EDUCATION FOR THE MASSES: THE HALDEMAN-JULIUS LITTLE BLUE BOOKS AS POPULAR CULTURE DURING THE NINETEEN-TWENTIES

Dissertation for the Degree of Ph. D.
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
DALE MARVIN HERDER
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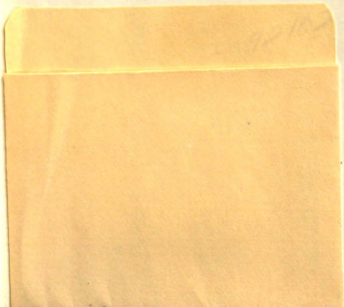

ABSTRACT

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By

Dale Marvin Fetzer

Emanuel Haldeman-Julius (1889-1951), [illegible] immigrant Russian-Jews from Odessa, became one of America's most unusual and successful publicists between 1919 and 1951. During his thirty-two year career he, in an attempt to bring culture and education to the masses, blanketed the nation with approximately five hundred million of his paper-cover Little and Big Blue Books from his printing plant in Girard, Kansas.

This study focuses on the Little Blue Books (3-1/2 x 5", most of them in blue paper covers) as a medium of American popular culture during the nineteen-twenties, and includes a biographical and psychographical sketch of Haldeman-Julius, an examination of the sources of his philosophy of popular culture and ideas of mass education.

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Emanuel Haldeman-Julius (1889-1951), the son of immigrant Russian-Jews from Odessa, became one of America's most unusual and successful publicists between 1919 and 1951. During his thirty-two year career he, in an attempt to bring culture and education to the masses, blanketed the nation with approximately five hundred million of his paper-cover Little and Big Blue Books from his printing plant in Girard, Kansas.

This study focuses on the Little Blue Books (3-1/2 x 5", most of them in blue paper covers) as a medium of American popular culture during the nineteen-twenties, and includes a biographical and psychographical sketch of Haldeman-Julius, an examination of the sources of his philosophy of popular culture and ideas of mass education,

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an exploration of his advertising, market analysis and distribution techniques, and a discussion of the things he learned about the American mind in the twenties. In keeping with the growing notion among scholars that popular culture phenomena are important but too often neglected reflectors of American values and taste, this dissertation attempts to carefully scrutinize the Little Blue Books as one more source of virtually unexplored evidence about the intellectual history of the American nineteen-twenties. Research was conducted by the author in East Lansing, Michigan, Girard and Pittsburg, Kansas, Washington, D.C., Rockville Centre, New York, and Roswell, Georgia. Traditional academic research techniques were supplemented by several personal interviews, frequent use of tape recordings, some use of motion picture film, and printed appeals for information from people who had been readers of the Little Blue Books during the twenties.

The major findings of the study indicate that the Haldeman-Julius Little Blue Books were the product of a carefully thought out and surprisingly sophisticated theory of mass culture, that their production was carefully controlled to keep them in close touch with shifting

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popular taste, and that the tremendous sales volume of the "University in Print" (approximately 150 million copies, from a selection of 1500 different titles, were sold during the twenties alone) provides what is perhaps an unparalleled cross-section of American taste during the twenties. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, this study adds to the growing body of evidence that we have inadvertantly been misled in our acceptance of the "Jazz-Age" and "Lost Generation" stereotypes of the twenties. Despite what some journalists and scholars have written about widespread disillusionment, pessimism and immorality in the twenties, it seems that the mind of the vast majority of Americans during that decade was optimistic, positive, fundamentally moral, and as traditionally progressive as ever.

EDUCATION FOR THE MASSES: THE HALDEMAN-JULIUS LITTLE BLUE BOOKS AS POPULAR CULTURE DURING THE NINETEEN-TWENTIES

By

Dale Marvin Herder

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of English

1975

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1975

To The Memory Of

William J. Fielding

(April 10, 1886-December 21, 1973)

A freethinker, a humanist,

a courageous but gentle man,

an intellectual kinsman, an

inspiration, a deeply missed friend.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study could not have been as thorough or as personal as it now is without the assistance of several people. I am especially indebted to William J. Fielding for his friendship, moral support, and memories of his affiliation with Emanuel Haldeman-Julius during the twenties, and to Andrew Cothran, for the wealth of thoroughly researched biographical information in his doctoral dissertation at the University of Maryland. I am similarly indebted to Caroline Blunt and Jeanette Fiore of the Department of Special Collections at the Michigan State University Library, to Professor Gene DeGruson, Curator of the Haldeman-Julius Collection at the Porter Library of Kansas State College, in Pittsburg, Kansas, and to William F. Ryan, a capable young writer and insightful literary critic who is preparing a book on Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, for his friendship, encouragement, and cooperation as I conducted my research.

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I would also like to thank Alice DeLoach and Henry Haldeman for their time, kindness, and assistance in providing me access to information about their father that would not otherwise have been available, and to Mrs. Rosalie Eisenberg and her son, Professor Marvin Eisenberg, for making me feel welcome in their homes and providing me with anecdotes of their brother and uncle's life. I am appreciative, too, to Judge Richard D. Loffswold and his staff of capable secretaries in the Probate Court of Crawford County, Girard, Kansas, for their courtesy and assistance during my visits to their office, to Mr. and Mrs. Montee Everitt, Mr. Walter H. Wayland, Mrs. Pearl McAhron, and Mr. Al Wheeler, of Girard and Pittsburg, Kansas, for making me comfortable in their homes during interviews and casual discussions about Haldeman-Julius and his relationship with Girard citizens.

I am indebted also to William McCann for his encouragement, enthusiasm, and humorous reminiscences of his boyhood days in a Michigan corn crib reading Little Blue Books, to my good friend and neighbor, Robert M. LaFollette, and my wife, Diane, for their reading and constructive criticism of the manuscript, and to my sons, Roy and David,

for their patience with a father who, for some strange reason, has put writing ahead of playing catch in the yard.

It is with sincere appreciation, too, that I note the generosity of the English Department at Michigan State University in awarding me a financial grant to assist with my travel and research, and the sound advice and kind cooperation of my doctoral guidance committee comprised of Professor Russel B. Nye (Chairman), Professor Douglas T. Miller, Professor James B. McKee, and Professor Victor M. Howard.

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CHAPTER I

THE MAN: A BIOGRAPHICAL AND PSYCHOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

A very curious, and at times, baffling bundle of contradictions. . . . Almost but not quite his is a split personality. . . . Altogether, I find him one of the most thoughtless, but most consolingly lovable, most exasperatingly egocentric, but most pridestirringly efficient of men.

Marcet Haldeman-Julius
August 30, 1924

John W.

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CHAPTER I

THE MAN: A BIOGRAPHICAL AND PSYCHOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Background and Birth

John W. Gunn, who had welcomed Emanuel Julius the night he stepped from the train into his new life in Girard, Kansas, wrote the eulogy for his famous friend:

> He would seek out, with a mind that was bold and restless and insatiable. Whether in city or town, bounded by ocean or prairie, . . . life was a glorious adventure. All was new; all was interesting; all dreams and desires were possible . . . . Now I wander solitary in the halls of memory, which echo hauntingly as I review the scenes, gestures, words and deeds -- the splendid wreckage of that vanished time.[1]

---

[1] John W. Gunn's "Eulogy," reprinted in the American Freeman (November, 1951), 1, quoted in Andrew Cothran, "The Little Blue Book Man and the Big American Parade" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, American Studies Program, University of Maryland, 1966), 442-443.

Sixty-two years and one day before his untimely death in 1951 this restless and insatiable seeker was born in an

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old store-front building at 237 Race Street, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The date was July 30, 1889. Two years before his birth his father and mother, David and Elizabeth Zolajefsky, like so many other nineteenth-century immigrants, had stepped onto American soil at Baltimore, Maryland. These Jewish immigrants, from Odessa, Russia, again like so many others, changed their last name for the sake of convenience in the new land. "Zolajefsky" became "Julius" when David Zolajefsky, a magnificently skilled bookbinder, was hired by the Eickoff and Kramer Book Bindery, on the corner of Sixth and Chestnut Streets in Philadelphia. While filling out paperwork on the new employee, the boss looked up and said, "I can't spell 'Zolajefsky,' let's just make it 'Julius.'" With no more formal paperwork than this simple decision by an employer, the family name was changed, and Emanuel, born a short time later, was named, on his birth certificate, "Julius."[2]

---

[2]Interview with Mrs. Rosalie Eisenberg, sister of Emanuel Julius, February 7, 1975.

No one could have predicted that this boy Emanuel Julius, born within earshot of the American Liberty Bell, this young son of an immigrant bookbinder, this tiny product

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of one Russian couple's American Dream, would eventually move even further westward with the rest of the nation, and with industry, pluck, luck and pagmatism, become himself a sort of embodiment of the American Dream. And become, as well, a significant force in the articulation, and perhaps creation, of American cultural values for at least a full decade.

From his inauspicious beginnings this man Julius was to become known, during the nineteen-twenties, as the "Henry Ford of Literature"--the "Wrigley of Publishing"--the "Voltaire from Kansas." Building on the premises that (1) happiness is the highest good of mankind, and that (2) knowledge is the key to happiness, Emanuel Julius set out to ameliorate the popular ignorance by sending his "University in Print" to the doorsteps of American society. Each 3-1/2" x 5" Little Blue Book that rolled off his presses was sent through the mail as a soldier in a war against ignorance. Individually and in phalanxes the crisp blue-uniformed nickel booklets were sent to carry knowledge and culture to the masses. Haldeman-Julius (his name was changed at the time of his marriage) theorized that the average man was a potential buyer of good books; he could and probably would read good literature if it came to him

in a size small enough to be carried in his work-trouser pocket and at a cost he could afford.[3]

---

[3]E. Haldeman-Julius, The First Hundred Million (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1928), 36-38, 41, 61; John W. Gunn, E. Haldeman-Julius--the Man and His Work (Little Blue Book No. 678, Girard, Kansas: Haldeman-Julius Publishing Co., 1924), 35-36.

The validity of Haldeman-Julius' hypothesis about "Mr. Average American" was substantiated by the phenomenal success of his thirty-two year publishing career (1919-1951). By the end of his first nine years as a publisher he had sold over a hundred million Little Blue Books and had made his Girard, Kansas, printing plant the largest mail-order publishing house in the world. It is estimated that before his death in 1951 he had almost unbelievably quintupled his 100,000,000 sales figure and had published nearly 2000 different titles in the Little and Big Blue Book series. E. Haldeman-Julius was certain of his impact on the masses; in the early nineteen-thirties he stated unequivocally that he had "done more to bring education to the masses than any other individual since the invention of printing."[4]

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[4]Although exact sales figures do not exist to substantiate this estimate, interviews with Mr. Gene DeGruson,

curator of the Haldeman-Julius Collection at Kansas State College (Pittsburg), and Mr. Henry Haldeman, son of E. Haldeman-Julius, indicate that the figures presented here are more accurate than previously published lower estimates; New York Times (June 14, 1964), 84; Saturday Review (April 12, 1969), 23. E. Haldeman-Julius, How to Become a Writer of Little Blue Books (Little Blue Book No. 1366, Girard: Haldeman-Julius Company, approximately 1934), 1.

Boyhood and Early Socialism

It was not particularly significant to Emanuel's boyhood that both his maternal and paternal grandfathers were Rabbis in Russia, for he recalled in his autobiography that his home life had been devoid of piety. "Neither parent," he wrote, "cared seriously about religion, and never thought I needed to absorb a mess of superstitious notions in order to earn a place in heaven. They were indifferent, for which I thank them . . . they just didn't seem to care a damn."[5] Despite his statement in later life

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[5]E. Haldeman-Julius, My First 25 Years (Big Blue Book Number B-788, Girard: Haldeman-Julius Company, 1949), 15.

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that he and his father were always on the best of terms, young Emanuel's boyhood seems to have been less than happy. The fifth of eight children (two died at sea when their parents came to America), there is reason to believe that he was ill-at-ease at home. According to his wife Marcet he was intentionally evasive about his childhood as late as 1924 (ostensibly because both parents were still alive, and he didn't want to hurt them). His "palpitating impatience with new visions," she wrote, was out of tune with the old-world atmosphere of his parents' home, and his boyhood had been "full of mental and spiritual conflicts." Isaac Goldberg, in a 1925 study of Emanuel's mind, attempted to relate the lad's "background of economic and emotional maladjustment" to the spirit of rebellion that sometimes becomes evident in Jewish boys as they approach Bar Mitzvah. But Emanuel's sister Rosalie sees the matter in simpler terms: Emanuel, who never expected or had a Bar Mitzvah, was a very bright boy and a "very misunderstood child." His parents, who were not quite poverty-stricken, simply did not know how to understand or communicate with such a precocious and outspoken boy. Tensions eased when, at the

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age of thirteen, he quit school and declared his independence by moving out of his parents' home.[6] After leaving

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[6] Marcet Haldeman-Julius, "What the Editor's Wife is Thinking About," Haldeman-Julius Weekly (August 30, 1924), 5; Albert Mordell, The World of Haldeman-Julius (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1960), 38-39; Issac Goldberg, "E. Haldeman-Julius: A Psychography," Stratford Monthly, Vol. IV (New Series), No. 1 (January, 1925), 25-26; Interview with Rosalie Eisenberg.

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school he worked briefly in a factory, as an office boy, as an usher in Keith's Chestnut Street theater, and as a copyholder in the proofroom of the Philadelphia Press and the Philadelphia Item.[7]

---

[7] My First 25 Years, 14; Sue Haldeman-Julius' "Profile," in The World of Haldeman-Julius, 10; Interview with Rosalie Eisenberg.

Having discovered Paine, Ingersoll, and the Socialist pamphlets and books bound by his father, and recognizing in himself a desire to read, think and learn, he found himself attracted by the literary and intellectual appeal of Socialism. By the time he was fifteen he had read all of Horatio Alger and Frank Meriwell's "Old King Brady" series, and was digging into Marx, Engels, Debs, Haeckel, Twain, Balzac, Sinclair, Voltaire, Tolstoy, Spencer, Hugo,

Huxley and more of Ingersoll. And by the age of sixteen, after repeated visits to the Socialist Party local at 1305 Arch Street, he thought of himself as "a full-fledged left winger." At seventeen he was writing articles, essays, editorials and stories, some of which were published in the Philadelphia Socialist press.[8]

[8] My First 25 Years, 15; Goldberg, 24, 26.

Asserting his independence, Emanuel made trips to Boston and New York on his own at the age of seventeen with practically no money in his pocket, and was initiated into the larger world outside of Philadelphia. As with Shakespeare, the world came to be little more than a stage full of players to this restless and insatiably curious young man. And Emanuel always felt that he was a part of a charmed enthralled audience. While in New York a tip led him to Miss Mason's School for Girls, at Tarrytown-on-the-Hudson, where he became a bellboy for what he later referred to as "his four hundred virgins."[9]

[9] My First 25 Years, 39; Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, America, The Greatest Show on Earth (Little Blue Book No. 1291, Girard: Haldeman-Julius Co., 1928), 4, 6.

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At the girls' school he passed the time by reading books borrowed from the library: Carlyle's Sartor Resartus, Emerson's Essays, and as much Mark Twain as he could lay his hands on. In August, 1908, two years after arriving in the New York area, Emanuel met Mr. Clemens in person. They strolled and talked along the banks of the Hudson at Clemens' home near Tarrytown, and the meeting confirmed for the young Socialist his notion that Mark Twain, a product of the working class of the west, "the fertile field of true democracy," was essentially a philosopher and social critic rather than a humorist.[10]

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[10] Ibid., 37-39; Emanuel Julius, "Mark Twain--Radical," International Socialist Review XI (August, 1910), 83-88, quoted in Cothran, 15-18.

Journalistic Apprenticeship

The intellectual stimulation and literary aura associated with turn-of-the-century Socialism led Emanuel to a post with the editorial staff of the New York Call. While at the Call he made good use of the education he had

gotten on his own and at the Rand School of Social Science in New York. He worked "like a demon" for $15.00 a week writing labor and Socialist news, Sunday articles on George Bernard Shaw, art, literature, impressions of common life and sketches of common folk. He did a little of everything . . . working as a journeyman reporter/writer in anticipation of bigger things to come.[11]

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[11] My First 25 Years, 44, 15.

From the Call he went west to work for another Socialist newspaper--Victor L. Berger's Milwaukee Leader. He was assigned to cover city hall, the jail, the sheriff's office, the morgue, police headquarters, the district court and the fire department. He was advancing from journeyman to apprentice, and he was demonstrating true versatility; he wrote from five to seven columns of newsprint every day . . . for $18.00 a week! While working for the Leader, Emanuel met Carl Sandburg. Their desks were side by side on the third floor of Brisbane Hall, and Sandburg (at that time a poet chiefly in the evenings at home) was by day the union activity reporter for the Leader.

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After more than a year in Milwaukee, Emanuel moved, with Chester M. Wright (his city editor) and Carl Sandburg to Chicago to work for the World, a Socialist daily that had recently burst into a 200,000 circulation as a result of a strike by the big capitalist dailies in Chicago. At the World his apprenticeship began to pay bigger financial dividends--$30.00 a week for writing general assignments of all sorts, including some direct shots at the Hearst people's circulation hoodlums who periodically made dawn raids on the World, beating up everyone in sight for scabbing on the striking capitalist press. Emanuel himself avoided being roughed up by hiding in the well of a roll-top desk. He then wrote first-page stories telling how Hearst's goons were outlaws and totally without respect for freedom of the press.[12]

[12] Ibid., 16, 22.

Emanuel never did like Chicago. It was clumsy and rough and raw--not beautifully rough and raw, as his friend Sandburg saw it in his poem about the city. Just ugly. So he was happy to join Chester Wright in another change of social and geographical scenery. Pursuing his westward

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trek to its conclusion in 1913, Emanuel became the assistant editor of the Los Angeles Citizen, a big weekly labor paper. This affiliation was short-lived, however, for when the State Committee of the Socialist Party asked Chester and him to run the California Social Democrat, a Socialist weekly, they accepted. Their talents were soon directed into The Western Comrade, an attractive Socialist monthly magazine, as well. Consistent with the rapid turnover in personnel at the Socialist papers, Emanuel completed his apprenticeship and within a year found himself editor of not only the Social Democrat, but also owner of the Western Comrade. He had mixed emotions about Los Angeles; he liked the ocean, the countryside, the mountains, the marvelous women . . . but he also saw Los Angeles in 1913-14 as a place that had manners without culture and a population eager to be duped by mountebanks, evangelists and con-men.[13]

[13] Ibid., 23, 31.

In the summer of 1914 Emanuel received an invitation from his old friend Chester Wright, who had gone back East to become editor of the New York Call. Would Emanuel

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return to his old paper and give Chester a hand? New York beckoned . . . it was an exciting, exotic, beautiful city. He resigned immediately from the Social Democrat, sold The Western Comrade for a thousand dollars worth of stock (which he converted into five $20.00 gold pieces), and left Los Angeles on his twenty-fifth birthday--July 30, 1914. Upon arriving in New York this young dandy (he began carrying a stick and took a large room at $4.00 a week on the east side of Washington Square), his ability proven during his labors in the West, assumed the dignified post of Sunday Editor on the Call and also wrote its literary criticism and musical and theatrical reviews. In this heady environment, on the eastern edge of Greenwich Village, Emanuel occasionally met in the elevator, but never spoke to, a beautiful young lady who lived on the floor below him in the Benedick Apartments. Her name was Anna Marcet Haldeman.

Miss Haldeman, the polished young daughter of an old and substantial banking family in Girard, Kansas, had recently graduated from Bryn Mawr, and was, during these New York years, an aspiring and successful actress. Her grandfather, John Addams, had been an important Cedarville, Illinois, Senator and friend of Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War; she was also the niece of Jane Adams, of Hull

House in Chicago. Her background was one of land and wealth and leisured culture. Marcet's blossoming stage career was cut short, however, when, after the death of her mother, in March of 1915 (her father, a University of Leipsic-trained musician and physician, had died in March, 1905), she returned to Girard to look after her inherited banking interests.[14]

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[14] Ibid., 46-47; letter from Mrs. Alice DeLoach to author dated January 22, 1975; Marcet Haldeman-Julius, Jane Addams as I Knew Her (Reviewer's Library, Number 7; Girard: Haldeman-Julius Co., 1936), 16; unidentified obituaries and news clippings loaned to author by Mrs. Alice DeLoach.

Girard, Marriage and Children

Girard, Kansas, at the time of Marcet's return, was the headquarters of The Appeal to Reason. A Socialist paper, founded in 1897 by Julius Augustus Wayland, The Appeal was the biggest and one of the most colorful of the Party's weeklies. Wayland, known as the "One Hoss Philosopher of Kansas," had established a Socialist commune

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in Tennessee named after John Ruskin, and exemplified the highest idealism of turn-of-the-century radicals who saw the populism of a Debs or a LaFollette as something truly viable for America. So idealistic was he, in fact, that he, in November of 1912, after reading a few passages from Bellamy's Looking Backward, killed himself in his home with a pistol. His farewell note said, "The struggle under the capitalistic system isn't worth the effort. Let it pass."[15]

[15] Interview with Mr. Walter Wayland, January 9, 1975; Russel B. Nye, Midwestern Progressive Politics (East Lansing: Michigan State College Press, 1951), 174; Stewart H. Holbrook, Lost Men of American History (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1946), 313-317.

Fred D. Warren, former managing editor, took over operation of the Appeal, along with J. A. Wayland's two sons, Jon and Walter, after the suicide. Warren, in need of an experienced assistant to run such a major operation, hired Louis Kopelin, Emanuel's boss on the Call. And Kopelin, in turn, sent for Emanuel to join him in Girard when Warren decided to phase himself out of the business. Faced with an opportunity to better himself again (Call circulation at the time was approximately 40,000, while the Appeal, under Warren's leadership, had circulated over

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a million copies--with more than 50,000 in the New York area), Emanuel told Kopelin he would come to Girard, and, in what must have been by then a familiar ritual, packed his bags . . . this time for the last time. With his mind full of dreams about working with the major Socialist paper in the country (the paper for which his old political idol, Eugene V. Debs, wrote editorials and gave lectures), with his mind full of anticipation and conviction that he, like Horatio Alger's boy-heroes, was being rewarded for his hard work and pursuit of idealistic goals for the common man . . . with a mind full of such thoughts and hopes and dreams, he could hardly have guessed that he would, in this little prairie town in southeast Kansas, eventually marry the girl he had met in the elevator in New York, buy the Appeal plant, and print millions of little blue booklets that would bring the message of self-improvement through self-education to the American masses.[16]

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[16] Wayland interview; E. Haldeman-Julius, My Second 25 Years (Big Blue Book No. B-814, Girard: Haldeman-Julius Company, 1949), 60, 62; Cothran, 42-45.

"I showed up late one night and was met at the train by [Louis] Kopelin and a young man named John W. Gunn,

who then was in his early 20's."[17] Emanuel took a room in

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[17] My Second 25 Years, 62.

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the Keys Hotel in Girard until he could get more permanent quarters. Later in that same month, October, 1915, he spotted Anna Marcet Haldeman in the hotel lobby. Turning to his old friend Kopelin, Emanuel asked who this pretty young girl was. Kopelin looked up and said, "she is the town's rich girl." Emanuel responded decisively . . . "I would like to marry her!" And eight months later, after getting reacquainted from their passing glances on the elevator in the Benedick Apartments, Emanuel Julius fulfilled another of the many goals he set for himself in life. He, the son of immigrant Russian-Jews, a poor uneducated boy from Philadelphia, married the town rich girl. He married her and her background of culture, social prestige, and patrician comfort.[18]

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[18] Letter from Mrs. Alice DeLoach, op. cit.; William F. Ryan, "Girard--Where Books are Battleships," The American Rationalist (November-December, 1974), reprinted from the Rosslyn (Va.) Review, Vol. VIII, No. 16 (June 13, 1974).

Letters

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Letters from Emanuel and Marcet to her relatives during their courtship demonstrate an early recognition on both their parts that independence was to be a key trait in their future relationship. In a letter to her grandmother at the Addams Homestead in Cedarville, Illinois, Marcet wrote:

> One thing we have positively agreed upon -- to let each other's business affairs alone entirely . . . . He is the type of man who can always 'hump himself' and look after both of us and any family we might have but I could not live comfortably on his income as it is at present.
> . . . So we have decided to be completely independent of each other -- each pay half of our common expenses -- and each take care of our own personal ones -- without consulting one another about the latter any more than we do at present. We shall, of course, each have our own room and I think we have lived long enough and are wise enough never to try to encroach upon one another's personality. The thought of being tied is almost intolerable to us both.[19]

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[19] Marcet to "Geliebte Grossmutter," March 21, 1916, quoted in Cothran, 56.

If Marcet's letter to her grandmother seems to be a thinly veiled reassurance that she was not about to be married for her money (at this time Emanuel was worth slightly less than $2,000, and Marcet's total property and other assets

were worth slightly more than $125,000), a letter from Emanuel to Marcet's Aunt Jane Addams, also midway through the courtship, removes the veil completely:

> Marcet has her work and I have mine. . . . Marcet understands me, but she doesn't know me . . . . I believe we both have a sense of fairness and an appreciation of personal liberty. I know I can accept a person's viewpoint even though I must reject a person's conclusions.
> . . . I have developed my own efficiency to the point wherein I am (and have been for more than five years) completely independent. This ability of mine is of such a nature that I can, at any time, take my choice of several positions. I prefer, however, to remain here with Marcet. I know I can always carry the burden of my own living expenses and that is important, isn't it?

Emanuel included a list of references in his letter to Jane Addams, and suggested that she write them to learn what they thought of him. "All of them are not my friends," he said. "Most of them are persons who know me through my work."[20]

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[20]Emanuel Julius to Jane Addams, March 8, 1916, quoted in Cothran, 54. The financial assets of Emanuel and Marcet at the time of their marriage were revealed in a Petition for Separate Maintenance filed by Marcet in the District Court of Crawford County, sitting at Pittsburg, Kansas, on December 4, 1933 (Case No. 12,833; documents part of the Haldeman-Julius file in the Crawford County, Kansas, Probate Court), and examined at the Crawford County Courthouse.

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The fact that Emanuel felt it necessary to list references for Marcet's aunt is indicative of the role Jane Addams played in granting approval for the marriage. Although documentary evidence is not available, there is good reason to believe that Aunt Jane was strongly against the proposed marriage . . . and even went so far as to write Upton Sinclair, a close associate of Emanuel's from his Call days, to enlist Sinclair's assistance in halting the marriage.[21]

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[21] Interview with Mrs. Rosalie Eisenberg.

From all indications the marriage, which took place at the Addams homestead in Cedarville (without Jane Addams' attendance), on June 1, 1916, was to be a thoroughly modern one. The respective roles and responsibilities of bride and groom seem to have been clearly spelled out prior to the wedding. Independence of personalities was such an important issue that Emanuel willingly complied with Marcet's wish that their last names be linked--thus preserving legally her identity as a Haldeman. Marcet stated in 1924 that the linking of last names had been "purely a response [on his part] to an earnest wish of [hers]; a

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generous gesture acknowledging our full partnership." Emanuel's last name was officially changed from "Julius" to "Haldeman-Julius" by the District Court of Crawford County, Kansas, on December 4, 1916.[22] After his marriage

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[22]Marcet Haldeman-Julius, "What the Editor's Wife is Thinking About," Haldeman-Julius Weekly (August 30, 1924), 5; Journal Entry of Judgment, No. 4336, Sitting at Girard, entered into the record on December 8, 1916 (document part of the Haldeman-Julius file in the Crawford County, Kansas, Probate Court, and examined at the Crawford County Courthouse).

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his friends and business associates began calling him by the familiar--yet officious--initials, "E. H-J."

Alice Haldeman-Julius was born on Saturday, May 26, 1917, and, despite protests from her unreligious father, she was christened--for the sake of her mother--at the Cedarville Homestead. Aunt Jane Addams arrived from Chicago for the ceremony. Henry Haldeman-Julius was born on November 1, 1919, the second and last of Marcet's and Emanuel's natural children. A third child, Josephine, was taken into the Haldeman-Julius family in August, 1918, but never formally adopted. The daughter of a poor coal miner named Jacob Wettstein, who worked in the small mining community of Ringo, just outside of Girard, Josephine and

her sisters reportedly danced in the streets and taverns for nickels and dimes that the miners threw at their feet. From time to time Marcet attempted to do social work in Ringo, helping poor families and underprivileged children. After the sheriff had brought the Wettstein children into Girard for care by the County Matron, Marcet noticed the children and asked that she be permitted to take Josephine and raise her. Permission was granted, and Josephine grew close to Marcet, apparently emulating her and wishing that Marcet were her own mother. In later years Josephine was at the center of a much-publicized controversy regarding her "companionate marriage" to a local boy named Aubrey Roselle. In reality the ceremony was highly legal, the only real break from time-honored marriage tradition being some rearrangement and deletion of words in the spoken vows.[23]

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[23]Cothran, 73, 109; Interview with Mrs. Alice DeLoach, November 1, 1974; Letter from Mrs. Pearl McFarland to Mr. Frank Swancara, of the Henry McAllister Legal Firm, Denver, Colorado, August 15, 1949. (Letter loaned to author by Mrs. Pearl McAhron, Girard, Kansas.)

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Physical and Personal Traits

The young man Marcet married in 1916 was a healthy, goodlooking fellow. Standing, as he described himself, "a full, majestic, towering five feet six," he dressed faultlessly, and had, according to Marcet, "a buoyant and youthful appearance -- the physique of the old Greek runners." He was slender but not thin, and she predicted (incorrectly as it turned out) that he would never become stout. He weighed a well-dsitributed 140 pounds, and appeared, to his wife, slightly taller than he actually was. His hair was black and fine, worn parted on the side or slicked back in a pompadour. Beaneath long, thick black eyebrows and eyelashes his clear blue-grey eyes perceived both the form and content of the passing parade. His chin was square and firm--Marcet described it as "aggressive." Emanuel was sometimes mistaken in public places for Edward G. Robinson, and he enjoyed it. Upon being told he looked like the famous actor, Emanuel would go into a little act of sticking his cigar out, lowering his voice, and growling, "Now listen here youse guys . . . ."[24]

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[24]Sue Haldeman-Julius, "Profile," in Mordell, 11-12.

Lloyd Smith, Emanuel's editorial assistant during the twenties, described two striking facial characteristics of the man who occupied the "inner sanctum" a few feet from Smith's own desk in the "outer office": His boss blinked his eyelids rapidly when thinking, and his nose was somewhat flattened at the base from some childhood incident. When the Editor was nervous, Smith wrote, or when something important was very much on his mind, he put the finger tips of one hand to his mouth or teeth. A careless observer might have thought he was biting his nails, but "E. H-J [was] never nervous or frenzied enough to do that." Marcet concurred with Smith's approximation of her husband's public temperament; she described him as being "low-key, temperate," a man with "tranquil emotions." The boss' office was bare of adornment, and was functionally equipped to turn out copy. He wore no jewelry except for a ring on the third finger of his left hand. He never carried a watch, but used the timeclock outside his office as a reference at work. At home, in his library-study, he had no clock either; he went to bed when he was tired.

In another, more penetrating and more honest, description of her husband, Marcet said he was a "volatile

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being," yet sensitive, with "a disarming but very sophisticated technique" that attracted women to him. He, in return, liked pretty and charming women, was supremely sure of himself, and allowed himself "a good deal more liberty than the average husband." Emanuel's attention was never held long by any one person--for he was not interested primarily in people, but in ideas for their own sake. "Ideas," Marcet wrote in 1924, "not emotions, direct his actions, shape his life. . . . While warmly affectionate and quietly loyal to the very few people whom he really loves, he is undeniably mental in his interests and reactions."[25]

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[25] My Second 25 Years, 14; Charles J. Finger's description of Emanuel in the Haldeman-Julius Weekly (March 24, 1923), 1, quoted in Cothran, 185; Lloyd Smith, "Outside the Editor's Door," Haldeman-Julius Weekly (February 13, 1926), 2; Peter H. Wyden, "Book Baron," Liberty Magazine (November, 1948), 20; Marcet's description of her husband in the Haldeman-Julius Weekly (August 30, 1924), 5-6.

Marcet's insight into the strongly mental aspect of Emanuel's personality is fundamental to an understanding of his total modus operandi. At the office or at home, except for infrequent outbursts of teary-eyed belly laughter among trusted friends or relatives, Emanuel was

preoccupied with work and ideas. He, according to Marcet, never hummed or whistled or sang; he was "a quiet, almost silent man, going about much of the time in a state of 'opaque thoughtfulness.'"

While at work he often used the floor as a waste basket . . . he gave manuscripts a cursory but accurate examination, read the incoming mail quickly, and, as a man who loathed wasted time or effort and loved efficiency, simply threw any offal from his desk onto the floor. He worked hard, according to his editorial assistant, and kept time-clock hours. No one was more prompt at eight in the morning, or at one in the afternoon, than the Editor himself. He sought no special treatment for himself, and made rounds through the plant about a half-dozen times daily. Mr. Haldeman-Julius, in Lloyd Smith's view, respected two things: industry and accuracy.

At home Emanuel read constantly, and was inclined to be withdrawn, impersonal, aloof. When working in his study, no one . . . neither Marcet nor the children nor Harold, the black houseboy, nor even Monty the dog -- dared disturb him. When he walked he was usually bound for a very definite destination, and had some equally definite thought in mind. "He never," according to Marcet,

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"even on the lawn in the evening, strolls, but walks, as he does everything else, rapidly and easily. Henry and Alice have to trot briskly to keep up with him, and never, by any chance, would it occur to Emanuel to slow his pace to suit them." Marcet, speaking both literally and metaphorically, continued: ". . . children and adults alike must keep up with him - or be left behind." Emanuel Haldeman-Julius may well have been a compulsive worker. Marcet stated that "his talk and thoughts are constantly of the Little Blue Books. Literally from the time he opens his eyes until he finally closes them, he is at work." He did the work of five men, according to his wife in 1924, but he enjoyed his work.[26]

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[26]Smith, Haldeman-Julius Weekly (February 13, 1926), 2; Interview with Professor Marvin Eisenberg, nephew of Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, February 7, 1975; Marcet's description of her husband in the Haldeman-Julius Weekly (August 30, 1924), 5-6; Cothran, 225. Although apparently quiet and serious at home, there is evidence that Emanuel Haldeman-Julius had a great sense of humor--especially when among friends. William J. Fielding, in his autobiography, All The Lives I Have Lived (Philadelphia: Dorrance & Company, 1972), remembered Haldeman-Julius' humor as his chief characteristic (p. 147).

Supporting the public image of her husband, Marcet described his character and personality in appreciative and

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glowing terms. Emanuel was a self-made man. From a small start he had "built up singlehandedly, by sheer brain and will power, by sheer genius, a tremendous, almost 100% automatic plant, which stands entirely free from debt." He was, despite his "swash-buckling and Barnum-like moments, a fundamentally honest man." She compared him with Georg Brandes' description of Voltaire, for Emanuel, too, was "a bundle of nerves, surcharged with electric energy." In a congenial atmosphere Emanuel, like his Enlightenment counterpart, was "the personification of wit; his intellect, with all its luminosity, was without heat." And Emanuel, again like Voltaire, was "a man whose very being was will power, whose ambition was action, who longed after honor, who was charm personified, whose praise a distinction sought -- whose scorn left marks like brands of iron."[27]

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[27]Marcet Haldeman-Julius, "What the Editor's Wife is Thinking About," Haldeman-Julius Weekly (August 30, 1924), 5-6.

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Family and Private Life

Marcet's public statements about Emanuel differed considerably from her private ones. The modern marriage they had entered into in 1916 disintegrated within eight years into a most unhappy home environment. Various factors were the ingredients for their stressful relationship: the uncompromising independence of Emanuel's and Marcet's personalities, Emanuel's impersonal intellectualism, Emanuel's compulsion for work, and two other issues--money and women.

Despite their stated plans to keep their individual finances totally separate, Emanuel and Marcet began, within three years of their wedding, what was to become not only a mingling of their complex business affairs, but also a gradual and consistent migration of Marcet's fiscal assets into Emanuel's hands. In 1919 she underwrote, with a $35,000 loan, her husband's share in the purchase of the Appeal plant from Jon and Walter Wayland. And to assist him further in establishing his mushrooming Little Blue Book and newspaper business, she, in a contract drawn on July 2, 1925, transferred to Emanuel $57,000 in Liberty Bonds, 265 shares of capital stock in the State Bank of

Girard, and all shares then held by her in the Haldeman-Julius Publishing Company. The agreement also leased him the Cedarville farm for him to operate and retain all profits.

In return he was to pay Marcet $100 every week thereafter, in addition to, and exclusive of, such weekly payments as he made toward the maintenance and support of the home and family, leave her all he owned if he died before her, pay all taxes on their farm home on the outskirts of Girard, pay all her debts prior to July 2, 1925, pay $25,000 outright to both Henry and Alice in the event that Marcet should die before Emanuel, leave $250,000 plus all life insurance benefits--or all he had if he were worth less than $250,000--to the children when he died if she had preceded him in death. Failure to make weekly payments for a four-week period would necessitate immediate payment by him to her of the sum of $125,000. Finally, Emanuel could cancel the agreement by payment of $125,000 in cash or securities to Marcet.[28] Later, in 1935, Marcet inherited

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[28] Ibid., 5; Contract Agreement between Marcet and Emanuel Haldeman-Julius dated July 2, 1925 (the original document is in the Haldeman-Julius file in the Crawford County, Kansas, Probate Court, and was examined in the Crawford County Courthouse in Girard).

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$3,000.00 from a reader who had followed her writing career and appreciated her literary talent as demonstrated in Little Blue Books, novels, and newspaper and magazine articles. Realizing her husband's financial plight due to the Great Deparession, she unhesitatingly gave him the entire $3,000.00.[29]

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[29] Cothran, 382.

In spite of her devotion and generosity to Emanuel, however, her own financial situation became at times frankly desperate. As early as August, 1924, Marcet, who often went to the Cedarville farm for long periods, wrote a letter to Alice and Henry setting forth vividly the details of her financial relationship with their father:

> Today the last of the first 10 tons of coal for the winter was put in. And your father gave me a check for it -- $57.50. This is certainly a great improvement over last winter when I was actually so harassed and worried about money -- your father was then giving me $25 a week -- that I have shed bitter tears on realizing that coal was again necessary. I don't know why -- but the coal seemed always to be the last straw. It took two very stormy sessions -- the last one on Sunday, August 3rd to get your fathers reluctant promise that in addition to the $75 a week he would this winter supply the coal. But it made me feel ten years younger.

It is the old story of resentment. He has 35,000 of my money tied up in the plant from which I do not get a cent. On Saturday, August 3rd he began paying himself a salary of $500 a week which means 52x500 = 26,000 a year. And also means there will be no dividends. Everything declared -- Louis's salary was also increased -- in the form of salary which leaves me out neatly.

I urged your father to let me have a hundred a week or 5200 a year. But he flew into a find cold rage. When you are older you can decide whether or not 1/5 of his salary -- for household expenses -- I pay all my own even to pen points and ink -- is an unreasonable request.

The months I earned all the expenses, the months your father contributed only $25 a week and the months he gave me 55 a week, I knew that he was hard pressed at the plant and did the best I could gladly but when the tide turned and general prosperity set in I felt it only fair that more of the burden should be lifted from my shoulders.

But when I found how set your father was -- just 75 no more and no less -- and after tears, arguments and a generally disgraceful scene -- the coal; I made up my mind too that what he won't pay for the house won't have.

I shall use tact where I can -- but he positively shall pay for the help -- the food --

. . . . . .

Always I will be a month behind -- in the drawer. It humiliates me. I am utterly discouraged --

But I know I might as well ask your father to take out his heart as to give me the $332.30 that would bring the Household Account up to date. And yet not one month ago he paid $850 for a chair for his library . . . . The chair is beautiful. I adore to see your father look well -- if he could

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> only learn to be fair. But that is simply not his nature. Kind he can be and often is; often suddenly generous -- But plain old-fashioned fair -- never.[30]

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[30]Marcet to Alice and Henry, August 20, 1924, quoted in Cothran, 221-222.

According to Marcet's report in the Haldeman-Julius Weekly just ten days later, Emanuel was at that very time driving "a beautiful Cadillac coupe" which he had purchased the year before.

A month later Marcet sent Emanuel an itemized account of "the expenses of your household and your children during the month of August, 1924." The exact nature of his response is not known, but in a letter to her regarding another matter shortly thereafter, he offered her a job writing for him. And, more surprisingly, she was delighted at the offer. She wrote back on September 14, expressing what appears to have been an unfulfilled need to be appreciated as a creative artist: "It is great fun being discovered -- even at this late date -- by my boy!"[31]

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[31]Letters and itemized statement quoted in Cothran, 222.

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In 1926 Marcet wrote a letter to Emanuel asking for a loan to cover an overdraft. "Can you and will you lend me three hundred dollars," Marcet pleaded. "I will pay it back -- fifty dollars (in cash, not by check or work) every Saturday evening." The remainder of the letter gives a rare glimpse into the internal dynamics of the family and Emanuel's role in it:

> If you feel you can't do it, it will take me that much longer . . . to get my overdraft wiped out. I have kept things going, paid bills -- one was for one hundred and twenty-five dollars for the kitchen stove -- passed through the strain of Christmas . . . and have reduced my overdraft by three hundred dollars -- it was six hundred and six when I started. Oh Manuel, please be kind and generous. I don't ask you to give it to me. And I assure you that I will pay it back precisely as I say I will. I do try so hard to do what is right. . . . Either Joey or Alice can tell you how cautious I am and how little we buy . . . .
>
> I have wanted to ask you this before, but just couldn't get up the courage. Well, you can't do anything more than say "No." And if you could do this for me and do it with love and tenderness, I assure you I should never forget it. I am not the kind of person who works well under strain, Emanuel, and I do so want to do my very best in this opportunity you have given me to write.
>
> . . . A dozen times I have gone -- feeling that the whole situation was preposterous -- to the library to ask you to lend me this and let me pay you back by the week -- and then my heart would fail me, because -- I know it is cowardly -- but I do so

> flinch from being sharply criticized -- when I am doing my best -- by someone I love as I do you.
>
> . . . I know that you have your own way of loving and that for you to do or not to do certain things does not mean quite the same that it would mean for me to do or not to do them. I know that you can really love me and yet not care very much whether I am happy or unhappy, while if I think you are worn by some worry or humiliation I just can't live until I have done everything in my power to help dissolve it for you.
>
> . . . Anyway dear, I love you.[32]

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[32]Marcet to Emanuel, February 16, 1926, quoted in Cothran, 261-262.

Marcet's true feelings about her husband were expressed in strong language in a letter to her Aunt Jane Addams in December, 1925. "You know, Auntie," she wrote confidentially, "all these years of living among people in whom I never confide has created in me the habit of keeping everything tight shut up in myself."

> Some deep instinct tells me not to discuss Emanuel and the various problems which arise from his peculiar temperament. I am not a hypocrite, but it has grown to be second nature to lift a smooth surface to the world in general and to all my closest friends in particular, to stress all that is loveliest and beautiful in our lives and to soft pedal all that is not so lovely and so beautiful. If people get the impression that the proportion of happiness is much greater than the pain -- well that is true. Because I have, as it

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> were, acquired a knack of enduring rather placidly the particular things with which I have to put up. That is to say -- I have grown accustomed to being loved by one of the most selfish, self-centered men on earth; to living daily with someone who thinks not only first but almost wholly of his own pleasure, his own wishes, and who never, unless he happens to be in a rarely expansive mood, is even slightly interested in the thoughts, wishes and feelings of those around him.[33]

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[33]Marcet to Jane Addams, probably in late December of 1925, quoted in Cothran, 241.

Although there were hints early in the marriage that Emanuel was willing to combine his past interest in beautiful women with the personal freedom guaranteed to him by Marcet before their wedding, it was not until 1924 that Marcet brought the matter unequivocally into the open. Writing to her husband from the Cedarville farm on May 13, 1924 (she had been at the farm much of the year), she stated explicitly the reason for her self-imposed separation from him and the terms under which she would return. Her letter is sensitive, sad, compassionately written:

> Manuel Boy:
>
> . . . I am planning to leave tomorrow and be home Thursday.
>
> Manuel, there is just one thing I want to say to you and I want to say it just as simply

as possible. You have your own life to live and must decide for yourself -- as I must -- what is right or wrong. I don't want to hamper you or make you feel tied in any way and -- if you want me to -- I am going to stay with you through everything. But, dear, I think you will understand that I cannot keep my own self-respect if I let you come to me from other women or caress me with the thought in my mind that even so you caress young girls. I should be no better than the fast women themselves and by sanctioning the others I should be truly culpable.

Maybe, Emanuel, you feel that you have put all this behind you. Maybe in your heart there are only deep regrets. If this is so, you will find in mine only forgiveness and love. You don't need to say so in words, dear. Or you don't need to say that you want to feel perfectly free -- perhaps your very soul needs that sense of utter freedom. I can understand that, Emanuel, and I am not judging you -- believe me.

But I cannot and will not share you. My humiliation in my own eyes, and in the eyes of Alice and Henry later, would be too profound. I could not bear it. I am proud, Emanuel, and already I have suffered past belief. I have burned and bled with the consciousness of insult and outrage. But that is past . . . .

I will wait for you, my darling -- a year, five years, the rest of my life, until you are quite tired of all the others, of variety itself and of unripe youth, until you long for me with a deep aching hunger for the peace and comfort that a man can find, Emanuel, only in his wife. If you ever do come to me again it must be with a pledge in your heart of hearts that never again will you be unfaithful to me.

Meanwhile, I shall try, in all sincerity, not to criticize you for whatever you do --

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> for love comes and goes and cannot be bound by promises -- nor even created by earnest wish. It is not your fault if you have lost yours for me.
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> And I know that you have deep -- and perhaps just -- resentments of your own. I can only say that whereas last year I was planning to spend -- to make bills and debt, since the first day of 1924 my one unfaltering determination and effort has been to catch up -- to pay my bills and debts.
>
> Yet full of resentments and mutual mistrust as we are, aren't we both big enough -- and wise enough -- to cast aside all recriminations -- even in thought? I, for one, Emanuel, intend on the eve of our ninth year of marriage to gather together all my precious, beautiful memories of you -- and they are so many -- and to cleanse my heart of all lurking grudges.[34]

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[34]Marcet to Emanuel, May 13, 1924, quoted in Cothran, 209-210.

In spite of efforts to resolve their personal, financial, and other problems, there is reason to believe that the tension in the Haldeman-Julius home persisted. Emanuel stayed in Girard, near his work and other interests, and Marcet traveled around the United States -- and to Russia and Mexico -- to cover stories and court cases such as the Scopes case in Dayton, Tennessee, and the Sweet case in Detroit, and look after the foreign sales of their jointly-authored novel, Dust. She also continued

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to spend a great deal of time at the Cedarville farm. At the Girard farm Josephine managed nearly all household matters, and she and Alice made regular trips into town for music and dance lessons and beauty parlor appointments. Josephine, Alice and Henry, in 1926 aged seventeen, nine, and seven, respectively, were in school during the day. Domestic help and farm laborers took care of the physical labor of running the 160-acre Girard farm, and Emanuel spent a great deal of time at his office or in his library study at home. Marcet, writing from Cedarville, expressed concern as to whether Emanuel was spending enough time at home, and whether he was seeing much of the children.[35]

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[35]Cothran, 264.

In 1926, with business literally booming (Emanuel had more than a thousand Little Blue Book titles in print, daily sales volume frequently exceeded a thousand dollars per day, and he was publishing Big Blue Books, the Haldeman-Julius Weekly, the Haldeman-Julius Monthly, and the Haldeman-Julius Quarterly), the head of the Haldeman-Julius household was driving a new six-thousand dollar Lincoln Salon Coupe (which, if it was like his earlier

Cadillac, was strictly and exclusively his, a vehicle in which Marcet rode only when invited as an honored guest). A year earlier he had boasted that his thirty-sixth birthday meant to him "health wealth, two country homes, three cars, two beautiful children [Josephine was usually an afterthought to him], success as a publisher, an editor and writer, and my name in the papers." "Money," he continued, ". . . came easily -- almost too easily. I never have to give much thought to money. A half hour or at most forty-five minutes a day will always bring me far more than enough for the day's needs, leaving over a tidy sum for old age. It just seems to work that way . . . it comes easily - a lot goes quickly, and it is good to see it come and go. . . . It seems there are people in this prosperous country who do not make enough. I meet such people from time to time, and they depress me. Some people, from what I can observe, have to worry and work and sweat to make a hundred or a thousand dollars. They have to give the job full time, and overtime. If I want something, and if that something costs ten thousand, or twenty thousand, I say to myself, 'money, come hence - quickly, painlessly, unobtrusively, legally' - and it comes as directed. It comes because I own a lot of presses that turn out millions of

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little books that sell at the price Wrigley charges for his gum. . . . You might say that I am the Wrigley of literature, or the Woolworth, or the Ford."[36]

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[36]Marcet's description of Emanuel (Haldeman-Julius Weekly, August 30, 1924), 6; Cothran, 265; E. Haldeman-Julius, "What the Editor is Thinking About" (Haldeman-Julius Weekly, August 8, 1925), 1.

Marcet, at the same time, was still preoccupied with getting enough money together to pay for the groceries. On April 13, 1926, she wrote Josephine from Detroit, where she was covering the racially significant Sweet trial (Calrence Darrow was the defense lawyer, as he had been in the Scopes trial a year earlier, and Ruby Darrow, his wife, had invited Marcet to cover the case): "I don't know whether or not I shall ask Daddy to pay me for this Sweet article. Not if the expenses [travel, lodging, etc.] run too high. An article is worth just so much and he and I know it." A week later she wrote Josephine again:

> I have made up my mind to pay cash -- spot cash for everything we buy hereafter -- except at the grocery and meat market. If we can't pay cash, we won't buy. . . . I sent Daddy thirty pages of copy yesterday. If he likes it he will pay you sixty dollars. Deposit it

> at once to my account. Oh, I hope he does!! . . . If Daddy gives you the sixty dollars and likes the article, wire me -- not over ten words. If he doesn't, don't wire.[37]

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[37]Marcet to "Joey," April 13 and 25, 1926, quoted in Cothran, 265; Ruby Darrow's letter to Marcet, February 7, 1926, is quoted in Cothran, 263.

It is difficult to account for the ambivalence Marcet apparently felt toward Emanuel. On one hand she felt, understandably, that he was selfish, insensitive and utterly domineering. And on the other hand she seems to have genuinely loved and respected him. Perhaps her somewhat sheltered and protected background as a child, combined with a sense of inferiority to her husband's intellect, and a deep need for approval and a sense of purpose in life were factors that prevented her from leaving Emanuel prior to her death in 1941. Her Aunt Jane Addams became a strong force in Marcet's life, especially after the death of Marcet's mother, when Marcet had almost no one else to turn to for advice and moral support. And although it is pure conjecture to link the values and attitudes of Jane Addams with those of her niece, it is worthy of consideration that Aunt Jane was, in spite of her liberal and liberated feminist image, an emotionally fragile woman,

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a person who sought a sense of purpose in establishing her settlement house and social work program, a person who desperately sought approval and recognition from her father and others, and who, like Marcet, grew up in a family tradition of strict morality, personal propriety, and almost Puritanical sense of duty. Some telling lines appear in a letter sent by Marcet to Emanuel--significantly, perhaps, written while she was visiting her aunt at Hull House--on April 6, 1926:

> Honey . . . everyone admires you so -- and justly. You are the most wonderful man I know -- because you are gifted in so many ways. These young professors -- charming, wide awake -- they really liked me, Emanuel, and I know Darrow does -- still do not seem to be gifted in a larger way -- as you are. I have always thought that there is in your makeup a dash of authentic genius. I do hope you are as glad of me as I am glad of you.[38]

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[38]Marcet to Emanuel, April 6, 1926, quoted in Cothran, 265. Insight into the Addams-Haldeman family at their Cedarville, Illinois homestead, and into the psychological makeup of Jane Addams herself, can be found in brief format in Christopher Lasch, The New Radicalism in America 1889-1963 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), 3-37. Marcet's relationship to her Aunt Jane Addams is detailed in her Jane Addams as I Knew Her (Reviewer's Library, Number 7, Girard: Haldeman-Julius Company, 1936).

In all fairness to Emanuel, he may have had some reasons for the "resentment" that Marcet said he justifiably had. A letter from Marcet to Alice in 1932 admitted to "many faults -- some of which are fundamental flaws in my character, others of which exist, like a chemical precipitate, only when another personality, like Daddy's pours itself upon my own. (And inevitably it must follow that I bring out faults in him)."[39] Alice's father did not leave

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[39]Marcet to Alice, December 17, 1932, quoted in Cothran, 368.

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much of a written record of his perception of the marital relationship, but he did say--in public--in his own disarmingly offhanded way, that he and Marcet were temperamentally "completely different -- as though Nietzche had married Queen Victoria." "Say," he continued, "that's not a bad figure. Someone could write a comedy on that. It would be funny, wouldn't it?" But it wasn't a comedy -- and if you asked Marcet or Joey or Alice or Henry, it wasn't funny.[40]

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[40]E. Haldeman-Julius, "What the Editor is Thinking About" (Haldeman-Julius Weekly, August 8, 1925), 1. On December 4, 1933 Marcet sued Emanuel for Separate Maintenance (he had moved out of the Girard farm home for a week

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in June, 1933, due to what he considered to be excess noise from Alice dancing, and had left home without returning in November, 1933, because some trays had come up missing in the house). The judge ordered Emanuel to pay $75.00 a week until a decision was made regarding his alleged breach of the contract entered into between Marcet and himself on July 2, 1925. The court action was eventually dismissed by joint accord of plaintiff and defendant and order of the judge on June 25, 1934. (Case No. 12,833, District Court of Crawford County, Kansas, Sitting at Pittsburg, Kansas. Documents located in Haldeman-Julius file in Probate Court, Crawford County Courthouse, Girard.) Details of Marcet's allegations and Emanuel's responses are accurately presented in Cothran, 373-375.

Mind and Values

The ideas and values of Emanuel Haldeman-Julius were so diverse and, at times, bafflingly contradictory, that no one single thread seems to have tied them all together. There were, however, several driving forces that might be seen as keys to the mind and work of the man.

He was an intellectual--and he needed physical and psychological freedom to think without the intrusion of unwelcome people or systematic governmental or religious censorship; he believed passionately and idealistically in the power of education--rationalism--to free men from their

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own self-defeating fears and superstitions; he had an intense desire for personal achievement; he was a thoroughgoing hedonist; and he was an efficient pragmatist.

Emanuel was, as Marcet pointed out, essentially a cerebral being; ". . . ideas," she had said, "not emotions direct his actions, shape his life." From his earliest adolescent days he was obviously quick-witted, obviously a reader, obviously a thinker. His movement out of his parents' old world home at the age of thirteen and into the larger world around him paralleled, according to Issac Goldberg, Emanuel's simultaneous gravitation from the repressive sterility of Philadelphia public classrooms into the liberated and liberating intellectual atmosphere of the Socialist Local. Socialism, in the pre-World War I years, was bathed in a literary atmosphere, and was a logical haven for youthful discontent. "As uninviting as the average 'headquarters' of a local might be," wrote Issac Goldberg in his 1925 "Psychography" of Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, "there was usually a bookcase filled with pamphlets and more substantial volumes bearing titles that suggested flight from harsh reality. And not flight alone. Revolt.

> . . . One in fifty might have grasped the economics of Karl Marx; the other forty-nine

> felt the spirit of liberation. Nor was this mere liberation from economic injustice. Freedom has a habit of spreading from economics to religion and from religion to morals. Vaguely, but none the less surely, one was drawn by promise of release from moral as from proprietary orthodoxy. For all practical purposes, the Socialist Local was a club of spirits seeking independence; politics was secondary.[42]

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[41]Issac Goldberg, "E. Haldeman-Julius: A Psychography," Stratford Monthly, Vol. IV (New Series, No. I (January, 1925), 26-27.

Emanuel's assertion of his freedom was evidenced not only by his unfettered relationship with his family, but also in his financial independence. If he wanted to go to New York or Tennessee to see Will Durant or William Fielding or Clarence Darrow, or if he wanted to entertain intellectually stimulating guests lavishly in his Girard home, he was able to do so with the grace and ease that money made possible.

His desire to be psychologically free from fear of retribution by any dogmatic ideological force was reflected in his deep and lasting aversion to all organized forms of religion or government. As a young man he had early dissovered the appeal of rationalism in Thomas Paine and Robert Ingersoll. He read his first mind-liberating book,

Paine's Age of Reason, when he was twelve or thirteen, and it eventually became number five in his Little Blue Book Series. Following Paine with a careful reading of a dozen or so Ingersoll pamphlets, he was able to settle the issue of religion in his own mind once and for all. He challenged god (seldom spelled by Emanuel with a capital "G") to strike him dead before he walked to the next corner in old Philadelphia. Still walking when he got a half block beyond, he decided "that if there was a god he didn't give a damn about what I thought or did."[42] From this simple childhood discovery Emanuel eventually grew to be militantly antireligious. In an article he wrote in 1925, entitled "Is Religion the Necessary Basis of Morality?," he argued that it was absurd for Christians to think that there can be no morality without religion. "Religion," he said,

> far from being a moral force, has given its sanctifying allegiance to the greatest immoralities in the history of man. . . . The priest, the soldier and the lord of the lands and serfs have worked in complete, pious accord to bind and rob the stupid, praying masses. . . . the medicine men of religion have in every age brewed doses to stupefy the

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[42] My First 25 Years, 15.

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> herd into hugging its chains. . . . Our age, for its more obvious great advantages, is chiefly indebted to science. . . . we are safer, cleaner, more productive - in short, we are . . . more civilized - and we cannot thank the church for our civilization. . . . It is no longer a crime to think.[43]

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[43]Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, "Is Religion the Necessary Basis of Morality?," Haldeman-Julius Weekly (June 6, 1925), 3.

Christians, especially Fundamentalists and Catholics, caught the brunt of Emanuel's attack on "godolatry," but he didn't restrict himself to castigating just the followers of Christ. He wrote in the March 28, 1925 issue of his weekly newspaper that he couldn't see that it was a triumph of intelligence for a man to believe in one god rather than a dozen . . .

> I am blind to any fine distinction between the man who believes that hell is an eternal fire and the man who believes that hell is an eternal frying pan: . . . A man who is full of a belief in any religion . . . has enough poison of superstition in his system to kill healthy thought. When a man casts reason aside, he might as well surrender his mind to one sort of bunk as another. You can follow Saint Paul, or Mother Eddy, or Joe Smith, or Pastor Russell, or the first wandering faith-healer you run across: What's the difference? One is as good and true and sensible as the other. The Mohammedan is not less intelligent than the Christian. Whether one worships Buddha or

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> Christ, the quality of faith is not different. A belief in Jehovah is not really more civilized than a belief in mumbo jumbo. One stiff dose of any kind of religious poison is as bad as a gallon. So, good brother, shut your eyes and grab any one out of the row of holy bottles.[44]

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[44] Haldeman-Julius Weekly (March 28, 1925), 2.

Although Emanuel was frequently accused of being an "avowed atheist," his position was actually that of an agnostic. In response to a letter from a Mr. Ralph Schafer, from Detroit, asking him if he were an atheist, Emanuel responded,

> I don't know the secret of the beginning and the end of life - first causes and absolute conceptions of the universe represent so much meaningless intellectual exercise to me - so why shouldn't I candidly admit my ignorance? And I am not less ignorant than others, be they atheists or believers in one of the many 'true' faiths. It is only that I am more honest (or less deluded) and willing to save time by letting the world know that I don't know the answer to the baffling riddle of the cosmos.[45]

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[45] Haldeman-Julius Weekly (August 30, 1924), 1.

Emanuel also told his son Henry that, although he had thought of himself as an atheist, careful analysis of his

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religio-philosophical position showed that he was indeed an agnostic. He simply did not know whether there was a god.[46]

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[46]Interviews with Henry Haldeman, December 23, 1969, and January 8, 1975.

The real issue, in any question of religion, according to Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, was whether or not a person was using reason. Like his mentors Paine, Ingersoll, Twain, Aristotle and others, he affirmed that man's highest function is to utilize his Reason . . . never to abdicate Reason and slavishly follow the fear-laden garbage disseminated by ministers, priests, rabbis and other organized and subsidized bunk-peddlers. It was perhaps a symbolic coincidence that Emanuel Haldeman-Julius came to Girard to work for and eventually own a newspaper called The Appeal To Reason.

Interestingly, and ironically, it was the same desire for intellectual freedom which drew Emanuel into the Socialist Party Local that eventually made him incapable of being a party-line Socialist. Political Socialism, when he got right down to it, wasn't really much different from Catholicism--or mumbo jumbo. At some point the Party prescribed how its members should think or vote or believe

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. . . and this was too much for a true free-thinker. As early as 1913 he had stated, in the Western Comrade, his criticism of Socialist poetry. It is "always the same thing," he said, "wailing over the same peasant, fiddling the same sentiment, describing the same smells, glorifying the same overalls."[47]

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[47]Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, "Books and Reading," Western Comrade, I (September, 1913), 212, quoted in Cothran, 29.

Although much was made of Haldeman-Julius' Socialism and other "pinko" leanings by the Federal Government and other organizations that opposed him, there is ample evidence to prove his "Socialism" was of the intellectually ideal type (with its appeal to his literary, cultural, and civil libertarian tendencies) rather than of the political type. He wrote long and frequently against the "mind of the herd,"--and was unalterably opposed to groupthink of any sort. As a pragmatic businessman, however, he was willing--and very able--to pick up the Socialist banner or wave the bloody shirt in order to bolster his newspaper circulation or sell more Little

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Blue Books. But even on these occasions he was a Socialist of Convenience.[48]

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[48]In 1916 Emanuel abandoned the Socialist Party Ticket to vote for Wilson, and, in spite of Party policy to the contrary, declare himself in favor of the struggle against 'German militarism.' (Cothran, 68.) On December 22, 1917, the name of the famous Girard weekly Socialist newspaper was changed from The Appeal To Reason to The New Appeal, in order to shed its traditional tie with the Party. On the 1st of March, 1919, with the war over, and having vowed in print to swing the jail doors open to political prisoners such as Eugene V. Debs, the name of the paper was changed back to The Appeal to Reason, and a hard-line approach re-appeared. In a similar vein, it is interesting to note that page one of the February 22, 1919 issue of The New Appeal carried the headline "SWEAR THAT YOU WILL NOT LET 'GENE DEBS ROT AND PERISH IN A PRISON CELL," and that page two carried an advertisement for Oscar Wilde's Ballad of Reading Jail--the "Greatest Prison Poem ever Written"--book number two in the New Appeal Pocket Series.

Contrary to Socialism, his politics, what little he ever admitted to, were essentially laissez-faire. He was fundamentally unfriendly to all ideas of government, and believed, with Thomas Jefferson, that "that government is best which governs least." "Governments are machines," he wrote in 1924, "intended to govern, to preserve order, to protect life and property, keep enemies from disarranging our lives, and punishing those who break simple and sensible laws . . . . government should be as simple as

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possible, and as the people grow in intelligence, it should become less and less significant, for with growth of general intelligence it becomes less necessary to govern. . . . At best, government is always a liability, never an asset."[49]

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[49]Excerpts from Haldeman-Julius' response to a letter from Mr. Harrison B. French, editor of a Farmer-Labor Weekly in Bowman, North Dakota, in the Haldeman-Julius Weekly (November 22, 1924), 4.

Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, unlike political Socialists such as Marx, Engels, and others associated with hard-line Party policy, championed the individual. He urged his readers to provide for themselves, rather than depend on the state. "I believe in individualism wholeheartedly," he said in 1924, ". . . better a crust of bread I have earned than a fairy loaf handed down by a politician."[50] Perhaps Issac

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[50]Ibid.

Goldberg was right: one in fifty might have grasped the economics of Karl Marx; the other forty-nine felt the spirit of liberation. Emanuel was certainly one of the other forty-nine. And, as Goldberg had suggested, the

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freedom Emanuel encountered had spread from economics to religion and from religion to morals.

Speaking as the social critic that he had become by his mid-thirties, and sounding much like the George Jean Nathan and Henry L. Mencken who had first struck him from the librarian's copy of Smart Set at Miss Mason's School for Girls, Emanuel responded to a reader's question about the possibility of improving the current political scene. His vituperative answer is a typical combination of his political, social, religious, and educational ideas:

> The best and most perfect man in the world given limitless power in the White House could do nothing if the men and women who put him there were unseeing, unthinking, able-brained, superstition-worshiping slant-heads, as most voters are. [Most voters] are lazy, slovenly, inferior, incapable, incompetent, stupid, and ignorant . . . they take value in the vote because they can't get it in their lives.[51]

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[51] Ibid.

He counseled his readers, on another occasion, to put their faith not in the ballot, but in their own character and energy and will. In what sounded like an aphorism from Ben Franklin or Henry Thoreau, he said, "You vote only once a year, or two years, but you live every day." "Let us

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face facts frankly," he summarized, "we have poverty and suffering because we have ignorance, the root of all evil."[52]

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[52] Haldeman-Julius Weekly (August 30, 1924), 5.

If ignorance was the root of all evil, in the schema of Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, education was the key to all things good. Not until every man, as an individual, had rid himself of the ignorance that had grown out of medieval superstition, could the human race hope to be truly happy. If there were to be a true social revolution--what his old Socialist newspaper friends called the "Red Dawn"--it would be through education, not politics. Emanuel wrote with the enthusiasm of a true believer when he said, in 1925, that education, in its broadest sense, "is the only means by which man can become a civilized animal." "I am optimist enough," he said, "to believe that the printing press can be used to change the world. Whether it will ever be done, I cannot say. But that it can be done, I haven't the least doubt in the world. It is part of my very being--this belief in education as a weapon for genuine progress--that I, for one, shall strive

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to use presses, ink and paper to spread culture and understanding among those who are capable of using their heads to some purpose." Education, to Emanuel, did not mean spending a number of years in a "diploma mill." It meant "self-development, self-reliance, self-help, and self-discipline." And his Little Blue Books were the educational tickets to self-improvement.[53]

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[53] Haldeman-Julius Weekly (January 1, 1926), 1; "Education: A Weapon for Real Progress," Haldeman-Julius Weekly (December 19, 1925), 1.

Horatio Alger was, with Paine, Ingersoll, Debs, Carlyle, Voltaire and others, undoubtedly one of the major forces molding the mind of Emanuel Haldeman-Julius. Having read all of Alger's self-help novels as a boy in Philadelphia, Emanuel, an uneducated and relatively poor lad, adrift in the city, could easily see himself in the role of Ragged Dick or Mark, the Match Boy. Through a combination of self-reliance, self-development, self-discipline, self-help, virtue, hard work, pluck, and luck, he, too, could share in the theme of success and personal achievement that coursed the pages of Alger's novels.

Applying these qualities to his own life, he, too, could raise himself Upward and Onward, and, seizing opportunity when it came, marry the cultured daughter of a wealthy banker, become the owner of huge roaring presses that would produce a sea of educational booklets to uplift other common people such as he had been, and trade in his patched pants for a plug hat and gold-headed cane. Like Carnegie, and like the boys who made good in Alger's novels, his success as an American entrepreneur would be one that wedded wealth and morality; wealth was respectable in America at the turn of the century--especially if the man of wealth accepted the doctrine of stewardship for his fellows. In 1928 Emanuel articulated this concept in his book, The First Hundred Million, a self-analysis of his own success story. He said, "I insist that I am a businessman and not a philanthropist . . . I invested my capital in the Little Blue Book idea because I thought it was a sound business venture . . . . I was as interested in making a profit as Henry Ford." Yet he expressed pride in the fact that he had "been able to use good business [techniques] toward the improvement instead of the exploitation of the masses.[54]

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[54]Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, The First Hundred Million (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1928), 39, 255-256; Haldeman-Julius Weekly (November 25, 1925), 1.

Marcet saw her husband's life in the nineteen-twenties as "one long exhilarating conquering of obstacles; one exciting, but steady advance, a solidly built pyramid of success." "Never in all his life," she wrote in 1924, "has he met with a devastating defeat. Hardships he has known . . . and struggle . . . but not failure."[55]

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[55]Haldeman-Julius Weekly (August 30, 1924), 6.

Although Emanuel apparently never alluded directly to Alger's impact on his thoughts and values, there is no question that he understood implicitly the essence of Alger's theme of success. This was evidenced in an address given by Emanuel to the Washington University Association, in St. Louis, Missouri, on February 10, 1925. Calling his talk "Literature and the Masses," he told his audience that the fame of Shakespeare and Dickens rests at least partially on the fact that their own lives were stories of poor boys who became successful and famous, and who never forgot their humble origins. "The masses," said

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Haldeman-Julius, "are fond of the oft-told tale. Maybe this is why so many poor boys, who are born in log cabins or sold newspapers or dusted the frost off the pumpkin after they had put the fodder in the shock, are sent to live in the White House and be first in the hearts of their countrymen."[56] If, as Professor Rychard Fink has

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[56]Speech reprinted in the Haldeman-Julius Weekly (February 21, 1925), 1.

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said in his Introduction to a recent reprinting of Ragged Dick and Mark, the Match Boy, Horatio Alger was "a major pump station on the pipe line that carried the American dream," Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, with pluck and luck--but never the help of Providence--discovered how to tap the flow at the pump.[57]

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[57]Rychard Fink's delightful and insightful essay, "Horatio Alger as a Social Philosopher," introduces Ragged Dick and Mark, the Match Boy to a new generation of readers in the Collier paperback edition (New York: 1962), and demonstrates how Alger's boy-heroes blended such qualities as the Protestant work ethic, the concept of stewardship, belief in the worth of the individual, keen desire for material and personal achievement, trust in the concept of self-improvement, an idealistically Socialist concern for the plight of the common man, and an abiding faith in the value of education as a force for progress . . . all qualities that I am here attributing to Haldeman-Julius. Stewart H. Holbrook, in his Lost Men of American History (New York: MacMillan Company, 1946), 228-238, has also

written provocatively of Horatio Alger as a social and popular culture phenomenon. Germaine to this study of Haldeman-Julius are Holbrook's observations that Horatio Alger was the writer, more than any other, who translated Spencer's and Darwin's ideas of "survival of the fittest" to the American common man. Haldeman-Julius had read Spencer as early as he read Alger, and was very possibly struck, both in the original Spencer and the Alger "translation," with the blatant and latent message of laissez-faire . . . the idea that those individuals who have best equipped themselves to survive (through education, self-reliance, etc.) in an environment of free and untrammeled competition will be the ones who achieve success.

Closely related to Emanuel Haldeman-Julius' will-to-achieve were two philosophical traditions he held close: hedonism and pragmatism. As a man who did not believe in a god or in an afterlife, Emanuel was of the general opinion that one should live his life as well as possible on a daily basis. Financial comfort was certainly an attainment for him in the twenties, and as a successful turn-of-the-century American entrepreneur who had worked his way up, he neither felt guilt nor was judged guilty by his fellows for enjoying the fruit of his labors. After pointing out that he had values higher than money, he once added that no one should labor under the false idea that he therefore disliked money. "I like it very much," he said. "I love to have it around. If I knew a way of getting a hold of a

hundred million dollars, providing the job would not take more than a hundred hours of my time, I would be willing to take each blushing dollar to my heart." And in a Little Blue Book published in 1928 he admitted, "No one is more decidedly a materialist than I am. But I want an intelligent, beautiful materialism. . . ." He and Marcet owned a beautiful home, complete with a swimming pool, library, and small stage, on a beautiful farm on the outskirts of Girard (and, of course, they owned the Cedarville farm inherited by Marcet), he entertained guests sumptuously, drove expensive and comfortable cars, had a fine collection of bound books, patronized artists whom he appreciated, enjoyed classical music in the privacy of his library study, indulged, with Marcet, his aesthetic desire to write articles and novels for publication outside his own plant, and, especially when travelling, enjoyed the best cigars and drinks. Andrew Cothran, Haldeman-Julius' first biographer, called him "a thorough-going hedonist in his advocacy of sensual pleasure (the only kind, he said, that man had any real knowledge of)." But Emanuel went beyond the simple hedonism of "Eat, Drink, and Be Merry for Tomorrow Ye Die," and sought to make culture, the key to

human happiness, available through his Little Blue Books to everyone who wanted it so no one need miss the kind of pleasure and freedom he had himself attained.[58]

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[58] Haldeman-Julius Weekly (August 8, 1925), 1; Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, America: The Greatest Show on Earth (Little Blue Book Number 1291, Girard: Haldeman-Julius Publishing Company, 1928), 20. A guest who stayed at the Haldeman-Julius home commented upon being treated like a prince, in Cothran, 287. William J. Fielding, one of the most famous of Little Blue Book authors, stated in an interview with this author on April 5, 1972, that he remembered delightful evenings of theatre, fine food and drink, and long discussions of new Little Blue Books to be written--all at the financial expense of Haldeman-Julius--when his old friend from Call days periodically returned to New York City on business. Lloyd E. Smith, in the Haldeman-Julius Weekly (February 27, 1926), 2, described his boss's travel and cigar tastes. Dr. Cothran's unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (University of Maryland, 1966) is a thoroughly researched and balanced chronological presentation of the life of E. Haldeman-Julius; the comments quoted here regarding hedonism appear on pp. 437-438 of his study.

Existing beside the intellectualism and idealism within the mind of Emanuel Haldeman-Julius was another equal, and, perhaps, contradictory force: pragmatism. At bottom, according to Issac Goldberg, his friend Haldeman-Julius was "as practical as the multiplication table." "Yet," Goldberg continued, "above that bottom, he has visions and ideals which he insists upon exploiting pragmatically. He wants his ideals to work in fact. He wants,

in a word, to materialize the ideal, and by that same token, is a practical idealist."[59] Regardless of the issue at

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[59]Goldberg, "Psychography," 27.

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hand, Emanuel had an almost uncanny sense of the next practical step. If the end was one that he deemed to be good, he could justify whatever means were necessary for its attainment. If the end goal was to get education to the masses, and if some educationally very worthwhile Little Blue Books were not selling well, Emanuel, in spite of what his detractors might say, simply changed the title to make it more attractive. If this simple process worked, an educational ideal was attained (the reader bought and read a work that improved his education), while, at the same time, the sales volume of the book was increased. Marcet, remarkably perceptive woman that she was, realized that the constant interplay of idealism and pragmatism in the mind of her husband was a <u>crucially</u> important factor in his life and work. She described his "exceptional mixture of inspired idealism and practical commercialism" as the secret of his success. "The man of action," she stated

succinctly, "has been able to put over with coolness and daring the ephemeral and elusive dreams of the idealist."[60]

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[60] Haldeman-Julius Weekly (August 30, 1924), 5.

If Emanuel Haldeman-Julius had a philosophy of life, it is a difficult one to assemble. In addition to what has already been said here about his formative years, his mind and his values, he offered the following hints as to his philosophy:

> I've always looked on myself as a liberal rebel, a constructive nihilist, a modest egoist, a cautious and sanitary immoralist, and a life-loving skeptic. As for politics, I give the damned subject no mind any more.[61]

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[61] American Freeman (December, 1944), 3, quoted in Cothran, 415.

> I have a philosophy weaving through [my writing] but I don't parade it, and so I give the impression of shallowness and superficiality, of having a small talent that only tickles the surface, of being one who picks posies and gambols with the lambkins. . . .[62]

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[62] American Freeman (April, 1949), 1, quoted in Cothran, 426.

John Gunn, close friend and student of Emanuel, may have come closer than anyone to capturing the essence of the Henry Ford of Literature:

> This is the key to Haldeman-Julius' philosophy of life: to do one's work, to stick to one's purpose, according to the best opportunities of life; a sturdy acceptance of human limitations without any relaxation of human effort. It is idle to ask whether this effort will ultimately come to nothing in some far-off wreck of things; within our field of vision, this effort bulks large in importance; without effort, life would be meaningless. "A man's work is the vital thing," says Haldeman-Julius; "and if that work is creative, it will bring him to the deepest joy that life holds."[63]

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[63]Gunn, The Man and His Work, 28-29.

After the Twenties

After the boom of Little Blue Book business in the twenties--and the bust of the Great Depression--Emanuel added hundreds of new titles to his pocket book series, changed old titles as needed, and, with some changes in titles and focus to keep up with changing times in his

weekly, monthly, and quarterly publications, kept his plant in Girard operating at a profit. But in terms of quantity of output, at least, things slowed down for the Little Blue Book Man. Marcet died of angina pectoris on February 13, 1941, at the farm home in Girard. The tribute for her, like the one for her husband ten years later, was written by John Gunn. Marcet's ashes were spread to the wind, as she wished, at the Cedarville homestead, and a headstone was placed in her memory near Cedar Creek with the following lines she had written:

> I was not, and was conceived;
> I loved, and did a little work.
> I am not, and am content.[64]

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[64]Interview with Mrs. Alice DeLoach, November 1, 1974.

Emanuel later married his charming and attractive former secretary, Miss Sue Haney.

After Emanuel reported an uninsured theft of $40,218, in cash, from his vault at the plant in Girard on February 18, 1943, Internal Revenue Service officials began an investigation of the Haldeman-Julius Company's bookkeeping and tax reporting procedures. As a result, he was indicted in March, 1950, by a Federal Grand Jury

at Topeka, Kansas, for evading some $65,000 in income taxes during the years 1944, 1945, 1946, and 1947, and was convicted on two of four counts of fraud.[65] Emanuel was

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[65]Cothran, 413, 418-419, 428, 432.

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deeply hurt and deeply angered at the outcome; his life had been one of dogged tenacity, constant work and struggle . . . and well-deserved success. Now, a convicted felon, he was angry at what he and many others thought had been the culmination of a long struggle by the Federal Government to "get" him for his radical stands against the government and his frequently explosive confrontations with the post office and organized churches.[66]

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[66]Interview with Henry Haldeman, January 8, 1975.

On the day after his 62nd birthday, with the court case still under appeal, Emanuel apparently went swimming alone in the pool behind his home, and while in the water suffered a severe heart attack or panicked and inhaled water. His wife Sue, finding him floating unconscious in the water, struggled to get him out of the pool, and called for help. All efforts to resuscitate him failed,

and his accidental death cut short the life of a still vital man who had predicted 27 years before that he would be working hard in his plant at the age of 70.[67]

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[67]Cothran, 441-442; Haldeman-Julius Weekly (August 30, 1924), 6. Despite speculation by some that death might have been the result of suicide, brought on by the court case, there is no substantive evidence whatsoever to support that conclusion.

Emanuel Haldeman-Julius may have appeared to be a baffling bundle of contradictions to his family, friends, and millions of regular readers, but he was consistent until the end to the ideals of his earliest freethought mentors, Paine and Ingersoll. In his Last Will and Testament he directed that his funeral be a simple matter, with "no flowers, no music, no mourners, no services, no sermon, prayers or religious services. . . ." And he was true, too, in the end, to the ideal of his first wife. If it were agreeable with his children and second wife, Sue, he wished that his cremains be buried near the ashes of Marcet on the farm in Cedarville, Illinois.[68]

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[68]"Last Will and Testament of Emanuel Haldeman-Julius," dated December 20, 1950, the original of which was examined in the Probate Court of Crawford County, Girard, Kansas.

With these final wishes fulfilled Emanuel Haldeman-Julius took leave of this world, fully expecting that he would not find another. His bold and restless and insatiable mind, his unbounded idealism, his sense of mission, his hard-nosed practicality, his spectator's fascination with the game of life . . . all these were left with John W. Gunn, to be eulogized from the halls of memory by this trusted friend who had met him as he stepped off the train into Girard that night in October, 1915.

CHAPTER II

THE IDEA: POPULARIZATION OF EDUCATION

We are trying, with devout hearts, to make the world unsafe for hypocracy, to educate the world with the University in Print - in short, to show those who are in darkness the Light and the Way to freedom, truth and life.

Lloyd E. Smith,
Haldeman-Julius Weekly,
February 20, 1926

CHAPTER II

THE IDEA: POPULARIZATION OF EDUCATION

Origins of the Idea

The idea behind the Little Blue Books grew out of a personal experience of Emanuel Haldeman-Julius when he was about fifteen years old in Philadelphia. On a freezing winter day he picked up a pamphlet edition of Oscar Wilde's "The Ballad of Reading Jail" from a table near the door in Nicholas L. Brown's bookstore at Fifth and Pine Streets, walked across the street, sat down on a cold park bench, and read the pamphlet straight through. He became so absorbed in the ballad that, despite the fact that his hands were blue, his nose was numb, and his ears were hard as glass, he never noticed the cold. "Never until then, or since," he wrote later in his autobiography, "did any piece of printed matter move me so deeply. When I walked away, my heels hit the stones with sharp clicks. I'd been lifted out of this world - and by a 10¢ booklet. I thought, at the moment, how wonderful it would be if thousands of such

booklets could be made available. . . . easily and inexpensively whenever one wanted to buy them." Fifteen years later, when Haldeman-Julius bought the Appeal to Reason printing plant in Girard, he used Wilde's "Ballad," along with "The Rubaiyat" of Omar Khayyam, numbers one and two in his series of pocket books, to make his publishing dream a reality and launch him on the road to success.[1]

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[1] My First 25 Years, 12-13.

William J. Fielding, probably best known as the author of the "Rational Sex Series" in the Little Blue Books, suggested, in an article written in 1952, that Haldeman-Julius' experience in New York City provided fertile soil for the roots of the Little Blue Books and the philosophy which prompted their publication. During his tenure as reporter and Sunday Editor for the Call he worked with and met such important Socialist and labor leaders as Clement Wood, Morris Hillquit, August Claessens, Jacob Panken, and James O'Neal, and absorbed the cosmopolitanism of New York's theatre, opera, lecture platforms, films, and the transplanted cultural niceties of many European and Asiatic countries. At the Hotels Brevoort and

Lafayette, near his room in Greenwich Village, he met and mixed with such literary notables as Mark Twain, Theodore Dreiser, Upton Sinclair, George Jean Nathan, and John Cowper Powys.[2] From this experience in New York, and from his work in Milwaukee, Chicago, and Los Angeles, he was later able to bring with him to the small southeast Kansas town of Girard (1920 population approximately 2,500) not only a variety of useful personal contacts in literary circles, but also the broad perspective of a cultured man who had traveled widely.

[2]William J. Fielding, "Prince of Pamphleteers," Nation (May 10, 1952), 453; My Second 25 Years, 25.

The youngster sitting on the cold park bench reading Oscar Wilde had been born into an era that was perfectly suited to his kind of heel-clicking dreams about providing knowledge to everyone cheaply and easily. In the second half of the nineteenth century the American ethic of individualism and progress was undergoing a major transformation in its intellectual and theoretical formulation. Due partially to higher Biblical criticism, and to studies in comparative religion, geology, physics and astronomy--and perhaps capped off by the publication, in

1859, of Charles Darwin's Origin of Species, the ideas of individualism and social progress came to be less and less understood among thinkers and writers in terms of colonial and pre-Civil War religious and moral premises. Instead, these ideas came to be understood more and more in terms of a naturalistic theory which argued that human behavior and complex social phenomena could be reduced to natural biological terms--and these to even simpler scientific physical and mechanical terms. Repudiating the older (religious) a priori method of arriving at truth, many proponents of naturalism insisted that only the scientific method (based on evidence, and therefore a posteriori), when focused on society, man, and the physical world, could lead to knowledge and truth.

The naturalistic viewpoint (with roots traceable back to the rationalism of Paine, Voltaire, Diderot, and Erasmus), which was communicated to the common man in America by such later-nineteenth-century writers as Herbert Spencer and, more subtly, Horatio Alger, reached Robert Ingersoll and Eugene Debs and Emanuel Julius and thousands of others with its message of biological and social evolution and survival of the fittest--and its potential as a

threat that could undermine the foundations of cherished traditional religious beliefs. No longer could one be certain that he had been created by a God in His own image --and no longer did one have to remain fixed throughout his life by a deity-imposed "calling" or "station."

If naturalism was unsettling to many in its elimination of the security provided by God's creation and placement of individuals in the social hierarchy, it was also inherently optimistic in its affirmation that a better life for individuals and societies would inevitably result once the accumulated ignorance, myths, and superstition of past ages were replaced by dispassionate scientific knowledge. If an individual with ability and ambition, for example, wanted to better himself, he could seek objective knowledge through education, and, thus better equipped than his less energetic or less capable fellows, could rise to the top of the social and economic ladder in a laissez-faire system.[3]

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[3]Gerald N. Grob and Robert N. Beck (eds.), American Ideas: Source Readings in the Intellectual History of the United States, Vol. II (New York: The Free Press, 1963), 8-9, 82-83.

This new naturalistic perspective, stated in Darwin's Origin of the Species, represented, in itself, hundreds of years of evolution in thought, and suggested a new interpretation of human nature and the nature of human society. And the new perspective suited well the turn-of-the-century American commitment to private exploitation of national resources and the maintenance of a free enterprise capitalistic economy.

Emanuel Haldeman-Julius saw mankind at the turn of this century as having only recently emerged from the intellectual darkness of the middle ages. Reflecting his widely-known dislike for organized religion, he often stated that the Church in the middle ages, by cooperating with the warlords and landlords, had maintained its members in a state of mental serfdom. The Church, he said, feared and repressed efforts to make knowledge popular (widespread) among the masses. In a surprisingly McLuhanesque sense, Haldeman-Julius saw the invention of the printing press as a mind-liberating revolution that worked to dispel popular fear and popular ignorance. "I am optimist enough to believe," he had said, "that the printing press can be used to change the world. Whether it will ever be done, I cannot say. But that it can be done I haven't the least

doubt . . . . I . . . shall strive to use presses, ink and paper to spread culture and understanding among those who are capable of using their heads to some purpose."[4]

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[4]Marshall McLuhan, spokesman for the Age of Electric Information, speaks of the "Gutenberg Revolution" as having imposed a linear, sequential, private pattern on human communication (Understanding Media, New York: Signet Books, 1964, especially pp. 155-162). While Haldeman-Julius was less aware of the psychic significance of Gutenberg's invention than McLuhan obviously is, the two men agree almost perfectly in their assessments of the social significance of typography. First Hundred Million, 61; Little Blue Book No. 1335, Can Knowledge Be Made Popular? A Debate. C. Hartley Grattan vs. E. Haldeman-Julius (Girard: Haldeman-Julius Company, 1929), 17; Haldeman-Julius Weekly (June 6, 1925), 3; Haldeman-Julius Weekly (December 19, 1925), 1.

The idea of inexpensive little books was not totally unique. Although Haldeman-Julius stated in 1928 that he had no precedents to follow when he began his business, Louis Adamic has pointed out, in an article written in 1930, that the Little Blue Books were modeled after the Universal-Bibliothek of the German publisher Philipp Reclam.[5] Reclam

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[5]First Hundred Million, 126; Louis Adamic, "Voltaire From Kansas," Outlook and Independent: An Illustrated Weekly of Inquiry (June 25, 1930), 284.

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published, in Leipzig, approximately 7000 titles in his series of little red paper-cover books. His paper books

sold for twenty pfennig before World War I and for three marks immediately after the War. Known around the world, Reclam's booklets measured 3 and 3/4 by 6 inches (the Little Blue Books were 3 and 1/2 by 5 inches), were well-edited, well-printed, and consisted of selections and complete works of the world's finest literature. Adamic's assertion that the Universal-Bibliothek was the model for the Little Blue Books has been tentatively substantiated by the discovery of several of Reclam's little red books, purchased by Haldeman-Julius in 1917 and 1918, in his daughter's collection of his personal papers.[6] There is evidence

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[6]Cothran, 131, footnote number 12.

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to indicate that Haldeman-Julius also studied the paper-bound pamphlets and books published in New York by Guido Bruno, the Tucker Publishing Company, and C. F. Farrell, Publishers--some of which dated as far back as 1874.[7]

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[7]Cothran, 132.

Haldeman-Julius denied that such cheap novels and books were precursors of his Little Blue Books because of the trashy and contaminating connotation he and others usually

associated with the term "dime novel." And he disassociated his series of books (they were a standard 15,000 words long) from the tract and pamphlet tradition that had existed since the eighteenth century.[8]

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[8] First Hundred Million, 256.

Another factor that may have helped create Haldeman-Julius' idea of a series of little books was the success story of S. S. McClure. Originator of the newspaper syndicate business in the United States, McClure was a genius in the art of circulation and mass distribution. He founded the magazine named after himself in 1893 with assets of $7200--and within fifteen years was worth a million dollars. His success story closely paralleled that of Haldeman-Julius; both were turn-of-the-century entrepreneurs in the publishing business, both wrote journals of "independent opinion," and both assessed their value, at one point or another, at a million dollars. Calling McClure "one of the world's greatest editors," Haldeman-Julius told his readers that McClure had created a new type of popular journalism, and compared his operation with that of Henry Ford. In a period when Harper's,

Century, and Scribner's magazines were expensive, and thus available to only those who could afford them, S. S. McClure made his popularly-priced magazine available to the masses. And McClure, like Haldeman-Julius later, published such previously unknown writers as Booth Tarkington, Jack London, Willa Cather, Frank Norris, and Theodore Dreiser. It is difficult to assess how much impact McClure may have had on the Haldeman-Julius idea, but the praise heaped on him in the July 12, 1924, Haldeman-Julius Weekly, and the fact that Haldeman-Julius had in his personal library a copy of McClure's autobiography (published in 1914), suggest that his influence was definitely felt.[9]

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[9]Haldeman-Julius offered his entire Little Blue Book business for sale in 1951 for $1,000,000 (Cothran, 435); Haldeman-Julius Weekly (July 12, 1924), 1. A copy of My Autobiography, by S. S. McClure (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1914), was found and examined in Haldeman-Julius' library in the Collection at the Porter Library, Kansas State College, Pittsburg, Kansas.

Combining his era's optimism about the potential of twentieth-century man with his own Socialist and working class background, Haldeman-Julius hypothesized that the average man was a potential buyer of books that could free him from ignorance. Having decided early in his career

that the reading audience of the Appeal to Reason owned all sorts of "brows" except high ones, he believed that the "middle-brow" American could and probably would read good literature if it was presented to him in a size small enough to be carried in his work-trouser pocket and at a cost small enough that he could afford. "The worker who has left school at an early age," Haldeman-Julius wrote, "to assume his burden in the world of industry grabs a Little Blue Book on Science or History as a famished man grabs a plate of food. He has an impatient, hungry mind. . . . How did life come upon this earth? How did man evolve into his present shape and habits? What is known about other worlds? . . . What are the laws of life . . . that a man can know and follow them? He educates himself and enjoys it."[10]

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[10]Cothran, 160, quotes a letter from Haldeman-Julius to William English Walling, on October 18, 1918, in which there is clear evidence that Haldeman-Julius knew very early in his career the nature- and power- of his reading audience. This knowledge, understood before he began the pocket book series, served him well throughout the twenties. Haldeman-Julius Weekly (February 21, 1925), 4.

Theory of Popular Culture

Adhering to the rules of the scientific method as he approached his life's work, Haldeman-Julius developed his theory of popular culture by starting first with a hypothesis. He later tested it by implementing it in the "laboratory" of American society, and eventually evaluated, in his book, The First Hundred Million, the empirical data that resulted from his experiment. His hypothesis--that "Mr. Average American" could and would read good books--was articulated prior to the first publication of the Little Blue Books. John W. Gunn, in his Little Blue Book about his employer, stated:

> I was working with Haldeman-Julius when he first thought of a series of little books, as an agency of popular culture; I helped read proof on the first little books, saw the idea take definite shape, gradually expand in scope and purpose, and grow to a good, healthy size . . . .

The popularity of the Little Blue Books, according to Gunn,

> was no accidental good fortune - one of those unforeseen successes that sometimes happen to individual books. It is the triumph of a definite idea, the fruit of a deliberately and extensively conceived policy. . . . [His was] essentially . . .

> a literary and educational policy, and a study of the possibilities of popular culture.[11]

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[11]John Gunn, The Man and His Work, 34, 6-7.

It may be of particular significance to American intellectual historians--who traditionally scrutinize the connective tissue between thought and action--that Haldeman-Julius was probably the first American to articulate a theory of popular culture in the twentieth century.

Haldeman-Julius' own definition of "popular culture" would have combined several terms: to him "popular" meant a combination of "useful/desireable/widespread," while "culture" was best defined as a combination of "knowledge/refinement/civilization."

According to the epistemology of Haldeman-Julius, knowledge was not to be valued merely for its own sake, as a sterile adornment. Like Aristotle, he perceived the summum bonum--the highest good--of mankind to be happiness. And happiness, as the Little Blue Book Man saw it, was to be achieved primarily through self-betterment, through knowledge of one's weaknesses and potential. Knowledge, therefore, was of extrinsic rather than intrinsic value.

It was a means to an end. It was to be used in the role of civilizer, as "the foe of all the stupid and evil forces that mar and threaten life." Unless it was understood to be a human factor, knowledge was worthless:

> If it does not vitally affect conduct, if it does not deepen the emotions, broaden the outlook, give one a more ordered and meaningful relation to life, it is . . . a dull and heavy encumbrance.

Haldeman-Julius could look about him and see plenty of evidence of encumbered men:

> . . . the educated man who lacks the vital spark that is the heart of culture is not very different under his mental disguise than his totally unlearned brother. He may be equally the victim of prejudice and self-interest and bitter, ungenerous emotions. Quite often one finds that he merely utters the common prejudice in more sophisticated language.

Knowledge was to be valued for its effect upon man's day-by-day thinking, upon his individual and social being.[12]

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[12] E. Haldeman-Julius, The First Hundred Million, 27-28, 36, 46; Gunn, The Man and His Work, 40-41; Debate With Grattan, 31-32.

It seemed to Haldeman-Julius that knowledge had come down through the centuries as the mysterious trade of elite scholars and professors. Although it would be

totally incorrect to portray Haldeman-Julius as anti-intellectual, it would be remiss not to point out that he was uncompromising in his indictments of "highbrow" men of learning who sought to mystify the common man and to hold themselves entirely apart from humanity. In 1929, while debating the question "Can Knowledge Be Made Popular?" (Little Blue Book No. 1335) with a well-known historian named C. Hartley Grattan, Haldeman-Julius argued that "it is not a mark of greatness, but of narrowness and weakness, to sit in an ivory tower, and let the world go by unheeded, indifferent to what the crowd thinks and does. What the crowd thinks and does," he continued,

> has been and is very vital to thinkers, and to liberal minded citizens, especially when they have felt the enormous fist of the ignorant, intolerant mob in their faces. What the crowd does and, correspondingly, what the crowd thinks, checks or advances, as culture is isolated or made popular, the degree of freedom and civilization that we can enjoy. To make knowledge popular is to make life as a whole freer and more intelligent. From the viewpoint of the scholar and thinker, even though he believes that the masses can never reach his lofty level of learning, I should say that the popularization of knowledge is an obvious policy of self-defense. Popularization, if it does nothing more, creates an atmosphere favorable to culture: it brings respect for the scholar and freedom for his work - while it means also that

> scholarship has a greater responsibility and must meet a wider test of usefulness.[13]

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[13] Debate With Grattan, 29-30, 23.

Haldeman-Julius was convinced that knowledge that is shut up in the schools and libraries, and that is the special pursuit of professional scholars, will not produce very lively results. To have any effect, he said, "it must be put into circulation - flung upon the four winds - dispatched on a mission of real culture into the highways and biways of life."[14] Only through this general circulation

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[14] Gunn, The Man and His Work, 57.

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of knowledge could life be protected from mass ignorance and individual self-scheming.

References by Haldeman-Julius and John Gunn in the early and mid-twenties to the cheapness of Little Blue Books, their infinite reproduceability, and the increasing democratization of culture, demonstrate a high degree of sophistication in their understanding of the premises and implications of popular culture theory. "I have a clear vision of an endless stream of small, cheap books,"

Haldeman-Julius told the Kansas City Advertising Club, on February 5, 1923,

> millions upon millions of them, issuing forth from this little Kansas town to level all cultural barriers . . . and bring all ages into the immediate revealing light of our present day . . . . I am thrilled by the spectacle -- a spectacle incredible and imossible in any other age -- of the universal enlightenment of mankind through the marvelous yet simple medium of compactly written, cheaply printed, endlessly multiplied books.[15]

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[15]Address reprinted in Haldeman-Julius Weekly (February 10, 1923), 1.

And John Gunn, a year later, on the occasion of the publication of the 500th title in the Pocket Series, stated that culture was being brought cheaply to America "by virtue of this country's technology and material productivity, by virtue of the very capacity for immense and infinite production that has been America's chief glory to date."[16]

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[16]John Gunn, "The Pocket Series," Life and Letters (January, 1924), 9.

In a talk delivered before the Washington University Association in St. Louis, Missouri, on February 10, 1925, entitled "Literature and the Masses," Haldeman-Julius

directly attacked traditional upper class domination of cultural standards, and argued with keen social and aesthetic perceptiveness that culture is really a democratic phenomenon. He said:

> The fact that I have been asked to talk about literature and the masses is doubly significant. It is a sign of the false notion . . . that the masterpiece and the multitude are phenomena of different worlds. It is also a sign that the two worlds, unreasonably divided, are coming to be regarded as one. . . . Kipling offers us a worthy text:
>
> "The Colonel's lady and Judy O'Grady
> Are sisters under their skins."
>
> The maid picks up the discarded novel of the mistress; she thrills identically to the splendid manhood of the hero; she sees herself with the same romantic vision in the person of the beautiful heroine; she flutters in an equal tempo of sentiment over the love passages; and she weeps no less over the tender, sad scenes. Perhaps the Colonel's lady feels a closer touch of kinship with the psychology of and poses of Sir Charles, while Judy recognizes more clearly the portrait of Jenkins the butler. . . . The . . . fact . . . is that a human being, equipped with a good nervous system, will thrill to the fundamental stuff of books (which is the fundamental stuff of life) regardless of his more or less accidental place in the social order. This is especially true of what is called a "masterpiece." The great books are the ones that have the universal, elemental appeal. Anybody can thrill to Shakespeare. Whether high-born or low-born men and women, this fact about his characters is far less important than the fact that they are men and

> women. Their passions are the passions of the whole of dizzy-headed and clay-footed humanity. Among the best sellers of the Little Blue Books are the plays of Shakespeare.
>
> Shakespeare is a popular writer - not perhaps as the latest novel by Harold Bell Wright is popular, but decidedly more popular than the esoteric author of Jurgen. And Shakespeare would be far more popular if his reputation were not so sadly battered in the schools. I think that the greatest misfortune of Shakespeare was that he became a school classic. . . . It is a tribute, so to speak, to the power of the schools to reverse the natural process of literary appreciation.
>
> The great artists have loved the trials and adventures and contrasts of common life. They have looked, not for the obviously grand, but for the unsuspectedly dramatic. . . . the artist finds the tragic and the beautiful in the life of the masses. Thus the common man finds his life plentifully and even picturesquely contained in the books. And he can, for certain, appreciate his own. The facts point simply to the democratic habit of culture. Culture belongs to - recognizes - neither class nor mass.[17]

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[17] Address reprinted in Haldeman-Julius Weekly (February 21, 1925), 1, 3. See Russel B. Nye, The Unembarrassed Muse: The Popular Arts in America (New York: Dial Press, 1970), 2-4, for a discussion of the interrelationship of popular culture, the democratization of society, infinite reproduceability, and minimizing of cost through efficient mechanical mass production. Ray B. Browne's, "Popular Culture: Notes Toward a Definition," 3-11, in Popular Culture and Curricula, Ray B. Browne and Ronald J. Ambrosetti, eds. (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1970), also discusses characteristics of popular culture phenomena.

On April 30, 1921, Haldeman-Julius announced for the first time the establishment of his "University in Print." The "university" of blue books was to be a democratic institution, not a "limited," not an "exclusive" school for the elite. It was to be "open to all, with a matriculation fee that is not more than the price of an ordinary movie."[18]

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[18] Appeal to Reason (April 30, 1921), 1.

Educational Idealism

If, as Haldeman-Julius had said, human poverty and suffering were the result of "ignorance, the root of all evil," then knowledge, the direct opposite of ignorance, was the key to the betterment of individual men and society as a whole. But the will to education was not enough . . . like many better-known proponents of Naturalism, Haldeman-Julius was convinced that the first step to empirical knowledge was to "unlearn" the myths and false beliefs with which one had been indoctrinated since early childhood. One must first debunk himself of shams and

superstitions, according to Haldeman-Julius, and then learn the truth with a totally open mind. "We must empty our heads of all kinds of intellectual garbage," he wrote in 1925, ". . . we are full of spooks and dreads. Fakirs and charlatans find men ready to swallow their nonsense. Mystical twaddle is gulped down as though it were the best of broth."[19]

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[19] Haldeman-Julius Weekly (December 19, 1925), 1.

Social reform could come about, in Haldeman-Julius' view, only if individuals reformed themselves first. Although he said, in his most idealistic moments, that he wanted to save the world, he shared with Jefferson, Emerson, Whitman, and Thoreau the concept that social reform in a viable democracy could come about only through the education of individual citizens. Haldeman-Julius actually sought, in his "University in Print," a sort of one-to-one educational relationship between the teacher (Little Blue Book) and the student (reader). "My work," he said, "is to bring culture to many individuals.

> I cannot bring it to the masses, for that is manifestly impossible. I can bring it to millions of individuals, but not to the

> herd. . . . I am not a dispenser of polly-anna joy and boyscout helpfulness. I am building my own character and understanding and cannot do the same for you should I even want to, which I don't. You must do the work yourself. . . . There is no easy road. Each man must take it himself. . . . To thine own self be true. Be intelligently selfish. Develop yourself. Live today. Try to see the wings of truth.[20]

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[20] Haldeman-Julius Weekly (August 30, 1924), 5; Haldeman-Julius Weekly (November 22, 1924), 4.

In the opinion of Haldeman-Julius, most of his fellow citizens were "cliff dwellers" of the early twentieth century who saw things "as darkly as the cliff dwellers of a primitive epoch."[21] The clamorous crusade

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[21] Haldeman-Julius Weekly (February 21, 1925), 4.

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against Darwinism in the mid-twenties was seen by the Little Blue Book Man as a great irony; in an age when science was changing the mechanics of life, it had little or no effect on the thinking of the common man. In a phrase that is startlingly like one of Marshall McLuhan's, Haldeman-Julius said in 1925 that "people live in a flying machine age and carry about with them a set of stagecoach

ideas."[22] Classic examples of the intellectual "cliff-

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[22] Ibid.; Marshall McLuhan recently expressed his idea that the average modern American lives physically in the space age but intellectually in "Bonanzaland" . . . with his "ranch" home outside of the city surrounded by a "split-rail" fence, with a "Mustang" and a "ranch wagon" in his two-"stall" garage, and with his evenings filled with the vicarious television heroics and chivalry of the old-west Cartwright family. (McLuhan's concepts of "Bonanzaland" and the "rear view mirror" appear in the McGraw-Hill educational film, produced in 1968, entitled, This is Marshall McLuhan: The Medium is the Massage.) See also Donald F. Theall, The Medium is the Rear View Mirror (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1971), for a study of the works and influence of the Toronto specialist in culture and technology. Both Haldeman-Julius and McLuhan are stating, of course, variations of the culture-lag theory of the distinguished pioneer sociologist, William Ogburn.

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dwellers" of the nineteen-twenties were the Fundamentalists and the Babbits--both of whom ignored the scientific facts of life by refusing to rid themselves of their ignorance and intellectual lethargy.

The Fundamentalist struggle with Darwinism evolution substantiated, in Haldeman-Julius' mind, his belief that education for the millions was not only a worthy ideal, but an absolute necessity. The Scopes "Monkey" Trial, which took place in Dayton, Tennessee, in 1925, was a concrete manifestation of the ideological clash between stagecoach traditionalism and the newer scientific

perspective of Naturalism. Haldeman-Julius and his wife Marcet drove down to Tennessee in their Cadillac to cover the circus-like trial as reporter/writers. Their friend Clarence Darrow, legal giant, freethinker, and agnostic, was the attorney for the defense of John T. Scopes, Rhea High School football coach and science teacher who had dared to introduce the subject of biological evolution into his classroom. Darrow's Fundamentalist legal opponent, William Jennings Bryan, had been, in the words of Darrow, "born out of his time. . . . God's foot slipped when he made Bryan, and he set this particular heap of clay too far down the row."[23] Bryan, representing the state of Tennessee and its law prohibiting the teaching of evolution, in Haldeman-Julius' opinion, was taking, along with the Tennessee legislators, "a headlong rush back into the dark ages."[24]

[23] Haldeman-Julius Weekly (July 11, 1925), 2.

[24] Ibid., 1.

Calling the case "Superstition vs. Science in the Hills of Tennessee," Haldeman-Julius stated in his weekly

paper that Bryan and the Governor of Tennessee wanted "the world made safe for superstition," and that the real issues in the case were "medievalism vs. modernism," and the constitutional question of educational freedom in the United States. Tennessee Fundamentalism, Haldeman-Julius said, in terms that conjure up images of the gargoyles of Notre Dame, "was panting with the medieval lust for suppression of knowledge."[25] "Bigotry could not be bolder," he said

[25] Haldeman-Julius Weekly (May 30, 1925), 3.

in another article, ". . . we know now that the Original Sin was not Adam's but Darwin's - or rather the first thinker's . . .

> the great sin was committed when man first began to study the origins and the laws of life, when he first began to accumulate knowledge instead of taking the Bible's word and not trying to learn better.[26]

[26] Haldeman-Julius Weekly (April 11, 1925), 2.

Under the banner headline, "SCOPES TRIAL OPENS; BRYANITES PLAN TO WRITE BIBLE AMENDMENT INTO U.S. CONSTITUTION," Haldeman-Julius anticipated the eventual outcome of the trial. The article, written in the crowded and

sweaty Dayton, Tennessee, courtroom, told his readers that the jury was bad, the local people in this "garden spot of militant Christianity" were "fanatics," and that "the preachers look[ed] contented."[27] Whether out of a desire

[27] Haldeman-Julius Weekly (July 18, 1925), 1.

to capitalize on the legitimating persuasiveness of an argument in behalf of American constitutional democracy or out of a sincere concern for his most idealistic conception of the function of education, Haldeman-Julius wrote in his Weekly that the Scopes Trial was "the opening gun in a long, elaborately planned campaign to write the Bible into the Constitution of the United States." Bryan, he wrote from the hot courtroom, had just stated as much publicly, and

> he is the voice of a vast public that believes in everything Bryan professes. Bryan and the Fundamentalists feel that they can get a sufficient number of states to vote an amendment into the Constitution giving the states the right to set down the Bible as the foundation stone of the public schools.[28]

[28] Ibid.

It was to be decided by the Scopes case "whether the yokelery, wallowing in superstition contemporaneous with black magic and witchcraft," could deny the pupils of the free schools (no longer free in Tennessee, according to Haldeman-Julius) the benefits of modern knowledge; whether a belief in the Bible held by hill-billies weighed more in the scales of modern education than the sound, careful, immense work of scientists. "It is real," Haldeman-Julius exhorted, "this issue of freethought. . . . We are simply forced to struggle for our rights as free men, else we do not deserve freedom." He invoked a quotation attributed to Thomas Jefferson:

> In every country and in every age the priest has been hostile to liberty; he is always in alliance with the despot, abetting his abuses in return for protection of his own. It is error alone that needs the support of government. Truth can stand by itself. . . .

He then asked his readers the rhetorical question, "what would Thomas Jefferson think of the Scopes case?"[29] Bryan, who had stated that "modernism is making us brothers to the brute," was described by Haldeman-Julius as being contemptuous of ideas, hateful toward thinkers, madly and

[29] Haldeman-Julius Weekly (May 23, 1925), 4.

maliciously opposed to freedom of thought and the unhampered pursuit of truth. "He would determine education," Haldeman-Julius said, "by the greatest ignorance for the greatest number. . . .

> Bible Bill would save the world by kicking out its brains and kicking it back into a dark age of superstition.[30]

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[30] Haldeman-Julius Weekly (June 6, 1925), 1.

Sinclair Lewis' George F. Babbitt provided another impetus for the educational idealism of Haldeman-Julius. Babbitt (published in 1922) was an attack by Sinclair Lewis on many of the deficiencies he saw in American society early in the twentieth century. Through his brand of social criticism Lewis (who also wrote Main Street, in 1920, and Elmer Gantry, in 1927, as critiques of the social status quo in America) sought, like his personal friend Haldeman-Julius, to promote the enrichment and broadening of American culture. In the November 21, 1925 issue of his Weekly, Haldeman-Julius wrote an article called "The Rule of the Babbitts," and argued that Americans needed cheap, easily accessible education to overcome our "Babbitt Civilization." Our standardized industry and production

(which he usually championed in terms of their capacity to improve the material standards and security of civilization) had led to the kind of standardized minds that Henry Ford was encouraging and that George F. Babbitt so typified.[31]

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[31] In the October 10, 1925, Haldeman-Julius Weekly (p. 1), Haldeman-Julius stated that the kind of anti-semetic propaganda then being printed by Ford in the Dearborn Independent was ignorant bunk, and that Ford should stick to mass-producing cheap useful cars rather than trying to standardize Ford flivver-owners into Ford flivver-thinkers.

Our standardized mentality, Haldeman-Julius said, "wants men to be like Ford cars . . .

> all of an equal mind, of the same opinions, of similar religious notions, of one way of looking at everything. A standardized industrial system has given us a standardized intellectual life. The average mind is accepted as the true mind. The average viewpoint is taken as the only accurate one. That is what I mean by a Babbitt civilization.[32]

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[32] Haldeman-Julius Weekly (November 21, 1925), 1.

To be different was to be wrong; if anyone's mind was not standardized, he must be a criminal. . . .

> Babbitt is the new tyrant. He is the judge, jury, and executioner. He is the voice of a million men and women . . . and he is the

> voice of God. He is the enemy of personality, of culture, of individuality, of free intellectual discussion, of honest views about life. Babbitt has created a Babbitt philosophy, a Babbitt morality, a Babbitt way of looking at things, a Babbitt language, and a Babbitt heaven. . . . The Babbitts in New York speak the language of the Babbitts in a Kansas town of 3000. There is no difference in outlook, vision, in desire. They are all boosters. . . .
>
> The individual who would escape standardization should become a debunker. . . . He should hunt around for the bunk that is cluttering up his own life, and drive it out. . . . He should debunk himself of every bit of Babbitt-bunk that is floating around. He should debunk Babbitt's religion, Babbitt's idealism, Babbitt's ideas of success, Babbitt's notions about what is important and what is not important. . . .[33]

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[33] loc. cit.

It was too easy to be a Babbitt, according to Haldeman-Julius. One needed only to invest five cents each week in the Saturday Evening Post in order to get his philosophy. One needed only to invest twenty-five cents each month in a copy of the American Magazine to get his biography. One needed only to invest twenty-five cents each week when the plate was passed, to get his religion. One needed to do only a few easy things--all of them inexpensive--for Babbittry, like Babbitt industry,

was run on the principle of mass-production . . . of quantity distribution at small profit and low cost, like Wrigley's gum. But Haldeman-Julius offered an escape that was also widely distributed, low in cost and low in profit margin. Anti-Babbitt literature, in the form of his Little Blue Books, "now costs less," he asserted,"than Babbitt reading." But first one must shake himself up. For too many it is too easy "to go through life with a full belly and an empty head."[34]

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[34] Ibid.; Victor Willard, in an article written in Sunset Magazine (January, 1926), saluted Haldeman-Julius for carrying the world's best literature "into the remotest corner of Podunk and Gopher Prairie" because of his spirit, audacity, and faith that there were readers and buyers in America who would respond if books were made as easily available and as cheap as chewing gum (p. 37). It is interesting to note that the complete title of Willard's article is "Bringing the Light to Main Street: The Activities of a Publisher in Girard, Kansas, Bid Fair to Wipe Out America's 'Hinterland of Culture' and Make Bookworms of All the Babbitts."

To fill the empty heads Haldeman-Julius offered mental vitamins--knowledge--for the starved masses. "Let gigantic presses begin grinding out the truths about . . . brazen fakirs, medicine men and witch-burners," he proclaimed,

> Let books be turned out in an endless flood, giving the world the story of science, of discovery, of honest thought, of fearless criticism. Let these presses roar by day and night - heaping on the world a Niagara of print.[35]

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[35] Haldeman-Julius Weekly (June 6, 1925), 4.

His presses, working like giants to feed knowledge that would bring freedom from superstition, could provide for every individual the scientific and aesthetic insights that, applied to daily life, could make common Americans, like himself, spiritual kinsmen of Erasmus, Diderot and Voltaire in the long and noble upward struggle of the human race.[36]

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[36] Haldeman-Julius Weekly (February 21, 1925), 4.

The link between Haldeman-Julius' Little Blue Book idea and the concepts of the men of the Renaissance and the Age of Reason is easily seen. In 1925 Haldeman-Julius said he was living in the midst of a "tremendous awakening, a mental renaissance." Free thinking, he believed, was largely based on the printing press, and because of the

popularization of knowledge through print, men were coming out of the dark ages.[37]

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[37]Haldeman-Julius Weekly (June 6, 1925), 4.

In a discussion with his daughter Alice at the time of the death of his wife, Marcet, Haldeman-Julius commented reflectively on the subject of his own epitaph: "How does this sound, Alice, 'The Erasmus of the Twentieth Century'"? After further discussion with her he shrugged the matter off with the conclusion that epitaphs in stone, even if they last a thousand years, simply don't matter.[38]

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[38]Interview with Mrs. Alice DeLoach, November 1, 1974.

Desiderious Erasmus was one of the first men to link scholarship with the printing press to popularize the rebirth (renaissance) of learning that in the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries eclipsed the ignorance of the middle ages. Born in the Netherlands ten years after Gutenberg's movable type printed the first European book (a Bible), Erasmus became a scholar-priest who spent much of his time in the study of Greek and Latin original documents, traveled widely in Europe, maintained a vast

correspondence with virtually all the scholars and great men of his day, and wrote voluminously. His satire, The Praise of Folly, published in 1511, lashed out at the evils and vices of his time. In it he attacked the sale of indulgences by priests, ridiculed the Pope, proclaimed the assininity of theologians, and enumerated the stupidities and injustices done by the monks who insisted that ignorance of the masses was the first essential. His satire won immediate and striking success; within one month of the publication of a reprint of The Praise of Folly in March, 1515, seventeen hundred copies were sold, and by 1522 more than twenty thousand copies had been issued in all.[39] Erasmus was branded at the Council of Trent as an impious heretic, his works were banned and burned in various Catholic countries, and the Expurgatorial Index of 1584 published a list of passages to be deleted from his works that was so long that it filled fifty-five quarto pages. Even this was found to be insufficient; the

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[39]Preserved Smith, Erasmus: A Study of His Life, Ideals, and Place in History (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1923), 49, 122, 125.

enumeration of his errors in the Expurgatorial Index of 1640 swelled to fifty-nine double-columned folio pages.[40]

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[40] Ibid., 421-422, 435.

In 1928 Haldeman-Julius stated that he was proud of his efforts to emancipate the American reader; even though some of his Little Blue Books ran into censorship problems with the post office and with various religious groups around the country, he was sure that "the day of any possible Index Expurgatoris is . . . far in the past."[41]

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[41] First Hundred Million, 86.

Perhaps Haldeman-Julius had in mind the following description of Erasmus by Preserved Smith when he suggested to Alice that he would like to be remembered as the "Erasmus of the Twentieth Century":

> As the broadest scholar and as the most published wit of his generation Erasmus is sure of a lasting place in the history of literature and of learning.
> . . . That he saw through the accretions of superstition, dogma, and ritual . . . that he left his mind play freely on the sacred arcana of the traditional faith; that he recognized reason as the final arbiter in these matters

> as well as in social and political affairs.[42]

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[42] Smith, Erasmus, 441.

Two other sources of inspiration for the educational idealism of Haldeman-Julius were Diderot and Voltaire. Both men, bright beacons in the Age of Reason, were intellectual heirs of the free-thinking tradition traceable back to Erasmus. John Gunn wrote in his Little Blue Book (#678) that he had one evening discovered Haldeman-Julius in his library reading John Morley's account of Diderot and the Encyclopedists.[43] Haldeman-Julius,

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[43] Gunn, The Man and His Work, 44.

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according to Gunn, was impressed by certain points of analogy and contrast, "and by the similarity of the general idea that inspired Diderot, with his own thought and purpose in publishing the Little Blue Books."[44]

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[44] Ibid.

Haldeman-Julius talked, in semi-autobiographical terms, at great length of Diderot and his work:

> The tremendous figure of Diderot stands by the side of Voltaire in the eighteenth century . . . . Diderot is an ideal example of the thinker in whom thought is alive, of the scholar who draws his chief inspiration from life and who relates his activities to the needs of men. Diderot's ample nature, his powerful and restless intellect, touched life at all points. He was richly endowed with thought, emotion and indomitable, constructive will . . . he had an infinite and dauntless curiosity about life. . . .[45]

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[45] Ibid.

The Church in Diderot's and Voltaire's era, according to Haldeman-Julius, even though it had been challenged by schism and individual protests such as those of Erasmus, exercised a stern domination over the minds of men, and stood like a stone wall against all efforts toward the liberation and advancement of humanity. Prior to Diderot's time, the Church had been able to suppress or remove isolated objectors, but his efforts in creating the Encyclopedia--an organized compilation of all the world's scientific knowledge--and disseminating it to the four winds, presented a serious challenge to the authority of the Church. Diderot knew, Haldeman-Julius said,

> that the power of the church rested upon ignorance. It was his aim to destroy that ignorance by displacing it with knowledge.[46]

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[46] Ibid., 44-47.

Sitting in his library with John Morley's volume in his hand, Haldeman-Julius gave a brief dissertation to John Gunn on the Enlightenment's assault on the prevailing ecclesiastical interpretation of human nature. He wrote virtually the same words one year later in the pages of his Weekly when he described an almost identical clash of values at the Scopes trial. He told Gunn:

> The church has imposed upon men not only a view of life that was fixed and narrow, but one that was hopeless and denied the possibility of a free and gracious life. Human nature was inherently evil, this world was a "vale of tears," and its many evils must be patiently borne with a pious gaze on the dim hereafter -- such was the attitude of the church. This dark and dismal view Diderot assailed, and the Encyclopedia aided powerfully to dispel.[47]

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[47] Ibid., 47.

Such a challenge to the theological interpretation of human nature was met in the eighteenth century, as it had been in the Index Expurgatoris in the sixteenth and seventeenth

centuries, and as it would be later, in Dayton, Tennessee, in the twentieth century, with repression and harassment. On two occasions, work on the Encyclopedia was suspended as the result of persecution by church and state.[48]

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[48] Ibid., 50.

Haldeman-Julius must have felt a stirring of his pride and a sense of being a latter-day standard-bearer for the Cause when he read Morley's account of a report by a parish priest to the lieutenant of police in 1747:

> Diderot, a man of no profession, living, etc., is a young man who plays the free-thinker, and glories in impiety. He is the author of several works of philosophy, in which he attacks religion. His talk is like his books. He is busy at the composition of one now, which is very dangerous.[49]

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[49] Report quoted in John Morley, Diderot and the Encyclopaedists, Vol. I (New York: MacMillan and Co., 1891), 111.

Diderot went beyond his enormous task of organizing knowledge into an encyclopedia; he took a firm position as an agnostic, and thus shared essentially the same religio-philosophical position of his Deistic fellow-thinker and

contributor to the Encyclopedia, Voltaire. In a letter written in 1766, Diderot stated brazenly the religious position that he had inherited from the Humanism of Erasmus, and that was to be passed on by Diderot and Voltaire to Thomas Paine, Robert Ingersoll, Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, and to the army of Little Blue Books that were sent forth to strike blows in the battle for the freedom of men's minds. "The Christian religion," Diderot wrote,

> is to my mind the most absurd and atrocious in its dogmas; the most unintelligible, the most metaphysical, the most intertwisted and obscure, and consequently the most subject to divisions, sects, schisms, heresies; the most mischievous for the public tranquillity, the most dangerous to sovereigns by its hierarchic order, its persecutions, its discipline; the most flat, the most dreary, the most Gothic, and the most gloomy in its ceremonies; the most puerile and unsociable in its morality. . . . Since it is necessary that man, being superstitious by nature, should have a fetish, the simplest and most harmless will be the best fetish.[50]

[50] Ibid., 219-220.

Haldeman-Julius saw in the Little Blue Books "a kindred spirit to that which moved Diderot and his fellows in preparing their immense Encyclopedia."[51] One serious

[51] Gunn, The Man and His Work, 53.

disadvantage of the Encyclopedia, however, was overcome by the Little Blue Books; while the influence of the former works were confined to the nobility, to the wealthy class, the Little Blue Books were cheap and effective "in the popular spreading of culture."[52] The Little Blue Books,

[52] Ibid., 50.

within easy reach of even the poorest man, could be read by all classes, and served as stimuli to education and tolerance. In 1924, continuing the comparison between his Little Blue Books and the Encyclopedia, Haldeman-Julius implied that his series would surpass the twenty years' work of Diderot and his colleagues. The pocket series had only five years behind it, and with more than five hundred titles already in circulation, it could become, in the next fifteen years, a series of a thousand, or five thousand titles, even more abundantly justifying the educational promise of the series.[53]

[53] Ibid., 53.

Tolerance, according to Haldeman-Julius, was the chief word of the thinkers of the eighteenth century.

Voltaire's Candide, as well as most of his other plays, histories, and criticism, rested on the premise that education would enhance toleration--especially religious toleration. Haldeman-Julius became a devotee of Voltaire's religious skepticism, and was pleased when his wife, Marcet, and Louis Adamic referred to him as the "Volatire from Kansas."[54]

[54]See Marcet's description of her husband in Chapter I. Louis Adamic, in "Voltaire from Kansas," Outlook and Independent (June 25, 1930), 283, described Haldeman-Julius as feeling that he had a "spiritual kinship with Voltaire."

Haldeman-Julius was so captured by the character and works of Volatire that, in the September, 1924, issue of Life and Letters, he announced the creation of a monthly magazine dedicated to the cause of Toleration. The new Haldeman-Julius Monthly was to bring knowledge and toleration to his readers in the spirit of Volatire.[55] "It was

[55]E. Haldeman-Julius, "Wanted -- a Voltaire," Life and Letters (September, 1924), 12.

the intellectual progress of mankind that chiefly interested Voltaire," Haldeman-Julius said in another article,

"he was engaged in an intellectual struggle with the brutal forces of superstition and intolerance."[56] Like his idol

[56] E. Haldeman-Julius, "A Voltaire for America," Haldeman-Julius Weekly (June 13, 1925), 2.

of the Enlightenment, Haldeman-Julius sought to attain his chief desire -- putting his educational message into circulation.[57]

[57] Haldeman-Julius Weekly (June 20, 1925), 3.

Haldeman-Julius summarized his educational idea and ideal in a Little Blue Book written by himself at the end of the decade. In What America Needs (Little Blue Book No. 1293), published in 1928, he wrote that this country needed, more than anything else, "well-organized knowledge; carefully related knowledge; knowledge that is alive and functioning in all its parts."[58] Admitting that this "may seem

[58] E. Haldeman-Julius, What America Needs (Little Blue Book No. 1293, Girard: Haldeman-Julius Company, 1928), 6.

an excessively idealistic picture of what America needs," and that it "may seem even a somewhat romantic ideal," he

sketched an outline of a perfect American scholar, who might, through the University in Print or other media, efficiently lead his fellow human beings as they continue the long march from the ignorance of the past to the enlightenment and happiness of the future. Haldeman-Julius offered to support, financially, such a young man or woman (he took care to open the position to all comers, regardless of race, religion, or sex) as he was soliciting, until the person was established on the small income to be received from their writings. "Such a young man as I now call for," he continued,

> must be one who can and will be a real leader - a real worker - a fully operating influence in supplying . . . an encyclopedic culture and scholarship in American life. This young man must, in a word, be a remarkably efficient machine for relating, vivifying and diffusing knowledge. He must be a good thinking machine; and a machine that will turn out the best product . . . of knowledge for other men.[59]

[59] Ibid., 48, 9.

Such scholars as he sought for America were not common. Looking back over the history of the world, he listed examples: Aristotle was the "Prototype and model of the great American scholar," followed by Bacon, Diderot,

Voltaire (Erasmus was surprisingly not listed), Huxley, and Joseph McCabe (the British scholar, and former Jesuit priest, who wrote prolifically in the Little Blue Books on freethought and education).[60] "What more splendid and

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[60] Ibid., 27-32.

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enduring conquest," he wrote, in metaphors that blended his youthful Socialistic militancy with a desire to fulfill the American mission as a beacon for other nations, "than for America to take and hold the rich fields of culture?

> It will be a fair conquest; it will not deny any others the right to these fields. It would make America happier. It would make America more secure in an intelligent control of life.[61]

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[61] Ibid., 36.

Summary

Haldeman-Julius was obviously capable of high flights into idealism. His roots in a relatively poor and uneducated family, and the driving forces that

committed him to freedom of thought, underpinned his faith in the goodness of education, drove him to achieve personal success (combined with stewardship for his fellows), and equipped him well to dream on a grand scale. But what of the other two driving forces that Marcet and others had seen in Haldeman-Julius? What about his hedonism and pragmatism? Could so practical a businessman as he truly believe that education was the panacea of human suffering? Perhaps part of his idealism was part of his sales pitch.

CHAPTER III

IMPLEMENTING THE IDEA: PRAGMATIC BUSINESS TECHNIQUES

I fancy him calling his disciples round him saying "what do Men Say of Me?" and the disciples replying "They say you are the Messiah come to preach the gospel of truth in the world." Whereupon a frown would come above the black eye-brows, with the words, sternly uttered, "Tell no man of this! I am a businessman. If the Little Blue Books didn't sell, I wouldn't print them."

Lloyd E. Smith
Haldeman-Julius Weekly
(February 13, 1926)

CHAPTER III

IMPLEMENTING THE IDEA: PRAGMATIC BUSINESS TECHNIQUES

The Profit Motive

Haldeman-Julius, in spite of his idealistic pronouncements about popular culture and the good it might accomplish for the common man, was at heart a pragmatic capitalist. If the profit motive might at first appear to compromise the idealism of his experiment in mass education, it must be remembered that without such a motive there would have been no Little Blue Books. As has been stated previously, Haldeman-Julius considered himself to be a businessman rather than a philanthropist; he invested his capital in the Little Blue Book idea because he thought it would pay off. He was as interested in making a profit, he said, as Henry Ford. And, in the spirit of Carnegie's exemplary stewardship for his fellow man, Haldeman-Julius was proud that he had been able to improve rather than

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exploit the masses while turning a handsome profit in his Little Blue Book business.[1]

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[1]First Hundred Million, 256.

William J. Fielding dismissed the apparent contradiction between Haldeman-Julius' Socialism and enthusiasm for the Capitalistic profit motive:

> I don't think there was any inconsistency in H-J's professed socialist beliefs and his capitalistic enterprise. He realized he was living in a capitalistic society and if he was to get along he had to abide by the existing rules. Socialism had to be achieved in the future and one had to live in the present. Frederick Engels, whose name is so often associated with Marx's name, was a successful British capitalist who worked and wrote for the socialist cause. There were times when he practically supported Marx. Morris Hillquit, a leading American Socialist, was a successful New York corporation lawyer as well as a propagandist for Socialism. There were many similar cases in this country, England and Europe.[2]

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[2]Letter from William J. Fielding to author, August 19, 1971.

Repeating his statement that he was not a philanthropist, Haldeman-Julius stated in 1925 that he had already accomplished what he had set out to do; he was, after only six

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years, selling books like Kresge and Woolworth.[3] And by

[3]"What America Reads," Haldeman-Julius Weekly (November 24, 1925), 1.

1927 he had become so confident of his business acumen that he boasted, "show me something good and I'll find a way to sell it."[4]

[4]Dan Hennessy, "Haldeman-Julius Writers," Haldeman-Julius Monthly (July 1927), 108, quoted in Cothran, 286.

A letter from Haldeman-Julius to Louis Kopelin one year after the two had become partner-owners of the Appeal to Reason, provides what is undoubtedly the clearest view of the pragmatism and hedonism of the businessman behind the Little Blue Books.[5] Writing to Kopelin about ongoing

[5]Undated letter from Haldeman-Julius to Louis Kopelin, approximately May, 1920, quoted in Cothran, 120-122. For details of the purchase of the Appeal to Reason by Haldeman-Julius and Kopelin see Cothran, 81-85. With the subscription list of the Appeal waning as quickly as Socialism after World War I, Haldeman-Julius and Kopelin wanted to get rid of the paper and move into the book printing and selling business.

negotiations to sell the Appeal to Reason newspaper to Upton Sinclair, Haldeman-Julius said:

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> The Appeal is a tremendous thing in itself. We [Haldeman-Julius and Kopelin] have gone ahead and put a tremendous amount of ability into a new venture which has been an enormous success -- book publishing. The time has come at last when the two must split into separate propositions so that each may grow in its own way. Uppy is the best man for the Appeal; we are best for the books. Therefore, Uppy puts over his cooperative Appeal Organization and -- now get this -- we dispose of our Appeal property in order to raise money to put into a book publishing house which will be the largest eventually in the entire country and even in the world, for that matter.

He then demonstrated beyond any doubt that his idealism was part of his sales pitch:

> Get the idealism. We are not cashing in. We are merely making it possible to do a better and greater work. The Appeal Army, in buying the Appeal, will make the Appeal a tremendous weapon, and at the same time enable us to go ahead and become the Henry Fords of book publishing. This argument is absolutely unbeatable.
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> . . . . . .
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> I think you will enthuse over this whole situation. It simply means that we will be getting more money than we had expected and that we will still have a finger -- yes, a whole fist -- in the pie. We will get an enormous fortune for our Appeal and at the same time we will still have a book plant, a stock and a business that would cost us over $50,000 to put over. . . . We will be in soft. . . . we will be completely cut off from the Appeal, away from the risks that necessarily accompany relationship with that

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[6] Ibid. The deal with Upton Sinclair was never completed.

The Little Blue Books were a good product. They would sell on their own merits. And the idealism was good. It would help to sell the product. Invoke the names of Erasmus, Diderot, Voltaire, Paine, Jefferson, Ingersoll, Debs, Darrow -- they, too, were idealists, and they, too, could assist in promoting the business. It would not be difficult for Haldeman-Julius to maintain his idealistic image; he was, after all, a sincere free-thinker, an honest agnostic, and a true believer in the value of education as a force for the amelioration of human ignorance and suffering. Is it not only good business sense to manipulate idealism if it will enhance one's opportunity to turn a profit? And was not Haldeman-Julius a good businessman? He must have considered it pragmatic rather than dishonest when, after telling Kopelin that the salespitch of idealism was absolutely unbeatable, he turned around and informed his readers that

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> . . . we are not a commercial institution. . . . We are using this excellent and productive organization for the spread of more culture, rather than the mere making of more dividends. The joy of issuing new titles and sending forth new millions of books -- these are the best dividends in the world to us.[7]

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[7] Appeal to Reason (March 25, 1922), 4, quoted in Cothran, 143. For further analysis of the public service image that Haldeman-Julius consciously projected and manipulated, see Cothran, 148-49, 153, 157, 169-170, 186-187, 212, 248, 313, 331, 397-98, 404, 407-08.

Given his printing plant, his idealistic philosophy of popular culture, his pragmatic business sense, and his hypothesis about Mr. Average American, the only thing needed to actually begin publishing was a procedural principle. Such a principle was soon established -- "find out what the public wants and give it to them."[8]

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[8] First Hundred Million, 121.

At the outset of his publishing venture Haldeman-Julius had only his intuition to guide him in determining popular reading tastes. He considered himself to be "Mr. Public -- E. H-J multiplied hundreds of thousands of times," and judged his first manuscripts by only one standard --

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"do I like them?"[9] His intuition was seldom wrong. Public

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[9]"Porter Library Bulletin," Vol. 3, no. 18 (May 15, 1969), 3 (Kansas State College, Pittsburg, Kansas).

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response to the publication of his first two books in the pocket series, Omar Khayyam's Rubaiyat, and Oscar Wilde's The Ballad of Reading Jail, made it clear to him that his own taste was sufficiently close to the audience he sought to reach. The publication of his first two sets of fifty classics, and the hundreds of more "popular" (non-classical) titles that followed, provided a basis for supplementing his intuition in subsequent years. He eventually developed scientific market analysis techniques which relied heavily on his advertising and sales feedback, response to questionnaires, and response to published appeals for information about readers' tastes.

The Psychology of Advertising

Sales volume and advertising feedback came to be Haldeman-Julius' most valuable tools in determining what

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the public wanted. By offering something for nearly everyone in a standardized format at a standardized low price, Haldeman-Julius had only to advertise his product widely, distribute it effectively, and then carefully study Little Blue Book consumption in order to feel the popular pulse. Because he considered his pocket series to be a "democracy of books," Haldeman-Julius considered each book purchase to be a nickel "vote." The relative pull of each title gave the editor a good indication of what kinds of books the public wanted.

Beginning with advertisements for his pocket books in his own weekly paper, Haldeman-Julius rapidly expanded the advertising of his product in such nationally circulated newspapers and magazines as the Kansas City Star, the New York Times, the New York Herald Tribune, the Chicago Tribune, the Chicago Times, the Philadelphia Inquirer, the Detroit Free Press, the Los Angeles Times, the Los Angeles Herald Examiner, Life, The Saturday Evening Post, Liberty, Nation, Popular Science, Popular Mechanics, and the Ladies Home Journal.[10] His advertising was

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[10]First Hundred Million, chapters XV and XVI. Haldeman-Julius also advertised in smaller, frequently rural newspapers, such as the Grand Rapids (Michigan)

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Press and the Michigan Farmer, as William McCann has pointed out in his amusing reminiscence, "Sex-mad Socialism," The Progressive (September, 1967), 45.

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successful largely because of its simplicity. By listing columns of book titles, arranged under such helpful subject headings as "Sexology," "Self-Education," "Evolution," "Health," "French Love Stories," "Religion," "Prostitution," and "Psycho-Analysis," he was usually able to bring a return of at least two to one, often as much as seven to one, and occasionally even ten to one, on the amount he had invested in advertising.[11] Haldeman-Julius was aware

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[11] First Hundred Million, 273.

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that advertising was perhaps the single most important factor determining the success of his business. He sought to advertise "everything everywhere," and believed that culture was awaiting his advertising genius.[12]

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[12] Ibid., 173; Cothran, 171.

Advertising, as an art and a science, had become big business in its own right by the time Haldeman-Julius began merchandising his little paper-back product in 1919.

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The first line of advertising agencies was published by the National Register Company in 1917, and contained the names and addresses of 1400 advertising agencies. Total American advertising volume had reached 1.3 billion in 1915, and by 1926, a little past midpoint in the decade under consideration here, American advertising volume had trebled to 3.3 billion.[13] Haldeman-Julius' attempt to

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[13]"How Advertising and Advertising Agencies Started and Grew in the U.S.: A Brief History," Advertising Age, Vol. 35, No. 49, Section 2 (December 7, 1964), 5.

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demonstrate his genius as an advertiser and salesman thus began in a period when considerable professional experience was available for a fee--or at no cost for those perceptive individuals who noted carefully the increasingly sophisticated pitchmanship in the growing world of media around them.

Among the most significant influences on American advertising--and thus on the American consumer--in the first decades of the twentieth century were Behaviorist and Freudian psychology. In tune with the naturalism of his era, William James had set forth, in 1890, in Principles of Psychology, a naturalistic and functionalistic

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interpretation of mental processes. He joined the raging controversy over the true nature of human nature by arguing that the mind was merely a physical organ--without any metaphysical qualities that might link man's (ethical) behavior to a Supreme Being. The human mind, according to James, had evolved like all other human organs, and functioned simply as a tool that enhanced man's capacity to adapt to his ever-changing environment.

In 1914 another American psychologist, John B. Watson, took James's mechanistic conception of the mind one step further, and in Behavior: An Introduction to Comparative Psychology provided the inspiration and name for the Behaviorist School of psychology. Basing his position on the now-famous dog-bell-salivation experiments of Russian psychologist Ivan Pavlov, Watson argued that men, like dogs, could be conditioned to behave in predictable ways through an associational thought process involving planned stimulus and anticipated response. Another book by Watson, Behaviorism (1925), kept fresh in the minds of nineteen-twenties ad-men such as Haldeman-Julius the idea that American consumer tastes could be manipulated nearly as easily as the taste of Pavlov's dogs. When Professor

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Watson was fired for domestic reasons from his academic post in the Psychology Department at Johns Hopkins University in 1920, he was hired and paid lavishly to apply his scientific knowledge to the sale of commercial products for the J. Walter Thompson advertising firm in New York City.[14]

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[14]Kenneth MacGowan, "The Adventure of the Behaviorist," New Yorker (October 6, 1928).

There is no question whatsoever that Watson's knowledge, and his experiments and implementation of techniques at J. Walter Thompson (one of the biggest advertising firms in the nation), had wide impact on the advertising industry.

Sigmund Freud's psychological theories, especially regarding drives, passions, impulses, and sexuality, also had impact on the advertising men of the twenties. Freud's concept of repression and release, in particular, was given practical and widespread illustration before the American public by Haldeman-Julius' friend Clarence Darrow when Darrow defended the confessed murderers Leopold and Loeb in 1924. Drawing directly from Freudian theory, Darrow argued, as he would a year later in the Scopes "Monkey" Trial, that human nature could no longer, in the light of

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scientific evidence, be understood in simplistic, traditional, quasi-religious terms. The senseless and unpredictable murder of little Bobby Franks by the cultured and highly intelligent Leopold and Loeb, Darrow submitted, was prompted by unconscious impulses and emotions rather than ordinary motives such as theft or anger or jealousy. And only a scientific perspective could illuminate (and perhaps control) the causes and implications of the release of the repressed drives within us all.[15] As was made clear by such post-War books as How We Advertised America, The Psychology of Package Labels, The Psychology of Selling Life Insurance, and Psychology in Advertising, demand for particular products could be created and perhaps controlled simply by associating them with emotion-laden symbols and appealing to deep-seated human desires.

[15] Roderick Nash, in The Nervous Generation: American Thought, 1917-1930 (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1970), states that the "impact of Sigmund Freud on American intellectual history of the 1920's might be compared to that of Darwin in the late nineteenth century or Locke in Revolutionary times." Much of my discussion of Watson's and Freud's impact on advertising has been drawn from Nash's comments, pages 45-55.

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standard (and effective) advertising themes by 1926, and that the use of personal testimonials (associating a product with a popular and attractive image) had been raised almost to the status of an art form.[16] And it is

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[16]"How Advertising . . . Started and Grew . . . ," 5.

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no wonder that Haldeman-Julius consciously associated his Little Blue Books with such deep-rooted American symbols as progress, individualism, education, self-improvement, and freedom (his slogan, borrowed from J. A. Wayland, was, "to remain ignorant is to remain a slave"), and that so many of his titles appealed to readers' curiosity about sex, psychology, and religion, or to their desire to improve their relative position in the world of intellectual or economic survival of the fittest.

Although there is no way of assessing exactly how much impact Watson had on Haldeman-Julius, it is perhaps significant that the Girard publisher had, in his private library, a book entitled The Battle of Behaviorism, by John B. Watson and William MacDougall (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1929), and that he published a Little Blue Book on Watson in 1925 (Number 861, Behaviorism: The

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[17]The Watson-MacDougall book was discovered and examined by the author in the Haldeman-Julius Collection at the Porter Library, Kansas State College, Pittsburg, Kansas.

MacDougall book is actually the transcript of a debate between the two men (MacDougall had been a Professor of Mental Philosophy at Oxford and Duke, and was a member of the Instinctivist School of psychology) which took place before the Psychological Club of Washington on February 5, 1924. In this debate Watson defined Behaviorism as "the prediction and control of behavior." There may be significance, too, in the fact that Haldeman-Julius hired at least two advertising firms to handle part of his huge publicity campaign; undoubtedly these firms were familiar with or practiced the techniques of Watson in order to remain competitive in the advertising world of the twenties.[18]

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[18]Correspondence in February, 1975, between J. Walter Thompson Company and the author has turned up no subsidiary or other direct connection between John B. Watson's former employer and the two advertising companies Haldeman-Julius hired in the twenties (Harrison-Rippey Advertising Company, St. Louis, and the Esty Company of Kansas City).

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Freud's impact on Haldeman-Julius is likewise difficult to assess, but the fact that the Little Blue Book Man published a psychoanalysis of Freud (Little Blue Book No. 926), used the Freudian term "sublimation" comfortably and well, and published numerous Little and Big Blue Books on such subjects as psychosexuality, psychoanalysis, sexual fears, and dream interpretation, indicates that Haldeman-Julius was aware of the potential of Freud's ideas as predictors and controllers of bookbuying behavior.[19]

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[19]Big Blue Books Catalog (no date), 44; Haldeman-Julius used the term "sublimation" in a discussion of the psychology of bookselling, in The First Hundred Million, 30.

Although Haldeman-Julius had editorial assistants and hired advertising firms to handle part of his workload, he served as his own advertising manager, and made all final decisions regarding titles and promotion of Little Blue Books.[20] He believed, like Watson, that the common

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[20]First Hundred Million, 138, 263.

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alone made the decision as to how titles and categories should be worded in order to provide the stimuli that would bring the masters of literature and reason to the masses through an association of culture with those aspirations most often considered desirable in the public mind.[21]

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[21]Cothran, 315, 171.

Haldeman-Julius was so successful in his self-appointed roles of advertising manager and resident social psychologist that Mr. Lincoln M. Schuster (of Simon and Schuster Publishing House) stated, in his "Foreword" to The First Hundred Million, that Haldeman-Julius had "mastered the psychology of the American people" . . . he had successfully conducted "a laboratory of American intellectual taste."[22]

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[22]The First Hundred Million, vi.

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Advertising and Market Research Techniques

It was important to the outcome of Haldeman-Julius' careful sales research that virtually all Little Blue Book advertising was "coupon advertising." Fully ninety-five per cent of the more than one hundred million Little Blue Books sold during the twenties were ordered on tear-out coupons which the customer sent directly to the factory in Girard. The coupon device enabled Haldeman-Julius to test the pulling power of all kinds of advertising methods and media, while at the same time helping him discover exactly what the public wanted. Utilizing the "key" advertising method, which required the customer to respond to a special "key" box number or "key" address, the publisher could tell even before opening an incoming order what advertisement should receive credit for the business. The data he received was thus direct and immediately quantifiable.[23]

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[23] First Hundred Million, 138, 265, 263.

Louis Adamic, in his article published in the June 25, 1930 issue of Outlook and Independent magazine, stated that Haldeman-Julius' sales were "a weathercock which shows

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which way the breezes of public taste are blowing."[24] In

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[24]Adamic, 285; First Hundred Million, 44.

January of 1929 the New Republic used another meteorological analogy in assessing the extent to which this medium of popular culture accurately reflected the attitudes and concerns of the society for which it was produced: "Mr. Haldemann-Julius' [sic] titles are so numerous and the volume of his sales so fantastic as to make his business almost a barometer of plebian taste."[25]

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[25]New Republic (January 9, 1929), 206.

Haldeman-Julius discovered that less than one in one hundred people omitted the key code, and that his simple system gave him excellent marketing feedback. By the later years of the twenties he was certain enough of the accuracy of his Little Blue Book sales data that he could claim to have discovered even the comparative popularity of chess and checkers in the United States: checkers led by twenty per cent.[26]

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[26]First Hundred Million, 265, 76.

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The Little Blue Book Man's approach to advertising was simple, direct, and personal. In order to increase efficiency, minimize duplication and reduce costs, he tried to sell from the first insertion of his advertisements. He seldom if ever wrote lead-up ads or paid for announcements of things to come.[27] Besides being aware of the

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[27] Ibid., 268.

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psychological insights of Watson and Freud, he kept a careful eye on movies, magazines, and other popular media to keep up with the latest social trends and promotional gimmicks--and thus was able to reduce his dependence on advertising agencies as sources of advertising ideas.[28]

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[28] Ibid., 157, 162.

Using his own Weekly as a major source of advertising for his Little Blue Books, Haldeman-Julius could test the effectiveness of specific ad-lines before paying out the big money necessary for advertisement in national newspapers and magazines.[29] His printed advertisements all contained

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[29] Cothran, 171-173.

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three simple elements: a list of Little Blue Book titles (grouped according to categories), an order blank, and a statement of price. By listing all of his books in a standard format, according to title and number, at their standard nickel price, in a standard full-page advertisement, his reliance fell heavily on the capacity of his carefully selected titles to do the selling.

Advertising in a personal conversational tone, Haldeman-Julius utilized his own personal charisma in appealing to his audience. He used the informal "I," "you," and "we," and told his potential subscribers such things as, "I can take you on at this time. I am doing this job personally, because I want to keep in direct touch with each individual aspirant for Little Blue Book authorship."[30]

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[30]E. Haldeman-Julius, Little Blue Book No. 1366, How to Become a Writer of Little Blue Books (Girard: Haldeman-Julius Company, 1934), 4.

Other advertising media used by Haldeman-Julius were less effective than newspapers and magazines as diagnostic devices, but they undoubtedly had a considerable influence on the number of orders he received. Inside the

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back cover of many of his early Little Blue Books the publisher printed lists of book titles and numbers currently available from the plant in Girard. Circulars and small 3-1/2 x 5 inch "Little Blue Book Catalogs" were also regularly stuffed into outgoing packages of books in the mailing room.[31] On at least one occasion Haldeman-Julius even

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[31]First Hundred Million, 157.

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took to the radio to advertise his ideas and product, reportedly reaching a million radio listeners at their crystal sets and new commercial Philcos. Speaking on the subject "Do the Masses Want Culture?," he closed his broadcast by offering a free Little Blue Book to any hearer who wrote in and mentioned the speech. Nearly 10,000 people responded.[32] This experiment with a non-linear

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[32]Unidentified newspaper clipping dated January 14, 1924, in the Haldeman-Julius Collection at Porter Library, Kansas State College, Pittsburg. The broadcast originated from the Crosley Radio Station in Cincinnati.

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means of advertising during the twenties was a radical departure from the usual format of this man whose entire life was committed to print. Despite the apparent effectiveness of his broadcast, he stated just six months later

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that he had "no delusions about the advertising possibilities of the contraption." "The best way to advertise," he continued, was "to print good books and advertisements and circulars and catalogs."[33]

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[33] Haldeman-Julius Weekly (July 12, 1924), 6. Although Haldeman-Julius did not like the radio, he did at one point consider establishing a broadcasting station in Girard, and tentatively planned to distribute receiving sets to his audience. The programs for the station were to be carefully planned in order to include lectures on all fields of human knowledge and activity, musical programs, and coverage of worthwhile news. (See Cothran, 187, for further discussion of this plan.) Although the broadcasting station idea was never actualized, a letter to this author from a Mr. Tad Tekla, dated January 5, 1975, indicates that he was first exposed to Haldeman-Julius and the Little Blue Books by hearing some of DeMaupassant "in the H-J edition" on his brother's radio crystal set in St. Louis in about 1927. The publisher thus did use the radio on a number of occasions for promotion of his product.

Because of Haldeman-Julius' controversial titles on religion, companionate marriage and human sexuality, a number of his advertisements were refused or apologized for after publication. The Christian Science Monitor repeatedly refused to print Haldeman-Julius' advertisements in the twenties, and he encountered similar censorship problems with American Magazine, the New York Times Book Review, Colliers, and Popular Science.[34] The Detroit Free Press

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[34]Haldeman-Julius Weekly (June 24, 1924), 4, and (June 28, 1924), 2; First Hundred Million, 34.

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published an advertisement for the Little Blue Books during World War II which was followed, one day later, by a front page apology, signed by John S. Knight, editor and publisher. Humiliated at the nature and text of the heavily anti-Catholic advertisement, Mr. Knight ordered the business manager to fire the careless department head who had allowed such insulting copy to be printed, and to refuse payment for the advertisement.[35] The same advertisement

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[35]"An Apology," Detroit (Michigan) Free Press (January 11, 1941), 1, quoted in Cothran, 402.

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was printed in the Philadelphia Inquirer one year later, and another front page apology appeared.[36] Shortly

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[36]Philadelphia (Pennsylvania) Inquirer (January 14, 1942), 1, quoted in Cothran, 405.

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thereafter, according to Haldeman-Julius, his advertisements were rejected by the Kansas City Star, the New York Post, and a dozen other newspapers.[37] Demonstrating his

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[37]Cothran, 406.

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adroitness and pragmatism, Haldeman-Julius made the best of these censorship situations. By putting up a great howl that he was being gagged by a conspiracy of government and religious enemies, he not only gained free advertising from the Detroit Free Press, but also reaped much publicity as a poor independent publisher who was being driven out of business simply for exercising his right of freedom of the press.[38]

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[38]The Canadian Government prohibited importation of Haldeman-Julius' Little Blue Books on sex during the twenties until an arrangement was worked out that led to examination of the books by proper authorities (First Hundred Million, 211).

In spite of his difficulties with censorship, Haldeman-Julius, in 1928, with 1260 different titles in print, was buying more agate lines of nationally circulated newspaper and periodical space than any other book publisher in the world.[39] In 1922, following a ruling by the

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[39]Ibid., 339.

United States Post Office preventing the mailing of national magazines containing one of Haldeman-Julius' advertisements for a sale of Little Blue Books on Shakespeare,

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the Girard publisher promptly revised his advertising at an additional cost to him of $200,000.[40] Manipulating the

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[40]See Cothran, 155-158, for a detailed discussion of the Shakespeare Contest Case. Frank Harris, in an article entitled, "The Henry Ford of Literature," appearing in his Pearson's Magazine (October, 1922) berated the pettiness of governmental bureaucracy, and praised Haldeman-Julius' printing of Shakespeare as a great and beneficent work for mankind.

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situation into another publicity stunt, Haldeman-Julius wrote off the huge financial cost as just one more government attempt to put him out of business. Another index of Haldeman-Julius' advertising volume became apparent when, in August, 1924, he decided to stop advertising his product in lists printed on the inside of the covers of his Little Blue Books. At a circulation of 120,000 per day, he calculated, the book cover advertising alone was worth $50,000 per year.[41] And Peter H. Wyden, in an article entitled

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[41]Haldeman-Julius Weekly (August 16, 1924), 2.

"Book Baron," in Liberty Magazine in 1948, indicated that Haldeman-Julius was still, well after the Little Blue Book

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heyday of the twenties, spending $175,000 per year on advertising.[42]

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[42]Peter H. Wyden, "Book Baron," Liberty Magazine (November, 1948), 21.

Although the majority of Haldeman-Julius' advertising was the simple three-part printed announcement, he also became well-known for his amazing "sales." When he first started publishing the Appeal's Pocket Series in March, 1919, he sold his books for 25¢ each. He later reduced the price to five for a dollar, then, as his production became more efficient and buyer demand increased, he cut the price to a dime. By 1922, when his list was at 300 titles, he finally was able to reduce the retail cost of the books to the world-famous standard price of 5¢ each. His usual order was twenty books for one dollar throughout the twenties.[43] On several occasions, either to get rid

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[43]First Hundred Million, 324.

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of slow-moving books or to spur sales in general, he advertised sales of Little Blue Books at a cost of 4¢, 3¢,

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and even 1¢.[44] Most of his "sales" utilized the date-line

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[44] Ibid., 332; Cothran, 128, 271.

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advertising technique, by which buyers were offered "fantastic savings" if they ordered "before February 1st," or some other set date. Usually Haldeman-Julius set his date-line at the end of a thirty-day period from the date of the advertisement--and usually he extended the period another fifteen or thirty days, due to the "avalanche of orders" he received as a response.

In 1925, during the most successful period of his meteoric rise, he ran the following date-line advertisement:

> You have until June 30th to mail your order. Let me know your answer on or before that date. I shall stop publishing the Little Blue Books - unless you send me enough orders to prove to me that the books are still wanted.[45]

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[45] Ibid., 332.

Such advertisements as these, referred to by some as "fire sales," and "cheap Third Avenue merchandising," led to some criticism of Haldeman-Julius by readers.[46] Sensitive to

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[46] William McCann, "Sex-Mad Socialism," 45; Letter from William J. Fielding to author, August 19, 1971.

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such criticism, he apologized if the date-line sales method had displeased anyone. But date-line sales, he explained, were used to build up clientele and mailing lists, not to make money. In the face of ever-rising costs for production, advertising, and shipping, he had to resort to some device for building up a stable market of customers. He announced in 1928 that date-line sales would no longer be necessary, but defended his past use of the technique as "sound sales psychology, beyond any possible doubt." Without the date-line technique, he said, he could not have successfully achieved, in a little more than nine years, a list of over 1260 titles.[47]

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[47]Cothran, 325; First Hundred Million, 327, 334, 335.

An important corollary to the key and date-line methods of checking the popular pulse was Haldeman-Julius' basic premise that the Little Blue Books were read books. While other book publishers might claim to reflect public taste in their annual sales figures, Haldeman-Julius knew that his success reflected more accurately than that of any other book-man the general psychology of American readers. Unlike many "merchandise books," in luxurious

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bindings, the Little Blue Books had no pictorial or luxury appeal whatever. For this basic reason, and because the editorial policy in Girard was to select manuscripts for their informative rather than prestige value, there was no conceivable reason for buying a Little Blue Book other than to read it.[48] In what was probably an overstatement of his

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[48] First Hundred Million, 118, 121.

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point, Haldeman-Julius asserted that "more than 99 per cent of the Little Blue Books sold directly to the purchaser are sold to him because he wants to read them."[49] The Girard

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[49] Quoted in Adamic, 285.

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publisher, as has been previously noted, frequently referred to his business as a "democracy of books"; the orders he received (sometimes 4,000 in a single day) indicated the degrees of interest that people had in the great variety of reading matter represented in his series. These votes, he believed, showed a great deal about the American character.[50] His dual roles of "campaign organizer" and

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[50] Ibid.; First Hundred Million, 247; Cothran, 307.

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"chief vote-counter" uniquely equipped him to keep his candidate in office.

After the key advertising and sales analysis technique, the second most valuable source of information about public taste was direct feedback to Girard in the form of unsolicited letters from readers of Little Blue Books. When in 1924 Haldeman-Julius published his five-hundredth Little Blue Book title, he used the occasion to publicize his "University in Print." He drew together and published in his monthly, Life and Letters, several favorable letters received from prominent American Blue Book readers.

An old Milwaukee Socialist friend, Carl Sandburg, wrote the following:

> The Haldeman-Julius hip-pocket library has a fine picked list of the best things men have thought and written. For a five-dollar bill it brings an amazing array of good things to read. It is the brick-layer's hope, the mucker's dream, the wop's wonder of an education.[51]

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[51] Life and Letters (January 1924), 3.

Upton Sinclair, whose muck-raking novel of the Chicago meat-packing industry, The Jungle, was published in a set

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of six Little Blue Books, saw the Pocket Series as the solution to the problem of culture:

> Haldeman-Julius has solved the problem of culture for the people. In a year or two he will be printing more books than all the rest of the publishers of the world. He is going to put all the comic strips, sports pages and Sunday supplements out of business. The most important invention since the art of printing is the art of printing five cent books![52]

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[52] Ibid., 8.

Will Durant, author of The Story of Philosophy, was perhaps the most celebrated of Haldeman-Julius' "finds." After the editor had persuaded Durant to convert his lectures on various philosophers into manuscripts for publication in the Little Blue Book Series (Haldeman-Julius published these manuscripts in a dozen Little Blue Books selling for a total of sixty cents), the young scholar's work became famous, and his efforts were collected into a handsome edition that sold for $5.00 per copy. Published by Simon and Schuster, it eventually became the best-selling non-fiction clothbound book in America. Durant wrote the following letter:

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> After wandering through all the radical and liberal political and economic movements of the 20th century I have been brought forcibly and inevitably to the conclusion that the only hope of political or economic redemption lies in the spread of knowledge and the enlightenment of understanding and judgment. We cannot change our institutions until we change ourselves; and we can change ourselves not by sermons but by knowledge and wisdom. If there is a utopia, Mr. Haldeman-Julius has found the road to it.[53]

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[53] Ibid.

Eugene V. Debs, another old Socialist friend, hailed the publication of the five-hundredth Little Blue Book title with the following letter:

> You have certainly built up a wonderful and unique publishing enterprise, and the millions of copies of books of all descriptions, containing literature in all languages, you have put into circulation, not only in this country but beyond the seas, must have a great cultural and educational influence upon the masses of the common people who have thus been reached and hitherto have been unable on account of the expensive cost to provide themselves with such literature. I hope you will succeed. . . . and that you will be encouraged to develop indefinitely your great educational and cultural enterprise.[54]

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[54] Ibid., 40.

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Letters from the common man were better indicators of what the average American reader wanted. The following letters, published in 1928, substantiate what the famous men above had said four years earlier about the Little Blue Books, and give an indication of what subjects were most wanted:

> Starr G. Bennett - Student, Kalamazoo, Michigan
>
> The Little Blue Books on marriage and its problems, health and hygiene, for example, are books everyone should possess. They contain practically all I have ever learned about sex and I consider them invaluable in this line of education.
>
> Louis B. Greenberg - Lawyer, Kansas City, Missouri
>
> Looking back on my five years in the University and considering the various educational forces with which I thus came into contact, I find that I cannot attribute to any single factor a greater portion of credit for the little learning I now possess than to the Little Blue Books.
>
> W. L. Nelles - Telegrapher, Rawlins, Wyoming
>
> The Little Blue Books, being pocket-size, furnish me with a means to employ my spare moments to advantage. They enable me to continue in isolation my studies in subjects that interest me. Large, cumbersome books are difficult to transport and cannot be kept constantly at hand to catch these exclusive, idle moments.[55]

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[55] Haldeman-Julius Weekly (March 10, 1928), 2.

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Unfavorable responses were not infrequent. It is not surprising that most of Haldeman-Julius' "hate mail" was directed against him personally (because of his agnosticism, anti-fundamentalism, and anti-catholicism) rather than against the philosophy or even the content of his Little Blue Books. Bishop George A. Beacher, in the Ames, Iowa, Tribune, said, "Down with H-J! Would you have a snake come into your parlor?" The Augusta, Kansas, Journal stated that "H-J is not a good citizen," and the Macon, Georgia, Telegraph castigated him for being "not conventional." In Greenwood, South Carolina, the Index Journal called Haldeman-Julius a "densely ignorant man," while the Holland, Michigan, Sentinel nominated him "for the position of president of the publicity grabbers for these United States." But perhaps the Perry, Iowa, Chief summed up best the position of all those who were unwilling to spend $2.98 for a college education in Little Blue Books; it stated quite simply that "H-J is a bad influence."[56]

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[56] Ibid.; Time (August 8, 1949), 47; Saturday Review (April 12, 1969), 23.

A third device for gaining information about popular American reading tastes was the questionnaire. In

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what was probably a first in the history of publishing, Haldeman-Julius sent out 15,000 questionnaires to his readers asking for their preferences in books and inviting comments and suggestions. He received approximately 9000 replies, providing him with valuable merchandising information.[57]

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[57]"Porter Library Bulletin" (Kansas State College, Pittsburg, Kansas), Vol. 3, no. 18 (May 15, 1969), 3-4; Cothran, 162, 177.

Finally, Haldeman-Julius sought feedback about popular taste by making direct appeals in his own publications for readers' responses. Public response to the following request, printed in the Haldeman-Julius Weekly of January 28, 1928, served as a partial basis for his conclusions in The First Hundred Million, the story of how he sold that number of books during the first nine years he was in business:

> What Have the Little Blue Books Meant to You?
>
> You know the Little Blue Books -- you have bought them -- you have read them. I am asking you to tell me, in a brief letter, just what those books have meant to you. . . . Be explicit. Be candid. Tell me exactly what these books have done for you. Have you been educated -- has your attitude changed since

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> you have been a reader of this pocket series? Have you been debunked? Is your outlook wider and freer than it was before you bought some of these books? Perhaps you never were much of a reader before; perhaps you now make use of your spare moments in a delightful or helpful way with these handy books. Tell me about it. Write me a personal letter -- 200 words or so --and tell me what the Little Blue Books mean to you. Give me your age, your occupation, and tell me something about yourself. Your name will not be used if you so request; what I am after is the general opinion among Little Blue Book readers as to the educational and cultural value of the series.[58]

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[58] Haldeman-Julius Weekly (January 28, 1928), 1. This appeal was advertised, nearly verbatim, by this author, in 1975. Response appears in the Appendix.

It is evident that Haldeman-Julius was highly conscious of the importance of his market. He tabulated and kept careful records of shifts in public taste, and sought reasons for increases or declines in sales volume.[59]

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[59] First Hundred Million, 138; Cothran, 277.

Carroll Y. Belknap, in an article printed the same year, said "There is no guesswork in his list of titles, no gamble on the supposedly fickle taste of the public, for he has followed one safe rule; to test the market

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cautiously, discover what the public wants, and then plunge heavily."[60] And the New York World, not always friendly to

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[60]Carroll Y. Belknap quoted Haldeman-Julius in "Books by the Million," Haldeman-Julius Weekly (April 21, 1923), 1, in Cothran, 177.

Haldeman-Julius, described the Girard publisher in 1929 as astute and "too well acquainted with bunk himself, to misjudge his market. Anyone that can sell millions of pills of wisdom in the form of Little Blue Books knows his business."[61]

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[61]New York World (March 24, 1929), 10, in Cothran, 332.

Distribution

Haldeman-Julius' distribution techniques were, in order of descending effectiveness, mail order, Little Blue Book shops, territorial agents, and vending machines.

Speaking to a convention of journalists in the mid-twenties, Haldeman-Julius said that America was the

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greatest mail order country in the world. He cited a sociological consideration that impinged on his topic: "More than three fourths of our population live along rural routes and in towns of less than five thousand."[62] Because

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[62]Quoted in Cothran, 162.

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there were few libraries or theatres in such rural places, and because people seldom left their farms or one-room schoolhouses to go into town, culture by mail order was a necessity if education and fine literature were to become a possession of the people.

Haldeman-Julius combined the lists of addresses from his Weekly (April, 1923, subscription was 455,000), his Life and Letters (April, 1923, subscription was 105,000), and his Pocket Book Series, and developed a composite mailing list of over 300,000 potential Little Blue Book buyers.[63]

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[63]Belknap, in Cothran, 175.

By sending out flyers on a periodical basis Haldeman-Julius was able to keep potential customers up to date on the newest additions to his list of titles. Haldeman-Julius saw a second reason to utilize his high-pressure, mail

order system; people were less inhibited about buying certain books by the number through the mail than they would be otherwise. The soothing anonymity allowed them to learn about the things they really wanted to know--such as sex and self-improvement--without any embarrassment. Illustrative of this, according to Haldeman-Julius, was the fact that 17,500 people per year ordered his Little Blue Book entitled How To Conquer Stupidity--something very few would do if they could not order by number, by mail.[64]

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[64] First Hundred Million, 48.

Having covered the rural Little Blue Book market through his mail order business, Haldeman-Julius focused his attention on the urban reading market. Looking around him and seeing the immense success of syndicated newspapers and new "chain" stores such as Kresge's, Woolworth's, and the United Cigar Stores, he decided that he, too, should cash in on the new mass consumerism that was growing rapidly in the twenties as a result of increased individual mobility (thanks to Mr. Ford) and the shifting of population into urban centers. He declared, in 1924, that the "chain store idea is sound," and opened a few Little Blue

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Book stores himself to test the market in cities with a population of 100,000 or more. (He later raised the population limit for towns deserving Little Blue Book stores to 250,000.)[65] He ran an announcement in his Weekly

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[65] Haldeman-Julius Weekly (March 8, 1924), 1. The 1920 census marked the point when for the first time the urban population of the U.S. outnumbered the rural. (The American Almanac for 1972 [New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1972], 24.)

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telling people how to open a Little Blue Book store in their city, and included a written memorandum agreement that would bind himself and the undersigned franchisee for one year of business partnership. To secure a franchise for their city, the potential businessmen in Boston, Baltimore, St. Paul, Louisville, Providence, Jersey City, New Orleans, or the thirteen other cities listed in the announcement, needed only to sign the agreement and send it to Haldeman-Julius with a check for $1,000. In return, the franchisee would receive:

1. The exclusive franchise for one year for opening a Little Blue Book Store in the city selected
2. 33,333 Little Blue Books to be retailed at 5¢ each

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3. 5000 circulars, imprinted with the name of the store owner, listing all Little Blue Book titles currently available
4. An advertisement announcing the opening of the Little Blue Book store on the front page of the Haldeman-Julius Weekly, and then in prominent positions in the Haldeman-Julius monthly publications (Know Thyself and Life and Letters). In addition, each Little Blue Book buyer from that city would be made aware of the store by receiving a free Haldeman-Julius Weekly with the local store's advertisement appearing on the front page.
5. A complete list of mail order customers in that city and vicinity.
6. A guaranteed 40 percent discount on all Little Blue Books so if the price went up or down the franchisee was protected.

By acceptance of the proposition it was understood that the franchisee would not handle any books or magazines other than those provided by the Haldeman-Julius Company. Toys, cards, and other non-competitive merchandise could be handled, however. The agreement also bound the franchisee to carry in stock at all times a complete list of all titles in the series.[66] Towns of less than 10,000

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[66] Haldeman-Julius Weekly (September 8, 1923), 1, and (March 8, 1924), 1. See Cothran also, 194-198, for discussion of Little Blue Book shops.

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population were eventually opened for franchises also; the franchise fee was $500, and these Little Blue Book

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shops received exactly half of what was offered to franchises in larger cities.[67]

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[67] Haldeman-Julius Weekly (May 17, 1924), 1, in Cothran, 198.

Between September, 1923, and the end of October, 1924, Haldeman-Julius established at least sixty-three Little Blue Book stores in the United States and Canada. The following list of Little Blue Book shops is as complete as data available from a variety of sources at this time will allow:

United States

Aberdeen, Washington
Akron, Ohio
Altoona, Pennsylvania
Ashland, Ohio
Atlanta, Georgia
Atlantic City, New Jersey
Birmingham, Alabama
Berkeley, California
Boston, Massachusetts
Bridgeport, Connecticut
Buffalo, New York
Cedar Rapids, Iowa
Chattanooga, Tennessee
Chicago, Illinois
  Randolph Street
  Wabash Street
Cincinnati, Ohio
Cleveland, Ohio
Columbia, Missouri
Columbus, Ohio
Dayton, Ohio
Detroit, Michigan
Edinboro, Pennsylvania
Hanover, New Hampshire
Hartford, Connecticut
Indianapolis, Indiana
Kansas City, Missouri
Lincoln, Nebraska
Los Angeles, California
Milan, Illinois
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Minneapolis, Minnesota
Nashville, Tennessee
New Rochelle, New York
Newark, New Jersey
New York City
  Broadway
  Brooklyn
  Coney Island
  42nd Street
  Nassau Street
Omaha, Nebraska

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Parkersburg, West Virginia	San Antonio, Texas
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	San Francisco, California
Pittsburg, Pennsylvania	Seattle, Washington
Portland, Oregon	Tacoma, Washington
Providence, Rhode Island	Topeka, Kansas
Reading, Pennsylvania	Washington, D.C.
Rochester, Minnesota	Wheeling, West Virginia
St. Louis, Missouri	Worcester, Massachusetts

Canada

Calgery, Alberta	St. John's, Newfoundland
Hamilton, Ontario	Toronto, Ontario
Montreal, Quebec	Winnipeg, Manitoba[68]

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[68]Internal evidence indicates that at least five of the above establishments were book distributors, not Little Blue Book shops, per se. Data for this list derived from Haldeman-Julius Weeklies as follows: January 19, 1924, 2; March 8, 1924, 1; April 12, 1924, 1; April 26, 1924, 1; May 3, 1924, 1; May 10, 1924, 1; May 24, 1924, 3; July 5, 1924, 1; July 26, 1924, 1; August 30, 1924, 1; September 6, 1924, 1; October 11, 1924, 1; October 18, 1924, 1.

There is little evidence regarding sales volume for Little Blue Book shops, but the Broadway store in New York City submitted an order to Girard in approximately March of 1924 for 250,000 Little Blue Books with which to restock its shelves. The Los Angeles store topped this phenomenal order with its own request, a few weeks later, for 275,000 Little Blue Books.[69] A reporter for the New York Times

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[69]Haldeman-Julius Weekly (April 26, 1924), 3.

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visited one of the shops in that city in 1924, and described its operation in an article, entitled, "Pay as You Go," "as the cafeteria idea adapted to the book business. There were no clerks -- just a series of racks organized to direct the customer from the entrance, through the complete list of titles, to the cashier's cage immediately in front of the exit."[70] The Broadway shop in New York was

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[70] New York Times (February 24, 1924), Section 8, 18, quoted in Cothran, 196-197.

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described in an Ashville (North Carolina) Citizen editorial as being crowded all the time.[71]

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[71] Haldeman-Julius Weekly (April 19, 1924), 3.

Information about Little Blue Book stores after 1924 is virtually nonexistent. The thirteen-month spurt of frenetic activity in 1923 and 1924 was apparently (and not uncharacteristically) the beginning and end of Haldeman-Julius' enthusiasm for the chain-store idea. The Little Blue Book shops seem to have done well in the last half of the twenties and into the thirties, but by 1938 not a single one remained in existence.[72]

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[72]Cothran, 390.

In March of 1924 Haldeman-Julius announced a plan for establishing County Agents as distributors of Little Blue Books in small towns and farming sections of the United States. As a supplement to his mail order business (which was already bringing education and culture to some rural people) he planned to establish one Little Blue Book Agent in each county in the country (except in counties having cities with a population of over 50,000). "The beauty of this plan," he said, in his March 22, 1924 Weekly, "is that you can use spare room and spare time for extra money.

> Any man or woman or boy or girl can be a Little Blue Book County Agent. You are not too old or too young, but you must have $300 or we cannot guarantee your territory.[73]

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[73]Haldeman-Julius Weekly (March 22, 1924), 1.

In return for the $300 franchise fee the prospective County Agent would receive:

1. 6,600 Little Blue Books (12 copies of each title at a wholesale cost of 3¢ each -- the series then consisted of 550 titles)

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2. 600 cartons to hold the Little Blue Books
3. 5000 catalogs with the Agent's name and address printed on the cover
4. 5000 circulars containing a complete list of Little Blue Books, and imprinted with the name and address of the Agent
5. 20 leather Little Blue Book covers to be retailed at 50¢ each
6. 22 yearly subscription cards to the Haldeman-Julius Weekly
7. 22 yearly subscription cards to Life and Letters
8. 13 yearly subscription cards to Know Thyself[74]

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[74] Ibid. Life and Letters and Know Thyself were monthly publications of Haldeman-Julius during this period.

The use of such an official title as "Agent," and some of the terms of the agreement were clearly attempts by Haldeman-Julius to appeal to the vanity and desire for status and recognition among his readers.

The Little Blue Book County Agent idea apparently fell flat within a year. In the May 10, 1924, Weekly, Haldeman-Julius listed a "Directory of Little Blue Book County Agents," including:

Tracy, California - San Joaquin County - Agent Irving J. Jilbert

Flint, Michigan - Genesee County - Agent Carl Steinert

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Glendale, New York - Queens County - Agent A. M. Friedman

Mt. Vernon, New York - Westchester County - Agent Julius Berger

Marietta, Ohio - Washington County - Agent Fred Abendschoen[75]

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[75] Haldeman-Julius Weekly (May 10, 1924), 1. A letter from this author printed in the December 3, 1974, Flint (Michigan) Journal, requesting information about Carl Steinert or his Little Blue Book County Agency, produced responses from a Mr. Merle Perry, Jr. and a Ms. Alice Lethbridge. Their helpful research in Flint Directories and genealogical records, and subsequent telephone calls to "Steiners" in the Flint area have indicated that Mr. Carl Steinert, the first Little Blue Book County Agent, was a toolmaker who lived at the Flint YMCA in 1923 and 1924. No other substantive data was uncovered.

This list of County Agents is the last bit of information provided by Haldeman-Julius about the ill-fated distribution idea.

An even less successful plan for dividing Little Blue Book sales territory in the United States was announced in a November, 1924, Weekly: Haldeman-Julius encouraged persons who might be interested in establishing regional distributorships to contact a Mr. Daniel Nicoll, owner of the Little Blue Book Company, 300 Madison Avenue, New York City. Mr. Nicoll had opened three Little Blue Book Stores

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in New York City, and "controlled" distribution in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, Washington, D.C., Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. He was, according to Haldeman-Julius, interested in dividing his territory among "well-recommended persons who have sufficient means to finance one or more stores." Haldeman-Julius added that "quick action was advised."[76] Nothing more was apparently ever said about this plan.

[76] Haldeman-Julius Weekly (November 15, 1924), 3.

Several years later, in 1939, Haldeman-Julius contracted with a Chicago vending machine company to distribute Little Blue Books in the same manner as five-cent packs of gum. An initial order of half a million books (including such titles as Kipling's Gunga Din and Other Poems) were sold in strategically-placed coin-operated machines under the following imprint: "Published for Automatic Libraries, A Division of O. D. Jennings & Company A National Institution."[77] Shortly before his death

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[77]Series of letters between Haldeman-Julius and the O. D. Jennings Company, dated March, 1939 (Haldeman-Julius Collection, Porter Library, Kansas State College, Pittsburg, Kansas).

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in 1951 Haldeman-Julius looked back on his experiment with the O. D. Jennings vending machine people:

> About 10 years ago I had a little experience with the vending machine industry when a huge concern in Chicago turned out a machine that offered the public Little Blue Books. It was as big as a juke-box, with all kinds of chromium and neon lights. They cost $149.50, which struck me as a big investment for something that was intended to sell booklets. At any rate, I saw about 200 of these machines go out from coast to coast, and they did well, especially at 34th and Broadway, NYC. But that $149.50 was just too much money. It would cost several thousand dollars for a distributor just to get started. I begged for a simple rack, like the ones that sell Lifesavers, and gum on cashier's counters in restaurants, drug stores, and the like; but nobody would listen. The swell, expensive thing had to be done -- that or nothing. But the public identified the machine with a slot machine and expected to hit the jackpot or something.[78]

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[78]American Freeman (May 1951), 12, quoted in Cothran, 391.

Haldeman-Julius' distribution scheme thus was intended to blanket the country; all counties without cities

populated by 50,000 or more people were to have County Agents, cities of 50,000 to 250,000 were entitled to a Little Blue Book "Agency," available through Mr. Nicoll or himself, cities with a population of over 250,000 were reserved exclusively for Little Blue Book stores, train and bus stations would be handled by vending machines, and the ever-reliable mail order business would distribute Little Blue Books to all other seekers of wisdom and culture.[79]

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[79] Haldeman-Julius Weekly (March 22, 1924), 1.

Packaging the Product to Sell

As Haldeman-Julius' list of books grew, he realized he could not afford to advertise all of them individually with descriptive blurbs. The title, and perhaps the name of the author, therefore, were the "package" that met the eye of the prospective buyer (and, in psychological terms, was the "stimulus" that prompted the customer to "respond" by picking up or passing the book by). The title on the

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cover and in the advertisements thus had to serve simultaneously as the identifier, descriptor, and sales persuader.[80]

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[80] First Hundred Million, 124.

Based initially on his intuition, and increasingly on his market analysis data, Haldeman-Julius realized that John B. Watson and other advertiser-psychologists were correct about the possibilities of creating and predicting buyer demand. Therefore, despite his own desire to "push" the classics because of their universal appeal and timeless literary value (he began his pocket series in 1919 with such authors as Wilde, Khayyam, Boccaccio, Tolstoy, Paine and DeMaupassant), he quickly perceived that he could improve his sales volume by shifting his emphasis from the classics to education.[81] In the November 8, 1919, issue

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[81] Appeal to Reason (April 5, 1919), 4.

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of the Appeal to Reason, he announced that his new emphasis would indeed be in that direction--and in the March 20, 1919, issue of the Appeal, he moved even a step closer to popular public taste by offering such titles as Love

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Letters of a Portuguese Nun, How To Live 100 Years, How To Be an Orator, On the Threshold of Sex, Common Faults in Writing English, and What Every Expectant Mother Should Know.

A careful analysis of the Little Blue Book orders of 400 people (each of whom ordered twenty books for one dollar) representing all social strata, informed Haldeman-Julius that some titles in his series were not ordered by a single person. Among them were works by Euripides, Spencer, Pascal, Aeschylus, and Kant. Since each book had been advertised in exactly the same way--by title only--and since no favoritism was in any way shown to any books over any others, Haldeman-Julius deduced that the disparity between those volumes selling as many as 97 copies out of the 400 orders and those selling none at all had to be attributed to the titles of the books.[82]

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[82] Haldeman-Julius Weekly (November 14, 1925), 2.

Knowing from past experience that authors were proverbially poor guessers when it came to titles that would sell books, and that changing titles was a common occurrence in editorial offices, Haldeman-Julius established

two editorial devices that could facilitate his task of retitling Little Blue Books whose unattractive "packages" needed attention.[83]

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[83]First Hundred Million, 133.

The two editorial innovations, the "Hospital" and the "Morgue," were set up to assist him in his "worthy conspiracy" of creating new readers who would keep his presses printing what he thought they should read and what his marketing analysis data told him they wanted to read.[84]

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[84]Cothran, 162, 277.

Whenever he discovered a book that was not selling its quota of 10,000 volumes per year he sent it to the "Hospital," his "editorial sanctum sanctorum," where he attempted to diagnose the reason for its poor sales health. In most cases a change in title ("word surgery") was sufficient to cure the ailing Blue Book. Once sent back to the advertising manager under its new name it was usually able to survive in the marketplace. Books with a sales figure that fell below 5000 and showed no signs of increase were condemned to the "Morgue"--or scrap heap. On a few

sad occasions Haldeman-Julius baled for scrap as many as 30,000 copies of a deceased Little Blue Book. When he discovered at one point that some of his Little Blue Books were not factual--that they were actually bunk books--he honored his pledge of honesty to his public and sent them to the Morgue.[85]

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[85]For a detailed discussion of the "Hospital" and "Morgue" see chapters VIII and X, First Hundred Million. Specific references upon which some of the foregoing discussion is based is to be found in First Hundred Million, 180, 183, 190.

Perhaps the best example of a Little Blue Book that recovered after hospitalization was Guy deMaupassant's "Boule de Suif." This famous story was first made available in the Pocket Series under the accurately translated title The Tallow Ball. When in 1925 the sales record for this book was reviewed, it was discovered that it was selling only half as well as two other Maupassant Blue Books (Love and Other Stories and Mademoiselle Fifi). The title of the lagging book was changed shortly thereafter to A French Prostitute's Sacrifice, which, of course, is what the story is about. Within a year the book had increased sales by more than three times--from 15,000 to 54,700

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copies.[86] Similar changes were made, with similar dramatic sales increases, on other volumes:

Old Title	1925 Sales	New Title	1926 Sales
Fleece of Gold Theophile Gautier	6000	The Quest for the Blond Mistress	50,000
Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme Moliere	3	The Show-Off	10,000
The King Enjoys Himself Hugo	8000	The Lustful King Enjoys Himself	38,000
None Beneath the King Zorilla	6000	None Beneath the King Shall Enjoy This Woman	34,000
Pen, Pencil and Poison Wilde	5000	The Story of a Notorious Criminal	15,800
Casanova and His Loves Clement Wood	8000	Casanova, History's Greatest Lover	22,000[87]

[86] First Hundred Million, 133-134.

[87] This data, drawn from First Hundred Million, is presented as it appears in Cothran, 318.

Experience with title changing demonstrated an interesting psycholinguistic phenomenon to Haldeman-Julius. Sometimes single word changes, especially if they were certain key words, served as sufficient stimuli to elicit a favorable response from the public. Words such as

"truth," "facts," "life," "how to," "self-improvement," "sex," "French," "Parisian," "Mademoiselle," and "coquette," were all seen by Haldeman-Julius as effective words that could be counted on to catch and hold the public's attention.[88] Each seemed to somehow touch a nerve in the

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[88]First Hundred Million, 143-156.

American character, and created curiosity, desire, or favorable associational thought processes that led the consumer to check the number of that title on the order coupon.

In some cases an ailing book needed only a "change of scenery" to restore its sales health. Such a change involved moving the book from one advertising category to another. Experience indicated, for example, that some poetry, such as Longfellow's Courtship of Miles Standish, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning's Sonnets From the Portuguese, sold much better under the category of "Love" than than under "Poetry." On more rare occasions a book that was selling poorly needed both a title change and a change of scenery--involving two or more return trips to the Hospital.[89]

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[89]First Hundred Million, 171, 173.

In his retitling and changing of advertising categories, Haldeman-Julius demonstrated a great deal of flexibility and desire to remain current with changing American tastes. Cognizant of the subtle relationship between medium and message, he changed his advertising categories depending on the audience and advertising medium with which he was working. While, for example, categories such as Fiction, Biography, History and Science might appeal to readers of the New York Times, he was perfectly comfortable using such categories as Murder, Women, Love, Mystery, and Jokes to appeal to the readers of one of his tabloid advertisements.[90]

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[90]First Hundred Million, 246.

Careful comparison of advertisements for Little Blue Books in the early and late 1920's indicates that there was a significant shift away from traditional, classical categories, book titles, and authors toward more popular contemporary categories, book titles, authors, and

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themes.[91] It is this very flexibility, incidentally, which

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[91]Cothran, 271-272. It is significant, though, that Haldeman-Julius recognized the sales-value of the word "sex" early in his career; he used it as one of the categories in his first categorization of books in the Appeal to Reason on January 17, 1920 (p. 3).

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has become a stumbling-block to Little Blue Book researchers; in a recent article entitled "The Haldeman-Julius 'Little Blue Books' as a Bibliographical Problem," Richard Colles Johnson and G. Thomas Tanselle have discussed the implications of the Girard publisher's readiness to alter titles and reassign Little Blue Book numbers.[92]

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[92]R. C. Johnson and G. T. Tanselle, "The Haldeman-Julius 'Little Blue Books' as a Bibliographical Problem," The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America, 64 (First Quarter, 1970), 29-77.

Criticism of Haldeman-Julius' manipulation of Little Blue Book titles and categories was sometimes bitter. The San Francisco Argonaut accused the Little Blue Book Man of selling books under false names, and called him a "literary scavenger," "a barnyard thinker," a man "uninfluenced by the common decencies of daily life."[93] Such criticism was met by Haldeman-Julius with

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[93]San Francisco (California) Argonaut (November 24, 1928), 3, quoted in Cothran, 321.

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the argument that his goal was wide distribution of education and culture. "If by altering a title here and there," the Girard pragmatist said in 1928, "a good book would be more widely read, then the end certainly would justify the means."[94] Demonstrating his insight into the psychology of

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[94]First Hundred Million, 132. For other comments on "hooking" people into reading good literature, see First Hundred Million, 123; William McCann, 45; The New Republic (January 9, 1929), 207; and The New Republic (August 15, 1960), 20.

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packaging, Haldeman-Julius proclaimed that "a good title is a work of genius"--and quickly added that in his factory any changes in title had to be validated by the actual contents of the book.[95] "The change," Haldeman-Julius said,

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[95]First Hundred Million, 139.

"must serve, not deception, but enlightenment; the change must advance some particular information as to exactly the book's contents."[96] The New Republic applauded

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[96] Ibid., 137.

Haldeman-Julius' cultural and business acumen:

> . . . where he leads his prospective reader to hope for a lip-smacking passage or two, it may be that he is coming closer to the essence of literature than any of the professors. For literature is not what is found in the libraries; it is what people read. If Mr. Haldeman-Julius invents a title for a book which makes his public read it, perhaps he has, better than others, described that book.[97]

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[97] "That Which We Call a Rose," The New Republic (January 9, 1929), 207.

Haldeman-Julius himself could hardly have written a more persuasive vindication of his title-changing policy.

Mass Production in the Girard Plant

Haldeman-Julius' original printing equipment consisted of the 12x18 inch job press he purchased with the Appeal to Reason plant. With this primitive device the printing of a single 64 page booklet--minus its cover--

took three eight-hour working days.[98] As his pocket books

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[98] First Hundred Million, 224.

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gained in popularity, Haldeman-Julius judiciously introduced technological innovations into his system of production. Under his guidance what had originally been a relatively expensive manual operation became within a decade a totally electric system of mass-production capable of printing 240,000 books per day.[99]

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[99] Ibid., 223-237, for a detailed description of how Haldeman-Julius "Fordized" his system of production.

In order to finance his technological improvements Haldeman-Julius appealed to his readers for loans. The response was so great that he announced, in the Appeal to Reason on January 21, 1922, that the loan request for the new Miehle press and folding machine had been oversubscribed by $2000. (He had asked for $13,500--and received $15,500.)[100] In January of 1922, with his new Miehle

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[100] Appeal to Reason (January 21, 1922), 2.

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automatic feeder and press printing 20,000 books per day, and with his new folding machine folding books two at a time (6,000 per hour), he was still falling behind the flood of requests for Little Blue Books. In terms reminiscent of Horatio Alger, Haldeman-Julius quoted his motto, "Onward still, and upward," and appealed to his readers for another loan. Like his first appeal, the new loan--for a $17,500 Perfector Press which would print 40,000 books per day--would return six per cent interest to his subscribers after six months or a year.[101] Later, with the Perfector Press installed, and by putting on three shifts of workers, Haldeman-Julius calculated that he could handle any deluge of orders.

[101] *Ibid.*

The two most important consequences of Haldeman-Julius' technological innovation were that the cost of a Little Blue Book could be cut to a fifth of its original price, and that the books became capable of virtually unlimited duplication and distribution. Had it not been for these factors, the Little Blue Book series could not have become such a powerful agency of printed popular

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culture.[102] "Getting the price down to five cents,"

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[102] First Hundred Million, 232, 235.

Haldeman-Julius said in 1928, "was a matter of increasing production, after installation of the latest machinery."[103]

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[103] Ibid., 223.

The Little Blue Book plant employed as many as 150 people at a time during the twenties, and the payroll was a major factor in the economy of Girard.[104] As late as

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[104] Interview with Mr. Gene DeGruson, December 23, 1969. (Mr. DeGruson is the curator of the Haldeman-Julius Collection at Porter Library, Kansas State College, Pittsburg, Kansas, and is preparing, with Mrs. Sue Haldeman-Julius, a biography of Mrs. Haldeman-Julius' husband.)

1948 Haldeman-Julius was reported as still having sixty employees, and a weekly payroll of $1500.[105] Recent

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[105] Wyden, 20.

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interviews with citizens of Girard indicate that the townspeople were generally neutral about Haldeman-Julius and his unorthodox business. Although many Girard

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residents may have disagreed with Haldeman-Julius' religious and social ideas, they valued his economic impact on the community, and speak of him today as a highly intelligent, pleasant, person who didn't mix much socially with his townsmen.[106] The plant was run in a businesslike

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[106]Interviews conducted informally by the author with merchants, hotel operators, bar patrons, restaurant customers, and courthouse employees in Girard, Kansas, January 7-9, 1975.

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fashion, and the boss was usually on the premises (his Cadillac Coupe in its certain spot at the curb outside). According to his wife Marcet, Haldeman-Julius loved efficiency; he employed only capable subordinates, she said, and his employees all knew they were expected to deliver results. "They know," she said in an article written in August, 1924, "that nothing -- absolutely nothing -- slips by Emanuel. Consequently his entire staff render him their best efforts. Either they fulfill their duties to his entire satisfaction or they are quickly and decisively dismissed."[107]

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[107]"What the Editor's Wife is Thinking About," Haldeman-Julius Weekly (August 30, 1924), 6.

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Lloyd E. Smith, Haldeman-Julius' editorial assistant, echoed Marcet's description of the tone of the plant in an article he wrote two years later. "As carefully trained girls open the mail," he said, "E. H-J presides. The only noise permitted in the office at this momentous time is the clicking of the adding machines, and the quick words of the girls calling 'dollar-fifty, check . . . fifteen cents, stamps . . . three dollars, P.O. . . .' etc., as each envelope is stripped of its contents."[108]

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[108] Haldeman-Julius Weekly (February 13, 1926), 2.

Haldeman-Julius worked in his shirtsleeves at the plant, according to Smith, and made rounds through the plant about a half-dozen times daily. Smith's description of the fully automatic plant in operation provides a word-picture of early-twentieth-century American industry worthy of quotation at length:

> Sucking fingers turn up the edge of a large white sheet of paper much as one wets his fingers to go through a stack, which is caught by other fingers and slid through the rollers, pressed against the ink plates, slid out again, and whirled through to the stack of printed sheets. . . . To the casual observer the Haldeman-Julius plant is a chaotic place. One knows that it is not chaotic

> instinctively - for a vast amount of work is accomplished; but it looks chaotic.
>
> . . . everything is reduced to a time - and labor - saving basis. There is a certain frenzy about the workers, as though they were trying to beat time, but this is only apparent: it is an illusion, probably caused by the observer's consciousness of vast achievement, and wonder as to how it is all done. But don't get the idea that anyone loafs on the job; if anyone does, the Editor has a simple remedy: "Well, you'd better go to the office and get your check." The workers, being human, are not paragons as to work, but there is one thing that cannot be gainsaid, and that is the output. Eleven millions of Little Blue Books in the warehouses tell their own story.
>
> Workers address H-J as "Mr. Julius," except for older and more responsible ones who have acquired the temerity to call him "Manuel." And most of the employees have learned very quickly to listen attentively, lest they be too cocksure.[109]

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[109] Ibid.

Recent interviews with former plant employees substantiate Marcet's and Lloyd Smith's descriptions of daily plant operation. Montee Everitt, who started working for Haldeman-Julius "as a flunkie" in about 1921 at the age of sixteen or seventeen and who later worked his way up through apprenticeship to full-time printer in the plant, speaks today of Haldeman-Julius in favorable terms. One of the older trusted employees who called the boss "Manuel,"

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Mr. Everitt says "he was fine to work for . . . he never gave me any trouble -- I worked." On one occasion, when a female proofreader caused Mr. Everitt and another printer to be blamed for errors in final copy, the two men informed Haldeman-Julius that they were quitting rather than be blamed for the faults of someone else. Haldeman-Julius listened carefully, checked into the matter, terminated the lady proofreader, and asked his two printers to stay. Montee's wife, Cova, who also worked in the factory, filling orders by pulling Little Blue Books from racks of "pigeon holes," stated recently that "Mr. Julius expected a day's work out of you, but he was not a slave driver." She does, however, vividly remember one occasion in which Mr. Julius came up behind her unexpectedly and told her she was "slow as molasses." "He chewed me up," she recalls, "I was just petrified -- absolutely scared to death of him -- I'd start shaking when he'd sneak up on you." Neither Montee nor Cova Everitt sanctioned some of Haldeman-Julius' ideas, but they felt that his politics were his own business, and they, like many others, were happy to have steady local employment.[110]

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[110]Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Montee Everitt in their home in Pittsburg, Kansas, January 8, 1975.

Mrs. Pearl McAhron, a Little Blue Book plant employee for thirty years, worked for Haldeman-Julius from two years after his arrival in Girard, when she was sixteen years old, until the day of his death in 1951. Beginning as a youngster who picked up around the plant, she progressed to floor lady (supervising women filling Little Blue Book orders), and finally into the editor's outer office where she opened daily mail receipts, worked with mailing lists, and assisted in the supervision of typists and proofreaders. She today describes Haldeman-Julius as a "fine man." "He expected you to do your work," she says, but she never experienced the fear that other employees did. Although she agrees that most Girardites were neutral or favorably inclined toward Haldeman-Julius and his culture factory, she described Girard in the twenties as being a "country town -- a hayseed town with some fairly narrow-minded people." She recalls a Reverend Babb, of the First Christian Church of Girard, who referred from the pulpit in the twenties to Haldeman-Julius' home outside Girard as a "house of sin" -- at the very time when Haldeman-Julius was providing the pay checks for about fifty of Babb's congregation. Hearing this, Mrs. McAhron

stopped going to church until Reverend Babb left her church. She also recalls seeing Eugene Debs and Clarence Darrow visiting the plant, and remembers payless paydays during the Great Depression. Mrs. McAhron also provides verification that Haldeman-Julius regularly received gift money from his contributors. These cash contributions for "the cause" of freethought and Socialism were handled by Mrs. McAhron for a number of years. At the direction of Haldeman-Julius she hid such gift money under the cushion of a big stuffed chair in his office. He later removed it when it had accumulated to sums as large as $5,000.[111]

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[111]Interview with Mrs. Pearl McAhron at her home in Girard, Kansas, January 9, 1975.

Relationship With His Writers

Haldeman-Julius started his series of pocket books with such well-known authors of classics as Khayyam, Wilde, Twain, Emerson, Balzac, Maupassant, Burns, Gray, Goldsmith, and Poe. After publishing 250 titles (in 1922) he varied

from his pattern of reprinting classics, and began to hire writers to prepare books that he felt were more suited to the rapidly changing values of the twenties.[112] His new

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[112] First Hundred Million, 199.

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emphasis included works by Frank Harris, Ambrose Bierce, Upton Sinclair, E. W. Howe, H. G. Wells, Sherwood Anderson, Theodore Dreiser, Ben Hecht, William J. Fielding, Joseph McCabe, Maynard Shipley, Miriam Allen de Ford, Clement Wood, Isaac Goldberg, Clarence Darrow, and Charles J. Finger on such modern topics as evolution, sex education, prostitution, homosexuality, psychology, freethought, religion, love and romance, marriage and divorce, murder and crime, ventriloquism, chess, sports, and gambling. Although most of the material in the early Little Blue Books is reprinted literature, Haldeman-Julius introduced first editions by such authors as Bertrand Russell, Clarence Darrow, John Cowper Powys, Upton Sinclair, Will Durant, and E. W. Howe. His series of debates (especially those of Darrow), translations of ancient classics (Seneca, Aristophanes, Sophocles, Euripides) by Alexander Harvey, unusual anthologies (such as Clement Wood's Poetry of the

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Southern States, Little Blue Book No. 719), and popularization of scientific research, represent a unique contribution to American popular culture in the twenties.[113]

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[113] First Hundred Million, 260-61, 131; "The Little Blue Books as a Bibliographical Problem," 31, 38-39.

Although Haldeman-Julius received hundreds of unsolicited Little Blue Book manuscripts (a few of which were actually published), he constantly corresponded with and worked out specific assignments with specific writers months ahead of his deadlines. Strict mechanical and page requirements led to a standardized formula of 15,000 words, "written strictly to order," for each 64-page book.[114]

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[114] First Hundred Million, 209, 31, 202-204.

John Gunn wrote that Haldeman-Julius took great care in assigning subjects to writers; a writer was given only those topics he could approach with enthusiasm. Haldeman-Julius, according to Gunn, never dictated subjects or viewpoints, but studied the peculiar bent of each writer, discussing his capabilities, and assigned work with a view to getting the best material from him.[115] He reminded his

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[115]First Hundred Million, 31.

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writers that each Little Blue Book was a sort of periodical, "each volume being an issue, of which the best selling 'back numbers' are continually kept in print and on sale."[116] There was, therefore, a necessity for a formula

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[116]First Hundred Million, 205.

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involving a general and constant appeal (such as the appeal of a poor boy making good) in the planning, writing, and publication of a Little Blue Book. His writers seldom took longer than two months to prepare a manuscript after it had been assigned, and Haldeman-Julius reached a decision on a manuscript within a week of its receipt in his office.[117]

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[117]First Hundred Million, 242.

There was no delay for people to get into the mood to write: "If I had waited for the writer to receive inspiration," Haldeman-Julius wrote in 1928, "the books would still be unwritten."[118]

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[118]First Hundred Million, 215.

Payment of Little Blue Book authors was generally decided and agreed upon by correspondence ahead of time, based on the experience and prominence of the author.[119]

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[119] First Hundred Million, 243.

Authors received varying sums, but $50 was a fairly standard payment for a publishable 64-page manuscript, and $25 was standard for his 32-page manuscripts (all rights to royalties were normally waived).[120] Haldeman-Julius

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[120] How to Become a Writer of Little Blue Books (Little Blue Book No. 1366), 20.

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claimed to have paid over $50,000 to Joseph McCabe for his series of more than 120 anti-religious Little Blue Book manuscripts, and reportedly did pay royalties to H. G. Wells for the publication of selections from his works.[121]

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[121] Ibid., 2; Interview with Mr. Gene DeGruson, December 23, 1969.

Whether or not the relationship between Haldeman-Julius and his writers was amicable is not clear. John Gunn wrote in 1924 that "the relations of Haldeman-Julius with his writers are of the finest and most agreeable

kind."[122] William J. Fielding, despite his respect and

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[122]The Man and His Work, 31.

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fondness for Haldeman-Julius, has written that the Girard publisher was "a sharp businessman and could drive a tight bargain." When Haldeman-Julius accepted one of Fielding's larger books, The Shackles of the Supernatural, he agreed to pay Mr. Fielding $400 and a hundred copies of the book. During the process of printing it, however, Haldeman-Julius pleaded poverty, and asked if the author would accept $200 and a couple hundred copies of the book. Fielding, who spent over fifty years as a trusted employee of the Tiffany Company, was not dependent on writing for his living, and accepted the reduced compensation in order that his book would receive as wide a circulation as possible.[123]

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[123]Letter from William J. Fielding to the author, August 19, 1971.

Marcet Haldeman-Julius described her husband's relationships with his writers in 1924 in the following fashion:

> When it comes to his dealings with authors of Little Blue Books, he is a veritable Robin

> Hood -- dickering to the point of hard-fistedness with well-known writers and over-paying and allowing absurd amounts of expense money to ones he believes are brilliant.[124]

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[124] Haldeman-Julius Weekly (August 30, 1924), 5-6.

And Louis Adamic, in an unflattering article written in 1930, said that although Haldeman-Julius boasted of his pleasant relationship with his stable of authors, the pleasantness was probably one-sided. "From the viewpoint of the author," Adamic continued,

> Haldeman-Julius conducts a literary sweatshop. I know personally of the case of a writer in California who has written over twenty Little Blue Books for some of which he received $50 a piece and for others no payment in cash.
>
> Often he pays as little as ten dollars for a manuscript; then spends hundreds of dollars advertising it in national publications. He has boasted that nobody gets the best of him.[125]

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[125] Adamic, 316.

Even though a number of Little Blue Book authors may have looked back later with some negative feeling about their payment and treatment at the hands of Haldeman-Julius, it is probable that most of his authors, like William J.

Fielding, were satisfied, in the twenties, to receive $50 for a manuscript and a chance to be read widely in the streetcars and buses and households of rapidly changing America. Clarence Darrow said that the question of money never got between Haldeman-Julius and himself; he never got paid at all.[126]

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[126]Quoted in Wyden, 64.

Haldeman-Julius welcomed, at least superficially, manuscripts from anyone with something to say. Based on his much-publicized faith in the talent and ability of the American common man, he announced that he felt it logical to "take men and women from every walk of life and teach them the art of becoming Little Blue Book authors."[127] He

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[127]How to Become a Writer of Little Blue Books, 5.

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offered his readers a self-study course consisting of thirty-six lessons (twenty-seven written by Haldeman-Julius, and the remaining lessons prepared by Joseph McCabe, Clement Wood, Leo Markun, Hereward Carrington, Harry Elmer Barnes, Gloria Gooddard, Lloyd E. Smith, and Dr. Harry Hibschmann)

for a total cost of $115.[128] There is no evidence to illustrate the number of subscribers who actually became successful Little Blue Book writers as a result of his self-study program in authorship, but there is high likelihood that the figure $115 was rung up more than a few times on the cash register at the plant in Girard at the behest of common Americans who always had known they could win fame and fortune through their undeveloped but clearly evident talent as writers.

[128] Ibid., 10.

A Measure of Success

Haldeman-Julius' pocketbook business became an immediate success. The issuance of his first fifty booklets in 1919 drew 2000 subscriptions, and his second fifty titles drew 7500 subscriptions.[129] In a letter to his wife

[129] Appeal to Reason (November 15, 1919), 1; (April 17, 1921), 4.

Marcet in August, 1919, Haldeman-Julius crowed that he had recently beaten the sales record of his partner and friend Louis Kopelin (who had previously headed the Appeal to Reason's Book Department). He told Marcet that he had rejected some advice from Kopelin about bookselling, and to prove to Kopelin just who was the most knowledgeable,

> I showed him that in nine months and 13 days I had sold $28000 worth of books, breaking all records. I beat Louis's 1915 (his best year) by $7000 -- this is to say, in 9 months and 13 days I sold more by $7000 than Louis sold in 12 months. He turned pale.[130]

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[130]Quoted in Cothran, 103.

In November 1921, alone, the Book Department sold over one million books to customers who had ordered by mail from his list of 239 titles. Orders that month were received from China, Japan, India, Ireland, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, France, and every state in the Union.[131] By April

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[131]Appeal to Reason (December 24, 1921), 2.

1924, Haldeman-Julius' receipts were running about $1000 per day, and in 1927, with a total annual sales volume of 20,700,000 Little Blue Books, his receipts averaged

approximately $2,875 per day. At this rate he was selling an average of approximately 1.7 million Little Blue Books per month, and at a minimum acceptable profit of a fifth of a cent per book, Haldeman-Julius netted about $3,450 per month in 1927.[132] Gross income was estimated by Time

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[132]Cothran, 207, 308; Fielding, "Prince of Pamphleteers," 453. Extrapolated figures calculated by this author.

Magazine in 1949 and William J. Fielding in 1952 at about $500,000 per year, with Time stating a profit margin in tenths of a cent and Fielding estimating a profit margin of a fifth of a cent.[133]

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[133]Time (August 8, 1949), 47; Fielding, Ibid., 453.

In The First Hundred Million, Haldeman-Julius' self-analysis of his business success during the decade of the twenties, he estimated that he had printed an average of thirteen million Little Blue Books annually (in one or two cases up to twenty-five million per year), and that his average increase in output of titles was 140 per year.[134]

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[134]First Hundred Million, 237, 198.

A graphic illustration of year by year title output and sales volume in the twenties is presented in Figures 1 and 2. (It should be noted that neither Haldeman-Julius nor current researchers have been able to correct for the errors that must exist in any such estimate of total output as a result of the Editor's title changes and issuance of new books under old book numbers.) The graphs clearly demonstrate that the twenties were the heyday of the Little Blue Books, and that the years from 1930 to 1951 marked a substantial slow-down in the Blue Book business. They illustrate, too, what Andrew Cothran pointed out from the perspective of the year 1945: it had taken Haldeman-Julius less than nine years back in the booming twenties to sell more than two hundred million Little Blue Books--but between 1928 and 1945 he had increased that figure by only forty million. Stated in another way, it took approximately twice as many years, after 1928, to sell less than twenty-five per cent of his earlier grand total.[135]

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[135]Cothran, 415-416.

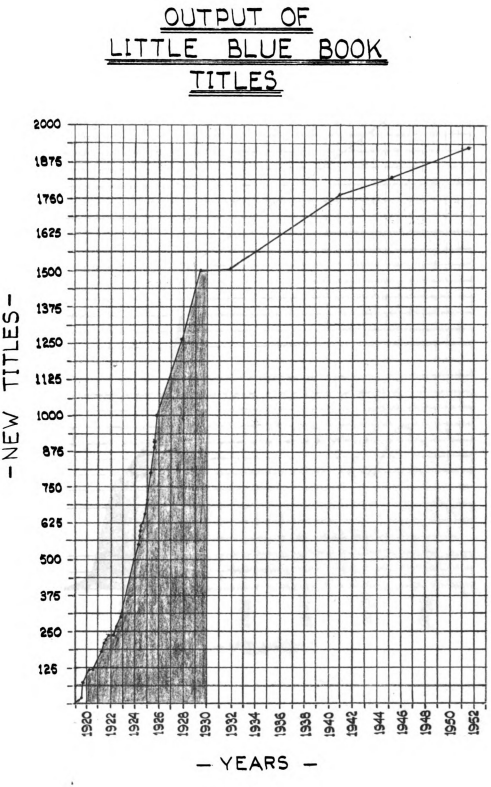
OUTPUT OF
LITTLE BLUE BOOK
TITLES
- NEW TITLES -
2000
1875
1750
1625
1500
1375
1250
1125
1000
875
750
625
500
375
250
125
1920
1922
1924
1926
1928
1930
1932
1934
1936
1938
1940
1942
1944
1946
1948
1950
1952
— YEARS —

Figure 1

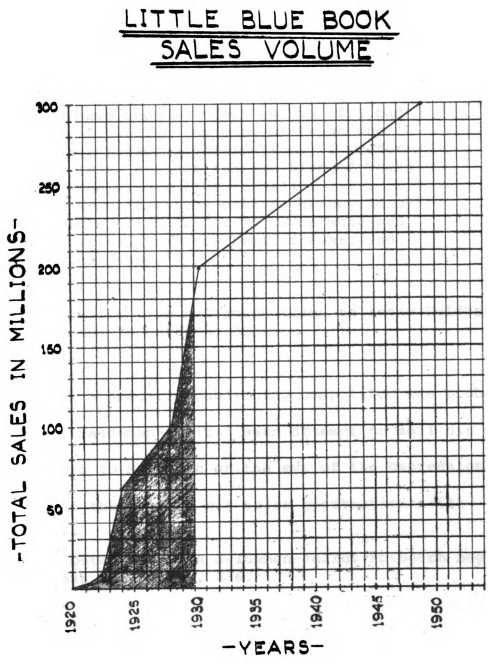
LITTLE BLUE BOOK
SALES VOLUME
-TOTAL SALES IN MILLIONS-
300
250
200
150
100
50
1920
1925
1930
1935
1940
1945
1950
-YEARS-

FIG. 2

Haldeman-Julius indicated in a letter to Issac Goldberg that his business had peaked in about 1929, and that he was satisfied with his business success. He wrote:

> I could have been 10 times as big if I had let myself publish the kind of trash one finds in a Mcfadden publication. I prefer to sell less, but publish the kind of books I like, the kind I like to sell . . . . I believe I don't really care to go beyond my 1929 volume. I'd prefer to issue more and better titles, from the best, freest, and most honest pens.[136]

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[136]Letter from Haldeman-Julius to Issac Goldberg in 1935, quoted in Cothran, 383.

This slap at a specific publishing competitor was probably a result of Haldeman-Julius' vain attempt to sell his entire business to Mcfadden on the eve of the Depression in 1929.[137] At the time of his sales negotiations with

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[137]Details of the Haldeman-Julius-Mcfadden negotiations appear in Cothran, 336.

Mcfadden, Haldeman-Julius listed his total business assets, and provided a clear picture of just how successful he had been in the decade since he borrowed money from his banker-wife to buy a third of the Appeal to Reason:

12,000,000 Little Blue Books in stock	$120,000
plates for 1500 titles in the pocket series	300,000
real estate, plant, machinery and equipment	156,000
mailing lists, paper stock, office equipment, supplies, and company good will	174,000
Total Value	$750,000[138]

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[138] Ibid.

Summary

There is little doubt that Haldeman-Julius' love of personal profit was every bit as genuine as his educational idealism. And there is little doubt that part of his idealism became a part of his sales pitch.

His pragmatism manifested itself in his use of psychology in advertising, in his market research, distribution, titling and mass production techniques, and in his handling of the numerous writers who provided the bulk of his material. And his hedonism manifested itself in the

booming financial success he experienced in the nineteen twenties.

One might conclude, as Victor Willard did in 1926, that the success of Haldeman-Julius' unique publishing venture lay ultimately in his genius for understanding the American public.[139] After having quite thoroughly dissected

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[139]Willard, 62.

Haldeman-Julius' methodology for learning what the American public wanted in the decade of the twenties, it is now logical to inquire what kinds of specific things Haldeman-Julius learned about American values in that decade.

CHAPTER IV

WHAT HE LEARNED: POPULAR TASTE IN THE TWENTIES

. . . his success ~~deserves~~, I think, serious scrutiny by students of American mantality. His book, The First Hundred Million, published in 1928 by Simon and Schuster, . . . is an important document worthy of shelf-room next to the Lynd's Middletown.

Louis Adamic
Outlook and Independent
(June 25, 1930)

CHAPTER IV

WHAT HE LEARNED: POPULAR TASTE IN THE TWENTIES

His Audience

Haldeman-Julius' market analysis led him to the conclusion that the Little Blue Book reading audience was tremendously diverse; letters from readers and reports from Little Blue Book shop proprietors in Cincinnati and New York indicated that readers were white, black, telegraphers, teachers, chauffeurs, clerks, professors, policemen, waitresses, ushers, railroad men, clergymen, college students, people who read the sporting pages, the racing sheets, and the tabloids.[1] Orders poured in from every state in

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[1]Cothran, 195, 197, for a description of the shoppers in Little Blue Book stores in Cincinnati and New York City.

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the Union and from South American, European, Middle Eastern, African, and Asian countries. A Texas oilman bought fourteen packages of 700 Little Blue Books each (total cost:

$486.50) to ensure his grandchildren a well-rounded education.[2] Haile Selassie, Emperor of Abysinia (now Ethiopia)

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[2]First Hundred Million, 251-252.

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ordered and received through the Seventh Day Adventists of Addis Ababa, Little Blue Books on better English, grammar, rhetoric, a rhyming dictionary, two crossword puzzles, a jokebook, and a copy of What Every Woman Should Know.[3] And

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[3]Wyden, 21; Fielding, Nation (May 10, 1952), 453.

Admiral Byrd took a complete set of 1500 Little Blue Books with him on an expedition to the South Pole.[4]

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[4]Fielding, Ibid., Saturday Review (April 12, 1969), 23.

Like the audience of the old Appeal to Reason, most American Little Blue Book readers were economically, educationally, and aesthetically "middle-brow" rather than "high-brow" or "low-brow." Haldeman-Julius concluded in 1928, that most of his readers were males, fairly modern in outlook, fairly young, and able to spend only a dollar or two at a time.[5] The Little Blue Book audience, in other

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[5]First Hundred Million, 25, 38, 52, 166, 270, 295.

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words, was drawn from that massive middling sector of American society which later came to be commonly known, stereotypically, as either a disillusioned and pessimistic "lost generation" who were somehow suspended in a state of psychological shock through the twenties, or the conformist zoot-suiters who jitterbugged in a Babbitt-like intellectual stupor through the Jazz Age in a decade-long debauch later to be known nostalgically as the "roaring twenties."

The Popular Mind in the Twenties

Haldeman-Julius, however, saw his readers as being precisely the opposite of the Jazz Age stereotype that has been created by textbooks and the media. Contrary to what Henry L. Mencken was saying about the "American booboisie" in the twenties, Haldeman-Julius saw, amongst the common people of the United States, "a nucleus around which to

build something worthwhile," "a promising multitude" of former George F. Babbitts.[6]

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[6] Ibid., 49, 51.

Rather than finding disillusionment and pessimism, Haldeman-Julius' market research indicated that there was a positive attitude toward American life and a good measure of hope for it among the hundreds of thousands of readers who sent coupons and dollar bills to him in Girard, Kansas. His audience was thorough in its quest for knowledge and truth, he said in 1928. There was no doubt in his mind that Mr. Average American wanted to know the facts of life, whether or not they were in accord with his political or humanitarian or religious beliefs and ideals. People were not as easily disillusioned as some social critics believed; "people wear shoes," he said in 1928, "and besides their toes are not nearly so tender as some of the guardians of our public safety seem to think."[7] And Haldeman-Julius

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[7] Ibid., 49-50.

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was confirmed by statistical evidence in his belief that the Average American was not the boob that some thought him

to be. In fact, the Little Blue Book Man found that American popular taste was receptive to the intelligent presentation of literary classics as long as the presentation was neither too intimidating, academic, or traditional.[8]

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[8] Ibid., 125-26, 117, 120, 172.

In his book, The First Hundred Million (1928), Haldeman-Julius claimed that he had discovered four main subject classifications covering ninety per cent of the reading interests of America. They were, in order or popularity, Sex and Love, Self-Improvement, Freethought and Skepticism, and Fun and Laughter.[9] He provided extensive

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[9] Ibid., 322.

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statistical support for these conclusions in his study, based on his sales records through the twenties.

Among the most popular books in the "Sex and Love" category were What Every Married Woman Should Know (112,000 copies per year), What Every Married Man Should Know (97,500 copies per year), Woman's Sexual Life (78,500 copies per year), The Physiology of Sex Life (65,500 copies per year), Modern Aspects of Birth Control (73,000 copies

per year), Prostitution in the Modern World (129,500 copies per year), Illicit Love, by Boccaccio (81,000 copies per year), One of Cleopatra's Nights, by Gautier (60,000 copies per year), 26 Men and a Girl, by Gorki (57,000 copies per year), and A French Prostitute's Sacrifice, by Maupassant (56,000 copies per year).[10] Haldeman-Julius pointed out,

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[10] Ibid., Chapter II.

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in The First Hundred Million and elsewhere, that his books dealing with sex were reliable and factually based. Several of them were written by medical authorities and pioneer sex researchers such as Havelock Ellis, Margaret Sanger, and William J. Fielding. None of them were sensationalist or in any sense smutty; their goal, as seen especially in Fielding's Rational Sex Series, was to inform people about the functioning of their bodies and to remove any sense of shame or sin from that understanding. Haldeman-Julius found it interesting that men frequently ordered sex-education books about women--and vice-versa, and that American readers had a "weakness" for tales by French authors such as Maupassant--and a special propensity to buy French-sounding tales of illicit love.[11]

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[11] Ibid., 21, 22, 27, 140, 31; Willard, 37.

In the field of Self-Improvement, best selling titles included How to Improve Your Conversation (77,000 copies per year), How to Improve Your Vocabulary (76,000 copies per year), Hints on Etiquette (72,000 copies per year), How to Write Letters (53,500 copies per year), Care of Skin and Hair (52,000 copies per year), Common Faults in English (47,000 copies per year), How to Psycho-Analyze Yourself (43,000 copies per year), and How to Fight Nervous Troubles (39,000 copies).[12] Haldeman-Julius concluded from

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[12] Ibid., Chapter III.

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these figures that the American Dream was not an idle one. Americans did, indeed, seek self-betterment and progress in the twenties--despite the minority of self-styled nihilists who claimed to have lost all hope after the First World War. What Americans wanted most, it seemed to Haldeman-Julius, was social improvement. There seemed to be a realistic recognition among many average Americans that such external considerations as physical attractiveness, social etiquette, and the ability to express oneself clearly

were definite criteria of culture, refinement, and upward social mobility. Haldeman-Julius considered one letter from a reader, in particular, to represent the common desire for self-improvement and culture: after having read and assimilated all of Hints on Etiquette, he felt ready for more particulars, and sought to obtain a much larger book of etiquette "so that he might become really and truly cultured."[13] But social improvement was not the whole

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[13] Ibid., 42, 51, 58-59.

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story. The fact that 17,500 people per year were willing to incriminate themselves to themselves by purchasing How to Conquer Stupidity was prima facie evidence that there was a core of common Americans who sought intellectual improvement as well.[14]

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[14] Ibid., 47-48.

The response to Haldeman-Julius' extensive publication of books on freethought and skepticism also indicated the eagerness of many Americans to be challenged intellectually. The production of these iconoclastic Little Blue Books stemmed from a combination of Haldeman-Julius'

liberal philosophy and the public demand for such reading material. While he was proud, on the one hand, of his role in the emancipation of the minds of American readers, and hoped that his efforts had helped to some extent to remove the possibility of there ever being another Index Expurgatoris, he also found, on the other hand, that freethought was more profitable, from a publisher's standpoint, than the most devout creed.[15] In support of this contention he

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[15] Ibid., 81, 86.

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cited his experiences as a publisher of the Bible. Despite traditional claims that the Christian Scriptures are the best-selling book in America, he found that his readers purchased four copies of Self-Contradicitons of the Bible to every single copy he sold of The Essence of the Bible. He attributed best-seller figures for the leather-bound Bible to the fact that it was a "merchandise book"; he said that people wanted it "just because it is the Bible and one really ought to have one on the premises."[16] Even though

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[16] Ibid., 184.

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the Bible might be a best-seller in the leather-bound market, Haldeman-Julius was convinced that its publishers could not claim, as he did, that their Book was bought to be read.[17] He pointed out, too, that for every copy sold

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[17] Ibid.

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of The Life of Jesus, nearly four copies of other books were sold suggesting that He never lived at all. Even The Life of the Infidel Ingersoll was more than twice as popular as The Life of Jesus.[18]

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[18] Ibid., 85.

Some of the other most popular freethought titles were Reasons for Doubting the Bible (31,000 copies per year), Forgery of the Old Testament (30,000 copies per year), The Myth of the Resurrection (30,500 copies per year), Thomas Paine's Age of Reason (29,000 copies per year), and Luther Burbank's Why I Am an Infidel (64,000 copies per year).[19] Haldeman-Julius informed Louis Adamic

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[19] Ibid., Chapter V.

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in 1930 that he had sold over five million copies of ex-priest Joseph McCabe's fifty-odd Blue Books, the most popular of which were: My Twelve Years in a Monastary, Seven Infidel U.S. Presidents, Horrors of the Inquisition, Absurdities of Christian Science, The Jesuits: Religious Rogues, Lies of Religious Literature, Pagan Christs Before Jesus, The Conflict Between Science and Religion, The Myth of Immortality, Religion's Failure to Combat Crime, The Futility of Belief in God, and The Fraud of Spiritualism. They sold from 13,000 to 46,000 each annually.[20]

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[20]Adamic, 314.

The fourth most popular category of Little Blue Books during the twenties was Entertainment, or Fun and Laughter. It is no coincidence that the best-seller in this category during the days of Prohibition was Toasts for All Occasions (55,000 copies per year). Nor is it surprising that Best Jewish Jokes, Best Negro Jokes, Best Irish Jokes, and Best Scotch Jokes were twice as popular as joke books about Americans during the twenties. This was, of course, the decade in which strict immigration quotas were enacted, the Ku Klux Klan was revived, and the

"melting pot," according to Haldeman-Julius, "failed."[21]

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[21]E. Haldeman-Julius, The Big American Parade (Boston: The Stratford Company, 1929). The title of Chapter VIII is "The Failure of the Melting Pot," and is Haldeman-Julius' assessment of ethnic and racial conflict in the U.S. at the end of the twenties.

Equally reflective of the historical context in which they were published were jokes about Henry Ford's ubiquitous invention. Although the Model T died in 1927, the jokes about it went rattling on. Best Ford Jokes sold an average of 22,500 copies per year during the mid and later twenties.[22]

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[22]First Hundred Million, 69-70.

Haldeman-Julius generalized about the most popular joke books of all; they dealt with what human beings have most revered, most idealized, and most consecrated--love and its relationships. Because love is so human, and universal, it makes good material for humor that can be appreciated by everyone. Best Jokes About Married Life, Best Jokes About Lovers, and Best Jokes About Kissing all sold in excess of 33,000 copies per year during the twenties.[23]

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[23]Ibid., 70.

Other good-selling joke books were Best College Humor, Best Jokes About Doctors (Preachers and Lawyers also), Best Hobo Jokes, and Humor of Abraham Lincoln. Haldeman-Julius observed that the success of professional jokes seemed to stem from the desire of common people to laugh at their superiors, or to laugh at "professional highbrows" whose foibles are usually so well hidden.[24] The single most

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[24]Adamic, 314; Ibid., 69.

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popular humorous author was Mark Twain, followed by another old-standard American by the name of Lincoln. Others, in approximate order of popularity, were Bill Nye, Josh Billings, Petroleum V. Nashby, and Artemus Ward.[25] Very

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[25]Ibid., 71-72.

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popular also were the so-called "fun" books--Crossword Puzzles, What Do You Know?, Who, When, Where, What?, Ask Me Another!, Mathematical Oddities, Party Games for Grown-Ups, Amateur Magic Tricks, and Children's Games--all selling by the tens of thousands annually.[26]

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[26] Ibid., Chapter IV.

Besides identifying the nature of his audience and discovering the reading categories that ninety per cent of them preferred, Haldeman-Julius learned a few other things about the average American during the nineteen-twenties. Despite the fact that his first two booklets had both been poetry classics, for example, his sales data proved beyond any doubt that Americans did not like poetry. Equally as unpopular with the common man were books of literary criticism and books that were "too esoteric," "too high-hat," or "too refined."[27] Haldeman-Julius claimed to have

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[27] Ibid., 32, 156, 172, 197, 194-95.

"salvaged" Bacon's The New Atlantis from his Morgue by "getting it away from the dust of dry tomes, into fresh air and sunlight with books of adventure." He changed its title to The New Atlantis: Lost Island, and put it alongside the Arabian Nights and Robinson Crusoe and Gulliver's Voyage to Lilliput so that "the rare atmosphere of highbrow literature" no longer "smothered" it.[28]

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[28]Ibid., 172.

Haldeman-Julius discovered, too, that Americans apparently were receptive to the idea of learning while on the run. Numerous readers informed him that the pocket-size of his Little Blue Books was an important factor in their decision to buy them. R. E. Runser, a bibliographer at the Michigan State University Library, was able, on account of their size, to read Little Blue Books on free-thought while attending church under duress as a boy in Erie, Pennsylvania. And William McCann, a retired Michigan businessman, found their small size to be of value when he, as a farm-boy, found it necessary to hide and read his Wild Women of Broadway in the corn crib. On street cars, subways, buses, in church, in a corn crib, or behind a plow, Americans in the twenties appreciated the pragmatic format and unintimidating size of Haldeman-Julius' little blue nuggets of knowledge.[29] Experiments with longer books,

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[29]Interviews with Mr. R. E. Runser and Mr. William McCann, January 19, 1970. Letters such as the one, previously noted, from the telegrapher in Rawlins, Wyoming, attesting to the convenience of the pocket size of the books, were common in Haldeman-Julius Weeklies during the mid-twenties.

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especially multi-volume Little Blue Books such as Upton Sinclair's Jungle, were dismal failures. Such works simply wouldn't fit into a trouser pocket comfortably--and most readers never got around to buying the entire set of five or six books after reading the first one.[30]

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[30] First Hundred Million, 188.

Haldeman-Julius reached a number of other conclusions by 1928 about the average American. There was, for example, no longer any need to defend the use of cosmetics by women. The liberation of women, greatly enhanced by World War I, had evidently progressed to the point where widespread opposition to the use of cosmetics was passe.[31]

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[31] Ibid., 53.

Probably reflecting another social phenomenon of the twenties (the rapid and massive migration of population from the country to the cities), the Little Blue Books on farming sold very poorly.[32] He also learned from his

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[32] Ibid., 56.

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market analysis that Americans in the twenties had a sweet-tooth, that they did not appreciate or understand (he was not sure which) satire in literature, that puns were popular with no one but pundits such as he, that reference books and useful tables were far more popular than most college professors would ever dream, and that John B. Watson and Sigmund Freud had been right about curiosity as a key stimulus in human (buying) behavior.[33] And he

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[33] Ibid., 58-59, 172, 73, 56-57, 83-84.

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learned by manipulating the title on a Little Blue Book dealing with habits (selling it first as How to Break Bad Habits, and later as How to Form Good Habits), that the average American was twice as interested in overcoming bad habits than he was in forming good ones.[34]

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[34] Ibid., 50.

In 1928 Haldeman-Julius declared that William J. Fielding's twenty-nine Little Blue Books, as a group, were "far and away the best sellers" during the twenties.[35]

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[35] Ibid., 211.

And Shakespeare, whose twenty-nine titles Haldeman-Julius never altered, remained high on his sales lists (2,436,000 copies sold by 1949) because people wanted to read him--in spite of the damage done to the famous bard's reputation by generations of insensitive high school English teachers.[36]

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[36]My Second 25 Years, 111.

A list of the ten best-selling titles in the twenties speaks for itself about popular American taste:

Author	Book #	Title	Date Issued	Total Sales
William J. Fielding	657	What Every Married Woman Should Know	Oct. 31, '24	493,500
William J. Fielding	656	What Every Married Man Should Know	Oct. 27, '24	445,500
William J. Fielding	654	What Every Young Man Should Know	June 20, '24	432,500
William J. Fielding	655	What Every Young Woman Should Know	Oct. 27, '24	400,000
Clement Wood	98	How to Love	March 12, '24	382,500
William J. Fielding	690	Man's Sexual Life	April 13, '25	382,000
John Cowper Powys	435	Digest of 100 Best Classics	July 11, '23	368,000
William J. Fielding	689	Woman's Sexual Life	Jan. 24, '25	357,000
William Shakespeare	816	Popular Shakespeare Quotations	April 27, '25	340,000
William J. Fielding	190	Psycho-Analysis Explained	Feb. 25, '21	330,000

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[37] My Second 25 Years, 88-116.

Historiographical Considerations

It has been suggested a number of times in the foregoing discussion that Haldeman-Julius saw the popular American mind in the twenties in a somewhat different light than the modern image of the decade would lead us to expect. Perhaps it is appropriate to ask, in more specific terms, just how Haldeman-Julius' perception of the twenties squares with the historical interpretations that have been written in the nearly half-century since the decade ended.

Professor Roderick Nash, of the University of California, in The Nervous Generation: American Thought, 1917-1930 (1970), has carefully and lucidly traced the creation, by popular journalists and scholar-historians, of the reputation of the twenties.[38] Professor Nash's analysis of the historiography leads to the conclusion that "the general public and scholars alike have been captured and captivated by the 'lost generation -- roaring twenties' image of the twenties." "American intellectuals," he continues,

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[38] Roderick Nash, The Nervous Generation: American Thought, 1917-1930 (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1970). In Chapter 2, "Reputation," Professor Nash has thoroughly and succinctly traced the various popular and professional historical interpretations of the twenties.

in his Introductory comments regarding the reputation of the decade,

> supposedly emerged from the war years cynical and alienated. Rebellion became a way of life: they drifted, valueless, from bar to bar and bedroom to bedroom, members of the lost generation. Popular thought in the 1920s has also been subject to extensive mythologizing. We have been led to believe that this was the "jazz age," as F. Scott Fitzgerald labeled it in 1922, during which Americans either indulged in an orgy of irresponsible dissipation or pursued the main chance with a narrow concentration that permitted neither ethics nor altruism. It was a decade-long house party. Iconoclasm was the order of the day. Tradition and convention were so much cumbersome rubbish.[39]

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[39] Ibid., 2.

Professor Nash has pointed out that a number of recent interpretations of the twenties have begun to raise questions about this stereotyped image. Writers such as John W. Ward, David Shannon, Paul A. Carter, John Braeman, Robert H. Bramner, David Brody, Archibald MacLeish, Oscar Handlin, Richard E. Langford and William E. Taylor have presented evidence that liberalism was anything but exhausted, that optimism was more popular than alienation, that old-time virtues and democratic values retained substantial vitality, and that intellectual and aesthetic

interests bloomed in the light of new challenges rather than wilted in the darkness of negativism and bewilderment.[40]

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[40] Ibid., 26-29.

In this vein, Forrest McDonald, in The Torch is Passed (1968), has stated that the image of "jazz-age" revelry and "lost generation" cynicism which have been popularized by Frederick Lewis Allen (Only Yesterday: An Informal History of the 1920s, published in 1931) and countless other writers, is "'highly misleading and superficial.'"[41]

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[41] Quoted in Nash, 31.

Professor Nash's own interpretation of the intellectual history of the twenties builds on and adds to the growing evidence that this decade (which, according to Nash, has received "more publicity, more popular attention, than any other decade-length period in the American past") has been grievously misunderstood. His entire book, in fact, after his early chapter tracing the sources of the current reputation of American thought in the twenties, is a careful and admirably readable revision and refutation of the "roaring twenties"--"lost generation" stereotypes. The

title of his book, The Nervous Generation, suggests his thesis that the depth, quantity and speed of change in post-World War I American values and society triggered an anxiety, an ambivalence, and a tenseness amongst the mass of average Americans that might more accurately be described by the adjective "nervous" than "lost."

Working from the premise that popular culture does indeed reflect the social and intellectual milieu in which it is pervasive, Professor Nash has suggested that intellectual historians have missed some important sources, in their research, by giving lengthy consideration to the implications of the literary works of F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, and H. L. Mencken, while failing to consider the implications of books written by such authors as Gene Stratton-Porter, Zane Grey, Harold Bell Wright, and Edgar Rice Burroughs. During the years between World War I and the depression, according to Nash, works by the first three writers never appeared at all on national best-seller lists, but books by Porter, Grey, and Wright appeared on the lists sixteen times. And Burroughs, who was not taken seriously enough by literary critics to even be ranked on the lists, may have outsold them all.[42]

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[42] Ibid., 1.

Like Edgar Rice Burroughs' adventures of Tarzan, Emanuel Haldeman-Julius' Little Blue Books were not, until recently, taken seriously by many persons who attempt to hear and understand the beat of the popular pulse. Yet, again like Burroughs, Haldeman-Julius' previously unparalleled contact with the American masses (his total annual sales in 1927 alone were 20,700,000 Little Blue Books, and his total sales for the decade were between 150 and 200 million), reduces to relative insignificance the value of such books as Fitzgerald's This Side of Paradise (published in 1920, annual sales of less than 50,000) for purposes of learning the state of the mass American mind in the twenties.[43]

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[43] Ibid.

Some perceptive individuals in the twenties, however, like Louis Adamic, who sought to place Haldeman-Julius' popular culture success story on his bookshelf next to the Lynd's Middletown, did, in fact, recognize and take seriously the significance of the Little Blue

Book literary phenomenon. The New Republic suggested, in 1929, that "apprentice critics could do worse than spend a year or two of graduate study in Haldeman-Julius' culture factory."[44] Burton Rascoe, writing in the New York Herald Tribune in 1924, could have been such a graduate critic. He said:

> The Haldeman-Julius phenomenon interests me. Here is a man who is selling millions of copies of the classics throughout the country, in the "corn-belt" and in the South, in places where books have never been sold before. There is not a "popular" author on his vast list, and yet there are few items which have not already sold more than any book among the other publishers' best sellers. . . . Perhaps Haldeman-Julius will demonstrate the necessity to revise the notions which obtain among editors and publishers as to what the people want.[45]

[44] Adamic, 283; The New Republic (January 9, 1929), 207.

[45] New York Herald Tribune (June 1, 1924), 27.

And Keith Preston, another critic whose insight has been missed by intellectual historians of the twenties, wrote, in 1923, with his tongue only partially in his cheek, that

> It is only recently that brain-food has been offered at chewing gum prices. Today one may

> behold the flapper wavering between Bill Wrigley and Haldeman-Julius, between salivation and salvation. And with increasing frequency she elects Haldeman-Julius.[46]

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[46] Chicago Daily News (December 26, 1923), quoted in The Haldeman-Julius Weekly (January 12, 1924), 1.

The former flapper, like the former George F. Babbitt, had good reason for electing Haldeman-Julius. The Little Blue Book Man believed in and supported her liberation. Had he not changed his last name in 1916 to recognize and preserve the individual identity of his wife Marcet? And did he not argue, in his newspaper articles and Little Blue Books on companionate marriage and sex education, for the cause of equality of the sexes? If the philosophy of liberalism had died after World War I, and if he was living in a "reactionary desert," as some writers have argued, Haldeman-Julius was unaware of it.[47] Aside

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[47] Nash, 62-63.

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from the sales appeal of the word "sex," William J. Fielding's Rational Sex Series in the Little Blue Books was intended to be an important force in the emancipation of women. Through the presentation of honest, scientific

discussion of human sexuality, Haldeman-Julius hoped to reduce the sense of shame and embarrassment which so many women felt regarding the sex question. Such enlightenment could counter the church-indoctrinated belief among many women that they were a lower being than man, a slave of his desires.[48] By removing the fear of disease and the

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[48] Haldeman-Julius Weekly (June 6, 1925), 4.

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fear of unwelcome conception from sex, Haldeman-Julius bolstered the hope and optimism of an increasing number of women who, after the war, had begun to attain economic independence and to move into the social, political, and intellectual mainstream of a more liberated and enlightened America.[49]

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[49] Big American Parade, 49-50.

Haldeman-Julius and his Little Blue Books reflected the vitality of the philosophy of liberalism, too, with regard to the questions of race and religion. On various occasions during the twenties he took a strong position in support of Negroes and other minorities, castigating the bigotry and ignorance of such forces as the Klan, and

championing the cause of social, economic, educational, and racial equality.[50] In The Big American Parade (1929) he

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[50]One such example is his reply to a letter from an intelligent free-thinking Negro reader at the Tuskegee Institute, in The Haldeman-Julius Weekly (March 21, 1925), 1.

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recognized with sadness the failure of the melting pot ideal in America, and, speaking of the unreasoning emotionalism in racial discrimination, said, "this is a wonderful example of how a prejudice can maintain itself confidently regardless of facts." He ended his comments on a note of hope, however, expressing some personal satisfaction that the Negro American was making social and economic progress because of his admirable courage and because of the increasing enlightenment of society.[51]

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[51]Big American Parade, 145-152.

Haldeman-Julius' conflict with organized religion was a continuation of the historical conflict that had existed between dogma and liberal freethought since the Age of Reason. His specific conflict, though, was unquestionably exacerbated by the intensification of the clash between religion and science that was materialized in the

Scopes Trial in 1925. His tremendous sales volume of Little Blue Books on skepticism freethought, science and psychology, and his own commitment to rationalism (rather than capitulation to cynicism) in the face of the issues raised by science's new interpretation of human nature, add to the growing body of evidence that the philosophy of liberalism was not bankrupt in the twenties.

Nor was political liberalism dead. Professor Nash has stated that the "persistence of liberal democratic ideals in the 1920s suggests the need to revise the image of intellectuals in the lost generation as nihilistic, narcissistic, and anti-American."[52] Henry L. Mencken,

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[52]Nash, 67.

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usually seen as an arch-iconoclast, was, according to Professor Nash, one of the most misunderstood intellectuals of the 1920s. "Mencken in his own way," Nash contends,

> actually championed the American democratic tradition. His uncompromising opposition to dogma, including that which placed the common man beyond criticism, stemmed from his allegiance to, not his rejection of, the ideal of individual liberty. In this sense Mencken was a democrat. The purpose of his writing was to show how far the United States had strayed from the ideals of freedom and democracy.[53]

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[53]Ibid., 61.

And Walter Lippmann, despite his acceptance of much of Freud's argument for the primacy of the irrational, in his book, Public Opinion (1922), returned, in his concluding comments, to reason and intelligence as the best hope of American government in the post-war years. In his final chapter, entitled, not coincidentally, "The Appeal to Reason," Lippmann argued that "it was not true that reason had failed"--"that there was no ground for despair"--that "'it is foolish for men to believe, because another great war took place, that intelligence, courage and effort cannot ever contrive a good life for all men.'"[54]

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[54]Quoted in Nash, 60-61.

Haldeman-Julius, an iconoclast of the first order, exposed, like Mencken and Lippmann, his own underlying affection for and trust in democracy and the American nation during the twenties. In The Big American Parade he granted that democracy is not perfect, but that it "works better for the greatest number than any form of

government"--and that it guarantees human rights.[55] "After all," he continued, "the finest thing about democracy is that within this free system,

> unhampered by tyranny of Church or State, we can work out, individually and in groups, our own ideals. . . . It is the virtue of democracy that it is not a hard-and-fast system politically or socially or culturally. Under it we have, at their best so far, the conditions of progress. It is not so long since man, body and mind, was in chains.[56]

[55] Big American Parade, 155.

[56] Ibid., 172.

Supporting Professor Nash's contention that Mencken's writing was intended to be constructive criticism that might help get American democracy back on the right track, Haldeman-Julius stated in a Little Blue Book written in 1928 (America's Fakirs and Guides, #1288), that Mencken, Sinclair, Darrow, Durant, Sinclair Lewis, John Cowper Powys and Edward Howe were all "aware, enlightened, honest, realistic critics of American life," and that their writings were stimulating forces for the improvement of the United

States.[57] Haldeman-Julius demonstrated that he was a

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[57] E. Haldeman-Julius, America's Fakirs and Guides (Little Blue Book #1288, Girard: Haldeman-Julius Company, 1928), 42-43.

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realistic, not a cynical or "lost" intellectual, when he wrote, in the same Little Blue Book, that "The modern spirit is skeptical, realistic, and rationalistic: it is fully aware of the large influence that emotions have in the lives of men: but it has a sound respect for facts, seeks in experience rather than in theory for a verification of the tendencies of human nature, and believes in the supreme use of reason in judging ideas."[58]

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[58] Ibid., 49.

Haldeman-Julius' opinion of the term "Jazz Age" (and "Mechanical Age," and "Age of Skepticism," and "Age of Hurry," and "Age of Advertising") was much like that of Forrest McDonald many years later. Such a phrase, he said, "fails to give a true and complete idea of the times," and if it is "regarded as only a singly important feature among a number of others, it is apt to produce

misunderstanding."[59] "Jazz Age," Haldeman-Julius wrote,

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[59] Big American Parade, 330.

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often creates the incorrect impression of

> people madly whirling and dashing about in a search for hectic, unnatural excitement, overstimulated, so extremely self-indulgent, regardless of serious or worthwhile purposes in life. Yet there was never a period when people were more broadly, intelligently interested in life -- when they had more serious objects in life (or more thoughtful, genuinely realistic and individual objects). . . . This age is too intelligent, too variously interested, and too highly efficient to be correctly identified as the Jazz Age.[60]

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[60] Ibid., 331.

Underscoring Professor Nash's argument that jazz was an "antidote to conformity, boredom, custom, tradition," rather than a mindless and immoral cacophony, Haldeman-Julius described jazz in the twenties as "youth, not simply in years, but in tonic vitality and eagerness that pervades all ages. . . . an incessant, an emotionally strong defiance of all austere, narrowing attitudes toward life."[61] If

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[61] Ibid., 76; Nash, 94.

Porgy and Bess (1935) had been produced just six years earlier, Haldeman-Julius could have cited one of George Gershwin's numbers as an unparalleled example of what he meant. "It Ain't Necessarily So," with its defiantly skeptical lyric, "the things that you're liable to read in the Bible, it ain't necessarily so . . . they tell all you 'chillun the devil's a villain, but it ain't necessarily so," could well have served as a best-selling title of one of his Little Blue Books on freethought.

The proprietor of the Girard culture factory was optimistic about the condition of aesthetics and thought during the twenties. Three years before R. L. Duffus published The American Renaissance (1928), Haldeman-Julius declared that there was underway in America a "tremendous awakening, a mental renaissance."[62] He saw a mental

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[62] Haldeman-Julius Weekly (June 6, 1925), 4; Nash, 90-91.

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revolution taking place that was similar to the French Revolution--"The time is ripe," Haldeman-Julius enthused,

> for fearless and far-reaching projects. Let us not throw away this precious opportunity by allowing ourselves to be dulled into inaction by the cynics who wrongly believe all is lost and there can be no awakening.[63]

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[63]*Ibid.*

In 1929 Haldeman-Julius saw a "growth in thought and art" among a "growing minority" of average Americans. This minority, he said,

> is spread over the forty-eight States. Its influence is not idle, but pervasive. . . . Personally, I have great hopes of culture in America. . . . In art, in literature, and in thought generally America is far ahead of any previous time.[64]

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[64]*Big American Parade*, 289.

Symphony orchestras, he noted, could be found by 1929 in most American cities of any size, art galleries and schools of art were multiplying rapidly, city planning and park beautification programs were proving successful, and the American skyscraper was material proof that our culture had evolved its own truly grand architectual style.[65]

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[65]*Ibid.*, 284-285.

"Nobody can have failed to recognize," Haldeman-Julius wrote in a Little Blue Book published in 1928, "the vastly increased stimulus of thought in America since the

World War." He saw a growing audience eager for new thought (verification was at hand in his sales data), and believed that an ever-greater number of average Americans were becoming sensitive to the source and quality of their opinions. "We have," he informed any lingering Babbitts on Main Street, "a greater pride of intelligence, of mental manliness."[66] Summarizing his reflections on aesthetics

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[66] America's Fakirs and Guides, 41-44.

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and thought in another Little Blue Book authored by him in the twenties, he said, "we have not in America much of the frail, hollow sadness of decadence and disillusionment."[67]

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[67] America: The Greatest Show on Earth, 15.

The popular image of dissipation, immorality and new-found license in the twenties is not substantiated by Haldeman-Julius' perception of the decade. Ethics had indeed changed since the war, he said in Little Blue Book Number 1374 (1929); the new ethical outlook, unlike the older more narrow, restrained, and innocent one of the past, was typified by freedom (not license), personal

expression, and practical (as distinguished from religiously dogmatic) values. "Precepts of self-denying virtue, that appear to have no basis in the tested, livable activities of the world of experience go by the board."[68]

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[68]E. Haldeman-Julius, Is the World Getting Better? (Little Blue Book #1374, Girard: Haldeman-Julius Company, 1929), 14.

He emphasized in another place, however, that the change in morals did not mean that ethics had been abandoned: "I repeat that we have not abandoned morality. We have simply moved forward to a different ground and view point of morality."[69] Instead of seeing "signs of fatal decay and

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[69]Big American Parade, 55.

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weakness and rottenness in the American social fabric," Haldeman-Julius perceived that American society was "virile, efficient and progressive."[70]

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[70]Ibid.

Professor Nash's thesis that "nervous" is a more accurate descriptor of the twenties than the adjective "lost," is clearly supported by Haldeman-Julius. In terms

not unlike Alvin Toffler's description of the psychic results of rapid and fundamental change (Future Shock, published in 1970), Haldeman-Julius reflected in 1929 that the impact of science and technology had produced "a far wider and profounder revolution in life in a hundred years than was produced (or possible at all) before in the space of a thousand years." In the past, he continued, "there were indeed changes -- social, political, cultural,

> but revolutions, even, were more a shifting of power than a change in the basic ways of life. Compared to the change that came with the Age of the Machine -- with science and industrialism -- change in former times may well appear to have been slow and inconspicuous.[71]

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[71] Is This World Getting Better?, 6-7.

Thirty years earlier, Haldeman-Julius pointed out, there had been much scoffing at the idea of the automobile, and twenty years earlier the airplane had been a subject of skeptical humor; but in 1929 proposals to communicate with Mars or make a journey to the moon were considered with an open mind. A vivid sense of the physical and cultural revolution that had been wrought since the turn of the century was conveyed by Haldeman-Julius in a

list of the common objects that had been added to the average person's familiarity in the past twenty-five or thirty years: electric lights, heating radiators, safety razors, victrolas and radios, chain stores, clothes hangers, telephones, self-supplying refrigerators, modern bath and toilet, mailboxes at every streetcorner, elevators, typewriters, sandwich shops, prophylactics, fountain pens, electric fans, toothbrushes, canned foods of all sorts, filling stations (a new kind of uniquely American architecture beside the skyscraper), and two-pants suits.[72] The

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[72] Ibid., 9-12.

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mind-boggling rapidity of change from the old, largely rural, life to the new, largely urban, life -- with its concomitant dislocations in the family structure, the way one worked, the way one thought and planned his daily schedule, the time one went to bed, the way one washed and shaved in the morning . . . this overwhelming rapidity of change led, inevitably, to ambivalence and anxiety and nervousness among an entire generation.

Although the Haldeman-Julius phenomenon does not clearly substantiate Professor Nash's idea that many

Americans sought the comfort and security of the past as it was presented by Zane Grey and others during the twenties, there is no question that the Little Blue Book Man perceived and shared some of the nervousness of his ambivalent countrymen--and that he and thousands of his readers were not eager to let go of such fundamental and traditional American values as democracy, individualism, progress, laissez-faire free enterprise, social equality, and pragmatic rationalism.[73]

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[73]Nash, 4. Alvin Toffler, in Future Shock (New York: Bantam Books, 1970), indicates that individual and social response to disorienting change commonly leads to the kind of hysterical clinging to familiar ideas that Professor Nash has suggested. Professor Toffler describes this response as "obsessive reversion to previously successful adaptive routines that are now irrelevant and inappropriate." Such reversionist behavior, typified, in Toffler's terms, by sticking to "previously programmed decisions and habits with dogmatic desperation," may partially explain the dogmatic and desperate posture of William Jennings Bryan and the religious Fundamentalists as they confronted Darwin, Freud, Naturalism and Science, Bibles clenched frantically in their fists, at the Scopes Trial in 1925. Another form of coping behavior, in the face of future shock, according to Toffler, is oversimplification. With old institutions and values toppling, Toffler's Super-Simplifier "seeks a single neat equation that will explain all the complex novelties threatening to engulf him." Perhaps this oversimplifying response could be imputed to Gertrude Stein for her (attributed) "lost generation" stereotype, and to F. Scott Fitzgerald for his "jazz age" stereotype. (All quotations from Future Shock, 358-361).

Summary

Haldeman-Julius learned, through careful scrutiny of his market research data and critical observation of the passing American parade, that popular taste in the twenties was essentially sound--the average American was not a mental sloth. He learned that Mr. or Mrs. Average American was not only able but eager to absorb the thoughts of good minds; he or she could and would read good literature if its presentation was sensible. And he knew these things, by virtue of his practically unrivaled contact with and systematic study of the American masses, better than most other authors, publishers, and critics in the twenties.

Throughout the decade, and even more so from the perspective of its last two years, Haldeman-Julius realized that America was on the move: the First World War had served more as an incentive than a detriment to the upward social mobility of women, blacks, ethnic minorities and ex-doughboys in all walks of life; the materialism that accompanied science and technology was a beneficent materialism (rather than a narrow Babbitt materialism) that improved everyone's standard of living, freed men from tedious labor, and enhanced the growth of culture; and

the shift from traditional to modern ethics was only one more joyous step in the march of the human race out of the ignorance of the dark ages and into the light of Reason.

Haldeman-Julius, one of the most scientific and careful takers of the American popular pulse in the twenties, saw little, if any, of the reactionism, despair, alienation, dissipation or ballyhoo that most historical studies and popular accounts have led us to believe are the distinguishing characteristics of the "lost generation."

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

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As with any truly popular medium, the total impact of the Haldeman-Julius Little Blue Books is difficult to assess. Read by both class and mass, the name a household word in America in the twenties and thirties, swapped among friends and "recycled" through secondhand shops, the Blue Books, like comic strips and television commercials, may well have touched millions of lives while remaining relatively unnoticed by society at large.

John Gunn and Rosalie Eisenberg (Haldeman-Julius' sister) have recalled incidents in which Little Blue Books were read and discussed enthusiastically by nuns, lawyers, clerks, and working men in buses and smoking cars during the twenties.[1] Ending his recollection of a smoking car discussion about Little Blue Books on Darwinism, heredity, and Wilde's artistic debt to Whistler, John Gunn cited

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[1]Interview with Rosalie Eisenberg; Gunn, The Man and His Work, 59.

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this one small occasion as proof that Haldeman-Julius was correct when he said that the "Little Blue Books are bringing knowledge out of the libraries and into the lives of men."[2]

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[2]Gunn, Ibid.

William J. Fielding, who retained a sharp memory and a delightfully mischievous laugh until his death at the age of eighty-seven in December of 1973, recorded his thoughts on the question of Little Blue Book impact:

> The Little Blue Books undoubtedly had an impact on a great many people during the 1920's and 1930's, probably in some areas more than others. Although these booklets had wide circulation in urban areas, where the centers of education are located principally, it would almost seem likely that their relative influence would have been greater in rural and isolated places, where variety of reading matter is not readily obtainable. My own experience has been limited to the metropolitan area of Greater New York and its suburbs, and it is surprising how often the Little Blue Books have been referred to by individuals in all walks of life, including college professors and other professional people. I have personally seen them read in New York's subways. I have had the experience of sitting alongside subway riders reading my own Little Blue Books. I never introduced myself as the author as I thought it would be an intrusion on their privacy, and an unwarranted assumption on my part. During the period in question, too, I received letters regularly

> from all parts of the country asking questions, particularly about sexual problems. In every case I answered them to the best of my ability. I would say that most of these letters came from the far west and the mid-west. . . . It must be remembered, of course, that the public has short memories. H-J advertised his books widely almost up to the time of his death in 1951, when this publicity ceased. In the twenty years that have elapsed, a new generation has come up, many of whom have never heard of this publishing phenomenon. While many of the old readers have nostalgic memories of the Little Blue Books, others unboubtedly have only faded recollection of them. It all depends on how much one was impressed by them at the time of their reading. I have become a member of organizations in which fellow members have come up to me and said they felt they had known me for years because of their familiarity with my Little Blue Books. One curious experience was told to me by a man who had lived in Alaska for several years in the 1930's, where he conducted a trading post, dealing mostly with the Eskimos. He said he was on his dog-sled making a trip into the port to get some supplies when he spied a little way off the trail a piece of colored paper on the snow. It was such an unusual sight to see any such evidence of civilization in the bleak tundra that he stopped his sled and went over and picked up the object. It was one of my Little Blue Books, No. 190 on Psychoanalysis.[3]

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[3]Letter from William J. Fielding to author, August 19, 1971.

The impact of the Little Blue Books was even felt in the jails of America. A letter to Haldeman-Julius from

a St. Louis prisoner said, "Send them books in a hurry, I want to improve my mind." The jailed reader explained that he didn't have much time left, since he was going to the gallows in thirty days. Haldeman-Julius reprinted the letter in his American Freeman, and a St. Louis newspaper picked up the story and began a campaign for a reprieve of the condemned man. The governor granted a last-minute reprieve, and the book-hungry convict was found not guilty and freed. He later wrote a letter of appreciation to Haldeman-Julius, saying, "That order saved my life."[4]

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[4]Wyden, 63.

Another inmate who felt the impact of the Little Blue Books (in a decidedly less ultimate way) wrote to Haldeman-Julius as follows: "You haven't had an order from me in six months because I've been in jail for running a still in Tennessee. When I got sentenced, the jury crowded around and the judge said, 'that's the finest bit of coppersmithing I've ever seen.' And I owe it all to the Little Blue Books."[5]

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[5]Ibid.

A letter to Haldeman-Julius in 1925 from a black reader, Mr. LeRoy R. Brown, of the Tuskegee Institute, suggests something of the impact of the Little Blue Books on another American during the decade in which the Ku Klux Klan was revived:

> You and the Little Blue Books have played an inestimable influence in the transformation of my concepts of life in general. No single source of information and inspiration has been so vitally effective on the shaping and directing of my thoughts. Being, as I am, a member of that "inferior" race generally accredited with an unusual degree of emotionalism and an extraordinary susceptibility to superstition, you may easily imagine the struggle to put down the tenets of a religious faith inculcated from infancy, and accept the more logical aspects of life as set forth by such noble geniuses as Voltaire, Paine, France, Thoreau, Emerson, and yourself.[6]

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[6] Haldeman-Julius Weekly (March 21, 1925), 1.

Haldeman-Julius printed Mr. Brown's letter in his Weekly, calling him "a fellow soldier in the liberation war of humanity." A month later a response to Mr. Brown's letter was printed in the Weekly. A Mr. W. P. Shutt, of Scotts Mills, Oregon, wrote that he used to be against blacks and for religion--that religion and race hatred at one time had supported each other in his mind. But after reading

Paine's Age of Reason in the Little Blue Books, he began to "wake up." After reading more of Paine--and Ingersoll and Darwin and Huxley and Haeckel--he realized that his thinking had been exactly backwards.[7]

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[7] Haldeman-Julius Weekly (May 2, 1925), 3.

Excerpts from one more letter at this point may serve to demonstrate the degree and kind of impact the Little Blue Books had in the twenties. (For up-to-date assessments of the impact of the Little Blue Books, see the letters to the author, in the Appendix, written in 1975, from elderly persons who responded to recent advertisements requesting such reminiscences.) A letter from young Rolland Fischer, of Route 3, Brillion, Wisconsin, is a touching document. He said, in 1924:

> How about a farm boy laying in a word now and then? Should farm boys do nothing, day in and day out, but tend horses, cows and sheep? Very many people here think so, but not so with me, I'm different. All my fellows around here are not interested in that which interests me. My great hobby is reading. I have told my friends of my interest in reading, and they simply said they would rather lie down and sleep. They're mostly all that way around here. . . .
>
> Had you walked across one of my father's fields last spring, during seeding time, you would have seen in one corner a horse and a

> harrow, near which sat a young man of 18, reading a small book while the horse rested. It was I that sat there, and the book I read was a Little Blue Book, The Stoic Philosophy. I carried this in my pocket while harrowing, and took it out to read whenever the horse needed a rest. Not only that day, but all summer I carried one or other of the Little Blue Books in my pants pocket. Sawing wood at the neighbors', I read a Little Blue Book while the tractor bucked, or when the saw shaft got a hot box. I didn't want to stand in the other people's way, so I sat down to read. So there's no excuse for not reading, not even for a farmer. . . . I want literature, and Girard, Kansas, is where I get it. I am only a farm boy, working with my father on a 140-acre farm.[8]

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[8] Haldeman-Julius Weekly (April 26, 1924), 2.

The Little Blue Books also had substantial impact on men and women who later, as teachers and writers, continued to popularize culture and ideas among their students and readers. John Gunther, in his Inside U.S.A. (1951), attributed to Haldeman-Julius strong influence on such writers as Dorothy Canfield Fisher, Edward Howe, Professor Carl Becker, Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, and Charles M. Sheldon.[9] Professor Joseph L. Blau, a distinguished and

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[9] John Gunther, Inside U.S.A. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951), 292.

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renowned scholar and teacher at Columbia University, has attributed at least part of his intellectual awakening to Haldeman-Julius and the Little Blue Books in an article he wrote for The Humanist shortly after Haldeman-Julius' death.[10] And Russel B. Nye, Distinguished Professor of English at Michigan State University and Pulitzer-Prize winning author of over twenty-five scholarly books dealing with American Studies and Popular Culture, looks back appreciatively at the Haldeman-Julius Little Blue Books, especially those of Maupassant, that stimulated his mind as a youth in Wisconsin.

[10]Joseph L. Blau, The Humanist (October, 1951), 205-208.

Professor J. D. M. Ford, who occupied the Chair of Romance Languages and Literature in Harvard University during the twenties (the Chair once held by Lowell and Longfellow) listed Little Blue Books by Issac Goldberg on Cervantes, Rabelais and Dante as required reading for his students in 1924.[11] Professor Roger Thomas, of the

[11]Haldeman-Julius Weekly (May 3, 1924), 2.

University of Texas, Austin, used Little Blue Books as supplementary reading in his classes the same year.[12] And

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[12] Ibid. (May 31, 1924), 1.

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the Superintendent of Schools in Neosho, Missouri, used Fielding's Puzzle of Personality (Little Blue Book #217) as an in-service training aid for his professional teaching staff in the fall of 1924. Superintendent Fred R. Anguin wrote Haldeman-Julius requesting information about Fielding and the distribution of Puzzle of Personality; it seems that Mr. Anguin needed "ammunition" to demonstrate to his local school board that he had exercised good judgment in utilizing Fielding's book with his teachers. A local Baptist woman and an itinerant Baptist Preacher had heard about the in-service training session, and labeled the book "pernicious" and "corrupting" in its influence on the instructors of Neosho's children. Haldeman-Julius' response informed Mr. Anguin that Fielding was a "careful student of life," that the book was "scientific," and that approximately 80,000 copies were then in use by instructors in public and private schools in the U.S.--with no other complaints received in Girard thus far.[13]

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[13]Ibid. (May 2, 1925), 1.

There is disagreement as to whether Haldeman-Julius' Little Blue Books were the precursors of the modern paperback book. William J. Fielding has argued that they were, and The New Republic has argued that they were not.[14]

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[14]Fielding, Nation, 453; The New Republic (August 15, 1960), 19.

There is little question, however, that the inexpensive paper format was proven by Haldeman-Julius to be a remarkably effective package for the emerging hustle-bustle values of twentieth-century Americans. The Little Blue Books may have been significant, too, in setting the stage for serious scientific studies of human sexuality by such researchers as Kinsey and Masters and Johnson. Haldeman-Julius claimed in 1949, just one year after the first Kinsey report, that he had "pioneered, prepared the way," for it--"there wasn't a ripple of protest, there were no shouts of suppression," he said, "and the book is amazingly plain-speaking in many places."[15] The Haldeman-Julius

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[15]My Second 25 Years, 86.

Little Blue Books have a claim to lasting significance, too, as the medium that introduced first editions of Will Durant, Bertrand Russell, Clarence Darrow, John Cowper Powys, Upton Sinclair, and E. W. Howe, and provided the first translations of many Greek Dramas that were to be later printed elsewhere.

Even more significant than their impact on individual men and women's lives, on the paperback book industry, on sex education, and on the world of letters, the Haldeman-Julius Little Blue Books served as millions of tiny mirrors reflecting (and to some extent, perhaps, changing) the customs and manners of hundreds of thousands of individuals who were living in a society and period undergoing rapid and fundamental change. Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, immensely complex man that he was, armed with his empirically derived market analysis data, was an insightful but unlettered critic of American society in the twenties. Both his First Hundred Million (1928) and his Big American Parade (1929) are worthy of shelf room next to the Lynd's Middletown, for they, like a summary of the content and

audience of Edgar Rice Burrough's Tarzan sagas, are infinitely more accurate reflectors of the American mass psyche of the twenties than the literary works of F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, and H. L. Mencken. In summary, the Haldeman-Julius Little Blue Books, as a source for historiographical and sociological research into the twenties, have proven to be a new and productive kind of popular culture evidence.

APPENDIX

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LETTERS FROM FORMER LITTLE BLUE BOOK READERS

In an attempt to learn something of the impact of the Little Blue Books on individual readers during the twenties, the following appeal was run by the author in the November-December, 1974, issue of The American Rationalist (published in St. Louis, Missouri) and in the January-February, 1975, issue of Progressive World (published in Oakland, California):

> E. H-J AND HIS LITTLE BLUE BOOKS -- what have they meant to you? I am completing a doctoral dissertation on H-J as a popular culture phenomenon during the twenties, and need assistance in assessing the impact of the Little Blue Books. Did they help you? Educate you? Debunk you? Did they anger you? Open your mind? Encourage you to read? Tell me, in a brief letter, just what the Little Blue Books have meant to you. Be explicit. Be candid. Give me your age, your occupation, and tell me something about yourself. Your name will not be used if you so request. What I am after is the general opinion among Little Blue Book readers in the twenties and early thirties as to the educational and cultural value of the pocket series.

This appeal, nearly a verbatim copy of an appeal published in 1928 by Haldeman-Julius himself, has brought in some thirty-five letters from former Little Blue Book readers. Selections from a number of them, in chronological order based on the date received, are presented here as testimony to the impact and historical legacy of the Emanuel Haldeman-Julius Little Blue Books during the decade of the "lost generation."

Mark Warren, Flint, Michigan--December 13, 1974
former Kentucky newspaper editor

> The books helped widen my reading in the field of good literature; as a result, I did much additional reading of some of the great authors, and have continued to do so all my life. . . . the books appealed largely to young people I knew who were seeking answers to life and living. . . . I do not mind being quoted, as I think he did a lot of good in merely making Americans think.

Tad Tekla, Cleveland, Ohio--January 5, 1975
retired office worker (age 61)

> My older brother was picking the radio crystal set, so I picked up some DeMaupassant in the H-J edition. This particular story shocked me, but made me wish for more. At the age of 13 this exposure to "Culture" in a Catholic home was a bit jolting.
>
> In retrospect, I firmly believe that my brother's supply of Little Blue Books encouraged me to further home study and self-education. Eight years later I "broke away" from the church -- and have never regretted it.

Grace Strickler, South Wilmington, Illinois--
January 7, 1975 retired homemaker (age 79)

I can't remember how I did get hold of the American Freeman paper. From there on my life was changed completely. I started ordering the little books and then from there, got acquainted with my favorite writer, John Cowper Powys, the freethinker.

I remember keeping the books hidden as my husband and family were very strict religious people, and after finding the American Freeman paper one day said "Haldeman-Julius was a communist" -- so I kept my paper and the little blue books hidden from then on.

P. H. Wolfe, Warren, Ohio--January 9, 1975
retired railroad man, gas man, factory worker
(age "90 plus")

I have about a hundred by: Joseph McCabe, Huxley, Wells, Haldeman-Julius, Durant, Voltaire and a few extras. All in good condition, so I must now start reading them again - I shall busy myself at the task ahead, along with other "hot" literature which keeps coming to me; and I do enjoy it all.

I do have several little blues on Herbert Hoover and his "work in the White House" but Watergate and other frauds and deceptions just about keep me busy, but "teapot dome" and the "Fur Coats" have to have some attention too.

The little blue books have helped me in many ways educationally, and in a general way have opened up a world for me, from Durant, Wells, Huxley, Spencer and Lester F. Ward, besides the lectures when I lived in Pittsburg, previous to W.W.I when, of course, all was destroyed or suppressed by the "patriots" of that day -- god damn 'em.

Paul Blanshard, St. Petersburg, Florida--January 11, 1975 writer, author of fourteen books on religion and freethought

During my passage from Christianity to non-belief I was profoundly influenced by the Little Blue Books. They were factual, simple and fearless. I particularly liked the pamphlets by Bertrand Russell and Joseph McCabe.

Arthur Goldie, Minneapolis, Minnesota--February 12, 1975 self-educated eighth-grade graduate (age 76)

The Little Blue Books opened my mind. From them it taught me that there are two sides to every coin. Now I say, "Thinking brains are better than praying lips."

Jesse L. Ralph, Madison, Indiana--February 15, 1975

I wish I were as young as when I read my first Little Blue Book. They meant a lot of good for me. They helped educate me. I am an autodidact, and got my education from many sources. . . . As a kid, like 99 and 44/100ths % of American children, I was filled full of religious bunk and dark age superstitions, until it drove me mad -- absolutely mad!

I saw visions, was chased by the devil, and could not sleep for the awful nightmares I had -- "End of the World," Devil and hell horrors, etc. The Little Blue Books brought the first light from out of the darkness for me. My mother had an old book called: "Seven Sermons on the Devil" from which she read aloud at night, before the fire. It had horrors in pictures of the devil "doing his thing." I could see these awful pictures in broad daylight. Ever hear of the book? I want a copy.

W. A. Gilbert, Mena, Arkansas--February 16, 1975
retired railroad man (age 82)

I was discharged from the army in January 1918. My Doctor gave me 30 days to live. . . . I held rights as a fireman on the Santa Fe railroad. As there was lots of time to kill while waiting for a train I always had a couple of the Little Blue Books, they were five cents each. I became so interested in reading that I forgot about myself. I have been spending my spare time reading all these many years. I have a shelf about seven feet long packed with these Little Blue Books. My very best friend, the late Clay Fulks, wrote for the E. H-J publications.

Roger Frohn, Ph.D., St. Paul, Minnesota--
February 18, 1975 (age 82)

My grandfather and grandmother, on my mother's side, said they got into their farm wagon about ten miles from Elkhart, Indiana, about 1880 and drove over a rutty, dusty road one day to hear Robert Ingersoll lecture. From then on they were uncompromising atheists. So I was raised outside the church.

When I was a student at Northern State College I met a student who handed me a Little Blue Book. I looked at it and pulled an identical copy out of my pocket and handed it to him. We became fast friends. He said he was converted by reading Little Blue Books. He brot a lot of them to the history class and the professor allowed him to put them on his desk. They made a row a yard long. A few students responded to his invitation to take copies away.

H. Clay East, Tuscon, Arizona--February 19, 1975
retired service station operator (age 74)

Was born in Tyronza, Arkansas, and grew up there. By the time I was nine I decided that the God stuff was a bunch of crap. I have never changed my mind.

I was always interested in automobiles, so as time went along that was the line I took up. I was in the service station business when the depression hit in the thirties. After the banks were closed by F.D.R. I had a lot of time to sit and think; there was 3 service stations in this small town with all of us doing a lot of sitting, so I figured that we should have one nice well-equipped station and we operators could split the time working and have some leisure . . . I went next door to tell H. L. Mitchell of my ideas, he looked at me and said, "why you are a socialist." I told him that my hair wasn't long enough, all that I knew about socialism was cartoons of the Russians with beards and long hair, he proceeded to bring me a small paper back, Letters to Judd, by Upton Sinclair, I went Socialist, I sold dozens of these, and it was thus that I learned of the Little Blue Books. . . . Ingersoll was my favorite, Darrow was next, Burbank was good, I considered all that I read very educational, the only anger they ever caused was by others being too narrow minded to read them. They also helped convince me that my conviction concerning religion was correct. I might add that I have the complete works of Thomas Paine. It probably would suprise you to learn how many college students when asked, don't even know who Paine was.

Carl Sullivan, Fiddletown, California--March 25, 1975
retired railroad man and building contractor
(age 90)

The Little Blue Books were my bible, and account, to a great degree, for my education and what I am today, intellectually. I am thoroughly convinced that if I could induce the American people to read those books today the political and economic climate would change overnight. I am approaching ninety and have been a believer in Socialism all my adult life, now stronger than ever.

I visited Girard, Kansas, in 1908 . . . Fred Warren was editor at the time . . . those were the days when we thought we were going to institute Socialism by democratic means and those were the days of comradeship, enthusiasm and solidarity. Then, scarcely anyone didn't know what Socialism was about. Today, not one person in a hundred have anything approaching a correct idea of what Socialism means.

Dr. Leo A. Broadzeller, D.D.S., Milwaukee, Wis.--
March 30, 1975

E. Haldeman-Julius was my greatest "eye opener." I received his Blue Books and all the Joseph McCabe books for years. I wish he were U.S. President today. . . .

Emerson Tichenor, Ph.D., Indianapolis, Indiana--
March 31, 1975

Well, Sir, I started reading the "little blue books" some 45 or 50 years ago, and at that time I thought them to be wonderful and still do. The reading of these books started me on the way to learning and knowledge (if you will pardon my being boastful). More than that they unshackled me from horror and fear. As a young lad, I with the rest of the family often went

Emerson Tichenor (cont'd.)

to the Baptist Church. Here I would not only hear these Baptist preachers talk about hell, but many would often act out a person in hell. With their eyes ablaze, their tongues hanging out, they would pull their hair and stomp their feet as if they were in untold agony. This, they would shout, will happen to you, if you do not do so and so, or if you did so and so (which every person had). They would then pass the collection plate. If there were not enough money collected the first round, some of these preachers would re-enact with more enthusiasm the horrors of hell, then pass the plate around again.

This "stuff" scared the living wits out of me. After reading some of the "Little Blue Books" on religion I lost much of my fear. Today, after much study of many of the many, many of the religions of man, and how they were started, I live in a world of TRANQUILITY.

Without a doubt the "Little Blue Books" (many of which I still have in my library) had a great impact upon my life.

Ervin Knowlton, Eau Claire, Wisconsin--March 31, 1975
real estate broker (age 70)

I recall the Little Blue Books very well. I only wish I had known about them somewhat sooner. . . . I am happy to say yes to all your questions except, "did they anger you?" NO. They were great books, much larger than their physical size. I think that the time is more ripe for them now than in the past. Secondly, people are so busy watching the idiot box (t.v.) that they do not have time to read an enlightening book.

Lou Kashins, New York City, New York--April 5, 1975
(age 71)

Your appeal in the March issue of P.W. sparked a nostalgia within me that I wouldn't exchange for all the gold in all the vaults in all the banks of America.

E. Haldeman-Julius? I wouldn't have wanted to be a young man at any other time than that of the sparkling wonderful era of E. H-J! And it all seems like yesterday.

Those Little Blue Books? I ate 'em up -- virtually every title he ever issued. What value for a nickel! I know of no greater catalysts in my life. Imagine: Ingersoll, Voltaire, McCabe, Paine, Mark Twain, Karl Marx, Schopenhauer, Darwin, Einstein (made simple), and a myriad of other such intellectual nibbles - - for 5¢ each. Names, knowledge, excitement I had hardly known existed prior to those Big Little Blues. The varied worlds of science, music, religion, atheism, art, physiology, health, and a dozen other dialectically-related subjects came into my life. Never was I without one or two of these Blue Gems in my pocket so that "as I ran, I could read."

Could anyone but a zombie not be inspired and fired to dig more in depth of such masterpieces of thought? I thought I was somewhat of a reader in my early youth. But E. H-J opened up vistas, broadened my horizons; tempted me with such delicious morsels that I was barely able to satiate my incessant hunger for reading on an ever-widening scale of subject matter. All of which have been mainly responsible for the total and many-faceted development I have enjoyed over my lifetime in attempting to understand Life and the molding of my own. While enjoying it, too.

I am now a very healthy, youthful 71 - going on 32 -- finally retired -- and gorging myself on reading and re-reading, among many other worthwhile activities. . . .

Lou Kashins (cont'd.)

It's impossible to evaluate E. H-J's Blue Books without also recalling his most readable and enlightening weekly: The American Freeman. There was a paper! How sorely needed such a torch is in our own sick, deteriorating America of today.

E. Haldeman-Julius' Little Blues were more than reading. They inspired me to:

Do more than look . . . . . to observe.
Do more than read . . . . . to absorb.
Do more than hear . . . . . to listen.
Do more than listen . . . . . to understand.
Do more than understand . . . to think.
Do more than think. . . . . to ponder.
Do more than ponder . . . . . to plan.
Do more than plan . . . . . to act.
Do more than act. . . . . TO SAY SOMETHING!

You asked for a "briefly," Mr. Herder. Sorry, this is the briefest I can discipline myself to be when it comes to the great E. H-J.

And you ain't heard nuthin' yet!

Eugene Knotts, Yankeetown, Florida--April 7, 1975
Mayor and Councilman of Yankeetown for 45 years
(age 81)

Last week I was searching through my library of about 1,000 books for Prometheus Bound and couldn't find it. After starting this letter I was reminded of looking through my Blue Books and there it was (Series 316). These books over the years have been invaluable to me. The subjects so varied and comprehensive, the form so handy. I carried them in my pockets, or dinner pail, tackle box, hunting coat or any other place where they would be handy to read when the opportunity presented itself. . . . In my opinion we could well do with another Haldeman-Julius. The need is here. The younger generation could use it but would they have time? Thanks for helping me find Prometheus Bound.

Andrew Vena, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania--April 7, 1975
retired welder

Good old Little Blue Books by E. H-J! My mother died in Italy while I was still a babe while my father worked as a coal miner in Pennsylvania. In 1912 I was brought to America by an aunt to be with my father. He re-married in 1914, thus I was raised by a stepmother . . . religious, superstitious, illiterate, a believer in "the evil eye" and other such nonsense.

I answered an ad in PSYCHOLOGY magazine for 20 Little Blue Books for $1 and that was my first contact with them and E. H-J's AMERICAN FREEMAN . . . THOSE BLUE BOOKS AND THE AMERICAN FREEMAN POINTED ME IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION. . . . They shuved me onto the right road. I've been an atheist-rationalist-freethinker-skeptic-nonbeliever-liberal-progressive ever since and never regreted it.

Harlow B. Grow, Pacific Palisades, California--
April 14, 1975 Inventor, retired air line pilot
and air force officer (age 68)

Little Blue Books played an important part in my early life as a farm boy, quite isolated from the world in general. The elementary school did not have a library and the high school had only a small collection of, mostly, reference books at one end of the study hall; extremely limited in scope. Through those years, however, I had access to quite an extensive library of Little Blue Books, kept in wooden apple boxes at home.

As I think back on those formative years, I realize that the impact was many faceted but, principally, the ownership permitted me to feel and be, later, quite comfortable in a college environment that might have been more than bewildering.

Albert C. Jones, Marble Falls, Texas--April 16, 1975
retired McDonnell-Douglas employee (age 62)

I consider the E. H-J Little Blue Books the best education I could have received. At the least they started me searching for a philosophy that would give me peace of mind and stand the test in this day. . . . In my opinion America would have been a much better place had E. H-J and D. O. Cauldwell had a much greater influence in the education of this nation.

John M. Harlan, Rochester, Michigan--April 17, 1975
retired Detroit fireman (age 72)

I ordered the Little Blue Books regularly from the time that Haldeman-Julius started publishing until he died. His little books were wonderful. They covered everything that anyone would want if they thirsted for knowledge. His death was a great loss to the world.

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