

# Who Is Coughlin, What Is His Program, How Did He Rise?

**Aided by Big Business, America's  
Number One Fascist Rose from  
Obscurity to Lead a Movement**

By JOSEPH HANSEN  
INSTALLMENT IV

In an editorial in the January 2, 1939, issue of *Social Justice* Father Coughlin attacked a proposal that the Red Cross ship wheat for distribution to starving victims of the civil war in Spain, both Loyalists and Fascists.

He gave as his reason that since there was greater need in the territory then held by the Loyalists, most of the wheat would go to feed starving Loyalists.

When five hundred thousand refugees began pouring into France, fleeing from the advance of fascist warlord Franco after being betrayed by Loyalist army leaders who had been put into power and supported by Stalin's Communist Party and the Social Democrats, Coughlin cynically declared:

"The hordes clamoring for escape at the border are not Spaniards. Thousands upon thousands are Russian Reds."  
(*Social Justice*, February 13, 1939.)

Coughlin approved Hitler's seizure of Austria. Coughlin approved Hitler's seizure of the Sudetenland. Coughlin approved Hitler's seizure of Czechoslovakia. Coughlin approved Hitler's seizure of Memel. Coughlin approves Hitler's bristling war threats.

In his broadcast of March 24, 1935, Coughlin declared: "Today the outposts of Germany are the frontiers of our civilization."

When the work week was lengthened arbitrarily by decree in France, Father Coughlin hailed the act.

In the Far East Coughlin supports Japan and describes this militaristic dictatorship where all civil liberties have been suppressed in blood for years, as "the sole barrier against the menace of communism in the Far East." The "victory of China," he assures the reader, would mean victory for communism in China." (*Social Justice*, December 19, 1938. See also the issues of December 26, 1938 and March 6, 1939.)

When Mussolini invaded Ethiopia (a Christian nation incidentally) Coughlin broadcast a speech attacking the Ethiopians and justifying Mussolini's criminal war. (*A Series of Lectures on Social Justice*, April 1936, by Rev. Charles E. Coughlin, pp. 17-19.)

Coughlin applauded Mussolini's seizure of Albania, calling it a "rescue" for the "benefit" of its million inhabitants.

Why is Father Coughlin so enthusiastic about the foreign fascists?

Let it be understood once and for all, that Father Coughlin is not an agent of the European dictators. Far from it. He is their disciple and admirer. But on the day that war breaks out between the United States and any one of these nations which Coughlin now lauds, he will turn against that nation as savagely as a cannibal on his aged grandfather.

What Coughlin desires is that the methods and the ideology of these fascist plunderers sink deeply into the minds of his followers.

Coughlin wants to organize a state similar to the Nazi and the fascist—a corporate state, and the REAL masters of that corporate state, the masters to whom he swears devotion and whose interests he represents, are America's parasitic SIXTY FAMILIES.

## The Fascists Hail Coughlin

When the Socialist Workers Party led 50,000 demonstrators in protest against the February 20 meeting of the German-American Bund in Madison Square Garden, the 18,000 members of the Bund, meeting under protection of the biggest concentration of police in New York history, were heiling Fuehrer Fritz Kuhn, Fuehrer Hitler, and Il Duce Mussolini. But the biggest ovation of the evening, next only to that accorded La Guardia's police, was the ovation given Father Coughlin.

Significant that the German-American Bund followers of Hitler should be so enthusiastic over Coughlin!

An Associated Press dispatch from Rome on January 17, 1939, stated that the radio priest "received fascist praise and thanks today from the *Regime Fascista*, the newspaper that has led attacks on the Vatican in the dispute over the Italian anti-Semitic measures."

In a Berlin dispatch dated November 27, 1938, Otto D. Toischus reports in the *New York Times*:

"The German hero in America for the moment is the Rev. Charles E. Coughlin because of his radio speech representing National-Socialism (Nazism) as a defensive front against Bolshevism."

The acknowledged advocates of fascism in America are not less enthusiastic.

George E. Deatherage, leader of the Knights of the White Camellia, who insists that fascism as a movement began in America with the Ku Klux Klan long before it was copied by the Nazis, declares:

"He is not the leader we are looking for, but America has produced no greater voice: and when the time for the showdown comes, Father Coughlin will have behind him and us, ten million mobilized followers." (*Saturday Evening Post*, May 27, 1939.)

William Dudley Pelley, Fuehrer of the Silver Shirts, another mysteriously financed "Christian" who openly proclaims his desire to Hitlerize the United States, declared in the November 14, 1938, issue of his magazine, *Liberation*:

"This past week the aggressive Father Coughlin went on the air over a New York radio station and delivered what amounted to the prize Silver Shirt speech of the year."

It is not difficult to understand the brotherly love between the openly acknowledged fascists and the "radio priest" who has risen so rapidly from obscurity.

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**BUILD WORKERS'  
DEFENSE GUARDS**

3c a Copy

# Administration Bill Wrecking W.P.A. Jammed Through House

## Fascists Attack Labor Meeting

**Transport Workers Attending Outdoor Rally  
Repulse Fascists in Street Battle—Thugs  
Hurl Bottles at Speakers**

The first street battle between organized labor and the Coughlin fascist gangs in New York City took place Friday night, June 16, at 138 Street and Willis Avenue in the Bronx when 5,000 workers, most of them members of the Transport Workers Union, hurled back a fascist attempt to break up an orderly workers' meeting.

## A Lesson To the Fascists— And Labor

AN EDITORIAL

New York's subway workers—members of the Transport Workers Union—have just given an instructive lesson to the Coughlinite fascists and . . . to the labor movement at large.

The fascist hoodlums who have been concentrating in the South Bronx section of New York were given a telling lesson in the sweeping power of the working class when it is organized, militant, determined.

When the Coughlinites sought to disrupt and break up the meeting called by the local branch of the American Labor Party, addressed by the leader of the Transport Workers Union, Michael Quill—

When they sought, by provocations and violence, to drive labor off the streets, to deprive a labor organization of its right to free speech—

The thousands of transport workers, and their brothers in other trades and industries who gathered about the platform, gave them a lesson that they needed badly and they will not soon forget.

That was Lesson No. 1. But there is also a lesson for the labor movement in general.

The assembled Transport Workers, who have already given more than one example of their spirit of labor solidarity, did not cringe, or crawl, or beg or petition.

They defended their leaders; they defended their platform; they defended their meeting; they defended their hard-won rights.

And they did it themselves. The thousands of workers around the platform were a DEFENSE GUARD against the fascist gangsters.

A Defense Guard was needed for that meeting. It was there. It WORKED.

It is needed nowadays everywhere. Union men, organize your GUARD of defense against FASCISM.

## Our Own Kind of Defense



## Martin's "Strike" Folds Up

**Claim that He Represents  
Majority Shown  
To Be a Fake**

(Special to the Socialist Appeal)  
FLINT, Mich.—Martin's General Motors "strike" has proved a complete dud.

Production has remained unimpaired in Chevrolet, in Fisher Body and in the G. M. foundry at Saginaw. No more men are absent from their jobs than the usual number accounted for by illness or other reasons.

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## PRE-WAR CRISIS SHIFTS TO FAR EASTERN SCENE

The latest acts in the swiftly-unfolding pre-war crisis were being played this week in two settings—in Tientsin and in Moscow. In the wings sat Hitler, waiting his turn to come on, and the scene-changers were ready to bring Slovakia and the Polish border into the center of the stage for the next episode.

In Tientsin the Japanese hijackers held a gun in the ribs of the British racketeers. The Japanese blockade of the French and British concessions at Tientsin and the international area at Amoy continued, growing bolder and more rigid.

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## N.M.U. in Crisis at Strike End

**Leadership Doomed  
Tanker Strike by  
"Hot Oil" Policy**

The crisis that has been ravaging the National Maritime Union under the leadership of a Stalinist wrecking crew headed by Joe Curran, came to a head with the official termination of the tanker strike at midnight, June 13. The strike, begun on April 17 as a result of rank and file pressure for militant action, was suffocated in a flood of "hot oil" which

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## Roll Call Shows All Factions For Slash

**Woodburn Bill Puts  
Relief Methods Back  
To Days of Hoover**

The Roosevelt-Woodrum W.P.A.-wrecking Bill was passed by the House of Representatives after midnight Friday, less than 48 hours after it was brought in. Speaker Bankhead and New Deal Majority Leader Rayburn joined with Woodrum, chairman of the appropriations sub-committee which drafted the bill, in jamming it through in record time.

The extraordinary size of the majority for the measure, which has been accurately described as putting relief methods back to the days of Hoover, means that not only did Roosevelt Administration leaders back the bill but they also used their control of patronage to prevent a sizeable bloc of Congressmen from recording themselves against the bill.

**Roosevelt Named Figure**  
The most important provision in the bill, that naming the amount to be expended for W.P.A., was the figure of \$1,477,000,000 named by President Roosevelt in his relief message to Congress of April 27. Not even the most reactionary Congressman found any quarrel with the president's figure, for it represented a slash of over one-third from the \$2,250,000,000 expended for W.P.A. during the previous fiscal year.

Under the Roosevelt-Woodrum Bill, W.P.A. rolls will average 2,000,000 during the fiscal year which begins July 1. In line with the recommendations Roosevelt had sent to Congress, W.P.A. administration officials have been slashing the job rolls, from the 3,350,000 who were employed in November, 1938—on the eve of the election—to the present 2,500,000, a drop of 850,000 jobs. An additional 500,000 would be fired under the Roosevelt-Woodrum Bill.

**Still Others to Go**  
If the bill is adopted by the Senate in its present form, actually more than a half million additional to those indicated above will be fired, for it includes a provision discharging by October W.P.A. workers under 45 years of age who have worked eighteen months or more. These are "eligible" to return to W.P.A. rolls after sixty days. If re-certified, but having no more standing than millions of others awaiting placement, they will in all likelihood stay off the rolls permanently.

The only controversy in the House of Representatives during discussion of the bill came on the various restrictive provisions directing administration of the funds by the W.P.A. These restrictive provisions—the 18 months limitation on a W.P.A. job, and abrogation of payment to skilled workers of the prevailing wage in the craft were the most important—met with some objections from some New Dealers, but their objections were "for the record"—so that they could go back to their labor constituencies with some face. How little resistance they put up is indicated by the speed with which the bill went through.

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## Who Is Responsible for the W.P.A. Cuts?

The 850,000 W.P.A. workers who have already been fired since November, the 500,000 others who are slated to be dropped to bring down the rolls to the two million limit provided by the Roosevelt-Woodrum Starvation Bill just adopted by the House of Representatives, the 500,000 or more others who are to be fired arbitrarily because they have been on the W.P.A. rolls for eighteen months—all these, and the millions of unemployed workers who bitterly need W.P.A. jobs must ask themselves: WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SLASHING OF THE W.P.A. ROLLS?

You can't fight back unless you know where the blows are coming from. You can't save your jobs, or win them back, or get jobs, unless you know who is leading the forces of reaction against you. You can't lick the enemy, unless you know where he is.

It's not your fault if you haven't a clear idea of who the enemy is. The daily press, the radio, all kinds of demagogues and fakers are deliberately trying to confuse you, so that you won't be able to fight back. But either you get clear on who you are going to have to fight if you are to save yourselves from starvation, or you go down into the breadlines and the garbage dumps.

Here are the facts:  
The slashing of the W.P.A. rolls was initiated and engineered by none other than PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT HIMSELF. He did it in his relief budget message to Congress on April 27, 1938. In that message he fixed the amount to be expended for W.P.A. during the year beginning July 1 at \$1,477,000,000—more than a one-third slash from the previous year's figure of \$2,250,000,000.

And the amount designated by Roosevelt is the amount now fixed by the Roosevelt-Woodrum Starvation Bill, an amount which simply wrecks the W.P.A., reducing the rolls to 1,350,000 less jobs than in November.

There are plenty of other things wrong with this W.P.A.-wrecking bill. But the most important thing wrong with it is the amount it provides for jobs. And for that Roosevelt is responsible, for HE NAMED THAT FIGURE.

That means that you can't even begin to fight for jobs, you can't begin to fight against the W.P.A. cuts, unless you are ready to CENTER YOUR FIRE ON ROOSEVELT. The "Republican Tories" and "Garner Democrats", the whole reactionary caboodle in Washington, are already hated and distrusted by the workers, employed and unemployed. These reactionaries could never get away with putting over these cuts—if they didn't have Roosevelt to lead them in the cutting drive.

To denounce the "Tory Republicans" and "Garner Democrats" is not enough. It is not enough to run picket lines against Republican headquarters. When the W.P.A. workers limit themselves to such actions, the reactionaries laugh up their sleeves, for they know that SUCH REACTIONARIES WON'T STOP THE CUTTING DRIVE.

Picket lines around Congress, picket lines around the White House, unemployed demonstrations everywhere with banners and slogans aimed against Roosevelt's W.P.A. cuts—that's the road, the only road, to a successful fight for W.P.A. jobs. All other proposals are eyewash, serving to conceal from the masses that at the head of the relief slashers stands President Roosevelt.