

Did Pope Pius XII Help the Jews?

by

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Part I - Overview

Did Pius XII help Jews?

In his book *Adolf Hitler* (Doubleday, 1976, Volume II, p. 865), John Toland wrote: "The Church, under the Pope's guidance [Pius XII], had (by June, 1943) already saved the lives of more Jews than all other churches, religious institutions and rescue organizations combined, and was presently hiding thousands of Jews in monasteries, convents and Vatican City itself. ...The British and Americans, despite lofty pronouncements, had not only avoided taking any meaningful action but gave sanctuary to few persecuted Jews."

It is historically correct to say that Pope Pius XII, through his bishops, nuncios, and local priests, mobilized Catholics to assist Jews, Allied soldiers, and prisoners of war. There is a considerable body of scholarly opinion that is convinced Pius XII is responsible for having saved 500,000 to 800,000 Jewish lives. In addition, one cannot ignore the views of those Jewish scholars who have defended and praised Pius XII. They include, among others, Pinchas Lapide, Jeno Levai, and Dr. Joseph Lichten, as well as Historian Michael Tagliacozzo, Sir Martin Gilbert and Rabbi David Dalin whose current scholarly contributions in defense of the Pope must be added to the work of past writers.

The following statement by German leaders is revealing: "The Pope has repudiated the National Socialist New European Order... and makes himself the mouthpiece of the Jewish war criminals." During World War II, the Pope provided false identification papers to potential victims of the Nazis and the Fascists. He ordered Vatican buildings, churches, convents and monasteries to open their doors and find hiding places for Jews and other refugees. Israeli Foreign Minister Golda Meir stated: "When fearful martyrdom came to our people in the decade of Nazi terror, the voice of the Pope was raised for the victims." Nor can Albert Einstein's statement be ignored: "Only the Church stood squarely across the path of Hitler's campaign for suppressing the truth." (*Time Magazine*, 1940)

History records Pope Pius XII's efforts to avoid World War II. His words (August 24, 1939) were prophetic: "Nothing is lost by peace. Everything may be lost by war." According to the *New York Times*, months before the war, Pope Pius XII invited the Prime

Ministers and Foreign Ministers of five European countries (Germany, Great Britain, France, Italy and Poland) to confer in Vatican City. He suggested that the meeting be held as soon as possible. He would open the first session in person and would put his palace and staff at the disposal of the plenipotentiaries. He would take no part personally but, if needed, he would be at the disposal of the conference through his Secretary of State as counselor and conciliator. He further suggested that the aim of the conference would be to settle amicably the German-Polish dispute and eventually to begin the settlement of other problems.

The article, by Jules Sauerwein, concluded: “Until now the Pope’s proposal has been kept closely secret. That he has made it, is a mark of his high intelligence and exceptional courage. He believes it his duty to make this proposal so as to save Europe from war, even though he is not sure he will succeed.” The *New York Times* editorial evaluated the political situation: “As Cardinal Pacelli, Pope Pius XII showed himself to be so devoted a friend of peace and so tireless an emissary of better understanding that it is wholly natural that he should now seek to use the authority of his great office to avert the threat of war in Europe.”

Honest students of history must look skeptically at those accounts of Pope Pius XII’s life which ignore relevant facts or rely on dubious or tainted sources (such as Soviet and Nazi propaganda) to make their case. Rather one can find persuasive evidence—in the form of news reports, testimony at the Nuremberg trials, documents in foreign archives, and research of reputable Jewish, Catholic, and other historians—that the Catholic Church consistently assisted Jewish victims of Nazi anti-Semitism. This fact is attested perhaps most strongly by the countless Jewish religious leaders, scholars, statesmen, journalists, and other dignitaries who have praised Pope Pius XII for his courage, compassion, and leadership.

The Holy See's position regarding the attempt to exterminate the Jewish people, with the consequent murder of millions of Jews, is that the “Shoah” was an immense tragedy. This was affirmed by Pope John Paul II at the Yad Vashem Monument on March 23, 2000, and confirmed by His Holiness Benedict XVI at the Auschwitz extermination camp on May 28, 2006. The memory of those terrible events must be a warning to eliminate conflicts and respect the legitimate rights of all peoples.

Pius XII deserves to be recognized by Yad Vashem for having saved the lives of persecuted Jews. When he learned about the Nazi round-up on October 16, 1943, he immediately sent an official, personal protest through the papal Secretary of State Cardinal Luigi Maglione to German Ambassador Ernst von Weizsäcker.

According to Jewish historian Michael Tagliacozzo, documents clearly prove that, in the early hours of the morning of October 16, 1943, Pius XII was informed of the round-up of the Jews in Rome and he immediately had German Ambassador von Weizsäcker called and ordered State Secretary Luigi Maglione to energetically protest the Jews' arrest, asking that similar actions be stopped. If this did not happen, the Pope would denounce it publicly. In addition, by his initiative he had a letter of protest sent through Bishop Alois Hudal to the military commander in Rome, General Rainer Stahel, requesting that the persecution of Jews cease immediately. As a result of these protests, the operation providing for two days of arrests and deportations was interrupted at 2 p.m. the same day. Pius XII's protest was published in the Vatican's official *Actes et Documents du Saint-Siège relatifs à la Seconde Guerre Mondiale*.

Part II - Yad Vashem

Does Pius XII deserve this honor?

As far back as the days of the Romans, Jews had established themselves in Italy. Indeed, Jews contributed to the struggle for freedom in the 19th century; they were educated and had obtained prominent positions in all fields; Italian Jews retained their deep respect for ethical concepts, their culture, their heritage.

Yad Vashem is a museum in memory of the victims of the Holocaust that honors non-Jews who helped save Jews during the Holocaust. The World War II record of the Jews and the Catholic Church in Italy shows that Pope Pius XII, through his network of apostolic delegates throughout the world, was able to save the lives of thousands of Jews, including those who did not convert to Catholicism, during the Holocaust.

Early on, Italian Foreign Minister Giuseppe Saragat came to the defense of Pius XII: “I am convinced Pius XII was a great Pope and that the campaign against him is orchestrated for partisans. So many years after his death, this is unacceptable not just for Catholics, but for all men of good will.... Innunerable episodes reveal the spirit behind Pius XII’s activity, especially here in Rome...where there is living testimony from all citizens on Pius XII’s work; moreover, instead of going to a safe place protected by Allied troops... he stayed in his place, in the mdidle of the storm, giving aid to neighborhoods stricken by the fury of the war, and trying to pry innocent victims away from Nazi barbarism.... In any event, the controversy that has broken out over the memory of Pius XII is not a cultural debate; it is founded on calumnies and lies that have nothting to do with historical and cultural research. In the debates against Pius XII we see the cold, calculating propaganda of those trying to excuse Nazism from horrific crimes by making the Roman Catholic Church co-responsible.”

As we approach the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Pope Pius XII (October 9, 1958), we ask Yad Vashem to posthumously recognize and honor him as “Righteous among the Nations.” The consensus among Catholics is that no one deserves this honor more than

Pope Pius XII. Not only would this gesture be much appreciated world-wide, but it would then be possible to eliminate the false phraeseology under his photo that is disturbing to many Catholics.

Comments in italics follow the erroneous statements beneath the Yad Vashem photo of Pope Pius XII:

1. “Pius XII’s reaction toward the killing of Jews during the period of the Holocaust is controversial. In 1933, as the Vatican Secretary of State, in order to maintain the rights of the Church in Germany, he signed a Concordat with the Nazi regime even at the price of recognizing the racist Nazi regime. When he was elected Pope in 1939, he put aside an encyclical against racism and anti-Semitism prepared by his predecessor.”

This statement is false. Pius XI, his predecessor, died before he could read those pages. Nor did Pius XII read them. Instead, he wrote his own encyclical, Summi Pontificatus, which dealt with racism. In it, Pius XII made abundantly clear his judgment of the German aggression.

2. “Although reports about the assassination of Jews reached the Vatican, the Pope did not protest either by speaking out or in writing.”

This is not true. There were more than 60 protests! Whenever Pius XII spoke out, there was immediate retaliation by the Nazis.

3. “In December of 1942, he did not participate in the condemnation by members of the Allies regarding the killing of Jews. Even when the Jews were being deported from Rome to Auschwitz, the Pope did not intervene.”

The Pope did indeed intervene. After that first day, the SS were ordered to stop the deportation of the Jews in Rome.

4. “He maintained a neutral position except toward the end of the war when he appealed on behalf of the government of Hungary and of Slovakia. His silence and the absence of directives obliged the clergy in Europe to decide independently how they should behave toward the persecuted Jews.”

The historical record shows that the clergy and members of the Church were ordered by Pope Pius XII to protect all refugees and Jews.

Upon my request regarding the criteria used at Yad Vashem, Dr. Mordecai Paldiel, director of the Department for “Righteous Among the Nations” responded on June 20, 2006: “The basic and underlying criteria is risk to one’s life and personal safety when affording aid to Jews....” He also added that he “was interested in the directives received from the hands of Pius XII to care for Jews.” Perhaps the following information will enlighten the members of the public commission at Yad Vashem.

In 1984, a psychiatrist and a theologian—two Jews who survived the Holocaust—began an interesting dialogue on life and religious experiences. This dialogue between Victor E. Frankl and Pinchas Lapide entitled, *A Quest for God and the Meaning of Life*, has now been published in Italian. In their search for truth there is an intense interdisciplinary exchange on well-being and salvation, between psycho-therapy and theology, science and faith. It is a precious dialog on suffering and compunction, but also on love and the meaning of life in order to comprehend the limits of one’s own knowledge and to be open to true tolerance.

Forty years after the “Shoah,” one is surprised to read on pp. 86-87, Frankl’s reference to the help given to his brother and family by Pope Pius XII during the Holocaust. It is most revealing: “Before his deportation to Auschwitz where he and his wife died, for several years my brother and family were hidden from the Nazis and the Fascists in Italy. During this period, until they was captured by the Nazis, they lived in a small town under the protection of Pope Pius XII who supplied all their needs. I recently learned that this Pope entrusted them to the care of his secretary, Giovanni Battista Montini, the future Pope Paul VI. My brother represented the group of Jews living in this town who had given him the honor of expressing their gratitude and acknowledging the Pope’s help and protection.”

In an article for the *New York Times*, James Feron noted forty years ago that Jewish historian Pinchas Lapide, after two years of research, came to the conclusion that Pope Pius XII deserved a memorial forest in the Judean hills with 860,000 trees, the number of Jewish lives saved through papal efforts. He had obtained information from accounts of survivors in Israel, from privately published accounts and from the archives of Yad Vashem. Indeed, the Church was instrumental in saving more Jews than those saved by all other institutions and organizations combined. The Pope depended on the local clergy to thwart Hitler’s extermination policy. “The book dramatizes one point above all others,”

Feron states, “that the Pope’s efforts were dependent on the strength and heroism of his churches in each country.” Lapidè traces the efforts of Roman Catholics to save the Jews and quotes a variety of sources to indicate that Papal Nuncios had received messages from the Vatican to contest the deportation of Jews. Lapidè tells how Pope Pius XII sent his Papal Nuncio in Berlin to visit Hitler in Berchtesgaden to plead for the Jews. That interview ended when Hitler smashed a glass at the Nuncio’s feet. From Hitler’s reaction the Pope was convinced that public pronouncements would have sealed the fate of many more Jews. After this incident, in retaliation, Hitler connived to kidnap Pope Pius XII.

Obviously during the war years, the Vatican, concerned about the Pope’s safety, took measures to counter schemes of malice. In fact, Robert A. Graham, one of the four editors of the Vatican documents, wrote a two-part article, “Did Hitler Want to Remove Pius XII from Rome?” In this article written a quarter of a century ago and published in Italian by *Civiltà Cattolica* (1972, Vol. I, pp. 319-327 and pp. 454-461), one finds the historical evidence confirming the claim in the Milan newspaper, *Il Giornale* (July 5, 1998).

References also appear in the memoirs, depositions, and testimonies of diplomats and military leaders such as Ulrich von Hassell, Ernst von Weizsäcker, Robert M. W. Kempner, Eitel Friedrich Moellhausen, Rudolf Rahn. Even Goebbels, Bormann and others among Hitler’s most intimate associates were aware of the plot, as well as officials of the SS, such as Eugenio Dollmann, Walter Schellenberg and Karl Wolff.

Some years ago Dan Kurzman interviewed Karl Wolff. The General explained that Adolf Hitler called him into his office on September 13, 1943, and spoke about his relationship with Eugenio Pacelli, which dated back to when he first came to power in 1933, and the bitter contempt that still existed between them. Reading from his own notes, Wolff quoted Hitler’s words: “I have a special mission for you, Wolff. I want you and your troops to occupy Vatican City as soon as possible, secure its files and art treasures, and take the Pope and Curia to the north. I do not want him to fall into the hands of the Allies or to be under their political pressure and influence. The Vatican is already a nest of spies and a center of anti-National Socialist propaganda.” This story is told in Kurzman’s new book, *A special Mission: Hitler’s Secret Plot to Kidnap Pope Pius XII and Seize the Vatican* (Boston: DaCapo Press, 2007).

When he was elected on March 2, 1939, Pope Pius XII had the advantage of his knowledge of Germany, the German language, and the German people in his evaluation of the world situation. His words and actions bear testimony to his human qualities: he was a careful diplomat. The major consideration that he expressed repeatedly in his messages to the Nuncios was to save lives. Albrecht von Kessel—aide-de-camp to Baron von Weizsäcker, the German Ambassador—stated: “...The members of the German Embassy at the Vatican were at one in assessing the situation. A flaming protest on the part of Pius XII against the persecution of the Jews would presumably have put him and with him the Curia into extreme danger but would certainly ...not have saved the life of a single Jew. Hitler, the animal of prey at bay, would react all the more cruelly the more resistance he met.”

Ulrich von Hassell, in *The Von Hassell Diaries: The Story of the Forces Against Hitler Inside Germany, 1938-1944*, (San Francisco: Westview Press, 1947; reprinted 1994), provides the day-by-day testament of a leader of the anti-Nazi German resistance. It documents Pius XII's active assistance to the anti-Nazi cause within Germany, and the esteem in which the Pontiff was held. Talks were arranged through the Pope for the purpose of laying a foundation for the discussion of peace terms after a change in the German regime. The confidential agent for Operation X was Dr. Josef Müller. Von Hassell records (November 6, 1943), that a decision had been made in the event of the fall of Rome, and noted that “the Pope would be carried away for his own safety. ...Our people are capable of this.”

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Part III - Testimonials

Is Jewish testimony available?

Pope Pius XII sent many protests to the Nazis and saved thousands of Jewish lives, largely through diplomacy rather than confrontation. He knew that more explicit public condemnations would have continued to provoke brutal reprisals against the very people he was trying to help. He directed all the convents, monasteries and churches to open their doors and hide Jews who otherwise would have been sent by the SS to the extermination camp in Auschwitz. According to a list compiled in 1963, by Italian historian, Renzo DeFelice, Jewish refugees were hidden in 155 Catholic institutions in Rome. Mentioned are three convents and schools belonging to the Religious Teachers Filippini, who date back to 1692, where 114 Jews were saved. Mother Teresa Saccucci, was interviewed during the war, and her memories are recorded in *La Chiesa e la Guerra* (1944). The Sisters helped the Holy Father in the Information Office of the Vatican Secretariat of State. Mother Teresa recalled: “For this work in the Information Office, I had designated five or six Sisters with typewriters. But every day there were other young women and children of the school who wanted to work for the Holy Father and answer the letters of prisoners of war and the needy. I did all I could to satisfy the Pope’s wishes.” Obviously, the work had to be kept secret. The Sisters dedicated themselves to this task.

In the archives of the Religious Teachers Filippini, there is a journal entry dated June 5, 1944: “Today began the exodus of the Jewish refugees. Over 60 women and children occupied the area designated for students, and also several rooms in the convent.” The June 8, 1944 notation records that, following Vatican directives, these Sisters sponsored the “opening of a soup kitchen where the Sisters served meals to all refugees.” In his own hand, Pius XII personally acknowledged the work of the Religious Teachers Filippini in Italy and in the United States of America. They assisted Pius XII as he cared for innocent civilians and racial groups targeted by Nazi persecution, and was deeply involved in trying to save Jews.

During my trip to Rome in November 2006, I met with 25 Jews, relatives of a group of 60 Jews who lived in the convent of the Religious Teachers Filippini on Via delle Botteghe Oscure (also known as Via Arco de' Ginnasi, and Largo Santa Lucia Filippini) and thus were saved during the Nazi occupation of Rome in 1943. Many of their relatives are deceased but several of those present said they remembered living in this convent when they were young. These Jews recognized the fact that the Sisters followed the instructions of the Pope. The following notarized statements confirm this information:

1. Eleonora Perugia, who resides at Via G. Pession, 18, was born in Rome on July 4, 1939, declared that, during the German occupation of Rome, she and her sister Elena, born November 12, 1941, were brought here by their parents who separated their seven children in order to save them from deportation. The two girls were entrusted to the Sisters until the end of the war.

2. Davide Di Castro, who resides on Via Orti di Trastevere, 86, was born in Rome on November 23, 1938, declared that he was in his Mother's arms when a member of the SS attacked his mother and he was hurt in his ribs with the soldier's gun. He was brought to the hospital then called "Ospedaletto", now known as "Nuova Regina Margherita." Although he was not completely cured, he was dismissed, because the doctor was afraid of repercussions since he was Jewish. Thanks to these Sisters, he was cared for until the end of the war.

3. Graziano Di Capua, who resides on Via Pagoda Bianca, 4, was born in Rome on January 13, 1939. He was born during the racial laws in Italy. When he was nine months old, he was afflicted with polio. No hospital would accept him because he was Jewish. When the deportations began, the young boy was taken to this convent where he remained until the end of the war.

4. Vittorio Polacco, who resides on Via Tuscolana, 713, was born in Rome on January 26, 1941. The morning of October 16, 1943, he was with his paternal grandparents in Rome, Lungotevere Ripa, 6, when suddenly the Germans stormed their apartment and arrested him, his aunt and uncle and his grandparents. They were placed in a truck. Mrs. Assunta Fratini was passing by and when she recognized little Vittorio, the son of her neighbor, she made a sign to one of the prisoners on the truck who threw the little boy, as though he were a ball, into her arms when the guard turned away. She brought the little

boy to her home on Via della Luce, 13. But when she saw other Germans approach the entrance she knew she would be taking a risk if she kept the Jewish baby. She then went to her friend, Sister Lucia Mangone. The little boy remained in the convent after the end of the war since his parents were convinced he had been deported. Only when Mrs. Fratini later met his mother and asked about the little one did his parents learn what had happened.

5. The family of Elisabetta Moresco, who was born in Rome on August 18, 1939, and now resides in Rome on Via Bagno a Ripoli, 36, consisted of their parents and three children. Because of the racial laws enforced in Italy in 1938, her Jewish father lost his license as a merchant. Her parents were forced to escape to Norcia and decided to bring their daughter to Largo de' Ginnasi. They entrusted the other children to Catholic families. Little Elisabetta remained away from her family until the end of the war. She continued to visit the Institution after the war and always remained close to Sister Margherita.

6. Serafina Zarfati was born in Rome on April 30, 1934. She now resides in Rome on Via Francesco Arese, 15. In 1940 she could not attend public school because she was Jewish. Her parents did not want her to go to a private school. Furthermore, the Jewish school in Rome, Vittorio Polacco, was too distant from her home. So in 1940 she received tutoring from Sister Margherita Mita. Because of ill health, she was obliged to continue studies between 1941-1944 in the Convents of Nostra Signora di Sion and San Pancrazio. After the war, Serafina returned frequently to visit Sister Margherita.

7. Elisabetta Di Tivoli, who resides in Rome, Via Laura Mantegazza, 19, was born in Rome on February 27, 1943. Her mother, Celeste Anticoli, delivered Elisabetta prematurely and had serious physical illnesses. When the child was only two months old, because of the racial persecutions, she entrusted her to Sister Lucia Mangone and Sister Margherita Mita. There was no room for the mother to remain, so Celeste Anticoli placed her in the arms of Sister Margherita and left. The child needed constant care because she was undernourished and sickly. Her parents lived in poverty hidden in the Roman hills. At the end of the war they returned for Elisabetta who was now a year old and the child did not recognize her mother. She wanted to remain in the arms of Sister Margherita. Because the baby was so attached to Sister, Celeste Anticoli returned often and occasionally even had to let her sleep there. In gratitude, the Di Tivoli family joined other Jews who were

saved and collected funds after the war, in order to donate a beautiful statue of Our Lady of Fatima to the Sisters.

8. Mario Mieli was born in Rome on April 20, 1941. He and his parents lived with his maternal grandparents on Via Portico d'Ottavia, 10. During the Nazi roundup of October 16, 1943, the entire family, except his maternal grandmother, was arrested. Mario was saved, thanks to a Catholic neighbor who pretended she was the baby's mother. She saved him from deportation and entrusted him to the Sisters. Later his maternal aunt, Enrica Di Segni adopted him. The entire family was deported and did not return.

9. Ornella Della Torre was born October 31, 1941, in Rome, Via Virginia Agnelli, 100. Because of the racial laws emanated in 1938, Jews were deprived of all rights. Letizia Zarfati, her mother, was pregnant and ready to give birth. When she arrived at the hospital, she was refused admittance because she was Jewish. Fortunately she turned to the Sisters and gave birth. When Ornella became very ill with whooping cough, the Sisters transferred her to their convent on Via delle Fornaci, just below the Gianicolo where she could breath fresh air. Later, because of her health, she was cared for in their convent on Via Sangemini (Monte Mario) where she remained until the end of the war.

10. Silvana Di Veroli, who resides in Rome, Via Monte delle Capre, 10, was born in Rome on September 14, 1942. Because of the racial laws enforced in Italy in 1938, her Jewish father lost his position. To assure their children of the necessary sustenance and care, their parents sent Silvana and her twin sister Enrica to the convent of the Religious Teachers Filippini, located on Via Sangemini (Monte Mario) where they remained until the end of the war.

In 1995, I interviewed several of the Sisters whose names are mentioned in these testimonials. Their accounts may be found in my book, *Yours Is a Precious Witness: Memoirs of Jews and Catholics in Wartime Italy* (New York: Paulist Press, 1997, 263pp.) An eyewitness was Sister Domenica Mitaritonne, who declared in a letter of September 26, 2000, that she resided in the Religious Teachers Filippini Convent at Via Caboto, 16, in the Ostiense Quarter of Rome: "Having received orders from the Holy Father, we welcomed the families of Jews who sought refuge from the Nazis and Fascists. Each night another Sister and I took turns watching through a window to see if the Germans were arriving in order to notify the Jews and help them hide under the stage in the little theater. One night

we had a terrible scare when a German truck stopped nearby. We immediately alerted the Jews who fled to safety. Fortunately, a neighbor had explained to the soldiers that this was an elementary school building and that there were no Jews living there.”

Another eyewitness is Sister Maria Pucci. She prepared a notarized statement dated June 26, 2006. During the Nazi round-up, she lived in the same convent and witnessed the deportation of Jews as well as the bombing of the city of Rome. In her deposition she explains that it was Pope Pius XII who came to the rescue of the Jews. She states clearly that this convent and school was Vatican property and was supported by the Vatican. At the Pope’s command to accept as many Jews as possible, they opened their doors and thus thirty Jews were able to hide from the Nazis. They were treated as family while living in the convent and school. All were saved except two, seventy-year-old Attilio di Veroli and his sixteen-year-old son. One day they decided to go check the merchandise in their store and, despite Sister’s insistence, they ventured out. Unfortunately, they were captured by the SS on the day preceding the Fosse Ardeatine Massacre and became victims of that German atrocity.

In gratitude to the Sisters, the Jews in Rome presented a beautifully decorated testimonial which reads: “Whoever saves one life...it is as though he had saved the whole world (Sanhedrin IV, 5). The Jewish Community of Rome to the Religious Teachers Filippini, Via Caboto, Rome, recalling how they risked their own lives to save Jews from the nazi-fascist atrocities.”

Did Pope Pius XII help the Jews? Indeed he did, directly and indirectly. Nor can one claim he was "silent." Rather one must speak of his "prudence." Almost fifty years have passed since Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli, Apostolic Nuncio in Istanbul, after an audience with Pope Pius XII on October 10, 1941, wrote in his *Diary* that the Pope’s statements were "prudent." In 1958, three months after Pius XII’s death, Pope John XXIII stated in his first Christmas message, that his predecessor was worthy of canonization, calling him *Doctor Optimus, Ecclesiae Sanctae Lumen, Divinae Legis Amator*. In fact, a prayer with the *imprimatur* of Bishop Peter Canisius, Vicar General of Vatican City, was circulated among the faithful. It stated that “Pius XII was a fearless defender of the faith, a valiant champion of justice and peace, a shining example of charity and all virtues....”

Part IV - Four Hundred Visas

Did Pius XII obtain these visas?

A marvelous glimpse into the way Pope Pius XII worked to help the persecuted Jews during the Holocaust may be found in *Consensus and Controversy* (Margherita Marchione, Paulist Press, 2002, pp. 295-297). Among the thousands of Jews saved directly by Pope Pius XII in 1943, there was a group of four hundred Jews. Writing to the author on March 19, 2001, Monsignor Giovanni Ferrofino, an eyewitness and participant, tells the story about *Four Hundred Visas for Jews*. The papal representative who followed the Pope's instructions to help these Jews is Archbishop Maurilio Silvani (1882-1946)—Titular Archbishop of Lepanto—who was named Nuncio to the Dominican Republic by Pius XII, May 23, 1942.

In a letter to Margherita Marchione, from Maussane-les-Alpilles, France, Monsignor Giovanni Ferrofino gave his personal testimony: “During the war, I was at Port-au-Prince as secretary to Silvani who had collaborated with Pacelli in Bavaria when he was Secretary of State and during negotiations on the Concordat with Germany. In 1943, instructions came to Nuncio Silvani from Pius XII telling him to ask General Rafael Leonida Trujillo, dictator of the Dominican Republic, to grant four hundred visas to Jews. It was subsequently learned that these refugees had been refused admittance to the United States. “

Nuncio Silvani immediately consulted the Dominican ambassador in Port-au-Prince who said: “Trujillo will never say ‘No’ to the Pope. But it is well known that the only way one can ask for such a favor is *in person*.” However, this would be an overnight trip. The capital of Santo Domingo was some 80 difficult kilometers across rocky Haitian territory and then another 350 kilometers of rugged Dominican roads under a blazing sun. And the Nuncio was not well, but he set out at once.

“I remember that trip like yesterday. It was traumatic. It would have been difficult at any time but with the Nuncio's illness, an illness that would eventually lead to his death, every hour was torture. When we arrived in the capital, the Foreign Minister very kindly offered use of an official car. We found Trujillo on horseback inspecting the

sugarcane plantations, the *cañaverales*. He was wearing his *Panama*. As he tipped his hat to us, he made a move to dismount. But the Nuncio shouted: ‘Oh, no, General, remain on your horse. You already know why I am here.’ ”

Trujillo smiled, nodded and replied that he could not refuse the Pope. But he had conditions which Ferrofino describes. “The dictator told us: ‘None of the four hundred can remain in the capital. They must live on the frontier and protect us from the clandestine immigration of Haitians. They will have land, houses, everything that is needed for a well-organized colony.’ ”

“We sent this information to the Vatican, and returned to Haiti. A few weeks later, the four hundred Jews arrived in Santo Domingo. It was not long after they were settled that a taxi from the Dominican capital came to the Nuncio’s residence in Port-au-Prince. A couple stepped out of the taxi, identified themselves as two of the refugees, and asked to see Nuncio Silvani.”

Ferrofino describes the meeting: “They thanked us and begged us to help them remain in Port-au-Prince. The wife was an attractive blond, ex-ballerina from the Vienna Opera House. ‘What would such a couple do in the capital,’ asked the Nuncio? ‘Start a ballerina school,’ came the reply. The Nuncio said: ‘I am not the most qualified person to tell you how to appeal to Trujillo for help to start a Classical Ballet School. Furthermore, as everyone knows, you must first win him over personally or by paying taxes. Trujillo never just gives anything to beautiful women.’

“I observed the two of them. There was no reaction from either the husband or the wife. They seemed stunned. They thanked us and left. But three years later, the Diplomatic Corps and all the members of the upper crust were invited to the opening of a new Ballet School named after Trujillo’s daughter, *Flor de Oro*. As for the others in the group of four hundred, one night, after having obtained passports from Mexico, they left clandestinely for Cuba and from that country, after a short stay there, they crossed the Mexican border and arrived safely in the United States, the land that had originally denied their entrance. All this happened, thanks to Pius XII.”

These Jews were certainly aware that no doubt Pius XII had provided the necessary funds for their trip as well as the visas for Santo Domingo. The fact remains that of the four hundred Jews with visas, 397 Jews eventually crossed the Mexican border and

arrived in the United States of America. Where are they or the members of their families today? Is one of them willing to testify so that Yad Vashem will declare Pius XII, *Righteous Among the Nations*?

It is also interesting to note that on September 19, 1942, Monsignor Paolo Bertoli, chargé d'affaires at Port-au-Prince, wrote to Cardinal Luigi Maglione, Vatican Secretary of State, informing him that General Trujillo was ready to offer hospitality to 3,500 Jewish children in France between the ages of three to fourteen. General Trujillo would organize the group and take care of expenses for their voyage. Again, thanks to Pius XII's intercession.

Archbishop Maurilio Silvani was later appointed Nuncio to Chile. He sent a copy of letter No. 1261 on August 29, 1943, and stated: "The President of the 'Comité representativo de la Colectividad Israelita de Chile' begged me, on the 27th of this month, to send to the August Pontiff the expression of their gratitude for all that His Holiness is doing in defense of the Jews in France and during the course of this war [Rapp. nr. 587/29, A.E.S. 190/43]." From Santiago, the Nuncio also sent a letter dated October 5, 1943 to Cardinal Maglione with a copy of the October 3rd *El diario ilustrado* which he received from the President of the Committee, Samuele Goren. The article states: "...En estos trágicos días, nuestra mente evoca la elevada figura del Sumo Pontífice, su Santidad Pio XII probado defensor de la causa de los perseguidos y en especial de millones de hermanos europeos nuestros que son víctimas inocentes de inhumanas masacres y crueles vejámenes. Recordamos con indignación que quienes infligen en los actuales momentos incontables sufrimientos al Santo Padre son las mismas fuerzas del mal que hacen ostentación del incalificable propósito de aprisionar tras las murallas de la Ciudad del Vaticano el incontenible soplo de la inmensa fuerza espiritual que emana del sitial de San Pedro..." [Rapp. nr. 3980/143 (A.E.S. 7145/43, orig.). See Vol. 9, p. 498.]

This story of the Four Hundred Visas was documented by reporter Walter Ruby in an article that appeared in *The Jewish Week* of September 29, 2006. He also explains that the Evian Conference, an international conference held in France in 1938, considered what to do about growing numbers of Jewish refugees fleeing Germany and Austria. It concluded that the Dominican Republic was the only country in the world that agreed to accept Jewish refugees as permanent residents.

Part V - Documentation

When will vilification of Pius XII end?

In a report filed with the U.S. State Department in 1939, Alfred W. Klieforth, U.S. consul general in Berlin, after a three-hour meeting “to discuss the situation in Germany” described Cardinal Pacelli’s views: “He opposed unilaterally every compromise with National Socialism. He regarded Hitler not only as an untrustworthy scoundrel but as a fundamentally wicked person. He did not believe Hitler capable of moderation, in spite of appearances, and he fully supported the German bishops in their anti-Nazi stand.”

Documents make clear that Pius XII told the Allies in late 1942, that he was prepared to issue a flaming explicit denunciation against both the Nazis and Soviet atrocities. However, because the Soviets were part of the Allied front against Nazism, the Allies immediately realized that any papal statement which included a condemnation of Soviet war crimes might fray the alliance, and damage the anti-Nazi war effort. The Allies dropped their request. Instead, the Pope included a clear statement against the Final Solution in his 1942 Christmas message.

In his classic work on the Holocaust, *Harvest of Hate*, Jewish historian Leon Poliakov writes that it is “certain” that the Vatican sent secret instructions to Europe’s wartime bishops to protect Jews. This is underscored in a captured wartime Nazi document that rages against a Ukrainian bishop “for making the same statements and even using the same phrases as the French, Belgian and Dutch bishops, as if all of them were receiving the same instructions from the Vatican.” (DocumentCXLV, A-60, Srchives of the Centre de Documentation Juive, translated in Phillip Friedman’s *Their Brother’s Keepers* (New York: Crown, 1957, p. 212).

Dr. Joseph Lichten, a Polish-Jewish survivor of the Holocaust and official of the Anti-Defamation League, wrote (*A Question of Judgment: Pius XII and the Jews*, 1963): “It is known that in 1940, Pius XII sent out a secret instruction to the Catholic bishops of Europe entitled *Opere et caritate* (*By Work and Love*), ordering that “all people suffering

from racial discrimination at the hands of the Nazis be given adequate help.... The letter was to be read in churches with the comment that racism was incompatible with the teachings of the Catholic faith.”

As early as the autumn of 1940, shortly after Italy entered the war, Pius XII sent explicit instructions to the bishop of Salerno, Giuseppe Palatucci, to assist Jews in Campagna who had been interned by Mussolini’s Fascist regime. The Pope accompanied his order with Vatican money for the suffering Jews (Vol. IX, Document 356 of the Holy See’s wartime, *Actes et Documents*).

Professor Ronald Rychlak, referring to sworn depositions in favor of Pius XII’s beatification, commented: “The original transcripts take up just over 1,700 pages which are spread over seven volumes.... The clear message from each and every witness is that Eugenio Pacelli—Pius XII—was an honest, holy and charitable man—even saintly (*Hitler, the War, and the Pope*, pp. 286-287).

It is important to note that on Yad Vashem’s website, there is an entry which appears in the *Encyclopedia for the Holocaust*: “...In many monasteries, churches, and ecclesiastical buildings in Italy, Jews were saved during the Nazi occupation, and the simultaneous opening of many Catholic institutions could have taken place only under clear instructions by Pius XII. Moreover, the pope protested officially, if only privately, against the persecution of the Jews in those countries where he felt that he might have some influence.”

In the June 26, 1981, issue of the *Osservatore della Domenica*, Cardinal Paolo Dezza, S.J., summarized a very confidential report of an audience with Pope Pius XII. Referring to a retreat he gave for the Holy Father in the Vatican during the month of December 1942, he stated: “On that occasion I had a long audience in which Pius XII, speaking about the Nazi atrocities in Germany and in the other occupied countries, manifested his sorrow, his anguish. He said: ‘They lament that the Pope does not speak. But the Pope cannot speak. If he were to speak, things would be worse.’ And he reminded me that he had recently sent three letters in which he deplored the Nazi atrocities: one to the person he defined as ‘the heroic Archbishop of Cracow,’ the future Cardinal Sapieha, and the others to two bishops in Poland. ‘They responded,’ he said, ‘thanking me, but telling me that they could not

publish those letters because it would aggravate the situation.’ And he cited the example of Pius X who, when confronted with a problem in Russia, said: ‘You must keep silence in order to avoid worse evils.’

“And even on this occasion, the inaccuracy of those who say that he kept silence because he wanted to support the Nazis against the Russians and Communism appears very clear. I recall that he told me: ‘Yes, the danger of Communism exists; however, at this moment the danger of Nazism is greater.’ And he spoke to me about what the Nazis would do if they were victorious. I remember he used the phrase: ‘They want to destroy the Church and crush her like a toad. For the Pope there will be no place in the new Europe. They say that he should go to America. But I am not afraid and I shall remain here.’ And he said this in a very firm and sure manner that one could clearly understand that if the Pope kept silence, it was not for fear or personal interest, but only just for fear of aggravating the situation of the oppressed. While speaking to me about the threats of invasion of the Vatican, he was absolutely tranquil, certain, trusting in Providence. Speaking to me about speaking out, he was full of anguish. ‘If I speak,’ he felt, ‘I shall harm them.’

“Therefore, even if historically one could discuss whether it would have been better to speak more or speak more strongly, what is beyond discussion is that if Pope Pius XII did not speak more strongly it was purely for this reason, not for fear or any other interest.

“The other part of the conversation that impressed me was that he spoke about all he had done and was doing to help the oppressed. I recall that he spoke about the first steps he attempted to make, in agreement with the German cardinals, but with no results; then about the conversations he had with Ribbentrop when he came to Rome, but with no results. At any rate he continued to do whatever he could. His one preoccupation was to avoid entering into political or military questions and to remain within the sphere of that which was the duty of the Holy See. In this regard, I recall that when the Germans occupied Rome in 1943 (I was rector of the Pontifical Gregorian University and it was I who accepted the refugees), Pius XII said to me: ‘Father, avoid accepting the military because, since the Gregoriana is a pontifical house and belongs to the Holy See, we must be out of politics. But for the others, help them willingly: poor, persecuted Jews.’” Note that the Pope

distinguished between military personnel and persecuted Jews. In fact, while the Jews were accepted at the Gregoriana, the military were given sanctuary at Palazzo Callisto. Pius XII inspired his followers to comfort suffering humanity and assist all war victims.

On April 17, 1961, attorney general Gideon Hausner—in his opening speech during the prosecution of Adolf Eichmann—stated: “When the Pope himself interceded for the Jews of Rome...and Eichmann was asked to leave them in Italian labour camps instead of deporting them, the request was turned down—the Jews were sent to Auschwitz.”

Witnesses honored by Yad Vashem as “Righteous Among the Nations” have come forward to state, unequivocally, that Pius XII gave direct and explicit instructions, both verbal and written, to his assistants and nuncios, to do everything they could to save Jews.

Part VI - World Press

How has the press responded?

Newspapers throughout the world acknowledged Pope Pius XII's efforts on behalf of persecuted Jews during World War II. A more forceful condemnation by Pius XII would not have saved more Jews. *Summi Pontificatus* was the papal statement most needed to fight ethnic and religious bigotry. The day after the encyclical appeared, the front-page of *The New York Times* carried this above-the-fold headline: "Pope Condemns Dictators, Treaty Violators, Racism; Urges Restoring of Poland" (October 28, 1939), with Herbert Matthews reporting: "It is Germany that stands condemned above any country or any movement in this encyclical—the Germany of Hitler and National Socialism." The many *New York Times* articles from 1939 to 1945 show that Pope Pius XII defended the dignity of the human person under the most trying and dangerous circumstances. He saved thousands of Jews and Allied troops who were hiding in every nook and cranny after Italy surrendered in 1943.

No one can deny that, during the period of the Holocaust, Pius XII spoke out against Nazism! His voice was indeed heard. There is documentation available in the archives of the Vatican Radio, *Osservatore Romano*, *London Times*, as well as *The Tablet* of London and, of course, the *New York Times*. Throughout World War II, Pius XII continually attacked Nazi policies. He so provoked the Nazis that they called him "a mouthpiece of the Jewish war criminals."

Long before any major voice in Europe condemned the Nazis, Pacelli helped prepare a decree condemning anti-Semitism, issued March 25, 1928: "Moved by Christian charity, the Holy See is obligated to protect the Jewish people against unjust vexations and, just as it reprobates all rancour and conflicts between peoples, it particularly condemns unreservedly hatred against the people once chosen by God; the hatred that commonly goes by the name of anti-Semitism." There were 60 Vatican dispatches to Berlin protesting against Adolf Hitler's treatment of the Jews before World War II. How can anyone claim that Cardinal Pacelli "said and did nothing" after Hitler began violating the Concordat and

savagely persecuted Jews? (See *Actes...Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1965-81, Tomes I-XI -- Tome III in 2 vols.*).

Before the 1933 concordat with Germany, the SS and Gestapo had rounded up and incarcerated thousands of supporters and activists of the leading Catholic Centre Party and were threatening thousands more. The former Chancellor, Heinrich Brüning, stated that Catholic youth leaders had already been tortured to death and there was a ghastly fate hanging over others. By signing a Concordat, which might give legal protection and accord a semblance of civil rights to those already imprisoned, Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli (the future Pope Pius XII) was following the most admirable principles of Christian charity. He could not foretell the demonic paths Nazism was to tread in the following years.

The struggle against the church did, in fact, become ever more bitter; there was the dissolution of Catholic organizations; the gradual suppression of the flourishing Catholic schools, both public and private; the enforced weaning of youth from family and church; the pressure brought to bear on the conscience of citizens and especially of civil servants; the systematic defamation, by means of a clever, closely organized propaganda, of the church, the clergy, the faithful, the church's institutions, teaching and history; the closing, dissolution and confiscation of religious houses and other ecclesiastical institutions; the complete suppression of the Catholic press and publishing houses.

In the spring of 1933 the German Government asked the Holy See to conclude a concordat with the Reich: the proposal had the approval of the Episcopate and of at least the greater number of the German Catholics. In fact, they thought that neither the concordats up to then negotiated with some individual German states nor the Weimar Constitution gave adequate guarantee or assurance of respect for their convictions, for their faith, rights or liberty of action. In such conditions the guarantees could not be secured except through a settlement having the solemn form of a concordat with the Central Government of the Reich.

By 1935, the Vatican was complaining about "German non-fulfillment of its terms and also protesting against pagan elements in the Nazi ideology, such as the doctrine of racism and the persecution of the Jews.... During the Nazi reign of terror in the city (of Rome) after the overthrow of Mussolini, substantial numbers of escaped prisoners of war,

Jews and leaders of democratic parties were sheltered by the ecclesiastical power.” (See *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1962 edition.)

On March 1, 2000 the Israeli government released the *Adolf Eichmann Diary*, describing the extermination of Jews by the Nazi regime and the actions taken by Pope Pius XII when Jews in Rome were deported on October 16, 1943. Eichmann clearly states that the Vatican “vigorously protested the arrest of Jews, requesting the interruption of such action; to the contrary, the Pope would denounce it publicly.” These memoirs reveal the truth.

There is documentary evidence that Nazis had only contempt for Pius XII and ridiculed him even when he was Secretary of State. Indeed, cartoons appearing in propaganda articles depict Pius as a co-conspirator with Jewish and Communist elements, acting to destroy National Socialism. He is drawn with grotesque “Jewish” features. If the Nazis could have pointed to the figure of the Pope as a secret sympathizer, it would have been an immense propaganda coup for the Third Reich at the time. With the combined forces of the USA, USSR and Britain against Germany, the need to boost morale was compelling and desperate. Had Pius XII stridently protested, more lives would have been lost. Jewish scholar Jenö Levai, testifying at the Adolf Eichmann Nazi War Crime Trials, insisted that bishops of the Catholic Church “intervened again and again on the instructions of the Pope. ... The one person who did more than anyone else to halt the dreadful crime and alleviate its consequences, is today made the scapegoat for the failures of others.” (*Hungarian Jewry and the Papacy: Pius XII Was Not Silent*, Sands and Company, London, 1968.)

Judge Joseph Proskauer, president of the American Jewish Committee, stated: “We have seen how great was the work of the Holy Father in saving the Jews in Italy. We also learned from various sources that this great Pope has tried to help and save the lives of Jews in Hungary.” According to Mary Ann Glendon, Professor of Law at Harvard University, “The tragedy of the Jewish people has been shamelessly exploited by foes of traditional religion.”

Pius XII’s example, as manifested in his concern for the Jews and for all victims of the Nazis, the prisoners of war, the homeless and displaced persons, has added to his words

the testimony of his actions in a world that knew no peace. When the Jews were persecuted during the Nazi occupation of Rome, Pope Pius XII gave orders to give hospitality in the Vatican and in all Vatican extraterritorial buildings—convents, monasteries and churches as well as in the pontifical apartments in Castelgandolfo—in order to save as many lives as possible.

A Report of the Union of the Italian Jewish Community to the Italian Government of August 1, 1944, was sent to the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, to the Ministry of the Interior, and to the Prefecture of Rome: “...Great was the assistance Jews received from the Vatican and from the various ecclesiastical authorities who, inspired by the spirit of charity, dedicated themselves toward lessening our sorrows and protecting us from our persecutors.... Palestine’s Grand Rabbi Herzog sent the Pope a telegram of condolence acknowledging the humanitarian work accomplished by the deceased Cardinal Luigi Maglione on behalf of the persecuted Jews (Numbers 8-10, September 18, 1944).” Another Report of the Jewish Community of Rome to the Union of the Italian Jewish Community is dated August 10, 1944: “...Gratitude, as we all well know, must be expressed in an extraordinary and sincere way to the Catholic Church and to its august Leader, His Holiness Pius XII. Together with the Jewish Community in Rome, I sent him the expression of the most intense gratitude of our entire population (Number 15, October 20, 1944).” The above excerpts were printed in the *Bollettino Ebraico d’Informazione* (Zionist Group of Rome).

In the daily newspaper *Hatzofe* (the organ of the National Religious Party MAFDAL), on June 22 1979, Historian Michael Tagliacozzo reviewed Meir Michaelis’ book, *Mussolini and the Jews, German-Italian Relations and the Jewish Question in Italy 1922-1945*, published by The Institute of Jewish Affairs, London (The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1978). This reviewer credited the saving of Jews to the “spontaneous help given to Jews by the Italians and the Catholic institutions in Rome. Regarding the controversial question of the “silence” of Pius XII and the Vatican, this volume enlightens us on the precious help given by the Holy See on behalf of the Jews of Rome. At the direction of the Pontiff himself, the clergy everywhere did its best to save the Jews so much so that a large number of the persecuted — particularly the elderly, women and children — were

welcomed in the convents that opened their doors to the victims offering refuge and assistance....”

Y. Bankover “Hamèsh Shanìm”, in *Diario di un soldato ebreo*, pp. 315-316 (Published and edited by the General Confederation of Jewish Workers in Palestine. Ed. Hakibbuz ha-meuchad, Tel Aviv 5705-1945) writes: “...In the midst of the general destruction that characterized the war zones, Rome remained intact. ‘A miracle took place here’: thousands of Jews were safe and sound. The Church, the religious houses, monks, sisters and above all the Pontiff, have worked in an extraordinary way to save Jews from the clutches of the Nazis and their collaborators, the Italian Fascists. While endangering their own lives, they succeeded with great efforts in hiding and feeding the Jews during the German occupation of Rome. Some religious paid the price with their lives to accomplish this (Don Pietro Pappagallo and Don Giuseppe Morosini). The entire Church participated with devotion in this effort. Not less important and decisive in saving lives was the help given by the population of Rome. The citizens generally hid Jews in their homes, feeding them with the little food they had. Every Jewish family that returned home after the Germans left, found their own house in order and, thanks to the Christian citizens, notwithstanding the dangers encountered, who guarded the homes of the Jews under the very eyes of the Gestapo.”

The following communication is from Captain Efraim Urbach, Rabbi-Chaplain of the 8th British Army to Dr. Leo Cohen, director general of the political department of the Jewish Agency, Jerusalem, Rome, 6/6/1944: “With this letter I send you the first summary on the conditions of the Jews of Rome, as I have witnessed after my one day visit...Persons of the Church have helped Jews and hid women and children, within the limits that were possible.” Rome, 7/6/1944 “Following up on what I already communicated with my preceding letter, I now give you some particulars.... This work of assistance must be attributed to the Persons of the Church. In a special way German Father Weber of the Pallottine Fathers and Cappuchin Father Benedetto distinguished themselves. Many Jews were hidden in convents.” (From the Zionist Central Archives, Jerusalem – Pos. 525/5279.)

Sergeant Yechiel Duvdevano—PAL 31621, Comp. 745 Artisan Work and member of the Kibuz Naan—was among the most influential heads of the Zionist Movement and of the Organization of defense “Hagana”. In the years 1943-1945 he coordinated the assistance

given to Jews in the Italian regions that were liberated.” Rome, 8/6/1944 “...Jews remained hidden, with Christian names, for 9 months, in cellars and in catacombs. Many found refuge in convents; especially children....The Germans promised a reward for every Jew that was captured and presented to them....The main help came from the Church....”

On August 2, 1943, the Jewish Congress sent the following message to Pope Pius XII: “World Jewish Congress respectfully expresses gratitude to Your Holiness for your gracious concern for innocent peoples afflicted by the calamities of war and appeals to Your Holiness to use your high authority by suggesting Italian authorities may remove as speedily as possible to Southern Italy or other safer areas twenty thousand Jewish refugees and Italian nationals now concentrated in internment camps... and so prevent their deportation and similar tragic fate which has befallen Jews in Eastern Europe. Our terror-stricken brethren look to Your Holiness as the only hope for saving them from persecution and death.”

In September, a representative from the World Jewish Congress reported to the Pope that approximately four thousand Jews and Yugoslav nationals who had been in internment camps were removed to an area that was under the control of Yugoslav partisans. As such, they were out of immediate danger. The report went on to say: “I feel sure that the efforts of your Grace and the Holy See have brought about this fortunate result, and I should like to express to the Holy See and yourself the warmest thanks of the World Jewish Congress. The Jews concerned will probably not yet know by what agency their removal from danger has been secured, but when they do they will be indeed grateful.”

Two months later, Rabbi Herzog again wrote to Pope Pius XII expressing his “sincere gratitude and deep appreciation for so kind an attitude toward Israel and for such valuable assistance given by the Catholic Church to the endangered Jewish people.” Jewish communities in Chile, Uruguay, and Bolivia also sent similar offers of thanks to the Pope.

More dramatic evidence has surfaced in an article by Marco Tosatti (*La Stampa*, August 8, 2006) that reaffirms what has long been known but denied by critics: the Pope ordered religious convents and monasteries to open their doors to shelter political fugitives and Jews during World War II. It concerns measures taken by Pope Pius XII to save all victims of the Nazis. This unpublished *Journal* of an

Augustinian nun in the convent of Santi Quattro Coronati in Rome was published by the magazine *30Days*. It is a newly-discovered Holocaust diary that reveals the drastic steps taken by the Pope and the Catholic Church to save the lives of Jews and others being hunted down by the Nazis.

According to the *Journal*, Pius XII instructed the mother superior to allow those fleeing from the Germans to enter the cloistered convent and remain as long as necessary. Not only does the Augustinian author provide details, but she explains that the pope wished to save “the children as well as Jews” and ordered that monasteries and enclosures should be opened to protect those persecuted. She admits she prepared false identity papers for all her guests. “Unfortunately,” the nun writes, “with the coming of the Germans in September, the war against the Jews—whom they wish to exterminate with the most barbarous atrocities—included young Italians and political activists who were tortured and subjected to the most horrible sufferings. ...We adhered to the wishes of the Holy Father. ”

Personally and through his representatives, Pius XII employed all the means at his disposal to save Jews and other refugees during World War II. As a moral leader and a diplomat forced to limit his words, he privately took action and, despite insurmountable obstacles, saved hundreds of thousands of Jews from the gas chambers.

Kenneth L. Woodward wrote (*Newsweek*, March 30, 1998): “No one person, Hitler excepted, was responsible for the Holocaust. And no one person, Pius XII included, could have prevented it. In choosing diplomacy over protest, Pius XII had his priorities straight. It’s time to lay off this pope.”

Pius XII was concerned that a public condemnation would result in retaliation and the loss of more lives. His “silence” accompanied a powerful action in defense of the Jews: he opened the very doors of the Vatican for thousands of Jews to hide there. In obedience to the pope’s directives, 155 ecclesiastical institutions welcomed thousands of Jews and other refugees whose lives were saved during the Nazi occupation of Rome.

It is irresponsible to deprive future generations of the contemporary assessments and judgments, that together comprise part of the historical record of the Holocaust era. British historian Sir Martin Gilbert stated: “So the test for Pacelli was when the Gestapo came to Rome in 1943 to round up Jews. And the Catholic Church, on his direct authority,

immediately dispersed as many Jews as they could.” His book, *Never Again: The History of the Holocaust* (Universe publishers, 2000) contains an extraordinary chapter on Pope Pius XII whose protection of refugees and victims of persecution was one of the finest examples of Christian charity in the whole world.

Part VII - Jewish Survivors

Have Survivors acknowledged help?

Testimonials of survivors of the Holocaust make it perfectly clear that the Pope was not anti-Semitic or indifferent to the fate of the Jews and that he did everything possible to help them. On October 10, 1958, the day after Pius XII's death, Mark Segal, a reporter for *The Jerusalem Post* interviewed Prof. Guido Mendes, a childhood friend and classmate of Eugenio Pacelli. Their paths separated when Pacelli entered the seminary and Mendes studied medicine. He became a lung specialist and, when interviewed, was living in Ramat Gan: "In 1938, with the beginning of the persecution of the Italian Jews, Pacelli's secretary called from the Vatican to ask the Mendes family if they needed help. The Mendes later escaped to Switzerland, and the Vatican secured them certificates to Palestine in 1989.... Mr. Mendes recalled that the Pope, meeting survivors of the concentration camps in Italy in 1945, had then predicted *soon, you will have a Jewish state.*"

Documentation shows that when Jews were threatened by racial laws in Italy, Vatican Secretary of State Eugenio Pacelli ordered Giovanni Montini (future Pope Paul VI) to provide the means for Jewish surgeon Guido Mendes to emigrate with his entire family. Guido had been his schoolmate at the Ennio Quirino Visconti Lyceum in Rome. The friendship between them was still vivid in 1958 in the elderly Mendes' memory when he described Eugenio as a careful dresser, always wearing a coat and tie, and distinguishing himself as the leading student. "He was always winning academic prizes," Mendes recalled. He also stated that when the Fascists began to threaten Jews in Italy, the then Secretary of State Pacelli helped the Mendes family flee from Italy. They remained in touch with one another over the years.

During this period of persecution, in response to Benito Mussolini's anti-Jewish legislation, Pius XII appointed several Jewish scholars to important positions inside the Vatican. In fact, his first encyclical, *Summi Pontificatus*, expressly mentioned the Jews, noting that in the Catholic Church there is "neither Gentile nor Jew, circumcision nor

uncircumcision, barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free. But Christ is all and in all”(Colossians iii.10,11)....”

Among the many survivors is historian Michael Tagliacozzo. In a letter to me, dated June 18, 1997, this Holocaust survivor, clearly expressed his sentiments: “In my study of the conditions of the Jews (*The Roman Community during the Nightmare of the Swastika*, November 1963), I pointed out the generous and vast activity of the Church in favor of the victims. I learned how great was Pope Pacelli’s paternal solicitude. No honest person can discount his merits Pacelli was the only one who intervened to impede the deportation of Jews on October 16, 1943, and he did very much to hide and save thousands of us. It was no small matter that he ordered the opening of cloistered convents. Without him, many of our own would not be alive.”

Again, years later, in a letter of August 8, 2004, he reiterated his convictions: “Any apology on the actions of Pius XII must be considered superfluous. This is clear to all men of good will and is entrusted above all to the memory of those Jews, now living, who have not forgotten the efforts and solicitude of Pope Pacelli.... One must add the countless expressions of gratitude of those whose lives were saved in the religious houses in Rome, Assisi and elsewhere. Even if gratitude was expressed directly to the Institutions who protected them, the merit goes to Pope Pacelli who, on October 16, 1943, gave orders to open the doors of the parishes, convents and monasteries to save the Jews from deportation.”

Those who continue to malign Pius XII and the Church, also offend the Jews who have testified that they were ‘hidden and saved” by the Vatican during World War II. These Jews, who survived in Rome as a result of Pius XII’s directives, have left us testimonials, interviews, and public acknowledgments toward the Pope, the Catholic Church and its religious organizations.

When he was elected on March 2, 1939, Pope Pius XII had the advantage of his knowledge of Germany, the German language, and the German people in his evaluation of the world situation. His words and actions bear testimony to his human qualities: he was a careful diplomat. The major consideration that he expressed repeatedly in his messages to the Nuncios was to save lives. Albrecht von Kessel—aide-de-camp to Baron von Weizsäcker, the German Ambassador—stated: “...The members of the German Embassy

at the Vatican were at one in assessing the situation. A flaming protest on the part of Pius XII against the persecution of the Jews would presumably have put him and with him the Curia into extreme danger but would certainly ...not have saved the life of a single Jew. Hitler, the animal of prey at bay, would react all the more cruelly the more resistance he met.”

Michael Tagliacozzo, wrote a letter to the daily newspaper “Davàr” (Tel Aviv, April 23, 1985) which states: “Little known is the precious help of the Holy See. On the recommendation of Pius XII the religious of every order did their best to save Jews. In great numbers, especially the elderly, women and children were welcomed in the convents that opened their doors offering refuge and assistance. Children in orphanages were sent to monasteries. Even in the Vatican, almost under the Pope’s windows, Jews found refuge hiding from the clutches of the Gestapo. The figures show that about five thousand were hiding in ecclesiastical institutions (4238 in convents, parishes and other institutions, while 477 were living in the extraterritorial buildings protected by the Holy See.”

Part VIII - Bombing of Rome

Did the Pope help stop bombing?

Although Pius XII begged the Allies to spare Rome and the Vatican, he did not succeed. The magazine, *Ecclesia*, records his charity during the bombing of Rome, when American bombers dropped tons of explosives on July 19, 1943. As Bishop of Rome, he hastened to console and comfort his people. When he learned that the Tiburtina section was bombed, hundreds were buried under the ruins, dead or injured, and the Church of San Lorenzo destroyed, he sent his secretary to withdraw all his personal funds from the bank, ordered his chauffeur to accompany him without the official escort, and hastened to the area. His white cassock was stained with the blood of those to whom he administered the Last Rites.

Again, on August 13, 1943, when the Allies bombed Rome near Appia Nuova and Tusculana, the Pope rushed to the area and, as he distributed funds, he blessed and consoled his flock. A mother shoved her dead child into the Pope's arms while he tried to console her. Others begged for help, as he administered the Last Rites and comforted the injured. Among the victims was a little girl lying on a stretcher, cold and immobile. Kneeling beside her, the Pope touched the child and spoke to her. At the sound of his consoling voice, the child opened her eyes, got up and walked away.

On November 5, 1943, when bombs fell not only on the Vatican and Rome, but also on the pope's apartment in Castelgandolfo, windows of the cupola of St. Peter's were shattered. Also, the Vatican railroad station, the laboratory for mosaics, the Governatorato building, and the Church of Santa Marta were damaged. The Religious Teachers Filippini in the United States responded to Pius XII's appeal for assistance and helped the poor in Italy.

Cesare Carnevale, an eyewitness, wrote: “Pius XII was the Pope of my youth. I still recall the impression I had looking at this saintly figure in white with arms outstretched in prayer as everyone turned to him during the bombings of Rome. . . . But I also have a very personal memory. During the 1950s, I was a young Salesian priest in Grottaferrata and worked with the youth of the area. We had a sports field but no equipment for the youngsters. So I turned directly to His Holiness and asked him to help me obtain sports equipment. Within a few days I received a large box with everything needed for a successful program: shirts, pants, shoes, footballs, soccer balls, etc.” Indeed, confirmation of a request for soccer balls to help children adjust in the aftermath of the war is found in a letter to Mother Ninetta Jonata in Morristown, New Jersey, dated June 18, 1947, from the Vatican secretary of state, asking for “footballs.” The letter also acknowledged cases of supplies that had arrived from the United States: “29 cases on the ship *City of Athens*; 60 cases on the *Exiria*; 90 cases on the *Waimea*.”

This charitable work continued for many years after the war. On March 26, 1951, Pius XII wrote: “We desire to express to you, beloved daughter, Our lively appreciation of the truly charitable spirit which animated you and those associated with you in the generous donation of relief supplies which you have forwarded to the Vatican. It is always a source of consolation to us to be reminded, through charitable acts such as yours, that Our children in America share Our great concern for the plight of those unfortunate souls who are living in circumstances of wretchedness and misery.”

During and after the war, in consonance with the pope’s wishes, not only did the Religious Teachers Filippini in the United States ship tons of cases of medicine and clothing to the Vatican, but they also visited the sequestered Italian prisoners of war and internees. The charity of helping the Pope care for the needy continued for about twenty years. When this work of mercy was no longer possible, I was asked to cross the Atlantic on the *Michelangelo* toward the end of May 1966, to care for the last cases of clothing and medicines for the pope’s poor.

During the Nazi occupation of Rome, Pius XII gave directives to open the doors of convents to hide Jews from the Nazis and Fascists. Many remained in the convents for about one year. To express their thanks, a group of Jews visited the Religious Teachers Filippini and offered them the gift of a five-foot statue of the Madonna, which still stands on the fourth floor in the corridor of Via delle Botteghe Oscure.

Part IX - Nazis and Jews Speak Out

Did Nazis and Jews speak out?

When will the indictment against the Catholic Church and, in particular, against Pius XII end? The Holocaust took place during a complex and dark period of human history. The Church was the only institution that had the courage to denounce the Nazi action. Both Nazis and Jews defend the actions of Pope Pius XII.

Nikolaus Kunkel

On January 24, 2001 *L'Osservatore Romano* carried the testimony of a witness to Pius XII's actions to save Roman Jews during the Second World War. In an interview with German Catholic News Agency (KNA), Nikolaus Kunkel, a lieutenant at the headquarters of the military governor of Rome in 1943, stated that he directly witnessed the SS roundup of the Jews. He remembers those dramatic days, 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."

When asked if he thought that a more vigorous protest from Pope Pius XII would have saved more Jews in Rome, Italy and occupied Europe, Kunkel stated: "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. ...Pius XII was in a most difficult political situation. Considering the circumstances, no one can reproach him for his actions." The SS unit's task was to deport all the Jews in Rome. According to Kunkel, "when the rumor of the raid proved to be true, Major General Rainer Stahel summoned and informed the officers of divisions 1A, 1B and 1C saying that he was totally opposed to the operation."

Adolf Eichmann

The Nazi leader, Adolf Eichmann, was condemned to death in Jerusalem in 1961 for crimes against the Jewish people. He affirms the truth about the Holocaust and the undeniable evidence that exists and has been ignored regarding Pius XII's humanitarianism. His words confirm the thesis of those historians who have collected documents on the action undertaken by the Vatican to defend Jews. Eichmann clearly states in his *Diary* that the Vatican "vigorously protested the arrest of Jews." Why did the Israeli government wait more than forty years to release this documentation?

The truth is also told in General Herbert Kappler's own words: "At that time, my office received the copy of a 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 immediately throughout Rome and its surroundings. To the contrary, the Pope would denounce it publicly.

On October 6, 1943, German Ambassador Moelhausen sent a telegraphic message to Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop in which he said that General Kappler, SS commander in Rome, had received a special order from Berlin; he had to arrest 8,000 Jews who were living in Rome, to deport them to northern Italy, where they would be exterminated. General Stahel, commander of the German forces in Rome, explained to Moelhausen that, from his point of view, it would be better to use the Jews for fortification works. On October 9, however, Ribbentrop answered that the eight thousand Jews of Rome had to be deported to the Mathausen concentration camp.

Eichmann wrote in his diary: "The objections 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." With this delay, it became possible for a good number of them to hide in convents and be helped by men and women of the Church.

Chief Rabbi Israel Zolli

An important witness to the role of Pius XII in wartime Italy is Rabbi Israel Zolli, Chief Rabbi of Rome during the Nazi occupation and persecution of Jews. A biblical scholar whose courage and integrity cannot be challenged, Rabbi Zolli was hidden in the Vatican. He was an eye-witness of the deportation of Rome's Jews by the Gestapo in 1943. He was converted to Catholicism and took the name Eugenio in Baptism in honor of Pius XII. In his book, *Antisemitismo*, he states: "World Jewry owes a great debt of gratitude to Pius XII for his repeated and pressing appeals for justice on behalf of the Jews and, when these did not prevail, for his strong protests against evil laws and procedures." Zolli, who found shelter in the Vatican during the war also stated: "No hero in all of history was more militant, more fought against, none more heroic than Pius XII in pursuing the work of true charity!...and this on behalf of all the suffering children of God."

Zolli devoted an entire chapter in his 1954 memoirs, *Before the Dawn*. Writing about the German occupation of Rome, he praised the Pope's leadership: "...The people of Rome loathed the Nazis and had intense pity for the Jews. They willingly assisted in the evacuation of the Jewish population into remote villages, where they were protected by Christian families. ... The Holy Father sent by hand a letter to the bishops instructing them to lift the enclosure from convents and monasteries, so that they could hide the Jews. I know of one convent where the sisters slept in the basement, giving up their beds to Jewish refugees. In face of this charity, the fate of so many of the persecuted is especially tragic."

Chief Rabbi Alexander Safran

Chief Rabbi Alexander Safran, of Bucharest, Rumania, made the following statement on April 7, 1944, to papal nuncio Andrea Cassulo: "In the most difficult hours which we Jews of Rumania have passed through, the generous assistance of the Holy See. . . was decisive and salutary. 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." After the war, the

Communists in Russia began calumniating Pius XII in their paper, *Izvestia*. Msgr. Fulton Sheen responded in the *New York Times*.

Chief Rabbi Isaac Herzog

Jewish organizations took note of Pius XII's efforts, and they turned to him in times of need. Chief Isaac Rabbi Herzog wrote to Cardinal Maglione on behalf of Egyptian Jews expressing thanks for the Holy See's charitable work in Europe and asking for assistance for Jews being held prisoner in Italy. The following month he wrote back thanking Pius for his efforts on behalf of the refugees that "had awakened a feeling of gratitude in the hearts of millions of people."

On August 2, 1943, the Jewish Congress sent the following message to Pope Pius XII: "World Jewish Congress respectfully expresses gratitude to Your Holiness for your gracious concern for innocent peoples afflicted by the calamities of war and appeals to Your Holiness to use your high authority by suggesting Italian authorities may remove as speedily as possible to Southern Italy or other safer areas twenty thousand Jewish refugees and Italian nationals now concentrated in internment camps... and so prevent their deportation and similar tragic fate which has befallen Jews in Eastern Europe. Our terror-stricken brethren look to Your Holiness as the only hope for saving them from persecution and death."

In September, a representative from the World Jewish Congress reported to the Pope that approximately four thousand Jews and Yugoslav nationals who had been in interment camps were removed to an area that was under the control of Yugoslav partisans. As such, they were out of immediate danger. The report went on to say: "I feel sure that the efforts of your Grace and the Holy See have brought about this fortunate result, and I should like to express to the Holy See and yourself the warmest thanks of the World Jewish Congress. The Jews concerned will probably not yet know by what agency their removal from danger has been secured, but when they do they will be indeed grateful."

A few months later, Rabbi Herzog again wrote to Pope Pius XII expressing his “sincere gratitude and deep appreciation for so kind an attitude toward Israel and for such valuable assistance given by the Catholic Church to the endangered Jewish people.” Jewish communities in Chile, Uruguay, and Bolivia also sent similar offers of thanks to the Pope.

Part X - Conclusion

Should Yad Vashem honor Pius XII?

In her memoirs, *Ich durfte ihm dienen: Erinnerungen an Papst Pius XII*, (1982), Sister Pascalina Lehnert explicitly states that Eugenio Pacelli warned the Germans against Adolf Hitler in 1929, four years before the dictator came into power on January 30, 1933. When asked if Hitler could perhaps help the German people, Pacelli shook his head and said: “Who among you has at least read his horrifying book, *Mein Kampf*? I would be very much mistaken in thinking that all this could end well.” The future Pope Pius XII could not understand why even highly competent Germans did not share his totally negative judgment.

No one can deny the historical record which shows that Pope Pius XII, through his network of apostolic delegates throughout the world, was able to save the lives of thousands of Jews during the Holocaust. As early as April 4, 1933, Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli ordered the Apostolic Nuncio in Berlin “to intervene with the government of the Reich on behalf of the Jews and point out all the dangers involved in an anti-Semitic policy.” The Catholic Church, therefore, did not simply protest on behalf of Church interests during negotiations of the Concordat, but protested on behalf of persecuted Jews when the new Hitler regime announced a major boycott of Jewish businesses. The record shows that more than sixty protests were made by Pope Pius XII. Across the theater of war, prisoners and refugees appealed to Pius XII as the representative of an older and more exacting morality than that practiced in the so-called “New Europe.”

Leaders throughout the world were deaf to Pius XII’s words before World War II: “Everything can be saved with peace; nothing can be gained with war.” His was the outstanding religious voice that openly and consistently defied the Nazis. While some individuals betrayed their Jewish friends by revealing their destinations, the Pope’s so-called “silence” saved lives. Had he spoken out, would not many more lives have been destroyed? It is foolish to think that the assistance given Jews, in the Vatican and in Rome alone, would have been successful without his knowledge and protection. Pope Pius XII

provided food and other necessities to the thousands of victims hidden in convents and monasteries during the Nazi occupation of Rome.

Critics who judge Pius XII's honesty and loyalty must consider his *formam mentis*. He lived profoundly the spiritual drama of the victims. He served the cause of religion, defended the rights of humanity, invoked and defended peace and freedom for all; he was an indefatigable pastor, a teacher of justice, honor, loyalty; he provided money, ships, food; he placed his radio, his diplomacy, his convents, at the disposal of the refugees. What would survivors have preferred — words or actions? If he had condemned Hitler or Mussolini, would these Jews have survived? Would the Nazis and the Fascists have tolerated the charitable work of the Catholic Church during World War II?

When some five hundred Jews embarked at Bratislava on a steamer for Palestine, their ship tried to enter the seaport of Istanbul but was refused permission to land. Captured by an Italian patrol boat, the Jews were imprisoned in a camp at Rhodes. One of the prisoners managed to appeal to Pius XII for help. Thanks to the pope's intervention, unknown to the Axis, the refugees were transferred to an improvised camp (Ferramonti-Tarsia) in southern Italy, where they were found safe three years later, in December 1943.

Tibor Baransky, a board member of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council and a Yad Vashem honoree, recalls that "Papal Nuncios helped the Jews. They got the orders straight from the Pope." He recounted that, while working at the age of twenty-two as a special representative of Angelo Rotta, the papal nuncio in Hungary, he heard from Jewish leaders who asked the pope not to raise a public outcry over the Nazi atrocities — since it would likely only increase their ferocity. (The Nazis had solidified their power in the early 1930s, and ferocious retaliation had been the typical response to every other Vatican protest.) Working with Rotta — Pius XII's personal emissary in Hungary — Baransky carried documents, forged protective passes, and faked baptismal certificates to save as many Jewish lives as possible;

When news of Pius XII's death on October 9, 1958, was flashed around the world, an editorial, "Fighter for Peace," in the *Los Angeles Examiner* expressed the sentiments of Catholics and non-Catholics, and declared that this *Fighter for Peace* was the

Pope of Peace. Of those mourning the pope's death, Jews—who credited him with being one of their greatest benefactors—were in the forefront.

Elio Toaff, Chief Rabbi of Rome: “More than anyone else, we have had the opportunity to appreciate the great kindness, filled with compassion and magnanimity, that the Pope displayed during the terrible years of persecution and terror.”

Golda Meir: “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....We mourn a great servant of peace.”

Rabbi Joachim Prinz, national president, American Jewish Congress: “Among his many, great contributions to mankind, the Pontiff will be remembered wherever men of good will gather for his profound devotion to the cause of peace and for his earnest efforts in the rescue of thousands of victims of Nazi persecution, including many Jewish men, women and children.”

Bernard Baruch: “During a dark generation of war, hate and unspeakable crimes against humanity, he helped keep burning the torch of peace, love and brotherhood. He epitomized the nobility of which the human soul is capable. To men of all faiths he was an inspiration and an example of courage, dedication and selflessness.”

The Talmud teaches us ‘whoever saves a life receives as much credit as if he had saved an entire world.’ If this is true—and it is just as true as the most typical of all Jewish principles: that of the holiness of human life—then a Jew must also defend loudly a great saver of Jewish life.” (Cf. Institute of the World Jewish Congress, *An Unfinished Agenda*, Policy Dispatch, n. 23, November 1997)

Far more than two million Jews did indeed survive, thanks to the help of the Church, bishops, priests, laymen. Undoubtedly, Pius XII deserves “that forest in the Judean hills which kindly people in Israel proposed for him in October 1958. A memorial forest, like those planted for Winston Churchill, King Peter of Yugoslavia and Count Bernadotte of Sweden with 860,000 trees.”

As a result of Pius XII's directives, many Jews survived in Rome and have left testimonials, interviews, and public acknowledgments toward the Pope, the Catholic Church and its religious organizations. Those who continue to malign Pius XII and the

Church, also offend the Jews who have testified that they were hidden and “saved” by the Vatican during World War II.

But the real object of the controversy is not Pius XII. It is the Chair of Peter. Destroying Pius XII’s reputation is only a means to an end, destroying the Papacy and the Church as we know it. By denigrating Pius XII, depicted as authoritarian, traditional and Roman, by painting John Paul II with the same brush, some writers are contributing to the goal of many confused Catholics—changing the Church into a social institution.

In his 1963 monograph, Dr. Joseph Lichten, head of the Intercultural Affairs Department of the Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith, questioned: “What is the case against Pius XII? In brief, that as head of one of the most powerful moral forces on earth he committed an unspeakable sin of omission by not issuing a formal statement condemning the Nazis’ genocidal slaughter of the Jews, and that this silence was motivated by reasons considered in modern times as base: political exigency, economic interests, and personal ambition.

“What is the case for him? That Pope Pius XII did everything humanly possible to save lives and alleviate suffering among the Jews: that a formal statement would have provoked the Nazis to brutal retaliation, and would substantially have thwarted further Catholic action on behalf of Jews.”