

= Elizabeth Dilling =

Elizabeth Dilling (April 19 , 1894 ? May 26 , 1966) was an American writer and political activist . In 1934 , she published *The Red Network ? A Who 's Who and Handbook of Radicalism for Patriots* , which catalogs over 1 @, @ 300 suspected communists and their sympathizers . Her books and lecture tours established her as the pre @-@ eminent female right @-@ wing activist of the 1930s , and one of the most outspoken critics of the New Deal .

Dilling was the best @-@ known leader of the World War II women 's isolationist movement , a grass @-@ roots campaign that pressured Congress to refrain from helping the Allies . She was among 28 anti @-@ war campaigners charged with sedition in 1942 ; the charges were dropped in 1946 . While academic studies have customarily ignored both the anti @-@ war " Mothers ' movement " and right @-@ wing activist women in general , Dilling 's writings secured her a lasting influence among right @-@ wing groups .

= = Early life and family = =

Dilling was born Elizabeth Eloise Kirkpatrick in Chicago , Illinois . Her father , Lafayette Kirkpatrick , was a surgeon of Scotch @-@ Irish ancestry ; her mother , Elizabeth Harding , was of English and French ancestry . Her father died when she was six weeks old , after which her mother added to the family income by selling real estate . Dilling 's brother , Lafayette Harding Kirkpatrick , who was seven years her senior , became wealthy by the age of 23 after developing properties in Hawaii . Dilling had an Episcopalian upbringing , and attended a Catholic girls ' school , the Academy of Our Lady . She was highly religious , and was known to send her friends 40 @-@ page letters about Christian scripture . Prone to bouts of depression , she went on vacations in the US , Canada , and Europe with her mother .

In 1912 , she enrolled at the University of Chicago , where she studied music and languages , intending to become an orchestral musician . She left after three years before graduating , lonely and bitterly disillusioned . In 1918 , she married Albert Dilling , an engineer studying law , who attended the same Episcopalian church as Elizabeth . The couple were well off financially , thanks to Elizabeth 's inherited money and Albert 's job as chief engineer for the Chicago Sewerage District . They lived in Wilmette , a Chicago suburb , and had two children : Kirkpatrick , born in 1920 , and Elizabeth Jane , born in 1925 . Their relationship was turbulent ; when Dilling discovered her husband was having an affair with another woman , she broke into the latter 's home at gunpoint and threatened her . Albert gave his wife \$ 100 @, @ 000 not to divorce him , and although he promised not to commit adultery again , he had two further extra @-@ marital relationships before their eventual divorce .

The family travelled abroad at least ten times between 1923 and 1939 , an experience that focussed Dilling 's political outlook and served to convince her of American superiority . In 1923 , they visited Britain , France and Italy . Offended by the lack of gratitude from the British for American intervention in World War I , Dilling vowed to oppose any future American involvement in European conflict . They spent a month in the Soviet Union in 1931 , where local guides , who Dilling claimed were Jews , warned her that communism would take over the world and showed her a map of the US in which the cities were named after Soviet heroes . She documented her travels in home movies , filming such scenes as bathers swimming nude in a river beneath a Moscow church . She was appalled by communism 's " atheism , sex degeneracy , broken homes [and] class hatred " .

She visited Germany in 1931 , and returned in 1938 , noting a " great improvement of conditions " . She attended Nazi Party meetings , and the German government paid her expenses . She wrote that " The German people under Hitler are contented and happy don 't believe the stories you hear that this man has not done a great good for this country . " In 1938 , she toured Palestine , where she filmed what she described as Jewish immigrants ruining the country , and Spain ? then embroiled in the Spanish Civil War ? where she filmed " Red torture chambers " and burnt @-@ out churches , " ruined by the Reds with the same satanic Jewish glee shown in Russia " . She visited Japan , which she viewed as the only Christian nation in Asia , and in 1939 , she returned to visit

Spain , for a second time .

= = Anti @-@ communism = =

Our family trip to Red Russia in 1931 started my dedication to anti @-@ Communism . We were taken behind the scenes by friends working for the Soviet Government and saw deplorable conditions , first hand . We were appalled , not only at the forced labor , the squalid crowded living quarters , the breadline ration card workers ? stores , the mothers pushing wheelbarrows and begging children of the State nurseries besieging us . The open virulent anti @-@ Christ campaign , every @-@ where , was a shock . In public places were the tirades by loud speaker , in Russian , (our friends translated) . Atheist cartoons representing Christ as a villain , a drunk , and the object of a cannibalistic orgy (Holy Communion) : as an oppressor of labor ; again as trash being dumped from a wheelbarrow by the Soviet Five @-@ Year @-@ Plan ? these lurid cartoons filled the big bulletin boards in the churches our Soviet guides took us to visit .

Dilling 's political activism was spurred by the " bitter opposition " she encountered upon her return to Illinois in 1931 , " against my telling the truth about Russia ... from suburbanite ' intellectual ' friends and from my own Episcopal minister . " She began public speaking as a hobby , following her doctor 's advice . Iris McCord , a Chicago radio broadcaster who taught at the Moody Bible Institute , arranged for her to address local church groups . Within a year she was touring the Midwest , the Northeast and occasionally the West coast , accompanied by her husband . She showed her home movies of the Soviet Union and made the same speech several times a week to audiences sometimes as large as several hundred , hosted by organizations like the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) and the American Legion .

In 1932 , she co @-@ founded the Paul Reveres , an anti @-@ communist organization with headquarters in Chicago which eventually had 200 local chapters . She left in 1934 , and it folded soon after due to lack of interest . With McCord 's encouragement , her lectures were published in a local Wilmette newspaper in 1932 , and then collected in a pamphlet entitled Red Revolution : Do We Want It Here ? Dilling claimed that the DAR printed and distributed thousands of copies .

Beginning in early 1933 , Dilling spent twelve to eighteen hours a day for eighteen months researching and cataloging suspected subversives . Her sources included the 1920 four @-@ volume report of the Joint Legislative Committee to Investigate Seditious Activities , and Representative Hamilton Fish 's 1931 report of an anti @-@ communist investigation . The result was The Red Network ? A Who 's Who and Handbook of Radicalism for Patriots , hailed with irony in The New Republic as a " handy , compact reference work " . The first half of the 352 @-@ page book was a collection of essays , mostly copied from Red Revolution . The second half contained descriptions of more than 1 @-@ 300 " Reds " (including international figures like Albert Einstein and Chiang Kai @-@ shek) , and more than 460 organizations described as " Communist , Radical Pacifist , Anarchist , Socialist , [or] I.W.W. controlled " .

Far more than the Spider @-@ Web chart of the 1920s ? a chart composed by a member of the DAR that plotted suspected red @-@ affiliated organisations with progressive individuals ? The Red Network revealed the power of " guilt by association , " a tactic that would be used all too often by future Red baiters with devastating effectiveness .

The book was reprinted eight times and sold more than 16 @-@ 000 copies by 1941 . Thousands more were given away . It was sold in Chicago book stores and mail order from Dilling 's house . It was distributed by the KKK , the Knights of the White Camellia , the German @-@ American Bund and the Aryan Bookstores . Subscribers to Gerald Winrod 's new journal The Revealer received a copy , fundamentalist preacher and president of the Northwest Bible Training School W. B. Riley claimed he had given away hundreds of copies , and it was advertised and sold by the Moody Bible Institute . It was endorsed by officials in the DAR and the American Legion . Copies were bought by the Pinkerton Detective Agency , the New York Police Department , the Chicago Police Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation . A Los Angeles arms manufacturer bought and distributed 150 copies , and a tear gas manufacturer bought 1 @-@ 500 copies which it distributed to the Standard Oil Company , the National Guard and hundreds of police departments .

In 1935 , Dilling returned to her alma mater to accuse such people as university president Robert Maynard Hutchins , educational reformer John Dewey , activist Jane Addams and Republican Senator William Borah as communist sympathizers . Retail tycoon Charles R. Walgreen asked for her help to obtain a public hearing after his niece complained that professors at the university were communists . They demanded the closure of the university . The Illinois legislature convened to discuss the matter , ultimately deciding that the claims were unfounded . Dilling delivered a frenetic half @-@ hour speech at the Assembly , with calls from the audience to " kill every communist " . She declared , " It is certain that the University of Chicago is diseased with Communism and that its contagion is a menace to the community and the Nation . "

Dilling 's next book , The Roosevelt Red Record and Its Background , published two weeks before the 1936 presidential election , was less successful . Like much of her later writing , it was largely a disjointed series of quotations . Roosevelt 's " Jew Deal " (as many including Dilling were calling the New Deal) was already a central theme of The Red Network , and it was already being debated elsewhere . Dilling later claimed that the House Un @-@ American Activities Committee was founded largely thanks to her two books . She wrote a pamphlet attacking Borah entitled Borah : " Borer from Within " the G.O.P. , fearing that if he won the presidential nomination voters would be forced to choose between two communists . She distributed 5 @,@ 000 copies at the Republican National Convention , and claimed credit for his defeat .

In 1938 , Dilling founded the Patriotic Research Bureau , a vast archive in Chicago with a staff of " Christian women and girls " from the Moody Bible Institute . She began regular publication of the Patriotic Research Bulletin , a newsletter outlining her political and personal views , which she mailed free of charge to her supporters . Editions were often 25 to 30 pages long , with a youthful photograph of the author on the cover conveying a personal touch . The masthead of early issues reads : " Patriotic Research Bureau . For the defense of Christianity and Americanism "

Dilling was paid \$ 5000 in 1939 by industrialist Henry Ford to investigate communism at the University of Michigan . As well as funding the Nazi Party and distributing his anti @-@ semitic newspaper The Dearborn Independent during the 1920s , Ford was a financial supporter of dozens of anti @-@ semitic propagandists . Dilling discovered hundreds of books at the university library written by " radicals " . Her 96 @-@ page report stated that the university was " typical of those American colleges which have permitted Marxist @-@ bitten , professional theorists to inoculate wholesome American youths with their collectivist propaganda . " She reached a similar conclusion when the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce paid her to investigate UCLA , and when she investigated her children 's universities , Cornell and Northwestern .

In 1940 , hoping to influence the presidential election , Dilling published The Octopus , setting out her Jewish Communism theories . The book was published under the pseudonym " Rev. Frank Woodruff Johnson " . Avedis Derounian reported Dilling claiming that " The Jews can never prove that I 'm anti @-@ semitic , I 'm too clever for them . " Her husband feared that allegations of anti @-@ semitism would damage his law practice . She admitted that she was the author at her divorce trial in 1942 . She explained that it was written as a response to B 'nai B 'rith . She stated : " It airs their dirty lying attempts to shut every Christian mouth and prevent anyone from getting a fair trial in this country " (for which she was cited for contempt) .

= = Isolationism = =

Besides relying on a gendered appeal to patriotic duty , Dilling enjoyed portraying herself as a helpless victim confronted by diabolical evil . One telling example was when a federal subpoena in 1941 , issued by the Justice Department , ordered her to Washington DC to explain her alleged affiliations with Nazi sympathizers . She described her experiences at the " New Deal O.G.P.U. , " an unsubtle reference to Stalin 's secret police , in the format of a play , in which she acted the part of the victim interrogated by an agent of the New Deal . The dramatic scene overflowed with " sinister glower [s] , " " sarcastic questions " and " long harangue [s] . " The victim , " a bit weary with the endless hectoring , " answered unfair questions with righteous indignation . Throughout this little skit , Dilling downplayed her public role and denied the accusation that she was " an important

woman " and that her " name carr [ied] weight . " A sincere act of humility this was not , but it did reveal Dilling 's inclination for martyrdom and self @-@ importance , as well as a talent for propaganda .

Dilling was a central figure in a mass movement of isolationist women 's groups , which opposed US involvement in World War II from a " maternalist " perspective . The membership of these groups in 1941 was between one and six million . According to historian Kari Frederickson : " They argued that war was the antithesis of nurturant motherhood , and that as women they had a particular stake in preventing American involvement in the European conflict they intertwined their maternalist arguments with appeals that were right @-@ wing , anti @-@ Roosevelt , anti @-@ British , anti @-@ communist and anti @-@ Semitic . "

The movement was strongest in the Midwest , a conservative stronghold with a culture of anti @-@ semitism , which had long resented the political dominance of the East coast . Chicago was the base of far @-@ right activists Charles E. Coughlin , Gerald L. K. Smith and Lyril Clark Van Hyning , as well as the America First Committee , which had 850 @,@ 000 members by 1941 . Dilling spoke at America First meetings , and was involved in the founding of Van Hyning 's " We the Mothers Mobilize for America " , a highly active group with 150 @,@ 000 members who were tasked with infiltrating other organizations . The Chicago Tribune , the newspaper with the highest circulation in the region , was strongly isolationist . It treated Dilling as a trusted expert on anti @-@ communism and continued to support her after she was charged with sedition .

In early 1941 , when the movement was at its height , Dilling spoke at rallies in Chicago and other cities in the Midwest , and recruited a group to coordinate her efforts to oppose Lend @-@ Lease , the " Mothers ' Crusade to Defeat H. R. 1776 " . Hundreds of these activists picketed the Capitol for two weeks in February 1941 . Dilling was arrested when she led a sit @-@ down strike with at least 25 other protesters in the corridor outside the office of 84 @-@ year @-@ old Senator Carter Glass . After a sensational trial lasting six days , she wept as she was found guilty of disorderly conduct and fined \$ 25 . Glass called for the FBI to investigate the women 's groups , and stated in the New York Times on March 7 that the women had caused " a noisy disorder of which any self @-@ respecting fishwife would be ashamed . I likewise believe that it would be pertinent to inquire whether they are mothers . For the sake of the race , I devoutly hope not . " Isolationist leader Cathrine Curtis believed that the image of the Mothers ' movement had been wrecked , and privately criticised Dilling 's " hoodlum " tactics as " communistic " and " un @-@ womanly " .

Many of the women 's groups continued to oppose the war after the attack on Pearl Harbor , unlike their allies , the America First Committee . Dilling campaigned for Thomas E. Dewey in the 1944 presidential election , although she accused him of " fawning at the feet of international Jewry " . Her political activity decreased as a result of her highly publicized divorce trial , beginning in February 1942 , during which dozens of fist fights broke out , involving both men and women , and Dilling received three citations for contempt . The judge , Rudolph Desort , said that he feared he would suffer " a nervous breakdown " during the four @-@ month trial .

A grand jury , convened in 1941 to investigate fascist propaganda , called several women 's leaders to testify , including Dilling , Curtis and Van Hyning . Roosevelt prevailed upon Attorney General Francis Biddle to launch a prosecution , and on July 21 , 1942 , Dilling and 27 other anti @-@ war activists were indicted on two counts of conspiracy to cause insubordination of the military in peacetime and wartime . The case was the main part of a government campaign against domestic subversion , which historian Leo P. Ribuffo labelled " The Brown Scare " . The charges and list of defendants were extended in January 1943 . The charges were again extended in January 1944 . The judge , Edward C. Eicher , suffered a fatal heart attack on November 29 , 1944 . A mistrial was declared . The charges were dismissed on November 22 , 1946 , after the government had failed to present any compelling new evidence of a German conspiracy . Biddle later called the proceedings " a dreary farce " . Dilling continued to publish the Patriotic Research Bulletin , and in 1954 , she published The Plot Against Christianity . The book " reveals the satanic hatred of Christ and Christians responsible for their mass murder , torture and slave labour in all Iron Curtain countries ? all of which are ruled by Talmudists " . It was retitled after her death to The Jewish Religion : Its Influence Today .

The UN Charter and treaties are constructed to make way for the " man of sin , " the Anti @-@ Christ who will hold supreme power over life or death as he briefly heads this last Red satanic world empire .

= = Media references = =

A character based on Dilling appears in the novel It Can 't Happen Here (1935) by Sinclair Lewis . The book describes a fascist takeover in the US .

" Who then , is Mrs Dilling ? Upon what strange meat has she been fed that she hath grown so great : And what inspired her , she who might have taken up knitting or petunia @-@ growing , to adopt as her hobby the deliberate and sometimes hasty criticism of men and women she has never seen . " ? Harry Thornton Moore , " The Lady Patriot 's Book , " The New Republic , 8 January 1936

" To see the lady in action , screaming and leaping and ripping along at breakneck speed , is to see certain symptoms of simple hysteria on the loose . " ? Milton S. Mayer , " Mrs. Dilling : Lady of the Red Network , " American Mercury , July 1939

" May God strengthen and uphold you , [Mrs Dilling] ... May your wonderful work grow and help save our Republic , ... a time is coming when you will be blessed ... You deserve a place in history comparable to Washington and Lincoln . " ? Quoted in Patriotic Research Bulletin , 4 July 1941

" I have rarely seen hatred take complete possession of a woman 's face as when Elizabeth Dilling stormed around the corridors shouting . She seemed like a woman pursued by the furies . What she did not know was that the furies were not outside her , but in her own mind . " ? Max Lerner , describing an encounter in 1941 , PM , 1943 or 1944