

FBI Seizes 18 'Christian Front' Members for Plotting Revolt

Herald 1-15/40



*Herald
P-144
1/15/40*

FIVE ARRESTED 'CHRISTIAN FRONT' MEMBERS WITH THEIR GUNS
(L-r) Michael Vill, Macklin Boettger, Frank Malone, John Viebrock, and John Gray. G-men reported the alleged conspirators maintained a camp where they practiced marksmanship.

I.N.P. Sound Photo

12 in Congress Marked To Die, Hoover Says

NEW YORK, Jan. 14 (C.T.P.S.). Eighteen members of the "Christian Front," anti-Semitic organization, were arrested today by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, charged with an amazing plot against the United States Government. The murder of 12 Congressmen for repeal of the arms embargo was considered, J. Edgar Hoover, chief of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, revealed.

Federal agents seized bombs, rifles and machine guns in a series of week-end raids, Hoover disclosed, and the men under arrest have been charged with "conspiracy to overthrow, put down and destroy" the Government.

Claim Coughlin as Founder

All the men, arrested separately in their homes, chiefly in Brooklyn, were reported by Hoover to be members of an "inner circle" within "the Christian Front," an organization which has claimed Father Charles E. Coughlin as its founder, although the Michigan radio priest has denied any connection with it or that it has any link with his Social Justice organization.

The group of reputed plotters called themselves "the Sports Club" or "the Country Gentlemen," Hoover said. Head of the clique, according to Hoover, was William Gerald Bishop, of Manhattan. Bishop, 39, a native of Vienna, describes himself as a writer.

"They were planning to bomb the Jewish Daily Forward, a news-

paper, also the Daily Worker, a Communist publication, and were discussing the possible bombing of the Cameo Theater, in East Forty-second Street, devoted to the display of Russian pictures," Hoover's statement said. It was added that they also had debated blowing up Manhattan police headquarters.

Members of Bund

Several of those arrested were members of the New York National Guard and several others were members of the German-American Bund, the head of the G-men said.

Among the material seized in the raids on the alleged conspirators' Brooklyn homes were 15 bombs, 18 cans of cordite, a highly explosive powder; machine guns, rifles, shotguns, automatics and 3,500 rounds of ammunition.

The raids were the result of an investigation which has been carried on since August, under the direction of Earl J. Connelley. Present with Hoover as he made the announcement was Clyde Tolson, assistant director of the FBI.

Fordham Grad Held

Another leading figure in the reputedly seditious group named by Hoover was John F. Cassidy, of Brooklyn, also among those arrested. Cassidy was described as a graduate of Fordham and St. John's universities. He was employed as a clerk in the offices of the Brooklyn Edison Co.

According to Hoover, "the Country Gentlemen" maintained a camp at Narrowsburg, N. Y., where they had a range and practiced rifle and pistol shooting.

"This group also discussed at its meetings the possibility of 'blowing up the — — — police department,'" Hoover's statement said.

Congressmen Marked

"They also discussed the possibility of killing 12 Congressmen who voted for lifting of the embargo on munitions for foreign governments."

In addition to Bishop and Cassidy, those jailed included:

John A. Viebrock, of Brooklyn, elevator mechanic; Michael Vill, Brooklyn, born in Germany and a naturalized citizen; Edward Walsh, Brooklyn, a graduate of

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St. John's University; Alfred J. Quinlan, of the Bronx, a member of the 165th Infantry, New York National Guard (the "Old 69th"); Michael J. Beirne, Brooklyn, native of Ireland, a naturalized American citizen, and a member of the National Guard; Macklin Boettger, 32, Brooklyn, a member of the 27th Air Division, National Guard.

Andrew Buckley, 34, of the Bronx, another member of the 165th Infantry; William H. Bushnell Jr., Brooklyn, and Paul Claus Gunther Ernecke, 36, Brooklyn, a member of the German-American bund.

Naval Aide Held

John Franklin Cook, 19, Brooklyn; John A. Graf, Brooklyn; Leroy Keegan, 37, Brooklyn, a Naval Reserve officer; George Kelly, 24, Brooklyn, an employe of the Sutton Hotel in Manhattan; Frank M. Malone, Brooklyn, a clerk; John M. Ryan, 38, National Guard sergeant.

John T. Prout, of Astoria, L. I., said to be a captain in the New York National Guard, was also among those arrested. Prout was born in New York, educated in Ireland, and is employed as a clerk for the Postal Telegraph Company.

Hoover said the investigation leading to the raids was begun by the FBI last August into the Christian front, "sometimes known as the committee for American action." He continued:

"In the course of that investi-

gation, an organization known as the 'Sports Club' or 'The Country Gentlemen,' which was a secret group made up of members of the Christian front, was discovered.

This group was led by Bishop and by Cassidy. On Saturday the FBI arrested 18 members of this organization in Brooklyn and New York."

Accused of Conspiracy

Also present when Hoover gave out his statement, and credited with co-operation, were Harold N. Kennedy, U. S. Attorney in Brooklyn, and his assistants, James D. Saver and T. V. Flynn.

The 18 are charged with seditious conspiracy, the penalty for conviction of which is \$5,000 fine and/or six years in Federal prison. They are charged with conspiring to overthrow, put down, destroy by force, the U. S. Government, and conspiring to oppose by force the authority of the U. S. Government.

Father Coughlin Denies Any Link With Christian Front

DETROIT, Mich., Jan. 15 (C.T.P.S.)—Father Charles E. Coughlin flatly denied tonight that there was any link "whatsoever" between the Christian Front and his Social Justice organization.

"That is a malicious lie, started by the Communists," the radio priest said.

"Actually the Christian Front is a Communist organization—disguised as anti-Communist—to stir up trouble from which the Reds can benefit."

Father Coughlin said he had denied "time after time" that the Front had anything to do with him or his group.