

theories of maverick professors who claim that the interminable delays in publishing many scrolls and their lack of accessibility until the 1990s originated in the Roman Catholic Church and were pursued later on by collusion between the Church and the Israel Antiquities Authority. Collins rightly dismisses this as nonsense. Similarly, by placing the Qumran community, the scrolls, and the site clearly as part of Judaism and Jewish history in Jewish Judea, Collins performs a service for truth. Palestinian Arab claims that the scrolls and the site belong to the Palestinian Authority because Qumran was located in the Kingdom of Jordan between 1948 and 1967 are rendered baseless and irrelevant, just as the earlier arguments that they were essentially Christian and not Jewish.

In today's politicized world of academia, unfortunately, the Jewish context and content of the scrolls and the site and the Jewish world of Jesus and his disciples must be restated and demonstrated constantly. Accordingly, John Collins's book contributes to debunking fraudulent political claims against the presence of Jews and the very essence of Jewish history and Jewish religion in the Land of Israel.

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## THE MAN WHO SAVED THE HONOR OF THE FRENCH CHURCH

*La Protestation, 23 août 1942 (The Protest, August 23rd, 1942)* Yves Belaubre, Paris: Ed. Nicolas Eybalin, 2012, 296 pp, (in French).

Reviewed by MICHELLE MAZEL

France is still coming to terms with “La Collaboration”, that dark period in French history which saw the Vichy government and all official branches of the administration collaborating with Nazi Germany and persecuting the Jews with indecent zeal while Frenchmen as a rule looked the other way. The Catholic Church has come under much criticism. While the Protestant Church was taking a courageous stand and helped the persecuted Jews, the Catholic Church was conspicuously silent for a long time, though individual members of the clergy did not hesitate to risk their lives to save Jews. Still, there was growing unease when details of the way Jews imprisoned in camps in France were treated filtered. Then Vichy authorities started sending the Jews from the camps in the so called free zone to Drancy, near Paris, from where they were put on the dreaded convoys to the camps in Germany

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and Poland. This is when one man's protest stunned the Vichy establishment, the German authorities, the church hierarchy and France as a whole. On Sunday, August 23, 1942 the archbishop of Toulouse, had a special message read in all the churches of his diocese.

"My dear Brothers," read the letter, "There is a Christian morality, there is a human morality, which lays down obligations and acknowledges rights. These obligations and these rights stem from the nature of man. They come from God. They can be violated but no man has the power to do away with them. That children, women, men, fathers and mothers be treated like cattle of no account, that members of the same family be separated from each other and taken away to an unknown destination, it is our time which was fated to see that sad sight. Why doesn't the right of asylum in our churches exist anymore? Why are we the defeated? Lord, have pity on us. Our Lady, pray for France.

In our diocese, dreadful scenes have taken place in the camps of Noé and Récébédou. Jews are men; Jewesses are women. Not everything is permitted against them, against these men, against these women, against these fathers and mothers. They are part of the human race. They are our brothers, like so many others. A Christian cannot forget it. France, beloved Fatherland; France, which carries in the consciences of all your children the tradition of respect for human beings; chivalrous and generous France—I have no doubt that you are not responsible for these horrors."

Jules-Géraud Saliège Archbishop of Toulouse.

Seventy-two years old at the time, ailing, partially paralyzed and speaking with difficulty, Saliège was an unlikely hero. Yet his words spread like a trail of fire; the Free French quoted them on their radio programs from London; the Vatican praised him, and the Catholic hierarchy followed suit, while the Vichy authorities searched for ways of stopping the spread of the letter and punishing the prelate. Indeed on June 1944, two members of the SIPO, the German security police, came to arrest the archbishop in order to deport him. However in view of his physical condition and the fact that he could not walk unaided, they departed, promising to return. Fortunately France was liberated soon after. The church was happy to bask in the reflected glory of one of its own. Much was made of the prelate, and in spite of his age and infirmity he was made a Cardinal and later hailed as a hero of the Resistance. Book after book traced the itinerary of a young man of no particular parentage in a church where scions of the nobility were fast tracked to promotion. Yet thanks to his incisive mind Jules-Géraud Saliège climbed the ecclesiastical rungs one after another—until he was made archbishop in 1928, at

the age of 58. And there he remained until 1946 when, as a tribute to his courage, he attained the rank of cardinal.

*The Protest* is the latest attempt to decipher the man Jules-Géraud Saliège. It is certainly different. Though he is presented as “writer, journalist and scenarist.” On the book cover, Yves Belaubre is better known for his articles and documentary films on cigars and the art of growing them. Indeed, he is pictured on his Facebook page smoking a fat cigar. He was commissioned to write “The Protest” by Nicolas Eybalin, a former diplomat who had just launched his own publishing house. In his introduction,<sup>1</sup> Eybalin writes “the authors of this collection are writers who know history and can master its documentation. They have retained the ambition to instruct through the *mise en scene* of their knowledge of the past.” Is there a hint here that the book might one day be turned into a play? Quite possibly.

In trying to explain what made elderly and increasingly ailing prelate speak out, Belaubre, who had access to the man’s own writings and there were many, to the writings of Saliège’s close collaborators, to official records and to the dozens of essays and studies done by others, chose a rather startling method. He tells the story of what happened in those fateful months from the point of view of the archbishop, as if he somehow knew what was in his mind, at times following a trend of thought or reminiscing about past events. (Indeed, perhaps in order to deflect criticism, he refers to his book in a number of interviews as “a novel”). Nevertheless there is solid research there. Saliège was an outspoken critic of antisemitism well before the war. According to the book, his views on the subject were identical to those of Pope Pius XII.

Belaubre is at his best when recounting the meeting Saliège had with his close friends and collaborators, making them come alive, whether partaking of a modest lunch in the kitchen, voicing their shame and disgust at what was happening or coming to ask for advice. He turns dusty records into vivid dialogue, and recreates with deft strokes the mood of these dark days. Here, for instance is how he describes the genesis of the letter. A social worker had come to tell Saliège the horrors she had seen in one of the camps. “In his bed, the archbishop is not asleep. He hears, muffled by the distance, the phone of the archbishopric ringing. It must be seven in the morning. He has not slept. As he hadn’t the slept the previous night, which he spent closeted in his office after the dreadful facts disclosed by the social worker. He had refused to dine. How could he have dined? He had sat down in front of his desk. He had read from his breviary. He had prayed. He had seen the night fall and he had started writing.”<sup>2</sup>

What is perhaps less successful is the way Belaubre follows the efforts Saliège makes to dominate a body that is failing him, even at one point taking the reader into the bathroom with the priest. It is difficult to gauge how effective this technique is—or why it was used. There could be two explanations: The first, an attempt to present the reader with something different, unusual, making this one book stand out among the many others. The other, a genuine effort to put himself in the prelate’s

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place to understand why he did what he did. Whatever the case, it makes for easy reading while being a valuable addition to the understanding of Vichy France.

### NOTES

1. p. 7.
2. p. 224.

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## REMEMBERING A FORGOTTEN HERO OF HOLOCAUST HISTORIOGRAPHY

*Laying the Foundations for Holocaust Research: The Impact of the Historian Philip Friedman*, Search and Research—Lectures and Papers 15, by Roni Stauber, Yad Vashem, 2009, 60 pp.

Reviewed by LAURENCE WEINBAUM

I was a child, not quite ten, rummaging through a bookcase in my grandparents' house when I came across *Martyrs and Fighters*. It was on the cover of that 1962 paperback, its faded pages brittle to the touch, that I first came across the name of Philip Friedman—and that I received my first introduction to the heartrending story of the Warsaw Ghetto. In particular, one chilling vignette from that book remained etched in my consciousness. It was an eyewitness description of a Jewish boy caught smuggling food from the Aryan side and trying to wiggle his way back into the ghetto. The child's hips got caught in the hole under the wall and a German began beating him mercilessly. By the time he was finally pulled through to the Jewish side by a horrified passerby, it was too late. The boy was dying, his spine crushed.

Many years later, while sitting in a Jerusalem cinema watching *The Pianist*, I was startled to see that terrifying episode depicted on the screen. I immediately recalled Friedman's book, one of the first anthologies of ghetto testimonies, and eventually was able to acquire a durable hardcover edition. In its pages I quickly found the account of that incident dutifully reproduced by Friedman and attributed to the