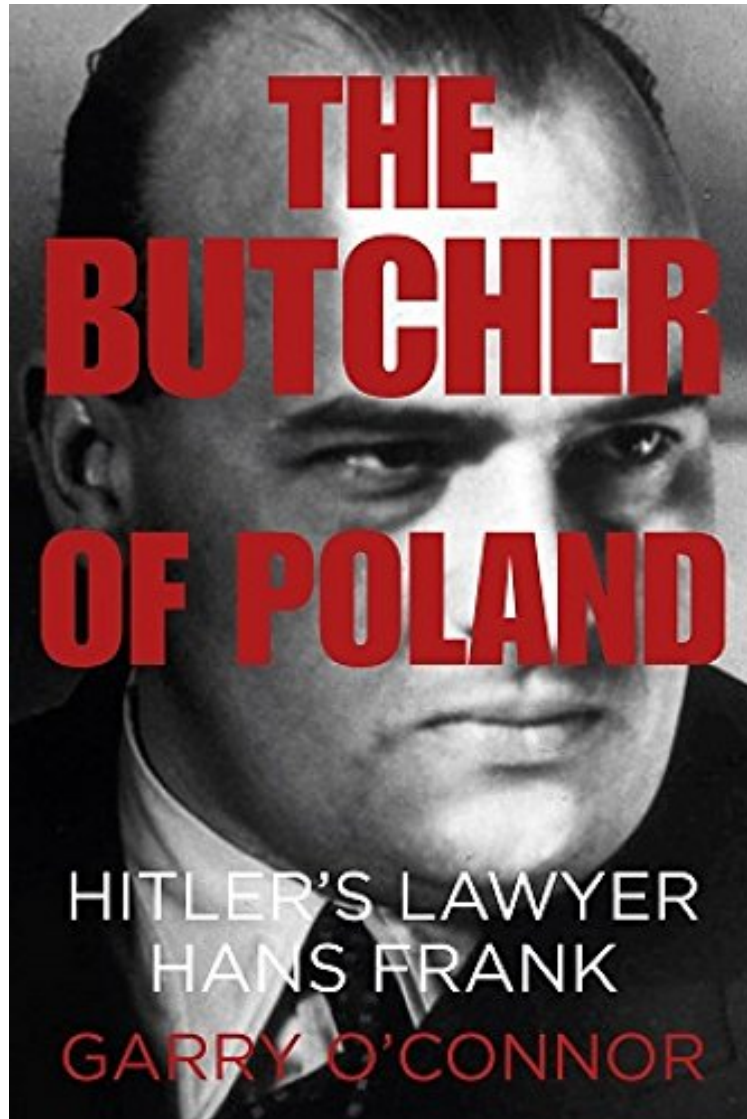


[Free] The Butcher of Poland: Hitler's Lawyer Hans Frank

The Butcher of Poland: Hitler's Lawyer Hans Frank

Garry O'Connor

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Garry O'Connor : The Butcher of Poland: Hitler's Lawyer Hans Frank before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Butcher of Poland: Hitler's Lawyer Hans Frank:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. This book has some value, I think, but early on, my feeling was to be wary of its precise factual representations. By Peter S. Bradley As the Nazi era has receded into the past, prominent Nazi celebrities like Frank have become essentially forgotten. This is unfortunate because the lives of these men shaped the Nazi era and, thus, we cannot understand the Nazi era without having some knowledge of these people. More importantly, these people were shaped by the era they lived through. If we want to achieve some understanding

of the nightmare of the Nazi era, we can't do any better than to understand what brought the son of a disgraced lawyer into the position of the "King of Poland." Unfortunately, this is not a particularly good book for accomplishing those goals. The author, Gary O'Connor, disdains the use of footnotes. He has a brief section of notes. These notes are vague at best, sometimes indicating a letter for "NF" - presumably Hans Frank's son, Niklas Frank - as a source. This practice makes it virtually impossible to check O'Connor's claim or use his sources as a link to other sources. Also, it appears that apart from correspondence with "NF," O'Connor relies on secondary sources, such as Guenter Lewy's *The Catholic Church And Nazi Germany*. He also relies extensively on Niklas Frank's biography of his father. Niklas' biography is described by O'Connor as being written as a first-person diatribe against a father who was executed when he was a toddler. Niklas may have had privileged access to family and friends, but I question how much support O'Connor gave Niklas' biography at the expense of Frank's diaries or other sources. O'Connor also comes across with a capricious anti-Catholicism. He uses every opportunity he can to mention Cardinal Ratzinger in contexts that imply guilt by association through the device of grammatical proximity. Thus, Frank flees Poland while young Joseph Ratzinger is manning anti-aircraft guns in Bavaria. What significance this has for Frank's biography is unclear. Likewise, O'Connor schizophrenically writes about the Catholic bishop's opposition to the Nazi regime and their support of the Nazi regime. Thus, he writes: "Cardinal Faulhaber did sometimes attack the Nazi position; once, without being explicit, in his popular Advent sermon of 1933 he said: It is my conviction that a defence of Christianity is also a defence of Germany. An apostasy from Christianity, a relapse into paganism, would be the beginning of the end of the German nation. He drew a vivid picture of life in Germany before the advent of Christianity. Taken from the Roman historian Tacitus, early German gods, fashioned after the likeness of men, were idealised portraits of what a German hero or housewife were conceived to be. They offered human sacrifice to the Gods; they indulged in savage superstitious rites as well as savage warfare; they practised vendettas as a moral duty. They had slaves, whom they put to death at will; they drank heavily and became murderous They were loyal to their comrades, monogamous and faithful Nobody seemed to get the picture. It was too late in any case. Faulhaber's words, which could be read two ways, became more a prediction than a warning. Faulhaber delivered other speeches and sermons criticising the Nazis from 1933 onwards and in 1935 some Nazis called in an open meeting for Faulhaber to be killed, and his house was shot at. But these were mere gestures. On the persecution of Jews and the political violence, the German churches, with notable exceptions, remained tragically silent; only the Jehovah's Witnesses were firm in their hostility, willing to be martyred. Himmler was impressed by their fanaticism and held it up to his SS men as an example." So, we learn that Faulhaber criticized the Nazis, but, apparently, the criticism was not up to O'Connor's standards, particularly with no one getting the mention, which he would know how? Likewise, Pope Pius XII comes in for some predictable and weird castigation: "silence, and in spite of Pacelli, Pius XI, his predecessor as pope, issued his fiery encyclical, *Mit brennender Sorge* (With burning concern) in March 1937, prompted by five German cardinals and bishops who had broken ranks. The encyclical excoriated Nazi hatred and calumny of the Church. But even in the encyclical there was no explicit condemnation of anti-Semitism. Gring fulminated and vowed reprisal, but under Pacelli's influence most Catholic bishops softened in their support of the encyclical. Again, it was too late. The Catholic hierarchy in Bavaria had allowed Hitler to insert the thin end of the wedge, while German Catholic independence had been paralysed." Of course, Pacelli was responsible for drafting *Mit Brennender Sorge*. Catholics were arrested and taken to Concentration Camps because of their involvement in publishing the encyclical. No one has ever suggested that Pacelli "softened" the encyclical - which was consistent with twenty prior years of condemnation of the Nazis by Catholic prelates, including Pacelli. O'Connor offers no citation for his claims, so this is yet an extension of *kultursmog* into the *zeitgeist*. I was interested in the religious background of Frank. Frank was Old Catholic, which was not Catholic. Old Catholics broke off of Catholicism in the 1870s as part of the definition of papal infallibility and the simultaneous *Kulturkampf* inflicted on Catholicism by Bismarck and German liberals. This raises all kinds of interesting angles about what it meant to be an Old Catholic in pre-Nazi Germany. None of these issues are mentioned. In fact, I've provided more information in this paragraph about Old Catholicism than was provided in O'Connor's book. What we do learn from O'Connor is the basic soulless, unrooted opportunism of Frank. Frank certainly believed in German nationalism, but it isn't clear that he was an anti-semitic in the sense we associate with the death camps. It seems clear that Frank saw in the Nazi movement the opportunity to advance his own interests. He acted as the Nazi lawyer in the 1920s and was able to translate his status as a lawyer into posts in the German justice ministries in the 1930s. By the end of the 1930s, it seems that Frank had been shoved out of the professional ministries, perhaps because of his own limitations. He then "lucked" into the appointment of the head of the "Government General" in conquered Poland. It was not clear to me how Frank made the transition from lawyer to justice minister to ruler of Poland, except that he was an opportunist who was loyal and available in 1939. Frank was a loathsome creature. It is clear that he converted to Catholicism in his final days, but even there he was an opportunist, at one point threatening to renounce his conversion because the Vatican failed to come through with a request for clemency. O'Connor spins the Catholic Church's willingness to provide last rites to Frank in contrast to the Lutheran Church's refusal to grant absolution to Goring, who had demonstrated no penitence. This book has some value, I think, but early on, my feeling was to be wary of its precise factual representations. 6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Ok not great By Bruce

D.Ok not great. Author kept mentioning subject kept dairy through out war. Thought he could have used that material a lot more. Should have been a more in depth bio than what we got here.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Author pushes his views which may not describe the man properley instesd try Nuremberg Diaries for a better viewBy CustomerNot a very scholarly work, rather an opinion based more on hysteria than fact. Not enough documents when Frank left over 47 volumes of diaries and notesReads like a poor Masters thesis

The only biography of a key member of Hitler's inner circle, described by his own son as "a slime-hole of a Hitler fanatic" The life of the Bavarian Hans Frank, one of the 10 war criminals hanged at Nuremberg in 1946, who converted to Catholicism before he died, has not received the full attention the world has given to other Nazi leaders. In many ways he warrants it more. His life symbolzses the hubristic and visionary ambition Germany had to an alarming degree much better than anyone else, perhaps because he was an intellectual of the highest caliber: "Can't they see," he said of his fellow accused at Nuremberg, "that this is a horrible tragedy in the history of mankind, and that we are the symbols of an evil that God is brushing aside?" As he recognized by the end he was a primary, if not the exemplary, symbol, his remorse, self-pity, and arrogance knew no bounds as they vied with his contrition. "In Prague, big red posters were put up on which one could read that seven Czechs had been shot today. I said to myself, 'If I had to put up a poster for every seven Poles shot, the forests of Poland would not be sufficient to manufacture the paper.'" Hans Frank, June 1940

About the AuthorGarry O'Connor is atheater director and the author of more than a dozen books including Universal Father: A Life of Pope John Paul II. Michael Holroyd is the author of A Book of Secrets.