



Campagna: The Camp, the Bishop and the Archives

By Paul O'Shea

December 2009

Editor's Note: Paul O'Shea is a historian of Pope Pius XII and author of "A Cross Too Heavy: Eugenio Pacelli, Politics and the Jews of Europe, 1917-1943." This paper, based on his analysis and work, was sponsored by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL).

It was edited by Deborah Dwork, the Rose Professor of Holocaust History and Director of the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Clark University; and Rabbi Eric J. Greenberg, ADL Director of Interfaith Affairs.

Discussion over the role of Pope Pius XII (1876-1958) in World War II remains divided: some scholars claim that the pope did all he could with respect to the murder of European Jewry; others claim he could and should have done more. Although historians are limited by the lack of access to the war-time archives from his papacy, there is an abundance of related archival material, some published and much not that helps scholars make judgments.

In February 2003 the journal *Inside the Vatican* published an article by Antonio Gaspari with the dramatic heading: "Uncovered: Correspondence of Pius XII". The article told the story of Giovanni Palatucci (1909-1945) and his work in saving Italian and foreign-born Jews from the effects of the 1938 Italian race laws and then, after September 1943, from the threat of deportation by the Germans.¹ Gaspari links the Avellino - (Campagna province) born policeman with his uncle, Giuseppe Maria Palatucci (1892-1961), the Franciscan bishop of Campagna in southern Italy. The younger Palatucci sent male refugees from Fiume in northern Italy to the relative safety of the internment camp in Campagna. It was to Bishop Palatucci that the "correspondence of Pius XII" was directed.² The two letters Gaspari cites were sent from Rome in the name of the Pope with money to be used for the interned Jews in Campagna. The first, sent by Cardinal Maglione, the Secretary of State, on 2 October 1940

(Campagna Files 1.1; hereafter CF)³ informed the bishop that the Pope was sending 3000 Lire *questo denaro e preferibilmente destinato a chi soffre per ragioni di razza* (to be used preferably for those who suffer for reasons of race [a phrase that could only mean Jews]). The second was sent by Monsignor Giovanni Montini (the future Paul VI) on 29 November 1940 with a gift of 10,000 Lire *da distribuirsi in sussidi agli ebrei internati*" (to distribute in support of the interned Jews).⁴

The Papal Letters: October 1940 to July 1942

Pius instructed Cardinal Maglione and Monsignor Montini to send donations amounting to 13,000 lire to help the internees.⁵ The documents reveal that there were a total of four papal gifts amounting to 21,000 lire.⁶ However, it is not possible to claim that these gifts constitute a pattern of rescue. The relevant documents were found in the third set of files.

Table 1: The Papal Letters

| Reference | Date | From / To | Content |
|--------------------|------------|-----------------------|--|
| CF 1.1 and CF 3.25 | 02.10.1940 | Maglione to Palatucci | Pope sends 3,000 lire. |
| CF 3.27 | 12.10.1940 | Palatucci to Maglione | Acknowledgement of receipt of the money. |
| CF 3.32 | 29.11.1940 | Montini to Palatucci | Pope sends 10,000 lire in response to Palatucci's letter of 08.11.1940 asking for help (CF 3.30) |
| CF 3.35-36 | 16.04.1941 | Palatucci to Maglione | Detailed breakdown of expenses; detailed food and medical costs. |
| CF 3.37 | 01.05.1941 | Montini to Palatucci | Pope sends another 5,000 lire. Palatucci acknowledged receipt on 12.05.1941. |
| CF 2.142 | 19.02.1942 | Nuncio to Palatucci | Acknowledges the generosity of the Pope. |
| CF 3.40 | 22.07.1942 | Maglione to Palatucci | Pope sends 3,000 lire. Palatucci acknowledged receipt on 24.07.1942. |
| CF 3.46 | 01.08.1940 | Palatucci to Maglione | Palatucci gave an account of how 5,000 lire |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| | | | of papal money was spent: 2,210 for general provisions; 883 for medical costs; 1,207 on clothes and other costs, including 700 for travel expenses. |
|--|--|--|---|

In another instance Maglione says that the Pope specifically asked the Bolivian ambassador to the Holy See to waive the \$350 required as surety for a visa. Three German Jews interred in Campagna had written to the Pope asking for his help.⁷

The letters tell us that the Pope not only knew of the suffering of Italian and foreign-born Jews, but that on at least two occasions, he acted to help alleviate their conditions. What they do not show is any pattern of action to help rescue Jews. This is important.

Before an examination of the Campagna Files is made the context of their publishing by Pave The Way must be explained.

Pave The Way

On 15 June 2009 Gary Krupp, founder and president of the New York-based Pave The Way Foundation announced the discovery of over 2,300 pages of documents that gave “strong support to the argument that Pope Pius XII – Eugenio Pacelli – worked diligently to save Jews from Nazi tyranny.”⁸ The documents were found in a monastery in Avellino in southern Italy by private researchers engaged by Pave the Way. The organization scanned the documents and published them on their website.⁹

Pave The Way, a non-sectarian organization that seeks to work towards peace “by removing obstacles between the religions and by initiating gestures of good will.”¹⁰ One of its major activities concerns the study of Pius XII. “Mindful of this, we have initiated the independent investigation of the Papacy of Pope Pius XII. This time in history has been a source of friction between the Jews and Catholics.”¹¹ The organization convened a symposium on Pius in Rome in September 2008, posted the results on the organization’s website – www.ptwf.org.

Included in the documents is a blistering attack on this author by one of the conference participants.

Mr Krupp states his intention to present the Campagna documents for public scrutiny in order to help scholars “blast the academic logjam” surrounding Pius XII.¹²

This article will focus on what, if any, evidence there is that points to any intervention on the part of Pope Pius XII to help the Jews interned in the Campagna Camp. Previous mention of papal money sent to the camp will be explored within the whole archival repository and the related historical context.

Pius or Palatucci?

Pope Pius XII does not figure large in the several thousand pages of new material. The man who does emerge is Bishop Palatucci. He authored hundreds of letters, telegrams, notes, memoranda to a veritable cross-section of Italian society written on behalf of the interned men in the barracks of San Bartolomeo and the Immaculate Conception. Overwhelmingly, the men interned in Campagna were Jews – victims of the increased antisemitic legislation that had grown since July 1938.

Among the 2,300 pages there are three letters from Cardinal Maglione and Monsignor Montini in the Vatican’s Secretariat of State concerning papal money sent for the internees and one letter from the Italian Apostolic Nuncio, Francesco Borgongini Duca. The letters document gracious acts that must be acknowledged, but they do not establish a papal relief program for the Campagna Jews. And from Campagna there are only two letters written directly to the Pope – one from an internee and the other from Palatucci – which is insufficient evidence to create a theory of direct papal involvement.¹³ None of this suggests that Pius was indifferent or unsympathetic.

The Campagna files reveal a bishop, his staff and several local parish priests working to help several hundred men interned for being Jews. It would have been unthinkable for Bishop Palatucci to see his work as somehow apart from or different to the work of the Church and Pope Pius XII. At the same time it is Palatucci who acted. And his action is clearly in response to the needs and circumstances of the men who wrote to him.

The documents offer no evidence that Palatucci acted for motives other than the desire to help where he could. Palatucci communicated with other bishops and with the Vatican requesting whatever help they could provide. He also communicated with local and regional authorities, medical professionals, police and security agencies, and with foreign consuls and ambassadors. Most poignantly, Palatucci ensured letters from the interned men were sent, wherever possible, to families and loved ones in Italy and throughout Europe.

Internment Camp Campagna June 1940 – September 1943.

In order to appreciate the provenance of the Campagna files it is necessary to review the circumstances under which the camp was established and the conditions under which the men lived.

The internment camp in Campagna in the Province of Salerno was established under the directions of the Ministry of the Interior published on 5 September 1939 for the purposes of interning people in the interests of national security, including foreign-born Jews who had entered Italy after 1919.¹⁴

On 26 May 1940 the Secretary of the Ministry of the Interior, Guido Buffarini Guidi ordered the chief of police Arturo Bocchini to prepare camps especially for Jews, not excluding Italian-born Jews, in the event of war. Italy declared war two weeks later.

From 1940 to 1943 there were 41 internment camps throughout Italy. The office of the Inspector General of Public Security divided the country into five zones and camps were opened in each. The Campagna internment camp was located in the fourth zone 13 miles / 21 kms north of Salerno.¹⁵ Prompted by a suggestion made on 8 September 1939 by Prefect Bianchi of Salerno, the Ministry of the Interior authorized an internment camp to be opened in Campagna: it operated under the direction of Mario Maiello between 16 June 1940 and 8 September 1943.¹⁶

Campagna is in a remote, rugged and largely area. Carlo Levi's 1945 memoir *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli* ("Christ stopped at Eboli") recorded his year of internal exile between 1935-1936 in a town not far from Campagna: it gives a graphic and moving description of isolation

and powerlessness. The same sense of isolation is glimpsed in the letters of the men in Campagna pleading for help from local, regional and national authorities.

Italian internment camps were vastly different from similar-purpose camps in German occupied Europe. While unpleasant places the Italian camps were suitable for human beings and were never places of torture and death.

The Campagna camp served as a place of internment for between 150 to 300 men crowded into the barracks.¹⁷ Italian born Jews and Jewish Italians whose citizenship had been revoked formed the single largest group of internees, but there were a number of “Aryans” many of whom were regarded as *apolide* – “stateless”. Among these Jews were men from Britain, Vichy France, Germany, Austria, Poland, Dalmatia, Fiume, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and those designated “stateless”. The places of origin for the non-Italian Jews reflected their belief, sometimes expressed in their letters, that Jews would receive humane treatment in Italy. Some had arrived in Italy as refugees fleeing Nazi persecution, others were married to Italians, and others have no reason given to their presence in the country. Throughout the Campagna Files there are dozens of letters expressing an almost unshakeable belief in the internees conviction of the fundamental goodness of the Italians.

Many letters to the Campagna internees were written by wives and family members who were themselves interned. They demonstrated the capricious nature of the internment process. Points of origin outside of Campagna included Turin¹⁸, Montegiorgio¹⁹ and Padua²⁰.

In CF 6 there are several pages of lists compiled for the *Raphaelsverein* Office in Rome.²¹ These few pages give a snapshot of the men interned in Campagna, the places of origin and the families that many had left behind.

Table 2 Campagna Internees (based on CF 6.25-31)

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|------------|----------|--------|----------|----|--|
| Total | 106 | | | | | |
| Jews | 93 | Converts | 17 | Non-Jews | 13 | |
| | | | | | | |
| Places of Origin | Germany | 66 | Vienna | 28 | | |
| | Poland | 18 | | | | |

and the windows do not let in sufficient light during the day. All this is having a negative impact on the health of many of the internees.

[We ask for] greater liberty during winter days to avoid the cold and remain free from the flu; returning to the timetable of 1940. The self-discipline of the well-mannered “good bourgeoisie” internees guarantees there will be no abuses.²²

Camp life revolved around a daily routine of combatting boredom. The men were not permitted to work even though a considerable number of interned medical professionals freely offered their services to local clinics and hospitals.²³ In December 1941 nine men wrote to the bishop politely asking to be given something to do.²⁴ What occupied much of their time was the unending anxiety about the fate of loved ones. The greatest anguish came from those who grew increasingly worried about their families in German-occupied Europe.

Internees were permitted to write and send money to their families as well as receive mail and parcels.²⁵ They were also given considerable freedom to move outside the barracks and around the town. Jews were allowed to practice their faith without hindrance and on at least one occasion two rabbis conducted a funeral and burial in the town. A small synagogue was established in San Bartolomeo.²⁶ These vital links to the outside world gave many of the internees a source of news and the hope of contact with their families.

Delasem, the Italian Jewish refugee agency, worked to help provide food, clothes and money to supplement the official government allowance of Lire 6.50 per day.²⁷ A library was opened, a camp bulletin published, football teams encouraged and one internee, a noted pianist, was engaged by the parish as an organist for Sunday Mass.²⁸ The most significant source of help for the internees came from Palatucci. Letters to him ask for financial help and even for a new pair of shoes.²⁹ Former internees wrote to Palatucci after the war expressing their thanks for his assistance.³⁰ It is doubtful Palatucci replied to all letters sent to him; but there are a few replies, mostly telegrams, indicating he maintained contact with the internees.³¹

On 8 September 1943 Italy surrendered to the Allies. The Anglo-American forces were rapidly approaching Campagna and on 9 September launched Operation Avilanche at Salerno. German troops occupied Campagna, a cause for grave concern for Palatucci who had written to the Italian nuncio, Francesco Borgongini Duca in late August expressing his fear that the Germans intended to use San Bartolomeo as a base for their troops.³² Upon Italy's surrender, the camp dissolved and the remaining Jewish internees were taken by local villagers and farmers into the surrounding hill country and hidden. For the next week the town suffered bombardment by Allied naval shelling and aerial attacks which killed about 300 civilians and at least one former Jewish internee. Liberation for the Jews of Campagna came with the arrival of the Americans on 19 September. The former internment barracks of San Bartolomeo was then used as a refugee camp under Allied supervision.³³

The Documents from the Campagna Diocesan Archives.

The Scanned Documents

The documents were scanned in 14 separate bundles with no indication of any cataloguing process applied. With very few exceptions the documents are written in Italian. Some are numbered according to an internal registration system that was used by the diocese but many are not. Most are classified according to the name of the person they concern and may include several different types of communication. The cases of George Löwy (CF 4.12-17), the interned Danish Consul from Palermo, Hans Meyerhof (CF 4.57-149), and Giovanni Weinstock (CF 2.5-19), demonstrate this quite clearly.³⁴ For reasons of space I have selected Weinstock's case.

Table 3: Campagna Files 2 Giovanni Weinstock.

| P | Date | File | From | To | Subject | Details |
|---|----------|------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| 5 | 26.09.41 | 2328 | Giovanni Weinstock | Bishop Palatucci | Requests the Bishop's help. | Originally from Trieste. Interned in Campagna since April 1940. (See p11) Asks to be transferred out of the camp. |

| | | | | | | |
|----|----------|--------------|---|--|--|--|
| 6 | 13.10.41 | 2270 prot | Curia Campagna | Francesco Borgongini Duca, Nuncio to Italy | Giovanni Weinstock. Asks for the nuncio's help. | |
| 7 | 17.10.41 | | Nuncio in Rome | Palatucci | Giovanni Weinstock | Received 19.10.1941. Ref n 2371 (?) Nuncio's office has passed on the request to the Director General of Police as requested. The request will most likely be denied. |
| 8 | 13.03.42 | | Giovanni Weinstock | Palatucci | Thanks the Bishop and asks for help. | |
| 9 | 17.05.42 | | Curia Campagna | Giovanni Weinstock | Patience | Weinstock encouraged to be patient. |
| 10 | 18.12.42 | | Giovanni Weinstock | Palatucci | Christmas Greetings | |
| 11 | 21.04.43 | 3596 | Giovanni Weinstock | Palatucci | Easter Greetings and thanks for his help in Weinstock's return to Trieste. | |
| 12 | 20.02.42 | 2677 | Giovanni Weinstock | Palatucci | Asks the Bishop's help to leave Campagna. | Now 20 months in Campagna. Questions for Rome completed. Longs to be reunited with his wife. |
| 13 | 20.02.42 | | Medical Report from Salerno Hospital on Weinstock | | Medical report | General health report and confirmation of previous ailments as a result of military service. |
| 17 | N/D | | Albina | Minister of | Requests her | At the end of the letter |

| | | | | | | |
|----|----------|------|---|--------------|--|--|
| | | | Pospisil, wife of Giovanni Weinstock | the Interior | husband be allowed to return to her in Padua Province on account of his health, damaged during his war service. | Pospisil notes that copies of the letter have been sent to the Ministry of the Interior – 05.02.1942; the Vatican in November 1941; on the advice of the Bishop of Trieste a letter sent to Cardinal Maglione, Secretary of State and a letter to Bishop Palatucci. |
| 19 | 10.08.44 | 4204 | Giovanni Weinstock in Rome | Palatucci | Thanks for all the Church has done. | |

The majority of the documents are not in chronological order and some have been copied in more than one bundle. Most are ordered according to subject. While a significant number of documents are type-written there are a several hundred pages of hand-written texts – many of which are difficult to read. Another hundred or so pages were typed on both sides of the paper making reading problematic. Particular issues relevant to the documents are discussed in the second part of this essay.

Campagna Files – Content descriptions

CF 1 (54 pages) – 1940-1942 Letters from the Vatican Secretariat of State to Bishop Palatucci

CF 2 (221 pages) – 1940-1943 Letters from Palatucci, Nuncio Borgongini Duca, Consular Officials, Government Officials and Internees to various addressees.

CF 3 (106 pages) – 1940-1941 Letters from Cardinal Maglione, Secretary of State to Palatucci.

CF 4 (168 pages) – 1940-1943 Collections of Letters from and about Internees, bundled by according to the internee's name, to Palatucci, with some letters from the Vatican Secretariat of State and the *Raphaelsverein*, the German Catholic Refugee Agency.

CF 5 (6 pages) – 1941-1943 Six pages of material from the Red Cross and others.

CF 6 (344 pages) – 1940-1942; 1946; 1953-1956 Letters from Palatucci and Internees including a letter from Palatucci's nephew, Giovanni (CF6.326)

CF 7 (21 pages) – Giovanni Palatucci – articles from 1999.

CF 8 (22 pages) – 1940-1942 Various letters from Internees, Palatucci.

CF 9 (238 pages) – 1940-1942 Letters from Internees addressed to the Ministry of the Interior

CF 10 (261 pages) – 1940-1942 Letters from Internees addressed to Palatucci

CF 11 (408 pages) – 1941-1945 Letters from Internees addressed to Palatucci

CF 12 (19 pages) – 1940-1943 Various letters

CF 13 (236 pages) – 1940-1943 Letters from Internees addressed to Palatucci

CF 14 (23 pages) – January 1941- December 1943 Account ledgers

Campagna Files – What can be learned?

- 1. The documents from internees can be classified along the following general themes:**

- a) Requests for help to be transferred out of Campagna.**

Most letter writers ask for consideration for transfers in order to be reunited with family members in other internment camps in Italy³⁵, in particular, Potenza³⁶. The second largest

category is requests for transfer on the grounds of poor health.³⁷ Like most of southern Italy, Campagna suffered from malaria.

In one instance two brothers, Erich and Martin Bendheim, wrote to Palatucci in May 1941 requesting a transfer to Viterbo for health reasons. After nearly twelve months of petitioning permission was granted. Less than a year later the brothers requested a transfer back to Campagna; the climate was judged to be better than Viterbo. Again, permission was granted and they returned to Campagna in early 1943. They left the town for the last time in June 1944 and eventually moved to Switzerland where they sent the bishop a final letter of thanks in May 1945. The Italian internment camp system was riddled with inconsistencies.³⁸ The relationship of the bishop to the process of securing transfers from the camp is not clear in the correspondence, but it is indicative of a level of “influence” Palatucci appears to have enjoyed with local fascist authorities.

b) Requests for medical treatment.

There was a considerable amount of correspondence dealing with internee health that went from the bishop’s office to medical professionals in Naples and specialists in different parts of the country. Medical complaints were many and varied. I suspect health was used as a means of attempted transfer to be with family.³⁹ Not surprisingly there are a number of quite detailed medical reports scattered throughout the documents.⁴⁰

c) Requests for help obtaining visas or passports for an internee and their families.

Between the opening of the camp in July 1940 and the end of 1941 when nearly all hope of emigration from Italy was gone, there were a number of attempts to secure passports and visa for individuals, spouses and family members for a variety of countries. The majority of these requests focused on Brazil, Bolivia and Ecuador.⁴¹ Some of the more desperate letters simply asked for help to get to anywhere in South America.⁴² However there were a significant number of requests for travel to the United States.⁴³

The volume of letters received and sent from Palatucci's office went to consular offices in Naples, Genoa and Rome and the relevant Italian offices. In many cases the official answer was "no", but there were several instances where visas were obtained. The greatest poignancy was found in the letters from internee Isaac Heger trying to find members of his family whom he believed were in Vichy France – he had the permission letters notifying him of the approval of visas, but he could not locate his family. Various agencies united in trying to find Heger's family.⁴⁴

The criss-crossing of Church and Italian government agencies occurred on a regular basis. The case of Arthur Krausz is demonstrative of this. Krausz was a Viennese born Jew who had been in Italy since 1939 before being interned in Campagna. In early December 1941 his wife, Gertrude sent a letter from Vienna to the Italian Foreign Ministry requesting an entry visa into Italy so she could be reunited with her husband.⁴⁵ She sent a copy of the letter to the Vatican, presumably enlisting all the help she could, and a note was then forwarded to Palatucci who passed it to Krausz.⁴⁶ Writing first to the Foreign Ministry in Rome, Krausz supported his wife's application with reference to two uncles, Bernard and David Möller in Trieste who would vouch for and support her.⁴⁷ Krausz then appealed to Bishop Palatucci to help him try and get a visa for his wife, citing his fear of "imminent deportation to Poland".⁴⁸ The use of the word "deportation" is significant because it points to a growing awareness among the internees, and, by extension, Italian authorities, of the danger confronting Jews in German-occupied Europe. On 11 December Palatucci wrote to Montini in Rome and asked for his help. On 9 February 1942 Montini replied to Palatucci and said that despite the efforts of the Secretariat of State the Foreign Ministry refused to grant Gertrude Krausz a visa on the grounds that she was a German Jew.⁴⁹ Gertrude Krausz survived the war.

d) Requests for help in locating relatives either in Italy or other parts of Europe

This was the saddest part of the document collection. Many names mentioned in the letters were checked through the Yad Vashem data base which holds the records of nearly three million victims of the Holocaust. More than a few were located.⁵⁰

Some of the letters asking Palatucci to help find family members were unknowingly written after the intended recipients had been murdered.⁵¹ Yad Vashem records a number of former internees submitting the Testimony page after the war. Alfred Weisz wrote to Palatucci on 26 September 1942 asking the bishop to help him find information about his children Brunhilde (b 1927) and Riccardo (b 1928) whom he believed were still in Vienna.⁵² He was not to learn of the fate of his children until after the war. Weisz's daughter and son were deported to Minsk where they died on or around 14 September; twelve days before their father wrote to the bishop. Alfred Weisz submitted Pages of Testimony for his children to Yad Vashem on 16 September 1956.

As far as I can ascertain, Bishop Palatucci sent every letter to Rome and the Vatican Information Service. And wherever possible, Rome replied with news – positive or negative.⁵³

Awareness of the deportations reached Campagna sometime in the later part of 1941. Several internees had written to Palatucci asking to news of their families and citing "rumours of deportation". The Bishop wrote to Rome asking for clarification on 9 November 1941.⁵⁴ A year later on 26 October 1942, Palatucci telegraphed Rome and asked about more rumours; this time of deportations in Bohemia.⁵⁵ The next document in the series is a two page sheet of names with the heading "Theresienstadt (Protektorato) Boemia". The list contains the names of deported relatives of internees Rodolfo Elsner, Kurt Lehmann, Marcus Benno and Max Pitzela.⁵⁶ Using the Yad Vashem data base I found that six of the relatives died in Theresienstadt or were murdered in Treblinka. The fate of the other five is unclear, though it is likely that they perished since most were elderly.

CF 6 also holds a number of letters and telegrams originating in Fiume where Bishop Palatucci's nephew, Giovanni was a policeman. The younger Palatucci was actively involved in rescuing Jews and helped many get into southern Italy and to Campagna.⁵⁷ Giovanni Palatucci wrote to his uncle 16 May 1942 asking for help for Eugenio Werndorfer. Werndorfer suffered from acute bronchitis and the younger Palatucci believed the warmer southern climate might help him.⁵⁸ Without more documentation there is no way of knowing

the reality of Werndorfer's health, but there is sufficient circumstantial evidence to suggest that health was a convenient excuse to keep moving Jews south.

e) Letters of thanks either in the hope of help or for help received both during and after the war.

There are several dozen letters of gratitude written by internees to Palatucci for his help during the war and after 1943 when they were liberated.⁵⁹ Some are effusive in their praise of the bishop and the local clergy for everything they had done and tried to do to help the Jews. There is a significant collection of letters written by former internees from places such as the United States and Switzerland.⁶⁰

Among the letters is a note of gratitude from the Polish Red Cross in Rome thanking Palatucci for his care of Polish citizens interned in Campagna.⁶¹

2. The documents from the Bishop or curia of Campagna can be classified along the following general themes:

a) Forwarded letters from internees to the Catholic agencies.

There are dozens of telegrams and letters to the Papal Nuncio to Italy, Francesco Borgongini Duca; to the Vatican Secretariat of State, in particular Cardinal Luigi Maglione, Monsignor Giovanni Battista Montini; to other Italian bishops; eg Cardinal Boetta, Archbishop of Genoa and other diocesan bishops.⁶² Some of the issues concerned questions about baptisms⁶³, conversions to Catholicism⁶⁴ and dispensations for marriage⁶⁵, as well as compensation claims outside Italy⁶⁶ and assurances that money had been sent on to an internee's family⁶⁷. There are also a number of letters written to the *Raphaelsverein* office in Rome.⁶⁸

There is one letter addressed directly to the Pope. Robert Schnitzler wrote to Pius on 27 November 1941 asking for help for his 74 year old mother Julie, resident in Vienna.⁶⁹ There is no record of a response from Rome, but the evidence gathered from other parts of the Campagna Files as well as the Vatican Information Service, indicates that a standard response would have been sent.⁷⁰

Most letters were written to Bishop Palatucci. There is nothing suspicious about this. Palatucci was the local bishop and the one who had some influence with local authority. However, many of the letters from the Secretary of State were written in response to letters addressed to the Pope and do not appear in these files. The Secretariat addressed questions that went beyond the “influence” of a southern Italian bishop and needed the gravitas of the Vatican especially when dealing with higher government authorities. While there is no direct reference to papal intervention, it is not unreasonable to suggest that Pius was aware of the requests made to him. Certainly the requests made by Cardinal Maglione infer papal wishes that attempts be made for the writers.

b) Forwarded letters from internees to Italian government and police agencies; foreign government agencies.

Most of these were hand-written letters addressed to the Ministry of the Interior. They were typed into formal submissions to the Ministry and sent from Palatucci’s office to Rome. The contents of the letters focus primarily on requests for transfer to be with family members or help in getting family members out of German occupied Europe, especially Austria, France and Poland.⁷¹ There are also requests for reclassification of status, assertion of Aryan identity⁷², requests to marry a non-Aryan⁷³ and loyalty to the Fascist-Italian cause.⁷⁴ Letters to foreign government agencies were usually letters to consulates asking for information on visa applications. There is a small number of letters addressed to the Salerno Police on a variety of matters.⁷⁵

3. Documents sent in response to letters from Campagna can be classified along the following general themes:

a) **Replies from Catholic agencies, including the Secretariat of State, pro-forma responses, formal letters addressed to internees and letters addressed directly to Bishop Palatucci.**

The bulk of these documents were acknowledgements of letters received and assurance that everything possible was being done to help.⁷⁶ There were a considerable number of responses to requests to assist in reuniting Campagnan internees with family members in other parts of Italy.⁷⁷ In one communication Rome asked the bishop for patience and not to expect answers for every case.⁷⁸ and in another letter asked the bishop to let internee Carlo Pollak know that the Holy See did not forward private letters.⁷⁹

The volume of requests was overwhelming. Many documents were, not unexpectedly, related to attempts to secure visas to South America⁸⁰ or in some cases, to the United States.⁸¹ In a letter in September 1940, Cardinal Maglione regretted that the Holy See was unable to do more because South American governments kept adding new restrictions for converted Jews seeking visas.⁸² A month later Maglione wrote to Palatucci advising that it was not possible to obtain an Ecuadoran visa for the “non-Aryan Catholic” Giorgio Pionkowski and his mother. The reason given was the Ecuadoran restriction placed on granting of visas to converted Jews.⁸³

In early 1939 the Brazilian government had pledged 3,000 visas to be used at papal discretion but began changing the conditions shortly afterwards. One of the requirements was non-Aryan Catholics had to have been baptized before 1937.⁸⁴ In the case of Isidoro Lande, Cardinal Maglione asked Palatucci to do whatever he could for this “sad case”. Lande, a converted Jew, was baptized after 1937 and was rendered ineligible for a visa.⁸⁵

There are letters from the German Catholic relief organization, the *Raphaelsverein* which worked to help “non-Aryan” Catholics emigrate⁸⁶ as well as the occasional request from other Italian bishops asking for assistance in helping internees emigrate.⁸⁷

There is evidence to suggest that every enquiry sent to Rome received some form of response. One poignant example is recorded in CF 1.25. Monsignor Montini wrote to Palatucci on 9 February 1942 in response to a request for help in obtaining an Italian entry visa for Gertrude Krausz Müller, a German Jew and relative on an internee. The request had been denied.

b) Replies from Italian government and police agencies, foreign government agencies addressed to internees or Bishop Palatucci.

Most of these documents were related to those mentioned above. The pattern appears to have been to seek help from both Church and government agencies. Government and police responses were written in formal bureaucratic language, always respectful towards Palatucci, but in general non-committal about the internees, which is not a cause for surprise.⁸⁸ Consulates wrote in a similar vein often expressing their regret that requests for visas could not be granted but occasionally advising that a visa had been granted.⁸⁹

Conclusion

While there is now some evidence to show Pius was aware of, and supportive of the work being done by Palatucci and others, it is still too early to claim this was a long-term strategy. Context is important. In 1940-1941 the treatment of Jews in Italy was not yet murderous, although it was becoming lethal outside Italy. This remained the case until September 1943 by which time the Jews interned in Campagna were no longer in mortal danger. The Germans who occupied the town for the few after 8 September were soldiers preparing to engage the Allies. There is no evidence of any German plans to arrest and deport Jews in the region, and even if there were, there was no time to implement an *action*.

There is no discrimination detected in the treatment of converted-Jews and Jews. The bias in favor of baptized Jews comes from the requirements of South American countries, in particular Brazil and Ecuador. Vatican interventions on behalf of Campagna internees in this regard are consistent with the historical record as demonstrated in ADSS.

Can Pius XII be credited with the survival of every interned Jew in Campagna? The answer is, of course, “no”. Can he be credited with providing assistance, however limited? The answer is “yes”. There is evidence he was aware of Bishop Palatucci’s work with the internees, but then there is evidence he was aware of similar work occurring in other parts of Italy and across Europe; *Actes et Documents* is one example that demonstrates papal awareness of efforts to help Jews. The Pope did send money, but it was only one part of the evidence of assistance revealed in the documents. Assistance for the Jews came primarily from the local bishop who needed no reminder from Rome to “do good and avoid evil”. Palatucci acted in accord with his conscience and did all he could with the limited means at his disposal including the money sent by the Pope. Again, context is important. Palatucci’s work was different to the rescue work undertaken by his nephew in Fiume after September 1943 when assistance to Jews in Italy became lethal. Bishop Palatucci was never in serious danger for helping the Jews of San Bartolomeo or the Immaculate Conception and while he may have annoyed some local or regional fascists, there is no evidence that he was ever likely to encounter anything more drastic than a verbal complaint. Certainly there is nothing in the documents that suggests the bishop ever had a problem attempting to help the Jews. His problems came from outside Campagna in the form of government and consular bureaucracies and problems created by the war.

My conclusion based on reading the documentation, is that the overwhelming majority of documents reflect an active diocesan bishop and curia attempting to help the internees as best they could with limited funds and limited “influence”. In effect, Palatucci showed considerable pastoral concern for the internees. The gratitude shown by many of the internees indicates a sense that the Jews in Campagna felt the bishop was sympathetic and genuine in his attempts to help and understood the difficulties of war time. I have not found any indication that the internees felt their cases were “hopeless”.

The Jews of Campagna were not saved – they had not need of it because they were in no danger of deportation – but helped through the work of a saintly bishop and his equally saintly priests who did what they believed was the right thing, and they were saved through the good fortune of being interned in that part of Italy that was so close to the Allied lines at the time of

the Italian surrender in September 1943. Any claim that these documents suggest a clear and unambiguous pattern of assistance to the Jews in Campagna from the Pope is simply not supported in these files.

© 2010 Anti-Defamation League. All rights reserved.

¹ Yad Vashem named Palatucci one of the *Righteous among the Nations* in 1990 and the process for his beatification as a saint in the Catholic Church was opened in October 2002.

² Antonio Gaspari, *Inside the Vatican*, February 2003, pp 14-16.

³ The numbering system used throughout for the files refers to the page number of the scanned documents within the PDF files that I downloaded. Therefore Campagna File 1.1 is to be understood as PDF file number one, page one.

⁴ Campagna Files 3.32. Hereafter CF.

⁵ Approximately \$US 9,800 in 2009.

⁶ Approximately \$US 13,000.

⁷ CF 3.1, 3.105.

⁸ www.zenit.org/article-26179, *New Evidence Says Pius XII Helped Jews*, 15.06.2009. (Accessed 14.10.2009)

⁹ See <http://www.ptwf.org/index.htm>. The documents are held in a Member Section and require a password.

There is a general section devoted to articles and videos on Pius XII:

<http://www.ptwf.org/Projects/Education/Pope%20Pius%20XII%20Videos.htm>

¹⁰ Homepage of Pave The Way, www.ptwf.org

¹¹ <http://www.ptwf.org/Projects/Education/Pope%20Pius%20XII%20Videos.htm> (Accessed 03.11.2009)

¹² http://www.nydailynews.com/opinions/2009/05/03/2009-05-03_stop_persecuting_pius_wwii_pontiff_is_branded_hitlers_pope_but_he_did_much_to_s.html (Accessed 17.10.2009)

¹³ CF 1.35, 27.11.1941 Robert Schnitzler to Pius XII asking for help in contacting his mother in Vienna [unknown to her son she died in Theresienstadt in January 1943]; CF 3.30, 08.11.1940 Palatucci to Pius XII asking for help for the Jews.

¹⁴ In 1936 the population of Campagna was 10,800.

¹⁵ Approximately 46.5 miles / 75 kms east of Naples.

¹⁶ CF 4.94; 6.243; 12.15. The camp was situated on two sites; the former Dominican Priory of San Bartolomeo on the north-west side of the town and the former Conventual Franciscan Friary of the Immaculate Conception in the north-east quarter of Caselnouvo. Both buildings had been confiscated by the Italian government during the seizure of Church lands after 1871 and had been used by the local military district as barracks. The Church of San Bartolomeo next to the former Priory remained a parish church and was used as such between 1940 and 1943.

¹⁷ CF 10.239. The files do not give a specific number of men interned outside of a general figure of 300 in October 1940. Susan Zuccotti cites 272 internees in September 1940. See Zuccotti in Joshua Zimmerman (2005) *Jews in Italy under Fascist and Nazi Rule*, UP, Cambridge, pp294-95. Another source claims the number of internees varied from 230 in February 1941 to 150 in September 1943.

http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Campo_di_internamento_di_Campagna (Accessed 06.10.2009)

¹⁸ CF 2.35; 4.42-52, 81-85.

¹⁹ CF 2.28

²⁰ CF 2.17; 3.5; 4.152.

²¹ The *Raphaelsverein* was a refugee agency sponsored by the Catholic Church in Germany. It provided assistance to "non-Aryan" Catholics trying to leave Germany and, after March 1938, Austria.

²² CF 9.235.

²³ CF 10.239, 240.

²⁴ CF 12.26.

²⁵ See CF 1.16-17; 2.1.

²⁶ http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Campo_di_internamento_di_Campagna (Accessed 06.10.2009)

-
- ²⁷ CF 3.35-36. 6.5 Italian Lire in 1941 was worth approximately US\$0.33 (2009 value – less than \$5.00)
- ²⁸ http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Campo_di_internamento_di_Campagna (Accessed 06.10.2009)
- ²⁹ CF 10.231, 233.
- ³⁰ For example see CF 11.61-111 passim.
- ³¹ For example see CF 11.110, 327, 330.
- ³² CF 2.196.
- ³³ The 1 November 1943 edition of *Life* magazine printed a photo essay entitled “Allies free Refugees from Internment” and showed some of the former internees in San Bartolomeo, their living quarters and the little synagogue. *Life* pp 43-46. A museum and study centre named in honour of Giovanni Palatucci was opened in the former barracks of San Bartolomeo in February 2008.
- ³⁴ CF 4.12-17(Löwy), 57-149 (Meyerhof); 2.5-19 (Weinstock).
- ³⁵ CF 1.10, 26; 2.5-19, 22, 28-30
- ³⁶ CF 3.94-96; 10.43, 217, 260, 261.
- ³⁷ CF 2.17, 70.
- ³⁸ CF 12.61-110.
- ³⁹ See CF 2.70; 6.36, 134, 148; 10.228.
- ⁴⁰ CF 2.13; 6.38; 9.18-19; 10.245; 11.5.
- ⁴¹ CF 1.6-9, 27, 30; 2.119; 10.45.
- ⁴² CF 1.14.
- ⁴³ For example CF 10.77, 121. See too Table 2.
- ⁴⁴ CF 2.48-49.
- ⁴⁵ CF 6.39, 40-41.
- ⁴⁶ CF 6.41.
- ⁴⁷ CF 6.43.
- ⁴⁸ CF 6.44.
- ⁴⁹ CF 6.45.
- ⁵⁰ For example CF 10.247, 259.
- ⁵¹ See CF 1.22, 32, 35; 10.44.
- ⁵² CF 10.40.
- ⁵³ For example CF 10.203. See too *Inter Arma Caritas* (2004) Volume 2 *Perseguitati per Motivi Politici, Religiosi e Razziali*, pp 643-716.
- ⁵⁴ CF 6.264.
- ⁵⁵ CF 6.265.
- ⁵⁶ CF 6.266-268.
- ⁵⁷ CF 6.316-325.
- ⁵⁸ CF 6.326.
- ⁵⁹ CF 2.8; 4.22-23, 125-126., 154.
- ⁶⁰ CF 2.162; 4.126, 12.329.
- ⁶¹ CF 4.145.
- ⁶² CF 2.115.
- ⁶³ CF 1.19, 23; 6.132.
- ⁶⁴ CF 6.155.
- ⁶⁵ CF 1.19, 23; 6.132.
- ⁶⁶ CF 1.43-44.
- ⁶⁷ CF 6.191.
- ⁶⁸ CF 4.77-78; 6.25; 12.21-22.
- ⁶⁹ CF 1.35; copy also in CF 8.2.
- ⁷⁰ Julie Schnitzler was deported to Theresienstadt on 29 July 1942 and died there on 14 January 1943.
- ⁷¹ See CF 2.48-49; 10.1.
- ⁷² CF 2.70.
- ⁷³ CF 2.166.
- ⁷⁴ CF 10.213.

⁷⁵ CF 4.88, 93.

⁷⁶ CF 2.41, 148. 152.

⁷⁷ CF 3.42, 82-85, 94; 10.151.

⁷⁸ See CF 2.58.

⁷⁹ CF 1.43-44.

⁸⁰ See CF 3.1, 78, 85-92, 93, 98, 100, 102; 4.29; 10.165, 194.

⁸¹ CF 3.5, 106.

⁸² CF 10.142. The documents do not show a bias towards converted Jews. The bishop and, by extension, the Vatican, was forced to work within the constraints placed by foreign governments.

⁸³ CF 1.27.

⁸⁴ See CF 1.14, 28.

⁸⁵ CF 3.100.

⁸⁶ CF 2.67; 4.24-31.

⁸⁷ See CF 2.59.

⁸⁸ See CF 2.55.

⁸⁹ CF 2.21 (visa not granted); 2.42-42, 50, 160 (visas granted).