

Nazi and vatican wwii relations

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Primary Facts

Holy See/ Vatican (seat of the Roman Catholic Church) and Germany forged relations in July 20, 1933 known as the Concordat of the Reich Concordat.

Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli (who later became Pope Pius XII in 1939) and Germany's Vice Chancellor Franz Von Papen were the Instrumental figures in the agreement. Witnessed by Msgr. Giovanni Montini (later became Pope Paul VI) and Ludwig Kaas (leader of Germany's Catholic Center Party).

Pope Pius XI and Hitler approved the Concordat but were not in attendance.

Prior to this Concordat, the Catholic bishops were active in denouncing Nazism.

1. Prior to WWII

Original reasons for the concordat (Vatican)

Generous financial assistance to German Catholic Schools(Alvarez and Graham)

Prior Concordat treaties were made with other nations like Bavaria in 1925; Prussia in 1929; and Baden in 1932

Autonomy of ecclesiastical institutions and their activities (Alvarez and Graham: 1997: 3)

Establish better footing in Protestant-controlled Germany

Prevent the spread of communism using Nazism as a bulwark

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Joint Agreement with the Nazi party for the Church's protection

Other vested interests

Original Reason for the Concordat (Germany)

To silence the Catholic bishops' persistent denouncing on the spread of Nazism.

Gain the church's approval and international recognition

Establish the trustworthiness and reliability of the Nazi regime.

Ensure the rise of Nazism, unopposed

Soften the Catholic Church's opposition to socialism by relying on the power of the pope over the congregation based on the Canon law.

Establish power over the German churches.

Endorse the Nazi ideology on divided German priests

Other vested interests

Negative Effects of the Concordat on the Roman Catholic Church

Hitler established in 1935 a Ministry of Church Affairs to oversee church movements and placed churches under administrative control.

Nazism was actively taught in schools which included " a salute" to Nazi officers.

Anti-Semitism was fanned as Jewish-hate propaganda was endorsed by the

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Nazi regime.

German priests were taught that Nazism reasserts the values of religion.

Religious activities were barred outside places of worship.

Authority of the Roman Catholic Church was questioned

Reduction of vocations to the priesthood by encouraging men to marry

Increasing hostility as Hitler decided not to honor the pact.

Notes:

Pope Pius XI started condemning the Nazi party but died shortly before he could deliver a blunt message to the public in 1939. Barely a month after, Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli assumed the papacy as Pope Pius XII as the wartime pope. War broke out in September of the same year.

There are rumors presented by Cardinal Tisserant that Pope Pius XI was murdered a few hours before he was to deliver a message condemning Germany.

2. During the War

The Vatican

Ended Pius XI's ban on Action Francaise which is an anti-Semitic organization

Denied knowledge on reported atrocities committed by the Nazi party against Jews.

Conciliatory policy of silence despite reports from bishops and other foreign dignitaries.

Did not denounce the humanitarian problem of the Jews and other marginalized sectors in Europe.

Refused to acknowledge any knowledge of the crimes against humanity.

Never excommunicated Hitler.

Remain mum and allowed genocide of the Jews.

Reasons for upholding the Concordat and silence despite Germany ignoring it

Pressured into silence by Germany's privileged information gathering on the Vatican

Believed that Nazism could work against communist movement

Germany questioned the neutrality of the Vatican

Fear of offending Germany and losing support.

Protection of the church properties and interest during the war

Protection of assets and interests

Veiled endorsement of anti-Semitism

Results:

Hitler's refusal to honor the terms in the Concordat allowed the worst genocide in the history of mankind among Jews and other marginalized sectors in Europe.

Properties were looted, women and children subjected to punishment and executions along with men. Treatment of men like common criminals or animals without legal consequences; mass murders of Jews with the supreme effort to eradicate their bloodline.