

# POSTOPINION

## Friend to the Jews

Pius XII's *real* wartime record

GARY L. KRUPP

**A** RECENT papal decree moved Pope Pius XII, among others, closer to sainthood — returning to the forefront the controversy over his role in World War II and the Holocaust.

Growing up Jewish in Queens, I never dreamt I would be defending the man I once believed to be a Nazi sympathizer and an anti-Semite. But my work since 2002 with my wife, Meredith, and the Pave the Way Foundation has led me to this point.

We founded Pave the Way to identify and eliminate nontheological obstacles between religions. Thus, despite our early prejudices, we decided to investigate the papacy of Pius XII (Eugenio Pacelli), one of today's greatest sources of hurt between Jews and Catholics.

After years of research in documentary evidence and eyewitness testimony, what we found shocked us. We found nothing but praise and positive

news articles concerning Pius' actions from every Jewish, Israeli and political leader of the era who lived through the war.

A few articles in the postwar era suggested that he should have done more to confront the Nazis — but it wasn't until 1963, in the wake of the fictitious play "The Deputy" (written five years after Pius died), that accusations began flowing that he had failed to act, that he was a cold-hearted Nazi sympathizer who couldn't care less about the Jewish people.

The evidence strongly suggests this was part of a KGB-directed and -financed bid to smear Pius, a Soviet disinformation campaign meant to discredit the Catholic Church, which at that time was profoundly anti-Communist.

In any case, the facts simply don't match what so many have come to believe about Pius.

It is unquestionable that Pius XII intervened to save countless Jews at a time most nations — even FDR's America — refused to accept these refugees. He issued false baptismal papers and obtained visas for them to emi-

grate as "Non Aryan Catholic-Jews." He smuggled Jews into the Americas and Asia. He ordered the lifting of cloister for men and women to enter monasteries, convents and churches to hide 7,000 Jews of Rome in a single day.

Among the 5,000 pages of documents that Pave the Way has located, there is abundant evidence that Pacelli was a lifelong friend of the Jews. Some highlights:

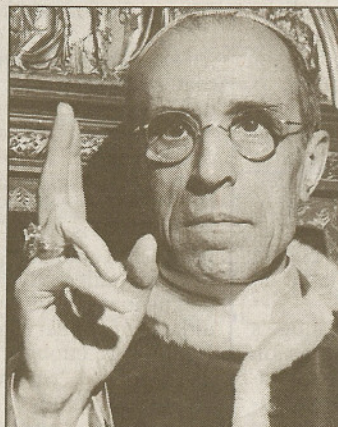
- In 1917, at the request of World Zionist Organization Director Nachum Sokolow, Nuncio Pacelli intervened with the Germans to protect the Jews of Palestine from extermination by the Ottoman Turks.

- In 1925, Pacelli arranged for Sokolow to meet with Pope Benedict XV to discuss a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

- In 1930, Pacelli supported the German bishops' orders excommunicating anyone who joined "the Hitler Party."

- In 1938, Pacelli intervened to defeat a Polish anti-koshering law.

- In 1939, A.W. Klieforth, the US consul general based in Cologne, Germany, wrote a confidential letter to Washington reporting on the "extreme-



Pius XII: Unfairly tarred as Nazi sympathizer and anti-Semite.

ness" of Pacelli's hatred of National Socialism and of Hitler.

- In 1947, at the United Nations, he encouraged the 17 Catholic countries out of the 33 in favor to vote for the partitioning of Palestine to create the State of Israel.

- A 1948 deposition by Gen. Karl Wolff, the SS commandant for Italy, revealed the Nazis' wartime plan to kidnap the pope, kill countless cardinals and seize the Vatican.

But the personal tales may be more compelling. Pacelli's childhood best friend was Guido Mendes, an Orthodox Jewish boy. He tells how Pacelli shared Shabbat meals with him. Mendes taught him Hebrew, and Pacelli helped him to emigrate to Palestine in 1938.

Pius XII's detractors prefer to criticize rather than simply look at the evidence. Two years ago, Pope Benedict XVI ordered the opening of the Vatican's archives up to 1939, containing much evidence of Eugenio Pacelli's activities leading up to his papacy. According to the sign-in sheets, few of Pius' critics have bothered to come to the archives to view the material.

Pinchas Lapide, a Jewish historian, theologian and Israeli ambassador, stated that the actions and policies of Pius XII saved as many as 860,000 Jews.

Albert Einstein, Golda Meir, the chief rabbi of Palestine, the chief rabbi of Rome and the heads of every Jewish organization showered praise upon him during his lifetime.

Were all these witnesses who lived through the war misguided?

Gary L. Krupp is president of the Pave the Way Foundation, which has many of the documents noted here online at [ptwf.org](http://ptwf.org) and which will soon publish a book with the main evidence in English, Hebrew, Spanish and French.

## A POLITICAL TEST FOR TEACHERS

U of Minnesota's ed-school travesty

ADAM KISSEL

**W**HEN a child doesn't finish his homework, who's at fault? The Race, Culture, Class and Gender Task Group in the University of Minne-

Did Johnny get a math problem wrong? Maybe it's because of society's "demands for assimilation to white, middle-class, Christian meanings and values."

The task group evidently wants to invade the thoughts, values, attitudes and beliefs of future teachers to make sure that they have the proper "dispositions" to be allowed to teach our youth. They recommend tests of "intercultural sensitivity" and "cultural intelligence." They

way. The Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, where I work, wrote the university's president a detailed letter last month. We pointed out that this proposal is the opposite of a liberal education in a free society because it would teach that the authorities get to decide