



Smithsonian
National Museum of American History
Kenneth E. Behring Center

Father Charles E. Coughlin Collection

NMAH.AC.1389

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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 .

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

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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*

Container Listing

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	<i>By the Sweat of Thy Brow</i> , 1930-1931
Box 1, Folder 2	Published writings, 1931
Box 7	<i>Father Coughlin's Radio Sermons Complete</i> , 1931
Box 3, Folder 1	<i>Father Coughlin's Radio Discourses</i> , 1931-1932
Box 7	<i>Father Coughlin's Radio Discourses</i> , 1931-1932
Box 1, Folder 3	Published writings, 1932
Box 2, Folder 2	<i>Eight Discourses on the Gold Standard</i> , 1932-1933
Box 1, Folder 4	Published writings, 1933
Box 2, Folder 3	<i>Driving Out the Money Changers</i> , 1933
Box 2, Folder 4	<i>The New Deal in Money</i> , 1933
Box 1, Folder 5	Published writings, 1934
Box 2, Folder 5	<i>Labor, Capital, and Justice</i> , 1934
Box 1, Folder 6	Published writings, 1935

Box 2, Folder 6	<i>A Series of Lectures on Social Justice</i> , 1935
Box 1, Folder 7	Published writings, 1936
Box 2, Folder 7	<i>Money!</i> , 1936
Box 1, Folder 8	Published writings, 1937
Box 2, Folder 8	<i>Money!</i> , 1937
Box 1, Folder 9	Published writings, 1938
Box 3, Folder 2	<i>Sixteen Radio Lectures</i> , 1938
Box 2, Folder 9	<i>Am I An Anti-Semite?</i> , 1938-1939
Box 2, Folder 10	<i>Why Leave On Our Own?</i> , 1939
Box 1, Folder 11	Published writings, 1940
Box 3, Folder 3	<i>Helmet and Sword</i> , parts 1-4, 1968
Box 3, Folder 4	<i>Bishop versus Pope</i> , 1969
Box 7	<i>Bishop versus Pope</i> , 1969
Box 3, Folder 5	<i>Who is Dead . . . God or Democracy?</i> , 1970
Box 3, Folder 6	<i>Antichrist</i> , 1972
Box 3, Folder 7	<i>Emmanuel-God With Us</i> , 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 candid, 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 | <i>A Collection of Reports on Bolshevism in Russia</i> , 1919 |
| Box 6, Folder 7 | <i>A Jubilee Memorial, 1916-1966</i> , souvenir book, 1966 |
| Box 4, Folder 15 | <i>The American Mercury</i> , 1939 |
| Box 6, Folder 5 | <i>An Answer to Father Coughlin's Critics</i> , Father Coughlin's Friends, book, 1940 |
| Box 3, Folder 9 | <i>An Answer to Father Coughlin's Critics</i> , Father Coughlin's Friends, book, 1940 |
| Box 5, Folder 8 | <i>The Anti-Semitism of Father Coughlin and the End of His Radio Career</i> , Schornick, Andrew, 1996 |
| Box 4, Folder 7 | <i>The Atlantic</i> , 1935 |
| Box 5, Folder 4 | <i>Black Mail</i> , Hoke, Henry, 1944 |
| Box 8 | <i>The Catholic Church in Detroit, 1701-1888</i> , Pare, George, book, 1951 |
| Box 5, Folder 10 | <i>The Catholic Communicators</i> , Noonan, D.P., 1990 |
| Box 5, Folder 6 | <i>The Challenge of Hate</i> , Lerner A.P. and Poster, Herbert, 1946 |
| Box 6, Folder 11 | <i>Charles Coughlin</i> , Russell, Jesse and Cohn, Ronald, 2012 |
| Box 9 | <i>The Coughlin-Fahey Connection, Father Charles E. Coughlin, Father Denis Fahey, C.S.Sp., and Religious Anti-Semitism in the United States, 1938-1954</i> , Athans, Mary Christine, book, 1991 |
| Box 4, Folder 12 | <i>Current America</i> , 1936 |
| Box 4, Folder 13 | <i>Current History</i> , 1936 |
| Box 16, Folder 4 | <i>The Daily Tribune</i> (Royal Oak, Michigan), 1935 |
| Box 17 | <i>The Dearborn Independent</i> , 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*,
Carpenter, Ronald H., book, 1998
- Box 5, Folder 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*, edited by
Lee, Alfred McClung and Lee, Elizabeth Briant, book, 1939
- 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 *The Mayor's Daughter, A Royal Oak Trilogy*, Christman, Therese M., book, 2011

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 *The New York Times Magazine* (New York, New York), 1933-10-29

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 *Radio Priest, Charles Coughlin the Father of Hate Radio*, Warren, Donald, book, 1996

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	<i>Old Time Radio, Father Coughlin</i> , 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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