

Pope Pius XII Should Be Honored at Yad Vashem As THE Most Righteous Gentile for He Did More Than Anyone On Behalf of the Jews During the Holocaust

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Important Facts to be Remembered

1. Pope Pius XII did more than any other person to save Jewish lives during the Holocaust, saving more than one million of them, 200,000 in Hungary, 50,000 in Poland, 360,000 in Bulgaria, 250,000 in Rumania, 22, 000 in Slovakia and 120,000 in Italy.
2. At the risk of losing his neutrality and the risk of his own life, he ordered all Catholic convents, seminaries, monasteries, orphanages, and hospitals to be open to hide our Jewish brothers and sisters.
3. In Rome occupied by Nazi troops, he harbored Jews within the Vatican itself to the extent that the Nazi's did in fact have a plan to invade and kill the Pope and others.
4. While secretary to Pope Pius XI, the future Pope Pius XII wrote an encyclical letter warning the German people of the dangers of Hitler and Nazism. This letter written in German was smuggled into Germany by Francis Spellman the future Cardinal of New York.
5. Between 1936 and 1943 Pope Pius XII protested against Hitler and Nazism over 60 times. After the Dutch hierarchy officially protested the arrest and murder of Jews, Hitler retaliated so forcefully with the deaths of added Catholics and Jews, that along with the Red Cross the Vatican realized that any future protests would bring down fierce measures of Nazi retaliation. From that point on all help for the Jews was carried out by the

various underground organizations that were saving the Jews by the tens of thousands.

4.

6. When the head Rabbi of Rome had arranged significant funds as a ransom of Italian Jews, it was Pope Pius XII who raised most of the ransom. The head Rabbi, in fact, became a Catholic right after the war, taking the Pope's own name.

7. Right after the war, the B'nai Brith Society named Pope Pius XII, Man of the Year, and he was praised by every prominent Jewish leader from Golda Meir to the head Rabbi of the United States.

8. When Adolf Eichmann's diaries were released by the Israeli government on March 1, 2000. Eichmann, unwittingly, exonerated Pope Pius XII for as Eichmann wrote, Pope Pius XII "vigorously protested the arrest of Jews, calling for the interruption of such action, otherwise the Pope would denounce it publicly." Further on he stated in his diary: "At that time, my office received the copy of the letter, that I immediately gave to my direct superiors, sent by the Catholic Church in Rome, in the person of Bishop Hudal, to the commander of the German forces in Rome, General Stahel. The Church was vigorously protesting the arrest of Jews of Italian citizenship, requesting that such actions be interrupted throughout Rome and its surroundings. To the contrary, the Pope would denounce it publicly. The Curia was especially angry because these incidents were taking place practically under Vatican windows. But, precisely at that time, without paying any attention to the Church's position, the Italian fascist government passed a law ordering the deportation of all Italian Jews to concentration camps."

"The objective given and the excessive delay in the steps necessary to complete the implementation of the operation, resulted in a great part of Italian Jews being able to hide and escape capture," Eichmann wrote. A good number of them hid in convents or were helped by men and women of the Church.

9. Since Pope Pius XII did so much more for his Jewish brothers and sisters than any other person on the face of the earth at that time the largest monument for non Jews should be erected at Yad Va Shem to Pope Pius XII. It would also be wonderful if the head Rabbi of Jerusalem followed the leading of Pope John Paul II should make a public apology of behalf of the

Jewish people for any Jewish negativity toward Pope Pius XII whom history will prove to be their greatest friend.

10. Pope John Paul II has called Pius "a great Pope." Golda Meir and numerous other Jewish leaders from that era praised Pius for his support of victims during the Holocaust.

11. According to some accounts, Pius sent instructions to his representatives throughout Europe, telling them to do whatever they could to help Jews and all who were suffering. Many authors have noted that the similar activities undertaken by different individuals in remote areas suggest a common plan, but no copies of a letter from Pius have surfaced and most of the firsthand witnesses are long gone. Recently, however, an eyewitness with impeccable credentials has come forward to set the record straight.

Tibor Baranski, executive secretary of the Jewish Protection Movement of the Holy See in Hungary during World War II, has been honored by Yad Vashem (Israel's Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority) as a Righteous Gentile for his rescue work. Officially he saved 3,000 Jews. Unofficially he saved at least that many more.

Baranski worked closely with Angelo Rotta, papal nuncio in Hungary during the war (who was also recognized by Yad Vashem as a Righteous Gentile). Baranski makes clear, however, that these lifesaving activities were not the lone actions of himself or Nuncio Rotta. "I was really acting in accordance with the orders of Pope Pius XII." Charges that Pius was not involved are "simple lies; nothing else," and claims that Pius should have done more for the Jews are, according to Baranski, "slanderous."

12. In an article appearing in the February 26th edition of *The Weekly Standard*, a political weekly edited by conservative commentators William Kristol and Fred Barnes, Rabbi David G. Dalin persuasively addresses the criticisms of Pope Pius XII in recent books which argue he did little to oppose the Holocaust during World War II. Citing historical records and testimonies of Holocaust survivors and Jewish public figures, Rabbi Dalin shows that recent books like *Hitler's Pope*, *Papal Sin* and *Under His Very Windows* have less to do with the truth and history than "an intra-Catholic argument about the direction of the Church today, with the Holocaust simply the biggest club available for liberal Catholics to use against traditionalists." Fortunately for the memory of Pope Pius XII it is soft club. However, the weakness of the case is lost in all the media hype and praise of these purported *histories*.

In a stunning criticism of these authors Rabbi Dalin also charges that "[t]here is a disturbing element in nearly all the current work on Pius. ... All are about using the sufferings of Jews fifty years ago to force changes upon the Catholic Church today." He goes on to state, "It is this abuse of the Holocaust that must be rejected. A true account of Pius XII would arrive, I believe, at exactly the opposite to Cornwell's conclusion: Pius XII was not Hitler's pope, but the closest Jews had come to having a papal supporter — and at the moment when it mattered most."

Rabbi David Dalin's article is must reading for defenders of the Pope, and all those who seek the truth about the role of the Church during World War II.

Righteous Gentile Defends Pius XII

By Ronald J. Rychlak

Before the recent abuse scandal, perhaps the biggest ongoing controversy involving the Catholic Church had to do with Pope Pius XII and the relationship between the Holy See and the Third Reich during World War II. The Church is considering Pius for sainthood, and the Vatican's investigating judge has said that there is an excellent case to be made.

Critics, however, charge that he turned a blind eye to Jewish suffering in the Holocaust. Some have even alleged that he was sympathetic to Hitler's cause.

Much of the debate centers on the activities of papal nuncios and other Catholic officials around Europe. It is indisputable that many of them risked their lives and more to protect Jewish victims from Nazi persecution. The debate in recent years has focused on whether these rescuers acted on their own or at the behest of the Pope.

Baranski personally saw at least two letters from Pius XII instructing Rotta to do his very best to protect Jews but to refrain from making statements that might provoke the Nazis. He adds: "These two letters were not written by the authorities at the Vatican, but they were handwritten ones by Pope Pius himself." He goes on to note that "all other nuncios of the Nazi-occupied countries received similar letters." Italian Jews, for instance, were sheltered in monasteries, seminaries and other Church buildings on the "direct instruction of the Vatican."

Baranski explains that for Pius, the first and foremost concern was saving human lives. "It was precisely because [Pius] wanted to help the Jews" that he refrained from making repeated public condemnations. Pius "intervened in a very balanced way," trying to save lives without provoking retaliation. He did not, however, behave differently depending upon the status of the victims. Baranski notes that these same concerns prevented the Pope from making repeated public appeals when the Nazis killed thousands of Catholic priests.

"The Pontiff did not only encourage the nuncio to protect Vatican [baptized] Jews," explains Baranski, "but as many persecuted persons as possible, in the ghetto or elsewhere." The nuncio kept Pius well informed of efforts undertaken in collaboration with other embassies, including close work with Swedish diplomat and rescuer Raoul Wallenberg, who also was declared a Righteous Gentile by Yad Vashem.

Baranski, who says that he was "fantastically near" to Wallenberg, reports that if Wallenberg were alive today, he would defend Pope Pius XII. In fact, Baranski explains that the Catholic Church collaborated with Wallenberg in his rescue efforts. "Look, there

was not problem or disagreement whatsoever between the Catholic Church and Wallenberg. I personally arranged unofficial, private meetings between Wallenberg and Nuncio Rotta." Baranski reports that Wallenberg "knew Pius was on his side." Rotta, Baranski, Wallenberg and -- yes -- Pius XII worked together as a team.

Baranski is now working on a book about his life. It will be an important contribution not only because of the firsthand history it will set forth, but also because of the morality and fundamental dignity of the author. He dismisses or deflects praise offered to him: "Look, dear professor -- the good Lord was so humble to allow a little nobody (me) to work his life-saving mission...." He also tells the story of a Nazi who once asked him: "Why do you, a Christian, protect and defend the Jews?" He replied bluntly: "You are either silly or an idiot. It is because I am a Christian that I help the Jews."

Baranski acknowledges that Catholics might have reasons to apologize to Jews for things that have happened over the course of history. He makes clear, however, that the wartime Pontiff is not a leader for whom Catholics need to apologize. In fact he agrees with the recently published opinion of Rabbi David Dalin. Yad Vashem should recognize Pope Pius XII, along with Baranski, Rotta and Wallenberg, as a Righteous Gentile.

A RIGHTEOUS GENTILE: POPE PIUS XII AND THE JEWS

BY RABBI DAVID DALIN, PH.D.

About The Author

Rabbi David G. Dalin, a widely-published scholar of American Judaism and the history of Christian-Jewish Relations, is the author or co-author of five books, including Religion and State in the American Jewish Experience, published by the University of Notre Dame Press in 1997 and, most recently, The President of the United States and the Jews. His article, "Pius XII and the Jews," was published in the February 26, 2001 issue of the Weekly Standard, and was reprinted in the August-September issue of Inside the Vatican, published in Rome. Rabbi Dalin is a member of the Editorial Advisory Board of the journal First Things, and a member of the Board of Governors of Sacred Heart University's Center for Christian Jewish understanding. He is now writing a new book, tentatively entitled: Two Popes and the Jews: Pius XII and John Paul II.

In recent years, Eugenio Pacelli, who became Pope Pius XII in 1939, has been the subject of considerable public criticism, and even vilification, for his alleged failure to speak out against Hitler during the Holocaust. Pope Pius' alleged "silence," in the face of the worst Nazi atrocities, has led some of his harshest critics to accuse him of being a Nazi sympathizer or an anti-Semite. In 1999, the British journalist John Cornwell created an international sensation with the publication of his best-selling attack on Pius XII, vilifying Eugenio Pacelli as "Hitler's Pope."

The past couple of years have seen the publication of eight more new books dealing with Pius XII and the Holocaust. To be sure, Pius has had both his defenders and detractors. Four of these books, by the Catholic scholars Ronald J. Rychlak, Pierre Blet, Margherita Marchione and Ralph McInerny, have been written in defense of Pius, his life and legacy. They have succeeded, in varying degrees, in effectively responding to the allegations of Pius' critics. Those vilifying Pius, and defaming his memory, however, have received the most media attention: Cornwell's Hitler's Pope, Garry Wills' Papal Sin and James Carroll's Constantine's Sword have become huge best sellers, generating much public

discussion and debate. Susan Zucotti's unremitting attack on Pius, *Under His Very Windows: The Vatican and the Holocaust in Italy*, published by Yale University Press, received heightened media attention as well.

For Jewish leaders of a previous generation, this harsh portrayal of Pope Pius XII, and the campaign of vilification against him, would have been a source of profound shock and sadness. From the end of World War II until at least five years after his death, Pope Pius enjoyed an enviable reputation amongst Christians and Jews alike. At the end of the war, Pius XII was hailed as "the inspired moral prophet of victory," and "enjoyed near-universal acclaim for aiding European Jews." Numerous Jewish leaders, including Albert Einstein, Israeli Prime Ministers Golda Meir and Moshe Sharett, and Chief Rabbi Isaac Herzog, expressed their public gratitude to Pius XII, praising him as a "righteous gentile," who had saved thousands of Jews during the Holocaust. In his meticulously researched and comprehensive 1967 book, *Three Popes and the Jews*, the Israeli historian and diplomat Pinchas Lapide, who had served as the Israeli Counsel General in Milan, and had spoken with many Italian Jewish Holocaust survivors who owed their life to Pius, provided the empirical basis for their gratitude, concluding that Pius XII "was instrumental in saving at least 700,000, but probably as many as 860,000 Jews from certain death at Nazi hands." To this day, the Lapide volume remains the definitive work, by a Jewish scholar, on the subject.

The campaign of vilification against Pope Pius can be traced to the debut in Berlin in February 1963 of a play, by a young, Protestant, left-wing West German writer and playwright, Rolf Hochhuth. *The Deputy*, in which Hochhuth depicts Pacelli as a Nazi collaborator, guilty of moral cowardice and "silence" in the face of the Nazi onslaught, is a scathing indictment of Pope Pius XII's alleged indifference to the plight of European Jewry during the Holocaust.

Hochhuth's play ignited a public controversy about Pius XII that continues this day. Despite the fact that *The Deputy* was a purely fictional and highly polemical play, which offered little or no historical evidence for its allegations against Pope Pius XII, it was widely discussed and acclaimed. Indeed, it inspired a new generation of revisionist journalists and scholars, who were intent on discrediting the well-documented efforts of Pope Pius XII to save Jews during the Holocaust. Their denunciation of Pius received widespread publicity with the commercial success of *Hitler's Pope*, in which John Cornwell denounced him as "the most dangerous churchman in modern history," without whom "Hitler might never have...been able to press forward with the Holocaust." Although an unusually harsh and bitter judgment, it was one with which Pius XII's other recent detractors, such as Wills and Zucotti, implicitly concur. Moreover, in their persistent efforts to vilify Pius, and defame his memory, his detractors have largely dismissed or completely ignored Pinchas Lapide's seminal and comprehensive study that so conclusively documents the instrumental role played by Pope Pius XII in rescuing and sheltering Jews during the Holocaust.

THE HISTORICAL RECORD: WHAT PIUS XII DID FOR THE JEWS

Despite allegations and misrepresentations to the contrary, it can now be documented conclusively that Pope Pius XII was responsible for saving hundreds of thousands of Jews during the Holocaust. Although the villainous "silence" of the Pope has been repeatedly alleged since the early 1960's, there is much historical evidence to confirm that he was not silent, that before and after he became Pope he spoke out against Hitler and

that he was almost universally recognized, especially by the Nazis themselves, as an unrelenting opponent of the Nazi regime.

Pius XII publicly and privately warned of the dangers of Nazism. Throughout World War II, he spoke out on behalf of Europe's Jews. When Pius learned of the Nazi atrocities in Poland, he urged the bishops of Europe to do all they could to save the Jews and other victims of Nazi persecution. On January 19, 1940, at the Pope's instruction, Vatican radio and L'Osservatore Romano revealed to the world "the dreadful cruelties of uncivilized tyranny" that the Nazis were inflicting on Jewish and Catholic Poles. The following week, the Jewish Advocate of Boston reported the Vatican radio broadcast, praising its "outspoken denunciation of German atrocities in Nazi [occupied] Poland, declaring they affronted the moral conscience of mankind."

In his 1940 Easter homily, Pius XII condemned the Nazi bombardment of defenseless citizens, aged and sick people, and innocent children. On May 11, 1940, he publicly condemned the Nazi invasions of Belgium, Holland, and Luxemburg and lamented "a world poisoned by lies and disloyalty and wounded by excesses of violence." In June 1942, Pius spoke out against the mass deportation of Jews from Nazi-occupied France, further instructing his Papal Nuncio in Paris to protest to Marshal Henri Petain, Vichy France's Chief of State, against "the inhuman arrests and deportations of Jews from the French occupied zone to Silesia and parts of Russia."

The London Times of October 1, 1942, explicitly praises him for his condemnation of Nazism and his public support for the Jewish victims of Nazi terror. "A study of the words which Pope Pius XII has addressed since his accession," noted the Times, "leaves no room for doubt. He condemns the worship of force and its concrete manifestations in the suppression of national liberties and in the persecution of the Jewish race."

Pius XII's Christmas addresses of 1941 and 1942, broadcast over Vatican radio to millions throughout the world, also help to refute the fallacious claim that Pope Pius was "silent." Indeed, as The New York Times described Pius' 1941 Christmas address in its editorial the following day, it specifically applauded the Pope, as a "lonely" voice of public protest against Hitler: "The voice of Pius XII is a lonely voice in the silence and darkness enveloping Europe this Christmas... In calling for a 'real new order' based on 'liberty, justice, and love'... the Pope put himself squarely against Hitlerism. Recognizing that there is no road open to agreement between belligerents 'whose reciprocal war aims and programs seem to be irreconcilable,' Pius XII left no doubt that the Nazi aims are also irreconcilable with his own conception of a Christian peace." The Pope's Christmas message of 1941, as reported by The New York Times and other newspapers, was understood at the time to be a clear condemnation of Nazi attacks on Europe's Jews. So, too, was the Pope's Christmas message of the following year. Pope Pius XII's widely-discussed Christmas message of December 24, 1942, in which he expressed his passionate concern "for those hundreds of thousands who, without any fault of their own, sometimes only by reason of their nationality or race, are marked down for death or progressive extinction," was widely understood to be a very public denunciation of the Nazi extermination of the Jews. Indeed, the Nazis themselves interpreted the Pope's famous speech of Christmas 1942 as a clear condemnation of Nazism, and as a plea on behalf of Europe's Jews: "His [the Pope's] speech is one long attack on everything we stand for... he is clearly speaking on behalf of the Jews... he is virtually accusing the German people of injustice toward the Jews, and makes himself the mouthpiece of the

Jewish war criminals."

In his recent history of the modern papacy, Professor Eamon Duffy of Magdalen College, Oxford University, substantiates the fact, ignored by Pius' critics, that the Nazi leadership viewed the Pope's 1942 Christmas message as an attack on Nazi Germany and as a defense of the Jews. "Both Mussolini and Ambassador Ribbentrop were angered by this [the Pope's December 24, 1942] speech," notes Duffy, "and Germany considered that the Pope had abandoned any pretence of neutrality. They felt that Pius had unequivocally condemned Nazi action against the Jews."

Critics of Pius minimize the significance of the Pope's 1942 Christmas message and fail to note (or analyze) the German reaction to the Pope's address. To do so, as Pius' defenders have aptly noted, would destroy their image of Pius as a "silent" Pope, and would demonstrate that the Nazis were very much aware of, and angered by, the Pope's condemnation of the Final Solution.

This awareness and danger on the part of the Nazis, moreover, had potentially dire consequences for the safety and security of Pope Pius XII during the remaining years of the war. The Pope's condemnation of Nazi actions against the Jews, led to considerable speculation at the time that Hitler would seek revenge on the papacy, and attack the Vatican.

There was, to be sure, ample historical precedent for Pius XII to have feared for his safety and security, if not his very life, should the Nazis be provoked to besiege the Vatican. As Rychlak has recently pointed out, the possibility of German invasion of Vatican City was very real: Napoleon had besieged the Vatican in 1809, capturing Pius VII at bayonet point and forcibly removing him from Rome. Pope Pius IX fled Rome for his life following the assassination of his chancellor, and Leo XIII was also driven into temporary exile during the late nineteenth century.

In fact, Hitler spoke publicly of wanting to enter the Vatican and "pack up that whole whoring rabble." It has long been known that at one point Hitler planned to kidnap the Pope and imprison him. And, as several scholars have noted, Pius XII knew that the Nazis had a plan to kidnap him. In addition to minutes from a meeting on July 26, 1943, in which Hitler openly discussed invading the Vatican, Ernst von Weizsacker, the German Ambassador to the Vatican, has written that he heard of Hitler's plan to kidnap Pius XII, and that he regularly warned the Pope and Vatican officials against provoking Berlin. So, too, the Nazi Ambassador to Italy, Rudolf Rahn, has described the kidnapping plot and attempts by Rahn and other Nazi diplomats to prevent it.

In critically assessing what actions Pius XII might have taken, but did not take, on behalf of the Jews of Europe, his defenders and critics alike point to his "failure" to excommunicate Hitler and other Nazi party leaders. Indeed, many of the Pope's "defenders," including this writer, wish (and believe) that papal excommunication should have at least been attempted. Such sentiments notwithstanding, there is abundant evidence to suggest that the excommunication of Hitler would have been a purely symbolic gesture, and would not have accomplished what its proponents hoped for. Hitler, Himmler and other Nazi leaders were, to be sure, baptized Catholics who were never excommunicated. Had Pius XII excommunicated them, his critics claim, such an act might have prevented the Holocaust, or significantly diminished it. On the contrary. There is much evidence to suggest that a formal order of excommunication might very well just have achieved the opposite.

When Don Luigi Sturzo, the founder of the Christian Democratic movement in wartime Italy, was asked by Leon Kubovny, an official of the World Jewish Congress during the Holocaust era, why the Vatican did not excommunicate Hitler, he recalled the cases of Napoleon and Queen Elizabeth I of England, "the last time a nominal excommunication was pronounced against a head of state." Pointing out that neither of them had "changed their policy after excommunication," he feared, Sturzo wrote Kubovny, "that in response to a threat of excommunication," Hitler would have even killed more Jews than he had. Writers and scholars familiar with Hitler's psychology share Sturzo's fear, believing that any provocation by the Pope, such as an order for excommunication, "would have resulted in violent retaliation, the loss of many more Jewish lives, especially those then under the protection of the Church, and an intensification of the persecution of Catholics." This is, I believe, a compelling argument that cannot be ignored. It is one, moreover, that is supported by the testimony of Jewish Holocaust survivors, such as Marcus Melchior, the former Chief Rabbi of Denmark, who attests that "if the Pope had spoken out, Hitler would probably have massacred more than six million Jews and perhaps ten times ten million Catholics, if he had the power to do so."

His "failure" to excommunicate Hitler, Pius XII's critics assert, is only one instance of his larger failure to make sufficiently forceful denunciations of the Nazis. The critics who have accused Pius XII of "silence" have claimed that in other ways, also, he failed to forcefully condemn the Nazi regime. Had he done so, they argue, it might have reduced, or even halted the anti-Jewish atrocities. Had he spoken out more forcefully and publicly, they maintain, more Jewish lives would have been spared. Their contention, however, "fails to consider the brutal realities in the wake of Nazism, as well as the retaliatory consequences sure to follow any condemnatory action." More stringent protests, or denunciations, on the part of the Vatican might quite possibly have backfired.

An example frequently cited by defenders of the Vatican is the public protest of Dutch bishops in July 1942 against the deportation of Dutch Jews from the Netherlands. When Pius XII first learned of the Nazi atrocities in Poland, he urged the Catholic bishops of Europe to do all they could to save the Jews and other victims of Nazi persecution. The bishops of Holland distributed a pastoral letter that was read in every Catholic Church in the country, denouncing "the unmerciful and unjust treatment meted out to Jews by those in power in our country." In no other Nazi-occupied country did local Catholic bishops more furiously resist Nazism than in Holland. But, their well-intentioned pastoral letter—which explicitly declared that they were inspired by Pope Pius XII—backfired. As Pinchas Lapide notes: "The saddest and most thought-provoking conclusion is that whilst the Catholic clergy in Holland protested more loudly, expressly and frequently against Jewish persecutions than the religious hierarchy of any other Nazi-occupied country, more Jews—some 110,000 or 79 percent of the total—were deported from Holland to death camps." The protest of the Dutch bishops thus provoked the most savage of Nazi reprisals: The vast majority of Holland's Jews—and the highest percentages of Jews of any Nazi-occupied nation in Western Europe—were deported and killed.

With the advantage of hindsight, Pius XII's revisionist critics have been judging the Pope's "silence" without considering the likely consequences of his having "spoken out" more loudly and explicitly. These critics do not know (or have chosen to ignore the fact) that the Pope had been strongly advised by Jewish leaders and by Catholic bishops in Nazi-occupied countries not to protest publicly against the Nazi atrocities. When the

bishop of Munster wanted to speak out against the persecution of the Jews in Germany, the Jewish leaders of his diocese begged him not to because it would result in even greater persecution for them. Pinchas Lapide quotes an Italian Jew who, with the Vatican's help, managed to escape the Nazi deportation of Rome's Jews in October 1943, as stating unequivocally twenty years later: "none of us wanted the Pope to speak out openly. We were all fugitives and we did not want to be pointed out as such. The Gestapo would have only increased and intensified its inquisition...it was much better the Pope kept silent. We all felt the same, and today we still believe that." Bishop Jean Bernard of Luxembourg, an inmate of Dachau from February 1941 to August 1942, notified the Vatican that "whenever protests were made, treatment of prisoners worsened immediately."

There is much evidence to suggest that had Pius XII more vigorously opposed or denounced Hitler's policies, there would have been serious and devastating retaliation. Undoubtedly, a stronger public condemnation of the Final Solution by the Pope would have provoked Nazi reprisals against Catholic clergy in Nazi-occupied countries and in Germany itself. Undoubtedly, also, such a public condemnation by the Pope would have severely jeopardized the lives of the thousands of Jews hidden in the Vatican, in Rome's many churches, convents and monasteries, and in numerous Catholic churches and other religious institutions throughout Italy, along with the lives of their Catholic protectors who were trying to save them. Many Italian Jewish Holocaust survivors have agreed with Michael Tagliacozzo, a Roman Jew hidden for several months at the Seminario Romano, the pontifical seminary, who approved of the papal policy that enabled him and many others to survive. A clearer public denunciation of the Nazis, they believe, would also have jeopardized the lives of the priests and Catholic laity who were sheltering and protecting them. Indeed, as even Susan Zucotti in her recent critique of Pius XII admits, "the pope's inclination to silence might well have been influenced by a concern for Jews in hiding and for their Catholic protectors."

To the very end, Pope Pius XII believed that a public denunciation of the Holocaust would have made matters worse by further enraging the Nazis and provoking even more violent reprisals against Europe's Jews, and against tens of thousands of Catholics as well. In retrospect, historians have come to appreciate this tactical caution on the part of Pius XII and the Holy See. His "silence," they recognize, was an effective strategic approach to protecting more Jews from deportation to the Nazi death camps. A more explicit and forceful papal denunciation of Nazism might have invited even more Nazi reprisals and made things even worse for the Jews of Nazi occupied Europe. One might ask, of course, what might have been worse than the mass murder of six million Jews? The answer is abundantly and horrifically clear: The slaughter of hundreds of thousands more.

Pinchas Lapide documents conclusively the extraordinary relief and rescue efforts conducted by Pius XII and his diplomats during the Holocaust. Through his country-by-country analysis of Papal efforts to rescue European Jews throughout Nazi Europe, Lapide demonstrates, beyond any reasonable doubt, that "the Catholic Church saved more Jewish lives during the war than all other churches, religious institutions and rescue organizations put together."

While approximately 80 percent of European Jews perished during World War II, 80 percent of Italy's 40,000 Jews were saved. The Nazi deportations of Italy's Jews began in

October 1943, after the German army occupied Rome and entrusted internal security matters to the S.S. On October 16, more than a thousand of the city's Jews were rounded up and deported to Auschwitz, where they were murdered a week later. From October 1943 until the Allied capture of the city in June 1944, the deportations continued, with 2,091 Roman Jews eventually being exterminated in Nazi death camps.

During the months that Rome was under German occupation, Pius XII, who secretly instructed Italy's Catholic clergy "to save human lives by all means," played an especially significant role in saving thousands of Italian Jews from deportation to Auschwitz and other Nazi death camps. Beginning in October 1943, Pope Pius asked the churches and convents throughout Italy to shelter Jews. As a result, although Italian dictator Benito Mussolini and the Fascists who remained loyal to him yielded to Hitler's demand that Italy's Jews be deported, in churches, monasteries and private homes throughout the country Italian Catholics defied Mussolini's orders and protected thousands of Jews until the Allied armies arrived. Although their lives were endangered by helping to save Jews, Italian Catholic Church leaders, from Cardinals to parish priests, hid Jews from the Nazis. In Rome, 155 convents and monasteries sheltered some 5,000 Jews throughout the German occupation. No less than 3,000 Jews found refuge at one time at the Pope's summer residence at Castel Gandolfo, and thus, through Pius' personal intervention, escaped deportation to German death camps. Sixty Jews lived for nine months at the Jesuit Gregorian University, and many were sheltered in the cellar of the Pontifical Bible Institute. Pope Pius himself granted sanctuary within the walls of the Vatican in Rome to hundreds of homeless Jews. Following Pope Pius' direct instructions, individual Italian priests and monks, cardinals and bishops, were instrumental in saving hundreds of Jewish lives.

IN TRIBUTE TO PIUS XII: PRAISE FROM THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

During his lifetime, and for several years after his death in 1958, Pope Pius XII was widely praised as having been a true friend of the Jewish people, who saved hundreds of thousands of Jewish lives during the Holocaust. As early as December of 1940, in an article published in Time magazine, the renowned Nobel Prize winning physicist Albert Einstein, himself a Jewish refugee from Nazi Germany, paid tribute to the moral "courage" of Pope Pius and the Catholic Church in opposing "the Hitlerian onslaught" on liberty:

Being a lover of freedom, when the Nazi revolution came in Germany, I looked to the universities to defend it, knowing that they had always boasted of their devotion to the cause of truth; but, no, the universities immediately were silenced. Then I looked to the great editors of the newspapers, whose flaming editorials in days gone by had proclaimed their love of freedom: but they, like the universities, were silenced in a few short weeks. Only the Catholic Church stood squarely across the path of Hitler's campaign for suppressing the truth. I never had any special interest in the Church before, but now I feel a great affection and admiration because the Church alone has had the courage and persistence to stand for intellectual truth and moral freedom. I am forced thus to confess that what I once despised, I now praise unreservedly.

Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, tributes to Pope Pius came from several other Jewish leaders who praised him for his role in saving Jews during the war. In 1943, Chaim Weizmann, who would become Israel's first president, wrote that "the Holy See is lending its powerful help wherever it can, to mitigate the fate of my persecuted co-religionists."

Moshe Sharett, who would become Israel's first Foreign Minister and second Prime Minister, reinforced these feelings of gratitude when he met with Pius in the closing days of World War II: "I told him [the Pope] that my first duty was to thank him, and through him the Catholic Church, on behalf of the Jewish public for all they had done in the various countries to rescue Jews... We are deeply grateful to the Catholic Church." In 1945, Rabbi Isaac Herzog, the Chief Rabbi of Israel, sent a message to Msgr. Angelo Roncalli (the future Pope John XXIII), expressing his gratitude for the actions taken by Pope Pius XII on behalf of the Jewish people. "The people of Israel," wrote Rabbi Herzog, "will never forget what His Holiness and his illustrious delegates, inspired by the eternal principles of religion, which form the foundation of true civilization, are doing for our unfortunate brothers and sisters in the most tragic hour of our history, which is living proof of Divine Providence in this world." In September 1945, Dr. Leon Kubowitzky, the Secretary General of the World Jewish Congress, personally thanked the Pope in Rome for his interventions on behalf of Jews, and the World Jewish Congress donated \$20,000 to Vatican charities "in recognition of the work of the Holy See in rescuing Jews from Fascist and Nazi persecutions." Dr. Raffael Cantoni, head of the Italian Jewish community's wartime Jewish Assistance Committee, who would subsequently become the President of the Union of Italian Jewish Communities, similarly expressed his gratitude to the Vatican, stating that "six million of my co-religionists have been murdered by the Nazis, but there could have been many more victims had it not been for the efficacious intervention of Pius XII." On April 5, 1946, his Union of Italian Jewish Communities, meeting for the first time after the War, sent an official message of thanks to Pope Pius XII:

The delegates of the Congress of the Italian Jewish Communities, held in Rome for the first time after the Liberation, feel that it is imperative to extend reverent homage to Your Holiness, and to express the most profound gratitude that animates all Jews for your fraternal humanity toward them during the years of persecution when their lives were endangered by Nazi-Fascist barbarism. Many times priests suffered imprisonment and were sent to concentration camps, and offered their lives to assist Jews in every way. This demonstration of goodness and charity that still animates the just, has served to lessen the shame and torture and sadness that afflicted millions of human beings.

Many other Jewish tributes to Pius came in the years just proceeding, and in the immediate aftermath, of the Pontiff's death. In 1955, when Italy celebrated the tenth anniversary of its liberation, the Union of Italian Jewish Communities proclaimed April 17 as a "Day of Gratitude" for the Pope's wartime assistance in defying the Nazis. Dozens of Italian Catholics, including several priests and nuns, were awarded gold medals "for their outstanding rescue work during the Nazi terror."

A few weeks later, on May 26, 1955, the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra flew to Rome to give a special performance of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, at the Vatican's Consistory Hall, to express the State of Israel's enduring gratitude for the help that the Pope and the Catholic Church had given to the Jewish people persecuted by the Nazis during the Holocaust. That the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra so joined the rest of the Jewish world in warmly honoring the achievements and legacy of Pope Pius XII is of more than passing significance. As a matter of state policy, the Israeli Philharmonic has never played the music of the nineteenth century composer Richard Wagner because of Wagner's well-known reputation as an anti-Semite and as Hitler's "favorite composer,"

and as one of the cultural patron saints of the Third Reich, whose music was played at Nazi party functions and ceremonies. Despite requests from music lovers and specialists, the official state ban on the Israeli Philharmonic's playing Wagner's music has never been lifted. During the 1950's and 1960's, especially, a significant sector of the Israeli public, hundreds of thousands of whom were survivors of the Nazi concentration and death camps, still viewed his music, and even his name, as a symbol of the Hitler regime. That being the case, it is inconceivable that the Israeli government would have paid the travel expenses for the entire Philharmonic to travel to Rome for a special concert to pay tribute to a church leader who was considered to have been "Hitler's Pope." On the contrary: The Israeli Philharmonic's historic and unprecedented visit to Rome to perform for Pius XII at the Vatican was a unique Jewish communal gesture of collective recognition and gratitude to a great world leader and friend of the Jewish people for his instrumental role in saving the lives of hundreds of thousands of Jews.

On the day of Pius XII's death in 1958, Golda Meir, Israel's Foreign Minister, cabled the following message of condolence to the Vatican: "We share in the grief of humanity... When fearful martyrdom came to our people in the decade of Nazi terror, the voice of the Pope was raised for the victims. The life of our times was enriched by a voice speaking out on the great moral truths above the tumult of daily conflict. We mourn a great servant of peace." Before beginning a concert of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, conductor Leonard Bernstein called for a minute of silence "for the passing of a very great man, Pope Pius XII."

Similar sentiments were expressed in the many tributes and eulogies for Pius by numerous rabbis and Jewish communal leaders, as well as by most of the Israeli press, several of whose readers suggested in open letters that a "Pope Pius XII Forest" be planted in the hills of Judea "in order to perpetuate fittingly the humane services rendered by the late pontiff to European Jewry." During and for close to two decades after World War II, Jewish praise and gratitude for Pius XII's efforts on behalf of European Jewry were virtually unanimous. Indeed, as Pinchas Lapide has so aptly stated: "No Pope in history has been thanked more heartily by Jews." Because of Pius XII's exemplary humanity toward European Jewry, no other Pope has earned such gratitude from the Jewish people.

PIUS XII: A RIGHTEOUS GENTILE, NOT HITLER'S POPE

I believe that a new, Jewish historical account of Pope Pius XII and the Holocaust—a comprehensive, yet critical scholarly "defense" of what Pius did for the Jews—needs to be written. Such a true account of what Pius XII really did for the Jews would arrive, I believe, at exactly the opposite of Cornwell's conclusion: Pius XII was not Hitler's pope, but the closest Jews had come to having a papal supporter—and at the moment when it mattered most.

Such a new Jewish historical evaluation and "defense" of Pius, needs to be based on how Pius's Jewish contemporaries viewed his efforts—his accomplishments and failures alike—during his lifetime, and how Jewish Holocaust survivors have evaluated (and reevaluated) his life and legacy in the decades since. Such a book must incorporate the first hand testimony of Jewish leaders in Israel, Europe and America, and of Holocaust survivors and former chaplains who served in Nazi occupied Europe, which bear eloquent witness to the heroic and often forgotten role played by Pius XII as a "righteous gentile," who was responsible for sheltering and rescuing hundreds of thousands of Jews.

In recent decades, new oral history centers have been established, to record and preserve the oral histories and personal testimonies of Jewish Holocaust survivors and their Catholic rescuers. As a result, an impressive body of new oral history interviews, with Jewish Holocaust survivors and military chaplains, Catholic clergy and laity, in Italy and other countries of Nazi occupied Europe, have been conducted and transcribed. These provide a new basis for understanding Pius XII's role in the Holocaust, and his relationship to Italy's Jews. An invaluable archival resource, these provide the basis for the new Jewish understanding of Pius XII and the Holocaust that cries out to be written. The new and existing oral history testimony of Jewish leaders in Israel, Europe, and America, as well as that of Jewish chaplains and of numerous Jewish Holocaust survivors, bear elegant witness to the heroic and often forgotten role played by Pope Pius XII in sheltering and rescuing hundreds of thousands of Jews. It is hard to imagine that so many of the world's greatest Jewish leaders, on several continents, were all misguided or mistaken in praising the Pope's wartime conduct. Their enduring gratitude, as well as that of a generation of Holocaust survivors, to Pius XII was genuine and profound, and bespoke their sincere belief that he was one of the world's truly "righteous gentiles." The Talmud, the great sixth century compendium of Jewish religious law and ethics, teaches Jews that "whosoever preserves one life, it is accounted to him by Scripture as if he had preserved a whole world." More so than most other twentieth century leaders, Pius XII effectively fulfilled this Talmudic dictum when the fate of European Jewry was at stake. Pope Pius XII's legacy as a "righteous gentile," who rescued so many Jews from Hitler's death camps cannot and should not be forgotten. Nor should the fact that the Jewish community, and so many of its leaders, praised the Pope's efforts during and after the Holocaust, and promised never to forget.

These points are especially significant in evaluating Pope Pius XII's enduring legacy for twentieth, and twenty-first, century Jews. It needs to be remembered, as noted earlier, that no other Pope in history has been so universally praised by Jews. So, too, the compelling reason for this unprecedented Jewish praise for, and gratitude to, a Pope needs to be better remembered than it has been in recent years: Today, more than fifty years after the Holocaust, it needs to be more widely recognized and appreciated that Pius XII was indeed a very "righteous gentile," a true friend of the Jewish people, who saved more Jewish lives than any other person, including Raoul Wallenberg and Oskar Schindler. A new authentically Jewish history of Pope Pius XII and the Holocaust, emphasizing his historic role and accomplishments as a "righteous gentile," may help to bring some long-overdue recognition to his too little known and appreciated legacy as one of the century's great friends of the Jewish people.

HISTORICAL TRUTH OF PIUS XII'S WORK

New Book by Sister Margaret Marchione

ROME, 16 APR 2000 (ZENIT).

In order to clarify Pius XII's role during the Nazi period, address the accusations of silence, and shed light on historic facts, Pantheon is publishing the Italian edition of Sister Margaret Marchione's latest book, "Pius XII: Architect of Peace."

The book looks directly at the Holocaust, and praises Pius XII's work in support of the persecuted. The author, who is internationally known for her numerous (more than 30)

publications on historic figures (she already published a book on Pope Pacelli, which appeared in both English and Italian, entitled "Pius XII and the Jews"), maintains that this Pontiff was one of the most invaluable protectors of the Jews in countries dominated by National Socialism, whose atrocities he condemned.

In addition, Pius XII was the Church's spokesman in history. In an address given on June 13, 1943, he said: "Our speeches and messages will not be able to be crossed out or run down by anyone, neither in their intention nor essence. Everyone has been able to hear them as words of truth and peace... The Church is not afraid of the light of truth, neither of the past, the present, nor the future."

Among the different initiatives in which Pius XII engaged, the book refers to his effort to center his ministry in the 1939-46 POW's. At that time, the Vatican was the only refuge for thousands of persecuted, and its Information Office was the only means of communication between the prisoners and their families. From the pages of this book a universal, generous, constant and paternal Christian figure emerges, who is returned to his rightful place in history. ZE00041604

JEWISH RECOGNITION OF POPE PIUS XII'S SUPPORT

Document Reveals Generous Jewish Donation to Catholic Church Following WWII
ROME, 30 JUL 1999 (ZENIT).

Contrary to some recent historical readings, which tend to picture Pius XII as silent, if not condescending, on the question of Nazi anti-Semitism, a document has been discovered in Israel that not only confirms Pius XII's role in defense of persecuted Jews, but reveals that world leaders of the Jewish communities at the time were very aware of his action, to the point that after the war they came to Rome and gave the Catholic Church a very generous donation.

The document was discovered by Lorenzo Cremonesi, the Italian newspaper "Corriere della Sera's" Jerusalem correspondent, who is completing a book on the history of Israel's relations with the Holy See. Cremonesi spoke about his discovery to the magazine "Tempi," sympathetic to the Communion and Liberation movement. While examining the Israeli archives, Cremonesi found a letter from the Vatican, dated October 27, 1945, signed by Monsignor Giovanni Battista Montini -- the future Paul VI, who at the time worked in the Secretariat of State; it was addressed to Raffaele Cantoni, President of the Italian Jewish communities. In the letter, Montini gave detailed information on a conversation between Pius XII and Leo Kubwitsky, secretary general of the World Jewish Congress. Montini wrote that during an audience, on behalf of his organization, Kubwitsky gave Pius XII more than one million dollars (at the present value) for "charity works" and expressed "his gratitude to the august Pontiff for his work in support of persecuted Jews."

Montini added, moreover, that Pius XII decided that "the sum should go exclusively to needy persons of Jewish origin." The news has awakened some interest but, as Fr. Peter Gumpel, reporter for Pius XII's beatification cause and an expert in the history of the period, has pointed out, "This is nothing new. It is news that has been published before. And it is only one of hundreds of testimonials of affection and gratitude that different Jewish representatives expressed to Pope Pacelli."

Fr. Pierre Blet, former professor of Ecclesiastical History at the Gregorian, who was one

of four persons appointed by Paul VI to compile the "Holy See's Acts and Documents of the Second World War," recalled that in at least three of the twelve volumes of this monumental work, specifically in Nos. 8, 9 and 10, are to be found "all the official documents in which the Jewish communities, the Rabbis of half the world, and other refugees, thank Pius XII and the Catholic Church for all the help and work in their favor."

SAVIOUR OF THE JEWS

Michael O'Carroll C.S.Sp.

There is scarcely any case of a dramatist influencing historians to the extent that Rolf Hochhuth did with his play about Pope Pius XII, "The Representative" (*Der Stellvertreter*). He maintained that by not publicly denouncing the Jewish genocide, Pius was responsible for the massacre.

He tried to do the same in another play which blamed Churchill for the death of Polish General Sikorski. However, on that, he was demolished in a BBC programme by David Frost.

But why did he have such success against the Pope - to the extent, that this old and thoroughly discredited canard was revived on another BBC documentary recently? Was there a dearth of historical evidence and documentation? Certainly not after the publication of the Vatican War Documents. Before that, in the published German State papers and in the Nuremberg transcripts, there was plenty of material to satisfy honest research. For instance, those who thought that there was no protest by the Pope against Nazi atrocities could have read what Ribbentrop, German Foreign Minister declared: "I know that we had protests from the Vatican, that we had a whole deskful of protests." They could also have read that these protests were ignored on Hitler's orders.

At the National Archives in Washington, which I was able to visit, there is a mass of unpublished documents relevant to the history of the second world war. Enough has been published to vindicate the policy of Pius XII.

Hitler's Jewish policy

In January 1939, when the war clouds were gathering over Europe, Hitler declared publicly that if it came to war the principal victims would be the Jews; later in his "Table Talk" he could assert that he had kept his word.

His essays and discourses show an all-out annihilation policy towards the race. He spoke of them as "vermin". And, the war gave him the motive to seek their extermination; it also gave him the possibility of achieving his sinister project.

But he could not have hunted the Jews all over Europe without the initial success which gave him control of so much territory. Without this, it is doubtful that he could even have herded the Jews in Germany itself.

Regarding the nations which had declared war on Hitler, they surely had an obligation towards the Jews. They had put them in mortal danger. But what did they do to help the endangered Jews? Nothing.

They talked - mostly to Pope Pius XII, telling him what he should say. But the real question was one of action and the one who saw this was Pius XII.

Pope as scapegoat

Let me illustrate the indifference of the allied governments. They should have had one obvious duty: to bomb the railway to Auschwitz. That was the death line and should have been cut at once. (My personal conviction about this was reinforced by a visit to the camp site in 1966.)

Martin Gilbert, biographer of Churchill, in his book *Auschwitz and the Allies*, reveals that Churchill accepted the idea, but was overruled by subordinates. The obvious comment is that Churchill did not tolerate any such action from his subordinates in matters he deemed important.

The excuse for not bombing the line was that it would endanger valuable allied lives. But the same lives were being put at risk on every other mission which carried them over the Auschwitz area.

There is also the grim chapter only recently opened, in the refusal of western countries to allow the thousands of proscribed Jews to leave Germany, on the grounds that they would not be able to cope with the influx.

There were many who needed a scapegoat. A Pope was ideal and they could count on the support of "modern" Catholics, eager to show how critical they could be of their own.

Public statements and further deaths

If Pius XII had protested, would Jewish lives have been saved? It was official Nazi policy to answer with reprisals. Prisoners came to dread such public statements.

Holland was the glaring example. When the Dutch bishops issued a condemnation, all Jews who had become Catholics were seized and sent to Auschwitz. Among them was the convert Edith Stein, Sister Benedicta of the Holy Cross in Carmel, later beatified by John Paul II.

A different policy was adopted in nearby Belgium: no public protest by the hierarchy, but assistance to the Jews to go into hiding and financial support, such as that given by the Archbishop of Brussels who allowed a Jewish group to use his bank account. True, the commanding general, Von Falkensen, was relatively humane and helpful. But the eventual outcome is significant. In Holland, 79 per cent of Jews were killed; in Belgium, 73 per cent were saved.

The Pope knew the Allied Governments wanted his word, regardless of its effect on the Jews, towards whom they showed utterly irresponsible indifference. He said he was keeping silent because he loved the Jews.

His housekeeper, Sister Pasqualina, later related in her <Memoirs> that she once saw him tear up and burn a denunciation of the anti-Jewish measures which he had prepared; he had just got news of the tragic events in Holland. Thereafter his mind was made up.

Was silence the only weapon available to the Pope?

Pope encouraged rescue programme

Here is where his critics grossly wrong him. Pius XII initiated, sustained and encouraged a programme of rescue all over Europe, principally through the Nuncios. With what results? The facts are available from Jewish historians.

The first and greatest Jewish authority on the subject was Hungarian Jew, Jenő Levai. He defended the Pope at the Frankfurt trial of the last Auschwitz personnel taken prisoner, as late as 1964. However, on the papal side, the blockbuster is the work of Pinchas Lapide, one-time brigade major in the British army, Jewish journalist and diplomat.

Lapide worked in Israel and had access to the great centre of archives, "Yad Vashem". In his book *The Last Three Popes and the Jews* (London, 1967), he surveys the entire area

covered by the anti-Jewish policy, points out the measures taken and the lives saved in each region. He reaches a total of 860,000 lives saved through Pius XII's programme. Another writer, David Herstig, writing in 1967 (*Die Rettung*, Stuttgart) calculated that 360,000 Romanian Jews in Israel owed their lives to the Pope.

Lapide, whom I interviewed in 1967, says that the Pope saved more lives than all government or international agencies together.

Other prominent Jews testified to his relief and rescue work, among them Isaac Halvei Herzog, the first Chief Rabbi of Israel, with whom I spoke about Pius XII, and in this country, Dr. Bethel Solomons who, when he was President of the College of Physicians, paid him public tribute.

It cannot be forgotten that the Jewish genocide was a policy worked out at the highest level, at Wannsee in January, 1942, with so many officials of high rank that it was styled the "Meeting of Secretaries". The destructive plan included all Jews in Europe, listing them, country by country, including 4,000 in Ireland. Yet those who were once my colleagues in the wartime Jewish Christian Society, the "Pillar of Fire", did not know this. Nor the extent of the genocide.

Dublin art dealer, Victor Waddington, gave me, at one meeting, a copy of the pamphlet by Victor Gollancz which on its cover stated that the victims numbered 300,000. Should not Gollancz, a publisher with multiple contacts, have been better informed? We know that already at that time the number of lives taken was ten times this figure. The whole plan comprised eleven million Jews, marked down for death. Hitler had foretold annihilation (*Vernichtung*) of the whole Jewish race in Europe. The master idea, strategic and tactical planning, a command structure, logistics, equipment, were all in place.

Let us thank God this was not to be.

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THE MYTH IN THE LIGHT OF THE ARCHIVES

The recurring accusations against Pope Pius XII Pierre Blet, S.J.

When he died on 9 October 1958, Pius XII was the object of unanimous tributes of admiration and gratitude: "The world", declared President Eisenhower, "is now poorer since the death of Pius XII". Golda Meir, the Foreign Minister of the State of Israel: "The life of our times was enriched by a voice speaking out about great moral truths above the tumult of daily conflict. We mourn a great servant of peace"¹. A few years later however, beginning in 1963, he had become the subject of a black legend: during the War, it was claimed, due to political calculation or faintheartedness, he remained impassive and silent in the face of crimes against humanity, which would have been prevented had he intervened.

When accusations are based on documents, it is possible to discuss the interpretation of texts, verify whether they have been misunderstood, received in a non-critical way, misrepresented or chosen selectively. But when a legend is created from unrelated elements and with the aid of imagination, discussion is meaningless. The only thing possible is to counter the myth with the historical reality proved by incontestable documentation. For this reason, Pope Paul VI, who as Substitute of the Secretariat of State had been one of the closest collaborators of Pius XII, as early as 1964 authorized the publication of the documents of the Holy See relating to the Second World War.

The lay-out of *Actes et Document*

The Archives of the Secretariat of State preserve the files in which it is often possible to follow day by day, sometimes hour by hour, the activity of the Pope and his offices. Here are found the messages and addresses of Pius XII, the letters exchanged between the Pope and civil and ecclesiastical authorities, notes of the Secretariat of State, service notes from junior officials to their superiors to communicate information and suggestions and, in addition, private notes (in particular, those of Monsignor Domenico Tardini, who had the habit, most fortunate for historians, of thinking with pen in hand), the correspondence of the Secretariat of State with the Holy See's representatives abroad (Apostolic Nuncios, Internuncios and Delegates) and the Diplomatic Notes exchanged between the Secretariat of State and Ambassadors or Ministers accredited to the Holy See. These documents are for the most part sent with the name and signature of the Secretary of State or the Secretary of the First Section of the Secretariat of State: this does not detract from their expressing the intentions of the Pope.

On the basis of these documents it would have been possible to write a work describing the attitude and policy of the Pope during the Second World War. Or an official report could have been produced to demonstrate the groundlessness of the accusations against Pius XII. Since the main charge was that of silence, it would have been particularly easy to use the documents to illustrate the Holy See's activity on behalf of war victims and particularly on behalf of the victims of racist persecutions. It was considered more suitable to undertake a complete publication of the documents relating to the War. Various collections of diplomatic documents already existed, many volumes of which dealt with the Second World War: *Documenti diplomatici italiani*; *Documents on British Foreign Policy: 1919-1939*; *Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers*; *Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik 1918-1945*. Given the existence of these collections and on the lines of such models, it seemed useful to allow historians to study from the documents the role and activity of the Holy See during the War. With this perspective the publication of the collection entitled *Actes et documents du Saint-Siège relatifs à la seconde guerre mondiale* was begun².

The difficulty lay in the fact that for this period the archives—both of the Vatican and of other States—were closed to the public and also to historians. The particular interest in the events of the Second World War, the desire to write its history on the basis of the documents, and not only from more or less direct accounts or testimonies, had led the States involved in the conflict to publish the documents still inaccessible to the public. Trustworthy persons charged with such a task are subject to certain rules: not to publish documents which would call into question people still living or which, if revealed, would hamper current negotiations. On the basis of these criteria the volumes of the *Foreign Relations of the United States* relating to the Forties were published, and the same criteria were followed in the publications of the documents of the Holy See.

The task of publishing the documents of the Holy See relating to the War was entrusted to three Jesuit priests: Angelo Martini, editor of *La Civiltà Cattolica*, who had already access to the secret archives of the Vatican, Burkhardt Schneider and the author of the present article, both professors in the Church History Faculty of the Pontifical Gregorian University. The work began in the first days of January 1965, in an office near the storeroom containing the archives of the then Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs and First Section of the Secretariat of State; documents relating to

the War were normally kept there.

In such conditions, the work was both easy and difficult. The difficulty was that since the archives were not open to the public there were no systematic inventories geared to research, documents were not classified, either in chronological or strictly geographical order. Those of a political nature, and hence relating to the War, were sometimes stored with documents of a religious, canonical or even personal nature, placed in fairly manageable boxes but sometimes with widely differing contents. Information relating to Great Britain could be found in files on France, if the information had been sent through the Nuncio in France, and naturally interventions on behalf of Belgian hostages were in the boxes of the Nuncio in Berlin. It was therefore necessary to examine every box and go through the entire contents in order to identify the documents relating to the War. The research was simplified, however, thanks to an old rule of the Secretariat of State in force since the time of Urban VIII: Nuncios were to deal with only one subject in each letter. Despite such difficulties, certain circumstances made our task easier. Since we were working in an office of the Secretariat of State and as members of the Commission, we were not bound by the conditions placed on researchers given access to the public storerooms in the consultation areas; one of us would take the boxes of documentation directly from the storeroom shelves. Our task was also made considerably easier by the fact that the documentation was for the most part typewritten and had been stored as separate letters (except for manuscripts to be typed for the printing office). Thus when a particular document was recognized as pertaining to the War it could simply be removed and photocopied, and the photocopy together with explanatory—notes as scholarly work requires—given to the printing office.

Although in the winter of 1965 the work was proceeding quickly enough, we decided to ask the help of Father Robert Leiber, who had retired to the German College after serving for more than thirty years as private secretary of Pacelli, first when the latter was Nuncio, then Secretary of State and finally Pope Pius XII. Leiber had followed the situation in Germany very closely, and it was he who had told us of the existence of drafts of Pius XII's letters to the German Bishops. These became the material of the second volume of the series and are the documents which best reveal the thoughts of the Pope.

The Individual Volumes

The first volume, which covers the first seventeen months of the Pontificate (March 1939 - July 1940) and which reveal Pius XII's efforts to stave off war, was published in December 1965 and was given a generally positive reception. In 1966, while Father Schneider was busy preparing the volume of the letters to the German Bishops, Father Robert A. Graham, an American Jesuit of the magazine *America* who had already published a work on the diplomacy of the Holy See (*Vatican Diplomacy*), asked for information covering the period on which we were working. In reply to his request, he was invited to join our group, especially as we had learned of the ever more frequent contacts of Pius XII with Roosevelt and since we were coming across documents in English fairly frequently. He worked directly on the preparation of the third volume, which was devoted to Poland and modelled on the second volume, concerning the relationships of the Holy See with the Bishops. But the direct exchange of letters with other Bishops proved much less intense, with the result that volumes two and three (in two parts) remained the only ones of their kind. Thus we decided to divide the documents into two sections: one was to be a continuation of the first volume, for questions

primarily diplomatic in nature, as indicated by their title *Le Saint-Siege et la guerre en Europe, Le Saint-Siege et la guerre mondiale*. These were volumes 4, 5, 7 and 11. Volumes 6, 8, 9 and 10, entitled *Le Saint-Siege et les victimes de la guerre*, present in chronological order documents pertaining to the efforts of the Holy See to help all suffering in body or spirit because of the War, prisoners separated from their families and exiled far from their loved ones, peoples subjected to the devastation of the War, and victims of racial persecution.

The work lasted more than fifteen years; the group divided the workload according to the planned volumes and the time that each member could give. Father Leiber, whose help had been so valuable to us, was taken from us by death on 18 February 1967. Father Schneider, after the publication of the letters to the German Bishops and while continuing to teach Modern History at the Gregorian University, had devoted himself to the section on the victims of the War. With the help of Father Graham he prepared volumes 6, 8 and 9, which were completed at Christmas 1975. But in the summer of that same year he had been stricken by the illness from which he would die the following May. Father Martini, who had devoted himself full-time to this work and had in some way worked on every volume, did not have the satisfaction of seeing the work completed in its entirety: he was only able to see the proofs of the last volume, at the beginning of the summer of 1981, before he himself passed away. Volume 11 (the last of the series) came out towards the end of 1981 under the auspices of Father Graham and myself. Thus Father Graham, although the oldest among us, was able to work until the project was brought to completion. During those fifteen years he was also able to work on related research and publications, which mainly came out as articles in *La Civilita Cattolica*, and which themselves also constitute a source of information which historians of the Second World War can profitably consult. He left Rome on 24 July 1996 to return to his native California, where he ended his days on 11 February 1997.

Since the beginning of 1982, I had resumed my own researches on seventeenth century France and papal diplomacy. But seeing that after fifteen years our volumes remained unknown even to many historians, I devoted the years 1996-97 to putting the essence and conclusions of that work into a single volume of modest size, but as complete as possible³. A dispassionate reading of this documentation clearly brings to light in its concrete reality the attitude and conduct of Pius XII during the World War and, consequently, the unfoundedness of the accusations made against him. The documentation clearly shows that he did everything he possibly could in the area of diplomacy to avoid the War, to dissuade Germany from attacking Poland, to convince Mussolini's Italy to dissociate itself from Hitler. There is no trace of the alleged pro-German partiality that he is purported to have developed while he was at the Nunciature in Germany. His efforts, joined with those of Roosevelt, to keep Italy out of the conflict, the solidarity telegrams of 10 May 1940 to the Sovereigns of Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg after the invasion of the Wehrmacht, his courageous admonition to Mussolini and to King Victor Emanuel calling for a separate peace certainly do not point in that direction. It would be unrealistic to think that with the halberds of the Swiss Guard, or even with the threat of excommunication, he would have been able to stop the tanks of the Wehrmacht.

But the accusation which is often repeated is that he remained silent about the racial persecution aimed at the Jews, even when this was carried to its ultimate consequences,

and that he thus left the way open for the Nazi atrocities. The documentation, however, shows the Pope's unflinching and constant efforts to oppose the deportations, the outcome of which was the subject of ever increasing suspicion. The apparent silence hid a clandestine activity on the part of the Nunciatures and Bishops to circumvent, or at least limit, the deportations, the violence, the persecutions. The rationale behind this caution is clearly explained by the Pope himself in different speeches, in the letters to the German Bishops, and in consultations within the Secretariat of State. Public declarations would have been of no use: they would have only served to make the fate of the victims worse and to increase their actual number.

Recurring accusations

In an effort to obscure this evidence, the detractors of Pius XII have cast doubts upon the seriousness of our publication. Quite remarkable in this regard is an article published in a Paris evening newspaper on 3 December 1997: "Those four Jesuits have produced [!] in the *Actes et documents* texts which have absolved Pius XII of the omissions with which he is charged [...]. But those *Actes et documents* are far from being complete". It is insinuated that we had omitted documents which might prejudice the memory of Pius XII and the Holy See.

First, it is not clear how the omission of certain documents would help to clear Pius XII of the failures of which he has been accused. On the other hand, to state peremptorily that our publication is not complete is to state something impossible to prove: to do so, one would have to compare our publication with the archival material and indicate documents present in the archives but missing in our publication. Even though the pertinent archival material is still closed to the public, some people have gone so far as to furnish alleged proofs of such gaps in the *Actes et Documents*. In doing so they have shown their scanty knowledge of research into archival collections, the opening of some of which they are demanding.

Repeating an identical statement in a Roman daily newspaper on 11 September 1997, the 3 December article states that the correspondence between Pius XII and Hitler is missing from our publication. Let us first note that the letter in which the Pope informed the Head of State of the Reich of his election is the last document published in the second volume of the *Actes et documents*. As for the rest, if we did not publish any correspondence between Pius XII and Hitler it is because such correspondence exists solely in the imagination of the journalist. The latter mentions contacts between Pacelli, then Nuncio in Germany, and Hitler, but, he should have checked his dates: Hitler came to power in 1933 and thus would only have been able to meet the Apostolic Nuncio after that, date. But Archbishop Pacelli had returned to Rome in December, 1929; Pius XI had created him a Cardinal on 16 December 1929 and Secretary of State on 16 January 1930. Most importantly, had such correspondence ever existed, the Pope's letters would have been preserved in the German archives and it would be natural for some trace of them to be found in the archives of the Foreign Ministry of the Reich. Hitler's letters would have ended up in the Vatican, but some mention of them would be found in the instructions given to the German Ambassadors, Bergen and then Weitzsacker, who were charged with delivering them, and in the reports filed by these diplomats confirming that they had in fact transmitted them to the Pope or the Secretary of State. There is no trace of any of this. In the absence of such references, it must be said that the seriousness of our publication has been impugned without a shred of evidence.

These observations about the alleged correspondence between the Pope and the Fuhrer are also applicable to other documents, ones which actually existed. Very frequently documents from the Vatican, e.g. notes exchanged with ambassadors, are attested to by other archives. One can presume that many telegrams from the Vatican were intercepted and deciphered by the information services of the warring powers, and that copies can be found in their archives. Consequently, had we in fact attempted to hide certain documents it would be possible to establish their existence and thus have a basis for casting doubt on the seriousness of our work.

The same article in the Paris newspaper, after imagining relations between Hitler and the Nuncio Pacelli, refers to an article in the *Sunday, Telegraph* in July 1997, which accuses the Holy See of having used Nazi gold to help war criminals flee to Latin America, and in particular the Croat Ante Pavelic: "Some studies support this thesis". One is amazed at the casualness with which journalists can content themselves with documenting statements. Historians, who often labour for hours in order to verify their references, will envy them. One can understand that a journalist will trust a colleague, especially when the English name of the paper gives him an air of respectability. But there are two other statements which deserve to be studied separately, namely the arrival in the Vatican coffers of Nazi gold, or more exactly the gold belonging to Jews and stolen by the Nazis, and its use to facilitate the flight of Nazi war criminals to Latin America.

Some American dailies had in fact produced a document from the U.S. Treasury Department in which the Department was informed that the Vatican had received, through Croatia, Nazi gold of Jewish origin. The fact that the document was "from the Treasury Department" might appear impressive, but one has to read what is printed beneath the headline and one discovers that it is a note based on the "report of a trustworthy Roman informant". Those who take such statements for gospel truth should read Father Graham's article on the exploits of the informant V. Scattolini, who made a living out of "information" concocted in his own imagination which he then passed on to all the Embassies, including the American Embassy, which dutifully forwarded it to the State Department⁴. In our search of the archives of the Secretariat of State, we found no mention of the alleged entrance into Vatican coffers of gold stolen from Jews. Obviously those who make such statements have a responsibility to furnish documented proof, for example a receipt, not kept in the Vatican archives, as in the case of the alleged letters of Pius XII to Hitler. In the archives themselves, one finds only the prompt response of Pius XII when the Jewish communities of Rome were subjected to extortion by the SS, which demanded that they hand over fifty kilograms of gold. At that time the Chief Rabbi turned to the Pope to ask him for the fifteen kilograms needed to make up the amount, and Pius XII immediately ordered his offices to make the necessary arrangements⁵. Recent checks of the archives have discovered nothing further.

Nor is the report about Nazi criminals fleeing to Latin America with the alleged help of the Vatican something new. Obviously we cannot exclude the naivete of some Roman cleric who may have used his position to facilitate the escape of a Nazi. The sympathies of Bishop Hudal, Rector of the German national church in Rome, for the Great Reich are well-known; but on these grounds to imagine that the Vatican organized a large-scale escape of Nazis to Latin America would be to attribute heroic charity to the Roman clergy, as the Nazi plans for the Church and the Holy See were well-known in Rome. Pius XII referred to them in his Consistorial Address of 2 June 1945, recalling that the

persecution by the regime of the Church had been intensified by the War, "when its adherents still entertained the illusion that, following a military victory, they would eliminate the Church once and for all"⁶. The authors referred to by our journalist have a rather lofty idea of the forgiveness of wrongs practised in papal circles, if they imagine that a number of Nazis were sheltered in the Vatican and thence taken to Argentina, under the protection of the Peron dictatorship, and then on to Brazil, Chile and Paraguay, as a way of salvaging whatever could be salvaged of the Third Reich: thus a "Fourth Reich" would have been created in the pampas.

In these reports it is hard to differentiate fact and fiction. For those who like to read fiction we can recommend Ladislav Farago's *Aftermath: Martin Bormann and the Fourth Reich*. The phrase "the Fourth Reich" says it all. The author takes us from Rome and the Vatican to Argentina, Paraguay and Chile on the trail of the Reichsleiter and other fleeing Nazi leaders. With the attention to detail of an Agatha Christie, he describes the exact position of each character at the moment of the crime, indicates the numbers of the hotel rooms occupied by the fleeing Nazis and the Nazi hunters hot on their trail, and paints a picture of the green Volkswagen which transported them. One is struck by the modesty of the author, who presents his book as "a typically French investigative report, a study which is serious yet without pretensions to pure scholarship(!)".

Conclusion

The reader will understand that the Vatican archives may contain nothing of all that, even if it actually happened. If Bishop Hudal did help some prominent Nazis to escape, he certainly would not have gone seeking the Pope's permission. And if he had later confided to him what had happened, we would know nothing of it now. Among the things which the archives will never reveal we must mention the conversations between the Pope and his visitors, with the exception of the ambassadors who reported on them to their governments, or de Gaulle who speaks of them in his Memoirs.

This does not mean that when serious historians wish personally to check the archives from which published documents have been drawn their desire is not legitimate and praiseworthy. Even after a publication carried out as accurately as possible, consultation of the archives and direct contact with the documents makes for historical understanding. It is one thing to cast doubt on the seriousness of our research, and another altogether to wonder if something perhaps escaped us. We have not deliberately ignored any significant document on the grounds that it seemed to us to damage the image of the Pope and the reputation of the Holy See. But in an undertaking such as this the person doing the work is the first to wonder whether he has forgotten something. Without Father Leiber, the existence of the drafts of Pius XII's letters to the German Bishops would have gone unnoticed, and the collection would have been deprived of the texts which are perhaps the most valuable of all for an understanding of the Pope's thinking⁷. Yet those letters do not contradict in any way what we had learnt from the notes and diplomatic correspondence. In them, we see more of Pius XII's concern to depend upon the teaching of the Bishops in order to put German Catholics on their guard against the perverse seductions of National Socialism, more dangerous than ever in time of war. This correspondence, published in the second volume of the *Actes et Documents*, therefore confirms the tenacious opposition of the Church to National Socialism, though we knew already of the first warnings of German Bishops like Faulhaber and von Galen, of many religious and priests, and finally the Encyclical Letter *Mit brennender Sorge*, read in all

the churches of Germany on Palm Sunday 1937, despite the Gestapo. We can therefore only consider as a pure and simple lie the claim that the Church supported Nazism, as a Milan newspaper wrote on 6 January 1998. Moreover, the texts published in the fifth volume of the *Actes et Documents* deny outright the idea that the Holy See supported the Third Reich because it was afraid of Soviet Russia. When Roosevelt sought the Vatican's help to overcome the opposition of American Catholics to his plan to extend to Russia at war against the Reich the support already granted to Great Britain, he was listened to. The Secretariat of State charged the Apostolic Delegate in Washington to entrust to American Bishops the task of explaining that the Encyclical *Divini Redemptoris*—which enjoined Catholics to refuse the hand held out by the Communist parties—did not apply to the current situation and did not forbid the USA to help Soviet Russia's war effort against the Third Reich. These are unassailable conclusions.

Therefore, without wishing to discourage future researchers, I very much doubt whether the opening of the Vatican archives of the War years will change our understanding of the period. In the archives, as we have explained earlier, the diplomatic and administrative documents are mixed with documents of a strictly personal character; and this demands a longer closure than in the archives of the Foreign Ministries of the various States. Those who do not want to wait but wish to study in depth the history of that convulsed period can work fruitfully in the archives of the Foreign Office, the Quai d'Orsay, the State Department, and in the archives of the other States which had representatives accredited to the Holy See. Better than the notes of the Vatican's Secretariat of State, the dispatches of the British Minister Osborne evoke the situation of the Holy See, surrounded by Fascist Rome which then fell under the control of the German army and police⁸. It is by devoting themselves to such research, without asking for a premature opening of the Vatican archives, that they will show that are really seeking the truth.

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Notes

1 *L'Osservatore Romano*, 9 October 1958.

2 *Actes et documents du Saint-Siege relatifs a la seconde guerre mondiale*, edited by P. BLET - A. MARTINI - R. A. GRAHAM (from the third volume) - B. SCHNEIDER, Citta del Vaticano, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 11 volumes in 12 parts (2 parts for volume 3), 1965-81.

3 Cfr P. BLET, *Pie XII et la seconde guerre mondiale d'apres les archives du Vatican*, Paris, Perrin, 1997

4 Cfr R. A. GRAHAM, "Il vaticanista falsario. L'incredibile successo di Vittorio Scattolini", in *La Civiltà Cattolica* 1973 111 467-478.

5 Cfr *Actes et documents*, vol. 9, 491 and 494.

6 Pius XII, "Consistorial Address" (2 June 1945), in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* (1945) 159-168.

7 Thus when we prepared the first volume, it was not known who edited Pius XII's appeal for peace on 24 August 1939, opportunely corrected and approved by the Pope. Only later research allowed us to discover that the editor had been Monsignor Montini (cfr B. SCHNEIDER, "Der Friedensappell Papst Pius' XII. vom 14 August 1939", in *Archivum*

Historiae Pontificiae 6 [1968] 415-414), although it is difficult to attribute particular sections to the two authors.

8 Cfr O. CHADWICK, *Britain and the Vatican during the Second World War*, Cambridge, 1986.

WORLD PRESS UNMASKS FALLACIES IN BOOK DEFAMING PIUS XII

Exclusive Interview with Reporter of Pacelli's Beatification Cause

VATICAN CITY, 3 OCT 1999 (ZENIT).

Over the last few days, the European press has published numerous articles demonstrating the lack of historic seriousness in John Cornwell's book, "Hitler's Pope," which will go on sale in bookstores this week. The magazine "Vanity Fair," published the statements of a number of newspapers against the British journalist's theses. Among these are newspapers like Milan's **Corriere della Sera**, the **Sunday Times**, the weekly supplement distributed by ABC, **Alfa and Omega**, and the new Spanish newspaper **La Razon**. France's **Le Figaro** has also harshly criticized Cornwell's lack of professionalism. Set-up against Papacy Father Peter Gumpel, S.J., Reporter of Eugenio Pacelli's (Pius XII) Beatification Cause, granted ZENIT an exclusive interview to discuss the accusations contained in Cornwell's new book.

Fr. Gumpel begins by admitting that "there is legitimate indignation, because Cornwell has simply produced an authentic set-up against Pius XII and against the ... papacy as an institution."

ZENIT: Cornwell states that his book is the result of months of work in the archives of the Secretariat of State. In addition, he asserts that he has been the first and only one to consult those archives.

GUMPEL: That's all false. The Secretariat of State has confirmed directly to me that Cornwell was authorized in mid-May, 1997, to consult the archive of the section on Relations with States. He worked there for some three weeks. The topic of his research was the relations with Bavaria (1918-1921); Austria, Serbia and Belgrade (1913-1915). Obviously, he had no access to the closed period, that is, beginning 1922. Cornwell wrote that he researched for months. In fact, he was there only three weeks and gathered information that in the end he didn't use. Michel Chappin, Professor of History at the Gregorian University and archivist of the Secretariat of State, has also told me that Cornwell is neither the first nor the only one to consult the archives of those years, which of course are much earlier than Pius XII's pontificate. It is true that the identity card issued by the archives to Cornwell has the number 1, but that is because recently the format of permits for access has been changed, and he received the first of the new series."

ZENIT: "Vanity Fair" publishes the photograph of a 1919 document that, according to Cornwell, is a proof of Eugenio Pacelli's anti-Semitism. The reporter says it is an unpublished document.

GUMPEL: Here, in my hands, I have the copy of the original of that document. Cornwell quotes with hostility a line of the letter that is six pages long. In this document there is nothing against the Jews. The only thing it says is that Levien (Communist leader

in Munich) and his lover were Jews. It was simply an observation in a document of an informative nature. They were Jews, just as they could have been Christians. Moreover, everyone knew that, at that time, the Communist leadership was made up of atheist Jews, who persecuted every form of religion, including that of the Jews. To give this text as proof of Pacelli's anti-Semitism seems to me a deformation caused by partial and biased analysis. Moreover, the text of this letter, which Cornwell presents as a text discovered exclusively by himself, had already been published in Italy in 1992, in a volume written by Emma Fattorini, "Germany and the Holy See: Pacelli's Nunciature between the Great War and the Weimar Republic," published by "Societa Editrice il Mulino." Cornwell has discovered nothing new; he has only copied documents that were already published and he has deformed them. The majority of his sources are secondary, and the choice is extremely biased.

ZENIT: Cornwell's main thesis is that Pope Pius XII favored and supported the Nazi regime.

GUMPEL: As Nuncio in Germany, as Secretary of State and, later, as Pontiff, Pius XII always singled out Hitler and the Nazis as the worst danger for Germany and the world. Cornwell minimizes or, more importantly, totally omits the condemnation of Nazism that Pacelli made in Lourdes, Lisieux, Paris, and Budapest, where he was Papal Legate. When Pacelli was elected Pope, the "Berliner Morgenpost," the organ of the Nazi movement, considered him an enemy of Germany. His aversion for Nazism was so well known that the weekly of the Communist International, "La Correspondance Internationale," wrote that "In calling to succession the one who had demonstrated energetic resistance against the fascists totalitarian ideas that tend to eliminate the Catholic Church, (and) Pius XI's most direct collaborator, the Cardinals made a demonstrative gesture by placing, as head of the Church, a representative of the Catholic resistance movement." And we won't mention the encyclical written against Nazism, "Mit Brennender Sorge." It is enough to read the drafts, not only to confirm that Pacelli was one of the writers but (to see that) the original text has additions in his own handwriting.

Cornwell does not publish the reports written by the Gestapo against the Catholic Church and the Pope, nor does he keep in mind what the U.S., English, French, and Dutch newspapers were saying about Pius XII's resistance against the Nazis. In the archives recently opened by the (British) Foreign Office, one can see that Pius XII was in touch with the German generals who wanted to overthrow Hitler. It was, in fact, Pacelli who transmitted to London the proposal of the German generals, who wanted to put an end to the Nazi regime.

In his unilateral analysis, Cornwell has not kept in mind either the testimony of U.S. Dr. Robert Kempner, former attorney at the Nuremberg Tribunal concerned with war crimes. After having consulted the documents that were in the control of the Secret Services and of Hitler's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kempner revealed that Pius XII and the Catholic Church sent a great number of protests, both direct and indirect, diplomatic and public, secret and explicit, to which the Nazis never responded. Kempner publicly defended the role and charity endeavors of Pius XII.

ZENIT: Cornwell asserts that Pius XII was anti-Semitic.

GUMPEL: He was so anti-Semitic that the most authorized and important leaders of the Jewish community and State thanked him publicly for everything he did to protect those who were persecuted. I would advise anyone who doesn't believe me to read the ninth

and tenth volumes of the "Minutes and Documents of the Holy See Relative to the Second World War," where all the testimonies of Jews saved from persecution, thanks to Pope Pacelli's role, are found. I don't think there is a public figure in the world who has received so many expressions of gratitude and recognition by the Jewish community as Pius XII.

ZENIT: The book, "Hitler's Pope," describes Pius XII as the expression of a closed, retrograde, authoritarian Church.

GUMPEL: Few know that Pius XII was the real architect and promoter of Vatican Council II. He was the one who created the Commission that was to prepare the sessions, but the situation had not matured and Pacelli was already ill. In any event, suffice it to read the Council's minutes to discover that, after Sacred Scripture, Pius XII is the most quoted author. In his encyclicals and addresses he focused on all the problems that would later be addressed by Vatican Council II.

MOST OF ROME'S JEWS WERE SAVED FROM HITLER'S FINAL SOLUTION LOR

Interview with Nicolaus Kunkel, former German army officer, on Pius XII's efforts to save Italian Jews

The following is a translation of an interview that Mr Nikolaus Kunkel, a witness to Pius XII's actions to save Roman Jews during the Second World War, gave to the German Catholic News Agency (KNA) on 7 November 2000.

Now 80 years old, Mr Kunkel was an officer at the headquarters of the military governor of Rome. He directly witnessed the SS round-up of the Jews and the fact that the majority of them were saved by taking refuge in the Vatican. After the war Kunkel worked as a bank manager. A lieutenant at the time, he remembers those dramatic days at the end of 1943 when the SS wanted to take advantage of the transition of power from Mussolini to Badoglio to carry out "the final solution to the Jewish question" in Rome too. The victims of Hitler's racist policies were able, for the most part, to take refuge in the Vatican thanks to Pius XII's orders and thus to escape the fate intended for them.

KNA: Mr Kunkel, on 10 September 1943, after the Badoglio government broke with the Rome-Berlin Axis, the Wehrmacht occupied the Italian capital. The war diary of the supreme command of the armed forces says in this regard: "The Wehrmacht will take care of protecting Vatican City". The 28 June 1964 edition of *L'Osservatore della Domenica* quotes Albrecht von Kessel, collaborator of Ernst von Weizsäcker, German ambassador to the Vatican, according to whom Hitler had always discussed the possibility of taking the Pope prisoner and deporting him to the German Reich. Verbatim: "If the Pope were to oppose this measure, there was even the possibility that he would be killed 'while trying to escape'". What is your recollection?

Kunkel: For the duration of my time in Rome, a good nine months, all of us officials were convinced that any day the order could arrive: "Occupy the Vatican". In this event practically speaking, to save time we had internally prepared a "mob plan", which of course is not found in the war diary. I am sure that the Vatican also considered this danger. Hitler's volatile nature made it realistic.

KNA: The fact that Pope Pius XII also saw this risk suggests that he had already prepared a resignation statement, if he were taken prisoner. It probably read like this: "They can only arrest Cardinal Pacelli, not the Pope".

Kunkel: Fortunately it did not happen, but the risk was there.

KNA: Were there contacts between the German military governor of Rome, Luftwaffe Major General Rainer Stahel, and the Vatican?

Kunkel: There were many. The Vatican's official contact with us was Fr Pankratius Pfeifer, the Superior General of the Salvatorians, who often dealt with the general, but also with the SS and the police. The so-called internal security of Rome was actually in the hands of the police, who were guided by the SS and by Kappler.

KNA: Who really held the power? Was Kappler under the military governor?

Kunkel: *De iure* yes, but *de facto* the SS was a state within the state. Therefore, yes, Kappler was in communication with the general, but in reality the SS led their own life and we did not know what went on within the SS hierarchy. In security questions, the SS more or less gave the orders in collaboration with the Italian Fascist police....

KNA: So the police forces who had not changed sides with Badoglio ...

Kunkel: Yes, and that played a considerable role. While Badoglio had joined the Allies, Marshal Graziani, Mussolini's War Minister, still took his cue from the Germans.

KNA: A month and a half after the occupation of Rome, 16 October 1943, the SS ordered a round-up of Jews. Was General Stahel, as military governor, informed of the round-up? Could he have prevented it?

Kunkel: Around mid-October there was a rumour that a special SS unit would be sent to the city and lodged at a small hotel near Piazza Barberini. The unit's task would be to deport the Jews. Italy already had "racial laws" by the end of the 1930s; however, they were applied with great tolerance. It seems that in Rome there was already a sort of ghetto. When this rumour proved to be true, General Stahel summoned and informed the officers of divisions 1A, 1B and 1C, saying that he was totally opposed to the operation. A few weeks after the beginning of a new collaboration with the Italians under the direction of Graziani, a deportation of Roman Jews would have caused ill-will and unrest among the Roman people. We sensed that this was not the general's whole opinion—which lay deeper!—but this statement stressing public order was a good explanation. The general continued saying that to stop this operation he would have to seek allies, above all in Berlin. To this end, Ernst von Weizsäcker, the German ambassador to the Vatican, would have to help. In fact, von Weizsäcker had a reputation as a cautious enemy of the Nazi regime. The general sent me to the ambassador with a sealed letter. I did not read it, but the general told me that in the letter he asked the ambassador to do all he could in Berlin to revoke the measure.

I recall that when I went to von Weizsäcker I waited in an ante-room and became angry because no one offered me a chair. The ambassador left the room and shortly after returned with the letter, this time sealed by him. He asked me to give the letter back to the general and tell him that this time he "unfortunately could not be helpful". I remember this phrase perfectly. When I gave him back the letter, the general spoke—cautiously—in a very detached way about the ambassador. After this he telephoned Himmler, but I cannot say anything for sure about that.

KNA: Roman Jews were rounded up on 16 October. That same day the rector of Santa Maria dell'Anima, Bishop Alois Hudal, and Fr Pankratius Pfeifer called on the general and gave him the "clear impression" that the Pope would turn to world public opinion if these round-ups were not immediately stopped. The next day, 17 October, the order came from Himmler to stop.

Kunkel: We had the impression that the SS had planned an action, but it reached a dead end and became public. Today we know that about 1,000 Jews were arrested. In our opinion, most Roman Jews had got wind of the imminent SS action because of delays in the preparations and so many of them were saved.

KNA: Of about 8,000 Roman Jews, then, 7,000 were saved?

Kunkel: We were certain that a large number of them were able to take refuge in Vatican buildings, which are numerous in Rome. In fact, the persecuted were able to take refuge in a relatively simple way.

KNA: 7,486 hid in the Vatican itself ...

Kunkel: I don't know the number.

KNA: In practice, how did it work? How were these Jews saved?

Kunkel: Probably by entering primarily from St Peter's Square. The other parts of the Vatican, with their high walls, are not accessible, while in St Peter's Square there were only two German guards on the border between Italy and Vatican City, to prevent German soldiers from entering Vatican territory in uniform. Civilians could freely cross this line.

KNA: Was this border between St Peter's Square and the city of Rome marked in any way?

Kunkel: No. As it is today, there was just a curved line marked between the colonnades. Our guards patrolled along this line.

KNA: Certainly, what Bishop Hudal and Fr Pfeifer said to General Stahel is worth noting: if the round-ups of the Jews had been carried out, Pope Pius XII would have vigorously protested and would have pressured Himmler to stop the action!

Kunkel: That was how it seemed to us at the time. We had the impression that the SS action had been delayed until most Jews had reached safety. We considered it a success that only 1,000 of the 8,000 or 9,000 or so Jews were arrested by the SS. Today, of course, one looks above all at the 1,000 victims; at the time we saw the 7,000 who did not become victims and were saved.

But many people, institutions and events probably contributed to this rescue. By the way, a few days after the round-up and despite his poor health, General Stahel—an Old Catholic—was transferred to the eastern front.

KNA: And now the decisive question: do you think that a more vigorous protest from Pope Pius XII would have saved more Jews in Rome, Italy and occupied Europe?

Kunkel: At the time I spoke about this with my immediate superior, Major Böhm, a Protestant from Hamburg. We were both of the opinion that, faced with Hitler's unpredictability, any action directed to world public opinion by the Pope would have been harmful.

KNA: In his play *The Deputy*, Rolf Hochhuth expressed the opinion that Pius XII should have made a blistering protest. Since the Pope did not do this, he is guilty of a grave omission.

Kunkel: It is easy to speak after the fact. In any case, we who were on the staff of the

German military governor of Rome were of the opinion that taking a vigorous stand would have had negative consequences.

KNA: Would the Supreme Southern Commander, Field Marshal Albert Kesselring, with whom Pope Pius XII was in contact, have had the power to stop the round-up of the Jews?

Kunkel: No. The power of the SS was so great that the *Wehrmacht*—to which Kesselring belonged—could not have opposed it. That would have taken a successful 20 July!

KNA: In your opinion, can Pius XII be reproached for any of his actions?

Kunkel: Pius XII was in the most difficult political situation in which a man can find himself. I recall a conversation with a Jesuit, Fr Otto Faller, concerning Germany's war on two fronts. He said to me: think that the Pope also fought a war on two fronts—against communism on one side and against Nazism on the other. This refers to the general situation at the time. As for your question: considering the circumstances, no one can reproach Pius XII for his actions. If he had spoken out more strongly, it would certainly have provoked unpleasant reactions.

KNA: Might he eventually have been arrested?

Kunkel: Yes, there was also that possibility.

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THE GOOD SAMARITAN: JEWISH PRAISE FOR POPE PIUS XII **Dimitri Cavalli**

Inside the Vatican has given considerable space in its pages to coverage of the fierce debate over the wartime role of Pope Pius XII and his alleged "silence" in the face of the Nazi persecution of the Jews (see particularly our June 1997 and our October 1999 issues). We will continue to do so as long as the debate rages. The article we print here brings together a considerable amount of previously scattered evidence for how Jews during Pius's lifetime viewed Pius's conduct. Reading Cavalli's piece, it is striking to see how different the general Jewish opinion of Pius XII was in the years during and immediately following the war from what it is today. This prompts a fundamental question: Were the Jews who praised and thanked Pius after the war all mistaken or insincere, or are the attacks on Pius today unfair?—The Editor

During World War II, many Jews around the world had the chance to observe Pope Pius XII's conduct. They listened to his every word, and scrutinized his every action. Instead of seeing "Hitler's Pope," most Jews concluded that Pius XII's public statements were directed against the Nazis, and that he and his subordinates in many Nazi-occupied and Axis countries were trying to save Jewish lives. The many extraordinary and eloquent tributes that the Pope once received from Jews show that the allegations that he was a Nazi collaborator and indifferent toward the extermination of Jews would have seem completely unjustified and unjust to those who closely following his career.

Allegations that Pope Pius XII was pro-Nazi are often supported by his time in Germany from 1917 to 1929 as the papal nuncio and his direct role, as Secretary of State, in negotiating the Vatican's concordat with Germany in 1933. These facts were universally known when Eugenio Cardinal Pacelli was elected Pope on March 2, 1939. How did Jews around the world react to his election? Were they concerned by his former ties to Germany?

In a March 6, 1939 editorial, "Leadership for Peace," the *Palestine Post* in Jerusalem said: "Pius XII has clearly shown that he intends to carry on the late Pope's [Pius XI] work for freedom and peace... we remember that he must have had a large part to play in the recent Papal opposition to pernicious race theories and certain aspects of totalitarianism..."

In praising Cardinal Pacelli's election, the *Jewish Chronicle* in London on March 10, quoted an anti-Nazi speech he delivered in Lourdes in April 1935 and the hostile statements expressed about him in the Nazi press. "It is interesting to recall... on January 22 [1939], the *Voelkischer Beobachter* published pictures of Cardinal Pacelli and other Church dignitaries beneath a collective heading of 'Agitators in the Vatican against Fascism and National Socialism,'" the *Jewish Chronicle* noted.

Also on March 10, the *Canadian Jewish Chronicle* commended the College of Cardinals for resisting Nazi attempts to influence the election and prevent Cardinal Pacelli from becoming Pope. "The plot to pilfer the Ring of Fisherman has gone up in white smoke," the editorial quipped.

Many Jewish organizations also expressed their enthusiasm for the new Pope. According to the *Jewish Chronicle* in London (March 10), the Vatican received congratulatory messages from "the Anglo-Jewish Community, the Synagogue Council of America, the Canadian Jewish Congress, and the Polish Rabbinical Council."

Pius XII's decision to appoint Luigi Cardinal Maglione as the Vatican's new Secretary of State also brought favorable reactions. The March 16, 1939 *Zionist Review* in London said that the Cardinal's appointment "confirms the view that the new Pope means to conduct an anti-Nazi and anti-Fascist policy."

Certainly, such statements made by Jewish newspapers and organizations show they considered the newly elected Pope Pius XII a friend of democracy and peace, and an enemy of racism and totalitarianism. Cardinal Pacelli's role in negotiating the concordat with the Nazis did not cause any concern. Instead, many Jews cited his anti-Nazi speeches, and his role as Vatican Secretary of State, which helped produce the 1937 anti-Nazi encyclical, *Mit brennender Sorge*, and numerous protests against the persecution of the Catholic Church in Germany.

Less than two months after World War II broke out, on October 27, Pius XII issued his first encyclical, *Summi Pontificatus*. On the same day, the New York-based *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, the equivalent of the *Associated Press*, reported that, "the

unqualified condemnation which Pope Pius XII heaped on totalitarian, racist and materialistic theories of government in his encyclical *Summi Pontificatus* caused a profound stir... Although it had been expected that the Pope would attack ideologies hostile to the Catholic Church, few observers had expected so outspoken a document..." In a November 9, 1939 editorial, "Endowed with Reason," the *American Israelite* in Cincinnati also discussed the encyclical. "In decrying totalitarianism, Pope Pius XII called the individual the end and the state the means of bringing out the fundamental equality of men because men are endowed with reason," the editorial said. "This concept of democracy is reiterated in the Pope's Encyclical, stressing again the inviolability of the human person as a sacred being..."

In January 1940, the United Jewish Appeal for Refugees and Overseas Needs donated \$125,000 to the Vatican in order to assist its efforts on behalf of all victims of racial persecution. On January 19, the *Jewish Ledger* in Hartford, Connecticut described the United Jewish Appeal's gift as an "eloquent gesture," which "should prove an important step in the direction of cementing the bonds of sympathy and understanding" between Catholics and Jews. An account of how the money was spent is in the Vatican's official wartime documents, *Actes et documents du Saint Siege relatifs a la Seconde Guerre Mondiale*, (Vol. VI, pp. 282-283.)

On January 26, 1940, the *Jewish Advocate* in Boston reported, "The Vatican radio this week broadcast an outspoken denunciation of German atrocities in Nazi [occupied] Poland, declaring they affronted the moral conscience of mankind." Exiled Polish Cardinal August Hlond of Gnezo and Poznan had given the Vatican detailed reports about the Nazi persecution of the Church in Poland. On the Pope's orders, Vatican Radio broadcast the cardinal's reports. The front-page story quoted one Vatican Radio broadcast as saying, "Jews and Poles are being herded into separate ghettos, hermetically sealed and pitifully inadequate for the economic subsistence of the millions designed to live there." This broadcast was also important because it gave independent confirmation of media reports about Nazi atrocities, which were previously dismissed as Allied propaganda.

Also, on January 26, the *Canadian Jewish Chronicle* published a brief item about Jacob Freedman, a Boston tailor. Mr. Freedman was concerned about the fate of his sister and nephews in German-occupied Poland. He wrote the State Department and the Red Cross, but they were unable to provide any information. Mr. Freedman then sought Pope Pius XII's assistance.

Several months later, Cardinal Maglione informed Mr. Freedman that his family were alive and well in Warsaw. "I don't know the words to express what I feel, that they should take an interest in us with all the other things in the world to worry them," said Mr. Freedman. "I think it's the finest, most wonderful thing." According to Pinchas Lapide's 1967 book, *Three Popes and the Jews*, the Vatican Information Office helped tens of thousands of Jews locate missing relatives in Europe.

On March 14, 1940, the *Jewish Chronicle* in London commented on Pope Pius XII's conditions for a "just and honorable peace," which he articulated in his 1939 Christmas

message. The *Chronicle* said that the Pope's conditions, especially the protection of racial minorities, were a "welcome feature," and praised him for standing up for "rights of the common man."

Also, in March, Italy's anti-Semitic laws went into effect, and many Jews were dismissed from the government, universities, and other professions. In response, Pius XII appointed several displaced Jewish scholars, including geographer Prof. Roberto Almagia, to posts in the Vatican Library. The March 29 *Kansas City Jewish Chronicle* said that the Pope's actions showed "his disapproval of the dastardly anti-Semitic decrees."

On April 29, 1941, a group of Jewish refugees interned at an Italian concentration camp thanked Pius XII after being visited by Bishop Francesco Borgognini-Duca, the papal nuncio in Italy. The prisoners wrote that the nuncio's visit gave them "new courage to go on living," and they described the Pope as a "revered personality who has stood up for the rights of all afflicted and powerless people." (*Actes*, VIII, pp. 178-179).

On January 2, 1942, the front page of the *California Jewish Voice* published a report on the Pope's 1941 Christmas address. "Religious persecution and oppression of minorities must have no place in the world of the future, declared Pope Pius XII in his annual Christmas Eve message," the article said.

By early 1942, the Nazis began to implement their plans to exterminate the Jews. The Vatican had no practical way of bringing these plans to a halt, but sought to assist endangered Jews and other victims on a case-by-case basis. This assistance ranged from actively opposing the deportations to meeting the material and spiritual needs of refugees. For example, on April 14, 1942, Rabbi Naftali Adler and Dr. Max Pereles, the representatives of thousands of Jewish refugees interned at the Ferramonti concentration camp in southern Italy, sent a letter of thanks to the Pope, who sent "an abundant supply of clothing and linen" to the children at the camp, and took care of the prisoners' other needs. "This noble and generous gift proves anew what the whole world knows and admires that Your Holiness is... also the paternal guardian and promoter of the ideal of humanity for all mankind," they wrote. (*Actes*, VIII, pp. 505-507).

In 1942, Croatia's Jews were being brutally persecuted by the Nazi-installed dictatorship. On August 4, Chief Rabbi Miroslav Freiberger of Zagreb, Croatia's capital, sought more assistance from Pius XII. Already, the Vatican's unofficial diplomatic representative in Croatia, Msgr. Joseph Marcone, who was acting on Cardinal Maglione's instructions, and Archbishop Alois Stepinac opposed the anti-Jewish persecutions. In his letter, Chief Rabbi Freiberger appreciated "the limitless goodness that the representatives of the Holy See and the leaders of the Church showed to our poor brothers." (*Actes*, VIII, p. 611). Throughout the war, the Chief Rabbi continued to express his gratitude to the Vatican for helping Croatian Jews.

The deportations of French Jews also began in late July 1942. Msgr. Valerio Valeri, the papal nuncio in France, protested the deportations with Marshall Henri Philippe Petain and Prime Minister Pierre Laval in August. The nuncio's intervention became publicly known by the end of the month. On August 28, the *California Jewish Voice* said, "Pope

Pius XII has asked the Papal Nuncio at Vichy to protest to the Laval Government against 'the inhuman arrests and deportations' of Jews in France... Previously, reports from Geneva had indicated that the Pope had tried, though vainly, to use his good offices in Slovakia to prevent deportations and other cruelties."

The *Voice's* account is confirmed by the *Actes*. On October 31, 1941, Cardinal Maglione had given Msgr. Valeri and Pierre Cardinal Gerlier of Lyon a blank check to "tone down" the practical application of the anti-Semitic laws, which would include any deportations. In April 1942, the Vatican protested the deportations of Slovak Jews with a note to the Slovak Government.

Although Msgr. Valeri actually made the protest, the Jewish press understood that he was acting on behalf of Pius XII. In a September II editorial, the *Jewish Chronicle* in London said, "The Pope's action is also a striking affirmation of the dictum of one of the Pope's predecessors that no true Christian can be an anti-Semite..."

In his 1942 Christmas message, the Pope condemned the treatment of "hundreds of thousands who, without any fault on their own, sometimes only by reason of their nationality or race, are marked down for death or a progressive extinction." The Pope's defenders argue that this was a clear reference to the Holocaust. The Pope's detractors insist that he didn't go far enough, and should have condemned the Nazis by name. But the Nazis understood the Pope very clearly. "In a manner never known before the Pope has repudiated the National Socialist New European Order," complained a January 22, 1943 report by the Reich Central Security Office. "Here he is virtually accusing the German people of injustice towards the Jews, and makes himself the mouthpiece of the Jewish war criminals." (Anthony Rhodes, *The Vatican in the Age of Dictators* (1973), pp. 272-273). I was unable to find any references to the Pope's address in the many Jewish newspapers that I examined. However, in a January 20, 1943 letter to Msgr. Arthur Hughes, the apostolic delegate in Egypt, Chaim Barlas, the Jewish Agency's Turkish Representative, wrote, "The highly humanitarian attitude of His Saintety [meaning, Holiness] expressing His indignation against racial persecutions, was a source of comfort for our brethren." (*Actes*, IX, p. 90). If Pius XII was "silent" in the literal sense of the word, then the Reich Central Security Office and Chaim Barlas could not have made these conclusions.

In late 1942, Chief Rabbi Isaac Herzog of Jerusalem sought the Pope's intervention to rescue Jews from the Nazis. On February 12, 1943, the Vatican's reply to Chief Rabbi Herzog was noted on the front page of the *California Jewish Voice*. "The Vatican this week cabled Chief Rabbi Herzog, assuring him that it is doing everything possible for all the victims of Nazi persecution, including the Jews," the article said. *The Jewish Chronicle* in London and the *Australian Jewish News* also reported the Vatican's assurance to the Chief Rabbi.

On April 16, 1943, the *Australian Jewish News* published a brief article about Cardinal Gerlier, who had strongly opposed the deportations of French Jews, and was sheltering Jewish children. The article quoted the cardinal as saying that he was obeying Pius XII's instructions by continuing to oppose France's anti-Semitic measures.

In his June 2 address to the College of Cardinals, Pope Pius XII spoke up again. He referred to persons "tormented as they are, because of their nationality or their race..."

delivered, without any fault on their part, to measures of extermination." The July 16, 1943 *Jewish Chronicle* in London published a slightly different version of these words on its front page under the title, "The Pope's Solitude."

On September 24, Alex Easterman, the British representative of the World Jewish Congress, contacted Msgr. William Godfrey, the apostolic delegate in London. Easterman informed him that about 4,000 Jewish refugees from Croatia were safely evacuated to an island in the Adriatic Sea. "I feel sure that efforts of your Grace and of the Holy See have brought about this fortunate result," Easterman wrote. (*Actes*, IX, pp. 488-489).

After Benito Mussolini's fall from power, the new Italian government surrendered to the Allies in September 1943. German troops occupied Italy, including Rome, in order to stop the Allied offensive. During the occupation of Rome, the Nazis threatened to arrest Roman Jews unless their leaders paid them 50 kilograms of gold. When the Roman Jews were able to raise only 42 kilograms of gold, they turned to the Pope, who agreed to provide the balance. Meanwhile, the Jews raised the balance from ordinary Catholics and informed the Vatican that the Pope's contribution was not needed. On October 28, 1943, however, the *Palestine Post* in Jerusalem noted Pius XII's offer on the front page under the headline, "The Pope's Gift to the Jews."

On October 16, the Nazis also seized about 1,000 Jews and deported them to Auschwitz. On October 29 *Jewish Chronicle* in London reported the Vatican's response to the arrests: "The Vatican has made strong representations to the German Government and the German High Command in Italy against the persecution of Jews in Nazi-occupied Italy..."

This account of the Vatican's actions was exactly correct. On Pius XII's orders, Cardinal Maglione made an immediate protest with Germany's Ambassador. Bishop Alois Hudal, the Rector of the German Catholic Church in Rome, protested the arrests of Jews with the German Military Governor of Rome. Along with the Vatican's protests, 4,700 Jews disappeared into Rome's convents, monasteries and the Vatican itself. The remaining 2,300 Jews were able to find shelter elsewhere because Vatican protests brought the round-ups to an end.

By 1943, the Vatican's many rescue efforts on behalf of Jews were being universally acknowledged. In the fall of 1943, the Jewish communities of Chile, Uruguay, and Bolivia sent letters to Pope Pius XII, and thanked him for assisting Jews (*Actes*, IX, pp. 498, 501-502, and 567).

The 1943-1944 *American Jewish Yearbook* said that Pius XII "took an unequivocal stand against the oppression of Jews throughout Europe." In his February 18, 1944 letter to Msgr. Amleto Cicognani, the apostolic delegate in Washington, D.C., Rabbi Maurice Perlzweig, the political director of the World Jewish Congress, wrote that "the repeated interventions of the Holy Father on behalf of Jewish Communities in Europe has evoked the profoundest sentiments of appreciation and gratitude from Jews throughout the world." (*Actes*, X, p. 140).

Two important Jewish leaders who worked with the Vatican to save Jews also expressed similar sentiments. "The people of Israel will never forget what His Holiness and his illustrious delegates, inspired by the eternal principles of religion which form the very foundations of true civilization, are doing for our unfortunate brothers and sisters in this most tragic hour of history, which is living proof of divine Providence in this world," Chief Rabbi Herzog declared on February 28. (*Actes*, X, p. 292). In his April 7 letter to the papal nuncio in Romania, Chief Rabbi Alexander Shafran of Bucharest wrote, "It is not easy for us to find the right words to express the warmth and consolation we experienced because of the concern of the Supreme Pontiff, who offered a large sum to relieve the sufferings of deported Jews... The Jews of Romania will never forget these facts of historic importance..." (*Actes*, X, pp. 291-292).

In June 1944, two separate events helped establish the Pope's reputation as a rescuer of Jews, at least temporarily. When the Allies liberated Rome, thousands of Jews came out of their hiding places, and told the world of their salvation by the Vatican. On June 25, the Pope openly protested the deportations of Hungarian Jews. The many tributes to Pius XII began in July. "It is gradually being revealed that Jews have been sheltered within the walls of the Vatican during the German occupation of Rome," reported the July 7 *Jewish News* in Detroit. A July 14 editorial in the *Congress Weekly*, the official journal of the American Jewish Congress, added that the Vatican also provided Jewish refugees with kosher food.

Also on July 14, *American Hebrew* in New York published an interview with Chief Rabbi Israel Zolli of Rome. "The Vatican has always helped the Jews and the Jews are very grateful for the charitable work of the Vatican, all done without distinction of race," Rabbi Zolli said. After the war, Rabbi Zolli converted to Catholicism, which brought him much severe criticism from some Jews. Dr. Zolli's conversion was widely attributed to his gratitude for what the Pope did for Jews. In his 1954 memoirs, *Before the Dawn*, however, Dr. Zolli strongly denied this assertion. Instead, he claimed to have witnessed a vision of Christ, who called him to the faith.

A week later on July 21, the Vatican received telegrams from the National Jewish Welfare Board and the World Jewish Congress. The National Jewish Welfare Board expressed its gratitude to the Pope for "the aid and protection given to so many Italian Jews by the Vatican..." (*Actes*, X, pp. 358-359). The World Jewish Congress also acknowledged the Vatican's "noble humanitarian work" on behalf of Hungarian Jews. (*Actes*, X, pp. 359).

The deportations of Hungarian Jews horrified the Allied and neutral nations. The American Jewish Committee and other Jewish groups organized a rally in Manhattan's Madison Square Park on July 31 to mobilize public opinion against the deportations. In his address, Judge Joseph Proskauer, the Committee's president, declared, "We have heard... what a great part the Holy Father has played in the salvation of the refugees in Italy, and we know from sources that must be credited that this great Pope has reached forth his mighty and sheltering hand to help the oppressed of Hungary." (Speech obtained from American Committee Library in Manhattan).

During the following months, Rabbi Stephen Wise, the president of the American Jewish Congress, Chief Rabbi Joseph Hertz of the British Empire, composer Irving Berlin, Congressman Emmanuel Celler of Brooklyn, the Emergency Committee to Save the Jews of Europe, the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada, and the World Agudas Organization also lauded Pius XII for helping endangered Jews. At the time, Rabbi Wise also condemned Christian indifference toward the extermination of Jews.

With Rome liberated, the Pope frequently greeted Allied soldiers. During one meeting, he blessed a Jewish soldier from Palestine in Hebrew. In the *Congress Weekly* (October 20, 1944), Elias Gilner found great significance in this event. Gilner wrote that the Pope's blessing "becomes a memorable act, a far-flung message of good-will, an expression of the Christian spirit at its highest." Gilner added that Pius XII by this blessing also began a "new course" in Catholic-Jewish relations.

The tributes to Pope Pius XII from Jews continued after the war in Europe ended. On April 22, 1945, Moshe Sharrett, the future Foreign Minister and Prime Minister of Israel sent a report of his meeting with the Pope to the Executive of the Jewish Agency. Sharrett wrote that "my first duty was to thank him, and through him, the Catholic Church, on behalf of the Jewish public, for all they had done in the various countries to rescue Jews, to save children, and Jews in general." (Lapide, pp. 225-226)

On October 11, the World Jewish Congress donated \$20,000 to Vatican charities. According to the *New York Times* (October 12, 1945), the gift was "made in recognition of the work of the Holy See in rescuing Jews from Fascist and Nazi persecution." Although the current leaders of the World Jewish Congress have a much different view of the Vatican's wartime actions, they never retracted that recognition.

During a St. Louis conference on the plight of displaced Jewish refugees on March 17, 1946, William Rosenwald, the chairman of the United Jewish Appeal for Refugees, Overseas Needs and Palestine, said, "I wish to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Pope Pius for his appeal in behalf of the victims of war and oppression. He provided aid for Jews in Italy and intervened in behalf of refugees to lighten their burden." (*New York Times*, March 18, 1946.) The previous week, the Pope granted Mr. Rosenwald an audience. According to Mr. Rosenwald, the Pope said that Holocaust survivors and Jewish refugees should be allowed to resettle in the United States.

In an article for *Commentary* (November 1950), French scholar and Holocaust survivor Leon Poliakov discussed the Vatican's conduct during the war. Poliakov suggested that the Vatican during the Holocaust retreated to its "medieval tradition" of protecting Jews from state persecution. "There is no doubt that secret instructions went out from the Vatican urging the national churches to intervene in favor of the Jews by every possible means," Poliakov wrote. In fact, according to Volumes VI, VIII, IX, and X of the *Actes*, these instructions were sent to the Vatican's many diplomatic representatives.

Still, Poliakov was troubled because he believed that Pius XII's public statements were too vague. But Poliakov conceded the argument that "public protests would have brought

no help to the victims, and might have produced contrary effects." He cited the tragic case of Holland where the protests against the deportations of Jews by the Dutch Catholic bishops in 1942 led to the arrest of Catholic Jews, who were previously spared for deportation by the Nazis.

In 1955, the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra, which was composed of Jewish refugees from many nations, toured Italy. The Orchestra performed a concert at the Vatican on May 26, 1955. According to the *Jerusalem Post* (May 29, 1955), "Conductor Paul Klecki had requested that the Orchestra on its first visit to Italy play for the Pope as a gesture of gratitude for the help his Church had given to all those persecuted by Nazi Fascism."

In 1957, the Pope received a delegation from the American Jewish Committee. The *New York Times* on June 29, 1957 reported that the Committee's representatives described the Pope as a "great friend" in the battle against racism and anti-Semitism in the United States. The Pope also praised the Committee's work, and issued a strong statement condemning anti-Semitism.

Pope Pius XII died on October 8, 1958. Many Jewish organizations and newspapers around the world mourned his passing, and recalled his wartime efforts to rescue Jews. At the United Nations, Golda Meir, Israel's Foreign Minister, said, "When fearful martyrdom came to our people in the decade of Nazi terror, the voice of the Pope was raised for the victims. The life of our times was enriched by a voice speaking out on the great moral truths above the tumult of daily conflict." The *Zionist Record* (October 17) in South Africa published Meir's moving eulogy along with tributes from Jewish organizations to the late Pope.

"Adherents of all creeds and parties will recall how Pius XII faced the responsibilities of his exalted office with courage and devotion," declared the *Jewish Chronicle* in London on October 10. "Before, during, and after the Second World War, he constantly preached the message of peace. Confronted by the monstrous cruelties of Nazism, Fascism, and Communism, he repeatedly proclaimed the virtues of humanity and compassion."

In the *Canadian Jewish Chronicle* (October 17), Rabbi J. Stern recalled that Pius XII "made it possible for thousands of Jewish victims of Nazism and Fascism to be hidden away..." In the November 6 edition of the *Jewish Post* in Winnipeg, William Zukerman, the former *American Hebrew* columnist, wrote that no other leader "did more to help the Jews in their hour of greatest tragedy, during the Nazi occupation of Europe, than the late Pope."

Representatives of the World Jewish Congress, American Jewish Congress, American Jewish Committee, Synagogue Council of America, New York Board of Rabbis, the Anti-Defamation League, Massachusetts Board of Rabbis, Rabbinical Council of America, National Council of Jewish Women, and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations also gracefully eulogized Pope Pius XII. The Chief Rabbis of London, Rome, Jerusalem, France, Egypt, Argentina and many other Jewish newspapers also paid tribute to the late Pope.

How do Pius XII's detractors explain these many statements of praise from Jews? They prefer to ignore them. Any acknowledgment of these tributes immediately undermines the case against him.

Instead, critics always focus on the Pope's "silence" without discussing what he actually said during the war, and how his addresses were received by all sides; insist that the Pope did little or nothing to help Jews escape from the Nazis; exclusively cite authors who attack him while ignoring those who defend him; and assign him sinister motives by using suspicion and a selective interpretation of evidence.

Recently, in *Commentary* (July/August 1999), Prof. Robert Wistrich argued that it is unfair to cite these tributes from Jews because damaging evidence against the Pope was discovered after his death. But that argument ignores the fact that many post-war revelations have been very favorable toward the Pope. In 1946, the Vatican newspaper confirmed that Pius XII in 1940 had acted as an intermediary between a group of German generals who wanted to overthrow Adolf Hitler and the British government. The release of documents from the British Foreign Office years later also confirmed his role in "The Generals' Plot." The 1953 publication of *The Undeclared War* by William Langer and S. Everett Gleason disclosed the Pope's surprising 1941 concession to President Franklin Roosevelt that American Catholics could support the extension of the Lend-Lease program to the Soviet Union.

The conclusions of the first generation of authors critical of the Pope like Rolf Hochhuth, Guenther Lewy, Saul Friedlander and Carlo Falconi were invalidated by the complete publication of the 11 volumes of the *Actes*. Unfortunately, these volumes, which detail the Vatican's relations with all the belligerent governments and assistance given to all the victims of the war, have been either ignored or downplayed by historians and journalists. Many Jewish organizations had no reservations about attacking Father Charles Coughlin, the anti-Semitic radio broadcaster. If these same organizations were actually displeased with Pius XII's actions, as Father John Pawlikoski suggested in *Commonweal* (July 17, 1998), then why did they continue to publicly honor the Pope throughout the war and beyond? How could Jews on six continents have been so tragically mistaken about one man? Could they all have been either blissfully ignorant or extremely disingenuous? Many Catholics have been puzzled by the fact that many of the same Jewish organizations that condemn Pius XII today once never passed up an opportunity to praise him. What could have caused the vast shift in Jewish attitudes toward the late Pope?

Some Catholic writers point to the influence of Rolf Hochhuth's 1963 play, *The Deputy*, which presented the Pope as a cold-blooded Nazi collaborator who did nothing as six million Jews went to their death. However, allegations that the Vatican collaborated with the Nazis did not begin with Hochhuth. While Pius XII was still alive, anti-Catholic authors like Avro Manhattan (*The Vatican in World Politics*, 1949) and Paul Blanshard (*American Freedom and Catholic Power*, 1949) condemned his actions during World War II. Although Manhattan and Blanshard found isolated audiences in some Protestant and fundamentalist Christian circles, many Jews continued to have a favorable impression of the wartime Pope.

Other cultural shifts in society ensured that Hochhuth's demonic portrait would become accepted as conventional wisdom. Shortly after Hochhuth's play made its appearance, the movement known as the New Left marched across college campuses. The New Left was more than a political movement; it was also a cultural movement whose members seized influential positions in the universities, the media and the entertainment industry. The Catholic Church strongly opposed the New Left's social agenda of legal abortion, contraception and sexual promiscuity. Activists needed a weapon to undermine the Catholic Church's moral authority and influence. "The silence of Pius XII" provided such a powerful weapon, and it was used at every possible opportunity. What right would a Church that failed to oppose the mass murder of Jews have to teach morality to anyone? A few years ago, the US Conference of Catholic Bishops criticized US Surgeon General Dr. Jocelyn Elders for her pro-abortion views. Dr. Elders responded by noting the Catholic Church's indifference toward both slavery and the Holocaust.

Unfortunately, Jewish organizations have never sufficiently explained why they changed their minds about the Pope. A clear answer may never be known unless Jewish organizations finally provide honest and convincing explanations after nearly 40 years of evasion.

Could attitudes shift again? It's possible. In the last several years, many Catholic newspapers and magazines have been zealously defending Pius XII's reputation. The Catholic League for Civil and Religious Rights has also been successful in bringing the debate over the Vatican's wartime role into the mainstream media. In his new book, *Never Again: A History' of the Holocaust*, acclaimed Holocaust historian Sir Martin Gilbert identifies the Vatican as one of the European governments that protected Jews. Prof. William Rubinstein's book, *The Myth of Rescue* (1997), which received substantial attention and criticism, argues that the Allies and Vatican could not have saved more Jewish lives. Rubinstein's sobering conclusion that the, "responsibility for the Holocaust lies solely and wholly with Adolf Hitler, the SS and their accomplices, and with no one else," represents a return to reason.

It may take a generation to restore Pope Pius XII's good name. However, more and more people today are recognizing that he acted like a Good Samaritan during World War II. When the Pope failed to prevent the start of the war, he immediately devoted himself to alleviating the physical and spiritual suffering of countless numbers of innocent victims regardless of their race or faith. As the late Father Robert Graham, S.J. wrote, the many tributes the Pope received from Jews around the world are a witness to both his efforts and his character.

(Cavalli is a freelance writer based in New York, with an M.A. from Catholic University. He is grateful to the Rev. Matthew Flood, S.J. of Fordham Prep in the Bronx, New York and to Angelo Sedacca for translating a number of documents from the Actes into English. The Jewish newspapers cited are on microfilm at the New York Public Library's Jewish Division.)

Taken from:

PIUS XII SAVED MORE JEWS THAN SCHINDLER *L'Osservatore Romano*

Interview with Historian Rabbi David Dalin of New York

You have labeled historians who have criticized Pope Pius XII as revisionists. Why?

Today there is a new generation of journalists and experts determined to discredit the documented efforts of Pius XII to save the Jews during the Holocaust. This generation is inspired by Rolf Hochhuth's play "The Vicar", which has no historical value, but levels controversial accusations against this Pope. However, Eugenio Pacelli's detractors ignore or neglect Pinchas Lapide's enlightening study.

[Lapide] was consul general of Israel in Milan and met with many Italian Jews who survived the Holocaust. In his work, Lapide documents how Pius XII worked for the salvation of at least 700,000 from the hands of the Nazis. However, according to another estimate, this figure rises to 860,000.

Why, then, has there been this change in appreciation?

I call today's critics revisionists because they reverse the judgement of history, namely, the recognition given to Pius XII by his contemporaries, among whom is Nobel Prize [winner] Albert Einstein, Chief Rabbi Isaac Herzog of Israel, Prime Ministers Golda Meir and Moshe Sharett; and, in Italy, people like Raffaele Cantoni, who at the time was president of the Italian Union of Jewish Communities. But many articles published at different times in Boston's Jewish Advocate, The Times of London, and The New York Times can also be perused.

What did Pope Pacelli do for the Jews?

We have much documentation, which shows that in no way did he remain silent. What is more, he spoke out loudly against Hitler and almost everyone saw him as an opponent of the Nazi regime. During the German occupation of Rome, Pius XII secretly instructed the Catholic clergy to use all means to save as many human lives as possible.

In this way, he saved thousands of Italian Jews from deportation. While 80% of European Jews died in those years, 80% of Italian Jews were saved. In Rome alone, 155 convents and monasteries gave refuge to some 5,000 Jews. At any given moment, at least 3,000 were saved in the papal residence of Castel Gandolfo, being freed from deportation to German concentration camps.

For nine months, 60 Jews lived with the Jesuits at the Pontifical Gregorian University, and many others were hidden in the basement of the Biblical Institute. Following Pius XII's instructions, risking their own lives, many priests and monks made possible the salvation of hundreds of Jewish lives.

But the Pope never publicly denounced the anti-Semitic laws and persecution of the

Jews

His silence was an effective strategy directed to protecting the greatest possible number of Jews from deportation. An explicit and severe denunciation of the Nazis by the Pope would have been an invitation to reprisals, and would have worsened attitudes toward Jews throughout Europe.

Of course one can ask: What could be worse than the extermination of 6 million Jews? The answer is simple and terribly honest: the killing of hundreds of thousands of other Jews. The revisionist critics of Pius XII know that both Jewish leaders as well as Catholic bishops, who came from occupied countries, advised Pacelli not to protest publicly against the atrocities committed by the Nazis.

We have evidence that, when the bishop of Munster wished to pronounce himself against the persecution of the Jews in Germany, the leaders of the Jewish communities of his diocese begged him not to do so, as it would have caused a harsher repression against them.

Don't you think that the excommunication of Nazis would have helped?

Yes, I would like to think so and deep down I think that at least there should have been an attempt to pronounce a papal excommunication. However, despite these sentiments, the documents suggest that the excommunication of Hitler would have been a merely symbolic gesture.

Would it not have been better than silence?

On the contrary. History teaches that a formal excommunication could have achieved the opposite result. Father Luigi Sturzo and the former chief rabbi of Denmark, for example, were specifically afraid of this. The Nazis themselves interpreted Pius XII's Christmas 1942 address as a clear condemnation of their regime and a demand in favour of Europe's Jews. The anger among the Nazis could have elicited catastrophic reactions for the security and fortune of the papacy itself in the years following the War.

A papal condemnation of the Nazis implied the well-founded and diffused suspicion at the time that Hitler would have sought vengeance in the person of the Pope himself, by attacking the Vatican. Rudolph Rahn, the Nazi ambassador in Rome, confirmed the existence of these plans, which he himself helped to forestall.

In your writings, you propose a new historiography written by Jews on the "Pius XII case". What do you mean?

I think the time has arrived on the Jewish side to get to work on a new reconstruction of the relation between Pius XII and the Holocaust. This reconstruction, closer to the facts, namely, of what Pius XII really did for the Jews, would arrive at diametrically opposite conclusions to the gratuitous ones of John Cornwell's book, "Hitler's Pope".

Pius XII was not Hitler's Pope, but the greatest defender that we Jews have ever had, and precisely at the time when we needed it.

This new work of historiography should be based in the judgement that his

contemporaries made of the efforts, successes and failures of Pius XII, as well as of the way in which the Jews who survived the Holocaust evaluated (or reevaluated) his life and influence in the succeeding decades.

Pope Pacelli was righteous among the nations, who must be recognized for having protected and saved hundreds of thousands of Jews. It is difficult to imagine that so many world Jewish leaders, in such different continents, could have been mistaken or confused when it came to praising the Pope's conduct during the War. Their gratitude to Pius XII lasted a long time, and it was genuine and profound.

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