

Coughlin Aides Face Grand Jury Today

News 4/28/42
The special grand jury on Axis propaganda today will call 10 witnesses in its effort to bare the alleged fascist connections of the Coughlinites weekly, Social Justice—which Attorney General Biddle labeled “clearly seditious.”

Due to be questioned are seven employees of the magazine and—significantly—three members of the personal staff of Father Charles E. Coughlin himself—Eugenia Burke, private secretary; Marie Rhodes and Bernice Marks, office employes.

After leaping to national prominence as a radio speaker, Coughlin founded Social Justice in 1938 and continued at the head until 1940, when he disavowed ownership. Recently, his superiors of the Catholic Archdiocese of

Detroit released a copy of the letter of disavowal, commenting that since 1940 no priest of the archdiocese had requested or received permission to have anything to do with the magazine.

Coughlin's answer to this and to the announced investigation of Social Justice was to dare the grand jury to summon him to Washington and, being ignored in this challenge, to assume “full responsibility” for the magazine's policies.

For reasons not made public, the grand jury omitted Coughlin's name from the list of witnesses summoned. Magazine employes due to be questioned today are: Mary May Schulte, circulation and office manager; Mrs. Virginia Robinson Palmer, bulk sales manager; Cora Quinlan, secretary-treasurer; Bernard O'Connor, editorial writer; Letty Faber, clerk; Frank Traynick, office employe; and Gwynette Chappelle, writer.

Another witness summoned today, David Baxter, leader of a secret organization mobilizing for R-Day (Revolution Day), reported to police yesterday that his hotel room here was robbed of a gray overcoat and double-breasted blue suit.

In the pockets, he said, were some notes which he jotted down at an investigation in behalf of his Social Republic Society and which he had intended to use in testifying.