

Afraid to Hang Bishop Who Denounced Nazis' Euthanasia of Wounded

Nurnberg, Jan. 20 (AP).—A high Nazi official demanded the hanging of Cardinal-Designate Count Clemens August von Galen, the Bishop of Munster, in 1941, and Martin Bormann agreed that a death sentence was "appropriate," secret papers of the missing Hitler deputy disclose.

The demands were made after the bishop in a denouncement of Nazi euthanasia told German mothers their wounded sons returning from the battlefields would be destroyed "like old horses gone lame, or old cows gone dry," because they no longer were productive.

The bishop is one of three German prelates who will be made cardinals in Rome next month.

Letters from Bormann

The documents, the property of the Roman Catholic Church, include letters and minutes of a conference among Bormann, Propaganda Minister Goebbels and Walter Tiessler, official in the Nazi propaganda setup who proposed the hanging. The papers arrived here too late for use in the war crimes trial, in which Bormann is being tried in absentia.

"After a conference of ministers, Dr. Goebbels discussed with me the sermon of the Bishop of Munster," said Tiessler's account of the Aug. 13, 1941, meeting in Berlin. "He could not say what effective measures could be taken at that moment.

"I explained to him that in my opinion there could be only one effective measure, namely, to hang the Bishop of Munster and that I already had informed Reichsleiter Bormann accordingly."

A second and more insistent plea by Tiessler for the prelate's execution brought this reply from Bormann:

"A death sentence certainly would

be appropriate. Considering the state of war, however, the Fuehrer will hardly order such a measure."

Goebbels counselled restraint, pointing out the position of power held by the bishop in the community and arguing that it would be better to wait until the war was over to deal with the bishop and the entire Catholic Church within the Reich, the documents disclosed.

Tiessler noted that Goebbels said of the bishop:

Would Lose Westphalia

"The population of Munster could be regarded as lost during the war if anything were done against the bishop, and I fear that one could safely include the whole of Westphalia."

Rev. Edmund A. Walsh, S.J., Regent of the School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., and consultant on religious persecution to Justice Robert H. Jackson, chief United States prosecutor, obtained the documents from the archives of the Bishop's Conference at Fulda in December. Dr. Walsh told this story about the Munster prelate:

On one occasion 20 Gestapo hooligans invaded the bishop's quarters intent on arresting him. As they burst in he cried: "Only 20 of you! I must be slipping."

Outside hundreds of the bishop's flock were waiting in the street.

"I'll be with you in a moment," the bishop told his would-be captors. "I want my hat and coat."

He emerged clad in episcopal robes, with his mitre on his head and his bishop's staff in his hand.

The Nazis did not dare to lead him outside before his followers under those circumstances.

"They never attempted to arrest him again," Dr. Walsh commented.

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