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BOOK REVIEWS

Jan Bank with Lieve Gevers, translated by Brian Doyle, *Churches and Religion in the Second World War*, London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016. Pages: xv+603 (paperback). ISBN: 978-1-84520-822-6

This book is extraordinarily interesting as well as disturbing. Innumerable are the publications on military and political aspects of World War II, plentiful those on religious aspects. The originality of this publication is that religious aspects are covered for all the main Christian churches in all the European countries involved in the war: this restriction to Europe might have been made clearer in the book's title. "Religion" in the title allows Judaism to be covered extensively but other religions besides Christianity are treated only occasionally — for example, Muslims in Bosnia and Croatia (pp. 203-6). The research and organization involved is outlined in the Acknowledgements (pp. viii-ix): a seminar group meeting for over a decade, the cooperation of staff in many archives and libraries, most notably those in the Netherlands and Rome, the financial generosity of benefactors. Altogether this is a collective work resulting from enormous labours, with Jan Bank the principal editor pre-eminent.

Of the twelve chapters in the book, the first seven cover all the European countries involved in the war on themes indicated by their titles: "Church and Nation after the First World War," which provides some historical background, "Religion and Totalitarian Ideology," "Churches in Occupied Territories," which is divided into two chapters, "Religion in All Out War," "Churches between Loyalty and Resistance," "Churches between Forced Labour and Resistance" and "Supreme Pastors and Ecumenism." The next four chapters are headed "Nationalist Socialist Mass Murder and the Churches" and focus on four aspects, as indicated by their subtitles: "Persecution in Nazi Germany," "Persecution in the Occupied Countries," "Allies and Vassal States of Nazi Germany" and "The Christian Dimension of Relief and Refuge." This change of focus is indicated at the

beginning of chapter 8. "In the preceding chapters (1-7) we focused on occupation as our primary theme, with killing and manslaughter as potential side-effects thereof. In the present chapter, murder takes centre stage: the collective murder of psychiatric patients, the Jews, and the Sinti and Roma; and the murder by exhaustion of homosexuals and persecuted members of the Jehovah's Witnesses in concentration camps" (p. 333). As the scale of suffering and the number of deaths was so horrific, chapters 8-11 make especially harrowing reading; though the sharp distinction between "murder" in these chapters and "killing" in the previous ones may be questioned.

Catholics are prominent in many chapters. Remarkable saints and grave sinners were counted among them but, unsurprisingly, the majority come somewhere in-between. Two factors are mentioned, though perhaps they could have been underlined more. First, the temptation to read history backwards. That is to say, the outbreak of full-scale war in 1939 as well as the final outcome in 1945 appeared to most people for most of the time (the book gives considerable attention to the years leading up to the outbreak of war) far from inevitable. Secondly bishops, especially, had to balance their duty to protect the people under their jurisdiction with protests against injustice and crimes: a difficult balance between prudence and heroism. That said, the overall treatment of Catholics is fair and appreciative as well as detailed.

The book's treatment of Jesuits illustrates some of these factors. The order was large, international and influential, with members in almost all the European countries involved in the war. Its Polish leader (Superior-General) for a long time before and during the war, Father Włodzimierz Ledochowski, is described as cautious (pp. 107 and 150). The German brothers Hermann and Friedrich Muckermann, both Jesuit priests, were more outspoken. As a result, Hermann was dismissed from his post as professor in Berlin in 1933, even though he believed strongly in German identity; Friedrich was editor of a resistance newspaper in 1934 and was forced into exile in the Netherlands (p. 103). Not mentioned in the book, however, is another German Jesuit, Rupert Meyer, well known for his resistance to Nazi ideals from 1923 onwards, who was beatified by Pope John Paul II in 1987.

Poland, the book states, "suffered more than any other European nation," losing as a direct result of the war some 5 million citizens — 3 million Polish Jews and 2 million other Poles — out of a total population of 35 million (p. 136). The country features prominently in

the book and the treatment seems even-handed. Attacked and partitioned by Germany and the Soviet Union (Russia) at the beginning of the war in 1939, and then occupied by the two countries, its citizens faced enormous difficulties. The Catholic clergy were not spared: in the diocese of Chelmno, to take one example, 202 priests (46% of the total) were murdered in the first two months of the war (p. 121). Balancing caution and confrontation was particularly difficult for bishops. When bishop Splett of Danzig, himself a German, protested against the Nazi order that the Polish language was forbidden in the sacraments, including confession, ten priests of the diocese were put to death a month later. The bishop then compromised, accepting that Polish could not be used but insisting that general absolution should be given in confession if the priest and penitent could not understand each other. Varying approaches to the occupation of the country were to be found in its two most senior clergy, archbishops Hlond of Warsaw and Sapieha of Cracow (they were created cardinals after the war), as well as among the other bishops; though page 380 states “the Polish bishops — as far as we are now aware — did not protest in public concerning the persecution of Jews.” Hans Frank, governor-general of Poland during the war, illustrates tensions within the German authorities. While he retained the confidence of Hitler and the extermination of millions of Jews occurred in Poland, he appreciated the importance of the Catholic church and gave considerable support to Christians. Also — though this is not mentioned in the book — he refused orders to destroy the historic centre of Cracow as the war drew to a close.

These are a few selective comments, mainly focusing on the Catholic church, about this wide-ranging book. Much attention is given to those in the senior ranks of church and state; though coverage is also given to those who did not support their church leaders, including Catholics who did not agree with their bishop. The final chapter 12, “Supreme Pastors and Ecumenism,” looks at those at the top of their churches: Pope Pius XII and the Orthodox patriarchs of Constantinople and Moscow. The religious affiliations of the clergy and other officials of the various churches may be presumed; but for other individuals we are not given much assistance. It would have been helpful, for example, to know that Hans Frank was not a Catholic during his years in Poland, although he became one shortly before his execution at Nuremberg in 1946. The countries of Europe are generally well covered, though information about Britain is scarce.

The presentation is generally good. The print is small but any larger would have expanded an already bulky book. The text is

clearly written and the arguments are very well supported with factual detail. Sources are indicated in the footnotes: all are published sources rather than unpublished archival material. Regarding layout, the Contents page includes only the twelve chapter headings: it would have been helpful to have there also the main sub-headings within the chapters. Twenty-one illustrations are well chosen to highlight key personalities and attitudes. An extensive Bibliography, a short "Index of Themes," covering both countries and topics, and a much fuller index of persons, titled "Index of Names," conclude the book.

As one whose early life was dominated by the war and accounts about it, the book is for me both fascinating and deeply disturbing. For those younger and without this immediate knowledge, it should still be very informative as well as instructive.

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Kristin M. Colberg, *Vatican I and Vatican II: Councils in the Living Tradition*, Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2016. Pages: xiii+162. ISBN: 978-0-8146-8314-9

'Living Tradition,' in the sub-title, is understood principally as the half-century from the end of Vatican II (1962-5) until the publication of this book, though with some appreciation of the century between Vatican I (1869-70) and Vatican II as well as recognition that this living tradition has not ended in 2016 but will continue to develop further.

It is good to have the two councils compared sympathetically (p. viii), rather than in opposition to each other as has been the case so often. Welcome, too, is the insistence that Vatican I's declaration of papal infallibility — the topic for which this council is principally remembered — was more limited as well as less rigid than is normally assumed, thanks to the long and lively debate at the council on the issue and the need to reach a formula that would be acceptable to the minority opposed to, or uneasy with, any definition of infallibility. Thus the declaration does not say directly that the pope is infallible, rather than in special circumstances he enjoys the infallibility which Jesus Christ willed his church — which Vatican II would interpret as the people of God alongside the hierarchy — to possess. The final voting was 553 in favour of the definition and only two against; though more than one hundred bishops absented themselves rather than vote against the decree. Subsequently, the two dissentient bishops (of Caiazzo in southern Italy and Little Rock in Arkansas, USA) and all the absentees declared allegiance to the decree, so there was no schism among the bishops of the Catholic church.