

Star
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17 Christian Front Members Indicted; Bail Is Reduced

Nine Marshals Still Uproar; Arthur G. Hays Shows Up, Is Squelched

By the Associated Press.

NEW YORK, Feb. 7.—Seventeen members of the Christian Front, arrested three weeks ago, were indicted today and then arraigned on charges of seditious conspiracy and conspiracy to commit offenses against the United States Government.

All pleaded innocent and were held in bail varying in amounts from \$5,000 to \$20,000. This was a reduction in bail, since all but two of the men had been held in \$50,000 bail previously.

The arraignment of the men in Federal Court, Brooklyn, was accomplished only after United States Marshal Arthur Jaeger had called nine additional deputy marshals to still the uproar in the courtroom. Even after Federal Judge Matthew T. Abbruzzo had rapped for order and the proceedings got under way there were frequent outbreaks of murmuring and indignant exclama-

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Christian Front

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tions as defense requests for still lower bail were denied.

There was one moment of excitement when Leo J. Healy, defense counsel, told Judge Abbruzzo, "There is a man here who plans to address the court."

Spectators' eyes searched the room as Mr. Healy continued:

"I don't know him and he has nothing whatever to do with this client (John A. Viebroeck, who was held in \$10,000 bail), and I request that the court forbid him permission to speak."

Judge Abbruzzo leaned forward.

"Who is it?" he asked.

United States Attorney Harold M. Kennedy broke in to say the expectant speaker was Arthur Garfield Hays, counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union, who told reporters later he intended seeking lower bail for the 17 defendants.

He's Squashed, However.

Judge Abbruzzo nodded to Mr. Kennedy and as Hays rose to speak ordered him to sit down. Then as the attorney continued to speak two deputies took him by the arms and tried to force him into a chair.

Hays protested. The judge then warned him to sit down quietly or "I will give other directions."

For the rest of the proceedings Hays sat down.

John F. Cassisy, described as leader of the Christian Front, which the Government contends had planned to overthrow the Government and set up a dictatorship, was held in \$10,000 bail. William Gerald Bishop, who has a police record and has been described as illegally in the country, was held in \$20,000 bail. The bail of the others was determined in part by whether they were married and had dependents.

At the time the men were arrested the Rev. Charles E. Coughlin declared he "roundly disavowed" the front, but subsequently described himself as "a friend of the accused," and added: "I did not belong to any unit of the Christian Front; never-

theless I do not disassociate myself from that movement."

Subsequently the Justice Department disclosed that there had been complaints against the Michigan radio priest himself, and that they were being investigated. The department did not disclose precisely what the inquiry would encompass.

The indictment charged that between January 1, 1939, and January 15, 1940, the defendants conspired "to overthrow, put down and destroy by force the Government of the United States."

It alleged that they conspired to obtain explosives and other weapons and military equipment and to steal property of the United States, such as ammunition and explosives.

It also charged that the various members "recruited and enlisted, armed, equipped and gave military training, firearms training and instruction in terroristic methods" in order to bring about their purpose.

15 Overt Acts Charged.

Fifteen overt acts were charged in the indictment. Among them Defendant John F. Cook was accused of drawing a floor plan of the headquarters of the 2d Battalion of the Naval Militia.

The maximum penalty for conviction on the count charging seditious conspiracy is six years in prison and \$5,000 fine.

On the other count, conspiracy to commit an offense against the United States, in this instance the stealing of Government property, the penalty is two years in prison and \$10,000 fine.