

PSF ~~122~~ Carter, John F. 1939

Box 122

1 set of papers

Subject File

Box 122

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journal*

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Sub. File

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#1 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.

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

#3 is merely a suggestion of a kind of message through diplomatic sources which could not possibly be considered objectionable.

#3

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]

VATICAN 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 mere fact that 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.

OCTOBER 6, 1939.

We, the People

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

By JAY FRANKLIN

The death of Cardinal Mundelein and the adoption of the "Coughlin clause" by the National Association of Broadcasters have raised the issue of Catholic leadership in American public life. Father Coughlin's opportunity to win and hold his following came with the publication on May 15, 1931, of the first of the great encyclicals on social reconstruction. Cardinal Mundelein also seized this opportunity and used the encyclicals as the foundation of a broad-based social program in Chicago and the Midwest. Between them, the two men have demonstrated the power of the social doctrines of their church to win and hold enthusiastic support from masses of Americans.

But the same fire which can warm a hearth can burn down the home, and Father Coughlin's use of radio to create Catholic political parties, to spread race hatreds and to "pressure" national policy in the international crisis 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 Martin Luther, unless Mundelein's policy becomes the general practice of the Catholics 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"? Cardinal Mundelein's last command to Bishop Shell of Chicago has brought the issue out in the open, supporting the President and discrediting the Coughlinites. The question is at last inescapable: Will the Catholic church in America let Father Coughlin steal the thunder of the encyclicals for cheap political theatrics, or will the church itself obey the encyclicals and thereby reduce Father Coughlin to a mere incidental voice?

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 man whose followers picketed Coughlin's own Bishop Mooney of Detroit with "Unfair to Coughlin" placards and whose supporters flooded the Vatican with 8,000 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 post goes to Mundelein's friend and right-hand man, Bishop Bernard J. Shell, it will be taken as a sign that the encyclicals of Pius XI were not simply the opinions of a weary Pontiff, 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, 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.

As for the "Coughlin clause" in radio, it will not stand up for long, if the timid policy prevails, for there will be no check to Father Coughlin's political advance and he will win back the right—perhaps over a station of his own—to buy time on the air and roll his own social justice for the benefit of a growing and dangerous Fascist movement under his leadership and control.

We, The People

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

By JAY FRANKLIN

To say that the passing of George Cardinal Mundelein, Archbishop of Chicago, deprives President Roosevelt of his staunchest moral ally is to misstate the facts. For the loss is America's Cardinal Mundelein was not so much a supporter of the New Deal as the New Deal was built on the progressive Catholicism of the late cardinal and of the church of which he was accounted a prince.

The dramatic encyclicals of the late Pope Pius XI, especially that on the reconstruction of the social order, supplied the moral basis for much of the New Deal's program for social reform. It enabled Roosevelt to build more solidly the agencies of relief and readjustment required by the economic depression, secure in the knowledge that his course enjoyed the approval and the sympathy of the greatest organized religious communion in the Western World.

On this basis Cardinal Mundelein stood like a rock and a fortress for the New Deal liberals who were not members of the pinkish fringe and who found in the concept of social justice a sufficient moral sanction for the process of reform. The cardinal stood by Roosevelt in 1932 and again in 1936, as well as in the long bickering over the judiciary reform bill and the reorganization bill.

Supported Neutrality Efforts

Cardinal Mundelein, too, stood behind President Roosevelt in his efforts to prevent the outbreak of the war last summer and one of the last decisions of the late cardinal was to authorize his right-hand man, Bishop Bernard J. Shell, to address the Catholic Youth Congress at Cincinnati in support of the President's neutrality program.

He did this not only as an American but as a Catholic, for he shared the anxiety of many loyal members of his church at the spread of the Coughlinite movement in American politics. The civil war in Spain had sharply divided Catholic sentiments and led to their political expression resulting in the emergence of an issue in which the church itself was being used to foster a Catholic pressure-group—Fascistic in ideas and methods—in the name of social justice itself. The question was arising whether there would be a Catholic Church or a Coughlinic Church in the minds of American Protestants.

Bishop Shell's address, like Al Smith's broadcast in support of President Roosevelt's neutrality program, was calculated to dissociate the church—in the persons of its most prominent layman and its best-known prelate—from the organization fostered (and financed only Heaven knows by whom) through Father Charles Edward Coughlin of Royal Oak, Mich., with his Christian Mobilizers and the German-American Bund.

Cardinal Mundelein, as early as 1937, had attacked the anti-Catholic propaganda of the German government, styling war propaganda as "bed-time stories for children," compared with the Nazi attacks upon the church. Moreover since the alliance of Stalin with Hitler, it was becoming necessary, if only for ecclesiastical reasons, to dissociate the church from any American movement calculated to help Hitler win the war and thus advance Communism to the Rhine and the Alps.

A Great and Good Man

But to millions of Americans, particularly to those poorer citizens living west of the Alleghenies, Cardinal Mundelein was more than a great churchman, more than a great liberal, more even than a great American. He was a great man and a good man. He was a tower of social responsibility, a treasury of calm, unhurried wisdom—a man whose voice was never silent in the face of cruelty and injustice, a man who was active, patient and persevering in the struggle to improve the economic lot, the social security and the moral welfare of the common man. Most of all, in a Nation most of whose economic and financial and much of whose political opportunities were dominated by the old and timid, despite his 67 years, he stood for the courage and hope of American youth for a world made better by their own efforts.

As Chicago's cardinal goes on his last journey, Roosevelt is only one of millions of Americans who mourn the loss of a friend. The world itself is poorer, most of all in this time of deepening crisis and moral confusion, for the passing of this great and simple man.