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DREW PEARSON

ON

THE WASHINGTON MERRY-GO-ROUND

DREW PEARSON SAYS:

ROGGE REPORT REVEALS HOW INTELLIGENT AMERICANS WERE TAKEN IN TO SUCH AN EXTENT THAT THEY SPREAD NAZI PROPAGANDA TO FOOL OTHER AMERICANS AS WE HEADED TOWARD CERTAIN WAR.

Washington.—The amazing thing about Nazi propaganda before Pearl Harbor was the Nazis' ability to suck in certain high-placed and supposedly intelligent Americans even after Hitler had invaded Poland, overrun France and spread out over most of Europe. The Reader's Digest, largest circulating magazine in the world, was one of them.

The report on Nazi activities in the USA, prepared by John Rogge of the Justice Department after weeks of interviewing top Germans, shows that one editor of The Reader's Digest, Paul Palmer, was in consultation with Hans Thomsen, Hitler's personal Ambassador in Washington; also with Manfred Zepp, head of the official Nazi propaganda agency, Trans-Ocean News Service.

The Rogge report, which many high politicos tried desperately to suppress, also tells how DeWitt Wallace, owner and editor of The Reader's Digest, hired Lawrence Dennis, now under indictment for sedition, to do some smear pieces against Henry Wallace, then Vice President of the United States.

Apparently, DeWitt Wallace knew how "hot" Dennis was, because he warned him to cut out his fascistic news letter. Also, the $4,300 which The Reader's Digest paid Dennis was not paid direct, but through a front man, Pendleton Dudley, a New York public relations agent.

Dennis also said that he also had collaborated with The Reader's Digest on an article by Senator Byrd of Virginia. This, according to the Rogge report, was in late 1941, shortly before Pearl Harbor.

"The Reader's Digest not only employed Palmer and Dennis," Rogge reported to his superiors in the Justice Department, "but also George T. Eggleton of Scribner's Commentator, the magazine which the Nazis subsidized."

Palmer was employed as an editor of The Reader's Digest from 1939 to 1945, and when Hans Thomsen, former Nazi Ambassador in Washington, was questioned about him by Rogge, Thomsen gave the following report:

"I met Paul Palmer several times in Washington and lunched with him. He made a great impression on me and seemed to be a special admirer of Germany and wanted to engage in some sort of activity (more)
because he had some money and wanted to bring about certain relations. I don't know whether he himself was a writer, but I think he made an attempt at it."

It was in the summer of 1941, when Lawrence Dennis's activities already were looked upon with public suspicion, that The Reader's Digest surreptitiously hired him. Here is Dennis's own story of that employment, as told in the Rogge report:

"That June, 1941, I did some work for Paul Palmer of The Reader's Digest. I did one thing for them and I got $1,500 in 1941. I had lunch with Wallace. He is the editor of The Reader's Digest. Wallace had lunch with me last spring. I don't know, February or March—I don't remember exactly when—and he said he wanted me to line up a set of articles on this quart of milk a day for everybody in the world, and freedom from want and poverty and all that sort of thing, the pros and cons, and he said he would have to be very careful not to let it be known that he was using me in any way.

"He said: 'You will have to stop your letter before it gets you in jail. They are not going to tolerate that kind of free speech now.'"

"Well, in June, Palmer came to me and said that Wallace wanted to make me a proposition and he would give me $1,500 for the piece of work I did for him, and he would give me a monthly stipend for a while if I would shut the letter down, so he gave me $1,500 last June and put me on at $400 a month, which goes through this month (February, 1942) and in order to keep the thing very confidential he had it done through a public relations counsel."

Testimony which Rogge secured from former German diplomats in Nuremberg showed that Dennis was also working through George Sylvester Vierreck, nephew of the Kaiser, and chief Hitler propaganda agent in the United States (he's now serving a six-year jail sentence). Vierreck had instructions from the German Embassy in Washington to pay Dennis $20,000.

Thus the views which Dennis put out through The Reader's Digest and other channels appeared to be valuable to the Nazis.

Even as early as 1936, Dennis was well and favorably known to the Nazis; also to Paul Palmer of The Reader's Digest.

"When Palmer was thinking in 1936 of disposing of his interest in the American Mercury Magazine," says the Rogge report, "Dennis advised Richard Sallet, propaganda attache at the German Embassy in Washington. Dennis told Sallet that this would be a good chance for the Nazis to obtain possession of a magazine.

(more)
"Palmer sent a copy of Dennis's book, The Dynamics of War and Revolution, to Thomsen. Thomsen replied:

"I am very grateful to you for sending me an advance copy of Lawrence Dennis's new book, 'The Dynamics of War and Revolution.' Just by skimming the pages it looks like a very interesting book to me of an author with whose trend of thoughts I am thoroughly familiar by reading his 'weekly foreign letter.'

Dennis had in mind setting up a secret propaganda organization which would make use of certain isolationist Senators, such as Bob Reynolds of North Carolina, Bennett Clark of Missouri, now on the U.S. Court of Appeals, and Senator Vandenberg of Michigan, then, though not now, an isolationist. To some extent this was accomplished by Vireck, as described in another part of the Rogge report. But regarding the part of Reader's Digest editor Palmer in this, Rogge says:

"At one time Dennis, Palmer, and Philip Johnson were contemplating some sort of publication of their own. Dennis, in a letter to Johnson, has these comments on that scheme:

"I think he (Palmer) wants to preserve anonymity, at least until the thing had got a respectable following. Well, that could be arranged. We could write most of the first drafts, let him edit and tone it down, and then circulate it under any formula considered practical and expedient.

"As soon as you get back, we should go down to see him. As I say in my letter to Palmer I have an introduction to Senator Reynolds from a V.P. of the Manufacturers Trust who is one of my subscribers. I think our strategy should be to turn out something which could be read and used by men like Senator Reynolds, Bennett Clark, Vandenberg, Lindbergh, etc. Writing for a small influential public and having no organization of dumbbells to embarrass us, we might be able to go right through a war, by observing a little caution and innuendo.'"

That was how some Americans tried to spread German propaganda to fool other Americans even at a time when Hitler had overrun Europe and we were headed toward certain war.

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