

A RHETORICAL STUDY OF  
SELECTED RADIO SPEECHES OF  
REVEREND CHARLES EDWARD COUGHLIN

Thesis for the Degree of Ph. D.  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY  
DAVID TERRANCE COE  
1970



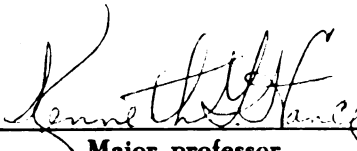
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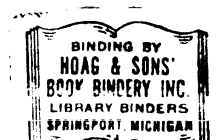
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A RHETORICAL STUDY OF SELECTED RADIO SPEECHES  
OF  
REVEREND CHARLES EDWARD COUGHLIN  
presented by  
DAVID TERRANCE COE

has been accepted towards fulfillment  
of the requirements for

Ph. D. degree in Speech

  
Major professor

Date February 10, 1970





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# ABSTRACT

Dr. Coe:

## A RHETORICAL STUDY OF SELECTED RADIO SPEECHES OF REVEREND CHARLES EDWARD COUGHLIN

by David Jackson, Jr.

As a student working on a paper  
dealing w/ radio and its use as a  
tool of collectivization. THANKS

M.S. 3/4/86

of Charles Edward Coughlin

he gave over the air during the early

1930's. Father Coughlin was born in 1894 in

Illinois who became a storm center of the

a political movement through his radio

This study includes a consideration of

self and the historical setting, as well as the

features of invention, arrangement, style, and delivery

his major discourses. Coughlin's speeches

described, analyzed, interpreted, and evaluated

against the customary principles and practices of rhetorical

criticism.

The biographical and historical considerations only

serve merely to acquaint the reader with Coughlin as a

speaker.

In terms of discourse preparation, delivery, and

audience analysis, Coughlin can be placed in harmony with

the best of classical rhetorical tradition. Coughlin planned

his discourses in advance; he was direct and unapologetic

in delivery, and he analyzed his audience as individuals,

not as a mass.

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## ABSTRACT

### A RHETORICAL STUDY OF SELECTED RADIO SPEECHES OF REVEREND CHARLES EDWARD COUGHLIN

by David Terrance Coe

#### Body of Abstract

The purpose of this project is to study the speaking of Charles Edward Coughlin as it is revealed in the discourses he gave over the air during the depression decade of the 1930's. Father Coughlin has been described as the Detroit priest who became a storm center when he tried to build up a political movement through his radio broadcast.

This study includes a consideration of the man himself and the historical setting, as well as the rhetorical features of invention, arrangement, style, and delivery of his radio discourses. Coughlin's speaking habits are then described, analyzed, interpreted, and evaluated within the context of the customary principles and practices of rhetorical criticism.

The biographical and historical considerations only serve better to acquaint the reader with Coughlin as a speaker.

In terms of discourse preparation, delivery, and audience analysis, Coughlin can be placed in harmony with the best of classical rhetorical tradition. Coughlin planned his discourses in advance; he was direct and conversational in delivery, and he analyzed his audience as individuals, not as a mass.

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Coughlin's discourses are characterized by a logical or rational development of materials. This is accomplished by an orderly presentation of materials and the use of transitions and internal summaries. His theme and purpose are always evident; and like a good advocate, he frequently defines terms and anticipates and answers objections to his position.

Like Cicero and later classical rhetoricians, Coughlin seemed to believe that the speech is the man. His ethical proof was regarded by hundreds of thousands of people as consisting of integrity, intelligence, and good-will. These attributes seemingly contributed to his speaking success.

Coughlin also successfully employed motivational appeals to gain the attention of his audience, suggest courses of action, and motivate his listeners toward predetermined objectives. His use of motivational appeals is further evidence of the classical rhetorical position that the effective speaker must have a knowledge of his audience's emotional behavior.

Perhaps the most distinguishing feature of Coughlin's radio speaking is his logical proof--appeals aimed primarily at man's reasoning process. His discourses are characterized by extensive reasoning from example and by analogy, causal reasoning, and, to a lesser degree, reasoning from sign. These characteristics of discourse construction and development exemplify the kind of spirit which Coughlin often seemed to emphasize--a passionate regard for using the scientific

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method of reasoning from the facts. While on occasion there may have been the tendency to overstate--his basic method was to reason from facts.

Although Coughlin's word choice was sometimes sharp and bitter, he was generally consistent with the best in classical rhetoric when he practiced clarity and simplicity of style.

An over-all appraisal of Coughlin as a speaker leads the writer to conclude that he was one of the most effective American orators of the twentieth century. He spoke to the needs of his day; and his words were attended to, appreciated, and--above all--acted upon. His books of radio discourses and the persons who heard him speak on the radio testify to his speaking ability and success. An in-depth rhetorical analysis of his discourse texts reveals that although on occasion the radio priest did some things not in accord with the best in rhetorical theory, for example, overstating his case, and attacking personalities, Coughlin was generally consistent with the best in classical rhetorical theory and practice.

#### A THESIS

Submitted to  
Michigan State University  
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for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Speech

1970

A Rhetorical Study

OF REVEREND

Day

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts

DOCTOR

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Accepted by the faculty of the University of Michigan  
College of Arts and Sciences  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
of Philosophy degree.

By

David Terrance Coe

Guidance Committee:

Kenneth G. Rance, Chairman

Russell J. Klein

David C. Ralph

Gordon L. Thomas

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Submitted to  
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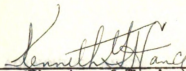
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College of Communication  
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the Philosophy degree.

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Jordan L. Thomas

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College of Communication Arts, Michigan State University,  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor  
of Philosophy degree.

  
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Director of Thesis

Guidance Committee:

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David C. Ralph  
Gordon L. Thomas



The writer expresses  
his appreciation of his graduate  
preparation of this  
Department of Speech, which  
Dr. Gordon L. Thomas, Dean  
of the Department of Speech  
and Department of Education.

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The writer expresses sincere thanks to the following members of his graduate committee for their assistance in the preparation of this thesis: Dr. Kenneth G. Hance, Department of Speech, who gave much of his time and guidance; Dr. Gordon L. Thomas, Department of Speech; Dr. David C. Ralph, Department of Speech; and Dr. Russell J. Kleis, Department of Education.

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## INTRODUCTION

### Title of this Project

A Rhetorical Study of Selected Radio Speeches of  
Reverend Charles Edward Coughlin

### Purpose of this Project

The specific purpose of this project is to study the radio speaking of Reverend Charles Edward Coughlin as it is found in, or revealed by, his radio discourses. This will include a study of the man himself, his historical setting, as well as the rhetorical invention, arrangement, style, and delivery of his radio discourses. In other words, the dissertation contains a study of Coughlin's discourse materials, the arrangement of these materials, the phrasing or wording of the materials, and the characteristics of delivery. Then Coughlin's radio speaking practices are described, analyzed, interpreted, and evaluated within the context of the customary principles and procedures of rhetorical criticism.

The study is limited to the radio discourses which Coughlin gave during the Depression decade of the 1930's. It includes a consideration of the significance of his discourses during this period, a period which covered the worldwide Depression of the 1930's, attempts at recovery through relief and reform, and events leading to World War II. His reactions to these influences are found in certain of his

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radio discourses. Other influences with which he contended during the years of his radio speaking were the New Deal Measures of the Roosevelt Administration and its attempts at recovery and reform, and problems in monetary reform, and labor problems. The relationship between these influences and Coughlin's radio speaking is also considered in this study.

### Limitations Imposed

Even though Father Coughlin's speaking covers many years, primary consideration of his speaking will be made during the period from 1930-1940, the decade of his greatest national radio significance.

Limitations of the study are limitations of a) type and b) time.

The limitation of type means that the study will directly relate to the radio speaking of Father Coughlin, as opposed, for example, to his "face-to-face" sermons, speeches, or social justice papers, and other writings and talks. Father Coughlin, it should be noted, became known through his radio speaking. Coughlin broadcast his speeches during the Depression decade of the 1930's. These radio speeches are studied both generally and specifically--generally in a chapter which surveys discourses on a variety of subjects and specifically in two chapters

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As stated previously, the plan of this study is to describe, analyze, interpret, and evaluate Coughlin's radio speaking within the context of the customary principles and procedures of rhetorical criticism.

Finally, the purpose of this thesis is not to write an extensive biography of Coughlin. The biographical considerations which are made will serve better to acquaint the reader with this man as a speaker. These considerations, too, will throw more light upon the radio speaking of Father Coughlin. As implied above, the limitation of time restricts the study primarily to the period 1930-1940, although events in the years prior to 1930 and subsequent to 1940 will be referred to when necessary.

Essentially, then, this is a study of the radio speaking of Coughlin as revealed in his broadcasts of the depression decade of the 1930's. Other considerations will serve only to advance this purpose.

#### Obstacles Encountered

This study is limited to printed records of Coughlin's radio discourses.<sup>1</sup> These records may or may not be true and

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<sup>1</sup>A vigorous and comprehensive attempt was made to secure other speech texts. The radio network could not be contacted because the speeches were given over no national network. The Shrine at Royal Oak does not have any available records of Coughlin's discourses, and an interview with Coughlin could not be arranged. Therefore, the study is limited to the only copies of the discourses available.



exact representations of what the radio priest said; however, even if not exact reproductions, they serve to suggest Coughlin's themes, appeals, methods of approach, and other aspects of composition.

As mentioned above, a regrettable obstacle encountered was the writer's inability to accomplish an interview with the radio priest. Coughlin was approached several times, but he refused to grant an interview. Therefore, much of this thesis had to be written using other sources about and by Coughlin.

### Significance or Justification of this Study

#### Intrinsic Merit

There is intrinsic merit in the study of the radio speaking of a man who has been described as not only "without doubt one of the greatest speaking voices of the twentieth century" but also a man who has been referred to as a major political force in the United States. Some sources credit Coughlin as the one man most responsible for the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt to the Presidency of the United States. Father Coughlin had a radio audience estimated at from 30,000,000 to 45,000,000 persons writing thousands of letters weekly. Father Coughlin also tried to form his own political lobby with a goal of five million members. There is intrinsic merit in the study of a man who rose to national prominence primarily through the use of the spoken word.

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## Distinctiveness

A review of the literature shows that there has been no study done of the type being proposed here. Nothing has been done on Father Coughlin in the area of a doctoral dissertation, although one such study was proposed by Donald E. Montgomery, in 1959, at Michigan State University. This dissertation was never completed.

While biographies have been written about Coughlin, none of these, however, has given consideration to his speaking. Two relevant Master's theses have been completed. Paul K. Crawford, M. A., Wisconsin, 1936, did "The Rise of Reverend Charles Edward Coughlin, Radio Speaker." However, this thesis was completed prior to the decline of Father Coughlin's speaking in the late 1930's and early 1940's. The other thesis, "An Analysis of the Johnson-Long, Coughlin Debate of 1935," done by Fred C. Ashley, M. A., Michigan, done in 1958, points to only one event in an eventful career.

Since there is no doctoral dissertation on the subject of Reverend Charles Edward Coughlin, and since there is no other study on the subject that represents the scope of this study, the proposed study is distinctive and should make a valuable contribution to the field.

## Materials and Sources

Various publications by and about Coughlin have served as a basis for this study. Some of the most important works, in addition to the volumes of radio discourses, have

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been: Father Coughlin of the Shrine of the Little Flower by Ruth Mugglebee; Father Coughlin and the New Deal by Charles J. Tull; and Father Charles E. Coughlin by Louis B. Ward, a close friend of Coughlin's.

The New York Times Index was particularly helpful because it listed literally hundreds of entries. These news articles were particularly helpful in following Coughlin's political ambitions.

Recordings of Father Coughlin's actual radio broadcasts were available at the Voice Library at Michigan State University. Although it is by no means a complete collection of the radio priest's broadcasts, it provided helpful insights into his speaking.

Many history books shed valuable light on Coughlin's place in history, among these being: The American Pageant by Thomas A. Bailey; Gordon Greenwood's The Modern World--A History of Our Time; Franklin D. Roosevelt and The New Deal by William E. Leuchtenburg; and The New Age of Franklin D. Roosevelt--1932-45 by Dexter Perkins.

## The Method or Plan of Organization

### Chapter I The Historical Climate in which Coughlin Spoke

This is a study of the relationship between the historical setting and Coughlin's radio discourses. The chapter analyzes Coughlin's consideration of the social, economic, political, and theological settings of his discourses.

## Chapter II The Speaker

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## Chapter II The Speaker: His Life and Relationship to the Times

This chapter traces the life of Coughlin from his birth to the present day, where he now lives in Royal Oak, Michigan. It provides a background for an analysis and understanding of certain influences upon his radio speaking.

## Chapter III Coughlin's Radio Discourses

This chapter categorizes Coughlin's radio discourses according to major themes--subjects about which the priest spoke with amazing frequency. It includes additional information, such as the title of each discourse, the year it was given, and the type of discourse. It should be noted that this information was gathered from many sources and that, consequently, the data are somewhat "uneven".

## Chapter IV Father Coughlin's Preparation and Delivery

Coughlin's habits or methods of preparing and presenting his radio discourses are discussed in this chapter. Attention is given to what Coughlin said about his practices, and what persons reported about his practices.

## Chapter V Rhetorical Background and Analysis of Discourse One

### "The Menace of The World Court"

This chapter begins with a rationale for analysis. This is followed by a rhetorical analysis of one of Coughlin's discourses according to the rhetorical constituents of arrangement, invention, and style. Also considered are: the audience, the occasion, and the setting of the discourse, as well as the source of, and an outline of, the discourse text.

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The rhetorical analysis is summarized according to what appear to be characteristics of Coughlin's rhetorical practice.

## Chapter VI Rhetorical Background and Analysis of Discourse Two

### "The Spirit of the Reorganization Bill"

This chapter is a rhetorical analysis of another of Coughlin's radio discourses according to the rhetorical constituents of arrangement, invention, and style. Also considered are: the audience, the occasion, and the setting of the discourse as well as the source of and an outline of the discourse text. The rhetorical analysis is summarized.

## Chapter VII Summary and Conclusions

This chapter summarizes the life and radio speaking of Coughlin. Certain conclusions are formulated about his speaking characteristics and abilities, and some suggestions are made for further study.

## Appendices

Appendix A. Speech Text "The Menace of the World Court"

Appendix B. Speech Text "The Spirit of the Reorganization Bill"

## Bibliography

## THE HISTORICAL

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## CHAPTER I

### THE HISTORICAL CLIMATE IN WHICH COUGHLIN SPOKE

It is necessary to understand the historical climate in which Coughlin lived if we are to determine the significance of his radio speaking and adequately analyze his radio discourses. A study of the relationship between this historical climate and Coughlin's discourses reveals that they grew out of, and were addressed to, clearly discernible historical trends and events. For example, Coughlin's oral discourses reflect and/or deal directly with such topics as: the New Deal, communism, monetary reform, the Jews, prohibition, the depression, new trends in government, and international relations. Coughlin's radio discourses reveal, therefore, that he was cognizant of their social, political, economic, and theological bases and implications.

This chapter will consider Father Coughlin's relation to some of the major trends and events which occurred, particularly in America, during his radio career. Coughlin's radio career began over station WJR in Detroit, Michigan, in 1926, but his national prominence in radio began in the early 1930's and ended abruptly in 1940. This chapter will, therefore, begin with a consideration of the United States during the period of the prosperous 1920's and will end with the



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America in the 1920's to the Depression of 1929

The Stockmarket Crash of 1929

The New Deal

The World Court Controversy

Special Political Interests--1935-1936

The Elections of 1936

The Supreme Court Proposal

The Recession of 1937

The Reorganization Bill of 1938

The Presidential Election of 1940

The Background of World War II

### America in the 1920's to the Depression of 1929

The 1920's in the United States seemed to be a period of unprecedented abundance. While before the beginning of World War I the United States was a debtor nation, by the conclusion of the war, the United States was owed ten billion dollars. Prosperity in the 1920's seemed to mount higher and higher. Business profits were unparalleled, and the American people found themselves with an abundance of capital. In fact, American investments abroad constituted one of the great factors in maintaining European prosperity. The period

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of the Roaring Twenties was a period of speculative investment--some of this was productive, but much of it was not.

There were a number of reasons for this great growth in business prosperity. Great changes in administration and management contributed to this growth in material wealth. Mass production involved more skillful planning as well as the more extensive use of machines. There was a growth in advertising and new methods of distributing of manufactured goods. Prosperity was also due, in part, to the great growth and development of new industries. Three of these industries--the automobile, the radio, and the film industries--contributed greatly to the general growth in the prosperity of the American economy.

Not only did large-scale industry grow, but the 1920's also saw the growth of trusts and combines which began to swallow up smaller businesses. Between 1919 and 1928, in manufacturing and mining, 4,000 firms were forced to merge with larger concerns, and about 6,000 disappeared altogether.<sup>1</sup> Within fifteen years, the number of banks had been reduced by half. One great corporation controlled the telephone system, and another the telegraph. Retail trade chain stores were pushing the small shopkeepers out of business. By the close of the 1920's, four companies owned half of the copper resources in America. Five companies produced one-third of

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<sup>1</sup>Gordon Greenwood, The Modern World--A History of Our Time (New York: Frederick Praeger, Publishers, 1965), p. 349.

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2nd ed., p.

the oil; and eight companies owned three-quarters of the coal mines in America.

The farmer was affected by the decline in world prices for agricultural commodities in the 1920's; and, in 1929, an Agricultural Marketing Act was passed with the object of improving efficiency in distribution, encouraging producers' associations, and preventing or controlling surpluses. Despite its efforts, prices did not improve, and the farmers were still a depressed group when the Wall Street Crash of 1929 put an end for a time to American prosperity.

As late as 1928, no one thought America was on the edge of the worst economic depression in history.

It had been a glorious year. Stocks had made a gain of \$11,385,993,733. The New York Times wrote in its New Year's editorial of January 1, 1929: 'But it will go hard to get people to think of 1928 as merely a 'dead past' which we must make haste to bury. It has been a twelvemonth of unprecedented advance, of wonderful prosperity--in this country at least. . . If there is any way of judging the future by the past, this new year may well be one of felicitation and hopefulness.'<sup>1</sup>

There were many reasons for looking on the optimistic side of things in this period. The year of 1929 marked the end of a ten-year period which showed the greatest increase in national income America had ever had. During the period from 1920 to 1929 the increase in the national income in terms of physical goods was 93 per cent.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Isabel Leighton, The Aspirin Age (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1949), p. 215.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 216.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p  
<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p



During this period the United States became more efficient industrially than any other country in the world. Production per man-hour in industries had doubled between the years 1909 to 1929. By January 1st, 1929, not only weekly cash wages but real wages had more then doubled since 1914.<sup>1</sup>

Hoover, who was President during this period, had told the American people during the election of 1928 that they could expect "two chickens in every pot and two cars in every garage." This summed up the normal standard of living that every American could expect.

Wall Street was fully in accord with such sentiments. During May and June, 1928, stocks wavered, but as Election Day approached, the market advanced. And when Hoover rolled in by twenty-one million votes to Al Smith's fifteen million, the Dow-Jones industrials soared to 300. The "New Era" had arrived. A new school of economists argued that when you buy common stocks, you buy the future, not the present. Imaginative projections of earnings, five and ten years ahead, flourished. Radio went up 500, was split five for one. Names like Auburn, Grigsby-Grunow, Kolster Radio--names you no longer hear--flashed across the ticker tape. Blue chips, like U.S. Steel, American Telephone, and Eastman Kodak, reached all-time highs.<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps the statement which best sums up this period of the Roaring Twenties was made by President Hoover, who a little more than a year before the crash of 1929, made this confident forecast in his acceptance speech as Republican candidate:

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 216.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 217. Van Austraend, 1941, p. 2.

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We in America today are nearer to the financial triumph over poverty than ever before in the history of our land. The poor man is vanishing from among us. Under these impulses, and the Republican protective system, our industrial output has increased as never before, and our wages have grown steadily in buying power. Our workers with their average weekly wages, can buy two or even three times more bread and butter than any wage earner in Europe. At one time we demanded for our workers a full dinner pail. We have now gone far beyond that conception. Today we demand a larger comfort and great participation in life and leisure.<sup>1</sup>

In the presidential elections of 1928 the Republican candidate, Herbert Hoover, had been successful in defeating the Democratic nominee, Alfred E. Smith, who had been the Governor of New York State. At that time the country seemed at the height of its prosperity, despite the plight of the farmers and the great inequality of wealth within the American community. Hoover, whose program advocated private enterprise, symbolized American well-being. He, himself, had no doubt that his term of office would see greater advance in the American economy. He predicted that poverty in the nation would be banished.

However, indications were already present that all was not well with the economy of the United States. For example, overseas borrowers were finding difficulty in paying even the interest on their loans. American agricultural surpluses could not be sold at profitable prices. There was a fever of speculation which had pushed stock market shares to prices

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<sup>1</sup>Nicholas Halasz, Roosevelt Through Foreign Eyes (Princeton, New Jersey: Van Nostrand, 1961), p. 2.

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<sup>1</sup>Greenwood

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p.

which were quite out of relation to their value. The ordinary American had been induced by various credit devices to assume time payment contracts which were far beyond his financial capacity.<sup>1</sup>

### The Crash of 1929

On October 21st, 1929, the most devastating crash ever to occur on any stock exchange now took place in New York. Prices began to fall on the 21st, but the real crisis was not to come until three days later on the 24th. In a single day over 12 million shares exchanged hands, and the scene was incredible. Panic gripped the shareholders who were desperately instructing their brokers to sell, but the downward trend could not be checked. By October 29th even the soundest stocks of the greatest business companies in America had fallen in value by more than 50 per cent.<sup>2</sup> It has been predicted that the paper loss to American investors reached an all-time high of 40 billion dollars. What was the result? Bankruptcies and suicides were commonplace, banks began to foreclose mortgages, and real estate values dropped sharply. Even the government was seriously hampered when it came to the collecting of taxes. Unemployment was facing many families. Production was cut back, workers were laid off, and there was a heavy reduction of wages of those remaining on company

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<sup>1</sup>Greenwood, op. cit., p. 349.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 362.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p.



payrolls. The depression in the United States was made worse by the fact that the depression became world-wide. The effect upon the United States was immediate; U. S. trade between 1930 and 1933 declined by two-thirds, and the national income also showed a disastrous slump from the estimated figure of 85 billion dollars in 1929 to an estimated 40 billion in 1932.<sup>1</sup>

Once the panic had started, it seemed impossible to stop the downward trend. The Hoover Administration had geared its policies to prosperity, and it seemingly had no remedies for the mounting crisis. Hoover, himself, deemed the crisis as a passing phenomenon and predicted a sharp turn for the better in the near future. The President urged industry to show confidence in itself and to try to maintain employment and existing wages; however, Hoover's relief measures and his program of public works were far too limited to meet the existing crisis. In his policies, he showed little understanding of the nature of the depression, and he seemed to lack imagination. In spite of Hoover's shortcomings, the Republicans could find no other satisfactory candidate to enter the 1932 Presidential election against the Democratic nominee, Franklin D. Roosevelt.

The crash of 1929 had brought an end to the era of the Roaring Twenties, and the American economy was in extremely

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 362.



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### Elections of 1932

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grave circumstances in September of 1931:

It is now two years since hard times reached this country, and it is no longer open to serious question that we are in the midst, not of an ordinary trade depression, but of one of the great upheavals and readjustments of modern history. A dozen governments have been brought down by it. In all the five continents it has upset the normal expectations of men by which they had been planting and making, buying and selling, borrowing and lending. In all the vast confusion which has resulted one thing is certain--the world, when the readjustments are made, cannot and will not be organized as it was two years ago. The post-war of the Nineteen-Twenties is over and done.<sup>1</sup>

### The Elections of 1932

The major issue in the Presidential election of 1932 was one of recovery. In that year the number of unemployed rose to 12 million, and the American economy was in a state of collapse. Herbert Hoover persistently clung to his opposition to governmental intervention, describing it as "un-American." It seemed, however, that the American people were ready to accept some experimentation and radical change, and Roosevelt was willing to try bold experiments. Franklin D. Roosevelt made many promises to the American people--he promised to revive the agriculture of the nation, the federal government would regulate industry, prohibition would be repealed, but the core of his program would now concern itself with questions of human welfare. Roosevelt, who had promised

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<sup>1</sup>Walter Lippmann, Interpretations 1931-1932 (New York: Macmillan Company, 1932), p. 5.

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the American people "a New Deal", received 23 million votes, and Hoover almost 16 million. The Democratic Party acquired control of both Houses of Congress.

The year 1932 was one of the gloomiest in the history of the United States--millions of industrial workers were out of jobs and tramped the streets of our cities. In cities such as New York, businessmen on the streets selling apples was not an unfamiliar sight. Bread lines were forming in some districts, and hundreds of poor people waited in lines for a handout of food. Many families had been evicted from their homes and were sleeping in shacks, and some slept on the ground. Farmers were stopping milk trucks in protest against the fall in the price of their product, or they were resisting the authority of the sheriff who had come to drive them away from their homes. Brokers and bankers were trembling at the thought of the future, and men talked of revolution. Many well-educated, respectable American citizens had endorsed a Communist candidate for President of the United States. In Washington, the so-called Bonus Marchers were encamped, and they had come to seek aid from their government. They were evicted by Federal troops, and General Douglas MacArthur, a conservative, commented on the Bonus Army of ex-servicemen which he had expelled from Washington in July, 1932:

. . . That mob. . . was a bad looking mob. It was animated by the essence of revolution. The gentleness, the consideration, with which they had been treated had been mistaken for weakness, and they had come to the conclusion, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that they were about to take over in some arbitrary way either the direct control of the

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Government or else to control it by indirect methods. It is my opinion that had the President not acted today, and he permitted this thing to go on for 24 hours more, he would have been faced with a grave situation which would have caused a real battle. Had he let it go on another week I believe that the institutions of our Government would have been seriously threatened.<sup>1</sup>

Let us first look at what became known as the "Hundred Days," that extraordinary period of legislation and executive activity with which the administration began. In his first year in office, F.D.R. could count on the backing of Congress and virtually no opposition from big business. Emphasizing that the crisis of depression should be treated with the same urgency as war, Roosevelt asked for, and received, extensive powers and at once began bold action. The President was called upon to provide immediate relief for the unemployed, immediate aid to save the banking and financial structure, and immediate help to keep business and industry functioning. The New Deal measures were divided into relief, recovery, and reform.

One of the most evident ideas is that none of the existing agencies of American society could cope with the burdens of relief.

The theory was that private charitable organizations and semipublic welfare groups, established to care for the old and the sick and the indigent, were capable of caring for the casualties of a worldwide economic disaster. And the theory in application meant that social agencies manned for the

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<sup>1</sup>Herbert Hoover, The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover, The Great Depression 1929-1941 (London: Hollis and Carter, 1953), p. 228.

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service of a few hundred families, and city shelters set up to house and feed a handful of homeless men, were compelled by the brutal necessities of hunger to care for hundreds of thousands of families and whole armies of the displaced and the jobless. And to depend for their resources upon the contributions of communities no longer able to contribute, and upon the irresolution and vacillation of state Legislatures and municipal assemblies long since in the red on their annual budgets. The result was the picture now presented in city after city. . . heterogenous groups of official and unofficial relief agencies struggling under the earnest and untrained leadership of the local men of affairs against an inertia of misery and suffering and want they are powerless to overcome.<sup>1</sup>

The Democratic Party had been very optimistic in the campaign of 1932, perhaps because the crash of 1929 had proved to them that the Republican claim of being the "party of prosperity" was false. In three years of the Hoover Administration the bottom had dropped out of the stock market, and industrial production had been drastically reduced. For instance, at the beginning of 1932, steel plants were operating at 12 per cent of capacity. In three years, industrial construction had gone from \$949 million to a new low of \$74 million. In no year since the Civil War were so few miles of new railroad track laid.<sup>2</sup>

In 1932 there were some 12 million unemployed, and the living conditions were very primitive for segments of American society.

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<sup>1</sup>"No One Has Starved", Fortune, September, 1932, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup>William E. Leuchtenburg, Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p. 1.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid...

<sup>2</sup>Ibid...

Many lived in the primitive conditions of a preindustrial society stricken by famine. In the coal fields of West Virginia and Kentucky, evicted families shivered in tents in midwinter; children went barefoot. In Los Angeles, people whose gas and electricity had been turned off were reduced to cooking over wood fires in back lots. Visiting nurses in New York found children famished; one episode, reported Lillian Wald, "might have come out of the tales of old Russia." A Philadelphia storekeeper told a reporter of one family he was keeping going on credit: "Eleven children in that house. They've got no shoes, no pants. In the house, no chairs. My God, you go in there, you cry, that's all."<sup>1</sup>

On the edges of towns or in empty lots in the big cities, many homeless men made homes of boxes and scrap metal. St. Louis had the largest "Hooverville," a settlement of more than a thousand people. There was scarcely a city that did not have at least one such settlement.

Portland, Oregon, quartered one colony under the Ross Island Bridge and a second of more than three hundred men in Sullivan's Gulch. Below Riverside Drive in New York City, an encampment of squatters lined the shore of the Hudson from 72nd Street to 110th Street. In Brooklyn's Red Hood section, jobless men bivouacked in the city dump in sheds made of junked Fords and old barrels. Along the banks of the Tennessee in Knoxville, in the mudflats under the Pulaski Skyway in New Jersey, in abandoned coke ovens in Pennsylvania's coal counties, in the huge dumps off Blue Island Avenue in Chicago, the dispossessed took their last stand.<sup>2</sup>

### The New Deal

The New Deal, promised by Roosevelt, had to deal with relief, recovery, and reform.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 3-4.

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The most pressing problem was relief. For instance, the banking system was in dire stress; and to prevent absolute chaos, the Roosevelt Administration declared the banks closed for a week. The President reopened those banks which he considered financially sound and provided for regulation of their activities. Roosevelt also assured governmental support of the banks to maintain their stability. So successful was the President in the problem of relief that it has been stated "the most universally praised of the President's actions was his dealing with the financial crisis."<sup>1</sup>

After successfully dealing with the problem of relief, Roosevelt next attempted to stimulate recovery of the nation through the expansion of credit. Some of the measures employed by the President were the following: The Farm Credit Administration was created to give assistance to farmers with their mortgages; the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, originally created by Hoover, was used to provide loans to industry; the Home Owner's Loan Corporation was created to aid those with heavy debts on urban property. Through these methods many important groups in the community either were given relief or were assisted to reduce their indebtedness. In 1933 Roosevelt began to experiment with currency--experiments designed to assist not only individuals but also governments in the repayment of their obligations through the creation of cheaper money. Roosevelt received full authorization to

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<sup>1</sup>Dexter Perkins, The New Age of Franklin D. Roosevelt (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 12.

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print a maximum of three billion dollars of Treasury notes, thus greatly increasing the amount of money in circulation. There were other measures which followed. Interest rates were reduced, and the dollar was drastically devalued by 40 per cent. eight years. The biggest achievement was in restoring the morale of the American people. Wishing to restore the morale of the American people, the President embarked upon a heavy national expenditure for unemployment relief. Harry Hopkins was appointed director of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration of May, 1933. This agency was permitted half a billion dollars for emergency relief to assist state and local communities, and ultimately it was to spend over three billion.<sup>1</sup> All of this money was spent to assist the President to achieve his objective of providing work until recovery had taken place. Wishing to provide relief through unemployment and to stimulate recovery by public expenditure, therefore, Roosevelt began a series of experiments such as the Civilian Conservation Corps, the Public Works Administration, and the Works Progress Administration. Perhaps the most outstanding of Roosevelt's experiments was the Civilian Conservation Corps, better known as the C.C.C., which was established in March, 1933. Its purpose was to provide work for young men between the ages of seventeen and twenty-three, who applied their efforts to the conservation of national resources, although provision was also made for reforestation of rural areas. It has been estimated that by 1941, \$360 billion dollars.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 361.



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#### Other New Deal

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educational and entertainment services. They replanted forests, checked soil erosion, helped to construct dams and bridges, and assisted in the control of pest diseases. Approximately 3,000,000 men were enrolled in the C.C.C. in the first eight years. The biggest achievement was in restoring self-respect, although, at the same time, the work they did was of great value to the nation.

Other New Deal organizations were the Civil Works Administration, the Public Works Administration, and the Works Progress Administration. These organizations were established to provide employment, finance public works, and generally to assist in the recovery of the heavy industries. The Civil Works Administration, which was organized in November, 1933, was primarily concerned with the provision of immediate relief work. More important was the Public Works Administration, also organized in 1933, which was directed by Harold Ickes, the Secretary of the Interior. Although this organization spent nearly six billion dollars, the United States gained greatly from the many civic buildings erected by this agency. In April, 1935, another organization was created in the form of the Works Progress Administration. Harry Hopkins was named as director of this organization, whose purpose was also concerned with the public work relief expenditure. This latter program was responsible for public works such as sewerage, reservoirs, highways, and the electrification of rural areas. It has been estimated that by 1941, W.P.A. had distributed over 11 billion dollars.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 361.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.. P

The height of depression in agriculture was reached in 1932--the farmers had reached a point of desperation, and there were violence and near revolution in the farm belt. A large part of the problem lay in the abundant agricultural potentialities within the nation. When modern techniques and modern mechanization of production were applied to the land, the inevitable result was a great surplus of primary production. The Roosevelt Administration enacted the Agricultural Adjustment Act in May, 1933, an act aimed essentially at raising agricultural prices and at easing the burden of indebtedness upon the farmer. Recovery in agriculture was to be based upon a series of agreements entered into between the Secretary of Agriculture and the farmers themselves. The essence of the program was government subsidy in return for reduced production. To sum up, the federal government was paying the farmers either for not producing or for destroying the crops and the stock they had produced. For example, in 1933, over 10,000,000 acres of cotton land were taken out of production and the wheat acreage was heavily reduced. Also at this time 6,000,000 young pigs were also destroyed. Agreements were also entered into covering tobacco, rice, barley, sugar, and beef cattle.<sup>1</sup>

While President Roosevelt was busy with governmental experiments at attempting to improve the economy, he often met with some resistance. For example, the A.A.A. was declared

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 362.

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invalid by the Supreme Court in 1936; however, Congress circumvented this declaration by replacing it with the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act, which, in essence, subsidized the farmers provided they adopted methods of soil conservation. This measure aimed at controlling production and raising prices by establishing marketing schemes in staple commodities. Gradually there was an upswing in the agricultural economy of the nation, and by 1939 the cash value of farm income had been almost doubled.<sup>1</sup>

Industry also needed its share of regulation by the government during the early 1930's, and the main device enacted by the Roosevelt Administration for the regulation of industry was the National Industrial Recovery Act of June, 1933. The N. I. R. A. attempted to enact Codes of Fair Practice and price-fixing agreements, and it tried to give protection to both labor and the consumer. The ultimate goals of this act were to increase industrial production, to expand employment, to improve working conditions by raising wages and reducing hours, and to provide for the unemployed through emergency relief and public works.

Another organization was also established, the National Recovery Administration, the purpose of which to administer proposals authorized by the Act. General Hugh Johnson was appointed director of this organization, which came to be generally recognized as the central organization of the New Deal. The results had been none too successful.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 363.

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Deal. The primary emphasis of this organization was to be directed at industrial self-government; however, the N.I.R.A. provided official regulations in the form of codes. Codes for each of the industries were to be drawn up by the industry, and these codes had to be approved by the President. Although great gains were made through the administration's attitude toward industry and industrial workers at this time, the Supreme Court declared invalid the legislation upon which this organization rested. However, labor had already begun to organize; and by 1936 the American Federation of Labor had a membership of over 4,000,000.

The Wagner Act of 1935, another aid to labor, was held valid by the Supreme Court. Under this act employees acquired the right to organize in trade unions of their own choice, and they were allowed to engage in collective bargaining. The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 also assisted labor in a number of ways--it established a forty-hour work week and a minimum wage, it banned child labor, and, in general, had profound effects upon the working conditions in American industry.

The Roosevelt Administration was greatly concerned with the welfare of the nation since relief was the big problem. This relief was dealt with in the form of vast federal governmental expenditure to assist the aged and unemployed. The States had previously assumed this responsibility, and the results had been none too successful. Roosevelt, in 1935, asked Congress to pass the Social Security

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Act, which introduced an entirely new concept of national responsibility for the needy. Although this act was based upon the principle of federal-state cooperation, it was the federal government which founded much of the financial backing. The validity of this act was argued before the Supreme Court in 1937; and the Court upheld the act, ruling that the federal government could legitimately enter this field without invading the constitutional rights of the States.

The many efforts to cope with the nation-wide depression by governmental intervention led to much greater federal spending. Often the budget of the New Deal reached fantastic figures like 8,000,000,000 or 9,000,000,000 dollars.<sup>1</sup> The nation appeared to be heading for bankruptcy, but the administration pointed out that the national income was almost doubled by 1939.

#### The World Court Controversy

Early in 1935, President Roosevelt urged America's entry into the World Court. With sixty-eight Democrats in the Senate, and knowing, also, that both Coolidge and Hoover had supported the proposition in the past, Roosevelt probably felt reasonably confident he would win approval. Isolationists would not grant even the mildest of approval for internationalist ventures; and due, largely to William Randolph Hearst, Will Rogers, and, most of all, Father Charles Edward

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 365.

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Coughlin, there was much protest. When the vote was taken, fifty-two Senators approved the Court proposal, and thirty-six were opposed.<sup>1</sup> Roosevelt was greatly disturbed by the defeat, and later wrote Senator Joseph Robinson: "As to the thirty-six Senators who placed themselves on record against the principle of a World Court, I am inclined to think that if they ever get to Heaven that they will be doing a great deal of apologizing for a very long time--that is, if God is against war--and I think He is."<sup>2</sup>

### Special Political Interests--1935-1936

Although in 1934 it seemed that a unified America was grappling successfully with the problem of recovery, some persons and special interests oppose Roosevelt's efforts with unusual bitterness. Brief mention will be made of a number of important individuals who were not satisfied with the New Deal during this period.

First, there was Huey Long, who had risen to power in Louisiana as early as 1928, and who had changed the Old Guard politics through a unique program of political reform.

. . . Long . . . was one of the men who played a leading role in securing the nomination for Franklin D. Roosevelt. But Huey knew that his future lay not in being the apostle of someone else's gospel, but in preaching his own. To become the messiah of millions one must reject

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<sup>1</sup>Notes: A two-thirds majority was needed for the vote to pass.

<sup>2</sup>Leuchtenburg, op. cit., pp. 216-217.

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3. Ibid.,

all rival prophets; and so months before big business began sniping at the New Deal, he had already turned against it. From the spring of 1933 until his death he kept up a steady drumfire and, despite temporary setbacks, he managed to capitalize the weaknesses and inadequacies of the New Deal to such good effect that in 1935 he was being spoken of as a serious contender for the Presidency and potentially the most formidable obstacle to the re-election of Roosevelt.<sup>1</sup>

In 1934 Long proclaimed his "Share-the-Wealth" movement, and his principal demand was that the government should guarantee an income of \$5,000 a year to every family and "make every man a king." Long was assassinated in September, 1935, thus ending all political ambitions for a man often called cunning and ruthless.

In 1926, Reverend Charles Edward Coughlin, a Roman Catholic priest of the parish of Royal Oak, Michigan, began a series of radio broadcasts over WJR in Detroit. His programs were so successful that in 1930, CBS was carrying his talks over a national hookup. Originally a children's program, it became a political program of national importance. So much so, that one address, entitled "Hoover Prosperity Means Another War," drew 1,200,000 letters.<sup>2</sup> By the end of 1932, he had a weekly audience estimated at from thirty to forty-five million listeners. By 1934, Coughlin had the heaviest mail of any person in the United States.<sup>3</sup> After many stormy

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<sup>1</sup>A. B. Magill and Henry Stevens, The Peril of Fascism (New York: International Publishers, 1938), p. 174.

<sup>2</sup>Leuchtenburg, op. cit., p. 100.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 101.



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broadcasts, the radio priest ended his radio career abruptly in the early 1940's.

Another political voice during this period was that of Dr. Townsend, who came forth with a plan for old-age pensions. His proposal was that every person sixty years of age and of "good character" should receive a pension of \$200 a month from the federal government. The payments were to be financed through a 2 per cent sales tax. If his testimony is to be believed, Townsend had nearly three thousand Townsend clubs with an average membership of 150 each in all parts of the nation.

### The Election of 1936

The election of 1936 was to be the test for the New Deal. Roosevelt was once again nominated for a second term by the Democratic Convention, and his opponent for the Republicans was Alfred Landon, the Governor of Kansas. One observer remarked that with the press and radio against Roosevelt, as well as the Supreme Court antagonistic towards him, it seemed that everyone was against Roosevelt except the electorate. The Chicago Tribune had stated that Landon stood "for the preservation of the American form of government." Roosevelt won by a landslide, receiving a majority of over 10 million votes, and he carried every state except Vermont and Maine. Surmounting great opposition, Roosevelt had not lost his touch with the common man at the polls.

Because the Supreme Court has the power to make legislation, it is a very important institution. Since Congress has the power to change the composition of the Court, it is also a very important institution. The President has the power to appoint and remove the Justices, and he also has the power to grant pardons and reprieves. It was felt that the President should have the power to appoint and remove the Justices, and that the Justices should have the power to make legislation.

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### The Supreme Court Proposal

Because the Supreme Court had invalidated much of the New Deal legislation, it, therefore, next received Roosevelt's attention. Since Congress had the power to control the membership of the Court, the President submitted proposals for changing the composition of the Supreme Court by adding younger members. Basically, the plan was that there was to be one new member, up to a maximum of six, for every Justice who had reached the age of seventy and had served for ten years but had not elected to retire. Although the number of Justices had been changed in previous years, 1937 was not the year for any more drastic changes without arousing great hostility. The President was charged with trying to "pack" the Court and also of seeking greater personal powers.

It was felt by many that Roosevelt's Supreme Court proposal was his greatest error; however, his proposals were ultimately achieved. For instance, one Supreme Court Justice transferred his support, which converted the liberal minority into a majority; and shortly after this, a number of judges announced their retirement. Others more responsive to the social and economic forces were appointed.

The Supreme Court battle was very significant, but had President Roosevelt won or lost?

Had Roosevelt, then really lost his campaign? In one sense he had won: The Court no longer stood in his way. There was more than political ingenuity to his claim, in 1939, that he had attained his ultimate objective despite the defeat of his plan for reaching it. Yet in another sense he had lost. Many members of Congress hitherto glad to meet his wishes had been left sore and vindictive by the

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pressure put upon them to vote for a measure thrown at them as the Court plan had been; and there were also Senators who were piqued at the Black incident, feeling that they had somehow been tricked into endorsing an appointment which later brought them embarrassment at home. When, a year later, Roosevelt tried to bring about the defeat at the polls of various Senators who had voted against the Court plan, these wounds were further inflamed. There was nothing new about the attempt of a President to reward his loyal supporters and eliminate his disloyal ones--although the Roosevelt offensive of 1938, to which the opposition press attached the opprobrious term of "purge," was unusually bold and inclusive--but to make the vote upon the Supreme Court plan the test of loyalty was galling. The offensive failed. In friendships within Congress, the President suffered. In this sense the campaign over the Supreme Court had been for him a costly defeat.<sup>1</sup>

### The Recession of 1937

In 1937, the United States faced another economic recession, and the nation's economy took a downward trend. Much of Roosevelt's work seemed likely to be undone. For instance, investments began to decline, production slowed down, and unemployment was on the rise. These were signs that America was heading for another depression. The President, as always, met the problem head-on by sponsoring a vast scheme of federal loans. The plan was for the government to assist the national economy by providing lavish governmental spending. Although the recession was temporarily halted, the nation was to be faced with the unemployment problem, and full return

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<sup>1</sup>Frederick Lewis Allen, Since Yesterday (New York: Bantam Books, 1965), p. 240.

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#### Reorganization Bill

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to national prosperity was not to be achieved until the nation began rearming for World War II. For instance, as late as 1939, the American unemployment figures still stood at about 9,000,000.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Reorganization Bill of 1938

The Reorganization Bill, proposed by President Roosevelt in 1938, was basically a plan to empower the President to reshuffle agencies in the interest of efficiency. The proposal was first mentioned in 1937; and at that time, everyone seemed for it--even conservatives such as William Howard Taft and Herbert Hoover had previously pressed for government renovation. However, by 1938, Congressmen seemed suspicious of any attempt by Roosevelt to give the Executive office any added powers, and the Reorganization Bill was considered an attempt by F.D.R. to subvert democratic institutions.

The bill was certainly designed to give more congressional prerogatives to the President, and it was designed to mark a shift of power from a Congress subject to pressure groups and national interests, to the President, who claimed to speak for the national interest.

The Senate approved the Reorganization Bill by a very narrow margin; however, on April 8, the House rejected the bill, 204-196. This defeat was the worst that President Roosevelt was ever to suffer in the House.

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<sup>1</sup>Greenwood, op. cit., p. 369.

## Presidential Election

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### The Presidential Election of 1940

With the Presidential election of 1940 in sight, the Democratic Party realized that its strongest contender was Franklin D. Roosevelt, although there was a strong tradition in American politics against a third-term President. Roosevelt, however, was renominated; and the Democrats chose Henry Wallace to run for the position of Vice-President. The Republican Party, deciding that they, too, needed a candidate with progressive traits, nominated Wendall Willkie. Willkie attacked the methods of the New Deal in his campaign, but made it very clear that he had no intention of overthrowing the reforms made by the New Deal legislators. Roosevelt received 27 million votes to Willkie's 22 million, and Roosevelt was once again voted President of the United States.

The election was a victory for Roosevelt, who thus became the first third-term President of the United States. "Confronted with a critical situation, a majority of the American people apparently believed that continuity of leadership was more important than doctrinaire attachment to a traditional principle."<sup>1</sup> Roosevelt's victory opened the way for aid to the democracies of the world, specifically the lend-lease enactment of 1941.

### Background of World War II

In August, 1939 the German Government signed a treaty with the Soviet Union to partition the lands of central-

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<sup>1</sup>Perkins, op. cit., p. 116.

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eastern Europe, thus assuring the Germans that they could attack Poland without any objection by the Russian Communists, who were ready to join in the spoils of war.<sup>1</sup> On September 1, Germany attacked Poland, and the Polish state was destroyed in a few weeks. This action on the part of Germany served to upset the balance of power in Europe. Therefore, war was inevitable between Germany and the Anglo-French allies, and they declared war immediately after the German army moved into Poland.

President Roosevelt immediately proclaimed the neutrality of the United States. The President called for a special session of Congress, and asked Congress for a modification of existing laws so that France and Great Britain might purchase war materials from the United States.

It seemed that as long as the Germans did not attack in western Europe, there was little likelihood that the United States would go to war. However, in April and June of 1940, the Germans seized Denmark and Norway, then seized Belgium and Holland. Driving the British from the European continent, the Germans then threatened the British home island. When the Germans finally attacked England, the United States felt itself threatened, because if the Germans conquered Britain, then they would be masters of Europe and in control of the Atlantic Sea approaches to the New World.

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<sup>1</sup>Marshall Smelser, and Harry W. Kirwin, Conceived in Liberty (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1955), p. 596.

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In June of 1940, President Roosevelt ordered the United States War Department to release surplus military stocks to Great Britain; and in July, Congress authorized four billion dollars of new naval construction. Shortly after this, in September, the President ordered the transfer of fifty American destroyers to Great Britain in exchange for the granting of naval bases to the U.S. in several British territories.

The United States could no longer be considered neutral, because America was aiding Britain. Aiding Britain seemed to have popular support in America because the avowed intention was to keep war away from America. "Though some people criticized the way in which the destroyer-bases had been carried through (without consulting Congress), it was evident that most people applauded it as a necessary measure of American national defense."<sup>1</sup> At this time Congress enacted the first peacetime act for compulsory military service in our history. It required all men between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-five to register for selective service, in order to bring the army up to two million men.

For two months the bill was debated in Congress, and when the final vote was taken, the measure passed by 317 to 171 in the House and by 60 to 31 in the Senate.<sup>2</sup> If Congress represents the opinion of the country, it seems reasonable to assume that America was ready to assist Britain.

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<sup>1</sup>Smelsor and Kirwin, op. cit., p. 598.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 601.



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At this time Roosevelt gave two of his most famous and significant speeches. In a fireside chat of December, 1940, the President asked for an immense increase in production, enough to make America "the great arsenal of democracy." In January, 1941, he addressed Congress in his "Four Freedoms" speech. The four freedoms Roosevelt mentioned were: freedom of speech and expression, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear.

During February and March of 1941, Congress debated the provisions of a new and far-reaching measure aimed at assisting Britain--the Lend-Lease Act. The underlying idea in this provision was that if the United States gave the British and their allies the guns and ships they needed, when the war was over, the British would return the materials or their equivalent. The law was drafted and permitted Roosevelt to allocate war materials to any other nation fighting. "Before the Axis powers were defeated, the United States advanced more than \$50,000,000,000 in lend-lease aid to its various allies and associates all over the world."<sup>1</sup>

When, in June, 1941, the Germans attacked the Soviet Union, both the United States and Britain immediately offered to help the Russians. Britain and the United States poured materials of every kind into the Soviet Union, and "without such prompt assistance it would have been impossible for the Soviet Government to withstand the onslaught of the German armies."<sup>2</sup>

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In 1941, President Roosevelt asked authority to arm the merchant vessels of the United States, and he also suggested that the time might well come to abolish the restriction by which American vessels, since 1939, had been forbidden to enter specified war zones. A bill to arm the merchant ships of the United States passed the House on October 17. The Senate not only passed the bill, but it went a step further than the House--it attached another provision. This provision permitted American ships to enter the waters from which they had been excluded under previous legislation. The House, after bitterly contesting the provision, finally passed it by a narrow margin.

On December 7, 1941, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, and more than 2,400 American men were killed, as well as another 1,100 were wounded. Eight battleships were put out of action, and two were totally destroyed. The Japanese had executed one of the most successful surprise attacks in military history.

The day following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt appeared before Congress to ask that a state of war be declared between the United States of America and the Japanese Empire. Congress confirmed this declaration with only one dissenting vote. Three days later, Hitler and Mussolini declared war on the United States; and thus, Americans found themselves fighting in World War II.

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## CHAPTER II

### THE SPEAKER: HIS LIFE AND RELATIONSHIP TO THE TIMES

The purpose of this chapter is to study the life of Charles Edward Coughlin, from his birth in Hamilton, Ontario, to the present day, in order to provide an understanding of the speaker's development into maturity. This understanding is an integral part of a rhetorical study, inasmuch as knowledge about a man's development, as well as his interests and reputation, are necessary if one is adequately to analyze the man as a speaker.

#### Background and Early Life

In politics. . . .I am neither Republican, Democrat, nor Socialist. I glory in the fact that I am a simple Catholic priest endeavoring to inject Christianity into the fabric of an economic system woven up on the loom of greed by the cunning fingers of those who manipulate the shuttles of human lives for their own selfish purposes.<sup>1</sup>

These words were uttered by one of the most colorful and famous men in America, Charles Edward Coughlin. The Reverend Charles Edward Coughlin has been described as "the

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<sup>1</sup>Alfred McClung and Elizabeth Briant Lee, The Fine Art of Propaganda (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1939), p. 9.

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Detroit priest who became a storm center when he tried to build up a political movement through his radio broadcasts."<sup>1</sup> Our first dramatic evidence of the political effectiveness of radio came in the 1930's. At that time the common procedure was to allow the air to be used for political purposes. Father Coughlin best exemplifies this procedure of inducing specific political action with his broadcasts. For example, in 1935, he denounced the World Court in a radio broadcast. The result--200,000 telegrams tied up the wires of Western Union. Another example, in 1938, Coughlin opposed a bill pending in Congress and appealed to his radio audience to send telegrams voting "no", and the next day more than 100,000 telegrams were sent by the listeners to their congressmen.

Charles Edward Coughlin was born of Irish-American parents at Hamilton, Ontario, on October 25, 1891. This year was doubly significant--it also marked the year of the publication of Pope Leo XIII's Rerum Novarum, a document that was to play an important role in the life of Coughlin.

Coughlin's father, Thomas, was an Irish-American workman, as were his grandfather, and his great-grandfather before him. His great-grandfather helped dig the Erie Canal. His father, born in Indiana, drifted to Hamilton, Ontario, became sexton of the cathedral, met a devout seamstress, Amelia Mahoney, also of Irish stock, and married her.

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<sup>1</sup>Giraud Chester and Garnet R. Garrison, Television and Radio (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1956), p. 33.

Charles was the  
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Charles was educated  
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Louis B. ...  
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Charles was the first-born, as well as the only living child in the family. His sister, Agnes, died in infancy; and Amelia Coughlin was left in a poor state of health.

Charles was educated at St. Mary's School in Hamilton, under the direction of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Upon graduation, he entered St. Michael's College, in Toronto, Ontario. St. Michael's housed both high school and college boys; and the classes were conducted by the Basilian Fathers, a religious order, whose job it was to train the Catholic youths in the Archdiocese of Toronto.

Coughlin graduated from University College of Toronto University in Honor Philosophy on May, 1911.

In the fall of 1911, Coughlin, who had just returned from a three month's tour of Europe, decided that he would enter the Basilian novitiate to study for the priesthood.

The first year in this novitiate was to be spent primarily in praying and meditating, the curriculum including biblical readings and an introduction to the Lives of the Saints. One year was to be spent away from home, and this year also included the exclusion of all social activities. The year included daily attendance at Mass and Holy Communion, and the recitation of the Office. Manual labor was required of each student. During these four years, Charles Edward Coughlin was still a resident of St. Michael's and was still subject to the discipline of the Basilian Fathers.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Louis B. Ward, Father Charles E. Coughlin (Detroit: Tower Publications, Inc., 1933) p. 16.

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Coughlin was ordained to the priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church on June 29, 1916, in St. Basil's Church, Toronto, Ontario.

The following September, Father Coughlin was sent to Assumption College, Sandwich, Ontario, near Detroit, Michigan. At this college he was to preach the word of God as well as to teach philosophy, English, and other selected high school subjects.

In addition to his teaching assignments, Coughlin was also preaching regularly, and was asked to assist at the parish of St. Agnes' Church, in Detroit. He was stationed at this parish for nearly two years.

While at St. Agnes', Father Coughlin performed his priestly duties in various other parishes in the city of Detroit, for it was customary for the Basilian priests to provide their services to the rapidly growing diocese of Detroit.

In 1918, a new Canon Law from Rome was enacted which allowed the priests in the Basilian Order to make a choice: either they must become priests living in a Congregation, such as Redemptorists or Jesuits, or they must live in Orders, such as Dominicans or Franciscans. Therefore, all those who wanted to become Religious could either take vows in a Congregation or else have themselves assigned to a Religious Order. In other words, the choice was to remain a secular priest or to be assigned to a religious order.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Louis B. Ward, Father Charles E. Coughlin (Detroit: Tower Publications, Inc., 1933) p. 16.

Father Coughlin

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Father Coughlin, among others, chose to remain as he was, a secular priest. He was then received into the diocese of Detroit by the Right Reverend Michael James Gallagher on February 26, 1923.

Almost at once, Father Coughlin was assigned as an assistant at St. Augustine's parish, Kalamazoo, Michigan, where he remained three months. Then he was called to St. Leo's Church at Detroit, where he remained nearly eighteen months. Father Coughlin was appointed to his first parish at North Branch, Michigan, to which was added the mission of Clifford.

#### Early Days At Royal Oak and Radio Beginning

In May, 1926, the Bishop sent Father Coughlin to build a new parish at Royal Oak, Michigan, which is located near Detroit.

In 1925, Rome canonized a young French nun who had died in 1897 at the age of twenty-four, and called her St. Theresa of the Little Flower and the Child Jesus. Shortly before she died, a change had come over her shy nature. She uttered strange prophecies: God would permit her to remain on earth till the end of time; she would "let fall from heaven a shower of roses." Not long after she died, evidences came pouring in of her powers. Miraculous conversions, cures, donations were ascribed to her intercession. Her "shower of roses" had begun to manifest itself, and she was canonized a saint.



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2 Ward, op. 9

3 Swing, op.

Bishop Michael Gallagher of Detroit had been in Rome in 1925 for the canonization of St. Theresa, and the year after he returned he found that Coughlin was agreeable to go to the almost empty parish of Royal Oak, which would be dedicated to the world's most modern saint.<sup>1</sup>

On the evening of August 15, 1926, Father Coughlin announced to a few members of his parish that he planned to broadcast services from the Shrine of the Little Flower, his parish church. Radio was in its infancy, and the announcement came as a shock.

. . .It was a thunderbolt to these staid parishioners. They were conservative men who were timid to venture beyond the fringe of the forest of fears. Broadcasting was expensive. Broadcasting was treacherous. Broadcasting was a novelty. Broadcasting was irreligious. More than all, these gentlemen did not feel capable of supporting even the ordinary burdens of a parish let alone this extraordinary and unprofitable expenditure which would be more appropriately undertaken to advertise cigarettes and soap and motor cars than to disseminate the principles of Christianity.<sup>2</sup>

Father Coughlin went to the office of the manager of radio station WJR in Detroit and asked for a wider audience for his Sunday sermons. "His motive was modest. He hoped to build up his parish--nothing more."<sup>3</sup> The station manager, Leo Fitzpatrick, liked Coughlin, and Fitzpatrick saw that it

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<sup>1</sup>Raymond Gram Swing, Forerunners of American Fascism (New York: Julian Messner, Incorporated, 1935), pp. 35-36.

<sup>2</sup>Ward, op. cit., p. 24.

<sup>3</sup>Swing, op. cit., p. 38.

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1 Ward,

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

would be a good idea to have a Catholic program in a city that was, at that time, 52 per cent Catholic.

. . . Little did either of them foresee that not many years later the same priest would be personally attacking E. D. Stair, publisher of the Free Press, in his capacity as chairman of the company which held the stock of the First National Bank, and that the Free Press would be lambasting him as "an ecclesiastical Huey Long," "a religious Walter Winchell," and a Wall Street speculator.<sup>1</sup>

The third Sunday of October, 1926, the first broadcast originated from the Shrine of the Little Flower. WJR had extended lines from its studio approximately twelve miles away to the Shrine. Therefore, at three o'clock, Father Coughlin began to preach his first sermon on the radio, which constituted an exposition of the Sunday gospel.<sup>2</sup>

For 156 consecutive Sundays this broadcast season was continued over one station, WJR.<sup>3</sup> The Sunday broadcasts were somewhat routine--they consisted of explaining the rudiments of the Christian faith and also of answering questions from letters he had received.

In the fall of 1929, two more stations, Station WMAQ of Chicago, and WLW of Cincinnati, were added to WJR to carry Father Coughlin's radio broadcasts. Finally, in 1930, the Columbia Broadcasting System signed a contract with the priest to carry his radio message.

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<sup>1</sup>Ward, op. cit., p. 27.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

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In 1931, Fitzpatrick organized an independent chain of stations extending from St. Louis, Missouri, to Portland, Maine. Twenty stations were now being used from both the National Broadcasting System and the Columbia Broadcasting System.<sup>1</sup>

### Coughlin's Entry Into National Politics

In October, 1931, Father Coughlin began denouncing the "so-called leaders" who had been stating that prosperity was "just around the corner." The depression was two years old, and countless thousands of American citizens were unemployed. In his speech of October, 1931, Father Coughlin abandoned his regular text of Gospel exposition to assail the Hoover Administration for its inability to cope with the economic conditions of the times. This was the beginning of the priest's entry into national politics.

On his first broadcast of the 1930-1931 radio season, Coughlin had stated that he realized the dangers of a priest's discussing problems of an economic nature.

In venturing upon this subject of labor and its relative questions of wages and unemployment I am not forgetful that the path of my pilgrimage is both treacherous and narrow. On the one side there are the quicksands of idealism, of radical socialism, in whose depths there are buried both the dreams of the poet and the ravings of the revolutionist. On the pathway's other side there are the smiling acres of Lotus Land where it is always afternoon, always springtime, always inactivity. It is peopled by those who are dulled by the opiate of their own contentedness to such a

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

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degree that they possess no prospect of what the future years hold in store for our nation. . . It is not a political question in the sense that it is partisan, that it is Democratic, or Republican. It is an American question, God's question which transcends the platforms of all political parties.<sup>1</sup>

Father Coughlin's biographer, Louis B. Ward, states that the priest had a very noble purpose in his desire to broadcast his messages over the radio.

Many hours have been spent with Father Coughlin discussing his appreciation of the task which confronted him as he embarked upon his career of broadcasting. As expressed hitherto, his ultimate end was and is the salvation of human souls. But it is clear that his proximate object was and <sup>is</sup> the renaissance of distributive justice.<sup>2</sup>

At any rate, whatever his motive, Father Coughlin began attacking the alleged abuses of the economic system of the country. The radio priest, a term by which he was often known, stressed the need for a return to the "old-fashioned principles of Christian charity." While many of his ideas appeared radical, nearly everything Father Coughlin said could be found in the papal Rerum Novarum.

The Radio League of the Little Flower came into existence not long after Coughlin had begun broadcasting. This organization contributed to support Coughlin's expensive broadcasting, for he was paying full commercial rates to all the radio stations as well as paying the American Telephone

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<sup>1</sup>Charles E. Coughlin, By the Sweat of Thy Brow (Detroit: Tower Publications, 1931), p. 7.

<sup>2</sup>Ward, op. cit., p. 32.



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and Telegraph Company for the network connecting these cities.<sup>1</sup> The depression seemed to verify many of the theories of the radio priest, and he had no difficulty in attracting audiences of all denominations who gladly paid one dollar a year membership to belong to the Radio League. The main purpose of this organization was to provide funds to pay for the broadcasting costs as well as to pay for copies of the talks and other printed materials which were distributed to the radio audience. Later in Coughlin's career, the Radio League was to provide financial support for the National Union for Social Justice.

The turning point in Father Coughlin's career, according to biographer Louis Ward, came in January, 1931. Congressman Louis McFadden of Pennsylvania had given the priest the statistics that would show that a drastic revision of the economic provisions of the Treaty of Versailles would be necessary if the world were to recover from the depression. Father Coughlin planned to use this material on his broadcast of January 4, 1931. CBS officials learned that this material was controversial, and they pressured the priest to delete anything of an objectionable nature. The network had previously received numerous complaints concerning the Coughlin broadcasts, and therefore the network tried to rid itself of the radio priest. Coughlin promised he would speak on a different subject. Instead of talking about the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

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Versailles Treaty, the radio priest spoke on the attempt of the network to censor his broadcast materials. Letters of protest have been estimated as high as 1,250,000, and Ward described this event as a turning point in Coughlin's career. From that time on, the priest, knowing that he had the backing of his radio audience, felt free to speak on any issue.<sup>1</sup>

Exactly one week after this incident, on January 11, 1931, the radio priest spoke on the controversial Versailles subject, and in this address he accused the international bankers of endangering world peace and prosperity in order to save their own European investments.<sup>2</sup>

Annoyed at their inability to control the radio priest, CBS invented a clever scheme to rid themselves of the embarrassment that Coughlin had caused them. This network created a new religious program called "Church on the Air." On this program, free air time was to be granted, on a rotating basis, to churches of different faiths. Because of this new format for religious broadcasts, Father Coughlin was firmly but gently shoved off the CBS radio network in April, 1931.

After he was eased off CBS, the next logical step for the radio priest was to try to buy radio time from NBC. This he tried to do, and was refused. The details seem rather obscure, but the President of NBC refused to give any reason

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<sup>1</sup>Ward, op. cit., p. 83-86.

<sup>2</sup>Ruth Mugglebee, Father Coughlin of the Shrine of the Little Flower (Garden City, New York: Garden City Publishing Company, 1933), pp. 215-218.

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Since the radio priest had been refused radio time by both major networks, he was left with one alternative--to organize his own radio network. The details were worked out by Leo Fitzpatrick, manager of WJR, Detroit, and Alfred McCrosker, station manager of WOR, New York, who leased connecting telephone lines for eleven stations, then, later, twenty-six. The cost was \$14,000 a week.<sup>2</sup>

In late 1931, Father Coughlin spoke out against prohibition. In speeches delivered on October 25, November 8, and November 15, the radio priest stated his concern that many ministers were more interested in enforcing prohibition than they were in facing the "number one problem" of helping hungry people in the midst of the national depression. For his own part, the radio priest organized a charitable organization known as "God's Poor Society," which distributed food and clothing to the poor in the Detroit region.

One Coughlin broadcast on prohibition was directed at Dr. Clarence Wilson, Executive Secretary of the Methodist Episcopal Board of Temperance, Prohibition, and Public Morals. Father Coughlin read over the air a passage from the Kansas City Journal Post which represented Dr. Wilson as charging that "Legion Conventions are planned ahead of time as drunken orgies. . .The ex-soldier who will do that--and practically all of them did it in Detroit--is a perjured scoundrel who

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, March 21, 1934.

<sup>2</sup>Swing, op. cit., pp. 97-98.

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ought not to represent the decency of the flag under which he fought."<sup>1</sup>

The radio priest, in an emotionally charged speech, defended the American veteran.

A few short weeks ago my ears were shocked with a sacrilegious infamy. These dead soldiers whose lips no longer can themselves defend; their old mothers and broken-hearted wives and little boys and girls whose voices are too inarticulate to shield themselves--these have become the latest target of attack in defense of prohibition.

"Perjured scoundrels" is the epitaph spoken of the dead. "Perjured scoundrels" is the cold consolation which the executive secretary of the Board of Temperance, Prohibition and Public Morals would sneer into the ears of those children and wives and gray-haired mothers when on this Armistice Day they are mindful of their loved ones.<sup>2</sup>

Father Coughlin's entrance into national politics was to begin on October, 1931. It was at this time that he denounced President Herbert Hoover for his failure in combatting the nation's worst depression. Without mincing any words, Coughlin denounced the methods of Hoover:

I remember that on March 7, 1930, more than one year and a half ago, the former Secretary of Commerce, Mr. Hoover, announced: "All evidence indicates that the worst effect of the crash of unemployment will have passed within the next sixty days." That was in the spring of 1930. I recollect that he and hundreds of others to whom 10,000 facts were well-known were busy preaching to us that prosperity was just around the corner. It appears to have been a circular corner to which they referred; a corner which if we could turn, we would not be willing to negotiate if it forshadows a repetition of these recent occurrences for the children of generations to come.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ward, op. cit., p. 97-98.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Father Coughlin's Radio Discourses, 1931-32,  
(Detroit: Tower Publications, 1933), p. 19.



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Not only did Coughlin denounce the methods of Hoover, he also gave a bitter castigation of the international bankers. Every nation, Coughlin asserted, had grown tired of their attempts to "perpetuate their gambling and gold seeking at the expense of a torture more refined than was ever excoogitated by the trickery of the Roman or the heartlessness of slave owners."<sup>1</sup>

It would appear throughout an examination of this speech, as well as others that Coughlin gave, that he sincerely believed that the international bankers were responsible for the apparent failure of capitalism. This over-simplified explanation of the world's economic illness was often repeated by the radio priest, and it was accepted by many of his listeners.

At the end of November, Father Coughlin once again attacked Hoover, rejecting the argument that relief from the depression was a local matter and that the federal government had no responsibility. Yet, Coughlin continued, if relief were a local matter as Hoover stated, then local authorities also had the responsibility of aiding local banks. Coughlin then compared the federal government and depression victims with God and the Jews, stating that God Himself would be condemned by Hoover for giving aid to the Jews in the desert when it was impossible for them to produce the necessities of life.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

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And so, my fellow citizens, we are actors upon the stage of life in one of the most unique tragedies which has been chronicled. Peerless leaders, abundance of foodstuffs, millions of virgin acres, banks loaded with money alongside of idle factories, long bread lines, millions of jobless and growing discontent.

Listener response was fantastic. Letters by the thousands poured in to the radio priest as he continued to discuss politics in his radio discourses.

For the next few weeks the radio priest continued to denounce the Hoover Administration. He spoke out against the Reconstruction Finance Corporation and stated that it was a two billion dollar dole to banks and industries. Coughlin's big concern over the RFC was that this legislation, he stated, would lead to financial socialism.

The radio priest was upset with the Hoover Administration and its inability to cope with the national depression. This is one of the major reasons he became an early supporter of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

In the up-coming elections of 1932, Father Coughlin, as a priest, could not take a direct part. However, in the fall of that year he delivered attacks on the policies of the Hoover Administration, and he attacked Hoover for not solving the economic problems of America. At this time Coughlin also began to advocate the devaluation of the dollar, a step which he considered an important part of the nation's economic recovery.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Father Coughlin's Radio Discourses 1931-32, op. cit.,  
p. 130.

<sup>2</sup>Reverend Charles E. Coughlin, Eight Discourses on the Gold Standard and other Kindred Subjects (Detroit: Tower Publications, 1933), p. 120.

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In only six years, from the beginning of his radio career in 1926 to 1932, Father Coughlin had become a national figure. His radio audience was estimated at between thirty and forty-five million listeners. Over 100 clerks and four personal secretaries were needed in 1932 to handle his mail, many of these letters containing dollar bills to help the radio priest carry on his programs.

One of the biggest questions that puzzle the present generation is how did an obscure priest become a national figure in such a short time. The answer, in part, lies in the fact that when Coughlin spoke on the air in 1930, the nation was at the height of its worst economic depression. (See Chapter I.) Many people were anxious to know what happened to our economy. Coughlin stated that he had the answers--it was the fault of the communists and the international bankers. People of all faiths listened to this eloquent radio speaker. After all, he could be trusted, they reasoned, because this was not a politician seeking office, it was a man of God who was seeking social justice on their behalf.

In 1932, Father Coughlin had lost all faith in President Herbert Hoover. The American economy had collapsed; and he felt that the capitalistic system was badly in need of reform, and that Roosevelt was the man who would "drive the money-changers from the temple", a phrase he often used. Coughlin believed that the international bankers had created artificial money to enrich their pockets. Perhaps the radio

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priest over-simplified the causes of the depression; but his radio audience, not schooled in the intricacies of finance, believed him.

The Union Guardian Trust Company of Detroit, Michigan, collapsed in March, 1933. Here was a mark of the depression on Coughlin's doorstep, and the radio priest charged that the Detroit bankers approved fraudulent loans to themselves in order to cover their own investments during the stock market crash of 1929.

Father Coughlin made a special radio broadcast over a Detroit radio station in which he attacked the Detroit banking system. Charging that the bankers had organized special holding companies to escape liability as bank stockholders under the law, he was especially critical of one member of the governing board of the Detroit Banker's Committee and Publisher of the Detroit Free Press, E. D. Stair. The newspaper had been one of the most bitter critics of Father Coughlin. Coughlin charged that \$63,000,000 had been suddenly withdrawn from the First National Bank on the basis of "inside" information shortly before the President had declared his National Bank Holiday of March 9, 1933.

Stair threatened to sue Father Coughlin for slander. An editorial appeared in Stair's newspaper which called Father Coughlin a demagogue and accused the priest of destroying the confidence of the people in the Detroit banks. The newspaper made the attack on Coughlin personal and called the priest an "ecclesiastical Huey Long."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Detroit Free Press, March 27, 1933.



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The Detroit Free Press became desperate to "get even" with Coughlin. Finally, it instigated an official probe of the priest's income tax returns, charging that he had failed to pay a tax on stock profits. A complete investigation was undertaken by the Bureau of Internal Revenue, the result being that the priest was refunded \$8 which he had paid. He was actually below the lowest income tax figure.<sup>1</sup>

Raymond Gram Swing, while openly critical of Father Coughlin and calling him a Fascist, has this good word to say about the radio priest's honesty:

Father Coughlin is a good actor and he is colossally ambitious, but avarice is not his weakness. He lives unpretentiously. He has simple tastes. And if he can occupy a handsome tower with a staff of over a hundred clerical helpers, travel freely, and when in Washington live in a suite in the Mayflower, that is hardly a great pecuniary gain. The man is much more comprehensible if he is believed to be not cheaply and irreverently dishonest in money matters. He is at least worth taking seriously.<sup>2</sup>

In the late summer of 1933, Coughlin renewed his war on the Detroit bankers. The radio priest was a principal witness at a one-man Grand Jury investigation of the Detroit financial crisis. Testifying before Judge Harry B. Keiden, he charged that both Detroit banks previously mentioned were "wrecked by the philosophy that money in the hands of the masses is a menace." Coughlin also took this opportunity

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<sup>1</sup>Swing, op. cit., p. 55.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

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Hoover tried to cure this damnable depression by pouring in gold at the top while the people starved at the botton. . .He fed grain to the pigs in Arkansas, but he wouldn't give a loaf of bread to the people of Michigan. I'm not criticizing him, but I condemn his philosophy and I cite him as a definite and concrete example of the philosophy that money in the hands of the masses was a menace. I'll show that the Detroit bankers were brought up in that same school.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time he was attacking Hoover, Coughlin had nothing but warm words for Roosevelt: "I am defending a Protestant President who has more courage than 90% of the Catholic priests in this country. . . a President who thinks right, who lives for the common man, who knows patience and suffering, who knows that men come before bonds and that human rights are more sacred than financial rights."<sup>2</sup> These words constituted an endorsement of Franklin D. Roosevelt that would last an amazingly short time.

After Father Coughlin had so eloquently testified, E. D. Stair once more prepared to meet the priest in battle. Stair charged that Coughlin had purchased sixty shares of stock in Kelsey-Hayes Wheel, a company involved in rather unorthodox business dealings. Coughlin turned the attack by stating that Stair and the Detroit Free Press had forged his name on the stock. The priest did admit, however, that the Radio League of the Little Flower had purchased the stocks

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, August 24, 1933.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

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in question. He then stated that there would be federal indictments against E. D. Stair and other financiers.<sup>1</sup> The next day it was denied that any such indictments were planned.<sup>2</sup>

In the early 1930's, Father Coughlin believed that the major problem confronting the United States was a monetary one. In 1932 he decided to concentrate on this economic problem in his radio lectures. The priest had long been interested in monetary matters; but it was not until two New York friends, Robert M. Harris, a cotton broker, and George LeBlanc, a gold trader, came to Royal Oak in October, 1932, that he decided to speak on monetary matters over his radio network.<sup>3</sup>

Father Coughlin has often been accused of trying to overthrow capitalism, but this is not quite true. The priest never advocated abolishing capitalism, but he did urge reform in this area. While attacking capitalism, Coughlin also defended the right of private ownership, and regarding the right of the state to place restrictions upon the use of private property, the priest had this to say: "The temporal goods which God permits to man are his in regard to property. But in regard to use they are not his alone, but others' also who can be sustained by what is superfluous for him. If the individual owner neglects his social responsibilities, it is

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., August 25, 1933.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., August 26, 1933.

<sup>3</sup>Ward, op. cit., p. 107.

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Father Coughlin devoted many of his broadcasts in the seasons of 1932-33 and 1933-34 to the money question. Broadcasting usually from October to April, his first series was entitled, "Eight Discourses on the Gold Standard and Other Kindred Subjects." The theme of these talks was, basically, that the international bankers had wrecked the American economy for personal gain. In this series, Coughlin demanded the immediate revaluation of the gold ounce, stating that most European nations had already brought their credit money into a reasonable relationship with their actual gold holdings. As far as Coughlin was concerned, the money problem was the actual root of the depression.

My friends, the fundamental cause of this depression is the stupidity of trying to retain the 1900 valuation of our gold ounce in ratio of 12-1 in the face of the fact that this gold, as related to currency money and to outstanding credit money, has just been rendered absolutely impractical.<sup>2</sup>

He claimed that the United States had two choices: either revalue and be Christians or repudiate and face Bolshevism. Coughlin's demand that the price of gold be raised from \$20.67 an ounce to \$41.34 was calculated to increase the national debt by 50%. However, it is noteworthy that, while the radio priest talked money matters, he said he regarded gold only as a medium of exchange, not as real wealth.

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<sup>1</sup>Charles E. Coughlin, By the Sweat of Thy Brow (Detroit: Tower Publications, 1931), p. 26.

<sup>2</sup>Eight Discourses on the Gold Standard, op. cit., p. 12.



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In this series of talks over the radio, Father Coughlin discussed matters other than money. He also discussed the use of mass production machinery, and acknowledged that it was a blessing to mankind. But he also charged that greedy employers often abused their ownership by paying low wages.<sup>1</sup> Citing church authorities, the priest emphasized his belief in the institution of private ownership: "The Catholic Church stands foreshadowing behind the capitalist, although it does condemn the abuses which have grown up around him."<sup>2</sup> He believed in the right to hold private property, but he also stated that this right carries with it an obligation to use this property for the common good.

In 1933, Father Coughlin developed a second series, called "Driving Out the Money Changers." Showing great bitterness, the initial broadcast was an attack on the proposed Glass banking bill, which authorized the establishment of branch banks of the Federal Reserve System. Maintaining that this scheme would further concentrate wealth in the hands of a few, he also stated that this bill would destroy many independent banks. The radio priest called the Glass plan "the most subtly vicious bill that the entire seventy-two Congresses have ever considered."<sup>3</sup> Most of the broadcasts in this series dealt with questions of money, or as Coughlin

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 44.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Reverend Charles E. Coughlin, Driving Out the Money Changers (Detroit: Tower Publications, 1933), pp. 5-13.

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called it, "the money famine." He insisted that the money shortage was deliberately caused by the international bankers to increase their own profits, and demanded a controlled inflation of currency to put the dollar back to its true value. Once more Coughlin suggested that the revaluation of gold at the ratio of approximately 2 to 1 was the only answer.

Revaluation was only part of the solution that Coughlin advocated. He also demanded that there be nationalization of all gold, with the government paying the holders in paper money. The radio priest was very critical of all the international bankers for using gold as an instrument of power; and of this group, the Rothschilds were singled out for a vigorous attack.

### The New Deal

In his March broadcast, Father Coughlin began to praise the New Deal of Franklin D. Roosevelt. He appeared confident that the new administration would enact his currency reforms, and he told his radio audience to be patient and give Roosevelt a chance to work things out. Coughlin even defended Roosevelt's unpopular Economy Bill, which reduced veterans' pensions and federal salaries. He insisted that Roosevelt was trying to get the nation back to work, and this was a task far more important than putting people on doles.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 72-93.

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Even though he had some doubts about the NRA, in an interview in The New York Times Father Coughlin endorsed it. The NRA, he maintained, was succeeding, not as rapidly as some would like, but it was not fair to expect perfection overnight. The radio priest praised the NRA as the first instance since the thirteenth century of a nation's attempting to control labor's hours and wages to prevent unfair competition and exploitation. He was so enthusiastic about the New Deal that he claimed a place for Roosevelt in the "American Hall of Fame" equal to that of Washington and Jefferson.<sup>1</sup>

The Agricultural Adjustment Act did not receive the Coughlin seal of approval, because the priest felt the solution was not to raise farm prices through crop reduction and destruction. Coughlin's solution was simple--the government should issue greenbacks and coin silver. Henry Wallace, the Secretary of Agriculture, and his assistant, Rexford G. Tugwell, became prime targets of Coughlin's verbal attacks.

Attacking such national issues assured Coughlin of great amounts of mail. The radio priest was proud of his letters and referred to them often. In fact, President Roosevelt found that Coughlin's estimates were to be taken seriously, when the President ordered the Post Office Department to check the accuracy of Father Coughlin's claims. In the twenty months from July, 1933, to February, 1935, the

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, September 6, 1933.

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Royal Oak Post Office cashed 65,397 money orders worth \$404,145.<sup>1</sup>

Nobody outside the organization gets to read his letters. He says that he has 2,000,000 names on file, and someone to whom he showed his filing-room asked to see the list from his home county in a nearby state. Father Coughlin at once complied. He pulled out a great handfull of cards, several inches thick. The visitor went over them; the names were of persons he knew, and they pretty well covered the county. Father Coughlin recognizes that his letters are his stock in trade. "I believe I possess in them the greatest human document in our times," he says; "I am not boasting when I say that I know the pulse of the people. I am not exaggerating when I tell you of their demand for social justice which is sweeping like a tidal wave over this country."<sup>2</sup>

On November 26, 1933, in his weekly broadcast, Father Coughlin lashed out bitterly against Al Smith. Smith, who had been governor of New York four times and was an unsuccessful Democratic contender for the presidency in 1928, had become one of the administration's most severe critics on monetary matters. In fact, in a letter published in the New Outlook, Smith had declared with great force: "I am for gold dollars as against baloney dollars. I am for experience against experiment."<sup>3</sup>

Coughlin denounced Smith on his radio broadcast, implying that he was a paid stooge of the banking interests.

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<sup>1</sup>Charles J. Tull, Father Coughlin and the New Deal (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1965), p. 41.

<sup>2</sup>Swing, op. cit., p. 56.

<sup>3</sup>Alfred E. Smith, "Sound Money," New Outlook, December, 1933.



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When the best-known Catholic priest in America attacks the best-known Catholic layman, there are bound to be repercussions; and there were many. This feud was very embarrassing, and, after much bitterness on both sides, the issue was quietly dropped.

In his initial broadcast of the 1934 series, Father Coughlin flatly stated that Congress had 150 days to decide if democracy would endure in the United States.<sup>1</sup> This statement was, of course, not to mean that the radio priest contemplated revolution, but it was an overstatement of the necessity for immediate monetary legislation. Coughlin attacked the Federal Reserve System for retaining the recently nationalized gold instead of turning it over to the Treasury Department. He later became an enemy of the Federal Reserve System and worked to try to abolish it.

Even though Coughlin was trying to pressure the administration into coinage of silver, he still considered himself an avid supporter of Roosevelt and the New Deal in the early months of 1934. In fact, when he testified before the House Committee on Coinage, Weights and Measures, Father Coughlin said:

President Roosevelt is not going to make a mistake, for God Almighty is guiding him. . . . President Roosevelt has leadership, he has followers, and he is the answer to many prayers that were sent up last year.

If Congress fails to carry through with the President's suggestion, I foresee a revolution far greater than the French Revolution. It is either Roosevelt or Ruin.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, January 15, 1934.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

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Even though Coughlin professed to be a supporter of the New Deal, he did not hesitate to criticize New Deal measures over the radio. He attacked the NRA, and said that the wage scale of forty cents was little more than "slavery." Coughlin, at this time, was constructing his elaborate Shrine of the Little Flower, and was paying \$.55 per hour for general laborers and \$1.40 for masons.

In a 1934 radio broadcast entitled the "United States Incorporated," Coughlin once again repeated his demand for government control of all currency. He emphasized that gold was not the only basis of wealth, and demanded that nationalization of the currency was the most important step on the road to prosperity. The radio priest also warned that unemployment would double unless this new credit system were put into effect.<sup>1</sup>

On the March 4, 1934 radio broadcast, Father Coughlin reviewed the program of the New Deal and stated that it had been "more or less successful." As he looked ahead to the second year of the Roosevelt Administration, he predicted that the most important problem would be the struggle for a just distribution of production and credit for all.<sup>2</sup> On the following broadcast, Coughlin outlined his own six-point program for the solution of this problem:

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, February 26, 1934.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

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1. The nationalization and revaluation of all gold.
2. The restoration of silver coinage and the nationalization of all silver.
3. The establishment of a government bank to control currency and establish credit.
4. The complete nationalization of all credit.
5. Legislation to extend credit not only for production but for consumption.
6. The total elimination of national government bonds.<sup>1</sup>

Even though Father Coughlin was somewhat bitter about monetary reform, the radio priest still emphasized that he supported Roosevelt. Therefore, the priest was understandably shocked when, in April, the Roosevelt Administration seemed to turn on him. Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau, with Roosevelt's full approval, published the names of all persons and organizations which had made substantial investments in silver. The avowed purpose was to discredit the motivation of many of the leading advocates of silver coinage; and when the government published the list of all holders of silver, the largest in Michigan proved to be the young lady who was secretary of Father Coughlin's organization, the Radio League of the Little Flower. She had 500,000 ounces at the very time that Coughlin was stating over the radio: "The restoration of silver to its proper value is of Christian concern. I send to you a call for the mobilization of all Christianity against the god of gold."<sup>2</sup> The priest, in other words, was trying to raise the price of silver from which his own undertaking was to profit.

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<sup>1</sup>Reverend Charles E. Coughlin, Eight Lectures on Labor, Capital and Social Justice (Detroit: Tower Publications, 1935), pp. 100-114.

<sup>2</sup>Swing, op. cit., p. 54.

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Amy Collins, Coughlin's secretary, claimed that she invested in silver solely on her own responsibility, stating that Coughlin knew nothing of the finances of the Radio League. Coughlin maintained that he would not personally benefit from the silver speculation, and added that he had always advocated the purchase of silver and allied himself with the President in anticipating an increase in the price of silver. The radio priest also countered by attacking Morgenthau as a tool of Wall Street, while the priest, at the same time, praised silver as a "gentile metal."<sup>1</sup> Although his reputation was damaged by this silver disclosure, few people felt that Father Coughlin had personally benefited by this transaction.

It seems that this silver list exposure was the beginning of the break between Coughlin and the Roosevelt Administration. Considering the incident from Father Coughlin's viewpoint, the exposure seems bewildering. Why did Roosevelt permit the list to include Coughlin's organization? He could easily have omitted it, especially since Coughlin had been a former supporter of the New Deal. Viewing the incident from Roosevelt's viewpoint, Coughlin stood in his way while the President tried to fight silver legislation. It is interesting to note that even though this incident took place, Roosevelt surrendered to the silver bloc a month later, and recommended silver legislation which resulted in the Silver Purchase Act of 1934. However, the breach was opened, and it was to result in open hostility and verbal warfare in 1935.

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, April 29, 1934.



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Father Coughlin began his 1934 radio season by warmly endorsing the New Deal. "More than ever I am in favor of the New Deal," he asserted, and he also added that as long as he possessed the power of speech he would support the New Deal.<sup>1</sup> Yet hardly had a week gone by when Coughlin began telling his radio audience that the two-party system was nearly dead. The radio priest was upset that there was no clear-cut distinction between the two major parties, and he advocated the solution of a new political alignment composed of genuinely conservative and liberal parties.<sup>2</sup> While the break was not complete between Coughlin and the Roosevelt Administration, he gave the Democratic Party two years to solve the distribution problem or it would suffer political death.

#### The National Union for Social Justice

On November 11, Father Coughlin announced the formation of the National Union for Social Justice, the membership of which was to be open to persons of all faiths who believed in the necessity of social justice in the economic system of the United States. Coughlin also hinted that his role in this organizing of a powerful lobby to promote social justice would be misinterpreted by his enemies. He knew he might be accused of "doing nothing more than stirring up the people."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, October 29, 1934.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., November 5, 1934.

<sup>3</sup>Charles E. Coughlin, A Series of Lectures on Social Justice (Detroit: Tower Publications, 1935), pp. 16-17.

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The radio priest then announced an elaborate sixteen-point program as the platform of the new national union. The preamble, sounding much like the basic social philosophy found in the papal encyclicals, as well as the sixteen points, helps us to understand Coughlin as well as his movement. Father Coughlin presented them in his radio broadcast of November 11, 1934 as follows:

Establishing my principles upon this preamble, namely, that we are creatures of a beneficent God, made to love and to serve Him in this world and enjoy Him forever in the next; that all this world's wealth of field, of forest, of mine and of miner has been bestowed upon us by a kind Father, therefore I believe that wealth, as we know it, originates from natural resources and from the labor which the children of God expend upon these resources. It is all ours except for the harsh, cruel, and grasping ways of wicked men who first concentrated wealth into the hands of a few, then dominated states, and finally commenced to pit state against state in the frightful catastrophies of commercial warfare.

Following this preamble, there shall be the principles of social justice towards the realization of which we must strive:

1. I believe in liberty of conscience and liberty of education, not permitting the state to dictate either my worship of my God or my chosen avocation in life.
2. I believe that every citizen willing to work shall receive a just, living, annual wage which will enable him both to maintain and educate his family according to the standards of American decency.
3. I believe in nationalizing these public resources which by their very nature are too important to be held in the control of private individuals.
4. I believe in private ownership of all other property.

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5. I believe in upholding the right to private property but in controlling it for the public good.
6. I believe in the abolition of the privately owned Federal Reserve Banking system and the establishment of a government owned Central Bank.
7. I believe in rescuing from the hands of private owners the right to coin and regulate the value of money, which right must be restored to Congress where it belongs.
8. I believe that one of the chief duties of this government owned Central Bank is to maintain the cost of living on an even keel and arrange for the repayment of dollar debts with equal value dollars.
9. I believe in the cost of production plus a fair profit for the farmer.
10. I believe not only in the right of the laboring man to organize in unions but also in the duty of the Government, which that laboring man supports, to protect these organizations against the vested interests of wealth and intellect.
11. I believe in the recall of all non-productive bonds and therefore in the alleviation of taxation.
12. I believe in the abolition of tax exempt bonds.
13. I believe in broadening the base of taxation according to the principles of ownership and the capacity to pay.
14. I believe in the simplification of government and the further lifting of crushing taxation from the slender revenues of the laboring class.
15. I believe that, in the event of a war for the defense of our nation and its liberties, there shall be a conscription of wealth as well as a conscription of men.
16. I believe in preferring the sanctity of human rights to the sanctity of property rights; for the chief concern of government shall be for the poor, because, as it is witnessed, the right have ample means of their own to care for themselves.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>A Series of Lectures, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

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While many Americans considered the monetary provisions quite radical, there is, however, nothing extraordinary in the sixteen points as a whole. These points, coupled with the preamble, sound like many proposals which had formerly appeared in the platform of the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party. Papal encyclicals of Pope Pius XI and Pope Leo XIII had a great influence on this platform, as they did on much of the radio priest's thinking.

There was nothing startlingly new in this political platform. These planks merely outlined much of the thinking of Coughlin, and he had mentioned them all previously in his radio broadcasts: a living wage, control of private property for the common good, absolute government control of all currency, a fair profit for the farmer, the priority of human rights over property rights, and the right of labor to organize.

Father Coughlin insisted that membership in his new organization--it was not a political party but a lobby--was open to all American citizens of every creed and level of society. The priest asked for five million members to transfer his program into a balance of power between the two major political parties, and anyone interested was asked to write the priest and send his name and address. Each member would be enrolled by authorized organizers. Voluntary financial support was to replace the fact that dues of any sort were not to be charged. The radio priest, himself, would draw up "suitable bills" to be submitted to Congress by the lobby.



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In subsequent broadcasts, Coughlin outlined his program of social justice. For example, on November 18, he outlined nine principles which clarified the meaning of point two-- "a just and annual wage," stating that the Government has the right to regulate both property and industry whenever it becomes necessary to insure an equitable distribution of wealth. The radio priest defended the right of the individual to own private property and made the ownership of property a desired goal of the working man.<sup>1</sup>

In the following weeks, Father Coughlin became very critical of American Capitalism. Just what he envisioned to replace the "old capitalism" is not quite clear. Since Coughlin was opposed to communism, socialism, and capitalism, he was left one label--fascism. Raymond Gram Swing compared Coughlin to Hitler: "But more nearly than any demagogue in America he has the formula for a fascist party, a semi-radical program which is 'safe' on the labor question, which guarantees the profit system, and which appeals simultaneously to agriculture, the middle class, and the big employer."<sup>2</sup>

Whether he can properly be called a fascist or not, the priest was very vague; and much confusion could have been avoided had he been more specific in advocating reforms.

On December 9, 1934, Father Coughlin attacked the American Liberty League, the financial community, and Cardinal O'Connell; and he announced his plan for a \$10,000,000,000

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 25-28.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 43-45.

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public works project--all in one broadcast. First on the program, Coughlin attacked the American Liberty League's emphasis on property rights and its neglect of human rights. The radio priest reminded Al Smith that the doctrine of the League was not the doctrine of the Catholic Church.<sup>1</sup> Then Coughlin began to attack his favorite target--the banker. He belittled the banker by calling him a "comedian" who not only made the masses poorer but had the gall to expect their admiration and respect.

Perhaps the biggest bombshell was Coughlin's proposal that the government institute a large public works program to guarantee steady employment for all workers willing to work.

To raise the \$10,000,000,000 needed to finance this project, Coughlin suggested that the United States issue the sum of \$5,000,000,000 against the treasury's holdings of twice that figure in metallic money and another \$5,000,000,000 as purely credit money. He stressed that no money was to be borrowed from the bankers. With this scheme, Coughlin predicted the end of depressions forever, stating that in periods of peak business activity, the government would slacken its pace. However, the program would remain in existence prepared to provide useful employment at the minimum rate of \$1500 a year for anyone not absorbed into private industry.

On December 9, 1934, the radio priest lashed out at Cardinal O'Connell of Boston. The Cardinal had, on numerous

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

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occasions, spoken out against Father Coughlin, and now the priest took O'Connell to task:

For forty years William Cardinal O'Connell has been more notorious for his silence on social justice than for any contribution which he may have given either in practice or in doctrine towards the decentralization of wealth and towards the elimination of those glaring injustices which permitted the plutocrats of this nation to wax fat at the expense of the poor. Now he castigates me for doing what he was expected to do.

William Cardinal O'Connell practically accuses me of misinterpreting the Encyclicals of both Leo XIII and Pius XI.

Every word that I have ever written has received the imprimatur of my Right Reverend Bishop. When this is taken into consideration William Cardinal O'Connell practically accuses a brother Bishop, who for years has been famed in Michigan for his defense of the poor and for his opposition to the type of pampered evils which have been so rampant in the textile industries of New England.<sup>1</sup>

Father Coughlin also made it a special point to explain that Cardinal O'Connell had absolutely no authority in the Church outside of his own Boston See. Coughlin was not in that territory.

The final radio broadcast of the 1934 season found Father Coughlin repeating his old theme--the demand that Congress assert its constitutional authority and nationalize all currency. Perhaps the most astounding statement made to this date by the radio priest was that he saw no hope for modern capitalism and no hope for democracy in America.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 70-71.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p

<sup>2</sup>Tull, o

Coughlin stated that the United States would have to give way to communism, fascism, socialism, or Hitlerism, or else construct a new system of social justice. Rejecting the four "isms", Coughlin stated that America's only salvation lay in social justice. Speaking of social justice, the priest stated: "Seeking no compromise, enticing no man by vain promises, it writes down a platform for today, with principles of truth, of justice, or humanity."<sup>1</sup>

Father Coughlin was very vague in this broadcast. There were no details given as to how the economy should be operated. He condemned capitalism, yet suggested nothing concrete to replace it.

. . .It is all too easy to say that capitalism must go, but the responsible critic must posit a workable alternative. In the light of Coughlin's past and future statements it would appear that he really meant that the principles of Christian social justice must be applied to American capitalism by means of sweeping government controls. But this is not what he said on December 30, 1934, and many people then<sup>2</sup> and later were confused as to his intentions.

In the beginning of 1935, Coughlin continued to praise Roosevelt, and he especially praised the President's State of the Union message in which Roosevelt asked for renewed efforts to fight the depression. Although the radio priest had a few kind words of praise for the President's new public works program, beneath all this praise, Coughlin was still convinced that money and the control of credit were at the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 98-99.

<sup>2</sup>Tull, op. cit., p. 73.



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root of the nation's economic problems. Coughlin then stated that Roosevelt's Administration had already borrowed \$8,000,000,000 in the first two years and that it would cost the nation \$14,400,000,000 by the time the loan was paid in full.

Shortly after this, on January 27, 1935, Coughlin once again attacked the Roosevelt Administration-supported proposal to have the United States join the World Court. He began his speech with these arousing words: "My friends: If I am properly informed--Tuesday of this week--Tuesday, January 29--will be remembered by our offspring as the day which overshadowed July 4. The one day was associated with our independence. The other with our stupid betrayal."<sup>1</sup>

Insisting that the Senators were ignorant of the true facts, the priest stated that the facts were that the World Court and the League of Nations were both organized by the international bankers and their cohorts. He demanded that the United States should refrain from any participation in the affairs of Europe and that the United States could never surrender any of its sovereignty for any reason. Coughlin then appealed to the isolationist foreign policies of Washington and Jefferson, as he interpreted them.

On Monday, January 28, 1935, Father Coughlin scheduled a special broadcast to repeat his charges against the World Court. Coughlin's talks brought a flood of telegrams, and these telegrams appeared to be a deciding factor in preventing

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<sup>1</sup>A Series of Lectures, op. cit., p. 117.

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the proposal from receiving the necessary two-thirds majority. The radio priest cannot claim all the credit, because William Randolph Hearst's newspaper chain also opposed the legislation of the bill. The New York Times perhaps best sums it up: "Intensive propaganda, which Democratic leaders declared originated with Father Coughlin and the Hearst newspapers and was finally expressed in 40,000 telegrams in the last two days, played an important part in the defeat."<sup>1</sup>

One month after this episode of the World Court, Father Coughlin made his first direct attack on President Roosevelt. The radio priest charged that the Roosevelt Administration was "wedded basically to the philosophy of the money changers" and the administration was concerned in keeping America safe for the "plutocrats." Coughlin also charged the administration with failure to issue more paper currency as well as the government's failure to halt governmental borrowing from the bankers. This was the first attack against Roosevelt, charging that he was in league with the money-changers.

At this time, 1935, Father Coughlin announced to the radio audience that the National Union for Social Justice was \$41,000 in debt and needed financial aid; he could not continue without funds to pay the expenses of the National Union. A week later he announced that several thousand letters had come in, many of which contained donations.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, January 29, 1935.

<sup>2</sup>A Series of Lectures, op. cit., p. 152.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.,

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On this same radio program of February 3, 1935, the radio priest explained part of his sixteen-point program. On the topic of monetary control, he stated that his purpose was not to drive out any banker who was willing to cooperate and loan genuine United States currency. He did, however, repeat his demand for a central bank; and he also castigated the Federal Reserve system once again.

On his broadcast in February, Coughlin continued to explain his program of social justice. Very bitterly attacking the Roosevelt Administration, he charged it with having communistic leanings. What really aroused the priest's anger was an attempt to obtain a charter for "The Public Works Emergency Leasing Corporation," which would have given the PWA authority to acquire private property and businesses. Coughlin insisted that this meant that the government was assuming the right to confiscate private businesses at its discretion.<sup>1</sup> Shortly after this, "The Public Works and Emergency Leasing Corporation" charter was withdrawn.

Father Coughlin devoted his March 3 broadcast to belittling the first two years of the New Deal. He stated: "The first two years of the New Deal shall be remembered as two years of compromise, two years of social planning, two years of endeavoring to mix bad with good, two years of surrender, two years of matching the puerile, puny brains of idealists against the virile viciousness of business and finance."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 152-159.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 193-96.

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In this same broadcast the priest criticized the President for not using the Sherman law to curb the monetary system. He also attacked the NRA by stating that prices rose more than wages under the NRA.

On March 4, General Hugh Johnson, former NRA chief, broadcast an attack on Father Coughlin and Huey Long, the Senator from Louisiana. Johnson charged that Coughlin and Long were both a menace to the nation, and he told Coughlin to get out of politics and to remain in the priesthood. Johnson said that a political alliance had been formed between Long and Coughlin, and stated: "These two men are raging up and down this land preaching not construction, but destruction--not reform but revolution, not peace but--a sword. I think we are dealing with a couple of Catilines, and that it is high time for someone to say so."<sup>1</sup>

Father Coughlin was offered equal time by NBC to answer Johnson, and he accepted. The radio priest defended his right to speak out on politics, stating that he, personally, had not benefitted from any of his activities. He did admit, however, that while the Radio League had made \$12,000 on silver futures, he had not benefitted from it. Coughlin then called Johnson, "a political corpse," and "the chocolate soldier," as well as the "first great casualty" of the New Deal experimentation. The priest stated that Johnson was merely a mouthpiece of Bernard Baruch and Wall Street. He

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<sup>1</sup>"Pied Pipers," Vital Speeches, March 11, 1935.



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then issued a denial that he had broken with President Roosevelt:

An entire nation knows that his statement is palpably untrue. . . My friends in this audience, I still proclaim to you that it is either Roosevelt or Ruin! I support him today and will support him tomorrow because we are neither going back to the individualism of the past nor are we going forward to Communism.<sup>1</sup>

Father Coughlin's association with Huey Long, the Senator from Louisiana, had gained national attention, and both Long and Coughlin were considered by many to constitute a serious threat to democracy in America in 1935. Raymond Gram Swing states that these two were the advance agents of American fascism. Norman Thomas, of the American Socialists, also contended that these two men were both leaning in the direction of fascism.<sup>2</sup>

Whether Father Coughlin can properly be called a fascist or not, he did manage to make many highly controversial statements. One question asked by many people at this time was, "How can Father Coughlin get away with it?" To answer this question, one must understand the "chain of command" in the Roman Catholic Church. Father Coughlin was directly responsible to only one man, his bishop, who was directly responsible to the Pope. Only rarely does a Pontiff ever intervene directly without going through the proper channels. Father Charles Edward Coughlin had the full support of his

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, March 12, 1935.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., April 22, 1935.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.,

immediate religious superior, Bishop Michael James Gallagher of Detroit. Their relationship can be explained by a statement which Gallagher issued in the spring of 1935: "I pronounce Father Coughlin sound in doctrine, able in application and interpretation."<sup>1</sup> While there was a great deal of adverse opinion at this time from other Cardinals and Bishops, Father Coughlin was directly responsible only to one man--his Bishop. And the priest had Gallagher's full support.

Another persistent question asked is, "How did people like Father Coughlin and Huey Long gain so much attention of the nation?" That question can be answered by looking at the economic conditions of the period--the nation was experiencing one of the worst depressions it had ever had; and as late as 1935, there were still as many as ten million people unemployed. The American people wanted answers to questions, and they wanted them fast; Coughlin and Long appeared to them to have the answers.

As mentioned previously, the radio priest usually ended his broadcasts in early April; however, early in 1935, he arranged for thirteen additional weeks of air time beginning April 28.<sup>2</sup> At this time Coughlin also began a series of public rallies to spark enthusiasm for the National Union for Social Justice and to make it a potent pressure group. The first meeting was held in Detroit, and fifteen thousand people went to Olympia Auditorium to hear the radio priest

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., March 31, 1935.

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launch the Michigan chapter of the national organization. At this meeting Coughlin endorsed six important measures then being considered by Congress: (1) Frazier-Lemke farm mortgage bill, (2) Wagner Labor Bill, (3) Wheeler Holding Company Act, (4) Nye Munitions Bill, (5) Nye-Sweeney coinage bill, and (6) veterans' bonus. At this meeting the radio priest also stated that he would retire from active political affairs as soon as the National Union for Social Justice was properly under way.

Father Coughlin staged a second national rally in Cleveland, Ohio, on March 8, 1935. There he spoke to a crowd estimated at twenty-five thousand, attacking the Eccles Bill, the administration-backed bank reform bill. Stating that this bill would make the President the financial dictator of the United States, Coughlin also condemned the Federal Reserve System, stating that it was like "a marriage license between a prostitute who has wrecked our home and the government who has deserted his wife, the American people."<sup>1</sup> He then demanded that the Federal Reserve be scrapped and be replaced by a government-owned Central Bank.

On May 22, 1935, Father Coughlin appeared in Madison Square Garden, but prior to the speech date he granted a news conference. Coughlin told the press that he had no personal political ambitions and indicated that there was a possibility he might support Roosevelt. "I sincerely hope

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<sup>1</sup>Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., The Politics of Upheaval (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1960), pp. 299-300.

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to be able to support Mr. Roosevelt again. I said hope. He has given expression to the greatest social philosophy that has ever been initiated by any country. Now we have hope that he will put it into practice."<sup>1</sup>

The night after this newspaper interview, Father Coughlin spoke in Madison Square Garden to a crowd of twenty-three thousand listeners. Basically, in this speech he attacked the capitalistic system and the Roosevelt Administration. President Roosevelt was attacked for vetoing the veterans' bonus bill, a bill that the priest had gone on record as supporting. Coughlin also attacked the President for tolerating the low wages paid relief workers--such wages, Coughlin maintained, encouraged the growth and spread of communism among the poor.

Father Coughlin then briefly summarized the National Union for Social Justice platform. Basically, it was: (1) protection for small businessmen and industrialists, (2) production at a profit for the farmer, and (3) a just and living wage for the laborer. The National Union was going to achieve these reforms not as a political party but rather as a lobby, representing the people.

In July, August, and September of 1935, the radio priest seemed to be making plans for the National Union for Social Justice. During this time he planned another public rally in Soldier's Field, Chicago, but was denied permission

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, May 22, 1935.



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to rent the field by the Chicago Park Board. Coughlin fought this in the lower courts and won; however, the Park Board won its appeal and barred him from using the field. (The decision of the Chicago Park Board not to rent the field to Coughlin is not understandable, since they had allowed American fascists to conduct meetings in this same field.<sup>1</sup>)

In the fall of 1935, Coughlin began a new series of radio programs and issued an alternative to Congress to enact social justice legislation or face political annihilation at the polls. Coughlin stated that "the hunting season for members of Congress is on." He denied any third party intentions, but announced that he was compiling a record of every representative or senator "either to applaud him as a patriot or lash him as a Benedict Arnold." Coughlin stated that the American people must remove members of Congress who had "lost sight of their duty," and he also predicted that he might have to change his slogan of "Roosevelt or Ruin" to "Roosevelt and Ruin." In this same address, warning that the United States was going to fight a war to preserve the British international bankers, the priest also had a few warm words for Italy and championed its cause.

The complete break with the Roosevelt Administration came when, on November 17, 1935, Coughlin informed his radio audience that the principles of the New Deal were incompatible with the principles of Social Justice. The Roosevelt

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, July 3, 27, 1935.

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2. Ibid.

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Administration, he said, had embraced two conflicting extremes, communistic tendencies and plutocracy, and was no longer deserving of support. Thus, any political alliance Coughlin may have had with the Roosevelt Administration was certainly shattered by this speech.<sup>1</sup>

Later in November, 1935, one week after Coughlin had made his complete break with the New Deal, he began concentrating on foreign affairs. In this broadcast, he accused Roosevelt's roving ambassador, Norman Davis, of secretly pledging help to the League of Nations in imposing sanctions on Italy for her aggression against Ethiopia. Coughlin then forecast that such meddling in the affairs of other nations would lead the United States into a general war by 1937.<sup>2</sup>

In his December 1, 1935, radio broadcast the radio priest must have shown more than a few listeners that he really did not know his own mind. Speaking on the New Deal, once again, which he had previously renounced, he changed his position. He stated that he had no desire to obstruct the New Deal, only to perfect it. Coughlin explained that he was not opposed to the New Deal, but he was opposed to its reactionary tendencies and its extravagant experiments. Conceding that President Roosevelt's election of 1932 prevented a revolution, he also declared that the President was not "the only man who can save America."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, November 18, 1935.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., November 25, 1935.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., December 2, 1935.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p.

In the latter part of November, 1935, rumors began to spread that Father Coughlin planned to join with Dr. Francis E. Townsend, the elderly California doctor who had a pension plan that attracted nation-wide attention in the 1930's. Townsend visited Coughlin at Royal Oak; and it appeared that the two had joined forces, although the doctor denied that any alliance had been cemented or was even contemplated. The doctor did state, however, that the radio priest had sanctioned his old age pension plan.<sup>1</sup>

On his last radio program of December, 1935, the radio priest announced to his listeners that he planned to begin a weekly newspaper if one million listeners would send him a vote of confidence. The proposed paper was not only to report the news, he added, but to interpret it as well.

In January, 1936, Father Coughlin announced that he had organized National Union for Social Justice units in 302 of the nation's 435 congressional districts. This was definitely a warning to congressmen that his lobby meant business.<sup>2</sup>

Early in February, 1936, Coughlin began to speak for passage of the Frazier-Lemke Bill, which he had previously advocated. Basically, this was a farm mortgage bill which was sponsored by Senator Lynn Frazier and Representative William Lemke, both from North Dakota. This bill provided for the federal government to act through the Farm Credit Administration and the Federal Reserve System, to purchase

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., November 25, 1935.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., January 6, 1936.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.,

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.,

all farm mortgages and allow the farmers gradually to pay them off at  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent interest. The farmers, of course, applauded this measure, because they had been paying very high interest rates, and farms were being lost at the rate of two thousand a day. However, the non-agrarian portions of society were alarmed because it appeared that the farmers were demanding "soft money" during a depression.<sup>1</sup>

The Frazier-Lemke Bill was considered in the legislature of thirty-three states, and these states adopted resolutions advocating its passage. However, Representative John O'Connor of New York, who headed the Rules Committee, tried to bottle up the bill.

Coughlin then began to attack Roosevelt on the radio, stating that the President had better endorse the bill or be responsible for its death in committee. Coughlin also stated that Roosevelt had pledged himself to support the principles of this bill in his campaign of 1932. Now, Coughlin insisted, he had betrayed the farmers. "Not once have you intervened for the bill which you promised to sustain. . . Meanwhile 32,000,000 residents of farm states of America. . . raised their voices to highest heaven for vengeance which God will not deny."<sup>2</sup>

Father Coughlin then attacked Representative O'Connor, saying that O'Connor was a servant of the money changers. He also ordered O'Connor to release the bill or resign from

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., February 3, 1936.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., February 17, 1936.



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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

Congress. Coughlin accused the New Yorker of cowing House members into removing their signatures from a petition which the bill's supporters were circulating. O'Connor's purpose was, Coughlin maintained, to force the measure out onto the House floor for discussion.<sup>1</sup>

O'Connor denied any attempt to coerce anyone. The Representative denounced Father Coughlin as a disgrace to any church, and he sent Coughlin a telegram which read:

Just read your libelous radio rambling. The truth is not in you. You are a disgrace to my church and any other church and especially to the citizenship of America which you recently embraced. You do not dare print what you said to me. . . If you will please come to Washington I shall guarantee to kick you all the way from the capital to the White House with clerical garb and all the silver in your pockets which you got from speculating in Wall Street while I was voting for all the farm bills. Come on!<sup>2</sup>

On February 17, Representative Martin Sweeney of Ohio read to the House the O'Connor telegram and shouted, "He accepts your challenge and will be here at 10 o'clock tomorrow morning." Later that day it was announced that Father Coughlin would not arrive in Washington until February 26.<sup>3</sup>

Representative O'Connor continued his attack on the radio priest:

Every decent Catholic in America has been ashamed of him since he came to this country. There isn't a clergyman of the Catholic Church except one that I know of who has approved of his desecration of the cloth by his intrusion into politics.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

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I personally never heard a Catholic priest talk politics from the pulpit. In the old days of prohibition and the KKK the cry of many of us to Bishop Cannon was "Back to the pulpit, stay where you belong."

Just because Father Coughlin is an egomaniac he thinks he can run the government. He stepped into the bonus bill and world court issues, but he had as much to do with the Congressional action on them as any elevator operator in the Capital.

When he saw the Frazier-Lemke petition needed only four signatures he stepped into that.

He is ineligible to run for President, but most people would welcome his attempt to run for any other office.

While purporting to be for the bonus, he told American Legion commanders that he was for the economy bill; that the soldiers had too much already.

In a conference with fifteen Senators last year after the House had passed the Patman Bonus Bill, one of his aides started to dictate what kind of bill the Senators should introduce and when they made certain suggestions this man said, "Father Coughlin will not let you propose any such bill."<sup>1</sup>

Father Coughlin's defense was made in the House by Representative Sweeney, who accused O'Connor of stirring up intolerance when he brought up the issue of a priest in politics. At the height of his speech, Sweeney turned to the House Chaplain and asked: "Is it politics for a man of Christ to rise on Sunday in a pulpit or by a microphone and beg to change an economic system that allows children to go to garbage cans in search of food?" Sweeney continued: "Thank God for men like him who have the courage to stand on

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., February 18, 1936.

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<sup>1</sup> New York Ti

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., Febr

Sunday and speak to unseeing millions, 30, 40, 50 million people about this situation."<sup>1</sup>

On February 23, Father Coughlin devoted his entire radio broadcast to the O'Connor incident. Stating that he was not defending himself, but the National Union for Social Justice, Coughlin read over the air a telegram he had received from a Representative Theodore L. Moritz of Pennsylvania: "I was persuaded to remove my name from the Frazier-Lemke petition by Congressman John J. O'Connor, Chariman of the Rules Committee. He said I was embarrassing the President by supporting this petition."<sup>2</sup> These words must have been music to the ears of the radio priest.

Bishop Gallagher was questioned by newspaper reporters concerning the O'Connor incident, and he stated that he planned to take no sides on the matter. He did comment that he was still supporting Father Coughlin all the way, and added: ". . .a Representative ought to know the only way to answer argument is by counter-argument and not by little-boy-tactics." The Bishop could not resist adding a little verbal poke at O'Connor: "Moreover it is presumptuous of Representative O'Connor to assume that he can kick Father Coughlin all the way down Pennsylvania Avenue."<sup>3</sup>

On February 26 it was announced that Father Coughlin was cancelling his Washington trip.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, February 19, 1936.

<sup>2</sup>Social Justice, March 13, 1936.

<sup>3</sup>New York Times, February 19, 1936.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., February 27, 1936.

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The radio priest continued to fight for the Frazier-Lemke Bill through his weekly newspaper called Social Justice. The first issue of this paper appeared on March 13, 1936; and during the first few months of its publication, Father Coughlin wrote many of the articles appearing in it. The editorship of the paper was assumed shortly after by E. Perrin Schwartz, former city editor of the Milwaukee Journal, who was to remain editor until the newspaper went out of publication in 1942.

The National Union for Social Justice was organized, at first, in local units of not fewer than 100 members, and each unit was to elect its own president. Each congressional district was also to have its own president, and the elected state supervisor was to direct the state organization. Father Coughlin was to be the National President, with twelve regional supervisors directly under his charge. No single unit was to have less than 250 enrolled, although the minimum number of enrollment was later dropped to 50.<sup>1</sup>

The National Union for Social Justice recommended that local unit meetings be held once a month; and at these meetings the unit president would read a message from the National President, Father Coughlin. The members were also urged to enter into serious discussions based on the sixteen principles of social justice.

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<sup>1</sup>Social Justice, March 20, 27, 1936.



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The meetings were to end with a recitation of the social justice pledge: "I pledge to follow the example of Jesus Christ who drove the money changers from the temple because they exploited the poor." Some members objected to the prayer, but Coughlin insisted that it was mandatory. A sergeant-at-arms was to be appointed by each unit to check the validity of membership cards, and no one was allowed to address the groups unless he be a member or unless he be approved by the state officers.

On April 20, 1936, the National Union for Social Justice filed its first financial report according to the provisions of the Corrupt Practices Act. It stated that it had raised over \$100,000 in the preceding two months, but that most of this sum had been borrowed from the Radio League of the Little Flower, and some had been borrowed from Father Coughlin's parish. The Radio League of the Little Flower not only provided most of the financial backing, but it also supplied free clerical help, free office space, and machinery. Coughlin's report stated that all the money was spent for legitimate expenses of the national unit.

On numerous occasions Coughlin asked the National Union to endorse only candidates who openly supported the sixteen points of the National Union. Party affiliation was not a factor in endorsing candidates, because to qualify for endorsement by the National Union for Social Justice the candidate was expected to publish his pledge to the principles of social justice. The central office reserved the right to

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The National Union for Social Justice held its first congressional district meeting on April 5, 1936. Members in attendance constituted the officers of the local units and elected delegates who represented units of 100 or more members. Father Coughlin attacked both political parties for their failure to reform the monetary system: "Both have wedded their destinies to those of the international banker. Both subscribe to the common policy of financial slavery for the inarticulate masses."<sup>2</sup> The radio priest then showed a change of mind by stating that a congressional candidate would not have to endorse social justice formally but that candidate would be judged on his past record. However, once the candidate accepted the support of the National Union For Social Justice, he must pledge in writing to work for congressional control of currency.<sup>3</sup>

In the Pennsylvania primary of April 28, the National Union for Social Justice endorsed twenty-four candidates in the thirty-four congressional districts. Twelve of those candidates won, and the National Union then entered the Ohio primary and won nominations in thirteen of the eighteen congressional districts in which it had entered candidates.

In the Spring of 1936 Father Coughlin devoted much of his time to the passage of the Frazier-Lenke Bill, but

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<sup>1</sup>Social Justice, March 20, 1936.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., April 17, 1936.

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the bill was defeated in Congress, 235-142, and a final attempt to pass it in the Senate as an amendment to the Guffey Cash Act failed by a 34-17 vote in July.

Father Coughlin fought back in Social Justice and attacked the opponents of monetary reform in both parties who had defeated the bill.

In 1936 rumors were circulating that Father Coughlin was going to form a new political party by joining his National Union for Social Justice members with those of Dr. Townsend. In the May 29, 1936 issue of Social Justice he implied that bigger victories were ahead. His final paragraph was: "Within two or three weeks, I shall be able to disclose to you the first chapter of a plan, which if followed, will discomfort the erstwhile sham battlers, both Republican and Democrat. We must go to victory from the primaries."<sup>1</sup>

When he was questioned by New York reporters, Father Coughlin denied any intentions of forming a third party. He did state, however, that he would not and could not support Roosevelt in any case. The radio priest indicated that he would consider supporting the Republicans if they reformed and nominated a good candidate. Coughlin was definite in that he would not consider supporting "Alf" Landon, Governor of Kansas, who was already considered the current favorite of the Republican Party.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Social Justice, May 29, 1936.

<sup>2</sup>New York Times, May 29, 1936.

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<sup>1</sup>Social Ju

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In his "Weekly Letter" of the June 5 publication of Social Justice Father Coughlin was once more bitterly opposed to the Roosevelt Administration and the New Deal. Attacking the President because he failed to reform the monetary system, Coughlin then went on to link Roosevelt with communism: "The opposing lines are already drawn. The Roosevelt Administration, on one hand, bent on communistic revolution; on the other, a public opinion progressively enlightened, as never before, on matters of monetary finance." Coughlin then accused Roosevelt of trying to establish a dictatorship in America.

Although Father Coughlin denied any third-party intentions, he gave every indication that he was about to begin a new political movement. In the June 12 publication of Social Justice the priest stated: "The activities of the National Union will increase tremendously immediately following June 16th or 17th. Approximately at that time I shall lay down a plan for action which will thrill you and inspire you beyond anything that I have ever said or accomplished in the past." Hinting at the possibility of a new party, he asked his followers to be patient and to have faith in him.<sup>1</sup>

On June 19, 1936, Father Coughlin hinted to a reporter that he considered a third party near.<sup>2</sup> It was generally agreed that Coughlin was going to name his own presidential candidate; and finally, on June 19, he announced on the radio

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<sup>1</sup>Social Justice, June 12, 1936.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., June 22, 1936.



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his support of Representative William Lemke, later called "Liberty Bill", for President on a new Union Party ticket. Coughlin was especially critical of Franklin D. Roosevelt:

At least, when the most brilliant minds among the industrialists, bankers, and their kept politicians had failed to solve these questions on the principles upon which the Old Deal had operated, there appeared upon the scene of our national life a new champion of the people, Franklin D. Roosevelt. He spoke golden words of hope to the people. Never since the days of the gentle Master and His Sermon on the Mount were such humanitarian principles enunciated. . . .It is not pleasant for me who coined the phrase "Roosevelt or Ruin"--a phrase based upon promises--to voice such passionate words. But I am constrained to admit that "Roosevelt AND Ruin" is the order of the day because the money changers have not been driven from the temple.<sup>1</sup>

Speaking of Lemke, Father Coughlin stated that Lemke was not bound to either major political party and therein lay America's only hope. Technically, Father Coughlin did not actually nominate William Lemke; he merely declared him "eligible for endorsement" by the National Union for Social Justice. Coughlin invited support of the Townsendites, farmers, and other groups to rally around and support "Liberty Bill" Lemke. In rather dramatic tones, Father Coughlin stated that he saw a great similarity between Lemke and Abraham Lincoln, as well as similarities of their parties. He stated that Lemke had chosen Thomas C. O'Brien of Massachusetts as his vice-presidential running mate.

A brief background of this Presidential candidate may provide insights to the times as well as to the political

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

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lobby which Coughlin helped to create. William Lemke was considered to have a strong following in the farm belt because he had persistently fought to champion farm legislation. Lemke was best known for battling for the unsuccessful enactment of the Frazier-Lemke farm mortgage bill. He was born in Stearns County, North Dakota, and was a graduate of the University of North Dakota as well as the Yale Law School. Lemke had written Crimes Against Mexico, an attack on President Wilson's Mexican policy.

William Lemke was active in North Dakota politics, and was a registered Republican who had previously served as an attorney general of the state. In 1922, he lost the governorship of North Dakota, but went on to Congress in 1932 and was reelected in 1934. Although Lemke ran for President on the Union Party ticket, he was, of course, defeated and later reelected to Congress on the Republican ticket.

It is interesting to note that in personally endorsing Lemke, Father Coughlin had failed to consult the officers of his own organization as well as failing to consult Townsend or Gerald L. K. Smith, who now led the Share-the-Wealthers of deceased Huey Long. Both Smith and Townsend stated that they would have to consult their followers before committing themselves to Coughlin's choice of candidates. Eventually, however, both men campaigned for Lemke.

It was clear from the beginning that "Liberty Bill" would need the combined support of the National Union, the

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Share-the-Wealthers, and the Townsend Clubs to carry any political weight. Father Coughlin claimed to have 5,000,000 members in his National Union; Smith claimed control of 3,000,000 votes; and Townsend boasted 5,000,000 members who could influence 20,000,000 votes.<sup>1</sup>

None of the important newspapers supported Lemke or his party. One article stated that the Union Party was the beginning of the Catholic Church's entering politics in America. The writer backed up his point with three reasons: (1) Coughlin was the logical choice to organize Christian Socialism in America. (2) The Vatican was losing influence all over the world; it was relying more and more on the United States. (3) Many American Catholics were upset with Roosevelt on religious grounds. His wife supported birth control, and his son was divorced. Also, Roosevelt had appointed an anti-Catholic, Josephus Daniels, as ambassador to Mexico.<sup>2</sup>

The fact that not one Catholic Bishop or Cardinal supported Father Coughlin, with the exception of his own Bishop, would seem to deny that the Catholic Church was entering American politics.

The platform of the Union Party, as with many political parties, was extremely vague. It was based, primarily, on the National Union for Social Justice sixteen points previously mentioned. There were few ideas from the Townsendites and

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, June 24, 1936.

<sup>2</sup>T.R.B. (Political Columnist) "Washington Notes," New Republic, July 8, 1936, pp. 34-36.

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the Share-the-Wealthers in the platform. The platform did include the direct coinage of money by Congress, the enactment of Coughlin's central bank scheme, and the recall of all interest-bearing bonds. There was a promise of production at a profit for the farmers; but generally speaking, the platform was particularly vague as to how all these goals were to be accomplished.

On July 4th, the Union Party campaign was officially under way. In Brockton, Massachusetts, Father Coughlin lashed out at the Roosevelt Administration before a group of ten thousand supporters. He took the opportunity once again to denounce the President and the New Deal by stating that Roosevelt had "out-Hoovered Hoover" by raising the national debt to \$35,000,000,000.

Later in July, Father Coughlin met with the Townsendites and Dr. Townsend in Cleveland, where an elderly audience of ten thousand enthusiastic listeners was addressed by the eloquent radio priest. Coughlin assured them that they would not lose their identity as a group by supporting Lemke. The Royal Oak orator then asked all those who supported Lemke to stand up, and all stood. Then in the heat of passion, Father Coughlin ripped off his coat and clerical collar and called Roosevelt that great "liar" and "betrayor" for not fulfilling his pledges about monetary reform. Then Coughlin yelled that the initials F.D.R. really stood for "Franklin Double-crossing Roosevelt", and further added that Roosevelt was receiving support from the communists.



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After Father Coughlin called the President of the United States a "liar" and "betrayer" before a crowd of ten thousand people, there was a tremendous reaction. Those who felt that Coughlin had gone too far as a priest heard Bishop Gallagher state: "There are a lot of people who would like him out of the way, but as far as I am concerned, and he is directly under my authority, he is working along the right path and he has my support."<sup>1</sup> Shortly after this comment, Gallagher sailed for Rome, and rumors circulated that the Vatican was going to crack down on Coughlin.

Only July 23, Father Coughlin apologized publicly to President Roosevelt. In his apology he explained that he was speaking in an extemporaneous manner and had used the term "liar" in the heat of passion. In the apology Coughlin reminded Roosevelt that he was an early supporter of the President and considered himself partly responsible for Roosevelt's election. "I was one of the first, and not one of the least, to help you to attain the presidency." Coughlin concluded by saying that he still had high regard for Roosevelt as a man and a fellow citizen, but not as a President.<sup>2</sup>

Coughlin campaigned for Lemke in various states during the summer of 1936, and in August his attacks took on a bitter tone. The radio priest spoke before a crowd of ten

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, July 29, 1936.

<sup>2</sup>Social Justice, July 27, 1936.

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thousand at Worcester, Massachusetts, and stated that Alf Landon was a "menace" and predicted a revolution if he were elected President. The next day at New Bedford, Massachusetts, Coughlin turned to attack Roosevelt once again and called him a Communist: "As I was instrumental in removing Herbert Hoover from the White House, so help me God, I will be instrumental in taking a Communist out of the chair once occupied by Washington."<sup>1</sup>

The national convention of the National Union for Social Justice was held at Cleveland, Ohio on August 13-16. At this convention the members ratified the nomination of Lemke for President. The National Union sent ten thousand delegates to Cleveland, although its total membership was estimated by Social Justice at six million. At this national convention, union members purchased 11,500 pictures of Father Coughlin at 25 cents each.

The keynote address was given by a senator from West Virginia, and the senator had nothing but praise for the sixteen-point program of the National Union for Social Justice.

Father Coughlin, to no one's surprise, was elected President of the National Union for Social Justice, and Lemke was endorsed by the convention with a vote of 8,152 to 1. The lone dissenting voter was nearly beaten by the crowd.

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, August 3, 1936.

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Coughlin spoke to a group of reporters during the final business session of the convention, and the priest challenged all Jews to adopt the Christian view of "love thy neighbor as thyself" in place of the old Hebrew law of "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." Coughlin also said that the Jews had been forced by Christians to become money-lenders, and he also stated that the time had come for the Jews to act like good Christians. Later Coughlin was criticized for castigating the Jews, but he vigorously denied that he had spoken any more harshly of them than he had of the Christians.

Forty-two thousand members of the National Union for Social Justice attended the outdoor rally that ended the convention at Cleveland Municipal Stadium on Sunday afternoon. The audience heard Father Coughlin pledge himself to fight for monetary reform, and the radio priest stated that the Government lacked "Christian charity". Coughlin then made a rash promise: "If I don't deliver 9,000,000 votes for William Lemke, I'm through with radio forever." After these words he collapsed with heat prostration and nervous indigestion and had to be assisted off the platform.

Although "Liberty Bill" Lemke and O'Brien both spoke at the convention, there was no doubt that Father Coughlin's speech was the high point of the rally.

It may be wondered how a Catholic priest was allowed to play an active role in American politics, especially when American tradition and the Catholic Church were both against

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such an endeavor. Coughlin got around this by emphasizing that the National Union for Social Justice did not endorse the Union Party--it endorsed only the candidates as individuals. All along, the radio priest maintained that he was not being political but that he merely headed a group which was dedicated to the bettering of the government.<sup>1</sup>

In September, 1936, there were evidences that the radio priest was headed for trouble with church hierarchy. The Vatican newspaper Osservatore Romano chastized Father Coughlin for criticizing the Roosevelt Administration. The paper stated: ". . . an orator who inveighs against persons who represent the supreme social authorities with the evident danger of shaking the respect that the people owe to these authorities, sins against elementary proprieties. The impropriety is greater as well as more evident when he speaks as a priest." The newspaper also inferred that Bishop Gallagher's statement that "the Holy See fully approved Father Coughlin's activities" did not correspond with the truth. The Vatican did approve of Coughlin's preaching the social encyclicals, but it was disturbed that his attack on Roosevelt might undermine respect for all authority.<sup>2</sup>

The day after the American publication of the Vatican paper, Bishop Gallagher arrived home from Rome, and Father Coughlin was on hand to greet him. Newspaper reporters were also there to question them, and Bishop Gallagher told the

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, August 10, 1936; Social Justice, August 17, 1936.

<sup>2</sup>New York Times, September 3, 1936.



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enthusiastic crowd: "It's the voice of God that comes to you from the great orator of Royal Oak. Rally around it."<sup>1</sup> The Bishop then denied that the Vatican had disciplined Father Coughlin, and he also stated that the Osservatore Romano was not the official paper of the Vatican. (While this is true, the newspaper is generally thought to reflect Vatican policy on most current issues.)

Perhaps the most successful meeting Coughlin ever held was the meeting at Riverside Park, Chicago, early in September, 1936. Eighty thousand people paid fifty cents each to hear Coughlin speak out against the Roosevelt Administration. The radio priest briefly referred to the Vatican newspaper incident: "Don't let them deceive you that the Vatican has cracked down on Bishop Gallagher or me. If they cracked down, I wouldn't be here this moment and you know it." Coughlin then compared the New Deal with a slick magazine with a fancy cover that hides the inferior content:

Mr. Roosevelt is the beautiful cover on the New Deal magazine. But what do we find when we open it. The first article is by Henry Morgenthau, the lover of the international bankers. The next article is by Rexie Tugwell, the communist and hand-shaker with Russia. The third article is by Mordecai Ezekiel, the modern Margaret Sanger of the pigs. The fourth article is by Henry "Plow me Down" Wallace, etc. . . Last but not least, we have "Three Finger" Jim Farley, Postmaster General, chairman of the state committee, of the national committee--three fingers--one for each pie!<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Newsweek, September 12, 1936, pp. 36-37.

<sup>2</sup>New York Times, September 7, 1936.

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On September 13, Father Coughlin spoke at Ebbetts Field in Brooklyn, New York, before a crowd of twenty-one thousand people who paid \$1.65 each to hear the radio priest speak. Some observers were upset to see the priest escorted by a military group which the veterans' organization provided. It looked too much like Hitler's National Socialist Party. At this meeting Father Coughlin attacked the industrial system of the United States, calling it "pagan". During this speech he managed to castigate the NRA, PWA, WPA, and AAA, as well as the entire New Deal.

A close examination of the writings and speeches of Father Coughlin shows that he spent a great deal more time attacking the Roosevelt Administration during this period than he did in endorsing Lemke. Speaking in New Haven, Connecticut, a few days later, Coughlin stated that Roosevelt was linked with communism: "Unless the flirting with communistic tendencies begun by the present administration is halted, the red flag of communism will be raised in this country by 1940."<sup>1</sup>

A few days later, speaking in Des Moines, Iowa, Father Coughlin indicated that he was not very certain of Lemke's victory in the national election. When he referred to the Union Party, the radio priest stated: "It is a banner which likely will be trailed in the dust of defeat. . . Gladly I prefer to uphold a losing cause which is right rather

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, September 17, 1936.

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than a winning cause which is wrong."<sup>1</sup> Coughlin stated to reporters in Des Moines that Lemke needed only 6 per cent of the total national vote to prevent either Landon or Roosevelt from obtaining a majority in the electoral college.<sup>2</sup>

In mid-September of 1936, Bishop Gallagher spoke extemporaneously to a conference of Catholic Study Clubs in Detroit and made some rather startling statements: "President Roosevelt has a much better background to work out these money problems than this man from the Dakotas. . . I am sure Father Coughlin thinks if Lemke gets in he can control Lemke. Well, he couldn't control Roosevelt. The money plank is dangerous because it nationalizes credit and gives the government too much control."<sup>3</sup>

In the October 5 issue of Social Justice, Father Coughlin denied that there was any difference of opinion between the Bishop and him. Coughlin also stated that the Bishop had been misquoted.<sup>4</sup>

In October, 1936, the Vatican announced that Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli, Papal Secretary of State, was going to make an extended tour of the United States. There was no reason given, and the Cardinal refused to answer any questions about Father Coughlin. It was generally believed that the Papal

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<sup>1</sup>Social Justice, September 28, 1936.

<sup>2</sup>New York Times, September 20, 1936.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., September 19, 1936.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

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Secretary was sent to investigate the radio priest, but to this day the Vatican has never revealed the cardinal's mission or whether it had any connection with Father Coughlin. Certainly subsequent speeches made by Coughlin show no moderating influence, and he continued to denounce whatever suited his fancy.

Early in October, Monsignor John A. Ryan, speaking over a national radio hookup provided by the Democratic National Committee, criticized Coughlin's monetary theories and lashed out at him for the charges he had made concerning the Roosevelt Administration's being communistic. Ryan urged people to vote for Roosevelt, and labeled Coughlin's charges of Roosevelt's being a communist as being "absurd." "Indeed, the charge of communism directed at President Roosevelt is the silliest, falsest, most cruel and most unjust of American history."<sup>1</sup>

Coughlin responded to the Monsignor by devoting an entire radio program to an answer. The radio priest titled the speech, "A Reply to the Right Reverend Monsignor: Spokesman for the Democratic Political Party." In answering Ryan, Coughlin denied that he had ever called the President a communist, and stated that he had used the word "communistic" to refer to the President's theories. To prove that what he said had Papal sanctions, Coughlin quoted directly from Pope Pius XI's Quadragesimo Anno on the money question. This

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, October 9, 1936.



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quotation was to back up Coughlin's statement that the private control of money and credit was really sanctioned by this Papal encyclical:

This power becomes particularly irresistible when exercised by these who because they hold and control money, are able to govern credit and determine its allotment, for that reason supplying, so to speak, the life-blood to the entire economic body and grasping, as it were, in their hands the very soul of production, so<sup>1</sup> that no one dare breathe against their will.

Monsignor Ryan reported that he received twelve hundred letters from Coughlin's listeners, and he stated that of these only fifty could even be classified as being courteous.<sup>2</sup> Certainly the listening audience of the radio priest was shocked to hear a fellow priest criticizing their leader. Ryan was a man who had long fought for social justice, and he was regarded as one of the leading scholarly proponents of Catholic social dogma in America.

In October, 1936, John Barry of the Boston Globe charged that Father Coughlin had attacked him physically in anger over an interview that the reporter had conducted in Boston. Coughlin answered by stating that Barry had tried to force his way into a private meeting and became more violent when asked to leave. The New York Daily News published a picture of Coughlin in the act of hitting Barry, but Social Justice accused the News of deliberately faking the picture.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Social Justice, October 19, 1936.

<sup>2</sup>Commonweal, November, 1936, pp. 44-45.

<sup>3</sup>New York Times, October 14, 1936; Social Justice, October 26, 1936.

Certainly this incident did nothing to enhance the radio priest's reputation.

In October, John H. O'Donnell of Pittsburgh filed suit for \$1,000,000 of National Union for Social Justice funds, claiming that Father Coughlin had misused the funds for political purposes. Although O'Donnell accused the priest of misusing funds, and demanded that Coughlin be removed from office as President of the Union, the charge was not valid. The funds collected by Father Coughlin were labelled as donations to pay the expenses of his radio time and publications, and the money was freely sent to be used as Coughlin saw fit. The suit was later dropped.

The very next day after the O'Donnell suit was filed, Father Coughlin was showered with feathers by a heckler in Detroit during a rally of the National Union. Coughlin threw the assailant to the ground and prevented the angry crowd from doing harm to the heckler.

In his radio talk of October 24, 1936, Coughlin brought foreign affairs into his broadcast by stating that the real issue in the upcoming election was peace or war. He maintained that Roosevelt was dragging the United States into war by playing a leading role at such international conclaves as the Pan American Conference recently held in Buenos Aires; and he argued that such a course of action would, in a few years, lead the U. S. into war. Coughlin also criticized Morgenthau's handling of the First World War debt and predicted that America would finance England and France in the next

war also.<sup>1</sup>

Two days later, Father Coughlin attacked the WPA as a "scab army" and called President Roosevelt a "scab President." The radio priest demanded \$150 a month for all WPA workers, stating that the government should pay wages comparable to those of private industry.<sup>2</sup>

At the end of October, Father Coughlin held the last great public rally in the New York Hippodrome with an audience of six thousand enthusiastic members of the National Union. Each member was asked to get ten votes for the Republican candidate for Governor of New York, William F. Bleakley. Coughlin did not ask these members to support Lemke, since the Union Party ticket could not secure a place on the New York ballot. The election laws in that state were complicated, and Coughlin confessed in an interview that since Lemke could not get on the ballot in New York, all hopes had ended for the candidate. Coughlin then predicted a Landon victory.<sup>3</sup>

The campaign ended with speeches in New York, Scranton, and Newark, as Coughlin continued to attack President Roosevelt at every turn. In one address in Queens, Coughlin stated that "a vote for Roosevelt was a vote for 273,000 socialists and. . . 78 communists who sent funds to Spain to massacre helpless nuns and priests."<sup>4</sup> When he appeared in

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, October 25, 1936.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., October 27, 1936.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., October 30, 1936.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., November 1, 1936.

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Newark the next day, Coughlin told his audience that there would be twenty million unemployed if Roosevelt were elected.<sup>1</sup>

The Union Party suffered a big defeat in the election of 1936, receiving less than one million votes. It also failed to win the electoral vote of a single state. The National Union for Social Justice was supposed to have a five million membership; and this group, joined with the followers of Smith, Townsend, and Lemke should have attracted considerably more votes.

There were many factors which contributed to the defeat of the Union Party, perhaps one of the most important factors being the great personal popularity of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Coughlin's personal attacks may have estranged many people from the radio priest, and 1936 certainly did not seem to be the year to conduct a negative campaign denouncing the President and his attempts at recovery.

Another factor which may have contributed to the failure of the Union Party was the fact that the forces of Coughlin, Townsend, and Smith did not seem to be well united. Each went its separate way on the campaign trail, and this may have been another factor in accounting for the Roosevelt victory.

Certainly Gerald K. Smith, the successor of Huey Long as the leader of the Share-the-Wealth movement, did not help in a victory for the Union Party. Smith admitted in the previous July that he was more concerned with paving his own

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., November 2, 1936.

political way than with getting Lemke into office.<sup>1</sup> Smith also alienated many people when in Georgia he screamed: "We're going to drive that cripple out of the White House-- and we're going to do it in 1936."<sup>2</sup> Lemke received only 4,386 votes in the entire South.

A poll was conducted by the American Institute of Public Opinion in June, 1936, and the results indicated that Dr. Townsend's endorsement of a Presidential candidate would favorably influence 10 per cent of the American voters.<sup>3</sup> However, even though Townsend was the head of several million potential pensioners, he was not a political organizer. The Townsend Clubs were not officially committed to support the National Union, and the Townsend contribution to the total vote was greatly lessened with the Union Party's failure to get on the ballot in California, the state of many Townsend clubs.

Norman Thomas, Socialist candidate for President, called Father Coughlin the leader of the new party and "messiah of the mob", a circumstance which certainly didn't help Coughlin's cause at the polls. It should be noted that Thomas was not very much concerned about the Union Party's political power in the campaign of 1936, but he was alarmed

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, July 21, 1936.

<sup>2</sup>Herbert Harris, "That Third Party," Current History, October, 1936, pp. 77-92.

<sup>3</sup>Edgar E. Robinson, They Voted for Roosevelt (Stanford University, California: Stanford University Press, 1947), pp. 186-207.

over the direction in which Coughlin and the National Union for Social Justice seemed to be heading.<sup>1</sup>

Lemke had very little prospect of attracting Progressive support for his candidacy. Some of the Progressives, for instance, were sympathetic to the Union Party cause, but they feared to split the liberal vote and risk a victory for Landon. Also the Progressive National Committee issued a statement supporting Roosevelt, saying that any division among liberals would merely give aid to the reactionaries, and urging Progressives to extend Roosevelt every assistance.

Lemke had reason to expect that he would receive support from the farmers, but he did not. One farm organization, the Farmer Holiday Association, failed to agree on the issue of Lemke's endorsement. Another factor contributing to Lemke's losing the support of the farmers might be attributed to Roosevelt's Secretary of Agriculture, Henry Wallace, who succeeded in convincing many farmers that the administration was concerned with their problems.

Therefore, to sum up, most progressives and liberals united behind the President as the best candidate of 1936; and, in a sense, the Union Party helped put Roosevelt back in the White House.

The Union Party attempted to organize a new party in four months to carry on its presidential campaign--a hopeless

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<sup>1</sup>Norman Thomas, After the New Deal What? (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1935), pp. 5-6.



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task, at best, Father Coughlin, late in June, decided to try to get on the ballot, leaving little doubt that he ever hoped to win with his candidate in 1936. Perhaps the radio priest was paving the way for the election of 1940.

While Father Coughlin managed to get his party on the ballot in thirty-six states, he succeeded in placing the name "Union Party" in only thirty of these states. The Union Party was unable to get on the ballot in some of the key states, including New York, California, and Louisiana.

The Union Party was almost totally dependent on the support of three organizations--the National Union, the Share-the-Wealth Movement, and the Townsendites. All three failed to give Lemke their entire support.

Lemke, however he came to be chosen as Presidential candidate in the 1936 elections, was not a good choice. Representing special interests in farm legislation, he was virtually unknown outside the Middle West. Lemke, overshadowed by the colorful radio priest, was defeated for President of the United States, but was later reelected to Congress on the Republican ticket.

Lemke received his greatest victory in his native state, North Dakota, where he received 13 per cent of the vote. In only four other states--Massachusetts, Minnesota, Rhode Island, and Oregon--did he receive over 5 per cent of the total vote. Running strongest in Texas, he received 3,177 votes; but he failed to carry the South. Two factors may account for this low vote in the South--it is heavily

Protestant, and Coughlin's radio network did not reach into this territory.

Samuel Lubell analyzed the voting pattern in the elections of 1936 and found that Lemke received as high as 10 per cent of the vote in only thirty-nine counties outside of his native North Dakota. In twenty-nine of these counties, Catholics numbered 50 per cent or more of the population, and twenty-eight of them had Germans as the leading nationality of these counties. The four cities where "Liberty Bill" Lemke received more than 5 per cent of the vote--St. Paul, Dubuque, Boston, and Cincinnati--were heavily German and Irish Catholic.

Lemke received far fewer than the nine million votes which Father Coughlin had predicted; and after this defeat, Father Coughlin had no choice but to live up to his pledge--leave the air and cease all radio broadcasting. On November 7, 1936, the radio priest bid his radio audience a fond farewell and announced that the National Union for Social Justice would cease to be active. Coughlin also stated that he would cease even to comment on the policies of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The radio priest made it very clear that his decision was his own--Bishop Gallagher had nothing to do with it. He stated he was leaving the air because he loved his country and his church too much "to become a stumbling block to those who have failed to understand."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Samuel Lubell, The Future of American Politics, (New York: Harper Brothers Inc., 1956), pp. 152-153.

<sup>2</sup>Social Justice, November 16, 1936.

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## Coughlin Leaves The Air, Returns, and Leaves

The priest kept his promise--he left the air. However, this did not prevent his Social Justice from attacking the Roosevelt Administration, and the paper did just that. Finally, on January 1, 1937, silence became too much for Coughlin--he returned to the air. The return was only temporary, he told his radio friends, his only purpose being to wish all his old friends a Happy New Year. Coughlin then suddenly announced to his listeners that he would return to the air if his listeners demonstrated their desire by raising the circulation of Social Justice from 600,000 to the new total of 1,500,000.<sup>1</sup>

That same month, January 20, Bishop Gallagher, Coughlin's good friend and only supporter in church hierarchy, died very suddenly. Although it was not proved that Social Justice had reached the desired circulation, Coughlin announced his decision to return to the air on January 24. On that broadcast the radio priest stated that Bishop Gallagher's last request was that he resume broadcasting. The new series was carried by forty-three stations, which did not include the South or the West Coast. The first broadcast was appropriately a eulogy of Bishop Gallagher, the radio priest saying in an emotionally-charged tone of voice: "From this great bishop I gained my inspiration. By virtue of his encouragement I pursued the path he had blazed for me."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., January 11, 1937.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., February 1, 1937.

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Subsequent weeks on the radio and in the pages of Social Justice were devoted to the labor scene. There was a sit-down strike at General Motors; and the CIO, newly organized, was using forceful tactics. Coughlin castigated the Governor of Michigan, Frank Murphy, for not using the state militia to crush the strike. He also lashed out at John L. Lewis, the CIO leader, who became a new favorite of Coughlin's attacks. Father Coughlin stated that while Lewis was not a communist, "Communism in the United States hinges on his success."<sup>1</sup> Coughlin then demanded "a living wage," saying that the government had a responsibility to control the dollar's purchasing power.

In February, 1937, the radio priest called upon the members of the National Union for Social Justice to "wake up." Coughlin asked all members to bind themselves to him and await further word from him in the pages of Social Justice and over the radio. He then admitted that direct political approach to reform was impossible: "Now we recognize that it is impossible to fight politicians with politicians, because you can't fight dirt with dirt." Coughlin then stated that the board of trustees had met in Detroit and had decided to withdraw the National Union for Social Justice charter from all states with the exception of Michigan. He explained that this move could make it more difficult for anyone to misuse the National Union for his own political ends.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Social Justice, February 15, 1937.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

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At this time President Roosevelt attempted to "liberalize" the Supreme Court; "court-packing" it was called by many. The first project of the National Union at this time was to try to defeat this measure. Coughlin castigated Roosevelt's attempt as one more step toward a dictatorship. The radio priest maintained, as did others, that constitutional amendments was the only answer to President Roosevelt's problem--a conservative court blocking "necessary" reform legislation. Coughlin used the pages of Social Justice to urge his listeners to wire their Congressmen a protest over the court scheme. The bill was defeated on July 22nd.

In the spring of 1937, Father Coughlin became more critical of Roosevelt. For example, on March 8, he predicted the end of the United States unless monetary reforms were enacted; and on April 11, he predicted another depression for 1938.

America will soon taste the bitter tears of a worse depression than 1929. You will live to see your meager pocketbooks fail to meet the costs of foodstuffs.

You will live to see before next April a depression setting in, in this country, that will make Mr. Hoover look like an archangel by comparison.<sup>1</sup>

In the same address the radio priest continued to denounce President Roosevelt and his monetary measures:

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, April 12, 1937.

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Any jackass can spend money. Any crackpot with money at his disposal can build for himself a dictatorial crown. It takes no brains to be liberal with other people's money.

It is time for the American people to perform a sitdown strike--not on industry, not on men of commerce, but on politicians. They are sitting down on you, waiting for the government executioner, waiting for the last chapter of the Bill of Rights to be burned at the stake like a witch, waiting for the Supreme Court to put its head on the chopping block.<sup>1</sup>

In April, 1937, Father Coughlin, in an issue of the Social Justice, spoke once more of the new National Union for Social Justice. He asked all members to reorganize into small groups, and each club of Social Justice to be affiliated directly with the National Union: "In common with the National Union all Social Justice Clubs profess faith in the 16 principles of social justice, but each club will be responsible to no persons but to its own members in its own clubs." Coughlin then stated the purpose of these clubs:

To learn social justice; to organize against sitdown legislatures and Congressmen; to battle Communism, Fascism and anti-Christianity wherever and whenever it is possible; to ensure democracy before it withers and perishes; to protect our Supreme Court; to oppose the evils of modern capitalism without joining in the excesses of radical labor organizers and to secure an honest dollar and an honest living for all Americans.<sup>2</sup>

In June, Father Coughlin elaborated on his new sixteen-point program of social justice, which he said could form the basis of a complete social justice program at all levels. No

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Social Justice, April 5, 1937.

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longer referring to the "Social Justice Clubs," he suggested Social Justice Councils in neighborhoods to establish his new program, these Councils to receive advice from the radio priest by mail. Also in this same month Father Coughlin announced that he had organized a "Workers Council for Social Justice" at the Ford Motor Company. This latter council was, more or less, a labor union dedicated to the sixteen points of the national program. All non-Christians, Coughlin maintained, were to be excluded:

The new Christian Union has no quarrel with the Brahman, the Buddhist or the Jew.

The Workers Council for Social Justice believes that the Christian scheme of economics is better than either the Brahman, or the Buddhist, or the Jewish schemes of economics. Therefore, it will not compromise with nor accept the principles of these philosophies which are in conflict with Christianity, so the leaders say.<sup>1</sup>

This restriction was, of course, aimed at the Jews since neither Brahmans nor Buddhists were working in large numbers at the Ford Motor Company. This statement shows a significant change on the part of the National Union, which had previously welcomed Jews; and it is also the beginning of an aversion toward the Jews on the part of the radio priest.

The "Workers Council for Social Justice" at the Ford Motor Company was organized to combat the CIO's efforts to organize the auto workers. The former organization was to attempt to get the Ford Motor Company to use its profits for

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<sup>1</sup> Social Justice, June 21, 1937.

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its employees' benefits. Grocery, meat, and clothing centers were to be established which would sell these items to employees at cost. The project never met with success, and it failed to attract support at the Ford Motor Company.

Social Justice explained the new structure of the National Union for Social Justice in the following words:

Henceforth, the National Union for Social Justice will be regarded as a hub of a wheel.

The spokes are Social Justice Councils which will be thousands in number and to which belong Christians who believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ and who are willing to practice by word and deed His principles of social justice and charity.

The rim of the wheel will be organizations known as Workers Councils for Social Justice.

The National Union for Social Justice as such will have no responsibility whatsoever for these third organizations. The National Union for Social Justice will endorse the principles of these organizations when they are in harmony with those of the National Union for Social Justice. At no time will it endorse the local officers or the methods to be employed.<sup>1</sup>

In his regular column in the June 21 issue of Social Justice, Father Coughlin spoke out at all politicians, stating that his greatest mistake in 1936 was to believe that democracy would work. "History has proved it to be impractical and unsound insofar as the politicians who seek not the welfare of the common good but only the welfare of their own pocketbooks proved irrevocably that we the people

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<sup>1</sup>Social Justice, June 21, 1937.

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are fools, if we trust them any longer."<sup>1</sup> The radio priest then stated that the majority of American politicians were procommunist, and he blamed them for the nation's economic situation. To show his contempt, he stated that even the international bankers, a group he abhorred, were less blameworthy than the politicians.

In that same issue of Social Justice, Father Coughlin predicted, and accurately so, that his new movement would be labelled "Fascistic", "un-American", and "anti-Semitic," but he also stated that he would never abandon his followers: "I will never desert you even though it costs me my life to sustain that promise."<sup>2</sup>

In late June of 1937, Coughlin announced that Walter Baertschi, a Presbyterian from Ohio, would be co-ordinator of Social Justice Councils, and two weeks later four other national coordinators were appointed to assist Baertschi. On July 12, Social Justice announced that "hundreds" of clubs had been formed, although no official figure was given.<sup>3</sup> The councils gradually faded in significance almost as soon as they were created.

There was speculation in 1937 that the newly appointed Archbishop of Detroit, Edward Mooney, would spell trouble for Father Coughlin in the latter's colorful radio career,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., July 12, 1937.

but Mooney told the press that he was certain that Father Coughlin did not want to be an issue, and "I see no reason why he should be."<sup>1</sup>

In October, Coughlin was to find that his new religious superior was not another Bishop Gallagher. During a press conference Father Coughlin had spoken of the "personal stupidity" of President Roosevelt, as he referred to Roosevelt's appointment of Hugo Black, a former member of the Ku Klux Klan to the United States Supreme Court. Three days after this incident, Mooney released a public statement explaining that Coughlin's remark did not represent the Archdiocese of Detroit; and the Archbishop also stated that it was regrettable that the radio priest did not avail himself of the "prudent counsel of a friendly critic." Coughlin had also stated that no Catholic could belong to the CIO, which Coughlin claimed to be a Communist organization. The radio priest had said that the CIO was an incompatible with Catholicism as Mohammedanism. Archbishop Mooney vigorously denied this:

Catholicism and Mohammedanism are incompatible on the basis of clearly stated fundamental principles of both. Catholicism and Communism are incompatible on the same basis.

But no Catholic authority has ever asserted that the CIO is incompatible with Catholicism on the basis of its publicly stated principles--though it is undoubtedly true that there are Communists in the CIO who are making every endeavor to gain control of the organization for Communist purposes, and

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, June 6, 1937.

it is the conscientious duty of Catholics in the CIO to relentlessly oppose these efforts.<sup>1</sup>

This was the first time that Father Coughlin had suffered such public rebuke from a religious superior; previously he had enjoyed full support from his bishop. Coughlin prepared an answer to Mooney and submitted it to the Archbishop before releasing it to the press. Archbishop Mooney refused to allow the radio priest to release the statement, commenting, "I advised Father Coughlin against publishing it because it seemed to me to go beyond the specific points in my statement." Coughlin obeyed his superior, but he also cancelled his radio broadcasts for the coming 1937-1938 broadcast season. Coughlin's attorney, Prewitt Semmes, told a press conference on October 9: "It was quite apparent that Father Coughlin would be permitted only to talk platitudes that mean nothing, that he could not say what he thinks, but only what the Archbishop thinks."<sup>2</sup>

Letters of protest were sent by Coughlin followers to not only the radio priest himself, but also the office of the Archbishop. Social Justice was quick to defend its leader, and the October 25 issue quoted Bishop Gallagher's statements on the radio priest which were nothing but the highest forms of praise. It was announced during October that Social Justice had been sold to Walter Baertschi and that he would serve as president of the Social Justice Publishing Company until Coughlin was able to resume control.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., October 8, 1937.

<sup>2</sup>New York Times, October 10, 1937.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., October 26, 1937.

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Social Justice carried on a crusade to restore Coughlin to the radio; and on November 8, it urged the formation of a Committee of Five Million to petition Pope Pius XI, asking the Pontiff to aid them in reinstating Coughlin to the air. Baertschi announced that he would support Coughlin's ideals and would return the newspaper to the priest when "his voice is freed from restrictions; when his pen, likewise, is free to write as it did in the past."<sup>1</sup>

Archbishop Mooney continued to be blamed by Social Justice for Father Coughlin's silence, and an unsigned article appeared in the November 8 issue entitled, "Did Archbishop Mooney Silence Father Coughlin?" The publication stated that the archbishop forced the priest off the air and led people to believe that what Father Coughlin spoke was not in harmony with the teachings of the Catholic Church, but indeed, contrary to the teachings of that institution. The article continued, "Nothing was left for Father Coughlin to do but to bow to his superior's judgment, or else appear before the microphone as a 'black sheep' in the eyes of millions of Catholics and non-Catholics in open contradiction to his lawful superior."<sup>2</sup>

Baertschi's nationwide attempt to restore Coughlin to the air gained impetus, and the Cleveland Social Justice Councils announced that they were seeking a hundred thousand signatures on the petition to be sent to the Vatican. In

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<sup>1</sup>Social Justice, November 8, 1937.

<sup>2</sup>Social Justice, November 8, 1937.

New York, friends of Coughlin organized in every county of the state to solicit personal letters to Church authorities on his behalf.

Finally, on November 20, 1937, an official statement was issued by the Archbishop Ameleto Cicograni, the Apostolic Delegate to the United States, who stated that the Vatican had instructed him to state that the "corrections made by the Archbishop of Detroit to the remarks of Father Coughlin were just and timely." The statement also rebuked Father Coughlin for not restraining his followers:

Every bishop has not only the right but the duty to supervise Catholic teaching in his diocese. Any priest who feels aggrieved by the action of the Bishop has the right of orderly recourse to the Holy See, but in loyalty to the Church, he also has the duty of using his influence to keep the matter from becoming the occasion of public agitation and thus possibly creating confusion in the minds of many Catholics.<sup>1</sup>

Undoubtedly the radio priest understood this implied rebuke, because two days later he issued an appeal to his followers to cease agitating on his behalf:

As a loyal priest of the Catholic Church I urge all my friends and I have stated many times privately, that I deplore the public agitation which has been caused by the cancellation of my radio broadcasts.

In the spirit of loyalty to my church I urge all my friends and followers to stop the holding of mass meetings or the sending of letters or telegrams to his Excellency the Archbishop of Detroit, or to the Holy See, with the design of securing the resumption of these radio broadcasts.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, November 21, 1937.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., November 23, 1937.

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That same day, Walter Baertschi told a newspaper reporter, in an interview over the telephone, that he would pay no attention to the Vatican's statement, and that he would ignore Father Coughlin's request. Baertschi said that he would continue his fight to restore Father Coughlin to the air; and on November 29, in the next issue of Social Justice, he stated on page one:

I know that Father Coughlin is an obedient priest. He cannot give his consent to our rallies, but in two years of association with him I know how his great heart loves social justice. As chairman of the Committee of Five Million I cannot let the people down. No fewer than 40,000 persons this week have begged me to carry on this fight for social justice and the restoration of our great leader to the radio. We cannot stop now; we must carry on!<sup>1</sup>

Social Justice also stated that the Vatican had never heard Father Coughlin's side of the story, and this publication insisted that the Apostolic Delegate did not speak for the Pope--he spoke only for the executive committee of American Catholic bishops who had really drafted the statement. Mass meetings continued to be held on Father Coughlin's behalf.<sup>2</sup>

#### Coughlin Returns to Radio

The radio priest then surprised many people by stating that he was returning to the air. Neither Coughlin nor the Archbishop was willing to comment on the matter, and

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<sup>1</sup>Social Justice, November 29, 1937.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



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what really happened is still a mystery. Mooney, when questioned by newspaper reporters, stated that Father Coughlin's return to broadcasting "represents the exercise of liberty of action which he has always enjoyed in this matter." The Archbishop said that he thought that Coughlin was a "recognized power as an exponent of Catholic teaching."<sup>1</sup> Father Coughlin declined to comment on the matter and stated that he would explain everything on his first radio broadcast.

In December, Father Coughlin began writing once more for Social Justice as Editorial Counsel, with Baertschi remaining as President of Social Justice Publishing Company. In his first article, the radio priest chastised the publication for straying from the path of social justice. Coughlin particularly disliked the paper's insinuation that the Apostolic Delegate did not speak for the Pope. Coughlin continued by saying that the publication had good intentions, but it must redouble its efforts to establish a positive program of social justice.

In January, 1938, Father Coughlin returned to the airwaves once more, and reemphasized his plea for capital and labor to work together for social justice. He repeated that he had left the air on a voluntary basis, and stated that he had always had the Archbishop's permission to speak out on public affairs. In concluding, Father Coughlin emphasized

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, December 7, 1937.

that he now regarded the affair as a "closed incident." Sixty-three radio stations carried this first broadcast of 1938.

### The Reorganization Bill

In March, 1938, Father Coughlin had another clash with President Roosevelt, this time concerning the "Reorganization Bill," which proposed a major reshuffling of government agencies by the President. The purpose, declared Roosevelt, was for more efficient government. Coughlin told his listeners that the real solution to America's problem was in the establishment of a corporate state; the radio priest's contempt for political institutions was becoming evident. He proposed a scheme whereby congressmen could no longer be elected by districts. Rather, they were to be elected according to representation of various portions of society such as auto workers, farmers, capitalists, etc. Each state was to have one senator who represented labor and one who represented capital. All political parties were to be eliminated. The President of the United States, he proposed, would be elected by the House of Representatives, no longer by the people. This corporate state would achieve the social justice the people needed.<sup>1</sup>

It certainly seems paradoxical that Father Coughlin, who advocated an authoritarian corporate state, accused

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<sup>1</sup>Social Justice, April 4, 1938.

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Franklin D. Roosevelt of dictatorial ambitions. He charged that the President was planning to seize all Catholic schools in the United States. Archbishop Mooney issued a flat contradiction: "I see nothing in the bill to expand present functions of Federal education agencies and therefore to arouse fears in regard to Catholic interests."<sup>1</sup> However, Father Coughlin urged his radio audience to telegraph their congressmen that they did not support the President's bill. Thousands of telegrams poured in; and the bill was defeated in the House on April 8, by a narrow margin, 204-196. Social Justice stated that the defeat was a great victory for democracy.<sup>2</sup>

#### Coughlin Organizes the Christian Front

In January, 1938, it was announced that Father Coughlin would no longer supervise the affairs of the Social Justice Councils; that responsibility was to be given to Walter Baertschi. Less than two months later, it was announced that the Social Justice Councils would be dissolved, the explanation being that there were too much dissension and insubordination to warrant their continuance.

Father Coughlin urged, in the May 23 issue of Social Justice, that groups of twenty-five persons form to study the principles of social justice. He stated that he did not

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, April 2, 1938.

<sup>2</sup>Social Justice, April 25, 1938.

wish to reorganize the National Union on its former basis. While stating that he did not have any intention of forming a new political party in 1940, he did request that his followers "prepare themselves for action in 1940." Father Coughlin denied that he had founded the Union Party in 1936-- the National Union had merely supported the Union Party's candidates.

In June, Social Justice announced the formation of the Million League. The units were to be known not as councils but as platoons which would serve the poor of all races and creeds.

The next month, Social Justice made an appeal for the formation of another new organization, the Christian Front, in which the Social Justice Platoons would be an integral part. To avoid confusion concerning the nature of this organization, Coughlin's statement will be repeated in its entirety:

The term "Popular Front" was coined by European Communists as an appealing smoke-screen behind which to conceal their subversive destruction.

The Moniker "Democratic Front" is the largest catchpole by which the Browderites hope to ensnare deluded Americans in a Red Web. Never in the history of language has a word been so misused as "democracy" by the Communists in this country. The fact that they have the effrontery to use the word despite what has happened under Communism in Russia, Spain, and Mexico is some indication of their contempt for the intelligence of American citizens.

If there must be "fronts," let us have a Christian Front!

Not a "front to throttle, enslave, and destroy America, but one to Preserve America as one of the last frontiers of human liberty.

Outside of practical Christianity in the United States, all is darkness, confusion, and despair. On one side stand the unrelenting rocks of greedy industrial capitalism. On the other, billowing swells of mistreated workers are being gradually rolled up into a Communist sea.

Without Applied Christianity there can be no charity on one side, no peace on the other.

Then let us have a Christian Front!

A Christian Front made up of Catholics and Protestants who still Believe that America, as it is now, is capable of containing both capital and labor under conditions of progress and mutual co-operation.

A Christian Front of such solidity and energy as will curb the Molochs of international finance and will restore to the Congress of the United States its Constitutional right to issue and regulate money of this Nation.

A Christian Front that will Never compromise with Communism, Facism, Nazism, or any other movement tending to destroy representative government.

A Christian Front that will not temporize for a moment with the hypocrisy of subversive agents who attempt by mealy-mouthed insincerity to show "there is nothing irreconcilable between Christianity and Communism."

A Christian Front which is not afraid of the word "facist" because it knows the word "facist" is merely bandied about as part of Communism's offense mechanism.

A Christian Front which will not fear to be called "anti-Semitic," because it knows the term "anti-Semitic" is only another pet phrase of castigation in Communism's glossary of attack.

A Christian Front that will be for America  
at Washington--not Against America From Moscow!

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Every Social Justice Platoon now formed and  
in operation is an integral part of the Christian  
Front.

If you have not yet organized your friends  
and neighbors into a Platoon for the purpose of  
advancing the cause of social justice in America,  
do so at once.

There are now close to 2,500 Social Justice  
 platoons of 25 persons functioning in the United  
States as units of the "Million League."

The time for you to take your part in this  
great drive is today.

Show that you will do this by filling in and  
returning the Co-Operation Coupon below.<sup>1</sup>

The Christian Front appeared to be a general alliance  
of all Christians against Communism rather than a specific  
organization of any type.

During much of 1938, Father Coughlin continued to  
assault the Roosevelt Administration, and he made it clear  
that Roosevelt was responsible for the severe recession  
which was nationwide in the winter of 1937-38. In his  
editorial for January in Social Justice, he posed the question:  
"Has our President led us to the end of the democratic-  
capitalistic road."<sup>2</sup> Later that year, Coughlin was once  
again linking President Roosevelt with the Communists.

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<sup>1</sup>Social Justice, July 25, 1938.

<sup>2</sup>Social Justice, August 8, 1938.



## Background Leading to World War II

In 1938, although Coughlin devoted little air time to foreign affairs, Social Justice mentioned them with some frequency. The paper agreed with major extreme isolationists such as Senators Borah and Nye. When Roosevelt asked, in January, for increased military appropriations, this was labelled by the paper as "a war measure."<sup>1</sup> Father Coughlin also defended the Japanese aggression against China, saying that the Japanese were merely imitating the example of the British in their pursuit of empire.

The Austrian Anschluss and the Sudetenland Crisis, the two great international crises of 1938, were discussed in Social Justice. One article alleged that the broken pledges of Hitler and Mussolini constituted the reason for Austria's downfall. Hitler's action was not criticized; and indeed, in the May 23 issue, Mussolini was chosen "Man of the Week."<sup>2</sup> In the September 19 issue of Social Justice, an unsigned article appeared that was very critical of the Czech abuse of the German population of the Sudetenland; but in October, Social Justice expressed sympathy with the Czechs and remarked about their fair treatment of the Germans within their borders.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., February 7, 1938.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., April 4, May 23, 1938.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., September 19, 26, October 24, 17, 1938.

In addition to making pronouncements concerning American foreign policy, Social Justice suddenly began to appear anti-Semitic. In the July issue, the paper began to quote from The Protocols of Zion, a 1905 publication of a book concerning an alleged Jewish conspiracy to take over the world. Its appearance in Social Justice is regarded as definite proof that Father Coughlin was, at least subconsciously, anti-Semitic. Coughlin was fond of talking about "good Jews" and "bad Jews"--a practice regarded as unfortunate during the depression decade in the United States, when anti-Semitism was strong and the Jews were often used as scapegoats for the economic problems of the world.

Social Justice continued to print excerpts from the Protocols during the summer and fall of 1938, and Father Coughlin explained his reasons in the August 8 issue of Social Justice:

(1) to advertise the contents of the Protocols so that all peoples will know that the tyranny, oppression and needless poverty in the world are not of God's devising, but are the results of planning, for the most part, by men who hate and detest the Christian principles of brotherhood and the Christian economics of plenitude; (2) to encourage the mass of Jews to join with us in opposing the Jew money changers as well as the Gentile money changers; (3) to invite the Jews as a whole to become militant, together with the Gentiles, against the spread of Communism with as much vigor as they oppose Fascism or any other foreign "ism".<sup>1</sup>

The radio priest accused the Jews of regarding Russia as a home-like haven because Russia was the only country

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<sup>1</sup>Social Justice, August 8, 1938.

which outlawed anti-Semitism. Coughlin cautioned the Jews, however, by stating that Stalin was in the process of turning against the Jews and that Stalin would "Out-Hitler Hitler" in persecuting them. He quoted from a controversial book, The Mystical Body of Christ in the Modern World, by Dennis Fahey, a priest, and indicated, at least by implication, that he agreed with the author that the Jewish banking house of Kuhn, Loeb and Company had financed the Russian Revolution and that the Jews had controlled Russia since then.<sup>1</sup>

During the fall of 1938, Coughlin was accused of being anti-Semitic, but in the September 19 issue of Social Justice the priest stated that if anti-Semitism ever appeared in America, he would be the first one to fight it. However, in the October 3 issue of the paper, Ben Marcin, one of the regular writers for the publication, wrote an article called, "The Truth About the Protocols," maintaining that "neither Father Coughlin nor the oppressed millions of the world's population, nor myself, are interested in their authenticity. We are interested in their factuality and particularly in the factuality of the inordinate control of the world's economy under the Jewish system of modern capitalism."<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that "Ben Marcin" was a pseudonym.

During the fall of 1938, Father Coughlin continued to give the impression of being anti-Semitic, and in the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Social Justice, October 3, 1938.

November 21 issue of Social Justice Coughlin wrote a commentary on the Protocols maintaining that prophecies of the Protocols were already being fulfilled:

The Protocols of the Wise Men of Zion cannot be proven to have actually been written by the "wise men of Zion," but the factuality of the content of the Protocols is about us at every turn.

Is it not true that the synagogue of Satan, under the leadership of anti-Christ, has hindered and hampered the activity of the Mystical Body of Christ?

Is it not true that some unseen force has taken Christ out of government, business, industry, and, to a large degree, education?

Is it not true that a force, over which we Christians seem to have no control, has gained control of journalism, motion pictures, theatres, and radio?

Is it not true that Communism has made progress in the world--Communism which is anti-Christ, anti-God, anti-Liberty, anti-Christian and only pro-Semite as long as the Semites do not practice their own ancient religion?

Is it not true that some unseen force has woven the threads of international banking to the detriment of civilization; that a godless force is dominating industry, has monopolized control of many industrial activities, has used governments as their servants, and has been instrumental in flinging one nation against another nation's throat?

Is it not true that even the so-called freedom of the press and of the radio is questionable when we view the propaganda which filters through the ether to the detriment of peace and prosperity?

Is it not true that gold, the international medium of exchange, has been concentrated in the hands of a few private individuals while nations languished, poverty stricken, with want in the midst of plenty?

Is it not true that there is an intensification of armament building; that discord and hostility are being sown throughout the world; that we are being conditioned to expect the outbreak of a universal war?<sup>1</sup>

In November 1938, Father Coughlin once again assumed the presidency of Social Justice Publishing Company--a time when the publication was very anti-Semitic. How the radio priest was granted permission to resume control of his paper at this time and was not allowed to run it in the previous year is a mystery. Certainly the publication was more of an embarrassment to the Catholic Church in 1938 than it had been previously.

On November 6, 1938, Father Coughlin once again began a new broadcasting season. Although no leading network would carry his broadcasts, he spoke once again on Sunday afternoon on forty-six radio stations. Father Coughlin intimated in Social Justice that Jewish control of C.B.S. and N.B.C., as well as Mutual, gave him difficulty in securing air time.<sup>2</sup>

In the first two broadcasts of the 1938 radio season, Coughlin repeated his beliefs in social justice and said he was opposed to communism. The third broadcast, on November 20, 1938, was perhaps the most fantastic program of his colorful radio career. The radio priest said that he was going to trace the cause of the vicious persecution of the

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<sup>1</sup>Social Justice, November 21, 1938.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., November 14, 1938.

Jews in Nazi Germany, which had reached incredible heights in November of 1938. He then proceeded to explain that the Nazi action was a defense mechanism against communism. The radio priest said that he agreed with the Nazi theory that the Jews occupied twenty-four of the top twenty-five posts in the Russian government in 1917. Then, dramatically, he presented the official Nazi list of Russian officeholders, and stated that he would send it "free of charge" to all those interested.

During this same broadcast Coughlin once again accused Kuhn, Loeb and Company of New York City of being one of the principal financiers of the Communist Revolution. He then implied that the persecuted German-Jews were not deserving of sympathy unless Jews everywhere sympathized with persecuted Christians. Perhaps the most astounding part of his radio address was his statement of why he was speaking out against the Jews:

Believe me, my friends, it is in all charity that I speak these words as I seek to discover the causes that produced the effect known as Nazis--Nazism which was evolved to act as a defense mechanism against the incursions of Communism.

Let us not forget the object of this discussion. My purpose is to contribute a worthwhile suggestion to eradicate from this world its mania for persecution.<sup>1</sup>

At least one radio station was very upset with Father Coughlin's radio address. Station WMCA, in New York City,

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<sup>1</sup>Social Justice, November 28, 1938.

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stated that all future speeches by Coughlin must be submitted to the radio station forty-eight hours prior to the broadcast for approval. The station stated that it would make an exception the first week and give the radio priest until noon on Sunday to submit a copy of his talk. Coughlin stated that he would not be able to comply with the radio station's demands because the speeches were not prepared early enough to be read by WMCA and also the diocesan censor.<sup>1</sup>

Certainly the November 20 speech of Father Coughlin was an indication of inciting racial hatred and should not have been allowed to be broadcast. If Father Coughlin's radio addresses were being censored by Church authorities, and it seems they were, why was the address permitted to be broadcast? One very strong possible reason might have been in regard to Coughlin's Bishop; perhaps he was fearful of another large-group protest of the radio priest's listeners, much like that of 1937. At any rate, Coughlin was not silenced.

With radio station WMCA not carrying his broadcasts, station WHBI in Newark was used by Coughlin to cover the New York area. On November 27, he returned to the air and continued in much the same manner. First he played portions of recordings of his previous broadcast in an attempt to show that he was in no way anti-Semitic. He then repeated the statement that American Jewish Bankers had helped finance the Communist Revolution in Russia. Father Coughlin then quoted from Father

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, November 27, 1938.



Fahey's The Mystical Body of Christ in the Modern World, and added that Fahey wrote that the United States Secret Service had prepared a report on Jewish financiers of the Russian Revolution; he then read off some of the names of those people on the list, including members of Kuhn, Loeb and Company.

Immediately after the radio broadcast, the United States Secret Service issued a statement denying that it had prepared a report linking United States Jews to the financing of the Russian Revolution. The firm of Kuhn, Loeb and Company also denied any connection with any Russian government, stating: "The firm of Kuhn, Loeb, and Company has never had any financial relations, or other relations with any government in Russia, whether Czarist, Kerensky, or Communist."<sup>1</sup>

The New York Times, in its editorial of the November 29 issue stated: "Responsible persons everywhere will approve the action of those radio stations that refused to broadcast a speech plainly calculated to stir up religious prejudice and strife."<sup>2</sup>

Another newspaper, The Brooklyn Tablet, the weekly of the Archdiocese of Brooklyn known for its anti-Semitic writing, supported Father Coughlin. The paper, in an editorial, was openly critical of the Jews.

The feeling is abroad that in the present crisis in Germany, the Jews in America have overreached themselves. They have corralled

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, November 29, 1938.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

everyone from the President down to plead their case. Yet they have shown no sympathy for the persecuted in other lands. WMCA itself had not a broadcaster ready to check "mistakes of facts" when speakers over its facilities pleaded for help for Loyalist Spain and other like causes. . .

This was the whole point of Father Coughlin's address. That it went home and that it carried a weighty truth is proven better by the action of WMCA than by any word of Father Coughlin.<sup>1</sup>

The Detroit Free Press, always ready to engage in battle with the radio priest, termed the broadcasts on Sunday as Father Coughlin's "weekly attack on the Jews." Father Coughlin became very angry and started a \$2,000,000 libel suit against the Detroit newspaper. However, as he had done with many legal actions in the past, he later dropped this suit.<sup>2</sup>

In mid-December, six thousand Coughlinites rallied in New York at Manhattan Center at a meeting sponsored by a group calling itself the Committee for the Defense of Constitutional Rights. The chairman of the meeting, Judge Herbert O'Brien, stated that Father Coughlin had saved America three times: by his opposition to the World Court, by his opposition to court-packing, and by his opposition to the Reorganization Bill. One member of the audience suggested that the group picket station WMCA and "put them out of business." The next Sunday two thousand pickets demonstrated in front of the radio station.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., November 26, 1938.

<sup>2</sup>New York Times, December 8, 1938.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., December 19, 1938.

It was during this time that Catholics began speaking out concerning the anti-Semitic image that Father Coughlin was presenting. Cardinal Mundelein of Chicago issued a statement that Coughlin did not speak for the Catholic Church.<sup>1</sup> The Michigan Catholic deplored that anyone would arouse feelings against the Jews as a race.<sup>2</sup> These quotations reveal that Coughlin did not speak for the Church, and his actions were not universally applauded.

While Father Coughlin was appearing anti-Semitic, he was also active in his criticisms of the Roosevelt Administration and its policies. Coughlin had been stating that the Roosevelt Administration was being infiltrated by Communist agents, but this kind of talk came abruptly to a halt in December, 1938. A month previously, the November 28 issue of Social Justice carried a warning for the Roosevelt Administration:

This National Weekly has long had in its possession information that ace operatives high in the council of the O.G.P.U. (Russian Secret Police) have wormed their way into the Washington bureaucracies--often in preference to native born Christian Americans.

We repeat that Social Justice has long refrained from giving circulation to any such disparaging information embarrassing to the Administration, in the full hope and expectation that Washington officialdom intended to clean house. News of the house cleaning is LONG OVERDUE.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., December 12, 1938.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Social Justice, November 28, 1938.

In the December 19 issue of Social Justice there appeared a story stating that Leon G. Turrou, one of the top agents in the F.B.I. was a Soviet agent.<sup>1</sup> The next week Father Coughlin printed a retraction, signed by his own name, that further investigation revealed that this evidence was inaccurate. This Turrou incident marked the end of the Coughlin attacks of accusing the Roosevelt Administration as full of Communists.

The Neutrality Act of the United States caused the next Coughlin clash with the Roosevelt Administration. This act completely prohibited the shipment of arms to belligerents, but with the Second World War in full swing, the administration began to consider the repealing of the "arms embargo" provision of the Neutrality Act. Roosevelt thought that this repealing of the "arms embargo" provision would give the United States a more flexible foreign policy. It would allow the American government to give assistance to innocent victims of military aggression. President Roosevelt knew that the American people as a whole greatly favored isolationism; therefore, he carefully prepared his annual message to Congress, given on January 4, 1939:

At the very least, we can and should avoid any action, which will encourage, assist, and build up an aggressor. We have learned that when we deliberately try to legislate neutrality, our neutrality laws may operate unevenly and unfairly--may actually give aid to an aggressor and deny it to that victim. The instinct of

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., November 19, 1938.

self-preservation should warn us<sup>1</sup> that we ought not to let that happen any more.

Father Coughlin, in his radio broadcast of January 15, urged his listeners to telegraph their protest of this repeal of the "arms embargo" to their Congressmen as quickly as possible. The telegraph offices were flooded with wires immediately after the priest left the air. It was estimated that over a hundred thousand telegrams were received in Washington. The whole affair was quickly dropped.<sup>2</sup>

Two weeks later, Father Coughlin stated that he was opposed to any war to aid the Jews in Germany or anywhere else in the world. He defended Hitler's attacking Czechoslovakia in March of 1939, and inferred that most American critics had exploited the issue as an excuse to attack Germany.<sup>3</sup>

It cannot be over-emphasized that Coughlin did not speak for the Catholic Church in America, nor was he supported by any church hierarchy other than his Bishop. Coughlin received a great deal of criticism from the Catholic press, perhaps the best of these Catholic criticisms being that written by John Cogley, editor of the Chicago Catholic Worker. Cogley wrote an open letter to Coughlin asking the priest to try to control his followers, who were engaged in active trouble-making:

In a sense you are the most powerful  
Catholic voice in the United States today. . .  
You are heartily disliked. You are genuinely

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<sup>1</sup>Samuel Rosenman (ed.) The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, (13 Vols.) (New York: Random House, 1938-50), VIII, 1-3.

<sup>2</sup>New York Times, January 16, 17, 1939.

<sup>3</sup>New York Times, March 27, 1939.

beloved. You are a definite, undeniable force on what novelists like to call the American scene. Your opinions sway millions; you dismay millions more. . .

You were a pioneer, and nobody who is devoted to the cause of social justice can forget that it was you who first made the word encyclical a part of America's working vocabulary.

But there is an unmistakable group of your faithful friends, violent supporters of you and your program, that have come popularly to be called "Coughlinites." They get into other people's hair. They get into mine. At times they probably get into yours. . . They are probably good simple people who don't have much sense, and it should not reflect on you that they have rallied 'neath your banner . . .

This "fringe" has become notorious for its burning anti-Semitism, and they have persisted in canonizing you as the patron of prejudice. They have become psychotic on the question of Jews. They are using your controversial Russian revolutionist figures to justify a senseless, un-Christian attitude toward Mrs. Cohen, the delicatessen lady around the corner, and Meyer, the insurance collector. They have confused your anti-Communism campaign with an anti-Semitism campaign. . .

. . . Something should be done to set them right. Somebody should talk to them. They would listen if you did. . . What you could say would help to make up for the pain and insult many innocent, godly Jews have received from your confused followers.<sup>1</sup>

Coughlin had been making many startling comments; yet his Bishop said nothing. Ben Marcin, writer for Social Justice, implied that since Archbishop Mooney had not "repudiated" Coughlin's remarks, he must approve of the priest's work. The radio priest made it quite clear, however, that he was responsible for his own actions:

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<sup>1</sup>Social Justice, May 22, 1939.

That I have made many mistakes no one appreciates more keenly than I do. I do not wish either to saddle my mistakes upon the Archbishop nor do I wish to present him as condoning any ill-advised policy or error which, unconsciously, I have adopted, or I may adopt.

Certainly, neither Bishop Gallagher in the past, nor Archbishop Mooney at present, can be on record as having approved or approving everything I have said or will say, what I have done or will do.<sup>1</sup>

While speaking on the radio in June 25, 1939, Father Coughlin once again denied that he was anti-Semitic or pro-Nazi:

When, either in speech or writing, have I advocated Nazism? It is true that I have regarded it as a defense mechanism against Communism. It is true--this following statement is supported by incontestable facts--that many Jews were among those responsible for furthering Communism in Germany and bringing that country to such a despondent state that Nazism became a reality.<sup>2</sup>

Father Coughlin was interviewed in the August 12 issue of Liberty magazine and once again stated his position on his alleged anti-Semitism:

The average Jew, the kind we admire and respect, has been placed in jeopardy by his guilty leaders. He pays for their Godlessness, their persecution of Christians, their attempts to poison the whole world with Communism.

My purpose is to help eradicate from the world its mania for persecution, to help align all good men, Catholic and Protestant, Jew and Gentile, Christian and non-Christian, in a battle to stamp out the ferocity, the barbarism and the hate of this bloody era. I want good

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<sup>1</sup>Social Justice, July 10, 1939.

<sup>2</sup>New York Times, June 5, 1939.

Jews with me, and I'm called a Jew baiter and anti-Semite. . .

I am anti-Communist and anti-Nazi. I am an American. No true American can favor either Communism or Nazism. . .

We must admit, though, that pro-Communist sentiment is growing in America. Newspaper and radio propaganda is responsible along with the shallow thinking of those exposed to that propaganda. In order to whip up sentiments for Communism our people are being flooded with accounts of Nazi atrocities. You almost never hear anything<sup>1</sup> or read anything about Communist persecutions.

During this period there was little mention of the Christian Front, but Coughlin once again broadcast concerning the idea of this organization on his program of July 30, 1939, and he asked that all Christians unite to fight the dreaded foe--Communism. Social Justice reechoed his words and stated that this organization would fight Red activities and protect not only Christianity but Americanism. The paper predicted a membership of five million by the following year.<sup>2</sup>

The radio priest stated that he would not be connected directly with the Christian Front; in fact, in Social Justice he stated that he would remain outside all organizations. His position was made clear in the following article:

#### MY POSITION TOWARDS ORGANIZATIONS

Permit me to clarify my position in connection with the broadcast of Sunday, July 30th, relative to the Christian Front.

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<sup>1</sup>Edward Doherty, "Is Father Coughlin Anti-Semitic?" Liberty, August 12, 1939.

<sup>2</sup>Social Justice, July 31, 1939.



First and foremost, let all those who are interested in either organizing the Christian Front or joining it understand that I am neither the organizer nor the sponsor of the Christian Front; and moreover, that it is not becoming for me to identify myself with this organization or any other organization.

From time to time, fine, zealous persons have approached me to associate myself with various organizations. To protect any usefulness that I may have as a public speaker, I resolved, following the experience of the National Union in 1936, to hold absolutely aloof from all organizations. I must not depart from this policy even in the case of the Christian Front.

However, if Christians as individuals or as groups desire to establish a Christian Front with the objective in mind of incorporating the spirit and the doctrines of Christianity into our social life, that is commendable. Nevertheless, as a clergyman, I do not find it compatible to identify myself with any movement in any way whatsoever. I prefer to remain entirely outside all organizations.

As a clergyman, I do not find it irregular to support labor unions in general, even though labor unions, in some instances, have been responsible through some of their members and leaders for seizure of property and contempt of law. However, I do not belong to any of them; I do not attempt, except as an outsider, to sustain or direct them.

Thus, as I support labor unions, so can I support a Christian Front whose advertised principles and whose officers propose to defend Christianity against the unjust aggressions of anti-Christian forces, even though some members of the Christian Front will be deserving, by reason of their ill-advised actions, of just criticism.

Therefore, gentlemen of the Christian Front, and those of you who are contemplating establishing units of it, please understand my position. I must hold myself disengaged from your organizations; I must act in no other capacity toward you than as a friend and counsellor, whose privilege it is to address you in your homes each Sunday. But I am determined to be independent of your group, and

therefore must refuse to undertake to advise you how to organize, whom to select as your officers and what to do in specific instances.

To depart from this program would destroy any usefulness I may have; for I would be assuming both an authority and a position altogether impractical.

While I earnestly encourage the establishment of a Christian Front along the general lines which I indicated in my radio address, Sunday, July 30th, I hope I have clarified my position towards it and have satisfied you as to its reasonableness.

Therefore, while I encourage you to carry on in the spirit of Christ and in the spirit of America, I am sure that I can be of more service to the cause by refraining from participating in it either as an active member, an active officer, or an active organizer, and by continuing to be a voice that is friendly to your cause and to every other good cause without participating in their activities.

What I have said relative to myself also holds good for Social Justice.<sup>1</sup>

On his radio broadcast of August 27, 1939, Father Coughlin stated once more that America must remain neutral, and he seemed to be more critical of America's foreign policy than he did of the foreign policy of Germany. "America must hold herself free from foreign entanglements. Have we not learned our lesson that we have no business in recognizing Russia, in preferring Russia to Germany." The radio priest also insisted that the United States should make no alliances with France, England, Belgium, and the Netherlands.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Social Justice, August 14, 1939.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., September 4, 1939.

On September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland.

President Roosevelt called a special session of Congress to try to repeal the arms embargo so that democracies in the world could buy arms from America. In this speech Roosevelt reemphasized his desire for neutrality and did not mention that there was any intention to aid France and England.<sup>1</sup>

On September 10, Father Coughlin told his radio audience to write their congressmen demanding "No cash or carry, no foreign entanglements, and no blood business."<sup>2</sup> The radio priest was determined to ban the sale of arms at all costs. It was reported that the Senate's mail grew from ten thousand pieces of mail per day to over a hundred thousand letters a day, with most of the letters being in favor of retaining the embargo.<sup>3</sup> Certainly, it may be assumed that Coughlin's suggestion that his listeners write their congressmen was one contributing factor in the letter increase.

Once again on October 1, the Royal Oak priest spoke out against repeal of the embargo, predicting that its repeal would send the United States into war and suggesting that the Communists would benefit by its repeal. Throughout October he echoed his plea that the embargo not be repealed.

The arms embargo was repealed on November 3, 1939, and it was stated that all trade in arms was to be on a cash-and-carry basis.

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<sup>1</sup>Congressional Record, September 21, 1939, pp. 10-12.

<sup>2</sup>New York Times, September 11, 1939.

<sup>3</sup>"Peace Blizzard", Newsweek, XIV (October 2, 1939), p. 29.

### Coughlin Ceases Broadcasting and Publishing

It was during this period that the National Association of Broadcasters drafted a new code of broadcasting standards which appeared to be directed at ridding themselves of the Coughlin broadcasts. The new code prohibited all "controversial" speakers from buying air time on the radio unless they appeared on a panel and other views were also presented. One official of the National Association of Broadcasters sent a letter to all radio stations asking them to advise the national headquarters if they were carrying Coughlin's broadcasts. Stations were to respond with dates of contracts' expiration, what provisions were provided for cancellations, and whether renewal broadcast contracts had been offered or accepted.

The code, which did not refer to Coughlin by name, was obviously directed at him. Although the National Association of Broadcasters did not define the term "controversial", many commentators of the day could easily have been barred from broadcasting under the term.

Coughlin not only was having difficulty with the National Association of Broadcasters, but he experienced some difficulties with a branch of the Christian Front. In January of 1940, seventeen members of a Brooklyn Christian Front Sports Club were arrested by Federal authorities who charged them with conspiracy to overthrow the government. When arrested, the youths were in possession of twelve rifles and eighteen home-made bombs. The New York newspapers denounced both the Christian

Front and the colorful radio priest from Royal Oak.

Coughlin told newspaper reporters in Detroit that he had no connection with the seventeen youths, and he also denied having any affiliation with the Christian Front, but he did admit advocating a Christian Front against Communists.

On January 21, 1940, Father Coughlin reversed his former position and told his radio audience: "I take my stand beside the Christian Fronters." Coughlin repeated that he stood on his past record and that he would continue his crusade against communism in America:

While I do not belong to any unit of the Christian Front, nevertheless, I do not disassociate myself from that movement. I reaffirm every word which I have said in advocating its formation; I re-encourage the Christians of America to carry on in this crisis for the preservation of Christianity and Americanism, more vigorously than ever despite this thinly veiled campaign launched by certain publicists and their controllers to vilify both the name and the principles of this pro-American, pro-Christian, anti-Communist and anti-Nazi group.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to announcing that he stood with the Christian Fronters, the radio priest asked the Justice Department why they failed to capture the two thousand or more communists who he stated were employed by the national government in Washington.

While the Brooklyn sedition trial dragged on, the June 17 issue of Social Justice, with a story entitled, "Social

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<sup>1</sup>Social Justice, January 29, 1940; New York Times, January 22, 1940.

Justice Will Take 500 Christian Refugees," appeared to be more anti-Semitic than ever. The story accompanying the headline stated that the Social Justice Publishing Company would sponsor five hundred Christian children because "the persecution suffered by the Jews in Germany is not to be compared to the persecution now being suffered by the Christians and Gentiles."<sup>1</sup>

On June 24, all fourteen defendants in the Brooklyn sedition trial were released by a jury that had deliberated nearly 48 hours. Nine of the fourteen were acquitted, and mistrials were declared in the other five cases. The defense attorney for the youths, Leo Healey, stated in his final appeal to the jury that the whole affair was a plot to "get" Father Coughlin as well as the Christian Front.<sup>2</sup>

Father Coughlin stated that the outcome of the trial was most significant: "The result of all this will be that the Christian Front movement will emerge more victorious and potent than ever."<sup>3</sup>

Social Justice picked Wendell Willkie as its choice for the 1940 Presidential election even before he had received the Republican nomination. The July 1 issue of the publication spoke of a Willkie-Lindbergh ticket. While speaking words of praise for Willkie, Social Justice predicted dire consequences if Roosevelt were reelected:

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<sup>1</sup>Social Justice, June 17, 1940.

<sup>2</sup>New York Times, June 26, 1940.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

Another term of Roosevelts, Ickeses, Perkinses, Morgenthau, Pittmans, and the 50,000 un-American appointees they have foisted upon us, will put a price tag on this nation of a "dime a dozen." If Mr. Roosevelt is re-elected--and we hope he is nominated--we will be buying gas masks for Christmas presents.<sup>1</sup>

After Wendell Willkie had been nominated by the Republicans, Social Justice once again showed a change of mind. The publication expressed serious doubt about the Republican nominee because the British press had enthusiastically received Willkie's nomination.

Wendell Willkie minced no words when it came to his welcoming the support of Father Coughlin and the Coughlinites. The Republican candidate stated that he would rather lose the election than accept the aid of those who are "opposed to certain people because of their race or religion."<sup>2</sup> Father Coughlin issued a quick denial that he had endorsed Willkie, and the priest stated that he had not written an article for Social Justice in over six months.

During this period, Father Coughlin was again accused of being anti-Semitic; therefore, once again he vigorously denied that he was in any way against the Jews:

I am not against Jews as Jews. Many are my friends. On November 20, 1938, I said that I wanted good Jews to support us in our fight against both Communism and Nazism, and I repeated that statement in subsequent occasions. Naturally, I am against Communistic Jews, or for that matter, Communistic Irishmen or any others who oppose our ideal and our institutions.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Social Justice, July 1, 1940.

<sup>2</sup>New York Times, August 28, 1940.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

Social Justice accused the Jews of pressuring Willkie into repudiating Coughlin, and the Republican nominee was charged with stirring up anti-Semitism by even bringing up the issue.<sup>1</sup>

On October 21, 1940, Social Justice printed an amazing article that requested the impeachment of President Roosevelt:

ROOSEVELT SHOULD BE IMPEACHED

On previous occasions Congressmen have called for the impeachment of the President.

On those occasions most citizens disagreed with the Congressmen.

At length, however, an event has transpired which now marks Franklin D. Roosevelt as a dangerous citizen of the Republic--dangerous insofar as he has transcended the bounds of his Executive position.

In plain language, without the knowledge or consent of Congress, he has denuded this country of thirty-six flying fortresses, either selling or giving them to Great Britain.

By this action Franklin D. Roosevelt has torpedoed our national defense, loving Great Britain more than the United States.

He has consorted with the enemies of civilization--through the continued recognition of Soviet Russia.

He has deceived the citizens of the United States--telling the newspaper reporters, who are the people's eyes and ears in Washington, that he did not know the whereabouts of these flying fortresses.

He has transcended the bounds of his Executive position--spurning the authority of Congress.

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<sup>1</sup>Social Justice, September 9, 1940.



He has invited the enmity of powerful foreign nations--on whose natural resources we depend for essential tin and rubber.

Because he has encouraged the British government to reopen the Burma Road, and encouraged Britain to declare war on the German government, when Britain was unable to care for the English people--he stands revealed as the world's chief war-monger.

All these events, culminating with the transfer of these 36 flying fortresses without the consent of Congress, demand that he be impeached.

For these words this National Magazine invites the lightening flashes of Administration reprisal.

What of it?

In the spirit and the words of Patrick Henry we repeat: GIVE US LIBERTY, OR GIVE US DEATH.

The day for pussyfooting is past.

The Gethsemane days of tribulation and persecution may be at hand.

Let the citizens of America recognize what this Executive has done to this country.

Let them rise in protest--now if ever--against this powermad dictator who would place upon his brow the crown of World Messiah.<sup>1</sup>

For many reasons, in the midst of the campaign of 1940, Father Coughlin found that he could not renew his broadcasting contracts with his regular stations and therefore had to cancel his 1940-41 season. The new code of the National Association of Broadcasters, previously mentioned, was one major reason.

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<sup>1</sup>Social Justice, October 21, 1940.

However, the financial condition of the Radio League of the Little Flower had declined considerably; and this organization, it will be recalled, was Coughlin's major financial support. In 1938, for instance, its revenue was \$574,416, in 1939 it was \$102,254, but in 1940 the contributions had declined to only \$82,263. The fact that Coughlin had often operated on a week-to-week basis in the past--and it is possible that he could have gotten additional funds during the broadcast season--leads one to believe that lack of money was not the only factor that kept the radio priest from broadcasting.

The radio priest from Royal Oak was somewhat bitter by not being allowed to continue his broadcasting; and in September he wrote in Social Justice:

. . .Not until there is an opportunity for the pendulum to swing to the right will I resume my place before the microphone.

It may be 10 months. It may be in 10 years. It may not be until we cease being war-minded.

I want it understood that I am not retiring from broadcasting permanently. I have been retired temporarily by those who control circumstances beyond my reach.<sup>1</sup>

Social Justice continued to campaign for Wendell Willkie as the only hope to keep America out of a war. The November issue, commenting on President Roosevelt's successful bid for a third term, stated that the American people were in

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<sup>1</sup>Social Justice, September 23, 1940.

danger if Roosevelt were elected unless the President was "willing to liquidate his international ideas and adopt the principle of America for Americans."<sup>1</sup>

When President Roosevelt introduced his lend-lease proposal of January, 1941, Social Justice termed it a plot to destroy private enterprise and to establish a "Marxian economy" in America: "The lend-lease bill is not substantially concerned with lending or leasing or giving materials to Britain. It is concerned, however, with scuttling the last vestige of democracy in the world--American democracy. . ."<sup>2</sup>

When in March of 1941 the United States Army banned Social Justice from all military posts without giving any official explanation, Social Justice printed:

Will Social Justice join in this world's greatest sell-out of a mesmerized people--mesmerized by British gold and Jewish propaganda??

Not as long as a printing press can be found to spread the truth as we can see it.

We will not oppose Mr. Roosevelt physically. But by the eternal God, we will not acclaim his radicalism, his crackpotism, and his unAmericanism.

Social Justice is honored in having been singled out to become the leading victim of dictatorial censorship.<sup>3</sup>

On September 29, 1941, Social Justice commented on the large number of pro-war Jews in the United States government, declaring: "The Jew should retire from the field of

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., November 11, 1940.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., February 3, 1941.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., March 31, 1941.

politics and government. He has no more business in that sphere than has a pig in China shop."<sup>1</sup>

During the final few months preceding the attack on Pearl Harbor, Social Justice continued to attack President Roosevelt and internationalism. One article was especially bitter:

Stalin's idea to create world revolution and Hitler's so-called threat to seek world domination are not half as dangerous combined as is the proposal of the current British and American administrations to seize all raw materials in the world.

Many people are beginning to wonder who they should fear most--the Roosevelt-Churchill combination or the Hitler-Mussolini combination.<sup>2</sup>

After the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor, Social Justice continued to fight. It predicted that all democratic liberties were now lost, and it also predicted that the American government would become totalitarian in order to fight the totalitarian governments of Japan and Germany.<sup>3</sup> Social Justice even attacked the patriotic slogan: "Remember Pearl Harbor," saying: "Indeed we will remember Pearl Harbor. And we will not forget that someone blundered, tragically blundered."<sup>4</sup>

The January 19, 1942 issue of Social Justice continued to attack President Roosevelt as a "muddling" war leader:

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<sup>1</sup>Social Justice, September 29, 1941.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., December 8, 1941.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., December 5, 1941.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., December 29, 1941.

The inefficiency, rank carelessness and possible criminal negligence associated with Pearl Harbor stands eclipsed by what is transpiring at Washington.

Our nation's Capital is the scene of a national tragedy which is appalling. It is best characterized by the single word-- "muddling."

Full responsibility for this muddling is laid directly on the doorsteps of the White House and in the chambers of Mr. Roosevelt's official family and political first cousins.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the fact that the United States was at war, Social Justice continued to infer that Roosevelt and his associates were communistic. The February 23 issue contained an article entitled, "Have the Reds Got Us."

The March 16, 1942 issue of Social Justice accused the Jews of starting the Second World War; and for "proof" the publication quoted the August 6, 1933 radio address of Samuel Untermyer, an American Jew, which urged all Jews to participate in an economic boycott of Hitler's Germany. Social Justice twisted this 1933 radio address into a declaration of war against Germany.<sup>2</sup>

After repeatedly attacking the war effort, Father Coughlin found himself confronted with Attorney General Francis Biddle. Biddle wrote Postmaster General Frank Walker and asked him to invoke the Espionage Act of 1917 to suspend or revoke the mailing privileges of Social Justice on the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., January 19, 1942.

<sup>2</sup>Social Justice, March 16, 1942.

grounds that it was presumably reaching members of the armed forces and persons subject for induction and enlistment. This 1917 law forbade anyone to interfere with the military forces of the United States.

Biddle enlisted the aid of Leo T. Crowley, a Catholic layman, to fly to Detroit and ask Archbishop Mooney to silence the radio priest and thus prevent the possibility of a sedition trial. Coughlin was called before the Archbishop and ordered to cease publication of Social Justice under penalty of defrockment. Father Coughlin realized that he must choose between remaining a priest or leaving the priesthood, and he accepted these terms.<sup>1</sup>

On May 4, Postmaster General Walker revoked the second-class license of Social Justice. The editor and publisher of Social Justice offered no objection; and Calvin Hassell, Assistant Solicitor of the United States, presented evidence consisting of quotations from the publications which he alleged proved that every issue since the bombing of Pearl Harbor had been seditious.<sup>2</sup>

In early May, Archbishop Mooney issued the following statement to the press concerning Father Coughlin:

I am grateful to learn that the question between the Postoffice Department and Social Justice magazine, involving a priest of this diocese, has been disposed of as reported in today's paper.

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<sup>1</sup>Francis Biddle, In Brief Authority (New York: Doubleday, Inc., 1962), pp. 243-47.

<sup>2</sup>New York Times, May 5, 1942.

Regardless, however of how the matter might have been disposed of, I had a definite and explicit commitment from Father Coughlin on May 1 that, from that date forward, his severance of all connection, whether direct or indirect, with the magazine would be absolute and complete.

My understanding with him is sufficiently broad and firm to exclude effectively the recurrence of any such unpleasant situation.<sup>1</sup>

### Later Life

Father Coughlin was allowed to keep control of his parish and the Shrine of the Little Flower, and he was apparently still in good standing with his Church. The National Union for Social Justice was officially dissolved on August 17, 1944, when Father Coughlin and a secretary filed the necessary papers at Lansing, Michigan.<sup>2</sup> In the following years Coughlin almost completely disappeared from the eyes of the public.

In 1955, Father Coughlin stated to Life magazine reporters in a rare interview that "it was intemperate of me, unbecoming a priest to call Franklin D. Roosevelt a liar."<sup>3</sup>

In the latter part of December, 1962, Coughlin gave an interview to Harold Schachern of the Detroit News. While defending his previous anti-Roosevelt views of the 1930's, he admitted that he now thought that American Presidents should

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, May 5, 1942.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., August 18, 1944.

<sup>3</sup>Life, November 14, 1955, pp. 119-120.

not be criticized. Coughlin also spoke on the views which he had held concerning World War II: "It wasn't because I was for Germany, but here you had the extreme left and the extreme right of totalitarianism, both the same, and I felt we should let them fight it out among themselves." The Royal Oak priest also admitted in the interview that he found it very difficult to adjust from a nationally-known orator to the life of a parish priest.<sup>1</sup>

A year after this, Father Coughlin granted an interview to Bernard Eismann of CBS news. Coughlin stated when speaking of his colorful past: "Well I suppose I committed an egregious error which I am the first to admit when I permitted myself to attack persons. I could never bring myself to philosophize the morality of that now. It was a young man's mistake." When Eismann asked Coughlin if he were free to talk of his past activities, the priest replied: "Oh, I'm not necessarily free. . . I'm not expressing myself on things philosophical."<sup>2</sup>

Today, at the age of seventy-eight, Father Coughlin lives in retirement in Birmingham, Michigan.

"It was a horrible mistake to enter politics," he says.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Detroit News, December 15, 1962.

<sup>2</sup>Bernard Eismann, "Reflections of a Radio Priest," Focus Mid-West, February, 1963, pp. 8-10.

<sup>3</sup>Life, Ibid.



## CHAPTER III

### COUGHLIN'S RADIO DISCOURSES

#### Introduction

The previous chapters considered (1) The historical climate in which Coughlin spoke and (2) a biographical sketch of Charles Edward Coughlin. It is the purpose of this chapter to consider Coughlin's radio discourses in more detail.

#### Overall View of the Radio Discourses Studied

While Father Coughlin first began his radio speaking on Sunday, October 3, 1926, with his children's radio broadcasts, only occasionally did he give comments on political and economic affairs. Actually, Coughlin did not rise to national prominence until 1930, when he became nationally known by injecting himself into politics. Therefore, his speaking on the radio will be considered from 1930 to 1940, when he was forced off the air. There is no complete record of all of his radio discourses available, unless Coughlin chooses to provide such a list. Thus far, he has not cooperated in this regard. Therefore, this work is done with consultation of many sources, and enough of Coughlin's radio discourses are available to warrant overall examination.

A close examination of the radio discourses reveals that Coughlin's speeches can be grouped into the following seven categories of subjects on which he spoke with amazing frequency: 1) Monetary Discourses; 2) Speeches against Herbert Hoover; 3) Speeches against Prohibition; 4) Speeches on the Jews; 5) Speeches against Communism; 6) Speeches on the New Deal; and 7) Speeches on Labor.

A brief examination of each of these topics will show what Coughlin believed and expressed in each of these subject-matter areas. There will be considerably overlapping, of course. For example, any one of Coughlin's speeches on money could legitimately be placed in both the Monetary Discourses and Speeches on the New Deal categories. However, in the lists of discourses which follow, each discourse is listed only once, and then in light of what appears to be its major emphasis.

### Radio Discourses Classified According to Basic Themes<sup>1</sup>

#### Monetary Discourses

1. Where Money is King (1930)
2. Gold and Silver and Child Welfare Bureau (1930)
3. Come, Follow Me (1931)
4. Render to Caesar (1931)
5. The Way Out (1932)
6. The God of Gold (1932)

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<sup>1</sup>For sources for these discourses, see pages 17-22.

7. Lateral and Frontal Attack! (1933)
8. "The New Temple"! (1933)
9. The Restoration of Silver (1933)
10. The Call to Arms! (1933)
11. Thus Goeth the Battle (1933)
12. "By Their Fruits They Shall Be Known"! (1933)
13. Money Control! (1933)
14. Industry and the Gold Standard Capitalism (1933)
15. Social Justice and a Living Wage (1934)
16. What Prevents a Just and Living Wage (1934)
17. Share the Profits With Labor (1934)
18. "Merchandisers of Murder" (1934)
19. Money Is No Mystery! (1934)
20. Expected of Congress (1934)
21. Roosevelt or Ruin and the Gold Law (1934)
22. United States Incorporated (1934)
23. The Ultimate Aim (1934)
24. The Banking and Monetary Control Act of 1935 (1935)
25. Prosperity and Taxation (1935)
26. The Declaration of Independence (1935)
27. A Reply to General Johnson (1935)
28. "Program-Not a Panacea" (1935)
29. The Regulation of Money (1938)
30. Unregulated Debts (1938)

#### Discourses on Herbert Hoover

1. Come, Follow Me (1931)
2. A Sandy Foundation (1932)
3. The Secret Is Out! (1932)

Discourses on Prohibition

1. On Prohibition (1931)
2. The Great Sin (1931)
3. Perjured Scoundrels (1931)
4. What is Truth? (1931)

Discourses on Jews

1. The Way Out (1932)
2. Untitled Discourse (1938)
3. Untitled Discourse (1938)

Discourses on Communism

1. Internationalism (1930)
2. Render to Caesar (1931)
3. Ballots--Not Bullets (1932)
4. Follow The Christ Child (1934)
5. Five Sparrows at Two Farthings (1938)
6. Untitled Discourse (1938)

Discourses on The New Deal

1. Lateral and Frontal Attack! (1933)
2. "The New Temple"! (1933)
3. The Restoration of Silver (1933)
4. The Call to Arms!
5. Thus Goeth the Battle! (1933)
6. "By Their Fruits They Shall Be Known!"
7. "Money Control"! (1933)
8. Industry and The Gold Standard Capitalism (1933)
9. President Roosevelt and Social Justice (1935)

10. The Future of the National Union (1935)
11. Sovietizing or Saving America? (1935)
12. The Menace of the World Court (1935)
13. Two Years of The New Deal (1935)
14. A Reply to General Johnson (1935)
15. Five Years of The New Deal (1938)
16. The Corporate State (1938)
17. New Deal Bookkeeping (1938)
18. It Is What We Do--Not What We Say (1938)
19. The Spirit of the Reorganization Bill (1938)
20. An Appreciation (1938)
21. In Conclusion (1938)

#### Discourses on Labor

1. Machine Age and Labor (1930)
2. Where Money is King (1930)
3. Man or Beast of Burden (1930)
4. Without Religion What? (1931)
5. Prosperity (1931)
6. Christianized Democracy (1931)
7. The Pact With the Past (1931)
8. By the Sweat of Thy Brow (1931)
9. Worthy of His Hire (1932)
10. The New Year (1934)
11. Expected of Congress (1934)
12. Roosevelt or Ruin and The Gold Law (1934)
13. The Problem of Unemployment (1934)
14. Plenty for All (1934)

15. United States Incorporated (1934)
16. The Ultimate Aim (1934)
17. Capital and Labor (1934)
18. Together We Stand (1938)
19. A Permanent Cure for the Recession (1938)
20. Five Sparrows at Two Farthings (1938)

#### Discourses on Miscellaneous Topics

1. The King in Pilate's Hall--1930 (Religious)
2. Our Solitary Boast--1930 (Religious)
3. Lest We Forget--1931 (Religious)
4. The Story of Bethlehem--1931 (Religious)
5. The Mystery of Pain--1931 (Religious)
6. The Next War--1931 (On Treaty of Versailles)
7. A Tribute to Washington (On George Washington and Americanism)
8. Up Is Down! East Is West!--1932 (On the Depression)
9. "Quo Vadis?" (Whither Goest Thou?)--1932 (On Democracy)
10. An Appeal to the Kidnaper--1932 (On Lindbergh baby kidnapping)
11. The National Union for Social Justice--1935 (On Social Justice)
12. More on The National Union--1935 (National Union explained)
13. The American Liberty League--1935 (Attacks Al Smith)
14. The Future of The National Union--1935 (On National Union)
15. War or Peace--1938 (On Isolationism)
16. Unsound Property Laws--1938 (On Property Laws)
17. Taxation Through Misrepresentation--1938 (Proposes Corporate state)

- 18. History of Holy Week--1938 (Religious)
- 19. In Conclusion (On the New Deal and Religious)

### Monetary Discourses

On many occasions Father Charles E. Coughlin took the "soulless" international bankers to task and stated that they caused the depression of the 1930's. On Sunday, January 11, 1931, he denounced the international bankers for endangering the world's peace and prosperity in order to salvage their European investments.

Later in 1931, Coughlin once again attacked the international bankers, stating that every nation had grown tired of their attempts to "perpetuate their gambling and gold seeking at the expense of a torture more refined than was ever excogitated by the trickery of the Roman or the heartlessness of slave owners."<sup>1</sup> The radio priest believed that the international bankers were responsible for most of the economic problems of the world.

Many of the 1932-33 and 1933-34 broadcasts of Coughlin were devoted to the money question. His first series of 1932 was called "Eight Discourses on the Gold Standard and Other Kindred Subjects." These speeches were primarily on the evil machinations of the international bankers, who, Coughlin charged, had greedily wrecked economic chaos for the sake of their own selfish gains.

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<sup>1</sup>Father Coughlin's Radio Discourses 1931-32, op. cit.,  
p. 20-21.

After Franklin D. Roosevelt's inauguration, Father Coughlin found himself dissatisfied with the President's reform measures; but he patiently waited, believing that Roosevelt would act if only Congress and the American people would support him against the interests of capitalism. The radio priest firmly believed that money was the key to the complex economic problems of the nation-wide depression. Although Coughlin was neither a monetary theorist nor an economist, he was firmly convinced that the international bankers had plotted to bring about the depression. He never tired of condemning the Morgans, the Rothschilds, and the Kuhn-Loebs as symbols of all the economic evils of the world. Coughlin tended to oversimplify in his beliefs, and few economic theorists would agree today that financial reform was the complete answer to bringing the United States from its depression to normal prosperity.

Father Coughlin's proposal for nationalization of currency has been questioned as a cure-all for economic recovery. It is doubtful, according to economic theorists, that nationalization of currency alone would have solved the nation's economic problems in 1933. Silver also failed to solve any economic difficulties and seemed to benefit only a very small group of silver owners and speculators rather than to raise prices and stimulate the increase of foreign trade. While the concentration of much of the nation's wealth in the hands of a few powerful financial tycoons was a very serious problem in America in the 1930's, certainly the entire blame could not be leveled at the international bankers whom



Coughlin so often accused in his radio talks.

Father Coughlin attacked the Roosevelt administration-backed bill which proposed to have the United States join the World Court in 1935. The "true" facts of this bill, Coughlin stated, were that the World Court and the League of Nations were both organized by international bankers and their cohorts. The priest stated that he had learned this from informants who "knew".

During the depression of the 1930's the nation was suffering terribly, and people looked to a leader to give them the answers to their economic woes. The radio priest seemed to know the answers, and the convenient scapegoats he used were the international bankers and the communists.

#### Speeches Against Herbert Hoover

In October, 1931, two years after the great Wall Street crash of October, 1929, Father Charles E. Coughlin began his entry into national American politics by denouncing the "so-called leaders" who had assured the American people that prosperity was just around the corner. On this broadcast he bitterly denounced President Herbert Hoover for what he termed the latter's indifference to the misery of millions of Americans who were suffering the effects of the depression.

On November of 1931, Father Coughlin once again attacked Hoover and his theory that relief was a local matter in which the federal government should take no part. The radio priest rejected the Hoover theory that unemployment in great national industries was a local concern.

During this period he continued to denounce vigorously Hoover and his administration. Coughlin called the Reconstruction Finance Corporation a dole of \$2,000,000,000 to banks, industries, and capital, and stated that it was based on the concept that "salvation comes from the top." The priest was alarmed that the RFC was giving unlimited power and wealth to a few individuals in an effort to bring back the prosperity of the late 1920's under the pretense of solving the problems of this nation-wide depression.

In the fall of 1932, Father Coughlin delivered a series of vehement attacks on the policies of the Hoover administration, and in these radio broadcasts he castigated Hoover for not solving the economic problems of the depression. The radio priest continually repeated that he advocated the devaluation of the dollar as the initial step toward economic recovery.

In 1933, Father Coughlin renewed his war on Herbert Hoover and also attacked the Detroit banking system:

Hoover tried to cure this damnable depression by pouring in gold at the top while the people starved at the bottom. . . He fed grain to the pigs in Arkansas, but he wouldn't give a loaf of bread to the people of Michigan. I'm not criticizing him, but I condemn his philosophy and I cite him as a definite and concrete example of the philosophy that money in the hands of the masses was a menace. I'll show that the Detroit bankers were brought up in that same school.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, August 24, 1933.

Speeches Against Prohibition

In three speeches on October 25, November 8, and November 15, 1931, the radio priest spoke against prohibition. With his usual Irish wit he began his talks on this problem as follows:

Prohibition is identified with a Persian philosopher by the name of Manes. This dreamer believed that he was appointed by Almighty God to become the moral leader of the world. He regarded all things material as essentially bad. He specifically condemned wine and women. I suppose the poor fellow did not know how to sing and consequently left song out of his litany of condemnations.<sup>1</sup>

Father Coughlin disliked the idea that many ministers were more concerned about enforcing prohibition than they were in helping feed depression-hungry victims. He was particularly angry by what he considered an attack on American veterans when he denounced Dr. Clarence Wilson, Executive Secretary of the Methodist Episcopal Board of Temperance, Prohibition, and Public Morals. Father Coughlin read over the air an excerpt from a Kansas City newspaper which represented Dr. Wilson as charging that "Legion Conventions are planned ahead of time as drunken orgies. . . The ex-soldier who will do that--and practically all of them did it in Detroit--is a perjured scoundrel who ought not to represent the decency of the flag under which he fought." The radio priest took this opportunity to rise to the defense of the American veteran with an emotionally charged speech called "Perjured Scoundrels":

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<sup>1</sup>Louis Ward, op. cit., p. 93.

A few short weeks ago my ears were shocked with a sacrilegious infamy. These dead soldiers whose lips no longer can themselves defend; their old mothers and broken-hearted wives and little boys and girls whose voices are too inarticulate to shield themselves--these have become the latest target of attack in defense of prohibition.

"Perjured scoundrels" is the epitaph spoken of the dead. "Perjured scoundrels" is the cold consolation which the executive secretary of the Board of Temperance, Prohibition and Public Morals would sneer into the ears of those children and wives and gray-haired mothers when on this Armistice Day they are mindful of their loved ones.<sup>1</sup>

### Speeches on the Jews

Perhaps the dominant trait in Father Coughlin's speaking and Social Justice writings in the summer of 1938 was his anti-Semitism. In November he very openly showed anti-Semitic feelings--the Jews became the answer for all foreign and domestic problems, and Coughlin continued to repeat this idea over and over until he finally was silenced.

Father Coughlin first exhibited his hostility toward the Jews in 1936, when, in speaking to a group of reporters, he said that it was time for all Jews to adopt the Christian policy of "love thy neighbor as thyself" in place of the old Hebrew law of "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." He stated that it was also time for the Jews to begin acting like good Christians. Coughlin was quick to deny any feeling of anti-Semitism, and stated that he was equally critical of gentile money interests as well as Jewish.

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<sup>1</sup>Louis Ward, op. cit., pp. 97-98.

The radio priest continued stirring up anti-Semitism in July of 1938, when he published The Protocols of Zion in Social Justice, which were an account of a Jewish conspiracy in Russia to seize control of the world. Even though it is generally agreed that the priest became openly anti-Jewish at this time, he sought to justify his position by stating that he was talking about good Jews and bad Jews. This kind of prejudice exhibited by Coughlin came during a time when anti-Semitic feeling was at a new height in the United States during the depression 1930's.

In November, 1938, he pretended to trace the cause of the persecution of the Jews in Nazi Germany, explaining that the Nazi action was nothing more than a defense mechanism against Communism. Coughlin publicly stated that he agreed with the Nazi theory that the Jews were responsible for the Russian Revolution and that they occupied twenty-four of the twenty-five top posts in the 1917 Russian government. After taking the Jews to task in a most harsh manner, the radio priest had the effrontery to state that he was doing all this in charity:

Believe me, my friends, it is in all charity that I speak words as I seek to discover the causes that produced the effect known as Nasis--Nazism which was evolved to act as a defense mechanism against the incursions of Communism.

Let us not forget the object of this discussion. My purpose is to contribute a worthwhile suggestion to eradicate from this world its mania for persecutions.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Social Justice, November 28, 1938.

Speeches Against Communism

One of the very first topics the radio priest discussed over a national network was that of communism. In 1930, over the Columbia Broadcasting System, Father Coughlin attacked the evils of Bolshevism, and discussed the degradation of family life in Russia. Following this episode, there began a series of anticommunist broadcasts.

On numerous occasions Father Coughlin tried to link President Franklin D. Roosevelt with communism. In 1936, he stated that while the President was probably not aware of it, his administration was drifting towards communism. Also in 1936, Coughlin stated that "Unless the flirting with communistic tendencies begun by the present administration is halted, the red flag of communism will be raised in this country by 1940."

In August, 1936, Father Coughlin spoke out against President Roosevelt and clearly labelled him a communist: "As I was instrumental in removing Herbert Hoover from the White House, so help me God, I will be instrumental in taking a Communist out of the chair once occupied by Washington." This charge was leveled at the President at New Bedford, Massachusetts, and was reported at Providence, Rhode Island, on the same day.

John L. Lewis, the C.I.O. leader, was described by Coughlin as a potential labor dictator upon whose shoulders lay the hopes of the Communist party in America. In fact, the February 8, 1937 issue of Social Justice stated: "John L. Lewis is Not a Communist but Communism in the U. S. Hinges on His Success."

In 1938, Coughlin spoke for the retention of the arms embargo, and he predicted that repeal would put the United States in the war within one year and would benefit only the communists. Maintaining that the repeal of the arms embargo would be the first step toward communism, he said that the Roosevelt administration had "coddled" the communists.

The Christian Front was organized in 1938 to enlist all Christians of good will to fight against communism. This organization, in spite of a few incidents of trouble-making in a few major cities, was an organization in name only, and did little to combat communism.

So badly did the radio priest hate communism that he welcomed Nazism as a defense mechanism against it. On a radio broadcast of June 5, 1939, Coughlin stated that he never advocated Nazism, but that he did regard it as a defense mechanism against communism.

#### Coughlin's Speeches on The New Deal

At first, Father Coughlin regarded Franklin D. Roosevelt as the economic savior of the United States, and he predicted that Roosevelt would do a far better job of handling the depression than had Herbert Hoover. Not long after Roosevelt's inauguration, however, he became dissatisfied with what he considered half-way measures of the President. Throughout the fall of 1934, Coughlin became very impatient with the Roosevelt administration's failure to accomplish economic reform; and he continually attacked the administration's

measures such as the Agricultural Adjustment Act and the National Recovery Act. Finally, in November of 1934, Coughlin announced the formation of the National Union for Social Justice, a nationwide lobby of the people. The purpose of this organization, Coughlin stated, was to establish a new and more equitable economic order based on a sixteen-point program. This program included, among other things, the nationalization of the monetary system and of private utilities.

The National Union, Coughlin maintained, was not an anti-Roosevelt organization, but was designed to counteract other pressure groups. The radio priest was emphatic that the National Union for Social Justice was not a political party--it was a lobby of the people. At one point, Coughlin claimed a membership as high as eight million, but the usual estimate was four to five million. The National Union for Social Justice was not very effective as a lobby, with the possible exceptions of the bonus issues and the World Court.

Father Coughlin broke completely with President Roosevelt in 1935, the primary reason probably being the President's failure to nationalize the national currency. He seemed to realize that the President never really intended to enact the reforms envisioned by Coughlin.

The priest continued to fight the Roosevelt administration until he left the air, and even then he continued to fight the New Deal in Social Justice until that too was silenced.



Speeches on Labor

On December 2, 1934, Father Coughlin announced seven principles with which the National Union for Social Justice hoped to combat the evils of capitalism and mass production; six of these seven principles called for direct government action. Since many of his subsequent speeches were on these principles, they are repeated here in their entirety:

1. We maintain that it is not only the prerogative but it is also the duty of the government to limit the amount of profits acquired by any industry.
2. We maintain that it is the function of the government to see that industry is so operated that every laborer engaged therein will secure those goods which will be sufficient to supply all needs for an honest livelihood.
3. We further maintain that it is the duty of government to secure the production of all those industrial goods--food, wearing apparel, homes, drugs, books, and all modern conveniences--which the wealth of the nation, the natural resources of the land, and the technical ability of our scientists are able to produce until all honest needs within the nation are amply supplied. This principle is contrary to the theory of capitalism. Capitalism produces for a profit to the individual owner. Social justice advocates the production for use at a profit for the national welfare as well as for the owner.
4. We maintain the principle that there can be no lasting prosperity if free competition exists in any industry. Therefore, it is the business of government not only to legislate for a minimum annual wage and a maximum working schedule to be observed by industry, but also to curtail individualism that, if necessary, factories will be licensed and their output shall be limited. For it is not in accordance with social justice that the owner of an industry will so operate his factory as to destroy free competition and thereby use his private property to the detriment of society.

5. It is the aim of the National Union for Social Justice to assist in the re-establishment of vocational groups. By this I mean that the laboring class who practice the same trade or profession should combine in units independent, if they so chose, of the factory where they work or of the industry in which they are employed.
6. It is the aim of the National Union for Social Justice so to work towards a reform in government that the Department of Labor shall not only protect labor but shall counsel and guide it in its negotiations with capital.
7. The National Union for Social Justice contends that strikes and lockouts are absolutely unnecessary. For in the case of disagreement between employer and employee it is the business of the Public authority to intervene and settle such disputes which cannot be settled amicably by the parties involved. For it is our observation that both strikes and lockouts have occasioned more harm to the common good of the nation than any benefit which has been derived. But in the case of the government's neglecting its duty to settle such industrial disputes, always keeping in mind that there is no settlement without a just and living wage for the laborer and an equitable distribution of profits to all, then there is nothing left except for a united labor to refuse to sell its services at a loss just the same as it is unreasonable to expect the farmer to plow his ground and sow his seed at a loss.<sup>1</sup>

The first two principles contain nothing new--Coughlin had previously preached that the government was obligated to provide the laboring class with favorable working conditions. In principles 3 and 4 noted above, Coughlin suggests a planned economy; but he does not state how he thinks the government could determine the specific needs of the nation's consumers. The fifth step suggests the organization and establishment of trade unions. The sixth step really points to the Department

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<sup>1</sup>Coughlin, A Series of Lectures, pp. 52-54.

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of Labor and suggests reform. The seventh principle elaborates the sixth by demanding that the government intervene in labor disputes. In summary, the radio priest advocated that labor be responsible directly to the government.

In 1937, Coughlin devoted much of his time to the American labor situation. The priest was critical of Michigan's governor, Frank Murphy, for not using the state militia to end the sit-down strike at General Motors. John L. Lewis was often attacked by Coughlin in 1937, and Coughlin called Lewis a potential labor dictator upon whose shoulders lay the hopes of the Communist party in America.

On October 8, 1937, Archbishop Mooney issued a flat contradiction of one of Father Coughlin's statements. Coughlin had said that no Catholic could belong to the CIO, because the CIO was as incompatible with Catholicism as Mohammedanism. Mooney stated:

Catholicism and Mohammedanism are incompatible on the basis of clearly stated fundamental principles of both. Catholicism and Communism are incompatible on the same basis.

But no Catholic authority has ever asserted that the C. I. O. is incompatible with Catholicism, on the basis of its publicly stated principles ...<sup>1</sup>

Many of the speeches given by Coughlin during this period were on labor and the labor scene; and by speaking out, Coughlin hoped to reform, not abolish, capitalism.

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<sup>1</sup>New York Times, October 8, 1937.

The following is a list of available Coughlin discourses from 1930-1940 given in chronological order:

A Chronological List of The Radio Discourses of Reverend Charles Edward Coughlin From 1930 to 1940<sup>1</sup>

1930-1931 Radio Discourses:<sup>2</sup>

1. Charity--The Policy of Christ
2. The King in Pilate's Hall
3. Our Solitary Boast
4. On Sacrifice
5. Sacrifice of the Mass
6. Lest We Forget
7. Machine Age and Labor
8. Where Money is King
9. Man or Beast of Burden
10. Internationalism
11. Without Religion--What
12. The Story of Bethlehem
13. Christ or Chaos?
14. Prosperity
15. Gold and Silver and Child Welfare Bureau
16. Why Radicalism?
17. Christianized Democracy

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<sup>1</sup>Since these discourses were collected primarily from books of Coughlin's discourses, much of the data are "uneven". For example, the 1934-35 discourses listed provide more specific dates than are found in the earlier years.

<sup>2</sup>Father Coughlin's Radio Sermons, 1930-1931 (Royal Oak, Michigan: The Radio League of the Little Flower, 1932). All 1930-1931 discourses can be found in this book.

18. The Pact With the Past
19. By the Sweat of Thy Brow
20. Quo Vadis--Whither Goest Thou?
21. The Slaughter of the Innocents
22. The Pilgrimage
23. The Great Betrayal
24. Easter Sunday
25. The Keeper of the Silver
26. The Mystery of Pain
27. Christ of the Red Fog
28. Thought for the Week-Multiplication of the Loaves

#### 1931-1932 Radio Discourses<sup>1</sup>

1. The Toppling Tower
2. Come, Follow Me
3. On Prohibition
4. The Great Sin
5. Perjured Scoundrels
6. Worthy of His Hire
7. Render to Caesar
8. What is Truth?
9. The Way Out
10. The Next War
11. A Sandy Foundation
12. The God of Gold

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<sup>1</sup>Father Coughlin's Radio Discourses, 1931-1932  
(Published by The Radio League of the Little Flower, March, 1932). All 1931-32 discourses can be found in this book.

The Secret is Out!  
 A Tribute to Washington  
 Up is Down! East is West!  
 "Quo Vadis?" (Whither Goest Thou?)  
 An Appeal to the Kidnapper  
 Ballots--Not Bullets!  
 Gold--Master or Servant  
 Gold, The Medium of Exchange  
 Use and Not Abuse  
 Rubber Credit Money

1934 Radio Discourses<sup>1</sup>

Couldst Thou Not Watch One Hour With Me!  
 The Resurrection  
 Bonds or Charity  
 The March of the Workers  
 The Suicide of Capitalism  
 Banks and Gold  
 Lateral and Frontal Attack  
 The New Temple  
 The Restoration of Silver  
 The Call to Arms!  
 Thus Goeth the Battle!  
 By Their Fruits They Shall Be Known!

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<sup>1</sup>Father Coughlin's Radio Discourses, 1933-1934 (The League of the Little Flower, 1934). All discourses 1933-34 can be found in this book.

13. Money Control!
14. Industry and The Gold Standard Capitalism
15. The New Year--Sunday, December 31, 1933
16. Expected of Congress--Sunday, January 7, 1934
17. Roosevelt or Ruin and the Gold Law--Sunday, January 21, 1934
18. The Problem of Unemployment--Sunday, February 4, 1934
19. Plenty for All--Sunday, February 18, 1934
20. United States Incorporated--Sunday, February 25, 1934
21. The Ultimate Aim--Sunday, March 11, 1934
22. Capital and Labor--Sunday, March 25, 1934

#### 1934-35 Radio Discourses<sup>1</sup>

1. The National Union for Social Justice--Sunday, November 11, 1934.
2. More on The National Union--Sunday, November 18, 1934.
3. Social Justice and a Living Wage--Sunday, November 18, 1934.
4. What Prevents a Just and Living Wage?--Sunday, November 25, 1934.
5. Share the Profits With Labor--Sunday, December 2, 1934.
6. The American Liberty League--Sunday, December 9, 1934.
7. Merchandisers of Murder--Sunday, December 16, 1934.
8. Following the Christ Child--Sunday, December 23, 1934.
9. Money Is No Mystery--Sunday, December 30, 1934.
10. President Roosevelt and Social Justice!--Sunday, January 6, 1935.

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<sup>1</sup>A Series of Lectures (The Condon Printing Company, Detroit, Michigan, 1935). All discourses of 1933-34 can be found in this book.



The Menace of the World Court--Sunday, January 27, 1935.

The Future of the National Union--Sunday, February 3, 1935.

Sovietizing or Saving America--Sunday, February 10, 1935.

The Banking and Monetary Control Act of 1935--Sunday February 17, 1935.

Prosperity and Taxation--Sunday, February 24, 1935.

Two Years of the New Deal--Sunday, March 3, 1935.

The Declaration of Independence--Sunday, March 10, 1935.

A Reply to General Hugh Johnson--Monday, March 11, 1935.

Program--Not a Panacea--Sunday, March 24, 1935.

### Radio Discourses<sup>1</sup>

February--Untitled Discourse Concerning O'Connor incident

April 5, 1936--Untitled discourse--Coughlin speaks on both political parties and failure to reform money issue.

May 10, 1936--Coughlin denounces "machine politics" and urges return to "real democracy".

June 19, 1936--Coughlin begins special summer series of broadcasting--Supports William Lemke for President on new Union Party ticket.

September 13, 1936--Coughlin attacks Roosevelt as currying favor with Communists.

October 24, 1936--Coughlin injects foreign affairs into his talks.

November 7, 1936--Father Coughlin leaves the air to fulfill pledge concerning failure of Lemke to get votes.

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<sup>1</sup>There is no book of discourses published for 1936-  
Topic areas were gathered from news articles in the  
New York Times.

1937 Radio Discourses

1. January 1, 1937--Special New Year's Greeting.
2. January 24, 1937--Eulogy of Bishop Gallagher.
3. March 8, 1937--Coughlin speaks on Monetary Reform.
4. April 11, 1937--Coughlin predicts another Depression.

Note: Father Coughlin cancelled his 1937-38 radio season after he was publicly rebuked by his new superior, Archbishop Mooney.

1938 Radio Discourses<sup>1</sup>

1. Together We Stand--Sunday, January 9, 1938.
2. A Permanent Cure for the Recession--Sunday, January 16, 1938.
3. The Regulation of Money--Sunday, January 23, 1938.
4. Unregulated Debts--Sunday, January 30, 1938.
5. War or Peace--Sunday, February 6, 1938.
6. Shall We Enter Into a League With Death?--Sunday, February 13, 1938.
7. Unsound Property Laws--Sunday, February 20, 1938.
8. Five Sparrows at Two Farthings--Sunday, February 27, 1938.
9. Five Years of the New Deal--Sunday, March 6, 1938.
10. The Corporate State--Sunday, March 13, 1938.
11. Taxation Through Misrepresentation--Sunday, March 20, 1938.
12. New Deal Bookkeeping--Sunday, March 27, 1938.
13. It is What We Do--Not What We Say--Thursday, March 31, 1938.
14. The Spirit of the Reorganization Bill--Sunday, April 3, 1938.

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<sup>1</sup>Radio Lectures 1938 Series (Condon Printing Company, Detroit, 1939).

15. An Appreciation--Sunday, April 10, 1938.
16. History of Holy Week--Sunday, April 10, 1938.
17. In Conclusion--Sunday, April 17, 1938.
18. The Background of Christian Social Justice--Sunday, November 5, 1938.
19. On Christian Hope--Sunday, November 13, 1938.
20. Persecution--Jewish and Christian--Sunday, November 20, 1938.
21. Let Us Consider The Record--Sunday, November 27, 1938.
22. Not Anti-Semitism but Anti-Communism--Sunday, December 4, 1938.
23. A Chapter on Intolerance--Sunday, December 11, 1938.
24. Is Christ the Messiah?--Sunday, December 18, 1938.
25. A Christmas Message--Sunday, December 25, 1938.

#### 1939 Radio Discourses<sup>1</sup>

1. Americanism--Neither Naziism Nor Communism--January 1, 1939.
2. The President's Message to Congress--Sunday, January 8, 1939.
3. Ten Million Unemployed--Sunday, January 22, 1939.
4. Why Leave Our Own?--Sunday, January 29, 1939.
5. Foreign Relations--In Three Acts--Sunday, February 5, 1939.
6. Fides Intrepida--Sunday, February 12, 1939.
7. Internationalism--or No Foreign Entanglements--Sunday, February 19, 1939.
8. An American Christian Program--Sunday, February 26, 1939.

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<sup>1</sup>1939 Radio Discourses (Condon Printing Company, Detroit, 1940). (Also, see Why Leave Our Own? The Inland Press, Detroit, Michigan, 1939.)

9. The Papacy--Pius VIII and Pius XII--Sunday, March 5, 1939.
10. Bonds and Neutrality--Sunday, March 12, 1939.
11. Social and Economic Reform--Sunday, March 19, 1939.
12. Our Problem is in America--Sunday, March 26, 1939.
13. The History of Holy Week--Sunday, April 2, 1939.
14. Untitled broadcast--(Coughlin speaks on Semitism and Naziism)--June 5, 1939.<sup>1</sup>
15. Untitled Broadcast--(Christian Front established and explained)--June 30, 1939.
16. Untitled Broadcast--(Coughlin replies to Elliott Roosevelt) Sunday, July 16, 1939.
17. Untitled Broadcast--(Coughlin demands adherence to the Neutrality Law)--September 10, 1939.
18. Untitled Broadcast--(Coughlin pleads for Neutrality) October 29, 1939.

#### 1940 Radio Discourses

1. Untitled Discourse--(Coughlin supports Christian Fronters charged with conspiracy)--January 21, 1940.
2. Untitled Discourse--(Coughlin attacks the war effort) May 12, 1940.

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<sup>1</sup>Broadcasts after April 2nd were not published in book form. Discourse topics were taken from New York Times.

## CHAPTER IV

### FATHER COUGHLIN'S RADIO PREPARATION AND DELIVERY

Pronuntiatio, the last of the five constituents, is another name for Delivery. Its primary elements are considered to be vocal utterance and bodily action.<sup>1</sup> Delivery, then, is concerned with the "lively enforcement of thought", and the means by which the ideas of a speaker are conveyed to his listeners. It is through this constituent that a speaker seeks to make an impression on the mind of his listeners, create a desire for the proposition he advocates, and move the emotions.

Here considered, delivery embraces: (1) the orator's methods of preparing his speeches, (2) his method of delivery, (3) the physical factors conducing to his effectiveness as a speaker, (4) his bodily action in delivery, and (5) his use of the voice as an instrument of persuasion.<sup>2</sup> Since this chapter is concerned only with Father Coughlin's radio speaking, consideration will be made of only the "audible code", or "what the speaker we hear." Therefore, this chapter will be concerned with: his methods of preparing his speeches, his method of delivery, and his use of the voice as an instrument of persuasion.

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<sup>1</sup>Lester Thonssen, and A. Craig Baird, Speech Criticism (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1948), p. 81.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid... p. 435.

## SPEECH PREPARATION

Fuller appreciation of a speaker and his speeches results from inquiring into the way he went about preparing his talks. This is not a simple matter. The problem has its roots in the orator's early training, his home life, possible influence of church and school and various clubs, his reading habits and favorite methods, and a host of other factors.<sup>1</sup>

Father Coughlin's early training moulded his method of writing speeches. For instance, he first appeared on the lecture platform at the age of seven.

In annual exhibition, Sister Anna directed a concert of St. Mary's student talent, to which each class made some contribution of pleasing entertainment. Charlie's class was slated to perform jointly. The boys marched out from a back room on to the stage of St. Mary's Assembly Hall, struck their poses, and took their cues. . . Then each pupil stepped forward, spotlight upon him, and embellished the theme by a further rhyming declaration of future ambitions that ran the gamut of trades and professions. It was now Charlie's turn and the lad braced himself into position. Neither faltering nor halting, with gestures and practiced tonal inflections, he versified stirringly:

"When I'm a man,  
I'll be a mason if I can.  
Buildings I'll build, and I think I'll be able,  
To build one as high as the Tower of Babel."<sup>2</sup>

As an undergraduate at St. Michael's, Charles was an all-around student whose oratorical abilities, fluency of tongue, and brilliance in English were unsurpassed.<sup>3</sup> Coughlin also learned much of the theater and a great knowledge of

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 436.

<sup>2</sup>Ruth Mugglebee, Father Coughlin of the Shrine of the Little Flower (Garden City, New York: Garden City Publishing Company, 1933), p. 29.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 56.

the masterpieces of the drama. "His liking of the drama was not a theatrical liking, however, for that which was exaggerated, artificial, or tawdry in its dramatic effects, but for that which suggested vividly expressive action or gesture."<sup>1</sup>

In the English seminar at St. Michael's, Coughlin gave early evidence of his ability to speak in an extemporaneous manner. "He had a rare command of the language. He chose his words with infinite discretion--hand-picked plums of wisdom. His diction presupposed practiced elocution. Mister Coughlin had an uncanny appreciation of what holds an audience."<sup>2</sup>

Another example of Coughlin's oratorical abilities at St. Michael's is related to the occasion when he was asked to give an oral recitation for a full twenty minutes on a reading, "The Beauty of God." Coughlin was unprepared. One of Charles' classmates stated that "that talk was a signal triumph for Mister Charles Coughlin."<sup>3</sup>

Word was spread around of "Chuck's" agile mind, and how he "put it over." He was singled out and pointed to as the "orator." He was heralded and acclaimed for his brilliance. It was an unheard-of thing at college for a student silently to have acquired an intellectual background as to enable him to toy volubly with scholasticism.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 67.

It was while studying under Basilian Fathers that Coughlin became interested in the ideas contained in Pope Leo's Rerum Novarum. This Pope had written this famous encyclical only a few months subsequent to the birth of Coughlin.

With even greater avidity he digested and devoured the concepts of Rerum Novarum. He was stunned by the striking simplicity with which the Workingmen's Pope condemned socialism, communism, and nihilism, at the same time championing the cause of the workers. He confided to the Basilian Fathers the decision of his mind. If the church considered him a proper candidate, he would study for the priesthood at St. Basil's at the conclusion of his university study of the classics, he told them. The fathers were warmly pleased. They sensed that the encyclical would give new life to Coughlin whose mind was discriminating, brilliant, philosophically sound.<sup>1</sup>

Much of the drama contained in the priest's later discourses can be traced to a type of indirect preparation he received as a teacher. Coughlin was sent to teach English, history and Greek at Assumption College, in Sandwich, near Windsor, Ontario. Father Coughlin "strode up and down the room, hardly ever sitting behind a teacher's desk in the customary procedure, that he might read their minds from their faces. . . Macbeth in a cassock sweeping earnest students into frenzied interest in literature."<sup>2</sup> Coughlin dramatized Shakespeare as well as religion in the classroom.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 98.



As mentioned previously, the most influential document that shaped the radio priest's preparation of his discourses was the Rerum Novarum or Pope Leo XIII. Louis Ward, Coughlin's biographer, sums up the Pope's influence on the Royal Oak pastor:

Naturally this encyclical letter became the object of Father Coughlin's intent study because the priest had determined to use its thoughts, its sentences, its paragraphs, in approaching the almost hopeless task of reconstructing the social life of this country. He appreciated that the doctrines which he was preaching not only appeared to be radical but were generally classified as such by those whose business it was to defend decadent capitalism. Strategically, therefore, he wove in and out of the fabric of his discourses the thread of thought emanating from the mind of his highest ecclesiastical superior to the end that, when he was called a radical, at least he would be in good company.<sup>1</sup>

Woven throughout the priest's radio discourses were many thoughts directly related to this encyclical of Pope Leo XIII. Coughlin used many points from it to back up his statements:

As a simple priest he realized that of itself his voice carried little or no authority. Therefore, every principle which he enunciated was protected by a quotation. The Rerum Novarum of Leo XIII was his Vademecum. This singular document, the most important pronouncement chronicled in the entire XIXth century on the question of social justice, was known intimately by the good Father. He studied it. He analyzed it. He checked it with the ten thousand facts held safely in his file. He discussed it. He took it with him to the factory. He measured it

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<sup>1</sup>Ward, op. cit., p. 41.

with the policies of labor unions. He lived it until it became part and parcel of his everyday life.<sup>1</sup>

Not only the encyclical of Pope Leo but also the encyclical letters of Pope Pius XI influenced the thinking and speech preparation of the radio priest.

Those who have studied the discourses as spoken by Father Coughlin have discovered that whether he speaks of property of wealth, of capital or labor, of the gold standard, of communism, of revaluation or of banking, he first brings to bear on the question the content of the encyclical letters of Leo and Pius; that he outlines the principles of political economy applicable to the particular subject; that he marshals the practical facts gleaned from the most trustworthy sources available; that he philosophizes upon the meaning or significance of these facts. Only then was he prepared to go into the homes of the people to find a subjective application to the lives of millions as they<sup>2</sup> struggle onward to their eternal destiny.

Certainly the letters the radio priest received were potent factors in shaping what he said and the preparation of his radio discourses. Many of the people who wrote Coughlin were looking for him to provide the answers to the complex economic problems that faced a Depression-America. Father Coughlin appeared to have the answers. The radio priest stated many times that "he knew the pulse of the nation better than any man alive," and the letters he received gave him a great deal of knowledge into the minds of his listeners.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 38-39.

<sup>2</sup>Ward, op. cit., p. 41.

Nobody outside the organization gets to read his letters. He says that he has 2,000,000 names on file, and someone to whom he showed his filing room asked to see the list from his home county in a nearby state. Father Coughlin at once complied. He pulled out a great handful of cards, several inches thick. The visitor went over them; the names were of persons he knew, and they pretty well covered the county. Father Coughlin recognizes that his letters are his stock in trade. "I believe I possess in them the greatest human document in our times," he says; "I am not boasting when I say I know the pulse of the people. I am not exaggerating when I tell you of their demand for social justice which is sweeping like a tidal wave over this country."<sup>1</sup>

In preparing his many radio discourses on so varied a group of topics, the radio priest consulted many different sources for the answers to the complex questions with which he dealt. In fact, the biographer, Louis Ward, infers that Coughlin, like President Franklin D. Roosevelt, also had his brain trust to aid him:

Realizing that he was subject to the criticism of the thousands, he contracted the best students of government, of law, of finance, of foreign affairs, of history, of political economy and of international relations that could be found. The priest did not pretend to know it all, but he relied to a great degree upon this little group of men who found in him the predominate characteristics of intellectual honesty. These men formed for the priest a college of research. They knew he wanted facts. They knew that his judgment was no better than the facts upon which it was based.<sup>2</sup>

Father Coughlin was always very careful to search for the facts he used in his radio discourses; and in addition to

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<sup>1</sup>Swing, op. cit., p. 56.

<sup>2</sup>Ward, op. cit., p. 41.

the "brain trust" mentioned above, he consulted official documents in search of statistics for use in his sermons.

If he spoke of unemployment he quoted authentic figures published in official documents, always referring to book, chapter, and page. A copy of the Congressional Record was always on his desk. Facts meant nothing to him. . . unless he could substantiate them. . . References were inane unless their origins were carefully checked.<sup>1</sup>

Ward makes a penetrating statement concerning the radio priest's preparation of his radio discourses when he stated: "He endeavored to employ as much care in formulating one of his discourses as if he were compounding a prescription with the nicety of a pharmacist."<sup>2</sup>

There is evidence that Father Coughlin wrote his radio discourses to be read aloud; and because he had unusual facility in translating his thoughts to a manuscript, his ideas were expressed much like poetry. Most poets would contend that poetry is written to be read aloud; Coughlin felt that he must prepare his manuscripts much like poetry.

Every word in the Coughlin discourse was written to be spoken, not to be read. The imagery was particularly selected. In one instance Christ was called back to gaze into the open window of a Connecticut sweatshop. In another instance the "unknown Soldier" returned to visit his brother. To the soldier who fought in France, Father recalled the scene of the battlefield. To the farmer, he depicted the waving field, the mortgage payment, the overburdening tax and the commodity price that spelled insolvency. To the laborer there

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

was characterized the bench or machine, the long hours of toil, the longer hours of unemployment, the less-than-living wage, the home with its loved ones and the discouraging future.<sup>1</sup>

In preparing his discourses, the radio priest adapted his ideas to his radio audience. Knowing that many of them were simple people who had difficulty following complicated, abstract ideas, he prepared his discourses carefully so that his listeners could follow his thinking.

Another characteristic of the method employed by Father Coughlin was the simple process of proceeding from the known to the unknown, from the concrete to the abstract. He started from the universal appeal to the emotions of men. Then he led his audience step by step into the sheer recognition of the primary and then of the advanced laws of political economy.<sup>2</sup>

While Father Coughlin does marshal an astounding array of facts in his radio discourses, the above-mentioned use of emotion exemplifies a related practice. In preparing his radio discourses, the priest intentionally played on the emotions of his listeners. This has led at least one writer to comment:

After reading and hearing many of his speeches I am struck by their technical similarity to those of Hitler. These, too, are vague and emotional. Carefully analyzed they do not read as radical as they sound. Like Hitler's, the priest's speeches tap the underlying prejudices of listeners. Hitler for years played skillfully on the resentment against the Versailles Treaty and against social conditions. Coughlin plays on the widespread

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<sup>1</sup>Ward, op. cit., p. 43.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 42.

animosity toward the bankers and the yearning of social justice. A minimum of explicitness and a maximum of feeling seem to make the best formula for founders of new movements. Whether Father Coughlin knows this, and is deliberately vague, only he can say. And he alone can unfold the secret of his ambitions, and what he foresees as his role in the next years.<sup>1</sup>

Thus it would seem that the radio priest considered the emotions of his audiences when preparing his manuscripts. Coughlin seemed to know that facts alone were not enough, that the emotions of the audience must be considered in preparing his addresses.

Ward, who is one of the few people who have observed Father Coughlin in the actual preparation of his radio discourses, has stated:

And so each discourse was prepared with the years for the background--years of study, of discipline, of perserverance. They are written with care and correction. Were it the reader's privilege to witness this priest as he is in the act of translating his thoughts to the typed page, he would see him prepare first an outline. This he elaborates, extends, illustrates as he applies his teachings. Hours pass by. Then he reviews his teachings. Hours pass by. Then he reviews the entire argument. He corrects, amends, softens, and rearranges and modifies his work. Ordinarily he submits it to his Bishop for approval as late as Saturday evening.<sup>2</sup>

The radio priest first prepared an outline which he used as a basis for the entire speech, and this outline was modified, rearranged, and corrected. Then came Saturday night.

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<sup>1</sup>Raymond Gram Swing, "Father Coughlin: The Wonder of Self Discovery," Nation, January 2, 1935, pp. 49-50.

<sup>2</sup>Ward, op. cit., pp. 42-43.

Few in the audience realize when they hear Father Coughlin on a Sunday afternoon that he has had little if any sleep the night before. Few realize that the final check-up on facts comes to a conclusion some time after the midnight of Saturday. Then comes the next re-writing. Then the timing, then the re-reading, then the internal and external check. All night long he has worked until the final draft is made in the late hours of Sunday morning. Only then does he betake himself to the Shrine to offer up the Sacrifice of the Mass.<sup>1</sup>

Father Coughlin often practiced his delivery in front of his assistants at the Shrine of the Little Flower. Ward makes such statements as the following in his biography:

"At Saturday midnight, while Father was practicing the timing of his discourse in the presence of his assistants at the Shrine. . ."<sup>2</sup> and "With meticulous care each sermon had been prepared; each delivery had been well practiced."<sup>3</sup>

Mugglebee states that Father Coughlin relied a great deal on the daily newspapers to assist him in the preparation of his radio discourses.

To the preparation of his sermons he gave long, tedious hours of research and study. With a few packages of cigarettes--he is an incessant smoker--and Miss Burke at a table with sharp pointed pencils and several stenographic notebooks, and ample space to pace back and forth, Father Coughlin's brain child was expressed in a flow of language that had been nursed for years. He had been a devotee of drama in college; and he was now an ardent devotee of current events, with the same thoroughness, with the same persistence,

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<sup>1</sup>Ward, op. cit., p. 43.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 84.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

with the same urge to pierce through fallacious oratory. All items of importance appearing in the press were clipped and filed for his attention by the remaining three of his corps of four capable, young women secretaries.<sup>1</sup>

In examining the wide variety of different topics the radio priest used for his discourses, one almost imagines that the priest spoke on the topic that was prominent in the newspapers of the preceding week. Mugglebee adds considerable support to this theory:

Many times he had his sermons prepared in the middle of the week, to be gone over and approved by his Right Reverend. But if, on a Saturday morning, the day before the scheduled broadcast, a news story of considerable importance--affecting the social and religious status of men and women--"broke," immediately Father Coughlin set himself down to the task of changing his discourse and framing one based on the meat of the news story. It meant grinding hours of hard work, but for hard work the priest was a glutton.<sup>2</sup>

#### METHOD OF DELIVERY

Father Coughlin's method of preparation indicates that he used the manuscript method of delivery, which consists of the priest's reading his discourse from a prepared text that has been written. Coughlin used his written discourses for both the purpose of practice and for delivery on his radio programs.

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<sup>1</sup>Mugglebee, op. cit., p. 231.

<sup>2</sup>Mugglebee, op. cit., p. 231.



Coughlin's method of delivery is clearly manuscript. He always outlined his radio discourses, and wrote them out word for word. His words, however, seemed as fresh to him as to his audience; and as he referred to his manuscript, the average person in his audience could hardly detect that he was using it.

The writer has been able to discover only one instance when the radio priest did not use the manuscript method of delivery over the radio--the speech he gave on the Lindbergh baby kidnapping. Ruth Mugglebee called this speech "the supreme highlight of his radio career."

It was a glorious declamation, a brilliant bubbling over of his inner self, an extemporaneous dissertation that was praised and acclaimed the length and breadth of the land, an emotional awakening that drew oceans of tears, flattering hero-worship, and eulogistic benediction. Father Coughlin's ability for reaching into the hearts of mankind, was, once and for all time, indelibly stamped for recording in a nation's hall of fame.

Then, and only then, was it discovered that he had stepped before the metal disc totally unprepared; that his appeal to the Lindbergh kidnappers was the natural plea of his burning emotions, of his touched, full, and aching heart.

With no written words, with no notes, with only a briefly worded editorial from the Detroit Free Press, but with a rush of sincerity that poured forth volubly from an awakening, quickening, and creative impulse, Father Coughlin stepped before the microphone in the sanctuary of the Shrine of the Little Flower that afternoon. What courage it demanded to meet the fixed dials of judging, waiting millions with but scanty preparation--with practically no preparation.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Mugglebee, op. cit., p. 307.

Although the radio priest customarily used the manuscript method of delivery, this extemporaneous speech was considered one of his best addresses. Coughlin seemed as versatile in the area of extemporaneous speaking as he was in using the manuscript. After this emotionally-charged speech, the reactions to it were swift in coming:

In the street, in the office, in the factory, in the home, an excited and emotionally aroused populace voiced comments that substantially were these: "Wonderful Father Coughlin. . . gripping appeal. . . unrestrained tears. . . beautiful. . . spiritual. . . holy. . . such pleading. . . such an open heart. . . a man with a soul as well as a keen mind. . . a student of human nature. . . 1 gorgeous drama. . . human to his finger tips. . .

#### USE OF VOICE

Voice quality was one of Charles E. Coughlin's strong-points. The rich, melodious, and pleasing tones of the priest characterize his delivery. Coughlin's simple style of delivery was influenced at an early age by Father Mahoney, the priest whom he knew as a child.

Incidentally, I have inquired of Father Coughlin where he discovered the style of preaching so fluently and so picturesquely to the children of his own parish. He replied that he was merely trying to imitate the great Father Mahoney, whose nine o'clock Mass on Sunday found the church crowded to the doors as both little folk and big folk marveled at the clarity with which he explained the gospel in the vernacular of a child.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 311.

<sup>2</sup>Ward, op. cit., p. 10.

Certainly the voice of Father Coughlin was rich and mellow, and one writer states that it was one of the greatest speaking voices of the twentieth century.

His distinction: a voice of such mellow richness, such manly, heart-warming, confidential intimacy, such emotional and ingratiating charm, that anyone tuning past it almost automatically returned to hear it again. It was without doubt one of the great speaking voices of the twentieth century. Warmed by the touch of Irish brogue it lingered over words and enriched their emotional content. It was a voice made for promises.<sup>1</sup>

Another writer states that Father Coughlin's voice was "rich, melodic, authoritative--had unbelievable charm and persuasiveness."<sup>2</sup>

Certainly the radio priest was very careful of his pronunciations, and his articulation was a work of art. "His voice, his trilling of the R's, his perfect diction, his bell-like pronunciations, so clear-cut and crystal-like, his dramatic inflections floated one's mind with the rhapsodic melody, 'In days of old, when knights were bold, and barons held their sway.'"<sup>3</sup>

Mugglebee writes a rather picturesque account of Father Coughlin's delivery and compares his presentation to dining in a choice restaurant:

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<sup>1</sup>The Aspirin Age, 1919-41, Edited by Isabel Leighton (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1949), p. 234.

<sup>2</sup>Leuchtenburg, op. cit., p. 100.

<sup>3</sup>Mugglebee, op. cit., p. 181.

In analyzing Father Coughlin's artful oratory and glamorous appeal, I like to think of this comparison, homely as it may be. When I enter a restaurant to eat, I think first of its cleanliness, then of its food, and finally of its esthetic sobriety and balm. "One-arm" places or cafeterias, however good, can never appease my sensitive nerves. I like a few bits of parsley to decorate my steak and the frilled white-cap holder for my lamb chop. Softly syncopated rhythm of soothing music unmarked by cymbaled clashings is conducive to my appetite. Clean whiteness of freshly laundered linens adds considerably to palatableness. And withal, I crave wholesome food. Tenderloin steak can taste like the toughened leather of cubed meat when not cooked properly. I feel that, in much the same manner, Father Coughlin served his radio discourses--substantially the white meat of the Gospel to satisfy, artistically, the fastidious taste of religious epicures. For, as the service of culinary preparations is a science, so is the distribution of religion an art of appeal.<sup>1</sup>

The former manager of radio station WJR in Detroit, Leo Fitzpatrick, stated that Father Coughlin's delivery was best noted for its simplicity and virility: "There was virility in his sermons--the virility of simplicity. And what a wallop he packed into his religious punch! He is a holy man, as you know, but what a he-man! . . . As a man, there is none finer. As a priest--well, his popularity can serve as a testimonial."<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps one of the most outstanding characteristics of Father Coughlin's speaking was his use of his voice.

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<sup>1</sup>Mugglebee, op. cit., p. 182.

<sup>2</sup>"Microphone Messiah," American Messiahs, by the Unofficial Observer (John Franklin Carter) (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1935), pp. 33-54, p. 37.

. . .His voice ranges from a low croon, oozing with emotion, to a clear bell-like ring which recalls William Jennings Bryan. His style is a blend of biting irony and well-ordered rhetoric, which makes few concessions to the popular wisecracks and the vulgarisms of the Huey Long-Hugh Johnson school. When he needs vituperation, he simply digs into the Bible for his epithets and parables--as do they--but his mastery of the Ciceronian method, particularly of praeteritio, that trick which orators employ when they say, "I shall not mention the fact that your father was a horse-thief and I disdain to refer to your recent incarceration for a statutory offense," helps him to achieve heights of high-toned denunciation where Johnson and Long pant along in the valleys of juvenile abuse and mere name-calling.<sup>1</sup>

From actual recordings of Father Coughlin's radio broadcasts it was found that his rate is increased or decreased according to the importance he gives to certain points he desires to stress. Ideas that Coughlin wishes to make prominent in the minds of his listeners are expressed slowly and deliberately with considerable pausing. Ideas relating to the general unfolding of the topics are expressed with an increased tempo. When explaining some extremely difficult point, or clarifying unfamiliar terms or concepts, Coughlin's rate of speaking ranges between 85-100 words per minute. When he is developing the general theme of his topic, his radio speaking ranges between 110-140 words per minute.

#### SUMMARY OF FATHER COUGHLIN'S DELIVERY

Father Charles E. Coughlin's philosophy of delivery suggests a thoroughness of preparation in order that his

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

to listeners will be impressed with the speaker's competency and become more inclined to listen to what the speaker has to say.

Thorough preparation enables one to concentrate on subject being presented rather than on how it is being presented. It minimizes stage fright by taking one's mind of one's self and focusing it on the point he is seeking to get across to his audience.

Father Coughlin stressed the quality of certainty in delivery. Belief in what one is doing tends to create a similar response in the audience. People like to feel that speaker is honest, dependable, considerate, and sincere.

Coughlin emphasized simplicity in his delivery as well as in his language, wherein he chose the simple words of the man on the street. The radio priest favored the manuscript method of delivery, although evidence exists that he was equally competent in the area of extemporaneous speaking. The radio priest's voice was most pleasant to listen to and it possessed an emotional quality that drew and held attention of the audience.

## CHAPTER V

### THE RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF DISCOURSE ONE

#### Basis of Selection

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the radio discourse entitled, "The Menace of the World Court" delivered by Charles Edward Coughlin over an independent radio network on Sunday, January 27, 1935. The case study method is used in Chapter Five and Chapter Six to present an in-depth, vertical consideration of Father Coughlin's speaking rather than a horizontal, general consideration of all his radio discourses. This particular radio discourse was chosen for the following three reasons:

- 1) It was given during the height of the radio priest's career as a national orator.
- 2) It presents the effectiveness of radio in inducing specific political action on an extraordinary scale in 1935 when Father Coughlin denounced the World Court in a radio talk and 200,000 telegrams tied up the wires of Western Union.
- 3) It is the first open assertion that Roosevelt was "in league with the money-changers", that is, the first attack that included not only the Roosevelt Administration but the President, Franklin D. Roosevelt, himself.

### Analytical Method

The analytical method employed in Chapters Five and Six of these two discourses will be based upon the various classical constituents of rhetoric: inventio, dispositio, elocutio, memoria, and pronunciatio. The last two constituents, memoria or memory, and pronunciatio or delivery were discussed in Chapter Four. In an analysis of the remaining constituents, inventio or invention, dispositio or arrangement, elocutio or style, it should be noted that although each constituent takes a distinctive view of speech, it is, nevertheless, inseparable from the other constituents. In other words, something which is discussed under one constituent might possibly be considered under another. For example, it is sometimes difficult to determine whether or not a particular sentence or group of sentences is a part of logical proof or emotional proof; and often what is considered as being logical or emotional proof might conceivably be considered under style. Let us now consider each of the three remaining constituents--arrangement, invention, and style, in this order.<sup>1</sup>

### Arrangement

Rhetoricians, both ancient and modern, have discussed this constituent in terms of the various divisions of a

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<sup>1</sup>It might well be argued that invention "logically" come first and should, therefore, be considered before arrangement and style. However, arrangement is being considered first in order that a synopsis and an analysis of the various speech divisions can provide a backdrop of the discussion of content per se.



speech and how the divisions are related to each other.

Plato, for instance, taught:

Each speech ought to be put together like a living creature, with a body of its own, so as to be neither without head, nor without feet, but to have both a middle and extremities described proportionately to each other and to the whole.<sup>1</sup>

A modern writer states that a "well-organized speech presents the ideas as 'organized platoons--in marching order'"<sup>2</sup> and he goes on to discuss the "overall" organization or arrangement of a speech.

It is, therefore, the purpose of this section to analyze Coughlin's radio discourses in terms of (1) the patterns of development in the divisions of his sermons and (2) the relationship among these divisions. In order to do this effectively, the sermons will be discussed according to their divisions--introduction, body and conclusion.

### The Introductions

William Norwood Brigance, in discussing the speech introduction, writes:

The speech introduction has two purposes: (1) to get attention and good will, and (2) to orient the audience, tell what the subject is about, and supply the necessary background.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Plato, Phaedrus, Lester Thonssen, (Comp.), Selected Readings in Rhetoric and Public Speaking (New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1942), p. 29.

<sup>2</sup>William Norwood Brigance, Speech: Its Techniques and Disciplines in a Free Society (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1952), p. 210.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 218.

The following methods of getting attention and good will are:

- (1) A personal greeting.
- (2) A compliment to the audience.
- (3) A reference to the occasion or surroundings.
- (4) A reference to matters of special interest to the audience.
- (5) Pleasant or humorous remarks.
- (6) A direct reference to the significance of the subject.
- (7) An illustration, comparison, or quotation related to the subject.<sup>1</sup>

The audience, Brigrance continues, may be oriented to the subject and purpose of the speech in these ways:

- (1) An explanation of the background of the subject.
- (2) A statement and explanation of the proposition.
- (3) An explanation of how one proposes to develop the subject.<sup>2</sup>

The above outline will serve as a basis for an analysis of the introductions to Father Coughlin's discourses.

#### The Patterns of Organization in the Bodies of the Discourses

The purpose of this part of the analysis is to determine the methods or patterns by which Father Coughlin organized the materials in the bodies of his discourses.

That is to say, the critic is interested in finding out whether the speaker's conception of his task--be it to explain, to entertain, to convince, or to persuade--is clear, and whether the selection and arrangement of the ideas conduce to their effectiveness.<sup>3</sup>

We are concerned, therefore, with the clarity of a single purpose, the recognizable emergence of a central theme,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 228-236.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 228.

<sup>3</sup>Thonssen and Baird, op. cit., p. 393.

and the order or plan by which the parts of the body are developed.

Brigance's principles of speech arrangement or organization will serve as a basis for our analysis of the bodies of Coughlin's discourses. Brigance discusses five "common thought patterns" whereby the content in the body of a speech may be arranged. These thought patterns are:

- (1) A time order whereby the speech material is organized according to time or chronological divisions.
- (2) A space order whereby the speech material is organized according to a pattern of space or spatial relationship.
- (3) A classification order whereby the speech material is organized according to its relationship to related subjects or classes. Another term for this might be the topical order for in both orders the speaker breaks the speech theme into various parts, or topics, and arranges them in their most effective order. It is possible for this form of organization to overlap with another form, for example, the chronological order.
- (4) A cause-and-effect order whereby the speech material is organized according to the causes and results of a condition or situation.
- (5) A problem-solution order whereby the speech material is organized according to a consideration of the nature of a problem and then the solution to the problem.<sup>1</sup>

It should be noted that any one of the above patterns of organization may be the basic structure of the discourse, while one or more of the other patterns may serve as a basis for the development of the segments or parts of the discourse text.

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<sup>1</sup>Brigance, op. cit., pp. 213-215.

## The Conclusion

The conclusion of a discourse has one or more purposes, depending largely upon the type and objective of the discourse--to summarize or restate the main ideas, to apply the ideas of the discourse by proposing definite plans of action which coincide with the interests and abilities of the audience, and to motivate the audience to action.

The speaker must pitch his conclusion on a high plane, through the choice of ideas, through composition and through delivery. . . A conclusion should serve a definite purpose, tie up loose ends, maintain a high level of<sup>1</sup> expression, and end with a note of finality.

An analysis of Father Coughlin's conclusions, therefore, should reveal whether or not, as needed by the type of discourse, he "tied loose ends together," proposed plans of action, and motivated his audience to action. The following forms of conclusions will serve as a basis for this analysis:

- (1) The summary conclusion in which the speaker restates his main ideas in a condensed form.
- (2) The conclusion of application in which specific procedures or plans of action are advocated.
- (3) The conclusion of motivation in which the audience is moved to act in a particular manner because of appeals to self-preservation, property, power, reputation, affections, sentiments, and tastes.
- (4) The quotation conclusion in which the theme of the speech is reinforced with the words of someone else.

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<sup>1</sup>Lew Sarett and W. T. Foster, Basic Principles of Speech, (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1946), p. 521.

- (5) The visualization of the future conclusion in which the speaker pictures what will, or will not happen, if his proposition(s) is accepted.<sup>1</sup>

### Invention

Classical rhetoricians have traditionally divided the constituent of invention into three parts known as modes of persuasion or proof. These modes of proof are: ethical proof, emotional or pathetic proof, and logical proof. Father Coughlin's discourses will be analyzed in terms of this division, and a detailed consideration of these modes of proofs follows.

#### Ethical Proof

Those available means of persuasion which lie within the speaker himself are termed ethos or ethical proof. Aristotle defined the role of ethos in speaking as follows:

The character (ethos) of the speaker is a cause of persuasion when the speech is so uttered as to make him worthy of belief; for as a rule we trust men of probity more, and more quickly, about things in general, while on points outside the realm of exact knowledge, where opinion is divided, we trust them absolutely. . . we might also affirm that this character (ethos) is the most potent of all the means to persuasion.<sup>2</sup>

Aristotle stated that ethos or ethical proof includes the three constituents of character, intelligence (sagacity),

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Aristotle, Rhetoric, Lane Cooper, (Trans.) (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1932), pp. 8-9.

and good will.<sup>1</sup> Thonssen and Baird describe these constituents as follows:

In general, a speaker focuses attention upon the probity of his character if he (1) associates either himself or his message with what is virtuous and elevated; (2) bestows, with propriety, tempered praise upon himself, his client, and his cause; (3) links the opponent or the opponent's cause with what is not virtuous; (4) removes or minimizes unfavorable impressions of himself or his cause previously established by his opponent; (5) relies upon authority derived from his personal experience; and (6) creates the impression of being completely sincere in his undertaking.

. . .it may be said that a speaker helps to establish the impression of sagacity if he (1) uses what is popularly called common sense; (2) displays a sense of good taste; (4) reveals a broad familiarity with the interests of the day; and (5) shows through the way in which he handles speech materials that he is possessed of intellectual integrity and wisdom.

Finally, a speaker's good will generally is revealed through his ability to (1) capture the proper balance between too much and too little praise of his audience; (2) to identify himself properly with the hearers and their problems; (3) to proceed with candor and straightforwardness; (4) to offer necessary rebukes with tact and consideration; (5) to offset any personal reasons he may have for giving the speech; and (6) to reveal, without guile or exhibitionism, his personal qualities as a messenger of truth.<sup>2</sup>

Modern writers have extended Aristotle's definition to include those elements or phenomena which are external to the speech itself. Wayne C. Minneek adds another source of ethical proof.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 92.

<sup>2</sup>Thonssen and Baird, op. cit., p. 358.

The nature of ethos can be clearly understood if prestige is conceived as arising from three sources: (1) the tangible attainments or known reputation of the speaker which the audience acquires before the delivery of the speech, (2) the character and personality revealed by the speaker as he utters the speech, and (3) the coincidence of the speaker's proposals with the rigid beliefs and attitudes of the audience.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, ethos includes everything a speaker does to persuade his audience that he is credible.

In this analysis of Father Coughlin's radio discourses, both exterior and interior phenomena will be considered as contributory to ethical proof.

#### Emotional or Pathetic Proof

The speaker who seeks to bring his audience into a psychological state so that it influences its own reaction to what is said employs what is commonly called "pathetic proof." Emotional or pathetic proof concerns what have been termed "extra-logical matters." Aristotle wrote that proofs may be "effected through the audience when they are brought by the speech into a state of emotion; for we give very different decisions under the sway of pain or joy, and liking or hatred."<sup>2</sup> Whereas this concept of "pathetic proof" in the strict Aristotelian sense embraces only the emotions, it has subsequently been broadened to include the several

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<sup>1</sup>Wayne C. Minnick, The Art of Persuasion (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1957), p. 113.

<sup>2</sup>Thonssen and Baird, op. cit., p. 358.

elements of motivation (even though Aristotle chose to discuss these elements in another connection.) Similarly, it has been altered by the virtual ignoring of the emotions as such and the substitution of the above-mentioned elements of motivation for the emotions.

In harmony with this line of thought, we shall here consider not only the emotions as such but also the related factors of motive appeals as we seek to analyze Coughlin's practices in the area of radio speaking.

This analysis of Coughlin's persuasion will be based on A. E. Phillips' "impelling motives" which consider man's spiritual, intellectual, moral and material wants.<sup>1</sup>

- (1) Self-preservation: This means the desire for the preservation of life and health, the desire for freedom from disease, fire, flood, injury, or pain. It means the desire for freedom from these things both here and in the hereafter.
- (2) Property: This means the desire for goods, lands, and money.
- (3) Power: The desire to possess skill, force, energy--the ability to be and to do. It includes the desire to possess intellectual, moral and physical strength--the ability to sway and control men.
- (4) Reputation: The desire for the good opinion and good will of other persons.
- (5) Affections: The desire for the welfare of others, the town, the country, the state and nation. This desire is altruistic, not selfish.
- (6) Sentiments: The desire to be and to do what is right, fair, honorable, noble, true--desires associated with intellectual and moral culture. It embraces duty, liberty, independence, and also patriotism considered as a moral obligation.

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<sup>1</sup>Arthur E. Phillips, Effective Speaking (Chicago: The Newton Co., 1909), p. 48.



- (7) Tastes: This means the aesthetic desires, the finer pleasures of touch, taste, smell, hearing and sight. It also includes those appetites in so far as they have an aesthetic side and are not<sup>1</sup> looked at from the point of view of self-preservation.

Consideration will also be given to how Coughlin used these appeals to (1) gain the attention of his listeners, and (2) to bring suggestion to bear on his audience.

Emotional proof may also be affected by a phenomenon outside the speech text, the speaker's emotionality. For example, facial expressions, gestures, and shedding tears. Emotionality may be a cause of positive influence. However, it may also be a hinderance in achieving the speaker's purpose if the audience feels that the speaker is too involved in his subject.<sup>2</sup>

### Logical Proof

In the analysis of Father Coughlin's logical proof the writer will examine the priest's rational appeals-- appeals aimed primarily at man's reasoning process. Classical rhetoricians, such as Aristotle, stress the importance of logos or logical proof:

The most important ingredient of a speech is rational demonstration through severe argumentation.<sup>3</sup>

It has been said that every complete speech is "the evolution of an idea."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 48-56.

<sup>2</sup>Phillips, op. cit., p. 84.

<sup>3</sup>Thonssen and Baird, op. cit., p. 331.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 332.

Minnick defines the role of logic in persuasion as follows:

Argument in persuasive discourse consists of a pattern of reasoning which leads to a particular conclusion. It is the mode of demonstration not of discovery; that is to say, it aims to illuminate some conclusion previously discovered by the arguer.<sup>1</sup>

There are four standardized types of reasoning in oral discourse, and the following types of reasoning will be used as a basis for our analysis of Father Coughlin's logical proof.

- (1) Reasoning from example: This is the process of inferring conclusions from specific cases or substances. Statistics will be considered as examples.
- (2) Reasoning by analogy: An analogy is a comparison between two cases, in one of which a certain factor is known to exist while in the other this same factor is under question. It follows the line of reasoning that if two cases are alike in essential respects, they will probably be alike in the respect under consideration. If the two cases compared fall in the same general category, the analogy is said to be literal. If the compared cases are generically different, the analogy is said to be figurative.
- (3) Causal reasoning: Causal reasoning may be from cause to effect or from effect to cause.
- (4) Reasoning from signs: This involves the relationship between substances and attributes. A sign is a reason for acknowledging a proposition to be true. The nature of the inference involved in reasoning from sign is this: If two things are usually or always associated in some manner, the presence or absence of one may be taken as a sign of the presence or absence of the other,

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<sup>1</sup>Minnick, op. cit., p. 139.

1. e., a reason for acknowledging its being or not being true.<sup>1</sup>

### Style

Style is the constituent which is concerned with the manner in which Father Coughlin expressed himself, that is, the manner in which he clothed his thoughts with words.

Father Coughlin's style can be analyzed according to certain qualities. Aristotle sets forth the qualities, or elements, of style as clearness and appropriateness in word choice and word combination. Quintilian considered style as embracing the choice of words, appropriate ornamentation, orderly and artistic arrangements of selected words--all suited to the conditions of the speaker, the subject and the occasion.<sup>2</sup>

The following synthesis has been made of the elements or qualities of style; and it will serve as a basis for the analysis of this constituent:

- (1) Clearness--clearness or clarity of style is achieved by such devices as directness (personal pronouns and common feeling), familiar and concrete words, questions and answers.
- (2) Coherence--coherence is achieved by the effective ordering of materials, internal summaries, and connections or transitions.

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<sup>1</sup>James H. McBurney and Kenneth G. Hance, Discussion in Human Affairs (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), pp. 94-108. (Also see: McBurney, James H., James M. O'Neill, and Glen E. Mills, Argumentation and Debate: Techniques of a Free Society (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1951) Chapter 7, "Evidence"; Chapter 8, "Kinds of Argument"; Chapter 8, "Kinds of Argument".)

<sup>2</sup>Brigance, op. cit., Sarett and Foster, op. cit.

- (3) Force--force or strength is achieved by such devices as repetition, repetitive linking of words or phrases, climax development, challenge, appeal, and command.
- (4) Variety--variety or lack of monotony can be achieved through varying combinations of the above: clearness, coherence, and force.<sup>1</sup>

Style will be analyzed in terms of the above four categories. It should be noted that these four categories over-lap and that such supporting materials as simile, metaphor, analogy, and alliteration may be discussed under any of these categories.

#### Summary

Two of Father Coughlin's radio discourses have been selected for rhetorical analysis. The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to an analysis of one discourse according to the constituents of arrangement, invention, and style. Chapter Six will concern itself with the analysis of the other discourse.

#### The Rhetorical Analysis of Discourse One

This discourse, "The Menace of the World Court", is taken from a publication entitled, A Series of Lectures on Social Justice, as broadcast by Reverend Charles E. Coughlin, published by the Radio League of the Little Flower, Royal Oak,

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<sup>1</sup>Brigance, op. cit., Sarett and Foster, op. cit.

Michigan, March, 1935. This book of sermons was published under the direction of Coughlin. Every effort was made to contact Father Coughlin as well as the Shrine of the Little Flower to secure texts of speeches. Because the writer met with no cooperation whatsoever, this text, the only one available, was used. Although it is possible that this text was edited, it represents essentially what Father Coughlin said on that occasion. Father Coughlin used the manuscript form of delivery, and his radio sermons were prepared with great care prior to the actual broadcast. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that this manuscript is as close as possible to the text he used. (See Appendix A for text.)

#### Audience, Occasion, and Setting

By 1935 Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration had been successful in bringing about some measure of economic recovery, and the administration was about to launch its further program of social justice. There appeared to be an uninterested attitude toward foreign affairs prior to 1935 in the United States. However, the war-like attitudes of both Mussolini and Hitler, as well as Japan's attack on Manchuria, gave the immediate cause for fears. Roosevelt stated that there was no ground for apprehension as far as the foreign relations of the United States was concerned. The President did warn the American people, however, that the maintenance of international peace was a matter in which the United States was deeply concerned.

Prior to 1935, internationalists had made repeated efforts to have the United States join the World Court. Roosevelt urged, in 1935, approval by the government of American membership. The Senate was reluctant to adopt this measure, and the "no-entangling alliances" excuse was offered again and again by many Senators.

The opponents of American membership in the World Court used the argument that whatever reservations might be adopted, the United States would be making a definite commitment that would prejudice its complete freedom of action.

"We are different over here," one senator perhaps unconsciously paraphrased George Washington; "Why go abroad?" Such original foes of the League of Nations as Borah, Johnson, and Norris spearheaded the attack on the Court, and they were vehemently supported by the Hearst Press and the Detroit priest, Father Coughlin. The latter's last-minute appeal ("keep America safe for Americans. . . and not the hunting ground for international plutocrats") was responsible for a deluge of anti-court letters and telegrams which swamped the offices of the wavering senators.<sup>1</sup>

Father Coughlin was very instrumental in the defeat of the World Court measure. "So many thousands of wires flooded Washington in response to a radio appeal by Coughlin that messengers carted them by wheelbarrow to the Senate Office Building."<sup>2</sup>

When the final vote was taken, fifty-two Senators approved the Court protocols, thirty-six opposed; the

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<sup>1</sup>Foster Rhea Dulles, America's Rise to World Power (New York: Harper and Row, 1954), p. 171.

<sup>2</sup>William E. Leuchtenburg, Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p. 216.

proposal fell seven votes short of the two-thirds needed. Twenty Democrats had bolted the President.<sup>1</sup> While President Roosevelt knew that he had not sustained a meaningful defeat, he was greatly disturbed by its implications. Roosevelt wrote to Senator Joseph Robinson:

As to the thirty-six senators who placed themselves on record against the principle of a World Court, I am inclined to think that if they ever get to Heaven they will be doing a great deal of apologizing for a very long time--that is if God is against war--and I think He is.<sup>2</sup>

This defeat of the World Court, of which Father Charles E. Coughlin played an important part, is significant in that it clearly revealed how fearful the United States continued to be of any foreign entanglements.

This radio discourse was given on an independent national radio network on Sunday, January, 1935. At that time, America, as was previously mentioned, was in the midst of a period of extreme isolationism; and the traditional isolationist believed that the United States should refrain from any participation in European affairs and should never surrender one iota of its sovereignty for any reason.

During Father Coughlin's rapid rise to fame, the nation was in desperate circumstances. The economy was upset by a nation-wide depression, and the American people demanded to know what had caused it. Father Coughlin had been blaming

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

the "international bankers" and the communists. At this period in American history radio was listened to avidly by the average family, and Father Coughlin's Sunday talks were heard by millions of listeners. Many of these people looked to a man they could trust, and Father Coughlin was trusted because he was not a politician seeking office, but a priest, a man of God.

Father Coughlin had established his ability to influence millions of fellow Americans through his radio broadcasts; and now the Roosevelt administration was proposing America's entry into the World Court, a threat to America's isolationism. This address was given on the regular radio broadcast time of the Royal Oak priest.

Before considering the rhetorical constituents in relation to this important discourse, we shall examine an outline of what Father Coughlin had to say about the World Court in his speech.

#### DISCOURSE CONTENT OUTLINE

#### CASE STUDY I--"The Menace of the World Court"

##### I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Tuesday, January 29 is compared with July 4th.

##### II. DISCUSSION

- A. The Senate is about to hand America's national sovereignty over to the World Court.
  - 1. Sovereignty is explained.
  - 2. "Without sovereignty a nation is but a shadow."
- B. A false philosophy has arisen in our midst.
  - 1. This philosophy looks askance upon nationalism.
  - 2. This philosophy is incompatible with the Prince of Peace.



- C. Senators are about to commit America to the Court.
  - 1. War and destruction will be the result.
  - 2. America's sovereignty will be bartered.
- D. The National Union for Social Justice is national.
  - 1. It is concerned with domestic turmoil.
  - 2. It is concerned with a living wage for Americans.
  - 3. It is opposed to the League of Nations and the World Court.
    - a. The revolution of Russia brought communism.
      - (1) Communism is a social disease.
      - (2) Coughlin is opposed to communism.
      - (3) The causes of communism must be eradicated.
- E. Many Senators have committed themselves, but to whom?
  - 1. Not to the factory worker.
  - 2. Not to the youth of the nation.
  - 3. Not to the farmer.
  - 4. Not to the young mother.
- F. Proponents of entry to the Court cry, "peace".
  - 1. War has been raging since the Court was organized.
  - 2. Adherents stated by remaining aloof we are interfering with World peace.
    - a. Consider Japan and China--nothing done.
    - b. Consider the Chaco War--nothing done.
- G. International plutocrats favor entrance.
  - 1. Mr. Norman David works for the plutocrats.
    - a. Davis is guilty of fraud.
    - b. Davis is on the Morgan preferred list.
- H. Telegraph your Senators telling them to vote "no" with or without reservations.
  - 1. Reservations are innocent and innocuous.
    - a. So are some Senators.
  - 2. Viscount Grey states England will construe our reservations.
    - a. "The blind mouse" will be trapped.

I. America has a bad relationship with Europe.

1. America is hated and detested by Europe.
2. European judges uphold welshing on war debts.
3. The World Court is an European Bully.
4. Therefore, no European entanglements.

III. CONCLUSION

- A. The Eighty-second Psalm of David intimates to us the establishment of the first known league of nations and the first advertised League Court.
- B. A canticle of a psalm for Asaph is appropriate.
  1. America and Isreal are alike.
  2. A covenant has been made against God.

Arrangement

The Introduction

(1) Gaining attention and good-will

Father Coughlin began his radio discourse by contrasting Tuesday, January 29th of the current year, with July 4th, "The one date was associated with our independence. The other with our stupid betrayal." This statement is startling, and probably included means of gaining the immediate attention of the audience. In the introduction Coughlin makes a direct reference to the subject of special interest to his radio audience, the World Court.

(2) Orienting the audience

In his very short and concise introduction, Coughlin attempts to orient his radio audience for what is to come immediately in the body of his discourse. By the term "stupid betrayal" he is preparing the audience for the

immediate transition into the body of his discourse, where he discusses sovereignty and implies that the loss of sovereignty is a betrayal. Coughlin's use of "stupid betrayal" in the introduction will later mean that the American people are going to become involved in war.

Father Coughlin, therefore, apparently sought to orient his audience to the problem of the World Court in his introduction and to prepare the listener for his ideas contained in the body of his discourse.

#### The Pattern of Organization in the Body of the Discourse

In terms of overall organization, this speech can be termed a problem-solution type of discourse. Father Coughlin states that the problem--"On Tuesday of this week the United States Senate is about to hand over our national sovereignty to the World Court"--can be resolved by sending a telegram to the Senators and "telling them to vote 'no' on our entrance into the World Court."

I appeal to every solid American who loves democracy, who loves the United States, who loves the truth to stand foursquare back of those tried and true Senators of long experience in their hopeless and yet honest fight to keep America safe for Americans and not the hunting ground of international plutocrats--Senators Borah and Johnson and Walsh and Thomas and Wheeler and Smith and the rest of them. Today--tomorrow may be too late--today, whether you can afford it or not, send your Senators telegrams telling them to vote "no" on our entrance into the World Court with or without reservations. Reservations are innocent and innocuous things. And so are some of the Senators who are of the opinion that a reservation can save us.

The speech seems to be organized according to a consideration of the nature of the problem and then the solution to the problem.

Coughlin makes the transition from the introduction to the body of the discourse in one sentence. He says, in the introduction:

My friends: If I am properly informed, Tuesday of this week--Tuesday, January 29th--will be remembered by our offspring as the day which overshadowed July 4th. The one date was associated with our independence. The other with our stupid betrayal.

The one sentence transition that gets him into the body of the discourse is, "On Tuesday of this week the United States Senate is about to hand over our national sovereignty to the World Court, a creation of and for the League of Nations." Coughlin then explains what is meant by the term "sovereignty", and states that "Without sovereignty a nation is but a shadow." The priest states that he speaks of these things because a "false philosophy" has arisen in America which looks askance upon nationalism and disparages the realities of life--its passions of greed and gain, its vices of intrigue and deceit." After identifying himself with peace, Coughlin insists that America stand "by Washington and Jefferson and their policy of 'no foreign entanglements' rather than by President Roosevelt and Norman Davis and their modern internationalism." The priest then shows that, thus far, the World Court has not been associated with peace, but with war. After giving the instance of the World Court case on the question of Austria's entering into trade relations

with Germany, Coughlin cites seventeen comments of the press on this World Court case. All these quotations condemn the action of the World Court. These quotations from the American press are followed with the positions of eight foreign newspapers which also condemn the World Court.

With a short transition statement, "Last Sunday I had occasion to remark that the Carnegie millions were being spent to realize the dream of inveigling the United States into the World Court. . .", Coughlin proceeds to associate the World Court proposal with the monied interests of plutocrats and the international bankers. The radio priest spends considerable time in building a case that Norman Davis, roving ambassador, is "working in the interest of the international plutocrats who favor our entrance into the World Court."

Coughlin's single purpose is clearly evident in the body of this discourse. He wants Americans to "send your Senators telegrams telling them to vote 'no' on our entrance into the World Court with or without reservations." Using a short transitional sentence, Father Coughlin then discusses the danger of reservations of any kind and simplifies this with an analogy:

In other words, coax the blind mouse into the trap and we will enlighten him afterwards.

Coughlin completes the body of his discourse by offering the solution to the problem of the World Court, by asking Americans to vote "no" on the World Court proposal, and then discussing the dangers of reservations. After showing that

Europe detests America because America asks that creditor nations pay their honest war debts, Coughlin calls the World Court an "European Bully" and asks that there be "no European entanglements." The body of the discourse is concluded with the suggestion that the problem can be resolved by the listeners identifying themselves with peace and the political concepts of Washington.

### The Conclusion

Charles Edward Coughlin does two things in the conclusion of this discourse. (a) He states that he will read a Biblical passage which "intimates to us the establishment of the first known League of Nations and the first advertised League Court", and (b) he reads a prayerful psalm that "is a prayer to preserve our sovereignty that is about to be lost, our nationality that is about to be jeopardized."

The radio priest reads a canticle of a psalm for Asaph which is a Biblical condensation of what Father Coughlin said in the body of his discourse. The final quotation seems to imply that God desires Coughlin's radio audience to aid the radio priest in opposing the entrance into the World Court.

An analysis of the arrangement of this discourse leads the writer to conclude that Coughlin used the best of classical rhetorical theory in the organization of his radio speeches.

InventionEthical Proof

## (1) Exterior to the discourse text

Charles Edward Coughlin was apparently known in 1935 because his radio audience was numbered in the millions. It is probable that many of the listeners to whom this discourse was addressed were attracted to what Coughlin said because:

- 1.) This was a priest, a man of God, speaking to them. He was not a politician with an "axe to grind."
- 2.) The radio priest had been identifying himself with the "common man" in the past, and did so on this occasion as well.
- 3.) America was experiencing its worst depression, and the radio audience was composed of jobless, hungry people.
- 4.) The nation was looking for someone to answer the complex economic problems which had brought about the depression. The radio priest presumed to know the answers--"the international bankers and the communists were to blame."

## (2) Revealed by the discourse text

It appears that Father Coughlin focused attention upon the probity of his character by creating the impression of being sincere and understanding. In speaking of the World Court proposal as an agency for advocating peace in the world, the priest states:

My fellow countrymen, no one more than I abhors the crimson ugliness of war. No one more than I desires the benedictions of that peace which the world cannot give. But conscious of the international conditions which surround us, conscious of the nature of the League of Nations and its functionary, the World Court, I protest against the impending action of those Senators who are about to direct the destinies of the United States along

the course which will be mapped for us by the League of Nations, overwhelmingly dominated by the great powers of Europe.

Father Coughlin also gives the impression of sincerity and understanding when he states how he will feel if the World Court proposal is adopted:

Nevertheless, when on Wednesday morning next, I shall read how our Senators will have voted their approval of America's joining the World Court and therefore its creator, the League of Nations, I shall feel that something sacred has gone out of my life, for I know that these gentlemen will have subscribed to a principle which is not only philosophically unsound but which is contrary to the expressed will of my fellow citizens.

The radio priest appears to stress his sincerity and to associate himself with what is virtuous and elevated by opposing communism:

Fellow countrymen, I am opposed to communism as much as I am opposed to the plague. But, thanks be to God, I have sufficient sagacity to realize that if I suffer stinking carcasses to rot on my doorstep, I can rant and rail against the plague until doomsday.

In explaining sovereignty to his listeners, the radio priest gives his radio audience an impression of sagacity designed to enhance his ethical proof.

By sovereignty I mean that supreme power by which a free people makes its own laws for its own internal conduct, independent totally from any law-making body in the world; that supreme power by which laws are judged and interpreted by its own court, supreme in every sense to any other court. Sovereignty also connotes the power to maintain an army and navy, to coin money and regulate its value, all of which are to be adequate to the needs of the nation independent, in every sense, from foreign interference.



Father Coughlin's lengthy answer to such questions probably helped to establish an impression of sagacity, as did his familiarity with communism, international banking, and newspaper articles from all over America and all over the entire world.

It appears that Father Coughlin also sought to establish good-will by identifying himself with his radio audience. Note the following selection, for example:

My friends: If I am properly informed, Tuesday of this week--Tuesday, January 29th--will be remembered by our offspring as the day which overshadowed July 4th. The one day was associated with our independence. The other with our stupid betrayal.

Father Coughlin's good-will is further attempted by his tact and straightforwardness. For instance, he does not vehemently rebuke his radio audience for considering joining the World Court. Rather, he tactfully states:

In years to come when you young men and women who are listening to me this afternoon will have had your economic lives melted down to the standards of England, of France, of Spain and Mexico. . . I pray you will still have faith in the brotherhood of man as preached by Christ; I pray you will have the courage to re-echo the words once spoken from Calvary's pulpit: "Father, forgive them, our Senators, for they know not what they do."

Father Coughlin seems to offset any selfish motives he may have had for delivering this discourse by emphasizing that he was speaking for the American people, and thereby found himself on the losing side and subject to ridicule:

I repeat that I take this stand knowing that while I am expressing the thoughts and the ideals, the hopes and the aspirations of the American people, I am on the losing side and I

am subjecting myself to ridicule, to ignominy and perhaps to chastisement. But cost what it may, the American people have a right to know the unvarnished truth of facts.

Furthermore, as a wise speaker Coughlin seeks to achieve good-will by implying that he personally has the facts and is to be regarded as a messenger of truth:

In light of these facts which I categorically state and which I will not retract--facts now known to millions of voters; facts which besmear the propaganda of the World Court with plutocracy; facts which indicate the purpose of our entrance into this flagless nation--in the face of these I appeal to the Senators who are well-informed to the Senators who are better informed not to disparage themselves with the American people and to smear themselves with plutocratic preference.

It appears that Father Coughlin is a master artist in that he focuses attention upon his probity of character, intelligence, and his good-will. He does this by (1) showing that he is sincere and understanding in advocating peace even though he is opposed to the concept of the World Court, (2) evincing good-will by tact and straightforwardness in picturing the future should the World Court battle be lost, (3) showing that he did not have any selfish motives, but rather was speaking for the American people, (4) identifying himself with facts and the side of truth, (5) associating himself with what is virtuous and elevated--democracy, over communism, and (6) identifying himself with his radio audience through the use of many personal pronouns.

(3) Speaker's interests and audience's interests

Father Coughlin seeks to build a good impression of himself in this discourse by two methods--the commonground

approach and the "yes, yes method."<sup>1</sup>

In using the common-ground approach, he seems to identify himself with democracy, Washington and Jefferson, and peace. Coughlin implies an identity of interests or beliefs with his audience. He identifies himself with the "fatherly admonitions of Washington and Jefferson. . .not to entangle us with the religious, the racial, the economic and the martial affairs of the Old World. . ." Identifying himself with peace, the radio priest quotes from the Bible, "Nevertheless, I glory in upholding a lost cause, rather than crying, 'Peace, peace, when there is no peace.'" Through the use of the common-ground approach the radio priest implies an identity of interests or beliefs.

It is in the body of the discourse that Coughlin seems to aim at the creation of a "yes" tendency on the part of his listeners. He seeks to impress upon his listeners the necessity of limiting the subject by phrasing a series of statements to which they would tend to respond affirmatively. Coughlin also includes some statements to which the listeners might respond negatively. A negative response, rather than defeating Coughlin's purpose, could indicate agreement with the proposition that the subject should be limited. Note the following statements to which a "yes" or "no" answer is demanded and by which Coughlin apparently seeks to discover common ground or belief:

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<sup>1</sup>Minnick, op. cit., p. 127.

Is this a practicable and servicable kind or international justice that we are trading the day after tomorrow for what we possess at this moment?

Did not Congressman Tinkham show that Davis was a fugitive from Cuban justice?

Is this the roving Ambassador whose judgment the United States President and Senate accept?

Is this the plutocrat adviser whose advice we will take to push us into the League of Nations, the man on the Morgan preferred list, the man whose action is painted with fraud?

It appears, therefore, that Father Coughlin acted in the best of the classical rhetorical tradition by  
(1) identifying himself with the interests of his audience  
and (2) seeking a positive response to his statements.

### Pathetic Proof

Father Coughlin's introduction might be considered an appeal to the sentiments, that is, the shocking contrast of two important dates, "January 29th and July 4th." This should be an attention-getting statement, for it suggests that his radio audience should consider the seriousness of the World Court proposal.

In the body of his discourse, Coughlin discusses the significance of the day on which he is speaking. Motivational appeals to patriotism abound in the body of the radio discourse. Consider the following examples of appealing to the Americanism and patriotism of his listeners:

I speak to you of these things because there has arisen in our midst a false philosophy which looks askance upon nationalism and

disparages the realities of life--its passions of greed and gain, its vices of intrigue and deceit. It prefers to sing the praise of the yellow peril of pacifism while it berates and belittles the vigorous valor of patriotism.

. . .I appeal to them to reconsider their determination because war and destruction, instead of peace and tranquility, are the fruits which their action shall reap. I appeal to them by the blood spilled at Valley Forge, by the fatherly admonitions of Washington and Jefferson. . .not to jeopardize our freedom. . .

In 1935 our decision has not been altered on this point and our Americanism has not rejected Washington and Jefferson.

Father Coughlin's primary motivational appeal throughout the discussion of the World Court is the appeal to self-preservation. He appeals to his listening audience to preserve the sovereignty of the United States: "On Tuesday of this week the United States Senate is about to hand over our national sovereignty to the World Court. . ."

In agreeing that he, too, hates war, Coughlin again appeals to self-preservation. The priest says that although the Senators are sincere, "I appeal to them to reconsider their determination because war and destruction, instead of peace and tranquility, are the fruits which their action shall reap." He elaborates this statement with more appeal to self-preservation.

I appeal to them by the blood spilled at Valley Forge, by the fatherly admonitions of Washington and Jefferson, which still ring in our ears, not to jeopardize our freedom, not to barter our sovereignty, not to entangle us with the religious, the racial, the economic and the martial affairs of the Old World, from which your ancestors and mine escaped to fashion a better land where democratic freedom

and the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness might flourish.

The radio priest uses suggestion to imply that the League of Nations was organized to aid the international bankers, and that the sessions of this organization are secretive:

To offset the rapid development of communism, there was organized this League of Nations where, at its secret sessions never published to the World at large, it was planned to build a counter internationalism whose main purpose was the protection of the international banker, the international plutocrat.

Father Coughlin appeals to his listeners' desire for knowledge by inviting them to share with him the comments that the American press have made concerning the World Court. The radio priest then reads from seventeen leading American newspapers to back up his point that the World Court can be accused of a "miscarriage of justice."

Coughlin uses suggestion to convince his audience by implying that the World Court is closely aligned with the international bankers and has little relation to the average citizen:

Thus, on Tuesday next, America, instead of rescuing from the hands of the international bankers the right to coin and regulate the value of money, instead of limiting the accumulation of wealth by the favored few, instead of bending her efforts to rescue the impoverished farmer, instead of guaranteeing a just and living wage to every laborer who is willing to contribute his honest work--America is ready to join hands with the Warburgs and Morgans and Kuhn-Loebs to keep the world safe for the inevitable slaughter.

By analogy Coughlin compares an Englishman's comment on "reservations" to a blind mouse in a trap, once again he appeals to his radio audience:

Listen, gentlemen, to what Viscount Grey of England thinks of your reservations upon which, like a silken thread, you will chance the anchor of our national destiny! He said: "Let America come in with its reservations. We will construe their reservations."

In other words, coax the blind mouse into the trap and we will enlighten him afterwards.

The speaker concludes the body of the discourse by appealing to man's reverence for the Bible. Coughlin states that "by chance last night I chanced to open my Bible at the Eighty-second Psalm of David which intimates to us the establishment of the first known League of Nations and the first advertised League Court." Then concluding with a prayer, the radio priest finishes his discourse with an appeal to preserve our "sovereignty that is about to be lost."

In summary: Father Coughlin relies upon pathetic proof in apparently seeking to gain the attention of his audience, and bringing suggestion to bear upon his listeners. The motivational appeal to his listeners' desire for self-preservation seems to receive the greatest emphasis throughout the discourse. Coughlin also appeals to their appreciation for intellectual gains, motivational appeals for Americanism and patriotism, and, to a large degree, uses suggestion to convince his listeners. The conclusion of the discourse is particularly interesting because of its climactic development

in which Coughlin reaches a point of emotional intensity with an appeal for self-preservation.

### Logical Proof

#### (1) Reasoning from example

Reasoning from example seems to be the characteristic method by which Father Coughlin appeals to man's rationality in his radio discourses. He states that many Senators have committed themselves to vote America's entrance into the World Court. Coughlin then asks, "Committed themselves to whom?" The radio priest then cites specific examples of those who do not desire the proposal of entry into the World Court:

Not to the factory worker, not to the farmer, not to the youth of the nation, not to the young mother nursing her baby boy at her breast. In 1920 we, the American people, renounced the World Court and the League of Nations. In 1935 our decision has not been altered on this point and our Americanism has not rejected Washington and Jefferson.

In furthering his argument that America does not desire U. S. entry into the World Court, the radio priest backs up his point by giving the radio audience another excellent example. Coughlin cites the American Legion as opposing the proposed legislation.

Beyond all question of doubt those who are most desirous of peace, those who are most opposed to war and carnage are the veterans who, in the World War, experienced its hell and its misery. More than all the frenzied pacifists and proponents of "Peace-through-the-World-Court" this group of badgered heroes went on record through the official statement of Edward Hayes, the Commander of the American Legion, in 1934, as totally opposed to our entrance into



the World Court. This official statement reads as follows: "Be It Resolved By The American Legion: That it is opposed to the entry of the United States in the League of Nations or to the adherence of the World Court, either with or without reservations."

These millions of ex-servicemen, these lovers of peace and haters of war, based their decision not upon the propaganda of idle sentimentality but upon the bitter experience of life's realities; of European hatred and distrust for America; of European rabid nationalism and social enmities.

Coughlin cites examples supporting his assertion that America "need no impartial judgment from the throne of the World Court because of its extremely nationalistic personnel." He then cites the comments of the press as examples concerning adverse criticism of a definite World Court case:

A short time ago there was a question of Austria's entering into trade relations with Germany. Against this France violently protested. The case was carried to the World Court. An openly unfair decision was handed down by this body of jurists who, despite their learning, could not disentangle themselves from the prejudices of their nationality.

Now what comment had the press of the civilized world to make upon this miscarriage of justice?

Father Coughlin then uses European newspapers as examples to back up his assertion that the World Court is guilty of partisanship.

Even the European papers, hundreds in numbers which I cannot quote because of lack of time, have condemned the World Court for its unfairness, as if through unfairness peace can be propagated.

The radio priest then cites ten European newspapers as examples to prove his point.

Coughlin contends that Americans are guaranteed fair judicial representation without belonging to the World Court. This contention is backed up with the example of the Hague Tribunal:

. . .do not forget that we have the Hague Tribunal which operates without force of arms and without a threat to annihilate any nation who does not accept its decisions.

To support further the contention that the American people are assured fair judicial representation without belonging to the World Court, Coughlin cites the past as an example:

Since the Jay Treaty of 1793 it has been the policy of the United States to address its disputes to an international court of justice. We have arbitrated the conduct of foreigners and of our own citizens during time of war. We have never once refused arbitration. For a period of over one hundred and fifty years we have been writing a record of arbitration that has never been paralleled in the history of the world. As a practical result of this arbitration the Rush-Bagot treaty of 1818 permits us proudly to point to the three thousand miles of an imaginary boundary line separating Canada from the United States. Not a battleship desecrates the waters of our Great Lakes; not a fortification threatens harm to our neighbor's soil! Shall this record of arbitration and of peacefulness, which has proven so profitable to the continent of America, be thrown into the discard? In the face of these facts we are asked to adopt the European system of the League of Nations which breeds wars and multiplies battleships and fortifications.

The radio priest contends that "those who are endeavoring to force America into the World Court" argue

that "peace" will result. Using two brilliant examples showing the opposite of peace, Coughlin attacks this contention:

What did the World Court do in the case of Japan and China other than to investigate the ruins which resulted from the Japanese cannon?

What has the Court done in the instance of the Chaco War in South America? Here is the story, my friends, which indicts the World Court as the tool of plutocrats.

Coughlin then continues by examples to show that big business and the wealthy are behind the League of Nations and the World Court.

Father Coughlin continues his argument that the World Court and the League of Nations are backed by the wealthy, the "plutocrats", and he cites America's roving ambassador, Norman Davis, as an example.

I also remarked that according to reports, Norman Davis, our roving ambassador, was associated with the Kreuger-Toll Match Corporation and was interested not only in rehabilitating the stock of that international brigand but of arranging for the sale of Kreuger-Toll products in America. Mr. Davis is most keen for us to enter the World Court. Mr. Davis has contacted the internationalists of Europe. And Mr. Davis does not wish me to retract what I said last Sunday.

This is the Mr. Norman Davis working in the interest of the international plutocrats who favor our entrance into the World Court.

It is the same Norman Davis who is a hold-over from the Hoover Administration. The same touchy gentlemen who was on the Morgan preferred list.

And behold, when we look into his Cuban record we find that he is well chosen to be our Ambassador-At-Large! Well chosen to represent the plutocrats and advise indirectly the Senators who are about to vote us into the World Court!

In backing up his point that Americans should vote "no" on our entrance into the World Court with or without reservations, Coughlin gives his audience an example of what at least one European thinks of the proposal of U. S. entrance into the World Court:

What did the great international diplomat and jurist and World Courter say of American reservations?

Listen, gentlemen, to what Viscount Grey of England, thinks of your reservations upon which, like a silken thread, you will chance the anchor of our national destiny! He said: "Let America come in with its reservations. We will construe their reservations."

In directing the attention of his audience to the dangers of joining the World Court, Father Coughlin states that once in the World Court there is no way of backing out or seceding. To support this assertion, he uses the example of States which desired to secede from the Union in America:

My friends, if I remember correctly there are some states which freely entered this Union with certain reservations, if we may call them such. A day came when these States wished to secede. Despite their understanding the Supreme Court of the United States decided they had no right to withdraw from the United States of America. Eventually came the Civil War when judicial decisions gave way to the force of arms. Eventually came Gettysburg and the decision that no State had the right to withdraw from the Union.

An interesting feature of Coughlin's logical proof is the use of statistics as examples in his discussion of the statement that America is detested because it had the boldness to ask payment on honest war debts.

There stands Europe which has welshed on the post-war debts by more than \$12-billion after \$14-billion had been contributed to them gratis during the war!

Coughlin once again uses statistics as examples in his attempt to show that justice cannot be obtained through the World Court: ". . . nations which have already welshed on their debts; nations which have already cost \$48-billion to make Europe safe for Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin and the rest of them?"

It appears that the outstanding characteristic of Father Coughlin's logical proof is his inferring of conclusions from specific instances or cases. In the writer's judgment Coughlin is especially adept in his ability to reason from example.

## (2) Reasoning by analogy

Rather Coughlin uses a literal analogy in his introduction by comparing two significant dates:

My friends: If I am properly informed, Tuesday of this week--Tuesday, January 29th--will be remembered by our offspring as the date which over-shadowed July 4th. The one date was associated with our independence. The other with our stupid betrayal.

The radio priest employs a figurative analogy in comparing communism to the plague.

Fellow countrymen, I am opposed to communism as much as I am opposed to a plague. But, thanks be to God, I have sufficient sagacity to realize that if I suffer stinking carcasses to rot on my doorstep, I can rant and rail in vain against the plague until doomsday.

Communism is a social disease which is bred in the lurid ulcers of unjust poverty.

Father Coughlin often speaks of the "money-changers" being driven from the temple, and the priest used this

### Biblical phrase as an analogy concerning the plutocrats:

But cost what it may, the American people have a right to know the unvarnished truth of facts. Perchance they have a right to speculate why, with such inordinate hurry, this Presidential message was placed before the Senate for a decision after two years of inordinate delay have elapsed in driving the money changers from the temple!

Coughlin uses a figurative analogy in discussing the danger of reservations in regard to the World Court: ". . . reservations upon which, like a silken thread, you will chance the anchor of our national destiny!" Continuing with the use of figurative analogy, Coughlin takes the statement of an Englishman and likens it to the mouse in the trap:

In other words, coax the blind mouse into the trap and we will enlighten him afterwards.

Coughlin, therefore, makes frequent comparisons between two cases. Sometimes the comparison is figurative, sometimes it is literal, but in both cases they are directed at man's reasoning process.

### (3) Causal reasoning

Father Coughlin relies heavily upon casual reasoning in the development of the body of this discourse. Some of the cause-to-effect statements which he employs are as follows:

Nevertheless, when on Wednesday morning next, I shall read how our Senators will have voted their approval of America's joining the World Court and therefore its creator, the League of Nations, I shall feel that something sacred has gone out of my life. . .

. . .the pauper's dole of federal paternalism is designed to force them down to the European standard of living now that we are determined to accept the European standard of diplomacy and,

in part, at least, the European standard of legislation.

In years to come when you young men and young women who are listening to me this afternoon will have had your economic lives melted down to the standards of England, of France, of Spain, and of Mexico; when you will be marshalled into an army to fight the red ruin of communism, I pray that you will still have faith in the brotherhood of man as preached by Christ; I pray that you will have the courage to re-echo the words once spoken from Calvary's pulpit: "Father forgive them, our Senators, for they know not what they do!"

In speaking of economic peace for all citizens,

Father Coughlin uses the following cause-to-effect statement:

During this depression they have been so overfed with the stale crumbs of promises that the white blood of cold mistrust is beginning to course through their arteries and veins.

He also uses this form of causal reasoning in discussing the results of not voting against the World Court:

Thus, on Tuesday next, America, instead of rescuing from the hands of the international bankers the right to coin, and regulate the value of money, instead of limiting the accumulation of wealth by the favored few, instead of bending her efforts to rescue the impoverished farmer, instead of guaranteeing a just and living wage to every laborer who is willing to contribute his honest work--America is ready to join hands with the Rothschilds and Lazerre Freres, with the Warburgs and Morgans and Kuhn-Loebs to keep the world safe for the inevitable slaughter.

In his discussion against the concept of America's joining the World Court with or without reservations, Father Coughlin uses the following cause-to-effect explanation:

My friends, if I remember correctly there are some states which freely entered this Union with certain reservations, if we may call them such. A day came when these States wished to secede. Despite their understanding the Supreme

Court of the United States decided they had no right to withdraw from the United States of America. Eventually came the Civil War when judicial decisions gave way to the force of arms. Eventually came Gettysburg and the decision that no state had the right to withdraw from the Union.

In summary: causal reasoning is an important method by which logical proof is established in this radio discourse. Father Coughlin appears to be a skilled craftsman in his use of causal reasoning to reinforce and explain his beliefs. The effect-to-cause ordering of materials gives the reader a strong sense of progression as he reads this discourse. In the writer's judgment, Father Coughlin exemplifies the best of classical rhetorical theory in his causal reasoning.

#### (4) Reasoning from sign

Reasoning from sign was implied in this discourse, rather than explicitly stated. Coughlin reasons from sign throughout this discourse by pointing out that America's intentions to enter the World Court is indicative of the fact that the United States would lose its national sovereignty. To Coughlin, the issues involved did not seem to require continued objective analysis. Everything pertaining to national sovereignty was good; everything pertaining to internationalism was bad. This reasoning is not evident in any particular portion of the discourse, but seems to permeate the discourse as a whole.

### Style

#### (1) Clearness



Three characteristics of this discourse seem to contribute to clearness of style--directness, familiar and concrete words, questions and answers. Coughlin's attempt to establish a common feeling with his audience and his use of personal pronouns enhance his directness. Note how direct he appears to be in the following examples:

With our understanding of political affairs sharpened on the grinding stone of experience we have doubled our determination to acquire social justice in all its splendor.

But permit me, my friends, to become more specific in advancing a final argument as to why we should refrain from entering our destinies. . .

I repeat that I take this stand knowing that, while I am expressing the thoughts and the ideals, the hopes and the aspirations of the American people, I am on the losing side and I am subjecting myself to ridicule. . .

More than that, if we have the Hague Tribunal, and I repeat, if we have access to the World Court as non-members, fortified with the guarantee of a fair judicial representation, why, I ask you, is it logical for us to submit our disputes to a new group of judges. . .

This is substantially what I said last Sunday. Substantially what I repeat because Mr. Norman Davis has asked me to retract.

And behold, when we look into his Cuban record we find that he is well chosen to be our Ambassador-At-Large! Well chosen to represent the plutocrats and advise indirectly the Senators who are about to vote us into the World Court!

Today--tomorrow may be too late--today, whether you can afford it or not, send your Senators telegrams telling them to vote "NO" on our entrance into the World Court. . .

Here we stand today, the creditor nation of the world, hated and detested for our so-called rapacity simply because we had the boldness to ask payments on honest debts.

We make the reservations, and the World Court interprets them. We struggle for peace, and the World Court threatens war. We praise Washington and cheer his compatriot soldiers. But, when the 22nd of February comes upon our calendar, let us bow our heads in shame for desecrating the final words bequeathed to us by the Father of our Country--"no European entanglements."

By chance last night I opened my Bible at the Eighty-second Psalm of David which intimates to us. . .

Familiar and concrete words and phrases also characterize this discourse. For example: "law and order," "word of God," "benedictions of peace," "ring in our ears," "may come and go," "pauper's dole," "to take root," "rant and rail," "beyond all question," "take this stand," "unvarnished truth," "more or less," and "old as the hills." Father Coughlin also evidently sought to achieve clarity of style by explaining and defining such terms as: "sovereignty," "communism," "Hague Tribunal," "World Court," and "foreign entanglements." Although the radio priest sought to achieve clarity of style by explaining and defining the above-mentioned terms, he failed to explain what he meant by the "plutocrats," "rhetoric," "international bankers," "supercilious idealists," and "Gordian Knot."

Clarity of style was further attempted by the following uses of questions and answers:

Many Senators inform us they have already committed themselves to vote for our entrance into the World Court. "Committed themselves to whom," may I inquire? Not to the factory worker, not to the farmer, not to the youth of the nation, not to the young mother. . .

Now what comment had the press of the civilized world to make upon this miscarriage of

justice? . . . What commentary can be made by you Senators who say you have committed yourselves to our joining the World Court when practically every honest paper in America has condemned this action of the World Court. . .

What has the World Court done in the instance of the Chaco War in South America? Here is the story, my friends, which indicts the World Court as the tool of plutocrats.

What action did the League of Nations and, therefore, the World Court take in this war of aggression? . . . It lent its support to curb Paraguay and to further the designs of the Standard Oil Corporation.

What did the great international diplomat and jurist and World Courter say of American reservations? Listen, gentlemen, to what Viscount Grey of England thinks of your reservations. . .

"By a sword say I?" Most certainly!

In the writer's judgment clarity of style is also enhanced by asking rhetorical questions which need no answer because they are "loaded" questions which contain the obvious response desired by the audience:

With this knowledge before us, why should we be supercilious idealists, speculating upon the future fairness of the World Court when the past record of the Court proves beyond dispute that it is unfair, that it is political?

Is this a practicable and servicable kind of international justice that we are trading the day after tomorrow for what we possess at this moment?

Shall this record of arbitration and of peacefulness, which has proven so profitable to the continent of America be thrown into the discard?

. . . why, I ask you, is it logical for us to submit our disputes to a new group of judges in whose veins blood is thicker than water and who have already proven themselves to be better politicians than jurists--judges representing nations which have welshed on their debts; nations which

have already cost \$48 billion to make Europe safe for Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin and the rest of them?

What did the World Court do in the case of Japan and China other than to investigate the ruins which resulted from the Japanese cannon?

Did not Congressman Tinkham show that Davis was a fugitive from Cuban justice?

Is this the plutocrat advisor whose advice we will take to push us into the League of Nations, the man on the Morgan preferred list, the man whose action is painted with fraud?

In the writer's judgment, clarity of style is, therefore, attempted by directness, familiar and concrete words, questions and answers, and the use of the rhetorical question. All of these devices aided Father Coughlin in achieving clarity in his radio discourse.

## (2) Coherence

As was pointed out in the analysis of arrangement, this discourse is clearly organized according to major topics or headings. These topics are united by short, effective transitions; the topics are frequently summarized, and throughout the discourse Father Coughlin's purpose and theme are evident. These characteristics contribute to the understandability of this radio discourse. Let us consider each of them in more detail with the stylistic element of coherence in mind.

In the very brief introduction, Father Coughlin seeks to orient the audience to his subject and the purpose of the radio speech. He does this by comparing two dates of great

significance to the American people. He prepares the listener for the body of his discourse and immediately directs the thinking of his audience toward a predetermined goal.

The content of the body is also coherently organized. Coughlin identifies himself with his audience by stating that, he too, hates war. He then immediately states that the "Senators are about to direct the destinies of the United States along the course which will be mapped for us by the League of Nations, overwhelmingly dominated by the great powers of Europe." Coughlin discusses and answers a series of questions designed to move his listeners toward his goal, getting them to wire their Senators a flat "no". After speaking eloquently about democracy, the radio priest, through an effective transition sentence, leads up to this request for immediate action. Coherence of structure is later reinforced through a number of analogies, comparing the present situation with the Civil War, and with Biblical precedent.

In the conclusion, Father Coughlin summarizes the entire discourse by reading a psalm from the Bible. Thus, the conclusion is related clearly and logically to what precedes.

### (3) Force

Force or strength in this discourse seems to be achieved by the devices of repetition, the repetitive linking of words and phrases, climax development, and appeal and command. All these elements of force or strength presumably

contribute to the impact of this radio speech. As previously mentioned, Father Coughlin frequently begins successive sentences with the same word and repeats the same word or phrase within a sentence. The following examples of his uses of repetition and repetitive linking reveal the stylistic element of force:

Thus, on Tuesday next, America, instead of rescuing from the hands of the international bankers the right to coining and regulate money, instead of limiting the accumulation of wealth by the favored few, instead of bending her efforts to rescue the impoverished farmer, instead of guaranteeing a just and living wage. . .

Not to the factory worker, not to the farmer, not to the youth of the nation, not to the young. . .

Despite the comments of the press. . . despite the vote of the American people. . . despite the protests of the American Legion. . .

Mr. Davis is most keen for us to enter the World Court. Mr. Davis has contacted the internationalists of Europe. And Mr. Davis not wishes. . .

In light of these facts which I categorically state and which I will not retract--facts now known to millions of voters; facts which besmear the propaganda of the World Court with plutocracy; facts. . .

This I shall read to you. It is as ancient as the hills. It is the story that has come down through the ages of Palestine, the story that was carried by Peter and Paul to the Romans, by James to Spain, by Thomas to India, by Patrick to Ireland, by Boniface to Germany and by those who first carried the Scriptures to America. It is a story known by every Jewish heart, a story known by everyone who professes Christianity, the story of the first League of Nations, the story of the World Court! It is a prayer to preserve our sovereignty that is about to be lost, our nationality, that is about to be jeopardized. It is a prayer to protect us, the seemingly chosen people of this day, from those who are envious of us, from those abroad who have consulted against our national heroes, our Washington and Jefferson.

After listening to a number of the actual broadcast recordings of Father Coughlin's radio discourses, it is safe to assume that the oral impact of this address was tremendous. The radio priest attempted to achieve a forceful development and delivery of his material by bombarding his listeners with a potent combination of facts and assertions. The piling of assertion upon assertion and fact upon fact is an important stylistic feature of this discourse.

Coughlin concluded by reading a prayerful psalm and ended his discourse with an obvious example of climax development. The radio priest's thoughts become increasingly intense and forceful, and then he concludes with the psalm.

The use of appeal and commands also contributes to the element of force and strength in this discourse. In this example Father Coughlin commands his radio audience to act immediately:

I appeal to every solid American who loves democracy, who loves the United States, who loves the truth to stand foresquare back of those tried and true Senators of long experience in their hopeless yet honest fight to keep America safe for Americans and not the hunting ground of international plutocrats--Senators Borah and Johnson. . . Today--tomorrow may be too late--today, whether you can afford it or not, send your Senators telegrams telling them to vote "no" on our entrance into the World Court with or without reservations.

And should the listeners not do as Father Coughlin suggests, he then tells them: "But when the 22nd of February comes upon our calendar, let us bow our heads in shame for desecrating the final words bequeathed to us by the Father of our Country--"no European entanglements!"

The devices of repetition, repetitive linking, climax development, and appeal and command, therefore, presumably contributed to the stylistic element of force.

#### (4) Variety

Variety, or lack of monotony, is achieved through varying combinations of clearness, coherence, and force. In the conclusion, quoted above under (3), there are examples of familiar and concrete words, directness, and the effective ordering of materials, repetitive linking, and climax development.

Variety of style is also accomplished by the occasional quoting of Scripture. For example, "Nevertheless, I glory in upholding a lost cause, rather than crying 'Peace, peace, when there is no peace.'" Coughlin also quotes from Scripture in the following: "I pray that you will have the courage to re-echo the words one spoke from Calvary's pulpit: 'Father, forgive them, our Senators, for they know not what they do.'" The conclusion of this discourse is a lengthy psalm which is once again quoted from Scripture for variety of style in the speech.

Alliteration also contributes to variety of style, as does Coughlin's use of metaphors. The following are examples of alliteration:

. . . runs rampant in the corridors of the Capital;  
while ghaos glamors at our doors.

. . . red revolution of Russia.

. . . found fertile soil upon which he sowed  
his seed of atheism!



. . .I have sufficient sagacity to realize  
that if I suffer stinking carcassss to rot  
on my doorstep, I can rant and rail. . .

. . .will be crushed by the certain conflict. . .

Coughlin uses such metaphors as these:  
Without sovereignty a nation is but a shadow.

. . .war and destruction. . .are the fruits  
which their action will reap.

Communism is a social disease which is bred  
in the lurid ulcers of unjust poverty.

In summary, variety in this discourse is achieved  
by varying combinations of clearness, coherence, and force,  
and through quotations, alliteration and through metaphor.  
There are several examples of alliteration and metaphor  
in this discourse; and it would appear that Father Coughlin  
used them consciously, although they are used so skillfully  
that they seem much like everyday conversation.

### Summary

This problem-solution discourse is divided into three  
main divisions--introduction, body, and conclusion. In the  
introduction, Father Coughlin orients his audience to the  
subject and purpose of the discourse by contrasting two  
important dates in American history. He also relates the  
title of his discourse to his introduction.

The materials of the body of this discourse are clearly  
organized according to major topics. In terms of overall  
development of the body of this discourse, it can be termed  
a problem-solution speech. Coughlin suggests that the solution

to the problem of the "menace of the World Court" is to send telegrams "telling them to vote 'no' on our entrance into the World Court." The main topics and main points are tied together by short transitions and internal summaries.

In the conclusion, Father Coughlin does two things: (a) He states that he will read a Biblical passage which "intimates to us the establishment of the first known League of Nations and the first advertised League Court, and (b) he reads a psalm that "is a prayer to preserve our sovereignty that is about to be lost." At all times throughout the tripartite division, Coughlin's theme and purpose are always evident.

In terms of ethical proof it was concluded that Coughlin's audience probably looked upon him as a credible source because of his reputation as a nationally-known orator, his identifying himself with the "common man", and his ability to "tell off" President Franklin D. Roosevelt. An analysis of the discourse leads the writer to conclude that it contains means of representing Coughlin as a man of integrity, intelligence, and good-will. For example, in the discourse many statements suggest that he was virtuous, honest, and sincere. In his discussion of the World Court, Coughlin displays a broad knowledge of history, but, in the writer's judgment, he has a tendency to overstate. The radio priest also expresses a concern for his audiences' spiritual, physical, mental, and material welfare.

Coughlin's emotional proof appears to be based on appeals to self-preservation to gain the attention of his

audience, bringing suggestion to bear upon his listeners, and motivating his audience to action. The motivational appeal to his listener's desire for self-preservation seems to receive the greatest emphasis throughout this discourse.

Logical proof is established through reasoning from example, reasoning by analogy, (particularly figurative analogies), causal reasoning and sign reasoning. Two striking instances of this form of proof are (a) the inferring conclusions from specific instances or cases--reasoning from example, and (b) the subtle reasoning by analogy to suggest that the World Court is associated with war and the plutocrats.

Coughlin's style includes the elements of clearness, coherence, force and variety. Distinguishing features of this discourse are the strategic uses of rhetorical question, questions and answers, and quotations.

An analysis of this radio discourse leads the writer to conclude that Father Coughlin used the best of classical rhetorical theory in the preparation of his speeches.

It is unfortunate, however, that the radio priest would sometimes overstate his case, attack personalities, and become vicious in his verbal attacks.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF DISCOURSE TWO

#### The Source for the Discourse Text

This discourse, "The Spirit of The Reorganization Bill," is taken from the book, Sixteen Radio Lectures, as broadcast by Reverend Charles E. Coughlin, published by The Condon Printing Company, Detroit, Michigan, 1938. This book was published under the direction of Coughlin. (See Appendix B for Speech Text.)

#### Audience, Occasion and Setting

This discourse was given on Sunday, April 3, 1938, over an independent radio network, and was broadcast from the Shrine of the Little Flower in Royal Oak, Michigan. The audience may be considered to have consisted of the millions of faithful listeners who heard the radio priest each Sunday during the broadcast year. The New Deal had been in effect for nearly six years, but the nation-wide depression was still being felt by many Americans.

The most damning indictment of the New Deal was that it had failed to cure the depression. It had merely administered sedatives. Despite some twenty billion dollars poured out in six years of spending and lending, of leaf raking and pump priming, the gap was not closed between production and consumption. There were even more mountainous farm surpluses under Roosevelt than under Hoover. Millions of dispirited men were still unemployed. . . . Not until World War II blazed forth in Europe--the greatest

pump primer of all--was the unemployment puzzle solved.<sup>1</sup>

There was a great deal of suspicion among Americans concerning the Reorganization Bill in 1938. The proposal was to empower the President to reshuffle agencies in the interest of efficiency, and ". . . by early 1938 the same elements which had fought Court packing had stamped reorganization as yet another attempt by Roosevelt to subvert democratic institutions."<sup>2</sup>

### Basis of Selection

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the radio discourse entitled, "The Spirit of The Reorganization Bill," delivered by Charles E. Coughlin over an independent radio network on Sunday, April 3, 1938. This particular radio discourse was chosen because it was given during a period when Father Coughlin had reached an amazing popularity, and also because it was a speech on a bill proposed by the Roosevelt administration which met defeat, this defeat being "the worst rebuff Roosevelt was ever to suffer in the House."<sup>3</sup>

The method of analysis employed in the study of this discourse will be based upon the several classical constituents of rhetoric: inventio, dispositio, elocutio, memoria, and pronunciatio. The last two constituents, memoria or memory,

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas A. Bailey, The American Pageant (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1961), p. 855.

<sup>2</sup>William E. Leuchtenburg, Franklin D. Roosevelt and The New Deal (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p. 277.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 278.

and pronunciatio or delivery were discussed in Chapter Four. In an analysis of the remaining constituents, inventio, or invention, dispositio or arrangement, and elocutio or style, it should once again be noted that although each constituent takes a distinctive view of speech, it is, nevertheless, inseparable from the other constituents. In other words, something which is discussed under one constituent might possibly be considered under another. Using the discussion of each constituent included in the introduction to Chapter Five, now let us consider each of the three remaining constituents--arrangement, invention, and style, in this order.

### Arrangement

#### The Introduction

##### (1) Gaining attention and good-will

Father Coughlin's opening sentence, "I appreciate that you expect me to review and comment upon the Reorganization Bill in today's broadcast," is simple and direct. In beginning his discourse with this sentence, he (a) refers to a matter which is probably of special interest to his audience--his discourse and the Reorganization Bill, (b) refers to the occasion--his Sunday afternoon broadcast, and (c) expresses his oneness with the audience. Coughlin probably maintained attention and good-will by concluding his introduction with the following statement, for in it he states that the audience is interested in the bill because it is dictatorial, and that the bill has unusual circumstances concerning its presentation:

This proposed legislation has stirred the American public to a passionate interest not because of the provisions of the bill, which, in their present form are definitely dictatorial but because of the circumstances which attended the presentation of the bill.

Father Coughlin, therefore, seems to have tried to gain the attention and good-will of his audience by referring to the discourse theme and the occasion, and by identifying himself with them.

## (2) Orienting the audience

Father Coughlin attempted to orient his audience to his subject by (a) explaining the background of the subject, and (b) hinting how he plans to develop the subject.

In discussing very briefly the background of the subject, he states that in the broadcast he will review and comment upon the Reorganization Bill, and that "this proposed legislation has stirred the American public to a passionate interest." Coughlin then drops hints as to how he will develop the subject in this discourse. He will talk about "the provisions of the bill", "their dictatorial" characteristics, and "circumstances which attend the bill."

It appears, then, that Father Coughlin sought to orient the audience to his point of view in the introduction. He told the listeners what the subject was about; he said the present form of the bill was "dictatorial", and he suggested that he would discuss the bill on this particular broadcast.

## The Organization of the Body of the Discourse

The body of this radio discourse is clearly separated

from the introduction and conclusion, although these major divisions are linked by significant sentences. The linking sentence or transition between the introduction and body is: "For your information, the legislation now awaiting passage by the House of Representatives is almost substantially different from that which was proposed more than fifteen months ago." Coughlin, therefore, indicates where he has been and where he is going. He also does this in a one-sentence transition between the body and conclusion: "We, the people, under God our Father, are called to arise and re-establish our authority."

This is a problem-solution type of discourse. The problem is stated very concisely by Father Coughlin in the body of the discourse:

Therefore, the question at hand is this:  
 "What contribution can I make to prevent the  
 ultimate passage of the Reorganization Bill  
 provided it contains paragraphs and provisions  
 which are obnoxious to democracy?"

The solution is also suggested in the body of the discourse:

What, therefore, is the plan which I suggest  
 and which, if acceptable, I ask every newspaper  
 in this nation to print and propagate?

It is this: Beginning tomorrow I advocate  
 that every congressional district in these United  
 States shall organize a committee composed of  
 intelligent, educated, judicious citizens. I  
 propose that these committees, small in personnel,  
 but versed in experience, shall be modern Paul  
 Reveres whose business it will be to ride to  
 Washington and arouse from slumber their prospec-  
 tive representative and Senators within the next  
 two weeks.

And if this solution should not be sufficient, Coughlin states that "If, and when, the new Reorganization Bill will



emerge from the joint conference of Senate and House of Representatives, then will be the proper time to deluge Washington with another shower of telegrams and of letters protesting your opposition to such emergency measures. . . ."

Within the body the materials are arranged according to the classification order, that is, according to major topics or headings. This becomes apparent when one considers the discourse outline below.

- I. The legislative plan has changed in the past fifteen months.
  - A. The Reorganization Bill and the Judiciary Reform Bill were regarded as twin bills.
    1. These bills were proposed to amplify the powers of the President.
    2. These bills would elevate the President over Congress and the Supreme Court.
- II. The three branches of government are independent and yet correlated.
  - A. They act as checks and balances of each other.
    1. Congress is a law-making body.
    2. The Executive branch cannot make laws.
    3. The Judiciary is limited to interpreting the laws.
  - B. Any proposed legislation which causes imbalance isn't constitutional.
- III. The twin bills were aimed at destroying the system of checks and balances.
  - A. The original Reorganization Bill gave congressional powers to the President.
  - B. The Judiciary Bill gave the President control of the Supreme Court.
- IV. The Reorganization Bill was delayed in Congress.
  - A. It regained public attention only recently.
  - B. The Reorganization Bill met with much discussion.
    1. Many telegrams were sent to Congressmen.
    2. The Democratic Party was split.
      - a. It was feared Harry Hopkins would be the new Secretary of Welfare.
      - b. It was decided that Hopkins would retain his present job.

- V. The passage of the Reorganization Bill is enhanced considerably at this moment.
  - A. The President supports it.
  - B. Proponents of the amendment will concede any amendments.
  - C. The House of Representatives will not defeat it.
- VI. The Reorganization Bill is limited by a specific date.
  - A. This presidential power will expire in 1940.
    - 1. Any changes the President makes will be permanent.
    - 2. The original government once lost cannot be restored.
  - B. The President got emergency powers in 1933.
    - 1. Emergency powers will become permanent.
- VII. For five years we have lived in the midst of emergency psychology.
  - A. We are accustomed to the psychology of emergency.
  - B. Congress has passed emergency measures making permanency of this emergency.
    - 1. Class hatred has been the result.
    - 2. Fifteen million people are on the "dole."
  - C. Telegraph your congressman protesting your opposition.
- VIII. What plan of action is best?
  - A. Congressional districts organize a committee.
    - 1. Committees go to Washington and arouse the sleeping senators.
    - 2. Ask congressmen if they are "rubber stamps".
  - B. If the bill passes, we will wire our congressmen.
  - C. American people, arise and re-establish your authority.

It appears, therefore, that Coughlin organizes his content according to a problem-solution type of arrangement.

In summary: the body of this discourse is basically organized according to a problem-solution type of discourse. Coughlin attempts to achieve coherence and clarity of thought by use of such sign-posts as: "For your information, the legislation now awaiting passage by the House of Representatives is almost substantially different from that which was proposed more than fifteen months ago." "What, therefore, is the plan

which I suggest and which, if acceptable, I ask every newspaper in this nation to print and propagate?" In the writer's judgment, coherence of thought and clarity of purpose are further strengthened by transitions and internal summaries. The sermon body is well organized; the central theme is supported and developed in eight main heads or topics. Father Coughlin's purpose is evident throughout the discourse, and the body is bound to the introduction and conclusion by strong transitions. It is obvious throughout the entire discourse that Coughlin feels the Reorganization Bill to be a threat to American democracy and the Constitution of the United States.

### The Conclusion

In the first sentence Father Coughlin restates his theme--the defeat of the Reorganization Bill. This restatement, "We, the people, under God our Father, are called to arise and re-establish our authority," is then qualified as not being a "religious issue." The priest states, "This is an issue between prosperity and democracy on the one side and emergency and party-ism on the other."

Thus, in his conclusion, Coughlin re-emphasizes his theme--the defeat of the Reorganization Bill--by quoting from Scripture to make the words applicable to all America in this crisis:

. . .I quote for you the words that the "letter killeth and the spirit maketh to live." And I interpret them to you to mean that it is not the letter of the Reorganization Law which matters in this instance. It is the spirit which predominates it, the spirit of centralization of power, the spirit of perpetuating a needless emergency, the spirit of defeatism which, like a cloak, is enshrouding the shoulders of America.

In summary, it seems clear that Father Coughlin appears to exemplify the best in rhetorical theory in the constituent of arrangement. The discourse appears to be well-organized around a single purpose, the defeat of the Reorganization Bill: Coughlin's discourse contains an introduction, body, and conclusion--all related to a central theme. The basic "common thought pattern" is that of "problem-solution order," whereby the speech material is organized according to a consideration of the nature of a problem and then the solution to the problem.

### Invention

#### Ethical Proof

##### (1) Exterior to the sermon text

When Father Coughlin gave this radio discourse, he had been known for almost a decade as a brilliant radio orator. In the past, the radio priest had attempted to identify himself with the average American citizen, and had gained a national and international reputation as a "man who could tell Franklin Delano Roosevelt what to do and get him to do it."<sup>1</sup> Father Coughlin at this time had a radio audience "estimated at from 30,000,000 to 45,000,000 writing an average of 50,000 letters per week."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>"Microphone Messiah," in American Messiahs, by the Unofficial Observer (John Franklin Carter) (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1935), p. 41.

<sup>2</sup>Wallace Stegner, "The Radio Priest and His Flock," in The Aspirin Age, 1919-1941, Isabel Leighton (ed.) (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1949), p. 236.

As a consequence of Coughlin's oratorical abilities, it may be implied that many people who heard his discourse had a favorable, preconceived opinion about him. He was a priest, a man of God, a national celebrity, and he identified himself with the common man. In other words, Coughlin may have achieved credibility as a result of phenomena external to the discourse text.

(2) Revealed by the speech

It appears that Father Coughlin focused attention upon the probity of his character by creating the impression of being sincere and understanding. In acknowledging the good faith of the President, Coughlin manages to give the impression of sincerity and understanding in regard to Roosevelt's attempts at reform.

Year after year, the President, in good faith, I will admit, has given utterance to a most humanitarian philosophy: He has sympathized with the underfed third population of our nation; he has extended a friendly hand to exploited labor; he has been a firm advocate of unionism; he has been keenly interested in the welfare of agriculture. Although he has been harsh and critical of monopolies and of industries, so have I; although he has castigated the concentrators of wealth, so have I. However, it is my humble opinion, the major portion of his economic activities during the past five years have tended to make permanent the emergency.

In stating "the advocates of the Reorganization Bill are waiting for me to call upon this audience and the American public to deluge the House of Representatives with more telegrams," the radio priest once again focuses attention upon the probity of his character by creating the impression of being understanding. He then displays common sense and good taste with the following explanation:

That would be unsound strategy at this moment. This is not the time for sending more telegrams. It is inopportune. The messages which the hundreds of thousands of persons in this audience already have sent to Congress have had their salutary effect.

His explanations of such positions probably helped to establish an impression of his sagacity, as did his familiarity with the three branches of the Federal government and their functions, his knowledge of how a proposed bill becomes a law, and his knowledge of the Constitution of the United States.

It appears that Father Coughlin also sought to establish good-will by identifying himself with his listeners. Note the following selection, for example:

For five years we have been living in the midst of an emergency psychology. For five years we have witnessed the inception of social reforms and have failed to recognize the establishment of the basic economic reform for which the times are clamoring. For five years we have experienced, not a decrease, but an increase in the causes of the emergency. More credit inflation has merely added to our national woes; more spending of debt money has merely deepened the roots of the emergency.

Coughlin further seeks to achieve good-will by emphasizing his "oneness" with the radio audience. Through this identification Coughlin attempts to reveal to us his good-will, an important element of ethical proof. The following examples contain what must have been regarded as revelations of Coughlin's good-will:

My friends, the hour has arrived for all of us to liquidate the emergency psychology which is devouring us.

We, the people, under God our Father, are called to arise and re-establish our authority.

I believe it is important now to inform you of the strategy being adopted by the sponsors of this bill and prepare you for ultimate action. . . .

Father Coughlin attempts to reveal familiarity with the depression that his listeners had recently experienced, and he also focused attention on his knowledge of monetary issues with the following statements:

In 1933 it was evident that our nation was in the midst of an emergency. There were millions of men unemployed and thousands of factories closed. Homes and farms and industries were being confiscated as rapidly as Government agents and mortgage-holders could act.

Every intelligent person understood that this want amidst plenty had been promoted by an unsound credit inflation and a corresponding lack of purchasing power among the laboring and agricultural classes which were receiving less-than-living wages.

The foregoing analysis leads the writer to conclude that Father Coughlin did things which would have, or should have, revealed him as a man of probity, intelligence and good-will.

### (3) Speaker's interests and audience's interests

It appears that Coughlin believed that his proposal of rejecting the idea of the Reorganization Bill might not be welcomed by his radio audience. The radio priest, therefore, attempts to build a good impression of himself before he states his proposal. He does this by the common-ground approach, whereby he focuses attention on experiences and attitudes he has in common with his listeners. In the introduction he states:

I appreciate that you expect me to review and comment upon the Reorganization Bill in today's broadcast. This proposed legislation has stirred the American public to a passionate interest not because of the provisions of the bill, which in

their present form, are definitely dictatorial but because of the circumstances which attended the presentation of the bill.

Coughlin attempts to identify himself with his audience throughout the discourse. Note these examples:

I believe it is more important now to inform you of the strategy being adopted by the sponsors of this bill and to prepare you for ultimate action than it is to magnify any one portion of the bill.

For five years we have been living in the midst of emergency psychology. For five years we have failed to recognize the establishment of the basic economic reform for which the times are clamoring. For five years we have experienced, not a decrease, but an increase in the causes of the emergency.

My friends, the hour has arrived for all of us to liquidate the emergency psychology which is devouring us.

We, the people, under God our Father, are called to arise and re-establish our authority.

Coughlin concludes the discourse with what appears to be a very subtle method of leading his audience to accept his proposals. He does this by "reviving the Scriptural text which is applicable to all America in this crisis."

. . .I quote for you the words that the "letter killeth and the spirit maketh to live." And I interpret them for you to mean that it is not the letter of the Reorganization Law which matters in this instance. It is the spirit which predominates it, the spirit of centralization of power the spirit of perpetuating a needless emergency, the spirit of defeatism which, like a cloak, is enshrouding the shoulders of America.

By use of the common-ground approach, Coughlin attempts to create a good impression, which evidently seeks to establish



ethical proof by identifying his interests with those of his radio audience. In the writer's opinion, Coughlin exemplifies the best in classical rhetorical theory in the area of ethical proof.

### Pathetic Proof

Father Coughlin's introduction was probably attention getting. It is an arresting series of statements which probably suggested to the persons who heard it that they should think seriously about the preservation of their democratic way of life.

I appreciate that you expect me to review and comment upon the Reorganization Bill in today's broadcast. This proposed legislation has stirred the American public to a passionate interest not because of the provisions of the bill, which, in their present form are definitely dictatorial but because of the circumstances which attended the presentation of the bill.

Father Coughlin then appeals to man's desire for knowledge by explaining the bill then under consideration by Congress, "For your information, the legislation now awaiting passage by the House of Representatives is almost substantially different from that which was proposed more than fifteen months ago." He appeals to his listener's probable interest in the government by explaining that the twin bills were designed to elevate the President over both Congress and the Supreme Court.

Coughlin also appeals to man's desire for knowledge. In discussing the heated debates concerning the current Reorganization Bill which had split the Democratic Party, he states that concessions were made by the opposition.

The radio priest cites the example of Harry Hopkins, who, it was surmised, would be the new Secretary of Welfare, "knowing that this gentleman had been a registered Socialist in New York City. . . ."

The motives of self-preservation are appealed to as Coughlin states that American democracy may be lost if the Reorganization Bill is successful:

When this work will have been completed in joint conference, then the new Reorganization Bill will be presented to the House and to the Senate either for passage or for rejection. The Senators will not be permitted to debate it. The members of the House of Representatives will not be permitted to discuss it. Each body, in turn, will be permitted to vote for it or against it and nothing more. Consequently, if the House of Representatives fails to defeat outright the entire Reorganization Bill during this week's session--and it is my honest opinion that the House will not be able to defeat it because of the multiple amendments which will be used to obtain support--then the New Deal conferees will wait patiently for two or three weeks until the public passion subsides. With lightning rapidity, the new bill will reappear before the Senate and the House for final passage before it will be possible for the people of America to reassemble their forces.

The above motivational appeal to self-preservation also contains a great deal of suggestion that the ordinary democratic processes are complicated, and the average voter can do little to stop them once they have begun.

The radio priest also uses suggestion to motivate his audience to believe that Roosevelt is a dictator.

But it is more essential to know that the changes which he makes between now and 1940 will remain permanent--so permanent that it would be impossible, practically speaking, for Mr. Roosevelt's successor in office, if there be one, to restore government to its original design.

Coughlin continues his discussion of the threat of a Roosevelt dictatorship, using fear appeals:

Is it the purpose of Congress to surrender the proud spirit of Americanism which once spurned this so-called charity from the public purse--to surrender it to the cringing spirit of a servile state, thereby establishing, not the dictatorship of a one-man Government, but the dictatorship of a one-party rule?

Throughout this discourse Father Coughlin makes numerous appeals for Americanism and democracy by explaining that our American form of government is seriously threatened.

Consequently, any proposed legislation tending to destroy the independence of one branch of Government, any legislation aimed at elevating one branch to a position superior to the two remaining branches, is contrary to the traditions of Americanism and to the spirit and letter of our Constitution.

The radio priest uses fear appeals to convince his listeners by giving his explanation of parliamentary law.

The reason for that statement is the following: Parliamentary procedure demands that once the House of Representatives will pass even the bare title of the Reorganization Bill, denuded of every controversial paragraph and proposal, the House bill and the Senate bill, which passed last week, will be placed together for discussion not by the Senate nor by the House, but by a New Deal, hand-picked group of conferees. These conferees are empowered by parliamentary procedure to re-write an entirely new bill, to incorporate in it every proposal which had been stricken out last week whether in the Senate or on the floor of the House and to rebuild it exactly as it was fifteen months ago. That is parliamentary law.

Father Coughlin finishes the discourse with a motivational appeal to self-preservation. This appeal to the preservation of a democratic way of life is built around a quotation from the Bible.

Therefore, reviving the Scriptural text which is applicable to all America in this crisis, I quote for you the words that the "letter killeth and the spirit maketh to live." And I interpret them for you to mean that it is not the letter of the Reorganization Law which matters in this instance. It is the spirit which predominates it, the spirit of centralization of power, the spirit of perpetuating a needless emergency, the spirit of defeatism which, like a cloak, is enshrouding the shoulders of America.

In summary: Father Coughlin relies upon pathetic proof in apparently seeking to gain the attention of his audience, bringing suggestion to bear upon his listeners, and motivating his audience to action. The appeal to the listener's desire for the preservation of Americanism and democracy receives the greatest emphasis throughout the discourse. In the writer's judgment, Coughlin seems to be skilled in weaving these appeals into the total discourse so that the attention of the listener is attracted to what he says, and not to how he says it, exemplifying the best of classical rhetorical theory.

### Logical Proof

#### (1) Reasoning from example

One method by which Coughlin established logical proof is through reasoning from example. In the beginning of the body of this discourse, Coughlin employs the following example of concessions to the opposition party:

Surmising that Mr. Harry Hopkins would be the new Secretary of Welfare; knowing that this gentleman had been a registered Socialist in New York City, millions of Americans were disturbed when they pre-visioned this gentleman's having charge of the administration of all existing Federal laws relative to education.

Father Coughlin reasons from example in seeking to prove that in 1933 the United States was in the midst of an emergency.

There were millions of men unemployed and thousands of factories closed. Homes and farms and industries were being confiscated as rapidly as Government agents and mortgage-holders could act.

The radio priest also reasons from example when he makes the assertion that "the provisions of the bill, . . . in their present form, are definitely dictatorial". The priest gives several examples which show that the Chief Executive's powers would elevate him over both Congress and the Supreme Court.

In stating that the Supreme Court, Congress, and the Chief Executive are three branches independent of each other, although co-related, Coughlin backs up this statement with examples:

The law-making body, Congress, is prohibited from executing the laws. The Executive, or Presidential branch, is restrained from making the laws, and the Judiciary, or Supreme Court section of Government, is limited to interpreting the laws.

To back up the assertion that the twin bills definitely aimed at destroying the checks and balances of our triply divided form of government, Coughlin once more reasons from example.

The original Reorganization Bill proposed removing specific powers from Congress and allocating them to the President. The Judiciary Bill, which was publicized one year ago February, was designed to give the Chief Executive specific and immediate control over the personnel of the Supreme Court.

Implying that parliamentary law is sometimes complicated and is sometimes unfair to the average voter, Coughlin backs

up this implication through reasoning from example.

. . . Parliamentary procedure demands that once the House of Representatives will pass even the bare title of the Reorganization Bill, denuded of every controversial paragraph and proposal, the House bill and the Senate bill, which passed last week, will be placed together for discussion not by the Senate nor by the House, but by a New Deal, handpicked by parliamentary procedure to re-write an entirely new bill, to incorporate in it every proposal which had been stricken out last week either in the Senate or on the floor of the House and to rebuild it exactly as it was fifteen months ago. That is parliamentary law.

Coughlin once again uses reasoning from example to show that the House and the Senate will have only the limited right to pass or reject the bill.

The Senators will not be permitted to debate it. The members of the House of Representatives will not be permitted to discuss it. Each body, in turn, will be permitted to vote for it or against it and nothing more.

To illustrate the statement that it would be impossible for Roosevelt's successor in office to restore government to its original design, Coughlin once again reasons from example.

In other words, Mr. Roosevelt has power to scramble eggs according to his own decisions until 1940. His successor will try in vain to unscramble them.

Coughlin uses examples to back up the statement that, "For five years we have been living in the midst of an emergency psychology."

For five years we have witnessed the inception of social reforms and have failed to recognize the establishment of the basic economic reform for which the times are clamoring. For five years we have experienced, not a decrease, but an increase in the causes of the emergency. More credit inflation has merely added to our national woes; more spending of debt money has merely deepened the roots of the emergency.

The radio priest uses examples as he seeks to prove that the American people have grown accustomed to the psychology of emergency:

I fear that the millions of the unemployed, of the destitute, of the financially embarrassed, have adopted as a permanent attitude the philosophy that the Government must support the people. I fear that these same millions have rejected the sound principle that the people must support the Government.

Although Coughlin takes Franklin D. Roosevelt to task for making permanent the emergency, the radio priest does admit that the President has "given utterance to a most humanitarian philosophy." Coughlin uses examples to prove this statement:

He has sympathized with the underfed third population of our nation; he has extended a friendly hand to exploited labor; he has been a firm advocate of unionism; he has been keenly interested in the welfare of agriculture.

In the writer's judgment Coughlin is especially skillful in his ability to reason from example.

## (2) Reasoning from analogy

There are a number of analogies in this discourse, most of them being figurative in nature. In the first analogy listed below, Coughlin compares Roosevelt's successor's attempt to restore government to its original design to the scrambling of eggs:

But it is more essential to know that the changes which he makes between now and 1940 will remain permanent--so permanent that it would be impossible,

practically speaking, for Mr. Roosevelt's successor in office, if there will be one, to restore government to its original design. In other words, Mr. Roosevelt has the power to scramble eggs according to his own decisions until 1940. His successor will try in vain to unscramble them.

Coughlin also uses figurative analogy in comparing the placing of "all Civil Service employees under the dictatorship of a partisan agent removable from his office at will by the President" with a pork barrel:

. . .I will not discuss at length that section of the bill which proposes to abolish the nonpartisan regulation of Civil Service and to place all Civil Service employees under the dictatorship of a partisan agent removable from his office at will by the President.

It is sufficient to note that this legislation would establish the largest political pork barrell in all the world and would insure the perpetuation of a one-party form of Government.

Coughlin employs another figurative analogy in comparing the dole the American people are receiving with a fire:

Thus, the flame of class hatred is leaping from the smouldering embers of discontent.

Another figurative analogy follows the one mentioned above:

This, to my mind, is the fruit which has grown upon the tree of emergency psychology.

The radio priest uses a figurative analogy to compare those congressmen who are "yes-men" to the Roosevelt Administration to a rubber stamp:

"Therefore, tonight in our congressional district, while thousands of your constituents are amassed in peaceful but public protest against the Reorganization Bill, we ask you this one question: Do you intend to be a Congressman to represent your people under the Constitution or do you prefer to be a rubber stamp to pass any bill including a Reorganization Bill, simply because our President requests it?"



He employs another figurative analogy in showing that Scriptural text is applicable "to all America in this crisis."

I quote for you the words that the "letter killeth and the spirit maketh to live." And I interpret them for you to mean that it is not the letter of the Reorganization Law which matters in this instance. It is the spirit which predominates it, the spirit of centralization of power, the spirit of perpetuating a needless emergency, the spirit of defeatism which, like a cloak, is enshrouding the shoulders of America.

Analogies, such as those above, appear to have been important means by which Father Coughlin sought to establish logical proof.

### (3) Causal reasoning

There are many instances of causal reasoning in this discourse. The following is an example of effect-to-cause reasoning:

This proposed legislation has stirred the American public to a passionate interest not because of the provisions of the bill, which, in their present form, are definitely dictatorial but because of the circumstances which attended the presentation of the bill.

In the above example of effect-to-cause reasoning, Coughlin states that a certain phenomenon, an effect, the dictatorial provisions of the bill, has produced a cause, has stirred the American public to passionate interest.

An example of cause-to-effect reasoning is used as follows:

To gain much of his partisan support, which is seriously wavering, Mr. Roosevelt, it is reported, indicated last night that he was agreeable

to a second amendment to the Reorganization Bill which will give Congress the right to override, by a majority vote, any action taken by the President under the bill's present provisions. Until yesterday the bill provided that it would require a two-thirds majority of Congress to nullify the presidential action under this bill.

Coughlin uses cause-to-effect reasoning to attempt to prove that if the House of Representatives fails to defeat the Reorganization Bill, the New Deal conferees will wait and it will appear again.

Consequently, if the House of Representatives fails to defeat outright the entire Reorganization Bill during this week's session--and it is my honest opinion that the House will not be able to defeat it. . .then the New Deal conferees will wait patiently for two or three or four weeks until the public passion subsides. With lightening rapidity the new bill will reappear before the Senate and the House for final passage before it will be possible for the people of America to reassemble their forces.

The radio priest again uses effect-to-cause reasoning in the following statement:

It is important to remember that as far back as the month of March, 1933, the President, who recognized that an emergency existed in the nation, asked and obtained from Congress emergency powers which permitted him to gain control over the purse of the nation, and which allowed him to establish at least fifty-six corporations such as the NRA the AAA, the Stabilization Fund, etc., to function as depression destroyers.

Coughlin also uses cause-to-effect reasoning in considering that the cause "If and when, the new Reorganization Bill will emerge from the joint conference of Senate and House of Representatives", will produce the effect, "then will be the proper time to deluge Washington with another shower of

telegrams and letters protesting your opposition. . .".

In an effect-to-cause statement, Coughlin says,

Government after Government concerned themselves almost entirely with the problem of supply and of profit. Government after Government disregarded the problem of demand and of consumption. As a result of all this the factories and the fields were well-equipped to produce plenty. The laborers and the farmers and their families, who comprised by far the major portion of the consuming power, could neither use nor consume the products of farm and factory because there was an insufficient purchasing power.

It appears, therefore, that causal reasoning is another important method whereby Father Coughlin seeks to establish logical proof in this discourse.

#### (4) Sign reasoning

Father Coughlin does not appear to use sign reasoning in the development of this discourse.

Coughlin relies upon reasoning from example, reasoning from analogy, and causal reasoning in an effort to establish logical proof.

In summary, after a careful analysis of Father Coughlin's logical proof, the writer concludes that the radio priest exemplifies the best of classical rhetorical theory in his appeals aimed primarily at man's reasoning processes. Father Coughlin is especially skillful in his attempts to reason through the use of example.

### Style

#### (1) Clearness

In this discourse extensive use is made of the personal pronouns "I, we, and us." Through the use of these

pronouns and by the establishing of a common-feeling with his audience, Coughlin may have achieved directness. Note, in the following example, Coughlin's use of personal pronouns and what appears to be an attempt to establish a oneness of feeling with his audience.

For five years we have been living in the midst of an emergency psychology. For five years we have witnessed the inception of social reforms and have failed to recognize the establishment of the basic economic reform for which the times are clamoring. For five years we have experienced not a decrease, but an increase in the causes of the emergency. More credit inflation has merely added to our national woes. . .

Thus, directness seems to be a characteristic of Coughlin's style, as is Coughlin's use of familiar words a characteristic of his style.

Clarity of style is further enhanced by Coughlin's use of questions and answers. Note how he answers this question: "What contribution can I make to prevent the ultimate passage of the Reorganization Bill provided it contains paragraphs and provisions which are obnoxious to democracy?"

This question I will answer at the conclusion of this broadcast this afternoon.

In stating that the "past five years have tended to make permanent the emergency," the radio priest asks the question: "With what result, psychologically speaking?" Coughlin then uses the answer to further his suggestion that the dole is not enough for American citizens:

While the taxpayers have suffered patiently in bearing the burden of bonds issued to extend doles and relief, they are growing impatient. While the dolesters themselves and the recipients of governmental subsidies at first were happy to receive an immediate crisis, they are growing dissatisfied because the little they receive is insufficient to maintain them on what they consider the American level of living.

Father Coughlin makes use of a number of rhetorical questions which really do not require an answer because the answers are contained in the question or the answer is self-evident. Note these examples of rhetorical questions:

Is it the intent of Congress, imbued with an emergency psychology, to perpetuate these persons as wards of the Government, thereby as supporters of a one-party form of Government?

Is it the purpose of Congress to surrender the proud spirit of Americanism which once spurned this so-called charity from the public purse--to surrender it to the cringing spirit of a servile state, thereby establishing, not the dictatorship of a one-man Government, but the dictatorship of a one-party rule?

"Therefore, tonight in our congressional district, while thousands of your constituents are amassed in peaceful but public protest against the Reorganization Bill, we ask you this one question: Do you intend to be a Congressman to represent your people under the Constitution or do you prefer to be a rubber stamp to pass any bill including a Reorganization Bill, simply because our President requests it?

Familiar and concrete words and phrases also characterize this discourse. For example: "to the spirit and letter," "time is the healer of wounds," "practical minded," "a flood of telegrams," "turn to the future," "it is my honest opinion," "try in vain," "it is sufficient to note," "less-than-living wages," "year after year," "be he rich or poor," "we, the people," "Congress," "to scramble eggs," and "democracy."

Coughlin also seeks to achieve clarity of style by explaining and defining such terms as "independent and correlated," "checks and balances," "Reorganization Bill," and "emergency." Coughlin fails, however, to explain what he means by "Socialist", although it may be that this term was well-known by the radio audience.

In summary: clarity of style seems to be achieved by at least three methods--directness, familiar and concrete words, and questions and answers.

## (2) Coherence

As was concluded in the rhetorical analysis of Arrangement, this discourse can be divided into three main parts--introduction, body, and conclusion. The introduction consists of an explanatory section in which Coughlin discusses that his radio listeners expect him to review and comment upon the Reorganization Bill in this particular broadcast. Coughlin then uses the transition device of stating that "this proposed legislation has stirred the American public to a passionate interest not because of the provisions of the bill, which, in their present form are definitely dictatorial but because of the circumstances which attended the presentation of the bill."

The body of this discourse is organized in relation to certain main points, including questions. It is clearly organized, achieving coherence through introductory and transitional sentences, questions and answers, rhetorical questions, and internal summaries.

The conclusion, while brief, is, in general, a well-organized condensation of the body of the discourse. It is tied to the body with this lengthy transitional sentence:

If, and when, the new Reorganization Bill will emerge from the joint conference of Senate and House of Representatives, then will be the proper time to deluge Washington with another shower of telegrams and of letters protesting your opposition to such emergency measures when now is the time for America to turn its back on such policies and to stretch forth its hand to the saving anchor of democracy which we can make function if we will to do so.

Thus, coherence is effected by the effective ordering of materials, internal summaries, and strong transitional statements.

### (3) Force

Force or strength in this discourse seems to be achieved by repetitions, the repetitive linking of words or phrases, and climax development. Let us note some examples of each of these methods. In the following examples, Coughlin repeats the same words in a single sentence:

Is it the purpose of Congress to surrender the proud spirit of Americanism which once spurned this so-called charity from the public purse-- to surrender it to the cringing spirit of a servile state, thereby establishing, not the dictatorship of a one-man Government, but the dictatorship of a one-party rule?

"Mr. Congressman, we are opposed to the Reorganization Bill because of the spirit which promotes it and because it is definite legislation to perpetuate an unnecessary emergency. We are opposed to a Reorganization Bill, not because it now appears innocuous, but because it indicates an abdication of power on the part of Congressmen in favor of the President; because it is contrary in spirit, if not in deed, to the triple division of checks and balances instituted by the Constitution of our democracy.

And I interpret them for you to mean that it is not the letter of the Reorganization Law which matters in this instance. It is the spirit which predominates it, the spirit of centralization of power, the spirit of perpetuating a needless emergency, the spirit of defeatism which, like a cloak, is enshrouding the shoulders of America.

The following is an example of Coughlin's use of the repetitive linking of phrases:

For five years we have been living in the midst of an emergency psychology. For five years we have witnessed the inception of social reforms and have failed to recognize the establishment of the basic economic reform for which the times are clamoring. For five years we have experienced not a decrease, but an increase in the causes of the emergency.

Climactic development also seems to contribute force of style. This is particularly true in the conclusion to the discourse:

Therefore, reviving the Scriptural text which is applicable to all America in this crisis, I quote for you the words that the "letter killeth and the spirit maketh to live." And I interpret them for you to mean that it is not the letter of the Reorganization Law which matters in this instance. It is the spirit which predominates it, the spirit of centralization of power, the spirit of perpetuating a needless emergency, the spirit of defeatism which, like a cloak, is enshrouding the shoulders of America.

The element of force is also achieved through the use of literal and figurative analogies. While these analogies have been discussed under logical proof, they are also a characteristic of Coughlin's style in this discourse.

Thus, the repetition of words, phrases, and sentences, climactic development, and reasoning by analogy, appear to be important factors of force in this discourse.



## (4) Variety

Variety, or lack of monotony, is achieved through varying combinations of clearness, coherence, and force. In the conclusion, quoted above under (3), there are examples of directness, the effective ordering of materials, personal pronouns, familiar and concrete words, and word repetition.

The use of three rhetorical questions also adds variety to this discourse. They are strategically located in the center of Coughlin's discourse, where he discusses "the intent of Congress, imbued with an emergency psychology" which tended to make a one-party form of Government in America.

In addition to Coughlin's use of analogies, discussed previously, variety is also achieved through the use of alliteration. The following are examples of alliteration:

. . . to surrender to the cringing spirit  
of a servile state. . . .

. . . while thousands of your constituents are  
amassed in peaceful but public protest. . . .

It is sufficient to note that this legislation  
would establish the largest political pork  
barrel in all the world and would insure the  
perpetuation of a one-party form of Government.

In summary: variety of style is accomplished through varying combinations of clearness, coherence, and force, and by rhetorical questions, analogies, and alliteration.

The constituent of style is concerned with the manner in which Coughlin expressed himself, that is, in the manner in which he clothed his thoughts with words. Although Coughlin did speak perhaps too sharply at times, his style was clear, coherent, forceful, and varied. Thus, he appears to exemplify the basic stylistic norms of classical rhetorical theory.

## Summary

This is a problem-solution type of discourse in which Father Coughlin is faced with the problem of persuading his radio audience to unite against the Reorganization Bill. This discourse is arranged according to the three-fold division of introduction, body, and conclusion. In the introduction, Coughlin refers to matters which were probably of special interest to his listeners--the occasion, and his oneness with them. He also orients the audience to the subject by explaining its background, defining terms, and explaining how he plans to develop the subject.

This is basically a problem-solution type of discourse, and the materials in the body are arranged according to the classification or topical order.

In the conclusion, Coughlin utilizes quotations from the Bible, appeals, a summary, and visualization to give final impetus to his proposal that "it is the spirit which predominates it, the spirit of centralization of power, the spirit of perpetuating a needless emergency, the spirit of defeatism which, like a cloak, is enshrouding the shoulders of America."

In general, Coughlin employs transitions and internal summaries which contribute to his clarity of purpose, organization, and development.

In terms of ethical proof it was concluded that Coughlin was probably considered a credible source by at least the majority of his listeners and that many persons were eager

to listen to his analysis and interpretation of the Reorganization Bill. An analysis of this discourse text leads the writer to conclude that it contains means of representing Coughlin as a man of probity, intelligence, and good-will. For example, the speech suggests that Coughlin was sincere and honest. He appears to be desirous of finding a solution to the dilemma of the Reorganization Bill. In his attempt to find a solution, Coughlin displays a broad knowledge of politics, history, government, and the New Deal. Furthermore, he expresses a concern for the spiritual, physical, mental, and material welfare of his audience.

Coughlin appears to base his emotional proof on appeals to man's desire for knowledge, appeals to the listener's desire for the preservation of Americanism and democracy, and appeals to freedom from dictatorship. Each of these various types of motivational appeals seems to have been used to (1) gain the attention of his listeners and/or (2) suggest that his listeners must unite to fight the Reorganization Bill.

Coughlin's logical proof is based, primarily, upon reasoning from example, from causal relationships, and from analogy.

The constituent elements of Coughlin's style include clearness, coherence, force, and variety. Some of the distinguishing features of his style are: personal pronouns, familiar and concrete words, questions and answers, rhetorical questions, repetition of words, and alliteration.

Although Coughlin made many of his attacks personal, and he also, at times appeared to be inconsistent in his statements, he was a master craftsman in the area of rhetorical theory and practice.

## CHAPTER VII

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the life and radio speaking of the Reverend Charles Edward Coughlin, to formulate certain conclusions about his speaking characteristics and abilities, and to suggest some topics for further study. This chapter will be divided into three sections: Coughlin: His Life and Time, and Radio Speaking; A Rhetorical Analysis of Two Discourses; Suggestions for Further Study.

#### Coughlin: His Life and Time, and Radio Speaking

Charles Edward Coughlin was born of Irish-American parents at Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, on October 25, 1891. He was an honor graduate of the University of Toronto, 1911, and ordained a priest of the Roman Catholic Church in 1916. At the age of twenty, Coughlin received his Ph. D. from Toronto University. As a young priest, Father Coughlin taught English at Assumption College, Sandwich, Ontario. Later he assisted in various parishes of the Detroit Diocese under Bishop Michael Gallagher, a man who was to endorse with "Imprimatur" Coughlin's writings and radio speaking. Finally,

in 1926, Coughlin was sent to a small mission church in Royal Oak, about twenty miles from the heart of Detroit, Michigan. In 1926, he began a series of radio broadcasts over WJR in Detroit, Michigan. These broadcasts, originally designed for children, began to become more and more political in nature.

The radio priest discovered almost by accident that he had tremendous appeal as a radio orator; and at first, he began speaking out against the capitalistic system, which he held responsible for the worst depression ever experienced by the United States. Coughlin also attacked the Hoover administration for its alleged failure to ease the suffering of countless millions of Americans during this depression. Coughlin became an early admirer of Franklin D. Roosevelt, and regarded Roosevelt as the economic savior of the nation.

After Roosevelt's inauguration, however, the radio priest became dissatisfied with what he considered to be "half-way measures" of reform. Nevertheless, he bided his time, believing that the President was hampered in his actions by Congress and the American people. Coughlin felt that money was the key to cure the depression, and he blamed the international bankers for what he termed their "deliberate" planning of the world-wide depression.

At first, Coughlin was content to endorse the President's revaluation of the dollar, and he was a staunch supporter of Roosevelt. In 1934, however, the radio priest joined the silver movement, believing that the revaluation of the dollar was not enough.

Throughout the fall of 1934, Coughlin grew increasingly impatient with the Roosevelt Administration for its failure to reform the economy. At this time he began attacking New Deal measures much as the Agriculture Adjustment Act and the National Recovery Act. In November of 1934, Coughlin announced the formation of the National Union for Social Justice--not a political party, he maintained, but, rather, a nationwide lobby of the people. The purpose of this lobby, Coughlin stated, was to establish a new and more equitable economic order based on a sixteen-point program which included the nationalization of money. At one point the radio priest claimed that the lobby had as many as eight million adherents, but the usual estimate was closer to half that amount. While the National Union for Social Justice demonstrated significant political effectiveness in the 1936 primaries, overall, it was not particularly effective as a lobby.

In 1935 Coughlin broke completely with the Roosevelt Administration; although there is no actual definite cause, he apparently was dissatisfied with the President's inability to nationalize the currency.

After his lobby lost at the polls in 1936, Coughlin became even more critical of Roosevelt, and attacked the latter's attempt to pack the Supreme Court. In April, 1938, Coughlin announced that the Corporate State should replace democracy since, in his judgment, democratic forms of government were not operating effectively. And, at this time, the radio priest became anti-Semitic, using the Jews as scapegoats

for all of the domestic problems of the country.

From approximately 1936 on to the end of his radio career, Coughlin was strongly in favor of American isolationism; and he also became very much opposed to communism. In 1938 he organized the Christian Front to enlist all Christians to fight communism.

Finally, Father Coughlin's radio speaking came to an abrupt end in 1940 after a period of declining popularity. Lack of funds, a new National Association of Broadcaster's Code, and outright cancellation of his programs by stations, as well as a disapproving bishop and hierarchy in the Catholic Church, are some of the pressures that brought an end to the Coughlin broadcasts.

Coughlin's radio speaking was clearly related to the historical climate in which he lived. That is, his radio discourses grew out of, and were addressed to, clearly discernible trends and events. For example, his discourses reflect and/or deal specifically with such topics as, the New Deal, Communism, the Jews, Money, Labor, Capital, Herbert Hoover, and Prohibition. The radio priest's discourses reveal, therefore, that he was cognizant of their social, political, economic and, to some degree, theological settings.

It has been noted that Coughlin was a student of oratory and the English language, that he was a studious person, and that he analyzed the time in which he lived and the persons to whom he spoke. Let us now consider, in more detail: discourse preparation, delivery, audience, occasion, and setting.



Father Coughlin planned his discourses several days in advance; but, if a news story "broke" during the week, he was more than willing to adapt what he had to say and, perhaps, change his entire subject to accommodate the topic of current interest. The Lindbergh baby kidnapping is a case in point.

Certainly the most influential document that shaped the radio priest's preparation of his discourses was the Rerum Novarum of Pope Leo XIII, and woven throughout the priest's radio discourses were many thoughts directly related to this encyclical. The papal encyclical of Pope Pius XI was also influential in the thinking and speech preparation of the radio priest.

The letters that the radio priest received were potent factors in shaping what Coughlin said and the preparation of his radio discourses. Many people wrote to Coughlin, asking him to provide the answers to the complex economic problems that faced a depression-America. The radio priest stated many times that "he knew the pulse of the nation better than any man alive," and the letters gave him a great deal of knowledge into the minds of his listeners.

There is evidence that Coughlin wrote his radio discourses to be read aloud; and he had unusual facility in translating his thoughts to a manuscript, his usual mode of delivery. The radio priest, in preparing his discourses, adapted his ideas to his radio audience. Knowing that many of them were uneducated people who would have difficulty

following complicated abstract ideas, he prepared his speeches carefully so that his listeners could follow his thinking.

Coughlin first prepared an outline which he used as a basis for the entire speech; and this outline was modified, rearranged and corrected. The priest often practiced his discourses aloud, with his assistant priests as the critical audience.

Voice quality was one of Coughlin's strong points; his voice being considered rich, melodious, and pleasing. One writer stated, "It was a voice made for promises," and another described it as the "greatest speaking voice of the twentieth century."

Father Coughlin stressed the quality of being certain in delivery. Belief in what one is doing tends to create a similar response in the audience, and his listeners generally believed him honest and sincere.

An over-all consideration of the many discourses which the radio priest gave during the decade of the 1930's reveals that he dealt with eight major themes--the New Deal, Communism, the Jews, Money, Labor, Capital, Herbert Hoover, and Prohibition.

His major source for discourse material, in addition to the newspapers, magazines, periodicals, and books on history, government, and church documents, was a type of "brain trust" much like that formulated by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The radio priest had a group of specialists in branches of government, economics, law, and others, to whom he referred from time to time.

The audience to which Coughlin spoke each week was composed of millions of American citizens who looked to him for guidance. These people had experienced a terrible depression, and many of them were without jobs, and were hungry. The radio priest seemed to know the answers to their questions concerning the economy.

Using the preceding pages of this chapter as a background, the following conclusions may be formulated concerning Coughlin:

- (1) Father Coughlin analyzed the time in which he lived and the persons to whom he spoke.
- (2) Father Coughlin carefully prepared an outline of his speech which he used as a basis for the entire speech. This outline was modified, rearranged, and corrected. The speech was then carefully rehearsed.
- (3) The radio priest stressed the quality of certainty in his delivery, believing that what one is doing tends to create a similar response in the audience.
- (4) The audience to which Coughlin spoke each week was composed of millions of American citizens who looked to him for guidance. These people had experienced a terrible depression, and the radio priest seemed to know the answers to their questions concerning the economy.

#### A Rhetorical Analysis of Two Discourses

##### (1) Arrangement

The discourses studied are composed of three

distinguishable divisions--introduction, body, and conclusion. The introductions contain means of gaining the immediate attention of the audience and establishing good-will between the speaker and the audience. In addition, Coughlin sought to orient the audience to such features of the discourse as the title, the text, and the purpose. The methods of orienting the audience to the subject are inextricably related to the methods of gaining attention and good-will.

In the conclusions, Coughlin does one or more of the following: (a) he summarizes the main points of his discourse; (b) he appeals for, or commands, specific actions; (c) he motivates to action through appeals to self-preservation, Americanism, affections, and sentiments; (d) he reinforces the theme by a quotation from the Bible, and (e) he visualizes the future in order to suggest what will happen if his proposals are not accepted or are rejected.

In light of our rhetorical analysis of Coughlin's discourses, it can be concluded that they were characterized by a logical or rational development of materials. This is accomplished by an orderly presentation of materials and the use of transitions and internal summaries which knit together the main divisions and points of each discourse. Coughlin's theme and purpose are always evident. Like a good debater, which he was, Coughlin frequently anticipates and answers objections to his positions and defines terms contributing to clarity of expression.

In the light of an extremely rational development of materials, conversational tone, and explication of terms, it is logical to conclude that Father Coughlin's discourses were intelligible--easily followed and understood. His emphasis upon clearly reasoned and developed materials places him in harmony with the best of classical rhetorical scholarship.

## (2) Invention

This study reveals that phenomena both exterior and interior to Father Coughlin's discourses contributed to his ethical proof. In other words, Coughlin's ability to influence can be attributed to sources external and internal to the discourse text.

Father Coughlin was a speaker of national fame for more than ten years, and during his radio career he achieved a national and international reputation. His popularity can be judged, in part, by the fact that when the radio priest spoke, letters often poured into the Shrine of the Little Flower by the thousands. One speech entitled "Hoover Prosperity Means Another War" drew in 1,200,000 letters. His audience was estimated variously from 30,000,000 to 45,000,000 listeners. Father Coughlin was considered as not only one of the greatest speaking voices of the twentieth century, but a man who has been referred to as a major political force, a man who could tell President Franklin Delano Roosevelt what to do and get him to do it. Even a CBS censor could not keep him off the air. As a result of these accomplishments, it might be concluded that Coughlin

was generally regarded as a source that persons were eager to hear and to learn what he believed. It is probable that this credibility was often transferred to the discourse situation, thus making it easier for the radio priest to gain his desired response from the radio listeners.

An analysis of the discourse texts discloses that Coughlin apparently focused attention upon his probity of character in several ways: (a) by associating himself and/or his discourse with what is virtuous or elevated, (b) by bestowing tempered praise upon himself, and (c) by creating the impression of being sincere in his task. It also appears that Coughlin, as a wise rhetorician, sought to establish an impression of sagacity through the use of tact, integrity, and a broad familiarity with the interests of the day. Finally, Coughlin spoke with straight forwardness, and he revealed himself as a man who possessed the attributes of an effective public speaker by identifying himself with the needs and interests of his radio audience.

These methods, by which Father Coughlin apparently sought to establish ethical proof, are essentially those which are typical of the best of classical and contemporary rhetorical theory, as represented by Aristotle and Cicero and by Lester Thonssen and A. Craig Baird. Coughlin's radio speaking characterizes that of a man of integrity, character, and good-will. There can be little doubt that these constituents of ethical proof contributed to his effectiveness as a radio speaker, and that, as a rhetorical scholar, he consciously employed the best rhetorical techniques.

Father Coughlin also makes rather consistent use of pathetic proof or motivational appeals in his discourses. These include appeals to self-preservation, property, affections, sentiments, and Americanism and patriotism. His discourses contain many examples designed to motivate an audience toward predetermined goals by such appeals to intellectual, material, and spiritual wants. A reading of Coughlin's discourses reveals that he was an excellent rhetorical scholar in his ability to interweave these appeals into the total discourse so that the reader's attention is attracted to what he said, not how it is said. On the basis of this study, as well as on the basis of reports by persons who heard him speak, it appears that Father Coughlin successfully used motivational appeals to gain the attention of his audience, suggest courses of action, and motivate his listeners toward predetermined goals.

The most effective use of these appeals relates to self-preservation and intellectual power. These emphases appear to be very potent factors in Father Coughlin's effectiveness as a national radio speaker. Certainly it appears that Coughlin's success as a public speaker can be traced, at best in part, to his awareness of the interests, needs, and wants of individuals within his radio audience. His interest in, and ability to use, motive appeals suggests that he is consistent with the theories of the best of the classical rhetoricians.

An analysis of Coughlin's radio discourses reveals, also, that he is particularly concerned with a rational

approach to accomplishing his objectives. One of the distinguishing features of his discourses pertains to his logical or rational appeals--appeals aimed primarily at man's reasoning process. Such forms of logical proof as reasoning by example, analogy, and causal reasoning, and--by implication--sign reasoning are in harmony with his concern for practical persuasion. Coughlin was very much interested in clearly reasoned discourse material, and his beliefs are evidently outgrowths of his interest in logic and debate.

The distinguishing feature of Coughlin's workmanship is an extremely rational or logical development of materials. His discourses are characterized by the use of examples to support assertions, and carefully delineated cause-to-effect or effect-to-cause reasoning. While reasoning by analogy and reasoning from sign are less often used, nevertheless, they add to the logical development of his radio discourses, Coughlin seems to be quite outstanding in his ability to employ various forms of logical proof. These characteristics of discourse construction and development exemplify the kind of theory which is in harmony with that of the many classical scholars who emphasized a rational approach in seeking to accomplish one's objectives.

An analysis of Coughlin's style reveals that it is characterized by clearness, coherence, force, variety, and directness. Clearness is achieved largely by familiar and concrete words; coherence by transitions; force by repetition;



variety by different combinations of words and sentences; and directness by personal pronouns, questions and answers, and identification with the audience. The combination of these qualities represents a style that has been characterized as "compelling."

An over-all appraisal of Charles Edward Coughlin as a radio speaker leads the writer to conclude that he was one of the most accomplished and, probably one of the most effective American orators of the twentieth century. Coughlin spoke to the needs of his day; his words were listened to and appreciated by millions of his radio listeners; and in many instances these listeners responded in a tremendously significant outpouring of overt expressions of favorable support.

At the same time, recognition must be made that Father Coughlin has been charged with the use of methods and tactics which "smack" of demagogery--of overstatement, of vicious attacks, and even of disregard for the truth (misstatements, distortions, and improper evidence). As indicated in Chapter II, some of these practices may very well be in evidence; and a detailed analysis of selected discourses might reveal indications of their presence in some cases. However, these characteristics do not appear

in the two speeches selected for intensive analysis-- speeches representing Coughlin's supreme power in influencing his listeners to write favorably to him and/or to implore their Congressmen to vote as he proposed.

### Suggestions for Further Study

After completing this study, the writer is cognizant that there are various areas of further study which might profitably be pursued. The following are suggestions for further study:

(1) A rhetorical analysis of Father Coughlin's radio discourses pertaining to the New Deal in order to determine if Coughlin maintained a consistent isolationist position.

(2) A content analysis of Coughlin's discourses in order to obtain more information about his invention and style. Such a study, for example, would affirm or negate the belief of this writer that Coughlin used more figurative than literal analogies.

(3) A rhetorical analysis of other discourses by Coughlin in order to determine the validity of the conclusion of these case studies.

(4) A rhetorical analysis of Coughlin's pulpit speaking to determine what relationship exists between that and his radio speaking.

## APPENDIX A

### THE MENACE OF THE WORLD COURT

(Sunday, January 27, 1935)

MY FRIENDS: If I am properly informed, Tuesday of this week--Tuesday, January 29th--will be remembered by our offspring as the day which overshadowed July 4th. The one date was associated with our independence. The other with our stupid betrayal.

On Tuesday of this week the United States Senate is about to hand over our national sovereignty to the World Court, a creation of and for the League of Nations. By sovereignty I mean that supreme power by which a free people makes its own laws for its own internal conduct, independent totally from any other law making body in the world; that supreme power by which these laws are judged and interpreted by its own court, supreme in every sense to any other court. Sovereignty also connotes the power to maintain an army and navy, to coin money and regulate its value, all of which are to be adequate to the needs of the nation independent, in every sense, from foreign interference.

Without sovereignty a nation is but a shadow. With sovereignty it is a substance capable of existing in peace and security, in law and order, free from the dictates of external powers.

I speak to you of these things because there has arisen in our midst a false philosophy which looks askance upon nationalism and disparages the realities of life--its passions of greed and gain, its vices of intrigue and deceit. It prefers to sing the praise of the yellow peril of pacifism while it berates and belittles the vigorous valor of patriotism. It subscribes to the utopian dreams of world peace without resting its arguments therefor upon the undying principles of the Prince of Peace. Forgetful of the word of God which warned us how they who trust their horses and chariots and perverted counsels are doomed to destruction, these advocates of the League of Nations and its World Court propose to pacify a turbulent world through the agency of arms, of battleships and battalions, of dirigibles and airplanes.

My fellow countrymen, no one more than I abhors the crimson ugliness of war. No one more than I desires the

benedictions of that peace which the world cannot give. But, conscious of the international conditions which surround us, conscious of the nature of the League of Nations and its functionary, the World Court, I protest against the impending action of those Senators who are about to direct the destinies of the United States along the course which will be mapped for us by the League of Nations, overwhelmingly dominated by the great powers of Europe. I grant that our Senators are sincere. I applaud their desire for peace. But, at this final moment, I appeal to them to reconsider their determination because war and destruction, instead of peace and tranquility, are the fruits which their action shall reap. I appeal to them by the blood spilled at Valley Forge, by the fatherly admonitions of Washington and Jefferson which still ring in our ears, not to jeopardize our freedom, not to barter our sovereignty, not to entangle us with the religious, the racial, the economic and the martial affairs of the Old World, from which their ancestors and mine escaped to fashion a better land where democratic freedom and the rights to life, to liberty and the pursuit of happiness might flourish.

# I

My friends, this is not rhetoric. It is a calm, plain statement of fact which time alone will vindicate. Perhaps I am out of tune with the tempo of modern events in giving expression to my fears and to my patriotism. Nevertheless, when, on Wednesday morning next, I shall read how our Senators will have voted their approval of America's joining the World Court and therefore its creator, the League of Nations, I shall feel that something sacred has gone out of my life, for I know that these gentlemen will have subscribed to a principle which is not only philosophically unsound but which is contrary to the expressed will of my fellow citizens.

Nevertheless, I glory in upholding a lost cause, rather than crying "Peace, peace, when there is no peace." I glory in standing by Washington and Jefferson and their policy of "no foreign entanglements" rather than by President Roosevelt and Norman Davis and their modern internationalism. Presidents and Ambassadors may come and go but Washington and Jefferson live forever!

While I disagree fundamentally with the Administration on the World Court issue, yet I shall uphold its principles of social reform insofar as they are consonant with social justice.

The National Union for Social Justice is national and not international. Its ideals and principles are chiefly concerned with obtaining economic peace for my fellow citizens. During this depression they have been so overfed with the stale crumbs of promises that the white blood of cold mistrust

is beginning to course through their arteries and veins. They are wondering, questioning how it is possible for this Administration to turn its precious attention to foreign affairs while we are still surrounded with domestic turmoil. They are suspecting, despite our untold wealth, that the paupers' dole of federal paternalism is designed to force them down to the European standard of living now that we are determined to accept the European standard of diplomacy and, in part, at least, the European standard of legislation.

The National Union for Social Justice is opposed to this penurious standard of living. It is more concerned with the prosperity of the minority wealth-holders in America than it is with the minority's political rights abroad. While we sympathize with the Serbian or the Roumanian, with the Jew in Germany or the Christian in Russia, the major portion of our sympathy is extended to our dispossessed farmers, to our disconsolate laborers who have been trampled upon and are being crushed at this very moment while the spirit of internationalism runs rampant in the corridors of the Capitol; while chaos clamors at our doors.

Permit me to be more definite in explaining why the National Union for Social Justice is opposed to the League of Nations and to its World Court. In 1917 came the red revolution of Russia. For centuries the citizens of that nation had been manacled by the chains of serfdom. While wealth was concentrated in the hands of a few the Russian laborer and farmer had been exploited. Seldom if ever had a voice been raised in their defense. Behind the shameful cloak of silence the state-controlled Church hid its head.

No wonder that Karl Marx found fertile soil upon which he sowed his seed of atheism! No wonder that communism grew! Carried on the wings of poverty, it began to take root in France, in Germany, in England and in America--wherever oppression reigned, wherever, even in a modified form, the principles of Czarism were practiced.

Communism is a social disease which is bred in the lurid ulcers of unjust poverty.

International communism was the irrational revolt against the irrational plutocracy of the international banker.

To offset the rapid development of communism, there was organized this League of Nations where, at its secret sessions never published to the world at large, it was planned to build up a counter internationalism whose main purpose was the protection of the international banker, the international plutocrat.

Fellow countrymen, I am opposed to communism as much as I am opposed to a plague. But, thanks be to God, I have sufficient sagacity to realize that if I suffer stinking

carcasses to rot on my doorstep, I can rant and rail in vain against the plague until doomsday.

So it is with communism. I can set up my League of Nations to oppose it and my World Court to condemn it. But all this is futile unless the causes which created communism--the unnecessary poverty, the exploitation--are eradicated and removed from our midst.

Thus, the international bankers and those in league with them--they who have guided the destinies of England, of Germany, of France, of Italy and who still hold sway over the destinies of the United States of America have unfurled their colorless flag, have organized their own secretive government and established their own international court to dominate the armies and navies of the world hoping thus to oppose communism and protect plutocracy.

Between the forceps of these mighty forces the innocent people of the world and you, the people of America, await to be crushed by the certain conflict which soon will ensue.

I realize that this thought has not been expressed hitherto in any publicized document, nor is it commonly known among the Senators of the United States. But this was taught to me by men who sat in at the secret sessions when the abortion of the League of Nations was cradled by those who were determined to protect injustice, to bandage the cancer of exploitation, to keep the carcasses on their doorsteps and to deceive the guileless citizen and the innocent Senator with their program of peace.

Thus, on Tuesday next, America, instead of rescuing from the hands of the international bankers the right to coin and regulate the value of money, instead of limiting the accumulation of wealth by the favored few, instead of bending her efforts to rescue the impoverished farmer, instead of guaranteeing a just and living wage to every laborer who is willing to contribute his honest work--America is ready to join hands with the Rothschilds and Lazerre Freres, with the Warburgs and Morgans and Kuhn-Loebs to keep the world safe for the inevitable slaughter.

In years to come when you young men and young women who are listening to me this afternoon will have had your economic lives melted down to the standards of England, of France, of Spain and of Mexico; when you will be marshaled into an army to fight the red ruin of communism, I pray that you will still have faith in the brotherhood of man as preached by Christ; I pray that you will have the courage to re-echo the words once spoken from Calvary's pulpit: "Father forgive them, our Senators, for they know not what they do!"

Many of these Senators inform us that they have already committed themselves to vote for our entrance into the World Court. "Committed themselves to whom," may I inquire? Not to the factory worker, not to the farmer, not to the youth of the nation, not to the young mother nursing her baby boy at her breast. In 1920 we, the American people, renounced the World Court and the League of Nations. In 1935 our decision has not been altered on this point and our Americanism has not rejected Washington and Jefferson.

With our understanding of political affairs sharpened on the grinding stone of experience we have doubled our determination to acquire social justice in all its splendor. Peace cannot smile upon us until the international banker is despoiled of his unseen crown and shadowy scepter; until the nations are restored to the people who inhabit them. In that lies our best defense against communism and bloodshed!

## II

But permit me, my friends, to become more specific in advancing a final argument as to why we should refrain from entrusting our destinies, in part, to the World Court and to the League of Nations.

Beyond all question of doubt those who are most desirous of peace, those who are most opposed to war and carnage are the veterans who, in the World War, experienced its hell and its misery. More than all the frenzied pacifists and proponents of "Peace-through-the-World-Court" this group of badgered heroes went on record through the official statement of Edward Hayes, the Commander of the American Legion, in 1934, as totally opposed to our entrance into the World Court. This official statement reads as follows: "Be It Resolved By The American Legion: That it is opposed to the entry of the United States in the League of Nations or to the adherence of the World Court, either with or without reservations."

These millions of ex-service men, these lovers of peace and haters of war, based their decision not upon the propaganda of idle sentimentality but upon the bitter experience of life's realities; of European hatred and distrust for America; of European rabid nationalism and social enmities.

To bear out this assertion that America need expect no impartial judgment from the throne of the World Court because of its extremely nationalistic personnel, may I cite the comments of the press on a definite World Court case?

A short time ago there was question of Austria's entering into trade relations with Germany. Against this France violently protested. The case was carried to the World Court. An openly unfair decision was handed down by this body of jurists who, despite their learning, could not disentangle themselves from the prejudices of their nationality.



Now what comment had the press of the civilized world to make upon this miscarriage of justice?

The Memphis (Tennessee) Commercial Appeal states: "The decision against Austria's right to enter is clearly a gesture to justify France's position . . . France wins a victory, other nations lose."

The Knickerbocker Press of Albany, New York: "The decision of the World Court in the Austro-German customs pact controversy has opened the gates for a flood of adverse criticism against the court and the principle for which it stands."

The New Orleans Item: "When the World Court brought in its split verdict on the Austro-German customs union we remarked last week that the plainly political texture of its division would probably revive old doubts and suspicions of the court's judicial disinterestedness. That surmise is superabundantly confirmed by the course of discussion since then . . . . The alignment of the Court in this Austro-German case has evidently been a shock to the strongest advocates of it in our country."

The Chicago Daily News: "Many advocates of entry by this Nation into the International Court of Justice, one must think, are deeply disturbed by the inescapable implications growing out of the advisory opinion given by that tribunal in the Austro-German customs union case."

The Chicago Journal of Commerce: "The chief victim of the World Court's decision in the Austro-German customs union case is the World Court."

The Minneapolis Journal: "The line-up of judges, nevertheless, is assailed as political."

The Washington (D. C.) Daily News: "As an advocate of American membership in the Court under the Root protocols, this newspaper is inclined to admit that there probably is some truth in those charges (of impartiality). It looks to us as if political considerations may have influenced some of the judges."

The Norfolk (Virginia) Virginian-Pilot: "It is apparent that the majority opinion was colored by grounds which critics of the decision will not hesitate to call political."

The New York Herald Tribune: "The reaction in this country to the World Court's advisory opinion on the Austro-German customs union has inevitably been unfavorable. Some of the strongest friends of the Court have expressed the greatest disappointment. It could hardly be otherwise. For the line-up of the Court exhibited a depressingly strong

political bias, and its decision by 8-to-7 vote robbed its findings of all weight or pretense to finality. Faced by a major issue, affecting the fundamentals of European organization, the Court failed to function either judicially or effectively."

The Charleston (S. C.) Evening Post: "Those under the influence of France, for example, ruled against the union, while those which are disposed to regard as desirable a better balance of power in Europe found the union not in violation of the treaties. . . . And now the Court has materially detracted from its prestige by its own display of political bias, and those who have protested against the United States ever consenting to submit to such a tribunal, issues involving the national interest of this country, have something substantial as an exhibit to fortify their opposition."

The Greenboro Daily News: "Jurists from the group of nations generally believed to be predominated by French influences voted against the pact."

The Springfield (Mass.) Republican: "It is disappointing that the decision was so close, and still more disappointing that it was obviously determined by political rather than legal consideration."

The Baltimore Evening Sun: "The product of partisan judges voted like ordinary politicians for the boys back home."

The Chicago Evening Post: "Unfortunately for the prestige of the Court, the cleavage was almost wholly on partisan lines, with France and her continental allies swinging the majority votes."

The Reno (Nev.) Evening Gazette: "In other words, France through her numerous alliances and by political trading, it is alleged, was able to gather in enough votes to win her case."

"The incident has not strengthened the Court in American eyes."

The Cincinnati (Ohio) Enquirer: "Unmistakably, there is evidence here of judges voting in terms of their own nations. . . ."

"This cannot fail to be something of a blow to the prestige of the World Court. . . ."

The New York Times: "Realistic friends of the World Court are agreed that its prestige has been deeply injured. There can be little doubt that the chances of American adhesion have been badly damaged. In the Senate there has been no particular enthusiasm for the Court. The protocols have been kicked about committee rooms. Presidents, while urging them upon the Senate in grave and lofty terms, have been inclined

to let things go at that. No real administration effort to press the issue has been made."

What commentary can be made by you Senators who say that you have committed yourselves to our joining the World Court when practically every honest paper in America has condemned this action of the World Court and every American who knows the inside story of the World Court is standing foursquare against your vote?

Today President Roosevelt is making an administration effort to sell the World Court to the American people, or rather, to sell the American people to the World Court.

Despite the comments of the press which I have read to you and of hundreds of other papers in Europe, in Asia and in South America condemning the partisanship of the World Court; despite the vote of the American people themselves, of the farmers and the laborers of this nation; despite the protests of the American Legion and every soldier organization, all of whom know that the World Court is partisan and, as has been indicated in this one case just cited, Mr. Roosevelt said to the Senate on January 16th: "I hope that at an early date the Senate will advise and consent to the adherence by the United States to the Protocol of Signature of the Statute of the Permanent Court of International Justice, dated December 16, 1920.

"I urge that the Senate's consent be given in such form as not to defeat or to delay the objective of adherence."

It is difficult for an ordinary person to comprehend how, in the face of this internationally recognized partisanship, such a proposal is psychologically or logically possible.

Even the European papers, hundreds in numbers which I cannot quote because of lack of time, have condemned the World Court for its unfairness, as if through unfairness peace can be propagated.

The New Statesman of England says: "The International Court is not, we fear, likely to add to its prestige by its opinion on the Austro-German Customs Union. Broadly, it may be said that the Latin nations are divided against the Teutonic--Japan aiding with the minority."

The Saturday Review of England: "There was little in the judgment of the Hague Tribunal on the proposed Austro-German Customs Union to recommend the principle of arbitration in international disputes."

The London Spectator: "What really emerges is doubt as to the wisdom of encouraging a Court whose strength lies in its detachment from political entanglements to rule on a question in which politics and law are inextricably intermingled."

The "Bund" of Berne, Switzerland: "What is the practical use of the ultimate sanction given by the Hague Court by a weak majority of one voice in favor of the French opinions?"

All this is in keeping with the editorial comment of Germany, of China, of Japan, of the Argentines, of Belgium, of Canada, of every outspoken newspaper in the world. But despite this, we are told by President Roosevelt: "The movement to make international justice practicable and serviceable is not subject to partisan considerations."

Now some newspapers who are supporting our entrance into the World Court forget these editorials and forget the partisanship, the favoritism of the World Court jurists who are predominately European, who are nationally opposed to America.

With this knowledge before us, why should we be supercilious idealists, speculating upon the future fairness of the World Court when the past record of the Court proves beyond dispute that it is unfair, that it is political?

I repeat that I take this stand knowing that, while I am expressing the thoughts and the ideals, the hopes and the aspirations of the American people, I am on the losing side and I am subjecting myself to ridicule, to ignominy and perhaps to chastisement. But cost what it may, the American people have a right to know the unvarnished truth of facts. Perchance they have a right to speculate why, with such inordinate hurry, this Presidential message was placed before the Senate for a decision after two years of inordinate delay have elapsed in driving the money changers from the temple!

The President says in his message to the United States Senate: "For years, Republican and Democratic administrations and party platforms alike have advocated a court of justice to which nations might voluntarily bring their disputes for judicial decision."

Heartily do we agree with the President. At the present moment, however, do not forget that we have the Hague Tribunal which operates without force of arms and without a threat to annihilate any nation who does not accept its decisions. At the present moment the United States can appeal to the World Court without belonging to it to settle international disputes. Thus, if the United States is in dispute with some other nation, it has as much authority and voice in selecting the judges as has the other disputing nation. But after next Tuesday our disputes will be reviewed by a set of judges elected by the League of Nations and not elected by the United States people and their Senate.

The President's message to the Senate did not explain this fact. It did not say that, if today we enter into a dispute with Great Britain, America and England will have an equal number of judges on the bench to decide the dispute. It did not say that after Tuesday of this week the American nation would have two votes--one in the assembly and one in the council of the League of Nations--and that Great Britain would have seven or eight votes against our two.

Is this a practicable and serviceable kind of international justice that we are trading the day after tomorrow for what we possess at this moment?

It appears from the Presidential message to the Senate that America has been hostile, more or less, to arbitration and that now it is desirous to participate in an international court where international disputes can be settled. It appears that it is our duty, as a member of the family of nations, to submit our grievances to "a court of justice" (to quote the President) "to which nations might voluntarily bring their disputes for judicial decision."

Since the Jay Treaty of 1793 it has been the policy of the United States to address its disputes to an international court of justice. We have arbitrated our boundaries. We have arbitrated the conduct of foreigners and of our own citizens during time of war. We have never once refused arbitration. For a period of over one hundred and fifty years we have been writing a record of arbitration that has never been paralleled in the history of this world. As a practical result of this arbitration the Rush-Bagot treaty of 1818 permits us proudly to point to the three thousand miles of an imaginary boundary line separating Canada from the United States. Not a battleship desecrates the waters of our Great Lakes; not a fortification threatens harm to our neighbor's soil! Shall this record of arbitration and of peacefulness, which has proven so profitable to the continent of America, be thrown into the discard? In the face of these facts we are asked to adopt the European system of the League of Nations which breeds wars and multiplies battleships and fortifications.

More than that, if we have the Hague Tribunal and, I repeat, if we have access to the World Court as non-members, fortified with the guarantee of a fair judicial representation, why, I ask you, is it logical for us to submit our disputes to a new group of judges in whose veins blood is thicker than water and who have already proven themselves to be better politicians than jurists--judges representing nations which have welshed on their debts; nations which have already cost \$48-billion to make Europe safe for Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin and the rest of them? How, in the name of God, can jurists from these nations give us justice in their courts?

The next argument advanced by those who are endeavoring to force America into the World Court hinges upon the word "peace."

As a matter of fact, since the court was organized, war has been waging almost continually among and between the members of the court. Some of these wars have been waged within the very shadow of the court itself, and yet the World Court has done nothing either to end or to prevent these wars. Thus the World Court has demonstrated that it has no power to keep peace in the world by its decisions.

Those favoring our adhering to the World Court insinuate that by our remaining aloof we are interfering with world peace. Nothing can be further from the truth.

What did the World Court do in the case of Japan and China other than to investigate the ruins which resulted from the Japanese cannon?

What has the World Court done in the instance of the Chaco War in South America? Here is the story, my friends, which indicts the World Court as the tool of plutocrats.

In 1878 President Hayes set up a board of mediators to fix the boundaries of Paraguay. Notwithstanding this settlement made by America and which has stood now for nearly sixty years, we find the Standard Oil Company of the United States endeavoring, through the League of Nations, to upset the peaceful agreement arrived at years ago.

Between Bolivia and Paraguay there is a tract of land known as the Chaco. It is fertile in oil fields.

According to the Congressional Record, Bolivia received financial help from the Standard Oil Corporation to wage war on Paraguay for the purpose of gaining control of these oil fields.

What action did the League of Nations and, therefore, the World Court take in this war of aggression? (What one does, the other does. They are one!)

It lent its support to curb Paraguay and to further the designs of the Standard Oil Corporation.

Instead of upholding the sixty-year-old decision of President Hayes, the World Court disdained it in favor of a plutocratic oil corporation.

No wonder the Standard Oil Corporation, through its Rockefellers, is circularizing America with literature to join the League of Nations through the back door of its World Court!

No wonder when such facts are known that the American people are becoming conscious of the real nature of the World Court and the real purpose behind our joining it!

## IV

Last Sunday I had occasion to remark that the Carnegie millions were being spent to realize the dream of inveigling the United States into the World Court and to establish the re-united States of Great Britain and America. To that gentleman, whose heart never left Scotland and whose bones are buried there, the year 1776 was America's disgrace and Washington was a traitor and a blunderer.

I also remarked that according to reports, Norman Davis, our roving ambassador, was associated with the Kreuger-Toll Match Corporation and was interested not only in rehabilitating the stock of that international brigand but of arranging for the sale of Kreuger-Toll products in America. Mr. Davis is most keen for us to enter the World Court. Mr. Davis has contacted the internationalists of Europe. And Mr. Davis now wishes me to retract what I said last Sunday.

I will gladly accommodate him by reading from the New York Times of Sunday, January 7, 1934.

Quote: "Headline: N. H. Davis Heads New Kreuger Body." "Norman H. Davis, ambassador at large of the United States has been appointed head of the international committee to compromise the conflicting claims of the companies of the late Ivar Kreuger and to make recommendations for readjustment in order to protect and conserve the assets of these companies.

"Mr. Davis accepted the chairmanship of the International Committee on condition that insofar as his work on disarmament may require attention it shall have precedence."

Mr. Davis said: "As the Disarmament Conference adjourned last fall until the latter part of this month, I decided after consultation with the President to accept the invitation mentioned above upon three conditions: First, that my work as chairman of the American Delegation to the Disarmament Conference shall take precedence. Second: That I shall work on the Kreuger matter only while disarmament does not require my attention and when I am specifically granted leave of absence by the Secretary of State and am receiving no compensation from the government, and Third: That someone be designated to collaborate with me in the Kreuger work and to act as my alternate if and when necessary."

This is substantially what I said last Sunday. This is substantially what I repeat because Mr. Norman Davis has asked me to retract.

This is the Mr. Norman Davis working in the interest of the international plutocrats who favors our entrance into the World Court.

It is the same Norman Davis who is a hold-over from the Hoover Administration. The same touchy gentleman who was on the Morgan preferred list.

And behold, when we look into his Cuban record we find that he is well chosen to be our Ambassador-At-Large! Well chosen to represent the plutocrats and advise indirectly the Senators who are about to vote us into the World Court!

Our own United States Supreme Court, in the case of *Las Ovas vs. Norman H. Davis*, made Davis and one other return the fruits of a \$15,000 fraud as well as promoter's stocks which the courts found he forfeited because such stock was intended for honest service and not fraud. Here the court specifically used the word "fraud." (See 227 U. S. 80 for said case.)

The same case was more elaborately described in the opinion of the court of appeals of the District of Columbia (Vol. 35 App. D. C. 372) which very pointedly branded the action of Davis as "fraud."

Did not Congressman Tinkham show that Davis was a fugitive from Cuban justice?

Is this the roving Ambassador whose judgment the United States President and Senate accept?

Is this the plutocratic adviser whose advice we will take to push us into the League of Nations, the man of the Morgan preferred list, the man whose action is painted with fraud?

## V

In the light of these facts which I categorically state and which I will not retract--facts now known to millions of voters; facts which besmear the propaganda of the World Court with plutocracy; facts which indicate the purpose of our entrance into this flagless nation--in the face of these I appeal from the Senators who were ill-informed to the Senators who are better informed not to disparage themselves with the American public and to smear themselves with plutocratic preference.

I appeal to every solid American who loves democracy, who loves the United States, who loves the truth to stand foursquare back of those tried and true Senators of long experience in their hopeless yet honest fight to keep America safe for Americans and not the hunting ground of international



plutocrats--Senators Borah and Johnson and Walsh and Thomas and Wheeler and Smith and the rest of them. Today--tomorrow may be too late--today, whether you can afford it or not, send your Senators telegrams telling them to vote "no" on our entrance into the World Court with or without reservations. Reservations are innocent and innocuous things. And so are some of the Senators who are of the opinion that a reservation can save us.

What did the great international diplomat and jurist and World Courter say of American reservations?

Listen, gentlemen, to what Viscount Grey of England thinks of your reservations upon which, like a silken thread, you will chance the anchor of our national destiny! He said: "Let America come in with its reservations. We will construe their reservations."

In other words, coax the blind mouse into the trap and we will enlighten him afterwards.

My friends, if I remember correctly there are some States which freely entered this Union with certain reservations, if we may call them such. A day came when these States wished to secede. Despite their understanding the Supreme Court of the United States decided they had no right to withdraw from the United States of America. Eventually came the Civil War when judicial decisions gave way to the force of arms. Eventually came Gettysburg and the decision that no State had the right to withdraw from the Union.

This thought was given me by an eminent Englishman who, paraphrasing the words of Viscount Grey, said: "Once you are in the World Court your Senate will not have the right to judge about American withdrawal. That will be the business of the World Court itself. You Americans have already subscribed to this theory in the days of your Civil War. You can't be welshers now."

Perhaps that is something for the Senators to think about as innocently they tie the Gordian knot of the World Court around the throat of the American public. It is easy to tie but perhaps it can be severed only by a sword.

"By a sword say I?" Most certainly! For it pertains to the constitution of the World Court that its decisions can be enforced by the armies and navies of all its signatories.

This afternoon on a national broadcast, that was donated and not paid for, two advocates of the World Court said that I was totally mistaken in this statement. I sympathize with their ignorance of the eighth plenary session presided over by Woodrow Wilson. Woodrow Wilson definitely stated that, if necessary, America would send her armies and her navies to Serbia and Roumania for the protection of

minorities. President Wilson's specific words are: "We must not close our eyes to the fact, that in the last analysis, the military and naval strength of the great powers will be the final guarantee of the peace of the world. . . . If any covenants of this settlement are not observed the United States will send her armies and her navies to see that they are observed." This is what President Wilson said before the eighth plenary session (secret) of the peace conference in Paris, held at the Quai d'Orsay, Saturday, May 31, 1919. College professors are sometimes impractical students as has been proven to us during the past two years!

Here we stand today, the creditor nation of the world, hated and detested for our so-called capacity simply because we had the boldness to ask payment on honest debts.

There stands Europe which has welshed on the post-war debts by more than \$12-billion after \$14-billion had been contributed to them gratis during the war!

There is not an European judge on the bench of the World Court, save the representative of Finland, who has it not in his heart to uphold his nation's philosophy of welshing when America is the creditor. One of the first things that will be injected into this unholy circus of the World Court will be the question of America's debts and the question of the gold clause!

So this is the kind of a World Court, an European Bully, to which our Senators are about to attach their apron strings.

We make the reservations, and the World Court interprets them. We struggle for peace, and the World Court threatens war. We praise Washington and cheer his compatriot soldiers. But, when the 22nd of February comes upon our calendar, let us bow our heads in shame for desecrating the final words bequeathed to us by the Father of our Country-- "no European entanglements."

By chance last night I opened my Bible at the Eighty-second Psalm of David which intimates to us the establishment of the first known League of Nations and the first advertised League Court.

This I shall read to you. It is as ancient as the hills. It is a story that has come down through the ages of Palestine, the story that was carried by Peter and Paul to the Romans, by James to Spain, by Thomas to India, by Patrick to Ireland, by Boniface to Germany and by those who first carried the Scriptures to America. It is a story known by every Jewish heart, a story known by everyone who professes Christianity, the story of the first League of Nations, the story of the World Court! It is a prayer to preserve our sovereignty that is about to be lost, our nationality that

is about to be jeopardized. It is a prayer to protect us, the seemingly chosen people of this day, from those who are envious of us, from those at home who have raised aloft a noise of propaganda and befouled the air with raucous counsel, from those abroad who have consulted against our national heroes, our Washington and Jefferson.

Therefore, with a humble heart I read this prayerful psalm:

(1 A Canticle of a psalm for Asaph)

2. "O God, who shall be like to thee? Hold not thy peace, neither be thou still, O God.

3. For lo, thy enemies have made a noise: and they that hate thee have lifted up the head.

4. They have taken a malicious counsel against thy people: and have consulted against thy saints.

5. They have said: Come and let us destroy them, so that they be not a nation. And let the name of (America) Israel be remembered no more.

6. For they have contrived with one consent: they have made a covenant together against thee,

7. the tabernacles of the Edomites and the Ismahelites: Moab, and the Agarens,

8. Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalec: the Philistines, with the inhabitants of Tyre.

9. Yea, and the Assyrian also is joined with them: they are come to the aid of the sons of Lot.

O God, hold thy peace, neither be thou still!

## APPENDIX B

### THE SPIRIT OF -- THE REORGANIZATION BILL

Sunday, April 3, 1938

I appreciate that you expect me to review and comment upon the Reorganization Bill in today's broadcast. This proposed legislation has stirred the American public to a passionate interest not because of the provisions of the bill, which, in their present form, are definitely dictatorial but because of the circumstances which attended the presentation of the bill.

For your information, the legislation now awaiting passage by the House of Representatives is almost substantially different from that which was proposed more than fifteen months ago. At that previous date the Reorganization Bill and the Judiciary Reform Bill, which appeared one month later on February 5th, were so identical in governmental objective that most keen observers regarded them as twin bills submitted to Congress for the purpose of so amplifying the powers of the Chief Executive, that they would elevate him, for all practical purposes, over both Congress and the Supreme Court. In other words, these two original bills, almost fifteen months old, would alter substantially the construction of our peculiar American scheme of Government.

Congress, the Supreme Court and the Chief Executive are three branches independent of each other, although correlated. As such they act as checks and balances upon each other. The law-making body, Congress, is prohibited from executing the laws. The Executive, or presidential branch, is restrained from making the laws, and the Judiciary, or Supreme Court section of Government, is limited to interpreting the laws.

Consequently, any proposed legislation tending to destroy the independence of one branch of Government, any legislation aimed at elevating one branch to a position superior to the two remaining branches, is contrary to the traditions of Americanism and to the spirit and letter of our Constitution.

The foregoing statement is most necessary when considering the implications of the Reorganization Bill.

Fifteen months ago the twin bills, to which I referred, definitely aimed at destroying the checks and balances of our triply divided form of Government. The original Reorganization Bill proposed removing specific powers from Congress and allocating them to the President. The Judiciary Bill, which was publicized one year ago February, was designed to give the Chief Executive specific and immediate control over the personnel of the Supreme Court. Ever since that date the minds of watchful Americans were disturbed at the prospect of dictatorship, as some chose to characterize it, or at the danger of unbalanced Government, as an erudite judge described it.

Because the second bill, related to the Supreme Court, was discussed first in Congress, the nation's attention was concentrated upon it. But the national mind, through some accident of circumstance, failed to remember the relationship of this proposed legislation to its twin which aimed at the reorganization of Congress. As a matter of history, the Supreme Court Bill failed to pass on the Senate floor. Then came a long silence. The strategy of those who at that time were bent upon destroying the independence of both branches of our Government was associated with the theory that time is a healer of wounds, and an opiate to the memory. Thus, it was only recently--within the last month or so--that the Reorganization Bill regained public attention. During the months of February and March of this present year it was considered in a Senate Committee and finally came before the entire body of Senators to be discussed.

Passing from the Senate to the House of Representatives last week, the Reorganization Bill created acrimonious discussion. No later than last night, its sponsors, moved by hundreds of thousands of telegrams, which effectively split the Democratic party, made two very important concessions to the opposition. Surmising that Mr. Harry Hopkins would be the new Secretary of Welfare; knowing that this gentleman had been a registered Socialist in New York City, millions of Americans were disturbed when they pre-visualized this gentleman's having charge of the administration of all existing Federal laws relative to education. Being practical minded to the extent that we appreciated how an unsympathetic administrator can pervert even a good law, this possibility--yes, probability--of Mr. Hopkins' being appointed to the executive office, set in motion a flood of telegrams protesting against the inclusion of educational laws under his department.

Today the administration of Federal educational laws, so the New Dealers promise, will remain in the Department of the Interior and will not be transferred to the jurisdiction of the Department of Welfare.

To gain much of his partisan support, which is seriously wavering, Mr. Roosevelt, it is reported, indicated last night that he was agreeable to a second amendment to the Reorganization Bill which will give Congress the right to override, by a majority vote, any action taken by the President under the bill's present provisions. Until yesterday the bill provided that it would require a two-thirds majority of Congress to nullify the presidential action under this bill.

Consequently, by yielding on these two points the Government's chances for the passage of the Reorganization Bill have been enhanced considerably. Tremendous opposition is still current, however, both in Congress and in the nation against its passage, not for what it is, or for what it provides at the present moment but because of its original spirit which attempted, concurrently with the Supreme Court Bill, to despoil Congress and the Judiciary of their independence.

Now let us turn to the future as it relates to the Reorganization Bill. It is my opinion that the proponents of this new bill will gladly concede on the floor of the House any amendment proposed in order to secure passage of the bare title of the Reorganization Bill. In no sense do I imply that this is a victory for the proponents. In no sense do I maintain that the amendments secured by Senators Wheeler, Byrd, Bailey, and Walsh or the amendments promised yesterday in the House of Representatives will be sustained. These Senators and Representatives O'Connor of New York, Sweeney of Ohio, Stack of Pennsylvania and many other Congressmen have fought and will fight valiantly against the ultimate attempt to encroach upon our democratic institutions.

The reason for that statement is the following: Parliamentary procedure demands that once the House of Representatives will pass even the bare title of the Reorganization Bill, denuded of every controversial paragraph and proposal, the House bill and the Senate bill, which passed last week, will be placed together for discussion not by the Senate nor by the House, but by a New Deal, handpicked group of conferees. These conferees are empowered by parliamentary procedure to re-write an entirely new bill, to incorporate in it every proposal which had been stricken out last week either in the Senate or on the floor of the House and to rebuild it exactly as it was fifteen months ago. That is parliamentary law.

When this work will have been completed in joint conference, then the new Reorganization Bill will be presented to the House and to the Senate either for passage or for rejection. The Senators will not be permitted to debate it. The members of the House of Representatives will not be permitted to discuss it. Each body, in turn, will be permitted to vote for it or against it and nothing more. Consequently,

if the House of Representatives fails to defeat outright the entire Reorganization Bill during this week's session--and it is my honest opinion that the House will not be able to defeat it because of the multiple amendments which will be used to obtain support--then the New Deal conferees will wait patiently for two or three or four weeks until the public passion subsides. With lightning rapidity, the new bill will reappear before the Senate and the House for final passage before it will be possible for the people of America to reassemble their forces.

At that time, unfortunately, my broadcast season will have terminated.

Therefore, the question at hand is this: "What contribution can I make to prevent the ultimate passage of the Reorganization Bill provided it contains paragraphs and provisions which are obnoxious to democracy?"

This question I will answer at the conclusion of this broadcast this afternoon.

It is essential, in the meantime, for all Americans to know that the Reorganization Bill from the very beginning, and even now, limits the powers of the President to interchange functions of Government from one department to another by a specific date. If the bill should pass, this power to be conferred upon the President will expire in 1940. But it is more essential to know that the changes which he makes between now and 1940 will remain permanent--so permanent that it would be impossible, practically speaking, for Mr. Roosevelt's successor in office, if there will be one, to restore government to its original design. In other words, Mr. Roosevelt has power to scramble eggs according to his own decisions until 1940. His successor will try in vain to unscramble them.

It is also important to remember that as far back as the month of March 1933, the President, who recognized that an emergency existed in the nation, asked and obtained from Congress emergency powers which permitted him to gain control over the purse of the nation and which allowed him to establish at least fifty-six corporations such as the TVA, the AAA, the Stabilization Fund, etc., to function as depression destroyers.

Under the Reorganization Bill, which grants him power until 1940 to transfer the function of one department of Government to another--and this permanently--these emergency powers will have entered permanently into the fabric of American life.

I believe it is more important now to inform you of the strategy being adopted by the sponsors of this bill and

to prepare you for ultimate action than it is to magnify any one portion of the bill. Thus, I will not discuss at length that section of the bill which proposes to abolish the non-partisan regulation of Civil Service and to place all Civil Service employees under the dictatorship of a partisan agent removable from his office at will by the President.

It is sufficient to note that this legislation would establish the largest political pork barrel in all the world and would insure the perpetuation of a one-party form of Government.

Nor shall I discuss the abolition of the Comptroller General's office because this portion of the bill is only incidental to its general bearing upon Government and the nation. Permit me to engage your attention with some thought relative to the word, "emergency".

Government after Government concerned themselves almost entirely with the problem of supply and of profit. Government after Government disregarded the problem of demand and of consumption. As a result of all this the factories and the fields were well-equipped to produce plenty. The laborers and the farmers and their families, who comprised by far the major portion of the consuming power, could neither use nor consume the products of farm and factory because there was an insufficient purchasing power.

In 1933 it was evident that our nation was in the midst of an emergency. There were millions of men unemployed and thousands of factories closed. Homes and farms and industries were being confiscated as rapidly as Government agents and mortgage-holders could act.

Every intelligent person understood that this want amidst plenty had been promoted by an unsound credit inflation and a corresponding lack of purchasing power among the laboring and agricultural classes which were receiving less-than-living wages.

Thus, the emergency eventuated which demanded that the idle and impoverished be fed and clothed and sheltered. Thoughtful citizens recognized that the causes of the emergency must be eliminated before its effects would vanish.

For five years we have been living in the midst of an emergency psychology. For five years we have witnessed the inception of social reforms and have failed to recognize the establishment of the basic economic reform for which the times are clamoring. For five years we have experienced, not a decrease, but an increase in the causes of the emergency. More credit inflation has merely added to our national woes;



more spending of debt money has merely deepened the roots of the emergency.

I fear that we have grown accustomed to the psychology of emergency. I fear that the millions of the unemployed, of the destitute, of the financially embarrassed, have adopted as a permanent attitude the philosophy that the Government must support the people. I fear that these same millions have rejected the sound principle that the people must support the Government.

Year after year, session after session, Congress has satisfied its conscience with passing more emergency enactments, thereby solidifying in the minds of the millions the permanency of this emergency. Year after year, the President, in good faith, I will admit, has given utterance to a most humanitarian philosophy: He has sympathized with the underfed third population of our nation; he has extended a friendly hand to exploited labor; he has been a firm advocate of unionism; he has been keenly interested in the welfare of agriculture. Although he has been harsh and critical of monopolies and of industries, so have I; although he has castigated the concentrators of wealth, so have I. However, it is my humble opinion, the major portion of his economic activities during the past five years have tended to make permanent the emergency.

With what result, psychologically speaking? While the taxpayers have suffered patiently in bearing the burden of bonds issued to extend doles and relief, they are growing impatient. While the dolesters themselves and the recipients of governmental subsidies at first were happy to receive an immediate assistance to tide them over an immediate crisis, they are growing dissatisfied because the little they receive is insufficient to maintain them on what they consider the American level of living.

Thus, the flame of class hatred is leaping from the smouldering embers of discontent.

This, to my mind, is the fruit which has grown upon the tree of emergency psychology. It is the same psychology which has been perpetuated by the President and by Congress who bestowed upon him the temporary powers he requested in 1933--the same Congress which is about to confer upon him the authority to perpetuate these powers.

My friends, the hour has arrived for all of us to liquidate the emergency psychology which is devouring us.

Congress is aware that 15-million persons are the regular recipients of doles and subsidies from the United States Government. These persons are of voting age. They

comprise men and women of the agricultural and the laboring classes. It is the intent of Congress, imbued with an emergency psychology, to perpetuate these persons as wards of the Government, thereby as supporters of a one-party form of Government?

It is the purpose of Congress to surrender the proud spirit of Americanism which once spurned this so-called charity from the public purse--to surrender it to the cringing spirit of a servile state, thereby establishing, not the dictatorship of a one-man Government, but the dictatorship of a one-party rule?

My fellow citizens, I repeat, the hour has struck for every proud American, be he rich or poor, employer or employee, Congressman or layman, to unite for the destruction of the emergency psychology which has taken such deep root in the souls of approximately 45-million of our citizens, and which promises, within the near future, to encompass more than half our population.

The principle that the Government should support the people must be abandoned. The principle that the people must support the Government must be re-adopted.

The attitude of Congress to concern itself with emergency legislation must be cashiered; for it is the business of Congress to apply its constitutional rights and duties in writing legislation which will terminate class struggle, class hatred and want amidst plenty.

Probably the advocates of the Reorganization Bill are waiting for me to call upon this audience and the American public to deluge the House of Representatives with more telegrams. That would be unsound strategy at this moment. This is not the time for sending more telegrams. It is inopportune. The messages which the hundreds of thousands of persons in this audience already have sent to Congress have had their salutary effect.

The nation is aroused, the nation must not return to slumber! Since vigilance is riding throughout every State in the Union, let vigilance continue to crusade!

Ladies and gentlemen, now that I have explained the procedure through which the Reorganization Bill must pass before it can be enacted into law, if ever; now that I have touched upon the defeatist attitude of a Government which, having failed to break the back of a depression, is venturing to perpetuate an emergency for the children and their children's children of future generations, our campaign extends to a more comprehensive scope. It will grow into a campaign which will not be satisfied until, like St. George of old, its sword will have let out the last throb of life from the dragon of "emergency".

What, therefore, is the plan which I suggest and which, if acceptable, I ask every newspaper in this nation to print and propagate?

It is this: Beginning tomorrow I advocate that every congressional district in these United States shall organize a committee composed of intelligent, educated, judicious citizens. I propose that these committees, small in personnel, but versed in experience, shall be modern Paul Reveres whose business it will be to ride to Washington and arouse from slumber their respective Representative and Senators within the next two weeks.

I propose that these committees shall ask their Congressman this one question and receive from him a definite answer:

"Mr. Congressman, we are opposed to the Reorganization Bill because of the spirit which promotes it and because it is definite legislation to perpetuate an unnecessary emergency. We are opposed to a Reorganization Bill, not because it now appears innocuous, but because it indicates an abdication of power on the part of Congressmen in favor of the President; because it is contrary in spirit, if not in deed, to the triple division of checks and balances instituted by the Constitution of our democracy.

"Therefore, tonight in our congressional district, while thousands of your constituents are amassed in peaceful but public protest against the Reorganization Bill, we ask you this one question: Do you intend to be a Congressman to represent your people under the Constitution or do you prefer to be a rubber stamp to pass any bill including a Reorganization Bill, simply because our President requests it?

"If the latter is your attitude, then there is no need of further inflicting a Congress upon the American people; if the former is your pledge to us, we will return home satisfied that the Reorganization Bill, or any other bill, aimed at perpetuating the emergency shall not pass."

My friends, this is my proposal at this juncture. I ask the editors of the various newspapers in the various localities to cooperate in establishing these committees.

If, and when, the new Reorganization Bill will emerge from the joint conference of Senate and House of Representatives, then will be the proper time to deluge Washington with another shower of telegrams and of letters protesting your opposition to such emergency measures when now is the time for America to turn its back on such policies and to stretch forth its hand to the saving anchor of democracy which we can make function if we will to do so.

We, the people, under God our Father, are called to arise and re-establish our authority.

This is not a religious issue. This is an issue between prosperity and democracy on the one side and emergency and party-ism on the other.

Therefore, reviving the Scriptural text which is applicable to all America in this crisis, I quote for you the words that the "letter killeth and the spirit maketh to live." And I interpret them for you to mean that it is not the letter of the Reorganization Law which matters in this instance. It is the spirit which predominates it, the spirit of centralization of power, the spirit of perpetuating a needless emergency, the spirit of defeatism which, like a cloak, is enshrouding the shoulders of America.

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