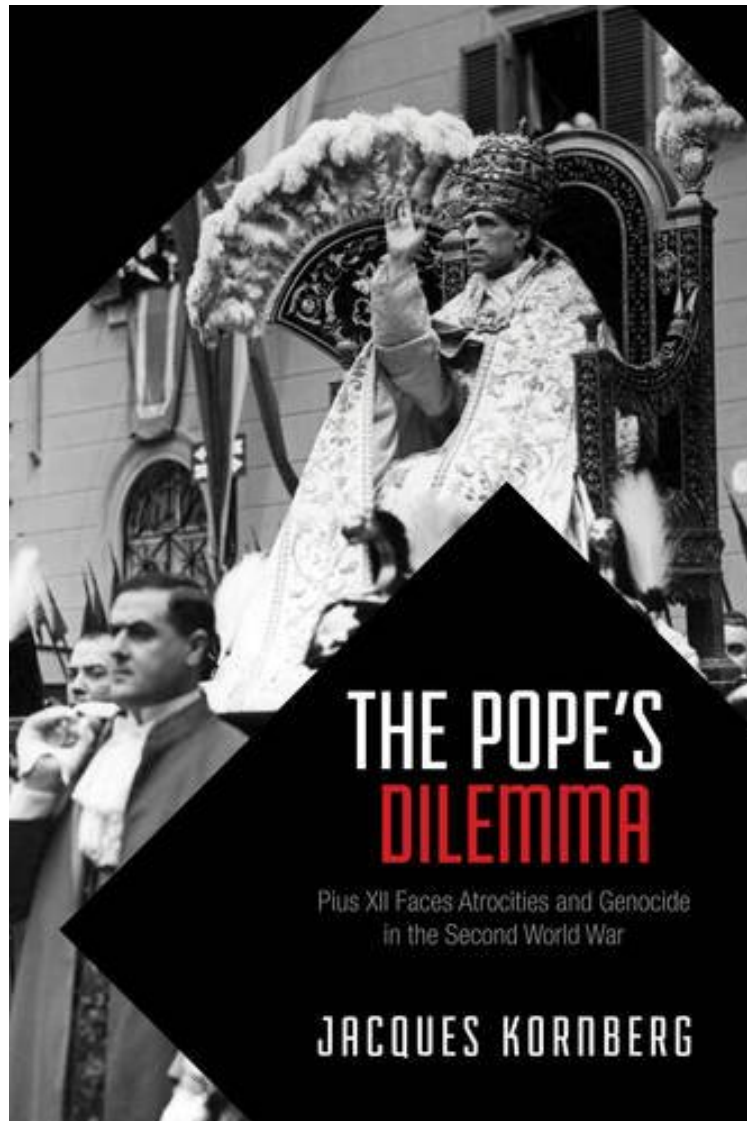


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The Pope's Dilemma: Pius XII Faces Atrocities and Genocide in the Second World War (German and European Studies)

Jacques Kornberg

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Jacques Kornberg : The Pope's Dilemma: Pius XII Faces Atrocities and Genocide in the Second World War (German and European Studies) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Pope's Dilemma: Pius XII Faces Atrocities and Genocide in the Second World War (German and European Studies):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Much needed thoughtful, fact-based, critical appraisal
By Dalcassian
This is the probably the real go-to book for intelligent criticism of Pius XII and World War II and the Holocaust. Unlike the "Hitler's Pope" or worse, Hochuth's "The Deputy", it does not rely on false assumptions, character-slander or a constant twisting of the record rooted in ideological prejudice. And Kornberg provides a logical and well-supported argument: namely that Pius XII refused to be confrontational with the Nazis because he feared losing his constituency. More specifically, Kornberg sees Pacelli/Pius as seeing the Church as a savior of souls that must survive. This necessarily conflicts with a role claimed as moral guide of western civilization or even German Catholics. Kornberg's book should be the worthy end of one part of the spectrum on which the other end would be Riebling who argues that Pius had a conscious agenda to aid in the overthrow of Hitler by acting coy and neutral, enabling connections to be kept up by the church between the Allies and German dissidents within the establishment. That is supported by the fact that the Vatican did precisely that in 1940 as Kornberg shows as well. Kornberg also, to his credit, corrects the implication that Pacelli in his pre-pope days orchestrated the destruction of the Center Party in Germany to the benefit of the Nazis. This reviewer does not agree with all or many of Kornberg's conclusions. Kornberg tries to impute a measure of papal anti-semitism in refusals or refrainings from changing older liturgical language while ignoring direct Vatican radio denunciations of anti-semitism during the war. The author ignores a record of personal phio-semitism and encouragement of rescue. He also too blithely dismisses the sources showing the Pope's troubled reaction to the Dutch bishops' outspoken denunciation of a German roundup of Jews being ignored by the Nazis and resulting in worse response. There are other problems, but Kornberg applies serious judgment and facts overall. Let the interpretations differ. The Pius debates will continue as Pius XII often serves as a figure into which to stuff opinions and prejudices rather than an actual historical person making the policy decisions of a decentralized increasingly irrelevant institution in real time in a world run by ideas, populations, violence, and violent rulers that had moved past it.
4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Most Important Study of Pius XII in a Generation.
By robert f.melson
This is the most important study of Pius XII in a generation. Kornberg shows in meticulous detail that when confronted with Nazism, the Pope believed that he was forced to choose between helping to save lives or of preserving the Church. He chose the Church.
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars
By Joaquim J. A. Olendzki
excellent

Pope Pius XII presided over the Catholic Church during one of the most challenging moments in its history. Elected in early 1939, Pius XII spoke out against war and destruction, but his refusal to condemn Nazi Germany and its allies for mass atrocities and genocide remains controversial almost seventy years after the end of the Second World War. Scholars have blamed Pius's inaction on anti-communism, antisemitism, a special emotional bond with Germany, or a preference for fascist authoritarianism. Delving deep into Catholic theology and ecclesiology, Jacques Kornberg argues instead that what drove Pius XII was the belief that his highest priority must be to preserve the authority of the Church and the access to salvation that it provided. In *The Popes Dilemma*, Kornberg uses the examples of Pius XII's immediate predecessors Benedict XV and the Armenian genocide and Pius XI and Fascist Italy, as well as case studies of Pius XII's wartime policies towards five Catholic countries (Croatia, France, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia), to demonstrate the consistency with which Pius XII and the Vatican avoided confronting the perpetrators of atrocities and strove to keep Catholics within the Church. By this measure, Pius XII did not betray, but fulfilled his papal role. A meticulous and careful analysis of the career of the twentieth century's most controversial pope, *The Popes Dilemma* is an important contribution to the ongoing debate about the Catholic Church's wartime legacy.

In this study, Kornberg offers a refreshingly different perspective on the motivation of Pius XII, which has not been explained satisfactorily by other historians. (Peter C. Kent *The Catholic Historical* vol 102:04:2016) The volume reflects the author's singular mastery of five decades of literature, exploiting the published documentary collections as well as recent scholarship that presents archival material available only for the last fifteen years. (Mark Edward Ruff *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* vol 30:03:2016) A meticulous and careful study of the career of the twentieth century's most controversial pope and a significant contribution to the debate over the Catholic Church's wartime attitude and legacy. (Andrea Di Stefano *Journal of Church and State* vol 59:02:2017) Jacques Kornberg has crafted a masterfully researched, carefully argued, highly readable scholarly monograph that adds greatly to the historical literature concerning Pope Pius XII and the Holocaust. (Richard Gribble *Canadian Journal of History* vol 52:01:2017) Kornberg, professor emeritus of history at the University of Toronto, has given us an original and balanced analysis of Pius XII's moral leadership that is as compelling as a novel. It will inspire much thought about dilemmas of church-state conflicts that we face in our increasingly war-struck world. (Nancy L. Roberts *Catholic News Service*, October 12, 2015) Upon reading Kornberg's record of Pius XII's response to German genocidal acts, one understands Francis's logic in terms clear and astonishing. (Norman Ravvin *The Canadian Jewish News*, January 4, 2016) Kornberg's work represents a monumental compilation of materials, both primary and secondary sources, reflecting a lifetime of study on the role that organized religion plays in our world. (Beth A. Griech-Polelle *Contemporary Church History Quarterly* vol 21:04:2015) This is a well-researched, meticulously argued scholarly treatment of Pius XII's wartime legacy. (J.P.

Blosser Choice Magazine vol 53:03:2015) In a book that reads like an exciting detective thriller, Jacques Kornberg examines Pope Pius XII and the Nazi regime of terror in Europe. Did the Pope resist the Nazis or acquiesce by failing to protest loudly and clearly? Could he have done more to rescue the Jews of Europe who begged him for his assistance? Why has world opinion shifted from praising Pius in the post-Second World War years to excoriating him, starting in the 1960s? Kornberg's book leads us through the maze of evidence with remarkable clarity and intellectual suspense. (Susannah Heschel, Eli Black Professor of Jewish Studies, Dartmouth College, and author of 'The Aryan Jesus: Christian Theologians and the Bible in Nazi Germany') For many years, historians have awaited the opening of the Vatican's archives for the reign of Pope Pius XII, unsure how the documentation therein will challenge our interpretations of the wartime church. Until that day arrives, Jacques Kornberg's magisterial survey, written in distinguished and elegant language, provides a valuable analysis of the numerous conflicting theories about Pius XII and his policies that have appeared over the course of the past fifty years. (John S. Conway, Professor Emeritus of History, University of British Columbia, and author of 'The Nazi Persecution of the Churches, 1933-1945') The Pope's Dilemma is a serious accomplishment by a historian who has spent years studying Pius XII in great depth. Jacques Kornberg has a fine grasp of the theology of the period and has truly incorporated it into his attempt to understand the choices Pius XII made during the Holocaust. (Kevin P. Spicer, C.S.C., James J. Kenneally Distinguished Professor of History, Stonehill College, and author of 'Hitler's Priests: Catholic Clergy and National Socialism') About the Author Jacques Kornberg is Professor Emeritus in the Department of History at the University of Toronto.