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The Reaction of Five American Catholic Periodicals to the Rise of Nazism: 1923-1937

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THE REACTION OF FIVE AMERICAN CATHOLIC PERIODICALS
TO THE RISE OF NAZISM:
1923-1937

by

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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of
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VITA AUCTORIS

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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND

The early 1930's witnessed the growth and maturation in Germany of one of the most formidable terrors of our time, the Nazi totalitarian state, which arose as a direct antithesis to all for which Christianity stands. With its nihilism, neo-paganism, antisemitism, and fanatic nationalism, German National Socialism ranks with Russian Communism as one of the two gross political aberrations of modern times. This thesis will make an effort to analyze the reaction of five American Catholic periodicals to the spectre of Nazism as it encompassed Germany; this is the primary purpose of the thesis. Yet, in addition, such an analysis will raise several interesting questions as to the depth or superficiality of the Catholic insight into the rising phenomena of Nazism, and, above all, as to the explanation of this penetrating or surface appraisal of such a deadly enemy of the Church. Needless to say, we will not attempt to answer these latter questions, but merely to make our analysis of the periodicals' reaction and to pose a few problems for consideration.

The five periodicals selected for investigation are America, The Commonweal, The Catholic World, The Homiletic and Pastoral

Review, and The American Ecclesiastical Review.¹ Naturally enough, a decided emphasis will fall on America and The Commonweal, since they are weeklies, and afford a regular commentary on the news, in addition to articles. It is believed that these magazines should offer a representative picture of the best in American Catholic thought for this period among both clergy and laity, though the value of the thesis does not depend essentially upon the representativeness of these periodicals, but upon their long-time importance in forming American Catholic thought.

The development of the subject will follow the lines to be now indicated. In this first chapter a short analysis of the Nazi ideology and a brief history of the National Socialist movement will be given, to serve as background for the investigation of the periodicals. The two central chapters will actually analyze the periodical reaction; the second chapter will cover from the "Beer Hall Putsch" in Munich in November 1923, when Hitler first gained international attention for himself and his Nazis, to March 23, 1933 when the Enabling Act gave him dictatorial powers for four years, and the third will consider approximately his first four years in power. In the final

¹ It is interesting to note that Father Thurston N. Davis, S.J. writing in the Fiftieth Anniversary Issue of America, includes only America and The Commonweal in the category of a weekly Catholic journal of opinion, though he said the Ave Maria was approaching this category. Along with The Catholic World, he placed The Voice of St. Jude and The Sign in the category of monthly Catholic journals of opinion. Cf. Thurston N. Davis, S.J. "What is America," America, CI (April 11, 1959), 98.

chapter a summary will be made and conclusions will be drawn.

In this first chapter, then, we will try to catch the spirit of the Weimar Republic and acquaint ourselves with the circumstances engulfing it, to delineate briefly the character of the Nazi movement, and to trace in barest outline its growth from an insignificant labor group in postwar Munich to a power that ruled Germany in the most totalitarian style. This should give us our background.

To understand the Weimar Republic we must realize that it was ushered in amidst one of the greatest periods of general disillusionment that has ever overtaken any people. The war had been lost. During the last days before the Armistice, a revolution took place in Germany, and the Socialists came to power. The main motive for the support of most Germans for this revolution was a desire for peace; they were surfeited with war.² Thus there was set up that "fateful twin relationship of military defeat and the establishment of the Weimar Republic,"³ which would later give rise to the legend of the "stab in the back," and which always remained to cast a shadow, albeit unjustly, upon whatever the Republic might achieve.

²Koppel S. Pinson, Modern Germany: Its History and Civilization. (New York, 1954), p. 365.

³Ibid., 347.

Political unrest was rampant during the early years of Weimar. The three major parties, the Majority Socialists, the Democrats, and the Centrists, often barely held the government together. In 1919-1920 two revolutions were put down in Berlin, one from the left and the other from the right. At the same time down in Bavaria a Soviet Republic was set up by the Jew Kurt Eisner, and was only overthrown with considerable bloodshed. Severe economic conditions added to the general confusion; it was only in 1923 that the skyhigh inflation came to an end, and a degree of economic stability was attained. Before this time thousands of middle class families had been impoverished, thus letting loose upon the nation a large number of embittered citizens, long accustomed to fairly comfortable living, and now left with nothing. From these Hitler would gather many recruits.⁴

The solution of the major economic problems was not the answer to all Germany's difficulties by any means. There was the Treaty of Versailles. Every German opposed this document, the only difference being in the degree of opposition and the means to be taken to secure redress.⁵ Such men as the Democrat Walter Rathenau and the Centrist Joseph Wirth, who believed that the way to

⁴Ibid., 447.

⁵Ibid., 422.

repudiation lay in peaceful negotiations with the Allies, often found little favor with their countrymen, and Rathenau was assassinated as early as June 1922 by a nationalist fanatic. Even during the period of economic prosperity the cry against the Treaty rang out incessantly, and when the depression struck in 1930 it reached a deafening clamor.

Intellectually and morally there set in after the war that degeneration that often follows upon wars, and which flourishes during times of national depression. Nietzschean nihilism had pervaded the mentality, especially that of the youth.⁶ Antisemitism appealed to many. Was it not the Jewish Socialists who had brought all this trouble in the first place by betraying the army? In any event, what we must note as important is the lack of any solid value to which the people could cling. In such a period of turmoil a person looks about for something to grasp firmly as an ultimate, but the intellectual atmosphere of Germany at the time militated against ultimates; the way was well prepared for the advent of nihilistic Nazism. Ever since the early nineteenth century Germany had been drifting away from the Christian and Western tradition. It was soon to reap the fruit of this.⁷

⁶ Ibid., 504.

⁷ Hans Kohn, The Twentieth Century: A Midway Account of the Modern World (New York, 1954), pp. 157-159.

During the years 1923-1930 the Weimar government stumbled along passably well, though needing the support of the nationalist parties. However, with the depression came new trials. Unemployment rose to six million by 1932,⁸ and the inability of the government to cope with the problem convinced many Germans that democracy was not for them. "Economic crisis, political tension, and cultural confusion all converged in the early 1930's to bring about a state of crisis from which there seemed to be no way out."⁹

To the Germany just described, more precisely to a Munich ravaged by political battles, returned a thirty year old veteran named Adolf Hitler in early 1919. He had been born in 1889 in the small town of Braunau near the Austro-Bavarian border, the son of a minor civil servant. Early in life he had lost both parents. After the death of his mother in 1908 he moved to Vienna, and later to Munich, always drifting about from job to job and never settling down. With the outbreak of war he joined the army, and found himself as a soldier; army life appealed to him. But soon the war was over and he returned to Munich once more, soon to begin his self-constituted role as an instrument of history.¹⁰

In September 1919, Hitler became the seventh member of the political committee of the National Socialist German Workers Party,

⁸Pinson, p. 453.

⁹Ibid., 466.

¹⁰Alan Bullock, Hitler: A Study in Tyranny (London, 1952), p. 352.

an organization founded the previous year by a certain Anton Drexler.¹¹ In July 1921, he was elected to the leadership of the party, and the same year witnessed the creation of the Storm Troopers, amounting to a Nazi private army with the alleged purpose of keeping order at party meetings. The party continued to grow steadily, but suffered a decided setback with the failure of the Munich Beer Hall Putsch of November 1923. After this fiasco Hitler served little over a year of a five-year jail term, during which time he wrote the Nazi gospel, Mein Kampf. Shortly after his release the party began to grow again, and by January 1926, counted thirty thousand members.¹²

Before we go on to relate the rise of the party, it seems appropriate that we try to offer an insight into the nature of Nazism, since this did not change basically from the founding of the party to the death of Hitler in the Berlin bunker in May 1945.

The first factor that we must understand about National Socialism is that it had no doctrine, no intellectual base, that it was fundamentally irrational. The National Socialist Revolution started from the notion that there are no longer any values, and that whatever assumes the appearance of a value is opposed to

¹¹ Adolf Hitler, My New Order, ed. Count Raoul de Roussy de Sales (New York, 1941), p. 13.

¹² Ibid., 47.

healthy vital instincts.¹³ "The sole theme of the Nazi Revolution was domination, dressed up as the doctrine of race, and failing that, a vindictive destructiveness, Rauschning's Revolution des Nihilismus."¹⁴ Undoubtedly, it is hard for us to grasp what this means, but once we have done so, we have come to understand an essential element of modern totalitarian government. Nazism consisted in the rejection of all value and the blind pursuit of power, which in turn leads to a dynamism that can never be satisfied.

Yet did not the Nazis set forth a systematic philosophy based on the concept of race? Yes, they did. But if we look to the Nazi philosophy of race and expect from it an explanation of the Nazi movement, we are making a serious mistake. The great majority of the Nazi elite considered all the contemporary race theory "Adolf's bunkum."¹⁵ All the official philosophy is aimed at the excitation of the masses and the stirring of their emotions.¹⁶ Actually Nazism requires no intellectual justification because it has denied

¹³Hermann Rauschning, "Russian and German Nihilism," Dublin Review, CCVIII (April 1941), 205.

¹⁴Bullock, p. 736. Rauschning's interpretation of Nazism has been widely accepted. Cf. also Finson, p. 490.

¹⁵Hermann Rauschning, The Voice of Destruction (New York, 1940), p. 234.

¹⁶Hermann Rauschning, The Revolution of Nihilism: A Warning to the West (New York, 1939), p. 18.

the intellect. "To the conscious nihilist there are no ideas."¹⁷ The Fuehrer states emphatically that we have reached the end of the Age of Reason; the intellect has failed. But this is much more than a reaction against rationalism. Conscience is spoken of as a Jewish invention, and the very idea of truth in either the moral or scientific order is deprecated.¹⁸ In their attitude toward science the Nazis put this theory into practice, subordinating all scientific truth to the advancement of the cause and palming off on the people absurd racial doctrines. As to moral truth the whole Nazi movement and tactic can be looked upon as one immense denial of it. Nazism stood for the most extreme manifestation of the revolt against reason. Its chief psychological mark was anti-intellectualism.¹⁹

For the Nazis the important thing was life, action, dynamism, force, guided by no intellectual principle.²⁰ It was dynamism in a vacuum, ready to be maneuvered in various directions at any time. Goebbels, in his little catechism of Nazism, answered the question what does it mean to be a National Socialist with the words, "struggle, faith, work, sacrifice,"²¹ That this dynamism

¹⁷ Ibid., 24.

¹⁸ Rauschnig, Voice of Destruction, p. 222-223.

¹⁹ Pinson, p. 490.

²⁰ Rauschnig, The Revolution of Nihilism, p. 23.

²¹ Pinson, p. 491.

might grow and continue an enemy was needed, something upon whom this energy could vent itself. Perhaps this explains to some degree Nazi antisemitism. This dynamism is of such a nature that it must continue on and on, that it is insatiable, that it could only approach an end in world domination.²² This is what the conventional diplomats failed to see in Nazism; like Communism, its totalitarian counterpart, it could never be contained. The very nature of a genuine revolution demands that it spread to other lands.²³

There are some who say that Nazism was good for Germany up to a certain point, but obviously in the light of what has been said this stands out as a gross error. Nazism was never good for Germany;²⁴ Hitler was never a patriot, a fact proved by his desire when he saw that defeat must come, to bring Germany and all Europe down with him.²⁵ Stripped of their romantic trimmings, all Hitler's ideas can be reduced to simple claim for power which recognizes only one relationship, that of domination, and only one argument, that of force."²⁶

²²Rauschnig, The Revolution of Nihilism, p. 209.

²³Sigmund Neumann, "Germany: Changing Patterns and Lasting Problems," Modern Political Parties, ed. Sigmund Neumann (Chicago, 1956), p. 416.

²⁴Bullock, p. 326.

²⁵Ibid., 706.

²⁶Ibid., 371.

From the earliest days the Nazis utilized antisemitism as one of their principal rallying cries. This aspect of Nazism is so familiar that it will hardly be necessary to say more than a few words about it. Let us merely note that, for the Nazis, race superseded the state, and the latter existed for the preservation of the former.²⁷ The Jews, in turn, were set up as the counter-race, the greatest obstacle to the purity of the new Herrenvolk. Hitler went way beyond conventional antisemitism and erected the Jew into the incarnation of evil. With diabolical ingenuity he grouped together all the difficulties besetting the German people, and lay them at the feet of the Jews. Even democracy was identified with the Jews, and seen as the means they contrived to overthrow the Aryan leadership.²⁸ From beginning to end Hitler underwent no change in this regard.

How did the Nazis put their antisemitism, if such a mild word describes their attitude toward the Jews, into practice? Not to mention acts of terrorism before they came to power, nor discriminatory laws, nor exiles, nor many other forms of persecution, it may be said that in the years 1941-1944 the Nazis murdered at least six million Jews.²⁹ Hitler's campaign for their extermination nearly succeeded in Europe.

²⁷ Pinson, p. 494.

²⁸ Pinson, p. 524.

²⁹ Pinson, p. 524.

On looking back we see that the second rallying cry of Hitler sounded a strong nationalist note. It was this nationalism that brought together all the elements of National Socialism.³⁰ In 1948 the former Nationalist minister Hans Schlange-Schoeningen wrote that without exaggeration all Hitler's speeches could be reduced to one basic pattern, "For fourteen years an accursed system has deliberately ruined Germany, but now I will lead you all, every single one of you, to a glorious future."³¹ Ceaselessly he drove home this idea until in the end the German people succumbed. In this regard the Allies in their insistence on German war guilt and the payment of reparations played right into the hands of Hitler.

Nazi nationalism, however, was an unusual nationalism; it would more properly be called a racialism. A central idea of the National Socialist Weltanschauung was the Volk, to the development of which the state was ordered. Nazism determined to do away with the liberal concept of the individual and the Marxist idea of humanity, and to put in their place the Volk community, which was grounded in the soil and held together by the ties of common blood.³² Naturally enough, the race took precedence over the individual. Thus the whole doctrine baldly denies the dignity of

³⁰Ibid., 499.

³¹Ibid., 500, quoting Hans Schlange-Schoeningen, The Morning After (London, 1948), p. 23.

³²Bullock, p. 369.

man, and in their New Order the Nazis definitely looked to an "empire of the Herrenvolk based on the slave labor of the inferior races."³³ That this was not mere talk was proved by the terrible literalness with which they tried to implement the New Order among the Eastern European peoples.

With these ideas of the nihilism of Nazism, and its anti-semitism and racialism fixed in our minds, we shall proceed very briefly to trace the historical manifestation of National Socialism.

Throughout the late 'twenties the party grew steadily, and reached a membership of sixty thousand by 1928.³⁴ Yet the Nazis were still a small party, and gained only twelve out of 491 seats in the Reichstag elections of May 1928.³⁵ Helped by a temporary alliance with the Hugenburg nationalists, a tremendous propaganda campaign, and, above all, by the depression, Nazi membership reached 240,000 by March 1930, and in the Reichstag elections of September of that year the Nazis obtained 107 seats, thus becoming the second party in the state and leaping into the international limelight.

The story of the next two and one-half years is a tragic one.

³³ Ibid., 291.

³⁴ Ibid., 126.

³⁵ Pinson, pp. 574-575. All Reichstag election figures will be taken from this page.

Depression brought the German people down to the very depths of despond. A weak government, hindered by the antagonistic tactics of the Nazis and Communists, proved unable to cope with the situation, and violence characterized political life. Unable to obtain a majority in the Reichstag after March 1930, the government had to resort to rule by presidential decree, thus establishing a virtual dictatorship. Mid-1932 witnessed five major election campaigns within five months, and in July of that year the Nazis became the first party in the state with 230 seats, though not obtaining a majority. Franz von Papen followed the Centrist Heinrich Bruening into the Chancellorship in May 1932, and in turn Kurt von Schleicher took the reins of office, but none could obtain a majority.

Overtures were made inviting Hitler into the government, but he refused anything short of the Chancellorship, and on the fateful January 30, 1933, he finally was called to the office by President von Hindenburg, the Right foolishly thinking they could hold him in check. A cooked-up Communist scare paved the way for the decree of February 28, which abolished many of the individual rights guaranteed by the constitution, and handed to the government extraordinary powers for use against those guilty of breaches of the peace. In this way terrorism against the opposition, especially the Communists, was legalized.³⁶ Yet despite their ter-

³⁶Bullock, p. 239.

roristic methods and tremendous propaganda, in the March elections the Nazis garnered only 43.9 per cent of the vote. But the end was near. On March 23 the fateful Enabling Act was passed, which gave to Hitler dictatorial powers for four years, and definitely ended parliamentary government in Germany for all practical purposes. "The street gangs had seized control of the resources of a great modern state. The gutter had come to power."³⁷

Now that the Nazis found themselves in the driver's seat, there began the process of consolidating the dictatorship and nazifying the people. Soon all federalism was abolished, the trade unions taken over, and opposition parties dissolved. A period of revolutionary violence followed the Nazi accession to power, featuring Storm Trooper pillaging and sadism, a breakdown of law and order, all with the connivance of the state.³⁸ For a while it appeared as if the revolution would only end with the complete nazification of every element of German life, but there came a time when such a procedure would permanently hamper the strength of the state. Hence Hitler had to call a temporary halt. The question of the immediate extent of the revolution was brought to settlement with the infamous Roehm Purge of June 30, 1934, when Captain Ernst Roehm, head of the Storm Troopers, along with many other Storm Troop leaders and Nazi enemies, including the head of

³⁷ Ibid., 245.

³⁸ Ibid., 280.

Catholic Action, Erich Klausener and former Chancellor von Schleicher, were murdered in cold blood. One need only note the manner in which Hitler dealt with the Roehm group to realize that "never had he illustrated so clearly the revolutionary character of his regime as in disowning the revolution."³⁹ After the death of Hindenburg Hitler assumed the duties of the presidency, and now it could be said that "if ever a man exercised absolute power, it was Adolf Hitler."⁴⁰

Before we close this introductory chapter, it would be well to say a few words on the specific relationship between Nazism and the Church. From what has already been said about the character of the Nazi movement, its ultimate incompatibility with Christianity can readily be perceived. Prior to 1933 many German bishops had understood this clearly, and declared ipso facto exclusion from the sacraments for those who adhered to the party.⁴¹

There can be no doubt that in the end National Socialism aimed at the total annihilation of Christianity.⁴² However, just

³⁹ Ibid., 280.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 348.

⁴¹ Robert d'Harcourt, "National Socialism and the Catholic Church," The Third Reich, ed. Maurice Baumont, John H. E. Fried, and Edmond Vermeil (New York, 1955), pp. 800-801.

⁴² Otto B. Roegele, "Catholicism and the German Public," The Catholic Church in World Affairs, ed. Waldemar Gurian and M. A. Fitzsimons (Notre Dame, 1954), p. 217; Anonymous, The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, (New York, 1940), p. 513

as the Nazis certainly had conquest in mind from the very beginning but for obvious reasons never came out and said so in so many words, so also in their dealings with the Church. Rather, they pursued a policy of alternating intimidation and conciliation,⁴³ which met with considerably more success than any officially avowed persecution would have achieved, and which was infinitely more pernicious. The outstanding example of this policy was the Concordat signed with the Vatican in July 1933, right on the heels of several weeks of violence against Catholics. The Concordat constituted a great psychological victory for Hitler, and deceived many Catholics into thinking that he actually sought agreement with the Church.⁴⁴ Hitler never manifested any effective intention of abiding by the Concordat, and as early as 1934 the bishops were protesting against Nazi activities against Catholic education, the Catholic press, and other Catholic associations.⁴⁵ Throughout the remainder of the Nazi period continued assaults were made on the Church, though this was camouflaged by clever propaganda.⁴⁶ It was at its worst in the so-called immorality trials in which the

⁴³d'Harcourt, p. 805

⁴⁴Roegele, 208.

⁴⁵Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy, (Cambridge, 1956), p. 257.

⁴⁶The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, p. 514.

clergy were accused of sex crimes in order to discredit them with the people. National Socialism and the Church were never at peace.

With this background, then, we can proceed to investigate the reaction of the American Catholic periodicals in question. To what extent did they show insight into the nature of the modern phenomena known as Nazism?

CHAPTER II

REACTION OF CATHOLIC PERIODICALS IN THE UNITED STATES

1923-1933

Before we enter upon our close study of the periodicals for the years preceding Hitler's accession to power, it might be well to point up briefly certain trends that keep recurring through this phase of our investigation, so that the reaction as a totality may be more readily grasped. In the first place, only rarely does there appear an indication of a realization of the genuine revolutionary and totalitarian character of the Nazi movement, with its nihilistic overtones of terror, violence, lust for power, and destruction for its own sake. Normally in these pages we will find Hitler portrayed as a nationalist, or an ultra-nationalist, perhaps a little more dangerous than Mussolini, and as a certain dictator if he achieves power; but this is all. He is not understood as the inaugurator of a modern totalitarian state. This is not to say that Hitler is generally pictured as a blessing, but rather that the extent of his evil is underestimated. In the same way there stands out a repeated tendency to underplay the power and attraction of the Nazi leader, whether this manifests itself in an excessive trust in the "good sense of the German people" and the power of the Center Party, or in a profession to see a split with-

in the Nazi ranks, and Hitler's breaking with the more radical element. To be brief, the periodicals take an optimistic rather than a realistic view. Over against this inclination to sell Hitler short there is balanced what appears at times as an almost exclusive concern with the rise of Communism. Certainly, in view of the Communist triumph in Russia and the fertile field provided Communism by the depression, there existed more than sufficient reason for the greatest alarm. Yet it seems, that, at least temporarily, this preoccupation with Communism clouded the vision of events in Germany. Lastly, as some of the magazines will themselves admit, they did not really know what was going on in Germany all the while, and this accounts for much of the shifting of positions and uncertainty that we are going to meet.

Of the five periodicals only America gives space to the attempted Munich Putsch of the Nazis in 1923. On November 17 we find the "Chronicle" commenting on the abortive action; it notes the serious anti-Catholic nature of the movement, as well as its anti-semitic character, and attributes its failure in part to its attacks on the Church. Good riddance, the author wishes, to a "most obnoxious interloper in Bavarian affairs"; may he not return.¹

¹America, XXX, 98-99. The "Chronicle" column is a mixture of news information and commentary, with emphasis on the former. At this time Father Richard H. Tierney was editor of America. He was replaced by Father Wilfrid H. Parsons in 1925, and Father Parsons' editorship spans most of the remainder of this thesis, until 1936. The Commonweal did not come into existence until 1924.

Shortly afterwards Hitler drops out of the America columns, except for several brief appearances, having made a decidedly unfavorable impression.

During the coming months and years Hitler was rebuilding, and only in late 1929 did he again make international news. At this time he united with Alfred Hugenburg, the leader of the Nationalist Party, in an intense campaign for the repudiation of the Young Plan and the "war guilt" charge levelled at Germany. Though the campaign, which first required a referendum, then a Reichstag vote, and finally a popular plebiscite, failed miserably, it did serve to throw the spotlight back on Hitler, and we find him mentioned several times in the America "Chronicle," each time in connection with Hugenburg, and always as the secondary figure.²

But not for long will Hitler play second fiddle to Hugenburg; the elections of 1930 are approaching. On September 14 of that year, in elections held amidst worsening social and economic conditions and growing political restiveness, the Nazis succeeded in winning 107 Reichstag seats. "Most astonishing" were the gains made by "Adolf Hitler's Socialist-Labor or Fascist Party," remarked a surprised America. This October 4 issue, commenting upon the Nazi election gains, affords us an instance of the tendency to make a conservative of the radical, and to see matters in an "optimistic" rather than realistic light. Despite the upheaval, the

²XLII (November 2, 1929), 75; XLII (December 7, 1929), 195.

"Chronicle" reports, conditions appear quiet and rumors of a coup have been dispelled. "The Fascists, in fact, seemed to have been sobered by the very extent of their victory and the possibility that they might have to share the responsibility of governing the country. The Fascist leader, Herr Hitler, has been most conservative in his statements since the elections and has announced that his party had not decided what steps it should take."³ In the lead editorial in the same issue the writer recognizes the seriousness of the German situation and its importance for the world and takes into consideration Father Edmund Walsh's interview with the New York Times, in which he had said that neither the German right nor left would hesitate to overthrow the Republic if it stood in their way. But in the end he adopts a more optimistic outlook. Bolshevism seems to be more on the writer's mind than Hitlerism, and he closes with a statement of confidence in "the good sense and good faith of the majority of the German people" to get them through their difficulties.⁴

The Commonwealth in its election commentary recognizes Hitler's ability as an orator and popular leader, and his talent for offer-

³XLIII, 604.

⁴XLIII, 607. In the course of the thesis it will always be brought out, either in the text or in a footnote, whether the citation is from an editorial or some other feature of the periodical. Father Paul Blakely, S.J., wrote most of the editorials for America at this time. Cf. Thurston N. Davis, S.J., "What is America?" America, CI (April 11, 1959), 92.

ing simple solutions to all the woes of the community. "Germans say their country has never known a more picturesque demagogue. To us he seems like an ardent and pseudo-philosophic representative of the Klan, a Teutonic one-hundred-percenter, preaching death to the Jews and big business, out to supply the country with a big army, Versailles or no Versailles." Undoubtedly the presence of the Nazis and Communists⁵ in the Reichstag will hinder parliamentary government, but it is not yet clear what these recent developments mean for continued parliamentary government in Germany or for world peace. They do indicate that the German people are not at all willing to accept the present world settlement as final.⁶ Several weeks later a reference to the "dangerous, if farcical antics of Hitlerites" makes one wonder if they are taking him seriously.

That they do so take him is exemplified in the next paragraph, when the excommunication of the Nazis by the Bishop of Mainz is announced, along with Cardinal Faulhaber's pronouncements on their nationalism.⁷ America for November 1 also reports the diocesan

⁵The Communists had 76 deputies in the Reichstag at this time.

⁶"Week by Week," XII (Oct. 1, 1930), 536-537. The Commonwealth's "Week by Week" column or section contains more commentary and editorializing than does America's "Chronicle." At a later date The Commonwealth will introduce a purely informational section, "Seven Days' Survey."

Michael Williams, the founder of The Commonwealth, remained its editor throughout the whole period we are studying.

⁷"Week by Week," XII (October 29, 1930), 651.

policy in Mainz,⁸ and so does the Catholic World in its December number editorial. Father Gillis clearly perceives the danger of Hitlerism to Christianity, especially in its extreme nationalism, its antisemitism, and its advocacy of a private ethics for the Germans.⁹ In the December 6 issue of America, the "Chronicle," commenting on an article in Osservatore Romano, concurs with that paper in its statement that the political beliefs of the Nazis are "decidedly anti-Catholic",¹⁰ and again cites the prohibition of the Bishop of Mainz against Catholics joining the Nazi party. Thus we see that very early the periodicals noted and concurred in the decisions of the Church authorities in Germany, and brought to the attention of their readers the anti-Catholic character of the Hitler movement.

At this time there began to appear in The Commonweal a series of articles, written by the associate editor, the well-known George N. Shuster, who was touring the cities of Europe with a view to feeling out the real situation there. This series of articles, ranging from November 19, 1930 to April 15, 1931, merits our

⁸"Chronicle," XL (November 1, 1930), 74-75.

⁹Catholic World, CXXXII (December, 1930), 354-355. The Rev. James Gillis, C. S. P. served as the editor of the Catholic World during the whole of the period we are studying.

¹⁰XLIV (December 6, 1930), 198. Though The Commonweal had reported the sanction of the bishop as an excommunication, actually it was an exclusion from the sacraments. Cf. p. 16 of this thesis, and the reference cited there.

special attention, since it proceeded from such a renowned pen and was written on the spot.

Above all, Shuster impresses upon us the political maelstrom in Germany, brought about by economic confusion. Especially in Berlin is the situation critical. The crucial socio-economic tension has led to sharp political divisions, and practically to continual war, in and out of the Reichstag, between the Nazis and the Communists.¹¹ Unless something is done to alleviate the international pressure put on the Reich, especially at the moment in the question of the German minority in Poland, it will be "virtually impossible" to prevent a general, large-scale shift to the right in Germany.¹² In his article "Il Duce's Handkerchief" Shuster declares outright that the American people must reject isolationism to do all they can to keep a fascist from seizing power. As it is, the German people will accept relief from anyone who will offer it, so desperate is their plight, with its unemployment and poverty. Hitler's accession to power could well mean war, and his taking over the government is very possible within the next year if Chancellor Bruening should fail with his

¹¹George N. Shuster, "Germany at Low Tide," The Commonwealth, XIII (November 19, 1930), 70-71; George N. Shuster, "Berlin," The Commonwealth, XIII (December 17, 1930), 183-185.

¹²George N. Shuster, "Geneva Once More," The Commonwealth, XIII (January 21, 1931), 320-321.

social program.¹³ However, Shuster does not see Germany as the only danger spot for war by any means. In his article "War Clouds over Europe" he does not even mention Hitler or Germany as threats to peace, but concentrates on the military build up in Italy, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and even Austria.¹⁴ All in all, Shuster exhibits a very pessimistic attitude toward the prospects of peace in Europe, and seems to foresee some form of impending cataclysm.

What does Shuster have to say in particular about the Nazis and Germany? We have already mentioned his awareness of the acute economic and social conditions in Germany, their tendency to aid Hitler, and Hitler's inclinations toward war. Several times he gives signs of an insight into the nature of the Nazi movement, particularly in his essay "Munich: Anno Domini, 1930." At the conclusion of a delightful article on the beauty and traditions of the ancient city, the question of Hitler is raised, for, after all, Munich is the birthplace of Nazism, and always remained its focal point. After attending a Hitler speech, Shuster pays tribute to the brilliant, fearless oratory of the demagogue, but goes on to say that "he is equipped with ideas of about the same value as those which form the stock in trade of the average United

¹³George N. Shuster, "Il Duce's Handkerchief," The Commonwealth, XIII (December 3, 1930), 131-132.

¹⁴George N. Shuster, "War Clouds over Europe," The Commonwealth, (December 10, 1930), 150-151.

States senator. What Germany needs is a few dozen Hitlers, so that the novelty of one will wear off." In the next paragraph the tone grows more serious. Hitlerism makes an appeal, a very strong appeal, to the masses, and "this is fundamentally not morbid." Furthermore the discipline of the party seems "salutary" at least for the time. Then we come to a telling group of sentences. "When one looks more closely, however, one sees that the codex of its laws is a series of oppositions, I had almost said a series of protestantisms, antagonisms to the rest of the world, to the Jews, to the rumanitive intellect, diplomacy, banks, other party philosophies. Therefore, by a kind of law of its being, Hitlerism is anti-Catholic, anticlerical, in Bavaria. But there are deeper forces at work. Are they akin to the fiercely nationalistic energies which made for religious antipathies and group wars throughout the post-medieval centuries? The question is earnest. We shall hope that the answer, when given, will be less so."¹⁵

Here Shuster seems to attain a glance into the nihilistic essence of Nazism, its negative character, and its bent toward destruction. Nevertheless he seems more optimistic for Germany than for Europe, and concurs with Chancellor Bruening's statement

¹⁵George N. Shuster, "Munich: Anno Domini, 1930," The Commonweal XIII (March 11, 1931), 511-15.

that "we have, I may say, preserved the Continent from a Bolshevist upheaval."¹⁶ The critical point is past, though the threat of Bolshevism still remains. From the point of view of defense against Communism, Hitlerism may even be considered good.¹⁷ The author never loses confidence that the German people will emerge triumphant from this crisis.¹⁸

In two articles in the Homiletic and Pastoral Review on the Church in Germany, Shuster puts forth nearly the same opinions. The first article indicates the pessimism of Cardinals Faulhaber of Munich and Bertram of Breslau, both of whom forbid him to publish all that they have to say. It points up Hitler as a major source of opposition to the danger of Communism, though he has "been denounced publicly by the great majority of German bishops."¹⁸

In the second article the author stresses again the need for international action to combat the depression, though he does not think a Communist victory in Germany likely. A reactionary triumph, especially a "religiously motivated fascism....might prove extremely grave" for the Church. He closes with a eulogy of

¹⁶George N. Shuster, "A Talk with Chancellor Bruening," The Commonweal XIII (April 15, 1931), 659-661.

¹⁷Shuster, "Germany at Low Tide," 70-71.

¹⁸Shuster, "Berlin," 183-185.

¹⁹George N. Shuster, "The Church in Germany," The Homiletic and Pastoral Review, XXXI (August, 1931), 1155-1161.

Bruening and the strong Catholicism of Germany, giving the liturgical movement and the youth movement special mention.²⁰

All in all Shuster's articles show him confident that the German people will overcome the trying situation in which they find themselves, and he certainly does not minimize the situation. The failure of the world to go to the help of Germany, at least in the form of dismissing reparations payments, has contributed to the rise of Hitler, who constitutes a threat for Germany and the world, even though he has served as a bulwark against Communism. Shuster's praise for the life of the Church in Germany is echoed many times in the periodicals, and it is evident that American Catholics looked with admiration upon the structure of German Catholic organization.

Returning to the regular periodical commentary, we discover a fairly frequent and slightly discordant note. In the February 28 issue of America, the "Chronicle" mentions the decree of the Bavarian bishops prohibiting priests from participating in the Nazi movement,²¹ and the March 21 issue contains the severe warning of Cardinal Schulte of Cologne against the dangers of National Socialism.²² An editorial in the same issue "The German Bishops

²⁰George N. Shuster, "Problems of the Church in Germany," The Homiletic and Pastoral Review, XXXI (August 1931), 1259-1265.

²¹XLIV, 490.

²²XLIV, 562.

and Hitler" sees Hitler especially as an "ultra-nationalist" and compares Hitlerism to the pan-Germanism prevalent before the war. Curiously enough, the editorial goes on to find the action of the bishops "profoundly reassuring, a powerful blow struck for the stability of the Republic.... It (the condemnation of the bishops) is one more testimony to the great fact that Catholic moderation and Catholic charity are the best guarantees for the security and prosperity of any state."²³

Now, undoubtedly, the vigorous action of the bishops kept many from National Socialism and strengthened Catholic resistance, but it seems that America is here placing excessive trust in the moral power of the bishops. What is said about Catholic moderation and Catholic charity can hardly be disputed, yet this abstract statement reveals a certain naiveté when viewed in the context of the situation. A somewhat similiar instance is found in the "Foreign Periodicals" section of the Catholic World for January 1931, where they quote the Month of November 1930, to the effect that "the Nazis are more of a portent than a real danger. Hitler had included in his program so many anti-religious and anti-social objects that the public conscience, so lately disabused of Prussianism, so sickened by exhibitions of racial arro-

²³XLIV, 566.

gance, has given him little sympathy."²⁴ Here the argument seems to be that Hitlerism is so foolish that it could never capture a nation. This is a variation on the perennial theme "it could not happen here." As America exaggerated the moral power of the bishops, so the Catholic World appears to undersell the capacity of the human person for evil, especially when confronted with desperate circumstances.

Throughout 1931 the political and economic situation in Germany grew increasingly critical. Chancellor Bruening, unable to obtain a backing in the Reichstag, ruled by presidential decree, a procedure which the Social Democrats tolerated rather than submit to a Nazi dictatorship. In and out of the Reichstag both Nazis and Communists strove to hinder effective government and to bring about the fall of the Republic. Hitler's Storm Troopers and the Communist organized workers vied for control of the streets, with the police often forced to the most extreme measures to maintain order, and all the while the Nazis grew stronger.

During the first months of 1931, the periodicals, while always deprecating the Nazi tactics, seem to lay more of the blame on the Communists. Sometimes this is not explicit but can be conjectured from the amount of space given to reports of Nazi vio-

²⁴CXXXII, 476-478. At this time the Catholic World printed a "Foreign Periodicals" section, in which it reprinted two or three lengthy extractions from overseas periodicals.

lence. The Commonweal states that "of the two stormy factions, at present the Communists are apparently the most to be dreaded."²⁵ America of the same week declares explicitly that the Nazi spirit of antisemitism is a principal reason for the constant brawling, though the Communists are also mentioned,²⁶ but the next week reports that Hitler's promise to abide by the law does away with the fear of an imminent reactionary revolution.²⁷ The following week America notes the praiseworthy activities of the Evangelical Parents League against the Bolshevist propaganda in the schools.²⁸ In its "Foreign Periodicals" section for June 1931, the Catholic World, quoting Professor Mary Boyle in the Irish Rosary for April 1931 plays up the Communists' battling with the police, but ignores the Nazi agitators.²⁹ Several weeks later America's "Chronicle" again plays up the Communist inspired disturbances, and states that "The Prussian police were seriously considering the advisability of suppressing the Communist Party."³⁰ Father

²⁵XIII (April 8, 1931), 617-618.

²⁶"Chronicle," XLV (April 11, 1931), 2.

²⁷"Chronicle," XLV (April 18, 1931), 26-7.

²⁸"Chronicle," XLV (April 25, 1931), 50-51.

²⁹CXXXIII, 350-352.

³⁰XLV (July 18, 1931), 338.

Joseph Thorning in "The Crisis in Germany" paints a graphic picture of the Communist and Nazi street forces, but by his tone indicates greater concern with the Communists.³¹ However, this is one of the last instances of seeming emphasis on the Communist part in the violence. After late summer this tendency appears to weaken.

As to the international situation, the treatment at this time stands out as anything but optimistic, what with the tentacles of the depression tightening over the world, and every nation seeking nationalistic solutions. Again the fear of Bolshevism dominates. In America for March 7, 1931, Father John La Farge, in an article, "The Soviet War Threat: Cause or Effect", takes cognizance of the warlike proclivities of the dictatorships and near-dictatorships, but sets up the Soviets as the greatest danger to world peace,³² A July 4 editorial on "The Source of Disquiet" maintains that unless the German problem is solved, Europe is headed for war or

³¹ Joseph Thorning, S.J., "The Crisis in Germany," XLV (September 26, 1931), 584-585. Father Thorning was a frequent contributor to America during the next years, though never a member of the staff. He received his doctoral degree from Catholic University, and served later as professor of sociology and acting dean of the Graduate School at Georgetown University. He also authored several books on political subjects.

³² John La Farge, S.J., "The Soviet War Threat: Cause or Effect," America, XLIV (March 7, 1931), 520-521. Father La Farge joined the staff of America in 1925 and is still with them. He served as editor from 1944-1948.

Bolshevism, more likely war first and then Bolshevism.³³ Several weeks later the Pilgrim, Father La Farge, in his "With Scrip and Staff" column, reprints parts of a letter from a German friend, who thinks that even if the right does gain a victory, it will only be temporary and a step on the road to Moscow.³⁴ Another indication of the primary concern with Bolshevism occurs much later in the February number of the Homiletic and Pastoral Review, in which Right Reverend Monsignor J. Strauberger in "The Religious Situation in Europe" brings out the grave danger to religion in the irreligious societies, then very strong in Europe, supported by Socialists and Communists, the "real gravediggers of religion." Though Germany is treated at length, Hitler is not mentioned.³⁵ Many other articles on Communism and Russia at this time impress upon us from what quarter the Catholic periodicals saw the greatest danger.

During the second half of 1931 we shall observe that the periodicals possess a realistic knowledge of the social, economic, and political turmoil in Germany, perceive the continued growth of

³³XLV, 293.

³⁴XLV, (July 25, 1931), 378.

³⁵RR. Msgr. J. Strauberger, D. D., "The Religious Situation in Europe," Homiletic and Pastoral Review, XXXII (February 1932), 463-473. In a similar strain are Dr. Heinrich Getzeny, "The Cultural Crisis in Europe," Homiletic and Pastoral Review, XXXII, (April and May 1932), 704-708, 817-820.

the Nazi movement, but place trust in Heinrich Bruening, the Center Chancellor who becomes something of an idol to them, to ride out the crisis. Max Jordan's "Zero Hour in Germany" in the July 8 Commonweal paints a true to life picture of the unbearable social conditions, especially the unemployment, and leaves the reader much less optimistic than the general commentary. "An empty stomach remains the best argument for violent upheavals." The three defense pillars against radicalism are Bruening, Hindenburg, and the army, he maintains.³⁶ Gerhard Hirschfeld in "Heinrich Bruening, German Chancellor" eulogizes the Chancellor for his outstanding work in an impossible situation,³⁷ and Father Thorning's "Germany, Victory or Defeat" in the October 10 America illustrates the strong appeal that both Communism and Nazism have for the youth, but places trust in the German people and government.³⁸

The duel between Hitler and Bruening becomes daily more intense. Will the Chancellor be able to stave off the Fascist threat? America for October 24 reports the open espousal of the

³⁶Max Jordan, "Zero Hour in Germany," The Commonweal, XIV (July 8, 1931), 251-252.

³⁷Gerhard Hirschfeld, "Heinrich Bruening, German Chancellor," America, XLV (July 25, 1931), 373-375. Hirschfeld was a regular contributor to America at this time, and had his own column on economics for a time.

³⁸Joseph Thorning, S.J., "Germany, Victory or Defeat," America, XLVI (October 10, 1931), 8-9.

Nazi cause by Hjalmar Schacht, former Reichsbank president and financial genius, but goes on to say that Bruening is carrying on and inspiring confidence.³⁹ Several days later The Commonweal expresses relief over the passage of the Chancellor's "reconstruction program" for the winter, but points out that he will have to improve Germany's international position by spring or "the barriers between the Reich and radicalism will tumble."⁴⁰ The November 7 America "Chronicle," while noting the large gains made by the Nazis in the communal elections, believes that the Bruening ministry has received additional strength with the visit of the Italian Foreign Minister Grandi to Berlin.⁴¹ Two articles by Father Thorning on Bruening once more reveal America's penchant for the Chancellor. In the first the author states that the Chancellor's outstanding speech, which won him a vote of confidence before the adjournment of the Reichstag at the end of October, brought even a few words of praise from Hitler himself. He continues, "The Nationalists, turning their guns from the Government, will now initiate a new campaign against Bolshevism." After all, Hitler has declared this fight against Bolshevism to be the "historical role" of German fascism. But many hard days still await

³⁹ XLVI, 51.

⁴⁰ "Week by Week," XIV (October 28, 1931), 621.

⁴¹ XLVI, 98.

Bruening.⁴² Hitler is not even mentioned in the second article, except by allusion. The Chancellor is optimistic, but insists upon the need for outside help if disaster is to be averted.⁴³

As Christmas came and went the Nazi tidal wave mounted higher and higher. The periodicals dutifully reported this fact. The December 26 issue of America finds Father Thorning in "Hitler: the Man and His Movement" emphasizing again the appeal of Nazism to the youth and its constantly mounting strength. The first paragraphs see Hitler as a "study in contrasts" and bring out his "blatant materialism and glorification of might makes right,"⁴⁴ but two weeks later an article by the same author, "The German Bishops and Hitler," while mentioning the antisemitism, the nationalism and anti-Rome attitude of the Nazis, closes with hope in Hitler's present conservatism, and thinks that perhaps the party doctrine will change.⁴⁵ The "Chronicle of the Year 1931" mentions hopefully Hitler's denunciations of violence, and his April announcement to use only legal means to achieve power.⁴⁶

⁴² Joseph Thorning, S.J., "The Triumph of Bruening," America XLVI (November 14, 1931), 128-129.

⁴³ Joseph Thorning, S.J., "An Interview with Bruening," America, XLVI (November 28, 1931), 176-177.

⁴⁴ Joseph Thorning, S.J., "Hitler: the Man and His Movement," America, XLVI (December 26, 1931), 278-279.

⁴⁵ Joseph Thorning, S.J., "The German Bishops and Hitler," America, XLVI (January 9, 1932), 333-334.

⁴⁶ America, XLVI (January 2, 1932), 295-296. The "Chronicle of the Year" summarizes all the important news events of the year.

Perhaps Father Gillis, in his February Catholic World editorial, exhibits the greatest wisdom when he comes right out and says that we Americans just do not know what is going on in Germany. We Americans do not know the truth. "We read reams of stuff on one side or the other.... So, who knows Germany?"⁴⁷ A Commonweal editorial for February 17 expresses the same sentiment in regard to National Socialism. "No one knows what it is, let alone what it might conceivable do."⁴⁸ But in the same organ for February 24 Maurice Leon, a New York lawyer evidently intent on presenting the French position in "France and Disarmament," declares that "it is impossible any longer to shut one's eyes to the menacing character of the Hitler-Hugenburg movement" and its certain expansionism. He insists that the world must take a stand against Fascism or free institutions are doomed.⁴⁹

With early spring came the presidential elections, and the first of five major elections to take place during 1932, with the consequent drain on the political energies of the people. In their analysis of the results which saw Hitler lose twice to von Hindenburg,⁵⁰ we find America, spearheaded by Father Thorning,

⁴⁷ OXXXIV, 618.

⁴⁸ The Commonweal, XV, 425-426.

⁴⁹ Maurice Leon, "France and Disarmament," The Commonweal XV (February 24, 1932), 461-463.

⁵⁰ The second election was required by the Weimar Constitution which required an absolute majority for the President.

more sanguine than The Commonweal. After the first elections Amer-
ica remarks that they "left Hitler in a sorry plight," since "the
general impression was that they (the Nazis) had reached their
peak..." In many quarters it was interpreted as a blessing that
the government did not fall into Hitler's hands at this time.⁵¹
An editorial in the same issue, "The German Elections," states
that "the elections seem to mean that the old thrifty, law-abiding,
home-loving, intellectual Germany, which we knew before the pas-
sions of the World War obscured our vision, means to retain con-
trol of the government. That it also means the downfall of Hitler
and his inflammatory program is not so certain."⁵² The Commonweal
expresses great satisfaction with the miraculous victory of
Hindenburg, yet warns us that much more will have to be done "if
Germany is not to slip farther and farther down the incline to
despair."⁵³ Max Jordan writing in The Commonweal after the run-
off election sees Hindenburg's victory as giving the West one last
chance to save Germany. If the reparations demands are not drop-
ped, Hitler will come into power. "The Nazis have become numeri-
cally the most powerful party in the Reich."⁵⁴ Father Thorning,

⁵¹ "Chronicle," XLVI (March 26, 1932), 586-587.

⁵² 591-592.

⁵³ The Commonweal, "Week by Week," XV (March 30, 1932), 590.

⁵⁴ Max Jordan, "Germany Elects a President," The Commonweal
XV (April 20, 1932), 682-684.

on the other hand, in "What Will Hitler Do Now," believes that the Nazi wave has reached its highwater mark, and emphasizes the fact that only in Germany have the people supported one regime throughout the depression.⁵⁵ Nazi attacks on the Church were a main factor in their defeat, he believes.⁵⁶ Two weeks later in "Bruening and Hitler: A Study in Patriotism," the same writer contends that Hitler has been cast from the ranks of the extremists in his party, and thus we begin to work into the pattern of the distinction between Hitler and the party, with the former representing a more conservative bent, of which we shall see more later.⁵⁷

On May 30 the German crisis entered a new phase, for on that day President von Hindenburg withdrew his support from Chancellor Bruening, and as a result the Bruening government fell. The move came as a great surprise to all the world, and to this day historians have difficulty in giving a complete explanation, though it seems that Junker intrigues had convinced von Hindenburg that Bruening, his support in recent elections, had Communistic leanings.⁵⁸ In any event, with the departure of Bruening from the

⁵⁵The Bruening government never had a parliamentary majority.

⁵⁶Joseph Thorning, S.J., "What Will Hitler Do Now?" America, XLVII (April 23, 1932), 58-59.

⁵⁷Joseph Thorning, S.J., "Bruening and Hitler: A Study in Patriotism," America, XLVII (May 7, 1932), 106-107.

⁵⁸Pinson, p. 474.

government, Germany did lose a vital stabilizing influence.

America in its "Chronicle" for June 11 believed that the new von Papen government would be strictly stopgap,⁵⁹ and The Commonweal for the same week expressed a similiar opinion. The latter, however, felt that Hitler would follow, and after him would follow Bolshevism.⁶⁰ Both America and The Commonweal yield in their tendency to de-radicalize Hitler, to make of him, at least in some way, a conservative, to prophecy his coming to terms with the more respectable elements in Germany. Thus The Commonweal: "The value of all movements such as Hitlerism, of Clemenceauism in France, lies in the extent to which sound, moderate government can compromise with them." The German people, it appears to The Commonweal, need someone with an extreme formula, like Hitler, to raise them out of their desperate situation.⁶¹ America, in an editorial "The Outlook in Germany," admits that with the departure of Bruening from the government, the old uneasiness returns, but refuses to go along with that segment of French opinion, "talking for Buncombe county," who think that a Hitler government means Germany's girding for war. "Pessimism is not in order." Bruening's retirement from the government does not mean a total withdrawal from public life. "No one can foretell what further changes will be

⁵⁹ XLVIII, 220.

⁶⁰ "Week by Week," XVI (June 15, 1932), 171.

⁶¹ Ibid.

wrought by this turn of the wheel... but it is difficult to picture Germany under a reign of Communism, or of unbleached Hitlerism. Herr Hitler, the militarists, and the landlords are now near the top. But remembering the fundamental good sense of the German people, and not forgetting the axiom that a radical in power usually becomes a conservative, we can look to the future with hope."⁶² Alas, this may be so in the ordinary case, but Hitler's case is not an ordinary one.

New elections were scheduled for July 31, to break, if possible the long-standing deadlock in the Reichstag. With the results in, and a victory registered for Hitler, though he did not obtain a majority, The Commonweal remarks that "it is hoped that the Hitler wave has reached its climax before it overwhelms the country,"⁶³ and the following week the same magazine admits its inability to analyze the situation. "Eventually Germany will have to solve the Hitler enigma, and when that happens the drift will tell us as much of the future as we can profitably desire to know."⁶⁴ America believes that the Republic is saved for the time being, but only with the help of powerful rightist control. With

⁶² XLVII, (June 11, 1932), 225.

⁶³ "Week by Week," XVI (August 10, 1932), 358. The Nazis won 37.4 per cent, the SPD 21.6 per cent, the Communists 14.6 per cent.

⁶⁴ "Week by Week," XVI (August 17, 1932), 380.

the trend to nationalism, "the national traits of stability and efficiency were coming back to their own."⁶⁵

The ensuing three or four months find America adopting a somewhat optimistic attitude, while The Commonweal proves quite reticent on the subject of Hitler, evidently acting on its previous statement about the difficulty of obtaining information. Undoubtedly dissension was growing in the party and Hitler was having difficulty restraining the restive Storm Troopers, but it would seem that he never did lose control.⁶⁶ The political jockeying between the government and Hitler in an effort to bring the Nazi into the government, did not bring about a change in his "all or nothing" policy.⁶⁷ America, for August 27 pictured the position of Hitler as a most difficult one. The President had rebuffed his request for the Chancellorship, and the Storm Troopers were growing impatient, "but it was thought improbable that Hitler would choose to plunge the country into civil war, which would be a carnage with the present inflamed passions let loose."⁶⁸ In the September 10 issue growing strength for von Papen was reported,⁶⁹ and a month later the opinion was reiterated

⁶⁵"Chronicle," XLVII (August 13, 1932), 437.

⁶⁶Bullock, p. 201-203.

⁶⁷Ibid., 209.

⁶⁸"Chronicle," XLVII (August 27, 1932), 485.

⁶⁹XLVII, 533.

Fapen has stolen Hitler's mantle with his strong demands in the field of foreign policy, and the people preferred his nationalism to Hitler's brand, which could lead into Socialism or Communism. "It was generally admitted that the coming elections would show the National Socialists much weaker than in the last contest, which would mean the loss of many seats in the Reichstag, and the end of Hitler's power."⁷⁰ The following week's "Chronicle" carries on in the same line, and spoke of reported dissension within the Nazi ranks.⁷¹

With the elections over, America was somewhat vindicated, for the Hitlerites lost two million votes, though still remaining the strongest party in the Reichstag; however, America's prediction of a growth of sentiment for Fapen proved inaccurate, and soon the Chancellor, with only a small minority backing him, resigned. In the same issue in which Fapen's resignation is reported, the "Chronicle" noted that "it was taken for granted that Hitler's dream of a Nazi dictatorship was crushed," but his adherents and his press would admit nothing of the sort.⁷² In the "Chronicle of the Year 1932" a tribute to Bruening proclaimed that he did much "to lay the foundation for the present strength of the Republic." As for Hitler himself, it says that his

⁷⁰"Chronicle," XLVIII (October 15, 1932), 26-27.

⁷¹XLVIII, (October 22, 1932), 50.

⁷²"Chronicle," XLVIII (November 26, 1932), 170.

"power reached its zenith, but failed to fulfil the prophecies that he and his followers had made." For the present the new Chancellor, von Schleicher, has made an "auspicious start."⁷³ Unfortunately, his chancellorship lasted just two more months.

At this point let us pause for a moment to look at several longer articles that appeared during the last few months and dealt with Germany and the Nazis on a less immediate level. In them we shall find some deepening insights into Nazi doctrine and tactics. Johannes Mattern of John Hopkins, for instance, in "The National Socialist Movement" in The Commonweal for May 18 points out how Hitler uses Communism as an excuse to justify his military activities. He also stresses what we have heard so often, unless Germany makes some progress in bettering her international position, the Nazis will take over the government.⁷⁴ In "The Religious Factor of Germany's Chaos" for the October 1 America, the renowned Hilaire Belloc emphasizes the evil of Nazi antisemitism, a point that perhaps should have been made more frequently in Catholic periodicals.⁷⁵ The Commonweal's "Germany the Paradox" by Max Jordan, who has shown an unusual ability to

⁷³ XLVIII (January 7, 1933), 319-320.

⁷⁴ Johannes Mattern, "The National Socialist Movement," The Commonweal, XVI (May 18, 1932), 63-65.

⁷⁵ Hilaire Belloc, "The Religious Factor in Germany's Chaos," America, (October 1, 1932), XLVII, 611-613.

penetrate Nazism, approaches the core of the Nazi movement, as it brings out its "revolutionary and even Bolshevistic character." Jordan points out Hitler's lack of any positive program and indicates the antisemitism and anti-Romanism of the Nazi idea. However, with the appearance of the real nature of Nazism, Jordan believes that it is losing strength, though he sees no relief in sight for the drastic socioeconomic situation in Germany.⁷⁶ Hitler is viewed as an extremely serious threat to world peace by Robert de Challeu in "War Debts and World Unrest" in the January 11 Commonweal.⁷⁷ In "The Spirit of Modern Germany," an America article difficult to interpret, Gerhard Hirschfeld believes that what the German people want is a faith in the idea of the state and its military expression, something they have had to do without since the fall of the Empire. He seems to say that the Germans want, and need an authoritarian state; it is consonant with their nature and history. As for the more immediate situation he appears to favor Schleicher, and to think that the Nationalists will soon take over, with Hitlerism subsiding.⁷⁸

⁷⁶Max Jordan, "Germany the Paradox," The Commonweal, XVII (November 16, 1932), 65-67.

⁷⁷Robert de Challeu, "War Debts and World Unrest," The Commonweal, XVII (January 11, 1933), 295-297. de Challeu was a former officer in the French army, and a contributor to periodicals in several countries.

⁷⁸Gerhard Hirschfeld, "The Spirit of Modern Germany," America, XLVIII (January 14, 1933), 356-357.

With the end of the month the big blow came, "surprising the keenest observers," when Hitler assumed the Chancellorship, on January 30, 1933, with the Nationalists in the cabinet becoming the "balancing check to curb the exuberant Nazis." With further mention of "adequate conservative safeguards" we pick up the guiding thought for the next weeks. America continues, in an apparently unalarmed manner, to report how Hitler had announced over the radio "a reasonable and moderate program," faithfulness to Christian moral standards, and a solution to unemployment in compulsory work, "undertaken with the characteristic discipline of the German people. ...He concluded by calling upon God for a special blessing."⁷⁹ Indeed Hitler knew how to put on the schmaltz, and America was not immune.

To The Commonweal also Hitler's accession to the chief governmental post proved unexpected, and they did not know what to make of it. Did Hitler accept office in the hope that, if he could run the country successfully until the early March elections, the voters would give him a majority? Or is he being used as a tool of the nationalists? If the latter is the case, the Nazis are sure to split, for the party is essentially one of the workers, for those who are unwilling to accept Marxism, yet feel the need for a solution. "But in all probability Adolf Hitler

⁷⁹"Chronicle," XLVIII (February 11, 1933), 442.

is too simple and fearless a man to betray the working population. If he finds that what he believes ought to be done cannot be accomplished, he will resign," and leave an even worse situation.⁸⁰ In an editorial in the following issue The Commonweal points out that Hitlerism, while owing much of its support to laborers, is by no means a party of organized labor, and goes on to say hesitantly that "our estimate is that no startling developments are to be expected." Mention is made, for the first time in a long while, of the previous episcopal condemnations of the National Socialists, but only to show that cooperation with the Center should be impossible.⁸¹ Two weeks later The Commonweal rejoices in the apparent conformity of the regime to its forecasts, there being no march on Berlin, no mammoth pogrom, etc. "Benefiting by police support, Nazis have staged something like an old-fashioned Kentucky feud" with the Communists. Though some see the return of the Kulturkampf, Hitler has warned his fanatical devotees about such stupid politics as attacking Catholics, and with this statement we see the start of a familiar pattern, Nazi attacks on the Church, with repeated Hitler apologies and explanations, often satisfactory to America and The Commonweal. The Commonweal expects Hitler himself soon to disclaim his violent oratory in favor of "the good old German middle class habit of going ahead

⁸⁰"Week by Week," XVII (February 15, 1933), 423.

⁸¹XVII (February 22, 1933), 453-454.

very slowly and cautiously." Like the explosive Social Democrats after they came to power in 1919 Hitler will soon go into "shadow-boxing."⁸²

America now grows less confident in its appraisal of Nazism. In the "Chronicle" for February 25 Hitler's apparent intention to force Fascism on the people is noted, with his use of coercion on every side.⁸³ The following week attacks on the meetings of the Center are reported, as well as the suspension of several Catholic papers. A heavy Nazi censorship makes it difficult to learn the facts of what is now taking place in Germany, says America.⁸⁴ The "Chronicle" for March 11 reports that Hitler is "completely in the saddle."⁸⁵ By March 25 it reports that "there seemed to be little doubt that the victory of the Nazis was a genuine revolution."⁸⁶ In the "Week by Week" column for March 29 The Commonwealth seems to appreciate some of the deeper ramifications of Nazism, especially in the cultural sphere, but compares Hitler to Jack Cade, the seventeenth (sic) century English revolutionary.⁸⁷ An editorial in the same issue, on the theme of what

⁸²"Week by Week," XVII (March 8, 1933), 507.

⁸³XLVIII, 490.

⁸⁴"Chronicle," XLVIII, 514-515.

⁸⁵XLVIII, 538.

⁸⁶XLVIII, 586.

⁸⁷"Week by Week," XVII, 591.

American Catholics can learn from the Center Party, establishes a likeness between Nazism and Bryanism. Again it misses the radical nature of Nazism as an ideology and way of life.⁸⁸

⁸⁸XVII, 593-594.

CHAPTER III

REACTION OF CATHOLIC PERIODICALS IN THE UNITED STATES:

1933-1937

The second phase of our study, which covers approximately the first four years after Hitler's accession to power, provides such an amount of material that it will be necessary to pick and choose in presenting it. In this process of selection emphasis will be placed on several key aspects and important events of this period of Nazi rule, so that a clear, faithful, and fairly comprehensive reflection of the periodical reaction is presented, without degenerating into a mass of chronicled commentary which would be but a slight improvement on file cards. At first the discussion of the immediate reaction to Hitler's rise to power will be continued, so that we can see the development through the Roehm Purge of June 30, 1934. After this bloody bath any illusion the periodicals may have had about Hitler was rather brutally dispelled. At the same time brief treatment will be given to the periodical commentary on early Nazi antisemitism, one of the most terrible aspects of the regime. After that the periodicals' presentation of the Church-State struggle in Nazi Germany will be taken up. In treating this topic we will follow the periodical treatment through the loss of any confidence that

may have been had in the Concordat solution. Next, the opinion of the international significance of the Nazis will be surveyed. To what extent were they considered a threat to peace? Finally, towards the end of the chapter, we will return to the problem of Church-State relations and see how the insight of the periodicals gradually developed during the last years of the period under consideration.

As should be expected, this second major part of our study will not reveal any sudden break with what has gone before, so that we should expect a continuation of the idea patterns of the previous chapter, and indeed, this is what we will find, with some modification. One point ought to be recalled and made explicit before we go on, and that is that Hitler's word meant nothing. He could no more be trusted than Khrushchev can be trusted today, as subsequent development in Nazi policy will make evident. How long would it take the world to realize this?

Oddly enough there is little direct commentary on the crucial Enabling Act of March 23, 1933, which turned over to Hitler dictatorial powers for four years. In general the periodicals continue in the same optimistic vein predominant at the close of the last chapter. Father Florence D. Sullivan, S.J., an America staff member from 1931-1934, writing naively in his article "Whither Hitler," glowingly presents the Chancellor as "a Catholic about whose orthodoxy there were many unkind rumors." Granted there had been violence, this was merely the temporary

accompaniment to a major change, for "Hitler in his public speeches and announcements to the press indicated that he is too canny to believe that government can be built up or maintained by violence or disregard of the rights of others.... The German people with their love of liberty will not suffer themselves to be driven into slavery." Officials have promised to end the violent treatment meted out to Jews. Indeed, if Fascism is the only answer to Communism, as in Italy, the Catholics will espouse it. As for the Church, "Hitler cannot afford to ignore or proscribe twenty million Catholics, one-third of the nation. He cannot permit outlawry and disorder. He must not proscribe or persecute any race or religion.... The signs seem favorable for a complete restoration of a great nation...."¹ To be sure, this article is not typical, and it is to be noted that Father Sullivan never contributed another article to America on the subject of Germany; nevertheless, the essay does bring out in a vivid way many of the common misapprehensions about the German situation: Hitler himself is not really radical. He will calm down with time. At least he has defeated Communism.

The "Chronicle" of the same issue, holding fundamentally the same position as Father Sullivan, indicates that Hitler has been

¹ Florence D. Sullivan, S.J., "Whither Hitler"?, America, XLIX (April 8, 1933), 6-7.

more conservative than expected, and appears soothed by his statement of the "necessity of the Christian religion as the foundation of morals and civic unity and his promises of justice for all races and religions."² Undoubtedly America was influenced by the action of Cardinal Schulte of Cologne, who on March 28 had lifted the ban on the Nazis, since Hitler had taken account of the teaching of the Church and her rights.³

The Commonweal for April 26 hopes, with justification it believes, that the words of Dr. Julius Curtius, German ambassador to the United States, will prove true. All the violence accompanying the change of government was due to a certain amount of "polaric tension," said Dr. Curtius. The German goal is not "chaos or negation of values, but social, industrial, and national reconstruction."⁴ A month later, after Hitler's May 19 speech to the Reichstag, The Commonweal remarks that "the situation is not necessarily as hopeless as is often assumed." It is likely that the important people in Germany will force Hitler to modify his program, though this is not necessarily so, and if not, then we are in for trouble.⁵ An America editorial commenting on the

²America, XLIX (April 8, 1933), 22-23.

³d'Harcourt, p. 805.

⁴"Week by Week," XVII, 702.

⁵"Week by Week," XVIII, 87-88.

same speech also implicitly indicates that Hitler will be restrained by the people, and is quite pleased with the speech, especially in regard to its statement of peaceful aims.⁵ It is noted in the "Chronicle" of the same issue that Germany is now unified; all Reichstag parties applauded at the conclusion of Hitler's speech.⁷

As has been seen, considerable violence, especially against the Jews marked the early weeks of the Hitler regime, and this violence called forth an international protest stimulated by Jewish organizations. The Commonwealth for April 5 "firmly associates itself" with this protest, and notes that Jews are being persecuted as Jews, not as Communists as the Nazis declared, and it goes on to say that "nothing more than the overthrow of Hitlerism by the German people itself will bring justice to the Jews and other oppressed minorities, including Catholics."⁸ However, The Commonwealth did not long insist that the overthrow of Hitlerism was necessary for the Jews to obtain justice, but thought the Nazi supremacy "cannot possibly be left unmodified, to say the least, by the influence of those other elements, the decent, moderate, reasonable Christian folk who make up the mass

⁶XLIX (May 27, 1933), 169-170.

⁷XLIX (May 27, 1933), 191.

⁸"Week by Week," XVII, 620.

of the nation."⁹ In other words, the German people just will not permit this persecution.

America at this time tends to play down the anti-Jewish campaign, while definitely taking note of it. Thus the "Chronicle": "It was learned from authoritative sources that these manifestations of race hatred, attributed for the most part to irregular groups, were condemned by Hitler and his cabinet, and that efficient means were being taken to restore order."¹⁰ Several weeks later it implied that matters were not perhaps quite as bad as was commonly believed, since many Nazi threats were never carried out.¹¹ The Commonwealth appears more forthright in condemning this persecution as a definite violation of human rights. Even if there is such a thing as a Jewish problem, i.e., the Jews having a disproportionate number of people in the high income brackets, it can never be settled by a denial of human rights.¹² Furthermore, extermination of the Jews will be followed by attack on the Church.¹³

Two America editorials indicate that it is evidently bothered by the sudden excitement engendered by the Jewish troubles

⁹"Week by Week," XVII, 647-648.

¹⁰XLIX (April 8, 1933), 22-23.

¹¹XLIX (June 10, 1933), 239.

¹²"Week by Week," XVIII (June 2, 1933), 114-115.

¹³XVIII (July 7, 1933), 254-255, (editorial).

in Germany, in contrast to the lack of interest in the religious persecution which has gone on for a long time and on a grand scale in Russia.¹⁴ Perhaps this concern with Russia partially explains its failure to take the firm stand one would expect. In its "Note and Comment" column for October 21 America acknowledges that there are too many Jews in the professions. Even the Jews recognize this, says the writer, and cites rather naively their present exodus from Germany to enter farm work in Palestine. "The Jew, whether in Palestine or their new-found centers of refuge, must be transformed from the intellectual to the manual worker."¹⁵ Hilaire Belloc, however, partially rescues America when in an excellent article he comes out categorically and declares that no one can justify the Nazi persecution of the Jews. It is a clear violation of human rights.¹⁶ An article appearing much later in the Catholic World comes to the same conclusion as Belloc, that the Nazis are violating human rights, and if we do not protest, silence is approval.¹⁷

As time passed, a primary concern of Catholic periodicals

¹⁴ XLIX (April 8, 1933), 11-13, "Jewish Protests and Russian Experiments."; L, (November 4, 1933), 97-98, "If Recognition of Russia Comes."

¹⁵L, 53.

¹⁶Hilaire Belloc, "The Persecution of the Jews," America, XLIX (July 22, 1933), 367-369.

¹⁷Paul Kiniery, Ph.D., "The Jewish Minority Problem in Germany," Catholic World, CXL (January, 1935), 422-427.

in the United States was the position of the Church in Nazi Germany. Before we consider this it would help to recall the absolute incompatibility of the Nazi ideology with Christianity, and Hitler's ultimate intention of suppressing the Church when he felt that he was strong enough to do so. Any concessions he made to the Church were made merely to insure a certain amount of Church support, as long as he felt he still needed it. Thus the Concordat, as any treaty to a ruler of Hitler's type, was a mere scrap of paper, which he would respect only so long as he felt it served his ends. This end was largely to pull the wool over the eyes of Catholics as to his real intentions, win a certain amount of support, and where this was not possible, at least to stir up confusion within the Catholic ranks as to his real purpose. It will be remembered that several days after coming to power Hitler, through a few facile promises about respecting the rights of the Church, secured the removal of the ban on Catholics joining the party. The Concordat was just a continuation of this policy. How long did it take America Catholics to realize this?

In an excellent article in the American Ecclesiastical Review for April 1933, John B. Mason, professor of political science at the University of Colorado, stresses the strong opposition of the German Church authorities to the Nazi program.¹⁸ He points out

¹⁸This was written before the removal of the ban on Catholics joining the party.

how the German hierarchy have "unanimously condemned" a part of the Nazi program "as being in conflict, in essential points of a moral nature with the teachings of the Catholic Church." The bishops have declared that the National Socialist movement is not merely a party, but a way of life, and its leaders intend to substitute it for Christianity.¹⁹ Catholics have been forbidden to join the Nazi Party under pain of refusal of the sacraments, and a Benedictine abbot has been punished for publicly protesting.²⁰

However, with Hitler's open declaration of the inviolability of Catholic teaching, the tasks and rights of the Church, and validity of the earlier concordats, and the consequent lifting of the ban on the party by the German bishops in late March, the situation changes. Editor Michael Williams of The Commonweal in his article "Hitlerism and Religion" in the May 19 issue, notes that the German hierarchy have been placed in a state of obvious embarrassment by their reversal now that Hitler is in power, and he goes on to recommend and quote at length from the aforementioned Mason article, as well as two others, one by E. C. Hom-

¹⁹The specific faults found with Nazism by the Bishop of Mainz, and quoted by Mason, were three: (1) the Nazis demand freedom of religion so long as it does not jeopardize the existence of the state. Acknowledged party leaders say the Church does just this; (2) They postulate a special moral feeling and moral law for the Germans, which leads to race hatred and denies the universal moral law; (3) By their talk of positive Christianity they mean a German National Church.

²⁰John B. Mason, "The Catholic Church and Hitlerism," American Ecclesiastical Review, LXXXVIII (April 1933), 385-401.

righansen, an eminent Protestant clergyman, in the March 29 Christian Century, and the other by Daniel Binchy in the March Studies. Homrighansen in "Hitlerism and Religion," while seeing danger in Hitlerism, points out that "Hitler himself is a Catholic and attends Mass faithfully. What is more, he demands that members of the Nazi group be positively Christian." Inasmuch as Williams endorses these articles, it is clear that he himself had not yet formed any clearcut opinion on the Hitlerism-Catholicism relationship, though he does see definite difficulties.²¹

Binchy's article, which does not receive quite as much attention from Williams as the other two, is quoted at length in the May Catholic World "Foreign Periodical" section.²² Binchy comments on the extreme difficulty of understanding the religious situation, but states definitely that Hitler is not a believer. Nevertheless, he has tried to "exorcise" the spirit of anti-Catholicism within the party, and does not want to break with Rome.

On June 11 the long awaited Fulda Pastoral of the German Bishops appeared, and seemed to bend over backward to come to terms with the state. This letter went so far as to express "great joy" that the leaders of the new state "have expressly de-

²¹ Michael Williams, "Hitlerism and Religion," The Commonweal, XVIII (May 19, 1933), 69-71.

²² OXXXVII, 221-223. Binchy was connected with the Irish Foreign Office, and saw service in both Germany and Italy, the former before the advent of Hitler. He is the author of an excellent study of Italian Fascism.

clared that they put themselves and their work on the foundations of Christianity. This is a public, solemn profession which merits the heart-felt gratitude of all Catholics." Though still showing themselves wary in many respects, the bishops go on to promise help to the new state, and give voice to the hope that much of what has happened recently will be only temporary, and that the leaders of the movement will extinguish its sparks of anti-Catholicism.²³

Despite this optimistic pastoral, America, suddenly becoming much more cautious, is slow to take any stand during June and July, and shows little enthusiasm over the bishops' letter.²⁴ On July 8 the "Chronicle" notes that Church-State relations in Germany are coming to a head, with many disturbances in Bavaria,²⁵ and Father LaFarge in his "With Scrip and Staff" column two weeks later calls attention to the suppression of the Munich Catholic weekly for three months, and adds that these reflections are "recommended to those of our fellow-citizens who think that the millenium is coming in Germany."²⁶ Thus on the eve of the signing of the Concordat no definite position had been taken by the periodicals, though America, would appear more pessimistic about

²³The text of the 1933 Fulda Pastoral can be found in John B. Mason, "The Catholic Church in Hitler Germany," American Ecclesiastical Review, LXXXIX (October 1933), 381-404.

²⁴XLIX (June 24, 1933), 267. (editorial)

²⁵XLIX, 335.

²⁶America, XLIX (July 22, 1933), 374.

the outlook for the Church at the time.

On July 8, 1933 the Catholic Church, through the Vatican, became the first major power to sign an agreement with the new German government. This was the famous German Concordat, arranged by von Papen, which basically exchanged the suppression of the Center Party and other Catholic semi-political organizations for the recognition of the rights of the Church, especially in regard to education, various religious organizations, and ecclesiastical discipline.²⁷ America records the fact of the Concordat in the July 22 "Chronicle,"²⁸ and in all subsequent issues has very little comment to make on the subject, except to note in time that the Nazis have completely disregarded it. Thus one cannot help getting the impression that America never felt that the Concordat would work, but out of respect for ecclesiastical authority hesitated to criticize, and just kept silence.

In contrast to America, The Commonweal over the month carries a continuous commentary on and evaluation of the Concordat. The lead editorial in the July 21 issue says "It would appear, then, that the apparently well-grounded fear that Catholicism in its essential expression would be attacked by the

²⁷The text of the Concordat may be found in The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, pp. 516-522.

²⁸XLIX, 383-384.

Nazi regime was either unjustified, or has been averted, at least so far as the official attitude of the Nazi government is concerned. It remains to be seen how far this official attitude corresponds to the real intentions of the Nazi regime, or the real power of the present rulers of that regime to maintain its official bargain with the Church." The editorial continues that it is "highly probable" that the state authorities will overlook the basic rights of the Church, and if they do, the Concordat will serve "as a criterion by which the civilized world will be able to judge the new situation." They end ominously by noting the arrest of a famous Dominican apostle of world peace on the very day of the signing of the Concordat.²⁹

Three weeks later the editor of The Commonwealth takes up his pen to defend the Concordat. The agreement by no means implies "moral recognition" of the Nazi regime, but rather, following the Church's policy in the past, "established a legal basis from which the defense of rights can be undertaken." Whether or not under existing circumstances the Church can actually succeed in getting its part of the bargain is an open question, but "it appears that the Church in Germany has emerged from the first stage of the German revolution, from several points of view as

²⁹XVIII, 295.

dangerous and critical an upheaval as any recorded in history, with remarkable success." Then he reverts to the old theme that the Chancellor himself is undoubtedly responsible for the German desire for the Concordat, and that he is not to be identified with the more radical anti-Catholic element in the party.³⁰

After another three weeks the editor interprets the Concordat from a new angle, seeing it as a "very plain signal post" to all Catholic Action to stress the fundamental. Amidst the great upheavals of the time, it may be necessary to give up "secondary forms of action," political and social, in order to preserve what is essential.³¹ In the same issue George A. Shuster writes in "Germany under the Concordat" that we just do not know how things will work out. The fact that Germany was amenable "must be attributed to the extraordinary influence of Mussolini upon the Hitler leaders." Why did the Church consent to the dissolution of the Center? Two probable reasons: the party was

³⁰XVIII, 359. Two months later in a letter to the editor the Abbé Ernest Dimnet, noted French intellectual and Commonweal contributor, severely criticized The Commonweal for their lack of clarity in this editorial. He points out that it is obvious that Hitler made the Concordat for his own advantage. XVIII, (October 6, 1933), 535. Earlier in a letter Dimnet had accused The Commonweal of taking Hitler and the whole Nazi movement much too lightly. XVIII (August 25, 1933), 410.

³¹The Commonweal, XVIII (September 1, 1933), 419.

weak against the Fascist majority, was internally split, and was losing Catholic votes, though gaining liberal ones; more important was "the marked personal opposition of Pope Pius to the spread of Bolshevism." Hitler's opposition to Bolshevism was preferred to Bruening's cooperation with the Socialists. "Rome sees in Moscow the final antagonist of Christianity, and therefore as abundant evidence shows, heartily welcomes a trend in Germany more actively opposed to Bolshevism than the sorely harassed Center Party could be." Later in the article Shuster writes that "of great importance is the fact that the Bishop of Osnabruck has been appointed to the State Council, which affords the Church political representation in a measure compensatory for what was lost through the political change." It is unfortunate that a man of Mr. Shuster's stature should be taken in by such a statement. Indeed, it seems he is bending over backwards in order to justify the action of the Holy See. He closes by saying that only time will tell if the proper course was followed, but that, in his opinion, "reason again was on the side of Rome."³²

At this time Father Thorning in America seems quite enthusiastic about the Concordat, and in an article "The Record of the German Center," eulogizes the party and praises its dissolution, at the behest of both Church and state, as a great final act of

³²George N. Shuster, "Germany under the Concordat," The Commonweal, XVIII (September 1, 1933), 420-422.

discipline. "Hitler, by a formal recognition of everything for which the Center had contended for sixty years, repudiated the ideology of the Kulturkampf and acknowledged the superior claims of conscience in the domain of faith and morals." If the agreement is observed, there will be no more need for collective Catholic political action. "The Centrists could not, with justice, be blamed for failing to bring the full Christian dispensation into the corporate life of the State....It is to be hoped that the Hitler government will supply this need."³³

That Father Thorning and Mr. Shuster were deceived to some degree appears obvious. The same cannot be said for Albert Brandt, writing in the September issue of the Catholic World. In "Hitlerism vs. Catholicism" he remarks that from the beginning the party has had very definite anti-Catholic tendencies, which in the past few years have been concealed, and that any love Hitler might have for the Church proceeds from "material reasons." True, of late Hitler has let up a little on anti-Catholicism, but it is to be noted that he needed support and funds. Moreover, his followers still keep up their anti-Catholic campaign. Der Fuehrer is in the habit of disavowing both himself and others. Which will it

³³Joseph Thorning, S.J., "The Record of the German Center," America, XLIX, (September 2, 1933), 510-512.

be this time?³⁴

The October issue of the American Ecclesiastical Review presents another article by John B. Mason entitled "The Catholic Church in Hitler Germany." The climax of Church-Nazi relations came when the Nazis achieved power, says Mason; this brought about a change in the tactics of the Church. At the beginning the author summarizes his earlier article, and then points out the Nazi violence against the Church before the Concordat. The remainder of the article contains the text of the June 11 Fulda Pastoral of the Bishops, with an explanatory commentary. Despite the optimism manifested by the bishops, Mason himself remains quite non-committal, even in face of the Concordat, and one gets the impression he does not share the outlook of the bishops.³⁵

How long did it take American Catholics to realize that the Concordat meant very little to Hitler? Proposed legislation for "mercy-killing" and sterilization aroused the strong protests of both America and The Commonweal. As early as the first week of August America in its "Chronicle" called attention to the anti-Christian trends evident in the sterilization laws,³⁶ and in an

³⁴ Albert Brandt, "Hitlerism Versus Catholicism," The Catholic World, (September 1933), 641-651.

³⁵ John B. Mason, "The Catholic Church in Hitler Germany," American Ecclesiastical Review, LXXXIX (October 1933), 381-404.

³⁶ XLIX (August 5, 1933), 430-431.

editorial "Hitler and the Physician" on October 21, 1933 strongly objected to laws in Germany legalizing euthanasia, and referred to "Hitler barbarism."³⁷ By the end of November America, which had never shown enthusiasm in regard to the Concordat, except for Father Thorning's article, pointed out that it "had not brought the peace and stability that was promised for it."³⁸ An editorial the next week protests against obvious violations of the Concordat in Bavaria,³⁹ and two weeks later the "Chronicle" states that religious freedom is far from won.⁴⁰ With the first issue of the new year an editorial "The German Tyranny," while not referring specifically to the Concordat, declares that the government has proceeded from "un-Christian" to "anti-Christian" policies, with sterilization particularly in mind.⁴¹ The "Chronicle of the Year" in the same issue again does not refer explicitly to the Concordat, but points out that both Nazi racial discrimination and sterilization laws have been condemned.⁴² A month later another editorial notes that Hitler has been interfering in

³⁷C, 51.

³⁸"Chronicle," C (November 25, 1933), 191.

³⁹C, 195-196.

⁴⁰C (December 12, 1933), 263.

⁴¹C (January 6, 1934), 315.

⁴²C (January 6, 1934), 336-337.

in Church affairs since "the very day of the signing of the Concordat."⁴³ Again in the March 24 issue it is stated in an editorial that despite the Concordat Catholics are confronted with serious difficulties in regard to education and youth organization. "It is daily becoming clearer that the temper of the Nazi government is definitely anti-Christian and anti-religious..." Unless the saner majority of the German people can reassert their authority, "Hitlerism will be established as a permanent menace to civilization."⁴⁴ Without a doubt America by this time has lost any esteem it may have had for the Vatican-German settlement.

The Commonweal does not keep up the running commentary on violations of the Concordat that America does. George N. Shuster in "Catholics in Nazi Germany" in the January 26 issue realizes that there is a crucial struggle going on, but that it is very difficult to acquire information about the real situation. The material gains of Catholics during the past sixty years have evidently been lost, e.g., political influence is gone; papers are censored; priests are jailed for so-called "political" talk from the pulpit; Catholic education is seriously threatened. Although some form of fascist dictatorship in Germany may be necessary for the people, still Nazism, says Shuster, inasmuch as it

⁴³C (February 3, 1934), 415-416.

⁴⁴C (March 24, 1934), 582-583.

is also a religion, is evil.⁴⁵ Such statements would seem to indicate that the author realizes that the Concordat has not succeeded, but he does not precisely advert to this fact. In the "Week by Week" column for May 4, The Commonweal reports that "the racial and religious stupidities of the government have led to multiplying acerbities, so that now even the Catholic hierarchy is virtually agreed upon the inevitability of opposition."⁴⁶ Finally, by June 1934, we find The Commonweal saying "those who still believe that the letter of a papal concordat will prevail against barbarism are living in a fool's paradise."⁴⁷

Father Gillis in the Catholic World never made direct comment on the Concordat, but certainly he does see that in Germany the struggle is between the Church and heathenism, the Cross and the swastika. Hitler's chances of successfully "baiting the Pope" are nil, and he will not succeed where Bismarck, Napoleon, and Henry VIII all failed. Father Gillis believes that Hitler would like to be able to call off the racial and religious hatred he has engendered, but that it has gotten out of his control.

⁴⁵George N. Shuster, "Catholic in Nazi Germany," The Commonweal XIX (January 26, 1934), 343-344.

⁴⁶XX, 3.

⁴⁷XX (June 29, 1934), 234-236. (editorial)

Unfortunately the die is now cast.⁴⁸

Hence, by early summer 1934, at the latest, the three principle magazines under discussion had recognized the futility of the Concordat as a protection for the rights of the German Catholics. Oddly enough, America, up to this point the periodical tending to be most optimistic in its view of the German situation, has never shown itself enthusiastic over the Concordat.

June 30, 1934 brought the infamous Roehm Purge, which grew out of a nascent spirit of rebellion on the part of the Roehm-led Storm Troopers, who feared a position subordinate to that of the army. It consisted in the cold-blooded murder of several hundred Nazi enemies, mostly Storm Trooper leaders, but also others, including former Chancellor von Schleicher, and Catholic Action head Erich Klausener.⁴⁹ This event marks an important development in the reaction of the periodicals, since it eliminated practically any sympathy the periodicals still may have had for Nazism, and helped them to see Hitler himself in his true light.

Both The Commonweal and America are horrified by the wholesale June 30 murders. "How shall one account for this outbreak, or try to sketch the objectives which its perpetrators had in

⁴⁸CXXXIX (May 1934), 129-132. (editorial)

⁴⁹The exact number is not known. Hitler admitted fifty-eight, and the French White Book gave 401. Cf. Bullock, p. 277. Other estimates are much higher.

mind?" asks The Commonwealth. "That Hitler should have done these things is, we repeat, simply inconceivable." Goering must have taken advantage of the Chancellor in order to effect this terrible deed.⁵⁰ The following week The Commonwealth "sets forth a theory" to explain the happenings. The more radical Nazis must have staged a brief revolution, and this accounts for the murder in the purge of such men as von Schleicher and Klausener; this rebellion was suddenly crushed, which accounts for the death of so many Nazis of the left. "The belief that Hitler suddenly ran amuck and ordered a holocaust requires far more credulousness than we are able to muster."⁵¹ America, in its editorial "Germany Shocks the World" for July 14, does not seek to excuse Hitler as did The Commonwealth. It reacts violently. "So the world is faced with a desperate clique, who will allege any pretext, either against its enemies or its own friends, in order to embark on any wild adventure to keep it in power."⁵² The next week another editorial "Mad with Power" stresses the same theme. "Hitler with his closest associates may not be insane, but for the common honor of humanity, we should feel relieved if they were."⁵³

⁵⁰"Week by Week," XX (July 13, 1934), 277.

⁵¹"Week by Week," XX (July 20, 1934), 296-297.

⁵²LI, (July 14, 1934), 315.

⁵³LI, (July 21, 1934), 339.

"Hitlerism once had a future; it now possesses only a past." Thus runs The Commonweal's commentary on Hitler's July 13 speech, supposedly an explanation of the murders, which offered little explanation beyond the fact that it was the Leader's will.⁵⁴ The Commonweal does not know what to make of Hitler, "who compromises the material and moral character of his nation because of a private 'party quarrel..." For a small matter such as this, he did not hesitate to show the world "that Germany had become a place where law is the will of a despot....Hitler, declaring that the decision of January 1933 was irrevocable, that his will superseded courts and legitimate rights, that the people would eat horse-meat or worse if his power were possible on no other basis, that the nation was a 'division', that opposition of whatever sort would mean certain death, not only made himself Germany, but rendered the name 'German', proudly born by generations of noble men and women, a title no decent human being anywhere else on earth would wish to bear."⁵⁵

Another event of this summer of 1934, overshadowed by the Roehm affair, but which also served to further convince both America and The Commonweal what Nazism really was, was the cold-blooded murder of Austrian Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss by Nazi assassins in an unsuccessful attempt at a Nazi coup in that coun-

⁵⁴Cf. Bullock, 279-280.

⁵⁵"Week by Week," XX (July 27, 1934), 317.

try. America in an August 4 editorial sees it as a further revelation of Nazi barbarity,⁵⁶ and The Commonweal points out in an editorial how the "frightfulness" of Nazism has appeared.⁵⁷

There can be no doubt that the events of this summer revealed the nature of Nazism more clearly than ever to the periodicals, yet their treatment of the death of President von Hindenburg and its aftermath show that they did not yet understand how completely Hitler held the people in his grip. In early August 1934 the aged president, idol of the army and conservative interests and a reluctant supporter of Hitler, finally gave up the ghost, and Hitler assumed the office of president, a move to be ratified by a plebiscite later in the month. The Commonweal felt that the army in taking the oath to Hitler as president, had succeeded in coming to some agreement with him, and "is surely and slowly curbing his freedom of movement."⁵⁸ In the plebiscite itself, controlled in every way, sufficient opposition was shown to Hitler's assumption of the presidency that both magazines took heart, especially America which stated that "Germany is not yet free, but she is on her way to freedom." As soon as Germans realize what Hitlerism really is, they "will rise in effective protest." "In that day they will speedily free themselves from a regime which is a stum-

⁵⁶LI (August 4, 1934), 387.

⁵⁷XX (August 10, 1934), 355-356.

⁵⁸"Week by Week," XX (August 17, 1934), 376-377. (editorial)

bling block to peace in Europe and a constant menace to man's God-given rights."⁵⁹ Unfortunately, "that day" was a long way off. True, the Storm Troopers had lost their political prominence, a fact that should have strengthened the army, but soon the SS would constitute a much more serious threat to the independence of the army than the Storm Troopers had ever been.⁶⁰

How did the periodicals react to Nazism with respect to the international situation? Did it constitute a threat to peace? The recognition of the injustices of Versailles and subsequent Allied dealings with Germany led the periodicals in the beginning to show some sympathy for the aggressive foreign policy of Hitler, and if not sympathy, at least understanding. But as time passed, they showed perception of the practical necessity of expansionism and aggressiveness on the part of a state such as the Nazi state. Gradually they began to realize that war was inevitable, once Germany had built herself up and acquired some allies.

After a conciliatory and reassuring Hitler speech dealing partly with foreign affairs on May 19, 1933, both America and The Commonweal appeared satisfied. The latter considered the speech "a straightforward bid for international friendship" and felt that

⁵⁹America, LI (September 1, 1934), 481-482. (editorial)
The Commonweal, "Week by Week," XX (August 31, 1934), 417: the verbatim quotations are from America.

⁶⁰Bullock, p. 281.

it had "helped to clear the air of at least some misconceptions," presumably about German foreign policy.⁶¹ A week later in the lead editorial "The Peace of the World" The Commonweal showed sympathy for Hitler's demand for equality, and declared that the speech was "more conciliatory than had been expected."⁶² Anything he said might have been said by Bruening, was America's comment; we ought to guarantee equality of arms to Germany if we are really interested in peace.⁶³

This friendly attitude did not last very long, and in its August 18 "Week by Week" column The Commonweal thought, despite the "repeated incidents of a provocative nature between Hitler's Bad Boy Scouts and citizens of neighboring countries," that Germany was both too weak in arms and isolated diplomatically to make any serious trouble, at least at the present.⁶⁴ The Commonweal also refused to get excited when Germany left both the League of Nations and the Geneva Disarmament Conference in October 1933 on the grounds that she was not being treated fairly.⁶⁵ An editorial several weeks later again expressed sympathy with the German view that if other nations do not disarm down to her level, she has the

⁶¹ "Week by Week," XVIII (August 26, 1933), 88.

⁶² XVIII (June 2, 1933), 113-114.

⁶³ XLIX (May 27, 1933), 169-170. (editorial)

⁶⁴ "Week by Week," XVIII (August 18, 1933), 376-377.

⁶⁵ "Week by Week," XVIII (October 27, 1933), 600-601; Ibid., 599-600. (editorial)

right to arm up to theirs. Germany is to a large degree rearmed, says The Commonweal, for though she (may) not have much equipment at present, she does have the will to fight. However, we can take the word of those in power that they do not want war, since this would ruin Germany. Furthermore, she has no allies. From her rearmament she wants not so much war, as force behind her words in foreign policy, but if things go on as they are, trouble could come, resulting in a terrible cataclysm.⁶⁶ Much later The Commonweal reverts to an important theme when it remarks that Hitler needs an objective in foreign policy "to stimulate the imagination of the people."⁶⁷ However, she is not yet ready for war. This is why war did not follow the frustrated coup in Austria the following August.⁶⁸

America's reaction to Germany's departure from the League of Nations and Geneva does not differ much from The Commonweal's. Pessimism in the situation is manifested in Father Laurence Patterson's article "Is War Coming?",⁶⁹ and in an editorial in the same issue,⁷⁰ but no strong criticism of Germany is made. America

⁶⁶XIX, 61-62.

⁶⁷XIX, (March 27, 1934), 565-566. (editorial)

⁶⁸XX (August 10, 1934), 355-356. (editorial)

⁶⁹Laurence Patterson, S.J., "Is War Coming?", America L (October 28, 1933), 79-80. Father Patterson was at the time teaching at Woodstock College, Maryland.

⁷⁰L (October 28, 1933), 73.

does seem more conscious of Germany's secret rearmament than does The Commonweal. H. C. Engelbrecht and F. C. Hanighen in their April 21 article "Is Germany Rearming?" conclude that "Germany has for some years been an arms producing and exporting country, despite Versailles and now, under Hitler, has already made great strides in rearmament,"⁷¹ and the "Chronicle" comments on May 5 that "it seemed evident that the military-minded Nazis were neglecting no effort to put themselves on a war basis."⁷² America is also quite concerned at this time with a certain expansionism implicitly contained in Hitler's doctrine of the unity of the German people.⁷³

After their failure in Austria in 1934, in the following two years the Nazis won several outstanding diplomatic victories in taking over the valuable Saar area through a plebiscite provided by the Versailles Treaty, in announcing open rearmament without any effective protests being made, and in violating both the Versailles Treaty and the Locarno Pact by marching into the demilitarized Rhineland. In an article in The Commonweal before the Saar plebiscite, Prince Hubertus Lowenstein, a noted German Catholic exile, had pleaded that in the coming plebiscite provi-

⁷¹H. C. Engelbrecht and F. C. Hanighen, "Is Germany Rearming?" America, LI (April 21, 1934), 32-33.

⁷²LI, (May 5, 1934), 95.

⁷³LI (August 11, 1934), 411. (editorial)

sion be made for genuine freedom, and no intimidation of the populace be allowed. Moreover, the Saarlanders ought to be allowed to preserve the status quo, and not be forced to choose between Germany and France, since being all German in nationality, they would choose the former. If they could preserve their status as independent, they would serve as a strong contrast to the rest of Germany, and would form the nucleus for the new Germany once Nazism fell. Furthermore we must not be taken in by the Nazi demand that this is the "one last obstacle" to a peaceful policy. A new last obstacle will keep arising ad infinitum. "National Socialism yields easiest if it is confronted with decisiveness."⁷⁴ For the most part, Lowenstein's appeal fell on deaf ears.

America in her "Note and Comment" column saw the Saar plebiscite as an example of peaceful reconciliation of differences, with the League leading the way.⁷⁵ The Commonwealth saw in it a "waning of Marxism" among the workers, and also, noted the rather noncommittal attitude of the ecclesiastical authorities on the issue.⁷⁶ A month later The Commonwealth came out in praise of the League's handling of the situation,⁷⁷ but Lowenstein returned to

⁷⁴ Hubertus Lowenstein, "The Saar Valley," The Commonwealth, XXI (December 14, 1934), 196-197.

⁷⁵ LII (January 26, 1935), 368.

⁷⁶ "Week by Week," XXI (January 25, 1935), 357.

⁷⁷ "Week by Week," XXI (February 22, 1935), 469.

the pages of the same magazine several months later to deplore the great mistake in not giving the Saarlanders a more attractive alternative to Nazism than union with France or a poorly guaranteed independence, and to accuse the League of conniving with the Nazis. The Nazi victory merely meant an increase in prestige for Hitler and further incitement to bold policy rather than a step in the direction of peace. "London may wake up only when planes bearing the Hakenkreuz fly over Picadilly Circus."⁷⁸ Unfortunately little attention was paid to the dire prophecies of Prince Lowenstein.

When on March 16, 1935 Hitler declared to the world that he was dropping all pretense, and would now proceed to full rearmament in defiance of Versailles and in accord with Germany's honor, America in an editorial "The Shadow of War" remarks that rearmament leads nearly inevitably to war, but finds fault not merely with Hitler but with all nations responsible for Versailles.⁷⁹ The Commonweal, on the other hand, thinks that the Allies were foolish to believe that the Saar decision was "final." The German government can point to successes gained by force, and we can look for attempts to incorporate Danzig, annex Austria, Czechoslovakia, and perhaps even the Polish Corridor. If only we had revised Versailles long ago! The world must now choose between German

⁷⁸Hubertus Lowenstein, "Europe's Zero Hour," The Commonweal, XLII (May 17, 1935), 61-63.

⁷⁹LII (March 30, 1935), 581-582.

domination of Central Europe or conflict,⁸⁰ though war is not likely in the near future.⁸¹ In following issues this last statement is elaborated. Though arms sales have increased, only bluffing will profit Germany at this time, believes The Commonweal, and it is unlikely France and England will fall for this.⁸² Furthermore, the diplomatic isolation of Germany provides a strong check on aggressive intentions.⁸³ In his article "What Will Europe Do?" in the same issue, George Shuster states that since Germany has failed to attain economic autarky through diplomacy, only war is left. This course is exhausting and expensive for the moment, so we can look for a period of "wearing waiting," which may not find Germany the loser.⁸⁴

In March 1936 Hitler made his next move, this time marching into the demilitarized Rhineland, and simultaneously holding out a non-aggression pact to England and France.⁸⁵ In a lead editorial "Goose-Stepping toward Chaos," The Commonweal asks the big ques-

⁸⁰"Week by Week," XXI (March 29, 1935), 637.

⁸¹"Week by Week," XXI (April 5, 1935), 637.

⁸²"Week by Week," XXI (April 12, 1935), 665.

⁸³"Week by Week," XXI (April 26, 1935), 721.

⁸⁴George N. Shuster, "What Will Europe Do?", The Commonweal, XXI (April 26, 1935), 725-726.

⁸⁵It is interesting to note that Hitler issued two sets of orders for this operation, one calling for withdrawal if France took to military opposition. Cf. Pinson, 519.

tion, have religion and affairs of state been completely separated, has Machiavelli triumphed? If there is not a change soon, "no man made treaties will save civilization."⁸⁶ The following week finds The Commonweal in the same mood, claiming in its lead editorial "Dictatorship Triumphant" that Hitler had won a great victory, and that, though immediate war was averted, "the probability, almost the certainty of a general war in the near future has been glaringly revealed." France and England have both shown their weakness in the face of German initiative.⁸⁷ America in its April 4 editorial "War Lords Muster" remarks that the world is paying for Versailles, and sympathizes with Germany's desire for the Rhineland, though explicitly not identifying Germany with Nazism. On the whole the situation looks bad.⁸⁸ A week later George Shuster in a rather involved Commonweal article "Is It Zero Hour in Germany?" thinks that Germany is not yet sufficiently solid politically and economically to start war now, but that she is growing in this respect. Furthermore, Germany has to show her people that the great expense of the army is worthwhile; hence, the danger of more Nazi militaristic talk and possible aggression.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ XXIII (March 20, 1936), 561-562.

⁸⁷ XXIII (March 27, 1936), 589-590.

⁸⁸ LIV (April 4, 1936), 607-608.

⁸⁹ George N. Shuster, "Is It Zero Hour in Germany?", The Commonweal, XXIII (April 10, 1936), 649-650.

In the May issue of the Catholic World Father Gillis points out that the great error was Versailles, and says we should not be surprised at Nazi action in seizing the Rhineland. Moreover, if the diplomats did not know that Germany was rearming, then they are hardly worth their salary. While showing some sympathy for Germany, Father Gillis has no use for Hitler, "a paranoiac and a homicidal maniac. Precisely: a cold-blooded, calculating murderer as he demonstrated with his Neronian 'purge'....He is Europe's Menace Number One, a greater danger than Stalin or Mussolini." But he did take his opportunity when Versailles gave it to him.⁹⁰

In October 1936, as a result of League disapproval of Mussolini's Ethiopian venture, the Rome-Berlin Axis was formed, which finally enabled Hitler to break out of his isolation, though The Commonweal characteristically hastened to note that this was not a military alliance. "Such a thing will not exist until Mussolini has lost his mind."⁹¹ America has nothing to say on the event at the time, except to note that it took place.⁹² The following week The Commonweal has become quite alarmed, though not over the Rome-Berlin agreement, and in its "Week by Week" column issues doleful predictions. Germany's four-year plan indicates her preparation for war is nearly complete. She now has a tremendous war machine

⁹⁰CXXXIII (May 1936), 129-132. (editorial)

⁹¹"Week by Week," XXV (November 13, 1936), 59.

⁹²"Chronicle," LVI (November 7, 1936), 112.

in operation. "Never before in the history of mankind has there been any such totalitarian mobilization of human beings and human wealth for conquest." All this is not only for home consumption. "Germany is bound sooner or later to seek expansion in Europe." The first goal will be Danzig, then the Corridor.⁹³

All in all the periodicals under survey grow increasingly pessimistic about the chances for war, though they do not see it coming for a while, principally because Germany is not yet prepared. Both the Catholic World and The Commonweal appear more fearful than America, The Commonweal being influenced somewhat by Prince Lowenstein's views. Of special note is the fact that Versailles proved invaluable to Hitler in the sense that he could always with reason point to its injustice as a justification for his own policy; it gave to his naked aggression a dress of respectability.

Now that we have completed our investigation of the periodical reaction to Nazi foreign policy up to late 1936, let us go back to see what they were thinking about Church-state relations during the latter part of the period under discussion. From the beginning the periodicals had recognized the impossibility of reconciling strict Nazism with Christianity, and by mid-1934 they had rejected any practical rapprochement on the basis of the Concordat. During the following two-and-one-half years many articles will

⁹³XXV (November 20, 1936), 87.

appear in the periodicals on the various aspects of the Nazi persecution, with consequent deeper understanding of Nazism and its hostility to Christianity; after mid-1934 they all tend in this direction.

In late 1934 The Commonweal published two anonymous articles dealing with the Church in Germany, both of which showed special insight into Nazi tactics. "The Present Front in Germany" warns us not to let Red persecution in Spain and other places make us indifferent to the Church's sufferings in Germany. "The situation seems indeed to be much more serious than many of us realize." The aim of the party is "the substitution of a creed which is more convenient to the nature of Germans and makes them more fit to devote themselves entirely and without restriction to the political task as figured out by the Nazis." Hitler's tactics are subtle, but we must not let blandishments, which usually follow a period of suffering, confuse us, since this is precisely what they are intended to do.⁹⁴ "Catholics in Germany" reminds us again to keep up our guard lest we be deceived by Nazi propaganda. "Nazism is absolutely anti-Christian" and has determined to make the Church "a kind of spiritual department in the ministry of propaganda until National Socialism has secured complete cultural control of the German people." At least Communism is openly anti-

⁹⁴William Western (pen name), "The Present Front in Germany," The Commonweal, XXIV (October 23, 1934), 601-602.

Catholic.⁹⁵

In the "Week by Week" column for January 4, The Commonweal remarks that Hitler keeps up a "silent but dogged war on the Christian churches," and though we see the Church glorified in her sufferings, still the outlook for the Church is "very dark" if the Nazi movement continues unabated.⁹⁶ The Commonweal hopes that the so-called currency trials⁹⁷ will "make it plain that a deeply anti-Catholic philosophy has now been speeding the Third Reich into a new Kulturkampf during the past two years, and that the situation will doubtless get much worse before it grows better."⁹⁸

In the May 24 issue The Commonweal printed excerpts from a statement by Hitler puppet Reichsbischof Ludwig Mueller, in which he declared his purpose in forming the Nazi German Church. Their

⁹⁵anon. "Catholics in Germany," The Commonweal, XXI (December 7, 1934), 163-165.

⁹⁶XXI (January 4, 1935), 274. Throughout this period of common suffering, The Commonweal always showed itself keenly interested in any signs of Catholic-Protestant reconciliation, or sense of community. Cf. George N. Shuster, "Toward Rome," XIX (December 29, 1933), 231-233; Karl Thieme, "The End of a Heresy," XX (June 1, 1934), 145-147 and (June 8, 1934), 176-177; Kurt F. Reinhardt, "The German Lutheran Struggle," XX (October 12, 1934), 550-552. It is a fact that one of the fruits of the Nazi period was deeper mutual understanding between Catholics and Protestants in Germany.

⁹⁷The currency trials were an attempt to defame the whole Catholic clergy because a few religious had violated the laws regarding money exchange with foreign countries. Propaganda played them up until they became preposterous. Cf. The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, pp. 295-297.

⁹⁸"Week by Week," XXII (May 10, 1935), 31.

rebuttal is revealing. "In essence National-Socialism is a religious movement. It is the offspring of the bottomless secularization and apostatizing of modern man....Unless all signs fail, this degradation is bound to become widespread. The future of the Faith will depend upon resistance, not by swords or the cabal, but again through complete willingness to profess at all costs the sacredness of the Christian life."⁹⁹ Thus The Commonweal.

America also keeps up a careful commentary on what is going on in Germany, but does not seem as penetrating as The Commonweal at this time. In the "Chronicle of the Year 1934" it calls attention to the widespread Nazi violations of the Concordat, especially in regard to Catholic youth organizations.¹⁰⁰ An editorial the following month stresses the fact that the right of parents to educate their children in the way they deem proper, a right guaranteed by the Concordat, has in practice been nullified.¹⁰¹ Rough treatment handed out to two thousand pilgrims on their return from Rome, along with the currency trials, offered occasion for another America editorial several months later. A determined campaign against the Church is being carried on in Germany, fre-

⁹⁹Ludwig Mueller, "Church and State in Germany," The Commonweal, XXII (May 24, 1935), 93-94. The quote is taken from the reply by the editors.

¹⁰⁰LII (January 5, 1935), 313.

¹⁰¹LII (February 23, 1935), 461-462.

quently with the open encouragement of high government officials. This cannot be the work of just an extremist element; nor can a government which so treats its people long stand.¹⁰²

Throughout the summer of 1935 America continued to deal with the religious situation in a number of editorials. In the July 6 issue, commenting on the pagan celebration of the summer solstice, encouraged by Nazi leaders, they state that the Nazis are making "a determined effort to paganize the German people."¹⁰³ A week later the great danger to German youth because of the impossibility of Christian education is emphasized,¹⁰⁴ and an early August editorial maintains that the present time is much worse than the Kulturkampf, since Bismarck did not forbid Christianity and encourage paganism.¹⁰⁵

On Sunday, September 1, 1935 the annual Fulda Pastoral of the German Bishops was read in all the churches, and, of course, dealt at length with the serious religious-political situation. As for action, it called for resistance only in the spirit of Christ, and condemned any resort to violence. It asked Catholics not to listen to or spread extravagant rumors about government officials, and goes on to say that "the best response to all

¹⁰²LIII (May 18, 1935), 122-123.

¹⁰³LIII (July 6, 1935), 290.

¹⁰⁴LIII (July 13, 1935), 314-315.

¹⁰⁵LIII (August 3, 1935), 385.

charges will be that Catholics distinguish themselves by their professional conscience and their spirit of sacrifice, and that they are fathers of model families and servants of the state, faithful to their duties."¹⁰⁶ It was a conciliatory document, and The Commonweal said just this. "It is an extraordinarily conciliating document, and by no manner of means satisfies the hopes of those who thought that more active resistance to Nazi policy was desirable." The Commonweal is dismayed with the failure of the bishops to make some appeal for political action and clearly hints that a stronger condemnation of Nazi terrorism and gross pagan tendencies would have been welcome.¹⁰⁷ America's commentary on the other hand is much briefer, and reveals none of the disappointment found in The Commonweal. It points out editorially that the persecution in Germany is every bit as severe as that in Mexico, and calls attention especially to the attacks on youth mentioned in the pastoral. It focuses on the avowed purpose of the letter, "to fortify souls of Catholics," and reminds us that the Church will survive.¹⁰⁸ The Commonweal definitely takes a different point of view, which seems more in line with its more

¹⁰⁶The text of the Pastoral may be found in La Documentation Catholique, XXXIV (September 28, 1935), 390-399. This is a French translation. The translation above is taken from p. 399, and is the author's.

¹⁰⁷"Week by Week," XXII (September 13, 1935), 455.

¹⁰⁸LIII (September 14, 1935), 531.

penetrating understanding of Nazism at this time.

The Catholic World has certainly not been unaware of what is taking place in Germany. In its "Recent Events" column in the June and August issues it takes note of the "blatant display of paganism and the open hostility to the Jews, and of increasing persecution of Catholics."¹⁰⁹ In an article in December 1935 the anonymous author displays an amazing perception of Nazism and the German situation. First, there is no likeness between now and the Kulturkampf; at least the latter was an "open fight." It is nonsense to think that Hitler himself is not so bad but is dominated by evil cohorts, since he is a "master liar of the century, mistakenly supposed to be the one honest fellow in the band of crooks," whose goal is the complete "unification" of the German nation in economics, thought, belief, ideals and politics. The author goes on to say that the Church "has been crippled by the suicide of the Center," and hindered by the Concordat, now a one-sided contract. When Hitler became Chancellor some Catholic leaders were inclined to "unreasonable optimism and opportunism," but now "it has become clear even to the most optimistic that they have been cruelly deceived." Only Nazi tactics change, not their program, which calls for the "methodical annihilation of the Church." The majority of the German hierarchy made the "tragic blunder" of thinking that they could tame Hitler as they had

¹⁰⁹ CXLI (August 1935), 618; CXLI (June 1935), 361-362.

tamed Bismarck, but Hitler was too clever. Hitler aims at totalitarianism, and he has the power and the cleverness to achieve it.¹¹⁰

Prince Lowenstein, whom we have already encountered in the pages of The Commonweal, now appears with an article in America in which he reiterates much of what the anonymous Catholic World writer has just said. The situation is much worse than the Kulturkampf, especially since there exists no organized defense. The big mistake was made with the dissolution of the Center Party. However, Lowerstein does not believe Hitler as firmly entrenched as did the former author, and he predicts he will have to go to war to save his power.¹¹¹

Another anonymous Commonweal article emphasizes once again the terrible persecution going on, and shows how the periodical has come to understand Nazism. "Brown-shirt orators are shouting openly that within two years the Catholic Church will be wiped out of Germany. These are no idle boasts." A diabolical propaganda aims at destroying belief, "but it is also thrilling, inspiring, elevating, for those with eyes to see the grandest sight on earth, that of the Church under persecution."¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Adolf Schuckelgruber, "The Church in Germany," Catholic World, CXLII (December 1935), 291-298. The name is a pen name.

¹¹¹ Hubertus Lowenstein, "A German Prince on Hitler," America, LIV (March 3, 1936), 563-564.

¹¹² anon., "Crucifixion on the Swastika," The Commonweal, (May 8, 1936), 35-37.

The spring of 1936 brought with it the immorality trials, a gigantic hoax excogitated by the Nazis to defame the clergy and religious of Germany in the eyes of the people,¹¹³ and this diabolical attack on clerical morals could have no other effect but to further embitter Church-state relations, insofar as they still existed. The Fulda Pastoral for 1936 still holds out hope that Hitler's anti-Bolshevism is sincere, and that this will perhaps cause some let-up in the persecution of the Church, and America goes along with this hope,¹¹⁴ but by the end of the year even this faint glimmer seems lost. The occasion for this is the publication of a pastoral of Cardinal Bertram of Breslau, one of the hierarchy who had long hoped for and worked for a rapprochement with Hitler, but now in his letter admits that this is impossible. America comments editorially: "It is all but certain that the skies will grow darker before religious freedom dawns again in Germany."¹¹⁵ Early in 1937 Pius XI issued Mit Brennender Sorge.

¹¹³Cf. The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich, pp. 298-325.

¹¹⁴LV (September 12, 1936), 541. (editorial) The text of the 1936 Fulda Pastoral may be found in the Catholic Mind, XXIV (November 22, 1936), 455-459.

¹¹⁵XVI (December 5, 1936), 204.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In our study the general purpose has been to reproduce the image of Nazism found in five American Catholic periodicals, three important journals of opinion and two clerical journals, from 1923-1937. We have made an effort to portray the reaction of the periodicals as a whole, and thus have not been concerned to differentiate extensively between the magazines. For the most part, no attempt has been made to pass judgment on the periodicals, since this would require much more information than the writer has at his disposal, e.g., a knowledge of the sources of information available to the periodicals, an acquaintance with the reaction of other periodicals, both Catholic and non-Catholic, as a basis of comparison. We have merely tried to present the totality of the reaction.

Now we will try to point up the salient features of the portrait created in the previous two chapters, and to examine them in the light of the reality of Nazism. Then, in accord with our findings, three questions will be raised, though no answers will be offered.

In the first place, it would seem that the periodicals never really grasped the amoral and revolutionary character of the Nazi

movement, a fact which becomes especially clear when we notice the ease with which they will accept Hitler at his word. It is difficult to understand a man who has stripped himself of all moral concepts, and of any regard for truth, but such is the case with men like Hitler and their followers, who never have any intention of speaking the truth, and who will not hesitate to do one thing while at the same time they profess that they are doing the exact opposite. This is precisely what we mean when we say that Nazism is amoral or revolutionary, revolutionary in the sense that it overturns all standard moral values.

As early as 1930 the periodicals reported the condemnation of the Nazi Party by several bishops because of the anti-Catholic character of the movement. These same periodicals, for the most part, went along with the bishops when shortly after the Enabling Act Hitler, by means of a few vague words about the rights of the Church, secured the repeal of the condemnation, and even won some words of praise for his liberal attitude. The Concordat itself, the initiative for which came from the Nazis, was one gigantic lie from the beginning, yet for a while there was a strong sentiment in the periodicals which saw this as a viable solution for the Church-state dilemma in Germany. Early promises made by Hitler not to upset the international situation were taken at their face value for a time, e.g., after his May 19, 1933 address to the Reichstag, though in this respect the periodicals were much more skeptical.

Such amorality cannot live in a spirit of friendship with Christianity, and it must be recognized that throughout the years under consideration the periodicals understood the impossibility of any theoretical union of undiluted Nazism with Christianity. However, as they were continually looking for some kind of agreement on the practical level, they jump at any word of Hitler that would seem to indicate the possibility of a de facto solution of the Church-state problem. The third chapter showed how the periodicals become more optimistic after the Nazi seizure of power and how they were soothed by Hitler's assurances at this time, e.g., in Father Thorning's America article. The Concordat did not meet with universal acclaim by any means, though several authors enthusiastically sponsored it, and opposition was expressed more by silence than by positive criticism in the case of America. There followed a period of growing distrust and finally there came the Roehm Purge, which provided the magazines with their best evidence as to what Hitlerism really stood for, and marked a major step in the development of their attitude. From then on their insight deepened and perhaps became most profound in the anonymous Commonweal and Catholic World articles at the end of the period, though it is doubtful how far America penetrated even then. A certain, unwarranted optimism, to be brought up later, may have been responsible for the slowness in perceiving the impossibility of practical as well as theoretical, conciliation with Hitler.

A second major feature of the periodical portrait is the re-

peated tendency to separate Hitler from the radical element in the party, and to see him as the honorable man among a group of thieves, doing his best to restrain the really violent element in the movement. This false picture of himself Hitler deliberately fostered, and it helped him considerably throughout the whole period we have surveyed. This theme appears immediately after the strong Nazi showing in the 1930 elections, after a few "conservative" statements by Hitler, and appears again and again during the crucial years just before and after his accession to power, frequently in the assumption that a radical out of power is a conservative in power. Here the general impression created is that once Hitler takes office, the "decent and respectable" element among the German people will force him to de-emphasize the radical nature of his program, such as the persecution of Jews and Catholics, and, in fact, this is what Hitler himself really wants, since at heart he is conservative. Wherever the periodicals may have acquired this view, it certainly was not from a thorough study of Mein Kampf, a book not referred to once in the whole course of our study. Again, according to this view, with the signing of the Concordat, it is Hitler himself who really desires agreement with the Church, though many of the radicals oppose it. Only with the Roehm Purge did the periodicals seem to begin to stop making the distinction between Hitler and the party, and it will be recalled with what difficulty The Commonweal brought itself to admit that Hitler himself was responsible for

this bloodbath.

Closely allied to this tendency to de-radicalize Hitler is the tendency to de-radicalize the German people, in the sense that they would never fall for an "unbleached" Hitlerism. Looking at it from Hitler's point of view, this can be considered a penchant to underestimate his power over the people and his ability to attract or force them to his way of thinking; looking at it from the people's point of view, it can be considered a tendency to overestimate the power of resistance of the German people. Before Hitler became Chancellor some felt that Hitlerism was "too foolish" ever to be accepted by the German people. Once he had become Chancellor, it was frequently stated that the people would prevent him from carrying through radical policies, and it will be recalled how at the time of the plebiscite for the presidency after the death of Hindenburg, America believed that the show of opposition in the plebiscite clearly indicated that the "German people were now on the road to freedom." Clearly the periodicals put a little too much trust in the German tradition of freedom, and in the will and ability of the German people to carry on this tradition.

A valuable tool used by Hitler, one even more useful than the image of himself as conservative, was his cry that he had come to save Germany from Communism, and this constitutes a third general characteristic of the reaction. During the years prior to 1933 we will recall how the periodicals were more concerned with Communist violence and the Communist threat to the government than

with the Nazis, though this did change in the last months before the fatal January 1933. At one time in 1931 Father Thorning seemed to agree with Hitler's statement that the "historical role" of German fascism was the fight against Bolshevism. Shortly after the Enabling Act Father Sullivan declared openly in America that if fascism was the only alternative to Communism, then bring it on. America continually manifested a disgust with the preoccupation of Americans with the persecution of the Jews in Germany, while overlooking the Communist persecution of religion in Russia and elsewhere. George Shuster in his evaluation of the Concordat saw a principal reason for the Holy See's agreement in the wish to set up a stronger opposition to Bolshevism in Germany. Even as late as 1936, following the Fulda Pastoral, America was still weakly hoping for some common front against Communism. There can be no question but that Hitler's avowed crusade against Communism won him some support and a good deal of sympathy from the periodicals, especially during the critical years right at the time of his accession to power. No one will deny the danger of Communism even at this time, but it appears that the Catholic periodicals permitted excessive concentration on Communism to impair their powers of perception in regard to Nazism, at least up to the final months of the period treated.

A fourth general feature, not so pronounced as the others, has to do with foreign affairs. Here Hitler held in his hands a trump card, namely, the Versailles Treaty, which he played with master-

ful skill. During the years while he was struggling for power, with nationalism his main rallying cry, nearly always Versailles won sympathy for him and his goals; and there was a measure of justice in his cause. The same can be said for his policy of withdrawing from the League of Nations and the Geneva Disarmament Conference. From the beginning, however, considerable awareness of Hitler's warlike proclivities was manifested, and several times the need to assume a warlike posture to justify belt-tightening for the people at home was recognized. Unfortunately, in the matter of the Saar plebiscite, Prince Lowenstein's warnings went unheeded, but it was not long before the periodicals realized that the only factor keeping Hitler from war was his lack of preparation, military and diplomatic. Here they seemed to have a realistic attitude.

On the whole, did the periodical reaction conform to what Nazism and Hitler really were? In general, it seems it can be said that the periodicals did not grasp the true nature of Nazism, with its lust for power and negation of values and its ruthlessness, until the time of the Roehm Purge, if even then; nor was the practical, as opposed to the theoretical anti-Catholic character of the movement clearly recognized until about the same time. Certainly, right at the time of his accession to power Hitler was able to create a picture of himself in the periodicals which did not fit the facts, and at other times he succeeded in playing the conservative. Both the threat of Communism, and to a much less

degree the Versailles Treaty, helped him to hide from the gaze of the periodicals, at least temporarily, the true nature of Nazism.

Though we have not made it a major concern to differentiate carefully between the reactions of the periodicals, still it might be interesting to delineate briefly several differences of approach that have stood out.

First of all, the Catholic World, under the vigorous editorship of Father Gillis, never really fell for any of Hitler's double-talk, and quite early we find Father Gillis declaring that Nazi antisemitism and private German ethics will be extremely dangerous for Christianity. At no time did we find the Catholic World picturing Hitler as the conservative or as the savior of Germany from Communism, and at the time of the Concordat we saw the pseudonymous Brandt speak out strongly against a Christian rapprochement with Hitler, while The Commonwealth and, to a lesser extent, America were hesitating. At the end of our study the pseudonymous Schuckelgruber presented us with an extremely realistic and accurate portrayal of the Nazi movement.

In general, it seems true that The Commonwealth and America on the whole varied little in their outlook, though in the years 1931-1932 The Commonwealth showed itself much more cautious than America in commenting on the German situation, and several times just admitted a lack of information and kept silence. This period also saw in The Commonwealth several penetrating articles by Max Jordan. At the time of Hitler's accession to power both

seemed moderately enthusiastic, America going to the extreme when it published Father Sullivan's unrepresentative article. However, with the Concordat a strange change took place. America, usually the magazine taking the most lenient attitude toward Hitler, never had anything favorable to say about the Vatican-German settlement, except for Father Thorning's article, and seemed to realize before The Commonweal the impossibility of its solving the Church-state problem in Germany. This indeed, is an interesting fact, and quite difficult to explain, especially in view of the fact that The Commonweal took a stronger position in regard to Nazi expansionism after the Saar plebiscite and also, in two anonymous articles published in late 1934 and in the editorial comment on Reichsbischof Mueller's statement in the following year, seemed more keenly aware of the nature of Nazism at the end of the period under survey than did America. The latter we saw hoping forlornly even at the very end for some kind of common opposition to Bolshevism. The sterner and even aggressive attitude of The Commonweal toward Nazism during these last years of the period can be seen also in its reaction to the 1936 Fulda Pastoral in contrast to that of America. As to Nazi antisemitism, The Commonweal appeared more outspoken in opposition on the grounds that it was just simply a violation of human rights. America certainly admitted this but did not concentrate on it and reaffirm it as thoroughly as did The Commonweal, and even once appeared to admit that something had to be done about the "Jewish problem" and to condone

its solution through questionable means. America certainly more than The Commonweal manifested irritation about so much concern with the Jews, and preferred to call attention to the persecution of Catholics in other parts of the world, especially in Russia.

In our opinion these are not really major differences; nevertheless, they should be brought out. If we were forced to line up the periodicals and rank them according to their degree of insight into Nazism throughout the period under discussion, distasteful and difficult as this would be, it would be necessary to place the Catholic World first, then The Commonweal, and finally, America.

As for the Homiletic and Pastoral Review and the American Ecclesiastical Review, the articles in the former by George N. Shuster do not differ from his Commonweal contributions, while the other 1932 articles cited show great concern for the danger of Bolshevism, practically to the exclusion of Hitler. The two articles by John B. Mason in the American Ecclesiastical Review both reflected considerable understanding of the situation in Germany.

In the light of our findings three questions arise which we would like to pose for consideration, but which we will not attempt to answer since, as we stated before, this would carry us beyond the scope of our work.

That Hitler profited by the threat, or seeming threat, of Communism is a patent fact; his ranting and raving against the Marxists won him the tolerance, if not the enthusiasm of many. The whole study demonstrates that in the eyes of the periodicals

Hitler was the lesser evil. Whether history has borne out this view or not, we do not believe it within our competence to judge, and this is not the question at issue; undoubtedly we can say that the concentration on Communism prevented a clear look at Nazism during much of the period under consideration. Is the atmosphere still such today that any crusader with nothing more than a few facile phrases about the evils of Communism can make attractive some cause of his own which in itself would be quite undesirable, though perhaps not so much so as Communism? Hitler never offered any positive program of his own beyond the most general promises, but his anti-Communism made this program palatable to many.

The second question to be raised deals with the Church's attitude toward Nazism, and through extension with the periodical reaction. Many critics of the Church have noted that the Vatican was the first state to make an official agreement with Nazi Germany, and have accused her of giving valuable support to the regime; and it is certain that Hitler approached the Church just to receive this support. The question is: must the Church of her very nature in her dealings with nations and peoples carry out Cardinal Newman's dictum "that the Christian must be slow to believe evil, credulous to believe good, and more content to have his confidence abused than to distrust one man who in fact deserves trust"?¹ Such a policy can have disastrous results in this

¹For this question cf. Catholic Mind, XLIII (February 1945), 77, quoting the London Tablet for August 26, 1944.

day and age of amoral totalitarian dictatorship, and perhaps leaves unheeded the Gospel injunction to be "wise as serpents." Certainly it is a literal application to international relations of the dictates of personal morality, which John Courtney Murray, S.J., has recently called into question so eloquently.²

Another point to be considered is the optimism of the periodicals, a tendency in most cases, though notably absent in that of Father Gillis, to see the brighter side, even when this outlook seems to be hardly justified by the facts, and perhaps is more the result of wishful thinking than anything else. In particular we are concerned with the ability to recognize many of the theoretical evils of Nazism, and yet still to hope against hope, as it were, that the Nazis will not reduce this theory to practice, and to give the impression that human nature is not capable of such reduction of Nazi theory to practice. We will once again recall the repeated assertion that the basic good sense of the German people would not stand for a pure, unadulterated Hitlerism, and that Hitler, either compelled by the people or his own nature, would just have to calm down once in power. To what can we attribute this optimistic outlook? Was it merely due to a lack of information? Did the periodicals unconsciously transfer conditions in our own country, where the people have a definite voice in

² John Courtney Murray, S.J., "Morality and Foreign Policy," *America*, CII (March 19, 1960 and March 26, 1960), 229-233 and 264-267.

policy, to Germany where this tradition is not nearly so developed and thus think that the people would force Hitler to modify his policy? Certainly the nature of the new, modern phenomenon of the totalitarian state with its absolute, effective power to enjoin its will upon the citizen was not perceived. For a while it seems that this optimism was partially due to an overestimation of the vigor of the Center Party, but this is not a sufficient explanation. Could it be that the periodicals simply had not learned one of history's greatest lessons, the depths of evil and the heights of good open to man? Did they fail to realize the evil that can be in a man? Or did they engage in wishful thinking and refuse to face the truth, like so many today will not face the facts about Communism, because they realize that this means that they must fight, and in doing so leave behind the TV's, the front porches, the corner drugstores of their daily existence? In any event, the question is an important one for our day, since it would be fatal to underestimate the evil forces in Communism and their power to corrupt men, or to allow the Siren-like voice of a Khrushchev to lull us into complacency with its deceptive talk of co-existence which so caters to our desire to lead normal lives and our dread of leaving the usual patterns of existence to take part in a great world-struggle.

These are three questions which seem to derive from the material of the thesis; we make no pretense at answering them, for this postulates a long study and one beyond the scope of our investigation.

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APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Robert L. Bireley, S.J.

has been read and approved by three members of the Department of History.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

January 21, 1963
Date

Charles H. Metzger, S.J.
Signature of Approver