

"It Can't Happen Here": Fascism and Right-Wing Extremism in Pennsylvania, 1933-1942

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The local history of American fascism remains to be written.¹ If we consider the numerous books on fascism and fascist movements written over the last half century, there is an elaborate historiography for virtually every fringe movement in most countries of Europe and the Americas, with the conspicuous exception of the United States.² However, it would be misleading to suggest that Americans were singularly lucky in escaping this particular political temptation. In reality, between about 1920 and 1945, fascist groups of every tendency flourished in the United States and often achieved significant popular support. As the nation approached what seemed inevitable participation in the Second World War, the degree of support for far-Right movements caused great concern both on the political Left and in law enforcement agencies. There were a number of official investigations and investigative exposés by journalists, who charged that the fascist-leaning groups were indeed conspiring with foreign governments to undertake sabotage and terrorist violence.

The truth of such charges remains uncertain, and of course the America that entered the war was, mercifully, almost wholly free of the feared fifth column activities. However, this does not mean that the earlier investigators had been engaged in unsupported panic-mongering, or that the violence of which they warned might not have occurred if events had developed somewhat differently. In the late 1930s, there were millions of Americans with at least some sympathy for the cause of the Axis powers. This political tradition would be especially significant for the history of Pennsylvania, a state which included representatives of all the major Rightist groups, and where the journalists of the period found some authentic Nazi and fascist sympathizers.

Between 1938 and 1941, both Philadelphia and Pittsburgh had flourishing branches of the Ku Klux Klan, the German-American *Bund*, the Silver Shirt Legion, the Italian Black Shirts, and the Christian Front. Philadelphia in particular

was a national center for far-Right political activism, and provided the publishing base for several extremist newspapers.³ No less an observer than General Van Horn Moseley, the would-be dictator of the United States, remarked in 1939 that “a great many patriotic organizations head up at Philadelphia.” He was aware of about seventy Rightist and anti-Semitic groups, organized in a loose coalition.⁴ Reading and Lancaster had branches of the *Bund*, York had its Klan lodge, Johnstown its Italian fascists. This forgotten strand is epitomized by a man like Paul M. Winter of Shavertown, near Wilkes-Barre, who belonged to a clique of extremists, anti-Semites, and alleged “fifth columnists,” a group of what we can only describe as fascist militants with both national and international connections. Winter was said to be in contact with German agencies, and members of his circle were discussing subversion and violence against the United States government.

These various movements have achieved little recognition in recent historical writing on Pennsylvania. When we consider Pennsylvania politics, we usually think in relatively moderate terms, of middle-of-the-road mainstream Republicanism, existing alongside a radical or left-wing industrial tradition that stretches from the Molly Maguires and the Wobblies through the CIO, the Socialists and the Mineworkers Union. However, Paul Winter reminds us of a very different tradition, one ignored in most standard political histories, but which was nevertheless a powerful local movement in the first half of this century. This is the radical nativist and anti-democratic Right-wing element which found its most famous expression in the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s, and which subsequently shaded into the European-influenced fascist and Nazi movements of the New Deal era. Winter’s circle was far from unique, and both the numbers and the diversity of Right-wing activists in Pennsylvania should perhaps make us reconsider our view of the state’s politics in the second quarter of this century.

The Foundation: The Ku Klux Klan

Defining fascism is not an easy task, and only in retrospect does the Nazi obsession with anti-Semitism appear so ideologically central. Some historians have emphasized the importance of “anti-ism”, defining the tradition in terms of what it opposed. Juan Linz offers a sophisticated if perhaps irritating definition: “We define fascism as a hypernationalist, often pan-nationalist, anti-parliamentary, anti-liberal, anti-communist, populist and therefore anti-proletarian, partly anti-capi-

talist and anti-bourgeois, anti-clerical or at least non-clerical movement, with the aim of national social integration through a single party and corporative representation not always equally emphasized; with a distinctive style and rhetoric, it relied on activist cadres ready for violent action combined with electoral participation to gain power with totalitarian goals by a combination of legal and violent tactics.”⁵

If we can speak of a “mainstream” fascist movement in the United States, it would undoubtedly be found in the Ku Klux Klan, which provided the essential foundation for all later development on the far Right. Had it existed in contemporary Europe, historians would unhesitatingly have termed it a fascist group on the model of Italy, Spain or Germany. Like the Fascists or the Falange, the Klan flourished in reaction to the failed radicalism of 1919-1920, and offered veterans the chance to relive wartime comradeship. The Klan too advocated a return to tradition, military virtues and paramilitary structure, and assumed all the familiar ritualistic trappings of authoritarian movements.⁶ It also advocated the rights of native labor in partnership with capital, against an insidious foreign foe. Presumably we do not call the Klan fascist because it so long predated the Italian Fascists proper: the original movement dated from 1865, and was revived in 1915. Also, as Sinclair Lewis reminded us, fascism can’t happen here. During the 1920s, the Klan became a mass movement in Pennsylvania and other northern states, with five million members nationwide and a Pennsylvania membership alone credibly estimated at over a quarter of a million. The American city with the largest proportion of Klan members per head of population was not Atlanta, or Birmingham, Alabama, but Altoona, Pennsylvania; and this strength continued in the western industrial regions of the state well into the mid-1930s.⁷

We know so much about the Pennsylvania Klan not only because of a superb book written in 1936 by Emerson H. Loucks, a remarkable political study, but also because Klan infighting accidentally exposed to public view the internal archives of the movement.⁸ This arose from events in 1940, when Klan and other Rightist groups were profoundly divided over how to respond to the apparent threat from fascist powers like Germany and Italy (see below). Some extremists plotted to oppose the war effort, even if this meant organizing sabotage and terrorism. Other activists were appalled by the prospect, and the internal feuding spilled over into violent confrontations. Finally, in October 1940, one “patriotic” Klan faction burgled the Philadelphia home of the regional Grand Dragon, Samuel G. Stouch, and stole

the complete Klan archives dating back to the early 1920s. They then handed this embarrassing material over to the State Police, who were thus able to build a full list of likely traitors and fifth-columnists. For the historian, this was a crucial event, as the State Police subsequently made all the archives available to the public. We thus have an uniquely full resource on Klan activities and membership, including all the internal bickering and infighting. I will not say much here about the Klan archives as a source, except to say that there is a staggering amount of information that remains to be tapped about individual Klan members and officials, and the documents include material on New Jersey and Delaware as well as Pennsylvania.⁹

Between 1923 and 1935, some 423 Klan lodges ("klaverns") were founded in Pennsylvania. Allegheny and four contiguous counties in the southwest of the state accounted for 99 of these, some 23 percent, suggesting the importance of the steel regions in the movement¹⁰ :

Table 1: Klan Lodges ("Klaverns") in Pennsylvania 1922-35

<u>Number of klaverns</u>	<u>Number of counties</u>
Over 30	1 - Allegheny (33 lodges in county)
20-30	2 - Philadelphia (20) Westmoreland (21)
10-19	7 - Armstrong, Clearfield, Fayette, Indiana, Luzerne, Schuylkill, Washington
6-9	19
1-5	36
0	2
Total	67

The Klan's appeal in the 1920s was not solely or even chiefly racial in nature, and the group was strong where there was only a handful of black residents. The Klan derived its strength above all from ethnic and religious conflict. It was chiefly an expression of Protestant fears of Catholic strength in the age of mass immigration from eastern and southern Europe. Klan supporters tried to pass laws restricting Catholic practices, encouraging the Protestant habit of reading the Bible in the public schools, and generally opposing Catholic interests wherever possible. The movement staunchly supported the Protestant panacea of Temperance, and it was

commonly observed that "Prohibition made the Klan." Klan policies were invariably dressed in the language and rhetoric of pure patriotism, and klaverns usually bore patriotic historical names — American Defender, Pride of America, Old Glory, Lincoln, Benjamin Franklin, William Penn, and so on. In the anthracite region, for example, we find klavern number 283, "American Pilots," in Pottsville, or number 301, "Bunker Hill", in Shamokin. The Klan recruited heavily through the freemasons and other fraternal orders, and the application forms of potential klansmen often boast lengthy lists of such memberships.

Aggressive demonstrations and anti-Catholic protests by the Klan inevitably led to conflict with Catholic groups, and there were riots leading to bloodshed and death in the western towns of Carnegie and Scottdale. In response, the Klan formed a paramilitary corps of "klavaliers."¹¹ Religious conflict often masked deeper social conflicts, especially the struggle of older established immigrant groups like the British and Germans to preserve their privileged employment position in the face of newer groups. Klan membership lists often show the importance of skilled workers, foremen, and petit-bourgeois groups like shopkeepers. Protestant clergy were prominent in the leadership.

This religious context goes far towards explaining the appeal of the Klan in northeastern Pennsylvania, especially the anthracite region, which would be one of the centers of later fascist development. There were long traditions here of conflict between older Protestant groups like the Welsh with Catholics like the Irish or Italians. Of the state's 423 klaverns, 57 were located in the eight counties of Luzerne, Carbon, Schuylkill, Lehigh, Columbia, Lackawanna, Wyoming, and Northumberland. At its height, this may have represented thirty or forty thousand members. Even if we recognize that supporters would often have been members for only a short time, this still makes the Klan a genuine mass movement. The organization was weaker here than in southwestern Pennsylvania, but Luzerne County was a real local stronghold, with no less than thirteen klaverns, while Schuylkill had eleven. These two counties might have had ten thousand members between them by 1924, with railroad workers well represented. Loucks suggests that Luzerne, Carbon, Lehigh, and Schuylkill counties formed a major center of Klan activity, so that the anthracite region became a distinct "province" of the Invisible Empire, one of eight areas into which Pennsylvania was divided. He also stresses the organizational role of Paul Winter, the key "evangelist" for the movement. During the great

coal strike of 1933, the Klan sponsored docile company unions in an attempt to divide the labor movement.¹²

The heyday of the Klan was in 1923 and 1924, but the organization's success was short-lived. A number of devastating scandals crippled the national leadership, and membership soon plummeted. According to Loucks, statewide membership fell from a quarter of a million in 1924 to perhaps 20,000 by 1928, and under five thousand by 1930. Even the 1928 presidential campaign of the Catholic candidate Al Smith caused little revival. (In John O'Hara's fictional version of Pottsville, the 1928 election caused a number of Klansmen to declare themselves publicly, but to no avail.¹³) The Klan shrank rapidly, leaving only a few pockets of support, and many klaverns disappeared altogether. The last Pennsylvania klavern was founded in 1935, in Harrisburg, and the following year Loucks' book looked distinctly like an obituary,

However, a number of Klan lodges remained, especially in the southwest, in Philadelphia, and in parts of the anthracite country. These surviving groups are in a sense just as interesting than the mass membership of the early twenties, because their history is largely unexplored. In the late 1930s, they provided the foundation for an attempt to revive the Klan, based on opposition to "Communism and the CIO," and a muting of traditional anti-Catholic prejudice.¹⁴ In 1939, former Imperial Wizard Hiram W. Evans was even present at the dedication of a Catholic cathedral in Atlanta, where he shook the hand of Philadelphia's Cardinal Dougherty.¹⁵ Nationwide, the Klan claimed an increase in membership of thirty percent in the year following mid-1939.¹⁶ However, Catholic authorities were unimpressed by the apparent change of heart, and the Philadelphia *Catholic Standard and Times* noted sarcastically how the Klan had taken "the old platform of saving the country from the kike, koon and katholic, and has added kommunist."¹⁷ Other Catholic papers published cartoons of robed Klan figures starting conflagrations labeled simply "Hate."¹⁸

The revived Klan attracted some support, especially in German areas, in up-state counties "where English is by no means the daily language of the countryside."¹⁹ A handful of klaverns maintained a membership of fifty to a hundred, as at Chambersburg (no. 119), Uniontown (no. 128), York (no. 304) and Philadelphia (nos. 359, 362). Other lodges had ten or twenty members, in contrast to the hundreds commonly found in the early 1920s: in Winter's territory, for example, we

find klavern number 236, "St. Paul's," in Schuylkill Haven; number 311, "Rescue," in Luzerne County; number 293, in Northumberland County. While these groups were smaller than their predecessors of the 1920s, the members were a more tightly organized and dedicated core, and they continued to act as an extremist pressure group Right up until the outbreak of war and the suppression of the subversives. In 1940, there were still twenty active lodges in the state, seven of which were in Philadelphia County.

The 1930s

In 1935, Sinclair Lewis's novel *It Can't Happen Here* imagined a fascist takeover in the United States. Unlike some speculative works, the events portrayed were not consigned to some distant future era, as the key event was seen as the coming 1936 election, which would give power to the "League of Forgotten Men" under the demagogic Buzz Windrip, and his paramilitary MMs, or the "Minute-men" (vulgarly, "Minnie Mouse"). In describing the support for this crypto-fascist movement, Lewis offers a superb analysis of contemporary American fringe politics, which clamors for quotation *in extenso*.²⁰ I will summarize the main elements here: "most of the mortgaged farmers. Most of the white collar workers who had been unemployed these three years and four and five. Most of the people on relief rolls who wanted more relief . . . Such large sections of the American Legion as believed that only Senator Windrip would secure for them, and perhaps increase, the bonus . . . such popular Myrtle Avenue or Elm Avenue preachers as, spurred on by the examples of Bishop Prang and Father Coughlin, believed they could get useful publicity out of supporting a slightly queer program . . . the remnants of the Ku Klux Klan . . . the Lost Legion of the Anti-Saloon League . . . a goodish number of burghers who, while they were millionaires, yet maintained that their prosperity had been sorely checked by the fiendishness of the bankers in limiting their credit," plus assorted "Intellectuals and reformers . . . Rugged Individualists," together with the "Morgan partners." A bizarre and unholy alliance it would have been, but Lewis was remarkably prophetic in listing here both the groups discontented with the economic situation of these years, and also the political movements offering solutions. All had some support in Pennsylvania, and all would be active in Rightist politics over the six or seven years after the book's appearance.

The economic discontent of the decade needs no emphasis, but some elements of this nightmare coalition merit discussion. The reference to the American Legion was especially timely in the context of the labor disputes of these years, as the new unionism of the CIO grew dramatically from mid-decade. In response, the employers' organizations drew on private armies and Right-wing groups, most notoriously sections of the Legion, a movement that had over 1,000,000 members nationwide in 1930, and which maintained an average membership of 800,000 through then 1930s.²¹ The group earned a reputation as a mass lobby group subsidized by big corporations and the National Association of Manufacturers, with the primary goal of combating strikes and labor unions.²² "Through the '20s and through most of the '30s the Legion became increasingly identified in the public mind with strike breaking and vigilantism."²³

In Pennsylvania the Legion was both active and militant, and in 1930 there were 73,000 members organized in 567 posts. In 1927 its role as self-appointed guardian of "Americanism" led to a scandal when Legion activism secured the dismissal of two left-wing professors at West Chester State Normal College. The affair attracted national attention, and the *Philadelphia Inquirer* remarked that the publicity "bid fair to make this a case about as prominent as the Scopes trial."²⁴

It was in the realm of industrial organization that the Legion attracted its greatest notoriety. The group was especially powerful in the southwest of the state, in the steel and coal regions.²⁵ These were also the old Klan centers and there was considerable overlap of membership. The Legion here provided the footsoldiers for opposition to the Steel Workers Organizing Committee, SWOC, the predecessor to the CIO. In 1933, Aliquippa police chief Michael Kane led two hundred armed men, mainly Legionnaires, against steel strikers in the town of Ambridge, resulting in the death of one man and the gassing or wounding of hundreds of others.²⁶ In 1935, Kane reappeared as the leader of a new organization called the Constitutional Defense League, described as an offshoot of the Legion's "National Americanism Commission." Kane himself urged that union organizers be hanged or "taken for a ride," but the group also used a subtler propaganda campaign with its "Harmony Ads" of 1936. Throughout Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Michigan, these advertisements attempted to oppose the efforts of the CIO by urging collaboration between labor and capital.²⁷ As labor tension rose the following year, the Legion was again drafted for physical confrontation. In Johnstown, "the mayor deputized the

local legion post commander as a special policeman, saying "That deputizes the entire membership of the American Legion post in Johnstown'." ²⁸ In 1937, Legionnaires were prominent in breaking a strike led by activists "foreign to our community" at the Hershey chocolate factory. ²⁹

Of course, the Legion was far from monolithic, and individual posts represented a wide range of ethnicity, religion and political opinion: many Legionnaires were themselves pro-labor or active unionists. However, the political tone of the leadership was well to the Right. ³⁰ Together, the Klan and the Legion provided the base from which later Rightist movements would recruit from the mid-1930s.

Nazis and Fascists

Real life never produced a "Buzz Windrip," but there were certainly would-be leaders who wished to emulate his fictional achievements, and his forging of an overwhelming popular coalition. Huey Long in Louisiana was the best known of such local overlords, but other states produced highly authoritarian regimes that drew on fascist symbolism, including the LaFollette machine in Wisconsin. In the mid-1930s, there was also an upsurge of broadly fascist groups in the United States, organizations like the Silver Shirt Legion and the Christian Front. These were usually united by a common opposition to Franklin Roosevelt, his New Deal policies, and his sympathy for the European democracies, as well as by a common anti-Semitism. There were also a host of semi-serious splinter groups, such as the Philadelphia-based Khaki Shirts of America, the aspiring *Führer* of which was Art J. Smith, "a confidence man peddling shirts and boots to a handful of dimwitted followers." ³¹ In 1938, Benjamin Stolberg wrote that "Today there are innumerable shirt organizations, nightgown rackets, the Black Legion, the Friends of New Germany, the Americaneers, the Committees of 100, of 200, of one million, the Women's National Association for the Preservation of the White Race There are literally hundreds of such outfits. And this spirit reaches into the darker corners of the DAR, the ROTC, the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Chamber of Commerce, the Lions, the Elks, the Eagles, the Moose, and the rest of the zoo of the small time Babbitry. It's all very dreadful and the Lord knows where it's leading to." ³²

In many regions, we find ties between all these organizations and the remnants of the old Ku Klux Klan and the American Legion. In Luzerne County, Legionnaire and Klansman Paul Winter was a pivotal figure in pro-Nazi and anti-Semitic organization (see below). In Pittsburgh in 1938, the Silver Shirt organization was founded by Charles B. Swift, who also headed the Constitutional Defense Committee of the American Legion in Allegheny County, a direct parallel to Kane's group in neighboring Beaver County.³³ Swift was also responsible for inviting anti-Semitic extremists George E. Deatherage and Roy Zachary to speak to the incipient group (Zachary had once announced to a *Bund* meeting that he was prepared to assassinate President Roosevelt).³⁴ Swift is a mysterious character, a serving Naval Intelligence Officer who used his military intelligence connections to build up "a sort of espionage organization of his own among citizens of a patriotic character who apparently have been duped into believing that in serving Mr. Swift they are serving the US Naval Intelligence Service."³⁵

i. The Bund

The older extremism of the Klan and the Legion was reinforced by newer groups that looked to foreign models, especially to Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. The *Bund* was the most visibly Nazi and controversial group, with its uniformed *Ordnungs-Dienst*, OD, which the *Bundesleiter* Fritz Julius Kuhn termed his personal SS. (As a veteran of the German *Freikorps*, Kuhn had first-hand experience of paramilitary movements.³⁶) Philadelphia *Bund* leader Norbert Biele was prominent in the OD, and presided over important national gatherings in the state, especially at *Camp Deutschhorst* at Sellersville, in Bucks County, where in 1934 the organization took over a home for wayward girls.³⁷ Philadelphia was a critical center of German-American organization, and the Friends of the New Germany held their national convention here in 1935.³⁸ With the rise of its successor organization the *Bund*, Philadelphia was one of only three cities outside New York to publish its own local version of the party newspaper, the *Deutscher Weckruf und Beobachter* (the others were Chicago and Los Angeles). Most of the *Bund's* newspapers were printed in Philadelphia.³⁹ In March 1938, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* exposed a *Bund* attempt to create a pro-Nazi newspaper network in the United States, in which Philadelphia would serve as a key headquarters.⁴⁰

The original Philadelphia *Bund* society had two hundred members, almost as many as Chicago: 138 of these were aliens, mostly German citizens.⁴¹ The city also had its own youth branch, modelled on the Hitler Youth.⁴² Like Philadelphia, Pittsburgh was a major *Bund* center throughout the decade, and western Pennsylvania was united organizationally with the midwestern Region III rather than the east coast Region I, which included the eastern half of the state.⁴³ *Bund* branches were also located in Lancaster, Reading, and Sellersville, and Reading had its own shooting range.⁴⁴ The *Bund* sponsored paramilitary Camps like *Nordland* and *Siegfried*, which aimed to recreate "the spirit of German National Socialism," and regularly included "sensational displays of Naziism."⁴⁵ Carlson suggests abundant Pennsylvania representation at *Camp Siegfried* meetings in Long Island.⁴⁶

The *Bund* was at its height nationally in 1937 and 1938, when it was seen as a sufficient threat to merit the close scrutiny of the House Un-American Activities Committee and the news media.⁴⁷ Accounts of the *Bund* at this time emphasize the close parallels with German Naziism, the role of German diplomats and intelligence agencies, the indoctrination of youth, and the concealment of the organization's true goals. At *Camp Deutschhorst*, for example, a "Philadelphia storm trooper" boasted of how the *Bund* had deceived the investigating journalists of the *Philadelphia Record* by replacing the customary Nazi swastikas and regalia with purely American symbols.⁴⁸ The role of German officials and consuls was controversial, especially since they were protected from investigation by diplomatic immunity. The Un-American Activities Committee was told that a key figure in the Pittsburgh *Bund* was William F. Knoepfel, the local consul, whose career as representative for a steamship line was felt to give him splendid opportunities for espionage.⁴⁹

Despite its apparent menace, the *Bund* went into steep decline in 1939 with increasing legal problems, personality feuds, and charges of corruption in the leadership. Norbert Biele became one of the *Rückwanderer* who returned to Germany on the outbreak of the European war. So did Willi Wenisch of Pittsburgh, another OD leader, as well as other Pittsburgh figures Anton Fuchs and Allen Goepfel, and Henry Seegers of Reading.⁵⁰ Fuchs, one of Kuhn's closest henchmen, would later serve in Rommel's *Afrika Korps*.⁵¹ By May 1940, several hundred *Bund* supporters met at the Philadelphia Rifle Club among ostentatious Nazi paraphernalia, but this was seen as a desperate attempt to revive the earlier successes.⁵² During 1941,

there were increasing strains among the Rightist groups, with open fights between Bundists and Christian Mobilizers. The Philadelphia *Bund* was one of many that effectively collapsed even before Pearl Harbor.

In its propaganda within Pennsylvania, the *Bund* was able to portray itself as the representative of a kind of local patriotism. In Germany, Nazi scholars lovingly publicized the Pennsylvania Dutch as models of true Aryanism, "the Nazi ideal type: the simple peasant unaffected by modernity and cultural amalgamation. More important, by actively resisting modernism and remaining insular they had remained racially pure."⁵³ They should be "held up to other German-Americans as examples of how *Deutschtum* could be preserved in an alien environment."⁵⁴ *Bund* activists were not always successful in drumming up support for the "new Germany", but the networks of German churches and cultural societies were at least likely to oppose any drift into war.⁵⁵

ii. Italian Fascists

Though not quite as notorious at the time, Italian fascist groups were at least as numerous and well-organized as the *Bund*, and even more clearly than the German Nazis, they acted in concert with foreign governments and intelligence services, in this case Mussolini's OVRA.⁵⁶ In the United States, pro-fascist organizations had developed very shortly after Mussolini's seizure of power in 1922, and Philadelphia was an early bastion.⁵⁷ The most visible body was the Fascist League of North America (FLNA), but fascist sympathizers were active in the Sons of Italy and the Dante Alighieri Society. Diggins suggests that about 90 percent of Italian-American newspapers nationwide supported Mussolini's regime, and this number included Philadelphia's influential *Il Popolo Italiano* and *La Libera Parola*, as well as *La Stella di Pittsburgh* (Pittsburgh's *Lavoratore Italiano* was hostile).⁵⁸ Fascist activities in Pennsylvania most often enter the public record in consequence of one of the many violent encounters with Italian-American leftists and anti-fascists. A Philadelphia banquet in honor of a visiting Italian aviator turned into a "brick-throwing riot" when rival factions clashed.⁵⁹ In 1931, a bomb addressed to the publisher of a fascist newspaper exploded in Easton, killing three mailmen.⁶⁰

Fascist activism reached its height following the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935, and there were mass rallies in Philadelphia and other cities in support of Mussolini's war effort.⁶¹ Fascists formed a counterpart to the *Bund's* uniformed

branch in the Italian Black Shirt Legion, which on one occasion mobilized ten thousand supporters at its Camp *Dux*, in New Jersey. In 1937, Blackshirts and uniformed Bundists held a joint rally at Camp *Nordland* in the same state, a collaboration which contributed to public and congressional concern about paramilitary activities.⁶² The following year, the House Committee on Un-American Activities included the Blackshirts as one of its major targets in a general investigation of totalitarian organizations, and received highly critical testimony from anti-fascist militant Girolamo Valenti. The Committee heard that Italian consuls were reported to be active in supporting the movement, especially P. Pervan in Philadelphia.⁶³ They coordinated fund-raising in American cities, and promoted statements of loyalty to the Mussolini regime, in which they were particularly successful with Philadelphia's Italian clothing manufacturers.⁶⁴ Mussolini's envoys attempted to restrain anti-fascist activities among Italian-Americans, and in one case the Johnstown Consul Angelo Iannelli was caught carrying out surveillance of local Italian dissidents in Nettleton, Cambria County.⁶⁵ One major activity of the fascist groups in Pittsburgh and elsewhere was organizing trips to Italy for emigrants and their children, events which naturally had a powerful propaganda purpose.⁶⁶

iii. The Christian Front

Apart from the foreign-oriented ethnic fascists, there were also new domestic currents. Catholic ethnic groups provided a recruiting ground for the Right-wing Catholic activism like Father Coughlin's "National Union for Social Justice," which had four million members nationwide at its height, or the subsequent Christian Front, the "Catholic Klan."⁶⁷ Coughlin himself was violently anti-British, and from 1938 his papers and radio broadcasts became overtly pro-German and anti-Semitic.

There was a powerful Coughlinite presence in Pennsylvania. Although his party picked up a paltry 67,000 Pennsylvania votes during the presidential campaign of 1936, the movement endured in working-class Catholic communities, and enjoyed a real revival during 1939, by which point his Christian Front had branches in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.⁶⁸ In Philadelphia, the group was blamed for the appearance of anti-Semitic stickers on synagogues and Jewish-owned stores, an attack in which the windows of a Black church were broken, and the disruption of a "Protestant tolerance" meeting.⁶⁹ The incidents were regarded as sufficiently serious to merit the creation of a special investigative commission by the Philadel-

phia Council of Churches. Outside New York City, Philadelphia and Boston were the largest and most militant centers of the movement.⁷⁰

In July 1939, Coughlin's *Social Justice* claimed that "more than 8,500 crusaders" had "jammed two Philadelphia halls to hear the voice of Father Coughlin" transmitted from Detroit. The priest reported on recent successes, and "urged Philadelphians to emulate their Christianity and Americanism."⁷¹ New York Coughlinite John F. Cassidy addressed Philadelphia meetings on the proposed Front organization, and urged followers to train and arm under the guise of sporting or rifle clubs, a cover much used by other Rightist groups (in early 1940, Cassidy was arrested by the FBI on sedition charges).⁷² Also in Pennsylvania, Amos Pinchot, brother of former governor Gifford Pinchot, was a contributor to *Social Justice* during its most vociferously anti-Jewish phase.⁷³ Pinchot was a former liberal active in the Bull Moose party, but he was also one of the founders of the America First Committee, whose isolationist convictions brought him to the far Right. Another Coughlin ally in Pennsylvania was United States Representative Louis T. McFadden, who was responsible for reading into the Congressional Record large sections of the violently anti-semitic forgery *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.⁷⁴

Of all the groups, the Christian Front had perhaps the greatest potential to become a genuine mass movement around which others could coalesce. In cities like Boston it remained central to anti-Semitic agitation and violence for several years.⁷⁵ Despite its numerical influence, the movement has not been extensively studied by historians, which is due in large measure to the diffidence of contemporary observers and journalists about publishing material critical of the Catholic community. At this time, very few mainstream media outlets were prepared to risk the violent attacks and boycotts that were easily provoked by material perceived as even mildly anti-Catholic, and the Boston activities of the Front were simply ignored by the papers of that city.⁷⁶ In consequence, we lack the media coverage or official investigations that we would need to write a balanced history of the movement.

Some Catholic leaders in Pennsylvania portrayed opposition to Coughlin as anti-Catholic or Jewish-mobilized. The Altoona-Johnstown diocesan paper headlined "Jews Back Radio Drive Against Coughlin."⁷⁷ On the other hand, many clergy were violently opposed to Coughlinism, especially its anti-semitic tendencies. In Pittsburgh, the "Priest of the Little Flower" was denounced by prominent

Catholics like Charles Owen Rice and James R. Cox, who depicted anti-Jewish activities as part of a spectrum that also included anti-Catholic agitation.⁷⁸ As Cox argued in 1939, "If Father Coughlin is right, then the Ku Klux Klan is right, and if the Ku Klux Klan is right about the Jews, it is also right about the Catholics and colored people, and Father Coughlin thereby condemns himself and all that he represents The Jews today, the Catholics tomorrow, and the Negro always." The resulting spectacle was absurd: "A Catholic priest become a storm trooper! A Coughlin become a Hitler hatchet man!"⁷⁹

Father Cox was noted for his outspoken political views, but on the Coughlinites he was not too far removed from the opinions of most diocesan authorities in Pennsylvania. This was especially true of the Philadelphia archdiocese under Cardinal Dougherty. The archdiocese was consistent in its denunciations of Naziism and the German government, and regularly condemned "racism," which in the context of the time usually meant anti-Semitism.⁸⁰ In 1939 and 1940, the archdiocesan newspaper was aggressively anti-Axis and pro-Polish, and even (surprisingly) pro-British. While skeptical of the sedition charges against the Front, the paper left no doubt of its hostility to Coughlin.⁸¹ In January 1940, the *Catholic Standard and Times* editorialized that "It is a thousand pities that there is not a real Christian Front, based upon charity and truth and not under the least suspicion of hatred to any race, creed or color If there is not a real Christian Front then there will be caricature ones, that will injure the cause that they profess to aid."⁸² No-one ever accused Dougherty of being a liberal, but he was staunch in his anti-racism.⁸³

The Fascist Network

Between about 1938 and 1941, the American far Right was a bewildering ferment of groups and ideological tendencies. We are well-informed about this political underworld, partly through the surveillance activities of police and FBI, while the papers of Samuel Stouch suggest the influence of a network of Rightist groups and international movements.⁸⁴ Also informative are the investigations of journalists like John Roy Carlson, who spent four years posing as a fascist sympathizer while he penetrated dozens of far-Right organizations.⁸⁵ Collectively, these accounts paint a disturbing picture of far-Right agitation and militancy.

They also indicate the thorough interpenetration of groups, so that Carlson's identification as an Italian fascist gave him instant entrée to all sorts of other groups: German, Russian, and Ukrainian Nazis, ultra-Nativists, Klan and Legion circles, and extreme isolationists. The different groups shared propaganda and training facilities, so that the *Bund's* Camp Nordland was used by Italian Black Shirts and Ukrainian Brown Shirts as well as the Ku Klux Klan.⁸⁶ There was an enormous overlap of membership on the political fringe, often crossing what might appear insuperable boundaries. For example, both the *Bund* and the Italian Fascists were violently opposed to secret societies like the Freemasons, who were the mainstay of the Klan, while the vehemently German nationalist *Bund* had a lively attraction for other ethnic groups, especially the Irish. And while some Legionnaires loathed the *Bund* as a symbol of German militarism, others were attracted by its anti-Semitism. The militantly Protestant Klan similarly had points of contact with the Catholic-dominated Coughlinite movements. In practice, tactical collaboration was close, and between 1938 and 1941 there were repeated efforts to forge even closer alliances. The Klan and the Legion thus found unexpected tactical allies in old Catholic foes.

The revolutionary and anti-capitalist rhetoric of fascism led to Rightist and anti-Semitic organs expressing quite radical labor sentiment, as when the Coughlinite journal *Social Justice* offered high praise to CIO leaders like John L. Lewis and especially his deputy Philip Murray. Lewis, of course, was by this point deeply involved in isolationist agitation, and Charles Higham suggests that he had become perilously close to German-run campaigns.⁸⁸ By 1940, the threat of war and the Hitler-Stalin pact had compounded this thorough ideological confusion on the far Right.

The Right in Pennsylvania

Between 1938 and 1940, the far Right became increasingly identified with what were portrayed as the closely interlinked causes of isolationism and anti-Semitism, for Jewish influence was consistently blamed for driving the United States towards war with Germany. As General Van Horn Moseley declared in his speech to Philadelphia's "patriotic" organizations in March 1939, "The war now proposed is for the purpose of establishing Jewish hegemony throughout the world," and "it has the support of the man in the White House."⁸⁹ In such circles, "Jewish" and

"Communist" were seen as synonymous, and both terms characterized the Roosevelt administration and the New Deal ("the principal backers of communism", to quote Van Horn Moseley).⁹⁰ Inevitably, the Right spoke regularly of the "Jew Deal." By 1940, isolationist groups like "America First" were drawn into the orbit of the far-Right societies and clubs.⁹¹

There were special circumstances promoting Right-wing extremism in Pennsylvania. Since the 1860s, the state had effectively been a one-party Republican monopoly, one of the few industrial regions where Republican dominance at state level was not countered by Democratic machines in the cities. However, the economic crisis of the 1930s had crucial electoral consequences, and marked the sudden upsurge of Democratic power. There was a near revolution in mid-decade.⁹² In 1934, Joseph Guffey became the first Democratic United States Senator in twentieth century Pennsylvania, after an election in which even the former Progressive Republican Governor Gifford Pinchot had come close to switching parties. The same year, George Earle was the first Democrat to be elected governor since 1895, and the party gained control of the state house. Pittsburgh fell to the Democrats in the "electoral revolution" in 1936, the year that FDR became the first Democrat presidential candidate to win the state since before the Civil War.

Matters in Philadelphia were more complicated. In 1935, S. Davis Wilson was elected Mayor as a Republican, but he distanced himself from the party and appeared to be moving towards a coalition with Democrats.⁹³ He was prevented by a massive series of corruption scandals that effectively destroyed his administration, but by 1937 there was every reason to believe that Pennsylvania would soon be as monolithically Democrat as it had once been Republican, with a powerful statewide coalition of "city dwellers, organized laborers, Catholics, Jews, Negroes and the poor."⁹⁴ Under firm Democratic domination, the state in 1937 executed a series of radical measures collectively known as the "Little New Deal." And although the Republicans elected a governor in 1938, the 1940 election was again a near-sweep for the Democrats.

In the context of the time, Republicans viewed the growth of Democratic power in largely ethnic terms, seeing the party as the tool of urban ethnic and Catholic machines. Both Earle and Wilson were extensively smeared for their supposed ties to Italian and Jewish organized crime groups. With the Republicans in collapse, this opened the way for other more extreme groups to channel anti-

Roosevelt sentiment. This political environment encouraged renewed nativism, and Christian Front activities stimulated Protestant militancy, as in Philadelphia, a location where the Front was viewed as a manifestation of Catholic aggression. In 1939, mainline Protestant clergy were active in the formation of a number of political groups including the "Protestant Cooperative League" and the "League for Protestant Action," which sought to "arouse the Protestant constituency of metropolitan Philadelphia."⁹⁵ Ironically, these organizations began as a response to perceived acts of intolerance, but they were soon co-opted by Klan leaders like Samuel Stouch, who used the League as a vehicle for traditional nativism.⁹⁶ So far, this seemed a return to nineteenth century patterns of sectarian politics, surprising only in the relatively late effort to resuscitate a Protestant front; but other factors led to new alliances with traditional enemies, especially the Catholic ethnic groups.

The situation in Pennsylvania was complicated by its ethnic structure, which predisposed many groups towards isolationism or pro-Axis sentiment. Especially in the cities and the industrial centers, there were large communities with little reason to favor Roosevelt's foreign policy or his tilt towards the Allies. Apart from the Germans and Italians, Irish communities had a lasting and visceral hatred of Britain and its imperial ambitions, while Ukrainians and Lithuanians had a comparable hatred for the Soviet regime. Collectively, this gave the far Right groups a sizeable constituency from which to draw their support.

Winter and Stouch

Native Rightists shared the general drift to fascist ideas in the late thirties, and the remnants of the Ku Klux Klan were influenced by Nazi ideology. As the Klan shrank, its members transformed their ideology in subtle ways, shifting from Protestant nativism to a more general acceptance of European fascist ideas and practices. In the anthracite district, for example, intense political debate rent the old Klan groups in Luzerne County, especially the "Rescue" klavern no. 311 in Wilkes-Barre. This was the scene of controversy between the true Nazis, above all Paul Winter, and the more moderate ultra-Patriots like Lewis W. Button.⁹⁷

The Nazi faction was also dominant in the Philadelphia klaverns headed by Samuel Stouch, whose personal sympathies are indicated by the abundance of Nazi periodicals and pamphlets found in his possession, as well as the domestic fascist works of authors like James B. True and Robert Edmondson.⁹⁸ He owned a vol-

ume of Hitler's speeches published by Berlin's Terramare Press, and another collection of *German Political Profiles* by the same publisher. There were character sketches of the Nazi leadership, and leaflets by the emigré "Union of National Socialist Russians." Stouch also read *The Free American* (the *Deutscher Weckruf und Beobachter*), and a newsletter published by Goebbels' Ministry of Propaganda. He assiduously collected the journals and propaganda sheets of all manner of fringe groups, including Ulster Protestants and Orangemen. (Blackshirt and Christian Front literature is conspicuously absent from the collection, presumably suggesting his enduring anti-Catholic sentiment). Stouch's anti-Semitism is confirmed by his political correspondence. One friend was G. Harry Davidson, who wrote in 1940 that German Jews might be only one percent of the population, but they "had stolen 95 percent of Germany's law, medicine, and educational practice, besides a corner of mercantile and finance, a strangled press, and a state within a state, *as they have almost complete here in America*" (my emphasis).⁹⁹

Controversy within the Klan developed during the later thirties, and reached explosive proportions by 1940, with Winter an earnest advocate of Hitlerite policies and methods. With war imminent, he was engaged in what increasingly appeared to be overt treason, and admitted his membership in organizations based in Nazi Germany. Winter's activities horrified the "Americanist" faction of the Klan, but he was not untypical. In 1940, Father Coughlin's associate Edward James Smythe promoted a union or at least a close alliance between the *Bund* and the Klan, and the two groups held joint paramilitary exercises with the *Bund* at Camp Nordland, where Stouch's predecessor Arthur Bell was portrayed shaking hands with uniformed *OD* leaders.¹⁰⁰ 3,500 militants gathered under a flaming cross for this "monster anti-war pro-American mass meeting." Also present were representatives of the Catholic movements, the Christian Front and the Christian Mobilizers, though this did not prevent the Klan from indulging in their customary invective against "Romanism" and "dumb ring-kissers."¹⁰¹

The timing of this event was disastrous, as in August 1940 the newspapers were full of the Nazi conquest of Continental Europe and many were predicting the imminent demise of Great Britain. This incident made the schism within the Klan irreparable, and Stouch was directly implicated as New Jersey fell within his realm of Pennsylvania, Delaware and New Jersey. Lewis Button attempted to lead the "Rescue" klavern out of the Klan, and denounced the "disgusting debacle from

true Americanism Wrong rules the Klan, and waiting justice sleeps.”¹⁰² In turn, Winter’s pro-German clique expelled Button from the group: we still have the letters of both men, appealing to Grand Dragon Stouch for support. Stouch himself was clearly a Nazi sympathizer, who presumably favored Winter over Button. But even had he wished, the Klan had gone too far to be saved: by the end of 1940, the Rescue klavern in Wilkes-Barre appears to have been the last functioning lodge in the anthracite country, and even that was losing members rapidly.

A Fifth Column?

Winter and his associates carried out propaganda and held very unpopular views; but is there any evidence that he represented a more serious threat? There are in fact some indications of this, both in terms of his wider connections, and in the reports of police agencies. One of the critical events occurred in 1939, when the king and queen of England visited Canada and the United States. The royal couple were to travel from the Midwest to the East Coast by train, and it was known at the time that the German government had mounted an assassination conspiracy, involving both the Irish Republican Army and German sympathizers in the United States.¹⁰³ If we examine the files of the Pennsylvania State Police concerning this visit, there is no question that they were taking very seriously the prospect of an attempt against the royal train: in fact, the file on this visit is far larger than the corresponding file for the visit of any other celebrity or politician for decades before or since.¹⁰⁴ The state police, which had an important internal security function, felt they had reason to fear domestic subversion and sabotage in the Nazi cause.

That the fear of a fifth column had some basis in reality is also apparent from the striking portrait of Paul Winter in Carlson’s book *Under Cover*. While under cover as an Italian fascist, Carlson interviewed Paul Winter at Shavertown: Winter was “a Legionnaire . . . and distributor of Nazi pamphlets direct from Berlin.”¹⁰⁵ (Carlson was apparently not aware of his Klan background.) Winter’s closest political associates included Edwin Flaig, a German who lived at Millvale near Pittsburgh, and who claimed personal friendship with Göring, Frick and other Nazi leaders. A flagrant anti-Semite, he had attended Hitler rallies in Germany, and looked forward to the day when Hitler would use mustard gas against New York City.¹⁰⁶ He was involved in gun-running, and boasted of the existence of armed

Nazi groups in the Pittsburgh area, often disguised as rifle or sporting clubs. Carlson suggests that Flaig and Winter were involved in nationwide conspiracies, mobilized ultimately from overseas. Flaig's Hunter's Lodge at Millvale was described as the operational base of "American Nazidom's traveling emissary," Olov Tietzow, who once described the Founding Fathers as "Masonic hoodlums . . . Masonic monkeys."¹⁰⁷

Another significant Winter contact was James B. True, who Flaig reported meeting at Shavertown in 1939, and who had bought some of Flaig's firearms. True was an anti-Semitic fanatic of national reputation, who denounced "the Jew Communism which the New Deal is trying to force on America." He attempted to patent a type of billy-club under the title of "Kike Killers."¹⁰⁸ He was also the publisher of the Nazi propaganda sheet, *Industrial Control Reports* (Stouch was a subscriber).¹⁰⁹ Another friend of both Winter and True was Robert E. Edmondson, publisher of the Nazi *American Vigilante Bulletin*, which attacked even J. Edgar Hoover as too liberal and leftist.¹¹⁰ He also believed Roosevelt was a Jew. Edmondson was originally based in New York City, but in 1939 his "Edmondson Economic Service" moved to the remote Luzerne County community of Stoddartsville: almost certainly, proximity to Winter influenced his choice of refuge.¹¹¹ In 1942, both True and Edmondson were among the leading victims of a massive FBI purge of traitors and fifth columnists, which led to a sensational sedition trial.¹¹²

The government became sensitive to the "fifth column" threat. In June 1941, the Pennsylvania State Police noted that the stolen Klan archives would be a very useful source in case the "Legion of Death" became as active as the "Black Legion" had in Michigan some years ago. The comment is interesting as it implies that authorities were taking seriously the threat of violent action or terrorism.¹¹³ In April 1941, journalist Albert Kahn alleged that Ukrainian fascist groups had been responsible for sabotaging the Pennsylvania Railroad's Cleveland to Pittsburgh express train, which crashed killing five.¹¹⁴ Higham claims that after the discrediting of the *Bund*, the Ukrainians became a leading arm of German intelligence in the United States, and writes that throughout the summer of 1941, Ukrainian fifth columnists spread out across the country, targeting centers like "virtually the whole of Pittsburgh, with its mills, railroad yards and river barges."¹¹⁵ Fears peaked in June 1942, with revelations of the plot by eight Nazi agents to blow up the Horse-shoe Curve near the old Klan center of Altoona. Homes of hundreds of enemy aliens were raided, many were interrogated, but no local network was uncovered.

These events marked the end of the long-feared threat of Nazi subversion within the United States, as well as the winding up of most of their organizations and front groups. From the mid-1940s, law enforcement attention turned rather to the alleged threats from the Left, and investigations of the far Right all but ceased. This shift of public attention gives the somewhat misleading sense that the movements and opinions described here came to a sudden end with the collapse of the organizational structure, but there was some continuity. For example, in 1939 Van Horn Moseley's appearance in Philadelphia was greeted with fulsome remarks from Mrs. David Good, one of the prominent leaders of the far-Right "coalition" in the city.¹¹⁶ In 1954, she reappeared on the governing body of the "Committee of Ten Million Americans," a McCarthyite pressure group that included many notorious anti-Semites and neo-Nazis in its leadership. In Pittsburgh, a leading figure in the anti-communist purges of the late 1940s was Judge Michael Angelo Musmanno, formerly an outspoken admirer of Mussolini, and an activist in vigilante organizations affiliated with the American Legion's Americanism Commission.¹¹⁷ Presumably there were others who retained their extremist views, but the nature and degree of continuity remains to be studied.¹¹⁸

An Assessment

How serious was the Rightist threat? Much depends on how seriously we take the assertions of the various journalists like John Roy Carlson, Harold Lavine, George Seldes, Albert Kahn, Leon Turrou, and the rest, who certainly had their distinctive agendas in wishing to portray Winter and his friends as serious terrorists.¹¹⁹ By so doing, they would strengthen America for the war they knew to be inevitable, and discredit fascist sympathizers and anti-Semites by the fatal association with Hitlerism. It was ideologically valuable to demonize the Right, and an elaborate left-wing mythology developed about the dangers to democracy posed by the large capitalist firms and their private armies. At the most cynical level, these were first and foremost journalists who recognized that a good story was to be found in the unearthing of real plotters. It is possible they exaggerated or at least painted their findings in the most sinister colors, and the scarcity of serious fifth column activity may confirm this.

There were also incentives for the United States government and its friends in the media to exaggerate the threat of subversion. The Camp Nordland meeting of

August 1940 was a godsend for the administration in stirring public fears about Nazi activism at a time when the intervention debate was reaching a crescendo with the critical issues of conscription and the destroyers deal with Britain. Of course, the November elections also loomed. This political dimension is vital in explaining the amount of material available on the various movements, and it is imperative for the historian to realize that the volume of available information is determined by factors other than the objective significance of the groups concerned. The fact that the *Bund* received massively more attention than the Blackshirts or the Christian Front does not mean that these latter organizations are any less worthy of study.

On the other hand, if we assume that all the charges by Carlson and others were true, what sources would be available to the historian to confirm them? By definition, conspirators and terrorists tend not to leave archives, or at least in any form which might be made available to researchers, and their public statements and documents will usually present a deceptively pacific image. No group would openly admit that it was in contact with agents of a potential enemy power, though the evidence for this in the case of the *Bund* and the Coughlinites is quite overwhelming.¹²⁰ In the freak circumstances that permit us to view a "snapshot" of the activities of Samuel Stouch in late 1940, the picture provides striking support for Carlson's account, not least in the widespread networking that crossed all putative ideological boundaries, and the deep sympathy with Nazi extremism.

It is also useful to remember that terrorism and covert violence are by no means an invention of the last twenty years, and the decade of the 1930s has a claim to rank as the first great age of state-sponsored international terrorism. The Germans and Italians made much use of overseas sympathizers to carry out assassinations and sabotage activities, for example in Austria, France, and Yugoslavia, and it was far from improbable that they would try to use such tactics in North America. Italian fascists certainly carried out assassinations in the United States, probably including the 1943 killing of Carlo Tresca, and the Germans forged alliances with overseas dissident groups like the IRA. The fact that something resembling conspiracy paranoia exists does not mean that there is no conspiracy, even if not in terms as lurid as a "Legion of Death".

We are on much firmer ground in assuming that the journalists and investigators were accurately reflecting the sentiments and commonplaces of the far Right,

whether or not there was any substance in the threats of blood and sabotage. This is amply confirmed by the reading habits of Samuel Stouch and the available writings of men like True and Edmondson. Examining this group therefore throws light on a genuine strand of far Right anti-democratic politics at a time of extreme crisis both internally (with the apparent collapse of the Republican party) and in international affairs. It demonstrates the transition in Rightist thought from religious issues to ideological and international matters, and suggests the extreme vigor of the opposition to the new Democratic coalitions in Pennsylvania. That such ideas seem so much at variance with the customary moderation of Pennsylvania politics should not permit us to ignore their influence and persistence.

Notes

1. An excellent recent survey is found in David H. Bennett, *The Party of Fear*, New York: Vintage, 1990, 244-267, though he is over-cautious in speaking of "quasi-fascists."
2. See for example Walter Laqueur, ed., *Fascism: A Reader's Guide*, London: Pelican, 1979.
3. For the *Bund* and the Silver Shirts in Pennsylvania, see Donald S. Strong, *Organized Anti-Semitism in America: The Rise of Group Prejudice During the Decade 1930-1940*, Washington D.C.: American Council on Public Affairs, 1941, 31-32, 51.
4. *Investigation of Un-American Activities in the United States. Hearings Before a Special Committee on Un-American Activities. House of Representatives, 75th Congress, third session/ 76th Congress first session on H. Res. 282 (The Dies Committee)*. Twelve volumes. Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1938-1941. vol. 5, 3554, 3559 (May 1939).
5. Laqueur ed., *Fascism*, 25.
6. There is a lively literature on the local activities of the Klan in its 1920s heyday, though far less on the afterlife of the 1930s. Among recent works, see for example: Nancy MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994; Richard K Tucker, *The Dragon and The Cross: The Rise and Fall of the Ku Klux Klan in Middle America*, Hamden, CT: Archon, 1991; William D. Jenkins, *Steel Valley Klan*, Kent State University Press, 1990; Leonard J. Moore, *Citizen Klansmen: The Ku Klux Klan in Indiana 1921-1928*, University of North Carolina Press, 1991.
7. Philip Jenkins, "The Ku Klux Klan in Pennsylvania 1920-1940", *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, 69 (1986), 121-138.
8. Emerson H. Loucks, *The Ku Klux Klan in Pennsylvania: A Study in Nativism*, Harrisburg, PA: Telegraph Press, 1936.
9. Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg, PA: Ku Klux Klan Archives, in State Police Records, RG30; Jenkins, "Klan in Pennsylvania."
10. Compare William D. Jenkins, *Steel Valley Klan*.
11. Jenkins, "Klan in Pennsylvania."
12. Thomas H. Coode and John F. Bauman, *People, Poverty and Politics: Pennsylvanians During the Great Depression*, Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1981, 144.
13. John O'Hara, *Appointment in Samarra*, New York: Modern Library 1994: 94-97.
14. "Ku Klux Klan is Being Reorganized on Big Scale," *The Register* (Altoona-Johnstown diocesan paper), February 26, 1939.
15. "Cardinal Dougherty Presides at Co-Cathedral Dedication," *Atlanta Journal*, January 18, 1939.
16. "Klan Comeback Attempt Runs Foul of Law," *The Register* (Altoona-Johnstown diocesan paper), May 26, 1940.
17. "The Klan Again," editorial in *Catholic Standard and Times*, Philadelphia, March 1, 1940.
18. For example the cartoon captioned "Back Again" in *The Register* (Altoona-Johnstown diocesan paper), May 19, 1940.
19. "The Klan Again," *Catholic Standard and Times*.
20. Sinclair Lewis, *It Can't Happen Here*, New York: New American Library 1970, 78-79. Lewis' view of Fascism was heavily influenced by the work of journalist George Seldes (see John P. Diggins, *Mussolini and Fascism: The View From America*, Princeton University Press 1972, 249). The "forgotten man" image of course comes from FDR, but the idea of a "forgotten man" movement as crypto-fascist also appears in the 1941 Frank Capra film *Meet John Doe*.
21. William Pencak, *For God and Country: The American Legion 1919-1941*, Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1989; Terry Radtke, *The History of the Pennsylvania American Legion*, Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1993. Radtke argues that the rightist and strikebreaking activities of the Legion were much exaggerated (48-49).
22. For allegations of Legion involvement in conspiracy and subversion at national level, see Jules Archer, *The Plot to Seize the White House*, New York:

- Hawthorn, 1973; though see also Pencak, *For God and Country*. Legion conspiracies are discussed in George Seldes, *Facts and Fascism*, New York: In Fact, Inc., 1943, 80-121.
23. Justin Gray and Victor H. Bernstein, *The Inside Story of the Legion*, New York: Boni and Gaer, 1948, 138.
 24. Radtke, *The History of the Pennsylvania American Legion*, 35-36.
 25. *Ibid.*, 58.
 26. Gray and Bernstein, *Inside Story*, 142-143.
 27. *Ibid.*, 143-4; Radtke, *The History of the Pennsylvania American Legion*, 48-50.
 28. Gray and Bernstein, *Inside Story*, 147.
 29. Radtke, *History of the Pennsylvania American Legion*, 49-50.
 30. *Ibid.*, 58, notes that there were fifteen African-American posts in the state by 1940.
 31. Bennett, *Party of Fear*, 244.
 32. Benjamin Stolberg, *The Story of the CIO*, New York: Viking Press, 93.
 33. *Investigation of Un-American Activities in the United States*, vol. 3, 2237-2244. (November 1938).
 34. John Roy Carlson, *Under Cover*, New York: The World Publishing Co., 1943, 173.
 35. *Investigation of Un-American Activities in the United States*, vol. 3: 2238.
 36. Leon G. Turrou, *The Nazi Spy Conspiracy in America*, Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries, 1972 (originally published 1939); Susan Canedy, *America's Nazis: A Democratic Dilemma*, New York: Margraf, 1991.
 37. Sander A. Diamond, *The Nazi Movement in the United States 1927-1941*, Ithaca, N.Y. Cornell University Press 1974, 212.
 38. *Investigation of Un-American Activities in the United States*, vol. 6, 3871.
 39. Strong, *Organized Anti-Semitism in America*, 35.
 40. *New York Times*, March 19, 1938.
 41. Donald S. Strong, *Organized Anti-Semitism in America: The Rise of Group Prejudice During the Decade 1930-1940*, Washington DC: American Council on Public Affairs, 1941, 32.
 42. Leland V. Bell, *In Hitler's Shadow: The Anatomy of American Naziism*, Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1973, 27-30.
 43. *Investigation of Un-American Activities in the United States*, vol. 10, 6094-95 (October 1939).
 44. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 1205.
 45. Diamond *Nazi Movement*, 243, and see below for Camp Nordland; Bell, *In Hitler's Shadow*, 27.
 46. Carlson, *Under Cover*, 109.
 47. *Investigation of Un-American Activities in the United States*, vol. 2, 1107-1180 (September 1938).
 48. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 1126.
 49. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 1153.
 50. Diamond *Nazi Movement*, 149-151; 363.
 51. *Ibid.*, 216.
 52. *New York Times*, May 28, 1940.
 53. Diamond, *Nazi Movement*, 60, 72-73.
 54. *Ibid.*, 200.
 55. *Ibid.*, 197-98.
 56. *Investigation of Un-American Activities in the United States*, vol. 2, 1181-1201 (October 1938).
 57. John P. Diggins, *Mussolini and Fascism: The View From America*, Princeton University Press, 1972, 81. Pages 77-110 describe the activities of Italian fascist groups in the United States.
 58. *Ibid.*, 83.
 59. *Ibid.*, 123.
 60. *Ibid.*, 133.
 61. *Ibid.*, 302; John Norman, "Pro-Fascist Activities in Western Pennsylvania During the Ethiopian War," *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, 25 (1942) 143-148.
 62. Diggins, *Mussolini and Fascism*, 105, 343.
 63. *Investigation of Un-American Activities in the United States*, vol. 2, 1183-85.
 64. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 1198.
 65. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 1183-84.
 66. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 1192-94.
 67. Sheldon Marcus, *Father Coughlin: The Tumultuous Life of the Priest of the Little Flower*, Boston: Little Brown, 1973: 139-207.
 68. John Roy Carlson, *Under Cover*, New York: The World Publishing Co., 1943, 56.

69. "New Anti-Catholic Society Established," *The Register* (Altoona-Johnstown diocesan paper), June 25, 1939.
70. George J. Mintzer and Newman Levy, *The International Anti-Semitic Conspiracy*, New York: American Jewish Committee, 1946, 53.
71. Strong, *Organized Anti-Semitism*, 65.
72. *Ibid.*, 65-67.
73. Marcus, *Father Coughlin*, 291.
74. Mintzer and Levy, *The International Anti-Semitic Conspiracy*, 44.
75. John Gunther, *Inside USA*, New York: Harper, 1951, 529.
76. *Ibid.*
77. "Jews Back Radio Drive Against Coughlin," *The Register* (Altoona-Johnstown diocesan paper), August 6, 1939. The national paper *America* commented that "The attack on Father Coughlin has become, in reality, an attack on Catholicism".
78. For Rice, see Patrick J. McGeever, *Rev. Charles Owen Rice - Apostle of Contradiction*, Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1989; "Anti-Semitism Called Mortal Sin for Catholics by Priest On Air," *Catholic Standard and Times*, Philadelphia, August 18, 1939.
79. James R. Cox, *Hitler's Hatchet Man*, pamphlet version of speech delivered to Dormont Rotary Club, no place of publication, no date (Pittsburgh, August 1939?). Coughlin typically responded to this attack by producing what he claimed was proof that Cox was in the pay of Jews: Letter of Charles Coughlin to Bishop Hugh Boyle, September 1939, Papers Relating to Father James Cox, Archives of the Diocese of Pittsburgh.
80. See for example "Pope Plays Racism," *Catholic Standard and Times*, Philadelphia, November 3, 1939.
81. Typical of war reporting in the *Catholic Standard and Times*, was this headline (February 9, 1940): "Nazi Atrocities Against Subjugated Poland. Barbarous destruction of whole population by dispossession, persecution, deportation, shooting and torturing, aim of conquerors. Document published in Rome reveals churches despoiled, clergy imprisoned and killed, laity deprived of religious rites." In January 1940, Cardinal Dougherty requested all churches in his diocese to undertake special prayers on behalf of Poland and its people. In the Altoona-Johnstown diocese, the official paper headlined "Polish Persecution Called Worst in History": *The Register*, February 4, 1940.
82. "The Christian Front," editorial in *Catholic Standard and Times*, Philadelphia, January 26, 1940.
83. Ironically, Dougherty had in the mid-1930s criticized Coughlin for his enthusiasm for the New Deal, suggesting that the priest drew too heavily on Jewish support: James F. Connelly, ed., *The History of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia*, Philadelphia: Archdiocese of Philadelphia, 1976, 390.
84. *Investigation of Un-American Activities in the United States*.
85. From the other journalistic accounts of this era, see for example Seldes, *Facts and Fascism*.
86. *Investigation of Un-American Activities*, vol. 2, e.g. p. 1192, 1210.
87. Philip Murray, "Control Technology," *Christian Social Action*, 4(7), (1940).
88. Charles Higham, *Trading with the Enemy*, New York: Dell, 1983, 85-94; Higham, *American Swastika*, New York: Doubleday, 1985. See John L. Lewis, "Industrial Unionism - CIO" *Christian Front* 2 (1937): 52-54.
89. *Investigation of Un-American Activities in the United States*, vol. 5, 3584-85; 3634-38.
90. *Ibid.*, vol. 5, 3635.
91. Justin Doenecke, *In Danger Undaunted: The Anti-Interventionist Movement of 1940-41*, Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1990.
92. Philip S. Klein and Ari Hoogenboom, *A History of Pennsylvania*, 2nd ed., Penn State Press, 1980; Coode and Bauman, *People, Poverty and Politics*, 224-253.
93. Russell F. Weigley et al., *Philadelphia: A Three Hundred Year History*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1982, 616-630.
94. Klein and Hoogenboom, *History*, 465.

95. "New Anti-Catholic Society Established," *The Register* (Altoona-Johnstown diocesan paper), June 25, 1939.
96. Jenkins, "Klan in Pennsylvania."
97. *Ibid.*
98. *Ibid.*
99. Diggins, *Mussolini and Fascism*, 207, for Klan hostility to the Italian-American Fascists.
100. Marcus, *Father Coughlin*, 150. Smythe was president of the Protestant War Veterans Association.
101. Carlson, *Under Cover*, 152-153.
102. Jenkins, "Klan in Pennsylvania," quoting Pennsylvania Klan archives.
103. Higham, *American Swastika*, 102-116.
104. Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg, PA, RG30: State Police files on protection of important visitors.
105. Carlson, *Under Cover*, 417.
106. *Ibid.*, 419-26.
107. *Ibid.*, 417.
108. Harold Lavine, *Fifth Column in America*, New York: Doubleday, Doran, 1940: 74-78.
109. Strong *Organized Anti-Semitism in America*, 152-157.
110. *Ibid.*, 79-82.
111. Carlson, *Under Cover*, 146.
112. John Roy Carlson, *The Plotters*, New York: E. P. Dutton, 1946; Maximilian St. George and Lawrence Dennis, *A Trial on Trial: The Great Sedition Trial of 1944*, New York: National Civil Rights Committee, 1946, 115, 437-38.
113. The "Black Legion" remark could be based on knowledge of actual events, but might well be drawn from the fictional portrayal in the 1936 Humphrey Bogart film of that name.
114. Higham *American Swastika*, 119.
115. *Ibid.*, 120.
116. *Investigation of Un-American Activities in the United States*, vol. 5, 3559.
117. David Caute, *The Great Fear*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978, 216-223.
118. Arnold Forster and Benjamin R. Epstein, *Cross Currents*, New York: Doubleday, 1956, 159.
119. Diamond, *Nazi Movement*, 206-207 implies that the journalists gave the *Bund* unwarranted publicity by their sensationalistic coverage.
120. *Father Coughlin - His Facts and Arguments*, New York: American Jewish Congress, 1939, for Coughlin's wholesale borrowings from Nazi propaganda materials.