

FROM
SIDNEY WALLACH
386 FOURTH AVE.
NEW YORK

8/1/39

To Mr. Samuel:

This is delayed, but here it
is. Please return it to me.

I did not ask for this
R.S.

W. Coughlin
Mr. Wallcut

Talk on Father Coughlin by
Elliott Roosevelt on his Emerson Radio Series,
July 15, 1939, WOR and the Mutual Network.

AMERICA LOOKS AHEAD

Good evening, everyone!

I am not exactly satisfied with the new radio code, because it is censorship, and I dislike censorship in any form. But even censorship might not be too high a price to pay, if it will help insulate us against the anti-Semitic oratory of that radio priest out in Royal Oak, Michigan, who is also anti-everything that doesn't compliment his own opinions.

When I say the radio priest, I am referring to the Reverend Charles E. Coughlin, who must have followed with a great deal of interest the recent action of the silver inflationists in Congress.

Father Coughlin would naturally be interested in silver. He is an expert on silver. In any case, he has bought enough of it to qualify as one. Before the Treasury Department released those interesting figures concerning his monetary activities, he bought up half a million ounces of silver. Naturally the public knew nothing of this, or it might have paid less attention to his cries that the government would have to revalue the dollar if it wanted to cling to the ways of Christianity.

For thirteen years this gentleman has set himself up as an authority on social reforms, on government, and on monetary issues. For thirteen years, this man's political fidelity has been as unpredictable as the wind. He used to preach against the "Menace of Hooverism," charging that Hoover prosperity would certainly breed war. When Mr. Hoover's prosperity began to decline, he lost no opportunity to denounce him, warning the country that it

had to be "Roosevelt or Ruin."

Four years later this same voice was shrieking "Roosevelt and Ruin." He urged the country to elect William Lemke, a Representative from North Dakota, to the White House. In this campaign, Governor Alf Landon was also a candidate, and when Father Coughlin was asked whom he preferred, Landon or Roosevelt, he replied, "How can you make a choice between carbolic acid and rat poison?"

Father Coughlin, for all his outward show of priestly humility, is a master of acrimonious invective. He has been described by John McCarten, in the American Mercury, as a man whom nobody can trust. McCarten illustrates this point with a story of Louis McFadden, a Pennsylvania Congressman, whom Coughlin betrayed after his celebrated attack on President Hoover on the floor of the House. McFadden, who is said to have the distinction of delivering the only anti-Semitic address ever heard in Congress, climbed to his feet one day and demanded the impeachment of President Hoover. The upshot of this was that every Republican newspaper in the country began to assail McFadden. Alarmed at the consequences of his remarks, McFadden went to Coughlin and begged him to say a few words on his behalf. "I certainly will," the priest replied. "Just listen to my broadcast next Sunday." When Sunday came, McFadden tuned in on Coughlin and heard him say, "Representative McFadden should be expelled from Congress for making such charges against our President." Thus, came the end of a beautiful friendship, a friendship so intimate at one stage of their association, that Coughlin even submitted his sermons to McFadden for approval before he delivered them over the air, according to McCarten.

Like all political demagogues, Father Coughlin is fanatical. If he is for you, you become the "annointed of God." If he dislikes you, you are

a "liar" and a "scab." All views that do not coincide with his own, are at once, "anti-God." He has publically indorsed many men, but seldom has this endorsement remained with any man long. A curious exception was his enthusiasm for the late Huey Long. But the Kingfish died before Coughlin's enthusiasm had time to cool. To Coughlin, Huey was a "true Democrat" and not a "scslaway," as practically everyone else is.

We shall no doubt hear some more of Father Coughlin's interesting discourses in the near future, when the 1940 campaign gets steamed up. But the millions who used to sit at his feet have waned. His audience has dwindled to a great extent. His bombastic tirades against sound government policies, his know(anti)-Semitism, and his casual disregard of facts while discussing subjects of a political or monetary nature have alienated millions of listeners who formerly wouldn't think of letting a Sunday pass without turning in on the Shrine of the Little Flower.

When Father Coughlin does enter the campaign, I think we may safely assume that fewer people will be called "liars" and more time will be devoted to straight talk. I hope for his sake that the information he uses in his future speeches will be more accurate than has been the custom in the past. And I would suggest that he omit altogether his allusions to fictions that do not exist, such as the existance of the "Little White Paper," which he claimed to have in his possession, and when was supposed to prove that a famous old American firm was financially supporting the Communist cause. The priest hinted darkly that the firm of Kuhn-Loeb, had direct dealing with Moacow. He said that evidence originated with the ~~the~~ British Government, and that he had it in his possession. But when asked to produce this little white paper, he admitted that he didn't have it. However, he said, guilt of the firm was established in a confidential report of the American Secret Service. When the Secret Service Department denied this, Coughlin

suddenly remembered that it wasn't the Secret Service at all. His information had come from an Irish priest who had written a book called, "The Mystical Body of Christ in the Modern World." But even here, there was no satisfactory evidence, and the whole story trailed off into thin air. Most of Father Coughlin's utterances have a way of running out of steam in blind alleys. As a compounder of stories, Father Coughlin has few equals. Despite the fact that his own churchmen as well as Jews have been relentlessly persecuted in Germany, Coughlin's shrine has become a clearing house for questionable propaganda which the Nazis make the fullest use of... Most of Father Coughlin's anti-Semitic views have been taken up by the Nazis and widely quoted in Germany. They have been reprinted in a dozen different languages, under Nazi direction, and spread throughout the world where German minorities exist.

Coughlin seems to consider himself a torch of righteousness in a world that is largely anti-God. The notoriety accruing from his radio harangues has given him a sense of value all out of proportion with his actual stature. Ecclesiastically, he is a minor figure. Without radio, he would be nothing but an obscure priest, responsible for the spiritual welfare of only a few families. But his flair for rabble-rousing and his success in attracting funds, has built his shrine into a million dollar big business investment. What his activities have been worth to himself, no one knows. But they have reflected little credit on his church. The public spectacle of a man of God handing out epithets and indulging in tirades, can only be distressing to those who have the interest and the dignity of the church at heart.

Just what effect the recently adopted code for broadcasters will have on Father Coughlin cannot be foretold at this time. In any case, it will be interesting to watch. If Father Coughlin disagrees with me, I hereby cordially invite him to pay us a visit on this program.