

Worker
4/6/40-5

'Fronters' Lawyer Tries To 'Red Bait'

Hits Ridiculous Note by Saying Communists Caused Arrests

Leo J. Healey, chief defense counsel for the 11 of the 17 Christian Front defendants who went on trial yesterday, took a tip from the FBI red-baiting methods and decided to smear red all over the government's case against the defendants.

Reaching into the stratosphere of ridiculousness, attorney Healey said in his opening statement in Brooklyn Federal Court yesterday that "we will show . . . that the whole indictment against my defendants was founded on testimony of provocateurs who are in the employ of the Communist Party in our great state of New York in endeavoring to instill . . . discontent, religious prejudice, bigotry and other un-American principles."

The anti-Semitic Christian Fronters are being tried on charges preferred by the government of plotting "to overthrow the government." They were taken into custody last January by Hoover's G-men in a series of theatrically staged raids. Some of the defendants were found to be members of the National Guard. The raiders reported they had discovered caches of arms, uncovered a plot by the "Fronters" to assassinate Jews, bomb the Daily Worker and Morning Freiheit and to institute a general reign of terror.

Healey singled out of the defendants William G. Bishop, whom Edgar Hoover had termed the "leader" of the arrested group, and charged that Bishop was actually an FBI agent himself and an agent provocateur.

U. S. Attorney Kennedy, meanwhile, told the jury that he had no intention of prosecuting the Christian Front as an organization.

"The only thing we are interested in here," he said, "is determination of whether these defendants planned to overthrow the U. S. government."

The opening of the trial was delayed 40 minutes while presiding

Judge Campbell, defense attorneys and representatives of the Associated Press met in closed conference concerning an AP story sent on the wires last Wednesday which reported that the government intended to keep Jews and Catholics off the jury. Nothing was learned about the results of the conference.