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The Hour



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Number 151-2

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THE CASE OF GERALD L. K. SMITH

In the city of Detroit, where tens of thousands of war workers are making a major contribution to the cause of the United Nations, a notorious anti-democratic rabble-rouser is making a major contribution to the cause of the Axis. His name is Gerald L.K. Smith. His speciality is distributing defeatist and disruptive propaganda. His Detroit headquarters have become a national center of fifth column intrigue, menacing the war effort of the United States.

Gerald L. K. Smith is the editor and the publisher of a magazine called The Cross and the Flag. Eight months ago a Federal indictment listed this magazine as an agency which had been used in a conspiracy to sabotage the morale of American soldiers and sailors. The Cross and the Flag is still being published in Detroit. Each month a new issue carries Smith's virulent propaganda to Americans in every part of the country.

Gerald L. K. Smith is head of an organization known as the Committee of One Million. This organization has all the characteristic earmarks of a fascist party. It is now being used for the purpose of reviving the America First movement, with the object of launching a new nation-wide appeasement campaign.

Gerald L. K. Smith is the man who once proudly reported to America's would-be Hitler, William Dudley Pelley:

"... by the time you receive this letter, I shall be on the road to St. Louis and parts north with a uniformed squad of young men composing what I believe will be the first Silver Shirt stormtroop in America."

William Dudley Pelley, who was then Fuehrer of the pro-Nazi terrorist Silver Shirts, is now in jail, where he belongs. Gerald L. K. Smith, who was then Silver Shirter No. 3223 and Pelley's most trusted aide, is now very much at large, carrying on his old work in a new and far more deadly way.

(MORE)

Past Record

The burly, smooth-shaven, rabble-rousing Smith, who was once a small-town preacher in Indiana, has come a long way since the days when he was a mere organizer of Silver Shirt stormtroop squads. After he and Pelley separated in the early 1930's, Smith moved steadily upward in reactionary and fascist circles. He served for a while as a lieutenant to the late Huey Long, and shortly after the death of the Dictator of Louisiana, he joined forces with Father Charles E. Coughlin. Together Smith and Coughlin organized support for the presidential candidacy of Representative William Lemke in 1936; and it was then that the intimate personal and political relationship, which has lasted until this day, first developed between Smith and the pro-Axis priest of Royal Oak.

Early in 1937 Smith founded the Committee of One Million (which at first had the somewhat less imposing title of Committee of Ten Thousand). From the beginning the organization had an obviously fascist character. Membership was secret. Cells were organized on a nationwide scale, the smallest having ten members and a "Leader." Smith's title was National Leader. For many months he stumped the countryside, endeavoring to build a mass following among the discontented and the insecure. His speeches were rabidly anti-Administration and anti-labor. Tirelessly stressing the favorite Axis theme of the "Bolshevik menace," he pictured the United States Government as overrun by Communists, the labor unions as Moscow-controlled, and himself as the great potential savior of private enterprise and the American way of life.

During the early days of the Committee of One Million, Smith was less cautious in his public utterances than he is today. After one of his speeches, the Cleveland News remarked that "Smith smells of Fascist KuKluxers a block away." Another newspaper had this to report about Smith's activities in the summer of 1938:

"In his recent speedy tour of Ohio, Rev. Smith has spoken in both urban and rural communities. In the urban communities he has made no reference to racial groups, but in the rural communities he has decried the sinister influence of Jews and Catholics."

Work in Detroit

In January, 1939, Smith set up headquarters for the Committee of One Million in Detroit. His talents as a reactionary rabble-rouser were put to quick and profitable use in the city where the murderous Black Legion had been spawned. He was soon giving a series of anti-Administration, labor-baiting broadcasts from WJR, Detroit's largest

and most expensive radio station. The name of his sponsor was never made public, but it was fairly common knowledge that a close working relationship had been established between Smith and a prominent automobile manufacturer, well-known for his extremely anti-democratic views.

When the America First Committee was formed late in 1940, and fifth columnists flocked into this organization, it was inevitable that Gerald L. K. Smith should attach himself to the Wheeler-Lindbergh movement. Although he was never an official member of the Committee, he became one of its leading organizers and spokesmen. He helped arrange the largest America First rallies in Detroit, and energetically distributed vast quantities of the Committee's propaganda. He could justly have claimed the title of America First Gauleiter of Michigan.

In the spring of 1941, when America Firsters were making a furious effort to obstruct defense legislation, Smith went to Washington to testify against the Lend-Lease Bill at a hearing held by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Subsequently his arguments against sending aid to Great Britain and the Soviet Union were widely publicized in fifth column circles.

The Inner Circle and Congressional Friends

Immediately after the United States entered the war, Smith formed a secret society called The Inner Circle. Its headquarters were in Detroit. We exposed the existence of this cabal in the February 21, 1942 issue of The Hour, reporting that its purpose was to serve as a brain trust for reactionary, appeasement forces in the United States. One of the first projects of The Inner Circle was The Cross and the Flag, a monthly magazine filled with propaganda assailing the United States war effort and harshly criticizing America's allies. The first issue of the publication appeared, by what seemed scarcely coincidence, in the very same month that Father Coughlin's Social Justice was banned from the U.S. mails because of its seditious content.

Before the second issue of The Cross and the Flag had been published, The Hour revealed that certain die-hard isolationist Congressmen who had previously worked with the America First Committee were helping promote the circulation of Smith's defeatist magazine (see The Hour for April 19, 1942). We named Senator Robert R. Reynolds, Senator Gerald P. Nye and Representative Roy Woodruff as Smith's most enthusiastic Congressional supporters.

On July 23, 1942, a Federal Grand Jury in Washington, D.C., handed down an indictment naming The Cross and the Flag as one of several agencies which had been used in a conspiracy to sabotage the morale of the United States armed forces. Nevertheless, Smith has continued to publish the magazine, featuring flagrantly disruptive and defeatist propaganda in every issue. Here are the titles of typical articles appearing in The Cross and the Flag: "Union With Britain -- International conspirators seek to destroy America's sovereignty in the name of wartime emergency and peacetime chaos"; "Will Refugees Take the Jobs Left Vacant by Soldiers?"; "Is President Roosevelt Being Used by the

Red Smear Artists?"; "Sir Stafford Cripps -- Whose Man is he? Churchill's or Stalin's?" Commenting on the war, the magazine rumors that "much bad news is being kept from us because it is feared it would break the morale of the people." The United States is described as being "overrun with brain trusters, intellectuals, ... war mongers, politicians, international financiers, pressure groups, special interests." We do not know what sort of victory we are fighting for, writes Smith, although "we are to exhaust our financial and physical resources ... to fill rivers with blood and oceans with ships, and battlefields with the dead and dying."

Need for Government Action Against Smith

Smith's latest undertaking is the reorganization of the America First movement, which Dr. Joseph Paul Goebbels once praised as "truly American and truly patriotic!" In January of this year Smith formed the America First Party, with himself as National Chairman. He claims that his Party has no connection with the former America First Committee. It is clear, however, that the fundamental purpose of the new organization is to resurrect the old Committee and renew its pro-Axis, appeasement operations.

The time has obviously come for the Federal authorities to put an end to the disruptive activities of Gerald L. K. Smith. The United States is fighting its sixteenth month of war against the Axis. Defeatist propagandists and anti-democratic plotters, who menace the war effort of this country, have no place in America today. Gerald L. K. Smith falls within this category. The Hour therefore urges that the Department of Justice take prompt action against him.

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POEMS FOR HITLER

Tens of thousands of copies of scurrilous anti-Semitic poems are being distributed around the country, particularly in war plants, in a special Nazi propaganda campaign to incite animosity against American Jews and thus disrupt our war effort. Some of these virulent Jew-baiting rhymes are in the form of printed pamphlets and leaflets; others are on mimeographed sheets and a number are simply typed, with multiple carbon copies. All spread the familiar Hitlerite canard that the present war was brought about by "World Jewry," and that the Jewish people are now reaping immense profits from it and are shirking every patriotic duty.

A typical poem is entitled "The Official Song of the Kosher Air Wardens." Another, called "The Marine Hymn." which pro-Axis elements are circulating among defense workers in navy yards, concludes with the comment that, after this war is over, "You will find the Jews are ruling you, In Washington's old White House." "America's Fighting Jew" pictures the Jewish people as "setting up black markets in steel and hoarded food" as "the Gentile soldiers go marching proudly by." A poem called "Rejected" is followed by this note: "Copyrighted by Satan & Satan, Inc., Jew York, Jew York." Another, headed "Three Wise Men", ends with this line: "Damned if I don't think Hitler's right."

The Hour recommends that the Federal Bureau of Investigation immediately investigate the printers, publishers and distributors of this new form of pro-Axis propaganda.