

## SUMMARY OF FATHER CHARLES COUGHLIN'S 20 NOVEMBER 1938 RADIO BROADCAST

Source: <https://cuomeka.wrlc.org/items/show/571>

Coughlin began with a pro-forma condemnation of the “persecution suffered by thousands of innocent Jews”, but he was notably keen to cast it as retaliation for the assassination of a German diplomat, Ernst vom Rath, in Paris, by a Polish Jew, Herschel Grynszpan, and to downplay the antisemitic nature of the Hitler government, presenting its policies thus far as targeting foreign Jews.

Coughlin said that while Jews were a minority, they were “a powerful minority in their influence”, especially “in journalism, in radio, in finance, in all the sciences and arts”, which perhaps explained the “unparalleled publicity” the pogrom had received.

Coughlin was careful to say he was presenting the Nazi view that the Weimar government was riddled with Communists and dominated by Jews, rather than stating it in his own voice, before declaring: “Nazism was conceived as a political defence mechanism against Communism”. With much less deniability, Coughlin went on to say that while the Soviet Union persecuted Christianity, the Bolsheviks “made it a crime for any comrade to utter a word of reproach against Jews”, adding—citing a Nazi document that he offered to share with listeners—that twenty-four of the twenty-five Soviet “Cabinet” members in 1917 were “atheistic Jews”, and the figure for 1935 was fifty-six out of fifty-nine, with the other three being married to “Jewesses”. Coughlin said he spoke these words “holding no brief for Germany or for Nazism, simply as a student of history”.

Coughlin said he simply wanted people to understand why the Nazis identified Bolshevism with Judaism, in the hopes that “an insane world will distinguish between the innocent Jew and the guilty Jew”. This was asked “in all charity”. Coughlin said his purpose was to “abolish persecution” by understanding how it arose—Communism had emerged as a response to the depredations of the old world, now Nazism was a reaction to the Communist inroads in Weimar—and to harness this moment to focus on all persecutions, mentioning specifically the hideous persecution of Christians then-ongoing under the Red regimes of Russia, Mexico, and Spain. Coughlin demands of “the good Jews of America” (and those promoting atheism in America) that they condemn “the irreligious atheistic Jews and Gentiles” overseeing the persecutions in the Communist lands.

Warming to his theme, Coughlin says he has documents showing the “Jewish bankers” who financed the Bolshevik coup. He reads a quote about the “Russian Jewish Revolution”, and then urges “charity” in its interpretation. Persecution can end, Coughlin went on, only if “Jewish leaders ... repudiate vigorously atheistic Communism and its followers”. Unless Communism is uprooted, and Jews with their power in the press and finance help in this effort, “unjust defence mechanism[s] similar to Nazism” will spring up all over the place, says Coughlin.

The conclusion of Coughlin’s broadcast was a lengthy complaint that Christians are history’s real victims—persecuted long before the Jews by the Roman Empire, and the antisemitic repression since is cast as a reaction to anti-Christian persecution. Amid this unhinged stuff, Coughlin has one solid point: that the unmerciful savagery of the Bolshevized Spanish Republic against Christian believers had been little-covered in the Western press and had not led to the severing of diplomatic relations by Western countries—but veers straight back into the absurd, blaming this on Jewish radio station owners.