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Box 59, Folder 14, Hungary, 1983.



memorandum

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

date Aug. 24, 1983

to Marc Tanenbaum

from Mort Yarmon

subject

I gather there will be a 40th anniversary celebration in Hungary in 1984, paralleling the Poland celebration this past season. I gather too that Karlikov is recommending AJC send a delegation. Pls keep this on file as something then for future attention.



Mort

memorandum

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

date Aug 22, 1983

From to Abe Karlikow

To from Mort Yarmon

subject

While this will be a matter for your successor (sob, gulp), do you have any thoughts at this writing as to how AJC should play the matter of the Hungarian anniversary of June 1984?

AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES

Easy — I'm going to recommend
we send a delegation,
& you can publicize that.



The American Jewish Committee

Institute of Human Relations · 165 East 56 Street, New York, N.Y. 10022 · 212/751-4000 · Cable Wishcom, N.Y.

December 29, 1983

Mrs. Illona Seifert
Sip Utca 12
Budapest VII, Hungary

Dear Mrs. Seifert:

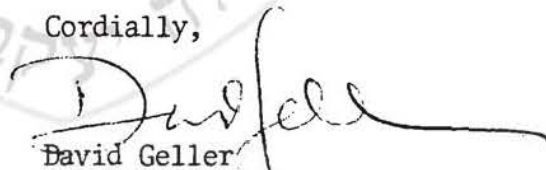
I hope that you are well. My wife and I still remember with fondness and pleasure your visit to New York a couple of years ago. We hope in the not-too-distant future we shall have the opportunity to see you again.

I am writing at this time because we have heard that the Hungarian Jewish community is preparing a major commemoration of the Nazi deportation some time in June, to which will be invited representatives of other Jewish communities as well as important Jewish organizations. If the report is accurate, the American Jewish Committee looks forward to participation in that ceremony as an expression of solidarity with the Hungarian Jewish community. May I suggest that invitations be sent to Howard I. Friedman, President, American Jewish Committee; Gordon Zacks, Chairman, Commission on International Relations; Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, Director, Department of International Relations; and myself.

As you can understand, it is important that I know as soon as possible the exact dates of the commemoration so that our officers can make the necessary arrangements in terms of their private calendars.

My wife and your other friends here send their regards. Salom...A
Vizontlátásra.

Cordially,


David Geller
Director, European Affairs
International Relations

DG/es

sent to
bcc: Nives E. Fox
Marc H. Tanenbaum ✓

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~~SECRET~~

Highlights from the speech of Dr. Tibor Bartha,
Bishop, President of the Synod of Hungarian Reformed Church,
President of the Ecumenical Council of the Hungarian
Churches:

I have been requested by the hungarian protestant organizations, methodists, baptists and the reformed church to relay their message: we share the deep sorrow of the Central Board of (Hungarian) Jews. Our sentiments are the same with those who bewail for the victims of history's most horrible mass murdering.

The scientific works of the World War's historical, economical, political and military-political reasons would fill thousands of libraries. But, human reasoning become paralyzed and we become speechless, because the persecution of Jews after the First World War opened such deep abyss, the depth of which could not be measured by human reasoning and it's motivation could not be explained by human logic.

Like a feverous hallucination, I've seen the spiraling march of the suffering people! A large red ball rolls out from underneath them! A little blond boy runs after it! The butt of a rifle rises! I closed my eyes, when I opened them I seen the body of the little boy.

My brothers! You, the people of Israel and us Christians, who adore the same God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, learned from our Master that this vision was the truth. Just one quotation from the New Testament: "...our fight is not against body and blood, but Powers and Might, the Lords of the World of Darkness and the demons of evil." This demonic power which prevailed in the antisemitism of the Fascists. This demonic power possessed the murderers of our brothers. Our message to those who stand outside of the circles of God's people: we didn't receive from God to lessen the responsibility of Man, quite to the contrary, it is our profetic responsibility to remind and warn people, their governments, the Human Race; do not become instruments of this satanic power! Let the Nazi persecution of the Jews be the example! Satan who is historically present in the atomic age, is preparing for the utmost Holocaust, which would lead to the destruction of human life on the Earth.

My Brothers! My believe from the writings (I left out the translation of some biblical quotations, G.H.) that... the promise of Life's victory, the curageous message of the people who fight for a future could only be brought by the unity of the people of Israel and the Christian Church! A dialog started in 1978 between the hungarian jewish community and the Reformed Church. We are mutually convinced of the blessedness of this brotherly approach.

The reformed church remembers the guidance of our teacher, Calvin, who adhered to the apostolic teachings in the question of jewish-christian relations.

According to Romans 9-10-11, there is a historical reason for the separation of the synagoge and the church: it is the will of God for the benefit of the Heathen. When the time

comes and King Messiah arrives the order of Gods people will follow: the first place belongs to Israel.

..... The establishment of closer relations between the jews and the christians is the realization of Gods plan for saving us. Just two examples of the calvinist tradition of my church: When the White Terror took the Chief Rabbi of Szeged, Dezso Baltazar, Bishop of Debrecen, traveled to Szeged and in an address to the Congregation (of the Jews) he offered consolation. The White Terror desecrated his church for that.

Bishop Albert Berecky, also the President of the Synod joined forces with the protestant movements, the Scottish Mission and the Good Sheppard Mission to resist in Christ's name the persecution of Jews. The Reformed Church reprinted his book, "the Hungarian Protestants against the persecution of Jews". I request from my brothers, present here to accept this booklet as a present and reminder. Because we wish to continue the course of bettering our relations, so that jews and christians could fulfill the Calling of God's people in the era of preparation for a new war.

(G.H. comment: there is a breed of clergy in Hungary, called "bekepap"-Clergy of Peace, which is really a formal declaration of allegiance to the Moscow directed Peace Movement, therefore the comments toward a new threat of war.)

From the speech of Dr Zoltan Kaldy, Bishop and President of the Hungarian Lutheran Church:

I take part in this memorial service with deep sorrow. I recall the 25th Psalm, verse 17: "Oh bring Thou me out of distress".

I am one of those, who as a young clergyman visited the Gettho of Pecs to try to give help to the people who were brought there. My whole life and attitude is now conducted by what I have seen and experienced there. The wife and daughter of a University Professor kneeled in front of me in heavy rain, begging for help. The feeling of helplessness still haunts me in my dreams. Since then, I could just scream everytime I notice injustice and inhumanity, brute force, discrimination, humiliation and violation of human rights. I learned in that Gettho, when these monstrosities appear among human communities, we must act immediately, instead "studying" it in the future, what should have we done to prevent and stop them. The idea of deportatation of the hungarian jews was not born on May 15, 1944, it was only a derivation of the inattention of the people of the Word to the happenings of 1933, the year, when Hitler took power and the years following that. People did not pay attention to the fact that a methodical force was building against dignity, life and humanity. Everybody could have read the Mein Kampf since 1924, in which Hitler openly declared the intentions of german fascism to rule the World and exterminate the undesirables. This decade reminds the people of the 1980's that we can not repeat this sleep

period, because this would lead to the final destruction of Humanity. Everything pointing to fascims, or fascism, already, or prepares to the drama of Destruction, must be dealt with in it's budding. We must be aware and awake, not just shouting, but united we must act.

I also have to say something else during this Service in front of God. I must confess to God and to you bretherin, as a member of the christian faith, that we christians, including my Church, we have not done all we could to prevent May 15, 1944. We are ashamed that those christian bishops, who were members of the Upper House (of the hungarian Parliament), have voted on the anti jewish laws of 1938 and 1939, instead of protesting them, which laws discriminated against the hungarian jewry and put limits to their rights. They have therefore helped to promote the decay of



they have therefore helped to promote the decay of morality of the period, because they gave excuse to those christians, who have noticed that what was happening to the jews was not God's will. That opened the roads toward the getthos.

This could not be concealed any more by the protest of several bishops, the lutheran among them, when the deportations started on May 15, 1945. The attempt to protest and help was too late. But, bless the Lord, at the same time there were christians, lutheran clergymen among them, who at the risk of their life saved helpless jewry. Gabor Sztehlo, lutheran clergyman saved more than 1000 jewish children and 400 adults. (G.H. comment: I have been in his care for a while after the war. The statement is very true.) Hundreds have given up their personal identification papers in the hope that this will help. The same happened in other christian faiths. This was still not enough, as they have known God's commandments.

How do we stand theologically? First of all, our lives and others is God's gift. Our life belongs to God. An example of that when Cain murdered Abel, the Lord said unto Cain "what has thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground". The spilt blood cries out and to the giver of life it's owner, the Lord!

We also profess that God created us to his image. This could be interpreted several ways, but one thing is for sure, that this likeness must contain the respectability of Man. To be Man means respect and mission. It is forbidden to humiliate Man, to discriminate against Him, to destroy his ability to live. One have to help instead to keep his life and enrichen others with his life. God wants it this way. He will demand an account if we act contrary. This is why it was a sin not just against Man but against God what happened in the getthos and extermination camps.

We could build a new world only if we reject with deliberation all those ideologies, philosophies and practices which subscribes to the inequality of races, preaches superiority or inferiority and the declaration that some are to rule and some are to be ruled. We must reject all theories of "blood and race", every form of racism, the doctrine of some nations superiority. (G.H. comment: this suppose to be directed to the U.S., if the speaker is questioned, but in hungarian double talk, it is understood, that it is actually directed toward the soviet.)

We must reject and denounce antisemitism wether it is packaged or in its coarsness. We must reject all form of fascism or neofascism at their smallest noise. We must reject all form of force, aggression, blindness and chauvinism. We must reject unanimously genocide, war, let it be nuclear or conventional.

From the speech of Dr Jozsef Ferencz, Unitarian Bishop:

Let the written speach stay in my pocket! May I remeber on

this rainy day in May, in two simple sentence, what unites me with the hungarian jewry. The first one, when in 1946, I was a young member of the religious leadership and as the representatives of the Hungarian Unitarian Church, we took part in the memorial service marking the first anniversary of the liberation of the Getto. I remember when the Chief Rabbi called for the last prayer, the words of the prayer were drowned out by sobbing and the sorrow which permeated this giant Grand Synagogue.

I would also say a few words of a personal friend, a jew. I have mourned him since 1945. He sat next to me in the Unitarian High School for eight years. We were together in good or bad, happiness, pranks, studying and in harder times. During his studies to become a pharmacist I hardly seen him, since I moved to Budapest. I got a message in the summer of 1944 that a jewish Forced Laborer is calling for my assistance. I thank God that with the help of a decent Doctor I could do something for him, although very little. Together with his mother I have cried for him in 1945, very much as each one of you cries for your own fathers, mothers, grandparents, relatives, people who were close to your heart. Although we belong to the minority, we share your sorrow. (G.H. comment: minority as one who practices religion. Untranslatable reference.) We share your feelings, because we feel close in our faith and the Eternal One, the true God, who is lenient for the destruction of 600 thousands, who saved the survivors and guards above us, will bless the memory of those, who sacrificed their life for their faith.

From Bishop Dr Laszlo Lekai, Presiding Bishop of the Hungarian Roman Catholic Church.

We have stopped with surprise on a spring day in 1944. On the main street of Veszprem, we witnessed groups of men and women marching with little bundles under their arms and obviously enslaved to those who were in charge of them. Many were respected leaders of the community, known, wealthy merchants, intellectuals or just common people, they were mostly familiar faces. They collected our fellow citizens of jewish origin to deport them from our community, country and transport them to a place of horrors, a hell on Earth and amidst spiritual and physical havoc, their lives were taken. Bishop Jusztinian Seredi, personally handled over a request and demand to the Prime Minister. Among other matters he emphasized that without lawfull verdict there should be no violation of anyones individual rights, they should not be humiliated and correct those existing laws which do so. Otherwise, regardless of Faith or Origin people should not loose their freedom, wealth or suffer from any other kind of punishment without a judgement, based on proof that the individual actually committed a crime for which this punishment would fit. Those who could not be convicted by lawfull process should be immune from violation of their

rights.

He sent a letter on the 29th of June in the name of the Synod to every church in the country to be read in public.

"we ask our parishioners that with the approval of questionable deeds or the promotion of such do not take this horrible responsibility upon yourself, whether to be judged by God or your fellow men. Do not forget, you can not serve the true cause of our country with injustice. Pray and work for all of our fellow hungarians without exception." On the 9th of July, in his address to the Synod, he labored on a conversation with two high ranking members of the Cabinet, that the forced removal of children and aged and the sick is contrary to the explanations given that this is not extermination, but they are only taken as laborers.

... We must teach the spirit of forgiving to our children. When the flames of hatred are the highest, Man should remain Man, let love radiate toward our fellow man. My closing thoughts about the history of what happened 40 years ago is, that hatred killed them, their memory should be reserved with love.

