



Joint Catholic-Jewish Historical Commission Suspends Work

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JCR 1 August 2001– The International Catholic-Jewish Historical Commission, jointly appointed by the Holy See and the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC) to study the Vatican's role during World War II, especially vis-a-vis the Holocaust, has announced that it is suspending its work. In a July 20 letter to Cardinal Walter Kasper, president of the Vatican's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, the commission stated that in order to continue its work it would need "access in some reasonable manner to additional archival material." In its October 2000 report based on a study of eleven published volumes of archival material, the Commission listed 47 questions requiring further investigation, and expressed the hope that it would be given access also to the unpublished material. The Vatican has stated that this is not possible, in view of the fact that the material has not yet been catalogued.

In a response to the Commission's suspension of its work, Father Peter Gumpel, S.J., the postulator of the cause of the beatification of Pius XII, issued a declaration expressing his deep regret at this action, and accusing the Commission of wrongfully spreading the suspicion that the Holy See was trying to conceal compromising documents. Father Gumpel also noted his 'keen disappointment' that the Commission's study of the published volumes 'was done in a superficial manner.'

The members of the Historical Commission are Reverend Gerald P. Fogarty, S.J., Professor of Religious Studies and History, University of Virginia (USA); Dr. Michael R. Marrus, Professor of Holocaust Studies and Dean of the School of Graduate Studies, University of Toronto; Reverend John F. Morley, Associate Professor, Department of Religious Studies, Seton Hall University (USA); Dr. Bernard Suhecky, Researcher at the Department of Social Sciences, Free University of Brussels; and Dr. Robert S. Wistrich, Professor of History and holder of the Neuberger Chair in Modern Jewish Studies at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Dr. Eva Fleischner, Professor Emerita of Montclair State University (USA), also served on the Commission during its study of the published volumes.

See also Jerusalem Post article:

www.jpost.com/Editions/2001/07/24/News/News.31055.html

Jesuit Father Peter Gumpel's statement: www.zenit.org/english/ under Archive/Dossier