

Nation

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THE CHRISTIAN FRONT CONSPIRACY TRIAL has thus far produced little that is startling or revealing. Every effort is apparently being made—by the prosecution as well as by the defense—to keep Coughlin's name out of the proceedings; likewise the names of his respectable mouthpieces in Brooklyn, from Edward Lodge Curran down. Prospective jurors were asked whether they had read such inflammatory journals as *Life* and *Look* (suspected of hostility to Coughlin); they were not asked whether they read *Social Justice* or the *Tablet*. The defense attorneys contend that their clients were preparing to defend the republic against a "Communist uprising." They charge that the chief government witness was planted in the Front by "Communists" as an *agent provocateur*. When one of the defendants abruptly commits suicide, his attorney blames it on "threatening letters" from "Jews and Communists." All this is obvious camouflage; it is the stale war cry of anti-democratic groups everywhere. But the prosecution, seemingly reluctant to tread on Catholic toes, finds itself on the defensive. The whole trial has an air of unreality and unimportance because of the taboos which prevail. If only seventeen men were involved in the terrorist plans, they were scarcely a menace to the republic; if Coughlin and his cohorts in high places knew what was happening, the plot assumes greater proportions. Unless this question is answered, the trial may prove to be without meaning.

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