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*Preserving American Jewish History*

MS-603: Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum Collection, 1945-1992.

Series E: General Alphabetical Files. 1960-1992

Box 86, Folder 22, NBC "Holocaust" - Spain, 1978.



SPAIN

2nd draft

Holocaust, which aired in Spain June 20 through 29 in six parts on the quasi-governmental TVE network, drew heavy preview and review coverage in Madrid's press.

The airing came amid controversies both internal and external to the Spanish government and the television network. The network's director, Miguel Martin, was reported as having said that unidentified foreign lobbies had protested against the presentation of the film.

New York Times correspondent James Markham suggested that there had also been network infighting over the question of whether or not it would show Holocaust. TVE had purchased the rights to the series nearly a year prior to its showing, and the ultimate decision to broadcast Holocaust was made by Juan Julio Baena, shortly after he had replaced Eduardo Autran Arias Salgado as assistant director for programming.

Although no viewership audience size figures were available, the more than ample coverage of the series in all branches of the media is indicative of the stir Holocaust evoked in the country. Ya, the Madrid daily, printed a synopsis of each segment of the series. El Pais, the liberal Madrid newspaper, published a two-part interview with Madrid's Hebrew community which delved into Spain's position in World War II and the situation today for Spain's 12,000 Jews.

ABC, another daily newspaper, carried a lengthy article on Auschwitz, but also ran a story by its video critic, Enrique del Corral, which criticized the film as too long and neglectful of the War's other martyrs.

According to Variety magazine, most criticism of Holocaust did not diverge greatly in theme from that in other nations. These

included complaints that the suffering of other groups condemned to concentration camps and to death was omitted from the series, that Holocaust suffered from its "slick Hollywood style," and <sup>contention</sup> the / that "Holocaust should induce neither an anti-present-day-Germany nor a pro-Israel reaction."

In a country just recently emerged from a dictatorship that was friendly to Hitler and that is still new to democracy, the strong negative reactions that appeared in the form of graffiti proclaiming "Holocaust is a Jewish Lie," "Death to the Jews," and "No Jews," along with many swastikas, as was reported in Variety, should speak for itself. Another slogan, "Holocaust is a Zionist Lie," appeared on posters signed by a neo-fascist youth organization.

Samuel Toledano, spokesperson for the Jewish Community of Madrid, responded to the work of the neo-fascist groups with words of "dismay and indignation."

El Pais published a letter by ex-Nazi officer Reinhard Spitzer which lamented ~~about~~ the "persecution of the losers" of World War II. A more subtle editorial in Ya warned that "the present state of Israel should not be allowed to capitalize on the series."

The first episode was preceded by a 75 minute roundtable discussion with Julian Marias, a Spanish philosopher; Treblinka camp survivor Joaquin Garcia Ribes; Jurgen Puhle, a German historian; Spanish psychologist Luis Pinillos; and Javier Tussel, a Spanish historian. The group avoided the issue of Spain's treatment of Jews during the war and the exact nature of General Franco's sympathies.

*The products compared Nazi Germany w/ Medieval Spain and in this regard*  
 Though Holocaust caused some stir when it was aired, "most Spaniards presumably haven't much changed their views on Germany, Israel, the Nazis or U.S. commercial television," commented Variety.

*Marias noted that during the Argentinian Jews were at least allowed to convert or leave the country.*

But "what is important," noted Angel Viñas, a historian who has written extensively on the ties between the Hitler and Franco regimes, "is that for the first time something anti-Nazi has been shown on television on Spain."

