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17 FRONT MEMBERS PLEAD NOT GUILTY

Maintain Innocence Of Seditious Conspiracy Against Government

Bail Set Considerably Below Previous Bond—Sympathizers Jam Court

[By the Associated Press]

New York, Feb. 7—In a courtroom loud with the muttering of their sympathizers, seventeen Christian Front members accused of plotting an anti-Semitic campaign with bombs and terror pleaded innocent today to charges of seditious conspiracy to overthrow the Government and conspiracy to steal army ammunition and explosives.

An indictment charging them with thus conspiring with other "persons unknown" had been handed up a short time before to Federal Judge Matthew T. Abbruzzo in Brooklyn. Bail ranging from \$5,000 to \$20,000 was fixed.

Material Reduction

This was a material reduction from the \$50,000 bond originally set for each defendant but the murmurings from among the 500 spectators apparently were directed mainly at the fact that Judge Abbruzzo had refused to make further reductions.

Only after Arthur Jaeger, United States marshal, had hurriedly assembled nine deputies was the uproar stilled. In the meantime, the judge had threatened to have the room cleared, and Arthur Garfield Hays, counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union, had been seized by the arms by two deputies and escorted toward a chair.

Counsel Objects

Hays had attempted to speak about the matter of bail, and the chief objector to his attempt was Leo Healey, counsel to one of the defendants, who told the court:

"... He has nothing whatever to do with this client... and I request that the court forbid him permission to speak."

Protesting, Hays sat down for the remainder of the proceedings and later told reporters he planned to try to bring about a bail reduction.

"We need hardly point out," he said, "that if the charges here are sound there is no group in the community that would condemn the intolerance of the defendants more than ourselves..."

Christian Fronters Smile As Swapping

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Probably Sincere

"We point out that, however misguided people are, yet where the crime charged is political in nature the defendants are likely to be sincere in their beliefs and in an endeavor to justify themselves are more likely to appear at trial than is the ordinary criminal."

The seventeen were arrested three and a half weeks ago by agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, whose chief, J. Edgar Hoover, asserted their ultimate aim had been the establishment of a dictatorship and the eradication of Jews.

Conviction on both counts of the indictment could bring maximum penalties of eight years in prison and \$15,000 in fines. It charged a broad conspiracy to:

"... Overthrow, put down and destroy by force the Government of the United States... To seize, take and possess property of the United States..."

Described As Leaders

Specific accusations included one that some of the accused conspirators planned to recruit, arm, equip and give military training and "instruction in terroristic methods" to a large private force.

The defendants were described in the indictment as "leaders, officers, active members and in control of a certain secret organization known as the action committee."