Father Charles E. Coughlin Collection

NMAH.AC.1389
Franklin A. Robinson, Jr.
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Collection Overview

Repository: Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title: Father Charles E. Coughlin Collection
Identifier: NMAH.AC.1389
Date: 1919-2015, undated
Extent: 9 Cubic feet (27 boxes, 1 map-folder)
Creator: Coughlin, Charles E. (Charles Edward), 1891-1979
Language: English
Collection is in English.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information
The collection was purchased by the National Museum of American History from Todd Moriarty. Moriarty had acquired the collection from an individual who amassed the materials with plans to write a book on Coughlin.

Separated Materials
Objects related to Father Charles E. Coughlin are held in the Division of Cultural and Community Life.

Processing Information
Processed by Franklin A. Robinson, Jr., archives specialist, 2018; assisted by Austin Arminio, intern.

Preferred Citation
Charles E. Coughlin Collection, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

Restrictions
Collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use
Reproduction restricted due to copyright or trademark. Other intellectual property rights may apply. Archives Center cost-recovery and use fees may apply when requesting reproductions.
Biographical / Historical

Charles Edward Coughlin was born on October 25, 1891 in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada to Thomas J. and Amelia Mahoney Coughlin. He was educated in Canada and attended St. Michael's College, Toronto. After graduation he prepared for Holy Orders within the Basilian Fathers at St. Basil's Seminary. He was ordained to the Roman Catholic priesthood in 1916. Coughlin left the Basilian order after 1923 and moved to Detroit, Michigan.

Coughlin was accepted into the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Detroit in 1923. He was eventually assigned to the Shrine of the Little Flower in Royal Oak, Michigan, a suburb of Detroit. His reputation for formidable preaching led to the growth of his congregation, and in 1926 Coughlin began broadcasting after a Klu Klux Klan cross burning on the lawn of the church.

He eventually expanded the topics of his broadcast to the political arena. It was with this programmatic change that Coughlin became one of the most controversial figures in the first half of the twentieth century. Described as the "Radio Priest," "The Fighting Priest," and the "Angel of the Airways," Coughlin broadcast weekly from a radio studio in Royal Oak from 1926-1940. Taking a strident and nationalistic tone, he lambasted immigrants, bankers, Communists and other groups. Breaching the line between religion and politics he also lectured and sermonized on government policy. While initially favoring the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt, he eventually became one of the president's harshest critics.

In 1936 he began publishing *Social Justice* a weekly paper. Coughlin's broadcasts were so successful that between 1931-1936 a new Shrine of the Little Flower was built. The zig-zag Art Deco style of the Shrine became a tourist destination for Coughlin's fans. His increasingly harsh rhetoric coincided with the outbreak of World War II. While stating he was not antisemitic, he professed support for some of the governmental policies of Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini in part because they were a check on Communist Russia. The Vatican and many Roman Catholic American bishops disagreed and wanted Coughlin to leave the airwaves. Eventually he was forced off the air and publication of *Social Justice* was halted.

Coughlin remained parish priest at the Shrine of the Little Flower until his retirement in 1966. He spent his retirement publishing and giving the occasional interview. Coughlin died on October 27, 1979. He is buried in the Holy Sepulchre Cemetery in Southfield, Michigan.

Scope and Contents

This reference collection was assembled to assist in writing a biography of the Reverend Mr. Charles E. Coughlin. The collection contains books, booklets, published sermons, published lectures, pamphlets and other printed materials. Of these, 57 were written by Coughlin. The remainder of the materials relate to him directly or have chapters or passages relating to him. Additionally, there are periodicals, including newspaper and magazine articles, and a full set of Coughlin's weekly publication, *Social Justice*, 1936-1942; other periodicals such as William Dudley Pelley's weekly *Liberation Journal*, 1938-1948; copies of Henry Ford's *Dearborn Independent*; original photographs, including images of Coughlin and of his church; letters; copies of the FBI's files on Coughlin; and (non-original) recordings of his broadcasts.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged in four series.
Series 1: Coughlin, Charles E., Writings and Speeches, 1930-1972, undated

Series 2: Photographs and Ephemera, 1927-1979, undated

Series 3: Periodicals and Publications, 1919-2012

Series 4: Reference Materials, 1933-2015, undated

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:
- Anti-communist movements -- United States
- Catholic Church
- Catholicism
- Priests
- Radio broadcasting
- Radio in politics
- Radio in religion
- Religion and politics

Types of Materials:
- Articles -- 20th century
- Audio cassettes -- 20th century
- Books -- 20th century
- Lectures -- 20th century
- Letters (correspondence) -- 20th century.
- Pamphlets -- 20th century
- Periodicals -- 20th century
- Photographs -- Black-and-white photoprints -- 20th century
- Sermons
- Speeches -- 20th century

Names:
- Ford, Henry, 1863-1947
- Pelley, William Dudley, 1890-1965

Preferred Titles:
- Dearborn Independent
- Liberation Journal
- Social Justice
Series 1: Coughlin, Charles E., Writings and Speeches, 1930-1972, undated

This series contains writings authored by the Reverend Mr. Charles E. Coughlin. The series includes published sermons, writings, and radio talks. Many of them were published by The Radio League of the Little Flower, the publishing arm of the Shrine of the Little Flower Basilica, Coughlin's home parish. Some of them were later autographed by Coughlin. The series is arranged chronologically.

Box 1, Folder 1  Published writings, 1930
Box 1, Folder 13 Correspondence, 1930-1964, undated
Box 10, Folder 3 Correspondence, 1936
Box 16, Folder 1 Correspondence, 1937
Box 2, Folder 1  By the Sweat of Thy Brow, 1930-1931
Box 1, Folder 2 Published writings, 1931
Box 7  Father Coughlin's Radio Sermons Complete, 1931
Box 3, Folder 1 Father Coughlin's Radio Discourses, 1931-1932
Box 7  Father Coughlin's Radio Discourses, 1931-1932
Box 2, Folder 2  Eight Discourses on the Gold Standard, 1932-1933
Box 1, Folder 4 Published writings, 1933
Box 2, Folder 3  Driving Out the Money Changers, 1933
Box 2, Folder 4  The New Deal in Money, 1933
Box 1, Folder 5 Published writings, 1934
Box 2, Folder 5  Labor, Capital, and Justice, 1934
Box 1, Folder 6 Published writings, 1935
Box 2, Folder 6  A Series of Lectures on Social Justice, 1935
Box 1, Folder 7 Published writings, 1936
Box 2, Folder 7  Money!, 1936
Box 1, Folder 8 Published writings, 1937
Box 2, Folder 8  
*Money!*, 1937

Box 1, Folder 9  
Published writings, 1938

Box 3, Folder 2  
*Sixteen Radio Lectures*, 1938

Box 2, Folder 9  
*Am I An Anti-Semite?*, 1938-1939

Box 2, Folder 10  
*Why Leave On Our Own?*, 1939

Box 1, Folder 11  
Published writings, 1940

Box 3, Folder 3  
*Helmet and Sword*, parts 1-4, 1968

Box 3, Folder 4  
*Bishop versus Pope*, 1969

Box 7  
*Bishop versus Pope*, 1969

Box 3, Folder 5  
*Who is Dead . . . God or Democracy?*, 1970

Box 3, Folder 6  
*Antichrist*, 1972

Box 3, Folder 7  
*Emmanuel-God With Us*, undated

Box 1, Folder 12  
Published writings, undated

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Series 2: Photographs and Ephemera, 1927-1979, undated

This series contains photographs and ephemera such as postcards associated with Father Coughlin and the Shrine of the Little Flower, Royal Oak, Michigan. Photographs are candids, newspaper photographs, official photographs, and studio portraits.

- Box 27: Photographs and postcards, 1927-1966, undated
- Box 1, Folder 7: Photographs and certificate
- Box 1, Folder 8: Photographs
- Box 1, Folder 9: Photographs and ephemera
- Box 10, Folder 4: Photographs, oversize, 1935-1979, undated
- Box 16, Folder 13: National Shrine of the Little Flower (Royal Oak, Michigan), undated

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Series 3: Periodicals and Publications, 1919-2012

This series contains publications (periodicals, pamphlets, and books) written about Father Charles E. Coughlin or on subjects related to him or his broadcasts. It also contains publications on The Shrine of the Little Flower, social issues, and the *Social Justice* newspaper. This series is arranged alphabetically by title.

Box 10, Folder 7  
*A Collection of Reports on Bolshevism in Russia*, 1919

Box 6, Folder 7  

Box 4, Folder 15  
*The American Mercury*, 1939

Box 6, Folder 5  
*An Answer to Father Coughlin’s Critics*, Father Coughlin's Friends, book, 1940

Box 3, Folder 9  
*An Answer to Father Coughlin’s Critics*, Father Coughlin's Friends, book, 1940

Box 5, Folder 8  
*The Anti-Semitism of Father Coughlin and the End of His Radio Career*, Schornick, Andrew, 1996

Box 4, Folder 7  
*The Atlantic*, 1935

Box 5, Folder 4  
*Black Mail*, Hoke, Henry, 1944

Box 8  
*The Catholic Church in Detroit, 1701-1888*, Pare, George, book, 1951

Box 5, Folder 10  

Box 5, Folder 6  
*The Challenge of Hate*, Lerner A.P. and Poster, Herbert, 1946

Box 6, Folder 11  
*Charles Coughlin*, Russell, Jesse and Cohn, Ronald, 2012

Box 9  

Box 4, Folder 12  
*Current America*, 1936

Box 4, Folder 13  
*Current History*, 1936

Box 16, Folder 4  
*The Daily Tribune* (Royal Oak, Michigan), 1935

Box 17  
*The Dearborn Independent*, bound, (Dearborn, Michigan), 1923

Box 26  
*The Dearborn Independent*, bound, (Dearborn, Michigan), 1926-04-24-1926-10-16

Box 16, Folder 3  
*Der Sturmer*, 1938-1939

Box 16, Folder 5  
*Detroit Free Press* (Detroit, Michigan), 1979-1989

Box 16, Folder 6  
*Detroit Times* (Detroit, Michigan), 1934-1937
Box 7     Facts and Fascism, Seldes, George, book, 1943

Box 9     Father Charles E. Coughlin, An Authorized Biography, Ward, Louis B., book
          (autographed "Charles E. Coughlin March 15/69"), 1933

Box 9     Father Charles E. Coughlin, Surrogate Spokesman for the Disaffected,

Box 9     Father Coughlin Fascist Demagogue, Hansen, Joseph, undated

Box 9     Father Coughlin, His "Facts" and Arguments, 1939
          1 Book

Box 9     Father Coughlin, His "Facts" and Arguments, 1939

Box 5, Folder 3     Father Coughlin Promise or Menace, Jager, Henry, 1935

Box 8     Father Coughlin, The Radio Priest, of the Shrine of the Little Flower,
          Mugglebee, Ruth, book, 1933

Box 8     Father Coughlin of the Shrine of the Little Flower, Mugglebee, Ruth,
          book, 1933

Box 9     Father Coughlin The Tumultuous Life of the Priest of the Little Flower,
          Marcus, Sheldon, book, 1973

Box 8     Father Coughlin & The New Deal, Tull, Charles J., book, 1965

Box 8     The Fine Art of Propaganda, A Study of Father Coughlin's Speeches,

Box 6, Folder 3     The Fine Art of Propaganda, A Study of Father Coughlin's Speeches,
                    Lee, Alfred McClung and Lee, Elizabeth Briant, 1939

Box 9     Forerunners of American Fascism, Swing, Raymond Gram, book, 1935

Box 11, Folder 1     Fortune (New York, New York), 1934-1935, 1934-1935

Box 16, Folder 7     Gentile News (Oak Park, Illinois), 1946

Box 8     The Ghost of Royal Oak, A Christian's Answer to Coughlinism, Kernan,
          William C., book, 1940

Box 9     The Great Mistake, Knox, John, 1930
          1 Book

Box 5, Folder 2     Guns, 1981

Box 9     Henry Ford and the Jews, The Mass Production of Hate, Baldwin, Neil,
          book, 2001

Box 4, Folder 14     How to Win Social Justice, Bittelman, Alex, 1936
Box 6, Folder 10  
*Images of America, Royal Oak*, McDonald, Maureen and Schultz, John S., book, 2010

Box 5, Folder 5  
*It's a Secret*, Hoke, Henry, 1946

Box 4, Folder 16  
*Liberation* (Asheville, North Carolina), 1939

Box 10, Folder 1  
*Liberation* (Asheville, North Carolina), 1938-1939

Box 4, Folder 4  
*Liberty*, 1934-1940

Box 11, Folder 2  
*Life* (New York, New York), 1955

Box 4, Folder 2  
*The Literary Digest*, 1932-1936

Box 11, Folder 3  
*Look* (Des Moines, Iowa), 1939-1940

Box 8  

Box 10, Folder 2  
*The National Jewish Daily*, 1939

Box 4, Folder 8  
*The New Republic*, 1935

Box 16, Folder 8  
*New York Daily* (New York, New York), 1940

Box 16, Folder 9  

Box 10, Folder 6  
News clippings, 1934-2007, undated

Box 4, Folder 9  
*News-Week*, 1935-1942

*Image(s)*

Box 6, Folder 9  
*Parish Handbook, the Shrine of the Little Flower*, 1981

Box 3, Folder 8  
*The Philosophies of Father Coughlin*, Riley, W.B., D.D., 1935

Box 9  

Box 6, Folder 6  
*Rev. Chas. E. Coughlin, Silver Jubilee*, 1916-1941, souvenir publication, 1941

Box 11, Folder 4  
*Radio Guide*, 1936

Box 4, Folder 1  
*Radiographs of the Little Flower*, 1928

Box 4, Folder 5  
*Radioland*, 1934

Box 4, Folder 6  
*Real America*, 1934-1935

Box 4, Folder 17  
*The Real Father Coughlin*, Magil, A.B., 1939
Box 6, Folder 4  The Rulers of Russia . . . , Fahey, Denis, book, 1940
Box 5, Folder 1  Scribner's Commentator, 1940
Box 12, Folder 1  The Shrine Herald (Royal Oak, Michigan), 1935-1936
Box 12, Folder 2  The Shrine Herald (Royal Oak, Michigan), 1937-1938
Box 12, Folder 3  The Shrine Herald (Royal Oak, Michigan), 1939
Box 12, Folder 4  The Shrine Herald (Royal Oak, Michigan), 1940
Box 13, Folder 1  The Shrine Herald (Royal Oak, Michigan), 1941
Box 13, Folder 2  The Shrine Herald (Royal Oak, Michigan), 1944
Box 13, Folder 3  The Shrine Herald (Royal Oak, Michigan), 1945-1947
Box 6, Folder 2  Shrine of the Little Flower, autographed by Reverend Father Charles E.
Coughlin, souvenir book, 1936
Box 6, Folder 1  Shrine of the Little Flower, autographed by Father Hutting, souvenir book, 1936
Box 6, Folder 8  Shrine of the Little Flower, Golden Jubilee, 1926-1976, souvenir book, 1976
Box 8  Shrine of the Silver Dollar, The Documentary Story of Father Coughlin, Spivak,
John L., book, 1940
Box 14  Social Justice (Royal Oak, Michigan), 1936-03-1937-06
Box 18  Social Justice, bound, (Royal Oak, Michigan), 1936-1942
Box 15  Social Justice (Royal Oak, Michigan), 1937-07-1938-06
Box 19  Social Justice (Royal Oak, Michigan), 1938-07-1939-05
Box 20  Social Justice (Royal Oak, Michigan), 1939-05-1940-06
Box 16, Folder 10  Social Justice (Royal Oak, Michigan), 1940, undated
Box 21  Social Justice (Royal Oak, Michigan), 1940-01-1940-12
Box 22  Social Justice (Royal Oak, Michigan), 1940-07-1941-07
Box 23  Social Justice (Royal Oak, Michigan), 1941-07-1942-04
Box 4, Folder 3  Time, 1933-1934
Box 16, Folder 11  Tolerance (New York, New York), 1939
Box 4, Folder 10  The Truth About Father Coughlin, Magil, A.B., 1935
Box 7  
*Under Cover*, Carlson, John Roy, book, 1943

Box 4, Folder 11  
*Vital Speeches of the Day*, 1935

Box 4, Folder 18  
What's Behind the 'Christian Front’?, 1939

Box 5, Folder 7  
*What is American Fascism*, Cannon, Joseph P. and Hansen, Joseph, 1976

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Series 4: Reference Materials, 1933-2015, undated

This series contains a variety of reference materials related to Father Coughlin, his radio broadcasts, and the Shrine of the Little Flower. It also contains a copy of Coughlin's FBI file and other legal materials related to Coughlin. The series contains commercially available cassette tapes of some of Coughlin's radio broadcasts. There is ordination and funeral memorabilia.

Box 10, Folder 5  
Sheet music, 1933-1936

Box 16, Folder 12  
"Chas E. Coughlin," portrait print, VanNess, Frank L., artist, 1934

Box 1, Folder 17  
Editorial cartoons, 1942

Box 1, Folder 14  
Social Security application, Coughlin, 1957

Box 1, Folder 15  
Ordination, Golden Jubilee, Coughlin, 1966

Box 1, Folder 16  
Funeral memorabilia, Coughlin, 1979

Box 1, Folder 18  
Assorted pamphlets, 1942

Box 1, Folder 19  
Assorted research materials, 1937-2015

Box 5, Folder 11  
Shrine of the Little Flower (Royal Oak, Michigan), ephemera, 1934-1986, undated

Box 1, Folder 20  
Ephemera, 1940-1950, undated

Box 1, Folder 21  
General Jewish Council, correspondence, 1939

Box 1, Folder 22  
National Union for Social Justice, 1935-1940, undated

Box 10, Folder 3  
Death certificate (Coughlin, Charles Edward), 1979

Box 1, Folder 23  
Broadside, undated

Box 1  
"Fr. Charles Coughlin," sixteen commercially produced cassette tapes of selected broadcasts, undated

Box 5, Folder 12  
Shrine of the Little Flower (Royal Oak, Michigan), souvenir postcard sets, undated

Box 5, Folder 13  
Maps, 1951, undated

Box 7  
Old Time Radio, Father Coughlin, various broadcasts, volumes 1-18

Box 16, Folder 2  
National Union for Social Justice, souvenir program (Olympia Arena, Detroit, Michigan), 1936-09-09

Box 24  
"Mooney Administration, Coughlin Case," copies of materials from the Archives of the Archdiocese of Detroit, 1933-1939
Box 25  Coughlin, Charles Edward, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) file (copy), 1936-1980

Map-folder 1  "The Fighting Priest," event poster, undated

Map-folder 1  National Union for Social Justice, broadside, 1936

Box 1, Folder 24  Coughlin, Charles Edward, FOIPA 1116891 Parts 1 and 2, undated

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