COUGHLIN, Charles E. (October 25, 1891-October 27, 1979)

Father Charles Coughlin was an influential American Catholic priest who became famous for his controversial but extremely popular radio program, which aired from October 1926 to September 1940. Coughlin’s program was mainly devoted to political and economic issues including the plight of the American worker, the need for nativist nationalism, and the growing threat of Jewish bankers and communism. He supported Franklin D. Roosevelt during the 1932 presidential election, but later turned against Roosevelt administration policies enacted during the Great Depression, which he felt were too generous to big capitalists. In 1934, Coughlin promoted the creation of the National Union for Social Justice (NUSJ), which he based on Catholic social justice principles intended to protect the rights of workers. After Kristallnacht in 1938, some major radio stations began to cancel Coughlin’s programs due to his increasing sympathy for Nazism and anti-Semitism. With the beginning of WWII in 1939, new licensing restrictions imposed by the Roosevelt administration and changes within the Catholic Church pushed Coughlin off the air. He was increasingly marginalized following the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941.

Bibliography: Sheldon Marcus, *Father Coughlin: The Tumultuous Life of the Priest of the Little Flower* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1973).

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