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RESEARCHER: WE'RE WINNING IN EFFORT TO CLEAR PIUS XII'S NAME

'Every Time We Do More Research, We Find a Diamond'

By Edward Pentin

ROME, JUNE 21, 2012 (Zenit.org).- After six years of untiring research that has uncovered 76,000 pages of original material, plus multiple eyewitness accounts and testimonies from prominent international scholars, Gary Krupp is confident the besmirching of Pope Pius XII's reputation is coming to an end.

"We're definitely winning, absolutely no question," Krupp tells me on a visit to Rome this week. "Every time we do more research, we find a diamond. It's incredible, but there's nothing on the other side because there's no documented foundation for any of their accusations."

Krupp, the founder of the Pave The Way Foundation, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to bridging the gap between world religions, is well known for being one of the most passionate defenders of Pius XII's reputation for heroism in his relations with the Jewish people.

As a Jew from New York who grew up, like many others of his generation, with an indoctrinated hatred of the wartime Pope for his alleged anti-Semitism and unwillingness to help Jews during the Holocaust, his anger at realizing this was all a lie, and his willingness to reveal the truth, is both heartfelt and compelling.

Now he and his team of researchers have uncovered more documented evidence that Pave the Way believes should act as incontrovertible proof to any serious historian that Pius XII did all he could to protect and defend Jews before, during and after the Second World War. All the documentation can be viewed on the organization's Web site: www.ptwf.org

Some of these documents show that Pius XII favored the creation of a Jewish state as far back as 1917. In further recent discoveries, Pave the Way has come across a letter written by Cardinal Pacelli in 1939 in which he attempted to obtain visas for 200,000 Jews who remained in Germany after Kristallnacht.

"He wasn't able to obtain the visas, but he tried," says Krupp. "The point is, he didn't do it from the safety of Washington DC or London. He did it while surrounded by hostile forces, and infiltrated by spies, and yet he still managed to save more Jews than all the other world leaders combined."

Further letters reveal how, through his nephew Carlo Pacelli, Pius XII helped prevent the arrest of Roman Jews in 1943, giving an estimated 12,000 of them the chance to seek refuge in Church monasteries, convents, and the homes of Italian Catholics. "All these archival records show how he personally helped save Jewish people," says Krupp, adding emphatically in his broad New York accent: "Anti-Semites don't do that!"

Other ground-breaking discoveries show how the Pope was not just a target for assassination by

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Hitler (Pave the Way has a copy of a letter Pius wrote to cardinals expecting to be killed and giving them instructions to form a government in exile), but that he and his secretary were also named in a German report as co-conspirators in the Valkyre assassination attempt on the Fuhrer in July 1944.

Pave the Way has combed through copies of the New York Times and Palestine Post from 1939 to 1958 to find any evidence of animosity toward the Jews. "There's not one negative article. Not one," Krupp says, adding that a French friend of theirs also went through French Communist and Socialist papers from that time, and similarly came up with nothing negative.

Krupp points out a "fantastic letter" from the American ambassador to Germany, reporting on 3rd March 1939 on the new Pope's election on 2nd March. The ambassador recalls in the letter meeting Cardinal Pacelli in 1937, and wanting to visit the Sistine Chapel, but he wasn't able to as the Cardinal had kept him in his office for three solid hours, talking about National Socialism and Hitler. "In the letter it says: "While his views against Hitler were well known to me, I had no idea of the extremity of his views," Krupp recounts.

Like many, Krupp is convinced the smearing of Pius's reputation was due to an elaborate misinformation campaign by the Soviets and, in particular, the film "The Deputy," which was widely performed after the Pontiff's death. The play, which spread what's become known as the "Black Legend" of Pius XII, is still being performed today, currently in Munich and even in an American university – something that greatly irritates Krupp given the dean of the university is allowing it on grounds of "academic freedom."

What makes him so unflinching in his desire to uncover the truth is his firm belief that history must be accurate. "People die with history," Krupp says, "so it's absolutely essential people realize that history is a sacred thing – you must get it right because people kill one another on perceived history." He says anti-Pius historians are "historical revisionists," and makes no apology for calling them "liars" instead of scholars.

He is particularly indignant with Rome's Jewish community and those who persistently propagate the Black Legend in the face of the contrary evidence. "All of Rome's Jewish community despises Pius XII, when a few short few years ago they erected a monument in his honor because he saved all of their lives," says Krupp (the monument, erected in 1946, is no longer there). "You have air in your lungs today because he saved your lives," he says in pointed words directed at them, "and yet you despise him? This is a sin. This is a Jewish sin." Krupp frequently stresses that one of the worst character flaws a Jew can have is ingratitude, and notes that the Hebrew word for Jew is actually based on the word gratitude.

He believes if any of the community were willing to look at the documents, they would change their minds. "Anyone who refuses to look at documents and the proof is a fool," he says. "This is especially obnoxious to me, as this community is alive because of his actions, very provably alive – everyone from the era said so," Krupp argues.

He also says he has come to discover the enemies of Pope Pius XII tend to be "ultra-left wing Jews and Catholics" with an agenda to destroy the Pope's reputation because he "typified the conservative, traditional Church."

But what about the regular accusations one hears made against Pius? Krupp bats away each of them away with ease.

On why Pius didn't lay down his life as a martyr: "Why didn't General Patten do the same thing? Why didn't Roosevelt do the same thing? Don't forget the Vatican is two entities, head of the Catholic Church and also a government. It would be the worst thing one can do, especially when he could do the good that he did alive. Being dead would be no good at all."

On the claim no Nazis were excommunicated: "They were -- I love this one. The German bishops said anyone who joined the 'Hitler Party,' who wore the uniform or flew the flag were excommunicated and a priest couldn't attend their funeral if any of them died."

On the accusation that Pius XII helped Nazi war criminals flee to South America after the war: "No, it was exactly the opposite according to Bishop Hudal himself [Hudal was a Nazi collaborator in Rome]; just read his [Hudal's] autobiography."

On the claim that Pius authorized forced baptisms of Jewish infants: "Nonsense. In fact he

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forbade it. There were some ... You had some overzealous nuns and others who did this, but he forbade it. He forbade it because he had a great love and respect for Judaism, starting from his childhood. His closest friend was a Jewish orthodox boy, Guido Mendes."

Krupp recognizes "Nostra Aetate," the Second Vatican Council declaration considered by many to have transformed Jewish-Catholic relations, as "one of the most important events in Jewish-Christian relations." It's arguable whether his invaluable efforts to clear Pius XII's name would have taken place had it not been for that document, but Krupp began working on the Pius issue after receiving a papal knighthood, seeing it would "open things up to do wonderful things between Jews and Catholics."

"I'm interested to know if he himself ever considered becoming a Catholic? "No, never," he says. "This is the way I am supposed to be. I'm doing what I'm supposed to do as a Jew not as a Catholic."

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"I feel my brothers and sisters are in the Church, but I would never consider converting," he says. "I'm very proud to be Jewish, and I think this is the path God meant for me to take."

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