today in the United States?”* . . .

“THE WHOLE COUNTRY IS SEETHING WITH DISCONTENT! . . . Yes, German and Japanese Aliens are committing suicide—but this is nothing to what we are going to see on the part of some home grown varieties—OF THOSE WHO MESS INTO THE AFFAIRS OF OTHERS.”

In Unity there is strength. Anything which will create disunity weakens us and aids our enemies. If they can create hatreds and suspicions among our people, they have won a substantial victory and we have sustained a serious defeat. Thus we find the enemy propagandists distributing literature stating: *“Chaos is coming to America for this war is a race war and a money system war, but one race and one money system will have to disappear and I do not have to tell you what race nor what money system. The answer is, JEWS.”*

\* \* \*

The foregoing are only a few examples of the propaganda that has been widely distributed since December 7. The list could be extended indefinitely. Such statements have been made on frequent occasions to large audiences consisting of hundreds of persons. Circulars from which some of the foregoing quotations were taken have been widely sold and distributed. It is all part of an organized enemy propaganda campaign, which reiterates, in leaflets and speeches: *“Remember: The U. S. Attorney General says we have a perfect right to talk—and we will!”*

# V

## By Their Fruits Ye Shall Know Them

Government action has put an end to the activities of known enemy agents through the elimination of enemy consuls, consular agents and persons registered as enemy agents, and by detention of aliens known to have enemy associations. However, the spreading of the same type of propaganda as they were engaged in still continues, and the sowing of new seeds of disloyalty goes on. In addition to spreading apathy and disunity, obstructing our war effort and interfering with recruiting, this activity also creates a favorable atmosphere for outright espionage and sabotage.

In Southern California, organizers, speakers, literature distributors and general organization handymen, such as F. K. Ferenz, Ellis O. Jones, James McBride, Robert Noble and the Van Meter Brothers, are still aiding in the dissemination of propaganda which follows the identical pattern of that previously put forth by departed or incarcerated enemy aliens. This is not surprising when the pre-war background of these handymen is considered: F. K. Ferenz has been operating The

Continental Shop at 2509 West Seventh Street, Los Angeles, California. He is the publisher of a swastika-decorated volume entitled “Hitler.” He has been a distributor of German propaganda films and German language records in Los Angeles. His motion picture films, sometimes accompanied by talks by such persons as Herman Max Schwinn, have been shown in many theatres. Because of such activities he was ousted from the Mason Opera House in Los Angeles and his eviction was upheld by the Superior Court.

James McBride can be best characterized by his testimony under oath before the Assembly Fact Finding Committee on un-American Activities in California when he admitted he had visited the Deutsches Haus (headquarters of the German-American Bund in Los Angeles) on many occasions, including a celebration of Adolph Hitler’s birthday. He also testified:

“Q. Did you ever meet Mr. Goebbels?  
A. I wish I had.

“Q. And you made a statement that you

thought he was a fine gentleman. A. I think he is, yes. . . .

"Q. How about Mr. Hitler? A. Mr. Hitler is a Christian. In fact, I think he has done more for Christianity than any other man in the world, that is the reason I like him."

**The Van Meter Brothers** cooperated with the Bund and were active in the subversive "League to Save America First."

**Ellis O. Jones** was head of the subversive National Copperheads. He has been a writer for such anti-Semitic papers as "Publicity" and a contributor to the "Deutsches Weckruf und Beobachter" which was the official organ of the Bund.

**Robert Noble**, admittedly in favor of the Axis, as late as February 11, 1942, declared to a large audience: "I am for the

Axis powers because they are the liberators of the world."

Before the Assembly Fact Finding Committee on Un-American Activities in California, Assemblyman Jack B. Tenney, Chairman, Noble testified October 17, 1941, as follows:

"CHAIRMAN TENNEY: Mr. Noble, a transcript was made of your speech that night and I want to ask you if you made the statements that I am about to read: (Read-

ing) "I say that I am for Germany and for Hitler. (Held up his hand in the Hitler salute and said, 'Heil Hitler'.) I do not know why people should be so shocked when we say we are for Germany and for Hitler. You know as I told you Germany has won this war and we might as well recognize the new order and the 'United States of Europe.'"

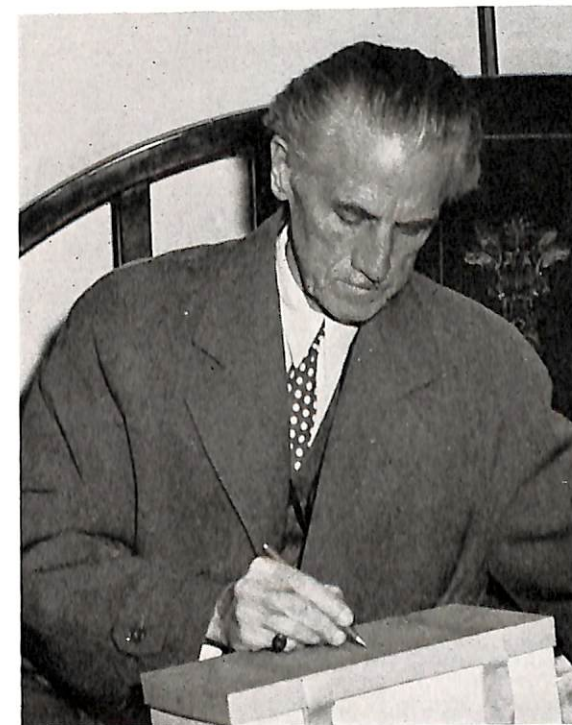
"Did you make that statement? A. I substantially made that statement, I don't know if I said 'Heil Hitler,' but I am perfectly willing to.



The man behind the "Front" . . . January 11th and January 14th meetings of two typical "front" organizations are advertised on posters in picture at left. The figure lurking behind them is **F. K. Ferenz**, former exhibitor of Nazi motion pictures, seller of Nazi literature and German language phonograph records, and publisher of a swastika-decorated volume entitled "Hitler." Ferenz, a naturalized citizen, has been a frequent speaker at enemy propaganda meetings of the type advertised above. He also works closely with those who plot the organizing and advertising of such meetings, and helps keep the speeches in line with the



current enemy propaganda line. A former associate of **Herman Schwinn**, Pacific Coast Fuehrer for the Bund, Ferenz now sticks close to such front-men as **Ellis O. Jones**, **A. M. Windhorst** and **Robert Noble**, with whom he is shown in photo above. Noble, who testified last October that he was perfectly willing to say "Heil, Hitler," is now champion of the Axis cause. He said on February 11, 1942, that he was for the Axis powers because they are the liberators of the world, adding: "*Germany and Mr. Quisling are doing a fine job of liberating the Norwegians from the aggressions of England.*"



Typical "Front" Organizer . . . **Ellis O. Jones** has long hewed to the Axis propaganda line, as publisher of vicious anti-Semitic literature, as organizer of the isolationist "National Copperheads," and since December 7th as platform performer and general collaborator with the Ferenz-Noble-Minier-Windhorst clique that habitually works through such fronts as "Friends of Progress," "World Events Forum," "People's Church," "United Minute Men and Women of America," etc.



**Leone Minier**, a typical enemy propagandist, is shown in the above photo acting as secretary of a subversive "Friends of Progress" meeting as the names on the collection envelopes are subpoenaed by a California State Assembly Committee investigating un-American Activities. No accounting is given of funds, which are solicited for "the cause" at these meetings by high-pressure oratory.

*"Q. You are for Germany and Hitler?  
A. Yes, all I understand about it. I read  
this book, Mein Kampf, and was abso-  
lutely thrilled. I don't know any other vol-  
ume that has the idealistic, marvellous*

*thoughts, and I, as far as I understand,  
concur and am in perfect accord and  
am perfectly happy to have everyone  
know it."*



**Hitler-admiring handy man . . .** Frequent hanger-on at enemy propaganda meetings since December 7th is James McBride, a characteristic example of the blindly loyal followers of subversive doctrine originally attracted by the German American Bund, and now held under the spell of its successor "Front" organizations. Above photograph shows McBride last October as a witness before the California State As-



**Former Bund-cooperator Van Meter** leaving one of the many weekly "enemy-front" meetings now carrying on the same line of enemy propaganda formerly issued by the German-American Bund.

sembly Committee Investigating Un-American Activities, when he expressed his belief that Hitler is a fine, Christian gentleman.

# VI

## A Board of Inquiry NOW May Avert Another Pearl Harbor

There is no more earnestly conceived policy of our government in connection with the present war, than its determination that it shall not justly be criticized for "witch hunting."

It is clear, however, that enemy propagandists are taking advantage of this liberal policy and using it for the protection of their activities.

It has been shown that all up and down the vital Southern California coast line, there still exists a shrewdly laid network of enemy propaganda activity, eating away at the civilian and military morale, and attracting subversive minded individuals amongst whom recruits for espionage and sabotage are most readily found. While the public is apathetic, lulled by a false sense of security into the belief that we are a 100 percent united people, enemy propagandists grow in number and boldness. Their public meetings are multiplying and their inflammatory speeches are delivered before audiences of increasing size and

growing bitterness. Their purpose is to involve America in civil discord, thereby undermining our war effort.

They must be stopped now.

The danger is not confined to Southern California, nor is the scope of the problem limited to the responsibility of any single government department. It concerns all government departments responsible for civilian safety and morale, war financing, war production, prevention of sabotage and espionage, and, in fact, the very success of our armed forces.

**Therefore, it is respectfully urged that the President of the United States immediately appoint a Board of Inquiry whose duty it shall be to investigate and report upon enemy propaganda activity in this country and to make recommendations so that adequate steps may be taken to remedy the situation. There must not be another Pearl Harbor!**



AMERICANISM COMMITTEE: *17th District, The American Legion  
Patriotic Hall, 1816 South Figueroa St., Los Angeles, California*

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