

Andreas Burtscheidt:
Edmund Freiherr Raitz von Frenzt
Rom-Korrespondent der deutschsprachigen katholischen Presse 1924–1964,
Paderborn [u. a.] 2008.

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In 1924, Edmund Raitz von Frenzt was sent to Rome as foreign correspondent for a newly created consortium of the most important daily newspapers in Germany that were associated with the Center Party and Bavarian People's Party. Previously, Raitz von Frenzt had served on the editorial board of the *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, then German political Catholicism's largest press organ. In his new posting, Raitz von Frenzt acquired a monopoly on Catholic-oriented reporting from Rome and the Vatican for Germany as well as the neighboring German-speaking lands. Such reporting naturally played a prominent part in these papers, until their eventual demise in the Third Reich. Between 1924 and 1964, Raitz von Frenzt was active at the crossroads between Germany, Italy, and the Vatican during the politically most turbulent part of the 20th century. In his most effective period of work between 1924 and 1933, he closely observed Mussolini's Italy and, from 1930, the rise of the Nazi movement in his own country.

In analyzing Raitz von Frenzt's activities as a correspondent, this first phase of his work stands out – before, that is, unfettered journalistic reporting fell victim to Joseph Goebbels's propaganda machinery. Not infrequently, Raitz von Frenzt discussed the ascent of the Nazi movement before 1932-33 with Cardinal State Secretary Eugenio Pacelli, as well as the future of the Center Party in the months before and after the Reich Concordat. Often, Raitz von Frenzt functioned as Pacelli's mouthpiece within the German Center Party circles. That is not to say that he was expected to coordinate each article with Pacelli beforehand; rather, Raitz von Frenzt increasingly adopted the cardinal's political guidelines.

German Catholicism's relationship to National Socialism continues to attract a substantial amount of historical scholarship. In particular, the problematic issue of the Reich Concordat has fueled considerable debate in recent German historiography, most notably the "Reppen-Scholder Controversy" of 1978. Regarding the milieu around the German Center Party, the question of how the Reich Concordat came into being in July 1933 is of great significance. When considering the Vatican viewpoint, Raitz von Frenzt must be considered a reliable witness. Thanks to close ties to all three protagonists of the treaty process – Eugenio Pacelli, Ludwig Kaas, and Franz von Papen – as well as his status as a papal chamberlain, Raitz von Frenzt himself functioned as an observer-participant in the course of events.

The Nazi regime's consolidation of power progressively curtailed Raitz von Frenzt's scope of operation to the point where his ability to support himself was threatened. After the final demise of his newspapers, some of which had continued until 1941, he seemed to have no professional future. But his closeness to the Roman curia gave him the opportunity to stay in Rome and to survive the dangerous months of the German occupation in 1943 and 1944 in the safety of the Campo Santo Teutonico. Although Raitz von Frenzt worked tirelessly to find a place in the new press spectrum that emerged in the Federal Republic after 1949, his efforts foundered on the changed professional conditions and journalistic demands of the post-war era, so that he increasingly faded from memory.