The steps taken by the Nazi government against the Lutheran Church and the Catholic Church and other denominations were gradual. The pressures on the Catholic Church began fairly early in the regime. The pressures on the Lutheran Church were carried on at the same time and were more effective for a number of reasons than those taken against the Catholic Church. The Lutheran Church in most of the states of Germany, if not all of them, was subsidized. At least a part of the maintenance of the church and of the pastors came from the local governments. Controlling therefore so large a part of the income of the church, the Nazi government began to use this as an instrument of pressure. There were of course evidences of resistance on the part of the pastors all over the country and the most effective resistance was by Dr. Niemoller, who was the pastor of one of the largest Lutheran churches in Berlin. He was very outspoken in his sermons and he showed a great deal of courage. The so-called gleichschaltung of the Lutheran Church, however, was not so difficult a problem. The pastors more and more became under economic pressure instruments of the regime.

With the Catholic Church the problem was a very difficult one. My recollection is that the Catholic Church received practically no money from either the federal or the state governments. There was a strong central control over the church. Completely aside from the determination to bring about a gleichschaltung of the Catholic Church, the Nazi regime and the various landesleiter had their eyes on the valuable property held by the church, such as convents and monasteries. They wanted these institutions for their own purposes. They wanted to use them for party purposes. The attack against the Catholic Church began through attacks on individual priests and runs for so-called immoral acts. The news of these persecutions, however, was so shocking to the public in general that the regime started to slow up in these particular forms of attack.

This led to the idea that there should be some new arrangement between the Hitler regime and the Vatican. Informal conversations were held. The leaders
of the Catholic Church, both clerical and lay, in Germany were not inclined towards such an agreement. They felt that any agreement which might be made between the Vatican and the Hitler regime with respect to the treatment of the churches would not in the end be respected. On the other hand, there seemed to be a more receptive attitude towards such an agreement in the Vatican.

The regime started to increase pressures on the church. It became commonly known in certain circles that Cardinal Pacelli, who was then the Pope's Secretary of State, was inclined towards a new agreement between the German government and the Vatican. On the other hand, the clerical as well as the lay leaders of the church in Germany were very reluctant to consider such an agreement. To me it was obvious from the beginning that such an agreement would be arrived at. I knew Cardinal Pacelli and I felt that his whole inclination would be towards an agreement. I also knew that his views in the matter would in the end prevail.

I do not remember the exact time, but it must have been in 1934, that I got word that an agreement was under active consideration. About that time I was asked by a good Catholic friend as to whether I would be willing to see Herr X, who was a well known industrialist and whose home was in Hesse. I said of course I would be very glad to see Mr. X (I can get his name from my papers), but that I did not see very much purpose in it as I had really no connection with this matter and was not even a Catholic. Some days later I was told by this same German friend that Mr. X was in room number ____ in Hotel Esplanade just across from the offices of the Consulate General and that he would be glad to see me in the afternoon. He would appreciate my coming to his room as he could not very well come to the Consulate General.

As I had lived a good deal in the Hotel Esplanade from time to time, I simply went to the hotel and took the elevator and went to his room. He stated that he appreciated very much my coming to see him. He knew that I was in close touch with a good many of the high officials of the Nazi government. He knew
that I followed the whole situation in Germany very closely. He knew that I was friendly towards Germany but that I realized what the practices of the present regime were and how dangerous they were, not only to the individual liberties of Germans but how much of a menace Germany was becoming for the rest of the world. He was therefore speaking to me as someone who might be able to give him some counsel, because of the knowledge I had of Germany and of the interest which I had in the maintaining of peace and decency. He then reviewed briefly some of the measures which had been taken towards bringing about an agreement between the Vatican and the Hitler regime. He said the point had now been reached where he had been asked to go to Rome in order to discuss this matter. The Vatican wished to discuss it. He asked me what I thought about it. I told him that I would prefer not to know any of the details of the arrangement, as there was I thought very little advice in any event that I could give. I wished really to remain apart from the matter. I assumed that what he really wished to know was whether I thought it was advisable to enter into such an agreement, and on that I was prepared to give him an answer. I told him that I thought that any agreement that was entered into by the Hitler regime with the Vatican would only be observed as long as it suited the convenience of the Hitler regime, and that that would not be very long. I said that their objectives with regard to the control of the church in Germany were just as definite as they were in other directions and as he had seen it happening, in all aspects of German life. I did not realize what the reasons were why the Vatican was interested in such an arrangement, but perhaps it wished to maintain the peace as long as possible. On the other hand, the Vatican must realize that such an agreement would have no real value and no enduring effect. On the other hand, so far as the Hitler regime was concerned, it only wanted this arrangement for its own purposes. It had not the slightest intention of keeping any agreement that it might make. The chances were that within three months after the agreement had been made, it would be broken. I
did not see any purpose, therefore, on the part of the Vatican in making the agreement.

On the other hand, I saw serious disadvantages in such an agreement being entered into. Resistance in Germany had been broken down gradually. The trade unions were gone. The universities had lost all authority. The schools were completely coordinated. All public opinion forming means were under the control of the government. The Lutheran Church unfortunately was becoming more and more clearly an instrument of the state. The Catholic Church and the army remained as the two outstanding elements really standing for decency and order. It would be a great misfortune indeed and have a very deteriorating moral effect I believed in Germany and among good Catholics as well as among persons who were not Catholics in Germany, for such an agreement to be entered into. It would be considered as an unrealistic arrangement and really a capitulation of the Church. There was still hope that the Church might be able to maintain its position. After all, the moral position of the Church was strong. It should, I thought, endeavor to maintain this position as long as it could, as it affected not only Catholics but non-Catholics in Germany as well.

Mr. X said that he was entirely in accord with these ideas. He said that practically all those whom he represented, and he represented the laity of the church, were of this opinion. They did not think an agreement should be entered into. He had, however, been requested to go to Rome in order to talk about this matter and he had great fears that the attitude of the Vatican, including that of Cardinal Pacelli, would be in favor of an agreement. I told him that was a matter which was outside of my province to discuss or even to offer an opinion. He said nevertheless he would like my opinion. I said that in my opinion the agreement was not going to last and should not be entered into, but that he would find that in Rome pressures would be brought upon him to change his own views and those of his associates in the direction of entering into an
agreement. He said he was afraid the situation was like that. He thanked me for having gone in to see him and he said he knew what I had done for many individual Germans, including some Catholics, in making it possible for them to leave the country when their life was in danger and he wished me to know that this was very much appreciated. He said that on his return from Rome he would get in touch with me to tell me of the results of his visit.

I told Mr. X that probably it would be more prudent for him not to do this, although I appreciated his thought, but that probably the best thing would be for him not to see me as I would learn the results in any event in other ways and through the press.

It was I believe some 10 days afterwards when my German friend who had approached me in the first instance came to see me and said that Mr. X had returned from Rome and was again in a certain room in the Hotel Esplanade and would be very glad to see me if I would go over. I went over to see Mr. X and found him very much depressed. He told me that he had been to Rome, that he had found the situation just as we had spoken of it a few days before before he had left on this trip, and that an agreement was about to be signed. He was much depressed because he said that there was no doubt that it would have a depressing effect on many people in Germany. It would not be in his opinion a good thing for the Church, as it would decrease in a measure at least the prestige of the Church. We had some pleasant conversation and that was the last time that I saw Mr. X. The news of the agreement was published in the press soon thereafter.

It was I believe just exactly three months after the agreement had been signed that the newspapers carried long articles to the action which had been taken in closing a convent somewhere in the south of Germany. Hundreds of nuns had been displaced from the convent with really no place to go. They were accused of carrying on either homosexual practices or of immoral practices. There was of course nothing whatever to this. This was only the beginning of a
series of attacks against monasteries and convents which culminated in the definite actions against the Church in order to decrease its prestige and its usefulness. It must be said that the Catholic clergy made a gallant struggle in Germany and showed a great deal of courage.

I had known Cardinal Pacelli, not well, but had had a number of occasions to meet him when he was Papal delegate to Germany and lived in Munich. Concerning the great intelligence and broad knowledge and capacity of Cardinal Pacelli there was no question. I, however, always had the feeling that he was a little bit too flexible in certain matters and too inflexible in others. I had the feeling that in any matter affecting grave political situations it would be difficult to determine where he would stand and how strongly he would stand. When I came to the Department of State as Assistant Secretary in 1937 it was sometime thereafter when I happened to be in the office of Secretary of State Hull when the head of the information service came in to see the secretary to say that word had just come over the ticker that Cardinal Pacelli had been elected Pope. I observed to the Secretary that I did not think that this was too good news on the whole, although he was undoubtedly a great and a good man. The Secretary wished to know what I meant and I told him I meant that it would not be possible for us in certain occasions of great importance to know just where the Pope would stand. The Secretary was very much interested in what I said and took up his direct phone to the White House and spoke to the President, and said the news had come in about Pacelli's election as Pope and that I was with him and that I had observed that I was not too happy about it. I had said that Pacelli was a very intelligent and a very capable man but that I was not exactly sure what attitudes he would take at times when certain strong attitudes were necessary. The President made some brief remark in reply to Mr. Hull and Mr. Hull replaced the receiver and said to me, "Tell George that not for the first time I think his appreciation is correct".
In any event, there is no doubt that the making of this agreement between the Vatican and the Hitler regime did a great deal of damage in the whole situation. It was discouraging to the German people as a whole.