

National Catholic Welfare  
Conference

— The Nazi war . . .

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the

**NAZI WAR**

against the

**CATHOLIC**

**CHURCH**

*The United States  
National Catholic Welfare Conference  
Washington, D. C.*

the  
NAZI WAR  
against the  
CATHOLIC  
CHURCH

The United States  
National Archives and Records Administration  
Washington, D.C.

# THE NAZI WAR AGAINST THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Quis ergo nos separabit a charitate Christi? tribulatio? an angustia? an fames? an nuditas? an periculum? an persecutio? an gladius?

Certus sum enim quia neque mors, neque vita, neque angeli, neque principatus, neque virtutes, neque instantia, neque futura, neque fortitudo, neque altitudo, neque profundum, neque creatura alia, poterit nos separare a charitate Dei, quae est in Christo Iesu Domino nostro.

Rom. VIII, 35, 38, 39.

## FOREWORD

Nine days after Easter Sunday in the year 1923, a harsh voice made itself heard in the ancient Catholic city of Munich. "If a people is to become free," it proclaimed, "it needs pride, self-will, defiance, hate, hate, and once again hate!"

Four months later, this same speaker made a distinction which precisely defines, today, the gulf between the Christian faith and way of life, and his way and that of his followers. On August 1, 1923, he said, "There are two things which can unite men: common ideals, and common criminality."

Since that Eastertide of less than twenty years ago, the voice of Adolf Hitler has grown louder in the world, and infinitely more powerful for evil. And none have suffered more at his ruthless and ruinous hands than the clergy and faithful of the Church.

Adolf Hitler and his Nazis have perpetrated an assault upon the Catholic Church which in cunning, deceit, audacity and wantonness matches anything his dive-bombers and his armored divisions have done. The assault upon Christianity has accompanied, it has indeed guided and given

ultimate meaning, to the violations and aggressions of his armed forces.

This assault is no haphazard thing. It was and is a calculated effort to root out and destroy the Christian religion. It was and is a shameless attempt to substitute a boastful and bloodthirsty paganism for the Sermon on the Mount. It is the vainglorious effort of the power of darkness, of the voice of destruction, to quench the Light which shineth in darkness, to still the Word by which were made all things that were made. Hitler's impious disciples proclaim him a divinity of strife, hate, and slavery, surpassing the Prince of Peace, the God of Love, whose service is perfect freedom. "It is," says Julius Streicher, "only in one or two exceptional points that Christ and Hitler stand comparison, for Hitler is far too big to be compared with one so petty."

Through the wall of censorship behind which the self-proclaimed Anti-Christ masks his crimes and profanations, have come accounts of persecutions and martyrdoms, in this twentieth century, which take their place with the early trials of our faith. The pages which follow can contain but a tithe of this sombre story. Often, some incidents, dates and places can not be given, for to do so would expose the victims of Hitler to yet further







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## THE CONCORDAT, 1933-1934

**O**N JANUARY 30, 1933, Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of the Reich. The next day he issued a *Proclamation to the German Nation*. He said: "It (the National Government) will preserve and defend those basic principles on which our nation has been built. It regards Christianity as the foundation of our national morality, and the family as the basis of national life."

On February 15, in a speech at Stuttgart, he said again: "And now Staatspräsident Bolz says that Christianity and the Catholic faith are threatened by us. And to that charge I can answer: In the first place it is Christians and not international atheists who now stand at the head of Germany. I do not merely *talk* of Christianity, no, I also profess that I will never ally myself with the parties which destroy Christianity."

Passing over Hitler's inclusion of himself and such as Rosenberg, Streicher, Roehm, Himmler, Goebbels and Goering under the name of Christian, we confine ourselves to the record. A month later, on March 23, 1933, addressing the Reichstag, the new Chancellor repeated no less than three times his protestations of the outstanding role which he purposed to give religion under his regime.

He said: "The Government, being resolved to undertake the political and moral purification of our public life, is creating and securing the conditions necessary for a really profound revival of religious life." And again: "The National Government regards the two Christian Confessions as the weightiest factors for the maintenance of our nationality. It will respect the agreements concluded between it and the federal States." And once more: "In the same way, the Government of the Reich, which regards Christianity as the unshakable foundation of the morals and moral code of the nation, attaches the greatest value to friendly relations with the Holy See, and is endeavoring to develop them."

These assurances, these solemn guarantees from the head of the new German state naturally made a profoundly reassuring impression throughout the world. Yet the records show that exactly two weeks after these last statements of purpose, Hitler expressed himself privately in a diametrically contrary sense. To his party henchmen, he laid bare the depths of his calculated hypocrisy. At the very time when his government was requesting the Vatican to resume negotiations for a Concordat between the Holy See

and the Reich, he explained to his intimates the course of his true intention.

“The religions are all alike,” Hitler declaimed, “no matter what they call themselves. They have no future—certainly none for the Germans. Fascism, if it likes, may come to terms with the Church. So shall I, why not? That will not prevent me from tearing up Christianity root and branch, and annihilating it in Germany.”

Hitler has often boasted of the efficacy of the lie as an instrument of his policy. Still speaking to his party henchmen, he said:

“I am willing to sign anything. I will do anything to facilitate the success of my policy. I am prepared to guarantee all frontiers and to make non-aggression pacts and friendly alliances with anybody. It would be sheer stupidity to refuse to make use of such measures merely because one might possibly be driven into a position where a solemn promise would have to be broken. Anyone whose conscience is so tender that he will not sign a treaty unless he can be sure he can keep it in any and all circumstances is a fool. Why should one

not please others and facilitate matters for oneself by signing pacts if the others believe that something is thereby accomplished or regulated? I shall make any treaty I require. It will never prevent me from doing at any time what I regard as necessary for Germany's interests."

On the night of April 6, 1933, the Führer thus expounded his views on the real role of Christianity and the Church, to Rauschning, Goebbels, Streicher, and a few others of the inner circle. After a passing reflection on the Italians, Hitler went on to say, as reported by Rauschning in his book, *The Voice of Destruction*: "Besides, Mussolini will never make heroes of his Fascists. It doesn't matter whether they are Christians or heathens. But for our people it is decisive whether they acknowledge the Jewish Christ-creed with its effeminate pity-ethics, or a strong, heroic belief in God in Nature, God in our own folk, in our destiny, in our blood. Do you really believe the masses will ever be Christian again? Nonsense. Never again. That tale is finished. No one will listen to it again. But we can hasten matters. *The parsons will be made to dig their*



*own graves. They will betray their God to us. They will betray anything for the sake of their miserable little jobs and incomes."*

Almost immediately, Hitler explained to Rauschning his conviction that the Christian priesthood could be corrupted to become the messengers of a pagan Nazi religion. "Do you think these liberal priests who have no longer a belief, only an office, will refuse to preach *our* God in their Churches? I can guarantee that, just as they have made Haeckel and Darwin, Goethe and Stefan George the prophets of their Christianity, so they will replace the cross with our swastika. Instead of worshipping the blood of their quondam saviour, they will worship the pure blood of our folk. They will receive the fruits of the German soil as a divine gift, and will eat it as a symbol of the eternal communion of the people, as they have hitherto eaten of the body of their God. And when we have reached that point, Streicher, the churches will be crowded again. If we wish it, then it will be so—when it is our religion that is preached there."

This dissertation by Adolph Hitler to his party intimates in the first months of his Chancellorship is remarkable not only for its candid immorality. Even more, it reveals the surpassing

cunning with which he laid his plot, and the exactness with which he foresaw the steps he would take.

In the most cynical and sinister words of all, he anticipated for his little audience of the inner circle the "immorality" trials of two years later.

"Catholic priests know where the shoe pinches," he said to Rauschnig, after having paid grudging tribute to the organizing abilities of the clergy. "But their day is done, and they know it. They are far too intelligent not to see that, and to enter upon a hopeless battle. But if they do, I shall certainly not make martyrs of them. We shall brand them as ordinary criminals. I shall tear the mask of honesty from their faces. And if that is not enough, I shall make them appear ridiculous and contemptible. I shall order films to be made of them. We shall show the history of the monks on the cinema. Let the whole mass of nonsense, selfishness, repression and deceit be revealed: how they drained the money out of the country, how they haggled with the Jews for the world, how they committed incest. We shall make it so thrilling that everyone will want to see it. There will be queues outside the cinemas. And if the pious burghers find the hair rising on their heads in horror, so much the better. The

young people will accept it—the young people and the masses. I can do without the others.”

Exultant in his foretaste of triumph, Hitler went on, as reported in Rauschning's book: “The Church was really something big. Now we are its heirs. We too are a Church. Its day is gone. It will not fight. As long as youth follows me, I don't mind if the old people limp to the confessional. But the young ones—they will be different. I guarantee that.”

“I promise you,” Hitler concluded, “that if I wished to, I could destroy the Church in a few years. It is hollow and rotten and false through and through. One push and the whole structure would collapse.”

On July 20, 1933, the Concordat was signed at Vatican City by Franz von Papen, Vice-Chancellor and plenipotentiary of the Reich, and Cardinal Pacelli, Papal Secretary of State and plenipotentiary of the Holy See.

In a radio broadcast from Bayreuth soon after this event, Hitler delivered himself as follows: “National Socialism has always affirmed that it is determined to take the Christian Churches under the protection of the State.” Referring to the Lateran Treaties as clarifiers of Church and State

relations, Hitler went on to say that "The German Concordat which now has been signed is a second equally clear step in this sphere. It is my sincere hope," he protested, "that thereby for Germany too, through free agreement there has been produced a final clarification of spheres in the functions of the State and of the Church." Hitler, not the Vatican, had sought the Concordat. Hitler, not the Vatican, reduced it to nothing. In keeping with his one immutable principle, Hitler was "willing to sign anything" to facilitate the success of his policy. Wiser, more prescient than other men of those days, the Holy Father did not suffer from many illusions about the value of Hitler's signature. He could not be aware of those statements of policy and purpose which Rauschning has since revealed to us. Yet the Pope was profoundly troubled. In his Encyclical, *Mit Brennender Sorge* ("With Burning Anxiety"), Pius XI explained in 1937 why he entered into the agreement of four years before: "When . . . at the request of the German Government We resumed negotiations for a Concordat on the basis of the proposals worked out several years before, and to the satisfaction of you all concluded a solemn agreement, We were

moved by the solicitude that is incumbent on Us to safeguard the liberty of the Church in her mission of salvation in Germany and the salvation of the souls entrusted to her—and at the same time by the sincere desire to render an essential service to the peaceful development and welfare of the German people.

“In spite of many serious misgivings, We then brought Ourselves to decide not to withhold Our consent . . . By Our act We wished to show to all that, seeking only Christ and the things that are Christ’s, We refuse to none who does not himself reject it the hand of peace of Mother Church.”

The Concordat consisted of thirty-four articles and a Supplementary Protocol. To list these articles in detail, and the hundredfold violations by which each guarantee, each safeguard was repeatedly flouted, is beyond our present scope. A comprehensive treatment of the whole subject, including a compilation of documents and data, is contained in a volume of over five hundred closely printed pages, entitled *The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich*. Published by Burns Oates & Washbourne, Ltd., in 1940, this book is already out of date; and its five hundred

pages deal with the persecution of the Church in Germany alone.

A treaty is worth the good faith in which it is signed. Article 1 of the Concordat reads in part as follows: "The German Reich guarantees freedom of profession and public practice of the Catholic religion. It acknowledges the right of the Catholic Church, within the limits of those laws which are applicable to all, to manage and regulate her own affairs independently . . ."

Within three months, Cardinal Bertram wrote in a Pastoral letter of his "grievous and gnawing anxiety" about Catholic organizations, the freedom of Catholic works of charity, Catholic youth, the freedom of the Catholic press, Catholic Action, and, not least, about the fate of many good Catholics who now had to suffer because of their former political opinions.

In January 1934, within six months of the signing of the Concordat, Hitler coolly showed his hand by a significant appointment: the elevation of Alfred Rosenberg to be the cultural and educational leader of the Reich—Rosenberg, so-called mystic or philosopher of National Socialism, notorious for his enmity to the Christian religion in general and to the Catholic Church in particular.

On April 2, 1934, at a time when Franz von

Papen was in Rome to offer suave explanation of the action of Baldur von Schirach in disbanding young people's organizations, sweeping them into the Hitler Youth, Pope Pius XI issued this message to the Catholic youth of Germany:

“Despite all the hardships through which Providence is leading you and in the face of propaganda working with allurements and with pressure for a new outlook on life which points away from Christ and back to paganism, you have kept your pledge of love and loyalty to the Saviour and His Church.”

On May 20, 1934, when speaking in Rome to five thousand German pilgrims, the Pope again vigorously condemned the new paganism. Twice more that year he repeated his condemnations, with mounting emphasis.

Pope was in Rome to offer some explanation of the action of Baudouin von Schirach in disbanding the young people's organization, warning them into the Hitler Youth. Pope XI issued this message to the Catholic youth of Germany:

Despite all the hardships through which Providence is leading you and in the face of your struggle working with alliments and with your eye for a new outlook on the world points away from Christ and back to paganism, you have kept your pledge of love and loyalty to the Sacrament and His Church."

On May 30, 1934, when speaking to Hitler to five thousand German pilgrims, the Pope again vigorously condemned the new paganism. Twice more that year he repeated his condemnations, with mounting emphasis.



## PERSECUTION IN GERMANY

**I**N 1932 was introduced the proposed release of the Church of Jesus Christ, in Berlin's White Circle Cathedral, the young church led by Father Youth in a Whitechapel village in a Communist area.

"The Nazis are all together,  
They gather for their justice."

## PERSECUTION IN GERMANY

"To the 1935-1937

"And good for justice—  
Let's look for a new day  
The day they were there."

The year of "Whitechapel" (1935) was the year of the Christian church in Whitechapel, London, which had been the center of the church's work of prayer and love. The church was also the center of the church in Whitechapel, London, which had been the center of the church's work of prayer and love. The church was also the center of the church's work of prayer and love.

In January, Dr. Wilhelm, the Nazi Minister of the Interior, proposed to the Council of the Church in Whitechapel. In April, a letter was published in Whitechapel, London, which had been the center of the church's work of prayer and love.

PERSECUTION IN GERMANY  
1932-1937

## PERSECUTION IN GERMANY

**I**N 1935 was instituted the planned ridicule of the Church. Liam O'Connor, in *Hitler's War on the Church*, quotes this song chanted by Hitler Youth in a Württemberg village on a Confirmation Day:

“The blacks are all seducers,

“They fight not for their home;

“As ever they are liars;

“They fight for wealth and Rome.

“’Tis clerics make Reaction

“And good for nothings—so

“Let's beat up all the traitors

“Nor any mercy show.”

The use of “speaking choirs” began this year. Anti-Christian slogans were chanted from trucks, which bore on their sides scurrilous cartoons of priests and nuns. This same year was also marked by attacks on Catholic Youth organizations, which were accused of the palpable absurdity of communist plotting.

In January, Dr. Wilhelm Frick, Nazi Minister of the Interior, urged “putting an end to Church influence over public life.” In April, a decree prohibited the publication of daily papers of a re-

religious nature. This was soon followed by censorship of weekly religious periodicals.

On May 12, the Archbishop of Paderborn, Mgr. Klein, was attacked by Hitler Youth as he arrived at Hamm. "They shouted insults at him," reports Mr. O'Connor, "tried to prevent him from entering his car, attempted to overturn it, spat inside and attacked with knives Catholics who protested."

In July, a decree by Goering against "political Catholicism" placed arbitrary power in the hands of the Nazis. In the same month, at the Reich Education Conference in Munich, Herr Roder of the Ministry of Education exulted: "I was delighted—I say it again, delighted—to wipe twenty monkish training colleges off the face of the earth with one stroke of the pen. I say, nevertheless, that was but a beginning." On July 13, Minister of State Adolf Wagner delivered himself of these sentiments: "In the days that lie immediately ahead of us the fight will not be against Communists or Marxists, but against Catholicism. Everyone will find himself faced with a serious question: German or Catholic?"

On August 11, some thirty truckloads of S.A. men put on a demonstration in Munich. The trucks were marked with such slogans as "Youth

belongs to us and not to the priests." The storm-troopers chanted, "Stick the priests and the Jews against the wall!" This performance was repeated on August 13 and 16 in the streets of Freiburg-im-Breisgau. Trucks, on whose sides were cartoons of priests and nuns, stopped in front of all Catholic institutions, including the Archbishop's palace. The stormtroopers chanted, "The priests must go to the gallows! Down with the priests!"

Hitler himself had set the general tone for the persecutions of this year in an interview which he granted the Reich Leader of the Students' League. He said:

*"We are not out against the hundred and one different kinds of Christianity, but against Christianity itself. All people who profess creeds are smugglers in foreign coin, and traitors to the people. Even those Christians who really want to serve the people—and there are such—will have to be suppressed."*

On July 26, in a speech at Munich, Julius Streicher struck a new note of calumny and blasphemy. This professional merchant of obscenity said: "There is a chaplain in the neighborhood

of Nürnberg who at the moment is under trial. He would say Mass in the morning and in the afternoon go to the station and hire male prostitutes of sixteen and lie with them in the evening. Next morning he would say Mass again, elevate the Host (Streicher imitated this), and the faithful would genuflect before it (Streicher mimicked this also).

“If you only knew the sort of letter we could publish—a letter written by a highly-placed bishop—then you would see that these people are men too.

“In the bedroom of a priest whose brother is a bishop we found things so abnormal that the average man would have no inkling of their use. We brought away from a convent of nuns, which, by the way, is still entrusted with the task of bringing up young girls, a whole heap of pornographic literature . . .”

“Christ mixed a good deal with women. I believe that He stayed with one who was an adultress—so I have heard.”

This minute sampling of the outpourings of Julius Streicher is a fitting introduction to the so-called “Immorality Trials” of the Catholic clergy, which began in the summer of 1935. An eye-witness account of these trials may be found

in *Skeleton of Justice*, by Edith Roper, one of only nine newspaper correspondents allowed access to the German criminal courts. Part of Mrs. Roper's narrative reads as follows:

"The German press heralded the proceedings with these headlines:

**INVESTIGATING AUTHORITIES  
HAVE ENOUGH MATERIAL  
FOR A THOUSAND TRIALS**

---

**A Thousand Trials for Sex Crimes Brought  
Against Catholic Priests, Monks, Nuns and  
Nurses**

---

"The propaganda machine, aiming to excite the lowest instincts of the people, was in full swing. Weeks ahead of time the newspapers promised sensational revelations and details of the alleged sexual aberrations, to make sure that everyone would read about the trials.

"Court proceedings began in the summer. Under the direction of Oberregierungsrat Dr. Doerner and several propaganda 'advisors,' reporters drove to West and South Germany to cover the trials. They had orders to attend every one. Reports were to appear in the newspapers each day. Ordinarily the German courts exclude the public

at the least hint of immoral or sexual matters, but these entire proceedings were open to all who cared to come. One nauseated reporter complained, 'The courts resemble the most shameless brothels you could imagine.'

". . . When the reporters returned to Berlin between sessions, there were long and fiery discussions about the trials. To a man, they were disgusted. They showed me the instructions forbidding them to report the fact that feeble-minded children and other persons of unsound mind were the chief witnesses for the prosecution. They said that not one healthy person or impartial witness was called to testify. We had all known the trials themselves had been instigated only for purposes of propaganda, but nobody had reckoned with such drastic methods or shamelessness. At least three thousand newspapers were required to print the reports of the trial. The *Freiburger Zeitung*, for instance, carried this:

'A sequence of horrors . . . Monks trespass against cripples . . . The lunatic asylum as a place of refuge . . . With dragging steps and trembling limbs, physically deformed, these poor victims stood stuttering and weeping before the



judge in order to repeat, with horrible gestures, their despairing accusation against the bestial criminal . . . All kinds of unnatural lechery . . . Debauches of greatest magnitude . . . Horrible homosexual crimes . . . Thirteen poor crippled children subjected to abominable misdemeanors in the cell of a cloister . . . The child raped, and a bunch of roses given to the mother! . . . Disgusting shamelessness of a criminal in a priest's cassock . . .'

" . . . The trials continued. Neither the accusations nor the methods of procedure were altered. Then one day the reports, and most of the trials as well, were suddenly stopped—long before the specified thousand cases had been completed. At first I thought the Ministry of Justice had prevailed after all. But no. The propaganda division was satisfied and thought it best not to overwork the occasion.

"Newspaper subscriptions may have been cancelled, but the action against the Catholics had succeeded. Two factors had proved decisive. First, the nature of the indictments. The accused could do nothing beyond denying the charges. How could they supply practical proof that they

had not committed the alleged act? If a man's opinions, intentions, or philosophy are attacked, he can defend himself, but this approach the authorities carefully avoided. They allowed no opening for a discussion of ideas or opinions. The Propaganda Ministry had ferreted out a punishable transgression against which only one defense is valid, namely proof of innocence, and the Gestapo had voided in advance every possibility of proving innocence. An intelligent psychological insight was shown in selecting the offense to be prosecuted, for not only the act itself but also the person who commits it arouses repugnance. A thief may be a very appealing person in spite of his thievery, but in the case of indecent assault the public identifies the perpetrator with his offensive act.

“... At first people thought only a few priests and monks belonging to the political opposition were involved, but the Propaganda Ministry had considered this possibility and refrained from taking action, at this point, against any politically suspect priest. Only those never before heard of were indicted, and this made the propaganda ‘take’ in the end. The Germans asked why, if the priests had not proved refractory in either political or church matters, they were being con-

demned. They must have been guilty of the crimes charged."

The next two years were a repetition of what had gone before. One by one, the thirty-four articles of the Concordat were systematically violated. The threat of criminal prosecution on charges designed by the Propaganda Ministry was used as a goad to drive the clergy to accept the subversion of Christian teaching in the Reich. The state strove to impregnate the children of Germany with all the harsh cynicism of National Socialist ideology, and to crush out of their hearts the words of Christ. One example, among many, of the precepts of the new German morality comes from a textbook distributed in 1936 to all schools in Germany:

"The teaching of mercy and love of one's neighbor is foreign to the German race and the Sermon on the Mount is, according to Nordic sentiment, an ethic for cowards and idiots."

Against such a background, on March 14, 1937, was issued the great Encyclical of Pope Pius XI, *On the Situation of the Catholic Church in Germany*, "Mit Brennender Sorge." Nowhere is there to be found a more penetrating statement of the

nature of those "intrigues which from the beginning had no other aim than a war of extermination." Because of the Encyclical's enduring importance, a considerable part of it is herewith reprinted.

**TO THE VENERABLE ARCHBISHOPS  
AND BISHOPS AND OTHER ORDINA-  
RIES IN PEACE AND COMMUNION  
WITH THE APOSTOLIC SEE: ON THE  
SITUATION OF THE CATHOLIC  
CHURCH IN GERMANY**

**POPE PIUS XI**

**Venerable Brethren, Greeting and  
Apostolic Benediction:**

With deep anxiety and with ever growing dismay We have for a considerable time watched the Church treading the Way of the Cross and the gradually increasing oppression of the men and women who have remained devoted to her in thought and in act in that country and among that people to whom St. Boniface once brought the light of the Gospel of Christ and of the Kingdom of God.

If the tree of peace planted by Us with pure intention in German soil has not borne

the fruit We desired in the interests of your people, no one in the whole world who has eyes to see or ears to hear can say today that the fault lies with the Church and with her Supreme Head. The experience of the past years fixes the responsibility. It discloses intrigues which from the beginning had no other aim than a war of extermination. In the furrows in which We had laboured to sow the seeds of true peace, others—like the enemy in Holy Scripture (Matt. xiii. 25)—sowed the tares of suspicion, discord, hatred, calumny, of secret and open fundamental hostility to Christ and His Church, fed from a thousand different sources and making use of every available means. On them and on them alone and on their silent and vocal protectors rests the responsibility that now on the horizon of Germany there is to be seen not the rainbow of peace but the threatening storm-clouds of destructive religious war.

... Even today when the open war against the confessional schools, which were guaranteed by the Concordat, and the nullification of the freedom of ballot for those entitled to a Catholic education, show the tragic seriousness of the situation in a field

which is a vital interest of the Church and an oppression of the conscience of the faithful such as has never before been witnessed, Our paternal solicitude for the well-being of souls counsels Us not to leave out of consideration any prospects however slight which may still exist of a return to the faithful observance of the pacts and to an agreement permitted by Our conscience. In accordance with the prayers of the most reverend members of the episcopate, we shall not weary in the future of defending violated right before the rulers of your people, unconcerned with temporary success or failure and obedient only to Our conscience and to Our pastoral office, and We shall not cease to oppose an attitude of mind which seeks with open or secret violence to stifle a chartered right.

. . . In this hour in which their faith is being tried like true gold in the fire of tribulation, and of secret and open persecution, when they are surrounded by a thousand forms of organised religious bondage, when the lack of truthful news and of normal means of defence weighs heavily upon them, they have a double claim to a word of truth

and of spiritual encouragement from him to whose first predecessor Our Saviour addressed these deeply significant words: "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and thou being once converted, confirm thy brethren" (Luke xxii. 32).

... Whoever according to an alleged primitive German pre-Christian conception substitutes a gloomy and impersonal fate for a personal God, denying God's wisdom and providence which "reacheth from end to end mightily and ordereth all things sweetly" (Wisdom viii. 1), cannot claim to be numbered among believers in God.

Whoever transposes Race or People, the State or Constitution, the executive or other fundamental elements of human society (which in the natural order have an essential and honourable place), from the scale of earthy values and makes them the ultimate norm of all things, even of religious values, and deifies them with an idolatrous cult, perverts and falsifies the divinely created and appointed order of things. Such a man is far from true belief in God and from a conception of life in conformity to it.

Only superficial minds can fall into the

error of speaking of a national God, of a national religion, and of making a mad attempt to imprison within the frontiers of a single people, within the pedigree of one single race, God, the Creator of the world, the King, and lawgiver of the peoples before whose greatness the nations are as small as drops in a bucket of water (Isaias xl. 15).

. . . Only blindness and self-will can close men's eyes to the treasure of instruction for salvation hidden in the Old Testament. He who wishes to see Bible history and the wisdom of the Old Testament banished from church and school blasphemes the word of God, blasphemes the Almighty's plan of salvation and sets up narrow and limited human thought as the judge of God's plans.

In your territories, Venerable Brethren, voices are raised in an ever louder chorus, urging men to leave the Church, and preachers arise who from their official position try to create the impression that such a departure from the Church and the consequent infidelity to Christ the King is a particularly convincing and meritorious proof of their loyalty to the present régime. By disguised and by open methods of coercion, by intimi-



dation, by holding out prospects of economic, professional, civil or other kinds of advantages, the loyalty of Catholics to their faith, and especially of certain classes of Catholic officials, is subjected to a violence which is as unlawful as it is inhuman. With the feelings of a father We are moved and suffer profoundly with those who have paid such a price for their fidelity to Christ and to the Church; but the point has been reached where it is a question of the last and ultimate end, salvation or perdition, and here the only way of salvation for the believer lies in heroic fortitude. When the temptor or the oppressor approaches with the traitorous suggestion that he should leave the Church, then he can only answer, even at the price of the heaviest earthly sacrifices, in the words of our Saviour: "Begone, Satan: for it is written: The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve" (Matt. iv. 10; Luke iv. 8). But to the Church he will speak these words: "O thou who art my mother from the earliest days of my childhood, my comfort in life, my advocate in death, may my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth if I, yielding to earthly persua-

sions or threats, should turn traitor to my baptismal vow." Then to those who flatter themselves that they can reconcile with outward abandonment of the Church an interior loyalty to her, let the words of the Redeemer be a severe rebuke: "He that shall deny me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in heaven" (Luke xii. 9; Matt. x. 33).

... When persons who are not even united in faith in Christ entice you and flatter you with the picture of a "German national church," know that that is nothing but a denial of the one Church of Christ, manifest apostasy from the command of Christ to preach the gospel to the whole world, which can alone be accomplished by a universal Church. The historical development of other national churches, their spiritual torpor, their stifling by, or subservience to, lay power show the hopeless sterility which inevitably attacks the branch that separates itself from the living vine-stem of the Church. Whoever on principle gives to these false developments a watching and unflinching "No" is rendering a service not only to the purity of

his own faith, but also to the welfare and vitality of his people.

... To leave moral forces of such profound strength unused or deliberately to exclude them from the field of popular education is irresponsible cooperation in the religious starvation of a community. To hand over moral teaching to subjective and temporary human opinions instead of anchoring it to the holy will of the everlasting God and to His commandments means opening wide the doors to the forces of destruction. Thus to encourage the abandonment of the eternal principles of the objective moral law in the formation of consciences, in the ennobling of all the spheres of life and of all its ordinances, is a sin against the future of a people, and its bitter fruit will have to be tasted by future generations.

Conscientious parents, aware of their duty in education, have a primary and original God-given right to determine the education of the children given them by God in the spirit of the true faith and in accordance with its fundamental principles and precepts. Laws or other regulations concerning schools, which take no account of the rights of the

parents given them by natural law, or which by threats or violence nullify them, contradict the natural law and are essentially immoral. The Church, the chosen guardian and interpreter of the natural law, cannot do otherwise than declare that the enrolments of pupils which have just taken place in circumstances of notorious coercion are the effects of violence and void of all legality.

. . . We direct especially fatherly words to youth. By a thousand tongues today there is preached in your ears a gospel which has not been revealed by the heavenly Father: a thousand pens write in the service of a sham Christianity which is not the Christianity of Christ. The printing-press and the radio flood you daily with productions the contents of which are hostile to faith and to Church, and unscrupulously and irreverently attack what, for you, must be sacred and holy.

And today when new perils and trials threaten, We say to this youth: "If anyone preach to you a gospel besides that which you have received" at the knees of a pious mother, from the lips of a believing father, from the lessons of a teacher faithful to God

and to His Church, "let him be anathema" (Gal. i. 9). If the State organizes a national youth association which is compulsory for all, then—without prejudice to the rights of religious associations—it is an obvious and inalienable right of the young, and also of their parents who are responsible before God for them, to demand that that association be cleansed from all activities hostile in spirit to Christian faith and to the Church, activities which up to the most recent times, and even at the present moment, place believing parents in a state of insoluble perplexity of conscience, since they cannot give the State what is demanded from them in the name of the State without taking from God what belongs to God.

. . . You are told much about heroic greatness, intentionally and falsely contrasted with the humility and patience of the Gospel; but why are you not told that there is a heroism in the moral struggle, that to keep baptismal innocence is a heroic act which ought to be appreciated as it deserves whether in the religious or the natural sphere? You are told much of human weaknesses in the history of the Church, but why

are you not told of the great deeds which have accompanied her path across the centuries, the saints she has produced, the blessing which came to Western civilization from the living union between that Church and your people? You are told a great deal about athletic sports. Practised in moderation and discretion, physical training is beneficial to youth. But often today so much time is devoted to it that no account is taken of the complete and harmonious development of body and spirit, nor of the fitting care of family life, nor of the commandment of Sunday observance. With a disregard bordering on indifference the sacred character and peace of the Lord's Day, which are in the best German tradition, are taken away.

We address a particularly heartfelt greeting to Catholic parents. Their rights and their duties in the education of the children God has given them are at the present moment at a crucial point in a struggle than which none graver could scarcely be imagined. The Church of Christ cannot wait to begin to mourn and weep until her altars have been despoiled and sacrilegious hands have destroyed the houses of God in smoke

and fire. When the attempt is made to desecrate the tabernacle of a child's soul, sanctified by baptism, by an antichristian education, when from this living temple of God the flame of belief is cast out and in its place is put the false light of a substitute for faith which has nothing in common with zeal for the Cross, then the spiritual profanation of the temple is at hand, and it is the duty of every believer to separate clearly his responsibility from that of the other side, and to keep his conscience clear from any sinful collaboration in such unhallowed destruction. The more adversaries strive to deny or gloss over their dark designs, the more necessary is a vigilant distrust and distrustful vigilance stimulated by bitter experience. The nominal maintenance of religious instruction, especially when controlled and fettered by incompetent people in the atmosphere of a school which in other branches of instruction works systematically and invidiously against this same religion, can never justify a faithful Christian in accepting freely such an anti-religious educational system. We know, beloved Catholic parents, that there can be no question on your part of such a consent. We

know that a free and secret ballot would mean for you an overwhelming majority in favour of the confessional school. Therefore in future We shall not grow weary of frankly reproaching those in responsible positions with the illegality of the coercive measures hitherto adopted and of demanding the right to allow a free manifestation of the people's will.

He who searches the hearts and the reins (Ps. vii. 10) is Our witness that We have no more heartfelt wish than the restoration of a true peace between Church and State in Germany. But if through no fault of Ours there is not to be peace, the Church of God will defend her rights and her liberties in the name of the Almighty whose arm even today is not shortened. Full of trust in Him "we cease not to pray and to beg" (Col. i. 9) for you, the children of the Church, that the days of tribulation may be shortened and that you may be found faithful in the day of trial; and also for the persecutors and the oppressors that the Father of all light and all mercy may grant to them and to all who with them have erred, and are erring, an hour of en-



lightenment like that given to Saul on the way to Damascus.

With this prayer of supplication in Our heart and on Our lips, as a pledge of divine assistance and as a support in your difficult and responsible decisions, and as an aid in the struggle, a comfort in sorrow to your bishops, pastors of your faithful people, to the priests, to the religious, to the lay apostles of Catholic Action and to all your diocesans and not least to those who are sick and those in prison, We impart with fatherly love the Apostolic Blessing.

Given at the Vatican on Passion Sunday,  
March 14, 1937.

PIUS PP. XI

This message from the Vicar of Christ speaks impressively for itself, and for humanity.

The German Government's retaliation also speaks for itself, and for the Nazis.

Twelve printing offices which printed the Encyclical were closed. Religious periodicals which had reproduced its text were banned for three months. All copies which the police could lay hands on were confiscated. Men and women who had transcribed or circulated the Encyclical were arrested.

Hitler struck back too by putting a thousand more clerics on trial for alleged sexual crimes. "They," he said, "have no title to criticize the morals of a State when they have more than enough reason to concern themselves with their own morals." A variation on this refrain was produced by Goebbels, a few weeks later. In a speech at Deutschland Hall on May 28, he said: "When, therefore, it is declared in church circles that the publication of what goes on at these trials endangers the morals of youth, I must point out that it is not the newspapers but the criminal sexual trespasses of the Catholic clergy which are threatening the physical and moral well-being of German youth. And I can declare in the fullest measure to the German people now listening to me that this sex plague must and will be ruthlessly extirpated. And if the church has proved itself too weak for this task, then the State will carry it out."

But the central contention of the Nazis was that in protesting against their bare-faced violations of the Concordat, and wanton persecution of religion itself, the Pope had intruded in the political sphere of the state. On May 1, in a speech at Berlin, Hitler said: "So long as they (the Churches) concern themselves with their

religious problems the State does not concern itself with them. But so soon as they attempt by any means whatever—by letters, Encyclica, or otherwise—to arrogate to themselves rights which belong to the State alone we shall force them back into their proper spiritual, pastoral activity.” So much for Article 4 of the Concordat, which had guaranteed the Vatican freedom in its relations and correspondence with the Catholic Church and clergy in Germany.

The Nazis professed not to persecute religion, but only to protect the political rights of their régime. Yet how far they unblushingly perverted and confused the established meaning of words and distinctions is exceptionally clear in a passage from Goebbels, later this same year—one of those blasphemies so relished as humor by the grosser part of his Nazi audiences. “The true political pastors of the German nation,” he announced, “are the National Socialists, while the Church squabbles about the administration of the Eucharist under one kind or both. The National Socialist régime provides no tidbits for the belly, but it does furnish delicacies for the soul.”

The Holy Father made answer to Hitler, Goeb-

bels and their fellows, on Christmas Eve, 1937, in his message to the College of Cardinals.

“No, by the grace of God, we have not lost the true names. We wish to call things by their true names. In Germany, in fact, there is religious persecution. For some time people have been saying and trying to make other people believe there is no persecution, but we know there is—and very grave persecution. Indeed, rarely has there been persecution so grave, so terrible, so painful, so sad in its deep effects. It is a persecution that lacks neither the brutality of violence nor the pressure of threats nor the deceits of cunning and falsehood . . . Our protest, therefore, could not be more explicit or more resolute before the whole world. We are engaged in religion and not in politics. Every one knows it, and all those can see it who wish to see.”

## PERSECUTION IN EUROPE

**W**ritten by the author of *The Holocaust: The Making of the Killing Machine*, this book is a comprehensive and accessible history of the persecution of Jews in Europe from 1933 to 1945. It covers the rise of Nazism, the Nuremberg Laws, the Kristallnacht pogrom, the Final Solution, and the Holocaust itself. The book is written in a clear and engaging style, making it an excellent resource for students and general readers alike.

### PERSECUTION IN EUROPE 1938-1941

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By [Author Name]  
[Publisher Name]



## PERSECUTION IN EUROPE

**“WE** began our fight with political Catholicism in March 1933,” shouted Minister of State Adolf Wagner in March of 1938. “The time has now come to continue this fight. Away with political priests! Down with political Catholicism!”

“I am absolutely clear in my own mind,” Reich Leader Alfred Rosenberg echoed, “and I think I can speak for the Führer as well, that both the Catholic Church and the Evangelical Confessional Church, as they exist at present, must vanish from the life of our people.”

Speech was soon turned into action in a series of assaults upon the persons of churchmen of high position. Victims of physical violence, in the space of a few months only, were Bishop Sproll of Rothenburg, thrice attacked, Cardinal von Faulhaber of Munich, twice attacked, and Cardinal Innitzer of Vienna, also subjected to two attacks. The attacks on Cardinal Innitzer are typical of the general methods employed by the Nazis. A description of one of these we quote from the *Osservatore Romano* of October 15, 1938.

“On Friday, October 7, a service for Catholic youth took place in St. Ste-

phen's Cathedral . . . The Hitler Youth and the SA had gathered there too and started counter-shouts and whistlings: 'Down with Innitzer! Our faith is Germany.' . . . Bands of SA men gathered together in front of the Bishop's residence and staged noisy demonstrations with the shout that the Cardinal should be taken to Dachau . . .

"The next day, Saturday, October 8, at 8:15 in the evening, the demonstrations started again from all sides, including the Rothenturmstrasse, so that the residence was entirely surrounded. Stones came from all directions, and all the windows were broken. Again and again the police were asked for assistance, as the demonstrators were endeavoring to break in, and several police stations promised to give aid. In spite of this, however, the heavy door was broken a quarter of an hour later and a disorderly crowd poured in, destroying everything they came across in the ante-chambers and on the staircase. The inmates of the residence hurried towards the chapel to the Cardinal's protection.



It was feared that the Blessed Sacrament would be the object of a sacrilege and a priest consumed the Sacred Hosts—and indeed it was high time, for the intruders had reached the episcopal chapel, struck a secretary of the Cardinal unconscious, destroyed the statue of a saint and, pursuing their vandalism, stormed the study of the Cardinal, where they broke open a writing table and smashed a crucifix. The purple pectoral cross and ring of the Cardinal were stolen, and everywhere the furniture was smashed, pictures slashed and objects of art demolished . . .

“The crowd had insulted the Cardinal in a most violent and vulgar way. His life had, indeed, been saved, but in another house of the Cathedral *Curia* very brutal things had occurred. The house was first thoroughly damaged and then a curate, Fr. Kravarnik, was taken and thrown out of a window. He was seriously injured, and it is said that both his legs were broken so that his life is in danger.

“Outside on the square the Cardinal’s

purple mantle, some articles of personal use, furniture, carpets, etc., were burnt. The outrages were not reported in any of the Vienna newspapers."

At the close of the year, the Pope again protested against the violence of the Nazis, in language recalling Nero and Judas the Betrayer, comparing Hitler with Julian the Apostate. The Supreme Pontiff decried in particular efforts being made in Berlin to represent the recent occurrences in Vienna so as to make the assaulted Catholics appear as almost the authors of the aggression.

On January 30, 1939, Hitler celebrated the sixth anniversary of his accession to the dictatorship of the Reich, in one of his lengthier speeches. Despite the record of those six years, he protested that: "Among the outcries against Germany raised today in the so-called democracies is the assertion that National Socialist Germany is an anti-religious State." To counter these outcries, he baldly asserted that, "No one in Germany has hitherto been persecuted for his religious views, nor will anybody be persecuted on that account." Then he continued, "But the National Socialist State will ruthlessly make clear

to those clergy who, instead of being God's ministers, regard it as their mission to speak insultingly of our present Reich, its organization or its leaders, that no one will tolerate a destruction of the State and that a clergy that places itself beyond the pale of the law will be called to account before the law like any other German citizen."

On February 10, the Holy Father died. Three weeks later, Eugenio Cardinal Pacelli, Papal Secretary of State, was elected Pope, taking the name of Pius XII.

In the time of Pope Pius XI, the Nazi attack on Christianity was in the main confined to the German lands. His successor has been confronted by an assault upon the Church which has extended itself ever more widely over Europe, following step by step the Nazi military conquest of other peoples.

### CZECHOSLOVAKIA

On October 1, 1938, Nazi armed forces crossed the frontiers of Czechoslovakia. Persecution of the Catholic clergy in the Sudetenland began, according to plan, almost at once.

Czech priests who for years had ministered to both Czechs and Germans in the Sudeten district

were robbed of their property and were expelled by the Nazis. Those remaining were deprived of all financial support and forced to do manual labor. All private schools were closed. Religious instruction was forbidden in state schools. Religious orders were suppressed.

Hitler's armies marched into Prague on March 15, 1939. The provinces of Bohemia and Moravia were made into a Protectorate of the Reich. The "protection" immediately took an accustomed form. Within a month of the occupation, Nazi police had arrested various representatives of the Catholic church. Gestapo agents went into churches to supervise sermons. Hundreds of priests were denounced, haled to the headquarters of the secret political police, and tortured.

In June 1939, Corpus Christi processions were forbidden in many districts. Monasteries and convents were requisitioned, and monks were humiliated and imprisoned.

Later in the year, after war had broken out, the persecutions were extended. In September, the Gestapo arrested four-hundred eighty-seven priests in the occupied territory of Czechoslovakia. These included Mgr. Stasek, Canon of Vysehrad in Prague and Mgr. Tenora, Dean of the Cathedral in Brno. They were taken to prison

and later to concentration camps. Six directors of Catholic charities were seized, including the well-known leader, Mgr. Stanovsky.

Shortly after the occupation of Prague, Carlo Cardinal Kaspar, Archbishop of Prague and Primate of Bohemia, was arrested for refusal to obey the Nazis' order that he instruct priests to discontinue pilgrimages to shrines and holy places. He was reported, re-arrested in July, and again in September 1940, when he again refused to obey this order. He died the following year, it is said of grief over the fate of his country and faith, and as a consequence of treatment received at the hands of the Nazis.

On October 28, 1940, it was reported that priests were being forced to present their sermons in advance to the Gestapo, and that they were compelled to deliver them from the pulpit with the corrections made by the Nazis, on pain of imprisonment. Priests also are reported to have been instructed to use the Bible "only so far as its guidance is not contrary to Nazi aims."

In Bohemia and Moravia, religious instruction was suppressed by the occupying power. Teachers of religion were driven from the schools. The theological faculties of Prague and Olmütz, and religious seminaries in all episcopal seats in the

provinces were closed immediately after the occupation. The property of most monasteries and convents was confiscated. German administrators were installed in other Church properties. Monks and nuns were driven from secular hospitals where they had worked as attendants, nurses and physicians. Several hospitals maintained by religious orders were closed.

Early in September 1940, all Catholic associations in the Protectorate were dissolved. The Catholic press came under stricter supervision, and many individual publications were suppressed. In general, all were compelled to publish articles supplied by the Nazi Propaganda Ministry.

The Pope's Encyclical *Summi Pontificatus* was confiscated in the mail.

And all this was accompanied by the constant pressure of physical violence.

Reliable Czech eye-witnesses report that when the Canons of Brno Cathedral arrived at Spielberg fortress for internment, S. S. guards siezed them and dragged them to the chapel. There, one priest was forced into the pulpit and compelled to read aloud a sacrilegious address. The older priests were made to dance around the altar holding torn-down crucifixes.

Again, at a Catholic festival at Bohdance, on June 15, 1941, the procession was kneeling before the altar in the open. Nazis threw themselves upon the procession, which consisted largely of women, girls and children. They knocked down and trampled the participants, particularly the girls in their white ceremonial dresses. When the priests led the procession back into the church, the Nazis stood outside, singing "Wir marschieren in die ganze Welt." The priest was arrested and interned.

Catholics at church and attending pilgrimages to the shrine of Stara Boleslav found that Gestapo agents were mingling with them. Hundreds were denounced. Priests were arrested.

Finally pilgrimages were forbidden altogether. The last one took place at Domazlece, where the priest managed to finish his sermon, to an immense congregation, just before being arrested.

## POLAND

At dawn on September 1, 1939, Nazi Panzer divisions attacked Poland. The assault upon the Catholic faithful of Poland followed quick upon the invasion of the Polish soil. An official account of these persecutions has been submitted to the Vatican by Cardinal Hlond, Primate of Poland.

We quote a partial selection of these reports:

*Excerpts from the Reports of Cardinal Hlond*

*Archdiocese of Gniezno*—"The archiepiscopal seminary of philosophy at Gniezno was taken over by the soldiers. A German general has taken the archiepiscopal palace as his quarters. The homes of the expelled Canons, as likewise the dwelling places of the lower clergy of the Basilica, have been occupied by the Germans . . . The principal parish church, that of the Holy Trinity, was profaned, the parish house invaded, and the entire belongings were stolen.

"Many priests are imprisoned, suffering humiliations, blows, maltreatment. A certain number were deported to Germany . . . Others have been detained in concentration camps . . . Imprisonment and arrest were carried out in such circumstances that priests did not even have the opportunity either of consuming or of placing the Blessed Sacrament in a place secure from profanation . . . In the camp of Gorna Grupa they have been frequently maltreated. It is not rare to see a priest in the midst of labour gangs working in the fields, repairing roads and bridges, drawing wagons of coal, at work in the sugar factories, and even engaged in demolishing the syna-



gogues. Some of them have been shut up for the night in pigsties, barbarously beaten and subjected to other tortures.

“At Bydgoszcz, in September (1939), about 5,000 men were imprisoned in a stable, in which there was not even room to sit on the ground. A corner of the stable had been designated as the place for the necessities of nature. The Canon Casimir Stepczynski, rural dean and parish priest of the place, was obliged, in company with a Jew, to carry away in his hands the human excrement, a nauseating task . . . The curate, Adam Musial, who wished to take the place of the venerable priest, was brutally beaten with a rifle-butt.

“The Rev. Anthony Bobrzynski, curate at Znin, was arrested on the street while, vested in surplice and stole, he was carrying the Viaticum to a dying person. The sacred vestments were torn from his back, the Blessed Sacrament was profaned, and the unfortunate priest was dragged at once to prison.

“Those churches which still have the ministrations of priests are permitted to be open only on Sunday, and then only from nine to eleven o'clock in the morning . . . Sermons are allowed to be preached only in German, but since these serve often as a pretext for the Germans to carry

off the priests to prison there is scarcely any preaching. Church hymns in Polish have been forbidden . . . Marriages are not being celebrated, as it is severely forbidden to bless a marriage which has not already been contracted before an official of the civil government. The latter, as a matter of principle, does not admit marriages between Poles. In various places the priests are interned in their own homes, and cannot bring the last sacraments to the dying.

“The crucifixes were removed from the schools. No religious instruction is being imparted. It is forbidden to collect offerings in the churches for the purpose of worship. The priests are being compelled to recite publicly a prayer for Hitler after the Sunday Mass.

“. . . The Catholic Action, so flourishing but six months ago, has been proscribed . . . Catholic societies of charity, the Ladies of Charity, the Conferences of St. Vincent de Paul, the pious foundations, have been dissolved, and their funds confiscated.

“From the time of the entrance of the German troops into these regions, numerous crucifixes, busts and statues of Our Lord, the Blessed Virgin and of the Saints that adorned the streets were battered to the ground. The artistic statues

of the patron saints, placed in the squares of the cities, and even the pictures and sacred monuments on houses and on private grounds, met with the same fate.

“A repugnant scene took place at the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration of Bydgoszcz. The Gestapo invaded the papal cloister, and summoned the nuns to the chapel, where the Blessed Sacrament was exposed. One of the police ascended the pulpit and cried that the nuns were wasting their time praying, because ‘God does not exist, for if there were a God, we would not be here.’ The nuns, with the exception of the Superioress, who was gravely ill, were conducted outside of the cloister, and shut up for twenty-four hours in the cellars of the Passtelle (passport office). Meanwhile the Gestapo searched the convent, and one of the policemen carried to the Superioress, confined to bed in her cell, the ciborium that had been taken out of the tabernacle. He commanded her to consume the consecrated hosts, crying: ‘Auffressen!’ (Eat them up). The unfortunate nun carried out the command, but at one point asked for water, which was refused. With an effort the nun managed to consume all the sacred species, and thus save them from further profanation.”

*Archdiocese of Poznan*—"The Curia and the Metropolitan Court, whether of first or second instance, for Cracow, Lwow and Wloclawek are closed and in the hands of the Gestapo, who are making a study of the records. The archiepiscopal palace was invaded by soldiers who have remained there for weeks ruining its fittings. The records of the Primatial Chancellory have been and still are being carefully examined by the Gestapo, who also raided the important archiepiscopal archives.

"... The Cathedral of Poznan, which is at the same time parish church of 14,000 souls, was closed by the police under the pretext of being unsafe for use. The keys are in the hands of the Gestapo. The most beautiful of Poznan's churches, the Collegiate Church of St. Mary Magdalene, a parish of 23,000 souls, has likewise been closed.

"... The Theological Seminary, which numbered 120 students in the four-year course, was closed by the German authorities in October and the buildings were given over to a school for policemen. The land belonging to the Seminary, about 1,700 hectares, has been given to the confidence agents to be exploited by them.

"The clergy is subjected to the same treatment

as the priests of the archdiocese of Gniezno. They are maltreated, arrested, held in prison or concentration camps, deported to Germany, expelled to Central Poland. At present about fifty are in prison and in concentration camps.

“The pastors Rev. John Jadrzyk of Lechlin, Rev. Anthony Kozlowicz, Rev. Adam Schmidt of Roznowo, and Rev. Anthony Rzadki, professor of religion at Srem, have been shot. There is insistent report that other priests have also been shot, but the report is not certain, for one reason that the executions are being carried out now without publicity being given to them.

“. . . The churches that are open can be used for devotions only on Sundays from 9 till 11. Priests have begun to say Mass on week-days in the early hours of the morning behind closed doors. Marriages are not being celebrated. There are no sermons and no music. Crucifixes have been removed from class-rooms, as well as holy pictures, and religion is no longer taught.

“The Polish Episcopate had made Poznan the national centre for organization and direction of religious activity and especially of the Catholic Action for the entire Republic. Unfortunately, all these centres of tremendous activity, charitable

works, organizations, and publications have been destroyed by German authorities.

“The national centres of the Pontifical Association for the Propagation of the Faith, and of St. Peter Apostle have been suppressed.

“... The National Institute for Catholic Action has been abolished. It was the directing centre of all the Catholic activity in Poland.

“... The National President of Catholic Action, the lawyer Mr. Dziembowski, and the office staff are in prison. The Director of the National Institute, Rev. Francis Marlewski, was first imprisoned, then expelled into Central Poland.

“The offices of the national centres of the Association of Catholic Women were raided and assigned to other purposes; the same is true of the offices of the Catholic Youth and Catholic Girls Associations. The National President of the Catholic Youth Association, Edward Potworowski, a noble of Gola, Private Chamberlain of Cape and Sword to His Holiness, was publicly shot in Gostyn Square. The President of the Catholic Girls Association, Miss Maria Suchocka, also of a noble family, together with her mother and brother, who had been deprived of his pharmacy at Pleszew, was robbed even of personal effects and expelled to Central Poland.

“The Graduate School of Catholic Social Studies has been closed.

“. . . The Catholic Institute of Pedagogy has been closed. This was a school recognized officially, destined to form competent and qualified teachers and nurses for Catholic schools and hospitals. It was frequented by many Sisters.

“The illustrated Catholic weekly, *Przewodnik Katolicki*, a paper for the people, has ceased to exist after a brilliant career of forty-three years.

“The esteemed Catholic weekly, *Kultura*, has been suppressed.

“The *Tecza*, an illustrated, literary Catholic monthly of more than ordinary value, is no longer edited.

“The *Ruch Katolicki* has been suppressed, a monthly publication and official organ of Catholic Action.

“The *Zjednoczenie*, an organ of the National Association of Catholic Women, the *Przyjaciel Młodzieży* and the *Młoda Polka*, organs respectively of the Catholic Boys and the Catholic Girls Associations, have been suppressed.

“The *Teologia Praktyczna*, monthly pastoral review for the clergy of Poland, has been suppressed.

“The monthly review *Ruch Charytatywny*, or-

gan of the Christian Charity movement in Poland, has been suppressed.

“The *Przewodnik Społeczny*, a Catholic monthly dedicated to modern social questions, has been suppressed.

“Besides these organizations and publications of national scope, all the organizations and publications in Poznan belonging to the archdiocese of Gniezno and Poznan were suppressed.”

Report of Nov. 29, 1939.

“. . . Our boys and a part of our girls over fourteen years of age are being deported to Germany. After the Sunday services these young people are arrested at the church door and sent off; a transport leaves every week.

“. . . Nothing certain is known of the fate of Canon Schulz of Bydgoszcz; probably he has been shot, and Canon Casimir Stepczynski as well. The Lazarist Fathers Wiorek and Szarek have been shot, while their confrères are in prison; soldiers are indulging in orgies in the church, which was closed under the pretext that the dome was unsafe. The priests of the deanery of Gniewkowo were all taken to prison and nothing more is known of them. Fr. Skrzypczak was killed by blows of a rifle. The parish priest, Fr.



Domachowski, was imprisoned and obliged to repair a bridge, standing up to his waist in water.

“ . . . Fr. Klein of Chometowo was imprisoned and forced to break stones on the streets. Fr. Janke of Jaktorowo has been shot. All the priests of Kcynia have been deported; the church there has been closed for two months. Fr. Romoald Soltysinski of Rzadkwin has died in prison. At Strzelno eighteen priests were put in prison, some of whom were later released, others deported. Fr. Cichowski of Sololniki has been in prison from the beginning and nothing is known of his fate. Fr. Namyslowski was beaten; they tried to force him by inhuman torture to profane the cross; he was taken to Wrzesnia half dead, and nothing more has been heard of him. Fr. Smolinski of Morzewo was put in prison and forced to dig potatoes. At Naklo, the pastor, Fr. Geppert, and his assistants, Frs. Chojnacki and Domek, were put in prison and are probably at Buchenwald near Weimar; their church is closed and ecclesiastical funds confiscated. Fr. Chojnacki has been forced to transport coal through the streets of Naklo. Fr. Koncewicz, at first in prison at Gniezno, was later deported to Germany. Canon Schwarz, at first in prison, has now been interned. Mgr. Schvenborn is in prison. Fr. Lewicki of

Goscieszyn was shot. The interned priests of the deanery of Trzemeszno were compelled to tear down a synagogue. For the past two months Mass was no longer celebrated in the District of Znin; all the priests are under arrest; the administration of the Sacraments is forbidden. Fr. Zeno Niziolekiewicz has been shot. At present the priests of Znin are forced to break stones on the streets."

Report of Dec. 10, 1939.

". . . The Gestapo rages especially against Catholic Action, all of whose funds they have confiscated. The national president and its officials are in prison.

"Crucifixes and statues which lined the roads and had given the country a Catholic character have been destroyed; even the holy figures of saints that were on the houses or in the gardens have been destroyed. In one district candles were confiscated from the churches.

". . . The primatial palace of Poznan has been completely ruined, the pious objects of devotion destroyed, decorations torn down, furniture broken. They carried off the linen, wine, and paintings; they burnt records and books."

*Diocese of Chelmno*—Incorporated in the Reich.

“. . . The ancient Cathedral, a veritable jewel of Gothic art, was first closed and then made into a garage, and it is now proposed to turn it into a market-hall. The statue of the Immaculate Virgin, erected in front of the Cathedral in 1854 to commemorate the promulgation of the Dogma, has been overthrown.

“The bishop’s palace was entered and despoiled of all its treasures, works of art and furniture. The valuable library, containing about twenty thousand volumes, was pillaged. The diocesan park was laid waste. Shortly afterwards the bishop’s palace was turned into a hotel, its beautiful chapel being used as a ball-room.

“The seminaries, large and small, with the college and the secondary school, are occupied by the German army. All the teachers have been driven out. The seminary cellars have been for several weeks the scene of tortures inflicted on both priests and Catholic laymen.

“Of the 650 priests devoted to the cure of souls in the schools and in the Catholic Action, only some twenty have been left. The others were imprisoned or deported, or forced to per-

form exhausting and humiliating labour, at which some died of fatigue.

“Those priests who worked in the Catholic Youth associations had most to suffer.

“It is not known where the majority of the clergy are detained, as the German authorities keep it a secret. It seems likely, however, that a large number are imprisoned in the concentration camp at Gorna Grupa, and the rest in that of Kazimierz Biskupi, or at Stuthof near Danzig, if not in other concentration camps in Germany. Some, however, were sent to the area of the Government General.

“It is stated that a large number of priests have been shot, but neither the number nor the details are as yet known, as the occupation authorities maintain an obstinate silence on the subject.

“. . . The flourishing religious life of the diocese has been almost entirely suppressed. The churches have almost all been closed and confiscated by the Gestapo, which removes the pictures and other objects of value. Scarcely thirty churches are open for just two hours on Sundays. There is a little more liberty allowed in the city

of Torun, where singing during divine service is permitted.

“... All the crosses and sacred emblems by the road-sides have been destroyed. At Gdynia the Germans publicly overthrew the great cross which stood before the Church of the Holy Virgin, and covered it with filth.

“... The great cross standing on Kamienna Gora, which used to be illuminated at night and venerated from afar by mariners at sea as a religious greeting of a Catholic Gdynia, was also overthrown.

“... 95 per cent of the priests have been imprisoned, expelled, or humiliated before the eyes of the faithful. The Curia no longer exists; the Cathedral has been made into a garage as at Pelplin; the bishop's palace into a restaurant; the chapel into a ball-room. Hundreds of churches have been closed. The whole patrimony of the Church has been confiscated, and the most eminent Catholics executed.”

*Diocese of Katowice*—Incorporated in the Reich.

“... The treatment inflicted on certain priests in prison has been outrageous. For example, Fr. Kupilas, parish priest of Ledziny, was shut up

for three days in the confessional of the church at Bierun, where 300 men and women were imprisoned at the same time without anything to eat and without being allowed to go out to satisfy their natural needs. Fr. Wycislik, vicar of Zyglin, was arrested and beaten in the streets of Tarnowskie Gory until the blood ran, and kicked and even trampled until he lost consciousness. Curate Budny had his sides pierced by numerous bayonet stabs, because the German authorities had ordered him to hold his hands up, and after a certain time he was unable through fatigue to do so any longer.

“The terrorism to which the clergy and the 500 civilians interned in the concentration camp at Opava (Troppau) in the Sudetens were exposed during September and October, 1939, was particularly frightful. On their arrival they were received with a hail of blows from sticks . . . Their bedding consisted of rotten and verminous straw. The Germans forced the priests to take off their cassocks, and their breviaries and rosaries were taken from them. They were set to the most degrading labours. For any infraction of the regulations, even involuntary, the prisoners were beaten; sometimes, merely in order to terrorize

them or perhaps from caprice, they were beaten until the blood ran. Many died.

“... The German police are beginning to take much interest in those who attend the Polish services, and to register their Christian and surnames on the church doors. There have been cases where those attending Polish services have even been photographed. And even prayer-books brought to church by the faithful are examined and listed.

“... The German authorities refuse to allow Polish children to be prepared for confession and first communion in their native language. As the children, boys and girls, very seldom understand a little German, they are forced to wait before being able to receive the Sacrament.

“... The pilgrimages to the shrine of Our Lady of Pickary have been forbidden; all manifestations of the faith outside the churches have become impossible; and even inside, every act and every word of the priest's is controlled.”

*Diocese of Lodz*—Incorporated in the Reich, with exception of some parishes which are situated in the Government General.

“... An eye witness reports as follows: ‘In the diocese of Lodz alone several dozens of priests

and religious clergy, with their bishop, Mgr. Tomczak, were sent to Radogoszcz. The newcomers were greeted with a frightful hail of blows with sticks, which did not spare even H.E. Mgr. Tomczak himself. The majority were then left without food for three days. The number of those detained amounted to about 2,000. They had to sleep on mouldy straw. The guards insulted and cruelly maltreated the prisoners. One could not enumerate all the insults and humiliations inflicted on them. The priests were made to wash out the latrines with their hands. It was not rare for the guards to order the prisoners to kneel down in a row, touch the ground with their foreheads, and call out, "We are Polish pigs." One day a policeman came into a room and said sarcastically, "You would like me to hang an image of the Virgin on the wall for you to pray to for victory? That would be the last straw." Then turning to the bishop he added, "You also will be hanged soon." A man who asked to be allowed to tend the bishop's injured foot was shot.'

"After long weeks of this sort of treatment, the sick priests were dismissed from the camp, and immediately sent to the Government General. In this way the unhappy diocese was likewise deprived of its clergy."



*Diocese of Wloclawek* — Incorporated in the Reich.

“. . . At Wloclawek, for three months, the people were forbidden to attend any church but that of the Minorites; but there have now for a few weeks been Sunday services in one of the Parish churches. In the deaneries of Lipno and Nieszawa there are no priests any more; in the others there are ever fewer.

“Services, where they are permitted, take place only on Sundays. Marriages and all offerings for the needs of public worship are forbidden. The Catholic Action has been suppressed, and its diocesan president, M. Pulawski, Chamberlain of Cape and Sword to His Holiness, was shot. The popular diocesan weeklies and the outstanding monthly, *Athenaeum*, edited specially for the clergy, and widely read throughout Poland, have all been suppressed.

“The crosses and chapels have been destroyed, and the patrimony of the Church confiscated; the parochial houses and the lands of the beneficiaries have been confiscated, and the revenues of the clergy stolen. After the publication of the encyclical *Summi Pontificatus*, the police destroyed a monument to Pope Pius XI put up on the walls of the Cathedral.

“The college and the Dlugosz episcopal lycée at Wloclawek have been occupied and stripped of all their modern equipment, and are at present used by the soldiers. The Jesuit church and novitiate at Kalisz were made into a temporary prison for persons exiled to the Government General. The Salesians had to move from their properties and the school buildings belonging to the Ursulines of Wloclawek were turned into barracks; and the Sisters of St. Vincent were driven from their hospital at Wloclawek and from all their other works.”

Supplement to report of Jan. 9th  
last on the religious situation in  
the Archdiocese of Gniezno and Poznan.

#### Archdiocese of Poznan

“... In general, the situation in the archdiocese of Poznan may be stated as follows:

- 5 priests shot.
- 27 priests confined in harsh concentration camps at Stuthof and elsewhere in the Altreich.
- 190 priests in prison or in the concentration camps at Bruczkow, Chludowo, Goruszki, Kazmierz Biskupi, Lad, Lubin, and Puszczykowo.
- 35 priests expelled into the territory called Government General.

11 priests died in prison and their bodies burned in crematoria.

11 priests seriously ill in consequence of ill-treatment.

122 parishes entirely without priests.

*Documents:* Report of Feb. 19, 1940.

“... The Chapel of the Ursulines at Koscierzyna has been profaned. The sacred vestments were used for sacrilegious buffooneries. One of the stoles was put on a dog.

*Documents:* Report of Feb. 27, 1940.

“... A few days ago I was at Katowice, when there were renewed mass executions of Poles on the space near the municipal park. Among the victims were priests. Their eyes were bandaged with pocket-handkerchiefs. After the volley had been fired, these same handkerchiefs, blood-stained though they might be, were used to bandage the eyes of others of the condemned. One of the priests was not killed and began to rise. He was then dispatched by blows with gun-butts.

*Documents:* Report of April 5, 1940.

“... In the monastery at ..... a few serving brothers were all who were left. The last monk had been deported in November to a con-

centration camp near Danzig. The aspect of .....is completely changed. The crosses and commemorative monuments have disappeared from the streets and the park. A beautiful statue of the Holy Virgin, at the feet of which numerous religious manifestations used to take place, has disappeared. The chapel of the religious community has been closed and the pews burnt in the stoves. The Church has been closed. The consecrated linen from the chapel and the church, the chandeliers and all the objects used in the church services have been carried away. On March 14th the new Hitlerian tenants got up a religious masquerade. They rang the Church bells, which had been silent for months, and when the faithful from the vicinity arrived, they saw a crowd of young people making merry, wearing chasubles, copes, and priests' berets, going round the park in procession, with rosaries and holy water sprinklers in their hands. The people withdrew in indignation. It was the eve of the festival of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows!

*Documents:* Report of April 7, 1940.

“Those who have been worst treated are Canon Szreybrowski, Curate Janicki of Sroda, Father Haase, rural dean to Kicin, and Canon Swinarski

of Czarnkow. The priests' families were told they must pay three marks to have their ashes."

## FINAL OBSERVATIONS OF CARDINAL HLOND, PRIMATE OF POLAND, CONCLUDING HIS REPORTS TO POPE PIUS XII

"... Hitlerism aims at the systematic and total destruction of the Catholic Church in the rich and fertile territories of Poland which have been incorporated in the Reich.

"... Almost everywhere the ecclesiastical administration of the dioceses has been effectively destroyed. The bishops, even when they are left in their sees, are only allowed to exercise their pastoral functions to a very limited extent.

"... The Cathedrals have been closed and their keys are kept by the invaders; one has been made into a garage. Five bishops' palaces have been invaded, and one of them has been turned into an inn, the bishop's chapel serving as a ball-room. In the chapel of the Primate's palace at Poznan the police have put a dog-kennel. All the seminary students have been dispersed and the seminaries occupied by the Hitlerian authorities.

"... It is known for certain that thirty-five priests have been shot, but the real number of

victims, whose names could not be ascertained, undoubtedly amounts to more than a hundred. More than twenty have died in prison. A hundred priests were maltreated and tortured; another hundred are suffering in concentration camps; hundreds of others, again, have been driven into Central Poland. Those who have been permitted to stay are subjected to numerous humiliations, are paralyzed in the exercise of their pastoral duties, and are stripped of their parochial benefices and all their rights. They are entirely at the mercy of the Gestapo, without possibility of appeal.

“In many districts the life of the Church has been completely crushed, the clergy having been almost all expelled; the Catholic churches and cemeteries are in the hands of the invaders. Catholic worship hardly exists any more; the word of God is not preached, the Sacraments are not administered, even to the dying. In certain localities Confession is forbidden. In the remainder of the territory the churches can be open only on Sundays, and then for a very short time. For seven months marriages between Poles have been forbidden. The Catholic Action has been completely suppressed. The Catholic press has been destroyed. The least initiative in the matter of

the religious life is forbidden. Charitable associations and works have likewise been destroyed.

“Monasteries and convents have been methodically suppressed, as well as their flourishing works of education, publicity, social welfare, charity, and care of the sick. Their houses and their institutes have been occupied by the army or the Nazi party. Many monks have been imprisoned; a great number of nuns have been dispersed.

“... The invaders have, further, confiscated or sequestered the patrimony of the Church, considering themselves as its masters. The Cathedrals, the bishops' palaces, the seminaries, the canons' residences, the revenues and endowments of bishoprics and chapters, the funds of the curias and seminaries, the fields and woods constituting the ecclesiastical benefices, the churches with their furnishings, the presbyteries with their furniture, and the personal property of the priests, the archives, and the diocesan or religious museums—all have been pillaged by the invaders.”

As Cardinal Hlond's reports poured into the Vatican, Pope Pius XII protested against the enormities they recounted, with unrelenting vigor.

On September 30, 1939, addressing the Polish colony of Rome and the Polish clergy, he said:

“Before Our eyes now passes a vision of mad horror and gloomy despair, a multitude of fugitives and wanderers, all those who no longer have a country or a home . . . We hope that God in His mercy will not permit that the exercise of religion be hindered in your country. We hope despite the many reasons for fear inspired by the only too-well-known plans of the enemies of God that Catholic life should continue profound and truthful among you.”

On October 28, the Holy Father issued his first Encyclical. In it he wrote: “Venerable brethren, the hour when this Our first encyclical reaches you is in many respects a real ‘hour of darkness’ (cf. St. Luke xxii, 53) in which the spirit of violence and of discord brings indescribable suffering to mankind . . . The blood of countless human beings, even non-combatants, raises a piteous dirge over a nation such as Our dear Poland, which, for its fidelity to the church, for its services in the defence of Christian civilization, written in indelible characters in the annals of history, has a right to the generous and brotherly sympathy of the whole world, while it



awaits, relying on powerful intercession of Mary, help of Christians, the hour of a resurrection in harmony with the principles of justice and true peace.”

And in a Christmas Eve allocution to the Sacred College of Cardinals, the Pope, in speaking of the Nazi-Polish war condemned the “atrocities and the illegal use of means of destruction, even against non-combatants, refugees, old persons, women and children, and the disregard of human dignity, liberty and human life” as “acts that cry for the vengeance of God.”

On November 16 and 17, 1940, the Vatican radio categorically denied reports by certain Spanish journalists, inspired from German sources, that the situation in Poland had undergone a change for the better. It stated that the religious life of many millions of Catholics continued to be brutally restricted. Among other things, it made clear that in the course of the previous four months at least four hundred clergy had been deported from Poland into Germany.

“The Catholic associations in the General Government,” the Vatican radio went on, “also have been dissolved, the Catholic educational institutions have been closed down, and Catholic professors and teachers have been reduced to a

state of extreme need, or have been sent to concentration camps. The Catholic press has been rendered impotent.

“In the part incorporated with the Reich, and especially in Posnania, the representatives of the Catholic priests and orders have been shut up in concentration camps. The number of priests sent to camps from the Posnan area alone exceeds 200. Certain of them have died in these camps. In other dioceses the priests have been put in prison. Entire areas of the country have been deprived of all spiritual ministrations, and the church seminaries have been dispersed.”

On October 27, 1940, it was revealed that admission to churches in incorporated territory is permitted only during services authorized to be held twice a week.

On January 7, 1941, it was reported that the Nazis were blocking an effort of the Vatican to send a delegate to Poland, to investigate conditions.

On February 16, it was revealed that, in sub-Carpathia, entire villages were being deported. The Nazis then closed the churches, saying there were no parishioners to attend them.

On March 9, the clergy of the famed and venerated Jasnagora Abbey at Czestochowa were

shot, the abbey transformed into a Gestapo headquarters, according to a Vatican source.

On the same day, *Dziennik Polski*, published in London, stated that since September 1939, 200 priests had been interned or shot in the Nazi occupied areas. Other sources put the figure far higher, saying that, of the 7,000 priests in Poland, no less than half had been shot or thrown into concentration camps where their ultimate fates remained unknown.

On March 28, the Polish Government-in-exile reported that 14 priests and monks had been killed by the Nazis during the preceding weeks, some of them having been tortured to death.

Father Adam Rosalski of the Kielce Catholic Seminary was fired on in the streets by the Gestapo, chased into a house, and then bayoneted to death.

Stormtroopers, executing Father Klimacki, first tore off his cross and slashed his face with it. Eighty-seven priests of Cracow were sent to work in the quarries near Linz, Austria. In mid-summer a new wave of anti-Catholic persecution began, and all Catholic Center priests in Cracow were arrested and deported to Germany, while their leaders were sent to concentration camps.

The sufferings of Christians in Poland are so numerous that their recital becomes after a time so overwhelming as nearly to numb the senses of him who hears. Yet we have reproduced but the barest fraction of that which is attested in the outer world. What deeds have been forever hidden behind the most savage censorship in Europe can only be surmised.

## YUGOSLAVIA

The Reverend John La Farge, S.J., in a series of articles in *America*, a preeminent Catholic weekly in the United States, gives the following account of the persecution of the Church in Slovenia:

“An official report sent to the Holy See and to Mussolini by the Consulta established by the Italian Government in Italian-occupied Slovenia, has recently been brought to this country, by an unimpeachable eye-witness to some of the very scenes therein detailed.

“The report covers the period from the invasion of Slovenia—as part of Yugoslavia—by Hitler on April 6 of this year and up to May 18. What is therein related is but the prelude to what we can infer to have happened since.

“It may be briefly described as hell for Catho-

lics and Catholicism in Slovenia, a 98% Catholic country, a hell deliberately planned by Adolf Hitler, out of his diabolical hatred for Christ and His Church.

“In the very first days after their arrival on the Slovene territory, that is to say, from April 11, 1941 on, the Germans began to claim and seize the Slovenian Church property, real-estate and chattel property and to dissolve the Slovene religious houses. This fate was experienced by the institutions of the Franciscan Fathers in Kamnik and Brezje (where the Franciscans had charge of the Slovenian National Sanctuary of the Blessed Virgin), the monasteries of the Capuchin Fathers in Celje (seat of the Province) in Maribor, Ptuj and Skofjaloka; the convent of the Minor Conventuals in Ptuj; the residence of the Jesuits in Maribor; the establishments of the Vincentian Fathers in Celje and Groblje, near Domzale (with a well-equipped mission printing press). Religious houses of women experienced the same treatment . . .

“The German officials for the greater part left the execution of the persecution of the Slovenes to young, often not even twenty-year-old, members of the SS and SA divisions and Gestapo formations. In house-searching, arrests and seizures,

the attitude and conduct of these German agencies wherever they had anything to do with sacred objects and sacred places were brutally sacrilegious.

“So for instance, in the parish church in Kranj early on the ninth of May of this year occurred the following: The priest catechist Zuzek, who alone among the clergy of the city of Kranj had not been arrested up to this time, was celebrating Mass. At the Consecration, an officer of the Gestapo strode into the church with his cap on his head and a lighted cigarette in his mouth. He walked through the church and up before the altar with his revolver raised and threatened the priest. The faithful assembled in the church hastily dispersed. The officer sat down then in the first pew and yelled away at the priest. The priest consumed the Blessed Sacrament and left the altar . . .

“The first victim of death among the Slovene prisoners was a Jesuit Father, Aloysius Zuzek, an old man of seventy-six years, victim of pneumonia from lying on the prison floor, who declared on his death bed as actual witnesses relate, ‘They have beaten me.’

“In Begunje, near Lesce, over 500 Slovene prisoners were lodged in the penal institute for

women at that place, of whom 105 were priests. The rest were respectable persons from other walks of life. Even these had to clean the latrines, carry the fecal matter out on the fields and perform such other works. By such labors and by the manner of their execution, the priests were to be humiliated and degraded to the utmost before the populace and their priestly vocation made to seem ridiculous and physically repulsive . . .

“The retired professor of religion, Rev. Anton Cestnik, in Celje, seventy-three years old, had to clean the steps before the barracks in Celje . . .

“Before the clergy of the Ptuj district were shipped over the border to Croatia the leader of the Gestapo spoke to the exiles:

‘You are Slovenes, we are Germans.

We have no use for you, you have no use for us. We have come here with the firm intention to remain here. For this reason you have got to get out. If anyone undertakes to come back here he will be put in a concentration camp from which there is no escape, or he will be shot. Do not speak any evil of us. We are everywhere and will find you everywhere.’

“They were then loaded upon trucks and taken away to Croatia.

“All priests were brought into the Kratky Inn where they were physically examined from three to half-past eight o'clock in the evening. Each one of them was brought into the little room where he had to undress even to his underclothes. Rev. Ocepek from Ovisise had to strip himself completely . . . they were shamelessly ridiculed and mocked.

“Religious news, from Slovenia's two dioceses of Ljubljana and Maribor, follows the same pattern after May 1941, as during the weeks preceding.

“The German occupation, according to the Italian memorandum of November 1, 1941, has extended over 145 of the 277 parishes of the Ljubljana diocese, that is to say, over 205,000 souls. Before the occupation, 245 diocesan and Order Priests were carrying out their apostolic mission in this territory. Now there is not one left who can do this freely. Of the parish priests three have been left at their posts. They can bury the dead, baptize and confess only within their own parish; they are not now, however, allowed to preach or to teach catechism in the schools. The fourth priest who is still at his post cannot



even enter his church. Special permit is needed to bury the dead. A few pensioned priests remain in this region, who are forbidden, however, even to say Mass. The rest of the clergy were some exiled, some arrested and sent to the various concentration camps, to be maltreated and eventually removed to Croatia, where they were left wholly destitute.

“Of the 260 parishes in the Diocese of Maribor about 430 priests of the diocesan clergy and 109 of the regular clergy exercised their ministry among a population of about 653,000 souls. Of these, perhaps 36 are still pensioners, some are still active and some are new—all the others have been exiled. Eight German priests have already been installed. Naturally these preach in German, after approval of their sermons by the Gestapo. The Slovene language has been banned even in the confessional. The priests can celebrate Mass only in the parish assigned to them. They are nothing more than prisoners, watched by the Gestapo.

“The Bishop for Maribor, Dr. Ivan Tomazic and the Slovene clergy have reacted with courage and superhuman energy. Pressure has been put

upon the Bishop to leave Maribor, but he has stated that he will submit only to physical force."

## GERMANY

In March, 1941, the Vatican radio broadcast: "The religious situation in Germany is pathetic. All young men who feel that their vocation is to take Holy Orders must forego this desire. The number of monasteries and convents which have been dissolved has become even larger. The development and maintenance of the Christian life has been rendered difficult. All that remains of the once great Catholic press in Germany are a few parish magazines.

"The threat of a national religion is looming increasingly over all religious life. This national religion is based solely on the Führer's will."

In April the Vatican radio quoted a pastoral letter by Mgr. Gruber, Archbishop of Freiburg-im-Breisgau, as follows: "Isolation and exclusion of convinced Christians is going on. The new teachings are an abuse of God and religion." In a later broadcast, the Vatican radio said that Catholicism is being dismissed by the Nazis as "a myth only suitable for the Mediterranean."

On July 26, 1941, in a letter to Reichminister Lammers, Bishop von Galen, famous for his spir-

ited resistance to Nazi persecution, wrote: "The Secret Police has continued to rob the property of highly respected German men and women merely because they belonged to Catholic orders."

On October 21, the Catholic Newscable quoted an editorial in the London *Tablet* as follows:

"Inside the Reich the leaders of the Church have had for several years no illusions about the anti-Christian nature of the Nazi movement. The German bishops have shown a fortitude for which we salute and honor them."

A Bavarian bishop's letter, quoted in *Ostschweiz*, says: "A wave of indignation is sweeping over Bavaria since prayers have been recently forbidden in all schools, and the cross is being removed from schools. The children of German soldiers are forbidden to pray for their fathers."

### SCANDINAVIA

On April 9, 1940, the Nazis overran Denmark and began their invasion of Norway. The history of the persecution of the Christian religion in these countries does not technically have a large place in this booklet, which is concerned exclu-

sively with the present German Government's conspiracy and assault against the Catholic Church. Suffice it to say that the anti-religious tyranny practised by Hitler's régime in Scandinavia parallels in numerous instances, and clearly in overall design, the anti-religious campaigns conducted in every country in which he has been about to exercise his will.

### THE LOW COUNTRIES

When, on May 10, 1940, the German armies entered the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg, a semi-official Vatican source stated that "The Holy See is deeply impressed and pained by the spreading of the war to the Netherlands and Belgium . . . Particular cause of sorrow is the violation of Belgium's neutrality which had the unhappy precedent of 1914."

The following day Pope Pius XII sent three messages:

To King Leopold of Belgium: "In a moment when, for the second time against its will and right, the Belgium people sees its territory exposed to the cruelties of war, We, being profoundly moved, send to Your Majesty and to the entire nation so beloved by Us assurance of Our paternal affection and, while praying to the All-

Powerful God that this stern trial may end with the restoration of the full liberty and independence of Belgium, We send Your Majesty and your people Our apostolic blessing with all Our heart."

To Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands: "Having learned with deep emotion that Your Majesty's efforts in behalf of peace have not succeeded in preserving your noble people from becoming a theatre of war, contrary to its will and its right, We pray God, Supreme Judge of the destinies of nations, to hasten the restoration of justice and liberty with His all-powerful assistance."

And to the Grand Duchess Charlotte of Luxembourg: "In this sad moment, when the people of Luxembourg despite its love of peace is enveloped by wars and torment, Our heart goes out to it and while We implore its celestial patroness to give aid and protection that it may live in liberty and independence, We send Your Royal Highness and your faithful subjects Our apostolic blessing."

## THE NETHERLANDS

On September 2, 1940, Arthur Seyss-Inquart, Nazi Commissioner for the Netherlands, ordered a purge of priests and monks of the Catholic

Church who refused to advocate National Socialism.

On November 27, the Nazis invaded the headquarters of the Society of Jesus at the Hague, as well as the offices of the Bishop of Roermond. It was reported that Father Kayzer, S. J., director of the College of Philosophy at Nymegen, had been interned.

At the end of January, 1941, the *Essener National Zeitung*, Hermann Goering's newspaper, responded with threats to a Pastoral Letter of the Dutch Bishops, issued on the 26th of that month. "We guarantee," said the *National Zeitung*, "that Hitler's party is strong enough to manage the Catholic Church in the Netherlands."

The following are repressive measures commonly practised in the Netherlands: Gestapo agents attend Church services. Stormtroopers march through the streets on Sundays to prevent Catholics from going to Mass. The independent existence of the Catholic Youth Movement was ended long ago. Priests are arrested and religious publications suppressed and suspended, including *De Maasbode*, largest Catholic daily in the Netherlands.

On March 28, 1941, *Universe*, a Catholic weekly published in London, reported that some four-

thousand five-hundred clerics in the Netherlands were about to be ejected from their positions in the Catholic educational system. The Nazis then decreed that all priests who headed Catholic schools must resign by May 1, 1941, to be replaced by men "trained in political life."

According to the *Essener National Zeitung*, Archbishop de Jongh was fined for his refusal to proclaim the Nazi invasion of Russia to be a "religious crusade" against Bolshevism.

In August 1941, Seyss-Inquart installed a Dutch Nazi as commissioner of the Roman Catholic Workers' Union. A pastoral letter branded this act as the abolition of "a movement of 200,000 members with a record of much good accomplished." The Archbishop of Utrecht requested that Catholics no longer remain members of the Union.

On June 21, 1941, the *American Press Review* reported that the Catholic paper *Ons Noorden* had been banned by the Nazis, on the ground that "the church had ridiculous concepts of loving God."

## BELGIUM

The extent of persecution in Belgium is indicated by the repeated appeals of Joseph Ernest Cardinal van Roey to his people to stand firm in

the face of adversity. Specific case histories have not come into the outer world in comparable quantity to the reports of Cardinal Hlond on Poland. Yet sufficient is known to demonstrate that the Catholics of Belgium are sharing with Christians of other conquered lands the Nazi oppression of their faith.

With the honesty and courage of his great tradition, Cardinal van Roey has written a refutation of Nazi racial doctrines, and a most significant discussion of the impossibility for good Catholics of collaboration with the Nazi tyranny. We reproduce a few lines of His Eminence's dialogue on the latter subject:

A. After all, isn't it true that the Church can adapt herself to any régime?

R. No. Never can she adapt herself to governments that oppress the rights of conscience and persecute the Catholic Church. On the contrary, Catholics are obliged to collaborate with those who seek to impede the imposition of such a régime. Collaboration with those who favor its introduction amongst us is forbidden.

A. The Nazi régime isn't so bad. A little



restriction will not harm the Church. Hasn't the Church, in fact, exceeded her rights?

R. No. The Church is not limited to services and sacrifices. Not only oral teaching but also the written word, and especially the press, ought to be at the service of Catholics as well as non-Catholics. She has the right to defend faith and Christian morality against hostile propaganda.

A. Aren't Catholics resigned to defeat and collaboration with the Nazis?

R. No. Reason and good sense will direct us in the way of confidence, of resistance, because we are certain that our country will be restored and will rise again.

No one familiar with the constant efforts of the Church to establish a *modus vivendi* with all forms of secular government will underestimate the grave compulsion which drew forth such a statement from the Primate of Belgium.

## LUXEMBOURG

According to authoritative information which has reached the Luxembourg Government now established in Montreal, the Catholic Church in the Grand Duchy is persecuted by the occupying

authorities for using its tremendous influence in a country where 98% of the population are devout Catholics to strengthen the people's resistance against the Nazi's attempts to Germanize them. The properties belonging to religious orders have been confiscated.

The Benedictine Fathers of St. Maurice-de-Clervaux were deported on an hour's notice to Bastogne in Belgium. The same treatment was inflicted on several other religious communities in Luxembourg-Ville. The members of a patriotic league, led by Catholic clerics, were imprisoned for having distributed pamphlets expressing faith in divine help.

Other members of the Catholic hierarchy were arrested, among them Mgr. Origer, Papal Chamberlain, who was deported at the end of September, 1940. His present fate is unknown.

Pierre Krier, Minister of Labor of the Grand Duchy, has issued a White Paper entitled "Luxembourg Under German Occupation" which includes the following facts: Many priests, mostly old men, are arrested, deported to Germany, or chased out into France. Some of the chief people of the Catholic daily *Wart* are in jail. Catholics are exposed to specially violent persecutions in the religious as well as the cultural sphere. Mon-

asteries, convents, and other possessions of the Church have been confiscated.

The monastery of Clerf was raided one night and the monks given one hour to leave. They were taken to Bastogne where they were told, "Now run."

## FRANCE

On July 26, 1940, the palace of Cardinal Suhard, Archbishop of Paris, was searched by the Gestapo "to seek evidence of collusion between the late Cardinal Verdier and the Jews." The Cardinal was not allowed to communicate with anyone until August 1.

On the same day the home of Cardinal Beaudrillart, rector of the Catholic Institute was searched, as were the offices of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, and the offices of several youth groups.

The following day, strongly indicating concerted action which amounted to a planned campaign, the Episcopal Palace at Lille was searched for five hours. When Cardinal Lienart protested that the search warrant was unsigned, the Nazi soldiers said: "We have the right and we have the arms."

On September 9, the Bishop of Quimper was

placed under house arrest for denouncing German plans to remake Brittany.

From the Vatican radio there came a German language broadcast denouncing the treatment of the Church in Alsace-Lorraine under the Nazi régime. Pointing out that three-quarters of the territory's 2,000,000 inhabitants are Catholics, the announcer declared that the National Socialist Party is now attempting to penetrate the country ideologically. Schools have already been reoriented in the Nazi ideology. Catholic schools have been disbanded, and priests active in educational work have been dismissed from their posts. The Hitler Youth and the League of German Girls have been established throughout the territory, and Alsace-Lorraine children have been sent to Germany for ideological training.

Alsatian Catholics, the Vatican radio charged, are being cut off and cannot establish contact with Catholics in older Germany. Colleges and missionary schools have been shut down.

The Bishop of Strasbourg has not been allowed to return to his diocese from unoccupied France and the Bishop of Metz has been expelled.

The Strasbourg Cathedral has been closed to Catholic services.

On October 11, Mgr. Ballard, Archbishop of

Besançon, was sentenced to jail "for attempting to turn the people against the Germans" because he had tried to collect food for 25,000 French war prisoners. At the same time, Vicar-General Galan was sentenced to nine days in jail for reading a message to raise the people's spirits.

On October 18, the Vatican radio said that a speech by Josef Buerckel, Nazi administrator in Lorraine, portends the closing of Catholic private and confessional schools in occupied France.

On December 12, the Catholic diocese of Metz was dissolved "for political reasons," by order of Buerckel, gauleiter for the newly-founded province of "Westmark."

In March 1941, the Vatican radio described Catholics in Alsace-Lorraine as being "tried in the fire of a cruel persecution." German oppressive measures have included the closing of Catholic schools, the exclusion of nuns from teaching, the setting up of Hitler Youth organizations, and the deportation of many Alsace-Lorraine youth to Germany.

The Germans used the Paris radio to accuse the Vichy government of reactionary clericism.

The strongest criticism was levelled against the educational system of the Jesuits which was

described as "extremely dangerous for the mentality of young Frenchmen."

On April 4, the Vatican radio again charged that: "Former Catholic teachers must now give instruction in accordance with National Socialist programs; that membership in Hitler Youth organizations is obligatory for boys and girls over 10; that religious seminaries are being closed, all Catholic organizations are being dissolved, and that Catholic newspapers are being suppressed in Alsace-Lorraine; and that to the end of December of the preceding year, 20,000 persons had been expelled from Alsace, including 60 priests."

On September 2, a United Press dispatch states that many Catholic priests in France had been arrested and jailed, or put in concentration camps. Eighteen had been jailed in Strasbourg because "they made anti-German statements," and sixty others had been sent to a concentration camp in the North Moselle region.

When Marshal Pétain was attacked by the magazine *Esprit* for his anti-semitic laws, the paper was suppressed.

The Gestapo ousted nuns from their institutions and, in many cases, forced them to go to Germany.

A typical Nazi trick was to distribute ration

cards on Sundays, at the precise time when Mass was being celebrated.

Near Drieuze, the Nazis locked a church when a funeral procession approached it, announcing that burials must take place without religious services. At Chateau Salins, the Gestapo tried to prevent services by locking the church door.

Sunday activities, including morning excursions for children, were devised by the Nazis to prevent Catholics from attending Mass. Children were also enticed away from their religious obligations by free Sunday motion picture shows.

On June 26, 1941, the Archbishops and Bishops of Germany, assembled at Fulda—Fulda, Fortress of St. Boniface—issued a Pastoral Letter, which was appointed to be read from all pulpits on July 6. A document of high courage, it merits the closest study. The most significant passages are quoted herewith:

*Excerpts from the Fulda Pastoral Letter*

Dear Members of the Dioceses: Not only the war but contemporary events which touch the religious field lead you to ask for a word of enlightenment and encouragement from your Bishops. In answering your call and your expectation, we are fulfilling our superior pastoral

duty. We want you to know that your Bishops are at their posts in these upsetting times; that they stood up for and will continue to stand up for the interests of our holy religion in complete unanimity with all permissible and possible means. Again and again have the Bishops brought their justified claims and complaints before the proper authorities. Be re-assured that the Bishops speak as openly as their holy duty as teachers of the creed and as defenders of the rights of the church asks them to do. Through this pastoral declaration the Bishops want to help you to see the real situation of the church in the light of your creed and enable you to judge it. We want to spare you an ominous spiritual conflict which might make it difficult for you to do your duty gladly. We exhort you to strive for a quiet and decided attitude which results from a true belief and strong confidence in God.

The events we speak of are all well-known to you and the object of yours and our deepest concern. They are the restrictions and limitations which have been put upon the free preaching of our creed and upon our church life.

Our church is God's visible empire, willed by God on this earth into which man enters through baptism and which must and will lead him in



complete independence to a supernatural destination. The church has, therefore, the right and the duty derived from God of religious and moral instruction and education of the youth from childhood onwards and of the free preaching of the Gospel of Christ in the degree which the church itself thinks necessary.

The church has the right to freedom of service and the right to establish a calendar of religious festivals which is regulated according to the religious needs of the faithful.

The church is and will be the guardian of moral laws given by God and it will never abide that which God has forbidden. In this way, the church saves for its people the firm foundation of moral strength and social order. The church has the right and the duty given to it by its divine foundation to practice charity. The credit for fulfilling this task and for having cared for the well-being of the people is particularly due to the religious orders and societies. They have always possessed the love and esteem of the Catholic people in a high degree. In all these fields, the church has found great obstacles during the past few years and particularly during the last months . . .

Dear Members of the Dioceses: The fact can-

not be denied that at present, either caused by the emergency or without reason, a very far-reaching restriction of the practice of our holy religion exists, but that must not discourage us or make us negligent. Every time of hardship is a test and confirmation of our religious faithfulness. Here we wish to point out some duties which are particularly brought upon us by these times.

There are no more religious Sunday papers and bulletins of your dioceses which, up to now, preached the creed and strengthened the moral powers of the family. As long as they are not published you parents must endeavour to replace what you and your children miss in printed religious instructions by regular attendance at church and by supporting the pastoral work in your community. More than ever it is the duty of you parents to concern yourselves about the books which get into the hands of your children and to provide at least a few good books in the home library for the family so that they could be read together.

With deep sorrow we heard the news that the Catholic kindergarten has now been abolished in large districts of the Reich in spite of the protests of the Bishops. They were treated and loved

by the Catholic people as a supplement of religious education. The Catholic schools have already been taken from us. Religious teaching in the schools has been cut down or completely dropped. For you parents have the strict commandment to become the religious teacher of your children. Our priests will gladly give you directions to fulfil this first and finest duty of a parent. It is up to you to follow their proposals conscientiously. The more difficult it becomes to attend a service in church regularly, the more the house of every Christian family becomes a small house of God. In the sanctity of the Christian family, it must become a sacred custom for everyone to gather as often as possible before the crucifix in order to offer a common prayer and to think of the anxieties of the church and of the people and of the ecclesiastical and worldly authorities. Pray also for your beloved dead, for the sick; pray for husbands, fathers and sons who are fighting in the midst of war. The creed and the virtue of your children must be the object of your fervent prayers—particularly so if the circumstances have brought about a local separation from your children and if they cannot have religious service and religious care. If they are far away, you must not only remind them in your letters of their

duty towards God but your prayers for them must be like the holy angels of God and give them guidance.

Dear Members of the Dioceses: We Bishops meeting at the tomb of Saint Boniface whose life work it was to bring the German people to our Master and Saviour, Jesus Christ, and who died the glorious death of a martyr in fulfilling this task, feel an even greater sorrow about the existence of powers working to dissolve the blessed union between Christ and the German people than we do about the incidents mentioned above. The existence of Christianity in Germany is at stake. Quite lately a book has been distributed in Germany in hundreds of thousands of copies which contains the assertion that we Germans had to chose between Christ and the German people.

Dear Members of the Dioceses: With burning indignation we German Catholics refuse to make such a choice. We love our German people and we serve them, if necessary, with our lives, but at the same time we live and die for Jesus Christ and want to be united with Christ in time and eternity. We are convinced that we serve our beloved German people best when we preserve Christ and His Gospel for them. It would mean

a terrible impoverishment of our people if we relinquished those Christian principles which for more than a thousand years have been the foundation of its spiritual and moral culture. Out of the Christian creed grew for our people that noble conception of human personality which asks the individual to fit himself into the order of the human community ready for sacrifices, but which on the other hand preserves for every individual his God-given rights and duties. God willed that they should be respected by all living creatures. If we care for the preservation of Christianity in our people, then we must fight and stand up for the personality and dignity of the German man.

Before all things we hold firm to Jesus Christ because he is "the son of God who came into this world that we might have life and that we might have it more abundantly" (John 10-10); "because there is no other name given to man under Heaven by which he can be blessed" (Acts 4, 7 and 12). At the request to leave Christ we answer like Saint Peter, "Master, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the son of the living God." (John 6-69).

As we are faithful to Christ nothing can sep-

arate us from His holy church which He has founded on the rock foundation of the pontificate. With a representative of Christ on earth, our Holy Father, we are united in filial love.

On November 8, 1938, a tall, rugged man, dressed in episcopal robes, came out of a Westphalian church where he had been administering the sacrament of Confirmation. Blessing the throngs as he passed, he circulated slowly through the crowd of people gathered outside the church.

A Nazi police officer, in charge of a squad of twenty men, ordered the bishop to stop.

The bishop turned and gazed at the police officer. "Never before in any diocese," the bishop said quietly, "has my right to do such things been questioned, and I don't propose that it should start now."

"Nevertheless I forbid you," the police officer shouted.

The bishop turned and gave the police officer a level stare, then continued his slow benedictory passage through the throng. The police officer did not say another word.

The man who outcountenanced the representative of the Nazi police force was Clemens

August Count von Galen—a churchman of such transcendant courage, that he is as much beloved by the whole of Catholic Germany as he is respected and even feared by the members of the Nazi hierarchy.

Bishop von Galen was born on March 16, 1878, at Dinklage, Oldenburg. He came of a family which had given many eminent ecclesiastics to Germany. As far back as 1650 a Bishop of Munster had been a von Galen, Christopher by name, and a man who had been instrumental in restoring peace to the countryside after the Thirty Years War. The first piece of social legislation presented to the Reichstag had been introduced in 1877 by another relative, Ferdinand von Galen.

Clemens August von Galen was ordained a priest in 1904, and became a bishop in 1933, having been elevated to that office by the late Cardinal Schulte, himself the first German prelate to have become aware of the anti-religious menace of the National Socialist movement.

Bishop von Galen had not been wearing his newly-acquired episcopal robes a year when, with a fearlessness which was completely characteristic of him, he began speaking out forthrightly against Nazi paganism.

Indeed Bishop von Galen has gone even farther than that in the freedom of his speech. Without the slightest regard for his personal safety, he has not hesitated to write or telegraph Hitler direct whenever he has violated the Concordat. The Bishop has gone in person to the highest authorities in the land in order to lodge a long series of vigorous protests against the persecution of the Catholic Church, and, risking his very life, he has publicly stigmatized the Gestapo and its chief, Himmler, as murderers and despots.

For 550 years a great religious procession had been held in Munster to celebrate the salvation of that city from fire and plague. In 1936, for the first time in all those centuries, the procession was interfered with by secular authorities. Nazi police barricaded a certain section of the cathedral square through which the Bishop would have to pass after the services. Hearing of this, Bishop von Galen mounted to his pulpit and said: "If anyone thinks that physical force, ropes and police measures are going to separate me from you, or you from me, he is making a serious mistake." The bishop's words were so moving that the congregation broke into spontaneous applause.

But Bishop von Galen's words could be as wittily barbed as they were stirring. One day he



was delivering a sermon in his cathedral against the State's interference with family life and the education of youth. A stormtrooper interrupted with typical Nazi disregard of the proprieties.

"By what right," he shouted truculently, "do you, a celibate, talk about the problems of marriage and children?"

Bishop von Galen fixed the Nazi with a withering stare, struck the pulpit a resounding blow, and instantly replied: "Never will I tolerate in this cathedral any reflection on our beloved Führer."

The Bishop of Munster's reputation for courage and integrity reached international proportions a few months ago when news filtered through the German censorship that he had delivered three "amazingly bold" sermons in the summer of 1941 denouncing Nazi principles.

The first of these was uttered following upon a big British air raid on Munster. The result of von Galen's attack was a fresh wave of anti-Catholic repression by the Nazis which included the dissolution of religious orders in Westphalia and the imprisonment of many prominent Catholics.

Nevertheless, the Bishop promptly returned to the attack with a sermon in which he said that

the city had suffered from "our opponents in war," and secondly from an "inner enemy" which "spiritually was most dangerous. No German citizen," he continued, "has any longer any security, and justice has come to be a thing of the past."

The following Sunday Bishop von Galen again spoke from the pulpit. He anathematized injustices within the Reich which "cried aloud to heaven for redress." He said there was no longer any law in Germany, but he asserted that the resistance of Christians was like a strong anvil, and that all hammers would break if the anvil remained sufficiently strong.

Bishop von Galen has been equally undaunted in his denunciation of Nazi racial theories and their sinister application in the killing of invalids and the insane.

"In the diocese," the Bishop stated, "a considerable number of persons in asylums had been taken away and then their relatives had been informed that they have died of pneumonia." He said that everyone knew that these people had been murdered. In his condemnation of these eugenic killings, von Galen has had the unqualified support of the Archbishop of Worms and of Michael Cardinal von Faulhaber.

“People speak of ‘blood and soil,’” Bishop von Galen said. “If these words have any significance whatever, I, more than anyone, should have the right to invoke this doctrine, for my ancestors have been established in this country for over 500 years. Here in this Rhenish land, we are on our own soil and have no need of prophets who come from abroad.” The Bishop was referring to the so-called “philosopher” of National Socialism, Alfred Rosenberg, who was born in Russia.

Reports emanating from Munster state that in November, 1941, a whole regiment in that city marched to the office of the local Gauleiter upon learning that Bishop von Galen had been prohibited from preaching. The soldiers not only demanded that the ban be rescinded, but formed themselves into a bodyguard for the Bishop and attacked a Gestapo agent who had been assigned to watch the episcopal palace.

In the fall of 1941, Bishop von Galen addressed a letter to Nazi leaders from which the following excerpt is quoted:

“In the absence of the intervention of the officers responsible for the protection of the legal order, I feel myself called upon and obliged as the responsible Bishop of 2,000,000 German Catholics re-

ardless of the consequences to me personally, to raise my voice loudly accusing the inner enemy who is ruining the people and the Fatherland, warningly calling the Government back from a path which must lead to destruction."

Bishop von Galen is now reported to be under arrest.

Finally, in October 1941, Alfred Rosenberg, the accredited anti-Christian prophet of National Socialism, issued in a thirty-point program the design for the state religion of the New Germany. This document is of such interest that we quote it in full:

### *The National Reich Church*

1. The National Reich Church (*Nationale Reichskirche*) claims with all decisiveness the sole right and sole power over all churches within the German Reich's boundaries; declares them as National Reich Churches of Germany.

2. The German people must not serve National Reich Church, but National Reich Church serves exclusively one doctrine: race and folk.

3. The activities of National Reich

Church are limited to territorial boundaries of the Reich and its "colonies."

4. "National Reich Church forces no German to belong," but "National Reich Church is ready to do all in its power to gain possession of the last German soul." Furthermore National Reich Church will not tolerate other churches or church-like organizations and clubs, especially those with international connections or government.

5. National Reich Church is determined unswervingly and by all means to annihilate Christian faith, which "though foreign to our being and character was imported to Germany in the tragic year 800."

6. No fundamental changes in the construction of the present churches will be undertaken for "they represent German folk property, German *kultur* and are part of the historical process and development of our people. They must be evaluated and preserved as German folk property."

7. There will be no scribes (*Schriftgelehrter*), pastors, chaplains or clergy

in National Reich Church, and only National Reich orators are to have the right to speak.

8. National Reich Church ceremonies will take place on Saturday evenings only with festive illuminations.

9. In National Reich Church, German men, women and boys and girls will unitedly pledge themselves to the Nazi conception of God.

10. National Reich Church will unswervingly work toward inevitable unification with the state. National Reich Church must subordinate itself to the State as a serving member. On this basis National Reich Church demands the immediate transference of all property of all churches and confessions to the State. It also forbids future churches to obtain possession of the smallest dot of German land or that such be given them. For "it is not the church which conquers and cultivates land and soil but exclusively the German state and the German people."

11. National Reich Church orators may never be "those who today with

cunning and treachery emphasize the absolute necessity of the maintenance of Christian teachings in Germany; for they lie not only to themselves but to the German people, merely for the sake of a job and their bread.”

12. National Reich Church orators are to be state officials under the law for state officials.

13. National Reich Church demands that printing and delivery of the Bible immediately be stopped in Germany as well as the further appearance of Sunday papers, writings, lectures and books with churchly content.

14. National Reich Church will guard with the utmost strictness against importation of Bibles and Christian religious literature into Germany.

15. National Reich Church declares that henceforth “our people’s greatest document and book will be our Führer’s *Mein Kampf*. National Reich Church is conscious that this book contains not only the greatest but, much more, the

purest and truest ethics for the present and future life of our people.”

16. National Reich Church “unswervingly dedicates itself with all its strength to make the book *Mein Kampf* popular and cause every German to guide his life according to this book.”

17. National Reich Church demands that the number of pages and the contents of the book in the future, in whatever form it may appear, correspond to the present popular edition.

18. National Reich Church removes from all altars the crucifix, the Bible, and all holy pictures.

19. On the altars of National Reich Church “will be our all-holy book *Mein Kampf* and on its left a sword consecrating our German people to the same token of God.”

20. National Reich Church orators must explain the book during National Reich Church ceremonies according to their conscience and abilities.

21. National Reich Church recognizes no forgiveness of sins. National Reich Church represents the viewpoint, and



will repeatedly profess it, that sin is inexorably avenged by the iron and unshakable laws of nature.

22. National Reich Church rejects the baptism of German children both with water and the ritual of the Holy Ghost.

23. Parents of a newborn German child must go before the altar only to repeat a German vow in the following words:

For the man, "I swear by God this holy oath that I, the father of this child, and my wife are probably of Aryan descent. As a father, I swear to rear the child in the German spirit for the German people."

For the woman, "I swear by God this holy oath that I (name) bore my husband this child, that my husband, the father of this child, and I, the mother, are probably of Aryan descent. As a mother, I swear to raise this child in the German spirit for the German people." Only on the basis of this German vow is a diploma to be delivered for a new citizen.

24. National Reich Church abolishes

confirmation, confirmation instruction, communion and communion instruction.

Places of education are the family, the school, the German *Jungvolk*, and the Hitler Youth Bund for German girls.

25. In order to make graduation exercises especially ceremonious, National Reich Church is placed at the disposal of the various youth organizations on State Youth Day, the Friday before Easter. On this day only the leaders of these organizations will speak.

26. The marriage of German men and women is to take place with a repetition of the oath of loyalty with the right hand on the sword. In National Reich Church no act may take place in an undignified kneeling position.

27. National Reich Church declares the tenth day before Pentecost to be the day of the German family.

28. National Reich Church rejects the customary penitence on Prayer Day and demands that it be transferred to the anniversary of the founding of National Reich Church.

29. National Reich Church will not

tolerate the existence of religious symbols.

30. On the day of the foundation all of the new National Reich churches, cathedrals and chapels within the Reich and its colonial boundaries will remove the cross of Christ which will be replaced by the *hakenkreuz* as the "only unconquerable symbol of Germany."

## PASTORAL LETTER OF MARCH 22, 1942

On March 22, 1942, the Catholic Bishops of Germany once again felt compelled to issue a pastoral letter.

This document not only ranks with the famous Fulda pastoral letters of previous years, but it also points out with forthrightness and clarity how the guarantees given by Hitler in the Concordat have been systematically violated. Since this pastoral letter serves to bring the situation of the Catholic Church under the Nazi régime up to date, it is here reprinted in full.

### I

Dear Diocesans:

For years a war has raged in our fatherland against Christianity and Church, and has never

been conducted with such bitterness. Repeatedly the German bishops have asked the Reich Government to discontinue this fatal struggle; but, unfortunately, our appeals and endeavors were without success.

Even in wartime, when solidarity has always been a matter of course, the fight continues; nay, increases in sharpness and bitterness and lies like a tremendous incubus on the German people, of whom at the last census 95 per cent—in Bavaria even 98 per cent—have professed to be Christians.

Therefore, the German bishops have considered it their duty toward Church and people to put an end to this internal war by a public declaration and an effective order. As we know that the faithful expect their bishops to do everything to protect belief and conscience, to re-establish the peace of religion and Church and to ease their souls from severe pressure, we feel obliged to make public the most important points of our memoir (to the Reich Government).

In the Concordat of July 20, 1933, the Reich Government granted the Catholic Church state protection for the free development of its functions. Actually, these grants have not been kept. Christianity and the Catholic Church have been denied state protection and are being fought and

fettered through measures and organs of party and State.

1. Promised and pledged was "the liberty of creed and worship of the Catholic religion." In truth, pressure is frequently used on those who depend on State or party positions to force them to conceal or deny their Catholic religion or to compel them to abandon the Church. Through numerous ordinances and laws open worship of the Catholic religion has been restricted to such a degree that it has disappeared almost entirely from public life. It appears as if the sign of Christ, which in the year 312 was gloriously carried from the catacombs, is to be driven back to the catacombs.

Even worship within the houses of God is frequently restricted and oppressed. Quite a number of places of worship, especially in the Ostmark, in the newly conquered territories, but also in the old Reich, have been closed by force and even used for profane purposes. Services in rented rooms have been prohibited despite urgent necessities. Purchases of lots for the construction of new churches is being rendered impossible.

From time to time religious instruction for children and juveniles has been prohibited even in church-owned premises and has been punished.

Religious care in hospitals has been most severely restricted through new laws.

2. Catholic parents and the Catholic Church have the natural and divine right to educate their children religiously according to the principles of the Christian faith and ethical law and in conformity with their own consciences. Through concordats, the influence of the Christian churches on school and education has been expressly granted.

Actually, however, the rights of parents and Church are being more and more restricted and have become ineffective. Juveniles in State youth organizations, in hostels and labor camps, often even in schools and country homes for evacuated children are being influenced in an anti-Christian manner and kept away from religious services and celebrations. In the new State institutions (such as teachers' training schools, all-political educational homes, etc.) any Christian and religious influence is absolutely impossible.

3. The Catholic Church and its priests have the right and the duty to pronounce and defend, freely and unrestricted, orally and in writing, the creeds and doctrines of the Christian religion.

The clergy, by agreement, has been granted State protection for the execution of its duties.

In reality, Catholic priests are watched constantly and suspiciously in their teaching and pastoral duties; priests, without proof of any guilt, are banned from their dioceses and homes, and even deprived of their freedom and punished for having fulfilled their priestly duties truthfully and scrupulously.

It is unbearable that clergymen are being punished with expulsion from the country or internment in a concentration camp without court procedure and any contact with the clergy, when approach to the bishopric could have resulted in the explanation of misunderstandings or the prevention of mistakes.

The holding of religious services and exercises is made almost impossible; the religious press has been destroyed almost entirely; the reprinting of religious books, even catechisms, school Bibles and diocesan prayer books is not permitted, while anti-Christian writings may be printed and distributed in mass circulation.

4. It is consented upon and granted by agreement: "Orders and religious societies are not subjected by the State to any specific restriction regarding their pastoral, educational, medical and

relief work, conduct of their affairs and administration of their estates.”

In fact, the Catholic orders have been expelled from schools almost entirely and are being curtailed in their other activities on an ever-increasing scale. A large part of their property and their institutions have been taken away from them and many are destined to perish because of the law prohibiting able-bodied men to work for them. Consequently, the German people will be in future without the pastoral services of the priests of the orders and without the sacrificing services of their nuns.

5. It has been promised and granted: “Within the limitations of the law, the clergy has the sole right to erect, conduct and administer the seminaries for priests as well as church refectories.”

In truth, not only the Church refectories for students have been largely destroyed or taken from the administration of the Church authorities but even seminaries for priests have been confiscated and deprived of their clerical status. This is in conformity with the purpose of those who wish to deprive the Catholic priesthood of successors.

## II

We emphasize that before the authorities we



not only stand up for religious and clerical rights but likewise for the human rights bestowed by God on mankind. Every honest human being is interested in the respect and preservation of these rights; without them the entire Western culture must break down.

1. Every man has the natural right for personal freedom within the boundaries designated by obedience to God, consideration of his fellow man and the common good and the just laws of the civil authorities.

We German Bishops protest against every disregard of personal freedom. We demand juridical proof of all sentences and release of all fellow citizens who have been deprived of their liberty without proof of an act punishable with imprisonment.

2. Every man has the natural right to life and the goods essential for living. The living God, the Creator of all life, is sole master over life and death.

With deep horror Christian Germans have learned that, by order of the State authorities, numerous insane persons, entrusted to asylums and institutions, were destroyed as so-called "unproductive citizens." At present a large-scale campaign is being made for the killing of incur-

ables through a film recommended by the authorities and designed to calm the conscience through appeals to pity.

We German Bishops shall not cease to protest against the killing of innocent persons. Nobody's life is safe unless the Commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," is observed.

3. Every man has the natural right to property and the use of his lawfully acquired property and to protection by the State of private property against willful interference. Nevertheless, in past years many Church possessions and especially houses of religious orders, have been taken away by force from their lawful owners and used for other purposes. Even places of worship have been confiscated and desecrated.

We Bishops, in the name of the Catholic people, from whom come the members of our orders, protest against this violation of natural property rights and demand the return of the unlawfully confiscated and in many cases sequestered property. We protest against such willful acts for the sake of the common good and as defenders of the fundamental social order willed by God. For what happens today to Church property may tomorrow happen to any lawful property.

4. Every man has the natural rights to the

protection of his honor against lie and slander.

On the front and in the homeland faithful Christians fulfill their patriotic duties like all their fellow citizens. Yet Catholic priests and laymen are suspiciously watched, secretly suspected, nay, publicly branded as traitors and national enemies, just because they stand up for the freedom of the Church and the truth of the Catholic faith.

Catholics of the religious orders have fulfilled their duty heroically in the field, at home and in war, a fact which has been frequently acknowledged through the bestowing of war decorations. In spite of this, many have been deprived of their monastic homes.

We Bishops protest against such violations of truth and justice and demand effective, honorable protection for all citizens, including faithful Catholics and members of Catholic orders.

For months, regardless of war misery, an anti-Christian wave of propaganda, fostered by party meetings and party pamphlets, has been carried through the country with the clearly noticeable, even outspoken, aim to suffocate the vigor of the Catholic Church in German lands.

If possible, they wish to destroy Christianity in Germany during the war, before the soldiers,

whose Christian faith gives them the strength for heroic battles and sacrifices, return home. The vast majority of the German people, whose deepest feelings are hurt by such attacks on Christianity, justly expect the immediate and frank rectification of the Reich Government of the unjust oppression and hated struggle against Christianity and the Church.

Dear Diocesans: We Bishops have informed you of our grave worries and ardent endeavor for inner peace in our German nation. We call upon you, with the devotion we have always shown you, to support our efforts through your prayer and your unshakable faith, and to repulse decisively and vigorously all attempts to make you waver.

We wish to prove through our attitude that we long for nothing but internal peace, and esteem nothing as highly and faithfully as our sacred creed, which we shall defend against all attacks. Decisively and firmly we refuse the suggestion that we should prove our patriotic faith through faithlessness toward Christ and our Church.

We remain eternally true to our Fatherland just because, and at any price, we remain faithful to our Saviour and our Church. God bless our

country and our holy Church. God give us an honest, happy, lasting peace to the Church and the Fatherland.

### The German Bishops.

The above pastoral letter is to be read in all churches during the services on Passion Sunday, March 22, 1942.

Responsible for distribution and edition: The Bishop of Wuerzburg, Matthias Ehrenfried.

On May 8, 1942, it was published in the uncensored press of the free world that Michael Cardinal von Faulhaber had again raised his voice against Nazi persecutions of the Catholic Church in an eleven-point indictment of the situation in Germany which he sent to the Holy See.

Cardinal von Faulhaber's charges, in a condensed form, were as follows:

1. That a "veritable war against Christianity" is being waged in Germany.

2. That the Church is the victim of an elaborate system of "anti-Christian espionage."

3. That moral "blackmail" is being applied to faithful Catholics in an effort to lessen their church attendance, and to

the Church itself in an attempt to extort greater contributions to the Nazi party funds.

4. That intensified propaganda efforts are being made among the lower paid workers to get them to disavow the Church.

5. That the Church is being accused of being a "super-national organization" and that "loyal Germans" are asked how they can reconcile their duties to the State with those to the Church.

6. That violence is often employed in the "catechism" of a "doubtful" German who must "develop a conscience of his nationality" or "suffer the consequences."

7. That "grave measures" have been taken in primary and secondary schools to prevent religious instruction.

8. That under the pretext of lack of paper, publication of religious material has been forbidden, while on the other hand the number and size of publications attacking the Church has "increased beyond measure."

9. That young people have been for-

bidden to attend evening religious festivals on the ground that they "prevent their getting enough sleep," yet "attendance at party functions, which often last well past midnight, is obligatory."

10. That church organizations have been prevented from acquiring land on which to build religious structures, and that in many cases land already in possession of the Church has been sequestered without indemnification.

11. That Church property, such as bronze bells and even ritual vessels of immense real or intrinsic value have been sequestered without warning and indemnification.

The Cardinal closed with a prayer that "the Church stand together for the fight of its existence. Today it is a question of life or death for Christianity, for in its blind rage against religion the Nazi 'faith' does not or cannot distinguish between Protestantism and Catholicism."

### THE POPE

"Let us be infinitely grateful to Our Lord," said Pius XII in his Christmas Eve message of

1940, "that in this, our own day, our church is not lacking in such elect saintly courageous souls, found alike in the ranks of the clergy and the laity, who give strong evidence of heroism, generally overlooked by the world, and of unwavering fidelity . . .

"Indispensable prerequisites for the search for a new order are:

"1. Triumph over hate, which is today a cause of division among peoples; a renunciation therefore of the systems and practices from which hate constantly receives added nourishment.

"2. Triumph over mistrust, which bears down as a depressing weight on international law and renders impossible the realization of any sincere agreement.

"3. Triumph over the distressing principles that utility is a basis of law and right and that might makes right; a principle which makes all international relations labile.

"4. Triumph over those germs of conflict which consist in two-sided differences in the field of world economy, hence progressive action, balanced by corresponding degrees to arrive at ar-



rangements which would give to every State the medium necessary for insuring the proper standard of living for its own citizens of every rank.

“5. Triumph over the spirit of cold egoism which, fearless in its might, easily leads to violation not only of the honor and sovereignty of States, but the righteous, wholesome and disciplined liberty of citizens as well.”

In November 1941, the Vatican radio broadcast in German a letter by the Pope, which said: “If people arise and allege that they are the bearers of a new belief or a new gospel which is not Christ’s gospel, and if they make the Holy Church and its Head, the Pope, the target of unheard-of attacks; if they attempt to create an artificial and unreal contradiction between loyalty to God and loyalty to the Fatherland—then the hour has come when the bishops must raise their voices because of their vows. It is the duty of the bishops to repeat without fear the apostle’s words: ‘We must obey God rather than men!’”

At the close of the year 1941, the Holy Father said, in his Christmas Eve broadcast to the world:

"In its place (the place of the true faith) they have fashioned Christianity to their liking a new idol which does not save, which is not opposed to the passions of carnal desires nor to the greed for gold and silver which fascinates, nor to the pride of life; a new religion without a soul or a soul without a religion, a mask of dead Christianity without the spirit of Christ. And they have proclaimed that Christianity has failed in its mission!"

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