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E. HALDEMAN-JULIUS
A CRITICAL EVALUATION

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Division in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Science

By
Kenneth Donald McCracken

Kenneth D. McCracken

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Pittsburg, Kansas

May, 1956

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THESIS ABSTRACT

One of the most controversial editors that ever worked in Kansas was E. Haldeman-Julius of Girard. It is the attempt of this work to follow the works of this writer, editor, and publisher from his first beginnings with struggling Socialist newspapers until his death in 1951. A background of his early life in Philadelphia is not neglected.

The author was fortunate in that the library of Kansas State Teachers College contains many of the late publisher's works which were the principal sources of information for this paper. In addition, books and magazine articles gave factual information as well as subjective analyses. Persons living in Girard who knew Haldeman-Julius have given valuable information concerning his personal traits.

Haldeman-Julius was born in a tenement district of Philadelphia and received a meager education there. He later worked on various Socialist newspapers until 1916, when he was invited to Girard to work on the Appeal to Reason. With financial aid from his wife, a local heiress, he was able to buy the plant, and convert the militant newspaper into an intellectual weekly with a strong accent of Freethought. Although he did not ignore the Socialist Party, he relegated it to a secondary position. The weekly newspaper was supplemented by other periodicals, which generally carried the same theme.

His chief claim to prominence was his book department which was begun in 1919. Haldeman-Julius published books in pamphlet form on many and varied subjects. He did not hesitate to publish books which were likely to be banned by the postal authorities and this attracted national attention. These Little Blue Books as they were called, became popular and by the time of his death, the sales had totaled more than 300,000,000. He also published larger books.

Haldeman-Julius was the voice of the radical thinkers of his time, and for some he provided their only outlet of expression.

CHAPTER I

A YOUNG LIBERAL GROWS UP

In 1887 a young Jewish couple living in Odessa, Russia, were preparing to leave for the United States. Both were the children of rabbis and consequently enjoyed an enviable position in Jewish society and had certain advantages over other children. One of these advantages was the opportunity for education, and David Zolajefsky had graduated from the gymnasium, the equivalent of high school. In addition, all young men were expected to learn a trade, and David had chosen the art of bookbinding, which proved to be his future occupation.¹

The trip to the United States was a strenuous undertaking for the young couple; before they arrived in Philadelphia, their destination, two of their children had died. David immediately applied for the only work that he knew, bookbinding, and was able to go to work at once. It was at this time that his employer suggested that he shorten his name, and "Julius" was ultimately selected.²

Their youngest son, Emanuel, was born on July 30, 1889.³

¹Albert Mordell, "The Father and Mother of Emanuel Haldeman-Julius," Critic and Guide, III (October, 1949), 14.

²Ibid. The name Zoladj was suggested by the employer, but Julius was selected, probably because it was more "American" and easier to pronounce.

³Marcet Haldeman-Julius gives the year as 1888. However, Albert Mordell, William J. Fielding, and Who's Who in America all agree on 1889.

The residence at that time was 237 Race Street, a rather historic location only a block from one of Benjamin Franklin's homes, only three blocks from Christ's Church, and only five blocks from Independence Hall.⁴ Despite its historic location, the area had by 1889 degenerated into a tenement district. Like most of the poor families in the area, the Julius family was at the mercy of the landlord. They could be evicted on a month's notice; or the landlord could increase the rent at will. As a result, the family was constantly moving from one tenement apartment to another, seldom staying at one location for more than a year or two.⁵

Although he was later to become a leading intellectual writer, young Emanuel received only a scanty amount of formal schooling. At the age of thirteen he had finished his formal education in the Philadelphia public schools.⁶ Later he attended night classes at Brown's Preparatory School located at Broad and Filbert Streets in the Odd Fellows Hall. His courses consisted of Latin and algebra. He found these two courses difficult and consequently dropped them. This terminated his schooling, but did not

⁴Albert Mordell, "The Birthplace and Residences of E. Haldeman-Julius," Critic and Guide, III (August, 1949), 28.

⁵Ibid., p. 32.

⁶Albert Mordell, "E. Haldeman-Julius Gets an Education in Philadelphia," Critic and Guide, III (October, 1949), 6. There is confusion concerning the amount of education received. Mordell claims that he finished the eleventh grade, while Marcet Haldeman-Julius claims the eighth. His son, Henry, said, "about the seventh grade."

in the least dull his desire to learn the writings of leading intellectuals.⁷

During all his formative years, Emanuel had found great delight in the works of leading intellectual writers. It has been surmised by some that his lack of interest in school was a result of the type of material offered and method of presentation rather than in the difficulty of the material offered.⁸ This thirst for intellectualism was not compatible with the neighborhood in which he lived. Being a tenement district largely inhabited by immigrants from Europe, it tended to have an old world atmosphere. As a result, Emanuel felt ill at ease with his home life and at the age of fifteen, he left to seek his fortune.⁹

For the next few years, Julius wandered from one job to another, mostly odd jobs around Philadelphia. For a while he worked as a copyholder in the proofroom for the Philadelphia Press and Record. This seems to have aroused his interest in the printing industry, although he did not go into that type of work immediately.¹⁰

During the middle of the first decade of the twentieth century, he became interested in the Socialist movement,

⁷Ibid.

⁸Interview with Henry Haldeman, February 16, 1956.

⁹Marcet Haldeman-Julius, "What the Editor's Wife is Thinking About," Haldeman-Julius Weekly, August 30, 1924, p. 5.

¹⁰Mordell, "Emanuel Haldeman-Julius Gets an Education in Philadelphia," loc. cit., p. 7.

joining the party in his teens.¹¹ Already he was forming opinions of leading intellectuals and political leaders; opinions which were to shape his editorial policy of later years. In general, he seemed to admire and respect those persons who had dynamic, progressive, and unconventional views and to scorn those whose outlook was orthodox and conservative.

One of those men whom he admired most was Eugene V. Debs, the head of the Socialist Party. He attended a number of Socialist lectures in his teens and was given the opportunity to hear the Socialist leader in person. Emanuel found Debs to be "a leader, a man of tremendous emotional power, a symbol."¹² He was "honest, candid, uncompromising, fearless, and always worthy of trust."¹³ Debs did not have the benefit of the politeness from the press that Norman Thomas later encountered. The "capitalistic newspapers" did not print a friendly word about him until he died.¹⁴ The young thinker and idealist was to write in Debs' behalf at the conclusion of World War I, while the latter was serving a prison sentence at Atlanta.

¹¹Louis Adamic, "Voltaire from Kansas," Outlook, CLV (June 25, 1930), 282.

¹²E. Haldeman-Julius, My Second 25 Years, p. 54.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 54-55.

For another leader of the liberal movement, William Jennings Bryan, Emanuel Julius had only contempt and scorn. While still in his teens, he heard William Jennings Bryan give his famous sermon, "The Prince of Peace," and though only an adolescent, he had "read enough of Darwin, Huxley, and Spencer to know what a jackass Bryan was making of himself."¹⁵ Julius credited most of Bryan's success to a superb speaking voice that "impressed his medieval-minded audiences of yokels and Bible-thumpers."¹⁶

For a while, Julius worked as a bellboy in a girl's school in Tarrytown, New York. It was while he was here that he had the opportunity of an interview with Mark Twain. Armed with an analysis of "revolutionary trends" in Twain's work, Julius proceeded to ask questions of Mark Twain about the unorthodox nature of some of his writings.¹⁷ The young bellboy received a tremendous impression from this meeting in August, 1908, and two years later wrote an article for the International Socialist Review entitled, "Mark Twain: Radical."¹⁸ In this article the young author refers to Twain as a "radical, a progressive, and an apostle of true democracy."¹⁹ Throughout his life, he constantly referred

¹⁵Ibid., p. 17.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷William J. Fielding, "Prince of the Pamphleteers," Nation, CLXXIV (May 10, 1952), 452.

¹⁸International Socialist Review, XI (August, 1910), 83-88. This was cited by Mordell.

¹⁹Albert Mordell, "Haldeman-Julius and Mark Twain," Critic and Guide, III (November, 1949), 8.

to Mark Twain as a great writer of progressivism and as a great American humorist.²⁰ "The Mysterious Stranger" by Mark Twain was a favorite book.²¹

Emanuel Julius continued to write articles for Socialist newspapers, including the Appeal to Reason, but did not actually get a regular reporting assignment until 1912, when he became a reporter for the Milwaukee Leader, then a new Socialist paper. After a brief stay on the Leader, he took a job as reporter for the Chicago Daily World. In 1913 he went to Los Angeles to work with the Western Comrade, a struggling Socialist newspaper. Julius was offered control over the newspaper in February, 1914, by Chester M. Wright on condition that Julius would hire Wright to do the printing. Julius consented to this arrangement and published and edited five issues between February and June of 1914. He then sold his interest to a Socialist lawyer, Job Harriman, for one thousand dollars in stocks, which was in turn sold for five twenty-dollar gold pieces.²²

The editor of the Western Comrade wrote at least one article which must have puzzled the Socialists of his time, and one which seemed to be a prophecy of future events.

²⁰Interview with Henry Haldeman, February 16, 1956.

²¹Fielding, "Prince of the Pamphleteers," loc. cit.

²²Albert Mordell, "Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, Owner and Editor of the Western Comrade," Critic and Guide, III (November, 1949), 40.

This was an editorial entitled "The Iniquitous Income Tax," which registered a complaint about the income tax legislation of this time (this income tax law did not affect incomes below three thousand dollars). Mordell recorded this ominous blast at the most democratic of taxes: "One should boost the oppressors at the present and defend the capitalist in his graft, for we must always remember that we may at any moment become plutocrats."²³ Since the income tax was one of the principal goals of Socialism, there is indication in this editorial that Julius did not feel that Socialism provided the complete answer to man's economic distresses.

While still with the Western Comrade in May and June of 1914, he began to write for the New York Call. It was Chester M. Wright who offered Julius a position on this newspaper, and he left for New York immediately after selling out the Western Comrade.²⁴

The New York Call building was evidently in need of improvement. Haldeman-Julius described the business establishment as "old, rickedy, musty, rat-infested, dirty, stinking, miserable, and scummy."²⁵ The Call at this time had a circulation of about 40,000, according to Haldeman-Julius. It had been founded in 1908 under the name of the

²³Ibid., p. 41.

²⁴Mordell, "Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, Owner and Editor of the Western Comrade," loc. cit., p. 40.

²⁵Haldeman-Julius, My Second 25 Years, p. 13.

New York Leader in 1908 and continued in existence until 1923. The Call was read by many non-Socialists because of its literary character; it had many articles of a non-political nature.²⁶

The New York Call, unlike most of the Socialist papers of the time, had a Sunday magazine section. Julius became the Sunday editor of the Call in August, 1914. In this capacity, Emanuel Julius, who had become one of the leading writers of Socialist fiction,²⁷ was able to use one of his stronger literary talents. Among the short stories that appeared in the Call were "The wall" on July 12 and "The Whistle" on June 21. One of his short stories entitled, "Young Man, You're Raving" was later printed as a Little Blue Book.

Mos of his themes in the editorials of the Call dealt with conventional Socialist subjects. One of the articles entitled, "The Equitable Moloch" was a bold attack depoloring the loss of life incurred during the erection of the Equitable Life Building.²⁸ Another article followed the Call's editorial policy of opposing our entry into the war. This article, "The Most Uninteresting Thing in the World is War," was an attack on England and related the sad fact that Socialists in many European nations loved their countries

²⁶Mordell, "E. Haldeman-Julius and the Call," Critic and Guide, III (September, 1949), 17.

²⁷Julius often used the pseudonym of Patsy O'Bang in fiction.

²⁸Mordell, "E. Haldeman-Julius and the Call," loc. cit., p. 18.

more than they loved Socialism.²⁹ Socialists generally were opposed to the entry of the United States into World War I and as will be shown later, many of the Socialist papers lost most of their appeal during World War I.

Perhaps the most important effect of the one year stay on the Call upon the life of Emanuel Julius was his association with many leading Socialists of the time. Among those people were Morris Hillquit, Mey London, Clement Wood, August Claessens, Jacob Punken, and James O'Neill. He seemed to have known Louis Kopelin also, although the latter left for Girard in 1913.

A few of these people were to have important associations with Julius in later years. Clement Wood and Paul Eldridge were to make important contributions to the Little Blue Book series of later years. Louis Kopelin was to be his partner on the Appeal to Reason.

It was Louis Kopelin who invited Julius to come to Girard as a reporter for the Appeal. Kopelin had come to Girard in 1913 to buy an interest in the Appeal to Reason and to act as editor³⁰ for the newspaper that now lacked the services of its two great promoters, J. A. Wayland and Fred D. Warren.³¹ Trouble between Kopelin and Charles

²⁹Ibid., p. 19.

³⁰Mordell, "E. Haldeman-Julius and the Call," loc. cit., p. 16.

³¹Warren was touring Europe at this time. Wayland had committed suicide in 1912.

Phifer had ended in the release of the latter and Julius was called to take his place.³²

It was at Girard that Julius launched on the career that was to make him one of the most fabulous editors in the United States--and certainly one of the most controversial.

³²Haldeman-Julius, My Second 25 Years, p. 62.

CHAPTER II

HALDEMAN-JULIUS AND THE APPEAL TO REASON

When Emanuel Julius moved to Girard in 1915, he found the Appeal to Reason beginning to decline. Up to 1914, the circulation had increased steadily from eight million copies in 1905 to thirty-six million copies in 1912, and the number of subscribers had risen from twenty-five thousand in 1895 to over a half-million in 1914.¹ But a death knell was sounding for the Socialist press. The Socialists' position against war was certain to present insurmountable obstacles to further growth of the paper.

The Appeal to Reason in its program of militant Socialism had encountered many enemies, and its editors had frequently been in court on charges of slander and sedition. In 1907, prior to the trial of Moyer and Haywood (two members of the Western Miners' Federation who had been accused of murdering ex-Governor Steunenberg of Idaho), President Theodore Roosevelt referred to the Appeal as a "vituperative organ of pornography, anarchy, and bloodshed."²

It was indicted for inciting violence through the mails in 1907 and this resulted in a case which, with complications

¹Harold A. Trout, History of the Appeal to Reason, p. 88

²Ray Ginger, The Bending Cross, p. 252.

(many of them promoted by Fred Warren, the editor) was not closed until 1912.³

Even after the Appeal to Reason had passed into history, it continued to draw biting comments from writers. In 1926 Victor Willard remembered the Appeal as "a bloody sheet, always with knife in mouth, fanatical frenzy in its eyes."⁴ Louis Adamic noted that "the appeal of the Appeal to Reason was to anything but reason." He said further that Wayland, though in theory an idealist and a radical, "was a selfish and rather clever mob-master . . . cashing in on the plight of the American underdog."⁵

The Appeal to Reason was not too popular even with the other Socialist newspapers of that period. The left-wing members of the Socialist Party at the 1904 convention charged that the Appeal to Reason and other papers were setting party policy by influencing readers.⁶ Socialist newspapers charged that the Appeal to Reason was using Socialism to build up the Appeal to Reason rather than using the Appeal to Reason to build up Socialism.⁷ Perhaps some of these charges were

³Trout, op. cit., pp. 46-47.

⁴Victor Willard, "Bringing the Light to Main Street," Sunset, LVI (January, 1926), 37.

⁵Louis Adamic, "Voltaire from Kansas," Outlook CLV (June 25, 1930), 284.

⁶Ira Kipnis, The American Socialist Movement, 1897-1912, p. 247.

⁷Ibid., p. 250.

made as an expression of jealousy; while most of the newspapers asking the people to throw off their chains were operating at a deficit, the management of the Appeal was showing a substantial profit.⁸ Certainly the Appeal to Reason was careless with its advertising, and it often was sensational in its presentation.

Except for the Socialist Party itself, it was the chief weapon of attack. Through the pages of the Appeal to Reason the Socialist movement was able to transmit initiation messages to new members and to mobilize them in "many campaigns against labor frame-ups and government corruption."⁹

But two solid blows had been struck against the Appeal. In 1912 J. A. Wayland, the publisher of the militant periodical, faced with charges of illegally transporting a woman across state lines for immoral purposes, ended his life with a bullet from an automatic pistol.¹⁰ Fred Warren, after touring Europe during 1913, returned to Girard and resigned as editor on July 27, 1914.¹¹ This seemed to be a very

⁸Ibid., p. 248.

⁹Kipnis, op. cit., p. 250.

¹⁰Ginger, op. cit., p. 313. Ginger maintains that the charge was ridiculous for four reasons: (1) Wayland was fifty-eight years old; (2) he was broken up over the death of his wife less than a year ago; (3) he was too shrewd for such a trap, and (4) he was unpleasantly moral. A note left in his copy of Looking Backward read: "The struggle under the capitalistic system isn't worth it. Let it pass."

¹¹Interview with Fred D. Warren, November 17, 1955.

timely move since Austria declared war on Serbia on July 28, 1914; this was followed by German declarations of war on Russia on August 1, and France on August 3.

When one considers the dilemma faced by the Socialist Party by the advent of the First World War, it would appear that Fred Warren had made his move with the idea of avoiding further conflict. Warren has repeatedly denied this. He had no way of predicting the beginning of a gigantic struggle that was to involve most of the nations of the world.¹² However, he has often mentioned that the Appeal was at a disadvantage during World War I. It could neither have opposed nor defended the war without running into serious difficulty.¹³

After Fred Warren's resignation, the paper continued under the direction of Walter H. Wayland,¹⁴ publisher, and Louis Kopelin, editor. The policy of the paper continued virtually unchanged, still voicing the traditional Socialist views, and solidly against the entrance of the United States into World War I. Plans were laid for the one thousandth issue of the Appeal to launch a full-scale attack upon militarism. Shortly before publication of this special issue, the post office issued a statement which forbade the

¹²Trout, op. cit., p. 60.

¹³Interview with Fred D. Warren, November 17, 1955.

¹⁴Son of Julius A. Wayland.

Appeal to send individual copies to persons at the usual second-class rate unless those persons were regular subscribers. As a result, all of the extra newspapers which were sent out had to be delivered as bundles in order for the Appeal to use the lower rate.¹⁵ The front page feature article of this issue was an editorial by Allan Benson entitled, "Let Us Prepare for Peace While There is War," and contained numerous attacks upon the imperialism of America.¹⁶ This was reinforced by an article by H. G. Creel entitled, "Hawaii, an International Crime."¹⁷

Emanuel Julius had only occasional signed articles on the inside pages of the paper throughout 1915 and 1916. Allan Benson, the Socialist nominee for President dominated the front page, while there were occasional editorials by Louis Kopelin. The writings of Julius at this period followed the conventional Socialistic pattern with attacks upon the manufacturers and expressions of pity for the laboring class. He praised Benson as the "irreconcilable foe of Poverty and Militarism."¹⁸ He implied that under Socialism, and only under Socialism, the worker would receive a fair share of

¹⁵Appeal to Reason, January 23, 1915, p. 1.

¹⁶Ibid., January 30, 1915, p. 1.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁸Appeal to Reason, April 22, 1916, p. 3.

the fruits of his labor.¹⁹ War was merely "the expression of plutocrats who are hungry for new profits."²⁰

While in New York he had met actress Jean Marcet,²¹ the daughter of the late Dr. H. W. Haldeman, a local physician, and S. Alice Haldeman, vice-president of the State Bank of Girard. The parents were strong Presbyterians, Marcet and her mother took an active interest in church affairs,²² and there are strong indications that she believed in a strong, moral set of values and in active humanitarianism. In a letter to her mother written from Bryn Mawr she defended the college against attacks upon the moral character of the institution. If there were any girls at the school who smoked and drank, she was unable to find them.²³

Marcet was born in Girard in 1887 and attended the local schools, where she was an industrious student. In a letter written to Bryn Mawr, Superintendent H. W. Shideler of Girard noted that "she is quick to grasp ideas and is very studious."²⁴ She showed strong grades ranging from 95 to

¹⁹Ibid., June 10, 1916, p. 3.

²⁰Ibid., June 24, 1916, p. 3.

²¹This was her stage name. She was christened Anna Marcet Haldeman and she was known variously as Anna Haldeman and Marcet Haldeman.

²²Interview with Jane T. Townsend, February 20, 1956.

²³Letter written from Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, by Marcet Haldeman to Mrs. S. Alice Haldeman, October 28, 1905.

²⁴Application for admission into Bryn Mawr College. Signed by H. W. Shideler, September 30, 1902.

99 per cent.²⁵ Marcet's father, Dr. H. W. Haldeman died when Marcet was young and her mother, S. Alice Haldeman, who had assumed charge of the State Bank of Girard, was one of the few women bankers in Kansas.²⁶ Marcet began work at Bryn Mawr in 1905, but there is no record of her having graduated from there. In September, 1909, she entered the American Academy of Dramatic Arts and graduated on March 15, 1910.²⁷ For the next five years she was a stage actress using the name of Jean Marcet. A survey of clippings and play programs show appearances in St. Louis, New York, Louisville, Montreal, and Philadelphia, as well as many smaller cities. Although seldom playing a leading role, she managed to draw attention from some of the critics. The Gazette Montreal noted that she was particularly meritorious in "Broadway to Paris," a spectacular musical with a mixture of vaudeville, burlesque, and dancing.²⁸

When Alice Haldeman died in 1915, Marcet was called back to Girard to become vice-president of the State Bank where she had served ten years on the board of directors.²⁹ She took active interest in the rivalry then existing between

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Interview with Jane T. Townsend, February 20, 1956.

²⁷Dramatic News, March 26, 1910, page not given.

²⁸Gazette Montreal, May 27, 1913, page not given.

²⁹Topeka State Journal, April 18, 1916, page not given.

state and national banks and was elected treasurer of the State Bankers' Association in the spring of 1916.³⁰

After her return to Girard, she became interested in community improvement programs, thus showing some of the traits of her aunt, Jane Addams. She complained to officials that the eight-cell Crawford County jail had inadequate facilities for handling the number of prisoners then in custody. Marcet devoted her Sunday afternoons to reading to the prisoners.³¹ At Radley, a small town a few miles south-east of Girard and one of the many mining camps in Crawford County, Marcet bought a seven acre tract for use as a community center. It was to include a community house, a tennis court, a track, and a playground. Activities included reading, play production, games, and dancing. Baseball was to be played on Sunday afternoons,³² and rules stipulated that boys under eighteen were not to smoke.³³

On June 1, 1916, Marcet and Emanuel were married in Cedarville, Illinois. They were a rather small couple: Emanuel was five feet, six and one-half inches tall;³⁴ Marcet was "Five feet, little or no inches in height."³⁵ For a few

³⁰Kansas City Star, September 25, 1916, p. 12.

³¹Topeka Daily Capital, April 18, 1916, p. 12.

³²An activity frowned upon by most churches in the area.

³³Pittsburg Weekly Headlight, April 13, 1916.

³⁴Marcet Haldeman-Julius, "What the Editor's Wife is Thinking About," loc. cit.

³⁵Kansas City Star, September 25, 1916, p. 3.

months, the couple stayed in Girard, living on the second floor of the building that now houses the Girard National Bank.³⁶ For these few months Emanuel continued to write for the Appeal to Reason, which raised his wages from twenty-five to thirty dollars a week,³⁷ while Marcet continued to work in the bank. During the fall meeting of the State Bankers' Association she served as hostess.³⁸

Although Emanuel claims to have hyphenated his name to Haldeman-Julius immediately after his marriage as "a generous gesture acknowledging our full partnership,"³⁹ there is no evidence to indicate that this was done until the next year. He continued to sign his name as "Emanuel Julius" on articles in the Appeal to Reason: the Kansas City Star referred to Marcet as "Mrs. Emanuel Julius" during the fall meeting of the State Bankers' Association.⁴⁰

The marriage was certainly not a case of endogamy. Marcet's strong Presbyterian background was quite a contrast with Emanuel's atheistic background (Emanuel's parents were not strict atheists; "they just didn't seem to care a damn.").⁴¹ But it was evident that the future family beliefs would be determined by Emanuel; whether Marcet was sincere in

³⁶Interview with Jane T. Townsend, February 16, 1956.

³⁷E. Haldeman-Julius, My First 25 Years, p. 13.

³⁸Kansas City Star, September 25, 1916, p. 3.

³⁹Marcet Haldeman-Julius, "What the Editor's Wife is Thinking About," loc. cit.

⁴⁰Kansas City Star, September 25, 1916, p. 3.

⁴¹E. Haldeman-Julius, My First 25 Years, p. 15.

her atheism at the beginning of her marriage or whether she merely "went along" is problematical. However, it appears that her conversion was real, and during the 1920's and the 1930's she wrote a number of articles on atheism from the positive viewpoint.

Charles Finger considered Marcet the type of woman who was endowed with the "strange ability to bring sentiment under the control of reason."⁴² Marcet found Emanuel to be "a baffling bundle of contradictions" and a "mixture of inspired idealism and practical commercialism."⁴³ To Marcet fell the responsibility of entertaining strangers, as Haldeman-Julius would greet them cordially and absent-mindedly bring them over to Marcet or to Pete Kelley, his secretary, and disappear.⁴⁴

After a few months, the young couple went to Cedarville, Illinois, to live on a farm that had been willed to Marcet by her mother. While they were in Cedarville, their first child, Alice, was born.⁴⁵ Haldeman-Julius seemed to take pride in posing with baby Alice, and a number of the photographs appear at the beginning of My Second 25 Years.

Haldeman-Julius returned to Girard a few months after the birth of his daughter and resumed work with the paper as

⁴²Louis Adamic, "Voltaire from Kansas," loc. cit.

⁴³Marcet Haldeman-Julius, "What the Editor's Wife is Thinking About," loc. cit.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵E. Haldeman-Julius, My First 25 Years, p. 13.

the Washington correspondent. He discovered that the paper was steadily decreasing in circulation, and that there was considerable controversy among the Socialist Party members concerning their stand on World War I.⁴⁶ The Appeal was supporting the pacifist stand during 1917. Louis Kopelin and John Walker Gunn, both within the age limit of the conscription act, registered for the draft as conscientious objectors.⁴⁷ The Appeal to Reason found it ironic that America should turn militaristic in order to protect freedom; and it printed the following plaque immediately after America's entry into the war:

To Crush Prussian Militarism which consists of--
 Conscription
 Censorship of Free Press
 Restriction of Free Speech
 Restriction of Free Assemblage
 Industrial Compulsion
 Supremacy of Martial Law over Civil Government

The Republic of the United States is Adopting
 Conscription
 Censorship of Free Press
 Restriction of Free Speech
 Restriction of Free Assemblage
 Industrial Compulsion
 Supremacy of Martial Law over Civil Government⁴⁸

The attack on militarism continued in subsequent issues. On May 5, 1917, the Appeal suggested another type of conscription in an article entitled, "How about Conscription

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Appeal to Reason, June 16, 1917, p. 2.

⁴⁸Ibid., April 28, 1917, p. 1.

of Incomes?" in which the Appeal advocated the confiscation of all individual income in excess of five thousand dollars. It deplored the tax rate which permitted retention of seventy per cent of an income of one million dollars as an indication that President Wilson and Congress had listened to the Capitalists and not to the Appeal to Reason.⁴⁹ Two weeks later, the Appeal asked its readers to "Flood Congress with Protests Against the Conscription Measure."⁵⁰ All efforts failed and Congress passed the Selective Service Act on May 28.

While the editors of the Appeal were condemning the Selective Service system of the United States, they were also finding much that was favorable in the "Peace Formula" of the Bolsheviks in Russia. Louis Kopelin's editorial of July 7 praised the formula and noted that the world had faith in Revolutionary Russia. Capitalism, he said, was on the way out, and the end would be inevitable when soldiers started fighting for themselves instead of for capitalists.⁵¹ Future articles reaffirmed the Appeal's faith in the new Russian economic and political system.

The name of the militant newspaper was changed to the New Appeal beginning with the edition of December 22, 1917. The policies of the New Appeal were announced in the initial issue. It pledged itself to gradual increases in income

⁴⁹Ibid., May 5, 1917, p. 1.

⁵⁰Appeal to Reason, May 19, 1917, p. 1.

⁵¹Ibid., July 7, 1917, p. 1.

taxes, public ownership of mines, oil wells, and water power, collectivizing of idle land, and the protection of labor.⁵²

This represented no basic change from the policy of the Appeal to Reason. The anti-military attacks were absent from the paper, however, and the war did not receive a prominent place. Shortly after the change in name, Kopelin and Haldeman-Julius each bought one-third interest in the newspaper, with Wayland retaining the other third. On April 20, 1918, the New Appeal was issued under the auspices of the New Appeal Publishing Company with Walter H. Wayland as president, Louis Kopelin as vice-president and E. Haldeman-Julius as secretary-treasurer.⁵³

The Appeal's attitude toward the war, which had been faltering for some time, suddenly took an about-face when Louis Kopelin joined the Army. In his farewell editorial on June 1, 1918, he explained that he believed that the aims of the war, as expressed by President Wilson, especially Wilson's firm stand on non-annexation of territory, met his full approval; he could support the war as an American and a Socialist.⁵⁴ The war also found approval in the eyes of Carl Thompson, a writer for the New Appeal, and he stated that Socialists should support the Allies.⁵⁵ After his

⁵²New Appeal, December 22, 1917, p. 1.

⁵³Ibid., April 20, 1918, p. 1.

⁵⁴Ibid., June 1, 1918, p. 1.

⁵⁵Ibid., June 8, 1918, p. 1.

entrance into the Army, Kopelin served as secretary of the Appeal's Social Democratic League's Mission to Europe. He reported on activities from London on July 13, Paris on August 10, and from Rome on August 24.

Haldeman-Julius took charge of the New Appeal after Kopelin went into the Army. It appears that this newcomer from Philadelphia did not appreciate others who tried to direct the progress of the paper. Immediately after he had purchased an interest in the paper, he began to assume the leading role, and after Kopelin joined the Army he did not like for Wayland to come around, even if it were for no reason but curiosity.⁵⁶ Even Kopelin was slightly irritating to him; Haldeman-Julius felt that he needed no one to help him manage.⁵⁷ Future events proved the correctness of his thesis.

For the remainder of the war, the Appeal was friendly to the war effort. A headline in the October 19 edition entitled "Forward with the President" urged the Socialists to stay with the President and his no-expansion, non-military program. On the same page, however, was the reiteration that the Socialists were going to continue the fight against militarism and monopoly.⁵⁸ Although ostensibly favorable to the war, Haldeman-Julius could never support it

⁵⁶Interview with Walter H. Wayland, February 23, 1956.

⁵⁷Interview with Henry Haldeman, February 16, 1956.

⁵⁸New Appeal, October 19, 1918, p. 1.

personally; the change of attitude was an attempt to save the paper, which was on the way to doom, and did not represent a true conversion in the private mind of the young printer. He continued to feel that Socialism knew no national boundaries.⁵⁹ The move had been initiated by Louis Kopelin and Walter H. Wayland before Haldeman-Julius had risen to a position of prominence.

An indication of the true position of Haldeman-Julius was demonstrated immediately at the close of the war. In May, 1918, the Congress of the United States had passed the Sedition Act, which made criticisms of the government illegal. Among those arrested under the act were the Socialists Kate Richard O'Hare, Rose Pastor Stokes, and Eugene V. Debs. Debs, one of the top leaders of the Socialist Party, became a martyr in the eyes of the young editor. Haldeman-Julius wasted no time in launching an appeal for his release once the war was over. In the first New Appeal issued after the Armistice he pleaded with President Wilson to pardon these pacifists now that the trouble was over and there was no danger of their words influencing the people against their government. The President was going to be fair to the conquered Germans, why not to loyal American pacifists?⁶⁰ In an attempt to free these pacifists, the chief of whom was

⁵⁹Interview with Henry Haldeman, February 16, 1956.

⁶⁰New Appeal, November 16, 1918, p. 1.

Debs, he wrote a letter to the Justice Department. The Justice Department answered his letter on December 16, and stated that it was not going to recommend amnesty. The Department explained that these people were not "political prisoners" since they had not been imprisoned for their beliefs. The Act was not directed at individual beliefs, but instead was directed at those people who were guilty of direct interference in the conduct and prosecution of the war effort.⁶¹

This defeat called for more action; the New Appeal announced a special Amnesty edition for March 1, 1919, of which they wished to distribute 1,002,925 copies, one for each day that the pacifists had spent in prison. The theme of the special edition was cast at the top of the first page: "Shall Gene Debs Lie in Jail While the Plute and Profiteers Defy Public?" At the same time, the name of the newspaper reverted back to the Appeal to Reason.⁶²

The Appeal to Reason continued to campaign for Debs' release and supported him for President, when in 1920, he ran for President while in the Atlanta prison, the second man to campaign for President from prison. Since Debs himself was allowed to issue only one campaign bulletin a week,⁶³ the work had to be carried by people on the outside.

⁶¹Ibid., December 28, 1919, p. 1.

⁶²Appeal to Reason, March 1, 1919, p. 1.

⁶³Ginger, op. cit., p. 401.

If the Appeal was an important factor in this election, Ray Ginger and David Shannon have overlooked it. Debs was finally released by Presidential pardon on Christmas Day, 1921.⁶⁴

The Appeal was also interested in keeping the railroads in the hands of the government after World War I. It warned its readers to "get ready for a big fight."⁶⁵ Again the Appeal lacked the vigor for a big fight, and the crusade went generally unnoticed.

Generally, the Appeal lauded the Russian Revolution as the one true, successful movement of Socialism. The writers found that although foreign intervention had caused much unnecessary shedding of blood, the revolution was generally mild when compared to others. They deplored dictatorial methods used by the leaders, but were certain that the nation would become democratic when its gains had been consolidated.⁶⁶ Three years later the workers and farmers were urged to "Help Build up Soviet Russia." Russia had been fighting the greed and hypocrisy of "marauding capitalist nations" for five years and needed the support of those people who were interested in seeing the "glorious revolution" succeed.⁶⁷

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 413.

⁶⁵New Appeal, December 28, 1918, p. 1.

⁶⁶Ibid., January 18, 1919, p. 4.

⁶⁷Appeal to Reason, May 27, 1922, p. 1.

The personnel of the Appeal to Reason had the opportunity to smile when a letter was received which enclosed a clipping from the Duluth (Minnesota) News-Tribune announcing that Leon Trotsky, one of the Bolshevik leaders of the Russian Revolution, had written to the Appeal to Reason and asked for his old job. Originally, the staff of the Appeal had circulated this rumor hoping that the Pittsburg Sun would print a story of it. When this hoax was printed in the Sun it aroused the interest of other newspapers in the area, although only the Topeka Daily Capital actually printed it.⁶⁸

One day in January, 1919, Louis Kopelin and Emanuel Haldeman-Julius bought out Wayland's interest. They paid him \$25,000 cash (advanced by Marcet)⁶⁹ and had a year to pay an additional \$50,000. A successful sale of books enabled them to complete this financial transaction.⁷⁰ This arrangement lasted for two years; then Haldeman-Julius assumed major control.⁷¹ Thus in a matter of five years Haldeman-Julius had risen from a twenty-five dollar a week reporter to senior partner of the Appeal to Reason. However, his presses were no longer being used for the sole, or even

⁶⁸Ibid., March 8, 1919, p. 2. Also recalled by E. Haldeman-Julius in My Second 25 Years, pp. 63-64.

⁶⁹Marcet lent him a total of about thirty-five thousand dollars and later put up securities for his notes.

⁷⁰Haldeman-Julius, My First 25 Years, p. 13.

⁷¹Louis Kopelin's name was dropped from the Appeal to Reason in the January 21, 1921, edition.

the primary, purpose of spreading Socialism. Instead, he was rapidly becoming a shrewd merchant of pamphlets and the next few years were to establish him as the baron of small books and the voice of the Freethinkers.

CHAPTER III

THE LITTLE BLUE BOOKS

In January, 1919, Haldeman-Julius gave an order to one of his printers to set up two small books--Oscar Wilde's "Ballad of Reading Gaol"¹ and Omar Khayyam's "The Rubaiyat." These books were advertised in the March 1, 1919 issue for ten cents each. Haldeman-Julius proposed that his readers send in five dollars for fifty such books that would come off the press in the next few months and nearly five thousand responded. During the last half of 1919, he again asked that readers send in five dollars in advance for ten additional books, and again nearly five thousand responded. With the money thus obtained, he was able to pay the fifty thousand dollars due on the plant.²

The book idea soon took hold and the publisher was able to lower the price of his books by installing new machinery and doing extensive advertising. The first books were sold for fifty cents each, but by the beginning of 1920, they were advertised for twelve cents each.³

The first books were badly proofread, clumsily trimmed, and printed in an odd assortment of type faces and type

¹Also, "Ballad of Reading Jail."

²E. Haldiman-Julius, My First 25 Years, p. 13.

³Appeal to Reason, January 17, 1920, p. 3. This was the price for direct sale; the ten cent price was in effect only for those ordering in advance.

sizes; occasionally, the type varied from page to page in the same book. They showed "the usual sloppiness and incompetence of the radical press."⁴ Haldeman-Julius quickly filled the plant with modern equipment and was soon able to print 240,000 copies per day.⁵

A glance at the titles showed that Haldeman-Julius was invading a field almost forbidden by the ethics of the day. Perhaps this may best be explained by the fact that he was developing an anarchistic mind. As will be shown on later pages, he was not one who was concerned with morals, ethics, or laws, but instead was one who believed in strong individualism guided only by his own interpretation of right and wrong.⁶ With this inner conviction, he would feel no qualms about printing a deluge of matter about the subject of sex which he considered, "if not the most interesting, is not far from being the most important subject with which one can individually concern himself."⁷ It is not altogether unlikely that a more correct analysis might be obtained by transposing the words "interesting" and "important."

By 1922 Haldeman-Julius was able to commence selling his Little Blue Books for five cents each. By that time his list had risen to three hundred titles and were obviously on

⁴Adamic, "Voltaire from Kansas," loc. cit., p. 285.

⁵Haldeman-Julius, My First 25 Years, p. 14.

⁶Interview with Walter H. Wayland, February 23, 1956.

⁷Appeal to Reason, January 17, 1920, p. 3.

their way to success. He continued to work long and hard promoting their sale, and here he proved to be a shrewd mercantile genius. By 1926, his sales had climbed to the hundred million mark⁸ and had attracted much attention.

In The First Hundred Million, Haldeman-Julius presented a listing of the selling power of different categories of books. The three best categories were books on sex and love, books on how to be a success, and books on wit and humor. The books on sex were the best sellers among the Little Blue Books and those in this group had generally sold from 40,000 to 130,000 by 1928. Some of the titles were as follows:⁹ "What Every Married Woman Should Know," "What Every Young Man Should Know," "Woman's Sexual Life," "Man's Sexual Life," "The Art of Kissing," and "Catholicism and Sex."

The second category in rank of sales were those books which gave suggestions on how a person could be a success in life. This list included such titles as "Success Easier Than Failure," "Hints on Self-Improvement," "How to Improve Your Conversation," "How to Write Letters," "How to Psycho-Analyze Yourself," and "How to Write Movie Scenarios." It is exceedingly doubtful that many of these books were of any real benefit to the reader, but they proved to be very beneficial to the publisher, for by 1928 they were selling

⁸Trout, op.cit., p. 75.

⁹E. Haldeman-Julius, The First Hundred Million, pp. 17-23.

from 20,000 to 77,000 annually.¹⁰

On the list as the third best selling category were the books on humor, and included among the titles are "Popular Joke Book," "Best Jokes of 1926," "Best Jewish Jokes," "Best Negro Jokes," "Best Yankee Jokes," "Jokes About Doctors," "Jokes About Preachers," "Jokes About Lawyers," "Humor of Abraham Lincoln."¹¹

The favorite books on the list in the eyes of the publisher were the Classics and those books which portrayed Freethinking. Among the classics included were the works of Shakespeare, which sold 100,000 copies per year and the works of Ibsen which sold about 60,000 copies per year.¹² Popular Freethought titles included "Did Jesus Ever Live?", "Self-Contradiction of the Bible," "Forgery of the Old Testament," "The Myth of Resurrection," "The Age of Reason," "Paine's Revolt Against the Bible," and Luther Burbank's "Why I am an Infidel."¹³

The Little Blue Books were standardized at fifteen thousand words each, and Haldeman-Julius demanded that authors conform to this specification. These fifteen thousand words were printed on sixty-four pages, three and one-half inches

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 40-44.

¹¹Haldeman-Julius, The First Hundred Million, pp. 67-72.

¹²Ibid., pp. 98-99.

¹³Ibid., pp. 85-87.

by five inches.¹⁴ The type for these books was set up in chases containing 128 pages each, and it was advantageous to print the books in multiples of thirty-two.¹⁵

One of the big expenses of selling the Little Blue Books was their advertising. In order to sell these books, it was necessary that people be informed; the Appeal to Reason was the medium for the first advertising and the Haldeman-Julius Publications continued to be the chief source of advertising throughout his career. However, other publications carried many advertisements of the Little Blue Books. The results from these advertisements were carefully studied for effectiveness. Haldeman-Julius was happy if an advertisement would bring in orders equal to twice the amount paid for advertising. Thus one can see that the cost of advertising was around two or three cents per book. The returns from advertisements varied from one-half to ten times the cost, but generally the returns were approximately twice the amount paid for the ad.¹⁶

The editor of the Little Blue Books advertised extensively in large city newspapers but felt that advertising in a small city newspaper never paid.¹⁷

¹⁴Ibid., p. 202.

¹⁵Haldeman-Julius, My First 25 Years, p. 8.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Haldeman-Julius, The First Hundred Million, p. 275.

Shrewd merchant that he was, Haldeman-Julius discovered that labels sell better than merchandise. He felt that the reading public evidently liked the economic and sexual aspects of a book more than its actual contents.¹⁸ Thus, whenever a book was old enough that the copyright had expired, or whenever the copyright was held by Haldeman-Julius, and the book was not selling well, he would experiment with various titles, making changes at will. These changes generally were directed toward making the book appear erotic when placed among a list of titles. "The Life of Casanova" enjoyed an invigorated life when renamed "Casanova, History's Greatest Lover."¹⁹ "The Life of George Sand" became "The Love Life of A Frenchwoman." "A Book of Humorous Verse" was altered to "A Book of Comic Poems" and the results indicated that "comedy" sold better than "humor."²⁰

In 1923 the editor, ever attempting to push his sales to higher and higher goals, announced the Chain Book Store Plan. The Haldeman-Julius Weekly proudly announced that "without sensationalism, without blowing of trumpets, without over-emphasizing advertising campaigns, a new idea is taking hold. . . ." Despite the lack of "sensationalism," however, the plan was outlined under the large-type headline, "LITTLE BLUE BOOK SHOP IDEAS IS SWEEPING THE

¹⁸"That Which We Call A Rose," New Republic, LVII (January 9, 1929), 206.

¹⁹Haldeman-Julius, The First Hundred Million, p. 153.

²⁰Ibid.

COUNTRY."²¹ The plan was given in sketchy detail; the prospective proprietor would merely send the publisher a thousand dollars and receive in return 33,333 Little Blue Books. The whole plan was given in more detail in a later issue. Anyone interested in beginning a Little Blue Book Store would send in his thousand dollars and receive (1) a one year exclusive franchise in his city with a chance of renewal; (2) 33,333 Little Blue Books; (3) 5,000 imprinted circulars; (4) an advertisement in the Haldeman-Julius Weekly announcing the opening of the store; (5) a complete list of patrons in the city and (6) a guaranteed discount of forty per cent.²² Haldeman-Julius emphasized that the Little Blue Book Stores be located in areas having both day and night life.²³ After most of the large cities in the United States had been covered, he offered the Book Store plan for medium sized cities. This was basically the same as the plan for large cities except that a franchise would be obtained with an order for 16,666 books for five hundred dollars.²⁴ The medium-sized cities were generally those with populations between 50,000 and 500,000.

²¹Haldeman-Julius Weekly, October 20, 1923, p. 5.

²²Ibid., March 8, 1924, p. 3.

²³Ibid., May 17, 1924, p. 1.

²⁴Ibid.

In order to reach people in rural areas, the County Agent plan was formulated. For three hundred dollars anyone who wished could get a franchise in any county which boasted no city larger than 50,000. For his money the buyer would receive 6,600 Little Blue Books plus cartons, catalogues, circulars, covers, and subscription cards to the Haldeman-Julius Weekly, Life and Letters, and Know Thyself, all publications of the Haldeman-Julius Company.²⁵ That was always one stipulation to anyone who did business with E. Haldeman-Julius: he must pay in advance.

The publisher of the Little Blue Books had other methods of increasing his sales, and he would resort to the familiar as well as the new and varied sales techniques. Periodically, he would announce an advance in price, but until after World War II, the price remained at five cents. On April 28, 1923, there appeared a full page advertisement announcing the withdrawal of the five cent price on June 30.²⁶ As June 30 approached, he continued to warn his readers about the increase in price after that fatal date. June 30 came and went and on July 14 the Haldeman-Julius Weekly triumphantly proclaimed, "Good news; the price of the Pocket Series is to remain at 5¢."²⁷

²⁵Ibid., March 22, 1924, p. 1.

²⁶Ibid., April 28, 1923, p. 5.

²⁷Haldeman-Julius Weekly, July 14, 1923, p. 4.

In 1925, the Company "reluctantly" announced that though sixty million of the Little Blue Books had been sold for the low price of five cents, increased manufacturing costs were forcing the publisher to raise the price to ten cents effective February 25, 1925.²⁸ There was silence on the Little Blue Books for over two months after this ominous day, but on May 6, the publisher conceded to "allow 5¢ price in order to introduce these new Little Blue Books,"²⁹

The authors of the Little Blue Books included many of history's great personages of the past and many well-known and unknown writers of the present. Authors included Tolstoy, Spinoza, Herbert Spencer, William Shakespeare, Henrik Ibsen, Jack London, Rudyard Kipling, Guy de Maupassant, Henry James, and Thomas Hardy. In addition, he bought manuscripts directly from individuals who were writing specifically for the Haldeman-Julius Publications. Some of these persons became associates of the editor, but there were, of course, many that never met him in person.

There is considerable disagreement among various writers concerning Haldeman-Julius's business relations with his authors. There were many of his authors who were dissatisfied with the payment received for manuscripts. Some of this was no doubt due to misunderstanding. Authorship seldom pays the

²⁸Ibid., January 24, 1925, p. 1.

²⁹Ibid., May 9, 1925, p. 1.

individual enough to compensate for the time spent, and many people do not know this. There were numbers of people who took an opposite view of the payment question. When faced with a returned manuscript, they would offer to give it away in order to see their work in print. To many people this was sufficient reward.³⁰

Haldeman-Julius does not mention the amount paid for manuscripts. Louis Adamic, however, stirred some of the friends of the editor in an article in Outlook. He charged that Haldeman-Julius often paid as little as ten dollars for a manuscript. He stated that he personally knew a California writer who had written twenty of the Little Blue Books. For some of these he had received fifty dollars each and for others "nothing in cash."³¹ Haldeman-Julius, he asserted, took advantage of inexperienced writers who did not understand the financial side of authorship; only such people as McCabe and Darrow were a match for him.³² Since Adamic was a former writer for the Haldeman-Julius Company, there were some who felt that he was merely expressing a grudge that he held against the publisher. However, a later article by Peter Wyden in the Liberty magazine stated that Haldeman-Julius paid the lesser authors one hundred dollars for their

³⁰Interview with Henry Haldeman, February 16, 1956.

³¹Adamic, "Voltaire from Kansas," loc. cit., p. 316.

³²Ibid.

manuscripts.³³ From this evidence, it is obvious that the price paid was not tremendous.

However, an analysis of book sales would indicate that the publisher could not afford to pay more than a hundred dollars at most for a manuscript. A book that sold ten thousand copies grossed only about five hundred dollars to the publisher. Since about half of this was spent on advertising and another hundred dollars was spent on printing, this left a rather small sum to be applied to paying authors. The publisher also took all the risks himself; he preferred to buy the manuscripts outright.³⁴

The most popular author of the Little Blue Books, judging from the number of sales, was William J. Fielding, whose principal occupation was with Tiffany's in New York. Most of his books were written from 1924 to 1926; all were on the subject of sex with the exception of a book on Free-thought.³⁵ There is no indication that Fielding had any medical training; the writing of books seemed to be merely an avocation. However, his books sold, and by 1949, their sales totaled nearly four and a half million.³⁶

³³Peter Wyden, "Book Baron," Liberty, XXV (November, 1948), 20.

³⁴Haldeman-Julius, My Second 25 Years, p. 96.

³⁵Ibid., p. 86.

³⁶Ibid., p. 89.

The most prolific writer for the company was Joseph McCabe, who wrote 121 of the Little Blue Books in addition to many larger books, and countless articles in periodicals.³⁷ McCabe spent twelve years in a monastery, and after withdrawing he quit the Catholic Church and wrote long and vicious articles against that institution. McCabe's total volume of material exceeded seven million words. Despite the tremendous volume of his material, Haldeman-Julius claimed that all of his work was scholarly, although there is not a single instance in which he resorted to footnotes. McCabe received more than a hundred thousand dollars for his manuscripts.³⁸

While it was a standing joke around the office of the publishing plant that the books written by the editor would not sell, Haldeman-Julius claims a sale of over one and a quarter million copies of those books which he wrote himself. His Little Blue Books, of which he personally wrote fifty-three, covered basically the same subjects as were selected for his newspaper editorials and included liberalism, atheism, debunking, and a few books on history.³⁹

Other authors included Upton Sinclair who wrote on Socialism, Isaac Goldberg, an atheist and a socialist, H. G.

³⁷Ibid., p. 96.

³⁸Haldeman-Julius, My Second 25 Years, pp. 96-97.

³⁹Ibid., p. 102.

Wells, Bertrand Russell, Will Durant, Clarence Darrow, Havelock Ellis, and others.⁴⁰

But Haldeman-Julius was also a shrewd business man. Without sales he knew that he could not afford to stay in the publishing business. At first he sold those titles which he thought were good. In 1925 he weeded out all those which sold less than ten thousand a year.⁴¹ He was not interested in a book that did not sell, no matter what the content. However, he would change the title if he thought the book had potentiality. He also sold many books which he did not particularly like in order to provide a financial cushion for books about which he was enthusiastic. This is a common practice among publishers; a publisher can seldom publish only those books which suit his own taste.⁴²

There are a number of reasons for the success of the Little Blue Book venture. Perhaps the most important reasons were those of advertising and accessibility. The publisher made the books available in street corners and tiny stores near the stream of traffic.⁴³ He bought advertising space in many of the large city newspapers and in the larger magazines, and constantly kept his wares in front of the public.

⁴⁰Fielding, "Prince of the Pamphleteers," loc. cit., p. 452.

⁴¹Adamic, "Voltaire from Kansas," loc. cit., p. 285.

⁴²Interview with Henry Haldeman, February 16, 1956.

⁴³Willard, "Bringing the Light to Main Street, loc. cit., p. 62.

Another factor that cannot be forgotten is the low price. He thought that it might be possible to sell books to everyone by lowering costs of publication--"books that they would want and which they could choose for the sake of the books alone."⁴⁴ The cheapness of the books prompted their sale, for by investing a dollar, a customer would receive twenty books of fifteen thousand words each, or a total of three hundred thousand words of reading material. This could be matched in no other place in the publishing industry with the exception of newspapers.

The changing of titles was also a reason for their increase in sales volume. The New Republic defended the publisher for this action. It admitted that Haldeman-Julius may have sold goods under false pretenses, but by so labeling these books the public bought better merchandise than they would have done otherwise. One advantage of this title-changing was that people such as Plato, Voltaire, and Tolstoy were read; the reader discovered that he was reading good literature instead of the erotic trash which he ordered. In addition the New Republic reminded its readers that if Haldeman-Julius "invents a title for a book which makes the public read it, perhaps he has, better than anyone else, described the book."⁴⁵

⁴⁴Adamic, "Voltaire from Kansas," loc. cit., p. 284.

⁴⁵"That Which We Call a Rose," loc. cit., p. 207.

Of course, it cannot be denied that some of the books in the series were of an erotic nature and were bought by people who had no taste at all for literature or culture and received neither from reading these books. However, in spite of the reputation for this type of literature which he received, a survey of titles indicates that only about ten per cent of the Little Blue Books belonged in this category, "which goes to prove that I have my mind on other things besides sex."⁴⁶ However, Haldeman-Julius personally believed that he was a pioneer in the field of sex publications and that he had paved the way for such books as the Kinsey Report to be met with general acceptance.⁴⁷

Haldeman-Julius felt that his books were bought for only one reason--to be read. People would not buy the unimpressive little pamphlets for Christmas gifts or to match the parlor furniture.⁴⁸ Because of the low price of the books, it is indeed possible that the purchases of these books might represent the true reading tastes of the American people. Early in 1930, the Mercure de France published a long treatise on his success as a mirror of the American people's reading tastes, national culture, and mob aspirations. Adamic claimed that several European writers had expressed interest

⁴⁶Haldeman-Julius, My Second 25 Years, p. 86.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Haldeman-Julius, The First Hundred Million, p. 3.

in him, though he did not mention them by name.⁴⁹ However, a survey of the purchases of the Haldeman-Julius Company may not be as accurate as is claimed. Haldeman-Julius admits being "hounded" by the Legion of Decency⁵⁰ and this may promote a distaste for him among the Catholic populace. Also, many other persons are missing from his lists and no polls were taken in regard to their taste in literature. The evidence on this point is not conclusive.

The Little Blue Books reached their zenith in the third decade of the twentieth century. Between 1919 and 1930, over 150,000,000 books were sold.⁵¹ The total at the time of his death in 1951 was reported by Time as "more than 300,000,000 copies."⁵² This indicates a dwindling interest in the Little Blue Books of the later years. Some of this is due, no doubt, to the tremendous volume of pocket, paper-bound books being offered by many other publishing companies. Certainly, his hope of selling a billion copies between 1930 and 1940 never materialized.⁵³

Despite the fact that the Company could print these books for about a cent each, the profit from each book amounted to only about two-tenths of a cent. Considering

⁴⁹Adamic, "Voltaire from Kansas," loc. cit., p. 283.

⁵⁰Haldeman-Julius, My First 25 Years, p. 10.

⁵¹Adamic, "Voltaire from Kansas," loc. cit., p. 283.

⁵²Time, LVIII (August 13, 1951), 87.

⁵³Adamic, "Voltaire from Kansas," loc. cit., p. 283.

an annual sale of ten million books, this gave the Company only around twenty thousand dollars profit from the Little Blue Book enterprise.⁵⁴ However, it was somewhat difficult to know just exactly how much money Haldeman-Julius realized from any of his ventures. His bookkeeping was not very accurate, and consequently the books did not give full information on receipts and expenditures.⁵⁵

In 1925 the Company began to sell the Big Blue Books. These were larger books from fifty to sixty thousand words each. By 1949, the Company had printed over seven hundred titles of the larger series, of which Joseph McCabe had written 122. By then many of the larger books were selling from twenty-five cents to a dollar each.⁵⁶ The subject matter in the Big Blue Books was much the same as that in the smaller ones, but the extra length gave the author space for fuller treatment of his subject.

⁵⁴"First 300 Million Little Blue Books," Time, LVI (August 8, 1949), 46.

⁵⁵Interview with Henry Haldeman, February 16, 1956.

⁵⁶Haldeman-Julius, My Second 25 Years, p. 96.

CHAPTER IV

SERVING THE CAUSE THROUGH PERIODICALS

On November 6, 1922, the last issue of the Appeal to Reason went to press. Socialism was becoming an unpopular issue, and the day was over when it was financially profitable to wave the Red Flag.¹ Recognizing this, the Girard publisher began to print the Haldeman-Julius weekly, a paper devoted to individualism and designed "to educate rather than agitate."² The change in name also meant a change in emphasis from Socialism to atheism. If there was one thing consistent about the mind of Haldeman-Julius, it was his firm stand on militant atheism. Never did he depart from it, and never did he doubt the value of Freethinking to society of mankind. Only through atheism could true tolerance develop.³

The first edition of the Haldeman-Julius weekly was sent to former subscribers of the Appeal to Reason, but many of them did not find the new paper to their taste,⁴ and consequently the editor was forced to create a new reading public, ideally one composed of intellectual atheists. During the first two years of its existence, the editorials

¹David A. Shannon, The Socialist Party of America, p. 122.

²Trout, op. cit., p. 71.

³Interview with Henry Haldeman, February 16, 1956.

⁴George Milburn, "The Appeal to Reason," American Mercury, XXIII (July, 1931), 371.

were devoted principally to discussions of the classics in literature. The paper ran in serialized form some of the newer books, especially those with some connection with Free-thought. The paper also served as a vehicle for advertising the Little Blue Books. In 1924 the editor began to expound Freethinking in earnest. The pages of the Weekly began to carry advertisements for a new publication, the Haldeman-Julius Monthly. This magazine was advertised as a "Smasher of Shams." Those shams included religion, race prejudice, censorship and politics.⁵ The editor felt that the United States needed a voice to fight against religion, racial intolerance, and those people who hindered the work of scientists. He advocated the new monthly as that vehicle of communication.⁶ This magazine was to contain sixty-four pages which measured five-and-a-half inches by eight inches. Typical of the system of cash in advance, the new monthly was to be published only upon receipt of five thousand advance subscriptions of a dollar and fifty cents each.⁷

The Scopes trial in Dayton, Tennessee during the summer of 1925 attracted considerable attention in the Haldeman-Julius publications. John L. Scopes, a young biology teacher in Dayton, was being tried on the charge of teaching evolution in the public schools. The results of this trial would

⁵Haldeman-Julius Weekly, October 4, 1924, p. 4.

⁶Ibid., September 13, 1924, p. 4.

⁷Ibid., p. 1.

determine the legality of teaching the evolutionary concept of man in the Tennessee schools. The attorney for the state was William Jennings Bryan, three times candidate for President of the United States. Defending Scopes was a noted agnostic lawyer, Clarence Darrow, a friend of Haldeman-Julius and author of a number of pieces of work for the Girard publisher.

Haldeman-Julius looked upon this trial as the case of "superstition vs. science."⁸ Bryan was exceedingly irksome to the editor. He had heard a number of his speeches while still in his teens, and the impression received had not been favorable. Now Bryan was fighting again the teachings of a scientific principle and "would make the world safe for superstition."⁹ The nature of the trial intensified his attacks upon religion and the Bible. Not that this was his first attack upon those institutions; earlier in 1925, he had referred to Christianity as "spookdom"; such leaders as Luther and Joan of Arc were led by "spooks."¹⁰ But now those attacks came more frequently. For Scopes, Haldeman-Julius had only sympathy for he "realized" that the young teacher was being "lynched before a crowd of fanatics." Denying the right to teach subjects which were contrary to the book of Genesis elevated Christianity to the position of

⁸Haldeman-Julius Weekly, May 30, 1925, p. 3.

⁹Ibid., June 6, 1925, p. 1.

¹⁰Ibid., January 17, 1925, p. 1.

a state religion.¹¹ There was no liberty in a school system which defended the Bible or forced the students to learn Biblical material against their will.¹² Especially is this true when one considered that the Bible had done more harm to mankind than "all other vicious books combined."¹³

The death of Bryan immediately after the trial did not soften the punch of the Haldeman-Julius Weekly. Haldeman-Julius found it ironic that Bryan, a pacifist, should be buried with full military honors in a military cemetery as a "Colonel of the Infantry."¹⁴ Sometime later Bryan's name again crept into a Haldeman-Julius publication as the "noblest nut", who would lean on God and cry, "I see the angels." The editor found him defending ignorance and holding the view that "when men were less informed, they were more inspired."¹⁵ It is of interest that Clarence Darrow told the press immediately after Bryan's death that his opponent in the Scopes trial was a menace to civilization.¹⁶

During the Scopes trial, Haldeman-Julius made an attempt to consolidate the Freethinkers of America into a

¹¹Ibid., July 25, 1925, p. 1.

¹²Ibid., August 29, 1925, p. 1.

¹³Ibid., July 25, 1925, p. 4.

¹⁴Haldeman-Julius Weekly, August 8, 1925, p. 1.

¹⁵Haldeman-Julius, My Second 25 Years, p. 27.

¹⁶Haldeman-Julius, The Bunk Box, pp. 41-42.

Freethinkers' League with headquarters in Girard. The League would be dedicated to art, culture, literature, free thought, honesty, and sincerity.¹⁷ The Freethinkers had been out of reach and apathetic to the attack upon the principles to which they were dedicated, and now they were definitely on the defensive.¹⁸

In 1926, the Haldeman-Julius Quarterly, a large magazine of one hundred and twenty-eight pages, began publication. This magazine was similar in nature to Life and Letters and was written for an intellectual reading audience. The price of the Quarterly was seventy-five cents an issue which was a fantastic price for any magazine at that time. In October, 1928, the Debunker, a magazine devoted to atheism, replaced the monthly. The principal contributor to this magazine was Joseph McCabe, the pet author of E. Haldeman-Julius. The editor gives circulation figures for the Quarterly at 18,000 and for the Monthly at 50,000.¹⁹ Like most of his publications, these magazines were useful in telling the world about the Little Blue Books.

On April 13, 1929, the first copy of the American Freeman rolled off the presses. With the American Freeman, Haldeman-Julius re-entered the field of politics, a field

¹⁷Haldeman-Julius Weekly, July 4, 1925, p. 1.

¹⁸Ibid., July 25, 1925, p. 1.

¹⁹Haldeman-Julius, The First Hundred Million, p. 284.

he had generally neglected in the Haldeman-Julius Weekly, but he still stressed the importance of atheism in the formation of a truly liberal society. The American Freeman was outlined as a "journal of liberal and progressive opinion."²⁰ Contributing editors to the new weekly newspaper included McCabe, Lloyd E. Smith, Harry Elmer Barnes, and Isaac Goldberg. Although many of these writers and editors were scholars of some rank, they wrote articles for a reasonable price, since the American Freeman offered an outlet for their expression.²¹

The American Freeman was published as a weekly until June, 1933. The paper was printed every Saturday and sold for one dollar per year or five cents a copy. In 1933, it became first a bi-weekly, then a monthly, the subscription price remaining at a dollar per year.

In January, 1933, the Girard company published the first issue of the Militant Atheist, a newspaper devoted entirely to atheism and dedicated to fight religion, churches and theology--"the last word in Freethought literature." Each issue was to contain about twenty thousand words, all articles were to be brief, language was to be readable, and there were to be no commercial advertisements. The paper was to be published monthly and subscriptions would sell for

²⁰American Freeman, December 7, 1929, p. 1.

²¹Interview with Henry Haldeman, February 16, 1956.

a dollar and fifty cents per year.²² But this paper with the somewhat vicious-sounding title lasted for only nine months. Haldeman-Julius could not induce the editors of other magazines to carry advertisements, and thus the Militant Atheist did not enjoy a very large circulation. Only the Nation, a liberal magazine, carried the advertisement at all, and it was deluged with complaints by irate religious readers.²³ Thus, with his back against the wall, the editor announced that he had combined the Militant Atheist with the American Freeman as of October, 1933, and the subscriptions to the Militant Atheist were applied to the American Freeman.

Although the American Freeman was openly atheistic, occasionally religious articles got into print. One of these articles was written by Professor Arthur S. Eddington, a Cambridge University scientist and was entitled, "Why I Believe in God." An analysis of this article would indicate that it was less distasteful to the editor than an article written by a clergyman, since Eddington rejected the idea of creeds, believing them to be an obstacle to religion.²⁴ Another article published was "Can We Follow Jesus Today?" and was answered "yes."²⁵

²²American Freeman, January 1, 1933, p. 1.

²³Ibid., October, 1933, p. 1.

²⁴American Freeman, July 6, 1929, p. 1.

²⁵Ibid., July 27, 1929, p. 1.

But generally the editor and his writers were warning the readers of the pitfalls of religious faith. The simple faith of former years, so admired by Ralph Henry Gabriel, became a faith of ignorance and superstition in the pen of Haldeman-Julius.²⁶ The American Freeman denied that Christ had shed any divine light or had done anything for modern culture. The fact that Christianity was pictured as being contrary to all principles of civilized people,²⁷ was a reason for the lack of interest by the "peasantry."²⁸

Although denouncing all types of Christianity, the American Freeman packed extra fury into its attack when it invaded the subject of Catholicism. Haldeman-Julius accused the Catholics of believing in the right to kill heretics; (the Catholics were slaves without souls of their own.)²⁹ He had no patience with those Americans who bemoaned the persecution of religion by the Communists in Russia, yet tried to force habits upon their own people in America.³⁰ For the Papal denunciation of the Communist persecutions, he had only the deepest contempt. "We can think of no greater hypocrisy than the denunciation by the Pope of the

²⁶Ibid., November 16, 1929, p. 1.

²⁷Ibid., January 11, 1930, p. 1.

²⁸Ibid., March 15, 1930, p. 1.

²⁹Ibid., January 4, 1930, p. 1.

³⁰American Freeman, March 15, 1930, p. 1.

Russian attack on religion."³¹ He goes on to say that the Russian persecution of Christians was unnecessarily cruel, it was certainly no more cruel than the anti-Catholic persecutions which were carried out under Papal decree. In a later pointed paragraph, Haldeman-Julius charged the Catholic Church with being the enemy of modern civilization as it had been of ancient civilizations.³²

Haldeman-Julius hoped to see a world which had no dividing boundaries to separate the various peoples into opposing camps. Patriotism was unreasonable; if a person were a loyal American, he could not admire a patriot of another country since their ideals were often in conflict with each other. Patriotism led to war, which is an outrage on mankind. Neither could nationalism and cultural unity bring about virtue, since the concept of patriotism was superficial. A person should consider himself a citizen of the world in order that he may be truly virtuous.³³

The American Freeman attacked the American penal systems in 1929 as being outrageous remains of an ignorant age. E. Haldeman-Julius declared himself against capital punishment, giving four reasons for its abolition: (1) "Single murder is turned by the state into double murder;" (2) capital punishment keeps the public thirst for blood

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid., January, 1940, p. 1.

³³Ibid., November 23, 1929, p. 1.

in condition; (3) the death of one person does not bring life to the murdered person; (4) solitary murderers are not dangerous to the nation at large.³⁴ Two months later the publication carried an article by Harry Elmer Barnes on the "Menace of Modern Prisons."³⁵ Barnes, a professor of the history of thought and culture, had made a study of penology, and later published a book entitled History of Penology.³⁶

The American Freeman also found time to condemn the Prohibitionists in Kansas, asserting that Kansas was filled with both liquor and "hypocritical politicians."³⁷

When Fred Warren returned to Girard in 1931, he was invited by Haldeman-Julius to resurrect the Appeal to Reason. Mr. Warren hoped to secure enough pledges for subscriptions to justify publication. Unsuccessful in this attempt, Warren began to edit the last page of the American Freeman, which was known as "Warren's Page." The page contained mostly a history of Kansas Socialism and reprints of some of the better works of Socialist leaders. He continued in this position through 1932 and the early part of 1933, when he resigned to publish Warren's Newspaper, which lasted through only four editions.³⁸ Warren resigned from the American

³⁴American Freeman, September 7, 1929, p. 1.

³⁵Ibid., November 16, 1929, p. 2.

³⁶Who's Who in America, 1952-1953, p. 134.

³⁷American Freeman, February 15, 1930, p. 1.

³⁸Trout, op. cit., pp. 72-73.

Freeman because he doubted the sincerity of Haldeman-Julius in the real intent of the movement.³⁹ While Warren looked upon Haldeman-Julius as a sensational merchant, the editor of the American Freeman considered Warren as a "run-of-the-mine writer" and a "student of feeble caliber."⁴⁰ There seemed to be a clash of personality; Warren was an affable person, happy to make new acquaintances, while Haldeman-Julius was willing to be alone with his thoughts and had few intimate friends.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the Socialists had claimed that capitalism lay at the root of most of the country's evils. The depression of 1929 gave the people a chance to wonder whether capitalism could hold the economy of the nation together, and the Socialists began to increase in numbers, and the elections of 1930 indicated mild successes for Socialism.⁴¹ The American Freeman entered the Socialist drive in real earnest, though the circulation was not large enough to receive mention in works on Socialism. In 1930 Haldeman-Julius blamed the current unemployment on "lack of social vision," and suggested a program of information collection, maintenance of public employment bureaus, and a program of public works--⁴²shades of New Dealism. Haldeman-

³⁹Interview with Fred D. Warren, November 17, 1955.

⁴⁰Haldeman-Julius, My Second 25 Years, p. 60.

⁴¹Shannon, op. cit., pp. 204-5.

⁴²American Freeman, April 5, 1930, p. 1.

Julius saw as one of the difficulties facing Socialists the reluctance of many occupations to classify themselves with labor; some of these fringe occupations included teachers and white-collar workers. The refusal of these persons to align with and identify themselves with labor had resulted in the word's losing its sting and its drawing power.⁴³

During 1931 and 1932, the American Freeman concentrated its attack on President Herbert Hoover. The Freeman charged that the Chinese Engineering and Mining Company and Bewick, Moreing, and Company had participated in graft more seriously was charged with the transporting of Chinese coolies to South Africa to work in the Johannesburg mines for a wage of twenty-five cents per week in conditions that killed seventy out of a thousand each year. During 1905-6, this company allegedly moved sixty thousand of the Chinese nationals into the South African gold fields where over a thousand died.⁴⁴ On January 3, 1931, the first of the Hoover specials known as the Hoover Scandal edition was issued as the Freeman began its bold attack upon the President of the United States. On December 26 of the same year, the Hoover Racketeer Edition told how Hoover had tricked the Chinese into signing for the South African venture.⁴⁵ Joseph McCabe wrote the blistering article covering parts of three pages and told how Hoover rounded up the "slaves" for which he

⁴³American Freeman, October, 1933, p. 1.

⁴⁴Ibid., February 27, 1932, p. 1.

⁴⁵Ibid., December 26, 1931, p. 1.

received ten dollars for procuring and twenty-five dollars for shipping.⁴⁶ On February 27, 1932, McCabe in another article in the Slave Trade edition expanded his biting remarks of the other two articles.⁴⁷ In July, 1931, the Freeman asked Hoover to explain to the American people his phony mine stock; why he should be President of the United States when he had lived and registered as an Englishman for twenty years; why he sold food allotted for relief to the starving Belgians; why he returned in 1917 to America as an agent of the Sugar Trust; why he fixed the price of wheat at a level which was advantageous to the millers instead of the farmers; and finally he was asked to explain his shady political career.⁴⁸

These vicious attacks on the President of the United States brought severe criticism from the Post Office Department. On March 5, 1932, the Freeman announced that it had received warning that unless it stopped telling the "truth," the paper would be barred from the mails.⁴⁹ This threat was followed by banning the Hoover editions from the mails, and the Freeman was told that no copies could be sent through the mails except those that were sold on the week of publication.⁵⁰

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷American Freeman, February 27, 1932, p. 1.

⁴⁸Ibid., July 19, 1931, p. 1.

⁴⁹Ibid., March 5, 1932, p. 1.

⁵⁰Ibid., April 2, 1932, p. 1.

The Freeman ran into more difficulty with the post office when the "Freeman Army" column was forced out of the paper. This column told of those people who were working for the Socialist cause.⁵¹ The June 25 issue complained that this was tyranny, and the copies of this issue were confiscated. Later the July 15 issue was declared unmailable and the August 1 copy was held up. However, no one on the Freeman was prosecuted and the paper at no time retracted any statements that it had made against Hoover.⁵²

During 1932 the Socialists saw their chance to improve their position in the political structure. The American Freeman made a strong bid to elect Norman Thomas President. Their objections to President Hoover were well known. For Governor Roosevelt (whom the editor was later to favor) the periodical showed contempt. Hoover and Roosevelt were the "twin tools of capitalism."⁵³ Roosevelt was definitely a capitalist as evidenced by his immense wealth. Both Roosevelt and Hoover were thieves. Hoover's crooked mining stocks had already been made public to the readers of the American Freeman. The United European Investors, Ltd., of which Roosevelt at one time was president and which was active after World War I, was so crooked that Roosevelt dared not incorporate it in the United States and left its

⁵¹Ibid., June 25, 1932, p. 1.

⁵²American Freeman, October 1, 1932, p. 1.

⁵³Ibid.

exploits to Canadian neighbors.⁵⁴

The strong interest in Socialism during this period was due, no doubt, in part, to the appearance of Fred Warren on the editorship of the paper. Socialism had the life and breath of the former editor of the Appeal to Reason, and he perhaps saw the opportunity to build another newspaper of the scope of the old Appeal.

The Hoover editions aided the circulation of the American Freeman. From 30,000 in early 1931, the circulation grew to a peak of 55,000 by October 1, 1932. The decline was rapid as interest fell. By December 15 of the same year, the circulation had fallen to 36,000. The attempt to bring the American Freeman to the forefront by sensational news had failed. This same type of sensationalism had often increased the circulation of the Appeal to Reason by several hundred thousand in an earlier era. The 55,000 circulation of the American Freeman looked pathetic when compared to the millions of copies sold of special editions of the former leader of Socialistic periodicals.

The New Deal took much of the edge away from the Socialist movement, since it offered the people many of the peripheral benefits of Socialism. A comparison of the 1932 and 1936 elections indicates a loss of over three-fourths of the Socialist vote.⁵⁵ The loss of Socialist votes was clear

⁵⁴Ibid., October 15, 1932, p. 1.

⁵⁵Shannon, op. cit., p. 247.

to the devout Socialist: it was Roosevelt.⁵⁶

Haldeman-Julius found much in favor of the New Deal program, since it was much like the program which was composed by himself. Generally he voted the Democratic ticket--if not for reasons of approving the Democratic program, then for reasons of hindering the Republican cause. A vote for the Socialist party candidate was obviously a lost ballot, since the Socialists could not hope to receive a substantial per cent of the total vote.⁵⁷

During World War II, Haldeman-Julius was probably reconciled to New Deal capitalism, though he refused to let this show in his writings and he remained a talking Socialist.⁵⁸ In 1943, he expressed hope that the world would go Socialistic at the conclusion of the war. Free enterprise was merely another way of saying, "rampant capitalism." But Socialism could never be successful in a world that was nationalistic and patriotic. Before it could be of any real benefit, it must be made available to the entire world. With the advent of world Socialism, political democracy could be fused with industrial democracy.⁵⁹

Whereas the publisher had been opposed to the entry of the United States into World War I, he did not condemn our entering World War II. The First World War at no time

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 248.

⁵⁷Interview with Henry Haldeman, February 16, 1956.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹American Freeman, March 1943, p. 1.

threatened our safety, and it was therefore unnecessary to take part in this struggle; during World War II, America's entry was necessary to maintain the status quo.⁶⁰ His newspaper gave whole-hearted support to the War and urged his readers to buy War Bonds. The American Freeman was strongly anti-Fascist and called on the people not to imitate the Nazis and continue to persecute our minority peoples.⁶¹

The editor could not bring himself to favor the Korean War a few years later. This was a civil war, he maintained, and the United States had no reason to interfere in the internal affairs of other nations. He maintained that the argument for uniting the two Koreas into a single nation broke down if one considered that if the United Nations had allowed the North Koreans to take over the southern part of the country, this would have amounted to union.⁶² This was rather naive reasoning for an intelligent man.

Intermittently throughout the life of the American Freeman, the Russian system of economics and philosophy was praised. A special edition featured the advance made in Russia. The editor thought that the United States could learn much from the Russian economic system; if not from their political system, then from their economic system.⁶³ The United States talked of "forced labor" in Russia to

⁶⁰Interview with Henry Haldeman, February 16, 1956.

⁶¹American Freeman, August, 1943, p. 1.

⁶²Critic and Guide, IV (December, 1950), 75.

⁶³American Freeman, June 27, 1931, p. 2.

cover up for "forced unemployment" at home.⁶⁴ Marcet Haldeman-Julius toured Russia in 1932 writing regular reports which were published in the American Freeman. In 1950, Haldeman-Julius praised the Russians for "turning from religion and embracing atheism." He had hope that the Communists in China might further this movement.⁶⁵ Haldeman-Julius found it to be a weakness of modern Socialists that they should spend most of their time baiting the Russians.⁶⁶

In general, the American Freeman was not an influential organ in the Socialist movement. The circulation was generally around 30,000, not an impressive figure. The fact that the circulation was scattered throughout the United States prevented it from having a strong localized influence. One of the indications of its lack of importance was its conversion in 1933 from a weekly to a monthly sheet. As late as 1949, the editor expressed the hope that some day he would be able to sell a newspaper as well as he sold books,⁶⁷ but the American Freeman remained a pale echo of the Appeal to Reason during the remaining two years of its life.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 4.

⁶⁵American Freeman, January, 1950, p. 1.

⁶⁶Haldeman-Julius, My Second 25 Years, p. 67.

⁶⁷Haldeman-Julius, My Second 25 Years, p. 60.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In 1948, burglars stole \$40,000 from the office of the Haldeman-Julius Publications. This theft led to investigations of the company's earnings. As has been said, it was difficult to establish a definite income for the company because of erratic bookkeeping. However, in Federal Court in Fort Scott, the publisher was given a sentence of six months in a federal penitentiary, and he received a fine of \$12,500. The internal revenue inspectors claimed that during 1945 Haldeman-Julius had an income of \$66,412 and reported on \$10,400, and during 1947, his income was \$27,288 against a reported income of \$7,800.¹

Haldeman-Julius appealed this sentence and while waiting for an answer, drowned in his swimming pool at his house east of Girard and just off Highway 57. He was found by his wife² about seven-thirty on the evening of July 31, 1951, sixty-two years and one day after his birth in Philadelphia. Although he had been under treatment for a year and a half for a heart condition, county coroner Dr. W. G. Rinehart pronounced death by drowning and noted that his lungs were filled with water.³

¹Pittsburg Sun, August 1, 1951, p. 10.

²Marcet Haldeman-Julius had died in 1941. In 1942, Haldeman-Julius had married Susan Haney, his secretary.

³Pittsburg Sun, August 1951, p. 1.

The atheistic beliefs of Haldeman-Julius forbade a traditional funeral with a minister presiding. A sermon offering assurance of a better life beyond and giving solace to those who remained would have sounded strange to the ears of a man who had advised his readers to face death in the same manner that they would face any other disappointment: by calm reasoning and realization of facts rather than resorting to irrational myths of immortality.⁴ The principal speaker at the funeral was Clay Fulks, a hill-country teacher, living at this time in Neosho, Missouri.⁵ Fulks had written a number of short pieces for Haldeman-Julius and a few articles for the American Mercury.⁶ Fulks read from the writings of Haldeman-Julius, and J. S. Todd read from the Rubaiyat and from the poetry of Shelley.⁷ There was no music at the funeral.⁸

The volume of work coming from the old plant dropped tremendously. The plant management was assumed by Henry Haldeman,⁹ son of the late publisher. There was one final American Freeman published which was a memorial edition for Haldeman-Julius. The Freeman being discontinued, the company

⁴American Freeman, August 31, 1929, p. 3.

⁵Pittsburg Sun, August 4, 1951, p. 3.

⁶Haldeman-Julius, My Second 25 Years, p. 71.

⁷Pittsburg Sun, August 4, 1951, p. 3.

⁸Pittsburg Sun, August 3, 1951, p. 6.

⁹Interview with Henry Haldeman, April 10, 1956.

published Now, a new magazine the size of a Little Blue Book, for a few months but discontinued this new enterprise because of lack of response. At present, most of the work of the company, now known simply as Little Blue Books, consists of reprinting old titles of Little Blue Books and Big Blue Books. Plans are underway for the publishing of more books in the future.¹⁰

It is a tribute to the shrewdness of the publisher that in spite of his unorthodox beliefs, his failure to abide by ethics and tradition, and his vicious attacks upon the government and religion, he had no serious trouble with the law until the income tax investigations late in his career; an incident which was not related to his personal beliefs. Though he was severely condemned by churches, and at times was not allowed to send certain books and magazines through the mail, he was seldom in danger of having to plead his case with a law court. During the First World War he had supported President Wilson, though as later events proved, he had not developed any real sympathy with the cause. During the attacks on Hoover, he had softened the blow just enough to enable the American Freeman to pass through the mails. It appears that Haldeman-Julius knew exactly how far he could go without getting into serious difficulty.

¹⁰"First 300 Million Little Blue Books," Time, LIV (August 8, 1949), 46.

The lack of regard for tradition and custom allowed the Haldeman-Julius Publications to be a voice for the Free-thinkers. These people were often stymied in their attempts to publish the messages in conventional periodicals, and often Haldeman-Julius offered the only vehicle of communication. William J. Fielding, a leading writer for the Little Blue Books, would have found his books virtually impossible to publish had not the Girard plant been in existence, and as such was naturally in a position to be biased toward Haldeman-Julius. In a memorial article written nine months after the death of the publisher, Fielding admired him for his courageous fight against the "political and religious status quo of his time." Haldeman-Julius fought against the church and the mass communication media and as a result he "left a legion of friends who will gratefully remember that, unlike so many of his contemporaries, he never submitted to the totalitarianism of either Left or Right, but fought uncompromisingly for our American Heritage of freedom."¹¹

Although he derided moral codes and stressed the materialist view, there is no indication that he departed far from certain accepted standards. He definitely believed in the preservation of family life, and felt that monogamy was the ideal system of marriage; perhaps the reason for its occasional failure, he reasoned, was that man was not yet

¹¹Fielding, "Prince of the Pamphleteers," loc. cit., p. 453.

prepared for this civilized method of mating.¹² Despite the fact that he found the prohibitionists in Kansas a hypocritical and ignorant group, he did not drink excessively himself, although he had no aversion to the practice.¹³ His principal attitude toward this subject was one of supreme indifference to the actions of other people, and of controlling his own life by a number of rules of common sense, not by God-given rules.¹⁴

The influence of Haldeman-Julius is difficult to measure in any positive manner. His advocacy of individualism left no organized movement behind as a voice of Freethought. The very tenets of Freethought forbade a tightly knit organization. Although he attempted to organize such a society during the Scopes "monkey" trial, nothing developed from it. Without active disciples, concrete evidence of his is missing.

Haldeman-Julius was at his zenith during the twenties, and his literature shows the tendency of the times. During this era a new school of writers known as the debunkers, encouraged by and pretending to imitate Lytton Strachey, an unorthodox biographer of Queen Elizabeth and Queen Victoria, began to deny all traditional judgements of past greatness. It was the purpose of these persons to rid literature and

¹²Marcet Haldeman-Julius, "What the Editor's Wife is Thinking About, loc. cit.

¹³Interview with Henry Haldeman, February 16, 1956.

¹⁴Marcet Haldeman-Julius, "What the Editor's Wife is Thinking About," loc. cit.

history of all the "bunk" that had been inspired by American political and military heroes. This attack upon traditional heroes led Oscar Wilde to say, "Every great man nowadays has his disciples, and it is always Judas who writes his Biography."¹⁵ The novelty of this type of writing led to its universal popularity during the twenties. The First World War had completed the metamorphosis of the Victorian era of writing, and the readers were interested in something exciting and perhaps "wicked."¹⁶ Haldeman-Julius found that the "debunking" craze followed as a natural corollary to Free-thinking. The Freethinker was never bound by traditional motives, and now such unconventional ideas were popular. The fact that debunking was sensational gave considerable help to those Freethinkers seeking a market for their literature. They could defend this "sensationalism" to critics by reminding them that "truth was stranger than fiction."

To the publisher, "debunking" did not necessarily mean that the life of the subject was demoted from glory to shame. It would not harm the character of a man like Mark Twain if the world knew that far from writing "humor" he was delivering brazen attacks upon the social system of the United States. Abraham Lincoln was not persecuted if it was shown that he did not attend church and was at times sacrilegious;

¹⁵Claude M. Fuess, "The Biographer and His Victims," *Atlantic*, CXLIX (January, 1932), 62.

¹⁶Edgar Johnson, One Mighty Torrent, p. 478.

on the contrary, a more alive and more enlightened Lincoln emerged. Far from destroying character, "debunking" removed the veil of hypocrisy and mysticism from such noble lives. Haldeman-Julius wished to show American heroes as they really were and not as super-patriotic citizens wished they had been.

In order to promote debunking, Haldeman-Julius published a number of periodicals besides his books. The Haldeman-Julius Monthly, later the Debunker, "exposed" the Paul Revere Myth,¹⁷ the truth about the patriotic American,¹⁸ and the truth about small towns.¹⁹ These periodicals told the "truth" of the Lourdes miracles, the love life of President Harding, the backwardness of the public schools, and the idiocy of religion. These magazines had a circulation of around 50,000, and while the reading audience was limited, these people were no doubt those who found inspiration for expressing their own unconventional views. The debunking era ended with the decade, perhaps because the novelty had worn off, perhaps because manuscripts were more carefully considered, and perhaps because the depression had a sobering effect upon Americans.²⁰ Haldeman-Julius failed to follow this trend and

¹⁷Virginus Dabney, "The Paul Revere Myth," Haldeman-Julius Monthly, V (March, 1927), 33-42.

¹⁸E. Haldeman-Julius, "What is a Good American," Haldeman-Julius Monthly, V (April, 1927), 42-47.

¹⁹E. Haldeman-Julius, "Morals of a Small Town," Debunker, X (July, 1929), 89-93.

²⁰Edward H. O'Neill, History of American Biography, p. 349.

continued to write in the same manner as he did in the twenties. His magazines went out of publication and most of his work was then concentrated on the Blue Books and the American Freeman.

Kansas has always had its fighting editors. In a state where newspapers have always been numerous,²¹ it was natural that competition would be keen. This combined with politicians who "played it rough" has given Kansas an illustrious history of journalism. Not to be forgotten among the fighting newspapers is the Appeal to Reason and its stirring comments upon the American capitalistic system. While the Appeal failed to regain its former glory after World War I, Haldeman-Julius kept the dwindling newspaper in operation and proved to be a loyal friend of Eugene Debs during the latter's term in prison and aided the Socialist leader in obtaining his Presidential pardon. Although a wavering Socialist in later years, Haldeman-Julius lauded such acts which gave security to the average working man.

The Freethinkers found him to be one of their leading exponents is evidenced by his close association with Clarence Darrow, Bertrand Russell, Isaac Goldberg, and Joseph McCabe. This was the subject most dear to the publisher and he devoted

²¹Charles C. Howes, This Place Called Kansas, p. 68. Howes gives these interesting figures: The Kansas State Historical Association has more library entries for newspapers than the Library of Congress; Kansas has had more newspapers during the years 1821 to 1936 than any other state; and in 1950, there were more newspapers in Kansas than in any other state.

much time and energy as he attracted the wrath of many of America's citizens.

Haldeman-Julius was a man of the twenties. That was a decade of many unsuccessful movements, stemming perhaps from a desire to complete the cleavage of America from the Victorian era. The depression of 1929 marked the end of this stirring era, but Haldeman-Julius remained at his job of consolidating the ideals then expressed. Atheism was not the popular subject among the intellectuals that it had been then. Debunking was losing its favor as people demanded honest, but fair, treatment of the subject.²² The depression also had its effect upon his business as it did on all other businesses across the United States. So Haldeman-Julius must be viewed as he appeared in the third decade of this century in order to appreciate his influence. The United States was in a period of transition when the culture was changing and ideas were beyond the bounds of practicality. The later period of readjustment of values was not a retreat from the World War I ideas, but a consolidation of them. So those who thought as Haldeman-Julius did were not rebuked. The period since has seen Christianity adopt more liberal doctrines, books display freer choice of material, and governments show more interest in social democracy, and Haldeman-Julius provided a medium for their messages.

²²Johnson, op. cit., p. 478.

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