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# 'Christian Fronters' Indicted for Plot

## U. S. Attorney Declares Coughlin, Who Praised Terror Group in His Paper, Will Not Be Discussed During Trial of Fascist Gang

A Federal Grand Jury yesterday indicted 17 Brooklyn members of the "Christian Front" on charges of "conspiracy to overthrow the government of the United States."

The defendants were arrested last Jan. 15 by agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation who seized a quantity of rifles, stolen from the New York

National Guard, and ammunition.

The indictment, charging seditious conspiracy and conspiracy to commit offenses against the United States, was handed up to Federal Judge Matthew T. Abruzzo in Brooklyn.

Apparently referring to publicity given the arrests because the defendants were members of the "Christian Front" and were subsequently assured by Father Charles E. Coughlin of his moral support, U. S. Attorney Harold M. Kennedy said that he would not discuss or consider any "issues completely extraneous to the case."

"In the interests of justice and fair play I earnestly hope that the public generally will turn a deaf ear to those who continue to raise false issues, whether it be ostensibly against these men or in their interest, so that they may be tried in the traditional American manner."

### COUGHLIN PRAISED FRONT

Contrary to statements issued by Coughlin at the time of the arrests, his paper "Social Justice" has carried columns of praise for the Christian Front and has had special tribute to John F. Cassidy.

On July 31, 1939, "Social Justice" carried the headline "Christian Front Carries Fight Into More States." An article in the fascist paper said: "Father Coughlin praised the heroism and zeal of the Christian Front in those areas where its work has already borne fruit and urged Philadelphians to emulate the Christianity and Americanism."

Another article in "Social Justice" characterized the Christian Front as "organized along militant lines as a defense mechanism against Red activities and as a protector of Christianity and Americanism, the Christian Front is spreading from Greater New York into Philadelphia, Boston and other centers."

### THEFTS CHARGED

The indictment contained two counts. One charged that the defendants conspired between Jan. 1, 1939, and Jan. 15, 1940, "with each other and with divers other persons . . . to overthrow, put down and to destroy by force the government of the United States and by force to seize, take and possess property of the United States."

The other count alleged that "on or about the first day of January, 1939, and up to and including the 15th day of January, 1940, the defendants did unlawfully conspire . . . to embezzle, purloin and take and carry away personal property of the United States."

The second count lists 15 alleged overt acts.

The defendants, all of them in jail in lieu of bail ranging from \$10,000 to \$50,000 each, are mostly small-salaried white-collar workers. They are:

John T. Prout, Jr.; John A. Viebrock; William H. D. Bushnell, Jr.; Macklin Boettger, John A. Graf, John F. Cook, La Roy Keegan, John F. Cassidy, Claus Gunther, Ernecke, Michael Vill, Michael J. Beirne, Andrew Buckley, Edward L. Walsh, Francis M. J. Malone, George M. Kelly, Alfred J. Quinlan, and William Gerald Bishop, one of the alleged leaders for whom Federal authorities listed the aliases William Hrneck, William Arneck, Capt. William Bishop, Capt. Gerald Bishop, William McAndrews and "Bill."