

# **Pius the Good; The brief for a much-maligned pope**

By William Doyno Jr.  
(The Weekly Standard, June 12, 2006)

*The Myth of Hitler's Pope: How Pope Pius XII Rescued Jews from the Nazis* by David G. Dalin Regnery, 256 pp., \$27.95

EVER SINCE THE GERMAN PLAYWRIGHT Rolf Hochhuth produced *The Deputy*—a long, unwatchable 1963 production that depicted Pope Pius XII as indifferent to the Holocaust—the notion that the Vatican bears a large portion of the guilt for Hitler's murder of six million Jews has waxed and waned. But it seemed mostly to be fading away, one of the sillier ventures in historical misunderstanding.

And then, suddenly in the late 1990s, it was back—and back with a vengeance. James Carroll published a long essay in the *New Yorker* in 1997 called “The Silence,” setting up his 750-page book, *Constantine's Sword*, using Pius XII to indict all things Catholic. With the success of John Cornwell's ingeniously titled *Hitler's Pope* in 1999, the I-hate-Pius-XII books came fast and furious. Garry Wills's *Papal Sin*, Michael Phayer's *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust*, Susan Zuccotti's *Under His Very Windows*, David Kertzer's *The Popes Against the Jews*, Daniel Goldhagen's *A Moral Reckoning*—who could keep up with them all?

Well, one person who managed was David G. Dalin, a rabbi and historian who became increasingly bothered by these attacks on the role of the Vatican during World War II. In 2001—in the pages of this magazine, as it happens—Dalín published “Pius XII and the Jews,” a 5,000-word blast at the anti-Pius ideologues. Every so often an essay comes along that changes the way people approach a controversial topic. After it appeared, Dalín's essay became one of the most talked about statements ever published on Pius XII: widely praised, challenged, and reprinted throughout the world.

Dalín has now expanded his essay into a book-length treatment of Pius and related themes. As Dalín shows, with copious documentation, the “silence” of Pius XII and the Catholic Church is one of the great falsehoods of the 20th century. During the rise and reign of the Third Reich, Hitler's racism and the Nazis' anti-Semitism were being condemned by Catholic spokesmen from every corner of the globe—especially the Vatican.

This is not to say that the Church's record is unassailable. Just as one can find bad Catholics today, so one can easily find ecclesiastical cranks, anti-Semites, and collaborators during the Nazi era. But they do not represent the Roman Catholic hierarchy, and the accurate history of those days shows how they lost their attempt to influence the Church.

Among the Catholic leaders who stood tall during that time, argues Dalín, was Eugenio Pacelli, the man who was to become Pope Pius XII. Tracing his life as a young priest, Dalín examines his service as nuncio to Germany (1917-1929), secretary of state to his predecessor Pius XI (1930-1939), and pope (1939-1958). Refuting the notion that Pacelli was a reactionary anti-Semite, Dalín proves that he was, if anything, a philo-Semite. As early as 1916, the young Pacelli helped craft a powerful statement against anti-Semitism, then followed that up by befriending and rescuing Jews from outbreaks of anti-Semitic pogroms.

On November 14, 1923, writes Dalín, just five days after Hitler's failed putsch against the local government in Munich, “Pacelli wrote to [Secretary of State] Cardinal Gasparri denouncing Hitler's National Socialist movement and favorably noting Munich archbishop Michael Faulhaber's vocal defense of Bavaria's Jews.” Later, after Pacelli succeeded Gasparri, the very first protest he sent Germany was against Nazi anti-Semitism in April 1933, just months after Hitler became chancellor.

Concerning the much-maligned Concordat, signed between Germany and the Church in July 1933, Dalín argues persuasively that it was a necessary defense mechanism against a ruthless totalitarian state. True, Hitler began violating it almost immediately, but had it not been signed, the situation would have been even worse. As Zsolt Aradi, who covered Pius XI's pontificate and wrote one of the best accounts of it, commented: “Actually, the little freedom that the Concordat left for the clergy and hierarchy was widely used to save as many persecuted Jews as could be saved.” Critics of the Concordat have never proposed a viable alternative.

Using newly released archives, Dalín establishes that Pacelli was something of a prophet in the 1920s and '30s, warning everyone who would listen about the dangers of Hitler. After a 1937 meeting with Cardinal Pacelli, the American consul A.W. Klieforth wrote to the State Department that Pacelli “regarded Hitler not only as an untrustworthy scoundrel but as a fundamentally wicked person.” According to Klieforth, he “did not believe Hitler capable of moderation,” in spite of appearances, and that Pacelli “opposed unalterably every compromise with National Socialism.”

Klieforth's son, Alexander, has recently confirmed the secret meetings and his father's testimony: “What was divulged was critical, sensitive information, because, among other things, it proved that the pope-to-be was anti-Nazi and hated Hitler. Cardinal Pacelli thought the whole Nazi ideology an abomination because it persecuted the Jews and it persecuted the Church.”

Pacelli's abhorrence of anti-Semitism was seen a year earlier, during a visit to America, when he publicly snubbed the notorious anti-Semitic radio priest Charles Coughlin—choosing, instead, to meet with Jewish leaders. Shortly thereafter Coughlin mysteriously vanished from the airwaves and, as Dalín notes, he always blamed Pacelli for his fate.

World War II began only months after Pacelli became pope in March 1939, and his first encyclical, *Summi Pontificatus*, is a searing condemnation of racism and totalitarianism. The new pope immediately made contacts with the anti-Nazi Resistance and actually approved a plot to assassinate Hitler. In his allocutions and famous Christmas addresses, Pius defended minorities and sharply condemned the persecution of people based upon their race. He ordered his nuncios to intervene for Jews and vigorously protest their deportation. Pius XII also authorized Vatican Radio to publicly condemn Nazi atrocities—which it did, often quite explicitly, citing Jews by name. Despite ongoing Nazi reprisals, Vatican Radio continued to broadcast defiant words like this, reported in the *New York Times* on June 27, 1943: “He who makes a distinction between Jews and other men is unfaithful to God and is in conflict with God's commands.”

During the German occupation of Rome, from September 1943 to June 1944, Pius XII—contrary to his detractors—made several energetic protests against the Nazi seizure of Rome's Jews, and took decisive action to protect them. Thanks to Pius and his subordinates, three quarters of them did survive, and Italy, as a whole, had a far higher survival rate of Jews than most other Nazi-occupied countries.

Pius's reaction to the Nazi round-up of Rome's Jews is at the heart of the campaign against him, and in *The Myth of Hitler's Pope*, Dalín is emphatic, demolishing the attack with hard facts and firsthand testimonies. Pius's anti-Nazi activities so enraged Hitler that he planned to kidnap the pope, eliminating him as an obstacle to global domination. During his pontificate, Pius was as strong an opponent of evil as John Paul II was in time: For good reason John Paul called Pius XII “a great pope.”

In a 1943 cover story, *Time* declared, “No matter what critics might say, it is scarcely deniable that the Church Apostolic through the encyclicals and other papal pronouncements, has been fighting against totalitarianism more knowingly, devoutly and authoritatively, and for a longer time, than any other organized power. . . . Moreover, it insists on the dignity of the individual whom God created, in his own image, and for a decade has vigorously protested against the cruel persecution of the Jews as a violation of God's Tabernacle.”

Dalín makes three major criticisms of Pius's detractors. He maintains that many of those who assail Pius are not really interested in the history of the Jews, or the tragedy of the Holocaust, but merely want to exploit them for their own ideological agendas. As Dalín notes, the Hitler's pope myth has proven quite useful to dissident Catholics who disagree with Catholic teaching. If they can prove that the Vatican was complicit in the Holocaust, then they can weaken papal influence on every issue today, and advance their own agendas.

Dalín also accuses the anti-Pius ideologues of framing him with tainted documents—a mistranslated 1919 letter about revolutionary Jews in Munich, for instance, a phony postwar memo about the Catholic view of baptized Jewish children (fraudulently presented as a “Vatican instruction”)—while omitting exculpatory evidence. That very nearly all Pius's detractors ignore his heroic actions at Castel Gandolfo—the papal summer residence, which took in thousands of desperate people, including many Jews, upon Pius's direct orders—underscores this point.

Finally, pointing to the extraordinary tributes the Jewish community offered Pius for saving Jews and fighting anti-Semitism, Dalín slams those authors who have tried to explain these tributes away as mistaken or manufactured in order to promote good Jewish-Catholic relations and reduce anti-Semitism. The idea that Jews manipulate events in their own interests is a motif of classic anti-Semitism, and Dalín confronts Pius's detractors with their own bigotry: To “dismiss and deny the legitimacy of their collective gratitude to Pius XII is tantamount to denying the credibility of their personal testimony and judgment about the Holocaust itself. To so deny and delegitimize their collective memory and experience of the Holocaust . . . is to engage in a subtle yet profound form of Holocaust denial.”

If critics are so concerned about anti-Semitism, Dalín asks, why have they ignored the anti-Semitism of one of Pius's major contemporaries, Hajj Amin al-Husseini? Who? you might ask. That's just the problem. Few people know about this virulent character, the scion of a wealthy Arab family who became the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem in 1922.

“From his earliest years,” writes Dalín, “al-Husseini was known as a virulent anti-Semite and as an opponent of Jewish immigration to Palestine.” His hatred of Jews was so intense that he made overtures to the Nazis, with whom he soon formed an alliance.

“While in Berlin,” writes Dalín, “al-Husseini met privately with Hitler on numerous occasions, and called publicly—and repeatedly—for the destruction of European Jewry.” At the Nuremberg trials, Adolf Eichmann's deputy was even more explicit: “The mufti was one of the initiators of the systematic extermination of European Jewry and had been a collaborator and adviser of Eichmann and Himmler in the execution of this plan. . . .

He was one of Eichmann's best friends and had constantly incited him to accelerate the extermination measures.”

Hitler had a favorite cleric, but it wasn't Pius XII. Dalín is not the first to draw attention to al-Husseini, but he is the first to discuss the mufti within the context of the Pius debate. Juxtaposing the records of the two religious leaders—al-Husseini, the Nazi collaborator par excellence, and Pius XII, who never met Hitler—highlights the duplicity and hypocrisy of Pius's critics.

In defending the good name of Pius XII, Dalín does not stand alone. One of the most encouraging signs in recent years is the wealth of new scholarship supporting Pius. The work of Margherita Marchione and Ronald Rychlak in America; Michael Feldkamp in Germany; Matteo Luigi Napolitano, Andrea Torrielli, and Antonio Gaspari in Italy; and Michael Burleigh and Sir Martin Gilbert in Great Britain all indicate a new outlook on the wartime pontiff. In fact, Gilbert, Winston Churchill's official biographer, and one of the most respected historians of the Holocaust, has been particularly eloquent in his praise of Pius.

So we have come full circle. Pius's reputation declined after Rolf Hochhuth's 1963 attack in *The Deputy*, only to climb slowly up again as the fraudulence of Hochhuth's complaint became clear. His reputation plummeted again in the 1990s as multiple books attacking him hit the bestseller lists. With *The Myth of Hitler's Pope*, David Dalín has begun the work of reestablishing the truth.

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# Three Jews and a Pope

By Sister Margherita Marchione, Ph.D.

(June 2006)

Recently, a Jewish group invited me to speak. When I mentioned that my topic would be Pope Pius XII, I was informed that it would not suit their needs: “My chairman thought it would open up the wounds of a few holocaust survivors in our group who lost mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers in the gas chambers. We have a few, not many, who escaped from Germany. They still are angry that the Catholic Church did not condemn Adolf Hitler.” Although this is not true, many Jewish organizations continue to state that “the Catholic Church did not condemn” the Nazi leader.

From England, Israel and the USA, three Jewish historians have refuted this distorted portrayal of world history: Martin Gilbert, Michael Tagliacozzo, and David Dalin. All three have taken issue with Daniel Goldhagen, John Cornwell, James Carroll and other writers of the past century.

As I pointed out in my own books during the past decade, why would German leaders state: “The Pope has repudiated the National Socialist New European Order... and makes himself the mouthpiece of the Jewish war criminals.” When Pius XII learned about the Nazi round-up on October 16, 1943, why did he immediately send an official, personal protest through the papal Secretary of State Cardinal Luigi Maglione to German Ambassador Ernst von Weizsäcker? This protest was published in

the Vatican's official "Actes." Why did the Pope provide false identification papers to potential victims? Why did he order Vatican buildings, churches, convents and monasteries to open their doors and find hiding places for Jews and other refugees? Why would Israeli Foreign Minister Golda Meir state: "When fearful martyrdom came to our people in the decade of Nazi terror, the voice of the Pope was raised for the victims." Albert Einstein stated. "Only the Church stood squarely across the path of Hitler's campaign for suppressing the truth." (*Time Magazine*, 1940)

How long will honest scholars condone statements by those who defame Pope Pius XII? Today even hardened detractors of Pius XII generally consider that, throughout the Second World War, the pope was hailed as a towering moral hero in the face of cataclysmic terror: a man solicitous on behalf of Jews and Gentiles alike who worked tirelessly for peace. Through diplomacy, personal contact with Heads of State, and the underground railroad, he protected the Jews and other victims of the Nazis in a way that no other leader with mighty war weapons could provide. His charity and love prevailed.

No Pope throughout history did more than Pope John Paul II to create closer relations with the Jewish community, to oppose anti-Semitism, and to make certain that the evils of the Holocaust never occur again. Relations between the Catholic Church and Jewish people are marked by mutual respect and understanding. Pope John Paul II visited the Chief Rabbi at the Synagogue in Rome in 1986 and declared that "the Jews are our dearly beloved brothers," and indeed "our elder brothers in faith." He established full diplomatic relations between the Holy See and the State of Israel. A survivor of both Nazi and Communist oppression himself, John Paul II has consistently praised Pope Pius XII for his heroic leadership during World War II, and led the cause for his canonization. His successor, Benedict XVI, has followed in his footsteps.

During the early part of the nineteenth century, pogroms were

going on in Poland. On December 30, 1915, the American Jewish Committee appealed to Pope Benedict XV to use his moral influence and speak out against anti-Semitism. Eugenio Pacelli, who was working in the Vatican Secretariate of State, was deeply involved in the preparation of a pro-Jewish document signed by Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Gasparri (February 9, 1916). This statement appeared in the New York Times, April 17, 1916 under the headline: "Papal Bull Urges Equality for Jews." It was printed in Civiltà Cattolica, April 28, 1916, v. 2, pp. 358-359, and in The Tablet, April 29, 1916 v. 127, p. 565.

Twenty years later, during his 1936 visit to America, Cardinal Pacelli met with two officials of the American Jewish Committee, Lewis Strauss and Joseph Proskauer, and re-affirmed Benedict XV's condemnation of anti-Semitism, promising to make its teaching better known. These facts are found in the archives of the American Jewish Committee, and are documented by Naomi Cohen, in her official history of the AJC, *Not Free to Desist: A History of the American Jewish Committee, 1906-1966*, The Jewish Publication Society of America (Philadelphia, 1972, pp. 180, 214-215, 578, section vii).

Pius XII was sympathetic to Zionism and the creation of a Jewish state, both before and after he was Pontiff, as a number of works have shown: *Three Popes and the Jews* by Pinchas Lapide (1967); *The Papacy and the Middle East* (1986); and *Christian Attitudes Toward the State of Israel* by Paul Charles Merkley (2002). (The last fifty years of conflict in the region seem to confirm Pius XII's fears of ethnic resentments and hatreds.) On July 30, 1944, Pius XII told the newly-appointed high commissioner for Palestine "of his intention not to interfere with the Jewish aspiration to create a national State in Palestine, saying that he was animated with great sympathy for the Jews." (*The Tablet* of London, Oct. 25, 1958.) And in 1945, during a meeting with Jewish survivors of the Holocaust, Pius XII told his Jewish

audience approvingly: "Soon, you will have a Jewish state."  
(*The Jerusalem Post*, October 10, 1958)

Recent followers of the anti-Pius XII myth, Susan Zuccotti (*Under His Very Windows*), Michael Phayer (*The Catholic Church and the Holocaust*) and David Kertzer (*The Popes Against the Jews*) make no mention of compelling documents that vindicate Pope Pius XII. The evidence in *Actes et Documents* (Libreria Editrice Vaticana) points to Pius XII's ceaseless activities for Peace. He was against Racism, Nationalism, Anti-Semitism and War. His efforts were on behalf of the persecuted: Jews, the homeless, widows, orphans, prisoners of war. It is important to note: 1. The Holy See's February 9, 1916 condemnation of anti-Semitism, which Eugenio Pacelli (the future Pius XII), then working in the Secretary of State's office, helped formulate. 2. The January 22, 1943 report written by the Nazi's Reich Central Security Office, which condemned Pius XII's 1942 Christmas Address for "clearly speaking on behalf of the Jews" and which accused the Pontiff of being a "mouthpiece of the Jewish War Criminals." 3. The Nazi plan, reported in the July 5, 1998 issue of the Milan newspaper *Il Giornale*, which described Hitler's plan to "massacre Pius XII with the entire Vatican," because of the "Papal protest in favor of the Jews."

One wonders why the *New York Times* heralds books that cast Pope Pius as a racist and hypocrite. Compare *New York Times* book reviews, editorials and news articles that question Pope Pius's respected reputation with *New York Times* articles and editorials that praised Pius' efforts on behalf of the Jews? Why not cite the 1943 *New York Times* editorial? "...This Christmas more than ever, the Pope is a lonely voice crying out of the silence of a continent." Pope Pius XII was widely admired. If his voice of moral authority can be taken out of the social ratio, the media's voice is empowered.

Testimonials abound. In 1985, Cardinal Pietro Palazzini was honored by Israel's Yad Vashem as a "Righteous Gentile." He

explicitly stated that Pius XII ordered him to save Jews. I interviewed him in 1995. His testimony is also clearly expressed in his memoirs.: "Amidst the clash of arms, a voice could be heard—the voice of Pius XII. The assistance given to so many people could not have been possible without his moral support, which was much more than quiet consent"(*Il clero e l'occupazione di Roma*, 1995).

Maurizio Zarfati, a resident in Acco, Hativath Golani St., 25/21 wrote December 7, 1994, that he was saved with his parents, brother and sister in the monastery of the Augustinian Oblates of Santa Maria dei Sette Dolori in via Garibaldi. To permit men to enter, the Holy Father exempted them from rules of cloister. The Sisters gave up their rooms and moved to restricted quarters. ... There were 103 Jews.

Soldier Eliyahu Lubisky, a member of the "Kibuz Beth Alpha," wrote on August 4, 1944, in the weekly "Hashavua," N. 178/42, that "he found more than 10,000 Jews in Rome. The refugees praised the Vatican for their help. Priests endangered their lives to save the Jews. The Pope himself participated in this work of saving Jews."

Regarding the German occupation of Rome, Michael Tagliacozzo's letter to the daily newspaper "Davàr" (Tel Aviv, April 23, 1985), states: "Little known is the precious help of the Holy See. On the recommendation of Pius XII the religious of every order did their best to save Jews. In great numbers, especially the elderly, women and children were welcomed in the convents that opened their doors offering refuge and assistance. Children in orphanages were sent to monasteries. Even in the Vatican, almost under the Pope's windows, Jews found refuge hiding from the clutches of the Gestapo. The figures show that about five thousand were hiding in ecclesiastical institutions (4238 in convents, parishes and other institutions, while 477 were living in the extraterritorial buildings protected by the Holy See).

The Pope's peace efforts, his denunciation of Nazism, his defense of the Jewish people, have been clearly documented. U.S. Army Chaplain Morris Kertzer addressed four thousand Italian Jews in the Rome synagogue and subsequently sent a report to the United States (June 9, 1944). Who can dismiss the personal testimonials by Jewish chaplains? Rabbi André Zaoui expressed gratitude "for the immense good and incomparable charity that Your Holiness extended generously to the Jews of Italy and especially the children, women and elderly of the community of Rome (June 22, 1944)." Jewish military chaplains have confirmed that Catholics in Italy, inspired by papal instruction, did much to rescue and shelter the Jewish victims of Nazi persecution, even providing false passports for them. Rabbi David de Sola Pool, chairman of the National Jewish Welfare Board wrote to the Pope: "We have received reports from our army chaplains in Italy of the aid and protection given... From the bottom of our hearts we send you the assurances of undying gratitude."

Recently Rabbi David Dalin stated that "to deny the legitimacy of the collective gratitude of Jews to Pius XII is tantamount to denying their memory and experience of the Holocaust itself, as well as to denying the credibility of their personal testimony and judgment about the Pope's role in rescuing hundreds of thousands of Jews from certain death at the hands of the Nazis."

It is very significant that Pope Pius XII had the nearly unanimous praise of all his contemporaries, a fact mostly ignored by his detractors. Most importantly, not one of the charges against him holds up under careful analysis. He does not appeal to modern sensibilities largely because he was always teaching the Gospel and Catholic doctrine to a world deafened by nationalism and the drums of war. There is absolutely no evidence that Pope Pius XII did anything wrong or stupid; there is overwhelming evidence that he did virtually everything right, and that he acted only after the



most careful and penetrating analysis of every possibility and after fervent prayer.

Testimonials of survivors of the Holocaust also make it perfectly clear that the Pope was not anti-Semitic or indifferent to the fate of the Jews and that he did everything possible to help them. In a letter to me, dated June 18, 1997, historian and Holocaust survivor, Michael Tagliacozzo, clearly expressed his sentiments: "In my study of the conditions of the Jews (*The Roman Community during the Nightmare of the Swastika*, November 1963), I pointed out the generous and vast activity of the Church in favor of the victims. I learned how great was Pope Pacelli's paternal solicitude. No honest person can discount his merits ... Pacelli was the only one who intervened to impede the deportation of Jews on October 16, 1943, and he did very much to hide and save thousands of us. It was no small matter that he ordered the opening of cloistered convents. Without him, many of our own would not be alive."

Again, August 8, 2004, he reiterated his convictions: "Any apology on the actions of Pius XII must be considered superfluous. This is clear to all men of good will and is entrusted above all to the memory of those Jews, now living, who have not forgotten the efforts and solicitude of Pope Pacelli.... One must add the countless expressions of gratitude of those whose lives were saved in the religious houses in Rome, Assisi and elsewhere. Even if gratitude was expressed directly to the Institutions who protected them, the merit goes to Pope Pacelli who, on October 16, 1943, gave orders to open the doors of the parishes, convents and monasteries to save the Jews from deportation."

Albert Einstein concluded in *Time Magazine* (December 23, 1940): "Only the Church stood squarely across the path of Hitler's campaign for suppressing the truth." There are expressions of gratitude, on the part of Jewish chaplains and Holocaust survivors, who give witness to the assistance and

compassion of the Pope for the Jews before, during and after the Holocaust. Among countless other Jewish authorities, Pius XII received praise from Moshe Sharett, Israeli Chief Rabbi Isaac Herzog, and Pinchas Lapide.

On April 7, 1944, Chief Rabbi Alexander Safran, of Bucharest, Rumania, presented the following statement to Monsignor Andrea Cassulo, Papal Nuncio to Rumania: "In the most difficult hours which we Jews of Rumania have passed through, the generous assistance of the Holy See was decisive and salutary. It is not easy for us to find the right words to express the warmth and consolation we experience because of the concern of the Supreme Pontiff who offered a large sum to relieve the sufferings of deported Jews  $\frac{3}{4}$ sufferings which had been pointed out to him by you after your visit to Transnistria. The Jews of Rumania will never forget these facts of historic importance."

An American newspaper carried the story of the Thanksgiving service in Rome's Jewish Temple that was heard on the radio (July 30, 1944). The Jewish chaplain of the Fifth American Army gave a discourse in which, among other things, he said: "If it had not been for the truly substantial assistance and the help given to Jews by the Vatican and by Rome's ecclesiastical authorities, hundreds of refugees and thousands of Jewish refugees would have undoubtedly perished before Rome was liberated." (*L'Osservatore Romano*, July 30, 1944).

In the summer of 1945, a petition was presented to Pope Pius XII by twenty thousand Jewish refugees from Central Europe: "Allow us to ask the great honor of being able to thank, personally, His Holiness for the generosity he has shown us when we were being persecuted during the terrible period of Nazi-Fascism."

At the end of World War II, Dr. Joseph Nathan, representing the Hebrew Commission, addressed the Jewish community, expressing heartfelt gratitude to those who protected and

saved Jews during the Nazi-Fascist persecutions. "Above all," he stated, "we acknowledge the Supreme Pontiff and the religious men and women who, executing the directives of the Holy Father, recognized the persecuted as their brothers and, with great abnegation, hastened to help them, disregarding the terrible dangers to which they were exposed." (*L'Osservatore Romano*, September 8, 1945).

Reuben Resnick, American Director of the Committee to Help Jews in Italy, declared that "all the members of the Catholic hierarchy in Italy, from Cardinals to Priests, saved the lives of thousands of Jews, men, women, and children who were hosted and hidden in convents, churches, and other religious institutions" (*L'Osservatore Romano*, January 5, 1946).

On April 5, 1946, the Italian Jewish community sent the following message to His Holiness, Pius XII: "The delegates of the Congress of the Italian Jewish Communities, held in Rome for the first time after the Liberation, feel that it is imperative to extend reverent homage to Your Holiness, and to express the most profound gratitude that animates all Jews for your fraternal humanity toward them during the years of persecution when their lives were endangered by Nazi-Fascist barbarism. Many times priests suffered imprisonment and were sent to concentration camps, and offered their lives to assist Jews in every way. This demonstration of goodness and charity that still animates the just, has served to lessen the shame and torture and sadness that afflicted millions of human beings." (*L'Osservatore Romano*, April 5, 1946).

There were many demonstrations of thanks and gratitude from the Jews saved through the assistance of Church institutions. Abramo Giacobbe Isaia Levi, a man of renowned intellect and a Senator of the Kingdom of Italy until the promulgation of the racial laws, was hidden in a convent during the Nazi occupation of Rome. He and his wife later converted to Christianity. He died in 1949 and, in his will, left a large sum of money to help elderly and impoverished Italian Jews.

His beautiful estate in the center of Rome, Villa Levi, was renamed Villa Giorgina, in memory of his young daughter who died prematurely. In his will he donated it to Pope Pius XII because he had been "preserved from the dangers of evil racial persecution, overthrewer of every relationship of human life" and was "grateful for the protection that was provided me in that turbulent period by the Sisters of the Infant Mary."

Popes, Cardinals and Bishops have consistently praised Pope Pius XII for his heroic leadership, his peace-making efforts and his commitment as the defender and protector of the victims of war and hatred which drenched Europe in blood during World War II. He was a moral beacon to mankind. His voice was heard around the world. It was the "Voice" of a tireless world leader whose contribution to humanity during the Holocaust is incontrovertible. It is time for Catholics to refute the careless innuendoes and unfounded accusations that have been leveled against Pope Pius XII whose aspirations toward truth and goodness and his extraordinary World War II achievements are one of the great events of our times.

It is very significant that Pope Pius XII had the nearly unanimous praise of all his contemporaries, a fact mostly ignored by his detractors. Most importantly, not one of the charges against him holds up under careful analysis. He does not appeal to modern sensibilities largely because he was always teaching the Gospel and Catholic doctrine to a world deafened by nationalism and the drums of war. There is absolutely no evidence that Pope Pius XII did anything wrong or stupid; there is overwhelming evidence that he did virtually everything right, and that he acted only after the most careful and penetrating analysis of every possibility and after fervent prayer.

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Several years ago in an interview, Sir Martin Gilbert, perhaps the foremost contemporary Jewish historian, noted that "Christians were among the first victims of the Nazis and that the Churches took a very powerful stand. ..." On the question of Pope Pius XII's alleged silence, he stated, "So the test for Pacelli was when the Gestapo came to Rome in 1943 to round up Jews. And the Catholic Church, on his direct authority, immediately dispersed as many Jews as they could." After years of research that began in 1959, Gilbert wrote *Never Again: The History of the Holocaust* that contains an extraordinary chapter on Pius XII's humanitarianism. Here Gilbert thanks the

Vatican for what was done to save Jewish lives. We owe this historian a debt of gratitude.

But how long will honest scholars condone statements by those who defame Pope Pius XII? Today even hardened detractors of Pius XII generally consider that, throughout the Second World War, the pope was hailed as a towering moral hero in the face of cataclysmic terror: a man solicitous on behalf of Jews and Gentiles alike who worked tirelessly for peace. His charity and love prevailed. Through diplomacy, personal contact with Heads of State, and the underground railroad, he protected the Jews and other victims of the Nazis in a way that no other leader with mighty war weapons could provide.

Marc Saperstein, professor of Jewish history and director of the program in Judaic studies at George Washington University, clearly stated in an article, "A Medieval and a Modern Pope" (*The Washington Post*, April 1, 1998): "The suggestion that Christian doctrines or practice led directly to the Nazi death camps is misleading and inappropriate. ... There were limits to the capacity of the Pope and the Roman Catholic Church to prevent a world power with military domination over a continent, from murdering the civilians it defined as its enemies. The fundamental responsibility for the Holocaust lies with the Nazi perpetrators. Not with Pope Pius XII. Not with the church. Not with the teachings of the Christian faith."

One of the evils that has enveloped the media is the fact that recent smear campaigns, mounted by misguided Jews and misinformed Catholics, are being used in what is really an intra-Catholic argument about the direction of the Church today. At the same time, Pius XII has unjustly come under attack by the opposition and a great deal of misinformation about this pontiff is being circulated. Books, articles and media reports have leveled sweeping attacks while clearly overlooking historical sources and factors. If he had denounced Adolf Hitler more explicitly, the Nazis would have responded with even more ferocity. Personally and through his

representatives, Pius XII employed all the means at his disposal to save Jews and other refugees during World War II. As a moral leader and a diplomat forced to limit his words, he privately took action and, despite insurmountable obstacles, saved hundreds of thousands of Jews from the gas chambers. The Pope was loved and respected. Of those mourning his death in 1958, Jews—who credited Pius XII with being one of their greatest defenders and benefactors in their hour of greatest need—stood in the forefront.

In the 60 plus years since World War II, overwhelming numbers of the Jewish Community have heaped thanks and praise on Pope Pius XII for his concern and assistance to the Jews in their difficult years. His supporters include, but are not limited to this list: Chief Rabbi Alexander Safran, of Bucharest, Rumania, The Jewish Advocate in Boston, Jewish chaplain of the Fifth American Army, Dr. Joseph Nathan, representing the Hebrew Commission, Reuben Resnick, American Director of the Committee to Help Jews in Italy, Abramo Giacobbe Isaia Levi, Senator of the Kingdom of Italy, Jewish scholar Jenö Levai, Moshe Sharett, Israeli Chief Rabbi Isaac Herzog, Jewish scholar Pinchas E. Lapide, Albert Einstein, U.S. Army Chaplain Morris Kertzer, Rabbi André Zaoui, Rabbi David de Sola Pool, chairman of the National Jewish Welfare Board, Jewish historian and scholar Richard Breitman, Jan Hermann and Dr. Max Pereles, from the Ferramonti-Tarsia detention camp, Marc Saperstein, professor of Jewish history and director of the program in Judaic studies at George Washington University.

In particular, one must also remember that in the summer of 1945, twenty thousand Jewish refugees from Central Europe presented the following petition to Pope Pius XII: "Allow us to ask the great honor of being able to thank, personally, His Holiness for the generosity he has shown us when we were being persecuted during the terrible period of Nazi-Fascism."

Recently, three Jews have come to the defense of Pius XII: Rabbi David Dalin, professor of history at Ave Maria

University; Historian Sir Martin Gilbert whose books have contributed immensely to the history of the Holocaust; Michael Tagliacozzo, historian and Holocaust survivor. Perhaps the greatest testimony was Hitler himself who consistently complained that Pope Pius XII was “a mouthpiece of the Jewish war criminals.”

The truth of the matter is that Pope Pius XII condemned Hitler and protested more than 60 times. Politically the pope could do nothing; however, in a humanitarian effort to save the lives of Jews and other victims of Nazism, he did more than any other world leader!

Margherita Marchione, PhD, author of: *Yours Is a Precious Witness: Memoirs of Jews and Catholics in Wartime Italy* (1997); *Pius XII: Architect for Peace* (2000); *Consensus and Controversy: Defending Pius XII* (2002); *Shepherd of Souls: A Pictorial Life of Pius XII* (2002) and *Man of Peace* (2003) Paulist Press. Also, *The Fighting Nun: My Story* (Cornwell Books, New York/London, 2000), *Pope Pius XII* (Ancora Press, Milan, 2003) and *Bilingual Italian-English and Spanish-English Coloring Books. Crusade of Charity: Pius XII and POWs*. Tel. 973-538-2886, Ext. 116 / E-mail Sr.Margherita.Marchione@ATT.NET].

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## Revisiting the Pius War



**Patrick J. Gallo, editor, Pius XII, the Holocaust and the Revisionists: Essays. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co, 2006. 218 pages. PB. NP.**

**Sister Margherita Marchione, Crusade of Charity: Pius XII and POW's (1939-1945). New York: Paulist Press, 2006. 284 pages.**

**Ronald J. Rychlak, Righteous Gentiles: How Pius XII and the Catholic Church saved Half a Million Jews from the Nazis. Dallas: Spence Publishing Co., 2005. 378 pages.**

These three books, together with David G. Dalin's *The Myth of Hitler's Pope: How Pope Pius XII Rescued Jews from the Nazis* (reviewed in the September 2005 issue of *Catalyst*), absolutely decimate the attacks on the reputation of Pope Pius XII made in the spate of books by James Carroll, John Cornwell, Daniel Goldhagen, David Kertzer, Michael Phayer, Gary Wills and Susan Zucotti. They meticulously re-examine the charges against Pius, charges which sadly have become deeply embedded in the very grain of our culture.

David Dalin is a rabbi, while Ronald Rychlak, Margherita Marchione, and Patrick Gallo are Catholic. This is of some significance since much has been made of the fact that the anti-Pius attackers are either Jews (Kertzer, Goldhagen, Zucotti) or Catholics. Protestants, in the main, have stayed out of the papal fray, having their own ambiguous history during the Holocaust with which to deal. The motivation of Jewish critics of the pope is complex. Historian Yosef Haim Yerushalmi put his finger on the nub of it in his response to Rosemary Radford Reuther in a 1974 conference when he noted that over the centuries when the Jews were in extremis they could look to the papacy for relief from attacks by secular powers, and usually received it. Thus, the inability of the Holy See to influence Nazism's genocide in the 20th century was profoundly shocking to Jews. Yerushalmi, however, goes on to note the relative weakness of the papacy in modern times in secular affairs, and to distinguish between medieval Christian anti-Jewishness and modern, racial, genocidal anti-Semitism, though noting, as have Pope John Paul II and then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, that the former was, in Yerushalmi's words, a "necessary cause" for explaining the latter, though not a "sufficient cause," being only one of a number of factors involved.

The motivation of Catholic critics of Pius is perhaps more subtle, though here again Yerushalmi shed light on it in 1974. While he acknowledges Reuther's "sincere and profound involvement in the fate of the Jews," he worries that for her it appears to be "part of a larger problem—that of the church itself," in which "she places the dawn of a new attitude toward the Jews within the context of an obvious hope for a total regeneration of the church." He goes on to note that "historically, reformist movements within the church have often been accompanied by an even more virulent anti-Semitism," citing the Cluniac reform, Martin Luther (who advocated the destruction of synagogues and the expulsion of Jews) and Calvin's Geneva, where Jews were forbidden to reside, though maintaining a legal right of residence and freedom to worship in Rome. The defenders of Pius, I believe, are quite accurate in noting similarly that for the authors of the anti-Pius books, the critique of the Church of the 1940's is in fact a part of a larger, contemporary reformist agenda, which raises quite legitimate questions about their academic objectivity. Indeed, in the case of Reuther, the fact that she had used Jewish suffering to further her own agenda became patently clear only a few years later when she published a book rejecting the very existence of the Jewish state and declaring the Palestinians to be the true "Jews" of the time, thus placing Israel and real Jews into the category of "Nazis." The books reviewed here are for obvious reasons reactive in nature. As Joseph Bottum notes in the epilogue to the Gallo volume, we still await "a non-reactive account of Pius' life and times, a book driven not by a reviewer's instinct to answer charges but by the biographer's impulse to tell an accurate story." He adds, I believe wisely, that "before that can be done well, the archives of Pius XII's pontificate will probably have to be fully catalogued and opened."

Rychlak's book, in a sense, comes closest to that goal, narrating Pius' life within the context of his times. His estimate that the Church, through its nunciatures (which handed out false baptismal certificates by the tens of thousands to members of "the family of Jesus") and through its monasteries and convents, rectories and other institutions saved some 500,000 Jews, is actually on the moderate side, with estimates ranging up to 800,000. Dalin, the rabbi, and Marchione agree with Rychlak that Pius in fact meets the criteria for a "Righteous Gentile" as defined by Yad va Shem, Jerusalem's Holocaust museum, which Pope John Paul II visited so reverently and penitentially during his pilgrimage there in the Millennium Year. Gallo's book is composed of essays, half of which were written by himself, half by such internationally prominent scholars as Matteo Napolitano of Italy and Juno Levai of Hungary. Half of the essays are new for this book, half published in journals before inclusion here.

Readers will be treated to the trenchant wit of Justus George Lawler and the inexorable marshalling of evidence of Ronald Rychlak. George Sim Johnson takes on the myths surrounding Pius XI's "hidden encyclical," which like a Brooklyn egg cream was in fact neither "hidden" nor an "encyclical" (since never promulgated, it remained simply a draft). Bottum himself in his essays fills in the gaps, such as the Ardeatine Massacre, and, as noted, comments incisively on the controversy as a whole.

Each volume, in its own way, attempts as well to explain why the attacks on Pius' reputation were made. Dalin, not without reason, calls it a phenomenon of the culture wars of our time, in which the "left wing," secular media latched on to the discrediting of Pius as part of its not-so-subtle attempt to discredit not just Catholicism, but religious faith in general.

Gallo notes the continuity between the current charges against Pius and those made by the Soviet Union in its Cold War propaganda against the West, again with Pius as a symbolic target for a larger agenda. It is true that the current attackers have come from what would be called "the Left" and the defenders from "the Right." It may be that to adjudicate this issue, like those surrounding Pius himself as Bottum indicates, we will have to await a time when all the documentation is out and the war itself a bit more distant in time and emotions.

Dalin and Rychlak are both critical of the work of the International Catholic-Jewish Historical Commission, launched with great hope by the Holy See and the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations in December 1999, which I was asked by Cardinal Edward Idris Cassidy, then President of the Pontifical Commission of Religious Relations with the Jews, to coordinate on the Catholic side. I would like to state that Professor Michael Marrus, on the Jewish side, and all three Catholic scholars acted with integrity and professionalism throughout what turned out to be for us all a grueling ordeal.

I believe those who read the actual statement of the group will come away with a more positive view of what the group accomplished than its critics present. The statement praises the objectivity and thoroughness of the *Actes et Documents du Saint-Siege relatifs a la Seconde Guerre Mondiale*, a 12 volume set of documents put together by four Jesuit scholars from the massive materials in the Holy See's "Secret Archives" for the period of WWII. The statement also praises the four papers produced by the group analyzing particular volumes, and the group's correspondence with its sponsors.

Marchione's *Crusade of Charity* is drawn largely from documents contained in *Actes et Documents*. It is her fourth book, all published by Paulist Press, on Pius XII. Whereas the first three were reactions to Pius' critics in general, this one centers on the massive efforts made by the Holy See during the Second World War to respond to enquiries about Prisoners of War, and family members in general, including Jewish family members who were among the missing. It shows a Holy See deeply involved in what was at the time among the most humanitarian of missions: helping people, whether Catholics, Jews or Protestants, to discover the fate of their loved ones. Page after page is touched with moving testimony to love at its most basic, and to the huge efforts of the relatively small and understaffed Vatican to cope with the thousands of requests coming to it in the midst of a world gone insane. Whatever one thinks of the Pius Wars, this is a book to read. It is a book which gives us models to emulate in one's own life.

Underlying the specific issue of Pope Pius, of course, is the deeper issue of the relationship between traditional Christian teaching on Jews and Judaism and the mindset not only of the perpetrators but also of the bystanders of Europe during the Holocaust. For whatever the ultimate, and hopefully dispassionate historical judgment of the actions of one pope, we Catholics, as Pope John Paul II reminded us time and again, must come to grips with that history, repent its sins, and do what needs to be done to ensure that it will never happen again. A proper framing of this deeper issue can be found in *Catholic Teaching on the Shoah: Implementing the Holy See's "We Remember"* (USCCB Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations, 2001).

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(This is a revised and greatly expanded version of a review that first appeared in Catholic News Service.)

# Why We Published the Pius War

William Doino, Jr.

Catalyst, April 2005

Eight years ago this month, the *New Yorker* magazine published a spectacularly long article entitled “The Silence.” Written by the resigned priest James Carroll (now a columnist at the *Boston Globe*), it argued that the doctrine of papal infallibility and the Church’s insistence “upon the primacy of Jesus as a means to salvation” were both false and had caused untold harm throughout history. In a misunderstanding of papal infallibility remarkable in one who had studied Catholic theology, Carroll contended that the doctrine prevented the Church from acknowledging its own guilt, causing John Paul II to remain “silent” in the face of overwhelming institutional sin. “The doctrine of infallibility,” Carroll concluded, “is like a virus that paralyzes the body of the Church.”

“The Silence,” caused a mini-sensation, becoming a focal point for anti-Catholics everywhere, and a conversation piece among the chattering classes. What made the article notable were not its attacks against the pope, its slashing attacks against papal infallibility, nor even its manifold errors about theology and Church history. What caused the greatest impact was Carroll’s attempt to blame Pope Pius XII—and, to a large extent, the Catholic Church itself—for the Holocaust.

Carroll’s charges were hardly novel. As early as 1943, Soviet propagandists concocted tales about Pius XII’s alleged collaboration with Hitler’s Germany, attempting to drive a wedge between the faithful and the Church. After the war,

these Communist myths were picked up by the German playwright Rolf Hochhuth—ironically, a former member of the Hitler Youth—whose play *The Deputy* (1963) attempted to transfer German guilt to an Italian pope. Hochhuth caricatured Pius XII as a cowardly and avaricious man who could have prevented the Holocaust with a few dramatic words, but—because of his own weak character and financial interests—chose to remain “silent.” Carroll’s *New Yorker* article resumed Hochhuth’s indictment of Pius XII, and extended it.

Although many people dismissed the *New Yorker* piece—even *Commonweal* magazine, often critical of the Vatican, called the essay “factually flawed...logically garbled...theologically incoherent”—Carroll’s attacks against the papacy encouraged anti-papal polemicists, both within and without the Church, to publish their own salvos. Within a few years, a cottage industry of attacks on Pius XII and the Catholic Church emerged: John Cornwell’s *Hitler’s Pope* (1999); Gary Wills’s *Papal Sin* (2000); Susan Zuccotti’s *Under His Very Windows* (2000); Michael Phayer’s *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust, 1930-1965* (2000); David Kertzer’s *The Popes Against the Jews* (2001); Carroll’s own *Constantine’s Sword* (2001); and Daniel Jonah Goldhagen’s *A Moral Reckoning* (2002).

On the talk-show circuits and in the academic journals, these books—despite their manifold errors—were greeted with an almost rapturous reception. One man, however, remained unconvinced: Rabbi and historian David Dalin. Disturbed and angered by what he considered the hijacking and exploitation of the Holocaust for partisan purposes, Dalin decided to respond. With degrees in both history and theology, and as a long-time participant in the Jewish-Catholic dialogue, he had both the knowledge and the authority to rebut the anti-papal polemicists, and write accurately about the Catholic Church and the Holocaust. The result was a series of essays and reviews, the most important being his first one, “Pius XII and the Jews,” a 5,000-word analysis of the entire controversy in

the *Weekly Standard* of February 26, 2001.

Translated into several languages, Dalin's article became one of the most widely reprinted essays on Pius XII. What struck so many people about Dalin's work was not just his point-by-point refutation of Pius' detractors, but his dramatic conclusion: "Pius XII was, genuinely and profoundly, a Righteous Gentile."

To be sure, Dalin's essay did not please everyone, particularly those who had made a small fortune off of the Deputy Myth, or whose ideological disagreements with the Church were energized and sustained by that myth. The attack became all the more ferocious. In an essay published in the journal *First Things*, Joseph Bottum argued that although Pius's supporters had demolished the accusations against the wartime pontiff, they had lost the larger war over Pius's cultural reputation—or at least, not yet won it—because the opponents of Pius XII still wielded the most influence. Bottum's conclusion, however, may have been a bit premature.

In reality Pius's supporters were growing in influence, not just in America, but throughout the world. Discussing this matter among ourselves, we decided to put together an anthology which would do what had not yet been done: answer the recent critics of Pius XII *all at once*, within a single cover, in a comprehensive, measured fashion. The result is *The Pius War: Responses to the Critics of Pius XII*, edited by Bottum and Dalin, and published by Lexington Books.

The first hundred pages of the book collect the best essays and reviews—selected from literally hundreds of possibilities—of the various attack books which have appeared during the past decade. The criteria for selections were eloquence, force of persuasion, depth of knowledge and, above all, historical accuracy—as the contributions would be worthless unless they could prove their case.

Hence, two distinguished Church historians—Dr. Rainer Decker of Germany, and Fr. John Jay Hughes—respond, respectively, to Cornwell's *Hitler's Pope*, and Michael Phayer's *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust*—explaining what really happened during the Nazi roundup of Rome's Jews (which was at the heart of Hochhuth's malicious play). Professor Ronald Rychlak, the foremost Pius scholar in America, deconstructs Susan Zuccotti's claim that Pius XII did "little or nothing" to assist persecuted Jews; Robert Louis Wilken, an eminent historian of Christianity at the University of Virginia, delivers a body blow to James Carroll's *Constantine's Sword*; teacher and publisher Justus George Lawler takes issue with Gary Wills' scatter-shot attacks and deeply flawed history; papal scholar Russell Hittinger responds to David Kertzer's *The Popes Against the Jews*; archival expert John Conway critiques historians who speak darkly about the Vatican's "secret" wartime archives—while never having studied the voluminous Vatican archives already released in eleven volumes; Michael Novak responds to Daniel Goldhagen's aspersions against Pius and the Church; and Kevin M. Doyle contributes the unexpected gem of the book, an analysis of the so-called "hidden encyclical," against anti-Semitism, intended by Pius XI and allegedly suppressed by Pius XII. Doyle shows that, far from remaining "hidden," the encyclical was transformed and published just six weeks after the beginning of the Second World War under a different name, *Summi Pontificatus*, condemning racism in all forms. Add to this Dalin's famous essay, and an introduction and concluding essay by Bottum.

Following these essays is my own contribution: an 80,000-word, 180-page annotated bibliography which attempts to canvass every aspect of this controversy—with a focus on demonstrating how Pius XII, far from remaining "silent," condemned anti-Semitism, racism, and genocide before, during and after the Holocaust. Constituting some two-thirds of the book, my bibliography has been very generously called "a tour de force

of scholarship and highly readable to boot" (*National Review*, February 14). My purpose was to provide a kind of historical road map, an intellectual compass, for both laymen and scholars alike, who want to know more about this subject—and want to know which authors can be trusted, which cannot—and why.

As important as we believe *The Pius War* is for recovering historical truth, it does not downplay or whitewash the sins of the "sons and daughters" of the Catholic Church, to quote John Paul II. Many of the essayists speak frankly about anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism, and the bibliography has a long section on Jewish-Catholic relations, covering every aspect of this turbulent relationship, light and dark alike.

Already we can see signs of change. A movie of Hochhuth's *Deputy* called "Amen" was released in 2002 only to become an international flop, garnering highly negative reviews. Hochhuth himself was recently caught praising the notorious revisionist historian—and accused Holocaust-denier—David Irving, thereby discrediting himself even further. John Cornwell recently stated that he now finds it "impossible to judge" Pius XII, in light of "the debates and evidence" that followed publication of his now-discredited *Hitler's Pope*. Even Susan Zuccotti, writing in the esteemed *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* (Fall 2004), while still maintaining her excessively skeptical attitude toward Pius XII's involvement in rescue efforts, acknowledges evidence she previously overlooked, and now believes there is "much room for compromise and reconciliation" between participants in this debate. So, progress has been made, and continues to be made, as new archives are opened, new books are written, new perspectives are formed.

*William Doyno Jr. is a Catholic author and commentator. A contributing editor to Inside the Vatican, he has been published in such journals as National Review, Modern Age, and Crisis, and is now researching and writing a book on the*

*Vatican's role during the Second World War.*

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# **Pius XII and the Holocaust: A Reader**

[Pius XII and the Holocaust: A Reader](#)

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## **New Anti-Pius XII Book by an Old Critic**

Ronald J. Rychlak

Catalyst, May 2004

During World War II and for years after it ended, Pope Pius XII was heralded as a staunch opponent of the Nazis and a champion of their victims. Then in 1963, as the result of a piece of fiction written by German playwright Rolf Hochhuth, a controversy arose about whether the Pope had been sufficiently outspoken about Nazi atrocities. One of the earliest papal critics of this era was Robert Katz. In his 1967 *Death in Rome* and in his 1969 *Black Sabbath*, Katz severely criticized

Pope Pius XII for failing to take a firmer stand in opposition to the Nazis.

After the controversy re-erupted in the past few years, with the publication of several new books, authors like John Cornwell and Susan Zuccotti were justifiably criticized for relying on Katz's work, which pre-dated the extensive release of Vatican documents on this subject.

Now, in *The Battle for Rome: The Germans, the Allies, the Partisans, and the Pope* (Simon and Schuster: New York 2003) Katz re-asserts his old charges. Not only does he cite his out-dated books for authority, but coming full circle, he relies upon Zuccotti and Cornwell who had relied upon him! In fact, at one point (p. 54), Katz refers to a charge made by "one historian." Flipping to the endnotes, one finds an abbreviation. Only by further flipping to Katz's key does the reader learn that Katz's "historian" is journalist (not historian) John Cornwell and his discredited book, *Hitler's Pope*.

One of the reasons why serious scholars have avoided Katz's earlier books is because of a lawsuit that was filed by Pope Pius XII's niece, Elena Rossignani. The Italian Supreme Court ruled that: "Robert Katz wished to defame Pius XII, attributing to him actions, decisions and sentiments which no objective fact and no witness authorized him to do." Katz was fined 400,000 Lire and given a 13-month suspended prison sentence.

In his new book, Katz discounts that lawsuit, noting that because of an amnesty, the litigation was ruled moot. That may be a legal defense, but it does not negate the two separate findings on the merits against Katz, and those findings should be sufficient to warn readers about the legitimacy of (and motivation behind) Katz's work.

Katz focuses on the period when German troops occupied Rome.



The first important Vatican-related event took place in October 1943, when the Nazis rounded up about 1,200 Roman Jews for deportation. Katz concludes that the Allies had advance notice of the planned roundup and that Pope Pius had at least an unsubstantiated warning of it.

Katz reports that a copy of a German telegram revealing the Nazi order for the roundup of Jews was passed on to President Franklin Roosevelt. Only by consulting the notes at the back of the book, however, does one learn that the telegram reached Roosevelt nearly three months after the roundup. Katz's case against Pope Pius XII, who had offered gold to pay a ransom to the Germans to prevent deportations, is even weaker. (Katz even faults Pius for making this offer, because it may have dissuaded some Jews from going into hiding!)

Katz claims that the German Ambassador to the Holy See, Ernst von Weizsaecker urged the Pope to make "an official protest" on the day that the Jewish people were arrested. In support of this claim, Katz cites a telegram sent by the Consul at the German embassy to the Quirinal [seat of the Italian government] to the Foreign Office in Berlin. This telegram, however, was sent nine days before the roundup and said nothing about any plan urged on the Vatican.

In a conversation that Weizsaecker had with the Vatican Secretary of State on the day of the arrests, the ambassador expressly urged the Pope *not* to openly protest, since a protest would only make things worse. In fact, thanks in part to Vatican intervention, about 200 prisoners were freed. Moreover, there were no further mass arrests of Roman Jews (thousands of whom—with papal support—went into hiding in Church properties). Obviously, Pius acted with the best interest of the victims in mind.

The second event on which Katz focuses took place on March 23, 1944 after Italian partisans set off a bomb which killed 33 members of the German police. Hitler ordered the immediate

execution of ten prisoners for every soldier killed. Within hours, 335 prisoners (most of whom were not Jewish; one was a priest) were led to the catacombs on the outskirts of Rome and shot. The massacre took place in complete secrecy.

Katz argues that the Pope knew of the retaliation in advance but that he did nothing to help. He cites as "proof" a memorandum that was received at the Vatican on March 24, about five hours before the prisoners were killed. That memo, which was published by the Vatican in 1980, said that "it is however foreseen that for every German killed 10 Italians will be executed."

First of all, this memo probably did not make it all the way to the Pope prior to the executions. More importantly, Pope Pius XII certainly was well aware of the likelihood of brutal Nazi retaliation before he got this memo, which provided no specific details or new information. In fact, historian Owen Chadwick cited the document as proof that Pius XII obviously did not know details of the reprisal.

When the memorandum made its way to him, Pius sent a priest to obtain more information and release of the prisoners. The Gestapo chief of police, however, would not receive the Pope's messenger. The executions were already underway. That officer (Herbert Kappler) testified during his post-war trial that "Pope Pius XII was not aware of the Nazis' plans before the massacre."

Katz's efforts to defame Pius XII are evident from the very beginning of this book. The text starts with a report from the Roman police chief on the activity of the clergy and Catholic Organizations. It says, "The clergy continues to maintain an attitude of cooperation with the Government." Since the book is about the era of Nazi occupation, one might think that the Church was in cahoots with the Germans. The date of the report, however, is *prior* to the Nazi occupation.

Katz suggests that Pius should have approved of rebel efforts to murder Nazis. At the same time, he suggests that the Pope should have participated in a funeral for murdered Nazis. He also criticizes Pius for his efforts to bring about peace. Additionally, Katz seems to think that the Pope should have behaved differently when the victims were Italian Catholics as opposed to Jews. Can you imagine the justifiable criticism if the Pope had done that?

Katz would have the reader believe that Sir Francis D'Arcy Osborne, British Minister to the Holy See from 1936 to 1947, was a critic of Pius. In fact, following the war Osborne wrote that "Pius XII was the most warmly humane, kindly, generous, sympathetic (and, incidentally, saintly) character that it has been my privilege to meet in the course of a long life." Similarly, Katz wants us to believe that the U.S. representative in the Vatican, Harold Tittman, was a papal critic. Tittman's son, however, is working on his father's memoirs, and he reports that the U.S. representative held a very favorable opinion of Pius XII's policies. Most preposterous of all is the attempt to suggest that Domenico Cardinal Tardini held Pius in low regard. One only need consult Tardini's loving tribute, *Memories of Pius XII*, to see the falseness of that charge.

Katz contends that Pius was prejudiced not only against Jews but also against blacks. He cites a British memorandum indicating that after the liberation of Rome, the Pope requested that "colored troops" not be used to garrison the Vatican. This canard stems from a report the Pope received about French Moroccan troops. They were particularly brutal, raping and looting wherever they went. The Pope did not want these specific soldiers stationed in Rome (or anywhere else). He expressed his concerns about these men to British Ambassador Osborne, who broadened the statement in his cable back to London, saying that the Pope did not want "colored troops" stationed at the Vatican.

The Pope's concern about these specific French Moroccan troops is made clear in a declassified confidential memorandum from the OSS, an article that appeared in the Vatican newspaper, and a message sent from the Vatican to its representative in France. None of these documents make reference to race, just the Pope's concern over these specific French Moroccan troops. (Although Katz did not know how they played into this story, even he noted the outrageous brutality of these soldiers.)

Katz assails Pope Pius IX as an anti-Semite; incorrectly asserts that Pius XII favored the Germans over the Soviets in World War II; calls Pius XII pompous; mocks the Chief Rabbi of Rome (who praised Pius XII); accepts self-serving testimony from Nazi officers over Jewish and Catholic witnesses; repeats stories that have been shown to be false; gives inaccurate interpretations to papal statements; cites rumors that suggest the Pope was prepared to flee Rome; and takes every cheap shot that he can.

Of those who support Pius XII, Katz writes: "The Pope's defenders can do no better than cite decades-old research of deflated credibility..." That, of course, is preposterous. All kinds of new evidence has come to light in the past year with the opening of new archives. Every bit of it supports the view that Pius XII and the Vatican leadership were opposed to the Nazis and did what they could to help all victims, Jewish or otherwise.

One final error made by Katz: He reports at the end of the book that Ronald J. Rychlak is a "non-Catholic lawyer and professor at the University of Mississippi School of Law, now Pius's staunchest supporter." I am and always have been Catholic.

*Ron Rychlak is a Professor of Law and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at the University of Mississippi School of Law. His is the author of Hitler, the War, and the Pope(Our Sunday Visitor, 2000).*

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# **New Vatican Archival Evidence Vindicates Pope Pius XII**



By Sister Margherita Marchione, Ph.D.  
(From Catalyst, November 2003)

*The following article, written by Sister Margherita Marchione, discusses new evidence from the Vatican Archives that shows the heroism of Pope Pius XII. Sister Margherita is no stranger to Catholic League members: we have published many of her articles on Pius XII. And she is certainly no stranger to the subject, having authored several books on Pius. Here, then, is her latest contribution.*

The Catholic Church survived persecutions for two thousand years and continues its mission of evangelization. However, today the anti-Catholicism prevalent in the media and the negative propaganda about Pope Pius XII mislead many Catholics who do not understand the present controversy claiming “silence,” “moral culpability,” or “anti-Semitism.” The political and ideological attacks on Christianity are charges that can be refuted by anyone who examines the evidence carefully.

Pius XII was not “silent,” and his courageous acts during World War II are incontestable. When Vatican Archives were opened in February 2003 for the period 1922-1939, the media expected to find documents supporting the claim that Pope Pius XII did not do all he should have done to save the victims of the Holocaust. On the contrary, the new material confirms that Pius XII was indeed a champion for peace, freedom, human dignity; a pastor who encouraged Catholics to look on Christians and Jews as their brothers and sisters in Christ, all children of a common Father.

The opening of the Vatican Archives has already proven that accusations against Pius XI and Pius XII are baseless. A letter dated November 14, 1923, to Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Gasparri written by Eugenio Pacelli (later Pius XII) when he was Nuncio in Bavaria, refers to Adolf Hitler's failed attempt to take over the local government of Munich. He denounces the National Socialist movement as an anti-Catholic threat and notes that the cardinal of Munich had already condemned acts of persecution against Bavaria's Jews.

Documents reveal that in 1933, as Secretary of State, Pacelli reviewed Nuncio Cesare Orsenigo's New Year's discourse and by secret code told him to remove the words “Leader of the German people” and to eliminate a paragraph that praised Hitler. In 1936, when invited by Hitler to attend the Nazi Congress, the nuncio again sought advice. So that he would not be obliged to attend, Pacelli suggested that he take a vacation so that he could absent himself. Pacelli corrected the nuncio's communications and told him not to participate with the Diplomatic Corps. Other corrections prove that Pacelli was not sympathetic toward Hitler whom he considered possessed by the devil and even attempted to exorcize him.

Historians and archivists confirm the authenticity of this document which demonstrates that, early on, the Vatican protested on behalf of Jews in Nazi Germany. It confirms the testimony of Father Robert Leiber who, in 1962, wrote an article on Pius XI's papal encyclical of 1937, *Mit Brennender Sorge*, which appeared in the German periodical *Stimmen der Zeit*. Leiber wrote: “It is significant that the first initiative of the Holy See toward the government in Berlin concerned the Jews. As early as April 4, 1933, ten days after the Enabling Act, the Apostolic Nuncio in Berlin was ordered to intervene with the government of the Reich on behalf of the Jews and to point out all the dangers involved in an anti-Semitic policy.”

The Catholic Church, therefore, did not simply protest on behalf of Church interests during negotiations of the Concordat, but protested on behalf of persecuted Jews when the new Hitler regime announced a major boycott of Jewish businesses. During World War II and the horrors of the Holocaust, millions of Jews and other Europeans suffered and were killed by the Nazis. In 1943, the Eternal City was occupied by the Nazis and bombed by the Allies during a two-hour attack. The Holy Father hurried from the Vatican to the streets of Rome. He stood in the midst of the terrorized people as buildings collapsed in piles of smoldering rubble, and bombs exploded on all sides. The Romans ran toward him for guidance and strength. With hands and cassock smeared with the blood of the dead and the wounded, he blessed and consoled them, and took care of their immediate needs. While Pius XII joined his flock, civil authorities fled. The people acclaimed him, “Defensor Civitatis.”

Pius XII operated a vast underground railroad. Although horrible to recall, it is important that the lessons of the Holocaust be retold accurately, and to recognize those who helped the persecuted. In occupied Europe, the Nazis killed 67 percent of the Jews. Millions of Christians did not escape Nazi terror during Hitler's attempt to exterminate all Jews. While Italy was being devastated by Allied bombs, the Nazis were killing innocent people. Eighty-five percent of Italian Jews were saved. Throughout Europe, sixty-five percent of the Jews were exterminated.

There is an abundance of evidence testifying to Pius XII's courage and integrity, as well as to his efforts to prevent the war and to shelter countless victims, including Jews. This generation should be talking about the debt of gratitude it owes Pope Pius XII, not maligning him.

It is crucial that any judgment of Pius XII look closely at the broadcasts of Vatican Radio. It has enjoyed a long history of world recognition and credibility, supporting both the sacred and secular objectives of the Church throughout the religious and political turmoil. It has been the daily “voice” of the Pontiffs—a bridge uniting Shepherd with his flock. It not only broadcasts the teachings of the Roman Pontiff, but it also gives information on the activities of the Holy See, reports on Catholic life throughout the world, and indicates the Church's point of view on current issues and her readiness to respond to the signs of the times.

Vatican Radio announces the Christian message freely and efficiently and links the center of Catholicism with the different countries of the world.

The wartime organization, *The Sword of the Spirit*, led by Cardinal Hinsley of Great Britain, was inspired by Pope Pius XII and approved by the Vatican. This group published a monthly bulletin which tried to bring together Catholics, Protestants and Jews. Topics included freedom, education, social and economic problems. With monographs by Christopher Dawson, John Murray, SJ, Barbara Ward and other well-known writers, the group published a series of leaflets on wartime activities. These offer proof of Pope Pius XII's embrace of all peoples and faiths.

Among the pamphlets of this ecumenical organization, one title is: “Voice of the Vatican” by Robert Speaight. In it the author answers the question, “What is the Pope's attitude towards the belligerent nations and the issues for which they are fighting?” He analyzes the policy of Vatican Radio and shows how uncompromisingly it spoke on the moral and spiritual problems raised by the war. In “The Pope and the Jews,” A.C.F. Beales describes the struggle of the Catholic Church against anti-Semitism during the war.

Certainly, such contemporary commentaries deserve to be carefully considered.

Documents reveal that Jan Hermann and Dr. Max Perles, from the Ferramonti-Tarsia concentration camp, went to the Vatican on October 29, 1944, to thank Pope Pius XII. They gave him a letter which read in part: “While our brothers were hunted, imprisoned and threatened with death in almost every country in Europe, because they belonged to the Jewish people, Your Holiness ...fearlessly raised his universally respected voice, in the face of our powerful enemies, in order to defend openly our rights to the dignity of man. ...When we were threatened with deportation to Poland, in 1942, Your Holiness extended a fatherly hand to protect us, and stopped the transfer of Jews interned in Italy, thereby saving us from almost certain death.”

Shortly after the Pope's death, Secretary of State Cardinal Domenico Tardini wrote in his book *Pio XII*: “Pius XII will go down in history as a Pontiff who was a wise reformer and brave innovator. He was a voice of truth, of justice, of love. Pius XII was a holy person, a symbol of mercy and of hope during a period of lies, despair and hatred. Everyone appreciated his intelligence and his extraordinary capacity to comprehend the dangers of Nazism and his efforts to alleviate the sufferings of humanity. His messages attempted to unite the world. His contemporaries listened to his inspiring words, as he spoke of brotherhood, of love, and of peace at a time of spiritual poverty and material destruction of exceptional dimensions.”

Pius XII was engaged in the greatest Christian rescue program in the history of the Church. Editorials of the time attest to the fact that he saved hundreds of thousands of Jews and Christians from death in the concentration camps and served as a beacon of hope throughout his pontificate. We join his contemporaries and express our gratitude.

My new book, *Man of Peace: Pope Pius XII* (Paulist Press), summarizes the issues. Another book, *Pope Pius XII*, published in Milan, Italy (Ancora Press), reveals his saintly and virtuous life; his scholarship and peace-making efforts; his commitment as the defender and protector of the victims of war and hatred which drenched Europe in blood during World War II.

Pope Pius XII was a moral beacon to mankind. He resisted the clamor to accommodate the Catholic Church to the world. His voice was heard around the world during the twenty years of his pontificate. It was the “Voice” of a tireless world leader whose contribution to humanity during the Holocaust is incontrovertible.

Man of Peace: Pope Pius XII was published in January 2004. For information on how to order it and Sr. Margherita's other books, including *Consensus & Controversy: Defending Pope Pius XII*, contact Paulist Press: 1-800-218-1903.

# **Popular Thriller Reprises Pius XII Slanders**



By Kenneth D. Whitehead  
(book review from Catalyst July-August 2003)  
*Daniel Silva, The Confessor,*  
New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2003.  
HB; 401 pages. \$29.95.

What Notre Dame philosophy professor Ralph McInerny has aptly called "the defamation of Pius XII"—in his excellent book with that title—has unfortunately been so widely successful in the culture at large that many people simply take it for granted that Pope Pius XII was guilty of a grave historical wrong in not speaking out more strongly against Adolf Hitler's efforts to exterminate the Jews. The recent film "Amen," by movie director Constantin Costa-Gravas, like the earlier play on which it is based, Rolf Hochhuth's "The Deputy," depicted Pius XII as a virtual accomplice in his willingness to mute public criticism of Hitler and the Nazis. Supposedly, the wartime pope was willing to remain silent both because he was pro-German and because he was acting in the interests of combating Communism through the advance of the German army into the Soviet Union. Pius XII is also severely criticized as well for maintaining Vatican neutrality in the war at a time when, as a moral leader, many say, he should have been more vigorously speaking out against the evil of the Nazis' "final solution." Evil the Nazis' final solution assuredly was. The alleged guilty silence and passivity of Pope Pius XII in the face of it is something else again, however, something a vast contemporary literature has examined in great detail. Far from the case against Pius XII having been proved by the various anti-Pius writers, though, rather the contrary has turned out to be the case: the less highly touted pro-Pius writers really have the better of the argument, as the present writer among others has shown in a review-article covering the principal recent anti-Pius and pro-Pius books (this review-article is available [here](#)).

The fact that the case against Pius XII does not hold up on the evidence—that the continuing denigration of the wartime pope is a defamation—has not prevented those convinced of the pope's guilt from going ahead to trumpet it to the four winds anyway. Such is the approach of the recent book by Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *A Moral Reckoning: The Role of the Catholic Church in the Holocaust and Its Unfulfilled Duty of Repair*. Goldhagen relies on sources whose evidence has been shown to be thin, shaky, biased, unsubstantiated, and even patently false—and then he goes on to accumulate many more errors of fact and judgment of his own. Just as the myths of Aryan racial superiority and Jewish racial pollution drove the Nazi extermination program, so the myth of the supposed complicity of Pius XII in the crimes of the Nazis drives the continuing campaign to vilify the good and honorable pope and man that Pius XII was. A scapegoat is needed to explain the failure of European civilization to counter the murderous ideology of the Nazis, and so the wartime head of the Catholic Church is targeted. One of the newest entries into the field of Pius XII defamation is a new thriller novel entitled *The Confessor* written by Daniel Silva. It appeared on the New York Times bestseller list almost as soon as it was published. Its author has enjoyed a growing reputation as a writer of popular thrillers, and he is, in fact, a skilled practitioner of the genre. In two recent books of his, *The Kill Artist* and *The English Assassin*, he introduced a superhero operative, Gabriel Allon, who is a talented restorer of fine paintings by day but is also a clandestine Israeli agent who always turns out to be more than a match for the Arab terrorists he encounters preying on Jewish victims. In *The Confessor*, however, the predators pursuing Jewish and other victims are no longer Arab terrorists; they are traditionalist Catholics operating out of the Vatican in an effort to cover up the evidence of Church collaboration with the Nazis in World War II.

The novel's action is based on the taken-for-granted "fact" of the culpable silence of Pius XII during the Holocaust against the Jews as well as upon the true fact that some individual churchmen were pro-Nazi. It would have been surprising if there had not been a few pro-Nazi churchmen, considering that the mesmerizing Adolf Hitler once held a good part of Europe in his thrall, and for more than just a few years. Probably a majority of Germans continued to consider him the savior of Germany well past the time when it had become pretty clear that what he was bringing about was the ruin of Germany.

That some individual churchmen were pro-Nazi, and a few even actively collaborated in the atrocities of Hitler's so-called New Order, however, in no way establishes that the Vatican's policy was even remotely pro-Nazi. That the contrary, in fact, has conclusively been shown in, e.g., *Pius XII and the Second World War: According to the Archives of the Vatican* by Pierre Blet, S.J., has simply not registered with a writer such as Daniel Silva. He relies on the anti-Pius sources instead. His main plot is based on a supposed secret wartime meeting between an archbishop high up in the Vatican and an official of the German Foreign Office. At this meeting, the Vatican official is depicted as expressly acquiescing in the Nazi plans for the Final Solution. Supposing such a thing ever happened—and there is no evidence for it—it is hard to see why the personal moral guilt of Pius XII would not in fact be diminished if he were shown to be acting on the recommendations of a trusted official who was really, unbeknownst to the pope, working for the Germans.

The novel implies nothing of the kind: Pius XII remains the bad guy, and both the author and his characters from time to time give vent to their feelings about this supposedly flawed and failed pope. Some of these asides seem lifted almost verbatim from anti-Pius books such as Susan Zuccotti's tendentious *Under His Very Windows: The Vatican and the Holocaust*, in which Pius XII is made to be somehow personally responsible for the 1,000-plus Jews who were rounded up in Rome in October, 1943 and deported to Auschwitz. What is not mentioned, either by Zuccotti or by Silva, is the truth recently brought out once again by the Jewish historian, Sir Martin Gilbert, namely, that around 4,000 of Rome's 5,000 Jews were hidden in Roman seminaries and convents—where the breaking of the rule of cloister in the latter institutions would have required papal approval—and were thereby saved from deportation.

The action of this thriller novel revolves around a fictitious new pope, Paul VII, who has just succeeded John Paul II, and who is a "liberal" pope who intends at long last to 'fess up and admit the Church's World War II guilt in failing to save the Jews. A far-right secret society of traditionalist Catholics headed by an ice-cold cardinal character—the kind of person the anti-Pius people seem to imagine Pius himself was—is determined to stop this admission of Church guilt even if it means assassinating the new pope, Paul VII. As the "confessor" of the book's title, this wicked and implacable cardinal sends out assassins with the promise of automatic absolution in the confessional for their deeds.

The nefarious Catholic traditionalists, however, fail to reckon with the Israeli superhero, Gabriel Allon. He is not only instrumental in saving the new pope from assassination, his exposé of the wartime sins of the Church through various acts of derring-do establish the need for the fictitious Paul VII to apologize for these wartime sins. In this regard, John Paul II's actual "apologies," at Rome's synagogue in 1986 and again as recently as February, 2003, at the Wailing Wall several years back, and in his 1998 "We Remember" document, are evidently not enough; the only thing that will ever satisfy the anti-Pius people, apparently, is a total admission that Pope Pius XII was indeed guilty as charged.

It is dispiriting to realize that this author's skill as a writer of popular thrillers will probably help persuade many readers about the "guilt" of Pius XII, thus expanding and perpetuating the defamation of the wartime pope to an even greater extent than is already the case. Unfortunately, among the sources acknowledged at the end of his book are such "anti-Catholic Catholics" as James Carroll, John Cornwell, and Garry Wills; but relying on such sources in trying to render anything like the proper "feel" of authentic Catholicism and how the Vatican functions is about as reliable as consulting the Jews for Jesus for insights into orthodox Jewish beliefs. These writers are arguably not even Catholic any longer, in spite of their pretence of being legitimate critics operating from "inside" the Catholic Church. With sources like these, Daniel Silva was never likely to get it right about the Church and the pope, and *The Confessor* as a novel has to be added to the already large body of literature perpetuating the defamation of Pius XII.

Kenneth D. Whitehead is a former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Education and a member of the Board of Directors of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights. His review-article entitled "*The Pius XII Controversy*" is available [here](#).

# The Assault on Christianity: Daniel Goldhagen's A Moral Reckoning

By Ronald Rychlak, Ph.D.

(The American Conservative, February 10, 2003)

In 1999, John Cornwell fired the first round in a new assault on the papacy, the Catholic Church, and ultimately Christianity itself with his book, *Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII*. Cornwell's thesis was that Pope Pius XII, who led the Catholic Church from 1939 until his death in 1958, was so concerned about centralizing authority in a strong papacy that he turned a blind eye toward the growth of the Nazis. Most readers took this book strictly as an historical charge against a long-deceased Pope, but those who followed it all the way to the end saw that much of the author's hostility was actually directed at the current pontiff, Pope John Paul II.

Quick on his heels of *Hitler's Pope* came a string of books (at least seven) that leveled new charges of anti-Semitism and blamed Christianity for the Holocaust. The culmination comes with the book by Daniel Goldhagen, *A Moral Reckoning: The Role of the Catholic Church in the Holocaust and its Unfulfilled Duty of Repair*. In it, Goldhagen claims that the Catholic Church provided the Nazis with a "motive for murder" and should be held to a moral reckoning for its sinful behavior. He argues that the authors of the New Testament (he calls it "the Christian Bible") inserted anti-Semitic passages into the

text decades after the crucifixion in order to serve their own political needs. As such, Goldhagen's book is not simply an attack on the papacy or the Catholic Church, but on Christianity itself, especially the New Testament, which Goldhagen says is "fictitious" and "not a reliable rendition of facts and events, but legend."

Goldhagen's focus is on those passages of the New Testament that long have been recognized as containing language that *can* be misunderstood. Of particular concern is Matthew 27:24-25, where Jesus is handed over to the Roman authorities, ultimately to face crucifixion. Pontius Pilate offered to free one of the "criminals," and the crowd called for Barabbas. As Matthew reports:

So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves."

And all the people answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!"

Goldhagen argues that Matthew here falsely attributes blame for the crucifixion to all Jews for all times, that this instilled a hatred of Jews into the European psyche, and that Hitler merely had to exploit this pre-existing attitude to his own perverted ends.

The remedy that Goldhagen proposes includes having Christians agree that Christ is not the only way to salvation and having them (with help from non-Christians) re-write the Gospels to purge offensive, anti-Semitic passages. He goes on to demand that the Catholic Church make reparations to Jews. He says that money reparations are deserved; political reparations are useful; but above all he stresses the need for the Church to admit its moral failings. He asks for apologies, the erection of suitable monuments, an end to the Church's diplomatic

relations with other nations, support for Israel, and repudiation of any claim that Christianity has supplanted Judaism. Instead, the Church must embrace religious pluralism, acknowledging that salvation is not limited to the Catholic Church or to Christianity. (Along the way, he also tells us that white southerners should make restitution to African-Americans for slavery and segregation.)

Let us first be clear that the Catholic Church does not read Matthew the way that Goldhagen suggests. At the Second Vatican Council, the Church made clear that guilt for Jesus' death *is not* attributable to all the Jews of that time or to *any* Jews of later times. The Catholic Church has always understood that Jesus was born into a Jewish family. His mother was Jewish. His early followers were Jewish, and the people who first heard him preach were Jewish. As Pope Pius XI said in 1938:

Mark well that in the Catholic Mass, Abraham is our Patriarch and forefather. Anti-Semitism is incompatible with the lofty thought which that fact expresses. It is a movement with which we Christians can have nothing to do. No, no, I say to you it is impossible for a Christian to take part in anti-Semitism. It is inadmissible. Through Christ and in Christ we are the spiritual progeny of Abraham. Spiritually, we are all Semites.

Goldhagen actually tries to twist this proclamation to show that Pius XI was an anti-Semite, but he fails. In January 1939, the National Jewish Monthly reported that "the only bright spot in Italy has been the Vatican, where fine humanitarian statements by the Pope have been issuing regularly."

Certainly no one would suggest that Christians and Jews have gotten along well at all times throughout history. Prior to 1870, when Popes had real temporal power, Jews were sometimes treated with religious and political contempt. Many Catholic officials of this period were fearful that Jews would lead Christians away from Christ, or worse. They found reason for

their fear in Old Testament passages such as Joshua 6:21 (Jews “observed the ban by putting to the sword all living creatures in the city: men and women, young and old, as well as oxen, sheep and asses.”), Deuteronomy 20:17 (“You [Jews] must doom them all...”), and Deuteronomy 7:1-5:

When the LORD, your God, brings you [Jews] into the land which you are to enter and occupy... and you defeat them, you shall doom them. Make no covenant with them and show them no mercy....Tear down their altars, smash their sacred pillars, chop down their sacred poles, and destroy their idols by fire. For you are a people sacred to the LORD, your God; he has chosen you from all the nations on the face of the earth to be a people peculiarly his own.

In 1564, Pope Pius IV announced that the Talmud could be distributed only on the condition that the portions offensive to Christians were erased. Earlier Popes had, at times, banned it altogether.

These measures are not reflective of happy periods in the history of Christian-Jewish relations, but almost all papal critics acknowledge that throughout even the worst periods Popes regularly condemned violence directed against Jews and offered protection when they could. This Catholic “anti-Judaism” was a matter of religion, not race. In fact, the more common charges arising out of this history related to efforts directed towards encouraging Jews to convert—to *become Catholics*.

By contrast, Nazi racial anti-Semitism did not encourage Jews to “join the party.” This “scientific” position drew support from biological arguments and *the absence of religion*. Nazis showed films equating Jews, handicapped persons, and other “undesirables” with vermin that needed to be exterminated. This was in direct contradiction to everything that the Catholic Church had always taught about the fundamental dignity of *all* human life.

Does this mean that it was impossible for Hitler to lay claim to Christian teachings as he advanced his evil agenda? Of course not. In Mein Kampf, Hitler went to great length about misusing religious imagery to inspire and inflame the masses. Hitler also played to a populist mentality, a racist mentality, a socialist mentality, a chauvinistic mentality, a nurturing/mothering mentality, a scientific mentality, and just about any other mentality that he could think of. Are they all to be condemned because they were capable of being manipulated by Hitler (who also planned to eliminate largely-Catholic Poland)? The answer is equally clear: of course not.

In order to understand the dynamics of the time, one only need examine Nazi arguments from the 1930s and 40s. Hitler regularly complained about Christian interference with his plan (saying one time that the Pope was blackmailing him). Nazis propaganda often showed Jews invoking Christian imagery or hiding behind church symbols for protection. Several such drawings are reproduced in Konrad Löw's new book, *Die Schuld: Christen und Juden im Urteil der Nationalsozialisten und der Gegenwart*, which was just published in Germany.

Goldhagen's book is not based on original historical research. He just culled the worst accusations from authors like Gary Wills, Susan Zuccotti, John Cornwell, and others without giving any consideration to the serious flaws that have been noted in their books. Goldhagen takes many of his larger themes from *Constantine's Sword* by James Carroll, an ex-priest, whom Goldhagen calls "a devout Catholic." Carroll hardly sounded that way in his memoirs, when he scoffed at his excommunication from the Catholic Church. More troubling, however, is the way Goldhagen's selectively used secondary sources to manufacture arguments.

Goldhagen's main source for his charges about the Vatican allegedly helping Nazi War criminals escape justice is Michael Phayer's book, *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust, 1930-1965*. Phayer, in turn, draws mainly from the conspiracy-

monger John Loftus and his discredited book, *Unholy Trinity: The Vatican, the Nazis and the Swiss Banks*. More recently, Loftus has accused the Bush family of establishing a fortune by laundering money derived from the Nazis.

Similarly, Goldhagen relies heavily and uncritically on Susan Zuccotti's book, *Under His Very Windows*, for his analysis of that period of the war when the Germans occupied Rome and northern Italy (1943-44). One of Zuccotti's chief sources, in turn, is the notorious Robert Katz—who was successfully sued by relatives of Pope Pius XII and publicly condemned by Italy's highest Court for defaming the wartime Pope.

Goldhagen blindly accepts John Cornwell's mis-translation of a letter written in 1919 by Eugenio Pacelli, the future Pope Pius XII, when he was papal nuncio in Munich. That year, Bolshevik revolutionaries temporarily took power in Bavaria and began operating what might best be described as a rogue government. Pacelli sent his assistant, Monsignor Lorenzo Schioppa, to meet with the Bolshevik leader, Eugen Levine, to determine whether representatives in Munich would be accorded diplomatic status. Levine responded by saying that he would recognize the extra-territoriality of the foreign legations "if, and as long as the representatives of these Powers...do nothing against the [Bolshevik government]." He made it clear that he "had no need" of Vatican representatives.

Pacelli wrote a six page letter back to Rome reporting on this meeting. The key passage, as translated by Cornwell (and accepted uncritically by Goldhagen), described the scene at the palace as follows:

... in the midst of all this, a gang of young women, of dubious appearance, Jews like all the rest of them, hanging around in all the offices with lecherous demeanor and suggestive smiles. The boss of this female rabble was Levien's [sic] mistress, a young Russian woman, a Jew and a divorcée, who was in charge. And it was to her that the nunciature was obliged to pay

homage in order to proceed.

This Levien [sic] is a young man, of about thirty or thirty-five, also Russian and a Jew. Pale, dirty, with drugged eyes, hoarse voice, vulgar, repulsive, with a face that is both intelligent and sly.

Goldhagen suggests that these 106 words, based on Schioppa's report, prove that Pacelli was an anti-Semite. In truth, however, this translation is grossly distorted.

The phrase "Jews like all the rest of them" is a distorted, inaccurate translation of the Italian phrase *i primi*. The literal translation would be "the first ones" or "the ones just mentioned." Similarly, the Italian word *schiera* should be translated as "group" instead of "gang." Additionally, the Italian *gruppo femminile* should be translated as "female group," not "female rabble." The Italian *occhi scialbi* should be translated as "pale eyes" not "drugged eyes."

When the entire letter is read with an accurate translation, it loses its anti-Semitic tone, which was introduced only by the bogus translation upon which Goldhagen relied. Moreover, that is not the only translation problem with *A Moral Reckoning*. Jody Bottum, writing in The Weekly Standard, says: "there isn't a Latin phrase in the book that doesn't have an odd translation."

When Goldhagen is unable to find outrageous charges that others have already advanced, he seems willing to manufacture false evidence to support his case. For instance, the photograph on the cover of *A Moral Reckoning* shows a Nazi sign ("Jews not welcome here") near what Goldhagen calls a "Catholic shrine." Supposedly this implies some kinship between the Church and the Nazis. According to German reviewers, however, this is not a single photo but a collage that brings the two images together.

A German court even ordered Goldhagen's book to be pulled from



the shelves due to a caption beneath a photo showing a Catholic prelate surrounded by Nazis. The caption said: "Cardinal Michael Faulhaber marches between rows of SA men at a Nazi rally in Munich." In fact, the photo shows papal nuncio Cesare Orsenigo, not Bavarian bishop Faulhaber. The city is Berlin not Munich, and it isn't a Nazi rally but a May Day parade. Faulhaber was a staunch foe of the Nazis, and his diocese reports that he *never* attended a Nazi rally. Orsenigo was nuncio and ex-officio dean of the diplomatic corps, so he was expected to attend this parade which celebrated workers, not Nazis.

Another of Goldhagen's most blatant errors relates to the Franciscan friar Miroslav Filipovic-Majstorovic, also known as "Brother Satan." Goldhagen ends his discussion of Croatia by writing: "Forty thousand...perished under the unusually cruel reign of 'Brother Satan,'... Pius XII neither reproached nor punished him... during or after the war." Actually, "Brother Satan" was tried, defrocked, and expelled from the Franciscan order *before the war ended*. In fact, his expulsion occurred in April 1943, *before he ran the extermination camp*. For Pius XII to have punished him "after the war" would have been difficult indeed, since he was executed by the Communists in 1945.

Goldhagen argues that the Vatican "endorsed" Italy's anti-Semitic laws. Actually, Mussolini's "Aryan Manifesto" was issued on July 14, 1938. On July 28, 1938, Pius XI made a public speech in which he said: "The entire human race is but a single and universal race of men. There is no room for special races. We may therefore ask ourselves why Italy should have felt a disgraceful need to imitate Germany." This was reprinted in full on the front page of the Vatican newspaper on July 30, under a four-column headline. Other articles condemning anti-Semitism (and I may have missed some) appeared on July 17, July 21, July 23, July 30, August 13, August 22-23, October 11-18, October 20, October 23, October 24, October 26, October 27, November 3, November 14-15, November

16, November 17, November 19, November 20, November 21, November 23, November 24, November 26, December 25, and January 19, 1939.

One of the most amazing parts of *A Moral Reckoning* is where Goldhagen attempts to construe the US Bishops' 1942 statement as a slap at Pius XII. At their annual meeting in November 1942, the U.S. Bishops released a statement on the plight of the Jews in Europe. It said, in part:

We feel a deep sense of revulsion against the cruel indignities heaped upon Jews in conquered countries and upon defenseless peoples not of our faith.... Deeply moved by the arrest and maltreatment of the Jews, we cannot stifle the cry of conscience. In the name of humanity and Christian principles, our voice is raised.

Goldhagen tries to turn this statement into a slap at the Pope and an "all but explicit rebuke of the Vatican." Actually, the American bishops repeatedly invoked Pius XII's name and teachings with favor ("We recall the words of Pope Pius XII;" "We urge the serious study of peace plans of Pope Pius XII;" "In response to the many appeals of our Holy Father"). Moreover, in a letter written at this very time, Pius expressed thanks for the "constant and understanding *collaboration*" of the American bishops and archbishops. They replied with a letter pledging "anew to the Holy Father our best efforts in the fulfillment of his mission of apostolic charity to war victims." They also offered a prayer for the Pope's charitable collaborators. The very idea that the bishops were trying to insult the Holy Father is *preposterous*.

Actually, the Catholic Church itself is a particularly unwise target for Goldhagen to have chosen. It is easy enough to find sloppy interpretations of the Bible or hate-mongers bending it for their own purposes, but the Catholic Church has a hierarchy and *official* teachings on these matters. Goldhagen

avoids that reality. In fact, he provides *no* evidence for his principal assertion that the guilt of all Jews for the crucifixion was a “central Catholic doctrine” and teaching it was “official Catholic Church doctrine.” In point of fact, the *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, the authoritative statement of Catholic doctrine during the Nazi period, says something quite different: “*All sinners* were the authors of Christ’s Passion.”

Goldhagen likewise presents *no* evidence that Germans who were brought up with a traditional Catholic education were more likely to support or join the Nazi party than were other Germans. In fact, Hitler tended to fare worse at the polls in Catholic areas than he did in non-Catholic parts of Germany. None of the Nazi leaders left evidence suggesting that they participated in the killing because they thought of their victims as deserving death due to the Gospels. Perhaps most shamefully, Goldhagen disparages all the good that Pope John Paul has done to advance relations between Catholics and Jews over the past quarter of a century.

Clarifying the events surrounding the crucifixion and working toward a better understanding of the truth are legitimate pursuits for Bible scholars. In fact, there is a vast body of writing that analyzes these issues in detail. Unfortunately, Goldhagen appears to be unfamiliar with most of it. He says that Catholic teaching has always “revised” its essential beliefs. That is certainly *not* true, and it reflects a fundamental ignorance of the topic on which he purports to write. The documents of Vatican II maintain a clear and unqualified connection with the original Deposit of Faith. The Catholic Church, according to its own teaching, does not have the authority to rewrite scripture or deny the ultimate divinity of Christ. (Can you *imagine* the divisions that would take place *within* Christianity if it tried to do so?)

Those who are interested in learning more about Catholic teaching regarding relations with Jews (which should

include every reviewer who treated Goldhagen's book with any degree of respect) are advised to read *Nostra Aetate*, the Second Vatican Council's renewal of the Church's condemnation of anti-Semitism. That is a far better way to approach this subject than by reading *A Moral Reckoning*, which in the end is nothing more than a sloppily written polemic rant.

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# **History as Bigotry: Daniel Goldhagen slanders the Catholic Church**

By Rabbi David Dalin  
(The Weekly Standard, 2/10/2003)

IN ITS JANUARY 21, 2002, ISSUE, the *New Republic* devoted twenty-four pages to Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's "What Would Jesus Have Done?"—one of the most virulent attacks against the Roman Catholic Church ever printed in a major American publication. Last fall, Goldhagen expanded that essay into a book, a curious and furious production entitled "A Moral Reckoning: The Role of the Catholic Church in the Holocaust and Its Unfulfilled Duty of Repair," about the Vatican's role during the Holocaust. Goldhagen is no stranger to controversy. His 1996 *Hitler's Willing Executioners* argued that blame for the Holocaust should be placed on all Germans—for "eliminationist" anti-Semitism was widely spread among prewar Germans and intrinsic to the German character. The Nazi exterminations could occur because the vast majority of Germans were already predisposed to kill Jews. Though Goldhagen gained international celebrity, his book's simplistic argument was widely criticized by serious scholars and historians.

In *A Moral Reckoning*, Goldhagen's argument is, once again, simplistic. It's dishonest and misleading as well. He identifies Christianity, and particularly the Catholic Church, as the preeminent source of anti-Semitism in the world—ancient, medieval, and modern. While indicting Pius XII as an anti-Semite and a collaborator with Nazi Germany—and ignoring any contradictory evidence—Goldhagen goes on to attribute anti-Semitism to the entire Catholic Church and its leadership, even the present-day Church under John Paul II.

Indeed, the book is so flawed—its facts error-prone, its arguments tendentious, and its conclusion, equating Christianity in its essence with anti-Semitism, both bizarre and dangerous—that most scholars in the field have simply tried to ignore it. *Hitler's Willing Executioners* sold very well and was widely praised in its early reviews. *A Moral Reckoning*, however, has flopped badly, despite a large publicity effort by which the publisher Knopf tried to recoup its advance. More prepared this time, reviewers have also been considerably less kind to Goldhagen, and the reviews have generally run from lukewarm to outraged. In the *Sunday Times*, the British historian Michael Burleigh held his nose long enough to brand the book "vile" and "a strip cartoon view of European history." Despite my fury at Goldhagen's misuse of the Holocaust to advance an anti-Catholic agenda, I had hoped to join the vast conspiracy of silence in which most Holocaust scholars have, delicately and politely, pretended that *A Moral Reckoning* doesn't exist. But the book hasn't quite disappeared with the same speed with which, say, H.G. Wells's 1943 *Crux Ansata: An Indictment of the Roman Catholic Church* fell down the memory hole. Rather, *A Moral Reckoning*—like Paul Blanchard's 1949 diatribe *American Freedom and Catholic Power*—is carving a permanent niche for itself out on the far edges of American culture.

Where Blanchard was a much-reprinted staple for the old anti-Catholic Evangelical world, Goldhagen seems to be turning into a staple for leftists whose hatred of Catholicism derives from the Church's opposition to abortion and the rest of the liberationist agenda. The huge outpouring of books in recent years attacking the wartime pontiff Pius XII—from John Cornwell's *Hitler's Pope* to Garry Wills's *Papal Sin*—were bad enough (and Goldhagen, who seems in *A Moral Reckoning* never to have consulted anything except secondary sources, relies heavily upon them). But when Goldhagen extends that attack to the demand that the Catholic Church, as we know it, be abolished as a disgrace and a danger to us all, he establishes a new marker for just how bad it can get—and the maddened anti-Catholics have responded by taking him to their breast, for his diatribe is more vicious and extreme than that of any other recent papal critic.

WITH ALL THAT IN MIND, it is perhaps worth putting on record some of the failings of *A Moral Reckoning*. Indeed, Goldhagen invites the reader to "acknowledge the incontrovertible facts and plain truths contained in this book." It's an invitation he shouldn't have issued. In the June/July 2002 issue of *First Things*, Ronald J. Rychlak published an extensive and damning list of errors in the *New Republic* article—astonishingly few of which Goldhagen has bothered to correct. So, for instance, the establishment of the Jewish ghetto in Rome, one of the tragic milestones in the history of Catholic-Jewish relations, took place in 1556, not in 1555; the Venice ghetto in 1517, not 1516; the Frankfurt ghetto in 1462, not 1460; the Vienna ghetto in 1626, not 1570. It's not that these are particularly important errors, but that they are *simple* errors—easy to look up, easy to check. You can't trust anything Goldhagen reports. He is off by three decades about the beginning of the process for Pius XII's beatification and misidentifies the role of Peter Gumpel (who is not the "advocate" but the independent judge of Pius's cause). He claims that Pius XII neither reproached nor punished Franciscan friar Miroslav Filipovic-Majstorovic, when, actually, the so-called "Brother Satan" was tried, defrocked, and expelled from the Franciscan order before the war ended (and was killed by the Communists shortly after). Then there's the caption that identifies a photo as "Cardinal Michael Faulhaber marches between rows of SA men at a Nazi rally in Munich"—except that the man in the picture isn't Faulhaber but the papal nuncio Cesare Orsenigo, the city isn't Munich but Berlin, and the parade isn't a Nazi rally but a May Day parade. Oh, and the fact that the irascible Faulhaber was a famous opponent of the Nazis. In October, a German court prevented publication of *A Moral Reckoning* until the slander against Faulhaber was corrected.

ON AND ON the factual errors go, the sloppy handling of dates, persons, and places all culminating in the selective use (or ignoring) of evidence to portray Eugenio Pacelli (later Pius XII) as the fount of the era's anti-Semitism. Relying entirely on *Hitler's Pope*, Goldhagen takes what was already an outrageous misreading of a 1919 letter (sent by Pacelli to Rome while serving as papal nuncio in Bavaria) describing a group of Bolshevik revolutionaries who had led an uprising in Munich—which Goldhagen extends to: "The Communist revolutionaries, Pacelli averred in this letter, were 'all' Jews."

The Holy See's 1933 concordat with Germany has long been a key instrument for critics of Pius XII, and indeed there are grounds on which to criticize it. But Goldhagen can't accept mere criticism: "Nazi Germany's first great diplomatic triumph," he has to label it, forgetting that the Four Powers Pact between Germany, France, Italy, and England preceded it, as did League of Nations recognition. Pacelli's concordat "helped to legitimate the Nazi regime in the eyes of the world and consolidate its power at home," Goldhagen insists.

But soon after the concordat was signed, Pacelli wrote two articles in the Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, unequivocally arguing that the Church had negotiated a treaty and nothing more—a treaty that implied no moral endorsement of Hitler or Nazism. While it's true that Hitler initially thought he would be able to use the concordat to harness the Church, he soon came to regret it—as his frenzied diatribes in his "Table Talk" reveal—precisely because it was being cited by Catholics as a legal basis on which to resist Nazism.

Goldhagen's efforts to portray Pacelli as a man whose whole life was fueled by anti-Semitism are made possible only by his ignoring all evidence to the contrary. Guido Mendes, a prominent Italian physician and Pacelli's lifelong Jewish friend, is never mentioned by Goldhagen. Nor is the fact that when Mendes lost his medical professorship as a result of Fascist anti-Semitism, Pacelli personally intervened on his behalf. With Pacelli's direct assistance, Mendes and his family were able to escape and eventually settle in Israel. Pacelli was instrumental in drafting the Vatican's historic 1916 condemnation of anti-Semitism. Bruno Walter, the brilliant Jewish conductor of the Munich Opera whom Pacelli befriended shortly after arriving in Munich in 1917, recounts that Pacelli helped free Walter's Jewish fellow musician, Ossip Gabrilowitsch, who had been imprisoned during a pogrom. These facts are also never mentioned in Goldhagen's one-sided polemic.

Goldhagen's centerpiece is the outrageous allegation that Pius XII "did not lift a finger to forfend the deportations of the Jews of Rome" or of other parts of Italy "by instructing his priests and nuns to give the hunted Jewish men, women and children sanctuary." Much of this is lifted straight from anti-Pius books like Susan Zuccotti's *Under His Very Windows*—and thus Goldhagen repeats the errors of those books and adds extras, all his own, in his determined attempt to extend their thesis into over-the-top railings against the sheer existence of Catholicism.

GOLDHAGEN IS APPARENTLY UNAWARE (or, more probably, doesn't care) that many distinguished scholars have declared Zuccotti's book "not history but guesswork," as the historian Owen Chadwick put it. Zuccotti's principal charge, mindlessly repeated by Goldhagen, is that there is no credible evidence that Pius XII ever explicitly ordered his subordinates to assist Jews in Italy. In fact, there is a whole body of evidence that proves Pius did. In 1964 Cardinal Paolo Dezza, the wartime rector of the Pontifical Gregorian University, published a signed article stating unequivocally that during the German occupation of Rome, Pius XII explicitly told him to help "persecuted Jews" and do so "most willingly." In his 2001 book *Gli ebrei salvati da Pio XII*, Antonio Gaspari compiles additional testimonies. And more recently, Gaspari came across new documents, establishing that as early as 1940 Pius XII explicitly ordered his secretary of state, Luigi Maglione, and Maglione's assistant, Giovanni Battista Montini (the future Paul VI), to send money to Jews protected by the bishop of Campagna.

The Nazi deportations of Italy's Jews began in October 1943. Pope Pius ordered churches and convents throughout Italy to shelter Jews, and in Rome itself 155 convents and monasteries sheltered five thousand Jews throughout the German occupation. Pius himself granted sanctuary within the walls of the Vatican, and his summer residence at Castel Gandolfo, to countless homeless Jews. Goldhagen's book conspicuously lacks any discussion of Castel Gandolfo, which enjoys a unique place in the annals of Jewish rescue (and Catholic rescuers) during the Holocaust: In no other site in all of Nazi-occupied Europe were as many Jews saved and sheltered for as long a period. The recently released memoirs of Adolf Eichmann also contain new evidence disproving Goldhagen's claim. The memoirs confirm that Vatican protests played a crucial part in obstructing Nazi intentions for Roman Jews. Eichmann wrote that the Vatican "vigorously protested the arrest of Jews, requesting the interruption of such action." At Eichmann's trial in Jerusalem, Israeli attorney general Gideon Hausner said, "the pope himself intervened personally in support of the Jews of Rome." Documents introduced at the trial provide further evidence of Vatican efforts to halt the arrest and deportation of Roman Jews.

No accusation is too preposterous for Goldhagen to accept. Commenting on the Vatican's alleged link to Nazi war criminals, he claims that Alois Hudal, an Austrian prelate and Nazi sympathizer, was "an important Catholic bishop at the Vatican," as well as a "close friend" and "confidant" of Pius XII. Indeed, he adds, both Pius XII and the future Paul VI actively supported Hudal in his criminal assistance to fleeing Nazi war criminals.

As it happens, Alois Hudal was never a bishop "at the Vatican," much less an "important" one, but rather an obscure rector of the *Collegio dell' Anima* in Rome, where he was placed to confine him to a post of little significance. Hudal also was never a "close friend" of Pius XII or Montini. In fact, Hudal's memoirs bitterly attack the Vatican for steadfastly refusing an alliance with Nazi Germany to combat "godless Bolshevism." Far from assisting Nazi war criminals in their escape, Pius XII authorized the American Jesuit Edmund Walsh to submit to the War Crimes Tribunal at Nuremberg a dossier documenting Nazi war crimes and atrocities. The recent book by David Alvarez, "Spies in the Vatican: Espionage & Intrigue from Napoleon to the Holocaust," shows how much Hitler distrusted and despised Pius XII.

GOLDHAGEN'S VIRULENT *A Moral Reckoning* focuses on Pius XII as the symbol of Catholic evil and repeats almost every accusation, including the most discredited ones, that has ever been leveled against him. But Goldhagen doesn't limit his anti-Catholic diatribe to Pius. Indeed, the point of all the Holocaust material in *A Moral Reckoning* seems to be the concluding pages' attack on John Paul II and the Catholic Church today. Though Goldhagen begrudgingly acknowledges John Paul II's extraordinary efforts to bring Catholics and Jews closer together, he immediately takes this praise back and ultimately contradicts himself entirely by accusing John Paul II of tolerating "anti-Semitic libels and hatreds" during his visit to Syria in the spring of 2001.

Goldhagen claims that "neither John Paul II nor any other Pope has seen fit to make . . . a direct and forceful public statement about Catholics' culpability and the need for all the members of the Church who have sinned during the Holocaust to repent for their many different kinds of offenses and sins against Jews." On the contrary: John Paul II has frequently repented and apologized publicly. In his very first papal audience with Jewish leaders, on March 12, 1979, John Paul II reaffirmed the Second Vatican Council's repudiation of anti-Semitism "as opposed to the very spirit of Christianity," and "which in any case the dignity of the human person alone would suffice to condemn." During his 1986 visit to Rome's chief synagogue—the first time any reigning pope entered a synagogue—John Paul II publicly acknowledged and apologized for the Church's sins. Insisting that there was no theological justification for discrimination, he apologized to the Roman Jews in attendance (many of whom were Holocaust survivors), declaring that the Church condemns anti-Semitism "by anyone—I repeat: by anyone." In 1994, at the personal initiative of John Paul II, the Vatican established diplomatic relations with Israel. In 1998, the Church issued "We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah," an official document on the Holocaust. And in 2000, the pope made his historic visit to Israel—one of the great legacies of his pontificate, which has done much to further Catholic-Jewish reconciliation.

But Goldhagen can acknowledge none of this. He identifies Christianity itself as the source of anti-Semitism and declares, "the main responsibility for producing the all-time leading Western hatred lies with Christianity. More specifically, with the Catholic Church." The definition of Jews as Christ-killers, claims Goldhagen, goes back to the origins of Christianity. Indeed, it is still central to Catholic thought today, and it has an "obvious integral relationship to the genesis of the Holocaust."

As the Jewish scholar Michael Berenbaum has noted, Goldhagen "omits all mention of the countervailing traditions of tolerance" within Roman Catholic thought, past and present. He also misrepresents the thought of those early Church leaders who advocated a tolerant attitude toward the Jews. Goldhagen's misrepresentation of St. Augustine's views of Jews and Judaism is especially appalling. As Ronald Rychlak has noted, Goldhagen's exposition on St. Augustine "is little more than a crude and contemptuous canard." Similarly, Goldhagen's unsubstantiated claim that "there is no difference in kind between the Church's 'anti-Judaism' and its off-shoot European anti-Semitism" is as unsubtle a statement as someone who claims to be a historian could possibly make.

In short, Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's polemic against Pius XII, John Paul II, and the Catholic Church fails to meet even the minimum standards of scholarship. That the book has found its readership out in the fever swamps of anti-Catholicism isn't surprising. But that a mainstream publisher like Knopf would print the thing is an intellectual and publishing scandal.

Rabbi David G. Dalin, a visiting fellow at Princeton University's James Madison Program, is working on a book about Pius XII, John Paul II, and the Jews.

