

The Documents from the Campagna Diocesan Archives.

The Scanned Documents

The documents were scanned in 14 separate bundles with no indication of any cataloguing process applied. With very few exceptions the documents are written in Italian. Some documents are numbered according to an internal registration system that was used by the diocese but many are not. Most documents are classified according to the name of the person they concern and may include several different types of communication. The cases of George Löwy (CF 4.12-17), the interned Danish Consul from Palermo, Hans Meyerhof (CF 4.57-149), and Giovanni Weinstock (CF 2.5-19), demonstrate this quite clearly. For reasons of space I have selected Weinstock's case.

Table 2: Campagna Files 2 Giovanni Weinstock.

P	Date	File	From	To	Subject	Details
5	26.09.41	2328	Giovanni Weinstock	Bishop Palatucci	Requests the Bishop's help.	Originally from Trieste. Interned in Campagna since April 1940. (See p11) Asks to be transferred out of the camp.
6	13.10.41	2270 prot	Curia Campagna	Francesco Borgongini Duca, Nuncio to Italy	Giovanni Weinstock. Asks for the nuncio's help.	
7	17.10.41		Nuncio in Rome	Palatucci	Giovanni Weinstock	Received 19.10.1941. Ref n 2371 (?) Nuncio's office has passed on the request to the Director General

						of Police as requested. The request will most likely be denied.
8	13.03.42		Giovanni Weinstock	Palatucci	Thanks the Bishop and asks for help.	
9	17.05.42		Curia Campagna	Giovanni Weinstock	Patience	Weinstock encouraged to be patient.
10	18.12.42		Giovanni Weinstock	Palatucci	Christmas Greetings	
11	21.04.43	3596	Giovanni Weinstock	Palatucci	Easter Greetings and thanks for his help in Weinstock's return to Trieste.	
12	20.02.42	2677	Giovanni Weinstock	Palatucci	Asks the Bishop's help to leave Campagna.	Now 20 months in Campagna. Questions for Rome completed. Longs to be reunited with his wife.
13	20.02.42		Medical Report from Salerno Hospital on Weinstock		Medical report	General health report and confirmation of previous ailments as a result of military service.
17	N/D		Albina Pospisil, wife of Giovanni Weinstock	Minister of the Interior	Requests her husband be allowed to return to her in Padua Province on account of his health, damaged during his war	At the end of the letter Pospisil notes that copies of the letter have been sent to the Ministry of the Interior – 05.02.1942; the Vatican in November 1941; on the advice of the Bishop of Trieste a letter sent to Cardinal

					service.	Maglione, Secretary of State and a letter to Bishop Palatucci.
19	10.08.44	4204	Giovanni Weinstock in Rome	Palatucci	Thanks for all the Church has done.	

Most of the documents are not in chronological order and some documents have been copied in more than one bundle. Most are ordered according to subject. While most of the documents are type-written there are a significant number of hand-written texts – many of which are difficult to read. Some documents were typed on both sides of the paper making reading problematic. Particular issues relevant to the documents are discussed in the second part of this essay.

I have read the documents as they appear in the scanned format sent to me by Gary Krupp. It is an exercise beyond the immediate scope of this article to create an ordered tabulation of the documents.

Campagna Files – Content descriptions

CF 1 (54 pages) – 1940-1942 Letters from the Vatican Secretariat of State to Bishop Palatucci

CF 2 (221 pages) – 1940-1943 Letters from Palatucci, Nuncio Borgongini Duca, Consular Officials, Government Officials and Internees to various addressees.

CF 3 (106 pages) – 1940-1941 Letters from Cardinal Maglione, Secretary of State to Palatucci.

CF 4 (168 pages) – 1940-1943 Collections of Letters from and about Internees, bundled by according to the internee's name, to Palatucci, with some letters from the

Vatican Secretariat of State and the *Raphaelsverein*, the German Catholic Refugee Agency.

CF 5 (6 pages) – 1941-1943 Six pages of material from the Red Cross and others.

CF 6 (344 pages) – 1940-1942; 1946; 1953-1956 Letters from Palatucci and Internees including a letter from Palatucci's nephew, Giovanni (CF6.326)

CF 7 (21 pages) – Giovanni Palatucci – articles from 1999.

CF 8 (22 pages) – 1940-1942 Various letters from Internees, Palatucci.

CF 9 (238 pages) – 1940-1942 Letters from Internees addressed to the Ministry of the Interior

CF 10 (261 pages) – 1940-1942 Letters from Internees addressed to Palatucci

CF 11 (408 pages) – 1941-1945 Letters from Internees addressed to Palatucci

CF 12 (19 pages) – 1940-1943 Various letters

CF 13 (236 pages) – 1940-1943 Letters from Internees addressed to Palatucci

CF 14 (23 pages) – January 1941- December 1943 Account ledgers

Campagna Files – What can be learned?

- 1. The documents from internees can be classified along the following general themes:**

- a) Requests for help to be transferred out of Campagna.**

Most of these letters ask for consideration for transfers in order to be reunited with family members in other internment camps in Italy, (CF 1.10, 26; 2.5-19, 22, 28-3), in

particular, Potenza (CF 3.94-96; 10.43, 217, 260, 261). The second largest category is requests for transfer on the grounds of poor health. (CF 2.17, 70) Like most of southern Italy, Campagna suffered from malaria.

In one instance two brothers, Erich and Martin Bendheim, wrote to Palatucci in May 1941 requesting a transfer to Viterbo for health reasons. After nearly twelve months of petitioning permission was granted. Less than a year later the brothers requested a transfer back to Campagna; the climate was judged to be better than Viterbo. Again, permission was granted and they returned to Campagna in early 1943. They left the town for the last time in June 1944 and eventually moved to Switzerland where they sent the bishop a final letter of thanks in May 1945. The Italian internment camp system was riddled with inconsistencies. (CF 12.61-110)

b) Requests for medical treatment.

There was a considerable amount of correspondence dealing with internee health that went from the bishop's office to medical professionals in Naples and specialists in different parts of the country. Medical complaints were many and varied. I suspect health was used as a means of attempted transfer to be with family. (See CF 2.70; 6.36, 134, 148; 10.228) Not surprisingly there are a number of quite detailed medical reports scattered throughout the documents. (CF 2.13; 6.38; 9.18-19; 10.245; 11.5)

c) Requests for help obtaining visas or passports for an internee and their families.

Between the opening of the camp in July 1940 and the end of 1941 when nearly all hope of emigration from Italy was gone, there were a number of attempts to secure passports and visa for individuals, spouses and family members for a variety of countries. The majority of these requests focused on Brazil, Bolivia and Ecuador. (CF 1.6-9, 27, 30; 2.119; 10.45) Some of the more desperate letters simply asked for help

to get to anywhere in South America. (CF 1.14) However there were a significant number of requests for travel to the United States (E.g. CF 10.77, 121).¹

The volume of letters received and sent from Palatucci's office went far and wide to consular offices in Naples, Genoa and Rome and the relevant Italian offices. In many cases the official answer was "no", but there were several instances where visas were obtained. The greatest poignancy was found in the letters from internee Isaac Heger trying to find members of his family whom he believed were in Vichy France – he had the permission letters notifying him of the approval of visas, but he could not locate his family. Various agencies united in trying to find Heger's family. (CF 2.48-49)

The criss-crossing of Church and Italian government agencies occurred on a regular basis. The case of Arthur Krausz demonstrates this. Krausz was a Viennese born Jew who had been in Italy since 1939 before being interned in Campagna. In early December 1941 a letter from his wife, Gertrude was sent from Vienna to the Italian Foreign Ministry requesting an entry visa into Italy so she could be reunited with her husband. (CF 6.39, 40-41) A copy of the letter was sent to the Vatican and a note was then forwarded to Palatucci who passed it to Krausz. (CF 6.41) Writing first to the Foreign Ministry in Rome, Krausz supported his wife's application with reference to two uncles, Bernard and David Möller in Trieste who would vouch for and support her. (CF 6.43) Krausz then appealed to Bishop Palatucci to help him try and get a visa for his wife, citing his fear of "imminent deportation to Poland". (CF 6.44) The use of the word "deportation" is significant because it points to a growing awareness among the internees, and, by extension, Italian authorities, of the growing danger confronting Jews in German-occupied Europe. On 11 December Palatucci wrote to Montini in Rome and asked for his help. On 9 February 1942 Montini replied to Palatucci and said that despite the efforts of the Secretariat of State the Foreign Ministry refused to grant Gertrude Krausz a visa on the grounds that she was a German Jew (CF 6.45). Gertrude Krausz survived the war.

d) Requests for help in locating relatives either in Italy or other parts of Europe

This was the saddest part of the document collection. Many names mentioned in the letters were checked through the Yad Vashem data base which holds the records of nearly three million victims of the Holocaust. More than a few were located. (E.g. CF 10.247, 259)

Some of the letters asking Palatucci to help find family members were unknowingly written after the intended recipients had been murdered. (See CF 1.22, 32, 35; 10.44) Yad Vashem records a number of former internees submitting the Testimony page after the war. Alfred Weisz wrote to Palatucci on 26 September 1942 asking the bishop to help him find information about his children Brunhilde (b 1927) and Riccardo (b 1928) whom he believed were still in Vienna. (CF 10.40) He was not to learn of the fate of his children until after the war. Weisz's daughter and son were deported to Minsk where they died on or around 14 September; twelve days before their father wrote to the bishop. Alfred Weisz submitted Pages of Testimony for his children to Yad Vashem on 16 September 1956.

As far as I can ascertain, Bishop Palatucci sent every letter to Rome and the Vatican Information Service. And wherever possible, Rome replied with news. (E.g. CF 10.203)

Awareness of the deportations reached Campagna sometime in the later part of 1941. Several internees had written to Palatucci asking to news of their families and citing "rumours of deportation". The Bishop wrote to Rome asking for clarification on 9 November 1941. (CF 6.264) A year later on 26 October 1942, Palatucci telegraphed Rome and asked about more rumours; this time of deportations in Bohemia. (CF 6.265) The next document in the series is a two page sheet of names with the heading "Theresienstadt (Protektorato) Boemia". The list contains the names of deported relatives of internees Rodolfo Elsner, Kurt Lehmann, Marcus Benno and Max Pitzela. (CF 6.266-268) Using the Yad Vashem data base I found that six of the relatives died

in Theresienstadt or were murdered in Treblinka. The fate of the other five is unclear, though it is likely that they perished since most were elderly.

CF 6 also holds a number of letters and telegrams originating in Fiume where Bishop Palatucci's nephew, Giovanni was a policeman. The younger Palatucci was actively involved in rescuing Jews and helped many get into southern Italy and to Campagna. (CF 6.316-325). Giovanni Palatucci wrote to his uncle 16 May 1942 asking for help for Eugenio Werndorfer. Werndorfer suffered from acute bronchitis and the younger Palatucci believed the warmer southern climate might help him. (CF 6.326) Without more documentation there is no way of knowing the reality of Werndorfer's health, but there is sufficient circumstantial evidence to suggest that health was a convenient excuse to keep moving Jews south.

e) Letters of thanks either in the hope of help or for help received both during and after the war.

There are several dozen letters of gratitude written by internees to Palatucci for his help during the war and after 1943 when they were liberated. (CF 2.8; 4.22-23 125-126, 154, Some are effusive in their praise of the bishop and the local clergy for everything they had done and tried to do to help the Jews. There is a significant collection of letters written by former internees from places such as the United States and Switzerland. (CF 2.162; 4.126; 12.329)

Among the letters is a note of gratitude from the Polish Red Cross in Rome thanking Palatucci for his care of Polish citizens interned in Campagna (CF 4.145)

2. The documents from the Bishop or curia of Campagna can be classified along the following general themes:

a) Forwarded letters from internees to the Catholic agencies.

There are dozens of telegrams and letters to the Papal Nuncio to Italy, Francesco Borgongini Duca; to the Vatican Secretariat of State, in particular Cardinal Luigi Maglione, Monsignor Giovanni Battista Montini; to other Italian bishops; eg Cardinal Boetta, Archbishop of Genoa and other diocesan bishops.(CF 2.115) Some of the issues concerned questions about baptisms (CF 2.199; 6.155), conversions to Catholicism (CF 6.155) and dispensations for marriage (CF 1.19, 23; 6.132), as well as compensation claims outside Italy (CF 1.43-44) and assurances that money had been sent on to an internee's family (CF 6.191). There are also a number of letters written to the *Raphaelsverein* office in Rome (CF 4.77-78; 6.25; 12.21-22)

There is one letter addressed directly to the Pope. Robert Schnitzler wrote to Pius on 27 November 1941 asking for help for his 74 year old mother Julie, resident in Vienna (CF 1.35; copy also in CF 8.2). There is no record of a response from Rome, but the evidence gathered from other parts of the Campagna Files as well as the Vatican Information Service, indicates that a standard response would have been sent. ²

Most letters were written to Bishop Palatucci. There is nothing suspicious about this. Palatucci was the local bishop and the one who had some influence with local authority. However, many of the letters from the Secretary of State were written in response to letters addressed to the Pope and do not appear in these files. While there is no direct reference to papal intervention, it is not unreasonable to suggest that Pius was aware of the requests made to him. Certainly the requests made by Cardinal Maglione infer papal wishes that attempts be made for the writers.

b) Forwarded letters from internees to Italian government and police agencies; foreign government agencies.

Most of these were hand-written letters addressed to the Ministry of the Interior. They were typed into formal submissions to the Ministry and sent from Palatucci's office to

Rome. The contents of the letters focus primarily on requests for transfer to be with family members or help in getting family members out of German occupied Europe, especially Austria, France and Poland. (Cf CF 2.48-49; 10.1) There are also requests for reclassification of status, assertion of Aryan identity (CF 2.70) requests to marry a non-Aryan (CF 2.166) and loyalty to the Fascist-Italian cause (CF 10.213). Letters to foreign government agencies were usually letters to consulates asking for information on visa applications. There is a small number of letters addressed to the Salerno Police on a variety of matters (See CF 4.88, 93).

3. Documents sent in response to letters from Campagna can be classified along the following general themes:

- a) Replies from Catholic agencies, including the Secretariat of State, pro-forma responses, formal letters addressed to internees and letters addressed directly to Bishop Palatucci.**

The bulk of these documents were acknowledgements of letters received and assurance that everything possible was being done to help. (CF 2.41, 148, 152) There were a considerable number of responses to requests to assist in reuniting Campagnan internees with family members in other parts of Italy (CF 3.42, 82-85, 94; 10.151). In one communication Rome asked the bishop for patience and not to expect answers for every case. (See CF 2.58) and in another letter asked the bishop to let internee Carlo Pollak know that the Holy See did not forward private letters. (CF 1.43-44)

The volume of requests was overwhelming. Many documents were, not unexpectedly, related to attempts to secure visas to South America (See CF 3.1, 78, 85-92, 93, 100, 102; 4.29; 10.165, 194) or in some cases, to the United States (CF 3.5, 106). In a letter in September 1940, Cardinal Maglione regretted that the Holy See was unable to do more because South American governments kept adding new restrictions for converted Jews seeking visas. (CF 10.142) A month later Maglione wrote to Palatucci advising

that it was not possible to obtain an Ecuadoran visa for the “non-Aryan Catholic” Giorgio Pionkowski and his mother. The reason given was the Ecuadoran restriction placed on granting of visas to converted Jews. (CF 1.27)

There are letters from the German Catholic relief organization, the *Raphaelsverein* which worked to help “non-Aryan” Catholics emigrate (CF 2.67; 4.24-31) as well as the occasional request from other Italian bishops asking for assistance in helping internees emigrate. (See CF 2.59)

There is evidence to suggest that every enquiry sent to Rome received some form of response. One poignant example is recorded in CF 1.25. Monsignor Montini wrote to Palatucci on 9 February 1942 in response to a request for help in obtaining an Italian entry visa for Gertrude Krausz Müller, a German Jew and relative on an internee. The request had been denied.

b) Replies from Italian government and police agencies, foreign government agencies addressed to internees or Bishop Palatucci.

Most of these documents were related to those mentioned above. The pattern appears to have been to seek help from both Church and government agencies. Government and police responses were written in formal bureaucratic language, always respectful towards Palatucci, but in general non-committal about the internees, which is not a cause for surprise. (See CF 2.55 Consulates wrote in a similar vein often expressing their regret that requests for visas could not be granted (CF 2.21,) but occasionally advising that a visa had been granted. (CF 2.42-43, 50, 160).

4. The Papal Letters: between October 1940 and July 1942 the Pope sent about 30,000 lire to Campagna.

Inside the Vatican made much of two letters where Pius instructed Cardinal Maglione and Monsignor Montini to send donations amounting to 13,000 lire (US\$9,775 in 2009)

to help the internees. The documents reveal that there was a total of four papal gifts. However, it is not possible to claim that these gifts constitute a pattern of rescue. The relevant documents were found in the third set of files.

Reference	Date	From / To	Content
CF 1.1 and CF 3.25	02.10.1940	Maglione to Palatucci	Pope sends 3,000 lire.
CF 3.27	12.10.1940	Palatucci to Maglione	Acknowledgement of receipt of the money.
CF 3.32	29.11.1940	Montini to Palatucci	Pope sends 10,000 lire in response to Palatucci's letter of 08.11.1940 asking for help (CF 3.30)
CF 3.35-36	16.04.1941	Palatucci to Maglione	Detailed breakdown of expenses; detailed food and medical costs.
CF 3.37	01.05.1941	Montini to Palatucci	Pope sends another 5,000 lire. Palatucci acknowledged receipt on 12.05.1941.
CF 2.142	19.02.1942	Nuncio to Palatucci	Acknowledges the generosity of the Pope.
CF 3.40	22.07.1942	Maglione to Palatucci	Pope sends 3,000 lire. Palatucci acknowledged receipt on 24.07.1942.
CF 3.46	01.08.1940	Palatucci to Maglione	Palatucci gave an account of how 5,000 lire of papal money was spent: 2,210 for general provisions; 883 for medical costs; 1,207 on clothes and other costs, including 700 for travel expenses.

In another instance Maglione says that the Pope specifically asked the Bolivian ambassador to the Holy See to waive the \$350 required as surety for a visa. Three German Jews interred in Campagna had written to the Pope asking for his help. (CF 3.1, 3.105)

5. **The Brazilian visa episode is reflected in several documents found in Campagna 3.**

Document pages 85-92, 93, 98, 100.³ These were all “non-Aryan” Catholics. In each case the date of their baptism was recorded. Throughout the Brazilian visa episode the Brazilian government changed the stipulations several times. One of the requirements was non-Aryan Catholics had to have been baptized before 1937. (See CF 1.14, 28) In one case, that of Isidoro Lande, Cardinal Maglione asks Bishop Palatucci to do whatever he could for this “sad case”. Lande had been baptized after 1937 and was rendered ineligible for a visa.

Conclusion

While there is now some evidence to show Pius was aware of, and supportive of the work being done by Palatucci and others, it is still too early to claim this was a long-term strategy. Context is important. In 1940-1941 the treatment of Jews in Italy was not yet murderous, although it was becoming lethal outside Italy. This remained the case until September 1943 by which time the Jews interned in Campagna were no longer in mortal danger. The Germans who occupied the town for the few after 8 September were soldiers preparing to engage the Allies. There is no evidence of any German plans to arrest and deport Jews in the region, and even if there were, there was no time to implement an *action*.

There is no discrimination detected in the treatment of converted-Jews and Jews. The bias in favour of baptised Jews comes from the requirements of South American countries, in particular Brasil and Ecuador. Vatican interventions on behalf of Campagna internees in this regard are consistent with the historical record as demonstrated in ADSS.

Can Pius XII be credited with the survival of every interned Jew in Campagna? The answer is “no”. There is evidence he was aware of Bishop Palatucci’s work with the

internees, but then there is evidence he was aware of similar work occurring in other parts of Italy. The Pope did send money, but it was only one part of the evidence of assistance revealed in the documents. Assistance for the Jews came primarily from the local bishop who needed no reminder from Rome to “do good and avoid evil”. Palatucci acted in accord with his conscience and did all he could with the limited means at his disposal including the money sent by the Pope. Again, context is important. Palatucci’s work was different to the rescue work undertaken by his nephew in Fiume after September 1943 when assistance to Jews became lethal. Bishop Palatucci was never in serious danger for helping the Jews of San Bartolomeo or the Immaculate Conception and while he may have annoyed some local or regional fascists, there is no evidence that he was ever likely to encounter anything more drastic than a verbal complaint. Certainly there is nothing in the documents that suggests the bishop ever had a problem attempting to help the Jews. His problems came from outside Campagna.

My conclusion based on reading the documentation, is that the overwhelming majority of documents reflect an active diocesan bishop and curia attempting to help the internees as best they could with limited funds and limited “influence”. In effect, Palatucci showed considerable pastoral concern for the internees. The gratitude shown by many of the internees indicates a sense that the Jews in Campagna felt the bishop was sympathetic and genuine in his attempts to help and understood the difficulties of war time. I have not found any indication that the internees felt their cases were “hopeless”.

The Jews of Campagna were not saved – they had not need of it because they were in no danger of deportation – but helped through the work of a saintly bishop and his equally saintly priests who did what they believed was the right thing, and they were saved through the good fortune of being interned in that part of Italy that was so close to the Allied lines at the time of the Italian surrender in September 1943. Any claim that these documents suggest a clear and unambiguous pattern of assistance to the Jews in Campagna from the Pope is simply not supported in these files.

Paul O'Shea

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¹ See Table 1.

² Julie Schnitzler was deported to Theresienstadt on 29 July 1942 and died there on 14 January 1943.

³ See too Actes et Documents, volume 6 passim.