



Hitler, the War, and the Pope

By Ronald J. Rychlak

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Was Pope Pius XII a Nazi Sympathizer?

For almost 50 years, a controversy has raged about Pope Pius XII. Was the Pope who had shepherded the Church through World War II a Nazi sympathizer? Was he, as some have dared call him, Hitler's pope? Did he do nothing to help the Jewish people in the grips of the Holocaust?

In a thoroughly researched and meticulously documented analysis of the historical record, Ronald Rychlak has gotten past the anger and emotion and uncovered the truth about Pius XII. Not only does he refute the accusations against the Pope, but for the first time documents how the slanders against him had their roots in a Soviet Communist campaign to discredit him and by extension, the Church.

Let those who doubt but read Rychlak, follow his exquisitely organized courtroom-like arguments. What Professor Rychlak brings to the forum are facts, not rhetoric, dates, not conjecture, evidence, not slander.... The world owes Ronald Rychlak a debt for bringing the truth to light. ---Rabbi Eric A. Silver

"In his well-crafted pages ... the portrait that emerges is one of an extraordinary pastor facing extremely vexing circumstances, of a holy man vying against an evil man, of a human being trying to save the lives of other human beings, of a light shining in the darkness."

--John Cardinal O Connor (1920-2000) Archbishop of New York (from the Foreword to the first edition)

"I have read many books on Pius XII, and this is by far the most dispassionate in laying out the context, relevant facts, accusations, and evidence pro and con. The book is highly engaging because it is filled with so many little-known facts. The research has been prodigious. Yet the presentation is as down-to-earth as it would have to be in a courtroom.... This is a wonderfully realistic book." ---Michael Novak

George Frederick Jewett Scholar in Religion, Philosophy, and Public Policy,
American Enterprise Institute

"Despite his many brilliant accomplishments, perhaps no modern-day leader of

the Catholic Church has triggered more controversies than Pope Pius XII. Some historians have argued that, in light of the Church's concerns about Communism, he was pro-Nazi during the 1930s. He has been accused of signing the Reichskonkordat as a signal to Adolf Hitler of Rome's favor; of dissuading Pope Pius XI from condemning Kristallnacht; and of remaining silent in face of proof that the Holocaust was taking place.

In this valuable book, Professor Ronald Rychlak sets the record straight. He paints a vivid picture of the social, political, and religious background against which the papacy of Pius XII took place. In so doing, Rychlak shows him to have been a man of singular wisdom and courage.

Eugenio Maria Giuseppe Giovanni Pacelli was a brilliant student as a young man, fluent in several languages, with doctorates in theology and canon and civil law. He was elected to the papacy just six months before Germany's invasion of Poland sparked the Second World War in Europe.

"Rychlak has buried the myth under an avalanche of facts and demonstrated that Pacelli's reputation deserves to be what it was during the war when the New York Times more than once praised him as a lonely voice crying out of the silence of a continent. Rychlak has done more than anyone else to set the record straight." --Professor Robert George McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence Princeton University

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Editorial Review

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This sympathetic portrait of Pope Pius XII serves as a direct rebuttal to John Cornwall's recently published *Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII* (1999), a scathing indictment of the controversial pontiff's wartime record. After placing the beleaguered pope's actions firmly into historical context, Rychlak concludes that Pius did everything within his limited scope of power to condemn Hitler and to save Jews without endangering even more innocent lives. Although this respectful, painstakingly researched account of an undoubtedly compassionate and well-intentioned holy man mired in incomprehensibly difficult circumstances provides a wealth of thoughtfully outlined rationalizations, it fails in its mission to completely convince doubters that Pius XII could not have taken a more heroic public stand against Nazism. *Margaret Flanagan*

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About the Author

In this extensive revision, Ronald J. Rychlak plumbs the depths of the Vatican's internal report on Pius XII as well as investigates recent charges that Soviet counter intelligence was involved in a plan to discredit Pius XII.

He also takes on all the various charges against Pius XII from John Cornwell, James Carroll, Susan Zuccotti, and others. No serious charge is left unrebutted.

Mr. Rychlak is Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and the Mississippi Defense Lawyers Association Professor of Law at the University of Mississippi School of Law. Mr. Rychlak has received three medals from the Holy See for his diplomatic service, and he advises the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations. His most recent book is *Righteous Gentiles: How Pius XII and the Catholic Church Saved Half a Million Jews from the Nazis*.

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