

God and Der Fuehrer

Tacked up on the bulletin boards of Roman Catholic churches throughout Vienna last week was this neatly printed notice: "Render to God the things that are God's and to the Fuehrer the things that are the Fuehrer's."

The humblest worshiper who stopped to read knew the notice had something to do with the bitter clash of authority between the Austrian Catholic Church and the Nazi party. Both church and party agree that Catholics owe separate duties to religion and state. They do not agree, however, on the boundary line. To blue-eyed, Sudeten German-born Theodor Cardinal Innitzer, weddings and religious education seem the province of the church. Last month from the pulpit of Vienna's St. Stephen cathedral, he sharply criticized new Nazi laws secularizing marriage rites and the teaching profession (PATH-FINDER, Oct. 22). After the sermon, on the sidewalk outside the church, ardent Catholics chanted Nazi slogans; but instead of crying "Heil Hitler!" they shouted "Heil Christ!"

While those who had done the shouting were losing their jobs last fortnight, Joseph Goebbels, Nazi Propaganda Minister, arose in Hamburg to declare that Catholics must not take the name of their Fuehrer in vain. His warning was clear: "The Catholic sheep called out on the cathedral square, 'Christ is our Fuehrer!' . . . That is frivolous playing with fire . . . What the Cardinals say inside their churches is their own affair. The street, however, belongs to us."

Lining up on the Fuehrer's side, the council of the Evangelical Church of Vienna promised to use its influence "against the Jewish spirit manifest in recent Catholic excesses."

On Sunday morning, Innitzer answered. In a statement read in churches throughout Austria (but ignored by the German press), the Cardinal denied that he had ever declared church

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war on the Fuehrer, called the "Heil Christ" demonstration "unplanned and unforeseen" and protested his loyalty to the Reich. "But," he added, "a bishop must at all times carry out his sworn duty of representing God and the church."

That Cardinal Innitzer's position was extremely delicate, his own church was well aware. Speaking to 300 archaeologists at his villa near Rome, 80-year-old Pope Pius said a word for his harried bishop: Nazi "persecution—that is its true name . . . has mounted as far as the sacred purple of a high pastor . . . We ask ourselves with . . . consternation: What more, what more are we to see?" The leader of 330,000,000 Catholics then compared the Fuehrer of 76,000,000 Germans to such unsavory historical figures as Judas and Nero.

Promptly, Propaganda Minister Goebbels' own paper, *Der Angriff*, charged Pius with "monstrous accusations against Germany." The Pope was told to mind his own business. Impudently, *Der Angriff* inquired: "Who asked 'Christ's representative'?"

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Cross vs. Swastika

The basic conflict between religion—with its emphasis on duty to God—and dictatorship—with its insistence on duty to the state—has long festered in totalitarian countries. Clashes between the Vatican and Mussolini have left a problem still unsolved in Italy (PATHFINDER, Aug. 13). Last month, a pastoral letter circulated by the Roman Catholic episcopate in Germany flung defiance at what the letter described as Nazi efforts to undermine not only Catholicism but all Christianity as well.

Last week, the long-smouldering conflict between cross and swastika was glowing at white heat on a new front—in overwhelmingly Catholic

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Innitzer Was the Center of Attack

Austria, whose absorption by Germany swelled the number of Catholics in the Reich from 21 millions to 27½ millions. Focal personality of the latest church-state clash was 62-year-old Theodore Cardinal Innitzer, Archbishop of Vienna.

In a series of open letters, the Cardinal had attacked Nazi regulations compelling civil rites for all marriages and removing priests and nuns from teaching and hospital posts. Last fortnight, to a congregation that jammed St. Stephen's Church in Vienna and overflowed 10,000 strong in the street outside, the Cardinal delivered a ringing plea to Austrian Catholics to "preserve faith and give open testimony thereof, difficult though that may be." After the service, Catholics demonstrated outside Nazi meeting places, shouting "Heil Innitzer!" and "Heil Christ!"

Reprisal was swift. Next evening, in what looked to foreign newspapermen like a pre-arranged attack, a mob of 5,000 suddenly converged on the Cardinal's palace adjoining St. Stephen's, screaming "Out with the priests!" A barrage of stones smashed every window in the building. One flew into a

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chapel where Innitzer was praying and struck him on the head, injuring him slightly. Rioters battered down the palace door and invaded the building.

After an hour, police quelled the riot. Next day, Vatican officials in Rome announced "with consternation" the "painful news" of the "outrage upon religion and the Church of Christ." No less prompt were Nazi officials themselves. Official circles in Vienna declared that the attack was "deeply regretted" and that "the guilty parties . . . will receive time to reflect upon their conduct in a concentration camp." To non-German observers, the Nazi stand seemed to indicate that extreme care was being exercised to prevent newly acquired Austria from becoming the Serajevo of a finish fight between the Catholic church and the Nazi state.

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