

Galen, Clemens August Graf Von

(1878--1946), German Catholic archbishop who was one of the most outstanding Catholic opponents of Nazism and Adolf Hitler. When the Nazis rose to national power in Germany in 1933, Galen pledged his allegiance to them, in the hope that they would win back the country's honor, which had been lost during World War I. However, he changed his mind after discovering the Nazis' anti-Catholic propaganda campaign, and after reading *The Myth of the Twentieth Century* by chief Nazi ideologist Alfred Rosenberg. Galen immediately denounced the book for its pagan, racist, and anti-Catholic content.

Galen's most famous anti-Nazi action was his condemning of the Euthanasia Program as clear-cut murder in a sermon he delivered on August 3, 1941. Some scholars believe that Galen's very public denunciation led Hitler to abandon the "mercy killings" of the mentally ill, aged, disabled, homosexuals, and others. Even so, Galen's opposition was considered to be an act of treason, and he was only saved from execution because Hitler did not want to risk a public battle with the Catholic church.