

# Banker Challenges Pecora to 'Duel' After Justice Speaks on Patriotism

By LEO J. MARGOLIN



Supreme Court Justice Ferdinand Pecora, long an aggressive anti-Fascist, has been challenged to a "duel" (weapons unspecified) by Luigi Criscuolo, a vociferous investment banker who has defended Fascist Italy in the past.

Criscuolo challenged Pecora last Wednesday in the Biltmore, but not in Pecora's presence. Others, however, were present when he said:

"I'll meet Pecora downstairs, upstairs, or in Central Park any dark night."



Justice Pecora

The episode resulted from a speech by Pecora in which he pointed out that American citizenship alone was not a guarantee of patriotism. The speech was made at a beefsteak dinner given by Generoso Pope to raise \$1,000,000 in War Bonds among 300 prominent men of Italian extraction.

Pope is the publisher whose newspapers formerly defended Fascist Italy. The party was a success, until Criscuolo sounded off. Pledges totaling \$2,000,000 were received. Guests included Lt. Gov. Poletti, Supreme Court Justices Louis Valente and Felix Benvenga; General Sessions Judge John Freschi; Commissioner of Corrections Peter Amoroso, and U. S. Attorney Mathias Correa.

Pecora began his speech by praising Americans of Italian extraction who have made good in America. Then he said:

"Let me remind you that while the precious decree of citizenship renders the person to whom it is given an American citizen, it does not insure patriotism in his heart.

"There are American citizens, not only among those who have obtained their citizenship by decree of the courts, but citizens who owe their citizenship to the accident of having been born on American territory, against which persons public officials like Mat Correa have instituted proceedings for their traitorous and subversive activities."

At this point Criscuolo stood up and shouted:

"That's a lot of tripe! You're smearing innocent people! You're insulting millions of loyal Americans of Italian origin who have sons in the Army for a victory for the U. S. A."

Criscuolo later said Pecora was motivated by a desire "to smear those who are not anti-Fascist."