

Months ago Cardinal Francis George, German American Archbishop of Chicago and a past Parade Marshall of the Von Steuben Day Parade, commented, "I expect to die in bed, my successor will die in prison, and his successor will die a martyr in the public square." Some time before that, the Catholic Church in Illinois, the largest provider of adoption services in the state, closed all of their adoption facilities rather than allow, via Illinois state mandate, same sex couples to adopt children from their care. The Chicago archdiocese as well as scores of other archdioceses across the country are also suing the federal government over the Human Health Services mandate that Catholic institutions provide their employees with contraceptive and "morning after" abortifacient pills in violation of Catholic teaching and the free exercise of religion clause contained in the Bill of Rights of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. George related that the HHS mandate will fine the Church \$500,000 a day for non compliance, and further stated that the Church will close down every Catholic hospital in the US (1/4 of all hospitals) rather than comply. Is history repeating itself? Read on. . . .!

A German Shepherd finds his Calling

Born (1876) and raised in Stuttgart as a son of a prosperous yet devout Catholic businessman/father, Rupert Mayer enjoyed a well endowed childhood, having opportunities to pursue higher education, become an accomplished violinist and a skilled horseman as well already as a young man. Upon finishing his basic educational requirements in 1894, however, he found himself called to the spiritual life. He took to the university studying philosophy in Fribourg, Switzerland and in Munich and later theology in Tuebingen before being ordained in 1899. Some time later he entered the Jesuit Order in Feldkirch, Austria where his superiors, recognizing his preaching skills, sent him to missions across Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands. In 1912 he was sent to work with the poor in Munich.

When World War I erupted Mayer volunteered his services as a military chaplain and drew assignment to a military hospital. He soon, however, requested a transfer to the "front" and was dispatched first to the Western Front in France and then to the Eastern Front in Poland and Romania. It was here that Mayer and his "kameraden" learned to share the Cross of Christ amidst the chaos, carnage and brutality of war. Mayer built a powerful, if not legendary, rapport with the men he served whether Catholic or not. In the thick of battle,

Mayer would make his way through the trenches from one man to the next, sharing yet calming their fears, praying for them and with them, hearing the confessions of the dying and feeding all spiritually via the power of the Body and Word of Christ.

Frequently admonished not to place his life so close to the mayhem, Mayer simply replied, "My life is in God's hands." In late 1915 Mayer was honored with the vaunted Iron Cross for valor under fire. A year later, however, God honored him with a larger share of His Cross by allowing shrapnel from a grenade to shatter his left leg which eventually required its amputation. Withdrawn to Munich for convalescence and unable to return to the "front," he resumed his work with the poor and was frequently referred to as the "limping priest."

Speaking Truth to Power!

Rupert Mayer,

The Apostle of Munich

Part I



Teutonic hell on Earth

Postwar Germany was a volatile place with every aspect of life uprooted to its core of existence. The Treaty of Versailles, forced down the throat of a now prostrate German nation by the Allied victors, set into motion circumstances which would not only cause the German economy to spiral out of control and, eventually, collapse but lead to the instability of Germany's first republican government, the Weimar Republik. Unable to pay for the war as the treaty dictated, the German government was, eventually, forced to keep printing money to meet their debt obligations. This, gradually, led to hyperinflation of the Deutschmark which proved devastating economically, socially and politically, most of all for the urban working

and middle classes and small businessmen. As Otto Friedrich in *Before the Deluge* described it:

The fundamental quality of the disaster was a complete loss of faith in the functioning of society. Money is important not just as a medium of economic exchange, after all, but as a standard by which society judges our work, and thus ourselves. If all money becomes worthless, then so does all government, and all society, and all standards. In the madness, a workman's work was worthless, a widow's savings were worthless, everything was worthless. The collapse of the currency not only meant the end of trade, bankrupt businesses, food shortages in the big cities and unemployment, according to historian, Alan Bullock, 'It had the effect, which is the unique quality of economic catastrophe, of reaching down to and touching every single member of the community in a way which no political event can. The savings of the middle classes and the working classes were wiped out at a single blow.'

Germany soon became a fertile breeding ground for radicals of every stripe. Cities were overwhelmed with millions of demobilized soldiers as well as refugees from the Sudetenland, Posen, Elsass Lotharingen and East Prussia, all German lands that had been taken away by the Allies in the Treaty in Versailles. Jobs were hard to find, food even scarcer and with nothing to do all day and all day to do it, the streets were filled with legions of empty pockets, growling stomachs and seething rage. Adam Ferguson in *When Money Dies* described the increasingly ominous situation in this way:

To ascribe the despair entirely to inflation would be misleading. Undoubtedly, though, inflation aggravated every evil, ruined every chance of national revival or individual success and produced the conditions in which extremists could raise the mob against the state. . . . It brought out the worst in everybody. It caused fear and insecurity among those who

had already known too much of both. It fostered xenophobia. It promoted contempt of government and the subversion of law and order. It corrupted where corruption had been unknown, and often where it should have been impossible.

Into this cataclysmic void limped one legged Rupert Mayer. His strong faith, tested by war and infirmity, provided him great moral insight into the human condition which proved of immense value in these most desperate times. Through the charitable organization Caritas and as Director of the Men's Congregation of

Mary, he raised money for the needy and helpless, never doubting the "neediness" of those requesting support with the generous rationalization, "If out of the ten who ask for alms, there are not nine who are not in need of them, and if through fear of that happening, I refuse my help to one really needy person, this would cause me immense suffering. I would rather give to all ten and thus avoid the danger of being lacking in charity." He also sought and received permission to offer Mass in the waiting room of the main railway station in Munich at 3:10 and 3:45 in the morning to meet the needs of those coming into and out of the city.

The Diabolical Seed of Versailles

At this same time the Communist Party and a fledgling nationalist ('Nazis' in short) movement were fighting it out on the streets of Germany's cities and larger towns. Into their fray sprung

Rupert Mayer, initially, as an anti communist debater who attended CP meetings to take on their speakers in order to defend Christian truth against Marxist atheism. Ever since the Russian Revolution in 1917, when the Tsar and his family were brutally murdered by the Bolsheviks and all land and property were taken over by the state, Communism had been greatly feared all across Europe. During the "cultural revolution" of the



Pic: Bundesarchiv

1923-issue 50 million mark banknote. Worth approximately US \$1 when printed, this sum would have been worth approximately US \$12 million, nine years earlier. Below: One legged veteran reduced to begging.



Pic: Bundesarchiv

early '20s, the Communists purged from Russian society anything and everything that stood in opposition to them. As militant atheists they razed thousands of churches to the ground or converted them to Communist Party centers while murdering or sending to the gulags of Siberia many more thousands of priests, businessmen, landowners, intellectuals and anyone else they perceived to be "enemies of the state." The founder of Communism, Karl Marx, had called religion the "opium of the masses" and predicted Communism would first take root in Germany because its large industrial proletariat were already ripe to overthrow their capitalist and religious exploiters. Berlin and Munich had even already experienced failed communist revolutions in 1918 and 1919.

Interestingly enough, it was in one of these lion's dens of Communist agitation that Mayer first met "der Fuehrer" of the fledgling Nazi party.

As early as 1919, Fr. Mayer had requested the floor at a public debate, determined to make a stand against Communism from the viewpoint of culture, history and religion. When he had finished speaking, (Adolf) Hitler mounted the platform and said: 'After this priest's attack on Communism, I wish also to make an attack on political grounds.' It was on this occasion that Fr. Mayer conceived both the interest and the desire to learn, in greater detail, in what direction the new Party was moving. From then onwards he followed on a very regular basis the meetings held by Hitler every two weeks. (Mission Capadanno)

By early November of 1923, a time of rising unemployment, a bankrupt currency and when national humiliation combined with despair was at its peak, this very same political agitator named Adolf Hitler attempted a coup of the Weimar government from Munich. Although the infamous "Beer hall Putsch" was

quickly snuffed out, a longing for strong handed intervention was becoming more apparent among the general population:

Among some, the rebirth of the German soul, battered by war, hardship, and humiliation, was becoming something of an obsession. Not just the militarists. . . or academics. . . but many of all classes began to long for a great leader, not a ruler of the type of the Kaiser, but one possessed of the attributes and Spartan values of the legendary figures of early Teutonic history. It was a longing Hitler fully understood. (Adam Ferguson, *When Money Dies*)

It didn't take very long, however, for Rupert Mayer to grasp that Hitler and his Nazi Party Platform was overtly hostile to Christianity in general and the Catholic Church in particular. Aside from the

disturbing facts (in the Nazi view) that the racial origins of Christianity were Jewish, that Jesus and his apostles were Jews and that the Bible, the Old and New Testaments, was a "Jewish book," it was more so in how the Bible provided the moral basis of German society and culture that they loathed. The Bible and *Mein Kampf*, the new Nazi bible, simply could not ideologically coexist if Hitler's vision of the thousand year 3rd Reich was to be realized.

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To be continued in Jan/Feb 2013



Communists (above) and Nazis (below) rumbled on the streets for control of Germany's political future throughout the '20s & early '30s.



Pics: Bundesarchiv