

## INSTRUCTIONS FROM AUTHOR TO LIBRARY FOR THESES AND PRIZE ESSAYS

AUTHOR Stanley R. Miles  
TITLE "The Antisemitism of William Dudley Pelley, Father Charles E. Coughlin, and Gerald L. K. Smith: 1933 to 1941"

TYPE OF THESIS: Ph.D. ☐ D.H.L. ☐ Rabbinic ☒  
Master's ☐ Prize Essay ☐

1. May circulate [☒] ) Not necessary  
 ) for Ph.D.  
2. Is restricted [ ☐ ] for \_\_\_\_\_ years. ) thesis

**Note:** The Library shall respect restrictions placed on theses or prize essays for a period of no more than ten years.

I understand that the Library may make a photocopy of my thesis for security purposes.

3. The Library may sell photocopies of my thesis.
- |          |       |
|----------|-------|
| <u>X</u> | _____ |
| yes      | no    |

March 19, 1975  
Date

Stacy R. Mills  
Signature of Author

Library  
Record

Microfilmed 7/15/75  
Date 7/15/75

Mona Gentry  
Signature of Library Staff Member

THE ANTISEMITISM OF WILLIAM DUDLEY PELLEY,  
FATHER CHARLES E. COUGHLIN, AND GERALD L. K. SMITH:  
1933 TO 1941

by

Stanley R. Miles

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for Ordination

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

1975

Referee, Professor Jacob R. Marcus

## DIGEST

This thesis is an examination of the careers of three native American antisemites from 1933 to 1941. William Dudley Pelley, Father Charles E. Coughlin, and Gerald L. K. Smith were chosen because they were the most popular antisemites who were not directly affiliated with the Nazi movement in Germany. The thesis is restricted to the eight years before America's entrance into the Second World War because this period witnessed much anti-Jewish activity and sentiment in the United States, as well as most of the western world.

Initially, this work was to be primarily based on the papers of Representative Samuel Dickstein of New York. Dickstein chaired a Congressional committee that investigated antisemitism and fascism in the United States during the 1930's. These papers are now kept in the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati, Ohio. Although the Dickstein papers were used, other source materials in the Archives were also of great value.

The first chapter of this thesis is a concise history of antisemitism in the United States beginning in 1654, when the first group of Jews arrived in this land, to 1941, the year America entered the Second World War. Initially, several definitions of antisemitism are presented. The reader is then given an impression of the historical situation of American Jewry in order to provide a general frame of reference from which to consider the specific activities of the three forementioned antisemites.

Following the overview of antisemitism in America are three chapters covering the lives and anti-Jewish manifestations of William Dudley Pelley, Father Charles E. Coughlin, and Gerald L.K. Smith. Their activities are described and examples of their antisemitism are examined. The written portion of this thesis concludes with a brief summary chapter followed by an appendix containing examples of Father Coughlin's writings, antisemitic and otherwise, from his Social Justice.



### Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my wife, Sheilah, a loving חיי נשק and pillar of strength during these past five years.

I also dedicate this work to my son, Seth, in the hope that he will only read about, but never experience, antisemitism.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the director, archivist, and staff of the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati, Ohio. Not only were they helpful above and beyond the call of duty with this thesis, but they have always been good friends, as well.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Chapter</u>		<u>Page</u>
I	Antisemitism in the United States: 1654-1941: An Overview	1
II	The Antisemitism of William Dudley Pelley	10
III	The Antisemitism of Father Charles Coughlin	19
IV	The Antisemitism of Gerald L.K. Smith: The Embryonic Stage	58
V	Summary and Conclusions	71

## Appendix

A  
B  
C  
D  
E  
F  
G  
H  
I

CHAPTER 1  
ANTISEMITISM IN THE UNITED  
STATES 1654-1941: AN OVER-  
VIEW

Before one can adequately examine the careers and antisemitism of Charles Coughlin, William Dudley Pelley, and Gerald L. K. Smith during the United States of the 1930's, the history of antisemitism in this country must be summarized. The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia defines antisemitism as:

...the movement to degrade Jews to an inferior position in all branches of life in the countries in which they live. Generally, it is applied to individual or group incitation and action to circumscribe the civil, religious and political rights of the Jews; also to hinder normal relations between Jews and non-Jews.<sup>1</sup>

Professor Gotthard Deutsch stated in the Jewish Encyclopedia published in 1901:

...it may be stated that Anti-Semitism (sic) as such does not exist in...the United States, still amid the general class distinctions maintained in social intercourse...a feeling against Jews manifests itself in social discriminations.<sup>2</sup>

It is this author's contention that Professor Deutsch's statement was incorrect. Prejudice against Jews, albeit at most times mild, has existed in the United States as long as Jews have lived here.

---

<sup>1</sup> "Antisemitism," The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia 1:341, (New York, 1939).

<sup>2</sup> "Anti-Semitism," The Jewish Encyclopedia 1:648, (New York, 1901).

The first recorded occurrence of Judeophobia in what is now the United States took place in 1654. Twenty-three Jewish passengers from the ship St. Charles requested of Peter Stuyvesant, the Dutch governor of New Amsterdam, permission to reside in that settlement. Their presence was not at all welcome:

It was bad enough that they were not insolvent...It was worse that their religion was not Dutch Reformed: the Director-General (Stuyvesant) had no use for other kinds of Protestants, let alone Papists. But it was worst of all that they were Jews, members of a "Deceitful race," who professed an "abominable religion," to quote Stuyvesant's own rhetoric.<sup>3</sup>

Needless to say, Stuyvesant tried to immediately expel these Jewish settlers. This attempt was overruled by his employers, the Dutch West India Company, which had some Jewish stockholders. The Jews in Colonial America were able to secure full economic rights by the end of the seventeenth century; however, full political rights were never attained during the colonial period.<sup>4</sup>

On a national level Jews have enjoyed complete political freedom in the United States since the Revolution. There has never been any religious test for public office nor has any state religion ever been established. Some states, however, required a Christian oath for office holders which proved to be a disability for Jews; Maryland abolished the oath in 1826 and North Carolina followed in 1868.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Lears, Rufus, The Jews in America: A History, (New York, 1972) p. 26.

<sup>4</sup> "United States," Encyclopaedia Judaica, 15:1648, (Jerusalem, 1971).

<sup>5</sup> Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, op. cit., 1:393.

The first nativist movement that incorporated Judeophobia into its program was the "Know Nothing" political party of the 1840's and 1850's. The chief targets of this group were new immigrants and Catholics but occasionally they spoke out against Jews, as well. In the first half of the nineteenth century most incidents of Jew hatred in the United States were small, isolated, and mainly attributable to the "Shylock" type stereotype ascribed to the Jews.<sup>6</sup>

The first period of widespread Judeophobia in the United States developed during the Civil War of 1861-1865. It should be noted that one is not able to distinguish between the Union and the Confederacy regarding this prejudice; it was present on both sides. Judah P. Benjamin was known as "the brains of the Confederacy." At various times he served the rebel government as Secretary of State, Secretary of War, and Attorney General. In spite of this valuable service Benjamin was not without his enemies in the Confederacy who never failed to condemn him for his Jewish birth.<sup>7</sup>

The most notorious episode of Civil War prejudice was the issuance of "General Order No. 11" by General Ulysses S. Grant

The Jews, as a class violating every regulation of trade... are hereby expelled from the department within twenty-four hours from the receipt of this order.

---

6

Encyclopaedia Judaica, op. cit., 15:1648.

7

Korn, Bertram W. American Jewry and the Civil War (Philadelphia 1961), p. 177.

8

Ibid., p. 122.

This edict, issued on December 17, 1862, expelled all Jews from the Department of the Tennessee which included portions of Kentucky, Tennessee and Mississippi.<sup>9</sup> When the Jewish community of Paducah, Kentucky complained to President Abraham Lincoln the order was firmly revoked. Later Grant, personally, expressed deep regret for the order and even helped fight foreign antisemitism when he was elected president.<sup>10</sup>

After the Civil War the specter of social antisemitism arrived on the American scene. Suddenly, Jews were refused accommodations at certain resort hotels, blackballed from social clubs and professional organizations, and refused admission into some private schools solely because of their religion.<sup>11</sup> It should be noted that many prominent gentiles, including the famous Christian minister Henry Ward Beecher, were quite vocal against this social discrimination aimed at Jews.<sup>12</sup>

The old adage that 'familiarity breeds contempt' applies directly to antisemitism in the United States. It is hard to believe but in 1870 there were only approximately 225,000 Jews in the entire country. The period from 1870 to 1921 witnessed a tidal wave of 2,500,000 Eastern European Jewish immigrants arriving in this land seeking economic opportunity together with religious and political freedom. Generally,

---

<sup>9</sup>  
Encyclopaedia Judaica, op. cit., 15:1649.

<sup>10</sup>  
Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, op. cit., 1:393.

<sup>11</sup>  
Encyclopaedia Judaica, op. cit., 15:1649.

<sup>12</sup>  
Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, op. cit., 1:394.

these new immigrants were poor, illiterate, and fervently Orthodox in their practice of Judaism.<sup>13</sup> As this group entered the mainstream of American society they stimulated new competition and rose in status. However, many of their customs still appeared quite strange to some Americans (including some Jews), causing the flames of antisemitism to be fanned.<sup>14</sup>

American Jewry did not ignore the spread of antisemitism but, led by the established German Jewish community, formed defense organizations. These groups include the American Jewish Committee founded in 1906; the Anti-Defamation League of the B'nai Brith founded in 1913; and the American Jewish Congress founded in 1920.<sup>15</sup> One of the earliest incidents in which the American Jewish Committee was called into action occurred in 1908. Theodore Bingham, the Police Commissioner of New York City, wrote an article for the September issue of the North American Review in which he stated that Jews make up fifty percent of New York's criminal element, even though they account for only twenty-five percent of the total population. Needless to say, the article caused a great furor and some antisemitism, as well. Subsequently, the American Jewish Committee confronted Bingham with some new statistics and he was forced to write an unqualified retraction in the very next issue of the magazine.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup>  
American Jewish History Class Lectures of Dr. Jacob Marcus, Spring, 1972.

<sup>14</sup>  
Encyclopaedia Judaica, op. cit., 1:394.

<sup>15</sup>  
Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>  
Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, op. cit., 1:396.



The Jewish community of Atlanta, Georgia, suffered a traumatic shockwave of antisemitism with the infamous Leo Frank Case. Frank, a Jew and a Northerner, was accused of killing Mary Phagan. She was a fourteen year old employee at a pencil factory that Frank managed for his uncle. Ironically, the murder took place on Confederate Memorial Day in 1913.<sup>17</sup> At this time the South was suffering an economic slump, obviously the Jews, in general and Leo Frank, in particular, made handy scapegoats for the Southern press and the Populist politicians. Jewish stores were boycotted and there were some incidents of violence. It was patently clear that Frank was innocent, yet he was still convicted on the thinnest threads of circumstantial evidence. In an act of supreme courage John Slaton, then Governor of Georgia, commuted Frank's sentence from death by hanging to life imprisonment. Six weeks later a group of the Knights of Mary Phagan, an ad hoc antisemitic group, stormed the prison where Frank was held, captured him, and lynched him near Mary Phagan's house.<sup>18</sup> It is interesting to note that these Knights of Mary Phagan rechristened themselves later that year as the revived Ku Klux Klan.<sup>19</sup>

A conspiratory concept of history was a prevalent notion among Americans in the decade following World War I as a reaction against the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. The antisemitic forgery known as the

<sup>17</sup> Golden, Harry, Our Southern Landsman, (New York, 1974), p. 80.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 88.

Protocols of the Elders of Zion, stimulating the notion that the Jews were responsible for a world conspiracy, was published in an English translation in 1920. In that same year, the Dearborn Independent, a weekly newspaper owned by automobile magnate Henry Ford, inaugurated a series of antisemitic articles which were later reprinted in booklets titled The International Jew.<sup>20</sup> Ford continued his antisemitism until 1927 when economic boycotts and various lawsuits forced him to make a public apology through Louis Marshall, the leader of the American Jewish Committee.<sup>21</sup>

One of the most reprehensible forms of antisemitism in the United States has been that type of social discrimination which excluded Jews from many schools and established Jewish quotas at many others. In June 1922 this educational discrimination became a national issue when A. Lawrence Lowell, President of Harvard College, announced that his institution was considering a quota system for students of the Jewish faith. The Jewish leadership of this nation was appalled and reacted strongly against this threat, causing Lowell's proposal to be rejected by a committee of Harvard faculty in April 1923.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup>

Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, op. cit., 1:396.

<sup>21</sup>

Encyclopaedia Judaica, op. cit., 15:1653.

<sup>22</sup>

Ibid., 15:1654.

The Pro-Nordic immigration laws passed by Congress in 1921, 1924, and 1929 proved to be an almost insurmountable threat to Jews who wished to enter the United States. These laws stemmed from a nativist prejudice against Russian Jews and Italian Catholics. Under the new laws immigration was limited from over 1,000,000 people per year to a mere trickle of 150,000. The law also assigned a quota for each nation based on the number of its countrymen residing in earlier years. Unfortunately, the Jews came from countries with the most restricted quotas.<sup>23</sup>

During the 1930's and early 1940's antisemitism in the United States almost reached a fever pitch. The antisemitic movements in this country could be divided into two distinct groups: (1) those which were directly financed and directed by the Nazis in Germany, such as the Friends of New Germany, which later evolved into the German American Bund; (2) those native groups which, inspired by the success of the Nazis in Germany, attempted to use the Jews as a scapegoat for the economic woes of the depression.<sup>24</sup> Three representatives of this second category will be examined in detail in the chapters to follow.

The groups which were directly controlled and probably financed by the Nazis in Germany were organized for propaganda purposes. The Friends

---

<sup>23</sup> Levinger, Lee J., A History of the Jews in the United States, (New York, 1949)p. 363.

<sup>24</sup> Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, op. cit., 1:398.

of New Germany and later the German-American Bund were designed to obtain sympathy for the Nazi regime and justify Nazi antisemitism. Both organizations were, for the most part, unsuccessful because American public opinion was opposed to the policies of the Nazi government in Germany.<sup>25</sup>

These Nazi and native antisemitic organizations aroused so much public disgust that the House of Representatives adopted a resolution, presented by Congressman Samuel Dickstein of New York, to conduct an investigation of Nazi activities in the United States.<sup>26</sup> The files of this committee, as preserved in the American Jewish Archives, are the basic source of research for this thesis.

The German-American Bund was never very strong but in the late 1930's it received an almost fatal blow between the passage of the Alien Registration Act, requiring all agents of foreign governments to register with the State Department,<sup>27</sup> and the conviction of its leader, Fritz Kuhn, of embezzlement.<sup>28</sup> The entrance of the United States into World War II in 1941 ended, to a great extent, this phase of antisemitism in this country.

---

<sup>25</sup>

Ibid., 1:399.

<sup>26</sup>

Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>

Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>

Encyclopaedia Judaica, op. cit., 15:1655.

CHAPTER TWO  
THE ANTISEMITISM OF WILLIAM  
DUDLEY PELLEY

While William Dudley Pelley was not the most famous or successful native antisemite in the United States during the 1930's, his career was quite colorful and should be examined. The main source used in the investigation of Pelley's exploits is the papers of Congressman Samuel Dickstein of New York, then Chairman of the House Un-American Activities Committee, in the American Jewish Archives located on the campus of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, Ohio. The format of this and the following two chapters, will be to, initially, give some biographical data about the subject followed by some examples of his antisemitism.

William Dudley Pelley was born on March 12, 1890 in Lynn, Massachusetts. His father was a Methodist minister.<sup>29</sup> According to Pelley's autobiography titled The Door to Revelation his paternal family was of English descent, settling in Newfoundland from the eighteenth through the nineteenth centuries; his maternal family was of colonial stock who served in both the American Revolution and the Civil War.<sup>30</sup> As a young man Pelley:

---

<sup>29</sup> Pelley, William Dudley, The Door to Revelation, pp. 3-4, (Asheville).

<sup>30</sup> New York Times, July 2, 1965, p. 27.

...worked on various newspapers in New England and served in a Young Men's Christian Association with American troops in Siberia at the end of World War I. As a writer, he had achieved some success with short stories and screenplays before turning to politics. He switched careers, he wrote, when he "Died and went to heaven" for seven minutes in 1928...he testified that he had been in daily contact with an oracle who predicted the rise of Hitler and directed the Silver Shirts.<sup>31</sup>

It is possible for one to draw three conclusions about the early career of William Dudley Pelley. He was a frustrated intellectual. His reaction to his lack of success was rage toward the parties he thought were responsible - he never blamed himself. Finally, Pelley had a problem with religion that was difficult for him to solve.<sup>32</sup>

Pelley's frustrated intellectual strivings and his lack of success can be easily connected. Throughout his life Pelley always stood on the threshold of fame and esteem, a threshold that he would never cross. The origin of these frustrations may be traced to Pelley's fourteenth year when he was forced to quit school in order to support his family during a period of economic distress. Pelley's anxiety intensified with the failure of various business ventures, coupled with his lack of success in his marriage. In the 1920's, he had some good fortune with various short stories, novels and screenplays. Although he never became an outstanding literary figure, he was still famous enough to be included in Who's Who in America, beginning with the 1924-25 edition:

---

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Strong, Donald S., Organized Anti-Semitism in America, pp. 43-44, (Washington, 1941).

PELLEY, William Dudley, author; b. Lynn, Mass., Mar. 12, 1885; s. William G. A. and Grace (Goodale) P.; ed. pub. schs. Editor and pub. *Philosopher Magazine*, Fulton, N.Y., 1900; 1905, 1907, 1909; Pelley Tassie Corp., Springfield, Mass., 1909-12; editor and pub. *Chicopee (Mass.) Journal*, 1912; *Wilmington (Vt.) Times*, 1914; *St. Johnsbury Caledonian*, 1917-20; pres. Gen. News Co., Inc., New York, since 1923. With *Internat. Y.M.C.A.* in Siberia, 1918-19. *Republican*, *Constat*. Author: *The Greater Glory*, 1922; *The Fog*, 1924; *Golden Rubbish*, 1924; also short stories in mags., screen dramas, etc. Home: 27 W. 10th St. Office: 28 W. 8th St., New York, N.Y.

In the late 1920's Pelley found an answer to his religious doubts and a release from the nervous tension caused by his unstable professional life. He became a spiritualist. William Dudley Pelley left the real world and entered an existence of unreality where one could find solace conversing with one's deceased relatives. The truth, that Pelley could not compete with his peers in the literary world, was forgotten. Pelley's shortcomings were suddenly of no consequence to him for the "subliminal world is the real world." Therefore, his world of strife and frustration was only an illusion.<sup>34</sup>

Although Pelley embraced spiritualism as an escape from reality he quickly discovered that the marketing of this "truth" could be quite lucrative. In 1930 Pelley established four spiritualistic enterprises in Asheville, North Carolina: Galahad Press, Galahad College, the Foundation for Christian Economics, and the League for Liberation.<sup>35</sup> Pelley's reason for choosing Asheville for his base of operation is rather interesting: he perceived, clairvoyantly, that a great cataclysm

33

Who's Who in America 1924-1925, p. 2528, (Chicago, 1924).

34

Strong, Op. Cit., p. 44.

35

Marcus, Sheldon, *Father Coughlin*, p. 147, (Boston, 1973).



was coming, after which, Asheville would be the only city left.<sup>36</sup> His businesses produced many tracts on spiritualism and a monthly magazine titled Liberation which offered initially:

...instruction and inspiration from sources above and beyond mortality...contents of this magazine, unless otherwise designated, were received 'clair-auciently' via the Psychic Radio, from Great Souls, who have graduated out of this three-dimensional world into other areas of time and space.<sup>37</sup>

At first Liberation was pure spiritualism, antisemitism was a later development in the magazine.

Spiritualism did not fulfill all of Pelley's hunger for success. He manifested delusions of grandeur in the form of antisemitism to hide his other frustrations. William Dudley Pelley would be the savior of the United States. Alone, he would lead a movement which would banish the Jews from power!<sup>38</sup>

On January 31, 1933, Pelley founded the Silver Shirts, an organization patterned after Adolf Hitler's Schutz Staffel. In fact, he fondly referred to himself as the "American Hitler." Initially, the Silver Shirts attracted many former members of the Ku Klux Klan; even though Catholics were not openly barred from membership many local units discouraged their participation.<sup>39</sup>

---

36

Strong, Op. Cit.

37

Ibid., p. 187.

38

Ibid., pp. 44-45.

39

Ibid., p. 47.



The official requirements for membership were:

Either men or women over the age of eighteen years may be members but only persons of the Christian faith are acceptable or will be recognized.

The Silver Shirts reached their numerical zenith in early 1934 when they listed 15,000 people on their rolls. Geographically, the Silver Shirts were strongest along the Pacific Coast with relatively few chapters east of the Appalachians.<sup>40</sup>

It is interesting to note that the constituency of Pelley's Silver Shirts was overwhelmingly middle class. Doctors, lawyers, small businessmen, and Protestant ministers made up a substantial percentage of the organization. There appeared to be an almost complete absence of manual laborers in the group. The Silver Shirts also proved to attract quite a few German-Americans; it was documented that seventy-five percent of the audience at a Silver Shirt meeting in New York City were Germans.<sup>41</sup>

Pelley used his Silver Shirt units as centers for distribution of fascistic literature in the United States. From his own Pelley Publishers came Liberation magazine which was first published in 1930 as a magazine totally devoted to spiritualism.<sup>42</sup> Pelley later changed the name of this magazine from Liberation to Pelley's Weekly. He also published the Silver Legion Ranger, an antisemitic periodical. Pelley's group was also connected with Josef Goebbels' World Service, the Nazi English language propaganda organ, by distributing Hitler's Mein Kampf and the anti-Jewish

<sup>40</sup>

Ibid., pp. 50-51.

<sup>41</sup>

Ibid., pp. 53-54.

<sup>42</sup>

Ibid., p. 49.

writings of Julius Streicher.<sup>43</sup>

One could legitimately ask why William Dudley Pelley was an antisemite. A probable answer is that this is the one road which he traveled that led to real fame. He achieved some degree of success with his ventures into writing and spiritualism but the flashy uniforms and boisterous groups he founded by imitating the Hitler movement in Germany gave him a greater amount of national visibility. Pelley's mystical belief that he was the "American Hitler" demonstrated the bravado of this man.

The Silver Shirt movement never really developed because of constant financial problems. During World War II William Dudley Pelley was tried and convicted on the charge of sedition. He served eight years of a fifteen year sentence; after his parole in 1950 Pelley officially retired. He died on June 30, 1965.<sup>44</sup>

Pelley's own brand of antisemitism is anything but original; it is snide, sick, and full of all the old cliches. Let us look at some examples:

In Pelley's autobiography, while explaining his Family's presence in Newfoundland he also takes a swipe at Washington during the New Deal:

Pelleys are, indeed as common in Newfoundland as  
Finkelbaums in the Washington Government...<sup>45</sup>

During the period before World War II Pelley published many pamphlets. One of them was titled: "Famous Jew Baiters of History". This

<sup>43</sup>  
Marcus, Op. Cit.

<sup>44</sup>  
New York Times, Op. Cit.

<sup>45</sup>  
The Door to Revolution, Op. Cit.

work consists of a list of quotations attributed to famous people from Cicero and Jesus to Charles Evans Hughes denouncing the Jews as cheats, cowards, communists and barbarians.<sup>46</sup> In reading this pamphlet it is blatantly obvious that many of the quotes were taken grossly out of context.

In another pamphlet, "Dupes of Judah," Pelley voiced the straight Nazi Party line on World War I. He pictured the war as a situation in which:

The Ashkenazic Rothschilds had the big bank roll behind Germany and the Central Powers; the Sephardic Samuels had the big bank roll behind England, France, and the Allies.<sup>47</sup>

At the same time Pelley also attacked against the Roosevelt administration and accused them of starting hostilities, anew:

I know...with the "kikes" swarming into the Federal Administration...with their hate and chagrin over Hitler added to their vast New Deal flop, the whole Von Rath episode coupled with Japan's winning of the China war - gives Roosevelt and his White House Sanhedrin precisely the opportunity they wanted to heat us up to War fever...<sup>48</sup>

The type of pamphlet with a question and answer format has been widely used by both Jews and antisemites, alike. Pelley was no exception

---

<sup>46</sup>

Pelley, William Dudley, "Famous Jew Baiters of History."

<sup>47</sup>

Pelley, William Dudley, "Dupes of Judah."

<sup>48</sup>

Pelley, William Dudley, "45 Questions...", p. 15.

when he published "45 Questions Most Frequently Asked About the Jews With Answers By Pelley." Following are three representative questions with his answers:

Should we say that Jews are members of a race or followers of a religion?  
The Jews, according to blood tests made in English laboratories, belong to one of the divisions of the Oriental - or yellow branch of the human family.<sup>49</sup>

Why do today's Jews make such an ungodly bother about returning to Palestine as a race?  
The Jews do not want to return to Palestine... they wouldn't be happy living with one another without Gentiles to exploit.<sup>50</sup>

To which branch of Jews (Askenazic or Sephardic) did Jesus Christ belong?  
Jesus Christ belonged to neither branch...the only true Jews are from the tribe of Judah... He...did not come from that tribe. Christ was a Galilean and a Nazarene.<sup>51</sup>

The Dickstein Papers also include correspondence relating to Pelley. His antisemitism was poorly concealed as a form of anti-Communism as one can see from a portion of the following letter sent to Mr. Dickstein:

This organization (Silver Shirts) pretends to fight Communism. It asks subscriptions of \$25.00 a year for the esoteric information it gives out, and makes quite a mystery of it by way of obtaining subscriptions.

The anti-Communism, however, of this organization seems to take entirely the form of anti-Semitism, and there are notes of sympathy with Hitler, which suggests the impossibility of its being a Nazi organization.

It represents Gentile Communists as being entirely dupes of Jewish Communists, which is of course rot.<sup>52</sup>

---

49

Pelley, William Dudley, "45 Questions...", p. 15.

50

Ibid., p. 31.

51

Ibid., p. 36.

52

Letter from Francis Ralson Welsh to Samuel Dickstein.

Many issues of Pelley's Liberation can be found in the Dickstein Papers. The following are a representative sample of headlines of various articles giving a clue to the focus of his antisemitism:

More Jews if Italy Goes Nazi<sup>53</sup>  
 Yiddish Rabbi Heads Drug Ring<sup>54</sup>  
 Know F.D.R. As the Jewish High Priest<sup>55</sup>  
 Can Congress Set Up A Five Jew Government?<sup>56</sup>

Each issue also contains a column filled with anti-Jewish "Gems" cleverly titled: "News Behind the Jews - Jews Behind the News." In one article Pelley even pre-dated Hitler with the following warning:

Now, if ever, the Sons of Jacob must take a last desperate gamble and find out if they can actually seize the government of the country before the vigilante storm breaks and a major part of the 7,000,000 Yiddishers who have managed to get into this country over the past ten years are slated for desperation - or worse.<sup>57</sup>

It is easy to see that the antisemitism of William Dudley Pelley from 1933 to 1941 was that of a "penny ante" Hitler. Mr. Pelley modeled his thought, behavior and pronouncements after those of the German Nazi leadership, and as such in hindsight, he appears to have been quite unsuccessful and unoriginal.

<sup>53</sup>

Pelley, William Dudley, Liberation, July 14, 1938.

<sup>54</sup>

Liberation, August 14, 1938.

<sup>55</sup>

Liberation, December 21, 1938.

<sup>56</sup>

Liberation, December 28, 1938.

<sup>57</sup>

Marcus, Op. Cit., pp. 147-8.

## Chapter Three

## THE ANTISEMITISM OF FATHER CHARLES COUGHLIN

In a positive sense Father Charles E. Coughlin was a pioneer and ahead of his time. The 1920's saw the birth of the media phenomenon of commercial radio. At first, broadcasting was perceived as a source of entertainment and news. Father Coughlin discovered and developed radio as a forum for propaganda, be it religious or political. It is sad that Father Coughlin's idea of social justice contained a poisonous dose of antisemitism and was eagerly swallowed by an America in the throes of an economic depression.

Charles Edward Coughlin was born on October 25, 1891, to Thomas and Amelia Coughlin in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. Both parents were of pure Irish descent.<sup>58</sup> Thomas Coughlin made a good living, when Charles was born he was the foreman at a bakery and owned a comfortable four room house in a middle class Irish neighborhood. When Charles was fifteen months old his mother gave birth to a daughter, Agnes, who died at the age of three months. After Agnes' death, Charles, as the only child of the Coughlin family, received all of the attention and affection his parents could give.<sup>59</sup>

Beside his parents, Charles' other most significant influence was

---

58

Block, Maxine, editor, Current Biography, New York: The H. W. Wilson Co., 1940, p. 199.

59

Marcus, Op. Cit., pp. 13-14.

the Roman Catholic Church. When he was an infant the family moved to a new home bordering the grounds of St. Mary's Church. The future priest would serve St. Mary's as an altar boy and attend her parish school. In addition to being a good student, Charles developed the ability to excell in athletics.<sup>60</sup>

After Charles graduated from St. Mary's at age thirteen, he matriculated to the high school at St. Michael's College in Toronto. The college was organized to train priests to serve the archdiocese of Toronto. This was Charles' first experience away from his parents. The separation proved to be painful for all, but they eventually adjusted. Once again Charles proved to be a creditable scholar and a good athlete. Ironically, the one course he had trouble with was economics; thirty years later he would be a self-proclaimed expert on the subject. He was a popular student and elected president of his graduating class.<sup>61</sup>

When he graduated from St. Michael's, his parents sent him to Europe as a graduation gift. Coughlin was unsure which vocation to pursue - the Church or politics. As much as he loved the Church he was also strongly attracted to the opportunities for power within the secular political arena. The European trip gave him time to plan a course of action. He would have the best of both worlds and attempt

---

<sup>60</sup>

Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>61</sup>

Ibid., p. 15.



what few North American priests had tried, to that day. Charles Coughlin decided to combine priestly duties with the quest for political power.

Charles Coughlin entered St. Basil's Seminary, next to St. Michael's, to prepare in earnest for the priesthood. He proved to be a rebellious seminarian whose superiors seriously questioned whether the priesthood was his correct vocation. At various times, he was punished by being cut off from all social contacts and sent to arduous manual labor.<sup>62</sup>

The seminary also proved Coughlin with some positive experiences. During his senior year Coughlin made an extensive study of Pope Leo XIII's noted encyclical, Rerum Novum, a Catholic response to Marx and the industrial revolution. Unfortunately, Coughlin's studies in American history and government were quite meager. He approached his task of saving America from a position of unschooled ignorance about the nation itself.<sup>63</sup>

Charles Coughlin was ordained as a priest at St. Basil's Church on June 29, 1916. His first position was as a teacher at Assumption College in Sandwich, Ontario, not far from Detroit, Michigan. Since there was a shortage of priests in the Detroit area, he was assigned to St. Agnes' Church in that city on weekends.<sup>64</sup>

Coughlin proved to be an aggressive priest and his superiors in the Detroit area hastened to use him to stimulate church attendance.

<sup>62</sup>

Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>63</sup>

Bennett, David H., Demagogues in the Depression, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1969, p. 31.

<sup>64</sup>

Marcus, Op. Cit., pp. 19-20.



In 1926 Bishop Michael Gallagher decided to erect a church in the suburb of Royal Oak. This was not as easy as it would seem. At that time there was less than thirty Catholic families in the Royal Oak and to make matters worse, the area was a hot bed of Ku Klux Klan anti-Catholicism. The bishop knew that his chance for success was slim unless he could place an ambitious, enthusiastic priest in the new parish. Gallagher knew that Coughlin was the man, so he commanded him to:

Build a church at the crossroads of faith  
and religious persecution...in Royal Oak -  
in the midst of the fiery hatred of Ku Klux Klanism.  
Build your church there in the wilderness.  
Name it the Shrine of the Little Flower.  
Make it a missionary basis in the desert  
of religious bigotry.

The original Shrine of the Little Flower Church was a simple wooden building with a seating capacity of six hundred worshippers. The church was immediately beset by financial problems and the threat of the Klan. Two weeks after the church was completed, the Klan burned a cross on the lawn and left a simple, but ominous, message: "Move from Royal Oak." Father Coughlin did not scare easily and he vowed that on the very spot the Klan burned its cross:

Some day we will build a church and raise  
its cross so high to the sky that neither  
man nor beast can burn it down.<sup>66</sup>

---

<sup>65</sup>

Ibid., pp. 22-23.

<sup>66</sup>

Ibid.

Coughlin had never forgotten his quest for political power. He was one of the first people who saw in radio the ability to reach great masses of people with both his religious and socio-economic views. His voice, he knew, was his greatest asset and what better way to stimulate interest in his rather remote church than through his dynamic personality. Some of his parishioners were skeptical and even scandalized by the notion of taking religion out of the church and putting it on the air. In spite of his congregants' objections Coughlin was determined to go on radio. Although his parishioners objected, his superior Bishop Gallagher, was enthusiastic. His congregants thought that the broadcast would be an expensive burden on them. Therefore, Coughlin sought and received the sponsorship of Dick Richards, owner of radio station WJR. On October 17, 1926, Father Coughlin made his radio debut. His sermon topic was the importance of religion in man's life.<sup>67</sup>

Between 1926 and 1930, Coughlin's programming consisted of religious sermons and talks to children. These broadcasts did not gain him the fame or status that he wished for himself.<sup>68</sup> On January 12, 1930, Father Coughlin abruptly changed the format of his program. His sermon, that Sunday, was a scathing attack on both Bolshevism and Socialism; he never bothered to distinguish the two ideologies.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>67</sup>  
Ibid., pp. 25-27.

<sup>68</sup>  
Block, Op. Cit., p. 200.

<sup>69</sup>  
Marcus, Op.Cit., p. 31.

During broadcasts on subsequent Sundays he delivered tirades against prohibition, then President Herbert Hoover, and the Russian Communist threat to America. These political-religious hours brought thousands of congratulatory letters, many containing contributions. In order to handle this new popularity, Father Coughlin organized the Radio League of the Little Flower.<sup>70</sup> Father Coughlin had found his metier at last. Radio was the medium through which he could combine his priestly functions with his quest for political power.

It is difficult for those born and reared on television to realize the hypnotic quality of some human voices on radio. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Adolph Hitler, and to a somewhat lesser extent, Father Coughlin, had powerful mesmerizing speaking styles. Father Coughlin's voice was described as:

Warmed by a touch of Irish brogue, it could be high and plaintive or deep and solemn. He could use it like a violin, running arpeggios with it and making the listening experience a memorable one long after the trilled rrr's had faded away.

(It was) a voice of such mellow richness, such manly, heart-warming, confidential intimacy and ingratiating charm, that anyone turning past it almost automatically returned to hear it again...It was without doubt one of the great speaking voices of the twentieth century.<sup>71</sup>

---

70

Bloc, Op.Cit.

71

Bennett, Op.Cit., pp. 35-36.

Coughlin's popularity as the 'radio priest' spread. In 1930 he was heard over the sixteen stations of the Columbia Broadcasting System in a series of twenty-seven weekly sermons.<sup>72</sup> He stirred up controversy with his political sermons to the point that CBS officials suggested that he mellow his delivery. The priest was furious and on his next program he gave a scathing attack on the network's feeble attempt at censorship. A few months later CBS dropped Father Coughlin's program and opted for a new religious program with nonpolitical preachers. At this point Father Coughlin tried to get on the National Broadcasting Company's network but they rejected him. Undaunted, by 1932, he set up his own private network that would reach more listeners than CBS.<sup>73</sup>

In 1932, Father Coughlin put all his influence behind getting Franklin Delano Roosevelt elected President of the United States. The priest was impressed with Roosevelt's desire for cheaper currency and the entire notion of a New Deal for the American people. The candidate promised Coughlin, in a private meeting, that the priest would be his close advisor on economic and social problems. The sincerity of Roosevelt's promise is questionable, but his courting of the 'radio priest' with his huge listening audience was a clever move.<sup>74</sup> Coughlin was a dynamic spokesman for Roosevelt as one can see in a selection of his campaign oratory:

It is either Roosevelt of ruin...  
(Roosevelt was) the Lincoln leading  
the fight against financial slavery.

---

72

Ibid., p. 33.

73

Ibid., p. 37.

74

Marcus, Op.Cit., p. 46.

Coughlin also proclaimed that to stop Roosevelt equaled stopping progress.<sup>75</sup>

It is important for the reader to note that at this time, indeed until around 1938, Father Coughlin could not have been considered an antisemite.

In spite of Roosevelt's pre-election promises to Coughlin, the President felt bothered by the meddlesome priest with his unsolicited advice. Roosevelt did not want to be used by Coughlin. When the New Deal adopted programs which seemed to come from Coughlin's theories, the priest suffered grave misunderstandings and deluded himself into thinking that the New Deal was his creation. The administration, on the other hand, thought of him only as helpful propagandist whom they could use.<sup>76</sup>

It was inevitable that Father Coughlin break with Roosevelt and the New Deal. He lusted for leadership, without competition, as he told his radio audience:

...the dictionary defines demagogues as 'the leader of the people'. I plan to be a demagogue in the original sense of the word.<sup>77</sup>

His magnificent voice combined with his controversial opinions earned him more listeners than either Gracie Allen or Rudy Vallee. Postmaster General, James A. Farley, reported to President Roosevelt in 1935, that

---

<sup>75</sup>  
Bennett, Op.Cit., p. 40.

<sup>76</sup>  
Ibid., pp. 39-40.

<sup>77</sup>  
Ibid., p. 42.

in the past twenty months the priest and his Radio League of the Little Flower had received over four million dollars in money order contributions. Coughlin not only contributed this money to charity but he also invested heavily in government bonds and automobile stocks. His new resources also enabled him to hire priests and resource personnel to serve his burgeoning empire.<sup>78</sup> When Father Coughlin began to criticize President Roosevelt, the administration discredited him. They discovered that his drive to return the country to a silver standard was partly selfish; the priest, through his secretary, owned more silver than anyone else in Michigan!<sup>79</sup>

In 1934 Coughlin founded the National Union for Social Justice. His goal was to forge his audience into a political movement. The response of his audience was encouraging, 200,000 people sent for membership applications in the first two weeks after the broadcast! The membership was open, Protestants and Jews, as well as Catholics were invited to join. Those who joined the National Union were asked to sign a pledge supporting its sixteen basic principles. This Coughlin cat. chism was a mixture of Populist philosophy and Papal encyclicals combined with parts of the platforms of the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party and the Wisconsin Progressive Party. It is interesting to note that neither democratic government nor free speech were endorsed in Coughlin's principles.<sup>80</sup> (See Appendix for Principles, in toto).

78

Ibid., pp. 55-56.

79

Marcus, Op.Cit., p. 68.

80

Bennett, Op.Cit., pp. 68-70.

By 1936, his break with Roosevelt was complete and irrevocable, Father Coughlin joined with Dr. Francis Townsend, a physician from California with a radical pension plan, and Gerald L.K. Smith, at that time known as a disciple of the late Huey Long, to form a Union Party to defeat the President in his bid for re-election. Coughlin's break with Roosevelt is signified by his change of slogans: 1932- "Roosevelt or ruin"; 1936- Roosevelt and ruin".<sup>81</sup> This year was further significant for Coughlin because on March 13, 1936, he published the first issue of his weekly magazine-newspaper, Social Justice. For six years, until 1942, the magazine would, together with his radio program, spread his opinions.<sup>82</sup> Initially, the newspaper promoted the new political party. The June 22, 1936 issue of Social Justice announced that William Lemke, a Congressman from North Dakota, was the Presidential candidate of the Union Party. In a speech to the party convention, the paper reported that Father Coughlin charged that the money changers were at the bottom of the world depression and that the Union Party would solve the nation's financial woes, just how was not elaborated.<sup>83</sup>

Although Father Coughlin was not openly antisemitic until 1938, his associates knew indeed he was and that he possessed a large library of antisemitica.<sup>84</sup> At the National Convention of the National Union for Social Justice, Coughlin, in a rather confusing manner, lectured to

---

81

Marcus, Op.Cit., pp. 102-103.

82

Ibid., p. 106.

83

Social Justice (abbreviated as SJ hereafter), June 22, 1936, I:15, p. 3.

84

Bennett, Op.Cit., p. 52.



some reporters. His true feelings were quite evident:

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 tried to explain how the unjust treatment of the Jews by the Christians had forced the Jews to become moneylenders...After building quite a strong case against Christians for the cruel treatment they inflicted upon the oppressed Jews, he suddenly switched and implied strongly that the time had come for the Jews to mend their ways and act like good Christians...it was a very confusing performance, but it is difficult to escape the conclusion that it revealed definite hostility against the Jews on the part of the priest, conscious or not. Severely criticized by the Detroit Jewish Chronicle for this speech, Coughlin absolutely denied any antisemitism and took pains to show that he had been equally critical of gentile money interests such as the House of Morgan.<sup>85</sup>

For this thesis the writer has read the issues of Social Justice dated the first week of each month from 1936 to 1941. During 1936, Social Justice was not overtly antisemitic. Big bankers, in general, were attacked whether their last name was Morgan, Rockefeller, or Rothschild. Indeed, an unsigned letter to the editor, allegedly written by a Jew, told Father Coughlin:

...As a Jew, I protest against any slander that comes from my own kind, because I believe you are the best friend the Jewish people ever had.<sup>86</sup>

---

85

Tull, Charles J., Father Coughlin and the New Deal, Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1965, p. 141.

86

SJ, November 9, 1936, II:16, p. 13.



It should be noted that the paper printed this last phrase in a substantially darker typeface. In the December 21, 1936 issue, there was an article which intimated that the abdication of King Edward VII of England was a "bankers plot", the bankers in question were the Rothschilds.<sup>87</sup> Even from this article it is difficult to assess whether Coughlin wished to be antisemitic or just anti-banker.

Father Coughlin vowed that if William Lemke was not elected President in 1936, he would go off the air. Lemke, obviously, was defeated and Coughlin returned to the air early in 1936. According to him, it was the dying request of Bishop Michael Gallagher that he resume broadcasting.<sup>88</sup> In retrospect, Coughlin's foray into the 1936 elections lost him supporters among moderates and pushed him further towards the right wing fringe. His oratory even outraged the Vatican. The pope forced him to apologize for calling Roosevelt a "liar".<sup>89</sup> He even sent the Vatican Secretary of State, Eugenio Cardinal Pacelli (later elected Pope Pius XII), to warn Coughlin's superiors to keep him under control. Unfortunately either Coughlin did not listen, or the bishops over him were intimidated by his power base.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>87</sup>  
SJ, December 21, 1936, II:21, p. 10.

<sup>88</sup>  
Marcus, Op.Cit., p. 139.

<sup>89</sup>  
Block. Op.Cit., p. 199.

<sup>90</sup>  
Marcus, Op.Cit., pp. 131-32.

Before 1937, Social Justice took an anti-Hitler stance. But, as of May 1937, the paper changes position somewhat, it becomes strongly anti-war, blaming rearmament on Stalin. Social Justice also begins to apologize for Nazi Germany:

Germany would not be arming herself to the teeth, today, weakening herself as a commercial nation... were it not for the ever hostile military force on her eastern frontier.<sup>91</sup>

The tone of the paper with regard to the Jews, gradually changed as well. Coughlin was not yet openly antisemitic; however, the articles began to focus on Jews, primarily, as villains on the world scene and the letters to the editor became a forum for antisemitic opinions.

Father Coughlin mildly initiated his antisemitic stance. In January 1937 in the "Questions and Answers" column, the following question was posed:

Question: Did Karl Marx ever attack private money creation privileges and international bankers?

Answer: No, his whole system proposed not the abolition of illicit private money creation and destruction powers, but its consolidation under a system of complete economic, political and religious domination of<sup>92</sup> the entire world by a few internationalists.

<sup>91</sup>  
SJ, May 3, 1937, III:17, p. 12.

<sup>92</sup>  
SJ, January 4, 1937, III:1, p. 4.

The phrases "international bankers and internationalists" would soon become code words for Jews. Perhaps, even here, Coughlin wished to intimate a Jewish conspiracy when he writes of "...religious domination of the entire world by a few internationalists."

At this point it is necessary to answer the question: Why was Father Coughlin antisemitic? The best explanation is supplied by Sheldon Marcus in his book, Father Coughlin. Analyzing the priest, he observed:

He had a few firm convictions beyond his hatred of Communism and a rather traditional feeling of anti-Semitism which in the early part of the twentieth century was more condoned than criticized by the Church. His early exposure to anti-Semitism in the Church circles in which he had received his training left its mark on him...

This early exposure to anti-Semitic views and his later bitterness toward Roosevelt and the men around him, many of whom were Jewish, brought Coughlin's anti-Semitism to the surface...he knew that Hitler had profited immensely from damning the Jews. He also knew that many Americans were still bitter and frustrated - possibly enough to enable him to recoup what he thought to be his declining appeal if he could show that the Jews were tied in with the Communists on one hand and the international bankers on the other and that the Jews were influencing the decision-making process of governments throughout the world.

As forementioned, in 1937 the letters to the editor came frequently from antisemites. Here are a few examples: This first letter was signed

"War Nurse."

While we are busy preaching strict neutrality, the war lords, the Rothschilds, Warburgs...Baruchs, wouldn't by any chance be just as busy outsmarting us, would they?<sup>94</sup>

In a letter given the title, "Persecuted Jews Aids Persecutors," virtually every antisemitic stereotype is presented:

The Jews, as a close knit and absorption defying people, have successfully maintained their identity and raised their standard of living in this country through the good offices of high-minded Christians.

It seems, however, that all this has made them overbold and even arrogant in their attitude toward others.

...we find these same Jews, who crier "Wolf" so vociferously when their own interests were effected, actually aiding and abetting in the brutal destruction of Christians by ending their support to this anti-Christian movement.<sup>95</sup>

One reader writes from Germany that he is very interested in Coughlin's paper. He particularly likes the way Social Justice describes his fatherland. In closing, he gives one other attitude:

I believe that everything possible should be done to smash...misrepresentation and the many<sup>96</sup> Jewish lies about national socialist Germany.

---

<sup>94</sup> SJ, April 5, 1937, III:14, p. 10.

<sup>95</sup> SJ, May 3, 1937 III:17, p. 11.

<sup>96</sup> SJ, June 7, 1937, III:23, p. 9.

Social Justice's antisemitic stance was further manifested in 1937 by an article titled "Russian Revolution Financed by Bankers." The article alleges that Imperial Russia was punished by the Bolshevik Revolution because the czar did not listen to the international bankers. These bankers are identified as Jacob H. Schiff, Kuhn, Loeb and Company, and the Rothschild family.<sup>97</sup>

Coughlin even went so far as to have sympathy for President Roosevelt at the expense of the Jews. He laments that one of the President's advisors is the:

...assistant President of the United States, Bernard Baruch. Mr. Baruch's counsel was poison to Harding, to Coolidge, to Wilson, and to Hoover. It always was and always will<sup>98</sup> be the poison counsel of the money changers.

The same issue of Social Justice which condemned Bernard Baruch also contained a bigoted article titled "On the Trail of the Money Changers" by Robert Hemphill. The article is a scathing indictment of the Rothschild family, one of Coughlin's favorite targets. The Rothschild firm is pointedly referred to as a "Jewish banking house" and the article implies that the family, through subterfuge and coercion, had managed to gain control of the European continent. Mr. Hemphill, the author of this piece, is termed a "widely known financial authority"; his lack

---

<sup>97</sup>

Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>98</sup>

SJ, August 2, 1937, III:31, p. 4.

of fiscal knowledge is matched only by his voluminous antisemitism.<sup>99</sup>

During 1937, Social Justice also demonstrated covert antisemitism through the use of editorial cartoons and pictures accompanied by captions. The April 5th issue has a particularly unflattering picture of Fiorello H. La Guardia. He is labeled "Public War Maker No. 1" and also referred to as "New York's Jewish-Italian Mayor."<sup>100</sup> A typical antisemitic ploy of drawing the devil with semitic features can be seen in an editorial cartoon in the August 2nd issue. The devil is congratulating an international banker for keeping the public unaware of the true shape of the nation.<sup>101</sup> (See appendix for both La Guardia picture and editorial cartoon).

Due to pressure from the Vatican aimed at Coughlin and his superiors, he was taken off the air but in the latter part of that year Social Justice proudly announced that the priest would resume his programs early in 1938. The article stated that "all good Americans, including Jews, welcome this great event."<sup>102</sup>

In the year 1938, Father Coughlin became an overt antisemite. Even before then, as early as 1936, Coughlin began to make anti-Jewish remarks. These statements did not go unnoticed by the Jewish community.

---

<sup>99</sup>

Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>100</sup>

SJ, April 5, 1937, III:14, p. 23.

<sup>101</sup>

SJ, August 2, 1937, III:31, p. 2.

<sup>102</sup>

SJ, December 13, 1937, IV:17, p. 1.

When the priest spoke of the money changers and international bankers the only names mentioned were Jewish. The Detroit Jewish Chronicle challenged him on this point. He did not respond directly but an article in Social Justice denied the charges while it compared "good Jews" and atheistic Jews", concluding that there was a Jewish question in the United States.<sup>103</sup> This categorizing of Jews into a "good" group, which Coughlin claimed that he liked and admired, and an "atheistic" group which he hoped to ferret out and destroy was one of the recurring motifs in the 'radio priest's' antisemitism. Also, he was constantly warning his Jewish listeners:

...don't forget this is a Christian nation -  
let's not overwork this democracy...<sup>104</sup>

Coughlin's antisemitism during 1938 began as mild and covert, but as the year progressed it became harsher, overt and threatening. The February 7, 1938 Social Justice contained a typical tirade against the "international bankers" which told how they hatched their "plots":

The founder of the Federal Reserve System, the Warburgs, are also members of Kuhn-Loeb and Company. Jacob Schiff was also a member of this banking firm. Thus though they secure the appointments of key men to front for their operations, the international bankers remain discreetly in the background, issuing orders.<sup>105</sup>

---

<sup>103</sup>

Marcus, Op.Cit., p. 126.

<sup>104</sup>

Bennett, Op.Cit., p. 52.

<sup>105</sup>

SJ, February 7, 1938, V:6, p. 15.



Letters to the Editor, such as one from John Fries, a reader from Scarsdale, New York, feared that the government in Washington was doing the bidding of a "Great International Sanhedrin."<sup>106</sup>

Bankers and politicians were not the only Jews who came under fire from Social Justice in 1938. Rabbi Stephen S. Wise also was a person to attack. Father Edward Lodge Curran, a Coughlin associate in Brooklyn, criticized both Wise and Judaism when he suggested:

It is Judaism, united to Christianity, which must conquer the totalitarianism of today and preserve that American democracy in our midst. Not the Judaism of Rabbi Wise who says "No" to Fascism and "Maybe" to Communism. But the Christianity of the Jew Saint Paul who said in the first century what all Christians must say in the twentieth: "No" to Fascism and "No" to Communism and "Yes" to Democracy in America.<sup>107</sup>

Deep analysis is not necessary to realize what Curran is saying is that the only worthwhile Jews are those who convert to Christianity, like Paul.

Social Justice also took on the task of being apologetic for Nazi antisemitic activity. The reason for Hitler's arrest of Baron Louis Rothschild was justified because:

<sup>106</sup>

SJ, March 7, 1968, IA:2, p. 13.

<sup>107</sup>

Curran, Edward Lodge, "The Christian Front," SJ, April 4, 1938, IA:6, p. 18.



Baron Louis was held co-responsible for the gigantic collapse of the... largest bank in the Danube region... which brought ruin to thousands and started the bank failures of 1932 and 1933... Baron Louis, however, got out from under by transferring his personal wealth to his brothers in London and Paris. It was on this account that Chancellor Hitler ordered his arrest when Germany took over Austria...<sup>108</sup>

The front page of the June 6, 1938 issue of Social Justice is a caricature of Fiorello La Guardia, a man Coughlin obviously loved to despise. The small article beside the picture suggested that the mayor is making a thrust for political power. Once again the paper notes that La Guardia was "half Jewish and half Gentile". It further notes that he draws his support from Socialists, Communists, David Dubinsky, and Sidney Hillman.<sup>109</sup>

Before the summer of 1938, it was difficult to definitely call Charles Coughlin an antisemite. As of August, all doubt had vanished for that month the priest began to print the antisemitic forgery, the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, in serial form.<sup>110</sup> Coughlin's introduction to the first protocol in his column "From The Tower" is a mixture of disclaimer and stereotype:

---

<sup>108</sup>  
SJ, May 9, 1938, IA:11, p. 18.

<sup>109</sup>  
"La Guardia's Kite," SJ, June 6, 1938, IA:14, p. 1.

<sup>110</sup>  
Strong, Op.Cit., p. 59.

Although Milius (the author of the Protocols) gave no proof for the authenticity of the work, and Jews at various conventions have repudiated the Protocols as forgery, nevertheless a correspondence between this prophecy contained in this book and its fulfillment is too glaring to be set aside or obscured.

In presenting them, with comments, it is not our desire to agitate ill-feeling against any individual Jews.<sup>111</sup>

This disclaimer is immediately followed by this brazen stereotype:

...we remark that the poor Jews who slaved in the sweat shops...were more exploited by the rich Jews who came from Germany...the vast majority of Jews most certainly is in nowise associated with this conspiracy against civilization and Christianity, even though a few are.<sup>112</sup>

Father Coughlin ended his article by warning the "good Jews" to repudiate the radicals.<sup>113</sup>

This August 1st issue was a virtually compendium of antisemitica. Together with the Protocols, Father Coughlin wrote an article titled "The Birth of a Corporate State". In spite of this rather innocuous title, the article contained antisemitic statements and warnings to Jews:

St. Paul spoke about the synagogue of Satan in his epistle. Modernists speak about the "Protocols of the Wise Men of Zion".<sup>114</sup>

---

111

"From the Tower" SJ, August 1, 1938, IIA:5, p. 5.

112

Ibid.

113

Ibid., p. 6.

114

"The Birth of a Corporate State," Ibid., p. 3.

It seems to cheapen the New Testament to compare it with the "Protocols".

He also warns:

From a Christian viewpoint he knows that those who are not with Christ are against him.<sup>115</sup>

Further on he accuses the Jews of;

...subduing the populations of the earth by gaining control of newspapers, of motion picture productions, of schools, and of governments. They excogitated plans to set the rich against the poor, the farmer against the laborer, the white against the black...it was their hope to so arouse labor to take over government and destroy every other branch of society.<sup>116</sup>

As outrageous as these antisemitic statements are, it is even further disturbing to realize that they were printed in a periodical with circulation of over one million copies.<sup>117</sup> However, even this fact is dwarfed when the documented proof is brought forth that each Sunday Father Coughlin had a radio audience of approximately three and a half million people and two-thirds of these listeners believed his every word!<sup>118</sup>

---

<sup>115</sup>

Ibid.

<sup>116</sup>

Ibid.

<sup>117</sup>

Strong, Op.Cit., p. 59.

<sup>118</sup>

Ibid., p. 63.

In the issue of Social Justice dated September 26, 1938, Father Coughlin printed a Jewish reply to the printing of the "Protocols". The article was titled "The Jewish Answer: The Truth About the Protocols"; it was written by Philip Slomovitz, the editor of the Detroit Jewish Chronicle. Slomovitz proved that the "Protocols" were a forgery drawn up by Czarist secret police. Sergei Nilus, the author, was not even original in his writing because the "Protocols" were heavily based on an essay titled "Dialogue in Hell Between Machiavelli and Montesquieu" by Maurice Joly, a French lawyer who hoped to discredit the government of Napoleon III. Slomovitz demonstrated that the "Protocols" were virtually identical to the "Dialogue" with a small amount of reediting.<sup>119</sup>

Slomovitz's article, was, in turn, challenged by an article in the October 3rd Social Justice, "The Truth About the Protocols" by Ben Marcin. Marcin was one of the most controversial contributors to the magazine. In 1938, Father Coughlin had made it a point to emphasize that Marcin was a Jew. By 1970, however, the priest admitted that he never knew "Marcin" and that his articles were probably ghost-written by a member of the Social Justice staff.<sup>120</sup>

Marcin's article quoted the writings of one Samuel Roth, a self-hating Jew. The chairman of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith,

<sup>119</sup>

Marcus, Op.Cit., p. 243.

<sup>120</sup>

Ibid., p. 254.

Sigmund Livingston, described Roth's work as: "one of the most disgraceful books ever written".<sup>121</sup> The "Marcin"-Roth article describes Jews in the following manner:

As they (Jews) appear in history, Jews are a tribe of deadly persecutors, and not a persecuted minority as they pretend to be. Through propaganda, they have tried to convince public opinion to the contrary, but facts and history stand as their accusers even their own authors and publications.

that statement is dynamite, as written by the eminent Jew, Mr. Roth.<sup>122</sup>

Further on the article contains an excuse and apology for antisemitism:

...when the Jewish commissars of Soviet Russia (following 1917) liquidated almost two million Christian Russians, I began to understand why all this wicked unnecessary bloodshed (was)...identified with leaders who were of the Jewish people, could have produced a Hitler and reprisals which our Jewish people have suffered outside Russia.<sup>123</sup>

Were all of the commissars Jewish and all of those murdered Christians?

Marcin also employs the standard Coughlin disclaimer that:

...no antipathy is extended toward the Jews for their religion. But bitterness has arisen toward many Jews for the rapacity of their economic control.<sup>124</sup>

---

121

Ibid., pp. 252-53.

122

Marcin, Ben, "The Truth About the Protocols," SJ, October 3, 1938, IIA:14, p. 10.

123

Ibid.

124

Ibid., p. 11.

"Marcin", later allegedly quotes three Jewish sources concerning the validity of the "Protocols", he writes:

...these three Jews have gone further than Father Coughlin...The Royal Oak priest waives the fact of Jewish authorship of the Protocols.

But what do three Jewish Rabbis themselves say?

In 1901, Rabbi Rudolf Fleischman of the Polish city of Schoken...stated: "The Protocols really did exist, and they were not forgery. Moreover, they were positively of Jewish origin.

In 1906, Rabbi Grunfeld of the Polish City of Swarzedz gave the following characteristically Jewish answer: "My dear questioner, you are too curious, and want to know too much. I am not allowed to say anything, and you are not supposed to know anything about the Protocols. For God's sake be careful,<sup>125</sup> or you will be putting your life in danger.

When the Chief Rabbi of Vilna was questioned concerning the authenticity of these two rabbis and their remarks, he stated that these men never existed!<sup>126</sup>

Marcin, then asks and answers the question: ...how many of the three million New York Jews are religious Jews? How many of them have left-footed their lives from the pathway of their Jewish religion? How many would pledge their lives to fight against

---

<sup>125</sup>

Ibid.

<sup>126</sup>

Ibid., p. 12.

Communism as they would against Nazism?

I know them from Union Square to the Bronx  
by way of Park Avenue. I know that not ten  
per cent of the New York Jews would join  
any league against Communism to oppose it  
as they would Nazism.<sup>127</sup>

The article concludes with a bit of anti-Jewish trickery dating  
from the Middle Ages. The old chestnut of the meaning of Kol Nidre  
is exhumed:

It is based on a declaration of the Jewish  
Talmud which reads: He who wishes that his  
vows and oaths shall have no value, stand  
up at the beginning of the year and say:  
'All vows which I shall make during the  
year shall be of no value'.

This is not something exhumed from the  
tomb of the Pharaohs. This, too, is modern  
and represents the present...Jewish mind.

I will say this of Christians that their  
vows and obligations, their oaths and their  
contracts are not so easily brushed aside.<sup>128</sup>

In the November 7th Social Justice, :Marcin's" byline appeared on  
an article titled: "A South American Invasion Is a Myth." Why, is  
answered in this bold-type precis:

Bernard Baruch's \$7½-Billion defense plan is a  
pretext for spending. But it may also be the  
front for another Egyptian "Collection Scheme"-  
or a New Jewish State.<sup>129</sup>

---

127

Ibid.

128

"A South American Invasion is a Myth," SJ, November 7, 1938,  
IIA:19, p. 7.

129

Coughlin, Charles E., Am I an Anti-Semite, 1939, p. 34.

At last, Coughlin's overt antisemitism hit the airwaves. In his address of November 20, 1938, the priest justified the Nazi treatment of the Jews as he explained in a speech titled, "Persecution-Jewish and Christians:

...I shall ask an intelligent audience composed of intelligent Christians and intelligent Jews: Why is there persecution in Germany today? How can we destroy it?<sup>130</sup>

He begins to answer his question with some false information:

...until last week, the Nazi purge was concerned chiefly, with foreign-born Jews. German citizen Jews were not molested officially...The property of German citizen Jews was not confiscated by the government...(Jewish) children...were permitted to attend public schools...<sup>131</sup>

The priest, later, gave one of many reasons for Nazi antisemitism:

...Jews...have risen to such high places in radio and in press and in finance; perhaps this persecution is only the coincidental which has broken the back of this generation's patience.<sup>132</sup>

Coughlin enters Communism as another justification for Nazism:

...Nazism was conceived as a political defense mechanism against Communism...Communism was regarded by the rising generation of Germans as a product, not of Russia, but of a group of Jews...<sup>133</sup>

---

130

Ibid., p. 35.

131

Ibid., p. 36.

132

Ibid., p. 37.

133

Ibid.



The priest, then, seeks to identify the Russian Revolution as a Jewish undertaking:

...I have before me a quotation from The American Hebrew which says: The achievement (of) the Russian-Jewish Revolution, destined to figure in history as the overshadowing result of the World War, was largely the outcome of Jewish thinking, of Jewish discontent, of Jewish effort to reconstruct.<sup>134</sup>

But the American Hebrew did not print the above:

The article, which stated the opposite of what Coughlin inferred did not include the phrase, "Russian-Jewish Revolution;" it was inserted by Father Coughlin.<sup>135</sup>

Coughlin went so far as to totally misquote in order to stir up anti-semitism.

This address by Father Coughlin stirred up a great deal of controversy. Radio station WMCA, New York City, as one:

...announced that it will broadcast...a complete statement detailing the errors of fact made by Father Coughlin in his regular Sunday broadcast.

WMCA officials broke precedent...after the radio priest had charged that the Jews fostered Russian Communism by broadcasting an announcement:

Unfortunately Father Coughlin has made certain mistakes of fact.

---

<sup>134</sup>

Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>135</sup>

"Father Coughlin His 'Facts' and Arguments," General Jewish Council, 1939, pp. 809.

Documents contradicting Father Coughlin's assertions were made public today<sup>136</sup> by the Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League.

American Jewry was outraged by the priest's remarks"

...the American Jewish Federation to Combat Communism and Fascism sent a telegram to Father Coughlin denouncing his statements linking the Jews to Communism and demanding<sup>137</sup> a retracting in behalf of race tolerance.

Needless to say, a retraction was not forthcoming. When WMCA asked the priest to submit his texts to the station forty-eight hours in advance, he refused, then WMCA cancelled his broadcasts. He reached New Yorkers on WHBI, Newark, New Jersey. Not all reactions to Coughlin's November 20th tirade were negative. Otto Tolischus of the New York Times in Berlin reported:

...The German here in America for the moment is the Rev. Charles E. Coughlin because of his radio speech representing National-Socialism as a defensive front against Bolshevism.<sup>138</sup>

William Dudley Pelley also congratulated Father Coughlin in Liberation writing:

136

"Coughlin Errors to be Corrected on Radio Tonight," New York Post, November 21, 1938.

137

"Labor and Jews Denounce Nazis as Protest Gathers Momentum," New York Herald-Tribune, November 22, 1938.

138

Marcus, Op.Cit., p. 161.

Father Coughlin went on the air over a New York radio station and delivered what amounted to the prize Silvershirt speech of the year.<sup>140</sup>

Father Coughlin's broadcast of November 27th only intensified his antisemitic campaign. He begins with a list of criticisms about his address. Then, he inserts his usual disclaimer:

...I invited and still invite the non-Communist, non atheistic Jews, whom I respect and with whom I deeply sympathize, to join with me in combating Communism.<sup>139</sup>

The crux of his speech stated that American Jewish bankers had financed the Russian Revolution, a virtual reiteration of the November 20th debacle.<sup>141</sup>

As the year passed, the priest became more apologetic for and dependent upon the Nazi propaganda organs. Father Coughlin's response to the horrendous Krystallnacht destruction of the lives and property of the German Jewry was that the program was simply a "...defense mechanism" against Jewish-sponsored Communism.<sup>142</sup> In his radio speech of December 4th the priest claims that he is quoting reports of the American Secret Service. It is actually a quote from the Nazi propaganda leaflet, World-Service, of February 15, 1936, straight from Germany.<sup>143</sup> The article, "Background for Persecution" signed by Father Coughlin, appeared in Social Justice of

140

"Father Coughlin: Self Condemned," Kansas City, Mo.: Friends of Democracy, Inc., p. 24.

139

Coughlin, Op.Cit., p. 57.

141

Marcus, Op.Cit.

142

Morse, Arthur D., While Six Million Died, New York: Random House, 1968, p. 227.

143

Lee, Alfred Mc Clung and Elizabeth Briant, The Fine Art of Propaganda, New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1939, p. 81.

of December 5th. The article allegedly tried to answer why Jews were being persecuted in Germany, picturing them as rapacious Communist murderers. In truth, Coughlin was not the author of this article. It was an English translation of an antisemitic speech delivered by Josef Goebbels at the Seventh Nazi Party Congress in Nuremburg on September 13, 1935.<sup>144</sup>

This General Jewish Council, including the American Jewish Committee, American Jewish Congress, B'nai B'rith, and the Jewish Labor Committee, attempted to counteract Coughlin's antisemitic propaganda. At first, he counselled them to fight Communism, not him. Later, he tells his listeners:

...I regret that I found occasion to remind this audience that the General Jewish Council (was) responsible for disbarring...the last vestiges of Christmas practice from many of our schools.<sup>145</sup>

By the end of 1938 the die was cast: Father Charles E. Coughlin was, undeniably, a dangerous antisemite.

From January to September of 1939, Father Coughlin kept up his antisemitic campaign. However, more space in Social Justice was being devoted to answering the priest's critics. After September, the paper

<sup>144</sup>

Strong, Op.Cit., p. 61.

<sup>145</sup>

Coughlin, Op.Cit., p. 106.

lessened its antisemitism, emphasizing isolationism and anti-British sentiment. Late in 1938, the aforementioned General Jewish Council produced a radio program featuring Frank Hogan, a Catholic and President of the American Bar Association, who refuted Coughlin's anti-Jewish charges. Social Justice of January 2, 1939, contained a page of letters condemning Mr. Hogan:

I am a non-Catholic and only wish my church had as good a champion of the people as Father Coughlin.

There is something rotten in Washington and Jewry when they have to get a Catholic to talk for them.

Another reader sent a telegram asking the question:

Mr. Hogan: Have you ever seen a Jewish demonstration<sup>146</sup> against Communism in New York City?

Coughlin desperately sought to back up his claims that American Jewry bankers helped finance the Bolshevik-Revolution. In an editorial an unnamed ex-intelligence agent writes:

In 1917 I was a major, detailed as an aide to the commission that came over here to try to get the money. They were quartered, among other places, in Otto Kahn's house on Fifth Avenue. ...the object of the mission was to get money from the Jews in New York to finance the Trotsky revolution...<sup>147</sup>

---

146

SJ, January 2, 1939, 3A:1, p. 10.

147

SJ, February 6, 1939, 3A:6, p. 2.

In this same issue of Social Justice, Coughlin, on the defensive, laments:

The whole weight of the abilities and money of the Jewish high command has been turned into "making a liar out of Coughlin."<sup>148</sup>

The back cover of Social Justice frequently spotlighted a "Man of the Week." This above issue's selection was Joseph P. Kennedy, then Ambassador to the Court of St. James, congratulated because:

So far is he from being a "puppet of Barney Baruch in disrepute with his master..."  
...Mr. Kennedy...put this country on record for George Washington's policy of no entangling foreign alliances.<sup>149</sup>

The March 6th Social Justice singles out the 1938-1939 edition of Who's Who in American Jewry, which for some unknown reasons, lists Leon Trotsky and others of Jewish background whom Coughlin considers Communists. The article concludes with the priest's standard warning that "good Jews" should help drive out the Communists.<sup>150</sup>

Social Justice was also critical about Jewish concern for their oppressed brothers:

<sup>148</sup>

Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>149</sup>

Ibid., back cover.

<sup>150</sup>

SJ, March 6, 1939, 3A:10, p. 2.

...there has been no outcry concerning the \$100-million fund which the American Hebrew is raising for distressed Jews of other countries...there are only \$700-million in fluid circulation in this country at the period of the Roosevelt depression.

Therefore, the people of this country sit idly by while one-seventh of their lifeblood is transferred to other lands!<sup>151</sup>

Ostensibly, Coughlin's Shrine of the Little Flower welcomed all opinions in frequent "pulpit debates". In a debate titled, "Semitism or Anti-Semitism", Father Coughlin presents an oddly pro-Zionist viewpoint:

Honest and deserved tribute was paid to those orthodox religious Jews who still sincerely cling to the sacred Torah and to the rich religious traditions of their race. It is among these Jews that survives the hope that the Zionist movement...will someday restore a Jewish homeland.

As Coughlin continues his logic becomes somewhat confused:

...(he) exposed those "reformed" Jews who, because the prophecies of the Torah are incompatible with their rejection of Christ, have discarded religious orthodoxy and substituted...Talmudic writings.

The article ends with a typical Coughlin charge, now including statistics:

...of the world's Jews about 5 per cent qualify as "orthodox religious Jews", while 95 per cent had left the strict faith of their fathers to take up various degrees of "liberalism"-ranging from "democracy" to outright atheistic Communism.<sup>152</sup>

<sup>151</sup>

SJ, April 3, 1939, 3A:14, p. 19.

<sup>152</sup>

SJ, May 1, 1939, 3A:18, p. 3.

Later, in this issue, Coughlin gives these "religious Jews" a dire threat:

Are religious Jews to find the answer in a pogrom or will a sufficient number of them join with Christians against the spread of Communism?<sup>153</sup>

Many radio stations, after pressure from Jewish groups, dropped Father Coughlin's broadcasts. During the first months of 1939 he was heard, in the New York City area, over station WINS, owned by William Randolph Hearst, the newspaper magnate. In early June the station cancelled his program. Coughlin, naturally, blamed the "radical" Jews who exerted force on Hearst through his advertisers.<sup>154</sup>

Isolationism was rapidly becoming a major Coughlin philosophy. The July 3rd issue of Social Justice neatly tied this feeling to antisemitism as it attacked the American Jewish Congress and Rabbi Stephen S. Wise:

The real purpose of the American Jewish Congress, he (Wise) said, is to protect Jewish rights and interests. Obviously included in this conception is imposition by America of drastic, war-provoking measures on nations which have mistreated Jews. This is internationalism espoused by Rabbi Wise—the internationalism which would plunge America into another foreign war.<sup>155</sup>

153

Ibid., p. 8.

154

SJ, June 5, 1939, 3A:23, p. 1.

155

SJ, July 3, 1939, 4A:1, p. 13.



Few incidents which could be employed by Coughlin for anti-Jewish statements were left unused. In 1939, the priest made the French motion picture "Golgotha" a cause celebre. The film was a Passion Play lensed in 1935. It was banned in the United States because it was flagrantly antisemitic. Social Justice fiercely complained:

The Passion Play may not be shown in Christian America, rather Christians in America may not view the picture drama of the ages on the screen of their favorite Jewish controlled motion picture theater.

To the (film) company's objection that it was not anti-Semitic... Rabbi (Stephen) Wise replied that he would view the picture provided that the American producers would make any changes that he suggested in the story of Calvary!<sup>156</sup>

Toward the summer of 1939 anti-Coughlin comments from Gentile, as well as Jewish, sources became more abundant. Reverend William C. Kernan, Rector of the Trinity Episcopal Church in Bayonne, New Jersey, presented an excellent analysis of Coughlin's antisemitism:

When Father Coughlin says that he is not anti-Semitic he means that he has never said, "I hate the Jews." This is a naive way for such a clever man to answer so simple an accusation. To be anti-Semitic does not mean that you have to go on record every five minutes by saying, "I hate the Jews." To be anti-Semitic may, and does, mean to stir up others' hatred against the Jews.<sup>157</sup>

---

156

SJ, February 6, 1939, 3A:6, p. 4.

157

Kernan, William C., "Father Coughlin's Anti-Semitism," a reprint of a speech delivered at Far Rockaway, Long Island, New York on July 28, 1939.

Look magazine, in the issue of September 26, 1939, contained an article titled "Father Coughlin and the Nazi Bund." It noted that the opinion of the German American Bund was that the priest had "dignified" antisemitism. The piece also stated that just as Coughlin often quoted the World Service propaganda agency of Nazi Germany, so Julius Streicher, in his antisemitic periodical, Der Sturmer, had published a drawing from Social Justice which pictured a Communist firing squad executing priests and nuns. He also congratulated Coughlin for "Flaying the Jews." An officer of the Bund candidly discussed Coughlin's relationship with the American "Führer", Fritz Kuhn:

Father Coughlin and Kuhn are good friends. Kuhn tried to get him to take off his collar and go into politics, but Father Coughlin wouldn't do it.<sup>158</sup> He can't do much because of his collar.

After the Second World War began in September, Father Coughlin muted his antisemitism, devoting less space in his paper to the Jews. In fact, by the early part of 1940, the priest seemed to be defending himself against the charge of antisemitism, rather than disseminating it. Social Justice became more anti-British and less anti-Jewish. Coughlin virtually cried "uncle" when, in June 1940, he complained that even though he had been less antisemitic, the Jews had not become less anti-Coughlin.<sup>159</sup> From this time through 1941, his antisemitism was more

---

<sup>158</sup>

Mueller, William A., "Coughlin and the Nazi Bund," a reprint from Look Magazine, September 26, 1939.

<sup>159</sup>

SJ, June 3, 1940, 5A:23, p. 7.

in the form of small innuendos, not full articles, as before. For example, in an article printed in the summer of 1940, Coughlin warned, almost as an aside:

Having waxed fat on the raw meat of popularity, the President and his secretariat, all of whom are Jewish controlled, are moving toward the establishment of dictatorship through edict.<sup>160</sup>

During the latter part of 1940 through 1941, with Coughlin's anti-British stance being almost pro-Hitler, his antisemitism was only a mild "rehash" of the priest's previous diatribes against Jewish conspiracies and Communist sympathizers. Since the greatest sin, to Father Coughlin, had become a pro-British attitude the Jews were naturally tied in with the English. The most potent antisemitic comments were leveled against those few Jewish refugees who had escaped from Hitler to America. Coughlin seriously questioned the wisdom of allowing them in the country.<sup>161</sup>

The last issue of Social Justice before Pearl Harbor once again criticized Rabbi Stephen Wise for his pro-British isolationist leanings. The rabbi was labeled "a dyed in the red internationalist."<sup>162</sup> Even after America's entry in World War II, Father Coughlin continued to side with the Axis by condemning the war effort, Roosevelt, the British, and

<sup>160</sup>

SJ, July 1, 1940, 6:1, p. 3.

<sup>161</sup>

SJ, September 2, 1940, 6:10, p. 12.

<sup>162</sup>

SJ, December 1, 1941, 8:22, p. 6.

the Jews. In April 1942, the government banned Social Justice from the mails. Attorney General, Francis Biddle, sent word to Coughlin's superiors in the Catholic Church; he warned that the priest would be tried for sedition unless the Church, itself, suppressed him. Coughlin bowed to Church pressure, disassociating himself with Social Justice and its movements. He also left the radio after twelve years. In the mid 1960's Father Coughlin was retired from the active priesthood.<sup>163</sup>

---

<sup>163</sup>

Bennett, Op.Cit., pp. 281-82.

## CHAPTER FOUR

## THE ANTISEMITISM OF GERALD L.K. SMITH:

## THE EMBRYONIC STAGE

Unlike William Dudley Pelley and Charles E. Coughlin, Gerald Lyman Kenneth Smith was not considered a full fledged antisemite in the years before the Second World War. Smith's career as an admitted antisemite began, for all practical purposes, in March 1942, when he published the first issue of his magazine, The Cross and the Flag. This periodical was considered the successor to Coughlin's Social Justice, which had been banned from the U.S. mail.<sup>164</sup> The Cross and the Flag is still being printed today and Gerald L.K. Smith, for over thirty years, has been the archetypical anti-Jew of the right wing in American politics. This chapter does not concern Reverend Smith's later and more notorious career, but the formative years of his antisemitic program to 1941.

Gerald Lyman Kenneth Smith was born in Pardeeville, Wisconsin, in 1898. He came from a long line of four generations of circuit riding "hellfire and brimstone" preachers. From his youth, Smith was gifted with a magnificent speaking voice. During high school he was the best debater in his county. In his junior year he won oratorical interpretation contests with his rendition of William Jennings Bryan's "cross of gold" speech. His early political influences on Smith were of the liberal-populist variety, the La Follette Weekly could always be found in his parent's home.<sup>165</sup>

---

<sup>164</sup>

Block, Maxine, editor, Current Biography 1943, New York: H.W. Wilson Company, 1944, p. 709.

<sup>165</sup>

Ibid., p. 707.

Smith was a precocious student; at the age of nineteen he graduated from Valparaiso University in Indiana while working his way through. He graduated with a triple major: literature, biblical history, and dramatics - three disciplines he would find quite useful in the future. After college, Smith served a ministerial apprenticeship in various rural churches in Indiana. Fame first came to Smith when he was "called" to a church in Deep River, Indiana. He proved to be an energetic and charismatic pastor, in his first month he had thirty-eight new converts. By 1922, Smith had worked his way up to the Seventh Christian Church in Indianapolis. He also married his childhood sweetheart, Eleanor Marion Sorenson, that same year.<sup>166</sup>

Gerald Smith's next promotion was to the prestigious Butler University Church on the north side of Indianapolis. His career in this church was somewhat strange, but explainable. He was liked by the congregation because of his magnificent voice, his interest in social work, and his fund raising ability. However, he was also one of the most important members of the then-powerful Indiana Ku Klux Klan.<sup>167</sup> This may have been Smith's first exposure to organizational antisemitism. At any rate, he was probably influenced by the Klan, which constituted a Protestant Who's Who in the Indiana power structure during the 1920's.

Smith might have stayed on indefinitely at the Butler University Church had his wife's health not made it necessary that they move to the South. In 1928, Smith became the minister of the elite King's Highway

---

<sup>166</sup>

Ibid.

<sup>167</sup>

Bennett, Op.Cit., p. 115.

Church at Shreveport, Louisiana. One of his congregants was attorney, Huey Long, governor of Louisiana. In Shreveport, as in Indianapolis, Smith became a "social reformer". He attacked injustices against the poor, even if they were perpetrated by members of his own congregation. This activity brought Smith into close contact with Huey Long:

...when he learned that Shreveport capitalists... were about to foreclose on a \$1,000,000 worth of... homes, he went to Huey Long and asked him to intervene in the situation. As Smith himself tells it: "I told him they were going to grab homes right and left. 'The Hell they are'. Huey answered. And they didn't. He passed a law. I decided then that Long was the right man.<sup>168</sup>

Smith also took time to gain fame in the community at large. Considering his later career, a rather curious event occurred in the early 1930's:

Rabbi Brill of Bnai Zion Temple of Shreveport, invited Dr. Smith to preach at the Temple... he exclaimed that the sermon of Dr. Smith<sup>169</sup> could not have been more genuinely Jewish...

When one examines Gerald Smith's fight for social reform and his obviously cordial relationship with the Shreveport Jewish community, the next step in his life appears, at first, to be a curious nonsequitor. Apparently, he was an early member of William Dudley Pelley's Silver Shirts, assigned registration number 3223.<sup>170</sup> In 1933, he left the King's Highway

<sup>168</sup> Block (1943), Op.Cit., p. 708.

<sup>169</sup> Price, Isabel B., Gerald L. K. Smith and Anti-Semitism, Master's Thesis, University of New Mexico, 1965, p. 32.

<sup>170</sup> Block (1943), Op.Cit., p. 709.



Christian Church to drum up support for Pelley. It is logical to think that Pelley gave Smith a significant heavy exposure to fascistic racism.<sup>171</sup> That year the preacher travelled the land for Pelley, speaking on topics as: "Why I left the Conventional Pulpit to Join the Christian Militia of the Silver Shirts" and "Some Day 100 Million Americans Will Hide Behind the Silver Shirt for Protection." Gerald Smith's sojourn with Pelley and the Silver Shirts was brief because his old congregant, Huey Long, sought out his services as a speechmaker and organizer.<sup>172</sup>

Gerald L.K. Smith soon became Huey Long's "most plausible apologist." He travelled the countryside preaching the gospel of "Share-Our-Wealth" and "Every Man a King" to a rural American buried in a bleak depression.<sup>173</sup> Long's panacea for the economic situation, the "Share-Our-Wealth" included promises of \$5,000 to each family, debt free homes, cars, and radios given to any family needing them; adequate old-age pensions; and universal free college educations to all qualified by I.Q. examinations. To pay for this largess, Long proposed a national financial census in order to seize all savings above a certain figure.<sup>174</sup> Smith claimed that in his speaking engagements he got 20,000 converts a day to Long's philosophy. This was not a difficult feat in Depression America because "Share-Our-Wealth" had no dues or demands on its members and even allowed them to wear an "offocial" badge from Huey Long, himself. Smith served Long, not only as a 'cheerleader' for the masses, but also defended "the

---

<sup>171</sup> Roy, Ralph Lord, Apostles of Discord, Boston: Beacon Press, 1953, p. 60.

<sup>172</sup> Bennett, Op.Cit., pp. 116-17.

<sup>173</sup> Block (1943), Op.Cit., p. 708.

<sup>174</sup> Bennett, Op.Cit., pp. 120-21.



"Kingfish" in such prestigious publication as The New Republic. In this magazine Smith struck a liberal pose and lauded Long's contributions for the good of blacks and organized labor in Louisiana.<sup>175</sup>

Gerald Smith's career was dealt a heavy blow when Huey Long was assassinated in September 1935. In one of Smith's finest hours he delivered the "Kingfish's" funeral oration. It was a stirring speech climaxed by Smith's comments on Long's movement: "My head is bloody but unbowed."<sup>176</sup> Smith fancied himself as Huey Long's logical successor, but members of the Long machine had other ideas:

Seymour Weiss harbored a special hatred toward Smith. He had heard the fiery orator make anti-Semitic remarks in the past, and shortly before Long's assassination he had squashed Smith's plans for a Share-Our-Wealth campaign against rich Jewish merchants in New Orleans.

With his associates and adversaries in Long's crew making peace with the Roosevelt administration, Gerald Smith found himself left out in the cold, a demagogue without a movement.<sup>177</sup> Smith was in a spiteful mood against those people who he thought had sold him out:

In a resentful mood in a last attempt to gain power and draw attention to himself, he sponsored an anti-Semitic drive in the state (Louisiana). Herman Deutsch, novelist and newspaperman, says Smith called him up one night, early in 1936, and announced that the Share the Wealth clubs would sponsor a movement against the rich Jewish merchants of New Orleans. Nothing came of it however...<sup>178</sup>

---

175

Block, Op.Cit.

176

Roy, Op.Cit., p. 61.

177

Bennett, Op.Cit., pp. 131.32.

178

Price, Op.Cit., pp. 54-55.

Years later Smith recalled his experiences with Huey Long and commented:

The Roosevelt gang, supported by the New York Jew machine, dubbed him a fascist and screamed for his liquidation and conspired with those who effected his assassination. He was murdered because they knew that that was the only way he could be stopped and Roosevelt could be saved.<sup>179</sup>

To stop Roosevelt in the election of 1936, Gerald L.K. Smith joined with Father Charles E. Coughlin and Dr. Francis Townsend in the Union Party supporting the candidacy of Congressman William Lemke for President. Due to Smith's speaking ability, he was a necessary asset to this fledgling political party. During the 1936 campaign, none other than H.L. Mencken described Gerald Smith as:

...the master of masters, the champion boob bumper...Twice at Cleveland, I saw the rev. gentleman torpedo the press stand. In that stand were journalists who had not shown any human emotion above the level of cupidity and lubricity for twenty years, yet he had them all howling in ten minutes.<sup>180</sup>

Smith's oratorical bombast impressed almost everyone present, except Father Coughlin. The priest correctly feared that here was a man who could rival and surpass him as a persuasive speaker. Therefore, during

---

179

Roy, Op.Cit., p. 62.

180

Marcus, Op.Cit., p. 118.

the remainder of the campaign the relations between the preacher and the priest were strained, at best. In later years, Coughlin even denied that he was allied with Smith saying that:

Smith was a viper...a leech... who was anti-Christian, anti-Semitic, and anti-God. I had no more of a relationship to him than I had with Spartacus and the gladiators.

The facts, as printed in Social Justice, contradict Coughlin. On the front page of the July 27, 1936 issue under the headline "Forces United" is a photograph of Coughlin, Smith and Townsend.<sup>181</sup>

Although Smith's main stock-in-trade, in the 1936 elections, was still not antisemitism, a magazine article about the Union Party noted that:

He (Smith) differs from his preceptor (Huey Long)...he is anti-Semitic whereas Long was virtually devoid of racial prejudice. Early this year Mr. Smith, who had been reading about the Nazis, tried unsuccessfully to stir up a boycott against Jewish merchants in New Orleans.<sup>182</sup>

That abortive boycott seemed to be like an albatross around Smith's neck in 1936.

<sup>181</sup>

Ibid., p. 105.

<sup>182</sup>

Harris, Herbert, "That Third Party," Current History, October 1936, XLV:1, p. 84.

During Smith's travels around the country, on behalf of the Union Party, his feeling toward Jews proved to be somewhat of an issue. In an interview with Nathan Kraus of the Jewish Transcript (Seattle, Washington) Smith airs some curious opinions. He asks"

You want to know...if I'm going  
to start a Fascist dictatorship  
and kill off all the Jews?

He then replies to his own question:

The Jewish people are panicstricken.  
It's the tragedy of a broken faith...  
Mr. Roosevelt has done more injustice  
to the Jews than any other man in  
history. Why? Because he openly bids  
for the Jewish vote. And when you do  
that, you put the Jew in the spotlight,  
you subject him to jealousy, you  
endanger him. It's more dangerous for  
a politician to patronize you than to  
attack the Jews.

The Jews live on persecution. They  
fill their treasures on persecution.  
Hitler is worth 100 million dollars to  
the synagogues.

I don't approve or endorse persecution for the  
for the Jews, but I observe - observe,  
mind you - that it's good for the Jews.

If anti-Semitism is stopped, it won't be  
by a Jew,<sup>183</sup> It'll be stopped by someone  
like me.

Unfortunately, Reverend Smith does not relate, for this article, his  
plans for stopping antisemitism.

183

Kraus, Nathan, "Oh! No! Rev. Smith's No Fascist," The Jewish Transcript, Seattle, October 15, 1936.

Late in October of 1936, Gerald L.K. Smith announced that he was forming a new, quasi-fascistic organization with the best features of the Union Party, the Townsend Plan, and the "Share-Our-Wealth" groups. Its stated purpose was "ultimately to seize the government of the United States." Smith first called the group the Nationalist Front Against Communism but he soon rechristened it, The Committee of One Million. Smith's compatriots in the Union Party were enraged. Coughlin, Lemke, and Townsend each separated themselves from Smith's new group and, in effect, ousted him from the Union Party.<sup>184</sup>

The Committee of One Million was based on such nebulous principles as eliminating Communism, protecting American institutions, and defending America as a white, Christian nation.<sup>185</sup> Smith's initial goal was:

As a crusading leader...he wanted to attract the conservative, substantial American element, and wanted no identification with lunatic fringe anti-Semitism, which could villify his chances for national political power. His feelings on the Jewish conspiracy were only implicit in his remarks as the leader of the "Committee of One Million." He even refuted charges that he had been a member of Pelley's Silver Shirts.<sup>186</sup>

In fact, during the late 1930's through the early 1940's:

<sup>184</sup>

Bennett, Op.Cit., pp. 252-53.

<sup>185</sup>

Ibid., p. 283.

<sup>186</sup>

Price, Op.Cit., p. 68.

His (Smith's) anti-Semitism was rather veiled, implied rather than overt. Although the anti-Semites...were for Smith, there<sup>187</sup> was some doubt that Smith was for them.

It took little analytical talent, however, to understand what the foundation of Smith's ideas really was:

Nor did the cheering crowd misunderstand his implications regarding the Jewish citizenry of America, wrote a Chicago Daily News reporter, after attending one of his (Smith's) rallies...he implied that any non-Christian was a traitor. The secret sinister, and powerful pro-Soviet conspiracy in Washington, was linked to Roosevelt's advisors: Frankfurter, Hillman, Rosenman, and others with...Jewish names. To audiences familiar with Father Coughlin...this was a more subtle statement of their pet thesis...the Jew is responsible for imperialist wars and Communism which would destroy capitalism. Jews...do not believe in Christ, the son of God...Therefore the Jew is anti-God; Communists are anti-God...<sup>188</sup>

In a report to a Congressional committee chaired by Representative Samuel Dickstein of New York, it was noted concerning Smith's Committee:

In line with the thought of so-called anti-Communists...many forces of intolerance are organized to fight Jews under such guises, namely, Gerald L.K. Smith.<sup>189</sup>

---

187

Ibid., p. 89.

188

Ibid., pp. 90-91.

189

An unsigned report on Gerald L. K. Smith, The Dickstein Papers, Box No. 477, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

The contents of Smith's speeches to various groups took on a set pattern:

According to a report, Smith addressed a meeting of the Defenders, in... Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on May 28, 1937...he attacked the New Deal, Jews, and Catholics, inferring that Catholics and Jews are Communists...<sup>190</sup>

Apparently Smith's anti-Jewish attitudes eluded many prominent people before World War II. Arthur Hays Sulzberger invited Smith to lunch with the executives of his New York Times. In 1939, he was a guest of radio commentator Lowell Thomas at the prestigious Advertising Club of New York. Gerald Smith was also in demand for speaking engagements at Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs, Chambers of Commerce, and private meetings of industrialists all over the country.<sup>191</sup>

Gerald L.K. Smith even took steps to defend himself against charges of antisemitism. In 1939, a film in the "March of Time" series presented Smith as a "rabble rouser" of the "lunatic fringe". The preacher also claimed that the film made him appear as a "Jew-baiter", causing him to have speaking dates cancelled, and violating his civil rights. He sued the film company for \$5,000,000.<sup>192</sup> The outcome of the case could not be found.

<sup>190</sup>

Gerald L.K. Smith, Nearprint Biography File, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

<sup>191</sup>

Block, Op.Cit., p. 709.

<sup>192</sup>

"Gerald Smith Sues Over 'Libel' in Film" New York Times, March 19, 1939, LXXXVIII:29, 638, p. 5.



Although some important people may not have realized Smith's true feelings, the Dickstein Committee was keeping him under investigation:

A report by Richard Rollins, confidential secretary to Representative Samuel Dickstein ...indicated that Gerald Smith was being closely watched by Jewish liberal elements, fearful of his connections with and his aspiration to ride into Washington on a Fascist program of hatred<sup>193</sup> against minority groups and the New Deal.

In the early 1940's before Pearl Harbor, Smith became an enthusiastic advocate of isolationism. He testified in Senate committee hearings against Lend-Lease and spoke at many meetings of isolationist groups. Smith expressed his admiration for, but never joined the America First Committee.<sup>194</sup> At a meeting of his own Committee of One Million, according to the Detroit Evening News of September 17, 1941, Smith praised the stand taken by Charles Lindbergh in his famous speech at Des Moines, Iowa, in which he spoke out against Jewish groups and their attitudes toward the war in Europe.<sup>195</sup>

After Pearl Harbor, Gerald L.K. Smith increased both his isolationism and antisemitism. His magazine, The Cross and the Flag, first published in 1942, is the oldest antisemitic periodical still printed in this country.<sup>196</sup>

<sup>193</sup>

Rollins, Richard, "Gerald L.K. Smith, the Invisible Hand Desirous of Destroying the New Deal, A report dated March 22, 1938, The Dickstein Papers, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati. 194.

<sup>194</sup>

Block, Op. Cit.

<sup>195</sup>

Footnote 190, Op.Cit., p. 2.

<sup>196</sup>

Forster, Arnold, and Epstein, Benjamin, The New Anti-Semitism, New York: Mc Graw-Hill Book Company, 1974, p. 19.



Although Smith has been denounced by both liberal and conservatives for the past thirty years, he is alive and prospering in Eureka Springs, Arkansas. In this small town in the Ozark Mountains, Smith has built a tourist attraction which includes a seven story statue, "Christ of the Ozarks", and an anti-Semitic Passion Play. Smith's "Great Passion Play" is presented from May to October in a natural amphitheater which seats 3,000 people who still can be exposed to the anti-semitism of Gerald

197

L.K. Smith.

---

<sup>197</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In the decade before the Second World War, antisemitism in the United States reached an ugly crescendo. The bell-wether event which precipitated these anti-Jewish activities was the rise and success of Adolf Hitler and National Socialism in Germany. The reasons why antisemitism became temporarily popular and, then, quickly declined will be discussed.

In 1930's were years of world-wide social and economic chaos. Governments and commercial systems rose and fell at an alarming rate. The United States was not spared; it, too, was suffering a severe depression. People instinctively clamored for both a solution to their financial plight and a scapegoat upon which to blame their woes. Throughout history, the Jews have often served this latter role.

There was not one major antisemitic movement which attracted the attention and imagination of a substantial number of Americans, as the Nazi Party had in Germany. During the '30's, many antisemitic organizations appeared in America, each appealing to a certain specific segment of the population. Americans of German descent, who took pride in Hitler's accomplishments and agreed with his racial theories, joined the German-American Bund. The Bund was probably subsidized with funds from Nazi Germany. People who were attracted to the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920's felt at home in the Black Legion, the Knights

of the White Camellia, or William Dudley Pelley's Silver Shirts. Roman Catholics could reinforce their feelings of antisemitism by listening to and reading the publications of Father Charles E. Coughlin, the famous "radio priest." Those who wished to conceal their prejudice in rather vague anti-Communist generalities could join Gerald L.K. Smith in the embryonic stages of his Judeophobia. Late in the 1930's, he developed the Committee of One Million as a forum for his beliefs. The American Jewish Community was quite fortunate in that the rivalry and enmity between these diverse groups was almost as strong as their antisemitism. Therefore, there was never a cohesive alliance of antisemitic groups in the United States.

William Dudley Pelley, of the three native antisemites examined in this thesis, ultimately had the least effect. Pelley was essentially a dreamer who combined his fascistic grand of antisemitism with an exotic spiritualism. He was never a charismatic leader and could neither gain a large following or raise money. His Silver Shirt movement began in 1933 and reached its zenith in early 1934 with a peak membership of 15,000, mostly middle class, men and women.<sup>198</sup>

Father Charles E. Coughlin may go down in history as this nation's most influential antisemite. He was one of the first men to realize the potential of radio as a medium of mass communication. The "radio priest" skillfully exploited the airwaves to gain a following of millions of Americans who devotedly listened to and were influenced by his Sunday

---

<sup>198</sup>

Strong, Op.Cit., p. 51.

afternoon broadcasts. Two crucial facts about Coughlin must be noted: He did not become overtly antisemitic until 1938, over a decade after he began his popular programs. And, the priest's following included not only Catholics but also some Protestants, as well. Before he initiated his antisemitic diatribes, he also attracted some Jewish support for his social and economic theories. Father Coughlin also published a magazine, Social Justice, as a forum for his opinions. This allegedly religious periodical contained vicious propaganda directed against Franklin Delano Roosevelt, American intervention in the Second World War, bankers, Communists, and, of course, the Jews. Even Father Coughlin's superiors in the Church were intimidated by his power; it took direct pressure from the Attorney General of the United States on the Vatican to finally silence him after Pearl Harbor.

Gerald L.K. Smith would ultimately become the most notorious antisemite in this country. During the time period examined in this thesis his virulent Judeophobia was in its embryonic stages. At this time, he was undoubtedly an antisemite but it was not a point that he openly admitted. Only after the censoring of Father Coughlin in 1942 would Smith assume the dubious mantle of being the pre-eminent American antisemite.

Why did these three native American antisemites ultimately fail? This writer believes that there are three essential reasons: First, antisemitism developed as an outgrowth of the depression, people needed a scapegoat. Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal succeeded in, if not

totally curing the economic malaise, at least lifting the American people out of their mental depression and need for an object to hate. Second, even though Americans, as all people, have prejudices, they also possess a strong dislike of the type of oppression that the Jews suffered in Nazi Germany. They might not have been Judeophiles but, by and large, they did not wish to be identified with and therefore repudiated Hitler's antisemitism. Third, the Roosevelt administration exerted pressure against these antisemitic groups and their leaders, with the result that they declined in power. Both William Dudley Pelley, of the Silver Shirts, and Fritz Kuhn, 'Fuhrer' of the German American Bund, were convicted of crimes. Father Coughlin was almost brought to trial for sedition.

The years from 1933 to 1941 provided the most fertile climate for the growth of antisemitism in the United States. It is a credit to the American people that, for the most part, they enthusiastically rejected this most irrational form of prejudice.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Books

- David H. Bennett. Demagogues in the Depression. New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1969.
- Maxine Block, editor. Current Biography 1940. New York, H.W. Wilson Company, 1941.
- Maxine Block, editor. Current Biography 1943. New York, H.W. Wilson Company, 1944.
- Charles E. Coughlin, Am I an Anti-Semite. 1939.
- Benjamin Epstein and Arnold Forster. The New Anti-Semitism. New York McGraw - Hill Book Company, 1974.
- Harry Golden. Our Southern Landsman. New York, Putnam, 1974.
- Bertram W. Korn. American Jewry and the Civil War. Philadelphia, The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1961.
- Rufus Lears (Israel Goldberg). The Jews in America: A History. New York, Ktav Publishing Company, 1972.
- Alfred McClung Lee and Elizabeth Briant Lee, The Fine Art of Propaganda. New York, Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1939.
- Lee S. Levinger. A History of the Jews in the United States. New York, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1949.
- Sheldon Marcus. Father Coughlin. Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1973.
- Arthur D. Morse. While Six Million Died. New York, Random House, 1968.
- William Dudley Pelley. The Door to Revelation. Asheville.
- Isabel B. Price. Gerald L.K. Smith and Anti-Semitism. Master's Thesis, University of New Mexico, 1965.
- Ralph Lord Roy. Apostles of Discord. Boston, The Beacon Press, 1953.
- Donald S. Strong. Organized Anti-Semitism in America. Washington, American Council on Public Affairs, 1941.

Charles J. Tull. Father Coughlin and the New Deal. Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 1965.

Encyclopaedia Judaica. Jerusalem, The Macmillan Company, 1971.

The Jewish Encyclopedia. New York, Funk and Wagnalls, 1901.

The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia. New York, the Universal Jewish Encyclopedia Company, 1939.

#### Periodicals and Pamphlets

Herbert Harris. "That Third Party" (Current History). October 1936.

Rev. William C. Kernan. "Father Coughlin's Anti-Semitism." A reprint of a speech delivered at Far Rockaway, Long Island, New York on July 28, 1938.

Nathan Kraus: "Oh! No! Rev. Smith's No Fascist." (The Jewish Transcript) Seattle, October 15, 1936.

William A. Mueller. "Coughlin and the Nazi Bund." A reprint from Look Magazine, September 26, 1939.

William Dudley Pelley. "Dupes of Judah."

William Dudley Pelley. "Famous Jew Baiters of History."

William Dudley Pelley. "45 Questions Most Frequently Asked About the Jews with Answers by Pelley."

William Dudley Pelley. Liberation. Asheville, July 14-December 28, 1938.

"William D. Pelley, 75, Dies; Founded Fascist Silver Shirts." (New York Times) July 2, 1965.

Selected issues of Father Coughlin's Social Justice. Detroit, March 13, 1936 to December 1, 1941.

"Father Coughlin His 'Facts' and Arguments." (The General Jewish Council). 1939.

"Coughlin Errors to be Corrected on Radio Tonight." (New York Post).  
November 21, 1938.

"Labor and Jews Denounce Nazis As Protest Gathers Momentum." (New York  
Herald-Tribune). November 22, 1938.

"Father Coughlin: Self Condemned." (Friends of Democracy, Inc.), Kansas  
City, Missouri

Miscellaneous

American Jewish History Lectures of Dr. Jacob Rader Marcus. Hebrew Union  
College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Spring 1972.

Letter from Francis Ralson Welsh to Samuel Dickstein concerning the  
activities of William Dudley Pelley. The Dickstein Collection,  
American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati.

Richard Rollins. "Gerald L.K. Smith, the Invisible Hand Desirous of  
Destroying the New Deal." A report dated March 22, 1938. The  
Dickstein Collection, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati.

Gerald L.K. Smith Nearprint Biographies File, American Jewish Archives,  
Cincinnati.



## Appendix A

The first page of the first issue of Father Coughlin's Social Justice

NO  
RECOVERY  
WITHOUT  
MONETARY  
REFORM

# Social Justice

PRODUCE  
FOR USE  
AT A FAIR  
PROFIT

PUBLISHED IN THE INTEREST OF THE NATIONAL UNION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

L 1 • NUMBER 1

ROYAL OAK • MICHIGAN • MARCH 13, 1936

5 CENTS PER COPY

## THIS FIRST EDITION

AS Social Justice makes its bow before the American public it is doing so with no apologies. A radio audience conservatively estimated to number twelve to fifteen million persons, i. e., in our case, more than a mere audience. It is an organization known as the National Union for Social Justice. For the most part, it is a group of citizens not only dissatisfied with the sham politics and sham policies existing in America, but anxious for a cleansing of both political parties, as well as for the enactment of just and equitable laws in harmony with social justice.

Thus, the reason for the existence of this newspaper becomes evident. Its pages will attempt to present the philosophy of social justice and, at the same time, to serve as an agent whose business it will be to maintain harmony of thought within the ranks of the National Union.

While this edition probably will go into the homes of more than 500,000 persons, the publishers entertain no foolish thought that Social Justice is beyond editorial criticism. We must creep before we can walk. Our first efforts, therefore, are identified with the characteristics of a robust infant.

Nevertheless, we have aspirations even though we are relying upon the ancient dictum that "a little child shall lead them."

Thus, in presenting Social Justice to the public may we contribute some assistance to the millions of Americans who are attempting to rid this nation of want in the midst of plenty.

Appendix B



**PUBLIC WAR MAKER NO. 1**—The week's first prize for the creation of ill will between nations, as a preparation for the war-makers' propaganda, goes uncontested to New York's Jewish-Italian mayor, former Congressman Fiorello H. La Guardia. Condemnation of Hitler and praise of Mussolini have long been good

for votes, but the protest of a rabbi's wife elevated the New Yorker's clowning to the dignity of an "international incident." The Milwaukee Journal, long expert at exposing "Junker bunk," proposes a standard form of apology for the United States to send to Germany.

*Photo of La Guardia by Acme*

Appendix C

An editorial cartoon, note the facial features of the devil (Social Justice, August 2, 1937)

## The Devil Takes a Vacation And Learns Something



—Drawn by staff artist of SOCIAL JUSTICE.

A section of an article from Social Justice, November 7, 1938 Note the Box.

NOVEMBER 7, 1938

**M**R. BERNARD M. BARUCH says that America must spend \$7½-billion on an armaments program to prepare for war. The flower of the country's youth will not only aid in manufacturing this machinery of death, and these engines of destruction, but they are to be privileged to go on the receiving end of their munitions when the next war comes. They will dig their own graves under the delusion that we are to have prosperity in the heavy industries.

Surely the man who wields the power to have such things done is somebody to be investigated, despite his studied efforts to remain unknown in the background. Let us by all means have more facts on this man and his plans.

Born in 1870 in New York, Bernard Mannes Baruch was educated at City College and at Williams, and entered the financial field, being a member of the New York Stock Exchange for many years. He came into prominence when, in 1916, President Wilson made him a member of the Advisory Commission of the Council of National Defense. He became chairman of its Committee on Raw Materials, Minerals and Metals. In 1918, he became chairman of the War Industries Board. Shortly afterward, he was put on the American Commission to Negotiate Peace—and what a peace was made at Versailles! He has served on many other important international and national bodies, and is a donor of funds to the International Institute of Politics of Williams College.

No man in the history of the United States has been closer to so many Presidents than this same Bernard Baruch. It is a common remark in Washington that he has access to the White House via a special back-door entrance—and, of course, the front door whenever desired.

# A SOUTH AMERICAN INVASION IS A MYTH



**By BEN MARCIN**

**Bernard Baruch's \$7½-Billion Defense Plan Is a  
Pretext for Spending. But It Also May Be the Front  
For Another Egyptian "Collection Scheme"—or a  
New Jewish State.**



## Stop 'Coughlin Plague' Choruses Jewish Press

THE "SMEAR COUGHLIN" campaign which is being carried on in the Jewish press, and the sudden mania to defend the Jews in the non-Jewish—even religious—press, patently have a common origin.

An excerpt from *Opinion*, Rabbi Wise's "Journal of Jewish Life and Letters" was reproduced in *Social Justice* last week under the caption, "A Threat to Father Coughlin."

In case you did not see it, Rabbi Wise wrote: "Father Coughlin will not destroy American democracy, but the American democracy MAY YET FIND IT NECESSARY TO DEAL WITH HIM!" ... "Baser than Coughlinism, IF SUCH A THING CAN BE," the editor characterizes those Jews who would "do the bidding of Father Coughlin" and cease to be Communists.

"Let us stop THE PLAGUE before it is too late! choruses the notorious 'Nailebn' in a boldface editorial in the January edition. 'Let no one take lightly the ravings of Father Coughlin over the radio,' this Jewish-Communist magazine goes on. 'What of it if he tries to assure us that he is no anti-Semite? ... LET US SMOTHER THE ENEMY by exposing him to the world as a danger to all civilized people.'"

So, the Jewish General Council takes its own advice and "answers" Father Coughlin's challenge that the Jews repudiate Communism by publishing a scurrilous attack upon the radio priest. A booklet is being circulated quietly (for them), among Congressmen, Protestant pastors, leftist writers and editors. The whole weight of the abilities and money of the Jewish high command has been

turned into "making a liar out of Coughlin."

Father Coughlin's collection of radio addresses published under the title, "Am I Anti-Semite?"—and obtainable by anyone who writes to Father Coughlin—is a complete refutation in advance of the Jewish General Council's "answer." Almost any week's edition of *Social Justice*—but especially of January 23 which reproduced the British White Paper"—presents further refutation.

"We have long past taken care to discredit the priesthood of the goyim, and thereby to ruin their mission on earth WHICH IN THESE DAYS MIGHT STILL BE A GREAT HINDRANCE TO US," says *Protocol No. 5*, of the "Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion". The Jewish press calls these collections "forgeries."

But the *Talmud*, which no Jewish editor to date has yet dared to repudiate, constantly enjoins the Jew to regard all non-Jews as "cattle" or "beasts" whose mission is to serve "the chosen."

*Time* magazine's reference to the Shrine Tower as a farm barn "silo" will not be without its significance therefore to those who regard all Christians as cattle.

Social Justice salutes the "bravery" of one of its dealers. April 3, 1939.

### ***Second New Yorker in Week Becomes a 'Social Justice' Hero***

**NEW YORK, N. Y.**—For the second time within a week, Jewish hoodlums have attacked a SOCIAL JUSTICE salesman on a New York train.

While selling this National Weekly on the Third Avenue elevated in the Bronx, Peter P. Lucenti was assaulted by a man who gave his name as "Samuel Weiss" and by several other persons whose identity is unknown.

Mr. Lucenti, who has been distributing SOCIAL JUSTICE for a number of years, was proceeding through the train calling out the magazine when, without warning, he was attacked by "Weiss," several other men and at least one woman.

Lucenti was thrown to the floor of the car, scratched on the face, severely bruised and suffered a wrenched knee. The elevated train stopped when the emergency cord was pulled and train guards came to Lucenti's help. A policeman arrived from the street and Mr. Lucenti caused him to arrest "Weiss." The latter countered with a charge against Lucenti. The beaten man was "paroled" in the care of his attorney.

Last week's SOCIAL JUSTICE told of J. Edward Silver's attack upon 10-year-old Joseph Gibbons in a subway train. In court the boy, rather than his attacker, was put on the defensive, his case being held for the attention of the Children's Society.

Appendix G

Father Coughlin's Sixteen Principles of Social Justice. Social Justice,  
September 4, 1939.

NATIONAL WEEKLY

# ***Social Justice***

*Founded 1936 by Father Coughlin*  
Published by The Social Justice Publishing Co.

## 16 PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

Liberty of conscience and education.  
Just living annual wage.  
Nationalization of important public resources.  
Private ownership of all other property.  
Control of private property for public good.  
Abolition of Federal Reserve Banking System and  
establishment of a Government-owned Central  
Bank.  
Restoration to Congress of its sole right to coin  
and regulate the value of money.  
Cost of living maintained on an even keel.  
Cost of production plus a fair profit for the  
farmer.  
Labor's right to organize.  
Recall of non-productive bonds.  
Abolition of tax-exempt bonds.  
Broadened base of taxation on basis of owner-  
ship and capacity to pay.  
Simplification of Government and lower taxes.  
Conscription of wealth as well as men in event  
of war.  
Sanctity of human rights preferred to sanctity of  
property with Government's chief concern for the  
poor.



## Are Jews Religionists?

CONSTANTLY it is asserted that Jews are the object of attack because of their religion.

Constantly it is affirmed that anti-Semitism is purely anti-religionism.

What are the facts?

The *B'nai B'rith Messenger* (March, 1941), helps to clarify the question: "Is Judaism a religion?"

In an article by Ira Eisenstein we read:

"The Jews are known as a 'religious' group, and, for the most part, they speak of themselves as belonging to a religion. Yet most Jews today are not affiliated with religious institutions, and many who are, contend that they have joined synagogues for all the activities which the synagogue conducts — except religious services. They become members of congregations for the social, educational or recreative values they may derive from membership."

Taking the above Jewish assertion at its face value, it appears that the majority of Jews are not religionists. Hence Jews are not persecuted on account of their religion, in Germany or elsewhere.

The cause or causes of their disparagement must be sought elsewhere; not concerning us at the moment.

We are merely interested in setting down the statement which appears in *B'nai B'rith Messenger* — one of the most influential and authoritative publications in the Jewish world.

The *B'nai B'rith* article indeed maintains that "the prime mistake is to speak of the Jews as a religious group."

Accepting this viewpoint as adopted by the Reconstructionist Jews, the author maintains that "Judaism is a civilization; and Jews are held together by a common sense of kinship or closeness to the various elements in that civilization . . ."

Precisely because Jews parade Judaism before the world as a civilization — a civilization composed of members in the ranks of Jews who for the most part, are irreligious, they can never expect anything else except opposition from the civilization proposed by Christ and held — at least, in theory — by Christian leaders.

Christianity is composed of Jew and Gentile; Judaism is Jew only.

It is quite impossible for a logical person to conceive how there can be co-operation, good feeling and good will existing between the Jews and others as long as the Jews insist that Judaism — composed for the most part of irreligious Jews — is a civilization which their leaders are endeavoring to impose upon the world.



Rabbi Stephen S. Wise was a favorite target of Coughlin's antisemitism, as demonstrated by this editorial from Social Justice of Dec. 1, 1941

## Rabbi Wise—Internationalist

AT ONE of the most tempestuous meetings held in Ford Hall Forum, Boston, Rabbi Stephen S. Wise denounced Norman Thomas as an evil influence in American life; called Charles A. Lindbergh an amoral being; and assailed U. S. Senator Cabot Lodge as one of the men who prevented America's entry into the League of Nations and, therefore, is more responsible for the present World War than Hitler himself.

Rabbi Wise is not a nationalist. By proclivity he is a dyed-in-the-red internationalist. To him, Americanism is isolationism. To him, internationalism is interventionism.

From the outset, Americanism was identified with nationalism, as against imperialism or any other ism which implied the dependence of the original Thirteen Colonies upon any other nation.

From the beginning, Communism was international—the only avowed internationalism known to the world until, perchance, it was interpreted that Hitler desired to internationalize civilization.

It is interesting to note that Dr. Chaim Weizmann, president of the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency for Palestine, recently condemned the British policy as affecting Jews.

Dr. Weizmann said: "Jews have been penalized for their loyalty and devotion to Britain." He added that he was "unable to record anything except disappointment and frustration" from Britain.

This spokesman for Jewry definitely has indicated the attitude of leading Jews throughout the world towards Britain. Therefore Rabbi Wise and those Jews who support him are now finding themselves interested in intervention more for maintaining the existence of the U.S.S.R. than for aiding the British Empire.

Nevertheless, Rabbi Wise is the leading Jewish voice in America. He is accepted by Catholics and Protestants as the equivalent of the American Pope of Jewry. Unwittingly perhaps, he compromises every Jew who loves America more than Moscow.