

Hailed by Coughlin--- Now Probed for Graft

By Harry Raymond

Former Deputy Comptroller Milton Solomon and Henry Modell, sporting goods merchant, charged by Mayor LaGuardia last week with concocting an \$8,000 extortion racket in connection with stirrup pumps, were key men in a so-called anti-communist drive among Jewish people in 1938.

The two, whom the Mayor said were engaged in a "crude and brazen" shakedown in connection with the war effort, were leaders and organizers of a red baiting organization, which had the endorsement of Charles Coughlin, boss of the government-suppressed "Social Justice," and Rep. Martin Dies.

Solomon incorporated his organization under the name of the "American Jewish Federation to Combat Communism and Fascism."

BACKED BY COUGHLIN

But he wrote in a letter to David Grant, secretary of the Christian Front For Peace Against Fascism, on Nov. 30, 1938, that "our fire is directed mainly against the evil of Communism." (Grant's organization was not connected with the Coughlinite subversive Christian Front.)

Solomon, chairman, and Modell, treasurer, and Sidney G. Harnett, secretary of the organization, posed for photographs in the Hotel Commodore with Rep. Dies in 1938 following organization of their group.

Later they were endorsed by the Coughlinite journal "Social Justice," which called their activities "outstanding" and added:

"We will be watching for news of the further progress of this Jewish campaign against Communism in the United States."

The organization never carried on any fight against fascism and in the only one issue of its official organ, "The American Jewish Federation News," progressive labor groups and Communism were depicted as the main enemies of the nation.

HIT WAR ON FASCISM

Early in 1938 John W. Smith, executive director of Solomon's Federation, denounced any idea of a war on fascism.

Prior to his taking over the director's job in the Federation Smith authored a piece in the Brooklyn Eagle under the headline: "War on Fascism Cloaks Plot to Sovietize U. S."

Solomon's organization didn't do so well. He and Modell collected money for a few months. Nothing has been heard of the organization since.

Today Solomon and Modell are under investigation by District Attorney Frank S. Hogan. From anti-communist activities they have, according to Commissioner of Investigation William B. Herlands, gone to other fields.

They now have to defend themselves against charges by the Mayor and Herlands that they solicited \$8,000—and got some of the money—on the promise they could "fix" the City Council to vote down the Quinn Bill making unnecessary stirrup pumps as air raid fire fighting equipment.

Civilian defense authorities are also in favor of defeating the Quinn Bill. But the bribe charges have scared many old guard councilmen and they fear to cast their votes in opposition.

LaGuardia, it is reported, is prepared to maintain stirrup pump protection in city dwellings whichever way the matter goes in the Council.

He said he would insist on prosecution of Solomon and Mendell—the latter who bought pumps at \$2.20 and sold them at a monopoly price of \$3.30—and would put the city in the pump business, selling pumps at the wholesale price of \$1.91.

Birds of a Feather



Before Milton Solomon and Henry Modell got mixed up in the current stirrup pump shakedown scandal they buddied up with Rep. Martin Dies in an anti-red crusade. Here they are at the Commodore Hotel in 1938 mapping their campaign. They are (left to right): Dies, Modell, Solomon and Sidney Harnett.