A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF AMERICAN AND AUSTRALIAN
CATHOLIC REACTION TO EUROPEAN DIPLOMATIC CRISES:
1935 TO 1939

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ACTU: Australian Council of Trade Unions
ALP: Australian Labor Party
NCWC: National Catholic Welfare Conference
WASP: White Anglo-Saxon Protestant
PART I

INTRODUCTION

In the two decades separating the end of the first World War from the outbreak of the second, there was a rapid decline of liberal attitudes and institutions throughout Europe. By 1939 liberal regimes survived only in such countries as Great Britain, France, the Low Countries, Scandinavia and Switzerland. In much of the rest of Europe the rule of law, constitutional safeguards and parliamentary bodies had collapsed under internal and external pressures. The war to make the world safe for democracy had uprooted millions of people, organised and sanctioned violence on a scale undreamed of by earlier nationalist leaders and left many participating nations economically prostrate. The crises which followed upon the war affected the whole of society. The great empires which had ruled over so much of Europe for so long had disappeared in the maelstrom of war, and with them the stability and security they had ensured. The instability of post war conditions everywhere placed stresses on disoriented and demoralised liberal governments which the weaker among them could not withstand. At the
same time they faced a growing challenge from both left
and right extremists. Ethnic, social and political
dissensions in some countries opened the way for a
firmer authority than that provided by liberal democratic
governments. In others, these conditions proved fertile
ground for the spread of communism and its doctrine of
world revolution. In one country after another, with what
seemed like alarming suddenness, communists, fascists,
nazis and their many imitators seized power and began to
exercise it without any constitutional or, in many cases,
moral restraints. Millions of people found themselves
subjected to a whole new way of life as totalitarian
regimes appeared throughout Europe.¹ Totalitarianism is
not only a political system; it is an ideology, making
a total claim upon society and the individual. Since a
totalitarian regime asserts complete direct authority
over all its subjects and the whole range of their
activities, it must harness the ideals, the aspirations
and the emotions of the multitude, not to satisfy them
but to destroy resistance to the leader's total powers,

¹ The following countries all rejected liberal govern-
ments for some form of dictatorship: Hungary 1919,
Turkey 1920, Spain 1923, Italy 1925, Portugal, Poland
and Lithuania 1926, Yugoslavia 1929, Germany, Austria
and Estonia 1933, Bulgaria and Latvia 1934, Greece
1936, Rumania 1938.
whether at home or abroad. By the 1930s much of Europe was engulfed by the two great forms of totalitarianism, communism and fascism, both of which claimed to provide panaceas for the ills of the world.

The first totalitarian state, and subsequently the universal model, was Soviet Russia during the period of war communism from 1918 to 1920. It was during these years that Lenin demonstrated that the communist party was not to be bound by any objective norms, not even those of its own making. The will of the leader, unlimited in scope and unrestrained in application, was to be supreme. This power was to be used in the name of the proletarian dictatorship, and this dictatorship was to cover the face of the earth. Immediately upon assuming power in Russia, the Bolsheviks launched an intensive campaign of international revolutionary propaganda and subversion. The demoralisation that spread rapidly in Europe after the war, especially among the defeated Central powers, provided the climate for the necessary social upheavals which should precede the revolution. Many who before 1914 had turned deaf ears to radical agitation were now prepared to believe that most social and political orders were rotten and that

the time had come to do away with them. In March 1919, when communist sponsored revolts in central Europe were at their height, Lenin launched the Third, or Communist International, dedicated to the cause of world revolution. The task of this organisation was everywhere to stimulate and assist revolutionary movements. This concept of world-wide revolution introduced a new and explosive element into international relations. It implied the rejection of existing state systems and the deliberate refusal to recognise peace and stability as goals of foreign policy. At home it justified the establishment of a totalitarian regime and it challenged the old order in every respect.  

The second great totalitarian ideology, fascism, originated in Italy but soon spread to other European countries. The various forms of fascism were very different in character and mirrored the entirely different backgrounds of the countries in which they developed. Some were more conservative, some less. Some were violently anti-Semitic, some were not. In different countries they attracted different classes of people. But all were strongly nationalistic and anti-communist. All forms of fascism were utterly opposed to democracy and political parties, which they wanted to eliminate and

3. Franz Borkenau, European Communism (London 1953) Ch.1 passim.
replace by a new authoritarian and corporative state. They were all a reformulation of the nationalistic aspirations of the pre-war years in the more favourable circumstances of the 1920s and 1930s. In these decades, nationalists had two advantages which they had lacked before. The revolutionary menace, now embodied into actual practice, predisposed many to back the most forceful opponents of communism. As well the aftermath of war and economic depression turned many more individuals into potential recruits. Fascism was the product of the deep social and economic crises of European society which shook the structures of the established order and persuaded many thousands of people that salvation lay in action. Fascist parties were conceived as tightly organised semi-military machines by which state and society were to be conquered and order to be restored. In all of them, para-military associations or militias, their members clad in black, brown, green or blue shirts and uniforms, played an important part. These were the activists who had to bear the brunt of the struggle for power. Part of the movement's ideology was a powerful myth of the nation and the race, which was to be preserved at all costs. It was a movement of nationalist and racial violence. The clearest expressions of fascist
totalitarianism were to be found in Italy and Germany, but it flourished in almost every country in Europe where disillusionment and disorder invited the assumption of power by a strong nationalist leader offering action and reform.\footnote{F.L. Carsten, \textit{The Rise of Fascism} (London 1967) 230-235.}

Any ideology which demands the total allegiance of its adherents ultimately must confront that most universal of total ideologies, the Catholic church. Many of the European countries which accepted communist and fascist dictators were traditionally Catholic countries. It is true that the Catholic church does not condemn any particular form of government \textit{per se}. In two thousand years she has learnt to live with and under most of the forms of government devised by man. Such coexistence is possible as long as governments demand only the legal and political allegiance of men, leaving the church supreme in the spiritual and moral sphere. It becomes difficult, even impossible, when governments assume control of the total range of man's activities. So the rise of the totalitarian dictators was paralleled by their efforts, first to control and then, in most cases, to destroy the Catholic church.

From the middle of the nineteenth century on,
communism came to be regarded by the church as the great enemy of Catholicism, the ultimate expression of modern man's revolt against God, the church and civilisation. The official opposition of the church to Marxism was voiced first by Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical, Rerum Novarum, issued in 1891. In his discussion of social justice, the pope condemned socialism because it destroyed the right of private property and did not recognise the role of the state in maintaining a just and harmonious social order. As socialist and communist parties in Europe grew in strength in the early twentieth century, Christian Democrats, at first forbidden by the popes to mix in politics, began to oppose them in Germany, France and Italy. The Russian Revolution with the subsequent suppression of religion and the activities of the Communist International were further steps in the growing hostility between communism and the church. Persecution of Catholics in Spain and Mexico brought the conflict to a head. In 1931, when Pius XI reiterated the social teaching of Rerum Novarum and brought it up to date, he explicitly condemned communism. In his encyclical,

5. The pope used this term to describe what we would now call communism.
Quadragesimo Anno, he accused communists of pursuing a two-fold aim, that of merciless class war and complete abolition of private ownership. During the 1930s, with communist propaganda spreading rapidly and persecution of the church widening in scope, communism became more and more a preoccupation of Pius XI until, in 1937, he devoted a lengthy encyclical to the topic. In Divini Redemptoris, the strongest condemnation of communism by the church to date, Pius declared that a conspiracy of silence on the part of the press had left the world in ignorance concerning the enormous scale of the horrors perpetrated against the church in Russia, Spain and Mexico. He then set clearly before the world the primacy of the "red menace" in the eyes of the church. By this time, fervent Catholics throughout the world had engaged in the battle against the enemy. Communism became a slogan to be used in attacking any policies or movements seen as harmful to the church or opposed to her teaching, from birth control to labour unions. Opposition to communism became the great preoccupation of the church in the twentieth century.6

If the church found it impossible to come to terms with communist regimes, the same appeared not to be true of its relations with fascist governments. Perhaps this

had something to do with the fact that fascism began in Italy and that Mussolini's fascism was not so extreme as later forms, especially nazism, were to be. It certainly had a great deal to do with fascist opposition to communism. Again and again Pius XI condemned fascism as it existed in Italy, because despite its obvious advantages, it was substituting political domination for free activity. Against its plan of indoctrination of youth in schools and para-military associations, the pope waged a ceaseless warfare. The foundation of this campaign, the belief that in comparison with the state all individuals or groups had only a relative significance, he condemned as a denial of the primary rights of the individual, the family and the church, all of which come before the state. As well as claiming the right to control education, Mussolini compelled Pius in 1931 severely to curtail the scope of Catholic action in Italy. "Catholic action" was the name used by the pope for his campaign, given form and organisation in the planning of the French Abbe Cardijn, to deal with the problems of the church in the modern world. This movement, which was to acquire sinister overtones for many non-Catholics in the years following its foundation, generally meant nothing more than the organised involvement of the laity in the apostolic work of the church under the guidance of the bishops.
Effort was to be concentrated in those areas of life with which the clergy had evidently lost contact, and young Catholics were encouraged to participate in the movement. Mussolini saw it as a challenge to complete government control and excluded its activities from the political arena and from the corporations and syndicates which had replaced trade unions. In spite of these difficulties, dictator and pope shared the same enemies and the same political realism. Both detested communism and were determined that it would not capture Italy. The freemasons who for over a century had been the implacable enemies of the church in Italy now had the activities of their lodges, their banks and their press curtailed by the fascist regime. The struggle between the church and the state was a source of weakness for both, and to Pius the fascist government was preferable to either the anarchy or the communism which seemed to be the only alternatives in the peninsula. The Lateran treaty of 1929, intended to establish a working relationship between the two leaders, was the first of a series of concordats between the Vatican and European fascist regimes over the next decade. The treaties were more often honoured in the breach than in the observance, and Hitler, who made his peace with the church in 1933, quickly demonstrated that the Catholic church and nazism could not exist happily side by side. But the fact that
the concordats were actually concluded, as well as the church's support for leaders like Dollfus in Austria, Salazar in Portugal and Franco in Spain, indicated that in spite of profound disagreements with its ideology, the church found fascism preferable to communism. 7

This fact necessarily coloured the reactions of large sections of the Catholic church in other parts of the world to events in Europe during the 1930s. As one crisis succeeded another, Catholics everywhere faced the dilemma of divided loyalties. Did one condemn communism as the greatest evil and condone fascism as a system less evil? Could Catholics remain neutral while other Catholics suffered bitter persecution at the hands of one or other of the totalitarian regimes? When Mussolini marched his troops into Abyssinia world opinion condemned this expression of fascist imperialism. Catholics might be in sympathy with this reaction, but the head of their church was himself an Italian, who had somehow come to a working agreement with Mussolini. They did not want this delicate balance disturbed, and many believed that the pope might suffer through a condemnation of fascist policies. Mussolini's venture in Africa could not be compared, in Catholic eyes, with the bitter persecutions

against the church which had been raging in Mexico and Spain for several years, persecutions which the church attributed wholly to communist influence in the two countries. Franco and his nationalist troops fought against communism and this won for him the support of the church. Catholics were aware, however, of Franco's excesses against the Republicans, and the prospect of a dictatorial government if he were victorious. It was not until 1937 that Pius XI voiced any condemnation of nazi policies, in spite of Hitler's ruthless and continuous war against religion from the moment he seized power. The growing oppression and atrocities in Germany during these years appeared to weigh less in the eyes of the official church than the concordat of 1933 and Hitler's opposition to communism. European Catholics who had to live in the existential situation of fascist regimes often must have been bewildered by the dichotomy between their church's semi-official acceptance of one form and condemnation of another, and their own daily exposure in each to harrassment and persecution. There probably seemed to them little to choose between the two. For those farther removed from the realities of fascism in all its forms, did the situations look less complex, the choices more clear-cut? Were they content to follow what seemed to be the official policy of their church? Or did the
political, social and intellectual climate in which they lived significantly affect the reaction of Catholics in more remote countries to events in Europe?

In attempting to answer these questions, I have chosen to discuss the reaction of American and Australian Catholics to certain events in Europe during the years 1935 to 1939. The United States and Australia, both democratic countries with predominantly Anglo-Saxon populations, watched events in Europe with a large measure of detachment. This detachment was due, not only to distance, but also to the strong isolationist mood which prevailed in both countries. Both had played their part in the first World War, and were determined that in future Europe must settle her own troubles as best she could. The people of each country were preoccupied with domestic concerns, more especially with economic recovery in the wake of the world-wide economic depression of the early years of the decade. In the United States President Roosevelt concentrated during his first term of office almost exclusively on his New Deal policies and plans, and in this, according to a contemporary report, he reflected "the judgment and spirit of the times in the land".  

Isolationist feeling was to reach an all time high among

Americans by 1937. A willingness to allow Great Britain to formulate empire policy without too great consideration of the details, together with a strong aversion to participation in another war, characterised large sections of the Australian population in the 1930s.\(^9\) The isolationism of the two countries was somewhat different in kind. That of Australia was the isolationism of a people who realised that British policy could lead them into war, in spite of their desire not to participate in an experience similar to that of the years 1914 to 1918. Americans, on the other hand, were responsible for their own neutrality on involvement in international affairs, and their isolationism was characterised by a search for neutrality legislation that would guarantee their continued isolation. In both countries Catholics constituted a significant minority group in predominantly Protestant populations. They were conscious of their particular national identity but conscious, too, of their membership of an international body, with long established traditions and attitudes towards various forms of government. American and Australian Catholics therefore

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viewed the rise of totalitarian governments in Europe if not differently from their fellow countrymen, at least with an added dimension to their vision. That their Catholicism should add another dimension rather than change or dictate their whole view, was due to what has been called the basic intention or direction of American Catholicism, a concept which applies equally to Catholicism in Australia. This basic intention is influenced by three elements. The first is the situation of these Catholics. Both countries are a varied mosaic, geographically, politically and culturally. In each there is an affirmation of individual liberty with a profound respect for social customs and convention, and in each a plurality of religious beliefs. Australian and American Catholics are thus situated at the centre of numerous influences, and live in the midst of a pluralism not found in older, traditionally Catholic countries. The second element is the predominance of the social function of the human person in these two societies. The way in which he contributes to economic prosperity is what largely defines a man. Whether it is called materialism or secularism; whether it is defined as Marxism or capitalism, is not important here. What is important is the reaction of the Catholic to a kind of humanism which is not to be found in traditional theology.
Finally, Catholicism embraces a system of morality, a way of life which imposes itself on the individual believer. It requires individual, family and social conduct of a particular kind. It is the interaction of this morality with the other two factors which gives the intention, or fundamental options of Catholicism in newer countries such as Australia and the United States. Catholic reaction to certain events often reveals the subtle conflicts experienced at this point of interaction, as individual Catholics try to reconcile political and social realities with traditional Catholic theology and tradition. Therefore I would argue that the reaction of American and Australian Catholics to events in Europe in the 1930s was far more than a simple reflection of what might appear to them as the official attitude of their church. Rather, it illustrates and illuminates certain fundamental aspects of their relationship with their own particular society.

The first question to be asked is what is meant by "Catholic?" Is it the hierarchy or the thousands of Catholic laymen? Is it the multitude of Catholic organisations, the Catholic press, or all of these put together? A further question is to what extent the historian can

measure and document the attitudes and reactions of any or all of these groups.

One must begin from the assumption that only a small percentage of any social group leaves a record of its reaction to public affairs. An even smaller percentage is genuinely concerned about any given foreign policy issue, since most politically alert citizens nearly always interest themselves in domestic problems or local or state affairs. 11 Surveys conducted in the United States suggest a maximum proportion of about 16 or 17 percent of the population really caring about foreign events and foreign policy. 12 It would be reasonable to expect an increased percentage in a particular social group when their interests are closely involved. So Catholic interest in foreign affairs would be heightened by reports of persecution of fellow Catholics in other countries, or by threats to the Church's welfare on the part of foreign governments. This would perhaps lead to a wider range of expressed opinions in the group. But this does not invalidate the assumption that a relatively small percentage of the population (or of any part of the population) shows real concern about foreign affairs. Given the strong isolationist


mood prevailing in both the United States and Australia during most of the 1930s, the "foreign policy public" must have been quite small relative to the total population of these two countries. In all social groups there are to be found those who make public statements, and who could be termed the official opinion-makers. These are certain well-known figures who know, or who think they know, the facts (or some of them) and who make statements and set forth arguments meant to influence others. The opinions of such persons, be they politicians, church leaders, editors or writers, do not necessarily represent general opinions and reactions. But the historian cannot ignore these views, even if they constitute merely "elite opinion". 13 The relationship existing between such opinion leaders and the rest of the population may be as insubstantial as cobweb, but it is just as much a reality. Faced with complex questions, the average citizen is likely to turn for guidance to those who profess knowledge. These, in turn, consult others whom they think specially qualified and so on and so on until the questions reach those who know others as well equipped but none better equipped. While the same process might take place regardless of the issue, it would not always involve the same opinion leaders.

On an economic issue, the leaders of opinion might be the bankers, real estate dealers or educators. On a foreign policy issue they would be well-travelled politicians or other public figures with a high level of education.\textsuperscript{14} On a religious issue, they would certainly be churchmen, writers contributing to the religious press or laymen holding significant positions in religious organisations. Thus, elite opinion flows down a ladder of influence and is disseminated among the general population. Such elite opinion should not be confused with general public opinion, but it can help immeasurably in the search for that elusive reality. General surveys indicate that, considering the generally high educational level of those interested in foreign affairs, such people tend to take unqualified stands and hold opinions dogmatically. Also, foreign events often involve remote and unfamiliar things, and even informed and interested people may comprehend the issue by association or analogy.\textsuperscript{15} Both these factors are significant in discussing Catholic reaction to events in Europe in the thirties. Catholic opinion leaders often wrote and spoke about foreign affairs in those years more dogmatically than about religious matters. Much of what

\textsuperscript{14} May, \textit{American Imperialism}, 23.

\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Ibid.}
they said was also in the simplistic language of image and association, so that concepts formed of events in one country were easily transferred to those in another. The search by the historian for opinions and attitudes is helped by considering "reactions" rather than just opinions. "Reaction" can involve physical as well as mental responses to an event. When citizens attend meetings and adopt resolutions, when they march or picket, the historian can gauge more accurately the strength of their feelings on a particular issue. Those who address such gatherings are often the same leaders whose opinions are given prominence in the press, and this is another link between expressed views and general public opinion. It is the expressed views of the writers of any given period which constitute the largest single problem for the historian of opinion. If we accept that the press reflects public opinion to any significant degree, then there are written records of a small portion of it. But these opinions tend to be those of the literate and articulate sections of the public. We do not have the thoughts and ideas of the rest; we do not have any "tapes of the phone calls and who said what to whom in the pub". 16

In lieu of tapes of such conversations, the historian must

study the opinions expressed in newspapers, journals, speeches, books and other products of the articulate public. The most he can say with certainty is that these opinions were read and probably held by some members of the public. Editorials and journal articles serve as expressions of opinion developing within and circulating out from leadership groups within the community. One has to assume that the sampling of opinion leaders discoverable in the press somehow represents the larger and more varied leadership group whose words and opinions are not recorded. If the historian errs in making such an assumption, it is an error committed in good historical company. So it is, that when trying to assess the reaction of American and Australian Catholics to events in Europe, the emphasis is, of necessity, on the leadership or elite opinion group within the Catholic minority. Undoubtedly, in practice there must be unending circuits of leadership relationships running through the community, like a nerve system through the body. Using indications of the influence of some of these relationships, it should be possible to learn something of the motives which caused

17. May, American Imperialism, 39.

Catholics to react as they did to certain European
diplomatic crises in the 1930s.

A study of opinions within a religious group must take into consideration the added element which the religious dimension brings to the problem. By its very nature, a religious organisation must influence its members in a special way, but its influence on the political and social behaviour of its adherents is not subject to precise measurement. It would appear to many observers that, in the case of the Catholic church, policy and opinions are handed down in a direct line from the pope through the hierarchy to a passive laity in the pews. This, of course, is a caricature, but it nevertheless contains an element of truth. There are, on a number of questions, clear-cut, authoritative Catholic principles, defined and interpreted by an easily visible system in which roles and statuses are firmly fixed and which finds its apex in the position occupied by one man, the pope.¹⁹

On the other hand, if one's message is intended to be universal it must be very general, and it must, from the start, leave room for some interpretation. When it is taken up and interpreted by different hierarchies and

different members of these hierarchies in different countries, with differing degrees of development, different proportions of Catholics with a different history, an infinite variety of interpretations can result. 20 The core of religious belief remains the same; its application to daily life is an ever-changing sociological and psychological phenomenon. 21 It would seem an impossible task to gauge to what extent a Catholic citizen is influenced by his religious beliefs in his attitudes to daily events. That he is so influenced is readily agreed upon, but most historians would find the fact very difficult to document. Perhaps the best one can do is to indicate where strongly held views on certain matters coincide with a predominantly Catholic population, without trying to decide the exact degree of causal relationship.

The Catholic church, like all other organised religious groups, faces a fundamental problem in the conflict between its doctrines and the practices of the wider society in which it exists. Theoretically the religious group must choose between striving to revolutionise society so as to conform it to the creed's ideals,

20. Ibid., 199.
or accepting the role of rationalising the difference between its creed and social behaviour. The first course calls for a complete withdrawal from, or a declaration of war against other major social institutions. The second either calls for a very high degree of tolerance, or allies the religious group in a submissive position to other institutions. Few religious organisations are to be found at either of these extremes. Most groups choose intermediate positions and, where possible, moderate their ideologies accordingly. In the case of the Catholic church we see paradoxical elements of permanence and resistance to large historical trends coupled with broad co-operation with all sorts of secular agents. The doctrinal core of the church is maintained rigorously, while flexibility in more mundane matters is permitted and almost universal. Denying the possibility of a utopia on this earth, the Catholic church does not aim to change fundamentally human nature and human institutions. On the other hand, it does not retreat into an otherworldliness which would condemn it to permanent ineffectuality in large affairs. The Catholic church

22. Moberg, 51ff.

always remains an integral part of the institutional fabric of society. It must therefore share people, space, wealth and other elements with other institutions. Churches are a part of society; even when they pull apart from society and try to be separate, they cannot fully succeed in freeing themselves from the web of economic, political and other social relationships of the culture, and from the complex patterns of past cultural conditioning which the individual members have experienced. Church members are also members of other social institutions, and this affects both group identification and group identity. Group identifications lead persons to take sides in conflicts and help determine their intensity. When numerous cross pressures are involved because of the many roles assumed by people in complex societies, group conflicts and group loyalty are both likely to be weakened by competing loyalties.\textsuperscript{24} The Catholic church, then, must not be viewed as a monolithic unity. The image of the church most frequently invoked is that of an authoritarian religious structure from which something called "the consistent mind of the church" emerges. However, while there are dominant movements and trends discernible within the Catholic minority everywhere, on specific issues apathy

\textsuperscript{24} Moberg, \textit{The Church as a Social Institution}, 517.
or opposition in other forms might possess numerical superiority. Like Catholics in all societies, American and Australian Catholics are divided. The divisions do not run along a single continuum, and would vary depending on what aspects of social behaviour were being studied. Cohesion and conflict within the Catholic community must be looked at in terms of the various activities in which Catholics, like everyone else, engage. The church is only one of several institutions claiming the allegiance of Catholics. For a particular individual it might be the most important one, but this does not negate the continuing influence of the others.

The historian must be extremely careful to avoid confusing a view expressed by a Catholic spokesman, cleric or lay, or written in a Catholic newspaper, with the church's official doctrine or attitude. The church officially endorses no political party, social system or particular form of government. Although there is a large body of Catholic social theory, there is no official mode of application of that theory in individual cases. Attempts by Catholics to make their religious faith relevant to political and social life have been continuous in Christian history and tactics have changed with the

25. Mayer, Catholics and the Free Society, 212.
changing historical scene. Individual members of the church do make statements and adopt attitudes on a variety of subjects and events and often claim to be speaking for the entire Catholic community. But there is no obligation on any other Catholic to accept those views. On the other hand Catholics have long been conditioned to look to the church for guidance in a wide variety of areas. As a result they tend to give considerable weight to statements by the hierarchy and other recognised church leaders. The religious provision of a specific, unifying, emotionally satisfying set of directions or explanations of existence excludes similar functions from a non-religious source. Man's loneliness or alienation is a product of a wide choice of alternatives and life styles, all potentially equipped to give him a sense of meaning and belonging. The genuinely committed Catholic, especially one who has been educated in Catholic schools, brings his religious outlook to all aspects of his daily living to a greater or less degree. He has learnt to cope with the diversity of sources of personality integration by relating them to his religious commitment.


Although he might not accept totally the attitude of church leaders on non-religious issues, this is an important factor in the formation of his own views. It is true that even if all the members of a particular hierarchy stand united and act in unison on a temporal matter, this does not mean that the church has taken an official position on this issue. It is equally true that in such a case many Catholics would not be able to make this distinction. Both the institutional church and its leadership group undoubtedly exercise a profound influence on the attitudes and behaviour of multitudes of Catholics with respect to many important issues of their secular life.

In this study the term "Catholic" will be used to designate anyone who would answer the question, "To what church do you belong?" with the reply, "Roman Catholic". It is obvious that this would include many persons who rarely enter a church or pay any attention to Catholic religious and social activities. But it has the advantage of accounting for those members of the Catholic community who are subject to all the pressures of Catholicism and of being Catholic in a predominantly Protestant society. It also includes, of course, the hierarchy, the clergy, the newspaper editors and other more articulate members of the church who make up the
leadership or elite opinion group in the church. The opinions and reactions of this group as recorded in the press will necessarily constitute a large proportion of the evidence used in this study of Catholic reaction to events in Europe. But it will be recognised for what it is, namely, the opinions of only one section of the church. It will be combined with any other evidence available in an effort to ascertain as fully as possible the precise nature and intensity of a more general Catholic reaction.

One final question is to what extent the study of two national Catholic groups rather than one will better illustrate the truth of the argument proposed. Would not a discussion of either American or Australian Catholics separately show whether their reactions are determined as much by their relations with their particular society as by their membership of the church? This could well be true, but if the conclusions arrived at are valid for two groups rather than merely one, this fact surely tells us something about the two larger societies and their relationship. The social milieu in which Australian and American Catholics lived their Catholicism and worked out their daily relationship between it and the rest of living, were alike in many respects, but also quite distinct in
many others. Each group had to come to terms with a similar but different set of political, intellectual and cultural circumstances, within the broad framework of democratic, white, predominantly Protestant countries. In each, in the 1930s Catholics represented an immigrant based minority, who were gradually moving out of the low socio-economic position they had long occupied but were still heavily concentrated in the ranks of labor and the lower-middle class. There were, however, significant differences, relating to such factors as numerical strength, educational level and actual political realities. The Catholic group in both countries will be looked at in detail, in their development and in their reactions to diplomatic crises in Europe in the years 1935 to 1939, in order to arrive at a deeper understanding of the attempts of American and Australian Catholics to relate themselves and their religious faith to their contemporary situation.
PART 2

CATHOLICISM IN THE 1930s

(i) THE AMERICAN CHURCH IN THE NEW DEAL YEARS

There is little doubt that American Catholics generally supported Roosevelt and his New Deal policies, at least with their votes if not always with their voices. A Fortune survey published in 1936 found sixty-six percent of Catholics interviewed supporting the president. Three months later a Gallup poll put the figure at seventy-eight percent.¹ The majority of Catholic voters had clearly supported FDR at the polls in 1932 and again in 1936.² There were, by the middle of the 1930s, twenty and a half million Catholics in the United States and at the end of the decade this number had increased by almost one million. Only about one sixth of them lived in rural areas, the greater majority being congregated

1. Washington Post, 11 October 1936. This compared with 60.8 percent of the whole population supporting Roosevelt.

in the large urban centres of the east.\textsuperscript{3} Many were the children and grandchildren of immigrants, who were moving fairly rapidly up the socio-economic scale into the ranks of middle-class suburbia. To an outside observer, the American Catholic church looked a well-organised and highly successful institution. It had, wrote a journalist, never been "more alert, more militant, more on the offensive". He pointed to the many societies and clubs, its "powerful formal and informal apparatus of education", its press and its political activity in relation to Mexico abroad and certain social legislation at home.\textsuperscript{4} However, if the size and devotion of the American church had become impressive by the thirties, there were some grounds for disappointment concerning the impact of the church upon the country as a whole. In national affairs, whether in federal politics, in business or in education and the arts, it could not be said that the influence of Catholics upon the life of the country had become what the optimists at


the turn of the century had hoped or expected. The reasons for this stem from the historical nature of Catholicism in the United States and the vicissitudes of the church in the nineteenth century, which culminated in the conflict over the so-called heresy of Americanism in the last decade of that century.

The two million Irish immigrants who came to the United States between 1820 and 1865 determined the character of the American Catholic church. They brought to it their strong sense of family life as well as its structure of parishes organised on a territorial basis. They also built the material fabric of the church. The meagre wages they earned digging the nation's canals and building its streets and railroads were always generously at the service of the church. The conservative authoritarian stamp of the American church can also be traced to the Irish. Unlike most continental countries, Ireland had no anti-clerical tradition, and their lack of learning made


Irish Catholics unusually passive in the presence of their educated clergy. Without a large body of articulate laymen in the church there was no real challenge to the growing autocratic power of the Irish-American hierarchy and clergy. Most importantly, the Irish mediated between the Catholic church as a strange and alien body and the emerging American culture. The Irish were well equipped for this task. They had the advantage of speaking English, their love of freedom made them eminently adaptable to the spirit of American independence and because in the old world they had kept the faith in face of systematic and prolonged persecution, they were prepared for the kind of hostility they encountered in their new home. They quickly adapted to American urban life, became active in local politics and soon acquired considerable influence in public affairs. As they Americanised themselves, an amazingly speedy process, they carried the whole church along with them and made it an American church. The Irish set the pattern which increasing numbers of other immigrant groups followed. 7

The Americanisation of the church did not proceed without opposition. It came on the one hand from native Americans and on the other from non-Irish immigrants who

arrived in ever-increasing numbers in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Native Americans saw the Irish immigrants as a far greater threat than those from other European countries precisely because in language, manners and culture they were so alike and yet so different from themselves. As well, they congregated in the large cities, where the obviously visible character of their Catholicism aroused non-Catholic fears and hostility. Anti-Catholic propaganda, material destruction of Catholic institutions and even physical violence were common in some eastern cities in the years before the Civil war. This nativist opposition cemented the loyalty of Irish Catholics to their church and reinforced the Irish character of American Catholicism.

The second source of opposition to the Americanisation of the church was found in the non-Irish immigrant groups. Large numbers of German Catholics who had migrated to the United States at the same time as the Irish during the first half of the nineteenth century had moved inland, where they established themselves in the mid western farming areas and commercial centres. They had set up their own German parishes and churches without encountering

significant opposition because they were removed from the sphere of Irish influence. The European immigrants who came later and settled in localities where the Irish were already dominant, found themselves in churches they could not regard as their own. The plight of such people as the Italians and Slavs, who began to arrive in large numbers towards the end of the century, was even more painful, since the Irish church they found in the United States was as alien to them as the secular culture they encountered in their new home. The result was a struggle, almost parish by parish, between the old Catholics and the new, a struggle that involved the nationality of the priest, the language to be used, the saints' days to be observed and even the name of the church. The Irish influence prevailed, however, and continued as the dominant influence in American Catholicism. It left them and their church two dubious legacies namely, a siege mentality like that which had characterised their religion and life in Ireland and the fusion of religion and nationalism in the Irish Catholic mind.


10. Oscar Handlin, The Uprooted (Boston 1951) 135; Herberg, 158.
The siege mentality caused a turning inwards, a strong emphasis on the development of all things Catholic and condemnation of anything in American life of which the church could not approve. The development of a Catholic education system and the formation of a large number of religious, social and cultural organisations encouraged accusations by Protestant Americans of the church's reluctance to enter unreservedly into American patterns and ways of living. The church was forced continually to defend itself against the vague Protestant fears that it was an alien institution, too Catholic, too Roman and not sufficiently American. It appeared to many Americans to be an undemocratic, authoritarian, foreign-based institution, presided over by the pope in Rome and the Irish bishops in the United States.\textsuperscript{11} Anti-Catholicism appeared again in the second half of the century, this time espoused by members of the Ku Klux Klan and the American Protective Association. Small wonder that the result was a strong sense of minority-consciousness on the part of American Catholics. If at times they seemed excessively anxious to assert their loyalty and patriotism, it was not because they felt any less American than their Protestant neighbours. But these latter so constantly

\textsuperscript{11} Francis J. Lally, \textit{The Catholic Church in a Changing America}, (Boston 1962) 32.
emphasised a "Catholic threat" to the country that Catholics were constrained to assert their Americanism in defense.\textsuperscript{12} They were constantly on the defensive in face of a prejudice against the church which has been characterised by one historian as the "deepest bias in the history of the American people".\textsuperscript{13} This Anti-Catholic hostility and the resulting minority consciousness combined to intensify the cohesion and centralisation of the American church, but it militated against the development of a vigorous intellectual tradition within the church. Catholicism had a distinctive contribution to make to the intellectual dialogue in America, having as it did a different sense of the past and of the world, a different awareness of the human condition and of the imperatives of institutions. Catholic preachers, writers and apologists constantly reiterated that Catholicism and Americanism were totally compatible. Yet there were sharp contrasts between the characteristic values of order, hierarchy and status within the church and American individualism, mobility and faith in progress. But instead of entering into a fruitful dialogue or producing a class of Catholic intellectuals capable of mediating between the Catholic mind and the

\textsuperscript{12} Ellis, \textit{American Catholicism}, 122-23.

\textsuperscript{13} Arthur M. Schlesinger Sr., quoted in Ellis, 151.
secular or Protestant mind, the church retreated into a "self-imposed ghetto mentality".\textsuperscript{14} Catholics would not break out of this until the middle of the twentieth century.

The second result of Irish dominance in the American church was the identification of religion with nationalism. In the centuries of struggle in Ireland against an alien Protestant minority, national loyalty had taken on an intensive religious colouring. To be a Catholic was to be a true Irishman; to be an Irishman was to be a true Catholic. Transferred to the situation in the new world where the Protestant majority was the source of the American national myth, this attitude was interwoven with the Irish Catholic's continual struggle for acceptance by the wider society. From the premise that Americanism and Catholicism were totally compatible, he went on to argue that the more fervent his Catholicism, the more truly American he was. To a greater or lesser degree all American Catholicism has tended to take on this peculiar nationalistic coloration.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{14} John Tracy Ellis, "American Catholics and the Intellectual Life", \textit{Thought}, 30 (1955) passim; Richard Hofstadter, \textit{Anti-Intellectualism in American Life} (London 1964) 135.

\textsuperscript{15} Herberg, \textit{Protestant-Catholic-Jew}, 161.
Ironically, it was this attempt to Americanise the church and to fit it into the national life of the later nineteenth century which gave rise to the controversy over a "phantom" heresy called Americanism. Catholics, like other citizens of the country, were caught up in the surge of nationalism which followed the Civil war. This new nationalism received additional impetus from the centennial celebration of independence in 1876 and culminated in the surge of American imperialism at the turn of the century. The United States at this time embarked upon the programme of expansion and improvement which was to make it the world's greatest industrial country. Americans not only accepted wholeheartedly the gospel of national progress, but were also supremely confident that the entire world would eventually adopt the American way of life. This also, to a certain extent, was the conviction of a group of Catholic prelates whose attempts to Americanise the church provoked a strong reaction from more cautious churchmen both in the United States and Europe. Probably there was no greater anomaly than this Catholic Americanism preached by Irish Americans in a country of a dominant English Protestant culture. In essence the controversy was a conflict between those who believed that the church should plunge into American life and embrace American institutions, and those who preferred to remain aloof.
Prominent among the advocates of Americanisation were most Irish Catholics. Because Irish Americans spoke the English language from birth, because they did not think of themselves as foreigners and because Irish bishops held the chief sees, they tended to speak for Catholicism in the nation. But Catholics of other nationalities, especially the Germans, did not accept this attitude. German Catholics, particularly in the midwest, brought with them from Europe not only the German language, but frequently German sisters and teaching brothers and, more importantly, German priests who tried in some measure to recreate the German Catholic communities that they had left behind in the old world. To the Irish the perpetuation of these foreign languages and customs seemed undesirable and a hindrance to the advance of Catholicism in the United States. The German Catholics who regarded the Irish lightly, not only resented this criticism from Irish and other Americans, but retorted with charges that American culture was permeated with religious liberalism and materialism manifested in easy divorce and irreligion. Such Catholics believed that the church could never wear the garments of American culture. They

bitterly opposed those who sought to modify the parochial school system, Americanise the Catholic immigrant, prevent Vatican condemnation of secret societies, trade unions and radical reformers, and carry on public discussions with Protestants. The anti-Americanists wished to retain their ethnic identity, resist dissolution by the Protestant majority and defend what they understood as the full integrity of Catholic doctrine. Ultimately the contending parties had to decide whether there was any such reality as a distinctive American Catholicism. Bitter conflict ensued for several years, and then national disagreements and problems became international heresy when the controversy reached France. Here the ideas of Father Isaac Hecker, a prominent Americanist,\(^{17}\) and prelates like Archbishop Ireland, were seen as a political and religious expression of what was later called modernism. In 1899, Pope Leo XIII condemned the heresy of Americanism while exempting prelates in the United States from association with it. He claimed to find in the American church a tendency towards over-

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\(^{17}\) Father Isaac Hecker (1819-1888) a convert, founded the Congregation of St. Paul the Apostle, called the Paulists. His biography, written by a member of the congregation and translated into French, began a controversy in that country over Americanism.
emphasis on the active virtues at the expense of humility, charity and obedience, putting natural virtues above the supernatural and employing untried methods of attracting non-Catholics to the faith. This condemnation killed the incipient dialogue between the church and America. Co-operation with non-Catholics was stifled as the bishops turned each to his own diocese and concentrated on the establishment of parochial schools, seminaries, a local Catholic press and local and diocesan organisations. Regrettably, the stigma of Americanism dealt a blow to American Catholic self-confidence from which it is only now recovering.18

Whatever might have been the effect of the Papal condemnation on other areas of the American Catholic church, it could not destroy the growing belief of individual Catholics in the excellence of the American democratic process. The Irish immigrants became almost totally identified with the Democratic party in the urban centres where they were concentrated. The urban political machines which they joined and eventually controlled, exhibited many of the characteristics of Irish village life.

Irish-American politics tended to be informal rather than structured with a fine indifference to Yankee proprieties. There was, however, a distinctive hierarchy of party positions, each with rights and responsibilities which had to be observed. The Irish village was a place of stable, predictable social relations in which everyone had a role to play under the scrutiny of a stern oligarchy of members and in which, on the whole, a person's position was likely to improve with time. Transferred across the Atlantic, these were the essentials of Tammany Hall and other political machines like it.\textsuperscript{19} Irish politics were conservative, reflecting the immigrants' desire for security, for a political structure with the capacity to survive and to serve family and group interests. But the very characteristics which made the Irish so successful in politics prevented them from doing much with government. They did not use politics as an instrument of social change, because their kind of politics concerned the processes of a society that was unchanging.\textsuperscript{20}

In spite of this continuous involvement in politics over a long period, it is a well-attested fact that, at

\textsuperscript{19} Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, \textit{Beyond the Melting Pot} (Cambridge 1963) 224-26.

\textsuperscript{20} \textit{Ibid.}, 229.
least since the end of the nineteenth century, American Catholics have not exercised the leadership and influence nor attained the national prominence that proportionately might have been expected of them. In politics Catholics have often risen to prominence on the local and state level, but exceedingly few have ever achieved high policy making level. There never has been, for example, a Catholic Secretary of State. Between 1789 and 1930 there were only four Catholics in cabinet posts, and the defeat of Al Smith in the presidential campaign of 1928 showed clearly that the White House remained the preserve of Protestant America.21 Nor did Catholics achieve prominence in other fields. Well into the twentieth century relatively few Catholics were found among the nation's business and commercial leaders.22 This is no doubt due to the interaction of a number of factors, one of the most significant of which must surely be that Catholicism in America is essentially the product of immigration. The overwhelming majority of Catholics in the United States have been laborers and artisans, farmers and civil servants.

21. Ellis, American Catholicism, 150-151.
Most of them came to the New World for economic reasons, fleeing from peasantry and poverty in Europe. Hundreds of thousands of them were masters of little education and spoke at best broken English. They came from countries where industrialisation had not been general and they came to a country where capitalism, for which they had to work, was in the hands of a Protestant middle class.\textsuperscript{23} The absorption of the majority of Catholics in making a living prevented the emergence of a leadership group, whether in the political, commercial or intellectual sphere. With the transformation of the original "shanty" Irish into the "lace curtain" Irish of the second and third generations (a process which characterised other immigrants groups as well,) Catholics began to move up the socio-economic scale. As the American church ceased to be the spiritual mother of immigrants and became the teacher and guide of the sons and grandsons of immigrants, she lost some of her character as the church of the lower classes. Universal education and the church's own parochial school system had given the children of immigrants the opportunity to move into the ranks of the new and numerous middle class America being created by the industrial expansion

\textsuperscript{23} McAvoy, \textit{The Great Crisis in American Catholic History}, 43.
and mobility of the twentieth century. Even at mid-
20th century, however, a Catholic characterised his church
as one with "deep roots and powerful support among the
so-called working classes". Of all the bishops,
archbishops and cardinals to that date, he continued,
not one was the son of a college graduate, nor came from
what would be considered by many as the "privileged class".
The Catholic bishops and clergy were the sons of "mill-
workers, coal-miners, dock-hands, day-laborers, tradesmen,
shop-keepers and other types of working men, including
'white collar' workers, but in each case 'workers'."

This concentration of Catholics in the working classes
has ensured the support of the church for organised labor.
It has been estimated that, in the early years of the
twentieth century, about two-thirds of the membership and
a substantial proportion of the leadership of organised
labour was Catholic. The church first publicly championed
the cause of labour in the late 1880s, in the controversy
involving Catholic membership of the Knights of Labor.
Secret societies of various kinds had proliferated in the

1956) Intro. by John J. Wright, xvi.
United States during the nineteenth century and membership of such societies was forbidden by the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore in 1884. The Knights of Labor, the first major labour organisation in the country, was, in its early years, a highly secret society and thus had aroused the suspicion of some of the hierarchy who wished to have it condemned. By 1886, two thirds of the seven hundred thousand members of the Knights were Catholics and so, too, was the Grand Master Workman Terence V. Powderly.\(^{27}\) The Canadian hierarchy, acting more swiftly than the American prelates, obtained a condemnation of the Knights on the grounds that they constituted a secret society, infected with socialism and given to violence. Cardinal Gibbons in a document submitted to Rome in 1887, defended the Knights who were, he said, merely seeking redress of just grievances from capitalists whose power and wealth had subjected labour to abuses which only their united strength could remedy. He contrasted the alienation of the masses from religion in other countries with the respect which it enjoyed among American workingmen. These latter, he stated, supported "not a democracy of license and violence but that true democracy which aims at the general prosperity through the means of sound principles and good

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27. Leckie, 206.
social order". The cardinal drew attention to the large numbers of workingmen in the American church and deplored the inevitable result of the proposed condemnation in their regard. The American church has, by and large, followed this lead of Gibbons, remaining pro-labour and showing a deep concern for retaining the allegiance of its working people.

The condemnation of Americanism and the resulting concentration on domestic concerns within Catholicism meant that the American church entered the twentieth century with the conservative elements among the hierarchy and church leaders in the ascendancy. While it is probably an exaggeration to suggest that most Catholics in the first years of the century retreated into "a mental ghetto from which they emerged only for football games and the Fourth of July", these were years of withdrawal from matters secular and concentration on matters religious and sacred. With the Catholic population steadily increasing, most of the energy of church leaders

28. Quoted in Ellis, American Catholicism, 107.
30. Leckie, American and Catholic, 262.
31. From 10,774,000 in 1900 to 17,885,000 in 1920.
and dedicated lay people went into providing the churches, schools, hospitals and other services they saw as necessary for a flourishing Catholic life. In 1908 Rome indicated her recognition that the American church had come of age by removing it from the jurisdiction of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith. With this, the United States ceased to be technically a mission country. Three years later the rank of cardinal was bestowed on three archbishops, thus giving the United States four cardinals, a number only exceeded by Italy and France. There were still frequent indications that Protestant Americans regarded Catholics as somewhat alien and un-American. When, in 1909, two large synods of both the Lutheran and the Baptist faiths publicly declared that no Catholic should be trusted to hold public office, Cardinal Gibbons felt obliged once more to defend the loyalty of Catholics, and publicly alluded to the constitutional declaration that no religious test could be required as a qualification for any public office. Catholic participation in World War One seemed to allay such fears for a time. During the twenties new issues arose to aggravate Catholics and to raise again the question of the compatibility of their faith with the American way of life. The church was united in its opposition to

32. The aged Cardinal Gibbons made the fourth.
prohibition, and this angered the Protestants, particularly Baptists and Methodists, who supported the Eighteenth Amendment. The resurrected Ku Klux Klan once more became a factor in American life, with anti-Catholicism as its central tenet. The Klan's harassment of minority groups, Catholics as well as Jews and Negroes, appeared to justify Catholic suspicions that Protestants were less devoted to constitutional guarantees than they professed to be. The apparent indifference of other Americans to the fierce persecution of the church in Mexico brought Catholic accusations of bigotry and hypocrisy against liberals and Protestants. The twenties ended under the shadow of Al Smith's defeat in 1928, and with millions of Catholics, still at the lower end of the socio-economic scale, suffering severely under the economic collapse which, all over the western world, ushered in the decade of the thirties.

For Catholics the ultimate affirmation of their Americanisation would be the election of a Catholic to the presidency and in 1928 even this seemed possible. A Catholic president would prove conclusively that Catholicism was not alien to American life and culture and that Catholics were not simply second-class citizens in a predominantly Protestant country. Catholics had long protested that there was no basic conflict between
their religious and political obligations, but that the rest of the nation remained unconvinced of this was clearly demonstrated by the defeat of Al Smith in the 1928 presidential campaign. Although Smith's popular vote almost doubled that of John W. Davis, Democratic candidate in 1924, Hoover was the victor in 1928 by a resounding plurality. Most dismaying of all, Smith failed to carry his own state and also lost sections of the south that had been loyal to the Democratic party since Reconstruction. Smith's Catholicism was not the only cause of his defeat; other issues concerned with prohibition, cosmopolitanism and metropolitanism were also factors in the campaign. Yet most of these were, in a sense, related to Catholicism. Smith was "wet", the grandson of Irish immigrants, a poor boy of the sidewalks of New York. To members of the Women's Christian Temperance Union and other like-minded prohibitionists, as well as to large areas of the south, Smith's stand on the liquor question made him a serious threat to public morals. In their minds his opposition to the eighteenth amendment made his religion more obnoxious and his religion magnified the wickness of his stand on

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\textsuperscript{33} Oscar Handlin, \textit{Al Smith and His America}, (Boston 1958) 129.
prohibition. His Irish ancestry and his roots in New York City's Lower East Side made him, in the eyes of nativist America a symbol of the aspirations, alien customs and foreign ideologies (including, of course, Roman Catholicism) of the "big-city" immigrant, against which "true Americanism" had to be defended. Smith's opposition to restricted immigration brought a call from Methodist Bishop Adna W. Leonard for "Anglo-Saxon unity, against foreigners, particularly the Latins ... who trample on our flag." The bishop declared himself one hundred percent Anglo Saxon, and saw himself and his supporters in small towns and rural areas as "Keepers of the Constitution, the flag and American citizenship". To other groups in rural and small-town America, Smith's residence in New York City and his association with Tammany Hall made him a symbol of the personal depravity and municipal corruption believed to exist in great urban centres. New York was viewed by many as a contemporary Babylon, swarming with Catholics, Jews and modernistic Protestants who drew their inspiration from the Union Theological Seminary; a city that nightly defied the Constitution, whose population was addicted to foreign

luxuries such as olives and chocolate eclairs. Smith believed he should not have to make an apology for his religion and openly and squarely faced the issue in the campaign. The Klan might be dead by 1928, but anti-Catholicism was vigorously alive. Even at the convention in Houston there had been a backstairs undertow about Smith's religion. After he had received the nomination, a vicious campaign attacked the church and painted a horrendous picture of the downfall of free institutions at the hands of corrupt priests whose tool Smith was. With the covert encouragement of local Republicans, numerous fundamentalist groups spread the story of the papist plot to conquer America through the ballot box. Smith's defeat clearly illustrated Protestant America's correlation of Catholicism with the vote for liquor, foreign white stock, residence in big cities and population density. It had been a real step forward when a major political party had actually risen above the long American tradition of bigotry to nominate a Catholic for the highest office in the land. But this knowledge did little to reconcile Catholics to what was evident discrimination

against them in the political world, the very area where they most strongly defended their Americanism. The 1928 campaign reinforced their minority consciousness, but it also made them much more aware of the growing recognition they received four years later from their next president, Franklin D. Roosevelt.

During the 1930s American Catholics remained very conscious of their minority status. There was no lack of evidence of continued Catholic impotence in many areas of American life or the hostility of important segments of American society to Catholic interests. Such factors as the recognition of Russia by the United States, the apparent general apathy toward religious persecution in Mexico, and the almost unanimous opposition of articulate American opinion to the Catholic position on the Spanish Civil war reinforced and helped to perpetuate among American Catholics the sense of alienation and minority consciousness which had dominated their thought since the middle of the nineteenth century. In the words of a contemporary intellectual, they had "gradually abandoned the State and withdrawn from the world to the sanctuary of the altars."  

At the same time there was a marked change both in Catholic attitudes to American life in general and in the recognition of Catholics as an important social and political group by the administration. Roosevelt was aware of the support given him by Catholics and was careful to retain that support in various ways. Catholics, in turn, made it clear that they approved of most features of the New Deal and were gratified to see members of the church appointed to important positions within the government. One obvious factor in Catholic support for and acceptance of Roosevelt and his policies was that, because of their particular economic situation, Catholics benefitted from the various New Deal reform measures at least as much as, if not more than, the rest of the American people. The practical support of the various New Deal policies by the rank and file Catholics was reinforced by their most articulate religious leaders. Probably for the first time in its existence in the United States, the church was in a position to speak to the nation and to point to a social doctrine that was not formed just for the occasion, but one that was already stated in papal encyclicals and pastoral letters. For the first time, too, other Americans seemed willing to listen to the voice of Catholicism. During the thirties Catholic intellectuals

and publicists paid considerable attention to social and economic problems, and adopted positions sympathetic to reform. The pressures of the depression years helped reduce minority fears, and produced a climate of opinion favourable to reform and the extension of government into many areas of social life.  

Roosevelt's recognition of American Catholics as a significant political group, was a welcome change after long years of apparent neglect by national leaders. Besides ensuring that a considerable number of Catholic names studded the list of his immediate helpers, Roosevelt took pains to continue a policy of Catholic appointments over the years of his presidency. Although there is little evidence to suggest that he allowed Catholic advocacy of any particular policy to influence his own final decision, Roosevelt did listen to the voices of Catholic opinion. Perhaps it was simply by listening and thus recognising the fact of Catholic grievances or needs that he won Catholic support. Much of the New Deal reform legislation was accepted by Catholics because of its

41. O'Brien, American Catholics and Social Reform, 51. This book gives a comprehensive coverage of this question in the 1930s.


43. Flynn, American Catholics and the Roosevelt Presidency, 239.
apparent, even striking, similarity to Catholic teaching on social justice, and Roosevelt gave evidence of being aware of this. Most Catholics also knew that he regularly consulted with such well-known clerics as Father John Burke (until his death in 1936) Monsignor John A. Ryan and Father Francis Haas. He was on good terms with prominent members of the hierarchy, and his close friendship with Cardinal George Mundelein of Chicago was public knowledge. Letters over the president's signature went out from the White House to bishops for their jubilees or new appointments, and to prominent clergymen and various Catholic organisations on significant occasions. Often these were sent at the request of well-known Catholics, such as congressmen and members of government agencies, who assured Roosevelt of the fidelity and support of the cleric or organisation concerned. Letters to Roosevelt from members of the hierarchy always received a personal reply. It would appear that in his relationship with religious leaders, F.D.R. never favoured his own Episcopalian church or even Protestantism. In fact, a case can be made that he felt free to neglect his own communion, perhaps he was reasonably sure of support

44. O'Brien, 52.

45. These observations are based on a study of the files of correspondence at the Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park.
from that direction, and gave greater attention to others, most notably, to Catholicism. It is clear that no Protestant religious leader gave support to Roosevelt comparable to that given by such Catholics as Father Burke, Father Maurice Sheehy, Monsignor Ryan and Cardinals Mundelein and Spellman. If it is true that these factors indicated a new recognition of Catholics as a major force in society and represented a change in the church's disposition toward the government, they also represented a gain in status for Catholics. This was extremely important for a minority-conscious group which had been struggling for over a century to demonstrate that there was no fundamental incompatibility between the demands of full Catholicism and loyal Americanism.

It was not that American Catholics were completely happy with life as they saw it lived in their country. Many of them were, in the 1930s, excessively preoccupied with what they saw as a tragic decline in public morals.

The Legion of Decency, formed in response to the pope's call for lay Catholic action, was very concerned with morally objectionable films and the standard of women's dress. For this it was much praised by Rome and condemned by many non-Catholic Americans, who felt

that the pressures exerted by the Legion, especially in relation to films, restricted freedom of expression and prevented the development of serious, creative work. All Catholic spokesmen defended the parochial school system, demanded prohibitive statutes against birth control propaganda, and acknowledged the role of the bishops and the need for obedience in many ill-defined but broad areas of life.\textsuperscript{47} Although willing to speak out forcefully on public questions of morality or serious interference with the independence of the church, the hierarchy generally abstained from political controversy. They normally limited their role in the political sphere to recommending their congregations to participate in the democratic process, voting intelligently for the best candidates and avoiding partisanship or extremism. They often worked behind the scenes, keeping in touch with members of congress, or other persons whose views on political affairs they approved.\textsuperscript{48} Cardinal William

\textsuperscript{47} O'Brien, 184, 224.

\textsuperscript{48} Cardinal Hayes to Rabbi Malev, 8 August 1935, refusing to be associated with a public statement on Germany, Cardinal Hayes Papers, New York Archdiocesan Archives, Dunwoody, New York, (hereafter cited as Hayes Papers); Cardinal O'Connell to Juan F. de Cardenas, 26 June 1935, on the Spanish situation, Cardinal O'Connell Papers, Archdiocesan Archives, Boston (hereafter cited as O'Connell Papers); Archbishop Curley to Congresswoman Virginia E. Jenckes, 9 February 1939, Archbishop Curley Papers, Archdiocesan Archives, Baltimore (hereafter cited as Curley Papers.)
O'Connell of Boston, senior member of the hierarchy, was one of the nation's most articulate prelates. Blunt, authoritative, decisive and conservative, he entertained strong opinions on most topics. Cardinal Patrick Hayes of New York presided at the ceremony at Catholic University, Washington on 14 June, 1933, when Roosevelt received an honorary degree from that institution. He praised the new president in glowing terms, and was referred to in reply by Roosevelt as his old friend and neighbour. 49

This head of the populous and wealthy New York archdiocese seldom made public statements, and it was a noteworthy occasion when he gave a press conference in 1938, on the fourteenth anniversary of his election to the Cardinalate. 50

He was, according to one Catholic laymen, "obsessed with the thought of communism", and heard "the shots in Spain every hour of the day", while at night when he awoke he saw "a picture of the revolutionaries in Spain shooting the figure of Christ from the cross and destroying the altars and churches and burning the convents". 51 Hayes himself said publicly that he did not fear the spread of communism

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because of the good sense of the American people. Not so Archbishop Michael J. Curley of Baltimore, whose voluminous correspondence reveals an almost total obsession with the spread of communism. He saw it as gradually seeping into every facet of American life, and being aided by all sorts of persons, even Monsignor John Ryan. He, apparently an exception among the hierarchy, endorsed the idea that Roosevelt and his New Deal policies were tainted with communism. Curley often spoke strongly, not always charitably, against those whose policies he disagreed with, and this sometimes included Roosevelt. Politically, the most significant member of the hierarchy was Cardinal George Mundelein of Chicago who, ironically, insisted on many occasions, that he was not "in politics". But his close personal friendship with Roosevelt made it inevitable that what he said and did had political overtones and consequences of importance to Catholics and the administration alike. This association began when, in the

52. New York Post, 23 March 1938, clipping in Hayes Papers.
53. Curley to Gordon O'Neill, 11 October 1937; Curley to Henry W. Samson, 5 October 1936; Curley to George E. Sullivan, 3 December 1937, all in the Curley Papers.
55. e.g. New York Times, 26 March 1935, disagreeing with Roosevelt's Mexican policy.
early months of his presidency, Roosevelt sent a message to the Cardinal for inclusion in his collection of presidential autographs.\textsuperscript{56} Thereafter the Cardinal supported Roosevelt publicly and privately to a degree equalled only by that given by Cardinal Spellman a few years later. In 1935, when Catholics were angrily demanding some action in Mexico, the president received an honorary degree from the University of Notre Dame, and Mundelein used the occasion to publicly proclaim his endorsement of Roosevelt’s policies.\textsuperscript{57} When accusations of communism were being levelled at the president in 1936, Jim Farley, Catholic chairman of the Democratic Campaign Committee, suggested to Roosevelt that he might ask Mundelein for a statement, because he carried "so much weight" in an area where the communist issue had been more effective than in other parts of the country.\textsuperscript{58} Farley presumably did not know that Mundelein had already spoken strongly about the matter to all the priests of his diocese, a fact which was immediately reported to Roosevelt.\textsuperscript{59} In other times of crisis, such as the controversy over the

\textsuperscript{56} Roosevelt to Mundelein, 22 April 1933, Mundelein to Roosevelt, 26 April 1933, Roosevelt Papers.

\textsuperscript{57} \textit{New York Times}, 10 December 1935.

\textsuperscript{58} Farley to Roosevelt, 23 October 1935, Roosevelt Papers.

\textsuperscript{59} Memo to Roosevelt from S.T.E. (Stephen Early) 30 September 1936, \textit{ibid}. 
Supreme Court or during the debate over revision of the neutrality laws, the Cardinal was ready to send supporting messages to the president, issue a carefully prepared statement or lunch with Roosevelt in Washington or Chicago.⁶⁰ As tensions in Europe increased after Hitler gained power, Mundelein also endorsed an internationalist foreign policy. On one occasion when he publicly condemned Hitler's persecution of religion, his reference to the Führer as a "poor paper hanger" was enough to prompt a formal protest by the German ambassador to the Vatican.⁶¹ Roosevelt considered Mundelein as one of the three greatest men in America,⁶² and the Cardinal's death, according to Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes, was "a heavy loss to the liberal cause". In Ickes' opinion he was the only member of the hierarchy who understood the New Deal and was really friendly to it.⁶³ The fourth American Cardinal, William Dougherty of Philadelphia, made few statements of a public nature, but on occasions did voice his opposition to Roosevelt's policies.⁶⁴ A revealing note

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⁶⁰ Numerous examples are to be found in the Roosevelt Papers.

⁶¹ Documents on German Foreign Policy (Wash. 1957) Series D, 1, 968.


⁶³ Ibid., 28.

from Farley to FDR urges that Dougherty be invited to tea at the White House. The Cardinal had told Farley that he had never met the president, and Farley commented, "He is rather a pompous fellow, but a strong character, and has real influence, as you know". Other influential members of the hierarchy whose attitudes and statements were reported nationally were Archbishop John T. McNicholas of Cincinnati, Bishop John F. Noll of Fort Wayne, Indiana and Bishop James H. Ryan of Omaha. All, or most of the prelates mentioned would have denied that they were involved in politics in any meaningful way, and by present standards, this is probably true. But they did at times make their position on domestic and foreign affairs clear enough for those who wished to follow them.

The American Catholic press of the 1930s covered a wide spectrum of interests and thought. At the end of the decade a writer who was anything but sympathetic toward the church described the Catholic press as one of the most influential publishing units in the United States, certainly "far more powerful" than any other religious press in the country. A more restrained, and naturally more sympathetic assessment of the situation appeared in

the Jesuit journal, *America*, in 1936. This listed Catholic publications at over three hundred, with a combined circulation of well over seven million. They ranged all the way from dailies in English and foreign languages to diocesan weeklies, and thence on through home journals of devotional and general appeal to reviews and intellectual quarterlies. 67 One of the largest components of the Catholic press was the series of diocesan papers brought out with ecclesiastical approbation in various parts of the country. Such papers normally mirrored the views of the bishop whose diocese they represented. 68 Some of them had a wide circulation outside their diocese of origin, being sent to areas which did not produce their own weekly paper. 69 Many smaller weeklies affiliated with better-known ones and published main news bulletins and feature articles forwarded from the central office. Local editors took care only of official news from the Chancery


68. e.g. Bishop Noll to Roosevelt, 26 February 1937: "I think that you should know that I have never criticised your Administration in my paper of nationwide circulation". Roosevelt Papers. Noll is referring to *Our Sunday Visitor*, published in Huntington, Indiana.

69. The most notable was *Our Sunday Visitor* with a circulation of 398,700. N.W. Ayer and Sons, *Directory of Newspapers and Periodicals*, Philadelphia, 1935.
office of their own diocese, and local reports of parochial, social, educational and sporting activities. This meant that the range of opinion expressed in Catholic weeklies was not nearly as wide as the number of papers might suggest. A major overall influence on the Catholic press was the NCWC News Service, a department of the National Catholic Welfare Conference. This organisation had its own network of foreign and domestic correspondents, and furnished the bulk of national and international news, feature articles and pictures for the Catholic press. The Brooklyn Tablet, a weekly diocesan publication, was probably the most conservative organ of the Catholic press, and Dorothy Day's Catholic Worker the most liberal. Indeed, to American Catholics of the 1930s, the Worker seemed too liberal, so that both publisher and journal were frequently accused of being pro-communist. Among the journals, America and Catholic World provided platforms for two important religious orders, the Jesuits and the Paulist Fathers. Commonweal was an influential journal edited by laymen, which was to pass through a crisis in the middle of the thirties, partly in relation

70. The Denver Catholic Register had affiliated weeklies in 27 dioceses.
71. See below, 69.
72. Time, 27 October 1941, 77.
to its policy on the Spanish Civil War. The major weeklies and periodicals did not follow a monolithic party line, nor were they static in their views. However, the Catholic press was largely isolationist, and preoccupied with the menace of growing world communism. In spite of impressive circulation figures, there were frequent complaints from members of the hierarchy that Catholics did not support their press, and each year in Catholic press month there were intensive drives to obtain more subscribers. Many believed that a combined circulation of seven million in a Catholic population of twenty million was not a good ratio, and it was repeatedly alleged that large numbers of Catholics had no contact with their religious press. Many of the leading Catholic publications, reported one journalist, were "living a hand to mouth existence", because of financial difficulties and limited circulation. The obvious problem in relation to any press is present here with the Catholic press of the 1930s. It is doubtful whether large numbers of Catholics were influenced by contemporary Catholic journalism, but some certainly were. It is also debatable to what extent the press reflected

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73. See below, 242-250.
collective Catholic opinion, but it cannot be ignored when searching for that elusive reality. It is reasonable to assert that it is one source of American Catholic reaction to events in the decade, even if it reveals only certain facets of that reaction.

The same is true, of course, of those persons, cleric or lay, who were prominent in public affairs during the period. Other than members of the hierarchy, there were several well-known priests and laymen who could be classed as opinion leaders. They spoke and wrote on a wide variety of issues relating to the church, and most were involved in some way in activities relating to the New Deal. Several of them were closely associated with the National Catholic Welfare Conference. This organisation began in 1917 as the National Catholic War Council, and during the war years it functioned as a highly effective medium in almost every phase of Catholic participation in the war effort. After the war, the council was retained as a national conference for Catholic affairs, and gradually evolved into the important organisation it remains today. It carries out the policies set at the annual meetings of the bishops, and coordinates Catholic efforts in many fields. In the 1930s it exerted considerable

75. Hereafter designated as NCWC.
influence through its nationwide news service, and through the energy of several of its executives. Father John Burke, whose inspiration had been responsible for its formation, remained executive director of NCWC until his death in 1936. He was a close friend of Roosevelt's, and was consulted by the White House staff on countless matters relating to the church and Catholics.\(^7\) 

Perhaps more widely known than Burke, Monsignor John A. Ryan was the first director of the Social Action Department of NCWC. Ryan was American Catholicism's foremost social reformer, and his influence was paramount in shaping the policy of the department on social issues and in counselling the bishops in their public pronouncements in this area. He worked energetically in the field of labor legislation, and served as a member of the Industrial Appeals Board of the NRA. He devoted much of his time to explaining and defending the New Deal to American Catholics, and was not always thanked or admired for his pains. He was continually branded as a socialist, and even as a communist, especially when he defended Roosevelt and his administration against the charges of

\(^7\) The Roosevelt Papers contain ample evidence of this, often in the form of memos from Roosevelt, directing that Burke be consulted on a particular matter.
communist sympathies. William Montavon, director of the legal department of the NCWC, was a prominent speaker and writer on the issues of the Spanish Civil War. He had spent a number of years in Spain before the 1931 elections, and was considered by some Catholics as an "expert" on Spanish affairs. He was one of the more moderate supporters of Franco in a period when moderation was absent from much of the public debate over Spain. Reverend Maurice Sheehy, assistant to the rector of Catholic University, Washington, Reverend Edward Lodge Curran, director of the International Catholic Truth Society in New York, and Mr. Charles G. Fenwick, president of the Catholic Association for International Peace all had considerable influence in Catholic circles. Important also, were such men as Postmaster General James Farley, Senator David I. Walsh and Congressman John McCormack, both of Massachusetts, and Frank Walsh, well-known New York attorney and Democratic supporter. These all used their influence both to advance Catholic views in political circles and to gain Catholic support for the administration.

77. e.g. Archbishop Curley to George E. Sullivan, 3 December, 1936, Curley Papers. Fred A. Grier to Ryan, 11 November 1936, Ryan Papers.

78. See below, Part 4.

79. McCormack was particularly active, as is evidenced by correspondence in the Roosevelt Papers.
Numerous Catholic organisations flourished in the thirties, and added their support or opposition to various causes or official policies. Foremost among them was the Knights of Columbus, a fraternal benefit society for men. In the thirties it had a membership of almost half a million, organised on local and state levels with a national headquarters in Connecticut. Frequently the Knights were to be found in the forefront of groups engaging in political agitation, leading attacks on non-Catholics or defending controversial figures who had church support. Supreme Knight Martin H. Carmody carried on an extensive correspondence with every important public figure from the president down.\(^80\) The activities of the Knights were generally reported in the secular press and one would get the impression from reading of the number of local groups represented and their large membership, that active lay interest was involved. This is probably not true, and great numbers of the Knights almost certainly took little real interest in the various activities, content to let the leaders speak for them. Their leadership often spoke at the behest of the hierarchy, who valued the support they received from the Knights. Cardinal O'Connell characterised them as "a strong militant body of Catholic laymen

\(^80\) Letters from Carmody are to be found in all the files of correspondence I consulted.
banded together to promote the activities of the church, and to furnish a bulwark for the preservation of our priceless heritage of religious and civil liberty." 81 The Knights achieved national prominence during 1935 for their sustained attack on Roosevelt's policy in regard to Mexico, and their demands for the recall of Ambassador Josephus Daniels. This was one of the rare occasions when the policy of the Knights did not receive total episcopal approval. After one particularly strong protest by them to Roosevelt, Archbishop John McNicholas of Cincinnati issued a statement, to be read in all the churches in his archdiocese, that the Knights did not speak for the priesthood or Catholic laity of Cincinnati. 82 The National Council of Catholic Men, led by Louis Kenedy, was another strong organisation, under the auspices of the NCWC. Women's societies were also numerous, the best known being Catholic Daughters of America.

No discussion of American Catholicism in the New Deal years is complete without some reference to the priest and the organisation which, although totally untypical of the church at the time, certainly gained more notoriety than

81. O'Connell to Carmody, 8 January 1936, O'Connell Papers.

82. Catholic World, 142 (December 1935) 362. General information on the Knights is contained in E.P. Willging and Dorothy E. Lynn, A Handbook of American Catholic Societies, (Scranton 1940) 16-17.
any other figure or association. On the whole, those clerics who publicly supported or criticised Roosevelt's policies disliked political association and tried to avoid identification with any political party or secular movement. Reverend Charles E. Coughlin, the "radio priest" of Royal Oak, Michigan, was the nationally notable exception to this rule. While most Catholics hesitated to commit themselves too publicly on any controversial issue, Coughlin alternately praised or blamed everyone and everything associated with the New Deal from the president down to the local officials. He found a medium for his message, the radio, which gave him an audience far greater than any other Catholic spokesman could command. Born in Canada, Coughlin first joined the Basilian Fathers, under whom he had been educated, and in 1923 transferred to the diocese of Detroit when the canonical status of the Basilians was changed. This placed him under the jurisdiction of Bishop Michael Gallagher, who remained Coughlin's staunch supporter for the most significant years of his highly controversial public career. Assigned in May 1926

to construct a new parish in Royal Oak, a suburb of Detroit, Father Coughlin found himself battling with the Ku Klux Klan, a strong force in the neighbourhood. He began a religious programme on the local radio network in an attempt to offset anti-Catholic prejudice, and so commenced what would ultimately become a period of intense political activity. His programme was an immediate success, and his fame as a speaker spread quickly. No one who heard his rich, powerful, melodic voice faintly touched with an Irish brogue ever quite forgot it. For several years the priest confined his talks to religious themes, avoiding, in his own words, "all prejudicial subjects and controversies and especially all bigotry." In the years 1926 to 1932, Coughlin gradually underwent an amazing transformation from obscure pastor of a small Michigan church to nationally known orator with a radio audience estimated at thirty million. His mail had reached such vast proportions by 1932 that he required the services of four personal secretaries and innumerable clerks to handle it. Many of his correspondents sent Coughlin gifts of money to support his work and keep him on the air.

84. Quoted in O'Brien, American Catholics and Social Reform, 151.

85. Tull, Father Coughlin and the New Deal, 20.
1931, he suddenly shifted the emphasis in his talks from God and religion to politics and economics. He explained to his audience that the depression had aroused his concern for the unchristian character of the nation's economic and political life, and that he felt constrained to preach the social gospel of Christ, exposing the reasons for the country's plight and urging the Christian remedy for its ills. Coughlin bitterly assailed the Hoover administration for failing to alleviate the widespread suffering, and turned to Roosevelt as the "man of the hour" who would banish the prevailing "want in the midst of plenty". Roosevelt was happy to receive support from so popular a Catholic priest and carefully cultivated the relationship in its early stages. After FDR's inauguration, Coughlin gradually found himself dissatisfied with the New Deal's "halfway" reform measures, but counselled patience, confidently asserting that the president would act more decisively if only Congress and the public would support him against the vested interests of capitalism. Neither an economist nor a monetary theorist, Coughlin was possessed with the notion that a few unprincipled international bankers had deliberately plotted the worldwide depression. Initially, the priest advanced himself

86. Ibid., 21.
as a spokesman for the administration. This soon proved an embarrassment to Roosevelt, who, however, refused to break openly with Coughlin. Gradually the priest's attention increasingly focussed on monetary matters, and in this area, after 1934, the New Deal measures continually disappointed him. In addition, Roosevelt's foreign policy, particularly American recognition of Russia and the administration's firm refusal to intervene in Mexico, alienated Coughlin. Finally, in 1935, Coughlin urged his radio audience to oppose United States entry into the World Court. The result was a torrent of anti-Court telegrams upon a divided Senate, apparently influencing enough votes to prevent the Court treaty from receiving the necessary two-thirds majority. This victory gave Coughlin a new confidence in his ability to influence the course of legislation by manipulating public opinion, and he became increasingly critical of Roosevelt's failure to enact sweeping monetary reforms. He finally broke with the president in November 1935, when he told his audience that the principles of the New Deal and those of social justice were totally opposed. The Roosevelt administration, he said, had embraced two conflicting extremes, communistic tendencies and plutocracy, and was no longer deserving
of support. In 1936 he formed his own political party, the National Union for Social Justice, based on an earlier organisation of the same name, which embodied a sixteen point programme for establishing Christian social justice in the nation. Finally, Coughlin went all the way in his opposition to Roosevelt and in 1936 ran his own candidate for the presidency, Congressman William Lemke, against FDR and Alfred M. Landon, the Republican candidate. Long before he had reached this point, however, the radio priest had been causing embarrassment in Catholic circles. He had been loyally supported throughout by his own bishop, but other members of the hierarchy did not endorse his political activities or his opposition to Roosevelt. Cardinal O'Connell was a consistent opponent, having denounced his attitudes continuously since 1932. In 1935, the Cardinal referred to "hysterical, disturbing voices" that were "yelling and screaming" in a manner unbecoming to anyone who occupied "the place of a teacher in Christ's church". Although O'Connell did not refer to Coughlin by name, there is little


88. The sixteen points are given in full in Tull, 62-63.

89. *Literary Digest*, 7 May 1932; paper clipping from unidentified paper, 6 December 1934, O'Connell Papers.
doubt that he was criticizing the radio priest, since he spoke on the day after a large Coughlin rally in Madison Square Garden. \(^90\) A contemporary Bostonian reported that O'Connell ordered all radios in priests' residences turned off when Coughlin was on the air. \(^91\) Cardinal Hayes of New York voiced his irritation with the priest on several occasions, and Cardinal Mundelein publicly took sides with Roosevelt against him. When the president received an honorary degree from the University of Notre Dame in late 1935, Mundelein, in his welcoming address, insisted that "no individual Catholic bishop, or priest, no organisation of laymen or Catholic newspaper" had the right to speak for the twenty million Catholics of the country in the matter of politics. \(^92\) Both Harold Ickes and Arthur Kroek interpreted this as a rebuke for Coughlin and a "complete endorsement" of the president and the New Deal by "one of the least politically minded of the clergy". \(^93\) Archbishop McNicholas of Cincinnati, Bishop Noll of Fort Wayne, Indiana and Bishop Schrembs of Cleveland all went on record as defending Roosevelt

\(^91\) James M. Curley, I'd Do It Again (Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 1957) 296.
\(^92\) New York Times, 10 December 1935.
against Coughlin. Bishop Mahoney of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, telegraphed to the president that he protested in the name of the priests and people of his diocese against insulting references to Roosevelt by a "clerical vulgarian." A priest from Iowa sent a message assuring Roosevelt that Coughlin did not represent "the sentiment of the Catholic priests of America", who would not "lower their high calling by attacking individuals with filthy names". Such "cheap bar-room methods", he concluded, were never resorted to "by Christian gentlemen". The measure of Catholic ecclesiastical concern is well illustrated by a note from Father Maurice Sheehy to the president's aide, in which he revealed that he, four bishops, three monsignori and another priest spent four hours discussing how best to handle Coughlin's attacks on the president. Many Catholic laymen were also distressed by Coughlin's criticisms of Roosevelt, but were at a loss to know where the priest stood in relation to the church's policy or

94. New York Times 18, 26 September 1936; Noll to James McMullin, 26 October 1936, Roosevelt Papers.

95. Mahony to Roosevelt, 21 July 1936, Roosevelt Papers.

96. Father Dostal to Roosevelt, 17 July 1936, Roosevelt Papers.

what, if anything, could be done to silence him. It seemed, too that a growing number of Americans of all persuasions were beginning to equate Coughlin's remarks with the official position of the church, and there were demands that he be officially silenced. But no-one could do this as long as the radio priest was supported by his own bishop. Because of a previous problem of a similar nature at the end of the nineteenth century, the principle had been established by the American hierarchy that so long as a priest was merely expressing his private political views, efforts at discipline would not be maintained. And Coughlin did not claim to be the voice of the official church.  

The hierarchical and clerical opposition to Coughlin finally came to a head when he accused Roosevelt of communist sympathies. In August 1936 he declared,

"As I was instrumental in removing Herbert Hoover from the White House, so help me God, I will be instrumental in taking a communist out of the chair once occupied by Washington".  

Father Sheehy reported to the White House that, after this


occasion, he had made a trip through the entire country, visiting all the Cardinals and bishops, to gain support for Roosevelt. He said that Mundelein had called together all the priests in his diocese and told them he had decided after much thought that "in order that he might be able to live with his conscience", he had to speak to them politically. Within five minutes, said the report, Mundelein had "completely destroyed Coughlin". Sheehy had further arranged for several bishops to write personally to Roosevelt, with the understanding that the White House could make use of the letters at an appropriate time if they so desired.\footnote{S.T.E. to Roosevelt, 30 September 1936, Roosevelt Papers.} Monsignor John Ryan was persuaded to make a nationwide broadcast, supporting Roosevelt and countering Coughlin's accusations of communism. Since earlier attempts to meet Coughlin's criticisms of the New Deal had always been forestalled by the argument that his social and economic programme conformed essentially to the teaching of Popes Leo XIII and Pius IX, it was appropriate that finally an answer should come from the priest who was widely regarded as the most competent exponent of the church's social teaching. In his address in October, Ryan rejected Coughlin's programme as opposed to the spirit of the social justice encyclicals. He
labelled the priest's charges of communism against Roosevelt as "ugly, cowardly and flagrant calumnies" and declared that his monetary theories were ninety percent incorrect. Ryan described the New Deal measures as "mild instalments of too delayed social justice", and urged the workers to vote for Roosevelt.102 For his pains Ryan was deluged by letters from Coughlin's supporters, more than twelve hundred in all. According to Ryan's own description, not more than fifty of them were expressed in courteous language. The vast majority were intemperate and intolerant, while a large proportion were abusive and insulting. Through a great many of the letters ran a thread not merely of prejudice, but of hate, and a number of them gave strong evidence of anti-clericalism. Most were written by poor and uneducated persons who had suffered much from the depression and who looked upon Coughlin as a messiah who would lead them into a promised land. What Coughlin had done to the minds of these people, wrote Ryan, was "saddening and sickening". They had been completely misled and their minds had been closed against any consideration of genuine remedies and reforms. Ryan was sure his talk had not converted such

people, but he was happy to have sown seeds of doubt in the minds of some, and to have helped those wavering in their allegiance to come to a decision. He regarded his speech as "one of the most effective and beneficial acts" he had ever performed in the interests of his religion and his country. As the resounding defeat of Lemke in November revealed the slightness of Coughlin's influence at the polls, he had little choice but to live up to his pledge to leave the air if Lemke failed to receive nine million votes. His returns and departures from the air over the next few years reflected a progressive decline in the income that had once poured in to support his efforts. Any influence he ever had at the White House was gone and he lost his most important supporter when Bishop Gallagher died suddenly in January 1937. The supposed conspiracy of the international, communistic, capitalistic Jew now increasingly occupied Coughlin's attention. In July 1938 his paper, Social Justice, published The Protocols of Zion. Originally published in Russia in 1905, the Protocols, which purported to be an account of a Jewish conspiracy to seize

103 Ryan to the editors of Commonweal, 22 October 1936. Copy in Ryan Papers. The researcher can verify Ryan's description, as the letters are all included in the collection at Catholic University of America.
control of the world, had been thoroughly discredited by reputable scholars.\textsuperscript{104} Coughlin had certainly been accused of anti-Semitism before this, but with the publication of the Protocols, the priest publicly aligned himself with anti-Semitism. He and his followers continued to protest that they were not anti-Semitic, since they differentiated between American and un-American Jews. Coughlin also claimed that it was not a question of anti-Semitism but of anti-communism.\textsuperscript{105} The theme of the Jews as scapegoats for all problems, foreign and domestic, was repeated again and again, on the air and in Social Justice, with little variation until Coughlin was finally silenced in 1942. From 1937 onwards he strongly emphasised a militant nationalistic isolationism with anti-British overtones and hysterical anti-communism. As affairs in Europe worsened, he campaigned vigorously against repeal of embargo and neutrality legislation, and continued his criticisms of Roosevelt. But he was never again the important figure he was before 1936. He was in conflict with his new bishop, Edward Mooney, and more and more Americans became aware that he did not represent the mainstream of American Catholicism. Finally in 1942, when

\textsuperscript{104} Tull, \textit{Father Coughlin and the New Deal}, 193.

\textsuperscript{105} Social Justice, 19 December 1938.
he became too great an embarrassment to the administration because of his determined opposition to the policy of Lend-Lease, Mooney curtailed Coughlin's political activities. He returned to his parish of Royal Oak where he remained until his death in 1969. Coughlin certainly was not typical of the Catholic church in the United States which, above all else, strove to keep aloof from politics. He was, in fact, too erratic to be neatly classified as an exponent of any particular ideology. He is probably best described as a "frustrated, disgruntled demagogue, lashing out at the world around him". 106 By the end of the decade, his audience had shrunk, and what he had left were mainly the discontented relievers, the belligerently "american", the haters of foreigners and Jews and the political riff-raff. 107 Indeed, any serious political ambitions he may have had were doomed from the start, for there was no real chance of a Catholic priest gaining the support of a meaningful political coalition of various fringe groups in the United States in the 1930s.

Coughlin's anti-Semitism was not peculiar to himself and his followers. A strong view of anti-Semitism is

106. Tull, 246.
clearly visible throughout the whole American Catholic church in the 1930s. Catholics shared this with large numbers of other Americans. A poll taken in November 1938 revealed that although a little over fifty percent of those polled believed that hostility to Jews was not strong in the country, thirty-two percent believed it was growing. Catholic opinion varied only slightly from the norm, with a higher percentage (thirty-five) believing it was on the increase.\textsuperscript{108} According to one contemporary Catholic writer, many of the Catholic journals were tinged with anti-Semitism.\textsuperscript{109} In some journals, such as the \textit{Brooklyn Tablet} and \textit{Ave Maria}, a devotional journal published from Notre Dame it was more than a tinge. Both of these continuously denounced the Jews, especially for not speaking out against communism and anti-Catholic persecutions in Mexico and Spain. Anti-Semitism in the American church had deep sociological roots. During the years 1880 to 1920, the many Irish immigrants and their children gradually


\textsuperscript{109} George N. Shuster, "The Conflict Among Catholics", \textit{American Scholar}, 10 (1940) 6.
rose above immigrant status, and large numbers of them gained wealth, social prestige and political influence. After 1920, the Jews began to advance along the same paths, and their migration from the crowded East side of Manhattan to Brooklyn and other areas of suburbia, inevitably meant a struggle for coveted middle-class positions just when the depression hit the country. The resulting hostility, strengthened by controversy over the place of religious instruction in public schools, increased sharply with the advent of Hitler.  

There were sufficient influential Catholic voices ready to declare that the German leader was a far less evil than Stalin, because, like the Catholic church, he was an implacable foe of communism. They argued that the church in Germany would suffer no loss of prestige if it refrained from all political activity. The sympathy so widely expressed for the victims of Hitler's race doctrines was resented by many Catholics, who argued that by comparison Catholics had been given virtually no support in their campaign against the Calles government in Mexico. Catholic journalists who criticised events

110. Shuster, 7-8.

111. Brooklyn Tablet, 25 March 1933, 6 January 1934, 10 August 1935; America, 3 June 1933, 197; 29 September 1934, 597; 12 September 1936, 540.
and policies in Germany were often targets for abuse. The daily press, when it did the same, was criticised for its economic dependence on the Jews. Anti-Semitism in Catholic circles also received a strong impulse from the Spanish Civil War. Jews and Catholics found themselves on opposing sides and drawing even farther apart because of this distant conflict. Catholic expectations that American Jews would sympathise with the persecuted Catholics of Spain because of the cruel suffering of the Jewish minority in Germany were quickly disabused. Typical was the complaint of one editor that Jews were giving every help to the Republicans in spite of their knowledge that the Loyalists had "burned and plundered and murdered". The New York Times was consistently attacked as a Jewish newspaper which refused to give adequate and objective coverage to the Spanish persecutions. Catholics were constantly urged to read only Catholic papers which could be depended upon to refute the propaganda in the Jewish-controlled secular press. Jewish activities in support of the Loyalists also came under Catholic fire, while the two or three Catholic

112. e.g. Ave Maria, 13 March 1937, 345.
113. See Part 4 for a detailed discussion.
114. Ave Maria, 13 March 1937, 345.
journals which tried to put the whole issue in perspec-
tive brought upon themselves nothing but abuse. Anti-Semitism was to be found at the very highest levels in the church as well as in the ranks. The political activities of Rabbi Stephen S. Wise of New York City's Free Synagogue came to the attention of the Apostolic Delegate, who asked Cardinal Hayes for information on the Rabbi. Monsignor R. Keegan, who answered for Hayes, described Wise as "a tricky politician", "distinctly radical", and more interested in the political welfare of the Jews than in their religion. He was considered a "dangerous man with whom to associate" and Hayes had always refused to serve on any public committee with him. Anti-Semitism was also encouraged by Father Coughlin's broadcasts. He told his listeners repeatedly that the "sons of Jewry" wielded great influence in every walk of life, but particularly in the fields of communica-
tion. He continually warned against Jewish conspiracies to rid the world of such persons as Hitler (an opponent of

115. Shuster, "The Conflict Among Catholics", 11. The journals referred to were Commonweal, Catholic Worker and New World (Chicago).


117. See above, p. 84-85.
communism) in order to flood the world with communism. Coughlin's words, according to one contemporary Catholic journalist, gave anti-Semitism "a religious inlay" which made it acceptable to many who otherwise would not have approved, and "stiffened the backs of all those who in any way were friendly to Hitler and Mussolini".118 In New York there were even clashes on the street between Coughlin's supporters and the Jews, and there were numerous complaints that the predominantly Irish-Catholic police force was showing partiality to the Coughlimites.119 The situation in this city was exacerbated by the attitude of the Brooklyn Tablet, which "loaded its dice against ... every Catholic who opposed Hitler and Mussolini, queried the virtues of Franco or supported the New Deal".120 Some Catholic voices were raised against anti-Semitism and its obvious increase in the United States. Journal editors condemned the excesses of anti-Semitism, while imputing a certain amount of blame to the Jews themselves. Jews were urged, among other things, to disassociate themselves from communism and other radical groups "openly hostile to Christianity" if they wished to gain Catholic

118. Shuster, 12.
119. Tull, Father Coughlin and the New Deal, 207.
120. Shuster, 13.
support.\textsuperscript{121} Privately and in public members of the hierarchy and other Catholic spokesmen registered their protests. Archbishop Curley of Baltimore wrote to two different correspondents on this point in April 1938. He expressed his belief that it was totally incorrect to imagine that the Jews were trying to take over the world, as many seemed to fear. He also condemned the notion that the Jews were responsible for the Russian revolution. Although, as he said, the Jewish race undoubtedly had "faults without number" and that some of their leaders were "rather exasperating", he deplored the growing anti-Semitism which he detected in many quarters.\textsuperscript{122} Archbishop Samuel Stritch of Milwaukee assured Rabbi Joseph Baron of the same city that Jews had the sympathy of Catholics. He condemned those who, "to gain and hold a popular audience", slandered Jews by "misquoting, half-quoting and actually insinuating untruths".\textsuperscript{123} Journalist Michael Williams deplored American Catholic apathy in regard to persecution of Jews in Germany, while Father Laurence Kent Patterson, S.J., a well-known contributor to Catholic journals, publicly refuted the common notion

\textsuperscript{121} \textit{Sign}, 17 July 1938, 710.

\textsuperscript{122} Curley to George E. Sullivan, 1 April 1938; Curley to David Goldstein, 22 April 1938, Curley Papers.

\textsuperscript{123} \textit{New World}, 28 July 1939.
that the leading men in the Russian government were predominantly Jewish. Monsignor John Ryan and writer George Shuster both attacked Coughlin's anti-Semitic utterances, and Cardinal Mundelein prepared a public statement declaring that in his anti-Semitism as in his other policies and attitudes, the Detroit priest did not speak for the Catholic church. Mundelein was too ill to deliver the message personally and had his Auxiliary Bishop Bernard J. Shiel read it over the NBC radio network in December 1938. In 1939 many Catholics were concerned enough about the spread of anti-Semitism to take some positive action. In response to a call by the hierarchy to fight this evil, they organised in various cities committees of Catholics to Fight Anti-Semitism. Such committees aimed at spreading the Christian teaching against "all forms of racial bigotry" by means of "leaflets, pamphlets, newsletters, radio broadcasts, educational programs and a speakers bureau".

124. Commonweal, 2 July 1937, 257; letter to the editor, America, 29 October 1938, 89.


126. Copy of circular from the New York Committee of Catholics to Fight Anti-Semitism, 26 May 1939, Ryan Papers; New World, 28 July 1939.
events intervened to lessen the tension between Jews and Catholics. The outbreak of war, and the subsequent entry of the United States into the conflict, united all Americans in a single cause. Conflict between Catholics and Jews was forgotten while both fought a common enemy in a war which neither had wanted.

Catholics, in common with almost all other Americans in the thirties, were strongly isolationist. One contemporary writer accused his fellow Catholics of an "un-Christian provincialism of mind" which refused to recognise the "moral, political and economic interdependence of the modern world". Such provincialism, he said, preached aloofness from the affairs of Europe and renounced all responsibility for anything that happened beyond America's national and geographic boundaries.\(^{127}\)

The Catholic press was solidly against any form of intervention in European affairs and supported neutrality legislation throughout the decade. Some Catholic editors became incensed at arguments which tried to portray England, France and Russia as democracies and then contended that the United States should come to the aid

\(^{127}\) Francis E. McMahon, A Catholic Looks at the World (New York, 1945) 78.
of its fellow democracies. "Of all the sticky, gooey hypocrisy of the last few years", exclaimed Father Gillis of the Catholic World, "it seems to me that the worst is the explanation that France and England are allying themselves with Russia to save democracy and Christian civilisation". 128 As the European situation worsened, members of the hierarchy began speaking strongly against American involvement, and there was a spate of non-intervention resolutions by various Catholic organisations. 129 Almost until the day war was declared, some journal editors were refusing to accept such a possibility, and as the conflict began they remained steadfastly convinced that the United States had no part in events in Europe.

What many Catholic isolationists were particularly fearful of was involving their country in a war on the

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128. Catholic World, 149 (July 1939) 389; also Catholic Worker, 6, (February 1939) 1-2; Michigan Catholic, 9 February 1939.

129. Brooklyn Tablet, 29 April 1939; Our Sunday Visitor, 7 May 1939; Charles F. Barrett to Congressman Herman Eberharter, 8 March 1939, submitting a resolution of the Catholic Radical Alliance, Department of State Records, File No. 711.0011/19, National Archives; John McCormack to Eugene Butler, 16 January 1939, expressing views on neutrality, William Montavon Papers, Catholic University of America, Washington (hereafter cited as Montavon Papers). Cardinal O'Connell, Archbishop Curley and Bishops Duffy, Noll and Shaughnessy had all made statements by May 1939.
side of the Soviet Union. If this should happen, Professor M.J. Hillenbrand of the University of Dayton wrote, Americans would be assisting the very state which "in basic political and social philosophy, in violation of all human rights, in advocacy of atheism", loomed as "the foremost menace to civilisation and Catholicism in the modern world".\textsuperscript{130} This overriding fear of the "Red menace" was intensified in the American church after 1936. Before that date it was seen mainly as responsible for the persecutions in Mexico, and as a somewhat vague threat to religious and democratic institutions in the United States. The outbreak of the Spanish Civil war and the injection of communism as an issue into the 1936 election ensured that thereafter it was an important factor in Catholic opinion. Members of the hierarchy and other Catholic spokesmen began, in season and out, to alert Americans, Catholics and non-Catholics alike, to the alarming spread of communism in the United States. Communism was seen in various aspects of New Deal legislation, in labor and industrial problems, in the growth of government activities, in secular schools and universities, and above all, as responsible for the widespread support being given by many Americans to the Republicans in Spain.

\textsuperscript{130} America, 17 July 1937, 294.
At the 1936 meeting of the hierarchy, Archbishop Curley, a determined foe of communism, proposed that a study of the growth and activities of this great evil be made during the coming year and that a report be presented to the bishops at their meeting in 1937. He was supported by Bishop Noll of Fort Wayne who, according to Curley, had in his offices "files on subversive movements and anti-Catholicism" which would "fill a rather good size (sic) building". The paper founded by Noll, Our Sunday Visitor, was exceeded only by the Brooklyn Tablet, in its rabid anti-Communism. Noll and his paper conducted a vigorous campaign during 1936 and 1937 for the erection of a huge figure of Christ in Washington as a symbol of the nation's opposition to communism. Although a considerable sum of money was collected, it was not sufficient to cover the cost of the proposed statue, and the project was dropped. Encouraged by the publication of Divini Redemptoris in 1937, the hierarchy intensified their campaign against communism by inaugurating a "Crusade for Christian Democracy". This

131. Curley to George E. Sullivan, 3 December 1937 Curley Papers; Noll to Roosevelt, 26 February 1937, advising the president that he (Noll) was on the committee appointed to carry out the study. Roosevelt Papers.


133. The money was used to help build the NCWC headquarters in Washington.
aimed at educating the young in social and civic virtues in an effort to offset communistic propaganda and activities. The Knights of Columbus also responded to the encyclical with an extension of their current crusade against communism. The Supreme Council of the Knights pledged their organisation to use "every facility and all the power" at their command for this purpose.¹³⁴ The tragedy of this concentration on communism was that it seemingly allied the church with fascism, or at least rendered Catholics blind to the dangers inherent in the rise of nazism. The anti-nazi encyclical, Mit Brennender Sorge, was issued just five days before Divini Redemptoris. Yet for every ten Catholics who might have read the latter document, there was possibly only one who had read the equally strong indictment against nazism.¹³⁵ Anyone who was rash enough to suggest that Catholic alarm over communism was somewhat excessive, or that fascism was perhaps a more immediate problem, was quickly condemned.¹³⁶ There were those, both priests and laymen, said one Catholic editor, who thought it was a species of disloyalty

¹³⁴. Supreme Knight Carmody to Cardinal Hayes, 26 October 1937, Hayes Papers.


¹³⁶. The Ryan papers include many letters to Monsignor Ryan deploring his lack of concern over the spread of communism. "I cannot share this anxiety", he wrote to Miss Mary Cameron, 14 May 1937, Ryan Papers.
to the Catholic cause to demand proof when charges of communism were made against anyone.\textsuperscript{137} Events in Europe were partly responsible for this preoccupation with communism on the part of the American church.\textsuperscript{138} As well, its rapid spread throughout the world was undeniably a concern of the official church. It is one of the most important factors to be considered when looking at the reaction of American Catholics to events abroad in the 1930s.

\textsuperscript{137} John B. Collins, editor of Pittsburgh Catholic to Ryan, 26 April 1937, Ryan Papers.

\textsuperscript{138} A fuller discussion of this topic will be found in Part 4.
(ii) IRISH-CATHOLIC CITIZENS IN THE BRITISH EMPIRE

If by the 1930s, Catholicism in the United States and in Australia had many common characteristics, it was not because the church in the two countries had comparable histories. Even though some later developments were similar, their beginnings were very different. The first Catholics of North America, whether of Spanish, French or English origins, were all free men. Although some of them had fled religious persecution in the old world, they went as free colonists to a new land where freedom of worship was added to those other freedoms they had enjoyed elsewhere. Australian Catholicism, by contrast, was born in the prison that was the penal colony of New South Wales. It began as "a Catholicism of poverty and the peasantry, violent, crude and ignorant". Its heart was bitter against the English oppressor, its religious temper "narrow, unlovely, belligerent". Its origin left deep scars which conditioned its subsequent development, making it appear to many Australians as an alien institution in a land devoted wholeheartedly, at least until the middle of the twentieth century, to the concept

of solidarity with the British empire.

Australia's first Catholics were all transported convicts, almost exclusively Irish. Some of them were political offenders who had been involved in the Irish rebellion of 1798, but a great many more were real criminals, thieves, poachers, forgers, embezzlers, men of violence and cunning. The members of the establishment in this remote outpost of the empire, the governor, the officers of the army, the administrators and the free settlers who came in small numbers in the first years of the colony, were all British and Protestant. Between them and their Irish Catholic prisoners there existed a deep, mutual distrust and antagonism. Since the Catholic church in England and Ireland was still living under the shadow of the penal laws, no provision was made for the religious needs of Catholics in New South Wales until 1820. In that year the first two appointed Catholic chaplains arrived in Sydney and the Australian Catholic church officially began thirty years after the first settlement was made.²

As free immigration to Australia gradually replaced

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transportation of convicts, about half those who came were Irish. When, after 1851, the discovery of gold lured thousands of Europeans to the distant colony, this invasion of gold-diggers followed the famine and troubles in Ireland, the Chartist agitations in England and the revolutionary ferment of 1848 in Europe. The Australian Catholic church therefore developed as a church of immigrants, but without the diversity which characterised the American church. In Australia, after the middle of the century, a predominantly Irish-Catholic laity was ministered to and educated by Irish priests and religious. By the mid-1860s the question of education became the central concern of Australian Catholics. The various denominational educational systems which existed side by side with the public schools had been receiving aid from the government for about thirty years. Essentially the protracted and sometimes bitter struggle during the 1860s and 1870s concerned whether government money would be withdrawn from religious denominational education and devoted exclusively to a public educational system which would be free, compulsory and secular. 3 The battle that

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ensued was fought not in a calm, impartial spirit, but in an atmosphere highly charged with controversial and sectarian rancour. Anti-Catholicism which for many reasons increased in Australia after the middle of the century, coloured the movement towards systematising public education and making it universal. On their part, Catholics exacerbated the situation by harsh and sometimes unjust criticisms of the state system of education. The 1880 Public Instruction Act was passed in the wake of a fierce controversy aroused by the joint pastoral issued by the bishops of New South Wales in the previous year. In this, the hierarchy condemned secular schools as "seed plots of immorality" and challenged the existing trends in public educational policy as corrupt, infidel and unjust. Their practical recommendations amounted to a grave warning to Catholic parents that they must send their children to Catholic schools, which must be provided and supported at whatever the sacrifice. The struggle to establish and maintain a separate education system, to ensure a Catholic education for every Catholic child, has coloured all the subsequent history of the church in Australia.

The closing years of the century saw a vigorous

growth in Australian nationalism and the rise of labour as a significant force in politics, and in both these movements the church played its part under the leadership of Cardinal Patrick Moran. Australia entered the twentieth century as a federated commonwealth, although remaining firmly linked to Britain as part of the empire. The Catholic church was still composed largely of Irish or those descended from them, who viewed the nation's British-oriented establishment in the same way as their forebears had done in the early days of the colony. Catholics continued to constitute a large proportion of the poorest section of the Australian community. For many years the energy of the church had been expended in building and evangelising and in common with the church in the United States, it lacked a strong intellectual tradition. Cardinal Moran, who presided over the Australian church from 1884 to 1911, was a pragmatist and a man of action. There developed during these years a gap between thought and action, with action dominant.\(^5\)

The Irish influence was maintained in the church through the efforts of large numbers of priests and teaching religious recruited from Ireland for service in Australia. This Hibernicisation of Australian Catholicism has been a

crucial factor in its development. It has given the
church a ghetto mentality and a tradition of clericalism
and transplanted Irish nationalism. The ghetto
mentality, born of centuries of persecution in Ireland,
was strengthened by the fact that to a large extent,
Australian society reproduced the characteristics of the
struggle in the old country. The society into which the
Irish Catholic was born was professedly Protestant and
quite evidently and loyally British. The Catholic school
system so laboriously developed towards the end of the
nineteenth century, propagated an antipathy to the WASP-
based power structure, and continually reminded Catholics
of their separateness from a perceived hostile environ-
ment. It was widely accepted that a "loyal" Catholic
must be on his guard against the rest of society from the

6. Patrick O'Brien, "Catholic Revolutionaries" Quadrant,
15 (August 1971) 24. The publication of John N.
Molony's The Roman Mould of the Australian Catholic
Church (Melbourne 1969) began an historiographical
controversy as to the extent of this Irish influence.
For a critical discussion of Molony, see Walter
Phillips, "Australian Catholic Historiography:
Some Recent Issues", Historical Studies, 21
(April 1971).

7. The phrase "White Anglo-Saxon Protestant", originally
used in reference to American society, is equally
applicable in Australia.
establishment down to little Johnny Smith next door.  
This produced a minority complex similar to, but perhaps not quite as strong as, that which characterised American Catholicism. From the end of the last century on to the 1930s and later, there is evidence of the clear distinction Catholics made between themselves and "others", encouraged especially by the separate school system attended by Catholic children. Catholics retained a strong consciousness that they were "Irish working class". The urgent need for the Catholic school system to act as a bulwark against the "pagan" world and the equally "pagan" education given in the state schools, was the basis of an ongoing argument, still strong in the thirties, between the government and the hierarchy, over the alleged injustice of lack of aid to denominational schools. Aversion to Catholic culture was woven into the very fabric of modern life, declared a Catholic speaker to Melbourne university students in 1935. Anti-Catholic influences dominated both education and the press, moulding the mind of the public in a fashion radically

8. Ibid., 25.
hostile to the Christian ideals and traditions. This idea of an anti-Christian, hostile environment reinforced the ghetto mentality of many Australian Catholics. It made them quick to express their opposition to systems of ideas and movements which threatened the security of Catholic beliefs and prejudices. Catholics intuitively felt that it was expected of them to act as apologists for the faith whenever the occasion arose.

The close relationship between the clergy and laity is another result of the Irish influence on Australian Catholicism. The controversy over the nationality of bishops and priests for the colony began early in the nineteenth century and was not finally resolved until the arrival of Cardinal Moran in 1884. Bishops Ullathorne and Polding, both Benedictines from Downside Abbey in England, had hoped to make the Australian church a Benedictine mission. The controversy which ensued rested

12. This controversy has been briefly documented by K.S. Inglis in "Catholic Historiography in Australia", Historical Studies, 8 (1958) 250. See also Mary Shanahan, Out of Time, Out of Place (Canberra 1970), and the more extensive discussion of the question of Benedictinism and Hibernicism in Phillips, "Australian Catholic Historiography", 602ff.
on other issues as well as on the relationship between clergy and laity, but it is evident that the desire on the part of Irish Catholics for an Irish clergy played a significant role. In 1873 Dr. Goold, first bishop of Melbourne, was asked why the names on his list of recommendations for episcopal sees in Australia were all Irish. "Any other course would be ridiculous", he replied. "It is most just and natural that Irish Catholics would have pastors of their own nationality ... everyone is aware of the special antipathy of the Irish towards England". Goold was convinced that in order to avoid "grave unpleasantness", it was "altogether expedient to give Irish bishops to Australia".\textsuperscript{13} When Moran arrived in 1884 he brought with him a dream of a new Ireland, reborn in the freedom of a great country, marked out, as he saw it, for special honour and favour, leading to power, fame and greatness.\textsuperscript{14} The Irish priests who followed him in increasing numbers endeavoured to make the dream a reality. They kept vitally alive the Australian Catholic's sympathy for all things Irish and did nothing to lessen that antipathy towards England remarked by Dr. Goold. Great Britain was not the "homeland" for Irish Catholics

\textsuperscript{13} Quoted in Inglis, "Catholic Historiography in Australia", 250.

\textsuperscript{14} O'Farrell, \textit{The Catholic Church in Australia}, 134.
as it was for a large section of the Australian population. Rather, they looked to that sorely tried country, Ireland, which had suffered so bitterly from British ascendancy.

Neither the British political system nor British national traditions meant a great deal to the Australian Irish Catholic, and his ardent sympathy with Ireland's fight for freedom made him all the more ready to support any movement towards the assertion of his new country as a distinct object of loyalty. 15 The Irish tradition, fostered by a zealous clergy and a continuous stream of religious teachers, both men and women, who manned the ever-expanding education system, provided a firm base for a peculiar form of Australian nationalism. This brought the Australian Catholic into direct conflict with what one historian has termed "that flag-waving, jingoistic, imperial ideology which saturated Australian society as a result of the intensity of the World War I propaganda campaign conducted by the pro-war, pro-conscription, defence of empire media". 16 Certainly the issue of conscription showed how deep was the division between Catholics and other Australians, a division which was based on much more than a government decision to conscript

men for the Australian army in 1916 and 1917. Catholics were led by Melbourne's Archbishop Mannix in their opposition to conscription, and there is no doubt that their motives were very highly coloured by British intervention in Ireland in 1916. Home Rule had been a popular cause among Irish Catholics in Australia before the war, and when the rebellion occurred, Ireland and its treatment by England became the symbol for many Catholics of their own position as an oppressed minority. There were several issues, including that of aid for Catholic education, which had brought Catholics into collision with the government in the years immediately preceding the war. As well, the traditional Irish antipathy for England cooled their ardour towards the war in which Australia had become involved as part of the empire. When Hughes appealed for conscription, Archbishop Mannix decided that the degree of civic allegiance he owed to Australia did not entail loyalty to the imperial government which was oppressing his own people. Many Catholics did not support Mannix, and there is considerable doubt whether Catholic opposition to conscription had any real effect on the final voting in either of the two referenda. But a good deal of emotion was generated by caustic and sometimes bitter exchanges between Prime Minister Hughes and Mannix, and at lower levels of the
community where Catholic disagreed with Catholic. 17 The whole argument was not simply about conscription, but was based on the conviction that Catholics were an oppressed minority within Australian society. The issue also showed that, in spite of the fact that by this time most Catholics were at least second generation Australians, they were still conscious of their links with Ireland to a quite extraordinary degree. The terms "Irish" and "Catholic" were still used interchangeably of them and by them, and their Irish nationalism was encouraged and sustained by a constant stream of Irish news in the Australian Catholic press. 18 The very high proportion of Irish clergy, who came fresh from the seminaries in Ireland to Australia each year, ensured that the flocks under their care retained their allegiance to Holy Mother Ireland. Irish religious customs and Irish saints featured largely in Australian Catholic piety, as priests and educators transplanted the world of Patrick and Brigid to the wide open spaces of Australia.


18. Inglis, "Conscription in War and Peace", 36.
By the second decade of the twentieth century, however, the dominance of the Irish clergy was coming under serious challenge. The Manly Union of Priests,\(^{19}\) formed in 1914, had as its general objective, to stress the Australian character of the church and the need for an Australian hierarchy and clergy. But religious orders were still recruiting in Ireland, and the sense of identification with all things Irish remained strong outside the intellectual segment of the church. No history of the church in Australia would be worth the name, wrote a Catholic editor in the thirties, if it did not recognise that the sons and daughters of St. Patrick had laid the foundation stones of Australian Catholicism. It was Irish priests and Irish nuns who, aided by a loyal laity, had watered the mustard seed which had grown into such a magnificent tree of Catholicity.\(^ {20}\) The editors of the Catholic press, even in the 1930s, believed that Irish affairs were at least as important, if not more so, than Australian. Irish politics, especially the fortunes of Prime Minister de Valera, were reported in great detail, and though Hitler might be marching his armies

\(^{19}\) The Australian national seminary is located at Manly in the city of Sydney.

\(^{20}\) Catholic Freeman's Journal, 16 March 1933, editorial on St. Patrick's day.
across Europe, editorials would discuss the latest developments in Ireland. For this over-emphasis on Irish affairs at the official level of the church, the Irish clergy and religious were largely responsible. They were responsible, also, for another significant characteristic of Australian Catholicism, the lack of anticlericalism. The privileged position of the clergy in Irish society had its echoes in Australia, where the priest was the guide and final arbiter on all spiritual, moral and even, at times, political issues.

The anti-British, Australian nationalism associated with strong support for Irish independence, which characterised the Australian Catholic community, led to a radical tradition within the church. Today very few people would class the Catholic church as a radical or revolutionary institution, in spite of much recent emphasis on Jesus Christ as a revolutionary figure. But the radicalism inherent in the Irish tradition of opposition to their British oppressors appeared in Australian Catholicism as a "quasi-iconoclastic, quasi-anarchist attitude" towards the established political and constitutional structures of society.21 This attitude of "rebell radicalism" stems from the beginnings of Australian

Catholicism. In their criticisms of the existing order, priests and people have not looked to some glorious past. They have appealed to the vision of a just future, in which Catholics receive their rights equally with the rest of society. It was this radicalism, together with the two factors of social class and economic status, that led Catholics into an "ideologically untidy but socially logical semi-alliance" with the Australian Labor Party.

In the eyes of some political commentators the Catholic Church in Australia has exerted an influence greater than any other institution on the nation's political life. Various other organisations and groups in the society have been directly linked with different parties and are recognised as cogs in the political machine, writes one. But the influence of the Catholic church, he says, has been just as significant, but far more subtle and covert.

Less friendly critics have seen the church as a much more sinister influence in politics, while others, carried away by the periodic outbursts of sectarianism which are a

feature of Australian history, have been convinced that the scarlet woman of Rome, centre of a wicked ecclesiastical tyranny, plans to take over the country and run it according to a latter day Inquisition.\textsuperscript{25} The Catholic church is a strictly hierarchical institution, and historically it has been closely linked with autocracy and other forms of authoritarian government. On occasions it has been severely critical of liberal theories and has appeared to many as the enemy of liberalism and democracy. The vagaries of history do not, however, commit the church to official support of any particular form of government, a truth aptly illustrated by the long and stable alliance between the most socialist of Australia's major political parties and the Catholic church, traditionally doctrinally opposed to socialism. This association stems from the fact that a very large majority of Labor's rank and file members, from the earliest beginnings of the party consisted of Irish Catholics, their descendants or sympathisers.

The likelihood of a connection between a large proportion of the Catholic population and the Labor party dates back to the Fenian scares of the 1860s and 1870s and

Henry Parkes' Treason Felony Act, and even to the earliest convict days, when the Irish were already national scapegoats. The Fenian troubles aroused the ever-present hostility of the Irish to England and prepared them naturally in Australia for the most intensely nationalist of the political camps, which, from 1891 on, was the Labor party. 26 There was little in the policies of the non-labor parties of those days to attract the lower and middle income groups which comprised the bulk of Catholic congregations. Though Catholic opinion might appear to have been driven into the Labor camp largely through the absence of a middle-of-the-road, effectively non-sectarian party, yet there was a positive foundation of common interest for the alignment. The first and major area of agreement between the two groups was their opposition to British imperialism and its Australian manifestations. The motivating force behind Irish Catholic and Labor hostility to the idea of imperial prerogatives differed in origin, but it brought the two together in bitter opposition to "the party that wished to keep Australia in a humiliating state of vassalage to England". 27 The

second area of agreement was that of the party's domestic policies. In the social and industrial realm, the basic contention of Labor was that the state must take increasing responsibility for the welfare of the people. In general, Catholic social doctrine approved of this approach and joined in urging the duty and responsibility of the state to the governed and especially to the working classes. \(^{28}\) Once it was clear that the Labor party was to be a permanent political reality and that it was not likely to become extremely socialistic, even the hierarchy was cautiously approving. In 1901 Cardinal Moran saw it as "the only party that at present appears to be above religious prejudice". \(^{29}\)

The bonds between Catholics and Labor were strengthened in 1916 and 1917 when the conscription controversy in Australia followed close on the Irish rebellion of Easter 1916. The execution of the leaders of the rebellion by the British authorities, the subsequent martial law, violence, mass arrests and deportations, alienated Irish

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nationalists everywhere. In Australia, where the conscription issue was being debated, anti-conscriptionist Laborites and aroused Irish Catholic nationalists were flung firmly into the same camp. The exodus of many Protestants from the party over the conscription referenda meant that the party lost a large proportion of its leaders, especially at the federal level and in New South Wales. The conscription controversies strengthened the existing alignment between Irish Catholics and the ALP, and provided the former with an unparalleled opportunity of rising from the rank and file to the leadership ranks of the party. 30 The high peak of Catholic representation at leadership level was reached in the Scullin cabinet at the end of the twenties. Of the thirteen members, seven were Catholics, including Prime Minister Scullin himself. Three of the seven were also later to become prime ministers. After 1931 when Labor was in opposition, the percentage of Catholics in the Labor parliamentary caucus was about fifty percent. The strongest Catholic representation at this time was in New South Wales and Queensland, but even in the small state of Tasmania, with a low percentage of Catholics in the total population,

Catholics nevertheless retained a strong hold on ALP leadership in the thirties.\textsuperscript{31}

One result of the post conscription sectarianism and jingoism was the assumption of a more radical position on social questions by some prominent Irish Catholics, both clerical and lay. Coming at the same time as increased Catholic leadership within Labor, it could have produced a new vitality in Catholic social thought and action. This was not the case, however, for a variety of reasons. There were deep, though often obscured divisions within the Irish-Catholic sections of Labor. Their energies were dispersed in faction fighting and in jockeying for positions of influence as they filled the positions left vacant by the 1916 split. There was no leadership or direction given by the hierarchy, with the dominant figure, Mannix, absent from Australia during most of 1920 and 1921. Perhaps, also, the vast majority of Irish Catholics found themselves so firmly oriented politically towards the ALP, so cut off by continued bitter sectarian feeling from the possibility of retreat to the ranks of anti-Labor forces that Catholic opinion had, for the time being at least, lost its political independence. Catholics remained passive while the party moved in a direction which

\textsuperscript{31} James Jupp, \textit{Australian Party Politics} (Melbourne 1964) 33.
would seemingly have placed enormous strains upon Catholic loyalty to the Labor cause. A new radical militancy in the industrial sphere was manifested in the One Big Union movement, and in 1921 the party adopted a forthrightly socialistic objective in the ideological sphere. It seemed that the danger of offending the Catholic vote could no longer be used effectively to gain modification of ALP policy. Most Catholics would remain loyal to the party. 32

Catholic membership of the Labor party is comparable with the Catholic bloc, centred in New York, Boston and Philadelphia, in the American Democratic party. Large Australian and American Catholic membership joined those particular parties in preference to their respective opponents for historical and international reasons and have remained with them after many of the original reasons substantially disappeared. 33 The most noticeable difference between the two countries has been the proportion of Catholics who have reached the highest posts in their respective parties. American Catholics have not been as prominent at the leadership level of the Democratic party as Australian Catholics have been in the ALP. This possibly is related


33. Crisp, 86.
to the greater importance in the United States of local government, the area in which Catholic politicians in that country have achieved a degree of prominence. It is also related to the more intangible factor of the acceptance of Catholics as loyal citizens by the larger society. Although Australian Catholics were anti-British for the most part because of their Irish extraction, and were in conflict with the rest of society over certain issues such as education, they were never considered as anything but loyal Australians. While American Catholics had to defend themselves against accusations of being un-American, there is no record of similar accusations being levelled against Australian Catholics. They moved freely from the restricted world of their Catholicism to the wider one of Labor politics without hindrance and without any sense of compromise. Catholic Labor men often met and talked politics outside the church on Sunday, at meetings of the Holy Name Society or the Knights of the Southern Cross. There was rarely any conscious plan to dominate or rule the Labor party, but in the minds of many of them there was no objection to using what organisational power they could muster to achieve their own sectional interests. Such men opposed bloc activity within the party, and they disliked any attempt at organisation of a "Catholic vote". But they were Irish
Catholic and Labor and they saw no conflict between the two identities. On most issues Catholics in the ALP merged easily into the general membership. But a fundamental division between Catholic and non-Catholic members over the socialist objective was always latent. By the 1930s the activities of the more radical elements of the party were causing concern to Catholics, who tended to identify such groups with communism. On certain issues, notably the Spanish Civil War, there were deep divisions in the party, in spite of (or perhaps because of) a high proportion of Catholic membership. But the alliance between Catholics and Labor held for another twenty years, before a serious split in the middle fifties began a new period in Labor history.

The census of 1933 registered the Australian population as just over six and a half million. Of these, one and a quarter million, or twenty-two percent, were Catholics. Thus Catholics constituted a substantial minority of the total population. They were concentrated most noticeably in the states of New South Wales and Victoria, but were in all the other states as well. The church in Australia,

34. Niall Brennan, The Politics of Catholics (Melbourne 1972) 3; Arthur Calwell, interview 15 February 1972. Calwell was for many years leader of the federal parliamentary Labor party.

wrote a Catholic journalist, has been composed almost entirely of "the type of people who, in the old world have tended to become apostate, the unionised workers in city and countryside, the civil servants and the poorer townsfolk". 36 Catholics have not remained on the lowest rung of the economic and social ladder, a position they largely occupied during the nineteenth century, but despite their evident upward mobility, they were in the 1930s under-represented in the most esteemed suburbs and occupations. 37 By this time the character of the Australian Catholic church was undergoing a certain change, but in other ways it remained essentially and tenaciously the same. It was still fighting the old battles against the rest of society, especially in regard to education and what its hierarchy saw as a serious decline in national moral standards. But there were also new enemies, which needed new strategies and different weapons. It was in response to these developments that Australian Catholics became more aware of international affairs in this decade, and their reactions to events in far-off Europe caused them to be sharply at

variance with large numbers of their fellow Australians. In Australia, as in other parts of the world, the twenties had been a decade of remarkable economic progress. There had been rapid development of the large-scale corporation and financial institution and the growth of urban industrialism. Large projects for land settlement, migration and the development of resources were the daily affairs of politics in the 1920s. There was little concern over international affairs. The gratification of Australians at having won a recognised place among the nations as a result of participation in World War I had its most marked consequence in greater resolution in tackling internal development. It was sufficient that Australia could borrow and spend, manage her own estate, pass her own laws and raise the tariff. International practice could be left to shape itself from one particular case to another. Then, after the optimistic decade came another which began in world depression and ended in world war, the events of which served to accentuate sharply the weaknesses in Australian economic, political and social structures.


The depression confused Australian nationalism. It made many Australians critical of the system under which they lived and under which they suffered unemployment. Capitalism was blamed for their ills and class consciousness was assiduously fostered by those who saw working class control of the government as a desirable end. Among the growing but still relatively small number of Catholic intellectuals there resulted a new awareness of the church's social teaching as embodied in the papal encyclicals. This found expression, particularly in Melbourne, in a new, enthusiastic lay movement with a deep and passionate social concern. For most Catholics the depression years were probably worse than for many other Australians, since their economic situation was more precarious. The troubled years of the 1930s did nothing to disturb the remarkably stable alliance between Catholics and the ALP. Catholic Labor politicians continued to play an important role in government. The first federal Labor government since the conscription issue, led by a Catholic prime minister, James Scullin, was in office from 1929 to 1931. Catholics remained prominent in the state branches of the party, and were to be found at all levels in the labour unions. It is

84. Hasluck, 6-7.
difficult to ascertain what factors kept Catholics so firmly aligned with Labor during this period. Such events as the Russian revolution and the growth of an international working class movement had changed the character of the ALP, causing it to become increasingly socialistic. The identification of many members of the party with radicalism and international communism in the thirties caused grave concern to some Catholic leaders. But did many Catholic party members identify other Labor men with the communism officially condemned by their church? To what extent was the ideological change mitigated by other aspects of party policy, thus allowing Catholics to remain loyal Labor men? However individual Catholics answered these questions, it is clear that the ALP remained the political party of most Australian Catholics in the 1930s. Former Labor leader, Arthur Calwell probably summed up their position accurately when he stated that concerning many of the issues of the decade, he was never concerned about what might be the church's attitude. "I have always divided my allegiances in accordance with the Jeffersonian theory of the separation of church and state", he said. "I could follow my

41. It would appear that almost no research on these issues has been done by Australian historical scholars.
conscience in regard to doctrinal matters, and with regard to mundane matters I voted as a Labor man". 42

Other well-known Catholic politicians probably acted in the same manner. They were largely isolationist in outlook and were concerned with domestic problems rather than events on the other side of the globe. They had no strongly Catholic intellectual background or training which would make them look to Europe or be interested in international affairs. 43 Efforts to form a Catholic political party had aroused sectarian bitterness in the years after the war, and ended with the controversy which surrounded the New South Wales' government's attempts to amend the Marriage Act in 1924. Thereafter, Catholic politicians remained with the Labor party, and rank and file Catholics did not look to them to implement any specifically Catholic policy within the framework of traditional ALP policy. Occasionally, Catholic commentators deplored this attitude and called for a more positively "Catholic" role by Catholics in public and political life. The editor of the Brisbane Catholic Leader wanted Catholic

42. Interview, 15 February 1972.
43. B.A. Santamaria, interview 15 February 1972; Kevin T. Kelly, letter 5 February 1972. Santamaria, who is president of the National Civic Council, and Kelly, at present Australian Ambassador to Portugal, were both foundation members of the Campion Society in Melbourne.
laymen, especially in "such troublous times", to study
the social pronouncements of the popes, and to implement
them as the only real basis for any social reconstruction
or lasting peace. There was no excuse for any Catholic
man in Queensland, or in any part of the Commonwealth,
not being familiar with them, he continued, and there was
only blame for those who, knowing them, allowed the enemies
of God to gain control of the political or social organ-
isations in Australia. 44

Specific Catholic political activity did not, however,
receive enthusiastic encouragement from the official church.
Archbishop Mannix had figured significantly in the
conscription debate, but other members of the hierarchy
were not involved. There had been some further political
battles related to the attempted formation of the Catholic
Democratic Party in the 1920s. With the collapse of this
party in 1925, the official attempt at Catholic participa-
tion in the political life of Australia ended for the
time being. "It is all over now", said Archbishop Kelly
of Sydney, when the party finally dissolved. "Let us go
ahead building our schools and with the marriage laws
of our church". 45 Excessive concern with the marriage laws

44. Catholic Leader (editorial) 11 May 1933. For this
editor, the "enemies of God" were always communists
or those in sympathy with communism.

45. Quoted in O'Farrell, The Catholic Church in Australia,
242.
of the church was peculiar to Kelly over the next fifteen years, but all members of the Australian hierarchy shared in his first objective. They embarked on a massive building programme which is all the more impressive when one remembers that it was carried out during a time of severe economic depression. Week after week the Catholic press of the thirties reported the opening of churches, extensions to existing school buildings or the erection of new ones, the expansion of institutions for the care of the sick, the aged, the orphaned and the handicapped. All of these required religious personnel, since it was unthinkable that the laity should staff Catholic schools and hospitals. So recruiting by religious orders, at home and abroad, especially in Ireland, was a continual process, and existing resources were stretched to the limit. A nationwide appeal was launched for the completion of a memorial chapel at the Manly seminary, which was finally opened with much ceremony in the presence of most of the Australian hierarchy in November 1935. In Brisbane, where the building programme went ahead at a dizzy pace, the vision of a magnificent new cathedral captured the imagination of Archbishop James Duhig. Seldom a week passed without an appeal to Brisbane Catholics, who saw the first concrete result of their generosity in the opening of the
crypt of the cathedral in 1937. Archbishop Mannix had a reply for Melbourne critics who thought it was extravagant for Catholics to be erecting such buildings in a time of depression. Such a policy was helping the economic situation, he said. Everything should be done to keep the wheels of industry going, but they would stop if people did not go on spending, judiciously and not extravagantly and not on imported luxuries. It was a great consolation to him personally that Catholics were doing what they could, out of their limited resources, to keep things going. But the foundations of the unfinished Holy Name Cathedral, overgrown and forgotten today even by Brisbane Catholics, stand in mute testimony to the fact that bishops' dreams can founder on the economic realities of the earthly city.

The same Catholics who, week by week, gave from their limited resources to finance the church's building efforts, also made up the membership of the numerous sodalities and societies which flourished during this period. Every good, church-going Catholic man, woman or child, belonged to some organised religious group. The various Hibernian societies, the Holy Name Society and the more powerful but less conspicuous Knights of the Southern Cross, drew

46. Advocate, 4 September, 1930.
thousands of men across the country to meetings, rallies and Communion breakfasts. They donned colourful regalia and marched in religious processions behind large banners, and filled the front pews of the church at the special monthly Mass attended by their society. Well-known clerical and lay speakers and sometimes, members of the hierarchy, used these occasions to put forward their views on current affairs, domestic as well as international. These speakers had an important influence on the opinions and attitudes of their audiences, who constituted the large body of practising Catholics. They spoke in simplistic and direct terms, and repeated their views to different groups on various occasions.47 The Knights of the Southern Cross, the Australian counterpart of the Knights of Columbus, were more secretive and more selective in membership than the other men's organisations. They usually comprised within their ranks the more influential members of the Catholic community. They were characterised by a contemporary Catholic layman, as ardent supporters of the Labor party, non-intellectual, anti-Masonic and anti-communist, taking their ideas on foreign affairs from the local Catholic press.48 Catholic

47. Santamaria, interview, 15 February 1972.
women also belonged to their own special sodalities, but their activities were rarely recorded in the Catholic press of the thirties. Each weekly diocesan paper did devote several pages to "women's interests", but these consisted of brief social jottings, home hints and recipes. Religious women celebrating an important anniversary were sometimes featured, occasionally marriages were recorded and there were death notices for women. Otherwise they were not considered newsworthy.

The activities and the expressed views of the Australian bishops were recorded in great detail in the Catholic press of the period. By far the most forceful member of the hierarchy was Archbishop Daniel Mannix of Melbourne, whose controversial reign lasted from 1912 to 1962. An Irishman endowed with fierce anti-British sentiments, Mannix had made himself the spokesman for those Catholics who, in the early years of the century, still felt isolated from and penalised by Australian society. He had gained immense prestige from his anti-conscription stand in 1916 and 1917, and was the focal point for continued pro-Irish anti-British agitation on into the 1920s. In the 1930s he was still speaking his mind fearlessly on social and political questions, and was

still commanding wide attention and respect. It is clear that he exercised a certain amount of pressure in political circles, but he did this in an unobtrusive way. He talked to people and let his attitudes and wishes be known, but if nothing came of this, he was content not to press the issue. Archbishop Duhig of Brisbane was far less fiery and rather more benevolent. His reputation as "James the Builder" sums him up. He was a practical man, whose natural inclinations were towards the avoidance of conflict or arousing animosity. He was beloved by his people and respected by the majority of Queenslanders, so that when he made comments on public affairs he was sure of a hearing. In Sydney, the ageing Archbishop Michael Kelly confined his remarks and sermons almost completely to spiritual and moral matters. His coadjutor, Dr. Michael Sheehan, also had little to say on current affairs, and resigned his position to return to Ireland in 1937. Other members of the hierarchy were occasionally reported in the Catholic press when they made significant statements, on religious or other matters.

50. Calwell and Santamaria agree on this point, interviews with both, 15 February 1972.

51. O'Farrell, 205.

52. e.g. editorial comment and several letters to the editor, Courier-Mail, 8 October 1935, on Duhig's statement about the Ethiopian war.
The views expressed by the Australian bishops undoubtedly had some influence on the attitudes and opinions of Catholics, but one must be careful not to exaggerate this influence. A large proportion of Catholics probably did not read the religious press, and only those statements made by bishops which were deemed in some way controversial ever found their way into the daily secular press. As well, a bishop reaches only a small audience personally by his sermons. He resides in a particular city, and customarily preaches only to one congregation in one church of that city each week. Even the large numbers of Catholics who attend that church but go to a different service, as well as those who attend other churches in the same city, do not come under the direct influence of their bishop's sermons and addresses. This was even more true of the thirties than of the present, when members of the hierarchy more often address secular organisations or use the mass media of press and television to reach a wider audience. There were several well-known priests who in the thirties spoke regularly to large audiences on a variety of subjects including international affairs. Included among these

53. See below, 136-138.
were Dr. P. Ryan and Dr. L. Rumble, both members of the religious congregation of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, and residing in Sydney. On most occasions these men preached or spoke on religious topics, but at special functions, such as Anzac Day services, they spoke more freely on other subjects and their views on current affairs were revealed. Dr. Rumble was better known to many people, Catholics and non-Catholics alike, for his radio programme of replies to questions on Catholicism. The Australian priest can in no way be compared with Father Coughlin in the United States. Dr. Rumble's precise, unemotional voice was heard on the radio for an hour every Sunday evening, answering questions sent to him on matters relating to the church and Catholic theology. Only very occasionally did the questions touch on such subjects as the Spanish Civil War, Hitler and events in Europe, or even happenings in Australia. Dr. Rumble had no advice to give his listeners on the economic problems of the day, nor did he aspire to lead a political party. Rumble was an Anglican convert, and therefore did not identify with the Irish tradition in the church. His influence, which was probably quite considerable on a number of Catholics, was in the realm of doctrine and dogma and only marginally in that of secular affairs.
Sermons and addressed by the hierarchy and other speakers, and Dr. Rumble's replies to his interrogators, were reported in considerable detail in the weekly Catholic papers issued in each of the five major capital cities. As with the American Catholic press in the 1930s, the problem in Australia, too, is whether many Catholics read the papers sold each Sunday to members of the congregation as they left the church. If it is true that in 1958 only one Catholic family in five in Victoria bought a church paper, the question is whether a significant number of Catholics even bought a paper in the 1930s when there was less money and a less well-educated laity. Presuming that a proportion did buy a Catholic paper and read it, was it because the press reflected their own views, or because they wished to be informed of the Catholic view on current affairs? The Catholic press of the period did not serve its readers very well in this latter regard. It was strong on all matters religious and normally paid only minimal attention to domestic and foreign affairs. The Advocate in Melbourne did make a significant attempt to cover foreign affairs. This was largely due to the influence of Denys Jackson, who wrote a weekly commentary on world

events for the paper, as well as lengthy articles on the different crises of the period. Thomas Hegarty did the same for the Brisbane Catholic Leader, but this paper was far more preoccupied with the menace of world communism than was its Melbourne counterpart. The Leader reflected the views of Archbishop Duhig, a fact which it frequently proclaimed. Neither the Catholic Freeman's Journal nor the Catholic Press gave the Catholics of Sydney an adequate coverage or discussion of current events. Comments on international affairs, other than Irish, in these two papers were generally confined to the editorial columns. The Catholic Press was edited by the aged and almost blind Patrick Cleary, but the views expressed were not his. The Freeman's Journal, on the other hand, did reflect the attitudes and views of its editor, W.G. Scarvell. He had been for many years a journalist on a Sydney daily paper, and knew little of Catholic social principles. This paper concentrated on Catholic life and piety, reporting in detail the activities of bishops and priests, religious ceremonies of all kinds and the meetings of numerous organisations and societies ranging from a Holy Name rally of several thousand men at the cathedral to the meetings of suburban branches of the Catholic Debating Society. It gives a
detailed picture of a strong but seemingly quite dull Catholicity. The content of the Catholic Press was a little more lively, although it covered much the same ground. Both papers were intensely pro-Irish, and Irish affairs constituted the largest ingredient in their overseas news coverage. Between them they probably had a circulation never exceeding twenty thousand and possibly much less. To the outsider the Catholic press could look a vigorous one. Tidings, the official organ of the archdiocese of Los Angeles and San Diego, reported in 1933 that, considering the comparatively small Catholic population of the country, it was doubtful if any other nation had a more loyally supported Catholic press than Australia. The reason for this appeared to be the fact that the majority of Australian Catholics were of Irish descent with very pronounced nationalist leanings. The appeal of the Catholic papers was therefore a dual one – they were Irish as well as Catholic. Irish the papers certainly were, to a degree surprising even for the 1930s. But the truth is that the Catholic press of that decade had a very small circulation in

55. Details from Brian Doyle, interview 15 March 1972. Doyle, who is now editor of the Brisbane Leader, worked for both Sydney papers at this time.

56. Reported in Advocate, 30 March 1933.
comparison with the number of Catholics in Australia. It is therefore almost impossible to assess the influence of the views put forward by its editors and contributors. The Irish Catholic emphasis of the Catholic press was equally matched by a WASP press and cultural emphasis on British news and British traditions. Most of the Catholic papers did not publish letters from readers, and those that did usually restricted their numbers and the topics discussed. The only forum of this kind for Catholic views was the daily press, and on one or two occasions we are afforded a glimpse of a Catholic community divided over a current issue to a degree never revealed by the Catholic press. The Catholic papers were probably read by most church leaders, both clerical and lay, who in turn would have transmitted something of the views expressed there to some Catholics who did not read them. There were no significant Catholic journals of opinion in Australia in the thirties, although an attempt to establish one was made by Brian Doyle when he began editing a small publication, Catholic Fireside, which was the organ of the Catholic Club in Sydney. The Australian Catholic Truth Society was active through the decade, and published numerous pamphlets in an effort to spread Catholic doctrines and views. The greater number of these were on religious topics, and after about 1935 many were
concerned with Catholic action in all its aspects. The society did attempt to cover international affairs, and issued pamphlets discussing the situation in Mexico, the Spanish Civil war, the rise of Hitler and, above all, the spread of communism. All too often these were simply reprints of similar pamphlets issued in England or the United States or articles from various overseas Catholic journals. Since the Catholic Truth Society does not have any figures which would give reliable information on the number of pamphlets printed or sold, it is not possible to judge the influence of their publications on Catholic views and attitudes in the 1930s.

It would be quite wrong to give the impression of a uniform, non-intellectual and somewhat lifeless Catholic laity in this period in Australia. There were movements and events which pointed to a slowly changing socio-economic composition of the Catholic community. A growing number of Catholic men and women were moving into the universities, the professions and educated intellectual life generally. The first important signs of this change occurred in Melbourne, but it was not confined to that city. Everywhere more Catholics were to be found in the institutions of tertiary education, and they were becoming familiar with the church's teachings on social justice.
and other social issues. There was a growing minority of educated Catholics who divorced themselves from politics, the traditional area of activity for the Catholic layman, and who set out to educate their fellow Catholics as Catholics, knowing that their students would later apply Catholic principles to contemporary issues in very different ways.\textsuperscript{57} With the encyclicals of Popes Leo XIII and Pius XI as their guide and inspiration, they developed a Catholic social movement with a positive programme of reform. It was formalised in 1931 by the foundation of the Campion Society in Melbourne, led by a young lawyer, Frank Maher. Many of its first members were university graduates and undergraduates, although it was not an academic organisation. The centre for the society was the Melbourne Catholic Library, where members gathered for reading and discussion. By invoking the patronage of Edmund Campion, an English Jesuit martyred under Elizabeth I, the members of the new society suggested their break with the old Irish-Australian tradition.\textsuperscript{58} The society drew heavily on English Catholic social thought as expounded by Belloc and Chesterton, and was in touch

\textsuperscript{57.} Kevin Kelly, letter 5 February 1972.

\textsuperscript{58.} T. L. Sutter, "Catholicism in Australian Politics since Federation", \textit{Catholics and the Free Society}, 41.
with the Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne and the Action Populaire in France. It was also influenced by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, founders of the American Catholic Worker. Although a good deal of discussion by members centred around local social problems which they hoped to solve by the application of the doctrine of Distributism as propounded by Belloc and Chesterton, international affairs inevitably intruded themselves. Members of the Campion Society thus became aware of the opinions of Catholics in other countries. Their interest in foreign affairs also stemmed from their view of Europe as the source of all that was best in the Catholic intellectual and cultural tradition. There was also developing a trend of Catholic thought which was opposed to any military activity except that which was seen to be directly related to Australian continental defence, and which morally supported any section of the Catholic world that was under attack, whether from fascists, nazis or communists.

The Melbourne Campion Society soon inspired similar groups in other states and the movement spread. In Sydney

59. Both French Catholic Societies.
60. Santamaria, interview 15 February 1972.
a branch of the society was begun by Brian Doyle, who had been in constant contact with the movement in Melbourne since its beginnings. In Brisbane a very active group, styling itself more traditionally the Aquinas Society, but modelled on the Campion Society, was inspired by a young lawyer, John P. Kelly. The Guild of Social Studies in Adelaide pursued an intensive programme of study groups and the Chesterton club in Perth used a similar method. In 1934 at a National Eucharistic Congress in Melbourne, a conference was called of representatives of all these bodies. The result was the formation in Melbourne of an unofficial clearing house, under the auspices of the Campion Society, for ideas on Catholic action. In association with a Jesuit priest, some of the conference members prepared a pamphlet entitled Prelude to Catholic Action, which had a wide circulation and prompted the formation of Catholic action groups in many parts of the country. Although the Campion Society and its counterparts in the

63. Interview with Kelly, 26 February 1972.
64. Murtagh, The Catholic Chapter, 174.
other capital cities were not seen initially as Catholic action groups, the idea of Catholic action had been floating around in the Australian church for several years and there had been sporadic attempts to formalise it. The Australian bishops, with the exception of Mannix, showed little real understanding of Catholic action as intended to regain the working classes for the church and they emphasised the spiritual and devotional aspects of the crusade. The concerted action by the Campion societies in 1934 gave a more practical turn to the movement, and from that time "Catholic action" became a great rallying cry in the church. The Catholic press of the 1930s gives abundant evidence of the spread of the movement, with extensive reports of meetings and discussions held by various groups. It also provided outlines for the discussions and much good advice on organisational aspects. In 1937 the fourth plenary council of the hierarchy of Australia approved the establishment of a national Secretariat of Catholic Action, and the movement passed out of the hands of the amateurs into the more efficient but also more controversial control of B.A. Santamaria. Membership of the Campion Society and other groups modelled on it was usually confined to the better educated Catholic laymen, but
Catholic action groups included members from every section of the church, even high school children. Enthusiastic and energetic Catholic actioners organised meetings which read and discussed papers on a wide variety of topics, including foreign affairs and the church's attitude towards them. But the movement was strictly controlled by the hierarchy, with approved chaplains present at each meeting to guard against doctrinal unorthodoxy. The topics to be discussed, even the form the discussions must take, were regulated by the secretariat, and there was little danger that Catholic action groups might become open forums for the expression by Catholics of divergent views and attitudes.

The Australian version of the Catholic Worker, although founded under the inspiration of the Campion Society, was never intended to be, nor did it ever become a mouthpiece for that society. Its avowed mission was to help build a new Christian social order based on Catholic social teaching. The remedy proposed by its editors was the reorganisation of the economic structures of society so as to create a co-operative commonwealth, based on a wide distribution of property among all the people, through co-operative ownership and shareholding by the workers. The Catholic Worker saw capitalism as the real enemy in Australia, and month after month it
featured carefully documented articles condemning government policies in all areas of social welfare. In foreign affairs it was thoroughly isolationist and anti-Communist.\(^{66}\)

No matter which one of these new movements in the church in the thirties is considered, sooner or later one encounters the name of Denys G.M. Jackson. Although most of his contemporaries state emphatically that his views were not typical of general Catholic attitudes of the period, Jackson was a prominent and colourful figure in Catholic circles. An Englishman, graduated from Cambridge, he came to Australia in 1927 and became history master at Xavier College, a large Jesuit boys' school in Melbourne. He spoke and wrote tirelessly on the Catholic tradition and on foreign affairs as he interpreted them in the light of that tradition. In 1934 he resigned his teaching position and began working full-time for the Catholic press in Melbourne. As "Sulla", he contributed articles and a commentary on current affairs to the Advocate, and he edited the second Catholic paper, the Tribune. He spoke each Sunday on the radio Catholic Hour, and conducted countless meetings and discussion groups.

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66. See O'Brien, "Catholic Revolutionaries", for a detailed discussion of this paper and its policies.
Above all, he brought his influence to bear most strikingly on the young men of the Campion Society, being a foundation member of the organisation. His influence in this regard came partly from his age (he was in his middle thirties and most of the other members were about twenty or a few years older) but also from his personality. He was positive in his ideas, trenchant in his manner of expressing them and he gave the impression of profound scholarship. He was everything those "discontented, curious but inhibited young men were not", wrote one of them. He was English, Cambridge educated, a convert and most important of all, he was "an old-fashioned right-wing imperialist", cast among enthusiastic, Irish, left-wing radicals. Jackson cheerfully admitted to these right wing, authoritarian views. He wrote of himself that he had begun as a royalist and an enemy of parliamentary democracy and in spite of what had happened in Europe, he had remained in the same camp of reaction. He firmly believed that monarchy, consecrated by tradition, though faulty, was

more dignified, more efficient and less corrupt than parliamentary government.\textsuperscript{68} One of his contemporaries believed that for many Catholics he was the church's mouthpiece on current affairs.\textsuperscript{69} But in the judgment of others, his views other than those directly concerned with the defence of the church, were not generally shared at the time by the Catholic community.\textsuperscript{70} His views might not have been typical, but during the thirties few men, either clerical or lay, spoke in the same vein so often to so many Catholics. His influence on the thought of the young men who made up the Campion Society was profound,\textsuperscript{71} and the same must have been true of many other Melbourne Catholics who seriously read their Catholic papers or attended Jackson's lectures. The intellectual sector of Australian Catholicism in the 1930s clearly contained a strong element of Jacksonianism.

In the early years of the decade Catholics shared with the rest of Australians a general lack of interest in and understanding of foreign affairs. There is

\textsuperscript{68} Jackson, "A Royalist Pilgrimage", \textit{Advocate}, 24 May 1934.
\textsuperscript{69} Brennan, 22.
\textsuperscript{70} Kevin Kelly, letter 5 February 1972.
\textsuperscript{71} All the former members of the society I interviewed emphasised this point.
abundant evidence that Australians at this time were absorbed in their own affairs, with little concern about what was happening elsewhere unless it quite evidently touched Australia's interests. Foreign relations were largely concerned with trade, and a typical attitude was that Australia's foreign policy should, for the time being, be directed towards maintaining and developing associations with existing markets while seeking to gain a footing in others where Australian goods were not yet sold. 72 In 1935 a journalist told J. Pierrepoint Moffat, American Consul to Australia that the average Australian was not particularly interested in foreign affairs, and drew a parallel with the average mid-western American. 73 When, in the following year, a visitor from England publicly stated that Australians were taking more interest in foreign affairs than on her previous visit five years before, the Sydney Morning Herald commented editorially that it was doubtful whether this alleged interest extended to the mass of the people, or was producing any


73. Moffat Diary 1935-1937 (Microfilm, National Library of Australia) 8. This is the diary of the American Consul in Sydney, J. Pierrepoint Moffat. Hereafter cited as Moffat Diary.
positive reaction. "So long as the leaders of both political parties cling to an isolationist policy", the editor wrote, "Australian interests in the outer world are mostly a figure of speech".74 In foreign affairs, Australian public opinion was uncertain when, as was usually the case, it was not greatly interested, and imitative where it was. The country appeared to find no obvious need for an independent foreign policy, and was prepared to have its views on these matters formulated for it in Britain.75 The average Australian was well content, in the view of a contemporary young politician, to be closely associated with Great Britain.

"He believes in Great Britain, he believes in the British Empire ... he knows that in the last resort Great Britain will not seek to interfere in the domestic problems of Australia and he is normally quite content to leave it at that".76

In this respect, most Catholics were "average Australians", indistinguishable from the rest of the population in being generally uninformed and apathetic about international

74. Sydney Morning Herald, 14 April 1936.
affairs. There were, however, two areas where Catholic opinion diverged from general Australian opinion on foreign affairs. The first was dependence on Britain. Given the Irish character of Australian Catholicism, it was inevitable that this view would be challenged by Catholics. But while the editors and writers who expressed their views in the Catholic press spent a good deal of time blaming the Australian government for blindly following Britain's lead, they offered no viable alternative policy. As the European situation worsened, they demanded that if Britain went to war, Australia should not follow automatically, but that her people be given the right "to exercise self-determination regarding peace or war". On the other hand they did not envisage Australia as playing a positive role in international affairs. They were thoroughly isolationist, and in the words of one of them, wanted to see Australian policy concentrated on domestic affairs without the complexities arising from involvement in "European tangles".

77. Santamaria and Calwell stressed this point, interviews with both, 15 February 1972.
78. Of course, this attitude was also prevalent in the Labor party, predating the Catholic "rise to power" in the party.
of the hierarchy had very little to say on international affairs, but when they did speak they revealed complete agreement with this anti-British isolationist view. If there was any positive influence on Australian Catholic intellectual attitudes in the 1930s, it came from the pope rather than from the Australian bishops. There was, during this period, a strong identification of Catholics with Italy, Rome and the papacy, and this had significant consequences on their attitudes to foreign affairs.\textsuperscript{81} The general concept of the international Catholic community, not identified with any particular government also influenced the attitude of some Catholics, while their Irish heritage made them sceptical of the policies of all the great powers.\textsuperscript{82}

A second significant area of disagreement between Catholics and other Australians was the Catholic attitude to communism. In Australia as in the United States opposition to communism became the dominating factor in Catholic thought in the 1930s.\textsuperscript{83} The Catholic press carried on a relentless war against the "Reds" and most

\textsuperscript{81} C.M. Clark, "Faith", Peter Coleman (ed.) Australian Civilisation (Melbourne 1962) 83; Doyle and John Kelly, Interviews, 15 February 1972, 26 February 1972 respectively; Kevin Kelly, letter 5 February 1972. This assertion can be verified from the Catholic papers of the period.

\textsuperscript{82} Kevin Kelly, letter 22 April 1972.

\textsuperscript{83} Calwell, interview, 15 February 1972, Kevin Kelly, letter, 5 February 1972.
of the editors had a tendency to close their eyes to the complexities of any given situation, seeing every crisis as a confrontation between communism and some other group in society. The Australian Catholic Truth Society brought out numerous pamphlets on the subject, linking communism most often with events in Mexico and Spain. Anti-communism accounts to a large extent for Australian Catholic opposition to the League of Nations, especially after the admission of Russia to the League in 1934.84 Warnings against the spread of communism came repeatedly from the hierarchy and other Catholic spokesmen.85 All other ideologies, such as fascism and nazism, were measured against it, and the weight of evidence always favoured the others.86 Catholics accused other Australians of being indifferent to the spread of communism in their own country, and of shutting their eyes to the possible results of this. The spread of this evil creed, in the view of Catholics, was leaving the way open for such terrible things as the wholesale executions for treason in Russia, the atrocities in Spain, the tyrannical rule of the National Socialists

84. Advocate, 20 August 1936; Catholic Press, 5 November 1936.

85. e.g. Catholic Leader, 18 January 1934; Catholic Freeman's Journal, 22 October 1936; Sydney Morning Herald, 3 August 1936.

86. Catholic Fireside, 3 (November 1936) 12.
in Germany and the fascist dominance in Italy. Only Catholicism was awake to the danger, and Catholics saw the church as fighting alone against this world-wide evil. They believed that communism in its turn recognised the church as its most formidable opponent and was endeavouring to stamp out Catholicism in those countries where marxism was establishing itself. This emphasis on the fight against communism distorted the Catholic view of world events, and on occasions aligned Catholics against large sections of the rest of the population, especially within the Labor party.

Anti-semitism was not a significant feature of Australian Catholicism in the 1930s. This is not to say that Catholics eagerly espoused the Jewish cause at the time of the German pogroms or that the writers in the Catholic press did not ever condemn the Jews. But such antipathy to the Jews which was sometimes evident in the press was not endorsed by members of the hierarchy or other responsible church leaders.

Archbishop Mannix was quick to offer sympathy to the Jews in 1938 when the full ferocity of the nazi persecution was directed against them. He warmly applauded the decision of the Australian government to allow Jewish and

other refugees to enter the country. Jackson declared that nothing could justify the sufferings inflicted on the Jews solely on the grounds of their race, while the editor of the Brisbane Catholic Leader condemned Catholics who "took up an attitude of hostility to the Jews". But there were Catholics who took this attitude of hostility, and all too readily subscribed to the idea that Jews were the evil power behind international finance, freemasonry and communism. In common with some American Catholics, they resented the sympathy given to the Jews in Germany when little was said about the persecution of Catholics, not only in Germany but in other countries as well. They, too, blamed this on control of the secular press by foreigners and Jews.

Australian Catholics in the 1930s did not share with the majority of their countrymen certain basic "myths" underlying the social and cultural milieu. In particular they rejected the ideal of the British empire as well as that of the international working class, a sort of modest pan-socialism. At the same time they tacitly accepted the

89. Advocate, 25 March 1937.
90. Catholic Leader, 24 November, 1938.
fact that Australia was a pluralistic society and that
the Catholic church did not want it to become a totally
Catholic society with Catholicism as the official
religion of the state. Like Catholics in the United
States, Australian Catholics quietly ignored the remarks
of those popes prior to Pius XI who implied that the
Catholic ideal was a confessionally Catholic society.
The general Australian Catholic attitude to the question
of church-state relations was one of pragmatism, and
like so much else in Australia both in the church and
in the wider society, it was "sans doctrine". In
discussing the reaction of Australian Catholics to events
in Europe in the thirties it is important to remember
that they were Catholics who were also Australian
nationalists. As Catholics they were bound intellectually
to avoid provoking or encouraging war of any kind. As
Australian nationalists, believing that a challenge to
Australia might come from Asia, they did not want war
to eventuate in the Pacific, or in Europe from where it
could spread to the East. As Catholics and nationalists
they believed that the great and permanent threat to all
their values was presented by international communism.

introduction by Max Charlesworth, XIII.
As good isolationist Labor men, they had a special interest in discouraging attitudes which would intensify divisions already existing within the Labor party. So their reactions to foreign affairs resulted from a mixture of roles, involving Catholicism, Australian nationalism and Labor politics. The "mix" varied with individuals, but each role is important when trying to discern a Catholic consensus of opinion on the various crises of the 1930s.

PART 3

THE ITALO-ETHIOPIAN WAR

(i) THE FASCIST-COMMUNIST DILEMMA

"Completely aware, extremely cautious and somewhat worried" was the way one editor described the attitude of the American government as Mussolini's troops began their long-advertised invasion of Ethiopia in October 1935. "Washington is watching the situation almost prayerfully", he continued, "... and the supreme hope right now is that the conflict may be isolated in Africa".¹ Mussolini had been contemplating an East African campaign for some time in order to consolidate Italian holdings south of the Suez. The Italian dictator probably had several motives for this move. Manchuria had convinced him that he could attack Ethiopia without interference from the League of Nations, and he wished to wipe out memories of a former Italian reverse in the African country. Paris and London were too preoccupied with the resurgence of German power to worry about Mussolini's manoeuvres. Finally, a splendid little war might divert attention at

¹ New York Times, 6 October 1935.
home from some of the dictator's unfulfilled domestic promises. The crisis came at the climax of a long debate in the United States about neutrality, a debate which had extended over a number of years. The public, aroused by the Nye investigation, was becoming more concerned over the situation in Europe and its possible effect on American security. The crisis in Ethiopia in the fall of 1935 brought American policy makers to the cross-roads of decision and gave new impetus to the drive for a foolproof neutrality law. The war in Africa was begun and carried to a conclusion within the framework of America's frantic search for such a neutrality law. The President signed the first one on 31 August 1935 and a second one in February 1936. It is doubtful whether Washington's "prayerful attitude" continued for long. Despite the rising tide of isolationist sentiment in the country, feelings against Italy within the administration grew increasingly bitter and partisan. Harold Ickes wrote that he had not met anyone whose sympathy was not with Ethiopia, and even Roosevelt himself indicated his support for the victim of Italy's aggression.  


3. Ickes, Secret Diary, 1, 446; Robert Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins (New York 1950) 1, 97.
American public attitudes had been slow to crystallise. There had been no surge of anti-expansionist sentiment during Mussolini's overt penetration of Ethiopia in 1934. Once war commenced, American opinion, as far as it can be assessed in the press, in the resolutions of various organisations and in letters and protests to the president and other government leaders, sympathised overwhelmingly with Ethiopia. "American public opinion," Count Ciano lamented, "is dead against us in the Abyssinian question."  

American hostility towards Italy and the campaign in Ethiopia was not a reaction against the political philosophy of fascism. For over a decade Americans had admired Italian fascism for its industrial virtues and patriotic pieties. But the martial spirit of the movement had been obscured to a large extent, hidden behind the glitter of fascism's proclaimed economic achievements and by Mussolini's imposing presence. In most cases the angry response of Americans to the war in Ethiopia was not provoked by fascism as much as by war fascism. This explains in part their incomprehension at the attitude of many Catholics towards the war, and the subsequent accusations


5. Diggins, 296.
of fascist tendencies which were increasingly levelled at the church by her critics during the second half of the decade.

The general Catholic reaction to fascism, as revealed by the Catholic press and other church spokesmen, was quite pragmatic. Like other Americans, Catholics admired Mussolini and his movement, and praised the dictator for having brought order and economic stability to Italy. Many were convinced, in the early days of his rule, that Mussolini's supposed Catholicism was not only a fact but a continuing influence on his governmental policy. Fascism was also seen as a good because it had overcome the possibility of a communist seizure of power in Italy. But the real measure of Catholic approval or opposition to particular fascist policies was the degree of favour which would accrue to the church. When the church seemed to be the winner in a struggle which had lasted many decades, the general reaction of the American Catholic press was one of happiness and support. So the Lateran Treaties at the end of the twenties appeared to them to be a perfect example of just how Catholic Mussolini was. On the other

hand, in the controversy over Catholic action several years later, the same editors and writers were not quite so favourable to Mussolini. The general impression was that he had made a grave mistake and that the defence of the church demanded strong action on the part of the pope. This manner of judging Mussolini's actions carried over, possibly almost unconsciously, to the Ethiopian war. The effect of a war on the church normally would be one factor influencing the attitude of Catholics to that war. But in this case, the church was not being harmed by the campaign in Ethiopia, and many Catholics were prepared to let well be. It seemed to them that the church might suffer indeed if the League of Nations intervened or sanctions were imposed on Italy. If, as many Protestants were demanding, the pope should explicitly denounce the war, there would, no doubt, be grave conflict between Mussolini and the Vatican. This could result not only in a decline of the church's prestige in Italy but possibly throughout the world. It would be quite incorrect to suggest that most American Catholics favoured the war. Many did not, and said so. Most said nothing. It was this silence, together with the seeming support of some Catholics for Mussolini's war, which angered other Americans. They could only interpret it as Catholic support for war fascism, which they now saw as the great evil threatening to engulf
the whole world.

Catholics had seen no reason to disagree with other Americans who saw Mussolini as the "man of the hour" in Italy. Mussolini's Italy appeared to them as a rational reproach to both the anarchy of capitalism and the tyranny of communism. In contrast to Russia's apparent war on property, its subversive internationalism and its destruction of "marriage, the home, the fireside, the family", fascism seemed to stand for property and filial values, social mobility within a social order and for God and country, all virtues which the church upheld and applauded. 7 Various American ecclesiastical dignitaries, including Cardinal O'Connell of Boston and Cardinal Hayes of New York, had visited Italy through the twenties and brought back glowing reports of what Mussolini was achieving in the country. Even such a far-seeing cleric as Monsignor Fulton J. Sheen, who viewed the movement from the United States rather than seeing it first hand, nevertheless praised fascism as a timely resurrection of the spirit of Roman Christianity. 8 Father Coughlin consistently defended Mussolini in his speeches and his writings.

7. Diggins, Mussolini and Fascism, 37.
8. Commonweal, 18 February 1931, 432-34.
Coughlin invited the dictator to write articles for his weekly paper, Social Justice, and promised to support him editorially. The Catholic press was divided over the issue of fascism. The Jesuit journal America looked favourably on the movement, because it was based on order, discipline, authority and a revival of the sacred values of church and family. The editors regarded fascism primarily in relation to the interests of the papacy. Hence America frequently quoted from papal statements which supported their view of fascism. As the Mussolini regime proved more amenable to the Vatican, the editorials grew warm with admiration and gratitude. Commonweal maintained a much more flexible attitude. Notwithstanding its editorial policy of generally favouring the movement, the editors published articles both for and against Mussolini. By 1931, in spite of certain reservations about various events in Italy, the editors of Commonweal were satisfied that Mussolini posed no threat to world peace and that there was "a complete absence of military bombast" in Italy. Father Gillis, editor of the Catholic World, also followed the policy of publishing


articles for and against the Italian dictator, and he made an earnest attempt to understand the fascist movement. In his early editorials on the subject he accepted the widespread belief that Mussolini had saved Italy from bolshevism, and he expressed admiration for the discipline and order displayed by fascism. But Gillis was disturbed by what he termed Mussolini's "highhanded and occasionally violent methods" and his scorn for the idea of liberty. The Catholic World was alone among the Catholic press in its sceptical reaction to the news of the concordat and Lateran Treaty between the Vatican and the Italian government in 1929. Many enthusiastic Catholics interpreted these agreements as the long awaited reconciliation between church and state in Italy. But Gillis denied that the Vatican had reconciled itself to Mussolini and fascism. Referring to a statement by the pope in 1927 that fascism viewed the state as an end in itself and citizens as mere means to that end, he concluded that the church could never be committed to fascism.\footnote{11} By 1930, Gillis had repudiated the fascist regime and Mussolini, and remained their strongest American Catholic critic throughout the 1930s. Other Catholic journals and

\footnote{11. For a lengthy discussion of the editorial policy of the Catholic World, see Diggins, Mussolini and Fascism, 188-90.}
papers took up positions somewhere between the two extremes represented by the *Brooklyn Tablet* and the *Catholic Worker*. The former was almost fanatically racist and pro-fascist, and the latter was the voice of the small and isolated Catholic anti-fascist left. Most others managed to accommodate their positions in a favorable relationship to fascism. The typical argument was summarised in an editorial in *Our Sunday Visitor*. The editor of this widely circulated weekly believed that the current world issue was whether fascism or communism should prevail, and in his view the sympathy of all right thinking men should be for the former. Under fascism, he argued, private property was not confiscated, God was not necessarily disowned and a happy state of religion and morality was at least conceivable.\(^{12}\) The commonly held view that if one was opposed to communism he was supposed to have nowhere to go but to fascism had made an extremely difficult situation for Catholics, lamented a contemporary author. Catholics knew the true nature of communism, he argued, and especially they knew it could never be democratic. Fascism was, in fact, a form of anti-marxism, but its

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totalitarian nature caused it to regard the church as an instrument of its own ambitions. In spite of such knowledge, most Catholic writers argued that the two ideologies were not equally evil. If both communism and fascism came from hell, communism "fumed from a lower pit of hell". Fascism could, and did, permit men to worship God according to the dictates of their consciences. On the other hand, communism was based on a denial of God, and its ultimate purpose was to destroy religion. Hence, while no Catholic (or no American for that matter) could accept the basic philosophy of either fascism or communism, he could, should a choice be forced upon him, tolerate fascism as the lesser evil. Thus the main argument of Catholics in favour of fascism was pragmatic. The church had been able to come to a working arrangement with Mussolini's regime; the pope was making the best of the situation. This could not be said of such countries as Russia and Germany, where the political circumstances hampered the church and even actively persecuted it. Fascism, it was argued, was capable of assuming many forms, and in some of them the church and


14. America, 8 October 1938, 12-13. This editorial is typical of many others in the American Catholic press during the 1930s.
citizens alike had a certain degree of freedom. Catholics would therefore choose fascism in preference to communism, not with approval but as the lesser of two evils. With fascism, the church could establish a temporary modus vivendi and wait hopefully for better times. But with communism, based essentially on atheism and committed to fostering godlessness, no such working arrangement was possible.

Such sentiments naturally caused other Americans to view the Catholic church as at least sympathetic to fascism if not actually supporting it. The connection between "the fascist threat and the activity of the largest single minority group, the Roman Catholic church", had noticeably increased over the years, wrote one journalist. There was only a suspicion of pro-fascism in the American church when Mussolini and the pope signed their treaty, he said. It increased during the Ethiopian war, and since then "Catholic actions in European and American politics, in labor struggles everywhere, in conflicts between super-patriots and liberals", in the exercise of censorship and the use of "mass pressure against progressive and

15. Ibid., 13 February 1937, 445.
liberal ideas and movements", had all resulted not merely in considerable questioning of policies among Catholics but a growing resentment among non-Catholics in America.17 According to another contemporary observer, the over-emphasis on communism, evident everywhere from "papal pronouncements to the luncheon conversation of Catholic laymen" was causing many to ask whether the church was pro-fascist. They feared that while thus opposing communism, it had swung to the other extreme.18

Americans might complain about the church's apparently over-sympathetic attitude, but at least until the mid 1930s, Mussolini continued to be admired by many of them. American businessmen, trying to solve economic problems in the depression, praised him as the proper antidote to bolshevism and as the ideal industrial executive who got things done. He was seen by some Americans as the supreme practising pragmatic statesman, by others as a redeemer who had turned back the tide of materialism and anti-clericalism in Italy. The Ethiopian war was the turning point, after which the American public became disenchanted and the government critical of and even hostile to Italy. Developments after 1935, including the Spanish Civil War,

the Axis alliance and the anti-Semitic laws in Italy, caused the great majority of Americans to turn against Mussolini.¹⁹

The most obvious feature of reaction by American Catholics to the war is the significant lack of it. Many Catholic papers and journals had no comment on the situation until some time after the Italian invasion, while others hardly recognised the war at all. The Boston Pilot noted the Pope's pleas for peace as the conflict began, and published two articles on the work of the Catholic church in Ethiopia. The only other mention of war was an editorial, in September 1935, which deplored war as a means of settling differences between nations. Even in this, Italy and Ethiopia were not named. Apart from these brief references, the Ethiopian war began and ended without any significant discussion of it by this paper. The Brooklyn Tablet did little better. Three editorials and several letters to the editor discussing whether Ethiopia was a Christian country were the sum total of this paper's interest in the war. During 1935, the emphasis, editorially and in the news columns of the Tablet was almost exclusively on Mexico. By April

1936 Spain was beginning to take prominence, and as the year went on, news from that country dominated the paper. Ethiopia and the Italian aggression there was of very little interest to the editor, and presumably the readers, of the Tablet. Even those editors who discussed the war when it began, gave no consideration to the developing crisis throughout late summer and early fall, 1935. One or two lonely voices other than newspaper editors were heard crying in the wilderness, but they were exceptional. Early in September the three hundred delegates to the annual convention in Washington of the Federated Coloured Catholics of the United States adopted a resolution regarding the situation. They expressed regret at the attitude of the Italian government toward "the semi-defenceless Ethiopian people", and declared that "the imperialistic designs of Mussolini" against Ethiopia would react unfavorably against the work of the Catholic church among the dark peoples of the world.20 Professor Charles Fenwick of the Catholic Association for International Peace urged Hull to repudiate the "aggressive declarations of Italy" and to call for arbitration of the dispute under the Pact of Paris. "Unless we are willing ... to marshall the forces of public opinion against Italy and to show the

20. NCWC News Service, 3 September 1935.
world that there are some benefits of the Pact", he wrote, "... then our solemn ratification of the treaty becomes a mockery." Almost all other Catholic comment came after the war had begun, and disagreed with the views expressed by the negroes and Fenwick. Catholic editors had no qualms about bypassing the real issues and concentrating on what they regarded as the hypocrisy of the protests against Mussolini's campaign in Africa. England was the major offender in this regard. She had extensive territories all over the world and had, in recent times, taken "a generous slice of South Africa from the Boers", not because room was needed for colonisation, but because the richest gold and diamond mines in the world happened to be there. France, too, had territory in Africa and was not about to relinquish it to any other nation. After the war, England and France had taken everything worthwhile and Italy was given the crumbs. In view of this extensive empire-building on the part of other nations, it was sheer hypocrisy for them to condemn Italy, since she badly need room for expansion.

21. Fenwick to Hull, 7 August 1935, Department of State, 765.84/765.

22. Ave Maria, 19 October 1935, 503; Brooklyn Tablet, 24 September 1935.

23. Brooklyn Tablet, 19 October 1935.
League of Nations was also severely criticised. When Japan attacked Manchuria, argued some Catholic writers, the League did nothing. Now, with "Britain's life-line of empire" threatened in the Mediterranean, the League was "whipped into action". Under British impulses it seemed almost willing to precipitate a European or even a world war in order, ostensibly, to save "a small kingdom of blacks" from a fate which some of those same League members were inflicting on the rest of Africa.24 One editor noted that he had received criticisms of his anti-British, pro-expansionist view of the conflict in Ethiopia. Even when thus challenged, however, this journal was not prepared to condemn Italy's aggression. When other nations exclaimed "piously" against Italy's "pushing policy", they might be right about the policy, the editor conceded. But he was not prepared to make any stronger statement, and reiterated the fact that other nations owned millions of people, acres and wealth, taken in just the same policy of "get-what-you-can" which Italy was pursuing. For such nations to assume a "holier than thou stance" and pretend to be shocked at Mussolini's acquisitiveness, was simply hypocritical.25 Both Commonweal and America


25. Ave Maria, 26 October 1935, 534.
showed some concern for international law and expressed the desire that the dispute could be settled by the League. But neither was prepared to condemn Italy, and both showed an almost heartless disregard for the fortunes of hapless Ethiopia. It could well be, wrote Michael Williams in *Commonweal*, that Italy had a greater measure of justification for her action than was at first evident. Only the romantic could believe that the African country had achieved a social order of such value that the world would be poorer without it. This willingness to sacrifice Ethiopia on the international altar was evident in the views of other editors besides Williams. The Ethiopian empire had been "gathered together by ravishing other's dominions". Italy's needs were apparent; she was thickly populated, with a rapidly growing population, and she lacked oil, coal and arable lands. Since France and Britain were not about to give over some of their territories in Africa or elsewhere, Mussolini was compelled to take action. It was, according to this view, morally defensible to take for oneself what had already been taken from others. The morality of the

situation was precisely what all but one of the Catholic editors were totally unwilling to discuss. Did Italy have any right to invade and conquer another country, even for all those laudable reasons listed in the editorials of the Catholic press? This was the question asked by Father Gillis of the Catholic World, the only editor to come out in open condemnation of Mussolini. In answer to his own question, Gillis reported that there was no hint of wrath in any of the press, secular or religious, against a big nation threatening to assault a "helpless little group of semi-savages". He returned to the same question after the war had begun. Diplomats, journalists, editors, all had been blind to this main moral issue of whether the Italian invasion of Ethiopia was justified, he wrote. All the arguments about who had profited from the war, or what England and other countries were doing about colonies, were "absolutely no justification or even a condonation" of Italy's "ruthless and murderous adventure". England's cupidity was no excuse for Italy's rapacity. A few months later, Gillis again discussed the war. He pictured the Ethiopian army, "a higgledy, piggledy, hobble-de-hoy mob of bareheaded

28. Catholic World, 142 (October 1935) 8.
29. Ibid., (November 1935) 137.
barefooted black men", whose military training was "largely of the age of the Queen of Sheba", facing the modern Italian army, well equipped with a superabundance of modern instruments of mass murder, high powered rifles, tanks, planes, mines and poison gases. The hideous slaughter of these people, wrote the priest, was the most shameful episode he had ever heard of in the history of war. He bitterly blamed not only the European statesmen who hesitated over the application of sanctions while Mussolini went ahead with his venture, but also members of the United States government, too supine even to say, "Stop in the name of humanity". \(^{30}\) Such strong condemnation of Mussolini and those who failed to deter him brought considerable wrath down on the writer's head. What surprised Gillis most was not the fact that his views aroused opposition among some Catholics but that his opponents saw them as inspired by a hatred of Italy and Italians. This he vigorously denied. He hinted at an open debate on the matter between himself and others. "There are rumours and rumblings of a challenge that might compel me to do this". \(^{31}\) A "Right Reverend Monsignor" had written a letter of some fifteen hundred words and had

\(^{30}\) Catholic World, 143 (May 1936) 138.

\(^{31}\) Ibid., (July 1936) 385.
demanded that it be given a place of equal prominence with the offending editorial. There were also many other protests but, said Gillis, they were mainly vituperative. The protests had, in fact, reached the highest level of the hierarchy. The Apostolic Delegate, on a visit to New York, raised the matter with the chancellor of the diocese. Complaints had been made in the New York Italian newspaper, Il Progresso, where the Catholic World was designated as "the official organ of the church" in New York and of Cardinal Hayes. The Apostolic Delegate directed Monsignor McIntyre to write to the Italian paper correcting the error. More importantly, he suggested that Father Gillis' religious superior be spoken to, presumably in the interests of less controversial journalism. McIntyre commented on the "seeming uselessness" of the editorial by Gillis, and added, "Mussolini was not acting as a Catholic but as an Imperator". In view of such official opinions in the church, it is small wonder that Gillis found writing against Mussolini a lonely job. Because Il Duce had put the crucifix back in the schoolroom and had erected a cross in the Coliseum, he commented, pious Catholics thought themselves obliged to justify a war

32. Ibid., (August 1936) 513. The references are all to the editorial in May.
33. McIntyre to Hayes, 24 May 1936, Hayes Papers.
in Ethiopia "that would have revolted Thomas Aquinas, Augustine or any other orthodox moralist". 34

Of American policy in regard to the conflict, the Catholic press had almost no comment to make. By the end of October 1935, the League had condemned Italy as an aggressor and had recommended a programme of limited economic sanctions. The United States government had indicated, albeit in a very cautious and hesitating manner, that its sympathies were with Ethiopia and the League. While not actively co-operating with the League, America did not wish to frustrate its plans in any way. The United States had managed not to offend Italy seriously, and except for a few questions and protests, Italy had kept silence with regard to American actions and policy. The crisis in Italian-American relations came, however, in November, when the League considered more effective sanctions. 35 It was in regard to sanctions that the Catholic editors discussed American policy if they did so at all, and they all agreed that the United States must refrain from taking part in any programme of sanctions. They used the fear of war as their main argument, but they were also worried about what more vigorous sanctions would

34. Catholic World, 149 (April 1939) 1.
35. Harris, The United States and the Italo-Ethiopian Crisis, 87.
mean to Italy. The American people must resolve once more not to be drawn into Europe's "obligato of cannon and destruction", but equally important was the need to preserve friendship with Italy. Quite naturally, Italian-Americans were vocal in their opposition to sanctions against Italy. The Italian Union of America reportedly comprised four hundred societies with a total membership of more than four hundred thousand. These people conducted an intense propaganda campaign in late 1935 and early 1936, through conferences, radio and public addresses and the press. When members of Congress returned to Washington in January 1936, they were confronted by well organised Italian-American protests. Members of the organisation, Friends of Italy, sent over ten thousand letters of protest to the State Department that month, and several other associations did likewise. It is tempting to label this activity as Catholic reaction to American participation in League sanctions against Italy,


but there is no readily available evidence to determine the religious affiliation of Italian-Americans. One can only conclude that some of them must have been Catholics, but it is impossible to decide whether they protested primarily as Catholics or as Italians.

There was very little else by way of comment or discussion in the Catholic press about the issues involved in Mussolini's campaign. Few Catholic papers gave any attention to the progress of the war, and only Commonweal noted its end in May 1936. Even demands by other Americans that the pope denounce the war brought little response from Catholic writers. The editor of America drew attention to the pontiff's words about the morality of a purely aggressive war, but even in this context, Father Talbot managed to be equivocal, and gave his readers the impression that Mussolini did have some justification for his conquest of Ethiopia. In spite of initial anxiety on the part of many Americans about sanctions, it was soon quite evident that the United States would not be involved, and all other considerations of foreign policy were overlaid by the vital question of neutrality legislation. The Ethiopian war quickly dropped from view in the American Catholic press in the early months of 1936 and its place

40. America, 7 September 1935, 506.
taken by the more emotional and divisive issue of the Spanish Civil War.

The ending of Italian aggression in Africa did not mean the end of the argument over fascism. Support for Franco by many American Catholics merely served to bring it into sharper focus. This attitude of sympathy for the Nationalists in Spain confirmed the belief of many non-Catholic Americans that the church supported fascism in its different forms. This charge was indignantly denied by Catholic spokesmen. But these denials were always allied with the countercharge that only the Catholic church could see the real world danger, which was the spread of international communism. "There has been such a vigorous campaign against Fascism in the American press and furthered by numerous organisations of men and women", wrote Bishop Noll of Fort Wayne, "that the attention of the people has been at least temporarily withdrawn from the even greater evil of communism".\footnote{Quoted in O'Brien, \textit{American Catholics and Social Reform}, 84.} Even this anti-fascist campaign was attributed to communist propaganda, "which deceived the entire American nation on the character and objectives of the so-called Loyalist cause in Spain".\footnote{\textit{Our Sunday Visitor}, 28 May 1939.} Most Catholics protested their hatred of
both fascism and communism, but rarely condemned both equally. If forced to choose, their preference would be for fascism. If declarations about such a choice seem now like legalistic quibbles, one has only to recall that this was the apparent choice facing Catholics in regard to the Spanish situation. Since they placed the blame for all the turmoil and persecution in Spain squarely on communism, Catholic support for Franco naturally seemed to put them on the side of fascism. It did no good to protest that they were being forced into the false position where, if they opposed communism they were considered to have nowhere to go but to fascism. Non-Catholic Americans wanted a total rejection of both by Catholics, and this was not readily forthcoming, even from those who carefully examined the question. Father John La Farge, S.J. pointed out that one of the problems in the debate was the lack of definition of the term "fascism". He carefully defined it, and then declared that the question as to whether fascism or communism was the greater danger was a meaningless one. In his view, communism was the parent and heir of fascism. Communism was born from and fitted readily into the social and

43. See below, Part 4.

44. Rustace, Catholicism, Communism and Dictatorship, 13; America, 10 October 1936, 4.
political unrest created by those who resorted to violence and exploitation to remain in power. Having said this, La Farge reiterated his belief that Communism remained the supreme enemy, and could be defeated only by a constructive programme of social reform. Father Parsons, retired editor of America, also discussed the fascist-communist dilemma. He believed that in Europe nations were already confronted with the choice between fascism and communism. He feared the same problem would soon actualise in the United States, and that Catholics would be manoeuvred into the position of being pro-fascist because they were against communism. However, Parsons also condemned communism as the greater evil, because it was a way of life based on atheism rather than merely a form of social organisation. The church, he argued, opposed communism not on political or economic grounds, but on religious grounds, in the name of God. It was the task of Catholics to warn other Americans that communism was undemocratic and that anti-fascist propaganda was aimed at involving the United States in a war that would benefit only the communists. Monsignor John Ryan put his choice in concrete terms when he stated that he would rather live in

45. "Fascism or Communism: Which the Greater Danger?" America, 10 October 1936, 4-5.
Italy than in Russia. Fascism was a lesser evil than communism, he said, and it would be less difficult to restore some measure of democracy and respect for human rights in countries where fascism had flourished than in a communist country. Only the indomitable Father Gillis was prepared to condemn fascism as well as communism. He severely castigated those Catholic editors who were so preoccupied with the crimes of communism that they could not see or would not admit the crimes of fascism. If they had acted thus through fear of criticism and had "taken refuge in the production of an innocuous, bloodless, lifeless paper", they had, he believed, "apostatised from the ideal of Catholic journalism".

One cannot say that American Catholics in the 1930s defended fascism, but they did accept it as a less than ideal political reality and made a certain case for it. As noted earlier, one of the reasons was because the church had come to terms with the Fascist regime in Italy. This point was repeated by almost every writer who discussed fascism in the Catholic press. Fascism was capable of assuming many forms, wrote Father Talbot of America, and in some of them the church and the citizen

47. Ryan to Carl D. Thompson, 28 October 1937, Ryan Papers.
48. Catholic World, 144 (March 1937) 645.
alike had a certain degree of freedom. This was preferable to a communist regime, in which religion was totally banished. As well, the church had not explicitly named or condemned fascism, whereas communism had repeatedly been condemned by the pope and by almost all other church leaders. Catholics also claimed (along with some non-Catholic admirers of fascism) that it was a movement which had grown out of the historic traditions of the Italian people. The word "fascism", declared Father Parsons, was synonymous with the term "Italian" and signified both the Italian system of government and the Italian mentality. Such a defence of the movement caused Gillis to ask, "If our Catholic ethics is coloured by nationalism, can it still be Catholic?" For a church which claimed a unique universality, the argument that race or ethnic traits formed the basis for a type of government was a denial of that catholicity. Catholic apologists for fascism sometimes argued from an anti-democratic viewpoint.

49. America, 13 February 1937, 445; Our Sunday Visitor, 27 December 1936.
51. Wilfred Parsons, "The Church in Contemporary Italy", Catholic Historical Review, 18 (April 1932) 9.
52. Catholic World, 142 (October 1935) 8.
53. Diggins, Mussolini and Fascism, 194.
Catholicism had not been completely happy with the rise of mass democracy, the ascendancy of natural man and the growth of industrial capitalism. English Catholic writers, notably Hilaire Belloc and G.K. Chesterton, who looked for a return to a more authoritarian order and economic discipline, were often quoted by Americans who defended Mussolini. Catholic intellectuals envisaged a Christian state based on some form of distributive justice, integral humanism and authoritarian order. While no American Catholic went so far as to claim that fascism was the ultimate expression of political Catholicism, some writers did see elements of compatibility between fascism and Catholic doctrine.\textsuperscript{54} It must be emphasised that reaction to the philosophical basis of fascism remained the preserve of the few. The greater number of those American Catholics who reacted favourably to fascism ignored the theory and praised the practical consequences of the movement.

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 192-93.
(ii) LABOR POLICIES, POPE AND DICTATOR

In Australia where there was, according to contemporary evidence, no "active and informed opinion" on foreign affairs, the complex international situation which resulted in the Italian invasion of Ethiopia certainly was not fully understood.¹ Australian ties with Britain and the separate Australian signature to the League Covenant involved the country in support of the proposed economic sanctions. But most Australians feared that sanctions would mean war, and they were materially and emotionally unprepared for war. The attempt to avert war between Italy and Ethiopia by applying the principles of the League of Nations did, however, bring home to many Australians more clearly than ever before the nature of the League system and Australia's part in it. The country as a whole had scarcely been aware of the obligations of League membership, or even of the fact that Australia was, at the time, a member of the League Council.² The general pre-occupation of the League with European affairs, the ineffectiveness of the Geneva discussions in the Manchurian war and the breakdown of the

2. Ibid., 176.
Disarmament Conference had chilled an interest in the League which had never been very warm.\textsuperscript{3} Nowhere in the British Commonwealth, according to one historian, did the League enjoy less assurance of support than in Australia. For the most part, her people were temperamentally disinclined to emotional internationalism.\textsuperscript{4} Public opinion in Australia in the 1930s was largely isolationist with a general scepticism of the efficacy of collective security.\textsuperscript{5} Experience suggested to Australians that in the last resort it was the Royal Navy and not the League that would afford them protection in a crisis.\textsuperscript{6} The daily press, on the whole, favoured a collective system through a strong League of Nations, but most editors believed that, as it was then constituted, the League was not capable of maintaining a secure collective system.\textsuperscript{7}

Although Australians were well aware of their

\begin{itemize}
\item J.C. Rookwood Proud, \textit{World Peace, the League and Australia} (Melbourne 1936) 52.
\item Moffat Diary, 3 January 1936, 52.
\item Mansergh, 144.
\item E.A. Ferguson, "Australia's Attitude Towards Collective Security", \textit{Australian Foreign Policy 1935-1936} (Melbourne 1936) 18.
\end{itemize}
country's peculiar ties with Great Britain, they tended to regard British commitments in the form of treaties with indifference, and did not feel closely involved in European problems. At the same time, Australians realised clearly their dependence on British support and there was a general fear that trouble in the Mediterranean would interfere with Australia's trade life-line, the Red Sea-Suez-Mediterranean route to Britain. The Suez route was also essential as the seaway for a British fleet sailing to defend Singapore and Australia's long, empty northern frontier. In general, the Australian people seemed unwilling to face the situation caused by Italy's demands on Ethiopia. The American consul in Sydney, J. Pierrepoint Moffat, described them adopting "an ostrich-like attitude", and assuring themselves "They'll find a way out of the crisis".

Certainly, no-one wanted war, and as the crisis intensified in August and September with every indication that Britain would join other League powers in applying sanctions against Italy, there were insistant demands from both press and public for an official statement on

8. Round Table, 25 (December 1935) 175.

9. Moffat to Hull, 24 September 1935, Department of State, 765.84/2059; Moffat Diary, 12 September 1935, 15; 20 September 1935, 27.
Australia's position. Prime Minister Joseph Lyons had just returned from London, and most newspaper editors confidently declared that he must have ascertained the attitude of the British War Office regarding the crisis. They awaited a statement to the public as to what lengths Great Britain was prepared to go in order to preserve her spheres of influence and, more importantly, to what extent the prime minister had committed Australia. At the end of August, the Minister for Defence, Mr. Archdale Parkhill, speaking of the threatened war in Ethiopia, promised that Australia would support Britain in any steps that would preserve peace. "Imminent political dangers" were involved in the European tangle, he said, and Britain and Australia were vitally concerned "with the problems of adequate defence of Empire interests". Neither Parkhill nor any other member of the government would comment on the likely course of action that Australia would pursue in any given set of circumstances. Moffat was privately informing Hull that he believed Australia would "parallel her action to that of Great Britain", but possibly at the cost of "much local bitterness and clash


12. Moffat Diary, 12 September 1935, 12.
of principles." When the prime minister made a statement in September, he confined himself to general guidelines. He said the government was convinced that the upholding of the principles of collective security as embodied in the League of Nations was essential to the peace of the world. But he did not wish to announce in advance "the course of action to be followed by the Commonwealth Government in contingencies the nature and circumstances of which could not, at this time, be given".14

The whole statement, according to one government senator who expressed strong disapproval, was "anaemic almost to the point of bloodlessness",15 and it satisfied very few people. We now know that, in spite of "all the telegrams back and forth", Lyons really did not know "the ultimate plans of the British Government" and so could do little more than issue his vague statement of full co-operation with Britain. He did not expect that the British would push matters to extremes or run the risk of general hostilities, so the prime minister believed he was safe in backing them.16 Lyons was in a difficult position

13. Moffat to Hull, 24 September 1935, Department of State 765.84/2059.
because he faced a divided cabinet, strong opposition from Labor and a public which accepted, perhaps uncritically but understandably in the circumstances, the common assumption that to impose the economic penalties provided for in the League covenant would inevitably cause war.  

During September, editorial opinion in the daily press moved in the direction of supporting Britain in all eventualities, and by the time of the Italian invasion of Ethiopia early in October it was clear that the Australian government would follow British lead completely. "Proposed without any clear conviction that it would achieve any useful object, and opposed with heat but without any effective alternative", the Sanctions Act finally became law on 15 November 1935. Since the effect of sanctions on Australia appeared to be only one of "mild inconvenience", and "totally devoid of hardship", public opinion generally supported the government.

Throughout the controversy, the main source of opposition to sanctions was the Labor Party, both in and

17. Round Table, 25 (December 1935) 177.
18. "Australia, the League and Sanctions", Round Table, 26 (March 1936) 393.
19. Moffat to Hull, 5 December 1935, Department of State 765.84/3346.
out of government. Labor spokesmen took the view that sanctions meant war, and were resolved that Australia should stand aside and not involve herself in an armed conflict overseas. "Certain minor sections of the community" had been talking for some time in "an unthinking fashion" of Australian neutrality, isolation and defection from the League, wrote one editor in September. Moffat reported the continued opposition of Labor, even after the Sanctions Act was passed. Various Labor leaders had enunciated this policy of opposition to sanctions when the issue was first raised, and when the parliamentary debate began in late September, it was elaborated and defined. The Parliamentary Labor Party unanimously agreed to a policy of non-participation in the League's imposition of sanctions, and this represented, as far as they could judge, Labor opinion throughout Australia. The movement was divided, however, and in Labor organisations outside parliament there was a great deal of discussion and evident division of opinion on the sanctions issue. There was a


21. Moffat Diary, 21 September 1935, 30; Moffat to Hull, 22 October 1935, Department of State, 765.84/2682; Moffat to Hull, 5 December 1935, ibid., 765.84/3346.

strong desire among union members to oppose what they called "Fascist imperialism" but isolationist sentiment in most cases proved stronger. In their view, nothing could justify "a new holocaust, a new bleeding of Australian manhood, a new piling up of debt for future generations". Labor supporters coined the slogan, "Australia won't be there", and most continued to argue for the complete withdrawal of Australia from the dispute. When John Curtin was chosen as the new leader of the parliamentary party in October 1935, he accepted the policy of isolationism adopted by most members of the party, but there is some doubt as to whether he believed in this course himself. He was prepared to sacrifice his own ideas for the sake of party unity, a badly needed commodity at that particular time. It has been suggested that he was sensitive to pressure from various groups within the Labor movement, especially that from both Catholics and communists.

While it is true that Curtin would have been well

23. Moffat to Hull, 24 September 1935, Department of State 765.84/2059.
aware of the extent to which support for Labor had suffered since 1930 because of Catholic fears of Labor extremists and by Lyons' action in abandoning Labor, it is not at all clear to what extent Catholics influenced Labor attitudes on the Ethiopian war. In fact, it is not clear that there was a recognisable "Catholic position" on the issue at all. It would seem that Catholics were as confused and divided as most other groups in Australia. Such Catholic opinion as the historian can find comes almost exclusively from the Catholic press. It is always dangerous to accept the views of newspaper editors as the views of the people, and this is particularly relevant in this case because of the small circulation of the Australian Catholic press in the 1930s. It is possible that the greater number of Catholics who took their views from the press relied on the daily secular press for their information. The only two members of the hierarchy who made reported public statements on the issue were Archbishops Mannix and Duhig, and even Mannix was ambiguous. The available evidence does not support the view that Catholics

27. Lyons had left the Labor party over the proposal of repudiation of foreign debts and controlled inflation in 1931 and formed the United Australia Party.

"wholeheartedly supported Mussolini". Much of it actually points to the contrary. There were many "schools and shades of thought" on Ethiopia among Catholics, according to a contemporary, and such Catholic opposition to sanctions as existed sprang in most cases from other attitudes and loyalties than approval of the Italian dictator. Catholics were certainly not favourable to Mussolini's aggression in Ethiopia, and the very few who did have sympathy with him were mostly of Italian or continental origin and in no way typical of most Australian Catholics whose forebears were Irish. In fact, Irish Catholics were sceptical of the role of all the great powers in Africa; not only Italy but Britain and France as well, and sceptical, too, of the League as the instrument of the policies of contending groups of powers. Irish nationalism predisposed them to sympathy with Ethiopian nationalism, but Ethiopia was itself an empire, and this was a problem for some of them. It seemed to many Irish Catholics that the conflict

29. This view is accepted by Andrews, op.cit., 30.
over Ethiopia was a war of "imperialisms" in which Australians as cultural Europeans and as christians, should have no part.\textsuperscript{33}

Two factors could make it appear that Catholics were supporting Mussolini. The first was their attitude towards Rome as the centre of Catholicism. In the 1930s there was a strong identification of Australian Catholics with Italy, Rome and the pope.\textsuperscript{34} Catholics feared that sanctions would mean war with Italy and that the pope might suffer in consequence. As well, the Vatican, not without difficulty, was at the time negotiating an arrangement with the dictator which, it was hoped, would strengthen the pope's secular autonomy in Italy and therefore heighten his spiritual authority throughout the world.\textsuperscript{35} Pius XI twice spoke about the war in terms explicit enough to show that he did not sanction wars of aggression. On 29 August 1935 he spoke to an international pilgrimage of nurses and to them he emphasised that everything possible must be done to find a peaceful solution to the problem. A war of conquest, said the pope, would be "unbelievably sad and horrible". He listed the reasons given by the Italian government for the

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{34} See above, 152.
\textsuperscript{35} Alexander, \textit{Australia Since Federation}, 115.
necessity of the war and rejected them. At the end of October he spoke once more against the war and begged prayers for peace in Europe and Africa where, he said, peace was already disturbed and there was "danger of suffering and greater breaches of the peace". Although his condemnation of Mussolini's aggression might not have been as strong as some people would have liked, Pius' words were plain enough for those Australian Catholics who heeded his words not to "wholeheartedly support" Mussolini's war of conquest.

A second cause of apparent support of Mussolini by Catholics was the attitude of some of them, including such influential persons as Denys Jackson and the members of the Melbourne Campion Society, of opposition to Britain and all its policies. The young men of the Campion Society vigorously opposed Britain's call for sanctions because they felt "a great disgust" for the British parliament and the "left liberal press" whose only recognition of Catholicism was to condemn it. What looked like sympathy for Mussolini on their part was, to a great extent, opposition to such attitudes adopted by Great Britain. Britain, they argued, had

36. *Age* (Melbourne) 30 August 1935.
taken "great chunks of the world" to make her empire, and then when Mussolini did the same thing the British press and politicians took a moralistic stance which they had no right to do. The Catholic community in general was reacting in the mid-1930s against the "dominant line peddled by all the major opinion-forming agencies in Australia, whether liberal, socialist or trade unions". So, recalls a former Campion Society member, at the time of the Ethiopian war, "some of us unashamedly championed Mussolini" just because everyone else was against him. Some Catholics, disturbed by the spread of world communism, saw Mussolini as a bulwark against the further spread of this evil, and this fact could also explain a certain acceptance of his regime, although without actual support of it.

An examination of the Australian Catholic papers shows that they did not adopt "a clear attitude" to the Ethiopian crisis. They certainly were all

38. Santamaria, interview, 15 February 1972. The same view can be found in the Melbourne Advocate undoubtedly due to the influence of Jackson who wrote for the paper. Some American writers expressed the same viewpoint.


42. Andrews claims that they did adopt a "clear attitude"; see Isolationism and Appeasement, 31.
isolationist and they all opposed sanctions. But within this framework there was a wide divergence of views. In some of the papers, the attitudes expressed at the beginning of the war changed as it progressed; in at least one, the Brisbane Catholic Leader, they did not. This paper took the view that Italy had a legitimate case for her expansionist policy and that no-one was really prepared to give it a fair hearing. In a long discussion of the crisis in September, based on the editorial views of the Catholic Times of England, the policy was stated explicitly and thereafter did not change, except in unimportant details. For her own safety and economic well-being, ran the argument, Italy must settle her relationship with Ethiopia once and for all. She must have either a mandate or possession of the country. When all allowances had been made for Ethiopia's case, one was forced to admit that it was a country where "murder, slave-dealing and all the degradation of savagery" were still triumphant. A strong power like Italy was needed to organise and civilise such a place.43 In the ensuing months there were many complaints by the editor of the Leader that the Australian secular press was ignoring the Italian point of view all together,

43. Catholic Leader, 19 September 1935.
and several feature articles in the paper described the economic and cultural backwardness of Ethiopia, and indulged in a debunking of the Emperor. In a complaint against two Queensland schools which had made collections for the Ethiopian Red Cross, the editor of the Leader characterised Haile Selassie as

"a shrewd Ethiopian gentleman who usurped the throne of Abyssinia and made about seven million pounds in gold out of the miseries of his submerged people, while weeping the crocodile tears of royal hypocrisy for the benefit of the flabby League of Nations". 44

These views on the Ethiopian war, although not necessarily the last uncharitable judgment of the emperor, reflected fairly accurately those held by Archbishop Duhig. The paper in this, and quite evidently in other areas, followed an "episcopal" line. The present editor of the paper confirms that the Leader faithfully expressed the Archbishop's views, 45 and a great deal of its comment on the first part of the war was related to the controversy sparked off by Duhig's statement about the war, which will be discussed later.

In Sydney, the Catholic Freeman's Journal, by far the most isolationist of the Catholic papers of the period,

44. Catholic Leader, 21 May 1936.
began discussion of the crisis by justifying "Italian aggression against border tribes" which were "obviously uncontrollable", mainly because Ethiopia was "the last refuge of the slave trade". As the crisis deepened, this paper showed much less concern over the rights and wrongs of the case, and a much greater concentration on the possibility of Australia's participation in war due to a devious British policy and the obvious failure of the League. Week after week the editorials stressed that the Australian government should not passively follow Britain's lead in foreign affairs, but should assert an independence in this area based upon Australia's own peculiar interests and needs, in view of the principle of "self-determination of the Dominions" which was contained in the Statute of Westminster. Instead of which, complained the editor, with the League of Nations "a broken thing" and the nerves of Europe "at snapping point", Australia was, in matters of peace and war, just where she had been in 1914 and could be catapulted into "another bloody and unwanted adventure on the battle-fields of the Old World". The second Sydney paper, the Catholic Press, took a much more cynical

46. Catholic Freeman's Journal, 7 March 1935.
47. Ibid., 18 July 1935.
attitude toward the whole situation, and scoffed at the existence of slavery in Ethiopia as a justification for the Italian venture. The "Non-conformist conscience" protested that the Ethiopian authorities "practised slavery and therefore should not be allowed to cumber the earth", wrote the editor. But Russia and Liberia also practised slavery, he argued, and the League of Nations was not worrying about that. According to this writer, the whole venture was a "gigantic game of bluff", with Ethiopia the pool and the "affectionate allies", Italy, France and Britain, holding the cards, and nobody "cared a rap" about the Ethiopians.\footnote{Catholic Press, 18 July 1935.} Both the Sydney papers saw British interest in the conflict as the cause of the general opposition to Italy and of the League's willingness to impose sanctions. Not only were the British believed to be anxious about the headwaters of the Nile which lay in Ethiopian territory, but a possible challenge to Britain's naval supremacy in the Mediterranean was latent in the situation.\footnote{Catholic Freeman's Journal, 22 August 1935.} This last factor illustrated clearly the different ways in which Britain and Australia viewed the crisis. Britain opposed Italian expansion in the Mediterranean and was prepared to resist it by means
of sanctions against Italy. To Australians it appeared that such a course would mean war, with a consequent severing of the all-important trade route through the Suez and the Mediterranean.

Alone among Catholic papers, the Melbourne Advocate actually defended the sovereignty of Ethiopia, although by the end of the war its attitude had changed. "Is the one independent nation in Africa to succumb to superior force?" asked the editor in the early months of the crisis. "Is the death knell being rung for the last vestige of African sovereignty?"50 This paper several times condemned Mussolini for his aggression, but at the same time the editor put forward the familiar argument of Britain's hypocrisy in view of her previous empire building. Britain had, after all, gained her empire in precisely the same way as the Italian dictator was acting. Britain and France, argued the editor, might "speak to Italy with effect if their own hands were rather cleaner". During the last century both these countries had been carving out huge possessions for themselves in Africa and the East, leaving little room for the late-comers in the field, including Germany and Italy. It seemed that those who had cheated Italy in the past were "heavily

50. Advocate, 30 May 1935.
responsible for the impending injustice" in Ethiopia. The Advocate also asked why Britain was so concerned over the African country when she had shown such indifference to the violation of China, and had acquiesced in Germany's breaches of her pledges. It was hard to believe that a "pure love of the collective principle" was her only or even her principal motive. This paper, alone among the Catholic papers, voiced concern over what might happen as a result of an Italian defeat in Africa. Since Mussolini had staked his reputation on the venture, failure could mean a collapse of his government. Italy would then fall into disorder, and Hitler would seize the opportunity to attack Austria and so cause another war. In light of such a possibility it seemed better to let Mussolini have his splendid little war, even if it meant sacrificing Ethiopia.

The Catholic press was unanimous in its opposition to sanctions. The argument was almost solely based on the premise that sanctions would mean war. The Freeman's

51. Ibid., 11 July 1935. Jackson's influence is evident in this argument.
52. Ibid., 26 September 1935.
Journal bitterly blamed Lyons for committing the Australian government to British policy when he was in England, and so making it necessary for the country to support a policy of economic sanctions. He had put Australia in such a position, declared the editor, that she could, if the "Old World diplomats muddled things", be carried automatically into a conflict in which she had no personal interest.\textsuperscript{55} The same editor applauded Curtin's statement on the possible necessity of a blockade to impose sanctions, with the probable result of Italy meeting "an act of war with an act of war". This seemed a realistic assessment of the situation, which the government was refusing to consider.\textsuperscript{56} Realising that he had allies in the ranks of Labor in his opposition to sanctions, the editor of the Advocate deplored the fact that on this question the "forces of Labor were divided". He thought that there had never been a time when united thinking and clear action had been more needed, if Australia was to avoid drifting into participation in a new slaughter.\textsuperscript{57} There was one variation on the general agreement regarding sanctions in the Catholic press, which appeared in the Sydney Catholic Press and in Catholic

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{55} Catholic Freeman's Journal, 24 October 1935.
\item \textsuperscript{56} Catholic Freeman's Journal, 31 October 1935.
\item \textsuperscript{57} Advocate, 3 October 1935.
\end{itemize}
Fireside, a monthly journal also published in Sydney. This related to Australia's position vis-à-vis the League. If war resulted from the application of sanctions, what would be Australia's position? England, her only protector, would be impoverished and helpless after a war, and who could guarantee that the League would apply sanctions against any invader of Australia? The League had left Ethiopia to the mercies of the Italian invader, and there was no reason to expect that, with England mortally wounded, Australia would not receive similar treatment.\(^58\) The Catholic Press was also worried about German designs on New Guinea, won back in the last war from that country "at the cost of Australian blood". If Australia refused to answer the call of the League of Nations when an aggressive dictator defied the world, how could she expect the League to use sanctions against Germany should she take the law into her own hands and send a fleet of her new and powerful warships to Samarai?\(^59\) These are, in fact, the arguments of one man, Brian Doyle, who edited the Fireside and wrote for the Catholic Press. They echo Lyons' own

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58. Catholic Fireside, 2 (November 1935) 2; Catholic Press, 26 September 1935.
feelings, as confessed to Moffat, that he could never forget that Australia might some day find herself in the same plight as Ethiopia.\textsuperscript{60}

Throughout the entire crisis and course of the war, the League of Nations came in for a great deal of criticism in the Catholic press. All the editors were quick to point out that the League had been powerless to prevent the Manchurian crisis only four years earlier, and that it was even more ineffective in this one. According to the \textit{Freeman's Journal}, all the League could do when trouble arose was "to wring helpless hands" and let bellicose nations have their way.\textsuperscript{61} This paper persistently reminded its readers that Australia paid "something like £60,000 a year" for representation at Geneva, and thought the returns for this investment were very poor. Should not Australia consider resigning from such a disappointing organisation, thus saving money and at the same time getting out of the "danger zone of European jealousies?"\textsuperscript{62} After the withdrawal of Germany and Japan and the probable withdrawal of Italy, the League

\textsuperscript{60} Moffat Diary, 2 October 1935, 56.

\textsuperscript{61} \textit{Catholic Freeman's Journal}, 4 July 1935.

\textsuperscript{62} \textit{Ibid.}, 5 December 1935.
had become "a mere instrument of the policies of the anti-Fascist powers", said the editor of the Advocate. To speak of such a body as representing civilisation as a whole had become impossible. Catholic writers also criticised the League as a "combine" to protect British and French interests, and saw antagonism against Italy over the Ethiopian crisis as "politically inspired by the representatives of combines which had an axe to grind". The only paper with a continued good word for the League was the Brisbane Catholic Leader, which opposed sanctions, yet was ready to endorse what it called "the League's search for a peaceful solution to the war". When sanctions had obviously failed, the editor insisted that the League had not wholly failed because it had kept Europe out of war. It was this writer, too, who pointed out that Germany was still unsatisfied, but could not now be easily stopped in her expansion since Italy had won in Ethiopia. Even in the interests of curbing Germany, it would be folly to repeat the "Italian fiasco". He

63. Advocate, 3 October 1935.
64. Catholic Press, 12 March 1936.
rather fatalistically concluded that Germany should be allowed to go ahead with her territorial demands. 67

One aspect of the crisis which caused a flurry of indignation in the Catholic press was the demand from various sources that the pope intervene and condemn Italy's action in Ethiopia. As early as July 1935, the Anglican bishop of Bendigo called on Pius XI to stop the impending war. "Some of us who have been looking to him to give a strong lead in this crisis have been bitterly disappointed", said the bishop. He wanted the pope to "translate his aspirations for peace into activities" by declaring that no chaplains would go with the Italian troops. 68 The press organs were also calling on the pope to act in some way, particularly by condemning the Italian campaign. 69 Pius did speak about the war on two separate occasions, making it clear that he did not sanction wars of aggression. Further than this, of course, the pope could not go. His position as head of a universal church made explicit condemnation of either side impossible. The Melbourne Argus commended the pope's first statement, and confidently asserted that his words would be heeded by

67. Ibid., 25 June 1936.
millions throughout the world. But words were not sufficient for those who demanded some positive action by the pontiff, ideally an outright condemnation of Mussolini. Quite understandably, the editors of the Catholic press indignantly rejected such demands. If Britain were the offender and France and Italy called on the pope, wrote one of them, a shriek of laughter would be heard from Land's End to John O' Groats. Why not, in fact, ask the Bishop of Canterbury to stop Mussolini? It was at least as reasonable as asking the pope. The Advocate editor reacted in much the same way, asking what the Anglican clergy would say if the pope attempted any intervention in Britain's affairs. Imagine the reaction of the press and public, he said, if a pope had condemned the Boer War, the invasions of Egypt and Burma or any of the hundreds of other famous "deeds that won the Empire" in defiance of the rights of smaller nations. Archbishop Mannix of Melbourne publicly defended the pope's reticence, and the daily press in mid-October gave considerable publicity to a statement by the Archbishop of Westminster that the pope could not have

70. Argus, 30 August 1935.
72. Advocate, 1 August 1935.
prevented the war. But the matter of papal intervention came up periodically until the end of hostilities.

Archbishops Mannix and Duhig were the only two members of the Catholic hierarchy whose comments on the war reached the daily press. Mannix criticised the League of Nations for not taking some definite action in the early stages of the crisis, and likened that body to "a fire brigade that rushed to a fire with a great ringing of bells, only to find that it had forgotten hose and water". He strongly denounced war, whether the aggressor be Italy, England, France or any other nation.

Six months later, Mannix again spoke against war in general, and the Italian campaign in particular. He believed Italy's invasion of Ethiopia was wrong, but blamed the Italian desire for expansion on the Treaty of Versailles. "And unless I am a false prophet", the archbishop said, "what has happened in the case of Italy will happen before long with Germany as well". Mannix's well-known Irish nationalism probably accounts for the fact that he was prepared to be more outspoken in

74. *Catholic Fireside*, 3 (January 1936); *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 April 1936; *Catholic Press*, 16 July 1936.
75. *Argus*, 17 October 1935.
76. *Advocate*, 7 May 1936.
condemnation of Italy than most other Catholic spokesmen. 77

In Brisbane Archbishop Duhig commented on the war when he blessed and opened extensions to a convent in the city early in October. His remarks were the cause of a short but very sharp controversy with ripples which spread as far south as Melbourne. Duhig began by making a plea that Italy's case for expansion be given some consideration by the public and the press. He then asked those who were criticising the Italian war to examine their own consciences, remembering what had happened when Australia was settled. There was a time, the archbishop reminded them, when "Australia was as black as Abyssinia is today". White people had taken this country "without saying by-your-leave" to the aboriginal population. Their descendants therefore had no real grounds for their criticism of what Italy was doing in Ethiopia. 78 Duhig's implied criticism of the British methods of empire-building and his references to what would now be termed Australian racism aroused a storm of protest. Letters from angry citizens, Catholics as well as non-Catholics, appeared in the daily press, and several public


78. Catholic Leader, 10 October 1935.
speakers attacked Duhig during the following week. Although the majority of his critics concentrated on the controversial aboriginal question, the archbishop, when he published a reply in the daily press, chose to reinforce his argument that there was justification for Italy's action. He expressed his belief that Italy would exercise a civilising influence on Ethiopia and ended with a special word for those who were "bitter in their criticisms of Italy". Let them, he said, imagine Britain in Italy's place and calmly ask themselves if they would ever think of condemning "the Motherland" as they had condemned Italy. 79 This reply changed the tone of the letters which were published in the press over the next few days. They now concentrated on criticism of Italy's aggression and on proving that she had no case against Ethiopia. Then suddenly the controversy died, as other events occupied the attention of public and press. Two weeks later, however, there was one final exchange between Duhig and the Anglican Vicar General of Melbourne, Bishop Booth. In the course of this, Duhig criticised the Australian government's treatment of Italian immigrants in Queensland, and Sir George Pearce, minister for External Affairs, replied on behalf of the federal government. 80

79. Courier-Mail, 9 October 1935.

80. Age, 6 November 1935; Courier Mail, 7 November 1935; Sydney Morning Herald, 11 November 1935.
Much more was involved in this episode than Catholic support for Mussolini. Duhig was known for his defence of the Italian migrants and was decorated by the King of Italy for this service. He was also an ardent admirer of Pope Pius XI and of Rome as the centre of the church. What appears most significant today is the archbishop's unusual awareness of what has become the important social and political issue of race relations. In the 1930s, however, it seemed to many Australians that Archbishop Duhig was supporting Mussolini and his aggression in Ethiopia, and that his words indicated general Catholic agreement with this view.

Discussion of the philosophical and ideological basis of fascism was almost entirely absent from Australian Catholic writing on the Ethiopian war. On the very few occasions when editors commented on the political system in Italy they confined themselves to a description of the relative freedom of the church under Mussolini. In March 1935 Brian Doyle condemned the "terrible twins, Fascism and Communism", and his editorial elicited only

82. Sydney Morning Herald, 15 October 1935.
83. Catholic Leader, 29 November 1934; 15 December 1938.
84. Catholic Fireside, 1 (March 1935) 3.
one letter of protest. This correspondent called attention to the fact that fascism in Italy had "restored the temporal power of the Pope", and asked for an article "showing that Fascism is something more than a political bogey".\textsuperscript{85} Nor is there any evidence of a preoccupation with the relative heinousness of fascism and communism, as in the United States. No Australian Catholic editor felt constrained to explain his choice between the two evils. One noted, in 1937, that it had become "the fashion of communists and their supporters" to describe those who opposed them as fascists. He dismissed the idea that because the Catholic church was "the world's main line of defence against communism", its members were all fascists. Having listed the political affiliations of Catholics in many countries, including "this land of the free, Australia", he concluded realistically, "Politically, Catholics are no more united than the general public".\textsuperscript{86}

In Australia, both the Labor Party and the majority of Catholics who expressed their views on the war, opposed the League policy of sanctions. The long association of

\textsuperscript{85} P.D. Cullen, letter to the editor, \textit{ibid.}, (May 1935) 18.

\textsuperscript{86} \textit{Catholic Leader}, 8 July 1937. The editor was making a general point, not discussing a particular incident.
these two groups and their apparent agreement on a strongly isolationist position could warrant the assumption of at least a certain amount of interaction on this issue. However, there seems to be almost no available evidence either to support or to contradict such an assumption. Catholic members of the Labor Party in the 1930s tended to keep their political and religious lives fairly strictly segregated.87 However, the large number of Catholics in the party at this time would indicate that there must have been some real influence of Catholics on Labor and vice versa. There is some evidence that Catholic influence was important in New South Wales where the crisis became related to J.T. Lang's fight for control of the party.88 The Ethiopian crisis presented Lang with the opportunity of striking a blow against his opponents by appealing to several groups, including Catholics, pacifists and anti-communists. In view of the lack of evidence, the historian can only guess that Catholics and Labor men were influenced by one another in their reaction to the war in Ethiopia. Mussolini's aggression in Africa and the imposition of League sanctions was not an important

87. See above, 126.

88. W.G.K. Duncan (ed.) Australia's Foreign Policy (Sydney 1938) 33.
issue for Catholics in Australia.\textsuperscript{89} Rank and file Catholics were not roused by the controversy in spite of the newspaper editors and statements from such well-known figures as Archbishop Duhig. Certain Catholics involved in Labor politics undoubtedly saw the crisis as an added reason for their political alignments and tried to give some effect to what they believed to be the church's "official" attitude. For most of them as has been suggested, disillusionment with the League and opposition to sanctions stemmed from factors other than support for Mussolini's aggression in Ethiopia.

In both Australia and the United States, Catholics were opposed to the League policy of sanctions against Italy, and were therefore accused by some of their countrymen of supporting Mussolini's war of aggression in Ethiopia. In the United States the accusations went further, and there the church in general was considered to be overly sympathetic to fascism and Catholics were branded as fascists by a number of other Americans. The political factor in each country was different, but it

\textsuperscript{89} A. Calwell, B.A. Santamaria and Brian Doyle all agree on this point. Interviews, Calwell and Santamaria, 15 February 1972, Doyle, 15 March 1972. Also Andrews, Isolationism and Appeasement, 73.
helped in both cases to determine the Catholic position on the issue. As a member of the British Empire and a signatory to the League covenant, Australia was obliged to support League policy. What Catholics, as well as many other Australians, wanted was an independent decision taken by the Australian government. They were afraid that if Britain determined empire policy and war in Europe ensued, Australians would be involved in another war in which they had absolutely no interests. The morality of a war of aggression apparently did not concern most Australians and large numbers of them took the attitude that if Europe wanted "a go at it" they had no objection provided that Australia in general and they in particular were not involved. When the government accepted Britain's lead and participated in sanctions against Italy, the majority of Australians acquiesced, even if unenthusiastically. Expressed Catholic opinion, however, remained opposed to the policy, and there were probably several factors involved. One was the traditional anti-British bias of Australian Irish Catholics and another

90. e.g. statement by Curtin, Sydney Morning Herald, 22 October 1935; Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates, 147 (1935) 565-56.

91. Moffat to Hull, 22 October 1935, Department of State, 765.84/2682; Moffat Diary, 24 September 1935, 34.
was a sense of identification with Rome and Italy. Large Catholic membership of the Labor Party was possibly the most significant factor. Despite different opinions within the party, Labor had evolved a public policy of opposition to sanctions which was adopted by almost all elements. Most Catholic members of the party would have been surprised if, because of their support of official party policy, they had been branded as fascists by other Australians.

In the United States those who opposed sanctions were not necessarily called fascists, because a majority of Americans adopted this attitude, determined as they were to keep their country out of war. This was impossible, they believed, unless they adhered to a strict policy of neutrality. The division in America was between those who expressed support for Mussolini and fascism and those who did not. The former were labelled "fascist", and they included a number of prominent Catholic spokesmen. As the controversy over the Spanish Civil War increased, and Catholics spent more time defending Franco than condemning Hitler, an increasing number of Americans accused the church of fascist sympathies. In reply, Catholics more and more drew attention to the distinction between fascism and communism, and felt compelled to choose between the two. In Australia, no such polarisation seems
to have occurred. In the case of the Ethiopian war it is not easy to see why those American Catholics who continued to support Mussolini did so. This was not a clear conflict between communism and some other ideology, as would be the case in the Spanish Civil War. Catholics had shared the general American admiration for Mussolini and his policies, but apparently they were not prepared to make an about-face, even when they must have been disillusioned by the Italian dictator's aggressive expansionism. Unlike Australian Catholics, members of the church in the United States were still, in 1935, suffering from a strong minority consciousness in relation to the rest of their society. They were particularly sensitive to anything which made it appear that they were less truly American than members of any other social group. So they argued against American participation in sanctions in terms of neutrality, but this was probably not the basic reason for their attitude. Their consciousness of the spread of international communism is perhaps more important. They had seen the effects of revolution in Mexico over several years, with the consequent persecution and destruction of the church. They had strongly opposed American recognition of Russia in 1933. The New Deal had brought to prominence a number of sophisticated eastern liberals, who, in the eyes of many Catholics, posed a new
threat to the church. Such Catholics believed that the liberal elite, composed of professors, editors, labor leaders and politicians, represented all those elements in American society which threatened the autonomy of the church and challenged the American practices they had always considered most essential. They also believed that, under the guise of liberalism and academic freedom, this group was encouraging communism in the United States. The success of what Catholics saw as communist propaganda was, according to one Catholic editor, proof of "the stupidity of the so-called liberals and intellectuals who were its first victims and are now its most fervent missionaries". It was the liberals in the United States who, in the 1930s, made "fascist" a kind of umbrella hate-term, to be applied to all kinds of political attitudes which they disliked. So, when they branded the church as fascist, Catholics retorted by declaring that communism was the great evil destroying the moral fibre of the nation. Possibly the defence of Mussolini by a number of Catholic spokesmen in 1935 and

92. O'Brien, American Catholics and Social Reform, 217.
93. e.g. Archbishop Curley to Reverend James Hickey, 11 February 1937, Curley Papers; Judge McDevitt to members of Newman clubs, Philadelphia, NCWC News Service, 7 April 1936.
94. Sign, 17 (September 1937) 67.
1936 was a reaction not to events in Italy and Ethiopia but to the growing dominance of a certain number of liberals in the United States, and the implied threat to the status of Catholics just emerging from a position of inferiority in their society.
PART 4

THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

(i) A WAR FOR GOD AND SPAIN

The rebellion of a right-wing military junta against the Popular Front government of the second Spanish Republic in the summer of 1936 quickly developed into a full-scale civil war. Spain had been a republic since 1931, oscillating between left and right-wing governments, with repeated uprisings and disorders which obstructed any real social reform in a country which had lagged dangerously behind the rest of Europe in this respect. In early 1936, general elections returned a coalition of left-wing parties combined in a popular front government. The policies of this new government plainly encouraged the military revolt. The ensuing conflict touched all the major western powers in some way, and in many countries it became a divisive issue, with various ideological groups ranged on different sides. The complexity of the situation in Spain was soon lost in a debate, often very bitter, which characterised the conflict in the simple terms of a struggle-to-death between democracy and autocracy, between fascism and
liberalism, between christianity and atheistic communism.

Behind the government forces, or Loyalists, rallied those who were united in their hatred of the fascist governments of Germany and Italy and who felt that defeat of General Franco and his followers would be a blow to the growing world fascist movement. Among these were many who were convinced that the Spanish Popular Front government was fighting in defence of genuine democracy. Franco, heading a coalition of the land-owning aristocracy, the church, monarchists, the army and conservative elements of the middle classes, was supported by Hitler and Mussolini, by anti-communists who were convinced that the Loyalists took their orders from Moscow, and by various groups who considered the Madrid government to be anti-clerical, anti-Catholic and atheistic. For liberals and leftists, the Loyalists represented democracy, while Franco's Nationalists were the embodiment of fascism. They saw the Spanish war as a microcosm of the world struggle between fascism and democracy. Liberals did not seem over-concerned by evident Soviet aid to the Loyalists, nor by the obvious influence that communists exerted in the Loyalist government. Communism was for them a far lesser evil
than fascism. Liberals and most Protestants, therefore, saw the Spanish Civil war as a clear case of democracy versus fascism and reaction. For more conservative groups, including anti-communists of all persuasions and many Catholics, it was an equally clear confrontation of christianity with communism and barbarism. In their view, the republican government was unworthy of recognition because it tolerated the anti-clerical excesses of anarchists and socialists. It was, they believed, a mere facade to mark the revolutionary schemes of these groups, who were supported and encouraged by Russian communists. The anti-clerical violence which characterised the few short months of the new government's existence, combined with a growing emphasis on the church's fight against communism, drew many Catholics into the pro-Franco faction. Because so many Catholic spokesmen, particularly members of the hierarchy and editors of the Catholic press, publicly supported Franco and the Nationalists, the Catholic church in many countries, including Australia and the United States, was soon accused of being aligned with the ever-widening world fascist movement.¹

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The Spanish Civil War confronted American Catholics with a terrible dilemma. Many of them wanted to support Franco because he was aligned with the Spanish church and had, so they believed, prevented further persecution of it. Yet the General's record was not unblemished and he was fighting to establish a totalitarian regime. The Nationalists committed atrocities against the Republicans, persecuted the Basques and ruthlessly smothered all opposition. American Catholics were aware of these facts, in spite of persistent denials by the Catholic press.\textsuperscript{2} Communist enthusiasm for the Loyalists confirmed many Catholics in their view that the Spanish government was completely dominated by "Reds". This government, in their view, did not represent the will of the Spanish people, and was bent upon the destruction of the church in Spain. So when Franco raised his standard of rebellion, many American Catholics, woefully ignorant of the real complexity of the situation in Spain, passionately supported his cause against the Republic which had attacked their church and its ministers. Most Catholics, wrote a contemporary journalist, "refused to consider anything else than burning churches and murdered priests".\textsuperscript{3} Patrick Scanlon,

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\textsuperscript{3} George N. Shuster, "The Conflict Among Catholics", \textit{American Scholar}, 10 (1940) 11.
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editor of the Brooklyn Tablet and one of Franco's most ardent supporters, commented early in the crisis that the "internal dissensions of the Spanish political groups" were difficult for Americans to comprehend. Indeed, it is quite clear from the public debate that most American Catholics who participated knew very little about the background of the war. Historical perspective for the most part escaped them. General Catholic preoccupation with communist and masonic machinations was so constant and intense as to allow little time or energy for a study of Spain's real problems.

American Catholics had a strong romantic attachment for Spain as the land of Ignatius Loyola, Teresa of Avila and the glorious counter-reformation. True, Catholic Spain had given the church a heavy burden in the form of the inquisition, and had been much maligned and slandered in consequence. But Spain had also done great things for the church, and, as it was repeated again and again by Catholic apologists, had twice saved Christianity in Europe, "once from the Moors and again from the Turks in the Battle of Lepanto". Although they deplored the end

5. McMahon, A Catholic Looks at the World 90.
6. This phrase is from the Brooklyn Tablet, 15 August 1936. Many similar ones can be found.
of the monarchy in this land of Ferdinand and Isabella, American Catholics had generally accepted the establishment of the republic in 1931 as a legitimate expression of the will of the Spanish people. Because of their ignorance of conditions in Spain, they were shocked by the resulting anti-clerical constitution which was promulgated by the new government, and by the first reports of anti-clerical activity and violence. The few American Catholic observers who knew the Spanish situation reported it honestly and counselled patience and tolerant support of the Spanish people's venture in republicanism. Such efforts, according to George Shuster, were doomed to failure from the start. The less moderate immediately raised the cry of communist and masonic plots, and as the situation in Spain worsened, their voices became louder, finally drowning out the moderates in a chorus of fear and abuse. The return to power of right-wing elements in 1934 gave general satisfaction to American Catholics, who persisted in the belief that the Confederacion de Derechos Autonomos led by Gil Robles would save the

8. Shuster, 11.
9. The major Catholic political party.
country. Catholic journalists and NCWC news releases frequently reported the renewed zeal of Catholics in Spain, the numerical growth of the Catholic action movement and the increased attendance at religious functions. They failed to report that the successive governments of the years 1934 to 1936 did little to endear themselves to the restless masses in Spain. Much anti-clerical legislation was repealed, but there was no real attack on the most urgent problems by various kinds of social reform.

The electoral victory of the left in February 1936 caught American Catholics unawares. They had hoped that these elections would reveal the predominant mind of the people wrote one editor.

"Those who know Spain best had wished that the people would show decisively that the country is still Catholic, conservative, sane. The vote leaves the confusion worse confounded".10

This intellectual confusion was nothing compared with the physical confusion which soon covered the face of Spain. Roused by the revolutionary preaching of Largo Caballero, the frustrated elements of the population joined him in an attempt to destroy the republic and to seize Spain for himself and the workers. Across the land the smoke of burning churches and convents mingled with that of burning farms. The nation was paralysed by strikes.

National figures and politicians of all parties and persuasions were murdered with impunity and neither life nor property was secure anywhere in Spain. The government was unwilling and often unable to take measures to control the situation. This was the tragic and complex situation which American Catholics saw in Spain, and their efforts to understand and interpret it left much to be desired. Most of them, with no background knowledge of Spanish history and no grasp of the real issues to enable them to see the problems in their proper and complicated perspective, quickly accepted the simplistic explanation of the war in terms of Christianity versus atheistic communism. They were blind to the failures of the church and Christianity in Spain. Catholics who had never heard of anarchists or anarcho-syndicalists, who knew nothing of Spanish history and assumed that the burning of churches was new to Spaniards, naturally concluded that it was the communists who murdered nuns and priests, who closed Catholic schools and destroyed the churches of God in Spain. The terrible events in Spain, they believed, were the result of "a planned assault on God, religion and humanity" by forces introduced into Spain by "astute and scheming men". If the combined

12. America, 12 September 1936, 539.
anarchist, syndicalist, socialist and communist group
won the war, it would mean not only the final assassination
of liberty in Spain but also a "renewed drive all over
the world by the forces of destruction".\textsuperscript{13} In face of
such a threat, Franco appeared as a man on a white horse,
galloping to the aid of persecuted religion. To this
saviour of christianity in christian Spain, a large
number of American Catholic spokesmen gave their whole-
hearted support.

The war in Spain quickly took first place in almost
all Catholic publications, and the featured articles and
reports were almost monotonously repetitive and similar.
The Catholic press which had previously warned against
American recognition of Russia, described how the same
evil forces which were at work in that godless country,
had caused the desperate plight of the church in Mexico.
Spain was simply the latest example of what happened
when communists gained a stronghold in Catholic countries.
The bitter hatred of God and his church which characterised
the government in Madrid, declared Catholic writers, had
no parallel elsewhere in the world except in Mexico and
Russia.\textsuperscript{14} The same purpose of destroying religion was

\textsuperscript{13} Brooklyn Tablet, 8 August 1936.

\textsuperscript{14} America, 19 September 1936, 564.
evident, and this meant also the destruction of all those human rights which christianity had taught governments to respect and to foster. Satanic agencies had once more kindled the flames of hatred and persecution. From Russia to China, from Mexico to South America and now in Spain, the true character of the communist programme was revealed. "Its chief victim was always the Catholic church and the Catholic religion".\textsuperscript{15} The story of the Spanish war began not in Madrid but in Moscow, wrote Wilfred Parsons, S.J. Representatives of communist parties all over the world had met there some time previously to plan a new policy. Spain looked like an ideal place to experiment with the "new line", and this strategy was successful until the unforeseen happened in the form of a rebellion. "The middle class forestalled the communists, the rise of the Right anticipated the revolt of the Left".\textsuperscript{16} Now, "Right and Left had locked horns in a terrific battle for the body and soul of Spain".\textsuperscript{17} American Catholics were warned repeatedly that they could not be indifferent.

\textsuperscript{15} W.F. Montavon, "The Holy Father Consoles Spanish Refugees", Catholic Action, 18 (October 1936) 7.

\textsuperscript{16} Wilfred Parsons, "No Masses in Madrid", Catholic Digest, 1 (December 1936) 51 (Reprinted from Columbia).

\textsuperscript{17} America, 8 August 1936, 412.
to this great struggle because they would most certainly be affected by the outcome. Spain's fate would determine whether or not the world would be "bathed in blood by communism as it was by the Mahomedan onslaught that began in the seventh century and did not end until Lepanto". Upon the issue of this struggle between right and left, declared one editor, depended the whole future of European society, or rather, world society, for the universal revolution was actively at work all over the globe. Constant repetition of these themes must have persuaded many American Catholics to accept this explanation of the war as the work of Catholic-hating atheists and communists.

Another factor which strongly reinforced this view was the highly emotional reporting of atrocities committed in Spain, especially in the early part of the war. Of course, in the Catholic press, blame for the atrocities was always laid on the Loyalists. The Nationalist troops headed by Franco did not do such terrible things. Statistics of priests and religious murdered, of churches and convents burnt or destroyed, continually featured in reports of the Spanish situation. Since these numbers rarely tallied in

the various papers and journals, one wonders where they came from. They often seem to be the impressionistic, on-the-spot guesses of Catholic journalists, or "eye-witnesses" reporting from various parts of the world, sometimes far removed from Spain. Catholic editors accepted, apparently without too much verification, stories of atrocities which were sometimes luridly detailed, and reproduced them for their readers. The headlines were often in the best tradition of yellow journalism. "Acts of Communists Those of Human Beasts Gone Wild" proclaimed one diocesan weekly,\textsuperscript{20} and another headed a full-page report on Spain with "Demoniacal Ferocity of Reds in Spain Turns Country into Shambles".\textsuperscript{21} On the same day the \textit{Boston Pilot} featured a story headlined "Nuns Crucified by Anarchist Women during Scenes of Horror".\textsuperscript{22} It was indeed true, as one editor remarked, that the atrocities reported in such detail were so horrible that "the imagination bogs down trying to visualise them."\textsuperscript{23} Not only did the Catholic press give vivid details to enable their readers to visualise these

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\textsuperscript{20.} \textit{Our Sunday Visitor}, 7 September 1936.
\textsuperscript{21.} \textit{Monitor}, 29 August 1936.
\textsuperscript{22.} \textit{Boston Pilot}, 29 August 1936.
\textsuperscript{23.} \textit{Commonweal}, 4 September 1936, 435.
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terrible things, but they also included the motives of the persecutors. "They have, out of sheer amusement", wrote one journalist, "herded together priests and nuns... and shot them down, or saturated their clothing with gasoline and gleefully watched them burn to death in agony". 24 "I saw nuns shackled to one another's ankles being dragged by lively mules through the cobblestone streets, the whole tops of their heads ablaze", reported another. "I was told they had been dipped in kerosene and touched off with long white church tapers". 25 Little wonder, then, that almost every member of the American hierarchy as well as numerous Catholic speakers and writers consistently referred to the Loyalist troops as "murderers of priests and nuns". Catholic publicists were also loud in their complaints against the seeming indifference of Loyalist supporters to reports of atrocities from Spain. In fact, non-Catholics actually sympathised with the fiends who perpetrated such outrages. 26 In spite of a "malignity of frightfulness" on the part of the Loyalist troops that would "make the Turk at his worst

24. Our Sunday Visitor, 6 September 1936.
25. Ave Maria, 17 October 1936, 503.
pause and consider", complained a Catholic editor, the "much vaunted free press of the United States, as represented by prominent newspapers in New York, Chicago and other large cities", obscured the real issues in the Spanish war and published "padded reports favorable to the Reds". 27

The picture of Franco which emerged in most of the Catholic press was that of a patriotic leader who "measured up to the standards of any champion of liberty and civilisation" at any time in history. 28 According to reports, he was a practising Catholic who went to Mass daily and spent some time in his chapel every evening after a hard day's fighting. He was "a living example to his soldiers and an inspiration to those around him". 29 Those he was leading in a "redemptive crusade" followed his example, and almost all his soldiers received communion every day. The editor who reported this fact declared that it was "concrete proof" that the stories of Nationalist atrocities against the leftists were fabrications. Who could believe that these men left the communion rail "to indulge in rapine, mutilation and

27. Ave Maria, 15 August 1936, 217.
slaughtere30 Reporting from the southern front, Catholic writer Aileen O'Brien also eulogised the great faith of Franco and his army. She described a visit to a Carlist battalion and reported that she found all the soldiers on their knees, praying the rosary. "What an outstanding sight", she exclaimed, "and how expressive of the spirit of those who are fighting for the salvation of Spain". She conceded that there might have been individual cruelties on the part of some of the rebels, but, she concluded, "so long as we have whole battalions of soldiers saying the rosary we need have no fear about the justice of their cause, nor its final outcome".31 When the capture of Madrid seemed imminent in December 1936, one journal gave details of Franco's plans. One of his first acts, it was reported, would be to escort on foot the Blessed Sacrament on its triumphal return to the Spanish capital. Huge altars were to be erected in the city's twenty-five principal squares and every day for a week special services of thanksgiving would be offered there. There was also to be a special ceremony at a spot where a religious monument had been destroyed by the Loyalist army. "This information


comes direct from the Nationalist headquarters at Burgos", the report concluded. "Spain is to be given back to God." 32

Most of the Catholic press agreed that Franco was fighting to give Spain back to God. The only major Catholic journals which made any effort to remain impartial were Commonweal and the Catholic Worker. The rest preached an open crusade for Franco, and spent much ink and energy refuting the views of the secular press. In the second year of the war, the editor of America boasted that the record showed that his journal "was among the very first to come out into the open against the so-called Loyalists and in favour of the Franco uprising." 33 The editor of this widely read weekly journal placed the entire responsibility for the war on the Spanish government, and warned that a victory for Madrid would lead to "wholesale butchery and destruction", and the complete domination of Spain by "Soviet inspired and Soviet-dominated communism." 34 America remained pro-Franco throughout the whole period of the war. Patrick Scanlan also reminded readers of the Brooklyn Tablet of his paper's unblemished record of support for the

32. Ave Maria, 19 December 1936, 793.
33. America, 16 April 1938, 26.
34. Ibid., 8 August 1936, 420-21.
Nationalists. Seeing the high ideals which animated them, he wrote, the *Tablet* was happy to support

"these real and gallant patriots. Week after week our columns have featured the cause of the courageous and self-sacrificing Christians of Spain in their campaign for the liberation of the country".

Scanlan claimed to have the full support of the bishop, clergy and laity of the Brooklyn diocese, who had "looked as one for the triumph of religion, liberty and justice". 35 *Sign*, a monthly journal published by the Passionist Fathers, was also unashamedly pro-Franco. Anyone who supported the Loyalists was immediately indicted editorially, and each issue contained lengthy articles on Spain, liberally illustrated and always favouring the Nationalist cause. The journal published numerous letters from Catholic readers, praising its policy of courageously telling the "truth" about the war and correcting the wrong or unjust reports in the secular press.

The *Catholic World*, notable for its long association with liberal causes, gave the least amount of editorial consideration to the Spanish conflict. When the editor did consider the issue, he usually discussed the opinions already voiced by various writers and journals, in an attempt to arrive at an objective view. Gillis refused

to accept a simplistic view of the Spanish war. Of all the unreasonable and impossible explanations of the situation, he declared, the most unsatisfying was that "a handful of agitators came to Madrid from Moscow and with Soviet money and Soviet argument", won over a population of a million Catholics. He concluded that there had been something gravely wrong with the church in Spain in the years preceding the revolution, but that American Catholics had been blind to the danger signs. As the war propaganda grew in intensity the editorials of the Catholic World registered a greater perplexity. Why, the editor asked, did the Basques, as well as so many other Spaniards, join the Loyalists against Franco? Although articles supporting the Nationalists began appearing in greater numbers as the war progressed, this journal did not support Franco editorially. Gillis was too aware of the complexity of the situation to completely endorse either side in the conflict.

Commonweal, edited by laymen, differed from other Catholic periodicals in that it commented more widely on secular events when most religious papers discussed only the parochial concerns of the church. Its response

to the Spanish civil war was in marked contrast to the
rest of the Catholic press. A few days after the war
began, Father Talbot, S.J., editor of America, met with
other Catholic editors to discuss the situation in
Spain. George Shuster, who was managing editor of
Commonweal, proposed a cautious response by the Catholic
press, and advised the editors not to take sides too
readily, in view of the complexity of the situation.
Gil Robles, leader of the Catholic Central Party was
expected in the United States shortly, and Shuster thought
it wiser to talk to someone familiar with Spanish events
before supporting either side. This was apparently
accepted by all present. Commonweal's first comment on
the war was therefore brief and impartial. Spain's
problems were many and deep-seated, wrote the editor, and
Spain would know troubled times until they were solved.37
Shuster was astonished, when he read the next issue of
America, to discover that Talbot had almost totally
disregarded the decision taken at the meeting, and clearly
supported Franco's uprising. Although the editorial
stated that opposition to the Spanish government did not
mean wholehearted approval of a future fascist government,
Talbot argued that the government had been guilty of so

37. Commonweal, 31 July 1936, 323.
many crimes against the citizens of Spain that its overthrow would be not only a blessing for Spain but a necessity for the advance of civilisation in the rest of the world. Victory by the Madrid government would lead to "more wholesale butchery of men, more widespread burning of churches, more vicious debasement of education".38 Shuster answered this with a clear warning of the dangers inherent in a fascist victory in Spain, and a refusal to support either side. "We cannot see any reason for stridently applauding the present rebels", he wrote.39 Letters attacking this neutral stand poured in to the journal's editor. Archbishop John McNicholas of Cincinnati, an early and ardent supporter of Franco, banned the sale of Commonweal in all churches in his archdiocese, and the chancery office of the archdiocese of New York brought pressure to bear on Williams because of his journal's position. Shuster said that the reaction of the New York clergy was "absolutely violent" and that he found himself unwelcome in circles formerly friendly to him.40

38. America, 8 August 1936, 420-21.
40. Details of the meeting and its results from Valaik, American Catholics and the Spanish Civil War, 78-80, based on an interview with Shuster, August 1961; Commonweal, 20 November 1964, 262 (a symposium of past and present editors of the journal).
Commonweal was going through a critical period, financially and otherwise, and Williams was not prepared to take a stand against the all-powerful hierarchy which could so easily ruin the journal. So the editorial policy changed, slowly but nonetheless completely, combined with a greater number of atrocity reports and warnings of the dire consequences for the United States if communism gained a further European stronghold in Spain. By mid-October the journal had become thoroughly anti-Republican. The "uprising", not a rebellion, was declared to be the army "throwing itself, not against a legitimate government", but against "a false front government behind which there were the enemies of all that the true Catholic Spain" held dearer than life. 41 As the months passed, an editorial rift developed between Commonweal's founder and editor, Michael Williams, and his managing editor, Shuster. Williams supported the Nationalist government of Franco because, in his view, the revolt of the Spanish people against "communism and anarchy within the national life and forced upon it from Russia", seemed absolutely justified. 42 He organised a financially disastrous pro-Franco pageant in Madison Square Garden, and his

41. Commonweal, 16 October 1936, 570.
42. Ibid., 5 February 1937, 398.
"unauthorised association" of Commonweal with this event raised objections from members of the editorial committee. In the early months of 1937, Williams also published in the journal a series of open letters to the secular press, in which he accused editors and journalists of distorting the picture of events in Spain. He declared that the American press, on the whole, had presented "far more of the facts which upheld the thesis of the Red government" in Spain than of the facts relating to the Nationalists.

Shuster was determined that Commonweal readers would see the other side of the controversy, and in March 1937 the journal published an article by an English writer Barbara Carter entitled "European Catholics and Spain". This advanced the view that many well-known Catholics in Europe did not support Franco, and gave numerous examples. A deluge of criticism against the journal resulted, as zealous supporters of Franco denied that Catholics the world over were not united solidly behind the Nationalists. Shuster supported Miss Carter, and published his dissenting

43. Carlton J.H. Hayes to Williams, 29 June 1937, copy in Ryan Papers. This correspondence reveals a serious division between Williams and most other members of the board of Calvert Associates, publishers of the journal.

44. Commonweal, 7 May 1937, 33.
opinion in two articles in April 1937. He drew attention to the fact that the pope had not taken sides publicly in the Spanish war, and declared that the church should not link itself with the "apostles of violence". Williams prefaced the first article with a note on the divergence between Shuster's views and the journal's editorial policy, but he did not indicate that Shuster was not alone in his disagreement with that policy. Edward Skillen and Philip Burnham, two younger journalists who had joined the staff of Commonweal in 1933, sided with Shuster against Williams and those members of the editorial council who supported him. Talbot of America was the first of many Catholic editors to attack Shuster for his views. Every Catholic publication in the United States, "with the exception of Commonweal and one or two minor sheets", he wrote, had put their faith in the Nationalist movement. Shuster's article, he was sure, would be ammunition for "all the communistically-controlled organisations" in the country and would be "quoted with approval by the anti-Catholic orators".

45. Commonweal, 2 April 1937, 625-27; 23 April 1937, 716-17.
47. America, 10 April 1937, 9-10.
While Catholic papers joined in the chorus of condemnation, other Catholics showed their disapproval by refusing to read the journal. Immediately following the appearance of the article, Commonweal lost almost one quarter of its subscribers, especially clerical subscribers.\textsuperscript{48} Shuster, possibly finding it too difficult to remain in the situation, left the staff late in 1937 to travel in Europe and write for American Catholics from that vantage point. By this time, Commonweal was suffering from organisational as well as financial problems, and Skillen and Burnham took the lead in a reorganisation of the journal's staff and policy. The founders who were still on the editorial council were retired, Michael Williams was posted as special editor and Burnham and Skillen became editors.\textsuperscript{49} On 24 June 1938, Commonweal formally announced a policy of neutrality on the Spanish war, thus putting itself in opposition to the rest of the Catholic press, most of the hierarchy and many other prominent Catholics, who during the two years of the war had united in support of Franco and the Nationalists. The new editors called for

\begin{quote}
"a search for the right, unblinded by that passionate partizanship which simplifies the
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49. Crimmins, 194.
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problem ... to the dimensions of a slogan and claims the right as the complete and exclusive possession of one warring party".

They drew attention to the atrocities committed by both sides in the war and deplored the danger inherent in the conviction that a choice had to be made between communism and fascism. "This is a dangerous disease;" they wrote, "sufferers from it are blinded by it to the truth that both systems are anti-Christian and secularist". Commonweal asked of its readers a

"sanity of judgment toward both sides in Spain, expressing a preference for specific ideas and actions when they are certainly known, but being an uncritical partizan of neither".50

In his new weekly column in the same issue Williams once more disagreed with this policy, but his dissent was mild in comparison with that of many of the correspondents to the journal who expressed their views. "If your combination statement on Spain is the best you can do, better pull down the blinds and turn the key", wrote one. "The Spanish war, Mr. Editor", said another tersely, "is a revolt of God-loving people against a government of oppression inspired and financed by Moscow and its Arch Devil Stalin". The editors were accused of

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"watching men who are fighting for their hearths and their altars - for your hearths and your altars - against utter tyranny", and deciding they were not acceptable. Editors and Catholic spokesmen all denounced the policy of neutrality as a betrayal of a holy cause. John La Farge termed the position "objective heartlessness" and declared that to thus abandon Franco was to "commit the unpardonable folly of throwing to the totalitarian dogs" the man who had "consistently declared for a Christian social order" and who showed some possibility of attaining it. Archbishop McNicholas told the Knights of Columbus that the martyrdom of seven hundred thousand Spanish soldiers and three hundred thousand "noble men and women butchered because of their religion" forbade any kind of neutrality. Bishop Noll of Indiana went further and accused the editors of Commonweal of collaboration with "the enemies of God and the state". In spite of opposition and criticism, the journal maintained

51. Resume of the letters received, ibid., 15 July 1938, 324-327.
52. e.g. Sign, 18 (August 1938) 5; America, 2 July 1938, 292; Ave Maria, 6 August 1938, 195.
53. John La Farge, "While Spain Burns, They Strum Impartially", America, 20 August 1938, 462-63.
54. Columbia, 18 (October 1938) 4.
55. Our Sunday Visitor, 7 August 1938.
its neutral stance to the end of the war, but by that
time it had been drawn into the general American
interventionist-isolationist battle, on which the staff
was very divided. 56

The only other Catholic paper to refuse support for
Franco was the Catholic Worker. Dorothy Day and her
colleagues rejected the use of force on any pretext, and
offered no apology for the paper's editorial stand of
opposition to the Nationalists. 57 They were also worried
about the establishment of a dictatorial government in
Spain and the growing influence of Hitler's agents in
Franco's camp. 58 Catholic Worker published articles by
Jacques Maritain, who argued against the view of war as
a holy crusade. For such improper conduct, the journal
was attacked by many of the larger, better-known Catholic
publications, including the Denver Catholic Register,
Boston Pilot, Brooklyn Tablet and Ave Maria. All of these
published articles against Maritain, and reiterated their
support for Franco and his army.

Most Catholic editors took issue with the daily
secular press on what they considered biased and even

57. Catholic Worker, 4 (February 1937) 6; 5 (July 1937) 1.
58. Ibid., 6 (September 1938) 7; ibid., (January 1939) 2.
untruthful reporting. They were at great pains to prove that the news coming to the daily papers about the war was unreliable and propagandist. In Talbot's words

"The foreign sources of news have been almost entirely captured by propagandists for the Leftists ... in our national press, Communist Spain has scored success over Republican Spain".59

In the view of another editor, the American secular press was engaged in a massive campaign of whitewashing "the exterior of the sepulchre of communism, within which are rottenness and dead men's bones."60 For almost a year the American public had been doped and duped by propaganda, said Patrick Scanlan in the summer of 1937. Never had the American people witnessed "such a prostitution of newspapers to invention, exaggeration, unfairness, partisanship and plain prejudice" as had been seen in the presentation of news from Spain.61 This "biased" reporting was seen as much more than exaggeration and prejudice; it was believed to be part of the world-wide campaign of communism for ultimate world control. The press, and through it the American people, had been the guileless victims of cleverly conceived communist propaganda which

60. Ave Maria, 5 September 1936, 331.
61. Brooklyn Tablet, 10 July 1937.
had deluded them as to the real nature of the Madrid government.\textsuperscript{62} The secular press, argued Catholic writers, was being "sabotaged from within its rapidly crumbling walls by a miscellaneous set of radical fanatics, radical rascals and congenital ignoramuses", who were totally subjective in their reporting and interpretation of events in Spain.\textsuperscript{63} They deplored the fact that no-one but Catholics seemed aware that the communists were using this press campaign to secure a wider and stronger base in the United States.\textsuperscript{64}

The whole picture of the war as given in the daily press was considered "distorted and inaccurate",\textsuperscript{65} but Catholic editors were particularly irate over two principal points. They refused to accept any suggestion that Franco and his supporters were fascists, and they waged an unremitting war against the titles "rebels" and "loyalists" as applied to the Nationalist and Republican troops respectively. When reporters asked Cardinal O'Connell of Boston if he knew that some of the newspapers had been calling Franco a fascist, because he had been receiving aid

\textsuperscript{62} \textit{Commonweal}, 7 May 1937, 33; 4 February 1938, 394.
\textsuperscript{63} \textit{Ibid.}, 28 May 1937, 113.
\textsuperscript{64} \textit{Our Sunday Visitor}, 25 October 1936; \textit{America}, 26 September 1936, 589.
\textsuperscript{65} \textit{Commonweal}, 4 February 1938, 394.
from two fascist dictators, Hitler and Mussolini, O'Connell replied that aid from fascist nations no more made Franco a fascist than French aid to America during the Revolution had made Americans Royalists. Catholic editors agreed with the cardinal. "Franco never was, nor is he now, nor will he be a fascist", wrote one of his supporters. Father Talbot was just as emphatic: "Franco never was a fascist, and I judge he never will be." It was not possible to deny that a fascist government in some form might be the outcome of the war, but when confronted with this possibility, Catholic apologists fell back on the idea that collaboration with fascism was possible for the church, while any kind of agreement with communism was absolutely impossible.

The designation of Franco's troops as rebels was a continual irritation to the Catholic press. Some editors went to extraordinary lengths to prove that they were not rebels in the accepted sense of the term. They argued

67. *Sign*, 16 (April 1937) 554.
68. *America*, 10 April 1937, 10.
69. *e.g. America*, 1 May 1937, 77. Catholic Worker was the only journal to give serious consideration to the possibility of a fascist regime in Spain after the war.
that the government against which these men rebelled was not legitimate, and that the uprising under Franco was therefore entirely justified. The so-called rebels were really counter-revolutionaries, and the revolution against which they "countered" was a movement taken over and dominated by a foreign power, Russia. 70 The whole crux of the matter, wrote Michael Williams, was whether Franco and his supporters were justified in joining what had been "stigmatised as a revolt against a democratically elected and constitutional government of a free nation". He judged that they were, because the government of Spain had been taken over by communists, anarchists and their sympathisers. The government thus no longer represented the people. Franco and his supporters had been driven into protest and open revolt by the "revelation of the truth concerning the forces of anti-civilisation, anti-democracy and anti-religion" which were in control of the so-called legitimate government. 71 "We believed from the beginning and we still believe", declared the editor of America,

"that the Rightist civic, political and military leaders rose under the captainship of General Franco for the defence of their fundamental

70. Boston Pilot, 3 April 1937.

rights as human beings, and of their social, economic, civil, democratic and religious rights as citizens of the Spanish Republic. 72

Overwhelming evidence, which he did not feel obliged to detail, convinced another editor that Franco's revolt anticipated "a carefully planned rising of the Reds which was to Sovietise Spain". 73 This view of the war precluded any idea that Franco and his followers were really rebels. Just as in 1776, the true patriots of America were termed rebels by the British, argued one writer, so in Spain the true Spanish patriots were branded as rebels by the communists. 74 "Nationalist" was a much more appropriate term, according to some Catholic commentators, because it spoke of "a love of Spain and a determination to save Spain from the enemies of all democracy, the Marxists". 75 On the whole the terms "Rightist" and "Leftist" were favoured by editors, who considered them more accurate. Among others, the Brooklyn Tablet, Denver Catholic Register, and Columbia accepted and used this terminology.

Members of the hierarchy and other Catholic leaders lost no opportunity of praising the Catholic press and its

72. America, 23 October 1937, 52.
73. Sign, 18 (August 1938) 4.
74. Our Sunday Visitor, 13 September 1936.
75. "Call Not These Men Rebels", America, 22 August 1936, 460.
undaunted support of Franco. Cardinal O'Connell sent a letter to all parishes in the archdiocese of Boston praising the work of the press in presenting the truth to the American people and thus putting the secular press on its guard against "fraudulent news stories". According to the Cardinal, the Catholic press had exposed "the Loyalist myth" that a Nationalist victory meant the death of democracy in Spain, had revealed the true facts of the war and demonstrated its effectiveness in defeating "wily propaganda", thus performing a real service to all lovers of truth. Bishop John Mark Gannon of Erie, chairman of the NCWC Press Department, praised Catholic publications unreservedly and condemned the secular press as a "vehicle of exaggeration and downright falsity". Week by week, said the bishop, the NCWC news service "flooded the American newsfield" and the world with the truth about the events in Spain. It challenged and disproved the secular press reports, relentlessly pursued the lies of propaganda and supplied the editors of American Catholic papers and journals with "facts, figures and the testimony of eye-witnesses". Catholic editors were then able to "expose the nefarious propaganda, to challenge the veracity of many articles in

76. Boston Pilot, 1 January 1938.
the secular press" and to save the American people from becoming "innocent victims of a plot to confuse and distort American public opinion". At the twentieth annual meeting of the American hierarchy in 1938, Archbishop Edward Mooney also praised the work of the NCWC and the Catholic press in general in combatting the "vicious propaganda" of the secular press. Father Joseph Thorning, S.J. extolled the Catholic press to members of the annual convention of the American Catholic Historical Association in 1938. It had not been hoodwinked by propaganda about Spain which had deceived the rest of the world, he said. On another occasion Thorning attributed the attitude of the secular press to "indolence, prejudice or outright malice", accused it of supporting Red anarchy and of aligning American opinion against those who had taken up arms "to serve hearth and altar in Spain".

Thorning's fellow Jesuits on the staff of America were so distressed by the "bias" of the secular press that they sponsored a "Bias Contest" with a fifty dollar prize for the most glaring example of anti-Catholic bias

77. Catholic Action, 20 (February 1938) 6-7.
78. Ibid., (November 1938) 18.
79. Brooklyn Tablet, 8 January 1938.
in the secular press during March 1938. Talbot urged his readers to spot the many seemingly innocent examples of bias which daily appeared in the press. Certain things did not seem anti-Catholic until some thought was given to them, he wrote. The bias could be achieved by playing up the anti-Catholic view, playing down the Catholic view or by means of half-truths, interpretations, implications and other tricks of propagandists. "It is an anti-Catholic bias", he concluded, "if it misleads readers on any Catholic question". 81 He did not add that it was counted anti-Catholic by most Catholic editors if the incident or presentation did not coincide with the version appearing in the Catholic press. In fact, many of the examples of bias submitted by readers and printed in the journal were news reports which differed from the reports to be found in the Catholic journals and papers.

Attacks on the secular press intensified after the American Newspaper Guild adopted a resolution in support of the Spanish Loyalists and condemned Franco as a fascist. One Catholic editor scornfully expressed preference for a firing squad rather than the so-called "liberalism" of the Guild's leader, Heywood Broun. "At least a firing squad will shoot us down as gentlemen without insulting

our intelligence", he wrote. Brawn was characterised by another Catholic journalist as a "Socialist crackpot" who never had an original thought. Such comments in the Catholic press roused the anger of Arthur Robb, Catholic executive editor of the leading trade journal, Editor and Publisher. He rejected the idea that the secular press had become a dupe of communist propaganda. He also denied that the American press approved the anti-clerical excesses of the Loyalists. He warned Catholic writers that their constant carping at the secular press would be most harmful to the Catholic press. He was immediately attacked by Scanlan with a point by point repetition and rehash of reported atrocities and alleged misrepresentations of the secular press. A reply from Robb to the Tablet received equally harsh and indifferent treatment.

Catholic writers and editors were apparently unable or unwilling to recognise that their crusade to reveal the

82. Our Sunday Visitor, 1 August 1937.
83. Denver Catholic Register, 4 July 1937.
84. Brooklyn Tablet, 26 June 1937.
85. Ibid., 3 July 1937. Several other Catholic papers also attacked Robb.
86. Ibid., 10 July 1937.
"truth" about the Spanish war and to counteract the "propaganda" of the daily press was equally biased in favour of Franco. A great deal of what they considered to be the truth was as much propagandist and suspect as any reports in the daily press. In spite of this they continued to the end of the war in their belief that they were rendering a service to the people in general and Catholics in particular. Michael Williams wrote that the Catholic press had rendered "valiant service to the cause of truth" by disproving the biased and one-sided reports that appeared in most of the daily press, and by demonstrating to the satisfaction of "all fair-minded Americans" that the Nationalist cause merited the support of all those "who believed in the right of self-defence against Red aggression".87 The Catholic press, "a small voice with a great cry", had not ceased since the beginning of the war to protest against the "campaign of misrepresentation" in the daily press.88 Single-handed it had cut through the "fog of propaganda and misrepresentation with which the issues in Spain had been beclouded".89

87. Commonweal, 4 February 1938, 394.
88. Brooklyn Tablet, 10 July 1937.
89. Columbia, 17 (February 1938) 5.
There is evidence that at least some Catholics accepted the reports in the Catholic press as the "truth", in spite of confusion caused by conflicting accounts of different events and issues. One reader of Commonweal was distressed by the views it presented and asked Monsignor Ryan, "If I were engaged in a family quarrel would I report to the press that my brother had sided with the opposition?" 90 Many of those Catholics who wrote to the same journal when it announced its policy of neutrality also condemned the editors for getting out of step with the rest of the Catholic press. 91 Voices pleading for moderation could be heard, even if faintly. A Catholic layman urged the Catholic press to "adopt a more critical attitude toward news coming from Spain." In his opinion much good would be done if Catholics were less willing to believe and pass on "as gospel truth" anything that "painted the Leftists as savages while dismissing as Leftist propaganda anything reflecting on the rebels". 92 This view, he concluded, was quite prevalent. "Your courageous and restrained plea for a calmer stand is something badly needed by Catholics and Catholicism",

90. Mary G. Cannon to Ryan, 1 March 1937, Ryan Papers.
92. Ibid., letter to the editor, 5 February 1937, 413.
wrote another. "We must sternly forbid ourselves to regard the Spanish war as primarily or even secondarily, a religious war", declared a third. "The soldiers of Franco should not be applauded as Catholic crusaders for God." This of course, was just what the Catholic press did. The Nationalists were crusaders and the war was "a war for God and Spain against the common enemy of God, Spain and civilisation, communism." If all American Catholics did not see it in this light, the Catholic press could not be blamed. It waged a continuous and vigorous campaign until the end of the war to convert all Catholics to this belief, and the efforts of the two or three Catholic journals which "tried to see things steadily and as a whole" were doomed to failure from the start.

Any newspaper editor or journalist who wrote favourably of the Loyalists was considered by the Catholic press as ignorant, communistic, un-American or plain foolish. Patrick Scanlan, in the Brooklyn Tablet, carried on a relentless war against such publications as the New York Post, World Telegram, New York Times and Herald Tribune.

93. Commonweal, letter to the editor, 15 July 1938, 326.
94. America, letter to the editor, 3 January 1937, 397.
95. Ibid., 12 September 1936, 536.
96. Shuster, "Conflict Among Catholics", 11.
all of which he considered biased in their Spanish reporting. He also lashed out against such journalists as Edgar Ansel Mowrer, David Dubinsky and Walter Duranty. 97 The editor of the Boston Pilot singled out Nation for condemnation, as representative of all that was objectionable in the "liberal press". He charged the journal with being communistic and anti-religious, and considered it impossible to get at "the truth of the Spanish situation" by reading it. 98 The Christian Century was the special target for Our Sunday Visitor, after the Century had attacked the church's crusade against communism. 99 At the beginning of war in Spain, the Philadelphia Record found itself under attack by Catholics because of its editorial comments on Spanish affairs. An editorial in July 1936 praised the Loyalists, who, it was argued, were fighting for orderly government and reform. 100 Clare G. Fenerty, congressman from Philadelphia, quickly informed the Record by letter that such a view was not acceptable to many Catholics. The struggle in Spain, he wrote the editor, was a duel between

97. Duranty was also attacked by America and Sign.
100. Philadelphia Record, 24 July 1936.
"those who espouse communism and those who despise it". Americans who opposed communism could not support the Spanish government. Fenerty was shocked to find in an American newspaper an editorial that "so glaringly endorsed" the communist group which had been "flooding the city streets with blood of innocent civilians in the massacres and confiscations" that had consistently characterised the Leftist movement in Spain. The editorial was also denounced from the pulpits of Philadelphia's Catholic churches on the following Sunday. Editor J. David Stern, finding himself out of favour with a considerable number of his readers, wrote a letter of apology to Cardinal Dougherty. He explained that the first editorial, entitled "Who is Revolting Now?" had been written before the Record knew of the Catholic church's "involvement in the war". Three days later a second editorial had denounced the Spanish government's attack on the church. But the diocesan paper had overlooked this when reporting the incident, complained Stern, and many pastors were still attacking his paper. Stern regretted hurting the feelings of his friends on religious grounds, and assured the Cardinal that the Record stood firmly for religious freedom and tolerance, and was opposed to communism and fascism alike. The Cardinal wrote a gracious reply, and let the matter drop. He was
probably sure that Stern had learnt his lesson and would be careful not to offend his Catholic readers again.101

As the war continued and there were some indications that Franco might be victorious, Catholic writers began to depict the Utopia which the General promised to establish in Spain. Bishop Karl J. Alter of Toledo passed through Spain on his return from Budapest in 1938, and his comments on Spain received wide publicity in the Catholic press. Nationalist Spain, according to the prelate, was tranquil and peaceful. The people appeared to be living under normal conditions with complete freedom of action. Not only the necessities but also the enjoyments of life were abundant, and the bishop saw little evidence of a state of war.102 Father Owen McGuire, America's special correspondent in Spain, had made a similar report some months earlier. The enthusiasm for Nationalist Spain was great, he wrote, and the people were enjoying peace and plenty.103 Father Edward Ferger painted an even more glowing picture. When Franco arose, he said, the people rose with him because they saw freedom ahead, and they

101. Details from Brooklyn Tablet, 15 and 22 August 1936. This paper published all details of the controversy, including the Cardinal's letter to Stern.
102. Our Sunday Visitor, 21 August 1938.
103. Sign, 17 (December 1937) 303.
could laugh again, even in their difficulties.

"And so when I see them, cheerily going about their grave task with a smile on their lips and with happy hearts, I am conscious of the fact that the government of Spain will and must be a government of the people's choice".

This explained, in Ferger's view, the orderliness, the strict obedience to lawful authority and the spirit of sacrifice for a common cause which he assured his readers he found everywhere in Spain. Territory taken over by Franco was quickly organised for orderly production, and soon enjoyed normal, peaceful conditions, wrote an editor, who had not been in Spain, but had received "authoritative reports". The law courts and hotels were opened, food was cheap, and for the first time in years people of all classes, regardless of their politics, could go about their business unchallenged. America gave its readers Franco's own description of the new Spain which he would cause to rise from the ashes of the war-torn old. In an interview for the journal, the Spanish leader placed the war guilt on freemasonry and communism. Spain, said Franco, was not merely saving itself, but was fighting on behalf of the whole of


105. Ave Maria, 18 December 1937, 791.
civilisation. "Our war is actually nothing but the world's battle between communism and anti-communism". He promised, if victorious, to "clean up Spain" and to end the "caricature of democracy" it had known in the past. Spain would become a corporate state where law and order and the rights of men would be fully guaranteed and protected. He protested that he had no desire to become the supreme ruler of Spain and declared that, after a short period of military dictatorship, the Spanish people could have a government of their choice, either monarchical or republican. 106

Most Catholic writers refused to consider the implications of the obvious Franco-fascist alliance. They denied that the presence of nazi and fascist volunteers in Franco's army would have any effect in post-war Spain. In this they showed themselves totally inconsistent. They repeated endlessly that the republic's alliance with Russia made the Spanish government communistic, but refused to accept the same argument in regard to Franco and the fascists. They would not believe that post-war Spain could be dominated by an alien ideology. Even the few who could see the dangers ahead, were prepared to assert that all would be well in the end. "Undoubtedly,

106. America, 2 October 1937, 605-6.
the type of government which General Franco has in mind is a kind of fascism", wrote Talbot. 107 But when condemning Shuster's plea for neutrality just two months later, he declared that Franco was not a fascist, and insisted that any government he established, even though it had to be "some form of authoritarian state", would be for the good of Spain, and the only possible alternative to a communist state. 108 The priest went even further in 1938 and insisted that Franco's ideas on government were corporative views which were "highly consistent with Catholic principles and papal encyclicals". 109 Instead of looking clearly at the possibility of a form of fascist government and its consequences for Spain, most Catholic writers were blinded by what they saw as the only alternative. They described in graphic detail what a communist regime would be like, and left the reader to draw the conclusion that such a state of affairs was what Franco was fighting against. What he was fighting for did not seem quite so important.

Statements on the Spanish Civil War by members of the American hierarchy, although few in comparison with the

total number of bishops, always secured the headlines in both the secular and the Catholic press. The former used them to give the impression that the whole church was solidly behind Franco, and Catholic editors used them to convince their readers of the righteousness of the view taken by the Catholic press. Early in the conflict, Archbishop John McNicholas of Cincinnatti, a well-known opponent of communism, ordered three days of prayer in all churches and chapels under his jurisdiction, in reparation for "the outrages and blasphemies" committed in Spain, and to "obtain Divine mercy for the persecuted country".110 This was the first in a long series of reported statements and actions by the Archbishop, always in support of Franco and in implacable opposition to communism and its influence which he saw everywhere in Spain under the Republican government. Other bishops also ordered special prayers and religious services for the welfare of Spain and against the encroachments of communism, not only in Spain but also in the United States.111 Assembled at the Catholic University in Washington for the annual meeting of the

110. NCWC News Service, 5 September 1936.

111. e.g. Archbishop Joseph Rummel of New Orleans, NCWC News Service, 5 September 1936.
NCWC in the early months of the war, the hierarchy of the United States extended their "sympathy and comforting encouragement" to the bishops, priests and Catholic people of Spain. Noting that the American bishops had led their people in prayer for afflicted Spain, the message assured the Spanish brethren of the persevering prayer of the American church for "the deliverance of the Spanish people from the thraldom of forces that are the foes of God and of all religion". No reference was made to support for either side, but it is abundantly clear from the text that at least the majority of the hierarchy supported Franco and the Nationalists.

Those bishops who did make public statements verified this position. Cardinal O'Connell of Boston first spoke publicly about the war in June 1937, when he sharply criticised a plan to bring refugee Basque children to the United States. In December of the same year he issued a pastoral letter praising the Catholic press for giving the truth about the Spanish war and refuting the "lies" in the secular daily press. His most publicised statement came a few months later when he was questioned by

112. Ibid., 20 November 1936.
newsmen on the reported bombing of Barcelona by Franco's troops. O'Connell did not deny that the action could have taken place, but declared that if it did, it must have been a military necessity and not a deliberate attack on helpless civilians. He denounced the evils of the communist-dominated Loyalist government in Valencia, which, he said, was not democratic, but "piracy and communism gone rank".  

115 As always, he concluded with the warning that Americans must wake up or communism would take over their own country. It was "burrowing" into America just as it once did in Europe.  

116

Cardinal Hayes of New York gave a press conference, the first in many years, in 1938 on the fourteenth anniversary of his election to the cardinalate. He told newsmen that he was praying that Franco would win the war, but hastened to make it clear that the church had never taken any official action to support Franco and that he held "no brief for him". A clerical member of the Cardinal's household, apparently not capable of such objectivity, was quick to point out that this remark might be misconstrued "to give comfort to communists", so

the cardinal withdrew it. 117 Hayes refused to believe that Franco would bomb Barcelona, but admitted that it was difficult to learn the real facts about Spain. In contrast with many other vocal members of the hierarchy, Hayes did not unduly fear the encroachment of communism in the United States. 118

Archbishop Curley of Baltimore refrained, on the whole, from making public statements, but his private papers are full of references to the war in terms which make it quite clear where he stood. He was dissatisfied with mere resolutions about Spain, such as that passed at the hierarchy's meeting in Washington in November 1936, and urged Cardinal O'Connell as the senior member of the hierarchy, to place himself at the head of a campaign to aid the "suffering church in Spain". He asked for a letter to every member of the hierarchy. "What we want from your Eminence is just a little word that would unify the work of us all in this field", he concluded. 119 He confided to a priest of his diocese that if he received no response from O'Connell, he would order a collection throughout his


own archdiocese. He "shed tears over the horrible conditions of Spain", he wrote, because "sadistic savageries and brutalities" such as had never even disgraced the "killing Soviets of Russia" were being committed. Curley made headlines towards the end of the war when he publicly criticised the ambassador from Republican Spain, Fernando de los Ríos. The latter had invited a group of Catholic clergymen and laity to visit Spain and investigate the conditions of the church in areas controlled by the Loyalist government. The archbishop of Baltimore was named by los Ríos as one of those invited. Curley scornfully rejected the offer of "religious ceremonies especially staged for the benefit of visitors", and stated that he had no desire to make a guided tour which was designed "to pass by one open church" while the party walked on ground "wet with the blood of hundreds of priests and nuns". He cast doubts on the ambassador's sincerity and called the invitation "base fraudulent trickery". Curley commented freely on the incident in his private


122. Ibid., 10 January 1939.
correspondence. "The printed statement was perhaps a little more refined" than his actual words, he reported. But it had received a lot of publicity and had disturbed "pink" and "red" members of the administration.\textsuperscript{123} "I used short and bitter words about the man de los Rios", he wrote to another.\textsuperscript{124} The "rat" thought he could get away with the "newspaper bluff", said Curley, but he did not expect "the shower of bricks he got on his head".\textsuperscript{125} In these letters, Curley accused los Rios of using the Spanish Embassy in Washington as a centre for propaganda. "He has spent money like a drunken sailor for entertaining purposes, and that means propaganda", declared the archbishop. Curley said he had "first hand knowledge" of events in Spain, so that he knew what he was saying. "I had two representatives in Spain all last summer", he wrote, "who went through every section and to every front". So he made his attack on the ambassador with complete assurance and, he concluded, "I only said about five percent of what I know".\textsuperscript{126}

Through the weekly paper of his diocese as well as

\textsuperscript{123} Curley to Miss Edith Ryan, 16 January 1939, Curley Papers.

\textsuperscript{124} Curley to Monsignor William Barry, 13 January 1939, Curley Papers.

\textsuperscript{125} Curley to Monsignor M.J. Foley, 26 January 1939, Curley Papers.

\textsuperscript{126} Curley to Noel Fitzpatrick, 11 January 1939, \textit{Ibid.}
in sermons and public statements, Bishop Noll of Indiana supported the Nationalist cause and called on others to do the same. This indefatigable opponent of communism also published a pamphlet entitled "It is Happening Here", warning American Catholics that what was happening in Spain would be repeated in the United States. According to John A. Ryan, internal evidence showed that "this precious document" was prepared by the bishop on the basis of "things he had read in the Hearst papers, the Chicago Tribune and other 'reliable' sources". Nevertheless, lamented Ryan, Catholic organisations fighting communism in more than one place in the United States were using this pamphlet as an authority.  

Not only members of the hierarchy, but other well-known clergymen also publicly endorsed Franco and his cause. "Sow your Moscow and you will reap your Spain", declared Father Joseph McCaffrey in a New York church.  

Father Walter Kellenberg, preaching in St. Patrick's Cathedral, assured his congregation that every Spanish rebel who gave his life to free the Catholic church from the oppression of an atheistic government died a martyrred


saint. The Franco movement, in the view of Father Edward Lodge Curran, was a crusade just as holy and just as important for the future of freedom and progress of European civilisation as the crusade which drove the Moors out of Spain. This priest exerted a wide influence in New York. He was an effective speaker, and frequently spoke over the Columbia broadcasting network. He also wrote in the Brooklyn Tablet and used his position as President of the International Catholic Truth Society to get his message to a wider audience. Father Robert Cannon, S.J. told five hundred members of the Guild of Catholic Lawyers that the so-called Spanish loyalists were loyal only to the laws of class hatred and greed, while the Spanish rebels, "glorious outlaws like George Washington and the Irish saints", were deserving of praise in their struggle for human liberty. Jesuit priests were among Franco’s most ardent supporters. The staff of America led the way and many others followed. This is difficult to explain fully, but perhaps it had something to do with their sense of gratitude to Franco who apparently was making it possible for their order to

130. Brooklyn Tablet, 8 August 1936.
return. The Republican government had ordered the dissolution of the society, and this had given Jesuits a sense of unjust treatment and persecution in relation to Spain. All members of the society had been ordered by their Father General to pray for their persecuted brothers, for Spain and for the return of the Jesuits to that country when peace was restored.\textsuperscript{132}

Those American Catholics who supported Franco, especially members of the many associations and groups within the church, were not content merely to voice their support and approval. Whenever possible they translated this into action, often by some form of protest against the activities of any individual or group which favoured the Republicans. One such group which aroused particular opposition, because its members collected money for use in Spain, was the American Friends of Spanish Democracy. Any meeting of this organisation, which had several auxiliary branches with slightly different names, was sure to attract Catholic attention and condemnation, if not physical opposition. In New Jersey, Catholic members of the Board of Education refused to allow the Friends to use the local school buildings for their meetings. The

\textsuperscript{132} Valaik, \textit{American Catholics and the Spanish Civil War}, 154.
board members appealed to the NCWC for facts about the organisation to back up their stand, since their only source of such information was the Catholic press.\textsuperscript{133} Leaders of a Catholic Radical Alliance picketed a mass meeting of the League for Spanish Democracy in Pittsburgh,\textsuperscript{134} at which two Irish brothers named O'Flaherty, who had fought for the Republicans in Spain, were the main speakers. When the doors of the hall opened, twenty members of the Alliance distributed leaflets to the audience, accusing the League of trying to draw the United States into war. According to the Alliance, those supporting the meeting were "either the instigators or the dupes of communist tactics", and were using "the same lying slogans" as had partly been responsible for dragging Americans into war in 1917.\textsuperscript{135}

William F. Montavon, director of the Legal Action Department of the NCWC, also strongly opposed the Friends of Spanish Democracy, and either personally or in collaboration with others, worked energetically to thwart their activities. In February 1938, when a performance by a "well-known magician" was advertised at a Washington

\textsuperscript{133} James E. Skane to NCWC, 14 September 1937, Montavon Papers.

\textsuperscript{134} This was one branch of the Friends of Spanish Democracy.

\textsuperscript{135} NCWC News Service, 27 September 1937.
department store in aid of the Friends' milk fund for the children of Spain, Montavon advised an executive of the store who consulted him that it should be cancelled. If the show was held, he said, the management of the business might expect "a very unfavourable reaction". On his advice, the function was cancelled. On another occasion he advised that one or other of the many Catholic women's organisations should undertake to protest to Raleigh Hotel in Washington. The Friends of Spanish Democracy were sponsoring a dance in the hotel on Easter Sunday night, with music from Benny Goodman's orchestra. The local Sodality Union and the Catholic Daughters of America were appraised of the matter and given the responsibility of putting the case for cancellation of the function to the management of the hotel. In the summer of 1938, the National Park Service issued a permit for the Washington branch of the Friends to use the Sylvan Theatre, which, according to Montavon, was "in the very shadow of the Washington monument". The occasion was the presentation of "a series of dramatic sketches", and as National Park Service regulations prohibited an admission


137. Office memo, 11 April 1938, Montavon Papers.
fee to the theatre, the secretary of the committee appealed for contributions when he issued tickets by mail. Montavon protested to the director of the Park Service that the sole purpose of the Friends of Spanish Democracy in making use of the theatre was to raise funds "for a private enterprise". What was worse, according to Montavon, the Washington Friends were well-known for being "prejudiced in their attitude toward the Spanish nation, taking sides definitely with the Leftist group" which claimed to have succeeded "to the rights of the elected government of Spain." Montavon protested that he did not dispute the right of any American group to take sides in the Spanish war, but he called the attention of the director to "the obvious impropriety of authorising the use of a national park belonging to the United States government" for the purpose of raising funds in support of one side of a conflict when that government had repeatedly stated a position of neutrality in regard to the war. The director replied that the soliciting of funds through the mail, even in connection with the use of the theatre, did not violate the park regulations, and that so long as the organisation in question refrained from charging admission, the function would be held as planned. Presumably it did go on, but the incident was typical of
many Catholic protests, especially during 1937 and 1938. Women were particularly active, disrupting meetings and "exposing" the machinations of "communists" and "leftists" in support of the Spanish Republic. Twice in one month in New York, the Women's Auxiliary of the International Catholic Truth Society turned out to picket meetings. Carrying placards denouncing the meeting as "radical-controlled", they disrupted the American Artists' Congress held in Manhattan in December 1937. A spokeswoman for the Auxiliary pointed out to reporters that many well-known socialists and communists were attending the meeting and that "resolutions favoring the Spanish Leftist government" had been passed. On December 12, the Women's Auxiliary also picketed a meeting held under the auspices of "a group of Red musicians to aid Leftist Spain".

As was to be expected, the Knights of Columbus were in the forefront of opposition to any activities aiding the Loyalists. They had as a body undertaken a crusade against communism in response to the pope's encyclical on that subject, so it was natural that they would include Spain's Republican government among their enemies. Their

138. NCWC News Service, 9 July 1938; also correspondence between Montavon and Arno B. Cammerer, Director of Parks, Montavon Papers.

139. Both incidents reported in Brooklyn Tablet, 1 January 1938.
attention was directed particularly to protests against the various films on the Spanish war which were being shown in the United States and which they considered as propaganda for the leftists. Having marked out their field of operations, the Knights lost no time in indicating their attitude to the administration. In March 1937, Supreme Knight Martin H. Carmody wrote to Hull, and put the position clearly before him. For some time past, he wrote, there had been evidence of a well-organised movement to arouse support in the United States for the Loyalist forces in Spain. Meetings were being sponsored by the American Society for Technical Aid to Spanish Democracy,\(^140\) at which films were shown and certain persons whom Carmody considered communistic, gave an address. The object of the meetings, said Carmody, was to appeal for money to aid the Loyalists and to induce "American workers" to go to Spain to help "keep up the essential productive system needed alike for the Spanish army and the civilian population". After listing fourteen meetings past and pending, Carmody requested that the movement and its sponsors be investigated by the state department, and if found to be in violation of the neutrality laws of the United States, that prompt action

\(^{140}\) This apparently was another branch of the Friends of Spanish Democracy.
be taken to prevent further meetings of the kind. \footnote{Carmody to Hull, 31 March 1937, Department of State, 852.00/5053.} There is no record of any reply to Carmody's letter, but this did not cause any noticeable lag in the Knights' campaign. By the time Hull had received Carmody's letter, they had already succeeded in their opposition to showings of the film "Defense of Madrid" in Pennsylvania. The Knights in that state called the attention of the state motion picture authorities to the scheduled screening in Wilkes-Barre, and it was banned for the same reasons given by Governor Earle of Pennsylvania when he banned the showing of a similar film, "Spain in Flames". This latter production, according to the governor, was "pure communistic propaganda, dressed up as a plea for democracy". His next statement must have given joy to all zealous Knights. "We Pennsylvanians are not interested in the propaganda of a government largely made up of Communists, Syndicalists, and Anarchists who butcher priests". Reporting this success in their journal, Columbia, the sponsors of the crusade warned fellow Knights that the film, "Defense of Madrid", was scheduled for appearances in Chicago and in cities throughout Wisconsin and Minnesota, and they were urged
to protest. 142 The Knights were successful in having "Spain in Flames" banned in Waterbury, Connecticut in June 1937. They termed this film "radical propaganda", which pictured the Catholic church "in an uncomplimentary manner", and declared that many non-Catholics had joined in opposing it. 143 The campaign went on into the following year, and when permission was requested to show "Heart of Spain" in Fall River, Massachusetts in April 1938, Father F. Childs, chaplain to the local branch of the Knights, made representation to the authorities on their behalf and won his case. Police refused to issue a permit on the grounds that the "evident purpose of the proposed meeting was to spread communism", so a showing of the film would not be in the interests of public order. 144 The film "Blockade" was considered by the Knights to be particularly offensive, and it called forth a special protest from their Supreme Board of Directors at their meeting in June 1938. In a telegram to Will Hays, president of the Association of Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, they declared that the film was "historically false and intellectually

142. NCWC News Service, 15 March 1937.
143. Ibid., 14 June 1937.
144. Ibid., 9 April 1938.
dishonest" in its portrayal of the struggle in Spain and in its complete suppression of the facts of the "communist-inspired reign of terror" that preceded and precipitated armed resistance by the Spanish Nationalists. The Knights resented the entrance of the motion picture industry "into the field of Leftist propaganda" and the consequent "special pleading in behalf of forces inimical to the ideals of American democracy and Christianity". On receipt of a copy of this telegram, Cardinal O'Connell of Boston congratulated the directors of the Knights on their activities and promised Carmody that he would take appropriate steps to ensure that the film was similarly protested in his own diocese.

Many Catholic organisations also adopted convention resolutions as a form of protest against American support of the Spanish Loyalists. The war had only just begun when the Catholic Central Verein of America at its annual conference in San Antonio, passed a resolution deploring the persecution of the church in several countries. "The recent terrible events in Spain", according to the delegates, were but a phase in the

146. O'Connell to Carmody, 23 June 1938, O'Connell Papers.
campaign which had swept through the world since communism had attained unrestricted power in Russia. The Verein extended its deepest sympathies to the Catholics of Spain "suffering indescribable atrocities at the hands of terrorists" and protested against "the many horrible crimes" committed in the name of democracy.\textsuperscript{147}

The National Catholic Alumni Federation, in the closing session of its biennial convention in 1937 at Boston, adopted a resolution commending the Nationalist cause in Spain and expressing support for the Spanish hierarchy in its condemnation of the minority that had "outraged the Christian spirit of the Spanish people". The members of the convention also resolved that their organisation would make every effort "to present the truth about Spain to all sincere believers in God" in the United States.\textsuperscript{148}

The Notre Dame Club of New York also registered its support of the Spanish Nationalists and condemned "in strong language" propaganda in favour of the Republicans in the United States.\textsuperscript{149} When one division of the Ancient Order of Hibernians wished to register a protest they went to the highest authority in the land. They were, in fact,

\textsuperscript{147} \textit{Boston Pilot}, 26 September 1936.

\textsuperscript{148} \textit{NCWC News Service}, 2 November 1937.

\textsuperscript{149} \textit{Ibid.}, 10 November 1937.
protesting about a statement by the president which seemed to them to be "an expression of preference for the Spanish Loyalists-to-Moscow" and "an objectionable dig" at the millions of Americans "whose sympathies were with the Nationalists". Roosevelt had said that no American should bear arms against a legal government, and the Hibernians were indignant. "Let us remind you, Mr. President", their secretary wrote, "that George III and his ministers constituted the technically legal government of the colonies, and that Lloyd George and his cabinet were the technically legal government of Ireland in 1919". It seemed to the Hibernians that any American citizen who wished to participate in Franco's fight against "Bolshevist World Revolution" had as much right to do so as "irresponsible college boys and crackpot left-wingers" had to fight for the Republicans, and there was no reason why such citizens should be "slurred or assailed" by the president. The society assured Roosevelt that copies of the letter would be sent to every Catholic and anti-communist organisation in New York State and New England. Other groups made their protest in a different manner. Twenty-five Spanish priests in the dioceses of New York, Brooklyn, Newark and Philadelphia organised themselves into

150. William F. Gorman to Roosevelt, 9 June 1938, Department of State, 852.00/8102.
a "Spiritual Union of Spanish Priests in the United States". The purpose of the union was "prayer and good works to beg with great fervour and intensity" that God would save Spain from the "irreligious and atheistic enemies" who were attacking the country. A further programme envisaged a union not only of all Spanish Catholics in the United States, religious and lay, but a nationwide union of all Catholics in America in a crusade of prayer and good works.  

Catholics who opposed the Spanish Republicans pursued the enemy everywhere. One group which roused their indignation was the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. The Catholic press devoted much energy to "exposing" its activities as working to drag Americans into war on the side of the communists. Recruiting and training of volunteers for the Brigade was reported as continuing in spite of a state department ban on such activity. One Catholic paper carried a detailed report of a boy from Minneapolis who allegedly trained in a secret camp outside New York City, learning the deadly art of war "with and from" the communists.  

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151. America, 13 November 1937, 123.
152. Brooklyn Tablet, 29 May 1937.
mother, grieving for her lost son, said he had been recruited for the "Red cause" at the University of Colorado. "They say he died a hero", she said. "Maybe he died a hero in Communist eyes, but he did not die a hero in my eyes. The Communists have taken a hero right out of my heart". In Cleveland, the Knights of Columbus successfully opposed the granting of a permit by the city council which would have allowed supporters of the Brigade to hold a fund-raising rally on its behalf. Catholics were suspicious of the state department's attitude to the question of recruiting American volunteers for fighting in Spain. Congressman John McCormack wrote to Hull that there was conclusive evidence that the communist party of the United States was behind such recruiting activity. He suggested legislation to deal with the problem, demanding that the state department investigate all volunteers before they were allowed to re-enter the country. Letters to Hull from other prominent Catholics indicate that they were not satisfied with the administration's attitude to what

153. America, 28 January 1939, 408.
156. Brooklyn Tablet, 30 July 1938.
they saw as contrary to the neutrality laws of the United States.\textsuperscript{157}

Most of the Catholic press reacted in outraged indignation in October 1937, when one hundred and fifty Protestant clergymen, educators and laymen published an open letter attacking the position of the Catholic hierarchy of Spain on the war as evidenced in their recent encyclical on the subject. This document, wrote the Americans, revealed open hostility to the principles of popular government, freedom of worship and the separation of church and state. The Spanish bishops had acted as "apologists for reaction and fascism". Their letter was intended as a "responsible and friendly attempt" to prompt American Catholics to protest against the position of the Spanish hierarchy, and expressed the belief that many of them did not share the opinions of the Spanish bishops. It noted, however, that many American Catholic leaders had already "given their blessing to General Franco and his Fascist allies".\textsuperscript{158} "Catholic editors struck out forcefully" against the open letter, read an

\textsuperscript{157} Rev. J.F. Kennedy (editor of Milwaukee Catholic Herald Citizen) to Hull, 17 January 1938, Department of State 852.2221/705; also Martin H. Carmody to Hull, 1 May 1937, \textit{iibid.}, 852.00/5053.

NCWC report. They looked upon it as "being incredible and lacking knowledge concerning the Spanish situation". Some writers poured out a deluge of words against the letter, and one suspects that these words also concealed a lack of knowledge concerning the true situation in Spain. The letter "brimmed with limping logic, devious phrase-twisting, tricky rhetorical questions and fake solicitude for democracy", wrote one. The authors of the letter, declared another, were trying to mislead the American public by their perverted attempt to link Catholicism with undemocratic and un-American principles. In an editorial entitled "Blind Leaders", one priest asserted that the open letter revealed "the value in which Protestant clergymen who pretend to leadership" held their religion. They were, he said, "the pure-blooded American type" who bubbled with patriotic fervour at the mention of "our American Revolution". They believed it was glorious to revolt against taxation without representation, but were amazed and alarmed that "men should resort to arms to protect their civil and religious

159. NCWC News Service, 5 October 1937.
liberties and their most cherished institutions". Monsignor Ready, secretary of NCWC, attacked the letter as lacking in frankness, and accused its Protestant authors of erecting a hideous straw-man which they presented to the public only to be reviled. He expressed grave concern that religious leaders has presented, on behalf of "a murderous, atheistic government", a rehash of irresponsible propaganda charges that had long been discredited. There was a good deal more in the same vein, and then a change of tone as the Catholic press applauded the public answer signed by one hundred and seventy-five Catholic clergy and laymen. This statement defended Catholic support for Franco's rebellion and argued that the Spanish bishops had acted in accordance with American ideals in seeking to preserve religious and civil liberties and democracy. They had appealed to all God-fearing men for help and understanding in their struggle against the forces of materialism and atheism "aligned under the banner of the hammer and sickle" for a traditional yet new Spain with a progressive attitude towards social, economic and political justice.

162. Father Theophane Maguire, C.P. Sign, 17 (November 1937) 195.
163. Catholic Action, 19 (October 1937) 5.
164. Brooklyn Tablet, 16 October 1937.
Completely ignoring or forgetting the abuse poured out on their critics, one editor concluded his report on the letter by adding, "The least we can do is afford them (the Spanish bishops) a respectful hearing and not heap them with abuse". 165

In 1937 a group of American intellectuals and liberals formed the Board of Guardians for Basque Refugee Children, with the intention of bringing five hundred young Basque refugees to the United States for the duration of the war. A number of prominent Americans, including Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, supported the plan, so its promoters were completely unprepared for the vehemence of Catholic opposition. Catholic spokesmen claimed that the leftists would use the children for propaganda purposes, and that their religion would suffer if they came to the United States. The Basque situation was a sensitive one for Catholics in any case, and the surprising strength of their opposition may have stemmed partly from blind reaction to a perplexing problem. The editor of America accused the Board of Guardians of collaboration with the North American Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy, and such an association was quite sufficient to condemn the

scheme in the view of many Catholics.\textsuperscript{166} Talbot also stated that at least ten thousand refugee children had been evacuated already from Spain for propaganda purposes, and sent to Mexico, England, France and Russia. This step had been taken in spite of Franco's offer to create a free war zone near Santander for the refugees.\textsuperscript{167} He sent a lengthy message to Hull, urging that before any positive action was taken, Catholic authorities be consulted. The Basque people were almost entirely Catholic, wrote Talbot, and the greater number of the children to be brought to the United States under the proposed scheme would be baptised Catholics. Therefore, any person or committee supervising the welfare of the children should be forced to guarantee that their religious freedom be "scrupulously safeguarded and protected from perversion".\textsuperscript{168} The editor of the Boston Pilot, having condemned the plan, proposed a solution of his own. Now that Franco had conquered the Basque territories, why should the children not remain there, where they would be safe? Franco had treated the adults among the Basque population with great kindness, and there was no reason to doubt that he would

\textsuperscript{166} America, 24 July 1937, 363.
\textsuperscript{167} Ibid., 5 June 1937, 198; 19 June 1937, 338.
\textsuperscript{168} Talbot to Hull, 24 May 1937, State Department 852.48/128.
do the same to children.\textsuperscript{169} One Catholic journalist indignantly reported that, in spite of Catholic protests, Mrs. Roosevelt had publicly endorsed the efforts of "Spanish radicals" to bring the children to the United States and had allowed her name to appear as a patroness of the scheme. In his view, such disregard for the feelings of millions of Catholics manifested a serious ignorance of what citizens of the country expected from the wife of the President.\textsuperscript{170} Cardinal O'Connell of Boston added his protest to the already considerable opposition. He believed that the scheme was ill-advised because "other means of relief" so readily suggested themselves.\textsuperscript{171} He thought the children should go to France to live with other Basque families who had been evacuated there. In his opinion, this was much more satisfactory than a plan which took the children to a distant land, where another language was spoken and where, perhaps, they could not practice their religion.\textsuperscript{172} Other church leaders also criticised the plan, and their views

\textsuperscript{169.} \textit{Boston Pilot}, 11 September 1937.
\textsuperscript{170.} \textit{Our Sunday Visitor}, 29 August 1937.
\textsuperscript{171.} \textit{Commonweal}, 18 June 1937, 198.
\textsuperscript{172.} \textit{Brooklyn Tablet}, 5 June 1937.
were endorsed by Senator David I. Walsh, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge and the governor of Massachusetts. The political figure who most strongly opposed the plan was Congressman John McCormack. He considered the matter so serious that he requested an interview with Roosevelt to discuss it. McCormack denounced the project as "Red propaganda" and busied himself putting pressure on government leaders in Washington in an effort to thwart its execution. The Massachusetts branch of the Knights of Columbus rejected the proposal as a "crafty scheme" designed to promote sympathy for the "Communist-Socialist regime of the Madrid-Valencia government" and called on the president to investigate its sponsors. Monsignor M.J. Splaine, director of the League of Catholic Women declared the scheme to be a direct threat to American neutrality, and his words fell as seed in fertile soil. Catholic Women's organisations immediately took up the fight and many of them sent messages of opposition to the president and the state department. However humanitarian

174. McCormack to Roosevelt, 10 June 1937, Roosevelt Papers.
the motive might be, wrote the secretary of one group, the whole scheme appeared to be just one more step "towards a communistic movement". She concluded with the plea; "If we can help in other ways, let us, but for humanity's sake, let the Basque children stay in their own country".¹⁷⁸ Such a stand looked anything but humanitarian to those outside the church who looked to the safety of the children rather than to the ideological convictions and conflicts of their elders. One journalist who probably spoke for many others declared that it seemed as if church authorities would prefer to have Catholic children exposed to the bombs of Franco and his nazi allies rather than to the possible Loyalist sympathies of their would-be American rescuers.¹⁷⁹ Not all Catholics saw the matter this way. Some time later when the question of refugee children was being discussed again, Monsignor John Ryan wrote that any plan to aid such children was commendable. He told his correspondent that he could not agree with persons who opposed these schemes. He argued that if everyone refused to give assistance to foreigners in their plight, for whatever seemingly laudable reasons, the needy in the United States

¹⁷⁸. Mary C. McNally to Hull, 30 May 1937, State Department 852.48/102.
would receive little benefit. "In other words", he explained, "those who refuse to contribute to foreigners will contribute little or nothing to Americans". As well, the more widely charitable effort was spread, the deeper became the fundamental concept of love of neighbour. "Charity begins at home" is a good motto, concluded Ryan, but it does not imply that charity should be restricted to one's own fellow countrymen. 180 Doubtless there were many who agreed with him. But Ryan was not in the habit of voicing such opinions publicly and anyone else who did was quickly drowned out by the chorus of opposition. It did no good for the Board of Guardians to plead that their effort was of a humanitarian character with no political overtones. 181 Catholic spokesmen simply could not or would not believe them, and when the Board abandoned the plan, they believed they had won a victory. It was, of course, a victory over communism, since communists were to blame for everything Catholics disliked about the Spanish Civil war, from the anti-clerical excesses of the Republicans to the


181. Frank Bohen, Secretary of the Board of Guardians to Frank Walsh, 10 June 1937, Frank P. Walsh Papers, Manuscripts Division, New York Public Library (hereafter cited as Walsh Papers).
seemingly innocent attempt of concerned Americans to rescue some Basque children from the horrors of war.

From the first lady in the land to the humblest citizen, none escaped the scrutiny and condemnation of Catholic spokesmen if they gave any indication of support for the Spanish Loyalists. When Mrs. Roosevelt accepted a gift of Goya prints and busts of prominent Spanish Loyalists from Fernando de los Ríos, the Spanish Republican ambassador in the United States, her action was attributed by the Catholic press to either ignorance or malice, the latter being most acceptable. One of the sculptures was of Delores Ibarruri, known as La Passionaria, whom Catholics accused of having caused the execution of "a large number of Catholics, particularly priests and nuns in Madrid". When Mrs. Roosevelt commented that she saw in the work the qualities of a "truly great woman", Patrick Scanlan poured vitriolic scorn on the incident. "The first lady of the land ... greets the first female Communist of Spain, the champion feminine murderer of religious followers", he wrote. "How humane, how kind-hearted, how tolerant, how Christian, how American Mrs. Roosevelt shows herself to be". 182

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182. Brooklyn Tablet, 21 January 1939.
Errol Flynn was accused by the Californian Knights of Columbus of aiding Frederick March and James Cagney to collect funds for the Loyalists. Benny Goodman and his manager Sol Hurok were both condemned as Jewish supporters of communist Spain. The Baltimore Catholic Review announced that in answer to its protests, Goodman's radio sponsor, R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, had promised that the musician would not take part in any rallies to aid the Loyalists, and had already cancelled one such engagement in New York City. Bishop Francis Kelley of Oklahoma attacked Theodore Dreiser for his views on the war, and James Cagney, Carl Sandburg and Upton Sinclair were indicted for their membership of the Friends of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. Two Boston Irish brothers, Frank and Charles Flaherty, who had fought in Spain, toured the United States to raise funds for the Loyalists. They were opposed by Catholic editors wherever they went, and on one occasion, Catholic opposition caused the cancellation

183. Our Sunday Visitor, 2 May 1937.
184. Ave Maria, 15 October 1938, 504; Our Sunday Visitor, 30 June 1938.
185. Our Sunday Visitor, 29 May, 1938.
186. Ibid., 7 November 1937, 20 November 1938.
of their appearance. 187 Father Michael Flanagan of Ireland was another speaker for the Loyalists who encountered strong opposition, and wherever he went Catholics picketed and opposed his rallies. One diocesan paper "exposed" Flanagan as a suspended priest who had left Ireland without the permission of his ecclesiastical superiors and objected to his appearance in Detroit. 188 In another city he was denied the use of a high school auditorium because of the protests lodged by a local priest. 189 At the Jesuit-owned University of St. Louis, Dr. Moyer S. Fleisher, chairman of the university's bacteriology department, sponsored an address by Flanagan, in spite of a warning from Archbishop John Glennon that he was "an unfrocked priest". Because of his action, Fleisher was dismissed from his university post. The president of the university, Father Harry Crimmins, S.J. said that the university had no official position on the Spanish war and did recognize the right of individual faculty members to private opinions. But the president said he could not "countenance

187. NCWC News Service, 27 September 1937; Denver Catholic Register, 21 October 1937.
188. Our Sunday Visitor, 16 May 1937.
one of its faculty members publicly sponsoring a speaker who had taken every occasion to speak offensively of the Catholic church, its officials and its doctrines".  

Father Talbot, S.J., editor of America, complained to Hull that the Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy was appealing for money and goods within the state department itself. The priest alleged that barrels were to be placed in the corridors of the department's buildings on a specified date, to collect goods for a relief ship destined for Republican Spain. Talbot admitted the need for relief measures for Spain, but did not approve of the government adopting "a partisan attitude toward the victim of war". He protested strongly against allowing "Leftists organisers and agitators" to use government buildings for their purposes.  

Congressman McCormack also wrote to Roosevelt about an appeal by the same committee to employees of the Department of Labor and its related agencies. A printed circular, said McCormack, had been placed on all employees' desks on pay day, and many people had felt obliged to contribute "lest they offend their superiors and possibly lose their

190. Brooklyn Tablet, 4 February 1939.

191. Talbot to Hull, 28 September 1938, State Department 852.48/255.
position.\textsuperscript{192} "No group of good men, no Catholic force, can today, without turning against Christ, seek neutral ground", Archbishop McNicholas of Cincinnati told the Knights of Columbus.\textsuperscript{193} In response to such urging, many good men not only eschewed neutrality, but worked energetically to discover and "expose" other less good men who rejected neutrality, but were unwise enough to support the other side.

Positive measures by Catholics in support of the Nationalists were rare. The one significant effort was the American Committee for Spanish Relief, which was organised by Michael Williams, assisted by Talbot of America and a number of prominent laymen. Advance notice of the committee published in \textit{Commonweal} stated that it was open to all men of goodwill, and that it would co-operate with "all other periodicals, societies or committees of all forms of religious faith and political views, exclusive of communism, anarchism and atheism" in a campaign to raise funds for the relief of war victims in Spain.\textsuperscript{194} The first function was to be a huge rally in Madison Square Garden, with E. Allison

\textsuperscript{192} \textit{NCWC News Service}, 3 September 1938.
\textsuperscript{193} \textit{Columbia}, 18 (October 1938) 4.
\textsuperscript{194} \textit{Commonweal}, 14 May 1937, 57.
Peers and Michael Williams as speakers, and a pageant entitled "Democracy Imperilled", portraying the plight of Spain under a communist regime. Cardinal Hayes had the meeting drawn to the notice of all parishioners in his diocese at Sunday Mass and the staff of America helped with the preparations. The organisers encountered opposition from various sources, and for a while it seemed as if the whole scheme might collapse. The management of the Hotel Biltmore, where the committee offices were established, refused to honour the arrangements first made with the management. Many of the staff, especially those working in the kitchen, had objected, and it was feared that communists would picket the building. The actor who had been engaged to play the lead in the pageant also backed down when he encountered hostility among other entertainers who were largely pro-Loyalist. The rally was attended by about three thousand people, and $17500 was collected or pledged in the course of the evening. But the whole affair was

195. Full page advertisement in Brooklyn Tablet, 15 May 1937.
hardly a success. Williams blamed "Communists and Left-wing allies", as well as "many prominent and influential Catholics" who had taken "a line of criticism and opposition" to the committee. Some members of the editorial board of Commonweal objected to Williams' association with the affair, and the final blow was the desertion of the cause by the Jesuits of America. They gave as their reason the fact that the American Committee for Spanish Relief had determined to distribute the money raised through the International Red Cross. The Jesuits believed that the semi-military nature of that organisation would result in an emphasis on relief of wounded and disabled soldiers rather than needy civilians. They preferred to entrust distribution to the Archbishop of Toledo. Williams accused the Jesuits of desiring to help only Franco's supporters, and argued for the needs of Catholics in Republican areas where war damage had been so much greater. America, believing that it was Williams who wanted the funds used

200. Commonweal, 4 June 1937, 141.
201. Carlton J.H. Hayes to Williams, 29 June 1937, copy in Ryan Papers.
203. Commonweal, 4 June 1937, 141.
in a partisan manner, went ahead with its own collection, and distributed it in co-operation with the Quakers' American Friends Service, an organisation which gave aid impartially throughout the war. As a result of meetings at Jesuit conducted colleges all over the country, and with the help of various Catholic organisations, the Jesuit campaign collected and sent to Spain over $92,000 by the end of the war. 204 Williams' Committee did very badly by comparison, and there is little mention of its activities after 1937. 205 Bishop Thomas Molloy of Brooklyn authorised a collection of religious articles for the churches of Spain, twenty thousand of which were alleged to have been destroyed by 1938. 206 The Brooklyn Tablet energetically promoted the idea, and week by week published lists of church furnishings and equipment sent to the paper's office by Catholics from all over New York. At the end of April 1938 the articles were sent off to Spain for distribution under the supervision of Cardinal Goma. 207 In 1938 a new organisation appeared, calling itself the Spanish Nationalist Relief Committee. This

204. La Farge, 392-94.
207. Ibid., 30 April 1938.
group hoped to raise enough money to repatriate more than thirty thousand Spanish children who had been sent out of Spain by the Loyalist government. Honorary committee members included Cardinals O'Connell of Boston and Dougherty of Philadelphia, and the committee planned to work in co-operation with such groups as the Knights of Columbus, the Catholic Order of Foresters and the Catholic Daughters of America. 208

In its first issue carrying front page reports of the Spanish Civil War, the Brooklyn Tablet published a small report from Osservatore Romano, the official Vatican newspaper. Under the heading, "The Church is Neutral on Spanish Strife", this stated that the Catholic church had not "interested itself in either side of the civil war now raging in Spain". 209 This fact was quickly forgotten by almost all Catholic commentators on the war, including Scanlan of the Tablet. Most leaders of the American Catholic establishment readily and for the most part uncritically endorsed Franco's rebellion as a holy crusade to preserve christian Spain from godless communist domination. This theme, with numerous variations and additions, dominated the Catholic press and the statements

208. Boston Pilot, 30 April 1938.

209. Brooklyn Tablet, 25 July 1936. The statement was also reported in New York Times, 23 July 1936.
of the majority of Catholic leaders, cleric and lay. Only a minority appeared to have significant reservations about Franco's cause and to make any effort to preserve that neutrality which had been posited as the church's first reaction to the war. A diligent search does reveal that some Catholic leaders doubted the wisdom of wholehearted enthusiasm for the Nationalists and believed that objectivity was preferable to partisanship.

One such dissenter was William Montavon, legal adviser of NOWC. He had spent some years in Spain, and certainly did not approve of the Republican government and its activities. But his public statements were always in favour of moderation and he would not lend himself to any activity in open support of the Nationalists. In a conversation at the Spanish Embassy, when an official of the embassy had asked him to make representation to the rector of the University of Oviedo, Montavon told the Spaniard that the official church had maintained a position of neutrality with regard to the two sides in the war. This meant that the American church had no means of contact with individual church leaders or members of the hierarchy in Spain. In an address to a group of Catholic women, Montavon made the point again a few months later. He told his audience that the pope had

210. Memo, Montavon to Monsignor Ready, 10 February 1937, Montavon Papers.
referred to the war on two occasions, in September 1936 and on Christmas Eve of the same year. In both addresses, Pius IX had denounced the persecution of religion and had expressed deep sympathy for the suffering people of Spain. But Montavon emphasised that on neither occasion did the pope speak with full approval of armed insurrection.\textsuperscript{211} That the church was not officially supporting Franco was a point very hard to get across in the climate of Catholic opinion of the time, and in most cases it was hotly denied by those who saw the Nationalists as the saviours of Catholic Spain. In his plea for neutrality published in \textit{Commonweal},\textsuperscript{212} Shuster had used the argument that if the pope's allocutions on Spain meant anything, they meant that the church, fully aware that the background of the Spanish conflict was the assumption that religion must be saved by fascism, warned the faithful against falling into this trap. "The Pope wanted Catholic neutrality in Spain", wrote Shuster. "He made the magnificent but immemorially Christian suggestion that it is better to suffer than to

\textsuperscript{211} Address to the Harrisburg Diocesan Council of the National Council of Catholic Women, 17 May 1937, copy in Montavon Papers.

\textsuperscript{212} See above, 245-46.
do evil". Father Talbot denied the validity of this interpretation of the pope's words. It was a perversion of the truth to state that the pope wanted Catholic neutrality in Spain, he retorted indignantly. Imagine the pope who had so continuously roused the Christian world against communism in encyclicals, allocutions and private addresses, being neutral on the question of the most serious communistic aggression of the day. Religion need not be saved by fascism, Talbot conceded, but it must not be destroyed by communism. That this latter conviction did not, of necessity, force him into the fascist camp, was a truth that seems to have escaped him. There were others who saw the position a little more clearly. A Michigan Catholic layman believed that Catholics and most Catholic publications (he excepted Commonweal and the Catholic Worker) had lost their balance in commenting on the Spanish war. At times, he said, "a condition of hysteria and frenzy" seemed to characterise the discussions. It had been an error for the Catholic press to idealise as a crusade for Christianity General Franco and his armies composed of

"Germans, Moors, Italians, Portuguese and Spaniards". Catholics, he concluded, should re-examine a position they had assumed too hastily, even though with the best of intentions. 215 "The forces under General Franco represent fascism and dictatorship", wrote a Catholic lawyer, "(who) disregarded the verdict of the ballot and resorted to the rule of force and violence". 216 Carlton J. Hayes, noted historian and convert to Catholicism, openly opposed the rebels, as did many young Catholic professors and teachers at such well-known institutions as Columbia University, Hunter College, the University of Notre Dame and Georgetown University. 217 Although Jesuits featured among Franco's most ardent supporters, one member of the Society reported that there were some notable exceptions. Opinion in the order was not as monolithic as it appeared and there was considerable division among its members over the war. 218 The neutral policy of both Commonweal and Catholic Worker has already been discussed. These journals were further criticised by the pro-Franco press when they published

218. Valaik, American Catholics and the Spanish Civil War, 88.
articles by Jacques Maritain which were critical of the Nationalist cause. Through the columns of the
Brooklyn Tablet, which would have nothing to do with Maritain, Father Henry Palmer of Long Island defended
the Catholic philosopher, and boldly challenged the
Tablet, which made frequent charges of unfairness
against the secular press, to examine its own
conscience. 219 Although buried under an avalanche of
angry letters from the paper's readers, Palmer refused
to be silenced and returned to the battle. 220 The voices
of such dissenters, few in number and faint in volume,
were lost amid the louder and more numerous chants of
approval for Franco sounded by the bulk of the Catholic
press and most Catholic leaders. Few Catholics read
such journals as Commonweal and many did not have the
intellectual background or training to be influenced by
such figures as Maritain. Those who read their diocesan
papers and listened to the words of their bishops and
clergy could have no other view of the Spanish war than
that of a struggle between the forces of good under the
leadership of Franco and the forces of evil united in the
name of communism.

219. Brooklyn Tablet, 4 March 1939.
220. Ibid., 18 March 1939.
In the United States, the final phase of the Spanish war was the embargo controversy which lasted from the spring of 1938 until the beginning of 1939. In January 1937, Roosevelt had asked for congressional amendment of existing neutrality legislation to make it applicable to the civil war in Spain. Congress quickly passed the required legislation, placing an embargo on the shipment of war materials to either side. When a new neutrality act was adopted later the same year, the president issued a proclamation applying its restrictions to Spain, in order that the export of arms might not "threaten and endanger" the peace of the United States.221 This policy, although it accords with Hull's general policies and with the administration's cautious efforts to co-operate with the anti-fascist western democracies, was also an endorsement of the non-intervention plan of Britain and France. This policy was criticised continuously for the period of the war by American liberals, socialists and communists as hostile to a legally constituted government battling against rebels aided by German and Italian fascist forces and supplies. The policy was favourably received by supporters of Franco, which meant by most Catholic

221. F. Jay Taylor, The United States and the Spanish Civil War, 77-86.
spokesmen, notably the press. By May 1938, when Franco's army seemed on the eve of victory, American supporters of the Republicans began campaigning for repeal of the embargo, so that the Loyalists could secure arms in the United States and defeat their fascist opponents. The Loyalists, they insisted, stood a fair chance only if they could buy arms in America, since the restrictions on arms shipments favoured Franco and the Nationalists. The latter received arms from Germany and Italy and therefore were untouched by the legislation.

When prominent citizens such as Henry Stimson, William E. Dodd and Senator Gerald Nye joined in a call for repeal, Catholic spokesmen leapt to defense of the status quo. They argued that American communists were leading the fight for repeal and that repeal would only prolong the war unnecessarily. They said such a move would be tantamount to a declaration of war, that would ally the United States with Russia and thus expose the country to German and Italian attacks. The first impetus for repeal died away, but when it gathered strength

222. For representative excerpts from Catholic press opinion, see America, 9 January 1937, 314.

223. See, e.g. Brooklyn Tablet, 7 May 1938; Boston Pilot, 14 May 1938; America, 14 May 1938, 132; Michigan Catholic, 1 September 1938.
again towards the end of the year, Catholic leaders began a major effort to influence government policy. The National Council of Catholic Men formed a "Keep the Spanish Embargo Committee, a Non-Confessional Committee Opposed to Repeal of the Arms Embargo on Spain for Patriotic and Humanitarian Reasons". Led by the president of the National Council of Catholic Men, Louis Kenedy, the committee planned to circulate a petition to be presented to Roosevelt and members of congress. This would demand that if the United States was to have a neutrality law at all, "it should be genuinely 'Neutral' and should not permit the taking of sides - either side - by our Government in the Spanish war". As well, the committee planned a "great mass meeting" on 9 January 1939, when "eminent speakers" would explain "why the United States should carefully maintain its neutral stand on Spain by continuing its embargo on arms". This meeting, according to secretary of the committee Edward Heffron, was "a huge success - the largest auditorium in Washington filled to capacity and almost as many turned away as admitted". Heffron told the audience at the rally that the committee was a "counter-

225. *Brooklyn Tablet*, 7 January 1939.
group" rather than a pressure group, and briefly explained its programme. A number of distinguished guests were on the stage to give their support, among them Senator David I. Walsh of Massachusetts and Representative Hamilton Fish of New York. The most popular and effective of the several speakers was Monsignor Fulton J. Sheen. This well-known and respected cleric emphasised that he was present not to urge support for Franco but to help keep America out of someone else's fight. In his view, the embargo should not be lifted to benefit either side in Spain because Americans were obliged to oppose all forms of totalitarianism, be it German nazism, Italian fascism or Russian communism. According to Sheen, those groups who were arguing for repeal only opposed the first two of these un-American ideologies and their motives were therefore suspect. They proved themselves to be "front organisations for communism". The Spanish Republican government, said Sheen, was either a Red government responsible for the murder of eleven thousand members of the clergy and the burning of twenty-thousand churches and chapels, or it was a government incapable of preventing such "wanton brutality and destruction". In either case it was no real government, and the rebels were "entirely justified" in taking up arms against it. The first concern of the American government must be the preservation
of neutrality, not its abandonment in favour of such a non-government. Fascism might be the principal threat of the times, concluded the Monsignor, but Americans must be on guard against the "ism which produced fascism", namely, communism. "First you have the moths, then the moth balls, first the rats, then the rat poison". Another popular speaker was Miss Aileen O'Brien, a young Irish writer who had recently returned from serving in Franco's Auxilio Social. She gave the audience graphic details of "a religious persecution unparalleled in history". According to this "eyewitness", the sight of half-burned bodies of priests and nuns was not uncommon in Republican territory. Nuns were turned into human torches for the delight of half-crazed anarchists and communists, and desecrated churches were in evidence everywhere. Lifting the embargo in favour of those responsible for such deeds could only be the action of "a hypocrite or a sucker".  

The "Keep the Embargo Committee" had been formed by the National Council of Catholic Men, but the Knights of Columbus were not far away and gave their full support to the project. A circular to all Knights in the District

227. The meeting is reported in detail in Brooklyn Tablet, 14 January 1939.
of Columbia called on them "as stalwart, patriotic American Catholics" to make the rally a success by attending with their families and friends. The official who made the appeal declared that the NCCM was an "official arm of the bishops of the United States" and in answering their call for assistance the Knights had an opportunity to demonstrate their desire "to be of real service" to their country and their church. 228 The Supreme Board of the directors of the Knights met in New York in January and adopted a resolution opposing repeal. They further resolved to call upon "all members and subordinate councils" of their organisation to urge this view on their respective representatives and senators. 229 Various other Catholic bodies also forwarded resolutions on the matter to the administration, and individual Catholics added their voices to the chorus of protest. Kenedy enthusiastically reported that the campaign to flood Washington with petitions in favour of retention of the embargo had, in a few days, exceeded 400,000 signatures. 230

228. Copy of the letter, dated 5 January 1939, in the Montavon Papers.


What was Catholic opinion on the embargo issue? According to Father Talbot, "Keep the Embargo" represented the Catholic position, because the committee in Washington was under the direction of the NCWC. As well, "an impressive number" of clergy and laity had "enthusiastically endorsed its position". Father Coughlin was sure this was the view of Catholics, too, and according to one report, was instrumental in jamming the telephone exchanges after one of his Sunday evening radio addresses on the subject. Nearly every telegraph station in the large cities was "swamped with messages to Washington", ran the account. From 5 p.m. Sunday evening until 5 a.m. Monday, over one hundred thousand telegrams had been sent and they were still arriving at the rate of four thousand an hour. From the Chicago and New York areas alone over sixty thousand had been received. Father Coughlin apparently did not take trouble to ascertain who were his allies in the fight, and stirred up a sharp controversy by accusing Congressman John McCormack of Massachusetts of not supporting the embargo. The indignant congressman, scattering letters and telegrams of complaint hither and thither, to the

231. America, 14 January 1939, 338.

Archbishop of Detroit, to Coughlin and Eugene Butler of NCWC among others, labelled the statement "false and unfair". He demanded that the radio priest not only retract the charge, but publicly to apologise to him "as an American and a Catholic". 233 It is difficult to know with certainty what the hierarchy thought of the embargo issue, because most of them remained silent during the controversy. When a priest wrote to Archbishop Curley of Baltimore urging him to persuade the bishops to support the embargo, Curley replied that although he opposed repeal, it was better not to make it appear as a Catholic crusade. Referring to the Washington rally, he said, "We kept every Roman collar except one off the platform. I had to keep in the background because we did not want to put the stamp of altogether Catholic upon the gathering". 234 The archbishop was afraid that opposition would not stop Roosevelt from lifting the embargo and that war would result. 235 Cardinal Dougherty of Philadelphia issued a circular to be read in all the churches in his archdiocese on 15 January. This directed


the congregations to sign immediately protests and petitions to their members of congress, protesting repeal of the embargo. The Catholic lawyer who supplied Roosevelt with this information stated that similar appeals were being made by a number of other bishops throughout the country. Since William Montavon and others associated with NCWC lent assistance in various ways to the campaign inaugurated by the committee, this can perhaps be interpreted as the support of the American bishops who controlled that organisation. Montavon, as already indicated, did not give public support to either side in the war. He stated his position on the issue when invited to become a member of the Catholic-inspired group called the American Union for Nationalist Spain. If he were a Spaniard, Montavon wrote, his personal inclination would be to favour such a union. However, he insisted, the church was neutral, as was NCWC. The United States government was also neutral. So, Montavon concluded, "as a Catholic American citizen", both because of these reasons and because of his personal

236. M. Doyle to McIntyre, 15 January 1939, Roosevelt Papers.

237. This is the conclusion drawn by Valaik; see "Catholics, Neutrality and the Spanish Embargo 1937-1939", Journal of American History, 54 (1967-68) 79.
convictions as an American, he was neutral. He was ready, however, to protest any action of the government that would favour either side. Presumably this is how he viewed the campaign for repeal of the embargo, since he was prepared to support the Keep the Spanish Embargo Committee. He was a charter member of the committee and his name was included in those who signed a petition to Congress not to change the Neutrality Act as it applied to the war in Spain. Montavon set out at some length in a letter to the committee's secretary his views on the illegality of the Republican government in Spain, and wrote that experience with Mexico had shown how advisable it was to put an embargo on both parties to a civil war. He could see no reason why a different policy should be adopted in the Spanish war. Montavon and other executive officers of NCWC wrote to members of the administration, arranged meetings and gave talks which they insisted were solely in the interests of true American neutrality but which were open to interpretation as active support for the general Catholic


239. Montavon to Edward Heffron, 3 January 1938, Montavon Papers. This date (1938) is obviously a mistake. The committee was not formed until late December 1938, so it should be 1939.
position on repeal of the embargo.\textsuperscript{240}

Opposition to the repeal of the embargo was the policy of almost all American Catholic editors. Repeal would be "barbarous", wrote one, because it would simply drag the war out longer without affecting its outcome. The reasons given by this editor were legitimately humanitarian. Repeal, he argued, would provoke further Italian and German intervention to offset American aid, and all Spanish people would be the victims.\textsuperscript{241} In light of a consistent and almost fanatical espousal of Franco's cause by this journal from the first days of the war, such reasoning sounds more than a little phoney. A statement on the issue a month later is even more suspect.

"Lifting the embargo would further help destroy the elaborate system of non-intervention set up in Europe to prevent the war from becoming a European and even a world conflict".\textsuperscript{242}

Since previous discussions on the war in most of the Catholic press had studiously ignored both the sufferings of those Spaniards who were in Nationalist-held territory and the many violations of the non-intervention pact by

\textsuperscript{240} The Montavon Papers contain ample evidence of this activity by NCWC officers.

\textsuperscript{241} \textit{Sign}, 18 (January 1939) 325.

\textsuperscript{242} \textit{Ibid.}, 18 (February 1939) 389.
Franco's allies, their concern for these factors when it suited their campaign smacks of hypocrisy. The Boston Pilot saw repeal as a declaration of war. Such an act would "pitch (the) country into the most serious crisis since the declaration of war on the Central Powers". 243 Another Catholic diocesan weekly undertook to speak against repeal for "thousands of Americans", listing several reasons for their opposition. By repeal, the United States would "go into the BLOOD BUSINESS, accepting coin so that men, women and children could be murdered". As well, such a course on the part of the United States would be open support of a "rotting, defeated, anti-Christian and anti-democratic government" which had "murdered thousands of Catholics in cold blood". 244 Some editors, perhaps sensing a lack of Catholic support for their view, declared that Americans, and even many Catholics, were confused on the issue. They quickly countered any suggestion that Catholic opinion was not solidly united. It was most important, wrote one editor, "that Catholic citizens and organisations" should offset the erroneous propaganda of Catholic division by immediately informing

244. Brooklyn Tablet, 7 May 1938.
Hull that they opposed lifting the embargo.\(^{245}\) From the time of the first attempt to repeal, Father Talbot had put forward the time-honoured argument that repeal would mean war, or at least dangerous foreign entanglements.\(^{246}\) He was still using it in 1939, calling for a "united front of Catholics themselves and Catholics with professing Protestants and those with no distinctive religious affiliations". He presumed to speak for all Americans who were Catholics, declaring them unalterably opposed to the "pseudo-democratic, the soured liberal, the concealed Communist forces", which were applying "such unholy pressure" on the president and congress to "plant American guns in Spain, to fill the Spanish air with American planes and to riddle the men of Spain with American bullets".\(^{247}\) Even the two rebels in the Catholic press camp, *Commonweal* and *Catholic Worker*, opposed repeal. Dorothy Day took this position on principle. She argued that there was only one purpose for arms, namely war. Because of this, the United States should not export arms to any country, either in time of peace or time of

\(^{245}\) *Michigan Catholic*, 1 September 1938.

\(^{246}\) *America*, 14 May 1938, 132.

\(^{247}\) Ibid., 14 January 1939, 338.
war. In spite of their doubts about Franco and their demands that Catholics remain neutral, the editors of *Commonweal* were equally opposed to repeal of the embargo. The export of arms, in their opinion, was warlike activity, and the United States should guard against anything of that nature, any "big-stick policies", even preparedness. "There is no enemy at the gate. Any attack on our shores is inconceivable".  

Other Americans believed opposition to repeal to be the Catholic position. In both May 1938 and January 1939, the editor of *Nation* discussed this question. In 1938, said an article in this journal, when the *New York Times* indicated that repeal was imminent, Catholics rallied to the cause. They "got busy and reached the President ... High church dignitaries came to Washington and talked cold politics". And the result, the journalist insisted, was that Roosevelt backed down. It was a "cold political fact", he wrote, that the president, who had "braved concentrated wealth", had not braved the risk of losing Catholic votes in Boston, New York, Chicago, Detroit and Baltimore.  

In January 1939 the story was

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248. *Catholic Worker*, 6 (October 1938) 2.

249. *Commonweal*, 4 November 1938, 32.

repeated. Catholic pressure, wrote Nation's editor, was the only real obstacle to repeal. The leadership of the church was deliberately attempting to nullify the "expressed pro-Loyalist sentiment of a majority of the American people". The hierarchy was accused of trying to "line up a few non-Catholics" to assist in the campaign and advocate retention of the embargo. In the editor's view, they had failed in this. At the Washington meeting, he said, the committee was "unable to induce a single prominent non-Catholic to deliver an address". 251 Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes believed that Catholic opposition was preventing repeal. In May 1938 he broached the subject with Roosevelt, who replied that lifting the embargo would mean the loss of "every Catholic vote next fall". The president said that the Democrats in congress were "jittery" about it, and did not want it done. The disgusted Ickes described this as "the cat that was actually in the bag, and it was the mangiest, scabbiest cat ever". 252 Later he reiterated his belief that it was "Catholic sentiment" which had prevented the repeal of the embargo. 253 It

251. Ibid., editorial, 21 January 1939, 77.
252. Ickes, Secret Diary, 2, 389.
253. Ibid., 586.
would seem that even Roosevelt agreed with him, believing Catholic opposition to be united and strong. Sufficient evidence exists to support the theory that in refusing to tamper with the embargo, the president based his refusal in part on fear of alienating the Catholic electorate.\textsuperscript{254} There were, of course, other elements in the decision to keep the embargo in 1939. The state department was resolved to follow England's lead, while Hull believed that the danger of a general war made it imperative to keep American arms out of Spain. Roosevelt himself was afraid of alienating southern democrats.\textsuperscript{255} Roosevelt was being kept informed of the role of the hierarchy in opposing repeal,\textsuperscript{256} and according to Ickes, Jim Farley had advised the president that the great majority of American Catholics were in sympathy with Franco.\textsuperscript{257} Against this, there is the evidence advanced by the editor of \textit{New Republic} who claimed that only forty

\textsuperscript{254} Besides Ickes, see: Eleanor Roosevelt, \textit{This I Remember} (New York 1949) 161; Robert Divine, \textit{The Reluctant Belligerent: American Entry into World War II} (New York 1965) 34; Taylor, \textit{The United States and the Spanish Civil War}, 188-89.


\textsuperscript{256} Doyle to McIntyre, 15 January 1939, Roosevelt Papers.

\textsuperscript{257} Ickes, \textit{Secret Diary}, 2, 470.
percent of Catholics supported Franco's cause. This estimate was confirmed by two polls taken in 1938 and 1939, which give the same percentage.

Ickes also sensed a change in Catholic attitudes, drawing his evidence from several incidents. In November 1938 he wrote a long letter to the president, outlining "some new aspects of the problem" which he thought Roosevelt should know. One factor was the view of the war taken by several Catholic lawyers who had participated in a conference in Washington. However the situation may have appeared to these men at the beginning of the Spanish war, wrote Ickes, they now believed that the problem was whether Hitler, by gaining mastery in Spain, would be able ultimately to dominate Latin America. This possibility, they believed, constituted "a terrific threat" to the Catholics of Spain and Latin American countries. So they were not in favour of the embargo. Later, Ickes noted in his diary that Tom Corcoran had asked Cardinal Mundelein during the latter's recent stay

258. "A Telegram to the President", New Republic, 1 February 1939, 357.
259. Time, 23 January 1939, 36. These polls will be discussed in detail later in the chapter.
260. Ickes named Frank P. Walsh, Louis F. McCabe and Dean Francis Shea.
261. Ickes to Roosevelt, 23 November 1938, Roosevelt Papers.
in Washington, how "Rome now felt about the situation in Spain". The cardinal, reported Ickes, said that "Rome had changed its position", and Corcoran asked Mundelein to tell the president this, an undertaking which the prelate accepted.\textsuperscript{262} Father Talbot reported in December 1938 that the president had been assured that "local sympathy for the rebel General Franco is much less", this report having appeared in the New York \textit{Herald Tribune}. Talbot insisted that whoever had Roosevelt's ear was wrong and ill-informed on Catholic opinion in the United States. He declared that he knew of no individual or publication "with any claim to speak for Catholics" who would not regard Franco's defeat as a disaster.\textsuperscript{263} In spite of such an assurance, Catholic voices were heard here and there demanding repeal of the embargo. In so doing they incurred the wrath of such people as Talbot, so that sometimes they were reluctant to define their position in relation to their Catholicity. At the conference of lawyers referred to by Ickes, Catholic attorney Frank P. Walsh publicly supported moves for repeal of the embargo, and condemned Franco and his forces as "traitorous" and "faithless".\textsuperscript{264} One New York paper

\textsuperscript{262} Ickes, \textit{Secret Diary}, 2 541.
\textsuperscript{263} \textit{America}, 3 December 1938, 204.
\textsuperscript{264} Copy of speech given by Walsh on 19 November 1938, in Walsh Papers.
reported that Walsh, "speaking as a lay Catholic", had called upon other American Catholics to remember that the Loyalists were also largely Catholic. He was sure that the twenty million "liberty-loving Catholics" of the United States, if properly informed as to the causes of the war in Spain, would join "in a great cry to the President" to lift the embargo which had "opened the door for Mussolini and Hitler to invade Spain".  

Probably well aware of the storm this would arouse in the Catholic press, Walsh wrote an immediate refutation, stating that "not a line of the alleged speech in which I am directly quoted was uttered by me". He denied having used the words "Catholic" or "Catholic church", nor had he made any reference to religion. In the ten minutes allotted to him he had urged lifting the embargo solely on legal and humanitarian grounds.  

Two members of the organising committee of the conference wrote their apologies for the misquotation to Walsh, affirming that he had not mentioned religion or the Catholic church. "Naturally, a man of your distinction cannot avoid

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265. **New York Herald Tribune**, 22 November 1938. Clipping in the Walsh Papers. These words, particularly the last sentence relating to Mussolini and Hitler, are nowhere to be found in any of the several slightly different original versions of the speech preserved in the Walsh Papers.

identification with the many institutions with which you have been so prominently connected", wrote one, "and I suppose the Catholic church is the foremost of these". Nonetheless, it was quite clear to the writer that Walsh did not in any way pretend to speak for the church but had spoken at the conference as a distinguished lawyer and citizen. More revealing from the point of view of assessment of Catholic opinion on the embargo is a letter from another Catholic lawyer to Walsh. He commended Walsh's stand on the question of repeal. No doubt, he said, Walsh would receive a certain amount of hostile criticism from "a vocal and reactionary minority group of Catholics" who were "badly misinformed on current events generally" and who always seemed to be the first to express the "Catholic" viewpoint. However, the writer considered that an ever-increasing number of "progressive Catholics" endorsed the view held by Walsh and others. In conversation with many of his Catholic friends, the lawyer reported, he had found "a great deal of indignation at the position taken by certain of our priests on the Spanish situation". He was worried by the unfavorable light this shed on the church, making it look

like an ally of the foes of democracy. He believed that a majority of American Catholics were ashamed of America's "unChristian behaviour in giving aid to the fascist destroyers of religion and democracy" while turning their backs on the "heroic defenders of these things in which we believe". This view was also held by George Shuster, who was perenially out of step with the rest of the church's spokesmen. He advocated review of all neutrality legislation passed during Roosevelt's presidency. These laws had done nothing more than drag Americans into a "glaringly ridiculous mess", wherein minority groups quarrelled in a manner pleasing to all enemies of democracy. All foreign conflicts, said Shuster, were of interest to the United States. "Whether we like it or not, we Americans live in the world and our own stability is at stake".

The embargo was not lifted, and historians have been quick to point to Catholic opposition as one of the main factors influencing Roosevelt's decision. If, as the evidence suggests, Catholics were not united on this issue, then the president and his advisers erred in equating the expressed opinion of Catholic spokesmen with

the opinion of Catholic laymen. The impressive statistics of letters, telegrams and other protests forwarded to Washington which were publicised by the Catholic press to indicate the strength of Catholic conviction must have been more compelling than the assurances of Ickes and Mundelein that there were breaches in the wall of opposition. It is possible, too, that Roosevelt, seeing clearly where events in Europe were leading, was not prepared to alienate social and political groups over the embargo issue. He would need their support for much graver foreign policy decisions relating to the war which he saw as resulting from "a coalition of European dictators". 270

As the war drew to a close in 1939, those sections of the Catholic press which supported Franco rejoiced at his victory and demanded diplomatic recognition of his government by the United States. Such Catholics apparently were not disturbed by the thought that the general's victory had destroyed any real hope of representative and responsible government in Spain for the foreseeable future, nor that his success had further emboldened the other

270. Roosevelt to William Phillips, 15 September 1938, Elliot Roosevelt (ed.) The Roosevelt Letters (London 1952) 3, 241. The idea that Roosevelt was "getting the country ready in sentiment" for war is also voiced in a report from the German Ambassador in the United States to the German Foreign Ministry, 22 March 1938, Documents on German Foreign Policy, Series D, 1, 696.
fascist states in Europe to an alarming degree. Instead, there were renewed paeans of praise for Franco, some even more extravagant than those of two and three years earlier. He was eulogised as a counterpart of George Washington, as a great Christian soldier who had "pitted himself almost single-handed against the immeasurable resources of international communism". Blasted by propaganda such as Washington never dreamed of, he now stood forth "serene, victorious and deserving of a high place in any category of human greatness". 271

On 27 February 1939, Great Britain and France recognised the *de jure* status of the Nationalist government, but the United States held back from such a move. After this date, demands for recognition which had been appearing in the Catholic press for some time, grew in number and volume. Week after week, most Catholic editors reiterated their case. "Justice demands that the United States Government consider the recognition of the Nationalist Government of Spain", wrote Talbot in *America*. 272 "We must recognise Franco now", he insisted a few weeks later. 273 The *Boston Pilot* could

271. *Sign*, 18 (March 1939) 480; also *America*, 3 June 1939, 171, where the same comparison with Washington is drawn.
find "no historical precedent for the Government's refusal to recognize the victorious Nationalists" of Spain. 274 Some writers argued that refusal to recognize Franco's government was harmful to America's own interests, since she was one of the few major powers to take this position. 275 Other Catholic spokesmen added their voices. Members of a newly-formed association, the American Union for Nationalist Spain, made recognition their first objective. Important Catholic members of this group included the president of Fordham University, the dean of the Law School at the same university and Bishop Francis Kelly of Oklahoma. The Union urged recognition in view of the fact that Spain would soon be one of Europe's great states. Establishment of relations would be conducive to closer ties with Latin America and strengthening of the Monroe Doctrine. 276 Speaking to several thousands in New York, Father Thorning also demanded recognition in the interests of hemisphere solidarity and the Monroe Doctrine. He argued that all the reasons advanced by the Administration to justify the


recognition of Soviet Russia also applied to Spain. If the United States could recognise the former state, where human rights were denied, there was no logical reason for denying Franco equal treatment, because in Spain those rights were revered. Thorning telegraphed these views to the president, adding that recognition by the United States government would bring "peace, order, religious liberty" to all the people of Spain. Another well-known Washington priest, Dr. Joseph Code, joined with Thorning to impress upon Roosevelt the need for immediate recognition. Code also wrote a long letter to Hull, in which he repeated the time-worn argument that the so-called republic of Spain had ceased to exist as a legitimate government, and there was therefore no justification for the American government's continued acceptance of their ambassador, de Los Rios, and no legal impediment to the formal recognition of Franco. Representative John McCormack also forwarded to Hull copies of letters he had received from

277. Ibid., 25 February 1939.

278. Thorning to Roosevelt, 4 March 1939, State Department, 852.01/514.


280. Code to Hull, 22 March 1939, State Department, 852.01/618.
Code, and added his own opinion that recognition would be in the best interests of the United States. 281 Together with a number of prominent clergymen and laymen, Michael Williams sent a message of congratulations to the Archbishop of Toledo. He assured the prelate that the signatories joined him in thanking God that the Red armies had been so completely defeated in Spain by "the heroic armies led with such consummate constancy and skill by that most distinguished and admirable Spanish Catholic soldier, Generalissimo Franco". 282 To this the editors of Commonweal, in accordance with their neutral position on the war, appended an expression of reservation, one of the very few to be found regarding Franco's victory. They emphasised that the message expressed the views of its authors, and that Commonweal did not subscribe to it in all respects. 283 Such reservations, however, could not dampen the enthusiasm of Franco's supporters, who continued to admire and praise almost until the outbreak of war in Europe in September 1939. Typical were the lengthy descriptions of reconstruction in Spain

281. McCormack to Hull, 23 March 1939, State Department 852.01/556.
282. Commonweal, 23 June 1939, 236.
283. Ibid., 237.
which were featured in America. According to these, the army was being "rapidly dismantled", the jobless masses were finding employment, and everyone from Franco to the poorest peasant, was working to build the New Spain.\textsuperscript{284}

In August 1938, a Catholic editor wrote that since the beginning of the war in Spain, there had been "practical unanimity among Catholics in hoping for a speedy and complete victory for the Nationalists".\textsuperscript{285} He noted regretfully that there were still some Catholics who remained unconvinced, and who adopted an attitude of neutrality. Two polls taken soon afterwards provide evidence that the number of such Catholics was quite considerable. The first, in December 1938, reported that only thirty-nine percent of American Catholics favoured Franco, while thirty percent were actually pro-Loyalist. The remaining thirty-one percent declared that they were neutral. A Gallup poll early in 1939 indicated that this last figure had risen by two percent, and that only thirty-eight percent of all American Catholics favoured the "crusade".\textsuperscript{286} Those who supported Franco had access

\textsuperscript{284} America, 17 June 1939, 229; also 3 June 1939, 171; 10 June 1939, 201.

\textsuperscript{285} Sign, 18 (August 1938) 4-5.

\textsuperscript{286} Time, 23 January 1939, 36.
to the Catholic press to publicise their views and it therefore seemed to many other Americans that all Catholics were pro-Nationalist. The remarkably high percentage of Loyalist sympathy revealed by the polls, when considered in conjunction with the continuous efforts of Catholic spokesmen to portray Franco as a christian and a democrat, and as the saviour of Catholic Spain, suggests that American Catholicism was neither monolithic nor without internal crisis. 287 In fact, then, nearly two thirds of America's Catholics failed to follow the opinion of "official" Catholic spokesmen on this issue. 288 From the first days of the war, almost the entire Catholic press, the majority of the American hierarchy, the NCWC and all its subsidiary organisations, Catholic alumni and alumae groups and a considerable number of prominent Catholic laymen took up the cause of Franco and championed it with uncritical zeal in the face of considerable opposition from most other Americans. 289 This attitude soon drew accusations of fascist tendencies and sympathies within the Catholic church from many Protestants and liberals. By 1937, the threat to world peace from the growth of fascism

288. Ave Maria, 17 December 1938, 793.
289. Valaik, American Catholics and the Spanish Civil War, 382.
was becoming apparent to an ever-increasing number of Americans. The more perceptive among them realised that if Hitler was to be stopped, the opposition to him must begin in Spain. Anti-fascism was equated with Americanism. "The supreme test of an anti-fascist today is not what he says but what he does for Spain", wrote one editor. 290 In order to be anti-fascist, an increasingly popular attitude in the second half of the decade, one had to be against Franco and for the Spanish Republic. Since so many prominent Catholics had aligned themselves with Franco, whom they uncritically viewed as the defender of Christianity against the scourge of communism, there is little wonder that many Americans were asking questions about "the connection between the fascist threat and the activity of this largest single minority group in the country". 291

George Shuster, who from the first days of the war had counselled moderation and an objective study of the Spanish situation, attempted to explain to his fellow Americans why some Catholics were so violently partisan. They felt, he said, and in some respects justifiably, that whatever concerned their brethren in other countries was


ignored in the United States, and that they themselves were endangered at home. Catholics had "minority-itis" more than at any other time in American history. Shuster believed this feeling was based on three main events, namely the great shock of the 1928 elections, the failure of their efforts to aid the church in Mexico and the "prevailing lack of sympathy" for the sufferings of Catholics and other religious groups in Russia. The result of all these factors, he continued, was "pent-up, smouldering resentment" which flared up when the war began in Spain. With thousands of priests and religious on the casualty lists, "golden opportunity had come to every silver tongue". In spite of efforts by himself and others to advocate "a decent and democratic policy", the use of American influence to arbitrate the dispute, the Catholic kettle had boiled over. Shuster did not condone Catholic support of Franco, but he did plead for a greater readiness on the part of other Americans to listen to Catholic points of view as "normal and integral parts of editorial and academic policy". After all, he asked, why build an intellectual ghetto for twenty million people? ②92

The factors listed by Shuster certainly prepared the

ground for Catholic support of the Nationalists, but there were further reasons, which related directly to Spain. Many American Catholics viewed with suspicion and apprehension the government of the second Spanish Republic. They deplored the anti-clerical legislation and the acts of Spanish radicals against the church, which they attributed to the government itself. This suspicion of the republic was deepened by a somewhat romantic and largely unhistorical view of Spain's history and of the reign of the last king, Alfonso XIII. Spain was seen by such Catholics as the Catholic country, the land of Catholic kings and great Catholic mystics, a land of unspoiled, deeply Catholic people. There was little awareness of the church's relative neglect of the masses in favour of the rich and well-born, or the degree to which the prestige of the king and the church had fallen during the dictatorship of de Rivera.\textsuperscript{293} The attitude of many Protestants to the conflict in Spain was another factor. The majority of American Protestants condemned Franco as a reactionary champion of feudalism, fascism and monarchism. Although this response seems to have been prompted largely by a sincere faith in liberal democracy, part of their support of the Loyalists did come from feelings of animosity towards Catholicism. The

\textsuperscript{293} Valaik, 383.
arguments of Protestants often betrayed a deep-seated
dislike of Romanism, a conviction that Catholicism was
authoritarian, of which the political manifestation was
fascism, and that it was essentially an alien force in
American society. There was, on the part of many of
them, a willingness to attribute all of Spain's mis-
fortunes to the church, to defend the Loyalists against
every charge of anti-clericalism and to take considerable
comfort in the disasters of the Spanish church.²⁹⁴

Preoccupation with the evils of communism and an
exaggerated estimate of its strength and the danger it
posed to the world was an over-riding factor. American
Catholics had seen the results of a secular, anti-
clerical government's attack on the church in Mexico. The
widely accepted notion that the atheistic forces of
international communism were behind the Mexican attack
on the church prepared them to accept readily reports of
communist machinations in Spain. Communist enthusiasm
for the Loyalists convinced many Catholics that the
Russians completely dominated the Spanish government
and they adamantly held to the view that a Loyalist
victory would obviously result in Stalinist control of

²⁹⁴. Guttmann, 69, 79; Traina, American Diplomacy and the
Spanish Civil War, 179.
Spain. The presence of communists in Spain could not be denied. Given the unalterable hatred and resultant fear of American Catholics for all things communist and all communists, it was easy to exaggerate not only the number but the power of the "Reds" in Spain.

Shuster said that Catholics reacted as they did because they felt endangered at home. As a minority group in American society, they had a long history of discrimination against them by other social and economic groups. After the political defeat of 1928, which they believed was the result of "triumphant bigotry", they had made significant political and economic gains under the New Deal. But they suddenly found their new status threatened by American responses to the events in Spain. In accordance with official Catholic policy, many of them saw communism as the great modern evil, and in the eyes of Protestant Americans, this put them in the fascist camp, a position alien to the American way of life. There had been considerable Catholic indignation when, in 1935 and 1936, Roosevelt and many of the New Deal policies had been branded by some public figures, including Father

Coughlin, as communistic. Most Catholics supported Roosevelt, and it was unthinkable that they should do so if he and his administration were tainted with communism. When war began in Spain, many Catholics logically opposed what they saw there as communist machinations, and then equated this with a greater degree of real Americanism than anti-fascism. Much of the Catholic support for Franco apparently came from those in the church who believed that the Spanish insurgents were fighting against communism and therefore for a kind of Catholicism which was perfectly compatible with the ideals loosely referred to as "the American Way of Life".297 This would explain the widespread determination of many American Catholic spokesmen, lay and clerical, to find some evidence of liberal democracy in Franco's Spain. Thus Franco became George Washington, the insurgents resembled the American rebels of 1776 and their cause was paralleled with the American revolt against the British.298 For Catholics just becoming more comfortable in a pluralistic society, such reasoning was necessary if they were not to risk the fairly substantial gains made toward acceptance in Protestant America. Their attitude was based also on an American

298. Traina, American Diplomacy and the Spanish Civil War, 183.
isolationist conviction that the groups opposing Franco in the United States and seeking to aid the Loyalists, were themselves un-American and desirous of dragging the country into a second world war on behalf of an atheistic communist government and its masters in Moscow.\textsuperscript{299}

The almost irrational passion which gripped some American Catholics in the course of the Spanish Civil War, and the fact that most of the Catholic press supported Franco, conceal the real picture. Almost two-thirds of America's Catholic population refused to endorse the holy crusade of the Nationalists, and either favoured the Republicans or remained neutral. For these people, the attitude of their church leaders must have been an embarrassment. It seems clear that most of the laity remained largely unconvinced by the pronouncements of the hierarchy and other Catholic spokesmen. This was perhaps partly due to the fact that many Catholics were big-city labourers who were strongly influenced by liberal politicians and labour leaders, as well as by an international working-class sentiment which was a very real factor in the 1930s.\textsuperscript{300} There are occasional glimpses

\textsuperscript{299}. Valaik, \textit{American Catholics and the Spanish Civil War}, 295.
\textsuperscript{300}. Traina, 183.
of lay realism in face of hierarchical attitudes and a willingness to make a personal judgment. 301 And the same desire for acceptance in a Protestant-dominated society which forced some Catholics to endorse Franco as a kind of Hispanic George Washington caused many more to refuse to align their views with the hierarchy and the Catholic press on controversial political issues.

To a degree seldom appreciated, the reaction of the "official" American Catholic church to the Spanish Civil war won it the mistrust of the nation's liberals and intellectuals. Here, they believed, was ample evidence that the church, an authoritarian institution, imposed authoritarian attitudes which issued into authoritarian political preferences. The Spain of the Inquisition and the Black Legend was once again stifling freedom. 302 Pro-Loyalist groups in the United States were inclined to believe that every important effort they had made to bring American policy into line with their sentiments had

301. Nation, 11 September 1937, 275, letter to the editor from Francis Kane Fendt of Philadelphia, questioning the idea, "as some of our church's hierarchy would have us believe," that the "big bad Russian Reds" were totally responsible for the situation in Spain.

failed because of Catholic opposition. Partisans of both sides had, in fact, only partial success in their attempts to influence public opinion. They failed to create significant bodies of pro-Loyalist and pro-Nationalist sympathisers. But, with all their confusing cross-fire, they did help to bring about anti-Nationalist and anti-Loyalist sentiments, and so together encouraged attitudes of antagonism and indifference towards both Spanish parties.\textsuperscript{303} In sufficiently influential circles, the success of Franco was more harmful to American Catholicism than any political scandal of Tammany Hall.

\textsuperscript{303} Traina, \textit{American Diplomacy and the Spanish Civil War}, 201-202.
(ii) THE MARK OF THE BEAST IN SPAIN

"In the month of July the centre of interest in Europe, which hitherto had alternated between Italy and Germany, shifted to Spain. In the events which have taken place there during the last six months, Australia has played no direct part, but she has watched them with the closest attention". 1

In these simple terms, the government of Australia officially recorded the opening of hostilities in Spain, a war which was to divide the nations of the world so sharply and lead into the much greater holocaust of the Second World war. Even more than the Ethiopian war, the civil war in Spain was remote from the lives and concerns of most Australians. Britain's involvement in League policy and the consequent participation by Australia in sanctions against Italy brought Mussolini's campaign in Africa to public attention and debate. But these factors were absent in the Spanish conflict. Most Australians had little knowledge and possibly less understanding of Spanish affairs and it is doubtful whether the public was aroused by the war to any significant degree. Only Catholics and communists were really involved, because

each group saw the conflict as specially related to its own ideological position. The official attitude of the Australian government was quite clear. It adopted a policy of strict neutrality towards what the prime minister, Joseph Lyons, described as "an internal dispute between two rival forms of government".² Besides conforming to an accepted maxim of non-interference with the internal affairs of other countries,³ this neutrality accorded with British and empire policy. For members of the Australian government, this was also a policy of political expediency. To make a statement for or against either side would be to invite controversy and division.⁴ R.G. Menzies, then a rising young politician, characterised the war in Spain as a conflict between "a Communist Government and a collection of Fascist rebels". He probably voiced the opinion of a majority of Australians when he continued, "We have no very great concern whether communism defeats fascism in Spain or vice-versa". Each system of government, he believed, while it might be admirable for Spain, was of "no possible value in a British community".⁵ Within

2. Sydney Morning Herald, 12 September 1936.
5. Argus (Melbourne) 23 September 1936.
this framework of considerable ignorance of and indifference to affairs in Spain, the general Australian attitude was support for the Republicans rather than the Nationalists. There were several reasons for this position. A government based on the church, the army and the aristocracy was alien to most Australians, and speakers and writers who commented on Spain usually regarded the Republicans as leaders of a popular democratic movement.  

6 As well, Australians resented the support given to Franco by Italy and Germany. Those who cherished links with the mother country could not forgive Italy for her treatment of Britain in the Ethiopian war. Many Australians were also strongly anti-German during the 1930s. These two countries could be a threat to Britain via Spain and the Mediterranean if they became strongly entrenched in the Iberian peninsula. These motives were reinforced by a fairly strong anti-fascist movement in Australia in the second half of the decade.  

Finally, Australian workers, partly influenced by


7. See Kevin Tristram, The Australian Reaction to the Spanish Civil War, (unpublished M.A. Thesis, Sydney 1966) 35, for a discussion of these points.
communist attitudes within the trade union movement, identified with the Spanish workers, who were Republicans. On the whole, the daily press took an equivocal attitude to the war. Most editors could see rights and wrongs on both sides of the struggle. While recognising the obvious social evils which existed in Spain, they disliked the violence of the radical groups and the failure of the government to control it. Some suspected Marxist influence in the war, and others worried about possible European repercussions. On one point they were unanimous. The only sane policy for Australia was strict neutrality and non-intervention.

Australian Catholics shared with Catholics in the United States a romantic and unrealistic attachment to Spain as one of the traditional bulwarks of the church against the spread of Protestantism. She was "the glorious Spain of Old", the "strong tower of the Faith in the West". The church in Spain was therefore respected with a tinge of nostalgia for a bygone age of Catholic hegemony. From the abolition of the monarchy in 1931 until the beginning of the war, the Catholic press

8. Andrews, Isolationism and Appeasement in Australia, 80-81, discusses the communist attitude to the war.

in Australia gave considerable prominence to Spain and her affairs. Much of this was concerned with Spain's glorious past and the part played by the church in the country's history. As one government succeeded another and disorders increased, Catholic editors quickly laid the blame, first on freemasonry, and then increasingly on communism. "There is no earthly doubt", wrote one of them in the early days of the Republic, "that the hidden master of this Radical movement is Freemasonry..... Freemasons are found burrowing everywhere in the South of Spain".10 By 1934, communism and anarchism were seen as the enemies of Christian Spain.11 The great sin of its new leaders was their rejection of Spain's "ancient faith and age-long political traditions", thus allowing it to come under the control of "elements susceptible to Bolshevistic influences".12 Indignant denials from the Catholic press soon followed any suggestion that the church might be to blame for some of the problems in modern Spain. Catholic spokesmen in Australia, even farther removed than Americans from the realities of the Spanish situation, had no understanding of the degree to which the church had ceased to be a unifying force in

society because it had lost its vitality. They failed to perceive that, because of the profound penetration of the Catholic religion into the social, economic and political life of the people, it was inevitable that when two centuries of discontent and disorder came to a head, the church would be deeply involved.\textsuperscript{13} Of the actual conditions in Spain and the complexity of the social and political issues, the Catholic commentators of the early thirties seemed relatively unaware. They made almost no attempt to discover the underlying causes of the several swings from right to left and to right again during the five disturbed years of the Republic. They apparently knew nothing of the quarrels between the church and the liberals, nor of the frustration and bitterness of the working classes, neglected and opposed by successive governments. In their view, Spain's troubles stemmed from official rejection of the monarchy, the army and the church, which had kept the country "sober". They used these three institutions, the embodiments of Spain's past glory, as a measuring rod for assessing the worth of each new government, and found them all sadly lacking by comparison. They awaited the day when the right would again find a leader, "a captain with a sword he is not

\textsuperscript{13} Hugh Thomas, \textit{The Spanish Civil War}, 36.
afraid to use against the enemies of Catholic Spain."  

After the electoral victory of the left in Spain in February 1936, the Catholic press in Australia spoke with one voice. This was the work of communism, which aimed at destroying Catholic Spain entirely and giving Russia a foothold in the west. The election was condemned as rigged, in order to dispose of Gil Robles, the Catholic leader, who was trying "to secure the amendment of the bitterly anti-religious constitution". The "hideous hand of Soviet Russia" had "twisted and disfigured Spanish life" and the outlook was dark not only for Catholics but for all of Spain. The anti-clerical and anti-Catholic outbursts of the new government quickly captured the headlines and were seen as a continuation of the Mexican persecution. "Calvary in Spain Today" proclaimed a May issue of the Advocate, and several weeks later the same paper was reporting "mangling, decapitation, torture and the like". There were confident predictions that Catholic Spain would soon repudiate the new Marxist leaders, and that sanity and good order would return after a period.

15. Catholic Leader, 14 May 1936.
17. Advocate, 21 May 1936.
18. Ibid., 2 July 1936.
of persecution.¹⁹

Catholic spokesmen in Australia saw the Spanish Civil war in the same simplistic terms as their counterparts in the United States. It was the legitimate uprising of Spanish patriots against a communist minority which had usurped complete power against the will of the mass of the people.²⁰ Franco's rebellion, wrote Brian Doyle, was the "spontaneous expression of Catholic Spain's wrath against the brutality and braggadocio of the Communists in control".²¹ This war, declared the *Freeman's Journal*, was a clear-cut struggle between "communism and anti-communism, between the Reds and the anti-Reds".²² A little later the same editor described the conflict as a "straightout fight for Christianity and civilisation" against communists seeking in Spain as elsewhere "to encircle and destroy the citadel of God on earth and trample the Cross under their feet".²³ Members of the hierarchy were ready to endorse this view of a struggle between Christianity and communism. According to

¹⁹. *Catholic Freeman's Journal*, 5 March 1936; *Advocate* and *Catholic Press*, both 23 April 1936.
²¹. *Catholic Fireside*, 3 (September 1936) 2.
Archbishop Duhig of Brisbane, Franco was

"fighting for the life of his country, its institutions and its ancient civilisation against the emissaries of Moscow and the barbarism and atheism which they represented". 24

Bishop Dwyer considered it a conflict between the followers of Christ and the devil, 25 while Archbishop Kelly of Sydney declared it to be a "new chapter in human history which presaged the destruction of civilisation". 26

Australian Catholic editors and speakers were no less prone to emphasise the atrocities in Spain than American Catholics, and they naturally blamed them all on the communists. Almost every editorial on Spain referred to the "slaughter" of priests and nuns, "bloodstained altars" and "burning churches". Week after week details were given of this "most ferocious persecution since the days of Diocletian". 27 News from the Loyalist areas, according to the Catholic press, was a "sequence of gutted churches and wholesale massacres of priests and other religious". 28 The Catholic Leader described a "Red

25. Ibid., 13 October 1936.
26. Ibid., 7 September 1936, pastoral letter of Archbishop Kelly.
27. Catholic Worker, 3 October 1936.
Saturnalia in Spain" culled from cables in overseas papers which, according to the editor, were not sent to the Australian press.\textsuperscript{29} The "Red Roll of Spanish Horrors" was endless, and included such details as army vehicles being driven over dead Dominican friars,\textsuperscript{30} the heads of Jesuits carried on silver trays through the streets by a frenzied mob\textsuperscript{31} and the "embowelling and crucifixion" of priests.\textsuperscript{32} "Hoardes of children" were reported as roaming the streets, armed with "pistols, hatchets and truncheons", joining in the "orgy of murder".\textsuperscript{33} As in the American press, the alleged numbers of religious and lay Catholics killed and churches burnt were frequently quoted. The impression given is that of untold numbers of martyrs and of churches destroyed. Precise figures did not seem to matter, as long as the picture was given of a massive persecution of the church, to warrant a holy crusade against the Reds in Spain. "Today", wrote one editor in conclusion of a long list of atrocities, "the Red flag waves over slaughtered Spanish priests and nuns, over the ruin of innumerable churches and convents, over

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{29} Catholic Leader, 17 September 1936.
\item \textsuperscript{30} Catholic Freeman's Journal, 29 October 1936.
\item \textsuperscript{31} Advocate, 20 August 1936.
\item \textsuperscript{32} Catholic Leader, 22 September 1938.
\item \textsuperscript{33} Advocate, 20 August 1936.
\end{itemize}
the ruins of the ideals and the honour of Spain". 34

To the modern reader, many of the atrocity stories seem quite improbable and unworthy of responsible journalism. In a Catholic community free of anti-clericalism and almost inordinately proud of the achievements of its religious men and women in the sphere of education and charitable works, this kind of propaganda (one cannot call it anything else) made a strong appeal. Almost all the recorded statements of the hierarchy and other Catholic speakers included some reference to atrocities. Archbishop Kelly of Sydney, who rarely made statements on current events, referred to the Spanish situation in a pastoral letter read in all churches of the archdiocese in September 1936. He wrote of "the demolition of churches, schools, monasteries and convents, torture and murder of the clergy and expulsion of nuns (and) overbearing mob violence". To bring home to his listeners the enormity of these crimes, he referred to two particular teaching congregations of nuns in Sydney in whom, "under God, we glory", whose members in Spain had been expelled from their convents. 35 Archbishop Duhig spoke in similar terms in Brisbane, adding to the list of outrages the "burning

34. Catholic Leader, 15 October 1936.
35. Catholic Freeman's Journal, 10 September 1936.
of hundreds of churches with priceless treasures of architecture and art. Bishop McGuire of Townsville warned that the communists were determined "to walk roads slippery with human blood", while Bishop Dwyer of Wagga characterised the Republicans as "people sent by Russia to demolish not only the monasteries but to murder bishops, priests and nuns". The joint pastoral letter issued by the Australian hierarchy at the conclusion of the fourth Plenary Council held in Adelaide in September 1937 repeated these same charges. After listing the alleged slaughter and destruction, the bishops concluded that

"the persecutions of the Roman Emperors who sought to eradicate the infant church pale before the savage and ruthless onslaught of the Reds in Spain against everybody and everything that stands for God and religion".

Earlier, the members of the hierarchy had sent a message of sympathy to the pope couched in similar terms. "Uniting with the whole Christian world, we pray for and do homage to the martyred dead", said the bishops. "We join with those who have lived to mourn amid the ruins of

36. Sydney Morning Herald, 7 September 1936.
37. Catholic Leader, 3 September 1936.
38. Argus, 13 October 1936.
Spain in deploiring the destruction that has been wrought by the enemies of God and religion. 40

In the Catholic press reports of atrocities, often with photographs, continued to appear throughout the whole course of the war. 41 Much of this material was derived from overseas Catholic papers, and was used to evoke an emotional revulsion against the Republicans, to illustrate their hatred of the church and their "insincerity and untruthfulness" in insisting that the war was not a religious one. Any suggestion that the rebels, in their turn, committed atrocities, was immediately dismissed by Catholic editors as "Red propaganda". A Sydney Presbyterian minister was roundly condemned by one editor, because he accused the Rebels of the "expulsion of Jews and Freemasons, and foreign missionaries" and of the confiscation of property belonging to "evangelical Christians". Such reports, said the Catholic writer, came from "sources profoundly affected by communistic propaganda". On the following page, the paper reproduced reports from "the latest European Catholic papers" of various alleged atrocities in Spain. There was not the slightest hint that these latter


41. The photographs were most often of material destruction of religious buildings and rarely supported the lurid atrocity stories which accompanied them.
came from sources profoundly affected by "Catholic propaganda", and might therefore be suspect. 42 When, at the end of the war, reports of trials and reprisals by Franco appeared in the daily press, this same editor scorned the idea that these could in any way be compared with the atrocities attributed to the Republicans throughout the war. It must be quite clear, he retorted, that the men who were given "into the hands of the hangmen or the firing squad richly deserved their fate". After all, they or others like them, had "massacred the unarmed" and carried out "inhuman atrocities", and that kind of "ghoulish must pay for its insensate lust to kill and hunt and outrage the helpless". 43 All sorts of dubious appeals were made to the emotions of Catholic readers. One paper devoted almost one whole page to the last letter of "a Spanish patriot" who was reportedly executed by the Spanish Reds in December 1936. Introducing the letter, the editor claimed that it was "a moving document ... noble in sentiment, typical of all that is best in Spanish Christianity". He added that the letter revealed "the true nature of the conflict more

43. Ibid., 13 April 1939. Apparently this Catholic editor had not considered the moral issue involved in executing men because others like them had committed crimes while they themselves could have been innocent.
vividly and truthfully than the statements of professional Christian leaders who occasionally visit Spain". To the modern reader the letter reveals nothing of this. It is simply the highly emotional outpourings of someone about to die, and could have been written by any Catholic soldier on any battlefield.\(^4^4\) When the Catholic Truth Society published a pamphlet entitled Red Spain, it was given a brightly coloured red and black cover illustrated with a mound of dead bodies.\(^4^5\) Sensational heading and lengthy reports periodically claimed that secret plans had been found which proved Russia's responsibility for the war.\(^4^6\) Above all, Franco was eulogised as a patriotic and gallant leader who represented the true spirit and will of the Spanish people. He was the great and holy deliverer who would restore Catholic Spain, with "its saints and its martyrs", with its "charity and proverbial tolerance" which had made it possible for Spain to become the "greatest Catholic country".\(^4^7\) There were continual denials of Franco's association with fascism, although

\(^4^4\) Advocate, 22 April 1937.

\(^4^5\) Australian Catholic Truth Society Record, 103, June 1937.

\(^4^6\) Advocate, 18 March 1937; 16 September 1937.

\(^4^7\) Catholic Leader, 25 February 1937.
Australian Catholic editors were not so preoccupied with this issue as were those in the United States. There were the same exaggerated reports of the "extraordinary religious fervour" among Franco's troops, and the same accusations against the "pink press" that it had tried to rouse public opinion against Franco by publishing "blatant falsehoods about his character and his policy". The Australian Catholic press did as much as possible to counteract such "anti-Franco propaganda". There were endless descriptions of his progress through Spain as his army gained more territory. Even as he advanced, wrote one editor, he was hailed as a deliverer. Behind him he left a "loyal and devoted population, breathing the air of freedom again", people who were once more at liberty "to ring the bells of their churches and practice the ancient faith of the Spanish people". When Franco was finally victorious, Archbishop Gilroy summed up the paeans of praise featured in the Catholic press. Franco, he said, was "a man who seemed to be raised up by Almighty God". He was a "military genius the like of whom has been

49. Advocate, 21 January 1937; Catholic Freeman's Journal, 5 November 1936.
50. Catholic Press, 13 April 1939.
rarely seen in the history of the world", a magnificent organiser, "a God-fearing and God-loving man". The world had not often seen such a man as General Franco, concluded the Archbishop. 52

The space devoted to the Spanish Civil war in the Catholic press was far greater than that given to any other topic and this continued until the end of the conflict in 1939. Other world events were crowded out by reports from Spain, or given only brief mention. Almost every week for these three years one of the leading articles in all the main Catholic papers was devoted to the topic. Several of the shorter reports on current events were also usually related to the Spanish situation. There were dozens of feature articles on Franco, alleged atrocities, the courage and devotion of those Spaniards who were supporting the Nationalists, and the responsibility of Russia and communism for the events in Spain. There was little analysis and no attempt at sifting truth from propaganda. Anything that originated from Catholic sources was the "truth", and most of the daily press was considered slanted in its reporting of Spanish news. The tone and language of all the Catholic press on Spain was very similar and repetitive and makes

for monotonous reading. There was much emphasis on the "Christian civilisation" which the Republicans were destroying and Franco was defending. The " Reds" were responsible for the "ferocious attacks" on religion, and were seeking to "Sovietise Spain". There was a great deal about the "tragedy of Spain", about massacres and martyrs, barbarism and brutality, sacrilege and the suffering Spanish church. When the rebellion began there was some discussion as to whether it was morally justifiable in the light of Catholic principles. Most editors thought it was. They agreed that because the authority of the elected government had broken down and disorder was widespread, there was a legitimate case for rebellion. 53 Then, having blamed the communists for the breakdown in government, they saw every event in Spain in the light of a crusade against these greatest enemies of the church. When the secular press highlighted events such as Nationalist bombing of cities, Catholic editors attributed it to "Red propaganda", which "succeeded in advertising every bomb that fell on a Red town from a Franco plane" and suppressed details of "dreadful massacres" by the communist troops. 54

53. Advocate, 30 July 1936; Catholic Fireside, 3 (September 1936); Catholic Leader, 15 October 1936.

Anti-British feeling called forth denunciations of Britain's policy towards Spain, and a continual barrage of criticism against the "pink" and "Red" English press. The resistance of the Basques against Franco's advance was a source of embarrassment to the Catholic press. In this instance, as in most others, the editors made no real attempt to understand why this traditionally Catholic section of the Spanish people was fighting against the "saviour" of their country. The general opinion was that the Basques had allowed their desire for independence to "tempt them into an alliance" with the communists, who used the divisions within Christianity to "destroy it utterly".

The main themes of Catholic press opinion thus emerged early in the war and thereafter did not change. The absence in Australia of any significant Catholic journals of opinion ensured that there was no attempt at debate on the issues, as there was to a certain extent in the United States. There was, however, the same continuing argument with the daily secular press, which was accused of slanted and even untruthful

55. Catholic Press, 7 January 1937; Catholic Freeman's Journal, 10 June 1937; 10 November 1938; Advocate, 11 August 1938; 12 January 1939.

56. Advocate, 22 April 1937; Catholic Freeman's Journal, 6 May 1937; Catholic Leader, 17 June 1937.
reporting on the Spanish war. Soon after the beginning of hostilities, the editor of Catholic Leader stressed that since that date the paper had been co-operating with "the public addresses of His Grace the Archbishop in an endeavour to place before its readers and the public generally the position of affairs in Spain" as they really were. 57 This paper was strong on "authentic" or "eye-witness" reports of the war, which usually degenerated into long accounts of the alleged excesses and atrocities of the Republicans. The editor applauded the Brisbane Courier-Mail on one occasion for giving "a fair statement of the difficulties associated with presenting news about the Spanish situation". 58 When another Brisbane daily devoted its leading article soon afterwards to a defence of the Australian press reporting on Spain, the Leader refuted the argument. In answer to the opinions of "a detached observer" of the political scene quoted by the Telegraph, they quoted E. Allison Peers as a much more trustworthy authority. 59 Editorials critical of the secular press recurred frequently in the Freeman's Journal. According to this editor, some of

57. Catholic Leader, 17 September 1936.
58. Ibid., 29 July 1937.
59. Ibid., 12 August 1937.
Sydney's daily papers had indicated quite early in the conflict their "leaning towards the Socialist and Communistic parties" responsible for the war. In them prejudice had conquered common sense, since they had allowed "a faint spirit of approval" to creep into "cabled reports of communistic and atheistical onslaughts on Christianity in far-off Catholic countries". 60 That faint spirit of approval grew, according to this editor, and he continued to attack the dailies for their misrepresentation and propaganda. 61 When victory for Franco seemed imminent, he proudly pointed to the service rendered by the Catholic press in the cause of truth. Catholic newspapers in the English-speaking world, he wrote, had been in the firing-line, "fighting misrepresentation and prejudice and the poison gas of Red propaganda". 62 Members of the hierarchy supported the press in their belief that only Catholic papers gave the authentic version of the Spanish war. Archbishop Mannix of Melbourne considered that the way the war was reported in the secular press was "an insult to the Catholic readers of Australia". 63 Whenever the Catholic church was involved,

60. Catholic Freeman's Journal, 30 July 1936.
61. Ibid., 30 December 1937; 24 February 1938; 5 January 1939.
62. Ibid., 14 April 1938.
63. Advocate, 20 August 1936.
he said, the sympathy, support and help of certain sections of the press went to the enemies of that church, no matter who they might be. 64 The "misleading cables in the daily newspapers" had the people of Australia in a fog about actual conditions in Spain, said Archbishop Duhig in Brisbane. 65 On the vexed question of whether "rebels" was an appropriate name for Franco's troops, a question which occupied a prominent place in American writing about the war, Australian Catholic spokesmen had relatively little to say. Early editorials in some papers took up the issue briefly when discussing the morality of the rebellion. Their conclusion was, of course, that the so-called rebels were the true patriots who had been "goaded into armed protest by the anarchy, tyranny, lawlessness and outrages against Christian religion". 66 Bishop Dwyer of Wagga made the same distinction in his first public comment on the war, and Archbishop Duhig and Dr. L. Rumble both agreed with him. 67 Thereafter Catholic writers and speakers referred to Franco's supporters as Nationalists, and seemed unconcerned about the continued

64. Advocate, 3 September 1936.

65. Sydney Morning Herald, 7 September 1936.

66. Catholic Freeman's Journal, 13 August 1936; 10 September 1936; Catholic Fireside, 3 (September 1936) 2; Advocate, 24 September 1936.

67. Sydney Morning Herald, 13 October 1936; Catholic Leader, 10 September 1936; Sydney Morning Herald, 7 September 1936.
use of the term "rebels" in the daily press. Discussion of foreign help for Franco was limited to answering objections raised by the daily press or public speakers. Catholic editors argued that since the Republicans were receiving help from Russia and the communists, there was no ground for complaint when the Nationalists accepted men and arms from their allies. No sensible person would deny the presence of Russians, Germans, Italians and other foreigners in the Spanish war zone, wrote one. But only "an invincible pro-Red" would expect to find Franco unassisted by anti-communist governments after "Russia's open and desperate attempt to overthrow constitutional government in Spain". 68 It was common knowledge, according to another, that the "so-called Spanish government" was "a mere tool in the hands of Russian Commissars", that the government forces were directed by Russian officers and that the government army consisted largely of Russian and French communists. In his view it was hypocritical of those newspaper editors who supported the Republicans to demand the withdrawal of German and Italian troops, while accepting the presence of foreign troops in the government forces. 69 Those

68. Catholic Freeman's Journal, 10 December 1936.
69. Catholic Press, 7 January 1937; Advocate, 17 February 1938.
foreign troops which were "the backbone of the Spanish Reds" had been invested by the secular press "with an heroic character", a far different treatment from that given to "volunteers from foreign lands" who were giving help to General Franco, complained a Catholic writer.  

In Australia there was no parallel to the Abraham Lincoln Brigades, and no programme of recruitment on behalf of the Republicans, so that the "foreign troops" issue did not become a significant one.

Catholic apologists for Franco were more embarrassed by the bombing raids on behalf of the Nationalists by Italian and German bombers than by the presence of men from these countries in Franco's army. Indeed, bombing raids became one of the most sensitive aspects of the war. Hardened as we are by five years of bombing raids in World War II and the even more destructive raids in all wars since then, we have to make an effort to understand the horror felt by millions of people over the air war in Spain. The Italian and German planes were first in the field on behalf of Franco, but it must not be forgotten that the Russians gave similar aid to the Republicans. To accusations against Franco for employing this method of warfare, the Catholic press gave two general

70. Catholic Freeman's Journal, 6 January 1938.
answers. The first was to condemn such "one-sided" accusations by demanding that those who were distressed by the bombing be equally distressed by the long list of "Red atrocities", especially those against the church.\textsuperscript{71} The second was to demand why all the attention in the daily press on air raids over Barcelona and Madrid? Why not include some graphic accounts of the Republican raids on Granada or Salamanaca? A true horror story could be written about the raid on Sarragossa, which had killed a number of women and children taking part in a religious procession.\textsuperscript{72} There had been no outcry, Catholic editors asserted, when the "Spanish Reds" were bombing Nationalist cities and killing and wounding the civilian populations there.\textsuperscript{73} All of this might have been true, but from publicists who had elevated the war into a crusade and its leader into a prophet, it was a hollow excuse for the excesses of the Nationalists, in view of persistent Catholic denunciations of the enemy. The destruction of Guernica showed even more the inadequacies of the Catholic press' position in regard to the conduct of the war. The savage

\textsuperscript{71} Catholic Freeman's Journal, 24 March 1938; Advocate, 21 April 1938.

\textsuperscript{72} Advocate, 25 November 1937.

\textsuperscript{73} Catholic Freeman's Journal, 24 March 1938; Advocate, 1 September 1938.
and unnecessary destruction of this Basque town was carried out by German bombers, as part of the Nationalist campaign to secure the north. The Nationalists claimed that the Basques had destroyed the town when they saw that it would be captured. Australian Catholic editors readily accepted this story, and one editor called the report of Nationalist bombing of the city the "biggest lie of the Spanish war". Another declared that Guernica had been razed by the retreating Reds with dynamite and fire, so that this "deliberate sacrifice of life" would discredit the Nationalists in the eyes of the world. If, as one Catholic spokesman claimed, only a Catholic could understand the Spanish Civil war, one has to conclude that the understanding of the conflict as revealed in the Australian Catholic press was extremely limited and does little to justify such a claim. The complex situation in Spain was reduced to a simple formula which was repeated with little variation throughout the whole course of the war. Spain was being assailed by a communist revolution which threatened to destroy the church and there was a vast press conspiracy to discredit Franco and the forces which were trying to save Spain.

74. Catholic Freeman's Journal, 21 May 1937.
75. Advocate, 5 May 1938.
76. Ibid., 19 August 1937.
Catholic editors put most of their energies into defending Franco and inveighing against communism, and failed to see that in doing so they were guilty of the same fault of biased and partisan reporting which was their continuing accusation against the daily secular press.

All over the country, Australian Catholic spokesmen, cleric and lay, reinforced this simplistic view of the war as a holy crusade against communism and the forces of evil threatening to destroy the church. In Brisbane, the well-known priest Dr. English told his audience that communism was fighting in Spain "to stamp out all ideas of Christ and the supernatural". Its face, he said, was "seared (sic) with the reckless leer of brutish, shameless degradation".77 The anti-communist people of Spain, in the words of a Melbourne Jesuit, were fighting for "their altars and churches, for the sacredness of marriage and the home, for the souls of their children" and for the right to worship God. "If they are to be blamed for that", he concluded, "there is nothing more to say".78 Archbishop Duhig branded the leader of the Republican government as "an avowed Bolshevik", who wanted to hand over Spain "to be a pawn in the hands of the

77. Catholic Leader, 30 July 1936.
Soviet* and so spread communism. The Catholics of Spain, said the archbishop on another occasion, were prepared "to go through bloodshed for their faith" rather than let the enemies of Christianity "take the love of God out of their hearts and turn old Catholic Spain into a pagan nation". When he opened a new religious building in his diocese, Bishop Hayes of Rockhampton compared the erection of "new convents and churches in Australia" with the activities of the "wicked men" who were burning and destroying similar buildings in Spain*. He declared that any government which abused its power as had the Spanish government, deserved to lose "all respect and obedience". For the sixteen months from August 1936 to November 1937, the Freeman's Journal reported over thirty occasions, such as communion breakfasts, annual meetings of societies and the opening of churches and schools, when members of the hierarchy, clergy or laymen spoke on the Spanish war. In every case the words were almost the same. Reference was always made to the evil of communism, its efforts to gain control in Spain and its plan to destroy the church. Each speaker dwelt on the "slaughter" (alternatively the

79. Argus, 19 October 1936.
80. Catholic Leader, 6 August 1936.
81. Ibid.
"murder" or "massacre") of priests, nuns and Catholic laity and the destruction of churches and other religious buildings. No good church-going Catholic could fail to be indoctrinated, at least to a certain degree, with this view of the Spanish Civil war. One notable exception to this was Dr. Leslie Rumble, the Sydney priest who conducted a question-and-answer programme over the radio. This priest refused to take such a simple view of the situation and stressed that interpretation of events in Spain was very difficult. He attributed some of the problems to the great gulf between rich and poor, and to the fact that those who had wealth and influence had refused to put into practice the social principles of the church. He also declared that it was not possible to preserve the status quo even if a war was fought in its defence. If the Nationalists did gain power, he argued, they would have to bring in sweeping social reforms. 82

It is difficult to ascertain to what extent the general body of Catholics accepted this view of the war as a holy crusade. There was very little activity in Australia on behalf of Franco and the Nationalists. Various appeals were made by members of the hierarchy for

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82. Catholic Freeman's Journal, 10 September 1936.
funds to help in the restoration of Spanish churches. In December 1936, £650 was collected at the annual meeting of bishops, where the idea of such an appeal originated. In a pastoral letter read the following week in all Sydney churches, Archbishop Kelly appealed for donations for "the relief of Spain". Archbishop Mannix issued a similar appeal in Melbourne and assured his people that his own small contribution would go with theirs. The South Australian Branch of the Movement Against War and Fascism objected to Mannix's appeal, and demanded that the attorney-general be asked whether the archbishop had not committed a breach of the Crimes Act. This move did nothing to deter Mannix, who several times urged the Catholics of Melbourne to continue giving to the fund. The money, he assured them, would be placed at the disposal of the Cardinal Primate of Spain for distribution to needy areas. In March, 1937 a Melbourne daily reported that, inclusive of over £3700 from the Melbourne diocese, the Catholic

83. Catholic Freeman's Journal, 3 December 1936.
84. Ibid., 10 December 1936.
85. Argus, 9 November 1936.
88. Age, 4 March 1937.
dioceses of Australia had contributed £6702 to the Catholic Spanish Relief Fund. There is no evidence in the Catholic press of further collections during the rest of the war period.

Only one volunteer went from Australia to fight for Franco. He was Eugene Bull, son of a prominent Sydney family, who went to Spain in September 1937 and joined the Nationalist air force. After serving in Spain, he joined the Royal Air Force and was killed in action a few weeks after the outbreak of World War II, while returning from a bombing mission over Germany.

There was a certain amount of activity by Catholics in the form of opposition to appeals made by supporters of the Republicans, but this was restricted mainly to Catholic action groups in the cities and larger country towns. The main target of opposition was the Spanish Relief Committee, which was formed in Sydney in August 1936 under the auspices of two other organisations, the Movement against War and Fascism and International Labour Defence. It was a typical communist front, designed to influence various groups in society, including the Labor party, while keeping the communist party in the background. The new organisation spread quite rapidly and

89. *Argus*, 20 March 1937.
90. Treston, *Australian Reaction to the Spanish Civil War*, 73.
appealed to the community through films, lectures, conferences, addresses by returned members of the International Brigades or nursing units, floats in May Day parades and a weekly broadsheet, Information Service. Officials of the movement were usually prominent Labor men, but the council members were a mixture of religious and union leaders and communists. The activities and appeals of this organisation naturally roused the anger of the Catholic editors. Its appeal for funds in Melbourne in March 1937 was characterised by the Advocate as "one of the most amazing pieces of subterfuge and effrontery yet perpetrated in this city". The people of Melbourne, said the editor, were being "hoodwinked and humbugged", and the sympathies of persons genuinely concerned for the suffering in Spain were being exploited to send money to Barcelona, "the headquarters of the movement which has no respect for human life", as was shown by "the wholesale massacre of bishops, priests and nuns". According to another editor, the members of the Spanish Relief Committee were "ignorant lying busybodies" who were pushing the communist cause in Australia, attempting to get Australian workers


92. Advocate, 4 March 1937.
to give aid to the enemies of democracy in Spain. When the committee sponsored a demonstration outside the Italian Consulate in Sydney protesting against the "massacre" and "murder" of children in Spain, a Sydney Catholic editor declared that this was overwhelming proof of their partisanship. If they were really sincere, he argued, they should also demonstrate at the office of the consular representative of "Spain's Red government" to express their "abhorrence of the mass murders of Spanish religious and Spanish Catholics by Bolshevistic hordes". In the Queensland town of Innisfail, the Spanish Relief Committee was strongly criticised from the pulpit by the parish priest. "He classed us as communists", complained the organisation's secretary, "whereas we are true patriots". Other clerics also denounced the committee. In March 1937, its council proposed a series of lectures on the Catholic church in Spain to be given by one of its members. These lectures, the committee explained, were in reply to attacks against it, particularly those made by the Catholic bishop of Bathurst when representatives had previously visited that

93. Catholic Leader, 13 May 1937.
94. Sydney Morning Herald, 2 December 1937.
95. Catholic Freeman's Journal, 9 December 1937
96. Treston, 79.
city. 97

Opposition to the Spanish Relief Committee sometimes went further than mere criticism. A public meeting called by the committee in the Adelaide Town Hall was disrupted by members of a Catholic action group, the Guild of Social Studies. According to press reports, nearly a thousand people at the meeting "frequently jeered and then hooted" the principal speakers who had to shout to make themselves heard above the "continuous flow of interjections". The president of the Trades and Labour Council declared that the disruption had been organised by the "Catholic Guild for Social Studies, and Franco, Hitler and Mussolini". 98 A Catholic commentator interpreted the event as an indication that the public was becoming impatient at "this continued attempt to get Australian sympathy and money for communists in Spain". 99

Two members of the Melbourne Campion Society wrote letters to a daily paper criticising an appeal for funds by the Spanish Relief Committee, and provoked a lengthy correspondence on the matter which finally had to be closed by the editor. 100 The communist party, through

97. Treston, 80.
98. Argus, 6 May 1937.
100. Age, 3–11 March 1937.
its organ, the **Workers' Voice**, branded the criticisms as slanders, and issued a challenge to debate the subject of the Spanish war. They proposed as a topic, "That the Spanish government has the support of the Spanish people, and is fighting for world peace and democracy."\(^1\) One of the Catholics, S.J. Ingewersen, curtly refused, and the second, T. Kelly, did not reply. The communist party proceeded with plans for the debate. At the eleventh hour, Ingewersen indicated that he would debate the issue if the Town Hall were engaged for the occasion and an admission charge of two shillings per person be sent to the Cardinal Primate of Spain to aid in rebuilding churches. He also demanded that the communist party provide a £50 bond, to be forfeited in the event of any hostile demonstrations against him.\(^2\) These conditions were dismissed by the communists as a "scover for retreat" and the debate went ahead as planned. When Ingewersen and Kelly were called by the chairman there was no response. However, leaflets, signed by the two Campion men, setting out the case for Franco, were distributed among the audience.\(^3\)

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103. Treston, 45.
When a new organisation, the New South Wales Council for the Relief of Spanish Distress, was sponsored by the Society of Friends in 1937, Catholics protested its activities, especially when it appealed for funds. Since the money was to be sent to the National Joint Committee for Spanish Relief in London, of which the Duchess of Atholl was chairwoman, there were cries of indignation from the Catholic Press. Did those respectable Sydney people who supported the organisation realise that the Duchess, "one of London's fashionable proletariat dictators", was popularly known as a "Pink in pearls?" asked one editor. A series of lectures in Sydney arranged by the Catholic Evidence Guild was utilised to offset the "propaganda" of the Council for the Relief of Spanish Distress.

Debates were a popular medium for public controversy in the 1930s, and Catholics figured in many of them, crossing swords with the defenders of the Spanish Republicans. The most notable took place at Melbourne University, where the Campion Society was actively engaged in drumming up support for Franco. The first University debate of the year 1937 was on the topic, "That the

104. Catholic Press, 10 June 1937.

Spanish Government is the Ruin of Spain". The speakers for the affirmative were all prominent Campion men, while the opposition consisted of two communists and a communist sympathiser. The press reported that the debate was conducted "in a disturbed atmosphere". There were over one thousand present, and "all the floor space was occupied, while students suspended precariously from ventilators and skylights". Despite the "efforts of the interjectors, the presence of a Yarra Bank orator and an attempt by a woman to begin a fight with her neighbour", most of the speakers made themselves heard. By a show of hands the affirmative speakers received the support of the meeting. The Catholic press naturally made much of this victory. The affirmative side presented a carefully documented case, wrote one Catholic reporter, and built up an irrefutable indictment of the Spanish government. The opposition, however, failed to come to grips seriously with the subject. Another debate was staged in the Victorian city of Ballarat, as the culmination of an extended controversy in the local press over the merits of the contestants in Spain. The subject for this

106. The affirmative team consisted of B.A. Santamaria, S.J. Ingewersen and K.T. Kelly, the negative, Mrs. Vance Palmer, J.W. Legge and Dr. G.P. O'Day.


occasion was the question, "Is the present government the ruination of Spain?" Again, the affirmative speakers were members of the Campion Society from Melbourne. Catholic supporters of the Nationalists, apparently well-organised, arrived to fill the hall some time before the debate began, and when Loyalist supporters arrived later they had to be accommodated in another smaller room opening off the main hall. From this position they could barely hear the speakers and were unable to offer effective opposition to the Catholic bloc in the hall, who helped their speakers carry the night. Under the heading, "Rebel Partisans Pack Meeting at Ballarat", the Workers' Voice, reporting the incident, regretted the attitude of local Catholics towards those who were "doing their best to explain the real nature of Franco's attack on the Spanish people".  

109 A Melbourne Catholic editor saw the situation differently. Catholics who heard the inspiring vindication of their views on the war, he wrote, could go forth

"with a new pride in their Faith and a renewed eagerness to live with their Faith. They have caught the spirit of the last crusade".  


Several months earlier, one of the most prominent members of the Campion Society, B.A. Santamaria, had been the storm centre of a rowdy meeting at Melbourne University. The University Peace Group was discussing a proposal to assist the Spanish government with monetary contributions, when Santamaria put a motion to the meeting. This stated that, in view of the failure of the government of Spain to preserve religious toleration, the meeting should declare its solidarity with General Franco. Amid the ensuing uproar, several members of the Peace Group asked if Santamaria was a financial member, eligible to put forward such a motion. The latter, who quite evidently was not, immediately "tendered the subscription of one shilling to the treasurer", who declined to accept it. In spite of this the motion was carried by 79 votes to 4.\textsuperscript{111} This group subsequently sent Franco a cable of support.\textsuperscript{112} A month later there was an attempt by what the \textbf{Workers' Voice} characterised as "organised rowdyism by about forty adherents of the Catholic Truth Society" to break up a meeting of the Hawthorn branch of the Peoples Front Movement. The meeting, called to discuss the "truth about Spain", was

\textsuperscript{111.} \textit{Argus}, 8 October 1936.

\textsuperscript{112.} \textit{Ibid.}, 13 October 1936.
attended by about 300 people, and the attempted
disruption apparently was a failure.\textsuperscript{113} Another Campion
member, Kevin Kelly, later stated that he had challenged
a communist member of the People's Front to a debate
on this occasion, but had been refused. He also said
that no discussions or questions had been permitted at
this meeting.\textsuperscript{114} For members of the Campion Society
this was a busy time. They saw Spain as the epitome of
Catholicism, and refused to accept criticism of the
church or its part in Spanish history. They kept an
"atrocities count", and for each atrocity attributed to
Franco they could always find three for the Republicans.
They packed meetings which supported the Republicans,
and disrupted them with flour bombs, fire hoses and any
other weapon they found at hand. They did not take time
to examine the complete picture of events in Spain.\textsuperscript{115}

There were some attempts made to counteract Catholic
publicity in favour of the Nationalists. A well-known
labour leader, Lloyd Ross, edited a small pamphlet
entitled \textit{Catholics Speak on Spain}, which was published

\textsuperscript{113} \textit{Workers' Voice}, 9 November 1936.

\textsuperscript{114} \textit{Ibid.}, 24 March 1937.

\textsuperscript{115} These details were given by Niall Brennan, an early
member of the Campion Society, interview, 16 February
1972.
by the Victorian Council of the World Movement against War and Fascism. It was a collection of statements by prominent European Catholics, which proved, according to Ross' foreword, that the war "was not religious but political and economic". There is no indication of how well it sold or whether Catholics read it. The Catholic press did not deign to notice its publication. In July 1937 the Acting Consul for Spain, Senor Ramon Mas, wrote to police authorities in Sydney protesting against what he termed "Fascist propaganda". He enclosed a pamphlet, the publication of which, in his view, was contrary "to the social and civic laws" of the country. He asked that the publisher be restrained by "the measures prescribed by law". The police department reported that the pamphlet had been published in Adelaide for the Catholic Guild of Social Studies. Its contents, according to the report, consisted of "quotations from various overseas papers and utterances of leading officials of the Soviet Union" and the tone was pro-Franco and anti-communist. It did not appear that any state law had been infringed by its publication, and the prime minister's department confirmed that no commonwealth law was involved.

116. Lloyd Ross (ed.) *Catholics Speak on Spain*, Melbourne, N.D.P.
117. Prime Minister's Department, A461:J420/1, part 1, Commonwealth Archives, Canberra.
The Spanish Civil war, much more than the Ethiopian war, posed a dilemma for Catholics within the Labor movement. Catholic trade unionists were faced with the prospect of divided loyalties. The "official" church attitude was emphatically pro-Franco, whereas the unions appeared to be united in support of the Republican government in Spain. Catholic editors constantly warned Catholic unionists against being seduced by "Red propaganda", while there were many appeals from Labor sources for Catholics in the unions to disregard the sectarian issue in favour of class unity. The Melbourne Trades Hall Council, held in August and September 1936, publicly associated itself with ALP policy of support for the Republicans. There were immediate cries of condemnation from Catholic spokesmen at all levels. The Trades Hall Council had been ill-advised in its action, wrote one editor. The principles for which the labour movement stood in Australia were not those of the party which had "so cunningly secured governmental control in Spain". He saw "consequences tragic for Labor's success at election time" resulting from the decision. It was worth tens of thousands of votes to their political opponents at the next election.\textsuperscript{119} The editor of the

\textsuperscript{118} \textit{Advocate}, 17 September 1936.

\textsuperscript{119} \textit{Ibid.}, 24 September 1936.
Freeman's Journal also predicted loss of support at
election time as a result of Labor's position.\textsuperscript{120}
Archbishop Mannix was vocal in his condemnation. He
referred to the "misguided and misapplied sympathy"
of the Trades Hall representatives and their "official
paper", for "the people who are doing such terrible
things in Spain".\textsuperscript{121} Associated with the official state-
ment by the Trades Hall was an appeal to all affiliated
branches to contribute funds to help "the Spanish
workers". The Brisbane Catholic paper described the
appeal as a "campaign of (sic) funds to assist the
killers of priests and defilers of nuns".\textsuperscript{122} Bishop
Norton of Bathurst directed Catholics to oppose the
campaign and so "keep the Labor movement true to the
purposes for which it was founded".\textsuperscript{123} Bishop Foley of
Ballarat was much more forthright in his condemnation.
After the appeal had been made at a local meeting of the
Ballarat Trades Hall, he characterised it as an appeal
"for the purpose of subsidising savages". He quoted

\textsuperscript{120} Catholic Freeman's Journal, 17 September 1936.
\textsuperscript{121} Advocate, 17 September 1936.
\textsuperscript{122} Catholic Leader, 17 September 1936.
\textsuperscript{123} Catholic Freeman's Journal, 17 September 1936.
"records of atrocities compiled from impeccable sources", which included "butcheries, arson, sacrilege, and sheer wanton destruction of cathedrals, convents, schools, monasteries and sacred shrines". This, he declared, was what the Australian workers were being asked to support.124 Some editors saw Lyons' statement on neutrality, made at this time, as an answer to this appeal by the Trades Hall Council.125 Catholic pressure was probably the main cause of the poor response by unions to this fund. By October the Trades Hall had received only £165. Four months later the sum was £450, a figure which, according to the International Federation of Trade Unions, put Australian unionists among the least generous in the world, even less so than in Palestine. In March 1938, the president of the Australian Council of Trade Unions reported that only very small contributions were being received from the various unions.126

In early October, the secretary of the Trades Hall Council reported that that body was being subjected to "considerable criticism" as a result of its resolution

124. Argus, 6 October 1936.
125. Catholic Leader, Catholic Freeman's Journal, both 17 September 1936.
126. Andrews, Isolationism and Appeasement, 89.
to open the fund for "the relief of Spanish workers". He reminded unionists that the appeal was for all Spanish workers, and condemned the critics for using the issue to "divide the unions on the question of religion". The Catholic president of the Victorian branch of the Labor party, E.W. Peters, was among the critics. He expressed surprise at the action of the Ballarat Trades Hall in supporting the appeal because, in his view no one in Australia was in possession of sufficient facts to say with authority whether the present Spanish government should be supported or opposed. He added that neither the Victorian nor the federal executive of the Labor party had yet declared an official policy, and that the Australian labour movement should not ally itself with either fascism or communism. The Melbourne Trades Hall Council conducted an inquiry into the incident, finally accepting Peters' explanation that he was expressing his private views and that he did not intend to commit the Labor party. But they publicly dissociated themselves from his remarks. In the view of one editor, the incident

gave strong evidence of the "divergent views" and "clash of opinions" in the labour movement over the attitude to be adopted towards the Spanish Civil war.\textsuperscript{130} The extent of Catholic pressure within the ALP is difficult to gauge, but there are glimpses of it in this and other incidents reported by the press. In Adelaide, a Catholic ex-senator, J.J. Daly clashed with the president of the South Australian Trades and Labor Council, who was postulating support for the Republicans as the official trade union policy. Daly declared that he would do everything he could to prevent any organisation from using the Spanish situation "for spreading propaganda against the Divine Law". He later chaired a meeting organised by the Guild of Social Studies in support of Franco.\textsuperscript{131} In Broken Hill several Catholic unionists refused to accept the Barrier Industrial Council's support of the Republicans. The president of the council was a Catholic, and on several occasions he refused to chair meetings, while other Catholic members of the executive refused to speak. In the same city several Catholic unionists tried to break up a meeting of the Spanish

\textsuperscript{130} \textit{Age}, 9 and 10 October 1936.

\textsuperscript{131} \textit{Catholic Worker}, 8 July 1937.
Relief Committee. By the end of October 1936, union leader, Lloyd Ross, was deploring the effects of Catholic opposition in the labor movement. At first, he said, the unions had been united in opposing "the Rightists and their Fascist tendencies". Gradually many of them had grown lukewarm, mainly because of "Catholic propaganda". A large section of the unions was now viewing the conflict less as a struggle between right and left than as between Catholicism and atheism. Ross deplored this attitude because it seemed to him that a side issue was being allowed "to becloud the fundamental nature of the struggle". John Curtin, leader of the Labor Parliamentary party, was still trying desperately to achieve party unity, and needed to avoid all contentious issues. The parliamentary party therefore adopted a policy of isolationism and neutrality. Curtin told Lloyd Ross that he could not say anything against Franco, because such a statement would "split the party wide open". Calwell also was aware of the deep divisions in the party over the issue, and advocated silence as the only sensible policy in view of the coming

132. Treston, Australian Reaction to the Spanish Civil War, 155.

133. Moffat Diary, 23 October 1936, 586.

134. Lloyd Ross, interview, 22 June 1972.
elections in 1937. He advised Hugh Dalton, British Chancellor of the Exchequer who was visiting Australia, not to mention the Spanish situation because of the "great depth of feeling on each side" regarding the issue.  

135 Catholic editors continued periodically to warn Australian workers against allying themselves with "the element in Spain responsible for one of the most ferocious attacks on religion recorded in history".  

136 Catholic spokesmen, of course, linked the Republican government in Spain with communism, and criticisms of Labor's support for this side in the war were also warnings that communism was infecting the unions in Australia. These warnings were given an added sense of urgency by the relatively rapid spread of communism in the country during the 1930s. By 1936 prominent communists had taken control of such key unions as the Federated Ironworkers' Association, the Waterside Workers' Federation, the Miners' Federation, the Sheet Metal Workers' Union and the Seamen's Union.  

137 Spain soon became the rallying point for Catholic opposition to

135. Interview, 15 February 1972.


communism. Many viewed the struggle as one further step, after Russia and Mexico, in the communist attempt to dominate the world and destroy religion, especially Catholicism. 138 Supporters of the Nationalists saw the survival of Catholicism in Spain as dependent on a victory by Franco and his forces. 139 This interpretation was reinforced by the support given to the Republicans by the Australian Communist party. Here, they believed, was definite proof that the war was a struggle between communism and the forces that opposed that godless movement.

As the war progressed and the emotional issues became more dominant, all shades of grey merged into black and white. Expressed Catholic opinion on the war was almost unanimous. 140 The press and members of the hierarchy spoke as with one voice, and the public dissenter was very rare. The "Catholic Worker" who wrote to the *Age* calling on all workers in Australia to support the government in Spain quickly drew fire from prominent members of the Campion Society and a controversy

138. *e.g. Catholic Leader*, 15 October 1936; *Catholic Freeman's Journal*, 1 April 1937; *Advocate*, 9 September 1937; *Catholic Press*, 16 June 1938.

139. Santamaria, interview 15 February 1972.

140. Lloyd Ross, interview 22 June 1972.
ensued through the columns of the *Age*. "It appears I have developed a broadside attack from the Campion Society", this Catholic dissenter ruefully remarked.141 There was no discussion of the issues in the Catholic press as there was in the United States. The editors and feature writers controlled policy on Spain, and most Catholic papers had no "letters to the editor" column. A long and close association between pastor and people meant that in Australia there was no anti-clericalism. So, Australian Catholics failed to understand the part this factor played in the Spanish war. By September 1936, many religious orders and congregations in Australia who also had convents and monasteries in Spain began to receive reports of the death of their fellow religious and of the seizure and destruction of their property. The Jesuit priests, the Marist and De La Salle brothers and the Sacre Coeur and Loreto nuns were among those affected by the disorders in Spain. These orders had schools and parishes throughout Australia, and were a major influence in arousing Catholic feeling against the Loyalists.142 The Catholic press made the

141. *Age*, 29 September - 9 October 1936.
decision for Catholics and indicated that it was the only one. "Catholics have only one choice", wrote a Melbourne editor, "to oppose the church's enemies in Spain, a simple issue". In 1938, the editor of the Catholic Press devoted the whole of the editorial page of one issue to the question of Catholic support for the Nationalists. It was the natural and only position for anyone who opposed communism, he declared. Franco's victory in 1939 was celebrated by the Catholic press as a vindication of this view. With the fall of Barcelona, wrote one editor, Russia's plan for a Red Iberia as a base for communist expansion in Western Europe had failed forever. More importantly, the view of the war taken by the Catholic press had been proved correct. "The Catholic press was right. The secular press was wrong", he concluded triumphantly. Archbishop Gilroy saw the end of the war as an answer to the prayer of Catholics that God would crush the enemies of civilisation. That prayer, he said, had been answered in full.

143. Advocate, 16 October 1936.
144. Catholic Leader, 24 March 1938.
145. Advocate, 2 February 1939.
146. Catholic Freeman's Journal, 9 March 1939.
It is not possible to determine how widespread was support for Franco and the Nationalists among Australian Catholics generally. All the available evidence for such support concerns the Catholic press, the hierarchy and clergy, some union leaders and the members of Catholic action groups. It tells us nothing about the attitudes of the thousands of Catholics who made up the church congregations on Sundays, whose views are not recorded. One study of the subject supports the thesis that the percentage of Catholics in Australia favouring Franco would be much higher than the United States figure of thirty-nine percent. 147 Unfortunately, we have no polls for Australia to make a comparison. Lloyd Ross has stated that he did not know any Catholics in New South Wales who seriously opposed Franco. 148 Discussion with Catholics who lived through the period of the war leaves one with the impression that most Catholics accepted Franco as the deliverer of Catholic Spain and that divisions in Australian society over the war were deep and lasting. 149 The nature of Australian Catholicism,

147. Treston, 102. He bases this judgment on views expressed by a wide range of persons he interviewed.

148. Interview, 22 June 1972. The problem here is how many Catholics Ross actually knew, and whether they were unionists, clergy, politicians or business and professional men.

149. This latter view is not borne out by evidence. There was apparently little public interest in general. See Andrews, 86, 94.
with its strong clericalism and its lack of vocal dissent, would encourage wide acceptance of the views expressed by the official spokesmen of the church. Since these latter characterised the war in Spain solely in the terms of a conflict between christianity and communism, those Catholics who saw communism as the church's greatest enemy would range themselves on the side of Franco and the Nationalists. In the absence of concrete evidence, the historian can do no more than state that a considerable number of Australian Catholics apparently supported the Spanish rebels. These Catholics would have been confirmed in their view by the expressed opinions of a number of significant Catholic spokesmen, including members of the hierarchy and the clergy, Catholic press editors and certain other Catholics in public positions both in the church and in political and social life.

If it is difficult to determine how widespread among Catholics was support for Franco, it is equally difficult to discover the underlying reasons for such support as did exist. Expressed Catholic opinion in Australia related the war in Spain to communism in the same way as did American commentators. Catholics in both countries shared the belief that communism was the church's greatest enemy and that the Spanish war was the latest move in the Red advance from Russia. They
also believed that destruction of the church was the primary objective of communism wherever it spread. As in the United States, however, so in Australia the attitudes of Catholics were more sophisticated and complex than a blind acceptance of the "official" attitude of the church's leaders. Events in Mexico had given American Catholic opposition to communism a particular orientation. An anti-clerical government in close proximity to the United States had used its power to secularise society and this heightened the awareness of American Catholics to the inroads of communism as a force in government and the intellectual life of a nation. Australian Catholics' concern over the advance of the evil was related to their association with the ALP. This was the tradition political party of Catholics, but the activities of more radical groups within the union movement were regarded by Catholics in the 1930s as communist infiltration and influence in the unions. Their concern was increased when both the Australian and British Labor parties supported the Spanish Republicans. The editor of the Catholic Freeman's Journal continually deplored the attitude of British labour, which was tactless enough "to deliberately ignore" the fact that "practical Catholics" could have no sympathy with
communist movements. He believed that the British Labor Party had "lost its head over the Spanish situation", and worried about the effect this could have on the Australian labor movement. Some Catholic reaction to this attitude in Australian Labor has already been discussed. In view of the fact that most of Labor supported the Spanish Republicans, it is surprising that much more evidence of widespread Catholic opposition within the movement is not available, if such opposition existed. Its absence suggests that large numbers of Australian Catholic unionists and Labor men must have either remained neutral or tacitly supported the Republicans in accordance with general Labor policy.

Catholic feeling in Australia was probably more dependent on race and origin than on most other factors. Because of the predominantly Irish background of most Catholics, opposition to Britain was a continuing feature of Australian Catholicism. As in the case of the Ethiopian war, when some Catholics supported Mussolini

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151. Ibid., 22 March 1937; 20 August 1936; 28 January 1937.
152. See above, 104-108.
because Britain opposed him, so too, British policy in relation to the Spanish conflict would explain some pro-Franco sentiment among Catholics. Britain was seen as being far more concerned about the balance of power in the Mediterranean than about the rights and wrongs of the Spanish war. There were also accusations in the Catholic press of anti-Catholicism on the part of British supporters of the Republicans.154

The relatively new intellectual movement within the Australian church possibly influenced some of the pro-Nationalist sentiment. The young men who formed the Campion society in Melbourne and their counterparts in other cities were strongly influenced by the writings of such men as Belloc and Chesterton, as well as other European Catholic writers and philosophers. They were, as a result, not overly sympathetic with liberalism and modern democracy. Denys Jackson's authoritarian rightwing views were a major influence in Melbourne, where there is strong evidence of some anti-democratic feeling among Catholics of the period. The Melbourne Advocate continually stressed the need for good order in society, and described democracy as a slow and ponderous system,

154. Catholic Freeman's Journal, 3 February 1938; 3 December 1936; 22 April 1937; Catholic Press, 1 April 1937; 13 May 1937; Advocate, 16 September 1937.
inadequate to deal with the evil of Marxism. Spain's problems, according to this paper, stemmed from the attempts to establish a parliamentary system based on the principles of liberalism in a country as traditionally monarchist as Spain. Mussolini's government in Italy was held up as the model of an ordered and effective system, which other countries, including Spain, would do well to imitate. There was, also, in much of the rhetoric and writing of Australian Catholics, the same romantic attachment to Spain as the greatest Catholic civilisation, as was evident in the United States.

It does not appear that Australian Catholics felt "endangered" as did members of the American church. Although they were conscious of their "separateness" from the rest of Australians in certain respects, they seemed comfortably sure of their acceptance by the larger society. In the 1920s and 1930s, Catholics were moving along with the tide of Australian political and social life, not against it. There were no confrontations

155. Advocate, 22 October 1936; 1 April 1937. Of course, Jackson wrote for the paper and his views are everywhere evident.

156. Ibid., 27 February 1936.

157. Catholic Freeman's Journal, 1 April 1937; Advocate, 1 April 1937.

between church and society on any major issue. It is significant that when a priest, recently returned from overseas, injected a note of sectarianism into his statements, he received no reported response. After detailing outrages and atrocities allegedly committed in Spain by the Loyalists, Father W. Nichol of Kyogle made the surprising declaration that in Australia "hatred was rampant". Enemies of the church and certain factions in political life were fanning flames of religious intolerance, he said, and attempts were being made to stir up a religious campaign. 159 There is no evidence of any response to these accusations, nor can the historian find any confirmation of them in the press of the period. Support for Franco and the Nationalists by some Australian Catholics does not seem to have affected to any significant degree their relationship with the rest of society.

On the whole, Catholic lay opinion in the thirties was uninformed, adopting the stand of the rest of the community unless roused specifically to do otherwise by foreign events which had an emotional impact. The Spanish Civil war did rouse a certain number of Australian Catholics. This was partly due to their identification of

159. Sydney Morning Herald, 24 July 1937.
the Spanish Republicans with communism and partly to special factors within the Catholic community itself. Unless there was a conspiracy of silence on the part of the daily press, the researcher must conclude that intense reaction to the war was largely confined to the official church, and that many rank and file Catholics were not roused by the events in Spain.
PART 5

HITLER AND THE COMING OF WAR

(i) AN UNPLEASANT ALLY OR A DANGEROUS FOE?

When Franklin Roosevelt was sworn in as president of the United States on 4 March 1933, the Americans who had elected him to office did not expect their new leader to involve himself in international affairs, however grave that situation might be. Certainly, there were enough tensions on the international scene to cause concern. In the far east the League of Nations had suffered humiliation and discredit and the United States had lost a certain amount of prestige. In Europe efforts to substitute an improved system of collective security for the armed ascendancy of France and the Little Entente had failed and even that ascendancy had become precarious. Japan had defied the moral sentiment of the world and Germany was showing signs of a revival which was certain to threaten the post-war settlement in Europe. The economic collapse in the United States, however, tended to obscure events abroad and Americans paid little attention to the confused international situation as they concentrated on domestic programmes of
recovery. As a result, they took little notice of the advent of a new national leader in Europe, although his rise to power coincided with that of their new president. Adolf Hitler became chancellor of Germany only a few weeks before Roosevelt's inauguration in Washington.

In Germany during the decade of the twenties, the bitterness of national defeat, severe inflation and the effects of the depression combined to facilitate the emergence of a party which united in its ideology both nationalism and socialism. To all with grievances against the Weimar republic, except those minorities destined for destruction by the party, the National Socialists promised something. Revenge for the ignominious defeat in 1914-18 appealed to the military class, while relief from reparations was attractive to taxpayers. Promised full employment gave hope to millions of workers suffering the effects of both war and economic depression.¹ After 1929, the party rose suddenly and seemingly miraculously to prominence in the national sphere, and on 30 January 1933 Hitler, as leader of the strongest party in the Reichstag, became chancellor of the German republic.

With its leader's appointment to this office, National Socialism had arrived at its long sought goal of political power, even though temporally the party only shared the responsibility of government. Within a week the first measures intended to suppress any opposition had been passed. After the memorable Reichstag fire a month later, the nazi machinery increased its activities of legal suppression and extra-legal intimidation. New elections held at the beginning of March gave the nazis a sizable plurality over any other party, even though the final consolidation of power had to wait a little longer for the death of the German parliament. Within two years, Hitler had effectively liquidated all domestic opposition, instituted unprecedented regimentation, withdrawn Germany from the League of Nations and declared himself supreme ruler of a nation which rapidly became the strongest country in Europe.

The characteristic feature of the immediate American response to Hitler's accession to power was reticence. The relatively small amount of editorial comment and the reserve with which that comment was made were surprising, considering the eventual result of this event. There was an almost complete lack of realisation by Americans of
the dangers of nazism.\textsuperscript{2} A partial explanation for this reticence is the fact that relations between the two governments were friendly in the early 1930s. In foreign policy there were no acute problems between the United States and Germany when Roosevelt assumed office.\textsuperscript{3} Events in Germany, particularly the continuing persecution of both Jews and christians, caused relations between the two governments to cool between 1933 and 1936. Increasing preoccupation of the United States' administration with other events, including New Deal policies at home, and Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia and Japan's renewed activities in the Far East, caused some lessening of tension between Germany and the United States during 1936 and the first half of 1937. The American people were not united in opposition to nazism in these first years of Hitler's dictatorship. Various social groups responded in varying degrees of approval or hostility to events in Germany. Only organised labour maintained a consistently critical attitude to the nazi regime from its inception.


\textsuperscript{3} Memo from Ambassador Dieckhoff to the German Secretary of State on relations between the two countries, 29 July 1940, \textit{Documents on German Foreign Policy}, D, 10, 351-52.
The sudden and brutal extermination of the free labour movement in Germany aroused their indignation against Hitler's government and a deep sympathy for the once great labour organisations of the country. American intellectuals were disturbed by National Socialist attempts to stifle academic freedom in Germany, but were slow to condemn Hitler or his followers. American businessmen approved the efforts made by the nazis to stabilise the country's economy, and adopted a watchful waiting attitude. The vast majority of Americans remained unconcerned about the new government except when particular policies implemented by the nazis brought certain events in Germany to public notice. 4

It was not until the late 1930s that most American editors recognised that Hitler and his party posed a direct threat to the survival of the economically depleted and politically disoriented western democracies. After a period of dismay at his more ruthless policies in the first two years of his regime, editorial comment on Hitler was infrequent and confused until 1938. Despite the alarms of 1933 and 1934, such prominent American papers as the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times and the St.Louis Post-Dispatch almost neglected Hitler in 4. Day, 25, 26, 224.
their editorial columns until the end of 1937. This attitude changed when Hitler moved against Austria in March 1938, and without a shot being fired, added seven million Germans to the Reich and a territory of enormous strategic importance to his further plans. According to the German ambassador in Washington, "the incorporation of Austria aroused dismay" in the United States and led to a general hostility towards Germany "that could hardly have been chillier". The events relating to Czechoslovakia, the unprecedentedly violent persecution in Germany after the assassination of a German diplomat in Paris and Hitler's further territorial demands finally convinced the American people that Nazi Germany presented the gravest threat to world peace.

One of Hitler's cleverest political manoeuvres was the way he kept his potential opponents, both internal and external, off balance, by blowing first hot and then cold, by rattling the sabre and then talking of peace. This stood him in good stead when it came to his relations with


6. Dieckhoff to the State Secretary, 29 July 1940, Documents on German Foreign Policy, D, 10, 352.
the churches. In his first policy statement as chancellor in March 1933, Hitler promised to work for peaceful relations between church and state, and he thereafter soothed ruffled Christian feelings by his protestations of devotion to something he called "positive Christianity". This was a sort of domesticated Germanised version of Christianity, intended to prop up the Third Reich with the sanction of religion. It so confused and disorganised Christians in Germany that they split into quarrelling, mutually antagonistic groups. It is no wonder, then, that the same confusion plagued Christians in the United States as well, as they tried to understand what was Hitler's real attitude to Christianity.  

In Germany during the twenties and early thirties, the Catholic church had to determine its position towards a movement whose leaders were known to hold views hostile towards Christianity. This was not an easy assignment, and it is not surprising that the church authorities sometimes appeared confused and inconsistent in determining the proper course to pursue. A number of German bishops had forbidden membership of the National Socialist party.

by Catholics in the twenties because of its anti-Christian policies, and then showed a conciliatory attitude when challenged by the Nazis. Many bishops believed it might be possible to convert the movement into an ally against communism and left-wing radicalism. The annual conference of German bishops meeting in March 1933, accepted Hitler's declaration of friendly relations between church and state, withdrew their earlier prohibitions against membership in the Nazi party and admonished German Catholics to be loyal and obedient to the new regime. Unfortunately there was no confusion on the part of Hitler, who from the very beginning set out to destroy the independence and authority of the Catholic church in Germany. To accomplish this goal he sometimes used the diplomatic approach, as when the Reich government negotiated a concordat with the Vatican. At other times he relied on intimidation and terror. Regardless of the political tactics used for the particular occasion, Hitler's goal was never altered. He remained shrewdly aware to the end of his reign of the political risks involved in a head-on collision with the established churches, but their continued independence could only threaten the unanimity which his totalitarian regime
pursued passionately and relentlessly. 8

Throughout the twenties and early thirties, Pope Pius XI had undertaken the task of concluding concordats with the European states, many of them newly established. 9 Negotiations for a concordat with Germany had been carried on spasmodically since the appointment of Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli 10 as Papal Nuncio in Germany in 1920. Largely because he believed a strong Germany would be an effective bulwark against the spread of communism, Pius reopened the negotiations and the concordat was signed in July 1933. Public opinion generally regarded the event as a great diplomatic victory for Hitler, while many critics accused Pius of being pro-fascist and of intentionally helping the nazis to attain power. 11 The authoritarian pope was certainly unsympathetic towards liberal and democratic forms of government, but he did not have a very high regard for fascism, especially


9. Between 1925 and 1933, the Vatican signed concordats with Bavaria, Poland, Rumania, Lithuania, Czechoslovakia, Portugal, Italy, Austria and Germany. Peters, Nazi Germany and the Vatican, 32.

10. Afterwards Pope Pius XII.

11. Lewy, The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany, 57.
towards the end of his reign. Pius XI collaborated with Hitler (and other totalitarian leaders) because of his fear of communism and because these rulers were in power, not because he was attracted to the ideology upon which their regimes were based. A concordat with these governments at the very least provided a legal base for Vatican protests against the regimes' hostile measures.

During the six years from the signing of the concordat until the outbreak of war, relations between the Catholic church and the nazis followed a pattern of sporadic harassment and persecution, interspersed with intervals of peace. These last came at times when the nazi government needed Catholic goodwill, such as the Saar plebiscite and the Olympic Games of 1936.12 The wooing of support was invariably followed by a period of repression. After the Saar plebiscite, the nazis increased their pressure on the many Catholic social and religious organisations and the Catholic press. They followed this with a campaign of villification against religious orders for alleged violation of the country's foreign currency laws. In 1936 the government carried out a systematic campaign against Catholic schools and attempted to undermine the moral character of the Catholic

clergy by instituting the so-called "immorality trials". These trials charged members of religious orders with sexual perversity, which the nazi press covered in every lurid detail. Repression, arrests and intimidation of Catholics continued until the beginning of war in September 1939. It is clear that Hitler had remarkable success in dealing with both the Vatican and the Catholic church in Germany, regardless of how much one may wish to condemn him and his tactics. He accurately judged the limits of Catholic patience, and his technique of alternating terror with promises of concessions served the nazi cause well. The frequent nazi violations of the concordat confirm the fact that Hitler never intended to take that document seriously. He found it useful at times because it provided his government with a degree of respectability and nothing more. Faced with these conditions, the concordat could not possibly have provided an adequate defence for Catholic rights. Only very gradually and rather late did the majority of the German bishops realise that Hitler's regime was intent upon destroying the church. Even then they thought they could save the situation by protesting against violations of the concordat and combining

13. Lewy, 156.

these protests with affirmations of loyalty to the state. 15

The response of American Catholics to Hitler and the nazi movement differed little from that of most other Americans. They failed to understand the real nature of National Socialism, and the vacillating policy of the German hierarchy gave them no clear lead. The concordat between the Vatican and Italy had settled the differences between Pius and Mussolini in a relatively satisfactory manner, and American Catholics believed that the same would be true of that signed by Hitler. Catholic writers who discussed nazism looked on the troubles in Germany as part of a political process which would right things in the end. Conflicts between church and state in such countries as Russia, Mexico and Spain were far more important in Catholic thinking in the first half of the 1930s, and this fact tended to play down the problems in Germany. Finally, Hitler’s regime was clearly anti-communist, and in the eyes of many Catholics throughout the world, this considerably lessened its evil. 16

Particular events in Germany naturally caused shifts in

15. Lewy, The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany, 326.

expressed Catholic opinion in the United States. When Hitler first came to power, there was uncertainty and speculation in the American Catholic press about the role of the German Catholic Centre Party. Editors were, on the whole, willing to admit that some features of the nazi regime were distasteful, but most urged patience and were optimistic about German recovery under Hitler. A more confident attitude was evident after the signing of the concordat between the Vatican and the new German government in July 1933. Two years later, reports of trials of German Catholics and religious for alleged violation of the currency regulations of the country caused a significant change in American Catholic attitudes. However, it was not until the papal condemnation of Hitler and nazism in 1937 that all American Catholic spokesmen became united in their opposition to any significant degree. 17 The editors of the Catholic press were the first group in the church openly to criticise Hitler's regime, but even they were relatively slow in adopting this position. To a large extent, the initially favourable

17. By 1938, also, there was less persecution of the church in Spain and Franco was making considerable progress in gaining control of the country. Catholic spokesmen therefore began to give more attention to other world events.
attitude towards Hitler and his nazis in the Catholic press arose from the fact that the church was engaged in bitter conflicts in several countries with the lines clearly drawn before the nazi regime appeared. Since Hitler seemed to have the same enemies and often talked like an ally if not a friend, he was accepted by many Catholic spokesmen at face value and quite pragmatically. From the start, American Catholics placed the German situation in the wider context and complex judgments of the church and failed to look directly at naziism since other black spots on the world's map were obviously worse. 18

Although the United States refused to join the League of Nations when it was established, many Americans hoped that the new organisation would prove effective in safeguarding the Versailles settlement and in averting future aggression. By the middle of the 1930s, this hopeful attitude had largely disappeared, as Americans searched for a neutrality policy which would keep them separated from Europe's recurring problems. Hitler and his aggressive policies seemed to be the latest direct result of the Versailles treaty and of the failure of the League to aid those nations which had appealed to it for help. 19

All segments of American Christian opinion concurred in this view and saw the Versailles settlement in particular as largely responsible for Hitler's rise to power. Catholic writers had nothing but scorn to heap on the treaty, and denunciation of it was a continuing theme throughout the decade. In 1934 it was characterised by a Catholic journalist as the "one colossal blunder of modern statesmanship", with its supposition that "a great people could be metaphorically kept in jail". According to another, the treaty was responsible for the German demands for return of the Rhineland. In Catholic World, Gillis indulged in a bitter condemnation of those who had framed the treaty. Because of failure of these "stiff-shirted, frock-coated, top-hatted nincompoops masquerading as adepts of a recondite art", the allies had given Hitler his "stock-in-trade, his total assets, the source of his power, the cry Versailles". Without this "stupidist, most vengeful, most unenforceable treaty of peace ever written", concluded Gillis, Hitler would still have been "a cheap agitator, recognised as a

21. Commonweal, 2 November 1934, 42.
22. America, 4 April 1936, 608.
psychopathic case". Instead of trembling in his presence, men would be laughing at him. 23 Later, Gillis declared that the great sinner at Versailles had been Woodrow Wilson, who had been unfaithful to his own principles, and so helped to murder his own brain-child. 24 Another editor called the treaty "one of the foulest documents in human history". He, too, believed that the result of "having made Versailles a disreputable bargain counter rather than a peace table" was the rise to power of Hitler and the nazis. 25 While the Catholic press was unanimous in emphasizing the responsibility of the allies for Hitler and nazism, some editors singled out a special factor. This was the refusal of the governments of the allied countries to help the Catholic chancellor, Brüning, in his attempts to create a viable German government. The critics of nazism, wrote one of them, would have been in a much stronger position had they freely given Brüning what was now being extorted from them "by the Hitler terror". 26

Among Catholic writers the feeling was strong that

23. Catholic World, 143 (May 1936) 130.
24. Ibid., 148 (November 1938) 130.
25. Brooklyn Tablet, 19 March 1938.
26. Catholic World, 142 (August 1935) 630; 147 (February 1937) 518; America, 8 April 1933, 6; 26 March 1938, 590; Commonweal, 1 November 1935, 23.
Hitler and his party formed a major bulwark against communism. The statement by the editor of America is typical. While many might regret the abandonment of democracy for dictatorship, he wrote, it was well to recognise that modern dictators had "taken the wheel to save storm-tossed nations", and had succeeded wonderfully in preserving the traditions of national life.27 The Reich government naturally exploited the Vatican's fear of communism whenever possible. On a number of occasions the nazis reminded the pope of the common interest they both had in thwarting the spread of communism. During 1936, when the Spanish Civil war broke out, even more attention was devoted to the communist menace as a basis for German-Vatican collaboration.28 It was to be expected, then, that many American Catholics would sympathise with Germany as the champion in the struggle against communism.29 The editor of the Brooklyn Tablet was particularly strong in his assertions that Hitler had saved Germany from communism. Although he agreed

27. America, 3 June 1933, 197.

28. Peters, Nazi Germany and the Vatican, 308.

29. Dieckhoff commented on this attitude among American Catholics to the German Foreign Ministry, 22 November 1937, Documents on German Foreign Policy, D, 1, 647.
with other writers that Catholics must have reservations about certain aspects of nazi doctrines, he declared that under existing circumstances in Germany all energies had to converge on the primary aim of preventing chaos within the country, which would inevitably result if communism triumphed. Such a course might mean making temporary sacrifices of personal liberty and political conviction, a necessary evil in the war against marxism.  

The majority of Catholic editors and writers were slow to condemn or criticise events in Germany other than religious persecution, and most adopted an attitude of optimism. The signs seemed favourable enough to them for a complete restoration of a great nation, with all the noble ideals and lofty aspirations which for so long had placed Germany in the vanguard of modern progress. For those with doubts, attention was drawn to the comforting fact of the concordat which, while it did not imply Vatican approval of naziism, nevertheless indicated that the church believed it could defend its rights legally against any encroachments. It was not until several years later that American Catholics were willing to admit

that the "solemn pledges which Hitler gave the Holy See were violated before the ink was dry on the concordat". Commonweal was the only Catholic publication which openly criticised National Socialism from its inception. In 1933, when most other Catholic editors and writers were phrasing their comments very carefully, and in many cases giving tacit approval to the new government, this journal gave endorsement to the "pressing of a handkerchief... to one's nose" as a normal response to Nazi Germany. The editors asserted that the goal of nazism was the establishment of absolute power over the German nation, and referred contemptuously to Hitler's "Bad Boy Scouts". A year later they declared that they saw nothing ahead for Germany but the continuing deterioration of its economic and cultural life. God alone knew what the ultimate stage would be.

Once it became clear that Hitler, ignoring the concordat, was proceeding against the Catholic church in Germany, the tone of the Catholic press in the United States began gradually to change. Soon after the destruction of all existing non-nazi political parties and

33. Commonweal, 16 April 1938, 38.
34. Ibid., 5 April 1933, 623; 7 July 1933, 225; 18 August 1933, 376.
35. Ibid., 4 May 1934, 3.
trade unions, the National Socialists began to move against the extensive network of associations controlled by the church and against the press directly or indirectly under her sponsorship. This continued until 1938, by which time all opposition of this kind had been eliminated. This campaign was conducted concurrently with the government's efforts to bring the church into disrepute by means of the currency and morality trials of members of the clergy and religious orders. In 1936, renewed pressure brought to bear upon Catholic parents led to the liquidation of most confessional schools.36

The Catholic press in the United States became increasingly critical of Nazi Germany as these events unfolded, and by late 1935 many editors were viewing Hitler as the instigator of a new Kulterkampf even worse than the first.37 Germany was increasingly linked by them with Russia as encouraging the growth of paganism and even barbarism.38 Hitler's presence at the funeral of Nietzsche's sister was proof for one Catholic journalist that the party took its principles from the "mad, Christ-

36. Lewy, *The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany*, 115, 156.
hating German philosopher". In the training of the youth of Germany in nazi societies and camps, he wrote, the works of Nietzsche were used extensively. It was no wonder, therefore, that the Catholic bishops and leaders of the Protestant churches in the country should be so deeply concerned about the christian youth of Germany. By 1936 the editors of America considered the Hitler government as insane, satanic, and hostile to the principles that made civilised government possible. Men should learn from the experience of Germany, they wrote a year later, what happened when a nation allowed itself to succumb to the wiles of the totalitarian state.

"It may supply a modicum of bread for a time, but in return it demands the cession of all rights and makes the citizen a slave". In spite of abundant evidence that Hitler and the nazis were utterly opposed to Catholicism, American Catholic writers continued to express surprise at persecution of the church in Germany. "The Nazi attack on the church is surprising", wrote one in 1936, "as religious freedom is one of the planks of the party

40. America, 22 February 1936, 464; 4 July 1936, 290. This last denunciation, as was often the case, was coupled with condemnation of Mexico, Spain and Russia.
41. Ibid., 3 October 1937, 60.
platform." Since Fascist Italy had found a modus vivendi with the church, Germany should be able to do the same. But this would be possible only if the nazi government abandoned that part of its philosophy which transcended politics and invaded the domain of religion. 42 "Hitler is apparently committed to a policy of persecution from which he could not now withdraw even if he wished to retreat", remarked another. 43 A third editor believed that, in spite of all that had happened, the way was still open to Hitler to prevent "the inevitable clash between the church and his government", if he would refrain from his attempts to "crush the church into abject submission". 44 After 1935, Gillis of the Catholic World became one of Nazi Germany's most outspoken critics. No ancient or medieval tyranny, he believed, was ever as absolute as this "terror" which had penetrated the life of the whole nation with the refinement of a modern civilisation without leaving a gap. 45 "We are seeing in Germany a riot of unreason and the repudiation of a thousand years of culture", he declared. The nazis might wear modern coats and collars

42. Sign, 15 (July 1936) 706.
43. America, 5 December 1936, 204.
44. Brooklyn Tablet, 27 March 1937.
45. Catholic World, 142 (December 1935) 296.
and trousers and speak a civilised tongue, but they were as cruel as "naked Indians or gibbering Bushmen". In fact, they were more dangerous than savages, for they were savages with the equipment of civilisation. Many writers also began to question the validity of the idea that Hitler had saved Germany from communism. If the nazis were sincerely anti-communist, it was difficult to understand why they were opposing communism's greatest enemy, the Catholic church. Several contributors to Commonweal posed this question in the journal in 1935 and 1936. These doubts were confirmed editorially in 1937 when the managing editor George Shuster declared that the nazis' claim to be the great antagonist of bolshevism was a pose.

"I believe that except for a handful of bankers and great industrialists, the nazi party today gets more support from the bulk of former members of the communist party than from the bourgeois", he wrote. Germany was fond of setting itself up as a bulwark against bolshevism, wrote another Catholic journalist, but where was the line between Hitlerism and

47. Commonweal, 6 December 1935, 145; 8 May 1936, 36; 23 October 1936, 603.
48. Ibid., 10 September 1937, 453.
Stalinism now that God had been banished by each system? They were quite plainly the same pagan system under different names, since in both Russia and Germany the glorification of the state was achieved only by submerging the individual. One could only range the two countries side by side as "foes of the Faith" and "announce with a shock of new uniforms the return of the heathen". By 1938, America also finally rejected the idea of nazism as a bulwark against communism. Far from being the defence mechanism against that evil that it claimed to be, nazism actually had a considerable role in its fostering, wrote Talbot. The more communist unrest that Germany could find in a neighbouring country, the greater would be its excuse to interfere. Hitler's Germany, it would seem, had a considerable stake in continued communist agitation.

As criticism of the nazi state increased in the Catholic press, so did criticism of its leader. In the years immediately preceding the war, the typical reaction of Catholic editors was to hurl epithets at Hitler, an art which was most perfectly developed by Gillis in Catholic World. "Loud-mouthed, swashbuckling, sword-


rattling desperado", a "paranoic and homicidal maniac", who was the "most impudent liar and promise-breaker of modern times" are some of Gillis' descriptions of the German leader.51 "To me", he wrote at the time of the Rhineland crisis, "he is a cold-blooded murderer".52 If war came, the "one chief villain in the tragedy" would be Hitler.53 That the dictator was insane was practically a refrain in the editorial columns of America from 1934 onwards. When the idea was first expressed in the journal, the editors reported that the suggestion of Hitler's insanity had shocked and outraged some readers. In letters to the editors they declared that he was establishing an improved form of government in Germany, and that Hitler alone stood between christianity and a flood of atheism and barbarism.54

By 1937, America's editors were convinced that Hitler was insane. With a brain distorted by lust for power and wholly devoid of any regard for moral values, they wrote, he gave actuality to moral excesses and

51. Catholic World, 148 (November 1938) 131, 133.
52. Ibid., 143 (May 1936) 130.
53. Ibid., 148 (October 1938) 9.
54. America, 3 February 1934, 415; 21 July 1934, 339. These were two of the basic continuing reasons given by those Catholics who were more or less sympathetic to the nazi regime.
abnormalities which men of normal minds were apt to pronounce impossible.\textsuperscript{55} \textit{Commonweal} editors were less ready to dismiss Hitler as insane, and saw the chief danger in his ruthless determination to push through his policies at any cost. Led by his troopers, Germany and the nations following her were "goose-stepping toward chaos and night".\textsuperscript{56} After Hitler had occupied Austria, they warned that far too many people had refused to take the German dictator seriously enough. They deluded themselves into believing that he was little more than "a mountebank, a visionary, the tool of the army, the mouthpiece of Big Business in Germany", a dictator who would soon involve himself in a series of fatal blunders that would destroy him. But Hitler had made very few blunders since his advent to power, and he could not be restrained or defeated unless his enemies stopped fighting a straw man, and took the correct measure of their antagonist.\textsuperscript{57}

If Catholic journalists are to be believed, interest in the persecutions in Germany on the part of most American Catholics was very sparse indeed. In 1934, George Shuster

\begin{footnotes}
\item[55.] \textit{America}, 12 June 1937, 229; also 20 September 1938; 27 September 1938; 26 November 1938 for editorials on the same theme.
\item[56.] \textit{Commonweal}, 20 March 1936, 562.
\item[57.] \textit{Ibid.}, 25 March 1938, 290.
\end{footnotes}
expressed his disappointment in the American church for its lack of interest and sympathy for the church in Germany. Scanlan of the Brooklyn Tablet explained this indifference in terms of the growing horrors of modern wars and revolutions. The terrible events of the last great war, the "sanguinary revolution inaugurated by the Bolsheviks", and numerous "lesser events of a similar nature" had so dulled the perception of men to horrors, crimes and injustices that they failed to respond to the persecutions in Germany. 

"We cry out in horror and demand that Catholics in the United States and Catholics the world over fully recognise the satanic character of the Hitler band", wrote the editors of America. In mid-1936, Commonweal deplored the "prevalent lack of Catholic interest in the whole Nazi situation". Twelve months later Michael Williams reiterated that American Catholics, on the whole, were indifferent to what their fellow Catholics were suffering in Germany, and had little sympathy for or interest in the fate of Protestants and Jews under the

58. Commonweal, 29 June 1934, 234.
59. Brooklyn Tablet, 8 February 1936.
60. America, 4 July 1936, 290.
nazi regime. When Father Gillis wrote an editorial condemning Hitler's persecution of the Jews, he said, "I suppose I shall receive from certain pro-Fascists as well as from anti-Jews vigorous adverse comment upon this editorial". In fact, reserve and a healthy dose of scepticism characterised initial American Catholic reaction to the savage persecution of the German Jews. One editor declared that while he utterly condemned the anti-Semitism of the Hitler government, he thought that too many deliberate lies had been circulated in connection with the matter. Judgment on the issue should be withheld until all the facts and circumstances were known, in the opinion of a Jesuit writer. Scanlan expressed what almost amounted to envy at the success of the Jews in calling attention to their plight. Rumours and gossip from Germany were given prominent space in the daily press, he wrote, while "authenticated" stories of persecution of Catholics in Mexico were ignored. This latter complaint was to become the dominant theme in Catholic

63. Catholic World, 147 (September 1938) 646.
64. Commonweal, 5 April 1933, 620.
press reaction to accounts of Jewish persecution in Germany through the decade. Once the Spanish Civil war began, Catholic journals were filled with laments about the inordinate attention given to the German situation in comparison with the brief and "biased" reporting of Catholic persecution in Spain. This was attributed to Jewish control of the secular press. Nowhere in the American dailies were Jewish issues misrepresented, wrote one Catholic journalist. The Jews always received absolutely fair treatment, because newspaper proprietors knew from experience that the Jews meant business, and that they would "fight to the bitter end" with everything they had. Those papers which threw "verbal bombs" at Jews soon saw the results in retrenched advertising and decreased circulation. 67 Gillis of the Catholic World alone among Catholic editors made an unqualified statement of shock and dismay at the excesses of Hitler and the nazis against the Jews of Germany, and maintained this attitude throughout the years until the beginning of the war. 68 Michael Williams went so far as to assert that large numbers of American Catholics sympathised with the

67. John A. Toomey, S.J., America, 6 November 1937, 106; also 12 September 1936, 540; Ave Maria, 13 March 1937, 345.

68. Catholic World, 139 (April 1933) 109-110; 140 (April 1934) 131; 147 (September 1938) 641-4.
nazi ideology and approved of the persecution of the Jews. And as late as 1938, Scanlan could still register a protest about who should be prayed for when persecutions were in question. Reporting that the Federal Council of Churches in America and the National Conference of Jews and Christians had called on the churches of the country to observe a special day of prayer for victims of religious and racial persecution throughout the world, he felt constrained to make a distinction. Catholic bishops, he wrote, were asking the clergy and the laity to pray to God for "ALL innocent victims of Tyranny". One would expect that the first description would include all, but Scanlan did not think so. In a long, slightly hysterical special editorial, he referred once more to the persecution of Catholics in Russia, Mexico and Spain which, he alleged, had been ignored by the rest of the world. In his view, those who were stressing the situation in Germany were trying to involve the United States in a European war. A priest writing in 1939 described the kind of reasoning used by many Catholic writers and speakers when they.


70. "We Pray for ALL Victims of Persecution", *Brooklyn Tablet*, 19 November 1938.
considered Hitler's treatment of the Jews. They began with the fundamental assumption that the one great enemy of the church was communism. The enemies of communism's enemies must at the very least be allied with communism. Germany was fighting communism and she was also fighting the Jews. Therefore, the Jews, if not actually communists, must be in league with communism. One should not waste too much sympathy on them and should be wary of humanitarianism which enlisted the sympathies of the soft-hearted in order to trap them into supporting the communist cause. 71 This certainly was the argument used in an editorial in America in 1938. According to this, there was an alliance among international Jewry, international communism and international freemasonry, an alliance which was aimed at Catholicism. In response to pleas from American Jews for better understanding on the part of Catholics, the editors declared that the matter of Jewish affiliation with communism would have to be cleared up before such understanding would be possible. The impression, true or otherwise, was that Jews formed the backbone of the communist party. If more Jewish spokesmen declared their opposition to communism

71. Gerald Vann, O.P., "Jews Reds and Imbeciles", Catholic World, 149 (April 1939) 15. Vann made it clear he did not agree with these arguments.
and fewer Jews joined the ranks of the communists, the American people would, in their view, have a kindlier feeling toward the Jews. Given the quite strong anti-Semitic vein in American Catholicism in the 1930s, as well as the preoccupation of many Catholics with the spread of communism, this lack of sympathy for the Jews in Germany was a logical consequence.

There is little evidence of "official" protests against Hitler and his policies by members of the American hierarchy and other well-known church figures. Those which were made all date after the pope's condemnation of the nazi regime in 1937. The Vatican had been following events in Germany with increasing anxiety. The Holy See had made numerous protests over the systematic violations of the concordat by the Hitler government. In the spring of 1937, Pius finally made his grievances public in an encyclical letter that was smuggled into Germany, secretly printed and within a few days distributed by messenger to the clergy throughout the country. On 21 March the encyclical, Mit brennender Sorge, was read from the pulpits of all Catholic churches

72. America, 7 May 1938, 98.
73. See above, Part 2.
in Germany. Although the pope condemned the constant German violations of the concordat and the unchristian teachings and practices of National Socialism, the document was moderate in tone and it contained no outright condemnation of Hitler's government. Its publication was to some extent overshadowed by another encyclical, this time against atheistic communism, which appeared only five days later, but this official criticism encouraged Catholics throughout the world to condemn Hitler and the nazis.

The first response in the United States was a resolution adopted by the annual meeting of the hierarchy in 1937, sympathising with the persecuted church in Germany and assuring the German bishops of the prayers of American Catholics on their behalf. According to the German ambassador in Washington, this resolution was "full of hatred and ill-will" for the Germans. "I do not want to overestimate the Bishop's Conference and its resolutions", Dieckhoff wrote. But, he warned, events in Germany would necessarily have an effect on the twenty five million American Catholics who, regardless of whether they were of Irish, Italian, German or other descent, were "rather

74. Lewy, *The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany*, 156.
solidly united behind their church.\textsuperscript{75} One year later, after the shooting of a German official in Paris had sparked off savage reprisals against the Jews in Germany, the ambassador reported that the "Catholic Bishops' campaign" against Germany was being waged "still more bitterly than before".\textsuperscript{76}

There is almost no evidence of this "bitter" campaign. In comparison with the number of statements and protests about events in Spain by prominent Catholic spokesmen, those about Germany and the nazis are almost negligible. In May 1937, the publishers of a monthly religious journal wrote to Cardinal Hayes offering space in the journal for statements by the hierarchy on the German situation. They believed that the "German government's tactics of terrorism" could be checked, at least in some measure, by a united Catholic front in the United States. They could see no better way of manifesting this unanimous condemnation of nazi philosophy and policy than statements from as large a number as possible of members of the hierarchy.\textsuperscript{77}

\textsuperscript{75} Dieckhoff to the German Foreign Ministry, 22 November 1937, \textit{Documents on German Foreign Policy}, D, 1, 646. The substance of the bishops' statement as reported in the press does not bear out Dieckhoff's description as "full of hatred and ill-will".

\textsuperscript{76} Dieckhoff to the German Foreign Ministry, 14 November 1938, \textit{ibid.}, D, 4, 639.

\textsuperscript{77} Joseph Matt, editor of \textit{Wanderer}, to Hayes, 21 May 1937, Hayes Papers.
Hayes did not accept the invitation to condemn Hitler either in this case, or twelve months later when he gave a press conference. When questioned by reporters, he "declined to discuss Hitler", although he spoke freely of Franco and the events in Spain. On the subject of the Catholic church in Austria, he said only that if the nazis treated Catholics in that country as they were doing in Germany, then the Austrian church would suffer a similar fate. A New York layman sent a newspaper article describing the persecution of Jews in Vienna to Hayes later the same year. He wrote the cardinal that he believed the Catholic church should join with "all other civilised organisations and communities" in protest against such events. He deplored the "unfortunate effect of silence on the part of the officials of the Catholic church concerning conditions in Germany and Austria". That silence, he said, led Catholics to believe that the policy of the church was to ignore those conditions and that what was happening to minorities abroad was no concern of theirs. He ended with an appeal that the hierarchy give leadership on these important issues. The cleric who replied on behalf of Hayes (absent at that time from New York) took exception to the statement that there had been

78. New York Sun, 23 March 1938, clipping in the Hayes Papers, New York.
no protest from the "dignitaries of the Catholic church". He reminded the correspondent of the public pronouncements of the pope and declared that, far from being silent, many other church officials, not only in Europe but also in the United States, had publicly voiced their protests against the atrocities and persecutions committed in Germany.  

The most notable condemnation of Hitler in the United States church was that by Cardinal Mundelein of Chicago. At the quarterly conference of the diocesan clergy, the cardinal described Hitler as "an alien, an Austrian paper-hanger and a poor one at that", and condemned both the nazi regime and its persecution of the church.  

The official German reaction was immediate and angry. It was reported from Berlin the following day that the "government news service, the press and the radio" had launched a "bitter counter attack" against Mundelein. One German paper accused the cardinal of attacking the head of a foreign state "in the tone of a gangster in his home town", and most of the press, evidently convinced that the cardinal's statements represented the views of American Catholicism, demanded that the Vatican formally

79. George Schak to Hayes, 8 July 1938; Edward R. Gaffney to Schak, 11 July 1938, Hayes Papers.

80. New York Times, 19 May 1937. It is interesting that a German-American member of the hierarchy was Hitler's most outspoken critic.
rebuke him. 81 Dieckhoff made representation to the state department, but explained to his superiors that since Mundelein had no connection with the United States government, and therefore spoke as a private person, there was no case for making a formal protest to the government. He advised that the German government should not allow the incident to assume undue proportions, a warning which was not heeded. 82 Cardinal Pacelli, Vatican Secretary of State, was drawn into the controversy when the German ambassador in Rome demanded action by the Vatican. Pacelli told the Germans that he had little sympathy with their complaint because of the "malicious slander and defamation", the "disgraceful calumnies directed against the church, the hierarchy and religious" in the German press. The German reaction, he said, had given the incident, which otherwise would have "remained limited to very local effects", a world echo which had surprised even the speaker himself. The Holy See was all the more powerless to deal with the incident, concluded Pacelli, since Mundelein's statements about persecution of Catholics in Germany were concerned with facts which


82. Dieckhoff to the German Foreign Ministry, 20 May 1937, Documents on German Foreign Policy, D, I, 968-969.
were in substance, irrefutable. 83

Cardinal Mundelein seems to have caused a much
greater stir in Germany than in his own country.
Deploring the lack of interest and sympathy in the
United States for persecuted minorities under the nazi
regime, Michael Williams asked whether Mundelein's
words would change the situation. Would his name go
down in world history with the names of other Cardinals
such as Thomas Becket, Stephen Langton or Cardinal
Mercier, who had publicly championed the church against
tyranny? 84 If published statements indicate the effect
of the Chicago cardinal's criticism of Hitler, it was
very slight. Gillis dwelt on Hitler's reaction to the
event, rather than on praise of the American church
spokesman who had made the protest. 85 Patrick Scanlan
agreed with Gillis that the epithet "Austrian paper-
hanger" was harmless, but he, too, refrained from any
comment on Mundelein's stand. 86 The only other notable
reference to the affair was by a congressman, who felt

83. Pacelli to the German ambassador at the Vatican,
24 June 1937, ibid., 979.
84. Michael Williams, "Blood and Tears", Commonweal,
2 July 1937, 258.
86. Brooklyn Tablet, 22 May 1937.
impelled publicly to come to the defence of the

cardinal, whose honour and reputation had been attacked

because he

"called the attention of the world to this
orgy of persecutions and uttered some blatant
truths about the alien, paranoic Fuehrer, Adolf
Hitler, and his official propagandist, the
club-footed demagogue, Dr. Goebbels." 87

It was many months before any other member of the American
hierarchy was prepared to openly condemn the nazis and their
leader. Their reluctance in this respect is probably
partly explained by the attitude of a nervous Catholic
lady who wrote to Archbishop Curley. Late in 1938,
Curley had finally spoken strongly "against Hitler,
Goebbels and the whole crowd of persecutors of Jews and
Gentiles", 88 and his correspondent was filled with dismay
when she read his remarks. She reminded the archbishop
that Hitler had warned America that expressions of
sympathy for the Jews would only make matters worse for
them. She was sure, too, that Hitler would "seize upon
any derogatory remarks about himself by American Catholic
prelates" as an opportunity for reprisals against "the

87. William I. Sirovich, speech in the House of
Representatives, 10 June 1937, copy in Ryan Papers.

already tortured Catholic hierarchy in Germany and Austria. She considered the situation "too desperately serious" to run the risk of further infuriating the German dictator. 89 By this time, however, Catholic concern had begun to swing away from Spain, and was directed to the situation in Germany. It was no longer possible to believe or hope that Hitler was honouring the concordat of 1933, and the renewed persecution of Jews in November 1938 was too brutal to escape condemnation by any Christian, no matter how tainted with anti-Semitism he might be. "The rising tide of indignation of American Catholics over religious and racial persecution" was increasing, reported a diocesan weekly during that month. It found expression, continued the report, in "a great number of denunciatory addresses, delivered by distinguished prelates, clergy, educators, statesmen and professional men throughout the land". In all sections of the country, bishops were issuing pastoral letters, calling for prayers for people "lashed with the thong of despotic persecution". In particular, prayers were requested for the "bitterly oppressed Jewish minority in Nazi Germany". 90 Catholic protests over nazi persecution

89. Elizabeth Kite to Curley, 14 November 1938, ibid.
of the Jews were well received throughout the United States, wrote another editor. The spokesmen

"concurred in condemning the whole Hitler regime, not in a mad hysteria but in grim indignation against the atrocities visited upon the Jews in Germany". 91

One can only wish that the protests had begun much earlier, since the silence of Catholics on these issues inevitably strengthened the impression that the church was both pro-fascist and anti-Semitic.

There are some recorded instances of protests by Catholic laity against Hitler's policies, which began as early as 1935. That year the Catholic Students' Missionary Crusade sent a telegram, signed by Archbishops McNicholas of Cincinnati and Deckman of Dubuque to the German bishops who were meeting at Fulda. It protested the unjust restrictions which the German government had placed upon "the basic and inalienable liberties" of their fellow Catholic students and of all youth in Germany. 92

The Catholic War Veterans Executive, after expressing their indignation at Hitler's actions, resolved to notify their membership throughout the United States to refrain from travel through Germany and on German ships, and to


discourage all Catholics who might plan such travel in the future. 93 The Friends of Catholic Germany picketed the German consulate in New York City, carrying signs denouncing the tactics of the German government and its persecution of Catholics and Jews. 94 In St. Paul, the Catholic journal, Wanderer, called on all Catholics in the city to refuse to participate in a welcome to Dr. Hans Luther, German ambassador to the United States, on the occasion of his visit to the city. 95 In 1936, the Catholic Press Association closed its jubilee convention with a resolution of protest against the morality trials then taking place in Germany. They also condemned the German press agencies for concealing "the true state of the religious and racial persecution being carried on by the Nazi government". 96 German-American Catholics consistently voiced their disapproval of events and policies in Germany. Each year the members of the annual convention of the Catholic Central Verein of America, the principal German-American association, adopted resolutions

94. Catholic Worker, September 1935, 1.
95. NCWC News Service, 18 November 1935.
96. Ibid., 30 May 1936.
to this effect. In their view, the German government had "shattered the confidence of the world in its integrity and humanity, and in particular, the confidence of the American people". 97 The members of a society honouring St. Boniface, the apostle of Germany, listened to their secretary and editor of a German language Catholic weekly, Hans Dexl, protest with "deepest grief and loathing" against the "modern grave-diggers of Christian German culture", and the "enslavement of the souls of their religious and racial brethren". 98 In St. Paul, a city with a large German-American population, over 3000 representatives from every parish, took part in a public demonstration, protesting the persecutions in Germany. The meeting was addressed by the archbishop of St. Paul, and copies of the resolutions adopted were forwarded to Hull and to the German ambassador in the United States. 99

One general form of protest which caused some controversy among Catholics was that of opposition to American

97. Central-Blatt and Social Justice, 28 (September 1935) 189; also 29 (October 1936) 210; 30 (September 1937) 172.
98. Boston Pilot, 26 June 1937.
participation in the 1936 Olympic Games, which were held in Berlin. Commonweal was credited by several persons with having initiated Catholic participation in this protest. An official at the German embassy in Washington complained that anti-German Americans were "propagating the idea that events in Germany constituted an anti-religious campaign", thus gaining the support of religious groups, especially the Catholics. As evidence he pointed to the "latest edition of the journal Commonweal", which called upon Catholics to boycott the Olympics in Germany.\textsuperscript{100} In 1964 Shuster, who wrote the original article in the journal, said that the high-water mark of Commonweal's battle against totalitarianism was the plea that Catholics not participate in the 1936 Olympics in Germany.\textsuperscript{101} However, the editor of a less well-known Catholic journal had made the same point very strongly one month before the appearance of Shuster's appeal. In the October 1935 issue of Sign, the editor wrote that the Olympics would undoubtedly be turned into a means of propaganda, affording the nazis an opportunity to "impress foreigners with the

\textsuperscript{100} Charge d'Affaires at the German Embassy to the Foreign Ministry, 31 July 1935, Documents on German Foreign Policy, C, 4, 515.

\textsuperscript{101} Commonweal, 20 November 1964, 262.
greatness of the New Germany" and to convince the German people that the rest of the world felt nothing but admiration for the Nazis and a desire to co-operate with them. However, wrote the priest, if the American Olympic committee refused to participate, it would be extremely difficult for the Nazis to hide from the German people the disgust which Americans felt for their racial and religious persecutions. He saw Catholic participation in the games as "joining hands" with those who were "sworn enemies of their religion", who were persecuting German Catholics and vilifying the church. "We sincerely hope", he concluded, "that no American Catholic will either take part or be present, if these games are held in Berlin".\textsuperscript{102}

Shuster expressed the same sentiments in his article. The games, he said, were to "set the seal of approval upon the radically anti-Christian Nazi doctrine of youth". Catholic participation would be, in effect, "aiding and abetting an effort to destroy the Christian faith". It seemed to Shuster quite incredible that the American Catholic clergy would not "raise their voices against this new temptation of offer incense at the altar of Baal".\textsuperscript{103}

The journal published a selection of letters received in

\textsuperscript{102} \textit{Sign}, 15 (October 1935) 132.

\textsuperscript{103} \textit{Commonweal}, 8 November 1935, 41.
response to the article, which showed the division in Catholic opinion on the issue. Those who disagreed with non-participation argued that the Olympics had been planned long before Hitler came to power, and that they were being organised by an international committee, not by Germans alone. Another argument was that athletic teams from other countries would include Catholics, so the United States should not be different. According to Shuster, these letters revealed that there were many more pro-fascist and pro-nazi American Catholics among the journal's subscribers than it was pleasant to contemplate. A special editorial answered these objections, and declared that Commonweal's policy was to oppose by every means possible "the tragedy" of American Catholic participation in the coming Olympics in Berlin. In January 1936, Gillis of the Catholic World entered the controversy. There was much ado about the issue, he reported. There were "debates, formal and informal, mass meetings, resolutions pro and contra, and all in all, considerable hubbub over the matter". In his view, the

105. Ibid., 20 November 1964, 262.
question was simply whether American athletes were willing to compete with athletes chosen on a basis of political theory rather than on athletic achievement. After reminding his readers of nazi persecution of Catholics in general and Catholic athletic associations in particular, Gillis concluded,

"If I were an athlete I would consider myself a traitor to my convictions, not only as a sportsman but as a Catholic if I were to answer an invitation and perhaps accept a prize from a political regime that persecuted my church and my people".107

It would appear that little notice was taken of such protests and other Catholic spokesmen were silent on the issue. A group of New York journalists, including Michael Williams of Commonweal, prepared a statement for the press to counteract a current impression that only the Jews were interested in the question of American refusal to participate in the games. Before releasing the statement, they sought the support of influential Catholics, including Cardinal Hayes of New York.108 However, the only prominent Catholics whose signatures were included in the published version of the protest


were George Shuster and Father William Stanford, the
president of Villanova College in Pennsylvania.\textsuperscript{109}
Hayes had previously received a letter from Rabbi William
Malev of New York on the matter of the Olympics. The
Jewish leader asked for an announcement from the cardinal
that he was in favour of "refusing to hold the Olympic
Games in Berlin", and thus help to show that "the entire
civilised world" was unalterably opposed to the nazi
regime. Hayes' secretary replied to the rabbi that it
was contrary to the policy and practice of the cardinal
to engage in matters of this kind, and so the suggestion
could not be complied with.\textsuperscript{110} With the "official" church
unwilling to participate, and Catholic opinion on the
issue divided, Catholic support for the campaign of non-
participation was negligible. Shuster went so far as to
blame lack of Catholic support for the eventual failure
of the campaign.\textsuperscript{111}

In contrast to their hostile attitude towards the
entry into the United States of refugee Spanish children,\textsuperscript{112}

\textsuperscript{110} Malev to Hayes, 6 August 1935, Hayes to Malev,
8 August 1935, Hayes Papers.
\textsuperscript{111} \textit{Commonweal}, 20 November 1964, 262.
\textsuperscript{112} See above, 293–99.
Catholic spokesmen indicated a willingness to allow German refugees to find a home in the country, especially towards the end of the decade. As early as 1934, Shuster had urged American Catholics to make an unmistakable public expression of their sympathy with and interest in persecuted Germans, especially German Catholics. This, he said, could include such practical tasks as the re-settling of German Catholic refugees who could no longer live and work in Germany. 113 In 1936, delegates to the annual convention of the Catholic Central Verein of America expressed their concern for German Catholics who had fled to the United States. They resolved to investigate the situation of such people and to submit their findings, together with suggestions for aid, to the social welfare department of the NCWC. 114 The following year, the NCWC formally organised a Committee for Catholic Refugees from Germany, which proposed to raise funds to relieve the immediate material needs of refugees, in order to help them settle in other countries. It also aimed at enlisting the support of American Catholics by keeping them informed concerning the position of the church in Germany and the


needs of German Catholics. This committee prepared a report to be presented at the 1938 annual general meeting of the American hierarchy. This recommended that every member of the hierarchy assist at least ten refugees, either by personally sponsoring their entry into the country, or by suggesting prominent Catholic laymen in their dioceses who would do so. By March 1939, the committee found it necessary publicly to appeal for help in a task which had become increasingly difficult. The two largest groups appealing for entry into the United States were members of religious orders who were no longer allowed to conduct schools in Germany, and Catholic laity who had "some taint" of Jewish blood or were married to Jews, and hence were subject to the racial laws operating under the nazis. Cardinal Mundelein supported a senate resolution introduced by Senator Wagner, which would allow the admission into the United States of ten thousand refugee children "of all creeds" from countries which were controlled by Germany. According to the cardinal, these children had done no wrong, and in providing a sanctuary where they could "grow up in the ways of peace and walk

116. NCWC News Service, 14 October 1938.
117. Commonweal, 17 March 1939, 562. According to one report, 35,000 religious in Germany had appealed for help. ibid., 559.
in the paths of righteousness", Americans would help not only the refugees but themselves.\textsuperscript{118} In spite of these indications of official support for proposals to aid refugees, American Catholics apparently did not respond generously. The editor of \textit{Commonweal} protested against the "spirit of intolerance and selfishness" which although ready to express "proper and just indignation" when religious were slain in one country, were not willing to do anything to help religious who were forced to leave another country.\textsuperscript{119} Some Catholics raised objections against admitting any more foreigners to the United States, which was itself suffering from depression and unemployment. Many of those trying to get in were probably communists and radicals, who would foment discontent. "Conditions here are deplorable", wrote one such Catholic. "We ought to be shipping those aliens back to their beloved Fatherland instead of opening our gates to them".\textsuperscript{120} Others did not realise, or simply refused to realise that all refugees were not Jews. They seemed to have no concern about aiding anyone except Catholics. Even the chairman

\textsuperscript{118} \textit{New World}, 28 April 1939.

\textsuperscript{119} \textit{Commonweal}, 31 March 1939, 618.

\textsuperscript{120} Letter to the editor, \textit{Brooklyn Tablet}, 23 April 1938.
of the Committee for Catholic Refugees viewed the matter in this light. He urged that Christian Germans, both Catholic and Protestant, be helped to enter the United States, otherwise the quotas would be filled with Jews.\footnote{121} Not even Catholic Jews were universally acceptable. "It is with profound humiliation and shame", wrote one Catholic journalist, "that we sometimes hear Americans and Catholics say positively that we should not help certain German Catholic refugees because they are driven from their country by reason of their Jewish blood".\footnote{122}

From 1938 onwards there was an increasing concentration on European events in the American Catholic press. This was partly due to the growing criticism of Hitler and his government by Catholic leaders in the United States, as well as to a lessening emphasis on the war in Spain where Franco was gaining control. In spite of this, Catholic editors gave much less attention to such events as the Anschluss and Munich than the daily press editors. This is surprising in the case of Austria, because this was a predominantly Catholic country and both Dollfus and Schuschnigg had professed to be endeavouring to apply Catholic principles in government. The emphasis in

\footnote{121} H.E. Froelicher, letter to the editor, \textit{Brooklyn Tablet}, 16 April 1938.

\footnote{122} \textit{Commonweal}, 31 March 1939, 618.
Catholic press discussions of the Anschluss was, therefore, on the implications of the event for Austrian Catholics. "In Memoriam" was the title given to an editorial on the subject in one journal, while a second editor entitled his comment "Austria Infelix". The editors of both the Brooklyn Tablet and America discerned anti-Catholicism in Hitler's move against Austria. Anti-Catholicism, the former argued, had led to the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary at the end of the first World War. The chickens of the Treaty of Versailles were now coming home to roost. Anschluss was a kind of punishment for the break-up of Austria-Hungary because it was Catholic. This move had laid the country open to future Prussianisation. As well, the whole imbroglio was a result of communism. Only after Stalin had sent his emissaries of hate and intrigue into Germany did the nazi revolution take place. When the Austrians voted overwhelmingly for union with Germany, this editor consoled himself with the thought that the greatly increased numbers of Catholics in the Reich might lead to

123. Commonweal, 4 March 1938, 505.
125. Brooklyn Tablet, 19 March 1938; America, 12 March 1938, 540.
an improvement in their treatment. Even as late as this, there seemed little real understanding in the American church of the extent of Hitler's opposition to christianity and especially Catholicism. More realistic was the editorial comment in Sign. There was little reason to suppose that the nazi persecution of Catholics (as well as of Jews and socialists) would not extend into Austria. He recorded various events, including the arrest of members of the hierarchy and the seizure of the Catholic press offices in the country, which indicated clearly the coming persecution. This writer also pointed out that Hitler's success in Austria was likely to embolden him for further seizures of territory. 

Talbot in America branded Anschluss as an act of aggression, and declared that it would have been better for Austria to die rather than submit to the iron heel of Hitler. The death of Austria, in his opinion, had not been universally mourned. Nazi anti-Catholicism found strange echoes in socialist bitterness within the nation's boundaries, in jibes at Austria's "clericals" from fascist ranks south of the Alps, in masonic circles among the great western powers who were not altogether displeased.

126. Brooklyn Tablet, 16 April 1938.
127. Sign, 17 (April 1938) 516.
that a nation should perish which too definitely acknowledged God and Christ. 128 Father Gillis thought the annexation of Austria was the most daring move Hitler had so far made and urged the pope to speak out plainly against the dictator's aggressions. As the priest surveyed the diplomatic scene after Austria, he saw nothing but confusion. 129 Another writer put a large share of the blame for confusion on the "blundering, procrastinating policies of Great Britain and France". If the attitude recently shown towards Austria was taken as a criterion of the zeal of western democracies to fulfil their pledges and obligations he wrote, Hitler would soon enter Prague as easily as he had entered Vienna. 130

Comment on Austria quickly disappeared from the Catholic press, in spite of obvious moves by the nazis to eliminate all opposition there, including the Catholic church. In July, Talbot referred to certain reported events in the country as the beginning of the suppression of minorities, and begged prayers for the people of

128. America, 26 March 1938, 578.

129. Catholic World, 147 (April 1938) 104-5; 147 (June 1938) 257-63.

"that unhappy country". 131 In October, when members of
the American hierarchy held their annual meeting in
Washington, they sent a message to the bishops of Austria,
extending to them "profound sympathy in their hour of
bitter sorrow". They applauded the actions of Cardinal
Innitzer of Vienna, who opposed the nazis, and character-
ised him as "standing before the whole world, an
incontestable witness to righteousness and a valiant
spokesman". 132 This is the only recorded statement on
the fate of Austria by spokesmen of the American church,
other than journal editors. Beyond this was silence.
American Catholic criticism of German aggression was
negligible, and Austria was absorbed into the Reich
without a protesting American Catholic voice being raised.

The dispute over the German claims to Czechoslovakia
did not arouse significantly more comment or opposition
from Catholics than did the Anschluss. The two main
themes in what was written in Catholic journals were
praise for Chamberlain and his success in obtaining a
reprieve from war, and the belief that Czechoslovakia was
not worth going to war for, especially since the United
States really had no possible reason to involve herself

131. America, 23 July 1938, 373.
132. NCWC News Service, 29 October 1938.
in Europe's quarrels. Some diocesan weeklies seemed almost unaware of the crisis, and commented briefly once or twice on the situation.\textsuperscript{133} The belief that Czechoslovakia was not a real nation was for most editors sufficient justification for approving the settlement at Munich. It was seen as an "illegitimate child of the post-war treaties", a "conglomeration of nationalities" united under a single name.\textsuperscript{134} Since it was an artificial creation, Hitler's claim that it had been constituted without regard for racial and other groups was valid. Further, the Czech government was not innocent of having persecuted the Sudeten minority and that minority's plea for autonomy was not without merit.\textsuperscript{135} Some editors saw the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia as a defeat for both the communists and the masons.

"The fact that Prague is headquarters for the Grand Orient and for the Comintern, as well as the prime source of munitions for 'Loyalist' Spain, may help to explain some of the sympathy lavished on this country", wrote one.\textsuperscript{136} Talbot declared that war over the Sudeten

\textsuperscript{133} e.g. \textit{Boston Pilot} commented only twice during the crisis, and \textit{Michigan Catholic} only once.

\textsuperscript{134} \textit{Sign}, 17 (June 1938) 646; \textit{Brooklyn Tablet}, 17 September 1938.

\textsuperscript{135} \textit{Catholic Worker}, October 1938; \textit{America}, 8 October 1938, 2.

\textsuperscript{136} \textit{Sign}, 18 (October 1938) 133; also \textit{Brooklyn Tablet}, 17 September 1938.
issue would have been unjust. The extent of Hitler's aggression, though menacing and sufficient to arouse the most intense anger, was not sufficient in his view to justify a resort to arms on the part of any nation. Czechoslovakia had to suffer in order that Europe might be saved.\textsuperscript{137} The editors of Catholic Worker also considered that war over the small European nation would be unjust. They saw the Munich settlement as an answer to prayer, in spite of the less than pure motivation of those who had reached it.\textsuperscript{138} Those editors who approved the settlement were loud in their praise of Chamberlain as the architect of peace. He was a dauntless and relentless champion of peace,\textsuperscript{139} who had exhausted every means of compromise in order to avert the conflict.\textsuperscript{140} He had "inherited the international crimes of Balfour, Lloyd George and the rest", but he had continuously fixed his gaze on peace.\textsuperscript{141}

Only two Catholic journals opposed the Munich settlement. Gillis called it a "covenant with hell", and

\textsuperscript{137} \textit{America}, 8 October 1938, 2-3.  
\textsuperscript{138} \textit{Catholic Worker}, October 1938.  
\textsuperscript{139} \textit{Brooklyn Tablet}, 1 October 1938.  
\textsuperscript{140} \textit{America}, 8 October 1938, 3.  
\textsuperscript{141} \textit{Brooklyn Tablet}, 1 October 1938.
scorned Hitler's claim that he was advancing the cause of self-determination by absorbing the Sudetens into Germany. In the "humiliation of England and France, and in a lesser degree of America at Munich", he could see no occasion for the distribution of medals. Not praise but blame was in order, and there was plenty of blame to go around. To Hitler went the lion's share as the

"loud-mouthed, swashbuckling, sword rattling, utterly reckless desperado who was quite willing to give the coup de grace to a badly wounded civilisation"

After Hitler came Mussolini, "who didn't lift a finger or whisper a word to dissuade the mad Austrian", until Chamberlain and Roosevelt flattered his vanity by asking him to intervene at the last moment. The editors of Commonweal, while crediting Britain and France with an honest effort to avert war, declared that in fact, war had merely been postponed, not averted. It would take a more naive group than the British Tories to feel they had appeased Hitler or settled the problem of fascist expansion. No treaty then standing was worth much more than the ribbons and seals that decorated it. It was George

143. Commonweal, 14 October 1938, 625.
Shuster who most bitterly denounced the settlement at Munich. He coupled his denunciation with a scathing indictment of the British Tory government. The taste of gall and wormwood was in everyone's mouth, he wrote. He saw the agreement as a "ghastly bargain", and detested seeing "brutality wrapped up in some of the most beautiful words" civilisation had saved from an evil century - peace, justice, honour. The Germans would never have marched into Bohemia had Britain and France made it clear that it would have meant war. But, Shuster accused, British Tories from the beginning had aided and abetted Hitler, seeing him as their natural ally against "all upsurgeance of labor and other ills".\[144\]

On this issue as in the case of Austria, there was silence from official Catholic spokesmen other than the press editors and journalists. When Germany finally absorbed the remaining Czechoslovakian territory into the Reich in March 1939, even these latter had nothing to say. Charles Fenwick, president of the Catholic Association for International Peace, wrote on this occasion to Sumner Welles, then Acting Secretary of State, commending his statement in condemnation of Germany's action. But he made it clear that his views were

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144. George Shuster, "Mr. Chamberlain's Dove", *Commonweal*, 21 October 1938, 666.
personal, and that he was not speaking on behalf of the Association. While it lasted, the controversy over Czechoslovakia aroused general indignation in the United States, largely because of the fear of war. When it was all over, there was a feeling of relief that war had been averted. In many quarters, however, this feeling was tinged with regret for the submission of the democracies under threat and anger because of the abandonment of the Czechs and this further surrender to Hitler. Recorded Catholic opinion gives little indication of Catholic participation in these attitudes. In spite of events at Munich and Hitler's subsequent failure to keep the agreement, Catholics apparently did not realise fully the threat Germany posed to the world. The early months of 1939 were a period of renewed interest in Spain, as Franco moved victoriously to the end of his campaign, and European events ceased to be the central concern of Catholics. According to one editorial comment, typical of most Catholic press views during the first half of 1939, Americans had enough to do at home without troubling about Hitler. He wrote:

145. Fenwick to Sumner Welles, 21 March 1939, Department of State, 711.00/1311, National Archives.
"Instead of concerning ourselves about prosperity abroad, let us glance at our empty factories, and at our streets crowded with millions of men vainly seeking a means of sustenance that is not mendicancy. Charity begins at home." 147

Catholic writers did trouble themselves, however, about the possibility of an Anglo-Russian alliance, because this would place the foremost communist country in the ranks of those with whom the United States presumably would ally herself in the event of war. In 1914 the presence of Tsarist Russia in the Allied camp had been an embarrassment to Allied supporters, including Catholics, in the United States. In the new European conflict, an alliance with Soviet Russia would possibly prove even more disturbing in light of continuous Catholic accusations against Russia as the instigator of religious persecution not only at home, but more especially in Mexico and Spain. 148 In the case of such an alliance, wrote a Catholic journalist, American Catholics would be faced with a problem "of tremendous moment". If they were conscripted for military service in such a war, the question would immediately arise as to whether they were bound in conscience to refuse to take

147. Editorial, "Our Own Business", America, 1 April 1939, 614.

part. Allied success would inevitably further the cause of Russia, a country which was violently opposed to all that Catholics held most valuable in life.\textsuperscript{149} The editor of \textit{Sign}, who campaigned vigorously against the agreement throughout the months of negotiation in 1939, recorded that Catholics would find it "morally reprehensible to participate in a war on the side of the Soviets". He reported that Bishop John Duffy of Buffalo had expressed the Catholic mind on the matter when he declared that if the United States were manoeuvred into a war and had atheistic Russia as an ally, he would tell American Catholic youth not to join such a conflict.\textsuperscript{150} The same writer insisted that Russia would be of little help to Britain and France in a war of attack on Germany's eastern front. The morale of both the army and the Russian people was reportedly extremely low, due to the purges which had resulted in thousands of deaths, "including the flower of the Soviet army and navy". But much more importantly, in spite of all the sham and democracy with which it was concealed, Russia was directed both in its domestic and its foreign policy by marxian concepts.

\textsuperscript{149} Thomas E. Davitt, "Can We Ally with Russia in Case of War?" \textit{America}, 1 April 1939, 605.

\textsuperscript{150} \textit{Sign}, 18 (January 1939) 645,
Nothing would suit them better than the outbreak of a "great imperialist war" which they believed would be the first step towards the inauguration of a general communist era. 151

There was general rejoicing in the Catholic press when the alliance was avoided. The most common attitude was that two scoundrels had joined forces in the Soviet-Nazi Pact, and that Russia was now shown up in her true colours. There were also demands that those who had been so vociferously denouncing the nazis should now also condemn Russia. Was there any reason for

"the Anti-Nazi Leagues, the Rabbi Wises, the Nations, the politicians in Washington, the radio-broadcasters and the whole gamut of seeming one-track minds" to be silent any longer on communism and Russia? 152

According to one editor, those supporters of Russia who classed themselves as "intellectuals" and "liberals" were in a particularly invidious position. In the midst of their "fervent denunciations of Hitlerism and laudations of Sovietism as the great foe of Nazism", they suddenly were confronted with the spectacle of the two totalitarian regimes, both enemies of religion, clasping each other in

151. Sign, 19 (August 1939) 6.
152. Brooklyn Tablet, 26 August 1939.
friendship. The alliance was seen as completely vindicating the Catholic opposition to Russia. Much had been written, said one editor, in the Catholic press and elsewhere, of the common ground on which these two totalitarian governments of Russia and Germany stood. The alliance verified the fact that the government of Russia was not democratic, but "blood brother to Nazism", and equally untrustworthy and vile. Individually Russia and Germany were pretty appalling; combined they could really show the world something, in the view of another editor. All the "unbearably self-righteous twaddle" of the intellectuals about socialist democracy being the great defence against fascism and dictatorship should fall pretty flat as the two systems blended together. Catholics, like most other Americans, were strongly opposed to any United States' participation in the war which began in early September, only a few days after the agreement between Germany and Russia. But they were less unhappy about supporting Britain and her allies than they would have been had Russia been included among those allies. The Soviet-Nazi Pact had released them from a

154. Sign, 19 (October 1939) 130.
155. Commonweal, 1 September 1939, 425.
pressing moral dilemma.

Throughout the decade of the thirties, Catholics had supported the general American search for a satisfactory form of neutrality legislation which would prevent United States participation in any future world conflict. Catholic spokesmen, and in particular the Catholic press, were almost unanimously isolationist and they maintained this attitude right up to the outbreak of war in September 1939. In 1935 Gillis in Catholic World advocated extension of the existing embargo law to cover loans and credits, while the editors of America urged the broadening of the definition of munitions to include anything that could be used in making war. In the early months of 1936 they argued at length in favour of making any embargo mandatory, not discretionary. In their view, to trade with belligerents and expect to keep out of war was like swimming to the edge of Niagara in the expectation of getting back safely to the shore. The same journal strongly opposed any increased spending on rearmament by the United States. The president was setting

156. Catholic World, 142 (February 1936) 517.


a wrong standard, it was argued, when he said that as other nations increased their armaments, America must keep pace with them. Rather, the policy of preparing for war to preserve the peace should be replaced by the principle that nations which did not arm themselves for war did not go to war. The Brooklyn Tablet made non-involvement with Europe into a virtual crusade. Two themes emerged clearly from the continual editorial comment on the topic. One was a profound distrust of Europe and its crafty leadership whose propaganda and beguiling words threatened to lead the United States to destruction. The other was the conviction that the movement toward war was part of a widespread communist plot to gain world domination. In Scanlan's view, Hitler seemed to have little to do with the prevailing European tension. Some of his policies must be condemned, but America's proper work was at home, not policing the world. It was foolish to imagine that Germany would attack the United States, and to think of Hitler as a menace to the country was absurd. Other editors also expressed the "conspiracy" view of the coming war. "Powerful international and

159. Ibid., 2 May 1936, 73-74.
160. Brooklyn Tablet, 4 December 1937; 19 March 1938; 24 September 1938.
domestic forces are at work to push the United States into the coming armed clash between Nazism and Soviet Russia", wrote one.\textsuperscript{161} America must stubbornly isolate herself from the European masterminds, agreed Talbot, and resolutely refuse to be "cajoled or backed into the conflict".\textsuperscript{162} A third declared,

"Our resistance to war propaganda is being worn down by the constant assertion, in season and out of season, that if war breaks out in Europe it will be impossible for us to keep out of it".\textsuperscript{163}

As the European situation worsened, the Catholic press became more insistent in its calls for strict neutrality. Americans had burned their fingers once by being drawn into an overseas war, and should not allow themselves to fall into the same error again.\textsuperscript{164} "We seek no colonial expansion", wrote Talbot,

"... we are not interlinked in security pacts, nor involved in the heritage of grudges and revenge. Nevertheless, we are in constant danger of being drawn into the boiling pot of European politics."\textsuperscript{165}

There were indignant denials that the United States was

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\textsuperscript{161} \textit{Michigan Catholic}, 9 February 1939.
\textsuperscript{162} \textit{America}, 5 March 1938, 516-17; 24 September 1938, 589.
\textsuperscript{163} \textit{Sign}, 18 (April 1939) 517.
\textsuperscript{164} \textit{Ibid}, 18 (October 1938) 133; \textit{Commonweal}, 4 November 1938, 31.
\textsuperscript{165} \textit{America}, 5 March 1938, 517.
\end{flushleft}
in any way obliged to come to the aid of England and France. Catholic writers rejected particularly that this was a call to aid "democracies", since it appeared that "Red Russia" was an ally of those two countries. There were also denials that a war in Europe at this time would be a war of ideologies, another war to save democracy. It would not be a fight of justice against injustice, of white against black. It was part of a struggle for political and economic dominance, with consequent military advantages in eastern and south eastern Europe. It was better understood in terms of essential war supplies, or of pounds and francs, marks and lire than in terms of ideals or high principles. Commonweal was the only major Catholic publication which did not advocate an inflexible neutrality policy. Its editors were no more eager than other American Catholics for the United States to become involved in a European war, but they believed that the nation had international responsibilities which it could not fulfil by retreating into isolation. These responsibilities were all the more significant since Europe and the United States shared the

166. Sign, 17 (November 1937) 196; also ibid., 18 (April 1939) 516; Michigan Catholic, 9 February 1939; America, 1 April 1939, 614; see also above, 470-73.

167. Sign, 18 (May 1939) 590; Brooklyn Tablet, 18 March 1939; America, 11 February 1939, 445; 22 April 1939, 37.
very marrow of civilisation.\textsuperscript{168} In 1936, when most other Catholic writers were demanding mandatory neutrality, Williams warned of the danger of eliminating a flexibility which might possibly prove salutary in some instances. Political platforms pledging non-interference or non-participation would not necessarily keep the United States safe and sound in its own happy isolation. The physical isolation of the country could not prevent it from being involved should war begin in Europe. It would be nothing but "monstrous national selfishness" for America to retreat into a state of moral and spiritual isolation.\textsuperscript{169}

By the end of 1937, \textit{Commonweal} was expressing agreement with the editorial view of the \textit{New York Times}, which urged a policy of co-operation with other democratic nations. A policy of strict neutrality, it was argued, would do little to solve the fundamental political and economic problems of the world. Unless some positive co-operative effort was made in this direction, the drift to war would continue, and the United States would be unable to avoid the terrible consequences of that war.\textsuperscript{170} In a special editorial discussing opposition to this viewpoint, Williams

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{168} \textit{Commonweal}, 5 April 1935.
\item \textsuperscript{169} \textit{Ibid.}, 1 July 1936, 334; 23 October 1936, 600.
\item \textsuperscript{170} \textit{Ibid.}, 17 December 1937, 201.
\end{itemize}
rejected the "fallacious notion" that Europe could only be regarded as permanently divided into two hostile camps. Americans were too prone, for example, to regard the Rome-Berlin axis as an enduring alliance that neither concessions, blandishments nor threats could possibly weaken. Something could be done in the field of international relations, he believed, to uproot the menace of both communism and fascism, and the United States could play an honorable and effective role in that enterprise. 171 At the same time, Commonweal argued against rearmament in the United States, believing that such a policy would inevitably lead the country into war. Co-operation should not extend to the use of force. 172 By 1939, the editors had adopted a policy of provisional isolationism, which seemed to them to be the immediately workable policy. America's duty, as they saw it, was twofold, to do everything in its power to keep out of a conflict and to do prudently what it would to keep others from fighting. 173 By the outbreak of the war, therefore, all the American Catholic press was in agreement that the United States should not become involved. The general attitude was

171. Ibid., 7 January 1938, 281-82.

172. Ibid., 4 November 1938, 31; 3 March 1939, 505; 30 June 1939, 246.

173. Ibid., 17 February 1939, 452; 31 March 1939, 618.
that Europe's problems were no business of the Americans, and they were consistently admonished. "Let's keep our hearts warm and our heads cool." 174

This position of non-involvement was not based on pacifism. Real pacifism was much more rare among Catholics than among Protestants, and some Catholic writers even saw pacifism as unchristian. The Catholic World was one of the leaders in the Catholic press in demanding that the United States stay out of war, but its editor, Father Gillis, was anything but a pacifist. Early in the decade when pacifist sentiment was strong among Protestants, Gillis argued against the idea that no Christian could be a soldier. In his view, extreme pacifism was likely to bring war, not peace, and anarchy in place of law and order. 175 In 1936 when the European situation seemed likely to result in war, he declared that the only real danger to the peace of Europe came from militant pacifists who were ready to plunge the continent into catastrophe for the sake of preserving peace through enforcing the decrees of the League of Nations. 176 According to the editor of America, education should portray war as a senseless, brutal way of settling

175. Catholic World, 140 (July 1934) 385-89.
176. Ibid., 143 (June 1936) 273.
disputes between states. But under no circumstances should Catholic children be led to believe that Don John of Austria, David or Joan of Arc were engaged in morally evil activities when they led their troops in defence of ideals which represented more to their peoples than did life itself. 177 However, Talbot was not ready to sanction any war which might occur. Each one must be judged as a separate entity. 178 Commonweal, while not adopting a pacifist attitude, expressed sympathy for conscientious objectors, and endorsed Pax, an organisation of Catholic pacifists. The editors expressed the hope that Pax would be successful in encouraging those who sincerely intended to refuse to fight in the next war, however speciously it might be advertised to them at the time. 179 The only Catholic publication which adopted an unqualified pacifist position was the Catholic Worker. Its editors announced in 1936 that it based its pacifism upon the belief that no modern war could possibly meet the traditional Catholic requirements for a just war. The church, they said, presented a stronger case for conscientious objection than

178. Ibid., 2 September 1939, 494.
any other group in society.\textsuperscript{180} Three years later, when war seemed imminent, the \textit{Worker} declared that in the event of war, it would refuse to support the United States.

"We will not countenance the commission of an evil act by our country. We feel it our duty to refuse to support such a war and to urge all others to refuse to support it".\textsuperscript{181}

\textit{Catholic Worker} was not the only journal to doubt the possibility of a just war under the modern conditions of warfare. Although Talbot of \textit{America} argued that there was a possibility that circumstances would justify a particular war, he did not believe they were present in August 1939. The title of "just war" could not be applied to a war in which the United States might enter in defence of the real or alleged rights of any European power.\textsuperscript{182} Although earlier in the decade the editors of \textit{Commonweal} had argued that the doctrine of the just war was "at once traditional, progressive and sound",\textsuperscript{183} they seemed doubtful about the justice of the war in Europe when it finally began. They quoted the words of \textit{Osservatore Romano},

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\textsuperscript{180} \textit{Catholic Worker}, 3 (April 1936); 4 (May 1936).  \\
\textsuperscript{181} \textit{Ibid.}, 6 (February 1939) 2.  \\
\textsuperscript{182} \textit{America}, 19 August 1939, 436; also 10 September 1938, 590.  \\
\textsuperscript{183} \textit{Commonweal}, 26 April 1935, 721.
\end{flushleft}
the official Vatican newspaper, stating that there was a "clear disproportion" between the causes of the actual dispute and the consequences of the impending war. This negated one of the main conditions for a just war in traditional Catholic theology. 184

There is little indication that the general body of Catholic laity participated in the controversy about war to any significant degree. Discussing his membership of the Catholic Association for International Peace, the Jesuit author John La Farge recalled that in the thirties most Catholics, even Catholic scholars, had little knowledge of the "important body of doctrine that already existed in the church on the subject of peace and international relations". The members of the Association accepted the doctrine of a just war, disapproved of the policy of aggression and were "for peace but not for pacifism". They worked to "acquaint the Catholic public with some of this material" and to "stimulate the colleges and universities to research and to encourage discussion". 185

There is no way of discovering the success or failure of their attempts in this direction. In 1936, the editor of a Catholic monthly, The Christian Front, had discussed the

185. La Farge, The Manner is Ordinary, 250-51.
possibility of war, and called for conscientious objection on the part of Catholics. He demanded an eductive campaign to inform Americans that the true Catholic mind regarded modern war as "a source of illimitable evil, and most probably waged for an unjust cause". 186 Some months later, the same editor wrote personally to Roosevelt, telling him that many Catholics believed that a just war was hardly probable, and that in case of an unjust war Catholics could not support it. 187 Not until a few months before war finally began did prominent Catholics publicly condemn war and American participation in a future war. By the end of April 1939, several members of the hierarchy, including Cardinal O'Connell of Boston and Archbishop Curley of Baltimore had

"spoken out in ringing tones and demanded that the United States mind its own business, give an example of peace and above all avoid any alliance which would recognise world atheism". 188

Father Joseph Thorning also demanded American isolation from "European strife", and especially from any association with Russia. "We are not interested in forming a war-time alliance with Joseph Stalin and his blood-stained


188. *Brooklyn Tablet*, 29 April 1939.
Commissars", he said. Catholic organisations, including the Catholic Daughters of America and the Catholic Radical Alliance, adopted resolutions demanding non-involvement, and forwarded their views to members of the government. Most Catholics shared in the strong isolationist mood of Americans right up to the outbreak of war.

The response of American Catholics to the rise of Hitler and subsequent events in Germany is in striking contrast to their intense partisanship and involvement in the Spanish Civil War. Persecution of the church was no less real in Germany than in Spain. But American Catholic spokesmen faced the problem of convincing many Catholics that a serious crisis did exist in the German church. The writer who entitled his article "The Nazi Persecutors Break No Bones, Shed No Blood", gave one reason for this lack of response. It was easy to understand burning churches and murdered priests and religious. Hitler's opposition to the church was much more subtle and less visible. "This bloodless warfare is shrouded in silence", wrote an American Catholic layman

189. Our Sunday Visitor, 7 May 1939.
190. Brooklyn Tablet, 16 April 1939; 8 July 1939; 15 July 1939; Central-Blatt and Social Justice, 31 (September 1939) 173.
191. America, 15 October 1938, 30. The author remained anonymous.
who frequently visited Germany. The editor of America pointed out that because it was a silent persecution, it was likely to be more fatal than one which dragged its victims to the scaffold. The church in Germany, unlike that in Spain, seemed to be intact. It still had its bishops and priests, its churches and its religious houses, even its money and property. Such a gradual despoliation could not arouse the same indignation among Catholic onlookers as did the very evident material destruction of the church in Spain.

Another reason for the difference in response was that the Spanish Civil war could be presented as a straightforward struggle between Catholicism and communism, the Catholic's enemy par excellence, however oversimplified and distorted such a picture might be. In Germany, on the contrary, the struggle was between the church and a government which claimed to be an opponent of communism. If the American Catholic accepted the premise that the enemy of his enemy was his friend, then he would find himself in the paradoxical position of accepting as an ally a


193. Ibid., 4 December 1937, 205.

man who was persecuting the church.\footnote{195} In this respect, too, the war in Spain cast its long shadow over the problem of nazism. Large numbers of Catholics had committed themselves wholly to the cause of Franco, whom they regarded as the saviour of religion against the "Red Menace". They were then asked to take a stand against Hitler, who had helped their Spanish hero to victory.\footnote{196} Rather than trying to work out all the confusing nuances of the situation, American Catholics probably found it easier to close their eyes to what was going on in Germany, and to focus attention on a much clearer struggle. Communism still remained the church's most dangerous enemy in the view of many Catholics, and fascism, the German version as well as the Italian, came a very poor second. The very fact that nazism was not held in such dread, wrote a Catholic a few years later, was evidence of its seductive power. For ten Catholics who might have read the papal encyclical against communism, there probably was only one who had read the equally important condemnation of nazism, issued by Pius XI only five days before. The latter was generally ignored at the very time when it

\footnote{195. Murphy, \textit{The American Christian Press and Pre-War Hitler's Germany}, 143.}

\footnote{196. McMahon, \textit{A Catholic Looks at the World}, 103.}
should have been heeded by Catholics everywhere.
Communism was a clear-cut materialistic system and its
opposition to christianity was evident from the beginning.
But nazism concealed for a considerable time its
fundamental antagonism to christianity.¹⁹⁷ The church
had made an effort to co-exist with nazism, something it
had never done with communism. The attempt had failed
almost completely, but many Catholic spokesmen clung to
a forlorn hope that it would save the church in Germany
long after there was any possibility of its doing so.
It was only natural then, for the average Catholic to
conclude that while fascism and nazism had come evil
features, as systems they were not totally evil. This
attitude also gave rise, as war came closer, to grave
fears of an alliance with Russia. American Catholics did
not want to ally themselves with communism against any
other system, and so were constrained to argue that
nazism was not so great an evil as communism.¹⁹⁸ The
Catholic press also played its part in the Catholic attitude
to Hitler and his policies. The Spanish Civil war was
featured in most journals and diocesan weeklies almost
to the exclusion of any other world events. This continued

¹⁹⁷ McMahon, 102.
¹⁹⁸ NCWC News Service, 28 August 1939.
through 1937 and 1938, when Hitler was effecting some of his most aggressive policies as well as bitter persecution of christians and Jews. Those same Catholic editors who complained about the lack of understanding and appreciation on the part of American Catholics regarding the situation in Germany may well have contributed to that misunderstanding. While it perhaps would be saying too much to assert that any of the journals were pro-fascist, they not infrequently attacked the anti-fascism of other Americans. In April 1939, Father Gillis penned a long indictment of the Catholic press for its consistent, loud outcries against communism and its almost total silence in regard to nazism and fascism. It appeared, he said, that the editors hated not tyranny as such but only anti-Catholic tyranny. "They didn't care what happened so long as it didn't happen to us", he declared. If the clergy and Catholic press everywhere had emulated the courage of the pope and his refusal to compromise his defence of the truth, the church would not then be desperately explaining that she was not fascist. By the time Catholic editors and writers fully realised the threat nazism represented to Catholicism, attitudes had been too

199. Murphy, 143.

deeply ingrained to change quickly. Hitler could not be transformed into a villain overnight. Nor did members of the hierarchy or other Catholic spokesmen help to clarify the issues. There was no public criticism by them of Hitler or nazism until late in 1937, and only when war seemed inevitable in the early months of 1939 did a significant number of such persons express strong views on events in Germany.

Above all, Catholics shared in the strong isolationism of most other Americans in the thirties. Although Roosevelt and members of the State Department might have been working for some time to counteract the isolationist sentiment in the United States, it was still very strong in the months preceding the outbreak of war, and intensified as the possibility of war increased. In an article published in the English Catholic Herald on the eve of the war, Monsignor Fulton Sheen cited "a tendency towards isolation" as one of the main attitudes of American Catholics in relation to the international situation. How could earnest and sincere members of an international religious body by so blind to the threat of nazism to culture and to their own religion? asked a Catholic writer.

201. The Charge d'Affaires in the United States to the German Foreign Ministry, 17 May 1939, Documents on German Foreign Policy, D, 6, 526.

He blamed the "articulate Catholic body as a whole", the "educators, the editors and the clergy of high and low estate" for being neutral or hostile toward the national policy "in one of the gravest crises in human history". He listed a number of reasons for Catholic isolationism. These included the obvious factors of opposition to communism and preoccupation with events in Spain. A small minority of Catholics confused peace with pacifism, because they had forgotten that peace is order ruled by justice, and that order can be restored at times only by drastic means. Some Catholics had dwelt so long on the evils in American life that they had become blind to the enormous good worth preserving. Why act so resolutely to save a culture, they argued, if that culture bore so many wounds? The anti-British factor was present, but was not as strong as it previously had been among Americans. The Irish Catholics who were opposed to war were swayed quite as much by the "traditional isolationism of the American mind as by the Cromwellian outrages of the seventeenth century". Perhaps most significantly, most Catholics chose isolationism because they opposed "any and all attempts to reestablish international law on the basis of collective security

203. McMahon, A Catholic Looks at the World, 100.
guaranteed by an international covenant.\textsuperscript{204} In this respect, national selfishness was as much in evidence among Catholics as among other groups in society, who refused to acknowledge United States responsibility for world and especially European peace. The editors of \textit{Commonweal} might assert that the modern world is too interdependent to make American isolation possible,\textsuperscript{205} but very few other Catholic journalists supported this view.\textsuperscript{206} Among Catholics of the United States there existed a strong provincialism of mind which refused to recognise the moral, political and economic interdependence of the world community. This provincialism preached aloofness from the affairs of Europe and renounced all responsibility for anything that happened beyond their national and oceanic boundaries.\textsuperscript{207} Catholics were thus slower than most other Americans to realise the intrinsic evil of nazism and the threat Hitler posed to world peace, but shared with them a

\textsuperscript{204} \textit{Ibid.}, 77, 101-103.

\textsuperscript{205} \textit{Commonweal}, 22 September 1939, 485.

\textsuperscript{206} e.g. \textit{America}, 8 October 1938, 3; 11 February 1939, 445; \textit{Sign}, 18 (April 1939) 516; 19 (August 1939) 4; \textit{Brooklyn Tablet}, 18 March 1939.

\textsuperscript{207} Kurt F. Reinhardt, \textit{The Commonwealth of the Nations and the Papacy}, (Milwaukee 1942) 6.
determination not to be drawn into the "toils of European ambition, rivalship, interest, humor or caprice". 208
(II) LOYAL SUBJECTS OF HIS MAJESTY THE KING

Between the two world wars, little attention was given by politicians or the public to Australia's foreign policy. To most Australian statesmen foreign policy was equivalent to intra-imperial policy, and despite some criticism from certain groups in the society, Britain's leadership in the field of foreign affairs was not questioned. Australia's geographical isolation, her strong economic ties with Britain, the homogeneity of her small population and her lack of industrial and military power made it appear almost ridiculous to discuss the desirability of an independent Australian foreign policy. Australian politicians, including Prime Minister Lyons, emphasised the unity of the Empire and Commonwealth, which largely depended on a common foreign policy. While they increasingly stressed the need for mutual consultations, they did not envisage an independent Australian policy, or even an Australian regional policy within the general framework of the commonwealth.¹ Lack of public criticism of such a policy

was considered by a contemporary observer as largely
due to apathy. Living as they did in "a quiet back-
water of world affairs", it was hard for most Australians
to become really agitated about the political relations
of nations which were little more to them than the
subjects of newspaper reports. Many who were privately
critical were deterred from voicing their opinions by
the prevailing attitude of regarding criticism of
British policy as savouring of disloyalty. Underlying
the whole attitude of Australians to international
affairs, wrote another, was a signal belief in the
essential purity of British political motive and a
complete trust in the competence of British diplomacy
to deal with any situation.

The differences between Labor and non-Labor govern-
ments on foreign policy during this period were matters
of emphasis rather than principle. Non-Labor groups in
Australia had always been more friendly towards Britain
and the empire than their opponents. Imperial ties
were to them the symbol and guarantee of the British way
of life. Labor's hostility to conscription, its opposition
to anything that smacked of militarism and its vocal

2. A.G. Colley, "Australia, Great Britain and the League",
Australian Quarterly, 10 (June 1938) 51.
3. J.C.G. Kevin, Some Australians Take Stock, 211.
opposition to British imperialism were regarded by its opponents as dangerous to the continuation of imperial ties.\textsuperscript{4} The aftermath of the first world war and the bitterness of the conscription campaigns forced Labor leaders throughout the twenties and thirties to adopt isolationism as the only viable policy for a movement comprising so many differing ideological groups. They also opposed automatic acceptance of British policy, and insisted on Australia's full independence.\textsuperscript{5} In the interests of party unity, Labor leader John Curtin had played down foreign affairs during the Ethiopian and Spanish Civil wars. Real development of Labor interest in foreign affairs only occurred at the time of German aggression in Europe in 1938 and 1939, when the argument over the war in Spain had turned into one over the policy to be adopted towards an armed and aggressive Germany.\textsuperscript{6}

Catholics adopted the isolationism of the Labor party, but they even more enthusiastically endorsed the anti-British and anti-imperial stance in regard to foreign policy. Australian-Irish Catholics had a long tradition

\textsuperscript{4} Fred Alexander, \textit{Australia Since Federation}, 118; Wolfsen, 71-72.

\textsuperscript{5} "Australia: the League and Sanctions", \textit{Round Table}, 26 (March 1936) 397. See above, 115ff. for a discussion of the composition of the ALP at this time.

\textsuperscript{6} Andrews, 111.
of opposition to Britain, and articulate Catholic opinion throughout the thirties called insistently for a revolt against passive acceptance of Britain's lead in foreign affairs. The federal government should cease hushing Australia's alarms about the possibility of war by "assuring it very sweetly" that the members of the British government knew what they were doing, wrote one editor in 1936.7 "The foreign policy of England is not the foreign policy of the Empire", declared another. "Downing Street is no longer able to commit the dominions to militant action without the consent of the dominion authorities".8

When an Australian historian, S.H. Roberts, stated publicly in 1937, that in view of the European situation, it was urgent that Australia take an active part in the formulation of empire foreign policy, he was warmly applauded by the Catholic Freeman's Journal. The editor deplored the "furtiveness" of the Australian government on questions of defence and foreign involvements, which suggested that its imperialism was much deeper and its surrender to the British cabinet more complete than even its bitterest political enemies suggested.9 The policy of "up to the

hilt with Britain" accepted by the federal government, wrote a Melbourne editor after the Munich crisis, was not a policy of wise security but one of folly. Through it Australians were liable to find themselves, solely because of their connection with Britain, involved in hostilities in which the national interest was only remotely concerned, if concerned at all.¹⁰ Similar demands that Australia pursue an independent foreign policy which would keep the country free of involvement in England's wars continued in the Catholic press until the two countries finally entered the war in September 1939. It is in this framework of dissent from the prevailing official foreign policy attitudes and a strong isolationism that the reactions of Australian Catholics to the rise of Hitler and to his subsequent domestic and foreign policies must be examined.

As early as 1932, some sections of the Catholic press were viewing the rise of Hitler with dismay. The terrorism and violence employed by his followers was not pleasant to contemplate, and one editor feared a persecution of the church if the nazis could get into power and remain there.¹¹ The press comments during 1933 concentrated largely on the


¹¹. Catholic Leader, 11 August 1932; Advocate, 12 January 1933.
ruthless methods used by the party in its advance to power. The "strong and unmistakable reassertion of German militarism" appeared to be threatening the peace of the world.\textsuperscript{12} Australian Catholic writers did not blame the Treaty of Versailles for Hitler's rise to the same extent as did the American Catholic press. Jackson did accuse the allies of enslaving Germany to the "power of international finance", and believed that the National Socialist movement resulted from the "desperate misery" this caused in the country. However this point was not emphasised by other editors.\textsuperscript{13} Little notice was given to attacks on the Jews by the nazis, and one Sydney editor defended Hitler as the leader needed in Germany at that time.\textsuperscript{14} The concordat between Germany and the Vatican also soothed Catholic fears in Australia as it did in the United States. The news of the agreement was extremely welcome, wrote a contributor to the Brisbane Catholic paper, and would lead Catholics to view the nazi regime with at least benevolent neutrality.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{12} Advocate, 9, 16 March 1933; Catholic Press, 16 March 1933.

\textsuperscript{13} Advocate, 19 October 1933. The general Australian reaction to the Treaty of Versailles was very different from that of Americans.

\textsuperscript{14} Catholic Press, 20 July 1933.

\textsuperscript{15} A.S. Hegerty, "The Church in Germany", Catholic Leader, 27 July 1933.
Hitler's guarantees for the freedom of the church were taken at their face value, and the early moves against Catholics were excused as being carried out without his sanction.\textsuperscript{16} Hitler's alleged Catholicism was stressed, in order to show that reports of difficulties between himself and the church were exaggerated. A young German teacher who lived in Melbourne visited Germany in 1933 and reported on her return that Catholicism was flourishing in the country. Catholics were numerous, she said, and very solid in the faith.\textsuperscript{17} By 1934 it was clear that Hitler had no intention of honouring his agreement with the Vatican, but Catholic editors in Australia blamed the party rather than Hitler for breaches of the concordat. These, they said, were related to the struggle for political control between conflicting groups within the nazi ranks.\textsuperscript{18} Although Hitler had declared the inviolability of the rights of the church in Germany, wrote one editor, strong forces within and behind the National Socialist organisation were determined to alienate especially the youth of Germany from allegiance to religion.\textsuperscript{19} In spite of continuing reports of attacks

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{16} Catholic Leader, 18 May 1933; 8 November 1933.
\item\textsuperscript{17} Advocate, 5 October 1933.
\item\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 8 March 1934; Catholic Freeman's Journal, 5 May 1934.
\item\textsuperscript{19} Catholic Leader, 28 June 1934.
\end{itemize}
on various organisations in Germany, the Catholic press refused to condemn Hitler. In May 1934, under the heading "A Year of Hitler", the editor of the Advocate warmly praised what the dictator had done in Germany and listed in considerable detail the achievements of the National Socialist government. Regret was expressed over what was being done to the religious and intellectual life of Germany and at the virtual destruction of the traditional liberties of the German states. But this was as far as the writer would go in criticism of the Nazis. Reports which were not to Hitler's credit were usually condemned as newspaper exaggeration. When it was stated in the cables that the nazis had put some Catholics to death, the editor of the Leader commented that although it was quite probable that Catholics were among the victims, there was no reason to believe that the nazis had put them to death simply because they were Catholics. This report was an effort by the British daily press "to work up Catholic opposition to the Nazis". By the end of 1934, there were signs of uneasiness among Australian

20. Sydney Morning Herald, 13 January 1934; Catholic Freeman's Journal, 15 February 1934; Catholic Leader, 12 April, 5 May 1934.
22. Catholic Leader, 19 July 1934. Similar views were expressed in Catholic Press, 24 May 1934; Catholic Freeman's Journal, 26 July 1934.
Catholic writers at the continued harrassment of both Catholics and Protestants by the nazi regime. Although the Saar plebiscite seemed to indicate that Hitler had won "the mind and heart of his people", other events in Germany constituted a "strange eclipse of Christianity" in the "most intellectual nation in Europe". The nazi attack on the church was blamed on "the philosophy of the German materialists, Kant and Nietzsche". The doctrines of these men had caused "a reaction towards the worship of ancient (German) idols". Denys Jackson argued that the only way to deal with Hitler was to come to terms with him as Mussolini had done. Otherwise, he said, there would be further crises in Europe over Memel, the Austrian-Polish corridor and colonial questions, "which still lurk menacingly in the shadows".

During 1935 and 1936, Hitler and events in Germany receded into the background in the Catholic press as first the Ethiopian war and then, much more overwhelmingly, the

23. Advocate, 30 August 1934.
25. Catholic Leader, 1 August 1935; 8 August 1935.
26. Advocate, 28 March 1935. In his recognition of the danger Hitler posed to the peace of Europe, Jackson was unrepresentative of Australian Catholic spokesmen of the period.
Spanish Civil war, dominated the news reports and editorial discussions. Persecution of the church, particularly in the form of immorality trials against members of religious orders, and the closure of Catholic schools, reached a high point in Germany in 1936. The Catholic press in Australia had very little to say on these matters. In Spain at the same time churches were burning and priests and religious were being killed, so news from there captured the headlines and featured in the sermons and speeches of most Catholic spokesmen. In comparison with events in Spain, the war against the church in Germany appeared relatively mild. Although they recognised that the church there faced the future "with grave apprehensions", Catholic writers who discussed the current persecutions of the church put the emphasis on Russia, Mexico and Spain, where the anti-Catholic policies were blamed on communism. Like American Catholics, they believed that fascism was not as intrinsically evil as communism, and that the church could come to a working arrangement with nazism. After two years of almost continual reports of nazi persecution of the church, the editor of the Catholic Leader still believed that, unlike communism, National Socialism was

not necessarily anti-religious. The belief that Hitler and the nazis had saved Germany from communism was an important factor in the reluctance of Australian Catholic spokesmen to condemn Hitler, as it was in the United States. Hitler began his work in Germany, said one, by "ruthlessly suppressing communism". Early persecution of the Jews by the nazis was due to their close association with European communism, wrote another. The driving out of those Jews who were agents of communism and whose mission was to destroy christian civilisation was "a good work for Germany", in the opinion of a third Catholic editor. Christians could rejoice that Hitler had definitely checked the extension of communism in Europe because that evil philosophy was indissolubly linked with materialism and ruthlessly pursued a violent persecution of religion. By 1937, the German dictator was back in Catholic news, because of his support for Franco in Spain. With Mussolini, he was the main source of arms and men for the Nationalist forces, and it appeared to Catholic supporters of Franco that in this role, Hitler

28. Catholic Leader, 1 August 1935.
30. Advocate, 21 September 1933.
31. Catholic Leader, 10 August 1933; also 27 July 1933.
was opposing communism once more. When other groups in Australia protested about this foreign intervention in Spain, Catholic spokesmen retorted by detailing the part Russia was playing in the war.  

However, as more detailed reports of ruthless nazi policies reached the Australian press, there were signs of disillusionment about Hitler's opposition to communism on the part of some Catholic commentators. Germany, once so impatient of communism, was now imitating the communists in its intolerant attitude towards the christian religion, wrote a Sydney editor in 1936. This attitude reveals a failure to grasp the truth that, in fact, fascism in the form of National Socialism, while it might not tolerate communism in Germany, was no less dangerous because it had its own reasons for wishing to destroy christianity. Dr. Eris O'Brien, a frequent commentator on international affairs, showed himself more realistic when he wrote that, although it was true that Hitler had once stemmed the rising tide of communism in Germany, his success in this respect had been grossly magnified and had served for too long to cloak the excesses which he had subsequently perpetrated.

33. Catholic Freeman's Journal, 10 December 1936; 10 June 1937.
34. Ibid., 9 April 1936.
35. Ibid., 28 October 1937.
Reports of events in Germany, particularly persecution of the church, increased in the last two years before war began. Nazism had, in four years, "smashed the Jew, gagged the press, persecuted the church and declared for a brand new Nazi patriotism" that was an exclusive, aggressive nationalism.\(^{36}\) The church was "suspected, insulted, persecuted and in danger of the concentration camp".\(^{37}\) Germany had become openly neo-pagan, and laid heavy hands on the Christian religion,\(^{38}\) and the Nazis had enforced a system of internal racial and religious oppression whose effects had been productive of danger and disturbance to her neighbours.\(^{39}\) Yet, in spite of a persecution "more vehement, more callous (and) carried on with more foul propaganda" than anywhere else in the world,\(^{40}\) Catholic spokesmen in Australia remained silent. The press editors detailed the persecution, but refused to take the logical step of outright condemnation of Hitler. In Melbourne Jackson published the encyclical condemning Nazi breaches of the Concordat and reported Nazi attacks on the

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36. Catholic Leader, 1 April 1937.
37. Ibid., 27 May 1937.
40. Catholic Leader, 17 November 1938.
church in detail. But he defended Hitler against the British political speakers who adopted a "governess-like tone" whenever they referred to him. No member of the hierarchy was reported in either the Catholic or daily press as having publicly condemned the axis powers in the years preceding the war. Bishop Farrelly of Lismore spoke in 1938 of civilisation being threatened by "new ideologies ... like Nazism in Germany and Communism in Russia", but proceeded immediately to a discussion of the ideal of a Christian corporate state. The pastoral letter by Archbishop Gilroy which was read in all churches on the day of thanksgiving after Munich implied that he accepted the pact at its face value. Dr. Henschke, the auxiliary bishop of Wagga, defended Chamberlain and the Munich settlement, stated that Hitler had a case in some respects and believed that tension was caused by French fears and Russian hate. Archbishop Mannix was exceptionally silent on Hitler and his policies, apart from his words at a Peace Rally in May 1939. At a time when persecution of Catholics in Germany was being

41. Advocate, 14 October 1937.
42. Catholic Press, 19 May 1938.
43. Ibid., 6 October 1938.
44. Catholic Freeman's Journal, 1 June 1939.
45. See below, 550-51.
intensified, Mannix spoke in Sydney to a large gathering of laymen. Warning them of the dangers to religion in the modern world, he spoke of "such happenings as are taking place in Spain, Mexico, Russia and other countries". Germany did not seem important enough to mention specifically. 46 Dr. Rumble was more critical of the regime in Germany than any bishop. On his radio programme he condemned all totalitarian rule as essentially wrong in itself and said that justice would never be done in a state unless the government was chosen by and representative of the people. 47 Eris O'Brien called Hitler a "pathological case", whose ideals were pagan and parochial and the opposite of Catholicism. 48 As early as 1936, there had been an attempt, quite unique in Australian Catholicism at this time, to organise a united protest by Holy Name societies in all dioceses. The Holy Name headquarters in Melbourne reported that societies in eleven Australian and New Zealand dioceses had forwarded copies of resolutions protesting against the treatment of Catholics in Germany. 49 The press report

46. Catholic Press, 9 September 1937.
47. Catholic Freeman's Journal, 15 April 1937.
48. Ibid., 28 October 1937.
49. Catholic Leader, 14 May 1936.
gave no indication as to where the protest would be sent, and a diligent search revealed no further mention of the matter in either the Catholic or daily press. One reason for reluctance of Catholic spokesmen to condemn Hitler was their attitude to Britain and France. As well as the traditional Irish Catholic hostility to England and the belief that France was controlled largely by masons and communists,\(^50\) they had been bitterly opposed to the policies of these two governments on the Spanish Civil war. Since most of them were also favourable to Mussolini's government in Italy, they were unwilling to support any condemnation by the allies of the axis powers.\(^51\) France was far too friendly with Russia in their view, and they were not happy at the prospect of an alliance with that country should war come.\(^52\) One other possibility peculiar to Australia's geographical position was cited by Catholic editors as a good reason for not risking enmity with Germany and Italy. If war came in Europe, Japan would most certainly be fighting with the axis powers, and in that event the position of Australia would

\(^{50}\) This was a frequently expressed view, e.g. Catholic Press, 16 April 1936; Advocate, 23 April 1936; Catholic Freeman's Journal, 21 May 1936.

\(^{51}\) Catholic Press, 15 September 1938; Catholic Freeman's Journal, 13 October 1938.

\(^{52}\) Catholic Press, 29 December 1938; Catholic Leader, 30 March 1939.
be "precarious".\textsuperscript{53} There was general rejoicing in the Catholic press when an Anglo-Italian treaty was finally concluded in 1938. It was a development which gave much comfort to those who hoped to see peace secured by reasonable understanding among the nations. For Britain it meant removal of a danger to her life-line in the Mediterranean, and to Italy it brought security in the sea, where peace was of paramount interest to her. The alliance of Italy and England, the editors agreed, was a natural one which corresponded to the vital needs of both nations.\textsuperscript{54} It is quite clear that most Catholic writers disapproved of what was happening in Germany, but they were ingenious in discovering reasons why it was not expedient to condemn Hitler. They blamed the system for what they disliked, and its leader was, if not exonerated, at least excused. Even after the events at Munich, the editor of the \textit{Freeman's Journal} was still scolding the Australian daily press for its "parrot-like reprinting of the caricatures" of Hitler and Mussolini which appeared in the British press. The dictators were, he said, no worse than headstrong and forceful statesmen,

\textsuperscript{53} \textit{Catholic Freeman's Journal}, 14 October 1937; 13 March 1939; 6 July 1939.

\textsuperscript{54} \textit{Catholic Leader}, 21 April 1939; \textit{Catholic Freeman's Journal}, 28 April 1938; \textit{Advocate}, 10 November 1938.
human like the rest of men, and probably just as well disposed towards peace as any other leaders responsible for the well-being of large populations.55

It was not until 1938 that events in Europe caused political controversy in Australia to focus sharply on foreign policy and defence. Until that time most Australians considered the likelihood of involvement in another war to be fairly remote. A federal election in October 1937 highlighted the ambiguity of the Australian attitude to international affairs. The United Australia Party quite understandably adopted a policy of co-operation with Britain in so far as obligations might rest on Australia as a member of the League of Nations. Curtin as leader of the ALP advocated isolationism, but denied that he would be a party to withdrawing Australia from the League. He also argued with Lyons that adequate provision for the defence of the commonwealth was the first task of any government. The two leaders merely differed over which arm of the services was most important, Lyons supporting the navy and Curtin the air-force.56 The election results

confirmed the Lyons government in office and the result was interpreted as an endorsement of its defence policy.\textsuperscript{57} A contemporary observer, however, noted that acceptance of the government's policy of imperial co-operation in defence did not necessarily mean acceptance of the principle of imperial co-operation in foreign policy. Australians ardently desired peace and did not want to be put in the position where they could be drawn into war. In this respect they were all isolationists.\textsuperscript{58} Jackson declared that the quite considerable swing to Labor\textsuperscript{59} indicated that the people did not want involvement in an overseas war, and that the "collective security policy" had shaken the confidence of the public in the Lyons government.\textsuperscript{60} It is quite probable that domestic issues and the still considerable internal divisions in the ALP were equally important in deciding the election. Australians might desire peace but they did not want to find themselves unprepared for war, and the government went ahead with a policy of re-armament.

\textsuperscript{57} Hasluck, \textit{The Government and the People}, 72.

\textsuperscript{58} H.L. Harris, \textit{Australia's National Interests and National Policy} (Melbourne 1938) 127.

\textsuperscript{59} This was most noticeable in the Senate, where the ALP gained 13 seats.

\textsuperscript{60} \textit{Advocate}, 28 October 1938.
along with the rest of the empire. The national attitude appeared to be, "Hope for peace, prepare for war and make no promises." 61

One of the first consequences of the Anglo-Italian agreement was the resignation of Anthony Eden from the British Cabinet in February 1938. This event, wrote an Australian journalist, "aroused much discussion of the problem of imperial consultation, and there was a certain feeling of disquiet". Eden's resignation seemed to many people to imply a radical change in British foreign policy which, on the prime minister's own admission, had not been preceded by anything like consultation with the dominion governments. The Australian daily press was divided, and there was confusion regarding the issues which had forced the Foreign Secretary to resign. 62 The general public may have been confused over the event, but the response of the Catholic press was unanimous. The Chamberlain government, the editors all agreed, was "well rid of Mr. Anthony Eden". 63 Although the exit of Eden was being "hailed as a tragedy" in some quarters, wrote one, the cause of peace would be much better served

61. Harris, 127.

62. "Australia: Foreign Affairs and Defence", Round Table, 28 (June 1938) 604.

now that Chamberlain was free to implement his own policies. 64 Those policies would get British foreign policy out of the political doldrums in which it had been for the past few years. A "lot of barnacles" had accumulated under its waterline, and they needed to be cleared away. Chamberlain was the man for this task. 65 Eden was too much of a political idealist, wrote another editor, and his failure to grasp the complexities of the European situation was fast driving Britain to the abyss. 66 Never had British foreign prestige fallen so low as under Eden. 67

There were several reasons for this manifest dislike of Eden. Catholic editors did not approve of his policies in regard to collective security and the League of Nations. He clung to the principles of the League, wrote Jackson, and devotion to this ideal blinded him to the fact that the League was now impotent to ensure world peace. Collective security was simply anarchy and constituted a perpetual danger to the peace of Europe. 68

64. Catholic Freeman's Journal, 3 March 1938.
65. Catholic Leader, 3 March 1938.
68. Advocate, 3 March 1938.
Eden adhered to the League mentality long after more experienced statesmen had ceased to regard it as a reality, in the view of another writer. While he continued to mould British diplomacy there was, therefore, excessive danger of being chained to a corpse, for Geneva, as far as its original objectives were concerned, had given up the ghost long ago. Assessing Chamberlain's policy a few weeks later, the same editor attributed the improved international outlook to the fact that the British prime minister, being no visionary, had competently assessed

"the weaknesses of the League of Nations, the breakdown of collective security and the danger of allowing prejudices forged in the political atmosphere at Geneva to perpetuate dangerous animosities."

More importantly to the Catholic mind, Eden's reliance on France and his overtures to Russia linked him with Catholicism's greatest enemy, communism. He "leaned too strongly to what was known as the London-Paris-Moscow axis" and appeared to "nestle under Litvinov's wing". It was most significant, declared the editor of the Freeman's Journal, that among those who mourned Eden's

70. Ibid., 28 April 1938.
departure from the Foreign Office were the "Red and Pink parties in British politics". He may not have approved of communism, but he had over-emphasised the part played by Hitler and Mussolini in the Spanish war while turning a blind eye to the assistance given to the Reds of Madrid and Valencia by France and Russia.\textsuperscript{72} Eden's reliance on France, said Jackson, had shown how completely out of touch he was with the reality of European foreign affairs. That country, "a broken tool of Soviet tactics", could no longer offer any basis of security or peaceful co-operation.\textsuperscript{73} The French government was under the thumb of communists and socialist factionaries, and Britain could expect no help from there if her security were threatened.\textsuperscript{74} Finally, Catholic spokesmen were critical of Eden's attitude towards Italy and Germany, because they supported a policy of appeasement. Strong official Catholic sympathy for Italy was at the root of their support for appeasement, as was the anti-English feeling of the Australian Irish. They feared communism and did not want to be

\textsuperscript{72} Catholic Freeman's Journal, 3 March 1938.
\textsuperscript{73} Advocate, 24 February 1938.
\textsuperscript{74} Catholic Press, 24 February 1938.
allied with France and Russia in a war against Italy and
Germany. 75 One editor went so far as to blame Eden for
the militancy and aggressiveness which had marked
Hitler's recent actions, because, he said, when Italy
was alienated from England Mussolini no longer acted
as a brake on the Fuhrer. 76 His policies, said another,
had exasperated Italy and Germany and brought the world
to the verge of war. 77 Under Chamberlain, the editors
all agreed, British foreign policy would take a forward
movement. The government could now come to an honourable
understanding with Italy in regard to Abyssinia, the
Mediterranean and bolshevism in Spain and then turn to
matters that reciprocally concerned Britain, Germany and
France. 78

The importance which the Catholic press in Australia
gave to Eden's resignation was surprising, considering
its general lack of comment on European affairs even as
late as 1938. The most significant feature of the
discussions was the complete agreement of the editors.

75. Catholic Leader, 3 March 1938; Advocate, 3 March 1938;
Catholic Freeman's Journal, 28 April 1938; Catholic
Press, 24 February 1938.
77. Advocate, 3 March 1938.
78. Catholic Leader, 3 March 1938.
This was not true of Hitler's next move in Europe. The discussion on the British political situation was terminated in both the daily and Catholic press by the crisis arising from the absorption of Austria into the German Reich.79 In February 1938 an editorial in the Catholic Press ridiculed reports in the daily papers which suggested that Hitler would send an army into Austria. The press, said the editor, was simply making Adolf the "bad boy" of Europe. If, indeed, the German leader was looking towards Austria, the only ones to blame were "the Big Four at the Versailles Peace Conference". They had set out to squeeze Germany "till the pips squeaked" and the pips were still squeaking. Austria had been left an easy victim to the future aggressions of anyone looking for territorial aggrandisement.80 Several weeks later, the paper reported that the Austrian chancellor Schuschnigg, speaking of his agreement with Hitler, declared everything had gone according to schedule. The Fuhrer had guaranteed Austria's independence under conditions satisfactory to his government. The editor commented that all the recent circumstantial

79. Round Table 28 (June 1938) 606.
statements about Hitler's domination of the country, "so brilliantly displayed by the semi-red newspapers", were thus proved entirely false. A complete about-face was made the following week, when Hitler had marched his army and driven his tanks into Austria. The "know-alls" who professed to be acquainted with all the secrets of European politics were soundly berated for not having predicted this latest German move. They were all watching Hitler, declared the editor, and professed to know his deepest secrets, but not one of them "had an inkling" that the Germans would be over the border at the week-end. "What a gullible lot we are," he concluded, "to think that their vapid stuff is worth cabling to every country in the world". One is left wondering about that editor's view of his own readers' gullibility, when they were expected to accept such changes in attitude, as unpredictable as Hitler's own moves. In Melbourne, Jackson blamed Britain, France and Italy for the fall of Austria. He thought those countries should have supported the restoration of the Hapsburg Prince Otto, and used their influence on the powers of the little entente to include Austria in their agreement.

81. Catholic Press, 10 March 1938.
82. Ibid., 17 March 1938.
83. Advocate, 24 February 1938.
The editor of the Catholic Leader also blamed Britain and France and "the other signatories to the treaty of St. Germaine," which had left the old Austrian empire practically dismembered. "Austria has been dying for twenty years", he wrote.\footnote{84} The concern of most commentators was the obvious collapse of a Catholic country. The Advocate edged its editorial in black, and the writing was almost melodramatic.

"The pride of Germanic Catholic culture, the bulwark of the faith for many centuries, the saviour of Europe from the scourge of Islam, after twenty years of poverty and martyrdom initiated at Versailles, has passed overnight from the pages of history, destroyed by the iron might of the Prussian monster."\footnote{85}

A little more soberly, a Sydney editor assumed that "the persecution, religious and racial", which had marked Hitler's rule in Germany, would also be conspicuous in Austria now that it had been placed under the Swastika.\footnote{86} Jackson was the only Catholic commentator to see clearly the political implications of the Anschluss. "Bohemia and Moravia, with their three million Germans, lie enclosed in the German nutcracker", he wrote.\footnote{87}

\footnote{84. Catholic Leader, 17 March 1938.}
\footnote{85. Advocate, 17 March 1938.}
\footnote{86. Catholic Freeman's Journal, 17 March 1938.}
\footnote{87. Advocate, 7 April 1938.}
There was no discussion of the legitimacy or otherwise of Hitler's claim to Austria, and no condemnation of his aggression. It was the first of Hitler's major aggressions, and could be regarded as merely an occupation of German territory to the general satisfaction of the inhabitants. There is no further available evidence on how Catholics reacted to it. They were probably as confused about it as was the rest of the Australian people. There was little or no debate in the columns of the daily press, and no strong protest from intellectuals or newspaper editors. With the labour movement divided, the unions demanding isolationism and the government wholeheartedly supporting appeasement, it is probably safe to assume that Catholic reaction was influenced by social pressures other than the editorials in the Catholic press. Their reaction probably differed from that of the rest of the population only on one point, namely fears of persecution of the church in the newly occupied country.

It would be misleading to talk of Australian public opinion on the Czechoslovakian crisis, wrote the Australian reporter for the Round Table, for there was no united unambiguous national attitude to the crisis.

Newspaper and other comment mostly reflected the apprehension and indecision of the ordinary citizen, who felt that events were moving in a direction that he dreaded, under the impulse of forces of which he had no control and little understanding. The basis of this confusion, in the writer's opinion, was to be found partly in a very limited knowledge of the problems of Central Europe and partly in the absence of statements by Australian politicians which might have given a definite lead to public opinion or indicated the proper role of Australia in the crisis. 89 After the crisis, opinion in Australia was not opposed to the Munich settlement. Most commentators paid little attention to the details of the agreement, but gratefully accepted the fact that it had averted an immediate outbreak of war. This opinion was to be found at all levels of the society, among intellectuals, conservative politicians and the working men. Only a minority appeared conscious of the fate of Czechoslovakia and of the doubtful means by which peace had been maintained. 90

Since the Catholic press had been unanimous in

89. Round Table 29 (December 1938) 44.
applauding the assumption of foreign policy direction by Chamberlain, they supported his policies of appeasement. When Czechoslovakia and its problems first appeared in the overseas cables in Australian newspapers, Catholic spokesmen showed as little knowledge and understanding of the situation as did their fellow countrymen. Vagueness as to the boundaries of Czechoslovakia and how the name should be pronounced were coupled with almost complete ignorance on the part of most Australians of the centuries-old conflict between Slav and German in Bohemia. 91 In the Catholic press there was little sympathy for Czechoslovakia as a country, the national identity of which was "nothing but a fiction". 92 Czechoslovakia was "a most remarkable creation of the Versailles wiseacres", wrote one editor, and was a state composed of racial minorities with no cohesive interests. 93 According to another, it was a "political conglomerate", an artificial "hotch-potch state" which must surely disintegrate. 94 Jackson regarded Czechoslovakia as the centre of freemasonry and liberalism

91. Round Table, 29 (December 1938) 45.
94. Catholic Leader, 30 June 1938, 15 September 1938.
in Europe, and as such, a worthless state, and its cause evil and hopeless. He and other Catholic writers accepted too readily that Hitler had a case against the country. The Sudetens, they said, had genuine grievances, and in view of the treatment they were receiving, Hitler's demands were reasonable. They all advised calm, and declared that the Czech leaders would soon be brought to see that they must cease oppressing the German minority, economically and politically. The only paper to dissent from these views was the Catholic Press in Sydney, but its independence was short-lived. Although its first comment was on the creation of Czechoslovakia by the Treaty of Versailles, it had changed in two weeks to support of the country. The editor described it as "more homogeneous than the old Austro-Hungarian Empire" was, and declared that it had originated in a union of the people concerned. He praised the nation's leaders, blamed Hitler for its difficulties and opposed any solution which involved the transfer of territory. By September, however, this view had been replaced by one

95. Advocate, 24 March 1938; 29 September 1938.
96. Ibid., 15 September 1938; 22 September 1938; Catholic Leader, 15 September 1938; Catholic Freeman's Journal, 1 September 1938.
which designated Czechoslovakia as the chief centre of communism in Europe.\textsuperscript{98} Thereafter, the paper concurred in the view of the rest of the Catholic press. It has been suggested that pressure was applied to the editor, since the \textit{Catholic Press} was the "official" Catholic paper in Sydney.\textsuperscript{99} There is no available evidence to support this supposition and a Catholic journalist who wrote for both Sydney Catholic papers at this time is doubtful whether such pressure would have been brought to bear.\textsuperscript{100} There were several occasions in the thirties when this paper did not pursue a consistent policy on particular matters, and this could be just one more such occasion. Because of their assertions that the Sudeten Germans had a legitimate grievance, Catholic editors blamed the secular press for its alarmist attitude and declared that there was no real crisis. The threatened break-up of the country, wrote a commentator in the Brisbane paper, had provided "the daily press and the Red and Pink sensation mongers with a feast of excitement". And "Herr Hitler is the villain of the piece".\textsuperscript{101} According

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to Jackson, there had been a virtual campaign of war-
mongering in the press, which bore a striking resemblance, 
both in its sources and in its character, to those which 
previously had been carried on in relation to China 
and Spain. There was the same demand that Britain should 
"fling herself into an alien quarrel in the cause of 'peace' and enter an international combine against 'Fascism'". In this case, he believed, the press had 
signally failed in arousing any great enthusiasm for the 
so-called "last democracy of central Europe", and any 
attempt to drag Britain (and Australia) into a war to 
defend it would certainly meet with bitter resistance. 102

As the crisis deepened, and war seemed probable, 
Catholic spokesmen reiterated their oft-expressed view 
that Australia had no part in Europe's quarrels. She had 
even less interest in this one, which was over a country 
and a problem which was totally remote from Australian 
concerns. "Shall Millions Die for Czechoslovakia?" 
demanded one editor, and he made it quite clear that, in 
his view, the answer was negative. 103 In Brisbane, a 
priest speaking to a gathering of Catholic men declared 
that he hoped no Australian would fight for "the hypocritical

102. Advocate, 1 September 1938.

pretext of Czechoslovakia". It was not worth fighting for, since it was neither a state nor a nation, but an "artificial contraption" brought into existence at the peace conference "through the machinations of the cynical Clemenceau who wanted to get Germany down for ever". Supporting this view, the editor of the Brisbane paper stated that this was also the conviction of the Queensland premier, Mr. Forgan Smith. The ALP, too, he said, had stated that Australia should be kept out of any such war. The only evident sympathy for the Czechs in Australia had been "Leftist sympathy, or the mistaken notions of the ignorant". Jackson opposed any suggestion of British and Australian participation in a conflict over Czechoslovakia because he entirely disagreed with the view that Britain was pledged to stand by France. As well, the crisis had come upon the Czechs largely as a result of their own "follies and crimes", and Hitler's violence had been provoked, to no slight extent, by exasperation at the sufferings inflicted upon the German-Bohemians by their Czech tyrants. Several writers

104. Catholic Leader, 8 September 1938.
105. Ibid., 29 September 1938.
106. Advocate, 29 September 1938.
blamed the threat of war almost entirely on communism, and gave this as an added reason for not supporting British and French guarantees in the matter. 107 Whatever the issues might be, they all agreed that for Australians, the rights and wrongs of the Czechoslovakian crisis were not nearly as important as the right of the Australian people "to be properly consulted before the despatch of the flower of their manhood to participate once again in a European war." 108

Since the Australian government had urged that the government of Czechoslovakia should not delay in making a public announcement of the most liberal concessions it could offer, and had actually participated in securing the Munich conference by suggesting a personal appeal to Mussolini, appeasement could be regarded as the "official" policy of Australia. 109 Lyons sent a cable of congratulations and gratitude to Chamberlain after the conference, and expressed publicly the appreciation of the people of Australia for "the great services rendered by Mr. Chamberlain, President Roosevelt

107. Catholic Press, 15 September 1938; Catholic Freeman's Journal, 1 September 1938; Catholic Leader, 15 September 1938.


and Signor Mussolini to the cause of peace". Catholic editors happily concurred in this view of the Munich agreement. It was seen as a triumph for Chamberlain, who in the words of one, had shown initiative, courage, and a statesmanship that "qualified him as the man to move in the diplomatic game and save Europe from tottering on the brink of war and ruin". Jackson was firmly convinced that the Munich agreement had saved Europe from war which could only result in either Russian domination or a total Nazi tyranny. He did want due recognition given to Mussolini's part in the settlement. In his view it was the intervention of the Italian leader that led Hitler to talk with other European leaders. This was a striking justification of the policy of Anglo-Italian friendship for which Chamberlain had worked so long. Other Catholic editors expressed naive faith in the promises made by Hitler and the achievements of the Munich discussions. Brought face to face, and discussing international questions in a calm atmosphere, wrote one, Chamberlain, Hitler, Mussolini and Daladier stopped the threatened war in a few hours, and there seemed reason to

111. Catholic Leader, 6 October 1938.
112. Advocate, 6 October 1938.
believe that similar future gatherings could solve other "European vexed questions" before they became too acute. He could not agree with the pessimistic conclusions expressed by certain critics of Chamberlain that Munich was a prelude to further concessions by the democracies to Hitler's demands. 113 Adolf Hitler had been taught that banditry was not a profitable game, said another. It had become evident that even dictators must recognise the strength of public opinion. 114

Catholic spokesmen other than the press writers had no comment on Munich. The only member of the hierarchy who alluded to the agreement was Archbishop Gilroy of Sydney, who accepted it at its face value. 115 Catholic acceptance of appeasement probably was little different from the attitude of most other Australians. It is not surprising then to find almost no evidence of any dissent on the matter. If any Catholics doubted the morality of the measures taken to appease Hitler and avoid war, they did not make such doubts public. Events quickly demonstrated that Hitler was not checked by Munich and that his aggressions would continue. His further moves after

115. Ibid., 6 October 1938; see above, 507.
the agreement, including the annexation of all the territories he had demanded, the harsh treatment of Czechs in the newly occupied German areas and Polish and Hungarian demands on Czechoslovakia soon released a flood of criticisms against Chamberlain's policies. Some critics deplored these as the latest defeat for democracy, some saw a mere postponement of a war less escapable and more horrible because of its postponement, while others were conscious of a betrayal of Britain's honour by this further concession to the demands of the dictator. 116 The Catholic press maintained its approval of Munich in spite of these criticisms. To all such criticisms, wrote Jackson, there was one great reply. The only alternative was war, for which the western powers were unprepared, and the cause was a doubtful one. 117 A Sydney editor agreed with him, and listed those killed and wounded in the first world war to prove the significance of Chamberlain's success in averting another terrible holocaust. 118 Even after the Germans occupied Czechoslovakia in March 1939, Catholic editors in Australia continued to defend the policy of appeasement. Now,

116. Round Table, 29 (December 1938)48.
117. Advocate, 22 December 1938.
however, they were critical of Hitler's aggression, while expressing categorical denials that Australia should be involved in the European problems. The German invasion of the country was absolutely inexcusable, in spite of Hitler's assertion that it was in reply to an appeal from the country's leaders.\textsuperscript{119} His pledges had been broken with a "contemptuous disregard of honour" which had dealt a death blow to every hope of real appeasement of Germany.\textsuperscript{120} The editor of the \textit{Freeman's Journal} propounded a doubtful political morality when he asserted that it had never been possible for Czechoslovakia to escape Hitler's grasping hand, so while it might be tragic for the Czechs and the Slovaks that Britain had failed to limit Germany's ambition, it was far better that they be sacrificed in order to avoid a general conflagration.\textsuperscript{121} Jackson could find no such excuse to justify the action which he described as "the brutal rape of the Czech nation". Any excuses used by Hitler to convince the world of his rights were so ludicrous as to be regarded as mere

\textsuperscript{119} \textit{Catholic Press}, 23 March 1939.

\textsuperscript{120} \textit{Advocate}, 23 March 1939.

\textsuperscript{121} \textit{Catholic Freeman's Journal}, 23 March 1939.
insult. It was clear to him that Hitler had reached the point at which he no longer found it necessary "to pay even lip-service to civilised opinions and standards".\textsuperscript{122}

In spite of this final realisation of the true nature of Hitler's aggressions and criticism of them, the Catholic press writers intensely disliked the camp this attitude forced them into. It put them in opposition to Italy, an old friend, and allied them, in all probability, with their greatest enemy, Russia. They were as opposed to an Anglo-Russian alliance as were American Catholic spokesmen and opposed it just as vigorously.\textsuperscript{123} They began early in 1939 warning Australians about the danger of such an alliance. Those who were so enthusiastic about "the Lion and the Bear getting together" would do well to remember that if they did, the "Bear would study his own terrain and safety first". Collective security with Russia as an ally would mean collective ruin.\textsuperscript{124} Jackson argued against the alliance for two reasons. The Soviet leaders, he said,

\textsuperscript{122} Advocate, 23 March 1939.

\textsuperscript{123} General Australian opinion was divided on an alliance with Russia, see Andrews, Isolationism and Appeasement, 172-76.

\textsuperscript{124} Catholic Leader, 20 April 1939.
were not interested in fighting a war in order to make Europe or the world safe for liberal democracy. Rather, they aimed to exploit their democratic allies so that when the right moment came, the revolution would triumph at the expense of both the warring groups. Secondly, those who wanted a Russian alliance were prepared to abandon principle in favour of force, because whatever might be the crimes or cruelties of the nazis, they were slight in comparison with those committed by the bolsheviks in Russia, Hungary, Spain and China. The *Freeman's Journal* mounted a crusade against the alliance, and week after week its leading editorial inveighed against it. The editor characterised Russia as the "anarchistic, anti-God troublemaker of civilisation", and considered an alliance with such a country as an alliance with Satan. Several weeks later he spoke of it as

"a pact with a barbarous anti-God government that has been a pest to Europe ever since it was born in the blood bath which horrified humanity".

Readiness to accept an Anglo-Russian alliance was proof

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125. *Advocate*, 1 June 1939.


to Brian Doyle that standards had been forgotten and judgment had been led astray in the face of nazi threats and successful deception. Relief was general when a pact was finally concluded between Russia and Germany. Jackson branded it as a betrayal of the internationalist left by Stalin, but expressed satisfaction that the union of paganism and atheism had removed the danger of a British alliance with Russia. He considered that from Australia's viewpoint the result could be pure gain, if the change of alliance led to a British rapprochement with Japan and the consequent ending of the far east menace. Every christian should rejoice over the fact that Great Britain and France had been spared the shame of an alliance with the anti-God Russian despot, wrote a Sydney editor. As a result Chamberlain and Daladier could meet the decision for peace or war with clean hands and the wholehearted approval of their peoples and the world in general.

Support for the policy of appeasement weakened rapidly in Australia during the ten months between Munich and the outbreak of war. One contributing factor was the

128. Catholic Fireside, 5 (July 1939) 3.
129. Advocate, 24 August 1939.
130. Ibid., 31 August 1939.
renewed persecution of Jews. In November 1938, a German Jew refugee shot and killed the third secretary of the German embassy in Paris, in revenge for the death of his own father under the anti-Jewish laws in Germany. The terrible pogrom which followed against Jews in Germany was undoubtedly a shock to the Australian public. It brought into prominence once more the ambivalent attitude of many groups in the society towards Jews, and towards the problem of refugees. The rest of the world was affected by German anti-semitic laws when Jews, fleeing persecution in their own land, tried to find homes in other countries. Australia became involved in the problem because it was one of the few countries in the world which was actively seeking immigrants. 132 When the nazis came to power in March 1933, many commentators believed that constitutional rule had broken down in Germany and that the only two alternatives facing the people were fascism and communism. They believed that the nazis would restore stability to the country and eradicate communism, which was a potential source of upheaval and chaos. 133 There was a tendency in Australia to suspect

133. Sydney Morning Herald, 7 March 1933; Argus, 2, 11 March 1933; Age, 13 March 1933.
all European Jews of communist sympathies, and the first attacks on Jews were seen by some as a legitimate attempt to prevent the spread of communism. ¹³⁴ This attitude was shared by Catholic commentators. Catholic spokesmen in Australia did not support anti-semitism nor encourage it, but some did manifest a belief in a Jewish conspiracy to control the press of the world and to be too prominent in financial circles. ¹³⁵ They also associated Jews with that greatest enemy of the church, communism. When the daily press was highlighting the first attack on Jews in Germany, Archbishop Mannix was not surprised that there should be "unrest, disorder and panic" in a country which was threatened with the spread of revolutionary communism. ¹³⁶ But Mannix could not be accused of anti-semitism. When a large meeting of protest against the German treatment of Jews was held in the Melbourne Town Hall in April 1933, the Catholic archbishop was one of several religious leaders who sent messages of sympathy to be read at the meeting. ¹³⁷ He had also written personally to the president of the Melbourne Jewish

¹³⁴ Sydney Morning Herald, 4 May 1933.
¹³⁵ Catholic Press, 18 May 1933; 27 July 1933; Advocate, 21 September 1933; Catholic Freeman's Journal, 29 August 1933; 25 May 1933.
¹³⁶ Advocate, 11 May 1933.
¹³⁷ Argus, 28 April 1933.
community, expressing his sympathy to local Jews and assuring them that he shared their distress. \(^{138}\) The editor of the Catholic Leader condemned nazi persecution of the Jews and the attempt by "certain publications" to stir up an anti-Jewish attitude throughout the world. Such propaganda he declared to be entirely contrary to the teaching and practice of the Catholic church, no matter what nation or race is attacked. "There are good Jews and bad Jews", he reminded his readers, "just as there are good men and bad men in every other race". \(^{139}\) Several weeks later he again condemned the "aggressiveness shown against the Jews". \(^{140}\) In Melbourne, Jackson did not use the same forthright language, but he too commented on "the attacks upon Jews and the heavy ill-treatment meted out to many of these, not to speak of the doing to death of a number of them", which suggested a brutality not normally associated with orderly government. \(^{141}\) In the following years, as persecution of Catholics increased in both Germany and Spain, there

\(^{138}\) Catholic Freeman's Journal, 20 April 1933.  
\(^{139}\) Catholic Leader, 6 July 1933.  
\(^{140}\) Ibid., 10 August 1933.  
\(^{141}\) Advocate, 30 March 1933.
were many complaints from Catholic commentators that these persecutions did not receive as much publicity as the recurring attacks on Jews in Germany and other German occupied territory. "Fascism persecutes Jews and Jewish cable agencies denounce it", wrote a Sydney editor. "Communism persecutes Christians, but Jews are not interested". Another tried to understand why Australians, "who paraded their humanitarianism so magnificently" when the nazis turned on "the Semitic shopkeepers of Berlin", could regard with unruffled calm, if not approval, a massacre of religious in Spain which had no parallel in modern times. By 1938, when German treatment of Jews was exciting world-wide indignation, Catholic writers were showing themselves more sympathetic to the problem, while still deploiring the publicity given to Jews in comparison with that given to Catholics. Jackson characterised anti-semitic terrorism as "unchristian and barbarous". He said that Catholics were sympathetic because the Jews' ancient faith was the ancestor of their own, and because both faiths had a


144. Advocate, 21 July 1938.
common enemy in the extreme nationalism which exalted race above spiritual values. The editor of the Freeman's Journal, however, penned a long editorial on the inequities of the press reports of persecutions. It was certainly an evil thing to beat a Jew in Germany, he wrote, but it should be equally evil to maltreat a christian in Spain. In view of what was actually happening to Jews in the great extermination camps in Germany, it is ironical to see what this writer believed to be the extent of their sufferings.

"At the worst, they appear to suffer robbery, blows and personal ignominy, whereas the Catholics in Spain under the Reds, not only lost their possessions but their lives as well".

When the nazis turned on the Jews with renewed force after the Paris shooting, Catholics joined with most other sections of Australian society in condemning the pogrom. Once more, it was the editor of the Catholic Leader who took the most uncompromising stand against anti-semitism. He rejected the common opinion that Jews were responsible for all the economic problems in the world because of their prominence in banking and finance.

145. Advocate, 14 July 1938; Catholic Freeman's Journal, 7 July 1938.

146. Catholic Freeman's Journal, 7 July 1938; Advocate, 21 July 1938.
Rather, he said, Jews had preserved the fine traditional qualities of their race. Contrary to popular idea, they were not notably avaricious. They had achieved remarkable success in business, scientific research, invention, engineering, philosophy and other professions, and in Australia they were law-abiding and respected citizens. Catholics who took up an attitude of hostility to the Jews, he concluded, could not justify their attitude on any grounds whatsoever.\footnote{147} Jackson also stated that Catholics could have no sympathy with discrimination against a person because of his race,\footnote{148} and a Sydney editor wrote that the whole Catholic world sympathised with the Jews.\footnote{149} Archbishop Mannix several times spoke of the persecution and of his sorrow at their sufferings. He was anxious to see everything possible done to mitigate those sufferings, and urged that those who fled from Germany should be welcomed to Australia if necessary.\footnote{150} In spite of these professions of sympathy, some Catholic editors were still critical. When the question arose as to whether the British and

\footnote{147} Catholic Leader, 24 November 1938.
\footnote{148} Advocate, 17 November 1938.
\footnote{149} Catholic Freeman's Journal, 17 November 1938.
\footnote{150} Ibid., 8 December 1938; 15 December 1938; Advocate, 30 March 1939.
United States governments should protest to the German government, Jackson once more brought up the lack of such protests when Catholics had been suffering so bitterly in Mexico and Spain.\textsuperscript{151} He qualified his sympathy by stating that there was no excuse for the nazis' behaviour, even though it might partly result from a recognition of the dangerous influence of Jewish internationalism in world politics.\textsuperscript{152} Jackson believed that Jews were fundamentally different from the rest of mankind. They always remained "essentially alien and apart from the Gentiles", linked by blood and sympathy with their brethren throughout the world. The only answer to the Jewish problem, he said, was peaceful separation. Jews should be given their own legal status and not treated as ordinary nationals of a country.\textsuperscript{153} Another editor praised a statement by Father Coughlin which associated Jews with the spread of communist influence in Russia and Germany.\textsuperscript{154}

Sympathy for the Jews suffering in Germany caused

\textsuperscript{151} Advocate, 17 November 1938; also Catholic Freeman's Journal, 17 November 1938; 19 January 1939; Catholic Press, 29 January 1939; Catholic Worker, 3 (December 1938).

\textsuperscript{152} Advocate, 24 November 1938.

\textsuperscript{153} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{154} Catholic Freeman's Journal, 19 January 1939.
no great problem whether expressed by Catholics or any other section of the population. It became an immediate and practical problem when those Jews suddenly became refugees seeking entry into Australia. In the thirties, Australia was seeking to increase the number of immigrants each year, and by 1938 it had become obvious that the bulk of these would no longer be from Britain. "Australian attitudes to white alien immigration vary considerably according to special interest and traditional views", wrote a commentator in 1938.\textsuperscript{155} Australian Catholics, largely because of their Irish working class background, combined labour's economic opposition to refugee immigration with anti-Jewish arguments used by other groups in the society.\textsuperscript{156} Catholic spokesmen agreed that Australia needed a larger population, but believed that instead of financing immigration schemes, the government should so improve Australian living standards that the population would stop committing "race suicide" and would be encouraged to have larger families.\textsuperscript{157}

In contrast to most other sections of the community, they

\textsuperscript{155} Round Table, 29 (December 1938) 168.
\textsuperscript{156} Hooper, 76.
\textsuperscript{157} Advocate, 13, 20 January 1938; 3 February 1938; Catholic Freeman's Journal, 28 April 1938.
did not wholeheartedly support British immigration, but favoured the admission of southern Europeans on the grounds of their greater suitability. They did not, however, favour Jewish immigration. They feared that an influx of Jews would flood the labour market, depriving Australian workers of employment and causing economic chaos. Jewish immigration could also provoke anti-Semitism and lead to an increased number of communist revolutionaries entering Australia. Mannix expressed himself pleased with the government's plan to bring in "some thousands of the Jewish and other refugees within the next two or three years", but hoped they could be absorbed into the country without "dislodging Australians from their work and without in any way upsetting the economic conditions" of Australia. Two Sydney editors expressed concern because the refugees were remaining in the cities, where they formed separate small communities. They were increasing the "parasitical classes" without establishing any new industries. Without widening the industrial field, they were exploiting Australian workers,

158. Advocate, 13 January 1938; Catholic Freeman's Journal, 28 July 1938.
159. Advocate, 14 July 1938; Catholic Press, 29 December 1938; Catholic Freeman's Journal, 7 July 1938.
160. Advocate, 8 December 1938.
while showing a reluctance to live in country areas. The migrant chiefly needed by Australia, one editor concluded, was a man with a little capital, willing to carve out a self-contained homestead in the back blocks for himself and his family, or one capable of helping develop the country's mineral wealth, instead of clinging to the bright lights. The outbreak of war in September 1939 interrupted the controversy over suitable immigrants for Australia, and five years later attitudes had changed considerably. The effects of war on many thousands of people in Europe helped to make most Australians, including Catholics, more realistic and sympathetic in their expectations of refugee immigration.

Although the Australian Catholic press argued insistently against participation in another European war almost to the day that war commenced, this was for reasons other than those advanced by American Catholic spokesmen. There was in Australia no argument about degrees of neutrality, since membership in the British empire precluded the idea of neutrality. Catholic writers might demand an independent policy for Australia.

in foreign affairs, but by September 1939, no substantial section of Australian political opinion argued for the right of a dominion to remain technically neutral in a war in which Great Britain was involved.\(^{162}\) Nor was there any discussion of the just war such as concerned American Catholics. One Catholic journalist who was interested in this question has stated that no Catholic spokesman gave it any consideration in the months preceding the outbreak of war.\(^{163}\) For various reasons they had supported a policy of appeasement, but they apparently had not considered the morality of a war in relation to the existing international situation. Jackson did argue against the morality of the "collective security system", which some Australians, notably communists and the ACTU, believed to be the only satisfactory form of foreign policy.\(^{164}\) In his view this policy was not only immoral but also impracticable. It was immoral because it amounted to a guarantee of the status quo, which was grossly inequitable, and every challenge to it was to be met by common action against the

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162. *Round Table*, 29 (September 1939) 858. Any argument about the war was related to participation in Britain's wars rather than about neutrality.


164. Andrews, 71, 90, 110. By collective security these groups meant British support of an alliance of France, Russia and if possible, the United States.
aggressor. Jackson revealed his real reason for opposing the policy when he continued, that it invited member nations of the empire to rest their security on the friendship of a state (Russia) whose agents were engaged in a world-wide subversive propaganda, and another (France) whose regime was drifting into chaos. Allied with these was "a mass of smaller powers" whose only anxiety was to escape from commitments they could not fulfil. The myth of collective security, he concluded, promised only increasing instability and disillusionment, with the certainty of final disaster. 165 This belief that the communist nations desired war and were conspiring to bring it about was also voiced by other Catholic editors. All the "war scares" that had been raised from July 1936 to the present, wrote one in March 1939, were the work of "the Comintern and their allies in the financial world". To the communists he added "the Grand Orient Freemasons", and stated that their operations had been like "a game of chess with the map of the world for a board". Soviet Russia wanted to get the revolution going in every country in Europe, he concluded, so as to crush the church of God and the proletariat at the same time. 166 As early as 1937,

165. Advocate, 3 June 1937.
166. Catholic Leader, 30 March 1939.
the editor of the *Freeman's Journal* had written that under communist pressure, the French government was likely to carry Britain into a war which Moscow believed would admirably serve its purposes. 167 He was still arguing this in the months preceding war, but adding a note of hope because he believed Chamberlain was thwarting such designs. 168 Jackson called it an "international conspiracy against peace", and declared that this campaign of sabotage flared up whenever there was the prospect of agreement between the western powers and the axis. 169 At the time of the Munich crisis, when war seemed very probable, one editor characterised events as the

"last desperate effort of Red Revolutionaries to precipitate the war that is intended to overthrow the bourgeois governments before winter's icy grip deters martial activities". 170

This belief that the war was being engineered by communism, and the probability of Russia as an ally if war did eventuate, caused the Australian Catholic press to adopt an almost wilful blindness about events in Europe. All the papers declared insistently that war was unlikely and

blamed the secular press for maliciously creating war
scares. "The Press Klaxons crash and the din is
terrific", wrote Brian Doyle in 1936. The cable
services, the press gang, the money barons and the
armament manufacturers were all owned and controlled by
the one group, he declared, and they were busy putting
forward as news, propaganda war war, "designed to
enslave the people for many a century ahead". 171 This
charge was repeated endlessly, until in the months before
the war it reached almost hysterical proportions. In
January 1939 the editor of the Freeman's Journal demanded
press censorship in the interests of peace. 172 The
possibility of war would considerably recede, he wrote
several weeks later, if the "continuous flow of stupid
hatefulness" and the "sensational stories of the plans
of the Chancelleries" which daily appeared in the press
could be stopped. They merely ruffled feathers every-
where, and retarded the good and honest work of world
leaders who were aiming at a quiet and complete settlement
of international problems. 173 As late as August both
Sydney papers were condemning the "war mongering press"

173. Ibid., 9 February 1939.
for alarming the nation, and even the Catholic Worker joined in the accusations. For the most part members of the hierarchy and other Catholic figures did not make any statements about the war. In Brisbane a priest who spoke to returned servicemen on Anzac day told his audience that he did not believe that "any of the Balkan squabbles", chronic menaces for as long as he could remember, were worth as much as a single drop of British or Australian blood. Australia's immediate concerns had nothing to do with Europe, rather they were with trade and defence in the Pacific, relief of unemployment and a more equitable distribution of the material goods of the world. In Melbourne, Mannix accused the press of raising needless war scares, and deplored Australia's declining birthrate in a period when "wars and rumours of wars" were upsetting the world. Catholics did, however, show their feelings in regard to war in what the Advocate described as "Australia's greatest peace Rally". The rally, which was organised by the Catholic Peace Committee at the suggestion

174. Catholic Press, 17 August 1939; Catholic Freeman's Journal, 17 August 1939; Catholic Worker, 2 September 1939.

175. Catholic Leader, 27 April 1939.

176. Advocate, 6 April 1939; Catholic Freeman's Journal, 22 June 1939.
of the secretariat of Catholic action, was the climax of a month's prayer for world peace asked for in May 1939 by the Pope. Sixty thousand people watched a parade of war veterans through the streets of Melbourne to the town hall. There, "peace lovers of every creed and class" united in "a gigantic deputation to the Australian government", urging it to redouble its efforts for peace. Peace resolutions were also sent to the Pope and the leaders of Britain, America, France, Italy, Germany and Poland. Archbishop Mannix and several other Victorian bishops, the prime minister, Robert Menzies, the state premier and many other prominent citizens attended. In his plea for peace, Mannix insisted that all justice in the conflict in Europe was not on one side, and that the totalitarian states were accomplishing some very fine things. A Sydney editor pointed to the rally as an example of the general attitude of Australians towards war. He declared that, although the ordinary citizen did not want war, he might just as well be a robot for all the influence he had on foreign policy decisions which could easily lead to war.

Neither arguments against war nor a refusal to face

177. Lyons had died in office on 7 April 1939.
178. Argus, 29 May 1939; Advocate, 1 June 1939.
179. Catholic Freeman's Journal, 8 June 1939.
facts could avert the crisis which developed in Europe at the end of August. On 1 September, the Germans invaded Poland, and Britain was forced to honour her pledge to defend the country. For two days the British government debated its promise of immediate assistance, but finally declared war on Germany on 3 September 1939. The Australian people took the news calmly, and there were very few dissenters when, in his speech to the nation the same evening, Menzies stressed that no separate declaration of war was necessary. Britain was at war, and it followed logically that Australia was at war too.\textsuperscript{180} This was precisely the state of affairs against which the Catholic press had argued for months, even years. Catholic editors and writers believed that the Australian people should have been consulted about their willingness to follow Britain into a war in Europe. One would expect to find, therefore, an immediate and strong opposition on their part to Australia's automatic participation in the war. Such was not the case. There is no evidence of any dissent by Catholics from the almost unanimous support by Australians for Britain and France. The Russian-German alliance removed the only real obstacle

\textsuperscript{180. Andrews, \textit{Isolationism and Appeasement}, 182-83.}
to Catholic approval of the allies. A Brisbane priest had stated several months earlier that if Britain went to war, Australians would follow the call of duty.\textsuperscript{181} This is precisely what they did, encouraged by the very papers which had earlier insisted on a difference between Britain's wars and Australia's. "Catholics in Australia are at one with their fellow citizens in the fight", wrote the Leader editor. He stressed that the fight was not against Germans, but against "that diabolical thing, that minion of the Powers of Darkness called Nazism".\textsuperscript{182} Australians, as loyal subjects of his Majesty the King, and members of the British Commonwealth of Nations, said another who had argued most consistently for Australian autonomy, would make their sacrifices cheerfully with rest of the empire in the dark hours ahead.\textsuperscript{183} All agreed that the cause for which Britain and Australia fought was a just one. Every effort for peace had been rudely brushed aside by Hitler, who appeared to have been rushed into action by a dramatic last-moment push from Stalin, in the view of

\begin{footnotes}

\textsuperscript{181} Catholic Leader, 27 April 1939.

\textsuperscript{182} Ibid., 7 September 1939.

\textsuperscript{183} Catholic Freeman's Journal, 7 September 1939.
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The national leaders of Great Britain and France had been compelled to go to war for the defence of European civilisation, wrote another. All Australians must resolutely work for the day when Hitlerism was destroyed, and liberty is again restored in Europe. Deploiring "arbitrament by the sword" as every Christian must, the editor of the *Freeman's Journal* was forced sadly to conclude that if rule by brute force were to be checked and oppression discouraged in Europe, Britain and France had little alternative but to take up the gauntlet Hitler had flung into the arena when he marched across the Polish border. Although the apparent Australian unanimity of opinion at the beginning of the war masked several groups of dissenters, Catholics did not constitute such a group. Most Irish Catholic Australians apparently differed little in attitude from other Australians when faced with the claims of empire in a time of crisis.

The most striking feature of Australian Catholic reaction to Hitler and events in Germany is that it was

187. These included the communists, who supported Russia and the ALP, still strongly isolationist. Andrews, 189.
confined almost totally to the Catholic press. There were very few statements by members of the hierarchy or clergy, no meetings of protest other than the peace rally in Melbourne, no debates by young intellectuals as there were over the Spanish Civil war. Australians generally were slow to realise the nature of Hitler's policies, and the available evidence suggests that Catholics were even slower, in spite of the fact that Hitler was systematically destroying their church in Germany. One reason was undoubtedly that Australian Catholics, like American Catholics, were preoccupied with the Spanish Civil war. Communism was the enemy of the church in every land, and Australian clerics and the Catholic press continually warned against its advance, not only in the wider world, but much closer to home in Australia. The Spanish Civil war was a clear illustration, in the view of most Catholic spokesmen, of what happened when communism and Catholicism came into conflict. By contrast with the savage methods employed in the annihilation of the church in Red Spain, wrote a Catholic editor, those of the German nazis appeared humane.188 So Catholics concentrated their gaze on the very visible struggle in Catholic Spain, and ignored or minimised the

188. Catholic Leader, 31 March 1938.
more subtle one in Germany. Australian Catholic spokesmen did not enter into long discussions as to the relative merits of communism and fascism. But they did believe, as did American Catholics, that the church could come to a working agreement with the latter, as the concordats concluded between the Vatican and both Italy and Germany proved. A strong Germany was considered necessary to check communist aggression in Europe, and Catholic commentators tended to gloss over or ignore the worst features of the totalitarian regimes. No Catholic writer or spokesman in Australia ever expressed approval of nazism, but neither did they very often condemn it. In common with a large number of other Australians, they supported a policy of appeasement in the last years before the war, and this made it appear that they chose fascism rather than communism.

Australian Catholics strongly supported isolationism, and argued against Australian participation in a future European war. This was due partly to their traditional Irish antipathy towards Britain and their history of antagonism to conscription. It was also an attitude they shared with many other groups in the society. Australia was a long way from Europe, and its people were much less internationally conscious than Americans, in spite of the latter's traditional policy of non-involvement
in European affairs. As has been noted, Australians had little interest in international affairs in the thirties, and it would take several years of aggressive policies by dictators and other leaders in Europe and Asia to rouse them to any real degree of concern. It was only in the early months of 1939, according to one commentator, that Australians began "in a more lively way to take stock of international events." Membership of an international church apparently did not make Catholics any more sensitive to world affairs than other Australians. Distance played its part in this respect, too, but so also did the undue emphasis on Irish affairs in the Australian Catholic press. Those Catholics who read their diocesan papers were very well informed on Irish life and politics, but could learn little about events anywhere else in the world, unless they were in some way connected with the church's activities. Other than editorial comment, there was little in the way of informed discussion of international affairs, and a heavy reliance on articles reprinted from overseas Catholic papers and journals. Catholic membership

189. This is the view of Dr. L. Rumble, M.S.C., letter, 23 September 1971.
190. Round Table, 29 (June 1939) 627.
of the ALP was another reason for their isolationism. This was the policy adopted by Labor in the early thirties as the only one to hold together its widely differing ideological components, and it remained isolationist until war commenced. Staunch Catholic Labor members were also staunch isolationists.

The apparently complete identification of Catholics with most other Australians in their acceptance of Britain's war as their own and Australia's duty to empire commitments is in direct contrast to the attitude of the Catholic press in the months leading to war. In spite of insistent demands that Australia pursue an independent policy, and that Australians be consulted about their role in future wars, the Catholic writers no less than their readers and most other Catholics supported their country's participation in the war against Germany. Irish anti-British feeling was not strong enough to overcome their loyalty to country and empire as Australian citizens. American Catholics often were compelled to argue that Americanism and Catholicism were not incompatible. Australian Catholics had no such problem. They were Australians who were also Catholics, and in very few areas did one loyalty conflict with the other.
PART 6

CONCLUSION

A study of Catholic reaction to European diplomatic crises in the years 1935 to 1939 is in large part a study of the relationship of the church, official and otherwise, to the phenomenon of certain new ideologies, especially as they were manifested in the totalitarian regimes of fascism and communism, which characterised the period between the two wars. A simple answer to the question of how the church responded to the new political ideologies would be that Catholicism accepted, or at least did not condemn fascism, while bitterly opposing communism. The church’s attitude to many events during the decade of the thirties would seem to confirm this. Official Catholic silence when Mussolini invaded Ethiopia contrasted sharply with the outcry when Catholics were persecuted in other countries. Was a black-skinned Ethiopian less worthy of respect than a persecuted Christian of Russia, Mexico or Spain? Such righteous indignation as flamed when a Russian peasant was struck down was not evident when Hitler turned on the Jews in Germany. If it was urgent and just to protest against communist crimes, it did not seem equally urgent and just to condemn fascist
crimes. In many instances in the thirties, the church appeared to be more concerned for its institutional interests than for freedom and justice for all men.

The response of the church to a given situation is conditioned by a number of factors which relate not only to the institutional international church but also to the church in a particular country. In any crucial situation, the behaviour of the Catholic church may be more reliably predicted by reference to its concrete interests as a political organisation than by reference to its timeless dogmas. Those "timeless dogmas", however, are of sufficient flexibility to allow the church to accommodate itself to a wide variety of political conditions. Leo XIII was the first pope to liberate the church from what had become, over the centuries, a strong identification with monarchy. He recognised that new and different forms of government were evolving and he reformulated Catholic political doctrine to prepare the way for their acceptance. Leo stated that the church would not reject any form of government that was fitted to procure the welfare of the subject. The only condition

of acceptance was that any government should be constituted without involving wrong to anyone and especially without violating the rights of the church. This doctrine was reiterated and amplified by later popes, including Pius XI in 1933.

The neutrality of the church towards various forms of government is an ideological adjunct of church diplomacy, necessitated by the international character of the church. The world-wide interests of Catholicism demand flexibility. More basically, this neutrality derives from the fact that the chief concern of the church is with the supernatural aspects of human life. To protect its pastoral mission the church will work with all types of government, and these acts of accommodation, either in the form of a concordat or without such a formal tie, make ideological intransigence almost impossible. 4 If the church is allowed to carry on its pastoral work, as was the case in Fascist Italy and initially in Nazi Germany, bishops will urge their flocks to be loyal to the existing governments. If its rights


4. Lewy, The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany, 332.
are violated, if churches and schools are destroyed and religious persons killed, as in Mexico and Spain, the church will support even an insurrection, provided the rebels promise to protect its interests when they come to power.

The Catholic church has always affirmed its right and duty to confront all moral issues. According to Catholic teaching, every aspect of man's life pertaining to the moral order, including many political, social and economic problems, are of concern to conscience and the salvation of man, and therefore come within the authority and care of the church. It is in the world precisely to ensure the establishment and continuance of a just order and to direct the consciences and actions of men in the midst of the conflicting claims and pressures of the world. Regrettably the record of the church does not always accord with these ideals. Being the church of men, it has often succumbed to the temptation to make itself at home in the world, to be intent only on making itself secure and free from opposition and persecution. The church's efforts to come to terms with the totalitarian

governments in the thirties and its lack of condemnation of them could be interpreted in this light. The Spanish Civil war, wrote a former editor of *Commonweal*, was a prime example of the church being "too much involved in the temporal order, where churchmen seemed to be committing the church to one side of a very complex political situation". 6

The acceptance of and attempted adaptation to authoritarian regimes was facilitated by the church's hierarchical constitution and the affinity for authoritarian ideas produced in its make-up. Catholic social ideals as set forth in the social encyclicals of Leo XIII and Pius XI have more in common with the fascist concept of the functions of the leader and the vocational hierarchy of the fascist state than they do with systems of parliamentary democratic government. 7 Church leaders believed that strong governments were needed in the 1930s to stop the spread of communism and in many cases appeared to have little faith in democracy's ability to withstand the tide. As long as fascist movements claimed to be bulwarks against communism, the church was willing to

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accept, at least for a time, the loss of political liberties that followed their accession to power. This benevolence towards fascist regimes on the part of the official church posed problems for its adherents in democratic countries. Many American Catholic spokesmen, while making a case for fascism, continued to regard American democracy as the highest and most desirable form of government. They continually rejected accusations that their church exhibited fascist tendencies, as they argued that Catholicism and true Americanism were not incompatible.

Preoccupation with the growth and extension of atheistic communism was an overriding influence on church policies in the 1930s. This already existing hostility to communism was reinforced by the personal experiences of both Pius XI and his secretary of state, Cardinal Pacelli. These two men had served as papal nuncios in Poland and Germany respectively, and what they saw there of communist activities influenced their policies when they became heads of the church. Both were determined to crush communism and in consequence both showed considerable sympathy for Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, whose governments professed to detest communism. Their attitude of anti-communism also caused them to support Franco and the

8. Lewy, 328.
Nationalists in the Spanish Civil War.

Many historians have accused the church of allowing nazism and fascism to develop unchecked. They believe that the excessive concern with communism as a threat to Catholicism darkened the judgment of the pope and other church leaders. It is possible that these leaders exaggerated the danger of communism. It is also probable that they misjudged the consequences, in terms of persecution of the church, of forthright condemnation of fascist governments. In common with other diplomats and political leaders, they made mistakes in their relations with the dictators and apparently failed to recognize the threat they posed to the democratic world.

If the policy of the church's leaders in regard to fascism and communism was conditioned by factors relating to the international character of the church, what can be said about the attitudes of those who make up the body of the church? In particular, did American and Australian Catholics in the 1930s reflect the policy of the official church or did other factors transform this policy into attitudes peculiar to each country? Modern man is subject to pressures from a wide variety of social institutions to which he belongs as a citizen. Because of the diversity and distinctive characteristics of these pressures, men who make up the church in different countries give each
national church a particular character. The Catholic church in the United States and Australia therefore reflects some of the characteristics of those two societies. American and Australian Catholics bring their own national traits to an interpretation of the church's official policy and add to it ideas and reactions resulting from the peculiar social and political pressures to which they are subject.

When church leaders adopted a very strong policy in the thirties, as they did in regard to communism, large numbers of Catholics in both countries accepted this policy. The war in Spain proves this beyond doubt. However, there is sufficient evidence to show that opposition to communism was reinforced in the two countries by different political realities. In Australia it was related to large Catholic membership of the ALP, which was also the political party of many Australian communists and their sympathisers. In the United States it was a compound of reaction to the Mexican situation, the government's recognition of Russia in 1933 and accusations of communist tendencies in certain New Deal policies, which Catholics largely supported. In both countries the true extent of Catholic support for the Nationalists was concealed by the publicity given to the
church's official view of the war. Many Catholics in the United States and Australia evidently found sufficient reasons for not endorsing that official policy. 9

Catholic attitudes in the two countries were also related to the political framework in which the church existed. American Catholics belonged to a republic, Australian Catholics to an empire. The matter of sanctions against Italy became an important question to Australians, not merely because the pope and the official church had come to a working agreement with Mussolini, but also because England's policy was empire policy.

In opposing this imperial policy, Australian Catholics had the support of the Labor party, which after 1917 had adopted isolationism, and so opposed sanctions through fear of war. Many American Catholics presumably opposed sanctions for what might be termed official Catholic reasons, but they were also in agreement with most other Americans in demanding abstention from sanctions because of the renewed isolationist mood which dominated the United States in the two decades between the wars.

9. The results of two polls in the United States give evidence of American Catholic dissent from the official attitude. In Australia the evidence is less conclusive but is sufficient to support this view. See above, 339, 407-8.
Australian Catholic spokesmen had a long record of opposition to British foreign policy as the norm for Australia, and this continued throughout the 1930s as Hitler brought Europe steadily closer to war. But all Australian Catholics accepted participation in that war as their patriotic duty when their government followed Britain into hostilities against Germany in September 1939. Australian Catholics, like those in the United States, were an immigrant-based minority in a largely Protestant society. What they considered a lack of acceptance of them by the larger society caused considerable concern to American Catholics throughout their history and was still evident in the thirties. Australian Catholics, although seeing themselves as different from other Australians in some ways, had no such problem. In the secular sphere they were indistinguishable from their Protestant neighbours, as was clearly illustrated by their immediate and total merging with the larger society in a war which their spokesmen had consistently opposed during the preceding decade.

The opinion leaders of the church in both countries did little in the 1930s to mediate between the official Catholic view of European events and the attitudes of those Americans and Australians who were also Catholics.
Members of the hierarchy and other church spokesmen as well as the press editors and writers almost completely ignored the secular realities which daily influenced the opinions and reactions of the laity. Those who argued for Australian abstention from sanctions or American isolation from the problems in Europe caused by fascist aggressions did so for almost purely ideological reasons. They usually did not advance economic or political reasons for their views, nor did they often appeal to a nationalist spirit which would urge the superiority of democratic values and way of life. Most American and Australian Catholic spokesmen discussed current issues and events in terms of opposition to communism and in relation to the welfare of the institutional church. In both countries articulate Catholic opinion was directed to an audience of Catholics who happened also to be Americans and Australians.

In the 1930s the American church was considerably more open than the Australian. There was a higher level of education among American Catholics and more discussion within the church with more dissenting opinions. In both countries, however, church leaders urged a united Catholic front to promote church interests and teachings, to spread the acceptance of Christian moral principles and
to defend social and political institutions against the spread of communism and secularism. The desire for a monolithic American Catholicism can be seen in such events as the sharp and often bitter reaction of many Catholics to George Shuster's attempts at dialogue with American liberals, the sudden loss of circulation by Commonweal when it abandoned the Franco cause, the bitter letters sent to John Ryan after he attacked Coughlin and defended Roosevelt and the collapse of the Catholic Worker's popularity when it refused to abandon pacifism after Pearl Harbour. In Australia, Jackson urged the young men of the Campion society to create a true Catholic society based on medieval and European models, all editors of the Catholic press warned continually of the dangers to faith in the secular society and members of the Irish clergy were suspicious of the newly-organised Newman societies in the universities, named as they often were after an English intellectual who was not among their heroes.

There was virtually no exchange of ideas between the two churches, in spite of their similarity. References to

10. O'Brien, Catholics and Social Reform, 225.
the Australian church by Americans was rare, being confined to comments on its growth and fervour and to such items as Archbishop Mannix's continued opposition to conscription and war. Australian Catholic editors sometimes reprinted articles from the American press, but these were usually taken from conservative publications like the Boston Pilot or devotional journals like Ave Maria. They did not feature items from the more liberal journals like Commonweal or America, nor did they indicate any American dissent from the official view on particular issues.

Official Catholic policy in the 1930s unhappily reinforced the general image of the church as authoritarian, conservative and sympathetic to undemocratic, fascist forms of government. Because the church in Australia and the United States remained rigid in hierarchical structure and narrow in social outlook, dissent from the official Catholic policy on European diplomatic crises in this decade was not always evident. It existed, nevertheless, because of other factors in American and Australian society which influenced Catholics who were subject to them. One can only hope that if a moral challenge comparable to that of the fascist dictators should again threaten society, the official church would wholeheartedly support
opposition to it and thus give better moral guidance to the rest of mankind.
A NOTE ON SOURCES

For reasons explained in Part One, the Catholic press in the United States and Australia was the most important single source for this study. This was supplemented by the daily press of both countries. Access to some important diocesan archives in the United States gave a dimension to that part of the study dealing with American Catholicism which is absent from the Australian section. In this latter country church archives are not yet open to scholars. It is regrettable that, owing to a series of mishaps and partial neglect, the papers of Cardinal Mundelein have largely been destroyed. Only those letters of the prelate which are preserved in other manuscript collections are available to researchers.

The papers of Monsignor John A. Ryan and William Montavon, legal director of the NCWC, held in the archives of the Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C. are most valuable not only because of the importance of these two men in the American church, but also because their correspondence touched, directly or indirectly, most of the major church figures of their day. There are no comparable collections of private papers relating to the
Australian church.

The Franklin D. Roosevelt Papers at Hyde Park, New York, are indispensable to any study of the 1930s. There is a large section relating to the Catholic church, as well as correspondence with a wide spectrum of Catholics on a variety of subjects. Other manuscript collections consulted, including records of the State department in the United States National Archives and of the Prime Minister's department in the Australian Commonwealth Archives were of marginal value only.

There are very few secondary works on the topic of American or Australian Catholicism in the 1930s. Two recently published studies of the church in America were helpful not only as guides to available sources but also in providing background for this thesis. They are George Q. Flynn, American Catholics and the Roosevelt Presidency 1932-1936 (1968) and David J. O'Brien, American Catholics and Social Reform: The New Deal Years (1968). No historian has written a comparable study of the Australian church. Nor are there many significant publications on the Australian political scene in the 1930s, a period which is only now coming under the scrutiny of intensive historical research. The same is not true, however, of the New Deal years in the United States, which have been examined by historians under
almost every aspect. Even here, however, Catholic opinion and reaction must be sought mainly in contemporary Catholic papers and periodicals.
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