

WALL STREET JOURNAL ERRS WITH CROPPED PHOTO

The March 5 edition of the *Wall Street Journal* contained a serious error. The newspaper was contacted by University of Mississippi law professor Ronald Rychlak about a photo of Pope Pius XII that suggests the Holy Father was sympathetic to the Nazis.

We are not pleased that the newspaper has not contacted Rychlak saying it will run his letter, but we are pleased to note that in an online posting they have accepted his criticism and changed the photo to reflect a more accurate depiction.

Rychlak is one of the world's leading authorities on the role of the Catholic Church's opposition to Hitler. He has authored several books on this subject, including *Hitler, the War, and the Pope*. He serves on the board of advisors of the Catholic League.

Here are his remarks, setting the record straight.

"The caption of the picture accompanying Francis X. Rocca's article on the opening of Pope Pius XII's archives ('*Vatican to Open Secret Archives on Wartime Pope Pius XII*'). The caption says 'Pope Pius in Berlin in 1939. The pope has been criticized for not speaking out against the Holocaust.' That is incorrect.

"This photograph, a favorite of those who seek to portray Pius XII in an unfavorable light, was actually taken in 1927. It shows Nuncio Pacelli, the future Pope Pius XII who was at that time a Vatican representative to Germany, leaving a reception for President Hindenburg. It is a Weimar soldier, not a Nazi soldier, in the foreground. Pacelli left Germany in 1929, before Hitler came to power, and he never returned.

"The dating of this photograph to 1939 was (to my knowledge) first done by John Cornwell in the British edition of his book when he put that photo on the cover. After objection from the Vatican, the publisher changed the date to 1929 (still incorrect, but at least prior to the Nazi era). Cornwell used the same photograph with the correct date on the U.S. edition of his book, but the photo was cropped to eliminate the soldier nearest the camera (making it hard to recognize that he was a Weimar soldier, not a Nazi), darkened (making it appear more sinister), and blurred (so that a chauffeur in the background takes on the appearance of an SS officer). Unfortunately, such manipulation of evidence has been far too common in this debate."