

The Play and the Plot to Denigrate the Pope

Ronald J. Rychlak

I. Introduction

In 1964, *America* magazine asked “What has happened since 1958 to erase with one sweep these informed and unsolicited tributes to the memory of Pope Pius XII? Why do they count for nothing when *The Deputy* comes to town? By what dialectic, or through what human fickleness, has a great benefactor of humanity, and of the Jews particularly now become a criminal?” Pope Pius XII’s reputation flipped so fully and so fast without *any* new evidence being uncovered – indeed solely on the basis of activity or inactivity that had been fully known for almost two decades. This was not an organic result of serious scholarship. Something else was at play.

While the charge that Pius XII was overly tolerant of the Nazi regime had been leveled earlier (particularly by post-war Communists who were trying to discredit the Church), most people trace the issue of Pius XII’s reputation to a play, *The Deputy*, written by German playwright Rolf Hochhuth. Although the play was fictional, Hochhuth claimed that it was based on “provable facts” and appended a text (“Sidelights on History”) to the play in which he argued that his depiction was justified by the historical record.

It was long known that *The Deputy* drew upon (or at least parroted) post-war Communist propaganda. Only recently did a former Soviet-block official set forth the charge that the KGB sponsored the play in order to discredit Pius XII and through him the Catholic Church. If *The Deputy* was indeed a Soviet plot designed to discredit the

Catholic Church, it becomes easier to understand how Pius XII, the “great benefactor of humanity,” came to be seen as something sinister.

II. The Play

The Deputy focuses on two main characters, Kurt Gerstein (based on a real person) and Father Riccardo Fontana (a fictional Catholic priest). As a prisoner of the Allies after the war, the real Gerstein (a Nazi official) set forth a written statement on which the broad outline of the play was based. It may have been true, but Gerstein was hanged in his cell (perhaps suicide) before his story could be confirmed. As such, he remains an enigmatic figure. Fontana is purely fictional.

The basic plot of *The Deputy* involves a good Nazi (Gerstein) who tells a good priest (Fontana) about what the Nazis are doing to the Jews. Fontana, however, is continually thwarted in his efforts to get a message to the Pope. When he finally succeeds, the Pope does not care. Fontana then sacrifices himself by putting on a yellow star and going to a concentration camp. Recurring themes include the idea that Hitler’s war against the Soviet Union was sort of a papal crusade, that Pius and the Jesuits were primarily concerned about their investments in the armaments factories, and papal silence.

If it were produced as written, *The Deputy* would take about seven hours to perform. Since that was totally unrealistic, the German producer, Erwin Piscator, edited the script into a more manageable length, making very substantial changes along the way. When the play was translated into English for the British production, scenes were shuffled and many nuances were lost. When the play came to the United States, a

different translation and abridgement were used, and the scenes were shuffled again. The 2002 motion picture version, *Amen*, provided yet another version.

Immediately after *The Deputy* premiered Church officials responded. An article by Archbishop Giovanni Battista Montini, written shortly before he became Pope Paul VI, and released just after, was published in the London *Tablet* on June 29, 1963. In it, he wrote:

For my part I conceive it my duty to contribute to the task of clarifying and unifying men=s judgment on the historical reality in question C so distorted in the representational pseudo-reality of Hochhuth=s play.... [which] does not represent the man as he really was: in fact it entirely misrepresents him.

Let some men say what they will, Pius XII=s reputation as a true Vicar of Christ, as one who tried, so far as he could, fully and courageously to carry out the mission entrusted to him, will not be affected.

A number of war-time diplomats publicly rejected Hochhuth=s characterization of Pope Pius XII, including Wladimir d=Ormesson (a member of the French Academy), Sir Francis D=Arcy Osborne (British Minister to the Holy See during the war), Ambassador Grippenbergr (from Finland), Ambassador Gunnar Haggelof (from Sweden), and Minister Kanayama (from Japan). Jenő Levai, the leading scholar of the Jewish extermination in Hungary observed that it was a particularly regrettable irony that the one person in all of occupied Europe who did more than anyone else to halt the dreadful crime and alleviate its consequences is today made the scapegoat for the failures of others.@

III. The Soviet/Romanian Plot

In early 2007, Ion Mihai Pacepa, a former Romanian intelligence chief and the highest-ranking official ever to defect from the Soviet block, reported that in 1960, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev approved a plan for destroying the Vatican=s moral authority by smearing the reputation of the late Pope Pius XII. Pacepa attributed the idea to KGB chairman Aleksandr Shelepin and Aleksey Kirichenko, the Soviet Politburo member responsible for international policies. AMoscow wanted the Vatican discredited by its own priests, on its home territory, as a bastion of Nazism.@

The KGB wanted Vatican documents so that its disinformation experts could work with them and taint the late Pope=s reputation. The trick was to get into the Vatican archives. According to Pacepa, that is when the chief of the Soviet foreign intelligence service, General Aleksandr Sakharovsky, concluded that the Romanian foreign intelligence service (*Departamentul de Informatii Externe* or “DIE”) was in an excellent position to reach the archives due to contacts it had made.

Pacepa says that he recruited three Romanian spies to disguise themselves as priests and gain access to the Vatican Secret Archives where they secretly photographed documents and send the results to the KGB. Nothing they found, however, could be used to fabricate believable evidence that made Pius seem sympathetic to Hitler=s regime. These documents might, however, form a reasonable background for fiction. That=s when the Soviets switched to the idea of writing a play.

According to Pacepa, the KGB chief of disinformation claimed to have created an outline for the first draft of *The Deputy*. Agayants did indeed specialize in writing false

histories; he was “Moscow Center’s disinformation expert.” As Andrew & Gordievsky explain in their book, *KG.B.: The Inside Story*: “Agaynts owed his appointments as the first head of Department D to his success in sponsoring a series of bogus memoirs and other works.” In terms of content, one of Agaynts favorite techniques was to associate his targets with the Nazis (and he was not above stirring anti-Semitic hatred to advance the Soviet cause).

Pacepa says that he met with an influential member of the diplomatic corps who... had begun his career working in the Vatican archives. His name was Agostino Casaroli. Pacepa does not go on to tell us that Pope John Paul II later named Casaroli Cardinal Secretary of State or that he was known as the Vatican’s secret agent in communist Europe. He was indeed known for dressing in civilian clothes to meet with communist officials.

IV. Hochhuth’s Research and His Researcher

With allegations like those set forth in the *Sidelights on History*, Hochhuth had to back up his claims. People wondered where he got his information. In a 2007 defense of the playwright, David Irving (who served as Hochhuth’s chief research assistance in the later 1960s) suggested that Hochhuth might have been fed bad information when he was writing *The Deputy*. Similarly, Pacepa charged that “Forgeries based on the stolen documents” were part of the play’s “historical appendix.” Whether Hochhuth wrote it or it was prepared for him by the KGB, *Sidelights on History* is not a piece of solid scholarship.

Hochhuth said that he spent three months in Rome “studying the atmosphere, talking to Swiss Guards, Romans and Jews who had been hidden in Italian monasteries.” He claimed to have posed a series of questions to “an elderly and experienced German-speaking bishop,” but he refused to name the bishop. Instead, he quoted “high clerics” and “anonymous eyewitnesses.” Hochhuth reported that the bishop avoided him for weeks, but ultimately confirmed his suspicions about Pius XII.

How the Protestant Hochhuth, an unknown aspiring playwright without even a high school diploma, would have managed to get a bishop to assist with this work is difficult to understand unless he had influential assistance. Of course, Hochhuth has a history of citing mysterious sources to support his claims. At least some of those sources seem to have been fabricated, and other charges that he made have been established as fraudulent.

In 1948, propagandists at the Historical Institute of the Soviet Academy of Sciences in Moscow hired M.M. Sheinmann to publish a fabrication alleging a Vatican-Nazi conspiracy. Translated into German as *Der Vatican im Zweiten Weltkrieg* in 1954, Sheinmann's works contained details about an alleged “Secret Pact” the Vatican had signed with Hitler. After *The Deputy* debuted, Msgr. Erich Klausener Jr., whose father had been the head of Berlin's *Catholic Action* but was murdered during the night of the long knives in 1934, pointed out that Hochhuth's play bore a striking resemblance to Sheinmann's propaganda. Of course, too many witnesses remained in Germany at this time for the charges to gain any traction.

When former Romanian intelligence chief Ion Pacepa first reported that *The Deputy* was a Soviet-inspired counter-intelligence operation, Hochhuth's strongest

support came from the British researcher David Irving, who posted the following on his web-page:

WHAT an extraordinary story about Hochhuth, and what utter rubbish; he was my best friend in those years and still is a good friend; I have two chapters about him in my memoirs. There was never a hint of Soviet influence -- which is not to say he may not have been fed a corrupt dossier in some clever way. He could be very naive.

Clearly, this is a matter that calls for more investigation. There are, however, some things that we do know.

First of all, we know that Irving is lying. *The Deputy* was first produced in 1963. As Irving reports elsewhere on his web page, Hochhuth first approached him after having written *The Deputy*, and they did not meet in person until 1965. Accordingly, they were not “best friends” at the time in question. Irving could not have known about Soviet influence at the time *The Deputy* was being written. Hochhuth and Irving did, however, become great friends. In the mid to late 1960s, David Irving worked as Hochhuth’s chief researcher. As Irving went on to become known as the world=s foremost Holocaust denier, his old friend Rolf Hochhuth always stood by him.

We also know that the British government suspected Irving of receiving financial support from the communists at this time. As Irving reports on his web page: “The recently releasae [sic] files in the Public Record office in London show that the Government suspected at that time I too was receiving Soviet financial support, otherwise how could I be living in my fine apartment in Mayfair just on the income of a struggling

author.” Irving denies receiving such support, but his only real accounting for the money is a complaint that the government took it away in 2002.

Irving once famously insisted that Adolf Hitler knew nothing about the systematic slaughter of six million Jews. In 1992, a judge in Germany fined him the equivalent of \$6,000 for publicly insisting the Nazi gas chambers at Auschwitz were a hoax. He has also been quoted as saying there was “not one shred of evidence” that the Nazis carried out their “final solution” on such a scale. “I don't see any reason to be tasteful about Auschwitz,” Irving declared in 1991 before a group of neo-Nazis. “It's baloney. It's a legend ... more women died on the back seat of Edward Kennedy's car at Chappaquiddick than ever died in a gas chamber in Auschwitz.”

Irving raised his profile as a Holocaust denier in 2000, when he sued Deborah Lipstadt of Emory University and Penguin Books over Lipstadt's book *Denying the Holocaust*. The book accused Irving of being a Nazi apologist and an admirer of Hitler, who has resorted to the distortion of facts and to the manipulation of documents in support of his contention that the Holocaust did not take place. Irving charged that the book was part of a concerted attempt to ruin his reputation as an historian.”

The defendants rested on the truth of the matter asserted. In other words, they argued that Irving was indeed discredited as an historian due to his denial of the Holocaust and his distortion of the historical record so as to depict Hitler in a favorable light. The British judge sided with Lipstadt and Penguin. The *New York Times* proclaimed: “The verdict puts an end to the pretense that Mr. Irving is anything but a self-promoting apologist for Hitler.” Well, he was that and Rolf Hochhuth's long-time collaborator and friend.

Irving was again in the news and in court when he was arrested for Holocaust denial in Austria in 2005. According to the BBC, at the time of the arrest Irving was returning from a visit to see Hochhuth. Hochhuth defended Irving throughout his Austrian ordeal, calling Irving “a fantastic pioneer of current historiography who has written terrific books” and calling the allegation that Irving was a Holocaust denier “simply idiotic.”

Hochhuth’s defense of Irving caused groups and newspapers in Germany to label Hochhuth an anti-Semite. Paul Spiegel, President of the Central Jewish Council in Germany, argued that with these statements Hochhuth himself was denying the Holocaust. The German publishing house *Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt* cancelled publication of Hochhuth’s autobiography over the matter. Of course, Hochhuth had defended Irving several times in the past. When Hochhuth praised Irving in his 1996 memoirs, critics asked how anyone could write words of praise for such a radical. His answer was: “Because I am Hochhuth.” Following the 2005 event, however, Hochhuth eventually issued an apology.

Standing by an old friend, even the world’s best-known Holocaust denier, might be an excusable offence, even if because I am Hochhuth trivializes the issue. This is not, however, the first time that observers have detected at least a tinge of anti-Semitism in Hochhuth’s work. Prior to *The Deputy*, Hochhuth’s only publication was a two-volume edition of the collected works of 19th-century German satirist and humorist Wilhelm Busch (1837-1908) that he edited. Busch, of course, was a favorite of the Nazi regime because of his anti-Semitism and anti-clericalism.

Hochhuth denied that Busch was an anti-Semite. He nevertheless deleted certain passages of Busch's work that he thought might be considered anti-Semitic because he knew would "lure even children." It is interesting, then, that he left stanzas like this in place: "And the Jew with crooked heel, Crooked nose and crooked legs, Fully corrupted and devoid of soul Wriggles his way to the Stock Exchange." Elsewhere, a poor old Jew is described as follows: "His pants are short, so is his coat, His nose is as crooked as his cane, Black are his eyes and grey his soul, With clever face, his hat thrown back... Our kind is much More beautiful!"

When *The Deputy* debuted, some critics noted Hochhuth's history of anti-Semitism. *Time* magazine reported: "Hochhuth, a Protestant who once belonged to Hitler's youth corps, has been denounced as a pro-Communist and an anti-Semite." While defending him, *Ramparts* magazine noted that he had been "damned variously as a Nazi, a Communist and an anti-Semite." The Broadway producer of *The Deputy*, Herman Shumlin, cut out scenes of Jewish collaboration and certain Jewish characters from the American production. Of Hochhuth's depiction of Jews, Shumlin said: "Why, he doesn't even know what a Jew looks like.... He has a stereotype of them as short men with eyeglasses." A declassified secret British intelligence report from 1969 even noted a certain anti-Semitic undertone in Hochhuth's next play, *Soldiers*.

V. An Unknowing Dupe?

Asked about Pacepa's article, Hochhuth denied any KGB influence and insisted that the play was all his own work. Perhaps Hochhuth was not a knowing player in a

communist plot. The facts suggest, however, that he was a good candidate for the Soviets to target as an unknowing dupe.

On the surface, Hochhuth seemed very impressive. The press called him a playwright of conscience, an idealist, and a man of discriminating moral intelligence. At the same time, as his friend David Irving said, he could be “very naive.” Irving would know. He worked hand in hand as Hochhuth’s researcher/historian on his first play after *The Deputy*. That play, entitled *Soldiers*, criticized Great Britain for bombing German cities, and it alleged that British Prime Minister Winston Churchill ordered the assassination of the Polish Prime Minister in exile, General Wladyslaw Sikorski. The play also revealed Hochhuth as a sloppy researcher at best and a fraud at worst.

Like *The Deputy*, *Soldiers* was loosely based on an historical event. During World War II General Sikorski became Prime Minister of the Polish Government in Exile, Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Armed Forces, and a staunch advocate of the Polish cause on the diplomatic scene. He was killed on July 4, 1943 when his plane crashed into the sea immediately on takeoff from Gibraltar. According to Hochhuth, it was murder, and it was perpetrated on the orders of Winston Churchill.

Hochhuth’s story was that agents entered the plane that Sikorski was riding and killed him and others (including Sikorski’s daughter, two members of Parliament, and a dozen innocent people) prior to takeoff. They then abandoned the plane. The pilot intentionally crashed (after taking special precautions for his personal safety) making it look like Sikorski was killed by the impact. Hochhuth’s charge was that the pilot survived the crash, but he was later killed by British agents to keep him quiet. Later investigation would prove that there was *no* substance behind Hochhuth’s claims.

Actor Carlos Thompson ended up investigating Hochhuth's charges and writing a book: *The Assassination of Winston Churchill*. In that book, Thompson reveals a semi-paranoid, Aall-too-eager to believe anything he is told@ Hochhuth. Thompson, who entitled one chapter AA sad example of Hochhuth=s methods,@ wrote of the Atangled gyrations of Hochhuth=s thinking@ and said that the playwright=s mind worked along Adangerously greased rails.@

Hochhuth would shift his premise based upon nothing more than (and often less than) a rumor. He originally claimed that Churchill had General Sikorski killed due to his strong stance against the Soviets. When an article in the Moscow *New Times* made a different argument, he immediately adopted it and suggested that Churchill had Sikorski killed due to his pro-Soviet policies. He did another flip-flop when discussing the British government=s desire to implicate or incriminate a certain participant in the plane crash.

Hochhuth was also very quick to re-write sections of his play and even to eliminate characters. As Lawrence Olivier=s wife, Joan Plowright, noted: AThere is one thing we all agree on, I=m sure. We have never seen an author so little married to his words.@ Witnesses complained that AHochhuth tried to put words in my mouth.@ He claimed to have a wealth of information (some of which was provided by David Irving), but he was evasive when asked about his sources. Sometimes it was a retired British Intelligence man; other times it was a Polish lady. He claimed to have deposited his proof in a bank vault to be opened 50 years later.

Hochhuth and Irving claimed that after five years of painstaking research they had Aconclusive evidence@ of the death of the pilot, Edward Prchal, at the hands of the AOld Firm@ in a staged knife fight in Chicago. Before long, word surfaced that Prchal was still

living in the United States. Hochhuth claimed that the man in the U.S. was an imposter, but he was wrong. Television host David Frost had Hochhuth as his guest on December 20, 1968. He let Hochhuth lay out his theory that Prchal had been in on the assassination and that he was later killed himself. Prchal, of course, had not been killed; he was waiting in the wings.

Prchal later filed suit for defamation. He won a \$50,000 judgment from the playwright. Hochhuth's biographer reported: "Hochhuth's accusation resulted in a libel action brought by the surviving pilot of the crashed aircraft which involved the author [Hochhuth] and the producers of the play in London in a costly financial settlement." The relator of Pius XII's sainthood cause explained: "Hochhuth was publicly disgraced in Britain and elsewhere when, with exactly the same anti-historical methods which he used against Pius XII."

VI. The German Communist Producer

When he was working on *The Deputy*, Hochhuth was an unknown publishing house employee. The man who would eventually bring *The Deputy* to the stage, Erwin Piscator, was a very influential producer. He was a founder of the school of drama known as Political Theatre, whose method was to put living or recently deceased political person on stage for either pillorying or praising. Piscator was also a devoted Communist who produced plays which celebrated the imminent demise of capitalist society and of course, capitalism's supposed clerical offshoot, the Catholic Church.

Piscator joined the German Communist Party (KDP) in 1918. Among the first productions he worked on were two plays by Franz Jung, a life-long friend and official of

the Communist Workers Party of Germany. In one of Piscator's early writings he explained that one "task of the Proletarian Theatre is to spread its educational influence, through propaganda, among those of the masses who are still politically wavering and indifferent."

In 1925, the KPD (the largest Communist Party outside of the Soviet Union) asked Piscator to produce a political review. He put together a team including himself, a composer nominated by the Party, and a writer/lyricist/producer. They came up with about a dozen sketches, introduced by a pot-pourri of communist songs that culminated in a Victory of the Proletariat scene. It was enough of a success that the KPD soon demanded that he stage a show for their first party conference. Piscator used the same team and produced a show with an overwhelmingly documentary approach... virtually every character being historical (and in many cases still alive)."

The Communist Party was not completely happy with the KPD production. Officials thought it was too factual, which - of course - lessened the propaganda use of the production. That may be what's wrong, comrade director... Don't stick so slavishly to that's the way it happened, an official wrote. Piscator took advice well and learned to fictionalize history. He soon found himself working with the leading Communist playwrights in Germany.

Piscator would work with playwrights to help get their work into shape for production, sometimes adding his trademark prologues or interludes. He also trained young actors, though it was said that they mainly received courses by KPD officials; one's party card became a certificate of competence.

In at least one case, Piscator's company declined to produce a play because the author declined membership in the Communist Party. In another case, Piscator invited representatives of the Soviet embassy and trade delegation and of the KPD and its paper to one of the final rehearsals of a play, only to be told that he had to re-write it. He complied, though it meant that opening night had to be delayed by two days. In the program to a production from April 1930, Piscator wrote:

Never was it more essential than now to take sides: the side of the proletariat. More than ever the theatre must nail its flag fanatically to the mast of politics: the politics of the proletariat. More and more insistent grows the demand: theatre is action, the action of the proletariat. The stage and the masses, a creative unity, not in the *AZeittheater* but in the militant theatre of the proletariat.

In 1928, Piscator's theater went bankrupt. Despite his dedication to the Party, there was some question in high Communist circles about the direction of his work. The scale of his productions seemed too grand for the working class. They asked whether he was a militant comrade or [just] a parlour communist. (His relationship with Nazi Germany's Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels, who once submitted a play to Piscator and with whom Piscator considered doing a radio broadcast, may also have puzzled the hierarchy.) Ultimately, however, his record as a supporter of the October Revolution and the Soviet Regime was a good one; from the days of the Proletarian Theatre onwards, he had been caught up in the wave of pro-Soviet feeling. As his biographer wrote: The overriding fact remained that he was a communist and subject to party orders.

Piscator defended his ideas in his 1929 book *Das Politische Theater* (“The Political Theater”). In it, he wrote: “any artistic intention must be subordinated to the revolutionary purpose of the whole: the conscious emphasis and propagation of the concept of the class struggle.” Continuing:

We, as revolutionary Marxists, cannot consider our task complete if we produce an uncritical copy of reality, conceiving the theatre as a mirror of the times.... The business of revolutionary theatre is to take reality as its point of departure and to magnify the social discrepancy, making it an element of our indictment, our revolt, our new order.

In 1929, Piscator made his first visit to the Soviet Union where he worked briefly with the International Association of Workers= Theatres (IATB). As reported in his biography, Communist artists came increasingly to take their cultural directives from Moscow.... it became natural for German artists not merely to visit Russia but to take jobs there.” Accordingly, in 1931 Piscator moved to the USSR. Piscator was soon elected president of IATB, which then changed its name to the International Association of Revolutionary Theatres. In the postscript to a 1934 Soviet edition to one play, he wrote that his theater was always political, that is to say political in the sense approved by the Communist Party.@

In 1936, worried about the Soviet pogroms, Piscator moved to France, where he married the dancer Maria Ley. As Soviet pogroms escalated, he was warned in 1937 not to return to the USSR. In 1939, he came to the United States where he opened the Dramatic Workshop at The New School in New York. Of Piscator, in 1940 *Time*

magazine wrote: "He produced great plays frankly as propaganda, stressed all possible class-war angles, emphasized mass effects rather than individual actors."

Neither the Soviet programs nor the move to the United States diminished Piscator's desire to use the stage to advance his communist agenda. Of course, as the United States entered the Cold War, Piscator was more circumspect about his communist ties. As his biographer explained: "One of the difficulties in judging Piscator's American achievements is that so much of what has been written about the Dramatic Workshop has been like an exercise in public relations. The Communist Party, however, still had faith in him."

Around 1951, Piscator moved back to Germany. This was a time when German theaters on both sides of Berlin were openly involved in pro- or anti-Communist propaganda. Piscator spent nine years floating from one theater to another, but he was appointed manager and director of the Freie Volksbühne (Free People's Theatre) in West Berlin in 1962. Since the Berlin Wall had recently been completed, and people could no longer cross over into Communist East Berlin, this theater was the primary theatrical voice of Soviet Communism in West Berlin.

How Hochhuth and Piscator came together is unclear. According to Hochhuth's biographer, in February 1962 (within weeks of Piscator's new appointment), "an unknown thirty-year old author called on Piscator to discuss a play which their common publisher thought might be of interest." Piscator, however, said that he got a call from an intermediary and that the play was then sent to him, already in galley proofs, set not by the eventual German publisher of the play, "but by a publisher who had to acknowledge, after typesetting, that he lacked the courage for publication."

Piscator said that he was impressed with the play. It was the kind of “epic, >political= theatre such as I have been fighting for for thirty years and more.” “I don=t think I am devaluing those authors who worked with me in the 1920s if I say that the type of play I ideally had in mind at that time is only now being written by people like Hochhuth...”

Of course, before *The Deputy* could be staged, Piscator had to significantly re-write it. At seven to eight hours, the written play simply could not be produced. Piscator ultimately staged Hochhuth’s story in a more traditional two to three hour format. Although it ran in Berlin for only a few weeks, had mixed reviews at best, and was denied by virtually every person who had first-hand knowledge of the Pope=s wartime activities, the Soviet propaganda machine was able to attract enough attention that the play eventually became an international sensation.

VII. The American Communist Producer

Herman Shumlin was the American producer who brought *The Deputy* to Broadway. While he was not of the same historic importance as Piscator, he had a long, successful career in film and on the stage. According to *Time* magazine (Feb. 5, 1940), Shumlin was the only producer who advertised in the *Communist Daily Worker*. The article went on to note that AMr. Shumlin had almost no friends except Leftist Lillian Hellman.@ Hellman, with whom Shumlin had a professional and a romantic relationship, was outspoken in her support for Communism.

Shumlin served as chairman of Athe leftist Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee@ (JAFRC). Although the JAFRC’s charter was to raise money for relief

causes, after WWII it sent funds to Yugoslavia, helping the Communists win the first post-war elections. In 1947, JAFRC was investigated for Communist infiltration by the House Un-American Activities Committee. When JAFRC refused to turn records over, a federal judge held Shumlin and 15 other members of JAFRC guilty of contempt of Congress. Shumlin was given a \$500 fine and a suspended three-month jail term.

Like Piscator, Shumlin re-worked *The Deputy's* script. He cut some of the more violent parts of the play as well as anti-Semitic characterizations of Jews. Many critics did not like Shumlin's version of *The Deputy*, but it ran on Broadway for almost a year. That seems not to have been as a result of the theatrical quality of the play. Discussing concern about violence at the opening (which had been experience in some other nations), *New York Times* theater critic Frank Rich wrote: "The only bomb was on stage, but the publicity turned the show, now forgotten, into a quasi-hit and earned its producer a Tony for his courage."

XIII. KGB and the Media

The KGB liked to use magazines, newspapers, films, and theater to spread Soviet propaganda. One former Soviet spy explained: "Theaters were immensely useful to the party.... I wrote radio scripts, prepared news releases under party direction.... I organized and staged rallies and fund-raising dinners. So thoroughly respectable was my front that one big Communist-sponsored rally – without the Communist label, of course – I was able to obtain the services of a snappy Catholic Youth Organization band." Campaigns just like this were used to promote *The Deputy*.

Soviet spies in the U.S. infiltrated left-leaning magazines and newspapers. They would even, on occasion, finance these journals and then plant stories reflecting the Soviet line, hoping that other news outlets would repeat them. As one former spy wrote: “I had no qualms about stirring up as much trouble as possible....” This spy developed close ties with M.S. (“Max”) Arnoni, a Holocaust survivor and publisher of the magazine *A Minority of One*. At first, the KGB spy simply relied on his friendship with Arnoni to place KGB-written articles into *A Minority of One*. As Arnoni’s financial situation worsened, the KGB funded some letters and ads for the magazine. Eventually, the KGB gave Arnoni \$10,000, and he hid the source of the funds. “Thus did the KGB infiltrate a small yet influential American publication.” Arnoni “unwittingly did the bidding of the KGB.”

Arnoni became a strong supporter of *The Deputy*. Not only did he write in support of the play in his own journal, he also wrote an article for another periodical, *American Dialog*. Rather than focusing on the play, he wrote about Pius XII and the Church’s concern over his reputation. He made inflammatory factual assertions that are demonstrably false. He even wrote of Pius that “the man who was to become Pius XII was deeply involved in the politics of ultra-rightist German parties.”@ While these articles were in magazines of fairly limited distribution, as the KGB hoped, the story found its way into many other media outlets.

Arnoni shared several interests and had contact with Edward Keating, the founder of *Ramparts* magazine. The two both took part in the largest ever anti-Vietnam “teach-in,” which was held on May 21-23, 1965 at the University of California at Berkeley. They also both had contributions to the same book: *Teach-Ins: U.S.A.: Reports*,

Opinions, Documents. They also shared an interest in (and wrote about) the John F. Kennedy assassination. Like Arnoni, Keating wrote two pieces on *The Deputy*, one for *Ramparts* and one for *This World* magazine. He also wrote a book touching on the subject. Arnoni also had contacts with Warren Hinckle, the editor of *Ramparts*. Hinckle signed one of Arnoni's protest letters that was funded by the KGB and published in the *New York Times*. It should come as no surprise to find that *Ramparts*, like *A Minority of One*, played a role in helping *The Deputy* have an impact on the American conscience. In fact, *Ramparts'* role was crucial in getting the play staged.

IX. The Communist Magazine that Helped

Although it would eventually reflect communistic ideals, Edward Keating founded *Ramparts* as a liberal Catholic quarterly. Around 1963, Keating became disillusioned with the Church, and he went from a respectfully orthodox convert to a brazen anti-cleric. Editor Hinckle explained: "there weren't enough Catholic laymen to write for and to buy the magazine. Besides, we got bored with just the church." By 1967, *Time* magazine would editorialize: "no other left-wing publication in the U.S. pursues shock more recklessly or plays around more with facts." It was particularly hard on the Catholic Church. Hinckle explained that "the ramparts of *Ramparts* were used for attacking the Church, rather than defending it as Keating first intended." Of course, because of its original identity, *Ramparts* had an undeserved credibility when it came to Catholic matters.

By early 1964, when *The Deputy* was about to open on Broadway, so many associates, diplomats, and other informed people had spoken against its thesis that it had

caused somewhat of an international scandal. New York's Cardinal Spellman had called *The Deputy* "an outrageous desecration of the honor of a great and good man." The *National Council of Catholic Men* and the *American Jewish Committee* were joined by Protestants under name of the *National Council of Churches*. The three groups all tried to talk the television networks out of promoting the play. Jewish War Veterans even marched on the play's opening to defend the Pope's honor.

With the play's ability opening in serious jeopardy, a little magazine with Catholic roots and a communist future, *Ramparts*, took the lead in defending it. It may not be too much of a stretch to say that without its support, *The Deputy* would not have played on Broadway.

It was never really clear why the California-based *Ramparts* decided to promote the play in New York City. In his memoirs, *Ramparts* editor Warren Hinckle said that he set out to invent an "ecumenical conspiracy" in support of *The Deputy*. He called Keating and said that the two of them were forming a committee, the *Ad Hoc Committee to Defend the Right of The Deputy to be Heard*. Hinckle said that he appealed to Keating's ego, arguing that "he could become famous overnight if he, a Catholic publisher, headed a committee to defend the Pope-baiting play." Keating finally agreed.

Hinckle was able to find a few prominent Protestants, like John C. Bennett, author of *Christianity and Communism Today*, who would stand with *Ramparts*, but they had trouble finding *any* Catholics who could accept the outrageous assertions set forth in the play. In desperation, Hinckle signed up some Catholic laymen, sociologist Gordon Zahn and novelist John Howard Griffin. Hinckle called them "Catholic window dressing."

Hinckle also drafted two Jews: Rabbi Abraham H. Eschel of the Jewish Theological Seminary and Maxwell Geismar, a critic and literary historian. Of Geismar, Hinckle wrote: “a wonderful man about whom I cannot marshal enough superlatives, who, from our chance meeting during the white-heat controversy over *The Deputy*, was to become almost instantly my closest friend, confidant, foster father, and soul mate, and the most important intellectual influence on the developing *Ramparts*.” This “most important intellectual influence” on Hinkle and *Ramparts* was an avowed Marxist and wrote the introduction to Eldridge Cleaver’s book, *Soul on Ice*. Cleaver later became a staff writer for *Ramparts*.

Hinckle, who had never been to New York before, created an event by spending an enormous amount of money. He threw a catered (Bloody Marys and danish) press conference that was really more of a party. He rented expensive space in New York’s Waldorf Astoria. He sent long (and expensive) telegram invitations and then followed up with telegram reminders to “everyone in New York City in possession of a pencil or camera.” It took far more money than a magazine like *Ramparts* normally would be able to devote to such a project to pull this off, but Hinkle attracted a huge crowd. One photographer said it was the biggest press conference he'd seen since Adlai Stevenson had conceded in the presidential race.

Ramparts’ defense of *The Deputy* overshadowed most of the news critical of the play in the final days and assured that the curtain would go up on opening night. That a *Catholic* magazine would defend the play was big news, but CIA documents released under the Freedom of Information Act confirm that *Ramparts* became a reliable outlet for

Soviet Communists. Exactly when the transformation was complete is unclear, but this effort with *The Deputy* clearly signified the transformation.

X. British Intelligence

Some have seen in Hochhuth's work, encouragement for those who, consciously or not, cannot accept Germany's defeat. Others have concluded that Hochhuth's work was part of a campaign to absolve Germany from war guilt. In 1969, British Intelligence, looking at Hochhuth's first two plays and a description of a third that he was working on at the time (with the working title *Anatomy of Revolution or How to Overthrow the US Government from the Inside*), saw both of those motivations and more. Referencing interviews conducted by an author investigating Hochhuth's research, a declassified Secret Report says: "it can also be argued... that Hochhuth is engaged in some 'decomposition' exercise and that he is attempting to destroy the fundamental value of a free society, from its religions to its heroes."

The Declassified Secret Memorandum, dated January 10, 1969, goes on to speculate about Hochhuth's role in spreading communist propaganda. It says that Hochhuth "might perhaps be an 'intellectual agent, writing either on behalf of the East Germans or the Soviets.'" The Intelligence officers could not "discount the possibility of long-term efforts by the communists to foster Hochhuth's allegations until they become legend." The report concludes: "whether Hochhuth is motivated only by the urge to write historical plays, to rehabilitate the Germans or is up to some more sinister game is difficult to determine at this stage. But the Russians are certainly reaping some of the benefit."

XI. Conclusion

Hochhuth may not have knowingly cooperated with the Soviets, but he was the perfect candidate to be an unknowing dupe. As his biographer reported, his ideology was not far removed from Marxism. He also admitted that he was, at least at times, anti-clerical. He was particularly opposed to priestly celibacy.

Assuming that his work on *Soldiers* is indicative of his work on *The Deputy*, Hochhuth's sloppy research and willingness to believe whatever story he was told would have made him an excellent target for the Soviets. Moreover, it was the appendix that attracted most of the attention, not the play. That is where he most likely had help. The Soviets had the opportunity to feed bad information to Hochhuth, and they also seem to have had the correct personnel in place. Even Hochhuth's great buddy David Irving said he may have been "fed a corrupt dossier in some clever way. He could be very naive."

The play was certainly supported by communists and fellow-travelers. The producer who brought *The Deputy* to the stage in Berlin had long carried out orders from the Communist Party. The American producer was also a Communist. Many of the journalists who brought early attention to *The Deputy* had strong ties to leftist (and sometimes Communist) causes, and the magazine that helped assure that the play appeared on Broadway was heavily influenced by Communists. Even many of the early reviews had communist links. Certainly, the main point of the play and the hostility to the Church came from the Soviets.

The Italian newspaper *La Repubblica* has reported that archival documents from the former East Germany support Pacepa's eyewitness testimony that the Soviet Union

was behind the campaign to calumniate Pius XII. According to Fr. Peter Gumpel, a historian and the investigating judge in Pope Pius XII's sainthood cause:

These revelations do not add anything to what the Holy See already knows, but it is important for those who have thought and written that Pacelli was “Hitler’s Pope.”

Now there are other documents that show how many false statements have been made about Pius XII. The responsibility of the Soviet Union is also evident in the campaign to calumniate Pius XII.

Gumpel’s conclusion is that there was a “deliberate effort on the part of the Russians to discredit Pope Pius XII.” German historian Michael Feldkamp concludes that “Pacepa’s report is wholly credible. It fits like a missing piece in the puzzle of communist propaganda and disinformation aimed at discrediting the Catholic Church and its Pontiff.” Putting together all of the evidence, it is hard to disagree.