

The Papacy and the Second World War as Reported
in the Hebrew Newspaper DAVAR

Peter G. Weintraub

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Advisor: Professor Martin A. Cohen

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INTRODUCTION

A great deal of attention has been devoted to the role of Pope Pius XII during the Holocaust period. Charges of lack of Papal action have conflicted with claims that Pius was a supporter not only of the Christian oppressed, but of the Jews as well. German playwright Rolf Hochhuth's play, The Deputy, first presented in the United States in 1964, maintained that Pius XII, despite full knowledge of the massive destruction of European Jewry, chose to remain silent. It stirred international debate. In addition, Volume VIII of the Vatican's publication of documents pertaining to World War II showed clearly that the Pope was indeed informed of Hitler's plan of annihilation as early as 1941.

The present study examines the data concerning Pope Pius XII and the Vatican during the war years, beginning on March 3, 1939, when former Papal Secretary of State Eugenio Pacelli was elected to succeed Pope Pius XI. The Hebrew daily newspaper Davar, which was published in what is now the state of Israel, is the primary source of information used. The position of the Pope and the Vatican will be examined in relation not only to the Jewish Question, but in terms of the general world situation. It is noteworthy that a contrast emerges between the view of the Pope held in his time and that granted him in historical retrospect.

CHAPTER I - ITALY - GENERAL HISTORY

Throughout the seven year period covered in this investigation, from 1939 until 1945, the Pope and his Ambassadors were seen as not only possessing a very strong political power, but willing to use this power when necessary. Papal efforts to stem the approaching war were hinted at,¹ and rumors mentioned that the Pope, during his meetings in May, 1939 with the Italian and French Ambassadors to the Vatican suggested that a conference of world powers be held. The conference would include the major European nations of England, France, Italy, Germany and Poland, and would be held in the neutral territory of the Vatican City itself. This peace plan was submitted to Hitler by Cesare Orsenigo, the Apostolic Nuncio in Berlin.² In fact, the Pope was viewed by even those Italians who disapproved completely of an alliance with Germany as the one force able to keep Italy from entering the war.³

Davar's analysis of this Italian opposition to Nazism was illustrated in an article entitled, "Italian Demonstration Against Nazism and Communism."⁴ The demonstration referred to in the article was a visit to Pope Pius XII by the King and Queen of Italy. This first royal visit to a Pope since 1929 was seen as an attempt to strengthen Catholic ties within Italy and to weaken the Italian-German link.

Papal attempts at international mediation activity increased during the period directly before Italian entrance into World War II on June 10, 1940. When American Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles came to Italy in December, 1939, his mission was the subject of much speculation in the world press.⁵ In mid March, 1940, both Welles and United States special envoy to the Vatican, Myron Taylor, met with Pope Pius XII for fifty minutes.⁶

Rumors of an American peace plan spread. The Pope himself was seen as a key force in negotiating this peace. However, the Vatican, although charged with the responsibility of bringing peace to all mankind, wished to maintain a stance of neutrality. The Vatican had to serve the twenty million Catholics in Germany as well as those in the United States and throughout the world. The Pope, therefore, due to his international responsibilities, was forced to publicly project an image of total neutrality. These rumors of Papal involvement with the United States thus harmed the tenuous balance which the Pope, as the spiritual leader of world Catholicism, had to maintain.

In May, 1940, the Vatican, in an article in the Catholic newspaper L'Avvenire, once again stressed her neutrality.⁷ But to little avail. As June of 1940 approached, and the bonds between Mussolini and Hitler

solidified, the Vatican was seen by the Axis powers as a force which must be restrained. After telegrams of consolation were sent to the leaders of Belgium, Luxembourg, and Holland by the Pope following the German conquest in May, 1940, distribution of the semi-official Vatican newspaper L'Osservatore Romano, was halted.⁸ On June 14, 1940, just four days after official Italian entrance into World War II, it was announced in Rome that the paper would not appear until after the end of the war.⁹

According to the articles appearing in the Hebrew daily Davar during the period of Italian participation in World War II, from June 10, 1940 until her surrender on September 8, 1943, neither the Pope nor the Vatican were ever criticized for leaning towards the German side.

Saul Friedländer, in his book Pius XII and the Third Reich, stressed that Pius XII was more sympathetic to Germany since he had served as Papal Nuncio in Munich from 1917 until 1920, and in Berlin from 1920 until 1929. Friedländer wrote that on March 5, 1939, Germany's Ambassador to the Vatican, Diogo von Bergen, met with the newly elected Pontiff. In Bergen's report to Germany, he stated:

"The Pope emphasized that I was the first Ambassador he had received; he felt it important, he said, to charge me personally with the task of delivering his deeply felt thanks to the Führer and Reich Chancellor; with these, he said, he combined his most sincere wishes for the well being of the German people whom, having known them

for many years during his activity in Munich and Berlin, he had learned to esteem and love more and more."¹⁰

This pro-Nazi stance was not as apparent as Friedländer contended. In fact, less than one month after Italy's entrance into World War II, (which in and of itself reflected a defeat for Pius XII who tried to keep Italy neutral), Germany, together with Italy, promised to give Israel to the Vatican after the war. However, it was made clear that this promise would be fulfilled only upon receipt of sufficient Vatican support.¹¹

Freedom of movement and communication within the Vatican City walls reflected a similar trend within the general Italian population. Growing Italian unrest and opposition to Germany was evident. One report claimed that 60% of all Italians wanted a British victory, and that more than 60% saw this victory as inevitable. Italy had total media censorship imposed in July, 1941.¹² The Vatican too was affected: all letters, telegrams and phone calls were monitored.¹³ And as German discontentment with the Vatican grew, the Vatican Radio, an international network, was also censored.¹⁴

As early as September, 1941, the Pope was involved in new peace plans, this time working towards a separate peace between Italy and the Allied Powers. The Nazis,

fearing Vatican negotiation of a separate peace,¹⁵ instructed the Italian Fascist papers to directly accuse the Pope of being one sided in his relationship with his flock. In no uncertain terms, the Pope and the Vatican were chastized for dealing with the Anglo-Saxon nations.¹⁶

These attacks against the Vatican continued. In February, 1942, the Vatican was once again accused of being an enemy of the Third Reich.¹⁷ Two months later, the Pope was again criticized by the Fascist press, this time for having spoken out against the compulsory instruction in Anti-Semitism ordered by Mussolini in all Italian schools. It was intimated in a Davar article entitled, "The Pope's Speech - A Great Blow to Mussolini" that when the Pope delivered his 1942 Easter address, he was indirectly attacking this instruction in Anti-Semitism.¹⁸ Furthermore, the Catholic newspaper Italia continually opposed these Anti-Semitic laws, and called all attempts at solving the Jewish problem worthless and vain.¹⁹

As the internal situation in Italy grew worse²⁰ and lack of food became a major problem,²¹ Mussolini's base of support disintegrated.²² On July 25, 1943, with no other option possible, Benito Mussolini resigned from office. Immediately on the heels of Mussolini's resignation, the peace making efforts of the Pope intensified. A report on July 29, 1943, just four days

after Mussolini's resignation, discussed rumors that together with King Emanuel of Italy²³ Pius XII would now work out an arrangement with the Allies for fair treatment of Italy in the event of her voluntary surrender.²⁴

These negotiations between the Vatican officials and the Allied powers continued throughout the summer.²⁵ The last official communique was reported just three weeks prior to Italy's unconditional surrender on September 8, 1943.²⁶

The surrender of Italy did not mark the end of Italian involvement in the war. Hitler, pledging to fight the war in Italy until the last soldier, led his armies on a conquest of Italy, which even included the occupation of Rome.²⁷ German control of Rome lasted from September 8, 1943 until June 4, 1944.

During this time, the greatest persecution of both the Jews and Catholics of Rome occurred. The Pope himself was affected. Rumors were reported by the Reuters News Service that the Germans would take the Pope as a hostage upon their exit from Rome. The Pope had even prepared a telegram to be read in the event of such an abduction to prove that he had been taken against his will.²⁸

Total censorship was imposed upon the Vatican, making written and telephone communication between the Pope and his nuncios increasingly difficult.²⁹ In October, 1943,

a meeting of Hungarian Bishops in Budapest were unable to send a telegram of blessing to the Pope. Although the censorship imposed on the Vatican in July, 1941 had limited the freedom of the Pope, conditions in 1943 were considerably worse. The Vatican was able to neither send nor receive mail from mid-September, 1943 until November 8, 1943.³⁰

On February 4, 1944, a group of armed Fascist Police entered the Saint Paul's College buildings. This, claimed the Vatican, was a clear case of violation of Vatican neutrality. Together with the major Catholic agencies of Rome, the Vatican sent messages of protest to the Italian government in February, 1944.³¹ In March of the same year, the German Naval Agency reported that the Vatican State had closed all its gates, and had placed a double guard around them.³²

Once the Nazi forces were removed from Rome in June, 1944, large scale changes occurred within the Italian government.³³ The Badoglio government, which had followed Mussolini's resigned after almost a year in office. Ivano Bonomi succeeded Badoglio as head of the Italian government. Bonomi was plagued with the almost impossible task of forming a coalition government. Both political and economic instability consumed Italy. Even after the end of World War II

in Europe on May 7, 1945, almost a full year after the resignation of the Badoglio government, instability was prevalent.

While the political reorganization within Italy was covered in great detail in the pages of Davar,³⁴ the role of the Pope and the Vatican was never mentioned. It seemed as if the Pope, who had played an active role in the pre-war period and even during the war, had returned to his traditional non-political stance. This does not mean that the Pope ceased all political activity when the war ended. Rather, he resumed the accepted pre-war role of working through channels available to him. One such channel was the Catholic Party of Italy. In fact, it was this political party which continued to exert influence. For it was only when the Catholic Party decided to recognize the position of the Republicans, that the Italian coalition government was established. The Catholic Party controlled the balance.³⁵

CHAPTER II - LIFE OF JEWS IN ITALY AND ITALIAN CONTROLLED
COUNTRIES

Life for the Jews of Italy began to change even before Italy formally entered the war. There was continued German pressure placed on the Italian government to enact anti-Jewish restrictions, styled along the lines of the Nuremberg Laws.

A collection of secret documents was discovered in the office of Friedrich Rainer. Rainer served as the District Leader (Gauleiter) of Northern Italy, with the center of operations in Trieste. His office was the center of all S.S. and Gestapo work within northern Italy. The documents showed that from the outset, the Nazis had little confidence in the Fascist leadership's devotion to Nazi ideology. These documents clearly stated that the Germans were convinced that not only were the Italian people resentful of their presence, and were not willing to comply with the imposed anti-Semitic laws, but that even the highest Italian officials, including Mussolini, were against singling out the Jews for special punishment. Mussolini specifically was remembered as stating that there was no Jewish problem in Italy, going as far as appointing Jews to various offices.

Rainer's papers further stated that any measures taken against the Jews in Italy were done so both reluctantly and half heartedly by the Italians, and that conditions for the Jews in Italy were by far the best out of all the countries under Axis domination.³⁶

Based on this evidence, it is appropriate to examine the daily accounts of Davar during the war period regarding the living conditions among Jews in Italy, and to see whether Friedrich Rainer's appraisals were accurate.

In January, 1939, the Italian Senate debated the introduction of Anti-Semitic laws into Italy. From the Senate floor, it was stated that Anti-Semitic propaganda would bring great damage to Italy.³⁷ However, despite protests, which even included an announcement by the Archbishop of Milan, Cardinal Alfredo Ildefonso Schuster that he would not visit the "LaScala" Theatre³⁸ as long as it was forbidden to Jews, March 12, 1939 was set for the expulsion of all the foreign Jews of Italy, numbered between 8,000³⁹ and 15,000.⁴⁰ Special American envoy to the Vatican, Myron Taylor, arranged an agreement between the Jews to remove as much as 75% of their money from Italy. However, not all Jews were that fortunate. Some would lose as much as 88% of their property and wealth.⁴¹

The Italian population reacted strongly against the charges made in the German-controlled Italian anti-Semitic newspaper, Regime Fascista, edited by Roberto Farinacci, that the 60,000 Jews of Italy were responsible for the war.⁴² However, there were no mass protests against the March 12th expulsion of foreign Jews. Exact figures were never revealed indicating the exact number of foreign Jews expelled, but Italian efforts at ridding themselves of the Jews appeared half hearted at best. All indications show that the majority of foreign Jews, although not living under ideal conditions, were still allowed to remain, at least temporarily, in Italy.⁴³

Two distinct types of Jews were found in Italy during the period of World War II: native Italian Jews and refugees who had fled from Poland, Germany, and other European countries and had found temporary refuge in Italy. Throughout the war, the two groups were treated quite differently.

The need for the skills of native born Italian Jews was apparent. Although laws restricted Jews from various professions, exceptions were often made whenever a need arose. By order of Mussolini, for example, as of January 1, 1939 all Jewish officers and soldiers were dismissed from the Italian army. Among those to be dismissed were four high ranking Jewish admirals, including Umberto Pugliese and Ettore Ascoli.⁴⁴ However,

Pugliese was reinstated in military service in February, 1941, when the need for capable leaders increased. In fact, Mussolini recommended a re-draft of Jews, and many Jewish doctors, engineers, and technicians were indeed drafted to fill the need created by the war.⁴⁵

It should not be thought that life for the Jews of Italy was comfortable. Increasing restrictions upon trade by Jews were enacted by the Italian government throughout the war. At the break of World War II, 20,000 Jews, approximately one third of all Italian Jewry, were reported to be without livelihood.⁴⁶ And although exemptions were given to influential Jews, and Jews affiliated with the Fascist party,⁴⁷ by February, 1940 official Jewish trade was limited to under 20,000 liras.⁴⁸ A new law, effective March 1, 1940, excluded Jews from most professions, with only a small number open.⁴⁹ These new restrictions included work in the jewelry trade.⁵⁰ In December, 1940, Jews were prohibited from selling books of study; a law enacted to cut off contact between Jews and Italians.⁵¹ Furthermore, Jews were no longer allowed to be directors in factories or offices.⁵² By the beginning of 1941, a figure of 50% of all Jews without livelihood was reported.⁵³

In light of these growing restrictions placed upon Italian Jewry, which gradually removed them from nearly

every possible contact with the non-Jewish population, it seemed that the Italian government had indeed adopted a totally anti-Semitic policy, with the intent of destroying the Italian Jewish community. However, in spite of restrictions, this was not the case at all.

From the outset, as early as April, 1939, many Jews were refused exit from Italy so that they could help the Italian war effort.⁵⁴ In November of the same year, Rome radio announced that close to 50% of the Jews were not affected by the anti-Semitic laws, and that 20,804 of the 86,401 Jews of Italy were needed in government services.⁵⁵ Mussolini was reported to favor a cautious stance on the Jewish Question.⁵⁶ Jewish schools were being supported in Italy even after Italy entered the war, with a grant of 285,000 liras given by the Italian Ministry of Culture.⁵⁷ Although Regime Fascista continued its attacks on Jews, it was often the only newspaper to cover speeches delivered by right wing anti-Semitic Fascist figures.⁵⁸ When the new laws restricting Jews from various professions were enacted in March, 1940, Scott Watson, Italian correspondent for the British Daily Herald, reported that the laws were unexpected, would be contested by the Italians, and were opposed by the Pope.⁵⁹ A famous trial, held in July, 1941 against fifteen Jewish doctors who were arrested for treating

non-Jewish patients (forbidden since the March laws of 1940)⁶⁰ resulted in eleven acquittals, and four minor fines. At the trial, one Italian woman testified that the Jewish doctor saved her child's life, and that, despite the law forbidding her to use the doctor, she would use him again.⁶¹

Expulsion continued to threaten Italian Jews. A speech delivered in May, 1940 by Italy's Assistant Secretary of the Interior called for the expulsion of Italian Jews, and stronger enforcement of the existing racial laws.⁶² Two months later, one third of the Jews of Trieste were imprisoned, and the entire Jewish population of the port city of Fiume detained.⁶³ However, during this time, talk of expulsion had shifted to talk of using the Jews for a labor force. Also, Jewish doctors, although officially forbidden to practice on non-Jewish patients, were drafted for service as official government doctors.⁶⁴

The Jews of Italy were in the position of being called upon when they were needed, despite official prohibitions. "Aryanization" of Jews in Italy, although not an everyday occurrence, did take place in accordance with the need. In particular, Abraham Jacob Isaac Levy,⁶⁵ a Jewish elder in the community as well as a member of the Italian Parliament, was declared a "pure Aryan" once

it was proven that he was really a bastard, and could claim non-Jewish parentage.⁶⁶ A note of interest is that Abraham Jacob Isaac Levi had a net worth of over three million dollars, which he used to support the Fascist regime. Also Admiral Umberto Pugliese, who in February, 1939 was dismissed from the Navy, but was reinstated in February, 1941, was also awarded the title of "Honorary Aryan."⁶⁷

Expulsion plans were shelved once it was realized that due to heavy military losses, Jewish manpower was more important than solving the Jewish Question. In May, 1942, Jewish males between the ages of 18 and 55 were scheduled to be drafted for labor.⁶⁸

Anti-Jewish measures did not cease. They were enacted, but enforced with far from total commitment. The Ministry of Propaganda did establish compulsory courses in anti-Semitism in schools throughout Italy.⁶⁹ These courses were opposed most vigorously in the Catholic newspaper Italia, resulting in an increase of anti-Catholic propaganda in the pages of Regime Fascista.⁷⁰

What role did the Pope have in this opposition to instruction of anti-Semitism? It was reported in March, 1943, that Mussolini started to relax some of the anti-Jewish legislation in order to strengthen his position with the Vatican.⁷¹ An article in Devar which traced the

origins and developement of anti-Semitism in Italy was quick to point out that not only did the Italian people never really accept anti-Semitism, but that special opposition to anti-Jewish laws came from the Pope himself.⁷²

With the fall of Mussolini on July 25, 1943, and the establishment of the new Badoglio government, all racial laws were revoked. Full Italian citizenship was returned to all Jews.⁷³ The immediate result was large scale Jewish enrollment in the army, with the Jews returned to their original ranks.⁷⁴

Life for the refugee Jews in Italy, who had come mainly from Poland and Yugoslavia, was an uncertain existence at best. In July, 1939, a council was established in Italy to provide aid to these refugees. Charlie Chaplin announced his donation to this fund, which delivered eight million liras to the Milan Jewish community.⁷⁵ This council was forced to close down on August 15, 1939, but was reopened in October of the same year.⁷⁶

An edict had been proclaimed calling for the expulsion of all foreign Jews from Italy by March 12, 1939. The date had come and gone, with the majority of refugees still remaining. However, in late December, 1939, an order was received in Italy from Germany to expell all Polish and German Jews in Italy.⁷⁷ This expulsion order was rescinded, but the Italian government now stated

that it would no longer offer even temporary domicile for Jews coming into Italy from other lands. Those Jews who were allowed to stay temporarily in Italy, had to agree to obey the laws, which varied from locale to locale. The best treatment was in Rome,⁷⁸ and the worst treatment was in Trieste.

Jews in Trieste, unable to get visas, faced almost imminent expulsion.⁷⁹ In May, 1940, final orders of expulsion were handed down to all 800 Jews of Trieste. They were given between five and twenty days to leave.⁸⁰ However, this edict was postponed, and seventy passports were furnished to Jews in Trieste; fifty to wealthy Jews and twenty to leading Zionists.⁸¹

The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, popularly known as JOINT, opened up a temporary office in Trieste, headed by the chairman of the immigration department of JOINT.⁸² His task was to help immigration to Palestine. Travel on Italian vessels had been prohibited,⁸³ but some Jews were able to secure passage on Greek liners such as the "Rudi." By September, 1940, all Jewish males of draft age (18 - 50) were sent either to concentration camps or special villages set up for refugees. The number of these refugees was estimated at 3,000.⁸⁴ JOINT, charged with the responsibility of aiding them, was unsuccessful in acquiring more exit

visas.⁸⁵ Reports varied concerning the welfare of the other refugees. Most were women and children. They had freedom of movement, but were in need of food and warm clothing.⁸⁶

Life in Italian concentration camps, although not comfortable, could not compare to the subhuman conditions of Jews in Polish or German concentration camps. In January, 1943, a report described the Ferramonti camp in southern Italy, which held more than three thousand Jewish and non-Jewish refugees during the war. It called it a small imprisoned republic, with an internal affairs government, two synagogues, a library, drug store, sports club, and art center. Relations between the Jewish inmates and their Italian neighbors were considered good. The report stated that the Catholic Church was taking an interest in these Jews.⁸⁷ Finally, the Jews themselves, although not permitted freedom of movement, generally praised the conditions.⁸⁸

One month prior to Mussolini's resignation, new preparations were made to expell the Yugoslavian Jews from Italy. They now numbered between eight and ten thousand. Refugees sent telegrams to their relatives and non-aligned nations in Europe. Jews permitted into Italy without having "Jew" stamped on their pass-

port, and previously allowed freedom of movement, were now in danger of being returned to the lands from which they fled.⁸⁹ However, Mussolini's fall from power in late July, 1943, and Italy's unconditional surrender on September 8, 1943, once again provided these refugee Jews with a temporary haven.

Following the Italian unconditional surrender, Germany was forced to retreat and give up territory. However, the Reich did maintain control over northern Italy and Rome, and began imposing even stronger measures of persecution against the remaining Jews, particularly in Venice and Trieste.

On September 15, 1943, fears of expulsion began once again.⁹⁰ All Jews were ordered to concentration camps in German-controlled Italy. Property was confiscated. Cases of offspring of mixed marriages were decided individually by the police. Previously, descendants of mixed marriages were not persecuted.⁹¹

In December, 1943, expulsion orders were given to the Jewish community of Rome, consisting of approximately ten thousand people. A number of Jews were able to find shelter in southern Italy.⁹² According to a Swiss newspaper account, over 80% of the Jews of Rome were still safe, and Jews with foreign citizenship papers were not bothered.⁹³ Throughout German-controlled Italy, Nuremberg law was imposed. Regime Fascista

suggested that Jews take on Jewish-sounding names, as was done in Germany.

The head of the Gestapo in Holland, Captain Aus der Funten, was sent to Italy to arrange deportation of foreign Jews from northern Italy. This same commander had been responsible for the deportation operation in Holland.⁹⁴ Expulsion of Jews was confirmed in a report released in January, 1944, stating that three thousand Jews had been brought from Italy to Poland in November, 1943.⁹⁵

The zeal of the Italians in carrying out the German operations, however, has been strongly questioned. An official Nazi newspaper, Volkischer Beobachter, lashed out against the Fascist government for not putting strong enough pressures on the Jews.⁹⁶ Still, the expulsions continued. Five hundred Jews were sent to Poland on January 13, 1944, from the San Vittore Prison in Italy.⁹⁷ Respite came only with the fall of Rome to the Allied forces on June 4, 1944, and the subsequent disintegration of the German fighting forces within Italy.

With the conquest of the German forces and the coming of the Allied armies, refugees, as well as native Italian Jews, saw a return to normalcy. Many anxiously hoped for permission to re-settle in Palestine. There were 13,200 refugees in Italy immediately following her September 8, 1943 surrender: 8,000 from Yugoslavia,

2,500 from the Third Reich, and the rest from Poland and Czechoslovakia. Ferramonti, the largest concentration camp, held 1600 Jewish refugees from various lands.⁹⁸

Jewish aid and relief was put under the control of the military Rabbi from the Jewish Brigade, Rabbi Urbach.⁹⁹ Rabbi Urbach, together with many Jewish soldiers from Palestine who were part of the army which freed the Jews from concentration camps, organized a rescue council,¹⁰⁰ and raised several thousand British pounds for the Jews of free Italy.¹⁰¹ The main concern was that of immigration. In May, 1944, the first ship of refugees from Italy set off for Palestine.¹⁰²

The fall of Rome in June, 1944 marked the beginning of total re-organization of the Italian Jewish community. JOINT, centralizing its efforts in their newly opened Rome office, dealt with the thousands of refugees in Rome.¹⁰³ The number of Jews in Rome at that time was estimated at 11,000: 9,000 Italian, 1,400 French, Yugoslavian and Polish, and 600 southern Italians. According to reports, the Nazis, during their period of occupation in Rome, expelled two thousand Jews from Rome and killed over five hundred.¹⁰⁴

The newly formed Bonomi government established a Department for Jewish Affairs, with Chief Rabbi of Rome Zolli and Jewish advisors taking part in it.¹⁰⁵ An almost complete return to normalcy had occurred in Rome by Rosh HaShanah of 1944.¹⁰⁶ The Bonomi government even made an effort to facilitate the acquisition of Italian citizenship for foreign Jews in Rome.¹⁰⁷

Although the war in Europe raged for half a year more, for the Jews in most of Italy, the war was over. A return to peaceful pre-war existence was anticipated once Nazi Germany was defeated. Many Jews hoped to immigrate to Palestine.¹⁰⁸

World War II ended in Europe on May 7, 1945. The scope of destruction of the European Jewish community became more obvious with each passing day. In Italy, the Jewish communities had begun to re-organize themselves. 45,000 Jews were reported in the cities of Trieste, Milan, and Rome.¹⁰⁹ Some eight thousand refugees throughout Italy, especially in the north, were awaiting certificates of entry into Palestine. However, these permits were not supplied in such numbers, and the refugee situation worsened as approximately ten thousand Jews came into Italy from the rest of Europe with the hope of immediately being able to go to the Holy Land.¹¹⁰ These refugees had vowed never to return to their original homelands, and wished only to settle in a Jewish state.¹¹¹

CHAPTER III - POPE PIUS XII, THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, AND
THE JEWS - ITALY

Throughout the entire period of World War II, both the Catholic Church in general, and Pope Pius XII in particular, were frequently attacked in the pages of the right-wing Fascist newspaper Regime Fascista. The attacks dealt with the Pope's pro-Jewish sentiments, and his opposition to the Nazi plans. Shortly after the death of Pope Pius XI, an article written by the editor of the paper, Roberto Farinacci, attacked the Catholic Church and blamed the Vatican for collaboration with the Jews and the Socialists. It claimed that the Catholic Church continued to oppose the racist policies. It was responsible, argued Regime Fascista, for the postponement of the expulsion edict against the foreign Jews in Italy, set for March 12, 1939.¹¹²

An interesting coincidence was that although few refugees were actually expelled from Italy on the official date of March 12, 1939, it was on this very date that the coronation of Pope Pius XII was held. More than half a million people witnessed the ceremony, which was the first public coronation of a Pope since that of Pius IX in 1846.¹¹³

Eugenio Pacelli, soon to be installed as the new Pope, selected the same name as his predecessor, Pius XI, whom he had served as Papal Secretary of State. The new Pope immediately became the object of widespread, detailed analysis. Investigators of the period allege pro-German sentiments, since it was Pacelli who served as a Vatican nuncio in Germany for thirteen years. In addition, as Papal Secretary of State, a position he held from 1930 until his election as Pope in 1939, he was the main Papal representative in the Vatican's arrangement of a concordat with Hitler's Reich, enacted in 1933.

Solomon Grayzel believed that Pius XII therefore favored Germany, and would continue to maintain the same friendly relations with them that he did as Munich Nuncio from 1917 until 1920 and Berlin Nuncio from 1920 until 1929. Grayzel stated in his article, "The Ties that Bind Synagogue and Church," that Pius XII loved Germany and that:

"He somehow failed to make a distinction between the Germany he knew and the Nazified Germany of the 1930's and 1940's."114

On March 6, 1939, just days after Cardinal Pacelli's election to the Papacy, he sent a letter to German Chancellor Adolf Hitler. In it, he drew on his past

experiences as nuncio in Germany when he said:

"Recalling with pleasure the long years during which as Apostolic Nuncio in Germany we gladly devoted all our efforts to have the relations between Church and State regulated and to make them more and more friendly through mutual understanding and ready cooperation for the good of both parties..."¹¹⁵

An interesting contrast, however, can be seen in Davar, in an article written just days before the coronation, entitled: "Blessings for the New Pope."¹¹⁶ In this article, Pacelli was praised as a fighter of Fascism, and hope was expressed that he would carry on the anti-Fascist and anti-Nazi tradition of his predecessor. It is true that the Hebrew newspaper Davar would naturally wish to hold this opinion. But even Fascist critics of the Pope pointed out the tradition of anti-Fascism begun by Pope Pius XI, which was expected to be continued by Pius XII.

Fascist reaction was strongly opposed to the first appointment made by the new Pope, that of Luigi Maglione as Papal Secretary of State. Maglione, charged critics, was too close to France, having once been the Vatican nuncio there.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, the Fascist press called the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church who actively opposed the anti-Jewish legislation, "honorary Jews." These Catholics would be destroyed together with the

Jews, claimed Regime Fascista in March, 1939.¹¹⁸

Guenter Lewy, in his article, "Was Silence the Only Solution?" also attempted to prove Papal preference for Germany. He quoted a letter written by Pius XII in January, 1943 to Michael Cardinal Faulhaber, Archbishop of Munich and Feising. In it, the Pontiff stated:

"If we have extended special consideration to any people, it was certainly toward Germany. We have done this, within the limits of justifiable, out of regard for the especially delicate situation of the Church in the German sphere of influence."¹¹⁹

However, the Fascist and Nazi press at that time condemned the Pope for being pro-Jewish. Since there exists no clearcut knowledge of what the Pope's personal and innermost thoughts were, speculation concerning them is fruitless. Instead, what can be considered are the Papal acts during this period. Furthermore, these actions must be considered not in light of whether the Pope actually liked or disliked the Jewish people. Rather, it should be understood that the Pope, by virtue of his office, was not free to act upon his personal beliefs. The Pope, as the leader of all world Catholicism, must act in accordance with the best interests of the Church. It is imperative that this be understood before Papal and Vatican action towards the Jews can be analyzed.

The Pope was reported to have known about the murder of the Jews as early as 1941. It has been claimed that he received constant reports on the general world situation as well as Church activities. George Steiner, in an editorial in the London Times of May 5, 1963 asserted this when he said:

"The Vatican, informed by the clergy of what was happening, hour by hour, in the ovens and bunkers of Belsen, assured them that their prayers were being said 'for our Jewish brothers.' " 120

The opposition of the Catholic Church in Italy to the anti-Semitic laws of the Fascist government was first reported in June, 1939 in "The Church in Italy Against the Racial Law."¹²¹ This report was based on Church opposition to the Italian translation of Race and Nation,¹²² a book written by German Catholic leaders. L'Osservatore Romano, the semi-official daily of the Catholic Church, published an article calling for Catholics to destroy this book.¹²³ Throughout the war, L'Osservatore Romano continued to be the forum for expressing both the Church's and the Pope's disapproval of the anti-Semitic legislation.

Regime Fascista, in April, 1940 claimed that the Vatican paper was an agent for the Jews,¹²⁴ and called for the suspension of its publication. The Fascist

The Fascist daily also claimed that the Catholic paper had received five million liras from Jews, and because of this the paper was supporting Jewish as well as English causes.¹²⁵ This report remained unsubstantiated, but curbs were sought on the political involvement of the Vatican newspaper.

Reports were circulated that the Italian government had made three demands on the Catholic paper:

- 1- not to publish material forbidden to be published in other papers,
- 2- not to publish articles influential to the community,
- 3- not to publish Fascist propaganda.¹²⁶

Farinacci, in the pages of his Regime Fascista, accused the Vatican of forming a pact with the Allies. He called L'Osservatore Romano an enemy to Italy and a clear tool of Jewish opinion.¹²⁷ However, publication of the paper was allowed to continue, but it was subject to the same censorship regulations which affected the other Italian newspapers.¹²⁸

Nazi and Fascist propaganda continued to criticize the Pope for being opposed to the Axis plans. The Papal invitation in February, 1940 of two Jewish professors, Tullio Levi Levita and Vito Volterra, to the Vatican conference on the age of the earth, was viewed as a

direct attack against the Fascist racial policies, especially since both these professors were dismissed from their teaching positions in Italy in 1938.¹²⁹ They were later made members of the Pontifical Academy of Science. Another three scholars removed from their jobs at the University of Rome were invited to work at the Papal library in December, 1940. Among them were Dr. Giorgi Del Vecchio and the famous geographer, Professor Roberto Almagia.¹³⁰ In addition, according to a report in May, 1940, all libraries in Italy were closed to the Jews, except the Vatican library.¹³¹

Radio Vatican also served as a means for speaking out against the racial policies. It was Radio Vatican which, as early as February, 1941, set up a radio station for Jewish refugees to send messages to relatives in Israel. Davar, which reported this radio transmission with great interest, claimed that the radio broadcasts attested to the human interest the Vatican had in the Jews of Italy.¹³² Radio Vatican continued these broadcasts, with transmissions reported on January 12, 1942,¹³³ January 13, 1942¹³⁴ and June 8, 1942.¹³⁵

All letters, telegrams, and phone calls to and from the Vatican were subject to total censorship

beginning in May, 1941. All communication was subject to Fascist approval.¹³⁶ However, Vatican protests did not cease. A May, 1941 Radio Vatican broadcast reported that all human beings are equal, and from the same ultimate source. Clear reference to the anti-Jewish laws was made in the broadcast, which announced:

"In the eyes of the Church, there is no difference between a Jew and a non-Jew; there are only human beings."¹³⁷

The Axis response to this open attack on Fascist policy came in the early part of June, 1941. Fascist and Nazi leaders put pressure on the Pope to curb the radio broadcasts. Further censorship was imposed upon the Vatican by the Italian government. It was rumored that the Vatican would be asked to relocate its publicity offices outside of Vatican City. Mussolini, however, fearing public protest, never publicly made this suggestion, though Vatican political involvement reportedly angered him.¹³⁸

Regime Fascista in February, 1942 accused Pope Pius XII of being an enemy of the Third Reich. Accusing the Vatican of involvement in political affairs, Farinacci claimed that the Pope should be involved only in religious matters.¹³⁹

Vatican political involvement had been feared by

Hitler himself as early as 1933, when the concordat between the Reich and the Vatican was being formulated. One clause which Hitler was most insistent upon was that the Vatican contain its activity to only Church related matters. When on April 17, 1933 Counselor Fritz Nenshausen, the specialist in Vatican affairs of the German Foreign Ministry met with German Vice-Chancellor von-Papen, he was told that one firm demand of the German government to the Vatican was to keep the Priests out of politics.¹⁴⁰ This was explicitly recorded in Article 32 of the concordat. This article excluded the clergy from politics, and formalized the one-party state of Germany.

On July 8, 1933, at 6:00 P.M., the final terms of the concordat between Nazi Germany and the Vatican were agreed to, including the article prohibiting Church political involvement. However, the Church and the Pope were constantly criticized throughout the war for not living up to the terms of the agreement. These criticisms, noted with consistency in Davar, far outnumber the claims of Papal support of the Axis policies. Indeed, the Pope is not criticized by Jewish sources for lack of action, but rather by Fascist and Nazi sources for too much pro-Jewish activity.

Mussolini, upon his return from Germany on May 1, 1942, told the heads of the Police and the Political Racial Office to order the wearing of the Yellow Badge for all Jews. The Police Chief told Mussolini that this order was not desirable due to expected Vatican protest. The order was rescinded. Regime Fascista claimed that Pope Pius XII as well as L'Osservatore Romano aided the Jews several times against the anti-Semitic laws, especially the Yellow Badge.¹⁴¹

In November, 1942, the Catholic hegemonies of Rome, Turin, Milan, Trieste, Fiumi, and Padoa sent protests to Mussolini against the oppressive Jewish measures. These protests were reported in Regime Fascista, which called for the removal of all Church power in Italy.¹⁴² This protest, the first of its kind in Italy, spoke out directly against the persecution of Jews, the closing of synagogues, the confiscation of Jewish property, and compulsory labor.¹⁴³

In December, 1942, the German Nazi newspaper Volkishcher Beobachter, in an article entitled, "Jewish Gangs in the Vatican" called L'Osservatore Romano a Communist paper written in Italy, on account of the article which appeared in it dealing specifically with the butchery and destruction of European Jewry. The

German paper claimed that the Vatican was not neutral, as it was supposed to be, but felt total hatred towards the Nazis; an attitude which must be stopped.¹⁴⁴

Just days before Italy's unconditional surrender on September 8, 1943, when Pietro Badoglio had already replaced Benito Mussolini as ruler of Italy, it was reported in Davar that due to Vatican intervention, the Italian government gave instructions at the end of August, 1943, to free 16,000 Jews in concentration camps, including the Isonzo camp. Professor Zolli, the chief Rabbi of Rome, expressed thanks to the Pope. He also conveyed the appreciation of Italian Jewry for the efforts of the Pope in behalf of the Jews during Mussolini's rule.¹⁴⁵

In October, 1943, with Rome in the hands of the Germans, the expulsion of all Roman Jews was ordered. Nearly all post-war accounts cite the plight of Rome's Jews as evidence of Papal insensitivity and inaction. The Pope was reported to have sat by and literally watched the Jews being deported from Rome.

However, it was Pius XII who donated eight kilograms of gold to the Jewish community of Rome, in order to help pay a tax of fifty kilograms imposed on it by the Germans. These reports, although not confirmed officially, were based on the knowledge that the Jews

couldn't get more than forty-two kilograms themselves, and that the total of fifty kilograms was obtained.¹⁴⁶ Pinhas Lapide, in his book, Three Popes and the Jews, went so far as to speculate that the Pope melted down religious articles in order to accumulate the needed gold.¹⁴⁷

In June, 1944, Chief Rabbi Zolli, at the dedication ceremony of the Rome Synagogue after German forces were removed from Italy, expressed thanks from Italian Jewry to the Catholic Church and the entire Priesthood for their help.¹⁴⁸ A month later, a priest was applauded enthusiastically at the Rome synagogue. His actions, which included warning Jews about the impending expulsion, securing papers, and saving thousands of Jews, was recognized and appreciated by the Jewish community, who saw these acts as coming from the Pope himself.¹⁴⁹

L'Osservatore Romano, as the semi-official Vatican newspaper, and Regime Fascista, which represented Fascist and Nazi sentiment, were in constant conflict during the war. Regime Fascista chastized the Catholic paper for too much political involvement. This accusation, made frequently during the war years by the Fascist paper, clearly contradicted claims made after the war

that L'Osservatore Romano was silent throughout the period of worst Nazi atrocities. This silence was said to demonstrate both Papal and Vatical support of the German racist measures. Davar, however, representing the Hebrew press during the actual war period, showed that a constant struggle took place between the Papal newspaper and the Fascist government. In fact, nearly every headline that dealt with the Pope or the Catholic Church during the Holocaust dealt with positive measures taken by the Pope to aid the Jews. In December, 1943, for example, L'Osservatore Romano condemned the expulsion of the 40,000 Jews arrested in German controlled Italy, stating:

"The new German decrees affect thousands of children, women, and elders, whose suffering will increase, especially during the summer."¹⁵⁰

Immediately after German forces had been totally removed from Rome, and from most of the rest of Italy, stories of Papal and Vatican aid to the Jews during the war appeared. Several thousand Jews were reported to have been given shelter at the Pope's summer home at Castel Gandolfo. Before leaving their refuge, they publicly thanked the Pope for his aid.¹⁵¹ Chief Rabbi Zolli, planned to meet with Pope Pius XII in the summer

of 1944 to confirm publicly the friendly relationship between the Pope and the Jews, and Papal aid to the Jews during World War II.¹⁵² Monasteries were rumored to be hiding places for Jews in Italy; in July, 1944, the Gestapo searched for Jews in the monasteries of Milan.¹⁵³

The Archbishop of Turin was arrested in his home in October, 1944 by Gestapo agents and accused of having given aid to the Jews. This same Archbishop took part in the protests sent to Mussolini in November, 1942.¹⁵⁴ Church officials, commenting on Papal aid to the Jews during the war, pointed out how thousands of Jews were saved by the Church by providing refuge in monasteries and Churches. In April, 1945, the Vatican published a list of people and places which helped the Jews. The list singled out Monsignor Angel Dell'acqua, who worked to arrange refuge places for the Jews. Renzo De Felice's book, History of the Italian Jews Under Fascism listed 155 such monasteries and convents in which the Jews found refuge during the war.¹⁵⁵ All tolled, over five thousand Jews were reported to have been saved by the Catholics in various institutions.¹⁵⁶

The greatest appreciation for Papal aid came on September 21, 1945. The World Jewish Congress delegation, headed by Dr. A. Leon Kubowitzki, gave two million

Italian liras, equivalent to approximately twenty thousand American dollars to the Vatican. The donation was made upon the request of the Italian Jewish community, who wished to thank the Vatican for its help to the Jews during World War II. The money was intended to be a small repayment to the Vatican for its expenditures during the war in behalf of the Jews.¹⁵⁷

CHAPTER IV - POPE PIUS XII, THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, AND
THE JEWS - FRANCE

References to Papal action in France are infrequent until July, 1942. Two unrelated cases of Catholic Church protest marked the years from 1939 to 1942. In January, 1939, a conference was held in France dealing with anti-Semitic racial policy. Among the participants was the head of the Catholic Church in France, Cardinal Jean Pierre Verdier. At the conference, Verdier proclaimed that such racial policies would turn the world into a jungle, where only the strong survive over the weak.¹⁵⁸ French Catholic opposition to anti-Semitism was not mentioned again in the pages of Davar until August, 1941. The Nazi film, "Jud Süss" was being shown in Vichy movie theatres. The Catholic Free Press Neuveau Temps, called the film idiotic, and forbade its being shown in Vichy theatres. In response to this Catholic protest, the newspaper was closed down for a month.¹⁵⁹

July, 1942, was the starting point for Papal and Catholic protest over the increasingly anti-Semitic laws of Vichy France. Pierre Laval had re-entered the government on April 14, 1942, assuming all of the power

of the faltering regime of Marshall Petain. Anti-Jewish measures, patterned on the Nuremberg laws, were quickly instituted during July and August of 1942.¹⁶⁰

Pope Pius XII's representative in Vichy protested the Jewish persecutions in August, 1942. Vichy newspapers were ordered not to print the protest, since the Papal involvement was seen to be pro-Jewish.¹⁶¹ An American broadcast service reported that due to Papal intervention, the Vichy government would not continue to imprison foreign Jews.¹⁶²

What effect did such Papal protests have? Although the Pope and his representatives both publicly and privately called for an end to the Jewish persecutions, between July, 1942 and at least January, 1943, the harassment of Jews continued. Articles appearing in Davar during this six month period clearly demonstrated that Papal protests were frequent and forceful. However, even continued protest seemed to have had only a small influence in changing any major political plans. This was clearly illustrated in August, 1942, when, despite Petain's promise to Pope Pius XII's representative not to imprison the Jews, a new order was given to take several thousand Jews who came into France after 1936.¹⁶³ Pierre Laval, in control of full dictatorial powers,

disregarded the Papal protest against the institution of the Yellow Badge in France in August, 1942, although similar Papal action in Italy had successfully prevented the institution of the Yellow Badge there.¹⁶⁴

Catholic protest to this increased anti-Semitism was typified by the protest of a group of French Bishops in conquered France who gathered in a council in Paris in September, 1942, to protest persecution of the Jews in France. This was reported in the Swiss paper Schweizer Kirchenzeitung.¹⁶⁵

Monsignor Jules Gerard Saliege, the Archbishop of Toulouse, continued this protest by daring to preach for the good of the Jews. He made his pro-Jewish statements during the morning prayers on October 30, 1942. He stated that if the Church had the power to protest, it would be used to protect persecuted Jews.¹⁶⁶ Furthermore, he stated:

"Christian ethics, human duties derived from God, are trampled upon. Human beings are treated like beasts. Jews are men. Jews are women. They are our brethren like many others. A Christian cannot forge that."¹⁶⁷

This Bishop's statement echoed the one made by Pope Pius XI in 1938: "We are all Semites spiritually."¹⁶⁸ The Archbishop of Toulouse's statement was publicly read

by over half the priests in free France as well.

Furthermore, Monsignor Theas, Bishop of Montauban, stated in his mass:

"... The present anti-Semitic measures are a mockery of human dignity, a violation of the most sacred rights of the person and of the family."¹⁶⁹

It was Monsignor Theas who had written to the Rabbi of his home town in December, 1942:

"I am anxious to assure you that you have my very keen sympathy and my prayers. The hour of divine justice will strike. Let us have faith."¹⁷⁰

During the same period, The Reverend Father Cahillet, Father Provincial of the Jesuits of Lyons, was arrested for concealing ninety-two Jewish children. Earlier that year, one Father Dillard, during a service in the Church of St. Louis de Vichy, invited the congregation to pray not only for the prisoners of war,

"...but also for the 80,000 Frenchmen who are being held up to mockery by being made to wear a yellow star."¹⁷¹

He died in Dachau.

Priests of occupied France also voiced protest. But, the Bishops of Nice, Frejus, and Monaco, as well as the Abbots of Leyrins and Frigolet, sent a telegram to Henri Petain re-affirming their loyalty to Nazi France, and disassociating themselves from unpatriotic

Christians whose apparent concern for the Jews masked a lack of devotion to the regime.¹⁷²

Radio Vatican also protested Vichy's anti-Jewish politics. In September, 1942, a broadcast specifically mentioned Jewish persecutions in France, and branded them as being directly opposed to the principles of humanity and ethics. It stressed that the Vatican had, and would continue, to do all in its power to fight such persecutions, which were in direct contradiction to the foundations of Christianity.¹⁷³

Another Radio Vatican announcement reported that up until that time (September 29, 1942 is the date of the Davar report), 150 Catholic groups had approached the Pope from Italy, France, and Spain to request that he help Jews in accordance with Christian principles.¹⁷⁴

These protests seem to indicate that there was consistent Papal and Vatican protest against the Jewish expulsion from France. Later sources have claimed that the Pope spoke only in the most general terms against the suffering of humanity. His Christmas address of 1942, in which he never specifically mentioned the Jewish people, but did mention human suffering, has been used as the proof text for this argument. In his speech, he showed concern for:

"...hundreds of thousands of people who, through no fault of their own and solely because of their nation or their race, have been condemned to death or progressive extinction."¹⁷⁵

However, the reports which appeared in the pages of Davar question that contention, claiming that the Papal offices in France, as in Italy, were accused by both Fascists and Nazis with speaking out in behalf of the Jews.

Catholic protest continued, patterned after the continued Sunday mass sermons delivered by the Archbishop of Toulouse, in which he called anti-Jewish acts contrary to Christian tenets. He requested the Bishops of other regions to use their strength to aid Jews. This heightened protest was in reaction to the Vichy government's order to imprison all Jews in non-conquered France. American protests were registered by Cordell Hull.¹⁷⁶

On September 9, 1942, an epistle from the Cardinals and Archbishops of free France stated that they could not be silent while the Jews were being oppressed. They called for an end to oppression, especially to women and children. It was sent to Marshall Petain, and it appeared in the Swiss newspaper Courier De Geneve. The reports called the protests "Pope initiated."¹⁷⁷

When the Swiss Jews in France were imprisoned in the last quarter of 1942, a headline in Davar labelled it as a "Rebuke to the Church,"¹⁷⁸ implying that such action was an affront to the French Catholic Church which opposed the move.

A group of priests and other notable Catholics meeting in Paris in October, 1942, decided to continue their protest orally, although Laval had not heeded the letter of protest from the French Bishops. Many donned the Yellow Badge, including the Bishop of Paris, Emmanuel Suhard.¹⁷⁹

It was this constant storm of Church protest which resulted in the Nazi pressure exerted in January, 1943, on the Pope to resign. His protest over the Vichy persecution of Jews was viewed as contrary to the Roman Catholic tradition of anti-Semitism. The Nazis believed that the Pope should always support the enemy of the Jews; the Nazis in this case. The names of eighteen Popes were listed substantiating this claim. The present Pope, argued the Nazis, was different, for he loved the Jews. Because of this, he caused destruction to the Catholic world. Ten million pamphlets, printed in six languages, were distributed, criticizing the Pope and his pro-Jewish acts, particularly those in behalf of the Jews of Vichy France.¹⁸⁰

CHAPTER V - POPE PIUS XII, THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, AND
THE JEWS - GERMANY

The accounts in Davar that related to Papal action in Germany were mainly concerned with the role of the Pope as an international peace mediator, with hope for a peace settlement often seen to rest in his hands. Direct Papal involvement with the Jews of Germany was not great. However, several clear instances of aid to the Jews, led by various high German Catholic officials, have and should be brought to light.

Flags flew at half mast upon the announcement of the death of Pope Pius XI in February, 1939, in all major German cities except Munich. Munich claimed to be the capital of both Nazism and German Catholicism. Hitler's newspaper Angriff condemned the late Pope for his excessive political involvement.¹⁸¹ The election of the new Pope, the former Papal Secretary of State, Eugenio Pacelli was met with negative reaction in Germany. Elected on the third ballot with a two-thirds majority, the new Pope was considered in Germany to hold views similar to his predecessor, and therefore anti-Nazi.¹⁸²

On the day after his election the Berlin Morgenpost stated:

"The election of Cardinal Pacelli is not accepted with favor in Germany because he was opposed to Nazism and practically determined the politics of the Vatican under his predecessor."183

Another strong German condemnation of the new Pontiff was written in the German paper Das Reich. It stated:

"Pope Pius XI was a half Jew, for his mother was a Dutch Jewess; but Cardinal Pacelli is a full Jew."184

Neither Pius XI nor Pius XII had any traceable Jewish blood in their family lineage. The labelling of the Pope as Jewish was intended to demonstrate his pro-Jewish sentiments.

Roberto Farinacci made a similar statement in Regime Fascista just days before the Papal coronation. He called all sympathizers with the Jews "honorary Jews."185

In the first meeting between the Papal Nuncio of Berlin, Monsignor Cesare Orsenigo, and Adolf Hitler, the nuncio, speaking about the welfare of the citizens of Danzig, was told that the people would make their own decision. Already in May, 1939, Pius XII and his delegate were being told directly by the Nazis that they

should involve themselves with only matters of religion. Politics should be left to the politicians.¹⁸⁶

In October, 1939, a rumor circulated that Hitler would become the leader of the new German Catholic Church. This was apparently a reaction to the Catholic protest over the German-Russian pact. For Russia, in maintaining an atheistic stance, was an enemy to the Church. Hitler was reported ready to dissolve the entire Catholic Church of Germany,¹⁸⁷ which the German government continued to subsidize with over one billion Reichmarks annually.¹⁸⁸ The German newspaper Deutsche Dienst denied this report, as well as the report that Monsignor Orsenigo protested to the German government over the treatment of Catholics in occupied Poland, especially in the Danzig region.¹⁸⁹

Davar demonstrated its own bias in the headline "Papal Epistle Accuses Germany" written on October 29, 1939.¹⁹⁰ Since no specific mention was made regarding Germany in the proclamation. Rather, the Pope called on future victors not to base peace arrangements on the power of the victorious, but on the power of justice.

Despite German condemnation of excessive Papal political involvement, the Reich appealed to the Vatican in December, 1939, to arrange a Christmas cease fire.

In the conference between German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop and Monsignor Orsenigo, in which the cease fire plans were discussed, assurances were given to the nuncio that relations between Germany and the Vatican would improve.¹⁹¹ Relative calm did exist on the war front during the Christmas of 1939.

The Pope invited German bishops to the Vatican in February, 1940. On the agenda at this meeting was a discussion on ways in which the Pope could be used as a peace mediator.¹⁹²

Foreign Minister Ribbentrop visited Italy and the Vatican in March, 1940, and although improved relations were promised in January, 1939, tension prevailed at these meetings. The Catholic newspaper L'Avvenire stated that the conversation between Pius XII and Ribbentrop was strained.¹⁹³ It was rumored that Hitler, in 1940, desired a re-working of the 1933 pact between the Reich and the Vatican, and it was toward this goal that he sent his foreign minister to see Pius XII. An article in Davar entitled, "What Did Ribbentrop Do In Rome"¹⁹⁴ revealed the widespread belief that a new concordat was being suggested during his meetings with the Pope. The main reason for a new agreement was to

assure the loyalty of Germany's twenty million Catholics.

A New York Times article, reported in Davar, stated that Pius XII received Ribbentrop with unprecedented rudeness. The German leaders reportedly were insulted over the rude behavior of the Pope.¹⁹⁵ It was not known for certain whether the discussion of a new concordat was in fact on the agenda or not, but rumors again were circulated when Ribbentrop returned to Germany. He promptly met with the Papal Berlin Nuncio Orsenigo, and the reports were that the Reich would guarantee freedom of religious expression in Poland, Germany, Bohemia, and Moravia to all Catholic citizens.¹⁹⁶ Negotiations between the Nuncio and the German Minister would continue, according to a March 22, 1940 report.¹⁹⁷

In January, 1941, a news report from Stockholm mentioned that a German priest had been arrested for converting Jews to Christianity in order to facilitate their ability to go to Latin American countries open only to Christians. This act was a crime against the Third Reich.¹⁹⁸ The formal declaration prohibiting Jews to convert to Christianity was enacted in April, 1942, but was retroactive to September 4, 1941. The order was signed by the Minister of the Interior, Dr. Wilhelm Frick. This order was a reaction not only to

the conversionary activity of the priest arrested in 1941, but due to increased conversion among Jews in 1941.¹⁹⁹

A striking contradiction between German policy and action took place in the second half of 1941. Restrictions upon Jews were increasingly severe in Germany, with deportations to the eastern concentration camps in effect. However, at this very time, there still existed in Germany a need for Jews. In July, 1941, a report was issued that Jewish doctors from Austria and Germany were sent by the hundreds to Kushka in the Soviet Union, to care for the German casualties. They were needed since non-Jewish German doctors were caring for the casualties returning from the eastern front. Also, one hundred Rumanian Jewish doctors were called, despite the law forbidding Jews into the Holy Rumanian Army.²⁰⁰ In Slovakia, all Jewish doctors were freed from camps and sent to military hospitals. In Hungary in the spring of 1944, Jewish doctors were called into military service at a time when the majority of Hungarian Jews were being executed.²⁰¹ Even Hermann Goring sent large numbers of Jews from concentration camps to factories, when the Balkan experts in German factories couldn't do the job.

This lack of Balkan skill in German industry led to German protest over the expulsion of the Jewish experts.²⁰²

In May, 1942, the requirement for classification as an "Aryan" was also modified in Germany to fit the need. Prior to that time, two classifications of Germans existed. The first was a Reichs Deutsche; one who was completely German on both parents' sides. The second category was Volks Deutsche, which applied to residents of lands allied with the Reich, including Japan. The new category, called Deutsch Stemmig, made one who had but one German parent or grandparent an Aryan. This new classification added to the number of Germans at a time when military losses were growing.²⁰³ Furthermore, in May, 1942, a report stated that in Poland it was possible to obtain a document certifying that the holder was a pure Aryan; even if that holder was in fact Jewish. The purchase of such rights was reported to be made through German officers in Poland for a fee of \$225.00.²⁰⁴

Another change in Jewish status occurred in the summer of 1944, just months before the end of the war. According to a Swedish newspaper, half Jews were drafted into the German army. Half Jews were considered those who were the offspring of a mixed marriage.²⁰⁵

German bishops protested religious persecutions without mentioning the Jews specifically in May, 1943. They made this protest in the name of Germany.²⁰⁶ However, the head of the Munster Catholic hegemony, Bishop Cleme August von Galen, came out in July, 1943, in a strong speech from his pulpit against Jewish persecution. He said that it was impossible to destroy the children of Israel. He specifically and publicly pointed to the destruction of the Jewish people when he stated:

"Through the children of Israel, the entire world received the Ten Commandments. In spite of this, an end is being made to German Jewry, and the Germans are slaughtering them in an unparalleled manner. Those who oppress the Jews didn't take into account the strength and power of God to punish the German nation. Today we are witnesses to this; how parts of our land have the same fate as Sodom and Gomorrah. I believe that all the attempts of the enemies of the Jews will be in vain, for it is impossible to destroy the children of Israel."²⁰⁷

Papal involvement as an intermediary in a German peace plan was again reported in June, 1944. Peace between Germany and the Allies was rumored to be forthcoming after Myron Taylor had met with Pope Pius XII that month.²⁰⁸

The following month speculation increased as

Vatican officials spoke with the German representative to the Vatican, Baron Ernst von Weizsacker, over whether the Pope could get involved in peace negotiations.²⁰⁹ Rumors that the Pope was interested in working towards the re-structuring of the German government were denied by the Vatican.²¹⁰

One of the only articles that appeared in Davar throughout the seven years from 1939 to 1945 which placed any blame on the Catholic Church for inaction towards Jewish persecution appeared in November, 1944. Entitled, "The Church and the Jews," it claimed that the Church of Germany spoke about the commandment 'Thou Shalt Not Kill' only when they themselves were harmed. No protests were made, said the article, when the Jews were being persecuted.²¹¹ Except for the rare cases of Bishop Galen, who throughout the war condemned all German policies which were inhumane, and Bernard Lichtenberg, Provost of Berlin, who said daily prayers for Jews, and eventually was arrested by the Nazis on October 23, 1941, dying en route to Dachau in 1943, this criticism of the German Catholic Church was accurate.

Perhaps Guenter Lewy was correct when he analyzed the position of the German Catholic clergy in his book, The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany. The loyalty of the

fatherland on the part of the highest Catholic officials in Germany superceded even their loyalty to the Church, he maintained.

CHAPTER VI - POPE PIUS XII AND THE JEWS - REST OF
THE WORLD

Few Papal references to Jewish matters in countries other than Italy, Germany, and France were made during the war period. However, through the several articles that did appear, there was a clear indication that not only was the Pontiff aware of the Jewish persecutions, but that he had vowed publicly to protest them and work towards their amelioration. Pius XII's predecessor had stated, just one month prior to his death, that he would compare Nazism to Bolshevism, and that the persecution of Jews was a disgrace to the Catholic world.²¹²

The first hint of Papal aid to non-Catholics, including Jews, came in February, 1940. Brazil, responding to a Papal request, agreed to provide in the near future three thousand visas for non-Aryans, including Jews. The Brazilian government was glad to help the humanitarian work of Pope Pius XII.²¹³ Less than a week after this news reached the newspapers, it was reported that the United Jewish Appeal, represented by Rabbis Abba Hillel Silver and Jonah Wise, presented a donation of half a million dollars for the

aid of Christian refugees. Half of this money was given directly to the Pope. The other half was given to Dr. George A. Buttrick, a leading Catholic theologian, and the President of the National Council of Catholic Churches.²¹⁴

Barry Schwartz adds important light in his article, "The Vatican and the Holocaust," written in the summer of 1964. He pointed out that three thousand non-Aryans who were re-located in Brazil, and whose names were contained in a secret yellow book, had to be baptized before being given a visa.²¹⁵

The most controversial of all Papal speeches during the holocaust period was his Christmas address of 1942. Davar headlined the story, "And What About the Jews?"²¹⁶ This headline referred to the fact that although the Pope did call himself a constant fighter against Socialism and Marxism, he did not mention even once the plight of the Jewish people.²¹⁷ The Pope had considered his Christmas address to be a clear indication of his concern for the plight of the Jewish people, even if they were not named specifically. He was shocked at worldwide Jewish reaction to it.

In February, 1943, the Pope was directly connected

with Jewish aid. As soon as the fate of the Jews within Nazi control was known, Chief Rabbi Herzog of Israel approached the Vatican mission in Jerusalem requesting Papal aid to save the Jews of Europe. The Chief Rabbi received an answer from the Pope in which he said that he would continue to do all in his power to aid the persecuted Jews. Chief Rabbi Herzog subsequently sent several practical suggestions to the Pope regarding specific refugees, since the previous Papal response had indicated a willingness to aid in such a way.²¹⁸

Talks between Pope Pius XII, British representative to the Vatican, Sir Frances D'Arcy Osborne, Cardinal Schuster, and the former Vatican minister from Hungary occurred on April 7, 1943.²¹⁹ These talks were the topic of discussion in the British Parliament at that time. One member of Parliament asked whether Osborne was speaking about Papal intervention. Foreign Minister Anthony Eden answered that the Vatican's acts of helping the suffering in Europe were public knowledge. He further stated that there was no doubt that the question of Papal aid to European Jews would be brought up at the discussions.²²⁰

In May, 1943, Monsignor Paschal Robinson, the Papal Nuncio in Ireland, spoke with the political secretary of the World Jewish Congress. They discussed the situation of European Jews. The nuncio promised, both in his name and in the name of the Vatican, full participation in all possible suggestions which would bring an easing to the situation.²²²

The first specific mention by the Vatican of Jewish suffering and persecution came in June, 1943. A broadcast of Radio Vatican in France said that peace and justice were endangered as long as racial discrimination continued between nations. The broadcast, which specifically mentioned the Jewish situation, stated:

"Those who persecute the Jews act in opposition to matters of peace in the world, and in opposition to the principles of justice, and even in opposition to God's commandments."²²³

In August of the same year, Journal De Geneve reported that the Pope, through mediators, once again approached the German government regarding the fate of thousands of French, Dutch, and Belgian Jews who were deported. The report indicated that the Pope requested a mission be sent to those deported, and word forwarded to their families concerning their whereabouts and conditions.²²⁴

After Rome was liberated by the Allied forces on June 4, 1944, Pope Pius XII issued his most specific statement concerning the Jews. It was reported that his concern over the fate of Jewish prisoners prompted him to say:

"For centuries the Jews have been most unjustly treated, 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."²²⁵

The fate of Jewish children in Europe was the topic of discussion between Moshe Shertok, head of the Jewish Agency, and Pius XII on April 9, 1945, just one month prior to the end of the war in Europe.²²⁶ At that meeting, the situation of European Jewry and the future of Jews in Israel was discussed. The exact number of children reported to have been given refuge in monasteries and churches through the Catholic Church was 5,700. The main problem was getting these monasteries and churches to agree to release these children, 3,700 of whom were still in their hands. The other two thousand were in establishments under Jewish auspices. All tolled, a reported nine thousand children were orphaned and stranded in post-war Europe, with two-thirds of them in

non-Jewish hands.²²⁷ Confirming the situation, the Vatican representative in Israel said that these shelters were only temporary, and that all the children would be returned.²²⁸

With the war in Europe hardly over, Pius XII further stated in a speech to the Sacred College of Cardinals on June 21, 1945, that he indeed knew about the Nazi atrocities. However, he was quick to remind the audience that his voice had been raised throughout the war in protest against these acts of terror. In the speech he remarked:

"During the war we never stopped, especially in our messages... opposing the ruinous and ruthless application of National Socialist doctrines, which ended in the most exquisite scientific methods to torture and suppress people who were often innocent."²²⁹

CHAPTER VII - POPE PIUS XII, THE VATICAN, AND THE
NON-JEWISH WORLD

Pope Pius XII always claimed to have made every effort to avert the outbreak of a European war. Also, his ministries reported that, once the war had started, the Pope acted throughout it as a peace mediator. The recurring problem that any Pope who represents not only Italian Catholics, but all Catholics throughout the world, faced was the issue of neutrality. Pius XII recognized the importance of maintaining a neutral position at least publicly, and so he stressed his neutrality throughout the war. It is within this framework as a spiritual leader for Catholics, both in the Allied and Axis countries, that the Pope's role should be assessed.

Pius XII recognized the need for a strong and active foreign policy. As the Secretary of State for Pius XI, and the Papal representative in the German Vatican concordat negotiations, he realized the political potential of the Pope.

George O. Kent wrote about Pius XII in an article entitled, "Some Aspects of German-Vatican Relations," that:

"Foreign affairs were his (Pius XII's) specialty and relations with Germany his own private domain."²³⁰

He therefore assumed the role as the leading foreign minister of the Vatican, ²³¹ a position he made publicly known in his Easter speech of 1939.²³² In that speech he praised the Spanish nation for fighting so bravely against Communism. Pope Pius XII feared Communism. He viewed the Spanish fight against it as one which would help to strengthen and preserve the Christian culture.²³³

The most active pre-war Papal involvement took place over the German occupation of Danzig. It was reported that on May 7, 1939, Pope Pius XII would call for an end to the Polish-German conflict. He would use his Papal legate as an intermediary. In that speech, the Pontiff expressed clearly his feeling that his representatives throughout the world should utilize their diplomatic power whenever possible to help preserve peace.²³⁴

Furthermore, in a speech broadcast to a French Eucharist Congress in Algiers, he said that during the entire month of May the entire Catholic Church should use all its means to strive for peace.²³⁵

On May 10, 1939, the Pope, through his nuncio

visiting Britain's Foreign Secretary, Lord Halifax, called for a multi-nation conference to deal with the matter of Danzig. This conference would include representatives from England, France, Italy, Germany, and Poland. Halifax agreed, providing the conference would not just be a formality, but would rather be one in which binding agreements would be made.²³⁶

Further Papal intervention through the offices of his Warsaw Nuncio, Monsignor Filippo Cortesi, were rumored. These reports were denied by the Vatican.²³⁷ The Warsaw nuncio did, however, come to the Vatican in June, 1939. Again, the Vatican denied the report that the visit was to discuss Danzig.

A valid point to be considered in light of this apparent Papal involvement in peace negotiations, is the continued Vatican denial of such involvement. It is known that the Pope and the Vatican had to constantly defend the oath of neutrality which by the nature of the office they were bound to uphold. It may, therefore, be concluded that the Pope sought to avoid being publicly connected with purely political matters, which might be interpreted as a Papal bias.

On the other hand, purely religious or universal concerns could be, and were, voiced by the Pontiff. His

broadcast from Rome to Poland on August 19, 1939 is such an example. In it he called for the saving of peace. His words were extremely general and unspecific, unlike the specific call for an international conference which he made earlier that year.²³⁹

Publicly Pope Pius XII regularly called for peace in the world, without making specific reference to the aggression of any one country. He announced at a council of Cardinals in June, 1939, that at the beginning of May, 1939, he had made known his desires for peace. In turn, he had received assurances from the nations' leaders that they would work for peace.²⁴⁰

The Regent for Hungary, Admiral Miklos Horthy, in a speech at the opening of the new Hungarian Congress in June, 1939, said that the time had come for international negotiations. He pointed out that it was difficult for any side to make the first step. The Vatican, said Horthy, was, therefore, the only power that could give the impetus for such a move, since the Pope was a neutral force.²⁴¹

Just days before the September 1, 1939 outbreak of World War II, Pius XII did call for peace. On Radio Vatican, he said:

"It is possible to save only through understanding, and not through weapons. We are on the brink of war, but it is still possible to prevent it. Please pray to God that the nations will understand..."²⁴²

Just one day before Germany invaded Poland, Papal Secretary of State Maglione met with the representatives of England, France, and Poland, as well as with the nuncios of Budapest and the United States. He instructed them all to be instrumental in whatever way possible to foster the cause of peace.²⁴³

Early peace efforts emanating from the Papal office were reported after the war had been in progress several months. In December, 1939, the news was spread that in Pius XII's first Christmas message, he would call for peace. The extended meeting between the Papal Nuncio in Berlin, Monsignor Cesare Orsenigo and von Ribbentrop at the Wilhelmstrasse, was mentioned. This meeting, which was rumored to have dealt with possible peace negotiations, was initiated by Pope Pius XII.²⁴⁴ In March, 1940, the Pope attempted to negotiate a peace settlement for Belgium. As early as August 25, 1939, the semi-official Vatican paper had announced the exchange of letters between Belgium and the Pope, dealing with ways in which peace could be preserved.²⁴⁵

The book, The State of the Catholic Church in Nazi-Occupied Poland, published by the Vatican, gave evidence in 1940 of Nazi persecution and torture of Catholics in Poland. All reports were made by Polish

priests who witnessed the events and were able to escape to either Italy or France. The persecution was reported to be increasing daily, with many priests executed without trial.²⁴⁶

In March, 1940, just a month before the publication of this book, the Pope met with von Ribbentrop in Vatican City. Pius XII was asked under what conditions he would support a peace plan. He responded that he would only support a plan which would allow both Catholics and non-Catholics of Poland to have a respite from persecutions.²⁴⁷ Nevertheless, persecution continued in Poland against even high Catholic officials.

Cardinal Hlond, the leader of the Polish Catholic Church as well as the Primate of Poland, released a report in May, 1940. In it, he outlined the anti-Catholic Nazi persecutions in Poland. It gave details of Nazi oppression in cities such as Lodz, Cracow, and Warsaw. It stated that the Nazi plan was to destroy Poland and uproot the religious institutions through expulsion and a general ban. The palace of the Bishop in Chelmno was turned into a hotel. The Church next door became a dance hall. Half of the priests of Lodz were either expelled or imprisoned. One priest from the city of Kotsk reportedly was

arrested and dragged barefoot through the city. The Jews were forced to tie him up and kiss his feet after he was shot. When he died, the Jews had to bury him in the Jewish cemetery.²⁴⁸

Perhaps as a reaction to this story of horrors, on June 2, 1940, Pius XII called upon the warring nations to honor the laws of human decency and international laws. He especially lamented the persecution of innocent citizens who were not fighting but were affected by the war. He ended his talk by calling for the honor of peace, justice, and brotherhood.²⁴⁹

In October of that same year, the Holy See delivered a speech in which he outlined the urgent measures needed to be taken for a just, honorable, and lasting peace. These included: 1- the right of every nation to independence, 2- reciprocal limitation of arms, 3- an international organization which would arbitrate disagreements, and 4- spiritual love and unity between nations.²⁵⁰

In May, 1941, the Catholic Bishop of Lucerne issued a report upon his return to Switzerland from Vatican City. He said that the Pope had decided to try to help the Polish citizens and those taken from

Poland. According to the Bishop, a mission would be sent to aid all, regardless of nationality. Pius XII was also concerned with those Poles under Russian control, and would have liked to send a mission there as well. However, neither mission embarked, since both Russia and Germany opposed the Pope's representatives coming to Poland.²⁵¹ However, the Pope did appoint a representative to the Polish government. In May, 1940, Archbishop Godfrey became the official Vatican representative. The Polish government in exile in London opposed the move. They felt that the Pope should send a representative to London as well as Poland.²⁵²

The clearest example of Papal intervention took place in May, 1940, when a Papal letter was sent to the governments of Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands after they had been attacked by Germany. In an article entitled, "The Pope Encourages the Attacked Nations,"²⁵⁴ Pius XII wished a speedy return to justice and freedom to these countries. He called for an end to the suffering of the three nations and the conflicts between them and others.²⁵⁴ Queen Wilhemina of the Netherlands sent a telegram to the

Pope, thanking him for his concern. In it, she said:

"I am thankful to his Holiness for his most recent telegram. It has definitely been decided by my nation and myself to fight the invading enemy until victory."²⁵⁵

These telegrams indicated an involvement on the part of the Pope which deviated from a strictly religious role.²⁵⁶ For although he never took a stand against Germany herself, he did speak out against a German military attack not on a religion, but on a nation. This demonstrated Pius XII's ability to speak out against Germany in a manner which was felt clearly by all the nations of the world.

Pope Pius XII used every major Catholic holiday as an opportunity to call for peace. He achieved a cease fire during the Christmas of 1940.²⁵⁸

In the Pope's 1941 Easter speech, he asked those who fought to do so with mercy, caring for women and children. He stated:

"Let us pray for peace. Not the peace of humiliation and destruction of nations, but rather peace which will insure the honor of the nations, and the just rights of everyone."²⁵⁹

At the same time, the Vatican Foreign Minister and Secretary of State, Cardinal Maglione, announced

that the believers should pray that year for peace and justice among people.²⁶⁰

In a June, 1941 speech from Vatican City, Pius XII announced that a victory for the wicked would not be possible. He called for belief in Godly justice, as he spoke on the suffering of the European nations.²⁶¹

In the Pontiff's Christmas address of 1941, he said that:

"The idea of power strangles life. We cannot close our eyes to the growing deprication of Christianity in our times and its bad usage in the sciences. We need men of spiritual strength, vision, and conscience in order to build a new world, with the knowledge that in a new order, a place for freedom would be established. The noble nations must defend the world for the general good... There is no room for centers of military power which threaten the rest of mankind... There is no room for religious persecution."²⁶²

The infringement of religious freedom in Germany was attacked by the Pope in early February, 1942. L'Osservatore Romano published an article on the problem of religious expression in Germany. Vatican Radio broadcast the contents of this article several times. Both the article and the radio messages were in response to a book written by a German soldier

which had become widely circulated in Germany. The book called for a war against Christianity, including both Catholicism and Protestantism. It maintained that the two systems which existed in Germany, that of National Socialism and Christianity, were enemies of each other. Christianity, therefore, had to be destroyed.²⁶³

During the Jubilee festival in May, 1942, Pius XII said in a radio speech:

"We abhor the war against Christianity and the war of cold apathy. Christians are greatly suffering because of their beliefs... we are using this time of Jubilee in order to once again proclaim the idea of freedom. These words are directed to all warring sides. Indeed, whenever we use the word 'peace' we run the risk of offending one side or the other... In some countries, power rules over justice and righteousness, and Christians are persecuted for the same reason; for believing in the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords."²⁶⁴

Pius XII spoke for forty minutes. His words were interpreted by the Germans as an attack on the Russians. The Allies interpreted it as an attack on Germany. The speech was also considered a hard blow to Mussolini, since the Pope spoke in Italian, not in Latin, apparently out of a desire to have his speech more widely circulated. In addition,

the words of peace by the Pope were carried on fifteen thousand Church radio stations. They made a great impact, especially the statement: "Return us to peace."²⁶⁵

Father Robert Leiber, S.J., Pope Pius XII's German born personal secretary during his Pontificate, agreed that the Pope's words were often misinterpreted. In 1966, Leiber said:

"The Pope protested against every wrong, wherever it was done. He did not go farther. He was quite right,... The Pope was, however, quite aware that every one of his words would be exploited in a purely political way either by the Allies or by the Germans."²⁶⁶

March, 1942, marked the beginning of reports that diplomatic relations between Japan and the Vatican were to be established. First news of these relations aroused suspicion. Both the United States and Britain were opposed to them. The Allies felt that the Vatican should not set up relations with a country such as Japan which did not have a substantial Catholic population. The United States argued that only dissension would be caused by such an alliance. As a result of this protest, the decision was made by the Vatican not to send a nuncio to Japan, as was

the custom.²⁶⁷

The entire question of Japanese-Vatican relations is an interesting one. Vatican political involvement in the clearest sense is seen. Since the Catholic population of Japan was minute, the Pope would not be establishing relations as a religious leader to the Japanese people, but rather as a political leader with a country involved in an international war. Archbishop Spellman of New York said in his sermon of March 22, 1942, that the Vatican was justified in establishing a pact with Japan due to the Vatican's neutral stance.²⁶⁸ Several days earlier, despite Allied pressure, the Vatican itself had expressed a desire to set up diplomatic relations with Japan.²⁶⁹ This was, in fact, carried out when Yosuke Matsuoka, a veteran Japanese statesman, was selected to be the Japanese representative to the Vatican. The Cardinal of Tokyo was raised to the position of nuncio, thereby completing the formal exchange of representatives.²⁷⁰

Reacting to the obvious displeasure on the part of the Allied countries, the Vatican publicly stated less than a week after the announcement of diplomatic relations was made that such an agreement did not

mean Vatican acceptance of the Japanese conquests in the Far East.²⁷¹

The British House of Commons questioned the establishment of relations between Japan and the Vatican. The British Under Foreign Secretary, prior to the Vatican's decision to receive a Japanese ambassador, voiced his government's view that such an appointment would be interpreted as being the result of Axis pressure. In response to this, the Vatican announced that discussion of Japanese-Vatican relations had begun in 1922. Diplomatic relations were established when they were, said the Vatican, for the sake of the spiritual needs of the Japanese Catholics. They were not connected with matters of the day, or outside pressure, contended Vatican City.²⁷²

The Vatican, in an effort to once again preserve her neutrality, refused to serve as an Axis peace mediator in September, 1942. Pius XII announced to his aides that he didn't believe that a German victory would benefit the Catholic Church.²⁷³ It wasn't until near the end of the war that a German suggestion for Vatican peace mediation was accepted, on the Pope's terms.

On November 1, 1942, a report appeared announcing the publication of a book by the Vatican, which listed all of the Pope's efforts to save those in captivity. The report stated that Vatican envoys visited lands, including Israel, England, and India, to see if the Pope's efforts were being carried out. However, no visits were allowed to German controlled Poland, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia.²⁷⁴

The most forceful Vatican attack on Germany came in March, 1943. Vatican Radio broadcast a speech by Justin Cardinal Seredi, the chief Hungarian Cardinal, against the Nazis and their laws. Specifically mentioning the Jews, he called upon the Hungarian people to:

"...give aid and refuge to everyone in danger of the Nazis, and to aid anyone persecuted either on religious or racial grounds. The Hungarians are forbidden to participate in the slaughter. In fact, the sacraments will be withheld from anyone who helps in the detention or expulsion to work camps; as, for example, what is being done to the Jews. Everyone who participates in any way in such acts of murder wears the 'sign of Cain.'"²⁷⁵

Just two months later, in May, 1943, Radio Vatican responded to a Radio Paris broadcast made on Sunday, May 23, 1943. The French report stated that Pope Pius XII

was mainly responsible for the present war, due to his hateful stance towards National Socialism. The Vatican labeled these reports propoganda, and stressed the obvious fact that neither the Vatican nor the Pope were responsible in any way for the war.²⁷⁶ In addition, the Vatican Radio broadcast a Papal epistle to the Bishops of Germany urging German Catholics to oppose the forces of evil with all their power. This epistle was originally written on December 25, 1942, in honor of the twenty-fifth anniversary of Pius's appointment as Bishop.²⁷⁷

Pope Pius XII expressed his concern over extremes in the air war in June, 1943. Receiving in session a group of Cardinals, he said that from the outset of the war he did all he could to convince the warring nations to honor the laws of humanity in the air.

In June of the following year, British Foreign Minister Eden was asked by a member of the House of Commons to involve the Pope in presenting objections to German unmanned air attacks. This suggestion was prompted by the knowledge that Pius had previously been involved in other such protests. Eden said that the Pope could protest if he wished, but it was not the

place of the British government to ask him.²⁸⁰

As the summer of 1944 approached, increased Papal involvement in a peace settlement was reported. In July, 1944, it was apparent that the Vatican spoke with Baron Ernst Heinrich von Weizsacker, the German Vatican Representative, about the possibility of Papal involvement in a German peace treaty.²⁸¹

Rumors spread that the Pope suggested the possibility of establishing a new German government. The Vatican did not deny that the Pope was interested in fostering peace based on the most recent events in Germany.

However, the Vatican did deny that Pius XII had requested Archbishop Spellman to formulate recommendations for a peace treaty which Germany would in turn submit to the Allied powers.²⁸²

Seeing an imminent end to the war in Europe, in September, 1944, the Pope said that the future of the world was unknown. Pius did stress that the right of private property must be a basic principle in the new world order.²⁸³

In his 1944 Christmas address, Pope Pius XII remarked:

"We should concentrate our attention on the problem of democracy. Democracy is the right of the citizen in a democratic state to express his opinion on matters concerning him."²⁸⁴

This was the last reported reference in Davar of Papal involvement in the world political scene until the end of 1945.

With the end of the war in Europe on May 7, 1945, public statements both from the Pope and his official sources decreased sharply. However, on May 22, 1945, the Vatican was reported to be preparing a White Paper to spell out the ways in which the Pope helped to ease the suffering during the war. The report would also refer to his involvement in anti-Nazi and anti-Fascist causes.²⁸⁵

CHAPTER VIII - POPE PIUS XII AND HIS INVOLVEMENT
WITH THE ALLIED COUNTRIES

Pope Pius XII has often been regarded as a political as well as religious leader. Articles in Davar substantiated the contention that the Pope had some power as a political force. This role seemed to have been understood by the Pope and the Allied nations.

Papal dealings with the United States regarding the rise of Fascism and Nazism in Europe began under Pius XI. In January, 1939, according to a Washington, D.C. report, Pius XI consulted with President Roosevelt. They were united in their opposition to the Italian racial laws. Roosevelt made public the main points discussed at this meeting. This enraged Berlin. However, no German response was made until March 30, 1939, when Hitler addressed the Reichstag.²⁸⁶

Pope Pius XII and Roosevelt began a correspondence almost immediately after the new Pontiff took office. In July, 1939, the Pope sent a telegram to Roosevelt in response to an earlier communique from the President. Both telegrams were reported to have dealt with ways of preserving a European peace, with the Pope as

mediator.²⁸⁷ In May, 1940, after the war in Europe had been in progress for nine months, Pius XII met the special American envoy to the Vatican, Myron Taylor. The audience with the Pope, which was viewed with special importance in Vatican circles, lasted one hour. Reportedly, it dealt with the international situation and especially the danger of war spreading to other nations.²⁸⁸

It was not until September, 1941 that Davar again reported direct communication between the Vatican and Washington. Pius XII had not responded positively to Roosevelt's suggestion that the Holy See recognize that the war against the Nazis was the same as a war of righteousness. However, Pius XII's answer was phrased in a way that seemed to imply disapproval of Nazi tactics.²⁸⁹

Myron Taylor's discussions with the Pope in September, 1941, were seen to be an important factor in the progress of the war. All political experts agreed that these talks were part of Mussolini's plan to prepare Italy and the world for a compromise peace plan in which Italy would be removed from the war and separated from German control.²⁹⁰ The Pope clearly was seen as working for the political welfare

of Italy and serving as a political mediator with the United States. Taylor's visit to Rome caused great speculation. The Italian press was warned not to publish the accounts of his visit. Also seen as important was the impending visit to the United States of William Phillips, the regular American Ambassador to Italy.²⁹¹

The Fascist newspaper Journala D'Italia protested against seemingly friendly relations between the Vatican and the Anglo-Saxon nations and blamed the Pope. While Myron Taylor was still at the Vatican, the Italian press propagandized over the nature of his mission, claiming displeasure on the part of many Italians over Vatican-American relations. Knowledgeable circles felt that this article in Journala D'Italia was seen as a direct command to the Pope to tone down the public stand of the Vatican.²⁹² This would indicate that the Pope was operating in an openly political manner. It was viewed as being dangerous to those who held positions of control in Italy.

At the same time, a New York correspondent of the British paper Daily Mail stated that Roosevelt was now fulfilling his task of attempting to remove Italy

from the Axis. It was also reported that Taylor explained to the President what would have to be done in order to hasten Italy's disinvolvement in the war. Taylor, upon his return to Washington, brought a telegram from Pope Pius XII, in which the Pope presented three suggestions for peace in addition to requesting that Roosevelt do everything possible to work along with the Pope in seeing that the war be fought humanely.²⁹³

Amidst great speculation, another round of talks between Taylor and Pius XII took place in September, 1942.²⁹⁴ The contents, however, were kept secret.²⁹⁵

En route to the United States, Taylor stopped for several days in England and met with several Cabinet ministers. Reports that the purpose of Taylor's meetings with the Pope was to discuss a peace plan were circulated in the press but remained unsubstantiated.

The general feeling was that Taylor met with Pius as the religious leader of more than twenty million American Catholics to explain the reason for American involvement in the war.²⁹⁶ According to Vatican circles reporting in the Swiss newspaper Die Tat, Myron Taylor proposed a joint American-British plan for rebuilding

destroyed Europe after the war.²⁹⁷

After Taylor's return to the United States, private sources said that Taylor would continue his negotiations with the Pope in an effort to find a solution to Jewish persecution in the lands of the Reich. American Secretary of State Cordell Hull, when asked to substantiate the reports, said that he couldn't. Informed sources, however, said that Taylor and Pius XII spoke at great length and with great concern over the situation of the Jews, and discussed feasible plans of action.²⁹⁸ Later sources certified that the Jewish Question was indeed on the agenda at the meetings, and that on September 26, 1942, Myron Taylor delivered an explicit letter to the Papal Secretary of State Maglione outlining details of the atrocities committed against the Jews.²⁹⁹

President Roosevelt was personally in direct communication with Pius XII before Italy's surrender. Just two days before the surrender, on September 4, 1943 they spoke for fifty minutes. The contents of this discussion were not reported.³⁰⁰ In June, 1944, after the German army had been driven out of Italy, and Rome was liberated, Pius XII expressed thanks to God that Rome and the Vatican City were finally saved.

A United Press story from Vatican City stated that the American representative to the Vatican, Harold H. Tittman Jr., said that the Pope would establish a neutral stance towards the American forces in Rome. Tittman also gave assurances that the Allied bombing of railroad stations in Rome had not damaged the Vatican.³⁰¹

Several days later Myron Taylor returned to the Vatican for more meetings with the Pope.³⁰² The contents of these talks were thought to concern a peace plan suggested by the Pope to the German Catholic Cardinals. However, the nature of the plan was not revealed. It was also reported that Pius XII presented a peace plan only after the German Cardinals had themselves asked the Pope to help Germany in the same way that he had earlier helped Italy.³⁰³ The Pope was not being asked to be the spiritual leader for the Catholics of Germany as he had been in Italy. Rather, he was being asked to serve the strictly political function of arranging a cease-fire between warring nations as he reportedly had previously done.

Relations between the Soviet Union and the Vatican were strained throughout the entire war period. The Pope was an outspoken opponent of Communism. Some say he opposed it even more than Nazism. Saul Friedlander

stated in Pius XII and the Third Reich:

"The Pope's demarche was certainly motivated by a desire to restore peace. The fact remains, nonetheless, that if Great Britain had agreed to sign a peace in June, 1940, German hegemony over the whole of continental Europe would have been assured. It is possible that Pope Pius XII glimpsed this danger, but nevertheless to support the efforts of the Germans on account of what seemed to him an even greater danger, an expansion of the Soviet Union into Europe."³⁰⁴

In February, 1940, the Moscow press continued an attack begun earlier against the politics of the Vatican. It questioned how Italy could uphold the 1929 Lateran Treaty, (a pact made between Mussolini's Fascist government and the Vatican), when the Vatican had clearly entered the political arena, an act clearly forbidden by the treaty. The Moscow paper claimed that this overt political activity had increased once Eugenio Pacelli was crowned Pope Pius XII in March, 1939.³⁰⁵

In March, 1942, the Italian news agency reported that Stalin sent a long telegram to the Vatican. Although certain Vatican sources confirmed the receipt of such a telegram, other Vatican sources strongly denied it.³⁰⁶

The Pope as a religious leader opposed the Soviet Union and its system of Communism. The Pope as a political leader recognized the importance of communication

with the increasingly important Soviet power. In February, 1943, informed sources in Geneva reported that the Vatican was awaiting a Russian diplomatic entourage to discuss Vatican-Soviet relations.³⁰⁷ An alliance was apparently not established.

In February, 1944, Radio Moscow issued this statement:

"The enslavement of the Vatican to Fascism isn't only an Italian matter. The Vatican supported many of the attacks of the Fascists. The Vatican now changed its stand, and she now offers peace to all nations. But in the great historical conflict between the freedom loving nations and the enemy of humanity, the Vatican took a straight pro-Fascist stand."³⁰⁸

This was the strongest attack on the Vatican made by an Allied nation during the entire war.

A move towards reconciliation between the Vatican and the Russian government began to take place in the summer of 1944. In August, the Soviet Embassy in Rome delivered a message to the Italian Minister of the Interior of the Bonomi Government, Pietro Gaspari. It stated that the Russian government would be in favor of supporting the Christian Democratic Party in the peace council being established by Bonomi. This memorandum, which suggested Russian support not only

of the Communists but of the Catholics, was also sent to the Vatican. It hinted at a pact between the Vatican and Soviet Russia, and joint participation in those social areas where an agreement could be reached.³⁰⁹

Only two months were to pass, however, before a Russian newspaper attacked both the pre-war politics of the Vatican and the Vatican's politics during the war. It attacked the Vatican's efforts as a peace mediator, and claimed, as did Hitler, that the Vatican should have concerned itself solely with religious matters.³¹⁰

At the time of this criticism, President Roosevelt was reportedly willing to give his support to a Russian-Vatican concordat. Britain too would have been willing to help foster such relations. The announcement of Roosevelt's interest was made by Cardinal Dennis Dougherty of Philadelphia, who spoke to the Pope about the concordat possibility. Dougherty, before going to Rome, served as an advisor to President Roosevelt at the White House.³¹¹

In February, 1945, Catholics in Jerusalem spoke informally and unofficially about the Papal desire to establish relations with the Soviet Union. It was felt that as Russian control over Europe increased, communism

would also spread. The Pope feared this and condemned it in his Christmas message of 1942. However, in the best interests of world Catholicism, Pius XII would be willing to set up diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, in order to help secure the rights of the Catholic Churches in Europe.³¹² However, as in the past, progress towards such an agreement was not made.

In April, 1945, the Vatican and the Russian government were verbally attacking each other. The Vatican opposed Russian imperialism in Poland. Moscow accused Vatican politics as being responsible for Fascism.³¹³

The last mention of Soviet-Vatican relations was in October, 1945. Rumors again were circulated that the Vatican was interested in a concordat with Russia. It also wished to discuss with the Soviet Union the matter of Church property in Russian-occupied territory.³¹⁴

As the year 1945 drew to a close, a pattern of attack, slight reconciliation, and renewed attacks, between the Vatican and the Russian government emerged.

One interesting aspect of the Soviet condemnation of the Vatican was that the Vatican and the Pope were accused of pro-Fascist political activity. This was

not the first criticism leveled at the Catholic Church for entering the political realm. Both Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy had accused the Pope of being politically partisan to the Allied cause.

EPILOGUE

In this study, an interesting picture of Pope Pius XII and the Vatican emerges; one in which each is depicted in a most favorable light. It points to a series of verbal proclamations as well as deeds performed by the Pope and his representatives throughout the war years. Furthermore, it recognizes that the Pope was compelled to maintain, by nature of his office, an outwardly neutral stance. According to my sources, in spite of this balance which the Pope was expected to maintain, he could not refrain from political activity. This earned him condemnation by all warring sides, as well as appeals from the Axis and the Allies alike for continued political involvement.

What can be drawn from the study is the political power which the Pope did possess; a power which he attempted to keep in balance with his religious responsibilities. Such a balance, however, was not always possible.

It is most important to consider the source of this documentation. One Hebrew newspaper, Davar, directed towards an almost exclusively Jewish readership, was the primary source. It was the viewpoint of this

newspaper during the war which was investigated, and not the entire gamut of knowledge concerning the Pope and the Vatican which either was reported during the war, or has come to light since. This newspaper overwhelmingly supported the actions of the Pope, and consistently viewed his office as one committed to positive action on behalf of the Jews. It reflected in its editorials that Pius XII was an enemy of Nazism, and that he constantly condemned the suppression of freedom which existed in the Third Reich.

Davar's appraisal of the Pope contradicts that of later investigators of the period. Any further study, then, must begin with the question: "Why has Pius XII been singled out as an enemy of the Jews, and accused of working, albeit indirectly, with the forces bent on the destruction of European Jewry?" Such a study must not try to prove a case of anti-Semitism by omitting or neglecting Papal acts of aid towards the Jews. A clearer understanding of both Pope Pius XII in particular, and the entire structure of the Papacy and its relationship with all religions, will then emerge.

FOOTNOTES

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