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Series A: Writings and Addresses. 1947-1991

Box 3, Folder 38, NBC Miniseries - "Holocaust", 1979.



AUSTRIA--MOVED BUT NOT UNANIMOUSLY

"Shown almost exactly 41 years after Austria, subverted from within by its own sizable Nazi Party, was forcibly swallowed up into the greater Reich, Holocaust rivited the country's biggest-ever radio-TV audience," reported the Christian Science Monitor. The series sparked a wide re-examination of the nation's past, one that led many to conclude that the program was important and worthwhile; but it also angered not a few who resented the re-examination. Thus the foreign press drew contradictory interpretations of just what the response to the program really had been.

"Holocaust Moves Austrian Viewers," wrote the Washington Post, while the Jewish Telegraphic Agency found a "Mixed Reaction to 'Holocaust' Film." Variety magazine told its readers that "Austria Reacts Mostly 'Favorable' to 'Holocaust': 13% Negative," but the New York Times thought that "Many Austrians Seem to Bristle at TV 'Holocaust,'" and the Religious News Service found "Austrians Not Sympathetic to Airing of Holocaust."

Unarguably, the showing of the series on the government owned ORF television and radio network touched off a major national debate about the Nazi era. In a country whose capital welcomed the fuherer with open arms, Holocaust sparked a new interest in the past among the young, led to the first serious teaching about the era, and brought about a wide ranging set of responses in the press and from the politicians.

The program was shown in uninterrupted installments on prime time on March 1, 2, 3, and 4, 1979. It was preceded by panel discussions on television and radio that included elected officials, scholars, historians, and concentration camp survivors, as well as the showing of films and documents from the German and Allied archives. Before Holocaust was shown, Austrian television aired "The Final Solution," and this documentary on the extermination program

was viewed by one million Austrians.

THE FIGURES

Two and one-fifth million Austrians, or 44% of the population, saw the entire series (as compared with 29% in Germany), and 2.9 million, or 50%, (59% of those over 18) saw at least one installment.

ORF officials reported that they received a record 1,500 calls about the first episode, about equally divided between pro- and anti-Holocaust. Newspaper polls at the time indicated a similar division.

"There were strong anti-semitic comments and calls urging TV officials to show 'other cruelties' as well," noted public opinion analyst Peter Diem, who monitored the initial night's response. There were enough such calls to make the Jewish Telegraphic Agency report that many/Austrians "appeared querulous about the reminder of their Nazi past."

But, Diem observed, "the number of positive reactions gradually increased" that night as the program ended and after.

By the time the series was over, ORF had gotten 7,361 calls--again, a record--and that represented a larger percentage of viewers calling in than the German station WRD had experienced.

An analysis of the calls that came in throughout the entire series added more depth to Diem's observation. 44% of those surveyed thought well of the series, while 32% disliked it. The remainder were non-committal. Many in that 44% expressed their awareness often, it seemed, for the first time, ORF reported, of the lesson the series bore.

Other data suggested that the program roused a higher percentage of those who disliked it than of those who liked it to pick up the telephone. A joint poll by Austrian public opinion research organizations showed that 87% of all viewers reacted positively to Holocaust, while only 13% reacted negatively. The poll found that 92% agreed it was "credible," that 79% found it "genuinely moving," that 73% thought it "necessary," and that 68% thought

Holocaust "objective." Only 5% actually objected to it.

This breakdown suggests certain fine distinctions--that not all those who found it credible were also moved by it; that some thought it was necessary even if it was not objective, for example. But a more significant aspect of the viewer response is suggested by the fact that before the showing, a poll found 74% of its respondents against Holocaust's being shown and only 24% in favor. Holocaust, then, represented a breakthrough in the public's conception of how the Nazi past should be treated.

The young, in particular, reacted strongly to what were, for them, the revelations of the program. "There was an extraordinary radio debate," reported the Christian Science Monitor, "between parents and their own teenage and older children."

"The later," the paper related, "would have none of the well worn arguments that 'the past should be forgotten.' 'You are wrong,' one 18 year old told his father. 'I don't know how you (your generation) lived all these years without telling us what happened.'"

THE PRESS

The press reaction to Holocaust was a mixed one.

The Jewish Chronicle of London reported that "All the Vienna dailies" applauded the showing of Holocaust, with the exception of the ultra-conservative Die Presse. But the Religious News Service reported that the press reaction was largely hostile to the series.

Die Presse, which styles itself as 'The "Times" of Austria,' and whose reputation rests largely upon its past--when its heavily Jewish editorial staff included Theodore Herzl, the founder of Zionism, and David Ben Gurion, Israel's first Prime Minister--dismissed Holocaust as "horror bore in the Hollywood manner." Paul Hoffman, writing from Vienna for the New York Times series as reported that it described the / only "speculation on scare and guilt feelings," and that it complained that no television series had been done on

the bombing of Hamburg, the slaughter under Stalin, or the Pol Pot regime's massacres in Cambodia.

Hoffman also noted that the provincial newspaper Salzburger Volksblatt did not approve of the show, and ran a series on "The Other Holocaust"-- the post-war expulsion of Germans from Czechoslovakia. The Neu Kronen-Zeitung, the Austrian paper with the largest circulation, he reported, filled two pages with what it stated was a representative selection of reader comments phoned in after the first part of Holocaust was on the air. Only 10 out of 30 unequivocally expressed shame or horror. (Hoffman did not relate opinion analyst Diem's findings that negative calls to the broadcasting station were at their peak at this same time.)

Hoffman reported that

On the other hand, the Vienna news magazine Profil produced a special issue on "Austria's Share in the Final Solution," which recalled that Adolf Eichmann grew up in Austria. ... The magazine listed other prominent Austrian Nazis and concluded that "Austrians joined in the murders wherever Austrian Hitler and his German henchmen wished."

Hoffman's reporting produced an irate letter to the New York Times from Thomas Nowotny, Consul General of Austria in New York. Hoffman's story was written, charged Nowotny, "in a way which must be termed misleading, if not in fact an outright misrepresentation."

"Of the numerous letters to the editor written to various Austrian publications, an overwhelming majority expressed themselves strongly in favor of the program, and also of the subsequent televised discussions... Why doesn't he mention," Nowotny asked, "that the editorials he chose to quote were among the few exceptions, that virtually all others came out in strong support of the series?"

But he did not dispute the text of the quotes. For there were two sides to the Austrian response and the minority side was still large enough to

lead the Jewish Telegraphic Agency to report a "mixed reaction" in the nation, and to convince the Religious News Service that the media had been largely hostile to the film.

THE POLITICIANS' RESPONSE

Chancellor Bruno Kreisky seemed to reflect the nation's supportive but at the same time somewhat ambiguous response in his statements about the series.

Addressing a Socialist Party convention on the day of the first evening's broadcast, he said he thought the series should prompt a discussion about the roots of Nazism. "We have to make sure that it will not happen again," he said. "We must talk sensibly with each other and not look silently."

He declared that he knew more than most people about the crimes of the era because of the close friends and relatives he had lost then, but warned against a "mindless black and white painting that simply pronounces all those guilty who lived then, and presumes to judge them without knowing of the pain that is haunting them." "Yet, without examining how it could occur," he thought, "we will not be more intelligent another time."

When asked if he had seen it, Kreisky (who is Jewish) replied that he had not, explaining that "Anyone who counted the victims of Nazi persecution in his own family did not need this film." He was also quoted as saying that "Neither nationalism nor chauvinism, including Jewish chauvinism, will help solve the problem of anti-semitism."

A leading member of Parliament, Dr. Otto Scrinzi, was perhaps the most prominent spokesman for the right-wing antagonism to the series. "One thing seems sure," he claimed, "the cash registers in Hollywood and Moscow are in

harmony " By this he meant to suggest that the series had not only been produced in Hollywood, but financed by the U.S.S.R. to undermine the Germans.

The only leading figure to come close to threatening the Jews, Scrinzi spoke of the "deep irrationality" of the Jewish personality and religion, which, he said, was apt to "trigger confusions, fear and eventually bloody aggressions in almost all host nations."

Scrinzi's remarks, however, drew many caustic responses in the Vienna magazine *Profil*.

THE RIGHT

There was no denying that the Austrian right, limited though it was in numbers, represented the opinions of a larger number of Austrians in their views about Holocaust. And it made its views known.

In addition to the anti-semitic and anti-Holocaust calls that ORF and the Neu Kronen Zeitung received, there were anti-Holocaust leaflets distributed by neo-Nazis in various cities, such as Graz, in southern Austria, where leaflets appeared calling Holocaust "the biggest lie in history."

In Vienna, demonstrators were expected around the ORF studio, and the police threw a security cordon around the building. But no protestors appeared. The director of Channel 2, however, received death threats relating to the program's airing

In effect providing further testimony to the powerful impact Holocaust had upon most Austrians, the right-wing Freedom Party fell victim to an internal split over the series. Its national leaders vehemently dissociated themselves from the anti-Holocaust pamphlets published by the party's own extremist wing.

The showing of Holocaust also led almost 100 Vienna University professors and staff members to sign a call for the outlawing of another far right group, the Action New Right

EDUCATION

The government did respond to the series, in a more significant fashion. The Minister of Education, Fred Sinowitz, had anticipated, before its airing, that the interest generated by Holocaust would spill over into the classrooms. To help teachers prepare for this, the Ministry sent to the schools a list of information materials which teachers could request.

"After the war and until quite recently," noted the Christian Science Monitor, "history teaching in Austrian schools and universities on the whole 1933-45 Nazi period was scrumpy. Watching Holocaust, young people seemed to suddenly be realizing just how much had been omitted and to resent it."

After the airing had begun, Sinowitz requested that Austrian teachers "deal with the horrors of the Nazi occupation during World War II." He ordered teachers to institute detailed and serious talks on the film and its significance for today and the future.

CATCHING THE NATION'S CONSCIENCE

The prestigious French newspaper Le Monde told its readers that Holocaust was "a shock for the Austrians" that "caught the conscience" of the nation.

Simon Weisenthal, the well-known Nazi hunter, reported that his Vienna office was flooded with more than 300 calls after the series was shown. This spate of tips on the whereabouts of former Nazis represented, he said, more than had been received in 3 years.

And Alfred Stroer, a leading official of the Austrian Federation of Trade Unions, told his co-unionists at a banquet commemorating Austrian resistance to the Nazi's March 13th, 1938 invasion that Holocaust had convinced a majority of Austrians that the terrors of the Nazi rule must not occur again.

There is no doubt that on the whole, the consensual repression of the knowledge of a terrible era had been thrown aside by Holocaust. Not all were pleased by the experience of reconsidering the past, but the great majority of Austrians found that doing so was both necessary and worth the emotional price

CANADA

Holocaust was shown in Toronto by CHCH TV, an independent station, and some 2.5 million people watched it in the greater Toronto area. According to CHCH TV, it received an overall average 53.5% share of those watching their television sets during its successive four nights of broadcast, which began on April 16, 1978. Starting with a 45% share, it went to 53%, then to 55%, and finally climbed to 60%.

In addition, many more Canadians saw the show on broadcasts picked up from American NBC affiliates. In Toronto it was possible to see the series on two other stations as well as on CHCH Channel 11.

There were some right-wing efforts mounted against the show, but they did not provide any serious problems: a Toronto group demanded that tapes of the program be seized and destroyed, and one dozen picketers marched in front of the CHCH TV studio. In addition, there were indications of a German-Canadian response to the series that was pointedly unfavorable to Holocaust.

The ~~show~~^{program} did have larger problems, however, in that neither of the two Canadian networks was willing to air it. Thus Holocaust was not seen at all, for instance, in the Vancouver area.

The Toronto Globe and Mail ran several articles on the series. The day before the first installment was broadcast, commentator Blair Kirby wrote that it was "made by "Jews with excellent TV qualifications," but that Holocaust was still "weak drama."

On April 19th, the newspaper ran a smaller story entitled "Holocaust is a Lesson," by the same author. Kirby still thought it was poor drama, but admitted that it "is having a major effect." The effect he perceived, however, was that it was "raising old angers, enmities, and quite likely fears. Some Germans are complaining that it is close to hate literature."

He worried that the film's makers "might be yielding to the temptation to cater

to Jewish feelings," and asked if it may "inspire a new hatred for today's Germans, Poles and Ukrainians... Even if Holocaust does inspire hatred--for some people, little excuse is needed--would that justify suppressing it? No. As unpleasant as it is, it appears to be a factually true though fictionally treated story of what happened."

The author did finally end up endorsing the show by recognizing that there are "millions... who may never learn about it any other way." But Kirby was the only regular reviewer in a major newspaper that this study found who veered ~~that~~ close to calling for the suppression of the series (albeit through the device of raising the idea and knocking it down).

The Globe and Mail did not, however, restrict its critical voice on the topic to one reviewer. Three days after the series ended, it provided space for an article by W. Gunther Plaut, a Senior Scholar at Holy Blossom Temple. He saw far more virtue in the series. "Holocaust;" the article was entitled, "it had to be told." In an implicit reaction to Kirby, he wrote, "There are fundamentally different kinds of viewers and reviewers: those who were there and those who were not. And then, there are Jews and non-Jews. I am a Jew, and I was there, at least for part of it."

My own reaction was mixed," Plaut told his readers. "The series was in many ways successful. Though on the whole poor drama, it was starkly real in a trivializing medium."

Artistically, it left much to be desired." But "Historically," it was "largely accurate," he felt, and therefore "an important antidote to recent attempts to rewrite history and declare the murder of millions a Zionist fabrication."

Not quite so ambivalent in its praise of the series was the Canadian Jewish News, which called the program "Flawed but impressive."

This newspaper corroborated the impression left by Kirby's apparent reluctant defense of the series against unspecified German-Canadian complaints about ~~the~~

Holocaust.

"German groups throughout North America complained that the program dabbled in propaganda, incited hate and inter-ethnic conflict. However," wrote the newspaper, "by any conventional standards, Holocaust was neither propagandistic nor hateful, but an honest attempt to convey the horror of an event that swept the continent. Facts are facts... That some Germans are unable to face facts, to admit what happened, is a tragedy in itself."

Despite an occasional "aura of unbelievability" that the Canadian Jewish News found around some segments of the story, the paper believed that "Holocaust was valuable and timely."

Despite the worries of the Canadian Jewish News and the antagonism of Kirby's reviews, no major controversy broke out over the program. Many watched it and more than a few may have resented it, but Holocaust generated little press controversy and no indication that it had truly stirred many souls--with anger or with socially significant pain. It was restricted to a large, but not complete, portion of the Canadian audience, and it held their interest, ~~xxxxxxx~~ at least in Toronto, where it garnered a continually increasing share of the audience. But it had nothing like the massive impact it made in the United States. And, despite the presence of some who felt threatened by the story the show told, even those groups who disliked it could still muster only twelve persons to picket the showing of Holocaust.

BELGIUM

Holocaust was preceded in Belgium by a great deal of radio publicity, and after it was shown, it garnered wide praise in the print media, including accolades from journalists who were known for their generally anti-Israel positions. It was watched, reported the Jewish Chronicle of London, by "a very large proportion of French-speaking Belgian viewers," nearly two millions.

The series also ~~was~~ brought into its broadcast station a record number of viewer call-ins.

The general reaction of the viewing audience, the Chronicle reported, was one of horror. Although Belgium suffered under the Nazi occupation, "many did not realize the extent of the cruelties inflicted on the Jews," wrote the Chronicle.

The Belgian press stressed the "positive and educative" value of the series, especially at a time of Nazi resurgence. And, on the same night, February 5, 1979, that the first episode was shown, more than 1,000 people demonstrated in Antwerp in protest against ~~the~~ what the Jewish Telegraphic Agency reported is a "mounting tide of neo-Nazi activities. The demonstrators marched through the city's streets after having first attended a public showing of the film, "In the Fuhrer's Name," produced and directed by a Belgian, Lydia Chagall. Among the marchers," noted the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, "were members of the Socialist and Communist Parties, clergymen and a large number of public figures "

The Jewish national committee, which will build a memorial to wartime Belgian Jewish resistance fighters against the Nazis, drafted a pamphlet on the Holocaust series to issue to teachers as informational material for

their class discussions. To help expedite this, the committee, which has as its co-chairmen Professor Chaim Perelman of Brussels University and Mr. J. Komkommer of Antwerp, approached the Ministry of Education.

The need for such educational efforts was highlighted by the report of a /Belgian television reporter who interviewed several young viewers, aged from 10 to 14 years of age. Most of them, he found, did not know the facts about the holocaust. They were also deeply impressed by the television program, and wanted to know more, he found. Only a few of the parents of the non-Jewish youngsters had provided their offspring with any information about the extermination program.

But one Belgian youth nonetheless made an excellent showing for his contemporaries on the debate that followed the show on Belgian television. The debate included a number of prominent persons, including historian Christian Halkan, but was of less than the highest quality. Most of the other panelists were unequipped for such a program, and only that one student from the youth group that participated, responded with alertness and intelligence.

Jean Francois Steiner, author of Treblinka (which met with much contention because of its argument that the Jewish victims of that death camp went to the massacre like sheep) suggested that "It's their right, it doesn't bother me," when asked about anti-semitism and housing and social club segregation. It was the young student who replied most cogently to this assertion.

Belgium's Flemish television channel showed Holocaust in October, 1978.

🇩🇪🇩🇩🇩🇩 DENMARK

No figures were available on the response to the televising of Holocaust in Denmark, a country which has been widely hailed as having courageously aided Jews fleeing the Nazis, except for a report that the Danes launched a public drive to collect one million Krone for the Sharei Zedek Hospital in Jerusalem as a memorial to the victims of the Holocaust. The clear implication of this is that the series moved the Danish viewing public quite strongly.



JAPAN--SOMEONE ELSE'S BATTLEFIELD

Holocaust received substantial pre-airing coverage in the newspapers and periodicals of Japan, and the station which bought it used 250 spot advertisements to promote the series, at a cost of about \$400,000. The series received high ratings despite the fact that it ran against several very popular shows, but it caused no large controversy.

Sold to TV Asahi before its American showing, the series was watched by 15% of the viewing audience on its first evening, October 15th, 1978. On the following evening, it was received by 11.9% of the televisions that were turned on at the time it was shown, and 13.7% of them the next night. On Sunday, when the final two episodes were shown, one directly after the other, it received a 16.5% and a 19.7% rating. The average audience it received was 15.6%, and TV Asahi felt that this represented a satisfactory rating.

Japan's other television stations met the challenge of the series by running not only their regular popular series, but also by airing specials, including a 25th anniversary show with old film clips from a popular program, Walt Disney's Dumbo, and the Japan Record Awards Ceremony.

The fluctuations in the viewer percentages, the counter-programming of high drawing shows by the other stations, and the absence of any ensuing controversy, either over its theme or production values, suggested that the Japanese, far away from the European battlefields and death camps, treated the program as an interesting, but not nationally significant, television program. This interpretation of Japanese viewer behavior appears to be supported by the fact that the other major American-made serial drama, Roots, did only somewhat better, having received a 23.4% rating. Major and disturbing themes of European-American history, apparently, have not seriously moved the Japanese public in its television watching patterns or responses.

GREECE

Holocaust played to an audience of three million Greeks, one third of the nation's population, and the showing was followed by reports of protests by all the Arab ambassadors --with the exception of the Egyptian ambassador--to Greek officials about the program's broadcast. In addition, the Greek-Arab League also protested the showing of Holocaust; the press response to this protest was caustic.

The conservative Athens daily newspaper Kathimerini criticized the League's protest, and another Athens newspaper, Commentator, challenged the Arab attitude to what it described as "the most horrible crime of the present century."

The Greek press, in daily comments during the early April showing of the series, expressed horror at the events it depicted and compassion for the victims, noted the Jewish Chronicle of London, some Athens newspapers pointed out that Greece/^{itself} had lost some 75,000 Jews during the Second World War to the Nazi death camps.

~~The New~~ New York Times, citing an "authoritative source," reported that the Arab ambassadors had complained that the series was Jewish propaganda. The source also reported that Foreign Minister Giorgios Rallis ^{ambassadors} told the/ that the Greek government, which, the Times noted, is trying to develop relations with the Arab world, "had the intention neither to offend the Arabs nor to promote Jewish interests."

The main channel, Greek Radio-TV, turned down the series, the Times wrote, apparently on the grounds that it did not like the program's pro-Jewish spirit. But Holocaust was shown instead on Yened, the station of the nation's armed services.

THE SOVIET UNION

Although the series was not shown on Soviet television, at least one Soviet commentator, Georgyev, felt that the program and its theme should be addressed.

He labelled the program a classic tear-jerker that limited its profound sorrow for individuals who lost their lives at the hands of the brown-shirts to the Jews, and asked, what about the Slavs?

"The dominant theme of Holocaust," he wrote, was that the humble Jew turned out to be the greatest martyr of World War II, and this, he felt, "is all but irrelevant. Jews in the West are always shown as a sacrificial lamb shoved through the Big Powers' negligence into the gaping mouth of the Nazi monster."

Calling the show a biased and lopsided presentation of the facts, Georgyev told his readers that the USSR was really responsible for saving the Jews in World War II through the Soviet Army's actions against Nazi Germany.

Interestingly, when Holocaust's producers wanted to bring tanks and other armored vehicles into West Berlin for the filming of the Warsaw ghetto uprising scenes, the Soviet officials whose permission was needed for the moving of weaponry into the city agreed to allow the weapons in fully as quickly as did the other joint administration powers' representatives.

SOUTH AFRICA

Holocaust came to South African audiences through the medium of the movie screen rather than the television set. A private South African firm obtained the cinema rights to it after Holocaust Executive Producer Herb Brodwin turned down a South African request to buy the program.

The newspaper advertisements for the movie showing produced some anger in the Jewish community of South Africa because they included pictures of European Jewish ghettos along with the words, "With a cast of six million Jews." The marketing manager for the firm, Hymie Segal, a Jew, responded to the Jewish concern by agreeing to take out the phrase, although, he said, he did not think the wording offensive.

The nation's Yad Vashem Memorial Foundation demanded an apology from the firm for "the insult to the memory of the six million" Holocaust victims.

No reports were available on the public response to the theater showings of Holocaust.

NORWAY

After an initial decision not to air Holocaust, Norwegian television reversed itself and broadcast the series. Although it apparently received some substantial advance mass media coverage, including a full back page summary and introduction in the tabloid format Radio TV publication, no figures were available on its viewing audience.

But the announcement that the series would be shown ^{late} in April, 1979, which was made that month, was followed by the receipt of threatening letters from anti-semites by some of Norway's prominent Jews.

The entertainment magazine, Variety, after noting how the subject of anti-semitism is a sensitive one in Sweden, added that it "is apparently sensitive in Norway also." The Swedish Broadcasting Company and the Norwegian Broadcasting Company were planning at the time of the program's March showing in Sweden, to co-produce a series about refugees fleeing across the Baltic from the Nazis. Swedish director Bjorn Fontander claimed that he was unable to find any Norwegian Jews willing to describe conditions in that country during World War II. Finally, he reported, he decided to read the anonymous description of one Norwegian Jew.

But, reported Variety, Norwegian television planned to cut this portion because it felt that the anonymous Jew could be too easily identified.

That is not the only section that Norwegian television was reported, one month before the scheduled airing of Holocaust, ^{have} to/cut from the refugee special. Another section, according to the producer, that shows Norwegian Nazis marching through the streets of Oslo, was also expected to be edited out of the show.

draft 3

GERMANY -- TOUCHING A NATIONAL NERVE

The American-made television series Holocaust was aired on West Germany's regional television stations on January 22, 23, 24 and 26, 1979, and it quickly generated an emotional response far greater than anyone had expected.

Only two days before the series' start, Heinz Galinski, leader of the West Berlin Jewish community, told the New York Times that the real issue was how many would actually see it, since the show was to be run on the little-watched regional stations. With the two national networks refusing the show, and with most pre-broadcast reviews criticizing it for errors of historical detail allegedly and for trivializing its topic by placing it in a soap opera-like serial context, the Cologne based station that bought and co-ordinated its airing, ~~the~~ WRD, hoped to gain 15% of the viewing audience.

Yet when the figures were in, Holocaust had garnered 32% of its first night's viewing audience, then 35%, 39%, and finally, 41% for the final episode. That last audience contained ~~some~~ 14 million people, and, all told, some 20 millions saw the show--about one-third of the nation. It was, WRD spokesmen ^{said} were pleased to say, unprecedented.

A follow-up discussion with ~~various~~ ^{experts} on the Nazi era was also broadcast each evening, and viewers were invited to call in to talk with the experts. Despite the 11:00 ^{P.M.} start of the discussion in a nation where early-to-bed, early-to-rise is the general rule, it too found a huge audience.

More than ~~5,200~~ calls came in during the first discussion's night, and they kept on coming in, during the day, during each episode and after, until some 50,000 calls had been logged.

CATHARSIS?

Many viewers were badly upset by the show, some could not watch complete

THE MEDIA

Such responses were widespread as an amazed mass media turned to examine the show's huge impact, and what it told about the German people, their young, and their relation to their past.

"A whole nation has now set out in search of its history," declared the radio station Norddeutscher Rundfunk. The Stuttgarter Zeitung newspaper concluded that "the film has altered our awareness," and the aroused interest in the past, wrote the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, was "a revelation."

One month later, the show was "still the leading theme in the country," reported Variety magazine. The mass circulation tabloid Bild ran a novelized form of the story, and seven top ~~German~~ writers, including Gunter Grass and Nobel Prize-winner Heinrich Boll, jointly offered to work on a German-made version.

THE YOUNG

One segment of the West German population stood out in the degree to which it had been moved by the program the young. A report on "The Impact of 'Holocaust'" by the Federal government stated that "People aged 20 to 25 showed the most interest," and the Hamburger Morgenpost and other papers agreed.

The Political
~~AXSMZKRY~~ (Education Office survey found that young people in particular wanted to learn more about the Nazi era, and that many admitted they now understood the reasons behind the reparations payments. But of those over 40, the poll found, 73% felt they knew enough already about the Hitler period

Another poll found that the ¹⁹⁻³⁴ age group most strongly favored the abolition of the statute of limitations on Nazi war crimes (by 71.6%) of all who saw the series. Equally telling was the finding that it was in the youngest age group (under 18) that the widest gulf between viewers and non-viewers appeared on this issue. Only 7.9% of the non-viewing youngsters opposed the statute, while 46.7% of the teenaged viewers opposed it. And, although moderate sized differences emerged between viewers and non-viewers on the issue in the older age groups, it was this youngest group, followed by the 19-34 group, that evidenced the largest ^{such} percentage

episodes, others were unable to fall asleep afterwards. Everywhere, the program was the major topic of conversation.

A survey taken by the Federal Office for Political Education found that, before the show's airing, 49% of its respondents felt the 1944 plot to kill Hitler was justified, and that after the series, 63% felt that way. Similarly, polls taken before and after the series found those opposing the statute of limitations against war crimes prosecutions doubling and even tripling after Holocaust was aired. A third sample by the Federal Office, taken three months after the second one, found that the attitudinal changes had persisted.

Yet the "negative reaction at the start of the first broadcast was terrifyingly high," Cologne station announcer Ivo Frenzel recounted, and the first two surveys also found an unchanged 30% bloc that felt "Nazism was a basically good idea that was only carried out badly."

One of the more striking results of the show was its effect upon the Bavarian village of Oberammergau, the city which has produced each decade for centuries since produced a Passion Play widely criticized as anti-semitic.

1634 "Many people are walking around the streets of the village saying 'God's sake,' shaking their heads in disbelief. 'How did we let it happen,'" said the director of the proposed altered version of the Play, Hans Schwaighofer. Many villagers declined or delayed answering the town council's letter asking them to sign up for the 1980 production, and the time allowed for such responses was extended.

Further evidence of Holocaust's impact came in many of the calls received after the initial flood of angry calls, by WRD. Callers offered new documents, trial records, diaries and photographs of atrocities, in an effort to unburden themselves and to help prove that it really did happen. Former prison camp guards called to ask for help with their own memories, and the vast majority of callers expressed shame, regret, horror or astonishment. The sensational press carried stories of former SS men who were deserted by their families, and Simon Wiesenthal, the well-known Nazi hunter, reported a sudden influx of calls and letters about former Nazis in the country by informants who had been shaken by Holocaust.

The widely read Der Spiegel wrote on Jan. 29: "Was this in the final reckoning really the catharsis? Thirty-four years after the end of the war and the Nazi era, the end of our inability to mourn?"

differences in their opposition to the statute. This, too, supported the conclusion that young Germans were the most changed by Holocaust

RELIGIOUS RESPONSES

Among those pleased with the show was Berlin Jewish community's chairman Galinski, who applauded the "beneficial effect" it had, particularly upon the statute of limitations issue and upon the young.

The general secretary of the Jewish Central Council in Germany, Alexander Ginsburg, suggested that "a conversation is beginning which has been avoided for years. This is good for democracy "

Before the ~~series~~ ^{series} was shown, church groups recommended viewing it, and after, many screened it again for their members. Still, the Churches came in for some criticism from those who called the broadcasting stations to ask why the Churches hadn't used their authority to oppose Nazism?

The Roman Catholic response to the series consisted largely of attempts to explain its position during the era. The ^{Roman Catholic} weekly Petrusblatt ran a small, favorable editorial on Holocaust, followed by the text of a 1942 report, which it claimed to have just found, that had been sent to Rome by the director of a Catholic office in Berlin set up to help non-Aryan Christians and Jews.

Catholic publications ran stories in this ^{vein} ~~direction~~ during the following month, including many explaining the 1933 Concordat signed between the Holy See and the Nazis. The articles led many inside and outside the Church to ask if it were belatedly trying to justify its actions of that era.

A high point in this questioning came with an article by the Catholic philosopher, Karl Heinz Deschner, in a February issue of the liberal daily, the Frankfurter Rundschau. In it, Deschner asserted that the German Catholic bishops supported rearmament and WWI and that the Vatican secretly agreed in 1933 to compulsory German military training, produced numerous quotes showing Church support for the Nazi regime, and argued that the Church's age-old persecution of Jews had laid the groundwork for Nazi anti-semitism

emotional reconsiderations of the Nazi era.

In West Germany, it was seen by an audience of unprecedented size on the nation's little-watched regional station network and produced what the important newspaper Die Welt called a national "catharsis." Holocaust led to the first widespread, serious teaching about the era it depicted in West German schools and observers believe the series was a significant factor behind the abolition of the statute of limitations on war crimes prosecutions by the German Parliament.

In France, it stirred a major controversy even before it was shown (without which it would not have been aired). While most of the French reacted with strong support for the series, Holocaust brought to the surface uncomfortable memories of collaboration with the Nazis and of the Vichy government.

The series received very large audiences in England, despite largely unfavorable media reviews of the series.

It also received huge audiences in Italy, Greece and Sweden, where half of the nation watched Holocaust.

In the Netherlands, Holocaust was shown after several major Nazi war criminals issues had agitated the nation for a number of years. Thus, while fully half the Dutch watched it, Holocaust also touched upon many unpleasant memories

In the United States, it was received very well by an audience of 120 million people. But in Canada, it appeared to stir certain fears and antagonisms.

In the two-island republic of Trinidad and Tobago, it was very well received, and critics who found fault with the series found themselves chastized by many letters to the editor of their newspaper.

In Australia, Holocaust broke all previous records and emotionally moved a large portion of the nation's viewing audience.

The Protestant (Evangelical) Church's response was less controversial, with its weekly newspaper, the Berliner ~~Zeitung~~ Sonntagsblatt, perceiving the crucial issue as being could it happen again, here or elsewhere?

"The origin of the political involvement of the Church today," declared the paper's editorial committee chairman on the front page, "... lies in the experience of the Church in the Third Reich." He noted with concern "a withdrawal from political preaching and a restricting of activity to the defending of our private interests "

Much smaller differences in the viewing behavior of the religious groups were indicated by one poll, which found Protestants (56.3% of the sample who gave their religion) comprising 55.2% of the viewing audience and 56.1% of the non-viewers. Catholics tilted a bit more towards viewing the series (10.5% of the respondents, 11.7% of the viewers, 9.0% of the non-viewers), as did Jews (0.5% of the respondents, 0.7% of the viewers, 0.3% of the non-viewers). Thus Protestants provided a slightly disproportionately small percentage of Holocaust viewers.

POLITICAL RESPONSES

The right-wing response to Holocaust was predictably negative.

Neo-Nazis attacked it as lies, trash and anti-German propaganda, and, where they couldn't deny parts fumed that it ignored German suffering during the War.

The Deutsche National Zeitung banner-headlined the series as "The Big Lie," and "The Big Fraud," and claimed there was no proof the Final Solution actually meant extermination of the Jewish people. The German people, it said, were being "brainwashed" into guilt, helplessness and "national masochism."

The monthly publication of the National Democratic Party asked "How many billions are Germans to pay now," and worked the theme of "hate-mongering atrocity stories of US-Jewish profiteers." At stake, it claimed, was the destruction of Germany and "the doom of the West "

More than verbal blasts, however, surfaced in the right's attack on the series. Two television facilities were bombed by Neo-Nazi groups during the airing of a preparatory documentary, The Final Solution. An old synagogue in Essen was

~~was~~ burned shortly before the series was started.

The nation's most conservative major politician, Christian Social Union chief Franz Josef Strauss, warned of a "new anti-German wave in Western Europe," and asked why television didn't focus on other topics like the Soviet treatment of German WWII POWs

Christian Democratic Union leader Helmut Kohl noted the "intense debate" provoked by the series, and argued that people should be made aware of the power of totalitarianism both right and left.

Hans Koschnick, deputy chairman of the governing Social Democratic Party, said that Germans "cannot, dare not, fly from this chapter of our history," and that the show 'will shake up those who don't want to face the truth about the past .."

Speaking on the floor of Parliament, Chancellor Helmut Schmidt praised the series, stating that "this film forces one to think critically, to think morally."

Also strongly in support of the series were most of the nation's liberal or left publications, and the Trade Union Federation and each of its 17 member unions issued strongly supportive statements on the program.

THE STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS

most
The/ significant impact the film had within the political realm was upon the statute of limitations for war crimes. This law, under which the last date for the start of war criminals' trials was to have been Dec. 30, 1979, was already before Parliament for reconsideration when Holocaust was shown. After the show's airing, Justice Minister Hans-Jochen Vogel noted a surge of support for an end to the statute, and ruling party chairman Hans Koschnick came out for abolishing the statute.

No observer doubted that the series had helped, in no small way, to convince the Bundestag to abolish the statute.

"The most striking manifestation of this concern" with the past, which had been sparked by the series, noted the Christian Science Monitor "has been the growing sentiment against letting the legal liability for Nazi crimes expire as scheduled..." The Monitor noted one poll that found those against the statute jumping from 15% to 39%, and another poll found ^{that} that percentage tripled from 14% to 47%.

The important daily newspaper Die Welt thought that "people who have until now opposed the extension of the statute .. may have changed their minds," and one of them, it appeared, was Christian Democratic Party chief Kohl. He had previously stated "I am definitely opposed to a general abolition of limitations," but after the series appeared uncertain, saying that every Member of Parliament had to "make up his own mind."

Chancellor Schmidt thought the series was a "must" for those voting on the statute

"The timing was perfect," thought Galinski, "because it came at a time "when there is talk of the Auschwitz holocaust, when some students are making jokes again about Jews, when the statute of limitations .. is an issue." This, he said, was all happening in the context of a period when "everybody seems to be preaching 'let us forget'."

It was clear that the series did not allow the Bundestag to forget.

EAST GERMANY

The impact of the series spilled over into East Germany as well, despite the fact that it was not shown there. Some 3 million East Germans along the West German border did see the show, and a spokesman for West German television told of many calls from East Berlin not only supporting the show (by 3 to 1), but complaining that it had not been shown on West German national television. (Had it been broadcast on one of the national stations, all of East Germany would have been able to see the series)

Thousands of East Germans appealed to their nation's leaders to run it, and E German Party boss Erich Honecker felt constrained to state in February that his nation's anti-fascist standards and past films relieved it of any need to run the series

EDUCATION

The surprise with which the film was met by young West German viewers produced a questioning of the quality of teaching about the Nazi era, and many gave low marks to education in this subject. "What goes on in the schools is a catastrophe, so little is taught, and so late," one teacher was quoted as saying.

History teachers, it was reported, often failed to take their classes past the last Kaiser, and a post-Holocaust American Jewish Committee study found that available textbooks, although accurate in their accounts of the Nazi persecution of Jews, fail to provide a historical context for the persecution.

The demand for topical educational material that followed the show caught the Federal Office for Political Education off guard. It had printed 250,000 copies of an informational kit correlated with the program--and quickly had to print more.

Also producing similar material was the North-Rhein-Westphalia provincial authority, and the Adolf Grimm Institute for Adult Education in Marx Marl, which prepared material on the problem- of teaching about fascism and the Final Solution

The German Council for Christian-Jewish Understanding in Frankfurt produced a special enlarged issue of its regular bulletin, combining material on ~~the~~

Krsstallnacht, ³ 250,000 of which were distributed throughout the nation.

"The film is good for those who don't know anything about the time," said a member of the Jewish Student's Federation in West Berlin. "Teachers could take this as a basis to do more about the problem." Teachers Trade Unions did do so, with many looking into the ways in which the Holocaust era could best be taught to their students. The importance of effecting teaching about the Nazi era was noted by Jewish communal leader Galinski. "We don't want to make the over 50 percent of the population who were born after 1945 responsible for what happened," he said, "but they are responsible for a future free of prejudice and the rule of base instincts."



AUSTRIA--MOVED BUT NOT UNANIMOUSLY

"Shown almost exactly 41 years after Austria, subverted from within by its own sizable Nazi Party, was forcibly swallowed up into the greater Reich, Holocaust riveted the country's biggest-ever radio-TV audience," reported the Christian Science Monitor ^(date). The series sparked a wide re-examination of the nation's past, one that led many to conclude that the program was important and worthwhile, but it also angered not a few who resented the re-examination. Thus the foreign press drew contradictory interpretations of just what the response to the program really had been.

"Holocaust Moves Austrian Viewers," wrote the Washington Post, while the Jewish Telegraphic Agency found a "Mixed Reaction to 'Holocaust' Film." Variety magazine told its readers that "Austria Reacts Mostly 'Favorable' to 'Holocaust': 13% Negative," but the New York Times thought that "Many Austrians Seem to Bristle at TV 'Holocaust,'" and the Religious News Service found "Austrians Not Sympathetic to Airing of Holocaust."

Unarguably, the showing of the series on the government owned ORF television and radio network touched off a major national debate about the Nazi era. In a country whose capital welcomed the fuhrer with open arms, Holocaust sparked a new interest in the past among the young, led to the first serious teaching about the era, and brought about a wide ranging set of responses in the press and from the politicians.

The program was shown in uninterrupted installments on prime time on March 1, 2, 3, and 4, 1979. It was preceded by panel discussions on television and radio that included elected officials, scholars, historians, and concentration camp survivors, as well as the showing of films and documents from the German and Allied archives. Before Holocaust was shown, Austrian television aired "The Final Solution," and this documentary on the extermination program

was viewed by one million Austrians.

THE FIGURES

Two and one-fifth million Austrians, or 44% of the population, saw the entire series (as compared with 29% in Germany), and 2.9 million, or 50%, (59% of those over 18) saw at least one installment.

ORF officials reported that they received a record 1,500 calls about the first episode, about equally divided between pro- and anti-Holocaust. Newspaper polls at the time indicated a similar division.

"There were strong anti-semitic comments and calls urging TV officials to show 'other cruelties' as well," noted public opinion analyst Peter Diem, who monitored the initial night's response. There were enough such calls to make the Jewish Telegraphic Agency report that many/Austrians "appeared querulous about the reminder of their Nazi past."

But, Diem observed, "the number of positive reactions gradually increased" that night as the program ended and after.

By the time the series was over, ORF had gotten 7,361 calls--again, a record--and that represented a larger percentage of viewers calling in than the German station WRD had experienced.

An analysis of the calls that came in throughout the entire series added more depth to Diem's observation. 44% of those surveyed thought well of the series, while 32% disliked it. The remainder were non-committal. Many in that 44% expressed their awareness often, it seemed, for the first time, ORF reported, of the lesson the series bore.

Other data suggested that the program roused a higher percentage of those who disliked it than of those who liked it to pick up the telephone. A joint poll by Austrian public opinion research organizations showed that 87% of all viewers reacted positively to Holocaust, while only 13% reacted negatively. The poll found that 92% agreed it was "credible," that 79% found it "genuinely moving," that 73% thought it "necessary," and that 68% thought

Holocaust "objective " Only 5% actually objected to it.

This breakdown suggests certain fine distinctions--that not all those who found it credible were also moved by it, that some thought it was necessary even if it was not objective, for example. But a more significant aspect of the viewer response is suggested by the fact that before the showing, a poll found 74% of its respondents against Holocaust's being shown and only 24% in favor. Holocaust, then, represented a breakthrough in the public's conception of how the Nazi past should be treated.

The young, in particular, reacted strongly to what were, for them, the revelations of the program. "There was an extraordinary radio debate," reported the Christian Science Monitor, "between parents and their own teenage and older children."

"The later," the paper related, "would have none of the well worn arguments that 'the past should be forgotten.' 'You are wrong,' one 18 year old told his father 'I don't know how you (your generation) lived all these years without telling us what happened '"

THE PRESS

The press reaction to Holocaust was a mixed one.

The Jewish Chronicle of London reported that "All the Vienna dailies" applauded the showing of Holocaust, with the exception of the ultra-conservative Die Presse. But the Religious News Service reported that the press reaction was largely hostile to the series.

Die Presse, which styles itself as 'The "Times" of Austria," and whose reputation rests largely upon its past--when its heavily Jewish editorial staff included Theodore Herzl, the founder of Zionism, and David Ben Gurion, Israel's first Prime Minister--dismissed Holocaust as "horror bore in the Hollywood manner." Paul Hoffman, writing from Vienna for the New York Times reported that it described the / only "speculation on scare and guilt feelings," and that it complained that no television series had been done on

the bombing of Hamburg, the slaughter under Stalin, or the Pol Pot regime's ^{SS/}massacres in Cambodia.

Hoffman also noted that the provincial newspaper Salzburger Volksblatt did not approve of the show, and ran a series on "The Other Holocaust"-- the post-war expulsion of Germans from Czechoslovakia. The Neu Kronen-Zeitung, the Austrian paper with the largest circulation, he reported, filled two pages with what it stated was a representative selection of reader comments phoned in after the first part of Holocaust was on the air. Only 10 out of 30 unequivocally expressed shame or horror (Hoffman did not relate opinion analyst Diem's findings that negative calls to the broadcasting station were at their peak at this same time.)

Hoffman reported that

On the other hand, the Vienna news magazine, Profil, produced a special issue on "Austria's Share in the Final Solution," which recalled that Adolf Eichmann grew up in Austria. The magazine listed other prominent Austrian Nazis and concluded that "Austrians joined in the murders wherever Austrian Hitler and his German henchmen wished."

Hoffman's reporting drew a private letter to the New York Times from Thomas Nowotny, Consul General of Austria in New York. Hoffman's story was written, charged Nowotny, "in a way which must be termed misleading, if not in fact an outright misrepresentation."

"Of the numerous letters to the editor written to various Austrian publications, an overwhelming majority expressed themselves strongly in favor of the program, and also of the subsequent televised discussions... Why doesn't he mention," Nowotny asked, "that the editorials he chose to quote were among the few exceptions, that virtually all others came out in strong support of the series?"

But he did not dispute the text of the quotes. For there were two sides to the Austrian response. and the minority side was still large enough to

lead the Jewish Telegraphic Agency to report a "mixed reaction" in the nation, and to convince the Religious News Service that the media had been largely hostile to the film.

THE POLITICIANS' RESPONSE

Chancellor Bruno Kreisky seemed to reflect the nation's supportive but at the same time somewhat ambiguous response in his statements about the series.

Addressing a Socialist Party convention on the day of the first evening's broadcast, he said he thought the series should prompt a discussion about the roots of Nazism. "We have to make sure that it will not happen again," he said. "We must talk sensibly with each other and not look silently."

He declared that he knew more than most people about the crimes of the era because of the close friends and relatives he had lost then, but warned against a "mindless black and white painting that simply pronounces all those guilty who lived then, and presumes to judge them without knowing of the pain that is haunting them." "Yet, without examining how it could occur," he thought, "we will not be more intelligent another time."

When asked if he had seen it, Kreisky (who is Jewish) replied that he had not, explaining that "Anyone who counted the victims of Nazi persecution in his own family did not need this film." He was also quoted as saying that "Neither nationalism nor chauvinism, including Jewish chauvinism, will help solve the problem of anti-semitism."

A leading member of Parliament, Dr. Otto Scrinzi, was perhaps the most prominent spokesman for the right-wing antagonism to the series. "One thing seems sure," he claimed, "the cash registers in Hollywood and Moscow are in

harmony." By this he meant to suggest that the series had not only been produced in Hollywood, but financed by the U.S.S.R. to undermine the Germans.

The only leading figure to come close to threatening the Jews, Scrinzi spoke of the "deep irrationality" of the Jewish personality and religion, which, he said, was apt to "trigger confusions, fear and eventually bloody aggressions in almost all host nations."

Scrinzi's remarks, however, drew many caustic responses in the Vienna magazine, Profil.

THE RIGHT

There was no denying that the Austrian right, limited though it was in numbers, represented the opinions of a larger number of Austrians in their views about Holocaust. And it made its views known

In addition to the anti-semitic and anti-Holocaust calls that ORF and the Neu Kronen Zeitung received, there were anti-Holocaust leaflets distributed by neo-Nazis in various cities, such as Graz, in southern Austria, where leaflets appeared calling Holocaust "the biggest lie in history."

In Vienna, demonstrators were expected around the ORF studio, and the police threw a security cordon around the building. But no protestors appeared. The director of Channel 2, however, received death threats relating to the program's airing.

In effect providing further testimony to the powerful impact Holocaust had upon most Austrians, the right-wing Freedom Party fell victim to an internal split over the series. Its national leaders vehemently dissociated themselves from the anti-Holocaust pamphlets published by the party's own extremist wing.

The showing of Holocaust also lead almost 100 Vienna University professors and staff members to sign a call for the outlawing of another far right group, the Action New Right

EDUCATION

The government did respond to the series, in a more significant fashion. The Minister of Education, Fred Sinowitz, had anticipated, before its airing, that the interest generated by Holocaust would spill over into the classrooms. To help teachers prepare for this, the Ministry sent to the schools a list of information materials which teachers could request.

"After the war and until quite recently," noted the Christian Science Monitor, "history teaching in Austrian schools and universities on the whole 1933-45 Nazi period was scrumpy. Watching Holocaust, young people seemed to suddenly be realizing just how much had been omitted and to resent it."

After the airing had begun, Sinowitz requested that Austrian teachers "deal with the horrors of the Nazi occupation during World War II." He ordered teachers to institute detailed and serious talks on the film and its significance for today and the future.

CATCHING THE NATION'S CONSCIENCE

The prestigious French newspaper Le Monde told its readers that Holocaust was "a shock for the Austrians" that "caught the conscience" of the nation.

Simon Weisenthal reported that his Vienna office was flooded with more than 300 calls after the series was shown. This spate of tips on the whereabouts of former Nazis represented, he said, more than had been received in 3 years.

And Alfred Stroer, a leading official of the Austrian Federation of Trade Unions, told his co-unionists at a banquet commemorating Austrian resistance to the Nazi's March 13th, 1938, invasion that Holocaust had convinced a majority of Austrians that the terrors of the Nazi rule must not occur again.

There is no doubt that on the whole, the consensual repression of the knowledge of a terrible era had been thrown aside by Holocaust. Not all were pleased by the experience of reconsidering the past, but the great majority of Austrians found that doing so was both necessary and worth the emotional price.

ITALY--REMEMBERING THE BETTER SIDE OF THE PAST TOO

Reports of the huge response to Holocaust in Germany and the U.S. stirred a great deal of interest in the program in Italy. Even before its Italian showing, the program was the subject of wide commentary in Italian newspapers and journals. When Holocaust was shown, it played to huge, although not record breaking audiences, and its recollection of history quickly became ammunition for the partisan politics of an election period.

But, even though Mussolini had been Hitler's ally, the Italian response was not comparable to the German one. Italy had not been the focus of the Nazi madness, and, as the Italian press pointed out, had granted only a limited acceptance of anti-semitism in that period and widely disregarded Mussolini's racial laws.

~~Before~~ the decision to buy Holocaust was made by the state run Channel One national network, Italy was, reported TV Guide, "torn between its desire to purchase Holocaust--and its dependence on Arab oil; Holocaust eventually won."

The series, which was broadcast over a five week period beginning on May 20, 1979, played to 18.5 million viewers on its opening night, according to the station. This was followed by even larger audience figures--20.8 million, 19.3 million, 21 million, and again, 21 million for the final installment.

Unlike Germany where, the Italian press told its readers, the citizens were largely unaware of their own national past, the Italians had never been allowed to forget World War II. Many books have been written on the Italian resistance to the Nazis, and the political alignments in Italy--25% Communist and 50 to 60% anti-Fascist Socialist, Social Democrat and Christian Democrat--have insured that the left-wing parties have kept alive the horrors of the time as part of their strategy for combatting contemporary neo-fascist parties.

The program inspired large newspaper headlines and partisan comment from political parties and candidates but most of the citizenry, reported the New York Times, seemed to take the series "in stride." That stride was

clearly favorable: one poll of 100 viewers found 31 who thought it excellent, 41 who thought it good, and only 2 who responded negatively to Holocaust.

Spokespersons for the political parties each addressed the series in terms of their own ^{ideological positions.} ~~priorities.~~ Thus Marco Pannella, the leader of the anti-Communist Radical Party, said that "I don't know when the film will get around to August 1939, when Nazis and Stalinists united to strike at Poland and to massacre Jews, anti-Fascists and opponents of the Third Reich and the revolution." And Antonello Trombadori, an official of the Communist Party, and thus no friend of the Church, asked "At what point did Catholic discrimination against Judaism and the atheist racism of the Nazis converge?"

A spokesman for the National Democracy, a neo-Fascist group, had other thoughts. Pietro Cerullo charged that the decision to show the series in the middle of an election campaign would benefit both the Christian Democrats and the Communists and that the scheduling represented "the worst kind of partisanship" by the state-run network, and indeed, the show was originally scheduled for an end of the year airing.

But there were others who viewed the scheduling differently. Holocaust was shown on Sunday evenings in the middle of a 100-degree breaking heat wave, as well as in the middle of an election campaign. Some people in the industry feared that many potential viewers would miss the series because they would be coming home from the beach while it was on the air. They wondered whether RAI Television had tried to sabotage the showing by its timing.

The airing, though it generated none of the astonishing re-examination of national guilt and responsibilities that it did in Germany, was met by the viewing public with "deep interest and much sympathy," as the Jewish Chronicle of London reported. This assessment was generally agreed with, and critics provided two reasons for it. The first was that many Italians had lived through the experiences shown, and so found identification with the Nazi-inflicted sufferings too painful. The second was ~~as~~ described by Il Messaggero, the Rome daily. "During the four evenings dedicated to 'Holocaust,'" (in Germany) "the streets of the

cities were deserted," it recalled. "The fact that our streets are deserted only on the occasion of a national soccer match," it suggested, was because "Italian anti-semitism was confined to only a fanatic minority. The masses do not feel indirect guilt nor involvement in the horrors" Holocaust portrayed.

As in other nations, some newspapers criticized the show for its "Hollywood style," but many still carried various stories on how the Italian government, under Fascism, intervened to protect and save Jews. On the air, meanwhile, an ongoing debate about anti-semitism past and present was a staple of the nation's news broadcasts.

An article in Il Giorno, for example, described some of the ways in which Mussolini's 1938 racial edicts were ignored, and cited several World War II documents showing how this proved to be a problem for fascist officials. One such document was a irate report from an SS commander in France complaining that "the Italian military authorities and police protect the Jews with every means at their disposal," sheltering 1000 Jewish refugees "in the best hotels " on the Ligurian coast.

A telegram from Roberto Ducci, then head of the Italian ~~xxx~~ Croatian office, now Italy's Ambassador to England, describing how he saved numerous Jews in Italian/ occupied territories from ~~deportation~~ was also cited in that newspaper. In it he ruled that Italian citizenship would be granted not only to Jews born in the occupation zone, but to those living there, and those having close relatives, or property there.

La Repubblica, another Rome daily, carried a large personal memoir by the son of the Italian Consul in Stuttgart in 1934, Italo A. Chiusano. He recalled his father's refusal to eat in restaurants that barred Jews and his reply to an SS officer who told ~~him~~ ^{him} about the Jewish "lack of creativity." To this, the story recounted, he replied that "Four great Jews of German-speaking origin" "founded the modern world"--Marx, Einstein, Freud and Kafka.

This public discussion did re-sensitize the Italian people to the history of Nazi crimes. It also, suggested the Jewish Telegraphic Agency correspondent in Rome, "perhaps added a context of deeper understanding to the words recently spoken by Pope John Paul II in behalf of Jewish victims at Auschwitz and has aroused public opinion to a stronger stand in favor of the abolition of the statute of limitations on war crimes in Germany."

The Union of Italian Jewish Communities, at this time, requested that the Italian government send an observer to the Bundestag for the then upcoming debate on the statute.

The emotional impact that the show had^{on} was, to some extent, an age-delimited phenomena^{on} people in their 20s and early 30s, reported the New York Times, gave a "lukewarm" response to Holocaust, since many had already seen ~~many~~ films and read ~~many~~ books on its topic. But many schools held class discussions about the series, and teachers reported that interest was especially high among pupils in their early teens, who had little exposure to the Nazi history of horrors.

That was not the only related broadcast which Italian television presented to its viewers. Following the first installment of Holocaust on Channel One, Channel Two aired a documentary entitled "Palestinians of the Diaspora". This consisted of interviews with Palestinians in the United States and in the Arab world, and included scenes of a refugee camp. It laid the burden for Palestinian suffering at Israel's door.

The JTA correspondent wrote that "the juxtaposition of the two, hardly coincidental, was an attempt by the media to equate the persecution of the Jews by the Nazis during World War II and the plight of the Palestinian Arabs today. In the announcement that preceded and followed each telecast," she wrote, "the Palestinian people were described as 'The New Jews of History'."

This linkage was not ~~confirmed~~^{confirmed} to television. Il Messaggero published summaries of Holocaust's first segment and of the Palestinian documentary on its television page. It stated that the documentary's theme "concerns another tragedy," and asked, "Has nothing been learned by History?"

Overtly anti-semitic responses to the series also made their appearance, on the walls of the city center in Padua, and there was a general increase in neo-Nazi graffiti, including one that read "Long Live Dorf."

But neither the graffiti, nor the Palestinian documentary, nor even the partisan utilization of the series made by campaign officials changed the fact that at least 21 million people, out of some 54 million, watched Holocaust--in the nation that had been Hitler's European ally.

* The Communist party in Italy has been assigned the role of chief propagandist for the PLO in Europe and has been active in producing pamphlets, posters, films, and public demonstrations in support of the PLO. Linkages are known to exist between the radical Red Army in Italy and the PLO, which has trained many guerrillas from Italy as well as from other countries in Europe, Latin America, Africa, and Asia.

ENGLAND-- CRITICS THUMBS DOWN, BUT TV SETS ON

generally
Even though the British press/turned thumbs down upon Holocaust,
the British viewing audience turned its televisions on. 19 million saw
the show, the second largest audience in British viewing history.

The series, which was aired on BBC-1 from September 3rd to 6th, 1978,
was generally criticized as yet another product of the American entertainment
production machine--an aspect of U S culture which the British, whose
cultural preferences are largely rooted in the nation's aristocracy, have
seldom -- looked upon with favor.

Even before Holocaust was televised, the critics had begun to criticize
it, and the BBC came under some pressure about the show from other quarters
as well

A Polish exile group petitioned the BBC for an early screening, which they
received. The exiles did not like the sequence in which Polish collaborators
appeared, and asked for its removal. Holocaust Producer Buzz Berger refused
yet when the series was aired, the segment had been removed.

Displeasure, or the expectation of it, in another sector also played into
the picture. "There was/surprising resistance to buy in some countries--even
in Britain," Kevin O'Sullivan, president of Worldvision, the syndicator for
the series, told the TV Guide. "Finally, one senior British broadcast official
--himself Jewish--told us: 'We are concerned that the National Front might
find it offensive.'"

"He meant, Sullivan explained, "the local fascists."

CRITICAL PRESS

The view which held that the series was Hollywood "trivia" was put quite
bluntly by Tom Bell, the British actor who played Eichmann in the series.
In a pre-airing interview, Bell told the Evening Standard that the show was
"a soap opera designed to be spectacular and make money "

Most criticism, though negative, was not so biting. That same article also quoted another English actor, Cyril Shaps--who is Jewish--as saying that at first he wondered "why are they doing this," but ~~that~~ he then 'read about the one or two books which denied that the extermination of the Jews ever took place and I was glad it was going to be made.'

The Daily Telegraph claimed the series was "abysmal," and that the violence was "indistinguishable from a thousand Westerns, and the Daily Express agreed, saying that "the Buchenwald concentration camp looks almost out of Ideal Homes." But the Evening Standard wrote that "Publishers also hope to make a profit, but books are not spurned for that reason. . any popularisation inevitably involves some vulgarisation." This, it wrote, is "the price for mass exposure."

The Standard also ran a man-in-the-street interview segment after the first show which pointed up how the average viewer's ideas about the series



differed from that held by most critics "It shows the bare facts which we should all know," said one respondent, and the least positive reaction it heard was that "I know all about what happened"--and this respondent concluded "But you can never forget, can you?"

The show's ^{final} instalment was followed by a discussion whose participants complemented the show's producers and the BBC for buying it, but which one reviewer felt was "confused" and lacked depth.

TASTE NOT POLITICS

The series stirred up some debate, but the issue was one of taste rather than of politics. Thus, while the Jerusalem Post's London correspondent could write of an "enormous controversy," Variety could report that Holocaust was "No big deal here."

The debate manifested itself in the calls that came in to the BBC about the show. One London newspaper reported from the BBC that "Switchboards ~~have~~ have been kept busy for hours late last night following the first" episode. The BBC received some 50 calls each of the show's first two nights, and another 30 the next day, and a spokesman said that "the reception was very mixed, but most callers seemed more concerned with the style and presentation... than the content."

"On Sunday, the majority of the calls were anti. But Monday's exaggerated press reports of the response prompted a reaction from people who thought the series good," said the spokesman. He concluded from the overall reaction that "It would appear that the Jewish tragedy is a less emotive issue in Britain than it was when it was shown in America."

OTHER REACTIONS

There were, however, other ~~various~~ indications that the series did touch many Britons deeply. The most frightening of these was the suicide of one woman after watching the show. Fanny Geddall, an 81-year old Jewish grandmother who was haunted by ~~the~~ what befell her husband's family in the Polish ghettos and death camps took an overdose of pills after the first episode. Though she

herself was born in England, she left a note saying that after watching the program, she wanted to leave the world.

Other viewers called it a nightmare, and one reported that she "could not sleep thinking about the awful things I had seen."

THE JEWISH RESPONSE

The Jewish response, one newspaper reported, was almost unanimously favorable; and the response of the nation's Jewish leadership, though mixed, was on the whole more positive than the general response to the series.

Rabbi Cyril Harris, Chairman of the U.K. Council of Ministers, said that the series did more harm than good, while Rabbi J.J. Kokotek, the Chairman of the Council of Reform and Liberal Rabbis, reported that he was impressed by the series, despite its flaws.

Kokotek, in fact, felt that the show's reach was large enough to provide an important opportunity to his fellow religious leaders. Along with the Office of the Chief Rabbi and the widely respected Dr. Solomon Gaon, he asked all ministers to give sermons on the holocaust. A similar call also emanated from the ^{British} Council of Christians and Jews.

The Holocaust Remembrance Group, an organization sponsored by the main groups within the Jewish Solidarity Committee, ~~was~~ also viewed the series as an opportunity for deepening British understanding of the holocaust era. It distributed 50,000 copies of a question-and-answer format booklet ^{on the holocaust} to synagogues and communal groups in Britain and Northern Ireland.

Several members of the Board of Deputies were also impressed by the show, Martin Savitt, Chairman of its defence committee, believed that "if it generates discussion about what really happened, it will have done its job," despite its weaknesses. Two other committees of the Board, the Yad Vashem and the Radio and Television Committees, sponsored a panel discussion in London two weeks after the series was shown, at which four experts considered

the show and the era it presented.

Historian Martin Gilbert, author-journalist Terrence Prittie, Jewish Agency representative Dr. S Levenberg, and the Rev. Dr. Isaac Levy were the panelists, and all four tended to restate ^(existing) criticisms of the series. Prittie was the most supportive of the series, saying that "maybe out of this film will come something extra--another look at Nazis and wartime Germany and also at the Germans who resisted."



of the
 Another indication ~~that~~ show's impact on the Jewish community was the predominance of letters on the subject in the London Jewish Chronicle's the week it was aired, letters to the editor section/ most of which applauded the series (though not without reservations) or contemplated its message

One noted the continuing plight of Russian and ~~the~~ Arabian Jews, and another was moved to ask "Why?" without finding any answer. But another letter stated that "A Jew with the basic knowledge of the atrocities will not find the programme informative "

One of the Jewish leaders who found serious flaws in the series was Rabbi Hugo Gryn, senior Rabbi of West London Synagogue, and a survivor of Auschwitz. In an essay on the series he wrote that "My admiration for the sheer daring of the conception must give way to a sense of frustration." Holocaust, he felt, "missed the point of the Holocaust itself" in its portrayal of its main characters

London?
 Also displeased was Dr. Nahum Goldman, honorary president of the World Jewish Congress. In an interview with the Polish news agency, he argued that "It is sheer nonsense to compare Poles with Nazis" because of their great suffering under the Nazi regime.

THE CHRISTIAN PRESS

The Christian media offered a large range of reactions to the series, stretching from the highly supportive to the seriously antagonistic.

The Roman Catholic Tablet writer "found that often I couldn't watch at all, that I trembled so violently and my heart thudded so fast that I thought I might become a later-day victim," and she commended the show to younger viewers' attention.

But the Methodist Recorder felt that "in this instance fiction underplayed the reality of the background."

dehumanization
 The Christian World critic felt a sense of "unreality" in the confluence of "romanticized violence and sentimentalized family life" which, however,

was shattered for him ^{when} ~~by~~ the actual shots of emaciated bodies and squads of camps prisoners were shown. "Suddenly the memory is jolted and we recall the revulsion and anger we once felt when the first pictures of the Nazi atrocities reached us," he wrote.

The non-secular response which caused the biggest stir was a feature article in the Church of England Newspaper by Colin Evans, who suspected the show "was made with strong Jewish backing in order to keep alive the white hot hate engendered by the events it records." After a disclaimer of "even the slightest anti-Jewish feeling," Evans contended that Christians and Jews are "divided in one respect. Revenge and retribution figure prominently in their interpretation of life, whereas our ideal... is reconciliation and peace without compromising justice." Christians, he asserted, "do not persist with the hate and the thirst for revenge."

The article roused a vigorous response, including one letter to the editor which was "appalled" by the "smug condemnation of Jewish desire for justice..." and which asked "is it not sheer insolence to ask the Jews to forget?"

Another response, signed by Rev. Phillip Schofield, contended that the issue "is not a Jewish/German problem, much less a Jewish/Gentile one; it ^{is} ~~is~~ the old story of evil.. " He called Evans' central contention "unhelpful," and asked by what justification Evans ~~asserted~~ made his assertions.

MILLIONS MORE BRITONS NOW KNOW

Despite the widespread criticisms, there ~~was no~~ ^{was no} significant question of the film's being showed, the need for such a program, or the truth upon which it rested. There were, however, reports of vandalism directed at Jewish property in Manchester. That city, which has the largest Jewish population in England after London, saw the smashing of windows at Mamlock House (headquarters of the Zionist movement in the city), at one ~~synagogue~~, and at the offices of two newspapers, the Jewish Telegraph and the Jewish Gazette.

But neither such violence, nor the controversy over production values, should obscure the basic fact of the wide public discussion that attended the showing of Holocaust. Nineteen million Britons watched the series, and many talked about it, read about it, wrote letters to the editor about it. Those who complained about the failings of the serial form were, after all, communicating that their feelings about the horrors of the Nazi era had been aroused and that they thought the show had failed to present those horrors in a fashion emotionally honest enough, or intellectually strong enough, to do the truth justice.

The Jerusalem Post's London correspondent summed up this underlying aspect of the British reaction to Holocaust when he wrote "one thing is clear--the series received so much publicity, both before and during the showing, that many more millions of Britons than before know something about what the Jews suffered at the hands of the Nazis."

BELGIUM

The Belgium Radio Television (BRT) Broadcasting organization was the first on the European continent to screen Holocaust. The September 13, 1978 start of the series was preceded by a great deal of publicity, and after it was shown, it garnered wide praise in the print media, including accolades from journalists who were known for their generally anti-Israel positions. It was watched, reported the Jewish Chronicle of London, by "a very large proportion of French-speaking Belgian viewers," nearly two millions.

The series also ~~waxxxx~~ brought into its broadcast station a record number of viewer call-ins.

The general reaction of the viewing audience, the Chronicle reported, was one of horror. Although Belgium suffered under the Nazi occupation, "many did not realize the extent of the cruelties inflicted on the Jews," wrote the Chronicle.

The Belgian press stressed the "positive and educative" value of the series, especially at a time of Nazi resurgence. And, on the same night, February 5, 1979, that the first episode was shown, more than 1,000 people demonstrated in Antwerp in protest against what the Jewish Telegraphic Agency reported is a "mounting tide of neo-Nazi activities. The demonstrators marched through the city's streets after having first attended a public showing of the film, "In the Fuhrer's Name," produced and directed by a Belgian, Lydia Chagall. Among the marchers," noted the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, "were members of the Socialist and Communist Parties, clergymen and a large number of public figures "

The Jewish national committee, which will build a memorial to wartime Belgian Jewish resistance fighters against the Nazis, drafted a pamphlet on the Holocaust series to issue to teachers as informational material for

their class discussions. To help expedite this, the committee, which has as its co-chairmen Professor Chaim Perelman of Brussels University and Mr. J. Komkommer of Antwerp, approached the Ministry of Education.

The need for such educational efforts was highlighted by the report of a Belgian television reporter who interviewed several young viewers, aged from 10 to 14 years of age. Most of them, he found, did not know the facts about the holocaust. They were also deeply impressed by the television program, and wanted to know more, he found. Only a few of the parents of the non-Jewish youngsters had provided their offspring with any information about the extermination program.

But one Belgian youth nonetheless made an excellent showing for his on the debate that followed on the Belgian stations. The debate included a number of prominent persons, but was, wrote one reporter, of less than the highest quality. Most of the panelists were unequipped for such a program, and of the entire youth group that participated, it was only that one student who responded with alertness and intelligence

Jean Francois Steiner, author of Treblinka (which met with much contention because of its argument that the Jewish victims of that death camp went to the massacre like sheep) suggested that "It's their right, it doesn't bother me," when asked about anti-semitism and housing and social club segregation. It was the young student who replied most cogently to this assertion.

Belgium's Flemish television channel showed Holocaust in October, 1978.

SWITZERLAND

More than half a million Swiss viewers saw the first installment of Holocaust when it was broadcast in April, 1979, by the nation's French-language television stations--despite the fact that 20% of the viewers had already seen it on French or West German broadcasts. In addition, the series was aired the following month on the nation's German-language stations.

Before the film was shown, anti-Semitic propaganda and anti-Semitic incidents appeared in various places around the nation. Though there was no reported indication that these incidents represented a co-ordinated resurgence of anti-Semitism, Swiss authorities were reported to be concerned about the vandalism and desecrations that included the painting of anti-Semitic slogans and swastikas on the Dufourstrasse Synagogue in Zurich and the vandalism which accompanied the graffiti. The synagogue was broken into and was reported to have suffered "considerable damage."

In Basle, the Jewish cemetery was desecrated and anti-Semitic slogans were scratched into several tombstones.

The La-Chaux-de-Ford synagogue suffered a bomb hoax, and anti-Semitic literature was openly displayed in public areas in Geneva.

Each of the French-language broadcasts were preceded by very sympathetic televised debates, the participants of which included death camp survivors, historians and journalists. They discussed the attitudes behind anti-Semitism, the murder of the six million by the Nazis, the role of the Jewish resistance, and the silence of the Red Cross in the face of the terror. One show included a portion that centered upon the kind attitude of the Swiss to the Jewish people in general.

DENMARK

No figures were available on the response to the televising of Holocaust in Denmark, a country which has been widely hailed as having courageously aided Jews fleeing the Nazis, except for a report that the Danes launched a public drive to collect one million Krone for the Sharei Zedek Hospital in Jerusalem as a memorial to the victims of the holocaust. The clear implication of this is that the series moved the Danish viewing public quite strongly.



GREECE

Holocaust played to an audience of three million Greeks, one third of the nation's population, and the showing was followed by reports of protests by all the Arab ambassadors --with the exception of the Egyptian ambassador--to Greek officials about the program's broadcast. In addition, the Greek-Arab League also protested the showing of Holocaust, the press response to this protest was caustic.

The conservative Athens daily newspaper Kathimerini criticized the League's protest, and another Athens newspaper, Commentator, challenged the Arab attitude to what it described as "the most horrible crime of the present century "

The Greek press, in daily comments during the early April/showing of the series, expressed horror at the events it depicted and compassion for the victims, noted the Jewish Chronicle of London, some Athens newspapers pointed out that Greece ^{itself} had lost some 75,000 Jews during the Second World War to the Nazi death camps.

The New York Times, citing an "authoritative source," reported that the Arab ambassadors had complained that the series was Jewish propaganda. The source also reported that Foreign Minister Giorgios Rallis told the ambassadors that the Greek government, which, the Times noted, is trying to develop relations with the Arab world, "had the intention neither to offend the Arabs nor to promote Jewish interests."

The main channel, Greek Radio-TV, turned down the series, the Times wrote, apparently on the grounds that it did not like the program's pro-Jewish spirit. But Holocaust was shown instead on Yened, the station of the nation's armed services.

SWEDEN--HALF THE NATION WATCHED

More than half of the Swedish population of eight million saw Holocaust when it was shown from March 8 to 11, 1979, a poll published the following month reported.

The first episodes attracted more than 48% of the active viewing audience, and that figure climbed to 65% for the final installment. Sweden has a viewer rating system, in which shows are rated from 1 to 5. This, too, indicated a substantial widespread approval of the series. No show ever receives a 5 rating, but Holocaust got 4.3--very close to the number one rated television program, the hockey games, which receive from 4.4 to 4.7 ratings.

Expressen, a liberal Swedish daily, reported that hundreds of Swedes phoned their office to discuss Holocaust. Most of these callers acknowledged Holocaust's importance, and stressed the necessity of airing the film, especially for its impact on the younger generation--despite what some saw as its "artistic insignificance."

A Swedish radio network in its "Open Channel" program broadcast discussions following both the first and second installments. Though nearly all the dialogue was supportive, a few viewers who phoned in labelled the film "A Jewish lie," according to Aftonbladet, the Social Democratic daily.

Aftonbladet and Expressen were joined by the Conservative Svenska Dagbladet in citing minor anti-semitic incidents that followed the airing. One pupil, it was reported, scrawled "Heil Hitler" on a wall. This prompted a classroom discussion about the program.

In a letter to Aftonbladet, one viewer wrote that the serial should be shown every five years to insure understanding and awareness of the Nazi crimes. Another viewer noted that the film was "painful but useful."

Yet, reported Variety magazine, "many prominent Swedes within the Swedish Broadcasting Company (SBC) and elsewhere in society were critical of the decision

to show Holocaust." "As information concerning a very important social subject, it is a deformity," charged Frank Hirschfeldt, whose opposition to the broadcast came from within the SBC

In an article in the company's weekly publication, he stated that he shared the opinion of Hans Villius, the respected historian with SBC Channel Two, that Holocaust's chief aim was to incite viewers rather than to help them understand the events it portrayed.

But after the program was aired, many critics asked why Channel Two had not prepared a follow-up discussion, as many other nation's television stations had done. A spokesman for the station explained that Channel Two felt it useless to do so, because such a follow-up discussion could not start until after 11.00. Channel Two planned instead to run a number of other programs about Hitler, the Jews, and the Second World War during the following months, the SBC spokesman stated. As one of those programs, he stated, the SBC planned to co-produce with the Norwegian Broadcasting Company, a series of four one-hour shows about the refugees who crossed the Baltic Sea.

This theme, suggested Variety, is somewhat sensitive in Sweden because, it claimed, even though many Swedes profess that anti-Semitism never gained a serious foothold in the nation, Sweden refused to grant German Jews refuge from the Nazi madness.

In fact, Variety was wrong on this point: Sweden allowed Norwegian Jews to cross the long border the two nations share, and the Swedish consulate in Oslo made strenuous attempts to renaturalize formerly Swedish Jews in order to provide them national status and thus protection. Sweden also accepted more than 8,000 Jews, half-Jews, and persons married to Jews who fled, with Danish help, to their shores.

That the magazine believed otherwise suggests that it and its sources in Sweden had been exposed to feelings of the order of 'why-didn't-we-do-more' after Holocaust was shown and then enlarged upon such sentiments. That such

feelings might arise in a nation that had been outside the main theater of World War II and in which, years later, half of the population watched the Holocaust series, should not be surprising



NORWAY

After an initial decision not to air Holocaust, Norwegian television reversed itself and broadcast the series. Although it apparently received some substantial advance mass media coverage, including a full back page summary and introduction in the tabloid format Radio TV publication, no figures were available on its viewing audience

But the announcement that the series would be shown^{late} in April, 1979, which was made that month, was followed by the receipt of threatening letters from anti-semites by some of Norway's prominent Jews

The entertainment magazine, Variety, after noting how the subject of anti-semitism is a sensitive one in Sweden, added that it "is apparently sensitive in Norway also." The Swedish Broadcasting Company and the Norwegian Broadcasting Company were planning, at the time of the program's March showing in Sweden, to co-produce a series about refugees fleeing across the Baltic from the Nazis. Swedish director Bjorn Fontander claimed that he was unable to find any Norwegian Jews willing to describe conditions in that country during World War II. Finally, he reported, he decided to read the anonymous description of one Norwegian Jew.

But, reported Variety, Norwegian television planned to cut this portion because it felt that the anonymous Jew could be too easily identified.

That is not the only section that Norwegian television was reported, one month before the scheduled airing of Holocaust, to^{have} cut from the refugee special. Another section, according to the producer, that shows Norwegian Nazis marching through the streets of Oslo, was also expected to be edited out of the show.

CANADA

Holocaust was shown in Toronto by CHCH TV, an independent station, and some 2.5 million people watched it in the greater Toronto area. According to CHCH TV, it received an overall average 53.5% share of those ~~not~~ watching their television sets during its successive four nights of broadcast, which began on April 16, 1978. Starting with a 45% share, it went to 53%, then to 55%, and finally climbed to 60%.

In addition, many more Canadians saw the show on broadcasts picked up from American NBC affiliates. In Toronto it was possible to see the series on two other stations as well as on CHCH Channel 11.

There were some right-wing efforts mounted against the show, but they did not provide any serious problems. A Toronto group demanded that tapes of the program be seized and destroyed, and one dozen picketers marched in front of the CHCH TV studio. In addition, there were indications of a German-Canadian response to the series that was pointedly unfavorable to Holocaust program.

The ~~show~~ did have larger problems, however, in that neither of the two Canadian networks was willing to air it. This Holocaust was not seen at all, for instance, in the Vancouver area. =d

The Toronto Globe and Mail ran several articles on the series. The day before the first installment was broadcast, commentator Blair Kirby wrote that it was made by "Jews with excellent TV qualifications," but that Holocaust was still "weak drama."

On April 19th, the newspaper ran a smaller story entitled "Holocaust is a Lesson," by the same author. Kirby still thought it was poor drama, but admitted that it "is having a major effect." The effect he perceived, however, was that it was "raising old angers, enmities, and quite likely fears. Some Germans are complaining that it is close to hate literature."

He worried that the film's makers "might be yielding to the temptation to cater

to Jewish feelings," and asked if it "may inspire a new hatred for today's Germans, Poles and Ukrainians . Even if Holocaust does inspire hatred--for some people, little excuse is needed--would that justify suppressing it," he asked. "No," he answered, "As unpleasant as it is, it appears to be a factually true though fictionally treated story of what happened."

The author did finally end up endorsing the show by recognizing that there are "millions.. who may never learn about it any other way." But Kirby was the only regular reviewer in a major newspaper that this study found who veered ~~that~~ close to calling for the suppression of the series (albeit through the device of raising the idea and knocking it down)

The Globe and Mail did not, however, restrict its critical voice on the topic to one reviewer. Three days after the series ended, it provided space for an article by ^{Dr.} W. Gunther Plaut, ^{Rabbi} Senior Scholar at Holy Blossom Temple. He saw far more virtue in the series. "Holocaust," the article was entitled, "it had to be told." In an implicit reaction to Kirby, he wrote, "There are fundamentally different kinds of viewers and reviewers those who were there and those who were not. And then, there are Jews and non-Jews I am a Jew, and I was there, at least for part of it."

"My own reaction was mixed," Plaut told his readers. "The series was in many ways successful. Though on the whole poor drama, it was starkly real in a trivializing medium."

Artistically, it left much to be desired.' But "Historically," it was "largely accurate," he felt, and therefore "an important antidote to recent attempts to rewrite history and declare the murder of millions a Zionist fabrication."

Not quite so ambivalent in its praise of the series was the Canadian Jewish News, which called the program "Flawed but impressive."

This newspaper corroborated the impression left by Kirby's apparent reluctant defense of the series against unspecified German-Canadian complaints about

Holocaust.

"German groups throughout North America complained that the program dabbled in propaganda, incited hate and inter-ethnic conflict. However," wrote the newspaper, "by any conventional standards, Holocaust was neither propagandistic nor hateful, but an honest attempt to convey the horror of an event that swept the continent. Facts are facts... That some Germans are unable to face facts, to admit what happened, is a tragedy in itself."

Despite an occasional "aura of unbelievability" that the Canadian Jewish News found around some segments of the story, the paper believed that "Holocaust was valuable and timely."

Despite the worries of the Canadian Jewish News and the antagonism of Kirby's reviews, no major controversy broke out over the program. Many watched it and more than a few may have resented it, but Holocaust generated little press controversy and no indication that it had truly stirred many souls--with anger or with socially significant pain. It was restricted to a large, but not complete, portion of the Canadian audience, and it held their interest, ~~xxxxxx~~ at least in Toronto, where it garnered a continually increasing share of the audience. But it had nothing like the massive impact it made in the United States. And, despite the presence of some who felt threatened by the story the show told, even those groups who disliked it could still muster only twelve persons to picket the showing of Holocaust.

JAPAN--SOMEONE ELSE'S BATTLEFIELD

Holocaust received substantial pre-airing coverage in the newspapers and periodicals of Japan, and the station which bought it used 250 spot advertisements to promote the series, at a cost of about \$400,000. The series received high ratings despite the fact that it ran against several very popular shows, but it caused no large controversy.

Sold to TV Asahi before its American showing, the series was watched by 15% of the viewing audience on its first evening, October 15th, 1978. On the following evening, it was received by 11.9% of the televisions that were turned on at the time it was shown, and 13.7% of them the next night. On Sunday, when the final two episodes were shown, one directly after the other, it received a 16.5% and a 19.7% rating. The average audience it received was 15.6%, and TV Asahi felt that this represented a satisfactory rating.

Japan's other television stations met the challenge of the series by running not only their regular popular series, but also by airing specials, including a 25th anniversary show with old film clips from a popular program, Walt Disney's Dumbo, and the Japan Record Awards Ceremony.

The fluctuations in the viewer percentages, the counter-programming of high drawing shows by the other stations, and the absence of any ensuing controversy, either over its theme or production values, suggested that the Japanese, far away from the sites of the European battlefields and death camps, treated the program as an interesting, but not nationally significant, television program. This interpretation of Japanese viewer behavior appears to be supported by the fact that the other major American-made serial drama, Roots, did only somewhat better, having received a 23.4% rating. Major and disturbing themes of European-American history, apparently, have not seriously moved the Japanese public in its television watching patterns or responses.

SOUTH AFRICA

Holocaust came to South African audiences through the medium of the movie screen rather than the television set. A private South African firm obtained the cinema rights to it after Holocaust Executive Producer Herb Brodwin turned down a South African request to buy the program.

The newspaper advertisements for the movie showing produced some anger in the Jewish community of South Africa because they included pictures of European Jewish ghettos along with the words, "With a cast of six million Jews." The marketing manager for the firm, Hymie Segal, a Jew, responded to the Jewish concern by agreeing to take out the phrase, although, he said, he did not think the wording offensive.

The nation's Yad Vashem Memorial Foundation demanded an apology from the firm for "the insult to the memory of the six million" Holocaust victims.

No reports were available on the public response to the theater showings of Holocaust.

THE SOVIET UNION

Although the series was not shown on Soviet television, at least one Soviet commentator, Georgyev, felt that the program and its theme should be addressed.

He labelled the program a classic tear-jerker that limited its profound sorrow for individuals who lost their lives at the hands of the brown-shirts to the Jews, and asked, "what about the Slavs? "

"The dominant theme of Holocaust," he wrote, was that the humble Jew turned out to be the greatest martyr of World War II," and this, he felt, "is all but irrelevant. Jews in the West are always shown as a sacrificial lamb shoved through the Big Powers' negligence into the gaping mouth of the Nazi monster."

Calling the show a biased and lopsided presentation of the facts, Georgyev told his readers that the USSR was really responsible for saving the Jews in World War II through the Soviet Army's actions against Nazi Germany.

Interestingly, when Holocaust's producers wanted to bring tanks and other armored vehicles into West Berlin for the filming of the Warsaw ghetto uprising scenes, the Soviet officials whose permission was needed for the moving in of weaponry agreed as quickly as did the other joint administration powers' representatives.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

The electricity failed during the first night of the airing of Holocaust in the two-island republic of Trinidad and Tobago, blanking out television sets in a large part of the country, including the capital city of Port-of-Spain. But that didn't stop the program from generating a wide interest.

While no figures are available on the viewing audience size or proportion, the heated controversy stirred up by one critic's disparaging and chauvinistic review of the show indicates that Holocaust touched the emotions of a great many people in the Caribbean nation.

The country's main paper, The Daily Express ran a review by critic Holden Caulfield that stated "why people should want to sit up way past midnight once a week to see the horrors of Holocaust is beyond me... unless of course they need lessons in man's inhumanity to man." World War II, he wrote, was relevant to the Third World only for the fact that it freed the colonies of Europe.

The response by the paper's readers was huge, with letter after letter taking the critic to task for his ^{5/}essay. One stated that "I can vividly remember first seeing photographs of mass graves at Auschwitz in Life magazine. It was inconceivable for me then, as it still is today, that human beings could do this to one another."

Several letters chided Caulfield for thinking that the Third World is all there is to the world, and another warned him "Do not forget that the Nazi menace is with us still, the world over."

The horror of mass slaughter and the need for vigilance against it motivated another to write "Only 35 years have passed but we have already forgotten this lesson as can be seen in Cambodia, Biafra, Lebanon, South Africa and Uganda."

One letter, noting that there had been "no advance publicity" for the showing of the series, urged a rebroadcast of Holocaust.

Another commentator, Taylor on TV, also disliked the show "The form
^
simply couldn't handle the material," he believed. A lot of his readers
did not agree. Indeed, letters in praise of the program and condemning the
critics' points of view kept coming in for two weeks after the January 15th-
begun series ended on Feb. 5th.

Perhaps the most subtle indication that the show was met popularly with
almost universal appreciation came from one letter that bore a neo-Nazi
tone. "All Germans weren't Nazis," this writer told the newspaper, and "too
little has been made of Allied atrocities," the letter stated.

The letter was unsigned.



AUSTRALIA--HOLOCAUST IN THE OUTBACK

Holocaust was shown in Australia in the first ^(week of July, 1978.) and it broke all previous television audience records by pulling in a 72% share of all those who had their sets on during its airing period. More than one million people saw each episode in Sydney alone, and a publicist for Channel 7, which aired the series, admitted that "We knew it would do well, but we weren't expecting to hold such a huge audience. We're stunned."

And well he might have been. The island continent responded powerfully to the series. Besides Sydney, where Holocaust picked up from 41.5% to 47% of the possible viewing audience, it played to huge audiences in the nation's other major cities. Holocaust received a 49.3% national rating on its first evening, followed by 45.7%, 47.0% and 47.6% ratings on subsequent evenings.

Further, it received a more favorable press response (though still a mixed one) in this nation than it did in several European nations.

July?
The Daily Mirror columnist Square Eye, wrote on June 27th, the day after the show's first installment, that "It is a powerful, moving reproduction of a terrible time, but it makes harrowing viewing, especially the bits about the children." Another newspaper urged "For God's sake, watch Holocaust on Channel 7." This paper pressed its readers to "Try to imagine it happening today to the men, women and children of Sydney and Melbourne," and concluded by stressing "Let us promise ourselves that it will never happen again."

The Mirror also ran a series "Survivors Tell the Mirror of the Horrors in Hitler Death Camps," complete with a drawing of a helmeted soldier backed by a swastika and the words "The Nazi Holocaust" in floating block letters. "One day two years ago Joseph Pakula went back to Auschwitz," the first story in the series began. "Sunshine and flowers, he thought. How unlike Auschwitz. Four million people had died here and Pakula had seen thousands of them

head for the gas chambers and the oven."

Pakula recalled for the paper how the door burst open and he and his wife were summarily arrested, and that he had lost his wife, his daughter, his father, his six brothers and his two sisters to the Nazis. The accompanying photograph showed him with his sleeve rolled up, the number 141445 tattooed on his arm.

Even a fundamentalist newspaper joined in welcoming the series. "No one can honestly remain complacent after viewing the terrible saga of 'Holocaust,' wrote a ~~proselytizing~~ ^{evangelical} newspaper, which found that "These events... leave Bible readers in no doubt that God is moving in the world," because the Nazi slaughter paved the way for the State of Israel which is "the prelude to the kingdom of God."

The Sunday letters section of a Sydney newspaper ^{ran} several letters to the editor/prefaced by the exclamation "It seems all-of Sydney was watching it!"

One letter reported that "nobody I know has not been watching it," and described Holocaust as "this excellent program."

Another noted that some people say it was wrong to dig up the past, but that "I think today's generation must be reminded of the horrors," and thanked Channel 7 for "an excellent series."

There was one complaint however: "No matter how excellent this series, it is bound to be distressing to many.. Channel 7 would have served us all much better by presenting Holocaust in weekly episodes..."

The negative responses came from newspaper columnists rather than from news articles or from readers' letters. The Square Eye, who had "harrowing viewing" ^{with the} first installment, changed his mind after the second "After a good beginning, Holocaust has failed to live up to its early promise," he reconsidered. "Even the scenes of mass killings have the look of a movie set about them," he complained.

Veritas, another Australian critic, also felt disheartened by the series. "What a let down Holocaust turned out to be," he wrote.

But the same day that the Square Eye blinked away his first review of the series, the Mirror ran another story headlined "TV Shock for Kids." This warned that a Sydney rabbi, Rabbi Lampert, was afraid that the show would be "too horrifying for children to watch," after seeing a preview of the whole story at a screening by the Jewish Board of ~~Rabbis~~ Deputies. "In families where children receive guidance from parents, then perhaps they could be allowed to watch," he said.

But a spokesman for the Deputies did not feel that way. Robert Goot reported that the city's Jewish community welcomed the series. He called it a "historically accurate dramatisation," and added that its serial format helped further viewer identification. "We believe Australians should watch it and try to understand what happened to the Jews during World War II to ensure the real lesson of Holocaust is never forgotten."

Channel 7 obliged this sentiment, as well as its ratings, by printing a large booklet of educational material pertaining to the series. An unusually detailed and well organized booklet, it outlined the show's plot, characters, and nightly developments, and provided an essay on the context of the show's events that took the reader from Roman times right up to the toll exacted by the Final Solution. It included a historical analysis by Byron L. Sherwin, of Chicago, Professor at the Spertus College of Judaica, a list and biography of the actual Nazi leaders, a description of places of importance to the era, and a glossary of relevant terms. The booklet also featured a bibliography of books on the holocaust's impact on Christian thinking and Christian guilt.

Jewish themes, noted one newspaper, seem to be popular in Australia. The preceding January, a television documentary on Jewish customs also received

high ratings. Clearly, mass communications play a special role in Australia, providing this furthest outpost of the West with a means of reaffirming its ties to ~~the complexities of~~ its sister societies. The story of the Jews, who they are and how they have suffered, gave a meaningful and moving theme to Australian television, and Australian viewers understood the meaning and were moved

