

Lichten, Joseph L.
— A Question of —
ADT 6497

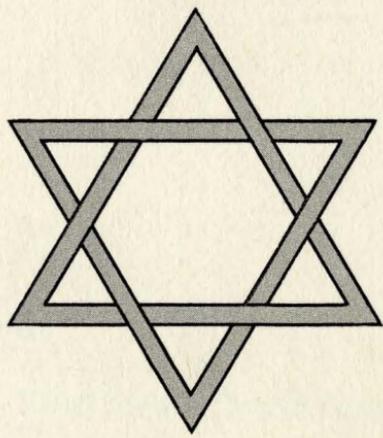
828580



Pius XII

A Question of Judgment

and the Jews



By Joseph L. Lichten

A QUESTION of JUDGMENT

PIUS XII and the JEWS

By

Joseph L. Lichten

1963

National Catholic Welfare Conference

1312 Massachusetts Ave., N.W.

Washington 5, D.C.

JOSEPH L. LICHTEN

Dr. Joseph L. Lichten is director of the Intercultural Affairs Department of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith. His special interest is the mutual understanding and cooperation between Catholic and Jewish communities in the United States.

Born in Poland, Dr. Lichten received a degree of Doctor of Law from the University of Warsaw. He was actively engaged in international diplomacy with the Polish Government and, from 1941 to 1945, was attached to the Embassy of the Polish Government in Exile in Washington, D.C., as consultant and advisor on Eastern European affairs and nationality problems. He left his country's diplomatic service when the Communists gained control of Poland, and is now an American citizen.

A QUESTION OF JUDGMENT: PIUS XII AND THE JEWS

by Joseph L. Lichten

In any human organization, the actions and attitudes of its leader color the image the organization has of itself and projects to those outside its membership. The stronger the leader, in his vested authority and in his person, the more firmly will this image be molded in his form.

This truism is particularly applicable to the Roman Catholic Church. Men speak of "good" popes and "bad," and of "good" and "bad" ages in the history of the Church. The judgments used to define these nebulous value words vary according to the judge's own culture, standards, faith or lack of it, and other equally subtle abstractions; Terence said it succinctly in *Phormio* (II, 4, 14): "*Quot homines, tot sententiae.*"

Recently an indictment has been brought down on Pope Pius XII, and by extension on the Catholic Church, of criminal implication in the extermination of some six million Jews during World War II. The principal accuser, in terms of publicity at least, does not present very convincing credentials, though he states his case persuasively. More important, it is Vatican practice not to open its archives on any period in history until several decades have passed. Therefore, the richest single source of information on Pope Pius XII's actions during his reign cannot be tapped.

Nonetheless, the question that has been raised has enormous significance; and it demands examination. One personal comment: many times, while searching through the appropriate documentation, I was also searching my soul. In view of my personal tragedy,

I have a special obligation to scrutinize every detail related to the Jewish tragedy of the last war.

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 his 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 in relation to the insane behavior of the Nazis, from overlords to self-styled cogs like Eichmann, he 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. To the Sacred College of Cardinals Pius XII wrote on June 2, 1943: "Every word that We addressed to the responsible authorities and every one of Our public declarations had to be seriously weighed and considered in the interest of the persecuted themselves in order not to make their situation unwittingly even more difficult and unbearable." ¹

The defense and the prosecution, to extend the metaphor, have both stated their positions strongly and publicly, taking the material for their arguments from as much of the record of Pius XII's activities as is now known, from knowledge of the Pope's character, and from personal recollections.



There is considerable documentation in support of Pope Pius' fear that a formal statement would worsen, not improve, conditions for the persecuted. Ernst von Weizsäcker, the German ambassador to the Vatican during World War II, wrote in his memoirs:

Not even institutions of worldwide importance, such as the International Red Cross or the Roman Catholic Church, saw fit to appeal to Hitler in a general way on behalf of the Jews or to call openly on the sympathies of the world. It was precisely because they wanted to help the Jews that these organi-

zations refrained from making any general and public appeals; for they were afraid that they would injure rather than help the Jews thereby.²

Pius XII's "silence," let us remember, extended to persecutions of Catholics as well. Despite his intervention, 3000 Catholic priests were murdered by the Nazis in Germany, Austria, Poland, France, and other countries; Catholic schools were shut down, Catholic publications forced out of print or strictly censored, Catholic churches closed. The possibility of a public statement from the Vatican moved German Foreign Secretary Joachim von Ribbentrop to wire Von Weizsäcker on January 24, 1943:

Should the Vatican either politically or propagandistically oppose Germany, it should be made unmistakably clear that a worsening of relations between Germany and the Vatican would not at all have an adverse effect on Germany alone. On the contrary, the German government would have sufficient effective propaganda material as well as retaliatory measures at its disposal to counteract each attempted move by the Vatican.³

Pius learned precisely how firm this German threat was from the protest of the Dutch bishops against seizures of the Jews, for immediately following that protest and, as later confirmed by an SS officer, in direct answer to it, the Nazis stepped up their anti-Jewish activities in the Netherlands: a week after the pastoral letter was read at all the masses in Holland, the SS rounded up every priest and monk and nun who had any "Jewish blood" whatever, and deported them to concentration camps.⁴ Pius and his bishops and nuncios in Nazi-occupied or -dominated countries knew that, like a sane man faced with a gun-carrier threatening to shoot, Hitler and his cohorts could not be considered civilized human beings. As Archbishop Andrea Cassulo, papal nuncio in Roumania, said in June, 1942, "I must proceed cautiously because [my actions] could ruin, instead of being useful to, so many wretched persons whom I must often listen to and help."⁵

The Pope's decision to refrain from a formal condemnation of the Nazis' treatment of Jews was approved by many Jews. One Berlin couple, Mr. and Mrs. Wolfsson, came to Rome after having been in prison and concentration camps. They took shelter in a

convent of German nuns while Pius himself, whom they had seen during an audience, arranged for them to escape to Spain. Recalling those terrible days, the Wolfssons recently declared:

None of us wanted the Pope to take an open stand. We were all fugitives, and fugitives do not wish to be pointed at. The Gestapo would have become more excited and would have intensified its inquisitions. If the Pope had protested, Rome would have become the center of attention. It was better that the Pope said nothing. We all shared this opinion at the time, and this is still our conviction today.⁶

In a letter in the London *Times* of May 15, 1963, Sir Alec Randall, a former British representative at the Vatican, comments:

Others besides Pius XII had to face a similar agonizing dilemma. The Polish cardinal, Prince Sapieha, begged Pius XII not to make public protests, as they only increased the persecution of his people. The International Red Cross refrained from protest because they feared that their work in German-controlled countries would be stopped. The British and American Governments were accused of callous indifference to the fate of the Jews because they failed to take them out of Nazi clutches before it was too late. To have done what was asked of them would have prolonged the war.

Pius XII's defenders in print—among others Sir D'Arcy Osborne, Msgr. Alberto Giovannetti, Father Robert Leiber, and Harry Greenstein,⁷ who represent three faiths and four nationalities—point to two elements of the Pope's personal philosophy in addition to the pragmatic reason for his decision to refrain from an explicit condemnation of the Nazis. First, he considered it his paramount duty to be pastor of the universal Church, and in his eyes this position required the strictest impartiality. Second, as an experienced diplomat, he knew full well that the days when a Vatican sanction carried weight were long since past, as Sir Alec Randall points out: ⁸ we have already seen just how correct this appraisal was. The era of renewed spiritual and moral leadership introduced by the pontificate of John XXIII had not yet dawned.

The undercurrent of all the Pope did was embodied in his words to Archbishop Angelo Roncalli, later to become Pope John,

when the papal nuncio came from Istanbul to visit Pius XII: "Above all else comes the saving of human lives." 9

One of the strongest testimonials to Pius' great feeling for Jews comes from an unpublished interview I had with Dr. Herman Datyner, a distinguished urologist. In 1940 Dr. Datyner, helped by his numerous international contacts, escaped from Warsaw into Italy, where, like all Jews and foreigners, he was arrested. He was sent from one camp to another and spent a total of four years interned. Orders were sent to these camps every few months for Jews to be deported to German concentration camps, but each instruction was sabotaged or thwarted, and it was known among the internees that the intervention on their behalf had come directly from the Vatican.

In 1945, as a member of the Inter-Allied Conference for Refugees and a special representative of all Jewish refugee groups and organizations in Italy, Dr. Datyner asked for and received an audience with Pius XII in order to thank the Supreme Pontiff for his help and care during the war years. He memorized a part of Pius' conversation, and repeats it with emotion today:

Yes, I know, my son, all the sufferings of you Jews. I am sorry, truly sorry, about the loss of your family. I suffered a great deal, . . . knowing about Jewish sufferings, and I tried to do whatever was in my power in order to make your fate easier. . . . I will pray to God that happiness will return to you, to your people. Tell them this.



The prosecution has rallied behind a young German playwright named Rolf Hochhuth, whose play, *Der Stellvertreter* (*The Representative*), first performed in Berlin on February 20, 1963, and in London September 25, carries a message summed up in the words of its main protagonist, the young Jesuit Riccardo Fontana: "A Vicar of Christ who sees these things before his eyes and still remains silent because of state policies, who delays even one day . . . such a pope . . . is a criminal!"

To substantiate his accusation, Mr. Hochhuth adds 46 pages of documentation to the printed play,¹⁰ and excerpts quotations

from the writings of two well-known contemporary thinkers, among others: the Catholic Francois Mauriac and the Jew Léon Poliakov.

The documentation which the playwright presents has impressed a good many people, especially reviewers, most of whom mention this "factual substantiation" in their treatment of the play. Hochhuth's efforts are indeed commendable, though a student of the history of the period will notice—obviously—the bias created by lacunae (the playwright is only interested, of course, in supporting his thesis) and—more subtly—unjustified conclusions. An example is found on page 312 of the English edition of the play, where Hochhuth writes:

But what Donati reported to the Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine (Documents CC XVII-78) about the official attitude of the diplomats of the Holy See, should be quoted. In the autumn of 1942, Donati had a note referring to the situation of the Jews in Southern France delivered to the Pope through the agency of the Father General of the Capucins, in which he asked for Papal assistance. It was not forthcoming.

The Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine in Paris contains abundant and thoroughly validated material on the relations between Angelo Donati, an Italian Jew to whom (as Hochhuth points out) many of his coreligionists owe their lives, and the Capuchin Father Benoît-Marie, as well as on the Vatican's actual response to pleas from Donati and others; I will summarize that material later in this article. Hochhuth's conclusion, "[Papal assistance] was not forthcoming," cannot be other than a deliberate distortion.

One of the several quotations which appear in the front of both the German and the English published versions of *The Representative* suffers from similar distortion. To Hochhuth's credit, when he was called to account on this matter, he promised to correct the English edition, which he has done. In the German printing, M. Mauriac is quoted as follows: "We have not yet had the consolation of hearing the successor to the Galilean Simon Peter condemn, unequivocally and clearly and not with diplomatic allusions, the crucifixion of these countless 'brothers of the Lord.' . . . a crime of such magnitude falls in no small measure to the

responsibility of those witnesses who never cried out against it—whatever the reason for their silence.” However, the missing middle sentence—which Hochhuth reinstates in the English edition of the play—reads: “No doubt the occupying forces were able to bring irresistible pressure to bear, no doubt the silence of the Pope and his cardinals was a most terrible duty; the important thing was to avoid even worse misfortunes.”¹¹ Mauriac, like Poliakov, as we shall see, was obviously not blind to the incredible dilemma Pope Pius found himself in, Hochhuth’s selective quotation notwithstanding.

Dr. Poliakov’s emphasis, in his book *The Jews under the Italian Occupation* and elsewhere, has been the same: granted, Pius XII did extend help and comfort to the Jews—the record is quite clear on this score—but he did not do enough. This “enough” would have been a firm protest, a formal statement, from the Vatican against the German “solution of the Jewish problem.” Yet Poliakov says also that “during the Hitler terror, the clergy acted untiringly and unceasingly to give humane help, with the approval and on the prompting of the Vatican.” Furthermore:

This direct aid given the persecuted Jews by the Pope in his capacity as bishop of Rome was the symbolic expression of an activity that was extended throughout the whole of Europe, encouraging and promoting the efforts put forth by the Catholic churches in the majority of countries. It is certain that secret instructions were sent out by the Vatican, urging the national churches to intervene in behalf of the Jews.¹²

These instructions, Poliakov adds, rendered special papal instructions or statements unnecessary. 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*). The letter began with a quotation from Pius XI’s encyclical excoriating Nazi doctrines, *Mit brennender Sorge* (*With Burning Sorrow*), and ordered 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.

Poliakov’s position, then, is essentially negative, though with noteworthy qualifications:

The humanitarian activities of the Vatican were necessarily circumscribed with prudence and caution. The immense responsibilities on the Pope's shoulders and the powerful weapons the Nazis could use against the Holy See undoubtedly combined to prevent him from making a formal public protest, though the persecuted keenly hoped to hear one. It is sad to have to say that during the entire war, while the laboratories of death worked to capacity, the Pope kept his silence.¹³

It is a matter of record, of course, that Pope Pius XII did not launch a verbal attack directly against the Third Reich; the statements he did make during World War II, with rare exceptions, were general expressions of sorrow and sympathy for all victims of oppression of any kind, and did not name names. As Von Weizsäcker wrote in a report to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Berlin on October 28, 1943:

Regardless of the advice of many, the Pope has not yet let himself be persuaded to make an official condemnation of the deportation of the Roman Jews. Despite the fact that he must expect his attitude to be criticized by our enemies and attacked by the Protestants in Anglo-Saxon countries, who will use it in their anti-Catholic propaganda, he has thus far achieved the impossible in these delicate circumstances in order not to put his relations with the German government and with its representatives at Rome to the test. Since it is currently thought that the Germans will take no further steps against the Jews in Rome, the question of our relations with the Vatican may be considered closed.

In any case, it appears that such is the viewpoint of the Vatican. *Osservatore Romano* of October 25-26, however, published an official statement on the Pope's charitable activities. The statement, which was couched in the usual abstract and vague Vatican terminology, said that the Pope expressed his paternal solicitude for all men without regard to race, nationality, or religion. The many activities of the Pope would be increased because so many were suffering so much misfortune.

One could not raise any objection to this statement because

few will recognize a direct reference to the Jewish problem in it.¹⁴

According to the March, 1961, article "Pius XII and the Jews, 1943-1944" in the Jesuit publication *Civiltà Cattolica*, by Father Robert Leiber, Pius XII's personal assistant from 1924 to 1959, the Pope directly denounced an illegal procedure only once during the entire war: the German invasion of Holland, Belgium, and Luxemburg on May 10, 1940, prompted the now famous telegrams to the heads of the three invaded states. These messages aside, Pius XII followed the policy of Benedict XV during World War I, and protested in general terms against injustices and violence wherever these might be found.

But is it correct to say that Pius XII was otherwise silent on the subject of Nazi atrocities? Had he utterly ignored the plight of the Jews, the term would be appropriate; had he spoken directly in their cause, he might today be called foolhardy—if we are to carry even his accusers' admissions to their logical conclusion. In effect, he chose a third course, one dictated by his long experience as a Vatican statesman and his great desire to save lives.

Many persons have already taken up the dispute, and some of their comments will be quoted in the present article. Rolf Hochhuth was a child during the period in question; further, his primary motivation was to write a good play and not an accurate record, and his historic perspective—like that of us all—is insufficient for a just critique of Pius' actions. If he were the only accuser, we could dismiss the issue; too much noise has been made about Hochhuth's drama *qua* drama as it is. But the controversy, coming on the heels of Dr. Hannah Arendt's question of why the Jews did not defend themselves better, has drawn more thoughtful minds into its wake. Some Jewish leaders who had none but words of praise for Pius' efforts on behalf of the Jews now point fingers of blame at him, effectively reversing their position of fifteen and twenty years' standing.

I think it would be well to examine more closely the record, as far as we now know it, of what Pope Pius actually said and did, how his words and actions were received by both Catholics and non-Catholics, and—perhaps most important—what motives are attributed to him; for in our Western culture, motivation is an essential factor in any discussion of a man's probity.

That the Pope was deeply antagonistic to the racism the National-Socialists advocated is evident from his work prior to his election to the papacy. The famous *Mit brennender Sorge* shows the hand of Pacelli, then Vatican secretary of state; more directly, as papal legate, Pacelli spoke these scathing words to 250,000 pilgrims at Lourdes on April 28, 1935:

They [the Nazis] are in reality only miserable plagiarists who dress up old errors with new tinsel. It does not make any difference whether they flock to the banners of the social revolution, whether they are guided by a false conception of the world and of life, or whether they are possessed by the superstition of a race and blood cult.¹⁵

Pacelli had obviously established his position clearly, for the Fascist governments of both Italy and Germany spoke out vigorously against the possibility of his election to succeed Pius XI in March of 1939, though the cardinal secretary of state had served as papal nuncio in Germany from 1917 to 1929 and had been instrumental in the signing of a Concordat between Germany and the Vatican. The day after his election, the Berlin *Morgenpost* said: "The election of Cardinal Pacelli is not accepted with favor in Germany because he was always opposed to Nazism and practically determined the policies of the Vatican under his predecessor."

As I wrote in the *Anti-Defamation League Bulletin* for October, 1958, the new Vicar of Christ showed no softening after his election toward Hitler's brutal policies; Pius the Pope was the same man as Pacelli the priest. Von Ribbentrop, granted a formal audience on March 11, 1940, went into a lengthy harangue on the invincibility of the Third Reich, the inevitability of a Nazi victory, and the futility of papal alignment with the enemies of the Führer. Pius XII heard Von Ribbentrop out politely and impassively. Then he opened an enormous ledger on his desk and, in his perfect German, began to recite a catalogue of the persecutions inflicted by the Third Reich in Poland, listing the date, place, and precise details of each crime. The audience was terminated; the Pope's position was clearly unshakable.

Summi Pontificatus, the first encyclical of his pontificate, issued October 20, 1939, had strongly attacked the doctrines of totalitarianism, racism, and materialism. The encyclical read in

part: "The first of these pernicious errors, today so widespread, is the disregard for that law of human solidarity and charity dictated and imposed . . . by the common origin and equality in their rational nature of all men, regardless of the people to which they belong." ¹⁶ In his Christmas Message of 1942 and in similar terms on June 2, 1943, he deplored the treatment of

. . . hundreds of thousands of persons who, through no fault of their own and by the single fact of their nationality or race, have been condemned to death or to progressive extinction. . . . It is a consolation for Us that, through the moral and spiritual assistance of Our representatives and through Our financial assistance, We have been able to comfort a great many of the refugees, homeless, and emigrants, including non-Aryans.¹⁷

That assistance was of inestimable value. It can be divided roughly into the two categories Pius XII names in the above broadcast: the work of the Vatican's representatives—the nuncios, bishops, clergy and religious, and laymen—and the financial assistance and other material services rendered the persecuted either directly by the Vatican or through appeals from the Holy See.



On behalf of the Jews of Slovakia, Pius XII intervened directly and—contrary to the allegations of his accusers—in unambiguous terms. A government ordinance, called simply the Jewish Code, was passed on September 9, 1941, parroting the antisemitic regulations of the Third Reich. A lengthy note was prepared by the Vatican Secretariat of State and transmitted on November 12 to the Slovak minister to the Holy See, Karl Sidor. It read in part:

. . . With the deepest sorrow the Holy See has learned that also in Slovakia, a country whose population almost totally honors the best Catholic tradition, a "Government Ordinance" was issued on September 9 establishing special "racial legislation" and containing various regulations in open contrast with Catholic principles.

In fact the Church, universal by the will of her divine

Founder, welcomes to her bosom people of all races, and views all mankind with a maternal solicitude for the purpose of creating and developing among all men feelings of brotherhood and love, in accordance with the explicit and categorical teaching of the Gospel¹⁸

Five weeks earlier, the Slovak bishops had sent a protest note to Jozef Tiso, the President of the puppet state:

. . . It does not escape the attention of the careful examiner that the philosophical conception on the basis of which the present ordinance has been drawn up is the racist ideology We do not intend to enumerate here all the dangerous errors that this doctrine conceals in itself We wish only to recall that the materialistic theory of racism is in direct contradiction with the teaching of the Catholic Church on the common origin of all men from a single Creator and Father, on the substantial equality of men before God stressed especially by the Apostle of the peoples, on the common supernatural destiny of men in consequence of the universal redemption work of Christ The so-called Jewish Code violates natural law and the freedom of individual conscience.¹⁹

This was but one of many protests directly from Pius XII or from the bishops against the persecution and deportation of Slovakian Jews. These provoked Prime Minister Vojtech Tuka to write on March 3, 1943:

It is incomprehensible to the government that ecclesiastic circles and especially the Catholic clergy should today adduce so many protests against the elimination of the Jews, who in the past were most responsible for the misery of the Slovak people The Slovak clergy—save for a few honorable exceptions—has rarely showed such zeal for the interests of its own people as it does now for the interests of the Jews, and in many cases even for those who are not baptized²⁰

Despite this and other verbal rejections of the protests from the Catholic hierarchy, Pius' pleas were finally heeded: although 70,000 Jews had been deported from the new pro-Nazi republic, the papal nuncio in Bratislava succeeded in obtaining a promise from the puppet government that further deportation plans would

largely be discarded. But when the Germans occupied Slovakia in early fall of 1944, the semblance of independence which that country had maintained for five years vanished, and with it the hard-won reprieves for the remaining Jewish population. Under the urging of the Vatican, the Slovak government protested the Nazis' familiar brutality toward the Jews, but to no avail. All the Pope could now do was continue to express his concern. A telegram sent in October to Archbishop Roncalli in Istanbul read that the Holy See, "despite the increasing difficulties, including those of communications, is still following with great attention the fate of the Jews in Slovakia and Hungary, and will leave nothing undone to help them."²¹

The papal nuncio in Roumania, Monsignor Andrea Cassulo, exercised his considerable diplomatic and spiritual authority in behalf of the Jews throughout the war; he made his first formal efforts as early as February 16, 1941. He worked untiringly to win the government's permission to send Jewish orphans to Palestine, and with some success. On October 20 he registered an official protest with Mihail Antonescu, Minister of Foreign Affairs, against the government's admitted plans to "regulate the Jewish question," and came, through his repeated intercessions, to be known to the Jewish population of Roumania as an ever-willing source of assistance.²²

Because of his close contact with Roumania's Chief Rabbi Safran throughout the war, Archbishop Cassulo kept himself and the Vatican informed about the condition of Roumanian Jews, especially those interned in concentration camps beyond the Dnieper. In 1942 and 1943, prompted by Pope Pius XII, the nuncio visited numbers of camps, taking with him considerable sums of money sent by the Pope for distribution among the prisoners. Following the 1943 visit, the Archbishop presented a ten-point request to Rado Lecca, the government official in charge of Jewish affairs, to alleviate the misery in the camps; by June, 1943, Rabbi Safran was able to report to him that conditions had improved noticeably as a result.²³

The Holy See's interest in the plight of the Roumanian Jews is attested to by Archbishop Cassulo's own official messages and memoranda as well as the testimony of Rabbi Safran. On November 24, 1942, the apostolic nuncio sent Mihail Antonescu a note which read in part:

Ever since the Roumanian government has come to believe itself bound to examine the diverse aspects of the Jewish question in Roumania and to solve it in accordance with the country's interests, the Holy See has been concerned, above all other considerations, with . . . the respect that must be assured to every innocent person who is abandoned and without support²⁴

The note, written immediately after Archbishop Cassulo's return from a visit to Rome, came at a particularly dangerous time for Roumania's Jews. The Third Reich was exerting heavy pressure for mass deportations of Jews eastward, to beyond the Bug River where German police were in command. In the opinion of many members of the diplomatic corps in Bucharest, the nuncio's applications were responsible for first the suspension of the deportation plans and then their postponement until the following year.²⁵ The Jewish community in Roumania asked Archbishop Cassulo on February 14, 1943, to write their gratitude to Pius XII for the help of the Vatican and its nunciature.²⁶

A Dr. Frederic, a young German Foreign Office agent, was sent on a tour through various Nazi-occupied and satellite countries to feel out their reaction to the Germans. As Frederic wrote in his confidential report to the German Foreign Office datelined Berlin, September 19, 1943, his meeting in Lwow with the Ukrainian leaders and Metropolitan Sheptytsky was far from heartening: the Metropolitan remained adamant in saying that the killing of Jews was "an inadmissible act," and Frederic comments, "In this issue the Metropolitan made the same statements and even used the same phrasing as the French, Belgian, and Dutch bishops, as if all of them were receiving the same instructions from the Vatican."²⁷

The action taken to help the Jews in Hungary was manifold. In the spring of 1944, the papal nuncio, Msgr. Angelo Rotta, warned that country on the first day of the deportation of Jews that the whole world knew what they really signified; on June 25, 1944, he delivered Miklós Horthy a letter which was a strong protest from the Pope.²⁸ Prior to the onslaught on Hungarian Jews by the Fascists, Hungary responded to promptings from the Vatican and gave asylum to Jewish refugees from Poland and Slovakia. As the bloodbath swept Hungary, the Vatican notified its nuncios in Budapest and Bratislava to watch the situation and do all they

could for the welfare of Jewish refugees.²⁹ At about the same time, the Pope had the following message sent to the World Jewish Congress, with which he was in communication during the war:

Whenever reports reached the Holy See that the situation of the Jews in Hungary was becoming worse, steps were immediately taken to assist these people and to alleviate their condition. The Holy See gives assurance that it will continue to act in behalf of these Jews. Following instructions from the Holy See, the Apostolic Nunciature in Budapest has repeatedly intervened with the Hungarian authorities so that violent and unjust measures would not be taken against the Jews in that country. The bishops of Hungary have engaged in an intense activity in favor of persecuted Jews. The action on the part of the Nunciature and the bishops will continue as long as necessary. . . . The Holy Father . . . [sent] a personal open telegram to the Cardinal [Archbishop of Strigonium (Esztergom)], and in this communication His Holiness again manifested his heartfelt interest in promoting the welfare of all those exposed to violence and persecution because of their race or religion or on account of political motives. The Holy Father gives assurance that he will, in the future as in the past, do everything in favor of these people in Hungary or in any other European country.³⁰

The Pope's words, discreet as they are, give little indication of how intense the clergy's activity was. The nuncio spoke out sharply, as did the Hungarian bishops, and simultaneously undertook as widespread rescue measures as possible. Helped by priests and nuns, he and the bishops sheltered several thousand Jews, distributed false papers, and provided information, clothing, and food; Laszlo Endre, the Undersecretary of the Interior in the pro-Nazi government, said testily that "as far as aid to the Jews is concerned, priests and clergymen . . . unfortunately are in the first rank. Protection and intervention have never been on such a large scale as today."³¹

The Catholic bishops of Holland published a pastoral letter read in all the Catholic churches throughout the country on April 19, 1942, condemning "the unmerciful and unjust treatment meted out to Jews by those in power in our country."³² And in a telegram dated July 11, 1942, the bishops demanded the suspension of

coercive measures against unchristened as well as christened Jews. But the deportations continued. On July 26, the bishops joined with representatives of almost all other religious communities to denounce the Nazis' lawless measures, but the response, as we have seen, was mass arrests of Catholics and Jews, among them Dr. Edith Stein, a convert to Catholicism and a nun, who was sent to Auschwitz.³³

In France, as everywhere else that humans were being victimized by the Nazis, Pius XII's aim was to utilize the Vatican's spiritual and material resources as completely as possible to help the oppressed in their misery. His means were deliberately quiet; we know how strongly he felt that any direct attack by the Vatican on Axis policies would spell at least interference with and at worst complete contravention of the Church's activities. Yet his exhortations to Catholics to cleave to the humane principles of their religion, like his messages to his bishops to do all they could to help, within the limitations of local conditions, were quite clear in their implications. Late in June, 1943, the Vatican radio warned the French people, "He who makes a distinction between Jews and other men is unfaithful to God and is in conflict with God's commands."³⁴ Catholic bishops and priests had long since been following these promptings, as two 1942 pastoral letters attest. The first, from Archbishop (later Cardinal) Jules Gérard Saliège of Toulouse and read on August 23, strongly echoed the principles stressed over and over by Pius:

There is a Christian morality . . . that confers rights and imposes duties. These duties and these rights come from God. One can violate them. But no mortal has the power to suppress them. Alas, it has been our destiny to witness the dreadful spectacle of children, women, and old men being treated like vile beasts; of families being torn apart and deported to unknown destinations In our diocese, frightful things are taking place in Noe and Rechedou [camps] The Jews are our brethren. They belong to mankind. No Christian dares forget that!³⁵

A week later the priests of the diocese of Montauban read to their congregations a letter from their bishop, Pierre-Marie Théas:

On behalf of my outraged Christian conscience, I raise my voice in protest [against the treatment of Jews], and I assert

that all men, Aryans and non-Aryans, are brothers because they have been created by the same God; that all men, whatever their race or religion, have the right to be respected by individuals and states. The present antisemitic pressures flout human dignity and violate the most sacred rights of the human person and family. . . .³⁶

That Pius' exhortations were effective, and that local officials charged with "the Jewish question" recognized this, there is no doubt. Witness a communication to SS Standard-Leader Dr. Knochen in early summer of 1943 concerning southeastern France, then occupied by Italian forces:

A treasonable propaganda is exploiting this difference between the conceptions of the German and the Italian governments in the matter of solving the Jewish question. Its theme is the following: in the first place, the "worthiness" of the measures applied; and in the second place, their Christian and Catholic conception, as it is inspired by the Vatican.³⁷

How receptive the Vatican was to proposals for helping the Jews is illustrated by the story of the now legendary Father Benoît-Marie of Marseilles. Conditions in France had become acutely dangerous for Jews by late 1942; the Vichy government had promised to deliver 50,000 Jews of foreign origin to the Germans, and had begun a ruthless manhunt that summer, especially in the large cities on the Mediterranean coast. Vichy had been allowing Jews to slip into southeastern France, a free zone, for several years, so that the normal Jewish population of some 15,000 had increased by many ten thousands when Italian forces entered the area on November 11, 1942. Father Benoît-Marie, a Capuchin priest, not only persuaded the Italian inspector-general of police in Nice, Guido Lospinoso, not to comply with the deportation orders, but proceeded—under the perhaps deliberately blind eye of the Italian occupation forces—to turn his monastery in Marseilles into a veritable rescue factory manufacturing passports, identification cards, certificates of baptism, and employers' recommendation letters for Jews, and to smuggle numbers of Jews into Spain and Switzerland. But the priest was not satisfied with these enterprises, and took advantage of a trip to Rome—he had been summoned by the Italian government to be censured for his suspected activities—to present a larger plan to Pius XII on July 16, 1943. In essence,

the plan would include gathering information on the whereabouts of Jews deported from France eastward, particularly to Upper Silesia, the location of Auschwitz; obtaining more humane treatment of Jews in French concentration camps; working for the repatriation of Spanish Jews who were residing in France; and transferring some 50,000 French Jews to North Africa where, in view of Allied military successes, they would be safe. The Pope agreed heartily with Father Benoît-Marie's plan, and helped him obtain pledges of support from Britain and the United States as well as from Jewish organizations sources in the Allied countries. But the project was destined to fail: with the surrender of the Badoglio government to the Allies, German troops swept into the Italian zone of France, and thousands of Jews fled in panic across the Alps into Italy and Switzerland.

Determined to salvage what he could of his plan, Father Benoît-Marie again approached the Vatican, which helped him prevail upon the Spanish government to authorize its consuls in France to issue entry permits to all Jews who could prove Spanish nationality. In case of doubt, the final decision rested in the hands of that impartial arbiter, Father Benoit-Marie.³⁸

In Belgium, the Catholics of Liège observed February 28, 1943, as a day of prayer for the persecuted Jews throughout Europe. Said the Catholic newspaper *Appel des Cloches*, "In communing and praying this Sunday for the persecuted Jewish people who were once Christ's chosen people, we shall be acting in accordance with the directives issued by His Eminence the Bishop."³⁹

Pius XII's record in relation to the Jews of Germany, which the Pope knew well from his 12 years there as papal nuncio, is very significant, for from Germany has come the defamatory picture of the wartime pope as a criminal. Numbers of German Christians and Jews have published vehement denials of Hochhuth's charge. They support their position by citing Pius' actions to help the Jews through his representatives in Germany. Msgr. Walter Adolph, Vicar-General of the diocese of Berlin, has written a particularly cogent account. He says that Pius XII, in previously unpublished correspondence with Bishop (later Cardinal) von Preysing of Berlin, encouraged him and his clergy in their protests against every sort of inhumanity. Typical of Pius' letters is this one:

We are grateful to you, dear Brother, for the clear and open words you have spoken on different occasions to your faithful community and thus to the public; We think hereby of your statement on June 28, 1942, among others, about the Christian conception of right and justice; of your speech on Totensonntag [Sunday of the Dead] last November about the fundamental human right to life and love; We think also especially of your Pastoral, issued on Advent, 1942, and which was also directed to the West German Church Provinces, on God's sovereign rights, the rights of the individual and the rights of the family.⁴⁰

We know from Goebbels' diary that the many pastoral letters issued in Germany during the war aroused the Nazis' contempt and hatred.

One of the Pope's letters to Bishop von Preysing treats the central dilemma that faced Pius XII all during the war:

We leave it to the [local] bishops to weigh the circumstances in deciding whether or not to exercise restraint, *ad maiora mala vitanda* [to avoid greater evil]. This would be advisable if the danger of retaliatory and coercive measures would be imminent in cases of public statements by the bishop. Here lies one of the reasons We Ourselves restrict Our public statements. The experience We had in 1942 with documents which We released for distribution to the faithful gives justification, as far as We can see, for Our attitude.⁴¹

The history of Vatican intervention in Nazi cruelties to the Jews dates back to April, 1933, when Pope Pius XI sent an urgent request to the then new Hitler government not to let itself be influenced by antisemitic aims. From 1939 onward, the public record shows countless Vatican intercessions on behalf of Jews, both prompted by pleas from Jewish and other sources and owing to the personal initiative of Pius XII. Many German Catholic prelates met their death as a result of their criticism of the Reich for its treatment of Jews. One, Msgr. Bernhard Lichtenberg, dean of St. Hedwig's Cathedral in Berlin, called on his congregation to pray "for Jews and inmates of concentration camps" after the pogroms of November, 1938, and his many similar protests led to his arrest in October, 1942. "We have been comforted to hear . . . that the

Catholics, especially the Catholics in Berlin, have extended much love to the so-called non-Aryans, and in this connection We want to say a special word of fatherly appreciation and heartfelt sympathy for Father Lichtenberg, who is imprisoned.”⁴² Father Lichtenberg voluntarily applied for transfer to the ghetto in Lodz, but was sent to Dachau instead; he died on the way to the camp in November, 1943.⁴³

What were Pius XII's actions in Italy, his native land and the country surrounding his own Vatican City? What was his response to the evils being committed almost literally under his windows, since the Jewish ghetto in Rome was so near the Vatican?

Early in the German occupation of Italy, the SS began their persecution of the Jews. On September 27, 1943, one of the commanders demanded of the Jewish community in Rome payment of 100 pounds of gold in 36 hours, failing which 300 Jews would be taken prisoner. The Jewish Community Council worked desperately, but was able to gather together only 70 pounds of the precious metal. In his memoirs, the then Chief Rabbi Zolli of Rome writes that he was sent to the Vatican, where arrangements had already been made to receive him as an “engineer” called to survey a construction problem so that the Gestapo on watch at the Vatican would not bar his entry. He was met by the Vatican treasurer and secretary of state, who told him that the Holy Father himself had given orders for the deficit to be filled with gold vessels taken from the Treasury.⁴⁴ There is some disagreement today among some of the principals involved—Zolli, other prominent Jews of Rome, and Father Robert Leiber—over the amount of gold demanded as ransom and whether the Community Council actually borrowed the gold; but there is no question that the Vatican did make the offer.

From the first days of the war, Pope Pius distributed untold sums to aid Jews all over Europe. The Vatican's own refugee agencies and the St. Raphael Verein gave financial and other material help in amounts we cannot begin to guess until the Vatican archives are opened, but the sums which passed through the hands of the Pallottine fathers, who administered the St. Raphael Verein and who kindly gave me materials from their own records, were very large. In addition, Pope Pius supervised the receipt and disposition of funds sent in his care by various sympathetic individuals and groups in Europe and the Americas, notably the Catholic

Refugee Committee of the United States. American Jews put large sums into the hands of the Pope, who distributed them according to the wishes of the donors; Father Leiber estimates that Pius received some 2½ billion lire from Jews in the United States by the end of 1945.⁴⁵

Pius XII was as sensitive to the spiritual needs of the Jews during World War II as he was to their material wants. None of the many Vatican services for refugees worked harder at its tasks than the Ufficio Informazioni Vaticano, to which Pius XII assigned the difficult job of seeking news for Jews in Italy of relatives who had been interned or left in other countries. The German Division of the Office of Information received a total of 102,026 appeals for information concerning Jews still in Germany between 1941 and 1945, and was able to furnish 36,877 replies, despite the fact that as the war wore on it could use few standard channels of investigation because of the danger that direct inquiry would have involved for the subjects.

When the Nazis forbade ritual slaughter to the Jews, the Pope sent *shohetim* into Vatican City to perform the ritual slaughter and store food for the Jews sheltered there. Many Jewish citizens, expelled from government, scientific, and teaching positions, were invited to the Vatican; the president and two professors from the University of Rome and a famous geographer, all Jews ousted by the Fascists, received important positions in Vatican City. Bernard Berenson, who preferred to remain in Italy during the war, was given asylum in a villa near Florence, which belonged to the Holy See's minister to the Republic of San Marino, so that he could continue to work and live unmolested; he and his family stayed there, under the flag of the Vatican's diplomatic immunity, until British and American troops arrived in the late summer of 1944.

A Jewish organization, the Delegation for Assistance to Jewish Emigrants (DELASEM), established in Genoa in September, 1939, was forced underground when the Germans occupied the city. Its treasury of 5 million lire was entrusted to Father Giuseppe Repetto, secretary to the archbishop of Genoa; a fifth of this sum was put in the hands of one Padre Benedetto, newly appointed president of DELASEM, who took the money to Rome on April 20, 1944. DELASEM continued its operations from its new headquarters in Father Benedetto's residence, the International College

of Capuchins in Rome, and through the indefatigable prelate kept in touch with the International Red Cross, the Pontifical Relief Commission, the Italian police and other civil authorities, and even the German occupation forces. The priest set his coreligionists and DELASEM to work manufacturing false documents and establishing contact with sympathetic Italian, Swiss, Hungarian, French, and Roumanian officials.⁴⁷ If these details seem familiar, it should come as no surprise; Father Benedetto was the French Father Benoît-Marie, who had gone to Italy when his grand plan to help the Jews in southeastern France collapsed under the German occupation of the region.

Among the thousands of personal histories of Vatican assistance, moral and material, is that of Dr. Meier Mendes, who recently recalled in a Catholic newspaper the efforts made on behalf of his family in 1939. When Dr. Mendes' father lost his professorship at the University of Rome as a result of the Fascist antisemitic campaigns, the Vatican offered him an important post at a Catholic university in South America. Professor Mendes asked in return whether the Church could help him and his family reach Palestine; the British government, said Dr. Mendes, had restricted immigration severely. Acting on instructions from Pius XII, the then Msgr. Giovanni Battista Montini, prosecretary of state, "intervened vigorously" with the British authorities and succeeded in obtaining an immigration certificate for the Mendes family outside the regular immigration quotas.⁴⁸

In the realm of material help for refugees, Pius XII's program under the direction of Father Anton Weber was perhaps the broadest in scope of any of the Pope's special aid operations.

Father Weber, today procurator-general of the Order of the Pallotines in Rome, operated a rescue mission during the war for Nazi victims that was the direct outgrowth of the work Eugenio Cardinal Pacelli, when Vatican secretary of state, had begun on behalf of Jews in 1936. That year the German bishops had requested Cardinal Pacelli to ask the Vatican to found an International Emigrant Organization; Pius XI had agreed, and the Cardinal himself had written to all the American bishops asking for their support.⁴⁹

Prior to Italy's entry into the war, masses of Jews fled to Italy from Germany, Austria, Poland, Hungary, Yugoslavia, and other

Balkan states. St. Raphael Verein, an organization long active in helping emigrants leaving Europe for the New World, received instructions from Pope Pius to give the refugees care, without regard to their religion or nationality. Father Weber shortly had a well-run organization working for the protection and help of refugees in every imaginable direction. He first established contact with Jews scattered ail over Italy to prepare for possible emigration, and then, with the uninterrupted assistance of the Vatican, tackled the mountain of practical problems facing his enterprise. Passports, visas, medical certificates—valid and otherwise—had to be procured; the papal Ministry of State made innumerable requests of foreign governments for exit and entry papers, with more than fair success. The government of Brazil, for instance, supplied 3000 entry visas at first intended for Jewish converts to Catholicism, but that they were used by practicing Jews is undisputed. Transit visas, many of them for Portuguese ports, were difficult to procure from that country because its government required each emigrant to present a paid steamer ticket first; Father Weber established a special office in Lisbon, which was supported by Vatican funds, to handle that process. The operating costs of the rescue group were enormous: the price for each emigrant—transportation, food, and shelter—could run upward of \$800; and the first source for this money was the Vatican itself. By 1945 Father Weber's organization had given assistance to some 25,000 Jews, 4000 of whom were able to travel to safety overseas.⁵⁰

I used the phrase "valid and otherwise" regarding the official papers Father Weber's organization procured for Jews. The cloak-and-dagger story of the false documents supplied to Jews by the Church all over Europe and the Near East is not yet fully known; nor, if it were, could it be told, for there are countless numbers of Jews whose peaceful enjoyment of their new citizenship today still depends on the apparent validity of these papers. The Vatican both initiated and lent its support to a remarkable variety of secret manufacturing enterprises—like that of Father Benoît-Marie in France and later in Italy—as well as exerted pressure on Allied and neutral governments to grant entry or at least transit to Jews in danger of their lives. Jewish refugees in France holding Paraguayan passports in 1943 and 1944 approached the Vatican for help, fearing that recognition of their papers would be withdrawn by that South American government; through the

apostolic delegate in Paraguay, the Pope obtained assurances that the passports would continue to be valid. The Vatican interceded with the Germans to allow Jews in Bergen Belsen who held South American passports to receive packages of food and clothing. Endless other examples could be cited, but perhaps the most extraordinary part of this particular rescue mission is what Ira Hirschmann has called Operation Baptism.

Archbishop Cassulo's 1941 protest in Roumania was in answer to a state ruling that a change of religious status by a Jew did not alter his legal status as a member of that persecuted "race." For the authorities had become suspicious, as did those in the Balkans, Hungary, and elsewhere later, of the number of Jewish "converts" to Catholicism. Until such a ruling was made in a Nazi-controlled country, however, a Jew who could prove himself a member of the Catholic Church could usually use the evidence of that membership—a baptismal certificate—as a safe-conduct paper to leave the country. No records have been published regarding who conceived the idea or how it was implemented, but the existence of the false baptismal certificates, and their number in the thousands, is a fact. It is also a fact that the Vatican was well aware of the plan, and that members of resistance groups, apostolic nuncios, nuns, representatives of Jewish aid groups based in the Allied countries, and untold numbers of ordinary citizens risked their welfare if not their lives to promote the ingenious scheme. By mid-1944, when only the Jews of Budapest had been temporarily spared in blood-soaked Hungary, another beloved Catholic figure had thrown his weight to the wheel, increasing the distribution of the baptismal certificates many times over: this was Pius XII's close friend and successor, Archbishop Roncalli, the late Pope John XXIII.⁵¹

With the arrival of the Germans in Italy, the Jewish population was threatened by the same sword that had ruthlessly cut down so many of their coreligionists in other parts of Europe. The Pope spoke out strongly in their defense with the first mass arrests of Jews in 1943, and *Osservatore Romano* carried an article protesting the internment of Jews and the confiscation of their property. The Fascist press came to call the Vatican paper "a mouthpiece of the Jews," echoing the April, 1941, denunciation of the publication by Roberto Farinacci, Italy's leading promoter of racist doctrines.⁵² In keeping with Pius' conviction that direct attack on Fascist

policies would cause more harm than good, the Vatican paper had curbed its criticism of the regime after Italy's entry into the war, but it continued to carry statements like that made in March, 1943, that no social order "could be based on racial privilege and force."⁵³

The emigration operations in Italy necessarily came to a halt, with the last plane carrying Jewish refugees leaving Rome on September 8, 1943, and Father Weber's St. Raphael Verein turned to the dangerous task of assigning the Jews left behind to hiding places. The Pope sent out the order that religious buildings were to give refuge to Jews, even at the price of great personal sacrifice on the part of their occupants; he released monasteries and convents from the cloister rule forbidding entry into these religious houses to all but a few specified outsiders, so that they could be used as hiding places. Thousands of Jews—the figures run from 4000 to 7000—were hidden, fed, clothed, and bedded in the 180 known places of refuge in Vatican City, churches and basilicas, Church administrative buildings, and parish houses. Unknown numbers of Jews were sheltered in Castel Gandolfo, the site of the Pope's summer residence, private homes, hospitals, and nursing institutions; and the Pope took personal responsibility for the care of the children of Jews deported from Italy.

During the whole period of mass hiding of Jews, the Germans made only two raids and captured only a handful of people. The Pope protested strongly, and no further raids occurred; further, though the sheltered groups included many non-Jewish refugees, there was not a single case of betrayal.⁵⁴

One hiding place for Jews was a Jesuit church with a false ceiling. Each man given refuge in the church was assigned to a space over a side altar and referred to by the name of the saint which the altar carried. The priests of the church delighted in chatting about "Xavier" and "Robert Bellarmine" and "Gonzaga" in the presence of Nazi officers, who never caught on to the game.⁵⁵

The mass media have filled us with the sickening count of the lives sacrificed by the Nazis to their theory of racial purity; what we do not know is how many lives were saved by the humane work of such men as Pius XII. Official figures, cold as they are, may give us an inkling. In 1939 there were some 50,000 Jews in Italy; in 1946, there were 46,000, of whom 30,000 were Italians

and 16,000 refugees from Germany, Poland, Hungary, Yugoslavia, France, and other countries. Approximately 8000 Jews in all were taken by the Gestapo⁵⁶—a horrifying cipher, like all such, but far smaller than those that follow the names of most Nazi-occupied or -controlled countries in the rollcall of genocidal slaughter.



Ten years after his address to the pilgrims at Lourdes, Pope Pius returned full circle to the theme of brotherhood which, contrary to playwright Hochhuth's allegations, inspired his unflinching help to persecuted Jews. After the liberation of Rome, while there was apprehension over the fate of Jewish prisoners in the hands of the Axis powers in northern Italy and Germany, he said: "For centuries the Jews have been most unjustly treated and despised. It is time they were treated with justice and humanity. God wills it and the Church wills it. St. Paul tells us that the Jews are our brothers. Instead of being treated as strangers, they should be welcomed as friends."⁵⁷

The tangible evidence of Pius' real character—his love for all men, and his particular concern for "justice and humanity" toward Jews—lies in the fact that throughout the war Jewish leaders from all over the globe approached him for help. One of the foremost of these was Chief Rabbi Isaac Herzog of Jerusalem, to whom the Pope gave the message that he would do everything in his power to help the persecuted Jews. Rabbi Herzog traveled to Constantinople to seek financial and other assistance for his Jewish Aid Fund, and, true to the Pope's word, found in the apostolic delegate in Istanbul, Archbishop Angelo Roncalli, an uncommonly dynamic collaborator in the rescue operations carried out for the Balkan Jews.⁵⁸ A letter dated February 28, 1944, which the future John XXIII wrote the Vatican to transmit a plea from Rabbi Herzog for help for the Jews of Roumania, began: "Chief Rabbi Herzog of Jerusalem . . . came to the Apostolic Delegation personally in order to thank the Holy Father and the Holy See officially for the many forms of charity extended to Jews in these last years . . ."⁵⁹

After the war Rabbi Herzog sent "a special blessing" to the Pope for "his lifesaving efforts on behalf of the Jews during the Nazi occupation of Italy," through the intermediary of Harry

Greenstein, now executive director of the Associated Jewish Charities of Baltimore. Mr. Greenstein said in a recent interview, "I still remember quite vividly the glow in his eyes. He replied that his only regret was that he was not able to save many more Jews." ⁶⁰

This is but one of the thousands of voices that have praised Pope Pius XII's great work on behalf of the Jewish people. Let me pick a few more at random.

On June 4, 1944, when the Allies entered Rome, the *Jewish News Bulletin* of the British 8th Army said: "To the everlasting credit of the people of Rome, and the Roman Catholic Church, the lot of the Jews has been made easier by their truly Christian offers of assistance and shelter. Even now, many still remain in places which opened their doors to hide them from the fate of deportation to certain death. . . . The full story of the help given to our people by the Church cannot be told, for obvious reasons, until after the war." At a meeting of the National Committee of Liberation, a Jewish speaker said: "It was in the name of the frankest feeling of brotherhood that the Church did its utmost to rescue our threatened people from destruction. The supreme ecclesiastical authorities and all those priests who suffered for us in imprisonment and in concentration camps have our eternal gratitude." ⁶¹ A prominent Jewish citizen of Rome declared: "Our Catholic brothers have done more for us than we can ever do to repay." Rabbi Elio Toaff, now Chief Rabbi of Rome, said after the death of the Pope: "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, when it seemed that there was no hope left for us." ⁶² And Rabbi Zolli wrote: "What the Vatican did will be indelibly and eternally engraved in our hearts. . . . Priests and even high prelates did things that will forever be an honor to Catholicism." ⁶³ No less grateful were the words uttered on Pius' death by the chief rabbis of Egypt, London, and France. At the United Nations, Israel's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mrs. Golda Meir, said:

We share the grief of the world over the death of His Holiness Pius XII. During a generation of wars and dissensions, he affirmed the high ideals of peace and compassion. During the ten years of Nazi terror, when our people went

through the horrors of martyrdom, the Pope raised his voice to condemn the persecutors and to commiserate with their victims. The life of our time has been enriched by a voice which expressed the great moral truths above the tumults of daily conflicts. We grieve over the loss of a great defender of peace.⁶⁴

Dr. Nahum Goldmann, president of the World Jewish Congress, wrote in his letter of condolence on Pope Pius' death: "With special gratitude we remember all he has done for the persecuted Jews during one of the darkest periods in their entire history." In 1945, the Congress had made a gift of \$20,000 to Vatican charities in recognition of the work of the Holy See in rescuing Jews from Fascist persecution; and an interoffice memorandum, written a year earlier by a WJC official closely involved in the Congress' pleas to Pius XII for help for the Jews of Poland, reads: "The Catholic Church in Europe has been extraordinarily helpful to us in a multitude of ways. From Hinsley in London to Pacelli in Rome, to say nothing of the anonymous priests in Holland, France, and elsewhere, they have done very notable things for us . . ." ⁶⁵

On April 7, 1944, Rabbi Safran of Bucharest paid tribute to the Catholic Church's activities on behalf of Roumanian Jews in a letter to the papal nuncio:

Excellency:

In these harsh times our thoughts turn more than ever with respectful gratitude to what has been accomplished by the Sovereign Pontiff on behalf of Jews in general and by Your Excellency on behalf of the Jews of Roumania and Transnistria.

In the most difficult hours which we Jews of Roumania have passed through, the generous assistance of the Holy See, carried out by the intermediary of your high person, 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, sufferings which had been pointed out to him by you after your visit to Transnistria. The Jews of Roumania will never forget these facts of historic importance. . . .⁶⁶

Some of the voices which eulogized Pius XII five or twenty years ago remain silent in the face of Rolf Hochhuth's allegations; a few have agreed with him. Why is this? Were men wrong then, or are they wrong now? Are some of the Catholics of Europe, who should be forever grateful to Pope Pius for not putting them to the agonizing choice between country and church, perhaps relieved to see blame heaped on another head?

No one who reads the record of Pius XII's actions on behalf of Jews can subscribe to Hochhuth's accusation. However, though the evidence moves against the hypothesis that a formal condemnation from Pius would have curtailed the mass murder of Jews, this is still a question of judgment. Two men present the complexities of that question very succinctly. One, Léon Poliakov, wrote the following sentence in *Commentary* in November, 1950:

It is painful to have to state that at a time when gas chambers and crematoria were operating day and night, the high spiritual authority of the Vatican did not find it necessary to make a clear and solemn protest that would have echoed through the world; and yet one cannot say that there may not have been pertinent and valid reasons for this silence.

The second speaker is the new Holy Father, Pope Paul VI, whose letter, quoted in part below, reached the offices of *The Tablet* in London an hour after his election to the papacy, and was published in the issue of June 29:

It is not my intention here to examine the question raised . . . [in] the play *Der Stellvertreter*: namely, whether it was Pius XII's duty to condemn in some public and spectacular way the massacres of the Jews during the last war. . . .

For my part I conceive it my duty to contribute to the task of clarifying and purifying men's judgment on the historical reality in question—so distorted in the representational pseudoreality of Hochhuth's play. . . .

[Pius XII] wished to enter fully into the history of his own afflicted time: with a deep sense that he himself was a part of that history, he wished to participate fully in it, to share its sufferings in his own heart and soul. Let me cite, in this connexion, the words of a well-qualified witness, Sir D'Arcy

Osborne, the British Minister to the Holy See who, when the Germans occupied Rome, was obliged to live confined in the Vatican City. Writing to *The Times* on May 20th, Sir D'Arcy said: "Pius XII was the most warmly humane, kindly, generous, sympathetic (and, incidentally, saintly) character that it has been my privilege to meet in the course of a long life." . . .

Let some men say what they will, Pius XII's reputation as a true Vicar of Christ, as one who tried, so far as he could, fully and courageously to carry out the mission entrusted to him, will not be affected. . . .

Notes

¹ Quoted in Sir Alec Randall, "The Pope, the Jews, and the Nazis" (pamphlet), London, Catholic Truth Society, 1963, p. 18; see also in Peter White, "An Attack on Pope Pius XII," *Jubilee*, June, 1963.

² Quoted in White, *op. cit.*; see also Paul Duclos, *Le Vatican et la seconde guerre mondiale*, Paris, Pedone, 1955, pp. 221-223.

³ Quoted by Dr. Robert M. W. Kempner in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, May 23, 1963.

⁴ Angelo Martini, S.J., "Il Vicario: Una tragedia cristiana?" (reprint), *Civiltà Cattolica*, 1963, II (2710), 324.

⁵ Angelo Martini, S.J., "La Santa Sede e gli ebrei della Romania durante la seconda guerra mondiale" (reprint), *Civiltà Cattolica*, 1951, III (2669), 459.

⁶ Quoted in Martini, "Il Vicario . . .", p. 317.

⁷ Sir D'Arcy Osborne, a Protestant, was the British Minister to the Vatican during World War II; Msgr. Giovannetti and Father Leiber, both Catholics, are respectively a member of the Vatican's Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs and the former secretary to Pope Pius; Harry Greenstein, a Jew, is the executive director of the Associated Jewish Charities of Baltimore.

⁸ Randall, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

⁹ Quoted in Robert Leiber, S.J., "Pio XII e gli ebrei di Roma, 1943-1944" (reprint), *Civiltà Cattolica*, 1961, I (2657), 455.

¹⁰ In the German edition; in the English edition (tr. Robert David MacDonald, London, Methuen, 1963), the "Historical Sidelights" run 63 pages.

¹¹ *The Representative* (English ed.), p. viii. The source for the Mauriac quotation is the preface he wrote for Poliakov's *Bréviaire de la haine*, Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1951.

¹² Léon Poliakov, "Le Vatican et la question juive," *Monde juif*, December, 1950; quoted in Duclos, *op. cit.*, pp. 191-192.

¹³ Poliakov, *Bréviaire de la haine*; quoted in Leiber, *op. cit.*, p. 457.

¹⁴ Published in *Monde juif*, June, 1949; quoted in Duclos, *op. cit.*, p. 222, and in Leiber, *op. cit.*, pp. 449-450.

¹⁵ Quoted in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, March 4, 1963.

¹⁶ Quoted in Duclos, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

¹⁷ Quoted in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, March 4, 1963.

¹⁸ Quoted in Fiorello Cavalli, S.J., "La Santa Sede contro le deportazioni degli ebrei dalla Slovacchia durante la seconda guerra mondiale" (reprint), *Civiltà Cattolica*, 1961, III (2665), 7; and in Jozef Lettrich, *History of Modern Slovakia*, New York, Praeger, 1955, p. 187.

¹⁹ Quoted in Cavalli, *op. cit.*, p. 8n.

²⁰ Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 13.

²¹ Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 17.

²² Martini, "La Santa Sede . . .," p. 454. The February 16 intervention was on behalf of Jewish converts to Catholicism; thereafter, the Archbishop worked for all Jews.

²³ Deposition of Rabbi Safran introduced by Gabriel Bach into the record of the Eichmann trial, at Decision No. 46; and Martini, "La Santa Sede . . .," p. 460.

²⁴ Quoted in Martini, "La Santa Sede . . .," p. 449.

²⁵ Poliakov, "Le Vatican . . ."; quoted in Duclos, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

²⁶ Martini, "La Santa Sede . . .," p. 459.

²⁷ Document No. CXLV, a-60, Archives of the Centre de Documentation juive, Paris; quoted in Philip Friedman, *Their Brothers' Keepers*, New York, Crown, 1957, p. 212.

²⁸ Gerhard Reitlinger, *The Final Solution*, New York, Beechurst Press, 1953, p. 431.

²⁹ World Jewish Congress memorandum, "The Vatican and the Jews," dated March 24, 1959 (photostat).

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Quoted in Friedman, *op. cit.*, p. 87; see also pp. 84-86.

³² Quoted in *American Jewish Yearbook, 1942-1943*, Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society, p. 215.

³³ Friedman, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

³⁴ Quoted in *American Jewish Yearbook, 1943-1944*, Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society, p. 292.

³⁵ Quoted in John M. Oesterreicher, *Racisme—Antisémitisme—Antichristianisme*, New York, Maison Française, 1943, pp. 239-240; see *New York Times*, September 9, 1942.

³⁶ Quoted in *American Jewish Yearbook, 1945-1946*, Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society, p. 117.

³⁷ Quoted in Léon Poliakov and Jacques Sabille, *Jews Under the Italian Occupation*, Paris, Editions du Centre, 1955, p. 96.

³⁸ See, among many other sources, *ibid.*, pp. 40n, 21-23; Friedman, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-58; Duclos, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

³⁹ Quoted in *American Jewish Yearbook, 1943-1944*, p. 263.

⁴⁰ Quoted in Father Walter Adolph, "Hochhuths fanatisches Vorurteil," *Deutsche Tagespost*, March 12, 1963.

⁴¹ Quoted in *Tablet* (London), March 16, 1963.

⁴² Quoted in Adolph, *op. cit.*

⁴³ See, e.g., Friedman, *op. cit.*, pp. 94-95. *The Representative* is dedicated to Father Lichtenberg and Father Maximilian Kolbe, the latter an internee at Auschwitz.

⁴⁴ Eugenio Maria Zolli (Israele Anton Zoller), *Before the Dawn: Autobiographical Reflections*, New York, Sheed & Ward, 1954, pp. 159-161.

⁴⁵ Leiber, *op. cit.*, p. 452.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 453.

⁴⁷ See, *ibid.*, p. 452; *Jewish Advocate* (Boston), May 4, 1963; Poliakov and Sabelle, *op. cit.*, p. 40n.

⁴⁸ *Catholic News*, July 11, 1963, sec. C.5, p. 2.

⁴⁹ *Rheinische Post*, September 9, 1961.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*; and *Boston Globe*, January 27, 1963.

⁵¹ On false Catholic papers, see, e.g., Ira Hirschmann, *Caution to the Winds*, New York, McKay, 1962, pp. 179-185.

⁵² *American Jewish Yearbook, 1940-1941*, Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society, pp. 384-385; *Osservatore Romano*, January 29, 1961.

⁵³ *American Jewish Yearbook, 1943-1944*, p. 292.

⁵⁴ *The Tidings*, June 9, 1961; World Jewish Congress memorandum dated March 24, 1959; Leiber, *op. cit.*, p. 451; *American Jewish Yearbook, 1944-1945*, Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society, 1944, pp. 233-234; Zolli, *op. cit.*, 187-188.

⁵⁵ *Evening Union Leader*, June 29, 1963.

⁵⁶ Leiber, *op. cit.*, p. 450.

⁵⁷ See Joseph L. Lichten, "Pope Pius XII and the Jews" (reprint), *ADL Bulletin*, October, 1958.

⁵⁸ *Tablet* (Brooklyn), March 21, 1963.

⁵⁹ Quoted in Martini, "La Santa Sede . . .," p. 461.

⁶⁰ *Tablet* (Brooklyn), March 21, 1963.

⁶¹ See Lichten, *op. cit.*

⁶² Quoted in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, March 4, 1963.

⁶³ Quoted in *American Jewish Yearbook, 1944-1945*, p. 233.

⁶⁴ Quoted in *Civiltà Cattolica*, 1958, III, 323.

⁶⁵ World Jewish Congress memorandum dated March 24, 1959.

⁶⁶ Quoted in Martini, "La Santa Sede . . .," p. 462.

