

HITLER'S RISE TO POWER

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CONTENTS

Page	Chapter	
1.	I	Bavarian Beginnings
5.	II	The Conquest of Germany
22.	III	Who voted for Hitler?
33.	IV	Franz von Papen
37.	V	The Concordat and Mit Brennender Sorge
46.	VI	The Saar Plebiscite
51.	VII	The Communist Party
53.	VIII	The Jewish Vote
57.	IX	The Protestants
61.	X	Sources of Prejudice
66.	XI	Assessments of Hitler in the 1930s
68.	XII	Summary of Key Points
70.		References

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CHAPTER I BAVARIAN BEGINNINGS

The Nazi party was formed in Bavaria and achieved its first electoral successes there. As Bavaria is considered to be the Catholic heartland of Germany, and Hitler was a baptised Catholic, it is sometimes implied that his movement grew out of a Catholic culture and took root amongst Catholics before spreading to the rest of the country.

A survey of the anti-Catholic philosophical and political forces that gave birth to Nazism has been set forth in 'Church in History' publication 'The Roots of Nazism'.

That publication established that few of the early Nazi leaders were Bavarian Catholics. They had come from other districts and religious backgrounds to congregate in the freer atmosphere of Munich. Here the growth of Nazism as a political party in Bavaria will be examined in more detail.

During November 1923 Hitler attempted to seize Munich and use it as a base for a march on Berlin. He failed and spent 1924 in prison. His party was outlawed, and at two elections his supporters, together with others of like mind, stood as candidates of the 'Volkischer Block'. Due to the publicity surrounding Hitler's trial and imprisonment, these candidates gained a sizeable vote in Bavaria. By 1928 Hitler was out of prison and his party contested the November elections of that year under its own name. After 1928 Hitler obtained his highest percentages outside of Bavaria, so it is the two elections of 1924 and that of 1928 which need to be analysed. The results of these elections were as follows:

	% Catholic	% Volkischer or Nazi vote		
		May 1924	Dec 1924	May 1928
ALL GERMANY	32	6.5	3.0	2.6
BAVARIA	70	16.0	5.1	6.4

((GP 322-3))

These figures appear to confirm the relationship between Catholics and a high Nazi vote. But Hitler's first electoral support came mainly from the 29% Protestant minority within Bavaria. In the May 1924 elections for the Bavarian state parliament 'most of the Volkischer vote of 17.1% came from the small town Protestant areas around Franconia'. ((PDS 32)).

' . . . in the May election of 1924 . . . outside Munich, the main areas paying heed to the Nazi message were already located in Franconia'. ((IK 23)). ' . . . the majority of the Nazi party's 55,287 members in late 1923 were Protestants'. ((PDS 19)). This trend is illustrated by listing the results of these elections.

	% Protestant	% Volkischer and Nazi vote		
		May 1924	Dec 1924	May 1925
LOWER BAVARIA	1.1	10.7	3.1	3.5
UPPER PALATINATE	7.5	9.8	2.9	3.6
UPPER-BAVARIA (including Munich)	8.8	19.0	5.7	7.1
SWABIA	13.2	12.9	2.8	4.3
LOWER FRANCONIA	18.0	10.1	3.3	3.7
UPPER FRANCONIA	59.7	24.5	9.3	10.8
MIDDLE FRANCONIA	68.7	24.8	9.0	9.1
NUREMBERG	62.0	26.0	10.6	10.6

((GP 322-3 and EGR 84)).

In some statistics 'Upper Palatinate' is not included as part of Bavaria, and this can cause slight discrepancies between figures.

The high Volkischer vote in Catholic Upper Bavaria in May 1924 was due to their 28.5% vote in Munich. Although the city was 81% Catholic, religious practice was weak. This is indicated by the 36% who voted for the atheist marxist parties (Socialist and Communist), at that same election. Volkischer, Socialist and Communist adherence was able to grow amongst these lapsed Catholics. The Volkischer vote was also boosted by the mainly Protestant Borenhausen suburb, with its a traditionally high nationalist vote ((RFH 151)).

In the more religious rural areas around Munich, Hitler gained little support, and even this was inflated. Germans could obtain 'Stimmscheine certificates' to enable them to cast their votes whilst on holiday, and many holiday makers cast their ballots in the tourist area of Upper Bavaria. Also, those holidaying in Austria could return to vote in villages along the border. For example, in the spa town of Garmisch, the registered electors in July 1932 numbered 19,700, yet 26,300 votes were cast. ((GP 284)). Research in Berlin indicates that Stimmscheine certificates were mainly applied for in the middle-class suburbs where nationalist feeling was strongest ((GP 285)).

At a later date Hitler did gain a part of the Catholic rural vote, but this came to a great extent from former supporters of the Bavarian Peasants League (BBB). This was an economic interest group which fought the local state elections.

It was mainly supported by baptised Catholics who were deaf to clergy exhortations. Immediately following the war the BBB was Communist led and its two leaders took part in the Munich Soviet Republic of 1918 ((GAC 407-8 and GP 70)). Later 'The Nazis swallowed up the BBB during the years of the depression' ((IK 20)). The Nazis also attracted a large proportion of young new voters ((GP 306)). It should be noted that 31% of Bavarian Catholics did not make their Easter Duties in 1931 ((GP 159)).

There was another factor which promoted a high Nazi vote in Bavaria, compared with the rest of Germany. When Hitler was released from prison in 1924, he was banned from addressing large public meetings. This was lifted throughout Bavaria in March 1927, so he was able to hold rallies for 14 months prior to the May 1928 elections. In less stable northern Germany, the ban was not lifted till September 1928. The Nazi movement relied to such an extent on Hitler's unique powers of oratory, that its candidates were often specifically labelled as 'Hitler Movement' ((EBW 90)). This situation contributed to the low Nazi vote in northern Germany, where Hitler was comparatively little known at this time.

It is sometimes asked why the Bavarian authorities failed to control Hitler during his early years. But in 1922, the Catholic Bavarian Minister of the Interior proposed to deport Hitler to his native Austria, and face the outrage of the Nazis and Volkischer groups. The plan had to be abandoned when the Socialists opposed what they considered to be an infringement of free speech ((EBW 58)).

Further attempts failed because the Austrians did not want him back. As Hitler had served in the German army, he persuaded the Austrians in April 1925 to annul his citizenship and he became stateless. In 1932 Hitler wished to stand as a Presidential candidate and needed German citizenship to qualify. The state Government of Brunswick, which was a Protestant state, provided him with a nominal official position so as to solve his problem ((EBW 118)).

The image of Catholic Bavaria being a stronghold of Nazism, was enhanced by its second city Nuremberg becoming associated with Julius Streicher's first 'Storm Troopers' and the mass Nuremberg rallies. Because of the symbolism of this city for Nazism, the war crimes trials were held there after the 1939-1945 war. Yet, as the city was 62% Protestant, it was not typical of Bavaria. The first town in Bavaria to give the Nazis a majority on its municipal council was 90% Protestant Colburg in June 1929 ((GP 85-6)).

Hitler was well aware of the situation. In 1925 he forecast that his Movement would eventually be strongest in the north of Germany, but insisted that its Headquarters should stay in Bavaria, where the opposition was fiercest ((GP 46)).

CONCLUSION

A close look at Bavarian politics shows that its Catholic culture inhibited the growth of early Nazism. The movement took hold in the minority non-Catholic segment of the Bavarian population, aided by some lapsed Munich Catholics who had rejected their upbringing.

CHAPTER II **THE CONQUEST OF GERMANY**

BACKGROUND

The 1925 census showed Germany as 63% Protestant; 32% Catholic; 1% Jewish and 4% other beliefs. Catholics were strong in the south and north west and there were further Catholic pockets in Silesia and East Prussia (See Map). Prior to the 1914-18 war, the Kaiser (King) ruled with the Reichstag (Parliament) acting in an advisory capacity. The four main parties were:

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Nationalist (DVNP): | authoritarian, conservative and nationalistic. |
| Conservative (DVP): | democratic, conservative, nationalistic. |
| Liberal (DDP): | democratic and emphasising personal freedom. |
| Socialist (SDP): | marxist at core but wishing to obtain its aims by popular consent. |

The Catholic Church was critical of these parties because :

- The Nationalists and Conservatives were militaristic, showed little concern for social justice and considered Catholicism to be alien to the German Protestant spirit.
- The Liberals opposed Christian values influencing economic and social policies. Also, their emphasis on personal freedom often led to the freedom of the rich and powerful to exploit the poor and weak.

- The Socialists aimed to establish a society based on atheist principles and to concentrate all property and power in the hands of the state, thereby gravely threatening the independence of the individual.

The Liberals and Socialists wished to undermine the right of parents to send their children to Church schools.

The Church supported the Centre Party because :

- It was inspired by Catholic social principles: Opposed both uncontrolled capitalism and the state ownership of all production; Advocated a widespread ownership of property and power; the ending of class warfare; and the introduction of co-partnership, profit sharing and co-operative schemes. The Centre also favoured strong but politically independent trade unions, and fought for social welfare legislation such as pensions, better housing, a minimum living income and land reform.

Between a half and three quarters of the Catholics voted for the Centre Party. The others did not necessarily support the philosophy and long-term aims of the non-Catholic parties, but either felt the Centre was too keen on social reform to be able to protect middle-class interests, or felt that it was not militant enough to obtain quick social improvements.

THE END OF THE WAR

By 1917 the warring countries were exhausted and the outcome was still evenly balanced. The Pope proposed a peace plan:- Germany to withdraw from France and Belgium; the Allies from the German colonies; all countries to reduce arms simultaneously, territorial disputes to be settled in a conciliatory spirit; and neither side to demand reparations ((JOS 46)). As most of the fighting had been on French soil, the French demanded reparations. Germany refused as this would imply that she was guilty of causing the war. It was pointed out to France that by ending the war quickly she would be saving the north of her country from even more destruction. France also wanted the return of Alsace-Lorraine which she had lost in 1870.

The Kaiser refused to accept the Pope's proposal for Germany to withdraw from Belgium. When the war had started, the Kaiser stated that Germany was not embarking on a war of conquest, but to defend her freedom ((JR P M 13)). It was on this understanding that the Centre, Socialists, Liberals and, others, had given their support to the war. But now the Kaiser would not accept the proposal to withdraw from Belgium.

On 19th July 1917, Erzberger, leader of the Centre, proposed a "Peace, Resolution" in the Reichstag:

"The Reichstag strives for the peace of understanding and permanent reconciliation of peoples. Forced territorial acquisitions and political, economic and financial oppressions are irreconcilable with such a peace" ((GAC 387)).

This was, in effect, a proposal to withdraw from Belgium. With Socialist and Liberal support the resolution obtained 212 votes against the 126 of the Nationalists and Conservatives. There were 17 abstentions ((WF 116)).

On the 14th of August, the Pope officially presented his proposals to each country. But the Kaiser, who possessed greater constitutional power than the Reichstag, still refused to withdraw from Belgium, and France insisted on her demands. So the war continued for another year until the Kaiser accepted it was lost. On September 28th 1918 he transferred power to the Reichstag. Those parties which had passed the 'Peace Resolution' would now take the blame for 'surrendering', not he, the army nor the Nationalists.

The years following were traumatic times of inflation, massive unemployment, poverty, political violence, and a profound sense of national weakness, disunity, bitterness and humiliation. The Nationalists and Conservatives blamed all this on the 'Peace Resolution' parties. The Catholic Centre party was particularly hated and Erzberger was assassinated.

Soon after the end of the war, some members of the Socialist party broke away to form the Communist Party, which aiming to achieve a marxist state by revolution and dictatorship. During the same period the Bavarian section of the Centre Party detached itself to form the Bavarian Peoples' Party (BVP).

The result of the Presidential election of 1925 gives an indication of the political situation at that time. As no candidate received 50%, a second ballot was held. The Nationalist candidate in the second ballot was Hindenburg, who was elected. He did not believe in democracy, but was willing to accept it as preferable to civil war.

	29th March	26th April
Nationalist+Conservative	39 %	48%
Liberal (DDP)	6 %	—
Bavarian	4 %	—
Centre (Dr. Marx)	14 %	45%
Socialist	29 %	—
Communist	7 %	7%
National Socialist (Nazi)	1%	—

THE SUDDEN NAZI GROWTH

Since 1918 the Centre, Liberals, Socialists and sometimes the Conservatives had formed coalition governments. But the economic crisis of 1929, together with Communist pressure, led to a Socialist refusal to take part in further coalitions. As the Liberals feared losing votes to the Conservatives, they also withdrew ((GAC 532 and JRPM 210)).

On 28th March 1930, the Centre's leader, Heinrich Brüning formed a government with less than 16% of Representatives supporting him. These were those of the two Catholic parties, the Centre and the Bavarian. The President had to use his emergency powers to put legislation into effect. Following the elections of 14th September 1930, Brüning's Catholic Parties continued to run the country. In these latest elections the Nazis had gained a surprising 18.3% of the vote.

THE CATHOLIC REACTION

Immediately after these elections, in which the National Socialist Party had emerged as a major force, the bishop of Mainz excommunicated all Catholic members of the party in his diocese, and banned uniformed groups entering churches ((KG 12 and A R 166)). He also gave instructions that party members would not be allowed to take an official part in funerals and other services ((RD 8, 9 and 12)). The other bishops decided to await the annual bishops' Conferences, so as to be able to formulate a united policy. In Rome the *Osservatore Romano* of October 11th 1930 commented: "Belonging to the National Socialist Party of Hitler is irreconcilable with the Catholic Conscience." In his New Year message, Cardinal Bertram of Breslau condemned extreme nationalism, without specifying the Nazi Party ((KG 13)).

The National Socialist challenge to the Church took a different form to that of the marxist parties. Their anti-religious philosophy and programmes were clearly set out, but Hitler's party was not so specific. Pagan, anti-Catholic and anti-religious books and speeches were explained away by claiming that they were the views of individuals. In this manner the Nazis tried to gain the support of anti-Catholic and anti-religious people, without alienating churchgoers. It was said that Hitler had modified the pagan views which he had set forth in 'Mein Kampf'. The Nazis repeatedly claimed that they were defending Christianity from godless marxism, and could have good relations with the churches provided the clergy kept out of politics.

The hierarchy's annual Conferences were held at Fulda and Freising during February 1931. They endorsed the action of the bishop of Mainz, but said that a distinction should be made between 'Activists' and 'Followers'. This was because some Catholics had voted for the Nazis because of their foreign policy, or in the hope that they would cure the economic situation and reduce unemployment, while not realising the party's long-term pagan aims. Such a distinction had already been made with regard to the Socialist and Communist parties in 1921. The attitude of the bishops since 1924 regarding extreme nationalist groups had also drawn this distinction ((KG 14 and GP 167)).

To implement their decisions the bishops decided to:

1. Issue Pastoral Letters addressed to all the Faithful.
2. Send a letter to the clergy giving guidelines for distinguishing between 'Activists' and 'Followers'.
3. Take steps to isolate certain rebel priests who held views favourable to the National Socialist Party.

The Pastoral Letters were sent out during the following weeks ((KG 13)). That of the Bavarian hierarchy, issued on February 10th, was typical. It condemned National Socialism because:

"It puts race before religion; rejects the Old Testament including the Ten Commandments; denies the authority of the Pope because he is outside Germany; plans a national church; puts the 'moral feelings of the German race' as the criterion of all morality". ((BS 807, RD 8, 9 and 12)).

It continued by pointing out that in their speeches, Nazi leaders had rejected the Concordats made with the local states, attacked denominational schools, called for the repeal of the laws which protected unborn life, and advocated a radical nationalism ((BS 807)). Whether a supporter of this Movement would be permitted the Eucharist, had to be judged on an individual basis. There was a difference between a person who had voted for the party without realising its pagan philosophy, and an elected representative, a writer, or an agent of the party ((BS 808)). Even here, pastors were very reluctant to refuse the sacraments to a person who, though an active member of the party, rejected its basic Nazi philosophy. Some people were muddled and short sighted rather than heretical. Some believed that the pagan elements would lose their influence once the party was in power. The bishops considered that the few priests who had written pro-Nazi articles had no excuse as they were educated enough to see that Nazism was contrary to Christian doctrine. These priests were therefore isolated ((KG 14-5)).

During the following two years a continuous campaign was waged, through pulpit and press, to expose the ultimate aims of the Nazi Party. The Nazis replied, that the church was led by 'political bishops', supporting the Centre Party under the cloak of religion.

It is impossible to quantify the effect of these condemnations. Most Nazi activists were already far from the Church in their life-styles and beliefs. Most of their followers, especially after the Pastoral Letters, were not practising Catholics. There would have been an effect on those pious Catholics who took little interest in politics and, without the condemnations, may have been deceived into voting for Nazi candidates. At the same time, militant Catholics were spurred into increasing their anti-Nazi activities. The Centre Party vote stood very firm against Nazi allurements. In March 1933, the Centre's vote rose although, due to the greater number of people taking part in that election, its proportion of the vote fell.

THE END OF DEMOCRACY

The Presidential election in the Spring of 1932 found the democratic parties too weak to offer a candidate. So they supported Hindenburg in order to keep out Hitler and the Communists. He was still willing to work within the democratic constitution. As no candidate won 50% of the votes, a second ballot had to be held.

	13 March 1932	10 April 1932
Hindenburg (Nationalist)	49.6 %	53.0 %
Hitler (Nazi)	30.1 %	36.8 %
Thermann (Communist)	13.2 %	10.2 %
Independent Nationalist	6.8 %	—
Independent	0.3 %	—

So 47% had voted to abolish Democracy.

Hitler, a renegade Catholic, found his main support in Protestant areas, while the staunchly Protestant Hindenburg found his in the Catholic areas. For example:

	Hindenburg	Hitler	Thermann
<u>Predominantly Protestant Areas</u>			
East Prussia	48.6 %	43.8 %	7.6 %
Frankfurt on Oder	48.1 %	45.7 %	6.2 %
Pomerania	40.7 %	52.6 %	6.7 %
Schleswig-Holstein	43.6 %	48.8 %	6.6 %
Chemnitz-Zwickau	37.7 %	47.2 %	15.1%
Thuringia	42.2 %	44.3 %	13.5%
<u>Mixed Areas</u>			
Wurttemberg	63.1 %	29.3 %	7.6 %
Baden	57.4 %	34.2 %	8.4 %
<u>Predominantly Catholic Areas</u>			
Colroge-Aachen	68.4 %	20.3 %	11.1 %
Coblenz-Trier	65.4 %	29.0 %	5.6 %
Upper Bavaria-Swabia	69.1 %	24.9 %	6.0 %
Lower Bavaria	72.3 %	22.8 %	4.9 %

((EBW 118-120)).

So a majority of Protestants had rejected democracy by April 1932

As the other democratic parties refused to shoulder governmental responsibilities, Bruning continued to rule with his Centre Party. The Socialists 'tolerated' him (i.e. they abstained on 'no confidence' votes). Municipal elections showed a continuing rise in Nazi support, and the only way Bruning could halt it was to achieve, by peaceful diplomacy, what Hitler said could only be achieved by force.

These were:

1. A Customs Union with Austria (which Austria desired).
2. Cancellation of war reparations.
3. Equal military status with Germany's neighbours.

Because of French opposition, the first objective could not be achieved, but by the end of 1932 Brüning had succeeded with the other two. The delay however had fuelled the impatience, frustration and anger upon which Hitler depended ((WC 318-20)). Brüning was also dealing with grave internal problems. He banned the Nazi SS and SA para-militaries, while leaving the more peaceful Socialist para-militaries alone. He drafted plans to resettle 600,000 unemployed people from western Germany on large underused estates in the east. He started a public works program to ease unemployment ((WC 318-20)). The landowning leaders of the Nationalist Party were worried regarding their estates and the one-sided banning of the para-militaries. So, aided by the influence of the army, they persuaded the President to dismiss Brüning.

'The fall of Brüning was a real turning point . . . he was one of the great figures produced by the Weimar Republic . . . who guided Germany through the worst phase of the depression. Once he had departed . . . the accession to power of the Nazis was only a matter of time' ((WC 318-20)).

Franz von Papen was appointed to replace Brüning as Chancellor and, as he was a Catholic, he is often portrayed as typifying a new Catholic attitude to Hitler at this time. Sometimes he is said to have been the leader of the Centre Party. These views are false. At one time he had been an extreme conservative rebel member of the Centre Party in the Prussian local parliament. But when he agreed to become Chancellor, he neither held a seat in the Reichstag nor in a local parliament, nor any office within the Centre Party. When he became Chancellor the Centre Party expelled him ((JRPM 230)). For more details of his life see Chapter IV.

In the July 1932 Reichstag elections the Nazis polled 37.3%, the Communists 14.3% and the Nationalists 5.9%. The Conservatives, Liberals and smaller parties nearly disappeared. The vote for democracy was down to 42.1% On 17th August the Catholic bishops warned of 'the dark prospects' for the Church if Nazism prevailed ((KG 15)). In the Reichstag election of the following November the democratic vote fell to 41.7 %. Papen wished to ban both the Nazis and the Communists but, as the army did not consider itself strong enough to fight both of them at the same time, this was not possible.

General Schleicher formed an administration for a short period but was not able to solve the mounting problems. So on 30th January 1933, a coalition government was formed with nine Nationalist and two Nazi ministers. Hitler became Chancellor (Prime Minister) and Papen his deputy. Papen was convinced that the President, big business, parliament, the army and his own skill, would be able to control Hitler until his popularity waned. The Nazi vote was starting to fall in local elections ((KCA 578)) and Papen told a friend, "In two months we'll have pushed Hitler into a corner so hard that he'll be squeaking". ((WC 325)). A Papen supporter said "We have Hitler framed in" ((GAC 568)). Papen's Nationalists were not a totalitarian party but wanted authoritarian rule without racist and other pagan Nazi ideas ((FVP 268)).

Papen was not alone in thinking that Hitler's power was on the wane. The "Worker's Newspaper" of the Austrian Socialist Party proclaimed 'Hitler could wait no longer. Every day made him weaker. He chose the other eventuality: the Chancellorship, in truth, surrender.' ((FW 72)). Most political leaders, including those of the Centre Party, did not think that Hitler would last long ((FVP 251)).

Although the new Nationalist-Nazi government had 43% of the seats, it still did not command a majority. Despite pressure from the President, the Centre refused even to 'tolerate' it. The President ordered fresh elections for the 5th of March in the hope that the new coalition would gain a majority of seats so as to be able to administer the country in a stable manner. He announced that:

"He wished to ascertain the attitude of the German people to the new government, which at the present hasn't a working majority" ((KCA 656)).

This came very close to him openly asking the electorate to vote for Nationalist and Nazi candidates.

On the 27th February the Reichstag building was burnt down and, by using forged documents ((FVP 269)), Hitler convinced the President and Cabinet that there was a Communist conspiracy to seize power. The following day, the President issued a decree granting the government emergency powers. This decree remained in force until 1945. The decree stipulated:

1. Suspension of all the basic rights of the citizen. [This was an unlimited power of arrest, interrogation, imprisonment, searches, phone tapping, censorship, and authority to ban meetings, organisations and publications].
2. Authorised the Reich government to assume full powers in any federal state whose government proved unable or unwilling to restore public order and security.
3. Order death or imprisonment for treason, assault upon a member of the government, arson in public buildings, incitement to riot, and resistance to the provisions of the decree.

Although Hitler had become Chancellor, the Nazis still formed a minority within the Cabinet. But the support for the Nazis in the country and their seats in parliament dwarfed that of their coalition allies. They were therefore able to claim the key Ministries they wanted. The decree gave the government, which was soon to become dominated by Hitler, dictatorial powers. It meant that any act or word of opposition to the government's Will, could result in the imposition of the heaviest penalties. The decree was the legal basis upon which the Concentration Camps were established ((GAC 574-5)). The decree was not limited in any way, so Ministers could interpret it as they wished. An arrested person had no right to a prompt hearing, counsel, appeal or redress for false arrest ((GAC 574-5)).

The decree 'was the fundamental emergency law upon which the National Socialist dictatorship . . . was primarily based'. It was more important than the later Enabling Act of March 24th ((EB 200)). The Nazi dictatorship had begun ((WC 326)). If the coalition could obtain a majority in a free election, Hitler would become the dictator of Germany in a legal and democratic manner.

HITLER IN POWER

Hitler permitted the 5th of March elections to proceed. He knew that if he won it would deal a serious psychological blow to his democratic enemies and facilitate his assumption of full power. If he lost he could use the Emergency Decree to arrest enough opposition Representatives in order to provide his government with the majority it required. A Government spokesman assured the foreign press that the days of parliamentarianism and democracy were definitely finished in Germany. An entirely new regime had come, and come to stay ((KCA 692)).

Although the decree was used to interfere with the freedom of the press and radio in Prussia and to close some Centre and Socialist meetings, the vote was secret. Hitler's dictatorial and often brutal methods did not lose him votes, but seem to have drawn him support from people desperate to elect a firm, strong and united government, with a clear majority, which would solve the country's problems in a speedy and efficient manner. This election gave the electorate the opportunity to show whether they agreed with the Emergency Decree and the way Hitler was using it. A very high poll of 88.5 % gave its verdict:

The Hitler-led Coalition	52%	(Nazi 44%, Nationalists 8%).
Democratic Parties	36%	(Socialist 18%, Centre 14%, others 4%).
Communists	12%	

The 35 electoral districts may be classified into 21 Protestant, 7 Catholic and 7 mixed. The Nazis achieved over 50% of the vote in 7 constituencies, all strongly Protestant. When we include the Nationalist vote we find that the coalition gained over 50% in 20 constituencies (13 Protestant, 3 mixed and none Catholic). In only 6 constituencies was the combined anti-Democratic totalitarian vote (Communist and Nazi) less than 50%. Five of these were Catholic and one mixed.

Soon afterwards a judgement on Hitler's rise to power was made by the Nazi paper, 'Volkischer Beobachter' of 29th March 1933:

"The first and fiercest adversaries of the new party were parliamentarians of the Centre. The Church leaders followed them." ((RD 71).

This closely echoed what Hitler had written nine years previously in 'Mein Kampf' regarding the earliest years of nazism:

" . . . in these very years, the movement carried on the bitterest fight against the Centre . . ." ((AH 514)).

Following the result, a wave of National Socialist enthusiasm swept all before it. Thousands of former opponents now wished to be on the winning side and joined the Nazi party ((GAC 577)). Others joined because they were willing to accept their fellow voters' democratic verdict or had a sense of foreboding. The Socialist para-military force decided not to fight, as they feared it might end in a blood-bath ((GAC 664)). Whole units deserted to the Nationalist Party's Stahlhelm, which also recruited amongst former Communists ((KCA 732-4)).

The A.D.G.B. (National Trade Union Federation) announced its willingness to break its ties with the Socialist Party and co-operate with the new government ((GAC 576)). Membership of the Socialist Unions fell by about a third in one month ((KCA 778)).

Sir Walter Citrine explained to the British Trade Union Conference that, as 63% of Germans had voted for dictatorship, the Socialists had refused to call a general strike because it would have led to a civil war ((TT 8 Sept 1933 page 18)). Within two weeks, Centre and Socialist controlled local parliaments and municipal councils had been replaced by Nazi officials ((KCA 709)).

Hitler wished to keep within the letter of the law. So, rather than arbitrarily dissolve the Reichstag, he demanded that an Act be passed enabling him to rule for four years without having to refer to it. This would involve a change in the Constitution, requiring a two-thirds majority. An 'Enabling Act' was proposed in the Reichstag on March 23rd. Hitler said that he did not want Socialist votes ((JRPM 231 and WLS 199)), so concentrated all his threats and promises on the Centre. At the end of his speech he said: "The Government will regard its rejection as a declaration of resistance. Now, gentlemen, you may yourselves decide for peace or war" ((KCA 726-7)).

Under the Emergency Decree 'resistance to the government' could be interpreted as resistance to the decree, and therefore punishable by any penalty including death. Outside the building the SA and SS had placed a cordon, and the air was filled with "Ermachtigungsgesetz . . . Sonst gibt's Zunder!" [We demand the Enabling Act . . . or there will be an explosion!] ((GAC 577)).

Goering, a Nazi leader, had stated on March 15th that if necessary they would eject some of the Socialist deputies so as to obtain a 2/3 majority for the Decree ((EBW 257)). The Cabinet had agreed that deputies absent from the vote would be counted as in favour ((EBW 259)).

The Centre, M.P.s were divided as to what to do, bearing in mind that only 36% of the Germans desired parliamentary democracy. Kaas, their leader, argued that if Hitler did not get what he wanted by means of the Act, he would secure it by more unpleasant means and that it would be wiser to concede and hope for favours in return ((GAC 578)). Others wished to make a symbolic gesture of defiance. Eventually the majority accepted the view of Kaas. Fear and a sense of the hopelessness can be seen in their final statement. "In view of the storms which threaten to arise in and about Germany, the Centre would set on one side

the doubts which in normal times could not be overcome, and would vote for the Bill" ((GAC 578 and KCA 726-7)).

107 Communist and Socialist M.P.s were missing because of arrest or intimidation. The remaining Socialists voted against and, like the Centre's leaders, had to flee from the country within a few months.

THE CHURCH

After gaining power, Hitler continued to maintain that he was not opposed to the Churches and wished them to work with him. He claimed that he was a victim of 'political bishops' who still aimed to wield power through the Centre Party. When the Reichstag met on March 21st, the Catholic Representatives attended a special Mass at Potsdam. Hitler, who had been baptised a Catholic as a baby, issued a statement:

"The German Catholic bishops have quite recently, in a series of public declarations on which the clergy have not hesitated to act, stigmatised the leaders of the National Socialist Party as traitors who should be refused the sacraments. These instructions have not been withdrawn and are still being carried out. In these circumstances the Chancellor is reluctantly compelled to remain away from the Catholic service at Potsdam. During the celebration the Chancellor and the Propaganda Minister, Dr. Goebbels, placed wreaths in the Luisenstadt cemetery in Berlin on the tomb of their murdered comrades of the Storm Troops." ((RD 72-5)).

This was hypocrisy. At this time, Nazi Party members were excommunicated, and neither Hitler nor Goebbels had been practising Catholics. Both had completely rejected Catholic teaching. The statement was nothing more than a propaganda move to put the responsibility for Nazi-Catholic hostility onto the shoulders of the bishops. When demanding the Enabling Act, two days later, the government declared:

"The National Government regards the two Christian confessions as factors essential to the soul of the German people. It will respect the contracts they have made with the various regions. It declares its determination to leave their rights intact. In the schools, the government will protect the rightful influence of the Christian bodies. We hold the spiritual forces of Christianity to be indispensable elements in the moral uplift of the German people.

We hope to develop friendly relations with the Holy See".
((RD 72-5)).

This provided a little hope that, now that Hitler had the responsibilities of power, he might give priority to establishing national unity and the implementation of his economic and foreign policies, rather than cause national dissension by trying to impose a pagan racist creed.

Thousands of Catholics now found it necessary to belong to the Nazi party, or one of its workers' organisations, in order to keep their employment in the Civil Service and local government. The bishops responded to this new situation by permitting party members to receive the sacraments and have a religious burial ((RD 72-5 and EBW 281)). Apart from easing the position of Catholic Civil Servants, this move was also a gesture to encourage the government to adhere to its protestations of friendship towards the Churches. It was difficult to foresee which elements within the party might come to dominate. A statement issued by the bishops assembled at Freising, read:

"As long as the leaders of the National Socialist Party can maintain towards the Church the benevolent attitude expressed in the declaration of the Chancellor, the bishops for their part will remain faithful to the point of view now indicated. It is unnecessary to add that this episcopal edict is in no sense an invitation to join the National Socialist Party, especially as the bishops have formally signified the continuance in force of the condemnations already passed on certain religious and moral errors". ((RD 72-5)).

The Church had done her utmost to prevent the Nazis becoming the Government of Germany. But now the party was the legal government, the bishops had to accept it while fighting Nazi ideology by different means.

PRAISES OF HITLER

The words of individuals are sometimes quoted as 'evidence' of Catholic enthusiasm for Hitler. But these utterances must be read within the context of the times. During the first years of his rule, many hoped that Hitler would use his unique gift of leadership to improve Germany's situation while letting the pagan aspects fall into the background. The French ambassador to Germany, M. Francois-Ponet, wrote at the time of the Berlin Olympic Games in 1936:

"Hitler's extraordinary personality has imposed itself on Europe. He does not merely rouse fear or aversion; he excites curiosity and awakens sympathy.

His prestige increases; his magnetic attraction is felt beyond the frontiers of Germany. Kings, princes and other illustrious guests throng the capital of the Reich, less perhaps to take part in the approaching Games than to meet the prophetic figure who appears to hold the destinies of our continent in his hand, and see at close quarters that country, which his irresistible grasp, has transformed and galvanized. All are enraptured by his faultless organisation, his perfect order and discipline, as well as his boundless prodigality" ((NP 98)).

Winston Churchill wrote in 1935, and allowed to be published in 1937:

"It is not possible to form a just judgement of a public figure who has attained the enormous dimensions of Adolf Hitler, until his life-work as a whole is before us . . . men have risen to power by employing . . . frightful methods but . . . when their life is revealed as a whole, have been regarded as great figures whose lives enriched the story of mankind. So it may be with Hitler". (See longer extract in Chapter XI).

In 1936 the British Liberal leader, Lloyd George, met Hitler and said how honoured he was to receive a gift from "The greatest living German". Hitler is: "The George Washington of Germany" (See Chapter XI).

The British Labour Party opposed rearmament up till July 1937, because it did not believe that Hitler was a threat ((DT 178)). Ernest Bevin, a Labour leader, admitted in 1941: "We all refused absolutely to face the facts". ((DT 178)). In September 1938 Hitler, speaking of the Sudetenland, said "This is the last territorial claim I shall make in Europe" ((DT 175)). The British and French governments accepted his word.

So it is not surprising that in the first few months of Hitler's rule, while he was full of assurances towards Christianity, world peace and justice, that many Germans assured him of their support for his political and economic aims. Catholics, including bishops, assured the government of their loyalty to Germany and willingness to co-operate in building a dignified and prosperous country under its democratically elected leader. By being co-operative they hoped to increase their influence and so encourage the moderate elements within the Nazi Party. It is from this short period that quotations from responsible Catholics, pledging support, may be found. The very fact that in the

election campaign they had used such strong language to condemn Nazism, meant that they also had to be emphatic when stating that they accepted the nation's verdict and would be loyal to Germany and its new democratically elected popular leader.

THE CHURCH CONTINUES THE FIGHT

While accepting the legality of the Government, the Church did not relax her fight against the pagan elements within the Nazi programme. During the second half of 1933 the bishops issued repeated statements and Pastoral Letters against Nazi ideology, infringements of liberty and contravention of the Concordat.

These, and those of the next few years, need a book to list them. Many may be read in 'The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich' ((CBC)).

Starting in October 1933 (within weeks of the Concordat being ratified) the Pope, speaking to a group of German visitors, vehemently supported their struggle to defend Christianity ((CBC 1)). On May 6th 1935 he said "In the name of so-called 'Positive Christianity' efforts are being made to de-Christianise Germany and lead her back to barbarous paganism" ((CBC 5)). At Christmas 1936, while speaking of the Spanish civil war, then being fought, he attacked the hypocrisy of the Nazis claiming to be leading the defence of Christian values ((CBC 6)). On 14th March 1937, four years after Hitler's Reichstag speech promising religious freedom, he issued the Encyclical 'Mit Brennender Sorge', in which he strongly condemned the whole pagan racist creed and its imposition on Germany. It was sent secretly to all parish priests and read from the pulpits throughout Germany on the same Sunday morning. The success of this tactic, which prevented the authorities confiscating copies, indicates how united and defiant the hard core of Catholics had become.

The Americans, especially the large numbers of German descent, admired Hitler's achievements in regaining Germany's international status, building economic prosperity and fighting Communism. Many accepted Hitler's claim that there was freedom in Germany except for agitators and political clergy. But on May 18th 1937 the American Cardinal Mundelein, said during a speech in Chicago:

"Perhaps you will ask yourselves how it is that a nation of sixty million intelligent persons bows in servile fear before a foreigner, and a fool into the bargain, and before two scoundrels like

Goebbels and Goering," who claim to regulate the slightest details of the people's life". ((NP 95)).

The enormous publicity the speech received caused the German government on May 24th to protest to the Vatican most vigorously. Cardinal Pacelli, Secretary of State, replied that when the persecution stopped he would look into the affair. A further protest on the 29th resulted in Cardinal Pacelli despatching a note, on the 24th June, to the German government praising Cardinal Mundelein ((NP 95-6)).

President Roosevelt, taking advantage of the atmosphere, visited Chicago on October 5th and also vehemently attacked Nazi Germany ((NP 98)). In the following November the American bishops issued a public letter of support of the German Catholics in their suffering ((NP 93)). There had been a strong feeling in America that she should not become involved in European conflicts, but the anti-Nazi campaign of the American Catholic bishops contributed to making it possible, two years later, for the President to assist the Allied cause even though not at war.

Also in 1937, Pope Pius XI issued the encyclical 'Divini Redemptoris', which was a condemnation of Communism. The Pope was well aware that the Nazis would use its publication for propaganda purposes, as they claimed they were the only effective defence against Communism. To prevent this it was not published until March 19th, by which time it was known that 'Mit Brennender Sorge' had been successfully read five days previously in Germany ((NP 86)).

Four months later at the Nazi Party's Nuremburg Conference, the "National Prize" was awarded to Alfred Rosenberg, thereby making his pagan 'Myth of the Twentieth Century', the official teaching guide of the new Teutonic religion ((AR 214)). Following the Encyclical, the battle between the Church and Nazi ideology was intensified.

CHAPTER III WHO VOTED FOR HITLER?

CHART A THE ANTI-DEMOCRATIC VOTE IN MARCH 1933

CONSTITUENCY	Nazi	Nazi and Nationalist	Nazi, Nationalist and Communist	Nazi and Communist
<u>MAINLY PROTESTANT</u>				
1 East Prussia	56.5 ^	67.8	76.5	65.2
2 Berlin	31.3	40.4	70.5	61.4 *
3 Potsdam II	38.2	52.2	70.0	56.0 *
4 Potsdam I	44.4	56.1	74.1	62.4 *
5 Frankfurt on Oder	55.2	66.3	73.7	62.6
6 Pomerania	56.3	73.3 ^	80.9 ^	63.9
7 Breslau	50.2	57.3	65.5	58.4
8 Liegnitz	54.0	63.1	69.8	60.7
10 Magdeburg	47.3	58.0	68.6	57.9
11 Merseburg	46.4	58.3	79.8	67.9 *
12 Thuringia	47.2	58.7	73.9	62.4
13 Schleswig-Holstein	53.2	63.3	74.0	63.9
15 East Hanover	54.3	65.6	73.1	61.8
16 South-Hanover-Brunswick	48.7	56.3	63.8	56.2
19 Hesse-Nassau	49.4	54.3	63.3	53.4
28 Dresden-Bautzen	43.6	51.3	64.7	57.0
29 Leipzig	40.0	46.5	63.9	57.4 *
30 Chemnitz-Zwickau	50.0	55.4	74.4	69.0 ^*
33 Hesse-Darmstadt	47.4	50.3	61.2	58.3
34 Hamburg	38.9	46.9	64.5	56.5 *
35 Mecklenburg	48.0	62.9	70.3	55.4

MIXED

9	Oppeln	43.2	50.7	59.9	52.4
14	Weser-Ems	41.4	52.0	59.9	49.3
22	East Dusseldorf	37.4	44.2	66.7	59.9 *
26	Franconia	45.7	51.1	56.1	50.7
27	Palatinate	46.5	49.0	58.0	55.5
31	Wurttemberg	42.0	47.1	56.3	51.2
32	Baden	45.4	50.0	59.8	55.2

MAINLY CATHOLIC

17	North Westphalia	34.9	41.7	52.4	45.6
18	South Westphalia	33.8	40.3	57.1	50.6
20	Cologne-Aachen	30.1 v	35.8 v	50.0	44.3 v
21	Koblenz-Trier	38.4	44.5	50.5	44.4
23	West Dusseldorf	35.2	43.2	58.7	50.7
24	Upper Bavaria-Swabia	40.9	45.3	52.3	47.9
25	Lower Bavaria	39.2	41.2	46.4 v	44.4

ALL GERMANY

43.9	51.9	64.2	56.2
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CHART B

Percentage of votes received at each election, with the last column showing the change between 1928 and 1933 for each party.

PARTY	20-5-28	14-9-30	31-3-72	6-11-32	5-3-33	Change
NATIONALIST (DNVP)	14.2	7.0	5.9	8.3	8.0	-6.2
CONSERVATIVE (DVP)	8.7	4.5	1.2	1.9	1.1	-7.6
LIBERAL (DDP)	4.8	3.8	1.0	1.0	0.9	-3.9
SMALL CONSERVATIVE PARTIES	14.2	14.0	3.0	3.4	1.6	-12.6
CENTRE-(Z)+ BAVARIAN (BVP)	15.2	14.8	15.7	15.0	13.9	-1.3
SOCIALIST (SPD)	29.8	24.5	21.6	20.4	18.3	-11.5
COMMUNIST (KPD)	10.5	13.1	14.3	16.9	12.3	+1.8
NATIONAL SOCIALIST(NSDAP)	2.6	18.3	37.3	33.1	43.9	+41.3
PERCENTAGE VOTING	75	81	83	80	88	+13

NOTES 1. For location of Constituencies see Map No. 1

2. A * sign on Chart A indicates Constituencies with a high Communist vote (over 17%). Their highest vote was in Berlin (30.1%).

3. A ^ sign on Chart A indicates highest vote, v indicates the lowest, in the list.

4. Religious allocation of constituencies, and map indicating areas of high population density, are based on 1925 census.

5. Charts and maps based on 'Wahler and Wahlen in der Weimarer Republik'. Published in Bonn, West Germany, 1968. Detailed maps, showing relation of the Nazi vote to religion, may also be seen elsewhere ((eg. KG end page)).

6. Elections were by proportional representation, so seats held in the Reichstag closely mirrored votes received by each party.

7. The Nationalists wished for rule by a powerful President, who would listen to, and often take the advice of, a freely elected Parliament. They were not totalitarian as were the Nazi and Communist parties.

8. The only constituency in 1933, to vote for the continuance of the Weimar democratic system was mainly Catholic Lower Bavaria.

9. All the Protestant constituencies had clear majorities for totalitarian (Communist and Nazi) parties. The two constituencies in the Catholic areas that voted that way did so by narrow majorities of less than 51%.

10. The vote for the Catholic parties rose in 1933, although the high poll caused their percentage to fall. This indicates that the Nazi vote in Catholic areas was drawn mainly from those who normally supported non-Catholic parties (i.e. the non-Catholic minority, lapsed Catholics and those who lacked wholehearted loyalty to their Faith and Bishops).

11. During Hitler's rise to power the Protestant right-wing and Liberal parties lost 72% of their vote share, the Socialists 38% and the Catholic parties 9 %.

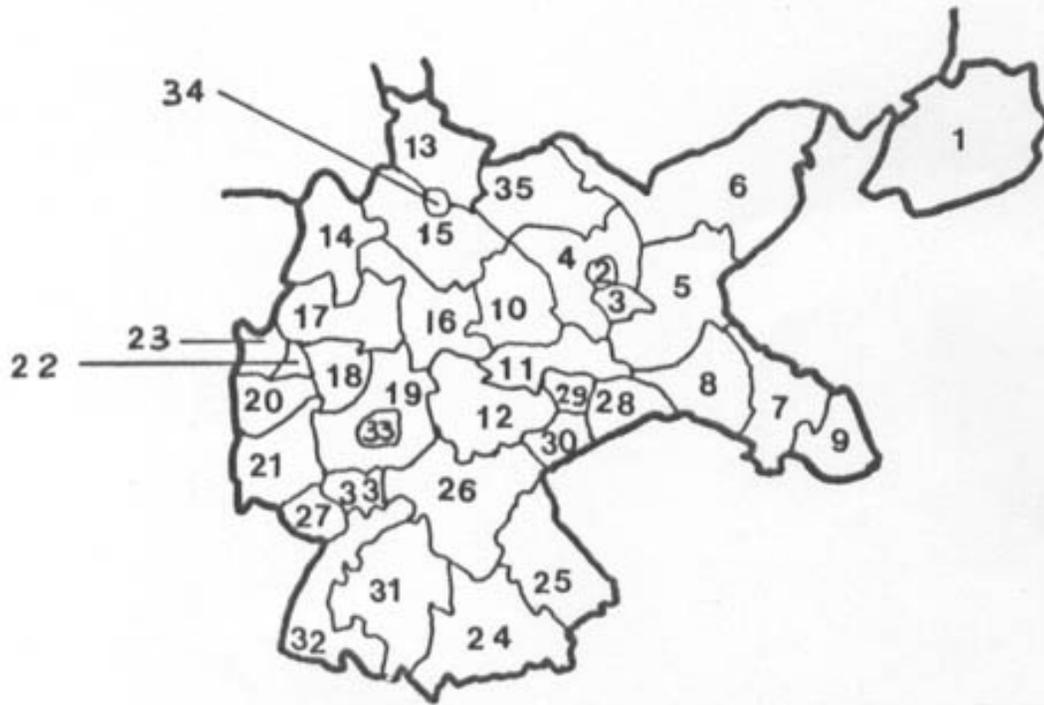
12. Catholic rural and urban areas both rejected the Nazis and Hitler's coalition.

THE UNIVERSITIES

At an early date, Hitler gained strong support amongst university students. When, in the summer of 1931, his student organisation (NSDStD) captured control of the national union of students, he was able to claim that he had the support of educated youth ((PDSA 50)). The Nazi student activists were not 'drop-outs', but successful at their examinations ((PDSA 59)). Their main, and best organised, opponents were the Catholic fraternities ((PDSA 62)). Where Catholics were few amongst the student population (Erlangen 27%, Griefswald 13%, Jena 4%) the Nazi vote was high. In 1930 the Nazi vote was Erlangen 76%, Griefswald 60% and Jena 67%. When, during the previous year, Erlangen had given the Nazis 51%, Hitler saw it as the 'Student Colberg' ((GP 210-211)).

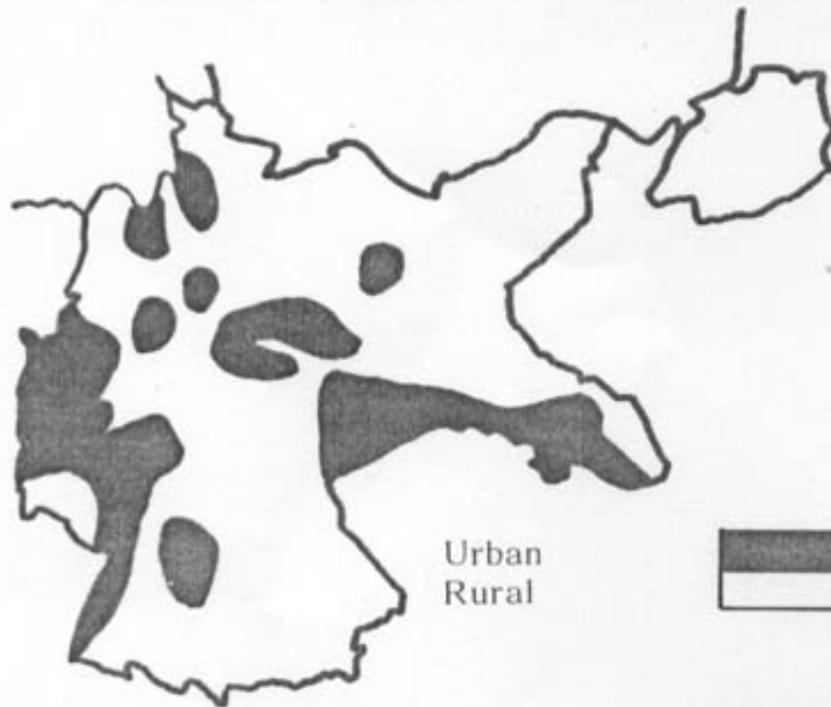
Due to the stronger Catholic presence at Freiburg and Munich, the Nazis polled only 25% ((PDSA 62)) and 33% ((GP 210)) respectively. At Bonn, where Catholics were 57%, the Nazis achieved 19% ((GP 211)). The Nazis failed at Wurzburg until there was '... an influx of Protestant students from Prussia . . .' ((PDSA 63)). The Socialists and Republicans were strong in Protestant Hamburg, but poor organisation led to a Nazi victory ((PDSA 63)).

The situation has been summarised as, 'The vote for the NSDStD was generally much stronger at Universities where the large majority of students were Protestants'. ((GP 210)).



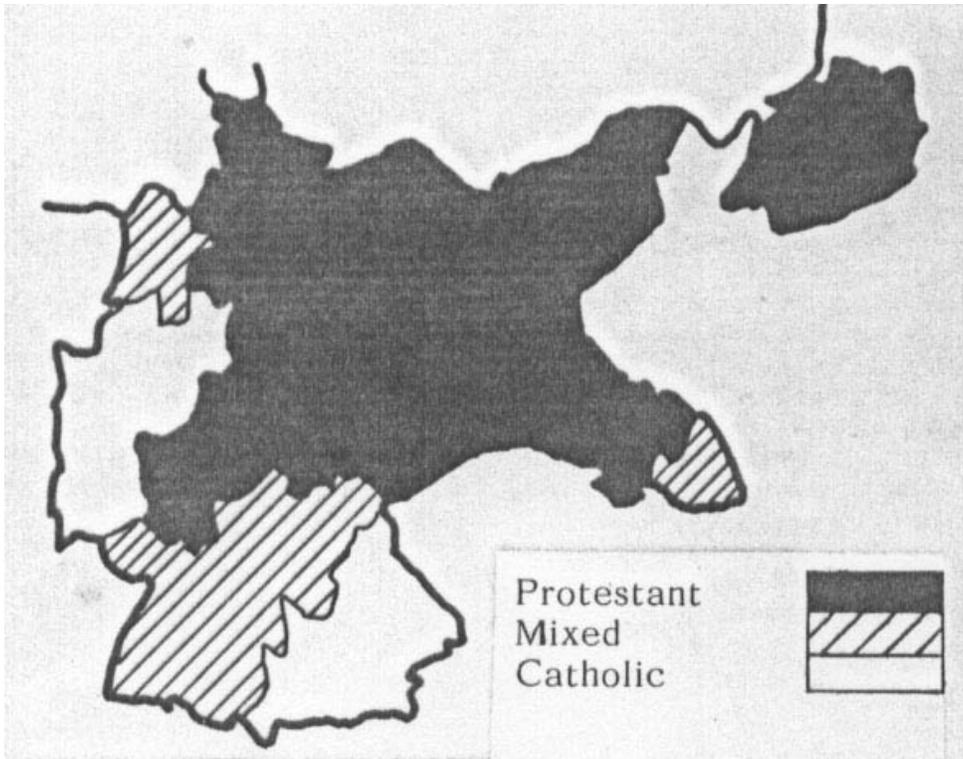
CONSTITUENCIES

MAP 1



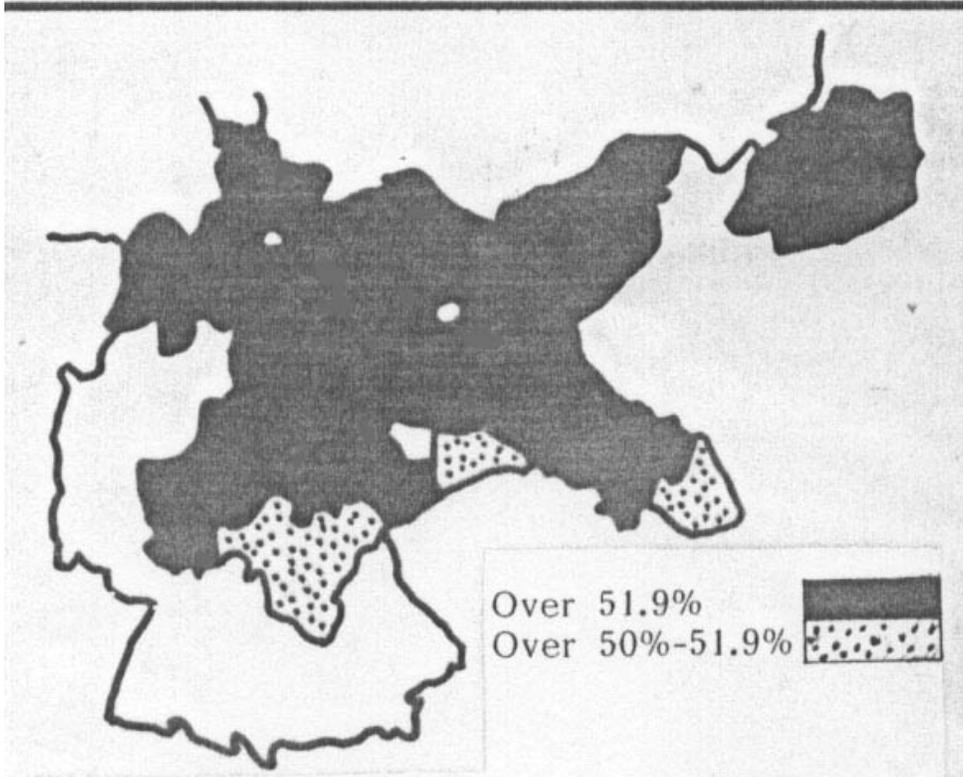
POPULATION DISTRIBUTION

MAP 2



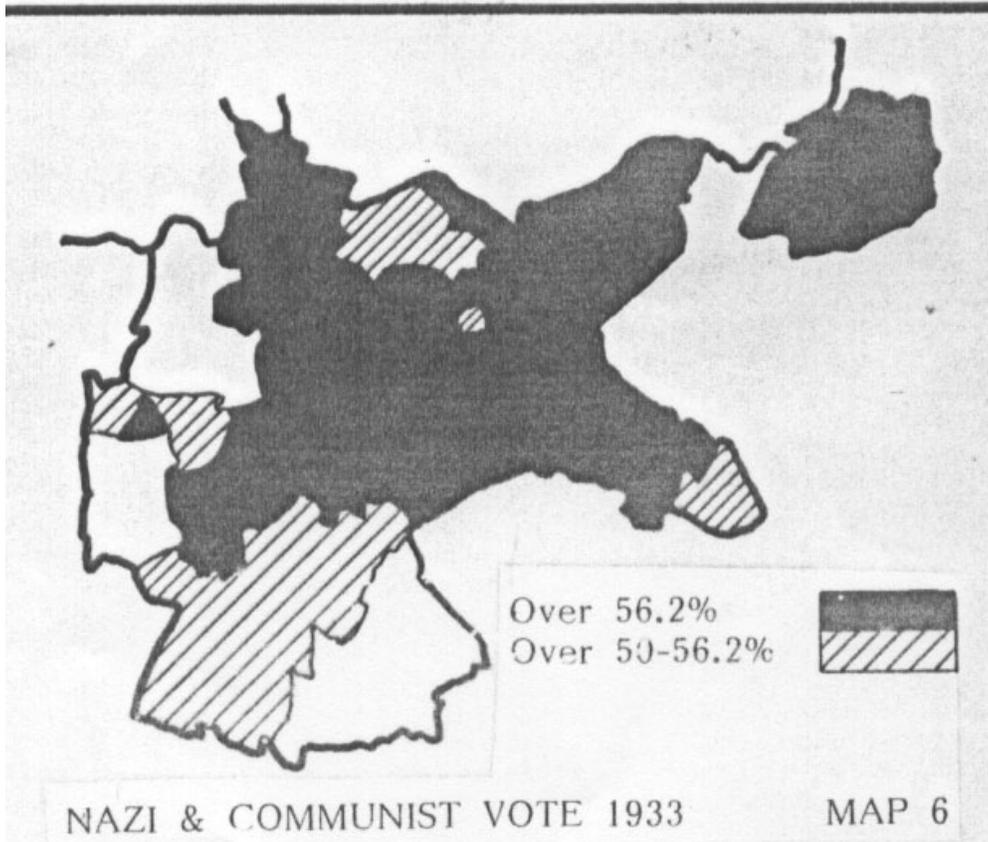
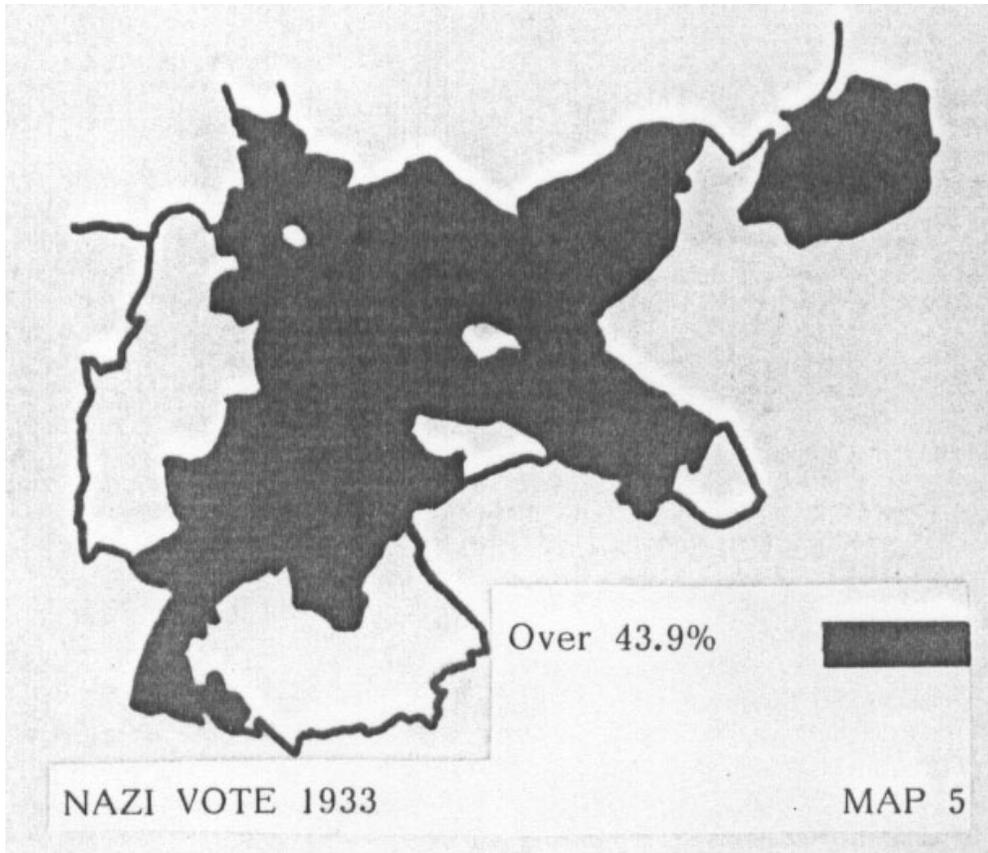
RELIGION OF CONSTITUENCIES

MAP 3



HITLER'S COALITION VOTE 1933

MAP 4



NAZI CARTOONS At first attacks were made against 'political' sections of the Church, while friendship was professed to those Catholics 'loyal to Germany'. After the 1937 Encyclical, the Church herself was accused of supporting Jewish Communist plots against Germany. Cardinal Pacelli became Pope Pius XII twenty months later. The first cartoon is from: 'Das Schwarze Korps, July 22nd, 1937. Humanité was a Communist newspaper. The second from: 'Der Heidelberger Student, May 4th, 1935. It shows a Nazi exposing Jews, Jesuits and Freemasons plotting together.



Die Frankreich-Reise des Kardinals

Sie sind entlarvt !

The Cardinal's Journey to France

Found out at last !

Schön ist sie ja nicht. Aber sie kann gut kochen!

Greuel-Lügen

She is certainly not pretty, but she can cook.

Horror-Lies

Giftküche der Volksfront.

Poison kitchen of the [Communist inspired] 'Popular Front'

CHAPTER IV **FRANZ VON PAPEN**

It is widely asserted that, who was instrumental in bringing Hitler to power, represented Catholic political opinion. It is sometimes stated that he was the leader of the Catholic Centre Party. Yet both these assertions are false.

Born in 1879, Von Papen was a Westphalian aristocrat with industrial connections. He was a Catholic and a former General Staff officer in the old Prussian army. Following the 1914-1918 war, he returned to Westphalia and purchased a large farm. His neighbours asked him to stand for the Prussian state parliament to represent farming interests. He agreed but did not join the Conservative Party, which in many ways came closest to the views of the farm owners. He later wrote: 'The Conservatives had too much prejudice and too many obsolete ideas' ((FVP 97)). He joined the Centre Party because most of the electors in his constituency were Catholics and it was devoted to compromise and the solving of social problems. ((FVP 97)).

In 1924 he was elected as a Centre Party M P to the Prussian state parliament ((FVP 103)). This local parliament was not restricted to the historic area of Prussia, but covered much of northern Germany. As in the national parliament, the Centre had formed coalitions since 1918 with the Socialists and Liberals. Papen immediately urged the Centre to break with the Socialists and form a government with the Conservatives. He was not successful and when the new coalition ministry was presented to parliament he led five other Centre MPs into voting against their own party's nominees. Because of his influence in bringing the farming vote to the Centre, he was not expelled ((FVP 106)). He was, however, banned from all committees, and became known as the 'black sheep' of the party ((FVP 106)).

In his Memoirs he wrote that his controversial position in the Centre was further complicated when he purchased 47% of the shares in 'Germania', the principal mouthpiece of the Centre Party ((FVP 111)). This 'caused consternation at party headquarters'. Papen became chairman of the Board of Directors and dismissed the editor and manager. He promised, however, to allow freedom of expression to all sections of the party. Trade Union leaders and a bishop were appointed to the board so as to balance Papen's conservatism ((FVP 111)).

In April 1925 the Centre put Dr. Wilhelm Marx forward as their candidate for President. Dr. Marx also had the support of the Socialists and Liberals, but Papen campaigned for Hindenburg, the Conservative and Nationalist candidate, claiming that voting for a President should not be considered a party matter ((FVP 107-8)). Papen later wrote 'This episode naturally made my position in the party extremely difficult, I had become an outsider . . .' ((FVP 107-8)).

Just prior to the 1932 elections, the Centre, Socialists and Liberals changed the method of electing the Prussian Prime Minister. This was to make it more difficult for a Nazi to obtain that position if, as seemed likely, the Nazis made big gains. Papen called this "a trick", and once more voted against his party ((FVP 110)). Soon afterwards he moved his home to the Saar and ceased to be an M P in the Prussian parliament ((FVP 110)).

Meanwhile at national level it had become impossible to form coalition governments in the Reichstag. When the President dismissed Brüning, he asked Papen to form an administration. The choice was most surprising as Papen was not even a member of the Reichstag. He later wrote "I am often asked how it was that someone in my position, in a more or less continuous state of conflict with the other members of my party, and with no record of high public office, acquired sufficient influence to be offered the post of Chancellor" ((FVP 114)). The answer appears to be that the President wanted someone, who was so independent in his thinking that he would be able to bring together people across party lines. Papen was firmly on the conservative side of politics yet had personal contacts with the Centre. Also he was on good terms with the army and held the respect of the President ((FVP 116)).

Papen proposed that the Centre should form a coalition with the Nazis and Nationalists as this would provide an administration with a parliamentary majority. Brüning replied on behalf of the Centre that he would never sit at the same table as the Nazis ((FVP 151)). Kaas, the Centre party chairman, begged Papen not to become Chancellor ((FVP 157)). He added that if he went ahead he would incur the hate and enmity of his own party ((FVP 157)). So when Papen, in June 1932, became Chancellor, the Centre MPs unanimously deplored what he had done. Papen tried to keep the friendship of the Centre but had to admit that there was no hope of reconciliation ((FVP 151)). In September 1932 the Centre joined other parties in passing a vote of 'no confidence' in Papen's government ((FVP 209)). Some authors state that the Vatican was pleased when Papen replaced Brüning. There is no evidence for this. The accusation is based on an uncritical acceptance of Communist propaganda.

After fresh elections in November of that year, Papen again asked the Centre to join with the Nazis and Nationalists in a coalition. Papen considered that if the President refused the largest party a say in the formation of a government, he would be violating the constitution ((KCA 8140)). But again the Centre refused ((FVP 212)), and condemned Papen's policy. It suggested that as the Nazis were the largest party they should shoulder the responsibility and the unpopularity of forming a government. Even with Papen's Nationalists as allies they would not command a majority, but the Centre would consider 'tolerating' such a coalition (i.e. abstaining on votes of no confidence) so that it could rule within the democratic system. Hitler would not agree as he knew that the Centre would only abstain while moderate policies were being pursued. Any attempt to introduce racial or dictatorial legislation would provoke the Centre into toppling him. Hitler was only willing to be part of a government which ruled by Presidential decrees and so be free from parliamentary restraint.

On the 30th of January 1933 the President reluctantly named Hitler as Chancellor in a Nazi-Nationalist administration, with Papen as vice-Chancellor. Presidential decrees would put its laws into effect. It was hoped that Presidential authority and the army would prevent Hitler becoming too powerful. Unfortunately the President aged quickly and became politically inactive, while the army became generally sympathetic to Hitler ((FVP 258)).

After the President gave Hitler dictatorial powers on February 28th and the Hitler led coalition parties received a majority in the elections of March 5th, Papen accepted that a 'one party' system of government was the only way out of Germany's problems ((KCA 8140)). It was on the 5th of March 1933 that Papen for the first time became an MP in the Reichstag and it was as a Nationalist, not a Centre Party member. As Papen was not a member of the Nazi party, he was not excommunicated by the Church. During the March election he had warned that pride of race 'must never develop into hatred of other races' and 'there was no need to found a new religion to bolster the German race' ((FVP 268)). In August 1932 a German delegate to the Jewish World Congress in Geneva had praised the Von Papen government's attitude towards the Jews ((FVP 285)). Papen soon became disillusioned with the way things were going.

On the 17th June 1934 at Marlburg University, while still vice-Chancellor, he publicly denounced Nazi attacks on free speech, the law, human rights, a free press, personal liberty and the churches. He said that the country had to choose between Christianity or Nazism ((FVP 309)). He condemned the reign of terror and warned the Nazis not to confuse virility with brutality. He declared that the one-party state was acceptable only as a transition stage on the way to an authoritarian but democratic state based on Christian principles ((FVP 307-9)).

Although publication of the speech was banned in Germany, copies were spread secretly, and reported abroad ((KCA 8230)).

Next day he handed in his cabinet resignation, but Hitler persuaded him to wait until an investigation had been made to discover who had banned his speech being reported.

Two weeks later, Hitler had all those likely to lead any attempt to overthrow him, murdered. These included Erich Klausener, the leader of Catholic Action, who had helped to draft Papen's speech ((WLS 218 and 223)), Fritz Gerlich, a Catholic editor, and Adalbert Probst, a well-known national Catholic Youth leader ((KG 61)). One of Papen's private secretaries was killed and two others sent to concentration camps.

Papen was arrested but his life spared, probably because of his strong personal friendship with the President. Also, without an organisation, he presented little threat to the regime. Hitler convinced him that there had been a plot to start a civil war, and it was unfortunate that some innocent people had been killed in error. Papen withdrew from the government in July ((FVP 263)). He served as ambassador to Turkey during the war and was found not guilty of war crimes at the Nuremberg trials (KCA 8140, 8227, 8230 and FVP 570)). He was found guilty, of assisting Hitler in preparing for the Austrian Anschluss by a denazification court in 1947. He claimed that the Court was biased as it consisted of four Socialists, one Communist, one Liberal and one Christian Democrat, with the President and his deputy both being Jews. On appeal in January 1949 he was immediately released from prison ((FVP 579)).

COMMENT

Papen conducted a very independent and personal policy through all these years and did not remotely represent, either officially or unofficially, the political views and policies of the Catholics of Germany.

CHAPTER V

THE CONCORDAT AND THE ENCYCLICAL

Soon after Hitler established himself in power, he requested that a Concordat be concluded with the Holy See. This would regulate the legal position of the Catholic Church in Germany, and provide Her with clear legal rights. The Church already had Concordats with several of the state governments, and a draft existed following negotiations with previous Reich administrations. The terms offered by Hitler were extremely good, assuring the Church of complete freedom of expression, education and action. The Pope didn't trust Hitler, but a refusal to sign would have enabled the Nazis to persecute the Church and put the blame for bad relations on the Pope. Many Catholics would reproach the Church for not accepting such a good 'peace treaty'. This would have split and weakened Church resistance to Nazi pressures.

To sign might also delay the expected persecution, and when it did come the Church would be clearly seen as the innocent victim. It would provide everyone with a measure against which to judge Hitler's adherence to his promises. Hitler would gain some temporary political prestige, but the Pope decided that the advantages outweighed the disadvantages. He confided to Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, an official at the British Embassy in Rome in 1933, that he was rushed and had to decide quickly. He had chosen between a very good treaty and the virtual elimination of the Church in Germany. He further remarked "They will scarcely break all the articles at the same time" ((MOC 39)). The Pope said later that he didn't regret signing, as it provided a legal, basis to resist Nazism ((MOC 39)). In the 1937 encyclical 'Mit Brennender Sorge', the Pope made known his motive for signing.

INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

Many writers give the impression that the Holy See was the only body negotiating with Hitler at the time and, by signing, the Pope was the first respectable authority to recognise Hitler's government. But the contemporary events show this to be untrue.

1. Recognition does not imply approval. Many governments have been granted international recognition when they had far less support from their people than that held by Hitler.
2. Hitler's representatives were recognised by the League of Nations. Germany did not withdraw from it until October 1933 ((WS 210)).

3. On May 5th the Soviet Union renewed her trade ((KCA 783)) and friendship agreement ((KG 27)) with Germany.

4. On the same day the U.K. Parliament voted by 304 to 56 to accept the Anglo-German trade agreement ((KCA 776)). This helped the U.K. coal industry at the expense of her manufacturing interests, and voting was on a non-party basis. Those voting to support the agreement included most of the Conservatives, most Liberals, including Sir H Samuel and Isaac Foot, and Labour leaders such as Clement Attlee, Sir Stafford Cripps and George Lansbury ((HHOC 1158-62)).

5. On July 15th, the United Kingdom, France, Italy and Germany, meeting in Rome, signed the 'Four Power Pact' ((KCA 877)). 'The Little Entente' of Yugoslavia, Rumania and Czechoslovakia gave its approval. ((KCA 821 and 832)). It was an: 'Agreement of understanding and cooperation'. Its object was to provide a basis for maintaining peace; to examine problems; to work together for success at the Disarmament Conference and to aim at economic co-operation in Europe ((KCA 829)). Three days later, the Nazi paper. 'Volkischer Beobachter' wrote: "The pact is perhaps historically the most important agreement of the last fourteen years" ((KCA 832)). The French Socialist and Radical coalition government gained a 406 to 185 vote in the French Assembly for this agreement, against right-wing opposition ((TT 9th June 1933 page 11)).

6. On July 20th the Concordat was signed ((KCA 883)).

7. On August 1st the Soviet Union accepted Herr Nadolny as a new ambassador to represent Nazi Germany ((KCA 897)).

8. On August 25th, the Haavara agreement was signed between Germany and Palestinian Zionists. In return for the Zionists promoting German exports to Palestine, Hitler allowed many Jews to leave Germany with enough money to meet British financial requirements for emigration to Palestine. In 1935 this agreement was endorsed by the World Zionist Conference. By September 1939 over 50,000 German Jews had settled in Palestine ((EZ and EJ)).

9. The Concordat was ratified on September 10th ((RD 125)).

10. Over 40 Concordats were signed between 1919 and 1939 ((NP 45)).

COMMENT: So the signing and ratification of the Concordat was not an isolated international event.

WITHIN GERMANY - A CHRONOLOGY

It is sometimes asserted that the Concordat was part of an agreement to dissolve the Catholic parties. To put their dissolution into perspective requires listing the main events of the transition to one-party government to 1933.

- 30th January Coalition government formed with Hitler as Chancellor.
- 27th February Reichstag fire.
- 28th February Emergency decree; Hitler obtains dictatorial powers.
- 5th March Elections.
- 5-22nd March Socialist and Catholic controlled local Parliaments and Councils dismissed ((KCA 709, 744)).
- 23rd March The Enabling Act forced through Parliament ((KCA 726-727)).
- 24th March Bavarian Party-Iron Watch paramilitary dissolved ((KCA728)).
- 5th April Nazis control of Catholic Peasants' Organisation ((KCA 44)).
- 2nd May Socialist Trade Union Federation suppressed ((KCA 778)).
- 2nd May The Catholic and the Hirsch-Dunker Trade Unions ordered to submit ((KCA 778)).
- 18th May Co-operative Societies taken over by Nazis ((DC 55)).
- 19th June Nazis announce they will set up a one party state ((KCA 847)).
- 19th June Socialists elect new executive as their leaders had fled the country ((KCA 848)).
- 22nd June Socialist party suppressed ((KCA 852))
- 22nd June Communist party suppressed ((JRPM 252)).
- 24th June Catholic Trade Unions suppressed ((RD 94)).
- 27th June Nationalist party dissolved ((KCA 856)).
- 27th June Liberal party dissolved ((KCA 856)).
- 4th July Nazi control of Nationalist Stahlhelm paramilitary ((KCA866))
- 4th July Catholic Bavarian party dissolved ((KCA 856)).
- 4th July Conservative party dissolved ((KCA 856)).
- 5th July Catholic Centre party dissolved ((KCA 867)).
- 7th July Bavarian Monarchist League dissolved ((KCA 868)).
- 11th July Government says all political parties have gone ((KCA 872)).
- 14th. July One Party State proclaimed ((WC 328)).

COMMENT:

There is no evidence of any pressure on the Catholic parties and organizations to dissolve by the Pope or bishops. Their demise was part of the pattern of uncontrollable events occurring within Germany, which affected all parties and non-National Socialist organisations. What do democrats do when a clear majority vote to abolish Democracy? This all occurred prior to the Concordat being signed.

A REVIEW OF ITS CLAUSES

A Concordat between the Church and a state is not a sign that the Church approves its particular system of government, the policies of the state or that the state supports the doctrines of the Catholic Church. A Concordat is normally agreed after or during a period of friction or antagonism, when the legal rights of each side are set down. They are often in the nature of a 'peace treaty' or an attempt at 'peaceful co-existence'. Forty concordats were signed between 1919 and September 1939 ((NP 45)). The Holy See was negotiating a Concordat with the Soviet Union in the 1920s, so as to obtain some basic legal rights to enable Catholics to practise their religion. If the Soviet Union had not broken off negotiations in 1927 ((DH 18)) and a Concordat had been signed, this would not have implied Church approval of the Communist system of Government, its terrorism, or the basic principles of marxist atheism. Similarly, it would not have implied that in future the Soviet Union would promote the Catholic religion.

The Concordat with Germany was signed on July 20th 1933 and on the 26th and 27th of July the Vatican paper, 'L' Osservatore Romano', insisted that it was based on Canon Law and did not amount to recognition of the political regime of the new Germany, still less to the directing principles of Hitlerism ((RD 124)). It was not an agreement with Hitler, but with the German state. Von Papen signed on behalf of President Hindenburg, and Cardinal Pacelli on behalf of the Pope. In March 1957 the West German Supreme Court ruled that the Concordat was still valid. ((TAB 6 April 1957 page 340)). It thereby confirmed that it was an agreement with the German State not with Hitler.

The Concordat consists of 34 articles and a protocol ((CBC 516-22)). This review has condensed and systematised the Concordat, so the numbering does not refer to the numbering in the original document.

WHAT THE CHURCH GAINED

GENERAL

Freedom of communication between Rome, the bishops, clergy and laity.

Freedom to publish Pastoral Letters, instructions, diocesan gazettes and to levy church taxes.

Freedom to preach and interpret the dogmatic and moral teachings and principles of the Church.

THE CLERGY

To be protected from outrages and interferences with their duties.

To be permitted to visit hospitals, prisons etc., and to hold Divine Services there.

Not to be called to act as Magistrates or Jurymen, nor to serve on taxation committees.

Not to be requested by Law Courts to disclose information obtained during pastoral work.

Not to be appointed to any state position without approval from a bishop.

The wearing of clerical dress or habit by those not entitled to do so to be made illegal.

EDUCATION

Catholic schools to be maintained and extended when necessary, with the teachers approved by the bishop.

Pupils attending schools established by religious orders, to be able to acquire the same qualifications as those at state schools.

The Church to be free to establish colleges for the training of the clergy. Catholic theology foundations in state universities to be continued.

ORGANIZATIONS

Parishes, Religious Orders and Societies to be recognised as legal entities in law. Their property to be protected.

Charitable, cultural, religious, social, professional and other associations, under the control of the bishops, to be protected.

State run sports, youth and labour organizations to allow their members time for regular practice of their religion on Sundays and Feast Days.

OTHER

Church marriage ceremonies to precede the Registry Office Ceremony. Racial minorities to be allowed to use their own language in Church services and organizations, providing Germans living in the corresponding country are granted the same right.

WHAT THE CHURCH PROMISED

1. Concordats with other countries to bear in mind the rights of German minorities to worship in the German language.
2. On Sundays prayers to be offered for Germany and its people.
3. Chaplains to be appointed to the army in consultation with the army command.

COMMENT: These three points are in accord with normal Catholic policy.

4. The government to be given twenty days notice of the appointment of a bishop, so could express its views. This did not give the government a veto, as Rome could ignore the views of the government without breaking the Concordat. The bishop had to take an oath of loyalty to Germany and its government.

COMMENT: Where Catholics are numerous, a bishop can have an influence on civic affairs. so some governments like to be included in the consultations prior to the choosing of a bishop. This is often carried out in an informal manner, but in this agreement it took a more formal form. As part of his duty to God, a bishop is loyal to his country. In Germany it was normal for all persons in civic positions to take an oath of loyalty, and this was now extended to bishops. It did not affect a bishop's duty to put God's laws before those of the state if they clashed.

These provisions were commonly included in Concordats. For example: The 1928 Concordat with Czechoslovakia permitted the government to object, on political grounds, to proposed bishops. Bishops were also required to swear allegiance to the State ((N C E 596)). So these items in the German Concordat were not a special concession to Hitler's government.

5. Clergy holding positions in Germany must be German citizens, have matriculated from German secondary schools and have studied philosophy and theology for at least three years at a German college or at Rome. Superiors of Religious Orders in Germany to be German citizens.

COMMENT: It is normal for the clergy of a country to be citizens of that country and to have received their education there, but a small minority may be foreign citizens. The effect of this clause on the life of the Church within Germany would be minimal.

6. Religious organizations must conduct their activities outside of political parties.

C O M M E N T: Since Bismarck's anti-Catholic campaign between 1870 and 1887, Catholic religious and political groups had worked closely together to defend Catholic freedoms, and later to provide answers, based on Christian principles, to Germany's social problems. In so doing, religious, social and political affairs had become blurred together in the minds of many people. As the Concordat granted religious freedom, and the Church was to be free in advising Catholics on moral issues within the one-party state, it was not unreasonable for religious organizations to be seen as clearly separate from political ones.

7. Priests will not be allowed to join or assist political parties.

COMMENT: Priests had helped to form Christian trade unions and co-operatives so as to free people from monopolistic laissez-faire liberalism and state socialism. Some had become deeply involved in the Centre party working for social legislation based on Christian principles.

While the Weimar parliamentary multi-party system existed, the bishops urged support for the Catholic parties. When the Concordat was signed, the National Socialist party alone existed, and priests were forbidden by the Church from joining it. If the Pope had insisted on the right of priests to join or assist illegal political parties, he would have been condemned by most Germans.

In March only 36% had voted for the continuance of the multiparty system, and many of these were now willing to accept their fellow voters' verdict and cooperate in the new single-party state. The Concordat did not affect lay Catholics joining illegal parties, only priests.

To have refused to sign, because of this one point, would have been seen by most people as justifying the Nazi claim that the Church was more interested in political power than religious peace. Church leaders foresaw a bitter future war between paganism and the Church, and were not going to start it over this one issue. When the attack did come it was clearly seen as an attack on Christianity, not as a state defending itself against a powerseeking political Church.

MIT BRENNENDER SORGE

This Encyclical was given at Rome on Passion Sunday, March 14th 1937. Much of it concerned the restatements of those Catholic beliefs that were particularly under attack in Germany. The extracts below concern those portions relating to the Concordat and general Papal policy towards Germany.

After mentioning the increasing persecution of the Church we read:

"When in the summer of 1933, Venerable Brethren, at the request of the German Government We resumed negotiations for a Concordat on the basis of the proposals worked out several years before, and to the satisfaction of you all concluded a solemn agreement, We were moved by the solicitude that is incumbent on Us to safeguard the liberty of the Church in her mission of salvation in Germany and the salvation of the souls entrusted to her, and at the same time by the sincere desire to render an essential service to the peaceful development and welfare of the German people.

In spite of the many serious misgivings, We then brought Ourselves to decide not to withhold Our consent. We wished to spare Our loyal sons and daughters in Germany, as far as was humanly possible, the strain and the suffering which otherwise at that time and in those circumstances must certainly have been expected. By our act We wished to show to all that seeking only Christ and the things that are Christ's, We refuse to none who does not himself reject it the hand of peace of Mother Church.

If the tree of peace planted by Us with pure intention in German soil has not borne the fruit we desired in the interests of your people, no one in the whole world who has eyes to see or ears to hear can say today that the fault lies with the Church and with her Supreme Head. The experience of the past few years fixes the responsibility".

The Encyclical then claims that the Church has done its best to uphold Her side of the agreement, and continues:

"When the time comes to place before the eyes of the world these endeavours of Ours, all right-minded persons will know where to look for the peace-makers and where to look for the peace-breakers."

"Anyone who has any sense of truth-left in his mind . . . will have to recognise with surprise and deep disgust that the unwritten law of the other party has been arbitrary misinterpretation of agreements, evasion of agreements, evacuation of the meaning of agreements, and finally more or less open violation of agreements."

"Our moderation in spite of all this was not suggested by considerations of human expediency, still less by weakness, but simply by the wish not to root out with the tares any good plant, by the intention not to pronounce a public verdict before minds were ready to recognise its inevitability, by the determination not to deny definitely the loyalty of others to their pledged, word, before the iron language of facts had torn away the veil which by deliberate camouflage covered and still covers the attack on the Church."

At the time of the negotiations for the Concordat a picture was taken of the Papal Nuncio to Germany, Mgr. Orsenigo, shaking hands with Hitler. This picture and these alleged words of the nuncio were used as Nazi propaganda "Chancellor, I have long attempted to understand you. Today, I am glad to say I do." He actually said "I have wanted to make your acquaintance for a long time, and today at last I do." ((AR 179)).

CHAPTER VI

THE SAAR PLEBISCITE

On January 13th 1935 a plebiscite was held in the Saarland to decide whether it should rejoin Germany. The successful vote for Germany increased the territory under Hitler's rule. It is sometimes said that, as the Saar was devoutly Catholic, the call of the bishops for reunion was crucial to the result, and they therefore were assisting Hitler's plans. Before an informed judgement may be made on the action of the bishops, a clear view of the situation is required.

THE REASON FOR THE PLEBISCITE

The 1914-18 war had been mainly fought in the industrialised north of France. So although she was a war victor her industry had been destroyed while Germany's had been left untouched. France therefore demanded reparations. The German Saarland on the frontier had rich deposits of coal and a thriving steel industry. So in 1920 the Allies placed it under the 'League of Nations' and granted the produce from the coalmines to France for 15 years as reparations. At the end of this period the inhabitants would be asked whether they wished to rejoin Germany, join France or remain under the League.

The population was German by language, customs and culture and, except for a brief period 200 years previously, had been part of Germany for 500 years ((LGC 55)). Only one person in 200 claimed French as their native language ((NGM 244)). Alsace-Lorraine to the west, which had been given to France in 1918, also produced coal and this grade of coal was needed in the Saar's steel mills, thereby making the areas economically inter-dependent ((NGM 248)). This economic aspect, together with the poverty in Germany, provided France with the hope that the Saarlanders would choose union with France or to continue under the League.

The League tried to undermine loyalty to Germany by creating a separate flag, coat of arms, railway system and separate membership of the postal union. The French represented Saarlanders abroad and their troops were stationed there. French currency was introduced and it was made part of the French customs union ((LGC 132)).

RELIGIOUS FRICTION

The mine owners had provided schools for the children of miners. These were now changed from being German and Catholic to French and anti-religious. This was in line with the anti-church policy of the French government. Privileges were offered to parents who were unconnected with mining if they transferred their children to the anti-religious schools. Less than 4% of children were involved but Church French relations reached a low point. Following representations, the League stopped the children of non-miners being enticed into the anti-religious schools, but did not help the miners' children ((FMR 53)).

The Saar was three-quarters Catholic, yet the five members of the Commission established by the League were all non-Catholics. After persistent protests, one Catholic was appointed in 1924 ((FMR 30)). The dioceses had their centres in Germany, and the League pressurised the Pope to break up these dioceses and form a completely new one for the Saar. The Pope said that he would wait until the Saarlanders had decided their own future and a peace treaty had been signed. This brought great joy to the people ((FMR 53)), who saw themselves as living in an occupied country.

It is unlikely that these incidents affected the plebiscite result, but they destroyed any image of France being a freedom loving country compared to Germany. Hitler at this time was still respecting the educational rights of parents.

THE SITUATION IN GERMANY

From March 1933 till the summer of 1934 the media promoted paganism, while the churches were unable to reply. Hitler did not personally take part in these campaigns and continued to assert that he wanted church assistance in rebuilding the country. During a meeting with the bishops in June 1934, he promised to curb the attacks being made by his pagan supporters. And in the second half of 1934 there was comparative peace and more freedom for the Christian press. Attacks on Jews also diminished and some Jews were returning to Germany ((NS 96)). Although the atmosphere was still tense, there was hope that the worst was now over.

A major contention of the Nazis was that Catholics, by owing allegiance to a foreign Pope, could not be as loyal as those who held a religion based on German blood. So, in Her battle for the soul of German youth, the bishops were

careful to avoid providing any ground for being accused of lacking in patriotism.

RELIGION AND POLITICS

The Saar's population of 823,000 was 72% Catholic, 26% Protestant and 0.5% Jewish ((ML 305)). Two elections, by proportional representation, to the Saar parliament were held, with the following results in percentages:

	1928	1932
Communist (atheist)	17	27
Socialist (atheist)	17	10
Centre (Catholic)	47	47
Conservative (Protestant)	19	10
Nazi (Pagan)	nil	6

((LGC 157-8 and ML 227-9)).

All these parties supported union with Germany, so a plebiscite at these times would have given a near 100% vote for Germany.

Hitler was not showing any moderation towards Socialists and Communists, so their leaders called for a pro-League vote. Hitler addressed a rally near the border to which Saarlanders were invited. Both Protestant and Catholic services were arranged at the start of the meeting to show the respect the Government had towards religion. Hitler stated that once the Saar had been returned, peace was assured as nothing more divided France and Germany ((FMR 98)).

BRITISH ASSESSMENTS

These were based on two serious errors:

1. That the Saar was devoutly Catholic.
2. That the vote could be so close that action by the bishops would be decisive.

In reality:

1. The Saar was 26% Protestant, and only 47% voted for the Catholic Party. Also many of these voters did so because of its economic policies, not for religious reasons.
2. By early May 1934, 86 % of the electorate had pledged themselves to vote for reunion with Germany ((LGC 163)). It was very clear that, 'there was no possibility of a majority vote against reunion with the Reich'. ((LGC 157)).

THE CHOICE FOR THE BISHOPS

The hierarchy was aware that there would be a large majority for reunion. The dioceses involved were those of Trier and Speyer, which were mainly in Germany. The bishops lived by their Cathedrals in Germany so were involved in the delicate situation between church and state. They had three choices:

1. Advocate re-union.
2. Advocate union with France or a pro-League vote.
3. Be non-committal.

They chose the first option. If they had acted otherwise it would have undone the months of restraint exercised by all the German bishops to prove that Catholics were loyal Germans. For 15 years the Saarlanders had eagerly awaited reunion and the end of foreign occupation. The only reason the bishops could have given for a call for not supporting re-union, would have been that the improving situation in Germany was no more than a hypocritical ploy by Hitler. They may have privately feared this themselves, but to argue this publicly would have provided Hitler with an excuse to launch an all-out persecution of the Church. The German people saw the plebiscite as a political and national issue, not one of religion. If there was going to be a 'showdown' between Christianity and Nazism the bishops were determined to avoid fighting it on the issue of patriotism. To take an anti-reunion stand merely to reduce the majority for re-union would have been considered foolish by practically everyone who knew the facts of the situation. It would have done great harm to the Church while not preventing the extension of Hitler's authority to the Saar.

CONFIRMATION

Analysis of the result confirms that the bishops could not have prevented reunion even if they had tried. The 97.9% who participated in the plebiscite held under international supervision gave a clear result:

For Germany	477,119	90.36%
For the League	46,513	8.82%
For France	2,124	0.4%
Invalid	2,249	0.42%

((RCA 1508)).

Every district supported reunion by at least 82%.

Many in Britain condemned the action of the bishops. But an indication of how far the British press was out of touch with reality, may be seen from the Times of London. The day prior to the poll, it predicted that the anti-German vote would be 40-50% ((TT January 12th 1935)).

ANALYSIS

1. The combined Communist and Socialist vote in 1932 was 37%, yet the anti-German vote was 9%. This indicated that over three quarters of the Socialists and Communists voted for union with Hitler's Germany. This is based on the assumption that none of the usual Centre and Conservative voters were against reunion. But at least a few of these voters, such as members of the Deutscher Volkbund formed by Catholic priests to reject union while Hitler was in power ((FM R 103)), would have voted against re-union. So the 'left-wing' vote for Hitler's Germany must have been near 80%.

2. The non-Catholic parties gained 53% in 1932. If, for the sake of analysis, we presume that all the 9 % anti-German vote came from supporters of these parties, we are able to see that the pro-German vote had gained 44% (i.e. 53 - 9) before a single Centre Party supporter's vote had been counted. This means that the bishops would have had to

persuade 41 out of every 47 traditional Centre supporters to vote against Germany in order to prevent re-union. This would have been an impossible task.

3. Knowing that any statement of theirs would not make any difference to the result, the only purpose in urging an anti-German vote would have been to make a symbolic gesture. It would have been against a Government showing signs, whether hypocritically or not, of moderating its revolutionary, fervour. To make this gesture would have presented Hitler with a great propaganda prize for its future war against the Church, and done nothing to prevent an extension of the area under Nazi control

CHAPTER VII

THE COMMUNIST PARTY

The Nazis made great efforts to convince those outside Germany that Hitler had the support of the churches. They were aided by the Communists, wishing to discredit the churches by spreading the same myth. So it is relevant to consider the role of the Communist party at that time.

Marxists had seized power following a naval mutiny at Kiel on 30th October 1918. The Kaiser abdicated on November 9th, and the Congress of Workers' Councils met in Berlin on December 16th. The majority wished to promote Democratic Socialism rather than establish a dictatorship, so the extremists formed themselves into the Communist Party. In January 1919 they attempted to overthrow the new government but were unsuccessful. For ten years the Socialists as the largest party formed coalition governments with the Centre and Liberals. Very difficult economic problems were brought under control, until the worldwide financial collapse in 1929 led to massive unemployment.

To understand Communist policy it is necessary to understand their long-term strategy. Their first priority was to destroy the Socialist party in order to gain the undivided leadership of the industrial workers. At the same time they aimed to prevent parliamentary democracy solving the problems of the poor. If unemployment and poverty were cured, class hatred would diminish and the opportunity lost to engineer a revolution. If they caused a loss of confidence in the democratic process they expected there would be a drift towards a right-wing authoritarian nationalist government. In time such a government would

become oppressive and unpopular and, in the absence of a strong Socialist party, the Communists would lead the working class (allied with a wide section of anti-authoritarian middle-class society) in a revolution. As the leaders of such a revolution they would be able to establish a Communist dictatorship.

So, while the Nazis were becoming a powerful force, the Communists considered the destruction of the Socialist Party their first priority. In 1928 at the 6th Congress of the Comintern (the international body co-ordinating world Communism), it was stated that social democracy and fascism were two weapons of the bourgeoisie: the first was used to demoralise the working class from within, the second to strike it from without. The party invented the expression 'Social Fascism' to describe the Socialists. In April 1931, the Communist Party urged its supporters to vote in favour of a Nazi and Nationalist initiated referendum in Prussia. This referendum aimed to dismiss the Socialist-Centre coalition in the local parliament and so end democracy. The referendum failed and the coalition ruled successfully from 1920-1932 ((WC 267)).

In the July 1932 national elections the Communists gained 12, and the Nazis 125, additional seats. The Communists considered this to be a triumph because the Socialists and other democrats lost heavily, thereby bringing civil war and revolution closer. In October of the same year, they supported a Nazi led transport strike in Berlin aimed to weaken the government. They co-operated with the Nazis in the streets.

But their greatest impact was to make the Socialists fear losing support to the Communists. This fear led them to refusing to join coalition governments in the Reichstag after 1929. Muller the Socialist leader and his two chief colleagues, were willing to compromise with the Centre party so as to preserve democracy ((GAC 532)). But Communist influences within the Trade Unions prevented this ((JRPM 210)). So the largest party supporting democracy was prevented from sharing governmental power from 1929-1933. With the small Centre party attempting to rule on its own with the aid of Presidential decrees, democracy came to be viewed as ineffective and farcical. This paved the way for the widespread desire for a strong leader - 'A Fuehrer'.

On the 1st April 1933, immediately after Hitler's victory, the Comintern's official organ 'Rundschau' declared:

'The momentary calm after the victory of Fascism is only a passing phenomenon. The resistance of the masses against fascism will inevitably increase. The open dictatorship of fascism destroys

all democratic illusions, frees the masses from the influence of the social democrats, and thus accelerates the speed of Germany's march towards proletarian revolution'.

During 1933, public speeches and newspaper articles in the Soviet Union stressed the desire for friendly relations with Germany. The Soviet Union could see advantages in encouraging Hitler to be hostile towards France and Britain. At the time these articles were appearing in the Russian press, Communists and their anti-Catholic supporters in Britain were helping the Nazis to establish the myth that the Catholic Church was a supporter of Hitler.

This chapter has been based on Chapters 3, 5 and 9 of 'The Pattern of Communist Revolution' by Hugh Seton-Watson, published by Methuen.

CHAPTER VIII **THE JEWISH VOTE**

The impression is often given that Catholics and Jews in Germany were antagonistic towards one another. The Jews, it is said, were nearly all Communists, and the majority of Catholics were anti-Semitic. These myths are not supported by an examination of the evidence.

During the half century prior to the 1914-18 war, there was a wide-spread loss of faith in Jewish belief and practice. In this vacuum, large numbers of idealists among Jewish young intellectuals embraced atheist Marxism. Immediately after the war, the Jewish German intellectual world became publicly identified with Marxism, in both its democratic socialist, and its revolutionary forms. 237 out of the 240 members of the socialist students group at Frankfurt-am-Main University were Jews. 25% of the socialist students at Heidelberg University were Jews, as were 50% at Berlin ((DLN 30))

In November 1918, Berlin born Kurt Eisner, an extreme independent Socialist, established a revolutionary Socialist Republic in Munich ((GAC 400-1)). In January the following year, the democratic Socialists regained control but by April anarchists were ruling the city, with the official government operating from Bamberg.

Later that month Communists led by Russian born Eugen Levin ((GAC 41)), seized power, establishing a Soviet Republic and forming a Red Army. None of

the leaders of these three revolutionary groups were Bavarian born ((EH 29)). The leaders of these three extremist groups were Eisner, Landauer, Muhsom, Jaffe, Levin, Toler and Axelrod. All were Jews ((EH 29)).

However, away from the intellectual world things were different. Most 'working class' Jews gave their support to the Socialists, but probably in no higher proportion than the Protestants. As the Nationalist and Conservative parties tolerated a high degree of anti-Semitism, the great majority of 'middle-class' Jews supported the Liberals ((DLN 72)). During the mid-1920s, 10 % of Liberal voters were Jews ((EH 13)).

A few practising Catholics were drawn to the German Workers' Party (DAP), when it was first founded. This party later became the Nazi party. But by the mid-1920s, as the precise policies of the Nazis became clearer, even this little support ebbed away. 'It is doubtful if many devout Catholics were in the Nazi Party when it was re-founded in 1925'. ((GP 147)).

The Catholic Centre Party embraced a very wide range of economic and political interests. Protestants and Jews were eligible to join from its very beginning ((EBW 27)), and it received some Jewish votes ((EH 29)). The degree and quality of Catholic support for the Centre Party varied greatly. In northern Germany the Catholic minority saw it as the protector of its rights, and as a means of evangelisation. There the party was radical and in 1924 received the support of three-quarters of baptised Catholics ((GP 158)).

In Bavaria, Catholics didn't feel the same threat to their schools and principles. Economic, social and local issues assumed a greater importance in motivating voting patterns. For many Catholics, especially those not religious, these induced them to support other parties. The Centre in Bavaria only obtained just over half the Catholic vote ((GP 158)). But at the same time the party was the unassailable 'establishment' in many villages and small towns. This attracted activists who pragmatically chose it as the best vehicle for a political career. Their motivation could be that of conservatism, Bavarian autonomy or a sectional or personal interest. Such people could rise in the Bavarian wing of the party yet express views, which did not represent the purest of Catholic religious opinion.

Revolutionary turmoil caused the Bavarians to feel very insecure. Many saw the armed Freecorps attached to the nationalist Volkischer groups, as being more effective in restoring order than the pacific Centre Party leaders.

In northern Germany the Centre was co-operating with the Socialists so as to preserve democracy, but for Bavarians socialism appeared to be the immediate danger. The Centre in Bavaria found it difficult to present itself as a bulwark against 'socialism' when it was part of a coalition with the Socialist party in the Reichstag.

So the Bavarian section of the party broke away to create the Bavarian Peoples' Party (BVP). While retaining its Catholic outlook, it formed local coalitions with conservative rather than liberal or socialist parties.

A strand of racist anti-Semitism existed in Bavarian society mainly manifesting itself in the volkischer movement. So volkischer anti-Semitism and militancy provided a challenge to the Centre Party in Bavaria. But some anti-Semitism rubbed off onto individual BVP members. Others opposed any anti-Semitism based on race or religion, but admitted that many of the intellectual authors, poets and philosophers, undermining Christian moral values, were Jews. They distinguish their antagonism towards the aggressively anti-Christian Jewish intellectuals, from enmity towards Jews because of race or religion. It has been suggested that two early BVP statements were anti-Semitic. But they need to be read within the context of the events taking place at the time.

A pronouncement in December 1918, following Eisner's seizure of power, read:

'The Bavarian Peoples' Party knows no difference between Bavarians of the Jewish faith and Germans and Bavarians of the Christian faith . . . for the Bavarian Peoples' Party membership of a race plays no role either . . . What must be fought are the numerous atheistic elements of a certain international Jewry with predominantly Russian colouring.' ((EH 27)).

A statement in the following April, while Munich was controlled by Anarchists and Communists, said:-

'The Bavarian Peoples' Party decisively rejects all violations of the entity of the people by a terroristic minority, led by elements alien in origin and race, and demands that there should at last be an end to the agitation among wide circles of the population on the part of foreign, politicising Jews.' ((EH 27)).

If the revolutionary leaders had been French immigrants, the attitude towards these `terroristic and politicising` foreigners would have been just as hostile.

While this antagonism was being shown towards revolutionary foreign Jewish politicians, local Rabbis were continuing to support the BVP ((EH 30)). They knew that the BVP was their main defence against the anti-Semites ((EH 30)). Also they knew that the atheist Jewish intellectuals and revolutionaries aimed to destroy all religious beliefs including those of Judaism and represented the views of very few within the Jewish community.

Hitler, writing of this period, sneeringly accused the BVP of begging for Jewish votes at elections ((AH 278)). When the threat of revolution receded the BVP reunited with the Centre Party at national (Reichstag) level.

The huge majority of Jews were irreligious and unconcerned at Liberal and Socialist opposition to religious schools and Jewish traditional morality. Orthodox (i.e. religious) Jews were struggling to preserve their schools and Jewish family life. Non-religious Jews had tried to close the Jewish schools in Berlin ((DLN 113)). Religious Jews were sympathetic to the Centre Party and the widely read orthodox: 'Israelitisches Familienblatt' frequently supported the Centre in its editorials. This was especially true in the elections of May and November 1932 and in February 1933 ((DLN 28)). 'Der Israelit' traditionally supported the DVP, but after 1932 recommended the Socialists and the Centre equally ((DLN 29)). 'Judische Rundschau', the Zionist paper, also had kind words for the Centre ((DLN 28-9))

Until 1928 about 60% of Jews voted for the Liberals (DDP) and 30% for the Socialists ((EH 48 and 66)). But when in July 1930 the DDP merged with an anti-Semitic group to form the 'States Party' ((EH 58 and DLN 73)), the DDP's Jewish supporters looked for a new home. In September 1930 the Centre nominated a leading Zionist as a candidate for the Reichstag ((DLN 28-9)). His position on the list gave him little chance of election, but at a time when all other parties, apart from the Socialist, were trying to distance themselves from the Jewish Community, it was a symbolic gesture of solidarity and emphasised the party's rejection of anti-Semitism. Another Zionist led the, 'Organization of Jewish Centre Party voters' ((DLN 29)). The Nazi Party claimed that: 'it was more Christian than the Centre Party because the Centre had Jewish candidates ((GP 164)). Researchers agree that in the last years before Hitler gained power, 90% of the Jewish vote went to the Socialists and the Centre ((EH 55)).

It is not clear in what proportion the Jewish vote split between the two parties. A Socialist writer considers that the Centre received less than 20% of the Jewish vote ((AP 59)), while another suggests that 60% voted Socialist and 30% Centre, thereby electing one Centre and two Socialist MPs, the remaining votes being distributed across the whole range from Communist to the DNVP

((EH 62 and 66)). Two other commentators assert that nearly all 'middle class' Jews switched to the Centre ((EH 55)), while another suggests that the Centre became a haven 'possibly for the majority of Jewish voters' ((DLN 72)).

There is no way of estimating how many votes the Centre and the Socialists lost due to their refusal to embrace anti-Semitism.

When the German Communist Party was established in 1919, seven out of 99 founding members were Jewish, as were 4 of the 11 man central committee and 10% of its Representatives in the 1920s ((EH 43-44)). But at lower party levels, numbers were insignificant, and few Jews voted Communist ((EH 44-47)). By 1932 not one Jew was amongst their 89 Representatives in the Reichstag, or the 57 in the Prussian parliament, or in other state parliaments. Not one Jew was included in the 500 candidates for public office ((EH 46)). The Centralverein, which fought anti-Semitism and advised Jews how to vote, gave its main aid to the Centre and the Democratic Socialist party. It not only excluded the DNVP and Nazis from their approved list, but the Communists also. ((DLN 88)).

Nazi propaganda aimed to assure those outside Germany that Hitler had the support of German religious opinion for his anti-Semitism. The Communists, frequently called 'Bolsheviks' by their enemies, preached the same message so as to discredit the churches. This combination produced a 'German anti-Semitic Catholic versus Bolshevik German Jew myth'. But in 1932 and 1933, any 'Catholic' M.P. or candidate who accepted the Nazi philosophy was refused the sacraments, and not one Jew was a Communist candidate or Representative in the Reichstag or a state parliament. This is an example of the difference between a politically motivated myth and historic reality.

CHAPTER IX **THE PROTESTANTS**

In showing the Catholic opposition to the growth of Nazism, this publication has referred to areas in Germany by using the traditional terms of 'Protestant' and 'Catholic'. It is therefore relevant to survey the relationship between the Protestant Church and Nazism. All but 150,000 of Germany's Protestants belonged to the Lutheran church, and Luther's teachings still exerted a great influence on politics at the end of the 1914-18 war ((WLS 236)). As well as hating the Catholic Church, Martin Luther was 'a passionate anti-Semite, and a ferocious believer in absolute obedience to political authority'. ((WLS 236-7)).

Luther was also a strident German nationalist. Most religious Protestants supported the. Nationalist party (DNVP), which was antagonistic to Catholics, Jews, marxists and democracy. Others voted for the conservative parties, which maintained similar though less aggressive attitudes.

Many of the areas considered as Protestant could with more accuracy have been described as non-religious. It was amongst this large non-religious segment of the population that Socialism, Communism and Nazism grew.

In Hitler's early days, it was the non-religious in Bavaria and beyond, who provided him with their support. For many, being Protestant meant little more than not being Catholic or Jewish. At the same time, Communists and Socialists openly proclaimed their intention of establishing an atheist state, one by revolution, the other by democratic means. In Berlin, the policies of these marxist parties were already being felt. During the 1920s religious services, even at Christmas, were prohibited in hospitals if just one patient in a large ward objected. A patient wishing to receive Communion in privacy had to go to the bathroom. ((OD 125)).

Many pastors felt that democracy could not last, and that civil war would lead to a marxist anti-religious dictatorship. As the nationalist and conservative parties did not attract much 'working-class' support, they were seen as being too weak to stop this. The Nazis were authoritarian, anti-democratic, nationalistic and hostile to Catholics, Jews and marxists. At first, because of these aspects and Nazi rowdyism, many religious Protestants refused to support them. But as they were able to attract millions of votes from all classes, they came to be seen as the most effective protectors of church and liberty. Nazi election literature said nothing about dictatorship, pagan morality, war, concentration camps, or selective breeding. The party called for a spiritual revival and proclaimed the importance of the Christian churches in promoting family life, peace and public decency.

Hitler strictly forbade direct attacks on Catholic or Protestant doctrines, and claimed that disputes with Catholic bishops were due to their interference in political affairs. Nazi propaganda could be very subtle. For example, the story was spread that Hitler always carried copy of the New Testament in his pocket and that he read Bible verses and stanzas from a hymnal every morning. This kind of thing was generally believed at the time ((OD 136)). During the two years prior to Hitler gaining power the great majority of young Protestant seminarians openly supported him ((EB 157)). Half the ordinands were followers of Hitler ((EB 157)).

'During the Reichstag elections . . . the Protestant clergy quite openly supported the Nationalist, and even the Nazi enemies of the Republic'. And later, ' . . . most of the pastors welcomed the advent of Adolf Hitler to the Chancellorship in 1933'. ((WLS 237)).

Like the Catholic bishops, some Protestant leaders warned that Hitler's electoral promises were a smoke-screen to hide his pagan aims, but few listened to them.

After 1924, a few Protestant candidates, supporting democracy and social reform, had stood in some towns. And in 1929 the 'Christian Social Party' was formed. ((AM 106)), but it gained few votes.

Anti-Nazi Protestants faced another serious difficulty. Hitler's movement was not merely a political party, but a new way of life based on pagan principles. While most Nazis were capturing the state, a small group calling themselves 'German-Christians' were working to capture the heart and structure of the Church. They used Christian words and ideals to cloak their real pagan aim, which was to make the church 'The spiritual sword of the Fuehrer.' ((OD 138)).

There were 28 separate Lutheran churches within a loose federal structure ((EB 204)), with Synods elected by church members in the parishes. Although any baptised Protestant could vote, normally only the committed took an interest. The need was widely felt for a more centralised organisation with a Reich Bishop, authorised to speak on behalf of all Lutherans. The German-Christians, utilising, this desire, fought a campaign to win control of the synods. The Nazi SA machinery was mobilised to support their candidates ((OD 139)). Ordinary parishioners were completely unprepared for this onslaught and the German-Christians, in November 1932, gained one third of the Synod vote in Prussia ((OD 139)).

So during the vital period when Hitler was reaching for power the much of the clergy supported him as a political leader and failed to grasp his real aims. At the same time the pagan infiltration prevented the more farsighted clergy from leading the church into providing firm Christian leadership.

The German-Christians, with others, now establishing one church to replace the federation ((OD 140)), and this church was formed in July 1933, after Hitler had achieved power. The German-Christians nominated Ludwig Muller as first

Reich bishop. He was Hitler's advisor on church affairs ((OD 141)), an army chaplain, of no theological formation, with little inclination for work and accustomed to move in 'influential circles' ((OD 140-1)). The Nazi party paid for his election campaign expenses ((OD 141)). When Friedrich von Bodelschwingh, a true Christian, was elected, Muller went on the radio to announce that, "a ruthless struggle of the German Christians against the Reich bishop had begun". ((OD 143)).

Hitler's commissioner replaced many church leaders with German-Christians ((OD 144)). But President Hindenburg protested and the church appealed to the Courts. Hitler did not wish to offend the President and had not consolidated his grip on the Courts, so the appointments were rescinded.

Although the state had no right to interfere, fresh elections were then ordered ((OD 145)). 'SA men streamed from the party offices to register as voters and then to vote'. ((OD 145)). Hitler made a radio campaign speech ((WDZ 44)) and the ballot was rigged to produce a German-Christian victory ((OD 145-6)). German-Christians were placed in key positions ((OD 146)) and it was these 'Church leaders' who proclaimed uncritical 'Protestant' loyalty and devotion to Hitler. It was these who identified the Protestant church so closely with the regime. Muller was made Reich bishop in September 1933 ((BH 814)) it was he who merged the 700,000-strong Evangelical Youth Organisation with the Nazi Youth ((WDZ 57)). 3,000 out of 17,000 pastors had joined the 'German-Christians', and about the same number had opposed them ((WLS 235-6)).

On November 13th 1933, the German-Christians organised a big rally at which they showed themselves in their true pagan colours. The principal speaker thundered against the "cattle drover and pimp stories of the Old Testament." He repeated the epithets spawned by Alfred Rosenberg in his 'Myth of the Twentieth Century'. All. "offspring of the Jews" were to be excluded from pulpits ((OD 147)). The Nazi threat was now plain to see and, 'A wave of indignation swept through the church'. ((OD 147)). Hitler was now securely in power so was not interested in giving them further aid. The German-Christian movement withered as quickly as it had grown ((OD 147)). However, many of its members retained their positions and kept the church under strict state control ((OD 147)). In May 1934 Martin Niemoller, who had 'welcomed the coming to power of the Nazis,' ((WLS 235)), was disillusioned and became the

leader of the anti-pagan 'Confessing Church', and from 1938 spent seven years in a concentration camp ((WLS 238)).

CHAPTER X SOURCES OF PREJUDICE

Reference books contain many items which at first reading imply Catholic support for Nazism. Frequently the information itself is correct but, being incomplete, provides a distorted picture. It is not possible to examine all of these but a few examples will illustrate the need for care when reading.

1. JULIUS STREICHER is listed in many reference books as having come from a 'devout' Catholic family. Following some years as a teacher he founded 'Der Sturmer', the leading anti-Semitic journal in Germany. At his trial in 1945, he claimed that he had merely repeated the anti-Jewish statements made by churchmen in the Middle Ages.

From such an outline of his life, the impression could be gained that Streicher was at heart a loyal Catholic and that his anti-Semitism had its roots in his Catholic upbringing. But when his life is seen in greater detail a very different picture emerges.

At the age of nineteen, Streicher became a substitute schoolmaster and taught in six Bavarian villages during 1904. He clashed with the clergy, and eventually a priest made a formal complaint about him to Streicher's municipal superiors ((RLB 3)). In 1908, following service as a volunteer in the army, he was given a teaching post in a large town where supervision by the clergy would be less direct ((RLB 3)). This indicates that his enmity was against the Church rather than towards an individual priest. It also indicates that his attitude was so well known that it had to be considered when finding him a teaching position. Within a year he was in trouble again for throwing a priest out of a classroom ((RLB 3)). Streicher later became known as a practising homosexual and

pornographer, so his lifestyle would have been the source of his conflicts with the clergy regarding his suitability to teach children.

The administrator of the schools in the Protestant town of Nuremberg was anti-religious and, when he heard of Streicher's difficulties, offered him a job there ((RLB 3)). He was now freer to publicise and spread his ideas. He joined the Democratic Party which aimed to eliminate religion from the schools ((RLB 4)). While being viciously anti-Catholic during these years, he was only mildly anti-Semitic. But in 1919 he also turned radically against the Jews ((RLB 8)). He established the 'Deutsche Sozialist' in January 1920 and its first issue attacked the Jesuits and Jews ((RLB 10)).

The paper became the Nazi organ for Nuremberg ((RLB 17)), so in 1923 he founded 'Der Sturmer' ((RLB 19)). Streicher had many mistresses and was known to be sadistic. His paper gave prominence to pornography and homosexuality ((RLB 49 and 53)). He compared Christian sacraments to alleged Jewish ritual murders ((RLB 62)). He printed that Christ's mother was a whore and Christ was born on a dung heap ((RLB 113)). In 'Der Sturmer', he repeatedly attacked priests and the Catholic Church ((GP 24 and 147)). The crudest attacks on the Catholic Church were reserved for the pages of 'Der Sturmer' ((GP 149)). He printed such obscene anti-Catholic stories and cartoons that Catholics held a public protest meeting in November 1925 ((GP 149)). When, after the war, he was in Court and fighting to avoid the death penalty, he claimed that he was merely following the ideas of medieval clergymen. The judges didn't believe this desperate attempt to 'justify' his views.

Julius Streicher 'saw Catholicism and Christianity itself, as products of Jewish legalism alien to German racial experience and himself professed a kind of vague German mysticism. . . . He disliked urban civilisation, was devoted to the German landscape and wrote articles in favour of herbalism and Nordic fairy-tails'. ((AN 133)).

The fact that Streicher was baptised a Catholic and that he and 'Der Sturmer' were violently anti-Semitic are invariably mentioned in reference books. Yet the further information that he was also fanatically anti-Catholic, and over a longer period of time is omitted. It may be asked: Why?

2. REINHARD HEYDRICH is sometimes listed as a Catholic. He was, under Himmler, responsible for developing the Gestapo and a key person in planning the transportation of European Jewry to concentration camps ((CM 41)). People are puzzled as to how he could reconcile his religious beliefs with such actions. Some speculate that he considered his actions necessary to protect Christianity

from Communism. The facts of his life are, however, more instructive than such speculation.

Heydrich was born in 1904 ((CM 5)) of a mother who was a practising Catholic ((CM 3)). His father, Bruno, never took his religion seriously and preferred a secular philosophy based on racism and struggle ((CM 7)). He was a strong proponent of Volkischer ideology and a fervent admirer of Wagner. He had studied music under Wagner's wife for a brief period during 1890 ((CM 7)). Bruno drew his ideological inspiration from the works of Houston Stewart Chamberlain and it was this anti-Christian philosophy that he inculcated into his children ((CM 7-8)).

Reinhard accepted his father's Volkischer ideology completely, and didn't make any pretence of following his mother's Catholicism ((CM 9)). At the age of fifteen he joined an extremist Freikorps group and other violently nationalist and anti-Semitic organisations. These groups were also bitterly anti Catholic. Reinhard displayed the Swastika symbol on his bedroom wall, with the slogan 'We are Lords of the Earth'. (For more details of Volkischer beliefs and those of Chamberlain, see CIHIC Publication 'The Anti-Christian Roots of Nazism').

In 1931 he became a member of Himmler's SS and soon afterwards was married in a Protestant church by a Nazi pastor. The church was decorated with a swastika and the organ played an anti-Semitic marching song ((CM 18)). He rose quickly to be a leader in the SS. 'One target of the SS was organised religion and in particular the Roman Catholic Church.' ((CM 30)). Himmler saw Catholic allegiance to Rome as an ideological challenge to the SS Aryan Order, and regarded its influence on youth as pernicious. 'Heydrich pursued the SS vendetta against the Church with relentless venom.' ((CM 30)). Although Heydrich wasn't absorbed like Himmler, in archaic Teutonic mysticism, 'He . . . despised Christianity as the religion of the weak . . .' ((CM 30)).

Heydrich attempted to discredit the Catholic clergy by engineering a series of 'Show trials' based on accusations of currency smuggling and sexual misconduct by priests and nuns ((CM 31)). These attacks on the clergy led to a break with his mother, who remained a Catholic. She was never reconciled with her son ((C M 31)). He planned to send his own men into seminaries to train as priests in order to obtain positions from which to destroy the church. Hitler gave orders that the final reckoning with Christianity was to be postponed until after the war, so Heydrich's plan was not implemented ((CM 31)).

Once these facts are known, any apparent scandal in the actions of a 'Catholic', disappears.

3. PAUL GOEBBELS from Northern Germany had been brought up as a Catholic, but in 1932 by marrying in a Protestant church excommunicated himself ((EB 173)).

4. VON RIBBENTROP, Ambassador in London in 1937, became German Foreign Minister in 1938. As a Catholic, it is said, he was in a good position to influence the Pope to come to an accommodation with Hitler. In actual fact he officially publicly apostatised from the Church in March 1937 ((C B C 230)).

5. OVER 43% of the population of Germany, following the absorption of Austria and the Sudetenland, was traditionally Catholic. It is therefore not surprising that many Nazis had been baptised as Catholics when babies. To label them 'Catholic Nazis' as if they accepted both beliefs, is a deliberate attempt to confuse and deceive.

6. A FEW PRO-NAZI PRIESTS are quoted in some history books as if they typified the German priesthood and as if their bishops condoned their actions. 'Catholic priests were an extreme rarity in the party.' ((GP 169 and 178)). The Nazis gave great publicity to the few who did exist. In 1932 the bishops found it necessary to isolate about ten priests because of their views ((KG 14-15)). This was out of the 23,000 priests in Germany at that time ((HPR 31)).

The most widely advertised pro-Nazi priests were Phillipp Haeuser, prohibited by his bishop in early 1931 from speaking at NSDAP meetings ((GP 170)), the eccentric Abbot Schachleiter O.S.B., who had to be restricted, and Hermann Muchermann S.J. (not to be confused with Friedrich Muchermann S.J.). This Jesuit was isolated in 1931 ((KG 15)), but continued to support Nazi ideology secretly. How far he had rebelled against Catholic beliefs may be gauged from a private talk he gave on October 30th 1934 to the English Eugenic Society. The Society described him as 'a devout Catholic' and praised him for his advocacy of sterilisation. His talk was entitled 'The Eugenic Movement in Germany'. The Eugenic Review quoted him as saying "I should be happy if the acceleration given to the eugenic movement in Germany, by legislative measures, might greatly assist the growth of the eugenic movement and of eugenic ideas in England." ((ST 120)).

A 'retired priest', Ludwig Munchmeyer, attracted large crowds for Nazi public meetings, at first causing great embarrassment to the Catholic authorities. Later it was discovered that he was not a Catholic but a former Lutheran minister

expelled from that Church in 1926 for slander, (((GP 88-89))). The Nazis spread rumours that many priests were secret members of their party ((GP 178-179)).

7. A CATHOLIC PRIEST, it has been claimed, helped Hitler to write 'Mein Kampf', thereby showing a Catholic involvement with early Nazism. Hitler was not a good writer, and three people are known to have corrected his grammar, pruned his verbosity and eliminated some politically objectionable passages ((WLS 85)). One of these was Bernhard Stempfle, an anti-Semitic journalist ((GP 250)) who is said to have been a former priest ((WS 85)). The earliest mention of him is in a biography of Hitler by Konrad Heiden, published in 1936. Here his Christian name was given as 'Rudolf' ((KH 206)). The author claimed that Stempfle had been a member of the Hieronymite Order.

But this Order was suppressed, apart from the branches in Spain and Italy, in 1835 ((MEPL 13)). As it seems very unlikely that Stempfle lived to Italy or Spain, his membership is brought into question. Many of those involved in Volkscher mysticism claimed to be associates with suppressed 'Orders' which allegedly were continuing to exist secretly and preserving secret occult knowledge. It is possible that Stempfle's 'priesthood' existed only in his own mind. As the Italian and Spanish monasteries died out in 1953 ((MFPL 3 and GB Vol. 5, 437)) the search for relevant archival material would be too time consuming for CIHIC. So at this stage it is not possible to say whether Stempfle left some Order or was expelled or whether he was ever a member. For him to have assisted with 'Mein Kampf' would show that his beliefs had little in common with Catholicism.

8. An attempt to try to minimize the Catholic resistance to Hitler, is noticed when it is stated that only five and a half million, out of 12 million Catholics, voted against him in 1933. This is a deceptive argument. The Catholic parties obtained five and a half million votes, which was in general terms their normal vote. The other six million had been traditionally given to non-Catholic parties such as Socialist, Communist, Liberal and Conservative. Many of these would have continued to do so in 1933. So, whilst it is true that six million baptised Catholics did not vote for the Catholic parties in 1933, it does not follow that they voted for Hitler.

9. It needs to be borne in mind that not only did the Nazi propaganda agencies depict Nazism as the protector of Christianity from Communism, but that the Communists encouraged the spread of such Nazi falsehoods in order to assist its own war on religion. English reference books have not yet freed themselves from this combined distortion of history.

CHAPTER XI

ASSESSMENTS OF HITLER IN THE 1930s

1. EXCERPTS FROM 'GREAT CONTEMPORARIES' by WINSTON CHURCHILL" Written in 1935, published in 1937

HITLER AND HIS CHOICE

“It is not possible to form a just judgement of a public figure who has attained the enormous dimensions of Adolf Hitler until his life work as a whole is before us. Although no subsequent political - action can condone wrong deeds, history replete with examples of men; who have risen to power by employing stern, grim, and even frightful methods but who, nevertheless, when their life is revealed as whole, have been regarded as great figures whose lives have enriched the story of mankind. So may it be with Hitler.

Such a final view is not vouchsafed to us today. We cannot tell whether Hitler will be the man who will once again let loose upon the world another war in which civilisation will irretrievably succumb, or whether he will go down in history as the man who restored honoured-peace of mind to the great Germanic nation and brought it back serene, helpful and strong, to the forefront of the European family circle. It is on this mystery of the future that history will pronounce. It is enough to say that both possibilities are open at the present moment. If, because the story is unfinished, because, indeed, its most fateful chapters have yet to be written, we are forced to dwell upon the darker side of his work and creed, we must never forget nor cease to hope for the bright alternative.

Adolf Hitler was the child of the rage and grief of a mighty empire and race which had suffered overwhelming defeat in war. He it was who exorcized the spirit of despair from the German mind by substituting the not less baleful but far less morbid spirit of revenge. When the terrible German armies, which had held half Europe in their grip, recoiled on every front, and sought armistice from those upon whose lands even then they still stood as invaders, when the pride and will power of the Prussian race broke into surrender and revolution behind the fighting lines; when that Imperial government, which had been for more than fifty fearful months the terror of almost all nations, collapsed ignominiously, leaving its loyal faithful subjects defenceless and disarmed before the wrath of the sorely-wounded, victorious Allies; then it was that one corporal, a former Austrian house-painter, set out to regain all."

A PARAGRAPH LISTING HITLER'S ACHIEVEMENTS ENDS, "These exploits are certainly among the most remarkable in the whole history of the world".

LATER WE READ, "While all these formidable transformations were occurring in Europe, Corporal Hitler was fighting his long, wearing battle for the German heart. The story of that struggle cannot be read without admiration for the courage, the perseverance and the vital force which enabled him to challenge, defy, conciliate, or overcome, all the authorities or resistances which barred his path".

AND AGAIN, "Does he . . . at the head of the great nation he has raised from the dust, still feel racked by the hatreds . . . of his desperate struggle, or will they be discarded . . . under the mellowing influences of success? . . . Those who have met Herr Hitler face to face in public business or on social terms have found a highly competent, cool, well-informed functionary with an agreeable manner, a disarming smile, and few have been unaffected by a subtle personal magnetism."

**2. EXCERPTS FROM 'THE REAL LLOYD GEORGE' by
A.J.SYLVESTER (His private secretary) and published by
Cassell and Co., London, 1947**

[Lloyd George is accepted as the greatest leader of the British Liberal Party].

Before he met Hitler, Lloyd George said, "In my view, it is most fortune thing for Germany that she has found such a leader as Hitler. I am looking forward to meeting him ... There is no doubt that Hitler, as far as Germany is concerned, is the resurrection and the life". After his meeting he said: "He is indeed a great

man. ... Fuehrer is the proper name for him, for he is a born leader ... yes, a statesman". Next morning he said: "One of the things about him which I like, is his directness in his conversation.". At his second meeting, Hitler handed L.G. a signed photograph of himself in a handsome frame. Lloyd George jumped from his chair, grasped Hitler by the hand and thanked him profusely for the gift. L.G. asked if Hitler would mind if he placed Hitler's picture on his desk with those of the great war leaders; Foch, Clemenceau, President Wilson and others. Hitler replied, "I should raise no objection to that, but I would object very much if you put it by the, side of such men as Erzberger and Bauer". Later L. G. said, "A strong Leader is a guarantee of peace." Hitler nodded enthusiastically and replied, "Ja, Ja, Ja."

Speaking to Ribbentrop, L.G. said, "ah, 'Mein Kampf' is a 'Magna Charta' " At dinner amongst his friends L.G. explained that when the earth passed through the tail of the comet it came into contact with a gas which, when it came into the atmosphere of the earth, made everybody doubly happy, feel more kindly and more well disposed. "Upon my oath, I am not at all sure that Hitler has not been the comet in Germany". L.G. told two German Baptist leaders, "In my view Hitler was a Divine gift to you". Although he added that he did not like Hitler's attack on the Jews.

On returning home he wrote to Von Ribbentrop and said that he thought Hitler was the greatest man Germany had produced since Frederick the Great.

In an article in the 'Daily Express' of September 17th 1936, L.G. wrote "He [Hitler] is the George Washington of Germany". ... "He is a born leader of men. A magnetic, dynamic personality with a single-minded purpose He has made them safe against political enemies ... The old trust him. The young idolise him".

3. Richard Lloyd George, writing about his father in 'Lloyd George', published by Frederick Miller, London, 1960, wrote: "He tried to convince me that we had misjudged the Fuehrer, who wanted nothing except to make Germany prosperous and the world safe from Bolshevism".

4. Herr Popp let Hitler a room in Munich during 1913 and 1914. He and Frau Popp called him, "the Austrian charmer," and later added, "You couldn't tell what he was thinking." ((HAH 58).

COMMENT: Considering these views, it is not surprising that although the German bishops had excommunicated Hitler, they hoped he would not try to implement all his evil plans. No one found it easy to decide how to handle

Hitler, and words had to be chosen carefully so as not to provoke him to adopt even more extreme positions.

CHAPTER XII

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

1. As soon as the Nazi party became a significant force, the Bishops firmly condemned its philosophy and repeatedly urged Catholics to vote against it.
2. The Catholic Centre party, with the aid of the Catholic Bavarian party did more than any other to try to save the democratic form of government.
3. The Nazi vote in Catholic areas was much lower than in the rest of Germany.
4. Hitler possessed dictatorial powers before the Enabling Act was passed. The Centre party, in common with the Conservative and Liberal parties, voted for this Act due to fear of personal physical violence and the hopelessness of resistance, not due to sympathy with the Nazis, who were their bitter enemies.
5. The legal and very popular Government of Germany offered a Concordat promising religious freedom and peace. Although the Pope did not trust Hitler there was nothing objectionable in its wording. To refuse to sign would have meant the ensuing war with pagan Nazism being fought over the right of priests to be active in illegal political parties, when over two-thirds of German voters didn't want a multiparty system of government.
6. The Concordat did not agree to the dissolving of the Catholic parties and trade unions. They, together with all other parties, had been suppressed or dissolved by government action before the Concordat was signed.
7. Hitler did obtain some international prestige from Germany signing the Concordat with the Church. But it was not the first or only international recognition that Hitler was the legal ruler of Germany.
8. Franz Von Papen was not at all typical of Catholic opinion nor a Centre party leader. Although opposed to the pagan aims and actions of Nazism, his misjudgements enabled the Nazis to make use of him.
9. Immediately after Hitler was voted into power, some Catholics genuinely accepted Hitler's pledges. Others expressed their loyalty to the new one party state and praised those aims which were good, so as to encourage a moderating trend, and allow time for Hitler to honour his promises. This period lasted a few

months, and was much shorter than the years of hope and trust allowed by leading British politicians of all parties.

10. The Nazi government was persecuting the Church between 1933 and 1937, and this increased after the publication of the Encyclical, 'Mit Brennender Sorge'. This strong condemnation of the whole Nazi creed, warned the world that Hitler's promises were valueless. The world closed its ears to the sufferings of Christians in Germany, so Hitler's version of what was happening came, with Communist assistance, to dominate much of the media. From this grew the myth of Catholic sympathy for Nazism.

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IK Popular Opinion & Political Dissent in Third Reich, Ian Kershaw, 1983

ILN Illustrated London News

JOS Pope Pius XII, by Jan Olav Smit, 1951

JRPM Weimar Germany, John R. P. McKenzie, 1971

KCA Keesings Contemporary Archives

KG Die Katholiken und das Dritte Reich, by Klaus Gotto, 1990

KH Hitler: a biography, by Konrad Heiden, 1936

LGC France and the Saar, by Laing Gray Cowan, 1950

MEPL Meyers Enzyklo-Padisches Lexikon, 1971

ML Saar, by Margaret Lambert, 1934

MOC Greatness Dishonoured, by Michael O' Carroll, 1980

NCE New Catholic Encyclopedia, 1967

NGM National Geographical Magazine, Vol. 67: 4907, Jan-June 1935

NP Portrait of Pius XII, by Nazareno Padellaro, 1956

NS Wilfred Israel, by Naomi Shepherd, c. 1984

OD In the Service of the Lord, by Otto Dibelius, c 1965

PDS Gregor Strasser, by Peter D. Stachura, 1983

PDSA The Nazi Machtergreifung, by Peter D. Stachura, 1983

RD The German Catholics, by Robert D'Harcourt, 1939

RFH Who Voted for Hitler, by Richard F. Hamilton, 1982

RLB Julius Streicher, by Randall L. Bytwerk, 1983

RLG Lloyd George, by Richard Lloyd George, 1960

ST The Right to Reproduce, by Stephen Trombley, 1988

TAB The Tablet, London

TT The London Times

WC A History of Germany, by William Carr, 1979

WDZ I Knew Dietrich Bonhoeffer, by Wolf Dieter Zimmermann, 1966

WF Dictionary of German History 1806-1945, by Wilfred Fests, 1978

WLB Weiner Library Bulletin

WLS The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich, by William L. Shirer, 1959, 1972

WSC Great Contemporaries, by Winston S. Churchill, 1937

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This version: 11th June 2006