God and the Fascists: The Vatican Alliance with Mussolini, Franco, Hitler, and Pavelić


Prologue

By Peter Gorenflos
Why, after almost fifty years, should there be a reprint of Karlheinz Deschner’s work *God and the Fascists* (*Mit Gott und den Faschisten*)? Because it is very topical. Because it is, fully unfairly, in danger of being forgotten. Because it disrupts a process of suppression, or better, indeed the deliberate policy of disinformation, pursued by the Vatican. It reminds us of the Vatican’s collaboration not only with Hitler, the greatest criminal of all time, but also with Mussolini, Franco, and the little-known Pavelić, the Fascist leader in Croatia who, along with Cardinal Stepinac, was responsible for the concentration and death camp of Jasenovac, of whose existence only few people know today.

Because the web of lies spun by the Vatican is exposed. It has been trying to position itself as an anti-Hitler resistance organization for decades, although according to Cardinal Faulhaber, Pius XII was “the best friend, indeed, the only friend of the new Reich at the beginning,” especially in the unstable initial phase of National Socialism, when history could have taken a completely different course! Because it is not a fashionable book that caters for a trendy opinion for reasons of accommodation but presents and summarizes historical facts precisely and in great detail and draws conclusions that are comprehensible to everyone. Daniel Jonah Goldhagen clearly considers it unnecessary to quote Deschner at all in his book *A Moral Reckoning: The Role of the Catholic Church in the Holocaust*, despite Deschner being able to provide much more information using much less ink nearly
Annexure – The Vatican Alliance with Mussolini Franco Hitler and Pavelić

forty years earlier. And because it is also exciting to read, like a novel but where every line is the truth and every reader is considerably more intelligent and enlightened after reading it than he or she was before and may also be shocked to see the extent of the collaboration between the Nazis, all the Fascists, and the Vatican! In short, because it exposes a historical lie. The lie of the Catholic resistance.

Let us not forget that it was the French Revolution that showed the Catholic Church where its boundaries were and thereby put an end to its feudal power—albeit, unfortunately, only half-heartedly. But still, the Spanish Inquisition did not sentence the last heretic—the schoolteacher Caetano Ripol—to death at the gallows, followed by a “symbolic burning,” until July 26, 1826, almost half a century after the Bastille was stormed! After the revolution, Napoleon’s troops occupied the Papal States at the end of the eighteenth century—which had arisen from bloody wars and been legitimized by a forged document, the so called Donation of Constantine—arrested Pius VI, and took him to Valence as a prisoner. The Congress of Vienna restored the Vatican State again in 1815 with a reduced territory, but in 1870, after the occupation by Italian troops, it finally disappeared in the new Italian state. Those responsible were then excommunicated … and could not have cared less.

The increasing power of the bourgeoisie, the development of the European national states, the emancipation movement, the natural sciences and progress through technological developments increasingly forced Catholicism onto the back foot in the second half of the nineteenth century— it tried desperately, and in vain, to take up the fight against “modern rationalism” with the first Vatican Council and restore the beleaguered papal authority by means of the dogma of infallibility. But time was against Catholicism. Under Bismarck, nearly two thousand Catholic clergy were imprisoned or given hefty fines in the Kulturkampf (“battle of the cultures”) for interfering in state affairs; the United States broke off diplomatic relations with the Vatican on February 28, 1867 (and did not restore them until 1984 under Ronald Reagan). The “Roman Question” had arisen: How could the Holy See be saved from ultimate, and at that time foreseeable, downfall? How, and with whose aid, could its former power be restored? This problem was exacerbated by the growth of the decidedly anticlerical workers’ movement after the debacle of the First World War, which was committed to enlightenment and the principle of equality.
Annexure – The Vatican Alliance with Mussolini Franco Hitler and Pavelić

This is the starting point of Karlheinz Deschner’s book *God and the Fascists*. The aim of this new edition, published by Prometheus Books, is to ensure it is not forgotten. With richness of detail, historically founded, and by mining a vast number of sources, it proves that after the First World War, the chance was seized to turn the wheel of history back together with the rising Fascist movements. For fear of a victory of the workers’ movement across Europe—according to the Soviet model—the Vatican, together with the reactionary property-owning classes and their henchmen—the Fascists—entered an alliance that was intended to secure the existence of both. This unholy Catholic alliance with the supposedly lesser—Fascist—evil led to the greatest catastrophe in human history: the Second World War and the Holocaust.

After the Catholic party “Partito Popolare” was dissolved by Pius XI, the curia paved the way for Benito Mussolini and Italian Fascism. As a reward, they received—by means of the Lateran Pacts—the Vatican State back, a sovereign, stately construct, albeit reduced in size, and the monstrous sum of one billion lire in state bonds and 750 million lire in cash. These assets formed the basis of the Vatican Bank, which is under strict observation from the American supervisory authorities today because of its machinations, suspicion of money laundering, and proximity to the Mafia.
Fascist leader Benito Mussolini, pictured with Hitler.

And the Vatican helped the Nazis to power according to exactly the same pattern and under the same premises. The Catholic Centre Party—the oldest party in Europe led by Prelate Kaas, a close friend of Cardinal Secretary of State Eugenio Pacelli, the Pope’s second-in-command—concurring with the Enabling Act of March 24, 1933, and then dissolving itself cleared the way for Hitler. The subsequent dictatorship set the catastrophe in motion. The historical lie that nobody at the time knew who they were dealing with is clearly disproved by Karlheinz Deschner. Because the first concentration camps had been built before the Enabling Act—not for the Jews at this point, but for political opposition—basic citizens’ rights were suspended and the boycott of Jewish businesses, doctors, and lawyers was called for. Hitler’s Mein Kampf could not have been unknown to Eugenio Pacelli: the same Eugenio Pacelli who had been the papal nuncio in Berlin until 1929 (“the best-informed diplomat in Germany”) and then made a career in the Vatican, first as cardinal secretary of state, then as pope. Pope Pius XII. He, who had the reputation of being an outstanding connoisseur and friend of Germany, harvested the fruits of that collaboration on July 20, 1933, in the form of the concordat with Nazi Germany. This treaty under international law still has constitutional status in the Federal Republic of Germany to this day (Article 123.2
of the German Basic Law). It regulates the friendly relations between the Holy See and the German Reich; state religious education was introduced under it, with a status equal to that of the other subjects taught, the payment of salaries from religious-education teachers to bishops by the state from public tax revenue is guaranteed and church tax collected by the state—to this day, let it be noted—a new phenomenon that was to have far-reaching consequences. Workers must publicly declare their religious confession, losing their previously constitutional right to keep this silent, and employers are obliged to take part in the collection of the ecclesiastical obolus. A church state was born! The Hitler concordat meant that the clergy’s robes were afforded the same protection as military uniforms, priests were exempted in advance from military service—they knew what was coming—the dissolution of the Centre Party was retrospectively justified and a great deal more.

Karlheinz Deschner describes how the collaboration of the German episcopate with the Nazis—which could only happen with the approval of the curia—lasted until the end of the Second World War, how vicars, priests, and bishops prayed for Hitler’s Reich every Sunday all across the land, which was also regulated in the concordat (Article 30), and agitated in favor of the war, how churches and cathedrals were decorated with swastikas on Hitler’s birthday, and the papal nuncio personally congratulated the Führer, full of pride, on his fiftieth birthday in 1939—half a year after the Kristallnacht! In the so-called church struggle, which is supposed to have been the expression of church resistance, the church stood up only for its own interests, never against Hitler, never against the war, and never for the Jewish population. And even after the military defeat of Nazi Germany, the Vatican helped high-ranking Nazi functionaries to flee to South America with the help of the ratline, with which Mengele, Eichmann, and many other criminals escaped the Allies’ justice.

What did Benedict XV, Pius XI, and Pius XII dream of? They dreamt of a Catholic continental Europe in a united military battle against the godless Soviet Union, as degenerated as it may already have been by Stalin’s influence (read Arno Lustigers Stalin and the Jews: The Red Book). They dreamt of the end of Orthodoxy, the end of communism, and the Catholicization of Russia. And of a neutral, Anglican Great Britain and a neutral United States. Because a military conflict within the western camp made the outcome of the war unpredictable. After the military defeat of France, this dream seemed to be well within reach, and in 1940 the whole world
Annexure – The Vatican Alliance with Mussolini Franco Hitler and Pavelić

was convinced that Hitler would win the war. The realization of the curia’s dream had, with Hitler’s help, come within their grasp.

We learn from Karlheinz Deschner how the invasion of the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, was openly welcomed, not only by the German episcopate, and how unlimited their enthusiasm for Hitler and agitations against Russia were. And Pius XII—who allegedly did too little against Hitler and said too little—spoke in a radio address one week later of “rays of light that raise the heart to great, holy expectations: great bravery and courage in defending the foundations of Christian culture and optimistic hope for their triumph,” by which he intended to express, according to embassy counselor Menshausen, the hope that the great sacrifices demanded by this war would not be in vain and would, should Providence so wish, lead to victory over Bolshevism. In this “war between worldviews,” which had been so longed for by the Catholics and which Hitler also called it, the Holocaust was viewed as a kind of collateral damage. There may even have been a secret feeling of satisfaction in light of the two thousand years of Christian anti-Judaism. Had Hitler not, in April 1933, already coquetted before high Catholic functionaries—as Deschner reports—and much to their delight, that his “treatment of the Jewish Question” was merely a continuation of medieval Catholic tradition?! In any case, the pope never condemned the Nazi pogroms against the Jews, not even when the Jews were rounded up before his eyes, so to speak, and taken away. Today’s propagated idea of a Judeo-Christian West is based on a syncretism swindle.

The Vatican was even more deeply involved in Fascist crimes in Croatia, where the Franciscans played a leading role in the atrocities perpetrated there, which were so brutal that even the Germans complained. Ante Pavelić, the leader of the Croatian Fascists, called the Ustaše, coined the slogan that a third of the Orthodox population of Yugoslavia should be forcibly converted, a third expelled, and the other third murdered. Seven hundred fifty thousand Serbs fell victim to this regime with clerical help, and often after brutal torture, as did 80 percent of the Jews in Yugoslavia. The Primate of the Croatian Catholics, Archbishop Dr. Stepinac, collaborated with Pavelić from the first minute to the last. After his conviction as a war criminal, the Ustaše leader managed to escape, initially to South America, with the help of the ratline. He was accompanied by the former contact man between the Croatian archbishop Stepinac and the Vatican, the priest Krunoslav Draganović, who was, among other things, responsible for the deportation of Jews and Serbs.
during the war as a “resettlement officer” and was later one of the key figures in
the organization of the ratline. He later fled to Franco’s Spain, where he found
refuge in a Franciscan monastery in Madrid. This war criminal died on December
26, 1959, and received the blessing of the Holy Father on his deathbed. Stepinac
was the only high cleric who was at least partly brought to justice for his deeds.
The sentence: sixteen years’ imprisonment with forced labor. After six years of
imprisonment, he was released early. Today’s theologians may claim that this
verdict was based on a “misunderstanding.” But it is no misunderstanding that Yad
Vashem rejected the obscenity of an application to grant him the title and honor of
a “Righteous among the Nations” twice, in 1970 and 1994. He was beatified by
Pope John Paul II in 1998.

In his résumé at the end of the book, Karlheinz Deschner says, in 1965, “If one
considers the attitude of Eugenio Pacelli to the politics of Mussolini, Franco,
Hitler, and Pavelić, it hardly seems an exaggeration to say: Pius XII is probably
more incriminated than any other pope has been for centuries. He is so obviously
involved in the most hideous atrocities of the Fascist era, and therefore of history
itself, both directly and indirectly, that it would not be surprising, given the tactics
of the Roman Church, if he were to be canonized.”

Eugenio Pacelli in Bamberg, Bavaria, 1924.
And now the beatification is already under way, less than fifty years later! If Hitler had won the war, one may wish to add, then he would presumably have long since attained the same Catholic honors.

And Franco’s support from the Vatican in the Spanish Civil War—and before—is also a theme of this rewarding book, this irreplaceable source of information.

Let us now return to the present, to the constitutional knock-on effects of the church’s collaboration with Fascism in Germany. One has to only compare this close interrelationship between church and state, this still-surviving German church state—which, under the Weimar Constitution and the federal constitution of Germany, should never have been permitted—with the constitutions of France and the United States, in which the separation of church and state is clearly stipulated. It then becomes clear how far Germany is today from being a modern democracy. It is a country in which the churches, on the basis of regional concordats, have places in all radio and television broadcasting councils, in nearly all newspaper editorial offices, in countless other influential institutions, and—some quite openly, others well hidden—at the levers of power. It then becomes clear what massive favors Hitler and Mussolini did the Vatican with this special answer to the Roman Question, with the restoration of its statehood, its assets, and its public influence, which were in a state of dissolution in the second half of the nineteenth century. And at what cost to the rest of the world!

Karlheinz Deschner’s book is an important contribution to enlightenment, a jewel for anyone who seeks historical truth; it is an antidote to the historical lie of Catholic resistance to Adolf Hitler and provides a fundamental contribution to the current debate on the rehabilitation of the Pius Brotherhood (fronted by Richard Williamson, who denied the Holocaust), the planned beatification of Pius XII, the scandal surrounding the Vatican Bank, the reintroduction of the Good Friday Intercession, and the role of the Vatican in the world in general.

Anyone who is looking for the historical Ariadne’s thread in the labyrinth of church heteronomy will go nowhere without Karlheinz Deschner’s book *God and the Fascists*. I would, at this juncture, recommend to anyone who wishes to find out more, many historical layers deeper, for example, about the historical origins of Christianity, Hyam Maccoby’s superb, central work *The Mythmaker: Paul and the Invention of Christianity* (1986), in which he proves that Christianity is not
founded on the Jewish Jesus but the Greek Paul, who composed a highly virulent mythical mix of gnosis, mystery cults, and the story of Jesus and, therefore, started off two thousand years of Christian anti-Judaism, which culminated in the Holocaust.

The other Ariadne’s thread from the religious labyrinth—the subjective, “psychological” one—can be found by anyone looking for it in Sigmund Freud (e.g., Totem and Taboo, The Future of an Illusion, Moses and Monotheism), and more especially in the pioneering study of religion by Fritz Erik Hoevels, “‘Bhagwan’ Rajneesh and the Dilemma of any Humane Religion” in Mass Neurosis Religion, published by Ahriman International, which is now also to be credited with the republishing of Deschner’s masterpiece God and the Fascists. Both authors make it clear how small the eye of the needle is through which human society must pass if the aims of enlightenment, reason, freedom, the principle of equality, and maximum happiness for the maximum number of people are to become reality, how many archaic and yet real power structures must be broken in order to achieve this.

May the interested reader convince himself or herself of the topicality of this book nearly fifty years after God and the Fascists was first published. It is thrillingly written and a literary achievement of the first rank.

Peter Gorenflos
Berlin, Germany

Nazi War Criminal & Roman Catholic Cardinal Stepinac

Pope Francis’ Junta Past: Argentine Journalist on New Pontiff’s Ties to Abduction of Jesuit Priests

Geoffrey Robertson QC: Pope Pius XII did everything to help the Nazis, and nothing to save the Jews