

U.S. Prosecutor Heaped Praise on Coughlin 'Front'

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'Social Justice' Says U.S. Attorney Kennedy 'Has No Heart' for Case; Looks to Intensified Activity of Terrorist Organization

By Lawrence Emery

One of the nation's most un-American, most viciously anti-Semitic and fascist-terroristic bands—Father Charles E. Coughlin's so-called Christian Front—has had the decks cleared for its renewed brawl-provoking work and is sent forth with the blessings of a representative of the United States Government who praises it in these astounding words: "The avowed purposes of the Christian Front are good sound American principles." (Social Justice, July 1).

The man who uttered this benediction on an un-American organization once took a solemn oath to uphold the Constitution of the United States and to defend the Bill of Rights.

Last week in a Brooklyn court of the United States his notion of Americanism resolved itself into a prosecution of 14 Christian Front members charged with plotting to overthrow the United States government so weak that it is little wonder a jury brought in an acquittal verdict.

GOVERNMENT SANCTION

This man, United States Attorney Harold M. Kennedy, whose direct superior is Attorney Robert H. Jackson, has literally given governmental sanction to a movement spawned by America's ace fascist inciter, Father Coughlin, who boasts of his friendship for Hitler and Goebbels and who time and again has called for the "Franco way" of terror and violence against the American people and their rights.

If this astonishing example of a governmental agent lending comfort and aid to professed enemies of American democracy is not a classic example of a native fifth column in action, then that overworked phrase has lost all meaning.

Still more indicative of a genuine fifth column in the midst of governmental apparatus is the fact that there has not been a single word of reproof from any of Mr. Kennedy's superiors, which can only be interpreted as complete sanction from on high.

Father Coughlin himself is the first to accept Mr. Kennedy's bid. Hailing the acquittal of the men whose cause he defiantly espoused, Coughlin threatened:

"The result will be that the Christian Front movement will emerge more vigorous and potent than ever. . . . The resentment on the part of the victims is liable to increase the wave of anti-Semitism . . ."

That is plain, open talk. And remembering the Christian Front's record of riots a year ago, that statement spells blood on New York streets.

An editorial in Father Coughlin's Social Justice for July 1, written before the acquittal verdict was announced, was already boastful and confident of the outcome of the Brooklyn trial. "Neither the government of the United States," it said, "nor the Federal Bureau of Investigation of the Department of Justice, had any enthusiasm for the prosecution of this paper-thin 'conspiracy.'"

The editorial gloats over this statement quoted from Mr. Kennedy's summation to the jury:

"The Christian Front is not in this case. Neither is the National Rifle Association. The Christian Front had to be mentioned because it formed the first background for the conspiracy. The avowed purposes of the Christian Front are good sound American principles, but if some convicts base their thieving expedition at an Elk's lodge, the Elks would have to be mentioned."

Although Mr. Kennedy went far out of his way to make the twisted legal point that the Christian Front as such was not on trial, Father Coughlin's own Social Justice in its July 1 issue shrills with this page 1 headline: "Not Guilty! Christian Fronters Cleared of Charges."

Why shouldn't Social Justice gloat? Is it any wonder that these statements of a government "prosecutor," coupled with his praise for the "Americanism" of the Christian Front, led a jury to find the prisoners not guilty?

RAISES QUESTION

This entire proceeding raises a question of fundamental importance to the American people: how much power and influence does Father Coughlin wield within the government of the United States?

Both judge and prosecutor in the Christian Front trial did everything in their power to convince the jury that the Christian Front was not on trial.

This is interesting when it is remembered that at the time of the arrests, Father Coughlin "roundly disavowed" the accused, hoped that they would be punished to the limit.

One week later Father Coughlin reversed himself, defied the government. "I freely choose," he declared, "to be identified as a friend of the accused. . . . I do not disassociate myself from that (Christian Front) movement."

What happened between the time of those two statements is not known. But what Father Coughlin did in that second declaration was literally to climb into the dock with the prisoners in a challenge to the government: "These are my men, and this is my movement. Let me see you prosecute us!"

POWER FROM WHERE?

From that moment on the prosecution in the case did everything in its power to remove the Christian Front from any implication in the plot, and even to apologize for mentioning the name of the organization in connection with the plot. Father Coughlin's name was studiously and painstakingly kept out

of the trial as far as that was humanly possible.

Father Coughlin has been denounced by innumerable Catholic laymen of prominence, and the late Cardinal Mundelein vigorously asserted that Father Coughlin in his utterances and activities in no way represented the Catholic Church.

Yet this man is able to challenge the law enforcing agency of the United States government and win even in the face of admissions and confessions from the accused on trial.

This is evidence of a fifth column in American life of far greater proportions than one man with a radio mike. It is a fifth column with twin fascist aims of pogroms against Jews, and violence against the people and their free institutions. And from all the evidence, it has powerful support in high circles.

It is time the people act to uncover the depths of this fascist menace to their peace and security.