

f. 1095: Handwritten note by Monsignor Domenico Tardini, Secretary of the Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, on the proposed protest:

19-XII-43

Eae [Ex audientia Eminentissimi = the Secretary of State*]

S. Em. [His Eminence Cardinal Maglione, Vatican secretary of state] is sending M. Dell'Acqua this project for a Verbal Note prepared by P.T.V. [Padre Tacchi Venturi] to examine it

(to me it seems that this verbal Note is both verbose and strikes false notes)

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ff. 1104-1105: **Memo by Monsignor Angelo Dell'Acqua, Vatican Secretariat of State.**

December 20, 1943

On the Note prepared by the Most Reverend Father Tacchi Venturi S.J. regarding the situation of the Jews in Italy, permit me to humbly offer the following observations:

1=If the Jewish situation in Italy is not characterized by exceptional seriousness as in other nations, for what reason, the German embassy might ask, does the Holy See think it its duty to send a special note in such strong terms?

All the more so as it does not seem to me that such a strong Note was sent for the violence carried out by the Germans toward Aryan individuals who professed the Catholic religion from birth, as happened in Yugoslavia and in Italy itself.

2=Why have the Holy See say that "a true sentiment of diffidence toward the Jews, if one excepts the very small group of anti-Jewish scholars, is not widespread in Italy..."?

The persecution of the Jews that the Holy See justly deplores is one thing, especially when it is carried out with certain methods, and quite another thing is to be wary of the Jews' influence: this can be quite opportune. Indeed, Father Tacchi himself toward the end of his Note speaks of "unquestionable serious inconveniences caused by Judaism when it comes to dominate or enjoy much credit in a nation".

3=Is it then opportune for the Holy See, in an official document, to affirm that "there does not exist in Italy an Aryan environment that is decisively hostile toward the Jewish milieu, which has come to be pacifically tolerated, even when they do not pass over to Christianity, but retain their attachment to the Synagogue": this may even be true, but it does

not seem opportune to me that it is the Holy See that says it, all the more so as there was no lack in the history of Rome of measures adopted by the Pontiffs to limit the influence of the Jews.

4=To refer with mathematical exactitude in the Note to the statistics of the Demography and Race [office] might raise some suspicion regarding the functionaries of that office, which could have some unfortunate consequence.

5=While in the Note one seeks to argue that there is nothing to fear from the Italian Jews, it says that “many Jews reached very high positions, which they have now lost, as quite a few of them were named Senators, a large number of others married into distinguished and noble families of pure Aryan stock, and as, lastly, many of them took part in the wars of Italian independence etc... (see pages 3 and 4).

6=In the note it is said that “the recent most serious measures of the German Authorities against the Jews born in Italy and furnished with Italian citizenship have been greeted very unfavorably and viewed badly by the Italians”: why limit the protest to Jews of Italian citizenship? and the foreigners, among whom there is no lack of those professing the Catholic religion, are they not equally children of the Church?: indeed they too have been living (at least many of them) in Italy for some time.

7=In the Note the mistreatment to which the Jews are allegedly being subject by the German Authorities is highlighted (page 5).

This may even be true, but is it the case to say it so openly in a Note?

8=Nor is it opportune to say that the manner with which the Germans proceeded to arrest the Jews “seemed designed to bring shame on those who thought to order them”.

I do not believe that expressions of this kind serve to reach the goal.

9=Is it opportune for the Holy See to speak out officially regarding the inconveniences caused by Judaism when it comes to dominate or to enjoy great credit in a nation?

I do not think so. If at some future time this comes to be known, the Jews might say: this is the protection the Holy See is giving!

10=Father Tacchi says that “one does not understand why and what need there is to return to a question that Mussolini’s Government considered already taken care of”.

The Germans might respond: but it is the [Italian] Republican Government (albeit following our insistence) that has aggravated the situation of the Jews in Italy.

11=The Holy Father has mentioned the racial question on a number of occasions in his messages and speeches.

Is it opportune for the Note to conclude by threatening a new intervention by the Holy See? Will it not have the opposite effect?

12=We note, lastly, that one seems to find some contradictions in the Note, at least verbal ones. Thus at the beginning it is said that the Jewish situation in Italy “does not have the same exceptional seriousness as in other Nations, partly due to the limited number of Jews resident in the Kingdom, partly due to the huge number of marriages celebrated between Jews and Aryans”: how can the expression: “limited number of Jews resident in the Kingdom” accord with “the huge number of marriages celebrated between Jews and Aryans”.

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For the above-mentioned reasons sending the Note does not seem opportune to me: this, at least, would have to be substantially modified. All the more so given that the German ambassador has already been written to twice—in confidential manner—about the racial question. Once to try to have news of those deported; and a second time so that they not proceed to the arrest and seizure of the property of the Jews of Venezia Giulia, especially those of mixed marriages.

I do not believe that the Ambassador has replied.

I would, therefore, judge it more opportune to speak of it again with the Ambassador, recommending to him that the already grave situation of the Jews not be aggravated further. And one might, also, ask some influential person to have a little word with Marshal Graziani [Minister of War of Mussolini’s German-puppet Italian Social Republic] in such a way that the Republican Government proceed with prudence.....

But one should also let the Jewish *Signori* know that they should speak a little less and act with great prudence....

* *In an earlier transcription of this note, the Latin abbreviation "Eae" was mistranslated.*