The Response of American Journals of Opinion To the Rise and Consolidation of National Socialism in Germany

Thomas Martin Keefe
Loyola University Chicago

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at Loyola eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Loyola eCommons. For more information, please contact ecommons@luc.edu.

Recommended Citation
http://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_diss/796

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 License.
Copyright © 1966 Thomas Martin Keefe
THE RESPONSE OF AMERICAN JOURNALS OF OPINION
TO THE RISE AND CONSOLIDATION OF
NATIONAL SOCIALISM IN GERMANY

by

Thomas M. Keefe

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

January

1966
VITA AUCTORIS

Thomas Martin Keefe was born on December 25, 1933 in Chicago, Illinois. He attended Chicago Catholic grammar schools, St. Cyril and St. Philip Neri, from 1940 to 1948 and De La Salle High School from 1948 to 1952. As a college undergraduate he matriculated at Wilson Junior College and Chicago Teachers' College from 1952 to 1953, and St. Mary's College in Winona, Minnesota from 1953 to 1956. He graduated from St. Mary's with the Bachelor of Arts degree in June 1956. He was awarded a Master of Arts degree in International Relations from Denver University in December 1957.

After one semester of graduate work at Loyola University in 1958, he became a Teaching Fellow in the History Department from September 1959 to June 1962, and he was a part-time lecturer during 1962-1963. During the school year 1963-1964 he taught history as an assistant professor at St. Mary's College in Winona, Minnesota. He served as a lecturer of history in Loyola's School of Business Administration in 1964-1965, and since September 1965 he has been Instructor of history at St. Joseph's College, Philadelphia.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**INTRODUCTION** ........................................... 1

Chapter  

I. THE NATIONAL SOCIALISTS SCORE  
THEIR FIRST SUCCESS ....................................... 11

II. THE PAPEN AND SCHLEICHER INTERLUDE ................. 88

III. HITLER IN POWER--THE FIRST PHASE: FROM THE  
CHANCELLORSHIP TO THE ENABLING ACT .................. 141

IV. THE JEWISH QUESTION .................................. 180

V. THE NATIONAL SOCIALISTS AND  
THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH ............................ 225

VI. NATIONAL SOCIALISM AND THE PROTESTANT CHURCH .... 326

VII. GERMAN DOMESTIC POLITICS FROM THE  
ENABLING LAW TO THE ROEHM PURGE ..................... 391

VIII. DOMESTIC ISSUES FROM THE ROEHM PURGE  
TO THE OUTBREAK OF THE WAR ............................. 454

IX. THE NATIONAL SOCIALISTS AND GERMANY'S  
ECONOMIC PROBLEMS .................................. 513

X. NAZI FOREIGN POLICY TO THE REMILITARIZATION  
OF THE RHINELAND ..................................... 566

XI. NAZI FOREIGN POLICY, 1936-1939 ....................... 642

XII. CONCLUSIONS ........................................... 753

BIBLIOGRAPHY ............................................... 782
INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is a study of the response of the American periodical press to a decade of German history—a decade which helped to shape the future of the world. Specifically, it is concerned with the events of the period from September 1930 to September 1939. In no way does the author conceive of his project as a new interpretation of German history during the National Socialist era; there has been no attempt to discover new facts relating to this period. Rather, the dissertation attempts to see the events of these years through the eyes of the writers who were shaping opinion in the United States toward German National Socialism. It intends to indicate what the journalists found interesting and worthy of comment and to analyze their views.

Thus while one intention of this work is to indicate what the American periodical press had to say and how it was said, a second consideration is whether or not the news coverage and interpretation by the journals were reliable, responsible and intelligent. It is hoped that this work will reveal enough information so that the many American journals considered here may be judged as to how well they performed the function they claimed to be fulfilling: giving the American reading public an accurate and
authoritative account of the events in Nazi Germany and a credible assessment of Adolf Hitler and National Socialism.

In examining the periodicals, a number of worthwhile lessons can be learned from the American response to some of the significant problems which arose between the two world wars. One question asked is whether the many periodicals and journalists were able to come to grips with the true significance of the National Socialist ideology or the character of Adolf Hitler. The same question was posed by Dr. Brigitte Granzow in her new book *A Mirror of Nazism* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1964) which considered the response of British newspapers and journals from 1929 to 1933 to Hitlerism and its growth.

Since the period under consideration was one in which great political, social and economic experiments were being undertaken by most of the important nations of the western world, the various assessments by the journals must be considered in this light. For example, the United States was following such a course under the direction of President Franklin D. Roosevelt after March 1933. That this one man played such a key role in directing America's recovery legislation could have been reflected in the journals that attempted to understand the so-called leadership principle of the National Socialist doctrine.

While in some American circles in the 1930's the Rooseveltian New Deal was considered revolutionary, hindsight shows now that it was nothing more than a moderate left-wing enterprise. This brings to the forefront the question of whether the
American journalists really had a clear conception of what extremism in government entailed, or whether they fully comprehended the concept of modern totalitarianism. There was no faction in the United States at this time which could compare with the National Socialists. The extremist and hate groups that blossomed in the nineteen-thirties lacked the organization and leadership to pose too great a threat to American institutions or to win a sizeable number of American converts. Nonetheless, the noise being made by the extreme right- and left-wing American movements must have been heard by the journalists who were shaping opinion on Germany and could well have influenced their writing in one way or another.

The racial theories of Nazism were a spectacular aspect of Adolf Hitler's program. Of course, anti-Semitism was not a new problem, but one wonders if the American periodicals and journalists were prepared intellectually to grasp the significance of Hitler's plans. Whether the journalists ever took seriously the racial policies of the National Socialist leader and his friends is another consideration worthy of investigation. One might also ask if a real sense of urgency with respect to the Jewish question was felt by the journals at any time during the period from 1930 to 1939.

Another factor which might well have figured in the journals' interpretation of the first years of the Hitler era was the Versailles Peace Treaty and the revisionist interpretation of the causes of World War I. Because many of the periodicals, especi-
ally those which could be classified as liberal-inclined, looked upon the 1919 settlement as an unjust and ill-suited arrangement, the views of these magazines on the emergence of National Socialism—a movement which used the anti-Versailles Treaty argument as one of its chief propaganda slogans—should be probed. Inquiries should also be made into how the journals treated the early activities of the Fuehrer and his officials. Whether the American journalists looked upon the National Socialists as ordinary politicians who, although dissatisfied with the status quo, would exercise their rule according to the standards of the twentieth century in their efforts to restore Germany's lost prestige, is another question to be answered.

Work in European history using the American journal and newspaper approach is not of recent origin. Several studies of press response have already appeared with respect to Nazi Germany. Two masters' theses at Loyola University in Chicago have touched on limited aspects of this problem: Robert L. Bireley, S.J., "The Reaction of Five American Catholic Periodicals to the Rise of Nazism: 1923-1937," 1963; and Samuel A. Marotta, S.J., "The Reaction of America, The Commonweal, and The Catholic World to Italian Fascism," 1959. The only known attempt thus far at a more intensive study is the unpublished Yale University dissertation written in 1954 by Frederick K. Wentz: "The Reaction of the Religious Press in America to the Emergence of Nazism." Sections of this author's work, based on his dissertation, can be found in two published articles in the quarterly Church History: "American
Several monographs dealing with press and periodical reaction to National Socialism have recently been published. In 1959 Alfred Grosser edited *Hitler, la Presse et la Naisance d'une Dictature* (Paris: Armand Colin), in which he documents the treatment of Hitler's rise to power in the major newspapers of the western world, 1932-33. A more recent work is Brigitte Granzow's *A Mirror of Nazism* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1964). Dr. Granzow has analyzed the response of the more serious British press, which she limits to The Times, the Observer, the Manchester Guardian, the Daily Telegraph and the Economist, with an occasional use of the New Statesman, to the rise to political power of Adolf Hitler from 1929 through most of 1933 and to the nature of Nazism. Andrew Sharf's *The British Press and Jews Under Nazi Rule* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964) is an important topical work which covers the period from 1933 to 1945. Dr. Sharf uses approximately 150 British newspapers and magazines in making his assessments of the British press reaction to the National Socialists' anti-Semitic program.

The present dissertation is distinct in its handling of the American journal response, notwithstanding the various unpublished manuscripts and published articles and monographs covering the same period of German history. It differs from the two Loyola University masters' theses in two ways: in the scope of years cov-
ed in German history and in the number of journals selected for the study. Wentz's Yale dissertation considered only the years 1933 to 1937, and his research was limited to American religious journals and newspapers. In contrast this dissertation covers the years 1930 to 1939, and utilizes American secular publications, more Catholic periodicals, and fewer Protestant ones, than Wentz's study. Almost no similarity exists between the present dissertation and the published monographs. Both Grosser and Granzow research primarily non-American journals and newspapers and limit their investigations to the advance of incipient National Socialism. As the title of Sharf's book indicates, he is concerned with one facet of the British press response to the Hitler program.

More than three dozen quality American journals have been investigated for this dissertation's approximately nine-year study of German history, September 1930 to September 1939. The decision has been made to use only the leading journals of opinion so that the problem might be followed in depth and with some consistency. The journals of opinion selected, with few exceptions among the monthlies and quarterlies, responded to the problems of the nine-year growth of National Socialist tyranny with a number of long editorials, a variety of signed articles and, in many instances, a news section devoted to short comments. With the application of these criteria, it was decided to reject the more popular magazines such as *Time*, *Newsweek*, *Life*, *Collier's* and *The Saturday Evening Post*, whose coverage and assessment of foreign affairs were found to be superficial and limited in depth. In these last-
named magazines the emphasis was on factual content and polished articles by men of literary talent which appealed to the less politically alert American reading public. No effort was made to consider newspaper articles. The day-to-day handling of the events does not allow the newspapers to linger long on any one particular subject, so that depth studies were relatively infrequent.

In the selection of the journals of opinion, an attempt was made to include representatives from the commonly recognized groups within the spectrum of American life. Representing the liberal school, The Nation and The New Republic, both weeklies, were the two prime examples of the secular journals which were examined. A moderately liberal approach to world politics was taken by The Survey Graphic; the same could be said for Current History until 1937 when, after The New York Times sold its interest in this monthly, it became a sensational type of journal for the next few years. The articles which concerned German affairs appearing in The American Scholar were usually left of center. Until it ended publication in 1932, The Outlook and Independent presented

---

1 The political orientation of most of the journals used in this study can be determined by investigating Edwin Emery and Henry Ladd Smith, The Press and America (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1954); Theodore Peterson, Magazines in the Twentieth Century (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1956); James P. Wood, Magazines in the United States (2d ed.; New York: The Roland Press, 1956); and Martin E. Marty, John G. Deedy, Jr., David Wolf Silverman and Robert Lekachman, The Religious Press in America (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963). For those periodicals not cited or precisely categorized in any of these monographs, the author has had to make his own judgment based on a thorough reading of editorials and signed articles touching on a number of important issues of the day.
a liberal interpretation of the news. The year 1932 also saw the demise of another moderately liberal monthly, The World's Work, which was absorbed by the conservative Review of Reviews.

The moderately conservative viewpoint of the American secular magazines was probably best expressed in the editorial section of The Living Age and in the pages of The Literary Digest. Both journals contained significant features. The Living Age's pages were filled by articles taken from various European news sources, while the Digest summarized world press opinion of the important events. More to the right in their editorial opinion and feature articles were The Review of Reviews and The American Mercury. Extremely reactionary material was published by The American Review.

A number of quality journals featured articles by authors with varying sets of values and political beliefs; except for an occasional editorial, it was difficult to determine the political orientation of The Atlantic Monthly, Harper's Magazine, Scribner's Magazine, The Forum and The North American Review. Hence they may be considered as neutral.

Attention was also paid to the religious periodicals, since many of them were keenly interested in world affairs. They became even more alert to events in Germany once the Hitler regime tried to bring the churches under state control. The most frequent Catholic response occurred in the Jesuit weekly America and the weekly Commonweal, controlled and edited by Catholic laymen. More often than not, America's reactions were conservative
in tone, while *The Commonweal* tended to be somewhat more liberal. The weekly *Ave Maria* and the monthly *Catholic World* and *Sign* were other Catholic magazines, all three controlled by religious orders, which offered their readers a significant number of articles and editorial comment devoted to German affairs. Their orientation was generally conservative. A minimum of material on world events was furnished by *The American Ecclesiastical Review* and the Knights of Columbus monthly *Columbia*.

For the Protestant side of the story, the highly respected non-denominational *Christian Century* must be placed at the head of the list. Numerous editorials and articles devoted considerable attention to the various developments in Nazi Germany. *The Christian Register*, a weekly of the Unitarian and Universalist churches, contained a few editorials and signed articles with a generally liberal orientation like the *Century* pertaining to events in Germany. Another weekly with a liberal slant to its editorial comments was *The Presbyterian Advance*. During 1934 this periodical changed its name to *The Presbyterian Tribune*, but unfortunately not every issue from this year to 1939 was available for research. A number of worthwhile articles were contributed to the Protestant quarterly *Religion In Life*. On the other hand, the subscribers to *The Lutheran Church Quarterly* were able to read only a few selections concerning the situation in Nazi Germany.

Some of those journals taken under consideration aimed at a more highly educated readership than others. Among these, the quarterly *Foreign Affairs* supplied a number of worthwhile long and
Incisive articles on the Third Reich. Less attentive to international events but containing some response to the Hitler regime were The Yale Review, Thought, a Catholic journal, and the Protestant quarterly Christendom. Occasional valuable commentary was also discovered in such scholarly reviews as the Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, The American Political Science Review and The Catholic Historical Review.

A chronological approach seemed most natural for the first three chapters in this dissertation. These cover the span of time during which the National Socialists made the transition from a political faction into the totalitarian government of Germany with the enactment of the Enabling Law on March 23, 1933. Their program possessed the flexibility, the vagueness and the dubious qualities of a mere opposition group. Thereafter, when the National Socialists assumed political responsibility, they were forced to devise concrete policies designed for specific day-to-day situations, in all aspects of German life. Hence a topical treatment of the material, i.e., the journalists response offered the best method for organization, and allowed for analysis in depth and with continuity.

The varying publication dates of the weekly, monthly and quarterly journals present some difficulty since they responded at closer or greater distance from the concrete events. The events themselves rather than the date of publication have supplied the criterion for determining the order of treatment in the dissertation.
CHAPTER I

THE NATIONAL SOCIALISTS SCORE THEIR FIRST SUCCESS

The Reichstag election of September 14, 1930, turned out to be a profitable one for the extremes—both Fascist and Communist. The National Socialists increased their total vote from just over 800,000 votes in the 1928 national election to over 6,400,000. More impressive was the number of seats won in the Reichstag: 107 as compared to only twelve in the previous campaign. A less spectacular increase was shown by the Communist Party, which acquired approximately 4,600,000 votes and 77 Reichstag seats—1,230,000 ballots and 23 deputies more than in the May, 1928 election. Readers of the American journals of opinion had not been fully prepared for such results.1 Few journals on

---

1 It should be pointed out that a somewhat more than cursory inspection of the journals under consideration during the nineteen-twenties revealed little in the way of depth study with regard to the National Socialist movement. In times of German political and economic crisis, the Nazis would appear along with other radical and revolutionary groups, but it did not seem that the periodical press went out of its way to detail any of their activities or to outline their program. The major event in the nineteen-twenties in which the Hitlers participated, the Munich Putsch, was given extremely limited coverage in 1923, as was the post-revolution trial of Adolf Hitler, General Erich von Ludendorff and their associates.

Once the troubles of the early twenties had apparently been alleviated, the operations of the anti-republican forces faded from the pages of the journals, except for an infrequent reference. It was not until 1930, when a variety of problems descended on republican Germany, that the American periodicals began to note
Eve had sensed the degree of animosity that the German people felt against the moderate government led by the Centrist, Heinrich Brüning. In the immediate post-election period the journals were quick to suggest reasons for the election results and to analyze the prospects for Germany's political future.

The first response appeared in the various weeklies. The liberal New Republic gave the most space to events in Germany. Time and again, it would present the most accurate assessment of German internal affairs during the period covered by this dissertation. Its September 24 editorial noted that the parliamentary government had the dual job of affecting legislation in a Reichstag which now had about 244 left- and right-wing extremists and a revival of the extremist activity. However, there was little specific notice of the growing strength of the National Socialist Party until just about two months before the September 14, 1930 national election. More significant was the fact that the journals failed to perceive just how potent a force the Nazis were becoming as a result of their high-pressure campaign tactics and their appeals to the disenchanted voters of Germany.

For a knowledge and understanding of the political climate in which the National Socialist Party was founded and was nurtured, background material is essential. There are a number of worthy volumes in English on the Weimar era. Harlan P. Hansen and Robert G. L. Waite have recently translated into English the two volumes of Erich Eyck's A History of the Weimar Republic (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962 and 1963). This is the most thorough study of the republican era. Still useful and always interesting is the work by the Social Democrat, Arthur Rosenberg, History of the German Republic (London: Methuen and Co., 1936). A short but profound monograph is Arnold Brecht's Prelude to Silence (New York: Oxford University Press, 1944). Samuel William Halperin is frequently given credit for presenting the best material for essential background knowledge in his Germany Tried Democracy (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1946). The Weimar Republic: Overture to the Third Reich (London: Faber, Faber and Faber, 1946) is a short, readable history by Godfrey Scheele. Economic and administrative problems are given particular emphasis.
keeping the World War I allies, especially the French, happy, while it struggled to fulfill the financial demands of the Young Plan. Carefully viewing the political situation, The New Republic seemed to think that there was little likelihood that even a Socialist-led coalition government would be able to carry on for any length of time. No government could be more than a temporary stop-gap with such pressure being applied from all sides. The German people were determined to upset the Versailles agreement, and they now had sought out a politician, Adolf Hitler, who was willing to oppose reparations fulfillment. But once Hitler came to power, there would be passive resistance and "perhaps even a resort to arms." One reassuring sign for this editorial writer was that the actual number of Hitler's backers was unknown, although the number of Germans voting for the National Socialist Party had already been published. It was believed by this weekly that many German votes for the National Socialists were cast to frighten more concessions from the British and French at the international level. The New Republic hoped that some kind of moderate coalition, organized by President Paul von Hindenburg and blessed with the "goodwill of the world," might be able to salvage some aspects of German democracy.2

2 The New Republic, LXIV (September 24, 1930), 139-140. This liberal organ had consistently supported the Weimar Republic and sympathized with it because of the restrictions imposed by the Versailles peace.

Where no specific author is named, in either the text or the footnote, the reference is to an unsigned editorial or short editorial comment; even when this editorial bears a title in the journal, this will not be indicated in the notes, in the interest of economy of space.
The radical victory in Germany was just as threatening as far as the September 24 Nation was concerned. Neither the Fascists, whose voting strength appeared to be within the middle class, nor the Communists, held enough seats in the Reichstag to claim a majority, although they were the second- and third-ranking parties according to the number of deputies. For the present, they could only increase their disturbances and continue to curtail normal parliamentary procedures. But the fact of the matter was that parliamentary government in Germany was approaching its demise. The Nation held out little hope for the advocates of moderation. No moderate ministry, said the editorial, would be able to stand for long against the attacks of the extremists. Besides, the German people wanted a dictatorship. This remark was apparently intended to remind the readers that the republican structure of the government was already tottering. The principle of ministerial responsibility had been violated on July 16, 1930, when Article 48 of the constitution had been invoked. After the Reichstag had rejected Chancellor Heinrich Bruening's financial measures, Hindenburg had permitted the Chancellor to take emergency powers in order to effect his fiscal program.

Adolf Hitler's activities since the abortive 1923 putsch were briefly surveyed by The Outlook and Independent for September 24, 1930. His recent success at the polls was reportedly due

3The Nation, CXXXI (September 24, 1930), 309. The Nation is the oldest and probably the most influential of American liberal journals. Its contributors included the most noted promoters of American liberalism.
his great gift of oratory and his appeal to women and the German youth. The main points of his program called for Anschluss, repudiation of the peace treaties and the disfranchisement of Jews. In this brief article the editors committed themselves to nothing except that the National Socialist gains caused some concern abroad. The September 27 Literary Digest noted the same concern for this "specter of Fascism" in foreign capitals; it, like The Nation, doubted whether anyone could now form a government of moderate parliamentarians.

Despair was the cause of the Hitler party's success, according to the weekly Christian Century in the September 24 issue. The desperate German population was turning to a dictatorship as a panacea for its country's economic ills, an action which, in the long run, could only bring instability to central Europe. A Presbyterian Advance editorial for September 25 attempted to analyze the new party alignment in the Reichstag and concluded that possibly a coalition led by the Socialists could make a workable government. This arrangement depended upon whether the center parties would agree to serve with the Social Democrats and vice-versa. The Socialists had refused to go along with Chancellor

---

4The Outlook and Independent, CLVI (September 24, 1930), 138. The editorials of this journal were moderately liberal.

5The Literary Digest, CVI (September 27, 1930), 9. In its editorial policy this journal was generally considered to be conservative; however, a significant part of the Digest was the inclusion in its pages of a survey of world newspaper opinion.

6The Christian Century, XLVII (September 24, 1930), 1139. This non-denominational Protestant weekly had a liberal policy.
Bruening's financial measures, and there was no indication that the stalemate would be broken. No Social Democrat sat in the Premier's cabinet. Nevertheless, the Advance was convinced that the German people would not remain radical and that "the situation probably will work out better than now appears probable." The magazine's optimism was not shared by another religious weekly. That the election results were "probably a faithful picture of the point of view of the electorate" was the verdict of the Catholic journal Commonweal. It believed that the political future of Germany was in the hands of the Catholic Center Party which was now faced with turning to the right or left for help in forming a new government or being confronted with indefinite chaos. Unfortunately for the administration the people who might have helped with the problem believed that "grinning and bearing it is the best recipe," while the masses hastened to the banner of Germany's most "picturesque demagogue."

From the time of the Nazi September election accomplishments, Adolf Hitler and his followers remained an almost constant news item in the journals under consideration. The majority of the articles continued to view the situation as serious, but the initial apprehension concerning the new reactionary surge in Germany began to wane. Professor Sidney B. Fay, in his October 1930

---

7 The Presbyterian Advance, XLII (September 25, 1930), 4. The Advance had a liberal slant with regard to its editorials, but its feature articles varied in opinion, depending upon the author.

8 The Commonweal, XII (October 1, 1930), 536. The Commonweal is a liberal Catholic weekly run by Catholic laymen.
Current History column, focused his discussion of the National Socialists upon their noisemaking and physical encounters with the members of the opposition parties, a condition, important to the ultimate success of National Socialism, which few other periodical journalists took time to note. Rather than write of violence, other magazines preferred to speculate. A number of this kind of article and editorial began to appear in early October 1930.

An editorial in The Nation of October 1, 1930 reevaluated the German situation and ended up with a more optimistic viewpoint than was thought possible a week before. The short editorial quoted Adolf Hitler as saying that he was against a physical revolution and was content to work in the area of ideas. At this moment, The Nation was apparently ready to accept the National Socialist Party leader at his word. It might well be, the journal conjectured, that the Fascist chief was prepared to work for a dictatorship through parliamentary procedure, fighting it out against the Bruening ministry which had not yet resigned. A general assumption pervaded the American journals and many German political circles as well that Chancellor Bruening and his associates would submit their resignations soon. However, eighteen months were to pass before these politicians vacated their offices. Contrary to the position held by The Commonweal that the Catholic Center’s decisions would determine future events, The Nation wrote that the viability of the Weimar system now seemed to depend upon

9Sidney B. Fay, "The Teutonic Countries," Current History, XXXIII (October, 1930), 136. This was a regular feature by Fay, a Professor of History at Harvard University and at Radcliffe College.
what action the Socialists would take.\(^\text{10}\)

In a signed article in the same issue of *The Nation*, Reverend Reinhold Niebuhr argued that the Socialists held the key to the Republic; however, it was up to some of the other "so-called republican" parties, among which he included the Democratic Party, the People's Party and the Catholic Center Party, to cease their opposition to Socialist ideas so that the government could form a united front against the extreme right-wing's attack. Reverend Niebuhr correctly pointed out that most of the German republican parties had been gradually growing more conservative and were willing to live with National Socialism rather than to submit to the demands of the class-conscious Socialists. On the other hand, the followers of Hitler were observed to be making a more determined effort to win over the workers by offering a mixture of class-conscious Socialism and fire-brand nationalism. In their political maneuverings, the National Socialists had been able to acquire a substantial following by making vague promises and appealing to the emotions. The last campaign emphasized anti-Semitism, but the anti-parliamentary government, anti-Versailles treaty and anti-Young Plan issues were not forgotten. No one seemed to know what the Nazi alternatives were with regard to the latter issues, except that the Hitlerites constantly made "vague allusions to a dictatorship." A party which was able to build a formidable organization in a short time on such a nebulous platform indicated to Niebuhr that Germany was sick politically and that the nation's

\(^{10}\) *The Nation*, CXXXI (October 1, 1930), 336.
future was in doubt.11

A brief news article in the Catholic weekly America for October 4 was cognizant of the complications that the election results could cause, but for the moment, it thought, not with complete accuracy, that everything was peaceful in Germany. America claimed to be receiving reports showing that even the Nazis were exercising some self-control. The extent of their electoral success apparently had sobered them, and there was little talk now of a revolutionary coup. In fact, America found that the party leader, Adolf Hitler, was speaking more softly and more conservatively.12 America had no comment on the demagogic speech made by Hitler in mid-September at the trial of Nazi-oriented army officers, in which he promised bloody retribution against all those Germans who had participated in the 1918 peace settlement. An editorial in the same issue erroneously interpreted the September election results as the possible first step in a Communist takeover of the government. For its source of information, the journal used a recent interview which The New York Times had had with Father Edmund A. Walsh, S.J., who had just returned from Europe. According to the parts of the interview printed in America, Father

---

11 Reinhold Niebuhr, "The German Crisis," ibid., 358 and 360. Niebuhr was perhaps the leading Protestant spokesman in the United States. Most of his fame was to be acquired while he was teaching at the Union Theological Seminary.

12 America, XLIII (October 4, 1930), 604. The Jesuit-managed America is generally conservative in its editorial approach, although on occasion, depending upon the subject, both editorials and feature articles could be placed in the liberal camp.
Walsh had recognized the anti-democratic tendencies of both the German extreme right and left. The editorial commentary, on the other hand, ignored Hitler and the National Socialists because they were supposedly without a program worthy of adoption, and then it predicted that the Bolsheviks would soon be masters of Berlin if Chancellor Bruening was not able to form a coalition government capable of bringing aid to the German workers. After having said all this, the editorial ended on the note of confidence that the "good sense and the good faith of the majority of the German people" would keep Germany within the ranks of a democratic republic.\(^1\)

Another religious journal, The Presbyterian Advance, agreed with America in thinking that the Hitlerites presented no immediate threat to the Republic, although it did not share with the Catholic magazine the same fear of the left. The Advance also accepted Hitler at his word and ignored contrary evidence. The journal had heard that Hitler had recently spoken about his future plans which emphasized his desire to restore Germany to her rightful position in the world, not by war, but by moral force, which of course could not be accomplished without the National Socialists winning a majority of seats in the Reichstag. The Presbyterian weekly wondered whether the Nazis had not already attained their maximum strength in September 1930.\(^2\)

Most of the American monthly periodicals did not have an

\(^1\)Ibid., 607.  
\(^2\)The Presbyterian Advance, XLII (October 9, 1930), 4-5.
opportunity to make a detailed appraisal of the September vote until their November issues. Sidney B. Fay in his regular column for the *Current History* magazine found a few "positive" aims among all the "anti" slogans in the National Socialist literature. He listed such things as the revival of nationalism, the return of the German overseas colonies, and the restoration of equality in international affairs. But anti-Semitism still appeared to be the Nazis' most pronounced viewpoint. Adolf Hitler might be downgraded by his opponents, but Professor Fay detected that he sincerely believed in himself and his program and through extraordinary organization had begun to mold a hard core of followers representing the new generation. His personal magnetism and seductive promises had brought him to the threshold of a Mussolini-like dictatorship.\(^{15}\) As time went on, other journalists besides Fay compared the German party leader to the Italian dictator, although they long regarded Hitler as inferior to Mussolini. The *November Living Age* wrote that Adolf Hitler could eventually become a "potent" if he showed "character and capacity"; however, if he did not, he would pass into oblivion.\(^{16}\)


\(^{16}\) *The Living Age*, CCCXXXIX (November, 1930), 222. In its editorial policy the *Living Age* was usually moderately conservative. The major portion of this American monthly consisted of translated or English articles of major political significance from the journals and magazines of Europe.

In the next two years, several other journalists would point out the similarities between Adolf Hitler and the Italian Fascist leader. These articles included the following: George N. Shuster, "Il Duce's Handkerchief," *The Commonweal*, XIII (December
In spite of all the absurdities of Hitler's program, Frank H. Simonds, writing in the November Review of Reviews, was reasonably certain that his appeal for a dictatorship was being carefully considered by the German electorate. The German people were looking for some way out of the intolerable situation existing within the parliamentary government. The enigmatic Adolf Hitler was given a closer look by another Review of Reviews correspondent. No longer could anyone laugh at Hitler and his ideas, said Katherine M. Palmer. He had done much studying after his putsch failure in 1923, and his rise in the last few months had been along strictly legal lines. His only recent physical encounters had been with Communists as he sought to create an image as an ardent foe of Bolshevism. Miss Palmer unfortunately seems to have equated Communism with Marxism, for she made no mention of the Nazi struggles with the Social Democrats. Reporter Palmer went on to attribute Hitler's large, enthusiastic following to his emotional oratory.


17 Frank H. Simonds, "New Germany Serves Notice: Why It Happened," The Review of Reviews, LXXXII (November, 1930), 66. Foreign correspondent Simonds was one of the most prolific writers on European affairs during the interwar period.
Hitler's method has been entirely personal. He believes in the power of the spoken word, and relies little on his books, pamphlets, and news-organs to win converts. Tirelessly he goes from beer-garden to beer-garden to address political meetings. Those who have attended these say that there is nothing outstanding about his appearance; nor is his voice inspiring. He is thin, almost to the point of emaciation, is nervous and appears to be overworked. He has fine features, dark wavy hair, a small bristling mustache, and a delicate complexion. When he speaks his eyes blaze with fanatic zeal. He utterly despises women, giving them little chance for power in the party, yet they adore him.

But Miss Palmer was convinced that many more Germans would have to be converted to his way of thinking before he triumphed. Once this was accomplished, the next step would be the winning over of the other states of western Europe to his plans for the glorious "third Reich." The odds were stacked against Adolf Hitler, according to Miss Palmer's calculations.18

The same general view of the German Fascist leader was also found in the October 11 and 18 Literary Digest and The Outlook and Independent for October 8. The Digest reported that Hitler was considered the most "fantastic figure" in post-war Europe.19 He was a man who believed in summary action, and with him anything was possible as he worked his way up the political ladder. Much of his political success was attributed "largely to women" who liked to refer to him as "Handsome Adolf." He was said to despise his female admirers,20 but no doubt he appreciated

18 Katherine M. Palmer, "Personalities: Handsome Adolf Hitler," ibid., 128-130. Miss Palmer had gotten her impressions while on a recent trip to Europe.
19 The Literary Digest, CIXVII (October 11, 1930), 15.
20 Ibid., (October 18, 1930), 34-36.
their votes. A more serious attitude was taken by The Outlook and Independent. This "strange leader" and his disciples were "no longer a joke." As long as economic hard times continued, they would remain a threat in Germany. While an immediate Fascist revolution seemed unlikely, action in the near future was quite possible. The Outlook was willing to wait and see whether Hitler would work for power through the Weimar political system as he had recently outlined. 21 Another article in the same journal concerned itself with both the character of the National Socialist leader and the future of his movement. The author, Harry Lorin Binsse, was not impressed with the physical appearance of the little man with the "Charlie Chaplin moustache," but he agreed with Katherine M. Palmer in her analysis of Hitler's great gift of oratory as his most potent weapon. He, too, seemed to think that Hitler's political strength rested on the German youth, women and old army officers, all of whom had been carried away by his romantic promises. They were also the main sources of contributions for the National Socialist Party treasury, although a number of other people had been mentioned as his financial backers. Included in this odd assortment by Binsse were Henry Ford, Leon Daudet, the Bolsheviks, the Rhenish industrialists, Mussolini and President Poincare' of France. All of these rumors amused Binsse, and he argued that it was absurd to think that the great majority of the German people would ever support "such patent foolishness

21 The Outlook and Independent, CLVI (October 8, 1930), 216.
as Hitlerism." Once the economic depression was alleviated, German Fascism would be doomed. For Binsse, the real question in Germany was the menace from the left—Communism. Hitler might contribute to the solution of this problem "by forcing the issue." The fact that Binsse was a Catholic may explain his fear of the unfounded Communist scare in Germany. However, The Christian Century for October 22 was also worried; it looked for a possible Communist revolution during the coming winter, followed by a Fascist reaction and a civil war between the two groups. What the government and the Reichswehr would be doing during the struggle was not stated. In full agreement with those who had faith in the German people was the Unitarian weekly, The Christian Register, which, on October 16, called them "too steady and stolid" to fall for the National Socialist line. Nevertheless, the political situation remained serious, and the German people were going to have to undergo a considerable strain, but how long the crisis might last, the Register would dare not say.

22 The same kind of assessment could be found in a more scholarly journal. Professor James K. Pollock, Jr., a member of the Political Science Department at the University of Michigan, made clear his views in "The German Reichstag Elections of 1930," The American Political Science Review, XXIV (November, 1930), 993-995. Pollock hoped that the increase in popularity of the Nazis was only a "passing fancy." While he considered the German people ripe for demagoguery, it was difficult for him to see how anyone could be captivated by the Nazi propaganda. It was the "sheerest drivel."

23 Harry Lorin Binsse, "Adolf Hitler, German Hypnotist," The Outlook and Independent, CLVI (October 15, 1930), 256-257,277. Binsse was on the editorial staff of The Living Age.

24 The Christian Century, XLVII (October 22, 1930), 1269-1270.

25 The Christian Register, CIX (October 16, 1930), 821.
If the Register and other sources maintained their confidence in the intelligence of the German electorate, there was still another important source of strength in Germany, according to The Nation's editorial on October 8. That Hitler and the German Fascists were not yet ready to upset the power structure in Europe or to smash the republican government was this journal's opinion. A revolutionary coup by the Nazis, or any other group, for that matter, would be thwarted by the "stout-hearted and patriotic old warrior" President Paul von Hindenburg and by the threat of British, and French, punitive action if the Young Plan was repudiated. This was the same periodical which responded so despondently to the results of the German election two weeks before. Having apparently lost faith in the German moderates, it gave evidence that it was forsaking its liberal principles and was placing the fate of Germany in the hands of a man who had the reputation for being a militant autocrat.

Any hope that the Bruening government could either contend with or overcome the opposition of the extremists died at the opening session of the Reichstag on October 13, 1930. Nazi hoodlumism ran rampant through the streets of Berlin, and attacks in the Jewish sections of the city were particularly prominent.  

The Register is the liberal-oriented weekly of the Unitarian and Universalist churches.

26 The Nation, CXXXI (October 8, 1930), 265.
27 The Nation, CXXXI (October 22, 1930), 431 and The Presbyterian Advance, XLII (October 23, 1930), 5.
The policing power of the government had obviously broken down. Inside the Reichstag building, the 107 National Socialist representatives solemnly filed in, dressed in their Party uniforms. That this novel sight caused much laughter in the assembly hall was some indication of the condition in which German democracy found itself. But as far as The New Republic was concerned, the Hitler party was by no means a laughing matter. The ingredients for a successful coup were still present, and the future of the nation was uncertain. 28

Chancellor Bruening and his government were momentarily saved from political embarrassment when the Socialists refused to support a "no confidence" motion offered by the reactionaries, and the Reichstag was adjourned until December 3. Somehow, Bruening had to maintain this alliance of the republican parties or else call for new elections in the winter months, when the economic problem would be at a seasonal peak. Both The New Republic and The Outlook and Independent agreed that the Communists and the Nazis would probably be the election victors. 29 More optimistic, because of a somewhat naive idea of native German characteristics, were The Nation, The Literary Digest and The Presbyterian Advance, all of which predicted less spectacular radical successes. 30

28 The New Republic, LXIV (October 22, 1930), 241.
29 The Christian Century, XLVII (October 29, 1930), 1303; The New Republic, LXIV (October 29, 1930), 279; and The Outlook and Independent, CLVI (October 29, 1930), 328.
30 The Nation, CXXXI (October 29, 1930), 459; The Literary Digest, CVII (November 1, 1930), 16; and The Presbyterian Advance, XLIV (October 30, 1930), 5.
During the period of the Reichstag's recess, The Commonweal published a comprehensive series of articles on the German political situation by George N. Shuster. At this time, educator Shuster was on tour in Germany, and he reported on the basis of his first-hand impressions. In discussing the problems of terrorism, he was not sure that the Nazis were the group to be worried about. This Catholic layman wrote on November 19, 1930, that "socially speaking," the National Socialists "seem comparatively harmless," but not so the Communists, who should be the major concern of Germany. That Hitler was fully aware of the Bolshevik threat and had instructed his followers to combat with the Communists in the streets of Berlin was in Shuster's estimation, "a blessing." No matter what Shuster thought of the Nazis personally, he was more of an anti-Communist than a pro-National Socialist; there was no effort on his part to whitewash the right-wing reactionaries. He could see little good coming from following the Nazi's "nationalism of despair." What seems to have influenced him at this time was the late September 1930 statement by the Catholic diocesan officials of Mainz declaring that no practical Catholic could belong to the National Socialist movement. "Hitlerism proceeds to ethical and religious conclusions of the gravest importance," wrote Shuster. It could be compared, he felt, to other contemporary movements such as French ultra-nationalism or Ku Klux Klanism in the United States.  

31 George N. Shuster, "Germany At Low Tide," The Commonweal, XIII (November 19, 1930), 70-71. At this time Shuster was managing editor of this journal and a teacher of English at Brooklyn
Shuster's second report on Germany appeared in the following week's issue of The Commonweal. That Chancellor Bruening, a man for whom the author showed great admiration, was able to find a supporting coalition after the fateful September election did not really alleviate the threat of a radical take-over was another one of his opinions. Too many Germans were well aware of the inadequacies of the Weimar democratic system, and "one must always reckon with the German need for a vision of some more resplendent reality." On December 3, 1930, Shuster reported that Germany was "really on the verge of becoming desperate" and that it was no secret the Fascists seized power in Italy in the same political atmosphere. Although it might have appeared that the longer his stay in Germany the more alert Professor Shuster was becoming to the German political realities, his last report of 1930 indicated that he had not completely lost hope with respect to Germany's immediate future. He wrote that despite all the pessimism conditions were not yet as bad as the Germans themselves believed.

The present hard times have naturally not engendered optimism. Indeed, the Berlin of the hour is doubtless gazing through too dark a glass. One feels, however, that

---

Polytechnic Institute, St. Joseph's College for Women and Immaculate Conception Seminary. The editorial column of the conservative Catholic monthly, The Catholic World, CXXXII (December, 1930), 354-355, likewise called attention to the Mainz diocesan statement. Reverend James Martin Gillis, C.S.P., had been editor since 1922.


33 Shuster, "Il Duce's Handkerchief," ibid., (December 3, 1930), 131.
this excessive inclination to adopt the mood of Lent is in several respects an advantage in periods of transition like that in which we live.\(^{34}\)

Shuster was not alone in his reserved optimism. On the eve of the December reopening of the Reichstag, Oswald Garrison Villard, another frequent visitor to Germany, estimated in the December 3 Nation that the Bruening government had gained in strength during the weeks of adjournment. However, the real time of crisis was still in the future. The winter months ahead would be the most difficult time for the government, according to Villard. While it was generally rumored that a dictatorship would be ruling in Germany by the spring, there was no guarantee, in Villard's mind, that it would be established by the Nazis. Because of the recent attacks on Catholics and Socialists, the Hitlerites were hurting their cause, and Villard predicted that they would probably have to be satisfied with sharing some posts in a Bruening ministry, or with watching the Chancellor set up his own dictatorship.\(^{35}\)

Two days before the Reichstag met on December 1, the drastic financial reform laws, which had caused a Reichstag crisis for almost six months, were put into effect by President Hindenburg's signature, thereby preventing the anticipated rejection by the parliament and the calling of new elections. When the Reich-

\(^{34}\) Shuster, "Berlin," ibid., (December 17, 1930), 184-185.

\(^{35}\) Oswald Garrison Villard, "Germany Nears the Crisis," The Nation, CXXXI (December 3, 1930), 603-604. At this time, Villard was editor of The Nation, a position he held until his retirement in 1932.
stag opened, the emergency action won approval because the Social Democrats once again decided to vote with the moderate republican parties and prevent another torrid election campaign. There was real fear of another major extremist victory. Reports out of Germany showed that both the National Socialists and Communists, especially the former, were picking up strength in local elections.36

On December 10, 1930, The Christian Century advised its readers to watch closely the German political scene because the nation was on the "verge of desperate action."37 A similar warning was given by The Commonweal a few weeks later.38

Meanwhile, The New Republic for December 31 could report that the German economist, Dr. Otto Nathan, had confidently announced in a New York address that the German Republic was in "no immediate danger from internal forces."39 An English traveller, Sir Philip Dawson, writing in the January 1931 Current History, was also sure that there would be no revolution in Germany and that subsequent governments would rule according to constitutional means and maintain a continuity in policies.40 Another optimistic

36 The Nation, CXXXI (December 17, 1930), 664.
37 The Christian Century, XLVII (December 10, 1930), 1518.
38 The Commonweal, XIII (January 7, 1931), 255.
40 Sir Philip Dawson, "Germany's Economic Plight," Current History, XXXIII (January, 1931), 570. Dawson was a member of the British parliament.
and somewhat naive voice was heard from *The Review of Reviews* in its January, 1931 issue. The worst was over in Germany, said Frank H. Simonds, for "the Hitler movement had in some degree spent its force." "Its more dangerous expressions" had been checked by a union of the republican parties. The counterattack was underway.41 What was noteworthy about Simonds' impressions of the German scene was that he was writing them from Berlin. Because he had just arrived in the German capital, his estimation of conditions had to be superficial. His information proved to be misleading, since the National Socialists were again taking the offensive and this was duly reported by other journals and their overseas representatives.

As the new year got under way the Nazis began a campaign against pacifism with an attack upon the film *All Quiet on the Western Front*. It was regretable, wrote Oswald Garrison Villard, that the Bruening Cabinet decided to keep the moving picture from being distributed in Germany. This decision not only added to the prestige of the radicals who attacked the film, but also "antagonized every liberal and every liberal element in Germany."

In many democratic circles in Germany, Villard found that there was talk that "the fate of this Republic will always be linked with the banning of a single film."42 Considering the same prob-

---


lem in the January 21, 1931 Commonweal, George N. Shuster believed the Nazi Party objective to be the resurrection of compulsory military service in order to give many of the National Socialists work. Another new point of emphasis for the Hitlerites, according to Shuster, who was still in Germany, was the touchy eastern question and the Polish Corridor. Any means were sought to embarrass the government. And still the reports in the February Living Age were that the Nazi Party was growing stronger by combined appeals to reaction and violence during January 1931.

William Martin, another European observer, wrote in the February Atlantic Monthly that Germany's forces of resistance were growing much weaker and that the only hope for the Weimar Republic was a balance of power among the various parties with President Hindenburg using his prestige to keep them together. A National Socialist victory would bring a general strike, while a Communist coup would bring out the German army. A strong German government was needed, stated Martin, but there was nowhere to turn. If the Bruening government collapsed, "no one would know how to replace it." The Literary Digest's report on February 14 said that many German and foreign observers considered a


44 The Living Age, CCCXXXIX (February, 1931), 556.

45 William Martin, "Europe. A Continent in Travail," The Atlantic Monthly, CXLVII (February, 1931), 242-244. Martin was the editor of the Journal de Genève.
Bolshevik Germany just around the corner. The nation was surely undergoing its worst crisis since the war had ended. This response came as a result of events in the German parliament.

The Reichstag reconvened on February 3, 1931. Both the Communist and Nazi representatives resumed their verbal attacks on the Bruening ministry. The climax came on February 7, when no-confidence resolutions introduced by the two extremist parties were defeated. Rebuffed as well was a National Socialist request for immediate dissolution of the Reichstag. Once more the Social Democrats came to the aid of the Centrist Chancellor. In spite of the defeat, the German Fascists continued to harass the republican advocates. Finally, on February 10, the Nazis, together with some of Alfred Hugenberg's Nationalists who had been playing a key role in the political disturbances of the last year, walked out of the Reichstag. Why these right-wing members took this step was a point of interest to some American journals, particularly those with a liberal orientation. The February 25 New Republic was somewhat mystified by the Fascists' maneuver of leaving the German political sounding board, no matter how much the frustration. It may well be, advised this journal, that the Hitlerites were preparing to undertake their often threatened revolution. Under the circumstances a return to the parliament would cost a great deal in prestige. No matter what the plans of the right-wing extremists were, The New Republic felt that the situa-

---

46 The Literary Digest, CVIII (February 14, 1931), 12.
tion had to be carefully watched.

We do not believe the German people are yet ready to support a revolutionary fascist movement which invites European war. If one were imposed upon them, it would probably bring a Communist reaction. The power of the more moderate parties to prevent one or the other of these extreme alternatives rests, first, on their ability to extract from the Allies and the United States a revision of reparations and other injustices of the war settlement, and second, on a revival of trade and industry.47

While The New Republic exercised caution with regard to the political future of Germany, a decisive victory for Chancellor Bruening was heralded by The Nation for February 25. Poor leadership had guided the National Socialists into obstructionist tactics in the Reichstag, and these had supposedly played into the hands of the skilled pro-government parliamentarians. The Nazi withdrawal was a "play to the galleries," a fatal gesture which failed to stimulate the mass reaction desired. Nevertheless, the prevailing economic conditions still meant to The Nation that demagogues like the Fascists could cause further trouble.48 A similar appraisal of the Nazis' action was given in The Outlook and Independent. As far as this periodical was concerned, the National Socialists' theatrical exit from the parliament was the final piece of evidence needed to show that the Nazis were "incapable of doing anything in the Reichstag of any great consequence."49 Reports, which had been received from Germany by The

47 The New Republic, LXVI (February 25, 1931), 28.
48 The Nation, CXXXII (February 25, 1931), 203.
49 The Outlook and Independent, OLVII (February 25, 1931), 286.
Literary Digest, indicated that German newspaper opinion was split over the question of whether the radical withdrawal strengthened the government or condemned the parliament to futility. The Literary Digest, CVIII (February 28, 1931), 15.

As a matter of record, the legislative body continued to operate without the boisterous elements. But it was premature to speak about the demise of National Socialism or to say that the Nazis were finished as a political force, as time would prove.

The uncertainty which gripped Germany during the early months of 1931 was reflected in the variety of reports that appeared in the spring numbers of the American journals. The New Republic of March 4, 1931 featured an article by Mildred S. Wertheimer, a staff member of the Foreign Policy Association. Miss Wertheimer reviewed Hitler's career and pointed out some of the planks of his largely negative program. In 1930 he had successfully appealed to the younger generation and many voters who did not normally exercise their right of suffrage to make a vote of protest against the status quo. Many of the votes cast for Hitler, she contended, were not for his program but were meant as a warning to the government.

It was a warning to the moderate parties in the Reich that if the parliamentary system is to survive, it must prove its worth by actual accomplishment, and also a warning that a great people cannot be continually oppressed without creating the danger of a wave of extreme nationalism which may eventually sweep a civilization into revolution or war.

The Bruening government had to act, and act it did over the win-
ter months with sweeping financial reforms in spite of widespread opposition. In any event, this kind of positive action had to continue, wrote Wertheimer, or the parliamentary system would ultimately collapse. The chances for continued accomplishments by the democratic coalition were already waning at the time of the Wertheimer article. A short report in the March 18 Nation told of the gradual disintegration of the spirit of cooperation within the ranks of the pro-republican Reichstag delegates. With the departure of the radical reactionaries from the parliament, the Nation observed the violent antagonisms of the government factions, plus the differences in political principles, rising to the surface. That this had been the reason for Hitler's plan of action was suspected by The Nation.

The Commonweal's response to these political occurrences in Germany consisted primarily of George N. Shuster's strange suggestion that what Germany needed was a few dozen Hitlers, "so that the novelty of one will wear off." In his estimation, a few more years of democracy would bring to the German political scene men of the same caliber as the National Socialist leader. The other major Catholic weekly, America, viewed the German scene from an altogether different angle and offered its own remedy for the political chaos. It was happy to report that some German bishops

52 The Nation, CXXXII (March 18, 1931), 286.
53 George N. Shuster, "Munich: Anno Domini 1931," The Commonweal, XIII (March 11, 1931), 513. In the same paragraph, Shuster wrote that Hitler's ideas had about the same value as those of the average United States senator.
had struck a blow for the Republic by openly criticizing the excessive nationalism of the National Socialists. The editorial in the March 21 issue suggested that "Catholic moderation and Catholic charity" were the "best guarantee for the security and prosperity of any State." It seems doubtful if this reported stand taken by the German hierarchy did much to stem the tide of Nazism, after some other reports of the spring of 1931 were taken under consideration. Besides, the Jesuit staff of America was consistently placing unwarranted confidence in the German episcopate that had yet to formulate an official policy with respect to the Nazi program.

There would be little opposition to a Hitler government if the economic trouble continued for any length of time in the estimation of S. McClatchie, an American who resided in Germany. His article in the April 1931 Forum saw Hitler acquiring substantial financial support from the German capitalist class, which indicated to McClatchie that his radical declarations were for propaganda purposes. McClatchie believed what many other German

---

54 America, XLIV (March 21, 1931), 566.

55 The problems confronting the German hierarchy in the year 1931 have recently been treated by Guenter Lewy in The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), pp. 10-15. On page 12 of his monograph, Lewy noted that only one member of the Catholic hierarchy at this time, Konrad von Preysing, Bishop of Eichstätt, "stands out as the one bishop with insight into the totalitarian aspirations of the Nazi regime. Most of the other members of the episcopate were excellent theologians or administrators but possessed only limited understanding of political matters. Their average age was slightly above sixty; their outlook on politics had been shaped by life in imperial Germany before World War I. Many were still convinced monarchists;
and foreign observers presumed that, once in control of the nation's affairs, Hitler would revert to the role of a traditional conservative. After he had been able to put into effect "some of his pet measures," especially restrictions upon the Jews, McClatchie believed that he would urge his country on to "the achievement of bigger and better things." 56

By March 26, 1931, the Reichstag's current business was completed, and the assembly adjourned until mid-October; however, President Hindenburg, at the request of the Bruening Cabinet, decided to extend the emergency powers under Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution, which would leave the governing of the country in the hands of the executive until the autumn parliament sessions. Designed to aid in alleviating economic problems, this action proved to be another step in precipitating the demise of the Weimar government. The all-too-free use of these special constitutional powers, especially when there did not appear to be an urgent need for them, corrupted the fundamental concepts of parliamentary government and gradually destroyed whatever faith the German people had in the Weimar system. Some journals felt that there should be some response to this extension of constitutional dictatorial powers. President Hindenburg's action could

all had a basically conservative outlook and were distrustful of liberalism and democracy." 56

S. McClatchie, "Germany Awake!" The Forum, LXXXV (April 1931), 218-224. McClatchie was an engineer and inventor who lived in Germany since the World War.
be understood but not condoned by the April 8 Nation. It was clearly an attempt to save the moderate government, but the liberal-oriented weekly also thought it placed in jeopardy German democratic institutions. The equally liberal New Republic, more aroused than its counterpart, called the situation in Germany precarious when even a majority government had to resort to a dictatorship to preserve itself. Showing considerable insight, it noted another possibility: the renewal of autocratic rule might influence some more desperate elements of society to "decide to substitute another set of dictators if it came to believe they could produce better results."

A generally conservative American journal, The Literary Digest, on the other hand, argued that a dictatorship to save German democracy, however paradoxical, had to be. Besides, it could report that most German citizens and politicians seemed to acquiesce in the government's move. Physical violence on the streets had gotten out of hand, and the reports from Germany indicated that only right- and left-wing radicals objected to the government's decision. A different view of the situation was taken by the April 8 Commonweal, which reacted less strongly to Germany's constitutional dictatorship. Its readers were advised that the abandonment of the republican ideas was only a temporary

---

57 The Nation, CXXXII (April 8, 1931), 368-369.
58 The New Republic, LXVI (April 8, 1931), 190.
59 The Literary Digest, CIX (April 11, 1931), 12.
measure. While no prediction was made concerning how long the German executive should retain these powers, it was implied that the behavior of the Communists and Fascists would be the determining factor. Typical of Catholic opinion found in the journals, The Commonweal still regarded the Bolsheviks as the more dangerous threat to the security of the German state, despite the fact that some German bishops had already expressed reservations about National Socialism.

Thwarted time and again by the Hindenburg-Bruening tandem, many of the National Socialists began to grow restless. The enthusiasm generated by the September 1930 election results was starting to wane. In fact, on April 2, 1931, a faction of the Nazi Party led by Walter Stennes broke out in revolt against the Party high command. Stennes was a leader in the Nazi S. A. storm troopers (Sturm Abteilungen) assigned to Berlin and a proponent of revolution to achieve Nazi goals. His reaction to Hitler's orders restraining the street activities of the S. A. in February 1931 was to seek out an arrangement with a former Nazi, Otto Strasser, leader of the factional Black Front group. What turned out to be a minor struggle within the German Fascist movement received notice in a couple of American journals. The Nation of April 15 called attention to the threatening schism be-

60 The Commonweal, XIII (April 8, 1931), 617-618.
tween the Munich and Berlin branches of the National Socialist organization. However, even if Hitler fell from power as a result of this friction, the Fascist threat of revolution would remain. The incident was heralded by America on April 18 as the end of Hitler's reactionary revolution phase. The Nazi leader was quoted as being critical of those in the organization—the Stennes faction—who were calling for immediate action. America made no attempt to present Adolf Hitler in a better light, although the implication of its remarks was that he had added both prestige and power to his own person as well as to what he considered to be National Socialist orthodoxy, which may well have been the case. On the other hand, both the May Living Age and correspondent John Elliott writing in the May 20 Nation agreed that Hitlerism was on the wane. Elliott added that he believed that, in the long run, the Hitler menace had served the German government by making it stronger in its international dealings.

In July 1931, two months after the optimistic reports about the frustrations and the factionalism of the National Socialists, discussions concerning the Hitler menace reappeared in the American journals. Chancellor Bruening had been forced in part

62 The Nation, CXXXII (April 15, 1931), 396.
63 America, XLV (April 18, 1931), 26.
64 The Living Age, CCCXL (May, 1931), 225.
65 John Elliott, "Germany's Bid for Independence," The Nation, CXXXII (May 20, 1931), 568. Elliott was on the Berlin staff of the New York Herald Tribune.
by the Nazi clamoring to seek dramatic political successes in the international arena, one being an attempt for a German-Austrian customs union made public on March 23, 1931. An Austro-German political union or Anschluss had been expressly forbidden by Article 80 of the Versailles Peace Treaty "except with the consent of the Council of the League of Nations"; however, Bruening and his associates had hoped that, if they kept the arrangement exclusively economic, opponents to union would find it less objectionable. The Chancellor's hopes were dashed almost immediately when France, Italy and Czechoslovakia protested against the plan, claiming that the maneuver was really a first step toward political Anschluss. Meanwhile, the plan was referred to the World Court where it was finally rejected in September 1931.66 Taking account of Bruening's customs union scheme in the July Review of Reviews, Frank H. Simonds announced that Germany would be lost to Fascism unless the Bruening ministry stopped trying to fulfill the radicals' international demands and faced political realities.67 Simonds was the man who had regarded the Nazis as an expiring force in his last Review of Reviews' article in the January number. Several other journals warned that revolution in-

66 A more complete discussion of the Austro-German customs union proposal, as well as the international financial problems with which Germany was involved in 1931, can be found in Edward W. Bennett's Germany and the Diplomacy of the Financial Crisis of 1931 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963).

67 Frank H. Simonds, "Germany on the Ragged Edge," The Review of Reviews, LXXXIV (July, 1931), 54.
spired by one group of extremists or another was imminent in Germany unless the economic ills were cured.68

Throughout the summer of 1931 a number of international discussions took place concerning the world financial crisis. One major matter for consideration was the moratorium on all reparation and war-debt payments suggested by President Herbert Hoover in June 1931. More important for Germany was the problem of the rapid withdrawal of foreign capital from the country. Although an agreement was reached in August 1931, which maintained the flow of short-term loans into Germany, new economies had to be imposed upon the nation. This meant more trouble for Chancellor Bruening, even though the Reichstag was still in recess. During all the weeks of international negotiations, the extremists did not let up in their pressure in domestic politics. An attempt was made on August 9 to force the Socialist government of the state of Prussia out of office by referendum. The Nationalist-Nazi bid was turned aside, and The Nation for August 19 seemed to go out of its way to praise the good political sense of the Prussian people. They should now earn the confidence of world public opinion, remarked this liberal journal, for the motion was defeated overwhelmingly. The vote was not taken according to party, and it was hard to determine the actual strength of the

68 The Living Age, CCCXL (July, 1931), 425-426 and (August, 1931), 524; Max Jordan, "Zero Hour in Germany," The Commonweal, XIV (July 8, 1931), 257; The Literary Digest, CX (July 11, 1931), 15; and The New Republic, LXVII (July 22, 1931), 243.
reactionaries, but The Nation claimed to possess information from Berlin which indicated that the results entailed a sharp setback for the National Socialists.69 There was mere praise forthcoming for the way the Social Democratic Party was coming to the aid of the Bruening ministry, which was out of sympathy with the working classes. The New Republic for August 19 believed that the Weimar Constitution was saved for the time being, but only on account of the support given to the Bruening dictatorship by the Socialists. They had abandoned their principles of change and revolution to help conserve the existing social and economic order.70 The decision made in Prussia indicated to the September Living Age that no rightist revolution would ever be successful without the support of the working classes. Nevertheless, this did not rule out the Nazis' joining a coalition government in the near future. In fact, the "immediate prospect" for The Living Age was a Bruening-Hitler coalition ministry.71 This was the first forecast of such a Centrist-National Socialist arrangement to appear in the journals. Other notices would soon follow referring to the possibility of a new coalition government with right-wing extremists included, and within a few weeks the public would be given the facts.

The setback for the Hitlerites in Prussia in August 1931,

69 The Nation, CXXXIII (August 19, 1931), 172.
70 The New Republic, LXVIII (August 19, 1931), 4.
71 The Living Age, CCCXLI (September, 1931), 6.
if it could be described as a setback, was to be only temporary. The National Socialists continued to work hard in local elections, they hoped to gain national power by utilizing the democratic processes of the Weimar Republic—a system which they ultimately planned to destroy. The local elections in the city of Hamburg, scheduled for September 26, happened to be the occasion where the German political spotlight shone next. The National Socialists engaged in a vigorous campaign. Accused of having "delusions of grandeur" by The Nation for September 16, Adolf Hitler was said to be attempting to sell himself as the last hope of millions of Germans. While once again his speeches failed to define new policies or suggest new remedies for Germany's problems, he seemed to be doing well enough to fill this journal with "great apprehension." 72

On the other hand, there was a definite touch of optimism in two contemporary American Catholic periodicals. The Catholic monthly Sign for October 1931 spoke enthusiastically about what had been said at the Catholic General Assembly, meeting at Nuremberg during the first week of September. The members of the congress, both clerics and laymen, endorsed the moderate government of the Catholic Heinrich Bruening and praised his tactics of moving the Catholic Center Party forward while the left- and right-wing extremists were neutralizing each other. In the words of the delegates, said The Sign, Christian principles would be the

72 The Nation, CXXXIII (September 16, 1931), 269.
basis of all future actions undertaken by the German government? A man who was in a more direct position to know something about German affairs since he was reporting from Germany, Father Joseph Thorning, discussed the spread of German radicalism in the September 26 America, but two weeks later he concluded that the Brumming government was gaining strength in spite of alluring appeals being made to "the German youth" by the Communists and National Socialists.

In contrast to the views of the Catholic periodicals, the Protestant Christian Century of October 14 found only "unrelieved fatalistic gloom, without a ray of hope" in Germany as the radicals prepared for the final day of reckoning for the Weimar government. Like Father Thorning, the author of this article, Sherwood Eddy, had himself been gathering information in Europe.

The Hamburg elections for the local House of Burgesses gave the National Socialists and Communists a much greater number of votes than ever before. Since the September 1930 Reichstag election, the Nazis had picked up almost 60,000 supporters and

---

73 The Sign, XI (October, 1931), 131. The Catholic monthly was moderately conservative when dealing with political problems.

74 Joseph F. Thorning, S.J., "The Crisis in Germany," America, XLV (September 26, 1931), 584-585, and "Germany--Victory or Defeat?" XLVI (October 10, 1931), 8-9. Father Thorning was acting as the special European correspondent of America.

75 Sherwood Eddy, "The Crisis of Europe," The Christian Century, XLVIII (October 14, 1931), 1279. Eddy was identified by this journal as an international Christian statesman. He was the secretary for Asia for the YMCA until 1931 and held yearly seminars in Europe for American educators until 1938.
the Communists approximately 30,000 additional voters. Forty-three of the total of 160 seats in the Hamburg municipal senate were captured by the Hitlerites, while the Communists won thirty-five seats. The October 21 Nation now doubted if the Bruening government would survive another concerted attack by the opposition extremist forces, which were being greatly helped by defections from the moderate parties of the center. A contributor to the October 14 Nation differed with a part of the journal's editorial opinion, when he pointed out with the Hamburg election figures as evidence, that the gains made by the radical revolutionary parties were chiefly at the expense of the Socialists. The author, Harry W. Laidler, believed that the Socialist Party was paying for its support of the conservative-moderate German government.

Some of the journal response at the time of the Hamburg municipal election also alluded to other German occurrences which were equally significant. By early October Chancellor Bruening and President Hindenburg, upon hearing the frequent rumors that the Social Democratic Party was beginning to feel uncomfortable supporting Bruening's executive government, had decided to call in Adolf Hitler for discussions. It was hoped that the Nazi leader could be persuaded to support the government program, at

76 The Nation, CXXXIII (October 21, 1931), 417.

77 Harry W. Laidler, "German Socialism in the Balance," ibid., (October 14, 1931), 384. The author was the director of the League for Industrial Democracy and had recently returned from Germany.
least temporarily, but the talks produced no results. The Nation for October 21 thought that the Hindenburg-Hitler conference had given the Nazi morale a big lift,78 while The Christian Century for the same week interpreted the government's action as a sign of desperation.79

Following his interview with Hindenburg on October 10, 1931, Hitler left immediately for Bad Harzburg, where a meeting of all the reactionary forces had been called. Uniting in what was then called the National Front, now usually the Harzburg Front, were the National Socialists, the German National Party and the Stahlhelm veterans' organization. Also in attendance were leaders of German big business and landowning groups. At the meeting a call was made for the defeat of the Bruening administration and the destruction of the Weimar Republic. To replace the 1919 Constitution, these reactionaries submitted as an alternative a political dictatorship which could combat effectively the Communist threat.80

78 The Nation, CXXXIII (October 21, 1931), 417.
79 The Christian Century, XLVIII (October 14, 1931), 1269-1270.
80 Earl R. Beck, Verdict on Schacht (Tallahassee: Florida State University Press, 1955), 19, called the creation of the right-wing alliance at Bad Harzburg "one of the most significant steps in Hitler's rise to power." Hitler became the leading figure in the German reactionary ranks as a result of the October conference, according to Walter H. Kaufmann, Monarchism in the Weimar Republic (New York: Bookman Associates, 1955), 200. "The greatest impression made by the Harzburg rally on the general public was that the National Socialists had now apparently united completely with what was usually called the more 'honorable' members of the opposition," wrote Erich Eyck in his second volume on the Weimar era: A History of the Weimar Republic, trans. Harlan
The vast majority of American journals failed to grasp the importance of this gathering at Bad Harzburg. Those magazines that did comment had little valuable analysis to offer to their readers. Alluding to the Harzburg Front, The October 21 Outlook and Independent guessed that Hitler was getting ready to force a dissolution of the Reichstag to bring new elections, so that the right-wing radicals could implement their scheme to gain control of the government. No matter what happened in the next few months, The Outlook and Independent foresaw troubled days ahead for the German people. A few weeks later, Michael Farbman, writing in the December 16, 1931 New Republic, pointed out very astutely that it was German industrialists who supplied Hitler with the cash for his campaign. Some of Hitler's followers were reported to be ready and eager to break with the representatives of capitalism and court the support of the German workers, but Farbman doubted that they would succeed. From all appearances, the Nazi leadership and the representatives of big business


81 The British journalists also failed to grasp the meaning of the Harzburg assembly. Brigitte Granzow, A Mirror of Nazism (London: Victor Gollancz, 1964), 160-162, discovered but a few comments about the German reactionary meeting. "The British press was not very impressed by it."

82 The Outlook and Independent, CLIX (October 21, 1931), 232-233.
stood on the same principles of social reaction. 83 A visitor from Germany, Gerhard Friters, explained in the January 1932 Current History that the capitalists had chosen the lesser of two evils by giving their support to the Nazis rather than the left-wing Socialist groups. It was obvious that for many Germans the ultimate aims of Fascism had less radical implications, in spite of the National Socialist Party's continued appeal to the workers of Germany. It was an accepted fact that the real strength of the Nazi movement rested with the embittered middle classes, said Friters. 84

A noticeable rise in Hitler's prestige was observed by the January 1932 Living Age: "Whereas Hoover's statements send the stock market down, Hitler's make the market go up." From all general appearances, German business interests seemed to The Living Age to be working to make Adolf Hitler respectable and to calm the fears that he was intent upon forcing a social revolution. 85 Neither did non-German business interests seem to be terribly worried about the Nazi threat to Germany, reported the December 16, 1931 Nation. In his recent utterances to the foreign

---

83 Michael Farbman, "Deadlock in Berlin," The New Republic, LXIX (December 16, 1931), 125-126. Farbman was editor of the yearbook Europa.

84 Gerhard Friters, "Who Are the German Fascists?" Current History, XXXV (January, 1932), 532-536. The author was a student of German political parties, doing work under the Faculty of Political Science at Columbia University.

85 The Living Age, CCCXLI (January, 1932), 379.
press, Hitler was saying that the National Socialist Party would be in power soon, possibly in a matter of weeks, and that his government would gladly pay Germany's commercial debts, but not reparations' payments. "Ominous" is what The Nation called "the calm with which his frank plays to the gallery have been received by foreign industrialists and financiers." It was easy to see that, if Adolf Hitler received considerable support from German big business, he would be well along the road to becoming the head of state. On the other hand, an alliance with capitalism would mean that the Socialism of the Nazi movement would have to be discarded in order to maintain this arrangement. Hitler seemed to be definitely leaning toward a working agreement with big business by the end of 1931.

The Reichstag sessions resumed on October 13, two days after the Bad Harzburg gathering. The meetings were more boisterous than ever, but once the demonstrations by the extremists were finished, the Chancellor remained in control. Nevertheless, in the view of the October 21 Nation, which had turned very pessimistic about the future of Germany, there was "nothing left but the shell of a republic."

The spirit of the republic is dead and gone. Its form only survives, and history shows that if it is profoundly easy to get away from democracy it is still more profoundly difficult to retrace one's steps. For always the dictator is certain that the emergency calls for more emergency decrees, and that he alone is capable of understand-

86 The Nation, CXXXIII (December 16, 1931), 654.
ing the necessity for cutting loose from all constitutional and democratic guaranties and restraints. 87

Meanwhile, a motion co-sponsored by the Nationalists and the Nazis, which called for a vote of no confidence in the Bruening administration was won by the government on October 16. The choice was Bruening or civil war between the Fascists and Communists, wrote The Nation for October 28. But the decision to sustain the government was not the end of the political troubles; The Nation looked for the worst winter since 1919 in the months ahead. Nothing good could come from the second theatrical display of the National Socialists, this time joined by their Nationalist allies, in walking out of the Reichstag. 88

In this period Heinrich Bruening was able to stay in power and prevent complete chaos because he could rely on Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution, which allowed for a constitutional dictatorship in time of national emergency. With the Reichstag deadlocked in the fall of 1931, reliance on Article 48 appeared to be the only way to attain the vital measures necessary to keep the Republic afloat. As long as Bruening had the confidence of President Hindenburg, he could issue decrees designed to meet Germany's economic and social needs. However, by assuming what amounted to the legislative function—the Reichstag elected in September 1930 was to sit only six times for a total of about twelve

87 Ibid., (October 21, 1931), 420.
88 Ibid., (October 28, 1931), 446-447.
weeks in its approximately twenty months of existence—Bruening was setting a course which could be emulated by future chancellors who had no devotion to republican ideals.

The political scene in Germany was surprisingly calm as 1931 approached its last weeks, in the estimation of the journals under consideration. Roger Shaw, an editor of The Review of Reviews, discussed the views of Professor William R. Shephard, who told Shaw his story after his recent return from Germany. Shaw was in agreement with Shephard's theory that despite the many crises, the German people would rise to the occasion when tyranny threatened. Only two journals, the November 25 Christian Century and The Literary Digest for November 28, mentioned another strong showing by National Socialism in the local provincial elections in Hesse in mid-November, despite Chancellor Bruening's personal campaign pleas for moderation. However, both periodicals indicated concern about this continual growth of Nazism's popularity. Their fears were confirmed when Current History printed a report of investigations undertaken by Richard A. Lester concerning German student life. Lester estimated that thirty to forty

---

89 Roger Shaw, "An Expert Looks at Germany," The Review of Reviews, LXXXIV (November, 1931), 49. Shaw and members of his family controlled the editorial policies of this very conservative journal.

Shephard, the Columbia University historian, apparently saw what he wanted to see. He seemed disinterested in the political struggle and instead discussed the pacific characteristics of the German people who spent their energy on body culture.

90 The Christian Century, XLVIII (November 25, 1931), 1477 and The Literary Digest, CXI (November 28, 1931), 13.
percent of the students were National Socialists; however, the overwhelming majority remained "quite religious" notwithstanding some points of the Nazi Party platform. 91

As the year 1931 came to a close, Adolf Hitler as a man and The National Socialists as a movement became more respectable in the view of a few American press observers. Critical accounts also continued to appear, so that it was increasingly difficult to get a clear picture of National Socialism. Without predicting whether or not Hitler would ever gain control of the German government, the December 16 Outlook and Independent thought that his diatribes and vague solutions for Germany's problems indicated that he lacked "the level-headedness necessary for effective leadership of a great nation like Germany." He reminded this periodical of Senator Tom Heflin of Alabama with his "swagger and bragadocio." 92 In contrast with this description was the evaluation made by the December 16 Christian Century, which gave Hitler credit for being an astute politician. His was a bold approach to Germany's ills, wrote this weekly, for he avoided making concrete proposals. He planned to settle on a definite program only after his organization had gained a Reichstag majority. The Century mentioned another story which was more rumor than fact. The gos-

91 Richard Lester, "The Germany of Today: Life Among the Students," Current History, XXXV (December, 1931), 385-386. Lester was an Instructor in Economics and Social Institutions at Princeton and attended the University of Bonn during 1930-1931.

92 The Outlook and Independent, CLIX (December 16, 1931), 488.
Sip had Hitler going to Rome to negotiate with Vatican officials in order to force the hitherto aloof Catholic Center Party into a political alliance and thereby precipitate the right-wing extremists' accession to power.93

The pronounced failure of the Bruning ministry, even with the aid of the emergency decrees, to work out the economic problems was causing many more Germans to turn away from the moderate cause and fall into line with the radicals, observed John Elliott in The Nation of December 16. He predicted that the next general election would give the Nazis the largest popular vote. Possibilities of party alliances were also discussed by Elliott, one being the National Socialists and the right-wing Centrists, and to counter this the joining of forces of the Social Democrats and the Communists—an almost fantastic suggestion.94 Another European correspondent like Elliott, Father Joseph F. Thorning, had a somewhat different view of the German politicians' maneuvers. Father Thorning advised that Social Democracy was beginning to crumble under the Hitlerites' assault. Already eliminated were the moderate parties to the right of center. The attraction for the Fascists had become almost irresistible, even though their nationalism rested on the narrowest base of anti-Semitism; moreover, they were no less materialistic than the Marxists, whom

93 The Christian Century, XLVIII (December 16, 1931), 488.
94 John Elliott, "Germany in the World Crisis," The Nation, CXXXIII (December 16, 1931), 662-664.
they attacked. The National Socialist terrorism and violence reminded Father Thorning of the tactics used by the Soviet secret police.\footnote{Joseph F. Thorning, S.J., "Hitler: The Man and His Movement," \textit{America}, XLVI (December 26, 1931), 278-279.} Thorning's \textit{America} report for December 26, "Hitler: The Man and His Movement," gave no hint that any German Catholics were ready to form an alliance with the Nazis; however, that the Catholic Church was doing its bit to prevent a Hitler triumph, contrary to other reports and rumors, was the theme of Father Thorning's article in the January 9, 1932 \textit{America}: "The German Bishops and Hitlerism." The author was disturbed by the reports of a possible National Socialist-Center Party \textit{entente}. There seemed to be little likelihood that the Catholic Center Party could ever coalesce with the Nazis in a future government unless the latter made some drastic and fundamental adjustments in principles. It was plain to see, continued Father Thorning, that the German Fascist program had only to be stated to show its inconsistency "with decent ethics, Divine revelation, and the world character of Catholic culture." Above all, Thorning asserted that the German bishops could be seen making clear to their flocks the Church's position with regard to Nazi propaganda and policies.\footnote{Joseph F. Thorning, S.J., "The German Bishops and Hitlerism," \textit{ibid.}, (January 9, 1932), 333-334.}

\textit{In The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany} (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), 14, Guenter Lewy makes this assessment of the German Catholic Church's relations with National Socialism at this time: "The National Socialists were quick to perceive that the Catholic episcopate was far from united on the question of how best to handle the Nazi problem. Exploiting the bishops' fear of the left-wing parties, they continued to stress in their
A view which differed from Thornning's appeared in a delayed editorial in *The Living Age* of February 1932. This monthly believed that Bruening would almost certainly turn to the right extremists for support in the next episode of the German political drama. The Chancellor was already leaning toward the right, for his emergency decrees outdid even some of Hitler's demands. A number of foreign sources were reported to feel that Hitler was losing some popularity and that in negotiations for cabinet positions Bruening would have the upper hand. 97

No matter what political parties might be maneuvering behind the scenes, Frank H. Simonds, contributing to the January 1932 *Review of Reviews*, was positive that the first five months of the new year 1932 would be a period of decision. He ventured to predict that Nazism would find itself legally in power by the spring of the year unless the economic trend changed, if only a little. There was still a slim chance that Germany would pull through, but Simonds saw the odds packed against it. "Watch Germany," advised the author, "for the key to the European crisis is there." 98

in their agitation that only the assumption of full political power by National Socialism could protect Christianity from its mortal enemy, Marxism. The Nazi propagandists also noted that even those bishops' declarations most critical of National Socialism had paid their respect to the nationalistic aspirations of the Nazi Party and they proceeded to put these utterances to good use.

97 *The Living Age*, CCCXLI (February, 1932), 473-474.

A National Socialist government in Germany had been a possibility since September 1930, but Chancellor Bruening and his associates had been able to delay the final reckoning through maneuvers that reportedly included agreement with the right-wing radicals. The last such confrontation between Bruening and the leaders of the right-wing forces, both Adolf Hitler and Alfred Hugenberg, took place during the first two weeks of January 1932. The discussion evolved around the possibility of avoiding an emotion-filled presidential election in April 1932, when President Hindenburg's seven year term of office expired. Bruening hoped to alleviate a number of problems by getting a parliamentary extension of the President's term for a year or two until calm could be restored in domestic politics. The Prime Minister's plan was in the nature of a constitutional amendment, and this necessitated the approval of two-thirds of the Reichstag. By January 12 Hugenberg had refused to permit his party members to vote for the extension, and Adolf Hitler had engaged in propaganda maneuvers in which he had offered President Hindenburg his support in return for Bruening's dismissal and the dissolution of the Reichstag. Hindenburg himself put an end to the negotiations by declaring his decision to run for reelection on February 16. The government set March 13 as election day. Adolf Hitler announced his candidacy on February 22, 1932, before he was actually a German citizen.

The approaching election naturally directed the attention of the American journalists toward Germany with renewed interest.
Michael Farbman, contributing an article entitled "The Twilight of German Capitalism" to the February 3 New Republic, declared that the collapse of the Weimar government would mean the end of the capitalistic system. Survival was being offered in what the National Socialists liked to allude to as state capitalism. "The middle classes must either sink to the level of the masses or help that party to power which promises them salvation." An editorial in the March 1932 issue of The Living Age announced that a revolutionary state of mind definitely existed in Germany but that the revolution itself would have to wait until the government collapsed. Until then, the Nazis and Communists would have to bide their time. This monthly was optimistic about the future, since it thought that the republican forces were getting ready to form a united front against the radicals. Another reason for hope was that "Hitler's personal appeal had declined at the turn of the year," or so imagined The Living Age. 

In the mind of Reverend Reinhold Niebuhr, this type of thinking was premature. He expressed an opinion in The Christian Century for March 2 that in spite of the strength of the two extreme political wings, neither dared to start a revolution because it feared that the result would then be a union of the republican parties and the thwarting of a revolutionary victory. Here, he

100 The Living Age, CCCXLII (March, 1932), 7.
thought, was a peculiar trait of the general structure of western urban society. All forces seemed to realize that there was much more to lose by a revolution of any kind and that no one class was powerful enough to triumph over the others. That revolution had thus far been prevented under the circumstances was more significant to Niebuhr than the possibility of revolution. 101

In March and April 1932, talk of revolution was put aside while the politicians prepared for the national presidential election and the subsequent run-off. President Hindenburg's leading rival for office was Adolf Hitler, with the Communist chief, Ernst Thaelmann, a distant third. As the campaign progressed, some interesting comments appeared in the American periodicals. The National Socialist leader and his organization were given a respectable presentation by one of the conservative Shaw family in their journal, The Review of Reviews, one month before the voting day. Hitler was depicted by Roger Shaw as the "honest, if outspoken" opponent of Hindenburg. Following this rather incomplete assessment of the Nazi chief, Shaw discussed the National Socialist program, omitting such matters as anti-Semitism and coming to the conclusion that it advocated "an intelligent use of force" under a strong leader, such as in Fascist Italy. 102

As far as the March 2, 1932 New Republic was concerned,

102Roger Shaw, "Germany Votes for President," The Review of Reviews, LXXXV (March, 1932), 44-45.
there was no candidate acceptable to those Germans who wished to preserve the Weimar Republic. Especially frustrated were the Social Democrats who had sacrificed principles to maintain the Brüning ministry in power. What to do was the great Socialist dilemma, said The New Republic. The German Socialists realized now that a vote for Hindenburg did not necessarily mean that Hitler would be kept out of the government. 103 As for Hindenburg's attitude, German author Karl Tschuppik expressed it this way in the October 1931 Foreign Affairs: "He took his stand 'faithfully and loyally' on the basis of the Brüning Government. But everyone in Germany knows that, if a change of cabinet should bring the parties of the Right into power he would support just as 'faithfully and loyally' a Hugenberg-Schacht government." 104 Adolf Hitler was stepping out of character, reported the March 2 Christian Century, for he was presently seeking office in a Republic, which he was set on destroying, by the regular constitutional means of election. "Hitler as the leader of a fascist revolution was an ominous figure. Hitler as a constitutional candidate for office is no figure at all." 105 It might be that Hitler had abandoned his anti-republican position now that he had become a German citizen, wrote Professor Sidney B. Fay in the April issue of Current History. "He has long been shifting from his original extremist

103 The New Republic, LXX (March 2, 1932), 275-276.
104 Karl Tschuppik, "Hindenburg," Foreign Affairs, X (October, 1931), 69. Tschuppik was the editor of the Tagebuch of Martin. 
105 The Christian Century, XLIX (March 2, 1932), 275-276.
doctrines to a more moderate attitude," was Fay's pre-election view of the National Socialist chief. 106

The final tally of the March 13 vote gave President Hindenburg a little more than 18,650,000 ballots (49.6% of the total). Hitler received approximately 11,339,000 or 30.1% of the total vote, while the Communist Thaelmann picked up 4,983,000 supporters and 13.2% of all the ballots. Nevertheless, another election had to be held because no candidate received a majority of the vote. Hindenburg's victory in this election, whether by a majority or a plurality, was anticipated by most observers in the American journals. The Literary Digest for March 26 rejoiced that the old soldier had been successful, so that Germany could be kept on the road of moderation in domestic and international affairs. It expected him to increase his vote margin over the "dapper Fascist leader" in the April run-off election. 107 Hitler remained very much of a threat, but Communism had been defeated, was the April 1932 Outlook and Independent's analysis between the first and second election campaigns. 108 A clear-cut Hindenburg majority would have been better news, in the eyes of The Christian Century for March 23, but the election did point to the fact that the German middle class and skilled workers were sensible enough to avoid

107 The Literary Digest, CXII (March 26, 1932), 15.
108 The Outlook and Independent, CLX (April, 1932), 205–206.
the revolutionary extremes when it really counted. However, the situation would bear watching, for the extremists indicated that they could gather in great numerical strength. 109

Making presumably another effort to exonerate Catholics in Germany from the charges of cooperating with the Nazis, Father Joseph F. Thorning pointed out in the April 23 America the situation in which Catholic Germany had actually voted for the President, while the Protestant north and east had generally fallen in line behind Hitler. The latter, thought Thorning, had now reached an impasse from which it would be hard to escape. The Nazi chief had promised too much to his followers, and now only another putsch would bring him any kind of success. 110 It is difficult to see how Father Thorning could write off the National Socialists and their leader when this man had just received eleven and one-third million votes for the post of chief executive.

Hitler personally and the National Socialist Party attracted more attention than ever in the issues of journals which discussed events between the two presidential elections. Numerous and often conflicting interpretations, views and predictions made it difficult for the American reading public to arrive at a clear idea of the German scene. Analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of National Socialism in the April 1932 issue of Foreign Affairs, the American correspondent of a German newspaper, Paul Scheffer,

put more stress on the deficiencies. It was his opinion that the
movement was "torn within by conflicting currents" and had no def-
inite policies. As a "common basis" the Nazis relied chiefly on
propaganda. For this reason, many Germans were saying that Hitler
was "afraid to assume power."\(^{111}\) Nor did Scheffer think that the
future was especially bright for Hitlerism.

...[T]here is no way of knowing whether the party can
ever take on full status as a party. We do not know
whether its leaders feel certain that it can. We are
not even sure whether Hitler in his secret heart is
free from doubts, whether, out of the inner aspirations,
the chemically pure ideals, which his following shares
with him--out of so much still fluid metal--he can forge
a weapon of steel adapted to practical politics. We do
not know whether at bottom he is a "strong man."\(^{112}\)

Also befuddled by German affairs was William Harlan Hale,
a contributor to The Nation for March 16. Hale found it diffi-
cult to break through the massive amounts of propaganda emanating
from Germany. One could not really tell, he wrote, whether the
National Socialists were on the threshold of victory and a Nazi
dictatorship or on the brink of defeat. But it was true that the
so-called Hitler cult had grown to serious proportions, especially
within the ranks of young Germany. Students, in particular, found
that their education condemned them to unemployment. These youths,
said Hale, had tired of the continual economic and international
failures of the republican government. In their despair, they

\(^{111}\) Paul Scheffer, "Hitler: Phenomenon and Portent," Foreign Affairs, X (April, 1932), 390. Scheffer was the Washington
correspondent of the Berliner Tageblatt.

\(^{112}\) Ibid., 382.
had reached out for a messiah image. National Socialism's dynamic technique of political action offered them the chance to let loose some of their frustrated energy in marching, singing and shooting.

Hale gave Adolf Hitler personally a low rating, classifying him as a typical fanatic. The German demagogue had speaking and leadership ability, but he was "utterly lacking in any sort of intelligence." The collection of doctrinaires and neurotics who surrounded him were, except for the German Communists, the malcontents of Germany. The real radicals of the National Socialist Party were few, and these, in the main, were idealists, each having worked out his own system for prosperity. The German people had the choice to make between these extremists and the forces for conservative reconstruction and internationalism. "The immediate future of Europe seems to rest on this decision."

A long-time resident of Europe, the American Nicholas Fairweather, presented a study in depth of Hitler and his organization in two consecutive issues of The Atlantic Monthly in the spring of 1932. The earlier article first surveyed the "Bible" of the National Socialist movement, Mein Kampf (Fairweather was one of the first responsible journalists in an American periodical to draw attention to Hitler's plan of action as it was written in his book), and briefly and accurately summarized the major

113William Harlan Hale, "Ten Years of Hitler: One Hundred of Goethe," The Nation, CXXXIV (March 16, 1932), 380-387. Hale was the former editor of Harkness Hoot and a frequent visitor to the European continent.
points of the Nazi leader's political philosophy. In effect, it was not really Hitler's program that had startled Germany and Europe, said Fairweather, but the way that he had set about to exploit it. A man with an egocentric mentality, he was able to identify himself with his ideas. Like almost all the other American commentators, Fairweather recognized Hitler's speaking ability as one of the real bases of his personal success. Hitler insisted upon having personal contact with his audience, and they were quickly overwhelmed by his emotional oratory. The Nazi leader's program, which was allowed but one interpretation, that of Adolf Hitler's, was being pursued with an absolute singleness of purpose, with an appeal to force if necessary. In Fairweather's estimation, Hitler wanted simply victory and the "expansion of the tribe." 114

The second article of the series told of Hitler's economic plan for state-controlled capitalism, which would exclude all Jewish interests. Economic boundaries would coincide with political boundaries. His explanation of racial purity brought marriage and childbirth under the state's surveillance. For Hitler it was paramount that the Germany of the future be racially pure.

Author Fairweather thought that Hitler was uncertain of his own future. It appeared to the author in this April 1932

114 Nicholas Fairweather, "Hitler and Hitlerism. I. A Man of Destiny," The Atlantic Monthly, CXLIX (March, 1932), 380-387. The Atlantic Monthly said that this American living in Europe had become so interested in "the phenomenon of Hitler's meteoric rise from obscurity" that he made a study of the man, his ideas and his methods.
article that Hitler would be willing to serve in a coalition government, rather than try it alone.

In that event, what ally would be least objectionable and most serviceable for him? The Social Democratic Party must be ruled out, for its policies are fundamentally opposed to Hitler's and no common ground could be found for a working agreement. But the Centre—the Roman Catholic party in Germany—is a businesslike organization; it will work with anyone for a limited objective so long as there is a prospect of carrying on orderly government and preventing a revolution. Why, then, should Hitler not seek the Centre, and the Centre not strike up a bargain with him? After all, if Hitler cannot be kept from power, the Centrists may think it better to share responsibility with him and exercise some check upon his wilder

est tendencies, just as Germany preferred to have the English remain on the Rhine with the French. The Church's ban on the Nazis may perhaps not prove irrevocable. However, Fairweather was not willing to bet that Hitler would be content with only part of the state's power, once he had a taste of office-holding—a shrewd observation. It was clear, nevertheless, that Fairweather's comments about the Catholic Centrist alliance with National Socialism would get some argument from Catholic sources, particularly America's reporter Father Joseph F. Thorne who had been doing his best to portray the German Catholics as the backbones of the Republic and the epitome of moderation.

In an article which appeared in the May 1932 Current History, journalist Ludwig Lore wrote that he did not think that Hitler's personality had anything to do with his success. It was his ability as an organizer and an agitator which counted most. How-

115 Nicholas Fairweather, "Hitler and Hitlerism. II. Germany under the Nazis," ibid., (April, 1932), 509-516.
ever, Lore agreed with many other observers that the National Socialist leader did personify for the German masses their ideas and ambitions, which made the Nazi movement a serious threat. Emotional slogans hid the many contradictions of the organization's platform. Should the Nazis achieve partial or complete control of the government, Lore predicted that the movement would split apart. The social goals of the worker members would immediately conflict with those of the Party's financial backers: industrialists, bankers, aristocrats and Junkers. At any rate, despite the existence of a basic dichotomy in Nazi policy, Lore seemed to expect the National Socialists to play a key role in future German politics.

The meaning of the German Fascist movement still remained a mystery to him, William C. White implied in the April 1932 issue of *Scribner's Magazine*. Here was the saviour, Adolf Hitler, who alone knew the vague way to the "Promised Land." Yet, with all the inconsistencies in policy and the lack of a precise program for the future, the National Socialist Party continued to grow in stature. If success was forthcoming, one could be assured, wrote White, that the Hitlerites in power would be basically different from when they were merely in opposition. White mistakenly asserted that the Nazis would respond just like the traditional parties. There would occur a moderation of principles.

116 Ludwig Lore, "Hitler's Bid for German Power," *Current History*, XXXVI (May, 1932), 166-170. Lore was a German-American journalist residing in New York City.
which, in the long run, would cost the Nazi leaders many of their adherents and perhaps their control over the German government. The unfaithful, meanwhile, would gravitate toward the Communist Party. Here was the real danger to Hitler and Germany, declared White, who underestimated the strength of National Socialist discipline. A second article by S. McClatchie in the same issue of *Scribner's Magazine* labeled the Nazis a "red" party like the Social democrats and Communists. All three were "pledged to suppress capitalism and to establish industrial democracy." This muddled interpretation, following White's unsatisfactory assessment, could not have failed to keep the readers of this monthly journal completely in the dark about German politics.

It was noteworthy at this juncture that two Communists were called upon by American journals to air their views concerning the German political problems. Their articles, in general, were more incisive and penetrating than many by the American commentators. The liberal weekly *The Nation* on April 20, 1932, published a translated article by Karl Radek arguing that the beleaguered middle class, struggling to keep itself from being proletarianized, had found a leader in Adolf Hitler. This class would have been better off if it had allowed itself to sink in the social scale instead of listening to the "quack" Hitler and his

117 William C. White, "Hail Hitler," *Scribner's Magazine*, XC1 (April, 1932), 229-231. White was an expert on Russian affairs, having lived and studied in Russia for several years.

theory of a German saviour. The Nazi leader had never had a single clear thought or a concrete intelligent program. About the only thing to come from his movement had been the promotion of military life and the arts of war with an increase of saber-rattling.119

Another revolutionary, the famous Russian Bolshevik Leon Trotsky, contributed an article entitled "I See War with Germany" to the April 1932 Forum, which dealt primarily but not exclusively with the international policies of the National Socialist Party. It was Trotsky's belief that if Adolf Hitler was ever to gain control of the German government, which he could never do by means of an elected parliamentary majority, he would need foreign allies while handling the internal chaos brought on by the opposition of the Socialists and Communists. Trotsky foresaw a period of German-Polish cooperation, with Soviet Russia as the ultimate target for aggression. Trotsky urgently advised the Soviet government to be prepared to mobilize immediately upon receiving notice of the establishment of a National Socialist government in Germany.120 While their forecasts of military action and warfare were premature, Radek and Trotsky were almost alone among

119 Karl Radek, "Hitler," The Nation, CXXXIV (April 20, 1932), 464. This article by the Russian journalist and revolutionary originally appeared in Germany in the Weltbühne of Berlin.

120 Leon Trotsky, "I See War with Germany," The Forum, LXXXVII (April, 1932), 224-227. Trotsky (1879-1940), who was asked frequently in this period to contribute to American journals, was residing in Turkey.
the journalists at this time in drawing attention to the potential military menace of a Nazi-controlled Germany.

Whatever threat Hitler and the National Socialists might have posed was temporarily forgotten when the results of the April 10 presidential run-off election were published. Although President Hindenburg handily defeated Hitler for the second time within a month, Hitler's showing, nonetheless, remained impressive. Since the March election the Nazi leader had picked up over two million votes and emerged with approximately 13,400,000 against 19,360,000 ballots cast for Hindenburg, an increase of only 700,000 over his earlier total. From all appearances, however, moderation had prevailed, and democratic elements in Germany felt a sense of relief. This, nonetheless, was not the feeling expressed by The New Republic, The Nation or The Literary Digest. The New Republic for April 20 displayed concern about the nineteen percent increase in Hitler's vote since the March election. It was possible, thought this liberal organ, that when local elections were held on April 24 and Hindenburg's name would count for little, Hitler and his party would obtain their "most important victory" so far.121 The worst was not yet over, predicted The Nation, for only an improvement of the economic situation could save Germany from dictatorship of the right or left. The Prussian state elections were going to be the key to the Fascists' future. While it appeared quite likely that the extremist groups would gain

121 The New Republic, LXX (April 20, 1932), 255.
enough strength to unseat the Social Democrat–Catholic coalition there and replace it with a rightist coalition, The Nation spoke of hopeful signs.

It is, of course, by no means certain that the Socialist–Catholic combination will be upset. The republican leaders have demonstrated that they are shrewder in politics than the extremists and they may very well again carry the day for moderation and the present republic.122

The worst was still to come in Germany, echoed The Literary Digest on April 23. Citing French newspaper sources, The Digest pointed to the large increase of votes for Adolf Hitler in the run-off election and noted his immediate appeal to Nazi Party members for hard campaigning in the Prussian elections.123

The presidential election was examined from a different angle by The Commonweal, which observed that apparently Hitler's entire campaign program had been severely curtailed by the government's using Hitlerite methods. "The argument that devils must be fought with their own fire had definitely prevailed in Berlin. So much, at least, Herr Hitler has accomplished." Such conduct should have exploded the myth that Germany was still being run under the Weimar Constitution. On the other hand, Brüning's decision to fight fire with fire might be considered a welcome sign because it showed that the Chancellor no longer thought it feasible to try to bring some of the more moderate Nazis over to his way of thinking.124

122 The Nation, CXXXIV (April 20, 1932), 45.
123 The Literary Digest, CXIII (April 23, 1932), 15.
124 The Commonweal, XV (April 20, 1932), 674.
Catholic author and educator George N. Shuster was not able to speak with certainty about the future of Germany in an article in the May issue of *The Forum*. He thought that anything could still happen. The surprise in the entire election for Roger Shaw of the May 1932 *Review of Reviews* was the failure of a large Communist vote to materialize. Adolf Hitler had once more increased his popularity, but it was Shaw's opinion that he had reached his peak. The votes for his opponents were almost two-thirds of the total, which, for Shaw, was a sizeable repudiation. A further observation seconded the views of those who looked upon German Catholics as a moderating element in the Weimar Republic. "It was a strange paradox that Hitler, who is a Catholic Lower Austrian, ran strongest in the Protestant North; while Hindenburg, the Protestant Junker, made his strongest showing in the Catholic South." Contributing to the April 20 *Commonweal*, Max Jordan considered both the great gain of votes by Hitler and the Hindenburg victory, since the General's present chancellor had, on several occasions, given evidence that he desired not only a postponement of reparation payments but the final termination, as the final defeat for the German "fulfilment" policy. As matters stood, President Hindenburg seemed to be the only one who had the authority and popularity to keep the Germans within the bounds of


reason, but Jordan considered it doubtful that he could revive the Weimar government and restore German faith in the possibility of a peaceful revision of the Versailles Treaty and a satisfactory solution to Germany's economic problems. The Germans were now a "desperate" lot, and the election trend pointed to disaster in the near future. "But there is still time for the correction of past mistakes, on all sides."\textsuperscript{127}

There would not be long to wait until the National Socialists' vote strength would be tested. The elections to the Prussian Landtag were set for April 24, 1932. The preparations for these elections were in progress when the recently reelected Hindenburg took steps which gave indication that the government was no longer willing to tolerate the activities of the German Fascists. Evidence had continued to mount that the Nazi storm troop groups were planning to rise in revolt. After considering the petitions of German state officials to restrain the Nazi paramilitary organizations, the Minister of the Interior, General Wilhelm Groener, together with Chancellor Bruening, requested the President to sign a decree outlawing the army of storm troops. Hindenburg signed the decree on April 13. Most American journals commented favorably. The government maneuver won warm applause from the April 21 Presbyterian Advance, which saw little good coming from this private army during the upcoming elections. The

\textsuperscript{127}Max Jordan, "Germany Elects a President," The Commonweal, XV (April 20, 1932), 682-683. Jordan, a long-time Washington correspondent, was reporting for the National Catholic Welfare Conference.
President was praised but so were the German people. They "have shown a steadiness under the most trying circumstances which entitles them to intelligent consideration at the hands of other nations." 128 The Nation for April 27 also approved of the measure but expressed less hope in the "steady" Germans than did the Advance. For most observers of the German political scene, it was a surprise to see the disbanding proceeding peacefully. To account for this, The Nation surmised that Adolf Hitler was fully aware that he could survive underground if need be. He also knew that the Nazis had a good chance to take over the Prussian government after April 24, and this would permit the incorporation of his outlawed legions into the police arm of the state. Since this was a distinct possibility, The Nation hoped that the disbanding measure did not come too late. 129 The dissolution decree received a different response from The New Republic.

If Adolf Hitler had been given the privilege of choosing the moment for the inevitable governmental attack on his military machine, he could hardly have asked for a more opportune time. The recent emergency decree ordering the dissolution of his troops comes when the Geneva and Lausanne Conferences, plus the Prussian state election, are keeping all Germany in a state of suspense, which works to Hitler's advantage.

Hitler was currently accusing Chancellor Bruening of being intimidated by the French government in the banning of his military organizations. This propaganda campaign issue should win him some more votes in the upcoming election, thought The New Republic. 130

128 The Presbyterian Advance, XLV (April 21, 1932), 5.
129 The Nation, CXXXIV (April 27, 1932), 480.
130 The New Republic, LXX (April 27, 1932), 283.
In contrast to this assessment, the more conservative editor of *The Living Age* believed that the Hitler menace had been exaggerated by the republican forces in order to cut down the Communist and Nationalist Party vote. "In other words, the danger to Hindenburg's presidential candidacy did not come from Hitler's fanatical followers but from middle and lower-class elements that might have thrown away their votes on one of the other two candidates." This resulted in Hitler's prestige growing much greater than his numerical following. Although "there is no doubt whatever that Hitler could seize political power by force," his chances for a successful coup were gradually diminishing.

However the threat of Communist revolution was increasing, thought *The Living Age*. The Brüning government was already interfering with banks and businesses, a step in the direction of Socialism as far as this journal was concerned. The writer seemed to lose sight of the fact that the Communist candidate, Ernst Thaelmann, lost a million votes between the presidential elections of March and April, which hardly confirmed his own prognostications. But then in its very next issue *The Living Age* called attention to what seemed to be a split within the German Communist ranks. Most Bolsheviks were still intent upon carrying on their feud with the Social Democrats, while a small faction regarded Adolf Hitler as the chief menace to the German workers. Only the National Socialists profited from the feud, "and both

---

131 *The Living Age*, CCCXLII (May, 1932), 194.
the presidential and the Prussian elections show that the swing to Fascism continues."132

National Socialism recorded another tremendous success in the Prussian state election for April 24, 1932. The Nazis became the leading party in the Prussian Landtag, holding 162 of 419 seats. Since the Center Party won 67 seats, which would have permitted a working majority for a Nazi-Centrist coalition, the May 4 New Republic revived the discussion concerning Catholic cooperation with the Hitlerites. Referring to recent editions of Centrist and Nazi newspapers, The New Republic saw both parties getting ready to meet each other halfway: "As a matter of fact, an alliance between these parties is not as unnatural as it may seem. Both are diametrically opposed to the social philosophy of the labor parties, and the Centrists have, on a number of occasions, demonstrated their readiness to cooperate with the National Socialists."

By no means, however, did The New Republic intend its analysis to be anti-Catholic. Earlier in the same editorial this journal had praised the Center Party and Prussian Catholics for holding their ground against the National Socialist threat in the Prussian elections. According to The New Republic,

...it proves that the Catholic Church still dominates the German workers of that faith, and that the Fascists have been as unsuccessful in their endeavors to win them as were the Socialists and Communists in the past.

One more factor mentioned in this editorial was the almost complete disintegration of the smaller parties133—one of the chief

132 Ibid., (June, 1932), 286.
reasons why the National Socialists were eventually successful.

Now that the Prussian state election had clarified the German political picture, two choices confronted Chancellor Brüning, as a Nation editorial saw it. He and the members of his Catholic party must either work with the National Socialists in a coalition government for Prussia or support a minority dictatorship; the former represented the "safest course." Thus the two leading American liberal journals agreed completely on this point. It was possible, The Nation suggested, that Hitler and his friends might well be sobered by this attainment of power. Either because it had lost all hope for democratic Germany or because Nazi propaganda had taken effect, The Nation claimed that Hitler had already tempered some of his views as his movement picked up electoral strength. "Indeed, only six weeks ago he revised his reparations policy so that today it is hardly to be distinguished from Brüning's."134 To have said the same thing about Chancellor Brüning would probably have been more accurate.

That National Socialism's leading spokesman, Adolf Hitler, could be kept under control, no matter what ballots showed, was the position taken by John Palmer Gavit in the June 1 Survey magazine. Germany would take care of Hitler as the United States had "absorbed Bryan and the Bull Moose," if only the French agreed to make certain international adjustments. "Forget Hitler and fix attention upon whatever may be going to happen this month at Lau-

134 The Nation, CXXXIV (May 4, 1932), 501.
sanne in Switzerland," was Gavit's advice. On the other hand, the May 7 Literary Digest, gathering information from all its news sources, found that the vast majority of correspondents judged the National Socialist Party to be nearing its goal for power in Germany after the election success in Prussia. Like the New Republic, the Digest also had information that Centrists "might join hands" with the Nazis to form the new Prussian state government. The May 5 Presbyterian Advance could see only disaster coming from a Hitler rule in Germany; and, unfortunately, the Fascist leader's day seemed near at hand. The reelection of Hindenburg for the presidency over Adolf Hitler had led many to believe that the National Socialist leader was finished politically; however, the Prussian elections proved beyond a doubt, for the Christian Century, that once the element of sentiment attached to Hindenburg was removed from an election, the Nazi Party would win the test in stride. The Century too considered it reasonable that the next government in Prussia would be a Catholic and Fascist combination, with the Nazis holding the important posts. In this event, it might be interpreted as a challenge to the French government, and chances were that this was just the beginning of a new


136 The Literary Digest, CXIII (May 7, 1932), 12-13.

137 The Presbyterian Advance, XLV (May 5, 1932), 5.
set of international problems.\textsuperscript{138} The Christian Century's German correspondent, Siegfried Scharfe, did not believe that there was any solution to the German political dilemma for the time being.\textsuperscript{139}

As the summer months approached and German political life seemed at an impasse, several journalists made an assessment of the National Socialist movement in the light of its constant popular growth. A very penetrating interpretation appeared in the May 18 issue of The Commonweal. Nazism, like Fascism, was an extreme measure, dedicated to the elimination of extreme conditions, wrote Johannes Mattern, a political scientist. The movement arose in an atmosphere of chaos mixed with a "will to live" feeling of the German people. Mattern pointed out the all-embracing nature of the National Socialist program, which included projects aimed to attract liberals, conservatives and nationalists. Demands of a more radical nature, made as early as 1920, had, in part, reportedly been modified so as not to offend capitalistic supporters; yet, Mattern observed that Hitler had not revealed these modifications for fear of alienating the more liberal of his followers.

Professor Mattern ascertained that this heterogeneous movement had surprised most of the German political parties by the strictness of the organization's discipline and the method it used to win adherents and acquire funds to swell the Party's treasury.

\textsuperscript{138} The Christian Century, XLIX (May 4, 1932), 563-564.

\textsuperscript{139} Siegfried Scharfe, "Germany's Status Still Uncertain," ibid., (June 8, 1932), 746. Scharfe was the German correspondent of The Christian Century.
The Germans' love for organization, colorful uniforms, music, marching and the like had been fully exploited by the Nazi leaders. Newspapers, magazines, theaters and other businesses had all helped the organization in one way or another. But in spite of all this activity, the National Socialists remained outside of the government, and, in the presidential election of 1932 and the subsequent run-off, the votes for Hindenburg, in fact, meant in Mattern's judgment votes for the moderate solution of Germany's ills. Still, if the Bruening-Hindenburg duo failed to achieve some successes in subsequent international conferences, chances were that Hitler would replace Chancellor Bruening. The National Socialist victory depended upon whether Adolf Hitler and his followers were able to restrain themselves and wait for the opportunity to succeed to power legally. Mattern closed his article with a prediction:

Will the National-Socialist party, once it gets into power, be able to fulfill what it has promised? Leon Trotsky, who should be able to judge, is reported as having said that Hitler in power would do precisely what Bruening is doing now. Trotsky might well have added, what he unquestionably visualizes: When that comes to pass, millions of Hitler's faithful adherents will be crushed beyond hope, while the rest may well be expected to turn in desperation to Communism as Germany's last chance of curing her social malaise in accordance with the Russian prescription.140

In another serious discussion Frank H. Simonds, writing in The Review of Reviews for June 1932, warned his American readers

140 Johannes Mattern, "The National-Socialist Movement," The Commonweal, XVI (May 18, 1932), 63-65. Mattern was a professor of political science at Johns Hopkins University.
that American officials and press commentators were not taking the Nazi threat seriously enough. Contrary to a widely held belief, Simonds insisted everything would still not be well in Germany, if Hitler and his "mob" came into power. In such an eventuality, all constructive work in Europe would come to a standstill; international cooperation would end; and a new economic crash would occur in Germany. Furthermore, Hitler's promises and goals in foreign affairs would bring Europe to the brink of another war. What could be even worse was that without a fixed program for the domestic ills of Germany and without cohesion in the ranks of his followers, Adolf Hitler was bound to fail, bringing on a Communist regime. Overwhelmed by pessimism, Simonds thought it certain that Germany would experiment with Hitler: "The pace of the progress of this reactionary party has reached the point where all hope of arresting it must be abandoned."\[141\]

Another realistic and pessimistic appraisal of the German scene was that of William C. White in the July 1932 issue of The Atlantic Monthly. White was especially disturbed by the political action of the young German generation, some of whom had climbed upon the Communist bandwagon, while the majority had turned to National Socialism for comfort. This "lost generation" had no faith in Germany's future under present conditions. For it, the only possible alternatives were international conflict or civil war. White was uncertain about the outcome of what he thought to

\[141\] Frank H. Simonds, "If Hitler Comes to Power," The Review of Reviews, LXXXV (June, 1932), 35-37.
be the Communist-Nazi struggle for power. "No matter what happens, the members of the lost generation are confident that it is only a question of time before victory will be theirs," wrote White.142

In the view of the American journals of opinion, Germany in the spring of 1932 had an uncertain future. There was no denying the steady progress of Adolf Hitler and National Socialism since the September 1930 election, although the correspondents had mixed emotions about this rise. Most closely identified with the Nazi ideology was one man—the leader, Hitler. Other important figures in the German Fascist movement's hierarchy remained shadowy individuals who seemed to be temporarily relegated to secondary roles by the journalists; there was little indication just how formidable the National Socialist Party executive committee had become. Some attempt to establish the identity of those in the movement had been made by the American periodicals. Members of the middle class, a considerable portion of the younger generation and the malcontents of German society were credited with making up the majority of the Nazi Party faithful. The Hitler program was geared to attract a number of diverse groups, but as yet it was difficult to pinpoint these converts, who remained nameless, except as ballots in the National Socialists' rising vote strength. While no list of prominent German intellectuals had been cited by the magazines for pro-Nazi leanings, references to Hitler's support from big business and men of wealth had been

given some minor consideration, but certainly such a situation was worthy of a more thorough and specific analysis.

Hitler himself proved to be a difficult character for almost all the observers to assess. That he was a spellbinding orator was certain, but most of his other qualities and characteristics seemed to escape the American journalists. In too many instances, Hitler was compared to American politicians, some of whom, like William Jennings Bryan, had been considered radicals in their day. That Hitler was put into this category indicates that few reporters had bothered to study the Nazi leader's program. Mein Kampf was seldom mentioned, and a discussion of Hitler's policies usually centered on some of his more spectacular and unorthodox proposals; even these were often given superficial treatment. Although there were frequent shallow comparisons of Hitler to Benito Mussolini, an understanding that the German leader was a promoter of totalitarianism seemed to be lacking. It was all too apparent that American observers were unable to pass judgment upon Hitler and his followers except within the context of the American democratic system. On the other hand, most correspondents from Europe and Americans who had resided in Europe for many years reported the growth of National Socialism more realistically.

Too much faith was put in the democratic process by the journals, especially since democracy in Germany had such a slender basis and had lost much of its appeal because of the failure to deal successfully with the various crises of the post-war
period. The sagacity of the German electorate was consistently overpraised, even while the records showed that the National Socialists were increasing their ballot strength. Seldom was the German electorate's depth of despair accurately perceived, nor was the fact that Chancellor Bruening had established a constitutional dictatorship, which helped to undermine the belief in democracy, shrewdly assessed.

Over-confidence in the ability of Heinrich Bruening and the Center Party to maintain Germany along a moderate path was repeatedly exemplified by articles in the American journals of Catholic persuasion. A number of other commentators continued to look upon General Hindenburg as the one man in the Weimar Republic who could successfully guide the government through the period of stress, whatever his political leanings might have been. The behind-the-scenes political maneuverings in Germany seemed to have escaped the American observers. In general, however, those reporters who had been making their reports from the scene of the action or who had been recent visitors to Germany seemed to have more insight into the confused political struggle than those who relied on second-hand accounts to make their appraisal.

The threat of a Communist revolution in Germany, in reality not a distinct possibility by the spring of 1932, disturbed such conservative periodicals as The Review of Reviews and The Living Age, as well as Catholic journals. This distraction tended to blur the picture of National Socialism presented in the pages of these magazines. On the other hand, in following the German
political scene in the prominent liberal journals, especially *The Nation* and *The New Republic*, one reads a more thoughtful and accurate evaluation of the major problems; however, these two liberal weeklies, along with many other observers, tended to vacillate in their views according to the successes and failures of the National Socialists. But when one reads *The Nation* editorial of May 4, 1932, expressing the opinion that Hitler's program would be moderated by responsibility if he ever came to power, one can only wonder at the limited understanding of the nature of National Socialism on the part of the American journalists.
CHAPTER II

THE PAPEN AND SCHLEICHER INTERLUDE

By May 1932 it was becoming clear from many of the American journals' reports that the Bruening government would soon have to decide upon what decisive measures to take with regard to the growing threat of National Socialism. Time seemed to be running out for the floundering Weimar Republic. Although the Bruening administration was able to defeat a no-confidence motion offered by the Nazis and other opposition parties in the Reichstag on May 12 by a vote of 287 to 257, the very next day General Wilhelm Groener, both Minister of War and Minister of Interior, resigned the former post under pressure. Not only had he been under fire from the National Socialists for the way in which he had dealt with the Nazi storm troopers, but behind the scenes one of Groener's subordinates, General Kurt von Schleicher, whose ambition it was to take command of the Reichswehr, was intriguing against his chief, as well as against Heinrich Bruening. Schleicher, on very close terms with the President, convinced Hindenburg that Bruening and Groener had made a serious political blunder when they dissolved the National Socialists' private bands. In spite of the fact that Chancellor Bruening had worked so diligently for Hindenburg's reelection, the President was persuaded to make a change.
in the administration. That Bruening no longer had the confidence of the President was revealed to the Chancellor on May 29, 1932. On the following day, Hindenburg announced the resignation of Bruening's ministry.

For most close observers of the German political scene, the resignation of the Bruening Cabinet was a surprise. On numerous occasions in the past months there had been rumors that the administration was about to topple or be replaced by reactionaries or radicals. Outwardly, however, Heinrich Bruening looked as if he were firmly entrenched in office in May 1932. Although major domestic and international problems remained unsolved, Bruening had, so far, proved capable of beating down the National Socialist and other opposition parties' attempts to unseat him. This situation accounts for the dazed condition in which world opinion, along with the American journals of opinion, responded to the event of May 30, 1932.

The Nation, in an editorial entitled "Europe in Extremis," interpreted Bruening's resignation as a signal for greater political and social unrest in Germany. No good could come from the removal of a man for whom The Nation now indicated great respect.

For twenty-six months, through one of the worst periods in Germany's history, he had surmounted every difficulty despite the fact that he had had to work with an extremely slender majority in the Reichstag, and one that was none too friendly to his policies. Even the rising tide of Hitlerism had not caused him to depart from his calm and certain ways.

It was ironic, in the words of the editorial, that this turning away from moderation by the German President occurred at the very
moment in which France appeared to be willing to modify some of her economic demands. The Nation had heard that Chancellor Bruening's dismissal was the result of behind-the-scenes intrigue of the Junkers and the military faction led by General Kurt von Schleicher. This American weekly could not verify these rumors, but if they were true, and they were, it proved to this journal that Germany had "learned little since 1914, for it was such intrigue carried on by Baron Holstein and others which contributed so largely to the diplomatic debacle that forced the World War upon Europe." It was safe to predict, The Nation felt, that a new administration led by a general, or by a dictator, or a combination with Hitler as a member of the cabinet, was in the offing. "In any event, the situation in Germany can only get worse, and with it that of Europe."¹

Although The New Republic still liked to blame the Versailles peace settlement for all the troubles in central Europe, this time it specifically named "the mounting power of the Hitlerites and the fact that von Hindenburg is himself, after all, a Junker and a militarist" as the two causes for the ouster of Chancellor Bruening. In The New Republic's opinion Hindenburg had taken the "first steps" toward a "Fascist dictatorship." It was fair to assume that the National Socialists and Adolf Hitler were in the driver's seat and would either participate in or control the next government. Even if this was not the case, the calling

¹The Nation, CXXXIV (June 8, 1932), 639.
of new elections, almost "inevitable" in the immediate future, was sure to bring the Nazis "another tremendous increase in their strength." Hitler in power with a vote of confidence would be very dangerous; however, The New Republic looked for him to seek a peaceful solution with France by holding out an offer of collective action against Soviet Russia. Speculation such as this gave The New Republic an opportunity to defend the Soviet Union, for which it had special affection. Here it is enough to note that this magazine's evaluation of the Bruening resignation was directly to the point: "The whole situation is full of dynamite."2

If it did one deed, the curt dismissal of Heinrich Bruening indicated that President Hindenburg was no longer fit to serve, in the eyes of both the most prominent Catholic weeklies, America and The Commonweal. However, the Jesuit periodical seemed to have mixed feelings, allowing sentiment to enter into its discussions of the German problems. On one hand, it editorialized that Hindenburg would be "likely to regret" his decision, and as far as the future was concerned, the prospects were not good. The news of the appointment of the ultra-conservative political dilettante, Franz von Papen, to head the new government had reached the offices of America. It seemed willing enough to accept this move, as long as the government of Junkers and aristocrats served as the "transition" cabinet it was rumored to be. What concerned America was that a long stay by Papen and his co-

2 The New Republic, LXXI (June 8, 1932), 83.
horts could spell disaster for Germany in international affairs. On the other hand, it declared that "pessimism is not in order." One basis for this statement consisted of the erroneous calculation that Bruening would remain a potent force in his country's affairs. Another was "the fundamental good sense of the German people" to make the right decision in times of crisis. A third reason was the "axiom" which said that "a radical in power usually becomes a conservative." The radical alluded to was Adolf Hitler, who was "now near the top." America did not express an opinion about precisely what role it expected the Nazi leader to play after Papen's "transition" government; since it grouped him with "the militarists" and "the landlords," Adolf Hitler in a coalition of conservatives seemed plausible.³

A more alarmed Commonweal considered the fall of Chancellor Bruening to be a "ghastly and frightening...catastrophe." He was viewed as the only man capable of formulating policies to keep to Communists out of power in Germany and of compromising with the Nationalists of the Hitler-type. To make matters worse, the selection of Papen as the new government leader had not only split the unity of the Center Party, of which Papen was a member (America had not referred to this fact), but it had given the reins of government over to a man who did not "know what the year 1932 is all about." Interestingly enough, The Commonweal found Papen personally appealing, "a gentleman of moderate endowments and unselfish

³America, XLVII (June 11, 1932), 225.
ambitions," yet it had doubts about his political philosophy. After Papen, and his stay would be very brief, predicted The Commonweal, new elections would have to be called, and Adolf Hitler would be the next figure propelled into power. He, it assumed, would also lose out quickly. Only God knew what would come after him, but it seemed certain that Western Civilization was on the brink of collapse. Unlike America, The Commonweal seemed to appreciate the fact that Germany's ills could not be corrected by the methods of either Papen or Hitler. What both Catholic journals probably feared was an ultimate Bolshevik victory if no other combination was successful in restoring order and prosperity in Germany. That neither weekly was aware of all the complexities of the situation was made evident by their interpretation of the event and their description of some of the leading characters in the political drama.

The appointment of a military and reactionary government under Chancellor von Papen indicated to the June 8 Christian Century that Hindenburg who, in the opinion of this Protestant weekly, remained in control of the situation, was finally convinced that a moderate-led dictatorship with republican forms was no longer capable of balancing the political situation. The editor thought that Germany faced only two alternatives: civil war and revolution under the National Socialists or government by a group of older, experienced ultra-conservatives, serving as "a temporary

4The Commonweal, XVI (June 15, 1932), 17.
stop-gap." It still remained to be seen, however, if the German workers would react with physical force against the new administration.⁵ A second Protestant weekly, The Presbyterian Advance, viewed the appointment of the new cabinet as a kind of political truce. It was indeed a better situation than that other alternative, the National Socialists in complete control. The Advance was one of the first periodicals to recognize that General Kurt von Schleicher was the power behind Papen and that these two, together with Hindenburg, appeared to have reached an accord with Adolf Hitler. They were reported "seeing eye to eye." What was all very clear was that Germany would be much harder to deal with in international negotiations.⁶

Both The Literary Digest and The Nation agreed that the makeup of the new government was reminiscent of pre-republican Germany. A return to monarchical rule appeared imminent, according to the Digest's sources of information.⁷ The Digest also expressed its fear that Franz von Papen was unconsciously preparing the way for Hitler. In fact, reports received from Berlin indicated that the Nazi crowds were already acting like the masters of state affairs.⁸ The Nation for June 15 saw the Junker administration falling after the next election, with Adolf Hitler, not a

⁵The Christian Century, XLIX (June 8, 1932), 723.
⁶The Presbyterian Advance, XLV (June 9, 1932), 5.
⁷The Literary Digest, CXIII (June 18, 1932), 11.
⁸Ibid., (June 11, 1932), 12.
king, taking command. But, in the meantime, chances for European economic cooperation would collapse.⁹ The fate of the Lausanne Conference, called for June 16, 1932, to seek a solution for the world economic crisis as well as to reach a final settlement for the reparations problem, seemed uppermost in the mind of The Nation. It assumed that Germany's domestic tension would be eased as soon as the world's great states adopted a program of economic reconstruction. The Christian Century for June 29 wondered whether the conference might be too late.

Certainly it is too late to undo what has happened in Germany in the last six weeks. Von Hindenburg has made his choice. He has placed the reich in the hands of the junkers. By that act he has perhaps taken the fate of Germany out of any relationship where the other nations can largely affect it.

The selection of Papen to head the government could only mean a future filled with civil strife, as far as the Century was concerned.¹⁰

When Franz von Papen assumed the chancellorship on May 31, 1932, he found himself assailed from all sides. No support for the government was forthcoming except from Junker landowners and some of the traditional conservatives. The key role was played by the Reichswehr, which was represented in the administration by General Schleicher, the new minister for defense. Schleicher, the man who was primarily responsible for the dismissal of Bruening, looked upon himself as the chief source of power in the near-

⁹The Nation, CXXXIV (June 15, 1932), 662.
¹⁰The Christian Century, XLIX (June 29, 1932), 826.
ly defunct Weimar Republic. Papen's need for the army's backing was all the more evident when his own Center Party associates ran him out of the organization for his contributing to the overthrow of another Centrist, the more popular Bruening.

Previously General Schleicher had made contact with the Nazi leadership, alerting it to his plans to unseat Bruening and preparing the way for a truce between the new government and the National Socialists. Hitler gave his final consent to the Schleicher compromise plan on May 30. In return for Nazi toleration of the Papen Cabinet, the storm troopers were to be permitted to reorganize, and the Reichstag was to be dissolved and new elections held in July. The dissolution occurred on June 4, and the ban on Nazi military units was lifted on June 16. Meanwhile, Papen and Schleicher had until the July 31 election day to build up public support for their rule and to cultivate their friendship with the Hitlerites.

Schleicher's intrigue did not escape the attention of American journalists. The Junkers and militarists had matters well under control, said John Elliott of The New York Herald-Tribune, writing in The Nation on June 29. This, in his belief, represented a more dangerous combination than a Hitler government. General Kurt von Schleicher apparently had plans to extend the so-called transitional regime and either bring in the Nazis after the summer elections or form his own military dictatorship, depending on the outcome of the July election. It was Elliott's opinion that Bruening had made his fatal mistake in not forcing the
National Socialists into a more moderate position by giving them some cabinet responsibility. As doubtful as this assessment might be, Elliott himself was more concerned with the future than with reminiscing about the past. "It behooves German republicans to watch the developments of the next months with the closest attention, for never has the Weimar democracy been in such danger as it is now."\footnote{John Elliott, "How Bruening Was Overthrown," \textit{The Nation}, CXXXIV (June 29, 1932), 720-722.}

The present dangerous predicament happened, said \textit{The Nation} of June 22, because the principles of the 1918 Revolution had not been fulfilled by the Socialist leaders. Militarism and monarchism should have been dealt with more decisively. Now it appeared that the workers, exhausted by their economic problems, were not going to be strong enough to protect the Weimar Republic as they had at the time of the Kapp Putsch. "Unless all signs fail," \textit{The Nation} foresaw a Nazi government by August.\footnote{\textit{The Nation}, CXXXIV (June 22, 1932), 695.}

There was no question about it, General Schleicher was now the man of the hour in Germany, reported \textit{The Literary Digest} on July 2. News from Germany indicated that he was the man capable of containing the National Socialists.\footnote{\textit{The Literary Digest}, CXIV (July 2, 1932), 11.} On the other hand, \textit{The New Republic} warned that the Nazis were carrying on as if they were already in power. Anti-Semitic violence had increased, and the Papen government had been given orders by Hitler to fire
Socialists, moderates and Jews in government offices or face reprisals after the July 31 election. The Nazis had become almost "hysterical" in demanding the ouster of the Prussian Socialist administration of Carl Severing, according to the July 27 Nation.

General Schleicher and Chancellor Papen's plan of appeasing the National Socialists confused more than one commentator and produced some rash judgments. The Papen-Junker government was really a Hitlerite government in disguise, George Gerhard proclaimed in The North American Review for August 1932. Heavy contributions had come to the Nazi Party treasury from these aristocrats; it was a fact that the provinces most under the jurisdiction of the landed gentry had enthusiastically climbed aboard the Hitler bandwagon. However, with reference to Hitler, Gerhard did not appear disturbed that he might soon join the government. Most of his platform, including even his bold anti-Semitism, was only political propaganda which would be soon forgotten once in a responsible position. Taking no interest in the growing rumored Papen-Hitler collusion, journalist Ludwig Lore was more worried about the irreparable damage a man such as Papen would cause, even though this regime might be short-lived. Chancellor Papen was prepared to lead Germany into war by playing the same crafty dip-

14 The New Republic, LXXI (July 13, 1932), 218.
15 The Nation, CXXXV (July 27, 1932), 66.
diomatic game as he did during the World War. 17

*The Living Age* felt certain that Papen would soon drop from power because he "counts for little among the younger generation of Nazis and Communists." As for Schleicher, he and Constantin von Neurath, the Foreign Minister, would probably stay around in some kind of dictatorship containing a few National Socialists. As a concession to the right radicals, Hitler's forces and other para-military groups would probably be allowed to unite with the Reichswehr. *The Living Age* incorrectly predicted that the Social Democrats would gain in popularity because "they have a strong organization and will no longer be held accountable for the conduct of government and intensification of the crisis." 18

The Catholic journal, *The Sign*, was disturbed by reports from a "reliable informant" that the new leaders of Germany represented an anti-Catholic plot. The Junker-Hitler combination was out to end the influence of the Center Party and the Catholic Church in Germany, even if this meant a gain for Communism, the perennial bugaboo of the Catholic writers. *The Sign* added that "few realize that it is the Catholic populations of Germany that are making the most strenuous fight against Hitlerism; and the Hitlerites are not ignorant of the personality of their enemy." 19

---


18 *The Living Age*, CCCXLIII (August, 1932), 475.

19 *The Sign*, XII (August, 1932), 5.
The Catholic monthly failed to mention that Chancellor Papen was a Catholic.

Some journalists were obviously confused by the events in Germany. The New Republic, for example, gave credence to a rumor that factions of the Center Party were working closely with the National Socialists in some German states. Siegfried Scharfe, writing for The Christian Century, could do little more than describe the present political situation as "one of the queerest which Germany has met since the revolution of 1918."

To the behind-the-scenes political intrigue in Germany was added the street violence being carried out by the various bands of the political parties. The climax of these engagements occurred in the city of Altona on July 17, 1932, when bloody riots broke out between Nazi and Communist sympathizers. Since the city was under the jurisdiction of the Social Democratic government of Prussia, Chancellor Papen thought he had found an excuse to expel the legal Prussian government. Therefore on July 20 Papen informed the Prussian administration that, since law and order was not being maintained in their state, President Hindenburg had authorized emergency powers naming the Reich Chancellor Federal Commissioner for Prussia and removing both the Prussian premier and the minister of interior. Although the Social Democrats tried to resist, they were forced to abandon their offices by the action of

20 The New Republic, LXXI (August 3, 1932), 302.
the Reichswehr. By this illegal action Papen and Schleicher acquired the largest and most important German state, which they immediately began to turn into a conservative bastion by ousting moderate and leftist civil servants. 22

The German political scene had been "simplified" by Papen's illegal act, in the view of The New Republic, which, with its leftist orientation, lamented the illegal suppression of the Socialist government of Prussia more deeply than did the other journals. The New Republic quite correctly assessed this action as a direct step toward an absolute dictatorship. It also noted that a number of leading American newspapers had adjusted themselves "to the idea of a Nationalist Germany with a monarchy in the offing." There were ulterior motives behind all this, suspected this liberal weekly.

The Nation saw more problems developing than The New Republic. There was real danger of a civil war, depending upon what

---

22A detailed study of this episode in Prussian history can be found in Earl R. Beck's The Death of the Prussian Republic: A Study of Reich-Prussian Relations, 1932-1934 (Tallahassee: Florida State University Press, 1959).

23The New Republic, LXXI (August 3, 1932), 301-302.
role Adolf Hitler and his associates had played in the *coup d'état* in Prussia. If a deal had been worked out, it might just be that Adolf Hitler and the militarists would be ruling Germany by the autumn of the year.24 With the striking down of the Socialist government in Prussia went the very roots of democratic government in Germany, reported *The Literary Digest.*25 No relief could be expected in the immediate future, warned an editorial in the August 3 *Commonweal*. All progress had been ended by the Papen-Hindenburg tandem, and it was impossible to think that the broken pieces of the republican government, especially in Prussia, could be successfully restored by a subsequent government. "In view of conditions," *The Commonweal* found the Papen "experiment" to be "quite ridiculous."

This stop-gap Cabinet went into office expounding a version of nationalism less bizarre than Herr Hitler's "old soldier" patriotism, but willing none the less to pat every stalwart "Brown-shirt" on the back. In company with the great majority of Germans, Colonel Von Papen and his associates wanted to cleanse the body politic of Communism. But like so many ultra-conservatives in other lands, they fancy that hygiene is an affair of one combing and brushing. Assuming that such men as Severing, whose services to the republic as a leader of Social Democratic labor are of inestimable value, can be brushed aside like mosquitoes with the help of a few soldiers, this government is playing with windmills like a manner worthy of Don Quixote.26

The London correspondent of *The New Republic*, Henry N. Brailsford, pronounced a eulogy for the German Republic on the eve

24 *The Nation*, CXXXV (August 3, 1932), 98.
25 *The Literary Digest*, CXIV (July 30, 1932), 9.
of the July 31 national election. In his estimation, the Reichstag could not function any longer as a parliamentary body. In fact, it had been two years since it had really done anything constructive. To a degree the difficulties in contemporary Germany stemmed from the fact that Socialism had failed miserably. The party of the 1918 revolution, the Social Democrats, had been content to work through the ballot and had never actually been able to acquire real economic and military power from the Junkers, industrialists and militarists. These forces were now in political control and would set about to reorganize a strong capitalistic state. Brailsford already saw the other capitalist nations giving more support to the Junker Papen's government than was ever given to the Socialist or moderate ministries.

Election returns on July 31 revealed the growth of extremism in Germany in the preceding two years. The Communist Party picked up almost 700,000 more votes and added ten new members to the Reichstag for a total of eighty-nine seats. The biggest gain by far, however, was seen in the Nazi landslide. Hitler's Party increased its total vote by over one hundred percent and added 123 Reichstag seats to the 107 which it already possessed. The Center Party added to its strength, picking up more than 500,000 votes and seven seats since the 1930 national election, while the Social Democrats suffered a loss of ten seats and about 600,000 supporters. The smaller liberal parties were almost wiped out.

Even the two conservative parties upon which Papen could depend for support, the People's Party and the Nationalists, had little success at the polls. Together they could give Papen only forty-four votes out of a Reichstag total of 608. Yet the National Socialists had not been able to obtain a majority of the Reichstag seats. Moreover, there was little difference between the number of votes for the Nazis in July and for Hitler in the April presidential run-off, a possible indication that the Nazis' peak of popularity had been reached.

Only one journal, *Current History*, devoted a full article to an analysis of the latest German election; eight others left it to their editors to express their opinions in briefer compass. Both *The Nation*\(^{28}\) and *The New Republic*\(^{29}\) thought that Hitler might be in for some trouble in spite of the Nazi Party success at the polls. A period of great decision-making confronted the leaders of National Socialism, since they had not gotten the majority needed to take control of the government leadership by legal means. Normal parliamentary procedure would have Hitler at least in a cabinet if his Party was willing to compromise with others, such as Nationalists and Centrists. Any reluctance on the part of the Nazis to accommodate would probably mean the continuance of the Papen regime with the aid of presidential decrees. Of the two liberal journals, *The Nation's* view of Hitler's future was the

\(^{28}\) *The Nation*, OXXXV (August 10, 1932), 115.

\(^{29}\) *The New Republic*, LXXI (August 10, 1932), 330.
By remaining outside the government, playing only a passive part in the affairs of Germany during the next few months, Hitler's influence would be largely negative. True, the large bloc of fascist votes in the Reichstag could be used as a club to hold over the present regime, but there are not enough fascist votes to put into effect any part of the Hitler program. And the fascist party is a party of action. It has grown fat on Hitler's extravagant promises. If its leader now fails to produce concrete results, fails to take energetic action leading to early improvement in the German economic situation, the party may very quickly turn upon this false messiah. On the other hand, if Hitler elects to enter a Nationalist-Catholic coalition, he will presumably be permitted to join only on terms laid down by former Chancellor Bruning, leader of the Catholic Center, without whose votes no coalition government can be erected. There is little doubt that Bruning would accept nothing in the Hitler program except that which is economically and politically sound. In brief, the greater part of that program would be unceremoniously rejected. But this again would mean that the action which has been promised the fascist voters would not be forthcoming. Hitler's impressive victory in the Reichstag elections virtually commits him to action; but, short of adopting violent measures, there is no way in which he can effectively act. Will the impoverished middle classes continue to follow his unproductive leadership much longer?

The New Republic believed that Hitler's more radical followers would demand a putsch. However, The Nation pointed out that General Schleicher was still lurking in the background ready to lead the Reichswehr into political control if necessary. Whatever the decision of the National Socialist leadership, The New Republic regretted that German reactionaries might be more willing to unite for common goals than the workers' parties of the Republic, which were busy denouncing each other.

In spite of the increase in Reichstag seats by both the Nazis and Communists, The Commonweal recognized that the election
was inconclusive. This Catholic journal put great emphasis on the fact that Heinrich Bruening's Center Party had increased its representatives. Although admitting that it might be wishful thinking, this journal expressed the hope that the ex-chancellor would be a determining factor in keeping the government moderate if the Reichstag continued to function.\(^30\) The second prominent Catholic weekly, America, responded much differently to the election than did most other journals. In the first place, it seemed to have more respect for the ability of Chancellor Papen than he actually deserved. Referring to him as a man of "political sagacity" and one who "seemed to have gained influence and power by his latest decisive actions" just before the election,\(^31\) America found Papen and his associates "satisfied" after the results were known.

"They found themselves in a stronger position than before and were confident that they would receive a vote of confidence from the new Reichstag to continue their policy of uniting Germany through a government not allied to any political group."\(^32\) The Jesuit periodical had apparently been fooled by the German ministry's propaganda, since few people imagined more than a handful of supporters could be found in the Reichstag for Papen's administration.

After what it described as the bitterest election campaign in the short history of the Weimar Republic, the August 11 Presby-

\(^{30}\) The Commonweal, XVI (August 10, 1932), 358-359.

\(^{31}\) America, XLVII (August 6, 1932), 413.

\(^{32}\) Ibid., (August 13, 1932), 437.
terian Advance saw the Papen regime surviving temporarily, although it did not explain how it reached this conclusion. The Advance still considered the German future to be a question mark because, as it pointed out, the anti-republican parties had outpolled the advocates of the Weimar Constitution. Another Protestant church organ, The Christian Century, took a more discerning look at the German affair. What really amazed this journal were the actions of the German Fascists, or rather the inaction of the Hitlerites. For months they had talked of a violent coup if the election results gave them less than a majority, but, as matters turned out, Hitler and his associates ruled out a march on Berlin. This was a wise decision, said The Christian Century, but it was not the technique of Fascism. Apparently the Italians were made of "sterner stuff." "German fascism, for all its brown shirts and nationalism, seems to lack the courage of its convictions." Nearly the same idea was expressed by Professor Sidney B. Fay in Current History. His article was the best summary of the events surrounding the election. He ruled out "any serious likelihood" of the establishment of Nazism. "Hitler does not have in him the stuff of which a Stalin or a Mussolini is made, nor are the conditions in Germany like those in Russia or Italy."35

What prompted statements like this was that Adolf Hitler

33 The Presbyterian Advance, XLV (August 11, 1932), 5.
34 The Christian Century, XLIX (August 10, 1932), 971.
had first of all decided against a National Socialist insurrection. Within the ranks of the Nazi Party, however, there remained some rambunctious elements still calling for a *putsch*. The discontented groups got no satisfaction out of the negotiations carried on between Hitler and the leaders of the government, Schleicher and Papen. The Nation for August 17 felt that neither Chancellor Papen nor General Schleicher appeared to want to take steps which might offend Hitler, yet the Nazi leader seemed unable to control his followers, who thirsted for action and power. "It appears almost certain that the political gangsters will drag Germany into civil war with their bloody tactics." There was really no way to tell whether a satisfactory agreement worked out with Adolf Hitler would appease his most radical followers.36 Even while the meetings between the Nazi leader and the government spokesmen were in progress, the campaign of terror continued. A new emergency decree against political terrorists providing for the death penalty for political crimes and the establishment of special courts had to be issued on August 9. The Literary Digest of August 20 reported that the usually "breezy" Papen had grown very apprehensive about the anti-government demonstrations.37

Nevertheless, The Christian Century for August 17 judged that the more responsible National Socialists and the other leaders of the rightist forces were seeking to get along with each

36 The Nation, CXXXV (August 17, 1932), 133.
37 The Literary Digest, CXIV (August 20, 1932), 996.
other. The *Century* assumed that as long as the forces of the right cooperated, the internal machinery of the state would survive, but there seemed to be little chance that any headway could be made with international problems.\(^{38}\) The *Presbyterian Advance* for the same week, on the other hand, saw the German state on the verge of collapse. Reaction was in the driver's seat and, whether fortunately or unfortunately, it did not know where it was going. Furthermore, said the *Advance*, the rest of the world was so occupied with its own economic problems that it did not really care what happened to Germany\(^{39}\)--an opinion that it reversed completely only a week later!\(^{40}\) In this latter issue, the *Advance* optimistically pointed out that the so-called republican parties had remained steadfast in their principles and had lost little of their voting strength to the extremists in recent election contests. A contrary view was expressed in the August 20 *America*. Reports had been received which told of many important German politicians who were ready to tolerate Adolf Hitler in the government, if there could be certain guarantees and safeguards imposed which would prevent a National Socialist dictatorship. "The general impression was that the time had come for Hitler to take over the Chancellorship and face the problem of demonstrating his ideal of statesmanship."\(^{41}\)

---

\(^{38}\) *The Christian Century*, XLIV (August 17, 1932), 996.

\(^{39}\) *The Presbyterian Advance*, XLV (August 18, 1932), 4.

\(^{40}\) Ibid., (August 25, 1932), 4.

\(^{41}\) *America*, XLVII (August 20, 1932), 461.
Speculation was put to rest on August 13, 1932, when the government clique announced a continuation of the non-party type of administration then in existence. As a party leader, Hitler in the premiership was now out of the question. Besides, during the negotiations he had demanded more power in the ministry than either Hindenburg, Schleicher or Papen was willing to allow him. When he was offered the Vice-Chancellorship, Adolf Hitler refused.

"Hitler's audacity had failed to impress Hindenburg," announced The Nation on August 24. It seemed to this liberal journal that Hitler had been pushed by the Nazi activists against his better judgment to make the dictatorship bid. "Forced on by the more fanatical of his followers, Hitler was in no position to compromise." Although talk of a Nazi putsch was being revived, The Nation doubted that the Fascists would test the strength of Schleicher's army units.42

A coup was definitely out of the question, wrote The New Republic, after Hitler's failure to join the Papen government. An armed revolt could have succeeded only while Bruening was in power. There was some reason to believe that Hitler was reluctant to turn down the Papen-Schleicher offer, and it appeared likely that he would renew negotiations with General Schleicher after a National Socialist leadership conference. This would be done despite the opposition of some of his disciples. Junker-Hitlerite cooperation seemed to be the only solution for the German politi-

42The Nation, CXXXV (August 24, 1932), 135.
Since the present government can in no other way procure a majority in the Reichstag, the dissolution of that body would be the only alternative. In that case the present government could continue to rule for a few months with emergency decrees, but it would find hard sledding against the combined opposition of practically all important parties and groups. The Social Democrats could not support, and the Communists would certainly refuse to support a government that chose the celebration of the Weimar Constitution anniversary to announce its intention of altering the fundamental law of the country to fit political conditions of a century ago by restoring the Herrenhaus, raising the voting age and decreasing and disorganizing the country's social services. The alternative of calling a National Constitutional Assembly, which has been suggested as a way out of the present inner-political deadlock, is hardly practical, for it too would produce such an overwhelming majority against the present regime that nothing would be gained thereby.

However, The New Republic called attention to one more possibility: a coalition of National Socialists and Centrists, about which rumors still circulated.  

Journalist Ludwig Lore, writing in the October Current History, heard the same reports, and he seemed to think that an understanding was almost certain. The National Socialists wanted immediate results, while the Catholics were supposed to be afraid of Protestant Junker domination. For the moment, the man of the hour in Lore's estimation was General Schleicher. It was this "conservative of old Germany" who, from the shadows, made and un-made governments. That Hitler would have to get his approval, and not Hindenburg's, for political power was another judgment.

---

made by Lore in the August 24 New Republic. A New Republic editorial predicted that Adolf Hitler would never obtain "real power" but it failed to take into account the changing moods of National Socialism's right-wing opponents. While this magazine believed that Hitler's inclusion in a coalition was a definite possibility, a complete usurpation of power by the Nazis would never be permitted by the industrialists, Junkers, or General Schleicher and the Reichswehr. It was precisely these elements which the National Socialist leader outmaneuvered within the next year.

Adolf Hitler had been "humiliated" in the words of America; he had been rebuffed by the President, and it now seemed that he was on the verge of losing control of his organization. The recuperative powers of the Nazi Party were underestimated by the Jesuit weekly, but it had been able to pick out one consequence of Hitler's talks with the Papen government. "It was certain that Hitler and von Schleicher had parted and would henceforth be political enemies." The Commonweal, which usually gave a good deal of attention to current events, had little new to say. On August 24 it carried an article on Germany by its European correspondent, Max Jordan, who presented what can only be termed a simplistic solution for all of the country's ills by arguing that the core of Germany's troubles was overcrowding. There was not enough land

---

46 The New Republic, LXXII (August 24, 1932), 59-60.
47 America, XLVII (August 27, 1932), 485.
for Germany's increasing population. Solve this problem, declared Jordan, and the German situation would be considerably eased.év Echoes of the National Socialist Lebensraum argument could be heard here!

August of 1932 found the American journals in a state of obvious uncertainty. Hitler's great success at the polls brought him publicity but not power, and he had turned down a chance to join the Papen Cabinet. There seemed to be many doubts that the traditional conservatives would ever permit him peacefully to take the lead in government affairs. Talk of a putsch persisted on the part of the more fanatical Nazis but not the leader. The major questions that interested the journalists were whether Hitler retained firm control over his movement's organization and what did he personally want on the German political scene. Although the political future of Germany was still dark, the American periodicals seemed to think that the threat of a Hitler-rule was diminishing. Maybe the National Socialists would enter a coalition government before long, but this could not be any worse than the Papen-Schleicher constitutional dictatorship.

There were, of course, the persistent rumors of deals and plots. These could be found in the American journals at almost any time, including the autumn months of 1932.ó That the Hitler-

48 Max Jordan, "Back to the Land in Germany," The Commonweal, XVI (August 24, 1932), 404.

49 The New Republic, LXXII (September 7, 1932), 83; America XLVII (September 3, 1932), 509; and The Living Age, CCCXLIII (September, 1932), 7-8.
ites, Centrists and Hugenberg Nationalists had finally gotten together was the latest word from *The New Republic* on September 7. Only Papen's and Schleicher's determination to maintain their regime prevented the takeover by this newly formed coalition, but continued stubbornness by the present ministry could bring on the long-awaited civil war. Similar stories were heard by *America* about discussions between the Center and the "Rightist parties," including the National Socialists. The monthly report of *The Living Age* mentioned that both Hitler and Schleicher had been carrying on discussions with French industrialists with the goal of working up some kind of agreement over Poland; the journal determined that Schleicher was the less trustworthy of the two; the "unscrupulous" General and Chancellor Papen had already backed down in their so-called deal to permit Hitler control over the Prussian state government.

According to Professor Sidney B. Fay in the September *Current History*, there need not be so much worry about Adolf Hitler, for he was a mere demagogue, he had "become more moderate in his program," and President Hindenburg could be depended upon to persuade the Nazis to respect "authority and order, efficiency and a strong sense of duty." Fay thought that he saw "a more conservative evolution," not a "reactionary or radical revolution" in the German future. 50

One critical voice was heard denouncing this type of report-

50 Sidney B. Fay, "Germany Elects a New Reichstag," *Current History*, XXXVI (September, 1932), 660.
Berlin newspaperman S. Miles Bouton expressed extreme displeasure with the way American observers were handling the German news. Few seemed to grasp the true significance of the National Socialist movement and the reason for its growth. "Every gain by the Hitlerites was followed by comforting assurances that now the last reservoir of their votes had been exhausted." The American public was being misinformed, because either the readers themselves or the editors wanted it that way. Above all, Bouton believed that it should be made clear that Hitler's followers were not all the worst elements of the body politic or "the ragtag and bobtail of the country." Within the ranks of his organization were Nobel Prize winners, noted scientists, jurists, writers, industrialists, noblemen and laborers. Bouton mentioned no names, nor did he go into any detail; however, his remarks were pertinent since the majority of the journalists and editors in the summer of 1932 seemed confused by the issues in Germany and perplexed by the personalities who were making the headlines. Bouton's remarks called attention to the fact that the Hitler movement was clearly becoming acceptable in the eyes of respectable Germans.

An article appearing in the October 26 issue of The Christian Century touched on the same problem. The Century's German correspondent, Siegfried Scharfe, told of the disappearance of the middle parties which had been the vehicles of political expression.

51S. Miles Bouton, "False News From Germany," The American Mercury, XXVII (September, 1932), 34. Bouton was an Associated Press correspondent.
for the educated Germans, who had turned to one of the Marxist parties, the Fascists and the Nationalists, or the Catholic Centrists. For the time being, despair had overwhelmed intelligence. This could account for people such as the unnamed Nobel Prize winners mentioned by reporter Bouton. Scharfe hoped that many of the votes for Hitler were made with the clear understanding that his was not a satisfactory solution for Germany's problems. Other ballots, he thought, were cast with the intention of bringing the Hitler crisis to a head, so that Germany could settle down and face the future without the Fascist annoyance.52

Another session of the Reichstag was scheduled for August 30; now the leading party would be the National Socialists with their 230 delegates. Before the first meeting was held, however, an event occurred which stirred emotions and caused heated debates. This was the celebrated Potempa case. On August 9, 1932, five members of the Nazi Party murdered a Communist in the Upper Silesian village of Potempa, and two weeks later they were sentenced to death by the special emergency political court in Bethuen. Adolf Hitler spoke out strongly in defense of his convicted comrades, bitterly accusing the government of legal assassination. At first Chancellor von Papen replied with strong words, announcing that he intended to maintain the domestic security of the state no matter who the lawbreakers might be. Then, fearing the conse-

52 Siegfried Scharfe, "German Middle Parties Vanish," The Christian Century, XLIX (October 26, 1932), 1310.
quences of new Nazi outbursts, Papen backed down and on September 2 commuted the murderers' sentences to life imprisonment. In the meantime, the Chancellor had announced a bold economic reconstruction program, which he hoped would win public support for his ministry.

In the light of the sequence of events during August, several journals tried to guess what would happen once the Reichstag convened on August 30. The two leading liberal weeklies, The New Republic and The Nation, suggested that the Nazi leadership would subsequently seek out accommodation with the Papen government,\(^5\) when, in reality, these radical politicians had decided to oppose the right-wing administration. That Papen was the master of the political situation and was on the verge of becoming dictator at the expense of Hitler and the National Socialists was the somewhat contrary view given by both The Literary Digest and America.\(^5\) The latter journal went so far as to suggest that "a bloody civil war" was an immediate "prospect."

There was no revolt, and the Reichstag met as expected on August 30. Hermann Goering was elected speaker, and immediately the Reichstag adjourned until September 12. During the recess Chancellor Papen took the opportunity to put into action his economic plans by emergency decree on September 4, 1932. Before the Reichstag resumed, America had time to respond to the first ses-

\(^5\) The New Republic, LXXII (September 7, 1932), 83.

\(^5\) The Literary Digest, CXIV (September 10, 1932), 11, and America, XLVII (September 3, 1932), 509.
It had forecast "a bloody civil war" in its September 3 issue, and now a week later it noted the "perfect decorum" of the legislature, which occasioned a note of hope in America's report. But it was not the time for optimism. When the Reichstag reconvened on September 12, Goering decided to press for a confidence vote in the government, even though Papen possessed a decree of dissolution. A Communist Party motion of no-confidence in the Chancellor's ministry was given immediate consideration against Papen's protests. While the vote was in progress, the Chancellor placed the decree of dissolution before Speaker Goering and walked out. The final vote of 512 to 42 was overwhelmingly against the government, but this only meant a return to rule by cabinet and decree, with Papen retaining the commanding position. Calculating that the National Socialists had begun to decline in popularity, the Chancellor dissolved the Reichstag and called for new elections on November 6. Papen hoped to influence the industrialists and financiers who had been making campaign contributions to the Hitler party and to exploit the dissatisfaction of Nazi Gregor Strasser and his right-wing faction which believed in cooperation with the conservative forces.

Predictions concerning the outcome of the German political crisis had proved to be erroneous, stated The Christian Century in its September 21 number. Neither Nazis nor Communists but the Junkers had formed the long-awaited authoritarian dictatorship.

55 America, XLVII (September 10, 1932), 533.
This audacious group of aristocrats had stolen the thunder from the Hitlerites, but this reactionary regime would last only so long as the army and police power were behind it, for it was "without any vestige of popular support other than that of the president." Nevertheless, The Christian Century thought it almost certain that a dictatorship would be long entrenched in Germany, even after Papen and Hitler had passed from the scene, because "it is hard for anything but some other form of dictatorship to overthrow it." At least it was clear to the Century that Germany's short adventure with democracy was finished.\textsuperscript{56} The Literary Digest agreed that Germany lay in the hands of a dictator, backed by Hindenburg and the German army.\textsuperscript{57} On the other hand, America, while admitting that "Chancellor von Papen emerged stronger and freer than ever" from the latest crisis, thought that the scheduled November elections justified some optimism.\textsuperscript{58}

The liberal journals could only express bewilderment at the rapid pace of events in Germany. The September 21 New Republican thought it saw signs that the Socialists and Communists were beginning to seek ways to cooperate in face of the right-wing front of the Nazis and Junkers. "In the final analysis, there is as little basic difference between these two parties of the right as between our own Republicans and Democrats," except that

\textsuperscript{56}The Christian Century, XLIX (September 21, 1932), 1123.
\textsuperscript{57}The Literary Digest, CXIV (September 24, 1932), 14-15.
\textsuperscript{58}America, XLVII (September 24, 1932), 580.
the Nationalist Junkers held the power that the National Socialists sought. Harping back to its ancient theory, The New Republic reiterated its suspicion of Nazi-Center efforts at a "working agreement," as indicative of the realignment of parties that lay in the immediate future.\(^{59}\) The Nation recognized that the new elections would not solve any problems, since they would not make the Reichstag any more workable than before. This liberal organ too saw the similarity of the right-wing groups, but this fact only confounded the puzzle of why the Nazis were contributing to the fall of Papen's government.\(^{60}\)

Writing in the autumn issue of Religion in Life, Professor Harvie Branscomb formed the mistaken opinion that the old guard Junker forces were in permanent control of the government. The Hitler group had picked up strength, especially in the German working class, but not enough to claim a majority of the German people. The growth of violence on the part of the political parties, led by the Nazis, had forced President Hindenburg to seek out individuals who would restore domestic tranquillity, even if it meant the return to power of people who were important in pre-republican Germany. The Papen government was expected by Branscomb to eliminate Hitler as an active force by taking up two of his policies, the rebuilding of the army and the destruction of the Communist threat in Germany, or by inciting the Fascist leader

\(^{59}\) The New Republic, LXXII (September 21, 1932), 141.  
\(^{60}\) The Nation, CXXV (September 28, 1932), 267.
to take the path of violent revolution. But Branscomb thought that this was about all of a positive nature that the world should expect from this Junker government. 61

Everett R. Clinchy, in the September 21 Christian Century, bared some of the worst features of the Nazi policies. Among other matters, Hitler's nationalism was of the excessive kind but, according to Clinchy, the National Socialist leader had the opportunity to become a statesman and a pioneer if he would champion a "nationalism that is not nationalistic." The author next called upon Adolf Hitler to accept Germany's military inferiority and to work for the good of humanity and a new world order. 62

The Living Age changed its mind in its October issue. Admitting that it had underestimated the strength of Papen and the ability of Schleicher, it predicted, accurately as events showed, that the Junker ministry would last as long as General Schleicher was able to "change with the times." 63 However, Frank H. Simonds, in The Review of Reviews and World's Work for October, thought that chances of a civil war were increasing. The German Republic

61 Harvie Branscomb, "Germany's Great Defeat," Religion In Life, I (Autumn, 1932), 605-608. Branscomb was a professor of New Testament at Duke University and was on the advisory council of this quarterly journal.

62 Everett R. Clinchy, "I Saw Hitler, Too," The Christian Century, XLIX (September 21, 1932), 1131-1133. Clinchy was the secretary of the National Conference on Goodwill Between Christians and Jews. He saw Hitler with a streak of the Rooseveltian campaigner in him, as well as with some trace of New York Mayor Walker's facility with public sympathy.

63 The Living Age, CCCXLIII (October, 1932), 102-103.
was finished, in Simonds' opinion, but as yet there was nothing to replace it. The Catholic Center Party had been trying to salvage something of the Republic by negotiating with the National Socialists for a coalition government. Simonds thought that the idea of a constitutional government still appealed to Hitler who, however, knew that he would lose his more radical followers to the Communists if he joined a coalition. The Nazis were a dynamic movement, and Hitler realized that there must be action sooner or later or the organization would disintegrate. Chances of success were growing slimmer as the Junkers and the army were united against him, and word was out that the Socialists were working more closely with the Communists against the Nazi challenge. Hitler was going to have to make up his mind soon or lose his opportunity to sit in any government.

In a word Hitler has come to the crisis which Mussolini met when he marched on Rome; and nearly two thousand years earlier Caesar solved by crossing the Rubicon on a similar adventure toward the Eternal City. But Hitler is hanging back. He cannot make up his mind to fish or cut bait, to throw himself upon the bayonets in front or succumb to the hardly less deadly peril of a constitutional control in partnership with the Catholics.64

Some contrary views were expressed by Denis Gwynn in a long, detailed article in the November issue of The Sign. He placed confidence in the fact that Chancellor Papen and the still powerful ex-premier, Heinrich Bruening, were faithful Catholics. These two statesmen were sure to be able to stem the tide of the

"gasbag" Hitler. The fact that Chancellor Papen had resorted to dictatorial methods did not seem to bother Gwynn at all. Neither did the fact that Papen had been put into the chancellorship by those forces which opposed Bruening and not as the official Centrist candidate. Bruening and Papen were Catholics in religion but held many different political principles. Both, however, were exponents of the papal social encyclicals, continued Gwynn from London, and, if given the chance, they would work for the restoration of Germany's greatness. Papen, asserted Gwynn, had already shown himself to be a strong leader, able to restore stable conditions. Of course the Chancellor had recently put into effect economic reforms which were detrimental to the German working class and hardly in line with the encyclicals, and few observers would agree that calm had been restored by his regime. Gwynn maintained that he had won over many of the army veterans' organizations and had seemingly injured Hitler's popularity and prestige by stealing the issue concerning rearmament. Any thought of Hitler's increasing his power now was extremely unlikely.

Since rumors persisted of a Center-Nazi coalition, Gwynn thought it necessary to discuss the possibility. Gwynn contended that it would take a great change of attitude on the part of the Nazis before this could occur. He said this even though, he admitted, the two parties had recently held discussions. That National Socialism had already been condemned by several German bishops was the basis of Gwynn's argument. The author noted that
but it was reasonable to suspect that they were not yet considered a permanent menace by the Church officials. Max Jordan, another Catholic reporter, also admitted the Centrist-Nazi discussions in the November 16 Commonweal. His article told of the more influential German conservatives abandoning the National Socialist movement and turning to Papen, who promised stability based on the old order of things. The British author, Hilaire Belloc, in a glaring misrepresentation of the facts in the October 1 America, attributed the "new reign of violence" in Germany to the anti-Catholic campaign.

There seemed to be no agreement whatsoever concerning the value of the Junker dictatorship or the future role of the National Socialists. That the Papen-Schleicher regime was stealing the issues from the Nazis seemed apparent in the reports received by The Literary Digest in early October. The Junker ministry was setting the stage for the rearmament of Germany and at the same time alienating the other powers of western Europe.

65 Denis Gwynn, "The Real Situation in Germany," The Sign, XII (November, 1932), 206-208. The Irish author Gwynn had been on the staff of several British journals, and a contributor to many others. During the nineteen-thirties, he was a director of the publishing firm of Burns, Cates and Washbourne. An almost regular contributor to The Sign, he became the chief spokesman of foreign affairs for this journal from this issue onwards.


67 Hilaire Belloc, "The Religious Factor of Germany’s Chaos," America, XLVII (October 1, 1932), 612. Belloc (1870-1953) was the noted British Catholic poet, essayist and biographer.

68 The Literary Digest, CXIV (October 1, 1932), 14.
called the Papen government's move to rearm "a concession to nationalism justified by an endeavor to defeat Hitler." That Germany was worse off as a result of this present government than she would have been under National Socialism, was the opinion of Emil Ludwig in the October 26 Nation. The author based his thesis on the assumption that the more "modern" and "socialistic" elements of the Nazis would have won control of the Party machinery, once it took over the state. Instead the leaders of the Papen government represented the most ardent and ruthless of reactionaries, those who had no desire to help the masses. The Living Age for November agreed that the government in Germany had cut itself off from the people. Even the National Socialists had split away from the Junkers, and it was anticipated by this journal that the German Fascists would help the workers' parties in a general strike. The Hitler movement had definitely moved to the left and could expect no more financial support from the industrialists.

Sidney B. Fay saw the same trend developing:

The Hitlerites are likely to have less campaign funds in the coming election than hitherto. The industrialists, who in the past contributed freely to Hitler's movement as an excellent weapon to curb the power of the trade unions and Socialists, need him no longer. The von Papen Government, in its general program for the reanimation of business, has given the industrialists more than Hitler could, even if he were in power.

69 The Commonweal, XVI (October 5, 1932), 519.

70 Emil Ludwig, "The Flight of the German Spirit," The Nation, CXXXV (October 26, 1932), 391-392. Ludwig was a popular historian and biographer.

71 The Living Age, CCCXLIII (November, 1932), 192.
There were other reasons for the coming decline of Nazism, asserted Professor Fay, who had discovered "extraordinary strength" in the National Socialist movement, namely the enthusiasm in the ranks. No organization could maintain itself as long as its leader's promise of fulfillment was "always just beyond the horizon." Fay reported that most outsiders felt that National Socialism "has reached its culmination."72

Professor Karl Geiser, who had recently spent several months in Germany, disagreed with Fay. The ideas of National Socialism, he wrote in The Nation on November 16, 1932—from all indications, the article was submitted before the balloting in the November 6 German election—went much deeper than just a phenomenon in Germany. Nazism was a "functional disorder of the heart of Europe." This disease was on the verge of becoming "organic" unless something was done about worldwide financial and economic problems. Only the continued excesses of the Nazi Party, Geiser believed, had weakened its cause. It still remained, however, a strong popular movement which reflected the misery of all the German people. Despite these discerning insights, Professor Geiser's assessment lacked depth, for he declared that the only group comparable to National Socialism in American history was the

movement centered around William Jennings Bryan. 73

November 6, 1932 was Reichstag election day again in Germany and, as in the past, there were a few surprising results. The voting was done in adverse conditions in Berlin, where a general transport strike had been in progress for three days. National Socialists and Communists alike supported the workers' demands, but this maneuver proved an asset for only the Bolsheviks. Since the July national election, the Nazis had lost some of their appeal. Their vote total dropped from almost 13,746,000 to 11,737,000, and they lost thirty-four of the 230 seats won in the summer election. The Communists, on the other hand, added eleven more Reichstag places, giving them a total of 100, while their ballot strength was enlarged to 5,980,000, a gain of just about 700,000 votes. As far as the National Socialists were concerned, Papen's undermining tactics gave some appearance of working. This was the first time in a national election in over two years that the Nazis had suffered a decline in their electoral strength. Nevertheless, the political groups which supported Papen's administration added only about twenty places in the new legislature, and this was not enough to help his Cabinet get its program through the Reichstag.

The journals could not miss the facts of the election, which they called to their readers' attention, but the signifi-

73 Karl Frederick Geiser, "Hitler's Hold on Germany," The Nation, XXXV (November 16, 1932), 474-475. Geiser was a professor of political science at Oberlin College.
cance of the National Socialist reversals provoked varying comment. One group, including The Literary Digest, The Christian Century and The Presbyterian Advance, forecast the continuing decline, if not the imminent demise, of National Socialism. Other emphasized the continuing crisis for constitutional democracy stemming from the impossibility of forming a workable majority out of the new party structure, a situation which would force closer right-wing cooperation, but The New Republic and The Nation felt relief that now a Nazi-Center alliance seemed to be out of the question. Concerning Chancellor Papen's role, The Presbyterian Advance thought he seemed satisfied with the election outcome, Frank H. Simonds in The Review of Reviews and World's Work saw him faced now with a greater menace from the Communists after his partial success with the Nazis, and The Living Age correctly predicted that Schleicher would soon receive the chancellorship.

The January 1933 Current History carried an article that revealed to the American reader the thinking of upper-class Germans: Richard von Kuehlmann's "The German Drift to Revolution." The author, German Foreign Secretary from 1917 to 1918 and since

---

74 The Literary Digest, CXIV (November 19, 1932), 13; The Christian Century, XLIX (November 16, 1932), 1397; and The Presbyterian Advance, CXLVI (November 17, 1932), 5.


76 The Nation, CXXXV (November 16, 1932), 468, and The Living Age, CCCXLIII (December, 1932), 285.

77 The New Republic, LXXIII (November 16, 1932), 6, and The Nation, CXXXV (November 16, 1932), 468.
then a frequent lecturer in the United States, asserted that his greatest fear was a Communist government in Germany. This article was written soon after the November 6 election. While declaring himself a democrat, von Kuehlmann wrote that only the present dictatorship could preserve what was left of the Weimar Republic.

Germany's most valuable assets today are the prestige of President von Hindenburg and the Reichswehr. Both have been deeply committed to the Papen-Schleicher experiment, so much so that some observers doubt whether they could disentangle themselves should the principles behind that Cabinet finally fail. Probably the von Papen government, or one similar to it, will be backed to the utmost by both the President and the army. Much will depend on the degree of material success. If the tide of returning prosperity is running fast enough, violent change may be avoided. The revolutionary forces, led by Moscow, know that if prosperity and normal business return before revolution is successful, all hopes for an overturn must be put aside for many years. Knowing this, they will strain every nerve to make hay while the sun shines. It is the battle of Europe, nay, of the whole world, which is now being fought on German soil. The von Papen cabinet stood for all that tradition had made venerable, and that is why many Germans gave it their support, fearful lest it prove to be the last dam against the rising floods of combined radicalism.

What Kuehlmann meant by combined radicalism was Nazism and Communism. With all the violent disorders between these two extremist groups, Baron von Kuehlmann perceived that their adherents were seeking out channels of cooperation in their attack upon the Papen government. This was not surprising, in the estimation of the author, for many of the National Socialists were "very sympathetic to Communist ideals." Now that Hitler had failed to make good his promise to take control of the government, it could be that the Nazis were beginning to break up into factions, declared Kuehlmann, with some of them already aligning themselves with the left-
wing extremists. While his evaluation of the government forces was that of a typical upper-class German, his assessment of the Hitlerites—they were "even more radical than the followers of Moscow"—was very accurate.  

Meanwhile in Germany Papen's regime was rapidly approaching its end. Ambitious General Schleicher, in particular, was displeased with the way that Chancellor Papen had been dealing with the National Socialists and at the same time striving to replace him, Schleicher, in the affections of the aging President. Schleicher also seemed to feel that the Chancellor had gone too far in alienating Hitler and his associates, who in the future would be badly needed to cooperate in some kind of national front government that the General dreamed of organizing. Pointing to the growth of the Communist vote as a danger sign, Schleicher demanded that von Papen resign so that the General's experiment might be implemented. Still a member of Hindenburg's inner council of advisors, Papen received permission to explore the possibility of a conservative-reactionary ministry including National Socialists, Nationalists, Centrists and members of the ultra-conservative People's Party. Affirmative answers were received from the Nationalists and the People's Party, but neither the Centrists nor the Nazis wanted anything to do with Papen. It only took the Chancellor a few days to determine that he could not form a party cabinet, and he announced on November 17, 1932, that he would con-

---

continue to serve only so long as it took President Hindenburg to organize a new ministry. The President was urged by his Chancellor to seek out Adolf Hitler to be the next premier—advice that Papen hoped would bring him back into office, since he knew it would be almost an impossibility for the Nazi leader to form a government with a parliamentary majority.

Hitler conferred with Hindenburg and General Schleicher on November 19 and again on November 21 but with no concrete results. Although Schleicher counseled moderation, Hitler demanded the chancellorship with full powers and nothing less; this the President refused. For the next two weeks uncertainty prevailed within government circles. Forced finally to abandon his friend, Papen, Hindenburg asked General Schleicher to form the next cabinet. So thus it was on December 3, 1932, that the man who had operated behind the scenes emerged openly on the political stage.

During all these events there was some, but not much, American journal response, probably because it was so difficult to comprehend what was going on behind the conference room doors. The Nation of November 30 came out definitely for no compromise with Hitler, whom it described as a man "committed to wholesale bloodletting." 79 The New Republic sensed that Hitler would not join in a coalition at this time; it guessed correctly that he would refuse to compromise his principles by joining a coalition government. This liberal organ also felt that the next constitu-

79The Nation, CXXXV (November 30, 1932), 515-516.
tional dictator would probably be General Schleicher, who was known to have held a powerful position in the background during the Papen episode. Both General Schleicher and President Hindenburg, this journal contended, were attempting to play off Nazism against Communism with the hope that both ideologies would collapse and leave the way clear for a strong Prussian-type state led by the Junkers and industrialists. \textsuperscript{80} The New Republic's supposition about Schleicher's next role in German politics was accurate, but the same could not be said with respect to his policies. That Adolf Hitler was actually asked to take over the government proved to the November 30 Christian Century that he was now considered harmless. Without knowledge of the activity of General Schleicher, the Century concluded that Papen would return. \textsuperscript{81} For The Nation of December 7, the most significant event of all was Hitler's refusal to take political office on Hindenburg's terms. The "confused and weak demagogue" had been deflated, trumpeted The Nation, and no longer need his threats and boasts frighten anyone. His power over his disciples had now been acutely compromised. "He has told his army of their impending victory so often that this need alarm no one." Germany would have some form of dictatorship over the winter months, but this was preferable to having Hitler in office. \textsuperscript{82}

\textsuperscript{80} The New Republic, LXXIII (November 30, 1932), 55.
\textsuperscript{81} The Christian Century, XLIX (November 30, 1932), 1460.
\textsuperscript{82} The Nation, CXXXV (December 7, 1932), 543.
The less than two months of military dictatorship under General Kurt von Schleicher brought little reaction from the American journals. Few observers seemed to realize what was happening in the inner councils in Germany. Every area of German domestic politics was neglected, including the actions of the National Socialists. One possible reason for the lack of response might be the approaching holiday season, during which the American journals usually reduced the number of their pages and the foreign reports. It might well be that most of them considered the new constitutional dictatorship only a temporary government which would soon be replaced after the first of the year; on the other hand, if the Schleicher ministry lasted, then there would be plenty of time to comment on it after the Christmas lull.

The Reichstag met from December 6 to 9; after a series of physical clashes between the Nazis and the Communists, it was adjourned until January 31, 1933. While some National Socialists criticized General Schleicher for bringing the Reichswehr into the political controversy, there was no vote of no-confidence taken, and the new cabinet enjoyed a reprieve to work out its program. Schleicher proceeded to attempt to win over as much support as possible, from the working classes as well as the Nazis. He restored wage cuts for the laborers and allowed a restoration of many civil rights. An amnesty bill for political prisoners was also signed. Not a doctrinaire conservative, the General was willing to make concessions to get public support. In the process, he alienated some of his former associates who disliked his
economical policy of currying favor with the masses and not protecting the agricultural products of the Junkers' estates from foreign competition.

In their commentary on Schleicher's chancellorship, none of the American journals demonstrated any real knowledge of the circumstances and intrigue that had brought him into office nor of the inner workings of German political life. The New Republic called attention to the fact that the German working-class parties were watching and waiting, as were the National Socialists. It expressed the obvious truth that the Chancellor needed the Nazis' support if he hoped to build a mass base for his regime, while The Literary Digest said with equal truth that Schleicher really needed no one's help to stay in power, especially since the army and the Prussian state police stood behind him. Writing in Current History, Sidney B. Fay noted that the new regime "is significant for its greater centralization of authority in the hands of the Chancellor." In general, the consensus of opinion was that Schleicher had a reasonable chance of surviving. Ludwig Lore's analysis in Current History for December revealed by its title the trend of his thought: "Will the Hohenzollerns Return?"
At this time the Catholic journal, The Ave Maria, discussed at length the religious manifestation of Nazism as seen in the faction called the "German Christians," a group about which a great deal more would be heard after Adolf Hitler came to power. The "German Christians" were to bring about a number of serious crises within the ranks of German Protestantism. Their impact on Catholicism was a secondary consideration. However, The Ave Maria perceived the sect to be a particular threat to the Catholic Church, since it sought to achieve the incorporation of the church by the state. The "German Christians'" failure or success would depend upon the way they handled the Catholic Center Party, which was always ready to battle for its religious rights. Later events showed that this journal apparently had a keen sense of what Nazism in power would mean for religion. On the other hand, it gave the Centrists too much credit, as events too would soon prove.

Some of the journals in early 1933 were moderately confident that Adolf Hitler and the National Socialists had lost their opportunity in the autumn of 1932 to take command of the government. Hitler failed because of his own personality defects, related The Living Age of February 1933, which was published before word was received from Germany that the National Socialist leader had accepted the chancellorship. If he had not been emotionally unstable he could have seized power in the summer. The truth was

85 The Ave Maria, XXXVII (New Series)(January 14, 1933), 54. This was a conservative Catholic weekly.
that the entire Nazi leadership was beset with personal emotional problems. The Living Age believed that only the Strasser Brothers were qualified as leaders, and these two had broken with the Nazi Party. Otto Strasser had separated from Hitler in 1930 and established the splinter Black Front organization. His brother, Gregor, remained one of Hitler's advisors until December 1932, when his suggestion for moderation and cooperation with the other conservative and reactionary organizations was rejected. General Schleicher had long hoped that Gregor Strasser would be the man to lead the National Socialists into a national front coalition government headed by the Reichswehr leader.

If Hitler had compromised with respect to joining a conservative coalition, he would have been a statesman and not a German, declared Gerhard Hirschfield in America. On account of this stubbornness concerning principle, Hitlerism was apparently subsiding, in the judgment of the author. One week later, on January 21, America noted that Hitler had presumably been driven to a defensive attitude as a result of the reported split with Gregor Strasser. Quite obviously America misread the signs, since the defection of Strasser created no unrest in the ranks of the Nazi Party faithful at the time. Nevertheless, this Catholic Jesuit weekly felt that Hitler was now fearful that another elec-

86 The Living Age, CCCXLIII (February, 1933), 474.
87 Gerhard Hirschfield, "The Spirit of Modern Germany," America, XLVIII (January 14, 1933), 357. Hirschfield was identified as a writer on political and economic topics.
tion would bring heavy losses to his movement. His treasury was also being strained, and it was beginning to look as if he would seek a post in the Schleicher ministry, rather than take the chance of losing his supporters in the business world. Another rumor heard was that Papen and Hitler had met in conference, which they did on January 4. The importance of this meeting was not grasped.\(^88\) Unknown to America or to any other observer in the journals of this country, this was the beginning of the end for Kurt von Schleicher's regime. A week later America found Hitler a little more confident, which he was, after a local election victory in the state of Lippe. Now there would be no compromise with General Schleicher, wrote America.\(^89\) The January 28 Literary Digest also found the "drooping spirits" of the National Socialists revived.\(^90\)

Contrary views could likewise be found in American periodicals, right up to the very eve of Adolf Hitler's chancellorship. Professor Calvin B. Hoover in Current History was sure that the Reichswehr and its leader, General Schleicher, would be able to keep peace and order. Thoughts of a coup by either the Communists or Fascists were thoughts of the past, said this article, dated February 1933.\(^91\) In the same issue of this monthly, Sidney

\(^{88}\) America, XLVIII (January 21, 1933), 370.

\(^{89}\) Ibid., (January 29, 1933), 394.

\(^{90}\) The Literary Digest, CXV (January 28, 1933), 13.

\(^{91}\) Calvin B. Hoover, "The Strength of German Capitalism," Current History, XXXVII (February, 1933), 544. Hoover was a professor of economics at Duke University.
B. Fay discovered "something like optimism" returning to German political life under the rule of Schleicher. "General von Schleicher is rather firmly entrenched for the time being," wrote George Gerhard in the February 1933 issue of The North American Review. America of February 4 felt that Schleicher's hold over the nation was slipping, but it believed that he was quite willing "to bring matters to a head." On the other hand, "a sufficient fear had been instilled into the Nazi leader to make him willing to delay a test of strength with the Chancellor." 

By the time these words were being read, Adolf Hitler had already become the Chancellor of the German government. Schleicher's position had become untenable, and he had handed in his resignation on January 28. His plan for a national front-type of government had made little progress. He tried to play for time; however, President Hindenburg refused to provide him with an order of dissolution for the Reichstag, which was scheduled to re-open on January 31. Franz von Papen and his associates, in the meantime, had been preparing for the next ministry with the knowledge of Hindenburg. At the time of his departure, Schleicher suggested Hitler as his successor. Papen, then the President, along with other conservatives, agreed on the Nazi leader, but he

---

92 Sidney B. Fay, "Von Schleicher as German Chancellor," ibid., 616.
93 George Gerhard, "The German Interlude," The North American Review, CCCXXV (February, 1933), 112.
94 America, XLVIII (February 4, 1933), 418.
was to serve in a government which would be dominated by traditional conservatives. Hindenburg extended the invitation, and Hitler accepted on January 30, 1933.

The appointment caught the American journals by surprise. January 1933 found Adolf Hitler apparently declining in prestige and voter appeal and, in the view of some journals such as The Living Age and The Nation, on the verge of seeing his organization splinter because of a failure to fulfill long-promised goals. For a number of observers—America, Calvin B. Hoover, George Gerhard and Sidney B. Fay—he did not seem to present a danger to the government of the likes of a Reichswehr general.

The election setback in November 1932 looked like a turning point in Hitler's career. Some journals hinted that he had neither the courage nor the ability of a Mussolini to bring his Fascist ideals to fruition. Still others, throughout the period from May 1932 to January 1933 covered here, considered him harmless enough to join a coalition government without causing eventual political upheaval, since the National Socialist Party had not been able to obtain a Reichstag majority. Hitler just was not so frightening anymore.

According to articles in America, The Nation, The New Republic, plus comments by Sidney B. Fay in Current History and Harvie Branscomb in Religion In Life, first Papen and then Schleicher were said to be outmaneuvering Hitler in the game of politics, even though neither man was popular with most of the journalists. The Commonweal's view of Papen was a major exception. The Catho-
lic magazines, in particular, counted heavily on Catholic statesmen and the Center Party to keep the National Socialists under control, while some of the more liberal journals still mentioned rumors of Center-Nazi collusion.

Almost all the American journals considered here had failed to understand what was happening behind the scenes in Germany. The weekly New Republic was the one main exception. S. Miles Bouton had to speak out against irresponsible reporting. The American periodicals were often surprised by the German government changes, starting with the sudden ouster of the Brüning ministry. While on the surface both the Papen and Schleicher constitutional dictatorships looked as if they could endure for a time with Hindenburg's and the army's support, these were but brief episodes in the intra-conservative struggle within the government to find political stability. The intrigue and strategem finally led to the appointment of Adolf Hitler.
CHAPTER III

HITLER IN POWER—THE FIRST PHASE: FROM THE CHANCELLORSHIP TO THE ENABLING ACT

The prospects of Adolf Hitler as German Chancellor had been discussed for so many months that it seemed rather surprising to see him at last at the head of a government on the afternoon of January 30, 1933. As has already been shown, articles in American journals were telling of National Socialism's disintegration and of the strong government under the firm rule of General Schleicher, even while the new premier was enjoying the first fruits of his office. Ever since the November 1932 election, news from and about Germany seemed to be scarce in American periodicals. However, once the news of Hitler's government appointment reached the United States, the journals under consideration gave the Hitler triumph more editorial and news space than they had since the days of his Party's first electoral success back in 1930.

For one, The Nation of February 8 doubted that Hitler actually achieved the long-talked-of German Fascist victory with his sudden appointment as Chancellor, for there seemed to be too many "checks" on his control. Besides Hitler, only two Nazis, Hermann Goering and Wilhelm Frick, sat in what amounted to a reactionary coalition government. The other members of this new ministry
were Franz von Papen; General Werner von Blomberg; two holdovers from the Schleicher government, Baron Constantin von Neurath and Count Lutz Schwerin von Krosigk; and two leaders of the ultra-conservative Nationalist Party, Alfred Hugenberg and Franz Seldte. Actually there was no strong anti-Nazi in the Hitler government, but *The Nation* at the time thought that Franz von Papen was the man to watch. In its closing paragraph, in which it predicted that the duration of the new German government might well depend upon whether the Center Party gave its support, *The Nation* cast doubts about Hitler's skill to overcome domestic political troubles.

If the new government is tolerated by the Center Party it may survive for months, perhaps much longer. If the Centrists turn against it, it may fall at once, for no government depending on a parliamentary majority can be formed without their support. Of course, Hitler and Von Papen may choose to dispense with the Reichstag altogether, precisely as Von Schleicher intended to do, but it is more than probable that Hindenburg would not consent to such a frank violation of the constitution. Even if the new government should remain in office, with or without Catholic support, Hitler seems destined to lose much of his following unless he can prevail upon his colleagues to carry out some of his blood-and-thunder promises. That they will do so is entirely out of the question. A majority of them would be only too happy to see the National Socialist movement destroyed, or at least working in harness with the other forces of reaction, but on their terms, not Hitler's.1

While the *Nation* thought that Hitler would cause little trouble as a member of the government, *The New Republic*, another liberal journal, viewed the situation quite differently. It expressed the opinion that the reactionaries had reached the end of

---

1 *The Nation*, OXXXVI (February 8, 1933), 137-138.
the line with the appointment of Hitler. The man for whom President Hindenburg had had nothing but disdain two months before was definitely in a commanding role in German politics. Unlike the Nation, The New Republic saw the National Socialist leader as the real head of the government. Hitler got just what he asked for—the premiership and some seats in the ministry for his associates; no compromise had been forced upon the new Chancellor. In general, the Cabinet membership shared the views of the Chancellor.

Since the new government contained so many aristocrats, The New Republic mistakenly referred to it as the most typical Junker government since the 1918 revolution. How long it would remain so was another question. Three key posts were held by Nazis, and in spite of statements to the contrary, it was expected by The New Republic that these men would soon take the lead in trying to impose unconstitutional measures. Dr. Joseph Goebbels' Nazi newspaper, the Angriff, was predicting a Fascist Germany within the year. Thus, except for the one statement that "every one of the new Ministers is nationalistic to the core, belongs to the military caste, is monarchistic and reactionary," The New Republic's view was an accurate description of what was actually happening in Germany. ²

In its reports from the European press and overseas correspondents, The Literary Digest found that there was no consensus of opinion about the new German leader. Some viewed him as a

²The New Republic, LXXIII (February 8, 1933), 336-337.
possible "clown or faker," while others saw him reestablishing law and order and perhaps even the monarchy. It was his oratory which seemed most impressive. This conservative weekly relied entirely on information from others, most of which seemed to be superficial at best.

Nothing about Adolf Hitler inspired confidence for The Presbyterian Advance. His past record was marred by disgraceful deportment; he had gained German citizenship only within the last year, obviously an opportunistic move. That the German people had permitted such a man to reach an "official position" puzzled and dismayed this religious organ. Predictions about his regime varied, but there was a possibility, one frequently mentioned at this time, that he might moderate his views and lead Germany through the crisis period. The Advance was ever hopeful, but not very optimistic, that Hitler would take this road.

President Hindenburg's decision to call upon Adolf Hitler for government service surprised even the "keenest observers," declared America of February 11, 1933, the first Catholic journal to respond to the event. The National Socialist leader seemed to be getting off to a good start, nevertheless, by announcing a "reasonable and moderate program" based on Christian standards. He also asked God's blessing, which probably appealed to the Jesuit

---

3 The Literary Digest, CXV (February 11, 1933), 12
4 The Presbyterian Advance, XLVI (February 9, 1933), 4.
5 America, XLVIII (February 11, 1933), 442.
editors. By and large, America seemed impressed but not overly enthusiastic.

Meanwhile in Germany preparations began for a new Reichstag election on March 5, 1933. Seeking to form a majority government, Hitler had just negotiated with Monsignor Ludwig Kaas, head of the Center Party, which held seventy Reichstag seats. Kaas seemed willing to come to terms, but Alfred Hugenberg, Cabinet spokesman for the Nationalists, objected. Hitler too changed his mind rather than accept the compromises Kaas demanded as the price of cooperation. Hitler preferred to carry on another election campaign, this time with the resources of the state at his disposal. Hugenberg acquiesced in a new election when Hitler assured him that the make-up of the government would not be altered, whatever the results.

As far as the February 15 New Republic was concerned, there was little doubt that the National Socialists would strengthen themselves in the forthcoming election, since their leader could now bring to bear a considerable amount of the state's power on the behalf of the Fascist ideology. No longer did this weekly refer to the present German government as one dominated by Junker and militarist ideals. Instead it bared some of the initial actions of the Nazi tyranny—the Socialist and Communist press was being suppressed, and new emergency laws had given the government control of all vehicles of propaganda and surveillance over poli-

5America, XLVIII (February 11, 1933), 442.
ical meetings. Again this leading liberal organ warned that no attention should be paid to the fact that Hitler controlled only a minority of the seats in the government; Mussolini had started this way, and already, it seemed to The New Republic, Chancellor Hitler had outmaneuvered his Nationalist associate, Alfred Hugenberg. The new Reichstag elections "will not only make the power of the Nazis secure but will leave the German Nationalist People's Party in a hopeless minority position." The Italian press had shown a noticeable interest in the Hitler regime, and The New Republic speculated about the possibility that the two Fascist leaders would organize a new bloc to reestablish the European power balance.6

Not everyone agreed with The New Republic's pessimistic editorial viewpoint. In the same February 15, 1933 issue, Hans V. Kaltenborn argued that Adolf Hitler had assumed the chancellorship with "crippling handicaps." His colleagues in the Cabinet, who were already being pushed to the background as Kaltenborn wrote, would supposedly never permit him to initiate his program. The National Socialist leader had moved into the chancellor's office withwaning prestige, contended Kaltenborn. No matter how the March national election came out, Kaltenborn was sure that Hitler had lost his opportunity to establish his so-called "Third Reich." "He is sworn to obey the Constitution and is likely to do so."7

6The New Republic, LXXIV (February 15, 1933), 3-4.
7Hans V. Kaltenborn, "Hail Hitler!" ibid., 11. Kaltenborn was the news editor for the Columbia Broadcasting System.
Kaltenborn accepted at face value Hitler's statements to him in his private interview some months earlier.

A Nation editorial of February 15 again reflected the inability of this liberal journal to grasp the full meaning of the ascendance of the Nazis. Hitler was depicted as being under the power of the industrialists and Junkers, who were plotting to "capture and tame" him; "and this the reactionary groups seem to have accomplished." The Nation felt concern that the Nazi chief had abandoned the working class as well as apparently his Party's Socialist principles. Now, it seemed safe to say that only a mouth-piece of the wealthy reactionaries would talk in terms of a compulsory labor service. Missing from the latest National Socialist propaganda were the "grandiose promises" to restore prosperity to the middle and lower classes at the expense of big business. How the German workers would react to this turn of events remained in doubt, but it appeared to The Nation that the Hitler government had everything under control. The biggest potential threat to the present right-wing extremist rule remained the Communist and Social Democratic Parties, but the editorial described both of them as being disorganized and demoralized. A shorter editorial note reported the vicious election campaign being waged by the Nazis; Germany was said to be under a "mob law" which had the government's support. 8

A short editorial in the February 15 Christian Century es-

8The Nation, CXXXVI (February 15, 1933), 163, 164.
sentially agreed with The Nation's position that the German government was still a reactionary coalition, not yet dominated by the three Nazi members of the Cabinet. Right-wing cooperation was very evident to this Protestant weekly, for the rightist organisations were "throwing all their resources into the effort to give his [Hitler's] government an impregnable constitutional position." Their intention was to help the government entrench so it could meet the anticipated Communist thrust. One point of particular interest for The Christian Century was the new government's decree of protection for religion.

To have Hitler, with his anti-Semitism, and von Papen and Hugenberg, with their love for the Hohenzollerns, celebrate their accession to power by decreeing special protection for religion is to have religion more certainly identified as a camp-follower of the reactionary forces.

Regardless of any initial period of prosperity for the churches, the Christians of Germany, according to The Christian Century, would suffer severe losses for several generations, should the Nazis succeed in establishing a lasting regime.9

The Commonweal also waited until February 15 to express its first thoughts on Hitler's chancellorship and the forthcoming election. The surprising choice of Hitler to head the government was merely the fourth of a series of stages, beginning with the Brunening ministry in 1930, carrying Germany farther to the political right. While German financial interests had pushed Adolf Hitler to the front of the political stage, The Commonweal's editors

9The Christian Century, L (February 15, 1933), 212, 213.
believed that the Nazi leader remained a man of the people, a shrewd observation contrary to that expressed by other periodicals such as The Nation and The Christian Century. The Commonweal insisted that the National Socialist Party

...was and still is essentially a "worker's party"--a movement joined by hundreds of thousands of poor folk unwilling to adopt a Marxist creed and yet convinced they must do something to escape from poverty and misery. But in all probability Adolf Hitler is too simple and fearless a man to betray the working population. If he finds that what he believes ought to be done cannot be accomplished, he will resign. And the people who made room for him will find the last stages of these things worse than the first.

By this last stage The Commonweal meant Communism. Rumors that a Fascist state would be imposed were brushed aside by this same Catholic journal a week later, in disregard of information that "even in Catholic circles voices are heard, suggesting that the Center party ought to prepare for the kind of action expedient in case parliamentary rule came to a sudden halt." The magazine argued that there was no parallel between the rise of Mussolini and that of Hitler. The two countries were not alike, and Hitler could not be compared with the Italian chief.

A major editorial in The Commonweal of February 22, 1933, could still find "no startling developments" coming out of the German political situation. "If the existing government can exert sufficient pressure, it should be able to drive the radical left underground; and the ultimate result might even be the disappearance of Communist candidates from the electoral lists." Such a possibility seemed to meet with The Commonweal's approval, but it expressed some misgiving that the National Socialists could fail
to satisfy the workers. "It may therefore eventually enlarge rather than heal the wound caused in German life by the scission between labor and bourgeoisie." However, this journal refused to become too pessimistic. The future did not look "rosy," but the editorial recalled the past greatness of the German nation and hoped that things would work out well for the future. Nevertheless, it was regrettable, said The Commonweal, that the Center Party would have so little influence on the course of German political life. A Centrist-Nazi fusion, which had been so "ably sponsored" by Catholic leaders, had probably been made impossible by the German bishops' condemnation of National Socialism. 10 The Commonweal left its readers with a false impression of the attitude of the German Catholic hierarchy's attitude and a serious underestimation of the Church's ability to adjust itself to whatever situation might prevail. It could well be that The Commonweal believed that Centrists could harness the energies of the Nazis and guide them in the correct direction.

Reports had been gathered by the February 18 America, which told of attacks on the opposition Communists and Socialists; the suppression of anti-Nazi newspapers; and the complete subjugation of the Prussian state government. The last was the work of Hermann Goering, the Minister of Interior for Prussia, who had gone about his business without any attention being paid his so-called superior, the National Commissioner for Prussia,

10 The Commonweal, XVII (February 15, 1933), 423, and (February 22, 1933), 451, 454.
Franz von Papen. Such action could be viewed as a key to the future. Furthermore, the February 25 America added that there would be no getting rid of Adolf Hitler even if the March 5 election went against him—a far different assessment of the German political scene than The Commonweal's. While campaigning, Hitler had announced his intention of carrying out his program for four years, whatever the election decision, reported America. To guarantee his victory, the Chancellor had curtailed the movement of moderate and left-wing political organizations. There seemed to be no way to stop the National Socialists, said an America which was growing more and more disturbed by the German news. Even President Hindenburg had retired into the background. 11

In "Who Stands Behind Hitler," a signed article by Ludwig Lore in the February 22 issue of The Nation, the author reminded his readers that the Reichstag had been eclipsed since the days of the Bruening ministry and actually no longer had an essential role in the conduct of the government. Assessing the present German regime, Lore did not think it necessary as yet to separate the Nationalists from the Nazis.

Both parties are composed of extreme nationalists, monarchists, and militarists who dream of the return of their country's pre-war greatness and believe in the possibility of its regeneration through a youth trained to military service and obedience to the state, and an army and navy that will restore to the Fatherland the territory and colonies it once possessed.

This would permit the two parties with their similar aims "to co-

11 America, XLVIII (February 18, 1933), 466, and (February 25, 1933), 490.
operate for a time," although Lore called attention to the disparities between them. Hitler's followers were crude nationalists, weighed down with the frustrated feelings of underdogs; they lacked the Nationalists' "cultural background,...bred-in-the-bone self-assurance, and...disdain for the lower classes." Nazi anti-Semitism took a much more violent physical form than the Nationalists', and this was a fundamental part of the Nazi Party program. In economics, they demanded a return to the "Spartan life of Germany's forefathers," with the hope of becoming self-sufficient, a proposal foreign to Hugenberg's party. Furthermore, Lore foresaw the totalitarian aspects of the National Socialists who, he predicted, would eventually stamp out all opposition and would abolish constitutional rights and liberties. The individual citizen was going to become a helpless tool of despotism.\(^\text{12}\) Needless to say, almost everything that Lore pessimistically predicted in February 1933 came true within a few months.

The German situation was not quite so bleak for The Living Age, a moderate conservative monthly. First of all, it felt that Hitler's emergence as Chancellor was a "fluke." He had been able to outmaneuver General Schleicher at a time when the Nazi leader was losing some of his popularity. Schleicher's policy, according to this editorial, was "to allow the Nazis to wear themselves out with internal dissensions," and The Living Age believed that this could still happen. Even a victory on March 5 would

\(^{12}\text{Ludwig Lore, "Who Stands Behind Hitler?" The Nation, CXXXVI (February 22, 1933), 196-197.}\)
not satisfy Hitler's most radical followers. They were demanding extreme economic measures which would never be accepted by the wealthy financiers behind the National Socialist Party. The *Living Age* looked for a possible *rapprochement* between these elements of the Nazis and the Communists if Hitler followed the advice of big business.\(^{13}\) Two other journalists shared this view, Denis Gwynn in *The Sign*\(^ {14}\) and a German newspaper publisher, Heinrich Simon, who contributed to *Current History*.\(^ {15}\) Gwynn felt that Hitler's world was collapsing around him due to intra-party conflict which was undermining the power and prestige of the Nazi leader. Simon maintained that Hitler's movement would decline, especially within middle-class circles, as soon as Germany's economic life improved. All that the Germans needed, wrote Simon, was a sense of security to rid themselves of the messianic Hitlerites. These three articles all shared the common error of overemphasizing the discordant elements in the National Socialist Party, of treating it as a traditional rather than a radically new political group, and of underestimating Hitler's skill.

The only extreme right-wing journalistic response to the German situation of early 1933 is to be found in *The Review of Reviews*, whose editor Roger Shaw wrote an article with the title

---

13 *The Living Age*, CCXLIV (March, 1933), 7-8.
14 Denis Gwynn, "Catholic Action and Disarmament," *The Sign*, XII (March, 1933), 496.
15 Heinrich Simon, "German Class Lines Crumble," *Current History*, XXXVII (March, 1933), 653.
"De Valera and Hitler: Europe's Men of the Month." When dealing with the Nazi leader, Shaw was generally sympathetic and apologetic. He pointed out that Hitler was in power by strictly constitutional means. His was a victory for the middle class at the expense of the "trade-union elements" which, Shaw insisted, erroneously, had dominated German politics since 1918. So far Hitler, whom the author compared to Oliver Cromwell, was not a dictator, but Shaw admitted the possibility that he would call his armed disciples into action if things went badly on election day. Hence, wrote Shaw, many liberals would vote for the Nazi leader just to keep the Weimar Constitution in operation, and thereafter the republican forces would be able to oppose him in the Reichstag.

According to Shaw, anti-Semitism was to be the key to the National Socialists' success. It would unite all classes of Germans "in a common hatred of the Jews...so that the pauper Nazis hate the wealthy Jewish bankers, and the plutocratic Nazis hate the Penniless Jewish communists." However, there was not to be an actual persecution of the Jews, for Hitler had no intention of disturbing his regime. Basically an extremely conservative man, Hitler was only radical in his methods. As a constitutional chancellor, Hitler would be "nothing whatsoever to worry about." 16

An extreme right-winger himself, Shaw would naturally be inclined

to favor the rule of a man with whom he shared common principles. Nevertheless, considering the fact that Nazi thugs were already wandering through German streets physically promoting the National Socialist cause, this column by a responsible journalist was highly misleading.

While some reports managed to remain optimistic with respect to the prospects of the Hitler government and still others, confused and bewildering, The New Republic continued to pound the theme that Adolf Hitler was gradually becoming an all-powerful dictator, even while the Reichstag elections were still weeks away. The National Socialist "Trinity" in the ministry was actually ruling the country, according to this liberal journal on March 1, 1933. Already Vice-Chancellor Papen's Centrist newspaper, Germania, had had issues suppressed after it happened to disagree with Nazi policies, and leading government officials affiliated with other parties had been replaced by National Socialists. Renowned educators of Jewish origin had been purged from institutions of learning. Even the Hugenberg Nationalists were complaining.17 It was plain to see that if the evidence gathered were true, and it was, The New Republic had been right all along regarding the menace of National Socialism. If, as some had predicted, the Nazis were going to be controlled by the conservatives in the Cabinet, the job was being badly bungled. The Nation of March 1, which, heretofore, had underestimated the resourcefulness of the

17The New Republic, LXXIV (March 1, 1933), 57.
Nazis, now agreed with *The New Republic* that Chancellor Hitler was "proceeding as if he considered himself sole dictator—as if he were Mussolini in Italy—and by the same methods." The Hitlerites' disregard for civil rights was likewise a concern of *The Nation.*

The more prominent religious-oriented weeklies, *The Christian Century, America* and *The Commonweal,* questioned Nazi campaign tactics as they related to the Christian Faith, Christian institutions and political organizations. At this juncture, the *Century* was particularly concerned with the way German Protestants seemed to be aligning themselves with the new government. What would happen to the Protestant churches in Germany after the disappearance of Hitlerism was the question that *The Christian Century* desired these religious-minded people to ask themselves. This situation was particularly significant, since the *Century,* a Protestant journal, foresaw Catholicism becoming the bulwark against Nationalism as a result of the Nazis' anti-Catholic activities. *America* also evinced concern over the Fascists' attacks on the Center Party and other Catholic interests. Because of this "reign of terrorism" *America* was getting more involved with the German political scene and becoming more critical of the methods of National Socialism. *The Commonweal,* on the other hand, attributed anti-Catholic agitation to Hermann Goering, who

---

18 *The Nation,* OXXXVI (March 1, 1933), 219.
19 *The Christian Century,* L (March 1, 1933), 275.
20 *America,* XLVIII (March 4, 1933), 514.
had since been admonished by Adolf Hitler—a man turning toward a more moderate policy, according to this journal. "It seems altogether likely that he will discontinue violent oratory for the good old German middle-class habit of going ahead very slowly and cautiously." Quite obviously, little attention in detail was being paid to overseas reports in The Commonweal's appraisal of events in Germany, particularly since the journal referred to the Nazi street violence activities as "something like an old-fashioned Kentucky feud." The Commonweal was also willing to bet that the National Socialists would turn out to be just like the Social Democrats in the post-1918 period.21

One Catholic journalist, writing for a monthly, had already begun to change his mind about Hitler, now that the Nazi demagogue had taken a firm hold upon the German executive. In an article for the April 1933 Sign, Denis Gwynn saw the Hitler Cabinet remaining in power no matter what the electorate decided on election day; and incidentally, the author forecast a Nazi majority. After March 5 Gwynn looked for a Cabinet power struggle with Hitler eventually outwitting his opponents. Nevertheless, it would not be a very strong Hitler, in Gwynn's estimation, unless the Chancellor sought an alliance with another political faction, namely the Center Party. The author was under the mistaken impression that the one common policy of the Nazis and Centrists, opposition to the Communist Party, would eventually serve as the

21The Commonweal, XVII (March 8, 1933), 507.
basis of a rapprochement, with both Frans von Papen and Heinrich Bruening steering the Center in this direction. Since the National Socialist storm troopers had been attacking Centrist political meetings and suppressing the Catholic press, Gwynn admitted that his picture of the new coalition was optimistic. Yet these incidents, he said, "should not be taken seriously." Hitler wanted to keep his legions loyal to him while the election campaign was in progress; he was intelligent enough to realize that the National Socialists could not govern without the help of the other major parties. 22 This was not the same Adolf Hitler who was being overwhelmed by revolt in the racist political party that Gwynn described in the previous month's issue of The Sign. Nor was it the real National Socialist chieftain.

The climax of the entire election campaign, and perhaps of the first phase of Hitler's chancellorship, came on February 27 when the Reichstag building was struck by fire of an incendiary origin. 23 Varied historical interpretations concerning the setting of the fire make it difficult to say for certain who actually started the blaze; however, that the Communists were to be

22 Denis Gwynn, "The New Regime In Germany," The Sign, XII (April, 1933), 553-555.

23 In the latest literature on the Reichstag fire of February 27, 1933, Alan J. P. Taylor, "Who Burnt the Reichstag?" History Today, X (August, 1960), 515-522 and Frits Tobias, The Reichstag Fire, trans. Arnold J. Pomerans (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1964), conclude that the fire was not the result of a Nazi or Communist plot, as is frequently pointed out in texts and monographs concerning modern German history, but the sole work of the Dutchman Marinus van der Lubbe.
the primary scapegoat became evident when a known Communist, Marinus van der Lubbe, was arrested and accused of arson. On the day following the fire, Chancellor Hitler issued the emergency decree "For the Protection of the People and the State," signed by President Hindenburg, which suspended civil rights guaranteed under the Weimar Constitution. Also the federal government was given the right to take over all powers in any German state, and the death penalty was imposed for various crimes against the state. What this did was to give encouragement plus state approval to the barbarous actions of the Nazi storm troopers against the meetings and official organs of the Communists, Social Democrats and other political opponents.

Events happened so quickly in Germany during the last days of February that only a few American journals had an opportunity to respond in detail. Only three periodicals had anything concrete to say concerning the action taken by the Reich government following the Reichstag fire: The New Republic, The Literary Digest and America all pointed out how the National Socialists were using this incident to their advantage and how threatening for the future was the suppression of civil rights. Only the Literary Digest voiced what soon became the common assumption that Hermann Goering himself and the National Socialist Party were responsible for the blaze.

24 The New Republic, LXXIV (March 8, 1933), 86; The Literary Digest, CXV (March 11, 1933), 15; and America, XLVIII (March 11, 1933), 538.
In spite of what was happening in Germany in late February and early March, Ludwig Lore, in a contribution to The New Republic of March 15, 1933, which was submitted before the Reichstag elections, opined that organized labor and its political representatives would be the Nazi leaders’ major hurdle. As long as Hitler continued to show favor to the industrialists and large landowners, worker members of his movement were bound to turn from him and re-enforce the ranks of his Communist and Socialist opposition. If this political reality continued to be ignored, Lore predicted that the workingmen’s parties would remain a long-time threat to Hitler’s rule.25 Reports of the results of the March 5 voting seemed to support Lore’s theory, for the Socialists and Communists picked up more than thirty percent of the vote in an unpleasant atmosphere.

Terror tactics used by the Nazis during the election campaign were but partially successful, since Hitler’s Party did not receive the desired majority vote. The Nazis’ 17,277,200 ballots or 43.9 percent of the total vote represented 288 out of a total of 647 Reichstag seats, which, together with the Nationalists’ 3,136,800 votes (8.0 percent of the total) and 52 seats, gave the National Socialist-Nationalist coalition 51.9 percent of the popular vote and a constitutional majority with 340 seats in the German parliament. The Socialist Party received 7,181,600 votes and

25 Ludwig Lore, "Can Hitler Survive?" The New Republic, LXXIV (March 15, 1933), 120-123.
120 seats—a loss of only one since the December 1932 election, but the Communists suffered a loss of nineteen Reichstag places to 81, and their vote total fell from 5,980,200 to 4,848,100. The Centrists gained 196,000 supporters, giving them a total of 4,424,900, and their Reichstag delegation increased by four to 74.

In one degree or another the American journals looked upon the results of the March 5 election as a Nazi victory, but most of them seemed to feel that Hitler would soon encounter political opposition. The March 15 *New Republic*, for instance, pointed to the large Communist and Socialist vote as proof that the labor parties were much more firmly entrenched than they had been in Italy when Mussolini so easily came to power. The Nazis would have to make a considerable effort to subdue them, and *The New Republic* fully expected the Hitlerites to make that effort in the ensuing months. Already announcements had been made that would point to this. Non-Nazi bureaucrats and officials were being replaced in governmental, educational and cultural institutions, indicating an eventual attack on the labor unions also. The Jews too were in danger, said *The New Republic* in its usual pessimistic tone. 26

Even though Hitler had won the battle against German democracy using constitutional methods, *The Nation* still underestimating his ability, forecast serious future difficulties. Adolf Hitler was "incompetent" and "totally ignorant of economic and

26 *The New Republic*, LXXIV (March 15, 1933), 119.
financial questions." So many promises had been made that it was
doubtful that he could ever fulfill them. If he does not repair
the economic situation, the masses which had backed him because
of his promises "to lead them out of the wilderness" would turn
elsewhere—if they were still able to do so. This was the key to
Germany's future, thought The Nation's editors, for if Hitler in
the next few months succeeded in cowing the people so that a sta-
ble National Socialist administration could be established, he
might rule for years. This March editorial indicated for the
first time that the journal was slowly coming around to the view
that the National Socialists had a chance to enjoy a long rule.
Brutal repression awaited the Social Democrats and the Communists
who were "weakened and frightened," in the words of The Nation.
As for the Jews, the magazine had been fooled by official Nazi
announcements denying plans for overt persecution, yet, The Na-
tion suspected, they would live as "marked persons" and without
the right to leave the country.

Altogether the spectacle of Germany is one to make the
gods weep. It is, of course, at bottom due to the folly
and the wickedness of the Treaty of Versailles. But this
does not alter the fact that Germany has now become one
of the danger spots of Europe, a source of unrest and in-
ternational anxiety, and perhaps another threat of war.27

Hitler was "thunderously approved" in the March 5 Reich
election, according to the conservative Literary Digest, but the
large vote total for the other major parties was an encouraging
sign that Germany was still politically alive. Noticed also was

27 The Nation, CXXXVI (March 15, 1933), 277.
another sign of hope, the slim margin in the new legislature enjoyed by the National Socialists and Nationalists combined.\textsuperscript{28} A comparable show of optimism could be found in \textit{The Christian Century} for March 15, which doubted that Hitler could ever firmly establish his so-called Third Reich. An orator and demagogue he might be, but he seemed to lack the qualities of leadership. Many of his best men had left his side "convinced that he was not worth their support," asserted the \textit{Century}, without, however, naming any. Old Germany was definitely dead, \textit{The Christian Century} recognized, but it would be up to others besides the National Socialists to organize the new one, as soon as Germany "found itself." The new Reich would pass beyond National Socialism; Hitler and his friends would have nothing to do with the real German revolution of the future.\textsuperscript{29}

False hope was not found in \textit{America} on March 18, 1933. It appeared resigned to the fact that the election truly represented the sentiments of the German people, who "overwhelmingly" favored the National Socialists. "The greatest surprise" for this journal, which seemed to be jarred by the fact, was the large number of votes polled in Catholic Bavaria by the Nazis—six million more votes than the Catholic Bavarian People's Party. Because so many Germans went to the polls, almost ninety percent of the electorate, \textit{America} concluded that the German people "were

\textsuperscript{28}The \textit{Literary Digest}, CXV (March 18, 1933), 11.

\textsuperscript{29}The \textit{Christian Century}, L (March 15, 1933), 352-353.
grasping desperately for some form of stable government with a possibility of a functioning Reichstag, and the end of the confusion and bitterness of further elections."30

The Commonweal, on the other hand, expressed more confusion than astonishment, a quality that often characterized this journal in early 1933. For a few months, thought The Commonweal, life would be easy for the victorious National Socialists, but after that Hitler and his associates would have to produce more than noise and public speeches. Failure to realize that National Socialism could be more than just a fleeting trend in German politics probably accounted for this journal's superficial comment. The Commonweal could see nothing constructive being done in Germany, or, for that matter, it perceived nothing very destructive either. The Junkers and industrialists in the government were struggling to conserve the state's financial structure, while Adolf Hitler seemed content with emulating Mussolini's Fascist gestures. The future for Germany was a "huge puzzle," concluded The Commonweal, which declared that it could discover no opposition to the government in power. The Communists had gone into hiding, and the Social Democrats were undergoing a fierce attack. A week later The Commonweal reported that events had shown the Catholic Center Party being outmaneuvered, with many of its leading members being forced out of office. Nonetheless, The Commonweal ventured the opinion that the rest would do the Centrists

30 America, XLVII (March 18, 1933), 562.
some good and perhaps revitalize them, after which the Center Party would be ready to contribute constructive work for the state, once the passions of nationalist fervor had died down. As the month of March 1933 closed, The Commonweal continued to treat the National Socialists as little more than an ephemeral nuisance.

In Germany the main currents following the election consisted of the introduction of the program of Gleichschaltung or the coordination of the Reich begun under Hitler's sponsorship. Non-Nazi state officials lost their positions, steps were taken to tighten the federal government's control over the Länder, and even private organizations felt pressure to reshape their structure along the lines of the "leadership principle." Leading Communist and Social Democratic officials were arrested and imprisoned, although the two movements were not yet outlawed. The once sacred German trade unions underwent constant harassment and suffered from Nazi confiscatory raids. Hitler's program enjoyed amazing success from its very inception.

National Socialism was consolidating its position with great speed, The Nation in mid-March warned its readers. In his pronouncements Hitler himself was speaking more softly, but his disciples under his directions were moving ahead at a rapid pace. Indiscriminate attacks were taking place against the Jews, and political opponents were reported being kidnapped and murdered.

31 The Commonweal, XVII (March 22, 1933), 563 and (March 29, 1933), 594.
German newspapers were being shut down. Censorship prevented the world from learning all the details of the persecution and the police-state tactics, said The Nation, but enough was known to Great Britain and France together for joint discussions concerning the "German peril." If still unsure about Hitler and his system, The Nation was beginning to realize that the National Socialists were not going to submit to those forces that this journal once thought could control them. This same theme received more thorough treatment a week later when The Nation published a signed article by the Berlin correspondent, John Elliott, who pointed out that Hitler had his own "mandate of his people." Consequently he had neither the need nor the intention of bowing to the whims of the aristocrats, nationalists and monarchists. Hitler, Elliott wrote, was a product of German democracy, and therefore he had no desire to restore the old order. The new monarchy in Germany was destined to have Hitler as a dictator rather than a Hohenzollern king at the helm. The Nation ran an editorial along with Elliott's article, stating its belief that the whole course of recent German developments pointed to dictatorship of the worst type. 32

The Nation had definitely come around to the thinking of its liberal contemporary, The New Republic, with respect to the resolution of Hitler to command German affairs, but it still did not be-

32 The Nation, CXXXVI (March 22, 1933), 302; John Elliott, (March 29, 1933), 337-339 and 332-333. Another of the many articles which, like Elliott's, discusses the possibility of the return of the Hohenzollern dynasty is the short editorial comment in The Literary Digest, CIX (April 1, 1933), 1-2.
lieve Hitler would last.

Real concern for the fate of Germany under National Socialism was shown by several religious journals in this spring of 1933. Two articles, appearing in The Christian Century and The American Ecclesiastical Review, were studies in depth and unlike many of the other essentially factual articles of that time.33

33With the mention of the first serious study of the essence of National Socialism, an opportunity is presented to cite a number of the most valuable works available in the area. The very latest monograph by George L. Mosse, The Crisis of German Ideology (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1954), explores the currents of thought through nineteenth- and twentieth-century German history, discussing the role they played during a century of German life. An excellent monograph by Fritz Stern, The Politics of Cultural Despair (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961) examines the German root sources of National Socialism in the years before Hitler's ascendency to political power. Taking a similar approach, Peter Viereck attempts to tie the German Romantics historically and logically into National Socialism in Metapolitics From the Romantics to Hitler (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1941). For a more than adequate examination of the phenomenon of the total state, as well as the problem of anti-Semitism, there is the pessimistic account by Hannah Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism (2nd ed. enlarged; New York: Meridian Books, 1958). Probably the best survey of modern German history can be found in Koppel S. Pinson's Modern Germany: Its History and Civilization (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1954). Especially useful is Chapter Twenty-One, which is concerned with Adolf Hitler and National Socialism. One of the most enterprising volumes is The Third Reich (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1953) edited by Maurice Bammont, John H. E. Fried and Edmond Vermeil. This large work investigates the many aspects of the phenomenon of National Socialism. A number of international scholars have contributed essays in their own particular area of study to this volume. Franz Neumann's Behemoth, the Structure and Practice of National Socialism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1942) presents a most valuable description and interpretation of Nazi Germany. Cited for its interesting insights and massive knowledge, this monograph is especially useful for its understanding of Nazi economics. Sidney B. Fay has translated Friedrich Meinecke's The German Catastrophe (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950). This German historian investigates the social and historical forces that led to the rise of Adolf Hitler and the ruin of his homeland. Hermann Max and Helmut Krausnick, German History, 1933-45: An
Writing in the March 29, 1933 *Christian Century* in an article called "Hitler and Religion," Reverend Elmer G. Homrighausen theorized that National Socialism was a cult of the absolute mystical state, with its strength firmly rooted in the mass of German people. It was striving to create a national revival, one in which all Germans would participate. Nazism was close to being a religious movement, Homrighausen found, yet it had not attempted to take the place of religion. Nevertheless, he also portrayed Hitler as believing in the Platonic idea of the state and thinking of himself as the messiah chosen by God to lead Germany back to her days of glory. What paths this National Socialist search for lost prestige would take interested Reverend Homrighausen, who rejected

the opinions that the Nazis were an immediate threat to world
peace.

There is imperialism of the most passionate kind, and yet, in spite of the sword-clanging we hear so much about from the distorting press, there is a sincere desire to avoid international armed combat. What sound like war scares from Germany are nothing more than the rising spirit of the German reich demanding a respectable place among the nations and a right to express the nation's inherent spirit...

To make the kind of Germany he desired, Hitler would have to work closely with the churches, Reverend Homrighausen prophesied; however, so far he found that the Christian churches had ignored his bid for a close working agreement. Of the two Christian sects Homrighausen deemed the weak and poorly organized German Protestant church as the best bet to fall under Hitler's control. The Catholic Church presented a more formidable problem for the Nazi Chancellor, according to this Protestant clergyman. Before a thorough reconstruction of the state could begin, he correctly predicted that the government would have to seek accord with Rome or face the same kind of opposition which confronted Otto von Bismarck in the nineteenth century. Hitler would do well "to go to Canossa voluntarily," advised Homrighausen, yet he found it difficult to believe that the papacy could compromise with a movement which claimed spiritual supremacy. Catholics in Germany had faced this dilemma for several years and, in spite of what Homrighausen misconstrued as an official ban placed upon National Socialism by the Catholic Church, one found many of its members turning to the Nazi Party. Here, the author suggested,
would be a prime mason for the Vatican to reconsider its attitude toward National Socialism. While Homrighausen's article was inaccurate in some details—he contended that Hitler was a practicing Catholic, and he seemed to put faith in Hitler's appeal to organized religion for support at the very beginning of his rule—he showed considerable insight in his assessment of the churches' predicament.

Some of Homrighausen's views were echoed by another author. Professor John B. Mason, contributing an article to the April 1933 American Ecclesiastical Review entitled "The Catholic Church and Hitlerism," viewed the Catholic Church as the chief obstacle to the growth of National Socialism. In what was primarily an historical survey of the Catholic Church's policies toward and pronouncements against National Socialism, Mason considered several documents on the diocesan level such as the Mainz edit of September 1930 and German Catholic newspaper opinions and then

---

34 Elmer G. Homrighausen, "Hitler and German Religion," The Christian Century, L (March 29, 1933), 418-420. The author was a minister of a reformed church in Indianapolis.

The most thorough and significant recent study of the Protestant church in Nazi Germany in English is Arthur C. Cochran, The Church's Confession Under Hitler (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), which describes the German Protestant struggle with the National Socialist state and the heretical "German Christian" faction in the years 1933-1934. A less thorough volume, but one covering the entire Nazi period, is Franklin H. Litell, The German Phoenix (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1960). A brief essay by Birger Forell, entitled "National-Socialism and the Protestant Churches," is to be found in The Third Reich (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1953). Homrighausen's view that the Protestant church was not prepared to meet the Nazi menace in 1933 finds general support in the three studies cited above.
erroneously concluded that "the German cardinals, archbishops and bishops in the course of the last two years have unanimously condemned a part" of the Nazi program. On the other hand, Mason suggested that "the Holy See may consider it too early to make an official and public pronouncement." In addition, Mason indicated that he was optimistic about the future role of the Center Party in German politics, because it had been able to hold its own against the Nazis at the voting polls.\(^{35}\)

The Catholic World for April 1933 also did not respond as if it expected Catholicism to reach an early accord with National Socialism. In an all-too-brief article which was the first response of this Catholic monthly to Adolf Hitler and National Socialism since a short editorial mention in December 1930, it did little more than display anger over the excesses of the Hitler government with respect to the Jews, Catholics and other minority groups, especially since Hitler "is, or was, a Catholic."\(^{36}\)

\(^{35}\)John B. Mason, "The Catholic Church and Hitlerism," The American Ecclesiastical Review, LXXXVIII (April, 1933), 385-401. Author Mason was a professor of history and government at Colorado Women's College; he was particularly interested in the German problem and later wrote a book on the church struggle: Hitler's First Foes: A Study in Religion and Politics (Minneapolis: Burgess Publishing Company, 1936).

The latest and most thorough discussion of the position of the German Catholic Church in 1933 can be found in Guenter Lewy's The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964). Lewy clearly indicates that the Catholic Church in Germany did not stand united against the Hitler government but, in fact, tried to cooperate with the new government. The same German Catholic Church policy is described in the article, "German Catholicism in 1933" by Ernst-Wolfgang Boeckenfoerde and translated by Raymond Schmandt in Cross Currents, XI (Summer, 1961), 283-304.

\(^{36}\)The Catholic World, CXXXVII (April, 1933), 109-110.
similar angry reaction to the recent Nazi activities appeared in the March 25 *America*.37

As Hitler moved toward absolute power, reports streamed from Germany telling of the acceleration of the reign of terror. All the journals responding agreed in condemning the atrocities, although some more vehemently than others, and a considerable divergence of opinion manifested itself as to what should be done about them. Both the April 1 *Literary Digest*38 and *The Commonweal* for April 5 misconstrued the latest sequence of events as the reopening of another epoch of Prussianism. The Catholic weekly wrote:

The anti-Jewish movement in Germany is far more than a tempest of prejudice stirred up in the lower depths of mob emotion by a demagogue. It is part and parcel of a strongly developed racial nationalism, with its own passionate, even fanatical philosophy of Teutonism, the spearhead of which is nothing other than the same dangerous, almost insane Prussianism which was glorified before 1914, and which the world too naively thought to have been overthrown, and discarded by the German people themselves, but which now is violently seeking to reestablish its predominance. To such a religion of racial pride and brutal power, the purging of the people obsessed by its spirit from what is considered to be the alien and corrupting taint of the Jewish element, seems a clear and certain duty.

Taking what amounted to its first really strong stand against Nazism, *The Commonweal* maintained that only the overthrow of Hitler and his followers would bring justice to the Jews and other minority groups, including the German Catholics. For the moment, the

37 *America*, XLVIII (March 25, 1933), 586.

38 *The Literary Digest*, CXV (April 1, 1933), 3.
opposition to the regime was impotent, but it was hoped that the more sane elements of the National Socialist Party, and The Commonweal believed there were some, together with the German democrats, would bring an end to the terror once the "contagious delirium of the revolution subsides." Above all, declared this journal, those democratic groups left in Germany should be given full moral support by world public opinion.39

Two other religious journals, one Protestant and the other Catholic, did not share The Commonweal's sense of urgency. Caution should be exercised with regard to the reports coming out of Germany, advised the April 5 Christian Century, which was willing to give the National Socialists the benefit of the doubt. Stories of what was supposedly happening would remain only unfounded rumor unless a neutral fact-finding board was sent to investigate. In the Century's opinion, emotions should be curbed until the truth was found out.40 The April 1 America agreed that the severe censorship of news from Germany made it almost impossible to get a clear picture of what was occurring.41

More positive action with regard to the German Fascists' crimes was favored by the two leading liberal weeklies. While the April 5 Nation advocated continued world pressure against the Nazi excesses,42 The New Republic for the same week called for a

39 The Commonweal, XVII (April 5, 1933), 620.
40 The Christian Century, L (April 5, 1933), 443.
41 America, XLVIII (April 1, 1933), 610.
42 The Nation, CXXXVI (April 5, 1933), 360.
prompt internationally inspired investigation. No number of foreign protests would ever mitigate the Nazi anti-Semitic campaign, but if these were to continue, The New Republic urged that sympathy should be given to other elements of the German political community—besides the Jews—which had disappeared behind the gates of the Nazi concentration camps. On no account did this periodical wish the United States government to get entangled with other protesting nations over the German problem or contribute to the upkeep of Hitler and his collaborators. The New Republic took the stand that the victorious powers of western Europe were responsible for Hitler, so it was their collective job to work something out with him or organize against his tyranny.  

Although the Hitlerites were acting as if they had confidence in the future of their movement, several commentaries appearing in the journals expressed some doubt. In the April 1933 Survey Graphic, John Palmer Gavit had yet to see anything coherent demonstrated by the Hitler coalition. The Communists had been subdued, but there still remained the labor unions and the Social Democrat Party, as well as the strong Center Party, to contend with. Anything could happen in the future, said Gavit, even civil war. The Living Age for April also thought that the Hitler Cabinet was on shaky ground. "The immediate question in Germany is

---


whether the alliance between the landowners and the industrialists will give way before Hitler’s mass movement crumbles.” So little did this conservative monthly think of the Nazis’ hold over the country that it predicted the next power struggle would take place between the Junkers of eastern Germany and the businessmen of the Rhineland area. This distorted view of German affairs, as seen through second-hand reports, can be contrasted with the opinions of a correspondent in Germany. This anonymous author, who initialed his articles “Y. K. W.,” predicted in The New Republic complete success for Adolf Hitler. All opposition would be suppressed, and enough of the working classes would line up behind Hitler to give him something approaching “popular support.” When President Hindenburg died, the Nazi Chancellor would probably succeed him. For the present, Fascism seemed to be the end of the political process in Germany. However, the author advised that, since Germany was a highly industrialized state, no one could say just how many years of prosperity Hitler would have to construct the type of state he wanted.

The Reichstag gave the Chancellor his opportunity to mold his kind of Reich by approving on March 23 the Enabling Act—the “Law for Removing the Distress of People and Reich.” This piece of legislation transferred the legislative functions of the Reich—

45 The Living Age, CCCXLIV (April, 1933), 97.

46 Y. K. W., “Eye-Witness in Berlin,” The New Republic, LXXIV (April 5, 1933), 207. The author was an American who had lived in Germany for many years. He was unable to sign his name for fear of reprisals.
tag to the Reich Cabinet and allowed for any deviations from the constitution deemed necessary by the Cabinet. In essence, the Reichstag had committed political suicide, but the National Socialists and other forces had contributed to its demise. Moreover, the law suspending civil rights passed at the time of the Reichstag fire remained in effect.

Because the Enabling Law would be a basic change in the Weimar Constitution, a two-thirds majority of the Reichstag was needed to pass it. The government had arrested the Communist representatives and some of the Social Democrats, but this still left the National Socialists short of the necessary vote. To overcome the now-suspicious Nationalists, Adolf Hitler promised that he would not try to alter the powers of President Hindenburg, the Nationalists' idol. Hitler's negotiations with the Centrist Party reached a climax when he addressed a letter to the Center leader, Monsignor Ludwig Kaas, in which the Chancellor promised to continue the existence of the German states, not to change the Weimar Constitution, and to protect the confessional schools and respect the concordats signed between German states and the Vatican. The Hitler promises were accepted at face value, and the Enabling Law passed the Reichstag 441 to 94. Only the Social Democrats cast "no" ballots. So it was on March 23, 1933 that Adolf Hitler became the legal dictator of Germany.

Little outspoken comment on the passage of the Enabling Law appeared in the American journals. The New Republic wrote that "the dictatorship and the terror in Germany are now com-
plete." This journal's major concern seemed to be what was going
to happen to the German people in the future. 47 The April 8 Lit-
erary Digest's response was very similar. 48 In what was primari-
ly a factual article, Sidney B. Fay in Current History accurately
summarized the events surrounding the passage of the Enabling
Act. 49 These three articles, none of which attempted to analyze,
were the extent of the American journal response to this signi-
ficant German constitutional change.

What the National Socialists achieved in the eight weeks
of German history covered in this chapter was noteworthy. The
chancellorship, a majority in the national election with the as-
sistance of right-wing allies, control over the state's bureau-
cracy and police, and a constitutional dictatorship attained
through the Enabling Law, were the accomplishments of Adolf Hit-
er and the National Socialist Party. While American journals
responded to Hitler's appointment and the events immediately pre-
ceding it, they seemed less interested in the March election and
even more so in the German Reichstag's decision to dissolve it-
self and permit an unencumbered rule for the Nazi chancellor.
Only three periodicals, The New Republic, The Literary Digest and
Current History commented directly on the Enabling Law after its

47 The New Republic, LXXIV (March 29, 1933), 170.
48 The Literary Digest, CXV (April 1, 1933), 1-2.
49 Sidney B. Fay, "The Hitler Dictatorship," Current His-
tory, XXXVIII (May, 1933), 233-234.
passage. Some journals did so later, several months afterwards in some cases, but by that time whatever impact the action might have had had worn off. Perhaps it could be argued that the journals looked upon the Enabling Act as merely legalizing a political reality of almost three years' standing. The name "dictatorship" had been applied by some to Brunening's term as Chancellor and even more frequently to the regimes of Papen and Schleicher.

It was also true that Hitler had been busy consolidating his regime in dictatorial fashion for at least three weeks before the Reichstag vote on March 23, 1933.

Many of the liberal- and religious-oriented journals responded immediately to the first of the Hitlerites' anti-Semitic measures, but they were puzzled about the ultimate norm for them. The interest created by this Nazi vendetta seemed to serve as a smokescreen to cover a good many of the details in German political affairs, at least for the American journals of opinion.

By the time of the enactment of the Enabling Law, the American periodicals had just about concluded that Adolf Hitler was going to be around for a while in the news headlines. But where Hitler would go after March 23 was still a question mark. He was experiencing complications with some of his Nationalist associates over his methods for keeping order and managing government, but an open rupture had not yet come. Domestic reconstruction was desperately needed, but the Nazi Party propaganda had promised dramatic results in foreign affairs. Germany and the world waited in April 1933 for the Berlin government to start making
decisions.
CHAPTER IV

THE JEWISH QUESTION

Following the passage of the Enabling Law on March 23, 1933, German affairs were given close scrutiny by American journals as editors and writers realized now that Adolf Hitler and the new German government meant important news. The topic with the most emotional impact during the first year of the Hitler regime was the continual harsh treatment of the German Jews by the government and by the Nazi para-military units.\textsuperscript{1} Anti-Semitism represented one of the basic principles of the National Socialist Party, a fact long recognized by the majority of American periodicals; with the prospects of at least four years of a Hitler dictatorship, the fate of German Jewry was certainly a most critical problem for the journals to consider carefully.

Almost without exception the major journals of opinion had something to say about the apparently unabated German anti-Semitic campaign. The first response, already noted in the previous chapter, appeared in the March 1933 issues of the journals; more comprehensive study began in April. Official and private denials to the contrary, extreme economic measures had been imposed upon Jews throughout Germany, according to The Literary Digest of April 8. The brief note reported the growth of foreign protest and boycotting movements in western Europe and the United States, which had brought threats from the German government of retaliatory measures.²

The New Republic for April 12 perceived that the Nazi government was "obviously frightened by the worldwide uproar over its boycott of the Jews," because it had declared in early April 1933 that it would treat Jews justly "if foreigners only behave themselves." Just the same, this journal predicted that the assaults upon the Jews would continue, since the elimination of German Jewry was an integral part of the Nazi program. The New Republic was correct in its assumption that anti-Semitism was "by far the easiest" of the National Socialists' pledges "to carry out."³

The anonymous Y. K. W. wrote in The New Republic that the Nazi chieftains had to promote the attacks to keep their waver-

²The Literary Digest, CXV (April 8, 1933), 9.
³The New Republic, LXXIV (April 12, 1933), 226.
ing mass support in line. The popularity of the National Socialists had been definitely slipping at the time Adolf Hitler took charge of the government in January 1933, in this author's view. Anti-Semitism was an immediate outlet for the energies of Hitler's younger disciples, observed Ludwig Lore in another New Republic article. The call for the expulsion of the Jews was supposed to be the solution of the state's economic ills. The fact of the whole matter, said Lore, was that anti-Semitism was "nationalism's best ally."

They are blood brothers; they belong together. A race which, without land and without concentrated material power, maintains its identity with such dogged persistence through the centuries is the living antithesis of nationalist ideology, that concept of the nation which is promised exclusively on political domination. Nationalism and anti-Semitism today outline the political picture of official Germany.

"The Nazis stand convicted of barbarism without parallel since the Middle Ages," proclaimed a more emphatic Nation editorial on April 12. Of course, because of the state censorship not all the facts were known, but the case could be judged by the words and actions of the Hitlerites. Attacks on Jews, liberals, Socialists, Communists and others would spell the ruin of the Nazi dictatorship, although The Nation did not say how this would come about. It did, however, think that only the mobilized protest of world opinion could save Germany from going to still low-

---

Both The Presbyterian Advance and The Christian Century pronounced German anti-Semitism. While the former believed that the Jews would suffer severe handicaps for many months to come, the Century felt that the future of the Jews depended upon an alleged power struggle going on inside the German government.

In an unusual article, considering the source, an American Jew, Robert E. Asher, contributed "A Jew Protests Against Protesters" to the April 12 Christian Century. Asher found nothing strange about the National Socialists' movements. It was realistic to eliminate one's opposition after a revolution or a significant political change. "History proves too well the necessity for this type of political realism, whether morally right or wrong." Now, history had shown how useless it was to persecute the Jew, said Asher, but a more tragic element of Hitler's policy was the assault upon the Socialists and Communists and everything they worked for in the way of labor legislation and privileges. In one of the few manifestations of the true humanitarian spirit appearing in the journals, Asher wrote that the Marxist groups deserved as much sympathy from the American people as the Jews, but as yet they were not getting it. Only some of the more lib-

---

6. The Nation, CXXXVI (April 12, 1933), 388.


eral American journals would eventually respond to Asher's request. On the other hand, Louis C. Cornish, in an editorial in The Christian Register of April 13, 1933, assessed world opinion as "amazed to find that the Hitlerites mean exactly what they have been saying." Cornish could not believe that this return to what he called "medievalism" would last. Tolerance was bound to win out in Germany, but the author did not say when.9

Representatives of some of the Catholic periodicals in early April showed less concern about Nazi anti-Semitism. America interpreted the early reports of Jewish mistreatment as exaggerations "invented by passion." Unlike most of the other American magazines, America believed the Hitler government entertained no planned campaign against German Jewry. Hitler and his Cabinet had been said to have already condemned the activity of the guilty culprits, "irregular groups," and order was now being restored.10 America's view on the Jewish question was amplified by one of its staff members, Father Florence D. Sullivan, whose article for the April 8 issue touched on a variety of aspects of the German problem. While Sullivan attempted to show some sympathy for the Jews, his article was permeated with mistrust.

All will deplore the violence, hatred, and injustice that admittedly accompanied the change of government. It

---

9Louis C. Cornish, "Editorial: Germany Under Hitler," The Christian Register, CXII (April 13, 1933), 235. The Register's editorials at this time were generally written by Unitarian and Universalist churchmen, but Cornish was not identified.

10America, XLIX (April 8, 1933), 22-23.
is particularly distressing that Hitler and his followers have so often blamed the woes of the nation on the Jewish race and vented almost diabolical hatred against many of its members. Much of this now seems to have sporadic and not intended by the man in power. There are too many contradictory stories for one to come to a conclusion. The evidence would seem to point to frightful exaggerations, perhaps part of Communist propaganda which is known to wax far on the miseries of others. The responsible officials have pledged themselves to prevent unjust treatment of the Jews; and testimony from reliable Jewish sources is added to the reports of our own Ambassador through the Secretary of State that order has been restored and no future outbreaks need be feared. Organized protests, especially when they excite governments to a hostile attitude towards Germany, will be resented by loyal Germans and only give pretext for unleashing destructive passions and cruel reprisals.

In all fairness the facts and circumstances should be fully known before a judgment is passed. Moreover, the distinction must be borne in mind that persecution against Communists who are Jews is not an attack on Jewry. Evidence is not wanting to prove that many Jews have long forgotten the religious tenets and holy practices of Zion and have become leaders in spreading an ungodly philosophy and in fomenting disorder and revolution. These should not have the sympathy of either Christian or Jew.\footnote{Florence D. Sullivan, S.J., "Whither Hitler?" \textit{ibid.}, 7. Father Sullivan was an associate editor of \textit{America}. This was the only signed article on German affairs by Sullivan during the period 1930-1939.}

Perhaps in an attempt to offset some of the remarks made by Father Sullivan, another Jesuit from \textit{America}, John La Farge, found value in the protests against the Nazis' activities. However, he was hopeful that the same attitude might soon be taken with respect to the deeds of the Soviet government.\footnote{John La Farge, S.J., "Jewish Protests and Russian Experiments," \textit{ibid.}, 11-13. Father La Farge was another associate editor of \textit{America}.}

Christian elements in Germany, it was hoped by \textit{The Commonweal} for April 12, would come to the front and modify the brutal
tactics of the Hitler regime. Above all, the Jews as a race should not be condemned, because there were good and evil in every nation. So too, a final judgment on the German nation must consider this fact. "Irrespective of all other things—political, business or cultural considerations—Christians outside of Germany must not judge rashly either the Jews or the Germans."\(^\text{13}\)

While *The Commonweal* now appeared more ready than *America* to criticize the Nazi government, it seemed to be contemplating a wait-and-see attitude not entirely dissimilar from *America*'s.

The Catholic weekly *Ave Maria* also took a position somewhat similar to *America*'s. It quoted an article from the London Catholic *Times* which saw German Jewry getting just what it deserved. The Jews, said this English report, were responsible for much of the world's "irreligion and immodesty" and were also leaders in Communism's attack on a civilization "which Herr Hitler, for all his faults, has sworn to uphold." Jewish Freemasonry also played a major role in the persecution of Catholics the world over. *The Ave Maria* found "truth" in the London reprint's undisguised attack on Jewry.\(^\text{14}\)

Professor Sidney B. Fay in the *Current History* for May 1933 was also unwilling to place on Hitler the blame for the excitement after his political victory. Much of the abuse against the Jews stemmed from unauthorized Nazi bands, that were later

\(^{13}\) *The Commonweal*, XVII (April 12, 1933), 647-648.

\(^{14}\) *The Ave Maria*, XXXVII (New Series) (April 29, 1933), 535.
brought under control and given strict orders to restrain themselves. As in the French and Russian Revolutions foreign interference only made matters worse for the Jews and others, contended Fay.15 Another monthly columnist, John Palmer Gavit, writing in the May Survey Graphic, called the contemporary German scene a "drunk-and-disorderly exhibit of medieval atavism."16 A contrary view was expounded by the arch-conservative editor of The American Review, Seward Collins, in his appraisal of the German situation. Writing off the Nazi excesses with regard to the Jews as "absurd atrocity stories," Collins expressed delight that capitalism had been saved in Germany by the Fascist revolution. Now Communism as a threat to the capitalist system was finished "forever," Collins prophesied.17

Exactly the opposite viewpoint appeared in the May 3 Nation in an article by the literary critic and author, Ludwig Lewisohn. In his opinion the "gigantic atrocity" of the Nazi regime was the plan to eliminate the Jews from German life. Some Jews were Communists, he admitted, but the vast majority had no connec-

15Sidney B. Fay, "Germany's Anti-Jewish Campaign," Current History, XXXVIII (May, 1933), 142-145.


nation whatever with Marxist activity. The irony of the predicament which the German Jews faced was that they had been thoroughly ac-
culturated over the years.

All previous major persecutions of the Jews, from the Middle Ages on through the pogrom waves in Czarist Russia after the Russo-Japanese War, were persecutions, that is, of a self-conscious group who were able singly and as a group to resist and survive persecution by means of the moral power of their historic and religious consciousness. This German persecution is the first major persecution in which the persecuted have sold out spiritually to their oppressors at the latter's invitation and command. They have eviscerated themselves; they have for generations extruded from their consciousness all Jewish content and from their political and moral lives all Jewish bindings. They are in fact today as Germanized as it is possible for them to be and have nothing within them wherewith to bear their Jewish fate. Can anyone conceive of a more cruel confusion or of a more hideous dilemma?18

Two months later a similar argument was used by Mary Heaton Vorse, then travelling in Europe, who wrote an article entitled "Getting the Jews Out of Germany" for the July 19 New Republic. Her article hinted that the physical extermination of the German Jews in the future was possible. She thus thought it pathetic, under the circumstances, to see some Jews trying at any cost to "become acceptable" to the regime.19

On April 19, 1933, The Nation recorded that reports about a persecution in Germany, all consistent, continued to mount.20

---

18 Ludwig Lewisohn, "Germany's Lowest Depth," The Nation, CXXXV (May 3, 1933), 493-494. Lewisohn was an author and literary critic.

19 Mary Heaton Vorse, "Getting the Jews Out of Germany," The New Republic, LXXV (July 19, 1933), 256-258. Miss Vorse was a novelist and short story writer.

20 The Nation, CXXXVI (April 19, 1933), 429.
while *The New Republic* believed that the Jewish discriminatory attacks had subsided for the time being, although "everything possible is being done to destroy the economic life of all Jews except bankers who were needed for the moment." 

Four months later the August 5 *Literary Digest* also called attention to the persecution. Only poor and lower middle-class Jews had been struck down. Ludwig Lore in the April 19 *Nation* noted the Jewish "economic annihilation." 

Meanwhile, a *Christian Century* editorial of May 3 expressed itself as very pleased to report that the Christians of the world and even many in Germany had come to the defense of the persecuted Jews. Yet this journal's own Geneva correspondent, William A. Visser't Hooft, could detect "little violent persecution," in fact "much less than in most other revolutions." Contrary to the position taken by his magazine, Visser't Hooft advised his readers to be patient. "The official attitude of the new government seems to be progressing from the blind anti-semitism of the irresponsible period of party politics to the somewhat less crude policy of distinguishing between anti-national and pro-national Jews." 

Three weeks later another writer in

---

21 *The New Republic*, LXXIV (April 19, 1933), 264.
22 *The Literary Digest*, CXVI (August 5, 1933), 12.
24 *The Christian Century*, L (May 3, 1933), 582.
25 William A. Visser't Hooft, "Christ or Caesar in Germany?" *ibid.*, 589. The author was the Geneva correspondent of this journal.
The Christian Century contradicted this journal's editorial opinions. Samuel McCrea Cavert "regretfully" noted in his article entitled "Hitler and the German Churches" that the German churches had not made any public protest against the injustice done to the Jews. But in the next breath he defended the Christian sects when he described the situation in contemporary Germany as "much like that of wartime." He believed that there were "inevitable limits to what any group can do" during a period of revolution.26

As long as the National Socialists continued their intimidation of the Jews, public proclamations from overseas and outside of Germany denouncing the Nazis' activities would continue, but it seemed doubtful that they would influence the regime. In the long run the Jews could be confronted with more severe handicaps. Concerning this application of pressure, the American journals were often ready to offer suggestions. The Literary Digest announced on May 27 that a campaign was underway under the sponsorship of American Jews for a worldwide boycott of German goods. The Digest considered this to be the best course "short of war,"27 although The New Republic of May 31 advised an appeal to the League of Nations as a concomitant to economic reprisals. The New Republic hoped that such a maneuver, combined with the economic results of the boycott, would influence the saner elements of

26 Samuel McCrea Cavert, "Hitler and the German Churches," ibid., (May 24, 1933), 683-684. Cavert was the general secretary of the Federal Council of Churches of Christian America.

27 The Literary Digest, CXV (May 27, 1933), 16.
the Nazi movement, and it believed that there were some, to seek ways "of getting out of the mess." However, the journal appeared doubtful that these rather feeble attempts would accomplish anything.

The Jewish problem remained a major consideration in the June number of the American monthly journals. Reviewing the sequence of events in the National Socialists' anti-Jewish program, Current History's Sidney B. Fay concluded that the action taken so far was "unparalleled in modern times." But he hinted that a more moderate policy under the direction of Adolf Hitler might prevail in the months ahead. Another Current History report, written by Roger B. Nelson, who was in Germany at the time, stated that "no effort was spared" to tack down public officials who might have traces of Jewish blood in their family backgrounds. This action, of course, was a portent of the future. Curiously enough, Edward S. Martin, the editor of Harper's Magazine, could find no reason for the Nazi persecution of the Jews in any of Hitler's formal documents. Evidently the Harper's editor was unfamiliar with Mein Kampf. Martin thought there was some truth in the belief that the Nazi leader had been influenced by the Prussian Junkers with respect to the Jewish problem. With reference

---

28 The New Republic, LXXV (May 31, 1933), 55-56.


30 Roger B. Nelson, "Hitler Propaganda Machine," ibid., 293. Journalist Nelson had been doing research in Germany, including personal interviews with political leaders.
to the Junkers, he also included this ridiculous statement in his column: "It is the opinion of the British-Israel authorities that they are the descendants of the Assyrians and that their propensity to beat up the Jews is just an outbreak of an immemorial habit of their mind which has run through thousands of years." 31

Writing from Germany for The Forum, the American S. McClatchie said that it was Adolf Hitler who had at last shown the German people "what they really wanted." Hitler had galvanized them into action in a search for what he termed German traditions. The Jew, of course, according to McClatchie, was not of this tradition, and therein lay one of the reasons for anti-Semitism. McClatchie made a point of stating his opposition to Hitler's methods and to intolerance of any kind. So it was, he said, that the world must be tolerant of the Nazi leader. There was a "special reason" for this tolerance. All opposed to Communism owed Hitler thanks, wrote this rather politically naive observer. The National Socialists had won the race with Communism for the control of central Europe. This occurrence, truly, had a more "vast and far-reaching significance" than the "racial squabble." 32

An American student in Austria, Kenneth McLeith, revealed


32 S. McClatchie, "Why Germany Hates the Jews," The Forum, LXXXIX (June, 1933), 374-378. A second article in the same issue, this one by a former associate editor of The Forum, Howard H. Bailey, "Europe's Sorest Spot," 322-326, contributed nothing significant to the discussion.
information concerning Nazi anti-Semitic activities outside of Germany in the June 14 Nation. Jewish students at the University of Vienna were under constant pressure and physical assault from Nazi sympathizers within the school. While this was not a very profound article in itself, McLeith's mention of National Socialist influence in Austria was an ominous indication that Hitler's ideas were gaining adherents in his homeland. It should also be remembered that the German Chancellor had long campaigned for Anschluss before stepping into his present position in January 1933.

A short New Republic article on June 7, 1933, heralded the first victory for the Jews over Nazi Germany. The protection of minorities in Silesia had been part of a German-Polish treaty in 1922, and after pressure by the League of Nations, the Nazi government agreed to suspend anti-Semitic laws in the area. "Silesia will now become a Jewish sanctuary inside Germany and will be a powerful influence making for more reasonable treatment of the Jews elsewhere in the Reich," declared the suddenly optimistic New Republic. It also felt that the international Jewish boycott on German goods and services was definitely affecting the German economy. Reports from Berlin in the possession of this periodical revealed that the Nazi leaders were trying to seek out a formula regarding the Jews "without losing too much face."

---

33Kenneth McLeith, "The Nazi Terror in the University," The Nation, CXXXVI (June 14, 1933), 669. This was a pseudonym of an American student at the University of Vienna.

34The New Republic, LXXV (June 7, 1933), 84.
Both *The Presbyterian Advance* and *The Christian Century* praised the League of Nations for investigating Nazi discriminatory tactics in Silesia. The latter weekly saw the Hitler acceptance of the League verdict as giving the world organization a great boost in prestige, and encouraging those who believed that the German Chancellor might moderate his racial policies.35

In reality, nothing of the sort was happening in Germany. Leaders of the Nazi movement continued to find ways to harass the German Jewish population during the summer months of 1933. On July 12 *The Nation* made an accurate guess that sterilization was soon to be legalized in Nazi Germany. The official announcement would be published two weeks later, and the law was to take effect on January 1, 1934. It was *The Nation*'s prediction that the "diseased and socially undesirable individuals" who would be sterilized would include Jews. Jewish workers were also to be excluded from the planned government labor organization, disclosing that the Hitlerites intended to oppress all classes of Jews, not just those who possessed wealth or were members of a profession, as had been the contention of many apologists. An editorial in the same journal two weeks later continued to prophesy the doom of the Jews.36 *The August 2 New Republic* reported the same situation to its readers.37

35 *The Presbyterian Advance*, XLVII (June 8, 1933), 5, and *The Christian Century*, L (June 14, 1933), 773-774.

36 *The Nation*, CXXXVII (July 12, 1933), 34 and (July 26, 1933), 87.

37 *The New Republic*, LXXV (August 2, 1933), 299-300.
The eminent Englishman, Hilaire Belloc, writing in America for July 22, advised his Catholic readers to recognize that the National Socialists' treatment of German Jewry was immoral, even though Belloc seemed to doubt the authenticity of published reports of "atrocities." On the other hand, it was Reinhold Niebuhr's opinion that the German Jews were undergoing even greater suffering than the foreign press imagined. One paragraph from his August 9, 1933 Christian Century article entitled "Germany Must Be Told!" read:

Besides the admitted facts of government policy there are many other aspects of the German ferocity against the Jews about which the average German citizen knows nothing. The Germans constantly remind the visitor that the streets are quiet, and invite him to observe the peacefulness of the cities for himself. But they know little of what goes on in nazi barracks, concentration camps and nazi hide-outs.

Hitlerism was an assault on modern civilization and the twentieth century, according to Dorothy Thompson and Benjamin Stolberg in the September 1933 issue of Scribner's Magazine. Yet, it was their contention that the Nazi revolution would have received less worldwide attention in this time of severe economic stress if Hitler had not turned upon the Jews. Ludwig Lewisohn thought that Nazism went farther than just an attack on material


39 Reinhold Niebuhr, "Germany Must Be Told!" The Christian Century, L (August 9, 1933), 1014.

40 Dorothy Thompson and Benjamin Stolberg, "Hitler and the American Jews," Scribner's Magazine, XCIV (September, 1933), 136. Miss Thompson, then the wife of the noted author Sinclair Lewis, was a reporter of international events, as was the German-born Stolberg.
Civilization. The German people had gotten themselves involved with paganism.

German nationalism to-day is a revolt against Christianity in its broadest as well as in its deepest sense; it is a pagan revolt against the whole of Christian civilization; it dreams, spinning like a dervish, of Nordic armies overrunning the earth, of berserker rage in battle, of the ecstasy of death and blood. To think of the Nazis merely as hoodlums and fools stung into action by hunger and demagogues is gravely to underestimate both the force and the menace of the movement...

This "demon of pagan revolt" had to assail "an immediate and accessible object." That is how the Jew fitted into the picture, believed Lewisohn. While this Harper's Magazine article was not the first to treat the revival of German paganism, it was the only one at the time to link paganism with anti-Semitism.

One short notice in the September 20 New Republic called for the vigorous support of the economic boycott of German goods on behalf of the German Jewish cause. A minor part of Dr. Alice L. Hamilton's report on Germany in the September Survey Graphic also touched on the Jewish question. She believed that merely a superficial inspection of German society would show Hitler and his anti-Semitic crusade with the almost unanimous support from the German nation.

---

42 The New Republic, LXXVI (September 20, 1933), 139.
43 Alice L. Hamilton, "Below the Surface," The Survey Graphic, XXII (September, 1933), 450-453. Dr. Hamilton was on the staff of the Harvard Medical School.
An interesting thesis was introduced by Francis J. Oppenheimer in the October North American Review: "What really annoys a Nazi in a Prussian Jew is not his Semitic denationalism, but the Jew's overnationalized Germanism." Oppenheimer then erroneously asserted that many Jews had been behind Hitler's program, except for the anti-Semitic planks. He put himself on record with the statement that "it's altogether questionable whether the Chancellor would be the force he is today had he lacked their support."44

One major article of the period was by Reverend Stanley High in the November 11, 1933 issue of The Literary Digest. In High's estimation anti-Semitism was the only point in the National Socialist program that had so far been carried out as originally planned. The source of this hatred was definitely Adolf Hitler. For him anti-Semitism was a religion, and no Jew should escape his wrath. High accurately foresaw what was in store for German Jews; he predicted that "unless there is an unlooked-for change in Nazi purposes, they will all be eliminated."45

Anti-Semitism had also struck at intellectual circles, according to a German student in the pages of the November 8 Nation. Jewish students and professors had been expelled from schools, scientific institutions sacked, and books by Jewish au-

45Stanley High, "The German Program of Anti-Semitism," The Literary Digest, CXVI (November 11, 1933), 13, 26-27. High was a clergyman of the Methodist Episcopal Church.
hers destroyed. "The intellectual life of Germany had been set back at least one-hundred and fifty years." The "epidemic" of ultra-nationalism had swept over Germany. This was the only way to explain the violence of the Hitler regime, said Philip W. Wilson in the December 1933 Review of Reviews and World's Work. Lewis Einstein, writing in The North American Review of December 1933, wondered whether this state of affairs, based on an unhealthy nationalism, indicated that the existing society was dissolving. Furthermore, he did not think that contemporary civilization could continue in a world half-free and half-slave, as it existed in the totalitarian states. It was ironic, wrote Waldo Frank in The New Republic for December 13, 1933, that the Jew "is persecuted by barbarous and desperate men because of ideals that he no longer lives."

Rabbi Philip S. Bernstein stated in The Nation on December 27 that the Nazi government had displayed its "worst duplicity" on the Jewish question. Hitler had washed his hands of any

---

46 Peter Lieberknecht, "A German Student Speaks," The Nation, CXXXVII (November 8, 1933), 534. The author was a German student living in France.

47 Philip W. Wilson, "The World Watches Germany," The Review of Reviews and World's Work, LXXXVIII (December, 1933), 22. Wilson was a journalist and former member of the British Parliament, who was living in New York.


49 Waldo Frank, "Should the Jews Survive?" The New Republic, LXXXVII (December 13, 1933), 122-123. The author was a novelist.
guilt for the anti-Semitic campaign. But it was clear to most observers that the Nazi leadership was morally responsible for the actions of its disciples.  

50 The Catholic weekly America for January 6, 1934, found that the standards adopted by the Hitler government in the "sustained and systematic attacks" upon the Jews had reached a new low by the end of 1933.  

51 This response was certainly a change in attitude from America's earlier response in April 1933. On the other hand, while Professor Carl J. Friedrich recognized that anti-Semitic feeling existed in Germany, he considered the tales of Jewish persecution to be "nonsense" in his Christian Register article for November 23, 1933. Friedrich looked forward hopefully to the time "when the great German traditions would eventually permeate the 'new' Germany."  

The year 1934 began in Germany with more precise anti-Semitic measures. One edict prohibited the employment of Jews for editorial and illustrative work in newspaper and publishing businesses after January 1, 1934. Another, also scheduled to become effective on January 1, placed new restrictions on Jewish

50 Philip S. Bernstein, "Can Hitler Be Trusted?" The Nation, CXXXVII (December 27, 1933), 728-730. The author was Rabbi of Temple B'rith Kodesh in Rochester, New York, and had visited Germany in the previous summer.  

51 America, L (January 6, 1934), 315.  

students in medical and law schools: the Jew was given the choice of renouncing his citizenship for the right of studying in German schools, an action which would exclude him from practicing his profession in Germany, or he could maintain his citizenship and be refused the license to practice. "The Jewish student in Germany can now choose the process by which he is to commit economic suicide" was the response of the January 3, 1934 New Republic, the only journal which felt the need to comment. During the first six months of 1934 the plight of the German Jews became involved with other problems, such as economic policy, which will be examined later. Overt persecution of Jewry in Germany, however, appeared to have receded into the background, and the American journals reflected this tendency.

Anti-Semitism remained a minor topic of consideration for the American journals until the summer months of 1935, although an occasional major article paused to reexamine the Jewish question in Germany. In part of a comprehensive review article, reasons why the German people were able to live with Hitler were cited by S. Miles Bouton in the October 1934 American Mercury. One outstanding reason was that National Socialism's program of anti-Semitism "appealed to a greater part of the German people." It was an historical fact, wrote the newsman, that "no other country on earth has such a long record of persecution of the Jews as has Germany, going back to the first Crusade."
A summation of the Jewish problem was given by Paul Kiniery in the December 1934 Catholic World. Entitled "The Jewish Minority Problem in Germany," this article emphasized the fact that less than one percent of the German population was Jewish. Kiniery displayed astonishment that the theory that German Jewry had been the cause of all of Germany's woes in the last generation was espoused by the Nazi government. "Seldom in world history has anything more ridiculous been taken seriously. Seldom have sordid motives been covered with such a thin veneer of respectability." Subsequently Professor Kiniery offered for the Jewish dilemma in Germany a simple solution, too simple since it seemed to be based on the premise that Adolf Hitler and his associates were reasonable men.

In view of the contributions made by the Jews during the War, in lives and money, it seems unreasonable to bar them so definitely from civil and governmental positions. It would be far more reasonable to admit at least the number to which they would be entitled on the basis of their population. If certain Jews circulated ideas subversive of German welfare, these Jews could be dealt with by the constituted authorities. There is no need or justification for a general condemnation of all Jews.55

Writing in the March 27, 1935 Nation, the British journalist William Zukerman accurately foresaw the resumption of the Nazi anti-Semitic campaign. The undisputed success of the German cause in the Saar plebiscite vote of January 1935 had given the Nazis the idea that there were actually few Germans who opposed

55 Paul Kiniery, "The Jewish Minority Problem in Germany," The Catholic World, CXL (December, 1934), 424-427. The author was a professor of history at Loyola University in Chicago.
their strong-handed tactics. "The trend in Germany before January 13 was clearly toward moderation, and German Jews took hope from it." After the vote the Nazi inner circle decided to revive the plan for expelling the Jews from German life which had lapsed for several months, since there no longer seemed to be a real domestic need for temperance. The pathetic hope of relief in German Jewish quarters, revived for such a short time, was ended for good, wrote Zuckerman. "It will be observed that the blasting of Jewish hopes coincided with the shattering of the broader hope for the gradual liberalization of Germany which Europe entertained for a while."56

Beginning in the last half of July 1935 and continuing into the autumn of the year, German racism again made headlines. The first vicious anti-Jewish riots in over a year were reported by the July 27 Literary Digest. This anti-Semitic "purge," said the Digest, "has been described as a 'purification.'" More information concerning the particulars of the persecution was included in the next week's issue.57

The physical attacks instigated by the National Socialists plus the restrictions imposed upon the small Jewish businessmen indicated to The Nation for July 31 that a split had occurred.

56 William Zukerman, "Anti-Semitism Revives in Germany," The Nation, CXL (March 27, 1935), 356-357. Zukerman was a well-known London journalist who had given special attention to international Jewish problems.

57 The Literary Digest, CXX (July 27, 1935), 10, and (August 3, 1935), 12.
within the Nazi ranks between those "moderates" led by General Hermann Goering who wanted the Jews eliminated from the professions and the arts and the more radical followers of Dr. Joseph Goebbels, who sought to drive the Jews out of Germany altogether into a ghetto. While The Nation hoped that this rumored break in the Nazi front would "hasten the day of reckoning," it correctly ascertained that the excesses would continue as long as the Nazis remained in power. The New Republic of the same week was uncertain whether this renewed anti-Semitic activity on the part of the Nazi Party radicals denoted a split over Party policy or an attempt to divert public attention from economic problems.

Neither liberal weekly, it is strange to note, suggested that perhaps the attacks proved beyond all doubt that anti-Semitism was an intrinsic part of the National Socialist ideology, a fact pointed out by The Christian Century in its response on August 7. Even if some of the attacks on the German Jews had been unauthorized, declared the Century, the Hitler government was fully responsible because of its outspoken principle of radical intolerance. Reports that the regime's officials intended to call a halt to the latest anti-Jewish activities would change neither the National Socialists' beliefs nor world opinion. "It has become entirely clear that the Nazi program is inconsistent with the existence of any free institutions, any diversity of blood or cul-

58 The Nation, CXLIII (July 31, 1935), 1004.
ture, and any church that is not a passive instrument of state-
craft."60

Both Sidney B. Fay in the September Current History and
the Catholic Commonweal for August 2, 1935 reported the rumors
of Nazi Party strife and general discontent, which were supposed
to be contributing factors to the latest anti-Semitic violence.61
The same argument was succinctly put by the German correspondent
to The Christian Century, A. S. Eker, in the September 18 issue.

Nowadays, the struggle is on a deeper issue. Superficially, it appears to be just the enforcement of the ra-
cial theories so long preached. In reality, it is something more fundamental. The Jew in Germany is being made
the scapegoat for the general discontent which has arisen
out of the disillusion due to the realization that nazi-
dom has no new heaven to offer, and that it will be a far
worse earth which will result from the policies now being
put into effect.62

The annual congress of the National Socialist Party met
at Nuremberg in September 1935. It was here that the 1935 anti-
Semitic campaign reached a climax, when on September 15 the Reich-
stag, meeting in a special session, approved new Nazi legislation
which turned out to be merely the first of the infamous Nuremberg
laws. The German Jews were now deprived of their citizenship
rights by this initial legislation. Nor from this time could Jews

61 Sidney B. Fay, "Germany's Religious Conflict," Current
History, XLII (September, 1935), 649.
62 A. S. Eker, "Correspondence from Germany: Germany Nears
Another Purge," The Christian Century, LII (September 18, 1935),
1183-1184. Eker was this journal's German correspondent.
meny a so-called Aryan or employ female Aryan house servants under thirty-five years of age. Other legislation would follow.

Surprisingly enough, there was practically no recognition shown by the American journals that the Nazi campaign against the Jews had reached a new stage of development. Perhaps the periodicals accepted the new German laws as something inevitable.

What reference there was to the Nuremberg Laws in The Nation of September 25 was almost entirely factual, while a short article in the next week's issue contained only some references to the Jewish reaction to the legislation. The Literary Digest for September 21 summarized the events that took place at the Nuremberg conference without trying to interpret them; The Presbyterian Tribune, The Commonweal and oddly enough, The New Republic, only cited the anti-Semitic legislation. A factual account was given by Professor Sidney B. Fay in the November 1935 Current History, with one interesting observation: Fay believed that the Nazis had set a pattern with regard to the Jewish question which

63 Andrew Sharp, The British Press and Jews Under Nazi Rule (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), points out that the British press, in general, also failed to recognize the significance of the Nuremberg legislation. There was likewise "a marked and rather curious division of opinion on Nuremburg, which did not by any means follow customary divisions of political, group, or social interests."

64 The Nation, CXLII (September 25, 1935), 337-338, and (October 2, 1935), 366.

65 The Literary Digest, CXX (September 21, 1935), 13; The Presbyterian Tribune, LI (November 14, 1935), 6; The Commonweal, XLI (September 27, 1935), 511-512; and The New Republic, LXXXIV (September 25, 1935), 169.
they hoped the rest of the world would eventually follow.66

The tide had turned again, for the Nazi dictatorship had proven that it could overcome its internal problems, responded the September 25 Christian Century. After taking all that had occurred at Nuremberg under observation, the Protestant journal concluded "that the future holds in store only an increasingly rigorous application of the Nazi principles of dictatorship, minority rule, rampant nationalism, drum-thumping militarism, ruthless anti-Semitism, and utter totalitarianism."67

Following the Nuremberg legislation, there was an uneven response in the journals of an accelerated German government drive against the former Jewish citizens. The Nation revealed on October 2 that the German Jews were completely at the mercy of the Nazi government and police. Dire threats had been made if the world Jewish economic boycott continued. "The new Ghetto is almost complete—the next step will probably be a Jewish costume, to match the Jewish flag which the Nazis gracefully permit to fly."68 The November 30 Literary Digest called attention to the rumor of new economic measures aimed at the Jews reportedly to be more extreme than anything yet promulgated. A source from The New York Times, reprinted by the Digest, ascertained that the new laws would "leave the Jews only a slim basis for a bare existence

68 The Nation, CXLII (October 2, 1935), 366.
as second-class citizens without political rights and with inferior legal rights." That laws would not be anti-Semitic but pro-German and part of a campaign against Bolshevism was Hitler's reply to criticism leveled at the proposed legislation, according to The Nation of December 11. The Jewish Communist agents must be crushed, declared Hitler, and he intended to fight terror with terror. "Surely there are very few persons left, outside of the most reactionary circles in England and the United States, so gullible as to swallow this monstrous misrepresentation," said The Nation.

Following up this argument on January 8, 1936, The Nation hoped that the December 30, 1935 denunciation of the Hitler regime by James G. McDonald, the recently resigned League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, would help destroy the growing tendency to accommodate the Nazi leaders in foreign affairs. Despite reports from travellers in Germany that the land was "a model of peace," McDonald was certain that the situation for Jews and others was growing worse, with arrests and the like taking place under the cover of night. "His recital of conditions in Germany will convince every humane person of the need for some concerted move on the part of civilized nations," commented The Nation's editor. America, The Literary Digest and Professor Sidney B.

69 The Literary Digest, CXX (November 30, 1935), 12.
70 The Nation, CXL1 (December 11, 1935), 662.
71 Ibid., CXLII (January 8, 1936), 29.
in the February 1936 *Current History* all noted McDonald's remarks but without adding anything significant to the discussion.72

What may well have been one of the casual observers in Germany, cited in The Nation article above, happened to tell his story in a late-1935 issue of one of the journals under consideration, the Protestant quarterly *Religion in Life*. Professor Frank Gavin seemed to have had a pleasant visit in Nazi Germany during 1935; he returned to say that it was "the most exciting spot on earth."

One sees few signs of objectionable people, of offensive conduct. I should say that friendliness, genuine and unforced, is more markedly in evidence to-day than ever before, and I saw no sign whatever of a single instance of the kind of truculence in bearing or attitude which was certainly not uncommon some years ago.

Gavin noted various changes in the new Germany. "It is not feverish or hectic at all, but it is certainly far more vitally alert than I remember having observed on other visits." For the peace of the world, people must try to understand "the phenomena of Nazi Germany," declared Gavin. "The vitality and vigor, the renewed hope and faith, the adventurous courage it shows, and the adherence to its ideals of many distinguished people...demand a fair and honest consideration of the Nazi scheme and its functioning in practice."73

---

72 America, LIV (January 11, 1936), 319-320; The Literary Digest, CXXI (January 11, 1936), 18; and Sidney B. Fay, "The Flight of the German Jews," *Current History*, XLIII (February, 1936), 536-537.

73 Frank Gavin, "Germany Revisited," *Religion In Life*, IV (Winter, 1935), 106-112. The author was professor of ecclesiastical history at General Theological Seminary in New York City.
Other observers viewed the German scene more realistically and more accurately over the winter of 1935-1936. In the January 15, 1936 *New Republic*, Dr. Kurt Rosenfeld presented the historical background of the German Jews in an article entitled "What Germany Does to the Jews," and commented upon the contemporary situation. Since 1933 the position of the German Jew had deteriorated until the present, where he lived "in a veritable ghetto." Almost all means of livelihood had been cut off by government administrative and legislative measures. Hitler had warned, in the meantime, that, if this procedure failed to produce satisfactory results, he might turn the "Jewish question" over to his radical Nazi Party disciples. "It is not difficult to surmise what this will mean," said Rosenfeld.74

Writing in the February 5 *Nation*, William Zukerman conjectured that the German Jews were being herded into a ghetto in order to make it easier to persecute them. Contrary to the belief of many foreign observers who expected gradual improvement for the Jews during the year, the anti-Semitic campaign had increased in intensity. It was "probably the last and greatest of all," and it had been legalized through the Nuremberg legislation. For their allies in this final assault the Nazis had the German middle-class and petty bourgeoisie, which Zukerman considered to be

74 Kurt Rosenfeld, "What Germany Does to the Jews," *The New Republic*, LXXV (January 15, 1936), 275-277. Rosenfeld, a German lawyer and a member of the Social Democratic Party, had been the Minister of Justice in the Prussian provisional government of November 1918.
"an impotent and ineffectual class doomed to extinction."  

Responding to this latest surge of Nazi racial oppression, Oswald Garrison Villard opined in the March 4 Nation that "the cowardice of the Hitler policy is beyond words." In reality, the anti-Semitic persecution was a confession of the superior ability of the Jews. The Fuehrer would have the world believe that the Germans were in danger until this small minority was driven out of the country. Such a campaign was easily accomplished against a foe which could not defend itself.

To me this is so dreadful a happening that if all the rest of the Hitler regime commended itself to sane and liberal men, I should never for a moment forgive it. The poisoning of the lives of the Jewish children is not the gravest count in the indictment. Even worse is the poisoning of the souls of the rest of the German youth by the inculcation of hatred, prejudice, and sadistic cruelty.

With few publicized Nazi anti-Semitic activities upon which to respond from the spring of 1936 to that of 1938, the journals, particularly the liberal secular ones, intermittently printed feature articles on German Jewry's predicament; however, the Jewish problem was also occasionally discussed within other major topics.

The condition in which the German Jews found themselves was discussed by Benjamin Stolberg in the June 17, 1936 Nation.

---

75 William Zukerman, "Where the German Ghetto Leads," The Nation, CXLI (February 5, 1936), 154-155.
while The Presbyterian Tribune of August 20 featured an editorial entitled "The Nazis Indicted," in which it expressed pleasure that world opinion was growing more concerned with German anti-Semitism. 78 One final article in 1936 by Herbert J. Seligmann in the December 30 New Republic did little more than review the three years of Jewish life under the Hitler dictatorship. 79

A feature article on Adolf Hitler in the May 1937 Review of Reviews by Roger Shaw touched on anti-Semitism. Shaw, who had often treated the National Socialist regime sympathetically, again showed this inclination, although this time he listed as Hitler's greatest blunder the alienation of the Jews who had long been Germany's friends in international circles. 80

On October 9, 1937, The Nation revealed that Jews were being released from German prison camps, "not because the anti-Semitic fever is abating in government circles of the sick Reich" but to make room for new Jewish victims. Local National Socialist officials were reportedly handling the Jewish question, which meant a return to the vicious pogroms of the early days of the Hitler dictatorship. The Nation's editorial staff reported that it had evidence which showed "that the German people take little

78 The Presbyterian Tribune, LI (August 20, 1936), 5.

79 Herbert Seligmann, "Anti-Semitism in Europe," The New Republic, LXXXIX (December 30, 1936), 265-268. The author was a student of race relations.

interest in the persecution of Jews." 81

Rabbi Philip S. Bernstein viewed German domestic affairs a little differently in his Nation article in the October 23 issue. He believed that the German people were still decent and humane or they would have followed the Nazi program to the letter and destroyed every German Jew. The Jew still survived because Germans continued to patronize his shops and use his professional services. Since 1933 anti-Semitism had not been of the violent nature due in part to the spontaneous world reaction. "Strange as it may seem, the Nazi government which has a genius for alienating others, is pathetically eager for friendship and is therefore restraining its extremists from violence." A more subtle policy was being followed at the moment, one which made the Jewish cause in Germany a hopeless one. Jewish firm and business names had been retained, but all except a few essential figures had been forced out of their jobs into the ghetto or driven out of the country. "Thus," concluded Bernstein, "the Nazi assault upon the German Jews moves on from segregation to pauperization, to emigration, to annihilation." For the persecuted there were but two alternatives: emigration or death. 82 The Jew had to leave Nazi Germany, concluded Curt L. Heymann in the March 1938 Current History, after he reviewed the five-year history of Nazi anti-Semitic activity.

81 The Nation, CXLV (October 9, 1937), 363.

82 Philip S. Bernstein, "The Fate of German Jews," ibid., (October 23, 1937), 423-425. Rabbi Bernstein had just visited Germany for the first time since 1933.
There was no other choice, declared Heymann, but he neglected to say how the Jews were supposed to get away. 83

The summer of 1938 brought more journal response to the German Jewish problem than had been published since 1933; most of it sympathized with the Jews, although the impression seemed to be that their position was hopeless. The June 25 Nation believed that the reported resumption of savage attacks on Jews was due to the Nazi government's failures to bully Czechoslovakia into submission over the Sudetenland question. Because of the need for a scapegoat, "the world is treated to a spectacle of cowardly brutality refined to the point of insanity." 84 It was the June 29 Christian Century's judgment that the latest Nazi surge against the Jews had "already surpassed all previous records of similar inhumanity in recent times, and apparently the crest of this flood of savagery has not yet arrived." While both government troops and undisciplined mobs carried out the attacks, the whole venture seemed to have been sanctioned by the government. Jews were now being arrested for the most trivial matters as the dictatorship determined to purify the state. 85

Prospects that anything could be done about the Nazi misdeeds seemed improbable to the July 1 Commonweal, for "observers

83 Curt L. Heymann, "German Laws Against the Jews," Current History, XLVIII (March, 1938), 38–45. Heymann was a member of the editorial staff of The New York Times.

84 The Nation, CXLVI (June 25, 1938), 712.

85 The Christian Century, LV (June 29, 1938), 805–806.
noted that many of the decent elements in the Berlin populace watched the anti-Jewish marauders in silent disapproval, but were apparently helpless. "86 The Ave Maria for August 6 sympathized with the Jews' predicament in Germany; however, it was not happy that world Jewry had not opposed Stalin and the Russian Communists, whose "system achieves the same results."87

A first-hand report on the German persecution appeared in the August 20, 1938 Nation, written by the former ambassador to Germany, William E. Dodd. In one passage Dodd remarked: "Altogether the catalogue is a striking example of the extremes to which mass hysteria and blood-hungry official propaganda can drive a people."88 Writing in the August 31 Christian Century, the Negro historian Lewis K. McMillan explained German anti-Semitism with arguments that echoed National Socialist assertions. The German Jews, McMillan stated, were different from their fellow countrymen. Jews were not closely attached to German tradition and history or to the everyday social life of Germany. Nor was the German Jew a member of the German Christian community. Since historically the Germans were "more or less prejudiced against Jews," the emergence of the National Socialists as a poli-

86 The Commonweal, XXVIII (July 1, 1938), 253-256.
87 The Ave Maria, XLVIII (New Series) (August 6, 1938), 183.
88 William E. Dodd, "Germany Shocked Me," The Nation, CXLVII (August 20, 1938), 176-178. Dodd was the American ambassador to Germany from 1933 to 1937.
tical force merely helped to activate anti-Semitic tendencies.89

Articles concerning the Jewish persecution in Austria, which had recently been united with Germany, appeared in The Ave Maria, The Nation and The Commonweal,90 and the fate of the Jews in the newly acquired province of Sudetenland was related by the October 19 New Republic.91

A more vicious attack upon the German Jews began in November 1938 immediately after a German official in Paris had been murdered by a Jewish refugee. The Nazi anti-Semitic campaign increased in intensity during the remainder of the year and into 1939. Responding in the editorial "War Against the Jews," the November 19 Nation commented that "never were mass cowardice, mass brutality, and mass destructiveness so gruesomely displayed. Despite the Nazi threat that the attacks would become more savage if protests were forthcoming from abroad, The Nation found itself forced to denounce this "degenerate brutality." Yet the viciousness of the Nazis' crimes was difficult to ascertain when this journal simply described new fines and laws which kept Jews out of all public entertainment houses. The November 26 Nation reit-


90 The Ave Maria, XLVII (New Series) (April 2, 1938), 439; The Nation, CXLVI (June 18, 1938), 685; and Michael Williams, "Views and Reviews," The Commonweal, XXVIII (July 15, 1938), 323. Williams had recently stepped down from this journal's editorship, a position which he had held since the periodical's inception in 1924.

91 The New Republic, XCVI (October 19, 1938), 292.
rated its stand, and former editor Oswald Garrison Villard accused the Nazis of planning the "deliberate murder" of 600,000 people. 92

An equally strong editorial stand against the German dictatorship was taken by the contemporary New Republic, which stated that there was "ample evidence" in the Nazi organs to indicate that the coup was planned long ago and waited only a convenient opportunity." This journal's plan to alleviate the sufferings of German Jewry, which "can never find peace or happiness, or even a chance to survive, except by leaving Germany," entailed the modification of United States immigration restrictions—a situation which it doubted could be achieved. 93

An unusually forceful stand was taken by The Christian Century which declared that "Hitler and his government have sounded depths of infamy which had not previously been plumbed in modern times." The German church should at once stand up and make its position clear, dissociating itself from the program of paganized racial nationalism. The American government should be pressed to speak out against the National Socialists' tactics. It should be clear to all that the point had been reached where the German treatment of a group within Germany's own borders could no longer be ignored by other governments. But the Century

92 The Nation, CXLVII (November 19, 1938), 524; (November 26, 1938), 550, 552-553; and Oswald Garrison Villard, "Issues and Men," 567.

93 The New Republic, XCVII (November 23, 1938), 60, and (November 30, 1938), 87-88.
refused to abandon its traditional policy against the use of force and called for pacific measures to check this madness. Still, it thought the situation urgent enough to warrant this statement: "Suppose that, instead of merely subjecting the Jews to economic and social disadvantages, nazi Germany should decide to massacre them." One week later, on November 30, the editors of this Protestant weekly conceded that other nations would have to interfere in German affairs for the sake of humanity, if the Nazi persecution continued. This task would be complicated because "in the nazi regime the modern world confronts a phenomenon for dealing with which it has not experience or precedent." ⁹⁴ The November 24 Christian Register expected the Nazis to direct themselves "against the rest of the world" after this final assault against the Jews. ⁹⁵

Even though the Nazi dictatorship was not Christian, The Ave Maria for November 26 still expected it to be civilized. The Hitlerites' resumption of their attack on Germany's Jewish citizens indicated their unconcern for world opinion. In its response, The Ave Maria almost made it sound as if the German leaders were only just now showing their disdain for world opinion. Roy Temple House, in the same issue, gave the appearance that he, too, misunderstood the policies of the Nazi dictatorship. He believed that the more intelligent German leaders were "too wily"

⁹⁴ The Christian Century, LV (November 23, 1938), 1422-1423, and (November 30, 1938), 1456.
⁹⁵ The Christian Register, CXVII (November 25, 1938), 689.
to persecute with brutal directness. 96

Many have already put Germany beyond the pale of civilized nations, declared America, but the truth was that basically the German people had not changed, only now they were being dominated by a madman. Certainly this planned attack on German Jewry was "one of history's blackest pages," but this Jesuit weekly could still perceive one ray of light: a government which based its policies on such measures had begun to dig its own grave. "We believe that the downfall of the Nazi Government will be dated from that fateful second week in November," since the Nazis had stirred up passions which could very well destroy them. In conclusion, the editors called for the Germans themselves and Germany's neighbors to settle the Jewish problem and pleaded for American non-involvement. This same point was taken up by the Jesuit father, Paul L. Blakely, in the December 3, 1938 America. Blakely criticized the American press for an apparent plan to involve the United States in another world war. The attacks on the German Jews were no worse than the atrocities committed against Catholics in Mexico and Spain. This new campaign for "humanity" had all the makings of another period like the years 1914 to 1917 in the author's opinion. With a touch of cynicism, he added that all that was needed would be the repeal of the Johnson Act's

96 The Ave Maria, XLVIII (New Series) (November 26, 1938), 696, and Roy Temple House, "German Catholics Calm in Persecution," 673. House was the chairman of the modern language department at the University of Oklahoma.
neutrality clauses so that certain European powers could carry on a war successfully. 97

Writing in the December 2 Commonweal, Michael Williams called the Nazis "the high priests of an organized false religion which strikes at the very roots of the religion of liberty and love." In was just this type of movement which the combined power of Judaism and Christianity overthrew about two thousand years before. Only two weeks before in the November 18 Commonweal, Williams expressed an opinion that Fascism and Nazism could be endured as long as they tolerated the Catholic Church. 98

Because many of the world's important statesmen uttered no condemnation of the German dictatorship's program, Father Gregory Feige in a Commonweal article entitled "Shall the Jew Perish?" feared that many individuals would begin to link "national progress and success with anti-Semitic policies." The problem was a basic moral one, and some had forgotten that God had created all men to His own image and likeness. 99 Father Feige seemed to imply that others shared the Nazi gangs' guilt. The December 1938 Catholic World added that the recent anti-Semitic campaign

97 America, LX (November 26, 1938), 170, 181-182, and Paul L. Blakely, S.J., "Nazi Atrocities and the German War Fever," (December 3, 1938), 202-203. The author was associate editor of America.

98 Michael Williams, "Views and Reviews," The Commonweal, XXIX (December 2, 1938), 153, and (November 18, 1938), 99-100. The Commonweal editorial comments concerning the anti-Jewish actions, XXIX (November 25, 1938), 113, added nothing of any value.

99 Gregory Feige, "Shall the Jew Perish?" ibid., (December 2, 1938), 177-178. Father Feige was the American representative of the newly established organization called the Opus Sancti Pauli, an international institution to combat anti-Semitism and to work for the conversion of the Jews.
could "bring nothing but shame to the greatness of the German people," for it was "a riot of unreason and the repudiation of a thousand years of culture." 100

Late in 1938 new Nazi laws against the Jews restricted their ownership of property and of stocks and bonds and forbade them to sell and buy gold. The December 14 Christian Century interpreted this as the beginning of a new ghetto system. "By the time it comes, the Jews who remain alive in Germany may be glad to have it." 101 Blackmail was another policy that the National Socialists were considering. According to The New Republic of December 21, the Nazis were proposing to exchange the German Jews for concessions in foreign trade. "For example, a wealthy German Jew may be allowed to escape from the fatherland with three or four poor Jews in his custody, if he can find friends abroad to buy enough German exports to meet the cost of the emigration."

The persecution of Jews was, of course, not a new situation, stated John Palmer Gavit in the January 1939 Survey Graphic, "but never before was there so widespread a reaction of horror." Indicating that he had little faith in the world's moral fabric, Gavit wrote that the world's dictatorships were setting a pattern for retaliation upon themselves when the positions were reversed. 103

100 The Catholic World, CXLVIII (December, 1938), 257-259.
101 The Christian Century, LV (December 14, 1938), 1535.
102 The New Republic, XCVII (December 21, 1938), 189.
"To ask the Nazis to cease their anti-Semitism is to ask them to stop believing their creed, wrote Richard L. G. Deverall in The Catholic World of January 1939. It would be just like asking Christians to stop loving one another. Specifically the Nazi dictatorship was but a means to an end which was "German blood." The cause of the regime's conflict with Christianity as well as Judaism was this basic belief in racism. Any thought of compromise was out of the question, wrote Deverall.\footnote{Richard L. G. Deverall, "Racism," The Catholic World, XLVIII (January, 1939), 398-404. Deverall was the editor of The Christian Front and a teacher of sociology at the Augustinian Seminary at Villanova, Pennsylvania.}

The Commonweal's George N. Shuster found it necessary on December 30, 1938 to come to the defense of the German Jews after they had been attacked by the famous radio priest, Father Charles E. Coughlin, for allegedly aligning themselves with the Communists. The Jews had been misrepresented, for most of them had not even been Social Democrats in 1918, let alone Communists, and "Bolshevism tainted them...far less notably than it did other German groups." Shuster stated that, while some Jews turned to the radical left after 1928, especially when Hitler began his climb to power, many others favored the imposition of a reactionary dictatorship and the solutions of the ultra-conservative parties, that is, of all except the National Socialists. Chancellor Franz von Papen had much overt Jewish support, probably much more than was given to him by his fellow Catholics. The Catholic Center Party also received some backing from the Jews at the polls. The
German Jews had made mistakes, political and otherwise, admitted Shuster, but turning en masse to Communism was not one of them.105

During the greater part of 1939 little response to the German Jews' predicament appeared in American journals. The few major articles which were published, such as the ones by Marvin Lowenthal in the February 1939 Survey Graphic and Father John La Farge in the Catholic quarterly Thought for March 1939, were absorbing but added little which was new to the discussion.106 The interests of the vast majority of the vehicles of American opinion turned elsewhere after the more dramatic attacks on the German Jews ceased.

As might be expected, in its initial stages National Socialist anti-Semitism attracted much attention and usually strong condemnation from the journalists, but no one suggested any really constructive or feasible means for alleviating the sufferings of German Jewry. Even though the National Socialists had loudly broadcast their hatred, the fact that they would actually carry out their threats startled most journalists and editors. Catholic journals, particularly America and The Ave Maria, appeared to be less sympathetic than many others to the Jews' plight and rea-

105 George N. Shuster, "The Jew and Two Persecutions," The Commonweal, XXIX (December 30, 1938), 263.

dy to accept the Nazi justifications of association between the Jews and the Communists. Religious prejudices obviously blinded the Catholic journals to the true significance of the anti-Semitic movement, and rendered their commentary superficial if not actually erroneous.

Starting in 1934, the Jewish problem noticeably moved to the background in the journals, except for its more spectacular manifestations. While a few long articles, mostly by contributors to liberal journals, continued to deplore German anti-Semitism, editorial response almost disappeared. However, by their silence the journals seemed to imply that the worst was over for German Jewry. Even the Nuremberg Laws of 1935 were passed over by all the journals without penetrating commentary. With a significant amount of anti-Jewish legislation already passed, there was really little need for the Nazis to persecute openly the Jews by extra-legal means or by physical assaults; however, the journals did not explore this line of thought. In fact, only a few liberal observers continued to discuss the German anti-Semitic activities and legislation within the broader framework of humanity.

The vicious renewal of the anti-Jewish purge in 1938 received a greater amount of attention from the American journals than any other specific event of this kind since the early days of the regime. While the Nazi regime was recognized for what it was, some observers persisted in arguing that the Nazi leaders would eventually listen to reason on this issue. Now and then an article accurately predicted the ultimate fate of Jews under the
Nazi heel, but the journalists did not dwell long on this subject. During 1939 the journalists' interest in foreign affairs completely overshadowed Nazi anti-Semitism.

The case of the German Jew was adequately presented in the American journals only when he was under overt assault, an unfortunate situation in the light of what would happen to Jewry in the near future.
CHAPTER V

THE NATIONAL SOCIALISTS AND THE
ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Even while the first attacks upon the German Jews in the spring of 1933 were being discussed, the American journals of opinion began to turn to the question of how the Roman Catholic Church would fare under the Hitler regime. As time progressed, this church-state problem became one of the most written-about topics in the periodicals. The American Catholic journals took the lead in the discussion, although the Protestant and secular magazines made a number of important contributions.

*America*, the Jesuit weekly, revealed on April 8, 1933, that the German bishops had on March 28 revoked the ban against Catholic participation in the National Socialist Party. Adolf Hitler, it seems, had promised to respect the rights, duties and doctrines of the Catholic Church in Germany. At this point, *America* almost became an apologist for the regime, a change in policy obviously connected with the German hierarchy's action. Following the new orientation, the same issue of *America* carried a major article by Father Florence D. Sullivan, reviewing the rise of Adolf Hitler and his first two months in power. In spite of the "many unkind rumors" about Hitler, there was little question about his Catholic orthodoxy, according to Father Sullivan. He
was a champion against Communism, and now even the Catholic Center Party had joined him in this struggle. The Jesuit priest recognized the fact that revolution always brought violence, and the fascist revolution in Germany was no exception. It could now be reported however that the government was getting domestic affairs well under control after a few weeks of run-away, "pent-up emotions." In his public utterances Hitler revealed "that he is too sanny to believe that government can be built up or maintained by violence or disregard of the rights of others, or of the principles of justice and fair play." Besides, Father Sullivan thought the German people had too great a love of liberty to allow themselves to be driven into slavery. For a successful fulfillment of his program, Adolf Hitler must work with a united nation, the America article continued. Disorder would not be permissible, but he should not attempt to proscribe any race or religion. The German Catholics remembered well Bismarck's attack, and they would be ready at a moment's notice to withdraw their support from the government. The signs, however, appeared to Sullivan to be "favorable for a complete restoration of a great nation with all the noble ideals and lofty aspirations" which had put Germany "in the vanguard of modern progress."\(^1\)

In contrast to the interest shown by America, The Common- real, for many weeks, remained relatively silent about German affairs with the exception of the Jewish problem. Another Catholic

\(^1\) America, XLIX (April 8, 1933), 23, and Florence D. Sullivan, S.J., "Whither Hitler?" 6-7.
weekly, The Ave Maria, did see fit to comment in its April 29 issue, and like America it seemed ready now to accept Hitler as the new, permanent leader of Germany. His statements with regard to Christianity as the basis of moral life together with what looked like Hitler's desire to settle affairs with the Church in Rome appealed to The Ave Maria's editors.²

This wish for compromise, part of Hitler's plan to render harmless the German churches, got under way in the first half of April 1933, when Vice-Chancellor Franz von Papen was sent to discuss concordat proposals with Vatican officials. Several journals voiced their opinion of the events preceding the concordat signing in July 1933. Among the secular journals, The New Republic for April 19 took note that Hitler could promise Catholic officials "cooperation in a great crusade against Communism." Yet it also wrote:

For those who believe that such an alliance would be a disastrous mistake for the Catholic Church, there is comfort in the realization that the Vatican has seen more than one dictator rise and fall again, and usually conducts its international relations on a basis of the strictest Realpolitik.³

"The hour of complete subjugation has come" for German Catholicism, wrote the more pessimistic Ludwig Lore in the April 19 Nation. Although he believed the "next logical step" to be "Fascist dominance of the Catholic church," some trouble could be antici-

²The Ave Maria, XXXVII (New Series) (April 29, 1933), 335.
³The New Republic, LXXIV (April 19, 1933), 264.
The April 19 *Christian Century* reminded its readers that both Hitler and Papen were Catholics, and although they had "nothing quite so definite" to offer the Catholic Church officials as Mussolini had, "it may be enough." Hitler would "be firmly in saddle" if an agreement could be reached, for it would undoubtedly mean the elimination of the important middle faction in German politics—the Catholic Center Party. This was an accurate picture of what would eventually happen, but in its next issue this Protestant organ seemed delighted to announce that "Vatican diplomacy was too wise to be caught by any promises or persuasions" of the Nazi representatives. The Pope, it was reported, gave them "pleasing trinkets for their wives" but no assurance that the Center Party would come to the side of National Socialism.

The *Christian Century*'s position continued to be that Hitler had "little to give and much to gain" from an agreement with the papacy, but first he would have to prove the stability of his government before the Holy See would reconsider the offer. Similar statements could also be found in *The Nation* for April 26. Nonetheless, both journals had been deceived, for steady progress toward the concordat continued to be made. General editorial

---


5 *The Christian Century*, L (April 19, 1933), 515, and (April 26, 1933), 547.

6 *The Nation*, CXXXVI (April 26, 1933), 458.
comments by America during the last part of April hinted at cooperation between the Catholic Church and Nazism, which was possible, it felt, despite the embryonic totalitarian nature of the German state, and which could save the Christian churches from persecution. It even hinted at the possibility of ex-premier Bruening joining the Hitler Cabinet in order to cement a working agreement between the Nazis and the Centrists.

Editor Michael Williams of The Commonweal finally spoke out about the church-state problem in Germany on May 19 in an article entitled "Hitlerism and Religion." Since Chancellor Hitler had just about consolidated his hold on the government and was getting ready to settle down for a long term of office, the German Catholics—and especially their bishops—faced "a cruel dilemma." Evidence of the great state of uncertainty was seen in the hierarchy's resolution to lift the ban on the National Socialist Party. Williams declared that traditional religion was being confronted with a "racial nationalism exalted to religious fervor." German youth, Catholics included, had been drawn to this movement, creating a "potentially dangerous" situation for the churches.

7 America, XLIX (April 22, 1933), 70-71, and (April 26, (1933), 95.

8 Michael Williams, "Hitlerism and Religion," The Commonweal, XVIII (May 19, 1933), 69. The greater portion of Williams' article reviews and discusses John Mason, "The Catholic Church and Hitlerism," The American Ecclesiastical Review, LXXXVIII (April, 1933), 385-401, and Elmer G. Homrighausen, "Hitler and German Religion," The Christian Century, L (March 29, 1933), 418-420, both cited in the preceding chapter of this dissertation, plus an
lifting of the Church ban on Nazism would do anything to strengthen Catholicism's role in German affairs.

On the other hand, Denis Gwynn, The Sign's correspondent for European news, perceived that German Catholics, in general, had given their support to the Nazi experiment. The Catholic politicians seemed to be making a comeback as a result and could have a restraining influence on the young hotbloods of the National Socialist Party. All this cooperation was being undertaken, said Gwynn, despite the fact that the Center Party had been discredited earlier in the year, more so "than most people outside Germany had expected." 9 Opposed to Gwynn's view were the editorial comments made by The Christian Century on April 26. This major editorial reiterated its confidence in the Catholic Church to stand firm, especially since many of the clergy had not been able to "adjust themselves to the new regime." However, because of the exigencies of the domestic situation, this Protestant weekly expected Hitler to leave the door open until some kind of settlement with the Catholics was worked out. 10

A very significant piece of news from Germany as far as the June 3 America was concerned, and this was the only American journal to respond immediately, evolved around the May meeting of

9 Denis Gwynn, "America and the New European Situation," The Sign, XII (June, 1933), 682-683.

10 The Christian Century, L (April 26, 1933), 550-551.
the German Catholic bishops in their annual assembly at Fulda. Commenting upon a pastoral letter which emanated from this conference, America called it "a magnificent enunciation of religious freedom," although the journal did note that the bishops expressed a willingness to support the national aims of the Nazi regime. The Jesuit journal seemed so eager to believe that everything would now go well for Catholicism in Germany that it refused to accept the American newspaper stories that told of the dissolution of a congress of the German Catholic Journeymen by the Nazi officials in Munich. Showing absolute distrust in the American foreign correspondents, it declared that "it will be well, in the absence of better information, to withhold judgment." What the source of this better information might be, it did not say.

Late June occurrences in Germany drew brief mention in several of the weekly journals. The opinion that a rigorous struggle was under way between the government and both major churches, but that as yet Hitler had been "stopped at the door of the sanctuary," appeared in The Literary Digest. Especially noteworthy were the attacks upon Catholics and Catholic institutions.


12 The Literary Digest, CXVI (July 1, 1933), 16.
Their wait-and-see policy apparently at an end, the editors of *The Commonweal* in the July 7 issue assailed directly the National Socialist program.

It is now quite apparent that the ruthless attempt to uproot and to gradually exterminate all participation or influence of the Jews in Germany—even of the considerable body of Christian Jews—is only one item in the program of realizing the totalitarian state, under which Christianity, either Protestant or Catholic, will be degraded into mere instruments of the triumphant policy of Teutonic race supremacy.14

Writing from Germany to the July 26 *Christian Century*, Reverend Elmer G. Homrighausen pointed out that the tide of Nazism was sweeping into Catholic ranks, where priests were now speaking out on behalf of the regime—a reversal of the situation noted by *The Christian Century* for April 26. This trend worried Homrighausen, whose religious prejudices came to the forefront. A concordat with the German state was apparently being considered by the Vatican, giving Catholicism, he feared, an advantage in a nation which had been "the bulwark of Protestantism."15 The editors of *The Presbyterian Advance*, however, still believed that German Catholics could be counted upon to stand firm against Nazi intimidation, and they suggested that Hitler might well fail in this venture because of joint opposition from both branches of

---

13 Ibid. (July 8, 1933), 13. The same topic drew the attention of *The Nation*, CXXXVII (July 5, 1933), 2; *The New Republic*, LXXV (July 5, 1933), 192-193; and *The Christian Century*, L (July 5, 1933), 867-868.

14 *The Commonweal*, XVIII (July 7, 1933), 255.

Christianity, each with a large number of adherents. The *Advance* felt this way because even Mussolini, who had given the National Socialists many of their ideas, had not been very successful with only one church, the Catholic, to contend with.\(^\text{16}\)

On the other hand, Sidney B. Fay in the August *Current History* discerned the Catholics of Germany being literally clubbed into submission.\(^\text{17}\) Neither did Professor John B. Mason see German Catholicism surrendering meekly to the German government in his article entitled "The Catholic Church in Hitler Germany" in *The American Ecclesiastical Review* for October 1933. Catholic priests and leaders found themselves in jail under "protective arrest" or physically assaulted "because they spoke their minds too freely." Nevertheless, the position of the Catholic Church was strong, contended Mason, who looked to the *Kulturkampf* as an example. He conjectured that there did not have to be another struggle, however, for the German hierarchy was presently willing to cooperate with the regime if the Catholic Church was granted her "minimum and inalienable rights."\(^\text{18}\)

Through the work of the reactionary Catholic Vice-Chancellor Franz von Papen, the German government's representations to the Vatican seeking an accord with the Catholic Church were

---

\(^\text{16}\)*The Presbyterian Advance*, XLVII (July 13, 1933), 5.


\(^\text{18}\)John B. Mason, "The Catholic Church in Hitler Germany," *The American Ecclesiastical Review*, LXXXIX (October, 1933), 381-
finally fruitful in the summer of 1933. Early agreement was reached on July 8, with the Concordat finalized on July 20. Some observers had predicted this action for a number of weeks, but other journalists believed that the German Catholics' traditional spirit of no compromise would prevail to the end. This latter group had failed to comprehend that a settlement with Catholicism had become a most necessary item in Chancellor Hitler's program.

19 The sequence of events leading to the signing of the Concordat was: March 28, German bishops lift the ban on National Socialism; early April 1933, Franz von Papen and Monsignor Ludwig Kaas visit Rome, where the decision is reached to draw up a draft concordat; July 2, the draft is completed; July 2 or 3, Kaas orders the Center Party dissolved; July 8, the Concordat is initialed, and on July 9 news of the signing is released to the press; and July 22, the text of the Concordat is published.

Nor was the depth of the German Catholic leaders' demoralization perceived.

Of the religious journals considered, the Catholic ones were hardest pressed to explain the situation; only The Commonweal seemed eager to take up the task. The announcement of the Nazi-Vatican agreement received a less-than-enthusiastic reception by The Commonweal, which in a major editorial on July 21 cautioned that an appraisal of the document had to wait until it was officially released. Yet by way of background, The Commonweal called attention to the conference of the German Catholic hierarchy at Fulda on June 11, at which the bishops had made clear the Church's stand on National Socialism and what the Nazi state could expect in the way of cooperation with Catholicism. The bishops would respect the new spirit of German nationalism, hoping that it would tend toward "orderly patriotism," but they could not forget the universality of the Catholic Church. The Church was for all nations and races, and this concept ran counter to the racial theories of the government leaders. The prelates found these racial beliefs unacceptable to the Christian conscience, adding that "equality of convictions" was as important as "equality of blood" in achieving a national unity. While maintaining the Church's traditional respect for legitimate authority, the churchmen issued a warning against the "authoritarian principle" prevailing in government circles. The authority of the state "shall not restrict human freedom beyond what is required for the sake of the community's welfare," and, by all means, it should be
How the government intended to interpret the Concordat remained a puzzle for The Commonweal. If it acted according to Christian principles, there would be no struggle. This journal still believed that Hitler and some other Nazis had dealt in sincerity with the Church, but that there were other National Socialist Party radicals who planned to bring the Church under "utter subjugation." Without the support of the dissolved Center Party, which had disbanded on July 5 as part of the price for the Concordat, Catholics in Germany would face unfortunate conditions should the radical approach to state-church affairs be adopted. The bishops were outwardly confident that the Nazi leadership would be faithful to its agreement. The Commonweal, however, did not share this sentiment.20

Later issues of The Commonweal frequently discussed the Concordat. In answer to widespread criticism of the agreement, the August 11 Commonweal presented an historical picture of such treaties, emphasizing the fact that concordats with the separate German states had long been customary and "not a new thing created in a kind of vacuum." Above all, the Church did not intend to give "moral recognition" to the Nazi government. Lacking such a tradition of agreements, the Protestant leaders were forced to surrender to Hitler.

Additional editorial comment appeared in Commonweal's
August 11 and September 1 issues. The former spoke optimistically about Hitler's personal desire for agreement with traditional Christianity; the latter was devoted to a close analysis of certain aspects of the July Concordat. Again it was stated that the Church found many National Socialist beliefs abhorrent. Nevertheless, said The Commonweal, the Nazi dictatorship was the legal government which had been voted into office by a "majority" of the German electorate. For Church recognition, the Hitler government had promised, and it was "a solemn obligation," to respect the rights of the Catholic religion. In this changing world the Church was being forced to deal with fundamentals at the cost of sacrifices. The most fundamental matter that the Church of Rome was concerned with in this era was "the purely spiritual mission of the Church of Christ." Unless the Church could continue to offer the Mass, impart the sacraments, continue her religious instruction and carry on her education facilities, all else would be lost. The editorial smacked of forced rationalization.

George N. Shuster of The Commonweal staff analyzed the effect of the Concordat on Catholic political and religious life in Germany in a signed article, "Germany Under the Concordat," in the same issue. First of all, the German-Papal agreement gave sanction by the Church "to the annihilation of the Center Party."

21 Ibid., (August 11, 1933), 359.
22 Ibid., (September 1, 1933), 419.
The work of many generations had been crushed, but the Vatican seemed to have reasoned, supposedly after gathering evidence from Germany, that the Center Party was weakening and that its survival was doubtful. Shuster agreed: "Though the election statistics of the year 1932 show a remarkably constant vote, there is no doubt that Catholics were rallying to other standards while their places were being taken by liberals who had no other party to support." More significant, according to Shuster, was the "marked personal opposition of Pope Pius to the spread of Bolshevism." Hitler's anti-Communism apparently appealed to the Pontiff.

The Concordat also defined the rights and liberties accorded to the Church. Here, said Shuster, while the German Catholics were pledged not to interfere with the Fascist regime, freedom in the area of religious education was increased, and the right to organise for religious purposes was acknowledged. What groups would be allowed to exist had not been clearly defined in the agreement, but early indications were that the government would be generously liberal. By no means did the Church "sell out" in order to preserve property and privileges, contended Shuster. Rather than retire to the catacombs she chose to stay above ground to preach the gospel to the Nazi-indoctrinated masses. "Time alone can prove whether the decision was right or wrong." Reason, however, appeared to be on the side of Rome, concluded Shuster.²³

²³George M. Shuster, "Germany Under the Concordat," ibid.
Other Catholic periodicals reacted promptly to the Concordat with brief superficial editorial comment (The Ave Maria and, strangely, America) or with more penetrating articles as in the case of The Catholic World and The Sign. The Catholic World's article, by a German observer writing under the pseudonym of Albert Brandt, saw the Concordat as another step in the Fascist scheme to organize a state religion. In spite of this show of friendship, Brandt advanced the idea that the Nazis disliked Catholicism almost as much as Judaism. Of late, only Hitler among the leaders had toned down his anti-Catholic attacks. In an accompanying editorial the same journal pointed to the historical dislike of the Vatican for political parties like the now-suppressed Center Party.

In the September Sign the British correspondent, Denis Gwynn, viewed the German Church agreement as comparable to the Mussolini-Vatican settlement of 1929. Even though it arranged for the demise of the German Catholic Center Party, which had been dissolved in July 1933, Catholic organizations would be permitted free scope in a supposedly totalitarian state. Whether or not this arrangement would work in practice remained to be seen; 420-422.

24 The Ave Maria, XXXVIII (New Series)(July 22, 1933), 119-120; America, XLIX (July 29, 1933), 383; Albert Brandt, "Hitlerism Versus Catholicism," The Catholic World, CXXVII (September, 1933), 641-651; Brandt, according to this journal, was the pseudonym of a well-educated German pacifist who had contributed articles to many American journals; The Catholic World, (August, 1933), 619; Denis Gwynn, "Europe's New Perspective," The Sign, XIII (September, 1933), 74-75.
however, Gwynn himself was very optimistic. In the weeks preceding the Concordat's signing, repeated assaults had occurred on Catholic organizations, laymen, and even on priests. Nazi principles were in basic conflict with Church teachings, and it was very likely that new difficulties would develop. But all-important to remember was that Chancellor Hitler himself desired peace with the Church. He had "committed himself to a policy of cooperation with the Church." With intra-party problems still brewing, Hitler was hoping to rely on Bruening and his followers for support, announced Gwynn, who could not have had any evidence upon which to base this conjecture. Furthermore, he maintained that before the signing of the Concordat many observers had felt that the Catholic Church would be the next National Socialist target.

But the new Concordat with the Holy See at least gives hope that there will be no open conflict during the next months of transition. And the fact that Hitler has enlisted the cooperation of the Centre Party and is determined to protect them from victimization gives much more promise of stability to the new regime than existed hitherto.

At the same time another Catholic spokesman, Father Joseph F. Thornning, eulogized the Centre Party in the September 2 America. He regretted its demise but saw no reason why Hitler would not keep his word about the religious sphere of interest as outlined in the Concordat. 25

The response of the Catholic journals was in most instan-

ces favorable to the action taken by the Holy See; none expressed any real uncertainty that the teaching of Catholic doctrine and the practicing of the Catholic religion would continue unhindered, even though the Center Party had disappeared. There prevailed the general impression that the papacy was fortunate in getting the agreement. All this optimism was based on the assumption that Adolf Hitler made the settlement in good faith, in spite of pressure being applied to him by the "anti-Christian" Nazis. Actually, it was only a matter of a few months before the journals' bright picture of future church-state relations was completely disfigured. 26

Less enthusiasm for the accord was shown by non-Catholic journals, some of which actually believed that the Vatican had "sold-out" to a totalitarian dictatorship. Probably their disappointment stemmed in part from the hope they had formerly expressed, as noted above, of joint Protestant-Catholic opposition forcing a halt in the Nazi anti-religious efforts, and now they felt themselves abandoned by their potential ally. The Hitler government had been successful in eliminating all Catholic opposition now that the Centrist Party was dissolved and priests

26During this period when the Concordat was being praised by most Catholic journalists, a short new item in America, XLIX (August 5, 1933), 430, noted, without elaborating, "further evidence of anti-Christian trends in Hitler's Reich with the July 22, 1933 announcement that a sterilization law had been decreed for Germany. Editorial comment would not appear until several months later when it was becoming evident that the Concordat had not solved all the existing problems between German Catholics and the Nazi state.
forced out of politics, said the July 19 *Christian Century*; thus the Concordat contributed to the evolution of the totalitarian state. The Catholic Church agreed to stay clear of politics, but what was meant by "politics"? *The Presbyterian Advance* asked. Whatever the government's interpretation, the *Advance* suspected that the German Catholics would not let themselves be severely handicapped.

It was a great moral victory for Chancellor Hitler and his government, remarked foreign sources cited in *The Literary Digest*. The conservative *Living Age* for September 1933 thought that the Vatican had surrendered to a "Government that discriminates against Catholics in particular and religion in general," but it added that at least the Catholics fared better than the Protestant church.

Roger Shaw described the agreement as a mutual understanding; all concerned seemed to be satisfied, according to this conservative journalist. The Concordat would not work, predicted Albrecht Paul Maerker-Branden in the same journal, *The Review of Reviews and World's Work*. The Catholic Church recognized neither national boundaries nor racial differences and this fact would spell the eventual doom of the compromise with

---

27 *The Christian Century*, L (July 19, 1933), 924.
28 *The Presbyterian Advance*, XLVII (July 20, 1933), 4.
29 *The Literary Digest*, CXVI (July 22, 1933), 11.
30 *The Living Age*, CCCXLV (September, 1933), 6-7.
31 Roger Shaw, "Has Hitler Scored?" *The Review of Reviews and World's Work*, LXXXVIII (September, 1933), 57.
the National Socialists. The liberal *New Republic*, recalling the history of the German Catholic Church, thought that German Catholicism was still a force to be reckoned with. This journal stated that "the famous shrewdness and political sagacity of German Catholicism will find new channels" to contend with National Socialism.

In one of many articles for *The Literary Digest* during 1933, Reverend Stanley High mentioned on October 14 that already trouble could be brewing between the Nazi government and the Catholic Church. Nazi interference with Catholic activities had increased, and rumors had it that the Vatican was ready to renounce the July Concordato. This was the first mention anywhere of such rumors. It would be several months before the Catholic journals began to comment on the possibility of further difficulties between the National Socialists and Catholicism. Catholic reports in the autumn continued to be generally optimistic about the future.

On October 3, 1933, a group of prominent conservative German Catholics headed by Vice-Chancellor Franz von Papen founded a new organization called the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft Katholischer Deutscher*, which sought to promote closer ties between Catholics and

---

32 Albrecht Paul Maerker-Branden, "Germany, Hitler, and Austria," *ibid.*, 40. The author was a German-born journalist who had turned conservative after an early career as a radical.

33 *The New Republic*, LXXV (August 2, 1933), 300.

34 Stanley High, "Hitler's One-Purpose Government," *The Literary Digest*, CXVI (October 14, 1933), 12, 34.
the Hitler regime. The November 11 Ave Maria was the only journal giving immediate attention to this development. It felt, under the circumstances, that the safest course for Catholicism had been taken, but it also pointed out that Catholics could not forget the duties of their faith when cooperating with the National Socialists. Two weeks later The Ave Maria reminded its readers that "since the Pope had made concordats with two Fascist States, he probably considers Fascism an altogether legitimate form of government." To give weight to its argument, the November 25 Ave Maria quoted Father Owen Dudley, the English novelist, who interpreted Fascism as a movement aiming "to re-establish a political and social order based upon the traditions that have formed out European civilization." Fascism was the "only political and social system powerful enough to conquer Communism." A form of government which went to extremes was bad, admitted the journal, "but there seems to be every indication that Fascism, in the hands of reasonable men, would give the Church fuller exercise of her rights, because of its opposition to Communism and Freemasonry." 35 Neither The Ave Maria nor Father Dudley recorded that Pope Pius XI had made it clear in his encyclical of June 29, 1931, Non abbiamo bisogno, that no good Catholic could be Fascist.

Just a week before this Ave Maria column appeared, Father Wilfrid Parsons in the November 18 America had classified Hitler

35The Ave Maria, XXXVIII (New Series) (November 11, 1933), 632, and (November 25, 1933), 695-696.
Germany as a totalitarian state, which would seem to rule out any of that reasonableness looked for by The Ave Maria. The Catholic World in December 1933 took a more cautious approach. Reports of Catholic-Nazi difficulties with the persecution of priests might not have been true, but all signs indicated that the details had not been hammered out between the two groups represented in the Concordat of July 1933.

As for the Protestant journals, the November 29 Christian Century related that the German Catholic newspaper Germania, once the official voice of the Catholic Center Party and partly owned by Franz von Papen, had in a recent editorial called for a Christian alliance to protect the common faith of all religions from the "threat of the government." Apparently the July agreement with the government was not working smoothly in the eyes of the Catholic church officials, the Century speculated. In spite of recent election triumphs, the Nazis had "overshot their mark," with regard to their arbitrary treatment of the churches. The November 30 Presbyterian Advance seemed delighted to recount that German Catholics had been seeking ways to unite with their Protestant brethren in the church-state struggle.

36 Wilfrid Parsons, S.J., "Totalitarianism," America, L (November 18, 1933), 150. Father Parsons was editor-in-chief of America from 1925 to 1936.

37 The Catholic World, CXXXVIII (December, 1933), 358.

38 The Christian Century, L (November 29, 1933), 1491-1492.

39 The Presbyterian Advance, XLVIII (November 30, 1933), 5.
The weekly Nation for November 29 also praised Protestant and Catholic cooperation against "anti-religious new heathenism"; it likewise expressed concern for those brave men who had openly defied the dictatorship. Although not extraordinary, The Nation's interest in the fate of the religious was unusual. "It is counter-revolution," declared the enthusiastic Reverend Stanley High in his December 2 Literary Digest article, "The German Clergy's Defy to Hitlerism." "Only the Church, Protestant and Catholic, provided an opposition that refused to flatten." The Nazis were finding out the hard way that the Christian conscience could not be strong-armed. While the pressure upon the German government from religious leaders of the rest of the world had been tremendous, the Protestant clergyman thought it too early to discern Hitler's reaction. Certainly to control religion was an essential part of the Fuehrer's plan for the totalitarian state.

While the Protestant journalists in general, as well as the secular periodical The Nation, were heartened by signs of religious cooperation in Germany, an editorial in the Catholic weekly America for December 9 placed a good deal of the blame for the rampant German paganism on Protestant over-enthusiasm; however, three weeks later America's short editorial column praised the orthodox Protestants for their "gallant fight for Christian indepen-

40 The Nation, CXXXVII (November 29, 1933), 607.
41 Stanley High, "The German Clergy's Defy to Hitlerism," The Literary Digest, CXVI (December 2, 1933), 12.
In a survey of the German religious problems, Sidney B. Fay told his readers in the January 1934 *Current History* that Michael Cardinal Faulhaber of Munich had become the leading voice of German Catholicism, demanding in a December 3 sermon the carrying out of the Concordat guarantees and criticizing the beliefs advanced by the neo-pagan Nazis. The whole business of the churches and the state had become such a serious affair that Fay believed Chancellor Hitler had sought to dissociate himself and government authorities from the conflict.\(^4\)

The January 1934 *Catholic World* expressed some apprehension about the future of German Christianity after hearing of Faulhaber's speech.\(^4\)

That American Catholic journals were beginning to grow uncomfortable about the Hitler government did become evident in late 1933 and early 1934. At the very moment when most Catholics were congratulating themselves for the way German Catholicism had managed to win the Concordat, a new Nazi decree on July 25 was published making sterilization of defectives the law of the land, effective at the beginning of 1934. *America* had mildly criticized the Nazi measure on August 5; however, its October 21 issue directed a much sterner warning to the German government in an edi-

\(^4\) *America*, L (December 9, 1933), 220, and (December 30, 1933), 312.

\(^4\) Sidney B. Fay, "German Churchmen Defy the Nazis," *Current History*, XXXIX (January, 1934), 482-483.

\(^4\) The *Catholic World*, CXXXVIII (January, 1934), 493.
torial on the subject of medical ethics in general. Whether it
be euthanasia or sterilization did not make a difference morally.
But the fact that the National Socialists were tempering with the
laws of nature was "Hitler barbarism."

One shudders at the possible effects of the Hitler
plan in operation. By hampering medical research and making it pointless, the plan fosters the spread of disease. By weakening the integrity of the physician, it destroys public confidence in the medical profession. By assuming an authority over life and death which belongs to God alone, it directly attacks His sovereignty. Under this barbaric policy, instead of staffing our hospitals for the incurable with able and humane physicians we shall staff them not with public executioners, acting under the rightful power of the State, but with murderers.45

No matter how bad the situation, America nevertheless
seemed to retain confidence in the future concerning German af-
fairs. On December 2 one of its editorials advised a Nazi offi-
cial in Bavaria, who was reportedly unhappy with the Catholic bi-
shops' response to the recent National Socialist legislation, to take "the easiest road to Canossa." Another America editorial on
January 6, 1934, admitted that there was little that was "cheerful" to discuss, but it refused to concede that the Nazis might hold the upper hand in the church-state struggle. Signs of ten-
sion between the Catholic Church and the Hitler government were very apparent, as seen in the Catholic bishops' protest against the government's "immoral" medical legislation. Chancellor Hit-
ler had yet to learn that it was folly to attack "considerable bodies in the State purely on the ground of their religious or

45 America, L (October 21, 1933), 50-52.
racial affiliation," editorialized the Jesuit weekly. The German nation must look to its Catholic citizens "for redemption." America thought that "at the proper time the Bishops will announce their program," but it still wondered how long "religious-minded" Germans could tolerate the "extravagances of Hitlerism." One other article in the February 10, 1934 America, written by its editor, Wilfrid Parsons, discussed sterilization in general and mentioned the German legislation only briefly.46

The only Commonweal recognition of the National Socialist medical legislation was a general article by a Catholic physician, James J. Walsh, appearing on February 2, 1934. Walsh seemed equally disturbed by the evils of modern science and by the German government. Although it did not mention the sterilization law by name, an article by Commonweal staff member George N. Shuster showed more than mild concern over the situation in Germany. He wrote on January 6, 1934, that few realized just how difficult it was for the representatives of religion to carry on in Nazi Germany. With particular reference to the Catholic Church, he believed that even German Catholics were unaware of the government pressures on so-called "political priests." A censored press made it appear that only a few clergymen had been removed to concentration camps for criticizing the new order. Actually, Shuster said, the religious struggle was "a great, fateful and bitterly

46 Ibid., (December 2, 1933), 195-196; (January 6, 1934), 315; and Wilfrid Parsons, S.J., "Sterilization Is Criminal Fol- ly!" (February 10, 1934), 445-447.
contested action." What made the entire affair more secret was the fact that the German bishops did not want to appeal for foreign support in order "to avoid the stigma of what is now called 'treason.'" Religious journalism and education had already been struck severe blows by the state. Catholics with Jewish blood had lost their places in society and could find relief in neither Hebrew nor Catholic circles. Shuster called for an alliance of Catholicism, Protestantism and Judaism against the "brutal, inchoate, fantastic but primitive" creed of National Socialism. These must stand united, "cost what it may."

Two other Catholic journals commented briefly and superficially about the sterilization legislation. The January 1934 
Sign declared for the first time that it had considered the Nazi-Catholic conflict inevitable. "The Church is the guardian of morality as well as of doctrine. And anything that strikes at the Catholic idea of the natural and Christian dignity of man the Church will not only resent but emphatically condemn." The following month's Catholic World felt happy to report that "the Church authorities protested so effectively in Germany that they won three important concessions from the Government." Catholic hospitals and doctors were to be exempt from the law, and Catholics sentenced to sterilization were to be permitted to "enter


48 The Sign, XIII (January, 1934), 325.
some institution" rather than submit to the operation.\textsuperscript{49}

No Protestant periodical dwelled upon the German medical
laws, but three secular journals offered a few comments. Both
\textit{The New Republic} and \textit{The Nation} for January 3, 1934\textsuperscript{50} now real-
ized that Hitler was not joking when he proposed sterilization
legislation. They viewed this law an another weapon over the
heads of the Nazis' victims, although basically they approved of
such operations. A few weeks later \textit{The New Republic} cited a Ger-
man report which told of the use of the sterilization laws against
political prisoners. This journal wondered whether the German
Jews would be next to fall under the law.\textsuperscript{51} The most complete re-
porting of the German sterilization legislation was performed by
Sidney B. Fay in the October 1933 \textit{Current History}. Professor Fay
made no moral judgment concerning the law, nor did he discuss
possible repercussions.\textsuperscript{52}

Editor James E. Clarke of \textit{The Presbyterian Advance}, on
one hand, in an article entitled "The Church Issue in Germany,"
bemoaned the fate of German Protestantism and praised the "saga-
city" of the Catholic clergy for securing a treaty with the Nazi
state; at the same time he wrote an editorial sympathizing with

\textsuperscript{49} \textit{The Catholic World}, CXXXVIII (January, 1934), 493.
\textsuperscript{50} \textit{The New Republic}, LXXVII (January 3, 1934), 208, and
\textit{The Nation}, CXXXVIII (January 3, 1934), 3.
\textsuperscript{51} \textit{The New Republic}, LXXVII (January 31, 1934), 321.
\textsuperscript{52} Sidney B. Fay, "The Sterilization Laws," \textit{Current History}, XXXIX (October, 1933), 103-104.
German Catholicism because it was under severe attack from the government.\(^{53}\) This situation would seem to indicate that the German Catholics were far less shrewd than at first perceived by Clarke. *The Christian Century* of February 21, 1934, told of Catholic priests "being subjected to astonishing physical indignities,"\(^{54}\) a matter not yet stressed in most Catholic periodicals except in the January 6 *Commonweal* article by George N. Shuster.

On January 24, 1934, Adolf Hitler named Alfred Rosenberg, the theoretician of the Nazi Party and one of the leading advocates of the neo-pagan cult, to the post of supervisor of the spiritual and ideological training of the National Socialist organization, including the Hitler youth. His tome, *Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts* (*The Myth of the Twentieth Century*), espousing racial superiority and purity, was placed on the *Index of Forbidden Books* by Catholic Church officials on February 9, 1934. At the same time as Rosenberg's appointment, pressure was being applied to bring the Catholic youth groups into the Nazi organization. Commenting on these developments, the March 1934 *Catholic World* declared that only with great difficulty could anyone preserve his religious faith in an organization supervised by Alfred Rosenberg. Furthermore, it rejected the recent efforts by Franz von Papen and his conservative Catholic youth associates to take the

---

\(^{53}\) James E. Clarke, "The Church Issue in Germany," *The Presbyterian Advance*, XLVIII (February 6, 1934), 7, 4.

\(^{54}\) *The Christian Century*, LI (February 21, 1934), 244.
Catholic Church out of all non-spiritual activities.\textsuperscript{55} The March 17 \textit{Ave Maria} bristled with indignation. Attempts would be made, no doubt, to introduce Germanic cult ideas into the Catholic Church, but

if Hitler thinks the German Catholics will tolerate any such action without organized resistance, he doesn't know by this time that it doesn't pay, in the long run, to oppose the Catholic Church. The past is a good indication of what may be expected in the future.\textsuperscript{56}

Unfortunately \textit{The Ave Maria}'s expectations were not to be fulfilled in the nineteen-thirties, for the main ingredients of the struggle were very much different from those in the past.

On March 24, 1934, \textit{America} called attention to the recent speeches of the Nazi leader of the Hitler youth movement, Baldur von Schirach. His demands for the seizure of Catholic educational and young people's organizations were in direct violation of the July 1933 Concordat. If the government insisted, this activity could light the fuse of a new \textit{Kulturkampf}, said \textit{America}. Again with reference to the struggle for the minds of the German youth, a major \textit{America} editorial entitled "The School Fight in Germany" said on March 24: "It is daily becoming clearer that the temper of the Nazi Government is definitely anti-Christian and anti-religious." Germany was seeking the level of Soviet Russia, but before it sank there, \textit{America} (which in 1932 naively trusted the good sense of the German people to keep Hitler out of the government) believed that the German people would reassert their

\begin{footnotes}
\item[55]\textit{The Catholic World}, CXXXVIII (March, 1934), 747.
\item[56]\textit{The Ave Maria}, XXXIX (New Series) (March 17, 1934), 344.
\end{footnotes}
authority. If they failed, Nazism would be a "permanent menace to civilization." 57

In the April Current History, Sidney B. Fay noted the "sharp friction" developing between the Nazis and the Catholics and called attention to the fact that Michael Cardinal Faulhaber of Munich had been urging German Protestants and Catholics to unite against the pagans. 58 "The tide of Nazi resentment" appeared to be rising against Catholic priests everywhere, in the opinion of the March 7 Christian Century, and on April 11 this journal cited the fact that Pope Pius XI had spoken out on Easter in praise of the young Catholics' perseverance in the face of pagan propaganda. There was no question, as far as the Century was concerned, that the pontiff was alluding to the German situation. 59

The Catholic phase of the religious struggle continued to hold the spotlight throughout the spring of 1934, more than any other issue concerning Nazi Germany, and was given full coverage by the religious-oriented journals, plus some attention by the others. On April 14 America voiced its objections to the suppression of German Catholic newspapers, but it also found that nothing had been done so far by the National Socialists to deter the bishops from their constant attack upon German paganism. Was

57 America, L (March 24, 1934), 602, 582-583.
59 The Christian Century, LI (March 7, 1934), 309, and (April 11, 1934), 483.
Hitler at fault for fostering this pagan trend, wondered America, or was the blame to be placed on certain radical elements of his Party? Was it not possible for Chancellor Hitler to control these people? America admitted that it was difficult to find the answers. Many German supporters of the Nazi leader were certain that he was anti-pagan and would soon put a stop to the "ravings of his wild men." While it had given hints that it mistrusted the intentions of Adolf Hitler and that it was on the verge of issuing a condemnation of the man for his role in the past year's events in Germany, America here showed that it was not yet ready to admit that Hitler personally controlled German affairs.

Perhaps America was influenced in its cautious treatment of the German Fuehrer by the fact that negotiations over further application of the Concordat had resumed between the German government and Vatican officials on April 9, 1934. In any event, America was silent editorially with respect to Germany as long as the fruitless talks continued. This, however, was not the case for other journals, both Catholic and non-Catholic, during April and May.

A second Vatican-German concordat, this one more exact with regard to church-state relations, was in the offing, responded the April 18 Christian Century. This Protestant organ also desired to see a brighter future for Germany, and the Catholic Church seemed to be the key. The Nazi government did not intend

---

60 America, LI (April 14, 1934), 5.
to get itself involved with another Kulturkampf, and besides that, the Century pointed out, "Hitler is a Catholic, as Bismarck was not." Moreover, the papal diplomats knew well how to compromise with secular rulers. If matters were worked out with the Catholics, a compromise between Hitler's government and the German Protestant sects would very likely follow. 61

The April 21 Literary Digest implied that the direct intervention by the Vatican in the German religious dispute was necessitated by the weakness of the Catholic forces in Germany. That Chancellor Hitler, apparently willing to settle the differences with the Catholic Church officials, was reportedly investigating the anti-Catholic actions of his followers was the purely speculative news received by this journal. 62

On the one hand, the Catholic Church was praised by the liberal Nation of April 25 for her stand against the Hitler government, but, on the other hand, the Church was criticized for abandoning her political vehicles—the Center Party and the Bavarian People’s Party—when she placed her trust in the National Socialists' promises of the 1933 Concordat. Of course the Church had many material interests at stake, but for her mistake German Catholicism was paying dearly. The Nation, however, hesitated to place any reliance on Catholicism in negotiations with the Nazis. The Catholic Church was not fundamentally opposed to National

61 The Christian Century, LI (April 18, 1934), 516-517.
62 The Literary Digest, CXVII (April 21, 1934), 16.
Socialism.

The Catholic church is not opposed to fascism. It made its peace with Mussolini and actively participated in the fascist domination of Austria. As fascism developed from a small sect to a mass movement, the church discovered much of which it approved and by which it might profit. Fascism may divide church and state and may deprive the former of some of its prerogatives, but it fosters religion and its concrete expression, the church, as the most effective means of bringing the masses to humble obedience to authority. Mussolini, the Anarchist-Socialist of an earlier day, introduced the cross into the classroom and religious instruction into the curriculum of every public school in the land. In the same way Hitler ordered that the schools of the country be permeated with religion—his religion to be sure—to lay the spiritual foundation for the acceptance of National Socialism's ideals.

The Catholic church in Germany is putting up a courageous fight with heathen perversions. Backed by Rome, it is today the strongest force that can be brought into action against the National Socialist regime. And yet it may take its stand in line with German fascism if and when the Hitler regime accedes to its demands.63

There was no "bargaining" between the Church and the Nazis, asserted The Sign in May 1934, contradicting press reports that the Church had sacrificed principle as well as abandoned German Catholics to their fate. "It looks as if some of our American editors," who remained nameless, "were more concerned with sensationalism than veracity," contended this Catholic monthly. "The Catholic Church has not retreated one inch before the insanity of Hitler and his lieutenants," was a statement which seemed to ignore the July 1933 treaty. As far as The Sign was concerned, a bitter struggle, with the entire Catholic population up in arms, was going on in Germany, with all the faithful ready to suffer

63 The Nation, CXXXVIII (April 21, 1934), 16.
A good example of one extreme of American Catholic periodical response to the affairs in Germany could be seen in *The Catholic World* for May 1934. An editorial, probably written by Father James Gillis, was unconcerned with Nazism in its political form and "the attitude of the German leaders to their internal affairs" as long as they stayed out of the realm of theology. Once they began to meddle with the Christian religion, it was the responsibility of every Christian to react. "But now the die is cast. The ultimate is clear, the gauntlet is down, the conflict is on. It is Christianity against heathenism...." In another comment the editor rekindled the hope that the German leaders may yet return to a reasonable policy. "I venture to think that Adolf Hitler would give his right eye to stop the prairie fire started by his own attacks on the Jews. He cannot be such a fool as his absurd mustache, his gestures, his grimaces and his wild utterances would seem to make him." It is difficult to see how the editor could have ignored the totalitarian ideology and all its manifestations as espoused by the Nazi leaders, especially since it was through political action that the National Socialists were able to strike successfully at the Church organizations.

While exploring the problem of German paganism—"a kind of bastard Christianity"—in the Summer 1934 *American Scholar*,

---

64 *The Sign*, XIII (May, 1934), 579.

Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr found that some German Catholics were willing to go much further in their opposition to Nazism than The Catholic World editor. It was to the credit of German Catholicism, Niebuhr believed, that the "average Catholic priest" had been more consistently aware of the scope of activities and the total evils of Nazism than his Protestant brethren. He had been less vocal, to be sure, but in the end the Catholic opposition might well prove to be more effective. Niebuhr fully recognized that because the Catholic opposition had been political as well as religious, more Catholic priests than Protestant clergymen were inmates of the government's concentration camps.

As the summer of 1934 approached, despairing reports concerning the Catholic aspect of the German church struggle continued to appear, although the Nazi pressure on the Church had abated temporarily. The least optimistic review of the German Catholic position was written by a leading Catholic layman, George N. Shuster, for The Commonweal. Having pointed out earlier in the May 11 issue the essential similarity between Nazism and Communism, on June 29 Shuster appealed to American Catholics to awake to the seriousness of the German religious situation. "Those who still believe that the letter of a papal concordat will prevail against barbarism are living in a fool's paradise." Contrary to the often heard rumor, there would not occur another "Canossa" in Germany, explained Shuster. It would be disastrously fatalistic.

for Catholics to sit back without concern in anticipation of an inevitable papal victory. In the modern world victory was only possible "when the last man on the fringe of the battlefield is wholly conscious of his duty and his responsibility." Injurious to German Catholics was the Jewish boycott of German goods, because it affected chiefly the industrial area where Catholics comprised the majority of the population. The "inevitable consequence" was that anti-Semitic nationalism and Hitlerism were bound to increase in these Catholic regions. Perhaps, mused Shuster, the old-fashioned idea of prayer and sacrifice on the part of the world's Catholics might be the only thing left to help the Church in Germany.67

Shuster's realistic appraisal seemed to be echoed by other Catholic observers. For instance, America on June 16 wrote that a crisis was building and that hopes for a new Church-state compromise had almost vanished. The bishops were meeting again at Fulda, and a bold statement was expected from the gathering.68 Writing in The Sign for July 1934, Denis Gwynn announced that what appeared to him to have been several months of "comparative truce in the relations between the new German State and the Church," had been broken by Dr. Joseph Goebbels on May 11 with a blistering speech against Cardinal Faulhaber, Archbishop of Munich.


68America, LI (June 16, 1934), 239.
Although the author found the Nazis doing everything possible to make life uncomfortable for German Catholics, ecclesiastical officials, he insisted, were striving earnestly to heal the breach. He actually believed that their efforts might succeed "in an atmosphere of good-will." "The Church has nothing to gain, and much to lose, by an protracted quarrel with the Nazi Government," observed Gwynn.69

On the eve of the June 30, 1934 Roehm Purge, relations between the Hitler government and the Catholic Church seemed to be deteriorating, in the estimation of American observers; however, in Germany Catholic negotiators (three members of the German hierarchy: Archbishop Konrad Grober of Freiburg and Bishops Wilhelm Berning of Osnabruck and Nicholaus Bares of Hildesheim) on the further implementation of the 1933 Concordat seemed willing to make what amounted to great concessions with respect to the disbanding of Catholic lay organizations. The killing of such Catholic leaders as the Berlin Catholic Action director, Dr. Erich Klausener, and Adalbert Probst, a spokesman for the Catholic youth organizations, in the June 30 purge, as well as the objections made by Adolf Cardinal Bertram of Breslau to the many concessions offered the Nazi government by the Catholic delegates, postponed indefinitely the final signing. Negotiations finally collapsed in January 1935.

Notwithstanding the murders of leading German Catholics in late June, the Protestant weeklies, The Christian Century for July 18 and the July 12 Presbyterian Advance, both subscribed to the theory that the Nazi-Catholic problems would soon be settled. However, The Christian Century believed the latest trend to be one of compromise, since it reported that Cardinal Faulhaber had made it known that the Catholic Church was willing to treat the Nazi government more favorably if "its new orientation will agree that the totalitarian state has no control over church affairs." On the other hand, The Presbyterian Advance, considering the pending Catholic-German government agreement on Catholic lay institutions, erred in calling it a victory for Catholicism. While voicing its admiration for the Catholic leaders, it criticized the German Protestants for failing to emulate their Catholic brethren's courage and persistence.

One such example of courage was the letter drawn up in early June 1934 by the German bishops at their annual assembly at Fulda. Although this document approved of the concessions being offered the German government in the negotiations, it was candid in its protest against the spread of paganism and against Nazi interference with Catholic Church organization activities. A single Catholic journal, The Sign, treated as significant this message which was ultimately forbidden publication inside Germany. The letter drafted by the bishops was called "forthright and im-

70 The Christian Century, LI (July 18, 1934), 939-940, and The Presbyterian Advance, XLIX (July 12, 1934), 5.
pressive" by the August Sign.

This courageous condemnation of the Hitler-Goebbels-Rosenberg program..., coming at such a critical period, serves to prove to the entire world that the Roman Catholic Church will not suffer the pagan Nazi ideas to be spread among the people but will withstand them to the last ditch.71

The direction that the negotiations took over what would happen to the Catholic organizations received no penetrating comments from The Sign or any other magazine. As a matter of fact, for some time little discussion with respect to the German Catholic problems could be found in either the Catholic or non-Catholic journals. The National Socialists' pressure upon the Church was relaxed for several months, since the Saar plebiscite was scheduled for January 1935, and Catholics were very numerous in that territory.72

The most incisive article on Catholic Church problems in Germany in the five months preceding the Saar vote was by G. E. W. Johnson in the November 1934 North American Review. He opined that the Catholic Church alone remained outside the German totalitarian state, mainly because of her own authoritarian structure. The evangelical church had fallen before the Nazi steamroller because the Nazis had been able to infiltrate and undermine the

71 The Sign, XIV (August, 1934), 3. The Fulda pastoral is mentioned briefly with only mild enthusiasm by America, LI (June 16, 1934), 239, and The Catholic World, CXXXIX (August, 1934), 618.
72 The details of the pre- and post-plebiscite journal response will be covered in a subsequent chapter on foreign affairs, although there appear frequent references to the German Catholic Church.
Protestant church's democratic structure. Several prominent leaders of the National Socialist Party were Catholics, including Hitler and Goebbels, and some inroads had been made by the movement among the Catholic faithful. The Catholic hierarchy had made an impressive stand against the National Socialists, and so far, the bishops had escaped persecution. The Hitlerites had instead taken the offensive against subordinate clergy in order to prevent the creation of prominent martyrs of the Bismarck Kulturkampf variety. Arrests had reached their peak in the early months of 1934 and had since abated to prevent bad impressions among the Catholic population in the Saarland. Johnson felt that both parties of the 1933 Concordat still wished to prevent a "head-on collision." The Nazis hoped to be able to work on the German Catholic masses through propaganda. Johnson believed, however, that the pressures would quicken once the Saar question was decided. A similar drive against the Protestant rebels accelerated as soon as Hindenburg passed away in August 1934.73

Only one Catholic journal printed an analytical article concerning Catholic-Nazi relations at the close of 1934. Anonymously written, the article appeared in the December 7 Commonweal and depicted the Catholic Church as coming out second best to the Hitler regime. German Catholicism was "in an exceedingly serious plight." Clearly evident was the fact that the government was "absolutely anti-Christian" and "absolutely anti-Catholic."

Agreements signed with Hitler were of no value. The 1933 Concordat was "invariably interpreted to the disadvantage of the Church." All questions were considered "political," thereby excluding the Church from any influence upon public opinion. The National Socialist control over the education of Germany's youth would pay dividends later, if permitted to endure for long. Young Germany would "forget what a truly Christian milieu is like." Unlike Marxism, declared the author, Nazism appeared as a force hostile to Christian principles, "adroitly camouflaged" as something called "positive Christianity." On September 8, The Ave Maria, in a short editorial, had declared that there was "little difference between this teaching and that of Soviet Russia," indicating that it, too, was making a more serious appraisal of the German religious problem than in the past.

Extensive commentaries on the position of the Catholic Church in Germany did not reappear in quantity until the early spring of 1935, following the Saar plebiscite, although The Commonweal of January 4, 1935 noted that "a silent but dogged war" between Nazism and Christianity continued. Much of the discussion by the Catholic periodicals appears to be of dubious value. Writing in two successive issues of The Commonweal, journalist

74 Anonymous, "Catholics in Germany," The Commonweal, XXI (December 7, 1934), 163-165. This journal called the author a distinguished German Catholic publicist, author and leader.

75 The Ave Maria, XL (New Series) (September 8, 1934), 311.

76 The Commonweal, XXI (January 4, 1935), 274.
George Seldes found, first of all, that Adolf Hitler's opponents had been taken by surprise when he turned out to be a much more impatient man than his Italian counterpart, Benito Mussolini. The German Fascist government took less than two years to achieve the totalitarian state which, only in rudimentary form, took the Italians almost ten. "Hitler orders the Fascist state to begin functioning at once. No one, priest or politician, must stand in the middle of the road. There is no time to waste." For this political situation the Center Party was "indirectly" to blame. Seldes stated that the German Catholic political party's refusal to commit itself "to one year's 'toleration' of Hitler in the Reichstag" back in February 1933, forced Hitler "to make the March election a mandate for dictatorship." This account was a clear distortion of the facts.

Other departures from reality occurred in Seldes' second article on March 1. While stronger than she had been in several decades, the Catholic Church, in Seldes' opinion, still found herself running behind "the march of the dictators" and "the super-nationalism of the twentieth century." So far, however, he argued that the Church had been able to safeguard satisfactorily the rights of Catholics. The Vatican still managed to stand out as a beacon of moral force and peace. With an air of confidence Seldes stated: "Today the Church is more alert than ever in its history to the political and moral currents in which modern society is caught." Most assuredly Seldes could be questioned on...
whether the compromise was working in Nazi Germany and whether the Catholic response to the government plan of action was at the moment adequate. Seldes must have been aware that negotiations for greater clarification of the points in the 1933 Concordat dealing with Catholic lay institutions had finally broken down at the end of January 1935. The Fuehrer had announced that he would follow through with the agreement negotiated with the German bishops in June 1934, in which the prelates had granted unnecessary concessions.

Little that had not been said before by others was written by Professor Patrick W. Browne in an article entitled "Another Kulturkampf" for the March 2 Ave Maria. He misinformed his readers by citing the German Catholic clergy as a "solid phalanx" against the Nazi regime. Germany under National Socialism, in his opinion, was a "more lurid picture" than the terrors of the French Revolution and what existed in Soviet Russia. Browne borrowed a recent argument from America on this last point. The Jesuit journal's February 23 editorial, while discussing the problems of Catholic education in Germany, rated the religious struggle in the Reich to be "less keen" than the one confronting

(February 22, 1935), 471, and (March 1, 1935), 506. This American journalist and sociologist had written numerous books about the American press and international affairs.

the Church in either Mexico or Soviet Russia.\textsuperscript{79} The Catholic World editorial for April 1935 contributed little but the pronouncement that Adolf Hitler was probably a "lunatic" if he thought the Church would collapse before his dictatorship.\textsuperscript{80}

There was no apparent easing of Nazi pressures. More and more clergymen were being arrested, and harassment of the various Catholic institutions was increasing, but "the situation will doubtless get much worse before it grows better," in the words of a May 10 Commonweal editorial.\textsuperscript{81} On May 18 America's editors likewise considered the situation in Germany very grave. The Hitler regime was leaving "nothing untried that may outrage the feelings of the religious inhabitants of that country." Some of the attacks and denunciations had proceeded from extremists outside of official circles, yet these were tolerated by the government. Nevertheless, the evidence seemed to show that the regime itself, led by many of its highest officeholders, had taken charge of the anti-religious program for more than a year. America, as usual, had confidence that German Catholics would triumph over this oppressive and insane rule, as their fathers had over Bismarck.\textsuperscript{82} But an American visitor in Germany, Edith Fernbach, told the readers of America that it did not seem likely that

\textsuperscript{79}America, LII (February 23, 1935), 461.  
\textsuperscript{80}The Catholic World, CXLI (April, 1935), 3.  
\textsuperscript{81}The Commonweal, XXII (May 10, 1935), 31.  
\textsuperscript{82}America, LIII (May 18, 1935), 122-123.
German Catholics alone could overcome the National Socialists.\textsuperscript{83}

More penetrating articles appeared occasionally. The editors of \textit{The Commonweal} reminded Catholics on May 24 that in essence National Socialism was a religious movement. "It is the offspring of the bottomless secularization and apostatizing of modern man, who is no longer capable of reverencing--despite his errors--his purity of Christianity, and must now try to subordinate even this to issues involving power and gain."\textsuperscript{84} Writing in the June 1935 \textit{Current History}, Professor Charles Sarolea showed how, for the philosophy of National Socialism, the church had to be a national institution. According to the Nazis, a so-called universal church was "an unreal monstrosity." The doctrine of the separation of temporal and spiritual powers was "a heresy and a crime against the Germans!"

In order, therefore, that the new German religion may discharge its vital national function, Rosenberg demands the uncompromising elimination of the Old Testament, the repudiation of the abortive attempt to transform and degrade the Germans spiritually into Jews, the elimination of all the dogmatic foundations of historic Christianity, whether they are Roman Catholic or Lutheran or Calvinistic. He demands the suppression of the Cross, and instead of the dreary and degrading dogmas and malignant symbols of the present churches he wants the new German Church to substitute the Nordic myths and sagas.

\textsuperscript{83} Edith Fernbach, "Catholic Life in Nazi Germany," \textit{ibid.}, (May 25, 1935), 153-154. Miss Fernbach was an eyewitness of what was taking place in Germany.

\textsuperscript{84} The Editors, "Reply," \textit{The Commonweal}, XXII (May 24, 1935), 94. This was a reply to the Reichbishop Ludwig Mueller, whose article on the church and state in Germany, "Church and State in Germany," appeared on pages 93 and 94 of this issue of \textit{The Commonweal}. 
and fairy tales which alone, since the beginning of time, have expressed German aspirations and ideals and represented German moral values.85

Three contemporary Catholic journals also expressed concern over the inroads being made by neo-paganism.86 An America editorial considered the damage inflicted upon the minds of the German youth almost "irreparable." Although America did not say so explicitly, it appeared to be waiting for Hitler to announce his personal support of Christianity and to condemn his pagan associates.

In the late spring and summer of 1935 the government again accelerated its attack on the religious front, and the disturbances with the Catholic Church appeared to be the most pronounced. Almost every American weekly and some monthlies noted the efforts of the Nazi regime to destroy the reputation of German Catholicism. Much of the government activity involved petty annoyances, but most of the periodicals considered the situation serious. That Catholic clergymen were brought to trial for violating the Reich currency laws and for alleged moral offenses was touched on briefly by The Commonweal, America and The Sign.87

85 Charles Sarolea, "The German Anti-Christ," Current History, XLII (June, 1935), 243-244. The author of this article was a Belgian who was for many years professor of French literature at the University of Edinburgh.

86 The Sign, XIV (June, 1935), 644; The Catholic World, XLII (June, 1935), 361; and America, LII (July 6, 1935), 290, and (July 13, 1935), 314-315.

87 The Commonweal, XXII (June 21, 1935), 199; America, LIII (August 17, 1935), 435; and The Sign, XV (August, 1935), 5.
Also noting the attack on the Catholic clergy and Catholic institutions were The Nation, The New Republic, The Literary Digest, The Christian Century and Sidney B. Fay in Current History.\footnote{88} All expressed sympathy for the German Catholics.

Naturally, more was heard from the Catholic journals when the Nazis continued their policies. The August 1935 Catholic World, as usual, was not sure what could be done; it seemed willing to wait for the German bishops' annual Fulda conference in August before making a pronouncement.\footnote{89} The Sign for August exhibited poor judgment by expressing the hope that the National Socialists would ultimately return to a policy of moderation.

We trust that sanity may be restored to those whose nationalism has become a mania. But should further conflict result, our prayer is that German Catholics may stand loyal to their Faith, as they have done on other occasions, regardless of the cost. Opportunities for heroic confession of the Faith and even for martyrdom are not limited to any country or to any age of the Church.\footnote{90}

The pessimistic words of possible martyrdom expressed by The Sign were in direct contrast to the views found in two other Catholic journals. The August 24 Ave Maria responded angrily to action taken by the Nazis against Catholic youth groups.

This is, without doubt, a declaration of war against the Faith. One would suppose that an average man would rea-
lize from a glance at the past how futile it is to fight the Church. It seems, however, that every generation must learn by experience; and a costly experience it generally is.91

The America editorial of August 3 made some rather bold assumptions which, in the main, were nothing but dreams.

Can we hope that the Catholics of Germany who today know the persecution which their ancestors bore under Bismarck will at some time be able to share their victory as well? The present moment seems dark; may it be only the deeper darkness before the dawn. At their meeting at Fulda this month, the Bishops of Germany will no doubt issue the command to the army. Upon that command, and the obedience given it, depend, under God, the future of the Church and her children in Germany.

America took an even stronger position on August 24, when it declared that "if the Nazi Government forces the issue, it probably will not live to go to Canossa."92 On occasion America showed itself totally ignorant of the Church's real position in the German Reich.

The climax of the annual meeting of the German Catholic hierarchy at the historic monastery at Fulda in August 1935 was the issuance of a pastoral letter to be read in all Catholic churches on September 1, 1935. The bishops also drew up a list of grievances which was delivered to the Fuehrer. The pastoral letter, which could not be put into pamphlet form or mentioned in German newspapers by the regime's orders, was partially aimed at the German neo-pagans. It likewise called for the protection of

---

91 The Ave Maria, XLII (New Series)(August 24, 1935), 249.
Catholic schools and organizations. The Nazi charge of political Catholicism, recently made against the clergy, was labeled a subterfuge to permit attacks upon the Catholic religious.

The Commonweal of September 13, 1935 believed the document to be a denunciation of the National Socialist activities during the last two years, although the bishops' letter was drafted in conciliatory terms. "One might have relished a strong indictment of terrorism and a courageous word about the non-Aryan cult"; however, The Commonweal fully realized that the Church was in no position to be anything but cautious. It could see no "signs of a political and civic movement compatible with the Christian conscience" arising in the near future to assist the Church in her battle. No enthusiasm was shown by this Catholic weekly for some recent statements by Dr. Hjalmar Schacht criticizing the Nazi excesses. "It is far from clear that his fanatical, reactionary conservatism would be, from the Catholic point of view, more than the lesser of two grave and disturbing evils."

One week later Michael Williams, The Commonweal editor, observed that the German-Vatican relations "were about as critical as could be without an actual denunciation of the violated Concordat." 93

Neither Commonweal account was especially pleased with the way affairs were going in Germany, but, as could be expected

from what they had been writing at this time, both *America* and *The Ave Maria* responded differently. The Fulda declaration was an act of "faith and courage," said the September 14 *America* with its usual air of optimism. German Catholicism stood united against the persecution.

That the Catholics in Germany will stand firm in the Faith, we have no doubt whatever. Persecution has united them with their Bishops and with Peter, and there is no disloyalty, or even dissension, among them. Nations rise and fall, but the Church survives to continue her mission among men. One need not be a prophet to foresee that when the Nazi faction is remembered only as a band that misruled Germany, the Catholic Church will still hold her German children, bound to her by the chains of Peter.

The September 21 *Ave Maria* described the letter as "a splendid example of power in reserve." Considered noteworthy was the fact that the hierarchy expressed greater anxiety for their country than they did for their Church. "For the Fatherland more than the Church will suffer from the drum-major antics of the pretentious Hitler. The Church has outlived other power-mad, strutting tyrants and will outlive Hitler."95

One Protestant journal immediately responded to the Catholic bishops' declaration. Germany was progressing toward her greatest religious crisis, in *The Christian Century*'s opinion. The Catholic Church leaders had formally reiterated their refusal to subject their institution to state dictatorship. In the bishops' counterattack the *Century* believed that they had gone as

---

94 *America*, LIII (September 14, 1935), 531.
95 *The Ave Maria*, XLII (New Series) (September 21, 1935), 374-375.
far as threatening to place all Germany under an interdict. "German national feeling has never forgotten the result of one interdict; even the treaty of Versailles has not left as deep wounds as the courtyard of Canossa."96

In effect, the Nazi answer to the churchmen came during the National Socialist Party Congress at Nuremberg, September 9-16, 1935, a meeting which also saw the birth of the initial anti-Semitic Nuremberg Laws. Addressing the wildly-cheering, partisan throng, Adolf Hitler listed the so-called political Catholics as one of his enemies at home and denied that his regime was fostering neo-paganism.

It soon became evident from the news and articles found in the periodicals in the subsequent weeks that there was little relaxation of tensions. Although in some particulars it was misleading, a significant article on the problems of the German Catholic Church, "The Catholic War on Hitler" by Emil Lengyel, an author of numerous books on international affairs, appeared in the November 26, 1935 Nation. German government officials had publicly proclaimed often that they wished to avoid the problems that Bismarck became involved with, but actually, said Lengyel, "the Kulturkampf is on, and the Vatican has reversed its previous policy toward Hitler rule." The arrests of nuns and priests for so-called illegal currency transactions had helped to mold the German Catholic masses into the most radical opponents of the

96The Christian Century, LII (September 11, 1935), 1131.
Hitler dictatorship, and, at the present, the only organized faction to oppose the Nazis. Lengyel went as far as to say that the "majority" of the Catholics "would gladly make common cause with the Socialists and dissident Protestants--some of them even with the Communists--if these potential allies were not too weak to move." German Catholics, led by Cardinals Faulhaber of Munich and Bertram of Breslau, "have reached the conclusion that it is their religious and patriotic duty to resist the Hitler regime, which they regard as that of the anti-Christ." Government pressure and persecution were "less open than that of the Jews, but...almost as virulent." Lengyel found it hard to believe that the attacks could go on without the Fuehrer's approval. Whoever doubted the accuracy of Lengyel's story, said the editors of The Nation, who seldom found anything good to say about the Catholic Church, could look at the latest news telling of the "suicide" of the former head of the Dominicans in Germany, Thomas Stuhlweissenburg, and the reported "sickness" of another Dominican bishop, Peter Legge.

If a German Catholic priest ends his life rather than endure longer the torments of a German prison, it is news. Any one may suspect, the Catholic belief in the impropriety of suicide being what it is, that Dr. Stuhlweissenburg's death was actively hastened by his jailers. 97

97 Emil Lengyel, "The Catholic War on Hitler," The Nation, CXLII (November 6, 1935), 532-534, and 523. Other editorial comment equally as critical of the Nazi treatment of the Catholic Church was published in: The Literary Digest, CXX (November 9, 1935), 12; The Commonweal, XXII (October 4, 1935), 540; The Ave Maria, XLII (New Series) (November 23, 1935), 663; America, LIV (November 30, 1935), 191; The Catholic World, CXLII (January, 1936), 393-395; and The Sign, XV (January, 1936), 324. The Nazis
Writing in the December 6 Commonweal, Father Victor Green saw the curse of paganism undermining the bulwark of Christianity, the Catholic Church, "with diabolical thoroughness, and determination." She was "being tied and dragged to the slaughter." Hitler himself was behind the program, Father Green claimed, although many were ready to accuse only his associates. A German who called himself Adolf Schückelgruber fully agreed with Father Green in his article for The Catholic World for December 1935. He indicated that Chancellor Hitler was the master of the German political scene.

Many people have evolved the idea of a Hitler who is a weak man entirely at the mercy of evil counselors. This is nonsense, Hitler with all his weaknesses and faults inspires absolute loyalty. He is a master in the art of employing other people's capacities and defects. There is no vice and no crime which he could not use while himself remaining apparently aloof from the frailties which he tolerates in his servants and in the mob.

Actually, continued the author, he had never officially proclaimed war on the Catholic Church. He gave the appearance that he desired to save Christianity and "to help Catholics to be better Christians than they were under the aegis of 'corrupt Centrum politicians.'" The Hitler totalitarian government was attempting to place the Catholic Church in Germany in the same position as behavior was also censored by Sidney B. Fay, "German Church Conflict," Current History, XLIII (December, 1935), 317, and by an associate editor of America, John A. Toomey, S.J., "Nazi Madhouse," America, LIV (October 19, 1935), 36.

98 Victor Green, "Some Impressions of Germany," The Commonweal, XXIII (December 6, 1935), 145-147. Green, a Catholic priest, had recently visited Germany.
the Russian Orthodox Church. 99

Youth organizations became a constant source of friction between the Catholic Church and the government. News that Cardinal Faulhaber had spoken out on this subject, denouncing the government for failing to live up to the 1933 Concordat, appeared in The Christian Century on February 19, 1936. The journal editorially chided Catholics for believing that any kind of agreement could ever be reached with a totalitarian state. 100 An account by The Literary Digest of February 22 revealed that a number of Catholic priests and laymen, all prominent in Catholic youth work had been arrested, some being charged with collusion with the Communists. 101 Commenting on the current difficulties, Sidney B. Fay in the March Current History suggested that a German youth group, less radical and demanding than the Hitler organization, might restore peace between the Catholic Church and the government. Whatever the outcome, the upper hand was held by the dictatorship; and it would be the Nazis who worked out the final arrangement to which the churchmen would have to eventually accede. 102

America, which earlier had criticized reports emanating from Germany for supposedly exaggerating the details of the Na-
ritional Socialist atrocities against Jews and Socialists, announced on February 22, 1936, that the stories being sent from Germany concerning Catholic sufferings probably "err by understatement." It further added that "the complete abolition of Catholic youth organizations, in violation of the Concordat, was reported to be the goal of Hitler's Government."\textsuperscript{103} A list of the various crimes against the Catholic Church, her clergy and her organizations was given by the March 1936 \textit{Catholic World}. Yet it found the Hitler dictatorship difficult to understand: while the German Catholics were being "bitterly harassed," the Nazi government sent congratulatory messages to Pius XI on the anniversary of his coronation.\textsuperscript{104} On February 15 the editors of \textit{The Ave Maria} contributed the news that at least eight Catholic publications had recently been suppressed.\textsuperscript{105} Expatriate Prince Hubertus Loewenstein told Father John A. Toomey in an \textit{America} interview on March 21 that the Church was "in greater peril today in Germany than it ever was in German history."\textsuperscript{106}

The February 26, 1936 \textit{Nation} speculated about the effects of the anti-Catholic program on German life and foresaw some interesting developments. "There may even be substantiation for the theory that the Catholics and the Communists have joined

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{103} \textit{America}, LIV (February 22, 1936), 463, 482.
  \item \textsuperscript{104} \textit{The Catholic World}, CXLII (March, 1936), 746.
  \item \textsuperscript{105} \textit{The Ave Maria}, XLIII (New Series)(February 15, 1936), 217.
  \item \textsuperscript{106} John A. Toomey, S.J., "A German Prince on Hitler," \textit{America}, LIV (March 21, 1936), 562-563.
\end{itemize}
hands in a struggle with the powers of darkness against which every degree and kind of enlightenment, religious or non-religious, are necessarily united." But these forces would not and could not win, "unless their strength, and the strength of any allies they have been able to enlist is greater than we have been led to believe." No disturbances would be allowed to get out of hand, for this would place in jeopardy the Nazi military preparations. The stakes were very high. Every person must be dedicated to militarism, said the Nazi philosophy, no matter what the religious leaders think about it. Presently, the whole German countryside is the domain of the Gestapo secret police, and any criticism of the government will be answered by wholesale arrests.¹⁰⁷

In a May 8, 1936 Commonweal article entitled "Crucifixion on the Swastika," an observer of religious affairs in Nazi Germany, who called himself Heinrich Waellermann, recorded the Nazi boasts that the Catholic Church in Germany would be exterminated within two years. Although the totalitarian state was still in its incipient stage, already great inroads had been made by the National Socialist ideology among the German Catholic population. "German Catholics remind one of defenseless sheep huddled in silent helplessness, beaten on all sides by a perfect storm of propaganda," said Waellermann. Today in Nazi Germany the Catholic had to be a hero and not merely a "good" Catholic, for the "good"

¹⁰⁷ The Nation, CXLII (February 26, 1936), 237.
Catholics of ten years ago...are today on the other side.\textsuperscript{108} The April \textit{Sign} seemed to find it ludicrous that Adolf Hitler had been referring to himself in speeches as the "Defender of the Faith" against the Communist threat to the East. Everything that he attributed to the Russian Bolsheviks was being practiced by the Nazis against organized religion.\textsuperscript{109}

More arrests and trials of the Catholic clergymen in Germany, particularly those of 276 Franciscans for "moral offenses," again brought some journal response in June 1936 and after. The June 12 \textit{Commonweal} opined that this situation should "arouse even sleepy Americans to a realization of the force of the attack now being leveled against the Catholic Church in Germany." Having destroyed almost everything else, the Nazis were now after the good name of the simple Catholic clergy.\textsuperscript{110} While \textit{The Ave Maria} agreed with the views of \textit{The Commonweal}, \textit{America} was critical of foreign correspondents for spreading the false rumors being instigated by the German government about the Catholic clergy.\textsuperscript{111} Writing in the September \textit{Catholic World}, Miss A. Norton Raybould restated a position once held by other Catholic commentators but

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{108} Heinrich Waellermann, "Crucifixion on the Swastika," \textit{The Commonweal}, XXIV (May 8, 1936), 35-37. Waellermann, an observer of German affairs, was the pseudonym of a Catholic eyewitness to the events which he described.

\textsuperscript{109} \textit{The Sign}, XV (April, 1936), 515.

\textsuperscript{110} \textit{The Commonweal}, XXIV (June 12, 1936), 171.

\textsuperscript{111} \textit{The Ave Maria}, XLIII (New Series)(June 20, 1936), 791, and \textit{America}, LV (June 20, 1936), 242, 262.
\end{flushleft}
now apparently abandoned by most in the light of what was going on in the Third Reich, that the "Church will find the means to heal these moral and political ills" and turn back the menace of religious persecution. 112

The Franciscan episode was "new evidence of the ruthless disregard of justice which characterized the totalitarian state," declared The Nation on June 10. The underhanded attack upon the Catholic Church would be partially successful, this journal predicted, since the Catholics, now with no free Catholic press or Center Party to help bolster and defend their position, had nothing with which to defend themselves except their courage. This situation was the result of the 1933 Concordat. 113 On the other hand, The Christian Century for July 8 believed that the National Socialist government was "riding for a fall" if it continued its attack on the universal practices of the Catholic Church. The present Nazi assault aimed at the monastic institutions and the practice of celibacy among the Catholic clergy. "It makes no difference what non-Catholic critics may think of these institutions—both of which, in our judgment, are objectionable from many points of view—any government that makes a frontal attack on them is going to get hurt." 114

112 A. Norton Raybould, "Whither Europe?" The Catholic World, CXLIII (September, 1936), 734. Miss Raybould, a well-known Catholic authoress and traveller, was living in Austria.
113 The Nation, CXLII (June 10, 1936), 726-727.
114 The Christian Century, LIII (July 8, 1936), 957.
Along with the government attack on Christianity, which subsided appreciably during the summer of 1936 because of the Olympic games, the continual activity of the pagan cult in National Socialist circles occupied the columns of some religious journals, both Catholic and Protestant, in the summer months. One of the observers, Ralph Thurston, writing in the July 10 Commonweal, noted the increase of cooperation between German Catholics and Protestants to fight the pagan evil.

The German Catholic bishops gathered for their annual conference at Fulda during August 1936. Besides the yearly pastoral letter, a special note was sent to the Fuhrer. On this occasion, the memorandum was compromising in tone, suggesting that the hierarchy was worried that Catholicism’s status in Germany was being weakened by the Nazis’ assault. While appealing to Hitler to live up to the 1933 Concordat and to end the government’s attacks on Catholic institutions, the bishops argued that Catholicism could be National Socialism’s natural ally in the struggle with world Communism. The Hierarchy’s criticism was also directed at the Nazis for making overt efforts to link Catholicism with Communism.

The response of The Ave Maria for September 26, 1936.

---

115 Ralph Thurston, "Hitler’s Heathens," The Commonweal, XXIV (July 10, 1936), 279-280; Thurston was the pseudonym of a foreign correspondent; Paul T. Morentz, "A Nationalization Religion Versus Christian Morality," The Lutheran Church Quarterly, IX (July, 1936), 309-310; and James G. McDonald, "Modern Spiritual Dictatorship," The Christian Register, CXV (June 11, 1936), 400; McDonald had recently resigned as the High Commissioner for Refugees from Germany.
denoted that it still seemed to be hoping that the Hitlerites would ultimately listen to reason. "If Hitler gives heed to the warning of the Bishops he will be able to keep Communism out of Germany as Mussolini has done in Italy." However, on October 10 the editors finally despaired that the German leaders would come to their senses; the same issue of this Catholic weekly included an article by Florence Gilmore eulogizing the Catholics who had died as a result of Nazi persecutions.\textsuperscript{116}

Although \textit{America} of August 1 considered the anti-Catholicism of the Hitler government to be a "permanent policy," six weeks later it expressed the hope that Hitler would "see the light." If his attitude toward Communism was sincere, he would follow the bishops' advice, editorialized the Catholic organ. Nonetheless, another editorial, entitled "In Germany," on December 5 contended that "the Church has earnestly striven to avoid a break with the Government but it would appear that patience is fast ceasing to be a virtue."\textsuperscript{117} \textit{America} had recognized that the German bishops' appeal to the Fuehrer had been in vain.

In spite of the condition of Catholicism in Germany, the October 9 \textit{Commonweal} could still state that although in principle Fascism and Nazism were condemned by the Church, "the Church has

\begin{footnotes}
\item[116]\textit{The Ave Maria}, XLIV (New Series)(September 26, 1936), 408; (October 10, 1936), 471; and Florence Gilmore, "Contemporary Martyrs in Germany," 457–460. Miss Gilmore had been a long-time contributor to Catholic periodicals.
\item[117]\textit{America}, LV (August 1, 1936), 386; (September 12, 1936), 541; and LVI (December 5, 1936), 204.
\end{footnotes}
been able to tolerate Fascism and Nazism, simply because as yet neither of these two systems have attempted to enforce the final conclusions of their philosophies." Just what point National Socialism had reached in its varied undertakings, many of which had been aimed at the ultimate destruction of the Catholic Church, The Commonweal editorial did not say. At variance with the editor's views was a Commonweal article by William Western, who thought that the Nazis had already gone quite far enough in enforcing their ideas by diabolical methods. It was very clear to the intelligent observer that the Nazi pagans were out to substitute for Christianity another creed "which is more convenient to the nature of Germans and makes them more fit to devote themselves entirely and without restriction to the political task as figured out by the Nazis."118

The November 1936 Catholic World added little to the discussion besides the comment that the German hierarchy was "profoundly concerned" about religious affairs, while the monthly Sign decided that, under the circumstances, the German Catholics had little choice but to fight the regime.119

In a cynical article, "The Catholic Stake in Europe's Crisis," which appeared in the October 21 Christian Century, a

118 The Commonweal, XXIV (October 9, 1936), 542, and William Western, "The Present Front in Germany," (October 23, 1936), 601-613. Western was the pen-name of a priest familiar with the German scene.

119 The Catholic World, CXLIV (November, 1936), 239, and The Sign, XVI (November, 1936), 197.
journalist who called himself Ignaz O'Brien did not think that the problems between Catholics and National Socialists would last. A good likelihood existed that the two groups would find ways to cooperate. Adolf Hitler was a Catholic and thought "along Catholic lines." Both the German and the Vatican foreign policies had as a basic aim the eradication of the Communist threat in the Soviet Union.

Seeing that national socialism has also completely routed within its borders communism, socialism, free masonry and all other movements likely to divert loyalty from the all-embracing state, the way is paved for closer understanding between the Vatican and Germany, since the Vatican has no sympathy with anything that savors of "Marxism," and can appreciate the importance of the spirit of supreme loyalty. When the moment is ripe for a real concordat between the two powers, all persecution of the Catholics in Germany will probably be immediately called off by the "Leader."120

Most other American journalists, including the editors of The Christian Century, would probably disagree with O'Brien's contentions, for the possibility of a Nazi-Catholic entente appeared to have long disappeared under the existing circumstances in Germany. But within a few months the writings of some American Catholic journalists would lend support to O'Brien's views.

While the Nazis grappled with their various domestic questions and tried to decide what to do about such foreign issues as the Spanish Civil War, an interesting debate developed

120 Ignaz O'Brien, "The Catholic Stake in Europe's Crisis," The Christian Century, LIII (October 21, 1936), 1386-1388. O'Brien was the pseudonym used by a journalist of international repute, according to this Protestant weekly.
in the pages of the American Catholic journals. It should also be pointed out that during the first half of 1937 the Nazi government again eased up in its anti-Catholic activities, and therefore, the Catholic journals had few opportunities to reiterate their usual charges. Because of the war in Spain, a question arose of whether or not a Fascist regime—such as the one organized by General Francisco Franco—could be supported by Catholics if the enemy was Communism. During 1937 this discussion often turned to the subject of the German form of Fascism and provoked a variety of responses by Catholic journalists.

Taking the lead in examining the perplexing question was the former editor of America, Father Wilfrid Parsons. In the January 1937 issue of the Knights of Columbus monthly Columbia, Parsons at first concentrated on international affairs, discussing the possibility of organizing an alliance against the growing Nazi threat. He considered Great Britain the key to the future of Europe, since the British statesmen had a choice to make: either stand behind France and her ally the Soviet Union against the Fascist powers, or stay out of continental affairs and let the Fascist states eliminate Communist Russia. Influencing the English decision, according to Parsons, would be the fact that Russian agents had been active in the British Empire, "while Italian and German Fascism is keeping to itself." Much depended on which of the two totalitarian ideologies the London government decided to support, but if it was Father Parsons' choice it would have to be Fascism, for it represented merely a reaction to the evils of
Bolshevism.

There is no Fascism unless Communism comes first. Fascism is only the reaction of the middle class to the menace of Communism. It is not an end sought in itself, as Communism is. If there were no Communism, there would never be any cry for Fascism; for Fascism is nothing more than the instinctive demand of the middle class, threatened in its security, for a strong central authority to curb its enemy. Take away the enemy and you will never have that demand.

A few weeks later, Father Parsons amplified his remarks in The Commonweal. In an article entitled "Fascist-Communist Dilemma," he warned American Catholics that Communism was quickly identified with democracy in many naive circles, and a week later he compared and assessed the totalitarian ideologies.

While Fascism is a social-economic-political system of State organization, Communism is that, and also a philosophy of life. It has its definite dogmas on God, on the nature of man and his destiny, and on moral obligations that are the diametrical opposite of Christianity, and the preaching of these dogmas is inseparable from its economic grounds, in the name of democracy; Communism must be rejected not only on these but also on religious grounds, in the name of God. There can be no question as to which is the greater evil.121

In "Catholicism and Communism," the editors of The Commonweal entered the discussion by defending Catholicism against various "left-wing" groups and The Christian Century management, whose "reckless charges play the game of those more active left-wing groups." Commonweal's editors outlined the long history of the Catholic condemnation of Communism on religious grounds. But

by no means, they asserted, did this attack on one totalitarian ideology imply the support of another, namely Fascism. While *The Commonweal* seemed to realize the evils of the right-wing extremists' movement, it substantially supported the views of Father Parsons. Another defense of the Catholic Church's policy with regard to the modern totalitarian ideologies was made by the February 12 *Commonweal*. The editorial, "The Policy of Catholicism," intended to answer charges publicized in a recent address by the noted American Protestant leader Reverend Reinhold Niebuhr that Catholicism was linked to modern feudalism or Fascism, just as it had been to the feudal system of the middle ages. Of course the policies and methods of the Church had been influenced by medieval feudalism, but the Church had existed before this institution and when it disappeared, the Church remained "unchanged, essentially, and essentially unchangeable," was *The Commonweal's* reply.¹²²

Not every *Commonweal* commentary smacked of forced rationalization. An outspoken criticism of Nazism was voiced by the English priest Edward Quinn in the February 5 *Commonweal*. "Nazi Germany, which claims to be the defender of Christendom, is only second to Russia in following out the Machiavellian principle, and appeals to it even more explicitly." Since the spiritual weapons of Christianity had "failed" to contain and conquer Bolshevism, they had been cast aside by the Nazis. The principles of

¹²² *The Commonweal*, XXV (January 1, 1937), 257-258, and (February 12, 1937), 426.
National Socialism were now "regarded as supremely spiritual," wrote Father Quinn.123

In April and May 1937, the managing editor and the editor of the two leading Catholic weeklies, The Commonweal and America, carried on a dialogue on the evils of Communism and Fascism, with the starting point being the Spanish Civil War.124 It is interesting to note that Pope Pius XI had already issued the encyclical Mit brennender Sorge on March 14, 1937, criticizing the Hitler regime, but neither party in the debate lingered on this document. Mr. George N. Shuster, the managing editor of The Commonweal, spoke out strongly against Fascism in all its national forms and warned churchmen not to identify themselves with Fascist regimes. Shuster recognized that, while Fascism might oppose Communism, it had in its growing process eliminated the most elemental moral principles and all signs of Christian ethics. In Germany, for instance, Fascism was rapidly becoming a "national Bolshevism."125

123Edward Quinn, "The Primacy of Politics," ibid., (February 5, 1937), 408. Quinn was a priest from the diocese of Leeds, England.


Editor Francis X. Talbot, S.J., cited in America the historical fact that the Catholic Church did not associate herself with any one form of government, and, in spite of the evidence that some clergymen had indicated their preference for the Fascist form, there was no danger of the Vatican aligning itself with this view. Concluding his side of the dialogue, Father Talbot made a rather thought-provoking statement, considering the difficulties the Catholic Church was experiencing under the German Fascist dictatorship, as well as the recent papal encyclical.

But here is the point: a collaboration with Fascism is possible for the Catholic Church; a collaboration with Communism is absolutely impossible for the Catholic Church. Mr. Shuster can be a Fascist and a fervent Catholic; he cannot be a Communist and a Catholic.126

Don Luigi Sturzo, a former political leader of the Italian Catholics before the Fascist episode, compared the ideologies of Communism and Fascism for the readers of the April 16 Commonweal. One difference between the two was that in Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy social classes "still coexist, with the principle of private property," while in the Soviet Union private property had been abolished and the proprietary classes scattered. In the area of religion, the Communists were materialists and atheists, but Nazism desired "a religion for its own purposes," and the Fascists sought a compromise with Catholicism. Sturzo denied that either ideology was "the remedy for the other"; neither were

126 Francis X. Talbot, S.J., "Further Reflections on the Spanish Situation," America, LVII (May 1, 1937), 76-77. Father Talbot served as America's editor from 1936 to 1944 after succeeding Father Parsons.
they antithetical. "The real fact is that Fascism paves the way for Communism or for something of the kind, and that Communism paves the way for Fascism or for another regime of the same type? In the course of his article, Sturzo perceived an important area of similarity in the totalitarian movements.

What does more than anything to put Germany, Italy and Russia on the same plane, so that they disturb the whole world, is their common and relentless war against western democracies, against the system of traditional rights, against respect of human personality, things rooted in our Christian civilization. These regimes sooner or later are bound by their very nature to result in war. 127

In an article entitled "The German Situation," the Englishman Christopher Hollis discussed the German problem in The Ave Maria for April 24, 1937, and gave an excellent example of how a Catholic could reconcile himself to National Socialism while always hoping for the best. The majority of Germans, he believed, saw in a dictatorship the only way to gain equality in European circles. They were willing to surrender their liberty to achieve this end, but, in the last four years, more had probably been lost than they ever considered possible. Economically, however, the regime had improved conditions to a point where they were better than any time during the Weimar period, in spite of many rumors to the contrary. Hollis was convinced that the lib-

127 Luigi Sturzo, "Communism: Fascism," The Commonweal, XXV (April 16, 1937), 686-688. Sturzo (1871-1959) was a Sicilian priest who founded and headed the Catholic Popular of Italy (Partito Popolare), which was destroyed by the Fascists. He authored numerous books on contemporary political problems and was especially interested in the role of the state in the modern world.
eral regime of the post-war era could not have survived for long. "If Germany had not gone Nazi it would have gone Communist, and all central Europe with it. And therefore in that negative sense the coming of the Nazi regime was certainly a good thing."

Some of the National Socialist teachings, Hollis admitted, were objectionable, and papal protests had been curtly brushed aside. Too, there had occurred the overt persecution of German Catholics and clergy. No one could be sure that the regime would turn even more anti-Christian, but one fact was clear: Hitler was no fool and in time he should realize that to combat Communism successfully he had to have the Catholic Church on his side. The German tradition was Christian, and "therefore the likelihood is that the German rulers will find that the attempt to maintain a policy that is both based on tradition and also anti-Christian involves them in contradiction and weakens the regime." For this reason their hostility to Christianity would probably be curbed.

Hollis concluded by saying: "The situation is then one not without anxiety, but by no means without hope."128

Hollis was not alone in his expressions of hope. Writing in the March 1937 Sign, Denis Gwynn recognized the fact that the National Socialist dictatorship continued to limit the activities of the Catholic Church, besides promoting the German pagan sect; however, he felt that "there is still time for diplomacy and

---

128 Christopher Hollis, "The German Situation," The Ave Maria, XLV (New Series)(April 24, 1937), 513-515. A member of the editorial board of The Tablet of London, Hollis had been doing economic research at Notre Dame University.
statesmanship to produce a settlement without revolutions." Gwynn took a position which was open to criticism: the Catholic Church could still play a constructive role in German affairs if some kind of modus vivendi could be reached with the regime. Ironically, an editorial in the very same issue of The Sign admitted that agreement with Hitler "seems to be almost hopeless. Concordats were scraps of paper."¹²⁹ The February 6 Ave Maria also seemed to look forward to a compromise settlement in Germany.¹³⁰

While Catholic journalists debated the possibilities of Catholicism accommodating with National Socialism, a few reports from Germany telling of anti-Catholic persecution and German Catholic protests continued to make their appearance.¹³¹ Despite the hopes of the more optimistic Catholic writers, no change in Nazi policy to strangle gradually the Catholic Church was visible. At this point, in the spring of 1937, the Catholic-Nazi problem was clarified by an official pronouncement from the Holy See.

The papal encyclical referred to as Mit brennender Sorge was dated Passion Sunday, March 14, 1937; it was read in the churches of all the Catholic dioceses in Germany on the following Palm Sunday, before the Nazi police were aware of the letter's

¹²⁹ Denis Gwynn, "Germany and Peace," The Sign, XVI (March, 1937), 494-495, 452.

¹³⁰ The Ave Maria, XLV (New Series) (February 6, 1937), 183

¹³¹ The Catholic World, CXLV (April, 1937), 550; The Literary Digest, CXXXII (February 27, 1937), 10; and The Ave Maria, XLV (New Series) (March 13, 1937), 343-344.
existence. In the document the pontiff protested the Hitler government's failure to abide by the 1933 Concordat which, Pius said, was drawn up in the first place with "many and gave misgivings," and he denounced the German pagan trend.

"Almost from the beginning those misgivings were justified," replied America on April 3, but it should be remembered that at the time of the treaty's signing this journal had very little to say about it. America noted that the Holy Father had been patient, but the Nazi persecution of the Church had become too grave to maintain silence. Of course Pius XI wanted peace, "but he plainly warns these madmen in Berlin that 'the Church is prepared to defend its rights and liberties.'" The Jesuit weekly expressed doubt, however, that the pope's message would halt the Nazis' anti-Catholic activities. The Commonweal allowed the encyclical to pass without significant commentary.

Both the May Catholic World and The Ave Maria for April 10 naturally supported the papal position, but neither journal evinced optimism for future German church-state relations. More penetrating comments were found in the May 1937 issue of Columbia. Father Wilfrid Parsons reasoned that the Holy See actually had no choice in 1933; it was either the Concordat and its

132 America, LVI (April 3, 1937), 612-613.
133 The Commonweal, XXV (April 2, 1937), 636, was only a brief news dispatch calling attention to the publication of the papal encyclical.
equivocal terms or a National Socialist war against German Catholicism. Regrettably, it turned out to be both.

She naturally took the peace, praying for the best. After all, she is no worse off than if she never had a Concordat; and she enjoys before the peoples of the world the unassailable moral advantages of being the wronged party, whose only fault was to trust the present German rulers. She will outlast them.135

Pope Pius XI's pronouncements looked like the beginning of a Nazi-Catholic fight to the finish to the March 31 Christian Century. Another Kulturkampf seemed imminent, a phrase mentioned very frequently over the last three years, and the Protestant organ seemed just as confident of Catholicism's ultimate success as some of the Catholic journals. "If it is that, it may confidently be predicted that in the long run the church will win, though it may require years to verify that prophecy."136

After briefly reviewing the action by the Vatican officials, The Literary Digest for April 3 concluded that since the pope had not renounced the Concordat of 1933, Hitler probably would soon.137 The Nation and The New Republic agreed that it was about time for the papal officials to take action.138 Considering the present situation in the Iberian peninsula, it was "inexplicable" that the Catholic Church would join hands with the

136 The Christian Century, LIV (March 31, 1937), 404.
137 The Literary Digest, CXXIII (April 3, 1937), 13.
German and Italian Fascists to overthrow the legal government of Spain, declared The New Republic. "Fascism, in any country, means enslavement for the mass of the population among whom the Church finds its strength. The Vatican's policy of allying itself with the fascists is certain to endanger the Church's own existence."

As a result of the pope's March declaration, the Nazi government intensified its anti-Catholic activities against the clergy and educational facilities. Editorial and articles called these events to the attention of the American people during the late spring and summer of 1937, but without any new, astute observations. Both religious and secular journals seemed to be waiting for the Church's next move. A few perceptive articles also appeared in this period. Having already touched on the problem of Nazi persecution of the Catholic Church in the July 2, 1937 Commonweal, Professor Waldemar Gurian presented a thorough study in the January 1938 Foreign Affairs. That the Nazi-Catholic

struggle would persist without resulting in an open break in German-Vatican relations was Gurian's assumption. After summarizing the chain of events since the 1933 Concordat, Gurian, who had some unkind words for patronizing German Catholics and reticent bishops, concluded that the Nazis would continue to eat away at the Church body, using, ironically enough, the 1933 agreement "as a means of fettering and oppressing the Church." As for the future, Gurian said:

The National Socialists are conducting their war on the Church not so much by means of a frontal attack as by the process of elimination. Such methods demand a new attitude on the part of the faithful. That is why one must conclude that the future of the Catholic Church in Germany depends above all upon the unknown believers who defend themselves against the totalitarian claims and obscurantist tactics of the National Socialist state. On the success of their attitude depends the question whether there will ever again be a humane culture in Germany, one in which the rights of free individuals are fully recognized.140

In an article for the July 17 America entitled "Hitler Should Learn a Lesson from History," historian Raymond Corrigan, S.J., compared the Hitlerites' assaults on the Church's position with the Prussian government's response to the mixed marriage problem in the nineteenth century, which was a false and misleading analogy. Father Corrigan hoped that the Nazi government ac-

140 Waldemar Gurian, "Nazi Persecutions of Catholics," The Commonweal, XXVI (July 2, 1937), 261, and "Hitler's Undeclared War on the Catholic Church," Foreign Affairs, XIV (January, 1938), 260-271. Gurian, a refugee from Nazi Germany, was an historian who was particularly interested in the religious struggle in Germany; he wrote Hitler and the Christians (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1936), and was a member of the department of politics at Notre Dame University.
tion would soon bring the Church a new vitality similar to that of one hundred years before. 141

An editorial in the July 2 Commonweal, "The Church in Germany," which contained a critique of several articles and books dealing with the religious struggle in Germany, made a half-hearted attempt to be realistic about religious conditions in the Nazi state. It recognized that the National Socialist aim was to eliminate completely the Christian idea from German life. As the Nazi government ruthlessly proceeded step by step to fulfill its plan, the Church seemed to be suffering a loss of prestige as well as membership for her failure to take an unequivocal stand against Fascism. Especially harmful seemed to be the Vatican's policy of indecision in denouncing the German government for its handling of the 1933 Concordat instead of severing relations with the dictatorship. But The Commonweal deemed this criticism unjustified, and it defended the papacy's position by quoting from Michael de la Bedoyere in The Dublin Review.

Those who would have her concentrate either on a quasi-political attack on Communism and Agnostic Liberalism when not bringing about a new reign of economic and social justice forget that she is powerless to effect anything except in so far as these secondary and tertiary matters automatically result from conviction in her religious dogma and practice of her moral teaching. To concentrate on them at a time when her essential function is widely challenged may be good short-term policy, but it is neither honest nor likely to pay in the long run. One may be sure that the Vatican realizes that if the

141 Raymond Corrigan, S.J., "Hitler Should Learn a Lesson from History," America, LVII (July 17, 1937), 343. Corrigan was a professor of history at St. Louis University.
Church has much to say about social reform and international morality, and a great part to play in the fight against Communism and Agnostic Liberalism, her immediate and primary task must be to defend and to win back ground on her dogmatic and moral side, for it is from this side alone that the rest of the things she would like to do find their spring and their coercive forces.\footnote{The Commonweal, XXVI (July 2, 1937), 253-255. This editorial reviewed Walther Gurian, Hitler and the Christians, trans. E. F. Peeler (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1936); C. F. Melville, "The Church in Germany and Austria," The Dublin Review, CC (April, 1937), 232-243; and Michael de la Bedoyere, "Rome and Reaction," ibid., 244-253.}

More on the German religious question in the same issue of The Commonweal was added by Michael Williams in "Blood and Tears." He acknowledged that some American Catholics continued to support the Hitler regime in spite of the latest anti-religious episodes, maintaining that the German bishops and the Vatican had been deceived by anti-Hitler propaganda. Their position continued to be "that Herr Adolf Hitler was plainly a divine messenger entrusted by Providence with the glorious task of preserving civilization and Christianity from the subversive undermining of the Communists and the Jews." The facts, however, could not support this ridiculous point of view, but, unfortunately, the great majority of American Catholics had failed to recognize them as such, and, to the amazement of the author, were "indifferent" to what their fellow Catholics, as well as the Protestants and Jews, were suffering in Germany.\footnote{Michael Williams, "Blood and Tears," The Commonweal, XXVI (July 2, 1937), 257-258.}

In the autumn of 1937 and over the winter months of 1937-
1938, the Nazis continued to apply pressure on the German Catholic Church organizations. Many of the reports found in the journals were very similar to those found in earlier issues. One by-product of the continuing anti-Catholic activity by the National Socialist officials was that Catholic spokesmen began to take a more realistic attitude toward all forms of totalitarianism. That both Fascism and Communism were evil was the theme of articles by Professor Paul Kiniery in the August 1937 Catholic World and Father Wilfrid Parsons in the March 1938 Columbia. Every Christian should be aware "that a great line of demarcation lies not between Fascism and Communism, but between democracy and the totalitarian state," exclaimed Prince Hubertus Loewensteiner in the March 18, 1938 Commonweal.

144 "American Visitor," "Hitler and Goebbels Are Having Their Day," America, LVII (September 4, 1937), 509; This visitor had relations in Germany and did not want his name disclosed; (October 23, 1937), 60; Hilaire Belloc, "Catholicism or Nazi State-Worship," LVIII (October 30, 1937), 76-77; Gabor De Besseney, "Herr Rosenberg Fashions the Third Reich," (November 20, 1937), 149; the author had been an army officer in the Austro-Hungarian army and later served as a newspaper correspondent, college professor and lecturer; The Ave Maria, XLVI (New Series) (October 23, 1937), 536; Marieli Benziger, "The Case of German Catholics," (October 30, 1937), 545; a professional genealogist and dietician, Miss Benziger had contributed many articles to Catholic journals over the years, including several on Germany; and (November 27, 1937), 694; The Sign, XVII (November, 1937), 198; and Waldemar Gurian, "Nazi Against the Church," The Commonweal, XXVII (November 19, 1937), 91-93.


146 Hubertus Loewenstein, "Goose-Step Freedom," The Commonweal, XXVII (March 18, 1938), 567. Prince Loewenstein was an exiled German Catholic liberal and the author of books on international affairs.
While Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr congratulated those few Catholic liberals who continued to speak out against the totalitarian ideology, he remained particularly critical of Catholicism and its stand on Fascism in the December 8, 1937 Christian Century. In Nazi Germany the Catholic Church had "cast its lot" with Fascism, according to Niebuhr. "In Germany the church is reduced to the pathetic role of begging the Nazis to let it co-operate in their anti-communist campaign, since the pope hates communism as much as Hitler does." An interesting observation was made by the March 1938 Living Age. It correctly ascertained that the Fuehrer was toying with the Catholic Church, alternating between expressions of esteem and periods of persecution. "There has been persecution or tolerance, depending on the state of public opinion and expediency at the moment.... Hitler was born a Catholic and knows the Catholic mind." 

The Catholic liberal George M. Shuster painted a black picture of the Catholic situation in Nazi Germany in the February 4 Commonweal article entitled "Twilight in the Third Reich," which seemed to substantiate the charges made by Reverend Niebuhr and The Living Age. "A whole nation walks through the dark toward a collective and political goal of which it is able to form no picture of any kind." It was impossible to predict or define any-

---


148 The Living Age, CCCLIV (March, 1938), 3.
thing in Germany under the circumstances, but in the growing darkness "men derive a strange resolve to bravery," and under this condition Shuster believed that the Christian churches in Germany had to be judged. In his opinion, German Catholicism was drifting into the same feeling of separateness that engulfed the Jews. Externally the Catholic Church remained intact, but little by little her functions were being destroyed. "Present-time Germany witnesses a piecemeal destruction at the end of which the national Church may be proclaimed." German Catholics had tried to deceive themselves, and so far they had been entirely successful. There was "a curious lameness" attached to Catholic resistance, with the feeling being that better days were bound to come in the future. So far this tactic had failed and now, wrote Shuster, "the real struggle is beginning," and German Catholicism did not appear prepared psychologically to confront it.

It is impossible to convey an impression of the sorrow and discouragement that prevail among widely diverse groups of Catholics, or of the fearful silence that is gradually descending upon the most intrepid spirits. Despite all the antipathy to the Nazis, and despite the widespread bitter hatred of all they are and imply, there really seems to be no longer a way out.149

When, on March 12, 1938, Anschluss became a reality, thousands of Austrian Catholics became members of the Third Reich. This situation could have easily created a new religious crisis. Thus, the activities of the Austrian Catholics and the Church hierarchy immediately attracted the attention of some American

149 George N. Shuster, "Twilight in the Third Reich," The Commonweal, XXVII (February 4, 1938), 397-399.
journalists. In the March 19 Christian Century Rabbi Philip S. Bernstein contended that the German annexation of Austria would greatly aggravate the lingering church problems for Adolf Hitler. Despite evidence to the contrary, he insisted that the Austrian clergy and their Catholic parishioners had resisted the National Socialist ideology and would continue to do so even though Anschluss had been accomplished. Discounting the early friendly gestures of the Austrian hierarchy, a problem which resulted in further controversy, Bernstein was hopeful that the Austrian religious would not follow the example of many of their German clerical brethren in 1933. He maintained that the Christian leaders of Germany had failed in their duty.

By their blindness and lack of comprehension they made the Nazi dictatorship possible. They showed little concern when Hitler robbed the German people of their freedom and imprisoned or murdered pacifists, Social Democrats, and Communists. Pastor Niemöller's sermon pronouncing God's blessing on Hitler's electoral mandates after the burning of the Reichstag was an interesting revelation of the mentality of the clergy. A small number, among them Cardinal Faulhaber, have denounced discrimination against Christians of Jewish descent, but scarcely a voice has been lifted against persecution of the Jews as Jews. Only when Hitler began to attack the church did the clergy rise to resist.

Too late did the German clergy realize that Hitler supported and fomented the anti-Christian crusade, said Bernstein. Nevertheless, writing with what appeared to be the last ray of hope, the rabbi admitted that the Christian churches remained the lone center of opposition to the totalitarian regime. It was not expected that they would be victorious if the regime endured for any length of time, but they "can keep alive a spirit of rebel-
lion which under other conditions may help to liberate Germany.  

Almost as if it were answering Rabbi Bernstein's accusations, The Ave Maria in an April 2 column recognized that the Nazi purge of Austrian Jews was well under way. Yet the editors thought that their condition might have been improved if they had worked more closely with Roman Catholicism and forgot some of their liberal notions.

Catholicism throughout the world is the same as it is in Vienna. Yet Jews and Jewish supported agencies have notoriously backed those forces which are openly at war with the very same religious reality that has proved such a good neighbor in Vienna. Striving repeatedly to undermine its social principles and morality, Jews have looked upon the Church as an organization that must be removed from the earth. The Vienna incident should be an evidence of their folly. They cannot afford to continue this folly if they would continue to prosper. Jewish Communists in our own country are conspicuously burning their candles at both ends.

Upon his arrival in Vienna, Adolf Hitler was given a very friendly greeting by the archbishop of Vienna, Theodor Cardinal Innitzer. Moreover the Austrian Catholic hierarchy issued a statement on March 18 praising the accomplishments of National Socialism and calling for Catholics in Austria to support the Anschluss plebiscite. The opportunist actions of the Austrian episcopate received some consideration from American journals, notably the Catholic-controlled ones. The Catholic World for April 1938 told of Innitzer's efforts to appease the Nazis, but

---

150 Philip S. Bernstein, "Hitler Dooms the Church," The Nation, CXLVI (March 19, 1938), 329-331.

151 The Ave Maria, XLVII (New Series) (April 2, 1938), 439.
it did so without editorial comment. This was probably all

The Catholic World wanted to say for the time being, until more

of the Austrian Catholic story could be learned.

What the Church officials at the Vatican thought about

the stand being taken by the Austrian bishops became known on

April 1 when a Vatican radio broadcast openly criticized the Aus-

trian hierarchy. Innitzer was quickly summoned to Rome, where he

signed a statement made public on April 7, 1938, which said that

no Austrian Catholic was bound by the bishops' call for the sup-

port of the April 10 plebiscite and that the statement published

on March 18 was not to be interpreted as a blanket approval of

National Socialism.

Just a few days before the plebiscite vote, The Nation

reported that the Catholic Church leadership was splitting into

factions over the ideas of National Socialism. It described the

activities of Cardinal Innitzer and his fellow Austrian bishops

along with the reactions of the Holy See. The Nation assumed

that the papal officials had criticized the Austrian hierarchy

for being duped by the Nazis in the light of "the sad experiences

of others." At last the Holy See seemed to be awakening to the

political realities of the day, and the editors of The Nation were

hopeful that "a suspicion is beginning to dawn on the Vatican

that in choosing to beat Marxism with fascism it has clambered

astride a bucking bronco and is in a fair way to be kicked by

152 The Catholic World, CXLVII (April, 1938), 104.
both horses."\(^{153}\)

Word reached *The Christian Century* on May 4 from its Vatican correspondent, R. H. Markham, that the Vatican had been using Vienna for its headquarters in the fight against the Hitler government in Germany. All was now lost because of Hitler's successful appeal to nationalism. To crown the Nazi success, Markham pointed to Innitzer's written approval of the dictatorship.

"A cardinal had gone to Canossa."

Innitzer could not withstand the wishes of a whole people. He dared not make his church the enemy of Germany and raise Italian Rome above German Berlin. Long has the Catholic Church hindered German unity and Innitzer at the supreme hour when all Germans were coming together dared not try to dam the strength. It would have swept the church away. It might have continued the Reformation and pushed political Catholicism entirely beyond the Alps.\(^{154}\)

Markham, however, failed to mention the April 7 statement made in Rome by the Austrian prelate.

More criticism aimed at the archbishop of Vienna was found in the May 4 *Christian Century*. Once again later declarations made by Cardinal Innitzer appeared to be ignored. Reverend Martin Schroeder, a Lutheran minister, stated that "for all practical nazi purposes the church is in the bag" in Austria. In more than one instance in recent German history the Catholic hierarchy had stood behind German nationalism rather than heed the advice

\(^{153}\) *The Nation*, CXLVI (April 9, 1938), 398.

\(^{154}\) R. H. Markham, "Correspondence from Austria: Vienna Catholics Vote for Hitler," *The Christian Century*, LV (May 4, 1938), 571.
of the Vatican. Another important consideration, contended Schroeder, was the fact "that Hitler is a Catholic." Do not be surprised, he wrote, if the Austrian cardinal becomes an important cog in the Nazi machine. "Through this manifesto blessing the annexation, Cardinal Innitzer has made a strong bid to head a national German episcopate, and Hitler is known not to forget anyone who ever was his friend in need."155

Much of Schroeder's assessment was, from all appearances, influenced by his emotions. Nevertheless, the Catholic author, George N. Shuster, writing in the April 15, 1938 Commonweal, conceded that nationalism or "national Catholicism" had played a major role in the success of the Anschluss. Many Catholics in both Germany and Austria had veered either to the extreme right or left in the post-war period.156

Innitzer's visit to Rome, where he was reprimanded for his actions at the time of the Nazi seizure of Austria, was mentioned by the May 1938 Catholic World. Without adding any comment, it printed a section of the Cardinal's April declaration concerning Nazism.157 America had more to say than usual about Innitzer's behavior. While it refused to condemn him outright, an America editorial of April 16 entitled "Unhappy Austria" im-

155 Martin Schroeder, "How Will Hitler Reward the Cardinal?" ibid., 555-557. Schroeder was minister of St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bloomfield, Nebraska.


157 The Catholic World, CXLVII (May, 1938), 237-238.
plied that Innitzer had made a bad error in judgment, for "it is clear to all the world outside Germany that no reliance is to be placed on any promise that Hitler may make." In another short editorial comment, it reported that the primate had gotten an "emphatic reprimand" from the Vatican officials. Clearly the Catholic Church leaders no longer placed trust in the Nazis. While it approved of this attitude, America advised "that the Church is preparing herself for inevitable conflicts that may arise."158

A later article in The Ave Maria for September 17, 1938, by the Filipino, Manuel C. Colayco, tried to exonerate Cardinal Innitzer. He objected to the criticism that had been aimed at the prelate, "most of it lying and unkind." His opinion was that Innitzer, "in using the Nazi greeting" as he had on several occasions, "was merely externalizing the good faith in which he accepted Hitler's assurances." Anyway, wrote Colayco, there was no use for the Austrian Catholics to try to oppose National Socialism. It was "as foolhardy as standing on the road in order to stem the tide." If Innitzer had slighted the Hitlerites by keeping silent instead of recognizing publicly the Fuehrer's promise to protect the Church, a whole series of reprisals would have taken place. In all probability the Cardinal "remembers that a kind word turneth away wrath and that mutual trust can yet estab-

158 America, LIX (April 16, 1938), 38, 26.
lish peace. ¹⁵⁹ By the time of this article, it should have been quite clear to Colayco that nothing that Innitzer had done or could do would change Hitler's decision to make the Church subservient to the Nazi state.

Actually little had changed over the past several years with regard to relations between the Nazi regime and the Catholic Church in Germany; however, by the spring of 1938 many of the Catholic periodicals were speaking out more candidly about German affairs. In the editorial "The Terrible Taint of Fascism" the May 14, 1938 America concluded that Catholics could not morally cooperate with a Fascist regime, a radical change from Father Talbot's argument in its pages during April and May 1937. This unsigned editorial declared that Fascism was a totalitarian ideology "which does not recognize human and spiritual values outside the state, and except conferred or allowed by the state." Nor could Catholics accept the theories of Social Fascism which used force to order social and economic groups.¹⁶⁰

On the other hand, the weekly Ave Maria gave the impression on May 14 that the Fuehrer and his followers could still be reasoned with when it came to the religious question. Often used

¹⁵⁹ Manuel C. Colayco, "Cardinal Innitzer's 'Heil Hitler,'" The Ave Maria, XLVIII (New Series) (September 17, 1938), 354-355. The author was a Filipino lawyer, teacher and leader in the Catholic Action Movement.

before by journalists, this old argument would never be confirmed. "One would think that men who pride themselves on their ability to organize would see that they are attempting the impossible." If they continued in their program, a time of crisis would only find disunity in the German state. 161

The Atlantic Monthly of September 1938 featured an article by Prince Hubertus Loewenstein, the German liberal refugee, which was highly critical of Vatican relations with Nazi Germany since the signing of the 1933 Concordat. There was "an increasing distrust of the temporal policy of the Church" for her failure to break completely with the National Socialist ideology. The Holy See had forced the German Catholics to sacrifice their political vehicles to Nazi totalitarianism, while the German hierarchy lifted the ban imposed on National Socialism until the Church's rights were infringed. Many devout German Catholics now wondered whether the Church would cooperate again with the state if her rights were restored. In Loewenstein's opinion Hitler had won his little game with the Church. 162

Michael Williams, although an admirer of Loewenstein and his democratic principles, criticized the Atlantic article in the September 30 Commonweal. Williams considered it "a singularly shallow article dealing with the Catholic Church in its relations with world movements and world affairs, the effect of which is

161 The Ave Maria, XLVII (New Series) (May 14, 1938), 632.
162 Hubertus Loewenstein, "Catholicism at the Crossroads," The Atlantic Monthly, CLXII (September, 1938), 326-327.
likely to be mischievous and thoroughly misleading...." Some of the criticism might have been justified, but Williams did not satisfactorily deal with the issue of church relations with the totalitarian state.163

Writing in the September 2 Commonweal, a Chicago priest, James A. Magner, observed that the Church had not condemned Fascism by name because it was not predicated on atheism. "Moreover the term Fascism itself is only in the process of definition and covers too broad a field, at least in popular concept, to be singled out for final analysis." Father Magner noted, however, that the Church had condemned certain ideas closely identified with the Fascist movement, but so had she attacked all attempts "to crush out religious freedom and the rights of man." While the Catholic Church had been consistent in her policies, Magner argued, this was not the case for those who had been the Church's most vociferous critics. As an example of this, the author turned to the problem most often used by the Catholic press to answer the attacks upon Catholicism: those who were maligning the Church were usually found on the side of the supporters of the "Communist cause" in Spain.164

An example of religious intransigence was seen in the latest pastoral letter from the German Catholic hierarchy after its

163 Michael Williams, "Views and Reviews," The Commonweal, XXVIII (September 30, 1938), 584.

164 James A. Magner, "The Church and Fascism," ibid., (September 2, 1938), 464. Father Magner was a priest of the archdiocese of Chicago.
annual Fulda meeting in August 1938, just as the Sudeten question was approaching its climax. The document summed up all the Church's complaints against the regime's policies ("war") toward Catholicism. It was perhaps the "most outspoken statement that has yet been made on the bitter struggle between the Catholic Church and National Socialism," in the view of the October 1938 Catholic World. The German bishops announced that the limits of patience and toleration had been reached. "Caesar has had all he can lawfully expect."\(^{165}\) America called the situation grave, but it foresaw the ultimate triumph of the Church over the "power-crazed madman." This editorial, "A Battle Against Christendom," believed that the German bishops would somehow bring an end to the "mad persecution." Having "withstood the gates of hell" for hundreds of years, the Church was well fortified to withstand this tyrant.\(^{166}\)

The overly optimistic Michael Williams declared that the Fulda message revealed the full nature of German domestic turmoil. Since it occurred at a time when the Nazis were mobilizing for war, it could have serious international repercussions plus bring down upon the German Catholics the full wrath of the dictatorship. Williams called to all Catholics to awake to the danger of this positive war upon Christianity.

The notion held by too many people, including too many easy-going Catholics, that the movement against Christi-

\(^{165}\) The Catholic World, CXLVIII (October, 1938), 109-110.

\(^{166}\) America, XLIX (September 10, 1938), 541.
anity in Germany represented nothing more serious—however deplorable—than the eccentric opinions of a few individuals, chance holders of public power, and that the storm would blow over, cannot be seriously held in the face of the declaration now made by the German bishops.

Several weeks later, on October 21, Williams again appealed to American Catholics to stop minimizing the danger in Nazi Germany. In view of the latest Fulda pronouncements, Nazism had to be considered undeniably an ally, not a foe, of world Communism. Nevertheless, in the November 18, 1938 Commonweal, Williams made some puzzling comments in an article which concerned the conflict between Communism and Fascism and the involvement of Catholicism in such world trouble spots as Spain. He showed a willingness to defend the Vatican policy of maintaining relations with Italy and Germany and of pressing for a Franco victory in the Spanish conflict. Having apparently overlooked what had been happening in Germany, Williams declared that these Fascist forces would accord the minimum rights to the Catholic Church, "but the Soviet government would not grant the indispensable minimum requirements of the Church." The Catholic Church only tolerated Fascism in all its forms because Fascism tolerated the Church. That the Fascists opposed Communism was of real significance to the Holy See. "If Fascism and National Socialism go to the full length of the logical application of their own principles the Church will oppose them as now it opposed godless communism."167

167 Michael Williams, "Views and Reviews," The Commonweal, XXVIII (September 9, 1938), 500; "Views and Reviews," (October 21, 1938), 673; and "Views and Reviews," XXIX (November 18, 1938), 99-100.
The Protestant weekly Christian Century admitted that the Catholic pastoral letter of Fulda was "probably the most resounding denunciation of nazi policy that had yet been made public." It responded unfavorably, however, to some of the "arrogant claims" made by the Catholic churchmen, and it thought that the bishops might have "broadened the scope of their demands," saying something about other rights besides religious.168

The journals' attention was drawn to more than just the bishops' decrees in the German religious dispute. An anonymous article entitled "The Nazi Persecutions Break No Bones, Shed No Blood" in the October 14, 1938 America described the conditions of German religious life. There seemed to be no outward signs of a persecution, and everywhere one got the feeling there was great prosperity, for the churches were always filled. Most of the persecution of the clergy was done outside the public's eye. No clergyman could take the risk of becoming popular, since the government would order him into seclusion.169

Considering much the same problem Father Edward Quinn, in the November 25, 1938 Commonweal, opined that the feeling still prevailed in Germany and elsewhere that the radical elements of the National Socialist Party would disappear and the regime would take up some constructive work. "One theory prevalent among Cath-

168 The Christian Century, LV (October 19, 1938), 1251.
olics is that Hitler will be impressed by the former glory of the Roman and German Christian Empire and will revive something of the prestige of the Medieval Church." Quinn was convinced that all one had to do was to listen to one of the Nazi leaders to know that the National Socialists planned to follow through with their program for years. Given the time to train the youth, it was highly probable that the movement would maintain itself like other revolutionary systems in recent history. As successes mounted, the program of Nazism would find easy reasons for its justification. Compromising with National Socialism would be of little value.

Concessions may get rid of the injustices created by the treaties but they will create even more fundamental injustices, the deprivation of the right to live for non-Aryan Germans and the destruction of the Church's right to condemn immoral political actions, and they will not get rid of the philosophy out of which the problem has arisen.

Resistance was the alternative to compromise, but this did not seem like it would solve the problem either. "It creates martyrs and strengthens the attachment of those who live to their particular religion." Father Quinn also doubted whether anybody was willing to take the chance of standing up to the Germans after the Czechoslovakian tragedy. This subject led to his suggestion that spiritual resistance might well be the only successful solution in the end. Only the "Spirit of God" could overcome and destroy the secular spirit which seemed to be in command of the world situation.170

The noted author, lecturer and educator, Monsignor John A. Ryan, delivered an address to the Catholic International Peace Congress meeting at The Hague in late August 1938, in which he condemned German Nazism as "the most definite and most formidable threat to international order and security." What disturbed Ryan most of all was the Hitlerites' denunciation of the Christian virtues, but he also recognized the dangers of the Nazi theories of racial purity and racial superiority. 171 In an article found in the February 1939 Forum, historian Saul K. Padover predicted ten more years of life for German Christianity including Catholicism. German paganism would be firmly established once the younger generation reached maturity. 172

The October 22, 1938 Nation recorded that the Nazi attack on the Austrian Catholic Church had begun with an assault upon Cardinal Innitzer's residence. This liberal journal would "waste no sympathy" on the prelate himself, but it did commiserate with Austrian Catholics in general: "We hope that before it is too late they—and Catholics everywhere—will force their church to repudiate its Innitzers who, like Prime Minister Chamberlain, believe that there is peace and safety in conciliating a paranoiac." 173

171John A. Ryan, "Political Causes of International Disorder," ibid., XXVIII (October 21, 1938), 668. The major portion of this article was taken from the speech delivered by the noted scholar and sociologist, Monsignor Ryan, at the Catholic International Peace Congress at The Hague, August 19-22, 1938.

172Saul K. Padover, "The Catholic Church: Nazi Scapegoat Number Two," The Forum, CI (February, 1939), 51-55. Padover was a research scholar and historian.

173The Nation, CXLVII (October 22, 1938), 395.
The appeasement policy of the Austrian hierarchy had failed, admitted the October 29 America, which, for once, agreed with The Nation. "Every indication seems to point definitely to the attempted eradication of every vestige of Christianity, as diametrically opposed to the Nazi philosophy," but however persistent the Nazi attack might be, the always hopeful Jesuit weekly believed that the Church would prevail in the end.174 There had been hope that the Nazi Commissioner for Austria, Joseph Buerchel, a Catholic, would be able to work with the Austrian Catholic leaders; however, the November 1938 Catholic World found that his solution for the situation was to accelerate the official attacks upon the Catholic Church hierarchy.175

The flow of articles, the great majority of which related the same old story of persecution, continued in late 1938 and into 1939. Many of these editorials and articles called for Catholic action against the Nazi dictatorship, but without specifying how Hitler would be overthrown.176

174 America, LX (October 29, 1938), 74-75.
175 The Catholic World, CXLVIII (November, 1938), 235.
176 A. I. S., "National Socialism a Religion," The Catholic World, CXLVIII (November, 1938), 167-171; (March, 1939), 642; CXLIX (April, 1939), 1-9; and Marieli Benziger, "Nuns in the Third Reich," (May, 1939), 142-148. Stephanie Herz, "There Is No Persecution, Mr. Hitler?" The Commonweal, XXIX (February 17, 1939), 457; Miss Herz was acting secretary of the Committee for Catholic Refugees from Germany. The Ave Maria, XLIX (New Series) (February 11, 1939), 185, and (February 18, 1939), 217. Anonymous, "Rosenberg Reveals Mind of Nazis Toward Catholicism," America, LX (March 25, 1939), 586-587; America described this author as "a man who has studied the Nazis in Naziland". J. Elliott Ross, "Catholics and Anti-Semitism," The American Ecclesiastical Review.
Although it would take another ten months to become a fact, the Jesuit Father John La Farge warned that Nazism and Communism would find no real problem in coming to a political accord. As of November 5, 1938, "signs thereof have already appeared." The most evident portent was that the Hitlerites did not oppose Bolshevism on religious grounds. Yet Nazism "persecutes, exiles, imprisons, calumniates those very laymen, priests and prelates who are or have been active in combating Communism as an anti-religious plague and a denial of Christianity."177

"'Love yourself and hate your enemies' is the Nietzschean dogma which animates the new pagan nationalism," wrote Father Wilfrid Parsons in the March 1939 Thought. Not too many months before, Father Parsons was involved in the controversy concerning the evil of the totalitarian ideologies. Now that Nazism had fully revealed itself to Parsons' satisfaction, he apparently decided to take another look at the problem. In this article entitled "Nationalism, Racism, and the Church," National Socialism was found to be more dangerous a threat to traditional values than Communism. It was a religion of materialism and the most notorious of the selfish nationalisms in Father Parsons' opinion. While "Nazi-Fascism" thought in terms only of the particular good of a

---

narrow group, "even Communism makes a profession of subordinating everything to the common good."178

A reprint article in The Living Age for March 1939 by the Frenchman, Gunther Buxbaum, reviewed the policy the Catholic Church had tried to follow with respect to the Nazi government. "The Church's problem was to come to a working understanding with National Socialism, while at the same time rejecting its heretical implications." The Church tried everything possible, but Buxbaum believed that she had failed. Refusing to make a forecast about future events, Buxbaum closed his article, "The Cross and the Swastika," with the hopeful thought that perhaps the Church's "attitude in the future will be more uncompromising."179

Rather than upset the "sensitive social organization" in Germany, the Nazis have not attempted to destroy all religion, which they had the power to do, wrote George M. Shuster in the May 19, 1939 Commonweal. The churches, on the other hand, could offer no more than moral resistance and only hope that this did not stimulate the regime to resort to more violent tactics. Shuster believed that "the duel may go on until the number of priests and faithful has shrunk to a mere handful." Nazism was indeed a great menace to European civilization, "the most formidable" of

178 Wilfrid Parsons, S.J., "Nationalism, Racism, and the Church," Thought, XIV (March, 1939), 68.

179 Gunther Buxbaum, "The Cross and the Swastika," The Living Age, CCCLVI (March, 1939), 56-60. This revealing article had been taken from the Mercure de France, a Paris political and literary bi-monthly.
its kind "since the days of the Mohammedan invasion." There seemed to be no doubt in the mind of the author that Communism, although "evil enough," was not "a really substantial menace." It was Shuster's honest opinion that National Socialism would probably terrorize Europe for years to come. He concluded his article by questioning those who continued to ignore the political realities with respect to Hitlerism. "Accordingly one can only say that those who are inclined to relegate the German system to a position of inferiority to Russian Sovietism as an agent of trouble in human society are ignoring the essential aspects of the world in which they live." 180

Possibly responding to the view of Shuster and other Catholics, The Christian Century of May 24, 1939 remarked that it looked as if the Catholic Church was finally "waking up to the dangerous position in which it has placed itself by its past friendliness with fascism." This Protestant weekly wondered whether it was too late. 181 This very definitely was the view of the German exile, F. Wilhelm Sollman, who reviewed the problems of the German churches in the March 29 Christian Century. The Catholic Church with its "totalitarian world view" was in "complete agreement" with the Nazi social and economic principles, and she favored "a state system under strong authoritarian leadership." There remained only a few liberal churchmen who stood their

181 The Christian Century, LVI (May 24, 1939), 659.
ground against the government encroachments. 182

During the summer months of 1939, there was a marked decrease in the number of articles and editorials attempting to come to grips with German religious problems, since international politics had become the all-important single issue of the day. A few short editorials in Catholic journals renewed their attacks upon the Nazi dictatorship which by now was an old story. 183

As we survey the periodical response to the Catholic religious struggle in Germany from the spring of 1933 to 1939, we discover that after the ban against Catholic membership in the National Socialist Party had been lifted in the spring of 1933, American Catholic journalists, particularly those representing America and The Ave Maria, seemed willing to tolerate the Hitler regime. There seemed to be a possibility that Catholic politicians would join the Hitler government and control the radical Nazis, although The Commonweal and the liberal secular journals doubted the efficacy of trying to cooperate with Nazism. All the Catholic journals either defended the signing of the July 1933 Concordat or avoided discussing it, while the non-Catholic jour-

182 F. Wilhelm Sollman, "Have German Churches Broken with Hitler?" ibid., (March 29, 1939), 416-417. Until he fled from Germany in 1933, Sollman had been the editor of the Rheinische Zeitung for more than twenty years.

183 The Ave Maria, XLIX (New Series)(June 17, 1939), 759-760, and L (New Series)(July 29, 1939), 153; America, LXI (July 15, 1939), 325; and The Commonweal, XXX (July 28, 1939), 327.
nals believed that the Church officials had made a highly questionable move.

Over the winter of 1933-1934, reports of renewed Nazi anti-Catholic activity were at first treated cautiously by the American Catholic journals, but such matters as the German sterilization law, plus numerous violations of the Concordat in the spring of 1934, appeared to sober them. Although the Catholic journalists decided that the Hitler regime was "anti-Christian," they persisted, with the general exception of The Commonweal staff, in defending the church-state treaty, with the hope that the Nazis would eventually listen to reason. America took the lead in predicting that the German Catholics led capably by their bishops would overcome present obstacles. Meanwhile, Protestant journals in the United States anticipated renewed Catholic-Protestant cooperation against the National Socialist enemy.

Following the lead of the German bishops, who issued a condemnation of the Nazi tyranny from Fulda in June 1934, American Catholic journals became outspoken critics of the dictatorship. Yet the criticism hardly varied in tone over the years, although the Nazi regime's pressure did not remain constant. Very often in the next four years, the Catholic journals and, in a few cases, non-Catholic ones, developed the habit of looking backward and judging the contemporary German situation by the standards of another period. They expressed the idea that another Kulturkampf had begun, and many journalists pointed out that the Nineteenth-century struggle had ended in the Church's favor.
Since the situation remained virtually unchanged for the next five years, non-Catholic journals eventually lost interest, but Catholic journals continued to censor the regime, with some still dreaming that Hitler would eventually make peace with the Church. Pope Pius XI's encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* scarcely changed the journals' attitudes.

The reporting of the Catholic journals was obviously greatly affected by the outbreak and the progress of the Spanish Civil War. Superficially the struggle in Spain appeared to be between two totalitarian ideologies, with Catholic Church interests at stake. Many Catholic writers found it very difficult to avoid the complex Spanish problem, and discussions quickly led to a comparison of the evil of Fascism, in all its national manifestations, with that of Communism. Despite the fact that the German Catholic Church had been all but paralyzed by the Nazi totalitarian structure, some Catholic spokesmen expressed a willingness to find accord with Fascism whatever its shortcomings. Even during 1938 and 1939, a time when Nazi Germany made known to the world its foreign ambitions, Catholic journals showed little inclination to reappraise the attitudes of Catholic prelates and their congregations when dealing with the Nazis. The poor judgment of a Catholic leader like Cardinal Innitzer was passed over quickly. However, Catholic periodicals, notably America, changed substantially their views on the Fascist and Nazi ideologies.

By the summer of 1939, with war clouds rapidly gathering, the Catholic Church struggle became a minor item of interest in
the Catholic journals, something which it had been in the non-Catholic journals for several years. The feeling of hope, which had so long played a role in the American Catholic response, was no longer exhibited; more pronounced was the attitude of frustration, for at no time did Hitler's *Kulturkampf* meet the formidable obstacles so often predicted by these journals.
CHAPTER VI

NATIONAL SOCIALISM AND THE PROTESTANT CHURCH

A second part of the Nazis' campaign against organized religion concerned their subjugation of the Protestant sects. This episode interested the Protestant journals primarily, but Catholic and secular periodicals also responded on various occasions.

From the very beginning of the Nazi era, German Protestantism faced greater difficulties in its fight for survival than the Catholic Church, because the basic issue of the struggle centered more distinctly around matters of faith. As early as June 1932, one group of Protestants with a National Socialist orientation founded the "Faith Movement of German Christians," which took for its own many of the planks of the Nazi Party program including the points on anti-Semitism and "positive Christianity." These "German Christians" could be regarded as liberal Protestants who desired to form a nationalistic sect free of Jewish influences.

A second threat to the Protestant churches was the Aryan pagan cult as presented in the writings of Alfred Rosenberg and other neo-pagans associated with the National Socialist leadership. Even though the spokesmen for the "German Christians" op-
posed the Nordic cult in principle, it was extremely difficult at first for American journalists to distinguish between these two factions. In fact, there appeared to be only a fine line of distinction between the more extreme "German Christians" and Rosenberg's followers, who can truly be called pagans. Only a few months after the establishment of the Hitler government, radical "German Christians" were heard calling for the elimination of many aspects of traditional Christianity, and thus the distinction became blurred in the Third Reich as well as in the American journals.¹

The confusion was evident as early as April 19, 1933, when the usually accurate Christian Century spoke of the "German Christians" as pagans. The situation remained unclear a week later, when the editors analyzed the status of German Protestantism from an historical point of view. Seen against the historical pattern, a concerted Nazi effort to undermine the Protestant church, the Century speculated, would not encounter serious opposition.

Given the power which Hitler now has, and sufficient time in which to exercise it, the Christianity of German Protestantism can be grafted on to the Teutonic root with much less effort than was required to annihilate traditional

¹Arthur Frey, Gross and the Swastika: The Ordeal of the German Church (London: The Macmillan Company, 1938), and Arthur S. Duncan-Jones, The Struggle for Religious Freedom in Germany (London: Victor Gollancz, 1938), are two monographs which examine in some detail the German pagan organizations and the Protestant Christian factions with pagan tendencies. For a brief study comparing the pagan cult with the "German Christians" see Curt L. Heymann, "The German God," Current History, XLVI (April, 1937), 63-68.
religion in Soviet Russia. In no Protestant land would such a task be so easy as in Germany, where Protestantism has been from the days of Martin Luther a thing apart from the secular life. The social responsibility of religion has never been even theoretically acknowledged by German Protestants as it has been in western Europe and the United States. Both Calvinism and Anglicanism, despite the blinding effect of their close association with the capitalistic system, have held theoretically to a degree of responsibility for the character of the social order, and both have been haunted with a vague sense of guilt for the sins of the secular state. The modern development of the social gospel has had more to build upon in Anglican and Puritan Protestantism than in Lutheran Protestantism. The latter early took flight from the economic and political sphere and developed under the forms of quietism and mysticism, in disregard of the kind of state and social order which secular forces left of themselves were producing.

In so many words, The Christian Century had little hope for the future of traditional German Protestantism, regardless of the insidious neo-pagan movement about which the Century's editors still seemed to know little.

In its next issue, on May 3, 1933, The Christian Century published an article "Christ or Caesar in Germany?" by its Geneva correspondent, William A. Visser't Hooft, who thought that the German situation gave all Christian churches a chance to stand together in a spirit of unity against the National Socialists. The great issue at stake in Germany was the spiritual freedom of the churches. The Nazi Third Reich wanted to be totalitarian. This condition would put the church in the position of becoming an arm of the state, carrying out its wishes. The majority of the Protestant bishops rejected the idea of being tied completely to the state; however, the "German Christians," those who wished to hasten the process of state consolidation, were growing pro-
emphatically that this turn to German paganism was restricted to a minority of German Protestants. 4

A clearer picture than the Digest's of German Protestantism's dilemma was written by Samuel McCrea Cavert, an official of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, in an article for The Christian Century on May 24. Unlike the labor unions and the universities, he wrote, the churches had so far been able to maintain some semblance of independence in Germany under the Nazi regime. One could, nevertheless, expect a continuation of the crisis, and Cavert hoped that German Protestantism would resist government pressure. However, the more radical "German Christians," advocates of a government-controlled church, probably commanded a majority in church elections. Consequently, the church leaders, whom Cavert mistakenly believed almost to a man opposed to the radical wing, must act prudently. Their dilemma arose from the fact that "earnest Christians" supported the "German Christians" because they felt Hitlerism to be Germany's only hope. 5 Almost every German adult, whatever his religion, had to face this moral crisis.

In an editorial entitled "Has Hitler Cowed the Churches?" The Christian Century of June 14, 1933, maintained that the ecclesiastical unity desired by the Hitler government would be beneficial to the church. "National church union represents a natural

---

4 The Literary Digest, CXV (April 22, 1933), 16.

development of the church, parallel to the unifying political policy of the Hitler government and helpful to it, but not necessarily subservient to it." In a very unusual mood, the Century seemed to apologize for the Protestant failure to criticize loudly the German regime's racist policies.

If German Christians do not rise as one man to protest, we should modestly remember the occasions when the apparent demands of patriotism have dulled our own moral perceptions. German Christians are also patriots. Most of them doubtless hope that in the present regime lies the hope of their country, though they may not like everything that it does. The German churches are going along with Hitler, but it does not appear that he is leading them by the nose. In calling upon them to unite in the formation of a national church, he marshalls them the way that they were going. 6

A less apologetic critic of the German Protestant clergy contributing to The Christian Century was Reverend Reinhold Niebuhr; however, he still maintained that the Protestant church had given the Hitler government its strongest organized opposition to date. On one hand, Niebuhr considered the stand on church freedom taken by the traditional churchmen against the so-called "German Christians" to be an admirable one, but he too regretted that they had not seen fit to make statements concerning the terror methods and anti-Semitic campaign of the government. The struggle for independence, the influence of nationalism upon the church, and the traditional Lutheran view that politics belonged to "the world" and was "incapable of Christianization" had done much to keep the spiritual leaders preoccupied, said Niebuhr.

6 The Christian Century, L (June 14, 1933), 776-777.
True, they had stood up against the attempt to have baptized Jews dismissed from the church body, "but in their very protest against anti-Semitism in the church they have by implication allowed it in the state." Perhaps, suggested this Protestant minister, no more could be expected, for it was estimated that seventy-five percent of the church membership was "avowedly nazi." These were individuals who feared the Marxian revolutionaries and who greeted the Hitler chancellorship "as a gift of God." They had been reenforced in their attitude by the fact that Chancellor Hitler had publicly endorsed Christianity and had returned religious instructions to the schools very early in his rule. Extravagant demagogic promises and the intensity of political feeling had blinded most Germans to the glaring contradictions of the government's policies. On July 5 Niebuhr commented again; he observed that many in Germany described the Protestant opposition as reactionary, while the "German Christians" supposedly consisted of young progressives "honestly anxious to establish the church again in the life of labor."7

By early July 1933 the constitution for a new united Reich Protestant Church had been drawn up. The document was approved by the Nazi-dominated Reichstag on July 14, but by that time the fight between the traditionalists and the "German Christians" centered around the selection of the first Reichbishop

7Reinhold Niebuhr, "Religion and the New Germany," ibid., (June 28, 1933), 843-845, and "Notes From a Berlin Diary," (July 5, 1933), 872.
for the new organization. Adolf Hitler's personal candidate was Dr. Ludwig Mueller, while the Protestant traditionalists preferred Dr. Friedrich von Bodelschwing, an elderly church leader. Bodelschwing had been elected Reichbishop by a committee of leading churchmen on May 26; however, Mueller and his backers protested that government approval was needed to make the election valid, and that the new constitution had to be sanctioned before the church leader could be named. On June 24 in support of the Mueller faction the government indicated its disapproval of the Bodelschwing election by appointing a "German Christian," Dr. August Jaeger, as state commissar for the Evangelical Church of Prussia. Jaeger immediately began to replace elected church officials with "German Christians," and in protest Bodelschwing resigned his position on June 24. Dr. Mueller and his associates now took command of the church machinery of government, and for all practical purposes the way was now clear for Hitler's candidate to be elected Reichbishop. On July 14 the Reichstag approved the new church constitution, and set July 23 as the date for the election of delegates to the German Evangelical Church Synod. The ministers of this body would then elect the new Reichbishop.

On July 13, 1933, The Presbyterian Advance guessed that Hitler might find his Protestant church program "too difficult for accomplishment." It noted that German orthodox Protestant clergymen were attempting to sustain their followers in the struggle, and the Advance called upon "Protestants of all lands" to give support to this fight "for freedom of conscience." Finan-
cial aid was said to be on the way from Protestants in other European countries, and the hope remained that German Protestantism and Catholicism could present a common front. In the meantime, in a public letter President Hindenburg had implored Chancellor Hitler to let the Protestant body maintain "the church's inner liberty." This would have to mean the right to criticize the state when warranted, observed the July 20 Presbyterian Advance, or else it would not matter if the church was maintained or not. 

The Literary Digest of July 15 wrote that in spite of the appeals of Hindenburg for an end to the religious feuding, the Chancellor was going to force Ludwig Mueller upon the Protestant church. The move was made, The Literary Digest conjectured, because of Nazi claims that the church had failed to halt the advance of Marxism. Hitler and Mueller apparently held the upper hand, but whether or not the government's campaign would end in success was another matter. The Digest had seen others fail in the same type of policy, and, besides, there remained yet another force to be heard from--the Catholic Church, which, according to this weekly, still opposed National Socialism. It is interesting to notice how often during these weeks the American secular and Protestant journals looked to Catholicism for help during the Protestant time of tribulation in Germany. Catholic journals, on

---

8The Presbyterian Advance, XLVII (July 13, 1933), 5, and (July 20, 1933), 4.

9The Literary Digest, CXVI (July 15, 1933), 15.
the other hand, seemed only mildly concerned with the Protestant problem. Occasionally periodicals like America and The Commonweal would express editorial sympathy for the Protestant clergy's troubles with the German government.\footnote{America, XLIX (June 3, 1933), 215, and The Commonweal, XVIII (July 7, 1933), 255-256. When not responding editorially to the German Protestant troubles from 1933 to 1939, Catholic journals would usually keep their readers abreast of events by including a factual report in one of their news columns.}

A Christian Century editorial, "The Ordeal of German Protestantism," predicted on July 12 that Hitler would soon overwhelm the Protestant churchmen: "A church which has conceived its liberty as a possession rather than as a function, as a privilege rather than as a responsibility, as a treasure to be kept rather than as a strategy to be employed, goes into the conflict handicapped from the start." From Germany Reverend Elmer G. Homrighausen told much the same story to the readers of the July 26 Christian Century. Only a few clergymen such as the eminent theologian Karl Barth had dared to challenge the state's doctrine of totalitarianism, as exemplified in the latest tactics used against the Protestant Church, but his stand produced little emulation.\footnote{The Christian Century, L (July 12, 1933), 901-903, and Elmer G. Homrighausen, " Barth Resists Hitler," (July 26, 1933), 954-955.}

Current History's columnist Sidney B. Fay also saw the struggle finished, with the Protestants yielding to Adolf Hitler.\footnote{Sidney B. Fay, "The Nazi 'Totalitarian' State," Current History, XXXVIII (August, 1933), 611-614.}

While Chancellor Hitler was coming to terms with the
Vatican in the summer of 1933, Protestant journals reported continued headway by the Nazi officials against the German Protestant church traditionalists. The Christian Century for July 19, 1933 announced that the Protestant press had been put under censorship and that church youth organizations had been brought under Nazi rule. While the church leaders had been speaking out against the government more than had been publicized, apparently nothing could halt the National Socialist domination of the church's administration.\(^\text{13}\)

Both sides, the Nazi-dominated "German Christians" and the orthodox Protestants, were girding for the German Evangelical Church Synod election on July 23. American Protestant spokesmen were naturally sincerely interested in the contest which would ultimately decide who would serve as Reichbishop. In preparation for this election, The Christian Century on August 30 published a clear exposition of the "German Christians'" position by Reverend Elmer G. Homrighausen, a recent visitor to Germany. Young German adherents of the "German Christian" point of view had told him personally that the National Socialist movement had "basic Christian elements in it." They expressed closely the Nazi propaganda line that Germany was being born again after having stood on the brink of Communism. "Anyone who will deny the presence of God in this movement," they argued, "will never admit God's presence in any event. Hitlerism is not anti-religious, it is a divine emer-

\[\text{13 The Christian Century, L (July 19, 1933), 924, and (July 26, 1933), 947.}\]
gence meant to liberate. Hitler is no arbitrary demigod, he is the chosen Fuehrer--Crusading Leader." The "German Christian" would further argue that Adolf Hitler had been a boon for the church, and it should show its appreciation by pacifying the liberal elements of the confession, by giving spiritual sanction to the administration's work and by correctly indoctrinating its youthful members. On the other side of the ledger, Homrighausen called attention to the German theologian Karl Barth's famous pamphlet *Theological Existence Today*, which developed the thesis that a church was no longer a church once it had succumbed to state dictation. Barth believed that the traditional German Protestants would be better off going underground rather than making a compromise with the "German Christian" group.\(^\text{14}\)

The degree to which some had become enamored of Hitler was indicated by Paul Hutchinson, another *Christian Century* reporter in Europe. In an article entitled "Germany Welcomes the Messiah," he described how the Nazi leader was being accorded "almost messianic rank." He had heard Hitler described as the "incarnation of the Holy Ghost."\(^\text{15}\) The Swiss Protestant bishop John Louis Nuelsen reviewed the position of the state and church in Germany in the autumn number of the Protestant quarterly *Religion In Life*. He sketched the background of National Socialism and observed

\(^\text{14}\) Elmer G. Homrighausen, "The Ethical Dilemma of German Christians," *ibid.*, (August 30, 1933), 1086.

\(^\text{15}\) Paul Hutchinson, "Germany Welcomes the Messiah," *ibid.*, (August 16, 1933), 1031-1032. Hutchinson was managing editor of the *Century*. 
that the movement had "infatuated the very best minds of the na-
tion." He heard the claims of the Nazis that they were the best
friends of religion. Under the National Socialists traditional
religion had been given a boost, but quickly the church had be-
come nothing but a department of the totalitarian state. The
religion of the state was not traditional Christianity, but "hu-
manism of an exclusive national, racial, Nordic type." He clar-
ified a confusing point by taking note that the "German Chris-
tians" had repudiated this kind of religion, but they also denied
that the state supported the pagan cult. Nuelsen thought that
these radical Protestants, the "German Christians," deceived them-
selves, since the totalitarian state requires a religion of na-
tionalism to add to its power and glory. In subsequent genera-
tions the Nazi education system should solidify the regime's the-
ory of the state, reflected Bishop Nuelsen.

What chances will there be for the claims of Jesus Christ
to be the only and absolute Master and Lord? The German
Christians are very optimistic. They see the face of the
Third Reich illuminated by the light shining forth from
the triumphant Christ. Will the next generation see the
eternal light of the Son of God? Or will they merely
see the fleeting flicker of national self glorification? 16

When the German Evangelical Church Synod election occurred
on July 23, the victory went decisively to Mueller and his "Ger-
man Christian" supporters. Mueller's own election, scheduled
for September 27, 1933, was now merely a matter of procedure.

16 John Louis Nuelsen, "Religion in the Third Reich," Re-
ligion In Life, II (Autumn, 1933), 542-552. The author was the
senior bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Zurich,
Switzerland.
Unanimously the American journals deplored the results. The August 12 Literary Digest believed that the totalitarian state had now been "achieved." "With a concordat with the Vatican signed in respect to Catholics, himself as overlord of the Protestants and all else under his sway, Hitler has succeeded in yoking all Germany to his star."\textsuperscript{17} The New Republic pointed to the opposition organized by the traditionalists in spite of severe handicaps as a sign of hope for the future.\textsuperscript{18} The signing of the Concordat meant to America's editors that Hitler "would yield" in his feud with the Protestant clergymen.\textsuperscript{19} Conversely, while defending the signing of the July 1933 Concordat, The Commonweal mentioned that the Protestants had been forced to surrender: "They could not look back upon a long tradition of agreements and Concords in the same way as could Catholics." Yet the editors conjectured that the Concordat signalled a defeat for the promoters of paganism.\textsuperscript{20}

While it had expected the results, a Christian Century editorial accused the Protestant laity of letting its church down in this time of trial. "The church organization is therefore made over, from bottom to top, in accordance with Hitler's ambition to bring every element of German life under his control."

\textsuperscript{17} The Literary Digest, CXVI (August 12, 1933), 16.
\textsuperscript{18} The New Republic, CLXXV (August 2, 1933), 300.
\textsuperscript{19} America, XLIX (July 29, 1933), 383-384.
\textsuperscript{20} The Commonweal, XVIII (August 11, 1933), 359.
Unlike many of the Catholic journals' attitude toward the Concordat, there was no apologetic attitude on the part of this Protestant weekly for its German brethren's shortcomings. No doubt the Century desired to be sympathetic, but it could not deny the fact that all was not well in church circles and with the churchmen's thinking. No more help from the Protestant church against Nazism could be anticipated, wrote Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr in the August 2 Christian Century. To him it was all too apparent that the churchmen opposing the "German Christians" were so preoccupied with their fight for church autonomy and against the aryranizing predilections that they had not had the time to protest the government's outrageous anti-Semitic conduct the way Catholics had. But German Catholics had freedom through the Concordat, "which the Protestant church sadly lacks."21

It was but a short time later that a few of the after-effects were felt in Germany and observed by two Protestant journals in the United States. A Presbyterian Advance editorial on September 21 criticized the recent action of the "German Christians" in barring all non-Aryans from church offices in the new Protestant organization. There would not have been room for Jesus Christ himself in the new administration of spiritual affairs.22 Some members of the general synod of the church had

21 The Christian Century, L (August 2, 1933), 971-972, and Reinhold Niebuhr, "Germany Must Be Told," (August 9, 1933), 1014.

22 The Presbyterian Advance, XLVIII (September 21, 1933), 5.
reportedly withdrawn in protest and would probably be imprisoned. Praise and honor should be given to these men, wrote The Christian Century on September 21, 1933. Apparently there was enough virility left in the church to force Hitler into a showdown.  

As a matter of fact, at the very moment in Germany a group of dissenting clergy was preparing to organize an opposition faction protesting the tenets of the "German Christians."

The story of German Protestantism from the fall of 1933 to the spring of 1934 contained only a few bright moments. A strong feeling of pessimism prevailed among most of the observers analyzing the scene. For instance, Reverend Stanley High, in one of several articles at this time for The Literary Digest, observed that although the Christian churches had been the only organizations to stand up to the National Socialist "steamroller," presently the dissenting Protestant pastors appeared to have come out second best in their contest with the Nazi state.  

While thoroughly assessing theologian Karl Barth's recent challenge to National Socialism, Reverend Elmer G. Homrighausen, in the October 26 Presbyterian Advance, drew attention to the fact that Barth did not attack Hitler personally or the Nazi Party's political policies. Barth had not even mentioned the Jewish problem, which, Homrighausen believed, he should have.

23 The Christian Century, L (September 20, 1933), 1164.
24 Stanley High, "Hitler's One-Purpose Government," The Literary Digest, CXVI (October 14, 1933), 12, 24.
Only the government's treatment of the Protestant church antagonized Barth. The German theologian claimed that the Nazi-oriented "German Christians" were undermining the very essence of the Christian gospel and violating the nature of the church. What appeared to grieve Barth more than anything else was the fact that the church was not ready to engage in the present struggle. "The trouble is that the church no longer knows why she is a church!" 25

Writing in the same Protestant organ on November 2, 1933, Henry Smith Leiper also thought that the work of the "German Christian" faction had violated the spirit of Christ. However, he expressed his willingness to maintain contact with the new German Protestant church organization in hope that the revolutionary spirit would be modified and that the beleagured German orthodox church leaders would not be isolated. 26 How far the radical "German Christians" had actually gone was shown in a report received by the Advance three weeks later. Leaders of the Nazi-backed group, particularly Dr. Reinhold Krause of the Berlin "German Christians," wished to discard the crucifix, eliminate the Old Testament, edit the New Testament and prohibit

25 Elmer G. Homrighausen, "Barth's Protest Against Hitler's Church Policy," The Presbyterian Advance, XLVIII (October 26, 1933), 6-7

26 Henry Smith Leiper, "The German Church Problem," ibid., (November 2, 1933), 2. Dr. Leiper was the secretary of the department of relations with churches abroad for the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America.
visits to the Holy Land. This kind of activity, which actually came close to the views held by the pagan sect, might help increase the number of orthodox members of the church ready to stand up for their convictions, thought the Presbyterian weekly.\textsuperscript{27}

One Protestant clergyman viewed current events as only the inevitable result of the church’s reactionary political attitudes. In his unique, penetrating \textit{Christian Century} article of November 22, 1933, the Lutheran minister Martin Schroeder asserted that the German Protestant church had not "been taken for a ride" by the National Socialists. "Hitler had done nothing out of turn, nothing contrary to the tradition, theology, spirit, or even the expectation of a great portion of his people. He has made shifts in form, it is true, but the heart of the church he has not touched." A majority of the churchmen, continued Reverend Schroeder, was in sympathy with the Nazi goals. The pastors had been "bidding for the brown shirt." "Let them keep it on," advised the author, "and we may do the same with ours." Above all, "sympathy or resentment" for the church in Germany would be "wasted effort."\textsuperscript{28}

Such an agonized examination of conscience as Schroeder’s found few echoes in the more superficial Protestant journalistic comments.

Meanwhile, late November reports suggested that Hitler had suffered setbacks in his battle with the Protestant opposi-

\textsuperscript{27}The Presbyterian Advance, XLVIII (November 23, 1933), 5

\textsuperscript{28}Martin Schroeder, "Brown Shirts for the Clergy," \textit{The Christian Century}, L (November 22, 1933), 1466-1468.
tion. A perceptible stiffening of the conservative opposition within the Protestant church was noted by The Christian Century on November 29 and by the November 30 Presbyterian Advance.\textsuperscript{29}

Although these Protestant journals did not identify the evidence for their newest appraisal, they were referring to the action taken by the dissenting clergy's new organization: the Pastors' Emergency League. This organization was born on September 21, 1933, when Pastor Martin Niemoeller sent a letter to all German pastors asking them to unite against the government's interference and to oppose the racist policies of the "German Christians." By January 15, 1934, the League had enlisted 7,036 members. Their protests quickly brought rather startling results under the circumstances. One of the most vigorous "German Christian" clergymen, Dr. Reinhold Krause, the Berlin leader of the Nazi-oriented sect, was silenced for heresy by Reichbishop Ludwig Mueller on November 15, 1933. The Emergency League clergy were also seeking the removal of Krause's superior, Bishop Joachim Hossenfelder of Brandenburg, who had long been a leader in the "German Christian" movement and had joined the National Socialist Party as far back as 1929. Although Mueller delayed his decision on Hossenfelder's fate, "moved by this pressure" from the orthodox clergy "and perhaps by his own sense of what is right," the Reichbishop rescinded the church's anti-Semitic rules, said the Century.

\textsuperscript{29}The Christian Century, L (November 29, 1933), 1491, and The Presbyterian Advance, XLVIII (November 30, 1933), 5.
The feeling of restrained optimism which the "revolt" of the German orthodox Protestant clergy generated for *The Christian Century* on November 29 began to fade slightly in early December. Even while the orthodox leaders, Pastors Gerhard Jacobi and Martin Niemoeller, the latter an early supporter of the National Socialist revolution, grew more defiant, the Nazi-oriented "German Christian" gave a vote of confidence to Reichbishop Mueller and pledged themselves to continue their alliance with the regime and to maintain the church on what they conceived to be "the gospels in their unadulterated form." On December 13, 1933, *The Christian Century* called the dissenters "marked men," who, if they failed in their mission to preserve religious liberty, would lose their position in the Protestant church, and perhaps even suffer physical violence. At the moment, the government was keeping hands off, apparently waiting for further developments. In the long run, the outcome of the contest "will probably be determinative of Hitler's success or failure." Without a doubt, the *Century* believed, "its effects will influence every other area of German culture which the state now dominates. If these Christian Germans are beaten by the 'German Christians,' Hitler's power will be absolute."\(^{30}\)

As a result of the activities of the Pastor's Emergency League, more confidence in the future of German Protestantism was

---

\(^{30}\)*The Christian Century*, L (December 6, 1933), 1523, and (December 13, 1933), 1566-1567.
expressed by the December 7 Presbyterian Advance, the first journal to refer by name to the dissenting clergy's new organization. The December 13 Nation hailed the League for inflicting the "first internal political defeat" upon the National Socialist government; however, this weekly contended that the Protestant group was aligned with the right-wing elements of the Hugenberg Nationalists, which had been eagerly searching for ways to weaken the dictatorship. Several Catholic journals watched anxiously the Nazi-Protestant battle, since fundamentals of Christianity were being threatened. Only America expressed optimism regarding the ultimate verdict. The Pastors' Emergency League had given courage and strength to other Christian groups, according to Professor Sidney B. Fay in the January 1934 Current History. The Union of Free Evangelical Churches, the organization representing Methodists, Baptists and Congregationalists, for example, had demanded assurance from the government that no attempt would be made to coordinate it with the Lutheran-Calvinist church.

On November 29 Mueller reorganized his spiritual ministry and excluded all members of the Faith Movement of German Chris-

31 The Presbyterian Advance, XLVIII (December 7, 1933), 4-5.
32 The Nation, OXXXVII (December 13, 1933), 664.
33 America, L (November 25, 1933), 191; (December 9, 1933), 220; (December 16, 1933), 263; and (December 30, 1933), 312; The Catholic World, OXXXVIII (January, 1934), 493; and George N. Shuster, "Toward Rome?" The Commonweal, XIX (December 29, 1933), 231-233.
34 Sidney B. Fay, "German Churchmen Defy the Nazis," Current History, XXXIX (January, 1934), 482-483.
tians. Seeing in this action renewed hope for German Protestantism, the December 20 Christian Century spoke as if the "German Christian" threat had been repulsed indefinitely. The movement would survive within the Protestant body but not as "a church within a church, dominating the whole, forcing its candidates into office and rewriting the creed and the laws of the church in conformity with its nazi ideals and for the promotion of the Hitler program." What the Century did not realize was that Adolf Hitler could not permit the action taken by Reichbishop Mueller to become definitive and still maintain the image of a totalitarian state. If this approach to religious unity under National Socialist dominance proved a failure, the Nazis would quickly find another, as they eventually did.

That the German leader would admit his error and choose to take the side of the Emergency League dissenters was a fallacy, yet this was the assessment of Charles S. MacFarland in the January 1934 Review of Reviews and World's Work. Showing a thorough lack of understanding of the goals and policies of the Nazis, MacFarland naively contended that the moderates of the Pastors' Emergency League had been successful in lessening the influence of the Nazi-oriented "German Christians" in the Protestant church organization because they finally got a hearing with the Chancellor. When MacFarland had spoken to Hitler in a recent interview, he had found him honest and sincere but with no comprehension of

35 The Christian Century, L (December 20, 1933), 1595.
the essential spirit and motives of the Christian church. Hitler had expressed to MacFarland his willingness to meet with the leaders of the League in order to hear their side of the story. The author identified the recent events as the results of such a conference. 36

During the first week of the new year, 1934, the Protestant church struggle was renewed. On January 4, 1934, Reichbishop Mueller issued a decree which forbade all Protestant churchmen to discuss the religious controversy. Immediately the members of the Pastors' Emergency League protested publicly. Mid-January 1934 issues of The Christian Century, The Nation, The New Republic, and the February Catholic World, all described what they believed to be the makings of a gigantic struggle which seemed to have pagan overtones. 37 The January 25, 1934 Presbyterian Advance judged correctly that the cards were stacked in favor of the National Socialists but that "when conscience is aroused something is sure to happen." 38

George J. Walmar, writing in the February North American Review, foresaw the government practicing a series of tactical re-


37 The Christian Century, LI (January 17, 1934), 76; The Nation, CXXXVIII (January 17, 1934), 58; The New Republic, LXXVII (January 24, 1934), 293; and The Catholic World, CXXXVIII (February, 1934), 620.

38 The Presbyterian Advance, XLVIII (January 25, 1934), 4.
treats and advances in order to weaken the church opposition. He also tried to describe the "German Christians" and to detail their goals.

Just as the Nazis insist that the German nation must sunder all ties of intimacy with other countries, so the German Christians declare that the Christian Church in the Reich must be Germanized and purged of all false notions of the universality of human brotherhood. They represent a school of thought which, with that truly Teutonic thoroughness for which Germans have long been famous, is prepared to carry the theory and practice of anti-Semitism to a logical extreme from which most anti-Semites have hitherto shrunk. Anti-Semites of former days, while declaring against the Jews, usually remained orthodox Christians in the theological sense, acknowledging the Bible as the word of God. But the German Christians at least possess the virtue of being far more rigorously consistent in their reasoning, if such a term can be properly applied to the mysterious complex of hates and passions which fills the space where their minds ought to be.39

Several other articles and editorials in the February issues of religious journals discussed aspects of the church-state clash. "Christian Totalitarianism," a major editorial in the February 7 Christian Century called attention to the most significant deficiency in the argument of the dissenting Protestant clergy,

The pathos of the German situation is that, though the six thousand pastors are making the most heroic stand which any body of Christians have been compelled to make since the days of the early martyrs, the cause which they champion is not the fully Christian ideal. It may, as we suggest, develop into the fully Christian ideal before the issue is decided, but it has not yet reached that stage. The explicit cause for which the German pastors are making their brave stand is a defense of the cloistered freedom of the Christian Church to manage its own

39 George J. Valmar, "Hitler and the German Church," The North American Review, CCXXXVII (February, 1934), 139-140. The author was using a pseudonym.
affairs as to membership, offices, ritual, creed and scriptures in accordance with its own ideals. But except in the domain of the church the pastors have not challenged totalitarian pretensions of the nazi state.40

Not every Protestant spokesman agreed with *The Christian Century*'s argument. The well-known German theologian Paul Tillich reminded the readers of the Protestant quarterly, *Religion In Life*, in the Spring 1934 issue, that the conflict within the German Protestant church was strictly non-political and would remain so. Sympathizers with the National Socialist Party could be found in both the orthodox and the "German Christian" factions. Some liberals and radicals backed Reichbishop Mueller, while the Emergency League was the camp of many old-time conservatives. To call the latter group the party of political resistance within the church would be to cloud the issue. The Catholic Church struggle, even though it might be hidden for the moment, was of more significance, according to Tillich, because the Catholics possessed a tradition of criticism in the political and social realms which the Lutherans had never developed. Paganism, a part of the world-wide trend toward secularism, was the real enemy in Germany. Tillich hoped that the German struggle would serve as an example and "open the eyes of other nations." Then, if the German church were to be sacrificed, it "would not be in vain." However, Tillich believed that the churches would be "partially successful" in their battle with paganism.41

---

40 *The Christian Century*, LI (February 7, 1934), 174-175.
41 Paul Tillich, "The Religious Situation in Germany Today," *Religion In Life*, III (Spring, 1934), 163-173. Tillich had
Throughout the first three months of 1934 Reichbishop Mueller performed his duties in a dictatorial manner, and many ministers were subjected to disciplinary measures, suspensions and dismissals, including Martin Niemoeller who was forcibly retired effective March 1, 1934. The Reichbishop appeared to have the situation well in hand. The Protestant church was being forced to go underground, in the opinion of the March 7 Christian Century, although it admitted accurate news from Germany was scarce. The Century felt that an underground church opposition would give the Hitler government considerably more to worry about in the future.42

From what the Century said, The Sign of March 1934 was too optimistic when it stated that the dissenting Protestant clergymen, with assistance from the German Catholics, would be successful in their revolt.43 Sympathy for the Protestant pastors under harassment from the pagan elements in the new German society was expressed by the Catholic weekly Commonweal on March 23, 1934. Yet, in the same column it reminded its readers that many of these orthodox Lutherans had formerly opposed ex-Chancellor Bruening just because he was a Catholic and a Centrist. The lesson to be learned here, announced the journal, was that in these

just been dismissed as professor of philosophy at the University of Frankfurt after publishing The Socialist Decision, which was critical of the Nazi regime. Professor Tillich was one of the world's most influential theologians.

42 The Christian Century, LI (March 7, 1934), 309.
43 The Sign, XIII (March, 1934), 451.
days of trouble and peril, Christians of whatever denomination
must cooperate.  

A short article in the May 12 Literary Digest was also
concerned with political allegiances; it discussed the courageous
activity of Pastor Martin Niemoeller but also noted that the Pro-
testant leader was "a staunch supporter of the Nazi regime" and
its political program—a situation which was no longer true. Pres-
umably Niemoeller "balks only at the substitution of the German
pagan gods for the Christian faith and at racial discrimina-
tion."  

During the first half of 1934, the Nazi campaign to pro-
mote the renaissance of paganism within the Third Reich received
increasing attention both within Germany and outside. In January
1934, Alfred Rosenberg received an appointment as spiritual dir-
ector of all the organizations of the Nazi Party, perhaps to
strengthen his hand in his efforts to weld Protestantism into a
single, malleable structure. Then in May 1934, the German Faith
Movement, the largest pagan sect, was formally organized under
the direction of Jacob Hauer with its membership rolls including
a number of government dignitaries. Such open support by the gov-
ernment of the pagan program disturbed greatly the editors of
The Presbyterian Advance, America and The Sign.  

44 The Commonweal, XIX (March 23, 1934), 563.
45 The Literary Digest, CXVII (May 12, 1934), 18.
46 America, L (March 24, 1934), 582-583; The Sign, XIII
(March, 1934), 451; and The Presbyterian Advance, XLVIII (Febru-
ary 15, 1934), 5, and XLIX (May 31, 1934), 5.
Presbyterian Advance conjectured that Christianity could deal successfully with the pagans, America expressed little optimism. The Sign, meanwhile, continued to confuse the "German Christians" with the neo-pagans. On the other hand a secular weekly, The Literary Digest for February 24, correctly pointed out that the pagan movement differed from the "German Christians" who now occupied a middle position between the "dwindling" supporters of the orthodox Protestant position and Teutonic paganism. 47

Sidney B. Fay briefly surveyed the pagan organization for Current History, making the interesting comment: "There is considerable sound historical and archaeological scholarship behind some of their contentions, but they have indulged in exaggeration and greatly minimized the benefits of Christianity in the history of Germany." 48 Discussing the entire church problem for The American Scholar, Reinhold Niebuhr established for his readers the basic differences existing between the "German Christians" and the German Faith Movement. Niebuhr pictured the "German Christians" as those who wished to mix "the paganism of a religion of race and blood...with a religion which seeks the universal and absolute above all particulars." According to this Protestant clergyman, the pagans of the German Faith Movement "want to reject Christianity altogether because its tendency toward universalism raises too many doubts about their religion of race and

47 The Literary Digest, CXVII (February 24, 1934), 22.
48 Sidney B. Fay, "German Neo-Pagans," Current History, XL (July, 1934), 489.
During the next several years American journals frequently printed articles and editorials commenting on Teutonic paganism without tying it directly to the Protestant church struggle; however, these responses, which, in general, condemned the heathen tendency, threw little new light on the subject. More important, for the moment, was the factional contest within the Protestant church structure, which seemed to be nearing another critical stage.

Editorials in The Presbyterian Advance on May 24 and May 31 called attention to increased government police activity in support of Reichbishop Mueller against the dissenting Protestant clergymen. Nonetheless, Sidney B. Fay reported in the July Current History that the traditional Protestants had grown strong.

49Reinhold Niebuhr, "The Churches in Germany," The American Scholar, III (Summer, 1934), 344-351.

50Some of the articles which treated briefly with the pagan tendencies were James G. McDonald, "Modern Spiritual Dictatorship," The Christian Register, CXV (June 11, 1936), 399-401; Paul I. Morentz, "A Nationalization Religion Versus Christian Universality," The Lutheran Church Quarterly, IX (July, 1936), 309-314; Sherwood Eddy, "Germany in Olympic Dress," The Christian Century, LIII (September 2, 1936), 1154-1155, and LIV (December 29, 1937), 1613-1614; Ralph Thurston, "Hitler's Heathens," The Commonweal, XXIV (July 10, 1936), 279-280, and Michael Williams, "Views and Reviews," XXX (December 2, 1938), 153; The Sign, XVII (November, 1937), 198; The Ave Maria, XLV (New Series) (January 30, 1937), 150-153; Wilfrid Parsons, S.J., "Hitler Marches On," The Catholic World, CXLIX (May, 1939), 176-183; The Literary Digest, CXXII (August 8, 1936), 26-27, and CXXIII (February 27, 1937), 10; and Philip S. Bernstein, "Hitler Dooms the Church," The Nation, CXLVI (March 19, 1938), 329-331.

51The Presbyterian Advance, XLIX (May 24, 1934), 5, and (May 31, 1934), 5.
er as the summer months began, while the "German Christians" had been forced into a more defensive position. Pastors and their congregations in south and southwestern Germany had virtually declared their independence of the official leadership and would probably organize a self-supporting denomination, said Professor Fay. Parishes in northern and eastern Germany, on the other hand, remained firmly in the hands of Reichbishop Mueller's supporters.

Just how this independent movement was supposed to function within the German totalitarian structure was not discussed. However, Fay was drawing attention to a very important tendency which reached its pinnacle of success on May 29-31, 1934. On these days, the First Confessional Synod of the German Evangelical Church was held in Barmen, Germany. In attendance were members of Lutheran, Reformed, and United Churches, and of various free synods. The Barmen Declaration, the result of the three days of conferences, condemned the doctrines of the "German Christians," especially those pagan beliefs which they seemed to share with the German Faith Movement, restated certain basic Christian beliefs and refused to cooperate with Reichbishop Mueller's church administration.53


53 The only extensive study in English of the gathering at Barmen is by Arthur C. Cochrane, The Church's Confession Under Hitler (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962). This monograph includes many valuable documents concerning the early struggle between the German Protestant churches and the National Socialist government, as well as the Barmen Declaration.
Because this new united church at Barmen asserted for itself the role of the true evangelical church of Germany, it would naturally expect to be challenged by Mueller's administration. What seemed to delay the expected showdown was the Roehm Purge of June 1934 and its aftermath, to which the Nazi leaders devoted much of their time. As a result of this bloody domestic episode, The Christian Century was cheered by the possibility that Reichbishop Mueller might soon be replaced, since his position was described as "practically untenable." In terms of church affairs and religious life, Mueller and the "German Christian" sect "have stood for the same extreme application of unadulterated nazi doctrine as Roehm and the brown shirts were accused of standing for in the political and economic realm." 54 For The New Republic it now seemed possible that Hitler would bid for peace with the churches. 55

Mueller, however, remained at his post, as strongly entrenched as ever. In August 1934, he successfully moved to merge all the state churches into the united national Protestant church under his direction. The new laws demanded an oath of allegiance to Hitler and to the decrees of the national church. Already protests were being heard from the members of the Barmen group, and The Christian Century for August 22 predicted that further agitation would develop. Yet this Protestant weekly could report that

54The Christian Century, LI (July 18, 1934), 939-940.
55The New Republic, LXXIX (July 18, 1934), 252.
many of the clergy showed a willingness to take the oath of allegiance as individuals but not as pastors.  

Sidney B. Fay noted in the October 1934 *Current History* that Mueller had been given complete control over all public pronouncements of the German Protestant churchmen, and in the following month's issue he recorded what appeared to be open revolt by the Protestant clergy of southern Germany.  

The October 3 *Nation* interpreted the Protestant church trouble as a serious breach in Hitler's totalitarian state structure. To both the churches and their leaders "belongs the credit of having been the first to venture an open and organized opposition to Nazi tyranny." Three weeks later *The Nation* maintained that the continuing Protestant-inspired demonstrations could have "far-reaching repercussions,"—a view shared by a contemporary issue of *America*.  

Even the "German Christian" faction, a one-time ally of Mueller, had reacted unfavorably to the Reichbishop's exercise of power, according to both *The Literary Digest* and *The New Republic*.  

*The Digest* possessed reports that Hitler was greatly disturbed over the entire affair, whereas the November 7

---


58 *The Nation*, CXXXIX (October 3, 1934), 365–367, and (October 24, 1934), 468; and *America*, LII (October 27, 1934), 70.

59 *The Literary Digest*, CXVIII (October 27, 1934), 20, and *The New Republic*, LXXX (November 7, 1934), 351.
New Republic wrote that the Fuehrer had yet to declare where he stood in the controversy. However, the November Living Age looked forward to "the bitterest period of religious persecution in centuries." A new dimension was apparently added to the religious disturbances when The Literary Digest wrote on October 6 that Mueller and Hitler were contemplating the establishment of a united church with the German Catholics, a thought also mentioned by America without comment.

Another Catholic journal, The Commonweal, showed considerable interest in the Nazi-Protestant contest. It praised the actions of the Protestant nonconformists and denounced the Nazi regime for trying to make "Christianity into the cringing image of an ideological slave doing service to a nationalism gone mad."

But because Lutheranism had always been closely dependent upon the state, this Catholic weekly reasoned, there was little hope that the revolt would succeed. Professor Kurt F. Reinhardt added that "the outcome may be decisive and fateful for the future of the reformed churches," a view which supported the earlier comments in The Commonweal by Karl Thieme.

---

60 The Living Age, CCCXLVII (November, 1934), 193.
61 The Literary Digest, CXVIII (October 6, 1934), 18, and America, LII (October 13, 1934), 22.
62 The Commonweal, XX (September 28, 1934), 497; Kurt F. Reinhardt, "The Lutheran Struggle," (October 12, 1934), 55; and Karl Thieme, "The End of Heresy," (June 8, 1934), 145-147, and (June 15, 1934), 176-177. Reinhardt was a professor in the department of Germanic languages at Stanford University, while Thieme was a German Lutheran who had recently converted to Catholicism.
The Christian Century summed up the Protestant religious situation on October 31, 1934, with the comment that "an irrevocable schism" loomed unless the government backed down. The Second Confessional Synod of the Evangelical Church in Germany had convened on October 24 and 25 at Dahlem, where the principles worked out at Barmen were laid down. The meeting at Dahlem called upon the Protestants of Germany to reject the instructions of Reichbishop Mueller, and it requested that its own leadership group, the Council of Brethren, assume the executive functions of the Protestant church government. The Christian Century observed

So long as the nazi program is one of state domination over the church—"one nation, one people, one church"—the schism will continue. The new synod's proclamation throws the blame directly upon the personnel of the existing church government for their arrogant methods and their employment of police and political force to overthrow the constitution of the evangelical church; but the blame rests back, as the dissenters clearly see, upon the government which appointed and instructed these agents and furnished the police and political force.

Declarations of loyalty to Adolf Hitler as the head of the German state did not hide the fact "that the resistance is directed essentially against the intention of the state and its head to control the church."63

Indications that the Protestant insurgents were meeting with success quickly appeared: Dr. August Jaeger, Reich administrator for the Prussian Evangelical Church, resigned on October 28 with the statement that his task was completed. Although Reichbishop Mueller remained in office, despite continuous attacks

63 The Christian Century, LI (October 31, 1934), 1366.
by his opponents, his power had all but vanished, and he would retire at the end of 1935. On October 30 Hitler met with representatives of the Council of Brethren, Lutheran bishops August Marahrens of Hanover, Theophil Wurm of Stuttgart and Hans Meiser of Munich, assuring them that he was willing to let the church work out its own future. But this meeting did not solve all the Protestant problems, for on November 9 at Dahlem a faction within the Council of Brethren led by Bishop Meiser lobbied for a new synod which would embrace more Protestants. A step in this direction was the setting up of a Provisional Board of Administration with Bishop August Marahrens as its head. Pastor Martin Niemoeller and a few others resigned from the Council of Brethren, protesting that this new "Third Front" would be inclined to compromise with the dictatorship. Protestant unity had proved to be very elusive.

In the light of these events, the November 14 Christian Century expressed the opinion that the Protestant clergy had inflicted on Hitler "his first major defeat." "The revolting pastors have punctured the pretension of Der Fuhrer to infallibility, and a once-infallible demigod is well started on the road toward becoming just an ordinary mortal." But would the pastors follow up their victory? "The prospects that they will do so are not bright."64 Other Protestant journalists shared The Christian Century's pessimistic view.65

64Ibid., (November 14, 1934), 1445.
65Henry H. Meyer, "Religious Education in the New Germa-
The Nation for November 14 heralded "the rout" of Mueller and his associates, but it accurately foresaw that the Fuehrer's authority would remain undiminished. "From the outset the insurgents have made it quite clear that theirs was a fight for ecclesiastical, not for political liberty." Moral criticism of National Socialist policies lay outside the scope of the Protestant tradition, declared this liberal, secular weekly on December 12. However, it acknowledged that a few of the Protestant clergymen had fastened themselves tenaciously and courageously to the minute "spiritual territory which the church staked out for itself." These men put to shame "groups with larger pretensions." 66

At first glance, America on November 10, 1934 hailed the victory of the Protestant dissenters, but a week later its Jesuit editors correctly interpreted the Nazi concessions as a tactical move on the government's part to soothe temporarily the opposition. 67 The January 4, 1935 Commonweal called the outlook "dark" for German Protestantism, while the January 23 Christian Century expressed considerable pessimism regarding religious

66 The Nation, CXXXIX (November 14, 1934), 549, and (December 12, 1934), 660.

67 America, LII (November 10, 1934), 118, and (November 17, 1934), 118.
affairs after the popular support Hitlerism received in the Saar plebiscite. 68

Even though the Nazi government resumed the harassment of the Protestant clergy and organizations, two reports in depth on German church affairs early in 1935 tended to be optimistic. In retrospect, Elmer G. Homrighausen, writing the article entitled "The Nub of the German Crisis" for the February 6, 1935 Christian Century, felt that the Nazi government had definitely muffed its chance to bring the entire Protestant church under state control. Weak in membership at the time of the Nazi ascendency to power, Protestantism reacted slowly to the national enthusiasm for the Hitler movement.

There are many things to keep in mind in judging the church struggle in Germany. There is the mystic idea of the state, conceived not as a social contract, but as an organism which protects and promotes culture. This is native to the German mind. Coupled with this is the notion of a people's or community church, so unlike the voluntaristic denominationalism of America. Ministers are social servants, paid by the state. Religious education is given in public schools. Sects have always been considered socially divisive, and "permitted" only after exhaustive examinations. German religion is not critically individualistic. Like the German mind it is mystical, but never anarchistic. Thus state and church have been complementary sides of the total life.

The Fuehrer's great mistake was his poor selection of men to take charge of religion in Germany. 69

The tendencies of moderation and circumspection had be-


come involved in the church conflict for the sake of "internal unity," wrote journalist Douglas L. Reed in Foreign Affairs for April 1935. He believed that the peace could be preserved, "since the tumult is clearly subsiding," and that a much stronger Protestant body might emerge.

The Church had gained, and not lost. The struggle has rallied lethargic churchgoers, quickened their interest in their faith, made them feel that it is something to be fought for, not kept on the bookshelf. Half-empty churches now are filled. Ultimately the conflict that was forced on Christianity in Germany in 1933 by the blurring of the borderline between the claim of the Party-State to absolute temporal authority and the claim of the Church to freedom of conscience may lead to the Church's renewal and rejuvenation.70

In spite of these optimistic judgments, the National Socialists showed no inclination to admit defeat in this area of the religious question. Nor were Pastor Martin Niemoeller and his followers, most of whom had broken with the Council of Brethren, willing to rest in a moderate stance on what they considered to be principle. On successive Sundays in March, the 10th and the 17th, a manifesto drawn up by the Niemoeller faction was read to a number of German congregations. This document again condemned the government's religious tactics and reiterated the protest against neo-paganism. As a result of this action, Niemoeller and over five hundred other clergymen were placed under house arrest. Four journals in spring issues, The Presbyterian Tribune, The Christian Century, The Literary Digest and The Sign, denounced

70Douglas L. Reed, "The German Church Conflict," Foreign Affairs, XIIII (April, 1935), 483-498. Reed was the Berlin Correspondent of the London Times.
the Nazis' retaliatory measures, while the Digest, The Sign and The Catholic World criticized the government's support of paganism.71 Led by Catholic editors, the censoring of the pagan program continued through the summer of 1935.72 Sidney B. Fay's Current History column for May 1935 included a summary of the contemporary Protestant troubles and called attention to the fact that the government had permitted publication of the part of the manifesto which was aimed at the "Nordic paganism." Fay interpreted this action to mean the continuing of uncertainty in the National Socialists' religious policies, particularly on what to do about the pagan sect.73

Persisting government maltreatment had the effect of reuniting the Protestant pastors who had separated at Dahlem in November 1934. The theme of harmony emerged at the Third Confessional Synod, meeting at Augsburg from June 4 to 6, and Niemoeller and his friends rejoined the Council of Brethren. But the concord appeared to come too late. On June 26 a new law practically placed the church under Nazi police control by providing that all future legal cases involving the Protestant church would

---


72 The Sign, XIV (June, 1935), 644; The Catholic World, CXLI (June, 1935), 361; America, LIII (July 6, 1935), 290, and (July 13, 1935), 314-315; and Charles Sarolea, "The German Anti-Christ," Current History, XLII (June, 1935), 240-244.

be heard by a special bureau in the department of the interior and not by the German law courts. Three weeks later, on July 16, Hitler, forgetting his "promise" not to interfere in church affairs, appointed the Nazi Dr. Hans Kerrl as the Reich Minister for Church Affairs with absolute powers and with instructions to bring "peace" to German Protestantism. Almost immediately Dr. Kerrl showed his apparent willingness to compromise with the churchmen who opposed the government's meddling; he appointed a committee of Protestant spokesmen to administer church affairs headed by the highly-respected Lutheran Superintendent Wilhelm Zöllner. This committee's first public statement, nonetheless, reaffirmed many of the "German Christians'" racist and political declarations originally condemned at the Barmen convocation in May 1934.

The journal response to Kerrl's appointment and to the events which followed was basically hostile. Kerrl was in full command of the situation, The Christian Century told its readers on October 9, 1935, after closely watching his activities. He was willing to make some concessions but only on his terms, which would leave church affairs under government jurisdiction. The Protestant church, this journal spelled out, was definitely handicapped in its struggle by the fact that it depended upon the government for funds. "Its struggle for independence from state control may be heroic but it is hopeless." The only remedy that The Christian Century visualized was cutting loose from state support. In the November 13, 1935 editorial entitled "As Free as a
State Church Can Be," the editors of the Century concluded that the efforts being made by Kerrl and the committee led by Wilhelm Zöllner to restore the resemblance of unity to German Protestantism were not an ideal arrangement, but they were the best which could be expected.

If, as it begins to appear, the official smile of the Leader has been withdrawn from Rosenberg's neo-paganism, and if liberty of worship and teaching has been restored to all elements in the church, and if the experience of the past three years has taught the politically minded officials of the government that there are some things that even their totalitarian omnipotence cannot do with faith and conscience—then it may be that Germany is even now on the way to having a united church that is as free as any state church can reasonably expect to be.

Reports in the Century during the next six weeks gave no indication that Kerrl had brought peace to the Protestant church. By December 11, 1935, the Century's editors announced that Nazi Kerrl had generated as much opposition as the discredited Reichbishop Mueller. Kerrl had declared for an authoritarian church structure which, in effect, forbade the church associations and synods any voice in the church government. "The former leaders of the resistance have expressed their determination not to yield. The final clash seems imminent and inevitable." Within days Niemoeller and other pastors who had defied Kerrl's orders were being deprived of their salaries, and some were on the verge of being charged with treason. In its January 8, 1936 issue, The Christian Century stated that "nothing of much further significance can happen in the campaign for the enslavement of the German church, for almost everything has already been done that can
be done." It had become totally impossible for a Protestant minister to speak out from the pulpit without fear of arrest and imprisonment. Although Dr. Kerrl now spoke in a commanding voice to the church, the _Century_ was happy to note that he did not yet speak for it.\footnote{In The Christian Register for November 7, 1935, Dale DeWitt suggested one new reason why Hitler's Protestant plan was not working: Protestant pastors did not wish to join the Fuehrer in destroying German Catholicism.}

Historian Koppel S. Pinson offered a long-range analysis rather than a commentary on the contemporary problem in a perceptive article entitled: "Pietism--A Source of German Nationalism" in the Winter 1936 issue of the Protestant quarterly _Christendom_. Pinson viewed the basic problem in Nazi Germany as a struggle "between two world views and two theologies, the theology of traditional religion and the theology of nationalism." Historically, wrote Pinson, religion and nationalism have long been crucial factors in German political and cultural life, besides being closely related. "In Germany, where religion continued to dominate public life for a longer period than elsewhere in Western Europe, those elements which went into the making of modern

\footnote{The Christian Century, LII (October 9, 1935), 1267-1268; (November 13, 1935), 1447; (November 20, 1935), 1477; (December 11, 1935), 1579-1580; (December 18, 1935), 1612; and LIII (January 8, 1936), 37-38. An America news note, LIII (October 5, 1935), 624, reported that the German Protestants feared that Hitler had decided to undermine the Protestant church by means of diplomacy.}

\footnote{Dale DeWitt, "Observations of New Germany," The Christian Register, CXIV (November 7, 1936), 657-659.}
nationalism and the nationalist spirit were first developed and engendered in the field of religion." Today, however, they stand toe to toe in a titanic conflict for the minds of the Germans.76

Frank Gavin investigated the Protestant problems from another angle for the readers of the Winter 1935 issue of Religion In Life; he considered the troubles to be centered around an intra-Protestant contest with the Lutherans standing by Reichbishop Mueller and the Reformed pastors lining up with the Barmen group.

The instinct animating hostility to the church program of the government is largely under the impetus of Reformed ideas: any dominance of the Church by the State is violently inconsistent with a theology in which the ideal of social organization is theocratic. Historic Lutheranism, on the other hand, regards the church as essentially invisible and attaches no necessary divine sanction to the forms, institutions and organized life of the visible church. From the time of Friedrich Wilhelm III, who constructed the Evangelische Kirche, with its quasi-reformed theology and the Lutheran liturgy, the constitutional and organizational side of this church has been largely molded and controlled by the State. Genuine autonomy and independence from the State was really never passionately desired by the true Lutherans. Within it those of the more Reformed wing were always restive under this relationship.77

The Literary Digest was the only non-religious journal in late 1935 or early 1936 to devote short editorial space to the Protestant dilemma. This conservative weekly objected to the harassment of the Protestant clergy, but it suggested that the minis-


77Frank Gavin, "Germany Revisited," Religion In Life, IV (Winter, 1935), 110.
ters offered "the most challenging defiance" to Hitler since he came to power. 78 Brief commentary on the Protestant-Nazi struggle could also be found in America, The Catholic World, The Sign and The Ave Maria; these Catholic periodicals either denounced Dr. Kerrl's arbitrary decisions, praised the resistance being offered by the pastors, or once again assailed the Teutonic pagan principles. 79

For the next several months the American journals exhibited little interest in the German Protestant problem, even though the Council of Brethren, at a Berlin meeting on January 3, 1936, issued a condemnation of the Zöllner committee and reasserted that the Council was the lawful group to reorganize the Protestant church. Similar declarations were made at the Fourth Confessional Synod, meeting at Bay-Oeynhausen on February 17, 1936, at which time was created the strongest united front against the Nazi government to yet appear.

The government's response to this insubordination was quick and arbitrary. More Protestant pastors were arrested and imprisoned, one of them for praying in public for the German Jews. Visibly depressed by the actions of the National Socialists, the February 19 Christian Century stated: "When a church is no longer

---

78 The Literary Digest, CXX (October 5, 1935), 14; (November 9, 1935), 12; (November 16, 1935), 18; and (December 14, 1935), 13.

79 America, LIII (October 5, 1935), 624; The Catholic World, CXLII (January, 1936), 490; The Sign, XV (January, 1936), 324-325; and The Ave Maria, XLIII (New Series) (February 15, 1936), 217.
free to pray, it no longer has any religious significance."

The Protestant struggle for religious freedom dragged on until the summer of 1936 when the dissenting clergy again opened up a barrage directed at Kerrl and the Zollner committee. The official address of July 16 again proclaimed the Barmen program as the sole authority for all German Protestant bodies, notwithstanding the Zollner committee which was packed with orthodox Lutherans.

The German Reformed Church's challenge met with the wide approval of the American journals. "In respectful but quite un-mincing terms" the Protestant pastors published what appeared to be "the most outspoken condemnations of nazism," according to The Christian Century. Additional comments were found in Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr's Century article entitled "German Church Girds for Battle." The Protestant pastors had finally decided, Niebuhr declared, that cooperation with the state was impossible because anti-Christian elements predominated in the ruling circles.

There would not be another false peace, since the dissentients had declared sections of the National Socialist program "completely incompatible with the Christian religion." Thus a new chapter opened in the never-ending struggle between religion and National Socialism, asserted Niebuhr. "There will be new crises and there may be additional defeats but there are bound to be

---

80 The Christian Century, LIII (February 19, 1936), 283.
triumphs also, for the church has a new vitality." 81

Commenting in a September 17, 1936 editorial, The Presbyterian Tribune announced that it was "thrilled" by the stand taken by Niemoeller and his associates. Such a dramatic display signified that "the gospel of Christ still is the power of God and ultimately the rulers of the earth must acknowledge it." 82

It was not what the pastors said but the spirit animating them which impressed the September 4 Commonweal. "These pastors are fully aware that the majority does not stand with them, and that force with all it implies rests in other hands." Nonetheless, they were willing to suffer martyrdom. 83 On the other hand, "Chancellor Hitler's reaction was nervously awaited," reported The Literary Digest on August 8. 84

No immediate Nazi reaction came. With the international Olympic games focussing world attention on Berlin during July and August 1936, the German government temporarily curtailed the activities of its police and simply ignored the adherents of the Barmen declaration. However, the respite did not appear to aid the dissenters, for the November 11, 1936 Christian Century quoted Pastor Niemoeller as saying that the religious fight was finished "and the church was lost." Cowardice killed the church.

81 Ibid., (August 19, 1936), 1100, and Reinhold Niebuhr, "German Church Girds for Battle," (August 26, 1936), 1129-1130.
82 The Presbyterian Tribune, LI (September 17, 1936), 4-5.
83 The Commonweal, XXIV (September 4, 1936), 436.
84 The Literary Digest, CXXII (August 8, 1936), 26-27.
continued Niemoeller, for no longer did anyone dare to speak out against the Nazi administration. "Perhaps he speaks too bitterly of those who were a little less bold than he. But his estimate of the struggle must be taken seriously," replied the Protestant organ. In a November 19 Christian Register editorial, "The Fight in Germany," Norman Hapgood described Niemoeller's statement as entirely accurate. In a November 19 Christian Register editorial, "The Fight in Germany," Norman Hapgood described Niemoeller's statement as entirely accurate. 85

A few weeks later, on December 23, The Christian Century called attention to the fact that some of the German Lutheran leaders had expressed doubt that a compromise with the Nazis, like that promoted by the Zöllner committee, could ever be fruitful. Lutheran goodwill had not been able to halt the advance of the pagan German Faith Movement. 87

Finally, on February 12, 1937, the Zöllner committee resigned, obviously despairing that a compromise could ever be reached. The German Protestant body now found itself under the complete charge of Dr. Kerbl and his Nazi officials. However, these men appeared anxious to justify the Protestant dissenters, for they offered to allow for a new church election of governing officials, supposedly without government interference. The Christian Century, LIII (November 11, 1936), 1483. 85

The Christian Century, LIII (December 23, 1936), 1708-1709.

85 The Christian Century, LIII (November 11, 1936), 1483.

86 Norman Hapgood, "Editorial: The Fight in Germany," The Christian Register, CXVI (November 19, 1936), 694. Hapgood, at this time the editor of this Unitarian weekly, had been closely associated with the "muckraking" era in American history when he edited Collier's.

87 The Christian Century, LIII (December 23, 1936), 1708-1709.
ian Century, the only journal which remained interested in the various aspects of the Protestant predicament, was justifiably pessimistic. Labeling the new election a "trojan horse," its editors predicted that the voting would be rigged so that the "German Christian" element would gain a sizeable majority. Too, it was quite possible that many would boycott the election in the face of "insuperable handicaps." The Century cautioned: "The increasing paganism of government officials and the influence of this paganism upon youth makes the outlook for Christianity in Germany dark indeed, no matter what the outcome of the coming church election may be."

The German correspondent for the Century, A. S. Eker, suggested that the Protestant-Nazi struggle had returned to its 1933 stage just before the installation of Reichbishop Mueller by Chancellor Hitler. In 1937, however, most of the church opposed government control, after having sampled almost four years of experimentation under the dictatorship.

The first flush of general enthusiasm for nazi ideas has passed. The use of the secret police, of prison and concentration camp, to enforce "positive Christianity" during the intervening three-and-a-half years has removed many illusions and bared the struggle in all its nakedness to the whole of Protestantism and most of all to the faithful in this country itself.88

During 1937 Kerrl was reinforced in his battle against the discontented Protestant pastors by other prominent Nazi offi-

88 Ibid., LIV (March 3, 1937), 271-272, and A. S. Eker, "Correspondence from Germany: Church Hostility Perplexes Nazis," (April 14, 1937), 502.
cials who aimed to silence the church discord. Wilhelm Frick, Minister of the Interior and a prominent member of the pagan movement, took charge of all the finances of the Protestant churches and forbade the publication of the pastors' names placed on the suspension list. The Gestapo under Heinrich Himmler began to arrest and imprison Protestant ministers reluctant to abandon the principles established at the Barmen convocation. Added to the physical force were the violent harangues by the Minister of Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, who doomed "theological nonsense."

The usual American journals responded with most of the emphasis centered around the July 1, 1937 arrest of Pastor Martin Niemoeller. Writing in the July 14 Christian Century, E. Sinclair Hertell believed Niemoeller's recent arrest to be a probable indication "that Hitler has decided to hazard one final supreme effort to make the swastika triumphant over the cross."

But, Hertell pointed out, the pastor's arrest was the result of opposition to the neo-pagan aspects of Nazism, not to the movement's political theory, which Niemoeller reportedly never totally rejected. On the other hand, in the Century's July 21 issue, the editors asserted that the arrests of Protestant clergy had brought into the open "the ultimate issue inside Germany." "A state in which the inhabitants cannot so much as address authority without being in danger of prison is a servile state. Its people are not free men, but slaves." A few weeks later in the article "The German Church Says No!" Harold E. Fey remarked that the arrests had not stopped Protestant ministers from making
public denunciations. As a matter of fact, Fey believed he saw German Protestantism widening its platform upon which to defend its rights against the state's infringement. 89

The July 10 Nation called attention to the Nazi government's efforts to intimidate the Protestants and made this appraisal: "In the past the anti-religious campaign has tended to quiet down during the tourist season; the fact that it is being intensified just now may signify an even more vigorous opposition than is indicated in the censored press reports." The same theme was presented in the August 14 issue, with the additional comment that the Nazis seemed unable to formulate a satisfactory way to eliminate independent-minded Protestant ministers. 90 In a feature article on Pastor Niemoeller in the September 1937 Current History, Emil Lengyel called him the greatest German religious figure since the Reformation: a man whom "History will not forget."

Although it was not Niemoeller's aim to start a revolt against Hitler, his movement has come to assume great political importance. The only effective opposition to the dictatorship is now the churches. In the early days of their fight it was customary for Protestant dissidents to emphasize their wholehearted loyalty to the Fuehrer. It is highly significant that this is no longer being done.

89 E. Sinclair Hertell, "Niemoeller," ibid., (July 14, 1937), 896-897; Hertell was the religious news department editor of Newsweek, (July 21, 1937), 915; and Harold E. Fey, "The German Church Says No!" (September 1, 1937), 1068-1069; Fey was the secretary of the Fellowship of Reconciliation for the United States and later editor of The Christian Century.

90 The Nation, CXLV (July 10, 1937), 30, and (August 14, 1937), 162-163.
The Government's attitude has so embittered the religious opposition that today it is difficult to say where religious resistance ends and political opposition begins. As leader of a great movement, Niemoeller has taken up arms against a seemingly invincible dictatorship.91

The November 6, 1937 Digest, commenting on the outlawing of the Barmen group by the German courts, expressed the opinion that the religious battle remained far from finished. "Although Adolf Hitler has claimed continuous triumph in his fight against church rebels, the paradox of the whole fight has been the packed pews in both Protestant and Catholic churches throughout the country."92 Concerning the same general subject, The Christian Century's correspondent in Germany, A. S. Eker, reported rumors that the more radical neo-pagan Nazis together with Hitler desired more drastic steps against the churches, but they feared the repercussions.93

A new source of friction in the German religious controversy attracted the attention of the December 8 Christian Century in an editorial entitled "The German Army Enters the Church War." It pointed out to its readers that a group of Reichswehr chaplains had protested directly to Hitler against the pagan orienta-


92 The Digest, I (November 6, 1937), 35. On July 17, 1937, The Review of Reviews purchased The Literary Digest, and the new combination was called The Digest until November 13, 1937, when it resumed the name The Literary Digest.

93 A. S. Eker, "Correspondence from Germany: Germans Greet Lord Halifax," The Christian Century, LIV (December 15, 1937), 1569-1570.
tion of the government's religious program. Whatever the consequences of the chaplains' complaints, this Protestant weekly thought it significant that no other groups had been "so frank in their statement of the facts in regard to the Nazi war upon religion, or so trenchant in their criticism of it, or so realistic in their delineation of its effects upon the morale of the nation." America's editors on December 18 prayed that something would come from the petition. At the least, the journals found this expression of opposition within the army an ominous portent.

Ignoring the chaplains' protest, a detailed report on the German religious question by the December 29 Christian Century revealed that official journals of the National Socialist Party were proclaiming the German pagan cult the official "state religion" at the same time that the government was announcing its intention to disestablish the existing church. A January 1938 report from A. S. Eker, on the other hand, remarked that the regime still found itself unable to make "any progress" against the churches, whereas in other spheres, notably the cultural, Germany resembled "an arid desert."

The secret trial of Hitler's nemesis, Pastor Martin Nie-

---

94 The Christian Century, LIV (December 8, 1937), 1518.
95 America, LVIII (December 18, 1937), 252.
96 The Christian Century, LIV (December 29, 1937), 1613-1614, and A. S. Eker, "Correspondence from Germany: Nazis First to Conquer Church," LV (February 23, 1938), 249.
moeller, occasioned some response from The Christian Century on February 23, 1938. It could well be, it editorialized naively, that the government felt apprehensive about publicizing the case in Germany where few people actually knew the full circumstances of the litigation. The reaction of world opinion to the trial gladdened the hearts of The Christian Century editorial board. A few weeks later, after the Protestant dissenter had been fined and released, he was rearrested for resuming his anti-government preaching. He and the other opposition ministers would continue to resist the regime's encroachments "unless the government makes a radical change in its policies," announced the March 16 Christian Century. 97 The National Socialist government had created a martyr in Reverend Niemoeller and thus exposed its own weaknesses, in the opinion of the February 1938 Catholic World, the only Catholic journal to respond editorially. 98

Meanwhile, in a decisive stroke against the Protestant revolters, Hans Kerrl, Reich minister for Church Affairs, had appointed as president of the Protestant church the lawyer Dr. Friedrich Werner, a National Socialist and a "German Christian" sympathizer, who was assisted by Lutheran and "German Christian" clergy. In mid-March 1938, soon after Hitler's Austrian coup, an order was issued commanding the clergy to take a personal oath to the Fuehrer. By now announcements such as this aroused little

97 The Christian Century, LV (February 23, 1938), 232, and (March 16, 1938), 324.
98 The Catholic World, CXLVI (February, 1938), 747.
journalistic response. As usual The Christian Century spoke for the Protestant position. For the Century the new oath was not surprising; its comment recalled a fact that the Century has emphasized previously on a number of occasions:

The fact is...that the Protestant church in Germany has never been independent, and so long as it continues to depend almost entirely upon state support for its maintenance, it can hardly lay proper claim even to the strictly circumscribed freedom which is allowed social institutions generally in the Nazi state.99

Why this historical point received so little emphasis from most journalists is not certain. Very possibly the emotional involvement with the many problems created by the Nazi dictatorship had some bearing on the situation.

Three later articles in Protestant journals reflected upon the German Protestants’ trials. Their main theme centered around the Nazi persecution of the Protestant pastors.100

By the middle of 1937, the American journals, including those affiliated with the Protestant churches, began to restrict themselves, with only a few exceptions in The Christian Century, to an occasional brief, factual note recording the day-to-day re-

---

99 The Christian Century, LV (May 4, 1938), 547. Cf. also note 73.

100 Edward Platzhoffer-Lejeune, "Religion in Germany Today," The Christian Register, CXVII (May 5, 1938), 296-297; The Register identified this author as a Swiss citizen; Ewart Edmund Turner, "Remember Martin Niemoller!" The Christian Century, LVI (January 11, 1939), 56; the author was an executive of the American Committee for Christian German Refugees and formerly a Berlin correspondent for the Century; and Charles R. Joy, "Voices From German Prisons," (May 3, 1939), 569-570; Joy was the administrative vice-president of the American Unitarian Association.
ligious struggle. However, they did publish a number of articles during 1937, 1938 and 1939 that attempted an analytical evaluation of the condition of German Protestantism, and the historical, theological and philosophical factors that had contributed to its present posture. The American reading public had an opportunity to scrutinize thoughtful critiques contributed by more serious writers than the harried editorial writers and reporters whose opinions had been aired before. Also, the journals finally began to devote close attention to the neo-pagan element in National Socialism and its relationship to Protestantism.

Both Curt L. Heymann, who included considerable historical background regarding the "German Christians" and the German Faith Movement for the April 1937 Current History, and Professor Cornelius Kruse in Religion in Life for the summer of 1937 offered thorough analyses. They both concluded that Christianity was irreconcilable with the teachings of National Socialism.101 Its Weltanschauung, based on the concept of blood and race, soil and honor, and the glorification of the nation-state, already established it as a religion in itself. In the words of Heymann:

It is the goal of Nazism to create one people, one Reich, one leader and one faith—the third confession for the Third Reich. God, according to the totalitarian principle, must be approached universally through the Volksseele, the folkic soul, which is the soul of the

believing Nazi. Hitler, hailed by his millions of followers as a new Messiah, is regarded by many as an instrument of God, similar to the Kaiser's idea of a modern knight in shining armor. According to leaders of the Germanic Pagan Faith Movement in their efforts to reject Christianity, or rather to de-Christianize present-day Germany, "God has revealed himself to us through the Fuehrer."

Kruse's article was essentially an attempt to instruct Christian leaders on how to combat Fascism. His final piece of advice said: "Should Fascism, nevertheless, establish itself also in our midst, the best strategy of the Church would be to emulate the heroic courage of the German churches today."

Educator Nathaniel Micklem, in an article entitled "Theological Issues in the German Church Conflict," for the Spring 1938 issue of Christendom, argued that the German churches were not unalterably opposed to the "politics" of the Nazi Party: "We should not belittle the really remarkable achievements of National Socialism, not only in organizing the national life in the interests of the whole community but also in awakening an almost religious fervor of service and sacrifice; but there can be no doubt that in fact positive Christianity is increasingly a mode of paganism." The problem, basically the same one pointed out by Heymann and Kruse, was that Nazi politics was intimately tied to the National Socialist Weltanschauung, which embraced man's world attitude toward life, although Hitler himself "makes a sharp distinction between religion and Weltanschauung." Dr. Rosenberg was the "crowned" leader for the Weltanschauung, and he stood "definitely outside the Christian church." It was this "philos-
ophy" of the Fascist movement which Christianity could not accept, although the so-called "German Christians" had been eager to seek out a compromise. Presently, the struggle between paganism and Christianity found Rosenberg holding all the important cards: government support, control of education, and a monopoly over the newspapers and radio broadcasting. "Apart from the spoken voice the church is almost silenced."102

The more optimistic Ambrose W. Vernon, an American Protestant clergyman, reviewed three years of church turmoil, highlighting the "German Christians" and the followers of the pagan doctrines, in the 1937 winter number of the quarterly Religion in Life. He opined that of all the institutions in Nazi Germany the church alone preserved some semblance of independence, even though freedom of movement had been greatly hampered. The "German Christians" had "steadily" lost ground after 1933 because, according to Vernon, they supported the government's anti-Semitic campaign; they failed to win over to their cause the leading ministers and theological professors; and the concept of the leadership principle, "cardinal in National Socialism," was totally rejected by German Protestants, thereby revealing "the spirit of democracy, implicit in Protestantism." Nonetheless, the "German Christians" would continue to have an important voice in Protes-

102 Nathaniel Mickle, "Theological Issues in the German Church Conflict," Christendom, III (Spring, 1938), 250-259. Mickle was interested in the religious struggle in Germany and within a year of this article would publish National Socialism and the Roman Catholic Church (London: Oxford University Press, 1939). He was the principal of Mansfield College, Oxford.
tant church affairs because of the ominous presence of the pagan-oriented German Faith Movement.

It is this powerful movement which hangs like a sword of Damocles over the Christian Church. To many of the moderates in the camp of the Confessionalists it seems wiser to accept the program of the German Christians, with its assurance of government favor, than by an attitude of intransigence to dare the National Socialists to an open endorsement of these anti-Christian tendencies. Rosenberg and Hitler hesitate to snap the ties which still bind their followers to the Christian sentiment and tradition of Germany and Europe. So long as this hesitation keeps the Damocles sword from falling, it is possible for the Church to hold its favorable position in the empire and to avoid a bitter struggle for its very existence. Is it not better to throw an uncaged tiger a bone?103

The American Lutheran theologian, Professor John Aberly, in his Lutheran Church Quarterly article for October 1938, recognized that the German churches seemed to welcome the Nazi revolution in 1933, and they had been regretting this decision ever since. But Aberly shared Vernon's opinion that the German churches remained relatively strong. To the credit of the religious leaders was the fact that many of them had continued to stand their ground against the state's "betrayal of the Christian faith," especially with regard to the treatment of the Jews, while other groups and institutions had succumbed with hardly a protest. Aberly advised:

The Christian world, if not the whole world, should take an intelligent interest in what is going on in these religious movements in Germany. It has been said that, in

103Ambrose W. Vernon, "The Religious Conflict in Germany," Religion In Life, VI (Winter, 1937), 112-124. Vernon was a congregational clergyman, educator and author.
their ultimate issues, all our problems, social, economic, national, and international, are religious issues.104

Christianity was still very much a living force in Nazi Germany, contended another very hopeful journalist, the British newsman, Fritz A. Voight, who discussed the German religious problem and religious conditions in the Soviet Union for the February 1939 Survey Graphic in an article entitled "The Menace to Free Worship." The Hitler government had not been "openly anti-Christian," wrote Voight, although it had practiced a more subtle form of persecution which was a "greater" threat to the Christian tradition than Russian Communism.

Unlike the Russian state, it does not halt at the church door, it does not look upon the altar and the Cross as useful, rather than useless or harmful, it has not contemptuous toleration, but it is determined, while preserving outward forms, to make the Christian faith serve the secular purpose of the state. The German state does not even halt at the foot of the altar or of the Cross, but would place the swastika over the altar and side by side with the Cross, or even over it. The essence of the German religious conflict is thereby symbolized. According to the German state, the swastika is supreme and demands complete allegiance, spiritual and corporal.

Against tremendous odds, Voight saw the German churches as the last bastion of freedom in Germany. He would not predict how the churches would fare, but he believed that the religious bodies "exercise a greater power today than they did under the tolerant Republic."105

---


105 Fritz A. Voight, "The Menace to Free Worship," The Survey Graphic, XXVIII (February, 1939), 83. Voight was a correspondent for The Manchester Guardian.
Another confident writer who used the nom de plume of Marie Munk wrote in the Autumn 1939 issue of Religion In Life that while the anti-Christian trend in Germany was growing, a remarkable religious revival was occurring simultaneously. Church services were overcrowded, and clergymen were becoming more "valiant" and "more anxious to spread the gospel and to help their parishioners." Marie Munk did not judge the dramatic gestures of defiance a lost cause, although it was clear to the author that the German youth—the future leaders of the German nation—had embraced the principles of Nazism.

The Christian Church in Germany goes through a time of crucial testing. It has withstood many persecutions in the past. There are many hopeful signs that like Phoenix from the ashes, the German Church will rise one day stronger and more powerful.

A similar story was told by Reverend Charles S. MacFarland in the article "Hitler or Christ: The Fate of Christianity in Germany" for The American Mercury of September 1939. There seemed to be a lesson to learn from the German religious situation—a lesson which MacFarland appears to have fully comprehended, for the Protestant minister noted that many of the clergy who had sought a policy of "appeasement" with National Socialism had "often suffered the most grievously" at the hands of the Nazi government. In this assessment of the Nazi-church conflict, MacFarland left little doubt that he now viewed matters realistic—

---

106 Marie Munk, "Nazi Ideology and the Christian Church," Religion In Life, VIII (Autumn, 1939), 483–495. The author, a former member of the German bar, was teaching at Hood College.
ally: "The outcome of that struggle is of incalculable importance to all mankind." 107

In a perceptive article criticizing the German churches, "Have German Churches Broken with Hitler?" for the March 29, 1939 Christian Century, F. Wilhalm Sollman distinguished between opposition to the present regime's religious policy and to the ruling system itself. Church policy appeared to be determined primarily by "the state's position in regard to church finances." Clearly, it was a case of blackmail! The religious leaders dared not go too far in their attacks on the dictatorship, since the government had yet to restrict the grants-in-aid, the tax exemptions or the special legal privileges enjoyed by the churches. It should be noted that Sollman was one of a very few journalists to emphasize this obvious facet of the structure of the German church. Whether or not his assessment conformed to reality, it represented an indisputable realistic approach to the subject.

Another factor, fear of a Communist government succeeding the Nazi regime, if it fell, also influenced the German churchmen. Moreover, Sollman suggested that the Lutheran concept of the state prevailed in German religious quarters: the state was "an expression of God's love for a sinful world." Although the author realized that "the issues behind the struggle between

107 Charles S. MacFarland, "Hitler or Christ: The Fate of Christianity in Germany," The American Mercury, XLVIII (September, 1939), 1-10. MacFarland's views had changed noticeably since his January 1934 Review of Reviews and World's Work article in which he called attention to Hitler's reasonableness in treating with German Protestant dissenters.
church and state in Germany are highly complex," he cautioned his American readers not to equate liberalism with opposition to the government in the ecclesiastical field. "For the time being church and state are at loggerheads. But neither has yet repudiated the old partnership." 108

Professor Harry F. Ward published an article in The Christian Century for November 16, 1938 entitled "The Morals of Reaction," just after the Munich Conference and evidently in response to it. Dealing with moral values rather than with the organized religions, Ward, in his appraisal, could have been referring to both Catholics and Protestants. By this particular approach to the problem, it could well be that Ward was trying to show the consequences of Nazi policies in terms that his readers might understand better than theological or libertarian concepts and arguments. Ward lamented the destruction of the world's basic moral values by the Fascist states and the forces of reaction in other countries which had aided the advance of this totalitarian ideology. The Fascists did not recognize ordinary standards; yet, "the tragedy of our time and its dark menace for the future is not so much the broken pledges of those who pursued a planned policy of deception as it is the dishonored covenants of the people of good faith and good will." Ward denounced the appeasers of 1938 for failing to create new institutions in order to preserve old values.

Those Christians who support the policies and program of
reaction, either because they are afraid of social change
or because they seek to avoid present suffering, are like
Saul of Tarsus, consenting to the death of the forces of
the future. Let us hope that, like him, they may realize
in time that a religion which brings them to, or supports
them in, this position is inadequate.109

Likewise censuring the moral code of the world’s great
powers, John Coleman Bennett, in a section of the article enti-
tled "Christians and the International Crisis" for the Spring
1939 issue of Christendom, looked to the religious leaders of
Germany to help restore the world to sanity but not in the imme-
diate future. Nevertheless, he reflected: "A revitalized church,
a repentant church can become a channel through which God can work
in the world in ways beyond all predicting."110

In summary, the American Protestant journalists, who con-
tributed the vast majority of the articles and editorial response
on the German Protestant religious question, expressed far less
optimism about the future of their German co-religionists than
Catholic writers about theirs. From the very start of Hitler’s
term as Chancellor, it was recognized that the "German Christian"
faction and the neo-pagan movement seriously menaced the orthodox
churchmen. Only after the Protestant-Nazi struggle had been all

109 Harry F. Ward, "The Morals of Reaction," ibid., LV
(November 16, 1938), 1395-1396. Ward was professor of social
ethics at Union Theological Seminary and chairman of the Ameri-
can Civil Liberties Union.

110 John Coleman Bennett, "Christians and the Internation-
al Crisis," Christendom, IV (Spring, 1939), 174-182. Bennett was
professor of social ethics at the Union Theological Seminary.
but decided by government measures in 1937 did a few American
Protestant spokesmen speak in terms of an ultimate victory for
German Protestantism. In general, most commentators on the Protes­t­
tant conflict, and in the main these were associated with some
Protestant church or organization, acknowledged that their German
brethren had made numerous errors in judgment.

The threat of paganism within the Protestant church and
within German life perplexed American Protestant journalists,
plus a number of Catholic editors, throughout the period from
1933 to 1939. At first, some of the journals, including The Chris­
tian Century, confused the followers of the Nordic cult with the
"German Christians," thereby invalidating their assessments. But
this confusion gradually disappeared, and correct thinking pre­
vailed in the end.

The non-religious journals quickly expressed sympathy for
the German dissenters, but seldom did they seem to see the strug­
gle in anything but political terms. Basic doctrinal problems re­
ceived little mention. On the other hand, The Christian Century
and other Protestant observers immediately realized that fundamen­tal Christian beliefs were at stake and that the issues in the
German religious question were complicated by the makeup of the
warring factions. It was clearly impossible to categorize the
orthodox Protestants and the "German Christians" as liberals and
conservatives. As the church struggle moved from stage to stage,
the Protestant journalists continued to speak candidly about the
participants, noting that the Protestants led by Pastor Martin
Niemoeller seemed little concerned with the progress of the Nazi totalitarian state except where church rights were involved—a traditional German Protestant position.

With the passage of time, the Protestant journals rightly recognized the fact that the Barmen confessional group was little more than a minor nuisance to the Hitler government. American Protestant writers acknowledged the bravery of Niemoeller and his associates, but seldom did they allow their optimism to get out of hand. Some Protestant journalists actually considered the control of the Protestant church by "German Christians" and government officials preferable to seeing pagan groups like the German Faith Movement gain ascendancy in German religious life.

The American Catholic journalists' response to the Protestant dilemma was extremely limited. It could well be that because of religious prejudices, Catholic journals failed to consider in depth the struggle of the Protestant pastors. Only an occasional editorial or factual note seemed to perceive that a relationship existed between the Protestant and Catholic troubles in Nazi Germany. The Catholic journals, unlike the Protestant ones, generally ignored the possibilities of confessional cooperation.
CHAPTER VII

GERMAN DOMESTIC POLITICS FROM THE ENABLING LAW TO THE ROEHM PURGE

During the period from late March 1933 to early July 1934, Adolf Hitler and his Nazi followers speedily constructed a totalitarian establishment. Within their own ranks the most serious question was how far to go in the direction of social and economic revolution as the concomitant of their political innovations. The American journals of opinion thus had two factors to observe: the construction program of the National Socialists as they replaced the Weimar Republic, and their own intra-party controversies.

State Consolidation

Very early, the all-powerful Hitler government took several significant steps to fashion the total state. German state federalism came to an end on March 31, 1933, when the states of the Reich were stripped of their power. All political parties except the National Socialist Party were suppressed by early July 1933, and a law of July 14 prohibited any others. During the spring months of 1933 the special Nazi police forces also went into action arresting and jailing all dissenters and anti-Nazis.

Much of the initial journal response to the domestic Ger-
man politics at this time appeared in the form of general articles reviewing the entire scope of German events. Most of these reviews were accurate as far as they went, but they were something less than perceptive. For example, without referring to a single specific domestic issue, Frank H. Simonds in the May 1933 Review of Reviews and World's Work hinted at an early collapse of the Nazi regime because of unspecified domestic problems.¹

On the other hand, the noted Protestant theologian, Reinhold Niebuhr, observed that Hitler and his partisans had been able in short order to weld together a strong force which should control the destiny of Germany for years. In his April 5 Christian Century article, which bore the misleading title "Why German Socialism Crashed," Niebuhr outlined with little analysis the technique used by the Nazis to achieve their often enunciated goals.

The fascists first of all developed the energy which increased their parliamentary vote from nothing to 30 percent in a few years. This still left them short of a parliamentary majority than were the socialists in earlier years. But they began to manipulate the organs of the state, particularly the presidency, until they came to power without parliament. Thereupon, they used all the power of the state, including the organs of propaganda, the suppression of the opposition press, incarceration of their foes, etc., so that they were able, with their allies, to establish a clear parliamentary majority. Since it was not overwhelming enough to insure complete stability, they kicked the ladder of democracy from under them after they had partly used and partly abused it to achieve power. In using the tremendous power of the presidency to gain their ends, it is interesting to note that they

availed themselves of an instrument which the socialists had set up to protect themselves against fascism. Only a year ago the socialists and Catholics combined to elect Hindenburg as president in order that he might protect Germany from fascism. Hindenburg defeated Hitler in a campaign engineered by Bruening and the socialists only to become the door through which the fascist hordes were admitted into the counsels of the state. The appeal of Bruening to Hindenburg two weeks ago, to protect those who had elected him from the vengeance of the groups who had opposed him and were now using his presidential decrees to oppress their foes, marks an interesting and rather pathetic chapter in the history of German politics. 2

Another article which dealt in generalizations, "The Folly of Hitler," was written by Oswald Garrison Villard for the April 12 Nation. This former editor of The Nation pictured Hitler as a charlatan. The German Chancellor knew no history and lacked knowledge of the "true aspirations of men." His advisors had been drawn from the discredited ultra-conservative groups which had led the German nation along the road to ruin in 1914. With a program which consisted of a hodge-podge of opposing and contradictory doctrines, Hitler was preparing to lead Germany back to greatness and world leadership. It included Communist and Socialist planks, while it called for the elimination of all true Marxists. To attain complete orthodoxy, he had unleashed his storm troopers. As far as Hitler was concerned, reconstruction would come about by wishing, thinking and declaring it often enough that the entire populace would eventually be caught up with the tide of optimism, wrote the unbelieving Villard. 3


Neither Devere Allen writing in the April 20 Christian Register nor Denis Gwynn in the May 1933 Sign attempted to assess specific events in the Third Reich. Allen advised that the Nazis might give superficial concessions in any area at any time but would never actually let up in their war upon all aspects of the liberal democratic community. The future of Adolf Hitler and his government was in the hands of the German people, Allen believed, but for them the "hour of effective action of any kind" would soon be past. He concluded with this accurate prediction: "As a matter of fact soon the entire German people will be reading what Hitler wants them to read, speaking what he bids them to speak, and holding counter-ideas, if at all, strictly incommunicado." Gwynn, to the contrary, hesitated to speak so decisively. While Adolf Hitler had "apparently triumphed all along the line," Gwynn suggested that a better judgment of the situation could be made after the early enthusiasm had died down.

Hope was already gone, according to Ludwig Lore, a spokesman of the liberal Nation. Free Germany had been destroyed, and creative Germany lay under siege after eight weeks of the Fascists' rule, Lore wrote in the April 19 issue. German fought German in a struggle for survival, since brute force had supplan-

became a contributory editor to this journal upon his retirement as editor in 1932.

4Devere Allen, "Back of Hitler--and Beyond," The Christian Register, CXXII (April 20, 1933), 247-248; Allen was the editor of World Tomorrow; and Denis Gwynn, "Hitler's Uneasy Partnership," The Sign, XII (May, 1933), 535.
ted more liberal and humanitarian ideas. In a less pessimistic
vein, The Christian Century of April 12 editorialized that Hitler
did not appear to be the master of the situation as yet, and it
offered a factual base for its opinion. Allegedly disturbed by
the activities of energetic National Socialists, representatives
of big business and Junker members of the Cabinet had reportedly
stepped in and advised Hitler to bring calm to the country. The
great fear of these elements was supposed to be foreign economic
reprisals. The Christian Century believed that Adolf Hitler
would let himself be guided by the voice of big business—a logical
enough conclusion from the known facts of prior collaboration
between German businessmen and Nazi politicians.

The April 19 New Republic was the first journal to acknow-
ledge the March 31 law which destroyed the "sacred" state indepen-
dence. In general, this law, which centralized German govern-
ment and wiped out the last trace of the historic states, thus
completing a process that had begun at the Congress of Rastad in
1799, was overlooked by the vast majority of the journals under
consideration. The April 26 Nation and America for May 6 merely
mentioned the end of federalism, while the conservative monthly

5Ludwig Lore, "The Nazi Revolution at Work," The Nation, OXXXVI (April 19, 1933), 441-442.
6The Christian Century, L (April 12, 1933), 483-484.
7The New Republic, LXXIV (April 19, 1933), 264.
8The Nation, OXXXVI (April 26, 1933), 458, and America, XLIX (May 6, 1933), 119.
Living Age editorial for June cited the law which transferred Germany from a federal into a centralized state as one of the "best things the Nazis have done." It would increase "the operating efficiency" of the political machinery.\(^9\) Obviously the judgment of the journal on this point was conditioned by the leading trends in American political thought during the nineteen-thirties. One would logically have anticipated a more critical comment from conservative circles. In his June 1933 column for Current History, Sidney B. Fay summarized, without comments, the details of the Nazis' consolidation program since the Enabling Act.\(^10\)

Prior to the final destruction of the non-Nazi political organizations, an occasional reference to inter-party infighting appeared in the American journals; however, a sharp picture of what was actually happening never appeared, and conflicting reports made it extremely difficult for the American reading public to make an intelligent judgment, regardless of the journal they read.

Writing in The Sign for May 1933, Denis Gwynn intimated that Hitler's position was threatened by the disillusioned Alfred Hugenberg and his Nationalist followers, who were finding the coalition government unsatisfactory, plus the more radical elements of his own organization led by Hermann Goering and Joseph Goeb-

\(^9\)The Living Age, CCCXLIV (June, 1933), 284.

The April 26 Nation reported the same rumors and held out hope that the Hitler regime might topple quickly. This liberal journal perceived that two of the more radical Nazis, Goering and Goebbels, had been doing most of the talking and acting of late, while Hitler and his more conservative associates had been strangely silent. Some Berlin observers were convinced that the dissension was more serious than that which had earlier resulted in the departure of the Strasser brothers from the ranks of the movement's faithful. If the extremists won control of the Fascist body, The Nation expected either a resumption of the now abated terror tactics or a Nazi Party rupture which might open the way for the opposition to return to power.12

While the liberal Nation would soon have to reevaluate its observations, the conservative monthly Living Age showed that it was momentarily in closer touch with the realities of the situation, although it might not have all the facts straight. Others besides the German Jews had fallen under the iron heel of the National Socialist Chancellor, said the editorial section of the May 1933 issue. The Hugenberg Nationalists were being eased out of the picture, and already Foreign Minister Neurath had tried to resign "in despair." Both the Prussian Junkers and the financial and industrial leaders were "being swept away" by the Nazi regime.

11 Denis Gwynn, "Hitler's Uneasy Partnership," The Sign, XII (May, 1933), 535.
12 The Nation, XXXVI (April 26, 1933), 190.
However, the terror would not go on, thought this editorial, and perhaps Hitler would regain the confidence he had won at the time of his triumph and lost shortly afterwards when the anti-Semitic campaign was initiated.  

From what The Literary Digest had to relate on May 6, tranquillity did not prevail in German domestic life. In fact, it appeared that the German dictatorship was getting temperamental about its terror campaign. The so-called "Brown Terror" could not be mentioned in the Third Reich under penalty of arrest, according to the Digest.  

On May 10 The Nation admitted that the Hitlerites held the upper hand in German affairs; it saw the government adding new strength with the merging of the Steel Helmet veterans' groups with the Nazi armed battalions. An important feature of this union was that the Nationalist Party Minister of Labor and commander of the Steel Helmet, Franz Seldte, had converted to National Socialism and brought his forces over with him. The Nationalist leader Alfred Hugenberg was not expected to sit still while his organization disintegrated, but unknown to The Nation it was actually too late for Hugenberg to do anything about it. In the light of what happened a few months later—the quiet departure of Hugenberg from the Hitler Cabinet—The Nation's idea that the Nationalist leader would seriously challenge Hitler.

---

13 The Living Age, CCCXLIV (May, 1933), 190.  
14 The Literary Digest, CXV (May 6, 1933), 10.  
15 The Nation, CXXXVI (May 10, 1933), 514.
was wishful thinking, to say the least.

During the first half of May 1933, three editors and a political scientist agreed that Adolf Hitler appeared to be growing stronger. The May 13 Literary Digest wrote that the world was no longer joking about the dictator and that some observers now felt that not even the German Reichswehr could unseat the Nazi Chancellor. He was presently so powerful, said The Christian Century of May 10, that he could "ignore his allies, and grant amnesty to most of his possible enemies." An America news note felt that the Nazis "had reaped the spoils of their recent coup d'etat and were in complete control of the German situation." This Catholic journal also saw the National Socialist system being applied with "speed and efficiency." Already a "legend of a glorious national revolution" was being created, said Oscar Jassi in the May 17 Nation, and Hitler would be depicted as the great national hero.

A more conservative appraisal of the German scene was given by George Gerhard in the June 1933 North American Review. He miscalculated that Hitler and Hugenberg would jointly exercise a moderating influence over the more enthusiastic Nazis in the months to come. Also misleading its readers was the May 26

16 The Literary Digest, CXV (May 13, 1933), 10; The Christian Century, L (May 10, 1933), 615-616; America, XLIX (May 6, 1933), 119, and (May 13, 1933), 143; and Oscar Jassi, "The Hitler Myth—a Forecast," The Nation, CXXXVI (May 17, 1933), 553. Jassi was a professor of political science at Oberlin College.

17 George Gerhard, "German Realities," The North American Review, CCCCXV (June, 1933), 517-522.
Commonweal, which announced that Hitler was in a position where he must continue to manipulate the masses, and more important, he needed to "conciliate, utilize and compromise with the politically helpless but nonetheless indispensable groups at the top."18

In a rather clear-cut and certainly unique statement, another Catholic journal, America, spoke out on June 3, asking for a more considerate attitude toward the Fascist regimes because of their stand against Communism.

The success of Mussolini in Italy and the strength of Hitler in Germany are making fascism for many the torch of liberation. What is uppermost in the minds of the majority of the people is to repeal the tidal wave of anarchy and economic revolution, which is the announced program of International Communism. While many will regret the abandonment of democracy for dictatorship, it is well to recognize that these modern dictators have taken the wheel to save storm-tossed nations, and have succeeded wonderfully in preserving the traditions of national life.19

It is not clear what traditions America alluded to, but since the journal had already noted on several occasions the destructive tendencies of the National Socialists, this commentary could well be considered a preparatory step in obtaining American Catholic acceptance for the upcoming Concordat.

In a contrary statement, the totalitarian state of Hitlerite Germany was compared to Bolshevik Russia by The Literary Digest of June 17,20 and Ludwig Lewisohn, writing in the June 21 Nation, confidently expected the National Socialists to join

---

18 The Commonweal, XVIII (May 26, 1933), 87.
19 America, XLIX (June 3, 1933), 197.
20 The Literary Digest, CXX (May 27, 1933), 10.
forces with the Bolsheviks in a campaign to take Europe back to "the dark ages."\textsuperscript{21}

During a period from the middle of June to early July 1933, several articles repeated the stories of inter- and intra-party strife. In the June 1933 \textit{Sign} Denis Gwynn doubted the ability of Hitler and his colleagues to withstand the pressure from other important German politicians; however, in the following month he predicted a Nazi-Catholic alliance to replace the Hitlerites' faltering compact with the Nationalists.\textsuperscript{22} Hamilton Fish Armstrong, editor of the quarterly \textit{Foreign Affairs}, rightly indicated in a July article that the National Socialists needed the help of no faction to maintain control of the government, and he added: "The mentality of the Nazi leaders is mainly an intensification of the instincts and feeling of the Nazi masses." Nevertheless, Armstrong foresaw a future division of the National Socialist leadership with figures like Goering and Goebbels challenging Hitler for supreme command.\textsuperscript{23}

"The Opposition in Germany," a major article by Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr appearing in the June 21, 1933 \textit{New Republic}, expressed some agreement with what Armstrong had written. Niebuhr,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{21} Ludwig Lewisohn, "The New Kultur," \textit{The Nation}, CXXXVI (June 21, 1933), 696.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Denis Gwynn, "America and the New European Situation," \textit{The Sign}, XII (June, 1933), 682, and "Hitler and the Polish Corridor," (July, 1933), 719-720.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Hamilton Fish Armstrong, "Hitler's Reich: The First Phase," \textit{Foreign Affairs}, XI (July, 1933), 589-604. Armstrong was the editor of this quarterly.
\end{itemize}
too, was convinced that Hitler had everything under control as far as the former major parties were concerned. What was noticeable, however, was that thousands of Socialists and Communists had come over to the government party in recent weeks, and many of these had become active in the Nazi storm troop battalions. This transformation meant that the most radical forces of the Hitler movement were being greatly strengthened in preparation for the internal struggle with the more conservative business elements. Those of the German Fascists who were at heart Socialists were not ready to concede an end to revolution. With numbers now behind them, the S. A. units were causing the Nazi officials enough concern that even the man once thought of as a radical, and still so considered by others besides Niebuhr, Minister Goering, pleaded with them to go slowly and not discredit the Hitler government. That political struggles in the Germany of the future would be intra-Nazi Party, with the radicals eventually gaining control, was Reverend Niebuhr's estimate. Although the American Protestant leader selected the wrong group to win the showdown that would eventually come in the summer of 1934, his assessment was particularly shrewd, especially since the editors of The New Republic still considered the Nazis' position threatened by Catholics and Hugenberg Nationalists.

24 Reinhold Niebuhr, "The Opposition in Germany," The New Republic, LXXV (June 28, 1933), 169-171.

25 The New Republic, LXXV (June 21, 1933), 137.
By July 5 it had become evident to The New Republic’s editorial writers that talk of anti-Nazi opposition was nonsense. They now predicted that Alfred Hugenberg would soon be forced into political oblivion. "His resignation will relegate him to futility in Germany’s political and industrial affairs under the dictatorship, and not even his string of more than one hundred newspapers will be able to prevent it."26 That Hugenberg was finished was also the view held by The Literary Digest of July 1,27 and the July 5 Christian Century admitted that German Fascism was made of "sterner stuff" than was first realized, as the Nazis advanced on the existing parties one by one.28

Under pressure, Germany’s political parties disappeared by early July 1933. The Communist Party was outlawed on May 26, and the Social Democratic Party suffered the same fate on June 22, 1933. "Voluntarily" the Center Party, the mainstay of most of the governments of the Weimar Republic, dissolved itself on July 5. The smaller parties passed out of existence almost without a trace, including the Nationalist Party, the National Socialists’ coalition "partner," Alfred Hugenberg, the Nationalist leader, resigned from the Hitler Cabinet on June 29. On July 14, 1933, the government promulgated a law which decreed under penalty of imprisonment that "the National Socialist German Workers'
Party constitutes the only political party in Germany."

The American journals of opinion, for some unexplained reason, neglected the details of the political parties' elimination, which was unmistakenly a major Nazi maneuver to destroy the last vestiges of German democracy. Minor remarks on the demise of the Center and the Nationalist Parties found above, plus a signed article and a portion of a major editorial on the suppression of the Social Democrats were the extent of the coverage at this time. According to the famous revolutionary Leon Trotsky, writing in the July 5 New Republic, the suppression of the Social Democratic Party on June 22 was a long-expected move. "The masses wanted to fight," but certain leaders of the movement deceived themselves into thinking that by supporting some of the National Socialist measures their organization could be preserved.

One cannot, unfortunately, deny the superiority of the Fascist over the proletarian leadership. But it is only out of an unbecoming modesty that the beaten chiefs keep silent about their own part in the victory of Hitler. There is the game of checkers and there is also the game of losers-win. The game that was played in Germany had this singular feature, that Hitler played checkers and his opponents played to lose. As for political genius, Hitler has no need for it. The strategy of his enemy compensated largely for anything his own strategy lacked.29

"The labor movement, for the time being, is powerless; liberalism, always weak and ineffectual in Germany is dead," declared a Nation.

29 Leon Trotsky, "The German Catastrophe," trans. Max Schachtman, The New Republic, LXXV (July 5, 1933), 200-203. Besides his criticism of the pathetic maneuvers of the leaders of the Social Democratic Party, Trotsky made a strong denunciation of the Communist Party's policies leading up to and immediately after the ascendancy to power of Adolf Hitler.
editorial entitled "Nazi Unification" on July 12.  

Possibly in response to the six-month anniversary of the National Socialist government, several editors and writers in August and September tried seriously to evaluate events since January 31, 1933. The Literary Digest of August 26 recorded that various European newspapers and periodicals were continuing to treat Chancellor Hitler as some kind of comedian, "a sort of actor-manager, staging his big show with scraps of discarded ideas and unconsidered trifles."  

Some explanation on this point was offered by the British journalist Harrison Brown who had just spent four years in Germany. In this August 2 Nation summary article entitled "Six Months of Hitlerism," Brown called the ferocity of the "new hates" in Hitler Germany unbelievable. The news about the "Brown Terror" to the outside world was delayed "because the editors of responsible papers abroad could not believe that even their picked reporters were not misinformed or carried away by their own emotions." Much of the Nazi "dirty work" was being done by "young men from relatively sheltered middle-class homes," which was all too astonishing at first glance. The terror would continue, predicted Brown. The new leaders, most of whom were "drug addicts and murderers, thieves, forgers, and moral decadents," had to perpetuate the reign of terror because it served as a substitute for constructive measures, and it just happened

30 The Nation, CXXXVII (July 12, 1933), 33-34.
31 The Literary Digest, CXVI (August 26, 1933), 13.
to fit their barbaric natures. Already thirty thousand men had been put in concentration camps, where a number of them had been "shot in flight." Without a doubt, the Nazi terror was the "worst" in European history; and the whole truth would never be revealed.

"To know what is happening in Germany today you must go to friends of old who know and trust you," wrote Dr. Alice L. Hamilton, who had recently visited Germany, in the September 1933 Survey Graphic. Dr. Hamilton found that many Germans had been overwhelmed by Nazi propaganda and spoke only the Nazi Party line. Others had been bullied into submission and were living in constant fear. Few were willing to speak critically of affairs since January.

A more valuable contribution by Dr. Hamilton was her article for the October Atlantic Monthly. She declared that whatever Adolf Hitler had done so far should not be any surprise. It was all in his book Mein Kampf, step by step, and Miss Hamilton then proceeded to make the most thorough investigation of this book that had yet been found in the American journals. Hitler, she said, had expounded his plan to become the master of the street battles and his system of propaganda whereby the big lie would be repeated so often that it would be believed by the masses. The doctrine of Germany's betrayal in the war and the need for a dictatorship to restore Germany's rights and military power

---

32 Harrison Brown, "Six Months of Hitlerism," The Nation, CXXXVII (August 2, 1933), 121-124. Mr. Brown was a British correspondent on the European continent.
were there too, as was the demand for unity of everything in German life. According to the author, events had proven that "he knew, and knows little" about economics. However, his plan for education was clear: physical training with the stress on the soldierly virtues." His foreign policy called for "living room" for the more advanced Aryan race at the expense of the weaker races in the East. Russia "is destined to provide for Germany the space she requires," but France remained Germany's chief enemy. To destroy French hegemony in Europe demanded allies, and for Germany these would have to be Great Britain and Italy.33

One of the most terrifying word pictures of Germany in the autumn of 1933 was given by Richard Neuberger in the October 4 Nation in the article "The New Germany." In his estimation, a tourist in Germany, with only the slightest knowledge of the language, could not leave the country without a feeling that an explosion was near. Germany was a "fortress bristling with hate and martial fervor." On the other hand, the belief in liberty was finished. Using the excuse of saving Germany from Communism, Hitler had crushed the rights and liberties of all his opponents and enemies.

Thus we see the "new Germany" as a land in which a racial and religious minority has been sacrificed on the altar of political expediency and intolerance in which democracy and civil rights have been abolished, from which culture and independent thoughts have been expelled, which is pre-

33Alice L. Hamilton, "Below the Surface," The Survey Graphic, XXII (September, 1933), 450-453, and "Hitler Speaks," The Atlantic Monthly, CLII (October, 1933), 399-408.
paring its children to be cannon fodder on the battlefields of a future war. 34

In contrast to the view of Germany given by Brown, Hamilton and Neuberger was the evaluation in the September Review of Reviews and World's Work by the conservative journalist Roger Shaw. He surmised Hitler to be no snob, for he was opposed to Socialists and Communists on one hand, and to monarchists, Junkers and Reichswehr generals on the other. "He and his followers are typically of the middle-class--strict, Spartan, conscientious--similar to the unswerving Puritans and to the French Jacobins of 1793." They were Victorian in morals, and the Chancellor was described as a "municipal 'clean-up man.'" The Jews had borne the brunt of the Fascist terror campaign because of their lead in the "modernistic movement." Hitler claimed, furthermore, that his dictatorship was protecting the general welfare of the workers from the Jewish capitalists.

Mussolini had given Hitler his methods for the revolution, Shaw reminded his readers. Unlike the Italian revolution, however, the Nazi revolution cost jobs instead of lives. It "ranks as the most orderly in history." For this peaceful coup, he gave credit to the Nazi leader who was "decidedly not a killer, despite some very flamboyant speechmaking." As far as foreign policy was concerned, Adolf Hitler was not a "true imperialist," for he de-

---

34 Richard Neuberger, "The New Germany," The Nation, CXXXVII (October 4, 1933), 377-379. Neuberger, who later distinguished himself as a journalist and as a politician in Oregon, had spent the summer in Germany as a student.
manded only what was German. Under him, Germany was swiftly regaining her stature as a great power and building up its national morale. "The little man with the Charlie Chaplin mustache is attempting a Reformation and a Renaissance rolled into one." Great energy was being put into a solution for the unemployment crisis. "Untrammeled freedom" in religious activities for the Catholic Church had been worked out. "Hitler is alleged to have done much that is bad," wrote Shaw. "Upon investigation it appears, however, that there is another and happier side to the question."

Hitler has recently announced that his favorite historical figure is Oliver Cromwell. Cromwell was a military dictator, puritanical, and a believer in direct action. He was a despiser of parliaments. In all these particulars this twentieth-century admirer has, to date, followed in his footsteps. It is no great leap from Iron Sides to Brown Shirts.35

Writing in an editorial in The Christian Register on October 12, 1933, Herbert C. Parsons expressed reservations about certain types of reporting which could have applied to Shaw's article.

American observers in Germany in recent months have not failed to observe certain physical benefits resulting from autocratic rule. Cleanliness in the streets, orderliness in policing, advance in housing plans, speak of a strong governmental direction. These are akin to the betterments which have come to be the familiar gains under dictatorial government, the cost of which in denial of self-reliance and individual freedom, as a spiritual value, is deeply obscured. Social reformers see the ends toward which they labor through educational and legislative paths, none too swiftly trod, accomplished almost instantaneously under aristocratic command. They are impressed by the regimentation of youth and the display, in brown-shirted ranks,

35 Roger Shaw, "Has Hitler Scored?" The Review of Reviews and World's Work, LXXXVIII (September, 1933), 41-42, 57.
marching with shouting enthusiasm under Nazi banners. And they, or some of them, return wondering if the childhood of America might not indeed by recruited in a somewhat similar manner to support our efforts toward recovery from the ills and ails of depression.36

In one of his several articles written from Germany, Paul Hutchinson of The Christian Century staff seemed convinced on September 6 that the Hitler regime could not last. That the leaders had nothing to offer but bellowing oratory was his rather shallow assessment. Too many of the campaign promises had been abandoned. Yet Hutchinson believed that Hitler was politician enough to know when the tide flowed against him. He would offer the nation a return of the Hohenzollern monarchy, Hutchinson predicted.

After six more weeks in Nazi Germany, correspondent Hutchinson became more penetrating in his analysis. "Hitler deserves to be taken with the utmost seriousness," advised Hutchinson in the October 18 Christian Century, since the German dictator had found substitutes for the existing order of things which were accepted by a majority of the population. In place of parliamentary democracy he offered the "principle of leadership" with the political creed of nationalism. His new social order combined nationalism and Socialism, to attract as many malcontents as possible. Continuing his incisive analysis of the many facets of Hitlerism, Hutchinson next asserted that Hitler had

36 Herbert C. Parsons, "Editorial: The German 'Christians,'" The Christian Register, CXII (October 12, 1933), 666. Parsons was a state official in Massachusetts.
brought religious life "down out of the vague clouds of mysticism and absorption in the possible bliss of a sweet bye and bye."
The church was to be recognized as a social agency with the expressed duty of building up the "community morale for the attaining of the ends set by the state." More Germans had openly opposed the government's religious program than any other, but the author also admitted that the reform-minded "German Christians" made up a vast majority of the church-going Protestant people.  

A Catholic correspondent, Denis Gwynn, in the September Sign, remained skeptical that the Nazis could maintain their control over the state. "The most uncertain factor" was Chancellor Hitler. He had not shown any capacity for the constructive measures which were absolutely necessary for the well-being of the German people. If he proved to be but a demagogue, there were formidable men standing in the wings ready to displace him. Gwynn acknowledged that it was difficult to ascertain exactly what was happening behind the scenes of the administration because of the strict censorship, which may account for his poor assessment.

Two Protestant writers, on the other hand, tried to be more realistic in evaluating the events in Nazi Germany. Professor William Lofthouse, in an article in the Protestant quarterly

---

37 Paul Hutchinson, "Will Hitler Restore the Hohenzollerns?" The Christian Century, L (September 6, 1933), 1104-1105, and "The Portent of Hitler," (October 18, 1933), 1299-1301.

38 Denis Gwynn, "Europe's New Perspective," The Sign, XII (September, 1933), 73-74.
Religion In Life for the autumn of 1933, while mildly critical of
the Nazi totalitarian ideology, cautioned that Germany and the
German people must be treated justly as they rose from the depths
of despair. The excesses of the totalitarian regime were of
course dangerous, but this British professor depicted Hitler as
"Communism's relentless foe." What the Nazi Chancellor was ask-
ing for Germany was no more than any other state would ask in the
same condition.39

James E. Clarke, the editor of The Presbyterian Advance, dis-
puted the "high rating" that some unnamed publicists had been
giving the German Chancellor lately. In a September 14 editorial
Clarke wrote that "for the prosperity of Germany and the peace
of the world it is to be hoped that Hitler is a man of unques-
tioned ability and of high and unquestioned devotion to the genu-
ine welfare of the German people." But, according to Clarke, Hitler's recent speeches indicated that he was placing difficul-
ties in his own path. His desire for race purity could never be
attained. Germany's destiny would have to be worked out on a
mixed blood basis like every other great nation.40

Some first-hand impressions of contemporary Germany were
presented to the readers of The Literary Digest by the Protestant

39 William F. Lofthouse, "The Totalitarian State," Reli-
gion In Life, II (August, 1933), 538-540. The author was the
principal and professor of systematic theology and the philosophy

40 The Presbyterian Advance, XLVIII (September 14, 1933),
clergyman Reverend Stanley High. This was an unusual procedure on the part of this weekly, for it seldom printed signed articles. In "Hitler and the New Germany," the first of a series of four articles, High argued that Hitler had accomplished almost nothing constructive since taking office in January. Most of the major problems still existed, but "barring the possibility of international action, Adolf Hitler has come to stay." The Fuehrer, High maintained, had been accepted by "every articulate German." Germany was presumably undergoing a religious ecstasy, where active support for the ruling authority involved a spiritual experience. High felt that religious adoration had been directed to Hitler without his invitation, and he had accepted it and capitalized upon it. "For religion in Germany has a peculiar political importance. Among no other western people is the conviction of a Divine mission so strong as among the Germans." The Nazi leadership had intelligently translated these notions into popular language for the masses. They, particularly the German youth, had received this "revitalized Teutonism" with great enthusiasm. Hitler had ended their feeling of despair and had given them jobs. It was these young people that the National Socialist were depending upon to extend their regime, for they could be "most easily molded."  

One week later, in the October 14 Literary Digest, Reverend High's second article discussed the totalitarian movement in

---

41 Stanley High, "Hitler and the New Germany," The Literary Digest, CXVI (October 7, 1933), 5, 42-43.
Hitler's Reich. "For each sphere of the nation's interests and activities there is to be but one organization; in each compartment of the nation's mind, one thought; in each corner of the nation's heart, but one aspiration." The Chancellor's most successful undertaking had been in the area of political consolidation and state centralization. At this point, High appeared almost to praise the Fuehrer's political acumen. State localism was completely erased, forcing people to think nationally. Nazi officials were also playing down the traditional dominant role of Prussia and Berlin in the state. The National Socialists had divided the major bureaus of their organization between Munich and Berlin, while Hitler and his government officials made it a point of policy to conduct visitations throughout the Reich. Having in mind the successful political unification under the Nazis, High made this statement: "If Adolf Hitler's regime was to end to-morrow, his place in history would be secure for this, if for no other reason."\(^42\)

In the next article of the series, Reverend High took a close look at Hitler's position in the Third Reich. The first section of this October 21 article contains what seems to be High's most significant piece of analysis in the entire *Literary Digest* series. Before taking over the government, Hitler and the Nazis were bitterly opposed, but now, High observed, everyone seemed to be jumping on their bandwagon. How many of these were

\(^42\)High, "Hitler's One-Purpose Government," *ibid.*, (October 14, 1933), 12, 24.
convincing Fascists would be difficult to ascertain; many Germans were "undoubtedly as much anti-Nazi as ever." Except, however, for a few outspoken opponents who quickly found themselves interned in concentration camps, "one would search far to find a more docile company of antis." Hitler's pledge to destroy the post-war political system had been disturbingly efficient, giving weight to the opinion of some that the Weimar era was artificial. "The Germany of Adolf Hitler is the real Germany," was the cry of the government's supporters.

As for the National Socialist Party organization, Hitler held the upper hand, despite rumors about "fire-eater" Goering's rivalry with his leader. Hermann Goering was a showman, but he knew who was boss. Thus High indicated that he had made a thorough study of the alleged power struggle within the ranks of the National Socialist leadership. "If Hitler chose," Goering "could be consigned tomorrow to an outer darkness that would be complete and final." The difference between Hitler and his associates was not quantitative, but qualitative. "It is all the difference between prophet and the disciple. And no one understands that better than the disciples." Hitler was devoted to his friends and had rewarded their loyalty amply; however, "if the issue arose, he could make it just as clear how ample his punishments would be for those who proved unfaithful." The purge of 1934 proved the validity of High's observation on this point! The weakest link in the author's study was his profile of the Nazi leader, whom he depicted as a warm and friendly man who was defi-
nately religious."

The Nazis' October 14, 1933 venture in foreign affairs—the withdrawal from the League of Nations and the Geneva Disarmament Conference was followed by a November Reichstag election and plebiscite, which resulted in overwhelming approval for Hitler's foreign policies. Nazi officials decided the opportunity was right to elevate the National Socialist Party together with its various subsidiary organizations to an official status as departments of the German state. In the words of The New Republic for December 13, 1933, which alone commented on this occurrence, "the party and state in Nazi Germany have become identical."

Censorship and Propaganda

The new German press law was first published on October 4, 1933, to take effect at the beginning of 1934. It empowered the government to exclude from publication anything which tended to weaken the "will for union of the German people and German culture." Using this part of the law, the Nazis gradually strangled the German free press, both religious and secular. As for

---

43 High, "The Man Who Leads Germany," ibid. (October 21, 1933), 5, 42. In "Danger Still in Austria," The Nation, CXXXVII (September 20, 1933), 322, John Gunther presented a view of Chancellor Hitler which contrasted drastically with High's kindly and religious man. "Hitler has served to housebreak Mussolini and make even Litvinov semi-respectable."

44 This problem will be treated in the chapters on German foreign affairs.

45 The New Republic, LXXVII (December 13, 1933), 115.

46 The most authoritative study of the Nazification of the
radio broadcasting, the National Socialists had a monopoly from the very inception of the Hitler ministry because the German government owned and operated all stations. Moving pictures remained in the hands of private firms, but they were soon following ever so closely the directives of the propaganda ministry headed by Dr. Joseph Goebbels.

The American liberal journals took the lead in showing concern about the freedom of writing and publishing and the exchange of ideas as they existed in Nazi Germany. Specific reference to the regime's attitude to the press appeared on November 8, 1933, in The New Republic. That Hitler had "complete control" over the German press was an exaggeration, declared this weekly, for many newspapers with independent convictions were still trying to maintain themselves. At the moment, the government appeared to be more interested in the distribution of foreign newspapers and periodicals, which it could not bully into submission. A somewhat contrary view was written for the November 15 New Republic by Richard Neuberger, who described the regime as very nervous about all criticism. "Fear of indignation abroad, coupled with fear of strife and rebellion at home, has prompted the Nazi government to control all publications with a mailed fist." He also thought that "the Nazis control one of the most highly organized movements in modern times to direct sentiment and opinion in German press can be found in the recent scholarly treatment by Cron J. Hale in The Captive Press in the Third Reich (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964)."
great country."47

By April 1934, Sidney B. Fay of the monthly Current History could report that arrests, suppression and censorship had forced more than six hundred German newspapers out of business in little over a year. The quality of the newspapers had suffered, he continued, because of the ouster of Jewish newsman.48 The April 4 Nation told of the demise of Berlin's more than two-hundred-year-old newspaper Vossische Zeitung, and it also condemned the "dead hand of censorship."49 What was happening in Germany as a result of this censorship was disclosed by the usually perceptive foreign correspondent S. Miles Bouton in the May 1934 American Mercury, a conservative monthly. It was his opinion that most Germans remained ignorant of what was happening in their own country and in the outside world. They remained hypnotized by the regime's "dizzy pace" and believed whatever the controlled press and radio told them.50 On the other hand, The Nation for April 4 argued that few Germans wanted to read the "dull and "stupid" stuff appearing in the official press, which was having difficulty maintaining its circulation.51

49The Nation, CXXXVIII (April 4, 1934), 371.
51The Nation, CXXXVIII (April 4, 1934), 371.
While censorship was being strictly applied in Nazi Germany, government officials were reportedly seeking ways to spread abroad the gospel of National Socialism. Three American journals in the late fall of 1933 discussed Nazism's penetration of North America. The Nation of November 1 called attention to the fact that "half crazy representatives" of the National Socialist movement were organizing quasi-Nazi groups in America at the same time that the Machiavellian German leader was broadcasting assurances that he wished only peace with all peoples. In the article "Hitlerism Comes to America" for the November 1933 Harper's Magazine, John J. Smertenko disclosed that the National Socialist units in America were being directly supervised by the main Party headquarters in Munich and that they were carrying out their campaign "systematically and methodically." Albert Brandt made similar remarks in The Catholic World for January 1934 but added the fact that the Nazis were also carrying out their activities in western Europe and South America.

52 The successes and failures of National Socialist propaganda at home and abroad can be studied in the recent scholarly works by Zbyněk A. B. Zeman, Nazi Propaganda (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), and by Ernest K. Bramsted, Goebbels and National Socialist Propaganda 1925-1945 (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1965).

53 The Nation, CXXXVII (November 1, 1933), 499.

54 John J. Smertenko, "Hitlerism Comes to America," Harper's Magazine, CLXVII (November, 1933), 666-667. Smertenko was the former editor of Opinion.

Women and Youth

German womanhood under the Hitler dictatorship was the subject of one major article during the fourteen months covered in this chapter. Dr. Alice L. Hamilton described the subordinate role of German women in the new Third Reich for the readers of the January 1934 Survey Graphic. She called the Nazi attitude toward women a "reversion to the past." 56

The fate of the German youth in the Nazi state, alluded to in a number of summary articles, was the primary concern of two journals during the summer of 1933. 57 In The New Republic for June 14, Mary Heaton Vorse wrote that the National Socialists were bent on indoctrinating the German youth from the primary schools to the universities. All experimental schools had been closed, liberal instructors dismissed, and "questionable" books banned. 58 News had been received by the July 12 Nation that all the youth groups were to be brought under Fascist administration, and the members would be instructed to spy on their parents and relatives in order to maintain political orthodoxy in the state. 59

56 Alice L. Hamilton, "Women's Place in Germany," The Survey Graphic, XXIII (January, 1934), 28.

57 For background material regarding one important activity of the young people, the German youth movements in the twentieth-century, see the recent work by Walter Z. Laqueur, Young Germany: A History of the German Youth Movement (New York: Basic Books Publishing Company, 1952).

58 Mary Heaton Vorse, "Germany: The Twilight of Reason," The New Republic, LXXV (June 14, 1933), 119.

59 The Nation, CXXXVII (July 12, 1933), 33-34.
Several months later, Oswald Garrison Villard discussed the role of German youth for the March 7, 1934 Nation. Villard noted that the backbone of Hitler's brigades remained the young people of Germany, just as they were before Hitler became Chancellor. Since January 1933, an overnight transformation from a despairing lot to a virile, happy and enthusiastic marching mass had greatly influenced many foreign observers of the Nazi state. But Hitler's program for a return to greatness had demolished the ideas which the German nation cherished most. Not only culture, but the rule of law, had been destroyed.

Its young men and women have been poisoned—poisoned with hate for certain classes in the community, taught to believe that they must smash and imprison and outlaw every individual whose views go counter to their own. They are bred in intolerance, nurtured in vindictiveness, breast-fed with hate. They are even being taught, many of them, that what Germany needs is the setting up of a pagan religion, the renewed worship of gods who typify at best only the crude idealism of men who lived in the days when everybody carried a weapon and was clad in the skin of a wild beast. If the teachings of Adolf Hitler are sound, however, the Christian religion ought truly to be scrapped, not only because Jesus was himself a Jew, but because all that he taught of brotherly love, tolerance, kindliness, good-will and forgiveness of sins is entirely banned.

The Nazi chief was leading the youth down a path of ruin, but the young people were incapable of analyzing the present situation, being blinded by nationalistic fervor and wild exputations. It was a sorry state of affairs, said Villard. Daniel B. Pulsford added in the April 1934 Sign that the German youth were being inculcated with the ideals of the bloody warrior as part of their

---

education for the good of the Fatherland. 61

**Education**

The German school system and intellectual life felt the heavy hand of Nazi interference almost immediately, since the schools and universities were under the supervision of local governments which became Nazi-infested during 1933. However, it was not until April 30, 1934, with the appointment of Bernhard Rust as *Reich* Minister of Science, Education and Popular Culture, that the entire school system was coordinated under a single hard-core National Socialist. 62 Several months before the naming of Rust, the November 8 *New Republic* considered the educational system "reduced to little more than propaganda for war." 63 Almost the same observation was made by Dr. Alice L. Hamilton, herself a one-time graduate student in Germany, in *Harper's Magazine* for January 1934. She wrote that Germany was now "deliberately abdicating her place of leadership in the intellectual world." Intellectual activity could not be tolerated in a totalitarian state where dissent was considered treason. The attacks upon the Jews, she stated, could be partly explained by their influence

61 Daniel B. Pulsford, "Cross or Swastika?" *The Sign*, XIII (April, 1934), 555.


63 *The New Republic*, LXXVI (November 8, 1933), 351-352.
in the German intellectual world. It was at the younger generation that the anti-intellectual campaign was primarily aimed. 64

By February 14, 1934, The New Republic's Verne Andrews could report that the Nazis had everything under control in the education area, 65 a view which was supported by Shephard Stone's article in Current History for April 1934. The great German universities had been forced into conformity by Nazi dictation. Stone seemed unhappy to relate that the majority of professors had "flexible backbones" and were voluntarily making the pillars of intellectualism the fortresses of Nazi chauvinism. They preferred to retain their academic chairs, however repugnant the restrictions, rather than be forced into exile or poverty. 66

A lone dissenting voice, that of William E. D. Allen in the ultra-conservative American Review for January 1934, was heard singing the praise of Fascist policies and their effect upon western culture. He assessed the Fascist movement as one "directed towards the revival of European culture." Moreover, it represented a revolutionary group led by war-veterans which "should establish the truth that further wars can hardly be a primary objective of the supporters of Fascist movements." Allen

66 Shephard Stone, "Twilight of the German University," Current History, XL (April, 1934), 39. Stone had spent several years studying in Europe.
424

had obviously not read the works of Mussolini or Hitler. He contended that Fascism concentrated on the consolidation and development of the internal resources which "should further exclude the necessity of war." "Building around the old and sure foundations of European racial culture," Fascism would assure peace to Europe and order to the world.67

Nazi Justice and German Resistance

The brutal police-state tactics utilized by the Nazis in creating Hitler's Third Reich were periodically noted by the American journals.68 Also treated somewhat superficially, since little was actually known about them, were the so-called underground opposition groups.69


Reports to the May 6, 1933 *Literary Digest* from the Manchester Guardian told of the establishment of extraordinary political courts with arbitrary powers. These dealt out prison sentences for the slightest offenses against the state. What was happening, the British paper contended, was being done systematically and with the knowledge of Hitler and his intimate advisors, not by bands of undisciplined storm troopers. Sidney B. Fay told the readers of the June 1933 *Current History* that news had been received that several large concentration camps for political prisoners were under construction. More would be heard about the concentration camps in greater detail. On July 5 *The Nation* called attention to the reported overcrowding of German prison camps as the political arrests became more numerous with the families of suspected persons now being seized, while in an earlier issue of the same journal, Emil Lengyel stated that "the true torch-bearers of civilization in Germany are in exile, in prison, or without work, and are labeled 'public enemies.'"

One optimistic sign for the July 12 *Nation* was the report that underground groups were being organized. German workers

1945 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1961), present excellently documented analyses on the resistance groups.

70 *The Literary Digest*, CXV (May 6, 1933), 10.

71 Sidney B. Fay, "Nazis Consolidate Their Power," *Current History*, XXXVIII (June, 1933), 358-359.

72 *The Nation*, CXXXVII (July 5, 1933), 2, and Emil Lengyel, "German Culture in Exile," CXXXVI (May 31, 1933), 607.

73 *The Nation*, CXXXVII (July 12, 1933), 33-34.
appeared to play the key role in the early resistance movement. According to the August 2 New Republic, a Communist-led underground movement had already begun to operate, and on September 13 it could report that "the new rulers of Germany have no enemies—and yet they are still arresting them." "Daily one reads of Communists beheaded, of Socialists sent to concentration camps, of boys sentenced to eighteen months of prison for distributing illegal newspapers." This journal also had some information that small subversive cells were proliferating throughout the industrial areas. Nazi officials referred to these cells as "this pest" and demanded "Draconian counter-measures." Still these groups were increasing all the time, declared the October 1933 Living Age. The National Socialists could be in power for a number of years, Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr thought, but in an October American Scholar article, he predicted a long and hard government struggle against the worker-led opposition groups.

On the other hand, some journals expressed reservations about the strength and potential of the opposition forces. For one, Ludwig Lore, writing in the September 1933 issue of Current History, foresaw a hard job ahead for the workers to rebuild a new organization after the recent failures of their associations.

74 The New Republic, LXXV (August 2, 1933), 299-300, and LXXVI (September 13, 1933), 113.

75 The Living Age, CCXCV (October, 1933), 98.

to stem the tide of the Nazi totalitarians. Yet Lore called to the attention of the readers of The New Republic for September 27 the reports that forces on the right were organizing illegal opposition, especially since the resignation of Alfred Hugenberg from the Hitler Cabinet on June 29.77 From Geneva Robert Dell, a correspondent for The Nation, declared in an October 18 article that his Berlin informants saw "no chance at all of an overthrow of the Hitler regime by the Germans themselves." Underground activity stories had been exaggerated by the Nazis themselves to give them an excuse for future severe policies. The Reichswehr might have done something earlier, but it was "now too late."78 Professor Seelye Bixler in the October 12 Christian Register reported that resistance was "still offered in some quarters" but "few dare to allow their opposition to become overt."79

The first major article devoted to German resistance forces did not appear in an American journal until late in 1933. Publishing the essay "Underground Germany" in the December 6,


78Robert Dell, "The German Nightmare," The Nation, CXXXVII (October 18, 1933), 454. Dell was the Geneva correspondent of the Manchester Guardian and a frequent contributor to American journals.

79Julius Seelye Bixler, "The World Today: German Universities," The Christian Register, CXXX (October 12, 1933), 665. Dr. Bixler was professor of religion and biblical literature at Smith College from 1924 to 1933 and professor of theology at Harvard University from 1933 to 1942.
1933 *Nation*, journalist Roger B. Nelson showed that he had more confidence in the German workers' resistance movement than the facts, as they are known today, warranted.

Whatever light there is today in darkest Germany is to be found underground. All that was good in German culture, all that was inspiring in German traditions, and all that was worth while in the German labor and revolutionary movements will be preserved by the new heroes of the Germany of tomorrow now being reared underground.

The membership was "almost suicidal in its heroism" and almost exclusively from the laboring class. Nelson admitted that the movement was small and somewhat confused, but it was growing rapidly and achieving a clarity of purpose. Although the author made no predictions, unity would not be accomplished easily, since he mentioned that the three main forces of resistance were reportedly represented by the official Communist Party, the Social Democratic Party and its youth organizations, and those workers opposed to the Marxist philosophy.

Rather than the dubious underground work by the laboring classes, it was the opposition from "the more devout Protestants and Catholics" plus that of "aristocratic circles" which *The Living Age* of January 1934 thought was hurting the regime more. However, in the next two issues, the editors began to give more credit to the workers, maintaining in their April editorial that the greatest threat to Hitler was the "possibility of united working-class opposition." Needing only unity, the workers had the

---

potential to erupt as they did during the Kapp Putsch of 1923, an indication that the full extent of National Socialist dominance had not been grasped by The Living Age.

A revitalized Social Democracy was presently working underground to unify the working classes and all anti-Nazi groups, claimed Ludwig Lore in the April 1934 American Mercury. Details about the society were scarce, as they were for all such resistance groups, but what appeared certain, according to Lore, was that the group was more concerned with building up an organization than with promoting agitation here and now. Because of this policy a split had occurred in the ranks of the young members who were "demanding decisive reorientation toward illegal revolutionary activity." These would be the leaders of the movement's future, thought Lore. They had not lost the spirit of revolution as the older workers had, and they were willing to fight for what they believed in, however desperate that cause might seem to be. Lore developed the same argument in another article, "German Socialism Underground," for the August 15, 1934 New Republic. Not the existence of active resistance cells, but a "fear complex" grasping all of Germany was recorded by Verne Andrews in the March 21 New Republic.

81 The Living Age, CCCXLV (January, 1934), 330; CCCXLVI (March, 1934), 4-5; and (April, 1934), 98, 154-157.


83 Verne Andrews, "Off to a Concentration Camp," The New Republic, LXXVIII (March 21, 1934), 156.
Journalist Louis Fischer did not fully agree with those who saw a resurgent workers' opposition. Writing in The Nation on April 4, 1934, he said that "millions of workingmen have accepted fascism out of the conviction that the Marxist sermons on class war were wrong." Supposedly the aggressive foreign policy and the dynamic militarism of the Hitlerites were two of the main attractions for the workers. Fischer did not discuss the problems of unemployment.84

Characteristically, Leon Trotsky predicted the ultimate success of the German workers, but only after a long and careful reorganization. In an article entitled "How Long Can Hitler Stay?" in the usually conservative American Mercury for January 1934, Trotsky maintained that the old Communist and Social Democratic Party organizations should be forgotten. They had both failed miserably before January 1933 and afterward. "No self-deception! A defeat covered up by illusions means ruin. Salvation lies in clarity. Only a merciless criticism of all failures and errors can prepare the great revenge." The German proletariat must make this effort, said Trotsky, since the Fascist regime

84 Louis Fischer, "Fascism and Bolshevism," The Nation, CXXXVIII (April 4, 1934), 381-382. Fischer was a noted journalist and an author of many works on international affairs. Nazism would survive, according to Frederick L. Schumann, professor of political science at the University of Chicago, in a more scholarly article, "The Political Theory of German Fascism," The American Political Science Review, XXXVIII (April, 1934), 232, as long as it continued to bring solace to those classes which it claimed to have saved from Bolshevism. A new revolutionary situation could be created, however, if economic disintegration continued or if a series of diplomatic defeats occurred.
"cannot fall of itslf."

It must be overthrown. The changing of the political regime in present-day Germany cannot be realized without an insurrection. True, for such an insurrection there is at present no direct and immediate prospect; but no matter what devious path developments should take, they must inevitably break through to insurrection.

Refugees

In the midst of all the National Socialists' repressive measures, it was not uncommon to find stories concerning German refugees. John Haynes Holmes, writing in the March 21, 1934 Christian Century, argued that the Hitler tyranny was "the most terrifying experience since the world war." The number of refugees fleeing the country spoke for itself. "Citizens do not run away from their native land except under conditions of terror and despair." Additional authoritative background information on the refugee problem was furnished by Joseph P. Chamberlain in the April 1934 Survey Graphic.

National Socialist Dissension and the Blood Purge

During the first half of 1934, the American journals re-


86 John Haynes Holmes, "How Do I Know About Hitler?" The Christian Century, LI (March 21, 1934), 391-392. Reverend Holmes was a minister in New York City and was the editor of Unity.

87 Joseph P. Chamberlain, "The High Commission for German Refugees," The Survey Graphic, XXIII (April, 1934), 177-180. The author was the American member of the High Commission for German Refugees.
ported a number of stories indicating that there was increased internal dissension within the government circle and the ranks of the Nazi Party. These rumors, together with the information that the workers were growing restless, caused a number of journals to speculate about what was going on behind the scenes in Germany. For instance, The Living Age of February 1934 noted an apparent reshuffling within the Nazi government's hierarchy. It looked as if Hermann Goering was being eased out of power with his replacement being Wilhelm Frick, another old Nazi Party stalwart. The March 7 New Republic examined similar rumors. Goering, it was conjectured, had become "a thorn in the side" of Hitler and his other lieutenants; he was now most influential in Germany's foreign policy-making and had been steadily gaining national prominence. The New Republic thought it clear that "relations among the leaders of the Nazi regime are far from harmonious." It called attention to a recent move by Chancellor Hitler to obtain a public pledge of loyalty from his government bureaucrats and Party chiefs. The Presbyterian Advance misinterpreted the oath-taking as a step taken by Hitler to crown himself emperor, rather than as an attempt to halt political unrest.

In The Review of Reviews and World's Work for March 1934, Roger Shaw discussed the role the army would play in the politi-

---

88 The Living Age, CXXXLV (February, 1934), 474.
89 The New Republic, LXXVIII (March 7, 1934), 85.
90 The Presbyterian Advance, XLIX (March 8, 1934), 86.
local battle that was apparently shaping up. The Reichswehr, the one major factor in German life outside of Hitler's control, actually held Germany "in the hollow of its hand." It had no great admiration for the Nazi leader, and it genuinely felt contempt for the para-military units of the National Socialist Party, considering them "hopeless amateurs and bombastic boy scouts."

"That the storm troopers outnumber the Reichswehr by nearly six to one, does not disturb the seasoned professionals." So far, the army had remained silent, but Shaw warned that "behind the silence is a mailed fist, which is capable of dealing knockout blows."91 On May 23 The New Republic revealed that Hermann Goering, once thought by some American observers to be on the road to oblivion, had been resurrected to help the regime acquire the solid backing of the regular army in case of an internal revolt by "elements in the Storm Troops."92

May speeches by Joseph Goebbels reminded the suspicious Christian Century of the days when the outcast Nazis were shouting threats at the republican coalitions. Cries to renew attacks upon the Jews, condemnations of the German Catholics, calls for individual Germans to act as spies in their neighborhoods, and the establishment of more extra-legal courts to deal with dissenters, indicated to the Century that something was worrying the

91Roger Shaw, "Germany—France—Austria!" The Review of Reviews and World's Work, LXXXIX (March, 1934), 36.
Nazi Chancellor and his friends. A contrary view was given by Philip W. Wilson in the May 19 Literary Digest. From some source that remained unnamed, he saw "signs that Hitler is arriving at years of discretion."  

Although the journals did not know it, the time of decision in Germany was near at hand. The first week of June 1934 found Ernst Roehm meeting with Hitler in what has been described as a last-ditch effort to reach an understanding on some basic principles. Exactly what transpired is not certain, but a few days after the meeting Roehm's S. A. troopers were given a one-month leave and Roehm himself went on sick leave. Then suddenly another voice was heard attacking the Hitler regime for its excesses and calling for a final end of the revolutionary changes that Germany had undergone since Hitler's coming to power a year and a half earlier. This was the theme of the speech made by Vice-Chancellor Franz von Papen at the University of Marburg on June 17. At the time it was widely believed that Papen was supported by the dying President Hindenburg who, in turn, had within his grasp control over the Reichswehr.  

Two journals, the June 9 America and the July Living Age, hinted that revolt was near at hand in Germany after hear-

---

94 Philip W. Wilson, "Is Mankind Talking Itself Into--or Out of--War?" The Literary Digest, CXVII (May 19, 1934), 41.
ing about the Hitler-Roehm discussions. Both periodicals sur-
mised that a major point of contention evolved around the control of the army.

Papen's speech drew slightly more notice from the Ameri-
can journals. The Vice-Chancellor's address "astounded" the July 4 Nation, one of the four journals which had time to react to this event before more serious developments occurred. Discontent seemed to be more widespread than at first believed. Papen had gone "extraordinarily far in his attack," criticizing not only personalities and the radical wing of the Nazi Party but also "the theory of Hitlerism itself." Rumors concerning the restlessness of Roehm's storm corps had also reached the desks of The Nation. Thinking that Adolf Hitler was caught up in the middle between two feuding factions, its editors ventured a poor guess that Hitler would now assume "the role of moderator." More realistic and more accurate was the close of this editorial.

The battle will not be a brief one nor gently fought, if it really comes to open conflict. The people may actually be called upon to take sides with one or the other of the two great national heroes, Hitler and Hindenburg, although they have so little to gain in the choice of masters thus presented to them. At any rate it will be a genuine test of Hitler's capacity as a statesman and fighter. It is one thing to be a silver-tongued orator and the world's greatest showman, and another to deal with a far-reaching revolt in your own ranks.96

The New Republic for July 4 thought much less of Papen's speech. It was the message of a man who had failed in his as-

96 The Nation, CXXXIX (July 4, 1934), 5.
signed task of containing the radicalism of the National Socialists in the government. He had become a useful tool and errand boy for Hitler in his relations with big business, Junkerdom and the Catholic Church. That Papen, representing the business interests, should berate the Nazis for turning to "National Bolshevism" was a mere disguise. "Nothing is more ridiculous and more dangerous than to say of the Brown Shirts and the Nazi leadership that they are 'brown outside and red within.'" What the industrialists feared most of all was a continuation of the ineffectual Nazi experiments which "contradict every known law of industrial development and every precept of commercial practice."

The Marburg address was given only a small news item mention by the June 30 America. Apparently still deceiving itself about Hitler's personality, America reported that the Nazi chief-tain had "frankly endorsed" Papen's points of criticism. His only objection seemed to be that Papen had voiced his views publicly. Aspects of Papen's speech received careful consideration in Cabinet discussions, according to the July 5 Presbyterian Advance. From all indications the moderates seemed to be in command, and their strength was "likely to increase." Rampant radicalism was on the way out, said the Advance, without realizing how it would be eliminated.

---

97 The New Republic, LXXIX (July 4, 1934), 196-197.
98 America, LI (June 30, 1934), 287.
99 The Presbyterian Advance, XLIX (July 5, 1934), 196-197.
The climax and the end of the National Socialist intra-Party disputes occurred on June 30, 1934, in an event accurately referred to as the "Blood Purge." This dramatic move by Hitler was directed primarily against the more radical social revolutionary wing of the National Socialist Party led by Ernst Roehm, which was also aiming at the incorporation of the S. A. troopers into the Reichswehr as a means of gaining control of the regular army. In a lightning-like maneuver carried out by the S.S. (Schutz Staffeln) blackshirted corps whose leader was Heinrich Himmler, Roehm and other S. A. leaders were murdered and the power of the brownshirts destroyed. Besides the S. A. leadership, the assassins struck down several who had ties with neither the S. A. nor the Nazi Party: Hitler's old enemies and potential leaders of dissenting political factions, many of whom were conservative and Catholic. The list of dead included General Kurt von Schleicher and his wife; General Kurt von Bredow; the former Nazi leader Gregor Strasser; two of Papen's assistants who had drawn up the Marburg speech, Herbert von Bose and Edgar Jung; the Berlin leader of Catholic Action Erich Klausener; and some of Hitler's old adversaries in Bavaria. Hitler later admitted to having had seventy-seven persons executed; estimates have gone as

100 The latest study of the June 30 blood purge is by Elisabeth Wiskemann, "The Night of the Long Knives," History Today, XIV (June, 1964), 371-380, which clearly shows that Ernst Roehm and his subordinates had not planned a coup, although they may have said rash things."
high as one thousand dead. 101

On July 13, 1934, Chancellor Hitler appeared before the Nazi-packed Reichstag to give his account of the events two weeks before. He spoke mysteriously and vaguely of secret plots and the moral degeneration of the victims, particularly that of his former associates. He made it quite clear in his address that he was the law of the land—the man who determined life and death in Nazi Germany. It was an impassioned speech by a man who seemed to be very confident of his power.

Most of the significant American weekly journals and many of the monthlies responded to the June 10 killings, and almost all were shocked. In general, the religious-oriented journals seemed eager to pass moral judgment upon the events of June 30. 102 America's responses of July 14 and 21 were the best examples of such reporting. 103 European civilization was definitely being menaced by the German "mad dogs," said the July 14 America editorial en-


102 The Christian Century, LI (July 11, 1934), 919-920, and (July 18, 1934), 939; The Presbyterian Advance, XLIX (July 12, 1934), 4; America, LI (July 14, 1934), 315, and (July 21, 1934), 339; and The Ave Maria, XL (New Series) (July 28, 1934), 119.

103 America, LI (July 14, 1934), 315, and (July 21, 1934), 339.
It is not as if these deaths came as a result of a revolt against the safety and security of the German state. If revolt there was, it was not against Germany, but merely against a regime. The real gravity of the situation becomes apparent only when we realize that. The state has a right to punish its enemies, after fair trial and real evidence. In Germany it was the Nazi party that wielded death. It was a mere accident that those who were killed were practically all the local leaders of that party. If the chiefs of any other political party had stood in the way their heads would have dropped instead, just as they have in Mexico, Russia, or any other pagan totalitarian state.

This "desperate clique" would continue to resort to anything to stay in power. One issue later, America's opinion had changed little. It believed that the German people had been thoroughly "cowed by men mad with power." They had not forgotten Christian morality and principles, but the Nazi government had wiped out all liberty, including that of expression.

The reasons for the decisive action taken by Hitler was a point of some discussion and divergent opinion among the journals. The theory that Roehm and his assistants had been plotting to overthrow Adolf Hitler and planning to bring about a "second revolution," was held by The Literary Digest, correspondent John Elliott writing in the Digest, The Commonweal, and an Englishman called "Dornatis," whose article appeared in The Atlantic Monthly. The July 11, 1934 New Republic accepted the story of an

104 The Literary Digest, CXVIII (July 7, 1934), 13, and John Elliott, "Nazi Germany's 'Second Revolution,'" (July 14, 1934), 3, 14; The Commonweal, XX (July 20, 1934), 296; and "Dornatis," "Will the Hohenzollerns Return?" The Atlantic Monthly, CLIV (September, 1934), 377-381. The author was the London Daily Telegraph correspondent at The Hague and Doorn.
alleged plot against the state, but by the following week's issue it discounted these charges because proof was lacking.\textsuperscript{105} While The Nation for July 11 believed the outbreak of violence within the ranks "inevitable" because of the great diversity of opinions on basic principles, it too failed to find any evidence to substantiate the plot theory.\textsuperscript{106} The Christian Century, Roger Shaw writing in The Review of Reviews and World's Work, Sidney B. Fay in his Current History column, The Living Age, and The Catholic World all felt that a revolt had been brewing when the government decided to strike.\textsuperscript{107} The Jesuit weekly America refused to commit itself to any position,\textsuperscript{108} but Oswald Garrison Villard and the editors of The Presbyterian Advance and The Ave Maria accused Hitler and his companions of murder.\textsuperscript{109}

That the German people had been stunned by the sequence of events was the report of The Nation, The Christian Century,

\textsuperscript{105}The New Republic, LXXIX (July 11, 1934), 222, and (July 18, 1934), 251-252.

\textsuperscript{106}The Nation, CXXXIX (July 11, 1934), 32, and (July 18, 1934), 61-62.

\textsuperscript{107}The Christian Century, LI (July 11, 1934), 919-920; Roger Shaw, "July in Germany," The Review of Reviews and World's Work, XC (August, 1934), 29; Sidney B. Fay, "Nazi Against Nazi," Current History, XL (August, 1934), 620; The Living Age, CCCXLVI (August, 1934), 471; and The Catholic World, CXXXIX (August, 1934), 618-619.

\textsuperscript{108}America, LI (July 14, 1934), 315.

\textsuperscript{109}Oswald Garrison Villard, "Issues and Men: The Strange German Character," The Nation, CXXXIX (July 18, 1934), 63; The Presbyterian Advance, XLIX (July 12, 1934), 4; and The Ave Maria, XL (New Series)(July 28, 1934), 119.
and The Commonweal, none of which elaborated upon this topic; however, the editors of the weekly Literary Digest and The Ave Maria contended that the country was seething below the surface and that exasperated Germans could take action to bring down the dictatorship. 110 The Nation's Oswald Garrison Villard predicted that the German people would continue to rationalize away the "barbarism" of the Hitler regime. 111 On the other hand, the Protestant clergyman Edward T. Ramsdall, writing in The Christian Century, believed that some Germans—Hitler's more fanatical followers—would approve of the terror methods, but the majority of the population would be silent—an eloquent silence of hatred. 112 Clearly Ramsdall had more esteem for the German people than Villard, but it might well be that Ramsdall's silent Germans, in the long run, were just as much to blame for subsequent crimes perpetrated by the Nazis as the rationalizers denounced by Villard.

Having had several weeks to reflect, the editors of America on August 25 could only offer their readers the often expressed hope that the German people themselves would open their eyes slowly to the evils of the Nazi administration, if given the slight-

110 The Nation, CXXXIX (July 11, 1934), 32; The Christian Century, LI (July 11, 1934), 919-920, and (July 18, 1934), 939; The Commonweal, XX (July 20, 1934), 296; The Literary Digest, CXVIII (July 7, 1934), 13; and The Ave Maria, XL (New Series) (July 28, 1934), 119.

111 Oswald Garrison Villard, "Issues and Men: The Strange German Character," The Nation, CXXXIX (July 18, 1934), 63.

112 Edward T. Ramsdall, "Hitler—Adored and Hated," The Christian Century, LI (July 25, 1934), 971-973. Ramsdall was minister of the federated church in Capo, Michigan; he was in Berlin from January to June 1934.
These latest excesses in Germany recall the dictum of the pagan poet that whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad. At present, according to trustworthy correspondents, it is difficult for the mass of the people in Germany, deprived as they are of a free press, both religious and secular, to understand just what is going on in Berlin. In consequence, they are still unable to present any organized or effective protest against the creation of an omnipotent Nazi State. Although censorship of the cables, and to a certain extent of the mails, deprives us of knowledge necessary if a reliable judgment is to be formed, there is reason to believe that Hitler's power is not what it was three months ago. It is our belief that given the opportunity to understand the ultimate purpose of the groups which are playing the despot in Germany, the people will quickly bring this reign of terror to an end. But many a gloomy day may dawn in Germany before that opportunity comes. 113

A somewhat contrary view of German affairs was given in the August 29 Christian Century. In an early August report from his post in Geneva, Switzerland, the usually perceptive Elmer G. Homrighausen told of the "uncertainty and anxiety" in Germany. The Germans feel this tension, but they were helpless to do anything about it. The German individual continued to avoid politics; "he prefers to plod on in his daily round, submerging himself in his rich old culture and music." The country was waiting to see what Hitler would do next. His rule appeared to be "more firm than ever"; however, "many feel that all is not well in the inner councils of the state." Hitler had done nothing so far to

113 America, LI (August 25, 1934), 458. The same attitude was shown by Oswald Garrison Villard in "Issues and Men: Hitler's 'Me and Gott,'" The Nation, XXXIX (August 1, 1934), 119. He could not believe that "in the long run" the German people would stand for Hitler's activities—even though he had been highly critical of the German people just two weeks before.
solve the really grave state problems, but again many felt "as if
chaos and perhaps communism would come" if he should disappear
from the scene. The government had the German young people still
well in hand, but some of the older youth had already grown weary
of the Nazi propaganda line which lacked concrete results. Tak-
ing account of the overall situation in early August, Reverend
Hommighausen could not help being pessimistic.

The religious and intelligent German is caught in a ter-
rible dilemma. He dare not criticize; nor do criticism and
radical action belong to his nature. And he cannot orga-
nize his protest. He knows not what the future may bring.
He does not want war.114

The effect the June 30 purge had upon the power of Hitler
and the direction the dictatorship would ultimately take were al-
so points of concern for the journals. Contrasting views pre-
vailed, even between the two most renowned American liberal week-
lies, The Nation and The New Republic. In its initial response
to the Roehm Purge the July 11 Nation declared that the incident
would do the greatest damage so far to Hitler's cause: "At one
blow, it shows him to be a knight of the revolver and not divine-
ly inspired to lead by the nobility of his example and his teach-
ings." The regime had clearly cast its ballot for the conserva-
tive right, but it remained in a position with a doubtful future;
the economic problems had not been solved, and Hitler showed lit-
tle promise that he had the ability to do so. "It gives his big
business masters and the Junkers the weapon they need to turn

114 Elmer G. Hommighausen, "What of Germany Now?" The
Christian Century, LI (August 29, 1934), 1090-1092.
upon him." The army and General Blomberg still stood behind the dictator, but The Nation felt that the Chancellor would be more like their tool, with his position growing more precarious by the day. One week later, a second Nation editorial supported most of the original response, although this time it was admitted that "Hitler's position seems relatively secure at the moment." Some reflections on the future were also added.

With the S. A. reduced to a shadow of its former self, no group save the military leaders themselves will be in a position to challenge the authority of the government. But by casting his lot with the right, Hitler has irrevocably narrowed the basis of his support. This action may enable him to escape some of the inner contradictions of his regime, but it cannot allay the growing discontent of which the alleged conspiracy was a symptom. The reorganization of the Storm Troops can serve only to drive thousands of disillusioned Nazis into the ranks of the despised Marxists. Although the ranks of the Communists and Socialists have been enormously reduced by Nazi terror, recent reports from Germany indicate a marked growth in their underground activities, a development which is likely to be accentuated if the Nazis adopt a reactionary policy.115

The New Republic for July 11 took a much more cautious approach than The Nation, saying that "no one can estimate what a new constellation of political forces may bring." Nevertheless, one question had been answered. The purge had shown the Chancellor that he could rely on the bulk of the police, Nazi corps and army for support. The odds that either the monarchist or the disorganized workers' groups would attempt to challenge the regime in the face of such power were now very poor. One week later, The New Republic declared that Hitler "to a dangerous extent" had

115The Nation, CXXXIX (July 11, 1934), 32, and (July 18, 1934, 61-62.
become "the tool of the reactionaries." It believed that by cut-ting himself off from his storm troopers he had become the vir-tual "prisoner of the Reichswehr and their reactionary allies."

"Hitler's overthrow will not come as soon as many persons hope and expect; but it is likely to come more rapidly than any but extreme optimists believed a year ago." The ultimate result of the purge was that economic problems would remain unsolved be-cause the radical economic reorganization could never be taken against the industrialists. Any change in Germany's economic situation could "only be superficial and temporary."

The New Republic continued to doubt whether Hitler was his own master after hearing his speech before the Reichstag. "In the main, it demonstrated his sincerity as completely as it gave evidence of his gullibility, the dark and devious course of his thought, the lack of sound intelligence and reasoning power." General Hermann Goering and the industrialists apparently con-trolled the situation, and these forces, together with Hitler, had decided that the leftists of the National Socialist Party had to go. It was a Hitler-led rebellion against his Party's own principles. All aspects of Socialism and every aid for the wor-kers were now lost permanently. "The new fascism toward which Germany is moving will combine the evils of private initiative in industry and fascist totalitarianism without the mitigating fea-tures of either." 116

116 The New Republic, LXXIX (July 11, 1934), 222; (July 18, 1934), 251-252; and (July 25, 1934), 278-279.
Some similar remarks were found in the response of The Nation of July 25. In order to come to grips with the economic problems, a firm alliance with the industrialists was decided upon by the National Socialists. Unlike The New Republic, The Nation considered Hitler the senior partner of this pact, not under the thumb of any interests. The Nation's editors reaffirmed that the regime had abandoned its promises for the workers and the lower middle class; and they looked for the rigorous application of policies directly detrimental to these groups. Yet, The Nation felt that this move could very well prove to be a great boon for the working class, if it took advantage of it. "The feeling that it is grappling with an invincible foe is gone; it knows from experience that it can stand firm against the industrialists." "The reorganization of Germany's working class is about to begin," exclaimed the much too enthusiastic Nation, forgetting it was dealing with a totalitarian police state.117

The Catholic weekly America could not make up its mind about Hitler's position after June 30. In a July 14 editorial entitled "Germany Shocks the World," the Jesuit editors surmised that Hitler had profited by the purge, but America's response after hearing Hitler's Reichstag speech was that he seemed to be on the "defensive."118 Writing in the August 1934 Current History, Professor Sidney B. Fay prophesied that Hitler could very

117 *The Nation*, CXXXIX (July 25, 1934), 89-90.
118 *America*, LXI (July 14, 1934), 315, and (July 28, 1934), 382.
well improve his position if he decided to follow through on a trend of "moderation." Fay considered the rise of Rudolf Hess and his recent appointment as Minister Without Portfolio to be a major sign that moderation of overall policy would probably soon take place.\textsuperscript{119}

Several editors and writers, including those representing \textit{The Christian Century}, \textit{The Ave Maria}, \textit{The Living Age} and \textit{The Atlantic Monthly}, inaccurately perceived a much less potent or ominous Fuehrer after the events of June 30.\textsuperscript{120} Shattered were both the German people's belief in Hitler's infallibility and in the "sanctity of the fellowship of his followers." Hitler as Germany's spokesman was just about finished, and General Goering was now reportedly managing the Chancellor's affairs. It was clear to the Century that many Germans would welcome an old-fashioned military dictatorship and the restoration of order. "We look for the fall of Hitler," announced the editors of \textit{The Ave Maria} on July 28, while \textit{The Living Age} echoed the sentiments of \textit{The Christian Century} that a military dictatorship would very likely replace the Nazi dictatorship. In a confusing response,

\textsuperscript{119}Sidney B. Fay, "Nazi Against Nazi," \textit{Current History}, XL (August, 1934), 620, and "Germany After the Purge," (September, 1934), 742-743.

\textsuperscript{120}\textit{The Christian Century}, LI (July 11, 1934), 919-920, (July 18, 1934), 939, and Edward T. Ramsdell, "Hitler--Adored and Hated," (July 25, 1934), 971-973, 963; \textit{The Ave Maria}, XL (New Series) (July 28, 1934), 119; \textit{The Living Age}, CCXLVII (August, 1934), 471; and "Dornatis," "Will the Hohenzollerns Return?" \textit{The Atlantic Monthly}, CLIV (September, 1934), 377-381.
the British journalist "Dornatis" predicted that Adolf Hitler would no longer be able to convince a single German "of the wisdom and righteousness of his methods." He also speculated that President Hindenburg, Franz von Papen and Hermann Goering, along with the conservative forces and the Jews, were making progress toward restoring the Hohenzollern monarchy.

Spokesmen of two leading conservative journals, The Literary Digest and The Review of Reviews and World's Work concluded that Hitler was about to embark upon a middle-of-the-road policy of moderation, but they did not say whether the Chancellor would be stronger or weaker as a result. One of these authors, Roger Shaw of The Review of Reviews and World's Work, inserted the questionable opinion that the National Socialist leader, "in many respects," was a "facade" in office, behind which worked the man with the "big brain," Joseph Goebbels, the "organizer of victory and manipulator extraordinary of public sentiment."

Neither The Presbyterian Advance nor Denis Gwynn of The Sign would hazard a guess concerning Hitler's future role in German affairs. Both, however, made thought-provoking comments. Germany may yet be spared a civil war, said the Advance, "but

---


122 The Presbyterian Advance, XLIX (July 12, 1934), 4, and Denis Gwynn, "Europe Re-Arms," The Sign, XIV (September, 1934), 73-74.
even that might be better than some things which can happen under
the present dictatorship—apparently the dictatorship of ambi-
tion, unrestrained by moral standards." An astute assessment was
formulated by Gwynn in his September 1934 column.

The first shock caused by Hitler's lightning stroke
against his former colleagues, on June 30, has already
passed off. His personal statement to the Reichstag
leaves foreign observers quite unconvinced as to the
facts which he alleges. But in all countries there is
now a clear conviction that the new regime in Germany
cannot be judged by ordinary standards, and that things
are likely to happen again in Germany which could not happen
elsewhere. Criticism of current events in Germany by the
application of ordinary standards has, in consequence, large-
ly ceased. But it should be remembered that criticism of e-
vents in Italy by ordinary standards has also largely
ceased.

Three journals, The Nation, The Christian Century and
The New Republic, felt that one of the consequences of the Blood
Purge of June 30 would be a loss of prestige and respect for Nazi
Germany in international circles.123 On August 1, for example,
The New Republic concluded that the Nazi bloodbath had "opened
eyes that were willfully blind before," all over the world; it
pointed to this event as perhaps, a turning point within the cir-
cles of National Socialist apologists, many of whom "have now
turned in horror from the cold-blooded vengefulness of this sys-
tem."

In an article for the July 18 Nation, Oswald Garrison
Villard described how "The Strange German Character" would react

---

123 The Nation, XXXIX (July 11, 1934), 32; The Christian
Century, LI (July 25, 1934), 963; and The New Republic, LXXIX
(August 1, 1934), 303.
to unfavorable foreign response to the purge.

The odd German character will manifest itself anew by more of the unending bitter complaints that we have had ever since 1914, that the world does not understand Germany, that it is unjust to it, that it is so credulous as always to believe the worst of Germany. There will continue to be the same bewildered protests that the Germans are not accepted by the rest of the world at their own rating as the greatest and most cultured race in all the world, who, as Hitler has said, are a people divinely appointed to lead the human race to greater heights than have ever been achieved before.124

Bruce Bliven of The New Republic staff generally concurred with Villard's opinion. A war of revenge headed the agenda of foreign policy aims of all patriotic Germans, thus, according to Bliven, it made no difference who happened to control the German Government.125

As one surveys the response of the American journals of opinion to the German domestic affairs from April 1933 to July 1934, one notes in summary that certain tendencies developed before the Roehm Purge. While some journals throughout the period, particularly those with a conservative slant, and the few Catholic journals which exhibited interest in non-religious domestic events, thought that some good might come from the German dictatorship if it was given some time to become properly oriented, the majority of liberal and neutral observers felt that the re-

124Oswald Garrison Villard, "Issues and Men: The Strange German Character," The Nation, CXXXIX (July 18, 1934), 63.

125Bruce Bliven, "The Next War," The New Republic, LXXIX (July 18, 1934), 253. Bliven was one of the editors of this weekly.
gime would ultimately bring disaster to the German nation.

In the spring of 1933, soon after the passage of the Enabling Law, some major liberal secular and Protestant journals believed Hitler's position to be shaky; however, speculation that the Chancellor could be managed by forces outside the Nazi Party disappeared during the summer of 1933, as the German party system came to an end. Beginning in the summer of 1933, the liberal journals, in particular, mentioned bits of news about dissenting opinions being voiced and anti-Nazi opposition in the form of underground movements. Most periodicals and journalists obviously hoped something would develop to unseat Chancellor Hitler, but these hopes were based on nothing but rumors of rather feeble German attempts at opposition without specifying the details.

The idea that the majority of the German people supported their government, despite any immediate shortcomings, appeared more frequently in the journals as the summer months progressed. The liberal weeklies, The Nation and The New Republic, offered their readers the best coverage of the German domestic scene, while conservative, liberal and neutral journals published numerous first-hand accounts of German conditions during the late summer and autumn of 1933 and the months which followed. There were many differences in interpretation, but a significant consensus was that Hitler held tight control over the German state, and, in spite of difficulties, his regime would be long-lasting. Most of these observers in Germany seemed to be able to make more realistic assessments of the situation than the editors and columnists
who relied on indirect sources of information.

Perhaps as a rationalization some of the more conservative editors were reminding their readers that matters could be worse in Germany; however, Hitler had one factor in his favor—his anti-Communism, a cause which impressed the Catholic and some conservative journals. A certain number of conservative American journals and journalists could be expected to quietly support Hitler as long as he maintained his anti-Communist stand.

In discussing the moves being taken by the National Socialists in the domestic area during the fourteen months covered in this chapter, the American journalists, with the exception of some conservative spokesmen, seemed to realize that a totalitarian establishment was in the making, but they often failed to understand the full meaning of "totalitarian." Techniques used by the Nazis to consolidate the Reich received superficial response and were inadequately detailed.

Intra-party Nazi disputes in 1933 drew numerous comments, some astute, others less so. Nevertheless, the journalists can be credited with anticipating the 1934 break in the Nazi ranks. So spectacular and concrete an event as the Roehm purge naturally attracted a great deal of comment, much of it uncertain. The consensus was that Hitler's power slipped because of the purge and that he would turn toward a more moderate policy, in line with that of the industrialists and Junkers, now that his more radical supporters had been liquidated. While some journalists predicted that Hitler would be overthrown or be replaced, the attitude of
most American periodicals seems to have been one of wait-and-see.