

# 'Headache Boy' Charged With Religious 'Plot'

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By WILLARD EDWARDS

Drew Pearson, smear columnist and radio prattler, was exposed in the House yesterday as the author of correspondence designed to arouse antagonism between religious groups.

Two letters written by Pearson were inserted in the Congressional Record by Representative Hoffman (R.), of Michigan.

## Charges Catholic Lobby

In one of the missives, addressed to an official of a Protestant organization, Pearson called attention to "the tremendous Catholic lobby" in Washington with the apparent intention, Hoffman noted, of stirring up a religious controversy.

The second letter was addressed to Edward James Smythe, of New York city, defendant in the current sedition trial. Wording of this epistle caused Hoffman to inquire if Pearson was leading Smythe to believe that he would have the columnist's co-operation.

Hoffman said the two letters came to light in the files of a Congressional committee which seized them several years ago in Smythe's headquarters as part of an investigation of Fascist activities.

He was making them public, he said, because he had been attacked in PM, Marshall Field's Leftist New York publication, for having written a brief note of acknowledgement to Smythe in answer to a letter mailed him by the agitator.

## Now Under Probe

Pearson is under investigation at present for spreading on the air excerpts from private letters written by Miss Vivien Kellems, Bridgeport (Conn.) manufacturer, to a German friend in Argentina. She has charged that this constituted tampering with the mails.

Both Pearson letters were on letterheads of "The Washington Merry-Go-Round," title of Pearson's syndicated column, and bore his name and that of Robert S. Allen, co-columnist who is now in the Army.

The first letter, dated April 14, 1938, was addressed to Lieut. Col.

Pearson B. Brown who, Hoffman said he was informed, was an official of the Protestant Chaplain's Association, of which Smythe was said to have been the organizer. It read:

"Dear Colonel Brown:

"Thank you for your letter enclosing a copy of yours to John Hamilton.

"I am wondering whether your organization has taken note of the tremendous Catholic lobby which was exercised in Washington during the discussion and vote on the reorganization bill. How did your organization stand on this bill?

"Very sincerely yours,  
(Signed) "DREW PEARSON."

"In this letter," Hoffman asked the House, "was Pearson attempting to get something to throw at a religious organization?"

"Was it a 'come along letter'? Was Pearson attempting to incite a controversy which might cause ill feeling between religious groups? Was he encouraging the Protestant Chaplain's Association to start a fight with the Catholic Church over some proposed legislation, the enactment of which was then before Congress?"

## Second Letter Listed

The second letter, addressed to Smythe as head of "The National Committee Against Communism," was dated July 14, 1937. It read:

"Dear Mr. Smythe:

"This is to acknowledge your letter of July 10. I appreciate your frankness and understand from the last paragraph of your letter

that you are willing to have us use your statement that you are a Fascist organization, etc.

"Very Sincerely yours,  
(Signed) DREW PEARSON."

"By the above," asked Hoffman, "was Pearson leading Smythe to believe that he would co-operate with him?"

The Michigan Representative also put into the Record the letter written by him to Smythe which was sensationalized by PM. It read:

"Friend Smythe: Thanks for yours of the eleventh. Shall be glad to receive the information referred to therein. Yours truly, Clare E. Hoffman."

Hoffman said this reply was sent by one of his clerks and was a regulation note of acknowledgment sent to persons offering material on any subject. He is totally unacquainted with Smythe, he emphasized.

"The fact that Smythe was addressed as 'Friend Smythe' meant no more than do the words of the President in his fireside chats, when he so frequently uses the term, 'My Friends,'" he remarked.

The Protestant Chaplain's Association recently addressed all members of the House and Senate, governors of the States and mayors of large cities, calling attention to its campaign for "a nationwide day of prayer for the American Republic."

After 46 Representatives, including Hoffman, 14 Senators and six mayors had replied favorably, PM charged that Smythe was organizer of the association with the Right Rev. Alexander A. Lowande as his "front." All the Congressmen and mayors then denied that they had authorized the use of their names as "sponsors" but PM singled out Hoffman for journalistic abuse although the list had included such "liberals" as Representative Voorhis (D.), of California, and Representative Bradley (D.), of Pennsylvania.

"PM's viciousness is illustrated by this incident," Hoffman declared. "It attempted to make it appear that those who advocated a day of prayer for the preservation of the Republic were in some way guilty of some improper association with Smythe, who has been indicted for sedition.

"The Communists deny the

existence of a God. In some of their literature, they proclaimed that religion was a fraud, that the priests and ministers were hypocrites. There is no law which prohibits PM following the Communistic lead."