

Watson 11/2/40

Within the Gates ^{Watson} 11/2/40

ABOUT TWO MONTHS AGO the citizens of Franklin, Massachusetts, aided by the American Legion and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, forced the Communist Party to abandon Camp Unity, a 100-acre development two miles from the town. For years the townspeople had been shocked by the strains of the "Internationale," by whispered tales of "free love," and by the fraternizing of Negroes and whites. Their campaign against the camp had taken the form of petty persecution—revocation of its dance permit and frequent arrests of the campers for fishing without a license. The American Legion had contemplated more direct action, some members even suggesting the advisability of burning all buildings and horse-whipping the occupants. When the FBI added its interest to the petty persecutions of the local citizens, the Communists decided to relinquish all rights to Camp Unity and depart. The townspeople were quite pleased, and sold the site almost immediately, for an excellent price, to the Tzehagron, an Armenian youth group which proposed to establish a "health camp."

The good people of Franklin do not yet know that the problem of organized subversion in their community did not disappear with the retreat of the Communists. The Tzaghagrons are junior members of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, an international organization far less interested in physical culture than in politics, and no less inimical to the institutions of democracy than the Marxists. The political creed of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation is definitely fascist. Moreover, members of the organization, known in Armenian circles as Tashnags, frequently enliven their politics with violence and terror. On Christmas Day in 1933 nine assassins stabbed Archbishop Leon Tourian to death in the Holy Cross Church, New York. The pretext of the murderers, all of whom admitted being members of the New York unit of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, was the usual one: the Archbishop was a Communist. Of course he was nothing of the sort, but he had opposed certain policies of the Tashnags. Two of the defendants were convicted of first-degree murder, seven of first-degree manslaughter.

The policies of the Tashnags have paralleled those of the Nazis with unswerving consistency not only in the United States but in other countries where they have branches, notably in Egypt, Bulgaria, Syria, Greece, Persia, and France. Although they had been for years bitterly opposed to communism, they modified the belligerency of their published statements concerning the U. S. S. R. after the German-Russian pact. They are as obsessed with the idea of race as the Nazis. In fact, the name of the youth group, Tzaghagron, means "making a religion of one's race." In 1935 several of their publications accepted and approved Rosenberg's racial theories.

During the past year or so the Tashnags have been court-ing respectability. Their English-language publication, the *Hairenik Weekly*, always abbreviates "Armenian Revolutionary Federation" to "Armenian Federation." Instead of being openly pro-Nazi they are now only anti-British. But their function among Armenian Americans is identical with that of the Bund among Americans of German extraction.