

Recently released FBI documents reveal strong anti-Catholicism on the part of ACLU General Counsel

FBI files reveal virulent anti-Catholic feelings, to a surprising degree, on the part of ACLU General Counsel Morris Ernst. The revelations support the long held beliefs of many Catholic organizations that the American Civil Liberties Union was an anti-Catholic organization. The ACLU, long dominated by the White Anglo Saxon Protestant elite in New York, would put an occasional minority on the national board, but it appears to be window dressing.

Ernst's anti-Catholic feelings appear in a draft of his book, *The Nature of the Enemy*. Ernst had requested that FBI staff review the book before publication, a book purported to explain who becomes a communist. Civil libertarians may be stunned by this revelation alone, that the FBI would be reviewing the text line by line, making corrections all along. Actually, the quality of the review surpasses the text itself. If the book was published without corrections, Ernst's biases would have been exposed, and the nature of the enemy would have become clear.

- Ernst makes the assumption that more Catholics become communists because they want to blindly follow a leader, such as the Pope, and Ernst actually compares Stalin and the Pope. From a March 6th, 1952 letter in FBI files, Ernst writes: "The men and women who found their satisfaction in the party from the following line, being told what to do and what to think and what to say seek a new authority. We suggest that it is among these that the Catholic Church finds its converts. Many observers have noted how often the ex-communist becomes a Catholic; after all, it is easier to turn to the Pope to replace Stalin than to seek a new source of strength within oneself. As a devout Catholic, the former communist finds as complete guide ready for him in all the affairs of life as he had in the party". Ernst says "We believe". Is he speaking for the rest of the membership of the ACLU? Did the membership actually vote on this issue? Was the rest of the membership as anti-Catholic as the 'leadership' of the ACLU?

The text of the book is loaded with anti-Catholic references, too numerous to mention. The FBI reviewer provides astute observations:.....(1) to state that Catholics are told what to think, what to say and how to act in the same essential way as communists are so instructed is to voice an untruth which detracts from the accuracy and integrity of the book; (2) likewise it is not true to say that a Catholic like a communist has "as complete guide ready for him in all the affairs of life as he had in the party." The reviewer adds, "The reading of the works of Catholic philosopher Jacques Maritain would tend to dispel this opinion".

While the ACLU National Board would put a few ethnic minorities on the national board, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn would be the most famous, largely based on her vocal Communist beliefs. She believed in free speech, and shouted her beliefs from the rooftops. It is doubtful the Pope would recognize her as a Catholic if he was checking her church envelopes. In any event, Flynn would be tossed off the national board of the ACLU simply for exercising her first amendment rights. It simply became too uncomfortable for the ACLU National Board, so they kicked her off. The hidden Communists would remain on the board. When Elizabeth Gurley Flynn demanded a hearing before the national board she challenged the decision to sack her, and accused to board of knowing that ACLU Chairman, Roger Nash Baldwin was a communist: she charged that he chose to hide his affiliation. Ernst was also a religious minority, one of the few in the organization. Jewish, you would

think Ernst would be sympathetic to other religious minorities, but he seemed to adopt the prejudices of the WASP elite he ran with.

There was a narrow span of control at the ACLU with Francis Biddle, of the Biddle Law Firm of Philadelphia, and FDR's Attorney General, maintaining the chairmanship for four years before passing the chairmanship on to his son-in-law, Patrick Murphy Malin. The Biddle family would be major investors in the Drexel Bank of Philadelphia, which were partners with J.P. Morgan. This was an age of interlocking directorships within corporations, and 'do gooder' organizations as well. To paraphrase Henry David Thoreau, whenever he spotted a 'do gooder', he walked the other way, "lest they do their good to me."

Attached is a limited excerpt from a rather extensive book and review as well.