

Jewish Survey 5/14/41

# Portrait of a Propagandist

*The Enemy Within*, A MONTHLY COLUMN

by ALBERT E. KAHN

MY FRIEND and I were discussing contemporary journalists when the name of Frederick Woltman came up. My friend dismissed Woltman with a deprecating witticism and a laugh. My friend was wrong. There is nothing funny about an enemy of the people.

Not long ago the National Federation for Constitutional Liberties held a dinner built around the theme of racial and national unity. The guest of honor was the great American Negro, Paul Robeson. Shortly before the date of the dinner, a series of articles by Frederick Woltman appeared in the New York *World-Telegram*, slandering the affair and its sponsors. Woltman charged that the National Federation for Constitutional Liberties was controlled by Communists, and that the Federation had listed persons as sponsors of the dinner without their permission. Lies are Woltman's literary stock in trade. He was, as usual, lying in this case. But that is of secondary importance. What is important is why Woltman attacked the dinner honoring Paul Robeson.

Is it because Woltman hates Robeson? Yes, that is part of it. Instinctively, a lilliputian like Woltman chatters with rage at a giant like Robeson. But the roots go deeper.

Woltman is a lackey. His lord and paymaster is the publisher Roy Howard, a misanthrope haunted by a dread of democracy. Woltman is hired to protect Howard's interests and serve his ends. Woltman's job is to create disunity, nurture intolerance and hamstring the democratic movements of the people. That is why Woltman attacked the Federation dinner. He got paid to do it.

That does not mean Woltman did not relish the task. He did. It is his nature to manufacture poison. He is afflicted with a brain-corroding disease: he hates persons who stand for justice, liberty and equality. Since he cannot reach their level, he wants to trample them below his own. Himself a minute figure, he is consumed with a mania to tear down everything above him. The same disease has driven Hitler to murder, enslave and humiliate millions of human beings.

Naturally, Woltman senses the extreme contempt of decent people for him. That multiplies his malice ten-

fold. He writhes and spits like a wounded snake. In this condition, he is all the more capable of earning Roy Howard's money.

Earlier this year Woltman tried to ruin the *Protestant Magazine*. He produced a series of articles vilifying the magazine's editor, Kenneth Leslie, a writer of depth and courage, a fighter and a poet. Woltman accused the magazine of being anti-Semitic. It happens that the *Protestant* has distinguished itself by its fight against anti-Semitism. If the *Protestant* had been anti-Semitic, Woltman would not have attacked it.

When a patriotic American organization was raising funds for a relief ship to save the lives of men who had fought against Hitler and Mussolini in Spain, Woltman labored feverishly to discredit the project and to prevent the ship from sailing. When German ships were transporting cargoes of Nazi agents to the United States, Woltman slept well and was silent. He is not paid to fight fascism.

When 224 Jewish trade union leaders formed a committee to buy tanks and bombing planes for the Red Army in the name of American Jews, Woltman began busily spawning canards to wreck the campaign. The Nazis were butchering hundreds of thousands of Jews in Europe and Russia, burying and burning them alive, torturing old men and women, raping girls and bayonetting infants. But Woltman wasted none of his ammunition on these mass-murderers. He held his fire for those Jews who would aid their suffering brethren by sending more equipment to the Red Army.

There is not a liberal cause, a progressive trade union, or an outstanding fighter for democracy that Woltman has not calumniated. Our country is at war against the fascists. Woltman is at war against the anti-fascists.

Years ago Woltman lost his job as a teacher on charges that he was a radical. The experience terrified him. He devoted himself to proving his accusers wrong. He trained himself to be an expert at defaming liberals, to master scurrility against progressives. Red-baiting, that fetish of fascists and half-wits, became the guiding principle of his life.

Propaganda is a serious business today. The word becomes a concrete act. Sentences are translated into

(Continued on page 33)

## **PORTRAIT**

*(Continued from page 9)*

deeds. The ultimate goal of anti-Semitic pamphlets is air bubbles injected in the veins of Jewish men, women and children. Slander against the Negroes culminates in black Americans being murdered on the streets of our cities. The provocation of disunity and confusion at home signifies the deaths of thousands of Americans abroad.

It is the organized function of paid German and Japanese agents to provoke disunity and stir up anxiety in this country. They hope in this way to weaken our war effort and aid that of the Axis.

What then can be said of the efforts of Frederick Woltman? He is not a paid agent of the Axis, but he does the work of promoting hatred, fear and dissension. Today, the pen of such a man is not only dipped in gall. It is dipped in blood.