

MEMORANDUM OF DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE INVESTIGATION  
OF THE CHRISTIAN FRONT

The writer was associated with the committee which was organized to combat the activities of the so-called Christian Front and similar organizations.

Following the arrest of fourteen members of the Christian Front and three others on charges of seditious conspiracy, an associate of the writer's called at the office of the FBI in the Federal Building, Rley Square, and offered to cooperate in the investigation. He was interviewed by Messrs. O'Donnell and Willauer.

The following day the writer visited this office at the invitation of Messrs. O'Donnell and Willauer, conveyed through the writer's associate who had visited them.

The writer and his associate called at the office of the FBI about two o'clock on January 30. We had with us certain records consisting of an index file of several hundred cards on which are listed the names of various people engaged in Christian Front and similar activities, and a bundle of reports which the index had been compiled ~~from~~ <sup>from</sup>.

On the insistence of either Mr. O'Donnell or Mr. Willauer, the writer and his associate were questioned separately, despite the fact which was explained to them, that it was necessary for both of us to be present in order to find necessary documents.

Present with Messrs. O'Donnell and Willauer was a Mr. Starr, who, I understand, is an agent of the FBI.

The writer was questioned steadily for about an hour and one-half. The first part of the examination concerned a list of names of organizations connected with the organization which the writer represents. These are some thirty in number. Mr. O'Donnell went up and down the list several times asking the same questions in each instance.

Much to the writer's surprise the questioning concerned primarily the writer's own history, activities, background and motivation.

I was asked what my salary was and how I could live on the amount mentioned. I explained that I represented another industry from which, during active periods, I received much more money. I was asked to describe in detail the setup in the industry and to give the names of key persons in the industry as well as the name of the person by whom I was directly employed.

At one point I referred to the Christian Front as a menace and was asked to justify this description. I gave my reasons for using the word and among them were the fact that the Christian Front and similar organizations had organized a boycott of Jewish storekeepers. Mr. O'Donnell thereupon asked why I was concerned about this boycott and not about the boycott that had been in force against Germany for four years.

As already indicated, much of the questioning was directed toward establishing the identity of the organization which I represented, its membership, its associated groups and the scope and membership of these groups. My questioners also displayed a keen interest in the financial setup of these groups.

I supplied information concerning a man whom I remember as a key figure in the investigation -- a Robert Monteith, who has been a right-hand man of Father Coughlin's, and who, according to my information, had been a German agent and was in some way connected with the Black Tom explosion. I said incidentally, that a dossier of this man was in the files of the Naval Intelligence. At this point, Mr. Willauer interposed to inquire the source of this information.

"Do I have to answer that question", I asked. Mr. Willauer replied quite rudely, "You don't have to answer any questions."

My reply to this was that I could not see what possible value the information could be to the FBI, and that it might get someone else into trouble. (Incidentally, this fact had not occurred to me until Mr. Willauer asked his question.)

At one time during the examination, Mr. O'Donnell interrupted to explain the details of the Christian Front organization to Mr. Starr.

"The Christian Mobilizers is a splinter group from the Christian Front," he said, adding something to this effect: "if I may use communist terminology."

(The significance of Mr. O'Donnell's statement is not apparent to the writer. It is included only at your request.)

At another point in the examination, the writer told of having seen an affidavit made by a former member of the U. S. Secret Service concerning other members of the Secret Service who were cooperating closely with Henry Ford at a time when they were in the employment of the U. S. Government. This affidavit, according to the writer's informant, had been sent to President Roosevelt. The writer's best recollection is that one of those named in the affidavit is Joseph Palma, then an official in the Secret Service, now Borough President of Staten Island, and an agent for the Ford Motor Company. Mr. Starr seemed quite interested in the reference to Mr. Palma and kept referring to him as "Joe."

At the beginning of the examination the writer was asked to give a history of himself and in the course of this mentioned that he was born in Dublin, Ireland. Later in the examination the writer was asked abruptly whether he was a citizen and when he replied that he was not, he was asked why he was so much interested in Americanism. He was asked why he was not a citizen and replied that he had not been here long enough to become one.