

**“‘Alternative’ Traditions in American Catholic Social
Thought: The New Deal Critics”**

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Although Monsignor John A. Ryan is the central character in conventional historical treatments of American Catholic social thought in the 1930s, there were other important figures representing Catholic approaches to the social question. Many of these social thinkers diverged from Ryan, particularly on the point of the degree to which they were willing to grant government a dominant role in the realization of social justice. The Catholic critics of the New Deal deserve a place of prominence in our historical understanding of Catholic social thought in the United States.