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# Jews hit Vatican appointment

## New bank adviser reportedly was a top financier for Nazis

**LOS ANGELES (UPI)**—A prominent Jewish research group called on Pope John Paul II Wednesday to break his silence on charges that he appointed Nazi Germany's most prominent financier to a Vatican post.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center at Yeshiva University, in Los Angeles, has demanded the resignation of Herman J. Abs, 81, from the Vatican bank advisory board. The center outlined the charges and its documentation to church officials in Rome last week by telephone and telegram, but it has received no response.

The Vatican press office Wednesday refused to respond to reporters' inquiries about the charges. Abs could not be reached.

AT A NEWS conference, Rabbi Marvin Hier, head of the research group, said an extensive file of documents proves Abs, head of the Deutsche Bank from 1940 to 1945, was an important figure in the Third Reich.

Abs never faced charges at the Nuremberg War Tribunal.

"We can't say Abs was a Nazi war criminal because he wasn't a member of the Nazi party," Hier said. "But can we say that Herman J. Abs was morally clean during the Second World War? It would be a joke to say that."

Hier said he did not believe the Vatican was aware of Abs' prominent role in Nazi Germany when it



Herman J. Abs

made the appointment last month.

"Forty years is a small time in terms of history to remember anyone connected with the most colossal tragedy in history," Hier said. "We don't want to forget that and don't think a spiritual institution like the Vatican should forget it either."

**HIER SAID** the center, named for the famed Nazi hunter who captured

Adolf Eichmann, hoped the Pope would act on the charges before the advisory board's first meeting next week in Rome.

Abs was a fund raiser instrumental in Adolf Hitler's rise to power, said Lydia Triantopoulos, an official at the center.

During World War II, while chairman of the Deutsche Bank, Abs also sat on the board of I.G. Farben, a chemical and industrial conglomerate. Hier cited testimony from the Nuremberg trials that indicated Abs was present at meetings where board members discussed the use of slave labor at a Farben rubber plant at the Auschwitz concentration camp.

Triantopoulos said records showed that 300,000 people "passed through I.G. Farben Auschwitz, and 125,000 are documented having been worked to death."

Hier also cited a recently uncovered report prepared in 1946 by the U.S. Army stating that Abs expropriated Jewish property for his personal gain and, as bank chairman, was directly involved in the annexation of Polish property.

**AFTER THE WAR** Abs was a private adviser and friend of Konrad Adenauer, West Germany's first chancellor. In 1957, he became chairman of the reorganized Deutsche Bank.

Hier charged that Abs was "restored to legitimacy" by the Vatican.