

PATHFINDER



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Nazis, Catholics

In order to show Nazi Germany in its most democratic light at the widely-visited Olympic games last summer, Berlin authorities suddenly stopped prosecution of Catholic priests and monks on immorality charges. After a year's truce, Nazi leaders took up their campaign against the Catholic church several months ago. By closing Catholic schools and putting practically all German youth in State-controlled institutions, they violated the Concordat of 1933 between Pope Pius XI and the Reich.

Two months ago, this brought a protest from the Pope in an encyclical which criticized the inner workings of the German state. Soon afterward, the Pope's letter brought an expression of hurt "surprise" from Adolf Hitler. Last week it brought about resumption and expansion of the trials dropped before the Olympics.

More than 1,000 monks and lay brothers of Catholic monastic orders were revealed to be in prisons all over Germany, awaiting trial on charges ranging from offenses against small girls to homosexuality within the cloisters. Chancellor Hitler's newspaper, the *Voelkische Beobachter*, warned: "It will be quite possible to use the radio to present the trials of Catholic priests and lay brothers to the whole world." The New York Times supplied a footnote: "About one in every 13 men of this great aggregation bound to poverty, chastity and obedience is to be publicly disgraced."

In a message to Berlin from the Vatican, aged Pope Pius warned Adolf Hitler that the Catholic church must be left to fulfill its mission in Nazi Germany. Catholic bishops, in a joint letter read in pulpits all over the Reich, explained: "It is the good right of Catholics to stand up for their schools . . . watch over your children."

But Adolf Hitler, in a May Day speech which went to 150,000 Germans in the flesh and 7,000,000 more at radio sets, had already cleft an irreparable breach between his aims and those of the Catholics. With a reference to his captive monks, he shouted: "We will not tolerate criticism of the State's morals when there appears to be sufficient reason to concern oneself about one's own morals.

"We made a start with the nation's youth. They shall not escape us. We will take them when they are 10 years old and bring them up in the spirit of the community until they are 18. They will join the party, the Storm Troops, the Elite Guard or other formations. Later on they will do two years of military service. Who shall dare say that such training will not produce a nation?"