

Workman
2/9/40

Cops Asked If They Belong to Christian Front

Valentine Question Seen Dangerously Confusing on Issue of C. P.

Reacting to persistent demands that the Police Department be probed for existence of cells of the terrorist Christian Front, Police Commissioner Lewis Valentine yesterday ordered all cops in the city to state whether they were ever connected with the Front or the Nazi Bund.

The Commissioner, however, failed to differentiate between the reactionary Front and Bund and the working class, the Communist Party.

He said his probe was aimed at the Christian Front, but the questionnaire sent out to 20,000 policemen not only asked if they were members of the Front, but also:

"Have you ever been a member of any subversive, Communist, Bund and Fascist organization?"

Linking of the word "Communist" with "Bund and Fascist," a dangerous confusion, was seen as opening the way for a local police drive against not only Communists but other labor leaders under the pretext of fighting such subversive forces as Coughlinite and Nazi terror and anti-labor gangs.

The Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League to Champion Human Rights charged last month that 40 members of the Police Department were members of the Christian Front.

On Jan. 16 Police Lieut. Thomas Cavanaugh, under suspension on bail bond charges, admitted he had been a member of the Front.

While the patrolmen were filling out the little white cards yesterday, Commissioner Valentine told reporters:

"We know who are the members of the Christian Front. Inspector Michael J. Murphy (head of the Commissioner's Confidential Squad) has been investigating a number of men of this department for some time."

Meanwhile, directors of the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association went into session last night to discuss Valentine's questionnaires.