

The Black International 5, Hitler Dupes The Vatican

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Contents

1	Hitler Dupes the Vatican	1
2	Chapter I	2
3	Chapter II	6
4	Chapter III	10
5	Chapter IV	14
6	Chapter V	17
6.1	Text and image sources, contributors, and licenses	20
6.1.1	Text	20
6.1.2	Images	20
6.1.3	Content license	20

Chapter 1

Hitler Dupes the Vatican

- Chapter I - The Church Sells Austria To The Gunmen
- Chapter II - The Approach To Munich
- Chapter III - The Murder Of Czechoslovakia
- Chapter IV - Why France Betrayed The Czechs
- Chapter V - On The Eve Of The World-Tragedy



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Chapter 2

Chapter I

H.G. Wells, who confessed to me a year ago that he had become convinced that I was right about the danger of Rome—he had more than once amiably ridiculed my preoccupation with it—said one of his superbly audacious things about it recently (September 27); and he said this to the most distinguished body the British Association for the Advancement of Science ever got together. This generation, he thought, might have to endure a series of wars waged “in the name of those dead religions that cumber the world today.” And he went on to make a parenthetical remark which must have made learned eyes open wide behind their horn-rimmed spectacles:

“A dead religion is like a dead cat—the stiffer and more rotten it is, the better it is as a missile weapon.”

It is obvious what religion he had in mind: the religion of Petain, Weygand, and Laval, of Leopold of Belgium, of De Valera, Vargas, and Salazar, of the Quislings of Austria, Czecho-Slovakia, and Croatia, the religion of that Black International which has for ten years helped the arch-criminals of history to dupe and enfeeble the democracies and to smirch our civilization with their foulness and brutality. In the day of reckoning it must stand in the dock with the other murderers.

In these little books I prepare the indictment and furnish the evidence. In the early stage’s of this corruption of civilization the four masters of crime—Italy, Germany, Japan, and the Black International, which we may justly personify in the present Pope, Pacelli-Pius—were isolated, like crooks working in different quarters of a large city. Japan was brooding over an old plan to exploit Asia which had been drawn up when Mussolini was a ragged little country lad sweeping the floor of his father’s saloon, and Hitler was begging nickels of his drunken and disreputable father in the sticks. The delicate Japanese nostrils would have quivered at sight of them. Even in 1922, when the industrialists and royalists of Italy raised Mussolini, for their own purposes and to his astonishment, to the position of a prince, Japan turned down the overtures of the Vatican. Seven years later the sharp-eyed Japanese statesmen saw the Papacy make Mussolini’s tottering throne safe and win world-recognition of it for him by a formal alliance, and they now turned to the Vatican and asked it to—for a consideration—render the same service to themselves, which it did. Then Hitler, impressed by the value of this holy alliance, sought the same spiritual assistance of the Black International and got it.

So the plot, using the international organization of the Roman Church to lull suspicion in other countries, was unified and took on cosmic proportions. Germany, Italy, and Japan were to rule and exploit the earth. The Pope—he thought—would be the universal chaplain, with the plan in reserve, of a League of Catholic power’s strong enough to cheek any trickery of Hitler. That will be cold history—or an epitaph—in a few years. I differ from Wells about those “wars of religion” in the future. If this generation which he and I will soon quit does not emasculate the Black International when this war is over it will deserve all it gets, but I have faith in it.

In earlier books I described the insidious preparatory moves in this collegial plot. Under the noses of the democracies, which actually applauded year by year except, for a time, in the case of Manchuria and Abyssinia, 200,000,000 folk were brought under what is politely called the authoritarian regime and added to the 200,000,000 of Germany, Italy, and Japan . . . Wait a bit, you protest. Where do you get these figures? Nobody in 1936 drew our attention to this remarkable development. I need say only: add up the populations of the stolen provinces of China, of Fascist South America, of Austria, Abyssinia, etc., and then find out why your oracles did not warn you in 1936 or 1937.

I have shown that the Black International played a very active and important part in this preparation for the launching of the plot in 1939. Can anybody even profess to doubt the value of the assistance it gave in destroying democracy in Austria, Spain, and Spanish America and supporting the annexation of China and Abyssinia? To this you must add its help in keeping Hungary, Eire, and Poland Fascist, in recommending Fascism (politely called the corporative state) in a solemn Papal Encyclical (Quadragesimo Anno 1931) to the entire Catholic world, in working on Catholic sentiment in France, Belgium, Britain, Holland, and America, and in sustaining the hatred of Russia. We return later to these points.

By 1938 the Axis on which Europe was to run was firmly constructed and ready to operate. Italy was to have Europe south of the Danube, and an African empire. Germany to have all north of that river. Mussolini, the Napoleon of the South, little dreaming that by 1941 he would be an old soldier on crutches begging coppers from Hitler, was blind to the emphatic statement in *Mein Kampf* that there is no room in Europe for two great powers. The rest of the world was still dreaming its dream of the benevolent and beneficent destruction of Socialism everywhere by these apostles of order and discipline. So Hitler made a bolder move: one that might provoke, and ought to have provoked, war.

He needed Austria and Czecho-Slovakia, Hungary was in the plot and very loyal to the Vatican; and in any case Pacelli was to visit it in 1938. With the control of Austria, Czecho-Slovakia and Hungary the conquest of the Balkans was assured, the broad road to Turkey and the East was open, and the blockade by the British fleet, on which small-minded British-statesmen relied, was deprived of its sting. The first step was to get Austria and the Danube, and in this the Black International was very useful.

In the summer of 1938 I discussed this annexation of Austria with an important German Nazi. He pleaded first that there was no annexation. It was an "adherence" (*Anschluss*) of the German people of Austria to their natural national unit. The facility with which America accepted this plea is dangerous. Germans will raise it strongly at the settlement—quite recently a German Socialist refugee insisted on it in conversation with me—and it is ominous that British statesmen never name the Austrians amongst the peoples they are going to liberate. However, the chief interest here is an incidental remark that my Nazi friend made. "If," he said, "you had gone to war over Austria, you would have found that we Germans had not enough petrol at the time to last more than ten days." He was an important industrialist, intimate with some of the leaders, and it was very clear to me that he was convinced of this.

How much the Vatican had to do with the criminal failure of France and Britain to begin arming at once—allowing that they were not in a position to fight in the spring of 1938—and drawing nearer to Russia we cannot say, but do not for a moment imagine that here I raise a wild and groundless suspicion. In 1937, as we shall see later, Pacelli had visited Paris—the first Papal Legate to do so since the fall of Napoleon—and on New Years' Day, 1938, Paris had the piquant spectacle of a representative of the Pope decorating and kissing its freethinking Premier and other Ministers. There was much besides this, but we will deal with the whole question of the corruption of France in a later book.

We are here not simply dealing with the overt action of the Vatican, which as in the case of Abyssinia and the Italian Church, often finds it convenient to act through the local hierarchy and itself remain silent. We are studying the share of the Black International in the world-debasement and tragedy. As far as Pacelli-Plus is concerned it is enough that he persisted in his attempts to conciliate Hitler and never said a word of the mildest censure of Germany's action in Austria. He knew that Mussolini had agreed to it as part of the general plan. But that the Church in Austria enthusiastically supported Hitler is not disputed, and no section of the Church was more docile to the Vatican. We shall see in a moment the trickery by which it was represented in America that the Austrian Church acted independently of the Vatican.

The way had been prepared, we saw, by the Church poisoning what the Annual Register calls "the Socialist watch-dog." Hitler would certainly not have had a walk-over in Austria if the Social Democrats, who firmly held Vienna and Linz and had hundreds of thousands of followers in the country, had still been strong in 1938. The Catholic Chancellor, Schuschnigg, was himself vigorously opposed to annexation, and it is interesting to speculate what would have been the effect of an appeal to Czecho-Slovakia, with its magnificent Skoda arsenal close at hand, Russia, and the Socialists and Radicals of France were there. The Church, by destroying them, destroyed this early chance of defeating the world-plot. It had killed the Socialist leaders, had put tens of thousands of the more spirited Socialists in jail, and had drilled the country into docility to itself.

For Austria was, as we saw, a theocracy, a priest-ruled state as not even Poland or Eire was. Dollfuss, who assassinated the Socialists in 1934 after consultation with Pacelli, was promptly assassinated by the Nazis. His successor, Schuschnigg, hated the Nazis and was opposed to annexation, but the last word was with Cardinal Innitzer, head of the Austrian Church; and he had the support in the Catholic government of Seyss-Inquart, who was a Catholic and a Nazi and was prepared at any time to stab his leader in the back. The main fact is, however, that since the suppression of the Socialists in Vienna

in 1934, the whole country was prostrate at the feet of the cardinal. Socialists were whipped into silence and the whole scheme of education, in school and press, imposed absolute docility to the Church.

That there was an understanding between Cardinal Innitzer and Hitler, who made his usual glib promises to respect and protect the Church, nobody denies. When Hitler marched into Vienna on March 13, 1938, all the church-bells in Austria rang, and a Swastika flag waved over the ancient Cathedral. Two days later Innitzer had a cordial interview with Hitler, and the cardinal and four of his leading bishops issued a manifesto summoning all Austrians to vote for Hitler in the coming plebiscite. The cardinal wrote "Heil Hitler" after his signature. It is a sufficient refutation of the plea that the Austrian's wanted to join Germany that Hitler angrily refused to ask them this by a plebiscite as Schuschnigg proposed. Hitler turned the idea into a farce by making it a plebiscite of the whole German nation. In this farce Innitzer and his bishops concurred and ordered all Austrians—they were now all Catholics in Church law—to support Hitler, calling him the man "whose struggle against Bolshevism and for the power, honor, and unity of Germany corresponds to the voice of Divine Providence." Was a supreme Church authority with a large clerical staff really ignorant of Hitler's true plan and motive? They spoke a common language, remember, and were near neighbors, and there was not the least secrecy about Hitler's plan to exploit Europe, If Innitzer understood the Nazi aim—and it is incredible that he did not—his association of it with "the voice of Divine Providence" was blasphemous from the religious viewpoint and loathsome from any angle.

But did Innitzer take this line upon instruction from or without consulting the Papal Secretary of State? It is not material for my purpose to settle this, as we are studying the share of the Black International as a whole. It happens, however, that the question was referred to the Vatican by Catholics of other countries, probably America, who were outraged by this gross interference in politics, and in favor of a corrupt and very dangerous schemer. And I quote the facts about the Jesuitical action of the Vatican from a Catholic writer, C. Rankin, in his flattering biography of Pacelli-Plus (*The Pope Speaks*, 1940).

On April 1st, apparently in reply to Catholic complaints of Innitzer's conduct—for so public a rebuke of a cardinal would otherwise be unprecedented—a Jesuit speaker on the Vatican Radio censored the Austrian cardinal and regretted that he had not recognized "the wolf in sheep's clothing." It is clear that this brought German protests, for the Vatican organ then declared that the radio talk was not official. Even the pious and rather obtuse Ransom adds that "it was characteristic of the extreme delicacy of the situation" that this denial was not published but was "telephoned direct to foreign correspondents by persons instructed by the Vatican to do so." He seems to be unaware of the irony of his words. The *Osservatore* said that Innitzer's action was not authorized: Radio said that it was opposed to Vatican policy and anonymous officials in the Vatican press bureau then said that the criticisms of Innitzer were not authorized. The cream of the joke is that all three—radio, printing press, and press bureau—are in the Pope's back yard, so to say, and would not dare to say a word on a matter of importance without consulting the Secretariat of State. About this time some American film company put into circulation a very impressive film, with most edifying and largely untruthful commentary on work in the Vatican City. It did not point out the convenience of the above arrangement.

Innitzer was invited to Rome to explain his action, and the Vatican was careful not to declare that he had been censured. Instead of this, the *Osservatore* on April 6 gave a long and sympathetic account of the cardinal's reasons for his action. Keesing's *Contemporary Archives* gives the gist of Innitzer's arguments, as published in the Swiss press at the time, but there is no need to consider them here. The Black International had rendered a new and most important service to the crooks, and the Vatican had neatly dodged the censure of Catholics in democratic countries.

Pacelli knew that, as we have seen several times, local Catholic hierarchies will, in their own interest, finally submit to anything that the Papacy does. For a year or two Mundelein had roused American Catholic's to a white-hot indignation against the Nazis for persecuting the Church and besmirching the fragrant lives of the communities of lay brothers. You would expect apoplexy when the news came that the Church had sold Austria to the Nazis, and given them control of the Danube, and smoothed the path of their bloody ambition, yet there was only a momentary flutter. Catholics bowed to the "unauthorized" assurance that Innitzer had not consulted the Vatican, and, as the world at large soon forgot Austria and resumed its admiration of Nazi efficiency, the matter was dismissed.

One needs no documentary evidence that this conspiracy between the Austrian Church and the Nazis was directed from Rome. National branches of the Church of Rome are bound to consult the Papacy before taking action on any issue of grave importance. That is what the Secretariat of State is for. And when the issue is one that affects other countries and the international policy of the Vatican the obligation to consult headquarters is so strong that an evasion of it is unthinkable. The question of joining Austria to Germany was clearly of this character. Such union would not only strengthen Hitler's position to a very important extent, so that it was a most valuable opportunity for one of those bargains for which the

Vatican is always alert, but to put an additional 7,000,000 Catholics under Nazi rule after what had happened to the Church in Germany this was so serious a matter that the suggestion that Innitzer acted on his own initiative may be dismissed as frankly childish.

But, while the concurrence and lead of the Vatican is certain, the ground of its policy is not clear. The key to it seems to be the extraordinary persistence of Pacelli in trusting the promises of Hitler. He had in 1932 made, in return for valuable service, a promise of a very favorable agreement with the Vatican. He had immediately dishonored the agreement, yet Pacelli and the German bishops had continued to appeal to him. In 1936 he had opened the series of vice-trials of priests and monks which had dealt the Church a heavier and more ignominious blow than ever, yet the Vatican had, with occasional mild complaints about persecution and paganism—never about crime and brutality until Catholic Poland was threatened with extermination—remained friendly. We shall see that at the opening of the great war he had made new promises to the Church, and we shall find the German bishops in 1941 complaining, while they still supported him, that he had not fulfilled his promises! This persistence in looking to the man who had plainly said years before in his book that he made his own moral law—"What is Necessary is Right" is the title of a chapter of *Mein Kampf*—is the key to this strange development. I say strange because, even if we admit that the annexation of Austria was inevitable, we should expect the Austrian Church to have met it with quiet dignity instead of waving Swastika flag's and chanting "Hell Hitler" like the treacherous scum of every country that Hitler invaded.

Whatever Hitler promised Cardinal Innitzer in their very cordial interview he cheated with his usual fluency. At the moment of writing this it is confidently reported—and as confidently denied, of course—that Myron Taylor has taken to Washington certain terms of peace, or certain new promises, which the Pope is transmitting on behalf of the arch-liar of modern history. One would have thought that by 1941, when the Pope had seen Hitler lie and cheat so brazenly for eight years, he would have been ashamed to produce any proposals from such a source. For within three months of his pleasant and confiding talk with Hitler the cardinal was a prisoner in his palace, and hundreds of his priests and monks were in the hands of the police, generally on the usual disgraceful charge. Swiss papers said that "50,000 Austrians have left the church this quarter, and a further 50,000 are expected to quit in the next quarter." The Church in Austria was, as a result of its trust in Hitler, disestablished and reduced to the same pitiful condition as the Church in Germany. It had helped Hitler to secure one of his bloodless victories. It now bled.

Chapter 3

Chapter II

Yet the Vatican had already begun to smooth the path of Hitler's sordid ambition in another area of Europe: to undermine the loyalty of a large part of Czecho-Slovakia. In a lecture which I delivered in London in 1936 I predicted that when the conquest of Spain was completed the Nazis would turn to Czecho-Slovakia. Many of my audience in those days of inglorious inactivity and childlike trust smiled, but although the country was not marked out for attack in *Mein Kampf* its fate, could easily be foreseen. Hitler's original ambition to make one empire of all German-speaking peoples, with the Ukraine for an additional granary, had grown mightily when he saw the cowardice and folly of the democracies, and Czecho-Slovakia stood like a second Gibraltar, a natural and formidable land-fortress across the route to Russia, the Balkans, and the East. It commanded the Danube, and it had within its own frontiers a very virile people with considerable resources.

But while Hitler made bravery the supreme Nordic quality and boasted in every speech of the irresistible might of the Reich, he preferred to proceed wherever possible by deceit. Not Thor, but Töcchi, the cunning, is the head of the modern German pantheon. The world to be dominated and exploited must be taken over piecemeal and by ruse, guile, and corruption. Hitler had men, and especially women, steadily corrupting France for him, and he imagined that the tactless Ribbentrop, who had a stupid idea of the influence of the aristocracy in England, was winning or duping that country for him. In Austria he used the Church, as he had used it for what it was Worth in Spain, and he used it in Czecho-Slovakia.

The cutting-up of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire at Versailles had been crude and cruel, but it is a lie originating in Germany and quite generally accepted in Britain and America, that the Sudeten provinces of Czecho-Slovakia had then been detached from Austria and tacked on to Bohemia. Any map that was published before 1919 will show that these provinces are part of ancient Bohemia, which before the Catholic troops so mercilessly trampled on it in the Thirty Years War was the most promising of the smaller civilizations of Europe. Its sturdy people were instinctively anti-Papal and had raised the banner of Hus before Luther was born. In its exhausted condition it had been taken over by Austria and had been made compulsorily Catholic in the customary way.

It was still under Austria when the industrial development of the nineteenth century began and its splendid natural resources now gave promise of wealth. The mineral resources were in the mountainous fringe, nearest to Austria, which became familiar to us as the Sudeten province—taking their name from the mountains—and Austria, the dominant power, followed the policy which England had once followed in Ireland. Austrian and German capital and enterprise, using Czech labor, were to reap the profit. The Czechs were to remain the hewers of wood and drawers of water for the Viennese capitalist. It was in this way that the border provinces had been filled with a German-speaking Catholic population.

Until Nazism began its insidious propaganda in the countries which it meant to annex these Catholics of Austrian (and partly German) descent had lived quite amiably with the Czechs. The country as a whole was Catholic. I have pointed out how the reckless propaganda of recent years has in this respect run to a most absurd extreme. For several years our annuals and other reference-books have—see the *World Almanac*, for instance—said that the population of Czecho-Slovakia is 10,500,000 and then that it contains 16,831,636 Roman Catholics (besides 1,129,758 Protestants, 1,173,479 members of other religions, and 854,636 of no religion)! Catholic statistics exhibit many miracles but this is the choicest. If the last figure is changed into something more than 2,000,000—for 854,636 is the number of those who boldly wrote on the census-paper that they had no religion—it will be seen that Catholics really numbered about 8,000,000 in a total

population of about 14,000,000, and half these Catholics were illiterate peasants and woodcutters.

Here you will begin to understand the action of the Black International in working for the destruction of Czecho-Slovakia. The creation of that republic—or the establishment of it, for it had already declared itself an independent republic—by Versailles was followed by internal developments which, year after year, caused consternation at the Vatican. Bordering on Russia the country was bound to feel in a high degree the wave of Communist and anti-religious propaganda which disturbed the Church everywhere, but there was an even worse danger, from the Roman point of view, in Czecho-Slovakia.

The reaction against Austria, which in spite of its fame for the amiability of its character had a grim record of tyranny, on the part of both Church and state, in Bohemia, there was a remarkable revolt against the Vatican. Almost at once (1920) a very large body of the priests and their people cut their connection with Rome and founded a national (Catholic) Czechoslovak Church. The very orthodox Irish Independent (August 13, 1938) said that “nearly a million people and 200 priests left the Church” in 1919 and 1920, that at the date of writing there was a painful shortage of priests in Bohemia and Moravia, and that a large part of the acting priests were of peasant extraction and of a low cultural and intellectual quality. The leading British Catholic weekly the Tablet (organ of the richer and better-educated Catholics) went further. In its issue of October 31, 1936 it had an article on religion in Czecho-Slovakia by a Catholic who had recently travelled in it. He had asked a priest about the report of secessions, and the priest had said:

“It is true, up to 1930 nearly 1,900,000 left the Church and, while about 150,000 joined the Protestant and Orthodox communities, the rest are without religion.”

The Roman priests so hated their brethren who remained Catholic but threw off the yoke of the Vatican that this man lies in the latter part of his statement. At the census of 1930 the National Church of anti-Papal Catholics still had 793,385 members, though even more declared that they had no religion. In fact, there is no other country in the world in which nearly a million folk made this formal declaration in the census-paper.

This situation is the key to Papal policy in Czecho-Slovakia and, as Catholic writers try to defend the Vatican by asking what interest the Church had in helping Hitler in that country, it has to be thoroughly understood. There were nearly a million Catholics who refused to recognize the Pope; and the Vatican considers these “ichismatias” as dangerous and damned as atheists. There were more than 3,000,000 Socialists and Communists, since they had polled 1,700,000 votes at the last election, and there was the most powerful Rationalist body in the world. Catholic writers boast that in 1934 a great Catholic Congress was held at Prague and attended by 50,000 Catholics. They do not mention that in 1935 the Freethinkers held a Congress there and it was attended by 40,000 members. President Masaryk, the idol of the country and the most respected statesman in Europe, and several of the political and most of the cultural leaders, including the internationally famous novelist Karl Capek, were Freethinkers. In no other country in the world had the Church of Rome lost in ten years so high a proportion of its members; and the loss continued yearly. Bohemia, the care of the Republic, the center of culture and prosperity, was lost to Rome. A Thirlmere travelling in the country after 1930 would have said, “The Church knows that she is doomed.”

As the government was deservedly popular and secured for the people a high and increasing prosperity there was no opportunity here of repeating the Spanish tragedy. The only feasible plan from the Vatican angle was to save the Sudeten Catholics at one end of the Republic and the very backward Slovak Catholics at the other from what Rome called the corrupting influence of Prague. This coincided with Hitler’s policy, though we may admit that the Vatican did not foresee—very few people foresaw—that when Hitler got these detached on the plea of the self-determination of peoples and found the French and British so cowardly he would grab the lot and have a magnificent starting-point for his further advance. But we shall see that the Church was more active than ever in the second and greater grab.

This general coincidence of the interests of the Vatican with those of the Nazis is supported by undisputed evidence of cooperation. The Catholic writer in the Irish Independent whom I have quoted admitted that the priests interfered in politics, though in the Sudeten provinces the work was left to the laity. The priests were less ready than those of Austria to be drawn into the Nazi spider’s web, especially when the Austrian Church began to suffer like the German, but Nazism spread amongst the laity in virtue of skilful German propaganda, and a local leader was found in the Catholic Henlein: the kind of puppet that the Germans liked to find—a man of poor intelligence and greatly flattered by being recognized in Berlin and promised’s high position in the Sudeten provinces when they were “liberated,” Henlein and his colleagues assured their fellow-Catholics that the Church had nothing to fear from Nazi rule. He had that promise from Hitler. In Germany, they said (quite falsely), Cardinal Faulhaber had provoked the Nazi government by his attacks on it. They would not do that in Sudetenland and would not be molested.

To the general public in America, to whom the word Slovak meant little more than the name of a tribe in Abyssinia, the

whole question turned on the Sudeten provinces. To Hitler these were only the pretext of intervention, and a pretext in regard to which, by promoting a little friction and getting Goebbels to represent this as resentment of a bloody tyranny of the Czechs, he could make out something of a case. But shearing off this narrow fringe of German-speaking towns, which lay outside the Czech "Maginot Line," would not give him Czecho-Slovakia, so the anti-Czech agitation at the other end of the Republic, in Slovakia, was far more important. This was overwhelmingly the work of the Black International.

The core of the Republic was, as I said, Bohemia or Bohemia and Moravia, which worked together and reached a high degree of culture and prosperity. The Czechs who inhabited them were as able and vigorous as the urban populations of Germany, and, fearing that the Nazi wolf would sooner or later quarrel with them, they had a fine army and at Skoda one of the greatest armament-making works in Europe. But beyond Moravia, to the east, the country ran on to the Carpathian Mountains, and from its geographical conditions this large province remained very backward. This was the land of the Slovaks, and beyond it the country terminated in a still more backward mountainous area with a Ruthenian or Ukrainian population. The Czechs might have done well to hand the latter to the Ukrainians and let Soviet Russia civilize it as it had done with so many border provinces.

Czechs, Slovaks, and Ruthenians had declared themselves an independent republic in 1918, when Austria collapsed, and Versailles had confirmed their position. It was a lively team to drive, including 6,000,000 Czechs, 3,000,000 Slovaks, 3,000,000 Germans, and more than a million Magyars and Ruthenians, but as long as President Masaryk held the reins and pre-Nazi Germany was friendly the republic made remarkable progress. Its social and cultural achievements must be read elsewhere. In a land of powerful minorities there are always men who thrust themselves into the limelight by shrieking that the ancient culture of a particular minority is in danger of perishing and they must demand autonomy. They are blind to the changed conditions of a world in which small national units only excite the cupidity of more powerful neighbors. The clash, however, only found expression in the melodramatic fights of politicians until the Nazis took up the grievances of the Sudeten Germans and the disintegration of the Church alarmed the Vatican.

The priests in Slovakia had long been associated with the patriotic movement in that province. The parallel with the situation in Ireland before it was granted Home Rule is close enough to enable anybody to understand. In Slovakia, however, the patriotic party was actually led by a priest, Father Hlinka, and was directly associated with Pacelli's policy. It is quite useless to talk about patriotic priests and the carefulness of the Vatican to avoid politics, when the most sensational event of the year 1933 in Czecho-Slovakia was that the Papal Nuncio was expelled for just such interference. He had supported the Slovak claims in a letter which was published on August 13, 1933. We shall see later how the French in their own interest—disguised, of course, as a noble effort to secure peace—replied to the summons of the Vatican to help it against the government of Czecho-Slovakia, but the months of agitation over the expulsion of the Nuncio for political reasons and the great Catholic demonstration that followed in 1934 plainly identified the Vatican with the priest-controlled Slovak movement. In any case we are studying the action of the Black International and need not trouble always to detect the Roman strings that work the clerical puppets.

This clerical Slovak movement led in the end to the utter ruin of Czecho-Slovakia. This was after Munich, and we need not go fully into the events which led up to that ignoble surrender. The year 1938 opened with a fair degree of tranquillity in the Republic. There had been scandals and a serious split in the Sudeten body, and the coalition government was willing to make reasonable concessions to the Slovaks. They were represented by two parties in Prague, the Slovak Catholic party and the Slovak Centralists. The capital of the province, Bratislava, was a solid city sharing the culture of Prague, and large numbers of its citizens were opposed to the political priests and their hordes of ignorant peasants, and wild-eyed mountaineers. An amiable settlement seemed possible, but this suited neither the ghouls of Berlin nor those of the Vatican. Hitler in February began the series of violent attacks on the Czecho-Slovak government, then headed by Benes, which were to prepare the German people for the opening of his aggressive campaign.

He was still within the framework of *Mein Kampf*, concerned only, he said, about the condition of German's outside as well as inside the Reich. There were 10,000,000 of them he said, living under oppression in Austria and the Sudeten provinces. We saw how he went on to annex Austria, and Benes easily proved that there was no persecution of Germans in Czecho-Slovakia. But Hitler's extraordinary success, thanks to the Church and the cowardice of the democracies in taking Austria without striking a blow most gravely confirmed him in his plan to take Czecho-Slovakia and broaden his base for a European war.

The Slovak Clerical withdrew their support of Benes and began to press for autonomy, and the Sudeten Catholics again raised their clamor. It was at this stage (March 14) that France and Russia gave an assurance of assistance to the Czechs in case they were attacked. Great Britain gave no pledge. The French later said that they relied on the cooperation of

Britain in virtue of their treaty of mutual defence but this did not contemplate the eventuality of France provoking an German attack by going to the aid of a third power. The sound criticism of Britain at this stage is that its statesmen could not shake themselves free of their blind anti-Socialist zeal and see that the Axis had opened a career of aggression. A combination in 1938 of the British and French fleets and the armies of France, Russia, and Czecho-Slovakia might have spared the world the horrors of the great war. At all events the leading French paper, *Le Temps*, announced that the government had given the Czechs an assurance of help, and the Russian press told of a similar assurance from their side; an assurance that, unlike the French, they have always acknowledged and were ready to honor.

Germany at the same date, the middle of May, made one of its solemn and nauseously hypocritical announcements to the world to the effect that it had no designs on Czecho-Slovakia and only wanted justice for the 3,000,000 Germans who lived in it. A month later Henlein went to see Hitler in Germany, and at Carlsbad, on German soil, he formulated the demands of the Sudetens. They had, of course, grown remarkably larger since his interview with Hitler, but this is not the place to repeat in detail the course of events up to Munich. The darkest tragedy was that occupation of the whole country which was never contemplated at Munich, and this is the tragedy for which the Black International was plainly responsible.

Throughout the summer of 1938 the demands of the Sudeten Catholics grew. The Czech government made concession after concession, but Hitler did not want concessions. He wanted refusal and an excuse to invade. When his troops began in the late summer to concentrate in the direction of Czecho-Slovakia Britain sent Lord Runciman to find the bases of a compromise. Runciman was one of those who held that any development was better than an advance of Socialism and all that he did was to persuade the Czechs to talk nicely to the Nazi wolf and not think of provoking him. Mussolini helped out his gangster-friend by publishing in his own paper in Italy an open letter to Runciman which that apostle of peace probably took seriously. He assured Runciman that he knew from conversation with Hitler that he had no intention whatever of doing more than liberate the Sudeten fringe with 3,000,000 Germans. It was all part of the sordid plan, but there was still in England, or in the ruling class, a belief that Mussolini was not as unscrupulous as Hitler.

So Chamberlain went to Berchtesgaden and to Munich and dragged England into that policy of appeasement which will cost the world an incalculable number of billions of dollars and millions of lives, waste of precious wealth, and a load of suffering under which the planet reels. Had I been capable of weeping I would have wept at one picture of that ignoble time: Chamberlain stepping out of his plane at Croydon on his return from Munich. His face naively lit with a smile like that of a school-girl who has won an unexpected prize, he flourished a scrap of paper before the crowd and explained that he had Hitler's signature to a promise to keep the agreement and not further menace the peace of Europe! The interests of the Conservative Party had required that the fate of an Empire should be entrusted to such a man, and he had had plenipotentiary power at Munich. He had at least the grace to die when he saw the sequel. The pious Halifax still represents the British Empire.

Another picture comes to hand. A journalist who was present at Munich, William L. Shirer, has just published his impressions (*Berlin Diary*). He describes Hitler walking past him on that fateful day:

"It was a very curious walk indeed. In the first place it was very ladylike. Dainty little steps. In the second place every few steps he cocked his right shoulder nervously, his left leg snapping up as he did so. I watched him closely as he came back past us. The same nervous tic. He had ugly black patches under his eyes. He was in a blue funk. If Britain and France had called his bluff there might have been no world-war. At least it would have been fought under very different conditions. And amongst the shower of congratulations to Chamberlain on his miserable surrender was a telegram from Cardinal Hinsley in the name of 'the Catholic archbishops and bishops of England.'"

Chapter 4

Chapter III

The Munich agreement was that Germany was to have those towns and districts on the fringe of Czecho-Slovakia in which there was a German majority. The self-determination of peoples is an admirable principle, but in application it needs to be watched carefully. If either priests or statesmen or, as in the case of Italy and Germany, both demand a full birth rate of their people so that the over-crowded population will ooze over the frontiers into neighboring countries and multiply there until they become the majority, as Mexicans might in parts of the southern States and Japanese in parts of the eastern, they have no right whatever to either autonomy or special privileges. A member of Wilson's staff at Versailles told me how that statesman, baited and exhausted by the French, clinging to his ideal of self-determination and dazed by, names of Hungarian, Bulgarian, Polish, etc., towns about which he knew nothing, was dragged into the blunders of that fateful treaty. Over-population, deliberately encouraged, was one of the chief pretexts—it was in this case not true—used by the arch-criminals to reconcile their own people to the idea of aggressive war and to secure the sympathy of muddle-headed humanitarians of the George Lansbury type abroad. Lebensraum (“space to live in”) for the noble German people was the cry—until the time came when the mask could be abandoned and it was changed to Grossraum, which practically means Empire.

Since this encouragement of the birth rate was the second chief point—the first was the suppression of freedom or glorification of authority—on which the policy of the Vatican coincided with that of the Axis we shall have to consider it later. At this stage it thrusts itself upon our notice because it explains why about one-fifth of the total population of Czech-Slovakia was found in the relatively small area of the Sudeten provinces and another fifth in the very backward conditions of Slovakia. The Czechs of the large and progressive central region were fully in line with modern civilization and controlled their birth rate. It was this prosperous central region that Hitler coveted, for he had now, and seeing the inertia of the western democracies, gone far beyond his original idea of uniting all peoples of Germanic blood in a powerful empire and securing the Ukraine as their granary. He and Mussolini, who had lied to Runciman with all the glibness of his type, proved this immediately by cynically ignoring the Munich agreement and Chamberlain and robbing Czecho-Slovakia of its vital defensive resources so that he could take it over when the time was ripe.

The essential evil of the surrender at Munich was that in practice it left to Hitler and Mussolini to settle what parts of Czecho-Slovakia were to be handed over on the sacred principle of self-determination. In theory this, and all questions arising from the settlement, were to be decided by representatives of the four powers. Russia was, of course, ignored as a low-caste nation which could not expect to sit at table with pure-blooded Nordics” and the descendants of the Caesars; and Britain and France further stultified themselves by agreeing to this. They very quickly found that they had betrayed Czecho-Slovakia and, as it proved before long, the cause of civilization. Hitler's military draftsmen included in the territory to be ceded the powerful fortifications and big guns and, as they saw Chamberlain still playing with his “Scrap of paper”, robbed the country of its equipment, air-force, military resources, and chief industrial enterprises. Catholic Poland and Hungary seized their opportunity and, like dogs attacking a mortally wounded deer, tore pieces out of the flanks of the distressed country, with the cordial approval of their priests. One of the most sturdy democracies in Europe, with a large and splendidly equipped army, a great arsenal, and an eagerness to cooperate with Russia, was disarmed.

But Hitler hesitated for months to take over the helpless country. One of the foulest features of this modern imperialism as compared with its historical predecessors is that, while it mouthed about the tonic of war and its invincible legions, it hypocritically denied until the last moment that it had any imperialist ambitions and covered every move it made with a

ragged mantle of respectable pretensions and mendacious pretexts of law and order. In this (in Austria, Abyssinia, and Spain) it had had the close cooperation of the Black International; the 'moral' force which professed to have the task of exposing all such immoral conduct in every part of the world. Hitler now found a still more useful ally in the Black International.

Pacelli was crowned Pope on March 12, 1939. This was, as I said, the day on which the Jews were, with terrible loss and suffering (which he never condemned), expelled from Italy. It was also the day on which Hitler sent a German plane to Slovakia to bring to Berlin the Slovak priest who was to sell Czecho-Slovakia to him for thirty pieces of silver.

One reads in the biography of the new Pope by Ransom that during the week after his coronation Pacelli was so beset with problems that he gave only three hours to sleep every night. What the problems were we do not know, but the problem that was then agitating the whole civilized world, the problem on the solution of which the peace of the world depended in the opinion of all thoughtful men, was not one of them. Ransom devotes 100 pages of his little book to the work of the overburdened Pope that year, but he never mentions Czecho-Slovakia, though it was upon the conduct of a priest, a prelate (or monsignore) of the Church, a man in a position of particular interest to the Vatican, that the world-crisis mainly depended. It, indeed, depended so vitally that three days after the Pope's coronation statesmen concluded that a European war was inevitable. Stalin began that intensive armament of his people for which the world is now profoundly grateful. Britain—it has since transpired—began its organization to meet a German attack, drafted the scheme of several costly war-ministers, ordered hundreds of thousands of card-board coffins for the victims of air-raids and vast hospital space, and even began in a quite gentlemanly way to create a war-industry.

Slovakia, with its almost illiterate priest-ridden population was, as I said, the weakness of the Czecho-Slovak combination, and now that Bohemia had lost a third of its industries and two-thirds of its coal-mines, this poorer province had risen in importance. Since Benes had had to fly for his life before the fury of Hitler a blight - in large part a clerical blight—had fallen upon the unfortunate land. Hacha had been appointed President and he surrounded himself with priests and Catholic politicians. Democracy was already dead. On February 10, 1941, the New York Times quoted this passage from the leading Czech Catholic paper.

"There is no Catholic in Europe who would shed a tear to see the collapse of democratic political disorder and who would not sincerely welcome the fall of economic Liberalism, which has been denounced by the Pope's Leading ideologist because it misuses the working people in favor of a few capitalistic exploiters."

The Pope's leading ideologist in America had been engaged for twenty years in assuring the public that the democratic institutions and economic forms at which the writer jeers are not merely in accord with the teaching of the Church but had actually been inspired by the great moral theologians centuries ago. We will consider some time the encyclical of Pius XI, one of the first fruits of Pacelli's guidance, on which this Catholic Fascism was based. It is enough here that, though the above passage was written two years after the disaster of 1939, the change from the fine old Cultural order inspired by Masaryk began in 1939.

Hacha and his colleagues at least realized that it was vital to keep the three national elements of the State—Bohemia-Moravia Slovakia, and Ruthenia—together, and the priest, Father Hlinka who was the oracle and leader of the Catholic Slovaks, agreed. They wanted, in order to protect their faith from the decay which it suffered amongst the Czechs, some sort of autonomy or Home Rule while remaining within the national unity. But Hlinka, the mediocre kind of political priest which such a country would produce, though an honest man, died in August (1938), urging his followers and his successor with his last breath to cling to the union. This successor, Msgr. Tiszo, who became well-known in the world-press in 1939 and 1940, was the second Quisling—the Catholic Seyss-Inquart of Austria being the first—in the long line of Papalist traitors who have served the Axis during the last three years; and he was a priest, in fact a monsignore—a rank between a priest and a bishop in the Roman Church—not a Catholic layman whose action might be repudiated, when this was desirable," by the Black International.

Tiszo was the son of a Slovak peasant who had been taken up by the Magyar bishop of the district and educated for the priest-hood in Hungarian colleges. At that time, under the old Austro-Hungarian Empire, Slovakia was under the control of the Magyars. Whatever may be the truth about his morals—Catholic parents made serious charges against him in connection with a girls' college in which he taught for a time—he identified himself very zealously with the interests of the Hungarians until their yoke was rejected by the Slovaks in 1918. He then became a patriotic Slovak and in time attached himself to Hlinka. The Czechs accused the clerical epicure—at least he was far from ascetic—of chronic political duplicity, and he certainly duped Hlinka. He succeeded to the Slovak leadership and became Premier of the autonomous province, and he proceeded to stir up a dangerous demand for separation and independence. Hitler wanted disorder in

Czecho-Slovakia, the usual hypocritical pretext for taking it over. Tiszo provided it.

Hitler knew that he was at last regarded with suspicion and that Russia, if not the western democracies, was very industriously arming, but he still had faith in their dread of war and their willingness to accept any sort of plausible excuse for his actions. His agents got into touch with Tiszo and the plot was concocted. Since the establishment of a virtually Catholic government at Prague Slovak grievances had relented. Tiszo raised the cry of independence and assured his followers that Hitler would prevent Prague from interfering with them. The news reached Prague, and Hacha deposed Tiszo from the Premiership and dissolved his cabinet. Tiszo, as Premier, had taken an oath to observe the Constitution, but such oaths were always open to interpretation by a skilful theologian. It was rumored that March 15 (1939) was fixed as the date of the declaration of Independence.

Prague sternly resisted, and in the intense agitation of the country there was certainly some disorder. Tiszo appealed to Hitler and, as I said, a plane was sent to bring him to Germany. There is an impartial summary of the events in Keesing's Contemporary Archives (March 18) in which these details may be read. Seyss-Inquart, the Catholic model of the Quislings, is said to have been sent in the plane to fetch Tiszo to Berlin, where he saw Hitler and Ribbentrop, while the controlled German press groaned with stories of outrages by the Czechs, as it would presently groan with charges against the Poles. Tiszo telephoned from Berlin to his friends that Hitler promised to support them in a declaration of independence, and the sordid story entered upon its last chapter. The wolf began his complaints that the Czech lamb was muddying the water for him.

Hitler, with that air of a Persian monarch which he had now developed, summoned Hacha to Berlin; and, with their usual felicity of coincidence, the Catholic Hungarian government, which was equally docile to Hitler and to the Pope, demanded that the Czechs should give up Ruthenia. Hacha was received with military horrors at Berlin at one in the morning, and four hours later (March 15) Hitler ordered his troops to take over Bohemia and Moravia if Hacha did not sign away the independence of his country. He would, he said, if Hacha refused, order 700 bombing planes to raze the noble city of Prague to the ground. The story of greed and treachery was over. With pathetic gloom the New York Times announced "the twilight of liberty in Central Europe." The world-press except the Italian, which exulted, expressed the gravest anxiety about the future and had no illusion about the Protectorates which Hitler made of the three sections of the old Republic.

What did the Vatican think of it? The murder of Czecho-Slovakia was a worse crime than the conquest of Spain or the annexation of Austria. It was not a question of taking sides in a civil war or of extending the German flag to a German-speaking people. It was worse than greed, the seizure of the wealth and resources of Czecho-Slovakia. Careful observers saw it as the first step in the enslavement of alien peoples in the service of Germany, the first move in a European war. But the Pope said nothing . . . Yes, to be sure, he continued to tell the world that peace is a very beautiful, desirable thing and war is hideous. How any Catholic of normal mentality can imagine that these utterances of the Pope taught the world something which it did not know or did not vividly appreciate one cannot understand; still less how this message of peace every Easter and Christmas was consistent with the summons to the world during the rest of the year to make a bloody end of Socialism in Russia and Mexico. Was it necessary for the Pope to use the word "bloody"? No one even suggests any other meaning of his words.

To Roman Catholics I am a pariah, a man beyond redemption, a writer whose corrupt gospel must not be mentioned in the press, yet I have seen and denounced the drift of the world for the last six or seven years. The only moralist who has any place in modern life is the man who does not merely tell it that there is a law of justice and that peace is precious, but points out which actions are unjust or effectively threaten the peace of nations. That is just what Pacelli-Pius has never done. Here was an appalling crime, the shadow of worse things to come, perpetrated in the very first year of his pontificate and he was dumb. A body of Catholics muttering "the Pope of Peace" is on exactly the same psychological level as a crowd of Nazis in the Sports-palast chanting "Heil Hitler" or of Fascists chanting "Mussolini Solo": the psychological level of the performing dog.

Ought we to go further and say that the Pope did not condemn what happened in Czecho-Slovakia because he cooperated in it by instructions to the Black International of the Sudeten, provinces, Prague, and Slovakia? It is one of those points which I leave open, and the reader must please himself. But in the name of common-sense let no Catholic suggest that the Pope was so busy, or happenings in Czecho-Slovakia were so remote and obscure, that little attention was paid to them at the Vatican.

There was during the few years before the war a persistent rumor in London that the government defied the warnings of its own Foreign Office. However that may be, there was no such friction after Munich. After the outbreak of war the Times

had indication's every week of plans that had begun to take shape immediately after Hitler and Mussolini had cynically violated their Munich agreement. There were plans of new and vast aviation-works; rich mansions and hotels, colleges in the country were put under contract to take government departments when war broke out; a body of leading journalists had a secret consultation with the government. But these things are now well known. Any statesman who did not see spurts of blue flame and jets of sulphurous smoke issuing from the pit after the gross violation of the Munich agreement . . . But there was no such statesman. Did those things escape the notice of that wonderful intelligence-service of the Vatican City and the eagle eye of the new Pope?

To say so would, in view of the terrible specter that rose on the horizon, be ludicrous even if Czech-Slovakia were at the other side of the world. But the question's that arose in Czecho-Slovakia were just of the kind that calls for ecclesiastical intervention. The Vatican has, besides its Secretariat of State, a number of "congregations", with large staffs, which correspond to the departments (trade, education, etc.) of ordinary countries. To these congregation's questions from all parts of the Catholic world are not only permitted. They are encouraged, for the business helps to maintain the Pope's vast revenue and the swarm of Italian clerical parasites who fatten in Rome. Some of them must have had a busy correspondence with Czecho-Slovakia since 1918, when the reaction against Austrian tyranny and the scularization of the new state started the disintegration of the Church. As I have said, it lost at least a fourth of its members in ten years. But the paramount questions were political, especially the question whether the solid Catholicism of the Sudetens and the Slovaks should be saved from the influence of the anti-Papal government at Prague by securing autonomy or, in the last stage, separation. I will tell presently how the Pope's Nuncio (ambassador) at Prague was expelled—an extra-ordinary occurrence in a Catholic country—for publicly supporting the political demands of the Slovaks. Was Pacelli, a thorough student of German affairs, likely to take little notice of these affairs which in any case supremely concerned the Secretariat of State?

Beyond question the Vatican was following the course of events with the closest attention, and it would be ridiculous to suppose such priests as Hlinka and Tiszo were not in complete accord with their higher ecclesiastical authorities and through these with the Vatican. The action of the Nuncio sufficiently proves this. Some day, when the great-hearted Czechs are restored by the civilization which betrayed them the full truth will be known. Meantime I venture upon this suggestion of Vatican policy. It was uncertain on the question of the Sudeten Catholics and as in the early days of Sinn Fein in Ireland, left the business to laymen. It was far from clear whether it would be a gain or a loss to transfer a couple of million Catholics, who were entirely free to have their Catholic institutions and schools under the Czechs, to Nazi control. It would please Hitler, but what was the worth of his promises? In regard to Slovakia the policy was clear. The dense mass of ignorant or illiterate or semi-literate Catholicism must be protected from Czech culture and progress by autonomy or, when this coincided with Hitler's policy, separation. But whatever one may think of this speculation the main fact does not share its uncertainty. The Black International vitally helped Hitler in taking the final preparatory step for his crime against civilization.

Chapter 5

Chapter IV

In one of his most important and most carefully prepared speeches, a vast American as well as British and French public listening on the radio or reading the printed word next day (August 25, 1941), Churchill deliberately described in these words the relation of the French to the Czechs in 1938:

“A French government deserted their faithful ally and broke a plighted word in that ally’s hour of need.”

Note carefully that this was not an attack on the miserable group of Catholic weaklings which was called the Vichy government. If it were, we might allow for strong feeling and over-emphasis. But it was a cold and responsible Statement of what had happened in the tragic days of Munich. At that time Britain and America were cordial friends of France, and the betrayal was softened with vague phrases or even, since the whole world was still steeped in calumny against the great Soviet civilization, excused on the ground that Russia could not be trusted. In war, as in wine, the truth comes out. France basely deserted its ally. Why?

Military considerations lie outside my many fields of interest but it can safely be said that they afford no justification of the action of France. Indeed now that we see the supreme French commanders in their true light as priest-ridden mediocrities who put the interest of their Church above the interests of their nation and the dictates of honor we wonder if they did not strain these military considerations in 1938 in order to avoid an effective alliance with Russia which the Vatican, which sought an alliance with Germany against Russia, would bitterly resent. There is a fallacy in the plea that events have proved that and war at that time against Germany would have been disastrous. Neither France (always too selfish to tax itself sufficiently for adequate defense) nor Russia had the forces they would later develop, but Germany also was far short of the power it would deploy in 1941 after being in a position for a year or two to enslave half of Europe. The Maginot Line was complete. and the Czechs had, to the great profit of the French Steel Trust—a similar line, an army limited in numbers, but of superb quality, and a staunch ally in Russia. If Germany had turned the Maginot Line by invading Belgium the British Fleet would be added to the coalition. The prospect was more hopeful than in 1939 and 1940 or at any time until Russia was drawn in.

But can we suppose that France at any time before 1940 was sensitive to the wishes and counsels of the Vatican? It was one of the most irreligious countries in the world, or at least it ran Britain close for that title. I have repeatedly quoted Catholic admissions that only about six or seven million of its 42,000,000 people were in any real sense Catholics. All its statesmen were, and had been for more than half a century, Freethinkers (except one Protestant) and apart from artists and literary men, whose convictions are not conviction’s in an intellectual sense, nearly all its cultural leaders were skeptics,

We shall study France more closely in a later book when we have to try to understand the monumental treachery of the Catholic military leaders, but a few points must be discussed here in order to complete the record of the action of the Black International in preparing the world, whether it realized what it was doing or not, for the historic crime of the war. In an earlier chapter I mentioned, incidentally, how in 1937 Pacelli went—we will not say was sent for he made his own policy—to Paris as the Pope’s legate. This was the first time the Papacy had sent a Legate to France since 1814. All reference-books had continued to describe it as a Catholic country, as they do today, and few thought of explaining this very singular attitude of the Vatican to it. But we will return to that latter. Pacelli, who hated democracy in general and France in particular, was so very amiable and successful that on the following New Year’s Day the gifts received by the Premier and the Minister of Finance, both Freethinkers, included Papal decorations.

Naturally this was not the beginning of pleasant relations, but I must give a very summary account of events at this stage. The Thirty Years' War (say 1884 to 1914) of France and the Vatican ended in the truce of 1914-1918, when the close union of all parties in France was demanded, and this led on to such amiable relations after the war that the very powerful French Freethought Party was never reconstructed.

The new element was Alsace-Loran, two solidly Catholic provinces which they had taken over from Germany. At first the French tried to weaken the Church in them by applying their laws (secularization of schools, marriage, etc.) to them but the Vatican inspired a resentment that alarmed the government. The true state of Alsace-Loran for years after 1918 was not described in the American and British press. It seethed with rebellions feeling, carefully fostered by its (in Alsace at least) German-speaking and German-hearted priests. France, expecting a German war of revenge sooner or later, was scared and had to call in the aid of the Vatican; and from the richly organized Catholic communities of Alsace-Loran, the clerical zeal spread to north-eastern France. There was, French Catholics admitted, no flood of conversions, but the mere fact of the annexation had raised the Church in France from a body of 5,000,000 to a body of about 7,000,000, and it was of the highest political importance to be on good terms with the Vatican.

So the frivolous folk of Paris saw strange things which had, they thought, been relegated to ancient history; exchange of representatives at Paris and Rome, the canonization of Joan of Arc, a Papal Legate embracing their very skeptical leaders, and so on. In 1904 I had attended a huge International Congress of Freethinkers at Paris and had on Sunday walked in a procession of 200,000 while the whole city seemed to cheer us. Twenty years later I attended another Freethought Congress in Paris. No more than 200 attended the largest meetings, and the city did not take the slightest interest. An aged ex-Minister who had been in the van of the anti-clerical struggle from 1890 to 1910 told me that for political reasons Freethought was dead and the Church very much alive. I was not altogether surprised. Two years earlier I had been in Athens, in fact in the British Legation there, when the Greek foreign minister had come with the news of the terrible defeat of the Greeks by the Turks. The French had been guilty of an act of treachery of which the older France would have been incapable. It had Supplied the Turks, the minister said, with guns, tanks, and officers against the Greeks.

Here I need consider only how the new policy affected the relations of France with Czecho-Slovakia. The government had with the support of the deputies from Alsace-Loran and in face of the violent protests of the Radicals sent an ambassador to Rome and received a Nuncio at Paris. When the Radicals were put in power in 1924 they tried to abolish this arrangement, but the clergy defeated them again through the Catholic deputies of Alsace-Loran. From that time the Pope's representative in Paris had considerable influence and there were frequent deals with the Vatican. The royalist movement, which was gaining ground and was mainly Catholic, was repeatedly checked by the Church at the request of the government. For the first time since Napoleon French Catholic writers (royalists) made drastic attacks on Rome, accusing it of traffic with the "blasphemous laicism" of the French government. The government had to pay for the Church's services.

One of the return services of the government concerned Czecho-Slovakia. In 1933 the Papal Nuncio at Prague was, as I said, expelled by the Czechs for political interference in publicly supporting the Slovak movement. The Vatican retorted by organizing a gorgeous festival at Prague in honor of the eleventh centenary of some medieval saint who was supposed to have introduced Christianity into the country, and the French were used to persuade their allies, the Czechs, to take part and adjust the quarrel over the Nuncio. The French Cardinal Verdier was one of the most conspicuous figures in the ceremonies.

In 1936 the French signed their pact with Soviet Russia. What Pacelli, who began this year to call repeatedly for war on Bolshevism, thought about it one can imagine, but we may defer that question. The Pact drew France, Russia, and Czecho-Slovakia into an alliance which seemed to be of such importance for the security of France and the peace of Europe that the feelings of the Church had to be disregarded. But in creating all the bitterness that it could against Russia by a false representation that it persecuted religion the Church added considerably to the confusion which distracted French attention from the urgent need to increase its armament. French Communists reacted as one would expect, and the royalists and Fascists derived new strength from the disorder.

If we recall that the Church also had representatives of the most fanatical loyalty in the highest military councils we begin to understand that element of the perfidy of 1938 which concerns us here. France was morbid and demoralized during several years before the way, but we did not then imagine that its great soldiers were convinced that lack of religion was the root of all its troubles and that the authority of the Church must be reestablished at any cost to the nation, even the sacrifice of that honor of which it was so proud. The final word in 1938 when the Czechs called upon the French to redeem their pledge, was with the Catholic heads of the army and navy: Petain, Weygand, and Darlan. Is it a mere coincidence

that they refused to fight for Czecho-Slovakia, which the Vatican was not interested in protecting, yet, without any further large addition to their forces in the intervening year, decided to fight for Poland, in which the Vatican was passionately interested? Had Pacelli already the idea that a France so humiliated and weakened that two priest-ridden old men could make it fall upon its knees once more might be linked with Italy, Spain, and Portugal in a bloc or League of Catholic powers? We do not know.

So the Czechs were sacrificed to the butchers under whom they suffer so appallingly today. The French complain that Britain did not support them.

Britain was under no pledge to do so in a contingency of that nature and had no army to speak of. But it would certainly have been forced in by public opinion, and its fleet would have been a powerful support. A British author who had exceptional sources of information told me that the ships were stripped ready for war, as they had also been during the German and Italian insolence in Spain, and groans and curses followed the news of appeasement from London. We were, relatively to Germany's resources, hardly better prepared in 1939 than in 1938, and the cause in 1938 would have been far more inspiring, while the aid of Russia was certain.

Msgr. Tiszo returned from his treachery in Germany and took over the petty Protectorate of Slovakia. He now showed his complete dependence on Rome and Berchtesgaden. In the summer of 1929 he drenched Bratislava, where many still cherished in secret the culture of the Czechs, with Pacelli's anti-Bolshevism and vilified the great memory of Masarvk. When Hitler hypocritically entered upon a peace-compact with Russia Tiszo again changed his tune. He sent his cousin as representative of Slovakia in Moscow and sent a telegram of congratulation to Stalin on his sixtieth birthday. Was he fully aware (as Stalin was) that the whole pretence of German friendship was one of those tricks by which the invincible legions; tried to weaken their opponents in advance?

He at all events strangled democracy and freedom on the lines of the "great encyclical" of Pius XI. The Catholic Tablet (July 27, 1940) said that the Vatican Radio, announcing that the blear-eyed Petain was going to "reconstruct France on a Christian basis" by suppressing liberty and sacrificing prosperity, added with joy that Tiszo had already done this in Czecho-Slovakia. Another section of the earth won for Pacelli's grand plan of a league of theocratic- Fascist states sworn to extinguish Socialism. But in all these matters man proposes and Hitler disposes. Already it is announced that Tiszo is under the frown of the Fuhrer, and it looks as if he will join the disillusioned band of Quislings (Henlein, Seyss- Inquart, etc.) who were to be lifted to power by the German giant.

Chapter 6

Chapter V

In the summer of 1938, between the tragedy of Munich and that of Prague. Pacelli went to preside at the Eucharistic Congress at Buda-Pesth. He was housed royally in the royal castle, and the fleet-less Admiral Horthy had long and very cordial conversations with him. Hungary is counted a Catholic country because 64.9 of its population is described as Catholic. It is Fascist, but as the star of Mussolini paled before that of Hitler, Horthy had linked the fortune of the state he despotically controlled with that of Germany. German armies could march through Hungary or use its stretch of the Danube whenever they needed. It had been unjustly treated at Versailles, and it looked to Hitler as it had earlier looked to Mussolini, to recover for it a large and rich slice of Yugo-Slavia. It was another of Hitler's bloodless victories and, as he had the sense not to interfere with Hungary's Church or institution's, the Papacy was content. It was one more Catholic Fascist state for the grand alliance, and Czecho-Slovakia was already doomed in the eyes of thoughtful observers.

The year 1939 then opened with very grave anxiety in all democratic lands. What would be the feeling of the Black International outside those countries?

You have only to turn back a few years and compare its feeling at the time when, at the beginning of 1930, Pacelli virtually took over the rule of the Church. Then the Church of Rome was disintegrating more rapidly than ever before. The steady loss by leakage until 1914 had been succeeded, as I showed, by a catastrophic loss of between 50,000,000 and 100,000,000 in about ten years. Russia, the principal source of the new corroding force, had made good and was preparing to offer to the world something which Rome had always declared impossible: a great civilization built without the least religious inspiration, for no one questions that the constructive class in Russia was entirely atheistic. Without anything that could justly be called persecution of religion this class had communicated its atheism to something like 100,000,000 people within its own frontiers, won tens of millions in China and even French Indo-China and Siam, and crossed the Pacific and devastated the Church from Mexico to Patagonia. The same influence had pervaded Europe and had in Germany and the southern half of the continent detached tens of millions of Catholic's from the Church. I have given the figures and the evidence.

Such had been the situation and the outlook of the Church in 1929. In the ten years of Pacelli's tenure of office as Secretary of State there had been a dramatic change. The triumphant spread of Russian irreligion had been completely arrested, and that country was isolated by a great wall of international hatred and slander. Italy and Spain were again prostrate at the feet of the priests. We will not say that it did not matter two pins to the Vatican whether the men who went to church and sent their children to Catholic schools once more were blessing or cursing the Church in their hearts as long as they obeyed, but we may certainly say that it was regarded by the Black International as a magnificent triumph that the tens of millions of apostates dare not open their lips and that their children were all handed over to the priest. Italy and Spain were once more Catholic countries. Portugal and Hungary were in line, and, while Germany, resisting both threats and blandishments, was still a very unsatisfactory ally, it had at least destroyed the Socialist-Communist force that had made havoc in the Church. The proud anti-Papalism of Czecho-Slovakia was in the dust, and France was on cordial terms with the Vatican. The rot (liberation?) had been stopped in South America, which presented an almost unbroken compulsory-Catholic front, and in the Far East the alliance with Japan opened up a golden prospect of a Catholic monopoly of missions in the one-fourth of the earth over which the flag of the Rising Sun was expected to wave.

That—again I am just summarizing facts of which I have given full evidence—was the situation in the Spring of 1939

when Pacelli reaped his reward and became Pope; and American Catholic literature assures you that he piously hated limelight and desired only to be an obscure parish priest moving amongst the obscure poor! Our newspapers have today “experts on religion” as “Church editors” just as they have political, financial, or international experts. These men never enlarge on this most spectacular religious development since the Reformation. In a single generation the Church of Rome lost and regained at least one-third of its members. These “experts on religion” would probably be startled and incredulous if you told them that, though I have proved it line by line. They are too busy talking nonsense about the Church in Russia or describing parochial triumphs and quarrels.

But why does not the Catholic journalist or orator dilate on this dramatic development? In the first place because he does not wish to call attention to or acknowledge the Stupendous losses of the Church from 1919 to 1929, which he has always denied. He prefers the miracle of the tail wagging the dog; the theory that small minorities of wicked men somehow get power in spite of rich and formidable bodies of priests, all the conservative elements, and the overwhelming majority of the nation! That explains Mexico and South America, Vienna and Spain. Exact—that is to say truthful—analysis is as rare in this field as decency is amongst Nazis or Fascists.

In the second place, and chiefly, he very certainly does not want to draw attention to the fact that whatever losses the Church sustained from 1919 to 1929 occurred in an atmosphere of free discussion while the gains were won entirely by coercion and violence. That sounds like one of those generalizations which suppress exceptions and reserves for the sake of strength. It is not. It is an accurate generalization of facts which we have now seen and it requires no qualification whatever. The only apparent exception is Russia, but the Church of Rome was always small in that country so that its losses are a slender element in the total; and it was more Polish than Russian and entirely pledged, as we shall see, to the war against the Soviets, so that it suffered on political grounds. In Mexico the losses preceded the application of the laws (passed long before) which punished political activity on the part of the clergy and do not make an exception to my general statement. But the great losses, the losses in ten’s of millions, in Germany, Italy, Austria, Spain, Czecho-Slovakia, and South America were the result of free discussion and the enlightenment of the people.

From 1929, when Mussolini made his infamous compact with the Vatican, onward the area of free discussion has been steadily reduced, and in each country in which freedom and democracy have been replaced by the tyranny of Fascism the Church has recovered ground. The only exception to this is Germany, and it is not an exception in principle because, though the Church was not here in alliance with violence this was only because its offer of alliance was spurned. Let us understand clearly what happened. We are not asked to believe that the 30,000,000 apostates of Spain and Italy, for instance, have become once more Catholics in their conviction and affections, any more than the 10,000,000 apostates under the Vichy government have. They probably in their own minds curse the Church more bitterly than ever. But all organizations and literature which criticized the Church and told people the truth about its history and its real aims were suppressed, and all children were compelled to receive religious lessons and breathe a Catholic atmosphere. The spread of the revolt was thus drastically checked and the people were treated as Catholics and subjects of Canon Law. The Church considered that it had recovered its ground.

This recovery by coercion had to be affected in every case by an alliance with the secular powers. The Church had never known any other means of regaining lost masses except by alliance, for mutual profit, with tyranny and violence, and it now found that, by an extraordinary piece of good fortune for itself, the secular powers which had formerly bludgeoned its rebels for it and seemed to have lost forever the power to do so, recovered the use of the whip and the firing squad. The Church’s recovery in the last ten years does not imply any genius in the person of its guide, Pacelli-Pius. The reaction against Communism began long before he became Secretary of State. He had only to link the Church with the powers of darkness which gathered strength in his time, and this was no new discovery of ecclesiastical statesmanship. That is why in the preceding books I have given a good deal of historical information. Without it you cannot fully understand the contemporary situation.

So the Black International pledged the Church to a policy of violence and tyranny, since this was the only possible way in which it could recover the ground it had lost. If there is one real miracle about the Church of Rome it is the loyalty of the normal educated Catholic layman to his clergy. Very large numbers of the faithful are of the type that tells you that it “never reads the paper’s” but I am thinking of the men who read their daily and discuss its contents just as you do. They read one year of Italy passing under the combined rule of Fascism and the Church and the violent suppression of all Socialist, Communist, Rationalist, and any other literature that caters to non-Catholics. A few years later it is South America, then Spain, then Austria, then Czecho-Slovakia. During all these years they are reading books or articles by Catholic writers who assure America that their Church is the ideal champion of freedom and democracy, and they know that in these countries where Church and Fascist authorities have combined millions—they could easily find that it is tens

of millions—of men and women have been robbed of the kind of freedom they treasure most and bullied into conformity with what they regard as false. They know this much at least, however much the press and their priests conspire to conceal the imprisonment of tens of thousands and the groans of tortured men in the jails. Does your Catholic friend really agree with his priest that this complete suppression of free discussion is necessary to guard the faith, and that million's of sullen, reluctant, bitter-hearted folk driven into submission by violence are a gain to it or to the World?

There is another feature of this on which I have as yet made no comment. The last ten years have witnessed not only the appearance of a vast amount of tyranny, torture, and bloodshed, but also a general degradation of character in which all sense of honor, truthfulness, and manliness seems to have been lost. Agreements between nations have become as cynical as they were in the days of Caesar Borgia and Pope Leo X. More than fifty such international agreements, treaties, pacts, etc., have been solemnly signed and sealed in the last twenty years, and tossed aside like broken toy's a few years later. Statesmen must now sign such pacts in the spirit in which Roman augurs once winked at each other over the altars. To deceive another state is a diplomatic ideal. No means to gain the end of a state—from castor-oil to opium, from prostitution to castration—is too foul to be used. Fluency in lying is almost the first qualification for office; and the men who talk most about honor are completely destitute of any sense of it.

I would ask the reader to reflect here very carefully. Certainly not the whole of civilization is thus degraded. Your nation and mine—America and Great Britain—have many faults, but we should justly resent the application of this description to them. Today we may add Russia; and there are Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey, and many countries. In fact, is it not the literal truth that it is only the allies of the Black International that have thus degraded and debauched the standard of personal and collective life? Let the Catholic who finds a triumph of his Church in the last ten years reflect on that. It is part of the price that the Church has had to pay.

And the greater price was still to come. Pacelli had, through the local hierarchies at least, blessed war, in Spain, Abyssinia, and Czecho-Slovakia. He was still in 1939 alternating between beautiful praise of peace and demands of war upon Russia and Mexico. We need not linger to wonder how far he realized what he had done with his alliances, but all the world now knows it. He had helped to set the stage for the vilest and bloodiest war in history. He had helped and courted the three powers which were pledged to launch this war, and for the most sordid greed that ever moved an army. What did Pius XII and his Black International do when the hellish bugles sounded and the black flag was unfurled?

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