

# **WILLIAM DUDLEY PELLEY**

## **Father of American Racial Mysticism**

**by A.V. Schaeffenberg**

In his prophetic novel, 1984, George Orwell envisioned the kind of society the world is rapidly becoming. A motto of that "future" time was, "Who controls the present, controls the past, who controls the past, controls the future." Part of that mind-control was assisted by the Memory Hold. It was an incinerator into which were thrown any pieces of information about the past which were considered damaging to the Big Brother System. To demonstrate how close the Establishment in our country resembles that of 1984, we present the story of William Dudley Pelley. Although the leader of a mass-movement that commanded headlines throughout the decade of the 1930s, his name is totally unknown today, except to a handful of researchers. Outside of infrequent, fleeting references to him in a few histories of the Depression Era, there are no books about his dramatic life; not even any newspaper or magazine articles. His photograph cannot be found outside the pages of *The New Order*, nor any photographs of his tens of thousands of followers, even though both his image and theirs dominated newsreels and publications of the time. His speeches are unobtainable even though they were heard by millions, sometimes over national-wide radio broadcasts. He attracted the friendship of legendary heroes like Charles Lindbergh and the hatred of legendary scoundrels like Franklin Roosevelt. Sinclair Lewis wrote a full length novel, *It Can't Happen Here*, based on his life. Along with the works of Theodore Dreiser, H.L. Mencken, F. Scott Fitzgerald and other luminaries of the 1920s, his books entered college curricula in the forefront of modern American literature. Yet, no college course in Great Books today features any of his titles. He was one of the most important creators of the silent film, the author of such classic screen plays as *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Despite the man's undeniable impact on his times, his name has been thoroughly expunged from contemporary history, his books (worse than banned or burned) unpublished, his political achievements consigned to oblivion.

In trying to research the material for this article, after months of investigation, I learned that his only biography was written eighteen years ago, an obscure university thesis by a hostile postgraduate student. Some scattered fragments of additional data came from xeroxes of Pelley's own moldering publications, via dusty library archives. Everything about him has been tossed into a genuine Memory Hole, no less thorough in its destruction but far more real than Orwell's model. The Big Brother who blots out all information about William Dudley Pelley is the same controller of the past who makes sure there are plenty of school books and pseudo-documentaries for television and the movies extolling the "greatness" of Martin Luther King, Jr. or Malcolm X. What could Pelley have done that so struck to the heart of the System, that ignited such a complete effort to erase all knowledge of his existence from American consciousness?

## **Horror in Russia**

William Dudley Pelley was born in Lynn, Massachusetts on March 12th, 1890, into abject poverty. All he could remember of his childhood was that he was "perpetually hungry and shabbily dressed". Unlike apologists for ineptitude, adversity did not deter young William from making something of his life. For him, destitution was not an excuse for laziness and failure, but a catalyst for betterment. Still in his early teens, he found lowly employment at a tissue factory, where he labored long, tedious hours for very little money. But he saved his pennies and educated himself by reading at every opportunity. Reading was his only passion and escape from the drudgery and material impoverishment of his adolescence. He especially loved the classic American authors - Poe, Emerson, O'Henry, etc. - and dreamed of being a writer. By his 18th year, he was better educated than most college graduates and began to realize his dream, when he was hired as a junior reporter for Springfield's Homestead newspaper. Although his income was hardly better than his wages at the tissue factory, he married in 1911 and was blessed with a baby girl the following year. She died around her third birthday, however. Despite his "frightful sorrow", or because of it, he worked harder at his craft than ever, his reputation as a reporter of extraordinary descriptive powers grew and, for the first time in his life, he was financially comfortable. In his following years, his feature articles in such nationally-known magazines as Red Book, Colliers and The Saturday Evening Post were admired by millions of readers.

By the end of the First World War, Pelley's prestige was such that his publisher commissioned him as a foreign correspondent on assignment in Eastern Europe. With a generous expense account and the diplomatic rank of "consular courier" conferred upon him by the United States government, he shipped out for Russia in early 1918. To him, his assignment was a fun adventure, a well-paid lark and a chance to vacation overseas. It turned out to be something far more. Until his fateful voyage, Pelley was a happy-go-lucky, up-and-coming author, with no real convictions of his own. As he remembered years later, the experience transformed him "from a nondescript writer to a grim crusader."

For two years, he covered 8,000 miles by train and horse-back through Siberia, into the Ukraine, across the steppes of Central Russia, into the Far East and through Asia to Japan. Through all these extensive travels, he was a personal witness to the communist revolution. He saw peasant women crucified to barn doors and a schoolroom in which the teacher and all the students had been bludgeoned to death, their brains splattered against the blackboard. There were whole villages depopulated by murder, with corpses swinging from every lamppost and choking the nearby streams. These victims were rarely military personnel, nor politically involved in any way. They were common people, mostly farmers and factory workers. Such horrific sights, encountered wherever the Reds passed, almost unhinged his mind. But they were so commonplace, he gradually grew enured to the sea of blood through which he traveled daily.

He learned first-hand that communism was not an ideology, it was simply the organization of the worst criminal elements led by Jews to destroy society. This was no speculation. Virtually all the commissars he knew (some of whom he interviewed) were Jewish, while the majority of their activists were common

murderers and perverts "liberated" from prison. They were motivated by hatred, power and revenge, nothing else. All their slogans about "Equality" and "Peace" were transparent ruses to dupe thoughtless liberals among the Russian people, their victims. Drunk with success, the Jews boasted openly of their plans for world conquest by fomenting the same kind of divisiveness in other countries. They told Pelley that Russia was just a stepping stone, a base for international subversion. Even their phony "communism" was utterly dispensable, just like their own followers, who they never hesitated to massacre on the slightest whim. Their long-range goal was one-world government, in which the masses became willing slaves, fueling an international economy with their genius and labor, while the Jewish people dominated all important positions of power. "After Russia," one greasy commissar smirked at Pelley, "then Europe and later, America!"

### **"Hooray for Hollywood!"**

Before his political awakening overseas, he knew nothing about Jews, never heard them discussed at home while growing up and, at most, thought of them only as members of a non-Christian religion. Returning to the United States a changed and shaken man, Pelley made his report to Representative Louis F. McFadden of Pennsylvania in 1920. The politician was so alarmed at what he heard, he personally read aloud the Protocols for the Learned Elders of Zion on the floor of Congress, officially introducing this vitally important document into the Congressional Record. (The Protocols represent an agenda for bringing Jewish leaders into positions of political and economic dominance over society. Predictably condemned as forges by hysterical Jews, the Protocols were verified as recently as 1982, when Baigent, Leigh and Lincoln's book about the Grail legend, Holy Blood, Holy Grail, established their historical roots.) Soon after, Pelley was introduced to a Justice Department official and Robert Sharp, chief of State Department intelligence. They told him his experiences were entirely born out of their abundant files on Jewish agitation in Russia and the United States. That these politicians were so outspoken is a revealing indication of how much political power the Jews have accumulated in the last 75 years; It is today completely unthinkable that any American politician would even hint at criticizing the 'Jewish menace'.

There seemed to be nothing that could halt the "historical inevitability" of the utopian one-world promised by Karl Marx. Pelley went back to his home in Vermont and tried to forget both the "bath of horror" he knew was slowly enveloping civilization. He felt restless and frustrated and became unlivable, so much so, he and his wife divorced. These were the Roaring Twenties, when Americans were caught up in the hedonism of postwar prosperity. People lived for pleasure and let serious problems take care of themselves. Pelley, too, was not immune from the spirit of his times. Trying to escape from his own conscience, he fled to Hollywood, California, where his reputation as an author preceded him, and he was hired as a screen writer at M.G.M. and Universal Studios. He worked furiously, turning out scripts for the leading motion pictures of the day. He even scripted a film version of his own short story, The Shock, which was an instant hit. His work was of such high calibre, he soon became one of the most respected and highest paid writers in Hollywood. In the words of this biographer, his esteemed screen plays for the leading actor of the silent screen "helped to establish Lon Chaney's reputation and forged a

friendship between the two men. In addition to Chaney, he claimed 'constant entree' into the homes of Theda Bara, Chester Conklin and other famous actors, producers and directors."

Busy as he was with living it up in Hollywood high society, Pelley found time to write novels which catapulted his name into the highest levels of contemporary American fiction. Both *The Greater Glory* (extolling the simple values of life in a small New England town) and *The Fog* (a love story) were best sellers and critically acclaimed. He was favorably compared to F. Scott Fitzgerald and regarded as at least the equal to Sinclair Lewis. But money and acclaim did not bring him inner peace. Ironically, he originally fled the realities of the East Coast for the fantasy mills of Hollywood, only to find himself in the midst of a largely Jewish movie industry that was perverting the art of film into commercial propaganda, which "benumbed, anesthetized and generally bilked" audiences. "While we concentrated on creativity," he said, "furriers from Second Avenue and pants-pressers from Milwaukee began to open studios to photograph canned dramas." He felt inwardly ashamed to have anything to do with the Hollywood illusion, as he was witnessing a shadow fall across his own country, just as it had in Russia.

At the height of his career's success and his emotional turmoil, on May 29th, 1928, he was suddenly and unexpectedly confronted by a deeply moving personal experience. He wrote about it in *My Seven Minutes in Eternity*, which sold 90,000 copies. Before 1930, he received more than 20,000 letters from his readers. Despite the pamphlet's phenomenal success, the author revealed few details concerning his experience, beyond his insistence that synchronous events of personally significant "coincidences" are occurrences in everyone's life that connect us to some Divine Plan. Never before a religious man, Pelley was no St. Paul struck off his horse by God's holy lightning. Whatever happened to him, it appears to have been not unlike the vision of a young Hitler had of his life when, as a 15 year-old student in Linz, Austria, something in a performance of Wagner's music showed him a glimpse of his future mission. Such personally significant happenings are not at all that rare, but usually occur to revolutionary personalities of a high order. In any case, Pelley saw that he was wasting his time in "the necromancy of making movies" that were becoming more materialistic, and determined to devote the rest of his life doing meaningful work, whatever that turned out to be. He was ready for greatness, he felt, but lacked any sense of direction.

Most of all, he wanted to do something worthwhile for his race and Western culture. He was not unaware of the National Socialist Revolution going on in Germany, but he thought it could not possibly triumph over the enormous power of Jewry. He remembered how the slimy commissar in Russia had prophesized that Europe was to be the next victim. He studied *Mein Kampf* and wondered if the principles so clearly laid out therein could be applied in the United States. It seemed too good to be true. Next year, the sham prosperity of the 1920s collapsed with the Great Depression. The United States went bankrupt and its people knew real fear for the first time. As millions of bitterly disillusioned Americans allowed themselves to be suckered in by a burgeoning communist movement and the transparent promises of the 'New Deal' espoused by Franklin Roosevelt, Pelley was horrified to recognize the same pattern of

mass-upheaval he witnessed in Russia being replayed in his own country.

### **The Birth of the Silver Legion**

When, however, Adolf Hitler was elected to power on January 30th, 1933, Pelley was thunderstruck. The impossible had happened. At least somewhere in the world, the people had pulled themselves together in the cause of their national existence. The omnipotent Jews were defeated after all. If idealistic men could win power in Germany, the same could be accomplished here. The very next day, Pelley founded the Silver Legion, regarded by most historians as the first genuine Fascist organization in the United States. True, the roots of the German-American Bund went back ten years earlier. But it was essentially a fraternal group with no political goals save, much later, preserving peace between America and Germany. The Silver Legion began as something altogether different. From its inception, its thrust was the attainment of political power, to someday become the U.S. government and establish a state based on the fundamentals of Fascism. More important even than these obvious political and philosophical goals, a new spirit, the dynamic will of people committed to social justice would be summoned to inspire Americans as never before.

From the outset, however, Pelley was faced with a serious dilemma: While he wanted to clearly identify his organization as Fascist, he was anxious to make it appear as American as possible. Although he admired the Swastika symbol and understood its significance, he knew too, that it was the official emblem of a foreign power. He did not wish to create the impression that he was the agent of another country. Instead, he chose the letter "L" as the symbol of his new organization. It was simple to reproduce under a variety of circumstances and stood for Loyalty to the American Republic, Liberation from materialism and, of course, the Silver Legion itself. He personally designed its flag, a square, white standard emblazoned with a capital L in scarlet. For the next nine years, it was to be seen by millions of Americans, carried into vicious street battles and hoisted over every state in the Union.

But in the beginning, beyond creating its first symbol, Pelley really did not know where or how to start. At last, he fell back on his writing skills and published a tabloid newspaper, *Liberation*, at his own expense. It created a sensation, becoming virtually an overnight success by attracting not only numerous financial supporters, but expressive writers like himself and first a dozen or so, then hundreds of unemployed men anxious to sell the publication from street corners. In decadent big cities like New York or Washington, D.C., these early activists were attacked by mobs, agitated by the communists, so the same enemy that made Hitler's Stormtroopers necessary were likewise responsible for the Silver Shirts coming into being. Pelley's choice of the name was an obvious reference to the German SS., but their presence at newspaper sales and public speeches was not less vital. The members of the Silver Shirts were by no means armchair revolutionaries, but tough street fighters. In a short period of time the Silver Shirts became the Silver Legion. The vast majority of Legionnaires were factory and office workers, or students attending high school or college. Many were also ex-servicemen, betrayed veterans of the phony "War to End All Wars". They saw through the capitalist nature of the Depression and regarded F.D.R. as the most dangerous president

ever foisted on the country. Most of all, they wanted to sweep aside the liberal-capitalist-democratic System and build in its place a free republic of altruistic citizens deeply conscious of their heritage and committed to social justice. To achieve that goal, they strove to build a real political movement aimed seriously at putting their leaders in office through legal, constitutional means.

Their uniforms consisted of a cap identical to those worn by German Stormtroopers, blue corduroy trousers, leggings, tie and silver shirt with a red "L" over the heart. To offset their European appearance the Silver Shirts never failed to fly the Stars and Stripes side by side with the Legion flag, and their official anthem was a pro-American text set to the famous Civil War march, the Battle Hymn of the Republic. "Silver symbolizes the purity of our fight", Pelley announced, "and the purity of our Ideals!" This began what he referred to as "The Great Marathon", conjuring images of the Thermopylae - "the ultimate contest for existence between enlightened mankind and materialism."

By the end of 1933, the Legion's growth was nothing less than extraordinary. Units were springing up all across the country, as Pelley found that he spoke as eloquently as he could write. By 1936, he was a nationally-known public figure, who had already addressed hundreds of thousands of farmers, students, housewives and, most usually, unemployed people all across the country. As he described once in *Liberation*, "Men in the little towns are suddenly galvanized by the piercing sound of the Silver Bugles (the name of a Silver Legion drum and bugle corps). They crane their necks up from ledgers and lathes. Rippling flags go past foggy windows where they've viewed the world with increasing sullenness during this highly successful capitalist Depression. They deploy upon the sidewalks and behold the finest specimens of American manhood doing something to relieve mass resentment. They want to play their parts." Like the growing Legion of his followers, being a Fascist activist, he felt "part of the very essence and figure of my country's current history." His message was the simple truth: "Capitalist democracy has failed, but out of its putrid remains is struggling to be born the monstrous offspring, communism. The Russian people failed to crush that monster in its womb and suffered terribly. I know, I saw it happen. The same is happening here. It is not a struggle for capitalism or communism, but between spiritual values and materialism."

### **Silver Shirts on the March!**

Pelley's organization of the Silver Legion was unique. Although there were permanent barracks for Silver Shirt training and local units flourished in most states and in every region of the United States, there was no central headquarters building. Instead, the Chief, as he was popularly known to his followers, ran the Legion from his Ford touring car. He never stayed any place more than a few weeks, at most, but was constantly on the move, traveling from one headquarters to another, staging outdoor rallies and mass-meetings along the way. Actually he went through several cars per year, because he was driven an astounding 20,000 miles annually. Wherever he happened to be visiting at the time was the national headquarters from which he made all his phone calls to other headquarters. This extremely mobile leadership tied the various headquarters very closely together and gave Pelley a tremendous understanding of Americans at all levels, in all parts of the country, while making him a personally known statesman to millions of people.

His plan for achieving power was open and direct: First, he would acquaint his fellow citizens with the Silver Legion program. Then he would enter the next presidential race in one state only for the experience he and his activists needed to understand practical politics. With that real-life training, he would make a serious bid for the 1940 national election. Accordingly, his support was so widespread in Washington State that his name was placed on the presidential ballot, thanks to the hard, door-to-door campaigning work of the Silver Shirts, who collected thousands of signatures on their circulating petitions. (Here, my research draws a blank, as I was unable to locate any sources describing the voter response he won. I conclude it must have been significant, for reasons which will soon be made clear.)

F.D.R.'s reinstatement as president brought closer the "conflict between the Light and Dark forces on earth" - a prophesy of the coming war against Germany made by Pelley in his first national radio speech. His election bid increased Silver Legion membership three-fold and won some important figures, including George van Horn Moseley, a retired general in the U.S. Army, Congressional Representative Jacob Thorkelson, Charles A. Lindbergh, Jr., and Walt Disney. All of them attended his public rallies and some shared the podium with the Chief. He was confident that, with this kind of high-level support and the obvious acceptance of millions of average Americans, the Silver Legion had a great destiny before it. As his biographer wrote, "Pelley looked forward to a World Alliance, centered in a Fascist Washington and made secure at either end in Berlin and Tokyo. As long as China tottered on the verge of becoming Stalin's satellite, the Japanese armies in Manchuria defended civilization against the insidious serpent of communism." Having lived in Japan for some time, Pelley came to deeply respect the Japanese as the bulwark in the Far East against the Soviet Union. He was therefore appalled at Roosevelt's attempts at goading Japan into a catastrophic war that would leave the door wide open to Communist expansion into Asia. The Chief proved all too prophetic here too, as the crippled American veterans of Korea and Vietnam can attest.

As the 1940 presidential election approached, the Silver Shirts, now 100,000 strong (House Committee, on "Un-American" Activities, Special Committee, 1939), were being taken very seriously by F.D.R. who recognized Pelley as a deadly serious contender; the Chief might not actually get into the White House, but he could control enough votes to swing the election away from the democrats. Roosevelt's popularity already waning, he could not risk his reelection and ordered the F.B.I. to "investigate" Pelley. Attorney General Frank Murphy balked at the obvious political persecution and made excuses to the President, telling him it would be a mistake to make "martyrs out of the Silver Shirts". Martyrs, schmartyrs - democratic incumbency was at stake, so he ordered what Pelley referred to as his "Gentile satraps" to make life miserable for the Silver Shirts. Their North Carolina unit (the legion's largest headquarters and the closest thing they had to a national office) was raided by federal marshals, its properties, including printing presses, confiscated, its residents arrested and jailed on a variety of contrived charges, all of which were dismissed but only after long months of financially draining court proceedings. Even so, none of the confiscated materials, as well as the legally owned building itself, were returned to the impoverished Silver Shirts; they

were told by the smiling judge that they had the right to sue the government for damages.

Hard on the heels of the North Carolina raid, Congressman Dickstein (New York) called for a national ban on public display of the Silver Shirt uniform. The Chief was quick to respond: "Any kike who thinks he can tell me what kind of shirt I can wear, or that I can't wear a scarlet L on it, will get a punch in his nose that he'll remember until he lands in Abraham's bosom!" As even his unsympathetic biographer admits, "Pelley had grounds to believe that he was being harassed."

The harassment accelerated and he was charged with tax evasion. Although he beat that politically motivated charge, the great expense and time needed to defend himself from impending imprisonment sabotaged his 1940 campaign. By that time (November), U.S. involvement in the widening conflict against Germany seemed virtually inevitable. Accordingly, Pelley changed the direction of the Legion from running for elective office to opposing the Roosevelt and his liberal warmongers. The Silver Shirts joined up with the German-American Bund, the Ku Klux Klan and numerous other patriotic organizations, large and small, united in mobilizing mass-opposition for peace. Here too, the Chief proved his power to win over millions, as national polls taken only a week before Pearl Harbor showed that more than three quarters of the American people were against war with the Axis unless the United States was physically attacked. How Roosevelt engineered that prerequisite, well-documented by modern scholars, is too complex for retelling here. After America finally entered the war, Pelley was heartbroken at what he saw as his country slid into the abyss. His life's work of the past nine years, all the wonderful success of the Silver Shirt organization and its enthusiastic grass-root support, seemed in vain. He dissolved the Legion, even its newspaper; what else could he do? He was remarried in 1935, but spent little time with his new wife, by whom he had a daughter. Close to despair, Pelley joined them in the small town of Nobelsville, Indiana, where he wanted to forget the world he had tried to save. His years of self-sacrifice seemed "a thankless job, striving to bring a vision to humankind, as humankind is constituted." But his wife, Helen, and some of his closest comrades urged him to continue, not to give up, in spite of the worst that had happened. Somewhat encouraged, he wanted personal assurance from the new Attorney General Biddle that he would be allowed to publish his views so long as he not undermine the war effort. Biddle gave him his word of honor that Pelley could publish without fear of restraint. Even though the country was at war, the right of free expression was constitutionally guaranteed.

### **A Pro-Hitler Roll Call in Wartime America**

In the midst of wartime hysteria sweeping the nation, he launched a new magazine, Roll Call. It was uncompromisingly Fascist, its famous editor and Silver Shirt writers unapologetic. They documented the prewar oil embargo Roosevelt imposed on the Japanese, forcing them to witness the strangulation of their economy or risk a war to free themselves from U.S. domination. F.D.R. wanted war to save his own faltering "New Deal" economy by the kind of mass-production only wartime industry could provide. The Reds wanted war to save the moribund Soviet slave-empire from Hitler's armies. The liberals



wanted war to preserve the capitalist/communist shell game they imposed so successfully on Gentile people throughout the world. Worst of all, in prosecuting war on the Fascist Forces of Light, duped Americans were making it possible for the same forces of internal decay that rotted German society before Hitler cleaned them up to take root in our own country.

Pelley sent pre-publication review copies to the Attorney General's office for government approval. Biddle could afford to appear magnanimous, confident as he was that the last of the Silver Legion would be hoisted on its own by the war-hysteria of "patriotic" Americans. But he was flabbergasted to learn that Roll Call was incredibly successful! Far from the popular hostility he counted on to overwhelm Pelley, the feisty little publication was turning up everywhere. And people were openly agreeing with its notorious editor. Most serious of all, "many copies were found among U.S. servicemen in all theaters of the war," according to Pelley's biographer. Into March, 1942, print runs first doubled, then quadrupled. In the space of probably no more than five weeks, Roll Call grew at a phenomenal rate. Obviously, not everyone was taken in by the propaganda-factories of Hollywood, obsessed as its capitalist movie-makers were with "International Finance and Roosevelt in shorts, Confession of Nazi Spies and Stalin in pajamas, dramas of thugs shooting up civilization, mobs storming sundry Bastilles and New Dealers breaking sod for billion-dollar privies," as Pelley wrote then. "We have gone to war because the selfish materialistic policy foisted on our country has pushed the United States back to the verge of bankruptcy."

Then, in late winter, he was urgently contacted by a U.S. naval officer who had been stationed at Pearl Harbor the previous December 7th. The man said that F.D.R. had lied to the American people about the attack, telling them that "although damage has been severe, our Pacific Fleet is still intact." The officer said he personally witnessed the devastation, which was far worse than the President allowed. In fact, all the U.S. capital ships were either sunk or badly damaged, except for five unescorted (and, therefore, nonoperational) aircraft carriers and their obsolete planes. Pelley rushed into print with the news: "Japanese bombers made Pearl Harbor look like an abandoned W.P.A. project in Keokuk!" The special edition that hit the streets was a bombshell, and eaten up by a public starved for truth, which had been the war's earliest causality. But when the Attorney General showed the usual advance copy to F.D.R., the President exploded like the battleship Arizona and demanded Pelley's arrest on April 4th. The charge: high treason!

Forced to break his word of honor to Pelley, Biddle ordered a grand jury to indict the Chief on twelve felony counts of the Sedition Act. During the course of his trial, the intensely politically-motivated prosecutor, Oscar Ewing, a cigar-smoking "big wheel" in the democrat Party, emphatically denied that the U.S. Pacific Fleet had been all that badly damaged at Pearl Harbor, and subpoenaed Secretary of the Navy, Knox, to assure the judge (and a vast, listening radio audience) that the situation was well under control, with no cause for alarm. As he spoke, American military forces were in headlong retreat from an unbroken series of defeats throughout the entire Pacific Theater. But when Pelley's defense attorney threatened to have the entire salvage crew from Pearl Harbor testify in court to support Roll Call's controversial report, the judge

swiftly dropped the main part of the indictment.

Now he was accused of falsely portraying the U.S. economy as bankrupt, therefore undermining public confidence during wartime. Here too, the defense was well prepared and subpoenaed Marriner Eccles, Chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank, who would have had to testify under cross examination and oath that the American economy was indeed only saved at the last moment by the war-production sparked by the blood-bath at Pearl Harbor. But the judge crushed the subpoena.

### **Sentenced!**

To their credit, both Congressman Thorkelson and Charles Lindbergh personally testified as character witnesses on Pelley's behalf, immeasurably brave actions when we consider that they did so in the midst of World War II, at a time when the United States was experiencing defeat from the Pacific to the Atlantic.

Despite their support and the failure of the leading indictment against him (to say nothing of a total lack of evidence regarding treasonable activity of any kind), Pelley was sentenced to 15 years confinement at a maximum security federal prison. The prosecution had been unable to produce a single piece of evidence to prove Pelley had committed any treasonable acts; all he had done was to criticize an unjust war and the evil President who schemed for it.

Twenty five years later, thousands of communists and their brainless dupes burned U.S. flags in the streets and violently protested American involvement during the Viet Nam War; unlike Pelley, none of them pulled hard time.

Penniless, he was unable to mount an appeal. Later, Lindbergh told a reporter for the Chicago Tribune that Pelley was no traitor, but a true patriot who was obviously being persecuted for saying publicly what a growing number of Americans were discussing privately. Pelley was to be made an example of for these people: Keep your opinions to yourself, or look what will happen to you!

Stunned by the harshness of his sentence, he was a mute prisoner of the war he opposed. While the Western World outside his penitentiary bars committed suicide, he read voraciously and thought deeply. Although sad, something in him would not let him despair: "Some day, we Americans will see in true perspective what a small group of rich financiers did to us, and why we have been so stupid to suffer it." As the catastrophic decade of the 40's came to an end, Pelley's daughter and son-in-law, with the help of old comrades, were able to raise enough money for an appeal. It failed, but their loyalty was undiminished and they tried again. In 1952, with Americans dying needlessly in Asia, just as he predicted, Pelley was reluctantly paroled on the condition that he participate in no "political activities of any nature", a flagrantly unconstitutional requirement he was too broke to contest. Frail in health, his daughter and her husband nursed him back to health at the family home in Nobelsville, Indiana.

Together, they founded a new publishing company, Soulcraft Press, which released his first book since the war: Something Better. In it, he singled out Roosevelt as the man most responsible for setting in motion the social upheaval America experienced in the Viet Nam era. "He was the forerunner of today's evolving chaos," which was nevertheless deemed necessary to create a Fascist-style state in the future. But it was the creation of two magazines

dealing largely with mystical and metaphysical themes that got him back on his feet financially, so much so he was able to repay all those loyal followers who had contributed so generously to his appeal. As earlier in life, writing gave him a sense of purpose and fulfillment. And he recalled without regret that seminal experience that set him on his difficult dramatic path in 1928; it all seemed destined to happen and therefore part of some Higher Purpose he trusted instinctively, even though he could not understand it intellectually. In his last years, he was happy with the love of his daughter and old comrades, and content to know that, even though he failed, he had done the best he could on behalf of his race and nation. And his enemies - the enemies of his people - had honored him by long imprisonment. He also lived long enough to witness the rise of George Lincoln Rockwell's 'American Nazi Party', a phenomenon that offered him deep comfort: Someone was carrying on the fight he began thirty years before.

### **Death and Legacy**

William Dudley Pelley died peacefully in his sleep on July 1, 1965, aged 75. While he was lying in state, someone burned a cross on the front lawn of the funeral parlor. It was never determined if the fiery cross had been set there by a friend or an enemy. His passing was observed (with malice, of course) in the national newsmedia, but immediately thereafter his name was allowed to lapse into obscurity.

In 1982, the little Indiana town of Nobelsville achieved brief national attention once more, when a neighborhood boy playing outside his room one midsummer evening was narrowly missed by a falling meteor that landed at his feet. "Not since the death of fascist leader, W.D. Pelley, seventeen years ago," the local newspaper reported, "has the rest of America taken notice of our community."

Pelley's life as a patriot was similarly meteoric. He was our country's first political activist in the Fascist style. He was the predecessor to Commander Rockwell and the Patriotic Movement in America Today. His living martyrdom in the belly of the beast won him a place of honor in the hearts of fellow fighters who came after him. He did not fail, as he thought, any more than a brave soldier who does his best when captured by the enemy fails.

Historical circumstances did not allow him to create the Fascist Washington he dreamt of. But in the far larger struggle for world-wide supremacy of reason, he fought the good fight; his was but the opening battle in an ongoing war for the final triumph of humanity. The Chief and his Silver Shirts have gone before us. They inspire us to follow their lead. And our victorious banner someday unfurled over Planet Earth will belong as much to them as to us!

### **Sources**

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