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**HOLLYWOOD'S SPIES: JEWISH INFILTRATION OF NAZI
AND PRO-NAZI GROUPS IN LOS ANGELES, 1933-1941**

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

HISTORY

by

Laura Rosenzweig

June 2013

The Dissertation of Laura Rosenzweig is approved:

Professor Alice Yang, chair

Professor Barbara Epstein

Professor Marc Dollinger

Tyrus Miller
Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	iv
Dedication	vi
Acknowledgements	vii
Introduction	1
1 “White Spot of the Nation:” Los Angeles at 1933	31
2 Nazis in Los Angeles: Not Just a Jewish Problem	70
3 Becoming Hollywood’s Spies	113
4 The LAJCC and the McCormack-Dickstein Committee, 1934	150
5 The Proclamation, 1935	186
6 Exposing the Berlin Connection, 1936-1941	231
7 Exposing the Nazi Fifth Column, 1936-1941	269
8 The Politics of Resistance: The LAJCC and the Dies Committee, 1938-1940	318
Conclusion	356
Appendices	369
Bibliography	387

ABSTRACT

*Hollywood's Spies: Jewish Infiltration of Nazi and Pro-Nazi Groups
in Los Angeles, 1933-1941*

by Laura Rosenzweig

In the 1930s, Los Angeles was a hotbed of Nazi-influenced political activity. Between 1933-1941, hundreds of far right-wing political groups led by the local chapter of the German-American Bund, emerged in the city. Intent on launching a Nazi-style political movement, these groups fomented a hostile political climate that threatened the city's Jews. In response to the threat, the Jewish executives of the motion picture industry joined with other Jewish leaders in the city to form the Los Angeles Jewish Community Committee (LAJCC.) Publicly, the LAJCC combatted prejudice and religious intolerance by joining in civic group coalitions. Privately, however, the LAJCC paid private investigators to infiltrate these Nazi-influenced groups to monitor their political activities. The information collected by Hollywood's spies was passed onto local, federal and military officials during the decade, informing both the McCormack-Dickstein Committee investigation of Nazi propaganda activity in 1934, and the Dies Committee investigation on un-American activity between 1938-1940. The role that American Jews played in these congressional investigations, let alone the Jews of Hollywood, was not understood by the public at the time, nor by historians since.

Drawing on archival collections in Los Angeles, New York, Cincinnati and Washington, this dissertation recovers the story of the LAJCC and Hollywood's spies to revise the consensus on American Jewish political agency and influence in the

1930s. It demonstrates that American Jews were not quite as paralyzed by antisemitism in the 1930s as the consensus contends. The political relationships the LAJCC established and the defense strategies it adopted to combat domestic Nazism reveal a new dimension of American Jewish political influence in the United States in the 1930s. This dissertation also marks the emergence of Los Angeles as a new site of American Jewish political power. As a result of the financial and political backing of the Jews of Hollywood, the LAJCC distinguished itself from other American Jewish defense organizations of the era, rising to political influence in Washington at a time when Jewish leaders in New York and Chicago faltered in the fight against domestic Nazism in the United States.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of Leon Lewis, the Jewish leaders of the motion picture industry, and the men and women who worked with them to fight the rise of Nazism in Los Angeles between 1933-1941. Their willingness to step outside the boundaries of their personal lives to combat a political problem far greater than themselves is an inspiration.

They remind all of us that democracy is not a spectator sport.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this dissertation marks a personal life goal. History has always been my passion, and since graduating from college I have wanted to pursue a doctoral degree. Thirty years later, that goal has been realized. What a rare privilege it has been to return to school at mid-life. I loved every minute of the journey, and in particular, the writing of this dissertation; but, I could not have realized this personal milestone were it not for the encouragement of my family and friends, the counsel of my teachers, and the generous support of the library professionals and philanthropic organizations who helped me along the way.

I must begin by thanking my husband, Cary, whose selfless support of my aspiration made this endeavor possible. For twelve years he shared in the thrill of new ideas and discoveries, and he buoyed my confidence during periods of self-doubt and fatigue. For twelve years, his wife was preoccupied with academic theories, historiographic analyses and stories of Hollywood's spies. Through it all, Cary was my study-buddy, sounding board and cheerleader. My name occupies the space below the title of this dissertation, but this was a shared accomplishment. Without his clarity, wisdom and devotion, this dissertation would never have been completed.

If my husband enabled my graduate career, it was the faculty at UCSC that showed me the way. While other area graduate schools balked at the idea of a part-time doctoral student, the faculty at UC Santa Cruz could not have been more welcoming and encouraging. UCSC's culture of acceptance proved to be precisely the right place for me to realize my academic aspirations. Lynn Westerkamp was

particularly understanding of the contingencies confronting an older graduate student. I am indebted to her for her support. During my years of coursework, Lynn, along with Alice Yang, Beth Haas, Pedro Castillo, Shelley Stamp, Murray Baumgarten and Bruce Thompson all supported my progress, challenged my thinking, and helped me to develop the skills needed to succeed. It was a privilege to have the opportunity to learn from each of them.

This dissertation is the product of eight years of research guided by my dissertation committee. Each of my advisors brought unique expertise and perspective to this project. I wish to thank my wonderful advisor, Alice Yang, for her commitment to my graduate studies. When I entered this program, I was often unsure of my ability and direction, but Alice's encouragement gave me the confidence to persevere. Twelve years later (a little longer than we expected!) I am no longer that tentative graduate student. Ever flexible and patient, Alice gave me the time I needed to complete this journey. The journey taken with Alice was, for me, the greatest reward.

This dissertation owes much to the scholarship of Barbara Epstein, who gave so generously of her time and thought to this project. Barbara poured over unwieldy rough drafts and provided me with lengthy, thoughtful written comments. Her knowledge of Jewish social movements elevated my work to a level of scholarship that I could not have realized without her. Our discussions on Jewish history and the American Jewish experience and her critical perspective helped to streamline the content of this dissertation. I was so fortunate to be among the last of her doctoral

students before she retired. Her reputation for excellence as a mentor and advisor is well known at UCSC, and she leaves behind a space that will be tough to fill.

Widely respected in the Bay Area Jewish community as a scholar, teacher and a mensch, Marc Dollinger has been a valued advisor. Marc graciously, and without hesitation, agreed to serve on my committee. Marc's thoughtful comments helped make this a more compelling scholarly work by helping to shape the argument of this dissertation. More than that, however, was the mentoring he provided as a dynamic lecturer and teacher. I am indebted to both Marc and Fred Astren for extending the opportunity to me to teach at San Francisco State University over the years.

This dissertation is the product of eight years of extensive research in several archives and libraries across the country. That research was made possible by the philanthropic organizations that sponsor and support doctoral research. This dissertation was made possible by a generous three-year grant from the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture and a dissertation fellowship grant from the Institute for Humanities Research at UCSC. Research and travel grants were also provided by the American Jewish Archives, Center for American Jewish History, the Historical Society of Southern California, the History department of the University of California at Santa Cruz, and by the Annenberg Foundation.

The substantial financial support that I received over the years allowed me to conduct research from southern California to Washington, D.C. I am thankful to the professional librarians and archivists who assisted me during the years. In particular, I am forever indebted to the staff of the Urban Archives and Special Collections of

Oviatt Library for their support. I could not have completed this project without David Sigler, Reading Room Supervisor, whose attentiveness and outstanding personal service kept this project on track. Thanks, too, to Kevin Profitt at the American Jewish Archives for his help during the month I spent in Cincinnati, Charlotte Bonelli for unlocking the “secret” of the American Jewish Committee’s 1930s fact-finding operation, and William Davis at the United States National Archives in Washington who helped me make sense of the massive Dies Committee collection and cut through its complexities to pinpoint the Los Angeles-related documents.

This research also benefited from the genealogical research skills of my friend, Pam Thompson. Thank you for the time and energy you took over the years to help me find the surviving descendants of several of Hollywood’s spies. Your discovery of Richard Gutstadt III, Claire Lewis Read, Sherry Slocombe and the details of Frank Prince’s later life not only enriched this research, but deepened their children’s understanding of their fathers. I am so fortunate to have a friend who shares in the thrill of finding that haystack needle!

What a pleasure and honor it has been to know both Claire Read and Sherry Slocombe. They both shared stories about their fathers with me. That they both had saved their fathers’ letters and documents after all these years was simply remarkable. It was an honor to have shared with them the role that their fathers played in combatting Nazism in this country.

My family and friends have provided unfailing support for me over the years. How many graduate students can say that their son was the editor for their final draft? My son, Adam, “grew up” with this dissertation, and his own academic interests were probably corrupted by the incessant historiographical conversations that took place at the dinner table during his adolescence. He is a far more talented scholar than his mother, and I am so proud that he could contribute to the completion of this project. My mother, who has always wanted a “doctor” for a daughter can now kvell! My father, whose personal historical memory curiously conflates “Anatevka” and the immigrant experience of Jews in Boston, shaped my own fascination for the 1930s. To my step-parents Jane and Mike, and mother-in-law Zoe, thank you for your ongoing interest in my progress. And, to my brother Steven, friend Lorri, sister Linda and her family, Ken, Abby and Sophia -- thank you for hosting me and entertaining me on my numerous stays in Los Angeles over the years. This would have been a far lonelier pursuit were it not for your company and hospitality. To Bruce T., thank you for enthusiastic support over the years, and for actually reading and editing this dissertation. To friends Jo-Ann, Casey, Bruce C., Karin, Ricki, Geri and Kenny, and to doctoral student colleagues Irene, Andrea and Tamara, thank you all for always taking interest in my progress, your patience as I bored you over dinners with the details of the latest find, and for not judging how long this took to finish. You are all part of the “village” that it took to “raise” this dissertation.

Introduction

In early 1940, *Liberty Magazine* published a seven-part series authored by Congressman Martin Dies of Texas, detailing the findings of his two-year Congressional investigation into un-American activities across the country. The *Liberty Magazine* series alleged Communist infiltration into every corner of American society.¹ The fifth article of the series, “The Reds in Hollywood,” revealed the most sensational of revelations from the Committee’s extensive investigations: Hollywood was harboring and nurturing Communist conspirators.² According to Dies, the motion picture producers had contributed large sums of money to the Communist Party, and motion picture writers were subverting American culture by subtly injecting Communist propaganda into their films.³ Invoking the widely accepted Fascist-Communist political binary of the era, Dies asserted that *since* “the producers [were] almost unanimous in the belief that...the real threat [in this country] c[a]me from Fascists and Nazis...” they *therefore* “look[ed] upon Russia as a democratic country and the Communist Party as a bulwark against the spread of Fascism.”⁴ Among his many spurious proof points, Dies informed his readers that the motion picture executives themselves had maintained an “elaborate ‘detective agency’

¹ Martin Dies, “More Snakes Than I Can Kill (Part 1),” *Liberty*, January 6 (1940); Martin Dies, “More Snakes Than I Can Kill (Part 2),” *Liberty*, January 13 (1940); Martin Dies, “More Snakes Than I Can Kill (Part 3),” *Liberty*, January 27 (1940); Martin Dies, “More Snakes Than I Can Kill (Part 4),” *Liberty Magazine*, February 3 (1940); Martin Dies, “More Snakes Than I Can Kill (Part 5),” *Liberty Magazine*, February 10 (1940); Martin Dies, “The Reds in Hollywood,” *Liberty Magazine*, February 17 (1940); Martin Dies, “Is Communism Invading the Movies?” *Liberty Magazine*, February 24 (1940).

² Martin Dies, “The Reds in Hollywood.”

³ Martin Dies, “The Reds in Hollywood,” 47.

⁴ *Ibid.*

whose professed purpose is to keep the producers informed regarding Nazi activities in the United States and particularly in California.”⁵

Although Martin Dies had a reputation for playing fast and loose with the facts, his revelation of Hollywood’s private investigation of Nazi activity in the United States was accurate.⁶ Between 1934-1941, the Jews of Hollywood did pay private investigators to infiltrate Nazi groups operating in Los Angeles. Joining forces with other Jewish business and professional leaders in Los Angeles, the Jews of Hollywood formed the Los Angeles Jewish Community Committee (LAJCC) to combat escalating antisemitism in the city. Publicly, the LAJCC was dedicated to fighting prejudice and religious intolerance through interfaith and non-sectarian partnerships with other civic groups.⁷ Privately, however, the LAJCC maintained a covert fact-finding operation collecting evidence of subversive Nazi activities in Los Angeles, which they passed onto federal authorities.

For decades, historians have concluded that the Jews of Hollywood purposely distanced themselves from the political challenges confronting American Jews.⁸ This dissertation, however, demonstrates that the Jews of Hollywood were not absent from the political crises facing American Jews, they were just hidden. For seven years, “Hollywood’s spies” submitted daily eyewitness reports documenting the rise of the

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Walter Goodman, *The Committee: The Extraordinary Career of the House Committee on Un-American Activities*, (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1969), 13, 53, 101, 105.

⁷ Shana Bernstein, *Bridges of Reform: Interracial Civil Rights Activism in Twentieth-Century Los Angeles* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), passim.

⁸ Neal Gabler, *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1988), introduction; Henry L. Feingold, *A Time for Searching: Entering the Mainstream, 1920-1945* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 256.

insurgent Nazism in LA and beyond.⁹ Fearful that the information their agents gathered on Nazi activity would not be taken seriously by authorities if it came from Jewish sources, the LAJCC partnered with the American Legion, a group whose Americanism was unimpeachable, to pass the evidence onto federal authorities. The information collected by Hollywood's spies guided and informed the McCormack-Dickstein Committee hearings on Nazi propaganda activities in 1934, and the Dies Committee hearings on un-American activities between 1938-1940. Through it all, the support that American Jews, let alone the Jews of Hollywood, provided to Congress and to the FBI, was neither understood by the public at the time nor by historians since.

This dissertation recovers the story of the Los Angeles Jewish Community Committee and Hollywood's spies for the historiography on American Jewish political agency in the 1930s. The LAJCC was the first Jewish defense organization established in the United States for the express purpose of monitoring and reporting on antisemitic and fascist activity.¹⁰ The LAJCC's covert fact-finding operation of the German-American Bund and its Nazi-inspired¹¹ allies demonstrates that American

⁹ From here on, "Hollywood's spies" will refer to the undercover agents and their covert activities, which began in 1933 and ended in 1941. "LAJCC" will be used to refer to all of the activities of the Committee, both public and private, between 1933-1945.

¹⁰ Shana Bernstein, *Bridges of Reform: Interracial Civil Rights Activism in Twentieth-Century Los Angeles*, 49, 232, endnote #96.

¹¹ The terms "Nazi-influenced" and "Nazi-inspired" will be used to describe a segment of the American far-right that promulgated political antisemitism in the United States as an expression of ultra-nationalism. From an academic perspective, there was a continuum within the extreme right that justifies this debate. Historically, however, American Jews made no such distinctions. Whether called "Nazi" or "fascist," American Jews understood these groups to be enemies of liberalism and democracy. The terms "Nazi-influenced" and "Nazi-inspired" will be used to describe the groups associated with FNG/Bund in order to differentiate them from domestic right-wing groups that may have been antisemitic, but were not influenced by Nazism.

Jews were not quite as paralyzed by the virulence of domestic antisemitism in the 1930s as the consensus contends. Furthermore, the political relationships the LAJCC established with local law enforcement, federal, and military intelligence officials to combat the forces of domestic Nazism reveal a new dimension of American Jewish political influence in the United States in the 1930s that revises long-held conclusions that American Jews lacked the political influence they needed in Washington to effectively advance their political agenda during that time.¹²

The case of Hollywood's spies pinpoints the era in which Los Angeles emerged as a new site of American Jewish agency and influence in the United States. For decades, New York City had been the center of Jewish political power and influence in the United States. It was home to the largest concentration of Jewish Americans and consequently, it was the center of American Jewish political leadership. While New York would remain the center of American Jewish political leadership in the United States after the war, Los Angeles quickly grew to become the second largest Jewish community in the country by the last quarter of the twentieth century. The 1930s presage Los Angeles' emergence as a new center of American Jewish political influence in the post-war years.

In the 1930s, political differences, organizational jealousies and weak leadership prevented the national Jewish defense organizations from working

¹² Henry L. Feingold, *The Politics of Rescue: The Roosevelt Administration and the Holocaust, 1938-1945* (New York: Holocaust Library, Distributed by Schocken Books, 1980); Henry L. Feingold, *Bearing Witness: How America and Its Jews Responded to the Holocaust*, (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1995); David S. Wyman, *Paper Walls: America and the Refugee Crisis, 1938-1941* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1968).

effectively on behalf of American and European Jewish interests.¹³ Historians question whether these groups -- the American Jewish Committee (AJC), Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith (ADL) or the American Jewish Congress -- even deserve the attribution of “national” defense organizations during the 1930s, given their ineffectiveness. During the Depression, American Jewish political agency was located at the community level, with each city organizing its own political, cultural and welfare organizations. The LAJCC is an example of the many local Jewish community relations committees that American Jews established to deal with the problem of antisemitism in the 1930s. *Hollywood's Spies*, however, explicates the exceptional leadership and financial and political capital that the Jews of Los Angeles possessed that distinguished the LAJCC from the rest. Rising to national political influence, the LAJCC represented American Jewish interests to Washington at a time when Jewish leaders in New York and Chicago faltered in the fight against domestic Nazism in the United States.

* * *

This dissertation is based on research from a relatively new historical archive, the *Jewish Federation Council of Greater Los Angeles Community Relations Committee Collection* (hereafter, CRC Papers). The CRC Papers are held in Special Collections and Archives of Oviatt Library at California State University, Northridge. The collection contains the documents of the Jewish Community Relations Council of

¹³ Marc Dollinger, *Quest for Inclusion: Jews and Liberalism in Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), Chapter 2; Henry L. Feingold, *Bearing Witness: How America and Its Jews Responded to the Holocaust*, chapters 10, 11; Gulie Ne'eman Arad, *America, Its Jews, and the Rise of Nazism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), chapter 6.

Los Angeles from its inception in the 1930s through the 1970s. Parts 1 and 2 of the collection cover the years 1933-1945. They contain approximately four hundred boxes with more than 60,000 pages of documents detailing the undercover activities of Hollywood's spies, the activities and relationships of the German-American Bund to its nativist allies, and correspondence between the LAJCC, the ADL, the AJC, local law enforcement officials, Congress, and military intelligence officials in southern California. The archive is an unparalleled treasure that documents the day-by-day evolution of domestic Nazism on the west coast between 1933-1945 and Jewish efforts to combat it.

This dissertation is primarily a work of historical recovery. It recovers the history of the LAJCC and of Hollywood's spies, reporting and explicating the documents from the CRC Papers for the historiography of American Jewish political power in the 1930s. Reliance on a single source does pose problems of reliability and credibility. The information in the CRC Papers, however, is corroborated by documents from other archival collections, including manuscript collections at USC's Doheny Library, the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati, the American Jewish Committee and the Center for American Jewish History in New York City, and the National Archives in Washington, D.C. Readers are encouraged to consult the endnotes in this dissertation, particularly for chapters four and eight, for a full understanding of the historiographic significance of this work. These sources confirm the role that the LAJCC played in the two 1930s Congressional investigations on un-

American activities, the McCormack-Dickstein Committee investigation (1934) and the Dies Committee investigation (1938-1940.)

The Challenge of Self-Defense in the 1930s

American Jewish historiography contends that American Jews in the 1930s lacked the political agency needed to effectively defend their political interests. First, the historiography maintains that the sudden virulence of antisemitism during the Depression caught American Jews off guard, creating a climate of fear that inhibited American Jewish political agency, particularly when it came to advocating for German Jewry.¹⁴ Second, the historiography asserts that American Jews lacked the national political organization and leadership it needed to confront that hostility as a united front. The lack of a strong, national Jewish political organization was also due in part to Jewish and American traditions of decentralized political and social organization.¹⁵ Thus, in the 1930s, while divergent political agendas and inter-organizational jealousies inhibited the three national Jewish self-defense organizations from organizing at the top, hundreds of community-based organizations filled the void at the local level. It was within this context that the LAJCC rose to political prominence behind the scenes in American/Jewish politics.

¹⁴ Naomi Cohen, *Not Free to Desist: The American Jewish Committee, 1906-1966*, (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1972), 93, chapters 8-9 passim; Marc Dollinger, *Quest for Inclusion: Jews and Liberalism in Modern America*, chapter 4; Gulie Ne'eman Arad, *America, Its Jews, and the Rise of Nazism*, chapters 6-8.

¹⁵ Naomi Cohen, "Pioneers of American Jewish Defense," in *Anti-Semitism in America*, ed. Jeffrey Gurock (New York: Routledge, 1998).

Nazism and Political Antisemitism in the United States in the 1930s

The historiography on American political agency in the 1930s asserts that antisemitism in America in the 1930s was more virulent and more vicious than it had ever been.¹⁶ According to Leonard Dinnerstein, the economic dislocation caused by the Depression triggered latent Christian cultural antipathies towards Jews that fueled the most hostile period in U.S. history for American Jews.¹⁷

Socially, American Jews faced political recriminations, prejudice, and discrimination in their daily lives throughout the 1930s. According to Dinnerstein, “Jew hatred permeated the United States” in the 1930s from the highest levels of government to Main Street.¹⁸ Anti-Jewish attitudes had been present in American culture ever since Governor Peter Stuyvesant tried to block the settlement of the first group of Jewish refugees to New Amsterdam in 1654. Over the decades, historians have identified several sources of American antisemitism, but all agree that anti-Jewish attitudes in America were rooted in Christian religious culture.¹⁹ During the

¹⁶ Leonard Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 105.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*; Henry L. Feingold, *Did American Jewry Do Enough During the Holocaust?* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University, 1985); Ariel Hurovitz, *Jews without Power: American Jews During the Holocaust* (New Rochelle, NY: Multi Educator, 2011); Carey McWilliams, *A Mask for Privilege: Anti-Semitism in America*, 1st ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1948); Naomi Cohen, *Jews in Christian America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Michael N. Dobkowski, *The Tarnished Dream: The Basis of American Anti-Semitism* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979); Charles Y. Glock and Rodney Stark, *Christian Beliefs and Anti-Semitism* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979); Frederic Cople Jaher, *A Scapegoat in the New Wilderness: The Origins and Rise of Anti-Semitism in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994); Louise A. Mayo, *The Ambivalent Image: Nineteenth-Century America's Perception of the Jew* (Rutherford N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1988); Robert S. Wistrich, *Antisemitism: The Longest Hatred*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1994).

¹⁸ Leonard Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America*, 107; Charles Herbert Stember, et.al., *Jews in the Mind of America* (New York: Basic Books, 1966), part one.

¹⁹ David Gerber, “Antisemitism and Jewish-Gentile Relations in American Historiography and the American Past,” *Anti-Semitism in American History*, ed. David Gerber (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 31; Charles Herbert Stember, et.al., *Jews in the Mind of America*, 127-29.

Depression, these latent Christian prejudices fueled populist resentments and nativism that justified widespread discrimination against Jews in housing, education, and employment in the United States. Hostility towards Jews in the 1930s sometimes escalated into physical assaults on Jews in some east coast cities, mirroring, at times, the streets of Berlin. Jews in Boston, Philadelphia, and New York City feared for their physical safety as well as their social and political security.²⁰

Politically, Jews were vilified by a range of groups and individuals. From the Protestant establishment's "genteel dislike" of Jews to the virulent racism of Nazi-influenced right-wing activists, political antisemitism took on new and more threatening implications. Historian David Wyman has pointed out that antisemitism shaped the State Department's immigration policies and influenced Congress' consideration of legislative options that might have saved thousands of lives.²¹ These same antisemitic attitudes, combined with disbelief and indifference regarding the crisis of German Jewry that Wyman found in Washington, pervaded the nation.²² Opinion polls taken during the decade by *Fortune Magazine* and by the American

²⁰ Leonard Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America*, chapters 6-7; Stephen Norwood, "Marauding Youth and the Christian Front: Antisemitic Violence in Boston and New York During World War II," *American Jewish History* 91, no. 2 (2003); Leonard Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America*, 145.

²¹ David S. Wyman, *Paper Walls; America and the Refugee Crisis, 1938-1941*; David S. Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984); Arthur D. Morse, *While Six Million Died: A Chronicle of American Apathy* (Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 1998);

²² Arthur D. Morse, *While Six Million Died: A Chronicle of American Apathy*; David S. Wyman, *Paper Walls; America and the Refugee Crisis, 1938-1941*; David S. Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945*; Charles Herbert Stember, et.al., *Jews in the Mind of America*.

Jewish Committee found that 60-65% of respondents believed that “Jews had too much power” in America.²³

The most vociferous expressions of political antisemitism in the United States came from the far right. According to historian Frances MacDonnell, during the 1930s “America teemed with extremist groups espousing anti-Jewish, anti-Communist and anti-democratic beliefs.” Hundreds of conservative, grassroots groups fueled this hostile political climate throughout the decade, and while no more than 20% Americans polled in the late 1930s had heard of most of these groups, events in Germany magnified the threat they posed.²⁴ Conservatives and right-wing critics of the New Deal expressed their opposition to its “socialist” policies and to the Roosevelt Administration itself in antisemitic terms. For these activists, the policies of the “Rosenvelt Administration” and its “Jew Deal” were being driven by agents of “Jewish-Bolshevism.” Some of the more extreme opponents of the New Deal spun false theories of Roosevelt’s own Jewish ancestry to “validate” their theory that Jews (read: “Communists”) had infiltrated the government as part of the “international Communist conspiracy.”²⁵

²³ Henry L. Feingold, *A Time for Searching: Entering the Mainstream, 1920-1945*, 216. For the original surveys, see “Fortune Survey X: Antisemitism,” *Fortune Magazine*, XIII, 1, January 1936: 157; Charles Herbert Stember, et.al., *Jews in the Mind of America*, chapter 5.

²⁴ Francis MacDonnell, *Insidious Foes: The Axis Fifth Column and the American Home Front* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 47. Estimates on the number of far right-wing, grassroots organizations vary widely. Henry Feingold (1992, 251) for example, cites 120 different groups. The LAJCC, however, maintained files on 400 different groups and individuals. Finding Aid, Part 2, CRC Papers; Charles Herbert Stember, et.al., *Jews in the Mind of America*, 111.

²⁵ Sander A. Diamond, *The Nazi Movement in the United States, 1924-1941* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974); Myron I. Scholnick, *The New Deal and Anti-Semitism in America* (New York: Garland, 1990); David Harry Bennett, *Demagogues in the Depression: American Radicals and the Union Party, 1932-1936* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1969); David Harry Bennett, *The Party of Fear:*

The most extreme antisemitic activists were influenced by Nazi ideology. It is no coincidence that the rise in political antisemitism in the United States started in 1933. As part of the Third Reich's official foreign policy, German agencies launched a worldwide propaganda campaign to attract supporters of Nazism in countries all around the world. Historian Alton Frye established that Berlin's propaganda campaign in the United States began as early as March 1933, which substantiates Leonard Dinnerstein's observations that racial antisemitism of the Nazi variety began in the United States with the ascension of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party in Germany.²⁶ Far right-wing, Nazi-influenced groups borrowed rhetoric and images from Nazism to drive a nativist cultural definition of "100% Americanism." Nazi-influenced political antisemitism portrayed Jews as agents of the international communist conspiracy and therefore, enemies of America. Led by aspiring demagogues, all of these groups employed antisemitic rhetoric to express their political and social frustrations. Many were inspired or influenced by Nazi ideology. Political denunciations echoing Nazi anti-Jewish rhetoric spilled out of radios, churches and Congress in the 1930s.²⁷ The most reactionary of these groups

From Nativist Movement to the New Right in American History (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988).

²⁶ Alton Frye, *Nazi Germany and the American Hemisphere, 1933-1941* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967); Leonard Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America*, 105.

²⁷ On Father Coughlin, see Alan Brinkley, *Voices of Protest: Huey Long, Father Coughlin, and the Great Depression*, 1st Vintage Books ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1983); Charles J. Tull, *Father Coughlin and the New Deal, Men and Movements* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1965); Louis B. Ward, *Father Charles E. Coughlin; an Authorized Biography* (Detroit, MI: Tower publications incorporated, 1933); Donald I. Warren, *Radio Priest: Charles Coughlin, the Father of Hate Radio* (New York: Free Press, 1996). Protestant ministers Bob Schuler and the Reverend Martin Luther Thomas were "radio ministers" in Los Angeles. Both used the airwaves to promote conservative domestic and international political agendas employing antisemitic allegations and innuendoes. Several Congressmen and U.S. senators were notorious for their antisemitic attitudes. The most notorious in the early 1930s

emulated the tactics of the Nazi Party right down to their private militias, which they hoped would one day bring a “Hitler-style” revolution to this country. Silver, White, Blue, and Khaki “shirt” organizations promoted Nazi-style political programs to resolve the Depression by disenfranchising American Jews.²⁸

The most strident of the “shirt group” demagogues was William Dudley Pelley. While most of these grassroots militias lacked a coherent political ideology or plan for what they would do with power once they achieved it, Pelley contrived an elaborate plan for a Christian economic “commonwealth.” Pelley’s plan for a Christian utopia in the United States was outlined in his 1936 book, *No More Hunger*. The plan required, among other things, ghettoizing American Jews on distant

was Congressman Louis McFadden of Pennsylvania. McFadden was reputed to be a member of the Silver Shirts. In 1933-34, he issued notorious speeches from the House in which he accused Jews of controlling the banking system in the United States and quoted the *Elders of the Protocols of Zion* in his newsletters to constituents. Senator Theodore Bilbo and Congressman John Rankin, both of Mississippi, were both unabashed antisemites. On Bilbo and Rankin, see Edward Shapiro, “Anti-Semitism Mississippi Style,” in *Anti-Semitism in American History*, ed. David Gerber (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987).

²⁸ For a discussion of antisemitism in the 1930s, see Leonard Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America*, chapters 6-7. For contemporaneous accounts of the sources of political antisemitism in the 1930s, see John Spivak, “Planning America’s Pogroms,” (New York: New Masses, 1934); Donald Stuart Strong, *Organized Anti-Semitism in America; The Rise of Group Prejudice During the Decade 1930-40* (Washington, DC: American Council on Public Affairs, 1941); Raymond Swing, *Forerunners of American Fascism* (New York: J. Messner, 1935); Travis Hoke, *Shirts! A Survey of the New “Shirt” Organizations in the United States: Seeking a Fascist Dictatorship* (New York: American Civil Liberties Union, 1934). George Seldes and Helen Larkin Wiesman Seldes, *Facts and Fascism*, Eighth ed. (New York: In Fact, Inc., 1943). For scholarly treatment of the origins and forms of political antisemitism associated with Depression-era demagogues, see Charles J. Tull, *Father Coughlin and the New Deal*; Donald I. Warren, *Radio Priest: Charles Coughlin, the Father of Hate Radio*; Leo P. Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right: The Protestant Far Right from the Great Depression to the Cold War* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983); Geoffrey S. Smith, *To Save a Nation: American Extremism, the New Deal, and the Coming of World War II*, (Chicago: I.R. Dee, 1992); Glen Jeansonne, *Women of the Far Right: The Mothers’ Movement and World War II* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1996); Francis MacDonnell, *Insidious Foes: The Axis Fifth Column and the American Home Front*; Morris Schonbach, “Native American Fascism During the 1930s and 1940s: A Study of Its Roots, Its Growth, and Its Decline” (Dissertation, University of California at Los Angeles, 1958, published by: Garland, 1985); and George Wolfskill, *The Revolt of the Conservatives* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1962).

reservations to remove the cultural, racial, and economic threat they posed to white Christian American society.²⁹

Fear Itself

Historians contend that this hostile social and political environment prevented American Jews from effectively defending themselves during the 1930s.³⁰ Unlike their immigrant parents who had experienced the violent potential of antisemitism in Europe, the generation of American Jews that came of age in the 1920s and 1930s had no experience with this level of political and social persecution.³¹ According to historian Lloyd Gartner, the hostile political climate of the Depression was far more distressing for American Jews than were the economic and social uncertainties of the era.³² Stunned by the sudden virulence, persistence, and prevalence of antisemitism in their daily lives, American Jews in the 1930s retreated and hoped that the bad times would pass. American Jewish defense organizations endorsed this avoidance strategy, encouraging American Jews to maintain a low profile. According to Dinnerstein,

Jewish community leaders admonished coreligionists to remain circumspect in their public behavior, to draw no attention to themselves

²⁹ William Pelley, *No More Hunger* (Asheville, NC: Pelley Publishers, 1936); Scott Beekman, *William Dudley Pelley: A Life in Right Wing Extremism and the Occult* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2005).

³⁰ Leonard Dinnerstein, chapter 6; Henry L. Feingold, *The Politics of Rescue: The Roosevelt Administration and the Holocaust, 1938-1945*; Henry L. Feingold, *Did American Jewry Do Enough During the Holocaust*; David Biale, *Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History* (New York: Schocken Books, 1986), 185.

³¹ Henry L. Feingold, *A Time for Searching: Entering the Mainstream, 1920-1945*, 2.

³² Lloyd P. Gartner, "The Midpassage of American Jewry," in *The American Jewish Experience*, ed. Jonathan Sarna (New York: Meier), 262.

as Jews and to disassociate themselves from any group considered foreign to American society.³³

Individuals adopted various avoidance behaviors and conciliatory tactics to hide their Jewishness. Some American Jews abandoned their religious identity as Jews altogether. Others tried to hide their ethnic identity. Young Jewish women, for example, often felt compelled to wear crosses around their necks when applying for secretarial jobs, while others changed their names to hide their Jewish identities.³⁴

The anxiety exhibited by American Jews in their every day lives was also apparent in the cautious approach that American Jewish defense organizations adopted to combat the problem at the national level. Partnering with liberal Christian and non-sectarian civic organizations nationwide, all three Jewish defense organizations contributed to the liberal counterpropaganda. All three promoted a more inclusive construction of “100% Americanism” than the one promulgated by conservatives and right-wing nationalists.³⁵ These liberal coalitions engaged public speakers, printed books, pamphlets and magazines. They also produced radio and film projects to “unmask rabble-rousers” who spread messages of hate and

³³ Leonard Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America*, 123.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *ADL Annual Report, 1934*, quoted in Thomas Mantel, “The Anti-Defamation League of B’nai Brith” (Honors thesis, Harvard University, 1950); Burton Boxerman, “Reactions of the St. Louis Jewish Community to Anti-Semitism, 1933-1945” (Dissertation, St. Louis University, 1967); Naomi Cohen, *Not Free to Desist: The American Jewish Committee, 1906-1966*; Deborah Dash Moore, *B'nai B'rith and the Challenge of Ethnic Leadership* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981); Marc Dollinger, *Quest for Inclusion: Jews and Liberalism in Modern America*, 62-6; Naomi Cohen, “An Overview of American Jewish Defense,” in *Jews and the American Public Square: Debating Religion and Republic*, ed. Alan Mittleman, Robert Licht and Jonathan Sarna (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002); Stuart Svonkin, *Jews against Prejudice: American Jews and the Fight for Civil Liberties* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 14-16; Henry L. Feingold, *A Time for Searching: Entering the Mainstream, 1920-1945*, 255-6; Shana Bernstein, “Building Bridges at Home in a Time of Global Conflict: Interracial Cooperation and the Fight for Civil Rights in Los Angeles, 1933-1954” (Dissertation, Stanford University, 2003).

intolerance across the country.³⁶ Yet, all three Jewish self-defense organizations purposely obscured their participation in these interfaith alliances, fearing the backlash that their involvement might cause.³⁷ In joining with interfaith and non-sectarian civic groups, the AJC, ADL, and American Jewish Congress asserted their faith in the goodwill and temperance of the American people to reject these anti-American forces. In maintaining a low profile within these coalitions, the Jewish defense agencies revealed their anxiety as well.

Until now, historians were unaware that American Jews in cities across the country were actually engaged in covert, fact-finding operations to combat insurgent Nazism. In at least eight other cities, Jewish groups conducted similar covert operations to expose the development of a Nazi-influenced political movement.³⁸ These efforts demonstrate that American Jews were not as paralyzed to take direct action to defend themselves as the historiography asserts. As part of these local defense operations, American Jews (or their agents) collected antisemitic literature

³⁶ Henry L. Feingold, *A Time for Searching: Entering the Mainstream, 1920-1945*, 251-3; Stuart Svonkin, *Jews Against Prejudice: American Jews and the Fight for Civil Liberties*, 15; Marc Dollinger, *Quest for Inclusion: Jews and Liberalism in Modern America*, 66-73.

³⁷ Henry L. Feingold, *A Time for Searching: Entering the Mainstream, 1920-1945*, 255-56.

³⁸ Covert fact-finding operations took place in at least a dozen cities across the county. Evidence pointing to this widespread covert response comes from different sources. For references to Portland, see correspondence, Lewis to Robinson during 1935, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 23, Folder 13. Activity may have been taking place in Seattle, see letter, Lewis to P. Allen Rickles, December 3, 1937, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 19, Folder 10. Activity in Miami was conducted later in the decade. "Burnett Roth Oral History," in Oscar Cohen and Stanley Wexler, ed., *Not the Work of a Day: Anti-Defamation League Oral Memories*, vol. 4, 3-23 (New York: Anti-Defamation League, 1987). "Benjamin Epstein Oral History," in Cohen and Wexler, Vol. 1, 60; Frank Prince mentions the fact-finding operation in Boston in his letter to Leon Lewis, January 11, 1934, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 26, Folder 14. Prince also mentions Indianapolis and Saint Louis in a letter to Lewis, January 19, 1935, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 26, Folder 22. Miles Goldberg mentions work in Cincinnati in a letter to Lewis, January 15, 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 22, Folder 24. For information on activity in Cincinnati, also see Cincinnati Jewish Community Relations Papers, MS 202, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, OH. For details concerning the covert activities conducted by the AJC, see Naomi Cohen, *Not Free to Desist: The American Jewish Committee, 1906-1966*, chapter 9.

from local street corners and bookshops, reported on pro-Nazi public rallies, and sent informants to infiltrate far right-wing groups to report on possible subversive activities. The ADL and the AJC managed these fact-finding operations as an informal, national network to combat insurgent Nazism across the United States. Neither the undercover operations nor the national network they formed have been explicated in American Jewish historiography. The history of the LAJCC, therefore, is not just a case study of one American Jewish community's political agency and influence in the 1930s, it is also exemplary of a broader, American Jewish political program to combat Nazism in the United States during the 1930s.

Unprepared to Lead

The virulent spread of political antisemitism across American culture in the 1930s caught American Jews off-guard. As a group, this generation of American Jews was politically unprepared to assume the mantle of leadership required to address the domestic and international political crises confronted them.³⁹ Although their rapid economic rise was the stuff of national mythology, second generation American Jews were not yet fully integrated into American politics.⁴⁰ According to historian Lloyd Gartner, the second generation was in "mid-passage" between the world of their fathers and mainstream America at the end of the 1920s.⁴¹

Transitioning socially and financially from the world of their immigrant parents into

³⁹ Henry L. Feingold, *A Time for Searching: Entering the Mainstream, 1920-1945*, 2; Lloyd P. Gartner, "The Midpassage of American Jewry," in *The American Jewish Experience*.

⁴⁰ Henry L. Feingold, *Bearing Witness: How America and Its Jews Responded to the Holocaust*, 241.

⁴¹ Lloyd P. Gartner, "The Midpassage of American Jewry," in *The American Jewish Experience*.

the American middle class, the Depression rudely arrested their progress.⁴²

Consequently, the second generation lacked the political experience and power it needed to effectively meet the dual crises of Nazism abroad and political antisemitism at home during the Depression.⁴³

Nor was the second generation psychologically prepared to lead. Their very ascent from immigrant life into the American mainstream was grounded implicitly in a shifting identity. According to historian Gulie Arad, America offered individual Jews emancipation from a “collective destiny,” but at a price: social acceptance in exchange for ethnic particularism.⁴⁴ Jewish notions of a separate national identity would have to be relinquished in order to win individual acceptance and communal security in America. According to historian Naomi Cohen, American Jews accepted these conditions.

For the sake of achieving equality, [American Jews] had accepted American conditions: proper Americanization and assimilation demanded disavowal of ethnic separation; group distinctiveness was acceptable only with the churches. Accordingly, Jews had either renounced their ethnicity formally or kept it concealed within the covers of their prayer books and walls of the synagogues. In exchange, their rights as a religious group were fully protected by the clauses of the Constitution...⁴⁵

⁴² Deborah Dash Moore, *At Home in America: Second Generation New York Jews* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 10-11; Beth S. Wenger, *New York Jews and the Great Depression: Uncertain Promise*, (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1999), 7.

⁴³ Lloyd P. Gartner, “The Midpassage of American Jewry,” in *The American Jewish Experience*; David Biale, *Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History*, 183.

⁴⁴ Gulie Ne'eman Arad, *America, Its Jews, and the Rise of Nazism*, 11.

⁴⁵ Naomi Cohen, *Jews in Christian America*, 97-8.

Second generation American Jews were proud to be Americans, and hence, fixating on Jewish political problems *as Jews* was antithetical to the bargain.⁴⁶

The psychological shift from immigrant to American contributed to their unpreparedness. According to historian David Biale, the more assiduously individual American Jews progressed towards that goal, the weaker their collective political consciousness became.

The very success of American Jews in entering the power structure in America...strengthened and weakened their ability -- and desire -- to act as a collectivity in the historical sense of the word.⁴⁷

Consequently, the virulence of political antisemitism in the 1930s caught American Jews psychologically off-guard and unprepared to respond as Jews. Perhaps the best example of the conflict of interest that antisemitism placed on American Jews in the 1930s can be seen in the political behavior of Roosevelt's advisors who happened to be Jewish. Henry Morgenthau, Sam Rosenman and Felix Frankfurter were men who had "laid aside their Jewish identity as part of the transaction for social status." They were not, as their detractors liked to think, "Jewish men of influence" inside the Administration. Rather, they were "men of influence who remotely, and, one suspects sometimes unhappily, happened to be Jewish."⁴⁸ Advisors in the Roosevelt administration who happened to be Jewish understood implicitly that they could not trade on their access to the President for Jewish interests "...without calling into

⁴⁶ Gulie Ne'eman Arad, *America, Its Jews, and the Rise of Nazism*, 11, chapters 1-2. Naomi Cohen, "An Overview of American Jewish Defense."

⁴⁷ David Biale, *Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History*, 178.

⁴⁸ Henry L. Feingold, *Bearing Witness: How America and Its Jews Responded to the Holocaust*, 231.

question their own bona fides as enablers of the American national interest.”⁴⁹ The sudden virulence of political antisemitism in the United States 1930s betrayed the American promise and caught American Jews without strong leaders who could effectively assert American Jewish political rights and lay claim to political influence.⁵⁰

The leadership of the LAJCC stands out as an exception to this trend. The two attorneys who took the helm of Jewish self-defense in Los Angeles, Mendel Silberberg and Leon Lewis, both had the political experience and the psychological fortitude to lead. Neither “came of age” in the 1920s; rather, they were older men, born in the nineteenth century, and highly assimilated. Silberberg was one of the most powerful attorneys in Los Angeles in the 1930s. His firm represented several major studios and he was a close personal friend of the highest paid American in the 1930s, Louis B. Mayer.⁵¹ Silberberg was known as a “king-maker” in the California Republican Party, and in his role as chairman of the LAJCC, he extended his political influence in representing the Jews of Hollywood to the outside world.⁵²

Although Mendel Silberberg was the executive director of the LAJCC, there is surprisingly little evidence of the role he played amidst the tens of thousands of pages

⁴⁹ Henry L. Feingold, *Jewish Power in America: Myth and Reality* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2008), 10.

⁵⁰ Gulie Ne’eman Arad, *America, Its Jews, and the Rise of Nazism*, 12, 13, 36-37; Naomi Cohen, *Jews in Christian America*, 98.

⁵¹ Neal Gabler, *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood*, 249, 316. Mayer was paid one million dollars in 1933, making him the highest paid individual in the country that year.

⁵² Neal Gabler, *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood*, 249; *ibid*; Max Vorspan and Lloyd P. Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1970), 218, 221.

in the CRC Papers.⁵³ Though Silberberg wielded political influence when it was needed, from 1933-1945, Leon Lewis directed the Committee's daily affairs, from its covert fact-finding operation to its relationships with local law enforcement, congressional investigations, and military intelligence. Lewis was politically experienced and psychologically prepared to lead. Born in Wisconsin in 1889 to German Jewish immigrants, Lewis was well into middle age and comfortably middle class when he came to lead the covert fact-finding operation in Los Angeles in 1933.⁵⁴ Lewis also had particular professional experience and skills that made him uniquely qualified to lead the fight against Nazism in the city. For the first twelve years of his professional career in Chicago, Lewis had been the first executive secretary of the Anti-Defamation League.⁵⁵ From 1913-1925 (with a break for overseas service in World War I) Lewis had helped mold the ADL's trademark defense strategies to combat antisemitic discrimination and defamation. Lewis was neither unfamiliar with, nor intimidated by, antisemitism.

Leon Lewis was the right man in the right place at the right time. Lewis brought his leadership skills and political expertise with him to Los Angeles when he moved from Chicago for health reasons in 1930.⁵⁶ Just three years later, Lewis found

⁵³ Neal Gabler, *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood*, 295-97. Gabler cites Silberberg as the leader of the LAJCC but Silberberg's presence in the CRC Papers is slight. Silberberg's low profile in the CRC Papers may be due to the fact that the LAJCC was run out of Leon Lewis' law office. Hence, it is possible that documents concerning Silberberg's activities were held by him personally. At the time of this writing, there is no known source for Silberberg's personal papers.

⁵⁴ Leon Lewis Private Papers. In author's possession, courtesy of Claire Lewis Read.

⁵⁵ Edward Grusd, *B'nai Brith: The Story of a Covenant* (New York: Appleton-Century, 1966). Also see "Lewis, Leon L.," *The Concise Dictionary of American Jewish Biography*, Jacob Rader Marcus and Judith M. Daniels, eds. (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson Publishing, Inc., 1994) vol. 2, 385.

⁵⁶ Lewis and his young family moved to Los Angeles in 1930 due to health problems. Neil Gabler asserts that Lewis had respiratory problems after having been gassed in the war (*An Empire of Their*

himself confronting Nazi activity in his newly adopted home. A decisive strategist and unflappable leader, Leon Lewis provided the necessary talent and emotional intelligence to lead Hollywood's spies.

Think Locally, Act Nationally

The hostile political environment of the 1930s was a major impediment to American Jewish political agency, but historians also point to the absence of a strong, national, political organization as a limiting factor on American Jewish political agency during the decade. Social and political differences among the three national Jewish self-defense agencies prevented the formation of a strong, national, Jewish political organization that could deal with the crises that confronted American Jews in the 1930s at home and abroad.⁵⁷ In fact, Jewish political organization at the national level was so dysfunctional during the 1930s that historian Henry Feingold concluded that it was a "fantasy" to imagine that there was any organization at all. Reflecting on Jewish organizational response to the crisis in Germany, Feingold wrote:

A communal base for unified action did not exist. Instead, there was fragmentation, lack of coherence in the message projected to policy makers, profound disagreement on what might be done in the face of the crisis and strife among the leaders of a myriad of political and religious factions that constituted the community. It may well be that the assumption of contemporary historians that there existed a single

Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood, 296). Lewis, however, did not see active duty in Europe. He had a desk job in London with the War Insurance Risk board., Lewis' respiratory problems were the result of the Spanish flu, which he contracted in 1917 while still in Europe (Leon Lewis Private Papers). Gabler also describes Lewis as a "semi-invalid," but according to Lewis' daughter, Claire Lewis Read, Lewis was not handicapped (Laura Rosenzweig, interview with Claire Lewis Read, August 2005).

⁵⁷ Gulie Ne'eman Arad, *America, Its Jews, and the Rise of Nazism*; Henry L. Feingold, *Did American Jewry Do Enough During the Holocaust*; Gulie Ne'eman Arad, *America, Its Jews, and the Rise of Nazism*; Marc Dollinger, *Quest for Inclusion: Jews and Liberalism in Modern America*, chapter 3.

Jewish community held together by a common sense of history and a desire for joint enterprise is the product of a messianic imagination.⁵⁸

The absence of a strong, national, Jewish political organization was the result of both American and Jewish communal traditions. Since the arrival of the first Jews to North America in 1654, the Jewish approach to communal organization in America was predicated on the Jewish religious and cultural precept, “the people of Israel are responsible for one another.” Consequently, American Jewish political and social organizations were community based, a pattern that fit neatly into the decentralized character of American communal organization as well.⁵⁹ American Jewish communal infrastructure also resembled the American federalist pattern of organization, “precariously balanced between unity and fragmentation,” as historian Jonathan Sarna has called it.⁶⁰ During the 19th and early 20th centuries, as Jewish immigrants spanned out across the country, each community established its own social welfare infrastructure. Jewish philanthropy funded a range of social welfare organizations including lending associations, mutual aid societies, and charitable relief funds.

The decentralized character of American Jewish social and political agency effectively met the needs of Jews in cities across the country for decades prior to the 1930s; but, what had been a source of strength throughout the 18th and 19th centuries proved to be a liability in the during the Depression. Decentralization caused fragmentation. During the Depression, American Jews responded to national and

⁵⁸ Henry L. Feingold, *Did American Jewry Do Enough During the Holocaust?* 285.

⁵⁹ Jonathan D. Sarna, *American Judaism: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), chapter 2.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

international problems at the local level. Jewish communities across the country created their own political action groups to advocate for German Jewry, to raise funds for a Jewish homeland in Palestine, and to fight antisemitism at home.⁶¹ The decentralized character of the American Jewish community thus inhibited the development of a unified, Jewish political voice at the national level. During the 1930s, hundreds of grassroots Jewish political organizations sprung up, representing diverse political agendas, and confusing national policy-makers as to just who spoke for American Jews.⁶²

The LAJCC was heir to this decentralized social and political welfare tradition. The LAJCC was just one of the many community-based groups created by American Jews across the country forced to deal with the challenges of antisemitism at the local level. As such, it partnered with interfaith and non-sectarian groups in LA to promote tolerance and equality.⁶³ The LAJCC, however, had more money and better leadership than other local Jewish groups. Consequently, the LAJCC was able to extend its political agency and influence to the national stage, becoming an equal player in American Jewish politics with the New York-based Jewish groups when it came to combatting Nazism in the United States.

The case of the LAJCC not only substantiates the fragmented character of American Jewish communal organization, it also reinforces Jonathan Sarna's observations of its "precarious unity." The LAJCC participated with the ADL and the

⁶¹ Beth S. Wenger, *New York Jews and the Great Depression: Uncertain Promise*, chapter 1.

⁶² Henry L. Feingold, *Jewish Power in America: Myth and Reality*, 32.

⁶³ Shana Bernstein, "From Civil Defense to Civil Rights: The Growth of Jewish Interracial Civil Rights Activism in Los Angeles," in *The Jewish Role in American Life: Annual Review*, ed. William Devereil (Los Angeles: USC Casden Institute, 2009); Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*.

AJC in a loose network of covert fact-finding operations that were conducted by American Jews around the country during the 1930s. Nevertheless, the divergent political priorities, organizational jealousies, and personality conflicts that kept the ADL and the AJC from working together effectively on behalf of German Jewry, also alienated the two groups in their work to combat insurgent Nazism in the United States.⁶⁴ Leon Lewis was repeatedly betrayed by his former colleagues at the ADL over the course of the decade, and relations with the AJC, although less strained, were also difficult at times. Consequently, Lewis established himself as a respected advisor to federal authorities and in so doing, he established the LAJCC as a reliable source of information on Nazi activity separate from the AJC and the ADL. By 1938, the LAJCC emerged as a new source of American Jewish political influence in Washington. Between 1938-1945, federal agencies, including the Dies Committee, the State Department, the FBI, and military intelligence all called on the LAJCC to provide information on subversive Nazi propaganda activities on the West Coast and beyond. Thus, the case of the LAJCC presents Los Angeles as an emerging site of American Jewish political power whose influence, at least as far as the fight against insurgent Nazism in the United States was concerned, was on par with the AJC and the ADL.

Finally, the LAJCC derived some of its political efficacy as an American Jewish defense organization from its approach to ethnic self-defense in the United States.⁶⁵ According to historian Gulie Arad, American political culture provided constitutional

⁶⁴ Gulie Ne'eman Arad, *America, Its Jews, and the Rise of Nazism*.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*; Deborah Dash Moore, *B'nai B'rith and the Challenge of Ethnic Leadership*.

protections for the individual, but did not extend those protections to special interest groups (i.e.. minorities). Consequently, self-defense posed a tricky problem. In order to be seen as Americans, Jews could not represent their concerns as a group, yet religious discrimination in the 19th century and racialized antisemitism in the 20th did just that -- categorized American Jews collectively. Jewish self-defense efforts, therefore, could not be framed in terms of minority group rights; rather, they had to be positioned in more universal terms.⁶⁶

Since the mid-nineteenth century, American Jews had been developing strategies and principles to defend their religious and cultural particularism while still ensuring their social status as Americans. From the start, American Jews positioned themselves as “authentic guardians” of the American tradition and therefore, their defense of the Jewish religion in Christian America was a defense of America’s core values of tolerance and equality.⁶⁷ Consequently, American Jews positioned self-defense as

...eminently compatible with their American loyalties. For Jews to have insisted upon defense may have logically belied a faith in American’s perception, but it was in fact an investment in America’s endurance and in Jewish survival in the United States.⁶⁸

Defense of minority rights was, therefore, an expression of America’s universalist values and not an expression of minority particularism. As historian Henry Feingold

⁶⁶ Gulie Ne’eman Arad, *America, Its Jews, and the Rise of Nazism*.

⁶⁷ Naomi Cohen, *Jews in Christian America*, 5.

⁶⁸ Naomi Cohen, “Pioneers of American Jewish Defense,” in *Anti-Semitism in America*, 99.

puts it, American Jews owe whatever power or influence they had in the United States to this principle of universalism.⁶⁹

Scholars have framed this universalist orientation to self-defense in various ways. Michael Walzer frames this position as the “politics of interest.” Marc Dollinger views it as the Jewish embrace of liberalism and the key to their inclusion in American political culture. Gulie Arad maintains that this universalist approach to self-defense solved the dilemma that “special interest politics” posed to minority groups in America. Regardless of how scholars frame it, universalism was the central principle guiding American Jewish responses to antisemitism in the early 20th century, and it was fundamental in justifying the LAJCC’s covert fact-finding operation to combat native Nazism in America in the 1930s.⁷⁰

As an American Jewish self-defense organization, the LAJCC was guided by this sacred principle of self-defense. In fighting social forms of antisemitism, the LAJCC partnered with local civic and interfaith groups to encourage equality and tolerance as a “guardian of the American political tradition.”⁷¹ The LAJCC promoted public education campaigns, radio programs, and goodwill events to foster religious and ethnic tolerance in Los Angeles. Privately, however, the Jews of Los Angeles understood the unique dilemma that Nazi-influenced political antisemitism posed to American Jews. Denunciations as conspirators and un-American subversives made it

⁶⁹ Henry L. Feingold, *Jewish Power in America: Myth and Reality*, 15-6.

⁷⁰ Michael Walzer, “Multiculturalism and the Politics of Interest,” in *Insider/Outsider: American Jews and Multiculturalism*, ed. David Biale, Michael Galchinsky and Susannah Heschel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Gulie Ne’eman Arad, *America, Its Jews, and the Rise of Nazism*; Marc Dollinger, *Quest for Inclusion: Jews and Liberalism in Modern America*.

⁷¹ Naomi Cohen, *Jews in Christian America*, 5.

difficult for American Jews to respond within the public discourse without being further impugned. Cornered by the public discourse, American Jews were challenged to find a self-defense response that would not aggravate American contempt for “special interest” politics. Consequently, the LAJCC adopted an “offense-by-proxy” strategy. Maintaining a low-profile, the LAJCC partnered with groups whose Americanism was unimpeachable, allowing these groups to lead the charge in exposing the Nazi threat to the American public. During an era of extreme political strife, the offense-by-proxy strategy allowed Jews to combat Nazism on universalist terms without being seen.

Chapter Structure

This dissertation recovers the history of the LAJCC and Hollywood’s spies to amend the historiography on American Jewish political agency and influence in the 1930s. The narrative is organized chronologically. Chapters one and two set the political context for the development of Nazi-influenced groups in Los Angeles. Chapter one, entitled, *White Spot of the Nation*, it surveys Los Angeles’ political history from the late nineteenth century to 1933, establishing the city’s ultra-conservative political culture as fertile ground for far right-wing movements like Nazism in the 1930s. Chapter two completes the prologue by presenting the origins of Nazism in Los Angeles, the response of local law enforcement officials to that activity, and the launch of an independent fact-finding operation by a group of self-elected local veterans who would eventually become Hollywood’s spies.

Chapters three and four discuss the emergence of Jewish political agency and influence in Los Angeles in 1933-34. Chapter three, entitled *Becoming Hollywood's Spies*, discusses how the veterans' fact-finding operation came to be funded by the Jews of Hollywood. This chapter establishes Leon Lewis the leader in the fight against Nazism. It relates the earliest example of Lewis' "offense-by-proxy" strategy to expose Nazism to people of Los Angeles. Chapter four, entitled *Los Angeles, Emergent*, illustrates Lewis' early execution of that strategy by revealing the guidance and support the LAJCC provided to the 1934 McCormack-Dickstein Committee investigation of subversive Nazi propaganda in the United States. In so doing, chapter four presents the emergence of Los Angeles as a new site of American Jewish political power in 1934.

Perhaps the aspect of the LAJCC story that best demonstrates its political agency and influence was their commitment to the long, drawn-out fight. Chapters five through eight demonstrate the LAJCC's unflagging political commitment to combatting Nazism in Los Angeles between 1935-1941, as Nazi-influenced political groups proliferated in the city and across the country. Chapters five through eight also detail six years of undercover work inside the German-American Bund and the plethora of nativist groups that challenged Jewish political status in Los Angeles during this time.

Chapter five, entitled, *Proclamation, 1935*, analyzes the historical significance of a single event that took place in Los Angeles at the end of 1935, heralding Berlin's new strategy to foment a Nazi-style movement in the United States. Chapter six,

entitled, *Exposing the Berlin Connection, 1936-1941*, explicates the undercover operation inside the German-American Bund in Los Angeles and the evidence produced by Hollywood's spies that exposed the relationship between Berlin and the German-American Bund. Chapter seven, *Exposing the Nazi Fifth Column, 1936-1941*, investigates Hollywood's spies' surveillance of the emergence of (what appeared to be at the time) a Nazi fifth column in Los Angeles and beyond. Chapters six and seven expose Berlin's role in driving a Nazi-inspired movement in the United States, and confirm the LAJCC's on-going political agency in the face of escalating insurgent Nazism in the city. These two chapters reveal the Jewish origins of much of the information that federal investigators at the time, and historians since, relied upon. Thus, these two chapters validate the longevity of the covert operation and confirm the LAJCC's political activism and influence.

Chapter eight, entitled *The Politics of Resistance*, investigates the reach and the limits of the LAJCC's political influence in Washington between 1938-1940. It discusses the LAJCC's limited legal and political options for resistance. Chapter eight relates the tenuous relationship between provided the LAJCC and the Dies Committee to further underscore Jewish political agency and influence in the fight against insurgent Nazism, and reveals the emergence of Los Angeles as a new site of American Jewish power. The chapter ends with Dies' betrayal of the LAJCC and the ironic twist that turned Hollywood's eight-year campaign to defend the United States from the anti-democratic forces of Nazism into grounds for Congress' investigation of the Jews of Hollywood themselves.

America's entrance into World War II marked the end of the LAJCC's undercover fact-finding operation. The federal government assumed responsibility for monitoring Nazi-influenced groups in southern California, relieving the LAJCC of the need to maintain a private, fact-finding operation. During the war, the LAJCC shifted its political energies from fighting Nazism to combatting the broader social issue of racism in Los Angeles. The Conclusion summarizes the role the LAJCC played in the city's wartime civil rights movement as the origins of Los Angeles' emergence as a new site of post-war Jewish political influence within American and Jewish American circles.

Chapter One

“White Spot of the Nation:” Los Angeles at 1933

Adolf Hitler ascended to power on January 31, 1933. Less than ninety days later, in the spring of 1933, a report submitted to Los Angeles police Captain William “Red” Hynes noted that downtown streets were suddenly littered with “considerable quantities” of Nazi propaganda. A group called the “Friends of the New Germany” (FNG) was responsible.⁷²

Based in New York City, the Friends of the New Germany was a new national organization with regional headquarters in Los Angeles and Chicago. Primarily comprised of German nationals living in the United States, FNG’s mission was to defend the Fatherland from what its members perceived to be false representations being made in the United States about Germany’s new chancellor, Adolf Hitler, and the “New Germany.” The group appeared in Los Angeles in the spring of 1933 and was actively engaged in promoting the new German regime. FNG sponsored frequent public talks and distributed antisemitic, anti-Communist flyers and leaflets on the busy streets of downtown Los Angeles. It also opened the Aryan Bookstore, which sold books, magazines, and pamphlets published in Germany for an American

⁷² Report dated June 25, 1933 (no title, no author), *Jewish Federation Council of Los Angeles, Community Relations Committee Collection Part 1, Box 14, Folder 17*. Special Collections and Archives, Oviatt Library, California State University, Northridge, CA. (hereafter, “CRC Papers”), The report was written for LAPD police captain William Hynes who most likely gave it to the secretary of the LAJCC, Leon Lewis. Subsequent police reports concerning Nazi activities in the city appear in the CRC Papers, indicating a working relationship between Lewis and Hynes.

audience that advanced the Nazi perspective on the source of the world's political and economic problems: "Jewish Communism."⁷³

Throughout the spring and summer of 1933, new FNG chapters popped up in cities across the U.S. By the fall of 1933, the preponderance of Nazi literature, Nazi political activity and complaints by Jews of harassment drew the attention of police around the country, but in Los Angeles, local law enforcement was slow to respond to similar concerns.⁷⁴ In September 1933, Leon Lewis, a local Jewish attorney, met with Los Angeles Chief of Police, James Davis. Lewis told Davis that he had been conducting a covert investigation of Nazi activities in Los Angeles "for some time." Nazi groups, Lewis informed Davis, had been spreading "the most vicious type of class hatred" with the "...ultimate objective to foster a fascist form of government in the U.S." Lewis shared evidence secretly collected by informants raising suspicions about FNG's true political motives with Davis, hoping to secure the chief's commitment to monitor Nazi activity in the city more closely.⁷⁵

Chief Davis was unmoved by Lewis' report. He responded by lecturing Lewis on the virtues of Nazism. According to Lewis, Davis' defense of Hitlerism "came straight from Nazi literature." Davis told Lewis that Germany had been "forced to take action" against the Jews because Germans could not compete economically with Jews. Davis also pointed out that Henry Ford had faced the same problem with the Jews in America and "had gone after them, [but Ford] had not been

⁷³ Sander A. Diamond, *The Nazi Movement in the United States, 1924-1941* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), chapter 5.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 123-134.

⁷⁵ Report [by L.L.L.] September 15, 1933, 11:30 AM, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 6, Folder 19.

able to get away with it” because the Jews had fought back. Patronizing Lewis, Davis said he understood why Jews, because of their “special racial bond,” would “work together to eliminate Hitler,” but Davis did not believe that Nazis posed a threat. The *real* menace to “life and property” in Los Angeles, Davis informed Lewis, were the Communists, not the Nazis.⁷⁶

Resenting the insinuation that he was concerned with Nazi activity only because he was a Jew, Lewis defended his motives as an American. He told Davis,

...I [am] Chairman of the Americanization Committee of the Downtown Post of the American Legion and...I [was] a Captain in the U.S. Army, [and] served eighteen months overseas [in WWI]...[T]here [is] no question about my motives in this matter...the disclosures I [am] prepared to make clearly demonstrate the anti-American purposes of the leaders of the Nazi group both here and generally through the country...[Nazi] efforts to create fascist action in the U.S. [are] an attack on life and property...and those with whom I [have] been acting in making this investigation ...[are] more interested in this matter as American citizens than as members of the Jewish faith.⁷⁷

The meeting did not last much longer. Davis assured Lewis that if Nazis in Los Angeles ever became a threat to “life and property,” the police would “have to handle it.” Davis dismissed Lewis and his concerns.⁷⁸

The meeting between Chief Davis and Leon Lewis in September 1933 reveals the context in which the Jews of Los Angeles adopted a covert approach to the problem of Nazi activity in their city. First, Davis’ empathy for the Nazi cause and his antipathy for Communism belied the deep-seated contempt and hostility that leaders in Los Angeles held towards “radicals,” an antipathy that had dominated the

⁷⁶ Report [by L.L.L.] September 15, 1933, 11:30 AM, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 6, Folder 19.

⁷⁷ Report [by L.L.L.] September 15, 1933, 11:30 AM, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 6, Folder 19.

⁷⁸ Report [by L.L.L.] September 15, 1933, 11:30 AM, Ibid., Part 1, Box 6, Folder 19.

city's political culture for forty years. Second, Davis' observations about Jews and their "racial bond" underscored just how marginalized American Jews were in the United States in the 1930s, compelling Lewis to qualify himself as an "American" in order to legitimize his concerns to Davis.

In order to understand why the Jews of Los Angeles adopted a covert approach to combatting Nazism, it is necessary to understand Los Angeles' uniquely conservative political and social culture. This chapter, therefore, analyzes the three "political orthodoxies" that governed Los Angeles in the early twentieth century: nativist progressivism, the "American system" of the open shop, and voluntaristic Protestantism.⁷⁹ First, this chapter examines the protracted, violent history of labor relations that made Los Angeles one of the most repressive, anti-labor cities in the country at 1933. Between 1890-1938, an oligarchic "business syndicate" controlled Los Angeles' politics. Over the course of four decades, the city's leaders adopted despotic, extra-legal tactics to defend their financial interests and political rights from "radical" labor. At 1933, Los Angeles was the bastion of the open shop in America. The city's leaders were proud of Los Angeles' reputation as "the nation's white spot."⁸⁰ Consequently, when Chief Davis defended Nazism to Leon Lewis, he was defending new allies in his on-going fight against the real menace in Los Angeles, the

⁷⁹ Gerald Woods, *The Police in Los Angeles: Reform and Professionalization* (New York: Garland, 1993), 34.

⁸⁰ Carey McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, 1983), 289-294; "Merchant and Manufacturers Association Gathers for Annual Dinner at Biltmore," *Los Angeles Times*, January 29, 1924. A1; Leonard Leader, *Los Angeles and the Great Depression* (New York: Garland Press, 1991), 1.

radical forces of Communism that were determined to undermine the city's anti-union policies.

Next, this chapter analyzes the underlying racial and ethnic relationships in the “white spot of the nation.” Although the moniker was used by city fathers to proudly declare the “purity” of the city's open shop business culture, it also referred to the professed purity of Protestant culture that dominated every aspect of the city.⁸¹ Chief Davis' references to the “Jewish racial bond” belied antisemitic prejudices broadly held by Protestant America at 1933. Unlike America's four larger cities – New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Detroit – Los Angeles was uniquely dominated by the very white Protestant majority whose nativist attitudes drove political antisemitism in the United States in the 1920s and 1930s.⁸² Thus, Jews Los Angeles at 1933 were politically suspect and their political influence was limited. With few political allies and even fewer options for combatting Nazism, the decision to launch an undercover fact-finding operation was shaped as much by the political culture of the city as by political necessity.

This chapter, therefore, explicates the political and social factors that determined the covert character of Jewish resistance to Nazism in Los Angeles in the 1930s. In so doing, it demonstrates that within Los Angeles' political and social

⁸¹ H. Mark Wild, *Street Meeting: Multiethnic Neighborhoods in Early Twentieth-Century Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 38. *Los Angeles Times* publisher Harry Chandler used the expression in reference to Los Angeles' intense economic development, which he said was “unfettered by labor unrest.” The expression was also used by nativists in LA who fought to block Japanese from moving into their neighborhoods in the 1920s by posting billboards that read, “Keep the White Spot White.”

⁸² Robert M. Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1930* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), xvii.

culture, Hollywood's spies and the Jews of Los Angeles were just playing politics, Los Angeles-style.

*The Forty Year War to Free a City*⁸³

At 1933, Los Angeles was perhaps the most conservative of America's five largest cities. While the social and political cultures of New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Detroit had been shaped by the influx of millions of European immigrants in the preceding forty years, modern Los Angeles was transformed by a completely different immigrant group: white, Anglo-Saxon Protestants from the American Midwest.⁸⁴ These Midwestern Christians brought with them the nativist values that lay at the heart of Chief James Davis' defense of Nazis at 1933. For forty years, the conservative business syndicate that ruled Los Angeles had fought tenaciously to protect the city from the "subversive forces" of organized labor.

The Business Syndicate, 1890-1938

As late as 1876, Los Angeles was a sleepy cow town, a village of 11,000.⁸⁵ Small, isolated farming colonies, ranches, and tumbledown houses dotted the local landscape.⁸⁶ With the arrival of the Southern Pacific and Santa Fe railroads in 1876 and 1887, respectively, the city's business leaders, led by the publisher of the *Los*

⁸³ *Forty Year War to Free a City*, (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Times, 1929).

⁸⁴ Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1930*, xvii, 79.

⁸⁵ U.S. Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census of the US: Volume I, 18-19; McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land*, 14.

⁸⁶ Judith Elias, *Los Angeles: Dream to Reality, 1885-1915* (Los Angeles: Santa Susanna Press, 1983), 1; McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land*, 114, 117; Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1930*, 186.

Angeles Times, Harrison Gray Otis, launched a nationwide public relations campaign to attract new residents to the city. Promising affordable housing, plentiful jobs and a climate beyond compare, the promotional campaign drew over a million newcomers to southern California between 1880-1920.⁸⁷ Los Angeles' population growth was unprecedented among western cities during this period. By 1920, "Cowtown" was America's fifth largest city and by 1930, it was the fourth largest city in the country.⁸⁸ As contemporary observer Carey McWilliams noted, Los Angeles did not "evolve" as other cities had, "it [w]as conjured into existence" by its business boosters.⁸⁹

Local commercial and industrial interests drove the rapid influx of these internal migrants to Los Angeles. Seeking to catch up and compete with San Francisco for homebuyers, workers, and new businesses, the city's public relations campaign was critical for attracting and maintaining a steady flow of surplus labor, which in turn, would attract new capital to Los Angeles. Surplus labor in the city kept wages low and ensured high profits.⁹⁰ On average, wages in Los Angeles between 1890-1910 were 20-40% lower than they were in San Francisco.⁹¹

It didn't take long for labor tensions to boil over in Los Angeles. Beginning in the early 1890s, and persisting for the next forty years, Los Angeles was embroiled in one of the most protracted and bloody labor relations conflicts in the country. As

⁸⁷ Elias, *Los Angeles: Dream to Reality, 1885-1915*, 1-29; McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land*, 126-29.

⁸⁸ "Table 16. Population of the 100 Largest Urban Places: 1930." U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1998. <http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0027/tab16.txt> . Between 1900 and 1930, the population of Los Angeles grew from 100,000 to 1.2 million, fourth only to New York City, Chicago, and Detroit.

⁸⁹ McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land*, 134.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 275-77.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 277.

workers in the city struggled to unionize, Los Angeles' business leaders defended the open shop, clinging tenaciously to nineteenth century notions of liberalism and individualism which viewed unions as intrinsically anti-American.⁹²

Los Angeles' protracted and bloody defense of the open shop began in the 1890s with a strike by the workers of the *Los Angeles Times* itself. Facing an economic recession, the newspaper announced a 20% reduction in wages for its unionized typographic workers. In retaliation, striking workers sabotaged *Times* delivery trucks, hijacking daily shipments of newspapers and dumping the newspapers on the streets. Otis, the paper's publisher and the most powerful man in Los Angeles in the 1890s, remained implacable in his opposition to the union. The *Times* imported strikebreakers to break up pickets and used the Los Angeles Police department (LAPD) to arrest strike organizers. Labor remained just as obstinate as Otis. For the next twenty years, the conflict between labor and the *Los Angeles Times* persisted, setting precedents for labor relations in the city.⁹³

If Harrison Otis was the most powerful individual in Los Angeles in the 1890s, then the Merchants and Manufacturers Association (M&M), the local trade association of local businesses, merchants, manufacturers, farmers and orange growers, was the power behind the throne. Los Angeles' businessmen's alliance was the product of two years of bloody conflict with rail workers in 1896 and brewery workers in 1897.⁹⁴ Rallying together to defend their property and their livelihoods,

⁹² *Forty Year War to Free a City*.

⁹³ McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land*, 277-284.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 278-80.

the merchants and manufacturers of the city allied to defend the open shop in LA. Over the next 30 years, the M&M proved itself to be one of the most reactionary opponents of trade unionism in the United States. When strikes were planned, member-businesses could count on the M&M to provide the necessary social, political and physical coercion needed to end them. The Association hired private thugs to attack picketers and routinely planted informants inside labor organizations to anticipate trouble. Backed by the editorial clout of the *Los Angeles Times*, the M&M used its power to pressure the city's elected officials to adopt repressive ordinances to silence labor. Ironically, the labor violence in Los Angeles stood in stark contrast to the "paradisaical" images of orange groves, mountains, sunshine, and ocean that the travel posters and promotional literature used to sell Los Angeles to prospective newcomers.⁹⁵

Two periods of violent labor strife between 1890-1930 had a profound impact on Los Angeles' conservative political culture. The first, between 1900-1910, pitted the Merchant and Manufacturers' Association and its battering ram, the *Los Angeles Times*, against workers led by the Socialist Party.⁹⁶ This period was capped by the infamous bombing of the *Los Angeles Times* by Socialist activists. The second period came at the end of World War I and lasted through 1924, when the Industrial Workers of the World became prominent within certain industrial unions in Los Angeles.

During this period the M&M, along with the "super-patriot" civic groups the Better

⁹⁵ Ibid., chapter 14; Elias, *Los Angeles: Dream to Reality, 1885-1915*, 1-3.

⁹⁶ Melvyn and Joseph Anthony McCartin Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All: A History of the Industrial Workers of the World*, Abridged ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 21. According to Dubofsky, the violent conflicts in the west at the end of the nineteenth century created the most radical and militant sector of the American labor movement.

America Federation and the Ku Klux Klan, consolidated conservative power and effectively demolished organized labor in Los Angeles for the remainder of the 1920s.

Between 1907-1910, violent industrial relations sunk Los Angeles into a state of war. Strikes by brewery workers, ironworkers and a host of construction tradesmen disrupted business in the city, even as tourists and new homebuyers continued to flow into Los Angeles, responding to the call of the city's boosters.⁹⁷ The Socialist Party was the effective leader of the city's workers, organizing political rallies atop soapbox platforms in the Plaza, in Pershing Square, and on the street corners of downtown Los Angeles.⁹⁸ Frightened by the radical rhetoric and labor's collective power, the M&M pressured the city council to pass a series of ordinances to limit both public assembly and street speeches in the downtown area.

The city of Los Angeles responded to the M&M plea. Between 1903-1908, the city passed a series of anti-free speech and anti-picketing ordinances intended to suppress organized labor in the city. The anti-free speech ordinances required permits for public assemblies and limited "street speakers" to specific streets and parks in the city. Antagonized by the efforts to abrogate their civil rights, Socialist Party leaders defied local authorities, conducting political rallies without permits in the "no speech zones."⁹⁹ The police raided these gatherings and arrested the leaders. Undaunted by police harassment, Socialist leaders moved their meetings to rented

⁹⁷ McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land*, 279-80. Between 1900-1910, the city of Los Angeles grew from 100,000 to 300,000.

⁹⁸ Wild, *Street Meeting: Multiethnic Neighborhoods in Early Twentieth-Century Los Angeles*, 151-55; McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land*, 279-283.

⁹⁹ Wild, *Street Meeting: Multiethnic Neighborhoods in Early Twentieth-Century Los Angeles*, 157.

vacant lots and meeting halls, baiting the police to arrest them on *private* property. The police, in turn, pressured the owners of these sites not to rent to labor groups¹⁰⁰

The Anti-Picketing Ordinance was passed by the city council in July 1910. This new law gave the LAPD the legal grounds to arrest picketing workers in the city. The Anti-Picketing Ordinance was the straw that broke the camel's back.¹⁰¹ Riots broke out in the city and 470 striking laborers were thrown into city jails that summer.¹⁰² In retaliation, striking members of the International Iron Workers Union planted a bomb in the *Los Angeles Times* building on October 1, 1910. The explosion killed twenty people and injured many more. Another blast, occurring shortly after the *Times* bombing, rocked the Llewellyn Iron Works. Police also found bombs set to go off in homes of *Times* publisher Harrison Gray Otis and M&M secretary Felix Zeehandelaar. In response, the *Times* hired a private detective agency to track down the men suspected of setting the bombs. The suspects were found in Nevada. *Times* agents illegally abducted and conveyed the suspects back to Los Angeles to face trial. When the socialist perpetrators plead guilty to the bombings, any sympathy that middle class Progressives held for labor in Los Angeles was lost for decades¹⁰³

The unrest that culminated in the *Times* bombing had a profound impact on political culture in Los Angeles. The public threw its support behind the law and order policies of the city's business leaders. The *Times* and the M&M unleashed a swift and extreme "reign of unmitigated political terror" on the city. The business

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 156; McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land*, 279.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 279-80.

¹⁰² Ibid., 280.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 281; Woods, *The Police in Los Angeles: Reform and Professionalization*, 26.

syndicate imported scores of thugs, professional gunmen, and private detectives to break the workers' popular rebellion. The M&M, elected officials, the LAPD, and conservative civic groups allied, consolidating their political power. Adopting political espionage as standard operating procedure, the business syndicate in Los Angeles routinely planted spies and informants inside factories, workers' groups, and on downtown streets to monitor "radical" activity.¹⁰⁴ Plain clothes policemen and paid informants hung out on park benches in Pershing Square and on the street corners of the no-speech zones listening for anyone who dared engage in political discussion. The Square, which had once been the center of soapbox politics in the city, was subsumed into the no-speech zone after 1910.¹⁰⁵ Thereafter, political conversations in the Square were conducted in whispered tones, as LAPD stoolpigeons and informants lurked around the park searching for troublemakers:¹⁰⁶

One can hear men first in quiet conversation. Voices are raised. Passersby stop and listen. A crowd soon gathers. Words fly thick and fast. Antagonistic ideas clash; convictions are expressed in angry tones. The crowd stirs about as it increases in size. The park officer approaches. The crowd silently and suddenly scatters, only to form again as soon as the officer gets out of sight.¹⁰⁷

The second period of extreme labor unrest that shaped the city's conservative political culture came during World War I and persisted through the mid-1920s. During the war, the radical industrial labor group known as the International Workers of the World, or "Wobblies," assumed a prominent leadership role among the city's

¹⁰⁴ McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land*, 291.

¹⁰⁵ Wild, *Street Meeting: Multiethnic Neighborhoods in Early Twentieth-Century Los Angeles*, chapter 6.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 176, 173

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, chapter 6.

workers. The Wobblies quickly developed a reputation for violence and industrial sabotage. Wobblies staged “quickie strikes” across the state, organized work slow downs, sabotaged production during the war, and took credit for the Market Street Bombing of 1916 in San Francisco.¹⁰⁸ In response to Wobbly-led violence, 160 Wobbly leaders were arrested and imprisoned in California during the war.¹⁰⁹ Newspapers across the state launched a campaign against the group, accusing its members of being “saboteurs, spies and German agents.”¹¹⁰ In Los Angeles, the crusading *Times* ran a series of articles in October 1919 exposing the IWW’s destructive actions.¹¹¹

By the end of the war, there was sufficient public prejudice against the organized labor in California to support the passage of the California Criminal Syndicalism Act. The new law, advanced by two Los Angeles-based organizations, the M&M and the Better America Federation, gave police the authority to arrest individuals associated with groups “which advocated or taught the commission of crime, sabotage, force, violence or terrorism to effect a change in industrial or political control.”¹¹² The legislation, according to George West of the liberal journal *Nation*, indicated a frightening shift to the right in California politics:

Los Angeles indeed sponsored the law and supplied the votes and the purpose which put it on the books. And this was not a hysterical demand on the part of a foolish herd. It was a deliberate policy conceived and executed by Los Angeles employers as organized in the

¹⁰⁸ Hyman Weintraub, "The I.W.W. In California, 1905-1931" (M.A. Thesis, University of California Los Angeles, 1947), 136.

¹⁰⁹ Weintraub, "The I.W.W. In California, 1905-1931," 140.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 146.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 169, 167.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 165, 164.

Better American [sic] Federation and the Merchants and Manufacturers Association. It was strictly an industrial policy, and a belief that legal terrorism would dispose effectively of labor unrest, a belief that they had always held, a belief that they had always practiced up to the limit which public opinion would tolerate, a belief on which they found themselves able to act without restraint as a result of the anti-red hysteria of 1919 and since.¹¹³

In the 1920s, law enforcement authorities across California used the law to arrest anyone associated with labor organizing, but none did so with more zeal than the police in Los Angeles.

In Los Angeles, the police used the new law to regularly harass labor organizers and their families during the 1920s. The LAPD routinely broke into labor union meetings without search warrants, revolvers drawn.¹¹⁴ The police employed private squads of professional gunmen to break up strikes, turning their backs on vigilante attacks on labor groups. In one such infamous incident, the KKK raided a social gathering of IWW families who had assembled to raise money for families who had lost loved ones in a railroad accident. Klansmen clubbed men, women and children and drove them from the hall. Seven children were deliberately scalded by raiders who threw an urn of hot coffee on them. One child had hot grease smeared on his skin. Amidst the mayhem, the raiders abducted nine of the attendees and threw them into the back of a truck. A caravan of cars and trucks drove forty-one miles into a deserted area of the Santa Ana canyon near the town of Oliver, where they forced their prisoners to strip naked. The Klansmen built a roaring bonfire, interrogated

¹¹³ George West, *Nation* (May 30, 1923) quoted in *ibid.*, 164.

¹¹⁴ Louis B. Perry and Richard S. Perry, *A History of the Los Angeles Labor Movement, 1911-1941* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), 190-91.

their prisoners in the cold night air, and intimidated them with gunshots fired into the air. The captives were tarred and feathered before their captors left them in the desert. Local newspapers almost unanimously excused the action of the mob.¹¹⁵ Between 1919-1925, 531 men, most of them members of the Southern California Industrial Workers of the World, were arrested in California under the state's anti-syndicalism law. Of the 264 people who were tried, 164 were convicted and 128 were sentenced to San Quentin for jail terms of up to fourteen years.¹¹⁶

* * *

In January 1924, just months after the IWW-led Maritime Transport Industrial workers dispute had been vanquished, more than 500 members of the Merchant and Manufacturers' Association of Los Angeles gathered at the Biltmore Hotel for the organization's annual dinner.¹¹⁷ The evening was filled with self-congratulations for Los Angeles as "the nation's white spot."¹¹⁸ M&M president Irwin Rice applauded the membership for standing strong on the open shop, and for their "fundamental principles of fair play and fair wages." Speakers that night were quite sure that the M&M's open shop practices had effectively assured the city's laborers that they need not "depend on any affiliation with labor organizations" in order to enjoy prosperous employment. These practices, Rice asserted, had made Los Angeles the envy of

¹¹⁵ Kevin Starr, *Endangered Dreams: The Great Depression in California* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 54; Weintraub, "The I.W.W. In California, 1905-1931," 238.

¹¹⁶ McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land*, 290-91; Weintraub, "The I.W.W. In California, 1905-1931," 182.

¹¹⁷ "Merchant and Manufacturers Association Gathers for Annual Dinner at Biltmore," *Los Angeles Times*, January 29, 1924. A1.

¹¹⁸ "Merchant and Manufacturers Association Gathers for Annual Dinner at Biltmore," *Los Angeles Times*, January 29, 1924. A1.

every city in the nation. According to Rice, more than 700 other cities across the country held Los Angeles up as proof that “open shop conditions [could] be maintained satisfactorily and that the progress of a city can be assisted when the unions and their agitators do not control the situation.”¹¹⁹

White Spot, Red Squad

If Los Angeles was the nation’s “white spot,” it owed much of its reputation to the extra-legal tactics of the Los Angeles police department. For forty years, the LAPD served as the syndicate’s dedicated, anti-labor “defense” force. In 1920, the M&M, Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, and the Better America Federation joined forces to establish a special “intelligence unit” within the LAPD, the city’s infamous Red Squad.¹²⁰ The Red Squad’s mission was to root out radicals before they could start any trouble. The Red Squad was an official unit of the LAPD, but its headquarters was located inside the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce building, where both the M&M and the Better America Federation had their offices, revealing the real center of power in Los Angeles.¹²¹

Between 1923-1938, Captain William “Red” Hynes directed an army of police detectives and a cadre of citizen volunteers who infiltrated “radical” groups and reported on their leaders and plans. According to historian Gerald Woods, William Hynes made a career out of anti-subversion, becoming “one of the best

¹¹⁹ “Merchant and Manufacturers Association Gathers for Annual Dinner at Biltmore,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 29, 1924. A1.

¹²⁰ McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land*, 291.

¹²¹ Sitton, “Urban Politics and Reform in New Deal Los Angeles: The Recall of Mayor Frank L. Shaw,” 24.

known and most widely hated policemen in the United States.”¹²² Throughout the 1920s, Red Squad informants provided the police with dossiers on labor activists, and tipped Hynes off to imminent strikes. Hynes would then inform the *Times*, which would upstage the strike by announcing the event in the press.¹²³

This will be shove Tuesday for the Los Angeles police. The Communists plan to stage another demonstration today...which means that 500 police will be held in readiness. If the communists demonstrate, the policemen will shove and keep on shoving until the parade is disrupted.¹²⁴

“Shove days” were regular occurrences in Los Angeles in the 1920s and 1930s.¹²⁵ Many of the volunteer informants were members of anti-Communist groups such as the American Legion, the pro-Nazi Silver Shirts, as well as the Friends of the New Germany.¹²⁶ The Red Squad’s reliance on right-wing groups like FNG to combat labor activism in the city accounts, in part, for Chief James Davis’ perception of Nazism.

Elected officials and the business syndicate in Los Angeles directed the Red Squad to take all measures necessary to protect their political and commercial interests. Police officers were incentivized with rewards of time off for every arrest that resulted in a felony conviction.¹²⁷ Consequently, the police raided private homes without warrants, baited suspected radicals into breaking the law, and regularly planted evidence

¹²² Woods, *The Police in Los Angeles: Reform and Professionalization*, 60.

¹²³ McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land*, 291.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 291-92.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 292.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 289-94; Woods, *The Police in Los Angeles: Reform and Professionalization*, 60, 137, 69; Sitton, "Urban Politics and Reform in New Deal Los Angeles: The Recall of Mayor Frank L. Shaw," 24; Wild, *Street Meeting: Multiethnic Neighborhoods in Early Twentieth-Century Los Angeles*, 185.

¹²⁷ Woods, *The Police in Los Angeles: Reform and Professionalization*, 141.

to substantiate trumped-up charges.¹²⁸ Anti-vagrancy ordinances turned the unemployed in the city into criminals. Shabbily dressed men were easy marks for Red Squad aggression. Vagrants were regularly stopped on the streets or dragged out of flophouses and arrested for vagrancy. In 1927-1928 alone, 12,000 people were arrested for “vagrancy” in Los Angeles.¹²⁹

The Red Squad quickly developed a reputation for brutal treatment of labor organizers and political radicals. The Red Squad regularly broke up public assemblies in parks, on the streets, and in vacant lots. They prevented labor and left-wing groups from distributing leaflets on the streets and from the air. They raided peaceful political meetings held by private groups in rented halls, and denied street access to protest marchers. In 1933, at the nadir of the Depression, the Red Squad dispersed 500 hunger marchers with tear gas and arrested twelve of the demonstrators. Two weeks later they suppressed a “riot” at the Bureau of Charities. A report of that incident stated that, “desks, chairs, and windows were smashed, inkwells hurled, heads clubbed and lips cracked.” Hynes offered to produce “documentary evidence” that communists had instigated the incident.¹³⁰

Challenges in the courts to the LAPD and the Red Squad’s zealous tactics were ineffective and further revealed the conservative, paranoid culture in the city and in the state. The courts colluded with local law enforcement authorities and the business syndicates across the state. Laws and ordinances that clearly violated the

¹²⁸ Ibid., 143, 140.

¹²⁹ McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land*, 292; Sitton, “Urban Politics and Reform,” 96.

¹³⁰ Hannah Bloom, “The Passing of ‘Red’ Hynes,” *Nation* (August 2, 1952): 91.

first amendment were routinely upheld in California, and private vigilante squads were regularly ignored by the courts.¹³¹ In 1922, the California courts ruled that the fourth amendment was not binding on local police departments. The courts thus sanctioned searches and seizures without warrants and other “door kicking” tactics. The courts also allowed the police to hold people for 48 hours without charges or evidence. In Los Angeles, if the police produced sufficient evidence in the prosecution of a case, local judges did not question how it was acquired. In effect, California court decisions legitimized the LAPD’s gangsterism.¹³²

Protests by respected community leaders against the Red Squad’s brutality proved ineffective. In 1931, a citizens’ committee consisting of one rabbi, two ministers and one member of the Daughters of the American Revolution met with Mayor John Porter and his Chief of Police, Roy Steckel, to protest the Red Squad’s disruption of public meetings. Joint committees of the Los Angeles Bar Association, Los Angeles Ministerial Association, the Methodist Ministers Association, and the Municipal League called on Mayor Porter to rein in Hynes, arguing that the police were acting as judge and jury; and, in 1932, the Southern Methodist Ministers Conference of Los Angeles expressed its concern that the Red Squad was the vanguard of fascism in Los Angeles.¹³³ Not only did these protests fall on deaf ears, but a smear campaign launched by the *Los Angeles Times* against these community leaders impugned them as “liberals” and “Communists.” The smear campaigns

¹³¹ Starr, *Endangered Dreams: The Great Depression in California*, 43.

¹³² Woods, *The Police in Los Angeles: Reform and Professionalization*, 140.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 144.

effectively neutralized the opposition, as no one could afford the taint of the Communist label.¹³⁴

For fifteen years, the Red Squad “presided over Los Angeles like an elite SS guard,” Carey McWilliams later wrote. Uninhibited by laws or courts, the Red Squad operated like fascist shock troops, McWilliams recalled, violating citizens’ civil rights to secure the political hegemony of its benefactors.¹³⁵ While other cities in America dissolved their Red Squads by 1919 and adopted Progressive reforms to mitigate labor unrest in the 1920s, America’s “white spot” did neither until 1938.¹³⁶ The Los Angeles police repressed radicals with the full endorsement of the Los Angeles Police Commission, as Commissioner Mark A. Price asserted,

The more the police beat them [Communists] up and wreck their headquarters, the better... Communists have no constitutional rights and I won’t listen to anyone who defends them.¹³⁷

Los Angeles’ nativist progressivism and obstinate defense of the open shop justified the Red Squad through the 1920s and most of the 1930s. In 1938, a liberal backlash against the corruption in city politics brought a recall election of Mayor Frank Shaw, ushering in a new era of progressive reform in Los Angeles. The new mayor, Fletcher Bowron fired Chief James Davis and dissolved the Red Squad.

* * *

In 1933, the leaders of LA’s “business syndicate” took pride in the city’s reputation as the defender of the open shop in America. The business cabal that

¹³⁴ Ibid., 144-5.

¹³⁵ McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land*, 291.

¹³⁶ Thomas Sitton, *Los Angeles Transformed: Fletcher Bowron's Urban Reform Revival, 1938-1953* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), 41.

¹³⁷ Woods, *The Police in Los Angeles: Reform and Professionalization*, 143.

controlled the city supported the LAPD's unethical and repressive tactics against labor organizing in defense of "America's white spot." Unlike other parts of the country where trade unionism had stronger roots, Los Angeles continued to employ strong-arm police brutality and terrorism to repress labor activism.¹³⁸ That brutality, according to historian Kevin Starr, actually backfired on the business syndicate. Instead of repressing labor activism into oblivion, police brutality radicalized labor in Los Angeles, creating a self-fulfilling prophecy of "radical" violence in the city.¹³⁹ Hence, when Leon Lewis came calling in September 1933, Chief James Davis was little concerned about Nazis in town. For forty years, Los Angeles had been embroiled in a bloody struggle with radicals. FNG did not pose a problem for Davis. After all, weren't Nazis fighting the same enemy he was?

Jews in "The Nation's White Spot"

When Chief Davis dismissed Leon Lewis and his concerns about Nazis in the city, Davis was not just trumpeting of the city's anti-labor party line, he was also reminding Lewis of his liminal status as a Jew in America. Davis' reference to "the Jews of the World" as a people with a "strong racial bond" reverberated with the widely held antisemitic prejudices of the day, and Lewis' response revealed just how socially marginalized American Jews were by those attitudes. In order to understand the implications that Davis' dismissal of Lewis had on the covert nature of Jewish response

¹³⁸ McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land*, 294.

¹³⁹ Starr, *Endangered Dreams: The Great Depression in California*, 27; McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land*, 279-280.

to Nazis in the city, it is important to understand Protestant dominance of “the nation’s white spot” and Jewish status within it.

A Cohesive, Christian Community, 1876-1920

At 1920, Los Angeles was the “whitest” city in the United States.¹⁴⁰ While East Coast and Midwestern cities in the United States had been transformed by European immigrants in the preceding forty years, Los Angeles had not. European immigrants did not flock to southern California in nearly the same numbers. In fact, only 25% of the population of Los Angeles was foreign-born at 1920, the smallest percentage of any of the five largest U.S. cities.¹⁴¹ Los Angeles owed its “whiteness” to an unprecedented internal migration of Midwesterners who poured into the city between 1880-1920.¹⁴² Lured west by the public relations campaign sponsored by real estate speculators and the railroads, Los Angeles grew to become the fifth largest city in the United States during this forty year period, as hundreds of thousands of “old stock Protestants” from the plains poured into southern California.¹⁴³

In the forty years between 1880-1920, hundreds of southern Californian communities were “conjured” into existence by real estate speculators. With the completion of the Southern Pacific railroad in 1876, seasoned real estate speculators

¹⁴⁰ Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1930*, 1; Shana Bernstein, "Building Bridges at Home in a Time of Global Conflict: Interracial Cooperation and the Fight for Civil Rights in Los Angeles, 1933-1954" (Dissertation, Stanford University, 2003), 32-38.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 37.

¹⁴² “Table 16. Population of the 100 Largest Urban Places: 1930.” U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1998. <http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0027/tab16.txt> .

¹⁴³ Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1930*, 1, 18-19, 79, 189; McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land*, 157-164.

from the land booms of Kansas City, Wichita, Minneapolis, and Seattle rushed into Los Angeles to make their fortunes and bought up large tracts of land in southern California.¹⁴⁴ Speculators raised brightly colored banners over virgin subdivided acreage to announce the coming of another new town. They plotted out new towns with streets, sidewalks and curbs, churches, schools and universities even before a single lot was sold.

In preparation for incoming homebuyers, home sites were staked-off and truckloads of brick, sand, and lumber were often dumped on lots marked “Sold” to give the impression that settlement had already begun. With the stage set, developers would announce the date for their land auctions. Giddy buyers lined up at railroad depots where excursion trains whisked them to the site. Greeted by brass bands and offered a free, catered lunch with wine and dessert, anxious bidders competed to buy the “remaining” lots. At the end of a day of frenzied land buying, everyone was happy: the railroads had packed their Pullman cars, the developers had made huge profits, and a new town would soon fill with new labor and consumers.¹⁴⁵ Dozens of cities in southern California like Ontario, Pasadena, and Glendale were planned and built by speculators and then sold off, house-by-house, to settlers from the Midwest and northeast. Between 1887-1889 alone, over sixty new towns encompassing more than seventy-nine thousand acres were so incarnated, including the city of Hollywood, one sunny day in May of 1903.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land*, 118-19

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 118-19, 134; chapter 7.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, chapter 8; 153

If the promise of a better material life pulled these émigrés to the last open corner of America's western frontier, the opportunity to re-establish their "cohesive Christian community" *pushed* them from their Midwestern homes.¹⁴⁷ The white, Protestant Midwesterners who flocked to Los Angeles at the turn of the twentieth century were cultural refugees. Fleeing from the problems that immigration, urbanization, and secularization imposed on their Midwestern communities, Kansans, Missourians and Iowans came to Los Angeles with a romanticized memory of a pastoral American past, a "nostalgia for an America that no longer exist[ed]..." but one they yearned to recover.¹⁴⁸ These newcomers to southern California were "voluntaristic Protestants," Christians for whom the church was the center of their social, cultural, and political lives as well as their spiritual and moral ones. Feeling the distinct loss of Christian life and community, they came to southern California to "build a community which would perpetuate American Protestantism based on the voluntaristic system which was declining in communities to the east."¹⁴⁹

The new suburbs of southern California served voluntaristic Protestants' utopian mission well.¹⁵⁰ Voluntary Protestantism emphasized cohesive community and consequently, these domestic immigrants migrated to southern California with their neighbors and resettling together in the newly laid out suburbs of Los

¹⁴⁷ Gregory H. Singleton, *Religion in the City of Angels: American Protestant Culture and Urbanization*, Los Angeles, 1850-1930 (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1979), 51.

¹⁴⁸ McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land*, 179.

¹⁴⁹ Singleton, *Religion in the City of Angels: American Protestant Culture and Urbanization*, Los Angeles, 1850-1930, 51.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 52.

Angeles.¹⁵¹ Redlands, California drew newcomers from Chicago and became known as the “Chicago colony,” and Bell Gardens was where lower-class Okies settled.¹⁵² Through residential covenants, restricted resale practices, and church membership, the new Christian communities of southern California ensured residential and social cohesion.¹⁵³ The new communities also offered their founding families the rare social and political opportunity to establish communal culture according to their Christian values and vision of American life because the new communities were literally *new*. Thus, Midwesterners settled in new towns just waiting for them to build schools, churches, and civic organizations. The open frontier of southern California provided the space for the recreation of “Christian village” life.

The colonization pattern of Los Angeles had its benefits and its liabilities. The tribal pattern of settlement created an “archipelago of island communities on the land,” ethnically, racially, or religiously homogenous, but isolated one from another.¹⁵⁴ On the one hand, this settlement pattern provided the insularity that these newcomers craved. Anchoring their lives around their churches, the political and social culture of white Protestant Los Angeles was intimately tied to church membership. According to historian Gregory Singleton, “In no city of the same size

¹⁵¹ Ibid., xv.

¹⁵² Ibid., 53-5; McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land*, chapter XV.

¹⁵³ Singleton, *Religion in the City of Angels: American Protestant Culture and Urbanization, Los Angeles, 1850-1930*, 52-53.

¹⁵⁴ McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land*, 314-315.

or larger, and in few that were smaller, were religious organizations and attitudes so closely associated with the political, economic and social life of the community.”¹⁵⁵

On the other hand, the exclusivity of Protestant culture and settlement in southern California isolated and alienated minority groups who also lived in the city. By 1900, Jews and Catholics who had held positions of prominence and power in the city prior to the arrival of the new Protestant majority lost their positions of civic influence. These minority groups turned inward to take care of their own while the new white, Protestant majority rose to dominate the city’s political and social life. By 1920, local city councils, school boards, and civic and cultural organizations in Los Angeles became an extension of the voluntaristic Protestant church communities in southern California. While only 16% of Los Angeles’ population belonged to these congregations, 93% of the elected officials, 87% of the appointed officials and 98% of the region’s school board members were also members of a voluntaristic Protestant church. According to Singleton, it would have been difficult to find an elected official, appointed office holder, or candidate who was not a member of a voluntaristic church between 1900 and 1920 in Los Angeles.¹⁵⁶

Jewish Life Transformed, 1900-1930

It should come as no surprise that Jewish community in Los Angeles was also transformed by the influx of Protestant Midwesterners at the end of the nineteenth

¹⁵⁵ Singleton, *Religion in the City of Angels: American Protestant Culture and Urbanization, Los Angeles, 1850-1930*, 119.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 71-72, 83.

century. These Christian newcomers carried with them nationalistic prejudices that shunted the city's Jews to the margins of the cohesive, Christian community they sought to establish. By 1900, the Jews of Los Angeles were socially and politically marginalized.

Immigration, urbanization, and secularization created significant social and political change to white, Protestant American culture at the turn of the century. The American nationalist discourse that evolved between 1880-1920 betrayed their status anxiety and their antipathy towards the newcomers who threatened "their" America. Consequently, American nationalism took on racist overtones during these decades, and reconstructed American identity as white, Christian and native born. American nationalism viewed Jews as interlopers in Christian society, which cast Jews as racially inferior foreigners who threatened Christian values and morality.

New antipathies towards Jews in the United States during these decades were ubiquitous in American culture.¹⁵⁷ In literature, Jews were routinely portrayed as villains. According to a 1913 Anti-Defamation League publication,

Whenever a producer wishes to depict a betrayer of public trust, a hard-boiled usurious moneylender, a crooked gambler...a depraved firebug, a white slaver or other villain of one kind or another, the actor is directed to represent himself as a Jew.¹⁵⁸

In politics, politicians found an easy scapegoat in Jews as the international bankers responsible for the wild boom-bust cycle of the late nineteenth century. In the election of 1896, both the Democratic and Populist Party platforms declared that, "the

¹⁵⁷ Michael N. Dobkowski, *The Tarnished Dream: The Basis of American Anti-Semitism* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979), chapter 2.

¹⁵⁸ Anti-Defamation League quoted in *ibid.*, 68.

influence of European moneychangers has been more potent in shaping legislation than the voice of the American People.”¹⁵⁹ By 1920, Jews could just as easily be vilified as Marxist revolutionaries intent on *destroying* capitalism as international financiers who *controlled* it.

Cultural watchdogs also warned of the insidious threat that Jewish control over theater and film posed to Christian culture and morality in America. Imagining Jewish theatrical producers as sexual deviants, Jewish control over the stage became a metaphor for the rape of American culture at the turn of the twentieth century. Salacious subject matter on the stage and the deflowering of American actresses by Jewish theatrical producers violated the Christian virtues of Victorian America. By the 1910s, when motion pictures became popular, similar assaults were levied against Hollywood’s Jews and the threat that “foreign control” over such a powerful medium posed to American culture.¹⁶⁰

In Los Angeles, nativist antisemitism edged Jews out of the political and social positions in the city at the end of nineteenth century.¹⁶¹ Prior to 1876, Jews in Los Angeles had been prosperous and influential businessmen in “Cowtown.”¹⁶² Jews were the first bankers in the city, helping to fund commercial development.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁹ Robert Michael, *A Concise History of Anti-Semitism in America* (New York: Rowan and Littlefield, 2005), 93.

¹⁶⁰ Steven Alan Carr, *Hollywood and Anti-Semitism: A Cultural History up to World War II* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), chapter 1.

¹⁶¹ Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 103.

¹⁶² Michael E. Engh, *Frontier Faiths: Church, Temple, and Synagogue in Los Angeles, 1846-1888* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992); Neil C. Sandberg, *Jewish Life in Los Angeles: A Window to Tomorrow* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1986), 26-7.

¹⁶³ Sandberg, *Jewish Life in Los Angeles: A Window to Tomorrow* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1986), 26-7; Max Vorspan and Lloyd P. Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1970), chapters 1-2.

Jewish merchants owned the city's leading retail, grocery and department stores. Jewish businessmen held offices in the Merchant and Manufacturers' Association in its early years. Fifteen of the Chamber of Commerce's founding firms were Jewish businesses, and Jewish banker Isaias Hellman was one of the three civic leaders who donated the land for the city's first university, the University of Southern California in 1880.¹⁶⁴

Socially, Jews had been respected members of the community as well. The city's first elected sheriff, Emil Harris was a Jew.¹⁶⁵ Jews were members of the Masons and the Odd Fellows, and their children were invited to society functions.¹⁶⁶ Twelve of the founding 125 members of the California Club (1887) were Jews.¹⁶⁷ Jewish-Christian relations in "Cowntown" were cordial. Christian ministers and lay leaders were in attendance at the opening of the city's first synagogue, the Temple Street Synagogue, in 1867.¹⁶⁸ In 1869, the *Los Angeles Daily News* ran an article entitled, "A 1869 Jewish Standard for Gentile Behavior" that commended Jews for their "commercial integrity and their studied isolation from prevalent vices of gambling and inebriation." It held up Jewish thrift, propriety, and virtue in public

¹⁶⁴ Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 75, 81, 82, 93.

¹⁶⁵ Norton B. Stern, ed. *The Jews of Los Angeles: Urban Pioneers* (Los Angeles, CA: Southern California Jewish Historical Society, 1981).

¹⁶⁶ Sandberg, *Jewish Life in Los Angeles: A Window to Tomorrow*, 26-7.

¹⁶⁷ Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 81.

¹⁶⁸ "A 1869 Jewish Standard for Gentile Behavior," quoted in Stephen Sass, ed. *Jewish Los Angeles: A Guide* (Los Angeles, CA: Jewish Federation Council of Greater Los Angeles, 1982), 9.

politics, linguistic skills, literacy and Jewish women's chastity as a model for the gentile community.¹⁶⁹

By 1900, Jews were no longer welcome in the civic or social organizations their parents had helped to establish.¹⁷⁰ In 1897, the California Club, which had been founded by Jews and Christians in 1887, adopted a restrictive covenant excluding Jews, and by 1920, the University of Southern California, which owed its land to Isaias Hellman, adopted a quota, limiting Jewish student enrollment.¹⁷¹ An article in the *Los Angeles Times* from 1897 justified social exclusion as a defense of Christian community:

With the growth of Los Angeles as a metropolis, has come a demand for social clubs, as are found in all large cities. No social club will be a thorough success which accepts anyone as a member who merely dresses decently and is able to pay the dues...No person should be admitted as a member of the club whom the average member would refuse to admit as a guest in his home...Only such clubs as are exclusive in regard to the character of the members can expected to be permanently prosperous.¹⁷²

Over the course of the next twenty years, Jews (along with other racial and religious minorities) disappeared from positions of political and social prominence in Los Angeles.¹⁷³

Changes in Los Angeles' social and political structure at the turn of the century also brought changes to the Jewish community in the city. By 1900,

¹⁶⁹ Stephan Sass, ed. *A Guide to Jewish Los Angeles*, 9; Norton B. Stern, ed. *The Jews of Los Angeles: Urban Pioneers* (Los Angeles, CA: Southern California Jewish Historical Society, 1981).

¹⁷⁰ Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 103, 36.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 95.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, chapter 8; *LA Times*, November 8, 1897 quoted in *ibid.*, 95.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 103, 135-136; Singleton, *Religion in the City of Angels: American Protestant Culture and Urbanization, Los Angeles, 1850-1930*, 134.

escalating social discrimination had prompted the descendants of the city's most prominent Jewish families to leave Los Angeles, many of them resettling in San Francisco.¹⁷⁴ The remaining community withdrew to their own neighborhoods, schools and social groups.¹⁷⁵ Los Angeles' small Jewish community of 2,500 supported one reform temple, one orthodox synagogue, three B'nai B'rith lodges, the Hebrew Benevolent Society, and several social clubs during the period.¹⁷⁶ Excluded from the prestigious California Club, the Jews of Los Angeles established their own social club, the Concordia Club in 1891. The Concordia Club was the "inner-sanctum" of high Jewish society in Los Angeles. Its ballroom, reading room, and card room provided for the "social and mental culture" of the community, and the club's Christmas party gained the reputation as one of the finest children's events in the city.¹⁷⁷

Another factor that contributed to decline in social and political prominence in Los Angeles was the influx of approximately 70,000 Eastern European Jews to Los Angeles between 1910-1930.¹⁷⁸ Two distinct groups of Eastern European Jews settled in LA during this time, establishing their own residential and social colonies in the suburban archipelago. The first were working class Jews from the East Coast and Midwest. These Eastern European immigrants had arrived in the United States ten to

¹⁷⁴ Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 104.

¹⁷⁵ Sass, *Jewish Los Angeles: A Guide*, 10.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁷⁷ Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 94, 143-145. Hillcrest Country Club replaced the Concordia Club in the 1920s as the city's Jewish social club. See Sandberg, *Jewish Life in Los Angeles: A Window to Tomorrow*.

¹⁷⁸ Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 135-136, 287. The Jewish population of Los Angeles was estimated to be 65,000 in 1927 and 130,000 in 1941; Sass, *Jewish Life in Los Angeles: A Window to Tomorrow*, 10.

twenty years earlier. Having worked in the industrial slums of America's largest cities, they too were drawn to southern California by the promise of a cleaner, drier climate, plentiful jobs, and affordable housing.

These working class Jews settled in the Boyle Heights neighborhood of Los Angeles, just east of downtown. They brought with them the socialist and communist values that were prominent within the Jewish working class. Boyle Heights, therefore, became the center of labor union activism in Los Angeles in the 1920s and 1930s.¹⁷⁹ Twenty-one different political organizations thrived in the neighborhood during the 1930s, among them Labor Zionists, Socialists, Trotskyites, the anti-Soviet Communist Workman's Circle, and the pro-Soviet International Workers Order. Radical groups argued their cause at Ginsberg's Vegetarian Restaurant at the corner of Brooklyn and Soto, in the heart of Boyle Heights. Vehement political debate was central to Jewish street life in Boyle Heights.¹⁸⁰ One indication of how dominant Jews were in Los Angeles' unions between the wars -- union meetings were often conducted in Yiddish.¹⁸¹

The other group of Eastern European Jews that settled in southern California at this time was the Jewish entrepreneurs of the motion picture industry. This group settled first in the city of Hollywood in the 1910s, but eventually dispersed to the west side communities of Culver City and Beverly Hills.¹⁸² The Jews of the motion picture industry created their own social and cultural colony. Until the 1930s, the

¹⁷⁹ Ellie Kahn, "Meet Me at Brooklyn and Soto: A Celebration of the Jews of East Los Angeles," (Teaneck, NJ: Ergo Media, 1996).

¹⁸⁰ Ibid,

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 118.

Jews of Hollywood were socially isolated from Protestant society because of their “loose morals,” and from the “downtown” Jews as well, who snubbed the “movie Jews” to avoid the disreputable stigma of the movie business.¹⁸³

In the 1920s Los Angeles, the Jews of Boyle Heights and the Jews of Hollywood were viewed with consternation by certain segments of Christian Los Angeles. For the city’s ultra-conservative business leaders, the labor activists of Boyle Heights posed a direct threat to free enterprise. For the city’s “morality police,” the Jews of the motion picture industry were subverting American society with their decadent lifestyle. When Henry Ford launched his infamous national campaign warning Americans about the insidious threat that the “international Jew” posed to America, local Protestant ministers in Los Angeles included Jews as part of their broader crusade against foreigners in defending their cohesive, Christian community.¹⁸⁴

The leader of Los Angeles’ “morality police” was “Fightin’ Bob Shuler,” minister of the Trinity Church in downtown Los Angeles.¹⁸⁵ Shuler was the “Savonarola of Los Angeles,” defending the nativist, Christian moral agenda from the insidious cultural influences of Jews, Catholics, Blacks and immigrants. Foreshadowing Father Coughlin’s success as a radio minister, Shuler used the airwaves in a weekly radio program during the 1920s to assail Jews and Catholics as the gangsters and vice lords in his weekly radio broadcasts and in his monthly

¹⁸³ Neal Gabler, *An Empire of Their Own* (New York: Anchor Books, 1988), 271-276.

¹⁸⁴ Neal Baldwin, *Henry Ford and the Jews: The Mass Production of Hate* (New York: Public Affairs, 2001.)

¹⁸⁵ Robert Salley, "Activities of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in Southern California, 1921-1925" (M.A. Thesis, University of Southern California, 1963), 113.

publication, *Bob Shuler's Magazine* (circulation ~ 11,000). Shuler accused Jews of paying off public officials in order to maintain their prostitution rings, bootlegging, and other criminal activities and maligned the “millionaire Jews” who were responsible for “debauching the whole nation with suggestive and licentious films.”¹⁸⁶

During the 1920s, LA’s “morality police” led the campaign against vice, corruption, crime and sin. Activist Protestant ministers fanned the flames of nativist antisemitism in Los Angeles, marginalizing the city’s Jews. By 1933, when Leon Lewis shared his concerns about Nazi activity in the city with police Chief James Davis, his appeal was undermined by the same antisemitism promulgated by Nazis themselves. Moreover, Davis’ rebuke reminded Lewis that his concerns were not truly “American.” In dismissing Lewis, it was clear that the Jews of Los Angeles were on their own to combat Nazis in Los Angeles.

Playing Politics in “The Nation’s White Spot”

Leon Lewis’ meeting with Chief James laid bare the challenges that the Jews of Los Angeles would face in fighting Nazism in the city. In 1933, American Jews had few political allies and even fewer political options for fighting insurgent Nazism. As an attorney, Leon Lewis understood that American jurisprudence did not yet extend civil protections from libel to groups. He also understood legal approaches for

¹⁸⁶ Bruce Henstell, *Sunshine and Wealth: Los Angeles In the Twenties and Thirties* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1984) 63; Bob Shuler quoted in Carr, *Hollywood and Anti-Semitism: A Cultural History up to World War II*, 115-16.

protection would only enflame their adversaries because such suits implicitly challenged their adversaries' First Amendment rights. That was a political risk Leon Lewis was not willing to take.

It was Los Angeles' own peculiar political culture that suggested the best strategy for resisting insurgent Nazism in Los Angeles: political espionage. Political spying among rival groups was standard operating procedure in Los Angeles in the 1920s and 1930s. Unlike other large U.S. cities at the time, where political rivalries broke down along class and ethnic lines, local politics in Los Angeles broke down along single issues, and therefore, adversaries resorted to espionage to monitor each other. The ultra-conservative civic group, Better America Federation, for example, had an operating budget of \$24,000 in 1933 to pay informants to infiltrate liberal and left-wing groups on the pretext that these groups were subversive.¹⁸⁷ The BAF paid high school students to report on subversive activities among students and teachers. It sent members of the KKK, American Legion, Silver Shirts, and Friends of the New Germany to infiltrate and disrupt Communist Party meetings.¹⁸⁸ According to Carey McWilliams, the Better America Federation paid "a prominent Los Angeles clubwoman" for *twenty years* to sit on the boards of liberal organizations and report back on those groups' activities. The information collected by the BAF was turned over to local, state, and federal authorities who investigated those groups as suspected "radicals."¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁷ Budget of the Better America Federation, 1933-34, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 12, Folder 5.

¹⁸⁸ McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land*, 292.

¹⁸⁹ McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land*, 291.

In the 1920s and 1930s, the Los Angeles police department, the “business syndicate,” and elected officials regularly employed political informants to monitor *each other*. Mayor John Porter (1929-1933) maintained a crew of personal informants, watchdogs, and amateur snoops.¹⁹⁰ Porter placed his spies in the city attorney’s office and in the LAPD.¹⁹¹ His choice of informants included men of questionable reputation, including the volatile and violent police detective, Deighton McDonald Jones. Jones had been fired from the force in the 1920s only to be rehired by Porter to inform on the LAPD. Porter’s political allies were issued captains’ badges to legitimize their “investigations” for the mayor without the consent of then Police Chief Richard Steckel. Porter’s successor, Frank Shaw, also employed private informants and spies. Shaw’s brother, Joseph, “managed” his brother’s relationships with organized crime, accepting kickbacks from vice lords and planting informants on the grand jury.¹⁹² Under both Porter (1929-1933) and Shaw (1933-1938), hundreds of private citizens were given official status as police agents, ostensibly to get them off the hook for minor infractions like traffic accidents. These badges also legitimized “private citizen cops” who were authorized to investigate the mayor’s enemies and report on their findings.¹⁹³

Thus, political espionage was common in Los Angeles. So much so, that even its own police commissioners concluded that Los Angeles was “a ‘racket-infested’ city, almost as much as Chicago, [w]here the racket wears the cloak of police

¹⁹⁰ Woods, *The Police in Los Angeles: Reform and Professionalization*, 138.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 173; Sitton, "Urban Politics and Reform in New Deal Los Angeles: The Recall of Mayor Frank L. Shaw," 113.

¹⁹³ Woods, *The Police in Los Angeles: Reform and Professionalization*, 73, 137, 165;

authority, and many of the racketeers wear police badges.”¹⁹⁴ In 1940, a Senate subcommittee investigating civil rights violations in Los Angeles concluded that underhanded political tactics were commonplace in Los Angeles. The subcommittee reported that the city, the LAPD, the Better America Federation and the M&M had illegally employed informants to disrupt trade unions, provoke violence, and ferret out “reds.” These same forces, the Committee reported, had consistently “...assume[d] [a] conspiratorial pattern of malfeasance.”¹⁹⁵

The decision by the Jews of Los Angeles to adopt a covert fact-finding operation to combat Nazism in Los Angeles was the product of the city’s own political culture. Political espionage in Los Angeles in the 1930s was hardly something that upset the city’s politicians. Within this political culture, the decision by a handful of Los Angeles’ wealthiest Jews to launch their own undercover operation was well within the bounds of normal for Los Angeles. During the 1930s, “Hollywood’s spies” were just one more informant group in a city rife with political spies.¹⁹⁶

Conclusion

The Protestant Midwesterners who flowed into southern California between 1880-1920 transformed Los Angeles into one of the most conservative cities in the nation. The city’s three political orthodoxies -- nativist progressivism, the open shop,

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 135.

¹⁹⁵ McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land*, 283.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 291.

and Protestant morality -- translated into repressive municipal politics, intense antagonism of trade unionism, and social exclusion of racial and religious minorities by the city's "morality police."¹⁹⁷ When Leon Lewis approached LAPD Chief James Davis with evidence of Nazi activity in the city, Davis' response reflected the prejudices and political priorities of the Protestant majority that dominated "the nation's white spot." After all, Davis served the interests of the city's power elite who had endorsed fascist-style tactics over the previous forty years to repress the very "radicals" in Los Angeles that Nazis had battled in Germany. If some Los Angelenos were appalled by Nazism in 1933, it wasn't necessarily because of its antisemitism or even its fascist policies. For them, Nazism was only objectionable because it was a foreign ideology. Hitler's strident position against Communists and his antisemitic propaganda appealed to some Americans. Within just a few months of the Lewis-Davis meeting, the first of hundreds of homegrown fascist groups would begin to emerge in Los Angeles to combat the Jewish-Bolshevik threat to their city. In the 1930s, California, and specifically Los Angeles, was a hotbed of far-right political activism.¹⁹⁸

The Jews of Los Angeles were on their own to combat these Nazi-influenced groups in the city in 1933. With few political allies and even fewer viable defensive tactics available to them, the Jews of Los Angeles chose to fight Nazism covertly. Ironically, their decision to employ political informants was fully compatible with the political norms of a city whose local police force had its own secret "intelligence

¹⁹⁷ Woods, *The Police in Los Angeles: Reform and Professionalization*, 34.

¹⁹⁸ Starr, *Endangered Dreams: The Great Depression in California*, chapter 7.

squad,” whose mayors spied on grand juries, and whose citizen groups regularly employed informants to keep tabs on their rivals. Spying on Nazis and Nazi-influenced groups in Los Angeles at 1933 was hardly remarkable. In a city where political espionage was standard operating procedure, Hollywood’s spies were just playing politics the way politics was played in the “nation’s white spot.”

Chapter Two
Nazis in Los Angeles: Not Just a Jewish Problem

In the spring of 1933 a new political organization appeared in cities across the country, the Friends of the New Germany (FNG). Publicly, the new group was dedicated to defending the new political regime Germany from the “lies” its members claimed American Jews were spreading about Nazism. Secretly, however, the group was intent on bringing the “Hitler Revolution” to the United States. In Los Angeles, FNG began its campaign by hosting free, public lectures that promoted Nazism and distributing Nazi literature throughout the city. FNG leaders in Los Angeles also began courting American veterans to join their organization. Suspicious of the new group, a self-selected cohort of veterans from the downtown post of the Disabled American Veterans of the World War (DAV) launched an independent inquiry into the new group to learn more. Directed behind the scenes by a Jewish member of the DAV, Leon Lewis, the veterans insinuated themselves in the Friends of the New Germany to find out whether the group was friend or foe.

This is how Hollywood’s spies began. It did not involve the Jews of Los Angeles or Hollywood at all. It was an independent inquiry conducted by a small group of U.S. veterans in Los Angeles whose leader happened to be Jewish. None of the original DAV volunteers were professional investigators, none of them were Jewish, and none were motivated by Nazi antisemitism. They were all private citizens, who, like Leon Lewis, suspected that the Friends of the New Germany threatened democracy in America. When the DAV volunteers began their investigation, they

never expected that they would uncover a conspiracy of the magnitude they found – a private militia training in street fighting, secret meetings with German officials, and plans for an insurrection. The DAV volunteers lacked the investigative experience, funding, and political cover they needed to effectively combat the problem. Leon Lewis worked feverishly behind the scenes to find those resources. Rebuffed by the chief of the Los Angeles police in his appeal for additional police attention to the Nazi problem, it took Lewis six months to secure the private funding and political cover that transformed the DAV volunteers into *Hollywood's* spies. In the meantime, the DAV investigators submitted daily reports to Lewis documenting FNG's plans to bring Nazism to the United States. This chapter presents the rather unexpected origins of Hollywood's spies, who they were and what they found, and explicates the challenge that Nazism posed to the Jews of Los Angeles in 1933.

National Socialism Comes to Los Angeles, 1933

Origins

Nazism was transported to the United States in the 1920s in the hearts and minds of hundreds of German émigrés who were among the 485,000 German nationals who migrated to the United States between the wars.¹⁹⁹ The majority of these German immigrants were single young men between the ages of 21 and 35 who had been displaced by the grave economic depression that hit Germany after World War I. Most of them were semi- or unskilled workers who came to the United States

¹⁹⁹ Sander A. Diamond, *The Nazi Movement in the States, 1924-1941* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), 379.

seeking economic opportunities that were not available in post-war Germany. Demoralized by Germany's defeat in the war and embittered by the severe post-war depression that forced their emigration, they came to the United States seeking better financial opportunity.²⁰⁰

The newcomers did not integrate easily into established German-American communities in the United States. The new arrivals were often members of the new National Socialist Democratic Workers Party (NSDAP) in Germany and subscribed to the Nazi idea that they were not emigrants; rather, saw themselves as Germans living in *Deutschum*, "Greater Germany," abroad. German-Americans, on the other hand, saw themselves as Americans. Consequently, the newcomers isolated themselves from the German-American community and from Anglo-American society. Believing that only racial Germans were worthy of National Socialism, these German immigrants formed their own distinctive social clubs and political groups. United in their common faith in National Socialism, they waited for "*der tag*," the day they would return home to a new and redeemed Germany.²⁰¹

The ascension of the Nazi Party to power in Germany in 1933, however, changed their purpose in America. Previously considering themselves sojourners in the United States, some of these German nationals now assumed the responsibility to unify the millions of "racial Germans" in America to the Nazi cause.²⁰² In July 1933, delegates from the disparate Nazi cells from across the country convened in Chicago

²⁰⁰ Diamond, 97-98; Susan Canedy, *America's Nazis, A Democratic Dilemma: A History of the German American Bund* (Menlo Park, CA: Markgraf Publications Group, 1990).

²⁰¹ Diamond, 102, 105, 106.

²⁰² Diamond, 125.

and founded the Nazi movement in the United States.²⁰³ Among the delegates to the Chicago conference were four pro-Nazi German nationals from Los Angeles: Paul Themlitz, owner of the newly opened Aryan Bookstore in downtown Los Angeles; his partner, Hans Winterhalder, a former first lieutenant in the German imperial army during the war; and two other former German army veterans from Los Angeles' German émigré community, Herman Schwinn and Robert Pape.²⁰⁴ Schwinn had arrived in Los Angeles in 1925 and was the only naturalized citizen among the four(see Appendix 1: Photographs.)²⁰⁵ Robert Pape had been a career officer in the German army, serving from 1914 to 1927, and was a member of the Nazi Party Pape arrived in Los Angeles in early 1932, and he maintained relationships with Nazi Party members in other American cities. Pape had held several "street-walking" jobs as a door-to-door salesman, his most recent as a "washing machine solicitor."²⁰⁶

The convening delegates (45 in all) represented various disparate Nazi cells from across the country. At the conference they joined forces, consolidating into a

²⁰³ Diamond, chapter 4.

²⁰⁴ German-American Alliance Trial Transcript, Themlitz testimony, (hereafter, Transcript), CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 4, Folder 8; Report 37, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 5. On Themlitz, see, Transcript, Themlitz testimony, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 4, Folder 8. On Schwinn, see "Hitler Likened to Roosevelt," *Los Angeles Examiner*, January 17, 1934; Transcript, Schwinn testimony, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 4, Folder 9; Transcript, Winterhalder testimony, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 4, Folder 9; On Winterhalder, see Transcript, Winterhalder testimony, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 4, Folder 9. It is not clear whether Winterhalder was a co-owner or a worker in the bookshop. In his testimony at the German-American Alliance trial, John Schmidt said he initially thought that Winterhalder was the co-owner (see Report 14, September 13, 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 5) but then testified that Themlitz was the sole owner (see, Transcript, Schmidt testimony, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 4, Folder 5). Other cities with chapters of the Friends of the New Germany also had "Aryan Bookstores" which operated has the front for the organization, just as it did in Los Angeles.

²⁰⁵ Transcript, Winterhalder testimony, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 4, Folder 9.

²⁰⁶ Transcript, Pape testimony, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 4, Folder 7; "Attempts to Block Justice are Made in Three Courts," (newspaper name not given), January 19, 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 3, Folder 37; Report 36, September 14, 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 5; Transcript, Pape testimony, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 4, Folder 6.

single, national organization called *Der Freunde des Neun Deutschland*, the Friends of the New Germany.²⁰⁷ FNG's mission was to combat the truth about the New Germany in light of the scurrilous lies it claimed Jews in America were spreading about the Third Reich and its mistreatment of German Jews. The leader of the new organization, Hans Spanknoebel, was a German national. Earlier that year Spanknoebel had traveled to Germany to secure Nazi Party chief Rudolph Hess's blessing as the official *fuehrer* of the Nazi Party in the United States.²⁰⁸ Spanknoebel modeled the Friends of the New Germany after the Nazi Party. The new group employed strong-arm tactics to achieve its objectives, enforced by its own uniformed storm troops that adhered to the *fuehrerprinzip*, Nazism's strict code of obedience.²⁰⁹ Headquartered in New York City, Spanknoebel divided the United States into three administrative FNG regions, the Northeast, Midwest, and West, each with its own "gaulieter" or regional leader. Spanknoebel selected Robert Pape to be the *gauleiter* of FNG in the West.²¹⁰

Following the July convention, Spanknoebel embarked on a "Clean up America" campaign, making speeches denouncing international Communism and racial amalgamation.²¹¹ His public addresses attracted primarily German nationals, naturalized Germans, and German-Americans who were fearful that persecution of German-Americans would again emerge because of the negative press that the Third

²⁰⁷ Report dated 7/19/33, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 6, folder 19; Transcript, Winterhalder testimony, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 4, Folder 10; Canedy, 51.

²⁰⁸ Diamond, 123; McCoy, "Hitlerism Invades America, Part I," *Today*, no. 1, vol. 23, (March 31, 1933): 7, 24, 28; "Hitlerism Invades America, Part III," *Today*, no. 1, vol. 25, (April 14, 1933): 6.

²⁰⁹ Diamond, 123-134.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 125.

²¹¹ Canedy, 51.

Reich was attracting in the United States. Spanknoebel's speeches were extremely militaristic and antisemitic. Offering his version of the "truth" about the New Germany, Spanknoebel told his audiences that Germany was not antisemitic. In point of fact, he said, "Jewish-Bolshevists" directed from Moscow had infiltrated Germany. Germans were the *real* victims, he claimed, not the Jews, and Hitler was merely "clean[ing] house" in Germany to free the Fatherland of the Jewish-Bolshevist graft and corruption that were part of the international Communist conspiracy.²¹²

In Los Angeles, the German Vice Consul Dr. Georg Gyssling offered his support to the FNG's West Coast leaders.²¹³ Gyssling was an ambitious Foreign Office diplomat and a staunch Hitlerite.²¹⁴ Since the ascension of the Nazis to power in Germany, Gyssling had been busy giving public talks to Los Angeles civic groups, combatting what he considered slanderous attacks made by "world jewelry [sic]."²¹⁵ Gyssling worked closely with FNG's "chief propaganda officer" Hans Winterhalder to plan FNG's public relations strategy. Winterhalder and Gyssling were in daily contact with each other, planning FNG's public relations campaign in Los Angeles and distributing Nazi propaganda literature to the German-American community through the local Turn Verein Germania (the federation of all German-American

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Untitled report dated June 30, 1933, (no author), CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 17; "Nazi Organization Activities, July 12, 1933" (no author, probably Red Squad agent or informant), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 17. Winterhalder contacted Gyssling daily.

²¹⁴ Untitled report dated June 30, 1933 (no author), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 17; Notes: Nazi Organization Activities, July 6, 1933 (no author, probably Red Squad agent or informant), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 17.

²¹⁵ Notes: Nazi Organization Activities, July 6, 1933 (no author, probably Red Squad agent or informant), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 17.

cultural clubs in Los Angeles).²¹⁶ Winterhalder and Gyssling hoped that local newspapers would carry their stories about the New Germany. When neither the *Los Angeles Times* nor the *Los Angeles Examiner* agreed to run Winterhalder's polemical essays, FNG was forced to change its propaganda strategy.²¹⁷

Taking direction from New York, Los Angeles's FNG leaders turned to the editor of the *California Staats Zeitung*, Los Angeles's weekly German-language newspaper (circulation 18,000-22,000) to secure its cooperation in advancing a pro-Nazi agenda.²¹⁸ All FNG regional leaders were ordered to adopt the strategy. The core of FNG's propaganda campaign was to raise the Jewish Question within German-American circles, hoping to transplant the issue to the domestic political discourse.²¹⁹ In Los Angeles, Winterhalder and Gyssling proposed that the paper run a series of articles explaining the tenets of Nazism, starting with the publication and explanation of the Nazi Party's very antisemitic platform, the *Twenty-Five Point Program of the Nazi Party*. Subsequent issues would then run articles explaining each "point" in greater detail.²²⁰ Unlike the editor of New York City's German-language newspaper, who was beat up by FNG thugs for rejecting the "suggestion" for a new editorial direction, the editor of the *California Staats Zeitung* in Los

²¹⁶ Nazi Organization Activities, July 12, 1933 (no author, probably Red Squad agent or informant), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 17; Notes: Nazi Organization Activities, July 6, 1933 (no author, probably Red Squad agent or informant), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 17.

²¹⁷ Report dated June 30, 1933 (no author, probably Red Squad agent or informant), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 17.

²¹⁸ Report dated June 25, 1933 (no author, probably Red Squad agent or informant), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 17.

²¹⁹ Diamond, 151-156; Report 1 (written by Schmidt, c. August 20, 1933), CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 4.

²²⁰ Report dated July 1, 1933 (no author, probably Red Squad agent or informant), CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 17.

Angeles agreed to make space for pro-Hitler articles and editorials.²²¹ The editor did, however, express concern that pro-Nazi positions in the paper might negatively impact the paper's leading advertisers: the Jews who owned some of the city's largest businesses, including the May Co. department store and Union Bank.²²²

Early Activity

As early as April 1933, newspapers in Los Angeles reported on Nazi activity in the city. On April 14, the *B'nai B'rith Messenger* announced, "Hitlerites Organize Branch Here." The article claimed that Nazi propaganda agents had been sent to Los Angeles by Berlin. The paper printed the alleged agents' names and addresses on the front page, including Robert Pape's, and called for their immediate deportation.²²³ On July 27th, the *Los Angeles Examiner* reported on the first Nazi meeting in the city, alongside a photo of Winterhalder and three other FNG members dressed in their paramilitary uniforms posing in the "Heil" salute (see Appendix 1: Photographs).²²⁴ Los Angelenos, however, either discounted these stories as propaganda or were too consumed with their own personal struggles with the Depression to care.²²⁵

²²¹ Report dated July 1, 1933 (no author, probably Red Squad agent or informant), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 17.

²²² Report dated July 1, 1933 (no author, probably Red Squad agent or informant), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 17.

²²³ "Nazi Paid Propagandists [sic] Infest American Cities," *B'nai Brith Messenger*, March 31, 1933.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*; "Hitlerites Organize Branch Here," *B'nai Brith Messenger*, April 14, 1933; "Nazis Hold First Opening Meeting Here," *Los Angeles Examiner*, July 27, 1933.

²²⁵ American newspaper editors and publishers, as well as the American public, did not believe the reports of Nazi persecution of German Jews in 1933 or for the rest of the decade. The American public, feeling partially manipulated by British propaganda into joining World War I just 15 years earlier, were not so quick to believe the fantastic reports coming out of Germany in early 1933. See Deborah Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust, 1933-1945* (New York: The Free Press, 1986).

The Jews of Los Angeles, however, were paying attention. In July, forty-six Jewish organizations, among them Jewish Socialist and Communist groups, responded to this early Nazi activity by calling for a citywide anti-Nazi demonstration. The anti-Nazi rally marked the beginning of a cycle of protest and counter-protest between the left and right in Los Angeles over the next twelve years, as each side competing for the last word in the political conflict.

Two different accounts of the July 12 anti-Nazi rally are found in the CRC Papers. The first, written in German, was written by FNG's informant, and the second was written by a Red Squad informant. The two accounts are remarkably consistent with each other. Both state that the size of the crowd was approximately 3,000, although the FNG report added that most of the attendees were "Jews and...Communists." This was probably true, as one of the main speakers, Dr. Aaron Rosanof, a psychiatrist and professor at UCLA, told the crowd that "46 Jewish organizations in Los Angeles are working hand in hand with Communistic organizations and the Friends of the Soviet Union to finish off Hitler." The FNG report also noted that the last speaker addressed the crowd in Yiddish.²²⁶

Both reports summarized the speeches made that night, noting the focus on increasing "fascist" activity in Los Angeles. The speakers called for vigilance at home and abroad against the Nazi foe and rallied the crowd to fight fascism in its

²²⁶ Report on Meeting Against Hitlerism, Philharmonic Auditorium, July 12, 1933, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 17. This is the English translation of the FNG report on the meeting that was submitted in German to Red Hynes and then given to Leon Lewis. Handwritten note on Lewis' copy reads, "Found in Police file. See German acct in Specht's file -- this is translation!"

midst.²²⁷ According to the FNG report, civil rights attorney Al Wirin criticized the Los Angeles police department's fascist-like behavior:

Comrades, I want to speak about Hitlerism, but not in Germany, no right here in Los Angeles. The KKK broke into a Jewish "Communitic home" in Long Beach; police Captain Hynes' Red Squad interfered with the strike in Mr. Goldstein's sweatshop; and American Legionnaires broke up a "Communitic meeting" at Polytechnic High School.²²⁸

Noted author Lewis Browne, just back from Germany, urged the crowd to boycott German goods. "When you buy a shoe lace, refuse to take it if it was made in Germany. The Nazis will not last under such economic pressure," he asserted.²²⁹

If the Jews of Los Angeles believed that fascism was on the rise in their city, their rally convinced FNG leaders that the Jewish-Communist conspiracy in Los Angeles was thriving. Two days after the anti-Nazi rally, Hans Winterhalder was on Red Hynes's doorstep, report in hand. Winterhalder's report interpreted the event through the prism of Nazi political ideology. "46 Jewish organizations," Winterhalder's report read, really meant 46 *Communist* organizations. "[W]orking together" was interpreted as "conspiring," and "fight fascism," was construed to mean manipulate into "fighting Americanism."²³⁰ Winterhalder informed Hynes that he could count on the Friends of the New Germany in the fight against Communists and Jews. Over the course of the next several months, FNG continued to provide Hynes

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ According to Hynes' independent information, there were about 3,000 people in attendance at the July 12th meeting and the speakers told the crowd that there were 45 Jewish organizations represented. According to Lewis, Hynes said that this was an "out and out Communist meeting and that it did a great deal of harm to the respectable Jews of this city, and that the Nazis were making a great deal of capital out of it." See report dated September 7, 1933, 11:00 A.M., CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 6, Folder 19.

with information on Communist groups in the city.²³¹ A note on the Hynes-Winterhalder meeting written in code confirmed FNG's national structure and its relationship to the German consulate:

13 [Winterhalder] gave 69 [Hynes] the report of the Philharmonic meeting two days later. 13 also sent a copy of the report to national HQ in New York and to the local German consulate. 13 told 69 that the meeting confirmed that American Jews were working closely with Communists.²³²

Despite Winterhalder's sincere intentions to help the LAPD with its "Communist problem," Hynes was suspicious of FNG, too. On August 1, Hynes sent detective R. A. Wellpott of the Metropolitan Division to the FNG meeting held at the Alt Heidelberg Restaurant.²³³ Wellpott submitted his report to Hynes the next day:

Approximately 100 people gathered in the reception hall of the mansion in which the restaurant and Aryan Bookstore are located. Fifteen young men whose arms bulge with excess power were scattered about the hall. The meeting was also covered by the Los Angeles Examiner, who described the athletic-looking men, dressed in brown shirts as members of the organization's "sports abteilung." They will not hesitate to tell you that they guard the meeting.²³⁴

According to Wellpott's report, the stage was decorated with the American flag, the imperial German flag, and the Nazi (swastika) flag.²³⁵ The meeting was called to order by Robert Pape, who played a phonograph recording of a German march.

²³¹ Documents in the CRC files contain early reports, ostensibly acquired by Hynes as a result of his association with Winterhalder. See *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 17. Hynes then allowed Leon Lewis to see and copy the information in September 1933. See report dated September 12 P.M. L.L.L., *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 6, Folder 19.

²³² Report dated 7/14/33, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 6, Folder 19.

²³³ Letter, Wellpott to Hynes, 8/2/33, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 18. The name of the person who wrote the letter is heavily crossed out, but the visible letters look like "Wellpost," which is probably R. A. Wellpott, who is listed as a Red Squad officer. See Senate Subcommittee on Education and Labor, "Exhibit #10216: Personnel Roster of Intelligence Bureau," *Documents Relating to Intelligence Bureau or Red Squad of Los Angeles Police Department*, (New York: Arno Press 1971), 23512.

²³⁴ "Nazis Hold First Open Meeting Here," *Los Angeles Examiner*, July 27, 1933.

²³⁵ Letter, Wellpott to Hynes, dated August 2, 1933, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 18.

Winterhalder followed, addressing the group in German about the FNG convention in Chicago held just days before. The keynote speaker, Dr. Rudolph Gerber, took the podium. He spoke on “The German Jewish Conflict.” Gerber explained that the Nazis wanted to prevent the “bastardization of Germany” by eliminating Jews from power. He criticized the Hohenzollern regime for allowing Jews into positions of responsibility and power. Several people jumped up and protested this remark. The protestors were escorted out of the meeting by brown-shirted attendants. The meeting resumed with recorded speeches by Hindenberg and Hitler played on the phonograph. At the end of the meeting, about 70 people rose and gave the Hitler salute when the new German national anthem was played.²³⁶

Hollywood's First Spy

The foregoing accounts of early FNG activity in Los Angeles, including the encoded report of Hynes's meeting with Winterhalder, were given to Leon Lewis by Red Squad Captain Bill Hynes. Historiographically, these reports are significant because they depict FNG activity on the West Coast, and thus corroborate past research describing the Friends of the New Germany as a national political organization.²³⁷ The police reports on FNG activity in Los Angeles found in the CRC Papers reveal the remarkable symmetry between FNG's activities in New York and its activities in Los Angeles: attempts to co-opt the local German-language

²³⁶ “Nazi Organization Activities,” August 2, 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 18. There were two different reports of the August 2 meeting.

²³⁷ Canedy; Diamond; Alton Frye, *Nazi Germany and the American Hemisphere, 1933-1941* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967).

newspapers, distribution of the same Nazi literature through a local bookshop called “the Aryan Bookstore,” public rallies conducted with the support of local German consulates, and, as chapter three will discuss, attempted take-overs of the local federation of German-American societies in both cities.

Of greater significance is the *source* of this information. All of this information came from internal police reports, but was found in the CRC Papers. The question is, how did internal police reports written by Nazi agents, including notes on a private meeting between Red Hynes and Winterhalder, end up in those files? The answer lies in a memo Leon Lewis wrote for his files, in which he described a meeting he had with Captain Red Hynes on or about September 7, 1933. In the memo, Lewis wrote that he met with Hynes to report on the early findings of the DAV investigation. Hynes told Lewis that the Red Squad had been watching FNG for some time and shared his files with Lewis. Lewis copied the reports in Hynes’ files, which included the addresses of the suburban branches of the Nazi organization in Santa Monica, Pasadena, Long Beach, Arcadia, and Huntington Park, scribbled “Found in Police files” on each, and filed them away.²³⁸

The encoded description of the Hynes-Winterhalder meeting is a particularly important document. First, it validates the Hynes-Lewis relationship. Second, it reveals the precautions Lewis took in conducting the DAV operation. All of the agents and suspects in this investigation were assigned numeric code names. The agents used these numbers when referring to themselves and to the people they were

²³⁸ Report, August 10, 1933, CRC Papers, Part I, Box 6, Folder 19.

investigating. This level of secrecy reveals the concern that Lewis and his agents had for this work. All of the DAV reports are likewise encoded and impossible to decipher without a key. Lewis, however, provides the “Rosetta Stone” for the DAV reports in a letter he later wrote to Sigmund Livingston, executive director of the Anti-Defamation League, in December 1933. The key lists Hynes as “69” and Winterhalder as “13” (see Appendix 2: Key to Spy Codes).²³⁹

Five days after his initial meeting with Hynes, Lewis (code name “1”), and Hynes met again, this time to discuss funding Red Squad surveillance of FNG. Hynes told Lewis that he did not have the funds to continue paying agent “M” to infiltrate FNG.²⁴⁰ “It would cost us \$150/month in salary plus expenses to maintain this operation,” Hynes told Lewis, “and we just don’t have the money right now.” Lewis informed Hynes that he had discussed the matter with Irving Lipsitch, president of the Jewish Federation of Los Angeles, and they had decided that Lewis, an unnamed local merchant, and two other attorneys would underwrite the cost to maintain Hynes’s operative.²⁴¹ According to Lewis’s notes, the following arrangements were made:

“But, I’d rather that ‘M’ stay on your payroll,” Lewis told Hynes, “I do not wish to have any direct dealings with a private detective.”

“I don’t blame you,” said Hynes.

“And, of course,” Lewis assured him, “there would be a piece of change in it for you, too.”

“That would be fine,” said Hynes.²⁴²

²³⁹ Letter, Leon Lewis to Sigmund Livingston, December 16, 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 1.

²⁴⁰ Report, September 12 P.M. L.L.L., *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 6, Folder 19.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*

²⁴² *Ibid.*

This exchange is important for two reasons. First is the question of “the piece of change” Lewis promised Hynes. Was this a bribe? It’s possible. The Los Angeles police department was notoriously corrupt, and it is possible that “a piece of change” for Hynes was yet another example of Lewis playing politics the way politics were played with Red Squad. Another possible explanation is that Hynes sometimes have moonlighted as a private consultant to area businesses, advising them on their responses to labor troubles, so the “piece of change” to which Lewis referred may have been payment for such services.²⁴³ Lewis never clarifies just what “the piece of change” was for, and there is no further mention of pay-offs to Hynes. Hynes remained helpful to Lewis until the Red Squad was dissolved by Mayor Fletcher Bowron in 1938. Second, the meeting with Hynes is important because it contextualizes Leon Lewis’s meeting with Chief James Davis just three days later (in which Davis dismissed Lewis’s concern over Nazi activity in the city). It is probable that Lewis met with Davis to appeal to Davis to allocate more resources to the Red Squad to investigate Nazis knowing that Hynes was underfunded. In fact, at the end of Lewis’s meeting with Hynes, Hynes asked Lewis to “put in a good word for him” with Davis.²⁴⁴

In 1933, who would have guessed that Bill Hynes, captain of the city’s infamous Red Squad, would have been Hollywood’s first spy? Hynes, it seems, may have been less dogmatic and more pragmatic than his red-baiting legacy suggests.

²⁴³ Gerald Woods, *The Police in Los Angeles: Reform and Professionalization* (New York: Garland, 1993); Thomas Sitton, "Urban Politics and Reform in New Deal Los Angeles: The Recall of Mayor Frank L. Shaw" (Dissertation, University of California, 1983).

²⁴⁴ Report, September 12 P.M. L.L.L., CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 6, Folder 19.

The German nationals who led the Friends of the New Germany were not American citizens, and within the nativist culture of the city and the era, foreigners were perceived with suspicion. It was not immediately clear to Hynes who these “friends” of the New Germany were or whether they were *his* friends. In a city where political power required a deep network of informants, Hynes was playing both sides of the fence, gathering information on Communist activity from Winterhalder, even as he shared informant information on FNG with a Jewish veteran.

Before They Were *Hollywood's* Spies

John Schmidt (“11”)

The DAV investigation of the Friends of the New Germany began in mid-August 1933 after several veterans reported that they had been approached by leaders of FNG to join the new group. The leaders of FNG assumed that American vets were just as disgruntled with the U.S. government in 1933 as they had been with Weimar in 1923. After all, hadn't the U.S. government fired on the Bonus Marchers at Anacostia Flats just last year? Hadn't Congress betrayed them in the recent Economy Act of 1930, cutting their service pensions? Thus, FNG leaders presented themselves as friends to U.S. veterans, confident that when *the day* came, thousands of veterans in Los Angeles would take to the streets in solidarity with FNG and bring the Hitler revolution to America, just as their Nazi comrades had done in Germany.²⁴⁵

²⁴⁵ The Bonus Army March of 1932 failed to persuade Congress to allocate funds to pay World War I veterans their retirement bonuses eight years early. The Economy Act of 1932 had reduced veterans' benefits and cut millions of disabled veterans' benefits as well. These actions angered veterans, as

Suspicious of the new group's political intentions, Captain John Schmidt, chairman of the Americanism Committee of the downtown post of the DAV, was the first DAV informant. Schmidt was the perfect foil for the DAV undercover investigation. Not only was Schmidt a naturalized German-American citizen, he was also an American veteran who had fought in France against Germany in 1918.²⁴⁶ As a German-American veteran, Schmidt was precisely the recruit FNG's national leadership had instructed its regional offices to find.²⁴⁷ Schmidt, however, was an American patriot. His undercover reports reveal him to be a man of integrity and a patriot who loved his adopted country. Schmidt's passionate commitment to defend America from Nazism was made all the more poignant by his personal trials, which included permanent emotional and physical disabilities from his war service and financial destitution as a result of the loss of his U.S. veterans' disability insurance after 1930.²⁴⁸ It is through Schmidt's reports that we come to understand the men of

expressed in American Legion documents and speeches in the summer of 1932. See Raymond Moley, *The American Legion Story*, (New York: Duell Sloan and Pearce, 1966); Donald J. Lisio, *The President and Protest: Hoover, MacArthur, and the Bonus Riot*, (New York: Fordham University Press, 1994).

²⁴⁶ The sources on Schmidt's date of birth, date of immigration, and enlistment in the CRC Papers conflict. See reports dated August 29, September 1 and September 5, 1933, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 4; "Hitler Likened to Roosevelt," *Los Angeles Examiner*, January 17, 1934, *ibid.*, Box 3, Folder 37. It is interesting that Schmidt told Themnitz that he did not fight against Germany in World War I, but that he had served in Mexico "fighting greasers, coyotes and rattlesnakes." See report dated August 23, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 4. In all likelihood, the *Los Angeles Examiner* record of Schmidt's service is correct. Schmidt probably lied to Themnitz because it would not have served him to tell Themnitz that he had fought against the Fatherland.

²⁴⁷ Letter, Louis Greenbaum to Leon Lewis, February 17, 1933 (see letterhead), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 29, Folder 17. Schmidt was chair of the Americanization Committee of the Disabled American Veterans of the World War, third district in Los Angeles; "Report, September 7, 1933," *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 4.

²⁴⁸ The Economy Act of 1930 cut disability payments to veterans. Leon Lewis had great compassion for Schmidt. Lewis reimbursed Schmidt for the expenses he incurred during the undercover operation, lent Schmidt significant amounts of money to sustain him personally, and tried to pull strings in Washington to help Schmidt regain his disability pension from the Veterans Administration. It took five long Depression years, but Lewis finally succeeded in having Schmidt's VA pension reinstated in

FNG not merely as clichéd Nazi villains, but as individuals with passionate political beliefs.

John Schmidt was the DAV's lead informant. He paid his first visit to the Aryan Bookstore on August 17, 1933, where he met Pape, Schwinn, and Themnitz.²⁴⁹ In his first report to Lewis, Schmidt wrote that he had learned that the purpose of the Friends of the New Germany was to fight communism. He reported that Winterhalder and Pape "could show me plenty of literature proving without a doubt that Communism was part of the Jewish plan of things and that therefore we must all combine to show the Jew as the author of all our troubles in America and throughout the world."²⁵⁰ Pape told Schmidt that the purpose of FNG was to drive Jews and Catholics out of government in the United States and replace them with German-Americans. Once in power, Pape said, German-Americans would usher in Hitlerism.²⁵¹

Pape was concerned that veterans misunderstood the Friends of the New Germany. He told Schmidt that recent VFW and American Legion resolutions denouncing Nazism were misguided. FNG was committed to defending Americanism and fighting Communists. FNG and American veterans were allies against a mutual enemy.²⁵² Pape hoped that Schmidt would bring some of his American Legion and VFW friends the next time he came around to correct those

1938. For more on Schmidt's contribution and the physical and financial challenges he faced while infiltrating the Friends of the New Germany, see *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 20.

²⁴⁹ Report 1 (no date, but text refers to August 17-19 1933), CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 4.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*

²⁵² *Ibid.*

misperceptions. Pape invited Schmidt and his colleagues to FNG's next membership meeting, as well, and asked Schmidt if he would speak at the meeting. Schmidt agreed to speak and promised to see what he could do about helping to recruit more veterans.²⁵³

Schmidt returned to the Aryan Bookstore at 902 South Alvarado Street a few days later with his wife, Alyce, to dine at the Alt Heidelberg Restaurant, located in the same mansion. The Alt Heidelberg was a popular spot among German-Americans. The ambience and the food, Schmidt wrote, were reminiscent of the old country. The restaurant was decorated in the style of a traditional German beer hall, and it specialized in German home cooking. Dinner, by Schmidt's accounts, was a Depression-era bargain: three courses for sixty cents and beer for a nickel. The restaurant attracted older German-Americans like Schmidt, but lately, a rowdier, younger crowd of German nationals, mostly of the Nazi persuasion, had been frequenting the restaurant.²⁵⁴ During their dinner, Alyce Schmidt got up from their table to find the powder room. When she began upstairs to the second floor of the mansion, she was stopped by a woman who seemed very agitated when she found Alyce on the second floor landing.

"Verboten," Alyce was told.²⁵⁵ Alyce turned around and went back downstairs to her table.

²⁵³ Report dated August 20, 1933, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 4.

²⁵⁴ Report, September 9 [written by Schmidt] and Report #77, September 27 [written by Schmidt], *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 5.

²⁵⁵ Report dated August 20, 1933 [written by Schmidt], *ibid.*, Part 1 Box 8, Folder 4.

In his August 22 report, Schmidt wrote that he had the distinct impression that there were secrets on the upper floors. Schmidt wrote, "I am sure they have arms and equipment some place. If it is in the house, I will know it soon."²⁵⁶

On August 29, 1933, Schmidt attended his first FNG membership meeting. Several speakers addressed the group before Schmidt took the podium. Hans Winterhalder informed attendees (about 80 people, Schmidt later reported) that the German government was making "a certain book" (*Mein Kampf*) available free of charge in English across the United States. Subsequent speakers addressed the audience in German. The first speaker read an antisemitic article from a German magazine. The next speaker discussed an article from *Reader's Digest* on the progress of Hitlerism, and then Schmidt spoke, introducing himself as a German, addressing the group in English:²⁵⁷

My friends of the old country, I am glad to speak to you though I would not try to make a speech in the German language as I have been away so long that I have forgotten much of it. I wish to inform you that although I have been in the American army during the War, I was not overseas fighting against you, but was on the Mexican border fighting greasers, coyotes and rattlesnakes.

I do not quite understand the ideals you are submitting to the American public as propaganda, but I do know that America needs a shaking up and waking up from what is known in America as Communism. I do hope that you men and women will unite with the common desire of the American veteran organizations to rid America of communism and Bolshevism, which is a thorn in the side of this country. I am not speaking for you or against you. I speak as an American citizen and veteran and if you too follow the program of true Americanism I can work with you. Naturally I understand that you, like many of us, have certain feelings towards the Jew. I do not know you. You do not know

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

me. We are unknown quantities to each other, but if I am permitted in the near future to speak to the real organization of yours, then I will lay out to you *what I do believe should be done to those who have come to these sacred shores and abused its trust and confidence*. Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you.²⁵⁸ [italics mine]

It was an effective performance. In his report to Lewis, Schmidt told Lewis that he won over Winterhalder, Pape, Schwinn, and Themnitz. “[T]he men, particularly COMMUNISTS [sic] are enthused over my (ha!ha!) support.”²⁵⁹ Schmidt convincingly assumed the role of the disgruntled American veteran and antisemite to his new friends, and he told the FNG faithful what they wanted to hear, but Schmidt’s professed allegiance to the Fatherland was a lie. Contrary to what he told the audience, Schmidt did serve in France, and he did fight against Germany.²⁶⁰ Moreover, when he promised to “lay out to you what I do believe should be done *to those who have come to these sacred shores and abused its trust and confidence*,” Schmidt was being duplicitous and ironic. While the audience believed Schmidt was referring to Jews, he was actually pointing his finger at *them*.

Schmidt’s first few visits to FNG headquarters convinced him that something was amiss. After relating his early experiences to DAV Post Commander Captain Carl Sunderland and to DAV State Adjutant Major Bert Allen, the two veterans agreed to join Schmidt in his investigation. Sunderland became agent “8” and Allen became agent “7.”

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Report dated August 25, PM, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 4.

²⁶⁰ Letter, Leon Lewis to Richard Gutstadt, March 2, 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 23, Folder 1.

In early September, Sunderland accompanied Schmidt to lunch at the Alt Heidelberg and met Themlitz and Winterhalder. Upon leaving, Sunderland was convinced that the Nazis were smart, dangerous, and systematic.²⁶¹ “You know, Schmidt, when you first brought me down here, I thought you were playing a joke on me,” Sunderland admitted, “and when I first met these guys, I thought it was all kid’s play. Now I’m convinced that if they ever find you out, they are going to massacre you so that your own mother wouldn’t know you. These fellows are covering up an awful lot and I surely would like to get to the bottom of this matter,” he told Schmidt.²⁶²

“Such a mob has no place in the United States,” Sunderland continued. “These men are not only out to drive the Jews from their public positions and destroy their properties, but also they would not stop at starting any kind of trouble in this country which would serve their purpose... the[se] Nazis were not just against Jews...[they are] out to overthrow the United States.”²⁶³

Schmidt, Sunderland, and Allen became regulars at the Aryan Bookstore, FNG meetings, and the Alt Heidelberg in fall of 1933. Pape, Winterhalder, Themlitz, and Schwinn were ecstatic with the new recruits. Pape respected Major Bert Allen as an officer and a leader and complimented Allen on his strong, autocratic style of command. “Your style is similar to Hitler’s,” Pape told Allen, intending a compliment. “We are very anxious to have Americans [like you] who think the way

²⁶¹ Report dated August 29, Afternoon, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 4.

²⁶² Report dated September 6, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 4.

²⁶³ Untitled document (draft summary of Sunderland’s entire investigation), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 22.

we do join our group.”²⁶⁴ Allen returned the flattery, telling Pape that DAV members were anxious to partner with them. Winterhalder told Sunderland that he was “the leader [they were] looking for because [he]...understood the situation thoroughly.” Sunderland could guide them on how to manipulate the ideals of Americanism to increase their recruitment of veterans and “assist them in eventually overthrowing the Jewish rulership [sic] which now exists in the United States.”²⁶⁵ And Schwinn reached out to Schmidt, expressing empathy for Schmidt’s “suffering” as a German-American:

You are a German at heart [Schmidt], and because you are a German, you suffered during the war. You must have been terribly persecuted by the Jews. I don’t blame you for feeling un-American...we must unite together to drive the dirty SOB’s out of this country.²⁶⁶

Schmidt was offended by Schwinn’s assumptions, writing that he “felt like busting [Schwinn’s] head open” when Schwinn spoke of him as “un-American.”²⁶⁷

The veterans also began bringing their wives to FNG events to further convince their new friends of their personal commitment to the cause. In approaching the investigation as a couple, the DAV volunteers established more intimate, personal relationships with FNG leaders than they could have on their own. The Schmidts began to socialize with the Papes and with the Themlitzes; they saw each other at

²⁶⁴ Report dated September 16, 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 5.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁶ Report dated September 12, (written by Schmidt), CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 5.

²⁶⁷ Report dated September 12, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 4.

FNG meetings and often went out for drinks after. Alyce Schmidt was invited to help Mrs. Pape establish the women's auxiliary of the Friends.²⁶⁸

Alyce Schmidt soon became an informant for the DAV operation. Robert Pape asked Alyce ("17") to do some clerical work "for the holy cause." Even though he could not pay her, he hoped that she would understand, being married to a German, that the cause meant more than money.²⁶⁹ Alyce Schmidt's work in the back offices of the bookshop provided Hollywood's spies with information they might not have otherwise acquired. Alyce typed FNG's membership list and Pape's correspondence to FNG headquarters in New York. She then submitted reports, separate from John's, to Lewis on what she saw and heard. Pape also had Alyce create scrapbooks of news clippings about the group, Nazism, and Jews.²⁷⁰

Socializing with FNG officers proved as informative as FNG meetings. Lubricated with alcohol, FNG officers often shared more than they probably should have about the secret political objectives of the Friends of the New Germany. It was at one of these social dates that the DAV volunteers learned about "der tag." Sunderland, John and Alyce Schmidt, and Bert Allen and his wife went out with Winterhalder and two FNG officers to the Lorelei Restaurant, a German-American

²⁶⁸ Report dated September 6, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 4. Schmidt asks Lewis parenthetically if Alyce's joining of the women's auxiliary "meets with your approval?"

²⁶⁹ Report #117 (probably October 12, 1933 written by John Schmidt), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 9.

²⁷⁰ Alyce Schmidt's clerical work may have survived the decades. Scrapbooks matching the description of those Alyce created are in the National Archives in Washington, DC. See Records of the Los Angeles Units, *Records of the German-American Bund, 1928-1945*. RG 131. United States National Archives, College Park, Maryland. Her neatly typewritten membership lists, with the names, addresses and phone numbers of FNG's members are also found in the CRC Papers.

beer hall patronized by Nazis, for beer, dancing, and political conversation.²⁷¹ With the beer flowing, Deiderich Gefken, the commander of FNG's mysterious storm troopers, shared FNG's plan for a Nazi-led insurrection in the United States.

Gefken started by telling his American veteran friends that FNG storm troopers had been instructed to foment unrest among American workers in order to hasten a *Communist* insurrection in the United States, whereupon FNG and veteran allies would "consolidate and march in military phalanxes to take the government."²⁷²

Gefken continued, asserting that it was "the kikes who run this country" who were responsible for the rotten deal vets were getting. American veterans were fed up, he said, and ready to vindicate themselves just as veterans had done in Germany.²⁷³

Gefken told Schmidt that thousands of storm troopers in the U.S. "were ready to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with U.S. veterans when the time came...to help them take back the government from Communists and Jews."²⁷⁴ The uprising, however, would not take place at the same time across the country, but would start in cities where FNG was most active, like Saint Louis, Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles, and then spread across the country, Gefken told Schmidt, as after all, "Nazism was an international affair."²⁷⁵ Two weeks following the uprising, Gefken estimated,

²⁷¹ Details of the party at the Lorelei come from several different documents written by different agents. See letter from William Conley to Chief James Davis, September 28, 1933, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 6, Folder 8; Report of Seven, September 28th for September 26th, 1933 (submitted by C. Bert Allen), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 5, Folder 20; untitled draft summary of Sunderland's entire investigation, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 22. Details of the party at the Lorelei were also reported by John Schmidt in report 72 dated September 26, 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 7.

²⁷² Untitled draft summary of Sunderland's investigation, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 22.

²⁷³ Letter, William Conley to Chief James Davis, September 28, 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 6, Folder 18.

²⁷⁴ Untitled document (draft of Sunderland's Investigation), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 22.

²⁷⁵ Report 103 (n.d., sometime in October 1933), *ibid.*, Part I, Box 8, Folder 8.

Protestant churches in the United States, led by the Lutheran Church, would lead a boycott of Jewish businesses. “That,” he declared, “would take care of the ‘Goddamn jews [sic].’”²⁷⁶

In his report documenting Gefken’s remarks that evening, John Schmidt wrote that Gefken “spoke like a man who had gone through the same kind of experience before and knew how to handle any emergency...He apparently is a fearless fellow, neither radical or [sic] fanatical, but absolutely believes in the supremacy of the Aryan race, by which he means the Germans.”²⁷⁷ Schmidt was right. Deiderich Gefken had been with Hitler in Munich in 1923, and he boasted that he had killed plenty of Catholics and Communists in the Ruhr Valley.²⁷⁸ “Naturally,” Gefken told Schmidt, “We’ll always kill a Jew on sight as we can recognize them, but we will have to ask others whether or not they are Catholics.”²⁷⁹

An American Problem

Schmidt, Sunderland, Allen, and Leon Lewis were stunned to discover the magnitude of FNG’s subversive political intentions to lead a Nazi revolution in the United States. Despite James Davis’ dismissal of Lewis’ concerns about Nazis in the city, the DAV volunteers discovered that Nazism was not just the Jewish problem Davis had suggested it was. Nazism was an American problem. The DAV volunteers learned that FNG’s plan for “der tag” assumed that Communist-led labor

²⁷⁶ Letter, William Conley to Chief James Davis, September 28, 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 19.

²⁷⁷ Report 96 (dated October 3, 1933), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 8.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

unrest in the United States, similar to that which had led to the Nazi uprising in Germany, was not long in coming to the United States. As soon as Communist agitation boiled over in America, FNG would be ready to lead the counter-attack and take over the country.²⁸⁰

Between August 1933 and March 1934, the DAV volunteers reported on FNG's preparation for "der tag." First, the group was building a paramilitary infrastructure that included a private militia modeled after Hitler's brown shirts, recruitment of American veterans and like-minded members of domestic, right-wing groups, and access to munitions. Second, the group was actively engaged as one of Berlin's unofficial "propaganda agents" in spreading the word of the Nazi gospel in the United States, to influence American public opinion towards Nazism in anticipation of "der tag."

Military Preparation

Not long after John Schmidt became a regular at FNG headquarters, Herman Schwinn confided to him that FNG, despite its public denials, was, in fact, a *Nazi* organization. "We cannot tell the public [this though], as otherwise the Jews would have a means of putting us out of business."²⁸¹ He told Schmidt that they got all their

²⁸⁰ Untitled document (draft of Sunderland's report), CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 22; Report dated 9/26/33 (written by William Conley), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 6, Folder 18; "Plot to Seize Govt Charged in Nazi Suit," *Los Angeles Herald and Express*, Jan 15, 1934, [n.p., news clipping], *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 3, Folder 37.

²⁸¹ Report 72 (dated September 26, 1933), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 7.

orders from New York and that Berlin directed New York.²⁸² In preparation for “der tag,” Schmidt learned, Pape had been ordered to recruit and train a secret storm troop brigade modeled after the brown-shirted “sturm abteilung” (SA) in Germany.²⁸³ In order to mask the true purpose of the SA in America, FNG had renamed the group from “sturm abteilung” to “*sports abteilung*,” claiming it was an exercise club.²⁸⁴

The SA in Los Angeles was shrouded in secrecy. Throughout September and October, the DAV volunteers pieced together fragments of information about the “*sports abteilung*” until they finally understood its true purpose. In the Fall of 1933, the SA in Los Angeles had 36 members.²⁸⁵ Schmidt observed that they hung out at the Alt Heidelberg and met to “exercise” in the large hall at the Turnverein Germania (the German-American community center in Los Angeles) every week.²⁸⁶ In reality, those “exercises” were military drills in street-fighting, hand-to-hand combat, the use of gas, handling mobs, and taking over local points.²⁸⁷ References were made to target practice near the Hollywood reservoir using live ammunition. Schmidt went out to the site and found old cans riddled with bullet holes that had been used as targets.²⁸⁸ SA meetings were private, conducted in German, and very heavily

²⁸² Report 33, September 13, *ibid.*, Box 8, Folder, 5; Report dated September 22, 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 7.

²⁸³ Report dated September 14, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 5; report dated September 22 [1933], *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 6; Transcript, Pape testimony, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 4, Folder 7.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*; McCoy, (March 31, 1934), 28. The same naming convention had been used in Germany to mask the role of the *sturm abteilung* prior to 1933, who referred to their brown shirted storm troops the “*sports abteilung*.”

²⁸⁵ Transcript, Specht testimony, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 4, Folder 6.

²⁸⁶ Report dated September 9, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 5.

²⁸⁷ Report 140, Report of 7, Verbal Report of 7, 8, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 10; report dated October 10, 1933 ELF, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 20.

²⁸⁸ Report 72 dated September 26, 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 7.

guarded. Schmidt learned that orders received “from over there” (presumably Berlin) were issued at SA meetings.²⁸⁹

Bert Allen and Carl Sunderland contributed to the information on the secret storm troopers. Sunderland reported that the “sports abteilung” groups were being established across North and South America and that the SA had arms and supplies. He learned that the SA plan was to fan out in “spider fashion” across the United States.²⁹⁰ The largest SA group in the United States, Sunderland learned, was in Chicago.²⁹¹ When “der tag” came, it would take command in the Midwest while SA brigades in NYC and LA would gain control over both coasts. Sunderland was told that “another organization would take care of the south.”²⁹² There were also sizable SA organizations forming in Vancouver and Toronto.²⁹³

Besides training its elite SA force, FNG also needed to expand its membership in preparation for “der tag.” Pape, Schwinn, and Gefken were anxious to recruit additional veterans to their rank and file paramilitary force. They needed recruits, and they turned to Schmidt, Allen, and Sunderland to help them attract large numbers of American veterans. The DAV volunteers agreed to help. They told Pape about their local political association, “P.A.L.” P.A.L. stood for “Patriotism. Americanism.

²⁸⁹ Report 33 dated September 30, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 7; Report of Number Seven, October 2 for October 2, and Report of Number Eight, same dates, jointly written, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 8; notes, September 26 (written by William Conley), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 19.

²⁹⁰ “Soviet Aim Laid to N.R.A. By German, Says Witness,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 23, 1934. A1.

²⁹¹ Untitled document (draft summary of Sunderland’s Investigation), CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 22.

²⁹² Sunderland’s source was probably referring to the Ku Klux Klan, which was wishful thinking on the source’s part. The Friends of the New Germany did not organize in the American south, perhaps because of a dearth of German-Americans, but more likely because of Klan hostility towards the group, which the nativist Klan viewed as a foreign threat to “their” America.

²⁹³ Untitled document (draft summary of Sunderland’s Investigation), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 22.

Loyalty.” The group was established to fight communism, to lobby to reverse the recent legislative setbacks against veterans, to support candidates who promoted Americanism, to eradicate all Communistic teachings and propaganda, and to educate all Americans in the true tenets of Americanism.²⁹⁴ Knowing how eager Pape was to formalize a partnership with a veterans’ group, Schmidt held out the real bait. “We would like FNG members to join P.A.L.,” he told Pape. “Our organizations are very similar and I think we should work together. I will bring P.A.L.’s membership applications to the next FNG meeting.”²⁹⁵ This is exactly what Pape wanted to hear. He agreed to help enroll FNG members into P.A.L. – for a slight percentage of the \$2 membership fee, of course.²⁹⁶

Pape, however, was unaware that P.A.L. was a *defunct* veterans’ organization. In the wake of their early findings, Lewis, Schmidt, and Allen revived P.A.L. As a cover for their investigation, P.A.L. president Major Bert Allen reopened P.A.L.’s downtown offices. The veterans made the office look busy by filling P.A.L.’s filing cabinets with dummy membership lists that they knew their Nazi friends would covet. They wired the office and the phones with hidden Dictaphone equipment so that meetings and phone calls with Nazis could be heard and recorded from the adjacent office, and Schmidt used P.A.L.’s letterhead in all his written communication with FNG.²⁹⁷ In the meantime, Bert Allen alerted government authorities to the operation

²⁹⁴ P.A.L. pamphlet, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 31, Folder 1.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁶ Report dated August 25 (written by Schmidt), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 4.

²⁹⁷ Report of Committee on Americanism (n.d., probably spring 1934; probably written by Lewis), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 29, Folder 19.

to protect his men from falling under possible suspicion for being Nazi agents themselves.

The American Legion and the VFW in Los Angeles cooperated with the DAV investigation throughout the fall of 1933. Schmidt, Sunderland, and Allen brought Los Angeles police officers and leaders of the American Legion and VFW to the rented office adjacent to P.A.L.'s office in the Western Pacific Building at Second Street and Broadway, to listen in on meetings between the DAV operatives and Nazi leaders using the installed Dictaphone equipment. Elaborate secret files were created to give the impression to Nazis and Silver Shirt leaders that P.A.L. was organizing subversive groups across country. These files were shared with Nazi and Silver Shirt leaders in great secrecy to win their confidence.²⁹⁸ In some cases, Sunderland, Schmidt, and Allen also brought these colleagues to FNG meetings to witness for themselves the threat that FNG posed to American security. FNG leaders were elated to discover their work half done by P.A.L. Even the German vice-consul Gyssling, "elicited considerable curiosity" and visited P.A.L. offices personally to learn more.²⁹⁹

Gefken, Pape, and Schwinn were also anxious to infiltrate the Los Angeles National Guard as part of their preparation for "der tag." They asked Schmidt many questions. How many Jews were in the U.S. armed forces? How many men were in the local National Guard? Would the National Guard be loyal in an uprising that

²⁹⁸ Draft document, 6 (n.d., no author; probably written by Lewis), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 29, Folder 23.

²⁹⁹ Draft document, 7 (n.d., no author; probably written by Lewis), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 29, Folder 23.

targeted only Jews?³⁰⁰ Gefken was particularly anxious to get into the Machine Gun Company of the California National Guard, along with his friend Zimmerman.³⁰¹ The two were eager to learn the American system of military training firsthand, and Pape said that he wanted to get into the National Guard to learn telegraphy.³⁰² Could Schmidt get FNG men into key National Guard units in southern California so that they could propagandize them from within?

Gefken also asked his new veteran friends to secure the floor plans of different California National Guard facilities. Quite a few FNG members had already joined the San Francisco National Guard, as instructed from “over there,” and they already had acquired the floor plan of the San Francisco National Guard Armory.³⁰³ The floor plan showed precisely where ammunition, supplies, and weapons were stored in the building, so that FNG storm troopers could plan how they would take it over at the right moment. Pape had orders to secure the blueprints for the National Guard armories in San Diego and San Francisco.³⁰⁴ Gefken asked Sunderland if he could get him the floor plans of the southern California armory and the floor plan for the National Guard aircraft unit in San Diego.³⁰⁵

Sunderland asked Gefken how they would get more arms.³⁰⁶

³⁰⁰ Report dated September 5, 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 4; Deposition of John Schmidt (dated September 22, 1933), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 6.

³⁰¹ Transcript, Schmidt testimony, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 4, Folder 5.

³⁰² Things That Should Have Been Mentioned, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 20.

³⁰³ Report 17, October 10, and Things That Should Have Been Mentioned, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 20.

³⁰⁴ Untitled document (draft summary of Sunderland’s investigation), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 20; Part 1, Box 14, Folder 22.

³⁰⁵ Untitled document (draft summary of Sunderland’s investigation), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 20.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

“Well, it is difficult to smuggle them into the United States on ships,” Gefken admitted. “Ships have to go through the Canal where their cargo is checked. Guns can be smuggled in from Mexico and Canada. All storm troops have personal weapons, but we’ve been instructed not to carry them in public because that would violate resident alien laws.³⁰⁷ When the zero hour comes, we will not hesitate to bring them out.”³⁰⁸ In his report of this conversation with Gefken, Sunderland reminded “1” (Leon Lewis) that the movie studios in Los Angeles had explosives. Sunderland recommended to Lewis that background checks be conducted on German studio workers and that the studios secure their explosives.³⁰⁹

John Schmidt (with Leon Lewis’s assistance) proved his worth to FNG officers by arranging positions for Gefken and Zimmerman in the machine gun company of the Southern California National Guard – and informed the Guard’s commander about the new recruits. Unfortunately, neither Gefken nor Zimmerman was admitted into the Guard: Gefken, because he had false teeth, and Zimmerman, because he could not promise to be punctual to drills because of his day job.³¹⁰

Political Preparation

In order to hasten “der tag,” FNG engaged in a propaganda campaign intended to incite fear of a Communist insurrection while promoting Nazism as America’s ally

³⁰⁷ Schwinn, who was a naturalized citizen, had asked Schmidt to get him a permit to carry a gun. He told Schmidt that he would have someone write a phony letter threatening his life to justify the permit. See, “Report dated September 19, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 5.

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ Report 98, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 20; Part 1, Box 8, Folder 8.

³¹⁰ Report 132 dated October 17, 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 20; Part 1, Box 8, Folder 9.

against the threat. Across the country, the Friends of the New Germany conducted public rallies, sponsored speakers, and distributed literature informing their audiences about the Jews, the Depression, and the Communist threat in the United States. According to historian Alton Frye (1967), millions of deutschemarks were spent by the German government on a massive propaganda assault in the United States between 1933 and 1945 to gain support for Nazism in preparation for *the day*.³¹¹

Despite duplicitous pronouncements from Berlin that National Socialism was not for export, Hollywood's first spies found otherwise.³¹² Merchant marine ships staffed by Nazi Party officials pulled into the port of Los Angeles several times a month in late 1933 to deliver antisemitic literature, money, and orders from Party officials in Berlin to the leaders of the Friends of the New Germany in New York and Los Angeles. The antisemitic literature these ships off-loaded was written specifically for an American audience, playing to American antisemitism, nationalism, and American fear of communism.

The evidence of the propaganda campaign cited by historians like Frye was discovered through covert means like the DAV's operation in Los Angeles. In the first two weeks of his investigation of FNG, John Schmidt reported how excited Winterhalder and Themnitz became with the arrival of each steamship from Germany. On August 25, Schmidt reported that Themnitz, Winterhalder, and Schwinn all "rushed down" to San Pedro to greet the *Eureka* when it arrived in port. The next day,

³¹¹ Frye, *Nazi Germany and the American Hemisphere, 1933-1941*.

³¹² Gyssling stated, "German National Socialism is an exclusively German national affair and not an article for exportation." See newspaper clipping, "Literature of Hitler in LA Described," *Los Angeles Evening Herald and Express*, January 17, 1933, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 3, Folder 37.

Schmidt wrote that the three were busy unpacking books wrapped in burlap that Schmidt surmised came off the boat.³¹³ Several days later, Schmidt went down to the port with Schwinn again, this time to meet the *Este*, where Schmidt witnessed Schwinn receiving a packet of money wrapped in brown paper.³¹⁴ In his report to Lewis, Schmidt recommended more rigorous customs inspections at the port. Schmidt reported that it was fairly easy to take anything off a ship without interference from customs officials. “[A] good dinner and a bottle of champagne on board the ship and a twenty dollar bill went a long way” with customs officials.³¹⁵

The Friends of the New Germany used the materials they received from Germany to plaster Los Angeles with pro-Nazi political propaganda. Every Thursday night in 1933 and 1934, FNG offered free public lectures at Turnverein Hall.³¹⁶ Speakers addressed the audience in both German and English on the current domestic and international affairs through the prism of Nazi ideology. The weekly lectures dealt with such topics as the political significance of the Hitler movement, Jewish control of capitalism, Moscow and the international Communist conspiracy, and the triumph of Hitler over this threat to western civilization.³¹⁷

Leon Lewis often sent stenographers to these early FNG lectures. Multi-page, single-spaced, verbatim transcripts of these speeches are in the LAJCC’s files, along with reports of the meetings submitted by John and Alyce Schmidt, Carl Sunderland,

³¹³ Report dated August 25, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 4.

³¹⁴ Ibid.

³¹⁵ Report dated September 19, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 5.

³¹⁶ Report dated October 29, 1933, (written by John and Alyce Schmidt), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 10.

³¹⁷ Report, September 10, 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 10, Folder 16.

and Bert Allen.³¹⁸ It is remarkable that FNG would have allowed anyone to sit in their audience so obviously taking notes on every word that was being said, but they did. Such note-taking activity at political meetings must have been common at public lectures, because Lewis' stenographers were never asked to leave.

These public talks were integral to FNG's goal of priming America politically for "der tag." Questions from the audience during these public talks, intended to challenge FNG and their pro-Nazi speakers, were used by the group to correct "misconceptions" about the New Germany that the "Jewish-controlled press" was spreading. Were German Jews being persecuted? Ernst Martens, FNG's public relations officer, consistently dismissed these allegations as Jewish or Communist (the two groups were interchangeable in the discourse) lies. Was Germany antisemitic? FNG speakers were indignant with the question. No, they explained, Germany was not antisemitic, but it had a right to defend itself against Socialists and Communists who had caused Germany's post-war depression.³¹⁹ They warned their audiences that the same subversions Jews plotted in Germany were being planned in America. Jews were also America's enemy, and therefore, Hitler and the Nazi Party were America's best ally in the fight against the international Jewish menace.³²⁰ Comments like these peppered every FNG public lecture, even as FNG representatives dismissed audience concerns that the Friends of the New Germany was actually a political organization associated with Berlin.

³¹⁸ For transcripts of speeches given at Silver Shirt and Friends of the New Germany meetings in late 1933, see John Schmidt's reports, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folders 8-9; report dated September 25, 1933 (submitted by Sunderland), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 10, Folder 16.

³¹⁹ Report of Elf regarding meeting on Thursday, September 28, 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 19.

³²⁰ Report dated October 16, 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 10, Folder 16.

FNG positioned itself as “loyal American citizens whose purpose it was to promote friendlier relations between the United States and their homeland,” even though few of them were actually U.S. citizens and the rest had no intention of becoming so.³²¹ To prove their loyalty to America, at the end of FNG gatherings, attendees gave three cheers for FDR at every meeting. And to demonstrate their “fairness,” the crowd was also rallied to give three cheers for Hitler, too. The audience rose obediently and “in true German fashion, presented the Hitler salute, and gave three lusty ‘Heils’ – one for Hitler, one for Hindenburg and one for FDR.”³²²

The Aryan Bookstore in downtown Los Angeles was critical to the political preparation for “der tag.” To passersby, the store appeared to be an innocent bookshop specializing in political works about National Socialism. In reality, however, the shop was a front for Nazi headquarters in Los Angeles. The books, magazines, and newspapers sold at the shop were published in Germany by the Ministry of Propaganda and exported to America with the express purpose of transplanting Nazism to the United States. The antisemitic content in this literature ran the gamut from rabid Jew-bashing to more subtle analyses that cloaked their antisemitic agenda in the pretense of “academic scholarship.”³²³ John Schmidt found orders to Pape on how to manage the shop from New York. Bookshop personnel were all educated in National Socialism and were required to have read *Mein Kampf*,

³²¹Letter, Dr. E. Rosenberg to Leon Lewis, October 4, 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 22. While Themnitz and Winterhalder had both taken out “first papers” towards naturalization, neither had any intention of completing the process. For Pape’s comments, see notes on meeting of Thursday, September 28, 1933 (written by William Conley), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 19.

³²²Notes on meeting of Thursday September 28, 1933 written by William Conley and notes written by Sunderland, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 19.

³²³See propaganda from Germany files, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 17, Folder 31.

but all bookstore personnel were to be American, John Schmidt learned, and Pape was ordered to have women do the selling.³²⁴

The back rooms of the Aryan Bookstore in Los Angeles housed the headquarters for the Friends of the New Germany. A pencil drawing of the store's layout from one of John Schmidt's reports shows that the shop had a small retail space in the front with a door that led to a back workroom and several private offices for FNG leaders.³²⁵ Schmidt's daily reports indicate that the backroom was often busier than the retail space. FNG leaders used the offices to conduct daily business, responding to correspondence from New York, planning their next public rally, and receiving a parade of local allies such as Captain Hynes of the Red Squad, Vice Consul Gyssling, and leaders of domestic right-wing groups they were courting. Schmidt noted that the doors to the offices were padlocked when they were not in use. Alyce Schmidt spent most of her time in the bookstore's reading room typing documents and correspondence for Pape, which she sometimes took home so that she could make additional copies for Leon Lewis.³²⁶ Working inconspicuously amongst the hangers-on, Alyce reported on the conversations she overheard in the rear of the bookstore.³²⁷

The Aryan Bookstore also provided FNG with its most constant, visible presence in Los Angeles, attracting potential new members to FNG everyday.

Thanks to the Depression, a mass of idle, unemployed men aimlessly roamed the

³²⁴ Report dated September 7, 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 4.

³²⁵ Hand-drawn floor plan of Aryan Bookstore, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 6.

³²⁶ Report by 17 dated October 13, 1933 (written by Alice Schmidt), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 20.

³²⁷ Alyce Schmidt's reports are mixed in with John's. She was agent 17. See, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folders 5-10 and Box 14, Folder 21.

streets of downtown Los Angeles during the day. Storefront headquarters of new political organizations like the Friends of the New Germany provided a daytime hang-out for men with no other place to go.³²⁸ The Aryan Bookstore was just such a refuge for the unemployed who hung out morning 'til night in the reading room, passing time with others who likewise, had nowhere else to go. Settling into the reading room in the back of the shop to read a Nazi publication, or pulling up to the large worktable, regulars at the Aryan Bookstore were inculcated with Nazism as they discussed politics, read Nazi literature, folded FNG flyers, and clipped and pasted news articles about Jews and Communists into scrapbooks.³²⁹

Feeding on shared frustrations, their conversations revolved around the movement, “der tag,” Jews and Communists. According to John Schmidt, it was nearly impossible to engage these people in conversation without talking about Jews. *Jews had started the war. Jewish bankers were responsible for the Depression.* “All Jews are yellow dogs,” Pape said, “they only went into the army when they were forced to serve, and after the war, they took over all the political offices in Germany and they all got rich.” Jews were a landless people, a nation within a nation wherever they went. That is why, Pape said, “they are out to take over the countries in which they live, and...why America is just as threatened by the Jews as Germany is.

³²⁸ Reports by DAV investigators Walter Clairville and Mark White on the Silver Shirts in Los Angeles also note how Silver Shirt headquarters became a kind of club house for its members, most of whom were unemployed men (some women) who had no where else to go during the day.

³²⁹ Report by Elf to Activities, October 12, 1933, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 20.

Americans must wake up and follow Germany's example...America must purify itself or it will die," he told Schmidt.³³⁰

Making "Friends"

Finally, preparation for "der tag" also involved reaching out to domestic right-wing groups in Los Angeles who might support the pro-Nazi cause. Pape, Schwinn, Winterhalder, and Themnitz hoped to partner with domestic right-wing groups in Los Angeles as they were doing with P.A.L. Domestic right-wing groups were often comprised of the kinds of people FNG wanted to attract: disgruntled veterans who shared the same antipathies towards Communists and Jews. In Los Angeles, hundreds of these groups sprung up in the city during the 1930s. Most were located within a ten square-block radius of each other, perpetuating downtown Los Angeles' long history as a site of political intrigue and confrontation. A full analysis of Los Angeles as a hotbed of Nazi-influenced activity will be presented in chapter seven, but, for the purpose of this chapter, it is important to note that within days of their first visit to the Aryan Bookstore, John Schmidt and Carl Sunderland observed an emerging web of relationships between domestic right-wing groups and the Friends of the New Germany, and, more specifically, between FNG and a group called the Silver Legion.

As early as June 1933, reports given to Leon Lewis by Red Hynes noted that copies of the Silver Shirt newspaper *Liberation* were available at FNG meetings.³³¹

³³⁰ Notes on meeting of Thursday, September 28, 1933 (written by William Conley), CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 19.

On July 12, 1933 another police report noted that Silver Shirt chapter leader Ernest Hill was observed at “local Nazi headquarters on two or three occasions.”³³² On September 11, Schmidt reported that Winterhalder sent Reverend Robert Shuler, leader of Los Angeles’s “morality police” and KKK cheerleader, a stack of pro-Nazi literature with a note instructing Shuler to concentrate on ministers and priests, because “[t]hey can help us most.”³³³

Of the 400+ right-wing groups that the LAJCC monitored in Los Angeles during the 1930s, the Silver Shirt Legion posed the most viable political threat. Like the Friends of the New Germany, the Silver Legion was a national political organization with effective leadership. Its mission was (1) to make it clear to the American public that antisemitism was necessary as the only means toward securing a cure for the present conditions; and (2) to remove Jews from positions of authority in government, finances, and economic circles.³³⁴ Based in North Carolina, the group’s founder and “Chief” was William Dudley Pelley, a former Hollywood screenwriter turned political demagogue in 1933. Pelley claimed that he had received a clairaudient (voices) message instructing him to form the Silver Legion and to establish the “Christ Government in America...a Gentile government against the Jews.”³³⁵ Inspired by

³³¹ Report dated June 25, 1933 (n.d., no author, probably written by police investigator and given to Leon Lewis), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 17.

³³² Nazi Organizational Activities (dated July 12, 1933, no author, probably Los Angeles police agent or informant), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 17. This report is in the same folder as reports copied by Leon Lewis from police records. It is likely that this report was done by the police and given to Leon Lewis as part of his collaboration with Red Hynes in the summer of 1933.

³³³ Report dated September 11, 1933 and report dated September 12, 1933 (written by Schmidt), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 5.

³³⁴ Report, dated September 16 (written by Carl Sunderland), *ibid.* Part 1, Part I, Box 10, Folder 16.

³³⁵ Report 126 (n.d., c. September 15, 1933, submitted by John Schmidt), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 9.

Hitler, Pelley declared himself the “American fuehrer” and promoted his utopian society, the Christian Commonwealth.

Antisemitism was central to Pelley’s Christian Commonwealth. Jews were the cause of America’s problems, according to local Silver Shirt organizers in Los Angeles, just as they had been the source of Germany’s woes for 2,000 years. According to one of Sunderland’s reports on a Silver Shirt meeting in Hollywood, the Silver Shirts would soon be a uniformed military organization, ready to take America back from “aliens in Washington.”³³⁶ “No doubt there will be bloody noses, skinned heads and plenty of lives lost,” the head of the Silver Legion in California told his audience that night in Hollywood, “but, losses will be unavoidable. Just as Christ drove the money changers out of the temple, the Silver Shirts will drive out all those who did not fall in with their movement.”³³⁷

In early October 1933, Carl Sunderland and Bert Allen applied for membership in the Silver Shirts, which pleased Pape and Schwinn. Sunderland and Allen were proving to be the perfect recruits. Their associations with P.A.L., FNG, and the Silver Shirts complemented FNG’s plans for “der tag” perfectly.³³⁸ The FNG leaders hoped that their veteran friends would promote Nazism among veterans, attract new members to the Friends of the New Germany, and broker new relationships with domestic right-wing groups in support of the coming Nazi revolution in America.

³³⁶ Report 90 (n.d., probably October 1, 1933, written by Schmidt) *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 8.

³³⁷ Report dated September 25, 1933 (written by Sunderland), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 10, Folder 16.

³³⁸ Report of Number Eight, October 5, 1933 for October 4, 1933 (written by Sunderland), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 14, Folder 20.

Conclusion

When the DAV veterans embarked on their independent inquiry of the Friends of the New Germany in August 1933, they never expected to uncover a problem of such enormous political consequence. Nor did they expect that their inquiry would last more than a couple of weeks. However, the veterans did discover a major political conspiracy. Nazi agents in the United States, with the support of Berlin, were preparing to lead a Nazi insurrection in America. The DAV volunteers believed that the situation required immediate attention from law enforcement officials, but when Leon Lewis appealed to chief of police James Davis, Davis rebuffed Lewis as a Jew who did not understand that Nazis were not the real menace in Los Angeles. For the next six months, the DAV volunteers maintained their surveillance of Nazi activity in the city until their leader Leon Lewis secured the financial support and political cover that transformed them into *Hollywood's* spies.

This then was the origin of Hollywood's spies. The covert fact-finding operation conducted by the Jews of Los Angeles between 1934 and 1941 began not as an operation by Jews in response to antisemitism, but rather as an independent inquiry by a small group of American veterans responding to Nazism. None of the original investigators were Jews, but they were all concerned with the threat that Nazism posed to American democracy. Despite police Chief James Davis' dismissal of Leon Lewis' concerns, the DAV volunteers demonstrated that Nazism in Los Angeles was not just a Jewish problem.

Chapter Three
Becoming Hollywood's Spies

When the DAV volunteers set out to investigate the Friends of the New Germany, Schmidt, Sunderland, Allen, and Lewis never expected to find a political conspiracy of the magnitude they did. Only two weeks after John Schmidt submitted his first report, Leon Lewis was meeting with Captain Red Hynes and Chief James Davis to appeal for greater police attention to the problem. Rebuffed by Davis, Lewis understood that he and his DAV colleagues were on their own to monitor Nazi activity in Los Angeles except, perhaps, for the police resources he might be able to “purchase” from Red Hynes. Over the course of the next six months, as FNG revealed itself to be a subversive threat to democracy, Leon Lewis worked tirelessly within veteran circles and the Jewish community to secure the financial and political resources the situation demanded.

Leon Lewis was the driving force behind the creation of the Los Angeles Jewish Community Committee (LAJCC) and Hollywood's spies. Without Lewis' dedicated leadership in the Fall of 1933, the LAJCC might never have been established. The three Jewish “islands” within the Los Angeles archipelago were too socially and ethnically isolated from each other. It is difficult to imagine that a Jewish organization that cut across those lines could have been created without strong leadership, and without Lewis' skill as a political strategist, neither the DAV inquiry nor the LAJCC's undercover operation would have had the political impact they did. This chapter, therefore, introduces Leon Lewis as the political force behind Jewish

resistance of Nazism in Los Angeles and shares the strategies he employed that transformed the DAV investigators into *Hollywood's* spies in both fact and style.

Leadership

Between August 1933 and March 1934, Leon Lewis worked tirelessly to secure the financial and political resources needed to combat the rise of Nazism in Los Angeles. At a time when Americans all around him were struggling to survive the Depression, Leon Lewis sidelined his law practice to struggle with Nazism in America. Rebuffed by the chief of police and embattled by leaders of the Jewish community during that six-month period, Lewis could have just washed his hands of the whole affair and withdrawn to deal with the Depression as well. But he didn't. As a result of his dedication and strategic vision, Lewis secured both the funding and the political cover that converted the DAV investigators into Hollywood's spies.

The Chess Master

Leon Lewis was a chess player, a *chess-by-mail* chess player. At home, Lewis maintained a chessboard with a game in progress that he frequently studied while awaiting the mailman to deliver his distant challenger's next move (see Appendix 1: Photographs).³³⁹ Over the eight-year period that he directed Hollywood's spies, Lewis emerges as a patient political strategist and shrewd tactician. These qualities were evident in the first few months of the DAV investigation, as Lewis resisted the

³³⁹ Laura Rosenzweig, interview with Claire Lewis Read, 2005.

temptation to go public with the sensational information of FNG's subversive activity. Lewis showed himself to be disciplined and calculating in his management of the undercover operation. As each day's reports brought new revelations of FNG's relationship with Germany and the group's preparations for "der tag," Lewis became *more* circumspect. Lewis gathered the evidence, building a compelling case with each passing day, and waited for "the mailman" to bring news of his opponents' next move.

The chess master's strategic vision for the undercover operation was reflected in the tactics he adopted to combat Nazism. Lewis understood the political ramifications that antisemitism in America had for American Jewish political agency in 1933. His encounter with James Davis proved that Jews could not engage in a public fight against Nazis in America. They would have to rely on non-Jewish partners to lead the charge. In Los Angeles, Leon Lewis "recruit[ed] the best men from among veteran circles, selecting high ranking officers from the U.S. army with unquestionable patriotic records, all [of whom] were Protestants."³⁴⁰ During the DAV inquiry and for the next eight years, Lewis purposely maintained a low-profile, managing the undercover operations from the privacy of his downtown law offices, directing "messengers" whose American-ness was unimpeachable. Thus Lewis's tactical discretion was the quality that made him an effective leader for such a sensitive political operation.

The "offense-by-proxy" strategy that Lewis employed relied on public relations to undermine Nazism. Over the course of the next eight years, Leon Lewis

³⁴⁰ Memo of speech made by Louis Greenbaum at closed meeting of B'nai B'rith lodges by the AD Committee (n.d., probably 1934), CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 22, Folder 11.

judiciously selected opportunities to use the information his agents collected to expose insurgent Nazism in the United States to the critical light of day, relying on American public opinion to do the rest. Lewis was so successful in executing this strategy that until now, the role that the Jews of Los Angeles played in various local and federal investigations and prosecutions of Nazis in Los Angeles has been hidden from history.

Nexus

While Leon Lewis's skill as a patient political strategist and a shrewd tactician made him the ideal candidate to lead Jewish resistance of Nazism in Los Angeles in the 1930s, Lewis's unique personal associations and past professional experience were also critical to his effectiveness as a leader. Leon Lewis was the nexus between the Jews of Los Angeles and an unlikely political partner, the city's veterans organizations. As a result of his membership in both the DAV and the American Legion, "the chess master" was able to discreetly broker a political partnership between the Jews of Los Angeles and the city's veterans, a group whose American-ness was unimpeachable, even if the latter did not realize they were affianced to the former.

Major Leon Lewis was a world war veteran with strong ties to veterans' organizations in Los Angeles, but Leon Lewis was not just another veteran. During World War I, he had served as legal counsel for the War Risk Insurance Bureau in Washington, D.C., settling claims for wounded veterans and the families of deceased

soldiers.³⁴¹ After the war, Lewis was active in two national veterans groups, the American Legion and the Disabled American Veterans, leading the political charge to protect veterans' benefits from federal spending cuts. Lewis had earned a reputation as an advocate for veterans' rights, and he therefore was a respected member of both the American Legion and the Disabled American Veterans in California. As a Jew, Lewis's membership in these veterans' organizations, let alone his stature, was uncommon. In the 1920s and 1930s, American veterans' groups were populated and led by individuals with strong nationalist and antisemitic prejudices.³⁴² Jewish veterans did not join the American Legion and related veterans' organizations in large numbers, preferring the camaraderie of the Jewish Veterans of Foreign War. Leon Lewis, however, was a "positive role model" for Jews within the American Legion, one Jewish Legionnaire noted. Lewis had been "colleagues with the non-Jews of the veterans' organizations for 15 years, teaching them that the Jew is just as kindly and human as others who desire to serve their fellow citizen...as they...desire."³⁴³ This backhanded compliment testifies to Lewis' exceptional status as a Jew within the Legion *in spite* of the Legion's pervasive antisemitic culture. Nevertheless, when FNG leaders initiated their courtship of veterans in Los Angeles in the summer of

³⁴¹ Leon Lewis Private Papers, courtesy of Claire Lewis Read, in author's possession. As a minor correction to Neal Gabler's characterization of Leon Lewis, Lewis was not gassed in the world war because he never saw active duty (Gabler, 296). Lewis had a desk job with the War Risk Insurance bureau in London. He did, however, contract the Spanish flu in 1917 while on a fact-finding tour of the French front that left him with respiratory problems. Lewis moved from Chicago to Los Angeles in 1930 because of his chronic respiratory problems.

³⁴² Leonard Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

³⁴³ Memo of speech made by Louis Greenbaum at closed meeting of B'nai B'rith lodges by the AD Committee (n.d., probably 1934), CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 22, Folder 11.

1933, Leon Lewis was in the right place at the right time to guide the independent inquiry.

Leon Lewis was also a member of the Jewish community in Los Angeles. Born in Wisconsin to immigrant parents in 1889, Lewis moved from Chicago to Los Angeles in 1930 with his young family for health reasons.³⁴⁴ An assimilated American Jew of German descent, Lewis joined the Jewish organizations that attracted the second and third generation Jews in Los Angeles: B'nai B'rith Lodge 487, Hillcrest Country Club, and the oldest congregation in the city, Congregation B'nai B'rith (no relation to the fraternal organization) now known as the Wilshire Boulevard Temple. Lewis was not an observant Jew, but he escorted his more-observant mother to synagogue regularly on Friday nights.³⁴⁵ Lewis's membership in these Jewish organizations gave him access to the wealthiest and most influential Jews.

Lewis, however, was not just another Jewish lawyer in Los Angeles. For the better part of the first thirteen years of his professional life in Chicago (1913-1925, with a break for the war), Leon Lewis had served as the first national secretary of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), the civil rights defense arm of the national Jewish fraternal organization, B'nai B'rith.³⁴⁶ During that time, Lewis helped conceive the ADL's policies on fighting defamation and refined the tactics the group employed to silence unabashed public slander and discrimination of Jews in the American press

³⁴⁴ Letter, Lewis to Colonel Henry Lindsley, September 15, 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 28, Folder 22; Rosenzweig, interview with Claire Read.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁶ Nathan Belth, *Not the Work of a Day: The Story of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith* (New York: Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 1963), 107-108.

and on the American stage. From its inception, the ADL believed that public expressions of prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination set a social standard that sanctioned discrimination.³⁴⁷ The early ADL rarely resorted to the courts to defend Jewish civil rights against slander or discrimination.³⁴⁸ The prejudices of the day would not have supported their appeals. Instead, the ADL relied on private appeals to individual conscience and propriety to discourage public expressions of prejudice and discrimination that the ADL believed perpetuated a climate of intolerance and prejudice.³⁴⁹ Leon Lewis brought that experience, skill, and the ADL's preference for discreet political action with him to Los Angeles from Chicago.

The DAV veterans did not know that while Lewis was directing their operation, he was functioning as a leader within the Los Angeles Jewish community as well. Lewis was in daily contact with local Jewish leaders in Los Angeles, as well as with the leaders of the ADL in Chicago and the American Jewish Committee in New York City, concerning Nazi activity in Los Angeles. Lewis channeled the evidence collected by DAV investigators of Nazi subversion in Los Angeles to federal authorities through this network for the next eleven years.

* * *

The leadership and strategy that Leon Lewis brought to the resistance effort in Los Angeles converted the DAV investigators into *Hollywood's* spies. To achieve this goal, Leon Lewis had to navigate the turbulent waters of identity that antisemitism in

³⁴⁷ Deborah Dash Moore, *B'nai B'rith and the Challenge of Ethnic Leadership* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981), 106.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 107-108.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 107-113.

the United States created for American Jews in the 1930s. Lewis saw himself as an American of the Jewish faith, but the antisemitic climate in which he lived racialized his Jewishness in an effort to delegitimize his American-ness. Lewis, therefore, adopted the offense-by-proxy approach to civil rights defense that American Jews had employed for decades.³⁵⁰ Leon Lewis was an adept practitioner of these offense-by-proxy methods of defense, and through his leadership, the Jews of Los Angeles were empowered to take on Nazism in their city.

The Road to *Hollywood's Spies*

John Schmidt wrote his first report on the Friends of the New Germany on August 20, 1933. By September 15, Leon Lewis had met separately with Captain Bill “Red” Hynes and Chief James Davis of the Los Angeles police and realized that the only real support he could expect from the Los Angeles police would come from resources he could “purchase” from the Red Squad. The fight against Nazism in the city would have to be a private affair and thus would need funding from private sources. Between September 1933 and March 1934, Leon Lewis worked tirelessly to secure the funding that converted the DAV investigators into Hollywood’s spies.

³⁵⁰ Belth, *Not the Work of a Day: The Story of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith*; David Biale, *Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History* (New York: Schocken Books, 1986); Naomi Cohen, *Not Free to Desist: The American Jewish Committee, 1906-1966*, (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1972); *Jews in Christian America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); "Pioneers of American Jewish Defense," in *Anti-Semitism in America*, ed. Jeffrey Gurock (New York: Routledge, 1998); "An Overview of American Jewish Defense," in *Jews and the American Public Square: Debating Religion and Republic*, ed. Alan Mittleman, Robert Licht and Jonathan Sarna (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002); Henry L. Feingold, *Jewish Power in America: Myth and Reality* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2008); Moore, *B'nai B'rith and the Challenge of Ethnic Leadership*.

Along the way, he also fired the first salvo at the Friends of the New Germany to the American public, establishing the strategy that transformed the DAV investigators into Hollywood's spies *in style* as well.

"The Monied Men"

For Lewis, the most obvious source of funding for the undercover operation was B'nai B'rith. After all, B'nai B'rith was the parent organization of the Anti-Defamation League, and Nazi activity in Los Angeles was certainly a defamation issue for the city's Jews. Moreover, Los Angeles' B'nai B'rith Lodge was the best-organized and largest Jewish institution in the city. Its nearly two thousand members came from all three segments of the city's Jewish community, the recently arrived Eastern European Jews of Boyle Heights, the Jews of Hollywood (also newcomers), and the well-to-do second and third generation descendants of Los Angeles' pioneering Jewish families.³⁵¹ Lewis was confident that B'nai B'rith would provide the financial support needed to maintain the DAV investigation of Nazi activity in the city.

Lewis was wrong. The men of B'nai B'rith did not come through for him. In the Fall of 1933, B'nai B'rith in Los Angeles, like so many other Jewish organizations across the United States, was internally split over the proper course of action to take in

³⁵¹ Max Vorspan and Lloyd P. Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1970), 151. Of the "big three" national Jewish organizations, B'nai B'rith was the only one organized in Los Angeles before 1933. Soon after the crisis in Germany began in 1933, the American Jewish Congress launched a chapter in LA. The American Jewish Committee did not have a network of local, but rather, depended on individuals to join the as members of a central national organization.

defense of German Jews. At the national level, B'nai B'rith discouraged its members from participating in public protests sponsored by the American Jewish Congress and Jewish labor groups. The more conservative leadership of B'nai B'rith believed that the German people would resolve the problem in due time without the embarrassment of international protest. However, as Nazi persecution of German Jews accelerated during 1933, B'nai B'rith's low profile, wait-and-see policy began to frustrate some of its members. In Los Angeles, Leon Lewis ran aground of that frustration when he approached B'nai B'rith with his low-profile approach to fighting Nazism in their own city.³⁵²

Lewis, a loyal organization man, was forced to split from his beloved B'nai B'rith to start a new anti-defamation council to support the DAV investigation. Working with a few B'nai B'rith brothers who supported the undercover operation, Lewis and his small band of B'nai B'rith "renegades" approached attorney Joseph Loeb, one of the wealthiest men in Los Angeles, to help them organize the new group.³⁵³ Loeb was the second-generation descendant of one of Los Angeles's pioneering, mid-nineteenth century Jewish families, the Newmarks. Loeb's grandfather, Harris Newmark, had been a successful businessman, a community leader, the founder of Merchants' and Farmers' Bank (which later became Union Bank of California), and a city leader in the late 19th century.³⁵⁴ Loeb's father, Leon Loeb, had been the owner of the first department store in Los Angeles, The City of Paris, and

³⁵² For more on the political in-fighting among the Jewish leaders of Los Angeles, particularly within B'nai B'rith, see correspondence, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 22, Folder 18.

³⁵³ Letter, Lewis to Gutstadt, July 21, 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 22, Folder 18.

³⁵⁴ Harris Newmark's autobiography, *Sixty Years in Southern California*, is a widely cited source on Los Angeles history from 1850-1910.

Loeb himself was a highly successful attorney in the firm of Loeb, Walker, and Loeb.³⁵⁵ Lewis shared the DAV reports with Loeb, who agreed to help.

Loeb arranged a meeting with the most prominent Jews in Los Angeles.³⁵⁶ The thirty men who attended the September 1, 1933 meeting were wealthy Jewish bankers, real estate developers, merchants, judges, and doctors, the second and third generation descendants of Los Angeles's pioneering German Jewish families. Lewis was confident that "the monied men"³⁵⁷ of Jewish Los Angeles would rally to the cause, because, as he noted in a letter to Gutstadt, "these men had more to lose and more to be afraid of than all the rest of the B'nai B'rith membership locally combined."³⁵⁸ The group met at the home of Superior Court Judge Robert Pacht. Lewis reported on the findings of the DAV investigators and pulled no punches in pointing out the threat that Nazis in the city posed to them personally. Lewis's appeal was effective. The new group pledged to raise \$5,000 to fund the DAV investigation.³⁵⁹

The new anti-defamation committee ruffled B'nai B'rith feathers. B'nai B'rith leaders viewed the new group as a direct challenge to their authority within the Jewish community, not to mention a competitor for scarce and desperately needed philanthropic dollars during those darkest days of the Depression.³⁶⁰ The antagonism turned personal. Lewis reported that he had become the target of "[a]n underhanded

³⁵⁵ Vorspan and Gartner, 75, 92, 222.

³⁵⁶ Letter, Lewis to Gutstadt, July 21, 1933, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 22, Folder 18; Letter, Lewis to Gutstadt, August 25, 1933, *ibid.*, Part I, Box 22, Folder 19.

³⁵⁷ Letter, Lewis to Gutstadt, August 25, 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 22, Folder 19.

³⁵⁸ For more on the political in-fighting among the Jewish leadership of Los Angeles, particularly within B'nai B'rith itself, see correspondence, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 22, Folder 19.

³⁵⁹ Letter, Gutstadt to Arthur Rosenblum, July 25, 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 22, Folder 11.

³⁶⁰ Letter, Gutstadt to Arthur Rosenblum, July 25, 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 22, Folder 11.

campaign of slurring remarks...impugning [his] motives and methods of fund control.”

In a letter to Gutstadt, Lewis wrote that certain B’nai B’rith leaders were

“jealous...concerned that I have political [aspirations] in the [B’nai B’rith] District, which I do not.” These jealous B’nai B’rithers marked Lewis as a “self-promoter [who was] trying to make a job for himself without proper B’nai B’rith control.”³⁶¹

Lewis told Gutstadt:

I have become the target for innuendoes questioning my loyalty to the Order. Needless to say, I have tried in every possible way to maintain the prestige of the Order and the League so far as was consistent with efficiency and operation, and this is in the face of non-cooperation and even active opposition from a few B’nai B’rith leaders. It has been a tempest in the teapot.³⁶²

Lewis dismissed the allegations, noting that no such competition between his new “AD Council” and Lodge 487’s Anti-Defamation Council existed, because a large portion of the new council’s funds was coming from non-B’nai B’rith members anyway.³⁶³ Nevertheless, while Nazi agents in Los Angeles met secretly with Nazi Party officers on board merchant ships, trained a private militia, and conspired to infiltrate the California National Guard, the leaders of B’nai B’rith in Los Angeles were arguing over organizational turf.

Resentment of Lewis and the new anti-defamation council was all for naught. Eight weeks after the group’s first meeting, only \$1,000 had been collected, \$300 of which was owed to Lewis.³⁶⁴ The “monied men” of the new group failed to raise the

³⁶¹ Letter, Lewis to Gutstadt, May 22, 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 23, Folder 4.

³⁶² Letter, Lewis to Gutstadt, April 5, 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 23, Folder 3.

³⁶³ Letter, Lewis to Gutstadt, November 1, 1933 (second letter written to Gutstadt that day), *ibid.*, Box 22, Folder 20.

³⁶⁴ Letter, Lewis to Gutstadt, November 1, 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 22, Folder 20.

money they had promised. Lewis continued to find himself “chronically out of pocket from \$200-\$600,” having to personally raise additional money when funds ran out.³⁶⁵ Lamenting to Gutstadt that Los Angeles was “the toughest city in the country in which to raise money for any purpose,” Lewis continued to fund the DAV investigators out of his own pocket through the winter while he searched for benefactors.³⁶⁶

The Mailman Delivers

At the same time that Lewis was searching for financial backing, “the chess master” was also receiving daily reports from his DAV colleagues. In October, FNG handed Lewis that opening. John Schmidt reported that FNG officials in New York ordered their regional gauleiters to secure additional funds and followers by gaining control over their local federation of German-American societies. In Los Angeles, the German-American federation, called the *Deutsche Amerikanische Stadt Verbund*, or the German-American Alliance was comprised of approximately three dozen German-American social and cultural organizations in the city.³⁶⁷ Member organizations paid dues to the Alliance, which in turn provided services and resources to its member organizations. The German-American Alliance in Los Angeles owned real estate in the city, a building at 926 West Washington Blvd, and a private camp, Hindenburg Park in La Crescenta, just north and east of downtown. FNG leaders believed those

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

³⁶⁶ Letter, Lewis to Frank Prince, January 25, 1934, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 26, Folder 14.

³⁶⁷ Samuel Duff McCoy, "Hitlerism Invades America, Part II," *Today* 1, no. 24 (April 7, 1934): 26. Note that Richard Gutstadt gave McCoy the DAV reports from Los Angeles for this magazine series, much to Leon Lewis' ire. Translation from the German Original into the English language: Accused of Nazi Intrigue in Los Angeles, January 6, 1934, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 3, Folder 37; Transcript, Sunderland Testimony, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 4, Folder 4.

real estate assets to be worth \$25,000 to \$30,000 and they hoped to gain control over them by hijacking the upcoming board of directors election.³⁶⁸

Representation in the Alliance was determined by the size of each organization. In order to steal the election, the Friends of the New Germany filed three separate membership applications to join the Alliance in September 1933, one for itself, one for the Women's Auxiliary of the Friends of the New Germany (which did not yet exist) and a third for the sports abteilung.³⁶⁹ Pape told Schmidt that he lied about the size of FNG's membership in order to acquire enough pro-Nazi delegates to steal the election.³⁷⁰

The Alliance's pro-Nazi president, Max Socha, presided over the election. The first item on the agenda was the admission of new organizations. Socha read the names of the new FNG organizations. Ignoring protests from the floor about the FNG's eligibility, the number of members it reported, and the paramilitary nature of the sports abteilung, Socha admitted all three pro-Nazi groups into the Alliance, giving the pro-Nazi faction within the Alliance a majority.³⁷¹ The pro-Nazi delegates swept the pro-Nazi Max Socha to re-election as president along with a new, pro-Nazi board of directors.³⁷²

The anti-Nazi organizations of the Alliance were livid about the fraudulent election. Several dozen member-organizations wrote angry letters to the board

³⁶⁸ Transcript, Sunderland Testimony, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 4, Folder 4.

³⁶⁹ Report of monthly meeting of GA, September 9, 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 16, Folder 2.

³⁷⁰ Transcript, Schmidt testimony, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 4, Folder 5.

³⁷¹ Report 119, October 13 [1933], *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 5.

³⁷² "Hitlerism Invades America, Part I," *Today* 1, no. 23 (March 31, 1934): 31.

protesting the election.³⁷³ Philip Lenhardt, the delegate from Los Angeles' Liederkranz (German-American Singing Society) and former secretary of the Alliance, wrote an open letter to the German-American community in Los Angeles exposing the conspiratorial nature of the FNG and Socha's complicity. Unable to get any of the mainstream Los Angeles dailies or the *California Staats Zeitung* (the German-language newspaper that Gyssling and Winterhalder had already co-opted) to publish his letter, Lenhardt sent his letter to the Jewish community newspaper, the *B'nai B'rith Messenger*, which was all too happy to publish a denunciation of Nazis in the city by a non-Jew.³⁷⁴ In his open letter, Lenhardt accused Socha of conspiring with FNG in return for their support of his presidency.³⁷⁵ Lenhardt declared, "We loyal German-Americans will investigate and fight this election. We will not tolerate the dangers of Nazi tactics to our colony."³⁷⁶ At the first meeting of the Alliance following the election, Schmidt reported that Lenhardt disrupted the meeting, calling out, "Max, you are a traitor! You sold us out to the troublemaking Nazies [sic]. Max, you will pay."³⁷⁷

FNG's fraudulent take-over of the German-American Alliance gave Leon Lewis the opening he was waiting for to expose the Friends of the New Germany.

³⁷³ For dozens of protest letters written from member organizations of the German-American Alliance, see CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 16, Folders 2 and 3.

³⁷⁴ Report 168, November 14, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 11. Otto Deissler, a senior officer of the board of the German-American Alliance, representative for Los Angeles Lodge No 12 of the Sons of Herman, and Past Grand President of the State Lodge of the Sons of Herman told John Schmidt of Lenhardt's efforts to have his letter published in a major daily. See letter to Editor by Phillip Lenhardt, *B'nai B'rith Messenger*, October 25, 1933.

³⁷⁵ Report by Number Eleven, November 10, 1933, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 16, Folder 2.

³⁷⁶ Letter to Editor by Phillip Lenhardt, *B'nai B'rith Messenger*, October 25, 1933.

³⁷⁷ Report 165, November 11 [1933], CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 11.

Shortly following the election, Lewis contrived a plan that required John Schmidt to lead the disgruntled anti-Nazi groups of the German-American Alliance against the new board of the Alliance. In order to do that, Lewis, arranged for Sunderland and Allen to purposely betray John Schmidt as an informant to Pape and Schwinn in order to free Schmidt.³⁷⁸ When Pape found out that Schmidt was an informant, he was irate. Not only did Pape send Schmidt a “Dear John” letter dismissing him from the Friends of the New Germany (and asking him to return his membership card) but over the next several months, as Schmidt worked with the anti-Nazi faction to bring a civil suit against the German-American Alliance, Schmidt received threatening phone calls as well.³⁷⁹

Deissler and Lenhardt v. Socha, et.al. was a civil suit engineered by Leon Lewis to call public attention to Nazi activity in Los Angeles. The plaintiffs in the suit were the anti-Nazi German-American organizations that were angry with the fraudulent takeover of the German-American Alliance staged by pro-Nazi forces in the community. In Article XVI of the complaint, the plaintiffs charged that the new member organizations of the German-American Alliance (i.e., the Friends of the New Germany and its subsidiary groups) were political organizations, and therefore ineligible for membership in the Alliance according to the Alliance’s by-laws. The

³⁷⁸ Draft Document, page 11 (n.d., no author, but probably written by Lewis.), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 29, Folder 23.

³⁷⁹ Letter, Pape to Schmidt, November 6, 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 11. Max Socha threatened Schmidt on November 9, 1933 at the German community’s Memorial Day services. Schmidt had a bodyguard with him and Socha mocked him, saying, “Bodyguard, eh Schmidt? Well, you may need one or you may need each other for mutual protection.” See report 162, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 9, Folder 11. Phone threats to John Schmidt are documented in report 190 dated December 12, 1933 (Box 8, Folder 12), and January 21, 1934, and affidavit of John H. Schmidt (n.d., probably early February 1934), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 9, Folder 8.

suit asserted that FNG's purpose was to spread Nazism and to undermine the government of the United States by "carrying on secret and insidious propaganda."³⁸⁰

On its face, *Deissler and Lenhardt v. Socha, et.al.* was really just a petty squabble between two factions of a private organization; but, that squabble offered Leon Lewis an opportunity to contrive a lawsuit exposing the Friends of the New Germany as a duplicitous, Nazi organization. Implementing the offense-by-proxy strategy, Lewis maintained his low profile throughout the process while his "American" colleagues carried the message of Nazi duplicity to the public. In a letter to Richard Gutstadt, Lewis spelled out the rationale behind the strategy:

From a publicity point of view, the set-up was ideal because it had been so arranged that it was in fact an attempt by one group of Germans to clear their central organization of Nazi influence and further, because the facts presented in Court by Major Allen as to the [DAV] sponsorship of the investigation was strictly true.³⁸¹

From behind the scenes, Lewis coached John Schmidt to persuade the anti-Nazi groups to bring the suit, and connected Schmidt and his disgruntled Alliance friends to three Jewish attorneys who agreed to take the case. Lewis paid the attorneys' fees out of his own pocket and briefed them on how to question FNG witnesses in order to elicit the truth about the Friends of the New Germany during the trial.³⁸² It does not appear, however, that the defendants ever knew who Leon Lewis was, or that the suit brought against them was intended as a show-trial.

³⁸⁰ *Deissler-Lenhardt vs. Socha, et.al.*, *ibid.*, Box 16, Folder 2.

³⁸¹ Letter, Leon Lewis to Richard Gutstadt, January 27, 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 22, Folder 24. In this same letter, Lewis also states that his recent admission to the DAV gave him the cover he needed to maintain the legitimacy of the DAV sponsorship of the investigation.

³⁸² Letters, Leon Lewis to Hugo Harris, April 2 and April 3, 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 4, Folder 1. Lewis paid Harris \$250 and also sent Harris funds to reimburse John Vieth for additional expenses (Letter, Lewis to Harris, May 14, 1934). See *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 4, Folder 1.

The civil suit against the German-American Alliance was front-page news in Los Angeles for two weeks in January 1934, just as Leon Lewis hoped. Sitting anonymously among the crowd in the courtroom gallery, Lewis watched as his DAV colleagues, all former U.S. army officers with unimpeachable credibility as Americans, brought the problem of Nazi activity in Los Angeles to the public's attention. On Monday and Tuesday, January 15-16, 1934, John Schmidt took the witness stand as the star witness for the plaintiffs and was followed later in the week by Sunderland and Allen. The three veterans told the court of the suspicious activities they had witnessed as members of the Friends of the New Germany: Nazi spies living in Los Angeles...money and propaganda smuggled off German ships...a private army training for "der tag"...a complicit German Consul.³⁸³ Their testimonies made headlines in all of Los Angeles' major dailies, each day revealing more spectacular details of a Nazi conspiracy in Los Angeles than the day before.

The sensational headlines drew dozens of curiosity seekers to the court that week. By the fifth day of testimony, the gallery was packed as a scene Lewis hadn't scripted, unfolded. That morning, as John Schmidt sat in the back of the courtroom listening to Max Socha testify, a man sat down next to Schmidt and threatened him. It was the second in-court threat made on Schmidt's life in as many days.

"We'll kill you Schmidt, you son of bitch!"³⁸⁴ the man whispered to Schmidt and then quickly got up and headed for the door.

³⁸³ For the newspaper clippings concerning the trial, and for the trial transcripts see German-American Alliance Lawsuit, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 3, Folders 36-37 and Box 4, Folders 1-10.

³⁸⁴ Affidavit of John Schmidt, January 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 9, Folder 8.

Schmidt called out to Leon Lewis, who was seated just ahead of him, “Major Lewis, my life has just been threatened!”³⁸⁵

Affidavits taken by Lewis following the incident detail what happened next. Lewis, who was seated anonymously among the crowd, turned back to see a man in a yellow leather jacket heading towards the exit. Alyce Schmidt turned to the Vice Commander of the American Legion who was sitting near her and asked him to help intercept the man as Lewis scrambled across the people sitting between him and the aisle to alert the sheriff’s deputy of the threat.³⁸⁶ Walking briskly after the man, Leon Lewis caught him in the courthouse lobby and detained him until the sheriff’s deputy, the Clerk of the Court, and the judge, followed by a stream of courtroom onlookers, caught up with them. After listening to the bickering between Schmidt, the man and his FNG defenders, the judge told the man to “beat it” and warned the others that there would be no more disturbances in his court.³⁸⁷

Back inside the courtroom, Schmidt requested that the court appoint a bodyguard to protect him for the duration of the trial. The request brought guffaws of laughter and catcalls from the defendants’ pro-Nazi comrades who were among those seated in the crowded courtroom gallery.³⁸⁸ Slamming the gavel on the desk, Judge Bush demanded order in the court. “This is not a laughing matter. If there is anyone present who believes perjury has been committed let him go to the District Attorney. Stop these

³⁸⁵ Affidavit of John Schmidt, January 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 6, Folder 21; affidavit of John H. Schmidt, (n.d.), *ibid.*, Box 9, Folder 8.

³⁸⁶ Affidavit of Alice H. Schmidt, (n.d.), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 9, Folder 13.

³⁸⁷ Affidavit of Leon Lewis, January 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 6, Folder 21; “Nazi Case Fray Averted,” *Los Angeles Times*, Saturday Jan 20, 1934. A1.

³⁸⁸ “Nazi Case Fray Averted.” *Los Angeles Times*, Saturday, January 20, 1934. A1.

threats. And if you want to fight, hire a hall.” Judge Bush assigned Sheriff Agnew to guard Schmidt, and ordered detectives into the courtroom “to prevent a tragedy.”³⁸⁹

(See Appendix 1: Photographs.)

The next day, however, the drama continued to unfold. Judge Bush entered the packed courtroom and immediately ordered the courtroom doors locked. No one was to leave. The judge informed the court that he had been threatened the night before. He deputized *Los Angeles Times* photographer, Fred Coffey, and directed him to photograph the people sitting in the courtroom gallery to aid the search for the person who had threatened him. The *Examiner’s* photographer snapped the shot of Coffey taking the picture of the stunned faces of the onlookers who were seated in the courtroom gallery (see Appendix 1: Photographs).³⁹⁰

During the second week of testimony, FNG members were called to testify. Hugo Harris, the plaintiffs’ Jewish attorney followed Leon Lewis’ playbook, questioning each witness to elicit as much detail about the Friends of the New Germany and its political objectives as possible. Karl Specht, commander of the SA, insisted that “SA” stood for “sports abteilung” and not “sturm abteilung,” even though he slipped twice during his testimony, referring to the group as the latter. And, what of the military drilling Schmidt had seen through the window at 902 South Alvarado? Oh, that was merely practice for the memorial day parade held on November 9. And, what about the drill book Specht had containing the regulations for Germany’s sturm

³⁸⁹ Ibid.; “Anti-Nazi Witness Gets Death Threat; Rescued by Judge,” *Los Angeles Examiner*, Saturday, January 20, 1934. A1.

³⁹⁰ “Attempts to Block Justice are Made in Three Courts” (clipping found in file, newspaper name not cited, n.p.) January 19, 1934, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 3, Folder 37.

abteilung? Specht told the court that he bought those books from the German ship, *Haben* when it was in port. There was nothing militaristic in them, he testified. They were really intended for large troops, not a small section of men like the sports abteilung.³⁹¹ According *Today Magazine* that April, Specht had flown to Germany in 1933 and returned with the drill manual.³⁹²

Gauleiter Robert Pape told the court that he was a *retired* German army officer, even though he had confided to Carl Sunderland that he was still active, had been sent by the German government to the States, and that 300 marks were deposited every month into his bank account in Germany.³⁹³ When Harris pressed him on his relationship with Heinz Spanknoebel, Pape denied knowing Spanknoebel -- the man who had made him western region gauleiter. And, wasn't it a strange coincidence, Harris asked, that the sturm abteilung in Germany had been called the "sports abteilung" before Hitler came to power? Did Pape know that? "No."³⁹⁴

Paul Themlitz's testimony addressed allegations made by Sunderland and Schmidt in their earlier testimonies. Themlitz denied that the Aryan Bookstore was in anyway associated with the Friends of the New Germany in New York City. He denied ever telling Sunderland that German sailors would come to their aid on German Day if attacked by American veterans for flying the swastika flag. And, Themlitz accused *Schmidt* of sedition. He told the court that it was Schmidt and Sunderland who told *him* that American veterans had been cheated out of their dole by the

³⁹¹ Transcript, Specht testimony, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 4, Folder 6.

³⁹² McCoy, "Hitlerism Invades America, Part I," 26.

³⁹³ "Hitler Likened to Roosevelt" (clipping found in file, n.p.), *Los Angeles Examiner*, January 17, 1934, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 9, Folder 8; report 115, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 8.

³⁹⁴ Transcript, Pape testimony, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 4, Folder 7.

government, and that Schmidt was the one who suggested that war vets should organize and take over government.³⁹⁵

“I just got the impression that they wanted us Americans, [that is we] *German-Americans* to join with them.” Themnitz said.³⁹⁶

Themnitz also told the court that Schmidt had blown his own cover as an informant one night when he got drunk at dinner. According to Themnitz, Schmidt got drunk at dinner, and on their way back to the bookstore, Schmidt told Themnitz that he was a secret service man working for a special group trying to find out what the FNG were doing and that he was getting paid for it.³⁹⁷

“Well, I can’t explain it. He really made a fool out of himself. I didn’t really believe him entirely. Especially about working for the American government. I didn’t believe the U.S. government was going to hire a man like that to find out about an organization that might be trying to overthrow the Government [sic]. I am sure they have much better men to do this work than to take a man like Schmidt.”³⁹⁸

As Themnitz left the witness stand, Schmidt called him a “dirty pig who live[d] in the gutter” in open court. Schmidt was rushed by several FNG members. Judge Bush ordered them out of the courtroom before a brawl could begin.³⁹⁹

When Herman Schwinn took the stand, he gave the Nazi salute when he swore the witness oath.⁴⁰⁰ Schwinn challenged the plaintiffs’ witnesses’ testimony. FNG

³⁹⁵ Transcript, Themnitz testimony, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 4, Folder 8.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*; “Near Riot Subdued at German Hearing,” *Los Angeles Examiner*, January 18, 1934 (clipping found in files, n.p.), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 9, Folder 8.

⁴⁰⁰ “Attempts to Block Justice are Made in Three Courts” (clipping found in file, newspaper not noted, n.p), January 19, 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 3, Folder 37.

literature, Schwinn claimed, was purely intended to enlighten the American public about the New Germany. It was not intended to foment insurrection. Schwinn was evasive in answering questions about FNG's relationships with German ship captains, and he denied that any of the literature was removed from the ships without clearing U.S. Customs. As for FNG's ulterior political objectives, Schwinn demurred, "We sympathize with the new German Government. But, first we are loyal American citizens standing fairly and squarely behind the man who has given this country a new deal just as Adolf Hitler has given Germany a new deal."⁴⁰¹

* * *

The suit against the German-American Alliance was ultimately thrown out by Judge Bush on legal technicalities. The trial, however, fulfilled Lewis' public relations objectives. It revealed the Friends of the New Germany as a duplicitous, Nazi-influenced group to the public. Its impact was evident among several groups in the city. In the short-term, the trial shook up FNG leadership and caused dozens of members to resign.⁴⁰² Robert Pape was relieved of his position as gauleiter. Herman Schwinn replaced him and became the leader of the Nazi movement on the west coast for the next seven years.⁴⁰³ Winterhalder and Themnitz, angry with Pape for not being militant enough, "endorsed" Pape's dismissal with a good beating and banished him from the bookstore.⁴⁰⁴ Schmidt reported that both Pape and his wife had lost their jobs as a result of their association with the Nazi group. Their employer, it seems, was "an

⁴⁰¹ Transcript, Schwinn Testimony, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 4, Folder 8; "Hitler Likened to Roosevelt," *Los Angeles Examiner*, January 17, 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 9, Folder 8.

⁴⁰² Report 169, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 11.

⁴⁰³ Report dated January 4, 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 9, Folder 8.

⁴⁰⁴ Report 173, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 12.

old imperial German and very anti-Nazi.”⁴⁰⁵ The trial also sent an embarrassed German Vice Consul Georg Gyssling scrambling for political cover. Gyssling’s name had come up more than once during the proceedings as a supporter of FNG. Following the trial, Gyssling issued a statement denying any connection between the German government and the Friends of the New Germany and reaffirmed that National Socialism was not “an article of export.”⁴⁰⁶

The impact of the trial was also evident on the city’s veterans’ organizations. The American Legion, VFW and DAV all passed resolutions denouncing Nazism as an un-American ideology, and all three veterans organizations in California adopted Americanism campaigns to combat anti-democratic, foreign “isms.” Leon Lewis was elected chairman of both the DAV’s Americanism Committee in Los Angeles and state Americanism Committee, and was also chosen to serve as the Deputy Chief of Staff for the DAV in California.⁴⁰⁷ Lewis’ new leadership roles within the DAV secured the strategic position within veterans’ circles he needed to serve him in the *other* new role he assumed that spring. Lewis was also selected to serve as executive secretary of new the Los Angeles Jewish Community Committee, a position created by the Jews of Hollywood, who had also been impacted by the revelations of the trial.

⁴⁰⁵ Report dated January 28, 1933 by Numbers Seventeen and Eleven, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 16, Folder 3; report 173 dated November 23 (by Schmidt), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 12.

⁴⁰⁶ “Literature of Hitler in L.A. Described,” (clipping found in file), *Los Angeles Evening Herald and Express*, January 17, 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 9, Folder 8.

⁴⁰⁷ “Report of Secret Committee of Disabled American Veterans of the World War, Department of California,” (draft document, n.d., probably spring 1934), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 29, Folder 23.

Hollywood Steps In

The German-American Alliance trial exposed the Friends of the New Germany as an agent of Nazism to the people of Los Angeles. The trial reached different groups in the city, as Lewis had hoped, but perhaps the most important group it reached were the Jewish executives of Hollywood.

In March 1934, when the trial was over, Leon Lewis still did not have the financial backing he needed to maintain the undercover operation. The “monied men” had let him down, but there was still one Jewish group he had not approached, the Jews of Hollywood. The Jews of Hollywood and the “downtown” Jews were socially estranged from each other. Hence, the appeal to the “monied men” had not included appeals to the motion picture executives. Until 1933, the two groups had little in common. The more established “downtown Jews” were all American-born and came from families that had lived in Los Angeles for several generations. The Jews of Hollywood, on the other hand, were Eastern European immigrants, new in town, and “fresh from the East, with the disreputability [of the motion picture business] clinging to them like tar.”⁴⁰⁸ Consistent with Los Angeles’ fragmented communal structure, the two Jewish groups were physically, socially and culturally isolated from each other. The rise of Nazism in Los Angeles in 1933, however, provided the common ground upon which these two segments of the Jewish community came together.⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁸ Gabler, *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood*, 274.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 274-276.

Leon Lewis himself did not have personal connections to the movie moguls, but some of his B'nai B'rith colleagues did.⁴¹⁰ In November 1933 they called on executives at MGM, Warner Brothers and Universal to raise funds for their anti-defamation work. Lewis was immediately successful. The Jews of Hollywood were a special target of antisemitic Nazi propaganda in the city and they needed little convincing of the threat that Nazis in LA posed to them. Lewis raised \$2,600 from thirty employees at Warner Brothers, a similar amount at MGM, and \$2,000 at Universal.⁴¹¹ In addition, Hollywood attorney Mendel Silberberg was recruited to serve as chairman of the new anti-defamation council. Silberberg's law firm represented several of the studios, including MGM.⁴¹² Although Lewis had originally been appointed to chair the anti-defamation committee, he stepped aside in favor of Silberberg, understanding that Silberberg's connections and influence in Hollywood would better serve the group.⁴¹³ Silberberg accepted the appointment as chairman of the LAJCC, and Lewis became the group's executive secretary, running the LAJCC's day-to-day affairs.

In March, just a few weeks after the trial, Silberberg summoned Hollywood's Jewish elite to a special dinner meeting at Hillcrest Country Club. Hillcrest was "the klavern from which all [Jewish] power [in Los Angeles] emanated." It was at once the most obvious and the least expected place to bring these two groups of Jews together. Historically, big Jewish fundraisers were held at Hillcrest, "where they became

⁴¹⁰ Letter, Lewis to Gutstadt, September 29, 1933, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 22, Folder 20.

⁴¹¹ Letter, Lewis to Gutstadt, November 1, 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 22, Folder 21.

⁴¹² Letter, Lewis to Gutstadt, February 22, 1934, CRC Papers, Part I, Box 22, Folder 25.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*

festivals of philanthropic virility. If large contributions were needed for a cause, they would call meetings at Hillcrest where each man would be called on in public to make his pledge.”⁴¹⁴ The club, however, was also the least likely place for the two groups to meet. Nowhere was the estrangement between LA’s downtown Jews and the Jews of Hollywood more evident than at Hillcrest, where the Jews of Hollywood had been excluded from membership since its inception in 1920. Doing unto the Jews of Hollywood as Protestant society had done unto them, the Jewish aristocracy of Los Angeles built Hillcrest as its own private sanctuary of privilege, keeping the Hollywood newcomers out. And, even though the motion picture men wanted “in,” they were not welcome at Hillcrest until the Depression forced the Club’s founders to overcome their prejudices and admit the greenhorn Jews of Hollywood in the early 1930s.⁴¹⁵ All that was about to change. Where once it had been the social fault line between “old” Jewish money in Los Angeles and the parvenus of Hollywood, Hillcrest was becoming the site of upper class Jewish unification in Los Angeles as the social prejudices that had previously divided them were overcome by the antisemitic Nazi propaganda which saw them all as just Jews.⁴¹⁶

On March 13, 1934 a parade of cars carrying studio heads, directors, producers, screenwriters and actors rolled past Hillcrest’s understated, unmarked stone gates at 10000 West Pico Boulevard on the edge of Beverly Hills. Only the minutes of the

⁴¹⁴ Gabler, *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood*, 289.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 276.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 276.

meeting, found in the Los Angeles archive reveal the celebrity status of the men in attendance that night:

From MGM: Louis B. Mayer, chief executive; Irving Thalberg, studio production chief; [David] O. Selznick, producer; Larry Weingarten, production supervisor; Ned Marin, writer/producer; Ernest Lubitsch, film director; George Cukor, director; Harry Rapf, producer; Sam Marx, story editor; Harry Wardell and Henry Myers, actors; Sidney A. Franklin, director; Edwin Justus Mayer, screenwriter; F.E. Pelton.

From Columbia Pictures: Sam Briskin, studio production chief; Sam Jaffe, producer.

From Paramount Studios: Emanuel Cohen, chief executive; Henry Herzbrun, legal counsel; Albert Lewis, producer; J. H. Kay; Howard J. Green, screenwriter.

From RKO: Pandro Berman, producer; Adolph Ramish and Walter Ruben, directors; C. Brock, producer; Mark Sandrich, director; and A. Kaufman.

From Universal Pictures: Edward Sloman, actor; John Stahl, director; E. Asher, Henry Henigson, producer; William Wylie. Mr. Hellman.

From United Artists: Harry Brand.

Rabbi Edgar Magnin, Judge Lester Roth, Judge Isaac Pacht and Leon Lewis were also in attendance.⁴¹⁷

At dinner, the guests found copies of the antisemitic *Silver Shirt* publications, *Liberation* and *Silver Ranger*, at their place setting. Both newspapers bitterly attacked the Jews of Hollywood as enemies of Christian America. The *Silver Ranger* was begin published right in Los Angeles, and both were being distributed throughout nation.

⁴¹⁷ Memorandum of meeting held at Hillcrest Country Club, March 13, 1934 – at dinner 6:30-10:30, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 1, Folder 30.

After dinner, the group adjourned to the meeting room where they were addressed by a lawyer whom most of them did not know. Leon Lewis reported on the behind-the-headlines details of the recent local trial that had fully exposed Nazi activity in Los Angeles.⁴¹⁸ Lewis informed his audience that the veterans who had testified at the trial had infiltrated FNG under his guidance. The trial had been specifically engineered to expose the Nazi threat to the public. “We knew that all the evidence regarding Nazi activity was not properly admissible,” Lewis told them, but, tacit agreement was made with the Judge and the attorneys for both sides that allowed that evidence to get into the record -- and into the newspapers. The trial had been a success from the Jewish point of view. Nazi activity in the city had been exposed by U.S. veterans.⁴¹⁹

The operation, Lewis told his celebrity audience, had cost \$7,000. The men working on financing the operation had, however, “fallen down.” There was no money left to continue the fact-finding operation, as persistent antisemitic activity in the city indicated it should.⁴²⁰ The movie men, therefore, were needed to support further “anti-defamation work.” Lewis proposed that a full time publicity man be hired to work in the tradition of the ADL to fight antisemitism in the city. This would relieve Lewis of the task and allow him to return to his law practice, which,

⁴¹⁸ Ibid.

⁴¹⁹ Letter, Lewis to Gutstadt, January 9, 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 22, Folder 24.

⁴²⁰ Letter, Lewis to Gutstadt, January 27, 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 22, Folder 24; Letter, Lewis to Gustadt February 22, 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 22, Folder 25.

he reported, “had been shot to hell” in the previous six months because he had been working day and night on the investigation.⁴²¹

His dinner guests were attentive. The Jews of the motion picture industry did not need a primer on the implications of Nazis in Los Angeles or on the implications of antisemitism for themselves. They had been in the cross-hairs of antisemitic attacks for over a decade from Protestant and Catholic groups concerned that motion pictures, in the hands of “former pants-pressers and button-holders,” posed a direct threat to American (read: “*Christian American*”) culture, virtue and morals.⁴²² Just six months earlier, in fact, Catholic Church leaders had organized a nationwide protest and threatened a national boycott of motion pictures if the Jews of Hollywood did not capitulate to a production code written by and monitored by their chosen representatives.⁴²³ They were summoned to a meeting with the Archbishop of Los Angeles. Church lay representative, attorney Joseph Scott, warned them that “the dirty motion pictures they were making, along with other invidious activities on the part of the Jews were serving to build up an enormous case against the Jews in the eyes of the American people.”⁴²⁴ Scott reminded them that certain groups in America were sympathetic to the Nazi purpose, and were organizing to attack Jews in America

⁴²¹ Memorandum of meeting Held at Hillcrest Country club, March 13, 1934 – at dinner 6:30-10:30, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 1, Folder 30; memo of speech made by Louis Greenbaum at closed meeting of B’nai B’rith lodges by the AD Committee” (n.d., probably late 1934), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 22, Folder 11.

⁴²² Leo Rosten, *Hollywood: The Movie Colony, the Movie Makers*, (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1941), 269.

⁴²³ Gregory D. Black, *Hollywood Censored: Morality Codes, Catholics, and the Movies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

⁴²⁴ Letter, Joseph Breen to Martin Quigley, August 4, 1933. Movie Production Code, Quigley, Martin to Lord, 1933-1949, Daniel A. Lord, S.J. Collection Midwest Jesuit Archives, Saint Louis, MO.

and that “what was going on in Germany could happen here.”⁴²⁵ It’s hard to imagine that Joseph Scott’s words weren’t ringing in their ears that night at Hillcrest as Leon Lewis confirmed the extent of Nazi activity in the city.

There was considerable discussion among the participants following Lewis’ presentation. Rabbi Magnin, Judge Roth and Marco Hellman all spoke up in support of the proposed program, as did Irving Thalberg. Louis B. Mayer emphatically supported continuing the operation. “There can be no doubt as to the necessity of carrying on and I for one am not going to take it lying down. Two things are required, namely money and intelligent direction...it [is] the duty of the men present to help in both directions,” Mayer said.⁴²⁶

Following Mayer’s comments, MGM producer Harry Rapf moved that a committee composed of one man from each studio be appointed. The resulting Studio Committee was comprised of Irving Thalberg (MGM), Harry Cohen (Columbia), Henry Henigson (Universal), Joseph Schenck (20th Century), Jack Warner (Warner Brothers), Emanuel Cohen (Paramount), Sol Wertzel (Fox) and Pandro Berman (RKO.) And, as they would often do within the privacy of Hillcrest, the members of the new Studio Committee made public pledges to support Lewis’ fact-finding work for one year.⁴²⁷ Thalberg committed MGM to \$3,500. Emanuel Cohen committed Paramount to the same amount and promised to speak to Jack Warner about a similar pledge. Universal accepted a quota of \$2,500, and Pandro

⁴²⁵ Letter, Joseph Breen to Martin Quigley, August 4, 1933, *ibid*.

⁴²⁶ Memorandum of meeting held at Hillcrest Country Club, March 13, 1934 – at dinner 6:30-10:30, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 1, Folder 30.

⁴²⁷ Letter, Joseph Breen to Martin Quigley, August 4, 1933. Movie Production Code, Quigley, Martin to Lord, 1933-1949.

Berman promised that RKO would contribute \$1,500, pointing out that RKO only had eight Jewish executives. The smaller studios -- Fox, 20th Century and United Artists -- each pledged \$1,500. Phil Goldstone and David Selznick were asked to raise \$2,500 each from agents and independent producers. In less than an hour, Lewis had secured \$22,000 in pledges.

The Studio Committee agreed to meet monthly to review all productions with any content that might exacerbate the rising tide of anti-Jewish sentiment in the United States. Attorney Harry Herzbrun from Paramount was assigned to represent them at the weekly meetings of the recently formed Los Angeles Jewish Community Committee.⁴²⁸

The threat Nazism posed to the Jews of Los Angeles was the catalyst that united the city's wealthiest Jews. When B'nai B'rith and the "monied Jews" dropped the ball in the fight against Nazism in Los Angeles, it was the Jews of Hollywood who came through. Still, though, in welcoming Silberberg to the cause, Richard Gutstadt cautioned Silberberg to keep egos in check:

It may not be felt in the immediate future, nor will it be credited to the Anti-Defamation League which is, of course, beside the point. The cause of America and the Jew in this country (believe me, this is not rhetorical) is infinitely more important than the glorification of any Jewish individuals or Jewish organization.⁴²⁹

Beginning in March 1934, the new Los Angeles Jewish Community Committee (LAJCC) held lunch meetings every Friday at noon at the Federation

⁴²⁸ Memorandum of meeting held at Hillcrest Country club, March 13, 1934 -- at dinner 6:30-10:30, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 1, Folder 30.

⁴²⁹ Letter, Gutstadt to Silberberg, March 24, 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 23, Folder 2.

offices.⁴³⁰ Lewis served as legal counsel to the Committee and Silberberg as its chairman. In May 1934 Lewis wrote to Gutstadt that the LAJCC was the most unified Jewish organization in LA, enjoying near 100% attendance at every meeting with “no diminution [sic] of interest apparent” among its thirty members (see Appendix 3: Los Angeles Community Committee, 1934).⁴³¹

* * *

The motion picture executives provided the financial support that transformed the DAV investigators into Hollywood’s spies *in fact*. The veterans, however, were unaware of this unlikely partnership.⁴³² Keenly aware of the political liability that the arrangement, , would cause American Jews if made public, Lewis was insistent that Hollywood’s support of the undercover fact-finding operation remain secret.⁴³³ Writing to Gutstadt about his concerns, Lewis was adamant that Gutstadt never divulge the source of Jewish political agency in Los Angeles. “[The veterans’] equanimity,” Lewis wrote, “must never be disturbed by any suggestion from the outside that Leon Lewis was behind the scenes.”⁴³⁴

Conclusion

Leon Lewis was the driving force behind the formation of the Los Angeles Jewish Community Committee’s resistance of Nazism in the city from 1933-1945.

⁴³⁰ Letter, Lewis to Gutstadt, May 22, 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 23, Folder 4.

⁴³¹ Letter, Lewis to Gutstadt, May 22, 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 23, Folder 4.

⁴³² Letter, Lewis to Gutstadt, July 14, 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 23, Folder 5. In this letter, Lewis tells Gutstadt that his DAV colleagues do not know about his ADL connections.

⁴³³ Letter, Gutstadt to Lewis, July 20, 1934, "CRC Papers.", Part 1, Box 23, Folder 5.

⁴³⁴ Letter, Lewis to Gutstadt, July 14, 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 23, Folder 5.

Between August 1933 and March 1934, Lewis worked tirelessly to secure the political and financial resources needed to combat Nazism in Los Angeles. Rebuffed by the chief of police and embattled by petty jealousies within the local Jewish community, Lewis' persistence during those first six months eventually paid off. He secured financial support from the Jews of Hollywood to create the LAJCC, transforming the DAV veterans into Hollywood's spies *in fact*, while his strategic sensibilities converted the DAV investigators into Hollywood's spies *in style* as well.

Lewis' leadership empowered the Jews of Los Angeles to establish the LAJCC. When FNG recruiters began courting his veteran colleagues, Leon Lewis, the *American*, did not sit idly by or look the other way. He assumed a leadership role among his veteran friends, and sacrificing his law practice to engage the political problem head on. Leon Lewis, *the Jew*, however, understood the limitations that antisemitism placed on Jewish political agency in the 1930s. Although American Jews considered themselves Americans of the Jewish faith, their antisemitic adversaries viewed them as foreigners and subversives. Consequently, Leon Lewis (and his Jewish counterparts at the ADL in Chicago and the AJC in New York City) very consciously adopted an offense-by-proxy strategy to expose insurgent Nazism in the United States to the American public while protecting American Jews from further political denunciations:

Above all, we must, as far as possible, keep Jewish participation and cooperation in the background as these men are not doing this work because they love the Jew, but because they have been impressed with the seditious and Fascistic character of the propaganda rather than with its Anti-Semitic phase. We have deliberately minimized the Anti-Semitism in both the Nazi and Silver Shirt movements in the propaganda

work which we have been doing now for some months with the Veteran [sic] leaders.⁴³⁵

Leon Lewis was an outstanding political strategist. For twelve years he effectively implemented this offense-by-proxy strategy that empowered the Jews of Los Angeles to combat insurgent Nazism in their city.

If Leon Lewis was the driving force behind the LAJCC's political agency, the Jews of Hollywood were the force behind their political influence. For nearly eighty years, consensus historiography has assumed that the Jews of Hollywood purposely distanced themselves from American Jewish life and politics by abandoning the East Coast.⁴³⁶ But for a few anecdotal exceptions, America's wealthiest and most visible Jews are remarkably missing from American Jewish political affairs during the 1930s.⁴³⁷ The Jews of Hollywood were not, however, absent from this problem. They could not afford to be. The antisemitic discourse that constructed Americanism as white, Christian and native-born, cast American Jews as outsiders, often calling them out as the most dangerous Jews in America.⁴³⁸ Their new home on the West Coast might have provided the physical distance they

⁴³⁵ Letter, Leon Lewis to Richard Gutstadt, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 22, Folder 25.

⁴³⁶ Gabler, *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood*, 1-7.

⁴³⁷ Exceptions include: film historians' work on the Warner Brothers' fight against fascism in film; the activities of the Hollywood Anti-Communist League, which involved mostly writers and actors, not the heads of the studios; and the wartime benefit production, "We Shall Never Die," the traveling pageant produced by Hollywood notables to protest the mass murder of Europe's Jews. The pageant was written by screenwriter Ben Hecht, produced by Billy Rose and Ernst Lubitsch. The pageant starred Edward G. Robinson and Paul Muni and subsequently traveled to other cities nationwide to raise awareness of the mass murder of Europe's Jews by the Nazis. References to "We Shall Never Die" as an example of the Jews' of Hollywood's involvement with Jewish political affairs in the 1930s and 1940s often leaves the impression of "too little, too late" by a group that could have done a lot more a lot earlier. See Michael E. Birdwell, *Celluloid Soldiers: The Warner Brothers' Campaign against Nazism* (New York: New York University Press, 1999).

⁴³⁸ Steven Alan Carr, *Hollywood and Anti-Semitism: A Cultural History up to World War II* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

needed to establish their empire, but it didn't protect them from those who tried to undermine their "quest for inclusion" in American society.⁴³⁹ The Jews of Hollywood were not absent from American Jewish political problems in the 1930s, they just were not present where historians were looking.

American Jewish historiography of this time period relies heavily on large archival collections located in New York City and in Cincinnati. These collections contain the records of the country's largest Jewish communities and their leaders. The Jewish leaders of the motion picture industry – Louis B. Mayer, the Warner Brothers, Harry Cohn, Carl Laemmle, William Fox, Jesse Lasky and Adolf Zukor – are nowhere to be found in the files that deal with the domestic political problems of the 1930s.⁴⁴⁰ Hence, the silence in the archive shaped the historiographical conclusion that they were disinterested and uninvolved.

That silence masks a very different historical reality. The movie moguls left little trace of their political agency behind in the East Coast repositories that inform this period of American Jewish historiography because the Jews of Hollywood had the resources, power and confidence to act unilaterally. They didn't need assistance or guidance from New York. The lack of correspondence between the two groups

⁴³⁹ Marc Dollinger, *Quest for Inclusion: Jews and Liberalism in Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Gabler, *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood*.

⁴⁴⁰ Ironically, if the pre-war records of the ADL had survived the last sixty years – or had been more widely available to historians at any time since the end of the war – historians might have "found" the Jews of Hollywood in a Chicago archive. Leon Lewis was after all, an ADL-man, not a New Yorker. He coordinated his Los Angeles operations with the leaders of the ADL in Chicago, not with the leaders of the AJC. The ADL records from that time period, however, were either not previously available to historians, and/or did not survive. It is possible, that like the AJC, the ADL record of this undercover operation was destroyed after the war, in order to prevent repercussions by antisemitic groups that would have used the operation as evidence of the Jewish cabal.

effectively hid Hollywood's spies for decades. The silence in the East Coast archives, therefore, not only led historians to an incorrect conclusion about Jewish Hollywood's political agency, but it hid the *opposite* condition: the emergence of Los Angeles as a new center of American Jewish political agency and power by virtue of Jewish Hollywood's support.

In order to find the Jews of Hollywood in this history, historians must follow the moguls west. The CRC Papers documents their support of the LAJCC and their private fight against Nazism in Los Angeles. Between 1934-1945, the LAJCC met once a week to review and discuss the challenges that insurgent Nazism posed to the Jews of Los Angeles. The group addressed issues of discrimination and prejudice in the city, along with tactics for combatting Nazi-influenced political activity that escalated through 1941. In 1937, the LAJCC relocated its offices to Hollywood to be closer to its motion picture benefactors. The "Hollywood committee" dealt specifically with the broader political challenges of Nazism in the last years of the 1930s. Between 1934-1941, the LAJCC adhered so closely to its offense-by-proxy strategy, that it effectively hid the role that Jewish Hollywood played in combatting Nazism for eighty years. The chapters that follow shed light on the contributions they made.

Chapter Four

Los Angeles, Emergent: The LAJCC and the McCormack-Dickstein Committee, 1934

In September 1933, the same types of political activities conducted by the Friends of the New Germany (FNG) in Los Angeles were also being observed in other U.S. cities. In New York City, reports concerning FNG's illicit importation of antisemitic propaganda, training of a private militia, and strong-arm tactics employed by the group to gain control over the city's United German-American Societies drew the attention of the Chairman of the House Immigration and Naturalization Committee, New York City congressman, Samuel Dickstein.⁴⁴¹ In October, Samuel Dickstein called for an investigation of Spanknoebel and the Friends of the New Germany. Dickstein revealed to the press information he had received concerning FNG's suspicious activity across the country.⁴⁴²

[I have received] information to the effect that about 300 persons have recently entered the United States as employes [sic] or servants of German consulates. Most of the men sent here have been personally selected by the German Minister of Propaganda...Many millions of marks have been made available for...the expenses which they may incur to carry on their propaganda here...[They maintain] a propaganda bureau...The objective of [which] consists in spreading Nazi propaganda in the United States, with the ultimate object of overthrowing our government and of installing in its place a dictatorship on the Nazi model.⁴⁴³

⁴⁴¹Sander A. Diamond, *The Nazi Movement in the United States, 1924-1941* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), chapters 4-5.

⁴⁴²*Ibid.*, 131; Susan Canedy, *America's Nazis, a Democratic Dilemma: A History of the German American Bund* (Menlo Park: Markgraf Publications Group, 1990), 53.

⁴⁴³“Nazi Actions Here Bring an Inquiry,” *New York Times*, October 10, 1933. 1. Dickstein's estimate of “300 persons” employed by the German embassy was an exaggeration.

These disturbing reports, Dickstein asserted, warranted further investigation.

Dickstein went on to announce the House committee on Immigration and Naturalization would hold hearings into Nazi propaganda activity across the country, promising that the investigation would result in deportations if necessary.⁴⁴⁴

The Dickstein announcement infuriated Jewish leaders at the ADL in Chicago and at the AJC in New York City. Both groups knew that Dickstein had over-stated his case because much of the evidence to which he referred *had come from them*.⁴⁴⁵ During the summer and early fall of 1933, both the AJC and the ADL had launched independent, undercover fact-finding operations to learn more about the Friends of the New Germany. Barely a month into their respective investigations, Dickstein had gone public with their preliminary information.⁴⁴⁶ ADL and AJC leaders were mortified with Dickstein's "ill-advised [and] premature" public declaration.⁴⁴⁷ Neither group had enough evidence to justify a federal investigation, and Dickstein's grandstanding threatened their undercover operations and put their informants at risk.⁴⁴⁸ Faced with an even greater political calamity should Dickstein make good on his promise to conduct public hearings, ADL and AJC leaders scrambled to dig up

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁵ Memorandum, December 1933, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 2, Folder 14.

⁴⁴⁶ Evidence marking the launch of the AJC's covert fact-finding activities in 1933 is fragmentary. See Naomi Cohen, *Not Free to Desist: The American Jewish Committee, 1906-1966*, 1st ed. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1972), 195-98; Form Letter, Morris Waldman to AJC Corporate Members August 16, 1933, Chronological Files, American Jewish Committee Papers, Jacob Blaustein Library, American Jewish Committee, New York, NY, Box 2, Folder "Aug-Sept., 1933"; letter, Morris Waldman to James Rosenberg, November 25, 1933, Morris Waldman Papers, American Jewish Committee Papers, EXO-29, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York, NY., EXO-29, Box 9, Folder "1933"; correspondence in *ibid.*, EXO-29, Box 40, Folder "Survey Committee: Educational Department Survey, 1933-1942."

⁴⁴⁷ Letter, A. Bruce Bielaski to Richard Gutstadt, October 11, 1933, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 22, Folder 20.

⁴⁴⁸ Memorandum, December 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 2, Folder 14.

additional evidence to prop up Dickstein's claims. The two Jewish organizations looked west, calling on Leon Lewis to bring both evidence and political leadership to the situation.

* * *

For decades, the guidance and information that American Jewish defense organizations, and more specifically, the LAJCC, provided to the McCormack-Dickstein investigation in 1934 has been hidden from history. Adhering to their offense-by-proxy strategy, American Jews maintained a low profile while they provided the Committee with critical information and counsel. Yet, there is no obvious documentary evidence in the Committee's archived papers in Washington that indicates a relationship with these Jewish groups. The CRC Papers in Los Angeles, however, detail the full scope of American Jewish political agency and influence in this regard. Moreover, when the CRC Papers are cross-referenced with certain documents in the McCormack-Dickstein papers, the identity of certain key advisors to the Committee who were associated with the ADL, AJC, and the LAJCC, not the least of who was Lewis himself, is revealed.

This chapter explicates the political influence that American Jews, particularly the Jews of Los Angeles, had on the 1934 House investigation of Nazi propaganda activities known as the McCormack-Dickstein Committee.⁴⁴⁹ From the Committee's emergency hearings in November 1933, through its final report to Congress in

⁴⁴⁹ It is clear that the AJC gathered voluminous evidence concerning Nazi and fascist activities in New York City and shared it with federal authorities, particularly after the war began; but, there are no documents that detail exactly who collected the information or how they did it.

February 1935, Leon Lewis and the LAJCC in concert with the ADL and AJC guided the Committee's investigations, informed its hearings and influenced its final report. This chapter, therefore, follows the phases of the congressional investigation to explicate the emergence of Los Angeles as a new site of American Jewish political agency and influence in the fight against Nazism in the United States in the 1930s.

The Emergency Hearings, 1933

In the Fall of 1933, Leon Lewis was consumed with the DAV investigation, monitoring the reports his DAV colleagues submitted, meeting with leaders of supporting veterans groups, and lobbying the “monied men” of Jewish Los Angeles. In the midst of this frenzy, Lewis was “pressed into service” by his successor at the ADL in Chicago, Richard Gutstadt, to assist with an impending Congressional hearing that had recently been announced by Congressman Samuel Dickstein of New York. Gutstadt, lacking sufficient evidence in his own files, knew that Lewis had “humdingers” that would “blow the Nazi movement in America to *smithereens* and...discredit completely all antisemitic organizations and American bigots who have had any truck with them.”⁴⁵⁰

In mid-November, Leon Lewis dropped what he was doing in Los Angeles to tend to the emergency in Washington. Lewis embarked on a three-week political mission to the East Coast, bringing both his leadership and the information his

⁴⁵⁰Private Papers of Leon Lewis, in author's possession, courtesy of Claire Lewis Read; letter, Lewis to Gutstadt, October 17, 1933, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 22, Folder 20; letter, Lewis to Gutstadt, September 9, 1933, *ibid.*, Box 22, Folder 20.

DAV agents had collected in Los Angeles on Dickstein's Congressional hearings of Nazi activity in America. By the time he returned home, Leon Lewis established himself as a trusted advisor with both Jewish and Congressional leaders. Lewis' leadership paved the way for the emergence of a new site of American Jewish political agency and influence in the fight against Nazism in the United States in the 1930s -- Los Angeles.

Damage Control

Only days following Samuel Dickstein's announcement that the Immigration and Naturalization Committee of the House would conduct emergency hearings into Nazi activities in the United States, Leon Lewis received an urgent telegram from ADL executive secretary Richard Gutstadt. Gutstadt requested that Lewis airmail him all of the information Lewis had on known Nazi organizers or propagandists, particularly, any evidence that established a financial or other definite connection between the Friends of the New Germany and Berlin.⁴⁵¹

Lewis hesitated. Just a little more than a month into the DAV investigation, Lewis had purposely withheld such details from Gutstadt to prevent a premature leak like the one Dickstein had committed. The Dickstein announcement, however, had forced the ADL's hand, and now Gutstadt looked to Lewis for assistance. Against his better judgment, Lewis sent Gutstadt the DAV reports from August 17-September 9 (later reports were still being transcribed), FNG membership and mailing lists, the

⁴⁵¹ Telegram, Gutstadt to Lewis, October 13, 1933, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 22, Folder 20.

names of the SA in Los Angeles, a copy of the SA drill regulations handbook (published by NSDAP in Germany), and photostatic copies of the SA marching songs “filled with ‘Judenhetze’” (Jew-baiting), identical to those sung by the brown shirts in Germany.⁴⁵² All of the information had been collected legally, Lewis assured Gutstadt. It had been given to his DAV agents voluntarily in the presence of witnesses.

“[W]e are on the brink of what will be indubitable documentary proof of nearly all the circumstances previously described,” Lewis wrote, but, he cautioned Gutstadt, there wasn’t anything that could yet be used in court to prove sedition.⁴⁵³ Lewis exhorted Gutstadt to treat the information with extreme confidentiality in order to

...protect ‘the Order’ [B’nai B’rith] and the safety of the fine fellows who [had] been willing to jeopardize their personal safety and pension status as disabled war veterans to get to the bottom of what is essentially a conspiracy aimed at the prestige and strength of our government...a premature disclosure of this information would jeopardize the personal safety of five families, including my own.⁴⁵⁴

Lewis emphasized the personal pledge he had made to his DAV colleagues:

I have pledged to these men that nothing would be done to uncover them until I have taken all the steps necessary to give them complete protection.⁴⁵⁵

After reading the Los Angeles dossier, Gutstadt realized that the LA reports were much more substantial than anything he had collected. Gutstadt asked Lewis to

⁴⁵² Letter, Lewis to Gutstadt, October 31, 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 22, Folder 20.

⁴⁵³ Letter, Lewis to Gutstadt, October 16, 1933 (marked “Not Sent”), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 22, Folder 20.

⁴⁵⁴ Letter, Lewis to Gutstadt, October 31, 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 22, Folder 20.

⁴⁵⁵ Letter, Lewis to Gutstadt, October 16, 1933 (marked “Not Sent”). *Ibid.* Part 1, Box 22, Folder 20.

go to Washington immediately to advise Dickstein before he opened the Committee's emergency hearings, in order to help control the damage that he feared the hearings would cause.

The emergency hearings before the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization had been set for November 14, 1934. Boarding the Chief Santa Fe at Union Terminal in Los Angeles on November 9 for the four-day transcontinental journey to Washington. As Lewis' train lumbered east, telegrams shot out to Dickstein requesting a meeting with the Congressman. Richard Gutstadt wrote to Dickstein introducing Lewis as the former National Chairman of the Anti-Defamation League who had done a "remarkable job" with the southern California investigation.⁴⁵⁶ Los Angeles Congressman Charles Kramer, who sat on the House Immigration and Naturalization Committee with Dickstein, telegraphed Dickstein introducing Lewis as an "old friend from Chicago" who had vital information for the hearings.⁴⁵⁷ Two days later, when Lewis' train chugged into Dodge City, Kansas, confirmation of his meeting with Dickstein was waiting for him:

⁴⁵⁶ Letter, Gutstadt to Dickstein, November 8, 1933, *ibid.* Part 1, Box 22, Folder 21.

⁴⁵⁷ Letter, Gutstadt to Dickstein, November 8, 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 22, Folder 21. For the conflicting account, see letter, Kleinberger to Lewis, January 17, 1934, and letter, Charles Kramer to Samuel Dickstein, November 8, 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Folder 5, Box 12; letter, Lewis to Kramer, February 5, 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Folder 5, Box 13. It is curious to note that Charles Kramer misrepresented his acquaintance with Lewis by telling Dickstein that Lewis was an old friend. In fact, Kramer had only just been introduced to Lewis by Ray Kleinberger, a member of the Los Angeles Police Commission.

Western Union Telegram

November 10, 1933

TO: Leon Lewis

C/O Chief Santa Fe Railroad Eastbound due 1255PM Dodge City Kansas

Congressman Dickstein will see you in Washington Monday morning.

--Charles Kramer, MC⁴⁵⁸

Leon Lewis stopped in Chicago on his way to Washington to strategize with ADL executive director Sigmund Livingston on how to minimize the potential damage Dickstein's political grandstanding might have caused their undercover operations. Livingston told Lewis that Dickstein had asked him to recommend a lawyer who could act as legal counsel for the Committee in Chicago. Livingston had declined to make the recommendation, telling Dickstein that the ADL did not support his Congressional investigation for three reasons. First, the House committee did not have the power to subpoena. Second, the Committee lacked the authority to cite witnesses for perjury, and finally, without an appropriation for carrying out a proper investigation, Livingston was concerned that Dickstein's "emergency hearings" would cause more harm than good.⁴⁵⁹ Hence, Livingston urged Lewis not to give Dickstein any documents from Los Angeles until Dickstein secured these authorities. Livingston also instructed Lewis to go to New York City after concluding his business with Dickstein in Washington to share with an "unnamed personage" at the AJC the LAJCC's superior investigative strategies.⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵⁸ Telegram, Charles Kramer to Leon Lewis, November 9, 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Folder 5, Box 12.

⁴⁵⁹ Memorandum, December 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 2, Folder 14.

⁴⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

Arriving in Washington on Sunday November 12, Lewis had but forty-eight hours to influence the hearings. The record of Lewis' activity in Washington and in New York comes from a multi-page memo he wrote for his files summarizing this extraordinary trip. In that memo Lewis wrote that upon arriving in Washington he contacted the two ADL men Livingston had recommended, "Mr. *E.K.*, a wealthy manufacturer" and "Mr. *L.O.*," an attorney." (Lewis' painstaking concern for security is reflected in the omission of names throughout this memo.) *EK* and *LO* believed that Dickstein was motivated by political opportunism. Facing a strong opposition in his upcoming re-election, *EK* and *LO* believed that Dickstein had gone public with his claims to curry political favor with his predominantly Jewish constituency even though he had little evidence to back his claims. The two ADL men shared "certain facts [with Lewis] which made it imperative that some direct control be exercised over the methods pursued by the Chairman of the Committee."⁴⁶¹ Consequently, the men made several long-distance phone calls to New York that night and arranged an 8AM breakfast conference for Dickstein with Lewis, the two ADL men (*EK* and *LO*), and two emissaries from the AJC in New York who arrived the next morning, "*AF* and *BH*."⁴⁶²

⁴⁶¹ Ibid. Connecting information from the CRC Papers, the AJC Archives, and the National Archives, "*LO*" was Louis Ottenberg, a Washington, DC attorney and ADL member. There is no information on the identity of "*EK*" other than he was an important player in Samuel Untermyer's boycott organization.

⁴⁶² "*BH*" is described in Lewis' notes as an attorney who had counseled Dickstein on several occasions. "*AF*" was Allie Freed, who, according to *Who's Who in Jewish America* owned a taxicab company in New York City. Freed was associated with the power-brokers of the American Jewish Committee, but it is not otherwise clear what his relationship was to the AJC. He had a relationship with Samuel Dickstein, as there is a letter from Dickstein to Freed in the Committee's papers in the National Archive. For more on the Allie Freed connection, see CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 25, Folder 19.

With just one day before the hearings were to begin, the ADL and AJC men met with Dickstein, sharing their concerns that “the mass of information and data” that the ADL and AJC had on Nazi propaganda activities should not be made public until Dickstein had legal authority to subpoena witnesses and to indict for perjury.⁴⁶³ They recommended that the Congressman hold the hearings as planned, but in executive session to minimize publicity. They also recommended that Dickstein ask questions that had already been asked during the New York City grand jury investigation, so as to limit the amount of new information divulged in order to mitigate further damage to the existing undercover operations.

The emergency hearings of the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization were held on November 14-16, 1933.⁴⁶⁴ For three straight days and two nights, Dickstein’s Jewish advisors kept a keen eye on the proceedings. During the days, Leon Lewis worked behind the scenes in Dickstein’s office, combing through the “evidence” about which the Congressman had boasted, finding little to support the claims Dickstein had made. Based on what he found in Dickstein’s files, Lewis advised Dickstein on what questions to ask and what questions to avoid. Due to the lack of substantive evidence, Lewis also convinced the Congressman to cut the emergency hearings short in order to save face. For their part, the attending ADL and AJC men consulted with Dickstein

⁴⁶³ Memorandum, December 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 2, Folder 14.

⁴⁶⁴ It is not clear if the transcripts to these hearings still exist. For the Committee’s report on the emergency hearings, see U.S. House of Representatives, *Report on an Emergency and Informal Investigation into the Extent and Character of Activities of Aliens in the United States Engaged in Nazi Propaganda and into the Sources of Funds to Finance Activities*, Subcommittee of the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1934 (hereafter, “*Emergency Report.*”)

on the two evenings in between the three hearing days, going so far as to accompany Dickstein on a train ride to Philadelphia on the first evening in order to have an hour with the Congressman, who had a speaking engagement there that night.⁴⁶⁵

Dickstein acceded to his Jewish advisors' suggestions. The first day of the emergency hearings was held in executive session, but, days two and three had to be public sessions, because, Dickstein explained, the press was expecting to hear the sensational evidence he had promised.⁴⁶⁶ Following the advice of his Jewish counselors, the witnesses Dickstein called in the public sessions were people who had already testified in New York in September, and thus offered only evidence that had already been made public.

When the last witness was called to testify on Thursday, November 14, it appeared that they were out of the woods but for a minor quarrel between Representative Focht (R, PA) and the editor of the *Daily Worker*. Focht redbaited the witness, who in turn, called committee member Hamilton Fish of New York City a Nazi. A great stir erupted in the hearing room forcing Dickstein to take to the gavel and order police to clear the room. Thus, the emergency hearings came to an abrupt end with but a whimper of publicity.⁴⁶⁷ The next day, headlines read, "Congressman Red-baits Witness," but little else came out of the hearing room confrontation, and in the end, Leon Lewis and the ADL and AJC men had succeeded in protecting their

⁴⁶⁵ Memorandum, December 1933, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 2, Folder 14.

⁴⁶⁶ Memorandum, December 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 2, Folder 14.

⁴⁶⁷ Memorandum, December 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 2, Folder 14. "Nazi Hearing Ends Abruptly," *New York Times*, November 16, 1933. 11.

undercover operations by helping Dickstein recover for the exaggerations he had made.⁴⁶⁸

A National Resistance Operation

Leon Lewis had effectively controlled the potential damage that Dickstein's public hearings might have caused the DAV, ADL and AJC undercover operations. (Leon Lewis did note, however, that as a result of the Dickstein announcement, FNG leaders in Los Angeles had become more guarded and were "watching their steps very carefully.")⁴⁶⁹ Lewis' east coast mission was not yet over. Following the conclusion of the emergency hearings, Leon Lewis went to New York City as directed by Sigmund Livingston. Representing the ADL in negotiations with the AJC, Lewis helped broker a national undercover, fact-finding program. Lewis' notes on his meetings in New York again reflect his concern for discretion. Lewis never named the men with whom he met, but only that he met with "gentlemen [who are] so prominent that I dare not place their names on this report."⁴⁷⁰ Over the course of four days, Lewis learned more about the AJC's fact-finding operation.⁴⁷¹ In his memo,

⁴⁶⁸ Memorandum, December 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 2, Folder 14.

⁴⁶⁹ Letter, Lewis to Gutstadt, October 31, 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 22, Folder 20.

⁴⁷⁰ Memorandum, December 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 2, Folder 14.

⁴⁷¹ For more on the AJC's undercover operations, see Naomi Cohen, *Not Free to Desist: The American Jewish Committee, 1906-1966*, 195-96. In 1933-34, the AJC's undercover operation was handled by Wolfgang Schwabacher, an attorney who set up a separate group out of his office called "Information and Service Associates." It appears that that group lasted just a year or two. See letter, Waldman to James Rosenberg, November 25, 1933, Waldman Papers, American Jewish Committee Papers, Box 9, Folder "Defense Activities." Also see scattered references to Schwabacher's activities, the Information and Service Associates, and the Survey Committee in Waldman correspondence, *ibid.*, Box 40, Folder, "Survey Committee: Educational Department Survey, 1933-1942."

Lewis commented that he was surprised at how “disorganized, [and] utterly inadequate” the fact-finding operation was in New York.⁴⁷²

Prominent NY leaders had not only been inactive, [but] others had been held back from taking any course of action because of the belief that the aforesaid leaders certainly must have the matter in hand.⁴⁷³

He concluded that the New York City undercover operation in “no way paralleled” what he had organized in Los Angeles.

As part of his negotiations with the AJC, Lewis hoped to secure their support for a new, non-sectarian resistance organization to fight Nazism at a national level. Lewis laid out his vision for a coalition of patriotic Americans of all creeds who recognized the threat that Nazism posed to Americanism. The new league would be led by men “of such a character as to appeal not merely to liberals but to Americans of all types, based not on antisemitism or anti-Hitlerism but upon pro-Americanism.” The interfaith composition of the group would signify that the problems at hand were not just of Jewish concern, but a national problem that called on “truly militant Americans” -- those loyal to the principles of tolerance and equality -- to combat.⁴⁷⁴ The four AJC leaders pledged \$25,000 to launch the new League for American Principles with the understanding that after that the three cities would be responsible for raising their own funds.⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷² Memorandum, December 1933, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 2, Folder 14.

⁴⁷³ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁴ Letter, Allie Freed to Leon Lewis, November 30, 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 25, Folder 19.

⁴⁷⁵ Memorandum, December 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 2, Folder 14. According to Freed, Livingston spent the meeting planning for a New York office of the ADL. In a subsequent letter, Gutstadt asked Lewis if he would go to New York City for 30-60 days to take charge of the new office. Lewis declined. See letter, Lewis to Freed, December 6, 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 25, Folder 19.

Unfortunately, the League for American Principles never saw the light of day. Reflecting the personal and organizational jealousies that plagued the ADL and the AJC throughout the 1930s, the leaders of the two groups could not come to an agreement on the terms for the new league. “AF” (Allie Freed, an AJC representative) later wrote to Lewis reporting on the breakdown among the leaders. According to Freed, Sigmund Livingston was more concerned with empire-building than he was with working for “the Cause.”⁴⁷⁶ On the other hand, Gutstadt and Livingston reported that the “New York Jewish situation was fraught with political in-fighting,” and they did not want to be involved with the AJC.⁴⁷⁷ The plan for the new league fell through as a result of these differences between AJC and ADL leaders. It was not the first time this had happened, nor would it be the last that their political, social and ethnic differences would prevent the two groups from finding the common ground they needed to address the political crises facing American and European Jews in the 1930s.⁴⁷⁸

The ADL and AJC may have failed to establish the new League for American Principles, but they did agree to the terms Lewis had brokered regarding a national, coordinated, fact-finding operation to combat Nazism in the United States. According to Lewis’ memo, the ADL and AJC agreed to work together under the direction of one man to pool the information they collected on Nazi activities from around the country. Frank Prince, “a [former Hearst] newspaper

⁴⁷⁶ Letter, Allie Freed to Lewis, November 30, 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 25, Folder 19.

⁴⁷⁷ *Ibid.*; letter, Gutstadt to Lewis, December 14, 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 22, Folder 22.

⁴⁷⁸ Gulie Ne'eman Arad, *America, Its Jews, and the Rise of Nazism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000); Henry L. Feingold, *Did American Jewry Do Enough During the Holocaust?* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University, 1985).

man of high reputation, wide experience and splendid contacts” was hired to coordinate a national, undercover fact-finding operation for the two Jewish organizations.⁴⁷⁹ Prince was to collect and review all informant reports, and to act as liaison to the Dickstein Committee. Leon Lewis was put in charge of fact-finding operations for the West Coast.⁴⁸⁰ B’nai B’rith man Charlie Sommers of Indianapolis was given \$2,000 (raised in New York City) to go towards “special work” in that city, while ADL men in Boston were instructed to raise funds their own funds.⁴⁸¹

Leon Lewis’ east coast mission had been a success. He had quietly asserted his political leadership on the Immigration and Naturalization Committee’s emergency hearings and he had brought his leadership skills to bear on the strained relationship between the ADL and AJC, brokering a national fact-finding operation to combat Nazism in the United States. In so doing, Lewis paved the way for the LAJCC as a new source of American Jewish political agency and influence as well. A month later, Dickstein announced a new Congressional investigation of Nazi activities across the country, and he named Leon Lewis special counsel in Los Angeles to his new subcommittee, noting that Lewis could be relied upon to be discreet, and that he would “lend dignity to the investigation.”⁴⁸²

⁴⁷⁹ Memorandum, December 1933, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 2, Folder 13; letter, Gutstadt to Lewis, December 14, 1933, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 22, Folder 22.

⁴⁸⁰ Letter, Gutstadt to Lewis, December 14, 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 22, Folder 22.

⁴⁸¹ Memorandum, December 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 2, Folder 13; letter, Gutstadt to Lewis, December 14, 1933, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 22, Folder 22.

⁴⁸² Letter, Dickstein to Rep. Charles Kramer, November 15, 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 5, Folder 12.

Agency in Absentia

Jewish influence over the emergency hearings extended to the report on the hearings as well. In January 1934, the House Immigration and Naturalization Committee released its findings from the November emergency hearings. The report summarized the growth of Nazi groups in the United States from the end of World War I, and answered several questions pertaining to the goals, character, influence, funding and level of penetration of Nazi-sponsored propaganda in this country. The report produced evidence showing that (1) Berlin was also supporting *domestic*, pro-Nazi organizations, and that (2) funds from Germany were being used to persuade American citizens of German birth that they owed their allegiance to Germany.⁴⁸³ Focusing primarily on Nazi activity in New York, the report did not make any references to Nazi activity in Los Angeles. For all of Lewis' work with Dickstein, there was not a single mention of Nazi activity on the West Coast.

The absence of this information was no oversight. Lewis, Prince and the ADL purposely withheld their information from Dickstein's report to protect their undercover operations. Exerting their political agency by abstaining, the Jewish organizations were expressing their opposition to Dickstein, his emergency hearings and to the national investigation he hoped to launch.

The choice to withhold their information from the report angered Los Angeles Congressman and Committee member, Charles Kramer. In early January 1934, Kramer sent repeated letters and telegrams to both Leon Lewis and Frank

⁴⁸³ U.S. House of Representatives, *Emergency Report*.

Prince asking that they send the DAV reports to Washington so they could be incorporated into the Committee's report.⁴⁸⁴ With the publication deadline only days away, the LA documents had not arrived in Washington, Kramer's telegrams turned angry:

After 3 days strenuous effort to locate testimony you took received wire from [Allie] Freed advising he received no testimony stop this is delaying investigation as we are ready to proceed stop regret you did not send report direct to me which Dickstein also claims you should have done stop answer.⁴⁸⁵

Lewis replied to each of Kramer's requests, telling him each time that he had sent his files to Livingston at the ADL in Chicago, that Livingston was supposed to have given them to Frank Prince who was to give them to Dickstein. This was the chain of command agreed upon by the ADL and AJC.⁴⁸⁶ As far as Lewis was concerned, he had followed the instructions of his organizational superiors.

The ADL, however, was purposely stonewalling the Committee. Gutstadt and Livingston were still concerned that without the proper legal authority, publication of their information would endanger the lives of their informants and send Nazi agents running, forever lost to future prosecution.⁴⁸⁷ "As a lawyer Leon," Prince wrote to Lewis, "I am sure you will agree with me that no good purpose would be served by

⁴⁸⁴ Correspondence, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 26, Folder 14.

⁴⁸⁵ Telegram, Lewis to Gutstadt, January 2, 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 22, Folder 18; correspondence between Lewis and Kramer, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 5, Folder 12. The testimony referred to were the official depositions taken from Schmidt and Sunderland by Lewis acting as special counsel to the Committee.

⁴⁸⁶ Letter, Leon Lewis to Charles Kramer, February 5, 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 5, Folder 13; letter, Lewis to Gutstadt, January 27, 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 22, Folder 24.

⁴⁸⁷ Letter, Livingston to Lewis, December 13, 1933, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 22, Folder 22; letter, Lewis to Prince, January 9, 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 26, Folder 14. The letters and telegrams between Los Angeles, Washington, and Chicago in the weeks prior to the publication of Dickstein's January report are in CRC Papers, Part 1 Box 26, Folder 14; Box 5, Folder 12; Box 22, Folders 22-23; Box 26, Folder 13.

letting [your] stuff get into the record, printed...and then put into circulation.”⁴⁸⁸

Moreover, the publication deadline coincided with the German-American Alliance trial. They could not afford to release that information prior to the trial.

Testimony in the German-American Alliance trial in Los Angeles wrapped up just days before the report was to go to press. Now it was Lewis who sent Kramer urgent telegrams imploring him to delay the publication of the federal report until the Los Angeles trial record could be transcribed, guaranteeing Kramer that the most compelling evidence of Nazi activity had just been exposed in Los Angeles. With the evidence of Nazi activity now public, Lewis urged Kramer not to allow “grass [to] grow under our feet” but to find laws that would indict the Nazis.⁴⁸⁹

THIS IS NO TIME FOR DILATORY TACTICS STOP DEPARTMENT
OF JUSTICE MUST TAKE OFFICIAL COGNIZANCE OF
SITUATION TO PREVENT ESCAPE OF MATERRAL WITNESSES
AND THOSE CHARGED IN STRONGLY CORROBORATED
TESTIMONY WITH OVERT ACTS OF SEDITION STOP⁴⁹⁰

Unfortunately, the timing was off. The “*Report on an Emergency and Informal Investigation into the Extent and Character of Activities of Aliens in the United States Engaged in Nazi Propaganda and into the Sources of Finds to Finance Activities*” had already gone to press, without the evidence from Los Angeles.⁴⁹¹

Charles Kramer was furious with Leon Lewis and with Prince. He reprimanded

⁴⁸⁸ Letter, Prince to Lewis, January 27, 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 26, Folder 14.

⁴⁸⁹ Letter, Lewis to Gutstadt, January 27, 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 22, Folder 24; telegram, Lewis to Kramer, January 19, 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 5, Folder 12.

⁴⁹⁰ Correspondence between Lewis and Kramer, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 5, Folder 12.

⁴⁹¹ U.S. House of Representatives, *Emergency Report*.

Prince in a telegram for the stonewalling. “Your delaying and stalling kept important information from getting into the public record!”⁴⁹²

Prince’s intention exactly.⁴⁹³

The ADL and AJC had asserted their political will by holding information from Congress. Both Jewish groups believed that the Dickstein Committee hearings were premature. Their decision was a calculated risk. Dickstein was going to proceed with or without their input, even though he did not have very compelling evidence. If the report from the emergency hearings had failed to convince the House to appropriate money for a Congressional investigation, there may not have been another chance to attract federal attention to the problem of Nazi propaganda activity in the United States. Believing, however, that Dickstein’s efforts were premature, the ADL and AJC were willing to take that risk. Hence, these Jewish asserted their political agency in November 1933 through stonewalling.

Dickstein proceeded with his plans to launch a Congressional investigation despite the lack of cooperation he was receiving from Jewish organizations. On January 3, 1934, he presented the bill on the floor of the House:

Resolved, That the Speaker of the House of Representatives be and he is hereby authorized to appoint a special committee to be composed of seven members for the purpose of conducting an investigation of (1) the extent, character, and objects of Nazi propaganda activities in the untied States, (2) the diffusion within the United States of subversive

⁴⁹² Letter, Prince to Lewis, January 8, 1934, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 26, Folder 14. In fact, Prince felt the information was so valuable that he suggested that perhaps the reports be placed in a safe deposit vault, if not with Prince then perhaps with Freed as a “neutral party.” Prince also suggested that “people in high places” (probably the Justice Department) not connected to Dickstein should see them.

⁴⁹³ Letter, Prince to Lewis, January 8, 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 26, Folder 14.

propaganda that is instigated from foreign countries and attacks the principle of the form of government as guaranteed by our Constitution and (3) all other questions in relation thereto that would aid Congress in any necessary remedial legislation.⁴⁹⁴

The resolution requested funding for a special subcommittee to investigate the suspicious propaganda activities that the emergency hearings had uncovered.

According to documents in the Los Angeles archive, Frank Prince told Leon Lewis that “we,” meaning the ADL and AJC, had influenced the language of the resolution requesting an appropriation for the investigation itself. According to Prince, the wording of *H. Res. 198* was the “sum total of constructive work conducted in very confidential meetings” among leaders of the AJC and American Jewish Congress.⁴⁹⁵ Prince informed Lewis that “they” had worked diligently to prevent Dickstein from becoming chairman of the Committee, a post that was assigned to John McCormack (D, MA) but had not been quite as successful in keeping Kramer off.⁴⁹⁶

H. Res. 198 passed in March 1934. The special subcommittee was awarded an initial appropriation of \$25,000, and in June, passage of *H. Res. 424* added another \$15,000 to the special subcommittee’s budget. The special

⁴⁹⁴ U.S. House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, *H.R. 198*, Washington, DC, 1934.

⁴⁹⁵ Letter, Prince to Lewis, January 11, 1934, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 26, Folder 14. The meetings included AJC executive committee members Judge Joseph Proskauer and Information Service and Associates director Wolf Schwabacher, Rabbi Stephen Wise of the American Jewish Congress and Allie Freed (affiliation unknown).

⁴⁹⁶ Press Release, Charles Kramer Correspondence, U.S. House of Representatives Special Committee on Un-American Activities Authorized to Investigate Nazi Propaganda and Certain Other Propaganda Activities, United States National Archives, Washington, DC, RG 233, Entry 7, Box 367, Folder “Press Releases and Congressional Speeches” (hereafter, Charles Kramer Correspondence). Dickstein said that he had declined the chairmanship of the subcommittee for “conscientious and patriotic reasons,” deferring to McCormack, “whose personality and record will establish as a fact that this investigation of Nazi and other foreign instigated propaganda in the U.S. is an official inquiry into a menace to the Government of the U.S. and its principles.”

subcommittee was formally known as the McCormack-Dickstein Committee, charged with investigating subversive propaganda activities in the United States.

The Committee, 1934

For decades, the LAJCC, AJC, and ADL's influence over the McCormack-Dickstein Committee has not been understood by historians. From the investigation phase to the hearings to the drafting of its final report, Jewish influence over the first incarnation of what would later become the House Un-American Activities Committee has been virtually undocumented until now. The CRC Papers in Los Angeles, however, document that relationship. The discussion that follows explores that relationship by cross-referencing documents found in Los Angeles with the Committee's papers in Washington and with hearing transcripts. It demonstrates the offense-by-proxy strategy American Jewish leaders employed in their support of the Committee and its exposure of early Nazi activity in the United States to the American people in 1934.

Frank Prince and The Committee

Documents in the national archive indicate that AJC/ADL's chief investigator Frank Prince was a trusted advisor and confidant to Committee chairman, John McCormack. One exchange of telegrams between McCormack and Prince in May and June 1934 reflects how intimately involved Prince was with the Congressional investigation. McCormack instructed Prince "to return books and pamphlets

confiscated from Friends of New Germany in New York if [you are] no longer using them,” to which Prince replied, “Have returned everything to Friends of New Germany except films and gun.” In his return telegram, McCormack instructed Prince not to return films and guns.⁴⁹⁷ In July 1934, Frank Randolph, McCormack instructed Randolph to ask Prince to investigate “certain conditions in Chicago” because Prince “ha[d] operators there.”⁴⁹⁸ In another memo to Randolph, McCormack instructed Randolph to have one of the committee’s investigators “keep Prince informed.”⁴⁹⁹ For his part, Prince’s use of “we” and “our” in his correspondence with McCormack indicates that Prince felt that he was a part of the team. In a letter to McCormack written in June 1934, Prince asked McCormack to have Speaker Rainey sign “a big bunch of subpoenas” before leaving for summer recess that “we” could use to call witnesses for executive hearings in Chicago, LA and Detroit, “otherwise *we* may find *ourselves* seriously handicapped in *our* endeavor,” [italics mine].⁵⁰⁰

Prince provided the Committee with information gathered by ADL/AJC fact-finding operatives from around the country.⁵⁰¹ In one case, Prince sent McCormack details of the activities of a German graduate student at Washington

⁴⁹⁷ Telegram, Frank Prince to John McCormack, June 18, 1934, *Administrative Records, 1934-35*, U.S. House of Representatives Special Committee on Un-American Activities Authorized to Investigate Nazi Propaganda and Certain Other Propaganda Activities, United States National Archives, Washington, DC, RG 233, Entry 1, Box 358, Folder 8 (hereafter, *Administrative Records, 1934-35*)

⁴⁹⁸ Handwritten note, McCormack to Randolph, n.d. (c. June 1934), *ibid.*, RG 233, Entry 1, Box 358, Folder 8.

⁴⁹⁹ Memo, McCormack to Randolph, n.d. (c. June 1934), *ibid.*, RG 233, Entry 1, Box 359, Folder “Shreve-Siney.”

⁵⁰⁰ Letter, Frank Prince to John McCormack, June 19, 1934, *ibid.*, RG 233, Entry 1, Box 358, Folder 8.

⁵⁰¹ Letter, Frank Prince to William Cherin, April 24, 1934, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 25, Folder 15.

University in St. Louis who seemed to be doing Nazi propaganda work. The student had “absented himself from the campus for two months and made an extended auto trip with the German Consul as far [w]est as California” making pro-Nazi speeches and presentations, threatening German-Americans who criticized his position. Prince reported that the graduate student compelled all Germans to defend the new Germany “or at least keep quiet” if they could not be supportive.⁵⁰²

In another case, Prince reported to McCormack that a student had threatened a professor who dared speak out against his pro-Germany talk at Maryville College in St. Louis, telling the professor that “if he valued the welfare of his family in Germany as well as his own, he had better give some satisfactory explanation [for criticizing the Reich.]” Prince told McCormack that he tried to get the professor to testify to the subcommittee, impressing upon him “the necessity of someone unmasking this whole abominable thing.” The professor was so upset, Prince reported, that his eyes filled with tears and “he could hardly form words.”⁵⁰³

Historians have studied these documents for decades and have taken no notice of Frank Prince among the dozens of investigators and contributors to the investigation. It is only in his role as a witness before the Committee that Frank Prince stands out. Prince was, in fact, the first witness called to testify before the McCormack-Dickstein Committee. When asked to identify himself, Prince said that

⁵⁰² Letter, Frank Prince to John McCormack, May 31, 1934, U.S. House Special Committee, *Administrative Records, 1934-35*, Entry 1, Box 358, Folder 8.

⁵⁰³ *Ibid.*

he was a private investigator who had been hired by “[a] group of influential Americans who had established a secret fund for the purpose of making an investigation of un-American movements in this country.” Prince told the subcommittee that the group he represented was not a corporation, but “merely private individuals with money who wanted these matters investigated and if deemed advisable, brought to light at the proper time.” Funds were made available to Prince through one man, whose name he did not volunteer. Prince was never asked by the Committee to divulge the identity of the “influential Americans” for whom he worked, and hence, the link between the AJC/ADL and the Committee has been hidden from history. Correspondence between Prince and Lewis, however, reveals that Frank Prince was, in fact, the proxy for American Jewish interests to the Committee.

Prince was subpoenaed by the Committee to provide information on the activities of the Silver Shirts and the group’s possible association with Berlin. Prince told the Committee that he managed 20 agents from New York to Los Angeles who “worked at strategic points” across the country.⁵⁰⁴ The information Prince provided the Committee on Silver Shirt activity came from Leon Lewis.⁵⁰⁵ Prince reported that his agents had been investigating the Silver Shirts in Chicago, New York City, New

⁵⁰⁴ Executive Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Special Committee on Un-American Activities. At Washington, DC. Investigation of Nazi Propaganda Activities and Investigation of Certain Other Propaganda Activities (April 26-27, 1934) (hereafter, Frank Prince testimony). It is clear that Frank Prince, a former Hearst newsman-turned-private detective was hired by the AJC in late 1933, according to Prince’s testimony before the Dickstein Committee. Evidence is fragmentary in the AJC Papers: Prince was recorded as present at the AJC’s Legal and Investigative Committee meetings during 1935. See *Chronological Files*, American Jewish Committee Papers, Blaustein Library, Box 4 (1935-1936), Folder “Jan-Feb [1935]” and Folder “Mar-April[1935]”; letter, Harry Schneiderman to Sidney Marks, September 6, 1935, *ibid.*, Box 4, Folder “May-Sept [1935]”; correspondence with Leon Lewis from December 1933 – March 1936, CRC Papers, Part 1, Boxes 26-27 (hereafter, *AJC Chronological Files*)

⁵⁰⁵ Correspondence, Leon Lewis and Frank Prince, February-April 1934, CRC Papers, Box 25, Folders 13-15.

Jersey and in upstate New York, but that the most significant Silver Shirt activity was in Los Angeles. Prince told the Committee that leaders of the Friends of the New Germany in Los Angeles and in Diego, had recently become members of the Silver Shirts and had taken charge of some of their posts.⁵⁰⁶

For decades historians who have studied the archives and testimonial record of the McCormack-Dickstein hearings have not known that Frank Prince worked for the ADL and the AJC...by design. In a letter Prince wrote to the AJC fact-finding operative William Cherin in San Francisco, Prince confirmed that “neither my name nor picture [will] appear in any newspapers,” assuring that the role of his Jewish benefactors played in fighting Nazism in the United States in 1934 would also remain hidden from history.⁵⁰⁷ The files of the LAJCC, however, unlock the decades’ old secret identity of the first witness called before the Committee, unequivocally linking the ADL and AJC to every phase of the House investigation of subversive Nazi propaganda activity in 1934.

Leon Lewis and The Committee

Immediately following the passage of *H. Res. 198* in March 1934, Leon Lewis became the Committee’s key man in Los Angeles, organizing investigators and evidence, preparing the witness list, and drafting the questions used in the hearings. Lewis’ relationship with Los Angeles Congressman Charles Kramer, who

⁵⁰⁶ Frank Prince testimony. For the corroborating records from Los Angeles, see reports by Walter Clairville, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 6, Folders 3-17.

⁵⁰⁷ Letter, Frank Prince to William Cherin, April 24, 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 25, Folder 15.

was a member of the Committee, however, was strained as a result of the stonewalling episode of January. Hence, tension and distrust between Kramer and Lewis encumbered the preparation for the Committee's hearings in Los Angeles.

Kramer's distrust of Lewis is evident in Kramer's selection of the Committee's investigators in Los Angeles. Leon Lewis had recommended that Kramer hire the DAV volunteers who had been working for the previous nine months as the official federal investigators.⁵⁰⁸ Kramer, however, did not take Lewis' recommendation. According to Lewis, Kramer decided instead to "spread [the political] plums" around by appointing an entirely new team of investigators to corroborate the veterans' findings concerning FNG activity, and, specific to the Los Angeles investigation, to corroborate the group's relationship to domestic right-wing groups, particularly with the Silver Shirts.⁵⁰⁹ Although political considerations may have been a factor in Kramer's selection of investigators, Kramer's distrust of Lewis was probably the primary factor influencing Kramer's decision. Kramer's distrust of Lewis is reflected in the instructions he gave his new chief investigator, Robert Carroll. Kramer cautioned Carroll not to share everything with Lewis.⁵¹⁰ Concerned over possible security leaks, Kramer also warned Carroll "...not [to] tell anyone who you are working for, and in particular, do not to take any women into your confidence.

⁵⁰⁸ Letter, Lewis to Kramer, February 10, 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 5, Folder 13; letter, Lewis to Kramer, April 20, 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 5, Folder 14.

⁵⁰⁹ Letter, Kramer to Lewis, May 10, 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 5, Folder 15; letter, Charles Kramer to Robert Carroll, May 5, 1934, and letter, Carroll to Kramer, May 28, 1934, *Charles Kramer Correspondence*, Entry 7, Box 367, Folder "Allen-Carroll, R.R." For Robert Carroll's investigative reports see CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 5, Folder 10.

⁵¹⁰ Letter, Kramer-Carroll, June 2, 1934 and June 6, 1934, in *Charles Kramer Correspondence*, RG 233, Entry 1, Box 367, Folder "Allen-Carroll, R.R."

Even if you see things about the Committee in the newspapers, do not say anything to anyone.”⁵¹¹

Lewis, however, was too critical to the investigation in Los Angeles to be marginalized, and was soon managing all the details of the Los Angeles hearings for the Committee.⁵¹² Documents in both the LA and Washington, DC archives indicate that the Committee’s three investigators met regularly with Lewis, and provided Lewis with copies of the daily reports they sent to Kramer. Hence, despite Kramer’s distrust of Lewis, Lewis remained central to the Committee’s investigation in Los Angeles. Moreover, Lewis’ stature with Dickstein remained untarnished, and consequently, when it came time to name chief counsel for the Committee, it was Lewis who was selected. Lewis, however, demurred, writing that it would be inadvisable to have a Jewish lawyer interrogating Nazis. On Lewis’ recommendation, Volney Mooney, National Commander of the American Legion, was selected to serve as the Committee’s chief counsel in Los Angeles.⁵¹³

Fatigue contributed to the tension between Lewis and Kramer in the weeks leading up to the hearings. In early June, Lewis fell ill from exhaustion. Working non-stop for months managing Hollywood’s spies, Congressional investigators and a host of other federal agents from the Department of Justice, the U.S. Secret Service, the Treasury Department and the Department of Immigration, Lewis needed help.⁵¹⁴ He wrote to Kramer requesting additional resources, complaining that the additional

⁵¹¹ Letter, Charles Kramer to Robert Carroll, May 5, 1934, *ibid.*, RG 233, Entry 1, Box 367, Folder “Allen-Carroll, R.R.”

⁵¹² *Ibid.*

⁵¹³ Letter, Lewis to Gutstadt, July 19, 1934, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 23, Folder 5.

⁵¹⁴ Letter, Lewis to Kramer, June 6, 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 5, Folder 15.

\$15,000 appropriated by the House for the national investigation was still insufficient to address the scope of the problem.⁵¹⁵ An irritated Kramer responded saying that there was no more money.⁵¹⁶

Frank Prince ran intercession between the two men. Prince empathized with Lewis' frustrations with Representative Kramer and with the politicization of the investigative appointments. "So, Leon, let's not kid ourselves...[the investigators hired in each city] are not worth their salt," Prince wrote, urging Lewis to keep his cool with Kramer for the sake of the cause:

Remember this, too, old man, [Kramer] is your baby and I have taken him in hand, nursed him and cherished him and know just as well as you do his failings and shortcomings. Raise hell with me, bawl me out if you like, let me know if you will, what you have on your chest and what you would like to see done, because it is so much easier, Leon, to help guide a man than it is to force him to turn around in his own tracks.⁵¹⁷

Prince assured Lewis that it would all be worth it in the end.⁵¹⁸

Frank Prince worked directly with Lewis on behalf of the Committee to help Lewis prepare the witness list and develop the line of questioning that would be used by the Committee at the Los Angeles hearings. Prince cautioned Lewis not to misuse the Committee's power of subpoena. "A subpoena from the committee," Prince wrote, "is not a search warrant. You must proceed carefully and within the law, otherwise, we are sunk. The Committee [will] lose its credibility and its authority."⁵¹⁹

Prince also instructed Lewis to brief Kramer on the expected responses to each

⁵¹⁵ Letter, Leon Lewis to Frank Prince, May 29, 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 26, Folder 15.

⁵¹⁶ Letter, Kramer to Lewis, June 11, 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 26, Folder 15.

⁵¹⁷ Letter, Prince to Lewis, June 9, 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 26, Folder 15.

⁵¹⁸ Letter, Prince to Lewis, June 9, 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 26, Folder 15.

⁵¹⁹ *Ibid.*

question, based on the evidence collected, to avoid hearing-room surprises. “There can be no ‘blow-up’ in the public hearings to which the press and public are admitted,” Prince warned.⁵²⁰

Offense-by-Proxy

By the time the Committee was ready to visit Los Angeles in August, four months of testimony heard in New York City and Washington had exposed much of what there was to hear in Los Angeles. Consequently, Lewis wrote to John McCormack just days before the commencement of the Los Angeles hearings, advising him that there would be little value in conducting public hearings there.⁵²¹ Moreover, Lewis advised McCormack that re-examining this information in LA would be anti-climactic and would only give local Nazis more publicity and the encouragement to “recommence their hypocritical reiteration of loyalty to American principles.”⁵²² Lewis did, however, recommend that the Committee conduct hearings in executive session in Los Angeles, as there was sensitive information concerning the relationship between the Friends of the New Germany in that city and domestic right-wing groups.⁵²³

McCormack heeded Lewis’ recommendation. The Los Angeles hearings were conducted in executive session during the week of August 1, 1934.⁵²⁴

⁵²⁰ Ibid.

⁵²¹ Letter, Lewis to McCormack, August 4, 1934, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 29, Folder 20.

⁵²² Ibid.

⁵²³ Ibid.

⁵²⁴ U.S. House of Representatives Special Committee on Un-American Activities, Executive Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Special Committee on Un-American Activities. At Los Angeles.

Based on the findings of Hollywood's spies, Lewis constructed a hearing agenda that called leaders of both the Friends of the New Germany and the Silver Shirts to testify. FNG leaders Paul Themnitz, Hans Winterhalder, and Hermann Schwinn were called on August 2, 3, and 6 to testify about the mission of FNG, its antisemitic attitudes, its questionable activities including the training of the private militia, its acquisition of arms, the relationship between FNG and California National Guard, FNG internal politics, and on the relationship between the Friends of the New Germany and the Silver Shirts in Los Angeles.⁵²⁵

Of unique focus in Los Angeles was the relationship between FNG and the domestic, paramilitary organization, the Silver Shirts. For nearly six months Lewis had been receiving reports from several DAV investigators who had infiltrated the group in Los Angeles and in San Diego. On August 3rd and 7th the Committee heard testimony from Los Angeles Silver Shirt leader Frederick Beutel and *Silver Legion Ranger* newspaper editor James Craig. Following a line of questioning constructed by Lewis, the Committee queried the two on the group's local activities and its relationship to the Friends of the New Germany.

Mark White and Walter Clairville, the two DAV investigators and Hollywood spies who infiltrated the Silver Shirts for Lewis, appeared before the Committee after Beutel and Craig. Clairville and White identified themselves

Investigation of Nazi Propaganda Activities and Investigation of Certain Other Propaganda Activities, 73-DC-6, 73-CALIF-2 (1934).

⁵²⁵ Ibid.

simply as veterans. Neither was asked any further questions about how they came to belong to the Silver Shirts, a question that might have revealed them as informants to the DAV investigation and to Lewis. And so, just as Frank Prince's relationship to Jewish organizations was silenced by the Committee's tactful interrogation just a few months earlier, so, too was the association between Mark White, Walter Clairville and their Jewish underwriters hidden from the historical record.⁵²⁶

Finally, U.S. Naval Officers Virgil Hays and Earl Gray, two active duty naval officers from San Diego also testified on August 7th. They reported in detail on the Silver Shirts' paramilitary drilling and the group's secret stockpile of arms in San Diego.⁵²⁷ It is probable that Hays and Gray worked with John Schmidt on the LAJCC's San Diego Silver Shirt investigation.⁵²⁸ Schmidt, Hollywood's first and best-informed agent was notably absent from the hearings in Los Angeles. Having suffered a nervous breakdown in the spring of 1934,

⁵²⁶ It is not clear whether Clairville, White, or any of Hollywood's spies knew about their Jewish benefactors.

⁵²⁷ U.S. House of Representatives Special Committee on Un-American Activities, Executive Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Special Committee on Un-American Activities. At Los Angeles. Investigation of Nazi Propaganda Activities and Investigation of Certain Other Propaganda Activities, 73-CALIF-2 (1934) (Beutel and Craig Testimonies). Walter Clairville and Mark White were both DAV members who infiltrated and reported on the Silver Shirt organization in Los Angeles in 1934. For more on White and Clairville's investigation of the Silver Shirts in Los Angeles, see CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 10, Folders 19-22; Box 11, Folders 1-10; Box 6, Folders 3-17.

⁵²⁸ In his encrypted reports from San Diego, John Schmidt talks about working with two naval officers, but does not supply their names. The information that Hays and Gray supplied the Committee is remarkably similar to the information Schmidt says came from his naval officer agents. See Schmidt's San Diego Reports, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 8, Folders 14-18.

Schmidt was being treated at the time of the hearings at the VA Hospital in Palo Alto, California.⁵²⁹

The McCormack-Dickstein Committee concluded its hearings in Los Angeles in a week. It interviewed the full cast of characters associated with insurgent Nazi activity in Los Angeles, yet, the role played by Leon Lewis and Hollywood's spies has remained hidden from the historical record for decades.⁵³⁰ Nowhere among the hundreds of pages of transcribed testimony, however, is there any mention of anyone named Leon Lewis or any indication of Jewish groups aiding the Committee. Correspondence between Frank Prince and John McCormack in the National Archive lacks references to Jewish groups. The correspondence between Charles Kramer and Leon Lewis never mentions Jewish Hollywood, the LAJCC or the ADL.

* * *

In February of 1935, the Committee published its final report to Congress. The report was authored and edited by Frank Prince, who had been a writer for the Hearst newspapers prior to his work as a private investigator.⁵³¹ The report exposed efforts by foreign and domestic agents to inject their political ideologies into American political culture.

In handling the subject of naziism [sic], fascism, and communism, it can readily be seen that attempts have been made and are being made

⁵²⁹ For more on the Schmidt investigation of the Silver Shirts in San Diego, see Schmidt's reports in *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 18; Frank Prince Testimony; letter, Schmidt to Lewis, September 11, 1934, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 8, Folder 20.

⁵³⁰ See *Administrative Records, 1934-35*, RG 233, Entry 1, Box 358, Folders "Investigative Reports"; *Charles Kramer Correspondence*, RG 233, Entry 7, Box 367, Folder "Allen-Carroll, R.R." See also, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 5, Folders 10, 17-18.

⁵³¹ Letter, Frank Prince to Sigmund Livingston, February 3, 1935, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 26, Folder 23.

from abroad and in some instances by diplomatic and consular agents of foreign countries to influence the political opinions of many of our people.⁵³²

The Committee sternly criticized racism and intolerance as perversions of “Americanism” and concluded that “communism, naziism [sic] and fascism are all equally dangerous, equally alien and equally unacceptable to American institutions.”⁵³³ In a letter written to Lewis detailing his role in drafting the report, Frank Prince wrote that he was “a little bit proud” of the report’s “stirring plea...for keeping all isms away from America, except Americanism.”⁵³⁴

The McCormack-Dickstein final report made six recommendations for legislation intended to limit the kinds of activities that the Committee had uncovered. The recommendations included preventing foreign propaganda agents from entering country, granting the Secretary of Labor the power right to terminate visas of individuals found to be creating discord among the people of the United States, and legislation that would make it illegal to “seduce any U.S. military personnel’s allegiance away from United States” or to attempt to overthrow the U.S. government by force or violence. In the end, however, only one of the proposals was passed into law – a bill requiring agents of a foreign government to register with the U.S. State Department.⁵³⁵

⁵³² U.S. House of Representatives, Subcommittee of the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, *Investigation of Nazi and Other Propaganda*, Union Calendar No. 44, Report No. 153 (1935) (hereafter, “Report 153”)

⁵³³ Ibid.

⁵³⁴ Ibid.

⁵³⁵ Ibid.

Conclusion

In 1933, the ADL and the AJC, two of the three national American Jewish defense organizations, united to combat the rise of insurgent Nazism in the United States. Until now, their efforts in this regard have been hidden from history. At the time, the hostile political climate fomented by Nazi-influenced groups forced American Jews to assume a low profile to combat the Nazi threat. Consequently, these two American Jewish self-defense organizations employed covert methods to gather information and worked behind the scenes with the McCormack-Dickstein Committee to support its investigation of this disturbing political activity in the United States. Consequently, historians have known little about this American Jewish program of resistance to Nazism in the United States in the early 1930s, making passing references to it in surveys of American Jewish history, unpublished dissertations, and ADL oral histories.⁵³⁶

⁵³⁶ References to undercover fact-finding operations can be found in Burton Boxerman, "Reactions of the St. Louis Jewish Community to Anti-Semitism, 1933-1945" (Dissertation, St. Louis University, 1967); Naomi Cohen, *Not Free to Desist: The American Jewish Committee, 1906-1966*; Oscar and Stanley Wexler Cohen, ed. *Not the Work of a Day: Anti-Defamation League Oral Memories*, vol. 1-6 (New York: Anti-Defamation League, 1987); Hasia R Diner, *The Jews of the United States, 1654 to 2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Henry L. Feingold, *A Time for Searching: Entering the Mainstream, 1920-1945* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992); Harry L. Lurie, "Jewish Defense Activity in the United States: An Inventory of Four Protective Civic Agencies," (New York City: Archives of the American Jewish Committee, August 1938); Thomas Mantel, "The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith" (Honors thesis, Harvard University, 1950); Jacob M. Sable, "Some American Jewish Organizational Efforts to Combat Anti-Semitism, 1906-30" (Dissertation, Yeshiva University, 1964); Stuart Svonkin, *Jews against Prejudice: American Jews and the Fight for Civil Liberties* (New York Columbia University Press, 1997); Max Vorspan and Lloyd P. Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1970); and Waldman Papers, American Jewish Committee Papers. Over the course of eight years, the author made multiple inquiries at the ADL requesting access to their prewar records. The author was told by ADL administrative staff that they did not know where or if those records existed. In the same period of time, the author also combed through all the AJC records. There are references in Maurice Waldman's correspondence that allude to the AJC's fact-finding operations, but, the group the AJC had engaged to conduct this work, Information Service and Associates, was set up as a separate entity, and its records

The lack of information on this operation is due, in part, to the centrality of New York City in American Jewish history. The American Jewish Committee papers, which provide the lion's share of documentation on American Jewish history for this period, contain but scattered and cryptic references to this joint venture. There was, however, another key player among the Jewish organizations influencing the McCormack-Dickstein Committee. By moving west, historians can learn much about American Jewish opposition to Nazism in the United States, and in particular, the leadership that the LAJCC provided to the McCormack-Dickstein Committee.

The CRC Papers document the character and form of American Jewish political agency and influence in this case. Documents in the archive reveal: (1) the ADL and the AJC both conducted undercover, fact-finding operations inside Nazi organizations as early as the Fall of 1933; (2) they coordinated their respective fact-finding operations into a national American Jewish resistance operation, and (3) they used their information to assert their political influence over McCormack-Dickstein investigations. Furthermore, when documents from the McCormack-Dickstein Committee papers in Washington are cross-referenced with the CRC Papers the support that American Jewish groups provided to the Committee becomes apparent. For decades, historians have combed through the Committee's papers for various scholarly purposes without detecting a connection between the Committee and any

are not part of the AJC collection at either YIVO or at the Blaustein Library. The Survey Committee of the AJC carried on this work through 1941, but a comprehensive documentary record detailing what they found, how they found it and what they did with the information is not part of the AJC public collection. The American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati has Samuel Dickstein's papers, but those papers do not contain information linking the of the AJC to the 1934 investigation, although there is correspondence between Dickstein, and AJC leaders.

Jewish organization. The names Frank Prince and Leon Lewis are unremarkable amidst the thousands and thousands of pages of documents the Committee generated. The key to their identities as leaders of this American Jewish anti-Nazi operation and to their significance for the historiography of the Committee lies in Los Angeles.

Above all, the CRC Papers document the emergence of the LAJCC as a new source of American Jewish political agency and influence at 1934. The McCormack-Dickstein Committee investigations required that American Jewish groups set aside their political differences, pool their resources and assert their political influence in order to realize the political benefits the Committee offered their resistance operation. The pre-existing political and organizational jealousies that prevented the ADL and AJC from working effectively together throughout the 1930s festered in 1934. Leon Lewis stepped into the void and provided the leadership that American Jewish defense organizations needed to take advantage of the situation. The reputation Leon Lewis earned as a leader marked the emergence of Los Angeles as a new source of Jewish political agency and influence within American Jewish political circles. Moreover, the information collected by Hollywood's spies was deemed so credible by Congressional authorities that the LAJCC emerged as a reliable source of information and counsel on Nazi activity in Washington as well.

Chapter Five
The Proclamation, 1935

In February 1935, the McCormack-Dickstein Committee released its findings on subversive propaganda activity in the United States. The Committee's final report declared that it had "unearthed evidence showing that an effort to spread the theory of National Socialist German Labor Party...had been under way in the United States for several years." The report exposed the German government's insidious efforts to transplant National Socialism to the United States through secret propaganda agents. It recommended that Congress pass several pieces of legislation that would make it difficult in the future for foreign agents to undermine the political integrity of the United States.⁵³⁷ In Los Angeles, Leon Lewis and the LAJCC retired their fact-finding operation, satisfied that the Nazi threat had been vanquished in the United States.

Less than ten months later, however, an incident in southern California proved Lewis and the LAJCC wrong, and forced the Jews of Los Angeles to relaunch their covert fact-finding operation against a new surge of Nazi-influenced activity in their city. On the morning of September 29, 1935, tens of thousands of *Los Angeles Times* subscribers opened their Sunday papers and found the following flyer stuffed inside:⁵³⁸

⁵³⁷ Report No. 153. 1935. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 3 (hereafter, *Investigation of Nazi and Other Propaganda*).

⁵³⁸ While there is exact estimate as to how many newspapers were affected, Carey McWilliams estimated 50,000. McWilliams conducted a private investigation of the incident for the Communist front group, American League Against War and Fascism. See Carey McWilliams, *It Can Happen Here: Active Anti-Semitism in Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: Mercury Press, 1935).

A PROCLAMATION⁵³⁹

IT IS UNIVERSALLY ACKNOWLEDGED. *That whenever a People or a Nation discovers existing within its body politic any factors or elements of a nature inimical to its welfare and to its very life, it is a right inherent in such a People or Nation and indeed a duty if means are available to such an end, to curb and to eliminate all such injurious elements.*

NOW WHEREAS, *the Jews as a race in America have been accorded far greater courtesy, privilege and protection in the enjoyment of our Liberties and Equality of Opportunity than they have enjoyed in any other country; and under our liberal Constitutional guaranties these same Jews have had the brazen effrontery, under the cry of “personal liberty,” to abuse that courtesy and that protection more grievously... to-wit:*

- A. Their cutthroat competition is destructive to all “fair practice”...they endeavor to run all competitors out of business.
- B. Through a general reputation for sharp practices, low cunning, insurance frauds and dishonest bankruptcy proceedings they have promoted a widespread contempt for the ordinary virtues of honor honesty in business.
- ...
- D. They have, through a long continued uniformity of racial conduct, evidenced...contempt for every element of our Christian morality and common decency:
 - 1. By such unspeakably bestial degeneracy...
 - 2. By a distinctly racial program calling, wherever possible, for the “seduction of a SHIKSE” (a Gentile girl) young or unprotected...
 - 3. Through these Jew-owned and Jew-controlled movies and over the protests and the concerted opposition of our educational, Christian and all other unsubsidized social agencies for over 25 years, they poured out upon us “the vilest stream of filth, indecencies and vulgarities, degradation and perversion with ever increasing emphasis on sex and crime that has been known in all the world’s history.” And in doing this, they also added insult to injury by claiming they were “only supplying a natural demand”...

⁵³⁹ Proclamation, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 9, Folder 15. See Appendix 4: Proclamation Flyer

AND WHEREAS, *through their closely unified banking interests and their highly perfected local, state, national and international "Jewish Community," an organized and separate racial minority functioning as a "state within the state," they have attained to great power over our business and political affairs...they have constituted themselves a menace to our free institutions, our Christian civilization and our Aryan culture...*

AND WHEREAS, *the general situation is such as to establish not only that a definite "Jewish Problem" exists, but also that the need for a solution of that problem is urgent: that any further extension of continuance of the courtesy of our Equality of Opportunity would only mean further and even greater abuses of that courtesy as these Jews increase their power and influence...*

AND WHEREAS...*we are entirely without any means of discipline, protection or redress other than herein recommended...*

AND WHEREAS, *through the pressure of acute economic discrimination it is most certainly within the power of our people to...put [the Jews] upon their good behavior and also prepare the way for an ultimate solution to the "Jewish Problem," unattainable through any legislative enactment...*

NOW THEREFORE IS IT PROCLAIMED, *That it is the inherent right and the solemn duty of all true and loyal Americans to use vigorously and concertedly the only means available to them during all the period between October 1st and DECEMBER 31ST, 1935 in the following manner, to-wit:*

In every way and wherever possible, to show an exclusive preference for Gentile merchants, Gentile professional men and Gentile working people.

BUY GENTILE! EMPLOY GENTILE! VOTE GENTILE!

The next day Leon Lewis' phone rang off the hook. He was inundated with inquiries concerning the surreptitious insertion of the malicious flyer into the Sunday

paper that weekend.⁵⁴⁰ How did it get inside the *Times*? Did he know who was responsible? Did he know that the flyers had also been posted on trees and telephone poles outside of local synagogues that morning (which was, perhaps not so coincidentally, Rosh Hashanah) and distributed to people in front of Catholic churches as well?⁵⁴¹

Reports of similar “proclamation assaults” streamed in from various sources all week. Newspapers in San Diego and Santa Barbara reported that the proclamation had been left on front lawns and slipped under the doors of Jewish shops, just as had been done in the commercial districts of Beverly Hills, Hollywood, and Boyle Heights.⁵⁴² B’nai B’rith representatives in San Francisco reported that the San Joaquin Valley from Fresno to Modesto had been plastered with proclamations and two days later, proclamations littered the streets of San Francisco itself. In Portland, B’nai B’rith contacts reported that the local chapter of the Friends of the New Germany (FNG) had received bundles of the proclamation for distribution, accompanied by a cover letter from Herman Schwinn urging the people of Portland to take action by distributing the flyers.⁵⁴³ By December, the flyer was circulating in as many as seventeen cities from Los Angeles to Chicago.⁵⁴⁴

⁵⁴⁰ The number of newspapers affected is not known. Bernstein cites 50,000, citing McWilliams, and Vorspan and Gartner as her sources. The approximate number of papers affected is not given in the CRC archives.

⁵⁴¹ Communications about the proclamation came from William Cherin and Eddie Zeisler, both in San Francisco. See CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 12, Folders 1-3.

⁵⁴² Reports of proclamation sightings came from private individuals and local newspapers. See folder “American Nationalist Party,” October 1935, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 12, Folders 1 and 3. For a full summary of the methods of distribution and the actions Lewis took against the American Nationalist Party, see Memorandum (n.d.), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 12, Folder 3.

⁵⁴³ Memorandum, [n.d., c. October 1935], *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 12, Folder 3.

⁵⁴⁴ [ADL] Form Letter, December 5, 1935, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 23, Folder 14.

The proclamation incident in Los Angeles in 1935 marked the next phase of Nazi-influenced political activism in Los Angeles, heralding three disturbing political patterns that shaped the coming years of hostility for Jews in America. First, the proclamation revealed Nazi ideological influence on domestic right-wing groups. Second, the incident disclosed new relationships between domestic right-wing groups and FNG. Third, the incident revealed the model that the Nazi Party provided to political demagogues aspiring to follow the German model in country, right down to Nazi-style plans for nationwide pogroms to rid the nation of its Jews.

This chapter, therefore, presents the proclamation incident as a watershed event for Jewish resistance against Nazism in Los Angeles in the 1930s. First, this chapter explicates the revival of the covert fact-finding operation as evidence of the LAJCC's ongoing political will and confidence to defend themselves. Second, it presents the role that Hollywood's spies and Leon Lewis played in assisting local law enforcement with their investigation, establishing the LAJCC's political influence with the LAPD. Finally, this chapter underscores the universalist intentions of the LAJCC's undercover fact-finding operation: to defend the United States from Nazism.

Hollywood's New Spies

Coming less than a year after the conclusion of the McCormack-Dickstein hearings, the proclamation incident drew Leon Lewis out of "fact-finding retirement" to fight an opponent he thought he had vanquished. Less than a year earlier, Lewis

had reported to the board of the LAJCC that its fact-finding operation had been a success:

[In the past year] We undertook to investigate as thoroughly as we could the internal organization and personnel of Anti-Semitic groups and the background and current activities of their leaders. We have watched their operations closely and learned their technique, their propaganda methods and the source of such moral and financial support as they have received. We have been able to study their immediate objectives from day to day and have been in a position as a result to take effective counter measures. In the short space of one year we have watched their rapid decline.⁵⁴⁵

The Friends of the New Germany in southern California had scattered, Lewis informed the board, and legislation that the McCormack-Dickstein hearings would produce would make it difficult for them to function again as propaganda agents of a foreign government. In light of these successes, Lewis told the board that surveillance of antisemitic groups was no longer necessary.

During the past year, economic conditions have progressively improved. World events have developed far more quickly than was [sic] expected to discredit completely the present regime in Germany. Today the situation is completely different from what it was when the program and budget of our activities was first formulated. In my opinion, the continuance of intensive investigations of the type heretofore carried out are a luxury and not an absolute necessity.⁵⁴⁶

Lewis concluded his end-of-year report by informing the board that he was going back to his law practice, which he said had been “shot to hell” from neglect over the previous eighteen months.⁵⁴⁷

⁵⁴⁵ Memorandum [1934], CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 2, Folder 16.

⁵⁴⁶ Memorandum [1934], *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 2, Folder 16.

⁵⁴⁷ Letter, Lewis to Sigmund Livingston, November 24, 1933, *ibid.*

Lewis' return to private practice was short lived. In October 1935, he relaunched the LAJCC's covert surveillance operation to investigate the proclamation incident. Leon Lewis engaged two new informants to investigate the proclamation in late 1935, Neil Ness and Charles Slocombe. Lewis assigned Neil Ness to infiltrate the Friends of the New Germany and Charles Slocombe to begin his investigation of the proclamation from inside the Klan.

Neil Ness, alias N2, was introduced to Leon Lewis in late 1935 by Lewis' soon-to-be second-in-command, Joseph Roos. Roos and Ness had met several years earlier in Chicago while working on an undercover investigation of Nazi groups in that city.⁵⁴⁸ Ness was a mechanical engineer by training who had spent several years in the USSR. In a letter of introduction to Lewis, Ness told Lewis that he had recently returned to the United States from the Soviet Union after falling ill to malnutrition. Ness was living in Los Angeles, trying to launch a new liberal magazine.⁵⁴⁹

Charles Slocombe, alias C19, was working as an informant for the Long Beach police inside the Silver Shirt organization in that city when he received a copy of the proclamation in the mail from Klan headquarters in Los Angeles. Slocombe wrote to Lewis. Slocombe informed Lewis that he was going to take the initiative to investigate the source of the flyer and its sponsors.⁵⁵⁰ Charles Slocombe was the perfect informant for Lewis. He had been one of the founders of the Long Beach Ku

⁵⁴⁸ Leonard Pitt and Murray Wood, "Joseph Roos Oral History" (1979), Joseph Roos Papers, Doheny Library Special Collections, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA (hereafter, Joseph Roos Papers). Lewis wrote to Dick Gutstadt inquiring about Ness' "reliability, integrity, intelligence," which Gutstadt affirmed. See correspondence between Lewis and Gutstadt, December 21 and 24, 1935, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 23, Folder 14.

⁵⁴⁹ Letter, Neil Ness to Leon Lewis, January 13, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 6, Folder 22.

⁵⁵⁰ [C19 Report] October 1935, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 9, Folder 15.

Klux Klan in the late 1920s, and was trusted and respected among Klan leaders in both Long Beach and Los Angeles (see endnote).⁵⁵¹ Slocombe gained quick and easy access to the right-wing groups that appeared in Los Angeles in the late 1930s. Charles Slocombe was Hollywood's longest serving spy, reporting daily to Lewis between 1935-1942 on the activities of the Silver Shirts, Militant Christian Patriots, the Klan, and their relationships with the German-American Bund.⁵⁵² Charles Slocombe produced approximately 2,500 pages of daily reports and hundreds of pages of supporting documents exposing the people, activities, and relationships among right-wing groups in LA.⁵⁵³

It didn't take either Ness or Slocombe long to find the perpetrators. Neil Ness first became acquainted with the Friends of the New Germany after eating at the restaurant in their new downtown headquarters, Deutsches Haus. Surprised by the display of swastikas and literature he saw at the Haus, Ness returned several times to find out more about the organization. Ness introduced himself as a writer with an

⁵⁵¹ In the 1920s and again in the late 1930s, Long Beach's most influential leaders were members of the Klan as well. According to correspondence with Charles Slocombe's daughter, Sherry Slocombe, Klan was an important node in the city's commercial network. (Charles Slocombe's later insider reports on the revival of the Klan in Long Beach in 1938-1940 verify the civic stature of many of its members.) Slocombe, however, did not agree with the Klan's racist ideology, as his twenty years of undercover work inside the Silver Shirts, Klan and other right-wing groups for the Long Beach police beginning in the early 1930s demonstrates. Sherry Slocombe, email correspondence with the author, Fall 2012.

⁵⁵² After 1938, Slocombe focused primarily on the Klan in Los Angeles. See "Slocombe, Charles (C-19)," CRC Papers, Part 1, Boxes 9-10, and Part 2, Boxes 40-41.

⁵⁵³ Slocombe did not express the kinds of racist opinions or prejudices that one might expect from a member of the Klan in any of the more than two thousand pages of daily reports he submitted between 1936-1939. He consistently expressed disgust with the antisemitic hate-speech he witnessed in his undercover work for Lewis.

interest in Nazism to FNG leader Herman Schwinn, and offered his services to the cause.⁵⁵⁴

Schwinn immediately embraced Ness as a desirable new recruit to FNG. He loaded Ness down with books and pamphlets written by both local and German propagandists to study, hoping that Ness would help FNG Americanize its literature.⁵⁵⁵ Among the materials Schwinn gave Ness were several pieces written by a local propagandist, including a copy of the proclamation. Ness queried Schwinn about the proclamation. Schwinn told him that FNG had paid to have it printed and helped to distribute it around town. Schwinn also boasted to Ness that he had taken a thousand copies of the flyer to FNG headquarters Chicago so that it could be distributed there as well.⁵⁵⁶ Several weeks later, Schwinn introduced Ness to the proclamation's author, Ingram Hughes.⁵⁵⁷

Ness' report of the Hughes-Schwinn connection was simultaneously and independently corroborated by Charles Slocombe's investigation. Slocombe began his inquiry by calling on friends at Klan headquarters on 7th Street in downtown Los Angeles. Presenting himself as a member of the then-defunct Long Beach Klan, Slocombe asked the attending Klansman about the proclamation. Who had written it? Where could he get additional copies? The Klansman informed Slocombe that the Klan didn't have any more copies of the proclamation, but told Slocombe that the flyer

⁵⁵⁴ *Hearings before a Special Committee on Un-American Activities*, Special Committee on Un-American Activities, 76th Cong., 5490-91 (October 5, 1939) (Testimony of Neil Ness).

⁵⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 5495; [N2] Report, January 9, 1936, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 6, Folder 26.

⁵⁵⁶ Letter, Lewis to Frank Prince, December 6, 1935, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 6, Folder 22.

⁵⁵⁷ [N2 Report] April 12, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 7, Folder 3.

had come from the Friends of the New Germany over on West 15th St. He suggested Slocombe go over to Deutsches Haus.⁵⁵⁸

Slocombe walked over to Deutsches Haus. The Aryan Bookstore, located in the lobby of the newly converted mansion, was open. Slocombe looked around the shop, browsing the literature. Slocombe asked the proprietor, Paul Themlitz, whether he had any more copies of the proclamation. Themlitz told Slocombe that FNG had printed the flyer and that FNG had supplied hundreds of copies to the Klan and other groups in the city so they could distribute it to their members.⁵⁵⁹ After making his purchase, Themlitz encouraged Slocombe to “place them where they will do the most good for the cause.”⁵⁶⁰

Over the course of the next month, Slocombe dug deeper into the relationship between the American Nationalist Party, the Klan and FNG. He began hanging out at both FNG and Klan headquarters, and discovered in the course of casual conversation that proclamation author Ingram Hughes was a frequent visitor to both. Slocombe learned that Klan Grand Kleagal Gus Price had met frequently with Hughes in the last several months, even though Price himself told Slocombe that he knew nothing about the American Nationalist Party or the flyer.⁵⁶¹ At Klan meetings that fall, Slocombe witnessed the proclamation being distributed to Klan members who were instructed to show it to their friends. At FNG, Slocombe reported that Hughes met frequently with

⁵⁵⁸ [C19 Report] October [n.d.] 1935, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 9, Folder 15.

⁵⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶¹ [C19] Report on Conference with Price and Yount, November 1935, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 9, Folder 16.

Schwinn.⁵⁶² At an FNG meeting in early November 1935, Schwinn praised Hughes to the faithful, and publicly declared that FNG had paid to have the proclamations printed.⁵⁶³

Herman Schwinn also introduced Charles Slocombe to Ingram Hughes. Slocombe offered to help Hughes in his work, and Hughes welcomed the assistance from someone as well connected as Slocombe. Hughes made Slocombe his private secretary, giving Slocombe a front-row seat into Hughes' world. Slocombe reported to work with Hughes at Hughes' 4th Street boardinghouse studio apartment that doubled as his office. Hughes told Slocombe that the police were watching him and warned Slocombe to follow his security measures.⁵⁶⁴ Hughes instructed Slocombe to take precautions in coming and going from the apartment:

Pull shades half way down.
Leave 1 light burning in the room, one in bathroom.
Hang the "Do not disturb" sign on doorknob.⁵⁶⁵

Hughes' landlady was a member of his new movement, and she screened his callers. Slocombe wrote. "No one can get by her to get to his room. All strangers are met in the hall way."⁵⁶⁶

Working side by side with Hughes over the next six months, Slocombe reported to Lewis on all of Hughes' political activities. In December 1935, Slocombe informed Lewis that Hughes had given Herman Schwinn several thousand copies of

⁵⁶² See Slocombe reports, January, April, May 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 9.

⁵⁶³ [C19 Report] November 6, 1935, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 9, Folder 15.

⁵⁶⁴ [C19] Report on Contact with Hughes 21 Nov 1935, *ibid.*

⁵⁶⁵ [C19 Report] Friday, December 6, 1935, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 9, Folder 16.

⁵⁶⁶ [C19 Report] Friday, November 22, 1935, *ibid.*

the proclamation to carry with him to the FNG national convention in Chicago.⁵⁶⁷

Later that month, Slocombe warned Lewis that Hughes and Schwinn were arranging another “paste-up” of the proclamations in LA. The plan called for cars of three men each to go out between 4-6AM, when police patrols were scant. Each car would have a driver, a man in back seat with a paste-pot, and a third man poised on the running board to hop on and off the car to do the actual posting. Four cars canvassed Los Angeles and Inglewood in the wee hours of December 15, 1935, three of them manned by “FNG boys.” Although they did not get to Glendale as hoped, Hughes told Slocombe that he was very happy that proclamations had been posted heavily near some synagogues in Los Angeles.⁵⁶⁸

Hughes also directed Slocombe to post proclamations in Long Beach. As all of Hollywood’s spies would do in the coming years, Slocombe agreed to the assignment in order to maintain his cover. Slocombe limited his “distribution” to just three KKK members’ homes, and to the “Spit and Argue Club,” a meeting place for radicals in Long Beach, to minimize the damage that his assignment might cause. Slocombe was sure that these select few would talk about the proclamation and write for more literature. In so doing, word would get back to Hughes confirming that Slocombe he had done his job. On Tuesday morning December 17, Slocombe awoke at 4 AM and dropped the proclamations off at the Klansmen’s homes. Later that day

⁵⁶⁷ [C19] Report, Friday, December 6, 1935, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 9, Folder 16; letter, Lewis to Gutstadt, December 6, 1935, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 23, Folder 14.

⁵⁶⁸ [C19 Report] Thursday, December 19, 1935, CRC Papers Part 1, Box 9, Folder 16.

he planted them at the club. When Slocombe met with Hughes to tell him what he had done, Slocombe reported that Hughes was pleased with his work.⁵⁶⁹

Slocombe's gumshoe work on the proclamation also included analyzing the paper, ink, and typeface of the document to get a lead on the print shop that had printed it. Among the documentation in Slocombe's LAJCC files are actual samples of paper stock and Slocombe's notes on how they compared to the stock used to print the proclamation.⁵⁷⁰ LAPD detectives working with Slocombe traced the paper to a print shop owned by none other than an FNG officer. To no one's surprise, the shop also printed the weekly Nazified German-language newspaper the *California Weckruf*.⁵⁷¹ When Slocombe reported that Ingram Hughes was a linotype operator at that shop, the connection between the proclamation and the Friends of the New Germany was further confirmed.⁵⁷²

Within just a few weeks, both of Hollywood's spies, Ness and Slocombe, had uncovered the source of the proclamation and the nascent alliance among the Friends of the New Germany, the Klan, and the new American Nationalist Party. Concerned about the partnership, Slocombe and Ness continued their undercover work in FNG and with Hughes, respectively, even after the police closed the case. Their paths crossed frequently in early 1936, as FNG and domestic pro-Nazi propagandists like

⁵⁶⁹ [C19 Report] Tuesday, December 17, 1935, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 9, Folder 16.

⁵⁷⁰ "Notes" (analysis of paper stock, typeface and ink used in proclamation, n.d., c. October 1935), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 12, Folder 3.

⁵⁷¹ [N2] Report, July 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 7, Folder 9. The printer's name was Landthaler (no first name given). Neil Ness later found Landthaler listed on FNG letterhead as the secretary of the political committee.

⁵⁷² For the police reports on the proclamation incidents, see folder "Los Angeles Police Department," *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 30, Folder 21.

Hughes courted each other. Astonishingly, neither Ness nor Slocombe knew that they both worked for Leon Lewis.⁵⁷³

Nazi Influence, Revealed

Ness and Slocombe's investigations of the proclamation established the influence of Nazi ideology and the Nazi Party on Hughes and his American Nationalist Party. Although the proclamation was but a single attack written by a solo propagandist, the revelations of Berlin's influence on its content and on its relationship with American political activists presaged the development and expansion of Berlin's international propaganda network in the United States. Tens of thousands of copies of the proclamation were printed and distributed across the country in early 1936 through a network of similarly-minded, Nazi-inspired activists. During the late 1930s, hundreds more groups emerged across the country, filling out the channels of that network, driving the virulent transmission of political antisemitism in the United States. Thus, Hollywood's spies' investigation of the proclamation confirmed Berlin's strategy of co-opting indigenous right-wing groups to serve as conduits of National Socialism into American political culture.

⁵⁷³ *Summary Report on Activities of Nazi Groups and Their Allies in Southern California*, Volume 1, Part I, Chapter 1, 11, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 26, Folder 5 (hereafter, *CRC Summary Report*). Lewis and Roos prepared a three thousand-page report for the Dies Committee between 1938-1940 summarizing the activities of the Bund and its nativist allies. Hereafter, both the original informant report as well as the Summary Report citation will be given to illustrate the original source of the information on this activity and that it was provided to the Dies Committee in the report.

Ideological Influence

The investigation into the proclamation revealed a disconcerting direct connection between Hughes and the *World Service*. Leon Lewis referred to his archive of documents and informant reports to prove this connection. In the September 22, 1935 issue of the local Nazi German language newspaper, the Nazified *California Weckruf*, Leon Lewis found a letter to the editor, written in English, that announced the launch of an anti-Jewish boycott in the United States. The letter explained that the boycott was intended “to put the Jews on their good behavior,” and “to prepare the solution of the ‘Jewish problem’” in the United States. The letter was signed, “Ingram Hughes, founder of the new American Nationalist Party.”⁵⁷⁴ The launch of the anti-Jewish boycott demonstrated the model Nazi Germany gave to the author of the proclamation, emulating the one that the Nazi government had instituted in Germany. The letter invited all people in America, regardless of nationality, to join the fight.

We wish to invite and to urge all good citizens, German American *or* otherwise (italics mine), to help us in this conflict – and which [they] all have a perfect right to do...you can, AS AMERICAN citizens best render service [to Germany] by joining us in our fight upon the foes in this country both of America and your fatherland.⁵⁷⁵

Hence, Hughes conflated the political interests of Germany with America, telling the German-American readers of the *Weckruf* that it was their duty as American citizens to join in the fight against the Jews.

⁵⁷⁴ Letter to Editor by Ingram Hughes, *California Weckruf*, vol. 1, no. 3, September 22, 1935 [n.p.], referred to Memorandum [written by Leon Lewis, n.d., c. October 1935], *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 12, Folder 3.

⁵⁷⁵ Letter to Editor by Ingram Hughes, quoted in Memorandum [written by Leon Lewis, n.d., c. October 1935], CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 12, Folder 3.

A week later, West Coast cities were plastered with proclamations.

Hughes' letter to the *Weckruf* validated his pro-Nazi position; but Leon Lewis' files contained even more significant evidence of Hughes' relationship to Nazi Germany. Going back in his files, Lewis found the March 15, 1935 copy of the *World Service* newsletter. The issue contained an enthusiastic review of a new book written in the United States called *Anti-Semitism, a World Survey*. The author of the book was Ingram Hughes.

The *World Service's* review of Hughes' book revealed the way in which the newsletter worked as an antisemitic content exchange. By reviewing a book written in the United States to its international readership, the *World Service* helped to spread the Nazi perspective around the world. The review, however, did not automatically establish a direct relationship between Hughes and the *World Service*; but Hughes' use of the text of the review in the proclamation did. Analyzing the two documents, Leon Lewis found whole segments of the review in the text of the proclamation. The *World Service* review of Hughes' book, began with the following passage:

...for in America, as a race, they [Jews] have been extended far greater opportunities than in any other country; and in America they have abused the courtesies extended them more than anywhere else.

The proclamation's opening paragraph was almost identical:

The Jews in America have been accorded far greater courtesy, privilege and protection in the enjoyment of our liberties and equality of opportunity than they have enjoyed in any other country...and abused that courtesy and that protection most grievously than under any other flag.⁵⁷⁶

⁵⁷⁶ Memorandum [n.d., c. October 1935], CRC Papers Part 1, Box 12, Folder 3.

Lewis analyzed the rest of the documents paragraph by paragraph, finding additional incidents of copied text and even identical typeset treatment of certain words, as in the following paragraph from the *World Service* review noting that the word “license” had been italicized in both:

...in such measure and degree that our constitution guarantee of liberty means only license (this word is italicized) to Jews able to take advantage of that guarantee.⁵⁷⁷

For Lewis, the similarity between the documents demonstrated the Hughes’ *connection* to the *World Service*. The review of Hughes’ work in the newsletter, and Hughes’ repurposing of that review in the proclamation was an early example the way in which the *World Service* acted as a content clearinghouse for pro-Nazi propagandists from around the world. As the next two chapters will show, this would not be the last time Leon Lewis and his assistant Joe Roos analyzed domestic propaganda to demonstrate the connection between the German Propaganda Ministry’s official news vehicle, the *World Service* newsletter, and domestic right-wing propagandists.

Lewis filed his analysis of the proclamation as a memo to himself, but probably shared it with prominent Los Angeles attorney and socialist Carey McWilliams. Two left-wing groups in the city, the American League Against War and Fascism, and the Jewish Anti-Nazi League of Southern California, hired McWilliams to investigate the incident. McWilliams used a nearly verbatim version of Lewis’ analysis – without citing his source -- in his expose of the proclamation

⁵⁷⁷ Memorandum [n.d., c. October 1935], *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 12, Folder 3.

event, *It CAN Happen Here: Active Anti-Semitism in Los Angeles*.⁵⁷⁸ McWilliams' pamphlet was widely circulated in 1935, and has been widely cited by scholars since, but the Jewish source of his analysis was never known.

Evidence of Ingram Hughes' pro-Nazi politics and his relationship to the *World Service* signaled a new phase in domestic right-wing activity in Los Angeles. Over the course of the next five years, Hollywood's spies would continue to produce evidence documenting similar direct exchanges of content between domestic German and foreign fascist propagandists operating within Berlin's international propaganda network, including verbatim reprints of *World Service* content in domestic antisemitic newspapers and vice versa. The analysis indicated that political antisemitism in the United States, even when it came from American groups, was influenced by Nazism and encouraged by Berlin.

The Network

The investigation of the proclamation not only exposed the connection between Hughes and the *World Service*, it also uncovered a network of antisemitic propagandists supported by Berlin that extended far beyond the boundaries of southern California. As Hughes' private secretary, Charles Slocombe discovered firsthand the scope of this international fascist propaganda network. Slocombe reported that Hughes was considered "an expert on the Jewish Problem by Nazis and

⁵⁷⁸ McWilliams, *It Can Happen Here: Active Anti-Semitism in Los Angeles*.

fascists the world over, who distributed his materials widely.”⁵⁷⁹ Hughes received requests from all over country for his proclamations, and mailed them out by the hundreds.⁵⁸⁰ Over the course of the six months that he investigated Hughes, Slocombe provided Leon Lewis with detailed records of Hughes’ local, national, and international contacts.⁵⁸¹

Hughes provided local groups like the KKK with his materials. He was in regular contact with the Italian and White Russian fascist leaders in Los Angeles, local Bund leaders W. P. Bauer in San Diego and Herman Schwinn, and with Count Ernst von Buelow, suspected head of German espionage in southern California. Nationally, Hughes’ friends included Silver Legion chief William Pelley and East Coast fascist organizer Colonel E.N. Sanctuary. His professional contacts included Peter V. Armstrong, publisher of *The American Gentile* in Chicago, who reprinted the proclamation in full. Hughes exchanged literature with domestic right-wing propagandists Robert E. Edmondson of New York, publisher of the *Edmondson Reports*, James True, publisher of *Industrial Control Reports* in Washington, DC, and with Reverend Gerald Winrod of Kansas, fundamentalist minister and publisher of *The Defender*. Hughes’ correspondence suggested the development of a national distribution network of extreme right-wing antisemitic propaganda.⁵⁸²

⁵⁷⁹ *CRC Summary Report*, Vol. 1, Part III, Chapter 2, 292, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 26, Folder 13.

⁵⁸⁰ [C19] Report on Contact with Hughes, 21 November 1935, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 9, Folder 15.

⁵⁸¹ [C19 Report] Thursday, April 30, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 10, Folder 2. Report says Hughes had letters with checks from Vermont and Minneapolis requesting proclamations and additional literature. He told Slocombe that he had six other checks he had not cashed yet.

⁵⁸² [C19 Report] Friday, November 22, 1935, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 9, Folder 15. Also see “Slocombe, Charles [alias C19] reports,” *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 9, Folders 15-20. Copies of the Proclamation were among approximately 100 pieces of antisemitic literature sent by Robert Edmondson to San Diego for

Hughes' network extended beyond the United States. Slocombe reported that Hughes corresponded with Colonel Fleishhauer, "secret" owner of the *World Service*, and with British fascist leader Arnold Leese, who was associated both with German Field Marshal Herman Goering and Flesichhauer.⁵⁸³ Right-wing propagandists from around the world wrote to Hughes, requesting copies of his literature that they could resell. Hughes profited from his propaganda activities by selling his books and proclamations to fascist propagandists such as Jacques Cartier in Montreal, "his old friends in Australia, the Warders and the Guardsmen," and the German propagandist Otto Vollbehr.⁵⁸⁴ Although it is difficult to confirm the volume of material Hughes distributed around the world, Hughes told Slocombe that he had mailed out over 44,000 copies of the proclamation alone.⁵⁸⁵

Model for a Political Movement

Nazi influence on Hughes and his proclamation was not limited to ideology or to its international dissemination. The Nazi Party itself served as a model for Hughes' American Nationalist Party. The proclamation presaged the proliferation of hundreds of Nazi-influenced domestic groups in Los Angeles. Some of these groups

distribution by the Silver Shirts there. Members of the San Diego B'nai Brith intercepted the bundle. See letter, L. David Wosk to Lewis, January 15, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 22, Folder 16.

⁵⁸³ [C19 Report] Wednesday, December 11, 1935, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 9, Folder 16.

⁵⁸⁴ [C19 Report] December 19, 1935, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 9, Folder 16; CRC Summary Report, Vol.1, Part III, Chapter 2, 292-3, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 26, Folder 13. Also, Hughes told Ness that he received materials from the Nazi Party in Germany from time to time. See [N2] Report, July 2, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 7, Folder 8. Requests for Hughes' materials were accompanied by checks. See [C19 Report] Thursday, April 20, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 10, Folder 2; memorandum [n.d., c. October 1935], *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 12, Folder 3; [C19 Report] on contact with Hughes, 21 November 1935, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 9, Folder 15.

⁵⁸⁵ [C19 Report] on Contact with Hughes, 21 November 1935, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 9, Folder 15.

successfully recruited members and gained political traction in Los Angeles. Others struggled but never took off, and others still were never anything more than fronts for solo political entrepreneurs out to profit financially from political rabble-rousing activities. Collectively, however, they created the most hostile and threatening political climate in U.S. history for American Jews. It was a situation that American Jews could not afford to ignore. Not wanting to give any such group room to grow, and not knowing which groups might actually gain traction and which would fail, Leon Lewis and Hollywood's spies dedicated themselves to exposing the Nazi-inspired threat that they posed.

Hughes fell into the second category: an aspiring political leader who struggled to launch a political party that never got off the ground. Nevertheless, the American Nationalist Party was predicated on the same nationalistic ideology as the Nazi Party, and it emulated the Nazi Party's use of political antisemitism to rally "true Americans" against the "Jewish aliens." According to Hughes, Jews are greedy, grasping, stingy, miserly, dishonest, conniving. In business, Jewish corporations "squeezed the little fellow." They brought no good to the world, and left no good behind them.⁵⁸⁶ Jews were behind all of the country's problems, and the American Nationalist Party's platform reflected this concern.

The mission of the American Nationalist Party was to combat Jewish influence in the United States. To accomplish this goal, the party would employ a truly nationalistic program, but, unlike other aspiring right-wing third parties that

⁵⁸⁶ [C19 Reports] December 1-4, 1935, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 9, Folder 16.

positioned themselves as “America for Americans,” the ANP’s slogan was “Americans for America,” reflecting a more racist, Nazi Party style nationalism. In speeches Hughes gave at FNG meetings in late 1935 and early 1936, Hughes expressed the Nazi position that antisemitism was really a form of true patriotism. “It would [be] better to call [Americanism] “Anti-Semitism,” he said. Hence, the ANP’s objectives and methods emulated the Nazi Party’s tactics.⁵⁸⁷

Early on, it would be important to gain the support of “real American” groups such as the American Legion, the Klan, the DAR, and the Silver Shirts, Hughes explained to Slocombe. Interestingly, Hughes included the Friends of the New Germany among his list of “real American” groups because FNG shared these political values.⁵⁸⁸ The party’s first three objectives were intended to attract this support. Hughes told Slocombe that the party’s first orders of business would be (1) to ban the Communist Party, (2) to eradicate “lawlessness, liquor and crime” in the U.S., and (3) to eliminate the Jewish lawyers who defended the gangsters behind these activities. Aware that too much antisemitic rhetoric might alienate some Americans from joining the party, Hughes, like his Nazi Party mentors, consciously suppressed his antisemitic rhetoric until the ANP had gained enough momentum. Then, Hughes explained, it would begin its campaign “to show everyone that Jewry and Communism are the same.”⁵⁸⁹

⁵⁸⁷ [C19 Report] Monday, February 9, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 9, Folder 18.

⁵⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

Working side-by-side with Hughes in his one-room studio apartment-turned-office, Slocombe handled all of Hughes papers. One day when Slocombe was working at the desk in the tiny studio apartment and Hughes was in the bath, separated only by a closed door, Slocombe came across Hughes' list of prospective donors and supporters. Slocombe quickly copied the list and attached it to his report to Lewis. The list named current and prospective members who were also associated with a wide range of right-wing groups in Los Angeles: FNG, the Silver Shirts, the White Russians, several wealthy individuals from Pasadena, whom Hughes hoped might fund the Party, and former LA mayor, John Porter, who was listed as a member of the right-wing White Guardsmen group.⁵⁹⁰ While the mission of Hollywood's spies was to provide daily reports from within these groups, from time to time, each of Hollywood's spies took more direct action that might compromise their undercover status, gathering documents and correspondence from their right-wing subjects and taking certain actions that undermined relationships and plans.

The American Nationalist Party never gained traction beyond "the usual (right-wing) suspects" in southern California; but the inspiration that the Nazi Party set for Hughes was far too threatening for the Jews of Los Angeles to ignore. In the last years of the 1930s, several similar domestic right-wing political parties emerged in Los Angeles, emulating the tactics that the Nazi Party had used in Germany to raise to power. Hence, the proclamation incident signaled to the LAJCC the emergence a new, Nazi-inspired political movement. Between 1936-1941, Hollywood's spies infiltrated

⁵⁹⁰ [C19 Report] Friday, November 2, 1935, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 9, Folder 15.

the most threatening patriotic rackets -- “patrioteers” -- in Los Angeles and reported on the complex web of conspiracy and fraud they spun (see chapter seven).⁵⁹¹

Violence as a Political Tactic

Nazi Germany not only provided American right-wing activists like Hughes with ideological inspiration, content, and a model for fashioning a political movement, it also legitimized violence against Jews as a means of achieving their political ends. Although violence against American Jews was never effectively organized and never officially sanctioned as government policy as it was in Germany, “marauding youth” and other vigilante gangs in some American cities did attack American Jews on the streets in the late 1930s. In Los Angeles, the investigation into the proclamation in late 1935 suggested a new viciousness towards Jews, and most notably, towards the Jews of Hollywood themselves.⁵⁹²

In 1933, Hollywood’s first spy, John Schmidt, had experienced firsthand FNG’s aggressive character when Schwinn personally threatened Schmidt for not following orders. In 1936, Charles Slocombe reaffirmed the Bund’s aggressive culture, reporting that Schwinn had offered him protection if he ever needed it. “If I ever need protection,” Slocombe wrote, “[Schwinn] would send some of the boys

⁵⁹¹ “Union Calendar No. 5. Report No. 1476. *Investigation of Un-American Propaganda Activities in the United States*,” ed. Special Committee on Un-American Activities (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1940), 9 (hereafter, “Report 1476”)

⁵⁹² Stephen Norwood, “Marauding Youth and the Christian Front: Antisemitic Violence in Boston and New York During World War II,” *American Jewish History* 91, no. 2 (2003).

along with me, and if I ever found any place that needed a little strong-arm demonstration, some of the troopers would assist me.”⁵⁹³

Slocombe and Ness also reported on the braggadocio of FNG storm troopers during their rifle club practice sessions. An air rifle range was set up on the mezzanine of Deutsches Haus. Storm troopers would practice their aim shooting at paper targets in preparation for “der tag.”⁵⁹⁴ Urged to imagine that they were shooting at Jews in the street, participants yelled out the names of local Jews they pretended to be shooting, including Representative Dickstein, national anti-German boycott advocate Samuel Untermyer, and Louis B. Mayer.⁵⁹⁵ FNG’s threat of violence against Jews never amounted to anything more than boisterous disruptions of anti-fascist political meetings and isolated incidents of thuggery and vandalism against Jews in Los Angeles. Much more vicious plots, however, were conceived by domestic right-wingers like Ingram Hughes.

Hughes’ plans for national pogroms signaled a new level of threatened violence by domestic right-wing groups against American Jews. Slocombe described Hughes’ plan “to finish off the Jews and their Gentile front crooks” as “one of the most diabolical plots I have ever heard of.”⁵⁹⁶ According to Slocombe, Hughes

⁵⁹³ [C19 Report] November 21, 1935, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 9, Folder 15.

⁵⁹⁴ [N2] Report, April 19, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 7, Folder 3; [N2] Report, May 1, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 7, Folder 5.

⁵⁹⁵ [N2] Report, July 15, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 7, Folder 9.

⁵⁹⁶ [C19 Report] Tuesday December 31, 1935, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 9, Folder 16. The list include high profile attorney Jerry Geisler of Hollywood, Milton Cohn, Dave Allen, gambler and bootlegger Farmer Page, Judge Willis, two Jewish leaders of the Communist Party, and Kent Parrott, aide-de-camp to former Mayor John Porter.

planned a mass lynching of twenty public officials and private citizens in Los Angeles, whom Hughes blamed with the city's "lawlessness, liquor and crime:"

I'll be glad to see some of those sons of bitches on the end of ropes, and the sooner the better. Each man we hang will be an example of a specific case, and what a representative group it will be, too. Busby Berkeley will look good dangling on a rope's end, his money won't be any good here. Another of his type will be Tamany [sic], the fellow that had the ill-reputed girl show in Hollywood; and while we're at it we may as well get the two Main Street Jews that own the burlesque theatres there. Leave it to the Jews to live and thrive on the weaknesses of mankind. Judge Willis will make a good example for letting Guy Colvin off as he did. The sooner we get these Jew sons of bitches and their Gentile fronts on ropes the better.⁵⁹⁷

Hughes rattled off additional names of intended victims to Slocombe, "AND, IF [sic] these two men...interfere or get active, they will be hung too: Silverberg [sic] and Leon Lewis."⁵⁹⁸

From the purchase of the rope to the selection of the execution site, Hughes had the details "figured out to the nth degree," wrote Slocombe.⁵⁹⁹ The execution would take place in the oak grove at Hindenburg Park, the private park owned by the Friends of the New Germany. "There are lots of nice oak trees there. It is ideal spot for most any occasion. No homes near there or anything. No way to disturb anyone," he told Slocombe.⁶⁰⁰ Hughes insisted that the ropes for the hanging had to be 50' long and made of hemp. He asked Slocombe to buy the rope, directing him to go to difference stores to minimize suspicion. On the designated night, groups of four men

⁵⁹⁷ [C19 Report] Tuesday December 31, 1935, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 9, Folder 16.

⁵⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰⁰ [C19 Report] Thursday, April 30, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 10, Folder 2.

- one driver and three others - would kidnap each victim and drive them to the park where four additional accomplices would be waiting to help with the executions.⁶⁰¹

“At the hanging,” he told Slocombe, “each [man] will have his job, and those who handle the ropes will wear heavy gloves so that hemp fibers and slivers won’t be found in anyone’s hands. I will be out of sight when it all happens, that is the actual hanging, but I will be close enough to direct it all.” After the victims were hung, they would be “given a hail of lead.”⁶⁰²

At one point in the planning, Slocombe suggested to Hughes that tar and feathering would be a better approach, but Hughes dismissed this idea:

“Tar and feathers will wash off,” Hughes said, “but a rope won’t...Hanging is one thing that will really stir people.” The Jewish problem called for action, Hughes told Slocombe, like the actions taken in Germany.⁶⁰³

The “necktie party” as Hughes called his the mass-lynching plan was never attempted, but the scheme occupied Hughes for months. Hughes collected photographs of his intended victims and posted them on the walls of his boarding-house room so that he and his accomplices would know what their victims looked like.⁶⁰⁴ (Slocombe did not mention whether Leon Lewis’ picture was in Hughes’ gallery.) Slocombe reported that Hughes discussed the plan at multiple meetings with

⁶⁰¹ [C19 Report] Tuesday December 31, 1935, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 9, Folder 16.

⁶⁰² [C19 Report] Tuesday December 31, 1935, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 9, Folder 16.

⁶⁰³ [C19 Report] Tuesday, January 21, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 9, Folder 17.

⁶⁰⁴ [C19 Report] March 19, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 9, Folder 20.

Schwinn and members of the Silver Shirts. Schwinn agreed to provide a group of “hand-picked” men who could be trusted to be “tight lipped.”⁶⁰⁵

Hughes’ vicious imagination for violence against Jews eerily presaged tactics used by the Nazis against German Jews in the years to come. One of Hughes’ plots included smashing the windows of Jewish shops with steel balls and a slingshot, foreshadowing the national pogrom in Germany in 1938 known as *Kristallnacht*. Three shots, Hughes estimated, would assure that the windows would come crashing down.⁶⁰⁶ Hughes also concocted a national pogrom using gas to murder American Jews in their synagogues years before the Final Solution was conceived in Germany. He explained to Slocombe just how this could be pulled off:

I have a new plan all worked out for our pogroms. It will work like a charm in the temples and synagogues. We’ll form a fake company for fumigating houses and [for] rat extermination. Under this guise, we can buy cyanide. [We’ll make] tanks with vents in the top for large hose connection[s]. We can make a portable centrifugal blower...When ready we can put the hoses to air vents...and drop the cyanide into the acid solution. The mixture makes gas at a tremendous speed and forced with the blower will...kill them instantly, bah, thousands strangled to death at once. Women, children, Jews of all sorts killed off...Exterminated like rats, that’s the way to get rid of them.⁶⁰⁷

Although Slocombe kept Lewis informed of all of Hughes’ plans, and Long Beach Police Captain Owen Murphy assured them that they had enough evidence to arrest Hughes for conspiracy, Lewis never sought charges against Hughes for his

⁶⁰⁵ [C19 Report] Tuesday, January 21, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 9, Folder 17.

⁶⁰⁶ [C19 Report] Tuesday December 19, 1935, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 9, Folder 16; CRC Summary Report, *December 1936 to September 1938*, Part III, Chapter 2, 294, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 26, Folder 13.

⁶⁰⁷ [C19 Report] August 10, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 10, Folder 3. Other reports on comments made by Hughes were made between January and August 1936. See Slocombe’s reports, *ibid.*, Part 1, Boxes 9-10. Also see *CRC Summary Report*, Vol. 2, Part II, Chapter 2, 299, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 26, Folder 13.

conspiratorial plans. In a letter to Richard Gutstadt, Lewis explained that Hughes did “...a lot of mouthing but actually attempts very little.”⁶⁰⁸ Because one of his agents was part of the “triumvirate” running the American Nationalist Party, Lewis was confident that he would be able to defeat every “set up” Hughes planned that legal measures were not necessary.⁶⁰⁹

Hughes’ wild plots to attack Jews foreshadowed similar violence conceived by right-wing extremists who followed him. Hollywood’s spies were equally well positioned inside those groups and they kept Lewis and the police abreast of threatened violence against Jews in the city. Although Hughes took precautions to protect himself from informants and undercover policemen, he never had a clue that his personal secretary, was in fact, the very informant against whom he so zealously guarded. He confidently confided to Slocombe that although “...there are still spies in some organizations...thank God there are none in ours.”⁶¹⁰

Agency and Influence

The proclamation incident caused the LAJCC to relaunch its covert fact-finding operations in late 1935. Following the proclamation incident, as Nazi-influenced activities in the city escalated, the LAJCC responded to the expanding challenge by reorganizing its board as needed and by professionalizing its back-office operations to meet the challenge, demonstrating the committee’s ongoing political will

⁶⁰⁸ C19 Report, January 26, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 9, Folder 19.

⁶⁰⁹ Letter, Lewis to Gutstadt, March 30, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 23, Folder 16.

⁶¹⁰ [C19 Report] February 10, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 9, Folder 18.

and agency in the fight against Nazism in the city. In the course of the new investigation, the information collected by Hollywood's spies was deemed so credible, and Leon Lewis' personal counsel so valued, that the incident established the LAJCC's political influence with local law enforcement in matters concerning Nazi and far right-wing activity in the city in the critical years that followed. Yet, even as Lewis established his personal credibility with local police, political influence had its legal limits. The investigation into the proclamation incident also set the boundaries for the legal pathways to resistance that the LAJCC could pursue in combating political antisemitism in the future.

"See Leon Lewis"

Leon Lewis became a trusted advisor and valued source of information on subversive right-wing activity in Los Angeles to local law enforcement agencies as a result of the investigation into the proclamation incident. Immediately following the incident, Leon Lewis found himself at the nexus of no fewer than five distinct investigations, providing information and direction to the Los Angeles police, the Long Beach police, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, as well as left-wing groups in the city, and of course, Hollywood's spies.⁶¹¹ The credibility of the information he produced on the Friends of the New Germany and its

⁶¹¹ Carey McWilliams conducted the investigation for the American League Against War and Fascism. Reporters from both the B'nai Brith Messenger (LA's weekly Jewish newspaper with no relationship to the fraternal organization of the same name) and the Jewish Telegraphic Agency were also on the case, along with two of Hollywood's spies, Charles Slocombe and Neil Ness. LAPD Detective A.C. Arnold wrote in his report that so many investigations were working at cross-purposes that it made his investigation more difficult. See attachment to letter from Justin to Kleinberger, January 9, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 30, Folder 21.

association with Ingram Hughes established Lewis as a trusted advisor, laying the foundation for the LAJCC's political influence in Los Angeles in the years that followed.

Lewis advised the *Los Angeles Times* on its response to the security breach that scandalized the paper. He recommended that the paper downplay the incident to frustrate the perpetrators' objective for publicity. Hence, the *Times* limited its response to the incident with an obscure, business card-sized ad warning *Times* readers that anti-Jewish literature of a "highly inflammatory and objectionable character" had been surreptitiously inserted into some subscribers' papers *after* the papers had left the *Times* warehouse. Assuring its subscribers that it was conducting an investigation, the ad offered a \$10 reward for information leading to arrest of guilty parties.⁶¹²

Lewis also coordinated evidence collection by Jewish organizations on the West Coast. B'nai B'rith sources in San Francisco and Portland documented FNG's role in distributing the proclamation in those cities.⁶¹³ The Jewish Telegraphic Agency interviewed Herman Schwinn and German Vice-Consul Grah concerning the incident. Herman Schwinn denied having anything to do with the proclamation:

"Isn't it strange, Mr. Schwinn, that the *Proclamation* first appeared in the *Deutsches Weckruf* before it was distributed around town this week?" Weisman asked.

⁶¹² Letter, Lewis to Zeisler, October 3, 1935, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 12, Folder 2; "Warning!" *Los Angeles Times*, October 1, 1935. The *Times* subsequently carried a scathing editorial against the American Nationalist Party on October 13, 1935.

⁶¹³ Letter, Robinson to Lewis, October 2, 1935, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 12, Folder 2.

“Not at all,” Schwinn said. “Hughes asked us for help, but we didn’t give him any. You can’t pin this on us. We are not interested in that kind of thing [boycott].”

“Well, how did you first come to see the Proclamation?” Weisman asked him.

“It was brought to one of our meetings by a non-member,” Schwinn said.⁶¹⁴

The “non-member” Schwinn referred to, was of course, Ingram Hughes. Since both Ness and Slocombe reported that Schwinn had boasted to each of them personally and in public that FNG had financed and distributed the proclamation, Lewis used the JTA interview transcripts to expose Herman Schwinn’s duplicity concerning the incident.⁶¹⁵

Critical to the political influence that the LAJCC would leverage over the following years were the periodic, sworn affidavits Lewis collected from each of Hollywood’s spies as to what they had seen, heard, and done in the course of their undercover operation. These documents not only protected Hollywood’s spies from later prosecution should their “participation” in any of these groups result in arrest, but they were also used as sworn testimony in the Dies Committee hearings and in later prosecutions of right-wing activists in Los Angeles. Neil Ness’ sworn statement regarding his work inside the Friends of the New Germany (renamed the German-American Bund while he was undercover) in 1937 was later used by the Dies Committee as an interview guide during Ness’ 1939 public testimony. Charles Slocombe’s 1937 affidavit informed local law enforcement officials on the espionage

⁶¹⁴ Interview with Hermann Schwinn [by Weisman, reporter for the Jewish Telegraphic Agency], October 2, 1935, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 12, Folder 2.

⁶¹⁵ [C19] Report on Meeting of Friends of New Germany, November 6, [1935], *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 9, Folder 15.

activities of British fascist agent Leopold McLaglen, leading to McLaglen's indictment, conviction, and deportation as a spy.⁶¹⁶

The depth and breadth of information contained in the LAJCC's files made Lewis a respected and trusted consultant to local law enforcement during the proclamation investigation. After learning of Hughes' threatened vigilante plots, Lewis worked with Long Beach police Captain Owen Murphy to secure copies of Ingram Hughes' fingerprints. Lewis had Slocombe slip Hughes' typewriter out of Hughes' boardinghouse room when Hughes wasn't there. Slocombe brought the typewriter to Murphy who had it dusted for fingerprints. Slocombe returned the typewriter to Hughes' apartment before Hughes knew it was gone.⁶¹⁷ Photostatic copies of three of Hughes' fingerprints are in the LAJCC files.⁶¹⁸

Lewis also established credibility and political influence with the Los Angeles police department at long last. LAPD detectives met regularly with Lewis in his office to discuss next steps and to compare notes. In their hunt for the perpetrators, LAPD detectives interviewed dozens of people for leads. Frequently, these leads

⁶¹⁶ Affidavit, 1937, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 6, Folder 22; Slocombe Affidavit, 1937, Charles Slocombe Personal Papers, in author's possession, courtesy of Sherry Slocombe. The Slocombe affidavit concerns events leading to the indictment and deportation of Leopold McLaglen (brother of 1930s Hollywood actor Victor McLaglen). Slocombe met McLaglen through Bund and Silver Shirt associates at the Bund's German Day festivities in Los Angeles in 1937. Through that association, Slocombe helped Long Beach police and Naval intelligence arrest McLaglen, who turned out to be a pro-Nazi espionage agent. For Slocombe's reports on the McLaglen affair on which the affidavit is based, see Charles Slocombe's reports, September-October, 1937, in CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 10, Folders 10-12. See also *Los Angeles Times* articles on the trial, March 1, 8 and April 6, 1938. (*The Hollywood Citizen News* and *LA Examiner* also reported the trial on approximately those dates.) Slocombe left Los Angeles suddenly for six months immediately following McLaglen's indictment and went to live with his family in Boulder City, Nevada. It is possible that Slocombe left town during the McLaglen affair fearing for his personal security.

⁶¹⁷ [C19 Report], Wednesday, February 26, 1936, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 9, Folder 19.

⁶¹⁸ *Ibid.*

referred the police right back to Lewis.⁶¹⁹ When Detective A.C. Arnold called on Los Angeles District Attorney Burton Fitts for information about the case, even Fitts told Arnold to “see Lewis. Lewis has all the information on the case to date.”⁶²⁰

Legal Limits

In spite of all the information collected by Hollywood’s spies on Hughes and his FNG collaborators, no charges could be brought against them. If the *Los Angeles Times* ever discovered who was responsible for inserting the proclamation into its papers, it never published the perpetrators’ names or prosecuted them. Although the posting of the proclamation on public property was a violation of municipal anti-handbill ordinances (except for one instance in Pasadena) there had been no witnesses who could identify the individuals responsible for the overnight papering of trees and telephone poles (see chapter 6).⁶²¹ As for Hughes, he was protected by the first amendment, so no charges could be brought against him for the ugly content of the proclamation itself. The proclamation incident, therefore, foreshadowed the legal challenges that the Jews of Los Angeles would face in fighting pro-Nazi hate speech in the years to come.

Nevertheless, the search for other opportunities to indict Hughes and FNG were explored by the LAPD on Lewis’ recommendation. Lewis suggested that continued surveillance might uncover an illegal financial relationship between the

⁶¹⁹ Attachment to letter from Justin to Kleinberger, January 9, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 30, Folder 21.

⁶²⁰ Attachment to letter from Justin to Kleinberger, January 9, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 30, Folder 21.

⁶²¹ Summary Report, November 14, 1935, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 30, Folder 21.

American Nationalist Party and FNG. To that end, Lewis and LAPD Detective A.C. Arnold discussed a plan for bugging Schwinn's and Hughes' homes, as well as FNG and (William Pelley's) Christian Party offices. The plan called for Arnold to rent the restaurant at Deutsche Haus for a private party, during which the police would install Dictaphone equipment. Arnold was also to secure the electrical blueprints for the Merritt Building – home of the Christian Party – so that Lewis could wire those offices. The report states that, “Lewis paid for the Dictaphone equipment.”⁶²²

The fact of this conversation is stunning. It confirms Lewis' political influence with the police; but evidence of the conversation – a letter written by the detective involved to his captain -- explicates the depth of the influence the LAJCC had with police. Copies of that correspondence along with the final police report detailing these plans are in the LAJCC files. LAPD detective Arnold sent a copy of the original document to Los Angeles Police Commissioner Ray Kleinberger at the close of the investigation. Kleinberger was a member of the LAJCC board.⁶²³ Kleinberger must have given the report to Lewis. Hence, while Lewis cultivated influence with beat detectives, the Jews of Los Angeles had political influence on the Police Commission. Over the next several years as Nazi activity in the city escalated, Lewis, Hollywood's spies, and the LAJCC leveraged this political influence with the LAPD as a primary method of resisting Nazism in the city.

⁶²² Ibid.

⁶²³ Attachment to letter, Justin to Kleinberger, January 6, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 30, Folder 21.

Organizational Restructuring and Expansion

After 1935, the Third Reich increased its propaganda campaign in the United States by feeding indigenous groups with antisemitic, pro-Nazi literature that these domestic propagandists used in their own newsletters, pamphlets and books. Thus was the virus of antisemitism spread in American political culture. The volume of antisemitic literature hitting the streets in Los Angeles exploded after 1935. Not so surprisingly, so did domestic right-wing activity. Hollywood's spies were firmly planted inside this right-wing subculture in Los Angeles, and they churned out thousands of pages of eyewitness reports and primary source documents for Lewis to file.

The organized Jewish community of Los Angeles responded to the escalation in Nazi activity after 1935 by reorganizing and expanding its representation. In 1937, the United Jewish Welfare Fund of Los Angeles formed the Los Angeles Jewish Community *Council* to better coordinate the delivery of social and welfare services in the Jewish community.⁶²⁴ The Council was a federation of most the Jewish organizations in the city, which included the Los Angeles Jewish Community Committee. The LAJCC became the Council's public relations arm. It dealt with the on-going challenges of Nazism, antisemitism and discrimination in the city through its fact-finding activities and outreach activities. The incorporation of the LAJCC into the new Los Angeles Jewish Council meant that the LAJCC was now officially part of the organized Jewish community's governing structure. No longer merely a

⁶²⁴ Outline, Resume of Committee History [1939], *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 9, Folder 1.

board of self-selected crusaders, the LAJCC would now report to and represent the interests of a far more representative communal body.⁶²⁵

The LAJCC made changes to both its back-office operation and to its board during this time period. The changes instituted reflect the LAJCC's on-going political confidence and agency in combating Berlin's expanding incursion into American political culture. In 1938, Lewis hired Joseph Roos to run the day-to-day undercover operation and serve as second in command of the LAJCC office. Roos was a Jewish German-American newspaperman from Chicago who had experience in undercover investigations of Nazi activity.⁶²⁶ Roos created a master filing system that made it easy to research and cross-reference the hundreds of names of people and organizations cited in the growing archive.

The master filing system (still intact in the archive today) enabled Lewis to produce documentary evidence for local and federal officials, as he had done with the analysis of the *World Service* book review and in exposing Schwinn's duplicity concerning the Bund's role in the proclamation incident. The archive contained such reliable information that local law enforcement officers, military intelligence agents, FBI investigators, and Department of Justice investigators regularly visited the LAJCC's office during World War II to do research.⁶²⁷

⁶²⁵ *Recommended Changes, Articles of Incorporation of Los Angeles Community Council* [1937], American Jewish Committee Papers, *Geographical Files*, Center for American Jewish History/YIVO, New York, NY, Box 3, Folder "Communal Organizations."

⁶²⁶ Pitt, Leonard and Murray Wood. "Joseph Roos Oral History," Joseph Roos Papers, Box "News Research Service," Folder 11.

⁶²⁷ The relationship between the LAJCC and federal investigators between 1939-1941 is borne out in various files and isolated correspondence throughout Part 2 of the archive. For Naval Intelligence, see "Zacharias, [Commander] Ellis M," CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 42, Folders 1-4.

The LAJCC itself was also reorganized into two sub-committees. The first one met regularly downtown and responded to incidents of local antisemitic harassment and discrimination in Los Angeles. Building relationships with other minority group civil rights organizations and non-sectarian religious groups in the city, the “downtown branch” of the LAJCC laid the foundation for Jewish leadership in the post-war civil rights movement in Los Angeles.⁶²⁸

The second sub-committee was responsible for maintaining the undercover fact-finding work to fight insurgent Nazism. Setting up offices in Hollywood, the Motion Picture Division of the LAJCC was created in 1937 (see Appendix 5: Executive Committee of the Hollywood Branch.) It was comprised of producers, actors, and the studios’ lawyers.⁶²⁹ Independent producer Walter Wanger was the chair of the Hollywood branch of the LAJCC. The “motion picture group,” as Lewis referred to them, met every Friday afternoon until the end of the war. They provided talent and direction for privately commissioned radio and screen productions promoting Americanism.⁶³⁰

The LAJCC’s board membership diversified and expanded between 1937-1945. LAJCC members were lawyers, judges, businessmen, and Jewish “club” women, all of whom were well-connected to both local Jewish and secular social, commercial and political networks (see Appendix 6: LAJCC Membership List,

⁶²⁸ Shana Bernstein, “From Civil Defense to Civil Rights: The Growth of Jewish Interracial Civil Rights Activism in Los Angeles,” in *The Jewish Role in American Life: Annual Review*, ed. William Devereil (Los Angeles: USC Casden Institute, 2009). The LAJCC had subcommittees focused on different community issues, such as Education, Social Welfare, “City Hall Matters,” and Police. See Lewis to Silberberg, November 11, 1936, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 24, Folder 2.

⁶²⁹ Motion Picture Division files, CRC Papers, Part 2, Boxes 17-18.

⁶³⁰ Outline, Resume of Committee History [1939], CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 9, Folder 1.

1942.)⁶³¹ Lewis was particularly proud that members from the “big three” Jewish organizations in Los Angeles (American Jewish Congress, ADL, and AJC) were represented, and had been able to “submerge their petty differences” to work more harmoniously in LA than were their national leaders.⁶³² Moreover, the LAJCC board was a remarkably stable group. By 1945, the board had evolved into a representative body comprised of delegates from over thirty Jewish political, cultural, social, and welfare organizations in Los Angeles. Remarkably, many of the men and women who joined Lewis in 1933 were still at the table in 1945.⁶³³

The LAJCC, however, was not a completely inclusive or representative group. It was comprised primarily of representatives of middle and upper middle class Jewish organizations, and specifically excluded the “leftist elements” within the Jewish community. In a letter to American Jewish Committee member Sydney Wallach, Lewis wrote that those people “were intent on sabotaging the new organization,” and that he was “trying to ‘ease’ [them] out of strategic positions.”⁶³⁴ While no organization can be truly representative of a community of 65,000, the LAJCC was more representative than past community groups had been and was more successful in mediating intragroup differences that frequently divided Jewish communities across the country.⁶³⁵

⁶³¹ Community Committee [membership list, n.d.], *ibid.*, Part I, Box 2, Folder 8.

⁶³² Letter, Lewis to Alfred Cohen [National President of B’nai Brith], May 22, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 23, Folder 18.

⁶³³ Draft, January 18, 1945, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 9, Folder 3.

⁶³⁴ Letter, Lewis to Sydney Wallach, December 13, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 24, Folder 17.

⁶³⁵ Bernstein, “From Civil Defense to Civil Rights: The Growth of Jewish Interracial Civil Rights Activism in Los Angeles,” 58-60; Max Vorspan and Lloyd P. Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1970), 221.

Within two years, the LAJCC was subsumed into the city's Jewish federation of charitable organizations, in accordance with the consolidation of the community's philanthropic infrastructure. The Jews of Hollywood provided the lion's share of funding for the Welfare Board and, therefore, for the LAJCC through the end of the war.⁶³⁶ In 1937, David O. Selznick crafted a solicitation strategy for the motion picture group that Lewis praised as efficient and productive. The motion picture group raised \$180,000 of the \$300,000 collected for the Jewish Welfare Board that year. Lewis noted that several individuals from the motion picture group personally contributed \$10,000 or more with little urging.⁶³⁷

Conclusion

Historically, the proclamation incident heralded the arrival of Nazi-sponsored political antisemitism in Los Angeles in the 1930s in three ways. First, its language belied its Nazi influences. Second, its sponsor, the American Nationalist Party, was modeled after the Nazi Party, right down to its justification of the use of violence against Jews as a legitimate political tactic. Third, its partnership with the Friends of the New Germany in distributing (forty thousand copies of) the proclamation in southern California and beyond marked the origins of an alliance between the Friends of the New Germany (soon to be known as the German-American Bund) and far right-wing groups in Los Angeles that reflected a broader Nazi-inspired political

⁶³⁶ Pitt and Wood, "Joseph Roos Oral History."

⁶³⁷ Letters, Lewis to Sydney Wallach (AJC), March 6, 1937 and June 4, 1937, *AJC Chronological Files*, American Jewish Committee Papers, Jacob Blaustein Library. American Jewish Committee, New York City.

movement across the country.⁶³⁸ Moreover, the appearance of the proclamation across the country unveiled channels of virulent transmission that empowered even solo propagandists to reach thousands of Americans.⁶³⁹ It was through these channels that Nazi-influenced political antisemitism spread across the country in the late 1930s, fomenting the intimidating political climate for American Jews. The proclamation incident presaged the emergence of hundreds of similar Nazi-influenced groups in Los Angeles during the late 1930s that persisted through the end of World War II.

Historiographically, the investigation of the proclamation incident marked a new phase in Jewish political agency in Los Angeles. Responding quickly and decisively to the event, Leon Lewis engaged two new informants who quickly uncovered the facts. Lewis' decisive action demonstrates a degree of political confidence and agency that contrasts with consensus conclusions that American Jews were too paralyzed to defend themselves. Furthermore, the adjustments Lewis made to the LAJCC board and to the back-office operations also demonstrate a will and commitment to meet the challenges which insurgent Nazism posed to the Jews of Los Angeles.

The investigation into the proclamation incident established a new and influential relationship between the LAJCC and local law enforcement. In the course of the proclamation investigation, Leon Lewis became a trusted advisor to the Los

⁶³⁸ Memorandum, October 6, 1936 Re: Henry Douglas Allen, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 10, Folder 5.

⁶³⁹ Letter, LLL to Gutstadt, December 6, 1935, *ibid.*, Box 23, Folder 14. After polling ADL members across the country immediately after the proclamation assault in LA in early October 1935, ADL executive director Richard Gutstadt wrote that the proclamation had been distributed to "16 or 17 cities" around the country. See [ADL] Form Letter, October 6, 1935, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 23, Folder 12; [ADL] Form Letter, December 5, 1935, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 23, Folder 14.

Angeles police. In the years following the investigation, and particularly between 1941-1945, Lewis' reputation as a reliable source of information on Nazi activity in the city extended his influence to the Long Beach and San Diego police departments, to the FBI, to the U.S. Justice Department, and to U.S. Naval Intelligence agents in San Diego.⁶⁴⁰ As testament to Lewis' stature with local authorities, the Los Angeles Police Commission deputized Lewis in 1938. Police Commissioner Ray Kleinberger sent Lewis a Los Angeles County Deputy Sheriff identification card to be used, ostensibly, in situations in which he might need to intercede quickly as a deputized officer of the court. The accompanying letter instructed Lewis to "keep the card accessible to show to any Police Officer on demand," and set the expectation that Lewis would "cooperate with the Police Department on all occasions and uphold its policies."⁶⁴¹

The proclamation incident explicates the source of Jewish political influence in Los Angeles: information. Democracy requires transparency, and transparency requires information. Ironically, the LAJCC was forced to resort to covert methods in order to realize that objective. The information collected by Hollywood's spies and

⁶⁴⁰ Documents corroborating the LAJCC's relationship with naval intelligence can be found in *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 42, Folders 1-4; also see memorandum, April 29, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 40, Folder 14. Correspondence scattered throughout the collection corroborates Lewis' relationship with other local and federal authorities. For example, Lewis worked closely with police Captain Owen Murphy on the McLaglen affair. See *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 10, Folders 10-12; also see Part 1, Box 30, Folder 27 and Part 2, Box 224, Folder 22. For examples of the LAJCC's relationship with the Justice Department during the sedition trials of 1944, see Los Angeles Examiner Clipping File, Special Collections, Doheny Library, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA, Box "Correspondence," Folder 6 ("Old Stuff").

⁶⁴¹ Letter, Kleinberger to Lewis, December 1937, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 30, Folder 20. Distribution of such police ID cards was not out of the ordinary. See Gerald Woods, *The Police in Los Angeles: Reform and Professionalization* (New York: Garland, 1993); Thomas Sitton, "Urban Politics and Reform in New Deal Los Angeles: The Recall of Mayor Frank L. Shaw" (Dissertation, University of California, 1983), 113.

archived by Leon Lewis proved to be the source of Jewish political influence in the fight against insurgent Nazism in Los Angeles in the 1930s. Confirming historian Henry Feingold's assertion that American Jewish political power is most effective when it is aligned with national priorities, the information collected by the LAJCC proved to be a potent weapon in defending American interests as well as American Jewish ones. Lewis' use of that information to expose insurgent Nazism to the American public was a primary example of effective political agency and influence.

There are two other factors that also may account for the LAJCC's increased political influence with the LAPD during and after the proclamation investigation. Recalling that police chief James Davis had condescendingly shown Leon Lewis the door in 1933 for suggesting that Nazis posed a problem worth investigating, Lewis' new status with local law enforcement may have had less to do with a change in political heart by LA's police than with Ingram Hughes' ill-chosen selection of the *Los Angeles Times* as the foil for his propaganda stunt. The *Los Angeles Times* was the most powerful political entity in the city. It had been closely allied with the police department for decades. The surreptitious insertion of the flyer into the paper struck at the paper's commercial integrity. The proclamation incident may have unintentionally drawn police attention to Nazi activities in the city. Although there is no evidence documenting publisher Chandler's probable outrage over the incident, it is for certain that police attention paid to the incident that elevated Leon Lewis to trusted advisor on Nazi activity in the city was driven by the *Times'* long-standing

alliance with the police and by Chief Davis, who was “Chandler’s man.”⁶⁴² Moreover, the LAJCC’s stock with the LAPD may have risen in the years following the proclamation incident as a result of the departure of Chief Davis himself. In 1938, an unusual alliance of left-wing economic groups and conservative moral reformers rallied against the rampant vice, corruption, and graft in the city and held a recall election of then Mayor Frank Shaw. A new mayor, Fletcher Bowron was swept into office as a reformer, vowing to clean up city politics. Bowron abolished the Red Squad, demoting its captain Bill Hynes to beat cop, and fired police chief James Davis for his less-than-textbook methods of law enforcement.⁶⁴³

* * *

Nazi-influenced propagandists like Ingram Hughes proliferated in Los Angeles after 1935. Between 1936-1941 the LAJCC monitored hundreds of Nazi-influenced domestic right-wing groups that came and went in Los Angeles, and directed Hollywood’s spies to infiltrate the most threatening (see Appendix 7: Partial List, Right-wing Individuals and Groups Investigated by the LAJCC, 1936-1946). Like Hughes, some of these right-wing leaders turned out to be nothing more than fly-by-night “patrioteers” seeking personal financial gain through political rabble-rousing. Others were better organized and funded than was Hughes, and their groups became viable threats. Set within the context of Nazi persecution of German Jews and Berlin’s burgeoning antisemitic propaganda network, Leon Lewis and the

⁶⁴² Sitton, “Urban Politics and Reform in New Deal Los Angeles: The Recall of Mayor Frank L. Shaw,” 74.

⁶⁴³ Hannah Bloom, *Los Angeles Transformed: Fletcher Bowron's Urban Reform Revival, 1938-1953* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005); “The Passing of ‘Red’ Hynes,” *Nation* (August 2, 1952).

LAJCC could not afford to ignore these groups. Lewis sent Hollywood's spies to investigate while he cultivated relationships and tactics that gave the LAJCC the political influence it needed to effectively resist insurgent Nazism in Los Angeles. The chapters that follow explicate in detail the undercover activities of Hollywood's spies inside the German-American Bund and their nativist allies in Los Angeles, and the ways in which the LAJCC leveraged information to combat them.

Chapter Six
Exposing the Berlin Connection, 1936-1940

The investigation of the proclamation incident in 1935 took eight weeks.⁶⁴⁴

At the end of the investigation, the Los Angeles police had identified the author of the flyer and his collaborators, but no charges were brought, as no laws had been broken. For Leon Lewis and the LAJCC, however, the case was not closed. The incident had disclosed disturbing new relationships between Berlin, the Friends of the New Germany (FNG), and domestic, right-wing activists that the Jews of Los Angeles could not afford to ignore. Consequently, the LAJCC maintained its covert, fact-finding operation inside the German-American Bund and its nativist allies in Los Angeles even after the police had closed the case. For the next five years, Hollywood's spies submitted daily reports to Leon Lewis from inside the German-American Bund and its Nazi-influenced allies. Hollywood's spies rose to trusted leadership positions inside the Bund that made them witness to secret meetings, planning sessions and conversations. Everyday for the next five years, Hollywood's spies submitted reports documenting the "Berlin connection" exposing the German-American Bund's anti-democratic political goals.

This chapter explicates Hollywood's spies' infiltration of the German-American Bund in Los Angeles between 1936-1941. It demonstrates the LAJCC's on-going political agency in combating the rise of a domestic Nazi-influenced movement in the city that became part of a broader (but fragmented) fascist movement in the United States between 1936-1939. The information collected by

⁶⁴⁴ [LAPD] Summary Report, November 14, 1935, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 30, Folder 21.

Hollywood's spies was passed onto congressional investigators between 1938-1940 and guided the Dies Committee in its investigation of a Nazi "Trojan horse" in America. Later, Justice Department officials used the evidence collected by Hollywood's spies in its 1944-46 prosecution of twenty-six Bund members and Nazi-influenced, right-wing activists.⁶⁴⁵ Throughout it all, the role that the Jews of Los Angeles played in collecting that information, were not known by the public at the time, nor by historians since who have used those federal records as the basis for their analyses.

In presenting this evidence as proof of Jewish agency in Los Angeles, this chapter necessarily details the political activities of the German-American Bund during these years. This chapter, therefore, presents a new source of evidence corroborating and deepening the historiographic understanding of the role the Bund played as a conduit for Nazi propaganda in the United States. While previous scholarly analyses have investigated the Bund's political life at the national level through government documents and Congressional testimony, this chapter presents a snapshot of how the Bund's national political objectives were executed at the local level, as witnessed by informants.⁶⁴⁶

⁶⁴⁵ For evidence of the LAJCC's support of the sedition trials of 1944-1946, see correspondence in Box "Correspondence, Folder 6 ("Old Stuff"), Joseph Roos Papers, Special Collections, Doheny Library, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA (hereafter, Joseph Roos Papers). For more on the sedition trials themselves, see: Maximilian St.-George and Lawrence Dennis, *A Trial on Trial: The Great Sedition Trial of 1944*, (St. Louis: National Civil Rights Committee, 1946); Leo P. Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right: The Protestant Far Right from the Great Depression to the Cold War* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983), chapter 5; Glen Jeansonne, *Women of the Far Right: The Mothers' Movement and World War II* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1996); O. John Rogge, *The Official German Report: Nazi Penetration, 1924-1942* (New York: T. Yoseloff, 1961).

⁶⁴⁶ U.S. House of Representatives, *Emergency Report (1934)*; Report 153 (1935); Special Committee on Un-American Activities, *Investigation of Un-American Propaganda Activities in the United States*,

Old Foe, New Face

Despite Leon Lewis' optimism that the McCormack-Dickstein Committee hearings had neutralized Nazism in the United States, neither Nazi propaganda nor the Friends of the New Germany disappeared following the hearings. In the wake of the embarrassing public revelations exposing Berlin' inappropriate propaganda activities in the United States and the nefarious political ambitions of the Friends of the New Germany, both entities spent 1935 regrouping. The Friends of the New Germany emerged more radical and flagrantly National Socialist, and Berlin reorganized its propaganda tactics in the United States to better camouflage its intrusion into American political culture. In response, the LAJCC also changed. Leon Lewis engaged new informants to meet the challenges that Berlin's new propaganda tactics posed, which relied on the FNG as its primary agent in Los Angeles. By the beginning of 1936, the old players all had new faces.

Berlin and the German-American Bund

The Friends of the New Germany re-emerged after the McCormack-Dickstein

Union Calendar No. 2., 76th Cong., (1939); Report No. 1476, (1940); *Preliminary Report, Un-American Activities of Various Nazi Organizations and Individuals in the United States, Including Diplomatic and Consular Agents of the German Government, Special Committee on Un-American Activities, 77th Cong.*; Sander A. Diamond, *The Nazi Movement in the United States, 1924-1941* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974); Ronald Johnson, "German American Bund and Nazi Germany, 1936-1941," *Studies in History and Society*, Vol. 6, no. 2, 1975; Susan Canedy, *America's Nazis, a Democratic Dilemma: A History of the German American Bund* (Menlo Park: Markgraf Publications Group, 1990); Warren Grover, *Nazis in Newark* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2003).

Committee hearings in 1935 more confident and flagrantly National Socialist than before.⁶⁴⁷ In fact, the Committee over-estimated the role that negative publicity would play in delegitimizing FNG.⁶⁴⁸ According to historian Susan Canedy, the McCormack-Dickstein investigation may have inadvertently radicalized the group.⁶⁴⁹ During 1935, Bund membership actually increased. Historian Sander Diamond believes that the reason for this was renewed anti-German feelings precipitated by the hearings, causing some German-Americans to seek political refuge with the group in 1935.⁶⁵⁰

During 1935, FNG was more boisterous than ever in its political activism. The group attracted even more negative publicity. News stories on their raucous, antisemitic meetings in New York City, St. Louis, and Chicago, and their street fights with Jewish war veterans, filled the papers.⁶⁵¹ In fact, the group attracted so much negative press in 1935 that it created diplomatic tensions between the U.S. and Germany.⁶⁵² In December the German Foreign Ministry issued an official public statement to assuage State Department concerns that the Friends of the New German was actually an agent of the Nazi government. Berlin ordered all Reich citizens to resign from the group or risk losing their passports. The order was published in major

⁶⁴⁷ Canedy, *America's Nazis, a Democratic Dilemma: A History of the German American Bund*, 64.

⁶⁴⁸ Constance B. Schulz, "Samuel Dickstein: Congressional Investigator, 1934-1939" (M.A. Thesis {unpublished}, University of Cincinnati, 1964), chapter 3, Samuel Dickstein Papers, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, OH.

⁶⁴⁹ Canedy, *America's Nazis, a Democratic Dilemma: A History of the German American Bund*, 64.

⁶⁵⁰ Diamond, *The Nazi Movement in the United States, 1924-1941*, 182. Diamond estimates the New York City chapter membership to be at about 10,000. It is difficult to estimate the exact size of the Bund, as membership fluctuated during the 1930s. The most conservative estimate for national membership at its height in 1935 is 25,000. (Diamond, 239, endnote #24.)

⁶⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁶⁵² Diamond, *The Nazi Movement in the United States, 1924-1941*, 133, 145.

U.S. papers and signed by Nazi Party chief Rudolf Hess.⁶⁵³ The pronouncement eased diplomatic tensions, but had little impact on FNG's propaganda activities.

In response, FNG reorganized to improve its image in the United States and to better conceal its subversive political activities. "Americanizing" their image, the Friends of the New Germany changed its name to the German-American Bund, installed naturalized German-American citizens as its leaders, and proclaimed itself an American political defense organization for Americans. No longer could it be viewed as a group comprised of foreigners. The new German-American Bund could claim the protections of the Constitution in promoting its pro-Nazi political agenda. Its new national fuehrer, Fritz Kuhn, announced the Bund's unequivocal commitment to defend America from the Communist scourge by promoting a "national-socialist" agenda in the United States:

[The goal of the new organization was to] Maintain and to extend the German-American Bund as an OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE MOVEMENT OF A NATIONALLY CONSCIOUS GERMAN-AMERICAN PEOPLE [caps from original] who are nationally-socialistically and constitutionally dedicated to the service of an actually independent Aryan-governed United States of America.⁶⁵⁴

Berlin, too, spent 1935 re-engineering its covert propaganda tactics in the United States. Conceiving a new strategy that would cultivate indigenous right-wing groups in the United States to serve as conduits of its Nazi propaganda, Berlin began shipping large quantities of antisemitic, pro-Nazi literature, written in English for an American audience to such right-wing groups and individuals. These groups, in turn,

⁶⁵³ Ibid., 174-175, 204, 206.

⁶⁵⁴ "Organizational Structure of the Bund," quoted in Canedy, *America's Nazis, a Democratic Dilemma: A History of the German American Bund*, 88.

either sold these materials to their members and supporters, or repurposed its content in their own antisemitic newsletters, pamphlets, and books, never citing Berlin as their source. Thus did the channels of virulent pro-Nazi antisemitism spread from Berlin into the American political discourse. According to the Dies Committee's final report on Nazi propaganda activity in the United States in 1940, the volume of antisemitic, pro-Nazi literature Berlin exported to the United States increased dramatically after 1935.⁶⁵⁵

By the beginning of 1936, therefore, Berlin had a new, better-disguised propaganda strategy for the United States, and the new German-American Bund was transformed into its primary agent. In Los Angeles, the Bund leased and renovated a large mansion at 634 West 15th Street to be the group's West Coast headquarters. Under the guise of a new name, a new image, and a new home, the German-American Bund in Los Angeles facilitated Berlin's new propaganda strategy with renewed political passion.

Hollywood's New Spies

As for the Jews of Los Angeles, the proclamation incident signaled these transformations, and the LAJCC responded by relaunching its undercover, fact-finding operation in 1935. Hollywood's newest spies, Neil Ness and Charles Slocombe, continued in their undercover work following the closure of the official police investigation. Ness remained Lewis' man inside the Bund through the end of

⁶⁵⁵ U.S. House of Representatives Special Committee on Un-American Activities, Report No. 1476 (1940).

1936, when it appears Neil Ness was discovered as an informant.⁶⁵⁶ Charles Slocombe, however, continued his undercover work inside several domestic right-wing groups for the LAJCC through 1942 (see chapter seven).

Two other men joined the ranks of Hollywood's spies between 1936-1941 to meet the challenge of Berlin's "American Enlightenment" campaign. William Bockhacker, alias W2, replaced Neil Ness as Hollywood's spy inside the Bund beginning in December 1937. Bockhacker was a German-American and he had previous experience as an undercover agent, having worked for the William Burns Detective Agency. In 1936, Bockhacker was introduced to Leon Lewis by comedian Eddie Cantor after Bockhacker offered his services to the Hollywood Anti-Fascist League. Bockhacker worked for Lewis in 1938 at a salary of \$30 per week until Lewis released him in late 1938, telling him that the FBI was taking over the investigation of the Bund. Bockhacker, however, later told Dies Committee investigators that the real reason Lewis discharged him was because Bockhacker "would not color his reports to make them sensational." Bockhacker may have worked as an informant for the Dies Committee inside German-American groups after the war began.⁶⁵⁷

⁶⁵⁶ A letter written by then-commander of the Bund's storm troopers, Reinhardt Kusche, to a local American Legion commander divulged that Ness had gotten drunk one night and boasted to his Bund friends that he was an informant. See letter, Kunze to American Legion, November 26, 1937, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 28, Folder 16.

⁶⁵⁷ After parting company with Lewis, Bockhacker interviewed with Dies Committee investigators to work as an informant. It's not known whether he got the job or not. See, Regarding William A. Bockhacker, U.S. House of Representatives Special Committee on Un-American Activities Authorized to Investigate Nazi Propaganda and Certain Other Propaganda Activities (Dies), *Los Angeles Numbered Case Files*, National Archive, Washington, DC. Box 12, Folder "Bockhacker, William A. Investigation, #77."

Charles Young was probably the FBI agent who replaced Bockhacker in late 1938. Young, alias Y-9, infiltrated the Bund for Lewis from the end of 1938 through 1941, and continued trailing former Bund members through 1942, even after the group had been broken up by the FBI following the attack on Pearl Harbor. Young, like Bockhacker, was a first generation German-American who spoke German and had investigative experience. He had previously worked as an investigator for the Los Angeles District Attorney's office, and while working for Lewis, maintained his connections with several local police departments, Army and Naval Intelligence.⁶⁵⁸ Young's reports not only document the Bund's relationships with domestic right-wing groups, they also include information on suspected German and Japanese spies who frequented Deutsches Haus between 1939-1941.⁶⁵⁹

The Propaganda Network

Hollywood's spy Neil Ness had infiltrated the Friends of the New Germany as part of the proclamation investigation in late 1935. When the police closed the investigation, Ness remained undercover, reporting to Leon Lewis for the next ten months on the Bund's relationship with Berlin. Offering himself as a writer and editor for the Bund's cause, Ness was quickly embraced by West Coast fuehrer Herman Schwinn as just the kind of American recruit the group was looking for. Schwinn made Neil Ness an editor of the *California Weckruf*, the Nazified German-language newspaper in Los Angeles, and gave Ness a desk inside the Bund's new headquarters

⁶⁵⁸ Charles Young correspondence, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 41, Folder 12.

⁶⁵⁹ Charles Young Reports, October-December 1939, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 41, Folders 17-18.

at 634 West 15th Street.⁶⁶⁰ Barely two months into his undercover assignment, Ness described his privileged perch inside the Bund, using a chess metaphor that Lewis understood well:

I am in the king row. I find myself constantly pressed to maneuver rapidly and intelligently so that I may always keep their forces uncovered while still protecting myself...Whether they shall checkmate me or I shall checkmate them or whether we both shall be stalemated, is still a question.⁶⁶¹

Being in the “king row,” Ness posed as a committed supporter of the Bund’s mission to transplant Nazism to the United States. Ness represented the Bund as a public speaker, worked to recruit other Americans to join the new group, was present at secret meetings with Nazi Party officials, and helped map out the Bund’s political tactics. Ness was personally “nauseated” by the lies and duplicity that his work for the Bund entailed.⁶⁶² Instructed by Schwinn to say whatever would promote the Third Reich to the Americans he met, “[t]here was no end to the outrageous lies the [Bund was] willing to publish,” Ness wrote. Whatever Ness said in public about the Bund or the Third Reich Schwinn promised would be “officially substantiated.”⁶⁶³ Despite these ethical compromises, Ness was committed to the greater calling: “here, by the Grace of God,” he wrote, “I find my service to humanity an end which justifies all means.”⁶⁶⁴

⁶⁶⁰ [N2] Report, March 6, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 7, Folder 1; [N2] Report, January 9, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 6, Folder 26.

⁶⁶¹ [N2] Report, March 6, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 7, Folder 1.

⁶⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

During 1936, Neil Ness confirmed that Berlin was by far the Bund's primary supplier of propaganda material.⁶⁶⁵ Ness' greatest contribution to the fact-finding operation was the evidence he produced exposing Berlin as the Bund's primary source of Nazi literature and the methods used to smuggle and disseminate that literature across the country. During that year, Schwinn provided Ness with books, pamphlets, and articles written by both local and German propagandists (including a copy of Ingram Hughes' proclamation) to help Ness Americanize the Nazi message for the Bund.⁶⁶⁶ When Ness casually inquired about the source of these materials, he learned about Berlin's evasive tactics to smuggle propaganda materials into the U.S. Schwinn told him that third party distributors in Germany were granted licenses by the Nazi government to export government-printed propaganda to countries all over the world. Large quantities of German propaganda wrapped in unmarked packages, therefore, passed undetected through U.S. postal and customs services every week. The materials were distributed by receiving agents in each country. Ness described how the Bund reprinted this literature under a false imprint, removing all traces of the German copyright, and then distributed it through a network of domestic right-wing groups across the country.⁶⁶⁷ The German-American Bund was one of dozens of

⁶⁶⁵ [N2] Report, January 18, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 6, Folder 26; also see CRC Summary Report, *September 1938*, Volume 1, Part I, Chapter 4, 44; *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 26, Folder 7; *Hearings before a Special Committee on Un-American Activities*, Special Committee on Un-American Activities, 76th Cong., at 5495 (1939) (Neil Ness Testimony). (Hereafter, Neil Ness Testimony.)

⁶⁶⁶ [N2] Report, January 11 and 15, 1936, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 6, Folder 26.

⁶⁶⁷ [N2] Report, January 18, 1936, and [N2] Report, May 14, 1936, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 7, Folder 6.

unofficial Reich propaganda agents in the United States that operated in this fashion.⁶⁶⁸

Ness' work exposed Berlin's duplicity with regards to the Bund. Despite assurances from Germany in both 1935 and again in 1938 that it had no official relationship with the Bund, Neil Ness documented that "communications, orders, reports, propaganda material, etc., [were] pass[ed] back and forth between Schwinn and Arno Risse [second in command] and the headquarters of the Nazi Party in Germany."⁶⁶⁹ Ness witnessed exchanges between German steamship captains and Schwinn at least once a month. Sometimes, the captains came to Deutsches Haus to personally deliver unmarked packages to Schwinn. Other times, Ness accompanied Schwinn to the port to meet Nazi Party officials onboard German steamships that arrived several times a month in Los Angeles. On February 10, 1936, Ness rushed down to the port with Schwinn and storm trooper commander Reinhold Kusche to deliver some "very important documents" to the *Elbe* before it sailed for Antwerp that evening.⁶⁷⁰

On March 10, 1936, Ness joined a group from Deutsches Haus to greet the *Oakland*. When they arrived at the dock, the group was taken directly to the captain's cabin where Schwinn turned over a briefcase, saying, "Here are the reports." The two conversed in German for a while, and the group was then invited to stay for drinks.⁶⁷¹ According to Ness, the party turned "into a debauchery." Captain Trauernicht took

⁶⁶⁸ [N2] Report, January 15, 1936, and [N2] Report, January 18, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 7, Folder 6.

⁶⁶⁹ *CRC Summary Report*, Vol. 1, Part I, Chapter 4, 44; *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 26, Folder 7.

⁶⁷⁰ [N2] Report, February 10, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 6, Folder 27.

⁶⁷¹ [N2] Report, March 10, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 7, Folder 1.

one of the women in their group out of the room. In their absence, the remainder of the party got quite drunk. A fight broke out between Schwinn and another man over improper advances made towards their female companion, Mrs. Wistorf. About thirty minutes later, Trauernicht and the other woman returned to the cabin quite drunk. The two were flushed and in a “hilarious mood,” Ness wrote. The captain offered to take Mrs. Wistorf out to show her the same good time, but she declined. Ness recorded that he carried a very drunk Herman Schwinn back to the car and that Schwinn slept on Ness’ shoulder all the way back to Deutsches Haus.⁶⁷²

In May 1936, the captain of the *Schwaben* delivered a four-inch stack of papers to Schwinn wrapped in brown paper.⁶⁷³ Later that month, Ness went down to the harbor with Schwinn to meet two ships that had recently arrived. The *Portland* was in from Vancouver and Seattle on her way to Germany, and the *Oakland* had just arrived from Germany.⁶⁷⁴ Ness reported on the routine exchange of “reports” for brown-paper wrapped packages sealed in red wax that were stamped, “Translation of Propaganda for Foreign Consumption.”⁶⁷⁵ In his testimony before the Dies Committee in 1939, Ness reported that sometime in 1936 the contacts on these ships changed from the ship’s captain to an official of the Nazi Party who sailed onboard every ship to confer with representatives from local Nazi Party support groups in

⁶⁷² [N2] Report, March 10, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 7, Folder 1.

⁶⁷³ [N2] Report, May 14, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 7, Folder 6.

⁶⁷⁴ [N2] Report, May 25, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 7, Folder 6.

⁶⁷⁵ Memo, May 14, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 7, Folder 6.

every port.⁶⁷⁶ Schwinn's rendezvous with German Nazi Party officials arriving on German steamships took place monthly throughout the summer of 1936.⁶⁷⁷

The bulletins Schwinn received from Nazi Party officials traveling on German steamships were most likely from the German Propaganda Ministry's official news service, the *World Service*. According to Ness, the bulletins contained news stories from the Nazi perspective, suitable for reprinting in pro-Nazi newspapers abroad. Thus was the Nazi perspective on world events disseminated around the world, including in the U.S. During Ness' tenure as Hollywood's spy inside the Bund in 1936, the bulletins carried news items extolling the quality of life for German laborers, methods for cultivating indigenous leaders for the Nazi movement, and instructions on how to promote the upcoming Olympic games in Berlin as a triumph of Nazism.⁶⁷⁸ Ness reported that "most of the material...published in the *California Weckruf*...in the last five months has been taken from these bulletins." The bulletins were closely guarded at Deutsches Haus and were not permitted outside of Schwinn's private office.⁶⁷⁹

Friends at the Consulate and Beyond

Between 1936-1939, the German-American Bund posed a political and diplomatic challenge for the Third Reich. On the one hand, some German officials

⁶⁷⁶ Neil Ness Testimony, 5499 (1939).

⁶⁷⁷ See Ness' reports for June, July and August 1936, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 7, Folders 6-8.

⁶⁷⁸ [N2] Reports, January 3 and 15, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 6, Folder 26.

⁶⁷⁹ Memo, May 14, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 7, Folder 6. The full description of propaganda importation and the exchanges between Bund members and German steamship crews between 1936-1939 was disclosed in the *CRC Summary Report*, Vol. 1, Part I, Chapter 4, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 26, Folder 7.

felt that the group was part of “greater Germany,” which the Reich sought to cultivate for the future, worldwide, German empire. On the other hand, the Bund, was undisciplined and unruly. Publicly, therefore, Berlin continued to deny of having any relationship with the Bund. Within the German Foreign Ministry, however, some officials in Berlin held out hope that the Bund could be corralled to the Reich’s advantage.⁶⁸⁰ As a result of this ambivalence, Berlin maintained close tabs on the Bund in the United States from 1936-1939.⁶⁸¹ Hoping on the one hand that the group might one day be of service to the Fatherland, and yet, on the other, fearing the political liabilities the Bund posed, Berlin instructed its U.S. consuls to try to manage the unruly group.⁶⁸² Hollywood’s spies reported on Hermann Schwinn’s relationships with these German government officials, producing more evidence of the Berlin connection. At the end of 1935, following Berlin’s edict ordering all German nationals to resign from the group, Berlin sent a special agent named Meyerhoffer to the United States to help FNG re-organize into the German-American Bund.⁶⁸³ The deployment of Meyerhoffer reflected Berlin’s hope at that time that the group might yet become a political asset. Meyerhoffer arrived in Los Angeles after visits to New York and Detroit, two strongholds of FNG activity. Neil Ness attended the secret Meyerhoffer meetings in LA, and reported on the new financial and programmatic structure that Meyerhoffer ordered a subservient Herman Schwinn to

⁶⁸⁰ Johnson, “German American Bund and Nazi Germany, 1936-1941,” 34-35; Diamond, *The Nazi Movement in the United States, 1924-1941*, chapters 7, 11.

⁶⁸¹ Johnson, “German American Bund and Nazi Germany, 1936-1941.”

⁶⁸² Diamond, chapters 7, 11.

⁶⁸³ [N2] Report, February 19, 1936, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 6, Folder 27; also *see CRC Summary Report*, Volume 1, Part I, Chapter 4, 58, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 26, Folder 7; Neil Ness Testimony, 5503-4 (1939).

follow. Meyerhoffer's appearance in Los Angeles, the deference paid to him by Schwinn and his officers, and the control he assumed over FNG, revealed Berlin's secret objective to control the German-American group.⁶⁸⁴

Hollywood's spies also reported on the Bund's relationships with the German consuls on the West Coast that further validated the Berlin connection. Herman Schwinn's primary consular relationship was with Los Angeles Consul Georg Gyssling. The two men did not like each other: Schwinn consistently looked for opportunities to make Gyssling look bad to his superiors at the Foreign Office, hoping that perhaps Gyssling would be dismissed and that he (Schwinn) might be named to replace Gyssling.⁶⁸⁵ Gyssling, on the other hand, saw Schwinn as loose cannon that needed to be tethered. Gyssling tried to control Schwinn per orders from Berlin, but achieving this objective was difficult without exposing a relationship between Germany and the Bund that Berlin had explicitly denied existed.

It was precisely this opportunity that Neil Ness tried to exploit. In April 1936, Ness insinuated himself into a plot hatched to oust Schwinn by the members of an anti-Schwinn contingent within the German-American community in Los Angeles. The plan called for the opposition group to secretly purchase the lease on Deutsches Haus from the owner with funds provided by the Consul himself. If successful, the anti-Schwinn faction hoped to wrest control of Deutsches Haus away from Schwinn, and depose Schwinn as the leader of the Bund. The plot supported Gyssling's

⁶⁸⁴ [N2] Report, February 19, 1936, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 6, Folder 27; also, Neil Ness Testimony, 5503-4 (1939).

⁶⁸⁵ *CRC Summary Report*, Volume 1, Part I, Chapter 3, 36, 38, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 26, Folder 5.

political objectives as well. Neil Ness established himself as the messenger between the two sides, hoping to expose Gyssling's participation in the scheme as evidence of the German Foreign Ministry's duplicity regarding the Bund.⁶⁸⁶

In the days just prior to sealing the deal, Ness visited Gyssling personally to explain the plot and to secure Gyssling's buy-in. Before agreeing to write the check to purchase the lease, Gyssling demanded confirmation that the lease was actually for sale. Ness went to Gyssling's office and in Gyssling's presence placed a call to the owner of the building to assuage Gyssling's concerns. Satisfied with the confirmation Ness secured, Gyssling agreed to fund the transaction.⁶⁸⁷ Little did Gyssling know, however, that Ness had actually phoned *Leon Lewis*, not the owner of the building, and that the phone call between Ness and Lewis had been staged to trick Gyssling.

Several hours later, Gyssling recovered his diplomatic senses. He called Ness and backed down from the plan. Gyssling explained that he was concerned that, if Schwinn were ousted, Schwinn would not be able to repay the personal loans extended to him by key German-American citizens in the community. Schwinn might go to jail, Gyssling told Ness, and he did not want to see a German go to jail. "You know that would raise an awful stink in town and if it happened, I might not be consul very long."⁶⁸⁸

More than likely, however, Gyssling realized the political fall-out that exposure of his involvement would bring not only to himself, but also to the German

⁶⁸⁶ [N2] Report, April 2, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 7, Folder 3.

⁶⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

Foreign Service. In light of Berlin's recent denial of any official association with the Bund, the publicity of Gyssling's involvement in such a plan would prove far more dangerous politically than keeping Schwinn as *Bundesfuehrer*.

The plot failed, but it indicated the trusted position that Neil Ness had carved out for himself with the Bund and with the German consul. Concerned that details of the plot might get back to Schwinn, Ness told Schwinn (without revealing his own role) that there was a group trying to take Deutsches Haus away from him. Schwinn, however, had heard about the plot from a loyal supporter. Consequently, Ness was able to affirm his loyalty to Schwinn and to the *fuehrerprincipe*, Nazism's guiding principle of blind obedience. Ness wrote that he was confident that Schwinn believed him.⁶⁸⁹

Hollywood's spies continued to report on the German consul's relationship with Herman Schwinn. Subsequent to the aborted coup, Ness attended a meeting at which Gyssling played peacemaker between the warring factions. He smoothed over the ill feelings that the German-American societies in LA had towards the Bund, and helped the Bund in its hour of financial need by writing a check for \$145. Ness witnessed Gyssling giving the check to Schwinn. Later, both men confided to Ness separately that Gyssling's financial aid to the Bund had to be carefully concealed.⁶⁹⁰ In his statement to the Dies Committee, Ness testified that Gyssling had provided

⁶⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁰ Ibid., and [N2] Report, April 28, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 7, Folder 4. Also see Neil Ness Testimony, 5512 (1939).

financial assistance to the Bund corroborated the testimony of other investigators who confirmed the German Foreign Ministry's inappropriate support of the Bund.⁶⁹¹

Between 1936-1940, Herman Schwinn met frequently with German consuls from other cities. In September 1937, San Francisco German Consul Manfred von Killinger visited Los Angeles, ostensibly to attend the Bund's annual German Day celebration before being recalled to Berlin. Killinger, who was assigned by the Reich to organize the Bund in preparation for the coming Nazi sabotage offensive against American shipping and aircraft industries, socialized with local Silver Shirt leaders Kenneth Alexander and Henry Allen and according to Slocombe, discussed "their mutual political interests."⁶⁹² Several months later, Schwinn met privately with von Killinger onboard the German steamer *Tacoma* and received instructions from the consul before von Killinger sailed home to Germany.⁶⁹³ Later that year, Captain Fritz Weidemann, Hitler's personal adjutant, visited Los Angeles and also met behind closed doors with Gyssling and Schwinn.⁶⁹⁴ Bockhacker reported that meetings between Schwinn and Gyssling continued during 1938, "shrouded in deep secrecy."⁶⁹⁵

⁶⁹¹ Dies Committee investigator John Metcalfe's testimony before the Dies Committee (1938) quoted in Canedy, *America's Nazis, a Democratic Dilemma: A History of the German American Bund*, 188.

⁶⁹² [C19] Report, September 13, 1937, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 10, Folder 10.

⁶⁹³ W2 Report, January 7, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 32, Folder 24. Also see, *CRC Summary Report*, Volume 1, Part I, Chapter 3, 40, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 26, Folder 6.

⁶⁹⁴ *CRC Summary Report*, *ibid.* It is interesting to note that Hitler gave Wiedemann the task to deny Fritz Kuhn official support for the Bund in 1938 when Kuhn visited Germany. Wiedemann summarily dismissed Kuhn and the Bund when Kuhn visited Germany in 1938. See Johnson, "German American Bund and Nazi Germany, 1936-1941." It is probable that Weidemann was similarly as stern with Schwinn later that year, following the Reich's policy to reign in the Bund after 1936.

⁶⁹⁵ *CRC Summary Report*, Volume 1, Part I, Chapter 3, 36, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 26, Folder 6. Wiedemann replaced von Killinger as the Nazi Consul in San Francisco in 1939. He directed Nazi espionage activities on the west coast, including collaborations with the Japanese.

In early 1938, Berlin planted a Gestapo agent, Hans Diebel, inside the Bund in Los Angeles. The move appears to have been intended to gain the kind of internal control over the Bund that Gyssling could not muster. As the second officer in command of the Bund, Diebel's job was to manage the Aryan Book Store; but in reality, Diebel was in Los Angeles to report back to Berlin on Schwinn's activities. Schwinn discovered Diebel as a mole quite by accident, and confided the revelation with Hollywood's spy, William Bockhacker. In 1938, Schwinn went to Germany on Nazi Party business. When he returned he told to Bockhacker that he was surprised to find copies of every communication that he (Schwinn) had ever written on file in Germany. Bockhacker reported of Lewis that

Schwinn [was] surprised to see copies of each and every order he had issued when he was in Germany. It seems that there is someone unbeknownst even to Schwinn, who has access to all information of the Bund and reports regularly to some authority in Germany. It is either Deibel or Risse.⁶⁹⁶

Hollywood's spies, it seems, were not the only ones spying on Schwinn. The Gestapo was watching as well.

* * *

The information Hollywood's spies produced exposing Berlin's efforts to reign in the Bund were even more incriminating than was the propaganda network. It was one thing for Berlin to ship propaganda literature to Americans to read or to distribute. The first amendment protected that activity, and as the proclamation incident demonstrated, the LAJCC could not use the law to stop American citizens

⁶⁹⁶ W2 Report, May 19, 1938, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 32, Folder 35.

from distributing Nazi propaganda. On the other hand, if the Bund was operating as an American political organization as it professed, then its relationship with officials of a foreign government raised legitimate questions about its loyalties. So, too, did Berlin's direction of the business and financial affairs of an American organization raise doubts about inappropriate political activities between friendly countries. After 1938, new legislation resulting from the McCormack-Dickstein hearings governed such relationships, and the information collected by Hollywood's spies exposing the Berlin connection prompted federal authorities to investigate that relationship (see chapter eight).⁶⁹⁷

Americanizing Nazism

In the years following the proclamation incident in Los Angeles, Hollywood's spies not only exposed the Bund as one of Berlin's functional propaganda agents, it also exposed the group as an ideological agent of Nazism. The information collected by Hollywood's spies between 1936-1939 directly challenged the Bund's repeated claim of being an American organization dedicated to defending democracy.

Hollywood's spies proved that the Bund's true political objective was to Americanize Nazism.

⁶⁹⁷ Congress passed the Foreign Agent Registration Act of 1938 as a result of the McCormack-Dickstein investigations. It required anyone working as a propaganda agent of a foreign government to register with the State Department. Congress passed the Voorhis and Smith Acts in 1940 that closed several loopholes in the 1938 legislation, setting the minimum age for registered individuals to 14, and requiring all organizations under the pay of a foreign government to register with State Department as well.

False Representations

Herman Schwinn consciously manipulated the image of the Bund and Nazism. At the national level, Herman Schwinn was second only to Fritz Kuhn. Locally, therefore, he took pride in representing himself as “*Die Fuehrer Des Westens*” - Western Regional Commander - and enjoyed the deference paid to him by the Bund members. Outside Deutsches Haus, however, Schwinn was careful in the way he represented himself. Neil Ness witnessed Schwinn introduce himself to a prospective recruit and donor as “the representative of the Hitler government on the west coast.”⁶⁹⁸ Just two days earlier, however, Ness reported that Schwinn had taken umbrage when referred to as a “Nazi” by the Assistant District Attorney as the two men waited for their appointment to see DA Burton Fitts:

“Who represents the Nazis?” the DA’s assistant [Crehan] asked, [calling Schwinn and Ness for their appointment.]

Schwinn was quick to reply that there are no Nazis in America. “Nazis are a German political party and are not present anywhere in America. We are purely an American organization. We have a House and our newspaper has a circulation of 10,000 twice a month.”

Upon leaving the appointment, Ness reported their conversation outside the building:

I was surprised at the way Schwinn represented himself and Deutsches Haus. Schwinn was not concerned in the way he misrepresented Deutsches Haus.

“Who is going to tell them any different? And what they don’t know wont hurt them,” he said.

I cautioned him that if either the assistant of the DA find out that Schwinn had misrepresented the Bund, they will be “pretty sore” and might stop their patronage of Deutsches Haus.

⁶⁹⁸ [N2] Report, July 24, 1936, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 7, Folder 9.

Schwinn dismissed my concern. “Aw, quit worrying, won’t you?”⁶⁹⁹

The two incidents reveal Schwinn’s understanding of the value and the liability of being seen as a Nazi. In the first instance, Schwinn purposely exaggerated his status in order to impress a would-be recruit. The scene in the District Attorney’s office, however, reveals Schwinn’s understanding that his Nazi affiliation was sometimes best denied. Both Schwinn’s boastful exaggeration of his official status as an official of the German government and his deceit at the DA’s office were included in Lewis’ report to the Dies Committee.⁷⁰⁰ The first, as evidence that the Bund was, in fact, an official agency of the Third Reich, and the second as evidence of the Bund’s duplicitous character.

Schwinn manipulated the Bund’s image and Nazism to suit his recruitment goals as well. After 1935, it was critical that Bund members be American citizens so that they could use their constitutional rights to free speech to shield them from prosecution. “We can be much more useful in the work we are doing for our fatherland,” Schwinn told Bund members in 1936, “if we are American citizens. As citizens we have the right to open our mouths and demand equality of rights.”⁷⁰¹ Hence, Schwinn actively sought to recruit Americans into the Bund.

Recruiting Americans, however, required a certain diplomacy and tact, if not duplicity. Bockhacker reported that Schwinn understood that Jew-baiting did not strike the same chord with “small town Americans” as it did with German

⁶⁹⁹ [N2] Report, July 22, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 7, Folder 9.

⁷⁰⁰ *CRC Summary Report*, Volume 1, Part I, Chapter 2, 42, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 25, Folder 6.

⁷⁰¹ W2 Report, May 16, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 32, Folder 25.

audiences.⁷⁰² Hence, Schwinn conscientiously toned down his antisemitic rhetoric when addressing Anglo-American audiences. As an alternative approach, Schwinn promoted the Bund to Anglo-Americans by revising U.S. history, featuring the central role that German-Americans had played in every American political crisis since the Civil War and urging his audiences to join the Bund in the nation's current struggle against Jews and Communists.⁷⁰³

In his testimony before the Dies Committee in 1939, Neil Ness provided the text from Schwinn's address to new inductees at his initiation ceremony in July 1936. In the speech, Schwinn skillfully manipulated German and American political interests, telling his new inductees that their allegiance to the Bund would save America from the Communist foe:

We are gathered here for the purpose of fighting for a common cause. We are formed in one union here for two great purposes; first, to fight for the cause of our Fatherland in all its relations with other nations; second to work for a close union between our Fatherland and our adopted country, the United States. We expect all of you to give all that you can in this cause. Now you are expected to aid morally and financially but there may soon come a time when you may have to aid physically in a new and greater struggle. When that time comes we expect you to give all. Your blood or your life whichever may be necessary. Now, I welcome you to this organization and once more command you to give all for the great cause of which you are now a part.

⁷⁰² Ibid.

⁷⁰³ Schwinn Up North Speaking in Portland and Seattle (Portland Report), June 27, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 32, Folder 26.

Closing his presentation with “an all-American” Hitler salute, Schwinn molded the Nazi message for American audiences.⁷⁰⁴ Schwinn’s self-conscious rhetoric was further evidence of the organization’s duplicity.

The Americanization of the Bund accelerated in 1938. A series of public gaffs by national fuehrer Fritz Kuhn, compounded by the revelations of the Nazi spy ring trial in New York that year, cast dark shadows on the group’s Nazi image.⁷⁰⁵ Kuhn back-peddled and tried to smooth over the Bund’s public relations problems by draping the Bund in patriotic colors. Working inside the Bund, Hollywood’s spy William Bockhacker reported on the changes that Schwinn was ordered to make by New York to Americanize the Bund’s image: all meetings were to be conducted in English – no more German; the German flag was to be replaced with a new Bund flag that incorporated a swastika on a field of stars and stripes; the Nazi anthem, the “*Horst Wessel*,” was banned at the Bund’s public meetings, and the Bund’s new slogan, “Free America” was to replace the “Heil Hitler” greeting that members habitually offered to each other.⁷⁰⁶

The new Americanization policies of 1938 went further. Kuhn’s “insatiable appetite for publicity,” his flagrant imitation of Hitler’s style, and his boastful public

⁷⁰⁴ [N2] Report, July 9, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 7 Folder 8; *CRC Summary Report*, Vol. 1, Part I, Chapter 2, 25, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 25, Folder 6; Neil Ness Testimony, 5492 (1939).

⁷⁰⁵ Kuhn consistently made comments referring to the Bund’s relationship with Berlin, which not only helped launch the Dies Committee, it also caused the Justice Department to investigate the group beginning in 1938. The discovery of the Nazi spy ring by the FBI confirmed Berlin’s insidious activity. The trial gave Hollywood its first opportunity to tell the story of Bund subversion that they had been waiting to expose to the public. See Leon G. Turrou and David G. Wittels, *Nazi Spy Conspiracy in America* (London: G. G. Harrap, 1939). Warner Brothers produced a film based on the trial: Anatole Litvak, dir., *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* (Los Angeles: Warner Brothers, 1939).

⁷⁰⁶ William Bockhacker reported on the changes mandated in “Bund Order 21” in W2 Report, September 19, 1938, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 32, Folder 29. Also see *CRC Summary Report*, Part 1, Chapter 2, 489-90, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 27, Folder 17.

claims of power as the American fuehrer embarrassed Berlin, which issued yet another public repudiation of the Bund and once again ordered all German nationals to resign from the group.⁷⁰⁷ The loss of its core members, German nationals, might have caused the group to collapse once and for all. In response, Kuhn created front organizations in New York and in Los Angeles that allowed German nationals to remain connected to the group without violating Berlin's edict. In Los Angeles, the front group was called the "Militant Organization of Patriotic Americans," a name that portrayed the group as American patriots, effectively masking its affiliation with the German-American Bund, and its non-American members. Initially, the National Patriots conducted their meetings at Deutsches Haus but relocated to Trinity Auditorium to insure the appearance of distance from the Bund, according to Hollywood's spy Charles Young. Flyers issued and distributed on the streets of Los Angeles by the new group betrayed the Patriotic Americans' association with the Bund. In order to free America, the flyer read, Americans were urged to "Join the Bund!" Hence, the Bund conflated a free America with Nazism in its not-so-subtle campaign to transplant Nazism to America.⁷⁰⁸

⁷⁰⁷ Diamond, *The Nazi Movement in the United States, 1924-1941*, chapter 11. Fritz Kuhn visited Berlin in 1938 to try to secure Hitler's personal endorsement. Hitler refused to meet with Kuhn and delegated his personal adjutant, and San Francisco Consul, Fritz Wiedemann to officially dismiss Kuhn and reject the Bund. See Johnson, "German American Bund and Nazi Germany, 1936-1941." Fritz Kuhn was arrested and convicted in 1939 for larceny and forgery in 1939. The Kuhn trial prompted mass resignations among Bund members across the country. The Bund limped along for two more years and when the United States declared war on Germany, a nationwide FBI raid on Bund headquarters around the country ended the organization.

⁷⁰⁸ Flyer, "Free America," CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 41, Folder 14; see also *CRC Summary Report*, Part I, Chapter 2, 503-04, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 27, Folder 17.

Fronts

In 1936, Herman Schwinn made Neil Ness chairman of the “camouflage committee,” the planning group responsible for organizing the Bund’s fronts.⁷⁰⁹ In 1938, William Bockhacker served in a similar capacity, planning all social events for the Bund.⁷¹⁰ Combined, Ness and Bockhacker provided Leon Lewis with the names of the Bund’s front organizations and the ways in which they injected Nazism into their affairs. Their subtle, yet very conscious tactics to “naturalize” Nazism in the community, explicated the Bund’s strategy to Americanize Nazism in Los Angeles.

The German-American Business League was one of the first fronts established by the new committee. On its face the League was modeled after other fraternal business associations in the city, but, as a Bund-sponsored group, the League fronted a Nazi political agenda at its businessmen’s luncheons and social programs. In their roles as social coordinators, both Ness and Bockhacker disclosed the Bund’s political and social front organizations to the LAJCC, and the methods the Bund used to leverage those fronts to achieve its political mission, the Americanization of Nazism.

Bund front groups hosted a wide variety of cultural and social events that subtly naturalized the image of the swastikas, paramilitary storm troopers, and the Nazi political agenda into the local cultural landscape. These social, cultural and political front organizations were created to attract Los Angelenos who would not have otherwise attended a Nazi-sponsored event. Between 1936-1939, Bund fronts

⁷⁰⁹ [N2] Report, March 6, 1936 and [N2] Report, March 21, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 7, Folder 1. Also see, Neil Ness Testimony, 5520 (1939).

⁷¹⁰ *CRC Summary Report*, Vol. 1, Part 1, Chapter 2, 25, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 25, Folder 6.

sponsored a wide range of social and cultural events on a regular basis drawing hundreds of locals to Deutsches Haus.

The German-American Business League's annual International Folk Festivals were one of the most successful Nazi fronts. To the public, the festivals were merely social events. The invitation boasted that these were the largest festivals of the season. Entertainment included "a large program of [ethnic] dancing and music," acrobats, "King" the wonder horse, "Buck" the movie dog, games for young and old, and wares from League businesses. The International Folk Festivals were, however, a pretext for injecting the Bund into the social and political fabric of the city. Local political candidates were invited to these events, and promised time to greet the crowd of local voters amidst the swastikas that adorned Hindenburg Park and the uniformed storm troopers who blended into the crowd. The presence of local politicians lent credibility to event as well. William Bockhacker reported that fourteen local politicians (or their proxies) were among the estimated 300 people attending the festival in 1938.⁷¹¹

William Bockhacker was master of ceremonies that year. Each candidate was given a few minutes to welcome the guests. Thanking the German-American Business League for inviting them, each candidate expressed his admiration for the German people, and the work of the German-American Bund in its fight against the Communist menace in Los Angeles. Following the remarks of the political candidates, the entertainment for the International Folk Festival commenced – sing-

⁷¹¹ [N2] Report, August 14, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 7, Folder 12; W2 Report, August 1, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 32, Folder 28.

along, German folk dancing, socializing, and drinking. The party went on into the early hours of the morning, “with some ‘old imbibers’ hanging on until about 3:00 AM.” Attendees left with a warm, if not intoxicated feeling for their host, the German-American Business League.⁷¹²

Bund-sponsored community events such as the International Folk Festival eschewed overt expressions of racial antisemitism for fear of offending American sensibilities. Hence, when local Italian fascist leader Joe Ferri used his airtime to make slanderous remarks against Jews, Bockhacker reported that Bund members were “very much put out.”⁷¹³ Self-conscious censorship did not mean, however, that the event was free of the Nazi message. The Aryan Book Store was present at all Bund front events. At the International Folk Festival, the bookstore set up tables and sold over 100 different antisemitic publications written by domestic extremists, including the most prominent and prolific American antisemitic propagandists, William Dudley Pelley, and local antisemitic propagandists Jack Peyton and Mrs. Leslie Fry.⁷¹⁴

The International Folk Festivals were a success on several levels. First, they were well attended. Bockhacker and Ness both estimated that several hundred people attended each one. Second, the presence of local candidates legitimized the German-American Business League as a credible host for an election event. Third, the events

⁷¹² [N2] Report, August 15, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 7, Folder 12; W2 Report, August 1, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 32, Folder 28.

⁷¹³ W2 Report, August 1, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 32, Folder 28.

⁷¹⁴ *Ibid.*

established a subtle quid pro quo between the candidates and the Bund.⁷¹⁵ Many of the candidates purchased ads in the *California Weckruf*, inadvertently supporting the Bund's ulterior objective to normalize Nazism in Los Angeles.⁷¹⁶ The faces of smiling candidates for judgeships, municipal commissions, and city boards interspersed with ads for the Bund's other front organizations – the Aryan Bookstore, the Bund's youth group, and the Bund's German Radio Hour – legitimized the Bund and subtly transformed it into an American association.⁷¹⁷

In 1938, the Bund's national strategy repositioned its regional offices as German travel agencies. When Herman Schwinn returned from the national Bund convention in New York in 1938, one of the first things he did was to remodel Deutsches Haus and turn it into the "Western German Travel Center." Promotional cards advertising the center announced that "Gift-Marks, Travel-Marks, Letters of Credit, Re-Immigration-Marks" could be purchased there, and anyone wishing to send money back to Germany could do so at the new Western German Travel Center at "exceptionally good rates." While serving as a front for the Bund, the Travel Center was also intended to raise revenue for the chronically strapped organization.⁷¹⁸

⁷¹⁵ [N2] Report, August 15, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 7, Folder 12.

⁷¹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷¹⁷ [N2] Report, August 15, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 7, Folder 12. See also *CRC Summary Report*, Vol. 1, Part I, Chapter 7, 169, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 26, Folder 10.

⁷¹⁸ *CRC Summary Report*, Vol. 2, Part I, Chapter 1, 434-5, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 27, Folder 15. See also W2 Report, September 6, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 32, Folder 29.

Deutsches Haus

Of all the fronts established by the German-American Bund in Los Angeles between 1936-1941, the most effective was Deutsches Haus itself. The brown stucco mansion at 634 West 15th Street was the West Coast headquarters for the German-American Bund. The two-story mansion housed the Aryan Bookstore, the Bund's offices, a restaurant, and a shooting range for (air rifle) target practice.⁷¹⁹ The heart of Deutsches Haus was a "great hall," an open space with a balcony that seated approximately 700 people.⁷²⁰ Swastikas had been worked into the design on the ceilings and German travel posters adorned the walls, beckoning Americans to visit the bucolic German countryside and its clean and orderly cities. Herman Schwinn's office was off the main hall and adjacent to the bookstore (see Appendix 1: Photos.)

The Gastube restaurant was a popular destination for Los Angelenos of all backgrounds in the late thirties, including young families. It was located on the ground floor of Deutsches Haus. The restaurant was decorated with cheery red and blue-checkered tablecloths. Waitresses wearing colorful German costumes served up its home-style meals while German music played in the background. Guests often joined in song.⁷²¹ The restaurant also had a bar, and between 1939-1940, the LAJCC had "ears" at the bar, as Gastube bartender Julius Sicius kept Leon Lewis informed of

⁷¹⁹ Unpublished Manuscript, Joseph Roos Papers, Box "Scripts, Books, Manuscripts," Folder "Joe's Book Manuscript."

⁷²⁰ [N2] Report, February 10, 1936, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 6, Folder 27.

⁷²¹ Unpublished Manuscript, Joseph Roos Papers, Box "Scripts, Books, Manuscripts," Folder "Joe's Book Manuscript."

conversations he overheard as he served drinks to Bund members and their associates.⁷²²

Deutsches Haus served as a Bund front in two ways. First, it was home to several legitimate German-American cultural organizations such as the Steuben Society, the German Commercial Club, and the German Students Club in accordance with the arrangement that Consul Gyssling had mediated in 1936.⁷²³ The presence of these mainstream German-American cultural groups legitimized the Haus as a cultural center. Some of these organizations had been taken over by pro-Nazi leaders. Steuben Society president Rafael Demmler, for example, proudly boasted to Neil Ness that he was the “Number one Jew-baiter” in Los Angeles.⁷²⁴

Second, the Bund used Deutsches Haus as a front by making it the official sponsor of Bund-sponsored community events. Hence, it was “Deutsches Haus” not the “German-American Bund” that invited the community to attend “Hawaiian Night,” “A Night in the Trenches,” or the “Old Fashion German Easter Market.” Swastikas and Nazi messages, however, were part of the design of all Deutsches Haus promotional materials. For example, the flyer for the 1939 Old Fashion German Christmas Market promoted the event as an opportunity to buy “American and German goods from *gentile* (italics mine) firms” (see Appendix 8: Flyer, Old Fashion German Christmas Market.)⁷²⁵

⁷²² “Sicius, Julius: reports,” CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 40, Folders 9-11.

⁷²³ [N2] Report, February 7, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 6, Folder 27.

⁷²⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷²⁵ Flyer, “Old Fashion German Christmas Market [1939],” *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 65, Folder 1.

It is interesting to note that the word “gentile” was used for American audiences where the word “Aryan” might have been employed in Germany. This clever discursive subversion was yet another of the Bund’s duplicitous ploys to Americanize Nazism. “Gentile” resonated with Americans in a way that “Aryan” did not; yet, the word “gentile” was used only in relation to one word in the English: – the word “Jew.” By employing the word “gentile” in its promotional literature, the Bund could raise the Jewish Question for Americans without ever mentioning Jews. When guests visited the 1939 Christmas Market, William Bockhacker reported that Hermann Schwinn greeted his guests saying, “Buy Gentile.”⁷²⁶

Hollywood’s spies successfully infiltrated the Bund, as their positions of leadership and responsibility reveal. As trusted members, they were sometimes able to go beyond observing Bund activities, to actually capturing Deutsches Haus events on film without suspicion. When Neil Ness snapped several dozen photographs of Bund leaders, members, and their guests at the annual German Day picnic held at Hindenburg Park in 1936, no one challenged him. The pictures capture scenes of families picnicking on a sunny day in a southern California park, swastika flags and banners waving in the background. Photos of a brigade of storm troopers standing at attention in parade formation illustrate the effort to normalize Nazis into the social fabric of the community. And, finally, Ness snapped a shot of civilians assisting a uniformed storm trooper mount a six-foot wooden swastika onto a pedestal in the

⁷²⁶ [W2] Report, December 16, 1939, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 65, Folder 2.

middle of the park.⁷²⁷ Ness' photos provided Lewis with a visual report of the Bund's strategy to "naturalize" Nazism in Los Angeles (see Appendix 1: Photographs.)

Ness' photographs of German Day 1936 are in the LAJCC archive.⁷²⁸ Copies are also found in the Dies Committee papers in Washington, though neither their source nor the photographer is cited. To historians who have used the Dies Committee papers over the last seventy-five years, these photographs appear to be random snapshots of a German-American Bund event in Los Angeles. The identity of the photographer and the circumstances under which they were taken changes their historiographical significance completely.⁷²⁹

Were Los Angelenos aware that Deutsches Haus was the local Nazi headquarters? Probably, but even if they weren't initially, upon their visit to a Deutsches Haus sponsored-event it would have been hard to ignore the swastikas and portraits of Hitler that decorated the Haus, or the Aryan Bookstore with its shelves of antisemitic books and magazines. When Henry Fonda and his wife visited the Haus during the 1939 Old Fashioned Christmas Market, Hollywood spy William Bockhacker speculated as to whether or not Fonda knew that the Haus was the headquarters for the local Nazi organization. In his report, Bockhacker tried to give Fonda the benefit of the doubt, but in his final analysis Bockhacker conceded that

⁷²⁷ CRC Papers, Photographs, Box 2.

⁷²⁸ Ibid.

⁷²⁹ U.S. House of Representatives Special Committee on Un-American Activities Authorized to Investigate Nazi Propaganda and Certain Other Propaganda Activities (Dies), *Exhibits, Evidence, Etc. Re: Nazi Subject Files*, United States National Archives, Washington, DC (hereafter, "*Exhibits, Evidence, Etc. Re: Nazi Subject Files*"), Box 114, Folder "Pictures of Fascist and Bund Leaders in Los Angeles Area." This box also contains an annotated scrapbook of photographs of the Bund and its activities, along with samples of the antisemitic flyers they helped domestic groups to distribute. Whether or not the scrapbook came from the LAJCC is not known.

Fonda would have been hard-pressed not to realize the Nazi connection after seeing all the antisemitic literature on display in the bookstore.⁷³⁰ A month later, Fonda invited the Bund's Male Choir to entertain at his home.⁷³¹

Conclusion

The investigation of the proclamation incident in late 1935 heralded the development and expansion of Berlin's new propaganda strategy in the United States over the next five years. Between 1936 and 1941, Berlin shipped thousands of tons of antisemitic, pro-Nazi literature to indigenous right-wing groups and individuals to transplant National Socialism to countries around the world.⁷³² Although federal agencies could not even approximate the tonnage, the Dies Committee report of 1940 contains one anecdotal report from "a high ranking customs official" who tried to capture the enormity of the problem, citing a shipment of five tons of German print propaganda that was off-loaded in San Francisco from a Japanese freighter as "typical of what [had been] happening during that year [1940]."⁷³³ After detecting Berlin's insidious propaganda strategy during the proclamation investigation, Hollywood's

⁷³⁰ [W2] Report, December 16, 1939, CRC Papers., Part 2, Box 65, Folder 2.

⁷³¹ R3 Report, January 2, 1940, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 65, Folder 2.

⁷³² Appendix III of the Dies Committee's preliminary report contained photographs and samples of the propaganda collected by the committee as evidence. The Committee's report admitted that it is difficult to estimate the amount of propaganda literature shipped from Berlin, but that the primary source was Germany, followed by the USSR, Japan and Italy. See *Preliminary Report, Un-American Activities of Various Nazi Organizations and Individuals in the United States, Including Diplomatic and Consular Agents of the German Government*, Special Committee on Un-American Activities, 77th Cong., at Appendix III, 1383-4 (1940). Another way to try to assess the volume is to base it on Hollywood's spies' records of the frequency of deliveries made in Los Angeles. Ships from Berlin pulled into the port of Los Angeles (as well as New York and Miami) approximately twice a month for as many as six years.

⁷³³ *Ibid.*, 1383.

spies maintained their undercover surveillance of the German-American Bund and reported as that strategy unfolded.

This chapter, therefore, demonstrates that the Jews of Los Angeles were not as paralyzed to defend themselves from political antisemitism as the historiography concludes. From 1936-1941, Hollywood's spies infiltrated the German-American Bund and provided Leon Lewis with daily reports exposing the connection between the German-American Bund and Berlin to transplant Nazism to the United States. In the face of escalating political hostility fomented in part by Berlin's "American Enlightenment," the Jews of Los Angeles maintained their courage and persisted in their fight against insurgent Nazism in their city.

Yet, despite the privileged information that flowed to him from inside the Bund, Leon Lewis was hard-pressed to find viable political or legal grounds to fight that threat before 1938. The Constitution protected the Bund in its right to denounce American Jews. Neither was there anything illegal in the group's front organizations or the ways in which it subtly Americanized Nazi symbols and ideas into their community events. The only legal tactic available to the LAJCC was to catch individual Bund members breaking the law. In the late 1930s, that meant targeting Herman Schwinn and Hans Diebel. In 1936, Neil Ness alerted the Immigration and Naturalization Service of Bund activities, hoping that the INS would investigate and find grounds on which to revoke Bund members' naturalization papers.⁷³⁴ In 1938, the INS did launch an investigation of Herman Schwinn's naturalization and later into

⁷³⁴ [N2] Report, July 15, 1936, and [N2] Report, July 26, 1936, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 7, Folder 9.

Hans Diebel's. In 1940, Schwinn's citizenship was revoked on what appears to have been a technicality that the judge, perhaps in light of Schwinn's affiliation with the Bund, was unwilling to overlook.⁷³⁵ Schwinn's denaturalization removed claims to Constitutional protections he had so flagrantly flaunted, and set the stage for his eventual deportation after World War II. There is no evidence in the archive that Leon Lewis had much to do with Schwinn's denaturalization, even though Hollywood's spy Charles Young reported that "everyone at German House believe [d] that the revocation of Schwinn's citizenship was the result of 'wire-pulling by Leon Lewis.'" ⁷³⁶

Thus, the Bund's duplicitous tactics created a political challenge for the LAJCC and for Jews across the country. Consequently, the LAJCC maintained its undercover surveillance on the German-American Bund without any idea as to whether their work would ever be of political or legal value. Between 1936-1939 in particular, the Jews of Los Angeles not only exercised their political agency, they also exhibited extreme patience and forbearance waiting for "*der tag*," their day. That day would not arrive until 1938 when Congress announced its second investigation of the decade into "un-American" political activities. Leon Lewis and the LAJCC, however, were ready with thousands of pages of evidence exposing Nazi activity in southern California (see chapter eight).

⁷³⁵ *Schwinn vs. United States*, 112F, 2d 74(1940). The fraud involved false testimony by the two American citizens who testified about the length of time they had known Schwinn.

⁷³⁶ Y9 Report, June 26, 1939, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 41, Folder 16; memorandum, October 3, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 8, Folder 39.

This chapter not only substantiates the continuing efforts by the LAJCC to combat insurgent Nazism in Los Angeles, it also deepens the historiographic understanding of the German-American Bund's political life and its direct connection to Berlin. The relationship between the Bund and Berlin is not new to the historiography. That fact was publicly established during testimony before Congressional committees and in print exposés published in the late 1930s.⁷³⁷ The Dies Committee itself concluded that the Bund was receiving support and encouragement from the German government. In its 1940 final report, the Dies Committee wrote:

Testimony before the committee, both from hostile and friendly witnesses establishes conclusively that the German-American Bund receives its inspiration from the Nazi Government of Germany through various propaganda organizations which have been set up by that Government and which function under the control and supervision of the Nazi Ministry of Propaganda and Enlightenment.⁷³⁸

Documentary evidence from the Dies Committee investigation, along with evidence from other U.S. governmental agencies, was later used by historians fully explicating Nazi propaganda activities in the United States. In his canon on the Nazi movement between the wars in the United States, Sander Diamond (1979) drew primarily from official government documents. His work details the emergence, growth, and decline of the Bund – an arc that is confirmed by the rise and fall of the Bund in Los Angeles. Historian Alton Frye (1967) also used official documents to show the mechanics of Berlin's secret propaganda network in (South and) North America, which is also

⁷³⁷ Report No. 1476; John Spivak, *Secret Armies: The New Technique of Nazi Warfare* (New York: Modern Age Books, 1939); World Committee for Victims of German Fascism, *The Brown Network* (New York: Knight Publications, 1936).

⁷³⁸ Report No. 1476, 15.

corroborated in this chapter. This chapter, therefore, confirms the analyses of these two historians, and in fact, brings them closer together. Fry's work does not specifically discuss the antisemitic nature of Berlin's propaganda or the role the Bund played as one of the conduits in that network. Diamond's work mentions both, but does not go into the detail that this chapter provides.

This chapter provides greater detail on the ways in which the German-American Bund operated as an agent of Nazi propaganda. First, it focuses on Bund activity in a new site – Los Angeles – complimenting recent scholarship on the regional activity of the Bund done by historian Wayne Grover in his study of Nazis in Newark, New Jersey. Second, this chapter corroborates the historiography by presenting information on the Bund from a new set of sources and a new perspective. While Diamond and Fry used official government documents, this research is based on the experience of informants as historical actors, and thus presents a more human perspective on the Bund and its political life.⁷³⁹

⁷³⁹ Diamond, *The Nazi Movement in the United States, 1924-1941*; Alton Frye, *Nazi Germany and the American Hemisphere, 1933-1941* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967); Report No. 1476.

Chapter Seven
Exposing the Nazi Fifth Column, 1936-1941

The investigation of the proclamation incident in 1935 prompted the LAJCC to maintain its undercover surveillance of the German-American Bund. Over the course of the next five years, Hollywood's spies exposed the Bund's relationship to Berlin and the group's duplicitous political agenda. The proclamation incident had also uncovered the disconcerting influence of Nazism and the Nazi Party on certain right-wing groups in the city. The text of the proclamation, the tactics adopted by its author Ingram Hughes to launch his antisemitic, ultra-nationalist political party, and the financial and organizational support that Hughes received from the German-American Bund, signaled patterns of Nazi political influence on the domestic right-wing that the LAJCC could not afford to ignore. Consequently, while the LAJCC conducted its five-year covert fact-finding operation inside the German-American Bund, it also maintained informants inside the Bund's key, right-wing allies to collect evidence of their relationship to Berlin as well.

Between 1936-1942, the LAJCC was among the dozens of anxious anti-Nazi groups producing evidence of a Nazi-influenced political movement in the United States. During that period, liberal and left-wing groups viewed the flood of Nazi propaganda and the proliferation of domestic, groups espousing similar ideas as signs of Nazi incursion into American society. From Main Street to the White House, these

groups fueled a “brown scare.”⁷⁴⁰ News features, magazine articles, memoirs, novels, radio programs, movies and even comic books, all ballyhooed the conspiratorial activities of an alleged Nazi “fifth column” in the United States.⁷⁴¹ Despite the sensationalism, there was valid evidence to justify concern.⁷⁴²

The LAJCC was a source of that valid evidence. Between 1936-1941, the LAJCC monitored more than 400 different right-wing groups that emerged in Los Angeles (see Appendix 7: Partial List of Right-Wing Groups Monitored by the LAJCC, 1936-1939.)⁷⁴³ These groups transformed Los Angeles into a hotbed of right-wing political activity at the end of the decade. Owing to the city’s conservative political reputation, along with its peculiar openness to crackpots of all sorts, the City of Angels was fertile ground for the full spectrum of right-wing groups, all of whom expressed their political agendas in antisemitic terms.⁷⁴⁴ While most of the right-wing groups that appeared in Los Angeles in the late 1930s turned out to be nothing more than fly-by-night operations, some did attract supporters and gain political

⁷⁴⁰ Francis MacDonnell, *Insidious Foes: The Axis Fifth Column and the American Home Front* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Leo P. Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right: The Protestant Far Right from the Great Depression to the Cold War* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983).

⁷⁴¹ The term “fifth column” was attributed to the Spanish nationalist General Mola, in a broadcast in 1936. Mola referred to four columns converging on Madrid from the outside, while a “fifth column” comprised of foreign agents, domestic traitors and enemy dupes subverted the nationalist cause from within. See MacDonnell, *Insidious Foes: The Axis Fifth Column and the American Home Front* and Chip and Matthew Nemiroff Lyons Berlet, *Right-Wing Populism in America: Too Close for Comfort* (New York: Guilford Press, 2000).

⁷⁴² Glen Jeansonne, *Women of the Far Right: The Mothers’ Movement and World War II* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1996).

⁷⁴³ See *Finding Aid*, CRC Papers, Part 2.

⁷⁴⁴ Carey McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, 1983); Robert M. Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1930* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Thomas Sitton, “Urban Politics and Reform in New Deal Los Angeles: The Recall of Mayor Frank L. Shaw” (Dissertation, University of California, 1983); Kevin Starr, *Endangered Dreams: The Great Depression in California* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

traction. Moreover, many beat a path to the doorstep of the German-American Bund, affirming Nazism's expanding influence on domestic right-wing politics. The persistence and rapid proliferation of these right-wing groups, all of whom used antisemitic rhetoric to attract followers, was disconcerting to the Jews of Los Angeles. It was a trend that the LAJCC could not afford to ignore. Consequently, Leon Lewis gathered information on the right-wing groups that emerged in the city during this period, and sent Hollywood's spies to infiltrate those that posed the greatest political threat. The information collected by Hollywood's spies revealed a political alliance between the Bund and a host of right-wing groups intent on fomenting a Nazi-style political movement in the United States.

This chapter, therefore, presents Hollywood's spies' investigation of the Nazi-influenced, nativist groups that orbited the German-American Bund in Los Angeles between 1936-1941 as further evidence of the LAJCC's on-going political agency in the late 1930s. It builds on the information presented in chapter five to demonstrate the full scope of the undercover fact-finding operation between 1936-1941. The information gathered from all of Hollywood's spies on the Bund and its nativist allies combined to create a compelling case exposing the full scope and duplicity of Nazism in America in the 1930s. By establishing the Bund's connection to Berlin (chapter six) and, in turn, demonstrating the alliance between the Bund and domestic far right-wing groups, the LAJCC documented what appeared to be the formation of a Nazi fifth column. Even though history would later conclude that these concerns were inflated, at the time, the evidence appeared compelling. That evidence would give the

Jews of Los Angeles the political capital they needed to combat insurgent Nazism through federal agencies in the coming years (see chapter eight.)

Finally, the semantic choice to use “Nazi-influenced” and “Nazi-inspired” throughout this dissertation is worth reiterating here. The term “Nazi” is not used to describe the nativist groups associated with the Bund because those groups would never have called themselves “Nazis.” They viewed Nazism as a foreign ideology, and preferred to think of their ultra-nationalism and antisemitism as expressions of “100% Americanism.”⁷⁴⁵ Nor is the term “extremists” used to describe these groups either, respecting historian Geoff Smith’s admonition that that term delegitimizes the criticisms these right-wing groups had for the liberal policies of the Roosevelt Administration.⁷⁴⁶ The domestic groups that orbited Deutsches Haus in the 1930s are therefore referred to here as the “Nazi-influenced” and “Nazi-inspired” to differentiate them from German Nazis and from domestic right-wing groups that were not influenced by Nazism at all.

This semantic choice was also made out of respect for the scholarly debate within the historiography of the right-wing in the 1930s. These historians assert that the use of the terms “fascist” and “Nazi” is inaccurate in describing these nativist groups.⁷⁴⁷ Addressing this very issue in his canon on the Nazi movement in the

⁷⁴⁵ David Harry Bennett, *The Party of Fear: From Nativist Movement to the New Right in American History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988).

⁷⁴⁶ Geoffrey S. Smith, *To Save a Nation: American Extremism, the New Deal, and the Coming of World War II* (Chicago: I.R. Dee, 1992).

⁷⁴⁷ Alan Brinkley, “The Question of Anti-Semitism and the Problem of Fascism,” *Voices of Protest: Huey Long, Father Coughlin, and the Great Depression*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1983); Neil Ness Testimony; Jeansonne, *Women of the Far Right: The Mothers' Movement and World War II*; Berlet, *Right-Wing Populism in America: Too Close for Comfort*.

United States, historian Sander Diamond referenced Eugen Weber in cautioning that the non-German American right should not be considered within the same political framework as western European fascism. According to Weber, the call for conformity which characterized the American right was not the same as the call for national unity in European fascism. Conformity was seen as a security measure whereas national unity was an offensive tactic for national advancement.⁷⁴⁸

Practically speaking, however, the Bund and the American right did share prejudices and political values that made these distinctions irrelevant to Leon Lewis and Hollywood's spies. From their perspective, the groups involved with the Bund were Nazis because they expressed their ultra-nationalistic political agendas in the same antisemitic terms that Nazis did in Germany. These groups differentiated "true Americans" from Jews in nationalistic terms, calling for political action, if not physical violence, against Jews as an act of patriotism. Hence, Leon Lewis and Hollywood's spies made no distinction between Bundists and their nativist allies; but, to be true to the historiographic debate concerning the precise ideological alignment of these groups, this chapter employs these more nuanced descriptors to more accurately describe the far-right, nativist groups that partnered with the German-American Bund in Los Angeles during these years.

⁷⁴⁸ Sander A. Diamond, *The Nazi Movement in the United States, 1924-1941* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974).

Hotbed!

Between 1936-1941, Los Angeles was a hotbed of far right-wing activity.

According to historian Kevin Starr, California, and no less Los Angeles, was marked by a “special disequilibrium” in the 1920s and 1930s that made it particularly vulnerable to far right-wing extremism.

California possessed the makings of a violent anti-left reaction because there were so many newly arrived lower-middle-class people in the State who were uncertain and insecure in what they had to gained or thought they had gained by coming to California...the shopkeepers, the small scale realtors, the upper level clerks and first level supervisors, the ranchers and farmers in the first generation of mortgaged ownership. Because they had climbed up the social ladder by coming to California, or of equal importance, because California had helped them decelerate their social descent, they could very easily take to the streets as populist vigilantes in defense of threatened values and social structures to which they themselves were only ambiguously assimilated.⁷⁴⁹

Los Angeles was dominated by these “second starters.”⁷⁵⁰ The city’s peculiar “newcomer culture” welcomed creative, if not eccentric, political, religious and social organizations that offered community to the city’s large number of newly arrived, lonely souls.⁷⁵¹ During the Depression, the “nation’s white spot” was fertile ground for right-wing groups with words like “Patriotic,” “Christian,” “Defender” and “Militant” in their names.

The proliferation of these right-wing groups in Los Angeles alarmed the Jews of the city. Most of these groups turned out to be nothing more than fronts for solo

⁷⁴⁹ Starr, *Endangered Dreams: The Great Depression in California*, 38.

⁷⁵⁰ Starr, *Ibid.*, 38, 57; McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land*, passim.

⁷⁵¹ Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1930, 195-97*; McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land*; Starr, *Endangered Dreams: The Great Depression in California*.

patriotic racketeers with a typewriter and an axe to grind. Some were local, grassroots start-ups with national aspirations, like Ingram Hughes' American Nationalist Party. They attracted early followers but quickly failed due to a lack of funds and poor leadership. Others were local chapters of more established national organizations. These groups, most notably the Silver Shirts, appeared to have the resources and leadership needed to become viable political organizations. Combined, they fueled a hostile political climate in the city in the late 1930s that the Jews of Los Angeles could not ignore, particularly given Nazi Germany's expansion into central Europe and its escalating persecution of German Jews.⁷⁵²

Between 1936-1941, the LAJCC maintained files on more than 400 such groups that sprung up in the city. These groups rented office space in the city's professional buildings and launched their political crusades.⁷⁵³ From their downtown offices, these political groups churned out antisemitic pamphlets and books that they distributed both locally and nationally. Newsboys hawked their penny newspapers on the city's street corners while organizers distributed handbills inviting the public to membership meetings and free political lectures. Downtown Los Angeles was transformed into a site of political debate, confrontation, and sometimes intrigue. On any given night of the week in the last three years of the 1930s, Los Angelenos could choose from several public lectures delivered by any one of a dozen firebrands from the left and the right, or they could join the crowd of picketers outside these events in

⁷⁵² The proliferation of right-wing groups in Los Angeles reflected the broader national pattern. See Berlet, *Right-Wing Populism in America: Too Close for Comfort*, chapter 7.

⁷⁵³ Ibid.

protest of the speaker within. Aspiring right-wing demagogues, for example, lectured on the problems of internationalism, Communism, and the “Jew Deal.” Accordingly, left-wing hecklers planted inside the halls did their best to disrupt the orations while their colleagues led noisy protests on the sidewalks outside. Brawls between members of the two sides often broke out, requiring police intervention. Most often, it was the city’s Red Squad who arrived to break up the conflict, most often hauling the Communist protestors off to jail.

Planet Deutsches Haus

Hollywood’s spies did not have to go far to begin their surveillance of these new groups on the West Coast. Many emerging right-wing groups beat a path to the door of the German-American Bund in Los Angeles after 1935, seeking to expand their respective organizations through an alliance with the Bund. Between 1936-1941, Deutsches Haus was the center of the pro-Nazi universe in Los Angeles, serving the far right as a center for ideological exchange, political networking, and collaboration. For Leon Lewis and the LAJCC, establishing the Bund as a duplicitous agent of Nazi propaganda cast immediate aspersions on the relationships that the group established with domestic groups. Thus, the information that Hollywood’s spies collected on the relationships between the Bund and its domestic allies documented the emergence of a disturbing Nazi-influenced domestic movement. While Leon Lewis kept files on over 400 right-wing groups that emerged in Los Angeles during these years, it was

the groups that orbited Deutsches Haus that were of greatest concern, and consequently, these were the ones that Hollywood's spies infiltrated.

Political Center

From 1936-1941, Deutsches Haus was the center of the pro-Nazi universe in Los Angeles from 1936-1941. It was a community center for the Bund and its followers, attracting the leaders and supporters of pro-Nazi domestic groups as they sprung up in the city. Consequently, Deutsches Haus was the focus of the LAJCC's fact-finding operation. Over the course of these five years, Hollywood's spies not only reported on the Bund's activities, they also reported on the activities of dozens of far-right groups that comprised the Nazi-influenced universe in Los Angeles. The most striking feature of Hollywood's spies' reports during this period is the endless number of domestic, far-right activists and groups they encountered at Deutsches Haus. The sheer number of domestic right-wing leaders and followers met at Deutsches Haus, on its own, underscored the Bund's importance to the far right-wing movement in the city during these years.⁷⁵⁴

From the start, the Bund's gravitational pull on the pro-Nazi universe in Los Angeles was obvious to Hollywood's spies. It was, after all, through Herman Schwinn that both Neil Ness and Charles Slocombe met Ingram Hughes, author of the

⁷⁵⁴ Charles Young's reports in particular contain more names of right-wing activists than they do details about their activities. This may be due, in part, to the fact that Young began his undercover assignment shortly after the attempted shakedown of Herman Schwinn by the Dies Committee investigator. Young's reports alone contain hundreds of names of individuals he met or observed at Deutsches Haus and Bund meetings, most of whom were associated with nativist and isolationist groups. See Young's reports in CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 41, Folders 12-25.

proclamation. Ness then met the Bund's most important local collaborators, Silver Shirt organizers Kenneth Alexander, Henry Allen, and (ironically) Charles Slocombe. Charles Slocombe, on the other hand, became Ingram Hughes' private secretary after his introduction by Schwinn. Working with Hughes led to Slocombe's introduction to the Silver Shirt leaders.

As a Silver Shirt, Slocombe spent so much time at Deutsches Haus working with Schwinn and his lieutenants, that Slocombe actually became a trusted Bund lieutenant. In fact, during 1937, when Lewis did not have an informant inside the Bund, Slocombe provided Lewis with so much daily information on the Bund by virtue of his Silver Shirt activities that Slocombe became, in effect, Lewis' man inside the Bund as well as Hollywood's spy inside the Silver Shirts.⁷⁵⁵ Charles Slocombe's relationship with the Bund led to his acquaintance with several "rising stars" in Los Angeles' pro-Nazi galaxy, including Leopold McLaglen, whom Slocombe helped to have deported for espionage in 1938, Jack Peyton, an aspiring national demagogue and founder of two viciously antisemitic groups, and Mrs. Leslie Fry, the city's most potent fascist activist.⁷⁵⁶

⁷⁵⁵ During these years, Lewis had only one man inside the Bund at a time. Neil Ness worked inside the Bund during 1936, but was found out late in the year, and his reports cease in December 1936. William Bockhacker was Lewis' next informant inside the Bund, but his reports do not start until 1938. Charles Slocombe kept Lewis informed on Bund activity throughout 1937 by virtue of his work with the Silver Shirts. See Slocombe's reports for 1937, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 10, Folders 6-12.

⁷⁵⁶ Leopold McLaglen was a British fascist and suspected German espionage agent. (He was also the brother of Hollywood movie star Victor McLaglen.) See Slocombe reports, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 10, Folders 9-12. Also see *Summary Report on Subversive Nazi Propaganda Activities in Southern California*, (hereafter, "*CRC Summary Report*"), Vol. 1, Part II, Chapter 1, 282, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 26, Folder 13. For newspaper coverage of the case, see *Los Angeles Times*, March 1, 8, and 9, and April 6, 1938. For more on Slocombe's encounters with Jack Peyton, see Slocombe's reports, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 10, Folder 9; Part 2, Box 40, Folders 13-15, 21. On Slocombe's encounters with Leslie Fry, see Slocombe's reports, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 10, Folder 9; Part 2, Box 40, Folders 16-19, 23.

By the time FBI informant and Hollywood's spy Charles Young began his surveillance of the Bund in late 1938, the political profile of its domestic colleagues was evolving. The coming world war brought new groups into Deutsches Haus orbit, most notably domestic isolationists in the city along with a host of foreign espionage agents. Young's reports are filled with the names of isolationist activists from Senator Robert Rice Reynolds' "Vindicators," Father Charles Coughlin's "Actioneers," founding members of America First in Los Angeles, and accounts of suspected German espionage agents who engaged Young to help them infiltrate industrial defense plants in southern California.⁷⁵⁷ This information brought military intelligence agents and U.S. Justice Department investigators to Lewis' doorstep from 1939 through the end of the war.⁷⁵⁸

Ideological Exchange

Hollywood's spies' infiltration of the German American Bund in Los Angeles revealed the group's political significance as the center of pro-Nazi activity in the city. It also revealed Deutsches Haus as a center for ideological exchange. The Aryan Book Store, located inside the mansion, stocked right-wing literature from Germany, as well as antisemitic, pro-Nazi newspapers, newsletters, pamphlets, and books written by local, national and international right-wing propagandists. Over the years, Hollywood's spies supplied Leon Lewis with samples of these newspapers, books and

⁷⁵⁷ C.19 Report, February 13, 1939, and C.19 Report, February 16, 1939, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 40, Folder 19; C.19 Report, May 10, 1939, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 40, Folder 21. For Charles Young's reports on America First in Los Angeles see *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 41, Folders 22, 24.

⁷⁵⁸ See "Zacarias, [Commander] Ellis M." files, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 42, Folders 1-4.

pamphlets. Lewis analyzed these publications to demonstrate the direct connection between the German Propaganda Ministry and domestic right-wing publications.

The inventory of the Aryan Bookstore illustrates the depth and breadth of Berlin's international propaganda network (see Appendix 9: Aryan Bookstore Price List, 1939). The newspapers alone reflected the national and international expanse of the pro-Nazi propaganda network: locally published papers such as William Kulgren's *The Beacon Light* and Leslie Fry's *Christian Free Press* were sold at the store, as were antisemitic, pro-Nazi newspapers published by propagandists from around the country, including Father Coughlin's *Social Justice* (Detroit), William Dudley Pelley's *Liberation* (North Carolina), *The American Gentile* (Chicago), Gerald Winrod's *Defender* (Kansas), Robert Edmondson's *Edmondson Economic Report* (New York City), and James True's *Industrial Control Reports* (Washington, D.C.) English language fascist literature also came from Canada, Britain, and New Zealand.⁷⁵⁹

Newspapers from the Reich's two major international publishers, the Fichte-bund and the World Service, were also on sale at the bookstore.⁷⁶⁰ The *World Service* was the official foreign news service of the German Propaganda Ministry. Its newsletter was the primary vehicle through which the Nazi propaganda machine disseminated news and information to millions of readers the world over. The sale of

⁷⁵⁹ Throughout the eight-year period, Hollywood's spies consistently provide the names of the propaganda pieces they picked up at the Aryan Bookstore. See, for example, Ness Reports dated April 30 and May 4, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 7, Folder 5; Slocombe's "Report on Conference with Price and Yount Nov 1935, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 9, Folder 15; Charles Young report dated May 21, 1939, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 41, Folder 15. Also see *CRC Summary Report*, Vol. 1, Part I, Chapter 5, 107-09, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 26, Folder 8.

⁷⁶⁰ *CRC Summary Report*, Vol. 1, Part I, Chapter 5, 92-3, 95, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 26, Folder 8.

the *World Service* newsletter by the bookstore was critical evidence linking the Bund and Berlin.⁷⁶¹

Leon Lewis' and Joseph Roos' textual analysis of its content further confirmed the symbiotic relationship between the World Service and domestic far right propagandists in the United States. Lewis and Roos found that large portions of Leslie Fry's rabidly antisemitic newspaper, the *Christian Free Press*, were taken from *World Service*, and also discovered content from Fry's paper reprinted in the World Service newsletter.⁷⁶² Further analyses of the *World Service* highlighted its "recommended reading" advertisements, promoting its favorite American pro-Nazi newspapers, all of which were sold by the bookstore in Los Angeles.⁷⁶³ Lewis and Roos' pick-and-shovel work on the *World Service* also produced an ad showing that the Nazi newsletter promoted the bookstore itself. On May 1, 1939, the *World Service* ran a front page ad recommending the Aryan Book Store in Los Angeles to its readers, telling them, "If you wish to read uncensored, enlightening literature on the Jewish-Communitic question write to the above Bookstore and ask for pricelist by enclosing return postage."⁷⁶⁴

Analysis done by Hollywood's spies and Lewis and Roos themselves demonstrated that the Aryan Book Store was a critical asset to the pro-Nazi

⁷⁶¹ *CRC Summary Report*, Vol. 1, Part I, Chapter 5, 95, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 26, Folder 8.

⁷⁶² *Ibid.*

⁷⁶³ *CRC Summary Report*, Vol. 1, Vol. 3, Part III, Chapter 3, 1263, *CRC Papers*, Part 2, Box 29, Folder 3.

⁷⁶⁴ *CRC Summary Report*, Vol. 2, Part II, Chapter 5, 623, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 27, Folder 21. For the full analysis conducted by Lewis and Roos on the relationship between the *World Service* and domestic propaganda, see *CRC Summary Report*, Vol. 1, Part I, Chapter 5, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 26, Folder 8.

community in Los Angeles.⁷⁶⁵ The bookstore facilitated the ideological development of its patrons and cultivated the growth Nazism in the city. For Hollywood's spies and Leon Lewis, the bookstore's dissemination of pro-Nazi propaganda affirmed the Bund's role in driving Nazism into American culture, and further proved the reach of Berlin's international fascist propaganda network across the United States.

Collaboration

If the Bund was the center of political networking and ideological exchange for the domestic far right in Los Angeles, it was also an active partner in political action. Between 1936-1939, Hollywood's spies reported on the dozens of right-wing activists who solicited Bund support for their causes and the Bund's collaborations. The earliest signs in Los Angeles of this trend came in 1934, when a splinter group of Silver Shirts allied with FNG leaders to launch a new political party modeled directly after the Nazi Party in Germany.⁷⁶⁶ In 1937, Charles Slocombe was recruited into an early, Nazi-inspired national movement, called the "National Protective Order to Gentiles," which joined forces that year with White Russian activists in Los Angeles. In 1938, Hollywood's spy Charles Young was invited to join yet another unification effort under the American Vigilante Intelligence Federation.⁷⁶⁷ None of these early

⁷⁶⁵ *CRC Summary Report*, Vol. 2, Part II, Chapter 5, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 27, Folder 21.

⁷⁶⁶ Hollywood's spies Mark White and Walter Clairville were well positioned inside that group. They provided Lewis with the details of the American Labor Party's Nazi influences, including its plans to maintain a vigilante militia. Lewis reported the formation of the American Labor Party and its Silver Lode Legion to the FBI.

⁷⁶⁷ Report by C19, Monday May 24 [1937], CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 10, Folder 9.

groups succeeded in attracting a critical following, but they were early signs of a trend to forge a national, far-right movement that gained momentum in the late 1930s.

The collaboration that proved most potent in Los Angeles was between the German-American Bund and the Silver Legion. The Silver Legion was the best organized and most viable of all the groups in LA's pro-Nazi universe in the late 1930s. It had much in common with the Bund. First, both groups were national organizations, with a national infrastructure, charismatic leaders and membership numbering in the thousands across the country. Second, both were ideologically aligned with Nazism, right down to their paramilitary units. While the relationship between the Bund and Silver Shirts in other parts of the country was not as strong as it was on the West Coast, the German-American Bund and the Silver Shirts in Los Angeles forged a productive political partnership that raised concern among the Jews of the city.

The historiography on the Silver Shirts often alludes to its close working relationship between the Bund on the West Coast, but details have been lacking because of a dearth of documents. Charles Slocombe, who infiltrated the Silver Shirts in southern California for three years, provides historians with a new detailed record of that relationship between these two groups. Every day for three years, Charles Slocombe worked alongside Henry Allen and Herman Schwinn and reported on the two groups' joint activities: their anti-Jewish protests, such as the one they staged outside the Ambassador Hotel in 1938, their disruption of rallies held by the Hollywood Anti-Nazi League, and their "propaganda assaults," similar to the

proclamation incident.⁷⁶⁸ With funds provided by Herman Schwinn, the Bund and Silver Shirts blasted Los Angeles, Pasadena, and San Diego with antisemitic flyers in the last years of the 1930s. Slocombe's eyewitness reports of this working partnership exposed the Silver Shirts as an ally of an agent of a foreign government.

Henry Allen was the Silver Shirts' most active propagandist in Los Angeles in the late 1930s. According to Slocombe, Allen received large quantities of Nazi propaganda from Germany, including the *World Service*.⁷⁶⁹ Allen was also connected to the network of American right-wing propagandists, through Berlin's propaganda network in the United States. He corresponded regularly with leading American far-right propagandists Robert Edmondson, James True, and Major Frank Pease in Florida.⁷⁷⁰ Allen distributed and sold these propagandists' antisemitic literature in Los Angeles. A prolific letter-writer, Allen also pestered elected officials regularly with complaints alleging the misdeeds of alleged Communists and Jews.

Allen also designed antisemitic handbills that he marketed in quantity to activists around the country.⁷⁷¹ One of his favorite formats was gummed stickers. The stickers were an efficient medium for delivering antisemitic messages. They could be plastered quickly and liberally on Jewish shop windows, where they could be seen by hundreds of passers.⁷⁷² Allen designed such a sticker in 1936. It was a caricature coat of arms for the CIO. It portrayed two Jewish men with grotesque

⁷⁶⁸ C19 Written Report, April 6, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 40 Folder 13; C19 Report, October 12, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 10, Folder 5.

⁷⁶⁹ *CRC Summary Report*, Vol. 1, Part II, Chapter 1, 255, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 26, Folder 11.

⁷⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 253.

⁷⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 254.

⁷⁷² C.19 Report, July 9, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 10, Folder 3; C.19 Report, November 16, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 10, Folder 5.

features – hooked noses, beards and big lips – holding a bomb and sitting above the hammer and sickle. The caption read, “Jew-Communist CIO Chieftains Directed from Moscow.”⁷⁷³ Allen marketed his stickers across the country, selling them for \$3.50 per thousand. Charles Slocombe ordered a thousand and in the note accompanying his order, complimented Allen on its design, writing, “It’s the best one I’ve seen yet.”⁷⁷⁴

The most effective method of propaganda distribution adopted by the Bund and the Silver Legion was the quirky 1930s method of handbill distribution called “snowstorming.” Instead of sending teams of men out in cars in the wee hours of the morning to paste flyers to public property one by one, snowstorming required just a few men with stacks of flyers, access to downtown rooftops during the business day, and a bit of wind. During this period, Hollywood’s spy William Bockhacker was in charge of these propaganda assaults for the Bund. Bockhacker confirmed that the Bund paid for the printing of the flyers and provided the manpower to distribute them, just as they had the proclamation in 1935.

It “snowed” heavily in Los Angeles between April and September, 1938. In mid-April, Herman Schwinn, Henry Allen, Charles Slocombe, and several Bund members drove out to Hollywood to precipitate one of the earliest “storms” at the busy intersection of Hollywood and Vine. Each member of the assault team was armed with several bundles of 500 copies each of Henry Allen’s latest antisemitic

⁷⁷³ Letter, Henry Allen to Charles Slocombe, August 23, 1937 (includes image of sticker), *ibid.*, Part 1 Box 10, Folder 9.

⁷⁷⁴ Letter, Slocombe to Allen, August 26, 1937, *ibid.*, Part 1 Box 10, Folder 9.

flyer, “Jews! Jews! Jews Everywhere!” (See Appendix 10: Snowstorm Flyers.) “Precipitants” found their way to the rooftops of several buildings near the intersection, including the Broadway Department Store, a bank building, and two other tall buildings at the intersection of Hollywood and Vine. Slocombe chose the four-story Club Cosmo located just off Vine Street. He made his way to the roof, but did not dump his flyers. Instead, Slocombe left them bundled on the roof and returned to the street. Slocombe met Allen on Hollywood Boulevard as ten thousand copies of the slanderous flyer floated down to the streets and sidewalks below. Meeting up with Allen on the street, Slocombe reported on how pleased Allen was with their work:⁷⁷⁵

He [Allen] walked with me and commented to people as they picked up the circulars saying, “Aren’t these terrible?” as though he were really very much surprised. The street was completely covered; it looked like a snowstorm and people were picking them up all over.⁷⁷⁶

After spending some time shuffling through the “snow” gloating over the responses of startled pedestrians, the team returned to Deutsches Haus to report on their deed. Everyone at the Haus, Slocombe reported, was very pleased with the job. Henry Allen and Schwinn were particularly tickled with their mischief as they imagined the uproar the incident would create. “Allen said that Leon Lewis would probably already know about it and Schwinn replied that ‘his phone will be buzzing all night.’”⁷⁷⁷

⁷⁷⁵ C.19 Report, April 11, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 40, Folder 13.

⁷⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

Bockhacker reported that individual Bund members were given large quantities of the flyer and ordered to stuff them in mailboxes and place them on windshields in their respective neighborhoods.⁷⁷⁸ Slocombe reported that a chauffeur, with consent of his employer, put the flyers on cars parked in the lot of his employer's country club.⁷⁷⁹ Another Bund member who worked at the Ambassador Hotel tacked the flyer up on the hotel kitchen's bulletin board for all employees to read. Bockhacker reported that two packages of Allen's anti-movies handbills, each containing one thousand copies, were mailed to San Francisco for distribution there by the Bund, and additional bundles had been shipped to other parts of the country.⁷⁸⁰

Allen's "Jews! Jews! Jews Everywhere!" flyer was widely distributed in Los Angeles that summer. In June, Bockhacker reported that an entourage of Bund members had gone out to Palmdale (northeast of Los Angeles) to scatter the handbill there.⁷⁸¹ In July, Bockhacker warned Lewis that the Bund was planning a propaganda raid in Glendale.⁷⁸² Bund and Silver Shirt propaganda assaults on the city continued into September. On September 1, Allen's newest handbill, "Boycott the Movies" (see Appendix 10: Snowstorm Flyers) was dumped on the streets of Hollywood, and on September 8, the "Boycott the Movies" handbill snowed down on the streets of

⁷⁷⁸ W2 Report, September 1, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 32, Folder 29.

⁷⁷⁹ C.19 Report, April 11, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 40, Folder 13.

⁷⁸⁰ W2 Report, September 1, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 32, Folder 29.

⁷⁸¹ W2 Report, June 27, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 32, Folder 26.

⁷⁸² W2 Report, July 11, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 32, Folder 27.

downtown LA, dumped from the rooftops of the May Co., the Fifth Street Store, and the Spring Street Arcade.⁷⁸³

In September, the rash of anti-Jewish propaganda snowstorms in Los Angeles ended abruptly with the beginning of the Dies Committee's national investigation into subversive propaganda activities. Public relations blunders by Fritz Kuhn during that time also prompted national fuhrer Fritz Kuhn to order Herman Schwinn to stop distributing the anti-movie handbill flyer.⁷⁸⁴ Schwinn removed the flyer from circulation, and it stopped snowing in Los Angeles.

* * *

Between 1936-1939, Hollywood's spies' surveillance of the domestic right-wing in Los Angeles revealed the gravitational pull that "planet Deutsches Haus" had on domestic right-wing groups in the city. While not all domestic right-wing groups in Los Angeles were influenced by Nazism, those that orbited the German-American Bund were. Deutsches Haus provided a center for political networking and ideological exchange, and the Bund provided organizational and sometimes financial support. For Hollywood's spies and Leon Lewis, the association of these domestic, far right groups with an agent of the Third Reich raised concerns over that a Nazi-inspired movement was forming in the United States.

⁷⁸³ New Handbills Thrown from May Co. and Fifth Street Store, August 29, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 32, Folder 28; Memorandum, September 2, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 32, Folder 29.

⁷⁸⁴ W2 Report, September 6, 1938, *ibid.*

The United Nazi Front, 1936-1938

The collaboration between the Bund and the Silver Shirts in Los Angeles was a local manifestation of a national unification trend within the far right in the late 1930s. Between 1936-1939 several new, far right-wing groups emerged across the country with the potential to forge a united, national movement. Father Coughlin's Christian Front in the northeast, Harry Jung's American Vigilante Intelligence Federation in Chicago, and George Deatherage's American Nationalist Confederation based in West Virginia all emerged during this time period, intent on launching an ultra-nationalist political movement. Ultimately, none of these groups had the leadership or the funding to realize their goal, but their concurrent appearance on the national scene at a time when the Third Reich was expanding across central Europe contributed to liberal fears of a Nazi "fifth column."

Those fears filled the popular press with allegations of Nazi subversion across American society. The near-hysterical pitch of the campaign generated the "brown scare." Liberal and left-wing groups, the ADL and AJC among them, matched an equally vociferous "red scare" to create a highly contentious and paranoid political culture at the end of the decade.⁷⁸⁵

Alliance in LA

In 1936, Herman Schwinn took several steps to expand the productive working relationship that the Bund enjoyed with the Silver Legion in Los Angeles to

⁷⁸⁵ Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right: The Protestant Far Right from the Great Depression to the Cold War*.

the national level. Brokering several opportunities that brought the national leadership of both groups together, Schwinn's efforts were part of the Bund's broader mission to foment a pro-Nazi political movement in the United States. Although the alliance between the two groups at the national level did not come together as Schwinn hoped it would, his efforts to bring the nation's two largest Nazi groups together was a further sign of a growing Nazi-influenced political movement in the city, and ultimately, across the country.

In 1936, Silver Legion founder William Dudley Pelley ran for president on the Christian Party ticket as a third party candidate. Herman Schwinn invited Pelley to Deutsches Haus on two occasions. The first time, in the summer of that year, to address a closed, joint session of Bundists and Silver Shirts at Deutsches Haus, and the second time, to meet privately with Bund fuehrer Fritz Kuhn.

Neil Ness provided Leon Lewis with the details of William Dudley Pelley's July 1936 address to a closed meeting of Bund and Silver Shirt members held at Deutsches Haus. According to Ness, Pelley paraded into the hall behind a color guard carrying the flag of the United States and the Silver Legion standard, a white flag with a giant "L" for "Liberation." He marched ceremoniously down the center of the auditorium, flanked by seven bodyguards, "approached the speaker's table in a very conceited and arrogant manner," and "for fully two minutes, strutted about like a vain peacock."⁷⁸⁶

⁷⁸⁶ [N2] Report, July 21, 1936, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 7, Folder 9.

According to Ness, fully four minutes elapsed before Pelley finally spoke. Taking firm and dramatic grasp of his Sam Browne belt, he looked over the audience and declared, “I have always loved Germany and I always will...I am for Adolph Hitler and I claim to be the Adolph Hitler of America.” The rest of Pelley’s campaign speech was laden with his “usual” rants against “the Moscow-controlled, and the Jew-infested, Rozenvelt Administration.” He also criticized the Republican candidate, Alf Landon, whom he accused of being a puppet of the Jews as well. As far as Pelley was concerned, he was the only candidate who could stop the Jewish conspiracy to take over America.

“It doesn’t matter who you vote for in 1936 – because both candidates are controlled by Jews. But, by the Grace of God, I am going to stop that...By the Grace of God I will march up the steps at Washington and show them that this is still a Christian nation!”⁷⁸⁷

The joint meeting of the Bund and Silver Shirts in July 1936 was the first significant instance in the unification trend in Los Angeles. Had that appearance at Deutsches Haus been a one-time event, Lewis might have dismissed it, but several months later, Schwinn again played matchmaker, continuing in his efforts to forge a national, pro-Nazi movement in the United States. Schwinn arranged for Pelley and Fritz Kuhn to meet secretly at Deutsches Haus in a closed-door session, to be followed by a joint conference of their local followers. Select Bund and Silver Shirt officials were present at the closed-door meeting between Pelley and Kuhn, including

⁷⁸⁷ Ibid. In a supplement to this report written later by Ness, Ness added that Pelley was drunk during the speech. Thirty minutes prior to the event, Ness had with Pelley, and wrote that Pelley imbibed large quantities of whiskey before he took the stage. See [N2] Report, July 21 Supplementary Report to Report Covering Silver Shirt Meeting, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 7, Folder 9.

the Silver Shirts' third-in-command, Charles Slocombe, who submitted a report to Lewis testifying to the meeting between the country's two Nazi leaders.⁷⁸⁸

Following their private *tete-a-tete*, Kuhn and Pelley addressed a joint conference of their members in the Deutsches Haus auditorium. An unsigned eyewitness report in the LAJCC files, most likely written by Joe Roos, described the scene.⁷⁸⁹ The auditorium at Deutsches Haus was packed, including the balcony above, suggesting that approximately 700 people were in attendance. According to the unsigned report, the writer observed "more Nazi storm troopers in uniform" than he had seen at any other meeting.⁷⁹⁰

Bund and Silver Shirt leaders addressed the audience, lauding each other with praise.⁷⁹¹ Kuhn spoke first, spending considerable time lauding over the Silver Shirts. "We are all in the same fight against the Communists and Jews, it is only fitting that we hold joint meetings with our fellow workers, the Silver Shirts, who have a common cause to battle and must, until the country is purged, together stick."⁷⁹²

Charles Slocombe, representing the Silver Shirts, followed Kuhn. Maintaining his cover as a staunch Silver Shirt, Slocombe attacked the liberal press, and told his pro-Nazi audience "that we would all be better off under fascism than

⁷⁸⁸ C.19 Report, November 17, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 10, Folder 5.

⁷⁸⁹ Deut[s]ches Haus Meeting, Sunday Evening November 15, 1936 (author unknown), *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 10, Folder 5. Even though this report is in Slocombe's file, it was written by someone who was in the audience listening to Slocombe's speech, as the writer gives a description of "Slocum" and his speaking mannerisms. It's probable that this report was written by Joseph Roos who was not yet employed by Lewis.

⁷⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹¹ C.19 Report, November 17, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 10, Folder 5.

⁷⁹² Deut[s]ches Haus Meeting, Sunday Evening November 15, 1936 (author unknown), CRC Papers Part 1, Box 10, Folder 5.

under democracy.” Los Angeles Silver Shirt leader Kenneth Alexander followed Slocombe. Alexander expressed his sincere desire that the partnership between the Bund and the Silver Legion would lead to the defeat Jews and Communists in America. Alexander closed the meeting with a prayer. Kuhn’s men as souvenirs gave departing attendees batches of small stickers. The stickers read, “The Jews are Our Misfortune.”⁷⁹³

Ness’ account of Pelley’s proclaimed status as the American Hitler, Slocombe’s eyewitness report of the backroom meeting between Kuhn and Pelley, and Joe Roos’ description of the Pelley-Kuhn conference at Deutsches Haus provided the LAJCC with compelling evidence exposing the origins of a Nazi fifth column in Los Angeles.⁷⁹⁴ In 1939, when Neil Ness was called to testify before the Dies Committee on his experience as a member of the German-American Bund, Ness reported on Pelley’s appearance at Deutsches Haus, telling the Committee that the audience “stamped the floor and just about took the roof down” when Pelley proclaimed himself to be the “Adolf Hitler of America.”⁷⁹⁵

The Fry-Deatherage-Moseley Connection

Herman Schwinn’s efforts to facilitate a national alliance between the German-American Bund and the Silver Shirts was an early manifestation of the trend within the far right in the late 1930s to establish a united Nazi front in the United

⁷⁹³ Ibid.

⁷⁹⁴ *CRC Summary Report*, Vol. 1, Part 1, Chapter 9, 197, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 26, Folder 10.

⁷⁹⁵ Neil Ness Testimony, 5495.

States. The national right-wing movement reached Los Angeles in 1938. What started as a local fact-finding operation suddenly became an intelligence operation of national and international importance. The information gathered by Hollywood's spies regarding efforts to form a united Nazi front in the United States was the LAJCC's most important contribution to the Dies Committee investigations, and would later inform the Justice Department in its indictment of several of the political activists involved.

The most politically significant evidence produced by Hollywood's spies in the late 1930s was the discovery of a plan conceived by several far right activists from around the country to stage a fascist coup in the United States following the 1940 elections, to be led by a former U.S. Army general.⁷⁹⁶ The plot was first made public through testimony made before the Dies Committee in the spring of 1939 by its co-conspirators, George Deatherage and General George van Horn Moseley. News of the sensational scheme filled national headlines in the spring of 1939 and was further trumpeted by the liberal and left-wing press as additional "proof" of a Nazi fifth column. Evidence of the plot came from various sources, not the least of which was from Los Angeles. The role that Hollywood's spies played in securing the evidence exposing George Deatherage's fascist coup was not known to the public then, nor by historians since; but, the incident fueled the brown scare and has been

⁷⁹⁶ MacDonnell, *Insidious Foes: The Axis Fifth Column and the American Home Front*.

widely cited by historians as an example of the reach and limits of native fascism in the late 1930s.⁷⁹⁷

The plot itself was conceived by a small group of far-right activists led by George Deatherage, a self-proclaimed fascist from West Virginia and founder of a neo-Klan group called the Knights of the White Camelia. In 1937, Deatherage, along with several co-conspirators from around the country, organized the American Nationalist Confederation to forge a national, united Nazi front. One of Deatherage's key collaborators was a newcomer to LA's far right political community, Paquita de Shishmareff, who went by the alias Mrs. Leslie Fry. Hollywood's spies' infiltration of the Bund and the Silver Shirts led to their surveillance of Fry as well, and the information presented here provides the historiography with new information on Leslie Fry, whose role in the Deatherage scheme has been little understood. Fry maintained such a low profile in Los Angeles that even Hollywood's spies had a difficult time understanding precisely what she was up to; but, her associations with Herman Schwinn, the Silver Shirts and British, White Russian and German agents who called on her between 1937-1938 aroused their suspicions.

Leslie Fry was the American-born widow of a Russian aristocrat who had been killed in the Russian Revolution. She and her sons escaped the Russian Revolution with the family fortune and fled to Europe in the late 1910s. Fry settled first in Britain. During her London years, Fry was active within fascist political

⁷⁹⁷ Ibid; Jeansonne, *Women of the Far Right: The Mothers' Movement and World War II*; Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right: The Protestant Far Right from the Great Depression to the Cold War*; August Raymond Ogden, "The Dies Committee: A Study of the Special House Committee for the Investigation of Un-American Activities, 1938-1943" (Dissertation, The Catholic University of America, 1943), 118-22.

circles, publishing an antisemitic newspaper called the *Christian Free Press* that was dedicated to promoting the theories of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.⁷⁹⁸ Fry became an expert *Protocols* propagandist in the 1920s, and in the mid-1930s, Fry was working as a paid agent for the German Ministry of Propaganda. The Ministry sent Fry to the United States to cultivate Nazism in America.⁷⁹⁹ By the time she settled in Los Angeles in 1936, Fry was well-established in international fascist propaganda circles.

Leon Lewis described Leslie Fry as a “mysterious international figure,” “brainy,” and “the most active fascist in southern California.”⁸⁰⁰ Fry was, by far, the shrewdest and most calculating of all the Nazi agents operating in Los Angeles in the late 1930s.⁸⁰¹ She consciously maintained a very low profile to safeguard her operation and her true identity as a paid Nazi propaganda agent. Unlike other far right activists of the era whose public posturing belied grandiose personal ambitions

⁷⁹⁸ There is little documentation on Fry’s past. Even Hollywood’s spies could not find out about her past. One of the most detailed accounts on Fry is in Jeansonne, *Women of the Far Right: The Mothers’ Movement and World War II*, 229, endnote #4. Researchers should be aware that allegations that Fry was actually a Soviet agent were circulated by Henry Allen to discredit her in retaliation for betraying him following his San Diego arrest in 1938. For Allen’s smear campaign of Fry, as well as what the LAJCC believed to be true about her past, see *CRC Summary Report*, Vol. 3, Part II, Chapter 2, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 28, Folder 16.

⁷⁹⁹ *CRC Summary Report*, Vol. 3, Part II, Chapter 2, 961-62, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 28, Folder 16. Fry was accompanied to the United States by a British colleague, Conrad Chapman. Chapman was even more discreet in his activities in Los Angeles than was Fry. Slocombe and Lewis suspected that Chapman may have been Fry’s superior as a Propaganda Ministry agent. Fry’s mission was to promote Nazism indirectly by disseminating the content of the *Protocols*. She frequently advertised the book in the *Christian Free Press*.

⁸⁰⁰ *CRC Summary Report*, Vol. 1, Part II, Chapter 2, 256, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 26, Folder 12. The Deatherage affair is widely cited by historians as an example of the extreme far right during the 1930s, but Fry’s role is seldom discussed because of the dearth of documents on her activities. For more on Fry’s activities in southern California, see “Fry, Leslie,” CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 62, Folders 11-22. Also, see *CRC Summary Report*, Vol. 1, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 26, Folder 12; *CRC Summary Report*, Vol. 3, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 28, Folders 15-16.

⁸⁰¹ Memorandum, April 29, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 40, Folder 14.

of power, Fry never spoke in public. She kept her name out of the *Christian Free Press*, even though she was the paper's editor, publisher, and its only writer. Fry trusted very few people. She worked within a tight circle of just nine trusted collaborators that included Silver Shirt Henry Allen and Bund fuehrer Herman Schwinn.⁸⁰² Fry's pro-Nazi group was one that Hollywood's spies could not fully penetrate, but her relationships with Schwinn and Allen gave Charles Slocombe tertiary access to this woman of international mystery and intrigue.

It took a full eighteen months of surveillance before Charles Slocombe discovered the full extent of Fry's activities as a Nazi propaganda agent in Los Angeles. Slocombe met Fry through Henry Allen in the fall of 1937. Fry had just returned from the inaugural meeting of a new, national fascist organization called the American Nationalist Confederation.⁸⁰³ Slocombe reported that Leslie Fry and the new group's leader, George Deatherage, had hired Henry Allen to work for the new

⁸⁰² Fry's circle of collaborators in Los Angeles were Conrad Chapman, Mrs. Faith McCullough, her private secretary, Mrs. Elizabeth Jewett, a wealthy benefactress from Pasadena society and suspected lover, Herman Schwinn, Ivan Gourine, White Russian agent, and four other women whom Lewis would not name in his documents because, as he put it in his memo, "they had made such strenuous efforts to preserve their anonymity that no gentleman would have the heart to express them so long as they behave themselves and 'be good.'" Untitled handwritten memo, (n.d.), CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 43, Folder 10.

⁸⁰³ *Hearings before a Special Committee on Un-American Activities*, Special Committee on Un-American Activities, 76th Cong., at 4004 (1939) (Henry Allen Testimony) (hereafter, Henry Allen Testimony). The Dies Committee confirmed that the following far right groups participated in the American Nationalist Confederation's inaugural meeting in Kansas City in the summer of 1937: Knights of the White Camellia (Deatherage), Militant Christian Patriots (Fry), William Pelley, Gerald Winrod, Charles Hudson (Omaha), James True, National Liberty Party (Frank W. Clark), Robert E. Edmondson, The American Rangers (J.H. Peyton), The American White Guard (Henry D. Allen), the Constitutional Crusaders of America, E.N. Sanctuary. Dies Committee findings summarized in *CRC Summary Report*, Vol. 4, Part III, 1240, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 29, Folder 2.

movement.⁸⁰⁴ In early 1938, Leslie Fry sent Allen on a six-week, cross-country tour to recruit political and financial support for the new, ultra-nationalist movement.⁸⁰⁵

The purpose of the mission betrayed the group's secret ambition to foment a fascist revolution in the United States. The people with whom Allen met, and the way he gained access to them further reveal Fry's stature within far right and international fascist circles. Allen's first stop was in El Paso, Texas, where he met with far-right associates of Fry's Los Angeles-based backers. From Texas, Allen went onto Atlanta to meet with Ku Klux Klan Grand Wizard Hiram Evans. Carrying a letter of introduction from Georgia governor Eugene Talmadge to Evans, procured for Allen by Fry, Allen met with Evans and offered to purchase the Klan from Evans in order to quickly fill the ranks of the American Nationalist Confederation.⁸⁰⁶ The details of the conversation are not available in any of the documents in the archive, but Evans did not sell.

Allen's national tour then took him to Washington, D.C., where his letters of introduction gained him audience with the representatives of several fascist-friendly countries. Allen met with the officials from the Austrian, Egyptian, Italian, Rumanian, and Iraqi embassies to update them on the progress of the fascist movement in the United States.⁸⁰⁷ Fry's status as a German agent also won Allen a seat at a private meeting of the U.S. German consuls held at the German Embassy

⁸⁰⁴ Henry Allen Testimony, 4000-1; C19 Report, April 6, 1938, and C19 Report, April 8, 1938, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 40, Folder 14.

⁸⁰⁵ Henry Allen Testimony, 4017.

⁸⁰⁶ Memorandum, April 29, 1938, CRC Papers, Part 2 Box 40, Folder 14.

⁸⁰⁷ Ibid. Note that this portion of the memo reveals the partial code that Allen and Fry used in their correspondence. The reference to "Arabs" in this case meant "Germans" and "Auntie" was Fry's code name in their correspondence. Also see Henry Allen Testimony, 4017- 4023.

with Hitler's visiting private adjutant, Captain Fritz Weidemann.⁸⁰⁸ From Washington, Allen traveled to New York City and met with Fritz Kuhn, carrying a letter of introduction written at Fry's request by Herman Schwinn.⁸⁰⁹

Allen's meetings with representatives of foreign governments demonstrated Leslie Fry's stature as a Nazi agent, and raised important questions for Lewis and the LAJCC. What was the purpose of those meetings? Why was an American citizen, backed by unregistered Nazi agents (Fry and Schwinn) meeting with foreign diplomats from fascist countries? With German consuls? With the head of the Bund and the Klan? It was activities such as Allen's cross-country trip that raised concerns among liberals and left-wing activists that a Nazi fifth column was forming; but, it was the documents later seized by Hollywood's spies that confirmed the fears.

Documents exposing plans to stage a fascist coup were seized from Henry Allen by Naval Intelligence in San Diego under Leon Lewis' guidance in the spring of 1938. The documents exposed "conspiracies for revolt in Mexico, a coup d'etat in the United States and clear evidence of connection with the Nazis by Allen," all planned and led by a network of Nazi-influenced domestic fascist cells.⁸¹⁰ Among the dozens of incriminating letters found in Allen's briefcase was correspondence between George Deatherage, Leslie Fry, and White Russian (fascist) Vladimir Kositsin containing instructions on paying Allen, letters discussing the recruitment of retired U.S. Army General George van Horn Moseley to lead the coup, a hand-drawn

⁸⁰⁸ Memorandum, April 29, 1938, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 40, Folder 14; Henry Allen Testimony, 4017-4034.

⁸⁰⁹ Memorandum, April 29, 1938, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 40, Folder 14.

⁸¹⁰ Memorandum [#2 dated April 25, 1938], *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 40, Folder 14.

chart illustrating the paramilitary structure of the United States government under this new fascist regime, and a letter from far right propagandist James True to Henry Allen suggesting that True might be able to supply Allen with “peashooters” (rifles) for the movement through the National Rifle Association.⁸¹¹

The sensational contents of Henry Allen’s briefcase became the basis for the Dies Committee’s most celebrated revelation of Nazi activity in the United States. The documents provided the Committee with a blueprint for investigating these conspiratorial plots and for the public interrogations of Allen, Fry, Deatherage, and Moseley. The questions asked by the Committee pertaining to Allen’s association with Fry, his trip across country, the people with whom he met, and details of the Deatherage organization reflected the content of Allen’s briefcase and the Committee’s desire to have Allen confirmed conspiratorial relationships as well as the plot for the record. Despite the Dies Committee’s infamous reputation for providing right-wing witnesses a platform for spewing their racist, far-right platitudes on the witness stand, the full extent of the Deatherage plot was laid bare during Deatherage and Moseley’s testimonies in the spring of 1939. The documents from Allen’s briefcase were also widely published in the popular press – the result of an apparent leak by either the Committee, the ADL or both. Details of the plot were front-page headlines across the country in the spring of 1939.⁸¹² Although the

⁸¹¹ L1. Arrest of Henry Allen, San Diego, April 22, 1938 -- Notes from Memory on Names and Data found in Allen’s Brief-Case, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 40, Folder 14. Confiscation of Allen’s briefcase was reported by the *San Diego Sun*. See “G-Men Probe Fascist Plot; SD Man Gold Shirt ‘Link’,” *San Diego Sun*, April 24, 1938.

⁸¹² “The Fuse under Mexico,” *Ken 1* (April 21, 1938): 15-19; “Prelude to American Fascism,” *Ken 1* (August 25, 1938): 24-26; “Exposing Native U.S. Plotters,” *Ken 1* (September 8, 1938): 24-26; John

scheme never amounted to anything more than wishful thinking on the part of its small band of conspirators, General Moseley's vicious antisemitic statements and praise for Nazism "came to symbolize the threat which reactionary elements of the military posed to democracy," according to historian Francis MacDonnell.⁸¹³

The Briefcase

The case of the Deatherage-Moseley conspiracy has been widely cited by historians as an example of the reach and limits of native fascism in the United States in the late 1930s, but the role that Hollywood's spies played in acquiring Henry Allen's briefcase was not known at the time, nor by historians since. The seizure of the briefcase by naval intelligence officials in San Diego shows how the local fact-finding operation in Los Angeles grew to national importance, and also Leon Lewis' status as a trusted advisor to U.S. Naval Intelligence, which was, at the time, the nation's most powerful intelligence agency.

On Friday, April 22, 1938, Henry Allen along with Charles Slocombe and two accomplices were arrested in San Diego for violating the city's anti-handbill ordinance in a sting operation planned by Lewis, Slocombe, and the San Diego police.

Spivak, *Secret Armies: The New Technique of Nazi Warfare* (New York: Modern Age Books, 1939); Leon Lewis was furious with the leak of Henry Allen's briefcase contents, but he could not determine whether it had come from the Frank Prince, who was advising Dies, or the Dies Committee itself. For other news coverage of Allen's briefcase and the Deatherage-Moseley plot, see "Plots to Seize America Told," *Los Angeles Times*, May 21, 1939. 1, 5; "Foreign Ties of Anti-Red Group Told," *Los Angeles Times*, May 24, 1939. 1; "Nazi Activities Aired in Hearing," *Los Angeles Times*, May 25, 1939. 1, 9; *The New York Times* covered the story on the front page on May 19, 21, and June 1, 1939; Stanley High, "Star Spangled Fascists," *Saturday Evening Post* 211, no. 48 (May 27, 1939); Roy Tozier, "Moseley of the Fifth Column," *New Republic*, June 7, 1939. 119-21.

⁸¹³ MacDonnell, *Insidious Foes: The Axis Fifth Column and the American Home Front*.

Slocombe and the two accomplices were booked and plead guilty to the charges. They paid the fine and returned to Los Angeles. Allen, however was not released. Allen was held in jail over the weekend until he could make bail for an additional charge, possession of the deadly weapon, which was also part of the Slocombe-Lewis plan.⁸¹⁴ Slocombe told the police that,

Allen carries a leather sheath on the side of the front door of his car. It is an oak club about 19” long with a leather thong to wrap around his wrist. The club is about an inch thick, and two and a half inches wide. The back of it is rounded and its face is quite sharp. He calls it a “kike killer” and showed me how to use it. ‘You wrap it around your wrist and then poke it in the man’s stomach, and when he bends over come down on top of his head with the flat side.’⁸¹⁵

Slocombe returned to Los Angeles and called on Mrs. Allen to update her on Allen’s arrest. It was then that Slocombe learned that Allen’s precious briefcase, which he never let out of his sight, was in Allen’s car. Mrs. Allen was agitated. She told Slocombe, “there are papers in the car that no one is supposed to see,” and when Leslie Fry found out about the briefcase, she emphatically ordered Slocombe to get it back before the authorities got a hold of it.⁸¹⁶

The most dramatic episode of the entire archive followed.

Slocombe notified Lewis about the errant briefcase, and the two raced back to San Diego the next day, a Saturday, to secure the briefcase before it could be returned to Allen upon his release that Monday. Meeting with the City Prosecutor,

⁸¹⁴ C.19 Report, April 23, 1938, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 40, Folder 14.

⁸¹⁵ C.19 Report, April 16, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 40, Folder 13.

⁸¹⁶ C19, Arrest of Henry Allen, San Diego, April 22, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 40, Folder 14.

representatives from the sheriff's office, and the local FBI agent, Lewis prevailed on the team to examine the contents of the case. Lewis later wrote:

I only had a few minutes to briefly examine the contents of the brief case and found a large mass of correspondence and other data covering the past six months, exposing widespread fascist conspiracies, numerous representatives and agents throughout the country and close affiliation with Nazi leaders and Nazi organizations. It further contained a blue-print of a set up of military and civil organizations with the objective of over-throwing the American government after the 1940 elections.⁸¹⁷

It was clear to Lewis that an inventory of the briefcase needed to be made, but neither the sheriff's office nor the FBI in San Diego had a photostatic machine to copy the briefcase contents. When Lewis offered to pay for the copying, both the city prosecutor and FBI man balked, neither able to take responsibility for such an action. Lewis pressed them, informing the two that he was working with Commander Riordan of Naval Intelligence in San Diego and that Allen's briefcase contained documents critical to national security. Working through the chain of command that revealed Lewis' standing with local police and with Naval Intelligence, Commander Riordan was finally tracked and told the city prosecutor and the FBI man "in pretty plain language that they could have confidence in Lewis and his assistant [Slocombe]."⁸¹⁸ Riordan pulled rank and ordered the locals to put Lewis and his assistant, "Mr. Walker," in charge of inventorying Allen's briefcase. In a marathon, overnight session,

⁸¹⁷ L1. Arrest of Henry Allen, San Diego, April 22, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 40, Folder 14.

⁸¹⁸ *Ibid.*

Lewis and Slocombe went through Allen's briefcase, identifying the documents to be photostatted and taking notes on the rest.⁸¹⁹

For Leslie Fry, the confiscation of Henry Allen's briefcase threatened to expose her closely guarded identity as a Nazi agent. Not long after the incident in San Diego, Slocombe reported that Fry suspected that Slocombe was the informer who tipped off the San Diego police, and that she had figured out Slocombe's connection to Lewis.⁸²⁰ Allen reported to Slocombe that Fry was concerned that if Allen was called to testify concerning the contents of the briefcase, he would "spill the goods," incriminating her and her circle of Nazi agents.⁸²¹

Fry took several actions over the next several months intended to intimidate Leon Lewis and the Jews of Los Angeles. She sent a telegram to LAJCC board member and Superior Court Judge Harry Hollzer, threatening the Jews of Los Angeles if they persisted in their "campaign" against Henry Allen. As the "Editor of the Christian Free Press," Fry sent a telegram to Hollzer asserting that "Allen was being persecuted by the Jewish Community and deprived of his liberty...[and that] Consequences...may be regrettable for all, for he is not alone," she wrote.⁸²²

⁸¹⁹ Ibid.

⁸²⁰ C19 Report, April 26, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 40, Folder 14. Leon Lewis had contacted Henry Allen's attorney, Harry Elder, to try to persuade him not to defend Allen. As a result of that conversation, Fry, who was paying Allen's legal expenses, figured out the connection between Slocombe and Lewis.

⁸²¹ *CRC Summary Report*, Vol. 3, Part II, Chapter 2, 925, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 28, Folder 15. Fry and Allen parted ways in the fall of 1938, just prior to the trial for the suit that Leon Lewis brought against Allen for illegally registering to vote as a felon. Fry reneged on her guarantee to pay for Allen's legal fees, and the resulting civil case was what actually exposed Fry's connection to Allen, and the Nazi spy ring she led. See

⁸²² Letter, Leslie Fry to Judge Harry Hollzer, May 22, 1938, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 40, Folder 15.

Fry's intimidation campaign became personal. Two months after the seizure of the briefcase, Hollywood's spy William Bockhacker warned Leon Lewis that Bund members were "tailing" Joe Roos, and that Roos would soon be "knocked over" on Fry's orders. Indeed, Roos was mugged outside of his home "by the Fry gang," as Lewis referred to the Bund and the Silver Shirts, shortly thereafter.⁸²³ Roos was shaken up, suffering bruises and broken glasses, but he was otherwise unhurt.⁸²⁴ For the first time in the archive, Lewis expressed concerns for his own safety. He wrote to Frank Prince a few days following the attack on Roos, noting, "The lengths these people will go to are unpredictable," and expressed concern that they might try to jump him next.⁸²⁵

Lewis' concerns were not unfounded. For several years Bund leaders had known that a Jewish attorney by the name of Leon Lewis was "the brains behind everything that [went] wrong against them."⁸²⁶ In the wake of the Allen briefcase debacle, Leslie Fry plotted to intimidate Lewis from taking any further action against Allen, which would have, in turn, lead to political and legal action which could have exposed her as a paid Nazi agent. Henry Allen confided in Charles Slocombe that he and Fry had been out to case Leon Lewis's home in preparation to kidnap Lewis's two young daughters (aged 14 and 7 at the time). The plan involved an anonymous warning to Lewis – wrapped around a brick to be delivered through his front window, threatening his children – if he did not stop his anti-Nazi activities. Allen told

⁸²³ Schwinn Reaction to Allen Case, June 15, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 32, Folder 26.

⁸²⁴ Letter, Lewis to Prince, June 17, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 147, Folder 9.

⁸²⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸²⁶ N.2. Report, September 18, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 7, Folder 13 and N.2. Report, March 17, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 7, Folder 2.

Slocombe that Fry had purchased gloves, oil-cloth coverings for their shoes, and the rubber stamp to craft the ransom notes.⁸²⁷

Slocombe told Lewis about the plot, and in his excitement – or perhaps his relief – he wrote, “Now we can get her! Do you think she still has this stuff [referring to the tools of the kidnapping] in her house?”⁸²⁸

The plot was never attempted, and neither Fry nor Allen were ever arrested for conspiracy. Several factors account for this. First, the plot was never attempted because Fry and Allen parted ways shortly thereafter, and hence, Fry had no obvious, willing henchman.⁸²⁹ Second, the police told Slocombe that they could not arrest either of them because the allegations were based on hearsay.⁸³⁰ Third, Lewis seldom pursued charges of this type against his enemies, because he felt he had enough insider information to take the necessary action should these threats of violence have advanced, prioritizing instead to protect his informants’ anonymity. Pressing charges against Fry or Allen in this case would have exposed Slocombe’s cover once and for all, and it appears that Lewis chose to hedge his bets. Nevertheless, 1938 proved to be a year of anxiety for Lewis, Roos, Slocombe, and the rest of Hollywood’s spies as long as Leslie Fry was in town.

The Anti-Communist Federation, 1938

⁸²⁷ C.19 Report, October 8, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 40, Folder 17. Also see *CRC Summary Report*, Vol. 3, Part II, Chapter 2, 946, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 28, Folder 15.

⁸²⁸ C.19 Report, October 8, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 40, Folder 17.

⁸²⁹ For Fry’s betrayal of Allen, see *CRC Summary Report*, Vol. 3, Part II, Chapter 2, 942-45, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 28, Folder 15.

⁸³⁰ C.19 Report, October 20, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 40, Folder 17.

Despite the seizure of Allen's briefcase in the spring of 1938, Leslie Fry remained true to her mission to forge a united Nazi front in the United States. Charles Slocombe's cover had been significantly comprised as a result of the seizure of the briefcase, but Fry's cooptation of the Bund allowed William Bockhacker to report on her efforts to establish a national Nazi-influenced political movement with the assistance of the Bund in Los Angeles. Consequently, Hollywood's spies were able to further confirm Fry's role in this national movement, and more importantly, the Bund's role in providing the resources necessary to stage the second annual Anti-Communist Federation conference in August 1938.

Immediately following the breach, Fry went on the offensive to protect herself. She broke with Deathage, distanced herself from the Bund and eventually from Henry Allen. Two weeks after the briefcase was seized, Leslie Fry, using her mouthpiece, the *Christian Free Press*, denounced the American Nationalist Confederation as an un-American organization because it used the emblem of a foreign country, a swastika, in its emblem. Using this as the premise to break from Deathage and from the Bund, the paper (i.e., Fry) her groups, the Militant Christian Patriots, and the American League of Christian Women, were breaking with Deathage because of the Confederation's apparent "un-Americanness."⁸³¹ Fry's "break" with Nazism was merely a public relations ploy. Lewis noted in his report to the Dies Committee that Fry's "patriotism" was nothing more than the "time-worn

⁸³¹ "To Our Members and Subscribers," *Christian Free Press*, May 1938. 1.

strategy to drape the American flag around her shoulder, condemn Communism...[with hopes that she passes] as a real and sincere patriot.”⁸³²

Both Bockhacker and Slocombe documented Fry and Allen’s daily visits to Deutsches Haus in the spring and summer of 1938, following the *Christian Free Press*’ denunciation of any group associated with a foreign government. Fry and Allen maintained a close relationship with Herman Schwinn in planning for the conference. Not only was the relationship constant and close, but Bockhacker and Slocombe reported that Fry’s authority over Schwinn was apparent “every other day at German Haus” during these months. Fry’s commandeering of Schwinn and the Bund led Lewis to surmise that Schwinn must have received orders from above to support Fry in her mission.

Schwinn is not the type who would permit this if he had not strict orders to fulfill every one of Mrs. Fry’s wishes, as he is anxious above all to increase the membership of the Bund and retain supreme power.⁸³³

Hollywood’s spy William Bockhacker worked alongside Fry, Allen, and Schwinn for several months helping with the logistics for the conference. Bockhacker provided Leon Lewis with the invitation to the event, which Lewis analyzed for the report as evidence of Fry’s duplicity as a Nazi propaganda agent. The event was to be at Deutsches Haus, but it was signed by Leslie Fry, who had only a month before denounced any group associated with a foreign government, like the Bund, as “un-American.” Despite Fry’s efforts to mask the event’s pro-Nazi

⁸³² *CRC Summary Report*, Vol. 1, Part II, Chapter 2, 261, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 26, Folder 12.

⁸³³ *CRC Summary Report*, Vol. 1, Part II, Chapter 2, 279-80, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 26, Folder 12.

orientation, the invitation betrayed Leslie Fry's duplicity as a secret Nazi activist.⁸³⁴ The new conference, called the "Anti-Communist Federation" asserted the need for "united front of informed Christian American citizens" to defend against the "Sovietiz[ation]" of the United States." The invitation underscored the need for a conference by appropriating the rationale for the new Dies Committee as its own, pointing to "authorities" who agreed that "international groups are focusing their conspiratorial activities on west coast, and California in particular."⁸³⁵

Bockhacker reported that ten thousand copies of the invitation were printed and mailed to every anti-Communist group across the country.⁸³⁶ Local Bund and Silver Shirt members distributed flyers throughout southern California, and Schwinn met personally with local right-wing groups to promote the August conference.⁸³⁷

This advanced warning allowed Leon Lewis to plan his response. Concerned that the anti-Communist conference would attract veterans, Lewis notified his American Legion colleague Dr. John Lechner, Chairman of the Americanism Committee, that the conference was a Nazi front. Lechner wrote a special bulletin to all Legion posts warning Legionnaires that the true sponsors of the event.

Mrs. L. Fry of Glendale and Henry Allen of Pasadena, two of the most active and important links in the Nazi structure in California. Knowing their background and having a record of their Anti-American activities, this office presumes to conclude that the conference is not held in good faith.⁸³⁸

⁸³⁴ Ibid., 275-77.

⁸³⁵ Invitation to Western States Convention of the Anti-Communist Federation, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 32, Folder 27.

⁸³⁶ W2 Report, July 25, 1938, and W2 Report, July 28, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 32, Folder 27.

⁸³⁷ W2 Report, July 28, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 32, Folder 27.

⁸³⁸ Special Bulletin to Legion Posts [July 1938], *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 32, Folder 27.

Lewis hired several temporary informants to report on the August conference from inside and outside of the Haus that weekend. His informants estimated that 300 people from around the country attended the conference. Leslie Fry told attendees that the goal of the organization was to attack the “big” Jews in America. She urged everyone to check on Jews in their respective regions, find things in their past for which they could be prosecuted. Speeches were given throughout the weekend on the challenges of Judeo-Bolshevism in the United States, and attendees were able to purchase a wide range of far right, pro-Nazi literature written by American propagandists from around the country.⁸³⁹

Fry took advantage of the conference to continue efforts to intimidate Leon Lewis. One of Lewis’ inside men reported that attendees were greeted in the lobby of the mansion by a large, ten-by-three-foot banner calling for Congressional action against Jews who persecuted Christian patriots. The banner read:

The Jewish Agents for prosecution of Christian Patriots are the Jewish Anti-Defamation League of the B’nai B’rith, 660 Roosevelt Building and the Hollywood Anti-Nazi League, 6912 Hollywood Boulevard. We must demand Congressional investigation of their alliance with the Communist Party. Track down the head and sponsors of their agents in your locality. In Los Angeles:

Leon L. Lewis, 660 Roosevelt Building
Mendel Silberberg, Roosevelt Building
Ernest Lubitsch
Judge Isaac Pacht
Eddie Cantor⁸⁴⁰

⁸³⁹ D.7 Report, August 6, 1938, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 32, Folder 28.

⁸⁴⁰ D.7 Report, August 6, 1938, and Wiseman Report by Telephone, August 6, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 32, Folder 28. Except for Eddie Cantor, the men listed on the Bund’s banner were members of the LAJCC. Cantor was not a member of the LAJCC board, but could be relied n by Lewis when needed.

The banner was a subtle invitation to harass Lewis and the others listed, each of whom were also members of the LAJCC board.

Outside Deutsches Haus, temporary informants D7 and B6, reported on the massive protest that raged in the street for the entire weekend (see Appendix 1: Photographs.)⁸⁴¹ Organized by the Hollywood Anti-Nazi League, approximately 3,000 picketers carried signs, tussled with police, and shouted anti-Nazi slogans at the Haus all weekend long.⁸⁴² Two other temporary informants, positioned on the roof of the adjacent Chevrolet building, recorded the license plate numbers of arriving attendees, while two more informants, not-so-discreetly positioned on the roof of the adjacent Miller Printing Company, took photographs of everyone who went in and out of the Haus until Bund members spotted them and rushed out to throw rocks at the offending photographers.⁸⁴³

Fry planned that the new, LA-based Anti-Communist Federation would attract a large national following. Schwinn intended to use the new group as a front for the Bund, announcing that Deutsches Haus was now the anti-Communist center on the West Coast.⁸⁴⁴ As for Fry, she hoped that the new federation would gain national political traction to fight Communists. Hollywood's spies reported that the federation's political platform called for closing immigration, outlawing Communism in the U.S., and severing diplomatic relations with Russia. The new anti-Communist

⁸⁴¹ D.7 Report, August 6, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 32, Folder 28.

⁸⁴² "Nazis Hear Foes Chant Hitler Dirge," *Los Angeles Times*, August 7, 1938. 1; "Crowd Heckles Bund Parley," *Los Angeles Times*, August 8, 1938. 3.

⁸⁴³ [Roos] Report, August 6, 1938, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 32, Folder 28.

⁸⁴⁴ "Nazis Adopt American Front to Fool Public," *Hollywood Now*, September 23, 1938, clipping in CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 32, Folder 29.

front also planned to expose the leaders of the Anti-Defamation League and “Jewish Anti-Nazi League” [sic] as Communist conspirators and called for a Congressional investigation of all Jews who actively fought Nazis.⁸⁴⁵

* * *

There was no third annual meeting of Fry’s Anti-Communist Federation. Ten days after the 1938 conference, the Dies Committee opened its hearings on subversive activities in the United States, and Fry disappeared from Los Angeles as mysteriously as she had blown in. Fry fled the country in the spring of 1939 when the Committee’s chief investigator arrived in Los Angeles.⁸⁴⁶ She did not remain in Europe long. Within just a few months, war broke out in Europe and Fry returned to the United States.⁸⁴⁷ In 1942, the Justice Department indicted Fry for sedition along with twenty-three other right-wing activists and Bund leaders, including Herman Schwinn. The prosecution used evidence procured from the LAJCC in its case against the group, but charges against Fry were dropped when the prosecution deemed it did not have sufficient evidence to prove its sedition case against her.⁸⁴⁸

⁸⁴⁵ H3 Report, August 8, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 32, Folder 28. *CRC Summary Report*, Vol. 1, Part I, Chapter 8, 191-92, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 26, Folder 10. See also the *Christian Free Press* from September 1938 for a long report and pictures from the Anti-Communist Conference, written by Leslie Fry.

⁸⁴⁶ Fry returned to the United States in the fall of 1939, and was arrested and held on Ellis Island as a “potential alien risk” along with other suspected Nazi agents. Jeansonne, *Women of the Far Right: The Mothers’ Movement and World War II*, 229, endnote #4.

⁸⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

Conclusion

Between 1936-1939, right-wing political dissent across the country escalated to unprecedented proportions. From mainstream Republicans to far-right, Nazi-influenced fascist groups, strident voices of dissent darkened the American political landscape after 1935, according to historian Alan Brinkley. Hundreds of right-wing groups and their would-be political demagogues filled the nation's city streets, airwaves, and rented halls with cries of protest against the New Deal's expansion of government into their lives and the Roosevelt Administration's broader, pluralistic conception of "Americanism." According to Brinkley, "[a]t no time since the Depression had [begun had] prospects for political upheaval seemed greater. At no time had the future seemed more uncertain."⁸⁴⁹

American Jews in the 1930s would have agreed with Brinkley. In Los Angeles, the LAJCC monitored the political activities of more than 400 right-wing groups between 1936-1941 that threatened to undermine democracy in America. All of those groups viewed Jews as the source of America's political and economic problems, and used antisemitic rhetoric to express their political dissent. Leon Lewis maintained files on all of these right-wing groups, but it was the groups that orbited Deutsches Haus and partnered with the German-American Bund that were of greatest concern to the Jews of Los Angeles. For the Jews of Los Angeles, political antisemitism was not the problem, it was the symptom. Insurgent Nazism was the problem. This chapter has demonstrated that the Jews of Los Angeles understood that

⁸⁴⁹ Brinkley, *Voices of Protest: Huey Long, Father Coughlin, and the Great Depression*.

problem and remained vigilant in their fight to combat it in Los Angeles by planting informants inside those anti-democratic, dissident groups. In fact, the absence of the most prominent right-wing group in the city underscores the LAJCC's primary objective.

The Ku Klux Klan is virtually absent from the surveillance of the Bund and its allies. There are two reasons for this. First, from the late 1920s through 1938, the Klan in Los Angeles was a mere shadow of the political force it had been during the 1920s.⁸⁵⁰ Second, and more important, the Klan completely disavowed the German-American Bund as a subversive foreign threat to Americanism equivalent to Communists. In fact, the Klan initiated its own "fact finding" operation inside the Bund in the fall of 1939 following the start of World War II in Europe. It also announced a statewide campaign to have the Bund banned in California, just as it had attempted to do to the Communist Party. The Klan in Los Angeles had little use for the Bund, and therefore, Lewis had no need to spy on the Klan. In fact, Lewis tucked his discussion of the Klan into a chapter of the *Summary Report* entitled "Fascist Organizations Now Extinct," spending only forty-five of the report's three-thousand pages to the Klan.⁸⁵¹ This chapter, therefore, demonstrates that the undercover

⁸⁵⁰ During the 1920s, southern California had the second largest concentration of Klan chapters and members outside of the south; but internal schisms led to a decline in membership in southern California by 1927. Robert Salley, "Activities of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in Southern California, 1921-1925" (M.A. Thesis, University of Southern California, 1963). Concerns over foreign political groups, Communists and Nazis alike at the end of the 1930s appears to have been the catalyst to its revival. See Slocombe reports on the Klan, 1939-1941, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 43, Folders 13-26 and Box 41, Folders 1-6.

⁸⁵¹ *CRC Summary Report*, Vol. 1, Part III, Chapter 6, 327-34. The July 1940 update to the *Summary Report* updated information on the Klan, based on Charles Slocombe's informant reports. See *CRC Summary Report*, Vol. 4, Part III, Chapter 6, 1389-1415, 1434-1448, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 29, Folder 7; C19 Report #2432, December 7, 1939, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 40, Folder 23. This report refers to

operation was intended to defend the United States from Nazism. It was not motivated by Jewish particularism; rather, it was predicated upon the universalism that defined American Jewish defense activity.

The primary objective of the LAJCC was to combat the rise of a Nazi-influenced political movement in the United States. In so doing, they were part of a broader liberal counter-protest in the late 1930s that sounded the alarm against the development of a “Nazi fifth column” in the United States. According to some historians, however, liberals at the time fomented a “brown scare” in the United States between 1936-1939 with exaggerated and sometimes unsubstantiated allegations of Nazi-influenced activities.⁸⁵² With the benefit of hindsight, these historians correctly conclude that neither individually nor collectively did any of these right-wing groups possess the requisite leadership, funding or political plan needed to gain national political power.⁸⁵³ These historians, therefore, conclude that

Los Angeles Examiner, article dated December 9, 1939; C19 Report, February 14, 1939, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 40, Folder 19. In order for Lewis to be able to subordinate the Klan as a priority, he had to have consistent information about them. Hence, even though the Klan played a minor role in the *Summary Report*, Slocombe provided Lewis with information on their activities from 1939-1946. For Slocombe’s reports on the revival of the Klan in southern California, see his reports beginning in 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 40, Folders 19-23. It is interesting to note that hundreds of members of the Klan met with the Bund in 1940 in New York as a show of solidarity. The group was, however, chastised by the Klan’s Imperial Wizard for initiating that relationship. MacDonnell, *Insidious Foes: The Axis Fifth Column and the American Home Front*.

⁸⁵² Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right: The Protestant Far Right from the Great Depression to the Cold War*, chapter 5; Smith, *To Save a Nation: American Extremism, the New Deal, and the Coming of World War II*.

⁸⁵³ Bennett, *The Party of Fear: From Nativist Movement to the New Right in American History*; Berlet, *Right-Wing Populism in America: Too Close for Comfort*, chapter 7. Historian Glen Jeansonne qualifies his conclusion by stating that the threat the right posed did not originate in actual power, but in their perceived power. Jeansonne, *Women of the Far Right: The Mothers' Movement and World War II*.

liberals, American Jews among them, over-reacted to “signs” of a Nazi insurgency in the United States.⁸⁵⁴

The covert fact-finding operation, however, provides a new context within which American Jewish response can be evaluated. It shows that American Jewish reaction to right-wing political activism was not merely an emotional over-reaction to sensational headlines and rumors; rather, it was an informed response to insider information. In fact, Hollywood’s spies were often the source *behind* some of those headlines. Over the course of five years, Hollywood’s spies documented Nazi influence over the American far right. From the local to the national, the LAJCC provided the federal government and news outlets with information that tracked the virulent transmission of Nazi propaganda from printing presses in Berlin to right-wing newspapers in the United States. Information from the LAJCC documented the Bund’s support of right-wing groups, Herman Schwinn’s efforts to broker a national alliance between the Bund and the Silver Shirts, George Deatherage’s plan for a fascist revolution, and Leslie Fry’s Anti-Communist Federation as a Nazi front. What historians have not understood, perhaps, is that the Jews of Los Angeles, and indeed, American Jewish leaders conducting similar defense organizations in other cities, had intimate, first-hand knowledge of these activities, and that they were one sources providing this information to the government and to media outlets.

⁸⁵⁴ Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right: The Protestant Far Right from the Great Depression to the Cold War*, chapters 5-6; Smith, *To Save a Nation: American Extremism, the New Deal, and the Coming of World War II*, 3-4, 7 and chapter 6.

It is no coincidence that the escalation of political antisemitism in the late 1930s coincided with the launch of Berlin's "American Enlightenment" propaganda campaign. The co-optation of domestic right-wing groups was central to Berlin's imperialist political goal to transplant National Socialism around the world. Historians have understood the connection for a while. What historians have not understood is just how informed American Jewish leaders were about the formation a Nazi fifth column in the United States. Even though those far right groups never gained the political, financial or cultural support it needed to become a viable political movement in the United States, their racist ultra-nationalism, and their threats of violence against American Jews were as "Nazi" as they could be, and they presented a threat that the Jews of Los Angeles could not afford to ignore.

Chapter Eight
The Politics of Resistance, 1938-1940

In the years following the investigation of the proclamation incident, Hollywood's spies filled Leon Lewis' filing cabinets with thousands of pages of eyewitness reports and evidence documenting Berlin's intrusion into American political culture and the evolution of a Nazi-influenced political movement in the United States. It was a story waiting to be told, but the political climate and culture of the era presented significant challenges to resistance. Legally, the Bund and its nativist allies were protected by the first amendment because American jurisprudence did not yet recognize group claims to civil rights protections from libel or hate-speech. Thus, the courts held little promise for American Jews seeking relief from their inflammatory political denunciations. Politically, paranoia over suspected Communist and Nazi conspiracies was mounting, which made it difficult for American Jews to respond to these denunciations directly. Consequently, the volumes of insider information collected by Hollywood's spies that revealed the duplicity of the Bund and the far right piled up in Leon Lewis' files, waiting for opportunities to realize their full political value.

This chapter investigates the politics that challenged American Jewish resistance to insurgent Nazism in the last years of the 1930s. It presents those challenges and along with the LAJCC's choices to further demonstrate the character and content of Jewish political agency and influence at the end of the decade. First, this chapter reviews the limits that the law placed on the resistance effort in order to

contextualize the LAJCC's choice to work with and support the Dies Committee, the infamous congressional subcommittee that investigated un-American activities in the U.S. between 1938-1944. Although the Dies Committee ultimately confirmed the Berlin connection, the duplicity of the Bund and the emergence of a Nazi-influenced nativist movement, the LAJCC's relationship with the Dies Committee was fraught with political risk and betrayal that ultimately ended in a Pyrrhic victory for the Jews of Hollywood.

Legal Limits

The McCormack-Dickstein investigation of subversive propaganda activities in the United States in 1934 exposed Berlin's intrusion into American political culture and the antecedents of a native, Nazi-influenced political movement in the United States. Despite the Committee's findings, over the next several years, Nazi-inspired "shirt groups" proliferated across the country. In response, state and federal lawmakers searched for legislative strategies to inhibit the development of a Nazi-influenced movement.

State legislatures took various approaches in trying to curb the problem of Nazi hate-speech within their borders. The New Jersey state legislature considered a bill that would have made it a misdemeanor to disseminate, circulate or publish "propaganda tending to create hatred, violence or hostility because of their race, color,

religion or manner of worship.”⁸⁵⁵ The Indiana state legislature considered a bill would have made it unlawful for political candidates to assail their opponents’ race or religion as part of the campaign.⁸⁵⁶ Neither bill passed. Both bills were examples of the efforts made by various state legislatures to address the issue of Nazi propaganda within their borders, and the challenge that the first amendment posed to their efforts to protect minority group civil rights.

Other states took a different approach to the problem of insurgent Nazism. Viewing Nazi-inspired “shirt” groups as a national security problem, New York, Ohio, California, Connecticut, as well as Congress passed laws that outlawed private militias. At the state level, legislation was passed that prohibited citizens from wearing “foreign uniforms” bearing “foreign insignias” (i.e., swastikas) in public, and further prohibited individuals dressed in such uniforms from participating in military drills. At the federal level, Congress passed federal legislation in 1938 and in 1940 that (1) required civilian military organizations to register with the Department of Justice, and (2) made it unlawful to overthrow the government of the United States.⁸⁵⁷

Jewish groups across the country took an active interest in these legislative efforts. Both the AJC and the ADL established legal subcommittees to analyze legislative approaches that might protect minority civil rights against persistent public defamation without impinging on the free speech of their detractors. These legal

⁸⁵⁵ New Jersey Assembly Bill [bill number not provided], introduced January 28, 1935, referred to in a letter, Prince to Livingston, March 9, 1935, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 26, Folder 22. The bill passed the New Jersey House in March 1935; letter, Prince to Sommers, January 18, 1935, *ibid.*

⁸⁵⁶ Letter, Frank Prince to Sommers, January 18, 1935, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 26, Folder 22.

⁸⁵⁷ Report, Committee on Public Relations (June 30, 1939), *Chronological Files*, American Jewish Committee Papers, Jacob Blaustein Library, American Jewish Committee, New York, NY (hereafter, *AJC Chronological Files*), Box 6, Folder “May-August.”

committees spent most of their time reacting to proposed legislation for their legality and constitutionality. From time to time, the ADL took a proactive approach, circulating its own ideas for draft legislation to its B'nai Brith "key men." In 1936, for example, it proposed legislation to extend the protection individuals enjoyed from libel to minority groups. The ADL's proposed bill would have redefined libel as "any malicious defamation" expressed in print, signs, pictures designed to "impeach the honesty, integrity, virtue, reputation character of patriotism of *the people* (italics mine) of any religious denomination... with the intent to expose them to public contempt, ridicule, prejudice, and hatred..."⁸⁵⁸ The ADL also considered proposing more tactical legislation, bills that would not directly challenge free speech, but made it more difficult for such groups to function. One such bill would have prohibited the use of "public structures [like as school auditoriums] by groups seeking to destroy American principles..."⁸⁵⁹

AJC President (and attorney) Cyrus Adler opposed the ADL's legislative approach to resistance. Concerned that American Jews not be perceived *as Jews acting as Jews*, Adler believed that such laws would never stand the test of judicial review, and would, therefore, would not protect Jewish interests. Laws intended to suppress Nazism, Adler contended, were by definition Nazi in method and therefore un-American in spirit.⁸⁶⁰ Frank Prince, the AJC's private investigator and congressional liaison to both the Dickstein and Dies Committees, concurred. Writing

⁸⁵⁸ ADL Form Letter, April 9, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 23, Folder 16.

⁸⁵⁹ Letter, Richard Gutstadt to P. Allen Rickles, September 14, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 23, Folder 22.

⁸⁶⁰ Letter, Cyrus Adler to Morris Waldman, April 27, 1934, AJC Papers, Box 3, Folder "March-April."

to ADL executive director Sigmund Livingston, Prince asserted that Jewish support of such legislation was political suicide.

We cannot legislate intolerance into oblivion, [and] I am most fearful that [these types of legislation will] react against us and form precedents and leave the way open for legislation that would have as its purpose our undoing.⁸⁶¹

The legislative approach to combatting insurgent Nazism in the United States in the 1930s proved futile for both lawmakers and risky for American Jews. For lawmakers, legislation intended to stifle political expression or association ran afoul of the Constitution. For American Jews, support of such laws, if passed, would have provided their adversaries with “proof” of the Jewish conspiracy against democracy. Moreover, this approach would not only antagonize the far right, it would surely have alienated America’s “vital political center.”⁸⁶² Ultimately the lawyers and judges who led the Jewish community relations organizations of the 1930s understood that they could not hope to protect Jewish civil rights by challenging their adversaries’ first amendment ones. In fact, when Robert Edmondson, one of the most prolific anti-Semitic propagandists of the late 1930s was indicted by a Grand Jury in New York City for “libeling all persons of the Jewish religion,” the American Jewish

⁸⁶¹ Letter, Frank Prince to Sigmund Livingston, March 9, 1935, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 27, Folder 1.

⁸⁶² “The Function of the American Jewish Committee (1941),” 9, AJC Papers, Record Group 347.1.29, EXO-29, Box 2, Folder “Annals: 1929, 1934, 1941-43, 1949”; Geoffrey S. Smith, *To Save a Nation: American Extremism, the New Deal, and the Coming of World War II*, Rev. ed. (Chicago: I.R. Dee, 1992), Epilogue; Leo P. Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right: The Protestant Far Right from the Great Depression to the Cold War* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983), chapter 6.

Committee's amicus brief *defended* Edmondson's right to free speech and recommended that the court dismiss the case, which it did.⁸⁶³

In Los Angeles, the LAJCC's legal subcommittee was also frustrated by the limits of the law. Working with other (Jewish) legal advisory groups in California, the LAJCC's legal subcommittee was unable to craft legislative remedies to curb Nazi-influenced political activity in the state.⁸⁶⁴ That did not mean, however, that the LAJCC was bereft of legal options. The information collected by Hollywood's spies over the years provided Leon Lewis a potent legal weapon against the leaders of the Bund and their allies. Determined to "leave no stone unturned to find Schwinn, Fry and Allen's legal vulnerabilities," Lewis kept a keen eye on his nemeses and waited to catch each one in *personal* violation of *other* laws.⁸⁶⁵

In 1936, Hollywood's spy Neil Ness seized upon the law to derail Bund leader Herman Schwinn. Ness alerted Immigration and Naturalization Service agents in Los Angeles of Schwinn's activities as leader of the German-American Bund, hoping that an investigation by the INS might invalidate Schwinn's recent naturalization.⁸⁶⁶

Indeed, the INS planted its own man inside the Bund that year, and by 1938, formal

⁸⁶³ The court ultimately agreed with the American Jewish Committee and charges against Edmondson were dropped, but not before Edmondson and his fellow antisemites had leveraged the hearings into a public relations campaign for their antisemitic cause.

⁸⁶⁴ Throughout the 1930s, American Jewish leaders persisted in their analysis of legislation that might quiet hate speech directed at Jews. In the end, they demurred in this tactic, understanding the possible perception that such lawsuits challenged the first amendment. See folder "Subcommittees: Legal and Legislative" from 1939-1941 in CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 4, Folders 27-30. The American Jewish Committee also studied the legal and legislative approaches to resistance extensively. It is interesting to note that this legal activity was the precursor to American Jewish leadership in the civil rights movement that followed the war. On Jewish leadership in Los Angeles's early civil rights movement, see Shana Bernstein, "Building Bridges at Home in a Time of Global Conflict: Interracial Cooperation and the Fight for Civil Rights in Los Angeles, 1933-1954" (Dissertation, Stanford University, 2003).

⁸⁶⁵ Letter, Lewis to Prince, June 8, 1938. CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 147, Folder 9.

⁸⁶⁶ [N2] Report, July 15, 1936, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 7, Folder 9.

proceedings were underway to revoke Schwinn's naturalization. Schwinn's citizenship was suspended on a fraud charge relating to his naturalization application.⁸⁶⁷ In 1940, Schwinn's citizenship was officially revoked, depriving him of the claims to free speech protections that he had so often flaunted.

In 1937, Hollywood's spies again caught right-wing activists on the wrong side of the law and Lewis used the opportunity to strike. Charles Slocombe produced evidence that resulted in the deportation of a German espionage agent, Leopold McLaglen.⁸⁶⁸ McLaglen was a British fascist and, as it turned out, a German spy. Moving within right-wing circles in Los Angeles, Charles Slocombe met McLaglen at the Bund's German Day picnic in 1937. McLaglen bragged to his new friends about his work as a German military intelligence agent. He recruited Slocombe, along with Slocombe's Silver Shirt compatriots Henry Allen and Kenneth Alexander, into his undercover activities, which included a plot to assassinate a dozen notable Hollywood celebrities and Jewish leaders in Los Angeles by pipe-bombing their homes. Slocombe was present during meetings where the four debated the final list of victims and discussed the "shopping list" for making the bombs.⁸⁶⁹

McLaglen was also pleased to learn that Slocombe ran a water-taxi business in Long Beach, and had easy access to the port. McLaglen "recruited" Slocombe to provide him with photographs of Japanese fishing boat activity in San Pedro Harbor. Slocombe agreed to work with McLaglen, but in the meantime, notified, Leon Lewis

⁸⁶⁷ Schwinn vs. United States, 112F, 2d 74 (1940).

⁸⁶⁸ Leopold McLaglen was Hollywood movie star Victor McLaglen's brother.

⁸⁶⁹ [C19] Report, September 30, 1937, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 10, Folder 10.

and Captain Owen Murphy of the Long Beach Police, who in turn brought U.S. Naval Intelligence in on the case to snare the spy McLaglen. A trap for McLaglen was set, involving Slocombe as the source of phony military information concerning Japanese espionage activity in the port of Los Angeles. McLaglen was caught trying to sell the information Slocombe gave him to a U.S. Naval Intelligence officer. McLaglen was charged with bribery, extortion, soliciting the commission of perjury, and preparing false evidence.⁸⁷⁰ In March 1938, McLaglen was tried, convicted of extortion and deported.⁸⁷¹

Between 1936-1938, Leon Lewis pursued Henry Allen relentlessly through the courts, but to little avail. Slocombe's reports kept Lewis one step ahead of the two-time felon and his political activism. Keeping a watchful eye on Allen, Lewis hoped to catch Allen in violation of a third felony that would send him back to San Quentin for life.⁸⁷² During these years, Lewis tipped off Pasadena, Los Angeles and San Diego police in advance of Allen's "snow storms," which were violations of each city's municipal handbill ordinances. In 1936, Lewis reported Allen to state relief officials for fraud, resulting in the suspension of Allen's relief checks.⁸⁷³ In 1938, Lewis was behind two felony indictments of Allen, both of which were intended to put the two-time felon out of political commission for a long time by sending Allen back to prison under the state's habitual criminal offenders statutes. The first

⁸⁷⁰ "Capt. McLaglen's Trial Under Way," *Hollywood Citizen News*, February 28, 1938.

⁸⁷¹ "McLaglen Jury Says, 'Guilty,'" *Hollywood Citizen News*, March 12, 1938; "Judge Banishes McLaglen," *Los Angeles Times*, April 6, 1938. 3.

⁸⁷² Letter, Lewis to Prince, June 8, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 147, Folder 9.

⁸⁷³ Letter Lewis to Gutstadt, June 8, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 128, Folder 15; Memorandum, May 18, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 40, Folder 15; C19 Report, November 3, 1938, and November 19, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 40, Folder 18.

indictment set Joe Roos up as the plaintiff in a suit charging Allen with voter registration fraud.⁸⁷⁴ The second was the police trap set in San Diego that resulted in a weapons charge against Allen. For various reasons, neither of the felony charges engineered by Lewis against Allen resulted in a conviction, nor did Lewis' dogged pursuit of the feckless Allen discourage Allen from persisting in his political activities.

In the end, Lewis' search for the legal grounds to defeat Herman Schwinn, Leslie Fry, and Henry Allen were time-consuming, inefficient and ineffective. Relying on the law left too much to chance and risked exposing his entire undercover operation. After all was said and done, Herman Schwinn's denaturalization case took three years to prosecute. Lewis never caught Leslie Fry on the wrong side of the law, and as for Henry Allen, his legal missteps were never quite egregious enough to secure a felony conviction. Moreover, every time Lewis caught Allen on the wrong side of the law, Lewis had to weigh the benefits of prosecuting Allen against the risk of exposing and losing Charles Slocombe as an informant. Each time, Lewis decided in favor of his informant and did not press Allen as hard as he would have liked to. Ultimately, Lewis' pursuit of Allen devolved into a petty game of cat and mouse while much bigger fish needed to be fried. Allen's activities in Los Angeles were but the local manifestation of a much broader, national problem that required more substantive methods of resistance than legal tactics would allow.

⁸⁷⁴ Letter, Lewis to Prince, June 8, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 147, Folder 9. The voter registration fraud conviction would have carried a 1-3 year jail sentence, except for Allen, who had a criminal record. Lewis wrote that Allen could have been sentenced to up to 10 years under the Habitual Criminal Act.

The LAJCC and the Dies Committee, 1938-1940

If legal approaches to resistance were limited, political approaches were risky. Between 1936-1938, political tensions in Europe reverberated in the United States, creating anxiety over suspected conspiratorial activities by foreign agents. The right raged with accusations of Communist infiltration of the Administration while the left sounded the alarm against subversive fascist activity across the country. In the spring of 1938, the FBI's discovery of a Nazi spy ring in New York City finally convinced Congress to act.⁸⁷⁵ In May, Congress passed HR 282, a resolution presented by Texas Democrat Martin Dies to once again investigate un-American activities in the United States. A committee was again appointed to investigate

(1) the extent, character, and objects of un-American propaganda activities in the United States; (2) the diffusion within the United States of subversive and Un-American propaganda that is instigated from foreign countries or of a domestic origin and attacks the principle of the form of government as guaranteed by our Constitution; and (3) all other questions in relation thereto that would aid Congress in any necessary remedial legislation.⁸⁷⁶

Martin Dies, the chairman of the new committee, promised to conduct an even-handed investigation to expose all "...organizations or groups existing in the United States which are directed, controlled or subsidized by foreign government or agencies and which seek to change the policies and form of government of the United States in accordance with the wishes of such foreign governments." The objective of the

⁸⁷⁵ D.A. Saunders, "The Dies Committee: First Phase," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* (1939): 224; Walter Goodman, *The Committee: The Extraordinary Career of the House Committee on Un-American Activities* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1969), 18.

⁸⁷⁶ U.S. House of Representatives, Special Committee on Un-American Activities, *Investigation of Un-American Propaganda Activities in the United States. Report of the Special Committee on Un-American Activities Pursuant to H. Res. 282, Union Calendar No. 2, 76th Cong., (1939).*

investigation, said Dies, was to shine “the critical light of day” on these groups, regardless of their political ideology, “and trust public sentiment to do the rest.”⁸⁷⁷

The new Congressional committee posed a serious political quandary to Leon Lewis and his Jewish compatriots at the ADL and AJC. On the one hand, the new Congressional committee represented the first significant political opportunity the LAJCC had to leverage the power of the federal government in the fight against Nazism since the McCormack-Dickstein hearings of 1934. For four years, Hollywood’s spies had filled Lewis’ filing cabinets with vital information on Berlin’s intrusion into American political culture without such an opportunity. Theoretically, the new investigation offered that possibility. In reality, the political winds that swept the Dies Committee to power in 1938 had blown in from the right. Martin Dies was an ardent anti-Communist, and Leon Lewis and his Jewish colleagues around the country feared that Dies’ political biases would only serve to “bring out the reactionaries,” and turn the Committee into an accomplice for the very right-wing groups that Jewish groups hoped to defeat.⁸⁷⁸ Consequently, Lewis and his colleagues in New York and Chicago had opposed the resolution in the preceding year, but once the Dies resolution was passed, Jewish defense organizations realized that they had no choice but to work with new Committee.⁸⁷⁹ They could not afford to allow a congressional hunt for the “red” Trojan horse in America go unchallenged

⁸⁷⁷ *Congressional Record*, May 26, 1938, 7570, quoted in August Raymond Ogden, “The Dies Committee: A Study of the Special House Committee for the Investigation of Un-American Activities, 1938-1943” (Dissertation, The Catholic University of America, 1943), 44.

⁸⁷⁸ Letter, Lewis to Gutstadt, March 24, 1937, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 4, Folder 2; letter, Gutstadt to Silberberg, March 25 1937, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 4, Folder 2.

⁸⁷⁹ Naomi Cohen, *Not Free to Desist: The American Jewish Committee, 1906-1966*, 1st ed. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1972), 210.

without providing counterbalancing evidence of the “brown” one.⁸⁸⁰

Between 1938-1940, Leon Lewis navigated the murky waters of anti-Nazi political resistance by supporting the Dies Committee. Lewis provided the Committee with extensive documentary evidence, counseled its west coast investigators, and recommended witnesses.⁸⁸¹ The relationship was fraught with political risk and betrayal, and even though the Committee’s final report to Congress in 1940 fulfilled Lewis’ highest hopes for exposing insurgent Nazism to the American public, that triumph turned out to be a Pyrrhic victory for the Jews of Hollywood.

Off to a Bad Start

It did not take long for the Dies Committee to fulfill Leon Lewis’ worst fears. A chance meeting between the Dies Committee’s new West Coast chief investigator Edward Sullivan and Lewis would result in Sullivan’s dismissal not 90 days into his tenure, which in turn, sparked the Committee’s infamous witch-hunt for Communists in Hollywood.

Edward Sullivan and Leon Lewis were two strangers on a train. They met on the two-day train journey between Kansas City and Los Angeles in early July 1938. The two men passed three hours chatting.⁸⁸² Sullivan introduced himself to Lewis as a federal investigator on his way to the West Coast.⁸⁸³ During their conversation,

⁸⁸⁰ Martin Dies, *The Trojan Horse in America* (New York: Arno Press, 1977).

⁸⁸¹ Memorandum No.1 attached to letter, Lewis to Monsky, March 11, 1940, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 129, Folder 6.

⁸⁸² Letter, Lewis to Prince, July 15, 1938, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 147, Folder 9.

⁸⁸³ Letter, Lewis to Gutstadt, August 22, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 128, Folder 16. Lewis did not make the connection between Sullivan and the Dies Committee because there were several federal investigations

Sullivan “parroted Nazi-like statements” with shameless fervor and criticized all anti-Nazi activity as Communistic. “It was clear that Sullivan believed that every man who contributed a dollar to a Spanish ambulance or for the relief of the Chinese coolies was a dyed in the wool Communist,” Lewis later wrote to Frank Prince.⁸⁸⁴

Sullivan, Lewis wrote, was all “hepped up” on the idea that most Communists in America were Jews. He related to Lewis how he had gone out of his way in the past to attend Jewish meetings on the East Coast and shared with Lewis his dismay at having to go to Los Angeles because, “There are too many Jews in that lousy city.”⁸⁸⁵ The conversation took a marked turn when Lewis finally told Sullivan that he (Lewis) was the National Secretary of the B’nai Brith.⁸⁸⁶ When the train pulled into Los Angeles’ Union Station, the two men bade each other farewell, never expecting how soon their paths would again cross.

The next night, LAPD Red Squad captain Bill Hynes phoned Lewis a few minutes before midnight to inform Lewis that the new chief investigator for the Dies Committee, one Edward Sullivan, had arrived in Los Angeles.⁸⁸⁷ Hynes told Lewis that he had instructed Sullivan “...to see Leon Lewis” about Nazi activities in the city. “Lewis,” Hynes informed Sullivan, “has all the dope on that subject.”⁸⁸⁸ Sullivan, Hynes told Lewis, was perturbed to find out that the man he had met on the train was

going on in Los Angeles at the time and Lewis assumed that Sullivan was connected to one of those. Lewis later wrote that he did not know who Sullivan was until the day after he had arrived home.

⁸⁸⁴ Letter, Lewis to Prince, August 15, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 147, Folder 10.

⁸⁸⁵ Letter, Lewis to Prince, July 15, 1938, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 147, Folder 9; letter, Lewis to Gutstadt, August 22, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 128, Folder 16.

⁸⁸⁶ Letter, Lewis-Prince, July 15, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 147, Folder 9, and Letter, Lewis to Gutstadt, August 22, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 128, Folder 16.

⁸⁸⁷ Letter, Lewis to Prince, July 15, 1938. *Ibid.*, Part 2, Box 147, Folder 9.

⁸⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

Lewis.⁸⁸⁹ For his part, Lewis was appalled to learn that the “Jew-baiter” he had met was the Dies Committee’s new chief investigator, particularly since he thought that the ADL’s man in Washington, Frank Prince, had been the one who recommended Sullivan to the Committee.⁸⁹⁰

The selection of Sullivan by the Committee confirmed Lewis’ worst fears about the Committee’s partisan agenda. Sullivan, as it turned out, had a “checkered past” as a labor spy for the Railway Audit and Inspection Bureau, one of the largest labor espionage organizations in the country and was active in antisemitic and anti-Catholic groups. Sullivan, it was later discovered, shared an office in Washington with the prominent American anti-Semite, James True.⁸⁹¹

Over the next three weeks, Lewis worked behind the scenes to have Sullivan dismissed. He berated Frank Prince for his poor judgment, inquiring how Prince could have ever expected Lewis to work with a man like Sullivan.⁸⁹² Lewis also called on his influential contacts at the American Legion to help arrange a meeting for him with Dies Committee member Congressman John Dempsey (D, NM.)⁸⁹³ Lewis was introduced to the Congressman as “the former Chairman of the DAV Committee on Americanism,” a title that bestowed the prestige and credibility of the Legion on

⁸⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁹⁰ Ibid.; Letter, Lewis to Gutstadt, August 22, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 128, Folder 16; Letter Gubin to Lewis, January 27, 1939, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 24, Folder 18. It was later discovered that Prince had misled Lewis regarding his association with Dies. Prince had nothing to do with Sullivan’s appointment. See memorandum, February 24, 1940, attached to Letter, Lewis to Monsky, March 11, 1940, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 129, Folder 6.

⁸⁹¹ Saunders, “The Dies Committee: First Phase,” 229- 30; “Labor Group Accuses Dies Committee Aide,” *New York Times*, August 26, 1938. 3.

⁸⁹² Letter, Lewis to Prince, July 15, 1938, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 147, Folder 9.

⁸⁹³ Memorandum, July 27, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 24, Folder 16.

Lewis, removing any hint of Jewish self-interest as he made his case against Sullivan. Lewis told the Congressman of his chance meeting with Sullivan and stated his concern that Sullivan's intemperate fanaticism would inevitably embarrass the Committee. Sullivan, Lewis told Dempsey, was a political liability that the Committee could not afford.⁸⁹⁴

Dempsey concurred with Lewis. In fact, Dempsey shared his own frustration with Sullivan, telling Lewis that the only reports he had seen from Sullivan were "lengthy *expense* reports."⁸⁹⁵ The meeting concluded. Dempsey thanked Lewis for his visit, promised to telegram Washington to have Sullivan recalled, and hinted that perhaps the next time he and his wife were in Los Angeles, that to visit a motion picture studio might be arranged.⁸⁹⁶ That day, Lewis sent a telegram to Frank Prince in New York, alerting Prince of Dempsey's intended actions:

July 29, 1938

D HAS PUT IN LONG DISTANCE CALL FOR MARTIN AND
WILL REQUEST S BE IMMEDIATELY RECALLED TO EAST
AND RECOMMENDING DISCHARGE.⁸⁹⁷

Edward Sullivan was discharged from his duties in August 1938.⁸⁹⁸ The exact date is not known, but two weeks following Lewis' meeting with Dempsey, Sullivan made stunning accusations in the national press smearing Hollywood for financing

⁸⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁹⁶ Copy of telegram, Lewis to Prince, July 27, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 3, Box 24, Folder 16.

⁸⁹⁷ Memorandum, July 27, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 3, Box 24, Folder 16.

⁸⁹⁸ The *New York Times* reported that Sullivan had been dropped from the Committee's payroll as of September 1, 1938. "Dies Plans to Form Americanism League," *New York Times*, September 21, 1938. 11. A letter from Leon Lewis to Prince dated August 17, 1938 states that Sullivan had been fired. It is not clear if Lewis learned about Sullivan's dismissal before the 15th.

“unbridled and unchecked” Communistic activities “from within the [motion picture] industry.”⁸⁹⁹

Evidence tends to show that all phases of radical and communistic activities are rampant among the studios of Hollywood and although well known, it is a matter which [sic] the film moguls desire to keep from the public.⁹⁰⁰

The next day, headlines across the country blared Sullivan’s sensational and unsubstantiated allegations: “Red Aid Linked to Film Stars” ran on page one of the *Los Angeles Times*. The *New York Times* ran two front page stories: “Dies Aide...Assails West Coast Reds,” and “Investigator Alleges Wide Terrorism and Reports Hollywood Aids Communists.”⁹⁰¹

The nation was scandalized. The studio executives were incensed. “Hell has been popping out here and I have had my hands full trying to control the situation,” Lewis told Prince.⁹⁰² Lewis implored Prince to send copies of the “evidence” to which Sullivan had referred in order to understand what Sullivan was talking about.⁹⁰³ There was, no evidence. Moreover, Sullivan never testified before the Committee or wrote an official report to document his sensational allegations.⁹⁰⁴ Sullivan’s public smear of Hollywood was accepted by the public as truth, because Sullivan was, after all, the “ace investigator” for a Congressional investigation. Furthermore, his allegations reinforced widely held assumptions about Jews and Communism. That the government now had “evidence” connecting the Communist

⁸⁹⁹ “Red Aid Linked to Film Stars,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 15, 1935. 1.

⁹⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁹⁰¹ Ibid.; “Federal Official Protects Bridges, Dies Aide Charges,” *New York Times*, August 15, 1938. 1.

⁹⁰² Letter, Lewis to Frank Prince, August 17, 1938, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 147, Folder 10.

⁹⁰³ Telegram, Lewis to Prince, August 15, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 24, Folder 16.

⁹⁰⁴ Ogden, “The Dies Committee,” 57; Saunders, “The Dies Committee: First Phase,” 229.

threat to the most visible Jews in America only validated those prejudices.⁹⁰⁵

Sullivan had opened the door to the Dies Committee's later investigation of Hollywood itself.

Sullivan's unsubstantiated public accusations against the Jews of Hollywood were an early example of the "Star Chamber" tactics employed by the Dies Committee that earned it its infamous reputation.⁹⁰⁶ Contemporary critics of the Committee and historians since have assumed that Sullivan's allegations were motivated by the same anti-Communist fanaticism that drove the Committee; but, a memo written by Leon Lewis several months later indicates that Sullivan's publicity grab may have been an act of revenge. In the memo, Lewis wrote that Sullivan had told Bill Hynes that he was going to "get even with Dickstein's friend, F[rank].P[rince]."⁹⁰⁷ Hynes warned Lewis of Sullivan's intentions, telling Lewis that Sullivan was "screwy" and "saw a Communist on every bush" (quite a criticism from Los Angeles' number one red-baiter himself!)⁹⁰⁸ If Sullivan was discharged before August 15, then his attack on Hollywood was motivated as much by personal revenge against the "lousy Jews" of Hollywood for costing him his job as it was by his prejudice against Jews-as-Communists.

Edward Sullivan did succeed in taking down Frank Prince. Digging into Prince's past, Sullivan sent Bill Hynes a document that ruined Prince's professional reputation and his career as a private investigator. The document was a copy of Frank

⁹⁰⁵ "Red Aid Linked to Film Stars," *Los Angeles Times*, August 15, 1935. 1.

⁹⁰⁶ Ogden, "The Dies Committee," 47.

⁹⁰⁷ Memorandum, October 31, 1938, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 147, Folder 10.

⁹⁰⁸ Letter, LLL-Prince, August 15, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 147, Folder 10.

Prince's lengthy *criminal* record, which Hynes passed onto Lewis. Lewis was stunned to discover that the man who had been the ADL and AJC's liaison to both the Dickstein and Dies Committees, and who had actually drafted and edited the Dickstein Committee's 1935 final report to Congress, had a felony record that went back twenty years and included multiple convictions and jail time served for forgery, fraud, and passing bad checks.⁹⁰⁹ The ADL and AJC both severed their relationship with Prince.⁹¹⁰ Sullivan must have left a copy of Prince's record behind for Dies as well, because the Committee also severed its relationship with Prince.⁹¹¹ After four years of regular correspondence between Lewis and Prince, the "Frank Prince" folders in the *CRC Papers* end abruptly with Frank Prince's criminal record.⁹¹²

⁹⁰⁹ Regarding Frank J. Prince [Criminal record], *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 147, Folder 10. Lewis sent Frank Prince's criminal record to Sigmund Livingston at the ADL. The ADL dismissed Prince. Prince, however, may have retaliated. In early 1940, *Liberty* magazine ran a series of interviews with Martin Dies in which Dies made similar accusations against Hollywood as a bastion of Communist activity. The allegations launched Congress's 1940s' investigation of Communism in Hollywood. Leon Lewis suspected that Frank Prince might have coached Dies on what to say about Hollywood as a way of getting back at them for his dismissal by the ADL. See two letters both marked, "Lewis to Henry Monsky, March 11, 1940" and their attachments, Memorandum No. 1, Memorandum No. 1a, and Memorandum No. 2, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 129, Folder 6. Frank Prince went on to lead a distinguished career as an upstanding businessman and philanthropist in St. Louis, Missouri. "The Press: This is Vicious," *Time Magazine*, February 22, 1960.

⁹¹⁰ Letter, Lewis to Gubin, February 15, 1939, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 24, Folder 18.

⁹¹¹ Letter, E.K. Gubin to Lewis, January 27, 1939, *ibid.* Part 2, Box 24, Folder 18.

⁹¹² What Sullivan hoped would really "bring blushes to the face of Leon Lewis et.al" was the mysterious poisoning death of Prince's first wife. Officially ruled a suicide, Sullivan believed the evidence was sketchy enough to incriminate Prince as someone who had gotten away with murder to his B'nai Brith employers. See Letter, Edward Sullivan to William Hynes, October 23, 1938; Regarding Frank J. Prince (attachment to letter); and Memorandum, October 31, 1938, all in CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 147, Folder 10.

“A Mass of Pertinent Material”

The Sullivan scandal started the Dies Committee and the LAJCC off on the wrong foot. Never did Leon Lewis imagine that the “reactionaries” he feared would come from the ranks of the Committee’s own investigators. Nevertheless, even before Sullivan’s inflammatory statements hit the press in mid-August 1938, Lewis and Roos had already spent June and July preparing evidence from their respective files for the new Committee. Over four years of incriminating, eyewitness reports lay dormant in the LAJCC’s files, and despite, or perhaps, *in spite* of the Sullivan scandal, Leon Lewis and Joe Roos continued in that work, harkening Richard Gutstadt’s earlier hope that the information the LAJCC held in its files might influence the Committee in the “right” direction:

In view of the mass of very pertinent material which we have gathered, we can contribute to the success of the Committee’s efforts...we must be with and not against the Committee...It should not be difficult to focus part of the investigation in southern California. This having been done, the Congressional Committee, fortified by certain information which we now possess, can dig in very deeply, particularly with regard to certain international aspects [of Nazi activity]...⁹¹³

Between 1938-1940, Leon Lewis provided the Committee with three types of expert assistance: documentary evidence, guidance on the Committee’s own, independent investigation, and recommendations for witnesses and the questions to ask them.

In September 1938, the LAJCC submitted the first edition of its most significant documentary contribution to the Dies Committee, the remarkable *Summary Report of Nazi Activity in Southern California*. The *Summary Report* was

⁹¹³ Letter, Gutstadt to Silberberg, March 25 1937, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 4, Folder 2.

written to guide, if not to justify, the Committee's work. It drew from the thousands of pages of daily reports submitted by Neil Ness, Charles Slocombe, William Bockhacker and Charles Young between 1936-1940. It documented the evolution of the domestic Nazi movement in Los Angeles and challenged the Bund's repeated claims that it was an American defense organization.

The *Summary Report* was organized into three parts. Part I, entitled, "The German-American Bund," constructed a compelling case exposing the German-American Bund as a Nazi agent for the Dies Committee.⁹¹⁴ It presented evidence collected by Hollywood's spies documenting Berlin's clandestine, international propaganda network, its form and function in the United States, and the role the German-American Bund played as a conduit in that network. It described secret meetings between Bund officers in Los Angeles and Nazi Party officials on board German merchant ships in Los Angeles, closed door conferences between Schwinn and German consuls Gyssling, Weidemann and von Killinger, and visits to Deutsches Haus by suspected German espionage agents.⁹¹⁵

Building on the incriminating case made against the Bund in Part I, Parts II and III of the *Report* presented the relationship that domestic right-wing groups in Los Angeles had with the Bund, thus exposing these groups as domestic subversives. Part II of the *Report* was entitled, "The Main Allies of the Bund," and it focused primarily on the political activities of Silver Shirt organizer, Henry Allen and Nazi

⁹¹⁴ *CRC Summary Report*, Part I, CRC Papers, Part 2, Boxes 26-30.

⁹¹⁵ *CRC Summary Report*, Part I, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 26, Folders 9, 10; Box 27, Folders 10-12, 15-21; Box 28, Folders 2-4.

propaganda agent, Leslie Fry. It detailed Henry Allen's association with local Nazi leader Herman Schwinn, his association with other domestic fascist propagandists in Berlin's international fascist network, and the connection between the World Service and the Nazi movement in the United States. Part II also described Allen's frequent, clandestine trips to Mexico, sneaking over the border to confer with the officers of the outlawed Mexican fascist group, the Gold Shirts, his meetings with foreign embassy officials on behalf of Nazi agent Leslie Fry to update them on the progress of the national anti-Communist movement, and a full description of the contents of Allen's briefcase, which further documented the Deatherage-Moseley plot.⁹¹⁶

Part II exposed Leslie Fry as an unregistered agent of the German Ministry of Propaganda. It pulled back the covers on Fry's various political activities, including the front organizations she established to promote Nazism in the United States, the role she played in the Deatherage-Moseley plot, and most importantly, her relationship with the World Service.⁹¹⁷ In service of this latter point, the *Report* related the details of a trap set by the LAJCC in which Hollywood's spy Charles Slocombe subscribed to Fry's newspaper, the *Christian Free Press*, under an alias. Shortly thereafter, copies of the *World Service* from Germany and George Deatherage's *Bulletin* began to arrive at Slocombe's mailbox, addressed *to the alias*, proving that Fry was providing mailing lists to both American and German

⁹¹⁶ *CRC Summary Report*, Part II, *ibid.* Part 2, Box 26, Folder, 12; Box 28, Folder 15-19; Box 29, folders 1-2.

⁹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 257, 59, 68.

associates.⁹¹⁸ The set-up raised questions about Fry's status as an undocumented agent of a foreign government and contributed to her later indictment in the sedition trials of 1944-1946.

Finally, Part III of the LAJCC's *Summary Report* dealt with the connection between fascist activities in southern California and the broader national movement. Entitled "Leading Fascist Individuals and Organizations," Part III documented evidence of a national, Nazi-influenced movement in the United States as witnessed in Los Angeles. Drawing on Slocombe and Ness' eyewitness accounts, it documented the local relationship between the Silver Shirts and the German-American Bund in Los Angeles. It described in full William Dudley Pelley's address to the Bund in 1936 as well as the meeting between Fritz Kuhn and William Dudley Pelley's to ally in order to drive a national fascist movement in the United States.⁹¹⁹

The *Summary Report* provided the Dies Committee with a roadmap for investigating Nazi activities at the regional, national and international level. Updated four times between 1938-1940, the three thousand-page report documented Berlin's insidious propaganda methods, the role of the German-American Bund as an agent of Nazi insurrection, and cast aspersions on domestic right-wing groups that consistently professed "Americanism" by exposing their relationship to Berlin and to the Bund. It was a political document, and as such, relied on the sheer volume of evidence collected by Hollywood's spies over the years to support the Committee's investigation.

⁹¹⁸ Ibid., 260.

⁹¹⁹ *CRC Summary Report*, Part III, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 26, Folders 13-14, Box 29, Folders 7-22.

Betrayed Again

In April 1939, the Dies Committee sent a new chief investigator to the West Coast to resume the work that Edward Sullivan had barely started before being discharged. James Steedman's immediate objective as chief investigator was to repair relations between the Committee and the studio executives, and with Leon Lewis himself. Steedman needed their cooperation to prepare the reports and witnesses for the coming hearings on Nazi activity in southern California; but, Steedman found that resentment and hard-feelings against the Committee still festered in Hollywood nine months after Edward Sullivan's infamous public allegations. Writing to Dies, he related the magnitude of the problem to his boss.

Sullivan's half-digested material from [Red] Hines [sic], "Steedman wrote to Dies, "caused irreparable damage to one of the first two or three most important industries in the United States."⁹²⁰

Steedman informed Dies that he was trying to defuse the hostility by telling the studio executives that Sullivan's report did not represent the Committee's findings, but only the political zeal of a renegade investigator. Steedman's personal assurances, however, fell short. "I am completely unable to win any cooperation from...people who should have wanted to cooperate with me," he wrote to Dies.⁹²¹

To help repair the relationship with the motion picture executives, Steedman proposed that Dies meet privately with the Hollywood moguls during his upcoming visit to California. "I believe that this would be a good strategy for you and the Committee," he wrote, adding that he could arrange to have photographs taken of the

⁹²⁰ Letter, Steedman to Dies, April 25, 1939, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 24, Folder 18.

⁹²¹ Letter, Steedman to Dies, April 25, 1939, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 24, Folder 18.

Congressman with some of the Warner Brothers stars for public relations purposes.⁹²² Steedman enlisted Leon Lewis' help to arrange the luncheon. The luncheon with Dies was held at the Warner Brothers' studio on May 1, 1939. Among the "big shots" invited were Louis B. Mayer, Harry and Jack Warner, Hal Wallis, Daryl Zanuck of Twentieth Century Fox, Joseph Schenck, Harry Cohn of Columbia Pictures, Walt Disney and Samuel Goldwyn.⁹²³

It is not known exactly what transpired during the luncheon, but any amends made by Dies at the May 1, 1939 lunch were destroyed two days later. No sooner had the plates been cleared from the Dies luncheon with the studio executives, than a Dies Committee investigator in Los Angeles landed a near-fatal blow to the LAJCC's covert fact-finding operation. On May 3, a local Committee investigator met Bund leaders Herman Schwinn and Arno Risse at a downtown Los Angeles cafeteria for lunch.⁹²⁴ The investigator had with him a typewritten manuscript, covered in a dark blue report cover, bound at the top, middle and bottom by brass brads.⁹²⁵ Referring to the report, the federal investigator informed Schwinn that it documented all of Schwinn's political activities from the past two years. The agent fanned the pages of the report for Schwinn, to dramatize just how much information the Committee had on him.⁹²⁶

⁹²² Ibid.

⁹²³ Untitled Document, [list of invitees], *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 24, Folder 18.

⁹²⁴ Letter, Steedman to Stripling, May 12, 1939, *Reports, Exhibits, Etc.*, Box 17, Folder "Hurley and Steedman, Report Rec'd May 12." (hereafter, "Letter, Steedman to Stripling, May 12.")

⁹²⁵ The physical description of the report is based on the copy of volumes 1 and 2 of the *CRC Summary Report* found in *Reports, Exhibits, Etc.*, Boxes 113 and 127.

⁹²⁶ Three accounts of what transpired exist. See "Letter, Steedman to Stripling, May 12." The second is a memorandum written by Lewis detailing what he was told about the incident by Steedman's assistant

According to Steedman's later account of the meeting, Schwinn was stunned. "I didn't know they had so much information on me," he told to the investigator.⁹²⁷ Pondering, he said, "I wonder if it isn't our Jewish friends in Hollywood who started this thing. I wouldn't doubt but [t]hat Leon Lewis had something to do with [this]," he said.⁹²⁸ The report shown to Schwinn was, indeed, a copy of the LAJCC's highly confidential *Summary Report*.

The investigator offered to sell the report to Schwinn and in addition, keep Schwinn informed of the Committee's investigation of him...for \$1,500. Schwinn told the investigator that he would have to think about the offer. The two men parted. Schwinn immediately jumped on an airplane and flew to San Francisco to consult with German Consul Fritz Weidemann on the matter.⁹²⁹

Ultimately, Schwinn declined the offer, but Chief Investigator Steedman was compelled to inform Leon Lewis anyway that the LAJCC's undercover fact-finding operation might have been compromised by this federal investigator.⁹³⁰ Steedman told Lewis that the incident as an *intentional* set-up by the government to frame Schwinn bribing a federal officer. Lewis was furious. He doubted Steedman. Lewis wrote that he believed that the agent had been caught in an actual shakedown and that

George Hurley. See memorandum, May 10, 1939, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 24, Folder 18. The third is Hollywood's spy Charles Young's report of what Schwinn told Bund members about the incident. See "Y-9 Report, August 25, 1939," *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 41, Folder 16.

⁹²⁷ Memorandum, May 10, 1939, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 24, Folder 18.

⁹²⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹²⁹ Letter, Steedman to Stripling, May 12; Y-9 Report, August 25, 1939, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 41, Folder 16. The Steedman letter details the week-long intrigue, noting that Schwinn flew to San Francisco to meet with then Consul Weidemann for advice following his first meeting with the over-zealous Dies Committee agent. Steedman speculated that Weidemann advised Schwinn and perhaps recommended ways to turn the situation to his favor.

⁹³⁰ Letter, Steedman to Stripling, May 12, 1939.

Steedman was covering up for his investigator.⁹³¹ The whole setup, Lewis wrote, “...was incompatible with the dignity of a Congressional investigation and if [the plot] had succeeded, they would never [have been] able to [explain] that it was a frame-up.”⁹³²

Once again, the Committee betrayed the LAJCC, but this time, the betrayal struck at the very heart of the covert fact-finding operation in two ways. First, it tipped Schwinn off to the depth and breadth of the information the Committee had on the Bund. After the incident, Schwinn became much more cautious and took greater care to conduct Bund business alone. Thus, after the spring of 1939, the information collected by Hollywood’s spies lacked the substance of their earlier reports. Second, the shakedown incident compromised Charles Slocombe, Lewis’ longest serving and most effective informant. Soon after the incident, Slocombe wrote that he was being “ostracized by the Bund.”⁹³³ Lewis did not believe that this was a coincidence, as Slocombe was the only one of Hollywood’s spies known to Steedman, whereas the rest of Hollywood’s spies were unknown to Dies investigators. Those informants continued to enjoy Schwinn’s confidence after the “frame up.”⁹³⁴

⁹³¹ Memorandum, May 10, 1939, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 24, Folder 18.

⁹³² Ibid.; letter, Steedman to Robert Stripling, May 12, 1938. Three different accounts of the incident exist in the archives: Steedman’s seven page, hand-written report to his immediate superior in Washington, Committee secretary Robert Stripling, which is found in the Dies Committee papers in Washington; Lewis’s account of his meeting with Steedman, and Schwinn’s account of the “frame up,” both in the CRC Papers.

⁹³³ Memorandum No. 1a, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 129, Folder 6.

⁹³⁴ Memorandum No. 1a, attached to Letter, Lewis to Henry Monsky, March 11, 1938 (2), *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 129, Folder 6. Slocombe stopped working inside the Bund after 1938, working exclusively inside the Long Beach Ku Klux Klan thereafter. He provided reports to Lewis on their activities.

The incident also undermined Steedman's objective, namely, to regain trust for the Committee. At the time of the shakedown incident, Steedman was preparing witness lists and interrogatories for the coming testimonies on Nazi activities in Los Angeles. Just two weeks after the Schwinn debacle, Steedman had the gumption to ask Leon Lewis for his assistance. Lewis, still feeling the burn of the betrayal, reluctantly agreed to help Steedman prepare for the upcoming hearings on Nazi activities even though he still didn't trust him.⁹³⁵

Leon Lewis did provide the Dies Committee with a list of witnesses and counsel on questioning each one. On Lewis' recommendation, Steedman subpoenaed three key Bund leaders to appear at the Federal Building in Los Angeles to be interviewed by his team. The Dies Committee papers in Washington show that Arno Risse, F.K. Ferenz, and Willi Kendzia were all questioned in the spring of 1939 in Los Angeles using questions Lewis drafted for the Los Angeles-based investigators.⁹³⁶ Lewis, however, was consistently frustrated with Steedman's conduct of the interviews. Reviewing the transcripts from these interviews, Lewis found that all three Bund leaders had misrepresented facts.⁹³⁷ Lewis offered to review the Bund members' testimonies for inaccuracies, but Steedman, however, did not take Lewis up his offer. Thus, these less than accurate testimonies became part of

⁹³⁵ Memorandum, May 23, 1939, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 24, Folder 18.

⁹³⁶ Memorandum No. 1, 4, attached to Letter, Lewis to Monsky, March 11, 1940, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 129, Folder 6.

⁹³⁷ Memorandum No. 1, 2-3, attached to Letter, Lewis to Monsky, March 11, 1940, *ibid.* Part 2, Box 129, Folder 6.

the Committee's official record, filled with the same kind of misinformation and unchallenged allegations that characterized the Dies Committee's entire record.⁹³⁸

Steedman's handling of Herman Schwinn proved even more disappointing for Lewis. When Steedman arrived in Los Angeles in early April, Lewis had urged him to immediately subpoena Schwinn before Schwinn could destroy key Bund records; but, it took Steedman a month to do so, and in the intervening weeks, the botched shakedown attempt had tipped Schwinn off to the Committee's interest in him. By the time the Committee subpoenaed Schwinn to appear in late May 1939, fully eight weeks had transpired since Steedman's arrival in Los Angeles, and three weeks had passed since the extortion attempt. Hollywood's spy erstwhile informant inside the Bund, William Bockhacker, reported that federal investigators would find no records in Deutsches Haus.⁹³⁹ Schwinn had removed them all, including the Bund's membership list that the subpoena had specifically ordered Schwinn to produce. A defiant Schwinn did not bring the subpoenaed membership list to the interview, and when asked about it, Schwinn told Steedman he didn't know where it was.⁹⁴⁰ Steedman threatened Schwinn with obstruction of justice unless he produced it. Schwinn eventually capitulated, but instead of producing the typewritten membership

⁹³⁸ For the testimonies of Arno Risse, William Kendzia and F.K. Ferenz, see *Los Angeles Numbered Case Files*, RG 233, United States National Archive, Washington, DC, Boxes 12-13.

⁹³⁹ W2 Report, July 7, 1938, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 32, Folder 27. Bockhacker reported that Schwinn had removed all Bund records from Deutsches Haus in anticipation of a government raid or subpoena. Bockhacker wrote, "None of the records are kept in German House. When Congressional Committee arrives, they will find nothing in the house."

⁹⁴⁰ Schwinn's refusal to cooperate with the Committee is covered in a report by Committee investigators Hurley and Steedman. See "Re Herman Max Schwinn and Arno K. Risse," [dated May 20, 1939], *Reports, Exhibits, Etc.*, Box 17, Folder "Hurley and Steedman, Report May 20, 1939;" Report, June 12, 1939, *ibid.*, Box 17, Folder, "Hurley and Steedman, Report June 12, 1939."

list that Steedman anticipated, Schwinn mocked the request by relinquishing five wooden shoeboxes containing hundreds and hundreds of loose metal plates used for printing the Bund's mailing labels instead. The wooden boxes still lie in the national archives, disguising Schwinn's triumph over the Committee.⁹⁴¹

Despite Lewis' disappointments with the Committee's handling of LA's local Bund leaders, the Dies Committee did heed Lewis' recommendations with regard to hearing testimony from Henry Allen and Neil Ness. Both men were called to Washington in 1939. Allen testified on August 22-23, 1939, and Ness in October.⁹⁴² These testimonies not only signify the discreet contribution the LAJCC made to the Committee's investigation, but references to their testimonies made in the Committee's final report left behind the hidden imprint of Jewish political influence on the investigations.

Henry Allen was predictably evasive during his testimony before the Committee. Refusing to answer questions directly and suffering frequent "lapses of memory" concerning his recent political activities and associations, Allen played cat and mouse with the Committee: he denied being a member of the Silver Shirts, feigned knowing the names of any Bund leaders except Schwinn, had no knowledge of any collaborations between the Bund and the Silver Shirts, and did not recall ever

⁹⁴¹ The engraved plates used to print the Bund's mailing list are contained in several wooden boxes found in the Dies Committee archive in Washington.

⁹⁴² Letter, Lewis to Prince, August 22, 1938, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 147, Folder 10. Risse, Ferenz, and Kendzia as well as Leslie Fry were interviewed in Los Angeles. For Leslie Fry's testimony, see *Reports, Exhibits Etc.*, Box 17, Folder "Hurley and Steedman Report, May 25, 1939." For testimonies of Arno Risse, William Kendzia, and F.K. Ferenz, see *Los Angeles Numbered Case Files*, Boxes 12-13.

hearing William Dudley Pelley publicly claim to be the “American Hitler.”⁹⁴³ The truth, however, was to be found in the specificity of the question put to Allen, which reflected Lewis’ interrogatories and the Committee’s familiarity with the contents of the *Summary Report*. Allen, for example, could not remember the details of his meetings with foreign officials during his trip to the East Coast on behalf of Leslie Fry and George Deatherage, just eighteen months earlier. Committee members “reminded” him in their questions that he had met with the German Embassy’s *chargés d’affaires*, Hans Thomsen, and “coached” him into remembering the purpose and content of that meeting: to update Reich officials on the progress of the fascist movement in the U.S.⁹⁴⁴ Over the course of Allen’s two-day testimony, it was the wording of the questions put to Allen that revealed the full range of Nazi-influenced activity in Los Angeles: the Bund and the Silver Shirts were closely allied in Los Angeles; William Dudley Pelley had declared himself to be the “America Hitler” at the 1936 joint meeting of the Bund and Silver Shirts; the two groups had worked together closely to distribute Nazi-influenced propaganda; much of that propaganda came from the World Service in Germany; and, the Bund and Silver Shirts co-sponsored of the Anti-Communist Federation convention in Los Angeles in 1938.⁹⁴⁵

In October 1939, Neil Ness also appeared before the Committee in Washington on Leon Lewis’ recommendation.⁹⁴⁶ Leon Lewis worked with Steedman to prepare

⁹⁴³ Henry Allen Testimony, 3974, 3975, 3977, 3979.

⁹⁴⁴ Henry Allen Testimony, 3971-4179.

⁹⁴⁵ Henry Allen Testimony, *passim*.

⁹⁴⁶ Neil Ness Testimony, 5490-5528. Ness was the only one of Hollywood’s spies to testify in a federal proceeding in the pre-war years that the LAJCC monitored right-wing activity in the city.

the brief used by the Committee to interview Ness.⁹⁴⁷ Unlike Allen, Neal Ness was a friendly witness to the Committee. For two days Ness related first-hand accounts of Herman Schwinn's secret meetings with Nazi Party officials on board German ships, and Consul Gyssling's financial assistance to the Bund.⁹⁴⁸

Ness' testimony came a month after the start of the war in Europe.

Consequently, the Committee also probed Ness about the potential threat that pro-Nazi forces in the United States might pose American security in addition to their questions concerning the Bund and the Silver Shirts.⁹⁴⁹ Ness related accounts of suspected espionage during his year as an undercover informant and conversations he had the Bund discuss plans to sabotage the water supply on the West Coast when "the day" came.⁹⁵⁰ According to Ness, Bund leaders on the west coast believed that they could count on one hundred members to sabotage the West Coast when the time came.

"We always discussed what we would do toward helping German [if war came]...such as blowing up waterworks and munitions plants and docks...espionage, too. We planned on paralyzing the Pacific coast from Seattle to San Diego...which included blowing up the Hercules powder plant -- where they make munitions -- and also blowing up all of the docks and warehouses along the water front."⁹⁵¹

Set against the background of the new European war, Ness' revelations about German spies and Bund sabotage took on new significance for national security. "There is nothing American or political about the organization at all," Ness told the Committee,

⁹⁴⁷ Ness-Lewis correspondence, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 40, Folder 1; Letter, George Hurley to Lewis, October 3, 1939, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 24, Folder 19.

⁹⁴⁸ Neal Ness Testimony, 5497-99.

⁹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 5518, 5526-27, 5528-9.

⁹⁵⁰ [N2] Report, August 20, 1936, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 7, Folder 12.

⁹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 5526-27.

“it is purely an arm of the German Government. At least that was my observation.”⁹⁵²

A Pyrrhic Victory

Despite two years’ of disappointment and betrayal, the LAJCC’s gamble to support the Dies Committee paid off. In its 1940 report to Congress, the Committee exposed the German-American Bund as the threat to democracy that Lewis hoped it would.⁹⁵³ The Dies Committee report, entitled “Investigation of Un-American Propaganda Activities in the United States,” stunned the Committee’s liberal critics with its even-handed conclusions, condemning both the German-American Bund and the Communist Party as subversive forces in American society.⁹⁵⁴ the Committee’s most severe critic between 1938-1940, the *New York Times*, found the Committee’s report to be “an astonishingly able and balanced document.”⁹⁵⁵

Presumed to have been authored by the liberals on the Committee, the *Report* detailed the Committee’s findings concerning Communist and Nazi activity in the country, concluding that both groups were actively working to undermine democracy in America.⁹⁵⁶ The twenty-five page report dedicated most of its ink to the problems of left-wing subversive activities, reflecting the disproportionate amount of time it had spent hearing witnesses on that subject; but, the report also detailed the Committee’s

⁹⁵² Ibid., 5527.

⁹⁵³ Report No. 1476, 21 (1940).

⁹⁵⁴ Ogden, “The Dies Committee,” 177; Wesley Price, “We Investigate Martin Dies,” *The American Magazine* (1940): 76.

⁹⁵⁵ *New York Times*, quoted in Ogden, “The Dies Committee,” 177.

⁹⁵⁶ Ogden, “The Dies Committee,” 177.

discovery of “a vast system of front organizations cloaking espionage, sabotage and propaganda activities under the direction of the Nazi government” in the U.S.⁹⁵⁷

The Dies Committee report confirmed that Nazi forces were at work across the country. It specifically called out the role that Berlin had played in fomenting a domestic, Nazi-influenced movement. The Third Reich, through its international publications agencies the Fichte-Bund and the World Service, had waged a clandestine propaganda war in the United States, pumping an “unprecedented volume” of hate literature into the country to support domestic groups in a revolutionary movement that advocated a “radical change in the American form of government.”⁹⁵⁸ These domestic right-wing groups, referred to in the report as “rackets,” secured their political and financial support from the most “misguided citizens” in the country by appealing to “the most base forms of religious and racial hatred.”⁹⁵⁹

The Committee’s final report went onto confirm the leadership that the German-American Bund had provided to this domestic, Nazi-influenced, fascist movement. The Bund, the Committee declared, was an agent of a foreign government that “receives its inspiration from Nazi Government of Germany through various propaganda organizations which have been set up by that Government and which function under the control and supervision of the Nazi Ministry of Propaganda and Enlightenment.”⁹⁶⁰ The Bund had organized meetings, political speakers, rallies, and conventions across the country “...to disseminate this information, recruit followers,

⁹⁵⁷ *Jewish Telegraph Agency News Letter*, Sunday, January 5, 1941, Vol. VIII, No. 22, 1, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 25, Folder 2.

⁹⁵⁸ Report 1476, 21.

⁹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 15.

secure financial support and encourage force and violence against religious and racial minorities in this country.”⁹⁶¹ Concluding that the Bund’s political motives and methods were “strikingly similar” to the “front” politics set up by Communist groups in the United States, the Committee concluded that the Bund along with the Communist Party, “should...be classified...as an agent of a foreign government and [be] equally condemned.”⁹⁶² The Dies Committee’s final report validated eight years of personal risk and sacrifice that Hollywood’s spies, the members of the LAJCC and Leon Lewis endured in order to combat Nazism in Los Angeles.

* * *

The Dies Committee investigation as well as its final report bore the hidden imprint of the Los Angeles Jewish Community Committee. Two of the sixteen witnesses called before the Committee to testify on domestic fascist activity listed in the report had come from Lewis. The Committee had used Lewis’ interrogatories and the *Summary Report* to extract the details of insurgent Nazi activity from those witnesses, and the Committee’s final report had cited evidence that came from Henry Allen and Neil Ness. Despite the disappointments, betrayals and blunders, the LAJCC’s gamble to work with the Dies Committee had paid off: the emerging Nazi-influenced movement in the United States had been revealed to the American people and, in so doing, had been largely vanquished.

Leon Lewis and the LAJCC were vindicated. In December 1940, Leon Lewis delivered his first annual report to the LAJCC since his 1934 address following the

⁹⁶¹ Ibid., 21.

⁹⁶² Ibid., 23.

closure of the McCormack-Dickstein Committee investigation. Lewis (again) declared the victory over Nazism, informing the board, “In the last seven years that have since elapsed, the American public opinion has nearly caught up with us.” Citizens of all faiths now understood that “organized antisemitism was not an end in itself, but merely a means to an end which spelled disaster for the fundamental liberties and civic rights of our citizenry as a whole.” Vindicated, Lewis asserted that the LAJCC had accomplished its goal, exposing the “corruptive influences in our national structure” to those in power who could mold public opinion. “At no time in the history of this land,” Lewis assured the board, “[was] the general public more thoroughly aware of the fact that professional haters are potential traitors.”⁹⁶³

Unfortunately, the LAJCC’s 1940 triumph proved a Pyrrhic victory. Just two months later, the Jews of Hollywood found themselves in the cross-hairs of the un-American activity investigations. In the February 17, 1940 issue of *Liberty Magazine*, Martin Dies personally assailed the leaders of the motion picture industry as sponsors of the Communist conspiracy in America:

“From what I saw and learned while in Los Angeles...Hollywood contributed large sums of money to the Communist Party. I was also convinced that Communist influence was responsible for the subtle but very effective propaganda which appeared in such films as *Juarez*, *Blockade* and *Fury*...”⁹⁶⁴

⁹⁶³ Report of Los Angeles Community Committee Given at Annual Meeting, December 22, 1940, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 9, Folder 2.

⁹⁶⁴ Note that in the article, “The Reds in Hollywood,” the year of the meeting is misprinted. The luncheon took place in May 1939. In the article, Dies misrepresents how the luncheon came to be, saying that it was the executives who were anxious to meet with him, when, in fact, the Steedman correspondence indicates that it was Steedman’s idea. See letter, Steedman to Dies, April 25, 1939, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 24, Folder 18.

The surreptitious injection of Communist messages in films, however, was not the only “evidence” that Dies used to press his case against Hollywood. Invoking the anti-Fascist/anti-Communist political binary of the era, Dies insinuated that the Hollywood executives themselves were Communists *because* they were ardent anti-Fascists. Dies pointed out that “the producers were almost unanimous in the belief that...the real threat [in the country] came from Fascists and Nazis.” So much so, that “...for many years they maintained an elaborate ‘detective agency’ whose professed purpose is to keep the producers informed regarding Nazi activities in the United States and particularly in California.”⁹⁶⁵

Martin Dies had betrayed the LAJCC’s anti-Nazi fact-finding operation, *twisting* it against the moguls as evidence of their *Communist* proclivities. Exploiting widely-held concerns about Hollywood and Jewish power, Martin Dies vowed “...to expose fearlessly and fully the truth about Communism in the Hollywood colony.”⁹⁶⁶

For six years the Jews of Hollywood had funded the LAJCC’s undercover operation to combat Nazism in America. Hollywood’s spies had influenced and informed both congressional investigations of un-American activity in the United States during the 1930s. At 1940, however, the politics of resistance had twisted their patriotic efforts into suspicious, subversive activity. The Jews of Hollywood now found themselves the subject of the very congressional investigations they had supported for so long.

⁹⁶⁵ Dies, “The Reds in Hollywood,” 50.

⁹⁶⁶ Steven Alan Carr, *Hollywood and Anti-Semitism: A Cultural History up to World War II* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Dies, “The Reds in Hollywood,” 50.

Conclusion

The LAJCC's experience with the Dies Committee illustrates both the potential and the limits that political approaches to resistance posed for the Jewish leaders of the LAJCC. American Jewish leaders had opposed the commission of another congressional investigation into subversive activities because they feared that such an investigation would only unleash the reactionary forces that the LAJCC was trying to defeat. It didn't take long for the Dies Committee to fulfill those fears. It was the Dies Committee's investigators *themselves* who betrayed Hollywood and the undercover fact-finding operation – multiple times. Those betrayals belied the limits of Jewish political influence with the Committee. Unlike 1934, Lewis and his AJC colleagues did not have the political influence with the Dies Committee that they had with the McCormack Committee. Leon Lewis did not have direct contact with the Committee chairman, Martin Dies, as he had with Dickstein and McCormack. The ADL/AJC's chief investigator Frank Prince, did not have the same intimate relationship with Dies as he had had with McCormack, becoming *persona non grata* with Dies as a result of the Sullivan scandal; and, although the Dies Committee was launched in 1938 in response to two Nazi-related incidents in New York City, the Committee quickly revealed its reactionary agenda and focused exclusively on the hunt for Communist subversives. Thus, from the start, the LAJCC's relationship with the Dies Committee exposed the limits of Jewish political influence in the United States in the late 1930s.

Nevertheless, despite these limitations, the LAJCC did wield some political influence over the Committee. After all, the counsel that Lewis provided to the Committee informed the Committee's investigation of Nazi activity in Los Angeles, guided its choice of witnesses, and contributed to its final report in which the Committee officially condemned the Bund and Berlin as for their subversive political activities in the United States. Ultimately, the key to the LAJCC's political influence with the Dies Committee was the quality of the information collected by Hollywood's spies. Heavily documented, the information in the *Summary Report* directed the Committee's investigation and corroborated the findings of other witnesses. Despite the betrayals, disappointments and blunders, the Committee did precisely what Leon Lewis hoped they would: expose insurgent Nazism to the critical light of day.

Conclusion

America's entrance into World War II marked the end of the LAJCC's undercover fact-finding operation. On December 10, 1941, the day before the United States declared war on Germany, the FBI conducted a coordinated raid on German-American Bund cells across the country. Seventy-six Bund leaders, including Herman Schwinn and Hans Diebel, were arrested and held as "dangerous aliens."⁹⁶⁷ In Los Angeles, the FBI also raided Deutsches Haus, confiscating Bund documents, correspondence, maps and 10,000 pieces of antisemitic literature.⁹⁶⁸ With the declaration of war on Germany, the organized pro-Nazi movement in Los Angeles fell apart. Any remaining Nazi-influenced groups in the city disbanded, their erstwhile members taking refuge with isolationist groups, most notably the local chapter of America First. As for Hollywood's spies, after Pearl Harbor, the FBI and military intelligence assumed responsibility for monitoring the remnants of the far right, thus obviating the need for the Los Angeles Jewish Community Committee's independent, fact-finding surveillance of the Nazi-influenced right wing in Los Angeles. The work of Hollywood's spies was complete.

As this study has demonstrated, Jewish leaders in Los Angeles were not nearly as paralyzed by political antisemitism in the 1930s as the historiography has long held. Between 1933-1941, the LAJCC maintained an undercover, fact-finding

⁹⁶⁷ "Ex-Bund Chief Here, 76 Others Seized," *Los Angeles Examiner*, December 10, 1941, Los Angeles Examiner Clipping File, Special Collections, Doheny Library, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA (hereafter, Los Angeles Examiner Clipping File).

⁹⁶⁸ "Ex-Bund Chief Here, 76 Others Seized," *Los Angeles Examiner*, December 10, 1941, *ibid.*; Letter, Lewis to Mrs. Mischel, January 6, 1944, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 111, Folder 20. The materials confiscated in the raid on Deutsches Haus are in Records of the Los Angeles Units, Records of the German-American Bund, 1928-1945, United States National Archives, College Park, MD.

surveillance of the German-American Bund and its domestic partners. Using the information collected by Hollywood's spies to arm congressional committees, interfaith coalitions and patriotic organizations with the political ammunition needed to discredit the Bund and its Nazi-influenced allies, the LAJCC demonstrated a level of political agency and influence previously unexplored in the historiography. In the wake of the FBI raids on the Bund, Leon Lewis expressed his satisfaction with the "inestimable contribution" the LAJCC had made to the nation's defense.⁹⁶⁹ "[T]he drudgery entailed in systematizing and making readily available the mass of data assembled" had ultimately paid off: "enemy agents and morale saboteurs" had been rounded-up and scores of un-American groups in southern California had disbanded.⁹⁷⁰ Although small, secret antisemitic organizations persisted in Los Angeles during the war, incidents of organized antisemitism in the city disappeared.⁹⁷¹

If the case of the LAJCC revises the consensus on American Jewish political agency and influence in the 1930s, it also affirms the consensus on the Jewish approach to self-defense in the United States. The Jewish leaders of the LAJCC understood American political culture and their position in it. They understood Americans' antipathy for "special interest group" politics, and thus, as a minority group, adhered to a "sacred" principle of Jewish self-defense in the United States: universalism. Acting as Americans first and Jews second, the Jewish leaders of the

⁹⁶⁹ Report of the Los Angeles Jewish Community Committee, 1941, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 9, Folder 3.

⁹⁷⁰ Report of the Los Angeles Jewish Community Committee, 1941, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 9, Folder 3.

⁹⁷¹ Report of Los Angeles Community Committee Given at Annual Meeting, December 22, 1940, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 9, Folder 2.

LAJCC engaged Nazism as a threat to American democracy, and not as a threat to American Jews.

This universalist approach was critical to the LAJCC's political efficacy, as it informed the strategies and tactics they adopted. Leon Lewis, the LAJCC and their Jewish counterparts in Seattle, Portland, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, Miami, and New York all understood the primacy of transparency in a democracy.⁹⁷² Their offense-by-proxy strategy and their covert fact-finding methods may have been borne from a hostile political environment, but they were conceived to safeguard democratic culture. In his first letter to Mendel Silberberg in 1934, Richard Gutstadt clearly articulated the universalist objective underlying the American Jewish strategy for combatting insurgent Nazism in the United States:

Ours is a carefully planned campaign of education...The subversive impulses which threaten and definitely plan the destruction of American institutions must be dragged into the open and all these antisemitic activities revealed only as the smoke screen concealing the real purpose.⁹⁷³

Six years later, as European democracies buckled under the brutality of Nazi totalitarianism and European Jews were herded into ghettos, Leon Lewis affirmed

⁹⁷² For evidence of the undercover operation in Portland, see correspondence, Lewis to Robinson, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 23, Folder 13; for Seattle, see Letter, Lewis to P. Allen Rickles, December 3, 1937, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 19, Folder 10; for Miami, see Oscar and Stanley Wexler Cohen, ed. *Not the Work of a Day: Anti-Defamation League Oral Memories*, vol. 1-6 (New York: Anti-Defamation League, 1987); for Boston, see letter, Frank Prince to Leon Lewis, January 11, 1934, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 26, Folder 14; for Indianapolis and Saint Louis, see Letter, Frank Prince to Lewis, January 19, 1935, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 26, Folder 22; for Cincinnati, see letter, Goldberg-Lewis, January 15, 1934, *ibid.*, Part 1, Box 22, Folder 24, and Cincinnati Jewish Community Relations Papers, MS 202, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, OH; for covert activity conducted by the AJC, see Naomi Cohen, *Not Free to Desist: The American Jewish Committee, 1906-1966*, (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1972), chapter 9.

⁹⁷³ Letter, Gutstadt to Silberberg, March 27, 1934, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 23, Folder 2.

the efficacy of the LAJCC's universalist strategy to combat Nazism in the United States:

[O]ur effort, though directed primarily against exhibitions of anti-Semitism, was in fact a program in defense of democracy. Side by side with the determination to discover all there was to learn about every major anti-Jewish group or organization, was the equally important and more far reaching conclusion that such research and fact-finding was surely the laboratory demonstration that democracy was being undermined in its fundamental ideals.⁹⁷⁴

The quest to expose the duplicity of the Bund and its nativist allies, therefore, became the justification for the LAJCC's covert fact-finding operation, and information became the key to its political efficacy.

If information was the key to the LAJCC's political efficacy, then faith in American democratic culture was the wellspring for its agency.⁹⁷⁵ By providing liberal and left-leaning groups with information for the counter-propaganda campaign promoting a more tolerant and inclusive cultural construction of "100% Americanism," the Jewish leaders of the LAJCC demonstrated their faith in the equanimity of the American people; and where that appeal fell short, Lewis frankly acknowledged that the self-defense campaign relied just as much on Americans' self-interest as it did on their sense of justice and fair play.⁹⁷⁶ "Our Community Committee," Lewis wrote, "like other groups in the same field, has functioned as a public relation agency following the usual strategies of publicity and making an

⁹⁷⁴ Report of Los Angeles Community Committee Given at Annual Meeting, December 22, 1940, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 9, Folder 2.

⁹⁷⁵ Stuart Svonkin, *Jews against Prejudice: American Jews and the Fight for Civil Liberties* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 16.

⁹⁷⁶ Report of Los Angeles Community Committee Given at Annual Meeting, December 22, 1940, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 9, Folder 2; Untitled Report, October 29, 1941, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 9, Folder 3.

appeal, either blunt or discreet, to the self-interest of the public.”⁹⁷⁷ By the late 1930s, hundreds of Jews and non-Jews supported the work of the LAJCC, because “they too, suddenly realized the nature of the attack being made upon our country and appreciate[d], more than ever before, that the so-called “Jewish problem” impinge[d] directly upon the self-interest of all strata of American life.”⁹⁷⁸ The LAJCC’s political efficacy, therefore, was rooted in their universalist approach to self-defense. Faith in Americans’ equanimity and self-interest powered their political agency and the information they collected was the source of their influence.

The LAJCC’s political influence did not end, however, with the advent of World War II. The information their informants collected before the war continued to be the source of their political influence during the war. Between 1942 and 1945, the information in the LAJCC’s files was deemed so reliable by law enforcement and military intelligence officials that these agencies came to rely on the LAJCC as a source of evidence in a variety of state and federal investigations and prosecutions. In fact, federal and military agents called so frequently on Lewis and Roos during the war years, that decades later Joe Roos recalled that the “office was like a pigeon coop. [T]he FBI guy [would leave] and [a] Naval Intelligence man [would] walk in. It was continuous.”⁹⁷⁹

During the war, the LAJCC flexed Jewish political influence at both the state and federal levels. In California, the LAJCC cooperated with the 1942 California

⁹⁷⁷ Untitled Report, October 29, 1941, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 9, Folder 3.

⁹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷⁹ Leonard and Murray Wood Pitt, “Joseph Roos Oral History,” Joseph Roos Papers, Doheny Library Special Collections, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA, Tape 1, Side 2.

state grand jury, providing information on the activities of former Bund members and on suspected Axis (both German and Japanese) agents in southern California.⁹⁸⁰

Federal and military officials also consulted the LAJCC's files on a regular basis. In the months immediately following the United States' entry into the war, Dies Committee investigator James Steedman regularly called on Lewis and Roos for information on the Dies Committee's ever-growing list of suspected Communists and Axis sympathizers.⁹⁸¹ Federal prosecutors relied on the LAJCC for evidence in lawsuits brought against former Bund members and their right wing allies. Between 1943-1945, the LAJCC provided the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service with evidence to support the denaturalization suits it brought against former Los Angeles Bund members; and, in 1942, when the U.S. Department of Justice brought charges against forty-two foreign and native-born right-wing activists for sedition, the U.S. Attorney General's office regularly requested documents and exhibits from Lewis and Roos as well.⁹⁸²

Closer to home, the LAJCC emerged as an important agent of "civic cooperation" within LA's emerging wartime, civil rights movement. Between 1942-

⁹⁸⁰ California Assembly Fact Finding Committee on Un-American Activities in California, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 21, Folders 5-24 and Box 22, Folder 1; see "Grand Jury Investigation of Subversive Activities Sacramento County" files, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 22, Folders 10-24 and Box 23, Folders 1-9.

⁹⁸¹ See Ellis Zacharias files, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 42, Folders 1-4. In fact, the LAJCC's monitoring of Japanese activity in Los Angeles between 1939-1941 may have contributed to the federal government's perception that a portion of the Japanese population in southern California was dangerous and thus influencing the later internment of Japanese citizens. Ellen Eisenberg quoted in Shana Bernstein, *Bridges of Reform: Interracial Civil Rights Activism in Twentieth-Century Los Angeles* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 75.

⁹⁸² Denaturalization Cases: U.S. District Court, Southern California District, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 22, Folders 3-8; Sedition Trials: Correspondence, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 22, Folders 18-21; Joseph Roos Papers, University of Southern California, Doheny Library, Special Collections, Box "Correspondence," Folder "Correspondence, 1940s."

1945, racism and racial violence by the white majority against Mexican- and African-American minorities in Los Angeles escalated to scandalous proportions.⁹⁸³ A rise in individual incidents of antisemitism accompanied this broader pattern. Concerned that racial violence might spread to the city's Jews, the LAJCC responded by shifting its political focus to fighting racism.⁹⁸⁴ Jewish civil security, Lewis reasoned, could be not ensured unless it was assured for all minorities. Addressing the board of the LAJCC, Lewis declared that

“The attitude of our fellow citizens toward the Negro, the Japanese-American, the Mexican-American, is obviously in the final analysis just as important to the maintenance of the democratic principle as is the attitude toward the Jew.”⁹⁸⁵

Thus, between 1941-1945, the LAJCC redefined the enemy, broadened its patriotic mission and adapted the lessons it had learned fighting Nazism in the 1930s to combatting racism in Los Angeles. And, just as their fight against Nazism had been framed by universalist terms, so too was the LAJCC's fight against racism.

During the war years, the LAJCC became a catalyst for moderate civil rights reform in Los Angeles.⁹⁸⁶ Combining their influential business and political connections with the experience they had acquired in combatting prejudice and discrimination during the 1930s, the Jewish leaders of the LAJCC played an important role in the interracial civil rights coalitions that developed in Los Angeles

⁹⁸³ Draft, January 18, 1945, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 9, Folder 3; Bernstein, *Bridges of Reform: Interracial Civil Rights Activism in Twentieth-Century Los Angeles*, chapter 3.

⁹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 96-99.

⁹⁸⁵ Untitled, December 26, 1945, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 9, Folder 3.

⁹⁸⁶ Bernstein, *Bridges of Reform: Interracial Civil Rights Activism in Twentieth-Century Los Angeles*, 10, 91.

during World War II.⁹⁸⁷ Taking seats on the Mayor's Council for Civic Unity, the County Council for Interracial Progress, the Mayor's Committee for Home Front Unity, the Supervisors Committee for Interracial Progress, and the Bureau for Intercultural Education, representatives from the LAJCC introduced the strategies and tactics they had developed during the 1930s to the new interracial and interfaith coalitions of the 1940s. Thus, the early civil rights movement in Los Angeles bore the distinctive imprint Jewish political influence.⁹⁸⁸

The experience that the LAJCC garnered in "civic cooperation" at the local level elevated it to a new position of political influence at the national level. In cities across the country, Jewish leaders faced similar community relations challenges. Between 1942-1945, Jewish leaders from Seattle, Minneapolis, Pittsburgh, San Francisco, and Detroit called on Leon Lewis to advise them on the formation of their own community relations councils.⁹⁸⁹ By the end of the war, these Jewish communities across the country were forming community relations councils to address intergroup conflict and to promote intergroup understanding and tolerance modeled after the LAJCC. In 1945, the LAJCC itself was reorganized as the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) of the Jewish Federation of Los Angeles.⁹⁹⁰ Comprised of representatives from over 50 Jewish communal organizations in Los

⁹⁸⁷ Ibid., 91, 98.

⁹⁸⁸ Untitled report, December 26, 1945, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 9, Folder 3.

⁹⁸⁹ See Lewis's various letters in *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 5, Folder 22. For Lewis's address to the Jewish leaders of Detroit, see Paper to Be Read by Mr. Leon Lewis at Detroit Conference on January 27-28-29, 1940, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 9, Folder 7. A copy of this same address was sent to the AJC in May 1941. See letter, Leon Lewis to George Hexter, May 14, 1941, American Jewish Committee Papers, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York, NY. GEN-13, Box 3, Folder, "Communal Organizations, 1941-1959.

⁹⁹⁰ LAJC Council Annual Report, December 13, 1946, *ibid.*, Part 2, Box 9, Folder 6.

Angeles, the JCRC was responsible for addressing issues of prejudice, discrimination and intergroup relations, and became the official public relations arm for the organized Jewish community in the city.⁹⁹¹

The emergence of the LAJCC at the local and national levels owes much to its leaders. While the historiography on American Jewish political leadership and organization during the 1930s bemoans its dysfunction, the LAJCC stands as an example of outstanding Jewish communal leadership and organization. Under Leon Lewis's guidance, the LAJCC proved to be one of the most effective Jewish communal organizations in Los Angeles and a role model for other Jewish communities. According to Lewis, the Committee was unencumbered by the internecine factions or struggles that plagued other Jewish defense organizations. Twelve years after the Committee was formed, a sizable number of the founding members were still on its board, and Lewis consistently expressed pride in the unity among LAJCC members and their commitment to the cause.⁹⁹²

There is a caveat to Lewis' portrayal of the LAJCC as a unified, Jewish community organization. Between 1933-1945, the Committee was comprised of like-minded, middle and upper middle class Jewish men (and some women). While their commitment to the cause accounted for much of the Committee's effectiveness, the fact that the Committee excluded the more "radical" elements of the Jewish

⁹⁹¹ Deborah Dash Moore, *To the Golden Cities: Pursuing the American Jewish Dream in Miami and L.A.* (New York: Free Press, 1994), 199.

⁹⁹² Draft, January 18, 1945, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 9, Folder 3.

community accounts for the “harmony” Lewis described.⁹⁹³ Nevertheless, the LAJCC’s organizational leadership and political efficacy stood in sharp contrast with the embattled ADL and AJC.⁹⁹⁴

Leon Lewis’ leadership was critical to the LAJCC’s political efficacy. His ADL experience, knowledge of the law and an unflappable confidence were essential to the group’s stability and longevity; but, what truly differentiated the LAJCC’s political agency and influence from other community-based Jewish defense organizations around the country was the participation of the Jews of Hollywood. It was, after all, Hollywood’s financial backing in 1934 that transformed the DAV investigators into Hollywood’s spies, and it was the moguls’ on-going support that made the undercover, fact-finding operation viable for so many years.

First, the producers’ combative temperaments provided the LAJCC with an intangible confidence that American Jews in other cities may not have had. As first generation immigrants to America, the moguls were socialized in the rough-and-tumble business climate of early twentieth century American commerce. They were tough competitors and their “take no prisoners” will to win shaped their response to the Nazi threat in their city and in their country.⁹⁹⁵ Consequently, the studio

⁹⁹³ Shana Bernstein, “From Civil Defense to Civil Rights: The Growth of Jewish Interracial Civil Rights Activism in Los Angeles,” in *The Jewish Role in American Life: Annual Review*, ed. William Devereil (Los Angeles: USC Casden Institute, 2009), 58-60.

⁹⁹⁴ Gulie Ne’eman Arad, *America, Its Jews, and the Rise of Nazism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), chapter 5; Henry L. Feingold, *Did American Jewry Do Enough During the Holocaust?* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University, 1985), introduction, chapter 10.

⁹⁹⁵ Neal Gabler, *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood*, (New York: Crown Publishers, 1988), Part I.

representatives were not mere honorary members of the Committee.⁹⁹⁶ They were working members, integral to its success. Representatives from all eight major Hollywood studios sat on the LAJCC board from its very inception. They attended meetings every other Friday for twelve years and worked on its subcommittees. They provided input, time and money to the cause, and in 1937, they established the Motion Picture Division of the LAJCC to handle special media productions to combat extremism and promote a more tolerant version of “100% Americanism.” The contributions of the Jews of Hollywood distinguished the LAJCC from similar defense groups around the country, and pushed it to the fore in American and American Jewish politics in the 1930s.

Proof of the political and financial value that the moguls brought to the LAJCC is evident in ADL director Richard Gutstadt’s several attempts to commandeer their financial support away from the LAJCC to the ADL.⁹⁹⁷ Several times during the 1930s, Gutstadt tried to convince the moguls to redirect their financial support of their local Nazi resistance program to the national program run by the ADL. In August 1938, Gutstadt made such an appeal in Hollywood. Inviting thirty leading producers, directors and actors from Hollywood to a private meeting at Harry Warner’s house to discuss the impending Dies Committee hearings. Specifically leaving Lewis and Silberberg off the guest list, Gutstadt tried to discredit Leon Lewis to his guests, and once again tried to persuade his wealthy guests to shift

⁹⁹⁶ Draft, January 18, 1945, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 9, Folder 3.

⁹⁹⁷ As early as 1933, Gutstadt looked to Hollywood to support the ADL’s work at the national level. Letter, Gutstadt to Lewis, October 17, 1933, CRC Papers, Part 1, Box 22, Folder 20.

their financial support to an organization that could conduct the fight the right way at the national level.⁹⁹⁸

Gutstadt's ploy backfired. The Hollywood men immediately rose to Lewis' defense, defended the LAJCC, and rebuffed Gutstadt.⁹⁹⁹ From that day on, the relationship between the LAJCC and the ADL was never the same. The daily correspondence that Leon Lewis and Richard Gutstadt had conducted for five years came to an end during 1938, and with it, the close collaboration the two organizations had previously enjoyed.¹⁰⁰⁰ From roughly that point on, Leon Lewis carved out political relationships for the LAJCC with the Dies Committee, independent of the ADL and the AJC. The absence of personal correspondence between Lewis and Gutstadt during the Dies Committee years stands in stark contrast to the close working relationship the two men maintained in 1934 during the McCormack-Dickstein investigation. The LAJCC exerted as much, if not more influence than the ADL or the AJC in the fight against insurgent Nazism. During the war, the LAJCC's reputation and political agency continued to grow, as it engaged with military intelligence, and the U.S. Department of Justice.¹⁰⁰¹

⁹⁹⁸ Memoranda, nos. 585-588, all dtd August 30, 1938, CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 147, Folder 10.

⁹⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰⁰ The ADL correspondence files in the CRC Papers from 1938 contain mostly form letters sent out from Chicago to the ADL's "key men," and in contrast to the correspondence files from earlier years, very few personal letters between Richard Gutstadt and Leon Lewis.

¹⁰⁰¹ Following the August 30, 1938 meeting held by Harry Warner for these thirty or so Hollywood leaders, Leon Lewis' personal correspondence with Richard Gutstadt all but ceases. The two men, who had corresponded daily for nearly five years, stop writing to each other, and the ADL correspondence files in the CRC Papers after 1938 contain only form letters sent out by the ADL to its key members. See "ADL/BB- National Correspondence" between 1939-1941, CRC Papers, Part 2, Boxes 128-129.

The LAJCC's emergence as a community-based Jewish defense organization with national political influence challenges the historiographical conceptualization of the AJC, ADL and American Jewish Congress as "national" Jewish self-defense organizations in the 1930s. While all three of these groups developed national constituencies and political influence in Washington after World War II, during the 1930s, only the ADL had a national membership base, by virtue of being a program of B'nai B'rith, that might have earned it status as a "national" Jewish defense organization. The AJC had some political influence in Washington to qualify it as a "national" Jewish political organization, which the LAJCC also had. Its relationships with the McCormack-Dickstein and Dies committees, military intelligence and the Justice Department call into question whether "the big three" were truly "national" Jewish defense organizations, or rather, local defense organizations located in cities with large Jewish populations that had, like the LAJCC, certain assets that accorded them national influence. Within this reconceptualization, Los Angeles emerges as a new site of American Jewish political influence by 1945, entitling the LAJCC to its place among the "big three" in the historiography of American Jewish political agency in the 1930s.

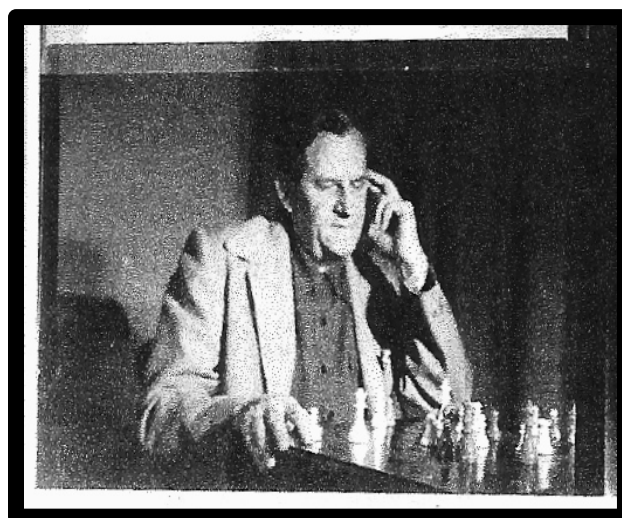
Appendix 1:
Photographs

Chapter 2, Image 1: Herman Schwinn



Source: Records of the German-American Bund, *Records of the Los Angeles Units*.
URG 131, Entry 315. Box 2, United States National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Chapter 3, Image 1: *Leon Lewis, Chessmaster (n.d., c. 1945)*



Source: Claire Lewis Read

Appendix 1, con't:

Chapter 3, Image 2: John Schmidt following in- court death threat, January 1934



Source: *Los Angeles Examiner*, January 19, 1934

Appendix 1, con't:

Chapter 3, Image 3: Photographing the Courtroom, January 19, 1934
(Original slightly damaged)



Source: *Los Angeles Examiner*, January 19, 1934

Chapter 6, Image 1: German Day Celebration, c. 1936 (Photographer: Neil Ness)



Source: CRC Papers

Appendix 1, con't

Chapter 6, Image 1: German Day Celebration, c. 1936 (Photographer: Neil Ness)



Source: CRC Papers

Chapter 3, Image 3: German Day Celebration, c. 1938 (Photographer unknown)



Source: Dies Committee Papers, *Los Angeles Numbered Case Files*, RG 233, United States National Archives, Washington D.C.

Appendix 1, con't

Chapter 6, Image 4: Restaurant, Deutsches Haus (Photographer Unknown)



Source: CRC Papers

Chapter 8, Image 1: Protest Outside Anti-Communist Conference, August 1938



Source: CRC Papers

Appendix 2: Key to Spy Codes *

(11)	Eleven	Captain John H Schmidt, US Army regular, retired
(7)	Seven	Major C. Bert Allen, US Army regular, retired
(8)	Eight	Capt. Carl F. Sunderland, US Army regular, retired
(17)	Seventeen	Mrs. J.H. Schmidt, aka Alyce Hannon
(18)	Eighteen	Mrs. C.F. Sunderland
	W.C.	Col. William Conley, Jr, Past National Commander, Disabled Am. Vets
(69)	Sixty-Nine	Capt. Wm. F. Hynes, chief of Red Squad, Los Angeles Police Dept
	M.P.B.	Marion P. Berg Jr, Railway Mail Clerk
	Number One	"refers to the undersigned"

Nazi leaders

(22)	Twenty-two	Capt. Robert F. Pape
(13)	Thirteen	Hans, also uses Ludwig, Winterhalder,
(44)	Forty-four	Paul Thamlitz
(27)	Twenty Seven	Hermann Schwinn
(29)	Twenty Nine	Rudolf Specht
(222)	Two-Twenty-two	Deidrich Gefken
(606)	Six Hundred Six	Dr. Konrad Burchardi
(99)		Mrs. Pape
TM		Mr. Rudy -- owns restaurant, Toastmaster (Report 88)

Nine Plus	Headquarters of the friends of the New Germany in NYC
Nine Minus	Nazi Headquarters at 902 So. Alvarado St., LA, subsequently 1004 West Washington Street, LA.

P.A.L. Veteran's organization incorporated under the law of the State of California of which Eight is the President and Seven is the Exec Sec. Named in the Charter under the initials P.A.L = Patriotism, Americanism and Loyalty. Membership is not restricted to vets, but almost all legislation. Inactive for the last 6 mos EXCEPT that board is allowing LAJCC to use its name, stationary and office facilities to carry on our investigation.

****It is not anti-semitic:** References that PAL is a/s made to Seven , Eight and Eleven in their negotiations with Nine Minus and Silver shirts done purposely as a cover to determine what extent the Nazis and Silver Shirts were willing to org vets in opposition to the government and to delude them that they were making progress w/PAL.

Source: Letter, Leon Lewis to Sigmund Livingston, December 16, 1933 in CRC Papers, Box 8, Folder 1.

* The key is presented as it was written in the letter from Lewis to Livingston, Chairman of the Anti-Defamation League.

Appendix 3:

Los Angeles Jewish Community Committee June 1934

Mendel Silberberg	Attorney; Chair, Community Committee
Leon Lewis	Attorney; Counsel, Community Committee
Harry G Balter	-- Attorney; LA B'nai B'rith Lodge President, 1933
I.B. Benjamin	-- Attorney; LA B'nai B'rith Lodge President, 1931; Member LA Housing Commission
David Blumberg	-- Merchant; 1st Vice President, B'nai Brith District Grand Lodge #4; Representative to B'nai B'rith
Dr. Blank	-- County Physician
Milton Black	-- Assistant District Attorney, City of Los Angeles
George Cohen	-- Attorney
Alfred Cohen	-- Scenario Writer; U.S. Collector of Customs
David Coleman	-- Assistant District Attorney, City of Los Angeles
Mrs. Ferguson	-- President, National Council of Jewish Women
M.J. Finestein	-- Attorney; Representative, American Jewish Committee
Louis Greenbaum	-- Attorney; Post Commander, Downtown Post, DAV
Harry Hollzer	-- U.S. District Judge; Rep., American Jewish Comm.
Henry Herzbrun	-- Legal Counsel, Paramount Pictures; Liaison to Motion Picture Committee
Feliz Jonas	-- Insurance Agent; President, LA B'nai B'rith Lodge
Ray Kleinberger	-- Merchant; Los Angeles City Police Commissioner
Al Lushing	-- Merchant; Water and Power Commissioner
Irving Lipsitch	-- Executive Director, Federation of Jewish Welfare Association; Rep, American Jewish Congress
Mrs. Lazard	-- Representative, local women's organizations
Dr. Edgar Magnin	-- Rabbi, Wilshire Temple
Marco Newmark	-- President, Federation of Jewish Welfare Associations
Louis Nordlinger	-- Retired; VP Federation of Jewish Welfare Assoc.
Isaac Pacht	-- Judge, Superior Court
Aaron Riche	-- Real Estate Developer; President, Officer's Conference of B'nai B'rith; Representative, American Jewish Congress
Arthur Rosenblum	-- Attorney; Member, B'nai B'rith District Grand Lodge #4
Ben Scheinman	-- Judge, Municipal Court; Representative, Zionist Organization of America
Dr. Maurice Smith	-- Dentist
Armin Wittenberg	-- Manufacturer
Mrs. Wolfstein	-- National Council of Jewish Women

Source: CRC Papers

Appendix 4:
A Proclamation (1935)

A Proclamation

IT IS UNIVERSALLY ACKNOWLEDGED, *That whenever a People or a Nation discovers existing within its body politic any factors or elements of a nature inimical to its welfare and to its very life, it is a right inherent in such a People or Nation, and indeed a duty if means are available to such an end, to curb and to eliminate all such injurious elements.*

NOW, WHEREAS *the Jews as a race in America have been accorded far greater courtesy, privilege and protection in the enjoyment of our Liberties and Equality of Opportunity than they have enjoyed in any other country; and under our liberal Constitutional guaranties these same Jews have had the brazen effrontery, under the cry of "personal liberty," to abuse that courtesy and that protection more grievously than under any other flag, as is shown in the following particulars, to-wit:*

- A. Their cut-throat competition is destructive of all "fair practice" and the American principle of "live-and-let-live" in the trade world: — by imitations, substitutions and shoddy they endeavor to run all competitors out of business.
- B. Through a general reputation for sharp practices, low cunning, insurance frauds and dishonest bankruptcy proceedings, they have promoted a widespread contempt for the ordinary virtues of honor and honesty in business.
- C. Through characteristic racial conduct they show complete disregard of our law, whenever law enforcement interferes with their desire for gain, or affects adversely any member of their race; and all this in such measure and degree that our Constitutional guaranty of LIBERTY means only License to Jews able to take advantage of that guaranty. And particularly in their disregard of and contempt for our laws, the Jews even go so far as to maintain paid lobbies at our Courts, to prevent their own racial criminals from paying the penalties of their crimes. Says a Jewish authority: "Our organization has not hesitated to recommend probation, parole, suspended sentence and other Court dispositions, because of the fortunate contacts which it possesses with the various JUDGES OF THE SUPREME BENCH."
- D. They have, through a long continued uniformity of racial conduct, evidenced a positive contempt for every element of our Christian morality and common decency:
 1. By such unspeakably bestial degeneracy as is charged against Dave Allen in "another notorious movies case."
 2. By a distinctly racial program calling, wherever possible, for the "seduction of a SHIKSE" (any Gentile girl, young or unprotected; and to whom as a class they have applied that most opprobrious, significant, and insulting epithet of "chicken"), as was shown in the recent Brice-Jorgensen, Loew-Francois, and Reynolds-Graham "affairs" — and as in the case of many other unfortunate young women who sought employment in the Jew-owned and Jew-controlled movies.
 3. Through these Jew-owned and Jew-controlled movies, and over the protests and the concerted opposition of our educational, Christian, and all other unsubsidized social agencies, for over 25 years they poured out upon us "the vilest stream of filth, indecencies and vulgarities, degradation and perversion, with ever-increasing emphasis on sex and crime, that has been known in all the world's history." And in doing this, they also added insult to injury by claiming they were "only supplying a natural demand."
 4. By lewd and lascivious acts directly intended to introduce vice and perversions into the lives of small children, as particularly shown in the case of Joseph Waxman, convicted in 1932 of a felonious assault upon and involving four girls under 10 years of age and a boy of 7; and as evinced also in the accusations against Samuel Goldzweig, who, after five postponements of trial, was recently freed of the heinous charge of attacking TWENTY-TWO little American girls, — on the technical ground that none could qualify as witnesses, as all the victims were under the age of twelve years!
 5. As an unseemly but truly racial characteristic, their great greed for money led them, in their haste to make all possible profit even from tragedy and death, to HUSTLE OUT the films of the late Rudolf Valentino, Marie Dressler, and Will Rogers before the bodies of those famous artists were fairly cold in death.

AND WHEREAS, *through their closely unified banking interests and their highly perfected local, state, national and international "Jewish Community," an organized and separate racial minority functioning as "a state within the state," they have attained to great power over our business and political affairs, and in the exercise of that power they have constituted themselves a menace to our free institutions, our Christian civilization and our Aryan culture:*

- B. In politics, as a vote-trading minority, they have commanded the appointment of Jews to places in the Cabinet and highest Courts.
- B. Through ownership of the movies, the radio, and many magazines and newspapers, and by dominating the policy of most other publications through advertising patronage, they have achieved almost complete control of the ordinary and usual means of access to our people.
- C. Just as they did first in Russia and later in Germany, so now the Jews on every hand in America are fomenting discontent, radicalism, and Communistic revolution. A careful survey reveals the significant fact that fully 95% of all Communist agitators and propagandists in America are Jews, and that leading Jewish papers have recently published articles endorsing such Jewish participation in this threat.
- D. The REAL HOPE of the Communists (and of Jews through Communism) is to work the destruction of Christianity in America, as was accomplished BY JEWS THROUGH COMMUNISM in Russia.

AND WHEREAS, *the general situation is such as to establish not only that a definite "Jewish Problem" exists, but also that the need for a solution of that problem is urgent: — that any further extension or continuance of the courtesy of our Equality of Opportunity would only mean further and even greater abuses of that courtesy as these Jews increase their power and influence:*

A. Even now this strongly entrenched Jewish minority, through a measure introduced in our Congress by one Dickstein, said to be a Russian Jew by birth, is attempting not only to throttle all further criticism of its racial program and conduct, but is also endeavoring thereby to destroy our Constitutional right of free speech.

AND WHEREAS, *our people are peculiarly law-abiding, and by our Constitution all legislative relief is at present barred to us, and by our statutory law acts of violence are banned, and we are thus entirely without any means of discipline, protection or redress other than that herein recommended.*

AND WHEREAS, *by their own institution in this country of the Jewish boycott of German goods (by which boycott of a friendly Nation the American people are losing the benefit of an export trade of approximately 200 million dollars per year), the Jews have themselves shown us the only weapon at our command, and one to the use of which in our own defense they therefore cannot make any valid objection.*

AND WHEREAS, *through the pressure of acute economic discrimination it is most certainly within the power of our people to awake in the Jews a sense of their collective racial responsibility for offenses against our people and thus to put them upon their good behavior, and also to prepare the way for an ultimate solution of the "Jewish Problem," now unattainable through any legislative enactment.*

NOW THEREFORE IS IT PROCLAIMED, *That it is the inherent right and the solemn duty of all true and loyal Americans to use vigorously and concertedly the only means available to them, during all the period between OCTOBER 1ST and DECEMBER 31ST, 1935, in the following manner, to-wit:*

*In every way, and wherever possible, to show an exclusive preference for Gentile merchants,
Gentile professional men, and Gentile working people.*

BUY GENTILE! EMPLOY GENTILES! VOTE GENTILE!

*Your dime spent at the movies may endorse and support further Jewish attacks upon our Christian morality,
Your vote cast for "X" in their "Xmas Sales" means "the unknown"*

Source: CRC Papers

Appendix 5:

Executive Committee, Hollywood Branch of LAJCC, 1941

Walter Wanger, Chairman	Producer
Leon Lewis, Secretary	Attorney
Robert Aller	IATSE
Maxwell Arnow	Walter Wanger Productions
Arthur Arthur	Columbia Studios
Ralph Blum	Agent
Jack Chertok	MGM Studios
Jack Cummings	MGM Studios
Lou Edelman	Warner Brothers
Matthew Fox	Universal Studios
D.S. Garber	Universal Studios
Henry Ginsberg	Paramount Studios
Jerry Hoffman	MGM Studios
Leigh Jason	
Jack Karp	Paramount Studios
Jock Lawrence	Samuel Goldwyn Studios
Mervyn Leroy	MGM Studios
Harry Maizlish	KFWB
Joseph Mankiewicz	MGM Studios
Irving Reis	RKO Studios
Allen Rivkin	
Sid Rogell	RKO Studios
Leo Rosten	
Mark Sandrich	Paramount Studios
Dore Schary	MGM Studios
Herman Schlom	
Leonard Spiegelgass	Universal Studios
Maurie Weiner	Universal Studios
Manny Wolfe	
Eugene Zukor	Paramount Studios

Source: CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 17, Folder 45

Appendix 6:
 Los Angeles Jewish Community Committee
 November 1942*

Mendel Silberberg	Chairman
Leon Lewis	Executive Secretary
Mr and Mrs. Herman Bachrack	
Mr and Mrs. I.B. Benjamin	Attorney, Los Angeles B'nai Brith Lodge
Mr and Mrs. David Blumberg	Merchant; Rep, B'nai Brith Grand Lodge #4
Judge and Mrs. Edward Brand	Judge, L.A. Country Superior Court
Mr and Mrs. Irving Briskin	Columbia Pictures
Mr and Mrs. Jack Chertok	MGM Studios
Mr and Mrs. George Cohen	Attorney, Universal Studios
Mr and Mrs. David Coleman	Attorney
Mr and Mrs. Lewis Drucker	California Attorney General's Office, Los Angeles
Mr and Mrs. Jack Fier	Columbia Pictures
Mr. M. J. Finkenstein	
Mr. Milton Goldberg	
Mr and Mrs. Gustave Goldstein	
Mr and Mrs. Henry Herzbrun	Legal Counsel, Paramount Pictures
Judge and Mrs. Harry Hollzer	U.S. District Judge
Mr and Mrs. Fred Horowitz	
Dr. and Mrs. Maurice Karpf	
Rabbi and Mrs. Jacob Kohn	Rabbi, Sinai Temple
Dr. and Mrs. E. M. Lazard	National Council of Jewish Women
Mr and Mrs. J.J. Leiberman	Attorney
Mr and Mrs. Joseph Loeb	Attorney, MGM Studios
Rabbi and Mrs. Edgar Magnin	Rabbi, Wilshire Boulevard Temple
Mr and Mrs. Marco Newmark	Banker
Judge and Mrs. Isaac Pacht	Judge, Superior Court
Mr and Mrs. I.H. Prinzmetal	MGM
Mr. Aaron Riche	Los Angeles B'nai Brith, American Jewish Congress
Mr and Mrs. Samuel Robinson	
Mr. Joseph Rosenberg	
Mr and Mrs. Arthur Rosenblum	Attorney; B'nai Brith District Grand Lodge #4
Judge and Mrs. Lester Roth	Attorney; former Judge, LA County Superior Court
Judge Benjamin Scheinman	Judge, LA County Superior Court
Mr. Max Strasburg	
Mr and Mrs. David Tannenbaum	Beverly Hills Community Committee
Mr and Mrs. Walter Wanger	Independent Movie Producer; Chair, Motion Picture Committee of the LAJCC

Source: CRC Papers, Part 2, Box 8 Folder 40.

* The list from the CRC Papers did not provide the members' organizational affiliations. Affiliations and assigned here were reconstructed by the author from various other sources and are, to the author's best knowledge, accurate.

Appendix 7:
 Partial List of Right-wing Individuals and Groups
 Investigated by the LAJCC, 1936-1946
 (Source: Finding Aid, CRC Papers, Part 2)

Alexander, Kenneth, 1938-1945	Americanism Defense League, Jan-Mar 1942-1945
Allen, Henry, 1938-1945	
Allen, Warren [Son of Henry Allen], 1938	Anglo-Saxon Federation of America, 1938; 1940-1942
America First, 1940-1944	Associated Farmers of California, 1939-1944
America for Americans Club, [ca. 1930's]	
American Action, Inc. [a.k.a. American Action Committee], 1946	Bader, Salem, 1943; 1945; 1946
American Coalition, 1938; 1940	Barr Bookstore, 1943-1944
American Defenders, 1938-1939	Baxter, David [Social Republic Society of America], 1941-1942
American Cmte for German Relief Fund, 1940	Beacon Light Publishing, 1940-1946
American Democratic Natl Cmte, 1940; 1941; 1944; 1945	Beal, Lee H. [For A Better America], 1942
American Fellowship Forum, Jul-Aug 1939-1943	Bell, Albertus. Dunston [Bishop Ancient Universal (Old Catholic) Church], 1938-1942
American Freedom Association, 1940-1941	Bergstrasser, [Dr.] Arnold, 1942; 1944
American Gentile, 1940	Brumback, Oscar, 1943
American-German Aid Society, 1939-1941	Bunker Hill Democratic Club, 1941
American Guerilla League, 1942	Bush, Oscar, 1946
American Guards, 1940-1942	
American Immigration Conference Board, 1939	California Staats Zeitung, 1940-1942
American League Against International Jewry, [ca. 1930's]	Carlson, [Dr.] Albert W., Jan-Feb 1942-1943
American Nationalist Confederation, 1938-1942	Carter, Boake, 1940
American Nationalist Party, 1939-1940	Christian American Foundation [D. Roy Parsons], 1946
American Patriots [Jack Peyton], 1938	Christian Business Men's Cmte of Greater LA
American Protective League, 1939	Christian Crusaders [<i>The Crusader</i>]
American Vigilant Intelligence Federation, 1940	Christian Front [a.k.a. Christian Mobilizers; Joseph E. McWilliams], 1938-1946
American Women Against Communism, 1938-1944	

Appendix 7, con't

- DeAryan, C. Leon [Editor, *The Broom*], 1938; 1943; 1945; 1946
- Dennis, Lawrence, 1941-1942; 1946
- Diebel, Hans, 1938-1941
- English Fascists, 1939
- The Equalizer* [L.R. Foster Publications, Los Angeles], 1938
- Federal Union, Inc., Hollywood Chapter, 1941
- Ferenz, Franz K., 1938-1942
- Fifield, [Reverend] James W. [Pastor, First Congregational Church of Los Angeles and Mobilization for Spiritual Ideals], 1940-1946
- Fry, Leslie, 1938-1944
- Gardener Harry J. [Publisher of *Mysticism*, Los Angeles], 1938; 1942-1944; 1945; 1946;
- Gebhardt, [Dr.] H.A., 1940-1942
- Gentile American Defense Union [George E. Sullivan], 1939-1940
- Gentile Cooperative Association, 1945; 1946
- German Groups: general [Alphabetical], 1940; 1941; 1945-1946
- German-American Chamber of Commerce, 1939-1940
- German-American National Alliance, 1939-1944
- German House, 1939-1944
- Gilbert [Dr.] Dan, 1944-1945
- Goerner, Ernst, 1939
- Goethe, C.M., 1938-1940
- Goode, Henry, n.d. [ca. 1940's]
- Griffith, Larry [Minute Men], 1941-1944
- Guards of Democracy, 1941
- Gyssling, [Dr.] Georg [German Consul Los Angeles], 1940-1942
- Ham 'n Eggs, 1942; 1945; 1946
- Hearst, William R., 1941-1946
- Heidenreich, Fred, 1940- 1941
- Hollywood Women's Republican Club, 1944
- Hornby, George E. [Ultra-American Party] 1940
- Horton, Col. P.A., 1944
- Huebner, Franz R.H. [American National Forum], 1939; 1941
- Hughes, T. W. [League to Save America First], 1940-1941
- Hynes, Capt. William Franz [LAPD-Intelligence Division], 1938-1940
- Independent America First, 1941
- Indians: American Indian Federation, 1938; 1939
- Indians: National American Indian League, 1941; 1945-1946
- Informed Voters of America, Aug 1942 1944
- Ingalls, Laura, 1941
- Italian Fascists, 1938; 1939-1942
- Jeffers, [Dr.] Joseph [Joe], 1938-1946
- Johnson, Floyd B. [Los Angeles Evangelistic Center], 1945
- Keep America Out of War Congress, 1941
- Kositzin, Vladimer, 1939-1940
- Kramer, [Dr.] George N., 1942; 1943
- Ku Klux Klan, 1938-1946
- Kyffhauser Bund, 1940
- Lahn, [Dr.] Robert [a.k.a. Dr. Robert Terrl], May 1938-1939
- League for Constitutional Government, 1938; 1940; 1941

Appendix 7, con't

- League for Truth, 1938
League of American Writers: Hollywood Chapter, 1940
Lewis, Fulton Jr., 1943-1944
Lindbergh, Charles A., 1940-1941; n.d. [ca. 1940]
Lippe-Weissenfeld [Prince Kurt-Bernhard Zur], 1939; 1940
Loyal Aryan Christian Citizens of the USA [ca. 1940]
- MacArthur Partisans [General Douglas], 1944
MacBeth, John, 1941
MacDonald, Frank, 1941; 1942
Mack, Russell, May-Aug 1940-1943
Maeder, Martin H., 1939-1944
Mankind United, 1938-1944
McClanahan, Meade, 1946
McCullough, Faith Hawk [Associate, Leslie Fry], 1938-1943
McLaglen, [Captain] Leopold Extortion Trial], 1938
Meller, Michael [White Russian Colony], 1942-44
Mexico, 1938-1942
Michelson, [Dr.] A. U. [Hebrew Evangelization Society, Hebrew Christian Synagogue, Los Angeles], 1940-1946
Modest, Anne, 1940-1941
Moral Rearmament, 1943-1946
Mote, Carl H., 1941-1944; 1945; 1946
- National Copperheads [Ellis O. Jones], 1941
National Council for Prevention of War, 1942-1946
National Gentile League [Donald Shea], 1939-40
- National League of Mothers of America, 1941-44
Neutral Thousands [The] [Bessie Abbott Ochs, Executive Director], 1938-1939
Nims, A. Dwight [Next of Kin, Inc.], 943-1944
No Foreign War Committee, 1940-1941
- Noble, Robert [Friends of Progress], 1939-1942
Nordskog, Andrae B., 1941-1944
- Palmer, L. H. [American Guards], 1943
Patriotic Order Sons of America [Minute Men], [ca. 1940]
Patterson, Sherman A.: Publications, *Militant Truth*, 1945
Perkins, Jonathan, 1939; 1942-1943; 1946
Peyton, Jack [American Rangers], 1939; 1940; 1942; 1943
Phelps, G. Allison [Radio commentator], 1940
Plack, Werner [Los Angeles German Consulate Attaché], 1940
Pro-America, 1942; 1944
- Reimer, John L. [National Book Mart, Los Angeles], 1939-1943
Ring, William C. [America Unlimited], 1943-1946
Robert, Clete [Radio Commentator], 1942
Royal Order of American Defenders, 1941-1942
Russians, 1938-1946
- Sahli, W. H. "Doc" [Christian American Guards], 1941; 1944; 1945

Scannell, Francis [Columnist, "One Man's Opinion"], 1939
 Schwinn, Hermann Max
 Sherrill, [Mrs.] Frances [Informed Voters of America], 1943
 Shol, [Mrs.] Edith Marian [American Freedom, Association], 1940-1943
 Shuler, [Rev.] Robert [Bob] P. [Pastor, Trinity Methodist Church, Los Angeles], 1942-1946
 Silver Shirt Legion of America, 1938-1939; 1940
 Socialists, 1939; 1942; 1946
 Springer, [Rev.] Harvey: 1939; 1943-1946
 Stadt Verband, 1938-1942 [a.k.a. German-American League of Los Angeles]
 Steuben Society of America, 1938; 1944-1946

 Tauer, Lucille [America First], 1941-1944
 Technocracy, 1942; 1943
 Ten Million Americans [Charles Franz Connelley and P. W. Gilmore], 1939
 Terminiello, [Rev.] Arthur W. [Catholic Priest, Alabama], 1941-1946
 Terry, G. Collins [Candidate, Mayor of Los Angeles], 1940 -1941
 Thomas, Martin Luther, 1938

 Vindicators [Senator Robert Rice Reynolds], 1939; 1941
 Vollbehr, Otto H.Franz, 1939; 1940; 1943
 von Bach, Violet, 1940
 Von Buelow, [Dr.] Ernst Ullrich [Count Ernst Von Buelow], 1938; 1939; 1941
 Von Wegerer, Alfred, 1940

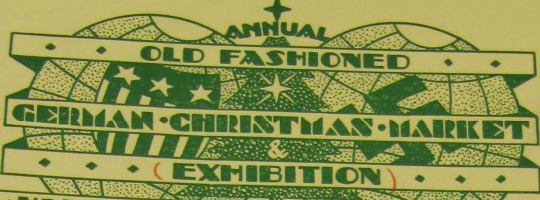
 Watkins, Louise Ward, 1942-1944
 We the Mothers Mobilize for America, Inc. [California Unit], 1940; 1941; 1943-1946
 Weber, Joseph O., 1940
 Webster, Nesta H., n.d. [ca. 1939]
 Woodford, Jack, 1940; 1943-1946
 Wrede, Heinz G., 1938

 Yankee Minute Men, 1942; n.d. [1942]

Appendix 8:
Flyer, Old Fashioned Christmas Market at Deutsches Haus, 1939

1939

DECEMBER 9th
TO
DECEMBER 16th
7 P.M.
EVERY NIGHT



**ANNUAL
OLD FASHIONED
GERMAN CHRISTMAS MARKET
(EXHIBITION)**

ENTERTAINING
EDUCATIONAL
MUSIC - DANCING
DOOR PRIZES
ADM. 10c
CHILDREN FREE

DEUTSCHES HAUS • 634 W 15TH ST • LOS ANGELES • CAL.
! BUY GENTILE !

The German American Business League again this year sponsors an exhibition of American and German goods from gentle firms. Together with an old fashioned German Christmas Market in the artistically designed surroundings of an old German town, this exhibition plans to put the goods of merchants and manufacturers before an interested group of buyers . . .

You are cordially invited to attend this interesting and educational undertaking;

As it takes place just before Christmas, you may do most of your Christmas shopping at this market.


Every evening music and entertainment, for you and your children, free door prizes, for the lucky winner, free motion pictures.

Admission 10 Cents

DEUTSCHES HAUS
 634 West 15th Street
 (½ Block West of Figueroa)
 Prospect 3939
GERMAN HOME COOKING
 IMPORTED AND
 DOMESTIC BEERS AND WINES

DEUTSCHE STIMMUNG
& ECHE
GEMUETLICHKEIT

TREFFPUNKT
DES
DEUSCHTUMS




Christmas Greetings

Source: CRC Papers

Appendix 9:
Aryan Book Store Price List, 1939

Copy to Replace Unstable Original. Property of the Urban Archives Comm. 100-19877 WAF-2495

PHOTOSTAT COPY OF OFFICIAL PUBLICATION LIST--GERMAN BUND



Truth brings Liberation.

A R Y A N . B O O K S T O R E .

H. Diebel

634 W.15.Str. Los Angeles, California.

Aryan Book Store

ESTABLISHED MARCH 1939

NEWS, MAGAZINES

REPRODUCTION

FOR ENLIGHTENMENT

*The Jewish Question" by Henry Ford	\$ 1,50
*Waters Flowing Eastward" by L.Fry. A treatise on Zionism.	1,50
*Fathers of Lies" by Warren William. Secrets of secret societies.	3,25
*My Battle" by Adolf Hitler. A translation from "Mein Kampf".	3,50
*All These Things" by A.W. Field. Remarkable expose of World forces in relation to present day chaos.....	2,00
*The Red Network" by Elizabeth Dilling. Who is who among radicals.	1,00
*The Roosevelt Red Record and its Background" by Elizabeth Dilling	1,25
*Occult Theocracy" (2 Vol.) by Lady Queenborough. THE most comprehensive and authoritative work on secret societies.	5,50
*Republic Reclaimed" by Newton Jenkins. America for Americans.	1,00
*And so they indicted me" by Edward Jones. New Deal persecution.	3,00
*Protocols of the learned Elders of Zion" The devilish plan of Jewry to dominate the World.	-,25
The Hidden Empire" by E.D. Pelley. The truth in a nutshell.	-,25
*Dupes of Judah" A challenge to the American Legion.	-,25
*What every Congressman should know" by W.D. Pelley	
Jews in our Government.	-,25
*45 Question about the Jews" by Pelley. Be ready to answer.	-,25
*Jews say so" by Pelley There is a Jewish World Plot.	-,25
*The Impeachment of Frances Perkins" by W.D. Pelley.	-,15
*Facing the Facts" by Ernest Sincero. Let America warn in time.	-,10
*The Plan in Action" " "	-,10
*The USA need not surrender" by E.B. White	-,10
*The Patriot" by Jack Poyton.	-,25
*Hypocrisy" by David Hall jr. Read the Truth about today and tomorrow, and laugh at current history.	-,15
*Bombshell against Christianity" by Marcus Savage, a Hebrew.	-,15
*The hidden hand of Judah" " "	-,15
*Communism's Iron grip on the C. I. O." A Congressional Record.	-,15
*Thus speaks the Talmud" The first translation of the Talmud.	-,15
*Jews, Jews, Jews" The Jews are not God's chosen people.....	-,05
*What will America do" by A. Warren William Hamilton. If War comes.	-,15
*The Key to the Lyatery" This magazine will open your eyes.	-,10
*The Truth about the Protocols" by Rev. Dr. Winrod	-,25
*The Jewish assault on Christianity" " "	-,25
*The Rulers of Russia" by Rev. Denis Fahey	-,20
*Why are the Jews hated?" by Britons Publ. Society, London, England	-,20
*A Plot for World Conquest" " "	-,20
*Zionism" by The Militant Christian Patriots, London.	-,25
*Trotzky" by a former Russian Commissar.....	-,25
*Social Justice" by Father Coughlin a weekly paper	-,10
*The Liberation" by E.D. Pelley a weekly magazine	-,10
*The Free American" by German American Bund. a weekly paper	-,05
*Edmondson's Bulletins" by E. Edmondson Facts in short.	-,05

And many other Publications.
Postage extra.

Publicity is the BEST CURE for all public evil.
To carry the biggest selection of anti Jewish-Communist literature in the country.

Source: CRC Papers

Appendix 10:
"Snowstorm" Flyers, 1938

J E W S! J E W S!
J e w s E v e r y w h e r e!

The Roosevelt Administration is Loaded with Jews
12 Million White American Workers Jobless

OVER ¼ MILLION EUROPEAN JEWS ARE NOW COMING TO UNITED STATES
TO THROW WHITE AMERICAN WORKERS OUT OF JOBS

Benjamin Franklin Said:
"Jews are a menace to this country if permitted entrance And Should Be Ex-
cluded."

Samuel Roth Said:
"We Jews are a people of vultures, living on the labor of the rest of the
world."

The Jewish Talmud Says:
"Jews are human beings, Gentiles are not human beings, but beasts." (Baba
Mezia, 114, 6.)

Samuel Roth Says:
"WE JEWS, who come to the Nations, PRETENDING to escape PERSECU-
TION, are really the MOST DEADLY PERSECUTORS OF MEN."

C o m m u n i s m i s J e w i s h

OUT WITH JEWS!!

**LET WHITE PEOPLE RUN THIS COUNTRY AS
THEY DID BEFORE THE JEWISH INVASION**

Wake up! Wake up! Wake up! Wake up!
Get in touch with your nearest Anti-Communist Organization

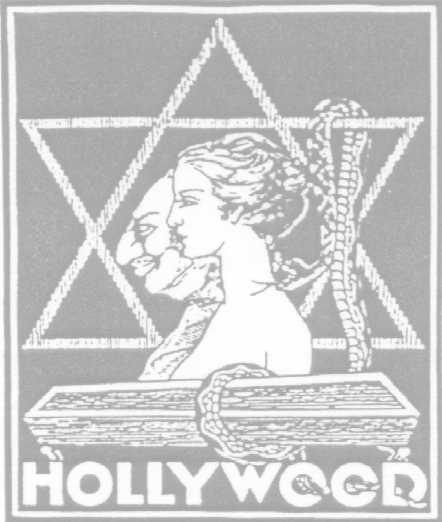
Source: CRC Papers

Appendix 10, con't

•

Christian
Vigilantes
Arise!

•



BUY
GENTILE

•

EMPLOY
GENTILE

•

VOTE
GENTILE

Boycott the Movies!

HOLLYWOOD is the Sodom and Gomorrah
WHERE
INTERNATIONAL JEWRY
CONTROLS
VICE - DOPE - GAMBLING
where
YOUNG GENTILE GIRLS ARE RAPED
by
JEWISH PRODUCERS, DIRECTORS, CASTING DIRECTORS
WHO GO UNPUNISHED

THE JEWISH HOLLYWOOD ANTI-NAZI LEAGUE CONTROLS
COMMUNISM
IN THE MOTION PICTURE INDUSTRY
STARS, WRITERS AND ARTISTS ARE COMPELLED TO PAY FOR COMMUNISTIC
ACTIVITIES

Source: CRC Papers

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- Harry M. Warner Papers. Special Collections, Television and Film Library. University of Southern California. Los Angeles, CA.
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- Joseph Roos Papers. Los Angeles, CA: Doheny Library Special Collections, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA.
- Leon Lewis Private Papers. In author's possession, courtesy of Claire Lewis Read.
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