

"This List Not Complete"

MINNESOTA'S JEWISH RESISTANCE TO THE SILVER LEGION OF AMERICA, 1936-1940

Sarah Atwood

DURING THE 1920S AND 1930S, A global economic crisis gave rise to fascism. Discrimination and violence based on racial, ethnic, and religious identities spread throughout Europe. Xenophobic, white supremacist, and anti-Semitic ideologies and pro-Nazi

fascist groups began taking root throughout the United States. Minnesota was no exception.

One of these groups, the Silver Legion (commonly referred to as the Silver Shirts), found a particularly

sympathetic audience within Minnesota. While the precise number of members and sympathizers is difficult to determine, the state's Jews perceived a threat. Through various

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Herman Lundberg, 5128 Luverne Avenue, Mpls. Lib subs
Emelia McAyeal, 1939 Bryant Ave. South, Mpls. " "
Rev. Joseph Majas, Pastor, St. Mary's Church, Willow River, Minn. Lib subs
Donald Noyes, 4801 38th Ave. So., Mpls. Lib subs
E.J. Pocock, 6301 15th Ave. So. Mpls. " "
Edna B. Rahm, 702 Chamber of Commerce, Mpls. "
H.J. Sorenson, 4700 14th Ave. So. Mpls. " "
Dr. Edward A. Zaworski, 1300 Second Street N.E. Mpls., Lib subs
Ralph Swan, Investigator for Veterans Relief, City Relief (Silver Shirt), vicious
M.H. Werlich, 3515 5th Ave. South, Mpls.
Jack L. Williams, 2948 Harriet Ave. Mpls.
Roy Witt, Witt's Market House, 705 Hennepin Ave. Mpls.
J.C. Appleton, 1612 Harmon Place, Mpls. Lib. subs
H.J. Berndt, 4820 14th Ave. So. Mpls. 12 WEC 12 HE Assistant secretary Mpls. Club
L.J. Borthen, E. 511 First National Bank Bldg., St. Paul, Lib subs
William A. Cole, 729 Second Ave. So. Mpls, 6 HE 6 WEC 6 PK Bookkeeper Mpls. Club
E.A. Crosby, 3323 Portland Avenue, Mpls. 2 WEC
Frank E. De Malignon, 2444 36th Ave. South, Mpls.
H.A. Dubar, c/o Nor. Pac Ry, Prince & Pine St., St. Paul
H.F. Erickson, 5100 38th Avenue South Mpls.
J.A. Erickson, Box 3386 St. Paul
Helen Fryberger, Plaza Hotel, Mpls. teacher at Pillsbury School
Francis C. Golberg, 3601 13th Ave. So. Mpls.
A.F. Gumphrey, 1829 Goodrich Ave., St. Paul
George Gunderson, 5509 First Avenue South, Mpls.
C.M. Heywood, Western Alloyed Steel Casting Co. 2833 Grand Ave., Mpls

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methods, including surveillance of Silver Shirts activity, the Anti-Defamation Council of Minnesota (renamed the Minnesota Jewish Council in 1939 and today known as the Jewish Community Relations Council) mobilized to combat the Silver Shirts and other forms of organized anti-Semitism in the state and throughout the Midwest.

THOUGH JEWS HAD BEEN LIVING IN Minnesota since the mid-nineteenth century, the end of World War I marked the beginning of a decades-long period during which Jews faced discrimination and exclusion from both formal and informal cultural and economic networks. Fears and hardship brought on by the Great Depression exacerbated underlying racial and religious tensions. In the 1920s, Minnesota's Ku Klux Klan targeted Jews, Catholics, and immigrants, as well as people of color. An increase in nativist sentiment, in part a reaction to the Russian Revolution of 1917, also resulted in the immigration quota system of 1924. Among the immigrant groups who were adversely affected by the quotas, Jews who had arrived in large numbers from Eastern Europe from the 1880s to the early 1920s, were singled out, partly because of their perceived connection with communism. In 1934 Local 574 of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, led by Trotskyist Communists, waged a successful series of strikes in Minneapolis that challenged the Citizens Alliance, an anti-union group that represented employers. The strikes triggered charges that Minnesota had been overrun by "Red menace" agitators seeking violent revolution. Furthermore, a number of prominent local religious leaders publicly espoused anti-Semitic sentiments, adding to the climate of anti-Semitism in Minnesota.¹



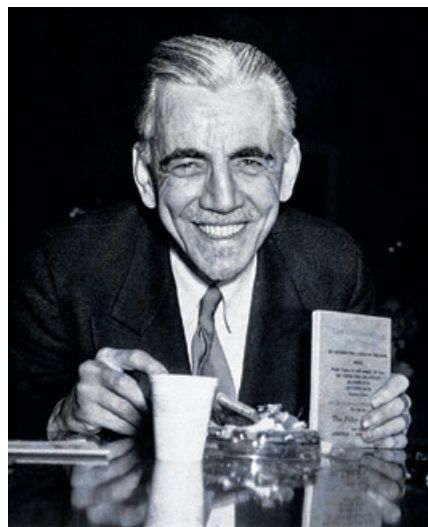
Prominent religious leaders publicly espoused anti-Semitic sentiments in the 1930s, adding to the climate of intolerance in Minnesota. This undated photo can be found in the files of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota at MNHS.

The rise of National Socialism (Nazism) in Germany led to a proliferation of pro-Nazi organizations in the United States. These groups offered an outlet for some Americans' fears and frustrations by focusing on a simple scapegoat: the Jews, with whom they associated both exploitative capitalism and socialist-communist radicalism. A 1941 survey by the American Council of Public Affairs documented the presence of more than 121 anti-Semitic organizations nationally. Several of the surveyed groups, particularly

the German American Bund and the Silver Legion, boasted sizeable memberships—20,000 and 15,000, respectively, with approximately a hundred thousand additional sympathizers each. Three smaller organizations were headquartered in Minnesota: the Christian Vigilantes of Minneapolis, which existed briefly between 1935 and 1936; the Pro-Christian American Society, established in 1936 but likely defunct by 1941; and the White Shirts in Virginia, established in 1938 and still active at the time of the 1941 study.

The prevalence of such organizations sent a chilling reminder to American Jews that their safety and well-being were under serious threat.²

The Silver Legion of America was founded in 1933 by William Dudley Pelley, a journalist, novelist, and one-time Hollywood screenwriter turned Christian mystic. While not explicitly anti-Catholic, the organization leaned Protestant and former Klan members gravitated to it. (See sidebar.) A 1934 American Civil Liberties Union booklet ominously warned readers that, despite his mysticism, "Pelley is no fool, no accident; he is a clever manipulator of mobs with a distinct talent for popular appeal, and a purpose so single and violent that it carries a conviction of sincerity." Despite Pelley's wish to frame his organization as a



Silver Legion founder William Dudley Pelley with anti-Semitic literature.

group made up of representatives of old and respected American families, his virulent anti-Semitism led

to the Silver Shirts being dubbed the "most vocal, most wild-eyed, and in some ways most dangerous" of all the Shirts movements.³

Pelley's message of anti-Semitism resonated with Americans anxious about changes in the cultural and political landscape of the United States. As Pelley parlayed his emerging worldview into a career as an author and speaker, he found an enthusiastic and growing audience among anti-Semites. National Silver Shirts membership grew rapidly, with the largest numbers in the Upper Midwest and the West. Though Silver Legion membership was impossible to gauge, 1934 estimates by the American Civil Liberties Union placed national membership between 75,000 and 2 million.

BUY GENTILE
PATRONIZE ONLY CHRISTIAN MERCHANTS
HOW MANY STORES IN YOUR LOCALITY ARE JEW OWNED?

IN RECENT YEARS THE MAIN STREET OF VIRTUALLY EVERY MAJOR CITY IN THE U.S. HAS BEEN TAKEN OVER BY HORDES OF EASTERN-EUROPEAN JEWS, WHO ARE SLOWLY BUT SURELY DRIVING GENTILE BUSINESS MEN INTO BANKRUPTCY. UNLESS IMMEDIATE ACTION IS TAKEN—CHRISTIAN MERCHANTS WILL BE DRIVEN OUT OF BUSINESS AND COMMERCE ALTOGETHER.

BOYCOTT JEW STORES

DO THE JEWS REALLY DOMINATE AMERICAN BUSINESS?

YOU BET THEY DO. CHRISTIANS HAVE BEEN DRIVEN OUT OF MANY LINES OF BUSINESS ENTIRELY

EASTERN EUROPEAN JEWS HAVE ALREADY BOUGHT UP THE MAIN BUSINESS SECTIONS OF THE LARGE CITIES. NOW THEY'RE MOVING INTO THE SMALLER TOWNS

JEWS OWN MOST OF OUR THEATRES, CLOTHING, JEWELRY AND DEPARTMENT STORES. THEY WORK TOGETHER TO SQUEEZE OUT GENTILE MERCHANTS.

SOMETHING SHOULD BE DONE BUT WHAT?

SOMETHING CAN BE DONE! LEARN WHICH STORES IN YOUR LOCALITY ARE JEW-OWNED. THEN BOYCOTT THEM. BUY ONLY FROM CHRISTIAN MERCHANTS.

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"Buy Gentile" cartoon, a sample of the anti-Semitic literature collected by the Anti-Defamation Council of Minnesota in the 1930s.

THE STRANGE CAREER OF WILLIAM DUDLEY PELLEY

Adolf Hitler's ascent to power in Germany in 1933 was also the catalyst for a new chapter in the quixotic life of journalist, novelist, and one-time Hollywood screenwriter-turned-mystic William Dudley Pelley (1885–1965). During a particularly challenging period of his writing career, Pelley claimed to have experienced a transformative "seven minutes in eternity," during which he ascended to a heavenly plane and was granted the gifts of clairvoyance and divination. In 1929 he published accounts of his experiences in a spiritualist journal and moved to Asheville, North Carolina. Here Pelley founded a publishing company, Galahad Press, and a small college in order to spread his spiritual teachings, which were based upon his purported travels to celestial planes, where he communicated with prominent, though deceased, historical figures.¹

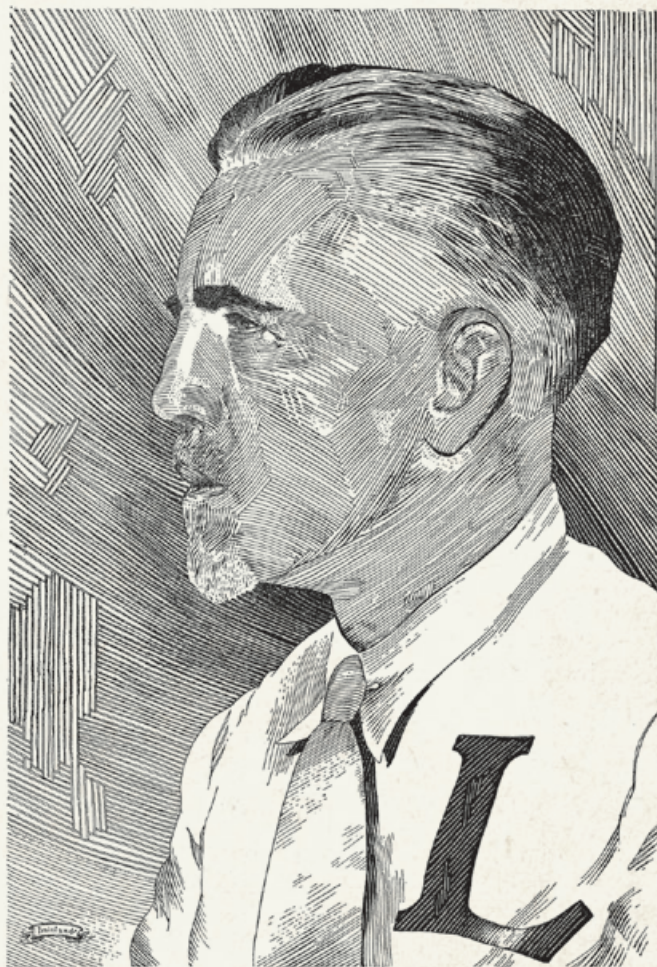
As early as 1931, Pelley was an avowed anti-Semite who claimed Jews were inhabited by demons. His corresponding racial and spiritual taxonomy placed Christians of European ancestry at the top of a hierarchy, while Jews, Native Americans, and African Americans were situated below. Pelley extended his spiritualism to a material plane, forming the Silver Legion as a paramilitary organization that would bring about "spiritual and political renewal," and declaring: "The Hitler Movement in Germany started from a sign painter making a speech from the top of a barrel. It is not too early to begin casting up our slates."²

Pelley's invocation of Nazism was clear in his choice of uniform: "a shirt of Silver, with the great scarlet 'L' emblazoned on your banner and over your heart, standing for Love, Loyalty, and Liberation," which called to mind the paramilitary group that supported Hitler's rise to power, dubbed the Brown Shirts for their brown uniforms. According to Silver Shirts rhetoric, Jews were, at best, unwanted citizens and, at worst, subhuman; it was no coincidence that Pelley's plan for American Jews should include relocation to designated Beth Havens, cities governed by rabbis within every state.³

Pelley saw Hitler's rise as fulfillment of a prophecy wherein Pelley would subsequently create a Christian militia to save the United States from upcoming political and spiritual chaos. Silver Shirts recruits were to be "of reasonably sound health and not afraid to risk your life and limb for your country," and they must take the oath of the "True Christian Soldier."⁴

Pelley's shift from mystic to anti-Semitic firebrand, though buttressed by contemporary frustrations, satisfied certain psychological needs, according to one historian of the Protestant far right in the 1930s:

Spiritualism did not provide adequate expression for Pelley's desires. Anti-Semitism, on the other hand, salved his feelings of inadequacy by offering delusions of grandeur. He would lead a nationwide movement of Silver-Shirted men to drive the Jews and revolutionaries from power! He would be the savior of his country! Here was a channel not only for externalizing his aggressions but also for releasing the bitterness generated by years of frustration.⁵



Portrait of Pelley wearing the silver shirt, 1933.

Pelley disbanded the Silver Shirts after the attack on Pearl Harbor. He continued to publish anti-government statements in his magazine, *Roll Call*, which alarmed the House Un-American Activities Committee. Pelley was charged and convicted of 11 counts of high treason and sedition and was sentenced to 15 years in prison. After serving eight years, he was paroled and released in 1950. He continued to publish books and pamphlets on his mystical philosophy. Pelley died on June 30, 1965.

Notes

1. 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), 12; Donald S. Strong, *Organized Anti-Semitism in America: The Rise of Group Prejudice During the Decade 1930–40* (Washington, DC: American Council on Public Affairs, 1941), 52.

2. Hoke, *Shirts!*, 12; Strong, *Organized Anti-Semitism in America*, 46; Bradley W. Hart, *Hitler's American Friends: The Third Reich's Supporters in the United States* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2018). Pelley's declarations that the Silver Legion had no ties to the Nazis or other groups such as the Friends of the New Germany (what eventually became the German American Bund), paired with the group's secrecy, only heightened fears about Nazism in the United States.

3. Leo P. Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right: The Protestant Far Right from the Great Depression to the Cold War* (Philadelphia: Temple University, 1983), 70.

4. Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right*, 70; Hart, *Hitler's American Friends*, 54.

5. Strong, *Organized Anti-Semitism in America*, 47.

Pelley's message of anti-Semitism resonated with Americans anxious about changes in the cultural and political landscape of the United States.

Contemporary scholarship now places peak national numbers closer to 15,000 members, with 100,000 sympathizers. Locally, a 1936 dossier on Pelley's activity named the University of Minnesota as one site where a group known as Swastika, a campus contingent of the Silver Shirts, had existed as early as 1934.⁴

Bad press that exposed a 1934 congressional investigation into arms dealing by the Silver Shirts, coupled with Pelley's indictment in North Carolina over allegations of stock fraud, temporarily stalled the upward membership trajectory. By August 1935, Pelley had resumed activity, this time incorporating newly created local councils of safety, which would be placed throughout the country. He also announced that the Silver Legion was getting into politics. Pelley would seek the presidency in 1936 under the banner of the Christian Party. Women were not able to join the Silver Shirts but were able to join the Christian Party and did so in Minnesota. Pelley garnered few votes, but his presidential campaign put him back in the spotlight. During the campaign he met Roy Zachary, a talented organizer, orator, and outspoken anti-Semite. Pelley made Zachary his second-in-command, and Zachary began traveling nationwide representing the Silver Shirts cause.⁵

A RECEPTIVE AUDIENCE AND A VOCAL OPPOSITION

In Minnesota, the group found a receptive audience as well as a vocal opposition. As Silver Shirts recruit-

ment ramped up in spring 1936, the Jewish community mobilized by forming the Anti-Defamation Council of Minnesota, an informal group consisting of anti-defamation leagues from around the state, dedicated to investigating the state's profascist climate. The public also took notice, thanks to a six-part exposé in the *Minneapolis Journal* written by a young reporter fresh out of the University of Minnesota named Arnold Eric Sevareid.⁶

Intrigued by a tip from communist acquaintances, Sevareid proposed and received permission from his editor to investigate local Silver Shirts activity. Sevareid later recalled his experience "was like Alice going down the rabbit hole into the world of the Mad Hatter. I spent hair-raising evenings in the parlors of middle-class citizens who worshipped a man named William Dudley Pelley." Published in September 1936, Sevareid's series was the first major coverage of anti-Semitic fascist activity in the state. The *Minneapolis Journal* framed the features as a "semi-humorous exposé of ridiculous crackpots who were befuddling otherwise upright citizens," Sevareid wrote in his autobiography. He protested to his editors, saying he wished for the stories to serve as a "cry of alarm." Instead the articles contained little more than patronizing anecdotes about Silver Shirts members and their conspiracies. This approach to the exposé was commercially popular for the *Journal*. Still, Sevareid received numerous threats from Silver Shirts sympathizers.⁷

THOUGH SOME ARGUED THEY WERE merely a small group of silver-shirted charlatans, Silver Shirts' presence was nevertheless alarming to the Jewish community, particularly as Pelley claimed a membership of 6,000 in Minnesota. Sevareid's work made painfully clear that ignoring Silver Shirts would not dissuade them. Journalist and publicist Edward Schwartz later recalled in an oral history interview, "This was one of the worst Jew-hating communities in the world through the 1930s and into the 1940s, and if it wasn't for the finger of publicity from fellows like Eric Sevareid and his remarkable series on the Silver Shirts, no attention would have been called to it." While it would be another two years after the publication of Sevareid's articles before the Silver Shirts once again captured Minnesota's attention, Jewish communities throughout the state covertly began the momentous project of mapping and monitoring Minnesota's Silver Legion.⁸

Within one month of Sevareid's exposé, the Anti-Defamation Council dispatched Charles I. Cooper, former president of the Minneapolis chapter of the Jewish fraternal organization B'nai B'rith, as well as an undercover informant identified in documents only as SLW to gather intelligence about Silver Shirts infrastructure. Their sources were local reporters, prominent figures in the Jewish community, and other undercover informants. Intelligence gathered included "a list of names, obtained from the automobile plates of those cars that were constantly in

people named in the index truly did wish for the removal or subordination of Jewish Americans, the sheer number of names underscores the insidiousness of anti-Semitism in Jewish life. One list with more than 500 names closes with the declaration: "This list not complete"—a haunting reminder that more names could be added and that ongoing commitment was needed to fight anti-Semitism within the state.¹¹

THE RETURN OF THE SILVER SHIRTS

Nineteen thirty-eight brought deepening tensions as economic uncertainty and political upheaval escalated. Despite New Deal measures to relieve unemployment, the American economy experienced a severe slump in 1937–38. The threat of war became more real as Hitler's armies occupied Austria in March 1938 and four months later annexed the Sudetenland (primarily German-speaking areas of Czechoslovakia that had once been part of Austria). Stimulated by fear and perhaps nationalistic pride, profascist groups proliferated nationwide. In Minnesota, the Silver Shirts began aggressively organizing once again in the spring of 1938. This time, both the press and the public took notice, observing links between the KKK and the Silver Shirts: "The spirit of the old Ku Klux Klan is being revived in Minneapolis, with a new name and a new kind of shirt," an article in the *Minneapolis Journal* proclaimed. Minneapolis mayor George E. Leach acknowledged the group's resurgence and proactively banned "anti-American parades," meaning events associated with Nazism and fascism. The ordinance reflected Leach's "desire to prevent Silver Shirts, Black Shirts or any other anti-American organization from gaining a foothold in Minneapolis" and was to be enforced by the chief of police.¹²

Undeterred, national Silver Shirts recruiter Roy Zachary made appearances in Minneapolis on July 29 and August 2, 1938. His speeches referenced far-fetched conspiracies, such as aviator (and noted anti-interventionist) Charles Lindbergh's child being kidnapped and eventually murdered by Jews and a Jewish takeover of the American monetary system. Zachary also criticized Teamsters Local 574, calling an all-out war on militant labor and disparaging "the alien forces that are seeking to undermine our constitutional government, take away our right of free speech and deprive us of our liberty."¹³

Subsequent publicity about these meetings led to increased public scrutiny and concern about Minnesota's Silver Shirts. The managers of the Ark Lodge Auditorium and the Royal Arcanum Hall, both located off Lake Street, on the 3000 block of First Avenue South, the Minneapolis sites of Zachary's July and August meetings, claimed to be unaware that they had rented space to the Silver Shirts. After receiving unsavory recognition from the press, the managers of both venues declared that the group was no longer welcome on their premises. Unfazed, Silver Shirts found other places to meet. At summer's end, the *Minneapolis Tribune* reported: "A number of persons, men and women, assumed the responsibility at the conclusion of the meeting of forming councils, and plans will be begun immediately for a mass meeting to be held within a month."¹⁴

The Anti-Defamation Council of Minnesota responded to the swelling presence of Silver Shirts by reissuing Severeid's 1936 newspaper articles as the pamphlet "A Reporter Tells the Truth about the Silver Shirts: An Exposé of Un-American Activities in Minneapolis." In so doing, the organization hoped "to enlighten the



National Silver Shirts recruiter Roy Zachary, as portrayed in *Minneapolis Star*, October 1938.

fair-minded Christian citizens of our state pertaining to the dangers that lurk in such un-American organizations as the Silvershirt [sic] Legion." The *Minneapolis Journal*, *Minneapolis Star*, *Minneapolis Tribune*, *Minnesota Leader*, and *American Jewish World* (published in the Twin Cities) also featured anti-Silver Shirts editorials, satires, and news reports.¹⁵

Readers weighed in with letters to the editor, arguing that the public was responsible for protecting democracy by rejecting anti-Semitism. "This is America and it is un-American to form class or religious distinctions. . . . It is a shame to insult splendid citizens who have always stood and worked for the best there is in America," wrote a correspondent to the *Minneapolis Tribune* who signed the

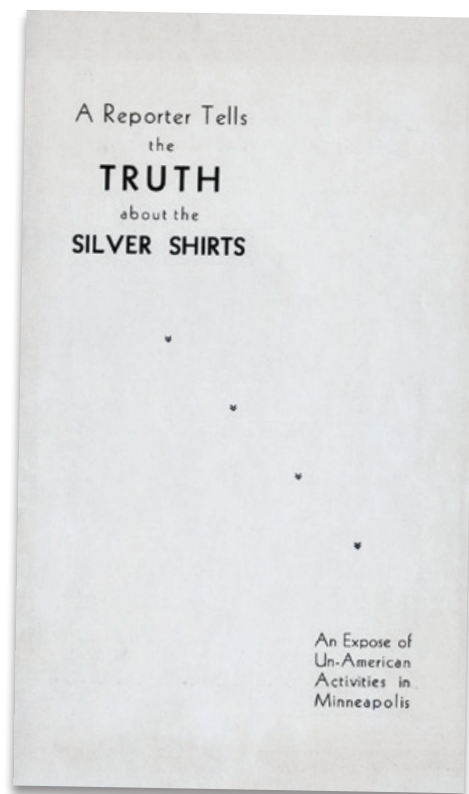
**"Hate-crusade rackets
cannot stand publicity.
They fade when stripped of
their mystery and secrecy."**

letter, "A Non-Jew." Another person called for vigilance in exposing the Silver Shirts: "Hate-crusade rackets cannot stand publicity. They fade when stripped of their mystery and secrecy. . . . That is a job, not just for Jews, but for all of us." Organizations, too, responded with public declarations against the Silver Shirts, including Masonic officials and the general executive boards of Locals 30 and 183 of the Cleaners and Dyers Union. Others, however, criticized the local press for providing free publicity for the fascist group. One writer

Ark Lodge Auditorium at First Avenue South and Thirty-First Street East, in Minneapolis, was the site of Silver Shirts meetings in the summer of 1938.

retorted, "Which is the bigger sap, the press or the joiner, is too fine a distinction to be argued, as is also the question of who are the more dangerous 'witch-hunters'—the Silver Shirts and such, or the ardent crusaders who propose to harry them."¹⁶

The press did no favors dispelling rumors that prominent businessmen were sympathetic to the Silver Shirts. In fact, newspaper coverage of the summer 1938 meetings in Minneapolis reported the invitation-only attendance of leading businessmen, including George K. Belden, president of Associated Industries of Minneapolis (the rebranded successor of the Citizens Alliance, whose anti-union grip on the city had ended thanks to the 1934 Teamsters strike).



A 1938 pamphlet containing Eric Severeid's 1936 newspaper articles was distributed to lodge members of the fraternal group B'nai B'rith by the Jewish Anti-Defamation Council to give to Christian friends.



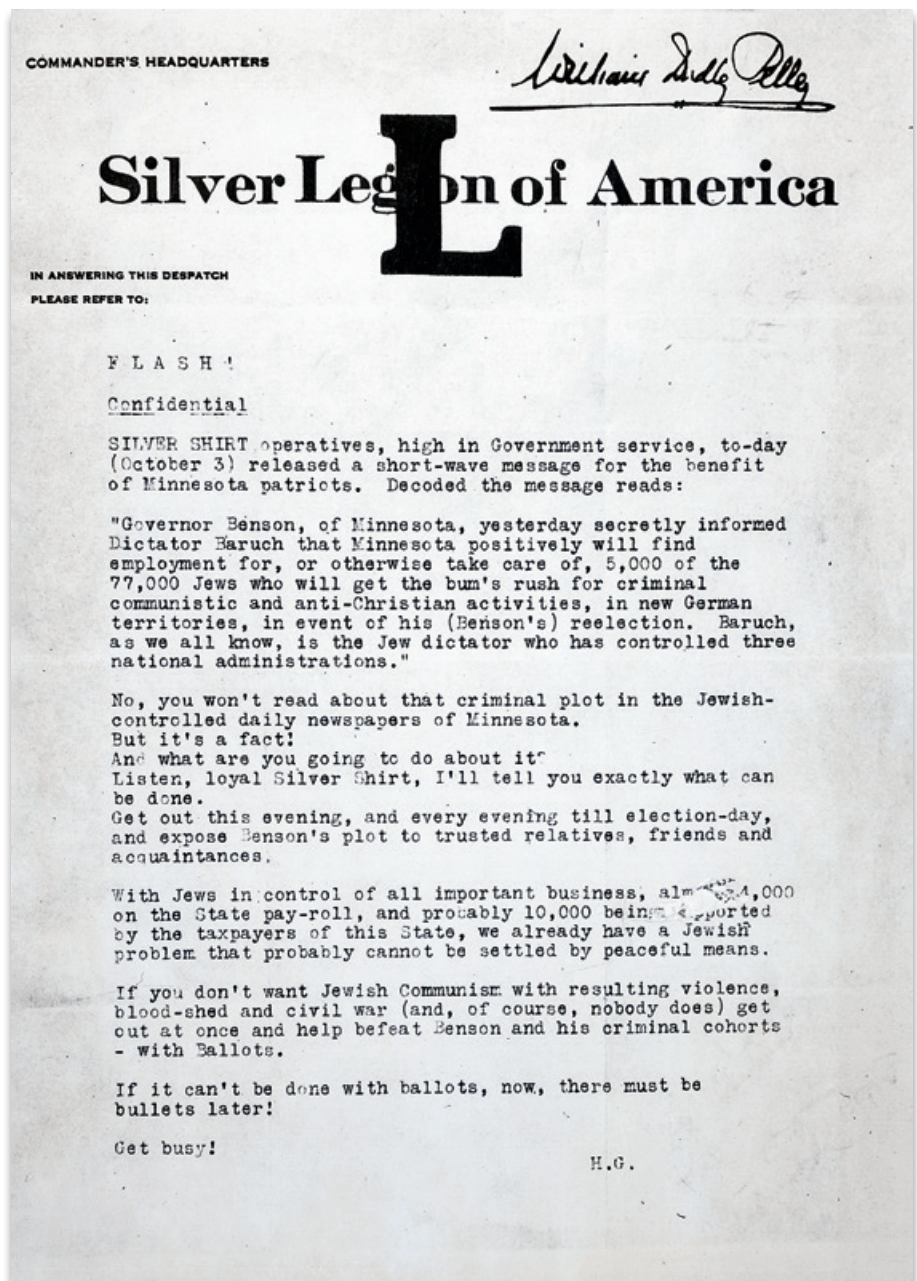
Albert I. Gordon, a union negotiator and rabbi of the Minneapolis synagogue Adath Jeshurun, wrote an open letter in August to the directors of Associated Industries. Gordon inquired into the organization's attitude toward the Silver Shirts, whose overt anti-Semitism, he wrote, appeared to counter Associated Industries' professed aims: the "establishment of amicable relationships between all the classes and groups of the city." Gordon's letter prompted public responses from both Belden and Associated Industries condemning the Silver Shirts. Associated Industries publicly disavowed the Silver Shirts, describing them as "vicious, intolerant, and un-American."¹⁷

Further, the pronouncements by Belden and Associated Industries did not quell all concern about Silver Shirts activity. Labor activists

also were alarmed and angered by Zachary's attacks and Belden's involvement with the group. The Trotskyist leadership of Teamsters Local 574 announced its resolve to confront the Silver Shirts and such organizations "in the open." Local 574 spearheaded the Union Defense Guard, composed of 600 men from multiple unions. Though direct confrontation never occurred, this militia stood ready to break up Silver Shirts meetings and to thwart potential Silver Shirts raids on union headquarters.¹⁸

By August 1938, the Anti-Defamation Council had become entirely independent from B'nai B'rith and the other organizations from which it had sprung. The growth of the Silver Shirts and their ilk was the impetus for the newly independent organization's work to surveil anti-Semites and advocate on behalf of Jewish Minnesotans. During an informational meeting on August 12 attended by representatives from more than 60 Jewish organizations, the need to combat the "shirtists" was repeatedly cited. The 175 attendees were asked to report all instances of anti-Semitism to the Anti-Defamation Council.¹⁹

The Silver Legion's interest in Minnesota also intersected with the 1938 gubernatorial race between incumbent Farmer-Labor candidate Elmer Benson and Republican Harold Stassen. In the months leading up to the election, the Silver Shirts distributed materials that urged violence if the Farmer-Labor Party was victorious in the statewide election. Readers of *Liberation*, the Silver Shirts newspaper, were advised, "If you don't want Jewish Communism with resulting violence, blood-shed and civil war (and, of course, nobody does) get out at once and help defeat Benson and his criminal cohorts—with Ballots. If it can't be done with ballots, now, there must be bullets later!" Benson



Silver Legion communique urging defeat of incumbent governor Elmer Benson: "If it can't be done with ballots, now, there must be bullets later!"

was defeated by Republican Harold Stassen.²⁰

In October, another Silver Shirts meeting was held in St. Paul. For two hours, approximately 200 attendees listened to Roy Zachary, the Silver Shirts recruiter, lecture on an impending "red dictatorship." By December, Anti-Defamation Council informant and secretary Charles Cooper, who had previously helped to infiltrate the Silver Shirts, confirmed

an additional meeting. Just two days later, Anti-Defamation Council chairman Arthur Brin received word that two Minneapolis police officers had joined the Silver Shirts and a third was a Silver Shirts recruiter.²¹

NEW NAME, NEW DIRECTOR

In July 1939, the Anti-Defamation Council legally incorporated and was renamed the Minnesota Jewish

Council, hiring attorney Samuel L. Scheiner as its executive director. Soon after his appointment, Scheiner wrote to Anti-Defamation League officials in Chicago alerting them to an important development: the Minneapolis distributor of a Silver Shirts pamphlet had been tentatively identified. Scheiner's network of confidential informants had reported that a US postal worker was assisting with the distribution of anti-Semitic material, including a curious pamphlet prominently featuring a Star of David on its cover. The pamphlet, falsely attributed to a real organization, the Committee for Relief of Jewish Refugees, was being distributed throughout Minneapolis, including outside of the courthouse. The forged pamphlet invoked several anti-Semitic conspiracies and explained how European Jewish refugee resettlement was part of a Jewish conspiracy to rule the nation. The document called for the boycott of Gentile stores and attributed the repeal of Prohibition to Jews so that



Samuel L. Scheiner, long-time executive director of the Minnesota Jewish Council, today known as the Jewish Community Relations Council.

they could monopolize the alcohol industry. The pamphlet also named prominent local Jews and businesses, hinting at their subversive role in a great Jewish conspiracy.²²

Scheiner believed because the pamphlet was distributed under false pretenses and attempted to rile up anti-Semitic sentiment it represented an unprecedented opening for striking back at anti-Semitism. Scheiner explained: "This is the first opportunity we have had to invoke the criminal statutes against the leaders of this organization and if possible we do not want to 'muff the ball.' It is extremely important that this matter be handled judiciously and cautiously." If the printer would identify who had purchased the pamphlets, the suspect might be charged for libel, forgery, and "conspiracy to commit and utter a forgery and libelous statements." The printer, however, signed a statement that he was unable to identify the customer who had made the pamphlets, concluding "that he is a stranger." Meanwhile, the actual Committee for Relief of Jewish Refugees placed ads in local newspapers offering a \$100 reward for information leading to the apprehension of the document's distributors.²³

BRASS KNUCKLES AND FISTICUFFS

Tales of Jewish men (including gangsters) combatting the Silver Shirts using their fists rather than their wits have circulated in the Jewish community (and in print) for decades, though there is little verifiable evidence to back up such stories. A 1992 Minnesota Public Radio documentary on anti-Semitism in Minneapolis gives an account of a small group of young Jews who used physical force during sporadic confrontations with the Silver Shirts.¹

Attorney Joe Bard recalled joining a small group of Jewish businessmen and professionals called the Twenty Club. One of the members, a doctor, recruited Bard as part of a subset of six or seven members to strategize how to fend off the Silver Shirts by means of physical force. Bard recounted his shock when handed a set of brass knuckles, something he had never seen before. Upon learning of their utility, Bard realized that the men were truly preparing for a physical confrontation. The group practiced techniques for two months, then learned of a gathering on Minneapolis's Lake Street. Taking the Silver Shirts attendees by surprise, the men, "with *mogen dovids* [stars of David] painted on our chests," stormed the room and "swung at heads." Bard

recounted that at least three physical confrontations occurred between the groups, though they were never covered in the media or referenced in Silver Shirts propaganda.²

Publicity about the physical fights between Silver Shirts and Jews would likely have been shunned as a potential threat to the reputation of otherwise upstanding Jewish businessmen and professionals and further fuel for already prevalent anti-Jewish sentiment. Though Jews generally agreed that anti-Semitism was a danger to their sense of safety and livelihood, by no means had a consensus emerged for how to deal with the Silver Shirts.

Notes

1. For a recent example of such recounting, see Neal Gendler, "Hitler's American Friends: Swastikas Carried Beside American Flags," *American Jewish World*, Oct. 17, 2018, 1, <http://ajwnews.com/hitlers-american-friends/>.

2. John Biewen and Beth Friend, "No Jews Allowed," radio documentary, originally broadcast 1992, *Anti-Semitism in Minneapolis History*, Minnesota Public Radio, https://www.mprnews.org/story/2017/10/18/anti-semitism_mpls_history.

No longer merely subject to the court of public opinion, the distribution of anti-Semitic material, a hallmark of Silver Shirts activity, was deemed illegal.

Within days, Scheiner and his associates located an individual who admitted distributing the material to a man named Albert Cyr, one of Scheiner's undercover informants. The suspect was T. G. Wooster, a familiar character who had appeared in numerous documents about Minnesota's Silver Shirts dating back to 1936. According to Jewish reports, he had seemed to be a relatively unremarkable member of the group. Under the pretense of obtaining the material in order to distribute it, Scheiner's undercover man finally had gained firsthand knowledge of the document's origins. Scheiner secured an affidavit from Cyr confirming that he had collected Silver Shirts materials from Wooster, who not only acknowledged distributing the pamphlets but also was found with 500 copies in his possession. According to Cyr's statement, Wooster boasted about subsidizing printing costs and noted "that various women were distributing these pamphlets in the City of St. Paul, as well as Minneapolis, by taking these pamphlets and inserting them in newspapers that were left at the doors of various homes."²⁴

The following day Cyr returned to Wooster's residence under the pretense of picking up pamphlets to distribute. Cyr brought along George R. Blaisdell, from whom Cyr had been renting a room. Blaisdell's previous association with the Silver Shirts had landed him on multiple Minnesota Jewish Council lists and reports about suspected anti-Semites. Unbeknownst to both Wooster and

Blaisdell, Cyr's lodging with the Blaisdell family was a ruse; Cyr had been living with the Blaisdell family as an undercover informant for the Minnesota Jewish Council. The following day, Cyr witnessed Blaisdell's 11-year-old son placing the anti-Semitic literature into the unoccupied cars of nearby churchgoers, likely under the direction of his father. In addition to identifying Wooster as the chief financier of the forged pamphlets, Cyr now had gained additional evidence in confirming another distributor of Silver Shirts materials in Blaisdell and a means to further expose Minnesota's Silver Shirts figureheads.²⁵

Cyr's testimony would enable charges to be brought against Wooster, Blaisdell, and a third man involved with printing and distributing the pamphlets, Cyrus Osterhus. All three could have been charged with the distribution of libelous and forged materials. Ultimately, Scheiner sought charges against Blaisdell for distributing literature that was "likely to create violence and a breach of the peace." The Minneapolis Municipal Court found Blaisdell guilty of disorderly conduct and sentenced him to one month in the workhouse. In his memorandum, ruling judge William C. Larson concluded:

There can be no more potent breeder of public disorder, than a deliberate stirring up of class against class, and race against race. That undermines the patriotic unity of our nation, and is in direct opposition to that tolerance of race and religion which our

constitution provides for, and which is a distinguishing feature of the fundamental law of our land, one of its great cornerstones essential to the peace and safety of any community.²⁶

The verdict was lauded as a momentous win. An editorial in the local *American Jewish World* crowed that previous judges had been "carried away by the mere sound of the words 'freedom of speech.' Judge Larson's opinion sets a precedent for judges to see the light behind the sound. . . . No matter what legalistic appeals or decisions may follow this ruling, no one can reverse its moral soundness." No longer merely subject to the court of public opinion, the distribution of anti-Semitic material, a hallmark of Silver Shirts activity, was deemed illegal. Tracking down the figureheads of the local movement was surely a victory for the Minnesota Jewish Council. Yet despite these gains, anti-Semitic acts associated with Silver Shirts sympathizers continued.²⁷

Though popular accounts of Minnesota's Silver Shirts mark their dissolution around 1938 when Harold Stassen won the governor's race, the Minnesota Jewish Council's records reveal that they remained active within the state through 1940. Scheiner himself was affected. In September 1939, while trying to purchase a home in St. Louis Park, he received an anonymous call to dissuade him. After investigating the neighborhood's residents and cross-checking against a list of suspected

Liberation at the Crossroads

DURING the past week the duly constituted authorities and some perhaps not so constituted have made three sallies in their campaign to stop Pelley of the Silver Shirts from publicizing the machinations of Jews and their satraps against Christian institutions.

As described in full detail in *Liberation Weekly* for October 14, now being mailed, the authorities of Buncombe County, North Carolina, sought to arrest the Chief in order to impose sentence which was continued for five years by the trial judge in 1935 upon Mr. Pelley's conviction of a technical violation of the State Blue Sky laws.

On the heels of the issuance of the *capias* the Judge directed the local sheriff to seize any records which might be useful in determining whether or not there has been any violation of the judgment of the court as alleged.

Next the County Tax Collector levied on and took technical custody of the printing plant and materials for current taxes which became due on the first Monday of October, 1939.

At the moment it is the last item which particularly concerns us, as we are called upon to pay the Tax Collector the sum of \$701.35 before Friday, November 3, or suffer the closing of The Pelley Publishers and the sale of the printing equipment and stock to satisfy the tax levy.

OVER the past eight years the Chief has brought to tens of thousands of America's bedeviled people a message of radiant hope and spiritual satisfaction. During this period he has worked and struggled and sacrificed for the benefit of his fellow citizens, only to be ridiculed, castigated and persecuted by the constituted authorities, who are wittingly or unwittingly doing the bidding of the money lenders to the end that opposition to their machinations against American institutions shall be forever laid.

It is the purpose of the Headquarters Staff to con-

tinue publishing activities. However, the present exigency involves the aforementioned tax levy which must be paid before November 3, the maintenance of the legal staff which is vitally necessary at this juncture, as well as the normal operating expenses.

There is available a good stock of Mr. Pelley's political and esoteric writings, and it is our intention to proceed with the production of the *Liberation Scripts* and *Galahad Lectures* and the printing of *LITTLE VISITS, REALITY* and *LIBERATION Weekly*.

ADMITTEDLY we are faced with a sizable job to maintain the *Liberation Movement*. But we believe that every last one of us has enlisted under its banner for the duration of the war for freedom and economic security for ourselves and our posterity. This being so, it is incumbent upon everyone owing a balance on account to remit every dollar possible to Headquarters.

In addition, we are sure that *LIBERATION* readers will support the cause with more liberal orders for our publications, and some generous contributions, even though such contributions may involve some degree of sacrifice. The security of men has forever called for sacrifice, and we at Headquarters are carrying on in the face of the staggering blows we have received, confident that our work is pointing the way to better days, and confident that our people throughout the Nation will again help us, in this latest struggle.

SHALL a purblind and bigoted officialdom be permitted to stop the work of the man who has sacrificed personal interests and fought inhuman persecution in order to show us the way to victory over penury and servitude to the god of gold? Every reader of *LIBERATION* is called upon to answer for himself and to act accordingly, with all haste.

THE HEADQUARTERS STAFF.

Asheville, N. C.,
October 24, 1939.

By the end of 1939, Pelley's publishing operations were in peril, detailed in this issue of Liberation.

Silver Shirts obtained from Pelley's files, Scheiner was able to confirm the culprit had also been active in the Silver Legion. The following month, a member of Stewart Presbyterian Church in south Minneapolis reported a congregant reciting Silver Shirts propaganda. Confirming the report's veracity, Scheiner relayed the suspected individual's previous ties to the Silver Shirts as well as the suspect's ties to local Evangelical minister C. O. Stadskev, known for his frequent anti-Semitic diatribes. Stewart Presbyterian's minister promptly acknowledged Scheiner's complaint and confirmed that he would ensure

that the suspect was "thrown out of the church."²⁸

In 1940 Scheiner obtained additional reports of individuals distributing anti-Semitic materials from their vehicles. He later received reports from a local priest that a branch of the anti-Semitic, pro-Nazi Christian Front had been growing considerably.

Pelley officially disbanded the Silver Legion of America in January 1941, due in part to the increased scrutiny he was facing from the House Un-American Activities Committee. The following year, Pelley was convicted of sedition and

sentenced to prison. Several other groups, however—including spinoffs of the Christian Front—continued to organize and raise funds to support the work of anti-Semitic figureheads. After eight years in prison, Pelley was released on parole and began publishing his tracts once again. In 1950, nearly a decade after the Silver Shirts had dissolved, Scheiner remained vigilant in tracking Pelley. Using the alias Mrs. S. L. Schriner, he requested information related to Pelley's reorganized publishing venture, Soulcraft Press.²⁹

The memory of the Silver Shirts did not fade for those who lived through that era. Numerous oral histories gathered between 1967 and 1986 for the Jews in Minnesota Oral History Project are replete with testimonials that reference the role of anti-Semitism during the 1930s. Twenty-five years after the Silver Shirts' dissolution, Rabbi Albert G. Minda recalled, "The Silver Shirts here in Minneapolis were creating a bad atmosphere, particularly for many young [Jewish] people who were born here and reared here, and wanted to stay on but found the doors barred."³⁰

Our understanding of how the Silver Shirts and other anti-Semites affected Jewish life in Minnesota is made possible largely owing to the records carefully collected by the Anti-Defamation Council/Minnesota Jewish Council. Through the records kept of the organization's diligent work during the 1930s, we can begin to grasp the degree to which organized anti-Semitism permeated the lives of Jewish Minnesotans. Scheiner and countless others acutely understood the dangerous potential of the Silver Shirts' ideologies. Scheiner declared in 1946: "Anti-Semites always use the cloak of anonymity to protect their vicious, false, and scurrilous printed material, for they well know that their accusations will not

stand close scrutiny and investigation." Though Jews recognized that lists of suspected anti-Semites would always be incomplete, their proactive fight against the Silver Shirts of the 1930s sent a clear, enduring message that it is not enough to merely vilify hatred. Instead, acts of intolerance and threats of violence must be taken seriously and met with organized opposition to ensure the safety and well-being not only of Jews, but of all Minnesotans.³¹ ■

Notes

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1. For more reading on the histories of Jews in Minnesota see: Hyman Berman and Linda Mack Schloff, *Jews in Minnesota* (St. Paul: MNHS Press, 2002); Albert I. Gordon, *Jews in Transition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1949); Michael G. Rapp, "Samuel N. Deinard and the Unification of Jews in Minneapolis," *Minnesota History* 43, no. 6 (Summer 1973): 213–21; and Laura Weber, "From Exclusion to Integration: The Story of Jews in Minnesota," MNopedia, MNHS, <http://www.mnopedia.org/exclusion-integration-story-jews-minnesota>.

Elizabeth Dorsey Hatle and Nancy M. Vailancourt, "One Flag, One School, One Language: Minnesota's Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s," *Minnesota History*, 61, no. 8 (Winter 2009/10): 363; Bryan D. Palmer, *Revolutionary Teamsters: The Minneapolis Truckers' Strikes of 1934* (Boston: Brill, 2013), 106; Farrell Dobbs, *Teamster Politics* (New York: Pathfinder, 1975); Michael Gerald Rapp, *An Historical Overview of Anti-Semitism in Minnesota, 1920–1960—with Particular Emphasis on Minneapolis and St. Paul* (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 1977), 24–38. In addition to Riley, George Mecklenburg of Minneapolis's Wesley Methodist Episcopal Church and evangelist Luke Radar of the River-Lake Gospel Temple Lake Street in Minneapolis preached anti-Semitic sermons on local radio stations.

For an overview of anti-Semitism in Minneapolis during this era, see Herbert Samuel Rutman, *Defense and Development: A History of Minneapolis Jewry, 1930–1950* (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 1970), 127; Laura E. Weber, "Gentiles Preferred": Minneapolis Jews and Employment, 1920–50," *Minnesota History* 58, no. 5 (Spring 1991): 166–82.

2. Donald S. Strong, *Organized Anti-Semitism in America: The Rise of Group Prejudice During the Decade 1930–40* (Washington, DC: American

Council on Public Affairs, 1941), 14, 30, 63, 141–43; Bradley W. Hart, *Hitler's American Friends: The Third Reich's Supporters in the United States* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2018), 56. Strong's 1941 study noted that estimates for the Bund of 25,000 were generous. Though several of the documented organizations merely consisted of the founder's name and a mailing list, Strong's research revealed a marked increase in anti-Semitism. Contemporary estimates cited by Hart estimates Bund membership at 20,000 at its peak with an additional 100,000 sympathizers and Silver Legion membership as 15,000 at its peak and an additional 100,000 sympathizers.

3. Strong, *Organized Anti-Semitism in America*, 53; 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), 8, 20.

4. "William Dudley Pelley," undated, box 40, folder "Pelley, William Dudley, undated, 1936 (1), 1938," Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota papers (hereafter, JCRC), MNHS, 13; Leo P. Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right: The Protestant Far Right from the Great Depression to the Cold War* (Philadelphia: Temple University, 1983), 57; Hoke, *Shirts!*, 13, 16; Hart, *Hitler's American Friends*, 56, 239.

Silver Shirts activity at the University of Minnesota was later confirmed by a suspected Silver Shirts member named Gibson Wright, in a report by an undercover informant (SLW, Oct. 13, 1936, box 54, folder "Subversive Activities: Minneapolis, 1936," JCRC, 2).

5. Strong, *Organized Anti-Semitism in America*, 40; Severeid's series of 1936 articles published in the *Minneapolis Journal* refer to his conversations with women active in Pelley's publicly facing Christian Party, though presumably these meetings corresponded with Silver Shirts activities ("New Silver Shirt Clan With Incredible Credo Secretly Organized Here," *Minneapolis Journal*, Sept. 11, 1936, 1, 14; "Silvershirts Meet Secretly Here But Come Out Openly in Pacific Coast Drive," *Minneapolis Journal*, Sept. 12, 1936, 1–2); Hart, *Hitler's American Friends*, 57–58.

6. Laura Weber, "Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas," MNopedia, MNHS, <http://www.mnopedia.org/group/jewish-community-relations-council-minnesota-and-dakotas>.

7. Severeid, "New Silver Shirt Clan"; Eric Severeid, *Not So Wild a Dream* (New York: Atheneum, 1976), 69–71; Joe Allen, "It Can't Happen Here? Confronting the Fascist Threat in the United States in the 1930s," *International Socialist Review* 85 (2012), <https://isreview.org/issue/85/it-cant-happen-here>. Minnesota Silver Shirts purportedly began organizing in spring of 1936. It's unclear, both from Severeid's exposé and his memoir, just how many meetings he attended with the Silver Shirts and how he attempted to infiltrate and if he did so undercover; it is likely that due to the reference of a Silver Shirt inquiring if his real name would be made public that Severeid had, at some point, disclosed his status as a

reporter (Eric Severeid, "Silvershirts' Dire Prophecy Falls Flat; World Goes on with a Chuckle Over Plot," *Minneapolis Journal*, Sept. 16, 1936).

8. Severeid, "Silvershirts Say Quarters are Bought by Morgenthau in Russia at 5 Cents Each," *Minneapolis Journal*, Sept. 15, 1936, 1, 6; Edward P. Schwartz, interviewer Rhoda Lewin, 1976, Jews in Minnesota Oral History Project, MNHS, 6.

9. Oct. 23, 1936, box 54, folder "Subversive Activities: Minneapolis, 1936," JCRC, 2; Rapp, *An Historical Overview of Anti-Semitism in Minnesota*, 53–54, 111–19; Rutman, *Defense and Development*, 127. For more information on Charles I. Cooper's work in Minnesota Jewish life, see: "Charles I. Cooper Heads B'nai B'rith," *Minneapolis Tribune*, Jan. 25, 1934, 5; "Jewish Group Honors Ex-Secretary at Dinner," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, Jan. 14, 1952, 17.

10. The index cards reside at the Berman Upper Midwest Jewish Archives at the University of Minnesota, and the lists are contained in the JCRC archives at MNHS. Today the JCRC records hold materials pertaining to its earliest iterations as the Jewish Anti-Defamation Council of Minnesota and the Minnesota Jewish Council.

11. List, "Minnesota Contacts," box 40, folder "Pelley, William Dudley, undated, 1936," JCRC, 2.

12. "Silver Shirts Hear National Office," *Minneapolis Star*, July 30, 1938, 4; "Un-American," *Minneapolis Journal*, Aug. 4, 1938, 12; "Mayor Explains Ban on 'Shirts' Parade," *Minneapolis Star*, June 16, 1938, 13.

13. "Silver Shirts Hear National Office"; Palmer, *Revolutionary Teamsters*, 227. Silver Shirts meetings apparently did not warrant front-page coverage in all newspapers, though local organizers' names were included in back-page write-ups. T. G. Wooster, who would again surface in 1939, was named as a local organizer, along with his home address. Letter presumably from T. G. Wooster to Silver Shirts members and potential members, July 23, 1938, box 41, folder "Pelley, William Dudley 1938–1940 (2)," JCRC.

14. "Two Halls Barred to Silver Shirts," *Minneapolis Tribune*, Aug. 4, 1938, 4; "Silvershirts Hold Meeting," *Minneapolis Tribune*, Aug. 3, 1938, 8; "Silvershirts Gather Again," *Minneapolis Star*, Aug. 3, 1938, 16. The "Two Halls" article notes, "Many Masons are opposed to the purposes of the Silver Shirts and a trustee of the Ark Lodge reported that he only knew 'the hall was to be used for a series of patriotic meetings.'" The American Legion's Bearcat chapter publicly resolved that Nazi Bunds, Silver Shirts, the KKK, and other fascist organizations were not welcome in Minneapolis: "Bearcat Legion Post Warns Bund, 'Isms,'" *Minneapolis Star*, June 11, 1938, 9. The Ark Lodge was at 3044 First Avenue South, and Royal Arcanum Hall's address was 3011 First Avenue South.

15. Joseph H. Schanfeld, "To the Members of the B'nai B'rith Lodges of the Twin Cities," Sept. 11, 1938, box 41, folder "Pelley, William Dudley, 1938–40 (2)," JCRC; "A Reporter Tells the Truth about the Silver Shirts: An Exposé of

Un-American Activities in Minneapolis," ed. Anti-Defamation Council of Minnesota, Minneapolis, 1938, box 41, JCRC; "Tide Against Silver Shirts Mounts Here," *American Jewish World*, Aug. 12, 1938, 1, 16. *American Jewish World* also publicized that it obtained a list of those who attended previous Silver Shirts meetings, no doubt an attempt to inhibit Silver Shirts recruitment and deter curious parties from attending future events.

16. "It Is Un-American," *Minneapolis Tribune*, Aug. 12, 1938, 16; "Hate Crusades," *Minneapolis Journal*, Aug. 17, 1938; "Attacks Continue on Silver Shirt Program Here," *American Jewish World*, Aug. 19, 1938, 15; "Tide Against Silver Shirts Mounts Here," 16; "Public Opinion Mounting Against Silver Shirts," *American Jewish World*, Aug. 16, 1938, 1, 16; O. C., "The Press and the Silver Shirts," *Minneapolis Tribune*, Aug. 25, 1938, 6.

17. "Belden Tells of Attending Silvershirts," *Minneapolis Star*, Aug. 4, 1938, 1-2; T. M. Greig, "Silver Shirts' Meeting Provokes Three Letters," *Minneapolis Tribune*, Aug. 5, 1938, 5; Weber, "Gentiles Preferred," 173. For more information on Gordon, see also Rutman, *Defense and Development*, 67-68.

18. "Labor Blasts Silver Shirts," *Minneapolis Tribune*, Aug. 14, 1938, 5. Both the Minneapolis Central Labor Union and American Legion of Minneapolis went on record during August 1938 decrying the Silver Shirts and Bund: see "Legion Denounces New Organization," *Minneapolis Tribune*, Aug. 5, 1938, 5. Palmer, *Revolutionary Teamsters*, notes that the formation of the Union Defense Guard would help to distance fascist resistance from labor proper and thus thwart charges of communism and potentially subdue anti-union violence (227-28). For a firsthand account of the role of the Union Defense Guard, see Dobbs, *Teamster Politics*, 187-97. Also see Joe Allen's "It Can't Happen Here?"

19. "175 Hear Report of Local Anti-Defamation Council," *American Jewish World*, Aug. 12, 1938, 7.

20. H. G., "Flash!" Silver Legion of America, undated, box 41, folder "Pelley, William Dudley, 1938-1940 (2)," JCRC. In 1934, a San Diego outpost of the Silver Shirts had organized to outfit members and seize city hall. In sworn testimony, it was revealed that members had secured ammunition in the case of a communist takeover on May Day (Strong, *Organized Anti-Semitism in America*, 50). Slightly more sophisticated than the Silver Shirts propaganda, but equally anti-Semitic, former Minnesota auditor Ray P. Chase's pamphlet "Communists or Cats Paws?" injected anti-Semitic conspiracy theories into state politics. That both Chase, as establishment politician, and the Silver Shirts articulated a desire to eliminate Jewish "influence" from state government illuminated the degree to which anti-Semitism had become fixed within Minnesota.

21. "200 Silver Shirts Show Up 'Shirtless,'" *Minneapolis Tribune*, Oct. 29, 1938; C. I. C., "Memo," Dec. 2, 1938, and "Memo to Mr. Brin," Dec. 5, 1938, box 41, folder "Pelley, William Dudley, 1938-1949 (2)," JCRC.

22. Rutman, *Defense and Development*, 129; Samuel L. Scheiner to Sigmund Livingston, July 27, 1939, and Charles I. Cooper to Samuel Scheiner, Aug. 16, 1939, both box 4, folder "Anti-Jewish Pamphlet: Committee for Jewish Refugees," JCRC. Scheiner went on to serve as the Minnesota Jewish Council's executive director most years between 1939 and 1974. During the same week the distributor of the Silver Shirts pamphlet was identified, Manny Katz, who owned a drugstore in Minneapolis, had anti-Jewish circulars posted to the window of his shop. Katz's drugstore was also disliked for its low price on beer, making nearby beer parlors resentful of the newfound competition from a drugstore. Scheiner and others suspected that the Silver Shirts had posted the anti-Semitic materials on Katz's windows. (Samuel Scheiner, Aug. 18, 1939, box 4, folder "Anti-Jewish Pamphlet: Committee for Jewish Refugees," JCRC).

23. Complaint Against Defendants, undated, 3-4; Scheiner to Sigmund Livingston, Aug. 4, 1939; Sigmund Livingston to Arthur Brin, Aug. 8, 1939; Cyrus Osterhus, Aug. 2, 1939; Samuel L. Scheiner to Sigmund Livingston, July 27, 1938—all box 4, folder "Anti-Jewish Pamphlet: Committee for Jewish Refugees," JCRC. Albert Cyr's name also appears in a 1934 article recounting that Cyr and other organizers of an "America First" parade had been overshadowed by 500 Communist hecklers ("Parade Goes on Despite Taunts," *Minneapolis Star*, Apr. 30, 1934, 4).

24. Anonymous, box 54, folder "Subversive Activities: Minneapolis, 1936," JCRC: "Man of about sixty years. Very low grade mentality. This man is only a front and has [sic] he knows nothing that the others do not know and receives his orders daily when he turns over the money and membership cards he may have." Affidavit of Albert Cyr, taken by the Law Offices of Samuel L. Scheiner, July 27, 1939, 1, and Samuel L. Scheiner to Sigmund Livingston, Aug. 4, 1939, both box 4, folder "Anti-Jewish Pamphlet: Committee for Jewish Refugees," JCRC.

25. "Key List of Subversive Subjects," box 40, folder "Pelley, William Dudley, undated, 1936," 6, JCRC; Affidavit of Albert Cyr, 2.

26. Complaint Against Defendants, undated, box 4, folder "Anti-Jewish Pamphlet: Committee for Jewish Refugees," JCRC, 1; "Judge Raps Class Hate," *American Jewish World*, Sept. 15, 1939, 1, 16. The actual Committee for Relief of Jewish Refugees was prepared to bring charges against Blaisdell, Osterhus, and Wooster both "individually and as [presumable Silver Shirts] members."

27. D. A., "Open-Eyed Justice," *American Jewish World*, Sept. 15, 1939, 4.

28. Samuel L. Scheiner, "Report," May 28, 1940, box 15, folder "Discrimination, General, 1940 (4)," JCRC; Samuel Scheiner to Harry W. Davis, Sept. 28, 1939, box 55, folder "Subversive Activities: Persons and Organizations, Rimmer-Sroga," JCRC; Rapp, *An Historical Overview of Anti-Semitism in Minnesota*, 156-66; Samuel L. Scheiner, "Report," Oct. 10, 1939, box 16, folder "Discrimination, General 1938-9 (1)," JCRC. The

Scheiner report confirmed information that the Minnesota Jewish Council had secured four years earlier, and established an individual's continued involvement with the Silver Shirts. L. W. Holmes of Minneapolis was allegedly distributing Silver Shirts materials; his name appears on JCRC's "Key List of Subversive Suspects," 27. Scheiner received an anonymous call that made clear "it would not be healthy for me to move . . . for the reason that they did not want any Jews out there." He subsequently wrote a letter to the Kelley-How-Thomson Company of Duluth, the suspect's employer, to inquire about the business's attitude toward Jews. Scheiner included the names of two Kelly-How-Thomson employees whose names appeared in lists of suspected anti-Semites.

29. Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right*, 76; envelope addressed to "Mrs. S. L. Schriener," Apr. 17, 1950, box 41, folder "Pelley, William Dudley, 1941-1943," JCRC; Samuel L. Scheiner, "Report," Jan. 26, 1940, and Samuel L. Scheiner, "Report," Mar. 22, 1940, both box 16, folder "Discrimination, General 1938-9 (1)," JCRC.

30. Rabbi Albert G. Minda, interviewer June Stern, July-Nov. 1968, Minneapolis, MN, Jews in Minnesota Oral History Project, MNHS, 28; Rutman, *Defense and Development*, 62.

31. Samuel L. Scheiner, Dec. 2, 1946, box 5, folder "Antisemitism: Minnesota undated," JCRC; Linn Firestone, interviewer Jeanne Boutang, Oct. 15, 1984, United Jewish Fund and Council Oral History Project, Jewish Historical Society of the Upper Midwest, 13. Firestone discusses his work as an advocate for Jewish Minnesotans: "he saw his job as somewhat more than reacting to these things [anti-Semitism] and that's why he went into the schools, that (sic) why he went into the correctional institutions."

Image on p. 142, Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota Papers, P445 (hereafter, JCRC), Box 40, Folder: William Dudley Pelley, undated, 1936 (1), MNHS Collections; p. 143, 144 (bottom), JCRC, Box 40, Folder: Anti-Semitism: Miscellaneous undated (13), MNHS Collections; p. 144 (top), AP; p. 145, courtesy of Imgur; p. 147 (top), Hennepin County Library, Minneapolis Photograph Newspaper Collection; p. 147 (bottom), JCRC, Box 40, Folder: William Dudley Pelley, undated, 1936 (1), MNHS Collections; p. 148, ProQuest; p. 149 (top), p. 150, 153, JCRC, Box 41, Folder: William Dudley Pelley, 1938-41 (2), MNHS Collections; p. 149 (bottom), 151, MNHS Collections.



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