

WE “COLLABORATED” WITH THE NAZIS?

As we approach the new millennium, Pope John Paul II has made many comments asking for forgiveness; he recognizes that the Church has erred in the past and should have done more to promote justice. But he has also wondered aloud why it is that no one other than the Church apologizes for past deeds. In this regard, the role of the Church during the Holocaust is particularly germane.

The pope has acknowledged that certain Christian thinkers have contributed to the defamation, and ultimate persecution, of Jews, but he has also defended Pope Pius XII from the charge that he was “silent” while Jews perished. “Those who do not limit themselves to cheap polemics,” the Holy Father has said, “know very well what Pius XII thought about the Nazi regime, and how much he did to help the countless victims persecuted by that regime.” Given statements like this, it is shocking to read that some are now saying that the pope has admitted that the Church “collaborated” with the Nazis.

In a brief comment on page 20 of the January 26 edition of *Time* magazine, the following was written under the banner “Mea Culpa”: **“THE LATEST IN BELATED APOLOGIES** In 1997 the Roman Catholic Church finally said it was sorry for collaborating with the Nazis during World War II.” The verb “collaborating” is the key word.

Knowing that this statement was not true, William Donohue called *Time* to ask for the evidence that the reporter used to come to this conclusion. He was immediately told that he could write a letter asking for a retraction (which he has done), but that wasn’t satisfactory. Donohue still wanted to know what the source was in the first place. Despite several phone calls, no one was able to find the source in question. With

good reason: there isn't any—the word “collaborating” was made up—for reasons which can only be labeled political.