

ATTACK ON PIUS XII IS UNSEEMLY

An article by Deborah Dwork and Eric Greenberg criticizing the Church for pursuing the cause of sainthood for Pope Pius XII was recently published on the website of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Dwork, a specialist in Holocaust studies at Clark University, and Greenberg, a rabbi and director of interfaith policy for the ADL, have the credentials, but their judgment was questionable.

They began their remarks by saying that “Pius refused even to say the word Jew during his famous Christmas speech of 1942.” But the *New York Times* knew who the pope was referring to at the time: “No Christmas sermon reaches a larger congregation than the message Pope Pius XII addresses to a war-torn world at this season. This Christmas more than ever he is a lonely voice crying out of the silence of a continent.” Nowhere in the *Times*’ editorial of December 25, 1942 did it mention the word Jew, but it’s clear what the editorial was referring to. Indeed, the *Times* ran an editorial on Christmas day, 1941, singling out the pope among the world leaders: “The voice of Pius XII is a lonely voice in the silence and darkness enveloping Europe this Christmas.”

The *New York Times* was not alone in praising the heroics of Pius XII. So was Greenberg’s organization: the ADL wrote gloriously of his efforts. So did the World Jewish Congress, Golda Meir, Albert Einstein, Emilio Zolli (the chief rabbi in Rome—he converted to Catholicism after the war, taking Pius’ name as his baptismal name), and many others. Furthermore, Israeli diplomat Pinchas Lapide credited the pope with saving as many as 860,000 Jewish lives. Today, English historian Sir Martin Gilbert credits the Church for its yeoman service.

There is always room for just criticism, but for Dwork and

Greenberg to conclude that the cause for sainthood for Pope Pius XII is “an act of aggression against the Jewish people” is flat out unseemly.