Bishop Alois Hudal, Römische Tagebücher: Lebensbeichte eines alten Bischofs

Investigator: *There is evidence of Pope Pius XI’s personal interaction with bridge-builder Alois Hudal in October 1934.*

Since the main source for this interaction is Hudal’s memoirs, we must again test statements of an untrustworthy witness against other known facts. Here, on page 117, Hudal speaks of meeting with Pius XI after his Trier speech. That speech took place on September 24, 1934.

It is plausible that Hudal was familiar with the anti-Nazi stance of Catholic clergy in Hudal’s native Austria. It is also consistent with his record that he would argue against that stance.

Hudal says he told Pius XI about his plans for a book called “The Spiritual Foundations of National Socialism.” Hudal says Pius objected that there is nothing spiritual in Nazism.

In fact, Hudal proceeded to write his proposed book. Consistent with the interaction he describes with the pope, Hudal removed “spiritual” from the book’s title, so that his book was entitled “The Foundations of National Socialism.” [*Die Grundlagen des Nationalsozialismus*]

Hudal’s articulation of the “mission” of Nazism is the same as we saw in Ex. 71b. His book proposed a Nazi-Catholic alliance to fulfill that mission.

Thus it appears that Pope Pius XI was on notice in October 1934 that a pro-Nazi Austrian bishop in Rome was starting to write a book on Roman Catholicism and Nazism. Neither Pius XI nor Secretary of State Pacelli, in charge of Vatican policy toward Germany, stopped Hudal from proceeding. Hudal’s book, proposing a “providential mission” for Nazism in alliance with Rome, was presented to Hitler by Papen in mid-1936. While the passage below, from page 119 of Hudal’s memoirs, is interpreted by historian Godman as a “warning” from Pius XI that Hudal refused to heed (p. 54), Godman offers no external evidence to support his interpretation. The fact is: Pius XI’s and Pacelli’s diplomatic policy toward Germany in the timeframe of October 1934 led neither to a rejection of Hudal, nor a blocking of his proposed book, nor a shunning of Thermann.

Hudal’s proposals were based on the premise that there was a division between radical Nazis and moderate-conservative Nazis.

Describing his proposal of the book *Spiritual Foundations of National Socialism* to Pope Pius XI in October 1934, Hudal writes, “I pointed out the great danger that the left wing of Nazism would rise to power and with it those men who absolutely reject Christianity and especially Rome.” (p.118)

Commenting years later on the essential premise of his completed book *The Foundations of National Socialism*, Hudal says: “In Nazism there were two currents, a left-radical and a right-conservative, both struggling for ultimate dominance in the Party. . . . The mission of German Catholics must therefore be to do everything to prevent the left wing of Nazism from coming to the fore. They must energetically strive to have Nazism take up Christian concepts of Folk, family, state, and individuality. Only in this way can a catastrophe be avoided.” (p. 127)

Hudal’s claim of divided Nazism flew in the face of conspicuous facts in Fall 1934: The Nazi Party Congress proclaimed Party unity. Hitler was the Party; Hitler was Germany. See *Triumph of the Will*. The Night of the Long Knives had demonstrated what happened to Party officials, however high-ranking, who fell out with Hitler.