

Coughlin Dares Biddle to Give Him Hearing

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Denies All Affiliation With 'Social Justice'; Blasts New Dealers

DETROIT, April 14 (U.P.).—The Rev. Charles E. Coughlin, denying any affiliation with the publication Social Justice, whose mailing rights have been suspended, tonight challenged Attorney General Francis Biddle to give him an opportunity to "defend the property of Social Justice."

"I am neither editor, owner, nor publisher of Social Justice," the radio priest told the United Press in connection with Postmaster General Frank C. Walker's announcement ordering the priest or one of his representatives to appear at Washington April 29 to show cause why the ban should not be made permanent.

Accuses "Jews, Communists"

"However," he added, "if Attorney General Biddle wishes to summon me to Washington to defend the property of Social Justice, I will not only be happy to do so, but will challenge him to the invitation."

"The reason I make this statement is due to the persistent fact that the Jews and Communists and New Dealers of America have been characterizing me as seditionist, a pro-Nazi and a disgrace to the priesthood of the United States."

"Gladly, therefore, do I meet their challenge if the Attorney General has the intestinal fortitude to issue it."

"Action Will Be Fought"

Frewitt Semmes, attorney for Coughlin and for the Social Justice Publishing Company, owner of the magazine, declined comment on the Post Office Department order stripping the publication of its second class mailing rights until he had had an opportunity to examine it.

"I will say, however," he said, "that it will be fought."

Social Justice was founded by Father Coughlin in February 1936 as the official publication of his political party—the National Union for Social Justice. Semmes said the radio priest's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas J. Coughlin, of Royal Oak, were "sole stockholders" of the Social Justice Publishing Company, which owns the magazine.

Chancellor's Disavowal

The magazine, which has a reported circulation of 250,000, is printed every Wednesday by the Cuneo Press, at Chicago. It is circulated by mail and sold at news stands and by street peddlers throughout the country.

Less than two weeks ago, the Rt. Rev. Edward J. Hickey, chancellor of the Archdiocese of Detroit, disavowed Social Justice as a Catholic publication. His statement was printed in the April 3 edition of the weekly Michigan Catholic under the headline, "An Authoritative Confirmation."

The Michigan Catholic asked Msgr. Hickey for the statement because of "current controversy on the editorial policy of the local weekly, Social Justice, in relation to American morale."

"Not Catholic Paper"

The editorial quoted from his answer:

"A Catholic paper is, by definition, one that is published under the supervision of proper church authority. Social Justice is not under such supervision and is, therefore, not a Catholic paper. Moreover, for nearly two years—since Father Coughlin's latest withdrawal from responsibility for Social Justice with the issue of May 27, 1940—no priest of this diocese has asked or received permission to contribute to Social Justice and no priest of this diocese has been authorized to associate himself in any capacity with its publication or circulation—or, to the knowledge of this office, has actually done so. In a word, the Archdiocese of Detroit has no responsibility, direct or indirect, for Social Justice magazine."

Although Coughlin ostensibly exerted no control over policies of Social Justice, it continued to reflect his views as they were expressed in Sunday sermons from the pulpit of the Shrine of the Little Flower. The magazine also carried his picture in each issue.

Perrin Schwartz, of Royal Oak, is listed as editor of the magazine.