

Conclusion

“WHY DON’T THE JEWS DOUBLE UP THEIR FISTS AND FIGHT IT OUT with me, instead of knifing us in the back?” It was the summer of 1943, and Moran was itching for a confrontation with the Jews of Boston. “I hit hard, and hit it on the button,” he told confidential informant T-1. From his position behind the scenes, Moran was growing ever more resentful, his anti-Semitism slipping into exterminationism. It was at this point that he began to talk about “eliminating the Jews.” Moran asked T-1 to use her military connections to infiltrate army camps and radicalize soldiers. “Instead of uncontrolled riots and anarchy,” Moran explained, “it would be preferable to have men trained in military discipline in order to take over and get rid of the Jews.”¹

Moran had gone over the edge. This was no longer religious anti-Judaism or even religious anti-Semitism mediated by Mystical Body theology and Catholic human rights. Nor could exterminating Jews could ever be camouflaged as Catholic Action. This was pure Nazism, without compromises. The Nazification of Francis Moran began under Herbert Scholz’s tutelage, but it flowered after the consul had departed, leaving Moran to navigate alone a city and country increasingly hostile to his views. At least officially. While it is true that the police had technically come down on Moran, Bostonians—and many of their civic leaders—remained in his camp. Those authorities who did oppose Moran preferred to steer clear of him rather than provoke his large band of supporters. For every liberal and anti-Fascist activist willing to go

public, there were dozens of former fronters and sympathetic Irish Catholics. And, perhaps most importantly, the Boston Police were more firmly on Moran's side than ever. Commissioner Timilty had done what was best for Commissioner Timilty and moved on. Now that the front was disbanded, he could be happily oblivious to its continued influence in Boston and his police force.

Moran and his followers could no longer get away with public statements in favor of Hitler, but they could exercise their rage toward the Jews around them. Moran did not have to be out front in order to stoke that rage. He still commanded his most ardent supporters and could orchestrate events from underground. In early 1943 he organized several speeches by Father Curran, which were stage-managed by former fronters under Moran's direction. Meanwhile, satisfied that the front was no more, BSC pulled back from its counterprogramming. The FBI's Boston office was in disarray in 1942 and 1943 and cut resources from its investigation of Moran.

It was under these circumstances that Boston experienced an outbreak of anti-Semitism. The "anti-Jewish violence in Boston" became "pervasive," according to historian Stephen H. Norwood. To use Derounian's more evocative language, Boston had "come to flame." The violence was perpetrated largely by Irish Catholic gangs. Some of the perpetrators were former fronters but many were not. They were ordinary fans of Father Coughlin living in neighborhoods steeped in the anti-Semitism that the front disseminated with the aid of clerics like Father Curran. Police abetted crimes against Jews, sometimes by turning a blind eye, sometimes by arresting Jewish Bostonians for defending themselves, and sometimes by directly participating in beatings of Jews.²

Historians usually put the beginning of Boston's surging Irish-on-Jewish violence in the fall of 1943.³ In fact there was rising hostility throughout the year. What changed in the fall was the publicity surrounding the persecution of Boston's Jews. For most of the year, anyone who was not a victim or perpetrator or in close contact with them would have had little sense of what was going on. As far as newspaper editors were concerned, the shuttering of the front was a strong final chapter in the story. Police complicity helped to ensure that the press missed the denouement, because many crimes were never logged through official channels. It would take concentrated investigative journalism, not beat reporting, to break open the story of Boston's anti-Semitic violence. Local Jewish leaders might have alerted the media on their

own, but they chose to stay quiet. With so much violence coming their way—state violence, perpetuated by the police and by private citizens protected by the police—many in the Jewish community feared that speaking out would result in still worse consequences.

It is unclear what civic leaders knew about the violence and for how long they knew it. What we do know is that high-ranking authorities evinced little concern until investigative journalists held their feet to the fire. Frances Sweeney was a key figure in exposing the systemic nature of the violence, both bearing witness to it and speaking to other journalists for their stories. The reporting that eventually came out shook authorities and private citizens, demonstrating as it did that the Christian Front remained influential in Boston. Moran had become that much more dangerous underground, and so had his followers and their fellow travelers, left to act on what he had taught. The anti-Semitic sentiments of the police and Irish Catholic civilians were no doubt genuine, but it is also reasonable to wonder if there would have been such a crisis had not Timilty not behaved so rashly, pushing Moran out of sight and martyring him in the eyes of the public.

By the end of 1943, the violence died down and with it Moran's career as an agitator. It was with Moran's departure from public life that the erasure of the Christian Front—from both daily life and historical memory—began. When Timilty tried to accomplish that erasure on his own, he only inflamed the front's militancy. He was understood by Irish Catholic Bostonians to be taking on the role of the Spanish, Mexican, and Russian leftists whose persecution of Christians had inspired the Christian Front idea in the first place. Had Boston's Irish Catholics known that Timilty was in fact an unwitting tool of a British intelligence campaign, they would have been that much angrier. It was, in the last analysis, Sweeney and her liberal associates who ended the front's year of terror, with law enforcement dragged grudgingly along.

The Anti-Semitic Crisis of 1943

“All the Jewish boys were pretty badly hurt,” Sweeney wrote to a friend in March 1943. “Eight Jewish boys were set upon by pre-arranged signal as they were leaving Hecht House in Dorchester.” Hecht House was Boston's first Jewish community center. It had opened half a century earlier and moved to Dorchester in 1942. The relocation was an indication of a changing city. The local Jewish population, numbering nearly 90,000 and amounting to around

12 percent of the city, was moving to Dorchester, Roxbury, and Mattapan, diversifying these heavily Irish neighborhoods and making Dorchester in particular the geographic heart of Boston Jewry. By the 1960s Boston's Jews would move en masse into the near suburbs of Brookline and Newton, an exodus explained in part by white flight—Dorchester, Roxbury, and Mattapan were increasingly enclaves for African Americans and immigrants of color—but also by the experience of living cheek by jowl with an Irish Catholic community harboring a critical mass of extreme anti-Semites.⁴

Arthur Derounian recorded the gruesome details of the Hecht House attack. One of the Jewish boys was stopped by five attackers, “all Irish Catholics.” One asked the boy “if he didn’t think Hitler was the greatest person in the world.” Then, “when the Jewish boy refused to answer, a boy stepped up and punched him in the face.” Each of the five attackers asked the same question and then punched the boy in the face again. Sweeney observed the court proceedings against the Hecht House attackers and found that “mothers are not letting their children go to court to identify their assailants because of fear of reprisals.” She noted that “one Irish boy—6’1” —when he was leaving the Dorchester courtroom, threatened the Jewish lad who had identified him.”⁵

The Hecht House attack occurred on March 16, 1943, the eve of St. Patrick’s Day and the same night Father Curran spoke at a gala event in Boston. Curran was again present at the invitation of the South Boston Citizens’ Association, led by Moran’s colleague William Gallagher. This time there were no protests, perhaps because Curran was not scheduled to speak. Instead, the isolationist New York congressman Hamilton Fish was the advertised speaker, but he backed out at the last minute. Curran, who was attending the event as a guest, took the lectern in Fish’s stead. The last-minute cancellation, and Curran’s convenient readiness to address the crowd, may have been a setup—a scheme concocted by Gallagher and Moran for avoiding opposition. During his speech, Curran thanked the South Boston Citizens’ Association “for the courage with which they beat back the protests of the Red groups and their pale political allies who sought to keep me out of Boston last year.”⁶

“I spoke with social workers at Hecht House who said [the attack] was distinctly the result of Curran,” Sweeney wrote. The result of Curran and the result of the Christian Front in its afterlife. Behind the veil of a South Boston neighborhood association, former frontiers were continuing to focus the attention of Irish Catholics on the front’s violent ideology. With Gallagher as the point man, Moran operated behind closed doors. After the speech,

Sweeney followed Curran to the lobby of the Hotel Gardner in Boston's Fenway district. There was Moran, waiting for the priest. As soon as he spotted Moran, Curran "broke away from his escorts . . . shook [Moran's] hand and pounded him on the shoulder and said, 'My God, I'm glad to see you.'" Moran stayed at the hotel until after midnight, meeting privately with Curran.

The Hecht House affray may have been set off by Curran's speech, but the evening of anti-Semitic and anti-Communist oratory was only a catalyst, bringing together reactive energies that were already coursing through the city. After the speech, Sweeney wrote to her friend that she had noticed "about five riots a month in that area." In Brookline, which Sweeney called "the wealthiest township in the US," two hundred Irish and Jewish students engaged in what the local police chief called "strictly a racial riot." She observed that "Jewish children were beaten severely."⁷

Isadore Muchnick, a city councilor from Dorchester and Harvard-educated lawyer, noticed the same trend Sweeney did. Speaking with Arthur Derounian in April 1943, Muchnick described both violence against Jews and the worrisome prospect of escalation. He had learned from sources around town that Jewish men were responding to the onslaught by joining auxiliary police forces and patrolling neighborhoods with "heavy sticks." At the same time, "Catholics are also serving as auxiliary policemen carrying big sticks." Muchnick feared that "if the attacks keep on, someone, sometime, is going to get killed."

That spring, Sweeney arranged a meeting with the local chapter of the Anti-Defamation League. She suggested that she and other Catholics contact priests of the Boston Archdiocese with a view toward extracting public acknowledgment and condemnation of violence. But the ADL opposed Sweeney's plan, suggesting that it should be "big time Catholics"—lay Catholics—not priests who spoke out. Whereas Sweeney and Derounian, like Tillich, understood that the priesthood was a pillar of Catholic anti-Semitism, it appears that the ADL either did not recognize this or was nervous about a project targeting clerics. Derounian, who was familiar with Sweeney's outreach to the ADL, noted that "nothing was done about the matter."⁸

Another witness to the rising tide of Catholic-on-Jewish violence was Isadore Zack. An officer in the US Army Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC), Zack was assigned to work domestic intelligence in Boston—a sign that, well after the United States had joined the fighting in Europe, the army still considered the city a front in the war. Zack's CIC report was written in the fall, when the crisis was at a high point, but made clear that matters had been

getting worse for some time. He was shaken by “the smashing of windows in synagogues, fifteen or more street fights within two weeks and other occurrences of like character which forced one police official to say that the situation had ‘reached a boiling point.’” That police statement was for Zack’s ears only: the police were not talking openly about the wave of assaults.

Indeed, the volatile “situation was not known to the general public,” Zack wrote. He tallied a range of incidents that had not made it into the papers, including “window-smashing at one synagogue and three Jewish stores, numerous awnings slashed at Jewish stores, five individual assaults, one Jewish victim beaten by police without provocation, and an attack by seven Christian boys on two Jewish boys on October 9, 1943.” In the absence of police reports, there was less for the papers to go on. Such incidents “had been underway for more than a year without any interference from civic authorities,” Zack noted. This was hardly a surprising outcome given Moran’s influence in the BPD.

But it was not just a lack of police interest that kept the violence out of the headlines. As Zack explained, “the Boston press ignored what was going on, in keeping with the wishes of Jewish leaders who were afraid publicity would make matters worse.”⁹ One example of these cowed community eminences was Rabbi Joseph S. Shubow, who shut down an effort to bring police bias to light. In the early fall of 1943, police arrested four Jewish boys in Dorchester, leading to an outraged response from a local politician named Berman, who was aiming for a spot on the Boston City Council. Available sources do not make clear why the boys were arrested, but Berman was up in arms because whenever Irish Catholics beat up Jewish boys, the BPD arrested the Jews. Berman wanted to come forward with his complaint, but, according to an FBI informant, “Rabbi Shubow was of the opinion that the matter should be hushed.” Such acquiescence was strategic, if not wise. Shubow was known as an “Americanist” rabbi—he focused on the integration of Jews into US society and was therefore not inclined to rock any boats. He worried that publicizing the plight of the Jewish boys would “do more harm” than good in a city that was already unwelcoming.

Despite the wishes of Shubow and others in the Jewish community, Boston’s anti-Semitic violence eventually did break into the news. If the Boston papers were no longer focused on the men, women, and politics of the Christian Front, a liberal New York paper, *PM*, was. Early in October 1943, a *PM* writer appeared at the FBI’s Boston field office. The reporter, whose name is

redacted in the FBI files, “had no constructive information,” according to Special Agent James Mahan. “He merely wanted to know why the entire group (the Christian Front) could not be apprehended.”¹⁰

A couple of weeks later, on October 18, *PM* published a story headlined “Christian Front Hoodlums Terrorize Boston Jews.” The author was Arnold Beichman, a journalist who was deeply concerned about issues of racism and anti-Semitism. It may well have been Beichman who visited the Boston FBI. The *PM* article relied on affidavits and other court records describing numerous unsettling incidents. The affidavits described beating after beating, as well as gang violence. In one case, a group of about fifteen youths shattered the windows of synagogue and then stood at the foot of the synagogue screaming, “Let’s kill all the Jews!” Beichman reported gangs on Blue Hill Avenue, Dorchester’s main thoroughfare, shouting, “They’ll be no more Jews on Jew Hill Avenue when the war is over!” Frances Sweeney is quoted in the article saying, “These are not just assaults on Jewish children, they are a manifestation that the Christian Front still thrives and is encouraged in Boston.”¹¹

The very day Beichman’s article was published, Massachusetts Governor Leverett Saltonstall held a press conference in his office. Beichman attended and was introduced to the governor as the author of the *PM* article. Saltonstall shared Beichman’s liberalism and was usually good-natured and even-handed, but on that day he exploded, demanding that Beichman “get right out of this office.” The governor insisted that the article was not telling the truth and falsely accused him of complicity in “terrorism.” For added measure, Saltonstall commanded his bodyguard to escort Beichman out of the building. *PM* counterpunched the following day, with a story occupying its entire front page and headlined, “A Challenge to Gov. Saltonstall: Stamp out Terrorism against Boston Jews or Disprove It.” The story of Boston’s anti-Semitic violence—and the governor’s refusal to combat it—went national.¹²

Although Saltonstall lashed out at Beichman, he was in fact “extremely disturbed” by the contents of the *PM* article, as he told Commissioner Timilty. Saltonstall was particularly discouraged by Beichman’s reports that the BPD was involved the attacks. “The whole matter concerns very much the good name of the people of our city and our state,” the governor wrote to the commissioner who had not quite shut down the Christian Front.¹³

In classic style Timilty shielded his officers. He advised Saltonstall that police had “no tangible evidence” concerning “unwarranted attacks and beatings being inflicted upon many innocent Jewish boys and girls.” He acknowledged

that he had received “periodic complaints of alleged anti-Semitic activity taking place in the Roxbury and Dorchester districts,” but “each case has been thoroughly investigated.” Nevertheless, he went ahead and “assigned twenty-five additional officers” to Roxbury and Dorchester. It was another knee-jerk move from Timilty, evidencing an unwillingness to engage thoughtfully with the facts of the crisis. Officers were operating on both sides of the law—putting more of them on the street might prevent some violence and lead to arrests of some wrongdoers, but adding officers could just as easily amplify the problems of police brutality and unjust arrests.

Timilty was not trying to protect only his men. He was also guarding his reputation as the undertaker of the Christian Front. The commissioner seemed personally offended by the suggestion that Moran and the front still held sway in Boston. “As no doubt you are aware, I caused the offices of this organization to be raided and closed in Boston,” Timilty reminded the governor. “As Police Commissioner I have used active and successful means to silence the Christian Front and have thereby terminated a sore spot of anti-Semitism in this city.” Showing the same reckless sense of invincibility that had him tangling with Moran in the first place, Timilty grew flippant with the governor. “It should be remembered that the City of Boston is not an outpost of the Kingdom of Heaven and nobody can make it one,” he wrote.¹⁴

Perhaps Timilty was feeling defensive because his bargain with Moran was backfiring. By the time Timilty responded to Saltonstall, many Boston papers were talking about the role of the Christian Front in instigating anti-Semitic violence.¹⁵ Timilty suddenly looked as irresponsible as he had in fact been. Worse still, from the perspective of the commissioner’s ego, Moran had played him for a fool. Moran had promised to shut down the front, and he had, but only in name. There was an obvious loophole in the deal Timilty had bragged about. Exploiting that loophole, Moran was inspiring, perhaps coordinating, a wave of crime and violence that was swallowing the police department and threatening to swallow Saltonstall, too. Evidently Timilty felt comfortable mouthing off at the governor, but it must be recalled that, at this time, the police commissioner was a gubernatorial appointee. The quirky rules of state politics ensured that when Saltonstall had a headache, Timilty had a toothache.

Like the police, the FBI proved unable to contend with the news of Moran’s ongoing activity. The problem in the bureau’s case was not ignorance. Agents knew a great deal about Moran: confidential informant T-1’s reports

were substantial, and often chilling, ensuring that the FBI did not share Timilty's delusion that he had shut Moran down. Throughout 1943 Boston's field office received reports of Moran's increasingly violent agitation, his urging of genocide, and roles of former frontiers in whipping up anti-Semitic sentiment in Boston.

The problem for the FBI was primarily one of leadership. The Boston field office had been in shambles since March 1942, when Virgil Peterson abruptly resigned. Within three weeks, Peterson had cleared out of Boston and moved to Chicago to take over the Chicago Crime Commission. It was a well-paying job monitoring street crime, gambling, and the rackets and a sensible career move for Peterson, a classically minded cop who had helped catch the notorious gangster John Dillinger. As Bostonian and one-time FBI counterintelligence chief William C. Sullivan wrote of the World War II-era FBI, "Dealing with Nazism, Fascism, Communism, and espionage were not at all the same as catching bank robbers and kidnapers." Peterson could attest to that. Initially he was replaced by Special Agent Carl Hennrich, but by August 1943 Hennrich was out, replaced by Edward Soucy, an expert in espionage cases. The Moran investigation fumbled and stumbled amid the shakeup. By the time Soucy was installed, the anti-Semitic crisis was smoldering and about to hit the newspapers.¹⁶

FBI leadership was a problem on the national level as well, thanks to Hoover's erratic behavior. The director's approach to the Moran investigation kept shifting, catching the Boston office off guard. On the day the Beichman story was released, Hoover wrote Soucy a long letter demanding to know why Boston agents had been so ineffective in developing sedition charges—charges that the Justice Department had previously taken off the table. "The subject appears . . . very active, and perhaps a dangerous person," Hoover noted, yet the Boston FBI seemed to be doing its best not to get Moran off the streets. "A sedition charge cannot be made merely through receiving and setting forth general reports on the subject's meetings supplied by confidential informants," Hoover wrote. "Information must be developed . . . concerning the recipients of the subject's statements . . . with particular reference to . . . the Armed Forces or . . . the Selective Service Act." T-1's reports, whatever their merits, could not prove that Moran was sowing sedition in the armed forces. Hoover wanted evidence he could use in court, but "the Bureau's requests along these lines . . . have been constantly disregarded," he fumed.¹⁷

Following on decisions made at the Justice Department, Hoover had previously told Peterson to build a case for custodial detention rather than sedition. However, by the time he wrote to Soucy, Hoover seemed to have forgotten his own orders. Soucy must have been startled by the unacknowledged about-face; evidently he took Hoover's latest lashing to mean that T-1 was no longer needed. Instead of coaching her on how to develop evidence material to a sedition charge, Soucy appears to have relieved her of her duties. At the high-water mark of the crisis, T-1 went silent, severing the FBI's connection to Moran's inner circle and to Moran himself.

Blowback

Sweeney, Beichman, and a number of other journalists and activists, as well as some modern historians, have blamed Moran for the wave of police and gang violence that engulfed South Boston in 1943. There is no documented evidence that Moran directed any crimes—except for Gallagher's manhandling and forceful removal of Sweeney from Curran's speech—but it is not unreasonable to assume that he planned some of the abuses that occurred and sanctioned others.

Yet the question of whether and to what extent Moran was personally involved in the brutal, police-abetted anti-Semitic violence of 1943 misses the larger context in two ways. First, Moran did not have to personally arrange every assault. He was an ideological and spiritual leader, not a general. His role had always been to inspire a movement. Second, if we focus inordinately on what Moran did, we run the risk of ignoring the intelligence and law enforcement actions that created the conditions in which he became so much more dangerous. BSC's covert operation enabled the self-serving Timilty to act on his worst instincts, and after the raid had forced Moran underground, the mercurial and disorganized FBI foundered. The bureau continued to collect information on Moran but did nothing with it, then kneecapped its own efforts by abandoning its top informant. There was no attempt by either the FBI or the police to connect Moran's underground activities to the violence in Boston. In other words, Moran's enemies forced him underground and then allowed his anti-Semitism to fester there.

Moran was harder to contain when he was far from the Hibernian Hall stage. For one thing, it became more difficult to collect information on his activities. Instead of speaking publicly, where he was easily accessible to the

police, the press, and opposition activists, he now met privately with his inner circle, where he was beyond most surveillance. Indeed, that circle shrank while he was underground, making surveillance harder still. Shortly after the papers began pointing to the Christian Front as an instigator of the violence, he dissolved the Friday Group—its last gathering came at an October 30 celebration of Father Coughlin's birthday, where William Gallagher asked, "Who is Walter Winchell?" eliciting "a cry of Jew, Jew, Jew." Thereafter Moran kept only two or three supporters around him. Like other ideological leaders who have been pushed underground, Moran was "both literally and figuratively outside the boundaries of the law and the norms governing civic life."¹⁸

Unsurprisingly, Moran was further radicalized in these circumstances. "I am persecuted night and day by the Jews," he told T-1 in one of their last conversations. He had in mind a specific instance: at one point in summer 1943, his wife Nora told T-1 that she had "found a little kike packing up a pile of Francis's books" outside their cellar.¹⁹ But it was not just a burglary that upset Moran. No longer speaking to the public—and now surrounded exclusively by his die-hard supporters, individuals as radical and conspiratorial in their thinking as he was—Moran saw no need for restraint. Indeed, he may have felt pressure to become more extreme, so as to outflank his lieutenants and retain ideological leadership.

It is also important to keep in mind that, as the public face of the Christian Front, Moran had played something of a moderating role in Boston. He was no Floyd Carridi or John Cassidy. He did not get into fistfights or plan terrorist attacks. He delivered lectures, arranged speeches, wrote letters, and showed films. He sermonized and explicated the theology of the Mystical Body. He rarely sanctioned heckling by his supporters, much less violence. He even made a spectacle of turning the other cheek, as when he instructed enraged audience members not to throw the infiltrator Maurice Goldsmith out of a Christian Front meeting. When Moran came under the wing of the Nazi Scholz, he still did not explicitly urge or condone abuses of Jews. But once Moran was underground, all bets were off. He could no longer manipulate his followers as masterfully as he once did, turning the heat up and down as he wished. He became a symbolic figure more than an operational one. Freshly and acutely aggrieved by the injustice Moran had suffered at the hands of the police and perceived left-wingers like Sweeney, and inclined to believe that their sorrows were products of Jewish conspiracies, Christian Front mem-

bers and fellow travelers diffused into Boston's neighborhoods and did what their hearts told them was right.

In this atmosphere, any attempt at accountability for Moran or his followers would inspire only further gripes. The *PM* stories did not help on this score. According to a November 4 report from FBI Special Agent Mahan, remnant frontiers were decrying *PM* for promoting and participating in an "anti-Catholic movement in Boston." This is exactly the sort of reaction Moran would have had. He had not spent the past few years preaching to empty chairs. He had educated a large chunk of Irish Catholic Boston, taught them to think as he did.²⁰

Moran seems to have understood his own success better than law enforcement did. By summer 1943, he was describing himself to T-1 "as a tough guy and a gang leader." This is not precisely an admission that he was coordinating the violence that was suffusing Dorchester and other parts of Boston, but he was certainly taking credit for it. And rightly so. Sociologists who study gangs have shown how they can emerge from organizations that "splinter" under "external pressures" such as "law enforcement and neighborhood dynamics." The resulting subgroups of fractured organizations then take on "a life of their own." Moran did not have to provide detailed instructions for every act of violence. He had been training anti-Semites since 1939; they had the tools—physical and intellectual—to strike out on their own. Frequently protected by police, inspired in proximate terms by the likes of Father Curran, and drawing deeply from the well of grievances Moran had filled over a period of years, atomized frontiers fostered a hundred mini cells across Boston and brought the fire that Derounian had foreseen.²¹

Final Days

In the last weeks of 1943, with the media and authorities now paying attention, the anti-Semitic crisis waned. At about the same time, Moran's chief law-enforcement protector lost his job: Timilty was relieved from his post after Governor Saltonstall blocked his reappointment as commissioner. Saltonstall had had enough of Timilty, in particular the commissioner's poor handling of the crisis, for which he refused any responsibility. Timilty would go on to run for mayor and lose, his departure from the civic scene bringing to an end what one scholar called the Tammany-style "Diamond Jim and Joe Timilty

political dynasty.”²² In fact, others of Diamond Jim’s descendants would go on to careers in Massachusetts politics, but the Timilty name became far less prominent, receding as another local dynasty, that of the Kennedys, was taking off.

As for the FBI, Peterson, a more passive protector of Moran, was long gone. But there was not much Soucy could do clean up the messy investigation he inherited. With Hoover having set aside custodial detention in favor of old-fashioned indictment, arrest, and trial, it was now essential that confidential informant T-1 testify against Moran in court—but doing so would mean revealing herself. On November 2, 1943, Soucy explained to Hoover that he had bad news from T-1. She still was “willing to assist” the bureau, but she “expressed unwillingness to appear in court in the event of prosecution.” Derounian had once described Moran as “crafty,” and so he was. But he was lucky too.²³

Moran had dodged justice again, and his most brilliant disappearing act was just around the corner: on or about November 3, he joined the army. Not only that, but he aimed to obtain a battlefield role, indicating to his draft board that he was seeking entry with A-1 status, meaning he would be eligible for full combat duty. This reflected an apparent change of heart. In January, he had “advised T-1 that he would accept limited service, or that he would like to be classified as a conscientious objector.”²⁴ It is tantalizing to think that Scholz directed Moran to join the army in a combat role and thereby wind up overseas, but there is no evidence to this effect. Publicly, Moran disavowed patriotism as the reason for his decision not to claim conscientious objector status. The issue, he said, was that he needed an army salary to support his wife and new baby. Announcing his enlistment, he told the *Herald* that he had lost thirty-six private-sector jobs in the previous year because the War Department was out to get him. “I have demanded from the War Department . . . to give me the reason for their action,” he said. “Every Communist can get a job when he wants it—even in the White House.” Speaking to the *Herald* again on December 3, he repeated the claim, saying he had been “bounced from thirty-six jobs in private industry during the past year because of his activities.”²⁵

In Washington Hoover learned of Moran’s army future while reading his morning newspaper. Livid, Hoover telegraphed Soucy on November 5 saying, “IMPERATIVE REMAINING INVESTIGATION BE COMPLETED.” A few days later, November 10, Hoover and Assistant Attorney General Tom C.

Clark agreed that Moran would not be assigned to any militarily sensitive duties, nor would he be on the front lines. Evidently they petitioned the army on the matter, because Moran would never see combat.²⁶

Moran was slated to report for duty on December 23. Just before he set off, he met with seventy-five of his closest friends back at Hibernian Hall to deliver what amounted to his “last lecture” before entering the US Army. “If killed in the service of his country, he asked his friends not to consider him a hero.” At the very bottom of his draft card, in the space for his signature, he had his draft board type, “I am absolutely and unequivocally opposed to dictatorial regimentation.” The draft board let the declaration go through, mainly because they thought it was a statement against Hitler. In Moran’s mind, it was a statement against FDR. His friends lavished him with a final cash donation.²⁷

In Europe Scholz rolled from one stroke of good fortune to the next. He had arrived in Budapest on December 1, 1941, and stayed exactly one year. Then he was transferred to the consulate in Turin, Italy. At the same time, he was appointed to the RSHA, the Reich Main Security Office. In Turin he continued the role he had performed in Boston, with his diplomatic work as a cover for espionage. Sometime prior to spring 1944, Scholz was transferred to Milan as consul general, maintaining his connection to the RSHA. In this new role, he tangled, through intermediaries, with US spymaster Allen Dulles. In 1944 Turin, Milan, and Genoa experienced violent uprisings of factory workers, which stopped war production and caused headaches for the Waffen SS, the main military force in northern Italy. Many of these strikes were sparked by agents working for Dulles, who was then an OSS operative headquartered in Bern, Switzerland. Scholz, however, managed to tamp down the worker unrest.²⁸

Scholz’s success caught the attention of Karl Wolff, a high-ranking SS officer and Germany’s supreme commander in Italy. Soon Scholz was petitioning Wolff for a promotion. For Scholz, this was a long time coming. He had occupied the same SS rank for ten years, perhaps preferring not to make any requests lest someone dredge up his past association with the disgraced Ernst Röhm. But by spring 1944, Scholz was convinced his time had come. It did not matter to him that the tide of the war had decidedly turned. At this point Allied armies controlled the south of Italy, and Mussolini’s puppet Saló Republic was barely hanging on. Some of the grittiest fighting of the war was taking place within earshot of Scholz’s consulate. Scholz must have understood

that a promotion would not secure much career advancement, given that all Nazi careers would likely soon end. Yet he still wished for recognition within an ideological system he held dear. For Scholz, it was important to be known as a superior Nazi, and Wolff agreed that he deserved the distinction. “*Standartenführer* Scholz is the type of leader who in his overall habits represents the straight line of the SS,” Wolff wrote to Berlin. He also noted Scholz’s exemplary work as “a voluntary cooperater with Amt VI,” the Nazi party’s Foreign Intelligence Service.²⁹

Scholz got his promotion to *Oberführer*—a rank equivalent to brigadier general—on May 21, just in time for D-Day. Less than a year later, on April 29, 1945, Wolff negotiated the surrender of all German forces in Italy. Hitler committed suicide the next day. As an English-speaking aide-de-camp to Wolff, Scholz may have taken part in the surrender talks, which were hashed out with Dulles. And as *Oberführer*, he would soon be in the Allies occupiers’ sights. According to rules promulgated on May 8, Scholz’s rank made him subject to automatic arrest. Somehow, he managed initially to squirm out of the Allies’ grip, and for about six weeks after the surrender, no one knew his whereabouts. He was captured in civilian clothes by members of the US Army Counter Intelligence Corps but was not placed in custody. Instead, and in keeping with his silver-spoon style, he repaired to the picturesque Tuscan thermal resort town of Montecatini, where he took a room in the grand Hotel Valentini.

The Caserta-based CIC agents suspected that Scholz was a spy but were unsure what to do with him. They also were uncertain about his rank, and Scholz was not about to answer questions honestly when lying better suited his purposes. So CIC asked for guidance from the State Department. The State Department responded that Scholz had sent weekly reports to Himmler from the Boston Consulate, that he had “a signed photo of Himmler in his home,” and that he was an ardent Nazi. Concerning his rank, all the State Department had on file was that he was a *Standartenführer*. The State Department also mentioned that his wife, Lilo, was “the daughter of Georg von Schnitzler of IG Farben” and was herself “a dangerous Nazi.”³⁰

The mystery of Scholz was not yet fully explained, but CIC had enough information to be worried and placed Scholz in protective custody. In practical terms, though, nothing changed. In July CIC decided to transfer Scholz to Verona for interrogation, but he claimed he could not be moved because “he was suffering from a weak heart.” A US Army medical officer confirmed

that Scholz “suffered from severe heart disease,” and he was left to ride out his stay in the Hotel Valentini. But Scholz was not sick. He had always been healthy and active and in his Boston days was an avid tennis player.

Scholz had outsmarted CIC, but Captain James Jesus Angleton was not so easily tricked. Angleton, who would later become the CIA’s counterintelligence guru, was the leader of Secret Counter Intelligence Unit Z, a special Allied outfit in Italy that decoded Ultra intelligence—German radio communications intercepted by the British. In October he sent CIC a secret message noting that “either by feigned or actual heart ailment, subject has been able to postpone systematic interrogations.” Angleton wanted a crack at Scholz, whom he pinpointed as a principal figure in Germany’s recovery of the “Ciano Diaries,” the personal papers of Galeazzo Ciano—Mussolini’s foreign minister and son-in-law. Apparently, while in the Milan Consulate, Scholz facilitated the work of Hildegarde Beetz, an RSHA plant who acted as Ciano’s secretary and knew where he had secreted his papers. Angleton wanted Scholz questioned vigorously. “Arrange . . . to interrogate subject on the details of his activities in Italy, which are dubious, to say the least,” he wrote.³¹

Yet Scholz soon outfoxed even Angleton, proving that Moran had learned from the slipperiest of fishes. Scholz’s scheme was a brilliant one. During interrogation by a Secret Counter Intelligence unit, Scholz asserted that he was stateless. As a refugee, he would have certain protections after the war, while being able to avoid German, Italian, and American laws that could hamper his movement. He also procured a letter of recommendation from Maurilio Cardinal Fossati of Turin. Fossati assured any Allied military authorities that Scholz always carried out his consular duties “with the highest humanitarian and Christian spirit.”³²

Scholz’s last deception was to convince American interrogators that he was still a Standartenführer. “Scholz does admit that he was a very ambitious and convinced Nazi,” his interrogator noted, but his long standing at the rank of Standartenführer seemed to suggest that he had grown disillusioned with Nazism and stopped trying to advance. “Subject in the opinion of this interrogator has changed his attitudes and beliefs,” the duped American agent wrote. With trickery, charisma, and fluent English, Scholz was slipping the nets of US intelligence. But the army did not simply let him go, instead demurring on plans for his repatriation. Scholz would have to bide his time a bit longer.³³

Then, suddenly, one more hurdle emerged. It was O. John Rogge, a name Scholz might have recognized from his time in the United States. Rogge was

a high-ranking prosecutor in the Justice Department. It was he who, violating obvious ethical norms, had taken the meeting with Catholic hierarchs trying to get the New York Christian Front sedition case downgraded or thrown out—although it must be noted that Rogge resisted the entreaties of the clergy. During the war Rogge used the Smith Act to prosecute the Great Sedition Trial involving Joseph McWilliams—“Joe McNazi”—and twenty-nine other alleged Nazi spies. The case dragged through the US District Court of the District of Columbia court for more than two years, and by early 1946, Rogge worried that he was going to lose. The news of Scholz’s capture in Italy seemed to provide an opportunity, though. Rogge thought Scholz might know something that could revive his faltering case. *PM* agreed, opining that an interrogation of Scholz “might prove sensationally useful to Rogge.” In an astonishing turn, Chief Justice Bolitha J. Laws of the district court suspended proceedings and allowed Rogge to travel to Europe and interview Scholz.³⁴

On April 4, 1946, Rogge interrogated Scholz at a US Army Camp in Oberursel, Germany. Scholz was his charming self, and Rogge’s performance was abysmal. The prosecutor focused on uncovering Nazi funding of the defendants in his trial, not on Scholz’s espionage. In other words, Rogge was asking Scholz the right questions from the standpoint of his own case, but he was allowing the SS man to get away once more. Scholz insisted he had nothing to share and that questions about money should be directed to Heribert von Stempel. To the extent that he was asked about his time in Boston, Scholz was often vague and misleading and downplayed his activities and his role.

Strangely, one thing Scholz did not lie about was his relationship with Moran. Scholz was candid with Rogge about his “secret meetings” with the leader of the Christian Front in Boston. This was the first substantial disclosure of their work together, but it meant little to Rogge. He was fixated on the money trail, which he saw as the best path to victory in the McWilliams case. Had he been willing to pay attention to the news coming from Scholz, Rogge might have realized that he had a real American Nazi spy on his hands, in the form of Moran. Instead Rogge returned to the United States with nothing to show in the context of the trial he would soon lose and which would become known to history as one of the Justice Department’s major debacles. Inexplicably, Rogge shelved his information about Moran for another fifteen years.

When Rogge finally published his revelations about Scholz and Moran in 1961, hardly anyone noticed. The war was long since over, the denazification

process had petered out unceremoniously, and American policymakers were preoccupied with a Cold War in which Berlin had been the key flashpoint for more than a decade. Maintaining alliance with West Germany was more important than justice for former Nazis, many of whom were now employed in the West German government. The public was in much the same place as official Washington, fearful of the Soviets and eager for reconciliation, especially after so many years of costly and tense occupation in the German capital. Americans also were not as cognizant of Nazi crimes as they would later become. Indeed, the word “Holocaust” had not yet been applied to the Nazi Final Solution. The first American book in the twentieth century to be titled *Holocaust* was not published until 1959, and it concerned not the Nazi atrocities but rather the calamitous 1942 fire at Boston’s Coconut Grove nightclub, which took nearly five hundred lives. The hunting of ex-Nazis and their collaborators would come later. In 1946 the public would have been aghast at Moran’s spying. Fifteen years later, there were other matters to worry about, and Rogge’s blind spot became one more reason the Christian Front fell from the minds of postwar Americans.³⁵

After the interrogation, Rogge made no recommendation to the US Army regarding Scholz. So Scholz came forward with a recommendation of his own. He argued to Allied intelligence authorities that he had been questioned by the special assistant to the attorney general of the United States and had been exonerated. Rogge’s ineptitude became Scholz’s passport out of detention. In December 1946 he was moved to a displaced persons camp in Darmstadt. He was no longer Herbert W. Scholz, ex-SS general, diplomat, and spy. He was Doctor Herbert W. Scholz, refugee. And he was inching closer to freedom.³⁶

Back in Boston, Frances Sweeney was busy with journalistic activities. In 1943 she started an anti-Fascist and human rights-oriented monthly newspaper called the *Boston City Reporter*. Sweeney headquartered the paper in the same office as IADA. She also collaborated with William Gavin, her friend from the *Herald* and *Herald-Traveler*, to produce a weekly column called Rumor Clinic. *Life* magazine ran a photographic, multipage article on Sweeney’s Rumor Clinic, which helped galvanize support for her style of investigative reporting. Throughout 1943 she tracked down the origin of divisive rumors and analyzed disinformation. Much rumor tracking was connected to Catholic-Jewish relations and anti-Semitism. Sweeney’s view was that by bringing disinformation to light, truthful reporting could gain the upper hand.³⁷

It is unclear if BSC was still supporting Sweeney clandestinely. The SOE documents stop recording IADA activity in late January 1942, and shortly thereafter the Office of Strategic Services found that IADA was essentially a one-woman operation. Yet somehow Sweeney maintained her perch in the high-rent Little Building through early 1944, suggesting that IADA was still taking in funds. Still, her public image was defined more by her journalistic projects than by IADA. In November 1943 Special Agent Mahan of the Boston FBI field office reported that IADA was still involved in advocacy, but he suspected a connection to the Communist Party, not British intelligence. Isadore Zack of CIC thought that Sweeney was working in some unknown capacity for partisans of the Irish Free State, which had dissolved in 1937. "God help military intelligence!" Sweeney wrote to her friend, the Harvard psychologist Gordon Allport, after the superintendent at the Little Building informed her that Zack had been making inquiries. "Izzy Zack spends all his time chasing Commies and me."³⁸

The heart of Sweeney's concerns in this period remained Catholic anti-Semitism. Through 1943 and 1944, she moved IADA closer to Jewish organizations such as the American Jewish Committee and the Anti-Defamation League. She continued to believe, like Tillich, that the only antidote to Christian Front anti-Semitism was public clerical philo-Semitism. She renewed her effort to find a priestly champion for her cause until tragedy struck "one rainy night in April, 1944," as Nat Hentoff put it. Sweeney was walking home when she had an "attack." She "fell to the ground, into the gutter and could neither move nor speak." Passersby thought her a swooning drunkard. "She came back for a while, but the slender troublemaker with deep blue eyes died in June."³⁹

Few knew it, but Sweeney had recently engaged. Her fiancé, James Bottis, mourned her with poignant words. "It just doesn't seem right that one who could see so much evil around her, and spared neither time nor courage to fight it, should suddenly be taken away," Bottis wrote to Allport. "To those of us who are left behind, her deeds should be a challenge to carry on the good work she started."⁴⁰