

U. S. MAY CLIP INFLUENCE OF RADIO PRIEST

Moves to Bar His Magazine Permanently From Mails

By Wide World News. *Star 4/26/42*

DETROIT.—Federal moves to halt distribution of the weekly magazine Social Justice may result in further narrowing of the sphere of public influence of the Rev. Charles E. Coughlin, Royal Oak, Mich., radio crusader who once numbered his followers by the millions.

The priest of the Shrine of the Little Flower has assumed personal responsibility for control of the magazine, its policies and its contents. Before this week he had, since the summer of 1940, disavowed responsibility for what might appear in the publication.

When Postmaster General Walker 10 days ago denied use of the mails to an issue of Social Justice because of alleged seditious statements, Father Coughlin quickly offered to go to Washington to defend the magazine.

A hearing on whether to bar the magazine from the mails permanently is scheduled for May 4 in Washington.

Only Forum to Be Grand Jury.

Father Coughlin, however, is not likely to be heard publicly at that time defending the magazine he founded in 1936. Attorney General Biddle said a special District of Columbia grand jury would be the only forum open to the priest.

Mr. Biddle said the publication "reproduces in this country the lines of the enemy propaganda," and added that the grand jury would receive "evidence of any tie-up with the Axis."

Father Coughlin has stated that Social Justice is owned by his parents, Thomas J. and Amelia Coughlin. E. Perrin Schwartz is editor and Cora Quinlan secretary-treasurer.

Catholic and non-Catholic sources alike have made frequent attacks on the magazine's editorial policy, charging since the United States entered the war that it has been anti-British, anti-Roosevelt, anti-Jewish, anti-Communist and obstructionist. Before Pearl Harbor it was one of the Nation's leading isolationist organs.

The criticism of Social Justice has been a continuation of attacks and accusations made against Father Coughlin himself during the days when, on a Nationwide radio network, he advocated political, social and economic reforms.

The crushing defeat of the third-party candidate he supported in the 1936 presidential election, and conflicts with authorities in his church, preceded Father Coughlin's retirement from broadcasting. Before he severed his official connection with Social Justice, the publication had rejected any supervision of its columns by authorities of the Archdiocese of Detroit.

A native of Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, Father Coughlin considered entering politics after his graduation from St. Michael's College in Toronto but was persuaded to enter the church, despite an intense interest in economics and finance.

After his ordination in 1916 he taught at Assumption College, Sandwich, Ontario, became assistant pastor of a church at Kalamazoo, Mich., then instructor in a Detroit school and later pastor in a small community at North Branch, Mich.

He was commissioned to found the Shrine of the Little Flower at Royal Oak in 1926 and for four years thereafter broadcast sermons and talks to children over a Detroit radio station, gaining no great recognition until 1929, when he injected economics and politics into his sermons for the first time.

Following a message on the stock market collapse he received 100 letters from listeners. Extending the broadcasts to a station in Chicago and one in Cincinnati, he found that correspondence rose sharply.

Goes on Network.

Late in 1930 he signed a contract with a network and spoke over 16 stations. The number of letters mounted to 3,000 a week. In later years correspondence was said to have reached at one time the staggering weekly total of 1,200,000 letters.

Contributions to his "Radio League of the Little Flower," sent voluntarily by listeners, paid expenses of his broadcasts.

In 1931 a series of addresses aimed caustically at great banking and financial institutions brought complaints to the Columbia Broadcasting System and his contract was not renewed.

But that didn't stop Father Coughlin. He continued speaking over a few sta-

tions hooked together in an independent network. Gradually the number of outlets rose to 26, then to 47, blanketing the Nation.

In 1932 he campaigned for the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt. When the banking collapse of 1933 occurred, Father Coughlin's persuasive voice carried its appeal for monetary reform, to "drive the money changers from the temple."

He organized his National Union for Social Justice in 1934 and became active in the national political scene. Abandoning his advocacy of the New Deal, he became one of its bitterest critics.

His program proposed abolishment of the Federal Reserve System, favored national ownership and control of public utilities, recognized labor's right to organize, advocated simplified government and urged increased taxation for the wealthy, less taxes for the poor.

During the heat of the 1936 campaign Father Coughlin, in a speech at Cleveland, called President Roosevelt a "great betrayer and liar." Rebuked by the authoritative Vatican newspaper Osservatore Romano, he later apologized, saying he referred to "Candidate Roosevelt" and not to "the President of the United States."

Diocesan Changes Followed.

Within three months after the election came the death of the Most Rev. Michael J. Gallagher, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Detroit and vigorous defender of Father Coughlin's right to criticize. The church established an archdiocese in the Detroit area under Archbishop Edward Mooney.

Father Coughlin's first utterance on public questions after that event—a statement that President Roosevelt showed "personal stupidity" in appointing Justice Hugo Black to the United States Supreme Court—brought him into conflict with Archbishop Mooney, who said the priest had used "unfortunate words."

When Father Coughlin failed to obtain approval of a proposed reply to the Archbishop, he canceled a projected series of radio addresses.

An attorney for the priest said "it was



FATHER COUGHLIN.

The Detroit priest is shown here in a typically aggressive attitude.

—Wide World Photo.

apparent that Father Coughlin would be permitted only to talk platitudes."

A year later Father Coughlin was back on the air for a time, discussing, among other subjects, treatment of Jews in Germany. He encountered difficulty, however, when some stations demanded manuscripts of his address in advance.

When a number of members of the "Christian Front" in Brooklyn, N. Y., were arrested in January, 1940, and indicted on charges of seditious conspiracy, Father Coughlin described himself as a "friend of the accused" and added that "in one sense the opposition to Communism is on trial."

After the defendants were acquitted, Father Coughlin said that "the result of all this will be that the Christian Front movement will emerge more vigorous and potent than ever."