

THE NATIONAL UNION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE [TRANSCRIPTION]

Truly, democracy itself is on trial. It has been given the final mandate to face the real causes of this depression and to end them instead of temporizing with useless efforts for the preservation of a system, both economic and political, which once before watered the fields of Europe with blood and the highways of America with tears.

...

This has to do with a just and living annual wage for all citizens who care to earn their own livelihood. I will deal with the substantial error associated with modern industrialism--an error which, if not eradicated, will logically lead us into the perpetuation of the dole system and thence into communism. After all, the economic analysis of communism teaches us that the State is absolutely supreme; is absolute master and proprietor of all material goods; is the sole industrialist and capitalist, and its citizens are the recipients of chocolate coated doles. Communism is nothing more than a candied pill of glorified *"doleism."*

...

Before speaking further about the distribution of wealth may I be emphatic in my opposition to the philosophy of destructionism or of sabotage. To all purposes destructionism says: *"Let us go back to the year 1900 or to the year 1850. Let us take land out of cultivation. Let us destroy pigs and cotton and wheat and corn."*

If that philosophy were logical, it would also say: *"Let us destroy one out of every three automobile plants; permanently lock the doors of one out of every three steel mills; burn down half our textile factories; food one-third of all our coal mines and pay a bounty to every Dillinger and desperado for removing scientists from our universities."*

It is the philosophy which refuses to face the problem of distribution. It is the philosophy which is attempting to hold us manacled to an obsolete system of finance and of production for a profit only. It is the final attempt on the part of a decadent capitalism to destroy us into prosperity. It is similar to the program of the bankers who, for ten years following the war, attempted to bond us with paper into gold prosperity.

Now, my friends, let no one deceive you with the economic lie that there is over-production when millions are hungry, when millions more are in the

bread line and when 16-million homes in America are deprived of the ordinary conveniences of life--running water, modern plumbing, electricity and modern heat.

There is simply a lack of distribution.

...

My friends, the outworn creed of capitalism is done for. The clarion call of communism has been sounded. I can support one as easily as the other. They are both rotten! But it is not necessary to suffer any longer the slings and arrows of modern capitalism any more than it is to surrender our rights to life, to liberty and to the cherished bonds of family to communism....

To organize for action, if you will! To organize for social united action which will be founded on God-given social truths which belong to Catholic and Protestant, to Jew and Gentile, to black and white, to rich and poor, to industrialist and to laborer.

I realize that I am more or less a voice crying in the wilderness. I realize that the doctrine which I preach is disliked and condemned by the princes of wealth. What care I for that! And, more than all else, I deeply appreciate how limited are my qualifications to launch this organization which shall be known as the NATIONAL UNION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE.

...

How shall we organize? To what principles of social justice shall we pledge ourselves? What action shall we take? These are practical questions which I ask myself as I recognize the fact that this NATIONAL UNION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE must be established in every county and city and town in these United States of America.

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Establishing my principles upon this preamble, namely, that we are creatures of a beneficent God, made to love and to serve Him in this world and to enjoy Him forever in the next; that all this world's wealth of field, of forest, of mine and of river has been bestowed upon us by a kind Father, therefore I believe that wealth, as we know it, originates from natural resources and from the labor which the children of God expend upon these resources. It is all ours except for the harsh, cruel and grasping ways of wicked men who first concentrated wealth into the hands of a few, then dominated states, and finally commenced to pit state against state in the frightful catastrophes of commercial warfare.

Following this preamble, these shall be the principles of social justice towards the realization of which we must strive:

1. I believe in liberty of conscience and liberty of education, not permitting the state to dictate either my worship to my God or my chosen avocation in life.
2. I believe that every citizen willing to work and capable of working shall receive a just, living, annual wage which will enable him both to maintain and educate his family according to the standards of American decency.
3. I believe in nationalizing those public resources which by their very nature are too important to be held in the control of private individuals.
4. I believe in private ownership of all other property.
5. I believe in upholding the right to private property but in controlling it for the public good.
6. I believe in the abolition of the privately owned Federal Reserve Banking system and in the establishment of a Government owned Central Bank.
7. I believe in rescuing from the hands of private owners the right to coin and regulate the value of money, which right must be restored to Congress where it belongs.
8. I believe that one of the chief duties of this Government owned Central Bank is to maintain the cost of living on an even keel and arrange for the repayment of dollar debts with equal value dollars.
9. I believe in the cost of production plus a fair profit for the farmer.
10. I believe not only in the right of the laboring man to organize in unions but also in the duty of the Government, which that laboring man supports, to protect these organizations against the vested interests of wealth and of intellect.
11. I believe in the recall of all non-productive bonds and therefore in the alleviation of taxation.
12. I believe in the abolition of tax-exempt bonds.
13. I believe in broadening the base of taxation according to the principles of ownership and the capacity to pay.
14. I believe in the simplification of government and the further lifting of crushing taxation from the slender revenues of the laboring class.
15. I believe that, in the event of a war for the defense of our nation and its liberties, there shall be a conscription of wealth as well as a conscription of men.
16. I believe in preferring the sanctity of human rights to the sanctity of property rights; for the chief concern of government shall be for the poor because, as it is witnessed, the rich have ample means of their own to care for themselves.

***Bio: Father Charles E. Coughlin** was a Catholic priest who reached a large audience through mass rallies and radio broadcasts. Coughlin, openly antisemitic, was an outspoken critic of the political establishment. This footage shows him addressing more than 80,000 people, the Illinois members of the National Union for Social Justice, at Riverview Park in Chicago. He criticized President Roosevelt (running for a second term as President of the United States) and attacked the government's fiscal policy in the aftermath of the Depression. Coughlin also offered to support any candidate opposed to Communists and Capitalists alike. [Source: Holocaust Encyclopedia by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum]

Source: Father Charles E. Coughlin, "The National Union for Social Justice," 1934.