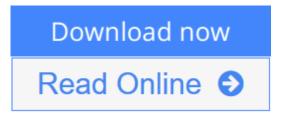


The End of Illusions: Religious Leaders **Confront Hitler's Gathering Storm**

By Joseph Loconte



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The rise of Islamic radicalism has led to heated discussions about how best to address the threat of religious terror. Disputes covering the right and wrong of war with Iraq, and the even bigger war on terrorism, continue to rage across America. But this is not the first argument of this nature? America was faced with a similar moral dilemma on the eve of World War II. Fascism was conquering Europe, and religious leaders across the nation vehemently debated how to confront Nazi Germany. In The End of Illusions: Religious Leaders Confront Hitler's Gathering Storm, Joseph Loconte brings together pieces from the most significant religious thinkers of the pre-war period. In these essays, the writers eloquently and passionately present their arguments for going to war or maintaining the peace. In doing so, they explore issues vibrantly relevant today, including the Christian cause for war, the problem of evil, and America's role in the world. These urgently written pieces connect the past with the present and resonate with renewed clarity and poignancy.



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Editorial Review

Review

With this vital documentation, Joseph Loconte brings back to life the intense intellectual battle that bitterly divided religious thinkers in the 1930s: How should they respond to the total war against the West, mounted by the Third Reich and its Axis partners? Reinhold Niehbur and others fought manfully against the overwhelming numbers of pacifists, doves, perfectionists, and just plain appeasers, and took many rhetorical blows for doing so. These documents tell the tale most eloquently. (Michael Novak, former U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Human Rights Commission, 1994 Templeton laureate)

Congratulations to Joseph Loconte for bringing together this indispensable collection of writings by American theologians and churchmen who either opposed or supported America's involvement in the war against Nazi Germany. Then, as now, a significant cohort of the clergy preached a 'moral equivalence' between the United States and its foes; then, as now, many averted their gaze from the horrors unfolding in another part of the world; then, as now, many cried 'peace' when there was no 'peace' for the victims of Nazism. Opposition to this position, spearheaded by Reinhold Niebuhr, located interventionism within the heart of the Christian tradition and its understanding of the role of the state in protecting citizens from, and punishing, evil. Loconte's briskly written, energetic introduction helps to frame our understanding of who the writers were and what issues were at stake. Anyone who wishes to deepen his or her appreciation of American church opinion between World Wars I and II should read this volume. (Jean Bethke Elshtain, The Laura Spelman Rockeller Professor of Social and Political Ethics, University of Chicago; author of Just War Against Terror)

Joseph Loconte gathered surprising material for his excellent historical study. (Joseph Bottum *The Weekly Standard*)

Although its subject is the fierce debate among religious leaders about America's entry into the Second World War, Joseph Loconte's powerful and timely book also sheds light on the conduct of religious leaders in our current struggles. Rarely has a collection of historical documents had more immediate relevance, or offered more self-evident parallels to the present. Then, as now, one is dismayed by the failure of so many of our most prominent religious spokesmen to give responsible guidance to those burdened by the terrible obligations of statecraft. Then, as now, one is grateful for the clear-thinking remnant who did provide such guidance, and who understood that genuine love for one's neighbors can never mean abandoning them to barbarism and murder. (Wilfred M. McClay, University of Oklahoma)

About the Author

Joseph Loconte is the William E. Simon Fellow in Religion and a Free Society at the Heritage Foundation's Center for Religion and Civil Society.

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