

DEFYING THE DEVIL: CHRISTIAN CLERGY WHO SAVED JEWS FROM THE HOLOCAUST

> The Harriet and Kenneth Kupferberg Holocaust Resource Center and Archives





DEFYING THE DEVIL: CHRISTIAN CLERGY WHO SAVED JEWS FROM THE HOLOCAUST

EXHIBIT CURATED AND TEXT WRITTEN BY:
RABBI ISIDORO AIZENBERG

Acknowledgments:

THE UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM
THE INTERNATIONAL RAOUL WALLENBERG FOUNDATION
SAINT VLADIMIR'S ORTHODOX THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
THE INSTITUTE OF CARMELITE STUDIES
GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK LIBRARY

This exhibit opened on Monday, February, 26, 2008, at the Harriet and Kenneth Kupferberg Holocaust Resource Center and Archives at Queensborough Community College.

IN A CENTURY OF HORRORS, Adolf Hitler remains the chief symbol of evil in the twentieth century. As such, it is difficult to understand how the German people could have supported the Nazi party with their votes or accepted the leadership of Hitler after he assumed power. This difficulty becomes even more acute when the German people are broken down into their constituent groups. Did doctors support Hitler? Did scientists support Hitler? Did university professors support Hitler? Did the clergy support Hitler?

ROBERT P. ERICKSEN, THEOLOGIANS UNDER HITLER, P. 1 RAMS OF TEXT have been written searching for responses to these questions. How indeed could the clergy, ostensibly paragons of justice, truth and mercy, justify and support the Nazi policies of discrimination, persecution and murder of Jews? Should not the commandment "Do not murder" have overridden any political loyalties?

The majority of European Christian clergy supported Nazi policies, remained indifferent, or feared that open criticism of the genocide would bring down the wrath of the Nazis on them. At the same time, there were those clergy, men and women, who felt compelled by the religious obligation to assist others in need. Some actually took Jewish refugees in their hands and found shelter for them, fed them and offered them hope; others issued false baptismal certificates or visas, or pressed other clergy and government officials to save Jews. Some of these clergy even paid with their own lives for their courageous opposition and defiance.

As of 2006 there were close to 600 Christian clerics who had been declared "Righteous Among the Nations" by Yad Vashem, the Jerusalem based National Holocaust Memorial organization for the study and remembrance of the Shoah.

Our exhibit honors only a few of these outstanding individuals. We have intentionally chosen clergy from several Christian denominations, pointing out how their courageous rescue efforts were manifested throughout Nazi occupied Europe.



E ARE ALL CHILDREN OF THE SAME FATHER



FOR GOD CREATED US in his own image, and we are obligated to extend our help to our fellow men, and not allow Satan to rule over us...

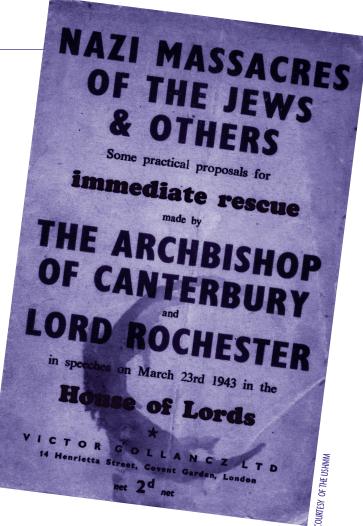
I have made my cross, have spoken with God, and have decided to save as many Jewish souls as I can.

— Metropolitan Damaskinos. Greece, 1943

HE SIMPLE FACT THAT people are persecuted only because of their racial origin is a violation of the natural law. If the good Lord has given them life, no one has the right to take it away or deprive them of the means to exist.

— Monsignor Angelo Rotta. May 1944

Metropolitan Damaskinos and Monsignor Angelo Rotta
motivated many other Christian clergy to rescue Jews. From
Greece to France they stood up in defense of an unbending
principle that they held dear: the sanctity of life. Some of them
publicly denounced the Nazi crimes against the Jews in their sermons; others, in
addition, disseminated their thoughts in print, such as the pamphlet shown on this page. Both
forms of expression powerfully contributed to the swaying of public opinion against Nazi crimes.





$lue{T}$

HE "TURKISH" POPE



THE FACT THAT Monsignor Angelo Giuseppe
Roncalli, the Vatican's Nuncio to Turkey from early
1935 until late 1944, helped to save European Jews during
the Shoah was well known. "But the specific details and
the depth of his personal responses had never been so
well documented" until Professor Dina Porat of Tel Aviv University,
uncovered the specifics in a recent book.

- He saw to it that Jewish refugees who arrived in Istanbul were assisted in going on to Palestine or other destinations.
- Slovakian Jewish children managed to leave the country as a result of his intervention.
- Jews held at the Jenovats concentration camp were liberated thanks to his intervention.
- Bulgarian Jews were allowed to leave Bulgaria thanks to Nuncio Roncalli's request to King Boris.
- Romanian Jews from Transnistria were able to leave because of his intervention.
- Orphaned children of Transnistria on board a refugee ship that weighed anchor in Istanbul were later able to arrive in Palestine due to the Nuncio's efforts.
- Hungarian Jews were saved thanks to conversion to Christianity certificates sent by Roncalli to the Hungarian Nuncio, Monsignor Angelo Rotta.
- Roncalli intervened in favor of Jews from Croatia, including Ugo Kon, president of the community, and the Great Rabbi of the community.

Monsignor Angelo Roncalli later became Pope John XXIII and was responsible for the Vatican II formal renunciation of the Catholic Church's centuries held deicide accusation against the Jews.



THE APOSTOLIC NUNCIO IN TURKEY, MSGR.
ANGELLO RONCALLI (5TH FROM THE RIGHT), IN
A MEETING WITH OTHER CATHOLIC CLERGY, ALL
FORCED TO DRESS IN CIVILIAN CLOTHES CONTRARY
TO CANONICAL RULES. THEIR DRESS WAS IN
FOLLOWING WITH A TURKISH GOVERNMENT'S JUNE
13, 1935 DECREE FORBIDDING THE WEARING OF ANY
KIND OF CLERICAL GARB IN PUBLIC IN ITS EFFORT
OF SECULARIZING THE COUNTRY.



HOTOS COURTESY OF IVAN BASTONI, ITALY

POPE JOHN XXIII

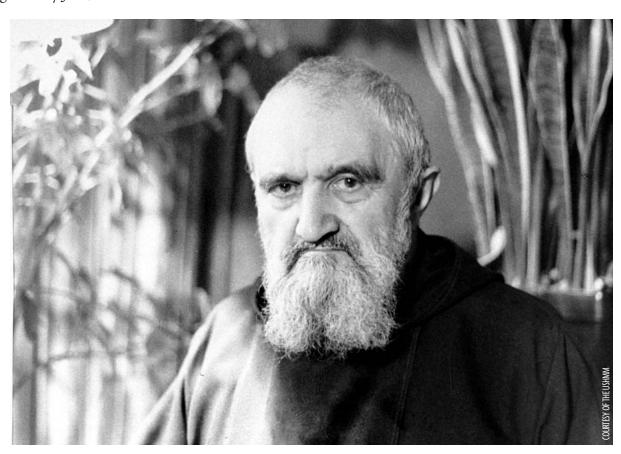
F ATHER OF THE JEWS

RENCH CAPUCHIN MONK Father Pierre-Marie Benoît was responsible for saving so many Jews, and his

courageous deeds reached such proportions, that Jews and non-Jews dubbed him "Father of the Jews." Residing in the Capuchin monastery in Marseilles (1942) and witnessing the rounding-up of Jews for deportation by the Vichy police, Father Pierre sprung into action. His own monastery became the nerve center for widespread rescue. A printing press in the monastery's basement turned out thousands of false baptismal certificates for Jewish refugees. In July of 1943 he went as far as presenting a plan to Pope Pius XII to transfer the Jews in Nice to North Africa via Italy. The plan was foiled by the subsequent German occupation of the Italian zone of France. When

the Gestapo learned of Father Benoît's activities, he was forced to leave Rome and became a refugee himself.

In 1966 Yad Vashem recognized him as one of the Righteous Among the Nations.



PORTRAIT OF FATHER PIERRE-MARIE BENOÎT

T THE LAST JUDGEMENT...

9

*** TWILL NOT BE ASKED whether I satisfactorily practiced asceticism, or how many genuflections I have made before the divine altar. I will be asked whether I fed the hungry, clothed the naked, visited the sick and the prisoner in his jail. That is all that will be asked.

These were the words of Elizaveta Skobtsova, known as Mother Maria, a Russian Christian Orthodox nun who founded a convent in Paris. Just as Father Benoît had transformed his monastery into a haven for Jews, so did Mother Maria transform her convent into a place of refuge for Jews with the aid of her parish priest Father Dimitri Klépinin. She, too, provided false papers to Jews with the help of the French underground, and even managed to smuggle out several children in tall narrow garbage bins from the Vélodrome d'Hiver, where thousands of Jews had been rounded up by the Vichy police for deportation.

Both Mother Maria and father Dimitri were arrested by the Gestapo in February, 1943. They were murdered in the Ravensbrück concentration camp only weeks before the liberation.

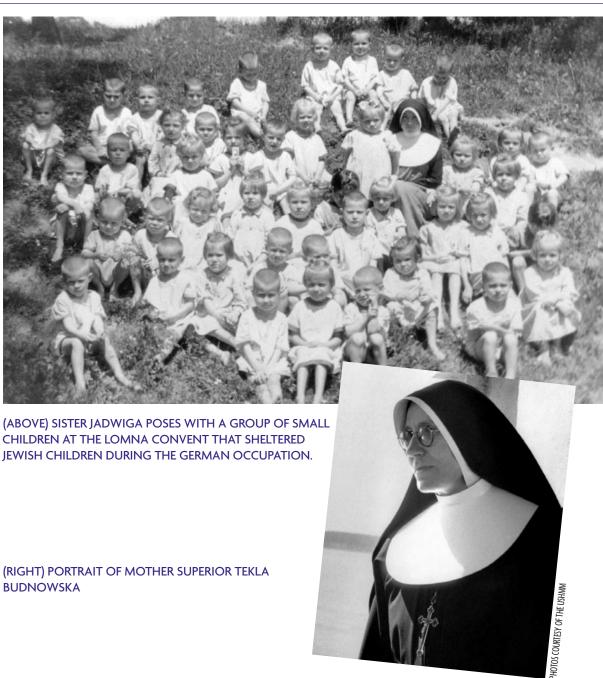


PICTURED FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: SOFIA BORISOVNA PILENKO (MOTHER OF MOTHER MARIA), IURA SKOBTSOV (SON OF MOTHER MARIA), ALEKSEI BABDJAN, MOTHER MARIA, GEORGI FEDOTOV, FATHER DIMITRI KLEPININ AND KONSTANTIN MOCHULSKI POSING AT THE LOURMEL CONVENT.



OTHER SUPERIOR TEKLA BUDNOWSKA AND SISTER JADWIGA

TN NAZI occupied Poland we Lencounter some extraordinary havens created by Christian clergy for Jewish refugees escaping persecution and eventual death. The Mother Superior of the Lomna convent school (in Przemysl, SE Poland, near the Ukrainian border) with the assistance of the head nurse. Sister Jadwiga, was instrumental in hiding numerous Jewish girls. When the convent came under attack by Ukranian nationalists in the fall of 1943, Budnowska quickly made arrangements to transfer the Jewish girls to Warsaw, where she established an orphanage in an abandoned building on the site of the destroyed ghetto.



N

OT ONE JEW LOST

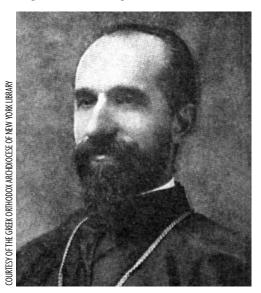
9

PEW RESCUE OPERATIONS of Jews can compare to the one that took place on the Greek island of Zakynthos (Zante), in the Ionian Sea. During the early years of the war the island fell within the Italian zone of occupation, but by September 1943 it was occupied by the Germans. Early in 1944 Mayor Lucas Carrer was ordered at gunpoint to hand over a list of the Jews residing on the island. The list, presented to the Germans by Bishop Chysostomos, contained only two names: his and the mayor's. The prelate reportedly told the Germans that if they chose to deport the Jews of Zakynthos, they would also have to take him. Chrisostomos then instructed the 275 Jews to flee to the hills and following his instructions, they were sheltered by local residents until the end of the war. "As a result of this unprecedented act of humanity by the entire population of the island, the Jewish community of Zakynthos had the same number of souls after the war as it did before. Not one Jew was lost.



PORTRAIT OF THE METROPOLITAN
CHRYSOSTOMOS

Bishop Chrysostomos and Lucas Carrer were both recognized by Yad Vashem as Righteous Among the Nations.



Not much different from the position adopted by Metropolitan Chysostomos was the one taken by Metropolitan Joachim Alexopoulus, the bishop of Volos, in NE Greece. On September 30, 1943, Rabbi Moisis Pessach was ordered to report to the Germans the names of the Jews residing in the town. After the rabbi turned to Bishop Alexopoulus, he handed him a letter of introduction to all the priests in the villages surrounding Volos, urging them to help the Jews in every way. They did. 74 percent of the community left Volos on time and survived. After the Jews returned to Volos after the end of the war, Alexopoulus issued a statement urging the local inhabitants to return all the valuables the Jews had left in their possession for safekeeping

PORTRAIT OF JOACHIM ALEXOPOULUS



HE MOTHER SUPERIOR SISTER MARIE AMELIE

9

In the Brussels suburb of Anderlecht where the Mother Superior Sister Marie Amelie and the nuns under her care demonstrated fearless courage. For about a year they had offered loving shelter to fifteen Jewish children, until the morning of May 20, 1943, when the German Gestapo entered the convent in search of Jewish children. When the Gestapo officer found three children missing he threatened that unless they appeared the following day, they would arrest one nun for each missing child. With the help of the Jewish underground who had heard of the raid, the nuns staged a mock kidnapping and locked themselves up in a room, while the children were taken to different locations. When the Gestapo came to investigate the nuns successfully convinced them that they were kidnapped and suffered no retaliation.



GROUP PORTRAIT OF THE NUNS OF THE COUVENT DU TRES SAINT SAUVEUR. SISTER MARIE AMELIE, HONORED BY YAD VASHEM AS A RIGHTEOUS AMONG THE NATIONS IN 2001, IS IN THE CENTER.



E KEPT US ALIVE. WE CAN NEVER DO ENOUGH FOR HIM."

— SURVIVOR REGINA WOLBROM

AGAIN IN BELGIUM, this time in the eastern city 🕽 of Liège, Monsignor Louis-Joseph Kerkhofs, convened a group of priests in September 1942 urging them to become involved in the rescue of Jews. Returning from that fateful meeting, Father Louis Célis was far

from suspecting that very soon he would be put to the test in fulfilling his superior's instructions. The Rotenbergs stood before him begging to save their lives. He did. The older Rotenbergs were betrayed by informers and perished in Auschwitz. Their children were hidden through the efforts of Father Louis Cèlis and of his brother Father Hubert Cèlis, ministering in a neighboring town. Both brothers were interrogated several times by the Gestapo and eventually both were forced to go into hiding.



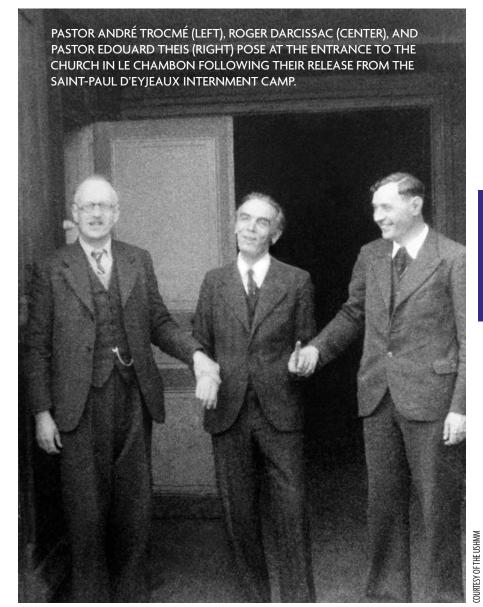
FATHER LOUIS CÈLIS ARRIVING AT LOD AIRPORT IN 1980 TO BE RECOGNIZED AS A RIGHTEOUS AMONG THE NATIONS BY YAD VASHEM. ALSO PICTURED ARE REGINA, WOLFGANG, SIEGMUND AND SONJA ROTENBERG WHO WERE RESCUED BY THE BROTHERS CÈLIS.

DON'T KNOW WHAT A JEW IS. I ONLY KNOW HUMAN BEINGS."

RENCH PROTESTANTS were keenly aware of the constraints on religious freedom in a predominantly Catholic environment. Since the days of the Reformation, the Huguenots in France had borne the brunt of persecution. It is therefore not surprising that French Protestants, mindful of their own history, were very sensitive to the plight of the Jews." Mordecai Paldiel, The Path of the Righteous, p. 27

NE OF THE MOST courageous saviors of Jews during the war was Pastor André Trocmé of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon, one of a cluster of largely Protestant villages in the Haute-Loire region of France. With the public verbal support of the regional Catholic Monsignor Pierre-Marie Théas, the active help of his wife Magda, and Pastor Edouard Theis, the headmaster of the secondary school in the area, André Trocmé "initiated and oversaw a vast operation sheltering thousands of Jewish children, a first step toward escape to Spain or to Switzerland." In January 1943 Trocmé and Theis were arrested and held for a month in the St. Paul d'Eyjeaux interment camp for political prisoners. Following his release, Trocmé continued his efforts on behalf of the refugees but was soon compelled to go into hiding himself for several months.

— PASTOR ANDRÉ TROCMÉ



A

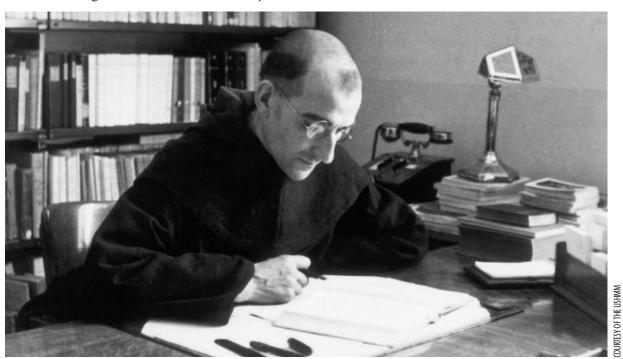
U REVOIR LES ENFANTS

9

ATHER JACQUES DE JÉSUS (born Lucien Bunel) was a Carmelite friar and headmaster of the Petit Collège Sainte-Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus in Avon. During the German occupation of France Father Jacques provided refuge for French youth seeking to avoid conscription for forced labor in Germany and for Jews trying to avoid deportation. These refugees were hidden in a nearby convent and homes in the

surrounding area. In January
1943, he enrolled three Jewish
boys: Hans-Helmut Michel,
Jacques-France Halpern, and
Maurice Schlosser, as students
in his school under false names;
Maurice Bas, a fourth Jewish boy,
he hid as a worker at the school.

Informed of the Carmelite friar's activities, the Gestapo seized Father Jacques and the three Jewish students. They were deported to Auschwitz where they perished. Father Jacques was sent first to the Neue Bremm



FATHER JACQUES DE JÉSUS

internment camp and then transferred to the Gusen I sub-camp of Mauthausen. He was liberated by American troops in 1945. Suffering from tuberculosis and weighing only 75 pounds he died several weeks later.

Father Jacques was recognized posthumously by Yad Vashem as a Righteous Among the Nations. The French filmmaker Louis Malle paid tribute to his former headmaster in the beautiful film "Au revoir les enfants."



HE PAPAL NUNCIO ANGELO ROTTA

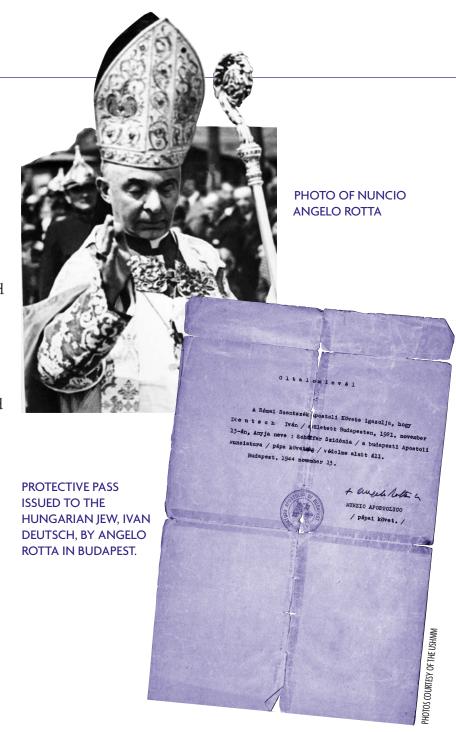
9

Angelo Rotta was the cleric who stood out most forthrightly in directly confronting the issue of the Jewish tragedy in Hungary."

Mordecai Paldiel, Churches and the Holocaust, p. 283

In the beginning of the anti-Semitic measures against the Jews in Hungary in 1944, Rotta limited himself to requesting that Jewish converts to Christianity be exempted from these laws. Regardless, Rotta's call became the first official protest by a Vatican representative against the deportation of Jews. In the course of a short time, with the persecution of Jews only growing worse, Rotta's continued protests before the Hungarian authorities was accompanied by the "issuing of letters of protection to thousands of Jews on the pretext that they had applied for conversion to the Catholic faith and therefore were under the protection of the nunciature." It is believed that Rotta extended between fifteen and nineteen thousands such documents. "As the Soviet army closed its ring around Budapest and began bombarding it, the government asked all accredited diplomats to leave the city. Rotta announced that he would stay behind to protect the Jews in the embattled city."

In 1997, Rotta was posthumously recognized by Yad Vashem as one of the Righteous Among the Nations.





LESSED IS THE FATHER WHO MERITS A SON LIKE FATHER ANDRÉ.

9

PATHER JOSEPH ANDRÉ, a Belgian priest, became one of the foremost rescuers of hundreds of Jews during the German occupation, most of them

children. Beginning in 1942, and after contacting the Committee for the Defense of Jews (CDJ), a clandestine Jewish organization searching for hiding places for Jewish refugees, Father André poured his full attention to finding shelter for Jews in monasteries, convents, hospitals and private homes. His fame in the rescue effort "eventually spread throughout the region, and it did not take long for the Gestapo to realize that Father André was frustrating its designs to have all the country's Jews deported to the death camps. He became a

marked man and had to go into hiding until the liberation of Namur, in the south of Belgium by the U.S. army in September 1944." Soon after, Father André undertook the task of collecting the children and returning them to their parents, relatives or Jewish organizations. He sought out the American Jewish military chaplain, Rabbi Harold Saperstein, and brought him to his parish church to lead the children in prayer.

In 1968, Father André was recognized by Yad Vashem as a Righteous Among the Nations. When he died in 1973 the pallbearers of his coffin included several of his former Jewish wards.

— A RABBI'S WELCOMING WORDS OF FATHER ANDRÉ TO ISRAEL



FATHER JOSEPH ANDRÉ, FLANKED BY AMERICAN MILITARY CHAPLAIN, RABBI HAROLD SAPERSTEIN, POSES WITH A GROUP OF HIS JEWISH WARDS ON THE DAY THEY WERE TURNED OVER TO THE JEWISH COMMUNITY.

OURTESY OF THE USHMIN

S ON OF ISRAEL, WE ARE HAPPY TO GIVE YOU ANY HELP...

... IT IS THE DUTY OF EVERY CHRISTIAN TO HELP THOSE IN DANGER."

HIS IS HOW Pastor Gerardus Jacobus Pontier of the Dutch ▲ Reformed Church in Heerlen—the southernmost city of the Netherlands—responded to the family of Shlomo Zilber, seeking his help in sheltering them from the Nazis.

Together with his wife, Dora, Pastor Pontier also became involved in the rescue efforts of the underground cell known as the NV group, that spirited Jewish children out of Amsterdam and resettled them with Dutch families in smaller communities.

Because of his rescue work the Gestapo eventually jailed Pastor Pontier for six months trying to wear him down through undernourishment and continuous interrogations. He was finally released on May 17, 1944.



PASTOR GERARDUS PONTIER AND HIS WIFE, DORA, POSE AT YAD VASHEM IN JERUSALEM AFTER HAVING BEEN RECOGNIZED AS RIGHTEOUS AMONG THE NATIONS.

T

HE JUDENPFARRER

9

Protestant minister who during the Third Reich summoned the courage to preach against the injustices of the Nazi regime and its persecution of the Jews. Settling in Heildelberg he first became involved in the Buro Gruber, an office set up by Pastor Heinrich Gruber in Berlin to help Jews get out of Germany. Then he set up his own Hilfsstelle [aid station] and placed a mezuzah on its doorpost to make Jews feel welcome. His opponents dubbed him *Der Judenpfarrer* – the "Jew Minister." His movements were eventually curtailed and he was forced to retire from the Evangelical Council of Churches. Finally in 1944 he was arrested and sent to forced labor in Alsace.

In 1950, Dr. Maas became the first non-Jewish German to visit the State of Israel.



DR. HERMANN MAAS ATTENDING A CEREMONY AT YAD VASHEM IN 1966, AFTER BEING RECOGNIZED AS A RIGHTEOUS AMONG THE NATIONS.

17

N EVERY WAY ENDANGERING HIS OWN LIFE...

... HE SAVED OUR LIVES, AND HE DID SO TIME AND AGAIN, FOR HE IS THE KINDEST MAN I HAVE EVER MET."

THESE WERE THE REMARKS offered by Ursula Korn when referring to Father (after the war, Monsignor) Beniamino Schivo. He, as was the case with other Christian clergy, was destined to save only one Jewish family. But he did so unflinchingly and with great devotion to save the Korns when they came seeking shelter from the Nazis. Following the German occupation of Italy and with Father Schivo's help, the Korns found refuge in a summer villa owned by the Salesian nuns. When that area became dangerous from advancing German forces, Father Schivo took the family to the Convent of the Sacred Heart in Citta di Castello, where the mother superior provided them with nuns' habits and hid them in a locked room so that no one else would discover their presence. Always dodging the Germans because they would have shot him on site, Father Schivo visited the Korns every night, bringing food and offering encouragement. Monsignior Schivo received the Yad Vashem award in 1986.



MONSIGNOR BENIAMINO SCHIVO POSES WITH URSULA KORN SELIG, ONE OF THE JEWISH WOMEN HE HAD PROTECTED AS A CHILD DURING THE GERMAN OCCUPATION OF ITALY.

T

HE VATICAN'S 'SCARLET PIMPERNEL'

sunny morning in Rome, Monsignor Hugh O'Flaherty, Chief Notary of the Holy Office, was out for a stroll in the city with his sister, Mrs. Bride Sheehan R.I.P. who was on holiday from Cahersiveen, [Ireland, the Monsignor's homeland]. 'As she walked down the street a woman rushed out of a jeweler's shop towards us', she recalled. 'She came up to me and placed a string of pearls around my neck. She said it was the only way she could thank Hugh for saving her Jewish husband's life during the war."

A DOCTOR IN DIVINITY, Canon Law and Philosophy as well as in the Vatican's diplomatic service in Egypt, Haiti and Santo Domingo, Msgr. O'Flaherty will above all be remembered for single-handedly helping up to 4,000 people, including many Jews, to escape from the Nazis during their occupation of Rome in 1943. Through an underground network that he created that even the Gestapo failed to smash and a web of friends and contacts inside and outside the Vatican he achieved the impossible. In spite of the many threats that he received on his life, he never gave up on his sacred mission.

When Notre Dame Sister Maria Antoniazzi was initiated into Israel's Righteous Among the Nations in Rome in 2005, she testified to the fact that the convent she lived in became one of a network of Rome safehouses secured under the leadership of Monsignor Hugh O'Flaherty.

A film made about his life staring Gregory Peck, is called "The Scarlet and the Black."



MONSIGNOR HUGH O'FLAHERTY RECEIVING A U.S. MEDAL OF HONOR FROM LT. GENERAL JOHN C.H.LEE, COMMANDER OF THE WORLD WAR II SERVICE OF SUPPLY FOR THE ENTIRE EUROPEAN THEATER FROM CHELTENHAM, ENGLAND BETWEEN 1942 AND 1944.

A T LEAST, IT'S GOOD YOU'RE HERE, MY DAUGHTER; I WILL PROTECT YOU,

...BE NO LONGER AFRAID."

TT WAS WITH THIS heart warming words that ▲ Bronislovas Paukstys, a monk in the Salesian order, welcomed Rachel Levin-Rosenzweig when she fled from the ghetto in Kaunas, Lithuania, in 1944.

Rachel was only one of the many Jews, among them numerous children, that Paukstys saved. "In contrast to Archbishop Brizgys, who turned down a request by a Jewish delegation for the church to become involved in rescuing Jews, Paukstys saw the Nazi conquest as a tragedy for his people and country, and the persecution of Jews as genocide, plain and simple, that one had to oppose."

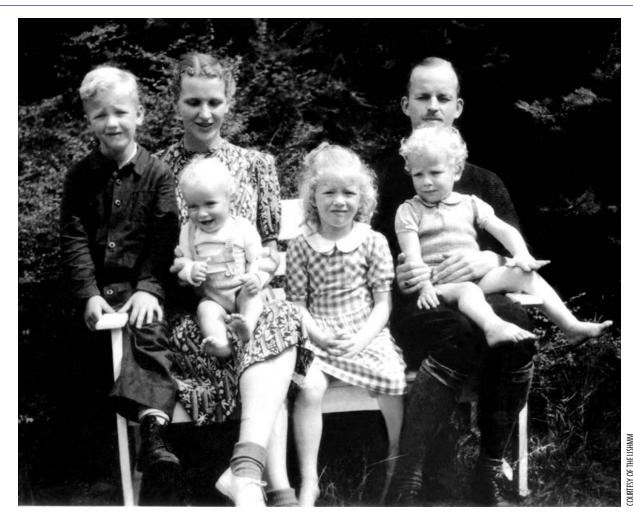
"In 1946, the Communist regime arrested him and sent him to Siberia, where he was assigned to crushing stones for ten years. He returned to Lithuania in 1956. From Israel, his former wards sent him packages of clothing and medicine. When he died in 1966, many of his former beneficiaries attended the funeral.

He was honored by Yad Vashem as one of the Righteous Among the Nations.



T HE DUTCH SAVIORS OF TWO JEWISH GIRLS

ORIS AND GERDA BLOCH WERE two sisters born in Berlin in the 1920's. Forced to leave Germany in 1938 they went to live with relatives in Holland. They moved several times from place to place, forced by the advance of the German army. In November 1942, after the deportations began, the girls were separated from their parents, hiding in different towns. Eventually Gerda went to live with the family of the Reverend Adriaan and Ank Farber in Kampen (East Holland) while Doris was taken to a nearby town and hidden in a farm owned by Carl Johann and Helene Derksen. For the most part Doris lived openly with the Derksens under an assumed name until the end



of the war. At that time Doris learned that her parents had been deported to their death in Auschwitz in 1944. Shortly after liberation Gerda found Doris and brought her to live with the Farbers, who became their legal guardians. Both sisters eventually immigrated to the United States.

PORTRAIT OF THE REV. ADRIAAN AND ANK FARBER WITH FOUR OF THEIR CHILDREN. THE FAMILY WAS RECOGNIZED BY YAD VASHEM AS ONE OF THE RIGHTEOUS AMONG THE NATIONS.



NONYMOUS PRIESTS

9

Sometimes young Jewish children were hidden in churches and convents throughout Europe, without knowing who their saviors were. This picture provided by Shmerke Kaczerginsky (Yiddish writer who succeeded in saving considerable Jewish material during the war that was later shipped to the YIVO Institute in New York.) to the YIVO shows an anonymous priest posing with a group of altar boys on the steps of a church. Among the boys were two hidden Jewish children. Shloimele Gziewacz from Warsaw is pictured in the back row, fifth from the left.





HE RABBI'S SON: SAVED IN 1944, SHOT IN 1982



Emanuele was the son of Rabbi Ricardo and Vanda Abenaim Pacifici. In 1940 Emanuele, who was then nine, was sent to a Jewish school in Turin, while his parents lived in Genoa. Due to the Allied bombing of Turin, Emanuele was sent to Casale Monferrato, which had a Jewish community and was located between Turin and Milan in the northwest corner of Italy. Rabbi Pacifici remained in Genoa and at the end of September 1943 he brought Emanuele back home through Sukkot. Following the October 16 massive round up of Jews in Rome, Emanuele's uncle came to Genoa to escort him to his mother who was hiding in Calci, a town near Pisa. Emanuele never saw his father again. On November 4, 1943 Rabbi Pacifici was arrested in his synagogue and killed in Auschwitz.

Pietro Boetta, the secretary of the cardinal of Genoa, visited Vanda and warned her to leave immediately, fearing that if he were arrested and tortured he would reveal the family's whereabouts. Vanda fled with her two sons to Florence where the Cardinal's secretary, Don Leto Casini (later honored by Yad Vashem as a Righteous Among the Nations), hid them. The next day, for greater safety, the boys were separated from their mother. A spy revealed to the Nazis where she was hiding, leading to her being captured and murdered in Auschwitz on December 12, 1943.

Emanuele remained hidden in another convent until liberation, when a soldier from the Jewish brigade reunited the two brothers with their grandparents in Rome.

On October 8, 1982, on the holiday of Shemini Atzeret, Emanuele was shot and wounded by Arab terrorists outside the synagogue in Rome.

PICTURE: FROM LEFT TO RIGHT ARE NATHAN OVIETO IN THE ARMS OF HIS FATHER, ENRICO ORVIETO, EMANUELE PACIFICI, GUILIANO ORVIETO, GUALTIERO ORVIETO, AND THE PRIEST WHOSE NAME IS UNKNOWN. BEHIND THEM ARE DON GAETANO TANTALO AND MARIO PACIFICI.



ER PATRICK DESBOIS: THE RESCUER OF MEMORY

THE LAST CHRISTIAN CLERGYMAN included in the exhibit did not rescue Jews during the Holocaust nor issue false baptismal documents, nor protest to the political authorities. Our contemporary is in the process of rescuing the memory of nearly 1,500,000 million Jews shot dead by the Nazis and buried throughout the staunchly Greek Catholic and Orthodox Ukraine. He is a French Roman Catholic priest and his name is Father Patrick Desbois.

"Unlike in Poland or Germany, where the Holocaust remains visible through the searing symbols of the extermination camps, the horror in Ukraine was hidden away, first by the Nazis, then by the Soviets. There was nothing to see in the Ukraine because people were shot to death with guns," and buried in gigantic pits in what became known as the "Holocaust of bullets." (The New York Times, 10/06/07, pp.A1 and A4)

Accompanied by a team that includes two interpreters, a photographer, a cameraman, a ballistic specialist, a mapping expert and a note taker, Father Desbois has identified more than 600 common graves of Jews, most of them previously unknown. "Only one third of Ukrainian territory has been covered so far and it will take several more years to finish the research."

Precisely because he is a priest, Father Patrick Desbois has been able to accomplish what no Jewish researcher or a rabbi could. And most importantly, he is determined to continue with the holy task that destiny has assigned to him.

The murdered innocents will not be forgotten.



FATHER PATRICK DEBOIS

GERMAN SOLDIERS OF THE WAFEN-SS AND THE REICH LABOR SERVICE LOOK ON AS A MEMBER OF THE EINSATZGRUPPE PREPARES TO SHOOT A UKRANIAN JEW KNEELING ON THE **EDGE OF A MASS GRAVE** FILLED WITH CORPSES.





SUGGESTED READINGS

Robert P. Ericksen, Theologians Under Hitler.

Excellent analysis of three major and influential German theologians, Gerhard Kittel, Paul Althaus, and Emanuel Hirsch, who found ample justification for Hitler's anti-Jewish legislation.

Sergei Hackel, Pearl of Great Price: The Life of Mother Maria Skobtsova 1891-1945.

The story of a nun of the Orthodox Church who saved Jews in Nazi occupied France and died a martyr's death in one of Hitler's concentration camps

Philip Hallie, Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed.

A thorough history of how the villagers of Le Chambon in France, spearheaded by their pastor, André Trocmé, succeeded in saving hundreds of Jews during the Nazi occupation of their country

Patrick Henry, Daniel's Choice.

A text devoted to tracing the live and work of Righteous Gentile Daniel Trocme, a cousin of Pastor Andre Trocme. Both are featured in the video listed below

F. Laboucher, The Incredible Mission of Father Benoit.

A comprehensive volume about the life of the Capuchin Father Marie-Benoit included in our exhibit.

Mordecai Paldiel, Churches and the Holocaust: Unholy Teaching, Good Samaritans and Reconciliation.

Director of Yad Vashem's Department of the Righteous Among the Nations, Paldiel tells the story of both the European Christian clergy that collaborated with the Nazis in their campaign to eliminate the Jewish population in its midst, and those who risked their lives to save Jews.





SUGGESTED READINGS (CONTINUED)

Mordecai Paldiel, *The Path of the Righteous*: Gentile Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust.

This text gathers the biographies and the many times heroic deeds of non-Jews, diplomats, clergy and run-of-the-mill citizens who saved Jews during the Shoah.

Eric Silver, The Book of the Just.

Less comprehensive than Paldiel's volumes, Silver provides fuller narratives about gentile rescuers of Jews during the Shoah.

Zola Zasloff, A Rescuer's Story: Pastor Piere-Charles Toureille.

The life and work of Vichy France Righteous Gentile Charles Toureille.

VIDEO

"Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Memories and Perspectives."

Bonhoeffer's anti-Nazi credentials remain unquestionable. However, he never retracted his anti-Jewish bias.

"Weapons of the Spirit."

Compelling narrative about the French village of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon where, led by Pastor André Trocmé, its citizens saved 5,000 Jewish children from the Nazis.

OUEENSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE

A College of The City University of New York 222-05 56th Avenue, Bayside, New York 11364-1497

Eduardo J. Marti, Ph.D., President of the College

THE HARRIET AND KENNETH KUPFERBERG HOLOCAUST RESOURCE CENTER AND ARCHIVES

ADVISORY BOARD

Sandra Delson-Deutsch, Ed.D., Chairperson
Roseanne Darche, Vice-Chairperson Ex-Officio
Dorothy Berman
Abe Dyzenhaus, D.D.S.
Jan Fenster
Hanne Liebmann
Steven Pezenik
Ruth Schlossman
Joseph Sciame
Harbachan Singh
Jeffrey Weisenfeld

PAST CHAIRPERSONS

Ellen Zinn

Owen Bernstein, Ph.D. May B. Ladman Anne B. Morse

BOARD EMERITI

Mel Dubin Gerdi E. Lipschutz Alfred Lipson Adam Mandelblatt Rabbi Fabian Schonfeld Jeffrey Silbiger, MD

Arthur Flug,
Ed.D., Executive Director
Jaime Brody,
Assistant Director
Rosemary Sullivan Zins,
Vice President for Institutional Advancement



Telephone: 718-281-5770 + Fax: 718-631-6306 + E-mail: hrc@qcc.cuny.edu/ Website: www.qcc.cuny.edu/hrca

EXHIBIT CURATED BY

Rabbi Isidoro Aizenberg

TEXT WRITTEN BY

Rabbi Isidoro Aizenberg

DOCENTS AND VOLUNTEERS

Ellen Alexander Hanne Liebmann Julius Grill Linda Ramirez Esther Katz Joachim M. Schorr

Jane Keibel

DESIGNER

David Arroyo,

This publication is funded through the generosity of organizations and individuals. If you would like to make a donation so that more educational material may be printed and circulated, please make a donation to the:

QCC Fund, Inc./Kupferberg Center Queensborough Community College 222-05 56th Ave., Bayside, NY 11364-1497

The Harriet and Kenneth Kupferberg Holocaust Resource Center and Archives was established to provide an educational resource for organizations and schools in the community.

It is a nontax-levy project of the Queensborough Community College Fund, Inc. made possible through the generosity of donors.

For information, contact: Dr. Arthur Flug, Executive Director.

