

Vatican Archives on Ustasha Ratlines to be Opened

Secret archives of Pope Pius XII will be opened, at last giving historians access to documents from the era of the 20th century's most controversial pope.

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The archives in question will be opened on March 2, 2020.

And while historians around the world are already preparing to record parts of the pope's documents explaining his role in the Holocaust, Croatia and the region will probably be more interested in his role the post-war rescue of war criminals, Croatia-based website Index is reporting.

The article said that a ratline ran through the Vatican that was used, among others, by Ustasha leaders to escape justice after WW2. This ratline was organized by Croatian Catholic priest Krunoslav Draganovic, whom Boris Raseta refers to as "the Ustasha James Bond" in his book.

The Ustasha regime was in power in the Independent State of Croatia (NDH), a WW2 entity allied with the Nazis that set up and operated death camps for Serbs, Jews, and Roma, including [Jasenovac](#).



Ustasha leader Ante Pavelic (image on the right) himself escaped thanks to his connections in the College of St. Jerome in Rome, as did many other criminals, while Index is reporting that Pope Pius XII must have known a lot about the crimes of the Ustasha – "if for no other reason than because of what (high ranking Croatian Catholic cleric) [Alojzije Stepinac](#) was saying."

"The speeches of Church dignitaries don't go unnoticed by the Vatican. It will be interesting to see what the pope thought of post-war Yugoslav authorities,

especially in light of (Croatia's) efforts to proclaim Stepinac a saint. Both canonizations (of Pius and Stepinac) are stuck and sidelined, both of them knew a lot about the biggest crime in the history of Europe. And neither was overly upset," Index writes.

Pope Pius XII is best known for the concordat between the Vatican and the Nazi Germany, signed in 1933, which he arranged while serving as the Holy See's ambassador to Germany.

When became the pope shortly before WW2 broke out, Pius XII was warning more about communism than Nazism, and was later silent on the Holocaust.

Over 150,000 documents that will be made public should provide the answer to the question that is troubling historians the most: Did the pope know about "the final solution," the extermination of the Jews, did he know about the Holocaust?

"Hardly not. The Vatican has had an excellent intelligence service for centuries, and they hardly missed the slaughter of six million people. And a more important question arises: Why didn't the head of the Catholic Church react?," the website wondered.

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