CHAPTER 9
ITALY, THE VATICAN AND FASCISM

In 1922, during the election of Pope Pius XI, an Atheist Italian agitator, standing in St. Peter's Square, is said to have remarked:—

Look at this multitude of every country! How is it that the politicians who govern the nations do not realize the immense value of this international force, of this universal spiritual Power? (Teeling, The Pope in Politics.)

In that same year that same man assumed office and then built the first Fascist dictatorship, on the pattern of which, in the following decade, so many European nations were to be established. It was the alliance of these two men, Pius XI and Mussolini, that influenced so greatly the social and political pattern, not only of Italy, but also of the rest of Europe in the years between the two world wars.

The fact that Fascism was born and first established in a Catholic country, and that it began its official career in the very seat of Roman Catholicism, is neither mere coincidence nor a freak of history. It was due to various important factors of a religious, social, economic, and political nature, not the least of which was the presence and co-operation of the Vatican in this first experiment of modern Totalitarianism.

Before proceeding farther, however, it would be of great help to glance briefly at the background against which Fascism was born, and particularly the part played by the Vatican in the social and political life of pre-Fascist Italy.

The history of the relationship between pre-Fascist Italy and the Vatican, as in the case of Spain and the Vatican, was one of bitter hostility between State and Church; the former trying to rid itself and the nation from the encroachment of the Catholic Church upon national life, and the latter attempting by all means to maintain or recapture those privileges to which it considered itself entitled. It was the same struggle that we have encountered in Spain and will encounter in many other countries, between the Catholic Church and the secular State conceived and sponsored by Liberalism and the democratic principles of the nineteenth century. The only difference was that in Italy the struggle was rendered even more bitter by the fact that, in order to achieve her unification, Italy had to despoil the Catholic Church of the Papal States, which included Rome itself.
The Italian people—with particular regard to South and Central Italy—had been used to complete submission to the Catholic Church, which controlled practically every aspect of their lives. In the Papal States, the illiteracy, ignorance, and misery of the people were amongst the worst in Europe.

When Italy was first unified the Italian Government proceeded to set its house in order, and began to do so guided by the principles of Liberalism. It secularized education and the Press; it proclaimed freedom of speech, religion, and so on. The Catholic Church fought every measure with the utmost ferocity, proclaiming to the Faithful that Liberalism was a sin and that whoever voted for the secular State would automatically purchase for himself eternal damnation.

This attitude was maintained not only because of the secular character of the new Italy, but because the Papacy claimed that its States, with Rome, belonged to the Pope. Therefore, until the State returned Central Italy and Rome to the Pope (thus preventing the unification of Italy), the State and all Italians supporting it were enemies of the Catholic Church, and the Catholic Church would have nothing to do with them. This in spite of the repeated efforts of the Italian Government, which on many occasions tried to open negotiations with the Vatican for an amicable settlement of the dispute.

Considering the times, circumstances, and the war that the Vatican continued to wage against the Italian State, the terms offered to the Vatican were more than generous, and should not have prevented the Church and State from reaching a satisfactory agreement. But the real motive behind the intractability of the Vatican was that it wanted to harass, and eventually destroy, the newly born Liberal Italy, and substitute for it the Clerical Catholic Italy of the past. By keeping open the Roman question, as it was then called, it kept millions of Italians hostile to the Government and all its laws. By preventing the authorities from speaking with an overwhelming popular mandate it prevented them from making more drastic reforms in the programme of secularization.

This enmity of the Vatican to the Liberal Italy of the closing decades of the nineteenth century not only created a state of war, as it did in other countries in similar circumstances, but also forbade all Italians to participate in the democratic life of the nation and exercise their newly acquired right to vote. Pius IX issued a "Non expedit," which forbade Catholics, under pain of excommunication, to vote at the elections. But as millions of Catholics were leaving the Church and therefore did not obey, Leo XIII, in 1886, had to issue new instructions to the effect that this "Non expedit" did not permit any of the faithful to use their vote.

This extraordinary interference in the political life of a nation on the pretext of the Roman question was in reality the desperate effort of the Vatican to weaken the
secularization of Italy and the Liberal forces, as well as all those other anti-clerical and revolutionary elements which were daily increasing throughout the country.

The Vatican's claim of the right to forbid Italians to vote was upheld well into the first decades of the twentieth century, and although it was slightly modified in 1905, and Catholic candidates participated in the elections of 1904, 1909, and 1913, the ban on Catholics taking part in the political life of the nation was not lifted until some time after the First World War. When the Vatican did grant Catholics the right to vote, it did not do so because it had been converted to democratic ideals, but because it had been forced by the changed times and the mood of the people. They not only continued to leave the Church en masse, but their anti-clericalist tendencies had increased a hundredfold since the first "Non expedit." This was due to the spreading of Anarchism and Socialism, which at the turn of the century began to take hold of the masses throughout the Peninsula, and which, by the time of the outbreak of the First World War, had already gained considerable political influence.

The principles of Socialism were fought with even greater ferocity than were those of Liberalism, with the result that those who embraced Socialism became even more anti-clerical than the Liberals. Italian Socialism, in fact, reached a point when it "made its very system and law out of opposition to the Church and religion" (Murri).

With Italy's entry into the First World War and the uprooting of millions of Italians who were sent to trenches and factories, Socialism took a greater hold of the country than ever before. When, immediately after the war had left its trail of economic, social, and political confusion and unrest, Socialism spread like wildfire, the Catholic Church became so alarmed that it searched desperately for some practical means by which to stop the surging Red tide.

The various anathemas of the Popes, the sermons of bishops and priests, and the devotion of the most backward stratum of society, were no longer enough. Something more up-to-date had to be found. So the Vatican at last reluctantly decided to allow Catholics to take part in the political life of the nation and organize themselves into a political party. The Party was created and led by a Sicilian priest, Don Sturzo, and it was called the Partito Popolare. The new Catholic Party soon spread all over Italy, becoming a powerful political factor to counter-oppose the Socialists.

Although a political means seemed to have been found by which the Red advance might be checked, the Vatican was far from having made up its mind on the best policy to pursue. For, as we have already said, there were two strong currents: one advocating battle against Socialism in the social and political field, the other advocating the adoption of more drastic measures.
The supporters of the second trend had become prominent since a new revolutionary Party appeared on the scene. It was led by an ex-Socialist Republican and Atheist, and was virulently anti-Socialist, anti-Bolshevist, anti-Liberal, and anti-democratic. It preached and practised violence on a large scale, beating up and murdering all Socialists it came across and burning their property. Its name was Partito Fascista, and its leader was Mussolini. Its supporters consisted mainly of desperadoes organized into bands which undertook punitive expeditions against the Reds.

Soon all elements which had reason to fear a social revolution—from supernationalists to industrialists and, above all, the middle classes—began to support the new movement. In the Vatican a cardinal watched it with great interest, not so much because of its programme (for the movement was composed of numerous anticlericals), but because it showed itself to be an instrument capable of fighting the Church's enemies with a weapon which the Church itself could not directly employ—namely, force. His name was Cardinal Ratti.

In 1922, just when the political forces of Socialism and of the Catholic Party were stabilizing themselves, having become the two great national parties, Benedict XV died. Cardinal Ratti, who was following Fascism with such keen interest, was elected Pope Pius XI.

With the coronation of Pius XI—who had a deep horror of Socialism and Bolshevism after having witnessed some of its aspects in Warsaw during the war, and who had no love for democracy—the Vatican's policy entered a new era. Pope Pius XI steered the political helm unhesitatingly towards the new Party, making overtures by rendering it a great service even before its organized March on Rome.

The tragic plight of the Italian Parliament had a chance of being redressed by the formation of a coalition of all progressive (but not Radical) parties. Such a coalition would have been composed mainly of the Socialist Reformists and the Catholic Party. These could have formed a Government capable of checking all extremists, for the Catholic Party had social and political plans similar to those of other moderate movements.

The coalition would have had a reasonable chance of succeeding, and thus, by stabilizing the Government, would have prevented the Fascists from staging their march and seizing power. But Pius XI had decided otherwise. He determined to dissolve all Catholic political parties, not only in Italy, but all over Europe. He saw that Catholic parties, however strong, could not crush the Socialists, owing to the very fact that in a democratic State there exists freedom for political movements. Moreover, the progress of the Reds in Italy and other countries was becoming more and more alarming. New and drastic methods had to be employed. So when the coalition
seemed on the point of giving concrete results and thus thwarting the march to power of the Fascists, the Vatican issued a circular letter to the Italian Hierarchy (October 2, 1922) bidding the clergy not to identify themselves with the Catholic Party, but to remain neutral. Such an order at such a moment could have only one meaning—repudiation of the Catholic Party and of its projected alliance.

This was the first direct move to come from the new Pope, directed towards paving the way for Fascism, which, after having organized a farcical march on Rome, assumed power on October 28, 1922, on the invitation of King Victor.

A few months later (January 20, 1923), Cardinal Gasparri, the Vatican Secretary of State, had the first of numerous secret interviews with Mussolini. During this meeting, the bargain between the Vatican and Fascism—as yet weak—was struck. The Vatican pledged itself to support the new régime indirectly by paralysing the Catholic Party, which had become as serious an obstacle to Fascism as were the Socialists. This, providing the new Government continued its policy of destroying Socialism, protected the rights of the Catholic Church and rendered other services to Catholicism. Mussolini, aware of the Pope's goodwill towards his movement, tried to make of him an ally, and gave his promise. The Roman question was also discussed.

As first-fruit of the new alliance, Mussolini rendered a good service to the Vatican. The Bank of Rome, which was controlled by Catholics, and to which the Vatican's High Prelates and the Holy See itself had entrusted their funds, was on the brink of bankruptcy. Mussolini saved it—at the cost, it is believed, of approximately 1,500,000,000 lire, which the Italian State had to pay. Shortly afterwards, the first voices of the Italian Hierarchy in praise of the leader of Fascism could be heard. On February 21, 1923, Cardinal Vannutelli, Head of the Sacred College of Cardinals, paid public homage to Mussolini "for his energetic devotion to his country," adding that the Duce "had been chosen (by God) to save the nation and to restore her fortune."

Yet, while the Vatican was secretly bargaining with the Fascist Leader, High Prelates were beginning to laud his movement, the Fascist squads were beating up and often murdering Catholic members of the Catholic Party who, throughout the country, went on opposing the undemocratic methods of Fascism, not stopping at murdering even priests (e.g., in August 1923 they murdered a parish priest, Don Minzoni). Had the Socialists committed such an act, the Pope would have invoked the fulminations of God; but, as it was, he remained silent and uttered not a single word of protest against such outrages, continuing unperturbed along his new path of collaboration.

In the spring of 1923 Mussolini, planning to paralyse Parliament, wanted to compel the Chamber of Deputies to approve an electoral reform by which the Fascist Party would have been assured of at least two-thirds of the total votes in the future elections.
Success in this would have been the first important step to open dictatorship. All democratic forces, headed by the founder of the Catholic Party, the Popolari, Don Sturzo, followed by his 107 Catholic Deputies, refused to accept, and fought the proposal to their utmost. Catholic resistance in the Chamber seriously imperilled Mussolini's plan; indeed, it became one of the major obstacles barring his path to dictatorship. However, that was not all, for it gravely endangered the new policy on which the Vatican had embarked—namely, to help the new Fascist Party and to cooperate with it in clearing the way from any possible impediment to the creation of an Authoritarian State.

The Pope therefore wasted no time, and not many weeks had gone by since the Catholic Party's open opposition to Mussolini in the Chamber, when Don Sturzo received a peremptory order from the Vatican to resign and eventually to disband the Party (June 9, 1923). Don Sturzo, although deeply shocked and for a time inclined to resist, finally bowed to the Pope's bidding, for besides being a member of the Church, he was also a priest. Although the Catholic Party was not dissolved immediately, the loss of its founder and leader was a blow which gravely weakened it. With the disappearance of Don Sturzo and the sapping of his Party's strength, the first serious obstacle to Fascism's bid for blatant dictatorship was removed.

Immediately the most responsible members of the Catholic Hierarchy (particularly those who knew of the Pope's scheme) began a campaign of enthusiastic praise of Mussolini. This campaign reached its climax when Cardinal Mistrangelo, Archbishop of Florence, one of the supporters within the Vatican of the Pope's new policy, after a speech at a public reception in which he bestowed all the blessings of the Almighty on the Fascist Leader and showered all the Catholic Church's thanks on him who had destroyed its enemies, in a moment of unbounded gratitude solemnly embraced the ex-Atheist Mussolini and kissed him on both cheeks.

The following year, under the direct personal instructions of the Duce, the Socialist leader, Matteotti, who was the bitterest opponent to Mussolini's bid for absolutism, was murdered by the Fascists. The indignation of the country was so great that the régime had never been so near to falling as it was during that crisis. In protest the Popular Party and the Socialists, after having withdrawn from the Lower House, asked the King for Mussolini's dismissal.

But, once again, the Vatican came to the rescue of the Fascist leader. At this juncture, when Socialists and Catholics were negotiating to bring into being a solid coalition and thus supplant the Fascist Government, Pope Pius XI came forward with a solemn warning to all Italian Catholics that any alliance with the Socialists, including the moderate brand, was strictly forbidden by the moral law, according to which co-
operation with evil is a sin. The Pope said this, conveniently forgetting that such co-
operation had taken and was taking place in Belgium and Germany.

Then, to complete the work of disruption, the Vatican ordered all priests to resign
from the Catholic Party and from the political and administrative positions they held
in it. This meant the complete disintegration of the Popolari, whose strength lay
chiefly in rural districts held by priests.

In addition to this, the new Pope conceived what was to be known as Catholic Action,
which was placed under the direction of bishops and which was strictly forbidden to
take part in politics. In other words, it was forbidden to fight the main actor in the
political scene —namely, Fascism. Pope Pius XI asked all Catholics to join the new
organization, thus inducing hundreds of thousands to withdraw their membership of
the Popolari, which, besides being thus weakened by the Vatican, was mercilessly
hammered by the triumphant Fascists.

These tactics of the Vatican lasted from 1923 until towards the end of 1926, when the
Catholic Party, having lost its leader and having been continually rebuked by the
Church and persecuted by the Fascists, was rendered illegal by Mussolini, and
dissolved. From that moment the Fascist Government became what it had wanted to
be—the first Fascist totalitarian dictatorship.

It was then (October 1926), and not by coincidence, that Pope

Pius XI and Mussolini started on those negotiations which were concluded with the
signature of the Lateran Treaty.

The Vatican and the new dictatorship, in spite of periodical misunderstandings,
chiefly owing to the fact that the Fascists continued to beat up Catholics, irrespective
of whether they were members of the old Catholic Party or of Catholic Action, praised
one another openly and frequently. The following two quotations sum up the attitude
of the Catholic Church towards Fascism at this period. On October 31, 1926, Cardinal
Merry del Val, in his quality of Pontifical Legate, publicly declared:—

My thanks also go to him (Mussolini) who holds in his hands the reins of the
Government in Italy, who with clear insight into reality has wished and wishes
Religion to be respected, honored, practised. Visibly protected by God, he has wisely
improved the fortunes of the nation, increasing its prestige throughout the world.

And, to complete the picture, the Pope himself, on December 20, 1926, declared to all
nations that "Mussolini is the man sent by Providence."
Such open praise and blessing by the Pope (who, incidentally, was one of the first to congratulate Mussolini on the failure of an attempt to assassinate him), the persistent help given to Fascism by the Vatican, and the liquidation of the Catholic Party at a moment when it might have prevented Mussolini from establishing himself in power had all cleared the way for a complete and unbridled dictatorship— the type of dictatorship, in fact, which Pope Pius XI wanted to see consolidated.

The Liberals with their secular laws, and the Socialists with their hatred for the Church—who, at the last election, in 1926, had been able, in spite of everything, to poll 2,494,685 votes, or more than half of the total polling—had been entirely liquidated, their parties forbidden, their papers suppressed, their leaders imprisoned or exiled. The menace of the Red wave had been averted and the Church had been rendered safe, thanks to its new policy of alliance with a strong authoritarian régime.

Now, with all internal common enemies annihilated, the Church and Fascism undertook in earnest the task of improving their already excellent relationship. For, in spite of their de facto alliance, not everything was well between them. Clashes between Fascists and Catholics, often members of Catholic Action, and anti-clerical demonstrations continued to obscure the horizon. An official Pact between the Vatican and Fascism would have stabilized their respective spheres. A Concordat was therefore desirable. But the most important aim of the Pope at this juncture was that the Church should negotiate for settlement of the Papal States. Mussolini, who had already proclaimed that religion was entitled to respect, would agree to both a Pact and a Concordat.

The Duce, however, in spite of his success, was not yet very firmly established. Many ex-Popolari members and Catholics of the general public mistrusted him, and, in spite of the clear hint given to them by the Vatican, they hesitated to support him fully. Something that would appeal to the imagination of Catholic Italy was needed. And what better opportunity than to give freedom to the Pope to make a solemn alliance between Church and State, something that had been made impossible for half a century by the democratic Governments that had ruled the country? A Treaty and a Concordat would strengthen the régime in such a way that nothing short of social upheaval could then destory it. In addition to internal consolidation, the prestige that it would gain abroad would raise the political status of Fascism throughout the Catholic world.

The negotiations which, significantly enough, were started with the dissolution of the Catholic Party in 1926 were concluded in 1929 with the signing of what has since been known as the Lateran Agreement.
We have already referred to the Lateran Treaty (Chapter 2), by which the Vatican was recognized as an independent sovereign State, and the Fascist Government undertook to pay a vast sum of money as compensation. The Agreement was acclaimed by the Catholic Church and Catholics throughout the world, and the prestige of Fascism grew by leaps and bounds everywhere.

But, in addition to acquiring its independence, which it had always refused under Liberal Governments, the Vatican had achieved another and no less important goal: it had restored the Catholic Church in Italy in accordance with Catholic principles that Church and State must not be separate, but, like body and soul, must co-operate together. A Concordat was signed by which the Catholic Church recovered all the former prominence which had been denied it by the secular State. Catholicism was at least proclaimed the only religion of the State; religious education was made compulsory in schools; teachers had to be approved by the Church, and only those textbooks "approved by the ecclesiastical Authority" could be used; religious marriage was made obligatory, "the civil effect of the Sacrament of matrimony being regulated by Canon Law"; divorce was forbidden; the clergy and religious Orders were subventioned by the State; books, Press and films against the Church were forbidden; and criticism or insult against Catholicism was made a penal offence. In short, the Catholic Church was reinstated as the dominant and absolute spiritual power over the whole nation.

The Vatican went farther. It again forbade all the clergy (a good minority of whom, headed by the ex-leader of the Catholic Party, remained hostile to Fascism) to belong to or to support any political party whatsoever. Thus it was impossible for any clergy to join an anti-Fascist movement, and as all clergy were under the direct orders of the Vatican, the ally of Fascism, it is easy to imagine the meaning of the clause.

On the other hand, Fascism recognized Catholic Action, which "had to carry out its activity outside any political party and under the immediate dependence of the Hierarchy of the Catholic Church, for the diffusion and exercise of Catholic principles."

The meaning of these clauses forbidding the clergy and Catholic Action to take part in any political activity is made crystal clear by Article 20 of the Concordat; the Vatican undertook to prevent its clergy from being hostile to Fascism, and to see that its bishops should become watch-dogs for the safety of the régime itself.

Thus the Church became the religious weapon of the Fascist State, while the Fascist State became the secular arm of the Church. The Vatican had at last gathered the fruit of its new policy—annihilation of its great enemies (Secularism, Liberalism,
Freemasonry, Socialism, Communism, Democracy); and restoration of the Catholic Church as the predominant spiritual power in the land.

As a proof of this after the Concordat was signed, Mussolini declared:—

We recognize the pre-eminent place the Catholic Church holds in the religious life of the Italian people—which is perfectly natural in a Catholic country such as ours, and under a regime such as is the Fascist.

The Pope did not lag behind the Duce in the generosity of his praises. On February 13, 1929, Pius XI proclaimed to the world that Mussolini was "that man whom Divine Providence" had allowed him to meet, adding that the Lateran Treaty and the Concordat would have been impossible "if on the other side there had not been a man like the Prime Minister." On February 17, 1929, at a reception at the Vatican, the Papal Aristocracy and Hierarchy applauded Mussolini when he appeared in a film; and the following month all the cardinals in Rome declared in an address to the Pope that "that eminent statesman (Mussolini)" ruled Italy "by a decree of the Divine Providence." And, as a finishing touch, the Vatican Authorities ordered all priests to pray at the end of their daily Mass for the salvation of "the King and the Duce" ("Pro Rege et Duce").

Could there be a closer alliance between Church and State than that between the Vatican and the Fascist régime?

But soon clouds appeared once more on the horizon. Church and State, although fundamentally supporting each other, began to have serious quarrels. This was inevitable, for, each being totalitarian, they each wanted absolute and sole control over certain sections of Society—in this case youth. Both State and Church claimed the sole right to educate the young. Pius XI claimed that, according to the Concordat, it was understood that the Church would have a bigger share in education, and that Catholic Action had to depend solely on the ecclesiastical authorities. Mussolini, on the other hand, wanted complete control over education and also wanted to control Catholic Action, as he did other organizations in the country.

The quarrel became so serious that Pius XI had to smuggle outside Italy an encyclical, Non Abbiamo Bisogno. In it the Pope did not, as was later asserted, condemn Fascism. Far from it. He simply denounced Fascist violence against Catholic Action and Fascist doctrines about the education of youth, which tended to place the supremacy of the State above everything, including the Catholic Church. The Pope then hastened to thank the Fascist régime for what it had done for the Catholic Church:—
We preserve and shall preserve both memory and perennial gratitude for what had been done in Italy, for the benefit of religion, even though no less and perhaps greater was the benefit derived by the Party and the régime.

Then he admitted that he had favored Fascism to such an extent that "others" had been surprised, thinking the Vatican had gone too far in reaching a compromise with the régime:—

We have not only refrained ourselves from formal and explicit condemnations [he declared] but on the contrary we have gone so far as to believe possible and to favor compromises which others would have deemed inadmissible. We have not intended to condemn the Party and the régime as such.... We have intended to condemn only those things in the programme and in the activities of the Party which have been found to be contrary to Catholic doctrine and practice (Pius XI, Encyclical, Non Abbiamo Bisogno, 1931).

He admitted that the Fascist oath, being contrary to the fundamental doctrines of the Catholic Church, was to be condemned. But he soothed the conscience of any Catholic in doubt by saying that although the Church condemned the oath, Catholics should nevertheless swear allegiance to the Duce. They could do so, said the Pope, by taking the oath and, as they did so, mentally reserving the right not to do anything against "the Laws of God and His Church." The authorities who received the oath knew nothing about such mental reservation. Thus, hundreds of thousands of Catholics, assured by their supreme religious leader that they could swear to obey and defend the Fascist régime, gave their allegiance to Fascism without further ado.

Could the determination of the Vatican to support the Fascist régime, in spite of disagreements, go farther than that? We shall have occasion to see that the Vatican gave similar advice to German Catholics, easing their consciences with regard to their support of Hitler. No wonder that, in spite of everything, the Church and State gradually drew closer together and later co-operated even more openly than they had done before.

The first overtures came from Mussolini himself, when, in June 1931, he declared:—

I wish to see religion everywhere in the country. Let us teach the children their catechism ... however young they may be....

Mussolini could well afford to speak thus. The Catholic Church, after all, was more than co-operating with Fascism in schools, in camps, and in the Fascist Youth Institutions, where children had to say grace before each meal. The following is a typical sample, written, approved, and encouraged by the Church:—
Duce, I thank you for what you give me to make me grow healthy and strong. O Lord God, protect the Duce so that he may be long preserved for Fascist Italy (New York Times, January 20, 1938. See Towards the New Italy, T. L. Gardini).

The highest pillars of the Church began again to exalt the Duce and Fascism in the most blatant terms. Cardinal Gasparri, Italian Papal Legate, said in September 1932:—

The Fascist Government of Italy is the only exception to the political anarchy of governments, parliaments, and schools the world over....

Mussolini is the man who saw first clearly in the present world chaos. He is now endeavoring to place the heavy Government machinery on its right track, namely to have it work in accordance with the moral laws of God.

At last the time for an official reconciliation was ripe. On February 11, 1932, Mussolini solemnly entered St. Peter's, and, after having been blessed with holy water, devoutly knelt and prayed. From then onwards the destiny of the Church and Fascism became more and more inseparable. The alliance was consolidated by the financial arrangements of the Lateran Treaty. About half the sum paid by Fascist Italy was in Government Bonds, which the Pope had promised not to sell for many years, and the Vatican's financial welfare therefore depended to a great extent on the preservation of Fascism.

Fascism and the Church worked hand in hand during the following two years, when all branches of life, especially youth, were subjected to a double bombardment by religious and Fascist teaching. In illustration, suffice it to say that textbooks in elementary schools had one-third of their space devoted entirely to religious subjects—catechism, prayers, etc.—while the remaining two-thirds consisted of praise for Fascism and war. Priests and Fascist leaders worked in with each other; the Pope and the Duce continued their mutual praise and became indeed two good companions bent on furthering the happiness of their peoples.

But Mussolini, who never gave anything for nothing, had not genuflected in St. Peter's because he had suddenly seen the Light.

He had a plan for the success of which the help of the Catholic Church was needed. And in 1935 the first of a series of successive Fascist aggressions which finally led to the outbreak of the Second World War was ruthlessly carried out: Fascist Italy attacked and occupied Abyssinia.
It is not for us to discuss whether overcrowded Italy had or had not to seek for "a place in the sun." Undoubtedly her surplus population and other factors played a great rôle in the adventure, but what we are concerned with here is the part played by the Vatican, which once again became the great ally of Fascism. The reason by which Fascism tried to justify its aggression was the necessity for expansion. This had been the main thesis of Fascist propaganda for years, and was intensified during the summer of 1935, when Mussolini's intention to attack Abyssinia was already clear. As the Fascist version that Italy was within her rights to wage war seemed to be received by the Italian people with visible scepticism, and as their enthusiasm could not be greatly roused, the Vatican came to the help of the régime.

Once again Pius XI let his authority as a spiritual leader be used for a political purpose: that of tranquillizing those Italian Catholics who entertained doubts about whether the Duce's planned aggression should be supported. And so on August 27, 1935, when the campaign of preparation and propaganda was at its height, Pope Pius XI strengthened the specious Fascist excuse, stating that whilst it was true that the idea of war horrified him, a defensive war which had become necessary for the expansion of an increasing population could be just and right.

That was one of the first of a series of steps taken by the Vatican to support Fascist aggression, not only within Italy, but also abroad, and above all at the League of Nations, in whose hands lay the power to take appropriate measures to impede the attack. On September 5, 1935, the very day on which the League of Nations had to begin the debate on the Abyssinian problem, a nation-wide Eucharistic Congress was held in Teramo, attended by the Papal Legate, 19 archbishops, 57 bishops, and hundreds of other dignitaries of the Catholic Church.

Whether the date was mere coincidence is open to discussion. It was not coincidence, however, that these pillars of the Italian Catholic Church chose that day also to send a message to Mussolini (who at that time was being attacked at the League as well as by practically the whole world Press), in which they said: "Catholic Italy prays for the growing greatness of the beloved fatherland, rendered more united by your Government."

Not content with this, only two days later, while the discussion on the Italo-Ethiopian problem was at its most critical stage, the Pope himself put his weight on the side of Fascism. His timely intervention had two main objects in view: to help Fascism to arouse in the unwilling Italians a national enthusiasm for the approaching war, and, above all, to influence the proceedings of the League of Nations itself by indirectly making the Catholic representatives of the many Catholic countries who were members of the League understand that they should not vote against Fascist Italy. For, declared the Pope, although he was praying for peace, he wished that "the hopes, the
rights, and the needs of the Italian people should be satisfied, recognized, and guaranteed with justice and peace."

On the following day, with the Pope's words still echoing in the ears of Catholic individuals and Catholic nations, the Duce himself declared to the world that Fascist Italy, while wanting peace, wanted a peace accompanied by justice. From then onwards Fascist propaganda quickened its drumming to a crescendo, seconded by the Vatican, until finally, on October 3, 1935, Abyssinia was invaded.

A cry of horror arose from all over the world, but not from the Vatican. The Pope kept his silence. As a Catholic writer stated afterwards, "practically without exception the whole world condemned Mussolini, all except the Pope" (Teeling, The Pope in Politics).

The Italian people received the news with very little enthusiasm, but Fascist propaganda tried to show that all nations were against Italy, not because of her aggression, but because they wanted to keep the Italians in economic slavery. Urged by these arguments and the Vatican, they little by little began to support the adventure.

Fascist leaders harangued in public squares and Catholic priests and bishops in their churches, both busy asking the people to support the Duce. When Mussolini asked the Italian women to give up their gold and silver rings to the State, Catholic priests preached that they should give as much as they could. Many bishops and priests led the offering by giving to the Fascists the jewels and gold belonging to their churches, even offering the church bells so that they might be made into guns.

To quote only a few typical examples:—

The Bishop of San Minato one day declared that "in order to contribute to the Victory of Fascist Italy" the clergy was "ready to melt the gold belonging to the churches, and the bells"; while the Bishop of Siena saluted and blessed "Italy, our great Duce, our soldiers who are achieving victory for the truth and for justice."

The Bishop of Nocera Umbra wrote a pastoral, which he ordered to be read in all his churches, in which he declared: "As an Italian citizen I consider this war just and holy."

The Bishop of Civita Castellana, speaking in the presence of Mussolini, thanked the Almighty "for having allowed me to see these epic and glorious days, sealing our union and our faith."
The Cardinal Archbishop of Milan, Cardinal Schuster, went farther and did all he could to bestow upon the Abyssinian War the nature of a holy crusade. "The Italian (Fascist) flag," he said, "is at the moment bringing in triumph the Cross of Christ in Ethiopia, to free the road for the emancipation of the slaves, opening it at the same time to our missionary propaganda" (T. L. Gardini, Towards the New Italy).

The Archbishop of Naples employed even the image of the Madonna, which was brought from Pompeii to Naples in a great procession. Ex-soldiers, war widows, war orphans, and Fascists all marched behind it, while Fascist war planes overhead showered down pamphlets in which the Virgin, Fascism, and the Abyssinian War were all glorified at the same time. After this the Cardinal Archbishop himself jumped on a tank and solemnly blessed the excited crowd.

This was going on all over Italy. It has been reckoned by Professor Salvemini, of Harvard University, that at least 7 Italian cardinals, 29 archbishops, and 61 bishops gave immediate support to the aggression. And this, it should be remembered, when, according to the Concordat of 1929, bishops were strictly forbidden to take part in any political manifestation.

The Vatican's support of the first Fascist aggression did not stop there, for it organized support abroad as well. Almost all the Catholic Press the world over came out to support Fascist Italy, even in such countries as Great Britain and the United States of America. To quote a typical passage:—

The cause of civilisation itself is involved, for the present at any rate, in the stability of the Fascist régime in Italy.... The Fascist régime has done much for Italy.... In spite of anti-clericalism ... it has fostered the Catholic religion (Catholic Herald).

And the Head of the Catholic Church in England went so far as to state:—

To speak plainly, the existing Fascist rule, in many respects unjust ... prevents worse injustice, and if Fascism, which in principle I do not approve, goes under, nothing can save the country from chaos. God's cause goes under with it (Catholic Times, October 18, 1935).

And finally, after the Abyssinians had been utterly subjugated, the Pope, to crown his continuous support of the war, after some sibylline remarks about a just and an unjust war, stated that he was partaking in "the triumphant joy of an entire, great and good people over a peace which, it is hoped and intended, will be an effective contribution and prelude to the true peace in Europe and the world" (Pope's speech, May 12, 1936).
With the conquest of Abyssinia a new country had been opened to both Fascism and the Church. Fascist armies were immediately followed by priests, missionaries, nuns, and Catholic organizations, who began their work for the extinction of the religious creeds of the Abyssinians and their substitution by Catholicism. For, as the Cardinal of Milan had said, the Italian flag had opened "the road ... to our missionary propaganda." Or, as the Archbishop of Taranto declared, after having celebrated Mass on a submarine: "The war against Ethiopia should be considered as a holy war, a crusade," because the Italian victory would "open Ethiopia, a country of infidels and schismatics, to the expansion of the Catholic Faith."

The Abyssinian War gave the first mortal blow to the League of Nations and accelerated the process of disintegration of Universal Peace. It was the beginning of a great venture which Fascism—Italian, German, and of other nations—in close alliance with the Vatican, initiated in a quest for Continental and World dominion.

Not many months had gone by since the complete subjugation of the first Fascist victim (late spring, 1936), when a second battle flared up, this time in Europe. In the summer of 1936 the Spanish Civil War was let loose on the Iberian Peninsula (July 16, 1936).

We have already examined the part which Mussolini played in preparation for the Civil War, and the help he gave Franco. The Vatican mobilized the Spanish Hierarchy and the Italian as well—the first to help Franco, the second to increase support of Mussolini, who was helping in the war against the Reds. We shall limit ourselves to quoting only a typical example of the enthusiasm of the Catholic Church for Mussolini at this period.

At the beginning of 1938, 60 archbishops and bishops and 2,000 priests, after having assisted at a ceremony connected with agriculture, asked to be received by Mussolini. Preceded by flags carried by priests, they went not only before the cenotaph of the unknown soldier, but also to render homage to the monument erected to those killed in the Fascist Revolution. Before being received by the Duce the bishops and archbishops led a procession, and when at last they were before him, they burst into frantic acclamation. The Archbishop of Udine read an address in which, amongst other things, he declared: "... Duce, may God protect you! We will all pray to Him, so that He will help you to win all the battles which you so wisely and energetically are directing for the prosperity, the greatness, and the glory of Christian Rome, Centre of Christianity—of this Rome which is the Capital of Imperial Rome."

After this a priest read an Order of the Day, approved beforehand by the whole assembly, repeating the will of the archbishops, bishops, and priests to co-operate with the Fascist régime, "for the wheat campaign as well as for the conquest of the
Empire ... so that Italy should be spiritually, economically, and militarily prepared to defend its peace against the enemies of her Imperial greatness." The motion ended: "May the blessing of heaven come upon you. The clergy of Italy are invoking on your person, on your work as a creator of the Empire, and of the Fascist régime, the blessing of the Lord. Duce, the priests of Christ give honor to you and swear their allegiance to you."

The archbishops, bishops, and priests then began to repeat "Duce, Duce, Duce." When at last Mussolini was allowed to speak, he asserted that the collaboration between the Catholic Church and Fascism had borne great fruits for all. He reminded them, with the deepest gratitude, of "the efficient co-operation given by all the clergy during the war against the Abyssinians ... remembering with particular sympathy the example of patriotism shown by the Italian bishops, who brought their gold to the local offices of the Fascist Party, while the parish priests were preaching to the Italians to resist and fight." When Mussolini ended, the archbishops and bishops, after having repeatedly invoked the blessing of Divine Providence upon Mussolini, began enthusiastically to acclaim him and again chant "Duce, Duce, Duce" (Corriere della Sera, January 10, 1938).

In the spring of the following year Pius XI died. Cardinal Pacelli was elected Pope, and assumed the name of Pius XII (March 12, 1939).

The change of the Catholic Church's supreme ruler did not affect in the least the policy of the Vatican towards Fascism. This for the very reason that the new Pope had been directing the Vatican's foreign policy for the preceding ten years and was mainly responsible for helping Hitler to assume power, as we shall see presently. He had always been in agreement with Pius XI, the only difference between the two being that Pius XII was more diplomatically-minded than his predecessor.

The commencement of the new Pope's reign coincided with Mussolini's decree for the expulsion of Jews (about 69,000) from Italy. The new Pope kept his silence, and when, a few weeks later, Fascist Italy invaded Albania, the Pope protested, not because a country had been wantonly attacked, but because the aggression had been carried out on a Good Friday.

A fortnight after Easter, 1939, the Pope received a letter so secret that only his Secretary of State was allowed to see its contents (according to his biographer, Rankin). There followed "feverish activity" with the representatives of various Powers, especially Poland, France, and Germany. Not many days later Hitler gave the first mortal blow which was to disintegrate Czechoslovakia. The storm of war was approaching rapidly, and finally, on September 1, 1939, Nazi Germany invaded Poland, and two days later France and Great Britain declared war.
The Pope made various proposals for peace, without success; and when, after Poland was crushed and shared between Germany and Russia, an uneasy lull descended upon Europe, Pius XII went on courting Fascist Italy. He ended that fateful year by taking the unprecedented step of receiving the King and Queen of Italy at an official reception at the Vatican, and shortly afterwards himself driving to the Quirinal.

There were several reasons why the Pope wanted to keep Fascist Italy out of the war: so that hostilities would not be extended; in order not to complicate the situation with the Western Powers while there existed a chance of peace; so that Italy might help later on, when the war was brought against Soviet Russia; and, last but not least, because if Fascism had collapsed, through either military defeat or internal revolution, the Catholic Church would have found itself in an unenviable plight.

Immediately Germany attacked Poland, the Vatican notified the Italian Government of its gratification that Italy was neutral. Count Ciano told Fr. Tacchi Venturi—a Jesuit go-between for the Vatican and Mussolini—that it was Italy's intention to remain outside the war; and on February 29 he told the Papal Nuncio to Italy: "I have the impression that a great offensive is about to break out.... Germany will make the maximum effort to bring us into the war." (The Holy See's Work for Peace in Italy, issued by the Vatican, June 1945.)

On April 24 the Pope, in an autograph letter to Mussolini, asked that Italy might be spared war.

Meanwhile Hitler was preparing to attack in the West, and sent Ribbentrop to appease the Vatican about the Nazi-Soviet Pact. And when Hitler invaded Holland and Belgium, the Pope for the first time sent a mild protest in the form of letters to the Belgian King and Dutch Queen, deprecating the fact that their countries had been invaded "against their will."

Upon this Hitler commanded Mussolini to keep Pius XII silent. The Duce, threatening reprisals and invoking article 24 of the Lateran Treaty, imposed silence on the Vatican, which could not bear the thought of the alliance between Germany and Russia. The Osservatore Romano ceased to publish political views.

The first notification that Italy had decided to enter the war was made on May 22 to Archbishop Borgongini-Duca by the Fascist Under-Secretary of State, and repeated by Ciano on May 28. A few weeks later, when France lay prostrate, Mussolini brought Italy into the war (June 10, 1940).

Once the country had joined in the conflict, the Catholic Church again aligned itself on the side of Fascism. Only nine days after the declaration of war the Pope, after
having received a few hundred newly wed Italian couples, told them that it was their "duty to pray for their country, which, rendered fertile by the sweat and blood of their forefathers, awaited that her sons should serve her faithfully."

On September 4, 1940, the Pope addressed 5,000 members of Catholic Action and exhorted them to be ready to give their own lives for their country.

When Mussolini attacked Greece, the Pope not only failed to condemn the invasion, but did not even mention it. Two days later, however, he granted audience to 200 Italian officers in uniform "who represented the Italian Army," and declared that it was most gratifying for him to bless men "who serve the beloved Fatherland with fealty and love." The following February the Pope received 50 German pilots and 200 Italian soldiers, all in uniform, and stated that he was "happy to receive and bless them."

In May 1941 he received the Duke of Spoleto, the day before the latter was to be proclaimed King of Croatia; and the day after the ceremony he received a Croat delegation led by Ante-Pavelich, the Fascist Dictator of Croatia, who had been condemned to death in France for having taken part in the assassination of the King of Yugoslavia.

On August 13, 1941, Pius XII received 3,000 Catholics and 600 Italian soldiers, to whom he said: "To-day there is great heroism in the battlefields, in the air, and on the sea. Although the war is horrible, yet one cannot deny that it shows the greatness of many heroic souls who sacrifice their lives to follow the duties imposed upon them by the Christian conscience" (see Il Vatican e il Fascismo, by G. Salvemini).

The Pope had to be cautious in his encouragement of Fascist soldiers, knowing he was watched by millions of Catholics in the Allied countries. But what the Pope himself could not say, the Catholic Church did. Its support and enthusiasm for the war surpassed even that shown during the Abyssinian campaign. The Church was one with Fascism, inciting the Italians to support the new adventure. Parish priests, bishops, archbishops, and even cardinals, preached and wrote exalting the glory of fighting and dying for Fascist Italy, emphasizing the duty of every citizen and Catholic to obey the Government. As before, the Cardinal of Milan, followed by bishops from all over Italy, made a tour of various military camps, blessing departing soldiers, machine guns, warplanes, and submarines; pinning holy medals on the chests of the faithful; distributing holy images in which the Fascist legions were represented marching towards certain victory, guided by angels, or the image of the Archangel Gabriel killing the dragon, Gabriel representing Fascist power and the dragon its enemies. Prayers and Mass were said everywhere. The Catholic Church, in fact, did not stint its
support of Fascist Italy, and its enthusiasm went so far that the Vatican itself had on numerous occasions to restrain the Italian Hierarchy.

The Pope went on receiving and blessing Italian and German soldiers up to May 1942, when the audiences were reduced, until, finally, they were stopped altogether. The picture had changed greatly since 1940.

Soviet Russia, which Hitler had promised to crush before the end of 1941, was far from being defeated, and in fact was hitting back. The battle of Stalingrad told the world and the Vatican that Germany was on the defensive. A Nazi victory, which in 1940-1 seemed almost certain, began to grow more and more doubtful. With the weakening of Germany's military impetus, the defeat in Africa, the almost complete obliteration of the Fascist armies, and finally the invasion of the Italian Peninsula itself, the situation had completely changed. The Vatican, therefore, prepared to take appropriate measures to ensure that, if Fascism should fall, Bolshevism would not engulf Italy.

Months before the invasion of their country the Italian people had become increasingly restless and organized menacing strikes. Socialist propaganda appeared in the industrial North. The great peril of Socialism, which had begun to sweep over the country, made the Vatican move.

A plan to cope with the new situation was devised after the Vatican had contacted the Allies (Great Britain and the United States of America) and certain Fascist and military elements in Italy, headed by the Italian Monarchy. The plan consisted simply of forestalling the fall of Mussolini, rendered inevitable by the internal state of the country, the inability of the régime to defend Italian soil, and, above all, by the war aims of the victorious Allies, which included the destruction of Mussolini's régime.

Both the Vatican and the Western Allies, however, had the same fear that the revolutionary forces in Italy might get the upper hand. Accordingly they came to an agreement by which, although Mussolini would be brought down, the general structure of the régime, with due modifications, would remain intact. Thus would be prevented the vacuum which would have been left by its disappearance and which would have given a golden opportunity to the enemies of social order and religion to take advantage of the situation. The plan was worked out in the early spring of 1943, the main agents being:—

Mgr. Spellman, Archbishop of New York, who was chosen as the intermediary between the Pope, President Roosevelt, and the Italian plotters.

The Fascist ex-Ambassador to London, Count Grandi (see chapter on Germany).
And the Fascist Minister Federzoni.

During his stay in Rome, in the early spring of 1943, Mgr. Spellman's activities consisted mainly of contacting the chief Fascist conspirators, Count Grandi, Federzoni, and the King of Italy (on February 22 and 23), and minutely reporting the progress of his talks to both the Pope and President Roosevelt.

After their plans had been laid down, Mgr. Spellman travelled in Europe and outside Europe, dividing his time between blessing bombers before they left to drop their deadly loads on German towns (e.g. April 6, 1943), and seeing people who were carrying out the new policy in which the Vatican, Great Britain, and the United States of America were so closely concerned. He visited especially the American Ambassador in Istanbul and the two Papal representatives then in that town (Mgr. Pappalardo of the Oriental Church, and Mgr. Clarizio of the State Secretariat of the Vatican).

The Vatican began to take the first cautious steps in Italy itself. On the outbreak of strikes organized by Socialists and Communists in North Italy, who demanded the fall of the régime and the abolition of the Monarchy, to be followed by social revolution, High Prelates began to warn Italians to be faithful to the Monarchy. For instance, as early as March 30, 1943, the Archbishop of Milan told Italians that they should "remember that the pledge of national unity is the Monarchy of the House of Savoy."

News of the secret negotiations, however, leaked out, and the first public hint of them was given on May 12, 1943, by the French journalist Pertinax, who was in extremely intimate relations with the Vatican Delegation in Washington. Pertinax stated that "the Vatican is deeply concerned with the social upheavals that in the peninsula are likely to be the outcome of military defeat beyond the sea and of unlimited destruction by air-raids at home."

A few days later (May 18, 1943), the New York Times broke the news from Berne that the Vatican had informed the British and American Governments that an Italian collapse now would have disastrous results unless Italy was neutralized at once or immediately occupied by Allied armies.

The Times correspondent, Mr. Brigham, on May 19, 1943, stated that he had learned from a "well-informed Vatican source" that a "plan" had been "elaborated in a special message from Pope Pius to Archbishop Francis J. Spellman of New York, at present in the Middle East." The plan aimed to make possible Italian "voluntary collaboration in the ousting of the Fascist régime" and "an armistice at once." The Fascist Party as such would be immediately disbanded. No provision was made in this first plan, Mr.
Brigham continued, "for the arrest or handing over to the Allies of any Fascist leaders."

The double campaign of the Vatican to help to forestall a popular revolt against the régime, and at the same time to prevent a social revolution, grew in intensity, and the Pope himself spoke with all his authority to a gathering of Italian workers, advising them to shrink from revolution (June 13, 1943).

The result of all these plans was soon apparent. On the night of July 25-26, 1943, Grandi led a revolt against Mussolini inside the Fascist Great Council. The Grandi resolution proposed that the King should take over supreme control of all armed forces. It was approved by seventeen and opposed by eight members. Mussolini went to see the King, and was told that he was no longer Prime Minister. Then Mussolini was arrested. The fall of the régime was as simple as that.

One of the plotters, Marshal Badoglio, who took over, declared: "The war goes on." But, behind the scenes, negotiations were taking place for the military surrender of Italy and the preservation of the Fascist régime in disguise.

There were minor changes in the Government; Fascists were kept in their former positions; while the revolutionary underground forces came into the open, only to be restrained again immediately by the new Government. Communist papers had two days of freedom, and were then suppressed. Badoglio called on the Italians to be "loyal to the King and all other stable and ancient institutions." The Church and its bishops spoke against the revolutionary and Bolshevist elements, and forbade opposition to the new Government.

There were great activities at the Vatican, the Pope and his Secretary of State holding meetings with the Portuguese, Spanish, German, and British Ambassadors. As the negotiations went on and the weight of Allied air-raids on Italy increased, the Pope grew impatient, being afraid that "the Italian people might become prey to Bolshevism." The Vatican pestered Great Britain and the United States of America for generous terms, "for in the fair land of Italy, the menace of Communism, instead of diminishing, is increasing." "The prolongation of the war," the Pope repeated, "creates danger that the young generation can be driven into the arms of Communism.... Moscow is awaiting the moment when Italy will merge with the European State Union under Communist supervision."

While the Pope continued to impress upon Roosevelt that "bombing breeds Bolshevism," Badoglio began a persecution of the Reds, enthusiastically supported by the Catholic Hierarchy and the Vatican.
At last, on September 3, 1943, Italy surrendered unconditionally. Mussolini had disappeared; the most outstanding features of the régime had been suppressed; the Western democracies had been satisfied that the Dictator would rule no more; in his stead there remained the fundamental structure of an authoritarian régime, ruled by a General and a King.

With King and General in the domestic field, and Britain and America in the foreign, Italy had been saved from internal Bolshevik revolution and external Bolshevik political pressure from Russia. The first great political counter-move by the Vatican and its lay allies had succeeded.

Soon afterwards Italy became a vast battlefield where Allied armies had painfully to fight their way northwards against the retreating Nazis, bringing untold destruction and social, economic, and political chaos with them.

While the armies battled, the Vatican and the Western Allies lost no time in carrying out the second part of their plan in the freed territory of the peninsula—namely, that of impeding revolutionary forces from gaining the upper hand.

The Allies carried out this policy through the organization they set up in free Italy (A.M.G.O.T.), which forbade political gatherings, political freedom, or the organization of anti-Fascist parties, at the same time prohibiting the purge of Fascists from public positions. The main administrative pillars of the former Fascist régime (the prefects) were kept in their former positions, while high civil and military officers were protected by an Allied Commission, which not only impeded any attempt to purge the country of them, but which admitted into the American-British fold Fascists who had been "active" up to the moment of defeat.

The Vatican's policy of directly and indirectly encouraging and supporting all those Conservative forces, with special regard to the military elements, which desired the preservation of the Monarchy, contrary to the will of the Italian people, came suddenly to light in May 1944. "Special investigators" of the American Army then intercepted messengers near the lines in Southern Italy, and opened a Vatican mail pouch. In it was found documentary evidence that the Vatican was engaged in active and highly secret machinations to preserve the House of Savoy.

The preservation of the Monarchy had become the main object of the Vatican and had the warm support of the Conservative British Prime Minister, Churchill, who, in order to put his plans into effect, personally visited Rome and was received in private audience four or five times by Pius XII (August 1944), and in the following year when, although no longer Prime Minister, he had long interviews with the Papal Nuncio to the new Italian Government (September 1945).
With the end of the Italian Fascist régime, the certain defeat of Nazi Germany, and the breakdown of Fascism all over Europe, the failure of the policy which the Vatican had pursued for over twenty-five years became more than obvious. A new policy, new methods, and new tactics proper to the changed conditions had to be adopted in order to save as much as was possible from disaster.

The Powers who had defeated Fascist Totalitarianism professed to be based on democratic principles, and, what was more, pro claimed their desire to see such principles adopted in liberated Europe. The enemies that the Vatican had fought during and after the First World War not only had survived, but had become stronger and bolder than ever. Soviet Russia, contrary to what had been the case after the First World War, emerged from the Second World War as one of the victors, with strengthened prestige, as a world Power whose political influence extended all over Eastern and Southern Europe to the very borders of Italy, where Bolshevism had grown by leaps and bounds.

To counteract these great changes the Vatican had to adopt two definite and interdependent lines, which together formed the new grand strategy of the Catholic Church in the post-Second-World-War period. The long-range international policy was to fight Soviet Russia by all means available, and to this end the Vatican, as in the past, had to ally itself with the Western democracies, who were no less eager than the Catholic Church to see that Soviet Russia's influence should be checked and, if possible, stopped.

The short-range policy, dealing with the domestic life of the nations, was to organize all the anti-Red elements into a solid block, led by Catholics, guided by the Vatican, and united into fighting political parties. These forces had to deal with economic issues and had to fight Socialism, not only on political, but also on social, grounds. It was at this point that the Vatican again gave permission to Catholics to organize themselves into a political movement.

Thanks to the new policy adopted by the Vatican, one of the first new Catholic parties to appear in post-Fascist Europe came to light in Italy and adopted the name of Christian Democratic Party. Leaders who were devoted to the Church were carefully chosen and soon began to shape the policy of the new Italy, hampering the efforts not only of the reborn Socialist and Communist Parties, but also of a restless section of Catholics who began to show alarming signs of revolutionary spirit.

Thus in the years immediately after the cessation of hostilities a distressed Italy watched an over-eager Vatican plunge directly into the political life of the country, openly organizing powerful Catholic parties, indicting any political movement which it considered was not in harmony with the Catholic doctrine, condemning Socialism,
and branding Communism, with a zeal that had lost nothing of its old fire but which, on the contrary, had become even fiercer, since, with the disappearance of Mussolini, the Red danger had surged more threateningly than ever.

The Pope and his cardinals, bishops and village priests all preached from the churches, the Press, and the radio, not only on religious, but on social and political issues, attempting to lead the bewildered Italian masses along a path traced for them by the Church. The Vatican openly supported institutions and men who had been responsible for the rise of Fascism. It ordered Italians to be loyal to King Victor, the man who had put Mussolini into power; and although the Italians, through a plebiscite, had voted overwhelmingly for a Republic, it went against the will of the people by making repeated attempts to preserve the House of Savoy.

In addition to its efforts to preserve the Monarchy, the Vatican, following its old policy, indirectly supported movements which had everything in common with the former Fascist Party except in name. A typical example was the Right-wing Uomo Qualunque (Common Man) Party, which in the general election of 1946 polled more than 1,000,000 votes. Its leader, until a short while before an Atheist, seeing the sympathy with which the Vatican looked upon his movement, made haste at this period, with all solemnity, to enter the Catholic Church. Vatican Radio gave the news (June 10, 1946) that Signor Gianini was baptized, had had his first Communion, received confirmation, and was married in the Church of the Sacred Heart in Rome, while the Pope had sent him his good wishes and blessing.

This, significantly enough, when several Catholics, including priests, were admonished, or even excommunicated, by the Holy Office for sponsoring social doctrines not in conformity with those of the Church—that is, Socialist doctrines (e.g. Fr. Fernando Tartaglia, a Florentine priest, excommunicated by decree of the Supreme S. Congregation of the Holy Office; Vatican Radio, June 12, 1946).

At the same time, those Catholics and priests who were helping the Fascist underground movement were never publicly reprimanded by the higher ecclesiastical authorities. Witness the occasion when the body of Mussolini, which had secretly been buried in a Milan cemetery, was stolen by Fascists and several months later found to have been hidden by the monks in the Pavia Monastery (night August 12-13, 1946), having previously been kept by the monks of another monastery (St. Angelo). Several fanatical Fascists and several monks were arrested as accomplices in the theft of the body.

But these two instances, however significant, pale before two other moves, inspired directly by the Vatican, which more than anything else since the end of the war gave unmistakable signs of the policy on which the Church had definitely embarked.
These moves were connected with the creation of two new political parties which, although formed by Catholics, were poles apart, notwithstanding the fact that, besides having in common the same religion, they were both of an extremist nature.

The first was a Catholic party with a marked tendency to the Left, and which, although a supporter of the Church, asked for radical social and economic reforms similar to those advocated by Socialism. It was called originally the Catholic Communist Party and subsequently the Italian Christian Left Party. After a few weeks the movement was denounced to the Cardinal Secretary of State, who commanded the Catholic members to dissolve it. On its dissolution Vatican Radio made the following comments:—

Another party ... has disappeared. This had the monstrous name of "Christian Left" and pretended to bring the new world to God through class war— that is to say, to bring Christian workers to the side of Socialism and heresy. Of course this was not achieved. Through this policy the Christian Left committed suicide. This is the tragedy of a small but dynamic party composed of enthusiastic youths who called themselves Apostles of Christ but spoke and acted like followers of Marx (January 1946).

But not many months had passed before another Catholic party with extremist tendencies appeared on the scene (August-September 1946), supported by the Vatican. It was called the National Christian Party, and openly proclaimed that it belonged to the Centre, or more precisely to the Right Centre, following Christian Democracy's shift to the Left. This because "the referendum proved the necessity of separation from Christian Democracy, which was tactically and ideologically compromised with the Marxist Parties (Italian Socialist and Communist Parties)." (Dr. Padoan, quoted by Radio Rome, August 24, 1946.)

Notwithstanding all the Vatican's efforts, however, in the first years after the Second World War the Socialists and Communists had swollen their ranks in a most alarming way; Italy was flooded from one end to the other by a gigantic Red wave. It was the first great wave of the released popular forces which were soon to turn Red, not only in Italy, but also in France and Belgium. In 1948 the Italian Communist Party, with the exception of the Russian, was the largest Communist Party in the world.

After the First World War the first Fascist movement had been born in Italy, where for the first time a Catholic Party was destroyed by the Vatican in pursuance of a new policy. After the Second World War the first Catholic Party to be reborn and to be hurled against the adversaries of the Catholic Church in the social and political arena of a restless age appeared significantly enough in the Italian peninsula. It was no mere coincidence. Deeming the time opportune for a change of tactics, the Vatican had
turned over a new leaf of its policy, a leaf which, from the very beginning, gave unmistakable signs that it was but the old policy under a different name, pursued in a different manner owing to changed times and circumstances, but aimed more relentlessly than ever at the same old goal: the furtherance of the Church's supremacy in the life of the Italian people.

CHAPTER 10
GERMANY, THE VATICAN AND HITLER

The history of contemporary political Catholicism in Germany began, roughly speaking, during the formation and consolidation of the First German Empire. A glance at the behavior of the Vatican at that critical period demonstrates the consistency of the fundamental policy of the Catholic Church in general and illuminates what appears to be its political somersaults. They were part of her method for reaching her goal and for the formation of the Catholic Party, the Centre Party, which played such an important rôle in German life.

That a Protestant State like Prussia should dominate the political life of the numerous German Catholic States roused the greatest hostility in the Catholic Church, and caused Bismarck, while establishing the German Empire, to recognize that the power centred in the Vatican was a most subtle enemy to his plans. Statesmen before and after Bismarck had faced this same problem, but Bismarck put it with truly Bismarckian brutality.... "Is this great body, namely the German Roman Catholic, one-third of the entire German population, to obey, in civil matters, laws made by the German Parliament or mandates issued by a knot of Italian priests?"

There was no doubt about the Vatican answer. It extended from Rome to the German bishops, and from the bishops to their lower clergy and laity. The whole machinery which the Catholic Church possesses was set in motion. From the pulpits denunciations were thundered which were more apt for political platforms; and in the Parliament there appeared the Catholic Party, devoted to the interests of the Vatican. It was headed by the formidable statesman Windthorst. Before the incorporation of Hanover into Prussia, this statesman had a commanding place in the Hanoverian Cabinet. He was known for his ambition, his great powers as a parliamentary leader, and for his hatred of the new order of things.

The two men became symbols of the two opposing forces. Since the power of the Vatican had been enhanced by the formula of infallibility, the supposition was that it would try to carry to its logical conclusion the claim of the Catholic Church on the life of a State and on the shape of society. The result was a long struggle into which were drawn almost all of the Catholic German Hierarchy. The most notorious were the Bishops of Ermeland and Paderborn, and the Archbishops of Cologne and Posen. The
appearance of the Jesuits soon followed. They had been very active against Germany
during her Austrian and French wars, and had not only stirred up religious differences,
but also political and racial hatreds, especially in Poland and Alsace-Lorraine. As time
went on, their activities increased and the struggle became still more bitter; not only
owing to the interference of the Jesuits, but through the efforts of the Hierarchy. Every
means was employed to drive out of the pulpits and professorial chairs all those who
had not accepted the infallibility dogma; and, as the men thus ostracized were paid by
the State, the civil authorities resisted. This led to such violence in preaching that it
caused the enactment of the "Pulpit Laws."

Bismarck nominated a strong man as Minister of Worship—by name, Falk; and at the
same time it was proposed by Bismarck that a German Ambassador should be sent to
the Vatican. This proposal was rejected.

In 1872 the whole body of Jesuits were expelled from Germany. This was very
significant, as the Jesuits, even when they had been expelled from all the nations of
Europe, and even from Rome by the Pope himself, had been left undisturbed in the
Prussian dominions. The Vatican ordered the Catholics in Germany to denounce
Bismarck and the State; and this the archbishops and bishops did in the most violent
language. The Pope himself threatened Bismarck with the vengeance of God, which,
he said, would overtake him.

Reprisals followed quickly. The German diplomatic representative, who in the
meantime had been sent to the Vatican, was withdrawn, and what came to be known
as the "Falk Laws" or "May Laws" were passed.

The struggle at its worst phase lasted more than five years.

The Vatican replied by ordering the German clergy to launch anathemas against the
civil authorities and against all those who refused to recognize the Pope as the only
infallible bearer of truth. The religious authority, it was declared, must be above all
civil ones. From the churches it was preached that the education of the clergy was a
matter for the Vatican and not for the State; and that no Catholic had the right to—or
could—separate himself from the Catholic Church: once a Catholic, always a Catholic.

According to Canon Law, marriage was a Sacrament and only the Church could
officiate at a marriage ceremony. This, they claimed, was not within the right of the
State. They not only stirred up religious and racial hatred in Poland and Alsace-
Lorraine, but, by using provincial jealousies in Catholic States like Bavaria and the
Rhine Provinces, they increased these jealousies, and, led by the clergy, the Catholics
became rebellious. Through religious questions and moral issues they created social,
civil, and political disorder and unrest, all of which was directed from Rome.
The Government replied by the expulsion of priests from their pulpits, and of professors and bishops, with fines and imprisonment scattered widely. Numerous religious Orders were driven from the Kingdom. As the conflict grew more bitter, bishops and archbishops were thrown into prison, the Archbishop of Posen for more than two years.

The struggle did not confine itself to Germany. It spread throughout various European countries. Fervent Catholics began to plot and plan in order to harm the State and its representatives. A Catholic youth who had been educated in a clerical school tried to assassinate Bismarck by firing upon him on the promenade at Kissingen, and he almost succeeded. The bullet grazed Bismarck's hand as he lifted it to his forehead in the act of returning a salute.

The Government replied with even more severe measures.

Numerous Catholic Members of Parliament were arrested and civil marriage was extended over the Empire.

The conflict did not end here. The Pope himself again entered the fray. Another encyclical was issued by Pius IX. It declared the detested laws void and their makers Godless, thus renewing the incitement to civil disobedience and civil war, and the struggle entered an even more acrid phase. The Catholic Hierarchy, the Catholic laity, and the Catholic politicians were bent on fostering this. The Catholic Church left nothing undone to secure her ends. The political instrument of the Vatican in Germany, the Centre Party, were given instructions, if instructions were needed, to show no mercy to the Government. Throughout the whole of this period, led by Windthorst, the Centre Party, numbering one-fourth of the Parliament, fought all Bismarck's measures indiscriminately, no matter how far removed they were from religious interests.

But in 1878 Pius IX died. The new Pope was Leo XIII. Both he and Bismarck tried to reach some kind of compromise. Bismarck began to confer with Windthorst and with the Papal representative Jacobini, and the basis for an understanding was laid down. A new Minister, Schlozer, was transferred to the Vatican, and the Government used great discretion in administering the Falk Laws. This rapprochement continued with such success that the Pope asked for Bismarck's portrait; after which, Bismarck asked the Pope to act as mediator between Germany and Spain regarding the claims of the two nations to the Caroline Islands. Further measures lessening the severe orders on both sides continued until Bismarck found himself relying on the German Catholic Party's support for the main measures of his new financial and economic policy.
The worst of the struggle was over and a modus vivendi was established. It was in no way extraordinary that the State should abate its claims on the Church and decide to respect and even support some of the Church's claims; or that the Vatican should develop a close friendship with the authoritarian Chancellor, as both hated and feared democratic and Liberal principles. Once the religious questions had been settled, they became intimate partners and fought, indiscriminately, the principles and ideas which they believed to be dangerous to religious absolutism in the Church and political absolutism in the State.

It is very significant that the Vatican, through the Centre Party, in more than one instance, first was hostile to some form of government, or statesman, and then became its ally. These changes, which may appear inconsistent, are quite the contrary; for however inconsistent the Vatican may be in its methods, it never loses sight of its ultimate goal, which is to further the interests of the Catholic Church; and this same procedure was followed several times in Germany as well as throughout Europe in subsequent years.

In the case of Bismarck's Germany, when the Vatican at first was hostile to the idea that a Protestant Prussia should rule Catholic States and Catholic subjects, it was hostile because Bismarck, paradoxically, wanted to bring about Liberal reforms. Although, to our modern conception, these reforms were not sensational, they were then—and, in their present form, are still—anathema to the Catholic Church.

Bismarck was no lover of democracy, even when he sponsored Liberal reforms; he was no lover of democracy when he fought the Vatican; nor was he when it became his friend—quite the contrary. And the Vatican realized this; which explains why it ultimately became his close friend. Once the Church had been reassured that her interests would be respected and her cause maintained in resisting the dangerous ideals of Secularism, Liberalism, and, above all, Socialism, her course was clear. She knew that, besides gaining important advantages through the strong, authoritarian will of Bismarck, in him she had a bulwark on which she could rely.

The Vatican always has had, and still has, a predilection for strong men. When it felt that it could rely on Bismarck, the Kaiser, and finally Hitler, it gave them its support. In the Centre Party and the German Hierarchy it had two strong instruments to achieve its political ends; and it is enlightening to go through the vicissitudes of the German Catholic Party.

From the beginning its membership was very mixed. It included workers and employers, rich landowners and peasants, aristocrats and scholars, officials and artisans. Unlike the Austrian Catholic Party, progressive and reactionary elements were represented in the ranks of the German Party, and its fundamental characteristic
was that its basis was not political but religious. Owing to its peculiar nature, the Centre Party did not confine itself to domestic problems, and after its creation it gave a typical instance of this.

In 1870 the troops of the United Italy occupied Rome and abolished the Papal States. Immediately the Catholic Centre demanded that Bismarck should intervene in favor of the Pope. Bismarck answered that "the days of interference in the lives of other peoples are at an end." The Centre Party went farther, and asked for German military intervention in Italy. It spoke of a "Crusade across the Alps." Bismarck lodged a protest with the Vatican, knowing well from where the Party drew its inspiration. The reply given was that the Vatican was unable to cast any reproach upon the Centre Party.

During the ten years of struggle against Bismarck the Party greatly increased its membership, and when, finally, an understanding between the Vatican and the Government was reached, in the beginning of the nineties, the Catholic Centre Party capitulated to the Hohenzollern's Reich and accepted its protective domination. That was the beginning of a path which, had it not been followed by the Catholic Party, would perhaps have changed the history of Germany. In view of the historical composition and prevailing conditions in Germany then, a Catholic Party might "have become a reservoir of real and important opposition . . . the opposition of West and South Germany to the military State under Prussian hegemony," as a famous German author rightly says.

How did the capitulation come about? Was it a mere error, or was it a calculated policy?

Although the main supporters of the Catholic Party were the masses of peasants and Catholic workers, up to the middle of the First World War its autocratic leadership was in complete control of Conservative aristocrats and the upper grades of the Catholic Hierarchy. It was this leadership which, having common interests and fearing the same enemies as those which were feared by the non-Catholic Conservatives and aristocrats of Germany, brought the Party into an alliance with the Imperial Reich. It was the joint hostility of Prussian militarism and of Catholicism toward certain social, political, and economic formulas which ultimately made close allies of these two deadly enemies. These formulas were embodied in the doctrines and principles of Liberalism, in the economic, social, and political spheres. The Catholic Party began a most violent campaign against what it described as "The anti-Christian, Jewish, Liberal Capitalism," thriving on continuous invectives, like those which have become so familiar during the Nazi régime ... the "Godless Manchester School!" the "Jewish Usury Capital!" the "Liberal Money Moloch!" etc.
If the anathemas launched against the Liberal principles and the Liberal State by the various Popes are recalled, it is not difficult to understand the hostility of Catholicism to Liberalism and its resultant alliance with reactionary Prussian militarism. It was a natural consequence of the condemnation of the Vatican against Liberalism in any form—a consequence which, from religious and moral grounds, had been translated into social-political issues. Less clear, perhaps, might seem the reason which induced Catholicism to be so markedly anti-Semitic. This peculiar anti-Semitism was almost the only common characteristic of both the German and Austrian political Catholicism. This anti-Semitic spirit and phraseology were carefully nurtured by both German and Austrian Catholicism in order to counterblast the principles and the influence of the German and Austrian principal political enemy—namely, the Socialist movements.

The Socialist movements were preaching economic, social, and political democracy. They were inviting men into their ranks, irrespective of their religion, race, or color. The Popes, and the whole spirit which animates the Catholic Church, were fundamentally hostile to democratic ideas, Socialism, and equality, whether educational, economic, or social; in fact, they were against any reforms backed by new political ideas or methods. They fostered in the minds of the Catholic Church members a contempt and hatred for the democratic spirit, and a desire for, and attachment to, Authoritarianism; this attitude their members carried with them into the Catholic Party. With the passing years their teaching penetrated deeply, and thus imperceptibly prepared the masses, ideologically, to accept the idea of dictatorship. That is what happened with the German Centre Party.

There was also another cause for the political behavior of the Centre Party, one which influenced them greatly and helped to develop their increased activity. This arose from the rivalry and consequent hostility shown by the Catholic Church against the Orthodox Church, especially the Russian (see Chapter 17, Russia and the Vatican)—another automatic result. As this religious hostility was instilled into all Catholics, when it was translated into political issues it developed into active political hostility against Orthodoxy, which, to Germans, was represented by Russia; and the attitude thus created was in complete harmony with the expansionist policy of the Kaiser—an additional bond between Catholicism and German imperialism. This was carried to such an extent that, during the Russo-Turkish War, the most Catholic Windthorst declared, among other things of a like nature, that in the last resort it was a question of "whether the Slav or German element should dominate the world." The hostility against the Slav and Orthodox Russia shown by the Catholic Party reached such a degree that it brought a rebuke from Bishop von Ketteler "for its excessive Germanic self-confidence." This was the ideology which prompted the Party to call its official organ Germania—a paper which, later, was bought by a chamberlain of the Pope, von Papen.
When Communism, an even greater and more determined enemy of the Catholic Church, and of the economic and social systems she supported, came into power in Russia, the Church's hostility grew a hundredfold in the ideological as well as in the active political field. The Centre Party seldom took any important step without first consulting the Papal Nuncio, for many years Cardinal Pacelli, who supported any policy or any man who would oppose and fight Soviet Russia. In view of this it is in no way astonishing that the Catholic Party accepted with such alacrity and satisfaction the "Crusade against Bolshevism" preached in Rome by the Pope, and in Berlin by Hitler.

During the quarter of a century which led to the outbreak of the First World War the Catholic Party, with the exception of a short period of conflict with Prince Buelow, was the strongest group in the German Reichstag; and was the most important single ally of all the German Reich Chancellors from Hohenlohe to Bethmann- Hollweg, and also one of the chief supporters of German imperialism. That support was well expressed by the first leader of the Party, Windthorst, when dealing with that great question of German politics regarding the attitude to be adopted toward the German Army. He declared in the Reichstag: "I recognize that the Army is the most important institution in our country, and that without it the pillars of society would collapse."

Windthorst was succeeded by Ernst Lieber, who followed in the steps of his predecessor. He was an enthusiastic supporter of German colonial aspirations and a great advocate of the Kaiser's Big Navy Policy; so much so, that von Tirpitz thanked him in his Memoirs. Lieber was a constant influential sponsor of the catastrophic policy pursued by the Kaiser, and advocated a bigger Army, a bigger Navy, expansionist policy abroad and dear bread at home. This policy would not have been possible without the wholehearted co-operation of the Centre Party which he led. During the First World War they stood firm in a united front of all German political parties who were in favor of war. According to B. Menne, the Centre Party was one of the most vociferous supporters of a "Greater Germany," and they staunchly advocated the rather unChristian demand for a "ruthless prosecution of the war." They were also an important prop of the dictatorship established by the generals.

The Centre Party supported the most unreasonable demands of German imperialism, such as annexations in the East as well as in the West. Its leader, at this period Peter Spahn, defined the views of the Party on what would be the "New Order in Europe" after the Kaiser victory. Addressing the Reichstag in the spring of 1916, he said: "Peace aims must be power aims. We must change Germany's frontiers according to our own judgment.... Belgium must remain in German hands politically, militarily, and economically." The Party went ever farther and were in the forefront of the most fanatical German imperialists. The Catholic paper, Hochland, demanded the
annexation of Belfort ... "with old frontiers of Lorraine and Burgundy," and finally the Channel coasts.

This was not all. When, in 1915, von Tirpitz demanded that all merchant vessels entering the war zones should be sunk without warning by German submarines, the Catholic Party supported this most enthusiastically and declared themselves for unrestricted submarine warfare, which was sponsored by generals, industrialists, Pan-Germans, etc. Hertling, the Bavarian Prime Minister and one of the leaders of the Catholic Party, was an intimate friend of von Tirpitz. Still more noteworthy, the campaign was sponsored by the Catholic Hierarchy itself. Proof of this is to be found in the actions of the Cardinal of Munich, Bettinger, who mobilized the rural clergy in Bavaria and launched an ecclesiastical propaganda campaign in favor of unrestricted submarine warfare. This went so far that the Cardinal himself went to the villages agitating among the Catholic Bavarian peasantry. In reply to many protests the Cardinal made the statement that "it would be an irresponsible crime on Germany's part if she failed to wage unrestricted submarine warfare." The German Catholic episcopate echoed these words and followed the campaign, speaking for the leading Catholic dignitaries on the question of unrestricted submarine warfare and the violation of Belgian neutrality. Sufficient to quote Michael Faulhaber, later Cardinal Archbishop of Munich, and then a prominent Army chaplain. He made the characteristic remark: "In my opinion this campaign will go down in the history of military ethics as the perfect example of a just war."

Finally, the Reichstag group of the Centre Party took a really sensational step (October 16, 1916). In a carefully drafted document it told the Reich Chancellor that, although he was formally responsible for Germany's war policy, he must obey the orders of the Supreme Command; and that whatever the decree issued by them, the Reichstag was prepared to support it. The significance of this declaration "extended far beyond the immediate dispute concerning unrestricted submarine warfare; it was, in fact, the first formal recognition of the dictatorship of the German Army leaders, not only in the military, but also in political affairs, and the subordination of the Reich's Government and the Reichstag to that dictatorship." (B. Menne, The Case of Dr. Bruening.)

The date of the declaration is also significant. There was no longer a weak-willed man like von Moltke the younger at the head of the Supreme Command, but, from August 1916 onwards, General Ludendorff.

He was the first of the modern dictators, and in the name of the Grand General Staff he was determined to rule supreme in Germany, and it was not long before he succeeded.
The charge that the party of Political Catholicism was the first in Germany to pronounce the solemn capitulation of Germany to the dictatorship of General Ludendorff may sound improbable, and even malicious, but it is nevertheless, as we have just seen, an historical fact. (B. Menne, The Case of Dr. Bruening.)

In the third year of the war the Catholic Party was led by a trinity of groups characteristic of all Catholic parties, and formed of Catholic aristocrats, high State officials, and leading Church dignitaries. They were mostly nationalist and reactionary, and created discontent among the Catholic peasants and workers. This was caused especially by the way they administered the so-called "civil truce," and the refusal to introduce a general and equal franchise in Prussia.

An opposition was formed gradually by the Catholic trade unions of the Rhineland, whose mouthpiece was Erzberger. Before and during the First World War he had played a doubtful political part as one of the directors of the Catholic industrialist Thyssen; at the Reichstag; and when he called for the annexation of the French iron-deposit of Briey. He was on very good terms with von Tirpitz, and, as leader of German propaganda, helped General Ludendorff to power.

In 1917 Erzberger cut himself away from all this. He received certain information which convinced him that Germany had no chance of winning the war. General Hoffman, the Commander of the German armies in the East, and Count Czernin, Austrian Foreign Minister, told him that Germany was in a hopeless situation.

But the main impulse came from the Vatican itself. Pope Benedict XV saw, with anxiety, that the position of the Central Powers was rapidly deteriorating. There is no reason to believe that he desired their victory; but at least it is clear that he was anxious to prevent their defeat. Austria was the one great Catholic Power left in the world, and the position of the Catholics in Germany was one of which great hopes were justified. In the circumstances it is understandable that the Pope sought a solution not unfavorable to the two countries, and to this end he set himself to spin the first thread of mediation between London and Berlin. The preliminary requirement was a declaration from Germany concerning her aims in the West. This was where Erzberger's task began.

The Pope sent one of his young diplomatic priests, a very capable young man, named Eugenio Pacelli (afterwards Papal Nuncio and Pope Pius XII), to Munich to establish relations with the coming man in German political Catholic circles, Erzberger. Shocked at the revelation made to him of Germany's unfavorable position, Erzberger gladly supported the action of the Pope. A speech delivered by him on July 6, 1917, made a deep impression on the Reichstag and had a very sobering effect generally. That was only the beginning, and Erzberger worked tirelessly to provide the Pope
with the declaration he needed as a preliminary to his intervention. It was, in fact, largely thanks to Erzberger that on July 19, 1917, a majority of the Reichstag, consisting of Catholics, Socialists, and Liberals, adopted a resolution in favor of "peace without annexations and indemnities." Even the Kaiser was satisfied with the adoption of such a useful formula, although he did make one little reservation: the renunciation of a decision by force of arms was not to apply to Germany.

The situation was quickly reversed when Russia collapsed, in September 1917. Germany forgot the Peace Resolution, the Socialist and Catholic guarantee formula against a complete defeat, and German generals dictated the peace treaties of Brest-Litovsk and Bucharest.

But when, in November 1918, Germany collapsed, Erzberger, the initiator of the famous Peace Resolution, was chosen as the man to negotiate the Armistice, Field-Marshal von Hindenburg asked Erzberger to accept the heavy task. "With tears in his eyes, and clasping Erzberger's hands between his own, Hindenburg besought him to undertake the terrible task for the sacred cause of his country."

This scene was repeated exactly ten years later, when the Field-Marshal, once again "deeply moved and in tears," held the hands of another leader of the German Catholic Party.

Erzberger, as Chairman of the German Armistice Commission, signed the Armistice.

Apart from having become a convinced democrat, after the war Erzberger became convinced that the militarists were the chief enemies of a peaceful, progressive Germany. However, that did not mean that the Catholic Party had changed. With the exception of Erzberger and his followers, the Party, as a whole, was still wholeheartedly on the side of the past Empire. Only two days after the collapse of Germany the Catholic Party in Cologne passed a resolution in favor of the retention of the Monarchy. Later, the leader of the Party protested publicly against the overthrow of the Kaiser, and in this he was supported especially by the young generation of Catholic officers in the Army.

The Catholic Church, besides its nationalism, was the chief instigator of this feeling and fostered the demands for the return of the Kaiser. Within the Catholic Party, and among the Catholics throughout Germany, the whole question was put very clearly by one of her principal German hierarchical pillars, Cardinal Faulhaber. Addressing the Munich Catholic Congress, he declared: "The revolution was perjury and high treason, and will go down in history branded for ever with the mark of Cain."
"The mark of Cain" was but a Biblical expression for what in more direct words the Nationalists called "the stab in the back." At the same time, and at the same place, Munich, Hitler was preaching the same thing!

Although the Catholic Party damned the Revolution and hated the Reds, nevertheless, it took its part in the Republican Government. As a Catholic put it, "taking its stand on the basis of the given facts." That did not mean there was a change of heart in the Party. It merely meant that it had to adapt itself to a new situation in order to attain the same ends. When dealing with Catholic parties, one must remember that they are but the instruments with which the Catholic Church aims at reaching certain religious moral goals; thus political Catholicism, even if not changing an iota of its programme, can adapt itself to new situations by very easily making tactical moves which would be very difficult to other parties whose principles are only political or social, and which, to them, would be a matter of deeper principle.

Under the Kaiser, the Centre Party was a staunch monarchic and imperialistic party. Under the Weimar Republic it appeared as though it had become republican and democratic. What had actually happened was that it had adapted itself to the new circumstances in order the better to pursue its way toward its goals; and it remained what it had always been—namely, a Catholic party.

This is not a question of mere opinion; the facts speak for themselves. The Centre Party changed its tactics, even made alliances, though always provisional, with the hated Reds and Left-wing parties, but it never changed its determined course. If we compare the various moves of the Centre Party during the first ten years of the Republic, from 1919 to 1929, it will be seen that a move to the Right was followed by a move to the Left, which in turn was followed again by a move to the Right. One step forward, two steps back, was in fact their policy throughout the existence of the Republic. At one time the development of a Left wing had seemed possible, chiefly owing to the effects of defeat in the last war; but the propagating of the democratic ideas among Catholic workers, even among middle-class citizens, including journalists, professors, etc., proved to be but a temporary outburst. This was confirmed when the leader of the Catholic democratic wing of the Centre Party, Erzberger, was assassinated in the autumn of 1921 by two members of the secret military organization who were harbored by Catholic Bavaria. After Erzberger's assassination, the tendency to follow his policy grew weaker, until finally it disappeared.

When Erzberger was assassinated, Dr. Marx, a Conservative Prussian Judge and President of the Legal Senate, was the official leader of the Centre Party. His policy was to maintain the equilibrium between Right and Left. It is well to note that from 1924 the Centre Party suddenly rejected the "Weimar Coalition," which was a
coalition of Catholics, Left-wing Liberals, and Social Democrats. This the Catholic Party did in order to enter into a coalition with the German National Party. A Government under such a combination was formed, the Chancellorship being assigned to the Catholic Dr. Marx. This meant that the Catholic Party, in spite of its great support from the Catholic working class, went over completely to the heavy industrialists, the Junkers, the super-nationalists, and the militant elements which guided Germany into the Second World War.

Once again this sudden change must be attributed to the spirit and the moral doctrines of the Catholic Church as a religious authority.

The chief cause of Dr. Marx's change of policy and altered tactics was due to what were called the School Laws. The Weimar Constitution had not made clear what type of school should predominate in the Republic. The dispute was centred on the issue whether the Church, be it Protestant or Catholic, should have the main say in educational matters, or whether the State, disregarding the Church, should give a Secular-Liberal education.

In pursuance of their aims the German Catholics, beginning with the German Hierarchy, advocated that the schools should be supervised by the clergy, and that the "confessional school" should be adopted; this, to the detriment of the secular schools. The German episcopate in particular was very militant in its demands—a militancy which was increased by the encouragement given it by Cardinal Pacelli, the Papal Nuncio, who had been in Berlin since 1920.

The desire of the Catholic Church to have Catholic schools, in order to educate German Catholics, was natural, and it would not have become a great national political issue if it had confined itself to the religious sphere. But it did not do this. The religious issues were transformed into political issues, and vice versa. The Vatican, seeing that it could not obtain its aims by mobilizing its hierarchical machinery, put pressure on its political instrument, the Catholic Party. The Party took up the cause of the Catholic Church and approached the German National Party, who were very accommodating on the school problem. Meanwhile, the heavy hand of the Vatican pressed on the social internal policy of the Centre Party. The result of this was that the Party leadership began to stifle the political social opposition of the Left wing of the Party itself. They attempted to weaken it and to rally the Left-wing elements to the support of the reactionary policy of the Centre by appealing to their religious principles and to the fundamental principles of the Church on this educational problem.

In this way the alliance between the Catholic Party and the potential totalitarian German National Party was concluded. This coalition between Catholic and
Nationalist was a pact of mutual guarantees. The Nationalists promised school laws which would have introduced confessional schools under the supervision of the churches; and the Catholics promised to support industrial subsidies, post-war import duties, and to vote, significantly enough, in favor of cutting down social expenditure. Twice an agreement on these lines was concluded, but in both cases the agreement broke down. The first School Bill of 1925 did not come before the Reichstag at all, and that of 1927 caused a most violent dispute within the coalition itself. The Party of Stresemann, in the end, caused it to be rejected. Both disputants wanted to have complete control of the education and formation of youth. It was the same dispute which, later, broke out between Hitler and the Catholic Church.

The School Bill was the cause of the breakdown of the coalition, which finally occurred in the spring of 1928. In May there were elections which resulted in a sensational swing to the Left—actually the biggest since 1918. The result was that in the Reichstag the Social Democratic Party had the strongest parliamentary groups in the House.

Besides this swing-over of the German masses to the Social Democrats, another shock to the Catholic Church was that the Catholic Party was among those who lost adherents. But a greater shock was to come. Other parties, especially the Social Democrats, had broken into the Catholic electorate, taking with them numerous votes. This was a thing which the Catholic Church and the Centre Party had thought would never happen; previously, it never had happened. The discovery greatly alarmed the Vatican authorities as well as the leader of the German Catholic Party. In the Vatican the decision about the Centre Party, which had been hesitatingly postponed, began to take shape; and the Centre Party, hoping to regain its lost ground, left the Nationalists and returned penitently to the coalition with the Social Democrats. The Social Democrat, Hermann Mueller, became Reich Chancellor.

That was in 1928. Anyone would have prophesied that Germany was going to have a Socialist rule at last, and so embark on cooperation with the other European nations. But the promise of this was not borne out. In 1929, in spite of all appearances, three men were in the key commands of the strategic position of the German Republic. The combination, Hindenburg-Groener-Schleicher, was working behind the scenes with the intention of liquidating the Republic. It is interesting to remember that they were the last Army Command of the Kaiser at the time of the Armistice negotiated in 1918. They began to intrigue in the military and, above all, in the political field, meaning to do away with the "irksome intermediate Reich," as they looked upon the German Republic, and this was only a preliminary to other important moves.

In 1929 Hindenburg, pressed by his friends, began a more active reactionary policy in the Reich. As soon as the negotiations which were then being conducted were
concluded, his first move was to dismiss the Social Democratic Chancellor, Mueller, and his Foreign Minister Stresemann. The General was already planning to abolish the principle that the Reich Chancellor must have the support of Parliament. A man should be put in his place who would have the "confidence of the Army." It was agreed that such a man should rule through Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution, which gave dictatorial powers; and if Parliament protested, it would be dissolved.

The conspirators discussed which party offered possibilities for their support toward the final liquidation of the Republic; and which man would be suitable for the preliminary steps to the creation of a dictatorship that would eventually prepare the path for a real one. The Centre Party was the choice; and one of its leaders, the devout Catholic Dr. Bruening, was the candidate who should rule, not with the consent of the Parliament, but by grace of the Reichswehr. The Chancellorship was offered to Dr. Bruening under the condition that, if he accepted with those aims in view, he should rule by means of Article 48, and on the instructions of the Reichswehr.

There was a man in Germany who, although not a German, knew how to shape the German political scene better than many German leaders; that man was Eugenio Pacelli, the Papal Representative.

Pacelli had been in Germany since 1920, first in Munich and then in Berlin. On behalf of the Pope, in 1917, he had taken part in the negotiations for a compromised peace between Germany and the Allies—an attempt which ended in failure. He had been constantly in Germany ever since and followed German politics closely, especially the politics of the Catholic parties: the Bavarian People's Party and the Centre Party. No Catholic leader of either party took a single step of importance without first consulting the Vatican through Cardinal Pacelli. And as Cardinal Pacelli was the right arm of the Pope, many important decisions rested with him.

When Pacelli first arrived in Germany as Papal Nuncio, he created a mild sensation when, contrary to expectation, he began to co-operate with Erzberger. There were different opinions about this, as the views of the Cardinal were fairly well known. Some held that he was in sympathy with the Left wing of Catholicism; others, that he tried to curb and restrain as much as possible the Socialist tendency of the Catholic leader. The latter view seemed to have been confirmed when, after the assassination of Erzberger, he treated his successor, Dr. Wirth, with great coolness. But when Dr. Marx took the leadership of the Party, Pacelli sided openly with the Right-wing Catholic group.

The Cardinal and the new leader of the Centre Party became intimate, and Dr. Marx never made a move without consulting Pacelli, who, in fact, practically directed the policy of the Catholic Party for several years during that period. It was he who first
conceived, and then inspired and promoted, the coalition of the Centre Party with the German National Party, which move was so full of most serious consequences for the whole of Germany.

What were the reasons which caused the Cardinal to steer a powerful political party in one certain direction instead of another; and what induced him to make an alliance with the most nationalist, authoritarian, anti-democratic, and would-be creator of a German dictatorship, the German National Party?

The answer lies in what has prompted all Catholic politicians: the interests of the Catholic Church as a religious institution. Setting aside the dislike of the Vatican for Socialism, etc., there was an immediate goal which the Vatican aimed at: it wanted to introduce the formal establishment of the confessional school into the German educational system. That they wanted above all; and it would have been possible if Germany and the Vatican had reached a mutual agreement for a favorable Concordat.

But the Concordat was never signed; nor was the School Bill ever to come into effect. Nevertheless, Cardinal Pacelli did well for the Catholic Church, as the Republic opened her coffers to the Church, and the subsidies of the German State to the Catholic Church increased from 148,000,000 marks, in 1925, to 163,000,000 marks, in 1928.

Cardinal Pacelli’s opinion on how to deal with the great set-back at the election of 1928 grew in weight at the Vatican, where he was known to be as keen as the Pope in his plan to sacrifice the old-fashioned political Catholicism. The Vatican had already started on that road, although after the war there had been much hesitation over the fate of the German Catholic parties, as they had proved an invaluable weapon even during the years immediately following the First World War, and it seemed as if they might still be of great service to the Church. But actually this was not borne out. The Catholic Party was no longer able to exert the great influence it had exerted in the past without allying itself with some other party— at times, even with its enemies. This was largely due to the framework of the Republic. It allowed too much liberty to the political groups, which increased the economic deterioration of Germany as the masses were radically inclined on social matters. Also, the loss of thousands of Catholic members of the Centre Party, who had left political Catholicism for other movements and in the main had joined the ranks of the Social Democrats, caused the Vatican great concern.

All this had been considered for several years, but the shock came when the loss suffered by political Catholicism in the spring of 1928 was known. Almost half a million voters had turned their backs on political Catholicism. It was the worst electoral defeat ever suffered in the history of the Centre Party. Although the loss was
proportionally enormous, the seriousness of the matter was even more alarming to the Vatican, as that loss was the culmination of a persistent decline in the strength of political Catholicism in Germany. Had this continued to decline at such a pace it would have been a matter of but a few years before the Party would have become a nonentity in the political life of the nation, and the "red, secular enemies of the Church would have prevailed."

The Vatican had kept a close watch on this decline, and after the defeat of 1928 the statistician of the Centre Party was asked to draw up a table showing the losses of the Party since its foundation. The report was sent to Rome by Pacelli. Its publication was forbidden, and only the high officials of the Party, and the Vatican, had knowledge of it. According to this report the percentage of all male Catholic voters who cast their vote for the Catholic Centre Party was the following:—

(See Table - Percentages)

This tendency of a persistent decline was the more serious as there was a prospect of the losses continuing to increase disproportionately, and with increasing speed, as the Catholic workers were more and more accepting Socialist doctrines, especially after the alliance of the Centre Party with the reactionary German National Party; whereas the Catholic Youth and the Catholic intelligentsia were going over to the German Nationalists.

The Party which had served German Catholicism for more than two generations was ceasing to become an effective political instrument. Something more drastic and effective had to replace it. A new path had to be followed; new policy adopted; new methods encouraged; new men had to be helped to power.

After the defeat of 1928 the most reactionary elements of the Catholic Party became all-powerful. The Left wing ceased to count so far as the direction of the Party was concerned; and that was explained by the fact that the Party became an instrument of the Nuncio Pacelli. The clerical elements were supreme. The mouthpiece of the Right wing of the Centre Party was Dr. Ludwig Kaas, Professor of Ecclesiastical Law at the University of Bonn, and Papal Prelate. He had specialized in foreign politics; he was the speaker of the Centre Party groups in the Reichstag on foreign affairs and went with the German delegation to Geneva.

Dr. Kaas's chief demands were for "a more active foreign policy." He was highly critical of Stresemann's foreign policy, and was against the attempts to carry out German aims by patient negotiations. This is noteworthy, for, at the time he was advocating this more active policy, two other men, the leaders of two parties, were
advocating exactly the same thing: Hindenburg, the leader of the German National Party, and Hitler, the leader of the Nazi Party, were in agreement with Prelate Kaas.

It is of interest to note, further, that Dr. Kaas, after the First World War, was a fervent leader of a separatist movement, which was largely sponsored by Catholics, in the Rhineland. On March 10, 1919, he was so certain he would succeed in creating a Catholic State that he telegraphed to Cologne: "Greetings to the Rhenish Republic." It should not be forgotten that he was a close friend of Dr. Seipel, the man who was planning the creation of a Catholic Empire in Central Europe.

Dr. Kaas's influence in the Party was much strengthened by the fact that he was an intimate friend of the Papal Nuncio in Berlin, Cardinal Pacelli. Pacelli and Dr. Kaas, on several occasions, spent holidays together in Switzerland; and the opinions of Dr. Kaas were regarded as the reflection of the views of the Papal Nuncio. The friendship with Dr. Kaas was one of the great incentives for the steady strides to the Right of the Centre Party, as Pacelli greatly encouraged Catholicism in Germany to adopt national activism whole-heartedly. This is the more noteworthy, as, upon various occasions immediately after the First World War, the Vatican had refused to grant its support for similar demands from the Centre Party. The Vatican began to give its support to the Nationalist Party from the year 1924 until 1928, and, from 1928, all its support until 1933.

This should not be overlooked, as during that period the Vatican was shaping and giving concrete form to its new policy in the world. Its various activities were all aimed at curbing democracy and Socialism in the various countries; and these activities took shape and were carried out by the different instruments of political Catholicism in Europe. It is worth noting a few of these forms, which, although varying in character, were all aiming at the same goal. In Bavaria and Hungary, political Catholicism was legitimist; in Belgium and Austria, reactionary; in Portugal, Spain, and Poland, militarist and Fascist. But all had one international framework, which was anti-Communism as sponsored by the Vatican.

In Germany, political Catholicism had to play no mean part in this international framework; but it was necessary to wait and create favorable circumstances in which to bring about the necessary alterations in German policy. The Vatican steered the Centre Party to the Right between the years 1924 and 1928; and steered it to dictatorship between 1928 and 1933.

The German Catholics came more and more under the influence of the clergy, often in conflict with the Centre Party, and that was done through the creation of Catholic Action. At the same time the Catholic intelligentsia, which was already very antagonistic to Soviet Russia, was made more so by the direct encouragement of the
Vatican. At the Vatican, and amidst the German Catholics, it became clear that, besides their common enmity against Communist Russia, there was another great goal before them, and that was the restoration of the Russian Church into the bosom of the Catholic Church (see chapter on Russia and the Vatican).

This odium and this aggressive attitude toward Soviet Russia met and mingled with all those other elements in Germany which entertained the same hostility toward that country: Prussian Junkers, Pan-Germans, Nazis, and the like. On this particular subject these groups were on common ground with the various leaders of political Catholicism, like Dr. Kaas, Chancellor Bruening, von Papen, etc.

But not all Catholic elements were in favor of this crusade. There were several which, for purely political reasons, were against it. After the defeat of the Centre Party there was violent controversy inside the Party itself concerning the future line to be adopted in social matters and in foreign policy; but, with Dr. Kaas and the Papal Nuncio in continual close touch, the clerical element won, and in December 1928 Dr. Kaas became the leader of the Centre Party.

That was the turning-point. The Centre Party from now on was completely in the hands of the Vatican. The rank and file continued in the belief that things were as before except that the Party was pursuing a more reactionary and nationalist policy; but in reality the Centre Party was being used for one purpose, and that was to destroy German democracy, German Socialism, and to create a dictatorship which should fight Communism and guarantee the interest of the Church in that country.

Events began to take concrete form; the Vatican plan began to work in the realm of German politics. Exactly a year had passed after Dr. Kaas's election when Dr. Bruening, the fervent Catholic Deputy, was elected chairman of the parliamentary group of the Centre Party, and the plot spun by the Nationalist and Centre Parties began to unfold itself.

At the New Year's reception in the palace of the Reich President, in 1930, Hindenburg was to see, for the first time, the man who had been recommended to him by the plotters—the most devout Dr. Bruening. They said that he would be the man who would rid them of democracy, who would render Parliament obsolete, and who would rule as a dictator with Article 48.

Hindenburg and Dr. Bruening discussed plans, Bruening raising several objections to getting rid of democracy too hastily. In the end he accepted. Hindenburg repeated another of his acts—a replica of that enacted with Erzberger several years previously. "Suddenly Hindenburg began to weep, those facile tears of old age; and with that historic gesture which began and ended so many of his relationships, he clasped
Bruening's hand in both his own. 'So many have forsaken me; give me your word that now, at the end of my life, you will not desert me'" (Wheeler-Bennet). Bruening accepted. On March 27, 1930, the Social Democrat Mueller resigned from the Reich Chancellorship. The following day Bruening was charged with the formation of the new Cabinet. On March 31 Hindenburg appointed Bruening Reich Chancellor, by the grace of the old General and backed by the German Army.

April 1, 1930, was an historical date for Germany. The new Chancellor made his first appearance in the Reichstag. The parliamentary régime in Germany had ended and the authoritarian régime had begun. "My Cabinet has been formed with a view to concluding in the shortest possible time the tasks generally considered necessary in the interest of the Reich. It will be the final attempt to carry them on with the assistance of the Reichstag," said Bruening. This meant that the new Chancellor did not appeal for support, but threatened Parliament with dissolution if that support was not forthcoming. The Reichstag had not heard such words since the days of Bismarck. The new Cabinet presented itself as "The Government of front-line soldiers," and from then it was very important, in the political field in Germany, whether a man had served in the front-line trench or not; and when, where, and for how long.

The Hindenburg-Groener-Schleicher plan was at last actively at work. Bruening had begun to carry on its mission. He presented the Reichstag with a finance programme which was to be an excuse for him to deal with Parliament summarily. Knowledge of this in detail is unimportant; but it provided for increased military expenditure, notwithstanding the fact that the State was in a bad financial condition, and it advocated a poll tax which became known as the "Nigger Tax."

The Reichstag, after having attempted to come to some agreement with Bruening, rejected several points of the programme. This is what Bruening and his companions had counted on. That same evening Bruening decided to put the rejected points into force by an "Emergency Decree" issued by the Reich President. The Emergency Decree was made possible by Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution. This Article permitted the Reich President, "in the event of considerable disturbance to public order and security, or danger to public order or security," to invest himself with certain dictatorial powers, including the right to issue laws by the so-called "Emergency Decree." The text of Article 48 made it very clear that the Emergency Decree was to be used only in case of grave internal unrest and tumult on a dangerous scale, factors which at that time, with Bruening, did not exist.

Two days after Bruening had issued his first "Emergency Decree," Parliament asked for its withdrawal. Bruening's answer was to dissolve the Reichstag. New elections were held during the following autumn. And in the elections of September 1930 the
shadow of Hitler appeared menacingly on the New Reichstag. One hundred and seven Nazi Deputies entered the House.

Men and events played into the hands of the parliamentary dictator. The Social Democrats, who had 142 seats in Parliament and who were now the strongest group in the Reichstag, began a policy of "toleration" toward Bruening, "lest worse befall." They were afraid of Hitler. It was a suicidal policy. The economic crisis did the rest. Bruening's economic policy, in the opinion of many, was disastrous. Wages were reduced between 25 and 30 per cent, whereas reduction in cost of living, which had been promised, was only 10 per cent; and while all servants of the State had their wages cut, it is significant that one section, the officers of the Reichswehr, was not touched.

When Bruening was made Chancellor there were 2,000,000 unemployed in Germany; when he left, there were 6,000,000, and a financial collapse was made worse by a self-imposed economic blockade! Had it not been for this political and economic chaos there were many Germans who would not have been influenced by Hitler, who was one of those who welcomed these conditions joyfully. As the debacle gathered impetus the rank and file of his Party increased, and there is no doubt but that Hitler's promise of recovery, and the prospects he held out of a brighter future, brought him many unsuspecting adherents.

Bruening had several plans of an economic and political nature, by which he hoped to avoid paying reparations and at the same time arm the German Army.

In the spring of 1932 Bruening declared that, as Germany had completely disarmed, "she had the legal and moral right" to demand the disarmament of all other countries. While he was speaking to the world in this way the Catholic Bruening went on with the secret arming of Germany. During his Chancellorship there were several incidents bearing on this, one of the most outstanding being that connected with Carl von Ossietzky, a Nobel Peace Prize winner, who was tried and convicted for revealing the military activities behind the facade of civil aviation in Germany. He was sentenced to a number of years' imprisonment, charged with "the betrayal of military secrets."

Bruening and his Defence Minister worked hand in hand on Germany's secret armaments, which, under Bruening, began to develop at full speed. He and his military friends gave particular attention to the air arm. Germany's illegal fighter and bomber formations were amplified and strengthened, and substantial subsidies were paid to aeroplane manufacturing firms, such as Junkers and Heinkels. Already there were in existence no fewer than forty-four illegal training schools for military flying. Plans, studied to the minutest details, were ready for the bombardment of the Maginot Line, as well as for Paris and London. The leader of the "Air Department," under
Bruening, was Captain Brandeburg—the man who later led the Luftwaffe when London was bombed.

Meanwhile, Bruening, "the Hunger Chancellor," as the German masses called him, was busy in the political field in connection with the rising Nazi Leader. He did not see in Hitler an enemy; on the contrary, he saw in him an ally who, in his lust for power and as a rival dictator, would help to get rid of democracy, to arm Germany, and to fight Bolshevism.

Almost immediately after the election of 1930 Goering had long and secret negotiations with Minister Treviranus; and, at the same time, Roehm, the chief of Hitler's S.A., was received by General von Schleicher. They discussed the Army, regular and irregular, and agreed, as was later disclosed, to alter certain features of the Nazi civil Army.

After these preliminaries the two leaders met again in October 1930. What was discussed has never been known in its entirety, but information leaked out which gave rise to the report that Bruening and Hitler had reached an agreement to share the government, and that Bruening would take Nazi Ministers into his Cabinet. However, the agreement broke down over the number of such Ministers to be given office.

Both Hitler and Bruening denied that they had ever made such arrangements; but upon one occasion, when Bruening was holding a meeting of Catholics, he was interrupted by a gang of Nazis. He threatened to make disagreeable revelations about what Hitler had confided to him of his plans if they continued to interfere with the Catholic meetings. The Nazis replied that they, too, could make sensational disclosures about what Bruening had told Hitler. Both, knowing themselves to be compromised, saw to it that there was no more friction to cause disclosures about the famous first meeting.

A year passed before the two leaders restarted their negotiations, in September 1931. This time Bruening publicly thanked Hitler and his supporters for "the courtesy with which, despite all criticism, they treated my person."

Hindenburg's term of office was expiring, and Bruening needed assistance for Hindenburg's re-election as Reich President, which he wished to secure through the Reichstag, and not through public election—a plan that was wholly unconstitutional. This plan gave Hitler a key position, as, without his Party, such a plan could not be carried out, Hitler having 105 seats in the Reichstag. Bruening knew what Hitler's programme would be if he came into power. Also he knew his secret plans: apart from which there came to light the notorious Boxheim document, which contained details for a policy of terror once the Nazis were in power.
That the Bruening Cabinet was behind Hitler was evident at the end of 1931, when a high Prussian official, a Democrat, saw the Minister of the Interior, Groener, and asked for support in a revolt led by a Berlin leader of the Nazi S.A. against Hitler. The opinion of Hitler held by the Government was shown plainly in Groener's answer: "Hitler is a man in favor of legality, who has promised to respect the Constitution. We must support him against the others, who are all firebrands." Then to the astonishment of the interviewer, the Minister added: "Hitler will certainly keep his word." In order to lend additional weight, he said that this was not only his personal opinion, but the opinion of Bruening, the Chancellor, who entirely shared his view on the subject.

But before trying to come to an agreement with Hitler, Bruening made several preliminary moves. He not only held Hitler in favor, but he spoke well of him and refused to take any steps against him, and in every way tried to smooth the path for him. He arranged that Hitler should at last meet Hindenburg, as others had arranged for his own first meeting with the old Field-Marshal; and, in addition, he asked the great Catholic industrialist Thyssen, one of the most generous financial friends of Hitler, to urge him to make a good impression on the President; for, should Hindenburg take a personal dislike to him, Hitler's chances of office would be lessened. He asked Thyssen to tell Hitler to be very moderate in speaking of his plans with the Reich President.

The meeting with the Field-Marshal took place, and Bruening and Hitler at last reached an agreement. Bruening offered to resign within the space of twelve months in order to give way to a Cabinet where the key positions would be in the hands of the Nazis, and in return Hitler was to support the election of Hindenburg as Reich President, and open negotiations with the Vatican for a Concordat.

Bruening's reason for postponing his resignation for a year satisfied Hitler, who accepted the offer. Bruening's argument was that if the Nazis were in the Government the Powers at Geneva would not make concessions to Germany; and Bruening hoped at least to obtain from them the complete abolition of reparation payments. With this he persuaded Hitler to be patient.

After the meeting, Hitler declared that he had been "deeply impressed" by Bruening. But, in addition to having been impressed by Bruening's plan to deceive the Allies, there were the military plans put forward and the enormous armament programme as conceived by Catholic Bruening. This was testified to later by the Nazi General von Epp, who declared that it was the "Reich Chancellor's rearmament plans which had really decided Hitler."

Bruening kept Dr. Kaas minutely informed of all his moves with Hitler, Dr. Kaas's task being that of faithfully reporting to the Pope the progress of the transactions. The
Vatican asked Bruening to make sure that, if Hitler was to be part of the new Government, the Nazis would not be hostile to "the true religion." But, for the second time, nothing came of all these negotiations. At the most important interview with Hitler, in January 1932, and to which Bruening took with him von Groener and von Schleicher, Hitler appeared, accompanied by his S.A. chief Roehm, who was the leader of the most intransigent Nazis. Bruening's offer, to his consternation, was rejected; also by the National German Party.

Seeing that collaboration with the Right-wing party of the extreme Right had failed, Bruening turned to the parties of the Left without any hesitation. He succeeded in convincing the Social Democrats, who elected Hindenburg by forming a Republican block against the parties of the Right. He put forward a slogan which would appeal to the Left: "Elect Hindenburg and defeat Hitler!" The Social Democrats once more gave their millions of votes for the election of Hindenburg and defeated the plan of the National Party and of Hitler.

But the election that took place during the same year gave such a shock to the Vatican that the Pope and Cardinal Pacelli definitely decided to support the new political force which alone could prevent Germany from going Left. The old Catholic Party had definitely had its day. Only drastic measures could stem the Red tide; that is, only Nazism. The poll caused Pacelli and the Pope to decide to put in their weight with Hitler. Out of a total vote of 35,148,470, the Nazi Party polled 11,737,391, the Catholic Party 5,326,583, and the Socialists and Communists 13,232,292.

The arch-enemies of the Catholic Church were making tremendous progress in Germany. If they were allowed to go on unchecked, and unless an iron hand assumed power and stopped them, it would be too late. And who could do that better than Hitler? From that moment, and behind the scenes, the Vatican worked with one main goal of influencing the issue so that Hitler would go into power. Ungrateful for the support of the Left, Hindenburg was no sooner elected than he turned sharply against it and pursued the most reactionary policy of an extreme Right-wing character, until, in the end, he offered Hitler power.

Meanwhile, Bruening was trying to destroy the Republic and restore the German Monarchy. He was always in complete accord with the Church's hostility to any form of popular government or republican régime, and with it in support of monarchies and authoritarian government. This spirit, with which he was so thoroughly imbued, was heightened by his nationalistic outlook. While Reich Chancellor of a Republic, he was working for its overthrow. He had taken the Constitutional oath, and the Republican Constitution began solemnly: "The German Reich is a Republic. Political power proceeds from the people." Bruening had sworn that he would uphold and defend such principles. But Bruening did not think himself bound to the Republic. He was
influenced by three great motives: his conscience as a Catholic, which bade him restore the authority of the Monarchy, for "authority does not derive from the people," as the Catholic Church has expressed repeatedly (see Chapter 6); and to this was added his strong nationalistic feelings and fear of the Reds, whose power he wanted to check.

Bruening had long conversations with Hindenburg, with the leaders of the National and Nazi Parties, and with the Crown Prince. Hindenburg was to be elected Reich Regent for life by a two-thirds majority of the Reichstag, which would have been obtained within a coalition of the Right-wing parties; and after his death, the second son of the former Crown Prince was to be proclaimed Kaiser.

The Vatican was kept well informed even before Bruening had taken active steps to put this plan into execution. Cardinal Pacelli had left Germany—in 1930 he had been appointed Secretary of State by Pope Pius XI—but he was still the main authority on German political affairs. He had given the plan his blessing, and the Vatican was in favor of it. The one condition that the Vatican imposed upon Bruening and his companions was that it should not be compromised or involved openly in the plot in view of the international complications to which it would give rise. Once the Monarchy was restored, the Catholic Church would give all her support through its clergy, Catholics, and Centre Party. Bruening and the other conspirators agreed. Outwardly, the procedure for the execution of the plan was not to come either from Bruening or the Catholic Party, or from anybody connected with the Vatican.

Once more the whole scheme was abortive. This time owing to the opposition of Hindenburg himself, who could not harmonize his still existing loyalty to his old Kaiser with the plan. But one result was achieved by Bruening while in power. Under his deliberate guidance, generals, big industrialists, Junkers, and extreme Nationalists were put into key positions. The military machine had reconquered Germany and become dominant—chiefly due to the moves of the Centre Party and, above all, to those of Bruening.

It has often been said that Bruening envisaged the restoration of the Monarchy in order to prevent Hitler from coming into power, but the facts do not bear out this contention. Bruening's original plan, to which Hitler and Hugenberg, the leader of the Nationalist Party, subscribed, and were ready to give their support, was: first, to destroy the Republic; secondly, to restore the Monarchy; and thirdly, to form a Government entirely composed of Fascist and semi-Fascist parties, which were the Nationalist, the Nazis, and the Centre Party. In order to achieve this last part of their programme Bruening promised Hindenburg, as well as Hitler and Hugenberg, that, once the first two goals were reached, he, Bruening, would resign and make way for Hugenberg and Hitler.
The Pope and Cardinal Pacelli were not only kept informed, but, for the ultimate plan which was to follow the restoration of the Monarchy, they wanted an assurance that a really strong Government which "would not leave room for the Social Democrats" should rule the new Germany, always under the conditions that enough guarantees should be given for the safeguarding of the Church's interests. These pour parlers were carried out at this stage, chiefly through Dr. Kaas and the Papal Chamberlain, von Papen.

Here are the textual words of Bruening regarding his plans, spoken to Hindenburg:—

I give my word that as soon as it has reached the point when the transition from the Republic to the Monarchy is assured, I will resign, and then you can form a Cabinet entirely from the parties of the Right [Nationalist, Nazis, etc.].

In addition to this, Bruening had another project in mind. This was, to turn the Social Democrats out of office in Prussia. Such a project had already taken shape before he asked their Party to support his plan to re-elect Hindenburg, who was nominated on April 10, 1932, and elected chiefly by the votes of the Social Democrats.

For several weeks the detailed plans were in the desk of Hindenburg. After the overthrow of Social Democracy in Prussia the attempt was made to form a strong Government of Catholics and Nazis. Mgr. Kaas was in continual touch with the Catholic leader, Gregor Strasser, trying to come to a final agreement with Hitler. But Hitler changed his mind at the last moment and the plan miscarried: he did not cooperate with Bruening because he knew that the Catholic Chancellor was politically dead. In fact, on May 30, 1932, Bruening fell.

Hindenburg dismissed Bruening on the advice of the generals and other forces which were working behind the scenes. They were plotting for the destruction of the Democratic German Parliament and for the creation of a dictatorship. The first phase had been reached. The time was ripe for the second phase.

The new Cabinet was formed by General von Schleicher, even before Bruening's dismissal. But at this point the plotters once more were divided among themselves. The generals wanted a man who should leave the door open to them at the first opportunity. That man had been chosen and had accepted. It was another Catholic, von Papen. But Mgr. Kaas, and through him the Vatican, wanted Hitler and Hugenberg to come into power.

For a long time the Vatican had been negotiating with the intriguers, and when it was known that the Chancellorship had been offered to von Papen, and that it had been accepted, it instructed Mgr. Kaas, who was the leader of the Centre Party, to ask him
to refuse it. This von Papen promised to do, and actually swore to Kaas that he would reject the offer. When, however, Hindenburg pressed him once more and von Papen accepted, Mgr. Kaas and the Vatican reproached him for having broken his promise, to which he gave a typical Jesuitical answer. The first time, he said, the President offered him the Chancellorship as a member of the Catholic Party, and in accordance with his promise he refused; the second time the offer was made to him as a private individual, and he accepted.

Franz von Papen belonged to a Westphalian Catholic family; he was rich, and in spite of the disreputable character for which he was notorious, he had great influence in the inner councils of the Catholic Party and at the Vatican. He was the owner of the main organ of German Catholicism.

The new Chancellor was heartily supported by the great Catholic industrialists, the aristocracy, and high State officials, all of whom knew that his nomination was but a last step to that at which they had been aiming for so long. In spite of the set-back suffered by Prelate Kaas and Cardinal Pacelli in Rome, matters would have taken the right turn for them at the right time but for the rank and file of the Catholic Party, which was composed of workers. They turned against the leading figures of the Party, its policy, and the new Chancellor, with as much strong feeling as the Social Democrats, and, for a time, the leadership of the Party fell into their hands. This was allowed, as the fate of the Party was already sealed.

The significance of the rise to power of von Papen was not realized except for the few intriguers in Berlin, and the still fewer in the Vatican. It was the conflict of the two tendencies in the German Catholic Party which gave the coup de grâce to Bruening. Those who had sponsored the second course, headed by von Papen, had persuaded the various generals and their colleagues to "work" on Hindenburg to dismiss Bruening from the Chancellorship. The two hostile camps within the high ranks of the leading German Catholics were divided on the issue whether definitely to abandon the Centre Party and allow its extinction, as decided by the Pope, or whether to allow it to continue and take its share in an administration headed by Hitler. In such an administration, the Nazi, the Nationalist German Party, and the Centre Party were to be full partners. The alternative was to subscribe to the death of the Centre Party and come to an agreement with Hitler about the interests of Catholicism and of the Church in Germany.

The first group was headed by Bruening himself. He had upon more than one occasion let the Vatican know of his objection to the plan of the Pope to get rid of the Catholic Party which, for two generations, had served Catholicism well, as the oldest, most powerful, and steady Catholic party in Europe. On several occasions he had promised to resign in order to give way to Hitler, provided the Centre Party should be
allowed to play its rôle. Even after his dismissal, Bruening informed Kaas, and through him the Vatican, that he would be ready to accept a post in the new Cabinet if Hitler were made Chancellor. Like Hugenberg, the leader of the Nationalists, Bruening was under the illusion that Hitler would work with them as equals. This policy, which had been condemned ever since the great defeat of 1928, was not accepted. Kaas and the other Catholics who had accepted the Vatican's decision were made to understand by Cardinal Pacelli that something had to be done before "unforeseen events could interfere with our plans." Kaas and his accomplices set in motion the necessary political machinery behind Hindenburg, and Bruening, who was already in disfavor with the German masses and with the clique which had put him into power, was dismissed.

The Chancellorship of von Papen was responsible for intrigues of all kinds, which originated in Berlin, between the groups of generals and the leaders of the various parties: the Right, the Centre Party, Mgr. Kaas, von Papen, the Vatican, and Hitler. The Vatican, Mgr. Kaas, and von Papen himself worked hand in hand to see that Hitler should get into power without any serious opposition. They were to prepare the way and ease the path of Hitler to the Chancellorship.

Von Papen was soon replaced by another Catholic, General von Schleicher. But the General found himself in sympathy with the Socialists and threatened to expose transactions which would have embarrassed high Catholics and the Vatican; and, last but not least, the corruption of certain dealings in which Hindenburg and von Papen themselves were involved. It was then that von Papen persuaded the old President to make Hitler President.

Later von Papen, during a lecture to a Catholic audience in Cologne, declared that: "Providence destined me to render an essential service to the birth of the Government of the national regeneration" (November 12). At the beginning of January 1933 von Papen met Hitler in the house of a Cologne banker and told him that the time had arrived when they should work together; the men and machinery that would put him into power were ready, and the Vatican would support him. In return it was expected that, once in power, he, Hitler, would destroy the Communist and Socialist Parties as a preliminary and discuss a Concordat with the Catholic Church. Hitler promised. The two reached an agreement. Hitler would become Chancellor, and von Papen Deputy Chancellor. Von Papen then persuaded Hindenburg to ask Hitler to become Chancellor. On January 30, 1933, Hitler, a Catholic by birth, was made Chancellor of Germany.

CHAPTER
THE VATICAN AND WORLD WAR II
When Hitler was made Reich Chancellor it was the beginning of the end for German Catholicism. Not many days had gone by before he asked for an "Empowering Enactment" which would give him dictatorial powers within legal lines. As to obtain this it was necessary for him to have a two-thirds majority in the Reichstag, the success or the failure of his demand depended upon whether or not the Catholic Party voted for him. In order to ingratiate himself with the Vatican and the highly placed Catholic leaders, Hitler, who had already secured the unconstitutional suppression of the Communist Party's mandates, began negotiations for the support of the Centre Party. These negotiations started in the middle of March 1933. Bruening himself and Prelate Kaas conducted them personally, and informed the Vatican of their progress in every detail.

Among other conditions exacted of Hitler by Bruening was that he should give a written statement to the effect that the Empowering Act should not override the veto of the President. He advised the Chancellor on what lines he should adopt in his Foreign policy. Prelate Kaas discussed and obtained the promise for which the Vatican had worked so hard for so many years—that, at last, a Concordat should be concluded. Hitler promised that the Catholic Church should have a special position of privilege in the New Reich if the Vatican would use its influence to secure him the vote of the Centre Party. The Vatican agreed, and Hitler made a further promise that in the inaugural declaration of his Government he would make a public declaration that would give effect to the promised privilege.

On March 23, 1933, the Reichstag met at the Kroll Opera House, in Berlin. In spite of a small Catholic opposition, the Catholic Party, led by Bruening and Kaas, voted for Hitler. They had voted the death sentence of the German Parliament and for the suicide of their Catholic Party.

On May 17, 1933, Hitler summoned the Reichstag once more and obtained a resolution subscribed, not only by the Nazis, the German Nationalists, and the Catholics, but by the Social Democrats, to the effect that "These representatives of the German people . . . place themselves unitedly behind the Government."

Meanwhile, von Papen had begun negotiations in Rome for the signing of a Concordat between Hitler and the Holy See. The time had been well chosen for negotiations—April, May, and June 1933. Besides von Papen, another leader of the Catholic Party who had accepted the view of the Vatican on political Catholicism in Germany went to Rome, where ways and means were discussed by which to carry out the Vatican sentence with as little shock as possible to the German Catholics. During his stay in Rome, Prelate Kaas, in a public declaration, described Hitler as "the bearer of high ideals who will do all that is necessary to save the nation from catastrophe."
Hitler himself, seeing the Vatican on his side, kept his promise about the Concordat, and stated on March 23, 1933: "Just as we see in Christianity the unshaken foundation of the moral life, so it is our duty to cultivate friendly relations with the Holy See and to develop them" (Universe, MARCH 31, 1933).

By this time the Vatican wholeheartedly favored the Nazis. The Pope sent orders to the German bishops, who were assembled at Fulda, that they were to instruct their clergy to support Hitler. The impartial Annual Register has already been quoted, in which it stated that "the gigantic swing-over of the Catholic middle class in West and South Germany to the Nazi Party broke the power of the old middle-class Catholic Parties" (1933). A glance at the electoral statistics will show that the Catholic (plus the Jewish) vote did not decrease; but there were 4,000,000 new voters. Many Catholics had hesitated, hating the Jews and the Socialists, but not daring to vote for the Nazis. But the order came from Rome that hostility to the Nazis must cease. (This, according to the Catholic "Revue de Deux Mondes" of JANUARY 15, 1935: Le Catholicisme et la politique mondiale.)

Meanwhile, Hitler had begun to prepare for the election. He paralysed the Communist and Socialist Parties by suppressing their papers and imprisoning their leaders. Not a single leader of a non-Nazi party was allowed facilities to appeal to the country except Bruening, who urged the German Catholics to vote for Hitler.

On February 27th the Nazis burned the Reichstag in order to rouse the millions of apathetic Germans against the Communists. On the same day the Communist Party was banned and thousands of its members murdered or put into concentration camps. On the 5th of March there were new elections. All Germany rushed to the poll, and, with the help of the many Catholics who voted for them, the Nazis got a larger number of votes and deputies than any other party.

Hitler struck another bargain with the Vatican before signing the Concordat. The Vatican was not to protest against his internal policy in dealing roughly with the "Communists, Socialists, and Jews, or even with some Catholic organizations" (presumably of the Left). The Vatican agreed. Hitler then commenced to deal with his enemies, who, incidentally, were the enemies of the Catholic Church. The most appalling persecution of Jews, Communists, and Socialists began. By March 1933 Hitler had suppressed practically the whole of the Opposition Press; all Communist papers were banned, and 175 of the 200 Socialist papers were suspended. This move was welcomed with undisguised rejoicing by the Vatican, especially as it had been agreed beforehand that the Catholic Party alone would be allowed to exist, at least for the time being. The pogroms which took place all over Germany shocked the civilized world and brought protests from many countries.
The "authority" which claims to be the moral authority of the world was practically the only one which did not utter a single word in defence of the persecuted, or of reproach to the Nazis. It would be well to remember that this was the same "authority" which asked the Spanish people to disobey their Government, and began an armed revolt in Mexico calling for a holy crusade against Communism.

During the reign of terror, Hitler began to co-ordinate the Catholic organizations, while at the same time, through the pressure of the clergy, the demand of Catholics to enter the Nazi Party and organizations increased by leaps and bounds. Despite the fact that the local Nazis continued to treat the Catholics roughly throughout Germany, the Catholic Party could do nothing, as it had the Catholic Hierarchy against it and they knew what was passing between Hitler and the Vatican. In desperation they put themselves entirely in the hands of Bruening, knowing of his opposition to the dissolution of German political Catholicism. Against all probability, Bruening still hoped that he might give a new lease of life to the Party by showing the Vatican that, through the influence of the Centre Party, the Church could bring pressure to bear on Hitler, and in that way make the opportunity for political Catholicism to govern with the Nazis. Bruening asked to see Hitler on this matter. At the end of June 1933 a new meeting between them was arranged. The announcement was made, but eventually Hitler cancelled it. The news he received from Rome caused him to do this. The Vatican and von Papen had brought the negotiation of a Concordat to a successful conclusion, and with this the fate of the Centre Party had been settled definitely.

The Catholic Party, which had defeated Bismarck, and in which Hitler saw his greatest enemy, was given orders direct from Rome to dissolve itself and thus clear the way to absolute Nazi dictatorship. On the evening of July 5, 1933, the Centrum issued a decree for its own dissolution—in fact its own death sentence. It was worded as follows:—

The political upheaval has placed German political life on an entirely new foundation, which leaves no room for Party activities. The German Centre Party, therefore, immediately dissolves itself, in agreement with Chancellor Hitler.

Many Catholics protested and criticized the conduct of the Vatican, which tried to appease and explain. In a semi-official statement it replied:—

The determination of Chancellor Hitler's Government to eliminate the Catholic Party coincides with the Vatican's desire to disinterest itself from political parties and confine the activities of Catholics to the Catholic Action organization outside any political party.

The Secretary of State, Pacelli, made this significant statement:—
On account of the exclusion of Catholics as a political party from the public life of Germany, it is all the more necessary that the Catholics, deprived of political representation, should find in the diplomatic pacts between the Holy See and the National Socialist Government guarantees which can assure them, at least, the maintenance of their position in the life of the nation. This necessity is felt by the Holy See, not only as a duty towards itself, but as a grave responsibility before the German Catholics, so that these cannot reprove the Vatican for having abandoned them in a moment of crisis.

When Mgr. Kaas, the leader of the Catholic Party, went to Rome he was instructed by the Pope to declare his support of Hitler, thus hinting to his followers what they should do. Whether or not he was personally convinced of the ideas he expressed, it is impossible to say; but the fact remains that, after interviews with the Pope and his Secretary of State, to the great surprise of many he made the following declaration:—

Hitler knows well how to guide the ship. Even before he became Chancellor I met him frequently and was greatly impressed by his clear thinking, by his way of facing realities while upholding his ideals, which are noble.

It is wrong to insist to-day on what Hitler said as a demagogue, when the one thing that interests us is to know what he does to-day and to-morrow as a Chancellor.... It matters little who rules so long as order is maintained. The history of the last few years has well proven in Germany that the democratic parliamentary system was incapable.

The German Hierarchy was instructed to support the Vatican's policy and the new Nazi régime, and the bulk of the Hierarchy obeyed. The following is a typical declaration by one of the heads of the German Catholic Church, Cardinal Faulhaber:—

In the Liberal epoch it was proclaimed that the individual had the right to live his own life as he chose; to-day the masters of power [Hitler] invite the individuals to subordinate themselves to general interests. We declare ourselves partisans of the doctrine and we rejoice in this change of mentality.

And the Archbishop of Bamberg, who addressed himself to the Catholic Press of Germany, advocated that all should second energetically and sincerely the efforts of the National Government to realize the reconstruction of Germany and renew its economic and spiritual life.

The Concordat between the Vatican and Hitler consisted of thirty-five Articles, and it amalgamated the various clauses and terms in the Concordat signed individually by
Prussia, Bavaria, and Baden. With the new Concordat the Catholic Church was making a pact in which the whole of Germany was included; and one which allowed her to impose her edicts on numerous German states that were unwilling, and had refused to have any agreement with the Vatican.

All the main aims of the Catholic Church with regard to a modern State are to be found in the Concordat. The Church, in accordance with its new policy, agreed to keep priests and religion out of "politics," whereas the State agreed to permit the Catholic religious associations, clerical and lay, as long as they confined themselves to religious activities. Education, marriage, the nomination of bishops, were all dealt with. Several years before, denominational schools had been the goal which the Vatican attempted to reach when it ordered the Centre Party to form a Government with the Right Parties, while boycotting the Social Democrats. The Vatican's aims were at last to be fulfilled by Hitler.

In appreciation for having made her full partner with the State, the Catholic Church asked God's blessing on the Nazi Reich.

On Sundays and Holy days, special prayers, conforming to the Liturgy, will be offered during the principal Mass for the welfare of the German Reich and its people, in all episcopal, parish and conventual churches and chapels of the German Reich (Art. 30).

And finally, the Order was given to all the Catholic Church spiritual generals—namely, the bishops—not only to be loyal to the Nazi régime, but to work to the effect that all the thousands of clergy under each bishop should be as loyal as the bishop himself; and furthermore, that they should see that no priest, or member of the Catholic Hierarchy, was hostile to, or opposed, the Nazi régime. Here are the actual words:—

Before Bishops take possession of their diocese they are to take an oath of fealty to the Reich Representative of the State concerned; or to the President of the Reich, according to the following formula: Before God and on the Holy Gospels, I swear and promise, as becomes a Bishop, loyalty to the German Reich and to the State of ... I swear and promise to honor the legally constituted Government, and to use the clergy of my diocese to honor it. In performance of my spiritual office, and in my solicitude for the welfare and the interests of the German Reich, I will endeavour to avoid all detrimental acts which might endanger it (Art. 16).

Taken as a whole, the Concordat was, to say the least of it, highly favorable to the Vatican. Germany is not a Catholic country. The Catholics form but a third of the whole population. Allowing for the addition of about 7,000,000 from Austria, the total
population of Germany in 1938 was 77,000,000, of which the Protestants formed 52 per cent and the Roman Catholics only 36 per cent.

The Vatican had now reached the principal aims of the Catholic Church in Germany—the disappearance of a Republic, the destruction of a democracy, the creation of absolutism, an intimate partnership of Church and State, in a country where more than half the population was Protestant. The principles expounded in the various encyclicals by the Popes had worked to bring about these political events.

After the Concordat was signed, the German Hierarchy and highly placed Catholics thanked Hitler, and promised they would co-operate wholeheartedly with the Nazi Government. The Supreme Head of the German Church, Cardinal Bertram, speaking in the name of all archbishops and bishops of Germany, sent a message assuring Hitler that they were "glad to express as soon as possible their good wishes and their readiness to co-operate to the best of their ability with the new Government." Here are the actual words:

The Episcopate of all the German Dioceses, as is shown by its statements to the public, was glad to express as soon as it was made possible after the recent change in the political situation through the declarations of Your Excellency its sincere readiness to cooperate to its best ability with the new Government, which has proclaimed as its goal to promote Christian education, to wage a war against Godlessness and immorality, to strengthen the spirit of sacrifice for common good and to protect the rights of the Church. (From a letter of His Eminence Cardinal Bertram to Chancellor Herr Hitler after the conclusion of the Concordat between the Vatican and the German Government. See Universe, AUGUST 18, 1933).

But the spirit of Totalitarianism, which desires to be always supreme, must be above all else. How was it possible, therefore, that two Totalitarianisms—that of the Vatican and that of the Nazis—should work in harmony? Sooner or later the conflict would have started.

It broke out almost immediately; and began, as usual, over the control of the youth, of education, etc., of which both Church and Fascism wanted absolute supervision and management. The Nazis began to attack Catholic associations and Catholic schools, and the next two years were characterized by "peevishness and querulousness on the part of the Church and insolent defiance on the part of the Nazis" ( The Vatican and Nazism).

Meanwhile, in the summer of 1934, there was the famous "Blood Purge." Thousands of people—Nazis, Nazi-Catholics, and non-Nazis, among whom were the Catholic
leaders von Schleicher and Strasser — were murdered. "I am the law," Hitler declared upon that occasion, while they were executed in cold blood without even a trial.

Neither the Vatican nor the German Hierarchy said a single word in condemnation.

In 1935 Hitler scored his first national-international victory. The Saar province had been under the administration of the League of Nations for a number of years, and the time had come to settle the issue of its return by a plebiscite. It was right that German territory should be returned to the German Reich, and no one would question it.

The Vatican, which exerted a great religious and social influence in the Saar, the whole region being eminently Catholic, did not try to restrain Catholic voters from voting to be under the Hitler Reich. Had the Vatican been against Hitler, as it claims now, it could easily have prevented the Catholics there from voting for its return to the Reich. But it did nothing of the kind. On the contrary, it instructed the Catholic Hierarchy to support the plebiscite, and Catholic Saar voted for Hitler by 477,119 votes against 48,637, mostly Jews. Patriotism and Catholicism went hand in hand.

In the case of the Saar it was natural for a German Catholic to wish for his province to return to the Fatherland in spite of Hitler. But the issue became more dubious when the Rhineland's turn arrived.

On March 7, 1936, Hitler, defying France, as Mussolini had so recently defied the League of Nations, with armed forces occupied the demilitarized zone of the Rhineland. Great Britain urged France not to oppose Hitler, who was once more successful. Here also the Catholics enthusiastically supported their incorporation into Nazi Germany, and Catholic churches thanked God. From the pulpits there poured out a stream of patriotism, and church bells pealed throughout the Rhineland.

It was not until two months later that Hitler, by a plebiscite, asked the country for its approval of what he had already accomplished. What had been his most outstanding deeds? He had violated his promise to keep a democratic Constitution; he had violently and bloodily suppressed all other parties; filled the jails and concentration camps with his political opponents; executed thousands of people without the remotest vestige of a trial; initiated incredible pogroms against the Jews; secured a hold on all the German youth, including the Catholics; destroyed all Catholic organizations; broken his word over the Concordat with the Vatican; and he was at that very moment in open conflict with the Catholic Church owing to the impossibility of harmonizing his Totalitarianism with that of the Vatican.

Yet the Vatican once more instructed the Catholic Hierarchy to support Hitler. Had the Pope, at this time, been against Hitler and Nazism, he could have influenced the
millions of Catholics throughout Germany, if not to vote openly against Hitler, at least to abstain from voting. Instead, the German bishops recommended the Catholics to vote for him. A letter issued by the German bishops was drafted in the Vatican itself, and was characteristic of its "subtlety," or, to use a more apt word, jesuitism. In this letter the bishops, having acknowledged that Hitler had been, and still was, persecuting the Church, facts they could not deny, recognized a "painful conflict of conscience." They could say no less when it was plain to the entire nation that Hitler was hostile to the Catholic Church. At this time, had the bishops ordered the German Catholics to vote for Hitler, they would have appeared to approve of "measures antagonistic to the Church" which Hitler had promulgated. Consequently, while the letter left Catholics free to vote as they would, those who wished to cast their vote for Hitler were offered the following formula to salve their conscience: "We give our vote to the Fatherland, but that does not signify approval of matters for which we could not conscientiously be held responsible" (Catholic Times, March 27, 1936).

It should be carefully noted that the Vatican did not advise that Catholics should not vote for Hitler; nor did it advise them to have scruples about the murders, pogroms, and injustices committed by him. It merely offered, to those in doubt as to what they should do, the palliative that they might eventually, refrain from voting for "measures antagonistic to the Church." This had always been the real and only cause of the conflict between the Vatican and Nazism from the beginning until its downfall: "For measures antagonistic to the Church." Throughout the Nazi régime the Catholic Church never spoke against Nazism as a political system. When it was compelled to protest about certain measures taken by Nazism, it spoke in the most ambiguous terms, and never once used the thunderous fulminations it has used so persistently against Communism and Russia. Last, but not least, the Church protested against Nazism only when her interests were involved.

The year 1936 brought a new heightened tension between the Vatican and Nazism, and this was because the activities of the Catholic Church were being hampered. On the occasion of the opening of the International Catholic Press Exhibition, the Pope, after the usual denunciation of Soviet Russia, protested mildly against Nazi Germany. These were the words he dared to say against Nazism:—

The second absentee is Germany (the first being Soviet Russia), since in that country, contrary to all justice and truth, by means of an artificial and intentional confusion between religion and politics, the very existence of the Catholic Press is contested.

When, in the same year (1936), the Pope made a speech about the Spanish Civil War—after having condemned the Red peril and Soviet Russia in the strongest terms—he once more protested against Nazi Germany because Nazism would not allow the Catholic Press to be an equal partner with the Nazi Press. He said:—
How can the Catholic Church do other than complain, when she sees that at every step she takes in the approach to the Catholic family, to Catholic youth, that is to those very quarters that have most need of her, she meets with difficulties? How can the Catholic Church act otherwise, when the Catholic Press is fettered, and ever more and more restricted; that Press whose office is ... to defend those convictions which the Catholic Church, as the exclusive guardian of Christianity genuine and entire, alone possesses and teaches?

That was the essence of the conflict between Nazism and Catholicism; and this was put into words by the same Pope a few years before, when, addressing members of the Sturmschar (élite) of the Catholic Young Men's Association, he said plainly what Catholicism's task was in Nazi Germany:—

The hour has come and has already been long upon us when, in Germany especially, it is not enough to say, "Christian life, Christian doctrine." We must say "Christian Catholic life, Christian Catholic doctrine." For what remains of Christianity, of real Christianity, without Catholicism, without also the Catholic Church, without Catholic doctrine, without Catholic life? Nothing, or almost nothing. Or better, in the end one can and must say, not merely a false Christianity but a true paganism (Easter, 1934).

Here is the fundamental reason why the Vatican protested against Nazism. It was only because Hitler would not allow the Catholic Church to sponsor Catholic life as an integral part of the Reich. In the same year, at Christmas, the Pope once more rebuked Nazism because, although it claimed to be fighting the Red peril, it was not cooperating wholeheartedly with the Church in Germany.

The Pope first raised his voice in warning with reference to the spread of Communism in Spain, and said that the Communist atrocities in that country ought to open the eyes of Europe and the whole world to the fate that would be theirs unless they adopted effective counter-measures. He then continued:—

But among those who proclaim themselves the defenders of order the spread of Godless Communism [Nazi Germany], and who even pretend to leadership in this matter, it gives us pain to see ... how, at the same time, they seek to destroy and extinguish faith in God and Divine Revelation in the hearts of men, and especially in the heart of Youth.... Rather do they destroy that which is the most effective and most decisive means of protection against the very evil which is feared, and, consciously or otherwise, work hand in hand with the enemy they think, or at least claim, to combat.

After the speech, the Secretary of State for the Vatican declared:—
It would be impossible to express more clearly the inability of National Socialism to form a true rampart against Bolshevism.

Cardinal Pacelli, later Pope Pius XII, on more than one occasion protested along the same lines. In the autumn of 1936 he, as Secretary of State, in a speech of welcome to the International Congress of the Catholic Press, complained of the suppression of the Catholic papers in Germany, and said:—

We cast troubled glances toward Germany. We feel deep regret that no official representative of the German Catholic Press has appeared at this Congress. After the last Pastoral of the German bishops it is incomprehensible that the Catholic Press in Germany should be intimidated, strangled, and obstructed in its apostolic struggle against Bolshevism.

Cardinal Pacelli's complaint was because the Catholic Press was not allowed to plant the seed of hatred in the German people against their great neighbor Soviet Russia, and in this way carry on their fight against Communism and Socialism.

It was not only the Pope and his Secretary of State who dared not attack Nazism as a political social economic system, but only dared to attack it when it affected the Church adversely. Various cardinals abroad, as well as cardinals and bishops in Germany, adopted the same attitude.

The following, among other utterances, are worth attention: In 1935, when Cardinal Faulhaber, of Munich, delivered a sermon there, he protested mildly against breaches of the Concordat, but uttered no protest against the hundreds of thousands of political prisoners in concentration camps. His whole protest consisted in the analysis of the fundamental errors that are at the root of National Socialist opposition to the Church; and he insisted upon the recognition of the position of the Church and the Papacy and the part which they must play in teaching the youth, clergy, and laity. "The Government must protect and co-operate with the Catholic Church," said the Cardinal, "as the Catholic Church alone is the bearer of redemption and the guardian of the glorious heritage of truth."

In May 1933 the Bavarian bishops issued to their flocks a call for co-operation with the Nazi Government; but they uttered the following words of admonition to Nazism with a view to their co-operating with the Church, "lest evil should befall":—

History teaches us that, just as harmonious co-operation between Church and State is necessary and beneficial, so disastrous effects follow when the State abuses its power in order to interfere with the life of the Church. In the one instance Church and State are fused together; in the other the Church is de graded to the status of a servant of the
State.... On no account can we ever agree to universal (undenominational) elementary schools in any form.

After having spoken about the importance of the Catholic Youth Associations, and asked the Nazis to allow the Church to co-operate with Hitler, the Bavarian bishops said: "We are not advocates of a form of criticism which combats and discounts all State authority." But the most significant sentence of the whole "call" of the bishops was the last one: "No one may hold back from the great work of reconstruction, and no one should be prevented from participation in it."

In a decree of July 1933 Bishop Matthias Ehrenfried, of Wurzburg, urged all the clergy of Lower Franconia to observe due subordination toward the Nazi Government. Here are the textual words:—

Under present conditions it is possible that subordinate officials might initiate wrongful and interfering measures which might militate against our co-operation with the national movement and disturb our sympathetic attitude toward it. It is not, however, the duty of the individual priest to judge of such matters or to redress them.... In so far as necessity arises, such questions will be dealt with by the higher ecclesiastical authority.

In October 1933 Cardinal Bertram expressed anxiety because Hitler did not allow the Catholic Church the freedom he had promised, and also because Hitler had dealt with Catholic politicians as if they had been Socialists or Communists. Among others, here are a few significant words:—

I refer to the anxiety which is felt on behalf of those leaders whose aim it was, as a matter of religious duty, to combat Marxism and Bolshevism in a manner appropriate to the form of government then existing.

Continuing, the Cardinal asked Hitler not to consider Catholic politicians his enemies, as they were quite the contrary; and those who had been deprived of their liberty should be set free and not treated as Socialists and Communists:—

We urgently request authoritative quarters in the Reich and State to make an earnest, benevolent, and early revision of the harsh measures which have been put into operation [in regard to Catholic politicians].

Bishop Wilhelm Berning of Osnabruck, in a sermon on New Year's Eve (1935), said that the Church wanted to co-operate with Nazism, but could not because Nazism "sought to tear Catholicism out of the hearts of the young."
In 1935 Bishop Matthias Ehrenfried, of Wurzburg, after having said that the Church would like to co-operate with Nazism, had to protest, as Nazism is "centralizing" Catholic Associations and schools, "even suppressing them as if they had been Communist." He ended the pastoral with these words: "Bestir yourself and defend the full rights of your Mother Church."

Cardinal Schutle, of Cologne, remonstrated with the Government for not allowing the Catholic Church to co-operate with it, and protested because Catholic freedom was being hampered and Catholics treated as if they were enemies of the Government (1935).

The Archbishop of Freiburg offered his protest because Nazis were not allowing full freedom to the Catholic Church in regard to the schools.

The combined pastoral letter of the bishops assembled at Fulda (August 1935) protested to the Government only because "the Holy Scriptures and even the Gospels are no longer to count for anything," and, "in place of the Catholic Church, a so-called 'Rome-free National Church' is to be set up." They also protested because "the Nazis accuse the Church of 'political Catholicism.'" The bishops ended the letter with the words: "Catholics of Germany, in recent years you have often asked, 'Must we Catholics then approve of everything in our Fatherland?" And the bishops answer later: "Catholics are instigating no revolt, nor are they offering violent resistance. This is so well known that, at all times, those who wish to gain an easy victory, particularly attack Catholics."

Bishops and cardinals protested because the Nazis permitted that "the right atmosphere is set up for a Kultur-kampf."

Later, because the Nazis did not honor Article 5 of the Concordat, which afforded protection to the reputation and persons of the clergy, Cardinal Bertram protested because "hundreds of thousands of books and pamphlets against the Catholic Church have been distributed in all districts, not excepting the most isolated village."

Bishop Galen, of Munster, in a sermon at Buer (March 1936), asked the Fuehrer how Catholics could co-operate with him when religion was not respected: "How can Christian parents allow their children to take part in labor camps of Hitler Youth meetings, when they know that religious guidance is lacking?"

Bishop Rackl, of Eichstat, protested because the Church is not as free as Hitler promised: "It is indeed laid down in the Concordat that the Catholic Church should enjoy full freedom, but you know that this is, unfortunately, not the case."
In 1936 the German bishops, assembled at Fulda, protested because, among other things, the Catholic Press was not free, and because of "interdenominational relationship":—

We cannot understand why the Catholic Press is restricted to purely ecclesiastical and religious matters by decrees. We cannot understand why our growing German Youth is so frequently withdrawn from Christian influence in order to be inoculated with ideas that are destructive of their faith in Christ or, by mixed interdenominational relationship, deprived of the vital force of their Catholic convictions.

In 1936 the Bavarian bishops once more protested because Nazism seemed to consider Catholicism the next enemy after Bolshevism.

On New Year's Eve, in 1936, Cardinal Faulhaber, in Munich, preached a violent sermon against Bolshevism and Soviet Russia, asking all men of goodwill to fight for the overthrow of Bolshevism. Then he asked them to protect Catholicism in Germany. He said that propaganda in Germany should incite against enemies and not be used "to drive as many as possible into leaving the Church." Later, the same Cardinal protested because "the correspondence of bishops is confiscated, Church property is seized and processions forbidden."

In 1938, Cardinal Faulhaber again protested because, "next year the State subsidy for priests will be curtailed or even completely withdrawn."

Bishop Galen, of Munster, in 1938 protested because: "In the last few months the National Socialist Party speakers have frequently called upon the Church to confine herself to the next life...."

In the Lenten Pastoral of the Bishop of Berlin, Count von Preysing, the bishops protested because the Church was accused of political activities. "Even the condemnation of Christ by Pontius Pilate was made" for political reasons.

Archbishop Grober, of Freiburg, protested because Hitler, in spite of all his promises, had deceived them: "When it was declared a few years ago that Marxism was dead, this gave rise to the hope that the de-Christianization of the German people would also cease. We have been deceived."

Protests continued to be made because the Nazis interfered with the schools and with the Catholic Youth; because Nazis did not show respect for the clergy; because cartoons against the Pope were published; because the Nazis restricted the freedom of the clergy to collect money at funerals; because they seized property; because they dared to bring before tribunals priests and monks accused of sodomy; because Nazis
laid down, in paragraph 15 of the Reich Law of Collections, that church collections must be confined to those taken during Divine Service, etc.

There have been thousands of protests from the Catholic Church, the Pope, the Vatican, and the German Hierarchy directed against the Nazis, but they were not protests against Nazism as such! They were not protests against the monstrous conception of Nazism because of its political-social system; because of its concentration camps; because of its persecution of Liberals, Democrats, Socialists, Communists, or Jews. Nor was it because of the loss of independence of Austria and Czechoslovakia; nor for the attack on Poland, the invasion of Denmark, Belgium, Holland, France, the attack on Russia, and for all that Nazism has done to the world. The Church only protested when her spiritual or material interests were at stake. And almost all her protests were worded in a mild form and were accompanied by promises and demands for co-operation with Hitler. It was certainly not because the Church did not want to help that there existed such hostility between her and Nazism. Far from it. These protests and offers of co-operation continued from the rise until the fall of the régime, the Church imploring that she be allowed to fight by Hitler's side against Soviet Russia and Bolshevism, and help to bring about the attack against that country.

Thus, in following the progress of Nazism in its path of conquest, it should be remembered that the Catholic Church in Germany never spoke against it except when her interests were at stake.

Ever since his rise to power Hitler continued to treat the Catholic Church inside the Reich as he thought fit, regardless of her protestations, but always keeping in mind the fact that it had great influence in other countries and could be made to serve his political aims within, as well as outside, Germany.

Measures within the Reich were bent on centralizing all the spiritual and cultural energies of the nation into one solid Nazi block; and the Catholic Church, like any other institution, had to submit to a greater or lesser extent. But continual friction was bound to result when the Church, a spiritual Totalitarianism itself, was brought into such close contact with the political Totalitarianism of the Nazis. Although the Church and Nazism had the same formidable enemies to fight—Bolshevism, Soviet Russia, democracy, etc.—their hostility to each other in certain definite fields provoked continual clashes. The most common cause of dissension was the vital issue as to which of the two should educate the German Youth. Nazism claimed the right and could enforce it. A typical instance of Hitler's power to enforce his claim was shown when he ordered all Catholic parents in Munich to send their children to a Nationalist school, whether they wished it or not. The Catholic Hierarchy protested as usual, but the pupils of the Catholic schools, in virtue of the vote, fell from 36,464 to
19,266; while pupils in the Nazi schools rose from 33 to 65 per cent. The same methods were used throughout Germany. But Hitler's hostile measures and "persecution" of the Church were prompted, not only by his determination to control all the energies of the German people, but also that he might compel the Church to serve him in his political design, either in Germany itself or elsewhere. Other instances of similar "persecutions" were the trials of the monks. Early in the summer of 1936 the Vatican learnt that 276 monks of the Franciscan Order, in Westphalia, were arrested on charges of sodomy. After about ten trials the Pope suppressed a province of the Franciscan Order "for irregularities." In spite of this the trials continued, and numerous other Orders were affected. The impartial American World Almanac for 1939 affirms that "up to October 1938 more than 8,000 Catholic monks and lay brothers had been arrested."

The Pope wrote an encyclical, *Mit Brennender Sorge*, (MARCH 1937), in which he insisted on a Christian conception of God, the position of the Church and the Papacy and the part that they must play; and he complained that Hitler was not observing the terms of the Concordat. Hitler replied by asking the Pope to order Cardinal Mundelein, of Chicago, to discontinue his accusations that the trials of the monks were founded on forgery. The Pope refused.

Yet, notwithstanding all this, and the protests to Hitler, the Vatican continued to support his régime.

For the real cause of this partnership it is necessary to go back to the earlier policy of the Catholic Church, which was dictated by the fear of Bolshevism. A real and worldwide campaign against it had begun by this time (1936). The Church had initiated a holy crusade. To be successful in this campaign she needed the help of Fascism and Nazism, whose hatred for Communism was equal to her own.

The picture of the world for the Catholic Church by 1936 was not very bright. Bolshevism was making headway inside and outside Europe. In France the Popular Front had come into being; in Spain, after the most Catholic Monarchy had been swept away, a "Red Republic" was ruling that "most Catholic country." In Latin America Socialist and Bolshevik ideas were daily gaining ground. Something had to be done lest they spread farther. Pastoral letters, the Catholic Press, and the Pope's fulminations against Bolshevism were not sufficient. The strength of the temporal Powers had to come to the rescue. And who could better and more willingly give help than the Fascist and Nazi countries? Fascist Italy, and, above all, Nazi Germany, had to be kept on friendly terms with the Vatican for that purpose and no other! Therefore it was necessary to put up with mild persecutions and demands by Nazism and Fascism provided they guaranteed that Bolshevism was kept under in Italy and Germany as well as abroad.
It is an interesting fact that, while persecution of every kind on the widest scale was taking place in Germany, the Vatican was still calling for war against Russia because of "its religious persecutions." After having tried all means to restrain the Nazis from persecuting the Church, and using all means for the suppression of the monks' trials, the Vatican adopted another method. It approached Hitler with the suggestion that they should combine for a crusade against Bolshevism, first in Europe, and then eventually in Russia. But first, Europe had to be made safe from the Red Peril. The crusade must start in Red Spain.

This approach was not the only advance made by the Vatican. Mussolini had also been contacted with this end in view; and he was asked to act as mediator and induce Hitler to end the hostilities directed against the Catholic Church. It was pointed out that if

Hitler took part in the crusade against Bolshevism it would help him in his design upon the "clerical State," meaning Austria. But primarily it was suggested that Hitler, Mussolini, and the Vatican should go to the aid of Franco and "crush the Red" in Spain. During these pourparlers the Vatican gave "assurances" to Hitler that when the time was ripe he would find a "not unfavorable support" for his claim to the annexation of Austria. His design to annex Austria had by no means been abandoned because the murder of the Austrian Chancellor Dolfuss had failed. In the offer of the Vatican, Hitler saw the opportunity to extend his prestige in Europe and to create a close alliance with Mussolini; but, above all, he saw the opportunity to test his newly built Army. He accepted the offer.

Immediately, the Vatican ordered all the Catholic Hierarchy of Germany to ask that Hitler should make good his acceptance and cease all form of hostility toward the Church. They were to tell him that the German Catholics and the German Church would be by his side in any campaign that he might undertake against Bolshevism. The letter signed by the German bishops, and which was published in the Nazionale Zeitung of SEPTEMBER 12, 1936, asked Hitler in plain language to allow Catholics to co-operate with him "in the fight against the ever-increasing threat to the world of Bolshevism, which shows its sinister hand in Spain, Russia, and Mexico."

They went farther. Besides repeating the words quoted above, and which the Pope himself had spoken only one week earlier when addressing priests and nuns from Spain, the German bishops made their meaning unmistakable by adding that Hitler should understand that they wanted to support his war against Republican Spain as well as against Russia, and that "guns alone were not enough to fight the Bolshevik dragon; a sound lead is necessary to secure victory...." With these words addressed to the arch-enemy of Bolshevism, there could be no mistake in the desire of the Vatican to start and support an ideological religious war.
But the trials of the monks and the incorporation of Catholic Youth into the Nazi organizations went on as before. Once again Mussolini asked Hitler to discontinue his hostility to the Church (The Times, NOVEMBER 4, 1936). Only a week later Cardinal Faulhaber had an interview with Hitler and repeated in more precise terms that all the German bishops and clergy would support him in any enterprise against Bolshevism, and that the Vatican would use all its influence throughout the world for Nazi Germany provided Hitler would respect the Catholic Church within the Reich. The Cardinal asked, in particular, that the Catholic Church should retain control of her schools. Hitler was persuaded. But a few days later the Nazi Minister of Education induced Hitler to change his mind, as the Minister considered that Catholic support of the régime now was negligible (The Times, NOVEMBER 17, 1936). At the beginning of 1937 all the Catholic schools of Bavaria and other provinces were taken over by the Nazis.

Once more the Church had to submit, although with some protestations; but meanwhile Hitler was keeping his word about Spain and had begun to help Fascist Franco. The Vatican had to decide which was the greater service. Although occasionally protesting about the internal antagonism of Nazism to the Church, the Vatican and the German Hierarchy, to say the least, co-operated with Hitler and Mussolini in order to destroy its Red enemies and prevent other peoples from accepting democratic or Socialist rule.

While Hitler was rehearsing his new army in Spain, and Mussolini was sending hundreds of thousands of Fascist soldiers to fight for Franco, with the blessing of Catholic priests, Hitler, with the assistance of the Vatican, was completing his rape of Austria. This was prepared and committed with the collaboration of devout Catholic Austrians, including a cardinal who ordered the bells of Vienna to peal in welcome of Hitler's occupation, and with the final consent of the Vatican, which commanded Slovak Catholics to disrupt and weaken internally the Republic of Czechoslovakia.

Thus, in two years, he occupied two countries: Austria in 1938, and Czechoslovakia in 1939, on the eve of the outbreak of the Second World War. (See the chapter on Austria and the Vatican, and chapter on Czechoslovakia and the Vatican.)

The year 1939 dawned—a year of fate for many countries, and for the Vatican. In that year Albania was invaded by Fascist Italy, the Spanish Republic was finally crushed and Franco began his Catholic dictatorship; Czechoslovakia was strangled, Poland was invaded, and, finally, the Second World War was let loose upon the world.

At the Vatican, early in 1939, the authoritarian Pope Pius XI died. There was no doubt as to who would be elected his successor. During the previous ten years the policy of the Vatican had been directed by Cardinal Pacelli, and that policy had to continue. It
was no mere coincidence that the most ardent supporters of Pacelli, who were asking the other cardinals to vote for him, were headed by Cardinal Faulhaber, Cardinal Innitzer, Cardinal Hlond, of Poland (whose main dream was to march against Soviet Russia and dedicate that country to "the Sacred Heart of Jesus"), and Cardinal Schuster, of Milan.

Pacelli was elected Pope under the name of Pius XII. In pursuit of his set policy the new Pope began a great campaign for peace. The Catholic Press was full of his words about peace, the freedom of nations, and the necessity for settling disputes without war.

But while he spoke thus, he acted in a very different way. He continued to be in close touch with Mussolini and Hitler, who needed the Church in order to carry out further their plans of conquest. The Nazi Government especially had been in close and frequent secret consultation with the Vatican about matters of which no one knew the exact purport. But it was noticed at the time that these pourparlers were very similar to those that had taken place during the betrayal of Austria and Czechoslovakia. Who was going to be the next victim? The rumbling of war was being heard continuously all over Europe, and many people feared that another act of aggression was being planned.

In the late spring of 1939, after much consultation with Berlin, a letter was sent from the Pope's representative there, by special courier, to the Vatican (April 24, 1939). The letter was of such importance that no one in the Vatican, except the Pope's Secretary of State, was ever allowed to know the message it contained. The Pope closed himself in his study for two entire days, brooding over the reply, which finally he wrote with his own hand, so that none should know its nature.

The letter went to Berlin. Hitler was immediately informed of its contents. This was followed by feverish activity at the Vatican. During May and June interminable and highly secret correspondence was exchanged between the Nuncios at Berlin, Warsaw, and Paris, while various ambassadors, notably the German, Italian, French, and Polish, called with unusual frequency on the Pope or his Secretary of State, in either an official or an unofficial capacity. What was happening? What decision had the Pope taken?

To-day, at a distance of several years, it is possible to give a fair account of what was going on behind the scenes during that fateful period. [After the Second World War numerous documents came to light concerning the activities of the Vatican at this period, most of them finding their way into the hands of the Judges and Prosecution at the Nuremberg trial (1946), in addition to the many declarations by people who
knew—for instance, M. François Charles-Roux, former French Ambassador to the Holy See.]

The Pope had been informed of the war plans of Hitler to invade Poland. Hitler had told of his grand strategy and his ultimate aims. He had to risk a European war in order to achieve them, but they were worth it. The ultimate and main goal was the invasion of Soviet Russia. To do that, Hitler needed to occupy Poland. Czechoslovakia, the first bastion, which had half-opened the gates to Russia, was not enough. Poland, too, had to be put at the disposal of Germany. The Pope would have to use all his influence in persuading the Poles—who, in the disruption of Czechoslovakia, had so intimately co-operated with Nazi Germany—to settle matters with Hitler, first regarding the question of Danzig (at that time the great issue was Danzig and the Polish Corridor), and then by making secret treaties with Germany for the invasion of Russia.

If the Poles refused, Hitler would invade Poland. He asked the Pope, first, not to condemn the invasion, and secondly not to ask the Catholics in Poland to oppose it, but to rally them to a crusade against the Soviets. Hitler made two promises: he would, this time, respect all the privileges of the Church in Poland, and, secondly, the occupation of Poland would be "temporary."

The Pope was faced by a tremendous dilemma. Here, at last, was the opportunity for which the Vatican had worked since the First World War, and for which it had been so busy setting up totalitarian reactionary régimes wherever possible: Bolshevism and its symbol, Soviet Russia, might be completely destroyed. That would mean not only the disappearance of a great country where Atheist Bolshevism ruled, but also the disappearance of a beacon of Communism for all the Communists of the world. Further, the other great dream of the Vatican—the absorption of the Orthodox Church by the Catholic Church—might also come true.

On the other hand, Poland was a very Catholic country, ruled by a Catholic dictatorship and in intimate contact with the Vatican. Was it worth while sacrificing it for the ultimate purpose of destroying Soviet Russia? And would not the invasion of Poland precipitate a world war? Would France enter such a war? Would the Papal influence in French Catholic circles, in combination with all the other powerful elements favorable to Nazism and hostile to Soviet Russia, be able to counterbalance the influence of Great Britain? These were the considerations which the Pope had to study. Pius XII had to make the greatest decision of his career, and, like his predecessor, who had had to decide on whether or not to sacrifice all the great Catholic political parties in Europe and favor Fascism, the new Pope had to determine whether he should sacrifice a whole Catholic country, and perhaps also France and other countries, as well as take the responsibility of acquiescing to the outbreak of a
world war, in order to achieve a goal which was of paramount interest to the future of the Church. Pius XII accepted.

He did, however, put forward three conditions:—

1. That he should be allowed to make peace proposals and be given time to start a peace campaign in the diplomatic world; that all possible means should be taken to reach a compromise with Poland and the Western Powers. 2. That, if the Vatican influence of Poland was of no avail, and the invasion of that country thus became necessary, Germany should inflict on Poland the least possible physical and moral damage, as far as was compatible with necessity; and, above all, that Germany should not persecute the Polish Catholics for their resistance, and that the interests of the Church should be completely safeguarded. 3. That it should not be made known that the Vatican had discussed with Germany plans for the invasion of Russia. The Vatican, in its official capacity, would have no responsibility whatsoever for the whole matter, although it would exert pressure, first, to restrain France from fulfilling her pact with Russia, and, secondly, to raise legions of Catholic volunteers in all Catholic countries of the world for a crusade against the Soviets. That Germany should not ask the Church "in its capacity as the mother of all Christians," or formally in its official capacity, to launch a "holy war" against Russia.

Once more Hitler promised all that the Vatican asked.

The Vatican began to exert pressure on the Polish Government, through the services of Cardinal Hlond, and in French Catholic circles, so that, if the worst should happen, the French would not enter the war against Germany. The negotiations failed, not because the Pope did not do his best to avoid war with Poland and the Western Powers, but because of the intransigence of Hitler, who had already determined to crush Poland, whether or not that country accepted his proposals.

And so, on September 1, 1939, Poland was invaded. Then, on September 3, in spite of all the forces that had worked against it, one of the most important of which was the Catholic Church, France declared war, followed by Britain. The Second World War had begun.

The Pope became almost ill, and for days it was feared that his health was impaired. But he kept his promise to Hitler. As several years before, with Austria and with Czechoslovakia, so now with Poland, instead of protesting to the world against the German attack, he remained completely dumb. Not a single word of condemnation, not a hint that Nazi Germany should have been, at least morally, condemned by the Seat of Catholic Morality.
Far from it. While the horror of the bombing of Warsaw was going on, and Catholic people were being massacred by the Luftwaffe, German archbishops and bishops were praying Almighty God to protect the Third Reich, and to enlighten its leader. We will quote only one example of such prayers, which thousands of priests were ordered by Bishop von Galen, of Munster, to repeat after Mass. It begins thus:—

Let us pray for the intention of the Sovereign Pontiff for the repulsion of Atheism and for the restoration to the Church of liberty and peace. Let us pray also that God may protect and bless our people and our country.

It continues:—

... Protect us from every catastrophe, Omnipotent and Eternal God. Take our country under Thy protection. ... Enlighten our leaders with the light of Thy wisdom so that they may recognize what is profitable to the nation and with Thy strength may do what is equitable.

Protect all the soldiers of our Army and keep them in Thy grace. Fortify those who are in combat ...

Protect our country, O Lord, from the attacks of enemies . . . etc.

The Pope's silence was in striking contrast to his attitude towards another invasion, which had taken place not long before—the invasion of Finland by Communist Russia. The official organ of the Papacy, which, like the Pope himself, had not condemned a single Fascist or Nazi invasion, burst into a lofty moral condemnation when Russia entered Finland:—

After twenty years of Bolshevist tyranny, it now appears that Communism, which had already suppressed political liberty, stifled individuality, reduced work to the status of slavery, and erected violence into a system, has added a new pearl to its diadem ... after hounding men it now hounds nations ... (Osservatore Romano).

This was followed by a most violent condemnation of Russia from the Vatican, and from cardinals, bishops, and Catholics all over the world.

Then it happened that Soviet Russia forestalled Hitler and occupied almost half of Poland. That was a blow which the Vatican took with great dismay. But worse was to come: Nazi Germany had made a pact with Russia.
The Vatican had been duly informed of the reasons, and the meaning of the pact. Nevertheless, the Pope protested. The Papal Nuncio in Berlin had a secret meeting with Ribbentrop, who told him that, as the original plan had miscarried (namely that in which Poland would have been occupied without the interference of France and Britain), it had become necessary to complete a temporary pact with Russia in order to deal first with the West. Only when the West had been made secure would Germany continue her plan for the invasion of Soviet Russia. The Vatican should try again to make France break her alliance with Britain and come to an understanding with Germany.

The strain of those months, the torture of having to take moral responsibility for matters of such tremendous importance, the partial failure of his plans, the fall of Poland, and the beginning of an other world war, were too much for the Pope, who in November had a serious nervous breakdown.

In spite of all that had happened, Pius XII hoped, once more, to avoid a world war. The following month (December 1939) he formulated his famous five points, or conditions of peace. It was a highly idealistic plan, full of the wisdom of beautiful words about peace, compromise, and the freedom of nations. The plan was hailed by the Catholic Press throughout the world, as well as by the Press of many countries, as the best proposition to come from the peace-loving Vatican. But how could any thinking person reconcile such beautiful words with the actual facts and with the policy that had been followed by the Vatican for so many years? The most important of the first five points read: "The right to life and freedom of all nations, big and small, powerful and weak." How could anyone reconcile this with the Vatican's acceptance— and in many cases flagrant support—of aggressions and the destruction of nations, such as committed by Japan in China, by Fascist Italy in Albania, in Spain, and in Mexico by civil wars, by Hitler in Austria, Czechoslovakia, and now in Poland?

Moreover, how could anyone think that the Pope really meant the words on peace, which he repeated every Christmas and Easter, when he allowed the very pillars of the Catholic Church to support and praise those very men who let war loose upon the world?

How could the Pope explain his words about the rights of peoples when Cardinal Faulhaber, Archbishop of Munich, had ordered, and himself conducted, a solemn service of thanksgiving in Munich Cathedral, after the unsuccessful attempt on Hitler's life, to offer thanks to God that the life of the Fuehrer had been spared for Germany and the world; and when all the Bavarian bishops had sent a joint message of congratulation to Hitler on his escape? (December 1939. See the Universe).
And why was the Pope silent during the invasion of Poland? Was not Poland a small country that had been unjustly attacked? But, at that time, the Pope did not condemn the attack on that country and the brutality of the actual conquest.

In January 1940, in the course of a broadcast, the Pope did mention Poland, and protested that he had learned of "infamy of all kinds," as well as "horrible and inexcusable excesses." But to whom was he referring? To the Russians. As far as Nazi atrocities were concerned, he made the mild remark that "outrages" were "not confined to the districts under Russian occupation." It is true that the Vatican went on protesting about Germany, but its complaints were, as usual, about breaches of the Concordat, with vague accusations of paganism and the like.

After the conquest of Poland the diplomatic activities of the Vatican switched over to the West, with particular regard to France. Steps were taken to contact the right people in France to ask for peace with Germany. But it was found impossible to take positive steps in this direction until the position changed, one way or the other.

[After the war it was disclosed that the Pope at this time was the focus-point of a peace plan which would have favored the Right and would have settled all Eastern European problems in Germany's favor. In addition to this, the Pope was exerting himself to bring about a compromise peace between the Allies and Germany, with a view to persuading the German leaders to call off the "blitz" on the West and thus render easier a reconciliation between the belligerents. To make their peace plan more acceptable to the Western nations, the Vatican and the German leaders also contemplated the possibility of substituting Goebbels for Hitler as Nazi Fuehrer of Germany. "This in response to important German political and military circles." These negotiations took place at the end of 1939 and the beginning of 1940, the main objective of the Pope being by uniting the European nations to turn them to the East. (See Rude Pravo, Prague, January 24, 1946; also Osservatore Romano, Radio Vatican's broadcast, February 11, 1946. Many of these facts came to light during the Nuremberg trial, 1946, but were kept in the background.)]

Meanwhile, the Vatican was continuing to urge Hitler to attack Russia, to which the invariable reply of Nazi Germany was that she first had to be secure in the West. The Nuncio in Paris had assured the Pope that if Germany should steer the war to the East, France would not move. He had had assurances of that from the highest authorities, and "certain quarters" had promised him that "actual armed hostilities against Germany might not be carried out at all" once Germany invaded Soviet Russia ( December 1939). One of the main "authorities" who had been in the closest contact with the Nuncio was General Weygand, a most devout Catholic; also Marshal Pétain and Laval (the latter held a Papal decoration).
Marshal Pétain, also a good Catholic, had tried for years to sponsor Fascist armed movements, the most notorious of which was that of the "Hooded Men" (Les Cagoulards). While he was Ambassador in Madrid he had plotted with Laval, Weygand, and others in France, first, to prevent France from entering the war, and, secondly, to make France come to an agreement with Hitler. Pétain negotiated with Hitler, through the Vatican, from the middle of 1939 to the middle of 1940. The Papal Nuncio in Madrid was one of the main intermediaries. Franco, too, helped in the plot, lending money and agents to Pétain. One Spaniard helped Pétain's secret negotiations more than any others. He was Señor Lequerica, Spanish Ambassador in France, who, during the Vichy régime, was so influential with Pétain that he actually attended the first meetings of his Government.

Thus, for months the secret negotiations between Pétain, Weygand, Laval, the Papal Nuncios in Paris and Madrid, Franco, Lequerica, and Hitler went on with varying success. Then Hitler made it known to the Vatican and the Catholic plotters that he could wait no longer. They must do something concrete. Pétain, when asked by the Papal Nuncio, told the latter to inform His Holiness "that there were good reasons to hope that the bloodshed between France and Germany would be avoided." (Quoted in a dispatch from the Italian Fascist Ambassador in Madrid, dated March 7, 1940.)

The Vatican made this answer known to Hitler (April 30, 1940). Hitler wanted more details, and a few days later decided to get first-hand information, as he wanted to know "with certainty how far the French could really go in carrying out their intentions as communicated to him by the Vatican." He immediately sent to the Pope his Foreign Minister, who had been in very close contact with the Papal representative in Berlin. As Shirer says, in his Berlin Diary, "the Nuncio had been quietly paying visits to the Wilhelmstrasse for weeks."

At the Vatican, Ribbentrop's visit was taken as a sure symptom that the war in the West had been avoided and that Hitler might be persuaded, at last, to take the war to the East. The official Papal organ, the Osservatore, which is usually so reticent and cool, was, for once, very jubilant in announcing the visit of Hitler's envoy. Ribbentrop had a meeting with the Pope at which no one else was allowed to be present. There were many rumors and speculations about the visit, at the Vatican and in Europe.

The following day, March 12, 1940, Hitler sent a telegram to the Pope, congratulating him personally on the first anniversary of his election to the Papacy.

But when Ribbentrop left Rome the Osservatore was very silent about it. What had happened?
Hitler had not considered the assurances of the Pope sufficient, and had made it known that he would invade the West first. As the Annual Register, a most impartial authority, says: "We know from Vatican sources that Ribbentrop told the Pope (March 11, 1940) that German soldiers would be in Paris by June and in London by August." Hitler assured the Pope, however, that if "friendly elements" helped Germany's victory, he would be "very modest in his demands against the Allies, with special reference to France."

In the spring of 1940 Hitler had, meanwhile, attacked another weak and small country—Norway. It was invaded on a transparently false pretext. The Pope was asked from many quarters to condemn the invasion, especially as only a few months previously he had made known his famous five peace propositions, in which he referred particularly to the rights of the small nations.

Once again the Pope remained dumb. But, as in the case of Finland, he replied through the official Osservatore. What was this reply? That there were only 2,619 Catholics in Norway, and that "the Holy See must keep in mind the 30,000,000 German Catholics in its activities" (Osservatore—quoted by the New York Times on APRIL 17, 1940).

After the invasion of Poland by Germany and by Russia, and after the invasion of Norway, relations between Nazi Germany and the Vatican became rather strained so far as the German internal situation was concerned. That was chiefly a reflection of German treatment of Polish Catholics, the shooting of priests, the arrest of bishops—everything which Hitler had promised he would not do.

Not many weeks after the visit of Ribbentrop to the Vatican, Hitler and Mussolini met at the Brenner Pass, in order to plan the invasion of the West and Mussolini's stab in the back to France.

The Vatican was kept well informed, and, seeing once again that Hitler meant what he said, it began to make friendly exchanges with him, keeping in mind the event "of a German success." The contacts with the French Catholic reactionary circles were resumed, and plans for setting up a provisional Government after the defeat of France were drafted. (For more details about France, see Chapter 16, "France and the Vatican.") The discussions went well, and Hitler and the Pope once more co-operated in the shaping of the things to come.

While all these activities were going on behind the scenes, Nazi Germany, at the beginning of 1940, decided that Catholic priests, monks, etc. should not be exempt from military service, as had been decided in the Concordat. Cardinal Faulhaber, of Munich, protested, not about the invasion of Norway, but about the abolition of
religious teaching in the professional schools for boys of fourteen to seventeen years of age. At that time it was reckoned that, since 1933, 20,000 Catholic schools, with over 3,000,000 students, had been closed.

Yet, in spite of such friction between the Catholic Church and Hitler, the relations of the Catholic Church and Nazism began to improve with the succession of German military victories. As the Manchester Guardian wrote, on May 24, 1940:—

The National Socialist State has, it seems, been able to reach a new understanding with the Catholic leaders.... In spite of the persecution of laymen and priests by the Nazis, in spite of all the attacks upon the Christian religion, new hopes have been raised among the German Catholics as a result of these negotiations.

What was the reason of this sudden change? Nazi Germany was winning the war. It appeared to be a matter of weeks. The Pope ordered all the German Hierarchy to stop criticizing the German Reich, but to support it. The forecasts of the Vatican, as well as of many other political circles, had proved right: Germany had won in the West, the Western Powers had been completely routed. Holland, Belgium, and France had capitulated and had been occupied by German troops, while England fell back to lick her wounds on her little islands.

This time the Pope took the step of writing letters to the Queen of Holland and the King of Belgium. Did these letters contain words of condemnation of Hitler's crime? By no means. The Pope simply deprecated, in a mild way, that these sovereigns' countries had been invaded "against their will." Apart from that, the letters were mere messages of condolence. Against the attack on France by Germany and, later, by Fascist Italy, the Pope again did not utter a single word of condemnation.

Mussolini declared—and many responsible people in various parts of Europe and America thought the same—that the defeat in the West meant that the Second World War had ended with a final German victory.

That was something on which the Vatican had counted. The New "Greater Reich" had an even greater interest for the Pope than, perhaps, for many other heads of States. The interests of the Catholic Church were being furthered. The Pope immediately opened up negotiations with Hitler. Thanks to Nazism, three more countries had got rid of Socialism and Communism: Belgium, Holland, and, above all, France. That was something for which to be thankful. The Vatican ordered the German Hierarchy to say prayers of thanksgiving in all German Catholic Churches for the Fuehrer (Universe, AUGUST 1940).
While the German Catholic churches were echoing with prayers of thanks and invocations for the preservation of Hitler, three German bishops went quietly to Rome and had long conferences with the Pope and his Secretary of State (Basler Nachrichten, OCTOBER 5, 1940). They discussed the best way in which the Church could enter into a really "close partnership with the victorious Third Reich." On their return, the great Conference of all Bishops and Archbishops of Germany met at Fulda. It was stated in Vatican circles, as well as in Berlin, that the Conference had to decide important issues, in view of the fact that the three bishops had brought back with them direct instructions from the Pope himself.

What had been going on meanwhile between the Vatican and Hitler in diplomatic fields? Hitler and the Pope were conducting secret negotiations for a new Concordat. Hitler had asked the Vatican to exert all its influence over the Catholics of the three conquered countries, to rally them to the support of the new Governments and occupation authorities. In exchange, Hitler promised to give a special position of privilege to the Church, not only in Germany, but wherever the German armies conquered.

The talks included discussions on the status of the Apostolic Nunciatures at The Hague and in Brussels. At Fulda, all the German bishops and archbishops were told (and gave their approval) that they should rally to Hitler, and should also "endeavor to bring a more close support of the German Catholic body for the victorious Germany and for its Great Fuehrer." In addition to this, they had to prepare plans by which all the hierarchies in countries under the protection of the Third Reich would, in future, co-operate with the German Hierarchy and eventually be amalgamated with it into one unique body.

It was also decided that the first step towards this last plan should be taken at the next Congress of the German Hierarchy, and that the meeting of the German bishops and archbishops—which, in the past, had been held year after year in Fulda—should be held in the very centre of the Greater Reich, as a symbol of union with it. This last point was expressly made known by the Pope himself.

Other minor (but nevertheless important) problems were also discussed and approved. A typical example was the approval of the Official Organ of German Catholics, Der Newe Wille (The New Will), the editorship of which, significantly enough, was given to the Field Bishop of the Armed Forces. This was a blatantly pro-Nazi imperialistic paper, which urged German soldiers to fight and conquer for Hitler. The only reservation made by the bishops was that "it should comply with certain conditions"; that is, it should not bear any "contradictions" to the precepts of the Catholic Church.
The plan for a Concordat was, of course, unanimously approved. It was pointed out that, while negotiations were going on between the Holy See and the German Reich, the Catholic Hierarchy should "make itself indispensable to the nation for the victorious conclusion of the war." After that they decided on an immediate declaration of loyalty to Hitler: "After the completion of the German victory, special ceremonies of gratitude to the German troops and of loyalty to Hitler will be announced."

But the Vatican, fearing the effect on the Catholics of the various invaded countries, and, above all, of Great Britain and the United States of America, ordered the German bishops (contrary to the usual procedure) not to issue any declaration on the proceedings and results of the meeting. While the German bishops were passing these resolutions in support of Hitler's war, the Pope himself declared, during an allocution, that he was "passionately interested in peace, but not in that shabby substitute for peace which consists in absence of war" (broadcast to North America in English by the Vatican Radio in August, 1940).

The benefits apportioned to the Catholic Church by the Nazi victory had begun to show concrete results. In place of the democratic Socialist Governments, totalitarian and, what is more, Catholic Governments were being set up. Strong Catholic authoritarian parties came into being and were steering their nations against the arch-enemy, Communism: Rexism in Belgium, the various Fascist parties in France, and, above all, the authoritarian Catholic Corporate State set up by the most devout Catholic, Marshal Pétain, who began immediately to restore the privileges of the Church which had been withdrawn by the wicked democratic republicans before the defeat of France.

In January 1941 all the German archbishops and bishops met again; and this time (as had been decided at Fulda) they met in Berlin. On this occasion all the Austrian bishops were also present in the Nazi capital. They reached "very important decisions." They issued a joint pastoral letter, forecasting final victory for Nazi Germany. In the letter they said "the impending final fight for freedom of the German people will require great sacrifices from everyone, but the victory of German Arms will guarantee peace for many years to come." This statement was read in all Catholic churches in Germany. It also said: "The German bishops further express the hope that the Catholic Church shall be allotted a share in the internal reconstruction of the Greater Reich ..." for, amongst other reasons given, "... the Church is entitled thereto, in view of the 50 per cent increase in the number of church-goers in war-time, particularly on the part of the soldiers."

But, in spite of all this whole-hearted support, Hitler began to play his old game again. Flushed with his military victory, he wanted no less than to bring into being a National Christian Church, by first crushing the Catholic as well as the Protestant
Churches. Bishops asked the Vatican to intervene, to stop the Government's religious campaign. But the bishops were careful to add that they would not for a moment "say anything that would turn aside the energies of the people or prejudice their devotion to their country." The Pope replied that he would censure Germany only for her treatment of the Church, but that he would not condemn her on other grounds, as he did not want to "create the impression that the Church favors the enemies of Germany." The Pope had good reason to say that.

In the late evening of June 20, 1941, Ribbentrop saw the Papal Representative in Berlin at a private meeting, after which the Papal Nuncio, Mgr. Orsenigo, immediately got in touch with the Vatican, where the lights shone throughout the whole night of June 20/21.

At last, on the morning of June 21, 1941, the news which the Pope had received officially the day before and for which the Vatican had worked and made so many sacrifices during many years was announced to the world. The Nazi armies had invaded Soviet Russia.

Once more the first five peace proposals were remembered, especially the first, dealing with the rights of small and great nations; but this time it would have been too much to expect the Pope to condemn the aggression against Soviet Russia. As usual, the Pope remained silent: he could not "officially" compromise himself. Moreover, Hitler had not as yet asked the Pope for help, although the Nuncio in Berlin, Mgr. Orsenigo, had promised Ribbentrop that "the Catholic Church would, in time, provide Germany with all the moral support of which it could dispose." For the time being, however, Hitler did not need the support of the Church. His armies could, he said, conquer Soviet Russia within the space of four months.

But as the Nazi armies cut deep into Russian territory, the Catholic Church began to organize a holy crusade against Soviet Russia, although in an "unofficial" capacity. It wanted to make it clear that it was on the side of the victor, so that it would be able to bargain with Hitler for the "co-ordination of spiritual matters." It was thus that the Vatican sent advice to the various National Catholic hierarchies all over the world to "support the military campaign against Godless Russia, not only passively, but also actively in the moral field." (Letter by the Secretary of State.) And so the Catholic World and the Catholic hierarchies, even in Allied countries, organized a campaign against Communism and Russia.

Of course, this was but the recrudescence of a campaign that had been going on for years.
This is not the place to quote in length the statements made by the Pope, by cardinals and bishops all over the world, inciting people and nations against Russia. We shall merely quote a few declarations, taken at random, by the German Hierarchy which show that the Catholic Church had for years been preparing the German people to fight Bolshevism and Russia. The incitement of the German Hierarchy had begun even before Hitler came to power, and after that event it was carried out with still greater gusto.

We have already quoted several attacks by the Pope and Cardinal Pacelli against Russia. On New Year's Eve, 1936, Cardinal Faulhaber said in Munich that he was oppressed with two great anxieties, the first of which was to "overthrow Bolshevism," and the second "the protection of the Church inside the Reich." Shortly afterwards, in April 1937, he declared:—

All the civilized world, but especially the Catholic nations, must unite into a holy crusade against Atheist Russia, and crush Bolshevism wherever it may be found.

In 1936, the pastoral letter of the Bavarian bishops protested because certain Nazis were stating that Nazism must destroy two enemies: the Catholic Church and Communism. The bishops declared that they, no less than the Nazis, were enemies of Bolshevism, and that it was therefore very painful to hear such assertions:—

We must request that it no longer be put about among young folk and the people in general that after the overthrow of Bolshevism, Public Enemy No. I, the next on the list is the Catholic Church, as Public Enemy No. 2.

Also in 1936, the Bishop of Munster, Count von Galen, said:—

"It is the duty of every Catholic, and of every civilized nation, to defeat and crush Godless Communism, embodied in Atheist Soviet Russia."

The German bishops at the conference at Fulda issued, on August 20, 1936, a pastoral letter which was read in all German Catholic churches at the end of the same month. It declared that:— the danger from Bolshevism in many other countries demands peace, union, and complete support of Hitler and the Nazi régime within Germany [but that such peace was made impossible] by non-Christian propaganda, by interference with ecclesiastical privileges and, above all, by the suppression of the Catholic Press, whose main task is to prepare the German people for a final fight against Bolshevism.

In a New Year Pastoral, at the beginning of 1937, Archbishop Grober, of Freiburg, summarized the grounds for complaint of the German Catholics against Nazism. Amongst other things, he said:—
... Is the Catholic Church . . . to be repeatedly (if sometimes covertly) branded as Public Enemy No. 2, and treated as the sworn associate of Bolshevism? ... Is the German nation as a whole to be prepared for a possible conflict with the Godless world of Bolshevism, which might, though God forbid it should, be forced upon us from outside, by concealing the essential and irreconcilable contradiction between the basic principles of religion and those of Russian Atheism? Are we preparing wisely for such an eventuality when the deification of Man and of the Nation and the denial of the immortality of the soul bring us perilously near to a cultural handshake with Communism itself? Is all this, I ask, to give the lie in an irresponsible fashion to the solemnly pledged word of our Fuehrer?

Later, in 1937, the same Archbishop declared:—

Marxism is not dead, as we have been told. It is more alive than ever. We as Christians and Catholics and as Germans, must crush it, wherever it is. Let us prepare for our task against the Godless neighbor [Russia], against whom all the civilized world one day will have to fight (May 1937).

In a pastoral of September 4, 1938, the Bavarian bishops, while protesting against Hitler's orders forbidding members of religious institutions to give convent education to girls, declared that Nazism should not antagonize the Catholic Church, for, after all, the Church was the greatest enemy of Communism and would help Hitler to fight it. From its many comments we quote the following:—

Is it not an intolerable contradiction that such schools as these should to-day be destroyed and rooted out from our homeland, just as has so recently been done in Bolshevist countries ... and that at a time when the German nation conceives it as its historic task to combat anti-Christian Bolshevism and appeal to the rest of the Christian world to aid it as comrades in the fight? ... How long will the State continue to reject the co-operation of the Church and of her religious Orders in carrying out the German national task of to-day: the fight against Communism?

After Russia was attacked, the German bishops, while complaining about the disharmony still existing in the Reich, were emphatic on one point—namely, in inciting the German people against Russia. "A victory over Bolshevism would be equivalent to the triumph of the teaching of Jesus over that of the infidels," they solemnly declared (1942).

It would be possible to go on ad infinitum quoting such declarations by the German Hierarchy against Russia and Communism, for they continued their campaign of hatred, not only before, but after Russia was attacked, and even after the Nazi armies had retreated and were finally defeated. Although the Vatican at this time (end of
1942 to 1944) gave instructions to the German Hierarchy "to be cautious and to speak against Godless Bolshevism only as bishops," the attacks went on to the very end of the war.

But when the Nazi armies were halted before Leningrad and Moscow, and defeated before Stalingrad, things had already changed. The Vatican had become more cautious than ever in its official declarations, but, at the same time, had intensified its campaign to help Hitler all over the world. Preparations had been made in various Catholic Fascist countries to enlist fighting units for the Eastern Front. These Catholic units began to take shape and to be dispatched to fight against Russia.

By the autumn of 1941 anti-Communist Legions were formed in all the Catholic countries: Portugal, Franco's Spain, Pétain's France, Belgium (from the Rexist Catholic Party). All the volunteers were enlisted to "fight against Godless Soviet Russia, and thus save Catholicism." Catholic countries which could not send soldiers sent money and organized meetings and nation-wide propaganda against the Soviet, all these activities being supported and blessed by the Catholic Church in the countries concerned. While the Vatican, in its official capacity, did not compromise itself, it instructed cardinals and bishops in many nations of the world to speak against Soviet Russia and launch anathemas on Moscow, asking for volunteers to fight the "Bolshevik Dragon."

From all over the Catholic world, from Italy to Ireland, from North and South America, volunteers and money were dispatched continually, to fight side by side with the Nazi armies which, after the first great onslaught into Russia, had halted before the great cities of Leningrad, Moscow, and Stalingrad. Despite that, the Vatican thought that Nazi Germany had suffered only a momentary military check, and that "Atheist Russia could be counted as officially destroyed." The Soviet military and political might was no longer a factor which should be taken seriously.

From then on, Nazi Germany was going to be the dominating Power of Europe. The Vatican lost itself in speculations about the future—a future to be shaped by Nazi Germany. The Vatican radio launched a campaign on the prospects of "Peace within the bounds of the New Order."

The Pope attaches great importance to moral values. Rulers who plan for peace should remember that.... Only on this basis can the international atmosphere be cleared. Strength must become the source of rights and not oppression.

Another thing that has to be drastically reorganized in the world is the free right to raw material. No nation should have the sole right over the goods which God has given them.
The New Order can thus be established in the Christian world.

Those were the words and that was the tone of the Vatican broadcasts at that stage; and it should be remembered that at that time (May 1942) Hitler was shouting about the necessity for a New Order and for Lebensraum and raw materials for Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. Both could be found in Russia.

Then, in June 1942, the Osservatore Romano published a series of articles expressing the Pope's ideas for the post-war world. In them the Pope demanded that "... the Church be allowed to fulfill, unhampered, her lofty mission in the world." The Catholic Church, the argument runs, has the right to participate in the political and public life of the nations, on the ground that religion is not only the teaching of the life of the people, but also a political and social science whose purpose it is to save souls and help the nations in accordance with a uniform system based on a uniform idea which should guide the individual, the family, and the nation.

But then, as the Nazi armies seemed to have stopped, and as the defeated "Atheist Russia" gave more and more signs of being alive and ready to counter-attack, the Vatican was again assailed by fears and doubts. While preaching peace, the Pope began a great diplomatic campaign in the various capitals of the belligerent countries. The goals of the campaign were two: (1) To prevent the United States of America and Great Britain from giving active help to Bolshevik Russia; (2) To find a means of preventing Russia from advancing westwards.

The best means of reaching these two fundamental aims was to attempt a negotiated peace between the Allies and the Axis. The Vatican had been in close touch with Hitler for months on this point, and once it had certain assurances from Berlin, it contacted London and Washington. The German Ambassador at the Vatican had secret audiences with the Pope and the Secretary of State daily. The gist of the Vatican's exertions was that, for the benefit of all concerned (namely Christian Europe), peace should be concluded; the Allies and Germany should unite and fight against Russia; to this end Hitler was ready to come to an agreement with Britain and the United States of America, provided "he could save his face"; a negotiated peace would be the salvation of Europe. Great Britain and America, however, rejected the proposals (May-June, 1942).

The Vatican made persistent remonstrances, saying that Britain and America should compel Russia to go so far, but no farther, in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, for "far-reaching assurance must be given to the people of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe to save them from the rapacity of Bolshevik Russia." As Great Britain and the United States of America failed to give such assurances, the Pope made it understood that in due time "the Catholic body in the United States of America, with the co-
operation of the anti-Soviet forces there and elsewhere," would see to it that "pressure should be brought forth to stir the foreign policy to healthier goals."

President Roosevelt had to send his representative, Myron Taylor, to the Vatican, promising that Great Britain and the United States of America would ensure that the Bolshevik troops would not overstep the borders drawn up by them. On his way home, Taylor had an interview with the devout Catholic Salazar, in which he stated that "after an Allied victory in Europe, Allied troops will protect, arms in hand, anti-Communist States against Bolshevik transgressions. A Soviet domination of Europe is entirely out of the question" (Lisbon, October 6, 1942). The Vatican, however, would not be assured, and continued to contact various capitals, with a view to detaching Britain and the United States of America from Russia and enabling Hitler to make a compromise peace with the former.

The Soviet armies' great success the following year made the Vatican even more frantic in its quest and in its accusations against Soviet Russia. Roosevelt told them that the Allies had decided to crush Nazi Germany, and that it was therefore necessary to put up with the advance of Soviet Russia. The Vatican should open negotiations with Moscow in order to safeguard the interests of those Catholics who were in the countries "liberated by Russia."

Roosevelt contacted Stalin personally on at least three occasions, with the view of bringing about a rapprochement between the Vatican and Russia. But the Pope continually refused. Early in 1943 Roosevelt therefore dispatched to the Vatican a great and intimate friend of the Pope, Mgr. Spellman, Archbishop of New York, to try to persuade him to follow Roosevelt's suggestions.

Spellman's task was "to persuade the Vatican to adopt a more indulgent attitude towards the Soviet Union in general, and in particular towards the future position of Russia in Europe" (Die Tat, Zürich, FEBRUARY 24, 1943). He began his mission by having a long meeting with Roosevelt. Then, on reaching Europe, the first thing he did was to meet Franco. He had several private meetings, both with Franco and with the Primate of Spain.

When in Rome, Spellman was received by the Pope and occupied much of the Pope's time for days. Their meetings lasted from 5 p.m. to 8 and sometimes 9 p.m. every day. They were so private that even the Pope's Chamberlain was not admitted, nor, very often, notified of them (February 20-23, 1943).

When Mgr. Spellman was not seeing the Pope he was in close touch with Bishop Evrainoff, head of the Vatican Information Bureau, or with Mgr. Ottaviani, Assessor to the Congregation of the Holy Office, one of the most influential personages at the
Mgr. Spellman saw the Spanish and the Nazi Ambassadors at the Vatican, and, at the end of his stay, had a long private meeting with the Nazi Foreign Minister himself (Ribbentrop), on March 3, 1943. The following day, having flown to Spain, Mgr. Spellman met the British Ambassador, Sir Samuel Hoare, and then returned to the United States of America, where he handed President Roosevelt a personal letter written by the Pope.

What plan did Mgr. Spellman take to the Pope? What plan did the Pope convey to Roosevelt? And, above all, what agreement was reached between the Vatican, Washington and London?

The fear entertained by the Pope regarding Soviet Russia's success, and her advance Westwards, finally reached Washington and London. All three Powers began to look with dismay at the advance of the Soviet armies, fearing that they would go too far Westwards before the Allied armies could enter the field to stop them. The three Powers looked ahead of the Soviet military victory; they saw, in the advance of the troops, the advance of an inimical ideology; and as the Pope saw in the soldiers of Bolshevism the arch-enemies of Catholicism, so the United States of America and Great Britain saw in them the enemies of their own social, economic, and political systems.

Some means had to be found to stop the Bolshevik advance. Once more the Vatican was there to help. It had been in close touch with Hitler, and had made him understand that if he climbed down on his territorial ambitions, the hope of a negotiated peace was in "the realm of possibility" (January 1943). Hitler made it known to the Pope that he "desired" peace: a peace which would be of advantage to the Western Powers, to Germany, and to the Catholic Church. He asked that the Allies should not open a Second Front, but should leave Germany to fight Soviet Russia. Thus Germany would be able to stabilize her Eastern frontiers and become "an impregnable bulwark to the flood of Bolshevism." The Pope wrote to President Roosevelt that "radical changes in the formation of the Nazi Government" would occur if the Allies approved of the proposal.

Roosevelt made the Vatican understand that there was no possibility of a negotiated peace while Hitler was in power; therefore the Vatican had better come to some understanding with Soviet Russia, and thus safeguard the interests of the Catholic Church in the countries invaded by the Soviet armies. Once more the Vatican refused. It was then that Roosevelt sent Mgr. Spellman to Rome on the task of persuading the Vatican to change "its attitude towards the Soviet Union."

But once in Rome, Mgr. Spellman was told what the Vatican thought of the Allies' demand for unconditional surrender of the Axis. Further, the Pope informed him that
he could not "accept the request of President Roosevelt to call on the Catholic world to fight Nazi Germany ... because the Vatican is unable to identify itself with the war aims of any group of belligerents" (February 21, 1943).

The declaration of Casablanca, which demanded the unconditional surrender of the Tripartite Powers, is completely incompatible with Christian doctrines.

The Vatican's view at this juncture was that the Allies, by insisting on their formula of unconditional surrender, were compelling the German and Italian nations to fight to the end, giving them no chance to come to an understanding with the Allies—an understanding which was becoming each day more urgent in view of the advance of the Soviet armies in Western Europe.

We have already seen what the Vatican's proposals were at this stage (see chapter on Italy and the Vatican), and how the Western Powers agreed that, while overthrowing the Fascist and Nazi régimes, the main foundations on which they were based should be preserved, thus avoiding a most dangerous vacuum in Italy, Germany, and throughout the rest of Europe. The results of this agreement were soon to be seen with the sudden downfall of Mussolini, the taking over of the Government by King Victor and Marshal Badoglio, and finally with the surrender of Italy and the consequent dispersal of German troops which had to be rushed to the Italian Peninsula at a moment when the Germans should have concentrated all their forces in readiness for the great attack.

After the surrender of Italy, as the defeat of Germany became more and more obvious, the Pope, although continuing his attempts for a negotiated peace, swung over to the Allies. Immediately after the liberation of Rome he began to receive Allied soldiers and officers by the thousand, making speeches in which he advocated a "moderate peace" and "peace without revenge"—although he continued, as ever, to speak and act against Soviet Russia.

While the Vatican was thus in touch with the Allies, it at the same time was trying to persuade Hitler to disappear, giving him to understand that, as the war was lost, it would be better for Germany if he "retired into obscurity." Hitler was stubborn, continually repeating that the Pope should persuade the Western Allies to fight on his side against the Soviets.

At last the Pope told the Nazi Ambassador that all the Vatican's efforts to persuade the Allies to make a negotiated peace with Germany were useless while Hitler was in power. It would have been a "great deed" for Hitler to have cleared the way for a German Government whose task would have been to make peace with the Western
Allies and thus prevent the Bolshevik armies from occupying Germany. If Germany had to be occupied, it should be by the Western Powers, not by Bolshevism.

In June 1944 Hitler informed the Pope that he was ready to accept suggestions, as forwarded by the Holy See. He wanted to know something more concrete, however, about "what the Allies would do with Germany." The Vatican immediately informed Roosevelt, and Roosevelt sent to Rome Mr. Henry Stimson, United States Secretary of State for War, and Mr. Myron Taylor, the United States special Envoy to the Vatican. Both men had long interviews with the Pope.

Before and after the arrival of these two Americans the Vatican was beginning another of its peace offensives. The Osservatore Romano came out with articles headed:—

End slaughter—Why go on fighting?

Why are they fighting? [one article exclaimed]. It is not the first time this question has been asked, but it has come up again after five years of horrifying war.

Let us hasten peace. It is the sole benefit on which we still count ...

But the discussions on the resignation of Hitler and on a negotiated peace ended abruptly. Something else, meanwhile, was going on behind the scenes. The Nazi Ambassador to the Vatican, Baron Von Weizsaecker, had been seeing the Pope and his Secretary of State very frequently, and when Myron Taylor visited the Vatican he saw him as well (June/July 1944). The Baron was a close co-operator with Ribbentrop, and during attempts by the Pope for a negotiated peace he had always distinguished himself by his genuine desire to co-operate with the Holy Father to agree on some peace proposal.

Cardinal Maglione, Mr. Taylor, the Nazi Ambassador, and the British Ambassador had frequent and very secret meetings (May/June). What was the cause of all this secret activity? The decision to repeat the happenings of Italy and "thus pave the way to the cessation of hostilities."

Such a decision had to be put into action quickly if the new plan was to succeed. For with the Nazi Armies rolling back before the Russians, the exit of Italy from the war, and the impending Allied invasion of Europe, the defeat of Germany had become a certainty. It was only a matter of time.

Whereas for the Allies the problem was how best to coordinate their military efforts to give Germany a final knock-out blow, for the Vatican the question became how to
ensure that the military/political manoeuvre that had achieved the surrender and yet the partial preservation of Fascist Italy would be repeated in Nazi Germany before the sand had completely run out.

Individuals and groups once more began to work, stirred by political and patriotic feelings but above all by the fear of the Bolshevist chaos that the complete defeat of Germany would bring in its train. Their objectives: to unseat Hitler, set up a provisional dictatorship, bid for peace with the Western Powers so as to arrest the complete breakdown of social order throughout the Reich. Such a change would prevent the Soviet Armies from entering German soil, which would be hermetically sealed off once the new Government had accepted the Allies' peace terms.

As in the case of Italy, those planning for the changes to come had been plotting with varying degrees of success for some time past, the tempo of their activities having quickened since the final defeat of Germany had become inevitable.

[An attempt on Hitler's life had been made as far back as 1939, after the Polish campaign. The first organized plot (besides that of 1939) took place in March 1943. (Note date. During the same spring Italian plotters were preparing to get rid of Mussolini.) The plot was conceived by the same elements which in the following year were to attempt to arrest or kill Hitler and, after the example of the Italians, set up a military dictatorship. In their still-born attempt of 1943, the plot miscarried, owing chiefly to the non-explosion of a bomb put in the plane in which Hitler was traveling (March 13th, 1943).]

As previous to Mussolini's downfall, so now also the Vatican, Great Britain and the United States of America were in complete agreement about supporting those elements inside Germany ready to carry out the coup. Nationalistic and patriotic goals were cunningly mixed with religious ones in such a way that these elements (among whom were individuals whose motives were anything but religious) would outwardly appear as a movement whose task was purely political. Its immediate aims: the salvage of whatever could be saved from ultimate disaster, and the establishment of a military dictatorship.

After the Italian coup, the Vatican—which although one of the main interested powers behind the scenes in the Italian and German plots acted to all appearances as an aloof observer—having made further approaches both to Hitler and to the Allies in the renewed hope that some kind of a compromise might be reached, seeing its attempts again ending in failure, set to work to avert final military catastrophe from overtaking Germany before a new Government was ready to take over.
It was thus that in the spring of 1944 the Vatican became active in that type of discreet but ominous activity which in the previous spring had preceded the downfall of Mussolini. The Nazi Ambassador paid several official and unofficial visits to the Pope, as did the British Ambassador to the Holy See, while Roosevelt's special envoy, Mr. Taylor, returned to Rome, where he was no less keen than his German and British colleagues on having long private interviews with Pius XII.

Once more the Vatican served as a kind of liaison between the Allies and the German underground charged with the task of replacing Hitler.

The German resisters had been advised to act before the Allies invaded the Continent. For had they been successful in setting up a new Government, they would have found it infinitely easier to sue for peace than it was for the Nazis to do so; and thus, by obtaining terms by which the dismemberment of the Reich might be avoided, the gloomy possibility of the Soviet occupying part of Germany would be banished. It should be remembered that at this time—spring 1944—the Soviet Armies were steadily advancing Westwards, while the Western Allies had not yet set foot on Europe.

In view of the gravity of the situation, the plotters—instead of planning to eliminate Hitler by arresting him as had been done with Mussolini—decided on his assassination. A plot which had been mapped out during the ten summer weeks of 1943, at the time when the Italian plan was executed, was now completed, "the military details for the coup being largely developed by Count Stauffenberg and Maj. Ulrich von Oertzen, in collaboration with General Treschow."

Col. Claus Schenk von Stauffenberg was Chief of Staff in the General Army Office, under Infantry General Friedrich Olbricht, the latter being one of the leading plotters. Count Von Stauffenberg was a most ardent Catholic and belonged to a family which for centuries had been deeply steeped in Catholicism. The Catholicity of the Stauffenbergs was their chief characteristic; they favored the old order of things, and therefore in politics they abhorred Socialist doctrines and all that they implied; as ardent patriots and as pious Catholics, their main goal was to further the interests of Germany and of their Church, and to fight their enemies by every means possible.

At this stage it should be noted that whereas previous unsuccessful schemes had never been fully approved by Rome, now that the Vatican had given its blessing a most devout Catholic suddenly came into prominence (many Catholics took part in the earlier plots, but had always remained in the background). Whether this was due to the unusual organizational experience of Von Stauffenberg or to other causes, it is difficult to say; the significant fact remains, however, that from this time onwards—
that is, as the Soviet Armies advanced—zealous Catholics became more active than ever.

Besides the military details of the plan, Count Von Stauffenberg and his friends had prepared a careful scheme in the political field. Many of his associates belonged to the Christian—read Catholic—Conservative opposition to Hitler, and were to become the leaders of the Christian Democratic Union Party, or Christian Socialist Union, headed by the devout Dr. Mueller.

According to this project, as soon as Hitler was eliminated the plotters would set up a military dictatorship. This would last long enough to prevent revolutionary disorder and to come to terms with the Allies. It was estimated that such provisional military dictatorship—to be modelled upon that of General Badoglio in Italy—would exist approximately three months. [According to Fabian Von Schlabrendorff. In the military dictatorship, the two leaders would have been Col. Gen. Ludwig Beck, who "was to serve as Chief of State until a final decision was made as to the form of Government," and Dr. Goerdeler, as Chancellor. Dr. Goerdeler was nominally a representative of the Bosch industrial enterprises (see Collier's. 27.7.1946).]

Once subversive elements had been safely neutralized, a Civil Government with two houses of Parliament would take the place of the temporary dictatorship. The interplay of various political forces would be resumed. Parliament would be controlled by an institution which would stand above it to "guarantee" the stability necessary for an ordered society: that is to say, above the Government there would be a King. We quote here the words of one who took part in the plot: "There would be a two-house Parliament, along the lines of the English system. The chief executive would be Chancellor, corresponding to a Prime Minister. In addition, it was felt that there must be one department that stood above political discussion, for the character and history of the German people are such that leadership cannot be built up exclusively from below. To meet this need, many of us favored a monarchy."

The reader should note the significant phrase: "leadership cannot be built up exclusively from below"—one of the main political doctrines of the Catholic Church, which teaches that Authority derives from God and not from the people.

The plotters persuaded many high German officers to side with them. Among these were Col. General Otto Von Stulpnagel, Commander-in-Chief in France, and General Alexander Von Falkenhausen, Commander-in-Chief in Belgium and Northern France. (One should remember the harmonious relationship between Von Falkenhausen and the Primate of Belgium, whom the General thanked "for the solicitude you have been good enough to show for the interest which I represent.")
It was decided to kill Hitler during one of his usual military conferences. At first there was great difficulty in finding volunteers for the task, until finally Maj. Gen. Hellmuth Stieff, of the High Command, came forward, and two others, Maj. Kuhn and Lt. Albrecht von Hagen, offered to help him.

Owing to lack of favorable circumstances, however, the attempt was postponed from week to week, until at last the plotters gave up hope. There were other plans also, but they all came to nothing. (Another plan was to have Hitler repeat his earlier visit to the Central Army Group in Russia, where Trekow and Von Schlabrendorff had almost brought about the Fuehrer’s death in March 1943. However, nothing could prevail on Hitler to journey there again.)

Meanwhile, events quickly succeeded one another, the date of the Allied landing was approaching, and the plotters saw with dismay that they had as yet done nothing to realize their plans. "We wanted desperately to stage our coup before the expected Western invasion by the Allies took place. But one unfortunate accident followed another, until on June 6th, 1944 the invasion began."

At this point some, having abandoned all hope, decided to give up their project. Not so others, especially those representing the Christian Conservative opposition. For although the first disaster that led the whole of Germany to the precipice, that is the Allied invasion of Europe, had already overtaken them, the second, the advance of Bolshevist legions on German soil, might yet be averted providing no time was lost.

The Red menace became an even more horrifying nightmare when, shortly afterwards (22nd June 1944), the Russians followed up the Western invasion with their offensive in the East.

At this stage, what neither patriotism nor fear of social revolution, political upheaval or national defeat had had the force to do, religious conviction and the will of men believing it their duty to take any risk, cost them what it may, to defend the interest and perhaps even the very existence of their Church from its arch-enemy, made them spring to action.

As the Red Armies advanced and none of the other plotters acted, the devout Catholic Count Von Stauffenberg stepped forward and himself offered to kill Hitler. (Von Stauffenberg, by the way, had been destined to be the key man with General Olbricht in the future home Army set-up whose task would have been to crush all subversive elements in post-HitlerGermany.)

In the words of Fabian Von Schlabrendorff:
"Ten days later (dating from 22nd June) I received a message from Count Stauffenberg. He had decided it was impossible to wait any longer. He was going to kill Hitler himself. We would be prepared for the assassination to take place any day."

This was all the more remarkable as "in the original planning, Stauffenberg had not been considered as a possible assassin, since he had only one hand, from which two fingers were missing. But he was fearless and able, and one of the few resistance men who were in a position to get at Hitler."

On July 20th, 1944, Count Von Stauffenberg acted. That day he took into Hitler's office a brief case loaded with explosives, timed to go off within a few minutes. Having deposited the case, he departed unsuspected. There followed an explosion so terrific that Von Stauffenberg had no doubt that Hitler and those with him had been killed.

Immediately after the attempt wild confusion seized Berlin. Von Stauffenberg, General Olbritch and others started to put their detailed plans into operation, beginning by holding General Fromm, Commander of the home Army, their prisoner. (Fromm, who afterwards executed Von Stauffenberg, in turn was himself executed by Hitler, who suspected that he had known of the plot.)

But the schemers had their way for only a couple of hours. Hitler had again escaped, and was still alive. [It is noteworthy that certain semi-official quarters in Allied countries, with particular regard to the British Broadcasting Corporation, in addition to large portions of the British and American Press, particularly the Catholic, usually very reticent, now stressed time and again that the man who had dared to attempt to rid the world of Hitler was a "Roman Catholic." This was all the more remarkable when one remembers that in similar circumstances the Church to which a political assassin belongs is rarely if ever mentioned. (Broadcasts from the B.B.C. on the 20th and 21st July, 1944.)]

Stauffenberg and Olbritch were immediately executed. General Beck was allowed to commit suicide, others died before the Fuehrer's firing squads.

Thus the plan which in the case of Italy had worked out so smoothly and so successfully, in the case of Germany miscarried completely.

Immediately the attempt was known to have failed, Cardinal Faulhaber, Archbishop of Munich, sent his own and his Bishops' congratulations to Hitler on his escape from the attack on his life. This was followed by the singing of the Te Deum in Munich Cathedral.
The Vatican for a time remained mute. But after a few days, as it powerlessly watched the unfolding of the final catastrophe, it began once more loudly to warn the victorious nations on two main subjects: First, that the Allies had to be generous to Germany; and, secondly, that they had to take measures to prevent the spreading of Communism and to prevent "Godless Russia" from conquering Europe.

As the end of Nazi Germany's military resistance was approaching and as the Russian armies advanced towards Berlin, Roosevelt continued his efforts to bridge the immense gap that separated the Vatican and the Kremlin. As late as March 1945, after prolonged negotiations with the Vatican, Roosevelt sent another personal envoy, Mr. E. J. Flynn, to Rome. Mr. Flynn saw the Pope on several occasions, and also the Papal Assistant Secretary. The purpose of the visit was a well-known "secret"—another of Roosevelt's many attempts for a rapprochement between Moscow and the Vatican. But once more the President's efforts failed, owing to the intractability of the Pope.

The "winter" disintegration of Hitler's armies reached a climax during the spring of 1945, when the Soviet armies rushed towards the Nazi Capital, while the Allies were occupying the great towns of Western Germany. During April and May the Nazi armies were collapsing, and on May 7 Germany surrendered unconditionally, preceded and followed by the surrender of various armies in different parts of Europe. Thus ended Nazi Germany and the Second World War in Europe.

A few weeks after the Allied and Russian armies had installed themselves in an utterly ruined and smoking Germany, after Hitler had been reported dead in Berlin, after a horror campaign had been let loose upon the world on the opening of the concentration camps, and after the German people had become the target of worldwide hatred and unheard-of national and individual humiliation and degradation, German voices began to be heard. They were the same voices that the German people had been hearing for years during Hitler's régime; the same voices that, a few years before, had prayed for Hitler's armies and for the "Great Fuehrer"; the voices that, when daring to whisper protests against Nazism, complained only when "breaches of the Concordat" were at stake.

German cardinals and German bishops, when showing foreign journalists the ruins of their cathedrals, began to thunder against "wicked Nazism," "the primary cause of all this havoc in so many sacred buildings." They repeatedly assured the British and Americans that they, the cardinals and bishops, as well as the Catholic Church, had always not only condemned Nazism, but fought it from its very beginning. The amazing statements of these dignitaries would fill whole books, but we shall content ourselves with two typical examples of this sudden conversion: two high prelates whom we have already met in this book, namely Cardinal Faulhaber and Archbishop Groeber. Only ten days after the German capitulation, Cardinal Faulhaber, after having
given a tirade against Nazism to American correspondents, was asked why he was so violently opposed to the former régime. He unhesitatingly declared: "Because Nazism was against Christianity and Catholicism."

He then gave four main reasons why Nazism created difficulties for Catholicism:—

1. The weekly inspection of the Hitler Youth, held always on Sundays, clashed with the Church services. 2. Abolition of religious instruction in schools for all pupils over twelve years old. 3. The all-pervading anti-Christian atmosphere engulfing Germany. 4. The ceaseless propaganda for militarism and the insidious methods of weaning the children away from family influences.

After giving these reasons, the Cardinal declared: "Nazism must not be allowed to rise after the war" (May 12, 1945).

[With the receding of the war into the background, however, several members of the German Hierarchy began to come out in defence of the Nazi régime. A typical example was Cardinal von Galen, who in February 1946 delivered an address in the Church of Santa Maria dell'Anima in defence of Nazism. The address was subsequently printed in pamphlet form, under the heading Law and Lawlessness, and distributed first in the British zone and then in other parts of occupied Germany. (See Kirchisches Amtsblatt fuer die Diozese Monster, July 1946.)]

Almost at the same time Archbishop Groeber published a pastoral letter in which, at last, he dared to condemn Nazism. He tried to explain why a "Catholic revolution against Hitler was an impossibility":—

It was not only because the Hitlerites had usurped power by means of a regular vote and could therefore claim the legality of their régime [he said], but every resistance against them collapsed in the face of a force that was bare of all scruple and ruthless to the core.

He continued: "Never were the German people deceived as much as they were during the past thirteen years." Finally, remembering the part he and the Catholic Church played, he significantly exclaimed: "However, in the eyes of God at least, we bear quite a bit of responsibility."

Then, more than a month after Germany's complete defeat; above the moans of the millions of bereaved, homeless, wounded, humiliated, and bewildered Germans; above the 9,000-10,000 Catholic Churches out of the total of 12,000 in Germany proper which were completely destroyed or seriously damaged by Allied air-raids or land battles; above the burned-out shells of cathedrals looming grimly against the
sky—for the first time since the rise of the régime the Pope dared to breathe the word "Nazism" in condemnation. During a short allocution Pius XII had the moral courage to declare that it was "a good thing" that "Satanic Nazism" had been destroyed.

That was all. The Pope had spoken against Nazism at last.

[When the Allies—Great Britain, the United States of America, Soviet Russia, and France—staged in 1946 what Hermann Goering called (September 1946) "the framed-up trial" of Nuremberg (the Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal), to which the principal Nazi survivors were brought, Pius XII sent Baron Ernst von Weizasecker, former German Ambassador to the Holy See, after having granted him a long audience (May 1946), to give evidence against the men responsible for having helped Hitler to power. It should be noticed that not a single word was spoken on the part played by Pope Pius XI, Pope Pius XII, and the various German cardinals and bishops. On the contrary, the Vatican was publicly thanked by the Chief American Prosecutor at Nuremberg, Justice Jackson of the United States Supreme Court, who expressed his "gratitude to the Vatican for making available to the Nuremberg trials documents touching upon the charges of persecution of religion in Germany and Nazi-occupied countries.... The part of the Nuremberg trial that was concerned with proving the persecution of the Churches was greatly expedited and aided by documents provided for us by the Vatican" (Justice Jackson, in a statement to the N.C.W.C. News Service, Washington, August 1946). While helping the victors and indicting the former Nazi leaders, presenting itself as one of Nazism's victims, the Vatican was using all its influence to save those Nazis who had helped to place the Catholic Church in a privileged position in the Third Reich and her satellite countries. This with particular regard to von Papen (see Pravda and Osservatore Romano, third week of March 1946), who was acquitted October 1, 1946; Mgr. Tiso, Prime Minister of Slovakia; Arthur Greiser, former Gauleiter of Western Poland, sentenced to death (July 15, 1946), and in an effort to save whom the Vatican sent a special cable to the President of Poland (see The Observer, London, JULY 21, 1946).]

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