

Saliege, Jules-Gerard

(1870--1956), Archbishop of the southern French city of Toulouse who actively opposed the anti-Jewish steps taken in France during World War II.

Before World War I, Saliege was strongly affected by Catholic theologians who believed that the church should begin rethinking some of its theological stands and get more involved in social issues. During the 1930s Saliege condemned RACISM as an un-Christian concept, and persisted in his opposition even after the Vichy government came to power in southern France in 1940.

In August 1942 the Vichy authorities began full-scale deportation of Jews. At that point, Saliege wrote a letter condemning the deportations and demanded that Christians acknowledge Jews as their "brothers." Saliege then sent the letter out to all the parishes under his authority. The letter was part of a revolution in Catholic thinking regarding Jews. As a result, many Catholics in southern France lent their support to the Jewish cause. (For more on Vichy, see also France.)