PSF Carter, John F. 1939

Subject File
Box 122

1 set of papers
Jay Franklin article (Franklin is receiving instruction in the Catholic Church) was too dangerous for Bishop S. if circulated widely enough to cause a storm. It was, therefore, "pulled" from all papers except the "Washington Star." But it tells a desperate truth about the Church, Coughlin, and liberalism.

Archbishop Spellman has seen this and has said he was sending it to Rome.

Jay Franklin article -- about Mundelein's general backing of the New Deal -- went all through the country.

Jay Franklin article -- merely a suggestion of a kind of message through diplomatic sources which could not possibly be considered objectionable.
Would you personally convey to the Holy See my appreciation of the commendation given my message to Congress on the so-called Neutrality Bill by the Osservatore Romano, and of the support publicly offered on the moral issues involved by Cardinal Mundelein and Bishop Sheil.

Would you also convey my appreciation of the outstanding courage in moral leadership which Bishop Sheil and other members of the hierarchy have demonstrated in this connection.

Article from the New York Times of October 5, 1939

Mr. LUCAS—Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to place in the Appendix of the Record an article from the New York Times of Thursday, October 5, 1939, containing comment on the radio address made by Bishop Bernard J. Sheil, of Chicago, which address I caused to be placed in the Record yesterday.

There being no objection, the article was ordered to be printed in the Record as follows:

[From the New York Times of October 5, 1939]

ROMAN PAPER STRESSES EMBARGO REPEAL STAND

Rome, October 4.—The Osservatore Romano published today extracts from the speech made by Bishop Bernard J. Sheil, of Chicago, commemorating Cardinal Mundelein’s death, and quoted in full the passage in which Bishop Sheil cited the Osservatore’s editorial praising President Roosevelt’s message to Congress on the neutrality bill.

The more than the Vatican newspaper printed this passage indicated, according to Vatican circles, the favor in which the Holy See views Mr. Roosevelt’s neutrality policy. In today’s issue the Osservatore also printed a long dispatch from Washington in which Mr. Roosevelt’s neutrality thesis is fully explained and in such a manner as to leave no doubt of the keen interest and sympathy it has aroused at the Vatican.
We, the People

Issue of Father Coughlin Awakens Church To Danger of Having Neglected Encyclicals

By H. W. FRANKLIN

The death of Cardinal Mundelein and the adoption of the "Coughlin plan" by the American National Association of Broadcasters have raised the issue of Catholic leadership in America public life. And as Father Coughlin's opportunity to gain and hold his following came at a time when Catholic leaders were concerned with the need for a strong, unified voice on social reconstruction, Cardinal Mundelein, who died on May 10, 1939, at the age of 80, was one of the greatest encyclicals in church history. He demonstrated the power of the social doctrines of his church to win and hold enthusiastic support from masses of Americans.

As the same fire which once warmed the hearth in homes and Father Coughlin's use of radio to create Catholic political parties, to spread race hatred and to "pressure" national policy in the international crises, has awakened the church to the danger of having failed to apply the encyclicals in America.

Danger to Church

The danger is primarily to the church itself. Father Coughlin has proceeded so far that he may become either a Savonarola or a John Huss, unless Mundelein's policy becomes the general practice of the Catholic Church in America.

For more than 20 years the issue has been forming. Is there to be a deeply rooted native American Catholicism, as expressed by men like Archbishop Ireland, Cardinal Gibbons or Cardinal Mundelein? Or is there to be a cautious policy of appointing weak or timid men as bishops and archbishops, men who "won't make trouble," and Mundelein's last command to Bishop Sheil of Chicago, has brought the issue out in the open, supporting the President and denouncing the Coughlinists. The question is: Is the church willing to accept a less inescapable Will the Catholic Church in America be led by the encyclicals for cheap political theater, or will the church itself obey the encyclicals and thereby reduce Father Coughlin to a mere incident in the political arena? Reports in Washington reflect a sharp division in the Catholic hierarchy on this point. They sense the danger that Father Coughlin is too strong to submit to hierarchical discipline. A map whose followers picketed Coughlin's own, Bishop Mowry's, Diocese, "Unfair to Coughlin," placards and whose supporters flooded the Vatican with 5,000 letters a week is not likely to accept control by his hierarchical superiors. The moral vacuum created by the church's neglect of social justice, will always be at the mercy of religious racketeers, just as the social and economic vacuum in the share-cropper belt was at the mercy of Huey Long. Father Coughlin can only be silenced if the American Catholics as a whole obey the social orders which virtually all but Mundelein and Coughlin ignored.

Await Vatican's Decision

The decision of the Vatican itself will be revealed when the vacant archbishopric of Chicago is filled. If the appointment goes to Mundelein's friend and right-hand man, Bishop Bernard J. Sheil, it will be taken as a sign that the encyclicals of Pius XI were not simply the opinions of a weary, pious man, but that effective social justice is increasingly the policy of the Catholic Church. It will also be a clear hint to Father Coughlin's followers that "Roman Catholic politics" are out of place in American public life and that the church desires to remove the political issue which he is raising. If the appointment goes to Mundelein's chosen successor, Bishop Francis J. Simonton, it will be taken as a sign that Father Coughlin's followers must be obedient and that the church will not go to the same extremes as he has.

If, on the other hand, the "don't-make-trouble" theory prevails and a safe, pious and weak man is put in Mundelein's place, Catholic leadership in America may go by default to Father Coughlin. If the Coughlin plan fails, and if the "moment of truth" arrives in radio, it will not stand up for the "do something" policy. If the "timid" policy prevails, there will be no check to Father Coughlin's political advantage, and he will win back the right to influence all that is socially wrong.
We, The People

Cardinal Mundelein's Efforts Helped Form Basis For New Deal Liberalism Platform

OCTOBER 3, 1933

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