



Comunità Ebraica di Roma



THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE
FOR HOLOCAUST RESEARCH

PRESS RELEASE

LISTS OF REFUGEES GIVEN SHELTER FROM THE NAZI PERSECUTION BY CATHOLIC INSTITUTIONS IN ROME REDISCOVERED

Rome, September 7th 2023 - An unpublished documentation that lists mostly Jewish persons who took shelter in Catholic institutions in Rome as they were fleeing the Nazi persecution has been rediscovered in the archive of the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome. The list of 100 women's and 55 men's religious congregations that offered hospitality, together with the numbers of the persons who were accommodated by them, had already been published by the historian Renzo de Felice in 1961, but the complete documentation had been considered lost. The newly rediscovered lists refer to more than 4,300 persons, of whom 3,600 are identified by name. Comparison with the documents kept in the archive of the Jewish Community of Rome indicates that 3,200 certainly were Jews. Of the latter it is known where they were hidden and, in certain circumstances, where they lived before the persecution. The documentation thus significantly increases the information on the history of the rescue of Jews in the context of the Catholic institutions of Rome. For reasons of privacy protection, access to the document is currently restricted. The document was presented at a workshop held at the Museo della Shoah in Rome on September 7, 2023.

The rediscovered documentation was compiled by the Italian Jesuit Fr. Gozzolino Birolo between June 1944 and the spring of 1945, immediately after the liberation of Rome by the Allies. Birolo was the bursar of the Pontifical Biblical Institute from 1930 until his death from cancer in June 1945. The rector of the Institute during this period was the German Jesuit Fr. Augustin Bea, who was created Cardinal in 1959 and became known for his commitment to Jewish-Catholic dialogue, seen especially in the Second Vatican Council's document *Nostra Aetate*.

The historians involved in the study of the new documents are Claudio Procaccia, Director of the Cultural Department of the Jewish Community of Rome; Grazia Loparco of the Pontifical Faculty of Educational Sciences Auxilium; Paul Oberholzer of the Gregorian University and Iael Nidam-Orvieto, Director of the International Institute for Holocaust Research at Yad Vashem. The research has been coordinated by Dominik Markl (Pontifical Biblical Institute and University of Innsbruck) together with the Rector of the Pontifical Biblical Institute, the Canadian Jesuit Michael Kolarcik. Rome was occupied by the Nazis for nine months, starting from September 10, 1943 until the Allied forces liberated the city on June 4, 1944. During that time, the persecution of the Jews led, among other things, to the deportation and

murder of nearly 2,000 people, including hundreds of children and adolescents, out of a community of approximately 10,000 to 15,000 Jews in Rome.

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