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Charles E. Coughlin

The “Radio Priest” of the Shrine of the Little Flower. His early career as a would-be political kingmaker ended with him as a voice of intolerance on the radio.

Splitting the Vote in Massachusetts: Father Charles E. Coughlin, the Union Party, and Political Divisions in the 1936 Presidential and Senate Elections

MICHAEL C. CONNOLLY



Abstract: *This article briefly traces Father Coughlin's religious upbringing and the emergence of his radio persona before explaining the evolution of his political involvement and viewpoints from 1932 to 1936, specifically focusing on the 1936 Senate race in Massachusetts and the implications of the race's outcome for Coughlin's popularity and political aspirations. Initially a confidante and strong supporter of President Franklin Roosevelt, Coughlin went on to endorse several third-party candidates in opposition to FDR and the Democratic ticket. In the Massachusetts Senate race, Coughlin's support of Union Party candidate Thomas O'Brien over Democratic Party candidate James Michael Curley arguably caused a split in the Democratic vote, thereby leading to the victory of Republican Party candidate Henry Cabot Lodge Jr., as well as inciting the anger of Cardinal William Henry O'Connell and many members of the Catholic Church along the way. Coughlin's opposition to the Democratic Party*

under FDR and increasingly offensive sermons led to a sharp decline in his popularity and political influence. In addition to secondary sources, this article draws from the papers of Charles E. Coughlin and Henry Cabot Lodge Jr. and the periodicals, The Church World and the Daily Boston Globe.

Michael C. Connolly is professor of history at Saint Joseph's College of Maine and lectures on Irish, Irish American, and maritime history. He is author of Seated by the Sea: The Maritime History of Portland, Maine, and Its Irish Longshoremen (2010), co-editor of John Ford in Focus (2008), and editor of They Change Their Sky: The Irish in Maine (2004). He is currently working on a historical novel, The Road That Leads Back.

During the 1936 Presidential campaign, Father Charles E. Coughlin described the New Deal as “a broken down Colossus straddling the harbor of Rhodes, its left leg standing on ancient Capitalism and its right mired in the red mud of communism.” Roosevelt, he stated, was “an anti-God and a radical.” Later in Cleveland, Ohio, he derisively referred to Roosevelt as a “scab President” and the Works Progress Administration (WPA) as a “great scab army.”¹ Much to his undoing, Father Coughlin rarely held back his opinions and preferences in terms of American politics and political candidates. While Coughlin started out as a local parish priest in Detroit, Michigan, once his radio show took off, he became a vocal political activist and critic of many government programs and leaders. Coughlin’s political downfall, however, centered on backing the wrong horse in the 1936 Massachusetts Senate race and such scathing denunciations of President Roosevelt. Father Coughlin’s increasingly radical opinions alienated many of his political supporters, parishioners, and fellow church leaders and led to a decline in popularity. This article begins with Coughlin’s Catholic upbringing in Canada and first clerical position in Detroit and proceeds to the birth of the “radio priest” and his early forays into political and economic commentary through mass communication. Then the article moves into an in-depth discussion of Coughlin’s influence on the Commonwealth of Massachusetts leading up to the 1936 election, both at the presidential and senatorial levels, and his fall from grace following the defeat of the Union Party candidates and the continued ascendance of the Democratic Party under Roosevelt.

Charles Edward Coughlin was born in Hamilton, Ontario, in 1891. He was the only child of Thomas and Amelia (née Mahoney) Coughlin,

a lower-middle-class Irish couple. Charles's early education and social life were dominated by the Catholic Church. In 1903 he proceeded from St. Mary's Parish school to high school and later college at St. Michael's College in Toronto. In 1911 he was president of the first graduating class from St. Michael's College to receive a University of Toronto degree due to the recent federation of the two schools. His entire education directed him toward the priesthood. He wrestled with his desire to be a politician and his parents' expectation of his entering the priesthood, but ultimately he entered St. Basil's Seminary in Toronto following a trip to Europe. Less than five years later, on June 29, 1916, Charles E. Coughlin was ordained a priest. His first career had begun.

In 1918, Coughlin was presented with the option of remaining in the Basilian Order in Canada or becoming a "secular" priest with local parish responsibilities. Coughlin chose the latter course, which for much of his life placed him under the control of his local bishop. From the early 1920s Coughlin served under Michael Gallagher, the Bishop of Detroit. The chemistry between Coughlin and Gallagher was extremely favorable from their first meeting. Coughlin was later to say of Gallagher that "next to my own father, I think he was the most beloved man in my life."²

BEGINNINGS OF THE RADIO PRIESTHOOD

By the fall of 1926, Father Coughlin began testing a plan to reach larger numbers of potential parishioners and to raise money for his new church, the Shrine of the Little Flower, in Royal Oak, Michigan, only twelve miles from Detroit. This plan may have been inspired by none other than the baseball legend Babe Ruth. The previous summer Ruth had appeared at the Shrine as a favor to Detroit Tiger scout and close personal friend of Father Coughlin, Wish Egan. The Bambino had used his fame and the radio to help raise some \$10,000 for Coughlin's church. Ruth's successful use of the new medium of radio on that occasion intrigued the young priest who now was faced with interest payments of \$100 per week on church building loans, in addition to the upcoming costs of winter heating. Several factors merged, including economic need, the example of Babe Ruth's flamboyant style, the need to reach out to more potential parishioners, Coughlin's unquestioned oratorical ability, and last, though certainly not least, the technological reality of the newly available tool of radio.

In the mid-1920s an ever-increasing number of American homes were equipped with radios. By 1934 over 20 million households in the United States were served by nearly 600 radio stations, making radio the country's

major source of news and entertainment.³ Charles Coughlin was early to sense radio's potential. This perception was arguably the most important of his career. He delivered his first radio broadcast on the importance of religion in man's life on October 17, 1926. His second career had thus begun, one which would soon take his voice to homes stretching from Bangor, Maine, to San Diego, California, even reaching beyond the nation's borders.⁴ And as the reach of his broadcasts expanded, so did his subject matter. It was not long before religious material was supplemented and, eventually, nearly replaced by matters of economics, politics, and foreign affairs. On January 19, 1930, for example, Coughlin's sermon was entitled "Christ of the Red Fog," and he delivered an attack on Bertrand Russell and others of suspected communist leanings on the following Sunday. The early response to these attacks was overwhelmingly supportive.⁵

On October 5, 1930, Father Coughlin commenced a twenty-five week broadcast season with the CBS radio network. CBS had sixteen stations that could be heard in twenty-three states with a listening audience of over forty million.⁶ Coughlin became a national figure within the first three weeks of its initial broadcast. His concentration was on economic issues with a strong emphasis on the concept of "social justice." These doctrinal themes were spiced with healthy doses of attacks on socialists and "international bankers," topics Coughlin would return to time and again. In the very midst of the Great Depression, Coughlin turned his guns on President Herbert Hoover whom he depicted as a tool of the international bankers, whose fortunes were made through "torture more refined than was ever excogitated by the trickery of the Romans or the heartlessness of slave owners."⁷

THE PRIEST AND THE PATRICIAN: MEETING ROOSEVELT

The spring of 1932 brought Father Coughlin together with the man who would shape not only his future but also the future of the entire nation, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Coughlin requested and FDR eagerly agreed to meet with the "radio priest" heard in millions of homes each week. By the end of their meeting Coughlin had promised to support FDR's candidacy for the presidency, and, in turn, Roosevelt told Coughlin that he would be his close confidante on social and economic matters. The centerpiece of Father Coughlin's domestic economic policy was monetary inflation. Only seven months before the election he appeared before the U.S. House of Representatives' Ways and Means Committee in Washington, DC, to request that the government pay its veterans what it owed them, or the famous "Bonus Bill."⁸



Franklin D. Roosevelt

The Democratic president became a chief political target of Father Coughlin's increasingly harsh radio addresses.

Coughlin counseled the immediate payment of the World War I soldiers' bonuses with freshly printed currency. He also wanted to increase the value of gold and silver, with gold doubling in value from \$20.67 an ounce to \$41.34 an ounce. He argued that this would have the near immediate effect of halving the national debt. At this point in October 1932, America

was plagued with more than 11.5 million unemployed, nearly one million farmers forced off their land, numerous bank failures, and a nearly empty U.S. Treasury. In this situation, Coughlin advocated inflation in order to prime the circulation of currency. He maintained that, “The only two ways out [of our difficulties] are revaluation of our gold ounce or repudiation of our debts. One way is Christianity. The other is Bolshevism.”⁹

In 1933 and 1934, Father Coughlin was “going the limit” for Franklin Roosevelt. It was “Roosevelt or ruin,” he stated. According to biographer Sheldon Marcus, however, “the priest misread the signs” and overestimated his role. Coughlin credited many “New Deal programs to his own influence. Convinced that Roosevelt would do his bidding, he began to fancy himself the Richelieu of the Roosevelt era.”¹⁰ The seeds of disagreement between Coughlin and Roosevelt were probably there from the start. Much of the problem had to do with their conflicting personalities and personal ambitions as well as several conflicting points of view on certain foreign and domestic policies. Father Coughlin espoused dramatic economic inflation, isolationism, and Anglophobia, views not shared by Roosevelt.¹¹

“Although their relationship remained outwardly friendly for two more years, the freeze had already set in [by 1933]. But Father Coughlin did not know this at the time.”¹² In these same years, Joseph P. Kennedy, father of the future president, served as liaison between FDR and both the business community and the Catholic Church. “In the early thirties, [Kennedy] had tried to keep Father Coughlin . . . on the New Deal reservation.”¹³

1935: A POLITICAL SCHISM TAKES SHAPE

By 1935 the “radio priest” began to link the failure of the Nye-Sweeney Banking Bill and the Frazier-Lemke Farm Refinance Bill, his two pet legislative projects, with growing animosity toward Roosevelt and his overall perception that the President had not yet ended the Depression. Coughlin’s rancor increased after the Roosevelt administration revealed that Coughlin and his agencies would personally benefit if the campaign to remonetize silver was successful, for which Coughlin had so vigorously advocated.¹⁴ The allegation of a conflict-of-interest tremendously embarrassed Father Coughlin and added fodder to his growing grudge against FDR.

Disgruntled with Roosevelt and, in turn, the Democratic Party, Coughlin took direct political action and formed the National Union for Social Justice (NUSJ), later known as the Union Party, on December 11, 1934. The NUSJ had sixteen guiding principles related mainly to social justice and labor policies.¹⁵ The creation of a new party signaled Coughlin’s schism with the

Democratic Party. The estrangement between Coughlin and Roosevelt, which had grown throughout 1935, became a permanent split on June 19, 1936. On that day Father Coughlin announced his support for the newly formed Union Party and its candidate for president, Representative William Lemke (1878–1950) of North Dakota. In this message Coughlin laid down his clear political markers. “Behind [the Union Party] will rally agriculture, labor, the disappointed Republicans and the outraged Democrats, the independent merchant and industrialist and every lover of liberty who desires to eradicate the cancerous growths from decadent capitalism and avoid the treacherous pitfalls of red communism.”¹⁶

In the same years, Father Coughlin’s viewpoints and actions also distanced him from important leaders of the Catholic Church. In April 1932 one of the most powerful of Catholic clerics in the country was William Henry O’Connell, archbishop of the Diocese of Boston. As the Irish-American known as the “dean of the American hierarchy,” his opposition to Coughlin carried great weight.¹⁷ In the pages of *The Pilot*, one of the major Catholic newspapers in the United States, Cardinal O’Connell took clear aim at Father Coughlin:

I wish to speak of the almost hysterical addresses from ecclesiastics. They have a way of attracting attention they do not deserve... There is a man in Michigan who talks every Sunday afternoon. He talks to the whole world. What right has he to do this? If he talks about things purely religious and established Catholic truths and teachings, we do not mind... The individual in Michigan takes it into his head to talk to the whole world. To whom is he responsible? The spectacular orator gets great popularity and is consumed with false pride. That is the way trouble has always started in the Church.¹⁸

In the same article, O’Connell spoke of such oratory sometimes being “really criminal in its effect [of] froth with real poison in it.” Finally, the Cardinal opined on the danger of separating Christians by income or class. “The truths of Christ’s teachings are for all. The doctrine of the Church knows no class. You cannot deride the rich.”¹⁹ Noted historian of Boston Catholicism James O’Toole writes, “O’Connell was on thin ice, since he was competing for influence with Coughlin among some of his own flock. Nevertheless, his belief that ‘the Catholic Church does not take sides with the rich or the poor, the Republican or Democrat,’ led him to reject any partisan mixture of religion and politics.”²⁰



William Cardinal O'Connell

Father Coughlin made a determined enemy in his criticism of Boston's Cardinal O'Connell, who rebuked Coughlin publicly and became part of a division over Coughlin within the Church.

The split between Father Coughlin and Cardinal O'Connell worsened as 1932 drifted into 1933 and the Depression continued despite the election and inauguration of a new president. In an April 1932 editorial, the Cardinal openly chastised Father Coughlin. The resultant nationwide avalanche of correspondence, much of it quite hostile to O'Connell, demonstrated the power and reach of radio.²¹ The Cardinal continued his printed opposition to Father Coughlin even after the March 1933 attempted bombing of

Coughlin's home. When Coughlin persisted in his political rather than religious comments, the Cardinal was reported to have responded, "Well, a priest has his place. If he remains in his place, he is highly honored."²²

At the same time, Coughlin's supporters were numerous and vocal. One such partisan simultaneously defended Coughlin and attacked Cardinal O'Connell. "Father Coughlin has brought more souls to the church than your whole diocese. Spend some of our money on the poor and our foreign missionaries instead of dividing it between your relatives. All the folks around call you Big Bill the politician. You're the Curley of the Church."²³ From Chicago came a protest claiming, "God has sent us Father Coughlin and Roosevelt and God bless them both."²⁴ A Philadelphia physician urged O'Connell, "It would be best for you to take a leaf from Father Coughlin's book of life."²⁵ A menacing letter from Manchester, New Hampshire, warned, "Don't think you can change the working people's opinion of Father Coughlin for we all love him, if things don't get better soon we won't need any bankers, remember what happened in Russia."²⁶ A letter written on Parker House (Boston) stationery managed to criticize church and state simultaneously. O'Connell could fume, but only impotently because Coughlin reported to Bishop Michael Gallagher who had stated, "I have no intention of interfering with Father Coughlin. Christ was not setting class against class when he rebuked the abuses of wealth."²⁷

Continued criticism by Cardinal O'Connell did eventually prompt a direct response from Father Coughlin. Coughlin maintained that the Cardinal had no authority to speak on matters outside his own jurisdiction, and he personally rebuked O'Connell for questioning the judgment of a fellow bishop, Michael Gallagher, "who for years has been famed in Michigan for his defense of the poor and for his opposition to the pampered evils which have been so rampant in the textile industries of New England."²⁸ As reported in the *Detroit News*, Coughlin concluded his radio address that week with another searing and highly politicized indictment of Cardinal O'Connell:

For forty years, William Cardinal O'Connell has been more notorious for his silence on social justice than for any contribution which he may have given either in practice or in doctrine toward the decentralization of wealth and towards the elimination of those glaring injustices which permitted the plutocrats of this nation to wax fat at the expense of the poor. Now he castigates me for doing what he was ordered to do.²⁹

The *Daily Boston Globe* featured this clerical spat on its front page under the banner headline, “Fr Coughlin Hits Cardinal in Talk.” The article suggested O’Connell had been critical of Coughlin for years. When the “radio priest” did respond in his regular Sunday radio address on December 9, 1934, that was “read and approved by Bishop Michael James Gallagher,” Coughlin held that “O’Connell has no authority to speak for the Catholic Church in America and no more business as a churchman to impose his thoughts on people living outside his jurisdiction.” Coughlin punctuated his comments with one very personal barb: “It is time that his bubble be bursted.”³⁰

The Cardinal and the “radio priest” often seemed like oil and water. “O’Connell despised Father Coughlin personally and unequivocally rejected Coughlin’s racism and anti-Semitism.” This personal animosity was manifested even though these two influential Catholic clerics agreed on three of the most important issues of the day for the Church: the threat of communist expansion, the persecution of the Catholic Church in Spain and Mexico, and support for American isolationism.³¹

COUGHLIN’S INFLUENCE ON MASSACHUSETTS POLITICS

While Coughlin debated with Cardinal O’Connell of Boston, he also began to take a more active role in the politics of the Bay State. In 1936, James Michael Curley was serving a single term as governor of the Commonwealth and running for an open seat in the U.S. Senate. Curley had first been elected mayor of Boston in 1914 after having persuaded the sitting mayor, John F. “Honey Fitz” Fitzgerald, grandfather of future president John F. Kennedy, to drop out of the Democratic primary in that year.³² By 1936, Curley had already served two terms as U.S. Representative from Boston and three terms as mayor of Boston. The “radio priest” was wildly popular among Curley’s political base and, therefore, could exert a strong influence this year on his election prospects.³³

Historian David H. Bennett writes, “it was clear that Coughlin’s strongest appeal was to an urban group — particularly, Irish or German Catholics of lower-middle-class origins. Gravely hurt by a Depression that had shattered their expectations of social and economic mobility, these Americans responded by the thousands to the magnetism of the radio priest.” In the mid 1930s Protestants outnumbered Catholics in Massachusetts. Catholics supported Coughlin at more than twice the rate of Protestants. His support among Protestants was the lowest among the “old-status” groups like the Congregationalists, the Episcopalians, and the wealthy. Social class surely

1936 Presidential-Vice Presidential Race

Affiliation	Candidates
Democratic Party	Roosevelt and Garner
Republican Party	Landon and Knox
Union Party	Lemke and O'Brien
Socialist Party	Thomas and Nelson
Communist Party	Browder and Ford
Socialist Labor Party	Aiken and Teichert

Electoral Slate

Seven parties put up candidates for president on the Massachusetts ballot of 1936.

appeared to be the trump card.³⁴ According to Philip F. Lawler, editor of the *Catholic World News*, “Curley set out to prove that his Irish-Catholic cohort now ran Boston, and the old guard [Puritans] had no choice but to accept their new inferior status.” Lawler further cited that “since 1910 [just before Curley’s first election as Mayor] every mayor of Boston has been a baptized Catholic.”³⁵

The election of 1936, both at the presidential and senatorial levels, represented the greatest single influence that Father Charles Coughlin would have on the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. As Curley would later recall, “He visited me while I was Governor and assured me that he would support my senatorial candidacy. This was one of the reasons that prompted me to run against Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr. in 1936, instead of seeking re-election as Governor.”³⁶ Father Coughlin’s importance in 1935 was such that he addressed the Massachusetts House of Representatives. He was ceremoniously accompanied to Beacon Hill by Governor James Michael Curley.³⁷ Previously Curley had asked Roosevelt advisor Jim Farley to “keep New Dealers like Rexford Tugwell, Frances Perkins, and Felix Frankfurter out of Boston. The opinion of most persons is that they are communistic.”³⁸ According to multiple sources, “Jim Curley had dubbed Boston ‘the most Coughlinite city in America,’ and the label seemed to stick. When Coughlin visited the city in the summer of 1935, politicians tripped over one another to be seen with him.”³⁹ Father Coughlin was loudly applauded for his speech which included an attack upon, among other things, “Nazism, Communism and that other form of dictatorship which is now insinuating itself into state

and federal government,” the latter a not too thinly veiled criticism of the administration of Roosevelt and the New Deal.⁴⁰

ROOSEVELT KEEPS AN EYE ON COUGHLIN’S INSURGENCY

Roosevelt was concerned about Coughlin’s impact on the national elections and state races. Although the Democratic National Committee saw the Republican candidate and Senator Huey P. Long as the greatest threats in the national race, Coughlin’s Union Party candidate stood to draw a respectable 4.56% of the vote away from Roosevelt in Massachusetts.⁴¹ While this was not enough to influence the presidential outcome in the Commonwealth, the Union Party could certainly affect the race for the Senate in Massachusetts and thereby sway the partisan balance in Congress. To mend fences, later in 1935, Joseph P. Kennedy, then Chairman of the Securities Exchange Commission (SEC) and soon-to-be ambassador to Great Britain, was asked to host a reconciliation meeting between Father Coughlin and Roosevelt. They met on the morning of September 11, 1935, in Hyde Park, New York. Roosevelt and Coughlin reportedly conversed from 7 a.m. until 2 p.m. with Roosevelt even referring to Coughlin as “Padre.” Neither side apparently made any formal commitments. Coughlin wanted the President to abolish the Federal Reserve and follow a more inflationary policy. Roosevelt informed Coughlin that “a third party led by a priest might result in a Republican victory.”⁴²

Regardless, Coughlin continued to support the Union Party and in 1936, Bostonian Thomas Charles O’Brien was selected as William Lemke’s running mate on the Union Party ticket. O’Brien had quite a varied background, having once worked as a railroad brakeman to put himself through Harvard. After switching to the Republican Party, O’Brien was elected District Attorney for Suffolk County, but after returning to the Democratic fold he was unsuccessful in an attempt to gain that party’s 1930 U.S. Senate nomination. It is clear that Thomas O’Brien was chosen mainly because of his loyalty to Father Coughlin and the priest justified his selection of O’Brien with the argument that the otherwise indistinct candidate balanced the ticket — Harvard versus Yale, East versus West, Catholic versus Protestant, Democrat versus Republican, and labor versus agriculture.⁴³ Some, however, believed O’Brien was tapped by Coughlin solely because he was an Irish Catholic from Massachusetts.⁴⁴

In the spring of 1936 Coughlin celebrated a number of primary election victories of Union Party candidates in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Michigan, Maine, and Massachusetts. These victories tended to bolster

Coughlin's appraisal of his potential for success in November, or at the very least they gave the impression that it was possible for him to affect the crucial national balance of power between the two major parties. He triumphantly declared, "Plutocracy has at last come to judgment. A new era in American history has been inaugurated by the National Union ... the day has come when perhaps it is necessary to establish not a third party, not a fourth party, not a fifth party, but to establish a people's party."⁴⁵

Whatever power Coughlin might have possessed at the national level, Roosevelt was not the only politician in 1936 carefully watching Father Coughlin's every move. In Massachusetts, three Democratic congressmen from strongly Irish working-class constituencies ran on the Union Party ballot.⁴⁶ In July of 1936, Father Coughlin barnstormed across Massachusetts. Father Coughlin's influence in strongly Irish neighborhoods such as Charlestown and South Boston resulted from the ability of the "radio priest" to express their anger, fears, and frustrations during an ongoing Depression, together with international concerns about the Spanish Civil War, among other issues.⁴⁷ At a speech in Brockton attended by over 15,000, hundreds of whom strove to "touch the hem of his sleeve," Coughlin revealed that he favored the candidacy of Lt. Gov. Joseph L. Hurley for U.S. Senate over that of James Michael Curley, the sitting governor.⁴⁸ Just five weeks later, the *Daily Boston Globe* reported, "In Last Hour J. L. Hurley Files for Senate Contest."⁴⁹

Father Coughlin was clearly showing his influence in the Bay State, but he was not finished. The Coughlinites mounted a campaign in the Democratic primary to promote the candidacy of Thomas C. O'Brien for U.S. Senate. They had preprinted stickers labeled with O'Brien's name, some 40,000 of which appeared in the Democratic primary results.⁵⁰ Although finishing a distant third to Governor James M. Curley and Joseph L. Hurley with only about ten percent of the vote, the Union Party had made itself heard.

Curley was the Democratic nominee for the Senate against Republican Henry Cabot Lodge Jr. But regardless of his primary loss and his subsequent selection as the Union Party's vice presidential candidate, Thomas O'Brien allowed his name to be printed on the official November ballot in Massachusetts as the Union party candidate for both vice president and senator. That decision certainly got the attention of the Democrats, and Curley in particular, and they would unsuccessfully fight to keep O'Brien's name off the ballot.⁵¹

Additionally, Governor Curley asked for the support of Coughlin followers in Massachusetts. Coughlin's earlier suggestion that Curley drop out of the race was ignored by the Governor who called himself a "partial

1936 Massachusetts Senatorial Race⁵²

Affiliation	Candidates
Democratic Party	James M. Curley
Republican Party	Henry Cabot Lodge Jr.
Union Party	Thomas C. O'Brien
Socialist Party	Albert Sprague Coolidge
Communist Party	Charles Flaherty
Socialist Labor Party	Ernest L. Dodge
Prohibition	Wilbur D. Moon
Townsend, Prohibition	Alonzo B. Cook
Townsend, Social Justice	Guy M. Gray
Townsend Plan	Moses Gulesian

Crowded Field

The 1936 senatorial ballot in Massachusetts. James M. Curley, an object of Father Coughlin's political ire, went down to defeat

Coughlinite." Curley went half way toward meeting the two requirements in order to receive Coughlin's full support. Although he endorsed the Sixteen Principles of the NUSJ, Curley was unable to comply with the second part of the demand which called on him to renounce President Roosevelt. Undaunted, Curley continued to ask for Coughlinite support "lest they so split Democratic ranks as to insure the election of his Republican opponent, Henry Cabot Lodge Jr."⁵³ The Governor was walking a tightrope, trying to entice Union Party supporters to his side without further alienating the party or its leaders.

Within two weeks of Governor Curley's announcement that he was a "partial Coughlinite," Father Charles E. Coughlin rejected that fig leaf and continued to promote the Union Party, in general, and the senatorial campaign of Thomas O'Brien, specifically. During an interview at Copley Plaza, Coughlin predicted that O'Brien would defeat Henry Cabot Lodge Jr., for the Senate seat and that James Michael Curley would finish a poor third "if at all."⁵⁴ As usual, Curley himself framed his response more colorfully, asserting that, "Father Coughlin was proclaiming that 'Hamburger Tom' O'Brien would defeat Lodge, with 'Curbstone Jim' bringing up the rear."⁵⁵ Coughlin argued that "both of the old parties have failed," and in particular he questioned the "Jeffersonian ancestry" of such Roosevelt Democrats as Ickes, Perkins, Wallace, Morgenthau, and Hopkins. While

such statements could be justified politically, they contained the type of salacious ethnic and religious innuendo for which the “radio priest” would later become infamous. Coughlin went on to put more distance between himself and the Democrats declaring that Massachusetts was “one of the strongest Social Justice states,” and reiterating that the Senate race was solely between O’Brien and Lodge.⁵⁶

STRAINS ON COUGHLIN START TO SHOW

It was on this trip to Boston in mid-October that the wear and tear of the campaign on Father Coughlin became evident. The *Daily Boston Globe* of October 12, 1936, reported that Coughlin “appears tired.” At the press conference in Boston, the *Globe’s* reporter, John Barry, took exception to Coughlin’s description of Harvard law professor Felix Frankfurter as a communist. Shortly afterward, upon meeting Barry by chance in Providence, Coughlin reportedly ripped off the reporter’s glasses and punched him in the face, until he was finally restrained by Thomas O’Brien. The next day in Boston, the still-simmering Coughlin exclaimed, “If I had him here I’d choke him. If I see that fellow I’ll tear him to pieces.”⁵⁷ These actions, coupled with Coughlin’s increasingly vicious attacks caused concern within Catholic circles. Thus Bishop Michael J. Gallagher of the Diocese of Detroit, Coughlin’s superior, was forced to defend the radio priest. “Father Coughlin may have used excessive words which might be reprovved, but, he added, this does not detract from the value of Father Coughlin’s whole activity, which, he said, has such efficacy for the people and gives such credit to the Church.” Other than “impromptu remarks” the bishop claimed that Coughlin’s preaching “conforms perfectly to the teaching of the Church.”⁵⁸

Coughlin’s abrasive and confrontational actions produced opponents inside the Catholic Church as well as within political circles. As the time of the election drew closer, Father Coughlin stepped up the ferocity of his assaults on the President, warning Roosevelt, “You can’t be a dictator any more; anyone who tries to play the part of God will stumble.” Coughlin threateningly claimed that the New Deal was “surrounded by atheists,” and if Roosevelt were re-elected there would be “more bullet holes in the White House than you could count with an adding machine.” A warning was given that “the revolution is coming as surely as God is in his house in heaven — unless we can drive the money changers out this year.”⁵⁹ Coughlin claimed that FDR was a “liar” and that he was “communistic.” He antagonistically called FDR “Franklin Doublecross Roosevelt,” and attacked the president’s stance on labor by proclaiming that no Catholic could be a member of

the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) because it “preached class warfare that was contrary to the principles of Christianity.”⁶⁰

As Father Coughlin’s rhetoric heated up, other Catholic prelates voiced their concern. In early October 1936 the Most Reverend John T. McNicholas, the influential Archbishop of Cincinnati, stated that some recent statements by the “radio priest” had “made impressions on the public which it is my duty to correct.” McNicholas had been visited by Vatican Secretary of State Eugenio Cardinal Pacelli, later Pope Pius XII, who had been sent to the United States to further “tone down” Father Coughlin and correct the misconception fostered by his bishop, Michael Gallagher, that Coughlin spoke with full Church approval.⁶¹ Archbishop McNicholas first defended Coughlin’s right of free speech, even in matters of politics, and credited his zeal for social justice. “No member of the Church has ever presented so forcefully as Father Coughlin the exploitation of the poor, the injustice done to the laboring classes, the evils of capitalism, the corruption of public officials, the dangers of Communism and destructive radicalism. He knows the poor and laboring man, he loves him and he pleads for him.” But then McNicholas continued, “Whatever his intention, Father Coughlin gives the impression that he appeals to force. In doing so he is morally in error.” Coughlin’s recent references to “upstart dictators” and specifically to FDR as being “anti-God” were particularly disturbing.⁶² Cardinal Pacelli on this same visit instructed Bishop Gallagher that he was to “exercise closer control” over his priest and to inform Father Coughlin that he was not to participate in political campaigning after the 1936 election was over.⁶³

It was then that Coughlin described the New Deal as “a broken down Colossus straddling the harbor of Rhodes, its left leg standing on ancient Capitalism and its right mired in the red mud of communism.” Further, at a speech in Springfield, Massachusetts, Coughlin belted out more of the heated rhetoric for which he was now famous, asserting that Roosevelt was “surrounded by the pinks, the vermilion and reds of every shade, associated with Spain, Mexico, Russia, the Socialist government of France — the Tugwells, Frankfurters and the rest of them.”⁶⁴ Thomas O’Brien, at his side, and hopeful to turn a recent remark by Cardinal O’Connell to his own electoral benefit, claimed that the leader of the Archdiocese of Boston “had spoken in forthright language ... on the duty to vote for men of good character.”⁶⁵

By November 1936, the Union Party was able to offer candidates for posts other than president and vice president in fewer than ten states. Even in those states the candidates were described by complicated, hyphenated appellations, which often joined together several different causes in hopes

of gaining wider support. Massachusetts, the strongest Social Justice state in the East, was no exception. Most candidates in the Commonwealth used some combination of names such as “Coughlin,” “Townsend,” “Laborite,” “Social Justice,” or even “Father Coughlin’s Principles Republican” as in the case of one candidate in the Eleventh Congressional District.⁶⁶

The final list of candidates on the official Massachusetts ballot in November 1936 included seven candidates for President and fully ten for the U.S. Senate.

Father Coughlin supported his Union Party candidate O’Brien in the Massachusetts Senate race. His main competition in this election was Democratic Governor Curley and Republican Henry Cabot Lodge Jr. (1902–1985). Lodge was formidable in every way. At the time of the election he was thirty-four years of age, a fact that Curley tried but failed to exploit against him. By contrast, Curley was approaching the age of sixty-two and O’Brien was forty-nine. Lodge’s grandfather had represented Massachusetts in the U.S. Senate for thirty years. At a time when Massachusetts was divided geographically with Democratic strength in the cities and Republicans running well in the suburban and rural districts, Lodge was campaigning on sound money and anti-inflationary economics, strict neutrality especially concerning events in Europe, and the targeted use of tariffs to protect local manufacturing. Lodge also prided himself on being a champion of racial harmony, once appearing with Olympic hero Jesse Owens in September 1936 at the Tremont Temple in Boston on the theme of “Tolerance.”⁶⁷

Lodge was completing his fourth year in the Massachusetts House of Representatives. To Massachusetts voters generally Lodge attempted to portray himself as independent minded, something that would appeal to moderates of both parties. To a group of Springfield Republicans specifically he claimed, “Since I reached the voting age, [I have] been frequently off the reservation.” To this he added his opinion that, “Republican tradition is a very elastic fabric.”⁶⁸ His actions seemed successful. He gained vocal supporters while Curley had vocal detractors. One editorial stated: “If James M. Curley, the Grand Promiser, skilled in all political skullduggery opposes [Lodge] he will have a hard fight ... It is extremely probable that along with the decay in the regard for President Franklin D. Roosevelt in this state, the Curley fortunes will crumble also. The district had the greatest admiration for the grandfather of this new Henry Cabot Lodge and will be greatly pleased to see him occupy his grandfather’s seat in the United States Senate.”⁶⁹

James Michael Curley, by contrast, clearly was not a pristine candidate and he carried much political baggage into the 1936 senatorial race against Lodge. His multiple past shenanigans and criticisms of the president made



Henry Cabot Lodge Jr.

Shrewdly playing himself up to Massachusetts voters as independent-minded, Lodge defeated the cagey and politically well-traveled Gov. James Michael Curley, the “Rascal King” ex-mayor of Boston, in the 1936 U.S. Senate election.

it difficult for even Roosevelt to endorse his fellow Democrat in this race.⁷⁰ Curley had been boxed into “an awkward political dilemma” by the priest he later called the “fiery pulpiteer of the Shrine of the Little Flower” and the “Detroit messiah” — his options were “back Roosevelt and lose national union support in a Catholic area or drop Roosevelt and lose regular Democratic support. Curley remained loyal to Roosevelt.”⁷¹ Governor Curley ended his campaign with a huge Democratic extravaganza of over 23,000 supporters

at the Boston Garden, with one placard proclaiming him “The Greatest Irishman since John Boyle O’Reilly.” Also present were James Roosevelt, the President’s eldest son, and the Democratic governor of Maine, Louis J. Brann. The Master of Ceremonies, Teddy Glynn, read a number of telegrams from local officers of the NUSJ announcing endorsements of President Roosevelt, Governor Curley, and the Democratic ticket, thus contradicting statements Father Coughlin had recently made in Boston. The candidate himself proudly spoke of “Curleyisms” — a reference to his proudest accomplishments in office over many years. “I propose to be progressive, liberal and humane. I leave to my opponent the heartless doctrines of conservatism, the protection of monopoly and the destruction of our humane and progressive legislation.” Lieutenant Governor Joseph L. Hurley inserted what he considered to be a degree of political pragmatism when he declared that “a vote for Lemke is a vote for Landon, a vote for Tom O’Brien is a vote for Lodge. [They] know they can’t be elected. Don’t follow false leaders.”⁷²

THE INFLUENCE UNRAVELS

On Election Day, the magnitude of Roosevelt’s electoral landslide became apparent quickly. Roosevelt had carried all but two states, necessitating the revision of an old political axiom to now read: “As Maine goes, so goes Vermont.” The plurality in Massachusetts for Roosevelt in the presidential race was 172,487 and in the senatorial race it was 142,302 for Lodge. The general election results were horrendous for the Union Party. Only in Lemke’s home state of North Dakota, where the Party polled 13%, did the Union Party receive more than 7% of the vote. The Lemke total of 892,378 out of a total vote of just over 45,000,000 was only slightly higher than the total polled in the previous national election in 1932 by the Socialist Party candidate, Norman Thomas (873,000 votes). In fact, this actually represented a smaller percentage of the total vote than that received in 1932 by the Socialists.⁷³ This result signified an electoral disaster for the Union Party and a personal defeat for its chief protagonist, Father Charles Coughlin. It certainly marked the beginning of the end of his national political influence and, after the election of 1936, Coughlin’s popularity and his following steadily declined.

Massachusetts, however, was the second-largest source of votes for the Union party, surpassed only in total number by Ohio.⁷⁴ What was true at the presidential level was not replicated in the race for U. S. Senate. Representative McCormack, Lieutenant Governor Hurley, and Governor Curley were all at least partially correct in their earlier warnings regarding the potential damage that could be done to the governor in the Commonwealth

by the Union Party. The difference in the popular vote between Lodge and Curley (142,302) was slightly less than the 143,055 votes cast together for the Coughlinite Thomas O'Brien along with those of the "Townsendite" Alonzo Cook (see "1936 Massachusetts Election Results" below).

Sheldon Marcus gave voice to what would later become the conventional wisdom, at least among Democrats, "On November 3, 1936, O'Brien, running on the Union party ticket, would draw enough Irish Catholic votes away from James Curley to enable the Republican Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., to squeeze out a victory."⁷⁵ Directly following the election, Frank L. Kane, secretary to Governor Curley, sent Father Coughlin the following sarcastic telegram which stated, "May I congratulate you on your successful victory in the Massachusetts election. You have deprived this state and this nation of real representation in the Senate of the United States. As Christ had his Judas and Caesar his Brutus, Washington his Arnold, so has Gov. Curley his Father Coughlin."⁷⁶ Curley, when asked for his comment colorfully stated, as was his style, "Any man has a right to express his own opinions. My own would be unprintable."⁷⁷

Governor Curley was stunned by this defeat, especially as 1936 proved to be a banner year for Democrats all over the country. In Curley's assessment, his senatorial defeat had been delivered by a one-two punch from Coughlin's support for Thomas O'Brien and Roosevelt's failure to fully endorse a fellow Democrat. His biographer Jack Beatty concluded, "The returns leave little doubt that Father Coughlin plus Roosevelt's cold shoulder made the

1936 Massachusetts Election Results

President		Senate	
Roosevelt (Democrat)	941,701	Lodge (Republican)	874,202
Landon (Republican)	769,214	Curley (Democrat)	731,900
Lemke (Union)	120,733	O'Brien (Union)	131,215
		Cook (Townsend)	11,840 ⁷⁸

Political Spoiler

Election results from 1936 suggest that Coughlin's Union Party candidates may have drained away support that might have gone to Lodge and to Curley.

difference. Lodge got 875,000 votes to Curley's 732,000 and O'Brien's 131,000. Without O'Brien in the race, Curley would have been within 10,000 votes of Lodge, a number small enough to be responsive to a presidential endorsement.⁷⁹

There is no way to know with certainty whether the Union Party's candidate for Senate, Thomas O'Brien, actively supported by Father Coughlin, actually determined the outcome of this race in favor of the winner, Henry Cabot Lodge Jr., who ran an energetic campaign. What can be said with clarity is that this made Governor Curley's task all the more difficult. With his personal flaws, his reputation of playing loose with money, his parochial base of support, and significantly the tepid support of a sitting president of his own party, the deck was already stacked heavily against him. Father Coughlin had, undoubtedly, made an impression on the election in the Commonwealth, especially below the presidential level, and Curley and his loyal supporters would forever believe that it was both decisive and unforgivable.⁸⁰

COUGHLIN TURNS VICIOUS IN DECLINE

Following the disappointing results of the national and local elections for both him and his movement, Father Charles Coughlin's radio sermons and writings became increasingly inflammatory, anti-Semitic, Anglophobic, and isolationist, even as the world approached the cataclysm of World War II. Through his weekly addresses and his aggressive, often antagonistic, posturing, Father Coughlin tapped into both the fears and dreams of thousands of Americans. He believed that he was creating a new approach that would forever transform American politics and society. He, and his supporters, were sadly disappointed, however. Their new vision of America did not come to pass. Their actions actually served to frustrate their own goals. Though not intending to play the role of spoiler, Father Coughlin's Union Party did just that in the 1936 election. Rather than sweeping O'Brien into the Massachusetts Senate seat, Coughlin's actions instead split the vote and made it easier for Republican Henry Cabot Lodge Jr., who opposed most Union Party ideas, to gain the open Senate seat previously held by his grandfather. Following this election, Coughlin's influence in American politics declined. However, he still agitated, organized, and sought to reshape the American political landscape into one that more closely resembled what he felt the Catholic Church's teachings supported.

Notes

1. David H. Bennett, *Demagogues in the Depression: American Radicals and the Union Party, 1932–1936* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1969), 227–31.
2. Sheldon Marcus, *Father Coughlin: The Tumultuous Life of the Priest of the Little Flower* (Boston, 1973), 21.
3. <http://autocww.colorado.edu/~blackmon/E64ContentFiles/CinemaAndBroadcasting/Broadcasting,RadioAndTV.html>.
4. Marcus, *Father Coughlin*, 36.
5. Marcus, *Father Coughlin*, 31.
6. Marcus, *Father Coughlin*, 34.
7. Marcus, *Father Coughlin*, 39, citing the *Detroit News*, December 2, 1931.
8. M855, Documents concerning Rev. Charles E. Coughlin, Archives of the Archdiocese of Boston, Braintree, MA (hereafter cited as M855, AABo), April 19, 1932.
9. Marcus, *Father Coughlin*, 48.
10. Bennett, *Demagogues in the Depression*, 39.
11. Lawrence J. McCaffrey, *The Irish Diaspora in America* (Bloomington, 1976), 170. Over time, Coughlin's views shifted further from compatibility with Roosevelt, eventually sliding far to the right. According to Irish-American historian Lawrence McCaffrey: "Unfortunately, the residue of ghetto neuroses had led some Irish-Americans into right-wing, paranoid politics, providing ammunition for those who insist that the Irish are congenitally reactionary... In the 1930s, millions of Catholics and other Americans listened on Sunday afternoons to the "radio priest," Father Coughlin, as he shifted from being a populist supporter of Roosevelt to an anti-Semitic advocate of fascism." McCaffrey's main thesis in this influential work is that the Irish on the East Coast, particularly inner city areas such as Boston, were more insular and parochial, due to inhibiting factors, and therefore not representative of the more expansive and successful experience of the Irish elsewhere in America.
12. Marcus, *Father Coughlin*, 46, 59.
13. Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *Robert Kennedy and His Times* (Boston, 1978), 23.
14. Marcus, *Father Coughlin*, 107–110.
15. Marcus, *Father Coughlin*, Appendix J, 300. Father Coughlin's own modified version of the Sixteen Principles consisted of the following: 1. liberty of conscience and education; 2. a just, living, annual wage; 3. nationalizing important public resources such as power and transportation; 4. private ownership of all other property; 5. control of private property for public good; 6. abolition of the Federal Reserve banking system and establishment of a government-owned Central Bank; 7. restoration to Congress of its sole right to coin and regulate the value of money; 8. maintaining the cost of living on an even keel; 9. cost of production plus a fair profit for the farmer; 10. labor's right to organize; 11. recall of non-productive bonds; 12. abolition of tax-exempt bonds; 13. broadening the base of taxation on the basis of ownership and capacity to pay; 14. simplification of government and lowering of

taxes; 15. conscription of wealth as well as men in event of war; and 16. the sanctity of human rights preferred to the sanctity of property, with the government's chief concern being for the poor.

16. Marcus, *Father Coughlin*, 113.

17. Stack, *International Conflict in an American City: Boston's Irish, Italians, and Jews, 1935–1944* (Westport, CT, 1979), 57.

18. *Boston Pilot*, April 23, 1932, 2. The lead article was entitled “Cardinal Counsels Calmness in Present Difficulties” and subtitled, “Warns Against Danger of Being Swayed by Popular Radio Orators.”

19. *Boston Pilot*, April 23, 1932, 2. Bennett, *Demagogues in the Depression*, 59, states that “Boston's Cardinal O'Connell was the first to speak out...”

20. James M. O'Toole, *Militant and Triumphant: William Henry O'Connell and the Catholic Church in Boston, 1859-1944* (Notre Dame, IN, 1992), 138.

21. M855, AABo, April 18, 1932; May 15, 1932.

One such letter in that same month to the Cardinal from a self-described Protestant who admired Coughlin claimed, “[He] has done more for the Catholic Church in his short period of Broadcastings that you will if you live 10 lives — Jealousy on your part — shame on you.” And another, one month later, “I am not a Communist or a Bulshevek, just a plain american farmer, and loyal American Citizen, and it makes one tired on reading your spewings.”

22. M855, AABo, March 1933.

23. M855, AABo, No Date — probably in reference to an article in the *Buffalo Evening News*, April 18, 1932.

24. M855, AABo, December 11, 1933.

25. M855, AABo, no date. Signed “Philadelphia physician.”

26. M855, AABo, December 11, 1933.

27. Marcus, *Father Coughlin*, 42.

28. Marcus, *Father Coughlin*, 43.

29. Marcus, *Father Coughlin*, 43, citing the *Detroit News*, Dec.10, 1934. See also Charles J. Tull, *Father Coughlin and the New Deal* (Syracuse, NY, 1965), 70–71.

30. *Daily Boston Globe*, December 10, 1934, 1, 4.

31. Stack, *International Conflict in an American City*, 57-58.

32. Michael C. Connolly, “The First Hurrah: James Michael Curley versus the ‘Goo-Goos’ in the Boston Mayoralty Election of 1914,” *Historical Journal of Massachusetts*, Vol. XXX, No. 1 (winter 2002): 50–74.

33. Stack, *International Conflict in an American City*, 33.

34. Bennett, *Demagogues in the Depression*, 58; Seymour Lipset and Earl Raab, *The Politics of Unreason* (Chicago, 1978), 172-74

35. Philip F. Lawler, *The Faithful Departed: The Collapse of Boston's Catholic Culture* (New York, 2008), 31.

36. Curley, *I'd Do It Again: A Record of All My Uproarious Years* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1957), 297.

37. Stack, *International Conflict in an American City*, 40–41.

38. Stack, *International Conflict in an American City*, 58-59.
39. O'Toole, *Militant and Triumphant*, 137. Originally reported in Curley, *I'd Do It Again*, 296; and also in Alan Brinkley, *Voices of Protest: Huey Long, Father Coughlin, & the Great Depression* (New York, 1982), 206; as well as other sources.
40. Marcus, *Father Coughlin*, 97-98.
41. Elliott Roosevelt, ed., *F.D.R.: His Personal Letters*, vol. 3, 1928-1945 (New York, 1947), 222.
42. Marcus, *Father Coughlin*, 100.
43. Bennett, *Demagogues in the Depression*, 197.
44. Tull, *Father Coughlin and the New Deal*, 128.
45. Bennett, *Demagogues in the Depression*, 83.
46. Stack, *International Conflict in an American City*, 54.
47. Stack, *International Conflict in an American City*, 55.
48. *Daily Boston Globe*, July 5, 1936, B1, 20.
49. *Daily Boston Globe*, August 12, 1936, 16.
50. Bennett, *Demagogues in the Depression*, 14, 222.
51. *Daily Boston Globe*, October 2, 1936, 1, 30. Also, Marcus, *Father Coughlin*, 130-131.
52. *Boston Evening Globe*, November 2, 1936, 19.
53. *Daily Boston Globe*, October 1, 1936, 1.
54. *Daily Boston Globe*, October 12, 1936, 1.
55. Curley, *I'd Do It Again*, 298.
56. *Daily Boston Globe*, October 12, 1936, 6.
57. Marcus, *Father Coughlin*, 132-33, as reported in the *Detroit Free Press*, Oct. 14, 1936. Also reported in Bennett, *Demagogues in the Depression*, 229-230.
58. "Bishop Gallagher Defends Preaching of Fr. Coughlin," in *The Church World*, July 31, 1936, 2. This source has been described since 1930 as "Maine's Catholic Weekly" and was also said to be the official organ of the Diocese of Portland (Maine). Bishop Gallagher was tracked down by reporters in Naples and Rome to make these comments.
59. Bennett, *Demagogues in the Depression*, 227-31.
60. William V. Shannon, *The American Irish: A Political and Social Portrait* (New York, 1963), 313-14. For a more in-depth analysis of Coughlin and the labor movement see James Hennessy, S.J., *American Catholics: A History of the Roman Catholic Community in the United States* (New York, 1981), Chapter 19, especially 274-75. See also David O'Brien, *American Catholics and Social Reform: The New Deal Years* (Oxford, 1968).
61. Marcus, *Father Coughlin*, 131-32.
62. "Coughlin in Error if he Appeals to Force is Statement of Prelate," in *The Church World*, Oct. 2, 1936, 9.
63. Marcus, *Father Coughlin*, 131.
64. *Daily Boston Globe*, October 29, 1936, 17.
65. *Daily Boston Globe*, October, 29, 1936, 16.
66. Bennett, *Demagogues in the Depression*, 244.

67. Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society (MHS), 28 September, 1936, document of the Massachusetts Republican State Committee Publicity Department.
68. Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., Papers, MHS, "Forceful Americanism" speech in Springfield, January 26, 1936.
69. Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., Papers, MHS, *Gloucester Daily Times and Cape Ann Advertiser*, no date, no page.
70. Shannon, *The American Irish*, 232.
71. Tull, *Father Coughlin and the New Deal*, 150. See also Curley, *I'd Do It Again*, 296–99.
72. *Daily Boston Globe*, November 2, 1936, 3.
73. Bennett, *Demagogues in the Depression*, 266–69. The party's next highest total was 6.5% achieved in Minnesota, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. In only two states, Ohio and Massachusetts, did Lemke poll over 100,000 votes. And in only four major cities - St. Paul, Dubuque, Cincinnati, and Boston did the Party receive over 5% of the vote.
74. Bennett, *Demagogues in the Depression*, 267–68.
75. Marcus, *Father Coughlin*, 130–31.
76. *Daily Boston Globe*, November 5, 1936, 1.
77. *Daily Boston Globe*, November 5, 1936, 1.
78. *Daily Boston Globe*, November 5, 1936, 1. See also Stack, *International Conflict in an American City*, 55–56, for election results.
- 79 Jack Beatty, *The Rascal King: The Life and Times of James Michael Curley*, 1874–1958 (New York, 1992), 397.
80. In one further note of political irony, Henry Cabot Lodge Jr., whose grandfather and namesake had defeated John F. Fitzgerald for U.S. Senate in 1916, would serve in that same position almost without interruption from 1937 until 1953. Having actively promoted the candidacy of Dwight D. Eisenhower for president in 1952, initially in a tight and acrimonious Republican primary battle with Senator Robert Taft of Ohio, Senator Lodge had not paid enough attention to his own bid for re-election in that year. In the Massachusetts Senate race of 1952, Lodge was narrowly defeated by a young political upstart, the maternal grandson of John F. "Honey Fitz" Fitzgerald, John Fitzgerald Kennedy. The wheel had come full circle.