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Box 86, Folder 2, NBC "Holocaust" - memo from Marc H.
Tanenbaum to NBC's Robert Kasmire regarding script, 1977.

July 25, 1977

Mr. Robert D. Kasmire
Vice-President, Corporate Affairs
National Broadcasting Co.
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, N. Y. 10020

My Dear Bob,

Enclosed please find my critique of
"The Holocaust" by Gerald Green.

I hope the comments and recommendations
prove to be useful. If you have any questions,
I will be happy to meet with you - or Mr.
Green, or anyone else for that matter - to
discuss any aspect of my memo.

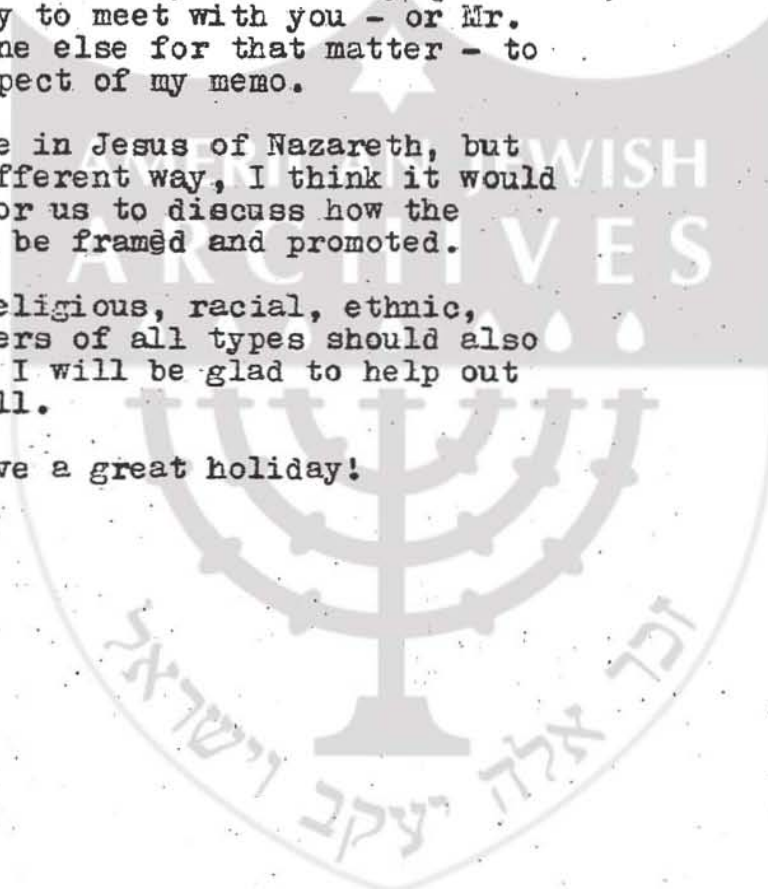
As was the case in Jesus of Nazareth, but
in a wholly different way, I think it would
be important for us to discuss how the
publicity will be framed and promoted.

Previews for religious, racial, ethnic,
and civic leaders of all types should also
be considered. I will be glad to help out
with that as well.

I hope you have a great holiday!

All the best.

Cordially,



July 25, 1977

TO: MR. ROBERT KASLIRE, VICE-PRESIDENT, NBC-TV
FROM: RABBI MARC H. FANENBAUM, NATIONAL INTERRELIGIOUS AFFAIRS
DIRECTOR, AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE
SUBJECT: "THE HOLOCAUST" BY GERALD GREEN

It is difficult - quite truly, impossible - for me to find the right words that would express fully and accurately the deep emotions that I experienced in reading these remarkable scripts by Gerald Green. I can only tell you that this was one of the few times in my life that I found myself responding to a manuscript by crying, and not feeling embarrassed by it. The power and poignancy of this narrative, the ultimate human as well as specifically Jewish significance of what it is saying, are such that I do not hesitate to tell you that I am genuinely grateful to God and to NBC-TV (in that order of billing) that finally, finally "the greatest systematic massacre in human history" - and some of the lessons that contemporary mankind must somehow be brought to learn from it if it is to survive our age of violence - are beginning to find their way into the consciousness of millions of people through NBC-TV's wisdom. Gerald Green, and with him Herbert Brodtkin, Robert Berger, among obviously many others, deserve the deepest gratitude of a great many people for turning their intelligence and talents to this urgent and essential responsibility.

Allow me to make a brief comment about my perception of the significance of this series on "The Holocaust" before I get to the texts of the scripts:

Studies that we (the American Jewish Committee) have carried out in recent years cooperatively with Roman Catholic, Protestant, Evangelical (mainly Southern Baptist), and Greek Orthodox religious textbook writers and publishers, as well as with "secular" textbook publishers, reveal that the Nazi holocaust has been either ignored or treated minimally in religious, social science, and history textbooks. The same condition of studied amnesia is also disclosed in the findings of our textbook studies in French-speaking countries, Italy, Spain, and most incredibly, in Germany as well. (We are presently engaged in a study of German anti-Semitism and the

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Nazi experience at the University of Fribourg with German educational and religious authorities as a constructive means of helping "the new Germany" confront its past in order to help build the conceptual and moral defenses against the possibilities of ~~the~~ any form of ~~the~~ repetition of that demonic history.) Similar work is being conducted in Argentina and Brazil and other parts of Latin America, where terror and torture now consumed thousands of Christians as well as Jews.

Paradoxically, courses on the holocaust that are now being given at colleges and universities throughout America attract large enrollments of students, frequently as many Christians as Jews. It is apparent that there is a widespread, if latent, interest and desire to know more about "the facts" of the Nazi holocaust, but also its larger implications for combatting evil and for preserving human life and a civilized society.

There is a primary and central point that I want to make about these excellent scripts of Gerald Green that is best expressed in a thesis I stated in a small paperback I wrote entitled, "Religious Values in an Age of Violence," (Harquette University publishers):

"Never before in modern history, Prof. (Lucy) Dawidowicz writes, has one people made the killing of another the fulfillment of an ideology, in whose pursuit the means were identical with the ends. The German state, deciding that the Jews should not live, arrogated to itself the judgment as to whether a whole people had the right to existence, a judgment that no person and no state have the right to make. The German dictatorship involved and engaged the entire bureaucratic and functional apparatus of the German state and the Nazi movement and employed the best available technological means.

"And in that reality lodges the universal implication for the whole of mankind. The 'final solution' destroyed East European Jews. In doing so, it subverted fundamental principles and every system of law that has governed, however, imperfectly, human society for millenia.

"A hitherto unbreachable moral and political barrier in the history of Western civilization was successfully overcome by the Germans in World War II, and henceforth the extermination of millions

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of citizens of subject peoples will forever be one of the capabilities and temptations of government."

There is a real danger that this NBC-TV series could suffer from the same response that exists in large parts of the general society to the Nazi holocaust itself, namely, that this is "a Jewish obsession." Were the audience to become mainly American Jews, that obviously would have its own value, but surely it would defeat the larger purpose of raising the consciousness ~~thex~~ and deepening the moral commitment of the American people "not to stand idly by" while hatred, prejudice, verbal violence, and actual murder are being unleashed against Jews, and against any other human beings.

Somehow, some way - perhaps in some skilfully contrived prologue and/or epilogue, as well as in the text itself - the special nature of the Nazi destruction of the Jews in tension with its broader meaning for every person could be articulated. Were that to take place, it would, in my judgment, "enhance" the message of "The Holocaust" rather than detract from it. And I would suggest that a ~~mix~~ similar approach be considered in the conceptualization and implementation of the publicity program itself, especially the earliest advance announcements. (The extraordinary national event that "Roots" became grew out of the fact, as I see it, that it caused 90 million Americans - and not only 22 million American blacks - to face the moral issues involved ⁱⁿ ~~the~~ slavery and racism.) Indeed, I contend, that it is only by understanding what Nazi demonism and lawlessness means ~~How? For the script?~~

~~It~~ for mankind at large, for every living human being, that non-Jews (Christians, Muslims, Hindus, animists, etc.) will begin to understand that they have a personal stake in confronting anti-Semitism and the Nazi holocaust, paradigmatic for the human condition especially in a nuclear-missile-neutron bomb age.

Now, for the texts:

1) I am concerned about the cut-off point of the first program. If the first program were to end at Script III or even IV, there is a risk of presenting a scenario in which the German Jews (mainly epitomized in the Weiss family) are portrayed as naive or foolish, living in a fantasy world, and thereby in fact responsible for making themselves

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victims of the destruction that eventually befell them. In this sequence, the only open-eyed, realistic, tough-minded Jew is the teenager, Rudi Weiss. The only other Jews in Scripts I to IV are Karl Weiss, who is pathetic, and the Kapo (p. 115), a Jewish traitor to his people who is also venal and sadistic. Aside from Rudi, there is not a single proud, reality-oriented Jew in this first sequence.

While Mr. Green presents - in very compelling fashion - "heroic" Jews in later scripts - the partisans, the Warsaw Ghetto activists, a few of the Judenrate officials - I would suggest that he consider what public effects will be left if the first ~~program~~ program presents German Jews only as bewildered, passive, accomodating, and submissive victims.

This problem is compounded in the first sequence by the fact that the Nazis and proto-Nazis are by and large "good Nazis". In the early stages of his character development, Erik Dorf is "neutral" to Jews. Even the bestial Muller comes off saying (p. 45) to the mob that destroys grandfather Palitz' shop and mauls him, "Leave them alone. Get off the street, Weiss" - thereby showing his compassion. I think I understand the artistic and literary problems that Mr. Green is dealing with - the ~~transformation~~ ^{tragedy} of Jews who thought of themselves as being more German than the Germans and still not being able to save themselves from betrayal and then destruction; how normal, conventional German burghers yielded to of got caught up in the Nazi mystique and murder machine and were transformed into murderers.

If all the transformation were to take place in one program, there would be little problem. I am just concerned at this point about the impact of the first three hours - as of now, it's naive, foolish Jews versus good or decent Nazis. As Mr. Green knows as well as, if not better than I, the realities among the Jews and early Nazis were more complex and diverse, and something of the incipient heroism of Jews and demonism of Nazis even in the early period needs to come through in the first program's impact.

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2) There is a repetition of canards about Jews in a straightforward, almost sloganeering way that troubles me. For example:

I - p. 18: HEYDRICH, Chief of the Gestapo, (incidentally, also presented as humane at this stage, even cultured - violin and Mozart) to ERIK DORF:

"Naturally. Young lawyer. Good education. Shut out of his profession, BECAUSE SOME JEW GOT THE JOB."

Comment: put that matter-of-factly by a civilized Heydrich in this early stage of the script, it would also seem to feed the mentality of those who call for quotas today in universities and jobs because "the Jews have got a monopoly." It should be possible to have Heydrich say this in a way that suggests its derivation from the racist mythos of Hitler and pan-German nationalist mysticism. (See Lucy Dawidowicz, The War Against the Jews, chapter, "The Jews in Hitler's Mental World," especially pp. 10 ff.)

I - p. 19: HEYDRICH TO DORF:

"By no means. This pure bigotry of true believers--is admirable. But at times it's better to be neutral, analytic, cold. Because, Dorf, the Jewish world conspiracy -- Bolshevism and capitalism conniving to crush Germany -- is a cold analytic thing. Racial poisoning by Jews, infiltration into our national life, betrayal of German ideals, VERY REAL STUFF? DORF."

Comment: The same point as above. There is just too much of this anti-Semitic sloganeering in the cultural atmosphere today to let it be expressed ^{in this unqualified way. I would like to see it} without its coming through as racist fanaticism. In this bland form, it almost sounds like a German version of General Brown, Spiro Agnew, (and the Moscow press which just last week wrote about "Jewish capitalist power and control of America".) Same for I, p. 50 - KARL, reading newspaper: "Citizen groups, angered over Jewish domination of the press and the banks, raided the Jewish quarter today..."

The "sense" of the racism is suggested in these passages from L. Dawidowicz, p. 9: "Between 1907 and 1910 Lanz von Liebenfels, an eccentric occultist-racist, published a series of pamphlets - which Hitler bought and read - called "Ostara: Newsletters of the Blond Champion of Man's Rights," in which he depicted the struggle

between the blond Aryan heroes and the dark, hairy ape-men representing the lower races. All human existence revolved around this struggle, whose central burden was to preserve the purity of Aryan women from the demonic sexuality of the ape-men."

And on p. 10, footnote: "People living in an anti-Semitic milieu - as Hitler did - already viewed Jews as diseased and filthy creatures, degenerate and corrupting, outsiders beyond fraternity and compassion. Since the society had already branded the Jews as loathsome pariahs, the Jews could then serve the symbolic and pathological needs of the obsessed and guilt-ridden."

Establishing that demonism toward the Jews would help make relevant Heydrich's further comment about "racial precedents" on I, p. 48, which in its present form is a thrown-away line, that does not communicate its genuine meaning.

3) The several references to Jews as "Christ-killers" are troublesome and need, I would suggest, more careful reformulation.

p. 53, LOWY: "that business about killing Christ, that was a long time ago. Why keep after us?"

p. 57: LAURA: "Papa, why does everyone hate the Jews?" (another bad slogan of "feeding the danard" character)

p. 58: PETER: "'Cause they killed Christ. Didn't you learn that in Sunday school?"

III-IV; p. 90: HEYDRICH TO DORF: The practical side! Anti-Semitism is the cement that binds us together. CHRISTIANS MAY DISAGREE ON A LOT OF THINGS, BUT AS MEN OF CONSCIENCE THEY CAN UNITE ON HATRED OF JEWS. "

DORF: "But the Jews have earned that hatred."

HEYDRICH: "Of course! Christ-killers. Well-poisoners. Agents of Satan. Murderers of Christian children."

IV - p. 139; BIBERSTEIN: "When I left the Lutheran ministry, I decided to encourage human love through Christian faith...So I joined the SS."

Comments: On one level, I agree with several of Rodney Gerard's observations to Mrs. Eleanor Timberman in his June 10th memo that gratuitous anti-Christian bigotry and anti-Christianity must be

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eliminated - for the ethical reason that Rabbi Hillel expressed, "That which is hateful to you do not inflict on others." But I must differ with him over several comments he offers on pp. 6 and 7 of his memo:

a) There is abundant evidence from both Catholic and Protestant scholars that tens of thousands of Christians who regarded themselves as "devout" and "faithful" Christians did in fact play an active role in the Nazi party and in the Nazi's "final solution" of "the Jewish problem." May I suggest that both Mr. Gerard and Mr. Green read, among other works, the following:

"German Catholics and Hitler's Wars," by the Catholic scholar, Gordon Zahn;

"The German Phoenix," by the Methodist scholar, Dr. Franklin Littell. (I write this from my summer home and do not have the books with me, otherwise I would cite some of the illustrative evidence.)

With agonized conscience, both Profs. Zahn and Littell make the point that millions of Germans lived a "compartmentalized" existence - they went to Church on Sunday and felt they were faithful Christians; the rest of the week, they were Nazis or Nazi fellow-travelers in good standing, and saw no contradictions nor incogruities in the incompatible claims of Christ and the Fuehrer (who, Prof. Uri Tal documents in his study, Christians and Jews in Germany, was also followed mystically as "Savior".)

Therefore, there is factual evidence that would support the Dorf's Christmas episode and the the singing of Silent Night. It is a matter of taste and judgment, however, whether one should "sock it" to the Christian viewers in that graphic way. I know many Christian theologians who might well feel that exactly such shock therapy is useful in helping to shake people out of their complacencies about their ^{nominal} religious commitments.

At the same time, there was a more substantial resistance to Nazism on the part of Catholic and Protestant pastors and some of their followers, which both Zahn and Littell (now Peter Hoffman in his newly-published The History of the German Resistance)

document than is usually acknowledged. Frankly, I believe it is important for ourselves and especially for the next generation of young people to know that there were people who stood courageously against evil and murderers, and for that reason I would hope that the Pastor Dichtenberg episode would be strengthened. Perhaps some additional material from Zahn and Littell could be incorporated to underscore the models of altruism and heroism, without distorting the actual reality of the overview of general conformity and submission to Nazi terror.

Regarding the Christ-killer teachings in religious schools: post-Vatican Council II studies of German Catholic textbooks used in primary, secondary, and seminary and university classes conducted by Sister Louis Gabriel and Pastor Eckhardt of Cologne disclose, regrettably and tragically, that anti-Jewish attitudes were taught ~~pervasively~~ pervasively. Similar evidence indicates that the same was true in Evangelical Lutheran schools.

But the problem nevertheless remains that the several "Christ-killer" references I have cited are too simplistic and risk credibility in these sloganized forms. It might be useful to cite Lucy Dawidowicz on the interrelationship of religious anti-Semitism and racial anti-Semitism as a suggestion of the mood and form which need to be expressed in the scripts:

"A line of anti-Semitic descent from Martin Luther to Adolf Hitler is easy to draw. Both Luther and Hitler were obsessed by a demonologized universe inhabited by Jews. 'Know, Christian,' wrote Luther, 'that next to the devil thou hast no enemy more cruel, more venomous and violent than a true Jew.' Hitler himself, in that early dialogue with Dietrich Eckart, asserted that the later Luther - that is, the violently anti-Semitic Luther - was the genuine Luther. Luther's protective authority was invoked by the Nazis when they came to power, and his anti-Semitic writings enjoyed a revival of popularity. To be sure, the similarities of Luther's anti-Jewish exhortations with modern racial anti-Semitism and even with Hitler's racial policies are not merely coincidental. They all derive from a common historic tradition of Jew-hatred, whose provenance can be traced back to Haman's advice to Ahasuerus. But modern German anti-Semitism had more recent roots than Luther and grew out of a different soil - not that German anti-Semitism was new; it drew part of its sustenance from Christian anti-Semitism, whose foundation had been laid by the Catholic Church and upon which Luther built. It was equally a product of German nationalism. Modern German anti-Semitism was the bastard child of the union of Christian anti-Semitism with German nationalism." (p. 23, The War Against the Jews.)

On Scripts I and II: Additional Comments

p. 38: HEYDRICH: "That damned scheming cripple Goebbels. TURNED HIS THUGS AND PSYCHOPATHS LOOSE? and they're beating up Jews..."

I would leave out the word psychopaths. I agree with Richard Rubenstein that "contrary to popular opinion, the Nazi holocaust was not carried out by a group of irresponsible criminals on the fringes of society who somehow forced the German people to pursue a policy of ethnic hatred that was wholly at odds with the great traditions of Western civilization."

p. 32 - RUDI: "Nobody wants us." I understand the pathos of feeling abandoned. I would like to see the point made here - in addition or instead of "nobody wants us" - "Some great democracies!"

p. 36: MARTA: "The Jews killed him." / PETER: "And they're all bad."

- I just don't like the frequent repetition of such phrases "as the bad Jews", "Why does everyone hate the Jews," "racial poisoning by Jews" - these register as flat-out assertions of fact or widely-held opinion, and there is no countering of them. Along the way, the negative imagery of contempt for Jews may well leave a deposit especially among younger viewers. (also, p151: Muller: "No wonder everyone hates you.")

p. 73: EICHMANN: "You'd be astonished how Jewish leaders cooperate with us." Also, IV, p. 186, DORF: "It's astonishing how they cooperate."

-While there were individual Jewish leaders in the Judenrate who deserve criticism for their supine accomodation, honesty and fairness require that we keep in mind - as S. Dawidowicz observes in A Holocaust Reader, that "the operations (of the Judenrate) were conducted under extreme duress and the all-seeing vigilance of the SS." And on p. 18, "The language of the petitions which German Jewish organizations submitted to the Nazi regimes may appear obsequious and submissive, but it served to state their case without bringing disaster upon themselves and the community they spoke for. The Jews had learned the language of accomodation, as all persons do in times of extreme persecution."

p. 158: DR. KOHN: "We have survived by accomodating."

-I wish Kohn could add the above sentiment, "as all people do in times of persecution and terror."

p. 115 - Kapo Melnik beats another Jew; p. 148, Gypsies show defiance, but Jews don't - more of point 1, page 3 & 4 of this memo.
p. 98 - Hebrew persuasion - why not Jewish persuasion?

On Scripts V and VI

p. 226 - if this is "evening prayers" (Maariv), an Orthodox Jew would normally not wear a tallit, prayer shawl. (Worn only at morning, Sabbath, or Holy Day services). A yarmulka would of course be worn at all times.

p. 231 - The Marriage Service

I would prefer other selections from the traditional marriage service that would lend, I think, poignancy to the scene. Thus, for example,

SAMUEL: He who is supremely blessed
May He bless the groom and the bride.
Blessed art thou, O Lord who sanctifiest thy people
Israel by consecrated wedlock.

(The groom places the ring on the forefinger of the bride's right hand, and says:)

RUDI: With this ring you are wedded to me in accordance with the law of Moses and Israel.

SAMUEL: Blessed art thou, O Lord, King of the universe, who hast created groom and bride, joy and gladness, delight and cheer, love and harmony, peace and companionship. Lord our God, may there soon be heard in the cities of Judah, in the streets of Jerusalem, the sound of joy and gladness, the sound of joyous wedding celebrations, the sound of young people feasting and singing. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who makest the groom rejoice with the bride."

RUDI breaks glass

On Scripts VII and VIII

p. 319 - RABBI "And David said unto his men -- gird ye on every man his sword" -

-I wonder if a more pertinent quote could not be used, something like:

Micah 5:8 - "Let thy hand be lifted up above thy adversaries, and let all Thine enemies be cut off."

Exodus 17:9 - "Moses said to Joshua: Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek"

p. 371- Eichmann: Resistance is over...THE JEWS SEEM INTENT ON

AIDING US IN THEIR ANNIH--

- I gag on such statements by Nazis; it suggests that "the Jews

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went voluntarily like sheep unto slaughter". The victims are blamed for their victimization, when in brutal fact they had no alternatives, no arms, no state to support them, nothing. Why give Eichmann and the Nazis posthumous victories?

ON MR. RODNEY GERARD'S MEMORANDUM

While it is not my role to respond to the Broadcast Standards issues discussed by Mr. Gerard, for whatever it may be worth I presume to indicate that I agree with much of what he has stated as his position on violence, nudity, language (unnecessary cursing). The nudity issue, however, needs to be understood far less as a matter of "Nazi efficiency" than as a ~~xxx~~ calculated plan to dehumanize the Jews. To traditional Jews especially, "Tzniut" - modesty in dress, was a fundamental article of faith and lifestyle. The Nazis took especial relish in humiliating religious Jews for they were seen as the quintessential Jews. To compel traditional Jews to undress publicly was the ultimate humiliation, and a stage toward dehumanizing them. That needs to be kept in mind in the treatment of nudity.

On "Historical Accuracy and Historical Interpretation", I have set forth my views on avoiding anti-Christianity and the factual basis for the Christ-killer canards earlier in this document. (See page 7).

As for the German intellectuals who claimed that "the overwhelming thrust of anti-Jewish Nazi propaganda was of an economic character," that was only partly true. The "economic" arguments that they gave to Mr. Gerard are the typical rationalizations that many Germans have employed since their defeat in World War II to make plausible the unspeakable Nazi atrocities. Hitler was more forthright than these "German intellectuals" in that he wrote in Mein Kampf repeatedly that "anti-Semitism was based on a correct understanding of the racial problem." The swastika was after a symbol of "racial purity," not of German economics or politics.

Regarding Mr. Gerard's comments on the Polish resistance fighters on pages 398 and 399, I think his caution is well-taken, but the evidence tends to confirm Gerald Green's interpretation.

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Whoever is interested in reading such confirming evidence would do well to study the section, "Resistance: The Ordeal of Desperation," in "The Holocaust Reader" edited by L. Dawidowicz. Thus, Yitzhak Zuckerman, one of the organizers of the Jewish Combat Organization in the Warsaw Ghetto, writes:

"The following day we received from our comrades on the Aryan side FIVE pistols and EIGHT hand grenades." That was the response of the Polish underground and the Polish-Government in Exile to a memorandum from the Jewish Combat Organization which on March 12, 1942, appealed for "a larger supply of arms, for the 10 pieces received do not suffice to organize an armed resistance or any other action of a collective and non-individual character."

If one reads "On the Edge of Destruction" about the situation of the Jews of Poland, it is tragically evident that anti-Semitism was as endemic in Poland as in Germany ~~was~~ as elsewhere. Indeed, in 1936, the Primate of Poland, Cardinal Hlond, in a pastoral letter read from the pulpits of most churches, openly supported an anti-Jewish campaign that culminated in pogroms against Jews. Among other moral niceties, Cardinal Hlond declared in his pastoral:

"A Jewish problem exists, and will continue to exist as long as the Jews remain Jews....It is a fact that the Jews fight against the Catholic Church, they are free-thinkers, and constitute the vanguard of atheism, of the bolshevik movement and of revolutionary ~~XXXXX~~ ~~XXXXX~~ activity....It is true that the Jews are committing frauds, practicing usury, and dealing in white slavery. ...One does well to prefer his own kind in commercial dealings and to avoid Jewish stores and Jewish stalls in the markets...One ought to fence oneself off against the harmful moral influences of Jewry, to separate oneself against its anti-Christian culture, and especially to boycott the Jewish press and the demoralizing Jewish publications...When divine mercy enlightens a Jew, and he accepts sincerely his and our Messiah, let us greet him with joy in the Christian midst."

As for "Jewish support of...Soviet Communism," I make no brief for Jews who supported Communism than I do for the handful of wealthy Jews who thought they could buy stability and security for themselves by aiding Hitler in the earliest days of the Nazi movement. And I write that as someone who is not allowed to enter

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the Soviet Union today because I am flagged in the Soviet Foreign Ministry as "an anti-Soviet propagandist" owing to my nationwide broadcasts, lectures, and writings in which I have consistently demanded that the Soviet Union fulfill its obligations under the UN ~~Charter~~ Declaration on Human Rights and the Helsinki Agreement by ensuring the human rights of Jews and of Christians and of Moslems and of all people whose human dignity must be honored everywhere.

But 20-20 hindsight, I am afraid, does not do justice to the specificities of time and place which make their own claims on people, especially those living in extremis who must make decisions in the context of the moment in which they live. "All over Europe resistance groups turned for material aid and moral support to either England or Russia. In Vilna, for instance, the young Jews who organized the resistance movement turned to the Lithuanian and Russian Communists for assistance and instructions and, through them, to the Soviet partisan movement which was directed by the Red Army." ("The Holocaust Reader," p. 330).

You can't do business with the devil. I agree. But when you are drowning, and only the devil is around to throw you a life-belt, you grab it. But obviously that does not mean that you have to go to bed with the devil as an expression of gratitude for his having saved your life.

In sum, if Gerald Green's "The Holocaust" contributes to a national dialogue - and hopefully to an international dialogue - of this order of significance for human survival, it will more than have justified the investment of time, talent, and energy of everyone involved. I wish for all of you the richest blessings and good fortune in this monumental undertaking!

Marc H. Tanenbaum