

CHAPTER III

HITLER'S SECRET WEAPON—
THE FIFTH COLUMN

IN 1937, when Hitler was throwing his invasion forces against Madrid, to destroy the Spanish Republic and make that city the first conquered capital in World War II, he revealed the secret of all his later successes, his "secret weapon." This was his use of native puppets like General Franco for open rebellion on his behalf, co-ordinated with hidden agents behind the Republican lines who worked to disrupt Republican unity, create dissension, sabotage all war effort, and finally to open up the gates to invasion. This secret weapon received its classic name by a sort of accident. One of Butcher Franco's generals in the service of Hitler, Quiapo de Llano, boasting over the radio how they were going to take Madrid, said: "Four columns of our army approach Madrid from four directions, and when they arrive they will be joined by the fifth column which is within the city, preparing to open the gates for them." That was the origin of the historic term—"Fifth Column." General Franco was the original "Quisling," but Quislings went without a generally accepted name until 1940.

The Fifth Column is the most complicated weapon of modern warfare. Only a part of it ever comes into the open to be recognized before Nazi conquest has been completed; until then it remains carefully hidden, often behind an

anti-Nazi mask. It does its work in the dark. Much of its history will probably never be known, so deeply is it hidden. We can only study typical examples of its work, learn to recognize its different forms from finding the results of its work, and trace backward from the crime the tracks of the criminals to their hidden lairs. Occasionally we discover some of their own documents, which throw much light upon their nature, work, and personnel.

Such a document of the Fifth Column in the United States has just been published by the weekly paper *In Fact*,* edited by George Seldes.

It is a "Memorandum" written on November 23, 1937, to summarize an agreement reached in a meeting between two Nazi agents and seven prominent Americans. Manfred Freiherr von Killinger, one of these agents, had just arrived from Berlin on his way to San Francisco as newly-appointed Nazi consul there. Baron von Tippleskirch, the other, was the Nazi consul in Boston. The names of the seven prominent Americans have not been revealed, but it is said that one of them is a Senator and the others are prominent industrialists and financiers. Their "Memorandum" of agreement is the platform for a typical Fifth Column detachment of the type of the "Cliveden set" which brought disaster to Great Britain.

This is so typical an example, and throws so much light on the Fifth Column in America and upon our national problems as a whole, that I am reproducing the "Memorandum" in its entirety. Here it is:

"Memorandum

"The purpose of this draft is not to commit anyone who attended our formal conference. On the contrary, the

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memorandum should only retain and preserve the main topics of our conversation which, if desired, could be reported to proper organizations or individuals having the competence and privilege to draw practical conclusions or take appropriate steps.

"1. One of our German guests emphasized in his statement that he has no authority to give any official viewpoint. Nevertheless, his personal impression is after years-long service in connection with consular representations here that radical changes took place in America's foreign policy with regard to Germany. 'Our country,' he said, 'was accustomed to regard the United States as a source of friendly influence. Its contributions have alleviated Germany's burden under the peace treaty. President Hoover's step leading up to the complete elimination of the financial debt resulting from the Versailles Treaty was considered always as characteristic manifestation of the American attitude towards the German people.'

"The Roosevelt Administration has introduced important changes which tend to alter the German opinion concerning the American attitude. A certain agitation was allowed to interfere with German-American relations. Instead of co-operating in the opening of tremendous potential markets, Germany and America were forced to join hostile diplomatic camps. The potential markets, China and Russia, cannot be organized without the active collaboration of American capital, however. World recovery is thus delayed.

"Germany is therefore willing to undertake everything humanly possible, in order to approach directly the financial and industrial leaders of the United States. The creation of a Japanese monopoly in the Far East is not desirable. Nor is for that matter a Chinese victory. The new

Presidential elections must bring the United States on the side of the powers fighting for the reorganization of the world markets.

"To support those trends in the American public opinion which definitely favor such a change is the paramount task of the German foreign policy. This support does not only include the swinging of the German-American vote to a Presidential candidate definitely sympathetic to the aforementioned aims, but also all possible co-operation with truly national forces. This, of course, cannot be construed as interference into American internal affairs, since the concrete form as well as the extent of that support must be determined by the political groups concerned.'

"2. Our second German guest, who was just recently appointed to a diplomatic post in this country, supplemented the above statements with the following points:

"Germany has been grossly misrepresented before the American public by Jewish propaganda. 'In order to clarify the picture,' he said, 'it is necessary to recall that Germany of the Republican period has thrown a remarkable confusion into the minds of the Germans. The state has been identified with some popular welfare institution. Creative capital was overburdened by the effects of a utopian social welfare legislation. Unemployed insurance, sick, old-age, and death benefits, social security, and war pensions meant terrible handicaps already. Trade union wages and hours have lifted productive costs above world standards.'

"What is the paramount achievement of National-Socialism? 'The spirit of New Germany was conducive to a kind of national solidarity. Exaggerated demands and social service were reduced and production costs realistically brought into harmony with the requirements of competition on the world markets. This is what we have done.

Not more and not less. It is true that many objections had to be overcome. The conception of featuring the State as a supreme welfare agency had to be eradicated and a policy of increased production pursued instead. We had to silence therefore all centers from where class struggle was being fomented and imprison dangerous utopians and sentimental philanthropists. It is true that Jewish propaganda was able to capitalize on some stern measures and slander New Germany before the world opinion. This is undoubtedly a detrimental fact. But we have gotten more by the rebirth of national solidarity and the co-operation of all for the same purpose.

“Without wishing to arouse any semblance of interfering with domestic questions in the United States, I cannot help mentioning that today’s America presents a very close picture of Social-Democratic Germany. Unrealistic “welfare legislation” sponsored by the Administration, chaotic class struggles and wage demands absolutely out of any proportion, strong Jewish influence in the political, cultural, and public life of the country are disquieting phenomena. We Germans, at any rate, are disquieted. We carry on a good work for world recovery and we know what potential danger an increasing red influence in the United States would mean for the whole world.

“Another disquieting characteristic of the situation is the lack of unity and clear-sighted leadership in the scattered national camp. You cannot start a strong concerted drive of all forces and agencies for the revival of American nationalism as long as this situation prevails.

“It is time to think seriously of the centralization of all forces of American nationalism and traditionalism. We Germans are seeking the co-operation of all American nationalists. Above all we believe in co-operating with the

economic leaders of the country, whatever the suitable form of the co-operation may be. There is little comprehension on behalf of the United States Government, but in our belief there must be comprehension for our viewpoint on behalf of business.

“We would advance the idea of such informal conferences between responsible business and political leaders in order to consider questions of national and international importance affecting economic and, yes, political recovery.”

“The following opinions were expressed by the American participants of the conference:

“(a) The substance of the German suggestion amounts to changing the spirit of our nation as expressed by recent elections. That is possible but by no means easy. The people must become aware of the disastrous economic effects of the policies of the present Administration first. In the wake of the reorientation of the public opinion a vigorous drive must start in the press and radio. Technically it remains a question as to whether this drive may center around the Republican National Committee.

“(b) Foresighted business men will welcome conferences of this kind. A tremendous inspiration might come out of them. There is no reason why we should not learn of emergencies similar to those prevailing in our own country and the methods by which far-sighted governments were trying to overcome them. It is also clear that manufacturers, who usually contributed to the campaigns of all candidates, must realize that their support must be reserved to one, in whose selection they must take an active hand.

“We must just as well recognize that the business leaders of this country must get together in the present emergency. By now they must have realized that they cannot

expect much from Washington. We will have to resort to concrete planning.

"We can all agree that it is desirable to convince our business leaders that it is a good investment to embark on subsidizing our patriotic citizens' organizations and secure their fusion for the common purpose.

"Unified leadership with one conspicuous leader will be a sound policy. We will be grateful for any service our German friends may give us in this respect.

"(c) American foreign policy must be chiefly guarded against the danger of the sovietization of the Far East. More than ever we must supervise by Congress what the State Department does. Rapprochement with Germany, while unpopular, is a necessity, if we consider the strong pro-Soviet agitation going on and finding patronage in the United States. It is of the greatest importance that leading and influential figures in our business life and the policy-making bodies of both political parties should be appraised of this first conversation and prevailed upon to discuss the possibilities of a non-partisan co-operation on the subject."

This is, indeed, a remarkable document. In it, as in an X-ray photo of an embryo, one can clearly see the American counterpart of the process by which in Germany of 1932 the Krupps and Thyssens, with the collaboration of their French, British, and American fellows, raised Hitler and his Nazi underworld to power over the German people; the same process by which France was softened up, betrayed, and finally delivered over to the conqueror bound hand and foot; the process by which Spain, Czechoslovakia, and Austria were conquered; the process which finally produced the notorious symbol of Quisling in Norway, the prototype of the Fifth Column's final result and aim;

the process that produced a Laval, Petain, and Doriot in Vichy France.

The Nazi reptile found many warm spots to lay similar eggs for the generation of Fifth Columns, not only throughout Western Europe but in the United States as well.

It is under the patronage of such "upper" Fifth Columns, with their wealth, power, prestige, and aura of respectability and patriotism that all the lesser Fifth Column detachments are bred and multiplied, down to the lowliest saboteurs, spies, and assassins of the German-American Bund and the Christian Front.

Such groups as this one met and plotted with Baron von Killinger and Baron von Tippleskirch against their own country, one of a thousand plots that prepared and led directly to the declaration of war against the United States by Germany last December.

The central thought of this "Memorandum," around which all else is organized, is the same as that of all the Fifth Columns of Europe. Just as the Cliveden set in England was known for the advocacy of rapprochement with Germany and hostility to the Soviet Union; just as the "200 families" in France, with their Lavals and Petains, concentrated on breaking the French-Soviet Mutual Assistance Pact and finally succeeded in 1938 at Munich, so also our American Fifth Column is preoccupied with preventing the development of friendly relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, while displaying deep trust and sympathy toward Hitler Germany, indeed looking to Hitler as the model to be studied and followed.

Notice in the "Memorandum" how cleverly the Nazi intriguers instruct their American pupils how to attack the Roosevelt administration as "Red" and "Jewish influ-

enced," how they hold out the prospect of unlimited profits and advantages on the world market through the destruction of trade union wages and hours and consequent lowering of costs, how they develop the technique of "changing the spirit of our nation as expressed by recent elections." Notice their offer to divide the booty of a conquered China and Russia with the American business men, a tempting bribe for those looking first of all for quick and easy profits.

Here is the basic example of the "sabotage of the mind" by the Fifth Column, against which Vice-President Wallace warned. Americans are recruited into conspiracies for the conquest of the United States, by appealing to their prejudices and to their greed. These are the "elite," the men of high position and wealth, the "upper" Fifth Column. Under them is recruited, thereafter, a corps of hired writers, who sell their talents of the pen for translating this program into supposedly independent and disinterested newspaper articles and "columns," concentrating particularly on whipping up the "menace of communism," the "red scare," and antagonism and fear toward the Soviet Union. And, most important of all, a "non-partisan cooperation" is established within the United States Congress itself, for the purpose of putting over the Fifth Column propaganda and agitation, this "sabotage of the mind," under the pretext of exposing and combating the Fifth Column. This was accomplished through the so-called "Committee for Investigation of Un-American Activities," headed by Congressman Martin Dies.

The Dies Committee and its work is the outstanding achievement of Hitler's Fifth Column in the United States. It draws its inspiration directly from the ideas and influences represented in the Nazi-sponsored meeting which drew up the "Memorandum" cited above. It gave official

governmental sponsorship for the Fifth Column. It succeeded in sabotaging American policy beyond all means of calculation. It blocked every effort of all those forces in America who fought for a policy which would have prevented the war, including President Roosevelt himself. It wrote Hitler's views into the laws of the land. It organized a witch-hunt against every outstanding person who advocated the idea of the United Nations when that would have defeated Hitler and his allies at relatively small cost. It harassed and embarrassed the President at every turn, and finally, with the help of its European Fifth Column allies, forced the President in 1939 and 1940 to bow to their policy, bringing the United States to the verge of hostilities, not against the Nazis but against the Soviet Union.

The Dies Committee, because it definitely distorted the policy, outlook, and understanding of the most powerful country in the world, our own land, the United States, made the greatest contribution to bringing upon the world the disasters of this war. It brought the United States face to face with possible defeat and destruction. And, worst of all, it still continues its work to this day, in the midst of the war for survival.

The Dies Committee requires, therefore, a more extended examination, which will be the subject of the next following chapters.