

MEMORANDUM

Anti-Semitism in the Christian Front has generally taken the line handed down by Father Coughlin. We have nothing against the Jews, they say, but we are fighting the Communists. All Communists, however, seem to be Jews, and all Jews are Communists.

An example of this is the speech made by John Cassidy, leader of the Christian Front, at a public meeting at Prospect Hall on May 22, 1939. Cassidy announced that the organization is not anti-Semitic, only anti-Communist, but wherever he looks in this fight, he is confronted by Jews. Again on June 16, 1939 at Prospect Hall he stated, "We're not here to fight the Jews - we are here to fight the Communists. But who turns up every time but the Jews, right behind the Communists."

Christian Front speakers at street meetings during 1939 created a dangerous situation in New York City by attacking the Jews in a scurrilous manner. On July 22, 1939 at a Dyckman Street meeting, Edwin Westphal said, "When we Christians gain control, we will gag you the same as you Jews are gagging us now." On June 19, 1939 at a Christian Front street meeting, Joseph McWilliams assured his audience that "all Jews are Communists." Edward Smythe on the same occasion, called for a boycott of the Jews.

It was often necessary for the police to arrest Christian Front members who were using offensive language in their street meeting talks. As reported in the Brooklyn Examiner for November 17, 1939, John Forrester, Christian Front speaker, addressing a crowd of three hundred at Columbus Circle, interspersed his speech with anti-Semitic outbursts, such as, "The Bible tells us that the Jews are a menace to the country, no good to themselves and no good to anyone else." When a man in the crowd became ill and collapsed, Forrester shouted, "Christians, the Jews stabbed him."

New York was not the only scene of Christian Front anti-Semitic attacks. Francis P. Moran, Boston Christian Front leader speaking in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, informed the crowd that President "Rosenfelt" was a Jew guilty of high treason. State Supreme Court Justice Francis B. Condon, American Legion Department Commander in Rhode Island, who had, unaware of its character, accepted the invitation to speak at this meeting, attacked Moran and stated he would not be on the platform with him if he had known Moran would make such statements. (New York Herald-Tribune, 11/12/39). Philadelphia too, was the scene of numerous anti-Semitic meetings by Christian Fronters. Father Edward Lodge Curran, member of the Christian Front in New York told such meeting on March 28, 1939 that he was happy to be back in an "American" city. The well-trained crowd responded, "not so many Jews here."

New York Christian Front activity has often taken the form of a boycott against the Jews. In June, 1939 the Christian Front distributed thousands of letters as follows:

Brooklyn, N. Y.

"R. J. Reynolds, Tobacco Co.,
Winston-Salem
North Carolina.

Gentlemen:

A word to the wise is sufficient.

Izzy Isakowitz, alias Eddie Cantor, has insulted Christian America. His attack on the Rev. Chas. E. Coughlin, Senator Robert R. Reynolds and Maj. Gen. Geo. Van Horn Moseley, U. S. Army (Retired) is the last straw. If you keep him on your program he will break the Camel's back.

Very truly yours

For Christ and Country.

Date: _____

"For Christ and Country" is the Christian Front slogan.

The Christian Front actively promoted the "Christian Index" which was started by two of its members. They listed "Christian" merchants and distributed circulars advising people to "Buy Christian and Save America." On Christmas, 1938 and 1939 the Christian Front backed trucks which cruised the streets of New York City bearing signs reading "Buy Christian for Christmas." On August 4, 1939 at a Christian Front public meeting at Prospect Hall, John Cassidy said, "Buy Christian is boycotting the Jews."

The menace of the Christian Front was recognized by the Brooklyn Church and Mission Federation representing virtually all Protestant Churches in Brooklyn. A statement issued by Rev. Dr. J. Henry Carpenter, executive secretary appeared in the New York Times for November 16, 1939. "Inasmuch as we are in possession of conclusive evidence that an organization known as the Christian Front has been active in spreading racial and religious prejudice," they warned, "we therefore feel it to be our bounden duty to counsel the Protestant Clergy and laity to engage to the utmost of their ability in counteracting any such disruptive influences."

In view of the reports that the so-called Christian Front is strenuously endeavoring to increase its forces by inviting Protestants into its membership, we are compelled to warn Protestant people against accepting such invitations and overtures."

Among others who condemned the un-American activities of the Christian Front was Mrs. Harold V. Milligan of the National Council of Women, who in a speech before the Women's Christian Temperance Union meeting in Rochester (New York Times, 9/29/39) said, "The people of New York City have been alarmed by the activities of the so-called Christian Front. Its members have brutally assaulted our citizens and our police. They condemn American democracy....They are corrupting our youth....and paving the way for Hitlerism. Above all, this so-called Christian Front has picked up the torch of Nazi propaganda...."

"....let us call it the un-Christian Front. We are justified in doing so. For we have seen the police blotters of New York City grow black with the shameful record of the un-Christian Front. We have seen great church leaders and laymen of all denominations rise in indignation to condemn the un-Christian Front. We have seen how - as it was in Germany, where together with the persecution of Jews came the oppression of Catholics and Protestants as well - we have seen how attacks on one group invariably mean attacks upon other groups, until all are engulfed in the disastrous seas of despotism."

Prominent Catholics, both laymen and clergymen, have attacked the activities of the Christian Front. On May 7, 1939 at a communion breakfast of the Catholic employees of the Consolidated Edison Company, John K. Carroll, Assistant United States Attorney said that Father Coughlin's followers "have no right to raise racial issues, nor to use the Christian Front as a medium of race persecution. (New York Herald-Tribune 5/8/39).

Representative Joseph A. Gavagan speaking at a dinner of the Co-Ordinating Committee in behalf of Persecuted Minorities on December 6, 1939 said, "How my blood boils when I hear the adjective 'Christian' used by ...the Christian Front...which thus insults the gentle Jesus Who preached love for all mankind."

The acuteness of the situation resulted in the organization of the Committee of Catholics for Human Rights, to counteract the poisonous propaganda put out by the Christian Front. Hundreds of well-known Catholics have enlisted in their campaign for true Americanism. Dr. Emmanuel Chapman of Fordham University is Secretary of the Committee and Editorial Counsel to their crusading publication, "The Voice for Human Rights."