

'Tablet' Hails Acquittal Of Prout and Rapp Quiz

DW 12/8/40 By Lawrence Emery

Charles E. Coughlin's personal journal, *Social Justice*, by now is generally known for what it is: a paper—fascist to the last line of type. Week after week it thumps the tubs of fascist ideology: "Down with the Jews," and "Down with Communism," the latter concept embracing even the most modest of diluted democratic reforms.

Less known is the weekly paper called *The Tablet*, which is the official organ of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn, but which has long since repudiated the progressive principles for which it stood when it was founded many years ago by the late Cardinal Mundelein.

Today, under the editorship of Patrick F. Scanlan and the tutelage of Rev. Father Edward Lodge Curran, *The Tablet* is even more virulent than *Social Justice* in its anti-Semitism and its crusade against "communism," and enjoys far greater "respectability" and prestige because of the official sanction of the Brooklyn Diocese.

"UNOFFICIAL" FRONT SHEET

Circulation of the paper is not confined to Brooklyn, but extends throughout New York State and the nation. It is read widely in the most reactionary political circles; it exercises great influence among members of the New York City police force; it is a sort of "unofficial" organ of the Christian Front and is enthusiastically hawked on the streets by that terrorist band.

But *The Tablet*, despite its official character, does not represent the basic doctrines of the Catholic Church. Cardinal Mundelein himself, in denouncing as un-Christian the anti-Semitism preached alike by Father Coughlin and *The Tablet*, said of the former on Dec. 11, 1938, that he does not "represent the doctrine or sentiments of the Church" in his printed or broadcast utterances.

Neither does *The Tablet* promote the interests of the Church. On the contrary, its message of hate is opposed by Catholic workers because they know that its only result can be strike and division where unity and solidarity is the first necessity.

And on a larger scale, the message of *The Tablet* is a constant spur to a possible resurrection of the equally detestable Klan-like

crusade against Catholicism.

The current issue of the paper reveals its hatred of progressivism, its endorsement of fascist reaction.

Allotted most space this week is the acquittal of Captain John T. Prout, Jr., by an Army court-martial on charges of having given 1,800 rounds of government rifle ammunition to the group of Christian Fronters who were tried in a Brooklyn Federal court on charges of conspiring to overthrow the United States Government by violence and terror.

Prout, with four others, still faces possible retrial in the Federal court on the same charge.

The acquittal is heralded on the front page as a "Christian" victory over a "campaign of persecution" conducted by "those who sought their pound of flesh"—all of which is part of the Aesopian language employed by *The Tablet* in its anti-Semitic arguments.

Prominently advertised, also on the front page, is a "testimonial" dinner given for Prout as a sort of victory celebration.

PROSECUTOR WINS PRAISE

On an inside page *The Tablet* publishes the full text of the statement made to the military court by Prout in which he offered a "repudiation" of a signed confession to the charge against him. Prout's statement was presented to the court under a provision which exempted him from the embarrassment of cross-examination.

In its report of the court-martial proceedings, *The Tablet* praises the Army prosecutor for the "clear, objective manner" in which he conducted the case, just as, in the earlier Federal trials, United States Attorney Harold M. Kennedy was praised for his "fairness" to the defendants.

Also highly praised by *The Tablet* are those who appeared as character witnesses for Prout, including Miss Dorothy J. Lutjens, whom it identifies as the general manager of the United States Chamber of Commerce, and Lieut. Col. Martin

H. Meany, Fifth Deputy Police Commissioner of New York City.

In Patrick Scanlan's own personally-conducted column is found the matter-of-fact statement that "we were not surprised the court of eight army officials brought in a quick verdict of not guilty"—a lack of surprise accounted for in the fact, indicated in the course of the court-martial, that Capt. Prout's 165 Infantry Regiment is riddled with loyal followers of the Christian Front, men and officers alike.

PRAISE FOR WITCH HUNT

Equally prominently displayed in this week's *Tablet* is the testimony given before the Rapp-Coudert committee by Dr. Harry D. Gideonse, president of Brooklyn College, and by the prominent informer Edward I. Fenlon of Brooklyn College's Department of Philosophy, who did their best to present the committee with properly-horrifying details of incipient "red revolution," but whose feeble bumbblings fell flat.

Nevertheless, Dr. Gideonse's story of student picketing is described in *The Tablet* as a "bit of revolution equalling that seen in Spain in the

days before the popular uprising under General Franco."

This is serious business for *The Tablet*, because the paper has campaigned and tirelessly for just such an assault upon the free school system as is now being made by the Rapp-Coudert Committee with the ultimate aim of destroying academic freedom and democratic education. Indeed, *The Tablet* prides itself for having, in fairly large measure, inspired the present inquisition against the schools.

On this week's letter-page, the paper proudly displays in leading place a congratulatory message from the noted informer Edwin P. Banta, the man whose original stoolpigeoning on the Writers project of the WPA used to good effect in the campaign to destroy or cripple the cultural projects sponsored by the government.

In his letter, which is actually a pathetic document begging recognition for past services, Banta recalls his part in picketing radio station WMCA when Father Coughlin's anti-Semitic tirades were barred—picketing which came to a sorry end when its leader was arrested in an attempted shakedown of the station.

And finally there is a letter proudly published which hails the Prout acquittal as a "victory for Christianity" and concludes with the ominous cry: "Awake Christians and join the crusade against anti-Christianity."