

THE CURIOUS AND CONTROVERSIAL CAREER OF WILLIAM DUDLEY PELLEY: FROM NATIONALIST POLITICS TO HIGHER METAPHYSICS

By Harrell Rhome, Ph.D.

Today he is unknown but to a few continuing devotees, students of twentieth century history, readers of obscure books, and researchers into the outré and bizarre. Pelley, a truly fascinating fellow, was a fairly well known public figure from the “roaring twenties” until his death in 1965. But, today he is largely forgotten or misunderstood. Ask a history teacher, politician or journalist. If they acknowledge knowing anything at all, you’ll likely be told that he was a “fascist”, “nazi”, “new age crank”, “occultist”, “racist cult leader”, “nut”, or... well, you get the idea. I don’t know about you, but when I hear such things, I automatically want to know more. Often, when certain figures are viciously vilified and disrespected, it is because they have offended the ubiquitous “Powers That Be” (PTB). Pelley not only offended them, he was a genuine threat back in the day, and the PTB acted accordingly. There is a striking and eerie foreboding feeling in the air as the same things, and much worse, are happening today as the PTB implement their ultimate plans for “homeland security” for the “chosen world order”.

A BRIEF BIO-SKETCH.

William Dudley Pelley was born in Lynn, Massachusetts 12 March 1890. While some say he grew up in grim poverty, his father was a Methodist minister in several small-town parishes. Hence, while the family may have been needy, they were probably no more so than other rural families across the

country. Parson Pelley also owned a small tissue factory, and his son dropped out of school to help with the work. But his learning did not cease. Early on, he developed a voracious love for reading, and was self-educated. The traditional Methodist teachings had little real impact, as his spiritual side was not to express itself until later in life. As might be assumed, he was later so involved in his work that he was not much of a “family man”. Be that as it may, the young Pelley married in 1911, producing a daughter who died three years later. That marriage later ended, and he did not remarry until later. The second marriage produced a daughter, but his insatiable writing, publishing, traveling and organizing activities consumed most of his time. His life is most easily followed and understood through the evolutionary stages of his personal and professional development.

JOURNALISM AND PELLEYS GREAT AWAKENING.

Life in the small town and work at the tissue factory was just not enough, so by his late teens, this smart and ambitious lad became a cub reporter for a Springfield newspaper. By age 19 he published his own magazine, *The Philosopher*, and remained a writer and publisher the rest of his life. Success followed quickly, his articles appearing in major newspapers and national magazines. Americans were interested in what was happening in Russia after the Revolution of 1917, so in 1918, he went to Russia as a correspondent. The young reporter traveled in a true “grand tour” from the Ukraine to Siberia and on to Japan. While in Russia, he saw whole villages destroyed by Bolshevik terrorists, the streets filled with blood, body parts and bodies with evidence of all kinds of desecration and torture. His natural inquisitive nature drew him to find out just who was behind these horrors. Pelley discovered the same thing that other honest journalists of the day found, which led to one clear conclusion. Jewish intellectuals, political theorists and activist radicals were at the front of the new communist movement that had already embarked on a terrible and gruesome quest for world power. More than a few key commissars were of Judaic origin. Of course, this was back in the days before political correctness

reared its ugly head to cover up the truth. Prior to his trip, Pelley knew very little about Jews or the Talmudic religion. When he returned home in 1920, he wrote articles and reports about his journey, some of which resulted in the matter of Jewish Bolshevism and the ever-dreaded Protocols of Zion being discussed on the floor of the House of Representatives, if you can imagine that! U.S. intelligence agencies also looked into these matters; see my article on Zionism and the establishment of the modern Polish state in *The Barnes Review*, May-June 2003. Without belaboring the point, the trek through the Soviet “miracle land” was William Dudley Pelley’s great awakening.

"There is much in the fact of Bolshevism itself, in the fact that so many Jews are Bolsheviks, in the fact that the ideals of Bolshevism at many points are consonant with the finest ideals of Judaism."

The Jewish Chronicle, April 4, 1919.

"The world revolution which we will experience will be exclusively our affair and will rest in our hands. This revolution will tighten the Jewish domination over all other people."

Le Peuple Juif, February 8, 1919.

"The governments of the peoples included in this world republic, with the aid of the victorious proletariat, all will fall without difficulty into Jewish hands. Private property will then be strangled by the Jewish directors, who will administer the state patrimony everywhere. Thus the promise of the Talmud will be fulfilled, that is, the promise that the Jews, at the arrival of the Messiah, will possess the key to the wealth of all the peoples of the earth."

Baruch Levy, in a letter to Karl Marx, published in the Rothschild-controlled *La Revue de Paris*, June 1, 1928.

But this was not to be his time of political action. Quite frankly, Pelley was disgusted and repelled by the horrors he had seen in Russia, not to mention stressed out by extensive international travel under difficult conditions. The journalist was

experiencing something we know today as “burnout”. As a result, he redirected his writing to fiction.

NOVELS, SCREENPLAYS AND... MYSTICISM.

This active and creative writer had quick success in the field of fiction as he had in journalism. He moved to the Hollywood movie community, working as a screenwriter for several major studios. Pelley quickly became a part of the Hollywood social scene, where he mingled with famous celebrities of the roaring twenties, and was frequently a guest in homes of actors, producers and directors. For instance, Lon Chaney was one of his best friends, and the one who suggested that he come to California. Best-selling short stories and novels followed, along with screenplays, all with favorable reviews. But after a while, Pelley realized that the same interests that controlled the “dark side” in Russia also ran the film industry. This was an additional personal awakening, but it was still not yet his time for political action.

"The greatest danger of Jewish Power lies in their large ownership and influence in our motion pictures, our press, our radio, and our government."

Charles A. Lindbergh, Jr., cherished American aviation hero, America First proponent and outspoken public figure in the same era as Pelley.

In the late 1920s, this author and emerging activist also continued an avid, at times almost consuming interest in spiritism and mystical, clairvoyant experiences. While some would call this “occult” or “New Age” as his predilections ran to séances and spirit readings, when one reads his books, it is clear that Pelley was no dilettante or dabbler. He had embarked on a profound inquiry based on a deep sincere spiritual interest about our true origins, purpose in life, nature of God, lives to come, and lots more. Like the metaphysical literary renaissance era of the late 19th century, the 1920s and 1930s were a time of extensive public interest in other dimensions, spirit communication, alternate religions and life after death, etc. The

bland Methodism of his youth had little impact, but the revelatory (shall I say, “prophetic”?) experience that followed gave new directions to his life. In *WHY I BELIEVE THE DEAD ARE ALIVE* (1950), he reports a paranormal, prophetic and life-directing experience. “It was not until the early part of 1928, when I had withdrawn to a little writing-bungalow near the foot of Mt. Lowe in Altadena, California, that the mystic curtain suddenly rolled backward and showed me something of the colossal, beautiful machinery that operates—as I call it—behind physical life.” There’s no room here to do it justice, but for a few more details, see *SEVEN MINUTES IN ETERNITY* (1929, 1954).

As a result, our protagonist, disgusted with the Hollywood scene, moved to New York City, networking with likeminded friends and connections in mysticism, spiritism and parapsychology. In 1929, at a female companion’s apartment, he began a series of paranormal automatic writing experiences. *STAR GUESTS* describes the sessions, channeled by spiritual guides, eventually producing over a million words for his pen, later published in a series of books. Readers may scoff, but what is clear is that William Dudley Pelley definitely, and sincerely, felt spiritually/divinely guided (perhaps compelled?) to undertake a mission.

[These book cover photos portray the successful author.]

AMERICAN NATIONALIST POLITICAL LEADER.

But readers must understand that this was not a man (as many mystics are) so caught up in metaphysical reveries that he lost touch with the momentous affairs of the day. The forces of nationalism were powerfully manifesting themselves all over Europe, taking elective political power in Italy and Germany first. The National Socialist movement was particularly inspiring to Pelley, and in 1932 he began what came to be known as the

Silver Shirt Legion, a group obviously patterned on those of Europe. Both the movement and its dynamic leader were popular, quickly establishing local chapters in many locations. Naturally, this frightened and alarmed the already nervous PTB. While some say that a mystical revelation revealed to Pelley that National Socialism was the proper model, when the Silver Shirts leapt into being right after Hitler was elected to power in Germany, the PTB assumed he was in direct contact with Germany, which is really unlikely. There was never any evidence of a direct connection, but his close identification with the German movement placed his name at the top of a list of PTB undesirables. It was, at most, an ideological connection. After all, they both opposed the same traditional adversary.

The Silver Shirts grew rapidly, and rather than a central national headquarters, there were numerous regional and local chapters. Pelley, who was called the “beloved Chief” by the members, traveled about the country, directing the organization from his automobile or from trains, organizing and publishing in great volume. The Silver Shirts were successful among working class citizens and veterans, but also among professional types and those who admired his spiritual and religious beliefs. It is hard to say how many members the movement actually had as the supposed totals often reflect the intentions of those who publish them, but it was likely around 25,000. The total might be 100,000 or even more if you count subscribers to diverse Pelley publications who weren’t members, and other sympathizers at various levels. Regardless of the actual number of those who followed the Chief, it was more than enough to alarm the PTB.

By the middle 1930s, the fiery nationalist speaker was near the height of his career. In 1935, Pelley and several associates organized the Christian Party. But, even back then – as it still is today-- the PTB made it difficult, if not impossible, for third parties to achieve ballot access. Pelley and William W. Kemp, his VP candidate, were on the Washington State ballot only, and garnered but a few votes in the 1936 election. Nonetheless, Pelley had a large following in California, in fact, along the whole Pacific coast, and viewed the experience as training for the 1940 election. Like the larger (more than one million members)

America First Movement, the Silver Shirts and the Christian Party opposed the machinations of the Roosevelt regime to involve us, once again, in the conflicts of Europe. Ultimately and unfortunately, neither group was successful, but not for lack of effort. The PTB knew the war was coming (after all, they planned it!) and recognized that they must have the American people ready to accept whatever they decreed to “protect national security”. A well-organized opposition, with an articulate and forceful spokesman, was the last thing they wanted. It became increasingly clear that the native nationalist movement was not so large now, but was strong and growing stronger under Pelley’s inspiring and inspiring leadership. This was something the governing cabal could not and would not tolerate, and another phase of his life was coming to an end.

"The Second World War is being fought for the defense of the fundamentals of Judaism."

Chicago Jewish Sentinel, October 8, 1942.

"The Roosevelt Administration has selected more Jews to fill influential positions than any previous administration."

Brooklyn Jewish Examiner, October 20, 1933.

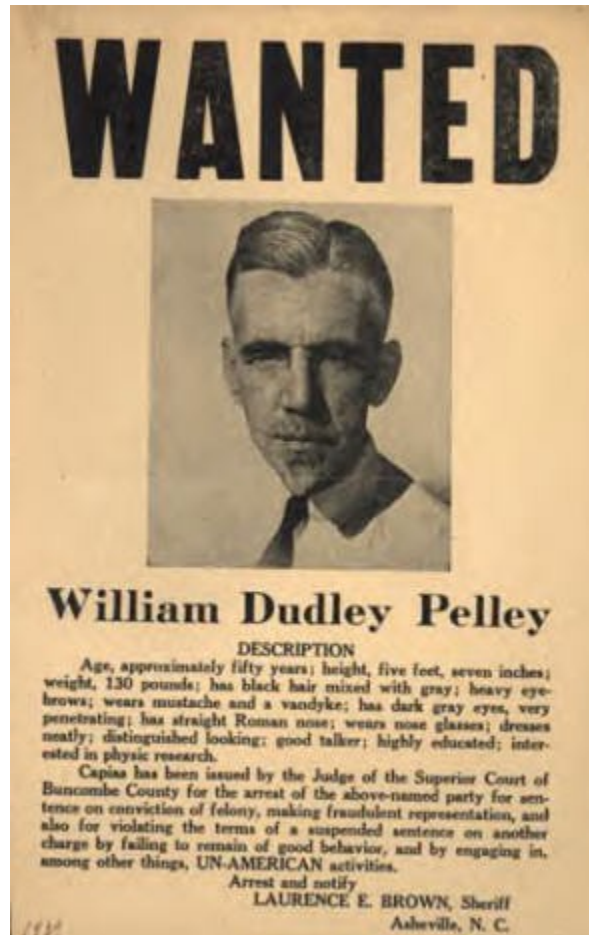
[Chief Pelley at a Silver Shirt encampment in full regalia.]

IMPRISONED BY WWII “HOMELAND SECURITY”

Two years before the better-known mass Sedition Trial of 1944 (see *The Barnes Review*, Nov.-Dec. 1999), “homeland security” was “protected” by arresting William Dudley Pelley. Various officials, at all levels --numerous local, state and federal agencies -- persistently persecuted the prolific nationalist author and leader, but they were ineffective. However, early in 1942, right after the war began, twelve felony charges of “sedition” quickly came at him. And, they hit him hard -- with a fifteen-year sentence in a maximum-security prison. Charles Lindberg, Congressman Thorkelson and others spoke in his behalf, a

daring thing to do during wartime, but to no avail. While the charges were eventually dropped for the 1944 “seditionists”, Pelley languished in the federal lockup until 1950. The exact motivation to eventually release him is unknown, but we do know that the 1944 trial eventually ended because, essentially, the feds looked ridiculous, and the public knew it. The Axis was thoroughly defeated, so it was hard to maintain that Pelley was still a national security threat.

Sad to say, the same unconstitutional outrages are happening today. Some might say Pelley’s detention was justified as there was legitimate fear of Axis spies and saboteurs, and the nationalist leader (hypothetically, at least) could have aided them or recruited “insurgents” here in the U.S.A. from his Silver Shirts. Yet, except with ideas, he never threatened anyone. So the war was over, and he should have been released, but was not. The only logical conclusion is that Prisoner Pelley was punished, most severely, for thought crimes. Before he was released in 1950, he apparently agreed never to speak, write, publish or organize anything of a political nature.



“Yet some hear you not. They [the Dark Forces] shall say: ‘Away with these charlatans who speak blasphemies [political incorrectness, sedition; hate speech] against us!’

I tell you they [the Dark Forces] shall try to take away your lives in that they fear you. They shall stalk you unawares. They shall come upon you and raise their hands against you, but ye shall go unscathed because of the armor that is about you.”

STAR GUESTS, p. 221 [explanatory comments added].

METAPHYSICAL TEACHER AND SPIRITUAL LEADER

After he was freed from the FedGulag, Pelley wasted no time, founding a spiritual/metaphysical group called Soulcraft, publishing *Soulcraft Journal* as well as *Valor* magazine (and

several other titles), focused on culture, history, religious themes and ethnography. The Soulcraft group was well received, and most of the million words from the automatic writing sessions of 1928-29 were published under various titles, all well received by an audience most interested in the subject matter. He mostly kept to his “agreement” with FedZOG, but every once in a while, he would address earlier matters. While *STAR GUESTS* is in essence nonpolitical and nonracial, the spiritual teacher does have something to say about his past adventures, and perhaps with a prophetic word for today, when the forces of truth are, once again, very nearly overcome.

“Why did I go off upon a political departure that seemed for a time to delay in ignominy? Because it was part of my instructions that I should do what I did. If the very essence of this sodomic beast lingering in man is not apparent in those ‘rulers’ who dictate the destinies of Soviet Russia, then where should I expect to apprehend them? Was it not beasthood and darkness at its worst? I chose to think so and I still choose to think so. Common sense tells me that Communism was the Beast at its strongest.” *STAR GUESTS*, pp.165-66.

“Great nations are not led of great statesmen, I tell you. They do the behest of the widely advertised, not the truly great in heart. They do follow demagogues who rant of war when war threateneth, and rant of peace when peace is popular. They are worldly sheep led of blind shepherds who do consort with wolves.” *STAR GUESTS*, p. 159.

Almost all groups in the same general interest areas have crossover membership, and there was quite a crossover from Soulcraft with the then popular I AM movement of Guy and Edna Ballard, plus with the growing number of Americans who sought to understand the phenomena of unidentified flying objects. There was intersection with several other factions such as those seeking the meaning of the Great Pyramid and the monuments of Egypt, British Israelism, George Adamski and the contactee groups, those interested in psychic phenomena, life after death, and others. Just as it was then, and still is today, whether some

want to admit it or not, there is interaction between certain metaphysical ideas and the nationalist right. This is true not only here, but in other parts of the world too, especially Europe. Pelley recently surfaced in the controversial nonfiction book, *STARGATE CONSPIRACY* (Picknett and Prince, 2001); the second printing has more about Pelley than the first. It tells of a conspiracy to manipulate world opinion about extraterrestrial life. Some of the material (esp. about Egypt, its monuments and god images) parallels *STAR GUESTS*. While some readers may dismiss such ideas out of hand, millions of people did not do so back in the 1950s, and they surely do not today. Visit the Internet or a bookstore and you'll see what I mean. This writer is not necessarily acting as a proponent of any of these positions so much as simply pointing out facts – and possibilities. Since some may explore further, following are suggestions for obtaining Pelley's books, all out of print.

PELLEY'S WRITTEN WORKS

It is neither possible nor advisable to try to review, recap or even list his many works in this limited space, but used copies of most of his books, including the early novels, are available. Among the books I have read and recommend are: *STAR GUESTS*, *WHY I BELIEVE THE DEAD ARE ALIVE* and *ADAM AWAKES*. Next on my list is *GOLDEN SCRIPTS*, and I plan to read others. *STAR GUESTS* is great beginning volume, if you can find it. Occasionally, you may see one of the several magazine/journal titles for sale. Get them; they are getting very hard to find. Unfortunately, no one has reprinted any of the books, and I found no plans to do so. Book collectors may want to add some to their shelves. If you would like obtain *STAR GUESTS*, email EagleRevisionist@aol.com and ask for a complete list of available titles.

A further word is required. In order for Pelley to elucidate the ancient mysteries, and about our possible true origins, the reader must be open to some challenging concepts, literally reaching to the stars. To the star system Sirius, to be precise. From there, it is said that spiritual (later corporeal) beings came to earth, committing sodomy with.... Well, the story is much

longer than can be recounted here, but I will share one especially eerie item. The channeled entities, through Pelley, spoke of a companion body to Sirius. The book was published in 1950, but was written/channeled back in 1929. Astronomers did not discover what we now know as Sirius B until the 1970s! Moreover, the readers of *STAR GUESTS* should have an open mind as to reincarnation or transmigration of souls; that we live more than once. Pelley presents all of this, and a good deal more, in an intriguing style, in *STAR GUESTS* and other readable books.

William Dudley Pelley peacefully passed away 30 June 1965, and was interred in an unmarked grave as he had requested. His daughter, Adelaide Pelley Pearson, who maintained the copyrights and continued circulating her father's works, passed away 11 November 2005. This article is dedicated with great respect and humility to this exceptionally fascinating and extraordinary man, a true and brave adventurer, exploring many exciting, challenging, and dangerous venues. May his spirit ever inspire truth seekers, now and in the dire and difficult days to come.

“Well knew I that they [the Dark Forces] might do such things [both to our world and to himself]. Well knew I that I was a sheep among wolves. Well knew I that I had volunteered for a mission of ignominy that I might hoist a petard of hope before the ranks of the doomed. Appraise ye the result.” *STAR GUESTS*, p. 156 [explanatory comments added].

Well, either I've said just enough to peek your interest in Pelley's spiritual philosophy, channeled writings and commentary or I have said far, far too much, so this exercise ends.

###

This article appeared in a briefer, slightly different version and title in the September/October 2007 issue of The Barnes Review historical magazine <http://barnesreview.org/>. Subscribe to Harrell's free e-magazine feature, Truth In History And Current Events, a free Internet service. EagleRevisionist@aol.com. Just put Subscribe in your subject line.

With exception of illustrations, this is Copyright ©2009 Harrell Rhome All Rights Reserved.