

The Formulation of Nazi Policy towards the Catholic Church in Bavaria from 1933 to 1936

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This study concentrates on the relations between church and state in Bavaria as a problem for Nazi policy-makers at the beginning of Nazi rule. Emphasizing the Nazi side of this problem provides a balance to those studies which either condemn or defend the actions of church leaders during the Nazi period. To understand the past is the first goal of historians. A better understanding of the attitudes and actions of National Socialist leaders and organizations toward the Catholic Church will provide a broader perspective for judging the actions of churchmen. Such an approach can also suggest clues or confirm views about the basic nature of Nazi totalitarianism. Was National Socialism essentially opposed to Catholicism? Was its primary emphasis on domestic policy or on foreign policy? Perhaps basic to these questions is whether Nazism was monolithic in its ruling structure or composed of diverse competing groups. I believe that the question of Nazi church policy is worth studying for its own sake, but it has further implications.

The materials used for this study are mainly microfilms of documents from the Main Archive of the National Socialist German Worker's Party in Munich, and from the files of the *Reich* Governor in Bavaria. An important part of these documents is made up of police reports, which, however, include more than mere descriptions of crimes and charges. But the nature of this material poses the danger of emphasizing those elements for which we have the most documentation. This is the perennial problem of historical interpretation: the problem of to what extent "the medium is the message." This problem must be attacked by applying to the available evidence a combination of historical method and imagination.

While the nature of this documentation limits this study to Bavaria, it can suggest a pattern for the problems of the formulation of Nazi policy toward the Catholic Church in the rest of Germany. Bavaria was the most Catholic part of Germany, nominally about 70%, and was also the birthplace of National Socialism. The church policies pursued by various Nazi leaders after Hitler became Chancellor of Germany were to some degree conditioned by their attitudes towards Catholicism in Bavaria during the previous period.

At the end of the First World War most leaders of the Catholic Church in Bavaria agreed with future Nazis in opposing the end of the German monarchies and the institution of a republic in Germany. Both had a strong dislike for political and economic liberalism, for socialism and communism, and for Jews. The short-lived Soviet Republic in Munich in the spring of 1919 embodied the enemy

for both Catholics and future Nazis.¹ The Archbishop of Munich, Michael Cardinal von Faulhaber, had condemned the 1918 revolution which overthrew the Catholic Wittelsbach monarchy of Bavaria, and gave only grudging recognition to the German and Bavarian constitutions of 1919.²

From the very beginning the Nazis had mixed attitudes toward the Catholic Church. Adolf Hitler, a nominal Catholic, was tolerant of Catholicism. Many other Nazis were practising Catholics. A staunch Catholic and early Nazi patron who will appear later in this study was General Franz Ritter von Epp. He commanded one of the military groups which liberated Munich from Soviet rule in May, 1919. Immediately afterward he ordered a Mass of thanksgiving, for which act of piety he was dubbed by the impious as the “Virgin Mary General” (Muttergottesgeneral).

Besides being opposed to what they called the red international of socialism and the golden international of Judaism, many Nazis were also opposed to the black international of Catholicism. Anti-Catholics among the early Nazis included the leading Nazi philosopher and writer, Alfred Rosenberg, and Hermann Esser, who before he was of age became one of Hitler’s most effective speakers.³ Heinrich Himmler, who joined the National Socialist Party in 1925, was another anti-Catholic who was to become a leading Nazi.

Because of this anti-Catholic aspect of National Socialism, because it made race a kind of religion, because it stressed German nationalism while Catholics were often separatists, and because Nazis attacked the specifically Catholic political parties, there were important religious and political differences between Nazism and Catholicism in the 1920’s. After the spectacular success of the National Socialist Party in the elections to the *Reichstag* in the summer of 1930, Catholic bishops in Germany began forbidding Catholics to be members of the National Socialist Party. By March of 1931 all the German bishops had condemned National Socialism, and some bishops instructed Catholics not to vote for the National Socialist Party in the crucial elections during 1932 and on March 5, 1933.⁴ The eight bishops of Bavaria issued on February 12, 1931, a declaration which listed five false doctrines of Nazism: 1) it puts race before religion, 2) it rejects Old Testament revelation, 3) it denies the primacy of the Pope because he represents an authority outside Germany, 4) it plans an undogmatic National German Church, and 5) it sets up the moral feeling of the German race as the

¹ Ernst Nolte considers the Soviet Republic in Munich as crucial to the formation in Germany of a radical Right. See his “Germany,” in Hans Rogger and Eugen Weber, *The European Right: A Historical Profile* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 1965), 297.

² It was actually the Diocese of Munich and Freising, but I follow the practice of the time in calling it the Diocese of Munich.

³ James Q. Cahill, “Alfred Rosenberg and the Early Years of National Socialism” (Unpublished M. A. Essay, Columbia University, 1960), 64, 106-111, 124.

⁴ Konrad Heiden, *A History of National Socialism* (New York: Knopf, 1935), 152-153. John Mason Brown, *Hitler’s First Foes* (Minneapolis: Burgess, 1936), 6-9.

criterion of Christian morality, which, however, is essentially universal. Priests were forbidden to belong to the National Socialist Party and were instructed to refuse the sacraments to active members.⁵

This was the hostile relationship which existed between National Socialism and Catholicism when Hitler became Chancellor of Germany on January 30, 1933. The situation was especially delicate because the Catholic Church was so deeply involved in the whole public and political life of Germany. For example, the state collected taxes from Catholics for the support of the Catholic Church, and the Catholic schools were state schools.

The first two months after Hitler became Chancellor were ones of adjustment and adaptation by both the new government and the traditional church authorities. In February the police were instructed to discontinue their surveillance of the National Socialist Party, since it was now a government party.⁶ The changing times are indicated by the fact that within a year the Catholic clergy became objects of the surveillance of the Bavarian police.⁷ Also at least one local branch of the National Socialist Party planned a list of sympathetic priests in order to circumvent the local curate's ban on the reception of the sacraments by Catholics who were members of the party.⁸ On March 23 the *Reichstag* gave Hitler dictatorial powers by a two-thirds vote, and on March 29 all the German bishops removed the prohibition of Catholic membership in the National Socialist Party.⁹ The stage was now set for possible cooperation between church and state.

By April the Nazis had control of all the German states either through elections or, as in Bavaria and about half the other states, by a *Reich* decree reorganizing the states and giving the appointed cabinets full legislative powers. *Reich* governors were appointed to the states and represented the authority of the *Reich*.¹⁰ The *Reich* Governor in Bavaria was General Epp. This appointment indicates that Hitler had no desire to antagonize Bavarian Catholics by naming an anti-Catholic as *Reich* Governor of predominantly Catholic Bavaria.

That Epp was not unacceptable to the authorities of the Catholic Church in Bavaria is shown by the invitations to him to take part in the Catholic German Societies Day in early June of 1933 and the *Corpus Christi* processions on May

⁵ Robert d' Harcourt, *The German Catholics* (London: Burns, Oates, Washburne, 1939), 13-14.

⁶ Exact reference lost, but similar to footnote 8.

⁷ Bayerische Politische Polizei, den 23. Mai 1935, referring to an order of January 6, 1934; Records of the National Socialist German Labor Party, Washington National Archives Microcopy T-81, Roll 184, frame 0334139. The following references to these microfilms will be cited by this method: NAM 184/0334139. The citation of letters will often shorten the title of the addressee.

⁸ Auszug aus dem Halbmonatsbericht des Regierungspräsidium von Niederbayern and Oberpfalz, von 20. Februar 1933, NSDAP Hauptarchiv, Folder 1758, Hoover Institution Microfilm, Reel 24A (very near the end).

⁹ Brown, *op. cit.*, 81

¹⁰ Herbert Jacob, *German Administration since Bismarck* (New Haven and London: Yale University, 1963), 119.

31, 1933, and June 15, 1934. But the *Reich* Governor declined the invitations to the *Corpus Christi* processions ‘out of considerations related to constitutional law.’¹¹

In May of 1933, Epp considered accepting the invitation to be honorary president of the Catholic German Societies meeting in Munich from June 8 through June 11, with over 20,000 delegates expected.¹² However, on June 2 the Bavarian Political Police banned the convention.¹³ Immediately, organizations of travel agencies, hotels and restaurants protested the loss of business that would result from the ban, and the executive of the convention asked for a reconsideration.¹⁴ The ban was lifted and Epp apparently attended, but not in any official capacity.¹⁵ On the eve of the last day, the convention was broken up by Nazi Storm Troops.¹⁶ The Bavarian Political Police blamed the executive for getting the wise original ban reserved and putting in an unpleasant situation the official delegates, Bavarian Economics Minister Graf Quadt and the Vice Chancellor of the *Reich*, Franz von Papen. They forbade similar conventions in the future.¹⁷

Another interpretation could be that by allowing the convention to be held and then breaking it up by violence, the Nazis satisfied the businessmen but showed the Catholics that they could not put on a show of strength and dominate the streets of a city for several days. The Nazis had won control of the streets from the Communists and Socialists before Hitler became Chancellor, and they were not

¹¹ Das Ordinariat des Erzbistums München and Freising, den 1. Juni 1933, An den Herrn Reichstatthalter, NAM 184/0334868. *Ibid.*, den 25. Mai 1934, NAM 184/0334861. [Memo], 6. Juni 1933, NAM 184/0334867. [Memo], den 30. Mai 1934, NAM 184/0334862.

¹² Generalpräsidium des Katholischen Gesellenvereins, den 10. April 1933, An den Herrn Reichstatthalter, NAM 185/0335245-6. *Ibid.*, den 2. Mai 1933, NAM 185/0335244. Der Reichstatthalter in Bayern, den 6. Mai 1933, an das Wirtschaftsministerium, NAM 185/0335243. Staatsministerium für Wirtschaft, den 9. Mai 1933, an den H Das Ordinariat des Erzbistums München and Freising, den 1. Juni 1933, An den Herrn Reichstatthalter, NAM 184/0334868. *Ibid.*, den 25. Mai 1934, NAM 184/0334861. [Memo], 6. Juni 1933, NAM 184/0334867. [Memo], den 30. Mai 1934, NAM 184/0334862. Herrn Staatssekretär des Herrn Reichstatthalters in Bayern, NAM 185/0335242.

¹³ Clipping, *Münchener Zeitung* (?), 3/4 Juni 1933, NAM 185/0335223.

¹⁴ Telegrams to Epp, June 5, 1933, NAM 185/0335217-22.

¹⁵ Card, Herr Exzellenz Reichstatthalter Ritter v. Epp nimmt als Gast am Ersten Deutscher Gesellentag München 1933 teil, NAM 185/0335192.

¹⁶ Letter to Epp from Protestant former military colleague, Fürstenfeld-Bruck, den 11.6 [19] 33, NAM 185/0335187-9.

¹⁷ Clipping, *M[ünchener] N[eu]este N[achrichten]*, 12.6. [19]33, "Erklärung der Bayerischen Politischen Polizei," NAM 185/0335182. Staatsministerium des Innern, Der Politische Polizeikommandeur Bayerns, den 20. Juni 1933, to government and police officials listing exceptions to the June 13 decree banning all public meetings, NAM 184/0333785.

going to let the Catholics prevent them from having a monopoly now.

But regardless of what interpretation is placed on them, these events are an example of church policy being imposed by an agency of the National Socialist Party with the cooperation of the police and against the wishes of the *Reich* Governor and several members of the *Reich* and Bavarian cabinets. Here we see the interaction of the five institutions involved in the formulation and implementation of church policy in Bavaria: the party, the police, the Bavarian Cabinet, the *Reich* authorities in Berlin, and the *Reich* Governor in Bavaria.

Of these five, the *Reich* Governor was the most sympathetic to the Catholic Church. That this was also the opinion of the bishops is indicated by the fact that four of the eight Bavarian bishops appealed to him against the actions of the party and the police during June, 1933.¹⁸ Apparently the *Reich* Governor was powerless to prevent or redress local party violence against Catholics, police action against Catholic societies, and lack of police protection for the clergy. He seemed to think that he had more chance of success in trying to reverse a local party office's expropriation of the property of a Catholic youth society in Landau in eastern Bavaria. Epp was opposed by Adolf Wagner, who, besides being Bavarian Minister of the Interior, was also the regional party leader, or *Gauleiter*, of Munich and Upper Bavaria. Wagner argued that confiscation of property was a party matter and that it was the *Reich* Governor's duty to help the party get better quarters. Epp said that to confiscate the property of religious societies was illegal whether done by the party or the state.¹⁹ But six months later Epp was still seeking in vain to have the property restored to the Catholic youth society.²⁰ The *Reich* Governor in Bavaria was unsuccessful in a contest with a local party office.

The Bavarian Cabinet generally pursued a more aggressive church policy than desired by the *Reich* Governor in Bavaria and the *Reich* authorities in Berlin. In

¹⁸ Das Erzbischöfliche Ordinariat Bamberg, den 2. Juni 1933, An Herrn Reichstatthalter, NAM 185/0335179. Abschrift des Briefes des Herrn Bischof Ludwig von Speyer vom 27. Juni 1933, NSDAP Hauptarchiv, Folder 489, Hoover Institution Microfilm, Reel 24 (at the beginning.) All the following references to material from the NSDAP Hauptarchiv are from Folder 489, Reel 24, and will be cited at HIM. Since the frames of this microfilm are not numbered, a number will be given to indicate the sequence of documents in the folder. These numbers correspond to my listing of the contents of the folder and range unequally but consecutively from 1 to 41. Auszug aus den Briefen des Herrn Bischof Ludwig von Speyer vom 1. Juli 1933, An Reichstatthalter, HIM 1. Abschrift, Bischöfliches Ordinariat Würzburg, 29 Juni [191 33, An Reichstatthalter, HIM 1.

¹⁹ Das Bischöfliche Ordinariat Passau, den 2. August 1933, An Herrn Reichstatthalter, NAM 185/0334985-6. Reichstatthalter in Bayern, Der Staatssekretär, den 9. August 1933, an Reichsleiter Bouhler, NAM 185/0334975. NSDAP Gauleitung, Bayerische Ostmark, den 29. 8. 1933, an Bouhler, NAM 185/0334976. NSDAP Kreisleitung Landau/Isar, den 26. VIII [191 33, an die Gauleitung Bayr. Ostmark, NAM 185/0334977-84.

²⁰ An den Herrn Bayer. Ministerpräsidenten, 3. März 1934, 6. April 1934, 23. Mai 1934, NAM 185/0334965, 0334964, 0334963.

July the *Reich* Government signed a Concordat which was very favorable to the Catholic Church in Germany. This gave legal guarantees to the church in Germany for its important position in public life, in return for which the Catholic Church agreed to withdraw from politics. The Bavarian Cabinet was apparently not consulted prior to the conclusion of this first Concordat between the Vatican and all of Germany. The violence, confiscation of property and arrest of priests which Catholics had hoped would end after the signing of the Concordat did not end, and complaints continued coming in to the Bavarian authorities. By the fall of 1933, complaints about police action against Catholic societies were being received through diplomatic channels. Bavaria had a long tradition of separate diplomatic relations with the Vatican.

The first record of such a complaint through diplomatic channels comes from a meeting of the Bavarian Cabinet on October 10, 1933. The papal nuncio in Munich, Msgr. A. Vassallo di Torregrossa, had delivered a note protesting against police restrictions on Catholic societies and threatened that the Berlin nunciature would protest to the *Reich* Government if there was not a satisfactory answer. The cabinet decided to authorize a conciliatory answer in order not to hinder the agreements still necessary for the implementation of the Concordat. But they recommended that, since the Bavarian Political Police had acted legally, police action be merely suspended and that there be no cancellation of the decrees under which the police had acted. Adolf Wagner, the Minister of the Interior and therefore in charge of the Bavarian Political Police, took a somewhat moderate stand in saying that he approved of an agreement with the nuncio despite the not always friendly attitude of the church authorities.²¹

Before the cabinet meeting on October 24, the *Reich* Government had issued an order to settle the matter of the property of the Catholic youth societies in accordance with the Concordat.²² In agreement with this, the Bavarian Cabinet made the important policy decision that “despite difficulties, the Bavarian State was ready to do everything to carry out the Concordat in Bavaria.”²³ Three days later, however, Hermann Esser, now the Bavarian Secretary of State, and Minister of the Interior Wagner negated this decision. They collaborated on a letter to the nuncio which accused the clergy of irresponsibility in the pulpit and of attacking the new National Socialist state.²⁴ On the same day, October 27, Secretary of State Esser notified *Reich* Governor Epp that the question of the loyalty of part of the

²¹ Ministerratsitzung vom 10. Oktober 1933, HIM 3 (also in NAM 185/0335172-3).

²² Der Reichsminister des Innern, den 19. Oktober 1933, An den Herrn Reichstatthalter in Bayern, NAM 185/0334949.

²³ Ministerratsitzung vom 24. Oktober 1933, HIM 3.

²⁴ Abdruck, Staatskanzlei des Freistaates Bayern, den 27. Oktober 1933, An Apostolischer Nuntius Msgr. Vassallo di Torregrossa, HIM 3.

The nuncio replied on December 16, but by that time the question was not of major importance to the Bavarian Cabinet and apparently was not pursued any further.

clergy would have to be settled before the Concordat could be observed.²⁵ In the Bavarian Cabinet there were at least these two influential party members, Hermann Esser and Adolf Wagner, who were not willing to submit to *Reich* instructions to carry out the Concordat. Furthermore, they were conducting independent and sharp diplomatic relations with the Vatican. Bavarian separatism seemed very much alive, only now it was an anti-Catholic separatism.

The Bavarian Cabinet's last independent diplomatic relations with the Vatican concerned the election appeal of the Bavarian bishops for the combined plebiscite and election on November 12, 1933. The plebiscite was to approve Germany's withdrawal from the League of Nations and the election was for the *Reichstag* from a one-party slate of candidates. Two members of the Bavarian Cabinet spoke to the Archbishop of Bamberg about an election appeal by the Bavarian bishops. Accompanying Hermann Esser on this mission was the Minister of Education and Worship, Hans Schemm, who was also the *Gauleiter* for eastern Bavaria.²⁶

Four days before the voting the Bavarian bishops issued an appeal. It called for an affirmative vote for Germany's withdrawal from the League of Nations as a vote in favor of peace and the equal rights of the German people. But the bishops made clear that this in no way was an endorsement of the measures taken in Bavaria against Catholic societies, the security of denominational schools, and respect for the Lord's Day, all of which were guaranteed by the Concordat. On the question of the *Reichstag* elections, the bishops stated that since this was a matter of party politics they would have to be neutral. The appeal closed with the requirements that it could be reproduced only in its entirety.²⁷

This appeal was immediately banned. The next day, November 10, Hermann Esser explained it to the cabinet ministers this way:

In view of the general tenor of the appeal and especially the improper criticism it contains, after reporting to the *Reich* Chancellor and in cooperation with the *Reich* Minister for Public Information and Publicity, I have forbidden the dissemination of the appeal through the press in Bavaria ...²⁸

But on the eve of the elections the Bavarian State Radio broadcast that part of the appeal which recommended voting "yes" in the plebiscite, and party leaders in Munich put up posters to the same effect.²⁹

²⁵ Staatskanzlei des Freistaates Bayern, den 27. Oktober 1933, an Epp, Siebert, Schemm, Frank, Rohm, HIM 3.

²⁶ Ministerratsitzung vom 21. November 1933, HIM 5. Abschrift, Segretario di Stato di Sua Santità, den 19. Dezember 1933, HIM 9.

²⁷ Erzdiözese München and Freising Amtsblatt, 8. November, 1933, HIM 4.

²⁸ Abdruck, Der Chef der Staatskanzlei des Freistaates Bayern, den 10. November 1933, an Siebert, Wagner, Frank, Schemm, copy to Epp, HIM 4.

²⁹ Abschrift, Der Erzbischof von München, den 18. November 1933, An die Staatskanzlei des bayerischen Ministerrates, HIM 7.

This charge was not rebutted at the next meeting of the Bavarian Cabinet, as

These are the undisputed aspects of the quarrel over the bishops' election appeal. The disputed questions were whether the party and state had coerced the bishops to make an appeal, whether it was proper for the bishops to include criticism in such an appeal, and whether Cardinal Faulhaber had approved the publication of only the first part of the appeal.³⁰

More pertinent to this study, however, is the evidence on this question of both radical and moderate tendencies in the actions of the Bavarian Cabinet. At the cabinet meeting two days after the election, the Minister President was instructed to inform the bishops that the cabinet considered their appeals as a "stab in the back," an expression reminiscent of the charge that traitors within Germany has caused her to lose the Great War.³¹ This suspicion of the bishops' patriotism was intensified after Cardinal Faulhaber warned the Bavarian Cabinet that

We will remember this ban if in the future, perhaps in the Saar question or some other patriotic hour, another declaration is asked for.³²

Hermann Esser said at the cabinet meeting on November 21 that the ministers should be amazed at this attitude of patriotism at a price, and Minister President Ludwig Siebert remarked that this statement about future patriotic declarations removed any foundation for trying to ease relations with the bishops.³³

Nevertheless, at these same two cabinet meetings, moderate policies toward the bishops were adopted. At the first meeting the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Education and Worship were ordered to restrain the Hitler Youth by forbidding them to interrupt church services and to keep them off the streets at night. The ministers were also to make it possible for the Hitler Youth members to attend Sunday services.³⁴ This was not an aggressive policy opposing traitor bishops. Minister President Siebert's proposal that he invite the bishops to discuss matters with him³⁵ But at this same meeting the same man said that it was useless to try to get along with the bishops because of their lack of patriotism!

The explanation of the apparent contradiction between the aggressive statements of the leading members of the cabinet and the moderate policies they adopted lies in outside influence. At the first of the two cabinet meetings under discussion, the cabinet agreed to ask for Hitler's advice. At the second, Minister President Siebert declared that "according to the instructions of the Führer and

were other of the cardinal's charges. Ministerratsitzung vom 21. November 1933, HIM 5.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, Ministerratsitzung vom 14. November 1933, HIM 9, Abschrift, Segretario di Stato di Sua Santità, den 19. Dezember [19] 33, HIM 9.

³¹ Ministerratsitzung vom 14. November 1933, HIM 9.

³² Abschrift, Der Erzbischof von München, den 18. November 1933, An die Staatskanzlei des bayerischen Ministerrates, HIM 7.

³³ Ministerratsitzung vom 21. November 1933, HIM 5. "Patriotism at a price" is my own phrase.

³⁴ Ministerratsitzung vom 14. November 1933, HIM 9.

³⁵ Ministerratsitzung vom 21. November 1933, HIM 5.

of the *Reich* Governor, the relations with the bishops now must be cleared up.³⁶ And at a third cabinet meeting on the same subject, Siebert reported that Hitler “had approved his intention of speaking seriously once more with the bishops.” Hitler also asked for a report which would enable him to compare with the other German states what the Bavarian state had done for the church.³⁷ Under such pressure, the Bavarian Cabinet approved a policy of reconciliation with the bishops.

In contrast with its apparent policy of reconciliation with the Bavarian bishops in November of 1933, the Bavarian Cabinet carried on sharp diplomatic exchanges with the Vatican. On November 25 the papal Secretary of State, Eugenio Cardinal Pacelli, delivered a note to the Bavarian ambassador at the Vatican defending the election appeal of the Bavarian bishops. Two weeks later Esser sent a rebuttal and counterattack to the Vatican through the Bavarian ambassador there. This was answered on December 19 by a devastating note from Cardinal Pacelli.³⁸ Sharp exchanges also took place between Minister President Siebert and the papal nuncio in Munich early in January, 1934.³⁹

That Bavaria's independent diplomacy with the Vatican caused difficulties for the *Reich* authorities was evident at the end of January, 1934. The *Reich* Minister of the Interior warned the Bavarian Cabinet that the seemingly different policies of Berlin and Munich referred to by Cardinal Pacelli could not be reconciled with Hitler's total leadership.⁴⁰ A week later the Governmental Reorganization Act transferred all governmental power to the Reich, thus destroying the remaining autonomy of the states and removing the basis for any diplomatic activity by the Bavarian Cabinet.⁴¹

³⁶ Ministerratsitzung vom 14, November 1933, HIM 9.

Ministerratsitzung vom 21, November 1933, HIM 5.

³⁷ Ministerratsitzung vom 29, November 1933, HIM 5.

³⁸ Abschrift, Segreteria (sic) di Stato (sic) di sua (sic) Santita, den 25. November 1933, an Baron von Ritter zu Groenesteyn, Bayerischer Gesandter beim Hl. Stuhl, HIM 5. Staatskanzlei des Freistaates Bayern, 9. Dezember 1933, An die Bayerische Gesandtschaft beim Heiligen Stuhl, HIM 5. Abschrift, Segretario di Stato di Sua Santita, den 19. Dezember [19]33, an Groenesteyn, HIM 11.

³⁹ Ministerratsitzung vom 9. Januar 1934, HIM 9.

⁴⁰ Abschrift, Der Reichsminister des Innern, den 24. Januar 1934, and d ... Staatskanzlei des Freistaates Bayern, HIM 14, 16 (the two pages of this letter are not together.)

⁴¹ The *Reich* Foreign Minister notified Epp on February 12 that this act transferred all sovereignty from the states to the *Reich*, and that Bavarian and Prussian embassy rights at the Vatican were extinguished, with April 30 as the deadline. Abschrift, Auswärtiges Amt, den 12. Februar 1934, An den Herrn Reichstatthalter in Bayern, NAM 185/0334901.

However, the Bavarian Government was still sending letters to its embassy in Rome on February 22 and March 12, 1934. On December 14 the *Reich* Minister of the Interior expressed surprise that the papal nunciature was still in Munich, since he had understood from the Berlin Nuncio that it had been abolished.

Herman Esser stated at the cabinet meeting on February 6 that it was not desirable to terminate Bavarian diplomatic relations with the Vatican at that time.⁴² The reason for this attitude of the leading Bavarian governmental opponent of the Catholic Church was no doubt that he would not be able to dominate *Reich* diplomatic relations with the Vatican as he had been able to do with a separate Bavarian diplomacy. Furthermore, there was an increasing tendency toward moderation in the Bavarian Cabinet early in 1934. Minister of the Interior Wagner recommended easing relations with the clergy, many of whom had become so restless and obstinate that they had to be arrested. He offered to meet with a representative of the Diocese of Munich to try to come to some agreement.⁴³ This attitude, coupled with the implications of the Governmental Reorganization Act, indicated increasing strength for a moderate church policy. There was, therefore, cause for Bavarian anti-clericals to seek ways to prevent adoption of more moderate policies toward the Catholic Church.

Whatever his motives, Hermann Esser gave a slashing speech on January 26, 1934, which provoked a new crisis with the Catholic Church and ironically resulted in more *Reich* demands on the Bavarian Cabinet for moderate church policies. In his speech, Esser attacked the Catholic clergy in general and Cardinal Faulhaber in particular for lack of loyalty to the state, shown especially by the cardinal's Advent sermons in December, 1933.⁴⁴ The next night, Cardinal Faulhaber's palace was attacked several times by a mob. Complaints about Esser's speech and the attack on the cardinal's residence were sent to the Bavarian authorities by the Munich Chancery Office, the Bavarian Diocesan Priests' Society and Archbishop Hauck of Bamberg. The Archbishop charged that Esser's speech had nullified his own recent instruction to his clergy, covered by the press, that "we are determined in all seriousness to cooperate with the new state." Archbishop Hauck suggested talks between representatives of the bishops and the state to arrange a reconciliation.⁴⁵

These events and the whole question of relations with the Catholic Church were extensively debated at the cabinet meeting on February 6. The Minister President reported that the Berlin Foreign Office wanted the Bavarian Cabinet to

Abschrift, Der Reichs – and Preussische Minister des Innern, den 14. Dezember 1934, an das Bayerische Staatsministerium für Unterricht und Kultus, HIM 20.

⁴² Ministerratsitzung vom 6. Februar 1934, NAM 185/0334903-7.

⁴³ Ministerratsitzung vom 9. Januar 1934, HIM 9.

⁴⁴ Clipping, *Völkischer Beobachter*, 27. Januar 1935, HIM 39. Minister ratsitzung vom 6. Februar 1934, NAM 185/0334903-7.

⁴⁵ Der Erzbischof von Bamberg, den 28. Januar 1934, An Herm Reich statthalter von Epp, HIM 39.

Gen. Vic. des Ordinariat des Erzbistums München and Freising, An der Herm Ministerpräsidenten des Landes Bayern, copy to Epp, HIM 38.

Klerusverband, Landesverband der Diözesan Priestervereine Bayerns e.V., den 29. Januar 1934, an den Herm Ministerpräsidenten des Landes Bayern, copy to Epp on January 31, HIM 38.

Clipping, *Augsberger Postzeitung* (?), 26. Januar 1934, HIM 39.

express its sympathies to Cardinal Faulhaber. Siebert's own view was that now that open conflict had broken out with the church, it could not be settled until the clergy gave up certain things. Then Hermann Esser explained his speech, saying that it had been necessary to answer the complaints of the Storm Troops that the cabinet had been too easy on the clergy. He added that the mob action against Cardinal Faulhaber was justified because of his Advent sermons, which had constituted a "very important attack on the racial outlook..."

The cabinet decided that an expression of sympathy to Cardinal Faulhaber, which could have been given immediately after the attacks, would now be misunderstood. The Bavarian Cabinet did not want to appear to admit any responsibility for the attacks.⁴⁶ There seemed to be the hint that pressure from the church and the *Reich* Foreign Office for a concession had made any concession impossible. The Bavarian Cabinet was not ready to subordinate Bavarian domestic policy to *Reich* foreign policy.

It was two weeks before the cabinet answered the three clerical letters of protest. In the meantime the *Reich* Governor informed the Archbishop of Bamberg that approval had been given to his suggestion for personal talks between representatives of church and state.⁴⁷ But when Minister President Siebert replied to the clergy on February 22, he blamed the clergy for the tensions between state and church.⁴⁸ Archbishop Hauck of Bamberg replied on March 7 that he was disturbed that the Bavarian Cabinet distrusted the loyalty of some of the clergy. He again suggested personal talks to try to improve relations.⁴⁹

Also on March 7, the *Reich* Foreign Office repeated its request to the the Bavarian Cabinet for an expression of regret to Cardinal Faulhaber.⁵⁰ However, neither of these conciliatory attempts bore fruit, partially because by this time officials of the Bavarian Government were already carrying on talks with Cardinal Faulhaber.

It seems that a Bavarian governmental secretary named Danser had been having talks with Cardinal Faulhaber and that these were followed on March 7 by a conversation between Cardinal Faulhaber and Bavarian Minister of the Interior Wagner. Both Dauser and Wagner reported that the cardinal was ready to concede priority to the state and to the Hitler Youth in the field of youth activities. As

⁴⁶ Ministerratsitzung vom 6. Februar 1934, NAM 185/0334903-7. Der Bayerische Ministerpräsident, den 22. Februar 1934, an Epp, Esser, Groenesteyn, Abdruck an das Auswärtige Amt, HIM 27.

⁴⁷ Der Reichstatthalter in Bayern, 9 Februar 1934, An den Herrn Erzbischof von Bamberg, HIM 38.

⁴⁸ Abdruck, Der Bayerische Ministerpräsident, den 22. Februar 1934, An das Erzbischöflichen Ordinariat München, HIM 28. *Ibid.*, An den Landesverband der Diözesan Priestervereine Bayerns e.V., HIM 27. *Ibid.*, An Herr Erzbischof [Bamberg], HIM 27.

⁴⁹ Abschrift, Der Erzbischof von Bamberg, den 7. März 1934, An Herr Ministerpräsident (copy by Staatskanzlei des Freistaates Bayern, den 12. März 1934), HIM 28.

⁵⁰ Ministerratsitzung vom 13. März 1934, HIM 28.

Wagner described it to Epp, relations between state and church had been severed, and it was the church which had taken the initiative in renewing them.⁵¹ Wagner seemed to be telling the *Reich* Governor that the Bavarian Cabinet had been proven correct in not making the concessions to the church asked by Berlin, since Cardinal Faulhaber was ready to make concessions of his own to renew relations.

This was an empty victory, however. By the spring of 1934 the Governmental Reorganization Act was having its practical effects, and the Bavarian Cabinet ceased to be effective in church policy. At the cabinet meeting on May 15 the cabinet did not debate, but was merely informed of church policy.⁵² Now the most important organizations influencing church policy in Bavaria were the police and the party.

In early 1934 the National Socialist Party became both more violently anti-Catholic and more divided on the religious question. It was admitted at the cabinet meeting on February 6 that an agitation had arisen within the party, primarily over religious matters.⁵³ The aggressive anti-clericals, such as Esser and the Storm Troops, became more active with the decline of the influence of the pro-Catholic *Reich* Governor and the sometimes moderate Bavarian Cabinet. In the time between the decline of these and the development of other organs of central control, local violence increased.

During April, May and June of 1934 there were many reports of fights between the Hitler Youth and Catholic youth groups. The usual consequence was that to prevent further conflicts the police either forbade the Catholic group involved to wear uniforms and engage in sports, or dissolved the group altogether.⁵⁴ The increasing aggressiveness of Nazi organizations was partially due to instructions from *Reich* agencies stressing the monopoly party organizations and youth societies had in matters of uniforms and sports and fields activities.⁵⁵ However, the impression remains that the main cause of increasing conflict between Nazis and Catholics in Bavaria in the spring of 1934 was the

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, Der Bayerische Staatsministerium des Innern, den 13. März 1934, an Herrn Reichstatthalter, NAM 185/0335164-8.

These documents reporting talks between Bavarian Government officials and Cardinal Faulhaber present problems of chronology and interpretation. It is not clear when Dauser's talks with Faulhaber took place. Very likely they began before Wagner's conversation with Faulhaber on March 7, for it is unlikely that there would be time between March 7 and 13 for the "repeated conversations" Dauser spoke of. Why Wagner's talk was not mentioned in the minutes of the cabinet meeting of March 13 is puzzling.

⁵² Ministerratsitzung vom 15. Mai 1934, NAM 185/0335150.

⁵³ Ministerratsitzung vom 6. Februar 1934, NAM 185/0334903-7.

⁵⁴ Various police and provincial government reports for April to June, 1934, NAM 185/0335139-47, 0335152, 0335154, 0335157-8, 0335162.

⁵⁵ Abschrift, Der Reichsminister des Innern, den 1. Februar 1934, NAM 185/0335170. Auszug aus den Rapport der Bayerischen Politischen Polizei vom 2. Mai 1934, referring to an April 30 order of the *Reichsportführer*, NAM 185/0335153.

increased aggressiveness of the local agencies of the National Socialist Party, especially the Hitler Youth and its adult counterpart, the Storm Troop, or S.A.⁵⁶

The hostility of the local party leaders toward a village pastor had much to do with setting off two demonstrations involving Bishop Ehrenfried of Würzburg. The pastor was arrested for the third time when, following his bishop's orders, he refused to leave his parish on March 28, 1934. On April 7, 1500 people gathered in front of Bishop Ehrenfried's residence after he had announced that because there was no pastor in the village First Communion could not be held. The demonstration ended after the bishop, although refusing to be intimidated by threats of arrest, agreed to appoint a new pastor and have First Communion soon. However, a second demonstration three weeks later was more hostile to the bishop and even broke into his palace. This demonstration was smaller but well planned and was apparently motivated by the belief that the new pastor had been a member of the *Reichsbanner*, the now-dissolved Socialist equivalent of the S.A. and, of course, at mortal odds with the Nazis.⁵⁷

The *Reich* authorities warned against a repetition of this violence, which had obviously been encouraged by the local party leaders. Heinrich Himmler, now in practice the head of all German police forces, called from Berlin on April 30.⁵⁸ He ordered that measures necessary to protect the bishop and his palace must be taken. That same day the Bavarian Political Police ordered a guard of local police and party troops around the bishop's palace.⁵⁹ This amounted to house arrest and implied that the Nazis had to protect the bishop from his own flock, but it also indicated to the local party leaders that mob action would not be allowed. This was the burden of the *Reich* Minister of the Interior's warning to the Bavarian Minister of the Interior on May 11. He stressed foreign policy considerations and said that he expected the guilty parties to be punished.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ The S.A. were not above intervening in fights between Hitler Youth and Catholic youth groups. On April 22 in Munich they did so and warned the Catholic group "for their own safety not to wear their uniforms in public again." Auszug aus dem Rapport der Bayerischen Politischen Polizei vom 23. April 1934, NAM 185/0335162.

⁵⁷ The facts of these events involving pastors Stöger and Lott in the village of Waldbüttelbrunn have been gleaned from the following police and episcopal documents, dated April, May and June, 1934: NAM 185/0335084, 0335089-93, 0335112, 0335114, 0335126-9.

⁵⁸ [Memo], Der Reichstatthalter in Bayern, 30. April 1934, NAM 185/0335113.

⁵⁹ Auszug aus dem Rapport der Bayerischen Politischen Polizei vom 2. Mai 1934, NAM 185/0335111. Auszug aus dem Halbmonatsbericht 2 für April 1934 des Regierungspresidiums von Unterfranken und Aschaffenburg, den 8. Mai 1934, NAM 185/0334110.

⁶⁰ Abschrift, Der Reichsministerium des Innern, 11. Mai 1934, An das Bayerische Staatsministerium des Innern, NAM 185/0335102-3. A memo of unknown origin, probably from Epp's office, said that "Besides, after the interpretation of the last demonstration by the church authorities, a repetition of these

This was not the only example of governmental attempts to keep the party from getting out of control. The confiscation of Catholic youth property in Schweinfurt by the party was reversed by the state. This story was printed in the official party newspaper and was clearly a warning to party members not to encroach upon the authority of the state.⁶¹ But violence continued. A village rectory was bombed in June and spontaneous lawlessness was undoubtedly more common than appears in the documents.⁶²

Throughout Germany during the first half of 1934, there was increasing demand by the radical and aggressive Nazis for what is best called a second revolution, which would sweep away all the old established institutions and replace them with purely Nazi ones. The Storm Troops especially, whose two million members outnumbered the professional army by about ten to one, were demanding that they be allowed to replace the elite, professional, honorable, aristocratic army. Hitler could not rule with the army against him and chose to reassure the army leaders by silencing those within his party who were demanding a revolutionary army. In the murders of the Blood Purge of June 30 through July 2, 1934, the primary victims were Ernst Rohm and other leaders of the S.A. Among the scores and perhaps hundreds of other victims, there were conservative leaders, including Catholics, who had earned the enmity of Hitler, G \ddot{o} ering, G \ddot{o} ebbels or Himmler.⁶³ But the primary effect of the Blood Purge was to silence permanently radical party demands in military matters. The effects of the Blood Purge on Nazi church policy were similar but temporary. Aggressively anti-Catholic action gave way in the second half of 1934 to a period of relative peace and quiet in the relations between state and church.

The Blood Purge marks the beginning of a new era in Nazi policy toward the Catholic Church in Bavaria. In the year and a half before June 30, 1934, Nazi church policy in Bavaria reflected mostly Bavarian interests. The Bavarian Cabinet, the police, the party, and even the *Reich* Governor to a considerable extent put Bavarian interest before *Reich* interests. But in the year and a half after the Blood Purge *Reich* interests and agencies became the dominant influences on Nazi church policy. The Bavarian state and local police came more under the control of Heinrich Himmler and the *Reich* ministries. However, the local party leaders in Bavaria retained their power on the local level.

Besides the Blood Purge, there was another major factor contributing to the relative quiet in religious matters in Bavaria in the last half of 1934. This was the desire of the Nazi authorities to ensure that the bishops would support the

events would be very serious and damaging to the foreign policy of the Reich Government." NAM 185/0335116-8.

⁶¹ Clipping, *V \ddot{o} lkischer Beobachter*, 20/21. Mai 1934, "Ein Missverst \ddot{a} ndnis in Schweinfurt," NAM 185/0335149.

⁶² Der Oberstaatsanwalt bei dem Landgerichte M \ddot{u} nchen I, den 20. Juni 1934, An den Herrn Generalstaatsanwalt bei dem Oberlandesgerichte, and related documents, HIM 37.

⁶³ The number of those killed is uncertain. It ranges from the figure of 77 given by Hitler in the Reichstag on July 13 to over 900.

plebiscite in the Saar district on January 13, 1935. The plebiscite was to determine whether the area was to remain under international jurisdiction, to join France, or to rejoin Germany. Catholics made up the majority of the population in the Saar district, and were still under the jurisdiction of German bishops, including the bishop of the Bavarian Diocese of Speyer. The attitude of the clergy on the Saar question was a matter of concern to the state authorities at the time of the aggressive anti-Catholic measures before the Blood Purge. On June 21 a report of the provincial government of neighboring Pfalz said:

The government fears unfavorable reactions which such a ban [affecting youth groups] would have in the Saar district, especially considering the yet insufficiently declared attitude of the Catholic clergy in the question of the return of the Saar district.⁶⁴

The subject of the Saar figured indirectly in the talk between government representatives and Cardinal Faulhaber on September 1, 1934, and was the main subject of a similar talk on November 19, when the cardinal was told that Hitler was ready to receive him. At that meeting the secretaries Dauser and Hofmann, representing the Bavarian Cabinet and the *Reich* Governor, commented that the bishops of Speyer and Trier were neutral on the Saar question. The government spokesmen argued that the Saar was more than a political question and that the Catholic clergy must speak in favor of the return of the Saar to Germany. They added that this was a national question and that the German bishops should act independently of the Vatican.⁶⁵

That the Saar question stimulated suggestions for an independent German Catholic Church is indicated by a provincial government's report early in 1935 that the Archbishop of Bamberg had spoken sharply against the idea of a national church. All the German bishops took it seriously enough to include in their pastoral letter of August 20, 1935, the warning that "if you are no longer Roman Catholic, you are no longer Catholic."⁶⁶

Apparently linked with the idea of an independent German Catholic Church was an attack on the honor of the Pope in the fall of 1934. A rumor had been fostered by some party leaders that before June 30, 1934, the Pope had given to

⁶⁴ Auszug aus dem Halbmonatsbericht des Regierungspräsidium der Pfalz vom 21. Juni 1934, NAM 185/0335137.

⁶⁵ Vormerkung: Besprechung mit Kardinal Faulhaber am 1. 9. [19]34, signed "Hofmann," HIM 19.

Vormerkung über eine Besprechung zwischen Kardinal Faulhaber, Staatssekretär Dauser and Staatssekretär Hofmann am 19. 11. 1934 vormittags zwischen 11. u. 1 Uhr, signed "Hofmann," HIM 20.

⁶⁶ Auszug aus dem Lage-(Sonder-)Bericht des Regierungspräsidiums von Oberfranken and Mittelfranken (Dezember 1934 and Januar 1935), NAM 184/0334765-6. Hirtenbrief an die deutschen Katholiken (Amtlicher Abdruck aus Nr. 17 des Amtsblattes der Erzdiözese München and Freising vom 29. August 1935), NAM 185/0334750-6.

Ernst Röhm, the Chief of the S.A., five million marks to overthrow Hitler. In November, the Archbishop of Bamberg protested against this rumor linking Rome with Röhm, and it went to the highest authorities in party and state.⁶⁷ This was a serious matter which could affect the support of the bishops for the Saar plebiscite. In December the *Reich* leadership of the National Socialist Party in Berlin repudiated this slander against the Pope, saying that “The rise of such a rumor is new proof that any absurdity can be circulated.”⁶⁸ The Archbishop of Bamberg, who had lodged the complaint, apparently was not dissatisfied with this result, for he was later reported as having requested prayers for a German victory in the Saar plebiscite.⁶⁹ The Bavarian bishops generally supported the German cause in the plebiscite.

Following the remarkable German victory in the Saar plebiscite on January 13, 1935, the conflict among Nazi authorities in Bavaria over whether to pursue an aggressive or a moderate policy toward the Catholic Church flared up again after a six months’ armistice. On January 3, 1935, the Munich police proposed to place the clergy under protective custody, and there were other signs of a renewal of aggressive policies toward the Catholic Church after the Saar vote. Just after the plebiscite, the *Reich* Governor’s secretary, Hofmann, visited the Munich police authorities and opposed the plan to start arresting clergy. He said that this was very poor policy after the bishops had done their “bounden duty” in the Saar question. Now that the armistice was over, Hofmann also went back to the eve of the Blood Purge and asked the Munich police to explain their confiscation of a pastoral letter of the German bishops on June 29, 1934. The Munich police replied that this had been done in cooperation with the Bavarian Political Police and the Bavarian Ministry of the Interior on the advice of the *Reich* Ministry of the Interior.⁷⁰ But in the matter of taking the clergy into protective custody in early

⁶⁷ Der Staatssekretär [Reichstatthalter], den 24. November 1934, An 1) den Herrn Reichsminister des Auswärtigen, 2) den Herrn Reichs- and Preussischen Minister des Innern, 3) den Stellvertreter des Führer Herrn Reichsminister Rudolf Hess, NAM 184/0334945.

The origin of the rumor was blamed on a *Kreisleiter* in: Auszug aus dem Lagebericht des Regierung vom Niederbayern and der Oberpfalz vom 7. Dezember 1934, NAM 184/0334850.

⁶⁸ NSDAP Reichsleitung, Abteilung für den kulturellen Frieden, den 12. Dez. 1934, An den Herrn Reichstatthalter in Bayern, NAM 184/0334841.

⁶⁹ Auszug aus dem Lage- (Sonder-) Bericht des Regierungspräsidiums vom Oberfranken and Mittelfranken (Dezember 1934 and Januar 1935,) NAM 184/0334765-6.

It is probable, but not certain, that the Archbishop’s request for support of the German cause in the plebiscite came after December 12.

⁷⁰ Staatssekretär Hofmann, Vormerkung fiber die zwischen mir and Regierungsrat Holzner von der Polizeidirektion München am 17. Januar 1935 vormittags stattgefundene Unterredung, NAM 184/0334783-4.

Polizeidirektion München, den 18. Januar 1935, An die Reichstatthaltereie, NAM 184/0334785.

1935, it appears that the *Reich* Governor was able to defeat the proposal. *Reich* Governor Epp was also able to redress the complaint of the Bishop of Passau on the morrow of the Saar vote that the leader of a local S.A. platoon had forbidden a meeting of a Catholic mothers' society.⁷¹ But this was Epp's last documented success in 1935, although bishops continued to appeal to him throughout the summer.⁷²

The powerlessness of the *Reich* Governor against even local offices when these were acting in accordance with instructions from *Reich* agencies in Berlin is illustrated by the action against the Catholic youth societies in Bavaria in July of 1935. On July 20 the *Reich* Ministry of the Interior requested the state governments to forbid members of religious youth societies from wearing uniforms or badges or engaging in sports. In addition to this, the main Catholic youth organization in Bavaria was banned and all its property confiscated.⁷³ Several municipal and provincial governments forbade their employees to allow members of their families to belong to religious organizations. For example, the government of the province of Lower Bavaria and Upper Palz issued a decree that

so long as the church authorities are not able to educate their subordinate clergy who are interested in politics to a positive attitude toward the state and the *Führer*, it will not do for civil servants and employees of the government to enrol their children in religiously related youth organizations.⁷⁴

The decline of the power of the *Reich* Governor by mid-1935 is evident when we recall that it was such restrictions on Catholic societies that he had been

Auszug aus dem Rapport der Bayerischen Politischen Polizei vom 3. Juli 1934, "Polizeidirektion München meldet," NAM 184/0334855.

Abschrift, Betreff: Polizeiliche Beschlagnahme and Erziehung, 29. Juni 1934, An das Erzbischöfliche Ordinariat München, NAM 184/0334801, 0334801a, 0334801b.

⁷¹ Various documents from January 3, 1935, to March 5, 1935, NAM 185/0335067-71 (also in HIM 39.)

⁷² Bischöfliches Ordinariat Würzburg, 21. Juni 1935, An die Reichstatthaltereie, and related documents, NAM 185/0335032-6.

Das Bischöfliche Ordinariat Passau, 25. Juni 1934, An Herrn Reichstatthalter, and related documents, NAM 185/033537-42.

An den Reich- and Preussischen Minister für kirchlichen Angelegenheiten, den 18. September 1935, by a *Ministerialrat* in Epp's office forwarding a letter of complaint by the Archbishop of Bamberg, HIM 22.

⁷³ Clipping, *Völkischer Beobachter*, 25. Juli 1935, NAM 185/0335027. Staatsministerium des Innern, Den Politische Polizeikommandeur Bayeras, 30 Juli 1935, an den Herrn Reichstatthalter, NAM 185/0335023-25.

Gesetz- u. Verordnungsblatt für den Freistaat Bayern, 2. August 1935, NAM 185/0335021-2.

⁷⁴ Clipping, (?), 26. Juli 1935, NAM 185/ between frames 0335019 and 0335020.

Clipping, *Völkischer Beobachter*, 25. Juli 1935, NAM 185/0335027

opposing for two years. The authority of *Reich* agencies in Berlin was becoming the decisive factor in Bavarian church policy.

The Bavarian police worked more and more in cooperation with agencies. We have already seen how the local police and the Bavarian Political Police worked with the *Reich* Ministry of the Interior regarding the confiscation of a pastoral letter in June, 1934, and the imposition of restrictions on Catholic youth societies in July, 1935. It is likely that similar cooperation was present in other important actions of the Bavarian Political Police. In December, 1934, they forbade all public propaganda meetings disguised as religious services, allowing outside of church buildings only such religious observances as were traditional.⁷⁵ In February, 1935, the Bavarian Political Police reinforced this order by forbidding the churches to hold meetings of instruction and defense against Rosenberg's latest anti-religious book.⁷⁶

This order was enforced against even the traditional Corpus Christi processions in June, 1935. The police arrested over one hundred priests, but it appears that in most cases the charges were dismissed or the accused were released with only a warning.⁷⁷

The increasing importance of *Reich* action on church policy in Bavaria in 1935 is illustrated by the Amann decrees of April 24, the effect of which was to eliminate most of the Catholic daily newspapers, and the trials beginning in May of priests and nuns accused of violating the currency laws of the *Reich*.⁷⁸ Both of these actions affected church policy throughout Germany. Another indication of the trend in 1935 to a church policy "made in Berlin" was the creation on July 16 of a *Reich* Ministry for Church Affairs.⁷⁹ Within a few months this new *Reich* ministry had issued orders reserving to the Bavarian Political Police the authority to confiscate periodicals.⁸⁰ No doubt this was prompted by the action of the

⁷⁵ Bayerische Politische Polizei, den 10. Dezember 1934, to police officials, NAM 184/0333786-7. *Ibid.*, 21. Dezember [19134, NAM 184/0333788-9. Abschrift, Der Reichs- u. Preuss. Minister für die kirchlichen Angelegenheiten, den 17. Aug. [19137, An die deutschen katholischen Bischöfe, Geheime Staatspolizei, Geheimes Staatspolizeiamt, "Nach dem Erlass des Chefs der Geheimen Staatspolizei vom 7. Dezember 1934...", NAM 184/0333822.

⁷⁶ Abschrift, Bayerische Politische Polizei, den 25. Februar 1935, HIM 21.

⁷⁷ Nr. 489 Fronleichnamsprozession 1935 - Massnahmen gegen Geistliche, HIM Reel 23 (at end) and Reel 24 (at beginning.)

⁷⁸ Oron J. Hale, *The Captive Press in the Third Reich* (Princeton, 1964), 151, 160-161, 169-184.

⁷⁹ Abschrift, Der Reichs- and Preussische Minister des Innern, den 22. Juli 1935, to many government and police officials, NAM 184/0334757-8. This action was no doubt related to the Nazi attempt to unify and control the Protestant churches.

⁸⁰ Bayerische Politische Polizei, den 4. November 1935, HIM 19.

An earlier police order forbidding translations of articles from *L'Osservatore Romano* stated that this was done in cooperation with the *Reich* Ministry for Church Affairs. *Ibid.*, 30. Oktober 1935, HIM 19

Munich police in August. On orders from the Bavarian Political Police, they confiscated the Munich diocesan gazette containing the pastoral letter of all the German bishops and banned further publication of the gazette. But Berlin intervened and forced the Munich police to lift the ban and return the confiscated issue.⁸¹ This indicates that by November the Bavarian Political Police were working closely with *Reich* agencies and would not order a confiscation on their own authority, such as they had done in August.

This increasing control of all Bavarian police by *Reich* agencies meant that instead of five, there were now only two Nazi groups involved in church policy in Bavaria. Since the end of the power of Bavarian Cabinet in the spring of 1934 and the *Reich* Governor's loss of influence by mid-1935, only the party was left to compete with the combined police and *Reich* authorities. Considered apart from the many examples of party leaders who were also government officials, the influence of the National Socialist Party was primarily on the local level.⁸² The indiscipline of the local party members was always a problem, and they could affect church policy either by indirect influence on government and police officials or by direct action. Both kinds of influence are illustrated in a report of the provincial government of Upper Bavaria for October, 1935. The Bavarian Political Police had approved the request of a Catholic workers' society for permission to take up a public collection, but the local party leadership protested and the S.A. took possession of the headquarters of the society. The police withdrew the approval for the collection.⁸³

This conflict between an aggressive church policy, often promoted by local party leaders, and a moderate church policy, usually desired by Hitler and other *Reich* authorities, continued as long as the Third *Reich*. The evidence that we have seen for the first three years of Nazi rule in Bavaria shows clearly that in matters of church policy, Nazism was not monolithic. Related to this are the answers to the other two questions posed at the beginning of this study. Those who pursued an aggressive policy toward the Catholic Church in Bavaria generally paid no heed to foreign policy, while the moderates, and especially Hitler, were strongly motivated by considerations of foreign policy. Surely this means that Nazism was not essentially opposed to Catholicism.

⁸¹ Auszug aus dem Monatsbericht der Polizeidirektion München für August 1935, den 6. September 1935, NAM 184/0334698.

⁸² A report of the *Gau* Baden *Gauschulungsamt der NSDAP* dated June 10, 1937, stated that lists published by the *Reich* Ministry of the Interior showed that of the 438 government officials in Prussia, 356 [81%] were members of the party. For the rest of Germany, there were 217 [58%] party members in a total of 377 government officials. NAM T-81, Roll 172, frame 0312810. These figures were probably for 1936.

⁸³ Auszug aus dem Monatsbericht des Regierungspräsidium von Oberbayern (Oktober 1935) vom 11. November 1935, NAM 185/0335010-11.