Historians of postwar American politics often identify race as a driving force in the dynamically shifting political culture. This book instead places religion and ethnicity at the fore, arguing that ethnic conflict among Irish Catholics, Italian Catholics, and Jews in New York City had a decisive impact on the shape of liberal politics long before black-white racial identity politics entered the political lexicon. Understanding ethnicity as an intersection of class, national origins, and religion, it demonstrates that the white ethnic populations of New York had significantly diverging views on authority and dissent, community and individuality, secularism and spirituality, and obligation and entitlement. New York Jews came from Eastern European traditions that valued dissent and encouraged political agitation; their Irish and Italian Catholic neighbors tended to value commitment to order, deference to authority, and allegiance to church and community. The book argues that these distinctions ultimately helped fracture the liberal coalition of the Roosevelt era, as many Catholics bolted a Democratic Party increasingly focused on individual liberties, and many dissent-minded Jews moved on to the antiliberal New Left.

Pius XI
John Pollard
in The Papacy in the Age of Totalitarianism, 1914-1958
After tracing the early life and career of Achille Ratti, this chapter considers the reasons for his surprise election as Pope Pius XI in the conclave of February 1922. It then identifies the characteristics of Pius
XI’s government of the Universal Church, including the role of chief collaborators like Cardinal Gasparri and Jesuit Fr Ledóchowski. The major focus is on the relationship between Pius XI and Italy, examining Vatican responses to Mussolini’s rise to power and the negotiations which eventually led to the resolution of the ‘Roman Question’ in the Lateran Pacts of 1929. The significance of this conciliazione is analysed, especially the establishment of the Vatican State and the reordering of the papacy’s finances. The chapter then considers the relationship between Pius XI and Mussolini thereafter and the implications, for Pius XI’s policies elsewhere in the Church, of the pope’s experience of Italian Fascism.

Pius XII

John Pollard

in The Papacy in the Age of Totalitarianism, 1914-1958

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This chapter traces the Vatican’s response to the spread of the Second World War to the USSR, the Atlantic, Africa, and Asia after the launching of Operation Barbarossa in June 1941. After examining Pius XII’s changing relationships with the Grand Alliance and Axis powers, it focuses upon his response to the Holocaust and other fascist genocides, revisiting the controversy over his alleged silences and examining the role played by the Church in the rescue of European Jews. The spotlight is then turned on Pius XII’s increasingly difficult relationship with Italy, particularly after Mussolini’s overthrow in July 1943, and, subsequently, the even more dangerous relationships with the German occupation forces and the Resistance in Rome. Consequently, the Vatican’s response to various Nazi atrocities in Rome is scrutinized. The chapter ends with an appraisal of Pius XII’s relations with the Western Allies, including De Gaulle, at the end of the war.