The Unneutral Diplomacy of the Vatican During 1939 and 1940

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In this scholarly historical investigation, Dombrowski examines the early years of Eugenio Pacelli, particularly his years of service as Secretary of State to Pope Pius XI. His research dispels a number of falsehoods and distortions concerning the Pope’s attitude towards the Nazi Party in Germany.

BACKGROUND AND CHARACTER OF EUGENIO PACEILLI

Before Becoming Pope, Eugenio Pacelli had been Papal Secretary of State for nine years. Even after his election, though ably assisted by Cardinal Maglione, in many respects Pius XII was his own Secretary of State - a situation he formalized by appointing no successor to Maglione after the latter’s death in 1944. Consequently, Vatican diplomacy during World War II was determined to a great extent by the character and values of Eugenio Pacelli. Those who knew him well could almost predict what position the Vatican would take in any given situation.

His values and his outlook on life were largely formed between 1885 when, at the age of nine, he expressed a desire to become a priest, and 1918 when he was 42 years of age. By then he had behind him four years of experience in attempting to alleviate the tragedies of war. He had been in charge of the Vatican’s humanitarian programs dealing especially with prisoners of war and the families of war victims. One result of this experience was Pacelli’s abhorrence of war and his nearly fanatical determination to maintain peace - almost at any price. This position would later earn him the mistrust and hatred of belligerents on both sides, each suspecting him of secret sympathies with the other.

It is my thesis that this suspicion was in part justified and that during 1939-40 the Pope was not, in fact, impartial in his sympathies. He was, as this paper will demonstrate, pro-British and pro-Roosevelt, as well as strongly anti-Communist and anti-Nazi. This was at a time when Stalin and Hitler were allies. On the other hand, it would be difficult to maintain that he was not a Germanophile in the cultural sense. He repeatedly spoke of his love for Germany.

In light of the above, it ought not to be surprising that the Pope worked, in conjunction with the German anti-Hitler opposition, for the overthrow of the Nazi regime. In contrast to the long-range danger to Catholicism, Christianity and even religion that he saw in “Bolshevism,” he considered Nazism as a passing phase from which he expected the German nation soon enough to recover. As in the case of leading members of the German Opposition (e.g., the Kreisau Circle and the Beck-Goerdeler group) the Pope’s main focus was on post-war Europe, and the role that he felt Germany must continue to play in the balance of power and the containment of Communism.

Eugenio Pacelli was born in Rome on March 2, 1876. His family had for generations been strong partisans of the Papacy in internal Italian politics. His grandfather, Marcantonio Pacelli, moved from the family estate at Oranno...
into the city of Rome and eventually was put in charge of Vatican finances under Pope Gregory XVI. Under Pope Pius IX he became Undersecretary of the Interior. After the seizure of the papal states in 1870 (and until his death in 1902) Marcantonio’s main task was the editing of the semi-official Vatican newspaper *L’Osservatore Romano.*

It was under the pontificate of Leo XIII (1878-1903), which followed that of Pius IX, that young Eugenio Pacelli formed his basic outlook on life. In opposition to his father’s desire that Eugenio become a lawyer, he firmly decided on the priesthood.

It is likely that nothing had a greater intellectual influence on young Pacelli than Pope Leo’s famous social encyclical, Rerum Novarum, which was published in 1891 when Eugenio was 15 years of age. In marked contrast to the ideas of Karl Marx, the document stressed social peace and inter-class cooperation.

Father Pacelli was ordained in 1899 after five years of extremely rigorous seminary studies which greatly affected his health and especially his nervous system. He spent only two years in parish work, and that he did while continuing post-graduate studies. After graduating *Summa Cum Laude* in canon and civil law, he entered the papal diplomatic service, having already become fluent in German, French and English. By the age of 23 he taught ecclesiastical diplomacy at the Papal Academy. For the next 40 years, until he became Pope Pius XII at the age of 63, Pacelli was primarily a diplomatic bureaucrat. Nevertheless, in his earlier years he spent considerable time in religious work, especially as confessor and spiritual advisor at two institutions for girls in Rome.

Pacelli early in life developed an appreciation of English ways, having three times been sent to England as Papal representative between 1901 and 1914. He was invited to the United States in 1911 to teach canon law at Catholic University in Washington, DC, but Pius X and his Secretary of State, Cardinal Merry del Val, felt they could not spare him.

Pacelli was at the Vatican in 1914, at the outbreak of World War I, when Pius X exploded in a fit of fury at the Austrian ambassador who had asked for a papal blessing upon the Austro-Hungarian armies. The Pope is quoted as having said: “Get out of my sight, get out of my sight. I bless peace, not war.”

During the course of World War I Pacelli repeatedly witnessed the diplomatic failures of Pope Benedict XV to end the war. The papacy was thoroughly mistrusted by both sides. Italy had entered the conflict on the express condition that the Vatican would have no role whatsoever in the peace-making process (This was specified in the secret Treaty of London of April 26, 1915).

Pacelli was made Secretary of the Congregation of Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs to carry out “all humanitarian initiatives of the Holy See, particularly with regard to war prisoners.” In the nations of the major belligerents Pacelli appointed at least one priest per diocese to facilitate communications between prisoners of war and their families with specific instruction that “no distinction be made either of religion, nationality or language.” At Vatican initiative some 63,000 “war prisoners incapable of further military service” were exchanged through Pacelli’s efforts. Pope Benedict’s policy during the war was not to mention individual nations by name but to observe “the strictest and most absolute impartiality towards the different belligerent nations . . . denouncing all injustice on whatever side it has been committed.” On August 1, 1917, Pope Benedict, addressing all belligerent governments, suggested a number of “concrete and practical proposals” - drafted by Pacelli - as a means of ending the conflict. These proposals were accepted in principle by the Germans, but were promptly rejected by the Allies.

It was Pacelli, as Papal Nuncio, who hand-carried the Pope’s proposals to Kaiser Wilhelm II at Kreuznach on June 29, 1917. The Kaiser was favorably impressed by the “distinguished sympathetic appearance, the high intelligence, and the impeccable manners” of Eugenio Pacelli, “the prototype of a Roman prelate.” Pope Bene-
dict was embittered not only by the failure of his peace plan, and the totally futile additional year of warfare, but by what he called “the insidious and crafty campaign of calumny and hatred against Our person and Our work.”

At the end of World War I Nuncio Pacelli was posted to Munich. He was there in time to witness the abortive “Soviet Republic” in Munich in early 1919. He was the object of a machine-gun attack on the nunciature and of a warning from “the Communist high command” to leave town at once. This occurred during an assassination campaign directed at the local aristocracy. Pacelli found himself confronting an armed and angry “Red” mob which had broken into his residence and demanded food and money. After explaining that all extra food had already been distributed to the poor of Munich, Pacelli demanded: “This is not German land but the property of the Holy See. Under international law it is inviolable, I demand you leave at once.” The German revolutionaries did.

Having previously ministered to the physical and spiritual needs of Allied prisoners in German hands, by early 1919 Pacelli organized food relief for starving German children. Soon an appeal went out to Americans of German descent for help in relief efforts. As the Weimar Republic was launched, Pacelli became the Vatican’s first Nuncio to all of Germany, while remaining the nuncio to Bavaria.

A highly memorable occasion for Nuncio Pacelli was the visit from Nuncio Achilles Ratti (the future Pope Pius XI) in 1920, as the latter passed through Munich on his way to Rome to report to Pope Benedict on his observations in Poland. There Ratti had witnessed first the advance and then the retreat of the Bolshevik army, as it had attempted to capture Warsaw. As the two Nuncios compared notes on the behavior and attitudes of “Red” forces, they became increasingly confirmed in their attitude toward the “Red Peril,” an attitude which remained dominant during the future papacy of each of these two men.

Pius XI, on his accession to the Papal throne in December of 1922, commented on the weakness of the League of Nations, and nostalgically contrasted it with “that ‘true League of Nations’ which, in his opinion, medieval Christendom had been. His policy was to draw up concordats with as many individual nations as possible. Nuncio Pacelli managed, in August 1929, in spite of strong Protestant opposition, to draw up such an agreement with the Prussian government. In this endeavor he relied upon the support of Monsignor Ludwig Kaas, head of the Catholic Center party. Kaas was to play a key role during World War II as an intermediary between the anti-Nazi opposition and Pope Pius XII.

The high point of the papal reign of Pius XI was perhaps the conclusion of the Lateran Treaty of February, 1929, with the Italian Government. A key negotiator in that process was Francesco Pacelli, Eugenio’s brother. While settling all major outstanding disputes between the Vatican and the Italian State, including compensation for the seizure of Vatican territory in 1870, the treaty did place some serious restrictions on future papal diplomacy: The Vatican obligated itself to “remain extraneous to all temporal disputes between nations, and to international congresses convoked for the settlement of such disputes, unless the contending parties make a joint appeal to its mission of peace.” This clause was often observed in the breach by having recourse to another clause by which the Vatican claimed “the right in every case to exercise its moral and spiritual power.”

In view of post-World War II accusations and innuendoes, an interesting aspect of Nuncio Pacelli’s work in Germany during the 1920’s was his attitude toward the rising Nazi movement. Out of forty-four public pronouncements made during his time in Germany, no fewer than forty were open or indirect attacks on Nazi philosophy, policy or activity. On August 30, 1927, he characterized the relationship between the Church and Nazism as “the conflict between Christ and antichrist.” His three last addresses were concerned with the struggle over the souls of Germany’s youth. A surprising ally in the fight against Nazism was the conservative, nationalist and Protestant President, Paul von Hindenburg, who praised “the noble conception Archbishop Pacelli had of his office, his wise objectivity, his inflexible sense of justice, his generous humanity, and his great love for his neighbor.”

Also interesting in light of later developments was the evaluation of Edgar Vincent Viscount D’Abernon, the British Ambassador, of Nuncio Pacelli: “In knowledge of German and European affairs and in diplomatic astuteness the Nuncio was without an equal.”
Pacelli became a cardinal in December, 1929, with the understanding that he would soon replace as Secretary of State the aging Cardinal Gaspari, who then retired in February, 1930. For all practical purposes, Eugenio Pacelli remained the Vatican's chief foreign policy maker from that date until his death in 1958. For much of his own reign he was ably assisted by Cardinal Maglione and Cardinal Montini (Pope Paul VI), the latter in the capacity of Undersecretary of State.

Cardinal Pacelli's major achievements during the nine years preceding his elevation to the papacy were his contributions to various encyclicals and pronouncements of Pope Pius XI. Prominent among these were the condemnations of “Communist” persecutions of the Church in Russia, Mexico, and Spain.

It is ironic that while Pope Pius XI is usually stereotyped as being strongly anti-Nazi for his encyclical Mit Brennender Sorge, Pius XII is often characterized as having been soft on Nazism. In fact, when Pius XI was thanked by three German bishops for so plainly and outspokenly condemning Nazism, he indicated that the thanks were due to Cardinal Pacelli. It was the latter who, among other things, strengthened the title from Mit Grosser Sorge (With Great Anxiety) to its final title, meaning “With Burning Anxiety.”

It is beyond serious historical dispute that both men were vehemently anti-Nazi and at least as strongly anti-Communist, seeing in both a challenge to Christianity. Both totalitarian ideologies were unequivocally condemned in two successive encyclicals published in March 1937. The first was the above-mentioned and the second, entitled Divini Redemptoris, was aimed at Communism. They were both the products of close collaboration between Pope Pius XI and Secretary of State Pacelli.

The relationship between Pope Pius XI and his Secretary of State was especially close toward the end of the former's reign. Pius XI made no secret of his admiration for his highly intellectual subordinate and repeatedly made clear that he had no doubt as to who should be his own successor: “Our Secretary of State works a great deal, he works well, he works quickly.... He will make a fine Pope!” This may explain why Pius XII was elected in one of the shortest conclaves in history.

In contrast, the next reign demonstrated how adaptable Vatican organization is to the personality of the occupant of the Chair of St. Peter. Generally speaking, the Vatican Secretary of State has a much wider field of action than, for example, the American Secretary of State or the British Foreign Minister. The first mentioned has to concern himself with doctrinal matters, promotions of ecclesiastical dignitaries throughout the world, public relations, the supervision of the Vatican bureaucracy, and disciplinary matters, in addition to whatever role the reigning Pope may assign to him in the diplomatic field. But suddenly, with the election of Pius XII, the role of Secretary of State, when touching upon foreign policy, was reduced from chief shaper of policy and chief executive officer to that of an assistant with very specifically defined tasks working under close supervision.

EXAMPLES OF PARTIALITY IN VATICAN RELATIONS WITH GERMANY, POLAND, BRITAIN, AND THE UNITED STATES

Of all the major powers, only Germany did not send a special representative to the coronation of Pius XII. The election of Cardinal Pacelli is not accepted with favor in Germany because he was always opposed to National Socialism and practically determined the policies of the Vatican under his predecessor.

The above item appeared in the Berlin Morgenpost on March 3, 1939, the day following the election of Pope Pius XII. It was not news to well informed Nazi officials that in Eugenio Pacelli they had a determined and dangerous enemy. Already in 1933, within two months after Hitler's accession to power, Cardinal Pacelli, as Papal Secretary of State, angrily criticized the German bishops for having submitted so readily and so rapidly to Hitler withdrawing spiritual penalties for membership in Nazi organizations.

After the conclusion of the 1933 Reichskonkordat, Pacelli confided to a British diplomat stationed in Rome his “disgust and abhorrence” of Nazi methods, deploring specifically “their persecution of Jews ... [and] their reign of terror...” Over the next six years, the Cardinal
was responsible for fifty-five diplomatic notes of protest from the Vatican, “the first ... on April 1, 1933, against the anti-Jewish boycott, and the ninth, on September 9, 1933, asking for protection of Jews converted to Catholicism. . . .” In January 1934, he took official note that in some places in Germany the persecution of the Catholic Church was now more severe than during the worst phases of Bismarck’s Kulturkampf.34

Addressing an international audience of a quarter of a million in Lourdes, France, in 1935, Pacelli called Nazi ideologues “miserable plagiarizers . . . possessed by the superstition of race and blood.” Two years later, in Paris, he accused the Nazis of “idolatry of race.” Goebbels’ idea of revenge was to assert that Pius XI was “a half-Jew whose mother had been a Dutch Jewess.” Later he asserted that Cardinal Pacelli was “a full Jew.” On the other hand, at about the same time learned German professors at Tubingen and elsewhere claimed to have discovered that Jesus had a Persian mother and a German soldier for a father.35

When, in May 1937, Hitler’s ambassador at the Vatican demanded an apology for anti-Nazi remarks made by Cardinal Mundelein of Chicago, Pacelli told him: “The German government itself bears the responsibility . . .” and advised Pius XI to stand firm, since giving in “would be an act of weakness which could only make the leaders of National Socialism still more arrogant, especially Hitler who thinks in his self-delusion that the entire world should knuckle under to him.”36

Not only was Pacelli responsible for many of the anti-Nazi policies of Pius XI, but:

The election of Pius XII, despite their clumsy display of indifference, was in reality a direct blow to the Nazis, who regarded him as responsible in no small degree for the intransigence of the Catholics of western Europe, the embarrassing resistance in Germany itself of Catholic and non-Catholic religious leaders and the increasing sympathy for the cause of the democracies.37

German security and intelligence agencies became virtually hysterical at the news of Pacelli’s election as Pope. And even General Ludendorff, a one-time Hitler supporter and extreme nationalist, wrote that “... Pacelli was the live spirit which stood behind all the anti-German activities of Rome’s policy ...[and that] Pacelli [was] active in reconciling England and Italy ... against Germany ... to shatter the Rome Berlin axis.”38

President Roosevelt, on the other hand cabled: “With great joy I learned of your election to the papacy. I recall with pleasure our last conversation during your visit to the U.S.A.” In France and England both the governments and the press rejoiced at Pacelli’s election. He even received the applause of the official organ of the French Communist Party, L’Humanité, which on March 3, 1939, called him “an adversary of the racial standpoint and a friend of freedom of conscience and human dignity.” Equally delighted were the French Socialists. The Zionist Jewish Community Council of Jerusalem cabled congratulations. On the other hand, Hitler’s new ambassador to the Vatican informed him: “I am actually leaving for enemy country.”39

Both sides, however, had failed to consider that Pacelli might be first and foremost a diplomat determined to preserve peace.40 As soon as Pacelli became Pope the Osservatore Romano, the Vatican’s semi-official newspaper, toned down its campaign against Nazism, as did the Vatican Radio.42 According to his biographers, Oscar Halecki and James Murray Jr., Pius XII was:

seeking to make increasingly clear the position of the Holy See as a “supra-national” force, in the hope that before the final crisis of war was reached it might serve as a peacemaker or at least as a medium of communication between the belligerents.43

According to Owen Chadwick, professor of ecclesiastical history at Cambridge:

Simple men and women from all over Europe, seeing war coming and their governments helpless to prevent it, looked to the Pope as a desperate hope. The condition for successful activity was a reputation for fair-mindedness, genuine concern as a Christian pastor, and above all neutrality. . . . But to achieve a neutral status ... the cost was public silence, except in generalities. . . . Diplomatic activity must be behind the scenes... Public condemnation ... was never going to deter the men now in power in Germany; and, therefore, his best hope lay in the part of a mediator, an agent sufficiently respected by both sides to bring angry and distressed men to talk across a table.44

As it became clear to Pius that Germany was determined to invade Poland and resolve its dispute over
Danzig and the Corridor on German terms by force, he attempted to steer the Polish government in the direction of negotiations. Britain and France, even though they had neither the means nor the intention of offering significant military help, urged the Poles to stand firm and concede nothing. After the conclusion of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact in August 1939, it was obvious that British and French support “became almost useless to Poland.”

Pius wanted to call a five-power conference of Britain, France, Poland, Italy and Germany as a last desperate attempt to prevent war, but his secretary, Monsignor Tardini:

protested the danger: that the Pope would be accused of playing Hitler’s game, letting him swallow ... Danzig and allowing him to begin all over again next spring; that the Vatican will be tarnished with the reputation that it proposed a second Munich, and that an aggressor will get what he wants under the auspices of the Holy See; and that the western powers might accuse the Pope of being in Mussolini’s pocket.

In any case, by May 23, 1939, Ribbentrop “requested him to refrain from making the proposed appeal.” As no better remedy seemed available, on August 30, 1939, the Vatican Secretary of State, Maglione, suggested to the Polish Government that it give up Danzig and indicate that it was prepared to talk about Germany’s other demands. Even if such appeasement would have satisfied Hitler for the time being, it seems that the Vatican did not consider the intensity of Polish nationalism, which made such a solution unthinkable.

For a long time the Vatican counted on Mussolini’s influence with Hitler and on the Vatican’s influence on the Italian Foreign Minister (and Mussolini’s son-in-law), Count Ciano, to prevent Hitler’s attack on Poland and, later, on the countries of Western Europe. Pius overestimated Mussolini’s influence on Hitler and Count Ciano’s on Italian foreign policy. He also, possibly, did not calculate on deliberate lies told by all three men. One example was Hitler’s promise to Mussolini (via Ribbentrop and Ciano) in May 1939 that there would be no war for at least three years. Another was Mussolini’s statement to Italo Balbo, his Fascist colleague of many years, on June 2, 1940, that Italy would not enter the war. Likewise, various statements of Count Ciano in his Diaries and elsewhere seem irreconcilable with one another. The simplest, if not the most charitable, explanation is that Pius often forgot that he was dealing with men who had fewer compunctions than he about untruthfulness.

The Pope’s last public appeal for peace was a broadcast on August 24, 1939, in which he stated:

It is by force of reason and not by force of arms that justice makes progress. Empires which are not founded on justice are not blessed by God. Statesmanship emancipated from morality betrays those very ones who would have it so. The danger is imminent but there is yet time. Nothing is lost with peace: all may be lost with war. Let men return to mutual understandings. Let them begin negotiations anew. Let them confer with goodwill and with respect for reciprocal rights....

The Foreign Ministers of Belgium and the Netherlands indicated that their respective sovereigns would mediate “if they were requested to do so, but would not take the initiative themselves.” This information was sent by the Papal Nuncio in Berlin, Cesare Orsenigo, to the Vatican on August 29, 1939.

The Polish Ambassador expressed his enthusiastic response to the Pope’s call for peace. He also expressed the hope that if Poland were to be attacked, Pius “would declare on which side justice and moral principles rest.” He also mentioned that as of August 26th, general mobilization of the Polish armed forces had not yet taken place.

One indication of Papal behind-the-scenes alignment with the anti-Nazi powers appears in a postscript attached to a Vatican internal document describing possible diplomatic moves of the Vatican, dated August 30, 1939. After going over all the options and their possible consequences, Monsignor Tardini informed Secretary of State Maglione: “It would be advisable in any case to keep Great Britain informed about the Holy See’s steps.” A footnote on that page of the Vatican’s published documents states, “This was done.”

On August 31, 1939, Pius had read out a diplomatic message to several ambassadors, in which he:

in the name of God ... begs the Governments of Germany and Poland to do their utmost to avoid every incident....He begs the Governments of Great Britain, France and Italy to support his request.
Still, according to Halecki and Murray, the Vatican “addressed both nations in the same terms,” in spite of knowing that the danger of war “could come only from the German side.”\textsuperscript{560} To the contrary, proof that the Vatican both recognized and publicly named the aggressor is contained in the issue of the \textit{Osservatore Romano} for September 2, 1939, in which the following statement appears: “Nazi aggression knew neither delay, ultimatum nor declaration of war.”\textsuperscript{561}

By that date, the Vatican had already been informed through its Nuncio to Italy that Italy would not support Hitler’s war against Poland and that “Hitler did not believe in Britain’s and France’s intervention but that he anticipated that he would defeat Poland in three weeks.”\textsuperscript{562}

Unlike most other sources of this period, Vatican documents indicate the extent to which a feeling of religious solidarity influenced foreign policy in the early stages of World War II. For example, on September 3, the Papal Nuncio in Budapest wrote to inform the Vatican that Hungary would not support the Nazi invasion of Poland, and that the Hungarian foreign minister had approvingly quoted Mussolini as having said: “Italy ... is a Catholic country and would feel distressed to have to fight alongside the new pagans against a Catholic State. Italy is united for sentimental reasons with two European nations, Hungary and Poland.” (This conversation had taken place in the presence of Count Ciano, who mentioned that Hitler had promised to maintain peace for three years.)\textsuperscript{563} If this was the position of Catholic nations, how much more was it the Vatican’s view.

An indication of papal support for the Polish cause came on September 21, when the Polish Primate, Cardinal Hlond, reached the Vatican. He was immediately received by Pius and given access to Vatican Radio to broadcast to the world his description of German aggression and atrocities. Nine days later, Pius addressed a large group of Polish exiles in which he made reference to Poland’s civilian victims of the war. At the same time he attempted, through Mussolini, to put pressure on Hitler to restore Polish sovereignty.\textsuperscript{564}

On October 20, 1939, Pius issued his first encyclical as Pope, \textit{Summi Pontificatus}. In it he stated:

raises a piteous dirge over a nation such as Our dear Poland, which for its fidelity to the Church, for its services in the defense of Christian civilization . . . has a right to the generous and brotherly sympathy of the whole world...\textsuperscript{565}

The encyclical was ordered to be read in all Catholic churches on October 29, 1939.\textsuperscript{566} Hitler’s response was an ever increasing brutality toward Poland’s civilian population, especially the clergy, intellectuals and Jews, who by Nazi actions, if not stated policy, seemed doomed to extermination. The Vatican’s reaction was to describe in detail German atrocities in Poland over Vatican Radio.\textsuperscript{567}

According to Derek Holmes:

Reports on the Church in Poland were broadcast as early as January, 1940, on the instructions of the Pope himself. ...Cardinal Hlond . . . submitted a detailed report on the persecution of the Poles and the Pope ordered that the facts should be broadcast on the Vatican Radio. On 22 January [1940] a broadcast claimed that Poland was in a state of terror. ... A broadcast in English to North America described the deportation of Jews...\textsuperscript{568}

Before the end of January, 1940, both the Manchester Guardian and the New York Times ran enthusiastic editorials about Vatican Radio. The latter stated: “Vatican City radio station made two broadcasts today adding many details to the atrocities that supposedly are being committed in German-occupied Poland....” A strong German protest to the Vatican was accompanied by threats of reprisals and as a result “broadcasts on Poland in this form were never carried again.”\textsuperscript{569}

Whereas it would be difficult to counter the implied claim of Guenter Lewy that German bishops felt more strongly about being German than about being Roman Catholic, it seems there was only one bishop, Army Chaplain Rarkowski, who supported the Nazis.\textsuperscript{570} Here too Vatican Radio was a useful tool for sending the errant bishop a direct message in September 1940:

If the army bishop has read or heard what the Head of his Church has repeatedly and unequivocally said about the injustice done to Poland, he must be aware of the discrepancy between his position and that of the Holy See. Many Catholics are convinced that Hitler’s war is not a just war
The German Foreign Office reacted by protesting to the Vatican. Nevertheless, Vatican Radio continued to criticize Nazi literature and condemn Nazi racist theories.

It was only in April 1941 that Pius ordered the broadcasts about religious persecution in Germany stopped. This was because the British government had gone too far in the toleration of a secret transmitter in London, broadcasting Black Propaganda, claiming to be Vatican Radio.

The British Foreign Office reaction was vehement and bitter, in sharp departure from the very cordial relationship maintained with the Vatican during all of the previous two years:

His Majesty's Government have learned with astonishment, concern and deep distress that, toward the end of April, the Vatican Radio abruptly suspended all reference to Germany, and all mention of German measures against the Church and the lying claims of German propaganda. This sudden silence . . . can only be attributed to successful pressure on the Vatican by the German authorities, and His Majesty's Government cannot but regard the decision of the Vatican to yield ... as highly regrettable and inconsistent with the best interests of the Holy See and the Catholic Church.... There can be no doubt that, with the help of the United States . . . the Christian ideal [will] triumph over pagan brutality.... What then will be the feeling of the Catholics of the world if it may be said of their Church that, after at first standing courageously against Nazi paganism, it subsequently consented, by surrender and silence, to discredit the principles on which it is based and by which it lives?

The Vatican replied that the decision had been the Pope's, "and was not the result of any agreement with the Germans. Furthermore, Catholics in occupied countries had been made to suffer as a result of serious distortions of the original broadcasts." Among those who disagreed with the tone and tenor of the British Foreign Office's official protest was Sir Alec Randall:

Relations between the Vatican and Great Britain were especially delicate after June 10, 1940, when Mussolini formally entered the war to partake of the carcass of defeated France. Not only communications with the outside world, but the very existence of the Vatican was dependent on Italian conscientiousness in observing the Lateran Treaty, which Mussolini could have abrogated unilaterally at any moment. The Vatican could hardly demand its rights as a sovereign neutral state, based on this treaty, if it were itself not observing the same treaty, at least on the formal level.

Thus Pius had no choice in maintaining official silence on many matters, while giving numerous indications informally and unofficially to the victims of the Axis as to where Vatican sentiments lay. He could not afford to leave himself open to the accusation of being a propaganda arm of the Allies, while Mussolini was formally at war with those powers.

Nevertheless, the Vatican did not accept the situation when a Roman Catholic chaplain, serving with the Italian armed forces, announced:

A crucial question confronting Britain, the United States and the Vatican throughout 1940 was the question of what attitude Britain should take toward Hitler's government. In the British Isles the will to fight was far from universal. Pacifist and pro-German views were far more widespread than it was politic to admit after the war was over.
Questions of morality and ideology aside, from a pragmatic point of view it was obvious that Hitler, at that time, had a preponderance of military might, manpower and resources. Military morale in the German armed forces was much higher than that among the prospective victims.78

The United States Ambassador to Britain, Joseph Kennedy, thought that Britain would not have a chance in a full-scale armed showdown.79 Coming to terms with Hitler seemed like the only realistic solution to many persons having no sympathies with anything Hitler represented. According to Owen Chadwick:

Germany had won, and the French sued for peace. What work now for a peacemaker? ... Could further bloodshed be prevented? Could an invasion of England be averted, with all its consequences of horror? Tardini and Maglione thought that the Pope might be able to help. Pius XII suggested to the governments of Germany, Italy and England that he should publicly appeal to them to make peace. . . . Hitler was himself putting out peace-feelers towards England... The American minister in Belgium (Cudahy) asked the Pope to persuade the British not to rule out these overtures of Hitler. Cudahy made it plain to Montini that he believed England incapable of resisting German invasion.80

That the United States and the Vatican were now, in 1940, coordinated in their foreign policy was no coincidence. Eugenio Pacelli had met and taken a liking to President Roosevelt in November 1936 at Hyde Park.

Cardinal Pacelli was then on a 16,000-mile tour of the United States.81 According to Vatican sources, the Cardinal discussed with the President the threat of Nazism to Europe. Both were also concerned with finding a way to establish closer relationships between the Vatican and the United States. As Pacelli left for Europe the following day he stated:

I have enjoyed all I have seen and done in America. I am leaving America with gratitude in my heart ... and with a prayer that Almighty God may contin-

Aware of the strong opposition to United States Government “recognition” of the Vatican, President Roosevelt came up with the idea of a “personal representative of the President.” Having sounded out Apostolic Delegate Cicognani in Washington, Roosevelt asked a retired Episcopalian businessman, Myron Taylor,-to go to the Vatican. Taylor had for years resided in Italy, had been, since April 1938, a presidential representative dealing with political refugees, and was personally acquainted with Eugenio Pacelli.83

Shortly before Christmas, 1939, Roosevelt wrote to Pius: It is

... my thought ... that we encourage a closer association between those in every part of the world - those in religion and those in government - who have a common purpose.... It would give me great satisfaction to send to You my personal representative in order that our parallel endeavors for peace and the alleviation of suffering may be assisted.... I trust, therefore, that all of the churches of the world which believe in a common God will throw the great weight of their influence into this great cause.

To you, whom I have the privilege of calling a good friend and an old friend, I send my respectful greetings...84

To soften the impact of the reestablishment of relations broken since 1868, Roosevelt sent letters of greetings to the President of the Federal Council of Churches, and to the President of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, with an “invitation to call on him from time to time to discuss with him the problems arising from present social conditions.”85

Pius was overjoyed, referring to Roosevelt as “the eminent head of a great and powerful nation” and to the offer as “this noble and generous act” of President Roosevelt. He was especially pleased by the choice of
Myron Taylor and considered the latter’s mission as a contribution to the “defense against the chilling breath of aggressive and deadly godless and anti-Christian tendencies ... that threaten to dry up the fountainhead whence civilization has come. ... Taylor was instructed to discuss with the Pope, among other things, “reduction of armament...”... [and] every possibility for an early end of hostilities.”

In practical matters one of the first requests of the American President transmitted by Myron Taylor had to do with “the activity of Father Coughlin and his violent broadcasts and the misgivings caused by the excitable ‘radio priest’.” Taylor also transmitted a memorandum from Roosevelt “concerning an anti-Jewish movement in the towns of Brooklyn, Baltimore and Detroit ... supported by Catholics in those cities. ...”

Many of these “anti-Jewish” manifestations were the result of a nation-wide propaganda campaign of the “America First” movement designed to keep the United States out of the war in Europe. At least partly because of public statements made by Father Coughlin and others associated with the movement, “Jews” were among those considered responsible for increasing American involvement in the conflict.

Pius XII did everything possible to keep the conflict from spreading in Europe - and especially to keep Italy non-belligerent. On the other hand, there seems to have been no encouragement whatsoever on the part of the Vatican toward American neutrality. On the contrary, when Father Coughlin was eventually silenced, after nine years of isolationist broadcasts, it was done “under penalty of defrockment” by his ecclesiastical superior, Archbishop Mooney of Detroit. This took place on May 1, 1942, after “Mooney consulted with the Vatican....”

Part of the reason for Vatican partiality toward Britain, the United States and the countries of Europe overrun by German and Russian armies in 1939 and 1940 would seem to have been the sharing of a common system of values. In spite of differences of doctrine and emphasis between Catholic and Protestant countries they discovered they had much in common when faced with the threat of totalitarian rule by powers to whom the State was both the source of values and the definer of the role and purpose of the individual. At least in the early stages of the war, when Hitler and Stalin were on the same side, Britain and its allies, both formal and informal, seemed to Pius XII as champions of the core values of Western Civilization, such as the primary role and dignity of the individual, the limitation of State authority, the brotherhood of Man under the fatherhood of God, the sanctity of traditions, respect for the family, the dominance of spiritual over material values, opposition to the notion that might makes right, and respect for treaties. All these values were seemingly threatened by both German Nazism and Soviet Communism. If Pius XII inclined toward Britain, France, the Low Countries, the United States and all the actual or potential victims of aggression, it would seem that on the basis of his own values, he had no other choice. However, once Nazi Germany invaded Communist Russia then, it would seem, it was an entirely new ball game. Then Pius would have more reason to be truly neutral. [But that theme is beyond the chronological scope of this thesis.]

During World War II, the Vatican was in a peculiarly delicate and precarious position in relation to the states involved in the conflict. On the one hand, according to international law, it was a sovereign state, among the states involved in the conflict. On the one hand, according to international law, it was a sovereign state with all the corresponding duties and expectations, but it did not have the means of carrying these out. It could not, for example, militarily defend its territory, nor assert its rights. It had to depend purely on moral force; and such force is effective only when dealing with other entities which share the same ethical framework. In other words, the Vatican had neither leverage nor even a common language when dealing with Nazi or Soviet Power. (“How many divisions has the Pope?” quipped Stalin.)

On the other hand, the Vatican is only secondarily a state, among national territorial entities. It is primarily the headquarters of a spiritual community of believers scattered throughout the world, and especially within the territories of often mutually belligerent nations. As the head and spokesman of this spiritual community the Pope may not take refuge in diplomatic evasiveness when faced with moral issues. He is expected to make clear pronouncements which are to serve as guidelines for action among those of his followers who are looking for direction. Anything less is bound to be seen as a dereliction of duty. The contradiction between this expectation and the means available to the head of a principality of a hundred acres surrounded by a hostile state ready to retaliate for any indication of breach of neutrality must be readily apparent. It is hard to escape the conclusion that Pius was faced with an inescapable dilemma in his dealings with the Axis Powers. From this perspective,
the policies he followed throughout 1939 and 1940 seem more to be admired than censured, especially in his dealings with the Italian Government.

VATICAN ATTEMPTS TO KEEP ITALY NEUTRAL

Within three days of the papal coronation of Pius XII, Hitler, on March 15, 1939, all but made World War II inevitable by militarily invading and annexing Bohemia and Moravia, in complete violation of his written pledge at Munich half a year previously. Thus the task of Pius XII was cut out for him from the very beginning of his reign.

Aside from combating the “errors” of Communism and Nazism, stopping the war and alleviating the suffering caused by it, the goal closest to Pius’ heart during 1939 and the first half of 1940 was to keep Italy neutral.

Those who wanted to see him denounce the regimes of

Hitler and Mussolini more openly and more immediately than his predecessor forgot that his overriding aim was, by avoiding openly taking sides... to reach a position from which he might hope to be able to help to negotiate a just settlement.... He concentrated chiefly, now, upon striving to keep Mussolini from joining in; in this endeavor he undoubtedly had the support of most of the Italian people.90

Already on August 29, 1939, Pius sent a Fr. Tacchi Venturi “in his name to Mussolini to exhort him to do the utmost for the preservation of peace and, at least, to keep Italy out of the conflict.” Among other things, Fr. Venturi was to tell the Italian dictator that “the Holy Father was very pleased about his efforts for keeping peace.” Mussolini immediately received the papal messenger and indicated his pleasure at the Pope’s gesture. “He reaffirmed that it was necessary to work for peace, observing also that a war could very be the end of the present civilization.”902 According to Fr. Venturi’s account:

... I did not forget the point regarding Italy’s neutrality... [which] the Holy Father wanted me to bring to the attention of the Head of Government. But I was happily anticipated by Signor Mussolini himself who, while proclaiming a universal war for Danzig to be a criminal act, made me clearly understand that Italy would look after her own interests by keeping out of the fight. At this point I did not fail to say that should it be impossible to prevent the conflict, His Holiness recommended for love of the country to keep Italy neutral. . . .93

On September 1, 1939, the day of Hitler’s invasion of Poland, the British Minister at the Vatican called on Cardinal Maglione to inform him “that the House of Commons would be in session today and, in all probability, the declaration of war against Germany would be announced.” Italy having proclaimed its neutrality, as Maglione had predicted, he suggested that it would not be advisable for the British Government to incite Italy or get her involved. “He fully agreed and mentioned that the Ambassador to the Quirinal had already spoken in this sense to London.” In taking leave the British Minister took the opportunity to acknowledge the “admirable work of conciliation” which the Vatican had done.94

On the same day, the Nuncio to Italy informed the Vatican of the anxiety of Count Ciano, Italian Foreign Minister, and that of the United States Ambassador, Phillips, who “had been agitated the entire night...” Ambassador Phillips was confident that Italy would remain neutral in the conflict between Germany and Poland. In confidence he assured the Vatican that “later on, Italy would join Britain and France... as a consequence of a future ultimatum by Britain and France to Italy.”95

Within a few days Italian neutrality was no longer such a certainty. According to Count Ciano: “The news of the first German successes against Poland has reawakened the Duce’s bellicose spirits...” Fr. Venturi was again sent by Pius “to see Mussolini and to congratulate him... for all he has done for peace...”96

Relations between Italy and Germany were at a low ebb. Cardinal Maglione wrote:

It seems that Hitler has written to Mussolini to obtain Italy’s military assistance pointing out to him that the fall of Nazism in Germany meant the end of Fascism in Italy. In Berlin, they speak openly of the new Italian treason. The relations between the Italian Embassy and the Chancellery have become cold.... Ambassador Attolico has announced his intention of going on leave, as at present he has nothing to do in Berlin.97
On his next visit the papal messenger, Fr. Venturi, was assured by Count Ciano, in the name of Mussolini, that Italy would remain firmly neutral in the Polish War, which Mussolini expected to be over in a few weeks.  

Likewise, on September 11, 1939, the Nuncio in Paris assured the French Foreign Minister that the Vatican was doing all it could to assure Italian neutrality, “and that the Holy Father considered it very important that good relations existed between France and Italy.” The Nuncio also informed the French Government that “Hungary also wishes to remain neutral and her Minister here would like this to be known.”

While doing everything possible to limit the war, Pius seemed to have a premonition of what would eventually follow. For example, in mid-September, in a letter to the Belgian Ambassador, Pius conveyed thanks to King Leopold for his efforts to prevent the outbreak of war, but admitted:

We see with deep sorrow the disaster daily approaching which ... would follow the abandonment of the principle of negotiations.... We have foreseen such a calamity right from the first day of Our Pontificate.... We raise Our prayers to God ... in order that he may shorten the day of trial and open to the peoples, threatened with unspeakable sufferings, new roads toward peace, before the fire now raging turns into a universal conflagration. ...

As the Vatican was working to contain the conflict, a surprising request came from the Latvian Foreign Minister, asking the Pope to take the initiative in uniting Europe’s neutral countries - specifically excluding Italy and Russia, for the purpose of “more effective resistance to efforts to bring them into conflict.” Specifically mentioned were Holland and Belgium, as well as the Balkan, Baltic and Scandinavian countries. There is no indication of anything resulting from this request.

The Nuncio to Italy visited Foreign Minister Count Ciano again on September 28 to thank him for his efforts in favor of peace and to express the Pope’s hope “that he would continue to do everything possible for such a noble purpose.” During the same visit, after Count Ciano had to leave because of an urgent call, the military commander informed the Nuncio: “I can tell you in confidence that we cannot wage war because we have nothing and because the Italian people do not want it.” He then expressed his own anxiety about the expansionist aims of

the Soviet Union and Germany. It is an anti-Christian movement against our culture; we must go back to the barbaric invasions to find a historical comparison. In the meantime, Poland, a Catholic State, is finished; unfortunately it was badly advised when it accepted war.

In spite of the Vatican’s desperate efforts to remain on good terms with Mussolini’s government and to use its influence to maintain Italy’s policy of neutrality, Pius, in his first encyclical, had some harsh things to say about the basic principles on which Mussolini’s (as well as Hitler’s and Stalin’s) state was founded. The Encyclical Summi Pontificatus of October 20, 1939, included the following:

One may hope that this hour of direst need may bring a change of outlook and sentiment to those many who till now have walked with blind faith along the path of popular modern errors.... From the immense vortex of error and anti-Christian movements there has come forth a crop of such poignant disaster as to constitute a condemnation....

The idea which credits the State with unlimited authority is not simply an error harmful to the internal life of nations ... but likewise it injures the relations between peoples, for it breaks the unity of supra-national society, robs the law of nations of its foundation and vigour....

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Treaties, in this case even if founded on justice, would not be considered as a basis for durable understandings, but only fleeting stopping points....

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In this way, natural order would be destroyed and there would be seen dug between different peoples and nations trenches of division impossible to refill.

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No ... safety does not come ... from the sword which ... does not create peace. Forces which are to renew the face of the earth.... must rest no longer on the quicksands of changeable and ephemeral standards that depend only on the selfish interests of groups and individuals. No, they must rest on ... the solid rock of natural law and of divine revelation.

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We considered it a duty inseparable from Our apostolic office . . . to try every means to spare mankind ... the horrors of a world conflagration, even at the risk of having Our intentions and Our aims misunderstood.

***

We have full confidence that all Our sons, especially those who are not being tried by the scourge of war, will be mindful in imitation of the Divine Samaritan of all those who as victims of

Pius took advantage of the occasion of presentation of credentials of the Italian Ambassador to the Vatican, on December 7, to deliver a brief lecture summarizing the main points of the encyclical presumably on the assumption that the Italian head of state had not read it or perhaps thought it did not apply to Italy. The final part of the papal message made reference to peace:

We are led to hope that Our further endeavors for such a high aim [peace in justice] will always find response in the courageous, strong and industrious Italian people who by the wisdom of their rulers and their inner impulses have, up to now, been saved from the danger of being drawn into war, and have thus been placed in the best position to cooperate for the establishment of true peace, founded on justice and humanity.105

Again, two weeks later, as the Italian King and Queen came to call on Pius, he ended his message of greeting with:

May ... God guide the fortunes of the Italian people ... and the decisions of its rulers, so that they may not only preserve, with far sighted vigilance and with deep wisdom, their internal and external peace, but also contribute to the re-establishment of an honourable and lasting universal peace.106

Count Ciano, who was present at the audience, responded:

I went to Salzburg to say: “Peace, peace.” But they answered: “War, war.” In this way I was able to preserve peace for Italy but I was unable to preserve peace for Europe.107

Fortunately for the Vatican’s efforts, relations between Hitler and Mussolini deteriorated significantly during the last third of 1939. Nazi irredentist agitation in the part of the Alps adjoining Austria and the Russo-German partition of Poland greatly offended the Italians.

Poles and Jews in Berlin were granted Italian visas.108 Italian resentment of the Hitler-Stalin Pact was exacerbated, especially by the Russian invasion of Finland, which began on November 30, 1939. Taking advantage of Mussolini’s anti-German mood, Count Ciano showed him an eyewitness account, by an Italian, of German atrocities in Poland. The Duce suggested the account should get into “American and French newspapers.”109

On Christmas eve, 1939, Pius delivered a very lengthy address on the theme of war and peace. He condemned not only the “calamity of war” but especially the manner in which it was waged, including “a series of acts incompatible with the rule of international law ... natural law and with the most elementary feelings of humanity...” He specifically condemned “the premeditated aggression against a small, industrious and peaceful people [the Finns], under a threat which was neither existent, desired, nor even possible...” He then threatened with “vengeance in the sight of God” violence against “non-combatants and refugees, against old people, women and children....” He also damned “the methodical anti-Christian and even atheistic propaganda, continually increasing, especially amongst the young.” He spoke of “the enormous work that will be required ... to pull down the cyclopean walls of aversion and hatred, raised during the heat of battle.” He saw “deep distrust ... between the nations” as one of the causes of war, and determined “in the meantime to alleviate the misfortunes created” where possible. He spoke specifically of “the bloodstained lands of Poland and Finland” and feared for the “future of Europe, and not of Europe only.”

The true needs ... of nations and peoples as well as of the ethnic minorities ... deserve benevolent consideration.... Even the best and most thoroughly thought-out arrangements will be ... in the end condemned to failure, if those who rule ... and the peoples ... do not accept that spirit ... of justice that is proclaimed ... in the Sermon of the Mount
and ..., has moral justice as a natural basis; that Universal love that ... builds a bridge even toward those ... not ... in our faith.

If ever there was a spiritual crusade in which the cry was heard “God wills it,” it is surely ... this crusade undertaken to bring the peoples back from the muddy pool of material and selfish interest to the fresh fountain of divine justice. ... There may appear, in all peoples and nations, far seeing ... spirits inspired by ... courage willing ... to oppose the dark instinct of base vengeance. ... Justice ... alone can create and preserve peace. 110

As the Italian royal family again paid a visit to Pius on December 28 he exclaimed:

We ... too implore God ... to extend ... protection over the August Sovereigns ... and all persons here present and bless the peace which, protected by the wisdom of its Rulers, makes Italy great, strong and respected ... 111

One result of the Pope’s efforts may have been that under the influence of Franco and Count Ciano, on January 3, 1940 Mussolini wrote a letter to Hitler in which he severely castigated him for, among other things, his close alliance with Russian ‘Bolshevism’:

The German-Russian agreement has had painful repercussions in Spain. The civil war is too recent. The earth which covers the dead - yours and ours and the Spanish - is still fresh. Bolshevism is a memory that obsesses Spain and the Spaniards ... they do not understand the tactical necessities of politics. ... What Germany and Italy have lost during the last few months in Spain has been won by the French and the British.

It is my definite duty to add that a further step in your relations with Moscow would have catastrophic repercussions in Italy, where anti-Bolshevik unanimity is absolute solid and indivisible. 112

Mussolini went on to lecture Hitler to the effect that “Germany’s task in essence was to defend Europe from Asia” and together with Italy to demolish Bolshevism. He then expressed Italian admiration for “brave little Finland,” and accused the Germans through the “treatment meted out to the Polish population” of falling into the hands of British propaganda. He stated that the Polish people,

as you yourself chivalrously recognized in your Danzig speech - fought courageously, [and] deserves a treatment which does not give occasion for hostile speculations. It is my conviction that the creation of a modest, disarmed Poland which is exclusively Polish ... can no longer constitute any threat to the Greater Reich. ... The creation of a Polish state under the German aegis would ... constitute a condition for peace. 113

Possibly this message was issued in response to pressure from the Vatican, partly through Count Ciano and partly through Vatican Radio and the Osservatore Romano. 114

Cardinal Maglione’s notes of February 17, 1940, contain the essence of some information confided to the Cardinal by Count Ciano in which the latter claimed he “has done everything and will continue to make every effort to prevent Italy going to war.” Ciano assured Maglione that Italy lacked armaments and was not prepared for war, and that the Air Force consisted of only one thousand planes, not five thousand as had been asserted. “Italy can only handle the small Balkan powers, if necessary. ...” 115

A new high point of good relations was reached between Italy and France at the end of February. Italy had agreed to sell France military supplies, including four hundred bombers “supplied as training planes.” On the other hand, commercial negotiations with Britain for supplies and 36 cargo ships broke down. Indications are that Mussolini definitely decided against joining Germany in the war. 116 On February 29, Count Ciano informed the Nuncio to Italy that Germany intended to launch an attack on France “very soon” and “will make the utmost effort to carry us into the war. I am fighting to avoid this happening but there are many strong currents....” 117

Among the images haunting Mussolini at this time was the contemptible treatment Italy received in history books for its “perfidy” against the Central Powers in the First World War. “The motive of Treue agitates him,” according to the memoirs of his private secretary, Anfuso. Furthermore, he had a dread of Italy being caught on the losing side in a generalized European war. 118

As part of the strategy for strengthening the Rome-Berlin axis, Ribbentrop visited the Vatican to talk to Pius and Maglione. Ribbentrop did most of the talk-
ing, boasting of Germany’s military strength and the popularity of its government. Pius brought up the issue of religious persecution in Germany and Poland, and asked to send a special envoy to Poland to “help to clear misunderstandings and to strengthen the priests in their purpose to dedicate themselves exclusively to their pastoral mission.”

Ribbentrop boasted that “National Socialism has prevented the triumph of Communism in Germany... Not one church would have remained in Germany...” He also claimed that “the goal of war for Germany is peace, for Britain, the destruction of Germany.” However, in answer to the Pope’s question, Ribbentrop admitted that Germany was planning an offensive.

Among many other things, Maglione protested that “Lay teachers of religion take advantage of their position for advocating the so-called National-Socialist ‘Weltanschauung’ and in this way fight religion itself...” Maglione then reminded Ribbentrop of the many Vatican requests to be allowed “to carry out... charitable work... in Poland...” to which no replies had been received.

Myron Taylor, Roosevelt’s personal representative, talked with Cardinal Maglione on March 15.

He would like to know if the Holy See, in order to prevent the extension of the war or at least to confine it, could make useful suggestions to be taken by the President... In case nothing could definitely be done at present, how could President Roosevelt help to protect Italy from the danger of being dragged into the war on Germany’s side?

On the following day, Pius wrote a very ebullient and complimentary letter to Roosevelt in which he mentioned his gratitude “for this further evidence of your solicitude for the restoration of peace...” Pius wrote that he was “greatly encouraged by the vision of new possibilities of beneficent action...” and that he took “particular satisfaction” in welcoming “Your Excellency’s endeavours for the alleviation of suffering... Blessed, indeed, are the peacemakers.”

Mussolini left for the Brenner Pass, on March 12, 1940, for a meeting with Hitler. Cardinal Maglione received the news from the British Minister and from the Italian Ambassador.

The meeting has been requested by Hitler who will insist on the points already put forward by Ribbentrop. . . . It is believed there that Hitler will try to persuade Italy to join the war on Germany’s side... During the conversation I (Maglione) expressed all the reasons which in my judgement constrain and compel Italy to remain outside the conflict. The Ambassador thinks these reasons are well-founded; but he thinks that as time goes by, it will be extremely difficult for Italy to keep out of conflict.

The United States Undersecretary of State, Sumner Welles, visited the Pope and Cardinal Maglione on March 18, to inform the latter, among many other things, that in relation to Italy: “In Washington we took the same line as followed by Your Eminence here,” and that “the President will be most pleased to unite his efforts to those of the Holy Father.”

Sumner Welles noted from his conversations in Berlin that “Hitler and his Government are convinced that the Allies [France and Britain] want the destruction of Germany...” He also noted that “Mussolini confirmed that the Germans are preparing a vigorous offensive within the next few days or weeks.” In London Sumner Welles obtained from the head of the Polish Government in exile, General Sikorski, “his opinion on the military might of Germany and Russia.” This may have been an indication that President Roosevelt was contemplating more direct involvement in the conflict.

At the end of March, Count Ciano informed the Vatican that at the Brenner Pass meeting with Hitler (see above) Mussolini “committed himself excessively.” He also confided to the Nuncio to Italy: “The Germans would shoot me if they could.” He also warned: “Do not trust the diplomats accredited to the Holy See who in their telegrams and reports give information about Italy as heard in the Vatican and also mention my name.” He did not fail to inform the Nuncio that “Mussolini ... reads everything. You must consider my position, otherwise I shall be obliged not to tell you anything more.” The Nuncio feared that the “Foreign Embassies have secret informers in the Vatican besides those which the Italian Government itself has.”
The cool tone toward France in the Italian press, by the second week in April, alarmed the French Ambassador to the Vatican and persuaded him that the Italian Government had already determined to enter the war.\textsuperscript{128}

The French government had sensed correctly: Mussolini had decided to go to war as Germany’s ally. However, the motive was not only desire for war booty. Mussolini realized that his armed forces were far too weak to resist the wrath of Hitler turned against a perfidious ally. He also realized that his dreams of becoming the dominant power of the Mediterranean could only be realized in alliance with Hitler. Furthermore, he deeply resented the British economic blockade and especially “the state of servitude in which Italy finds herself in her own sea,” as he later wrote to Churchill in contemptuous response to the latter’s plea for peace (May 16, 1940).\textsuperscript{129}

On April 10, the Italian Ambassador protested to the Vatican the many demonstrations for peace throughout Italy “while the Government tries to prepare peoples’ minds to be ready for any possible development...”\textsuperscript{130} Cardinal Maglione was also told that the “Osservatore Romano... should be more moderate... and more impartial in reporting war news.” To the latter demand the Vatican Secretary of State responded: “L’Osservatore Romano cannot follow the other newspapers in the line of thought which has been imposed on them. I have always advised L’Osservatore to be prudent, objective and moderate...” He then proceeded to explain that the value of the Vatican’s newspaper lies in its being “recognized, everywhere, and especially abroad, as the true, impartial, serene, independent organ of the Holy See.”\textsuperscript{131}

Within two days the French President noted with satisfaction the increasing circulation of Osservatore Romano. This was probably related to Mussolini’s promise to Hitler upon being informed of the latter’s invasion of Denmark and Norway on April 9: “I shall give orders to the press... unreservedly to applaud this German action.”\textsuperscript{132}

Pius wrote a letter to Mussolini, on April 24, pleading for peace, in which he stated:

We recognize... the noble efforts with which in the beginning you tried to avoid and then to localize the war... But now the fears flare up again... The shadow of the war seems to cast its approaching and terrifying gloom even on the peoples yet untouched...

We express the heartfelt wish, that thanks to Your efforts... to Your Italian patriotism, Europe may be saved from greater ruin and grief; and in particular your and Our beloved country may be saved from this calamity."

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this communication is that it was “the result of concerted action of the Holy See and the White House to protect Italy’s neutrality.”\textsuperscript{133}

In his April 30 answer to the Pope’s plea for peace, Mussolini said:

I understand... Your wish that Italy be preserved from war. This has been possible till the present, but I cannot guarantee that it will be so to the end.

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I can assure You... that if Italy should go to war tomorrow, it would be indicated... that honor, interest and posterity have demanded it.\textsuperscript{134}

In the meantime, Hitler had written flattering letters to Mussolini on April 9, 11, 20, and 28, and would write him again on May 4. He not only played up to Mussolini’s sense of grandeur, but also described in detail his own military victories. According to Count Ciano: “Hitler is a good psychologist, and he knows that these messages go straight to Mussolini’s heart.”\textsuperscript{135}

Roosevelt’s personal representative, Myron Taylor, speaking to a member of the Vatican Secretariat of State, on April 24, hinted that the United States might go to war with Japan and that: “Such an action would probably place the United States on the side of the Allies in the war in Europe.”\textsuperscript{136}

News came from London, on April 28, that “Lord Perth [former British Ambassador to Rome]...expressed
his admiration for Osservatore Romano . . . [mentioning] that the paper had gained great respect in Great Britain for its outspoken efforts in favour of truth. . . .” He also assured the Vatican that the British Government “has never had any intention of crushing Mussolini and has never placed Hitler and Mussolini in the same category,” and Lord Perth wanted the Vatican to convey this “assurance to Mussolini.”

The London Apostolic Delegate later confirmed the above in conversation with Britain’s Foreign Minister, Lord Halifax, who added that one could learn many things from Mussolini’s Government, especially about land-reclaiming projects and domestic colonization. He was convinced that there was more affinity between British and Italian tradition than between Italian and German tradition, as Britain has seen greatly influenced by Roman culture.

Aside from this rather obvious flattery, Lord Halifax passed on the message to Mussolini that he would get more from the final peace conference settling the war in Europe if he did not become a belligerent and that “Bolshevik Russia would be very pleased to see Italy involved in the war.” If the Vatican were to pass the above to Mussolini’s Government “it would be well at the same time to let General Franco know how greatly His Majesty’s Government differentiates between Hitler’s regime and Mussolini’s and Franco’s Governments.” He also commented on the Osservatore Romano’s increased circulation and the “courageous way in which the newspaper has been reporting the European situation.”

By May 2, Roosevelt had hinted to Mussolini that “America would not remain indifferent in case of a defeat of the Allies,” as Cardinal Maglione had guessed. Three days later, Pius, in a message directed at Italian Catholics, made a desperate plea for peace. On May 10 Hitler’s armies moved west and from Berlin the Papal Nuncio sent the news that the “German people have become very silent; it is clear that they do not approve of the aggression . . . .”

A serious confrontation occurred on May 13, 1940, between Pius and the Italian Ambassador. Mussolini had been highly perturbed by the public message of support and sympathy Pius had sent to the rulers of Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands as their respective countries were invaded by the German army. The Duce’s Ambassador did not stop short of threatening the Pope with “the possibility of serious things happening.” Pius responded, “We are not frightened,” and proceeded to explain that he had an obligation before God to speak out in such instances. He also reproached the Italian

Government with several months’ foreknowledge of Germany’s aggressive plans. He then stated: ‘Beware . . . all of us will be subjected to God’s Judgement, none will escape; no temporal success . . . can exempt us . . . ’ The Holy Father also called attention to the fact that Italian honour itself was at stake. ‘They know the Italians . . . exactly and fully about the atrocities taking place in Poland. We would like to utter words of fire against such actions and the only thing restraining us from speaking is the fear of making the plight of the victims even worse.’ Where is Italian honour? Even here ‘uncivil acts’ take place ( . . . measures taken to hamper the distribution of the Osservatore Romano); they are not admissible; they should cease.

The following day Cardinal Maglione announced to the Nuncios and Apostolic Delegates in Argentina, Brazil, the U.S.A., Canada, France, Spain, Portugal, Switzerland and England that they should inform the local press in their respective countries that, “measures taken by the Fascist Party are making distribution of Osservatore Romano impossible. . . .”

On May 15, 1940, the Paris Nuncio writing to Cardinal Maglione agreed that the “idea of asking for the intervention of South American statesmen has been a very good one in order to persuade Mr. Roosevelt to give more decisive support to the Allies.”

By the time war broke out on the Western Front, it seemed that the Pope’s intensive effort in the cause of peace for over a year had been entirely futile. And yet, he had already developed a reputation as a man of peace to the point that the Foreign Minister of Japan came privately to see Cardinal Maglione and in confidence stated that the war, if it lasted for a long time, could lead to revolution almost everywhere and cause the downfall of civilization; that war between China and Japan, now in its third year, was weighing heavily on both countries and a way to settle it should be found; that the Holy Father could do a lot in this respect.
Pius gave a lengthy and emotional address, on June 2, 1940, in condemnation of war and made an appeal to the consciences of occupying powers to observe principles of humanity. “Justice and equality demand that these populations be treated in the same way as the occupying Power would like their own citizens to be treated if the circumstances were reversed.”

In spite of opposition from “the Throne, some of the generals, the Church and the people,” on June 10, Mussolini declared war against France, one week before Marshal Petain publicly asked Germany for peace. It took the Italian armed forces a full week to launch the attack, and then they managed to capture only two French border towns and a little surrounding territory.

Pius XII was undoubtedly attached to peace and abhorred conflict. That these traits were not due to a lack of moral courage, nor to an excessive passivity, is probably best illustrated by his involvement with the German Resistance. Here he probably went too far in the opposite direction, taking too great risks and too active a role for the head of a state treaty-bound to neutrality.

VATICAN INVOLVEMENT WITH THE GERMAN RESISTANCE

Being a lover of freedom, when the [Nazi] revolution came in Germany I looked to the Universities to defend it, knowing that they had already boasted of their devotion to the cause of truth: but no, the Universities immediately were silenced. Then I looked to the great editors of the newspapers whose flaring editorials in days gone by had proclaimed their love of freedom: but they, like the Universities, were silenced in a few short weeks. Then I looked to the individual writers … they too were mute. Only the Church stood squarely across the path of Hitler’s campaign for suppressing truth. I never had any special interest in the Church before, but now I feel a great affection and admiration… I am forced, thus, to confess that what I once despised I now praise unreservedly.

- (Albert Einstein)

Nevertheless, a number of serious scholars specializing in this question, such as Guenter Lewy, Gordon Zahn, and Mary Alice Gallin, have after careful sifting of the evidence found that the issue of Catholic opposition to Hitler was not simple, or clear cut. German priests and bishops were not only Catholic, they were also German and in many cases their sense of patriotic duty and their nationalistic feelings seemed to take precedence over their spiritual zeal or their awareness of being members of a universal church.

While several hundred German Catholic priests were sent to Dachau (326 were still alive by April 1945) many “were rebels not only against the state, but against their ecclesiastical authorities as well.” One factor which likely restrained Pius XII from a more clear-cut, open and formal condemnation of Hitler’s policies in Eastern Europe seems to have been fear of alienating the German clergy, or of putting them into a still more difficult position.

Nevertheless, evidence seems to indicate that of the German hierarchy no one was closer to Pius XII than Bishop Preysing of Berlin, who was also one of the most determined and consistent foes of Nazism and Hitler’s policies. However committed Pius himself might have been, he “knew that the German Catholics were not prepared to suffer martyrdom for their Church....”

To be sure, there did exist a small minority of influential German Catholics and Protestants who were prepared to attempt Hitler’s overthrow, even at the risk of martyrdom, for the sake of being able to end the war. Vatican historians Pierre Blet, Angelo Martini and Burkhard Schneider mention the Pope’s involvement with the German Resistance but they seem to take great pains to understate it:
Faithful to the principle that nothing should be left undone which could in any way serve the cause of peace, the Holy Father ... approached by important political and military circles in Germany, agreed to send some of the questions these circles had on the aims of the war and the conditions of peace to the other belligerent party, as well as the answers this party had thought it necessary to give. The aim of interested German circles was to attain a Germany liberated from National-Socialism...The attempt was made between the end of 1939 and the first months of 1940.153

According to the Vatican archives, on November 23, 1939, Cardinal Maglione received information from the Nuncio in Berne, Switzerland, that “a serious military plot is being organized in Germany to overthrow Hitler and National Socialism and to conclude peace with Britain and France.” According to the Vatican, the source of this information was Alexander, Duke of Wurttemberg, Abbot of the Benedictine Abbey of Beuron, who had been “expelled from Germany by the Gestapo.” At the time of this communication “Dom Odo” was “in charge of aid to Catholics and Jews expelled from Germany.”154

There is evidence from other sources that the Vatican already knew about this plot one or two months earlier. Joseph Müller, a 41-year old Munich lawyer long active in the fight between the Nazi regime and the Catholic Church, had been called to Abwehr headquarters at the request of Colonel Hans Oster, assistant to Abwehr head Wilhelm Canaris.155 Both Oster and Canaris were prepared to launch a military coup against Hitler as means of forestalling hostilities between Germany and Britain and France.

Their chief worry was that “the Western Powers might take advantage of internal disorder, or even civil war, to mount a full-scale attack on the Reich.” It was Oster’s idea to contact “the enemy without incurring the stigma of treason” by going through a “respected and neutral head of state, preferably Pope Pius XII.” Canaris liked the idea, as he was well acquainted with Pacelli from their horseback riding days in Berlin. Oster told Muller that he was being sent, on behalf of General Ludwig Beck, head of the Resistance, “in the name of decent Germany..., to re-establish contact with the present Pope.” He was to request that the Vatican inform the Western powers “that the military opposition was plan-
ning Hitler’s overthrow in order to prevent an attack in the West.” What they wanted in return was a guarantee that the West would not attack and a “just and honourable peace.”156

Under the cover of being on an intelligence mission for the Abwehr,157 Müller left for Rome armed with a letter of recommendation from Abbot Corbian Hofmeister and some names of persons to contact at the Vatican, provided by Wilhelm Schmidhuber, a Munich businessman and honorary Portuguese Consul. In addition, Muffler was personally acquainted with Monsignor Ludwig Kaas, former head of the German Zentrum (Catholic) Party and now advisor to Pius on German affairs.

According to Heinz Hohne:
It was Kaas who established the initial contact. He went to the papal summer residence at Castel Gandolfo, where Pius XII was staying until the end of October and passed on what Muller had told him. The Pope agreed to forward messages from the German military opposition to the British Government but told Kaas to begin by sounding out the British Embassy at the Vatican. He also declined to meet Muller in person. All communications were to be transmitted by way of Kaas and the papal private secretary, Robert Leiber, a Jesuit priest from Baden.158

Father Leiber was “the principal personal aide and confidant of Pius XII” and had been with him since 1924. He was to remain the Pope’s “right-hand man until the latter’s death, seeing him several times each day. In regard to his and the Pope’s involvement with the German Resistance, he was later quoted as having felt that they both “went much to far.”159

One issue strongly disputed among the principals is the timing of the first contact between the German Opposition and the Vatican:
It has always been Müller’s conviction that the September campaign in Poland was still in progress when he started his work in Rome and first got in touch with Father Leiber to enlist the Pope’s support. He has the most vivid recollection of sitting with Monsignors Kaas and Schonhoffer ... near the Quo Vadis chapel off the Appian Way and talking with them about the course of the Polish campaign which was then flickering out.... All else
In contrast, Father Leiber’s recollections indicate that he was first involved in the matter when Pius was already back at the Vatican, which would have to have been after October 31 - the date of the Pope’s return from his summer residence of Castel Gandolfo in 1939. According to the testimony, at his trial, of the Nazi SD (Security Service) investigator Walter Huppenkothen, Muller first visited Rome at the “end of September or beginning of October.” Another document confirms that Muller had returned from Rome by October 5, 1939.161

We do not know when Muller again set out for Rome, but Huppenkothen, once more reporting on the basis of Dohnanyi’s archives, provides the date of his return - October 18. The notation referred specifically to the Pope’s consenting to serve as intermediary, as well as to his envisioning a peace “favorable to Germany,” provided there were no assault in the West and that Hitler were removed from the government.162

The German resistance movement was electrified by the good news of the Pope’s involvement. The diary of one of the chief conspirators, Major Helmuth Groscurth, includes an entry for October 20, 1939:

The Pope is very interested and holds an honorable peace to be possible. Personally guarantees that Germany will not be swindled as in the forest of Compiegne. With all peace feelers one encounters the categorical demand for the removal of Hitler.163

The British Government agreed to negotiate with the German representative only on the condition that the Pope vouch for him. This Pius did. One reason for the Pope’s ability to play the role of intermediary between the German resistance and the British had been the previous assurances of Chamberlain and Halifax that they “would welcome Vatican cooperation in any peace efforts.”164

The Pope now channeled’ questions and answers in both directions between Muller and [Sir Francis D’Arcy] Osborne [British minister to the Vatican], Father Leiber acting as intermediary between Muller and the Pope. Information, messages and the results of the soundings were almost invariably transmitted verbally, but on several occasions Father Leiber left some missive for Muller in his hotel... All these papers were immediately destroyed by Muller with the exception of one of Father Leiber’s visiting cards and a sheet of paper with the Vatican watermark, on which was set out a summary of British negotiating conditions. Both these were used as proof for General Halder....165

The Vatican’s involvement with such covert “cloak and dagger operations did, of course, cause indignant astonishment when it came to light in later years. Professor Owen Chadwick states: “It is certain that the pope [sic] knew what was happening; that in the crudest terms, he allowed the Vatican to be used as an agent in German conspiracy against Hitler.”166 According to Harold C. Deutsch:

In any event the Pope’s quick consent to act as intermediary between a conspiratorial group in one belligerent state and the government of an enemy country can be reckoned among the most astounding events in the modern history of the papacy.... Certainly it was a step so daring as to seem akin to foolhardiness. The risks to both the Pope personally and the Church were incalculable. The Nazis, had they learned of it ... would have been furnished every excuse they needed for ... an assault on the Catholic Church in Germany and wherever else the SS might tread. .. Knowledge ... would have enabled Mussolini ... given to wild threats about what was in store for the Holy See ... to accuse it of a clear breach of neutrality and of the Lateran Pact. ...167

As a sideline, Muller also acted as a secret Vatican courier bringing documents on Nazi persecution of the Church from Germany to the Vatican.

Material given . . . by such prelates as Bishop Rusch of Innsbruck in the afternoon might assail the ears of enraged and confused Nazis over Radio Vaticano at 8:45 the next morning. The accumulated mass of data . . . was turned over by Father Leiber to a fellow German Jesuit . . . whose British and French colleagues had ways of transferring the material to the West. In 1940 it was published . . . in London and New York....

It was through Muller that information on SS barbarities in Poland, so assiduously gathered by Abwehr agents on the order of Canaris, found its way regularly to the Vatican.... A Jesuit named Joseph Griesar slipped into Poland to secure better insights into the Nazi Church policies there. Most vital of all to the Church ... was the funnel-
ing to the Vatican, through Muller, of warnings concerning SD preparations for new assaults on religion.... The Opposition was ... able to count within its ranks a top figure in Himmler's police forces, Arthur Nebe ... director of the Criminal Division of the Reich police organization. As such he had access to the most secret reports originating in all police units subject to Himmler.... Such data came first to Oster and [personal advisor to the Minister of Justice, Dr. Hans von] Dohnanyi and were then conveyed to the Vatican through Muller and to Evangelical quarters through Dohnanyi's brother-in-law, Dietrich Bonhoeffer.168

A major consideration of nearly all the top leaders of the active German Resistance to Hitler dealt with the role that religion should play in the “new Germany that would arise from the ashes of the Third Reich.” The preoccupation was due to “the prominence of religious elements in resisting . . . and the frequently predominant influence of religious and moral motivations among Opposition Leaders.”169

From the conspirators’ point of view the only successful contact with the British government came about because an intermediary of the necessary influence and reputation was available. This was the Vatican.170

Perhaps the most important unanswered question about the line of communication between the British Foreign Secretary at one end and retired German Army Chief of Staff, Ludwig Beck, at the other - and the Pope’s right-hand man, Father Leiber, in the middle - is the substance of what was communicated. A number of tantalizing clues give rise to some fascinating questions:171

Was there any connection between these talks and the “unsolved” assassination attempt on Hitler in Munich on November 8, 1939? What was the origin of the idea appearing among members of the Resistance in late 1939 that after getting rid of Hitler, Germany should launch a “crusade” eastward to rid the world of Bolshevism? How much of Eastern Europe was to be Germany’s “sphere of influence” in a “Christian” post-war Europe? What territory was planned to be included in post-Hitler Germany? Who wanted Hitler dead? Who wanted him put on trial?

What was the planned fate of Hitler's henchmen and chief partners in crime? What was to become of the Gestapo, the SS and other similar organizations? What was to be the ultimate purpose of the dossier Dohnanyi had kept for years detailing Nazi crimes and brutality?172 If the British government acquired these papers, as stated by German witnesses, why did it never bring them to light? Were communications with Britain, which eventually came to the knowledge of Heinrich Himmler, the possible origin of Hitler’s decision, at the end of 1940, to launch an attack on the Soviet Union? Why did Himmler, for years, protect Canaris and other principals of these negotiations?173

Some authors (e.g. Heinz Hohne) either state or imply that these early attempts on the part of the German Opposition to establish contact with the British Government were rebuffed or never got down to substance. Yet Vatican sources and other authors (e.g. Deutsch and Hoffmann) indicate that information was passing back and forth between early October, 1939, and February 20, 1940. The explanation that the information supposedly passed to the German Opposition regarding the British demands and concessions originated in the wishful thinking and fertile imagination of Muller and Vatican underlings is not entirely convincing.174

Ambassador Ulrich von Hassell’s diary tends to confirm, through communications with Swiss historian Carl Jacob Burckhardt, that the British Government was willing to be quite generous in the terms for mak-
ing peace with a post-Hitler Germany - at least as late as January, 1942. At that time Britain was still willing to consider Germany’s 1914 borders as “a perfectly practical basis for peace talks.” Considering Britain’s weak military position during the first half of the war, such “generosity” is perfectly understandable.

The November 9, 1939, Venlo incident, in which Schellenberg and another SS agent posed as German Opposition leaders in order to capture two British intelligence officers in Holland, interrupted the talks for several weeks and “the fact that the British were prepared to resume talks at all was due primarily to .. the Pope and the respect in which he was held. Chamberlain and Halifax set great store by the Pope’s readiness to mediate.

Pius had a conference with Ambassador Osborne on January 11, 1940, in which the latter was informed of the German Opposition’s position, which he conveyed to London. In place of the “violent, bitter and utterly unscrupulous” offensive which Hitler had planned in the West for mid-February, a responsible government, after getting rid of Hitler, would make honorable peace with Britain. The settlement they proposed mentioned that there would be

... a restoration in Poland [sic] and Czechoslovakia and [Germany] would also deal with Russia. There could, however, be no concession over the existing Anschluss with Austria.

The Pope did not specifically endorse any of these terms and indicated that he felt uncomfortable in the role of mediator. He did, however, guarantee that “the German principals were in no way connected with the NSDAP” (Nazi Party). The British War Cabinet, meeting on January 16, considered the German proposals but decided to insist on the elimination of Hitler’s Government “as a first step ... and, then talk of peace.”

Ambassador Osborne was again summoned for a papal audience on February 7th. On the basis of four typewritten pages in front of him, Pius explained that the “conspirators in Germany wanted to replace the present government by a democratic, conservative, moderate, decentralized and federal one.” However, they wanted an advance guarantee of the “continued union of Austria with Germany.” In return they promised an independent Poland and to give up “non-German Czechoslovakia” (presumably keeping the Sudetenland). “Pius XII repeated that he felt uneasy about transmitting such information but that his conscience forced him to pursue even the smallest chance of saving human lives. . . .”

On February 17 Halifax and Chamberlain replied that “a definite programme must be submitted and authoritatively vouched for . . . His Majesty’s Government would look for, above all ... security for the future . . .” Around February 20, Pius received the communication in writing from Osborne. He communicated the substance immediately to Miller. “The German opposition were assured by the British Government that, should there be no German western offensive and should the German dictatorial regime be replaced by a democratic one within a reasonable time, the Western Powers would not take the offensive during the coup.... the Reich frontier of 1937 would be left intact ...[the] question of Austria’s union ...[would be] settled by a plebiscite in Austria. . . .

Many of these conditions, in slightly different versions, were circulated among the German Opposition as the “X-Report,” so called because Muller was referred to as “X” in Vatican documents. Not a single copy seems to have survived, although there were two copies as late as 1954, and different members remember its contents somewhat differently. Nearly everyone agrees that the Sudetenland was to have remained with Germany. Most also recall that union with Austria was to have been determined by plebiscite.

There is some disagreement about the provisions dealing with the configuration of post-war Poland, with General Halder recalling that the frontiers of 1914 were to have been re-established, while several others recall that “German-speaking parts” were to have been returned to Germany. Only Father Leiber insists that Poland would have been “restored.” General Halder also recalls that Alsace-Lorraine would have remained with Germany with the borders of 1914. Most others insist that this region was not mentioned in the “X-Report.”

In any case, the conditions agreed upon by Chamberlain and Halifax - in the form conveyed to the German Opposition - were “so favorable that they were now prepared to act; the coup d’etat was now scheduled for a date in February,” according to what Muller told Father Leiber. Among the arguments for a rapid overthrow of Hitler’s regime were the further reports of “crimes committed in Poland.”
In the meantime:

For months Dohnanyi and Oster had been collecting material and evidence on the crimes of the Party, the SS and the Nazi leaders, on corruption in Party organizations, on criminal and immoral practices in the Hitler Youth and the S.A., on profiteering. . . . cases of rape, ill-treatment of prisoners, atrocities in Poland and anti-Jewish pogroms. The evidence was intended to be used, not only to open the eyes of the generals but subsequently for legal proceedings against the culprits and to show the people what the leaders were like.187

Once the decision to move against Hitler had been taken by the top leadership of the Opposition, the success or failure would rest in the hands of military men on active duty. Here several basic problems presented themselves. In the first place, several of the top generals had sincere scruples about violating the personal oath pledging fealty to the person of Adolf Hitler.188 Oster came to the conclusion that the only solution which could bring unanimity among all of the top generals was to free them from their obligation by the assassination of Hitler.189 Oster’s two-fold problem was that he could not get the approval for murder from Canaris, Beck, Goerdeler or any of the other top leaders, and that he could not obtain the services of a skilled and willing killer who was in a high enough position of trust to get near to Hitler.190

Most of the active-duty generals became aware that the vast majority of younger military officers had been effectively indoctrinated,191 often in the Hitler Youth and in school, and were fanatically devoted to their Fuehrer. The majority of the military conspirators were at higher headquarters and not in command of troops. Those who were had serious doubts that their orders for rebellion would be obeyed at the rank of major and below.192

A further complication was that with each successful expansion of German power (i.e. Rhineland, Austrian Anschluss, Munich 1938, the rapid conquest of Poland, etc.) the intoxicating and contagious enthusiasm for Germany’s charismatic leader went up.193 In late 1939 he had the support of nearly all the younger officers and an estimated approval rating of 75% among the general populace, according to the Hitler opponent, General Thomas.194 Those who knew or cared about the moral issues involved were few and quiet. The Gestapo was more effective than it had been at the last attempt in September 1938.

The dilemma facing the generals and the civilian leaders of the Opposition was that as long as the prospects for German military victory were good (and the Western Allies therefore “generous” and accommodating) the prospects for a successful coup were near zero.195 There was much reluctance to be stigmatized with having caused defeat or civil war in the midst of victory by a “stab in the back” of a providentially infallible and invincible leader. On the other hand, if the Opposition leaders waited until the prospects of victory were so dim as to be imperceptible, and a coup would be popular, England and its allies would no longer be willing to negotiate an “honorable” peace, and would again impose victor’s justice, as at Versailles in 1919.196

Beck, Goerdeler, von Hassell, Canaris, and several other top leaders had no doubt that Germany was bound to lose the war eventually, but in the first half of that war they had difficulty communicating such a belief in the face of a string of unbroken victories.197 It was Oster who decided on the expedient of shortening the war and setting the stage for a successful coup through working for a defeat of the western offensive. An unsuccessful invasion of the Low Countries would destroy the myth of Hitler’s invincibility, and provide the occasion for getting rid of the Nazi regime.198

Again, the Vatican was used, this time to channel information to “the enemy” including the date for the projected invasion.

What set Oster apart from other opponents of the regime was his fanatical and uncompromising determination that Germany’s Western offensive should fail. Not content to wait . . . he planned to hasten it... This meant that the countries of Western Europe, which had become Germany’s enemies against their will, must be warned of the forthcoming attack and acquainted with the plans and objectives of the German High Command....

Canaris would never have followed Oster down this road had he known of his friend’s intentions. Their positions were becoming more and more distinct. ... Canaris . . . had always been anxious to preserve peace because he believed that any war would spell the end of Germany - and Germany, which possessed an intrinsic and quasi-religious value in the Admiral’s world ... meant more to him than any political system his country chose to adopt.... He always resisted Hitler’s warlike policy until the first shot was fired....199

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In speaking to the Italian Ambassador on December 7, 1939, Pius made allusions to Italian Fascism and Nazism as “a wrong process of thought and action which ... has fallen ... into oblivion and contempt. ...” He considered these ideologies as “distorted development, amounting to subversion of the principles of justice and moral duties ... which believe that ... progress ... consists in freedom from the bounds of natural law....” He also predicted:

Each one of these errors, as generally every error, lasts for a certain time ...; it is at one moment at its height and then suddenly falls apart. There are two phases: the first when the intoxicating poison of the alluring doctrines overwhelms and infatuates the masses and makes them fall into its power, and the other, when the bitter fruit becomes ripe ... at least in the eyes of the wiser and more thoughtful. ... How many eyes, once closed, are now opening again?200

This address was made just in the middle of the five-month period when the leaders of “decent Germany” were appealing to him to help them make peace with Germany’s adversaries.

Just one month later, on January 5, 1940, a telegram arrived from Brussels pleading:

Belgian Government received serious information [presumably from Oster through Albrecht Bernstorff] according to which Belgium and Holland could ... be exposed to German attacks. Government here would be extremely grateful to receive confidential and secret information as to whether the Holy See has received any intimations of this kind.201

Four days later Cardinal Maglione was able to respond to the Brussels Nuncio that “sources which seem reliable [i.e. Müller] give mid-February ... as highly probable date of offensive against Holland. ... Use this information very cautiously. ...” A handwritten note on this document states that the “... Holy Father the following day called the Minister of Great Britain.”202

On January 14, 1940, a similar request for confirmation came from the Hague, and on the following day Maglione wrote to Holland: “There are rumors of an offensive ... toward the middle of February...It...is not possible to check the substance.... In giving this reply to Foreign Minister ... request ... greatest circumspection.”203

Hitler had, indeed, planned such an invasion for mid-February. Ambassador Osborne sent a cable from the Vatican to London on January 12: “A major German offensive has been prepared in every detail for mid-February... It will be hard, fierce and relentless.” But two days before this message was sent a German plane with two staff officers carrying plans for the invasion landed accidentally in Belgium. This combined with inclement weather caused an indefinite postponement. Altogether it was postponed fourteen times.204

The Government of the Netherlands, on April 9, 1940, again sent word that “fearing imminent invasion by German troops,” it has taken “urgent measures.” The Nuncio wrote that the “Government asks me to address myself to Your Eminence for advice.” The answer was “No news here ... although future danger cannot be excluded.” However, on May 3, an identical telegram went out to the Nuncios in Brussels and the Hague “to be decoded only by Nuncio”:

From sources considered reliable, we understand that, unless an obstacle or intervention occurs in the meantime, an attack on the Western Front is imminent, striking also at Holland and Belgium and possibly Switzerland.... Destroy this coded message.206

The Vatican archives contain the footnote: “This news was brought to the Vatican by Dr. Joseph Müller, who was an ordinary agent between the Vatican and the generals hostile to the Nazi regime (communication of R.P. Leiber).”207

While no return message from the Netherlands has been published, the one from Belgium states: “I spoke only with ... the King who expresses thanks and asks for prayers.” The May 6-7 issue of Osservatore Romano contains the information that on May 6 Marie Jose, the royal princess of Italy (of the Belgian royal family and wife of Italian Crown Prince Umberto), had been received in audience by the Pope. “The Pope mentioned the imminent attack against Belgium,” according to a footnote in the published documents.208

Next day the Undersecretary of State, Montini, later Pope Paul VI, summoned the diplomatic representatives of Britain and France. [Ambassador] Osborne informed the British Foreign Office of the Vatican’s belief that a German offensive would be launched the same week.209
The Belgian Ambassador, having been notified through Father Leiber, could not believe the source of the information. “No German would do a thing like that.” After transmitting the information to his own government with the message “author of information always considered worthy of trust by Nuncio . . .,” the following day he sent another message expressing his doubts:

“This man is either betraying his country to our advantage or acting on Germany’s behalf. He obviously presents himself... as a loyal friend, that is to say as a traitor.”

This telegraphed message, which was read by German Intelligence (in this case Goering’s Forschungsamt) also included the information that the Vatican informer “derives his information from the General Staff, whose emissary he purports to be.” Feeling uneasy, Muller left for Germany on May 4.

According to Heinz Hohne, Admiral Canaris was outraged and indignant when he deduced that Muller had been the one who gave away the date of the German offensive:

Even the most resolute opponent to the regime despised treason. They drew a sharp distinction between Hochverrat [attempt to overthrow the government] and Landesverrat [treasonable activity in relation to other countries]. Opposition to Hitler they considered justifiable, even in wartime, but collaboration with the enemy at the expense of their comrades was beyond the pale. “Every member of the Abwehr circle would firmly have eschewed Landesverrat” wrote... the Abwehr’s administrative chief.... No one could have felt this more keenly than Canaris himself, who was almost physically allergic to this form of treachery.... The Admiral had repeatedly enjoined every officer, ranker and civilian employee to report any circumstance, however trivial, that pointed toward treason.... His attitude toward traitors was implacable.

Muller was summoned to report to Canaris, and after being warned by Oster prepared for the worst. Oster’s parting shot was: “Cheer up, the Almighty will help us, not the other rotten swine.” Surprisingly, Canaris agreed to help Muller to cover his tracks.

Rohleder thought he knew an informant capable of piercing the veil of secrecy... in the Vatican.... His name was Gabriel Ascher... a German Jewish emigre resident in Stockholm, ... the Swedish correspondent of a Swiss newspaper. Ascher had adopted the Catholic faith. ... [He] gained access to almost the same circles as those frequented by ... Muller.... As Rohleder proudly testified after the war: “Ascher managed to elucidate all the surrounding circumstances in a logically complete and entirely conclusive manner. He named... Muller as the traitor.”

Partly in contrast to Heinz Hohne’s version, published in 1979, Harold C. Deutsch’s earlier version (1968), which was used as a source by Hohne, gives the credit for the betrayal of Müller only partly to Ascher, but to a far greater extent to an apparently pro-Nazi former Benedictine prior of Beuron Abbey, Hermann Keller. The latter, while remaining a monk and priest, seems to have been moonlighting as a secret Nazi SD (Security Service) and Abwehr agent from about 1938 on.

The issue is important in the sense that the arrest of Müller led to the arrest of Oster, and ultimately to that of Canaris. According to historians of the Resistance, it was the absence of the last two mentioned from their official positions in July, 1944, that seems more than any other single factor to have led to the failure of the plot of July 20th. This failure, in turn, led to the execution, in most brutal fashion, of perhaps 4,500 members of the “Decent German” Opposition (out of about 7,000 arrested) who, had they survived, would almost certainly have formed a large part of the new ruling elite.

From many points of view, with their execution perished the best men of Germany who had survived eleven years of Nazism without having sold their souls in the process.
the German Opposition. Not the least of this came from
the American Jesuit, Father McCormick, Fr. Leiber’s im-
mediate superior, and from Father Leduczowski, the Pol-
ish Superior-General of the Jesuit Order. The anxieties
of these two men led to many precautions and much
more discreet meetings with Muller, but by then it was
already too late.\textsuperscript{218}

When questioned after the war, Pius affirmed that
the source of the warning of the imminent invasion of
the Low Countries “had again proved helpful in afford-
ing information about the attack on the Soviet Union.
The source in question,” said the Pontiff, “was Canaris.”
According to Deutsch, “Father Leiber ... remembered
with great clarity the [warning] which concerned the at-
tack in the East in 1941. In fact ... he had a number of
notices as plans developed, probably even as early as late
1940.”\textsuperscript{219}

It is clear that those with whom Muller talked in
Rome had but a vague idea of the structure of the
group he represented. No doubt they heard
from time to time of Canaris’ dramatic role of
 guardian angel, but had no notion of the vital part
played by Oster. It would have been too much to
expect them to understand the complicated rela-
tionships at Tirpitz Ufer [Abwehr Headquarters]
or to comprehend the unique personality and po-
sition of Canaris. Father Leiber affirmed that he
had assured the Pope that the warnings led back
to Canaris....\textsuperscript{220}

Although chronologically beyond the scope of this
paper, it might be worth mentioning that:

In their first private audience after the war, [Pius]
received the miraculously surviving Josef Muller
with an embrace and the assurance that he had
prayed for him every day after hearing of his im-
prisonment. “We have contended,” he said, “with
diabolical forces.”\textsuperscript{221}

\textbf{CONCLUSIONS}

Over the past two decades innumerable books,
articles, plays and films have touched on the role of Pope
Pius XII during World War II. The majority appear to be
at least somewhat antagonistic. A few imply or hint at
anti-Semitism, pro-Nazi sympathies, cowardice, personal
or organizational ambitions or other unworthy motives.
While such treatments may entertain the public and ap-
peal to the baser instincts of bigotry or delight in the top-
pling of “sanctimonious idols,” they need not be taken
seriously by historians since they are not based on any
solid evidence or sound historical sources.

On the other hand, many serious and conscien-
tious scholars, several of whose works appear in the
bibliography of this thesis,\textsuperscript{222} have long and seriously
pondered the meaning of the public silence of the Pope,
when confronted with the horror of atrocities in some
respects unprecedented in human history. These schol-
ars have established, as has this work, that Pius XII had
knowledge of Nazi atrocities in occupied countries, es-
pecially Poland. They have also established that the Pope
had no doubts on the score of who perpetrated aggres-
sion, and yet, Pius made no formal pronouncement de-
nouncing the German Government for its conduct, nor
declared the Allied cause to be a “just war”.\textsuperscript{223}

The evidence seems to indicate that Pius hoped
and worked for the goal of a post-Nazi Germany imbued
with Christian ideals and serving as a bulwark against the
spread of Soviet Communism.\textsuperscript{224} Such a Germany would
have to be at least as strong as Bismarck’s Germany had
been, but it would also have to have a friendlier disposi-
tion toward the Vatican and its ideals than had been the
case with either pre- or---post- World War I Germany.
The bitterness of a Versailles-style victor’s justice would
have to be avoided at all costs, so would any action which
could give ground for a new “stab in the back” legend.\textsuperscript{225}

The realization of such a goal would necessitate
the termination of hostilities on a basis other than to-
tal victory for either side. Since it was clear that Britain
would, under no circumstances, make peace with Hitler
his removal would have to be engineered.\textsuperscript{226} Both this re-
quirement, and the role Pope Pius envisaged for post-
war Germany necessitated that the Vatican collaborate
closely with Germany’s traditional elite and that it avoid
giving grave offense to Germany’s nationalistic sensibili-
ties. Consequently, Germany’s atrocities, misdeeds and
aggressions were not formally castigated by name.

As Pius saw it, only Germany could serve as a
countervailing force to expansionist Soviet Russia. From
his point of view, it was a far easier task to bring back
Germany, rather than Russia, to the fold of Christian
civilization. It is possible that Pacelli’s Germanophile,
pro-Western, and aristocratic biases played a role here.
There is no question that he could communicate more
easily with a von Papen or a von Hindenburg than with a
“Bolshevik” Commissar.227

Only in light of the above context does Vatican involvement with the anti-Hitler plotters make sense. It also explains why Pius took such pains to appear formally neutral in his relations with the belligerents. The Lateran Treaty limited his role at peace conferences to situations in which he would be invited by all parties to a dispute.228 If he were to forego the good will of one side by, for example, condemning its atrocities, he would automatically forego the possibility of playing a role in the post-war peace process. The evidence would seem to indicate that Pius wanted to avoid a Versailles-Weimar sequence at all costs, since it would only bring about a new Hitler and a new war of vengeance.

The Vatican’s role in limiting the conflict, by encouraging the neutrality of Italy, begs the question of motive. Was it because Pacelli, the Roman, loved Italy and loved peace, or was it because he didn’t want Germany strengthened by active Italian co-belligerency? If he supported neutrality for the sake of limiting the conflict in order more easily to nudge Europe back to a path of peace, why did Pius not encourage, for example, the American neutrals represented by Charles Lindbergh and the “America First” movement?229 There is some evidence that Pius, in the early stages of the war with which this paper is concerned, welcomed a more active participation in European affairs by Roosevelt and the United States.230

Perhaps he felt that such participation was necessary to restore the equilibrium of forces and restrain Germany’s hubris and Hitler’s megalomania. It is possible that he saw in American participation a means of weaning Germany away from its alliance with Russia. Perhaps Pius considered the possibility that Germany might be beaten and that in such an eventuality only the presence of American forces could prevent the overrunning of the remnant of Western Europe by the Russian army.

It is possible that this kind of analysis gives Pacelli too much credit for foresight, but if the evaluations of the man by the British Ambassadors, Viscount d’Abernon and Sir Francis d’Arcy Osborne, and the German President, Paul von Hindenburg, and others is correct then this is not beyond the realm of possibility.

Those who defend the silence of Pius XII could, of course, take the opposite tack and explain that, given the circumstances, Pacelli was not silent at all. They could point to the encyclical of which he was the chief author, Mit Brennender Sorge, as the first official condemnation of Nazism by any head of state. They could list his forty public pronouncements attacking Nazism as he was Papal Nuncio in Germany, or his fifty-five diplomatic notes of protest to the Nazi Government as he was Papal Secretary of State between 1933 and 1939.231

Concerning his official “silence” regarding events in Poland, it could be pointed out that he had ordered Vatican Radio to describe German atrocities in Poland and he had allowed Cardinal Hlond, who escaped Warsaw just ahead of Hitler’s army, to use Vatican Radio to publicize Poland’s plight. The semi-official Osservatore Romano was similarly used to attack “Nazi aggression” against Poland in clear language.232 During mid-1940 it was the only newspaper in Italy which printed war news without a pro-Axis slant - and it even editorialized in favor of peace long after the Duce had made it clear that he would enter the war on Hitler’s side. The information which did reach Britain and the United States during 1939 and 1940 about Nazi atrocities in Poland was nearly all gathered by the Vatican and passed on from there so that it could be published. The same holds true for reports of Church persecution in Southern Germany and Austria.233

Wisely or otherwise, Pius came to the conclusion by about April 1941 that publicizing the atrocities for which Hitler was responsible did not deter the latter. On the contrary, it seemed to infuriate him and drive him to ever greater excesses.234 In Poland the Bishops pleaded with their Pope to moderate his pronouncements and
they informed him that they dare not have his encyclicals read from churches in their dioceses for fear of provoking ever greater retaliations. Pius finally decided to delegate the responsibility to local bishops to decide what public pronouncements could effectively be made within their own territories. Experience later in the war seems to bear out the wisdom of Pacelli’s policy. In Rumania, Hungary and Slovakia hundreds of thousands of Jews were saved from deportation to extermination camps by quiet diplomacy and pressure. On the other hand, in the Netherlands thousands of Jews, who could have been quietly saved, perished after the Dutch Catholic clergy publicly denounced their planned deportation. In Italy, especially, the vast majority of the resident Jews were saved by quiet means. A public confrontation would almost certainly have resulted in their execution.

The reality, then, seems to be that Pius was both quiet and vocal: too quiet for some, too vocal for others. The wine bottle was both half-full and half-empty. A man dying of thirst will be very grateful for what is in it - although later, when he is well satiated, he may recall resentfully that the bottle was half-empty.

There is a possibility that some of those who write critically of Vatican action or inaction during World War II may lack experience or understanding of the limitations on human initiative under a state of terror. Many seem to attribute far greater influence to the clergy and to ecclesiastical penalties than either have enjoyed in Europe since the end of the Middle Ages. The Vatican has long memories. Its officials have not forgotten that excommunicating Elizabeth I of England and absolving her subjects from allegiance did not achieve its purpose. On the contrary, it created problems and disabilities from which Catholic Englishmen still suffered three centuries later.

Open warfare between the Vatican and the German State would not only have resulted in the slaughter of thousands of clergymen and perhaps millions of faithful, as the example of occupied Poland suggests, but it might also have created a Nazi Catholic Church by Vatican alienation of a large part of the German hierarchy who felt themselves to be “good Germans.”

It has been suggested that Pius XII could have struck a heroic pose, and unreservedly condemned Hitler and all his policies. He might have had to suffer martyrdom for his gesture, or he might have gotten away with it as regards consequences to his own person. But it does seem almost certain that forty million German Catholics, to whom he often made reference, would have had to pay a heavy price.

There seems to be unanimity in all detailed historical accounts about certain aspects of Eugenio Pacelli. All agree that he was a brilliant man, that he was sensitive, that he had a delicate conscience, and that he was cautious and prudent. He was also known to be courageous, compassionate, and generous. If he had any faults they were those of his virtues taken to extremes. He was also an organization man, a self-effacing diplomatic bureaucrat who often worked eighteen hours a day to the verge of nervous exhaustion.

And yet, in terms of the Vatican goals and policies considered in this thesis, he could hardly be described as successful. He favored the Allied cause, but before the war was over the American and British press reviled him for his “pro-German” and “pro-Italian” utterances. During 1939 and 1940 he did about all that was humanly possible to keep Italy out of the war; and when the opportune moment came, Mussolini jumped in to despoil defeated France. Pius XII probably went further than any other Pope in the last four centuries to overthrow a government and a system; and all that came of that effort was the execution of some 4,500 members of that German elite with whom he could well have worked to create a new “Christian” order in Europe. Of all his major efforts, described in this paper, not one can be said to have achieved its purpose. And yet, it seems, that Europe in one of the worst crises of its entire history was a somewhat more humane, more civilized, place for the efforts of this very shy and highly nervous man.

This thesis has demonstrated that the Vatican, in the person of Pope Pius XII, was wholly and irrevocably committed to the condemnation of all forms of totalitarian government and the ideological foundations supporting such government. Chapter III has detailed the very many and various efforts of Pius XII to keep Italy non-belligerent after the failure of Vatican efforts to prevent the outbreak of the conflict over Danzig and the Polish corridor.
In Chapters II and IV, I have attempted to demonstrate the complexity of the Vatican’s simultaneous relationships with the German Government, the Roman Catholic hierarchy of various nations, the German Resistance, the governments of various nations at war with Germany, as well as the victims of Germany’s aggression. That such relationships would entail contradictory pressures and obligations was inevitable. That Pius XII grossly violated the very treaty which gave juridical existence to the Vatican State has been amply demonstrated. If such action can be justified at all, it would seem that it would be under the principle that in an extreme enough case, where millions of lives and the very existence of nations and peoples are at stake, the meticulous observance of treaties does not take precedence over all other considerations.

Much time and space has been devoted to the intricacies of the conspiracy against Hitler, in which the Pope was an “unindicted co-conspirator,” and the reasons for its failure. This seemed justified because so much in the Pope’s plans and hopes depended upon the successful removal from power of Adolf Hitler. That this should have failed was not at all inevitable, but it was understandable. The consequences of the failure were incalculable. Had World War II ended in a negotiated settlement, in 1940, between the British Government headed by Chamberlain, and a German Government headed by Carl Goerdeler, the world today would be a far different place.

The removal of Hitler having failed, the Vatican can be said to have had only two possible realizable goals during World War II: It could use its diplomatic and persuasive powers to attempt to moderate the behavior of the aggressors and it could do all that was humanly possible in the aftermath of aggression to minimize the harm to the victims. One may, it seems, safely assume that the latter exertions were more successful than the former, but perhaps that was due less to the efforts and abilities of Pius XII, than to the nature and values of the adversaries he faced.

Incidentally, and in passing, there have been continuous references to Eugenio Pacelli’s humanitarian efforts, both as Pope and before, to alleviate human sufferings. This was not so much a policy as an almost instinctive reflex of a very compassionate man who could hardly bear to hear of human misery such as killing, pain, starvation, and the separation from loved ones. If this aspect has not been covered systematically it is partly because of its spontaneous rather than planned nature. Large-scale efforts to locate missing persons, prevent starvation, hide and rescue Jews, prevent or curtail the bombing of civilian populations all occurred in the later stages of the war, beyond the chronological limits of this thesis.

Only in his efforts to diminish and alleviate sufferings can Pope Pius XII be said to have been successful. Even here he did not do anything spectacular that would alter future human organization or modify global concepts. He merely earned the gratitude of millions of individual Poles, Jews, and Western Europeans who would likely not be alive today, but for one man’s humanitarian efforts. In the words of Sir Francis D’Arcy Osborne who was in continual touch with Pius XII during the time covered by this thesis: “Pius XII was the most warmly humane, kindly, generous, sympathetic . . . character that it has been my privilege to meet in the course of a long life.”

NOTES
4See for example DGFP XI, p. 792; and Delzell, Papacy and Totalitarianism, p. 85.
6Holmes, Papacy, p. 120.
7Delzell, Papacy and Totalitarianism, p. 92; RDHS I, pp. 87, 316.
8Halecki and Murray, Pius XII, pp. 129-130.
9Ibid., pp. 3-10.
11Halecki and Murray, Pius XII, pp. 15-16, 22 ff.
13Halecki and Murray, Pius XII, p. 24.
14Ibid., pp. 27-28.
15Ibid., pp. 28-31.
17Halecki and Murray, Pius XII, pp. 28-31; Hughes, Popes’ New Order, pp. 186-193.
18Halecki and Murray, Pius XII, pp. 32-41; RDHS I, pp. 4-5.
19Halecki and Murray, Pius XII, pp. 46-47; RDHS I, pp. 4-5.
20Ibid., pp. 52-53; Delzell, Papacy and Totalitarianism, p. 84.
21Halecki and Murray, Pius XII, p. 54; Hughes, Popes’ New Order, p. 18.
22Also called “Lateran Pacts,” referring to the three separate agreements: 1) Mutual recognition of the legal existence of the Vatican and the Italian Kingdom. 2) A concordat dealing with marriage and church-state relations. 3) A financial agreement concerned with compensation by Italy to the Vatican. (See Delzell, Papacy and Totalitarianism, pp. 2-3.)
23Halecki and Murray, Pius XII, pp. 62-63.
24Ibid., p. 63; Delzell, Papacy and Totalitarianism, p. 83.
25Holmes, Papacy, p. 119; Halecki and Murray, Pius XII, p. 65.
26Halecki and Murray, Pius XII, pp. 70-72; Delzell, Papacy and Totalitarianism, p. 57.
29 “Pius XII,” L’Osservatore Romano, March 18, 1976, p. 8; RDHS I, p. 5.
30Holmes, Papacy, p. 121.
31Halecki and Murray, Pius XII, p. 138. 32DGFP VI, p. 519.
33Lapide, Last Three Popes, p. 99.
34Ibid, pp 102-104.
35Ibid., pp. 104-105, 120.
36Ibid., p. 119.
37Halecki and Murray, Pius XII, p. 138; RDHS I, p. 4.
38Lapide, Last Three Popes, pp. 120-121.
39Ibid., pp. 122-123; RDHS I, p. 4.
40Falconi, Silence, p. 93; Holmes, Papacy, p. 121.
41DGFP VI, p. 516.
42Ibid., pp. 29, 300, 483; Halecki and Murray, *Pius XII*, p. 141.
43Halecki and Murray, *Pius XII*, p. 141.
46Chadwick, “Papacy and WW II”, p. 73.
48Chadwick, “Papacy and WW II”, p. 73.
50Chadwick, “Papacy and WW II”, p. 73; RDHS I, pp. 36,41-43.
56RDHS I, pp. 243-244.
57Ibid., p. 233.
58Ibid., p. 246.
59Ibid., p. 256.
61RDHS I, p. 260.
63RDHS I, pp. 268-269.
64Halecki and Murray, *Pius XII*, pp. 120-121.
65Ibid., p. 121; RDHS I, p. 300.
67Ibid., pp. 127-128, 131. An impression of the degree of brutality exercised toward the civilian population can be gathered from passages written in 1940 in the Diaries of Hitler's former ambassador to Italy: “The hungry workers are gradually getting weaker, the Jews are systematically being exterminated, and a devilish campaign is being launched against the Polish intelligentsia with the express purpose of annihilating it. For the death of one SS man... five hundred intellectuals were taken at random from the lists of lawyers, doctors, et cetera, and murdered.” See Ulrich von Hassel, *Von Hassel Diaries* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1947), pp. 152, 159, 100, 105, 114, 115.
69Ibid., p. 129.
72Ibid., pp. 129-130.
73In White Propaganda the source is properly identified, in Gray Propaganda it is left in doubt, in Black Propaganda the propagandist assumes a false identity. Holmes, *Papacy*, p. 130.
74Ibid., pp. 130-131.
75Ibid., p. 131.
76Ibid., p. 134.
77DGFP X, pp. 245-248, 294-296.


80Chadwick, “Papacy and WW II”, p. 76; RDHS I, pp. 470-471.

81Halecki and Murray, Pius XII, p. 156; RDHS I, p. 5.

82Halecki and Murray, Pius XII, pp. 157-158.

83Ibid., p. 159; RDHS I, pp. 49-52.

84RDHS I, p. 327.

85Ibid., p. 329; Halecki and Murray, Pius XII, p. 159.

86Halecki and Murray, Pius XII, pp. 160-161; RDHS I, pp. 336, 341.

87RDHS I, p. 355.


89Tull, Coughlin, pp. 235-237.


91RDHS I, p. 240.

92Ibid., p. 242.

93Ibid., p. 244.

94Ibid., p. 260.

95Ibid., pp. 264-265.

96Ibid., pp. 275-276.

97Ibid., pp. 276-277.

98Ibid., p. 277.

99Ibid., pp. 282-283.

100Ibid., pp. 285-286.

101Ibid., p. 289.

102Ibid., p. 294.


104RDHS I, pp. 295-302.

105Ibid., p. 317.

106Ibid., p.323.

107Ibid., p. 324.

108Kirkpatrick, Mussolini, p. 437.

109Ibid., p.438.


111Ibid., p. 338.

112Kirkpatrick, Mussolini, p. 441.

113Ibid., p. 442.

114Halecki and Murray, Pius XII, p. 121.

115RDHS I, pp. 345-346.

116Ibid., pp. 348-349.

117Ibid., p. 350.

118Kirkpatrick, Mussolini, pp. 443, 447.

119RDHS I, pp. 354-361.

120Ibid., p. 357.
121Ibid. pp 360, 364.
122Ibid. p.369.
123Ibid. pp 369-370.
124Ibid., p. 374.
125Ibid., pp. 375-376.
126Ibid., pp. 375, 380.
127Ibid., pp. 382-383.
128Ibid., p. 388.
129Kirkpatrick, Musolini, pp. 453, 461.
130RDHS I , p. 390.
132Ibid., p. 393; Kirkpatrick, Musolini, p. 455.
133RDHS I, p. 395.
134Ibid, p. 403.
135Kirkpatrick, Musolini, pp. 455-456.
136RDHS I, pp. 396-397.
137Ibid pp. 399-400.
138Ibid., pp. 400-401.
139Ibid
141Ibid pp 422-423. Italics and parentheses as in original text.
143Ibid., p. 427.
144Ibid., pp. 433-434.
145Ibid., pp. 443-446.
146von Hassell, Diaries, pp. 135, 140.
147Kirkpatrick, Musolini, pp. 466-467.
151Lewy, Nazi Germany, pp. 303-305; Chadwick, Journal, p. 78.
152Lewy, Nazi Germany, pp. 304, 316, 319.
153RDHS I, p. 86.
154Ibid. pp. 313.
156Hohne, Canaris, pp. 388-389.
157Deutsch, Twilight War, p. 117.
158Hohne, Canaris, pp. 384, 389-390.
159Deutsch, Twilight War, pp. 114-115, 121; The same source, on page 349, mentions that a “high British official,” in 1944, told Father Leiber: “Pius XII in his efforts for peace went to the outer limits of what was possible for a Pope.”
160Ibid., pp.117-118.
161Ibid., pp.118-119.
162Ibid., p.119.
163Ibid., p. 120.
164Ibid., p.121.
165 Hoffmann, *History*, pp. 159-160.
166 Chadwick, “Papacy and WW II”, p. 78.
167 Deutsch, *Twilight War*, p. 121.
168 Ibid., pp. 122-124.
169 Ibid., p. 124.
170 Hoffmann, *History*, p. 158.
173 Ibid., pp 509, 529, 582.
177 Deutsch, *Twilight War*, pp. 136-137.
179 Ibid.
180 Ibid., pp. 160-161.
181 Ibid., p. 161.
182 Ibid., pp. 161-162.
187 Ibid., p. 123.
189 Hohne, *Canaris*, p. 396.
200 RDHS I, p. 316.
203 RDHS I, pp. 342-343.
205 RDHS I, p. 389.
207 Ibid.
210Ibid., p. 411.  
211Ibid pp. 410-411.  
212Ibid., pp. 415-416; For further comments on Canaris’ attitude toward treason see Deutsch, *Twilight War*, p. 65.

214Ibid., p. 418.  

218Deutsch, *Twilight War*, p. 137.  
219Ibid p. 351.  
220Ibid.  
221Ibid., pp. 351-352.  
222Among those who especially fall into this category are Guenter Lewy, Gordon Zahn, John Morley, Mary Alice Gallin, Carlo Falconi and Pinchas Lapide. To a lesser extent the following authors also touch upon the issue of Papal silence: Oscare Halecki, E.E.Y. Hales, Charles Delzell and Derek Holmes.

223It must be clarified that for this thesis, which deals only with 1939 and 1940, the question of Jewish genocide does not play a role since that program did not go into effect before early 1942. In the early stages of the war Hitler had, after receiving no response to Germany’s offer to send Jews to any country which wanted them, tentatively decided on Madagascar as a possible site for dumping Europe’s Jews.

225Lewy, *Nazi Germany*, p. 305.  
226See above, Chapter IV, pp. 76, 82.  
227See above, Chapter I, pp. 3, 8, 9, 11-13.  
228See above, Chapter I, pp. 10-11; also RDHS I, p. 87.  
229See above, Chapter II, pp. 33-37.  
230See above, Chapter III, p. 66.  
231See above, Chapter I, pp. 11-12; Chapter II, pp. 16-18.  
232See above, Chapter II, pp. 25-30.  
233See above, Chapter IV, pp. 77-78.  
241Ibid., pp. 245-256.  
243Ibid., p. 266.  
247For example when he protested the Allied war aim of “unconditional surrender,” or British-American bombing policies, or the desecration of Mussolini’s corpse.

251In making this statement I have not overlooked the Jewish victims of “the Holocaust.” According to Pinchas Lapide, a Zionist (upon whose cause the Vatican has never looked kindly), the Church headed by Pius XII was responsible for saving approximately 800,000 Jewish lives, far more than were saved by all other organized efforts put together. (See his *Last Three Popes*, pp. 213-222.)

252See above, Chapter I, pp. 8, 9, 11, 13; Chapter II, pp. 16-19, 27-30; Chapter III, pp. 47, 48, 51, 56, 61, 66; Chapter IV, pp. 69, 90, 97.
253 See above, Chapter II, pp. 20-25.
254 See above, Chapter I, pp. 1-2, 6-7, 8-9; Chapter II, pp. 26-28; Chapter III, pp. 41, 45, 50-52, 56, 66-67; Chapter IV, pp. 83, 92, 97.