

DAY MORNING.

ES' SUIT UNDER FIRE

Made for Dismissal

Aide in Attack on Action Against Administrator

Disputed Over to Name Wallace Papers Filed

The question of jurisdiction of Atty. Hall and Asst. U. S. was yesterday filed with District Judge Cosentino to dismiss the petition to enjoin Federal Milk Administrator H. C. Darger and assistants, Carroll Hunter and Bradley, and their counsel, Morrison, from enforcing code regulations.

FT FOR MONDAY

Hearing on the application for injunction and the motion for dismissal will be heard by Judge Monday.

Of the motion to dismiss filed last night on officials of plaintiff dairy companies, the Valley Dairy, the Guernsey Dairy, the Valley Dairy, the Royal Farms Dairy and R. G. Willis, and their counsel, Lewis D. Collings and E. S. To Jurisdiction

S TO JURISDICTION

Question of jurisdiction rests on the fact the plaintiffs failed to name Henry A. Wallace, Secretary of Agriculture, the National Milk Administrator, in their petition for an injunction. The local officials contend he should have been named in the application for a restraining order, and then the suit involving the Secretary of Agriculture must be filed in the District of Columbia.

Best Will Help Y.M.C.A. Work

EAST LOS ANGELES, Aug. 7.—Community Chest executives have promised to contribute \$2400 this year to the East Los Angeles Y.M.C.A., so that the organization may continue its work.

A resume of the accomplishments of the institution in providing orthorecreation for the boys of the community and its consequent reduction in cutting down juvenile delinquency were presented to the Chest executives. An anonymous donor originally established the institution here.

Naval Surgeon to Take Post

Inside Story of "Putsch" Disclosed



Left — Corp. E. T. Gray, U.S.M.C., tells about activities of Silver Shirts at San Diego.

Virgil Hays, ex-member of U.S.M.C. relating experiences as member in the Silver Shirts.

SILVER LEGION STORM TROOPS

This is to Certify that VIRGIL HAYS - Instructor

Is in good standing in the Silver Legion Storm Troops, San Diego, Calif. 47-6 Post. Oct. 1-1934 in

Signature of Virgil Hays

Membership card of Virgil Hays in Silver Shirt organization which he carried while observing operations of Shirts.

SILVER SHIRT PLOT TOLD

Marine Tells Congressional Group Plot to Seize San Diego City

(Continued from Page 1, Part I)

government, ejection of Jews from public office and a national corporation plan of government with every adult citizen holding one share of stock on which a dividend of \$80 a month would be paid.

UNDERSHERIFF "DOOMED"

Additional testimony was to the effect that a number of sailors and marines, including at least two commissioned officers, belonged to the Silver Shirt organization in San Diego, and that Oliver X. Sexson, undersheriff, was to be slain when the troops captured the city. It was said that the members engaged in military back of San Diego, that at least a store building W. Kemp was commander of Silver Shirts, and as commander area.

In announcement of the summary testimony which be disclosed by poisonous nature serious intentions.

SEWELL QUIZ REPORT

Bar Trustees to Receive Findings Sometime Before August Primary

Sometime before the primary election the findings of a special inquiry into the courtroom conduct of Superior Judge Harry F. Sewell will be presented to the trustees of the Los Angeles Bar Association and, according to Attorney William A. Bowen,

PAYNE INSANITY HELD HOPELESS

Head of Norwalk Hospital Testifies at Trial

"Epileptic Furor" Described as Condition in Killings

"Complete Mental Failure" Seen by Dr. Wayte

For the third time since his sanity trial began Louis Rude Payne, 21-year-old convicted murderer of his mother and brother, yesterday was declared to be insane by Dr. Edwin Wayte, head of the Norwalk State Hospital, who testified before a jury of seven women and five men in the court of Superior Judge Schmidt.

Not only was the boy insane, seized by an "epileptic furor," at the time he beat Mrs. Carrie Payne and his brother, Robert, 15, to death with a Boy Scout hand-ax, but he is hopelessly insane now, the psychiatrist testified.

The epilepsy and the "dream state" through which the youth moved at the time of the brutal murders goes on to a complete mental failure, Dr. Wayte told the jurors.

Defense Attorneys Leonard Wilson and Charles Rude rested their case yesterday at the conclusion of Dr. Wayte's testimony. The prosecution will open today.

BUDGET RISE PLEA MEETS OPPOSITION

Realty Board Asks That All Requests to Exceed Limit Be Denied by State

A telegram was sent yesterday to the State Board of Equalization by the Realty Board seeking

STEP TAKEN ON CHANGES IN CHARTER

Amendments on Utilities Franchises Approved by Council Committee

After an extended hearing, the Legislative Committee of the City Council approved three suggested charter amendments applying to public utility franchises. If approved by the Council at its session tomorrow, these amendments will be submitted to the people at the September 27 election.

One amendment will permit any and all utilities to apply for indeterminate franchises. A second amendment covers transportation utilities alone. The third amendment, which occasioned most of the argument, permits gas companies to apply for term franchises.

Paul Overton, appearing as attorney for the Los Angeles Gas and Electric Corporation, protested against the provision which will require gas companies to surrender their constitutional franchises and also opposed the method of determining the value of the properties.

Nash Dealers to Meet Sales Leaders Today

Plans for an extensive sales campaign will be outlined to more than 200 Nash distributors, dealers and salesmen today at the Biltmore by Courtney Johnson, general sales manager of the Nash factory at Kenosha, Wis.



The sales promotional program will include motion pictures, show mobiles and going tests on stamina, speed and braking. Since being shown at the Chicago World

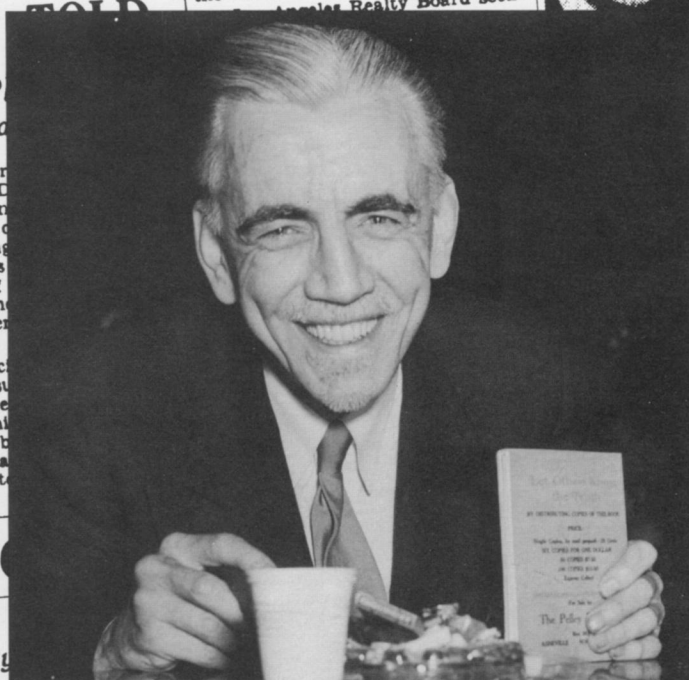
accompanied on a California visit by Fayette advertisement Storrs Case, sales manager.

Others Will Merri

A. Aug. 7.—More California new have been invited to meet at dinner here. address the editors owners at the meeting in Birch

ACCUSES MARRITTING HER

LOS ANGELES, Max Barrett cut off a local wife's hair with a pair of shears early this morning home, 4521 Union Pacific she informed the police.



Continuing a series of lectures by guest educators at the summer session of the University of Southern California, Dr. Frank A. Laurie will begin three lectures on today in Mudd



THE MAN WHO WOULD BE HITLER

William Dudley Pelley and the Silver Legion

by Suzanne G. Ledeboer

The names in *Who's Who in America* are selected not as the best but as an attempt to choose the *best known* men and women in all lines of useful and reputable achievements.¹ The editors did not necessarily imply praise, or even respect for William Dudley Pelley when they included his name in each biennial edition of *Who's Who* from 1926 to 1942. During those years, Pelley's reputation grew first from his success as an author and publisher and later from his notoriety as the man who was prepared to be "America's Hitler." A national rather than a California figure, Pelley was the founder of the Silver Legion of America, a fascist organization whose activities first drew national attention in 1933. A

(Left) William Dudley Pelley, holding Silver Shirt literature, testified to the Dies committee in Washington, February 8, 1940. Pelley told the committee he felt toward Jews "exactly as the Nazi party" did in Germany. He added, however, that he did not "countenance all the methods Mr. Hitler may have put in force."

AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

year later, when a U.S. congressional committee set out to investigate the organization, it chose Los Angeles as the site for its hearings—at a time when Pelley himself was on trial in North Carolina for fraudulent business practices. The choice of Los Angeles was dictated by the conspicuous activities of the Silver Shirts in California. By the end of the decade, Pelley was predicting violent action to overthrow the New Deal in areas where the Silver Legion was strongest: the South, the Pacific Northwest, and California.² Silver Legion posts were active in Baldwin Park, Fontana, Hollywood, Huntington Park, Inglewood, Long Beach, Los Angeles, San Bernardino, San Diego, Santa Barbara, Santa Paula, and Ventura.³ Pelley's story, and the story of the Silver Legion, is one of religious and political extremism, utopian economic theories, and intellectual poverty.

William Dudley Pelley was born April 12, 1885, in Lynn, Massachusetts, to William and Grace Goodale Pelley. His father was an

impoverished itinerant Methodist preacher, and Pelley was raised in an inhibited, deeply religious New England atmosphere. Pelley described himself as a child as "a perpetually hungry, shabbily dressed, none-too-happy youngster."⁴ His formal education ended when he was fourteen. Ten years later Pelley wrote that he edited and published *Philosopher Magazine* to express his "smoldering Bolshevism" and "the fearful storm of hatred and despair within me."⁵ Between 1912 and 1919, Pelley worked as a police reporter for the *Boston Globe* and did occasional writing and editing for several regional publications.⁶

Pelley also wrote slick fiction, and "The Toast to Forty-five," a short story that first appeared in *Pictorial Review*, was included in *The Best Short Stories of 1918*. The story—which focused on heredity, blood ties, and Christian self-sacrifice—was prefaced with three stars, signifying a work of more or less permanent literary value" and entitling it to a place on the annual "Rolls of

Honor.”⁷ Later editions of the *Best Short Stories* series listed his contributions to *Collier's*, *American Magazine*, *Good Housekeeping*, and *Redbook*. There were no more three-star stories, but several merited one or two stars.⁸

In 1919, Pelley was selected by the Methodist Centenary and the Rockefeller Foundation for missionary work in Japan and Korea. After completing his tour as a missionary, he became publicity man for the International YMCA's Red Triangle, traveling 8,000 miles across central Siberia. Additionally, he served as a courier from Ambassador Francis to Consul-General Harris and President Wilson and as a war correspondent for the *Saturday Evening Post*, covering the Allied intervention against the Bolsheviks in Siberia. Pelley wrote about his experiences in Asia and analyzed the situation there for *Sunset Magazine* and *World Outlook* in 1919 and 1920. His observations reflected a provincial New Englander's isolationist sentiments and assumptions about the superiority of a northern European heritage as well as an anti-imperialist ideology reminiscent of the 1890s. Pelley's articles are replete with references to “Christian white men,” “white men's blood,” “Japs,” race, and heredity.⁹

Despite his well-established reputation as a writer Pelley was deeply in debt when he moved to Southern California in 1928 and formed the Pelley and Eckels Advertising Agency.

Suzanne Ledeboer is a Literacy Assistant in the Pasadena Public Library's Pasadena Reads program. She is currently doing research on the Great I Am Foundation, another Thirties group.

He also sold real estate, published a magazine, *High Hat*, wrote scenarios for films starring Lon Chaney, Tom Mix, and Hoot Gibson, and founded a chain of fast-food restaurants.¹⁰ Warner Brothers-First National Pictures made Pelley's third novel, *Drag*, into a movie which reviewer A.M. Sherwood, Jr., praised as “vastly entertaining” and worth following “with rapt attention from beginning to end.”¹¹ *Golden Rubbish*, Pelley's fourth novel, introduced the political philosophy he would eventually develop in the League for Liberation sect and the Silver Legion. It presents contemporary characters who are the instruments of a new religion which is to be led by a “common man somewhere who shall lead the nations into some sort of union.”¹² Four years later he would identify this common man as Adolf Hitler.

Pelley marked an experience which occurred in April 1928, while he was living in Altadena, as the turning point in his life. According to his own account, published as the lead story in the March 1929 issue of the 2.2 million circulation *American Magazine*, Pelley had died one April evening and gone to heaven for seven short minutes. There he visited deceased friends, relinquished his negative personality and habits, and acquired the ability to “unlock hidden powers within myself that I know every human being possesses and had augmented my five physical senses with other senses just as bona fide, legitimate, and natural, . . .”¹³ Pelley concluded that the subliminal world was the real one and hinted that perhaps he was one special “monitor” chosen for the unusual experience of dying and going to Heaven in order “to give the whole race an inspiration

by which it may quicken its spiritual pace.”¹⁴ Over 5,000 readers wrote letters in response to “Seven Minutes in Eternity—the Amazing Experience that Made Me Over.”¹⁵ Pelley continued this theme in “An Eagle Flies,” which appeared in *Collier's* on June 15, 1929, and referred to “the strivings of the great Race Heart to lift itself out of the sloughs of brutish biology as Biology, and attain to those Heights of Progress marked on every crag by the clean, white shafts of Sacrifice.”¹⁶

It took Pelley two years to begin building institutions that embodied his political and religious convictions, but by 1930 he had moved to Asheville, North Carolina, where he established the Galahad Press and Galahad College. Pelley asserted that students at the college, where the enrollment was limited to 250 per year, learned a superior form of Christianity and Christian economics while studying Ethical History, Spiritual Eugenics, Social Metaphysics, Christian Philosophy, Educational Therapy, and Cosmic Mathematics. The classes were also available as correspondence courses.¹⁷ In April, 1931, Pelley founded the League for the Liberation, also known as the Fraternity of the Liberation. A year later, the League had published at least two thick volumes titled *The Program of Services for the Weekly Assembly of the League for Liberation*.¹⁸ The League established a Church of the Christian Democracy with Pelley as its high priest and offered a weekly program of services which addressed such subjects as spiritual identity, charity, parenthood, “nerves,” morality, and male-female relations.¹⁹



SCHEMER AND FUEHRER—David Mayne, seated, who confessed forging letters linking Chairman Dies and William Dudley Pelley, leader of Silver Shirts, is shown looking at one of the letters yesterday at Washington. Pelley stands beside him.

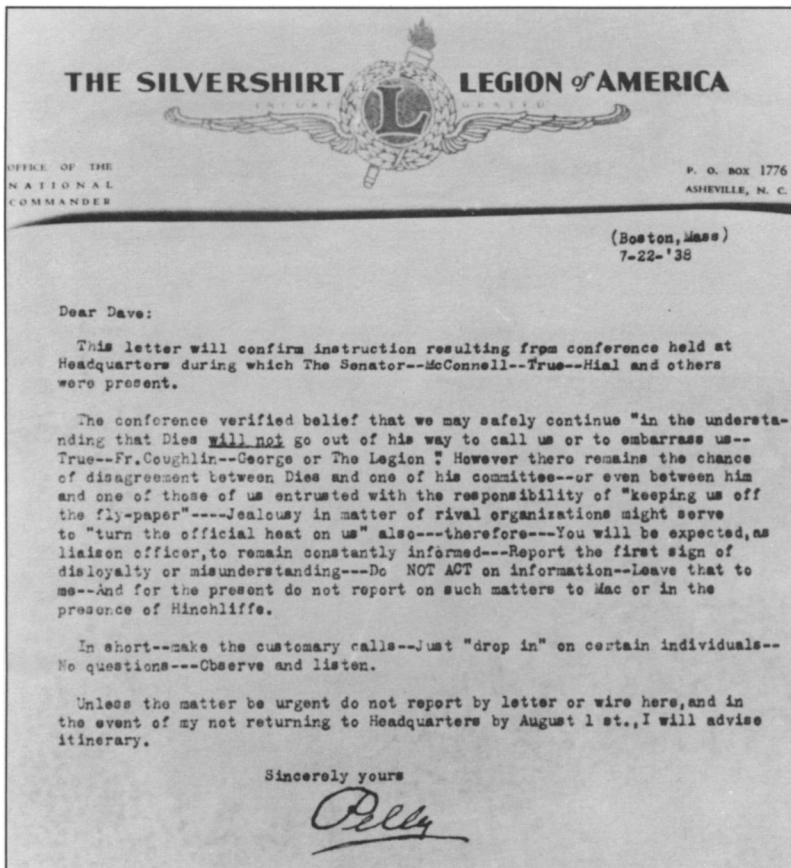
The religion of liberation moved Pelley to write and publish a book on political economics in 1933. *No More Hunger* is a two-volume collection of what appear to be twenty-two different pamphlets printed separately over the preceding several years. Each section describes one aspect of a "Christ Democracy" whose economics are a modified version of Mussolini's corporative state, with heavy emphasis on the virtues of white, protestant Christianity against the evil influences of "modern educational institutions supported by endowments from the present rapacious element in the modern barbaric state."²⁰ In Pelley's utopian nation there would be no competition, no taxes, no rents, no interest, no currency, no foreclosures, and no crime. Neither would there be Jews or bankers. Lawyers, however, were given a special place. Because they would lose eighty percent of their business with no disagreements to resolve, lawyers would administer the affairs of the nation from a headquarters located in Washington, D.C.²¹ *No More*

Hunger was Pelley's plea for a return to what he thought was the utopian era of the nineteenth century before the Great War and before the waves of immigration from southern and eastern Europe had arrived in the United States. The League and its "Christ Democracy" were not stridently anti-Semitic; however, the book did promote white Protestant racial and religious superiority.

Yet Pelley made a smooth transition from religious and economic spiritualism to organizing a paramilitary force in open support of Adolf Hitler. On January 31, 1933, the day after Hitler came to power in Germany, Pelley formed the Silver Legion of America. He claimed a year later that "posterity will attest that Chief Pelley of the Silver Shirts was the first man in the United States to step out openly and support Adolf Hitler and his German-Nazi program. Hitler became German Chancellor on the 31st [sic] day of January 1933. This publication appeared on the 18th of the ensuing February openly and unashamedly endorsing Hitler and his

program against the German Jewish 'reds.'"²² Pelley claimed to have received this inspiration from his oracle four years previously: "When a certain young housepainter comes to the head of the German people, then do you take that as your time-symbol for bringing the work of the Christ Militia into the open!"²³ In 1939, Pelley would explain his intentions more fully in his autobiography:

My purpose in forming the Silver Shirts, . . . was to prepare a great horde of men nationally to meet the crisis intelligently and constructively. Every Silver Shirt must know the full extent of the conspiracy, see it in its most detailed workings, get his thinking up onto a level where the size of the plot could be accredited and, if Red Communism in all its frightfulness were finally projected upon the country, be in a position to join with tens of thousands of similarly enlightened Christians, and preserve the form of constitutional government set up by the forefathers. If this last meant using force to hurl a great regime in



AP/WORLD WIDE PHOTOS

Copy of a letter written to discredit the Dies committee by suggesting that chairman Martin Dies was in active collusion with Pelley. Pelley's agent David Mayne confessed to having forged this and other letters.

scoundrels from the country, very well then, it meant force.²⁴

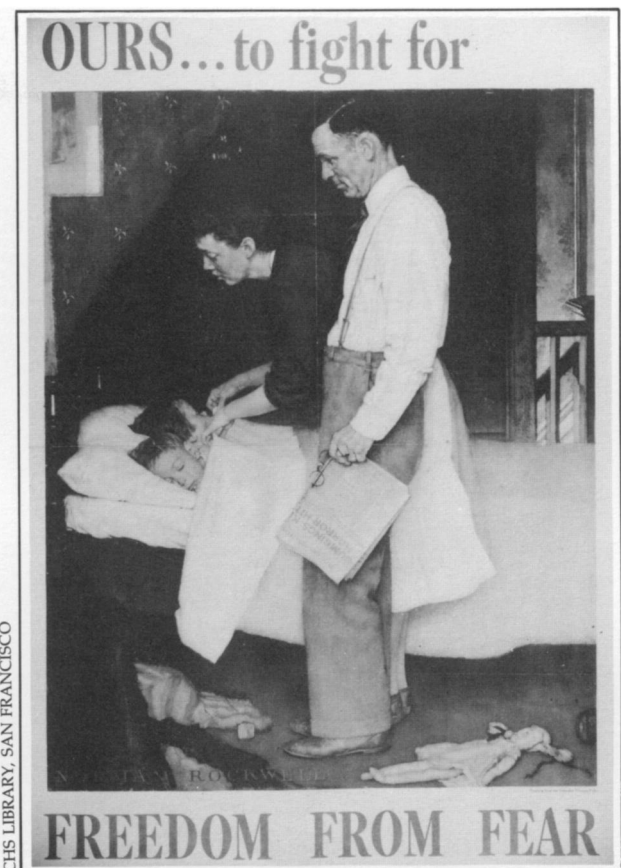
Although originally organized in Asheville, the Silver Legion moved its central headquarters to Oklahoma City in its first year and from there directed the affairs of its nine districts, which spread from New England to the Pacific Coast and from the Plains states to the Gulf of Mexico.²⁵ Pelley was national commander, or chief, and there were a national field marshal, a comptroller, and a foreign adjutant. According to Pelley, "The whole Silver Shirt horde required discipline from top to bottom. But military discipline is military discipline. It rests on severe penalties for infractions of rules. It depends on uniforms to designate rank and therefore authentic responsibilities."²⁶ Silver Legion recruits could purchase a uniform consisting of "dark blue corduroy trousers, tie, leggings [*sic*], and a silver shirt with a scarlet "L" on the shoulder." The uniforms cost ten dollars and were available from the Legion's Quartermaster Corps in Oklahoma City.²⁷

At its peak, the Silver Legion probably enrolled 15,000 members, reported Donald S. Strong, who conducted a study of anti-Semitic groups, although claims ranged from 5,000 to two million. The highest concentration was on the Pacific Coast, and membership grew quite rapidly in California during the mid-1930s—a time when many esoteric movements found a ready audience in the state. Silver Shirts engaged in direct action against alleged or actual communist organizing efforts among farm workers.²⁸ Membership was open to women as well as men, and the rolls listed a majority of professional people, including Protestant clergymen and attorneys. Blue-collar workers and former members of the Ku Klux Klan were also represented, as were individuals who were thirty-second degree Masons or Scottish Rite Shriners. Although Pelley claimed a need to build "a Native-Son, Protestant-Christian political machine," many of the members were German-Americans. Applicants were required to submit a photograph and supply detailed

personal information: "racial extraction," religion, name and address of family physician, profession, "previous politics," physical disabilities, military training, average income, name of bank, real estate owned and its location, and references.²⁹

Donations were solicited and received, but the amounts obtained were generally one and two dollars at a time. Three large donations were made by George B. Fisher, an executive of the Crowell Publishing Company, (\$20,000); Sarah C. Scott (\$10,000); and Dr. John S. Brinkley, who allegedly made a fortune selling goat extract to impotent men (\$5,000). The German-American Bund was also solicited for funds, and additional money was raised from dues of ten dollars per year and from the sale of literature published by Galahad Press.³⁰

The Silver Legion published *Liberation*, a weekly magazine, and *The Silver Ranger*, a weekly newspaper. *Liberation*, with a press run of 50,000 in December, 1933, also served as the newspaper of Galahad College under the name of *The Liberator*. In



Pelley and the Silver Shirts never became a major force in American life, but their open espousal of Hitler's doctrines inspired real fear that "it can happen here," especially after the United States entered World War II.

an early issue the *Liberation* masthead—strategically placed over an article which rewrote the Declaration of Independence—announced that the magazine was a “Journal of Patriotism and the Higher Fraternity.”³¹ The *Silver Ranger* began in Oklahoma City in November, 1933, but moved to Los Angeles the following January. It was published there for the next seven months. Press runs in Los Angeles were never more than 13,000 and at times were as low as 5,000. Paid subscribers numbered 1,300, and additional copies were handed out to members of Silver Legion posts for distribution.³² The masthead for February 1, 1934, summarized the organization’s credo: “Liberty Under Law, Liberation by Light, For Christ and Constitution, and Take Back the Nation from the Alien.” The lead article was headlined “Silver Shirts will Repudiate Recognition of Red Russia!” and subtitled “Pelley’s Men Covenant to Restore Constitution to Full Health and End Jewish NRA Within Nation.”³³ Still another Pelley corporation, Skyland Press Publications,

sold a million copies of his writings per year, mostly on the Pacific Coast. Large shipments were sent to the Aryan Book Store operated by Hans Diebel and located next to the German-American Bund’s headquarters in Los Angeles.

The first major nationwide expose of Pelley appeared in *Harper’s Magazine* in November, 1933. Johan Smertenko’s article examined the political basis for the growth of Anti-Semitism in the United States and the use of scapegoats to explain away the economic cataclysm then taking place. A month later, the *New Republic* followed with profiles of a number of American fascist groups and warned that Pelley Silver Shirts were dangerous and needed watching.³⁴ *Today*, a weekly news magazine, published a three-part series by Samuel Duff McCoy in March and April, 1934, which documented the pro-Hitler activities of American groups with German and/or native American ties. Pelley and the Silver

Shirts were the main focus of the second article in the series. *Today’s* reporting was supplemented by two full pages of editorial comment by Raymond Moley in the March 31, 1934, issue.

Legal and economic troubles followed the unfavorable press. On April 25, 1934, Pelley’s Galahad Press filed for bankruptcy in Asheville. Within a month, the bankruptcy petition had become a sixteen-count grand jury indictment of Pelley. The charges included selling stock in the press without registering its sale with the state, advertising stock for sale with prior knowledge that Galahad Press was insolvent, and diverting \$100,000 of Galahad Press funds for Pelley’s personal use.

Pelley’s correspondence of several hundred thousand letters was subpoenaed and examined by an Asheville lawyer who reported that most of the letters came from poor, uneducated, neurotic, elderly women. The correspondents indicated interest in Pelley’s metaphysics or opposition to the liberal policies of



AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

Police break up a disturbance outside a Silver Shirt meeting place in Chicago, November 23, 1938. Five people were arrested in this melee.

President Roosevelt's administration. Letters from lower or middle class native Americans with Anglo-Saxon origins who lived in urban areas of the Middle West and the West Coast predominated. Many of the letters were written prior to the organization of the Silver Shirts and most showed more interest in Pelley's spiritualism and the Great Pyramid prophecy than in the Silver Shirts.³⁵

Pelley was found guilty early in 1935, sentenced to two years in prison, and fined \$1,000.³⁶ The sentence was suspended as long as he remained on good behavior. Pelley stopped publishing *Liberation* after his indictment but reissued it as *Pelley's Weekly* in August, 1934. Many regular readers and subscribers had drifted away, however, and press runs for the new weekly dropped to about 16,000.³⁷ Writing after his conviction, Pelley claimed in 1935 that the state of North Carolina wanted to silence him "because of my personal admiration for, and moral support of, that great and wise man who at the present writing dominates the

German nation and has caused it to take the first great step toward the accomplishment of those aims that appeal to me strongly as a political philosopher."³⁸

While Pelley was being tried in Asheville, the Silver Shirts were coming under congressional scrutiny as the Special House Congressional Subcommittee on Un-American Activities (the McCormack-Dickstein Committee) opened hearings in Los Angeles. Chaired by Representative Charles Kramer of Hollywood, the subcommittee had been directed to investigate the activities of the Silver Shirts and other fascist groups in Southern California. Two Marine Corps Intelligence agents testified that they had joined the Silver Shirts and offered sensational details from their experiences. Virgil Hayes reported that he had been recruited by W.W. Kemp, head of the Silver Shirts Pacific Coast division, after a chance encounter. He claimed to have taught members street fighting and the use of small arms and to have been offered \$10 for each rifle, \$50 for each machine

gun, and \$20 for each case of ammunition he could obtain. The Silver Shirts were armed with rifles, pistols, and shotguns purchased from two corporals at the North Island Naval Base in San Diego, Hayes said. He had seen 2,000 rounds of ammunition and had heard that 12,000 more were kept in hidden reserve. He had also watched Silver Shirts drilling and had talked to Pelley about plans to overthrow the U.S. government.³⁹

Corporal E.T. Gray testified that the Silver Shirts wanted to establish a corporative state and remove Jews from public office, and he told of a plan for 200 Silver Shirts to converge on San Diego's city hall on May 1, 1934, and kill the undersheriff, a Jew. Gray claimed that U.S. Navy and Marine Corps forces had agreed to support the *putsch* and that the sheriff's office agreed with the aims of the Silver Shirts.⁴⁰ Other testimony asserted that Silver Shirts held target practice and military drills near San Diego and had 25,000 members throughout California. Sheriff Cooper of San Diego county



Pelley was arrested on an outstanding warrant when he appeared before the Dies committee. Here, a police officer books him at the Washington, D.C., police headquarters.

THE NEW YORK TIMES

and Chief Peterson of the San Diego police challenged this testimony, although they admitted that the Silver Shirts had held two meetings in the area.⁴¹ Meetings in California were said to attract five to six hundred people. Public hearings ended before the testimony was complete because, according to subcommittee counsel Volney Mooney, the nature of what was said was "poisonous."⁴²

Pelley's most ardent apostle was Henry D. Allen, whose career in California had included two convictions for passing bad checks and terms in San Quentin and Folsom state prisons, where he was known as Prisoner 2853 and Prisoner 9542 respectively. Allen scattered his loyalties among various racist and fascist groups: the Silver Shirts, the Gold Shirts, the American White Guard, and the *Amerika-deutscher Volksbund*. He first encountered the Silver Shirts when he purchased a copy of *Liberation* from a vendor at Sixth and Hill streets in Los Angeles in the fall of 1933. Allen was already a regular visitor to the local headquarters of Friends of New Ger-

many, forerunner of the German-American Bund, at 1902 S. Alvarado Street. He soon joined Karl Lackey and Colonel W.A. McCord to organize a Los Angeles post of the Silver Shirts, which included Allen's wife and son. Silver Shirt meetings were held in conjunction with those of the German-American Bund at German House, 634 W. Fifteenth Street. As the featured speaker at one of these meetings, Pelley declared, "I am the Hitler of America," a statement he would repeat.⁴³

Allen dropped the Silver Shirts in 1934—at the same time Pelley's Galahad Press went bankrupt—to concentrate on the American White Guard, but he returned in 1936. In testimony before the Dies committee in 1939, Allen insisted that the Silver Shirts had been unable to rent auditoriums for their meetings in Los Angeles because they were fighting Jewish Communism, and the Jews owned all the meeting halls. However, Joseph Jeffers, pastor of Kingdom Temple, allowed a Silver Shirt recruiting film to be shown at his church, and Allen spoke at this

meeting on the "Cause of Communism."⁴⁴

In December, 1935, Pelley organized the Christian Party and prepared to run for president in 1936. As a prelude to this effort, he had published *Nations-In-Law*. Five years in the writing, the book represented Pelley's second vision of utopia, a nation run by those "without audacity or intellectual snobbery, [who] by the very essence of our knowledge . . . should consider ourselves as those in whose hands world progress is reposed." He added, "it is not for our feet alone but for the intellectually handicapped multitudes who follow where we lead."⁴⁵ *Nations-In-Law* characterized the New Deal administration of Franklin Roosevelt as under the control of Jews and their "clutch on organized Christendom."⁴⁶ It also praised "the Aryan, and particularly the Anglo-Saxon, [who] has carried in his blood from time immemorial the consciousness of his importance in and to the social structure."⁴⁷



CHS LIBRARY, SAN FRANCISCO

Naval recruits at the San Diego Naval Training Station in 1939. Intelligence agents had testified in 1934 that the Silver Shirts regularly purchased weapons from personnel at the San Diego naval installations.

With the Christian Party behind him, Pelley ran for president with W.W. Kemp, head of the Pacific Coast District of the Silver Shirts, as his running mate. The party's campaign slogans were "Christ or Chaos?" and "For Christ and Constitution"; its slate of electors listed individuals with "fine old American names," although Pelley reported that many German-Americans were also enthusiastic supporters. Pelley claimed in his campaign speeches that "the time has come for an American Hitler and a pogrom. When I'm President, I'll incorporate the Silver Shirts into a combination of Federal army and police force. I'm going to do away with the Department of Justice entirely. I am calling on every Gentile in these prostrate United States to form with me an overwhelming juggernaut, . . . for Christian government."⁴⁸ Organized in nine-man Councils of Safety, the party planned to grow by directing each member to form another council in an ongoing process. For six months it campaigned intensively from Pelley's headquarters in Se-

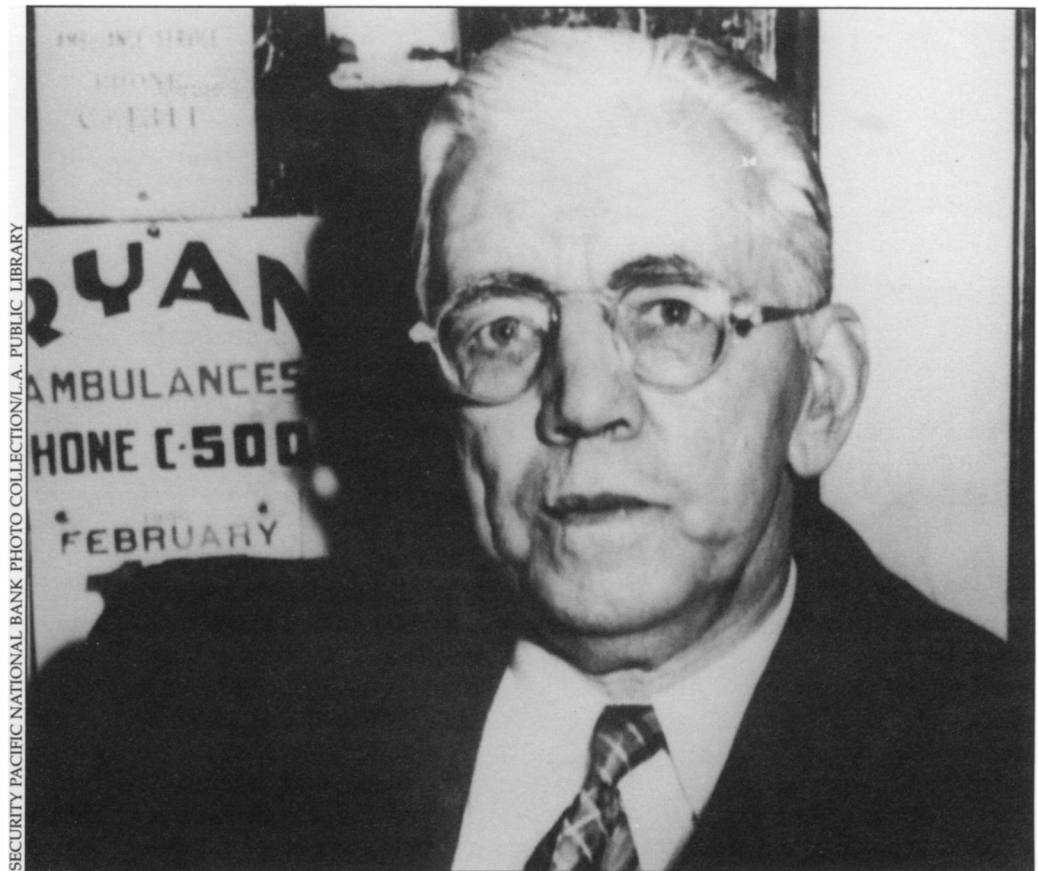
attle. Nonetheless, Washington was the lone state to allow the Christian Party on the ballot, and on November 3, 1936, only 1,598 of Washington's over 700,000 voters cast their ballots for Pelley.⁴⁹

In the following two years Pelley and the Silver Shirts drew little attention from the mainstream press. One item in the *Los Angeles Times* reported a Secret Service inquiry into Silver Shirt activities in Chicago. The *New York Daily News* devoted two-and-a-half pages to publishing the full text of a Pelley booklet, "Jews in Washington," along with Pelley's picture, and a three-column headline.⁵⁰ The *Saturday Evening Post* for May 27, 1937, however, carried an exclusive interview with Pelley by Stanley High, who reported that Pelley Publishers was turning out 30,000 pieces of high-quality literature per day. The pamphlets and full-sized books were "extraordinarily good typographical jobs, artistically bound and printed," wrote High, noting that Pelley obviously had money from some outside source which he declined to iden-

tify. Pelley told High that he expected violent action to overthrow the New Deal in the South, the Pacific Northwest, and California, areas where the Silver Shirts were strongest.⁵¹

The interview with High was one of the few Pelley granted during his lifetime. As a rule, he tried to avoid direct questioning, particularly that of congressional committees. Thus, in 1939 when a subcommittee chaired by Jerry Voorhis of California was charged with summoning Pelley to testify, it hired David Mayne, Pelley's Washington representative, to find him.⁵² Mayne was not successful. In testimony to the Dies committee in 1940, Mayne acknowledged that he had forged Pelley's signature to a number of letters which hinted that Dies approved of Pelley's campaign against Jews and communists. The letters implied that Dies had promised not to investigate the Silver Shirts thoroughly and, Mayne admitted, were a hoax intended to discredit Dies.⁵³

In February, 1940, the elusive Pel-



Pelley on his release from the federal penitentiary at Terre Haute, Indiana, on February 14, 1950.

ley made an unscheduled appearance before the Dies committee during which he said he had been approached by a representative of the German government after he founded the Silver Shirts. "Colonel" Edwin Emerson had offered Pelley ten dollars for each German he enrolled and set a target of 15,000 German members of the Silver Shirts, Pelley recounted. He had, he said, refused the offer and tried to discourage the Nazis. Pelley also told the committee that the FBI had investigated him in 1939, and he was under the impression that the bureau approved of his work. An FBI spokesman immediately denied the assertion.⁵⁴ Stating that there were 25,000 Silver Shirt members in twenty-two states in 1940, Pelley said he could disband the organization if the Dies committee continued its good work. Pelley considered himself a "forceful proselyte" without any vicious intent, since he used words, not violent deeds, to further his goals. He repeated that he was ready to be the Hitler of America, although he claimed that the Silver

Shirts were being disbanded.⁵⁵ The Dies committee also learned that the Silver Legion had received \$66,000 between September, 1937, and January, 1939.⁵⁶

Pelley's testimony to the Dies committee came six months after he had filed suit against it for \$3,150,000 in damages. He charged that the committee had "maliciously and without foundation publicly charged him with being a representative of the German government, a racketeer, a violator of the criminal statutes of the United States and a public enemy."⁵⁷ Pelley had also requested that the committee be restrained from investigating his personal activities. U.S. District Court Judge B. Yates Webb denied his request. Although his suit against the committee bore no fruit, his appearance before it did, for it enabled law enforcement officials to arrest him and return him to North Carolina for violating the terms of his 1935 sentence.

After a two-month recess, the Dies committee returned to the subject of Pelley and the Silver Shirts in April. One of the star witnesses was

Dorothy Waring, formerly a secret agent for the McCormack-Dickstein committee. Waring worked for "The Order of '76," another pro-Nazi organization, and knew Pelley. She told the committee that he carried two guns, had two bodyguards, and had worn his Silver Shirt uniform on a visit to her apartment. He had told her of plans for the Silver Shirts to march on Washington, D.C., and to have people in key positions of power in New York City. She concluded that he expected to be dictator of the United States.⁵⁸ Representative Samuel Dickstein testified that Pelley had told the 1934 hearings, which Dickstein co-chaired, that Pelley planned to take over the National Guard in all forty-eight states. Dickstein said guns and ammunition had been recovered from an armory in San Diego where they had been stored for use by the Silver Shirts. He also claimed the McCormack-Dickstein committee had evidence that Pelley had connections with the Ku Klux Klan, the Christian Mobilizers, the Christian Front, and the Crusaders.⁵⁹

In addition to the evidence gathered by the Dies committee, 1940 saw new documentation of links between Pelley, the Silver Shirts, and Nazi Germany in two books by former undercover agents. Richard Rollins, who had been an investigator for the McCormack-Dickstein committee, published copies of three letters on Silver Shirt letterhead which he had stolen from the offices of "The Order of '76." All three were labeled "Official Dispatch" and were signed by Paul Toal, Adjutant. The first was addressed to the Friends of New Germany. The second, addressed "Dear Chief," listed Toal's recent activities and wished Pelley well in his "Western Work." This letter, dated September 25, 1935, stated that the Friends of New Germany were not anxious to join with the Silver Shirts, but that Russian pacifists were. The third was to the "Order of '76" and verified the consolidation of that group with the Silver Shirts.⁶⁰

John Roy Carlson revealed in *Under Cover* another Pelley connection, this one to Gerald L.K. Smith, an associate of Huey Long and Father Coughlin. In an undated letter to Pelley quoted in the book, Smith wrote: "By the time you receive this letter, I shall be on the road to St. Louis and parts north together with a uniformed squad of young men composing what I believe will be the first Silver Shirt Storm troop in America."⁶¹ Another letter dated August 5, 1936, listed Smith's Silver Shirt membership number.⁶² Twenty years later, O. John Rogge's *The Official German Report* provided additional information that Pelley's name had appeared at the top of a German list of "National

Men in America" who could be expected to cooperate with the Nazis.⁶³

By the end of 1940, Pelley claimed to have disbanded the Silver Shirts and was publishing works on metaphysics and economics for businessmen under the name of the Fellowship Press in Indiana. Pelley stopped publishing *Liberation* and replaced it with two new magazines, *Roll Call*, "The Voice of the Loyal Opposition," and *The Galilean Magazine*.⁶⁴ Dies indicated that his committee would be interested in the new publications, and ultimately, Pelley's writings in *The Galilean* became the basis for one of the few sedition trials in American history.

In April, 1942, Pelley was arrested for insurrection and sedition. A twelve-count indictment was returned against him and the Fellowship Press on June 9, charging the publication of material whose purpose was the

*dissemination of false statements with intent to interfere with the operation or success of the military or naval forces of the United States or to promote the success of its enemies; and obstruct the recruiting or enlistment service of the United States by distributing certain publications to persons eligible for military service.*⁶⁵

The trial began on July 28 in Indianapolis, with Charles A. Lindbergh and Congressman Jacob Thorkelson subpoenaed as witnesses for the defense. Thorkelson, from Montana, had used his franking privilege to mail Nazi propaganda for George Sylvester Viereck, a German intelligence agent.⁶⁶ There is no direct evidence that he performed the same service for Pelley, but he had consulted and met with him. Lindbergh

had had no previous contact with Pelley or the Silver Shirts, but he was concerned that Pelley would not receive an impartial trial and that freedom of expression would be "improperly restricted, under the pressure and hysteria of war."⁶⁷ After seven days of testimony, the jury of farmers and small tradesmen returned a verdict of guilty on eleven counts.⁶⁸ Pelley was sentenced to fifteen years in the federal penitentiary in Terre Haute, Indiana; he served ten. He unsuccessfully appealed his conviction three times over the next thirteen years.

Pelley did not change the American constitutional system, nor did he achieve any of his stated goals. On the national scene, he was overshadowed by Huey Long and Father Coughlin. Even in Southern California, Aimee Semple McPherson and Upton Sinclair had more charisma and were able to attract far broader support than was Pelley. Yet, because he and the Silver Shirts were vocal and visible early in the decade, they attracted those who were easily influenced by hate, fear, and prejudice. Pelley's Silver Legion did not become a refuge for throngs of people caught in the worst depression in American history. The public wanted change, but not through the methods of a paramilitary organization.

After his release from prison in 1952, Pelley lived in Noblesville, Indiana, until his death in 1965,⁶⁹ a man forgotten as a defendant in one of the rare sedition trials in United States history and as an influence in California during the 1930s. □

See notes beginning on page 155.