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President's Commission on the Holocaust

Office of the
Director

May 1, 1979

Dear Marc:

It is with a deep sense of honor that I enclose a copy of the remarks by the President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States, and the Chairman of our Commission on the occasion of the National Civic Holocaust Commemoration Ceremony.

Sincerely yours,

Irving Greenberg

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum
National Director
Interreligious Affairs of the
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Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
NATIONAL CIVIC HOLOCAUST COMMEMORATION CEREMONY

The Rotunda,
United States Capitol

12:43 P.M. EST

AMERICAN JEWISH

I am honored and also grave and solemn as I participate in this ceremony during Days of Remembrance for victims of the Holocaust.

Just five weeks ago, during my trip to Israel, I visited again Yad Vashem -- the memorial to the six million. I walked slowly through the Hall of Names. And like literally millions before me, I grieved as I looked at book after book, row after row, each recording the name of a man or a woman, a little boy or a little girl, each one a victim of the Holocaust.

I vowed then -- as people all over the world are doing this week -- to reaffirm our unshakeable commitment that such an event will never recur on this earth again.

A philosopher has written that language itself breaks down when one tries to speak about the Holocaust and its meaning. Our words pale before the frightening spectacle of human evil which was unleashed upon the world, and before the awesomeness of the suffering involved; the sheer weight of its numbers -- 11 million innocent victims exterminated -- 6 million of them Jews.

Although words do pale, yet we must speak. We must strive to understand. We must teach the lessons of the Holocaust. And most of all, we ourselves must remember.

We must learn not only about the vulnerability of life, but of the value of human life. We must remember the terrible price paid for bigotry and hatred and also the terrible price paid for indifference and for silence.

It is fitting also that we recall today the persecution, the suffering and the destruction which has befallen so many other people in this century, in many nations, peoples whose representatives have joined us for this observance. For the central lesson of the Holocaust must be that, in the words of the poet, "Each man's death

MORE

diminishes me".

To truly commemorate the victims of the Holocaust, we must harness the outrage of our memories to banish all human oppression from the world. We must recognize that when any fellow human being is stripped of humanity; when any person is turned into an object of repression; tortured or defiled or victimized by terrorism or prejudice or racism, then all human beings are victims, too.

The world's failure to recognize the moral truth 40 years ago permitted the Holocaust to proceed. Our generation -- the generation of survivors -- will never permit the lesson to be forgotten. Human rights and human dignity are indivisible. America must, and always will, speak out in the defense of human rights not only in our own country, but around the world.

AMERICAN JEWISH
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That commitment imposes special responsibilities on us to uphold the highest possible standards of human justice and human rights here at home. I applaud the Congress in calling for this day of remembrance of the Holocaust. And I renew my call to the Senate to take a long overdue step this year by ratifying the International Treaty on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide. Without concrete action, our words are hollow. Let us signify by deed as well as by word that the American people will never forget.

It is, perhaps, ironic that we meet today in a season of rebirth and renewal to recall a time of darkness and destruction that has no parallel in human history. And yet it is also fitting that we do so in this Rotunda, along with actual survivors of the Holocaust itself. For the Holocaust is also a story of renewal and a testament to the power of the human spirit to prevail.

People who saw their homes destroyed helped build a new homeland in the State of Israel. People like Elie Wiesel, the Chairman of my Holocaust Commission, who witnessed the collapse of all vision, created and shared with us a new vision. It is an incredible story of a people who refused to allow despair to triumph, who after having lost their children, brought new families into the world.

It is our collective task as well to learn from this process of renewal, the roots of hope -- a hope not based on illusion or ignorance, but hope grounded in the rebirth of the human spirit and a reaffirmation of the sacredness of life.

With that hope, we will strive to build out of our memories of the Holocaust a world joined by a true fellowship of human understanding, a world of tolerance and diversity in which all peoples can live in dignity and in peace.

END (AT 12:45 P.M. EST)

REMARKS OF VICE PRESIDENT WALTER F. MONDALE
HOLOCAUST COMMEMORATION CEREMONY
APRIL 23, 1979

MR. PRESIDENT, MR. SPEAKER, MR. MAJORITY LEADER, MEMBERS
OF CONGRESS, DISTINGUISHED GUESTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

-- I AM PROFOUNDLY HONORED TO JOIN YOU, AND ALL
AMERICANS, AS WE COMMEMORATE BOTH THE TRAGEDY OF THE
HOLOCAUST, AND THE VIBRANT RESILIENCE OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT.

-- HUMAN NATURE CASTS A COMPLEX SHADOW ON THE HISTORY OF
CIVILIZATION. THE TRIUMPH OF THE HUMAN HEART HAS ITS
MEMORIALS -- IN OUR MIRACLES OF ART, IN THE GENIUS OF OUR
DEMOCRACIES, IN THE LESSON OF COMPASSION AT THE SOUL OF ALL
RELIGIONS.

-- BUT THE HISTORY OF HUMANITY IS ALSO SCARRED BY
IGNOMINY. HATRED, INJUSTICE, OPPRESSION, BLOODSHED: THESE,
TOO, HAVE THEIR MONUMENTS THAT LITTER OUR NOBLER HISTORY LIKE
TRASH IN A GARDEN.

-- WE MEET TODAY TO RECALL BOTH SIDES OF HUMAN HISTORY --
TRIUMPH AS WELL AS TRAGEDY. WE MEET BOTH TO RENEW OUR GRIEF,
AND TO RECOMMIT OUR COURAGE ... TO SING KADDISH
FOR THE FALLEN, AND TO SANCTIFY AS WELL THE WORK OF THE LIVING.

-- THE HOLOCAUST BEGGARS THE HUMAN IMAGINATION. TO
RECALL IT IS TO THINK THE UNTHINKABLE. TO DESCRIBE IT IS TO
SAY THE UNSAYABLE. TO BE ITS HEIR IS TO INHERIT A NIGHTMARE.

-- BUT THE HORROR WE COMMEMORATE TODAY MUST NOT BLIND
US TO THE LIFE WHOSE ROOTS LIE IN ITS ASHES. FOR TODAY WE ALSO
AFFIRM THAT GENOCIDE HAS NO PART IN HUMAN HISTORY.

TODAY WE DECLARE THAT DECENCY AND DIGNITY AND LIFE ITSELF ARE INALIENABLE, AND MUST FOREVER REMAIN SO. TODAY WE BEAR WITNESS NOT ONLY TO THE UNANSWERED CRIES OF THE ELEVEN MILLION, BUT ALSO TO THE DUTY THEY CONFER ON US: THE DUTY TO BANISH BLOODSHED FROM THE ANNALS OF OUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE.

--TODAY WE BEAR WITNESS. ELIE WIESEL THE DISTINGUISHED CHAIRMAN OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S HOLOCAUST COMMISSION, PUT IT THIS WAY IN HIS MOVING NOVEL, THE OATH:

"WE MUST TELL, AWAKEN, ALERT, AND REPEAT OVER AND OVER AGAIN WITHOUT RESPITE OR PAUSE, REPEAT TO THE VERY END THOSE STORIES THAT HAVE NO END..."

WE WILL REPEAT THOSE STORIES WITHOUT END. ONE OF THEM IS THE TRAGEDY OF THE HOLOCAUST. BUT ANOTHER--AND JUST AS IMPORTANT--IS THE STORY OF THE HUMAN HEART IN ITS RELENTLESS SERVICE OF HIGH IDEALS.

--I HAVE THE PRIVILEGE TO INTRODUCE TO YOU THE REVEREND DR. ROY ECKARDT, WHO WILL OFFER THE INVOCATION.

THE HOLOCAUST: BEGINNING OR END?

BY

ELIE WIESEL

Mr. President, Mr. Vice President, Mr. Speaker, Leaders and Members of the House and the Senate, Distinguished Guests:

Allow me to tell you a story.

Once upon a time, faraway, somewhere in the Carpathian mountains, there lived a small boy, a Jewish boy, whose dreams were filled with God, prayer and song.

Then one day, he and his family, and all the Jews of his town, were rounded up and exiled to a dark and evil kingdom. They arrived there at midnight. Then came the first separation, the first selection.

As the boy stood with his father, wondering whether his mother and sisters will come back, an inmate came to tell them the truth; this road led to the final destination of the Jewish people; the truth was there: in the fire, the ashes, the truth was in death. And the young boy refused to believe him; it had to be a lie, a nightmare perhaps, this could not be happening, not here, not now, not in the heart of civilized Europe, not in the middle of the twentieth century. Father, said the boy: if this were true, the world would not be silent Perhaps the world does not know, said the

father. And father and son walked on, part of an eerie nocturnal procession, toward mysterious flames of darkness.

Thirty-five years later -- almost to the day -- the same Jewish boy stands before you with a deep sense of privilege, to remind our contemporaries that in those times of anguish and destruction, only one people -- the Jewish people -- were totally, inexplicably abandoned -- only one people were simply, cynically handed over to their executioners.

And we, the few survivors, were left behind to bear witness and tell the tale.

But before doing so, allow me, on behalf of your Commission on the Holocaust and its Advisory Board, to thank you, Mr. President, for summoning our Nation -- and all nations -- to keep their memory alive.

We also wish to express our profound gratitude to all the distinguished guests and national leaders for being here today at this unprecedented assembly, responding to this call for remembrance. No other country, and its government, besides Israel, has issued or heeded such a call, but then Israel is a case apart. Israel's commitment to memory is as old as its history itself.

On my first night in the camp, which was the last for most of my friends, my family, my relatives, my teachers, I wrote:

Never shall I forget that night, which has turned my life into one long night, seven times cursed and seven times sealed. Never shall I forget that smoke. Never shall I forget the little faces of the children whom I saw being thrown into the flames alive beneath a silent blue sky. Never shall I forget that sky.

Never shall I forget those flames which murdered my hopes forever.

Never shall I forget that nocturnal silence which deprived me, for all eternity, of the desire to live.

Never shall I forget those moments which murdered my soul and turned my dreams into dust, into smoke Never shall I forget these words even if I am condemned to live as long as God himself.

But Mr. President and friends -- what does one do with such memories of fire -- with so many fragments of despair? How does one live in a world which witnessed the murder of one million children and remained world?

Those of us who were there are haunted by those whose lives were turned into ashes, by those whose cemetery was the sky.

Terror-stricken families hiding in ghetto-cellars. Children running with priceless treasures: a potato or two, a crumb of bread. Endless lines of quiet men and women on their way to

mass graves, reciting the Kaddish, the prayer for the dead, over themselves. Teachers and their pupils, mothers and their infants, rabbis and their followers, rich and poor, learned and illiterate, princes and beggars -- all pushed inexorably toward death. Father, says a young boy, is it painful to die? Must I die? Think of something else, answers the father. Think of tomorrow.

Treblinka and Ponar, Auschwitz and Babi-Yar, Majdanek and Blezec: What happened? Did creation go mad? Did God cover his face? Did the Creator turn against his creation? Did the God of Israel turn against the people of Israel? The question everyone asked upon arrival inside the gates was: What does it all mean? Was there a design, a secret pattern?

We didn't know, we still don't. How can anyone explain evil of such magnitude? How can anyone comprehend so much pain and anguish? One cannot conceive of Auschwitz with or without God. But what about man? Who can understand the calculated deprivation of the killers? The indifference of the onlookers? When Jews did have a possibility of leaving Europe, how many countries were there ready to accept them?

What was the Holocaust: an end or a beginning? Prefiguration or culmination? Was it the final convulsion of demonic forces in history? A paroxysm of centuries-old bigotry and hatred? Or, on the contrary, a momentous warning of things to come?

Turning-point or watershed, it produced a mutation on a cosmic scale, affecting all possible areas of human endeavor. After Auschwitz, the human condition is no longer the same. After Treblinka, nothing will ever be the same. The Event has altered man's perception and changed his relationship to God, to his fellow man and to himself. The unthinkable had become real. After Belsen, everything seems possible.

Admittedly, I belong to a traumatized generation, hence I speak of my people, the Jewish people. But when I, as a Jew, evoke the tragic destiny of Jewish victims, I honor the memory of all the victims. When one group is persecuted, mankind is affected. Still, for the sake of truth, we must remember that only the Jewish people's extermination was an end in itself. Jewish victims, stripped of their identity and of their death, were disowned by the whole world: they were condemned not for what they did or said, but for who they were: sons and daughters of a people whose suffering is the most ancient in recorded history.

Every occupied nation, every underground movement received help from London, Washington or Moscow. Not the Jews: they were the loneliest victims of the most inhuman of wars. A single air-drop, a single rescue mission would have proved to them, and to the enemy, that they were not forgotten. But, Mr. President and friends, the truth is that they were forgotten.

The evidence is before us: the world knew and kept silent. The documents that you, Mr. President, handed to the Chairman of your Commission on the Holocaust, testify to that effect. Actually, pictures of Auschwitz and Birkenau had reached the free world much earlier. Still, when the Hungarian Jews began arriving there, feeding the flames with ten to twelve thousand persons a day, nothing was done to stop or delay the process. Not one bomb was dropped on the railway tracks to the death factories. Had there been a similar Joint Session of Congress then, things would have been different for many Jews

And yet, and yet when the nightmare lifted, there was no hate in the hearts of those who survived. Only sadness. And, paradoxically, hope, hope as well. For some reason they were convinced that out of grief and so much suffering a powerful message of compassion and justice would be heard and received. They were convinced that the Messiah would come and redeem the world. They were convinced that, after Auschwitz, people would no longer yield to fanaticism, nations would no longer wage war, and racism, antisemitism and class humiliation would be banned forever, shamed forever.

Little did we know that, in our lifetime, we would witness more wars, new racial hostilities, and an awakening of Nazism on all five continents. Little did we know that, in our lifetime,

books would appear in many languages offering so-called "proof" that the Holocaust never occurred, that our parents, our friends did not die there. Little did we know that Jewish children would again be murdered, in cold blood, by killers in Israel.

The survivors advocated hope, not despair. Their testimony contains neither rancor nor bitterness. They knew too well that hate is self-debasing and vengeance self-defeating. Instead of choosing nihilism and anarchy, they chose to opt for man. Instead of setting cities on fire, they enriched them. Many went to rebuild an ancient dream of Israel in Israel; they all chose to remain human in an inhuman society, to fight for human rights everywhere, against poverty everywhere and discrimination, for humankind, always.

For we have learned certain lessons. We have learned not to be neutral in times of crisis, for neutrality always helps the aggressor, never the victim. We have learned that silence is never the answer. We have learned that the opposite of love is not hatred, but indifference. What is memory if not a response to, and against, indifference?

So let us remember, let us remember for their sake, and ours: memory may perhaps be our only answer, our only hope to save the world from the ultimate punishment, a nuclear holocaust.

Let us remember, let us remember the heroes of Warsaw, the martyrs of Treblinka, the children of Auschwitz. They fought alone, they suffered alone, they lived alone, but they did not die alone, for something in all of us died with them.



WARSAW GHETTO RESISTANCE ORGANIZATION

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2 May 1979

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Mr. Elie Wiesel, Chairman
President's Commission on the Holocaust
726 Jackson Place, N.W., Suite 7233
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Elie:

Since I talked with you yesterday by telephone, it is very hard for me to control my emotions, which, I am sure, you will understand.

It is true that nowadays one year means much more than many years in the past, and from one month to the next and from one week to the next things happen so fast that sometimes it is difficult to sit down quietly and take count of them.

The first meeting of the President's Commission took place on February 15. It is not even one hundred days that the Commission is in existence, and so much already has happened. I know how much you personally and the staff around you contributed to the fact that within such a short period of time the work of the Commission has been brought to the attention of millions of people.

I know that basically those who are deeply committed to remembrance have no quarrel as to what needs to be done. What worries me is the little time that is left to do the job. I recall the first meeting, when I arrived with a letter from yourself appointing me chairman of the Advisory Board. I probably never mentioned this to you before, but I felt that you actually gave me a passport representing my purpose in life. There is nothing at all, besides the members of my family, which is so precious to me.

On that February 15 I submitted suggestions which basically were later repeated by many others. Now, two months later, I still believe in the same suggestions. In fact, I believe in them even stronger, as I now realize that there is actually a good chance of bringing these ideas into reality.



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- 2 -

Mr. Elie Wiesel

To yourself I don't need to advocate what it means to be a survivor. Indeed, I learned most of it from you, and hope to learn more in the future. But I will never agree that persons who were not there are able to fully understand us.

I know that survivors alone are not in a position to build a memorial. I regret that they have not done this in the past. However, since it has not been done, we must accept the situation as it is. For this reason we must work together with non-survivors to build it.

I know that we shall have to compromise. But I am sure that under your chairmanship we will never compromise the dignity of remembering our Six Million Jewish martyrs.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

BENJAMIN MEED

cc: Rabbi I. Greenberg
Dr. M. Berenbaum



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SUGGESTIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON THE HOLOCAUST BY BENJAMIN MEED AT THE FIRST MEETING OF THE COMMISSION

Washington, D.C.

February 15, 1979

LET US REMEMBER

I submit these suggestions as a survivor of the Holocaust.

I believe that through the creation of the President's Commission on the Holocaust we are offered a unique opportunity to present our case to the American people and to the world. We must utilize this opportunity to the best of our ability. We must remember, and we must help others to remember.

For the first time an agency of the Federal Government, representative of the entire country and acting under the leadership of the President of the United States, is prepared to voice its concern about and find ways to remember the Holocaust. It is important, therefore, that survivors of the Holocaust present their views to the Commission, and that the Commission listen to them carefully. Each survivor had both witnessed and experienced the horrors of the Nazi persecutions. Collectively as well as individually they are able to serve as guardians of the truth and of historical veracity. Furthermore, they stand on guard in the present. It is primarily through their efforts that the subject of the Holocaust has come to the attention of President Carter.

Thus I believe that survivors, as long as they are still living and are ready to bear witness, should participate in all current activities related to the Holocaust. Indeed, by their very presence, survivors may help assure that these activities are not only a matter of writing history and commemorating the victims but also a contribution to a better and saner life today and in the future.

IT MUST NOT HAPPEN AGAIN

Our cry, It Must Not Happen Again, has been heard many times, but it is our duty to keep on repeating it. What happened to the Jewish people during World War II has no counterpart in history. We must always be alert, therefore, to assure that the suffering and the slaughter are not repeated—not with respect to us and not with respect to any other people. Unless this is understood and

accepted as the logical consequence of the Holocaust experience, all commemorations, observances, and writing of historical records will remain meaningless. For this reason it is recommended that the Commission firmly establish its stand on the relationship between past and present events.

To put it differently, I believe there is no guarantee that history cannot repeat itself. History may indeed repeat itself unless this is prevented in due time. Today the United States is both the world symbol and the world bastion of freedom, where human dignity has been preserved and enhanced. This position of moral and material strength should be utilized for the practical purpose of preventing any future suppression of human freedom and liberty.

INTERNATIONAL ACTION

Specific action to prevent a future holocaust should be of international concern.

There are many specific situations around the world which require intervention on the part of an authoritative body of public opinion. One example is the forthcoming statute of limitations on Nazi crimes in West Germany—a step against which survivors of the Holocaust, among others, have raised eloquent objections.

Regrettably, many Nazi criminals have successfully avoided prosecution. Many, as we well know, have gone into disguise or hiding. This, however, does not mean that they should be either forgiven or forgotten. The Federal Republic of Germany may prefer to disregard this point of view, but its authorities may, before it is too late, pay attention to world public opinion.

Indeed, a great deal of evidence exists that the Nazi movement has continued in an international scale through the present time. It is suggested that the Commission help unmask the Nazis wherever and whenever they may be. It is also suggested that the Commission help counteract Nazi claims asserting that the Holocaust did not in fact take place, or that documented cases of persecution and murder are an invention on the part of the Jewish people—the very victims of the Nazi savagery.

DATE AND MANNER OF OBSERVANCE

The generally accepted date of commemoration of the Holocaust, and of the anniversary of the 1943 Warsaw Ghetto Uprising—the symbol of Jewish resistance against the Nazi oppressor—is based on the Hebrew calendar: the week of the 27th day of the month of Nissan, which usually coincides with the end of April.

This observance is highly important to the survivors and to the Jewish people in general. I believe that, in fact, it is not enough to select one day each year for this purpose. I suggest that there should be each year a *Week of Remembering the Holocaust*, and this should be the week of the 27th of Nissan.

It is hoped that the annual Holocaust commemoration will become one of the most important observances in the life of the American Jewish community, acting in conjunction with the American people at large. The feeling should be promoted that everyone should participate in the community's remembrance, for his or her own sake and for the sake of future generations.

The commemoration procedure itself should be most serious. It must be stressed that, whatever program or procedure is followed, the commemoration cannot be compared to any other community event. Furthermore, the commemoration should be non-political; it should be nation-wide; and it should be held with the participation of the old and the young.

NATIONAL FOUNDATION

The Commission should recommend to Congress that it establish, and that national institutions and organizations support and maintain, a *National Foundation on the Holocaust*. This Foundation would continue the work of the President's Commission on the Holocaust after the Commission will complete its designated assignment.

The headquarters of the Foundation should be located in Washington, the political and historic capital of the United States, the showcase of the nation, and the seat of the conscience of the American people. A suitable counterpart and memorial should be located in New York, the principal world urban center, the site of the United Nations, and the largest Jewish community in the world. Additional counterparts and memorials should be established, through local efforts, in other American urban centers, such as Los Angeles, Chicago, Atlanta, Cleveland, Detroit, Boston, Milwaukee, Dallas and Miami.

HOUSE OF REMEMBRANCE

The National Foundation on the Holocaust should create funding for the establishment of an appropriate *House of Remembrance*.

I suggest that the Commission recommend a specific function for the House of Remembrance. This institution should serve as a center for educational activities and for the presentation of the events of the Holocaust. It should contain permanent exhibitions, book collections, documentation, and premises appropriate for lectures, public meetings, and technical services connected with remembrance support. It should be equipped to make educational materials available to schools, public institutions, and publishing organizations.

The House of Remembrance should be sanctioned by Congress as an arm of the National Foundation on the Holocaust. It should establish cooperative agreements with similar institutions in this country as well as in other countries.

An architectural competition should be held as the basis for the design of the House of Remembrance. This design should be expected to represent, both externally and internally, the subject and the magnitude of the Holocaust as well as the sentiments of the American people, including those of the American Jews. However, it should be understood that there must be no embellishments. In a sense, we must allow those who perished to speak for themselves.

GUARDIANS OF TRUTH IN REMEMBRANCE

Thirty-four years after Auschwitz, Warsaw Ghetto, Dachau and Treblinka, we witness a great upsurge of interest in the tragic events of the Holocaust.

As survivors, we note this with gratitude. However, we are often painfully disappointed when we discover that what happened during the Holocaust is subject to ugly distortion, vulgarization and exploitation. Millions of innocent people—in their life of struggle, in their resistance against the vicious enemy, and in their destruction while the world was silent—often are presented in an entirely false light.

I suggest that, in enumerating the future tasks of the National Foundation on the Holocaust, the Commission specify the task of “guardians of truth in remembrance,” to help preserve a faithful memory.

SECOND GENERATION

Our most crucial task should be to transmit successfully our knowledge, our message, and our emotions concerning the Holocaust to the second generation that comes after us, and hopefully to the generations which will follow.

We, all of us, will be judged by history on the basis of our ability and success in performing this task: in conveying to future generations the content and the meaning of the tragic and heroic events of the Holocaust.

CONCLUSION

It is important that the work of the Commission continue even after the Commission itself is discontinued. I realize that several of the suggestions listed above reach beyond the apparent intent of the President's Executive Order 12093 establishing the Commission on the Holocaust. I believe, however, that a liberal construction of this Order is possible and admissible, and that the President himself would not object to it.

The “appropriate memorial” to which the Presidential Order refers need not be understood only as a sculptured monument. Rather, I suggest that it should be broadly interpreted as permitting—if not outright encouraging—a memorial designed for the living, such as the Foundation and the House of Remembrance herein described.

Above all, it is of the utmost importance that we continue to remember and keep reminding others of the heinous crimes committed during the Holocaust, and tell the story of the heroism of the gallant martyrs in their struggle for freedom. Above all, mankind must not forget the grim lessons of the past and must pass this lesson on to future generations.

Respectfully submitted,



BENJAMIN MEED



President's Commission on the Holocaust

May 7, 1979

Office of the
Director

Dear Marc:

We are pleased to inform you that our Chairman, Elie Wiesel, will lead our rescheduled trip to Eastern Europe and Israel on July 29 through August 12. These dates will allow us to spend Tishaa B'Av in Auschwitz and the Sabbath of Consolation in Moscow as well as now giving us time to devote our energies toward completing the outlines of the report to the President before we leave and to prepare for the third Commission meeting. We regret the inconvenience that this delay may cause you, but we feel it is more important that the work of the Commission proceed rapidly toward a successful conclusion.

So that we can schedule the Commission's third meeting at a time most convenient (or, perhaps more accurately, least inconvenient) to the majority of the members, I would appreciate an indication on the enclosed form of your plans for June. An envelope is enclosed to expedite your immediate response to this request. We would also appreciate an indication of your interest in participating in the East European-Israel trip now that the dates have been changed. The form includes space for your response. Some details regarding the trip are covered in the enclosed letter from the Co-Chairmen of the Travel Subcommittee.

Thank you in advance for your quick reply.

Sincerely yours,

Irving Greenberg
Irving Greenberg

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Boston University

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The University Professors

May 10, 1979

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum
The American Jewish Committee
165 East 56 Street
New York, New York 10022

Dear Rabbi Tanenbaum:

Thank you for your letter. It means much to me, and I am sure you know why.

Your comments on involving the mass media are on my mind. I am sure that at one point, soon, the Commission will call upon you, and ask for your valuable help.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely yours,


Elie Wiesel

EW/mlh

UPDATE - THE WORK OF THE COMMISSION

May 14, 1979

In Executive Order 12093, dated 11/1/78, the President charged his Commission on the Holocaust to "recommend an appropriate memorial to those who perished in the Holocaust." By its vote at the April 24th meeting, the Commission has stated in principle what it considers appropriate. Articulated below is the model offered by the Commission. This document is designed as an update on the work of the Commission and is offered for your evaluation, refinement, consideration and assessment of its achievability.

WHO SHOULD REMEMBER THE HOLOCAUST?

The Commission concluded that although the Holocaust is an enormous tragedy, it is more than the sum of its victims. The Holocaust radically challenges our understanding of morality, religion, politics, government policy, and of human nature itself. It reveals pathology at the heart of modern civilization which poses an ever present danger of repetition. It is essential that all Americans try to learn new models of behavior and responsibility in all aspects of our national life--political, ethical and religious. Only the understanding and cooperation of all people can prevent a recurrence. Only the fullest exploration of the issues it raises in all areas of knowledge and culture can spell out the implications and responses needed. There is a great deal of work yet to be done by all Americans.

The total systematic evil of the destruction included degradation of the victims and eradication of their memory. Therefore, remembering is an important statement of human and civilization's renewal--a statement that must be made by all of humanity. Despite its recognition that the primary victims and the uniquely total fury of the Holocaust was unleashed against six million Jewish victims, the Commission found that it is essential that all Americans, not just Jews, confront this event.

The Holocaust was the systematic, sustained, and scientific destruction of six million Jews and millions of other people by the instruments of a modern, bureaucratically organized, technologically equipped state. Far from being the work of a few madmen, the Holocaust represented a fundamental tendency within an advanced modern society which reached its breaking point, lost its coherence and regained its sense of meaning and cohesion only in the process of destroying others.

It is important that we demonstrate why the social cohesion of German society disintegrated, what facts led to the collapse of the Weimar Republic and the rise of Hitler. We must also understand why the Jews were chosen as the central victims of persecution, how it spread beyond them to engulf others, and the development of the destruction process in its various stages from definition and expropriation to concentration and annihilation. The story of the Holocaust must be told in its historical perspective and with accuracy.

THE AMERICAN RECORD

The Holocaust is not only a tragedy that occurred across the ocean in Europe. Its record highlights a serious breakdown of the American tradition of concern for human rights and refuge for the persecuted. The indifference of the bystanders was critical to the success of the aggressors. The various factors--bureaucratic, political, cultural, religious--which made apathy possible must be understood and corrected.

The American record also includes the War Refugees Board and the liberation of the camps; the insistence of General Eisenhower that the Germans and the world view their handiwork; American absorption after 1945 of 100,000 Jewish survivors as well as other refugees and extraordinary American support for the State of Israel, the home of the survivors. The record also includes the recognition by the President of the United States of this historic tragedy and failure and his linkage of this historic confession with a commitment to prevent a recurrence. The Commission believes that nothing could more eloquently testify to the will to decency and humanity of the American people than this willingness to remember past error and to confront this searing event in the hope of making a better moral, political order for the future.

The Commission concluded that Jews will likely remember this phenomenon in any event. The very significance of a Presidential Commission was its implied statement that all Americans now must take up the challenge of memory and response in an ongoing way. History would honor President Carter for the civic courage it took to incorporate this event into American life. The Commission believes that over a period of time a more humane, responsible and common American concern could emerge from this painful encounter. The society we save from such pathology may be our own.

AN APPROPRIATE MEMORIAL

The Commission concluded that a statue (or other physical evocation of memory) should be part of the memorial. However, since challenge to conscience and change in understanding and consciousness is the key response to the Holocaust, a learning process and an encounter with the Holocaust should be at the heart of the "living memorial."

The Commission has voted in principle to recommend that a three-component memorial to the victims of the Holocaust be centered in Washington, D.C., the Nation's Capitol.

Component 1: Preserving the Record/Communicating the Memory

The Commission has recommended that a national museum/memorial be established in Washington. Based on the experience of Yad Vashem in Jerusalem (and using projection and models as in the Beit Hatefutsot-Museum of the Diaspora in Tel Aviv), it would use exhibits and projection displays to inform and to emotionally move the visitors to the national Holocaust memorial to the phenomenon of the Holocaust. The museum will have to be of symbolic and artistic beauty, visually and emotionally moving in accordance with the solemn character of the Holocaust. The projection and the program will operate at multiple levels so as to impact the casual visitor and to have room for more in-depth exploration by those so moved.

The museum can appropriately incorporate exhibits on the six million Jews as well as the other millions of victims of the Holocaust. Indeed it may incorporate some changing displays to dramatize areas of current concern.

The museum should incorporate a special emphasis on the American aspect of the Holocaust. This record includes the lack of response (exclusion of refugees, denial of the Holocaust, etc.), the liberation of the camps, the reception of survivors, the lives that were rebuilt, the development of a new sensitivity to the Holocaust as well as a growing respect for multi-ethnic, multidimensional American culture.

The museum will incorporate a library, an archive of Holocaust materials, computer linkage to existing centers of Holocaust documentation and a reference staff. This will enable both the general public and scholars to pursue the study of the record of the Holocaust.

The Commission proposes that this museum become an autonomous bureau of the Smithsonian Institution. Like the Smithsonian, it would offer extension services to the public, to scholars, to other institutions. Like the Smithsonian, it would offer diffusion of knowledge of this event for the improvement of humanity in areas of ethical responsibility, political and governmental process, civic and religious solidarity.

A Memorial of Life, Not Death: The Commission concluded that study and projection of the Holocaust should incorporate the life and culture of the victims and not just the destruction process. Similarly, the extraordinary efforts to preserve human dignity and life during the Holocaust, the heroic resistance efforts, and the response of renewed life after the event also, in a way, offer a measure of consolation and hope for humanity. Visitors to the museum could come in contact with the shattering tragedy of this event yet also learn of the tenacity of the human spirit. In seeing the collapse of law and social cohesion, the visitor may develop a greater appreciation of the very processes and fiber of democracy. The Commission feels that this process of education could lead to a major deepening of the quality of American civic and political life and a strengthening and enrichment of the moral fiber of this country.

Component 2: Action to Prevent a Recurrence

A Commission Committee of Conscience of distinguished moral leaders of America should be established to meet regularly at the national memorial to the Holocaust. Were they alive, people of the stature of Martin Luther King, Jr., Abraham Joshua Heschel, Reinhold Niebuhr, and A. Philip Randolph would be some of the appropriate members. Senior political elder statesmen past the age of political ambition or retired Supreme Court Justices of great moral stature could also qualify. This panel would receive reports of any genocide or potential genocide around the world. If it found a condition of genocide, the panel would have access to the President, the Congress and the public through the media to alert the national conscience and national policy makers to the presence of genocide (actual or immediately potential) and thus stimulate worldwide action to prevent this destruction.

Rationale: In 1942-1943 when reports of the ongoing Holocaust came out, they were suppressed at lower levels of bureaucracy or they were disbelieved. There could be no more appropriate or universal memorial to the six million Jews and to the millions of other victims than the creation of a mechanism to arouse conscience against an attempted repetition of genocide.

While this mechanism is consistent with the significant stress on human rights in the current Administration's foreign policy, the panel would restrict itself to dealing with genocide and not general human rights violations. This restriction is out of respect to the awesome and total nature of the Holocaust and the fear of denuding its specific meaning in the process of applying its lessons. It also reflects the commitment to avoid duplication of other agencies' work. Politicization or routinization of protest might lead to ineffectiveness.

While this panel and its appeal to the conscience of America and the world does not guarantee the victims will be saved (that would take sanctions and possible use of force), it is believed that the force of world opinion can have substantial impact in preventing genocide. Again, it would honor our government and our people if, for the first time, in response to a unique catastrophe, an instrument of national conscience (one scholar has called it "an instructionalized moral scream") is institutionalized and given the mandate to help prevent bureaucratic indifference.

Component 3: Learning, Study, Confronting the Implications

The Commission recommends that an educational foundation or institute be located as an integral part of the national memorial. This foundation would pursue educational work and explore the issues raised by the Holocaust for all areas of human knowledge and public policy. The foundation would not center all work in Washington but would relate to and nourish such work in all sections of the country, with many existing institutions--both academic and educational--as well as with the growing network of institutions that deal with the Holocaust. The Washington center will function as a clearinghouse.

This work would include: support and evaluation sources for the development of Holocaust curricula now going on at all levels of public and private schooling. It would include bringing together educators, curricula developers and scholars through consortia, conferences and teacher training.

On the academic and research level, the institute would approve research and travel grants, fellowships for graduate students, internships and training, visiting faculty appointments to stimulate teaching of the Holocaust, publications, project funding and conferences.

Publication priority would be given to out-of-print classics, selective support for new works of special merit, first publication of survivors' accounts of special intrinsic value and documentary and photographic books. Conference priority would be given to scholars' research, training and teaching, conferences to introduce the public to the issues, implications of the Holocaust for humanistic and policy issues. A major effort to stimulate and to coordinate oral history projects would be included.

In recognition of the broad significance of the issue and of the powerful educational role of the media, the foundation would offer both development grants and prizes for work in the arts, literature and the media. Parts of this ambitious program can be initiated in stages.

The net effect of this entire project would be a triumph of moral will--preserving the memory of the victims with a major development of civic responsibility and a new level of discourse and responsibility which could be an ongoing source of strength and moral and civic renewal in the United States of America.

The Universal and the Particular

The Commission repeatedly explored and related the issue of the uniqueness of the Holocaust and the primacy of the assault on the Jews with the suffering of the other victims and the need to apply the lessons to all groups and all aspects of national life. On the one hand, the issue is particularly sensitive because the Holocaust defies description, and, on the other hand, there is a real danger that, if the material is not handled sensitively, it can be converted into propaganda. Still the Commission is convinced that encompassing the unique dimensions of the Holocaust can only lead to a new sensitivity to the suffering and anguish of other human beings. Similarly, in the words of President Carter, it seeks to "harness the outrage of our memories to banish all human oppression from the world." The Commission came to a consensus that properly done, a memorial can do justice to the agony of the Holocaust and the response of the victims while applying its implications to a broad range of groups and human concerns. Much will depend on the development of the project and on steering a careful course between the temptations of withdrawing into moral and cultural solipsism on the one hand (the Holocaust is totally unique and incomprehensible) or dilution and vulgarization on the other.

The overwhelming consensus achieved by the Commission (which is made up of a group of broadly divergent backgrounds and interests, including survivors and nonsurvivors) is that this project is an appropriate memorial to those who perished in the Holocaust.

FUNDING

The Commission concluded that following the guidelines of the President and in light of the general significance of the Holocaust, funding for this memorial should be primarily supplied by the private sector through a broad public subscription. Despite the size of the project, the Commission felt that the public support is available. It was essential not to sacrifice the program to a building but to do both.

While funding will be primarily private, the issues raised by the Holocaust are so fundamental and connected to public policy that it is essential that consciousness of the Holocaust be incorporated into all areas of national life. Therefore, Federal participation was deemed crucial to effective mobilization and channeling of public concern.

The Commission proposes a partnership--a public/private joint project that would involve a government challenge grant to be matched in an appropriate ratio by public subscription. Similarly, participation through a land grant and through affiliation with the Smithsonian would symbolize the Federal commitment to this issue while leaving primary responsibility for funding and initiative to the American people and the private sector. A model for this cooperation is found in the history of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, and the National Gallery of Art, etc. The dialectic of government/private partnership, national center and grass root programming, academic study and moral/ethical exploration would in itself be an extraordinary model for American culture and political life in many areas.

The Commission also recommended that the Federal sponsorship of this project express itself in a willingness of the White House and the Congress to give visible moral support to the public subscription effort. This program could also include a broad-gauge appeal to schoolchildren of America because the very process would become educational in itself and a source of new national solidarity.

The estimated funds to pay for the museum/memorial, capitalizing or endowing the ongoing programs and one-time costs for building, acquisition and computerization of scholarly archives would be approximately 40 to 50 million dollars. About one-half would go for construction and one-time capital outlays.

POSTSCRIPT

Nothing can recall to life the victims or undo the tragedy of the Holocaust. Nothing can soften the massive moral catastrophe that

made the destruction possible. However, the extraordinary moral renewal and civic solidarity as well as generosity of spirit implied in a successful realization of this memorial could serve as a rallying point for the human spirit. It could create an ongoing force for mutual concern, human responsibility and group cooperation.





President's Commission on the Holocaust

May 18, 1979

Office of the
Director

Dear Marc:

As a follow-up to the Days of Remembrance National Civic Holocaust Commemoration Ceremony, the following materials are enclosed for your interest, information and review:

Sermon delivered by Senator John C. Danforth, Sunday, April 29, 1979, at the Washington National Cathedral's Holocaust Commemoration Service.

Remarks of Sigmund Strochlitz made at a special meeting of the Connecticut Legislature to commemorate the Holocaust.

Remarks made by Miles Lerman at the New Jersey State Legislature Holocaust Commemoration Ceremony.

A summary of the activities of the State of Minnesota by Rabbi Bernard Raskas which can rightfully serve as a model to be emulated.

Minutes of our meeting of April 24th.

Best wishes.

Sincerely yours,


Michael Berenbaum
Deputy Director

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum
National Director, Interreligious Affairs
of the American Jewish Committee
165 East 56th Street
New York, New York 10022

Suite 7233, 726 Jackson Place, NW, Washington, D.C. 20503
202-395-7343



THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

WASHINGTON REPRESENTATIVE • 818 18th Street, N.W., Suite 740 • Washington, D.C. 20006 • (202) 298-8787

May 22, 1979

Mr. Benjamin Meed, President
Warsaw Ghetto Resistance Org.
871 7th Ave.
New York, N.Y. 10019

Dear Benjamin:

I am writing to you after having just read your letter to Elie Wiesel dated May 15. I consider that letter also a response to my letter to Elie of a few weeks ago, a copy of which I sent you.

I cannot begin to tell you how distressed I am over the "debate" that seems to have developed over what is really an undebatable proposition, namely that the Holocaust Commission's responsibility is to memorialize the six million Jewish victims in the most appropriate manner. There is nobody, absolutely nobody that I know of in or near the Commission, who disagrees that this is indeed our mission, and the only one. Certainly, I do agree with this, and I said it in my letter to Elie. What seems to have led to the mistaken impression that there is some dispute over this central principle is that some of us, but not all of us, believe it is right and it is helpful to demonstrate that our agony over the Holocaust does make us particularly sensitive to other crimes against humanity.

In my letter to Elie, I quoted approvingly both him and President Carter because they have expressed this limited aspect of "universality." Now I wish to quote an equally eminent individual, and with hearty endorsement:

"We must always be alert, therefore, to assure that the suffering and the slaughter are not repeated -- not with respect to us and not with respect to any other people. Unless this is understood and accepted as the logical consequence of the Holocaust experience, all commemorations, observances, and writing of historical records will remain meaningless. For this reason, it is recommended that the Commission firmly establish its stand on the relationship between past and present events."

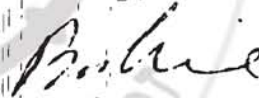
You will recognize, of course, that these are your words, included in your impressive statement to the Commission on February 15. You, and we, are saying that we are determined never again to be silent when a holocaust threatens -- not only against Jews but any people.

- more -

While I sincerely believe there is no substantive issue between us, I do concede the possibility of honest differences arising on some detail here or there as we get into the actual implementation of the program. What kind of reference, if any, should be made to some past crime against humanity other than the Holocaust in a pamphlet or a film strip or an exhibition intended to place the Holocaust in some historic or analytical perspective? I have every confidence that the men and women who will ultimately be involved in answering such questions will be able to achieve agreement, because they will be considering such questions in the context of what I repeat is the unanimous feeling of all Commissioners and Advisers: the Holocaust is a unique piece of Jewish and human history, though its significance extends to all peoples.

I said above I was distressed over the present "debate." Perhaps I should modify that comment. I suppose the concerns that you and others are expressing may assure that in fact we do not lose sight of our basic function. But I do remain distressed over the possibility that the "debate" will lead to a misconception in the community generally, that American Jews may be led to believe that the "universalists" have triumphed over the "particularists." In my judgment this is not happening and will not happen, because there is in fact no such dichotomy, despite the anguished laments of a few. I pray that this unwarranted confrontation be abandoned, so that together we may proceed to the real issues that must be resolved.

Sincerely,



Hyman Bookbinder
Washington Representative

HB:dw

cc: Mr. Elie Wiesel
Dr. Greenberg
Dr. Berenbaum
Mark Talisman

PROCLAMATIONS FOR DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE
STATES AND CITIES OF THE UNITED STATES

May 23, 1979

Summary:

States: A total of 35 including Puerto Rico and the Canal Zone

Cities: A total of 65

Listing:

Alabama - Governor's Proclamation

Alaska - Governor's Proclamation

Arizona - Governor's Proclamation

California - Governor's Proclamation

Cities: Chula Vista
Fountain Valley
Garden Grove
Hayward
Long Beach
Los Angeles
Pico Rivera
Sacramento
San Francisco
San Jose
Santa Clara
Sunnyvale
Westminister

Colorado - Governor's Proclamation

Cities: Aurora

Connecticut - Governor's Proclamation

Cities: Hamden
New Haven
West Haven

Delaware - Governor's Proclamation

District of Columbia - Mayor's Proclamation

Florida - Governor's Proclamation
Office of Comptroller
Office of the Treasurer
Commissioner of Education
Commissioner of Agriculture
The Attorney General
Secretary of State

Cities: Fort Lauderdale
Gainesville
Miami

Georgia - Governor's Proclamation

Hawaii - Governor's Proclamation

Idaho - Governor's Proclamation

Illinois

Cities: Arlington Heights
Aurora
Springfield

Indiana - Governor's Proclamation

Iowa - Governor's Proclamation

Cities: Cedar Rapids
Des Moines
Dubuque

Louisiana

Cities: New Orleans

Maine - Governor's Proclamation

Cities: Portland

Massachusetts - Governor's Proclamation

Cities: Somerville
Waltham
Worcester



Michigan - Governor's Proclamation

Cities: Flint
Grand Rapids
Lansing
Livonia
Pontiac
Saginaw
Southfield

Minnesota

Cities: Minneapolis
St. Paul

Missouri

Cities: Florissant
Independence
Kansas City

Montana - Governor's Proclamation

Nebraska - Governor's Proclamation

Nevada - Governor's Proclamation

New Jersey - Governor's Proclamation

Cities: Elisabeth
Paterson
Trenton

New Mexico - Governor's Proclamation

New York - Governor's Proclamation

Cities: Buffalo
New Rochelle
Troy
Yonkers

North Carolina - Governor's Proclamation

Cities: Charlotte

North Dakota - Governor's Proclamation



Ohio

Cities: Canton
Cleveland
Dayton
Euclid
Mansfield

South Carolina - Governor's Proclamation

South Dakota - Governor's Proclamation

Tennessee - Governor's Proclamation

Cities: Chattanooga

Texas - Governor's Proclamation

Cities: Arlington
Richardson

Virginia - Governor's Proclamation

Cities: Alexandria

Washington - Governor's Proclamation

Cities: Seattle

West Virginia - Governor's Proclamation

Wisconsin - Governor's Proclamation

Cities: Madison
Milwaukee
West Allis

Wyoming - Governor's Proclamation

Canal Zone - Governor's Proclamation

Puerto Rico - Governor's Proclamation



rec'd 5/30



WARSAW GHETTO RESISTANCE ORGANIZATION

ווארשעווער געטא ווידערשטאנד ארגאניזאציע

871 Seventh Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10019 • 212-246-7492



24 May 1979

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MEMORANDUM

To the Subcommittee on Days of Remembrance
President's Commission on the Holocaust

From Benjamin Meed

Subject: Fixing the date of Days of Remembrance

The purpose of this memo is to discuss a proposal for the fixing of a permanent dating system for the Days of Remembrance of the Holocaust.

It is respectfully proposed that each year one week corresponding to the Hebrew calendar date of the 27th day of the month of Nissan (usually the middle or the second part of the month of April) be designated as the Days of Remembrance of the Holocaust. In 1980, the above date corresponds to Sunday, April 13.

The background of the selection of the above Hebrew calendar date is the following.

Soon after the end of World War II, the Jewish survivors established that nearly every day of the year represented an anniversary of the destruction of some Jewish community during the Holocaust. Furthermore, as information was gathered about Jewish uprisings against the Nazis in concentration camps and other places, additional anniversaries of such events were listed.

The most prominent anniversary came to be the first day of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, on April 19, 1943, which was then the eve of the Pesach (Passover) festival. This particular anniversary became the symbol of commemoration of Jewish armed resistance in World War II.

Obviously it became impossible to observe all the different anniversaries of the tragic events of the Holocaust. The question arose, which one to select as representative of the Holocaust, so as to adhere at the same time to established Jewish tradition concerning observances of days of mourning. According to this tradition, Jews may not mourn on the Sabbath and on holidays.

It was found that the date of 27 Nissan, which is close to that date in 1943 when the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising began, never falls on the Sabbath or on a Jewish holiday. The Israel Parliament (Knesset) passed a law fixing the observance of the Holocaust anniversary on that day of the Hebrew calendar. Furthermore, the Israel Minister of Justice (who is in charge of legislative matters) in 1975 issued an opinion that, outside Israel, Jewish communities are free to commemorate the anniversary on any date close to 27 Nissan, "according to prevailing circumstances". This means that if, for example, it is easier to commemorate on a Sunday instead of a weekday, so as to assure better participation, this is acceptable.

Over the past several years, although there are some exceptions, the overwhelming majority of Jewish communities in the United States and around the world has accepted the date of 27 Nissan (which each year corresponds to a day approximately in the middle or second part of April) as the appropriate date of commemoration. By extension, if more than one day is set for such observance, the entire week in the proximity of, or including, the 27th day of Nissan is selected.

The exact date each April corresponding to 27 Nissan can be easily computed for an indefinite number of years ahead.

It is proposed, therefore, to adhere to the above Jewish custom as a matter of unifying the observance of the Holocaust anniversary throughout the United States and elsewhere in the world. A major commemoration, such as the one held each year in New York under the leadership of the Warsaw Ghetto Resistance Organization, should be held on a Sunday so as to enable participants to travel longer distances and to assure the largest possible participation.

Additionally it is proposed that the President's Commission on the Holocaust recommend that each year, on the date corresponding to 27 Nissan, memorial candles be lighted in each home desiring to commemorate the Holocaust. The Warsaw Ghetto Resistance Organization will undertake the task of designing such candles if this proposal is accepted.

Furthermore, we in WAGRO, having had the experience during the past 17 years in organizing an annual Commemoration with the participation of from ten to twenty thousand people, request that a full week of Holocaust observances be set aside in accordance with the above enumerated principles.

The reason for requesting a full week of observances is that we feel it is important, for educational purposes, to allow ample time for different commemorative activities in schools, community centers, churches, and synagogues.

In conclusion, it is requested that the President's Commission on the Holocaust recommend to the President and Congress of the United States that A Week of Holocaust Observances be designated each year to coincide with 27 Nissan.

It is also requested that the Commission recommend the distribution each year of educational kits on the Holocaust to school children around the country, explaining the significance and the background of observing the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and honoring the Six Million Jewish victims, the martyrs and the heroes of the Holocaust.

Respectfully submitted,



BENJAMIN MEED





President's Commission on the Holocaust

Office of the
Director

May 29, 1979

Dear Marc:

We are pleased that you will be joining us on the trip to Eastern Europe and Israel. The travel agent will be writing to you directly to indicate precise information on the trip, its itinerary, and its cost.

Because we will be traveling on official business, members of the Commission and Advisory Board will receive an official passport with visas where required for each of the countries we visit. The State Department will facilitate our trip through the issuance of these official passports and visas. In order to complete the enormous amount of paper work with all due speed, I ask that you bring with you to our June 7th meeting your current passport and seven 2" x 2" recent photographs. At the close of our meeting, a representative from the Passport Office will join us to complete all the necessary forms. Spouses and friends will not be traveling with official passports; their visas will be handled by the travel agent.

To expedite the travel session on the 7th, enclosed are the visa forms for Poland, Israel, and Russia (2). Please complete and sign the visa forms for Poland and Israel. However, because the U.S.S.R. requires a typed form, please print personal information on one visa form and only sign the other. We will prepare the final, signed form in this office. An envelope is enclosed for your convenience in returning the forms where they will be kept until our June 7th meeting.

Because we are traveling on official business, the tax provisions of the enclosed IRS decision will apply to all of the expenses incurred by the Commissioners or Advisory Board Members.

Suite 7233, 726 Jackson Place, NW, Washington, D.C. 20503
202-395-7343

I look forward to seeing you on the 7th.

Sincerely yours,



Michael Berenbaum
Deputy Director

P.S.: If you are unable to attend the June 7th meeting, the following instructions are given to apply for your official passport:

Make application in your city by going to your local passport office with your present personal passport and two photographs. As soon as you receive your official passport, please sign it and send it via "Certified Mail" to our office along with five 2" x 2" recent photographs (required for the visa forms). Please follow the procedure indicated on the first page for the visa application forms.

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum
National Director
Interreligious Affairs of the
American Jewish Committee
165 East 56th Street
New York, New York 10022

ST. LOUIS CENTER FOR HOLOCAUST STUDIES

611 Olive Street/Suite 1778
St. Louis, Missouri 63101
(314) 621-8120

May 31, 1979

Alex Grobman
Director

Senator Jack Danforth
460 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Danforth,

I appreciate your efforts and those of your very competent staff to bring the President's Holocaust Commission hearings here to St. Louis. The witnesses we had assembled were a unique group, representing various segments of the community, including a Polish woman who helped save the lives of Jews during World War II. Miss Natalia Abramowicz was honored by Yad Vashem in 1971 and now lives in St. Louis where she is being cared for at the Jewish Center for the Aged.

Although the hearings were cancelled, I have tried to synthesize the ideas that were to have been presented in the enclosed memorandum. In addition, I am sending a report explaining the work that we are doing at the Center.

Thank you again for your help. I have enjoyed working with Nancy Altman and John De Vault and look forward to continued involvement with them.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,



Alex Grobman
Director

AG/lbm
ENCLOSURE

ST. LOUIS CENTER FOR HOLOCAUST STUDIES

611 Olive Street/Suite 1778
St. Louis, Missouri 63101
(314) 621-8120

Alex Grobman
Director

May 31, 1979

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Jack Danforth
FROM: Alex Grobman
RE: President's Commission on the Holocaust

I. Site for National Center

The National Center in memory of the Six Million should be in Washington, D.C., and house exhibits depicting the history of Jewish life and culture in eastern, central, and western Europe, the Nazi period, and the DP period (from the end of the war in May 1945, to the founding of the State of Israel).

The establishment of the Center in the nation's capital will be itself a statement about the importance of the Holocaust. It would remind our legislators and citizens that, as Richard Rubinstein has pointed out:

The passing of time has made it increasingly evident that a hitherto unbreachable moral and political barrier in the history of Western civilization was successfully overcome by the Nazis in World War II and that henceforth the systematic, bureaucratically administered extermination of millions of citizens or subject peoples will forever be one of the capacities and temptations of government. Whether or not such a temptation is ever again exercised, the mere fact that every modern government possesses such power cannot but alter relations between those who govern and those who are governed. This power must also alter the texture of foreign relations. According to Max Weber, 'The state is a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of force within a given territory.' Auschwitz has enlarged our conception of the state's capacity to do violence. A barrier has been overcome in what for millenia had been regarded as the permissible limits of human action. The Nazi

period serves as a warning of what we can all too easily become were we faced with a political or an economic crisis of overwhelming proportions. The public may be fascinated by the Nazis; hopefully it is also warned by them.

Those who argue that New York should be the site of the major Center because of its unique archives fail to recognize the significance of placing it in Washington, D.C. The Tel Aviv area is more heavily populated than other cities in Israel, but the Israelis built their national memorial, Yad Vashem, in Jerusalem, their capital city. Holocaust Centers are needed in New York, Philadelphia, Los Angeles and elsewhere, but the National Center would not have as powerful a symbolic impact if not located in the capital city.

II. Exhibits

In order to appreciate the magnitude of the loss of the Six Million Jews, it is imperative to have exhibits showing the richness of Jewish life in Europe that was lost. The exhibits should also deal with the Nazi years as well as the period of liberation that followed. Most memorials have not dealt with the post-war life of the Jews, but there is much to be learned about the role of the American Army, the American government, the American Jewish chaplains, the Jewish soldiers, as well as the survivors' efforts to re-establish their lives and flee to Palestine.

There should also be development of mobile exhibits that can be sent to schools and churches, cities, and rural areas of the country. These exhibits could be housed in special mobile vans that would circulate throughout the United States containing, for example, art of the concentration camps, memorabilia of survivors, films, books, posters, and multi-media presentations.

III. Programming

An equally important function of the National Center should be to serve as a clearinghouse for curriculum development for public, parochial, and private schools; development of materials for the legal, medical, and other professional schools; programs for communities; adult education programs; and camp projects. The Center should coordinate Holocaust Conferences throughout the United States, provide financial assistance and resource material to scholars and teachers involved in Holocaust projects, and financially assist in development of local Holocaust centers.

Professor Solon Beinfeld, of the History Department at Washington University, notes that the National Center must also help preserve the culture of European Jewry. "...It is my conviction," he contends, "that we cannot with a clear conscience honor the dead while what is still living

of their culture struggles to survive. To keep the Forward /a Yiddish newspaper/ going, to publish I.B. Singer in the original, to strengthen YIVO /an archive devoted to Eastern European culture and history/ and the Leo Baeck Institute /devoted to German Jewish history/ are holy obligations. Part, at least, of any sums collected for the memorial must be used in this way, and a commission established for this purpose. Otherwise we allow the Holocaust to continue its destruction."

IV. Local Holocaust Centers

Regional or local Holocaust Centers exist in Philadelphia, Brooklyn, New York, St. Louis, and Los Angeles. There are also memorial committees in Atlanta, Montreal, and elsewhere. A National Center, which would have public funding, could strengthen these centers and encourage the development of additional centers in other cities. From our own experience in St. Louis, it is clear that there is a real need for such centers. Since we began in November 1977, the demands on the Center's resources have increased significantly.

V. Oral History

The National Center should serve, as well, as a repository for Oral History resources such as testimonies (many of which should be on videotape for distribution in areas where survivors are either not available or where a specific topic is needed); memorabilia, and other collections such as diaries or tapes.

VI. Resource Center

The National Center should acquire holdings on all aspects of the Holocaust: audio-visual materials, books for all age groups, archival materials, and periodica. It should prepare annotated bibliographies, and suggestions on how to use the materials.

VII. Second Generation

The children of survivors are an important means of transmitting the lessons of the Holocaust to the future generations. The National Center should help them to direct their concerns and perspectives.

VIII. Yom Hashoa

It is imperative that the "Days of Remembrance" coincide within a week of the 27th Day of Nissan, Yom Hashoa on the Jewish calendar. We are not sure how this can be done, but to have separate periods of mourning the Six Million would be counter-productive. Our suggestion is that a solution be reached with the help of Dr. Irving Greenberg.

IX. The "Righteous Among the Nations"

No Holocaust memorial would be complete without honoring the heroic efforts of those non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust. Judge Moshe Bejski, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Committee for the Designation of the "Righteous Among the Nations," has observed these rescue activities "inspire the feeling that in a sea of malevolence and darkness there were wonderful human beings!"

The National Center must not only find an appropriate means of honoring the deeds of these people, it must also work with Yad Vashem to publish the "deeds of each of the 'Righteous Among the Nations'." This is important, Bejski asserts, "so that the episodes of individual rescue will not remain the exclusive preserve of the rescuer and the rescued; not only because these episodes are the sole source of light in a world of atrocities and the loss of the image of God, but because we owe it to the rescuers. Moreover, the publication of these episodes will prove to the whole world what could have been done in terms of help and rescue if only more people had made the effort."

AG/lbm





President's Commission on the Holocaust

May 31, 1979

Office of the
Director

Dear Marc:

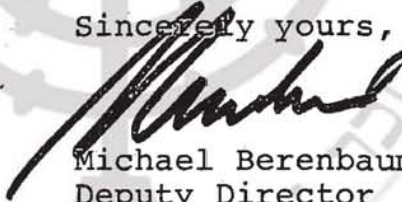
Enclosed are the materials for the forthcoming meeting of the Commission scheduled for June 7, 1979 at 10:00 a.m. in room 2118 of the Rayburn Building on Capitol Hill.

Included in this package is an update on the work of the Commission which articulates the basic outlines of our program as well as a listing of the individual projects that have been recommended. Furthermore, we are enclosing the minutes of the subcommittee on Days of Remembrance which met in Washington last week, as well as the agenda.

For those of you planning to travel with us to Eastern Europe and Israel, please remember to bring with you to the June 7th meeting your passport and seven 2" x 2" photographs so that we can process your official passports at the meeting.

I look forward to seeing you on the 7th.

Sincerely yours,



Michael Berenbaum
Deputy Director

Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum
National Director, Interreligious Affairs
of the American Jewish Committee
165 East 56th Street
New York, New York 10022

PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON THE HOLOCAUST
SUBCOMMITTEE ON DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE

Minutes from the Meeting of May 24, 1979
2:00 a.m., Room 460, Russell Senate Office
Building, Capitol Hill.

Members Present:

Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, co-chairman, presiding
Senator John Danforth, co-chairman
Honorable James Blanchard
Benjamin Meed
Solomon Zynstein
Steven Ludsin
Cantor Isaac Goodfriend
Nancy Altman, representing Senator Danforth
Marcia Rogers, representing Senator Danforth
Shelby Solomon, representing Congressman Blanchard

Commission Staff Present:

Dr. Michael Berenbaum

Proceedings:

The meeting began with a staff report from Dr. Berenbaum indicating that the activities of the Days of Remembrance were diverse and generally successful. We all know about the National Civic Holocaust Commemoration ceremony. Local civic ceremonies were held in three states, Minnesota, Connecticut, and New Jersey with Rabbi Raskas, Sigmund Strochlitz and Miles Lerman, respectively as the guest speakers representing the Commission. From all indications these ceremonies were very successful and can be repeated next year. Other states will be added. According to our sources and information from the National Conference of Christians and Jews a Holocaust Commemoration Service was held in close to 10,000 churches throughout the country, an all time high. The Episcopal Church under the leadership of the National Cathedral and at the urging of Senator Danforth, sent out copies of the litany and information on the commemoration service to over 7,500 Episcopal priests throughout the United States. The Governors of 35 states and the mayors of close to 100 cities sent the Commission copies of their proclamations. The City of Somerville, Massachusetts had assemblies in each of its high schools and the State of Minnesota under the leadership of Rabbi Raskas provided the Commission with models for ceremonies by hosting a Civic Commemoration Service, a Jewish Communal Service, an art exhibit of Holocaust Art and Posters as well as a lecture on the Holocaust by Commissioner Raul Hilberg, and a Christian ecumenical service.

Television coverage on Holocaust related topics was carried throughout the nation by National Educational Television. It sent

out some 5 programs as optional choices for programming on the Days of Remembrance. It was unfortunate that we were late in contacting the networks for they need a lead time of some 5 or 6 months to adequately program television programs on the Holocaust.

Rabbi Tanenbaum urged the staff to compile as complete a list as possible of all the events of the Days of Remembrance and the models of the individual events so that this can be made available to others in the coming years.

Cantor Goodfriend inquired about our plans for next year and it was agreed that we should seek imaginative ways to build upon the events for future years.

Steven Ludsin spoke of the services that he attended which included a lecture, two services (a Christian and a Jewish Service) and a candlelight walk between an Episcopal church and a synagogue.

Rabbi Tanenbaum pointed out the importance of local commemorations and suggested that we worked to incorporate more states into the local activities for Days of Remembrance.

The Subcommittee then moved to the question of dates. Nancy Altman indicated that Senator Danforth was interested in insuring that the "Days" coincide with a weekend and not interfere with religious holidays (such as Easter or Passover), and relate to Yom Hashoah the internationally recognized Holocaust Commemoration Day. He is willing to sponsor the legislation for next year, but since the Congress must proclaim Days of Remembrance annually and the President may proclaim them in perpetuity, she advanced the suggestion that the Commission, as part of its recommendations to the President, suggest an annual commemoration of the Days of Remembrance declared by the President in perpetuity.

Mr. Benjamin Meed pointed out that the 27th of Nissan was chosen because of its proximity to the Warsaw Resistance Uprising and because it never takes place on the Sabbath for on the Jewish Sabbath all forms of mourning are prohibited.

Solomon Zynstein stressed the historical importance of our choice of these Days.

Mr. Steven Ludsin proposed that the Days of Remembrance be observed annually beginning with the Sunday preceeding or, on those years when the internationally recognized Holocaust Commemoration Day (Yom Hashoah) falls on a Sunday, the Sunday of Holocaust Commemoration Day.

The Subcommittee agreed to recommend to the Commission that the date for next year be set from April 13-19th commencing on Holocaust Commemoration Day Sunday, April 13th and lasting for six days thereafter.

The Subcommittee also unanimously agreed to suggest to the Commission that it recommend in its report that the President proclaim the Days of Remembrance of Victims of the Holocaust in perpetuity, "to be held annually commencing on the Sunday preceeding or the Sunday of internationally recognized Holocaust Commemoration Day."

The Subcommittee also strongly urged that the National Holocaust Memorial be charged in its charter with the continuing responsibility "to recommend to the nation means of commemoration of the Days of Remembrance." It felt that this mandate was integral to the work of the Memorial institution and would allow it to retain its major role in commemoration.

The Subcommittee then spoke of some possibilities for next year and it considered the possibility of some Holocaust commemoration Activities in the Arts and in Music.

The staff was urged to compile a listing of various programs in the Holocaust and a complete listing of musical compositions relating to the Holocaust. It was further urged to compile models for religious and civic services as well as other ideas for a memorial commemorative service.



THE JEWISH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF AMERICA

3080 BROADWAY • NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10027

212 RIVERSTON 2 8000

OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

CABLE ADDRESS: SEMINARY, NEW YORK

June 5, 1979

Mr. Elie Wiesel
239 Central Park West
New York, New York
10024

Dear Elie:

To my deep regret, I cannot attend the June 7th session of the Presidential Holocaust Commission because of a prior commitment that could not be rescheduled. However, I want to register in writing my concern that some of the recommendations which we made in our previous meetings be given full weight and representation at the meeting on June 7th as well. I have no reason to doubt that you are in accord with my own views on the subject, but in view of the pressures being put upon many members of the Commission from various corners, I write to express my own views on the subject.

To begin with, I feel that any Holocaust memorial should be devoted exclusively to the victims of the Nazi policy of decimation of the Jews. By including other holocausts or genocides in general and the sufferings of other minorities such as Armenians, we would only dilute the results of any project emerging from the Presidential mandate. I do not want to appear insensitive to the tragedies of other people, but I believe that the treatment of other tragedies will mitigate the perception of the tragedy that the Jewish people suffered in Europe. Accordingly, I think the Holocaust Commission should recommend to the President of the United States and to Congress that the memorial be dedicated exclusively to the memory of the Jews of Europe.

Secondly, I do not believe that whatever funds are amassed ought to be dissipated by creating more than one memorial. However large a fund becomes available for any memorial, it will never be quite sufficient for more than one center. We could achieve so much more by concentrating our energies and resources on one major center which would serve as a museum for popular education, a repository for documents and a center for major research. While I personally favor Washington, D.C. as the national center for the Holocaust memorial for reasons I articulated at our meetings, I would be agreeable to establishing a memorial in New York City.

Thirdly, let me reiterate my hope that we will not endow departments of Holocaust studies across the country, but that we will be training younger scholars to teach these materials properly. We can only produce effective specialists in certain areas of the Holocaust experience, not train general Holocaust scholars. I do agree with Professor Hilberg that as part of our

educational program we should endow a major documentary compilation on the Holocaust so that the materials will be available for authentic reportage. Again, this should be concentrated in one major center so that we do not squander the valuable resources of time, energy and funds.

Our task, I believe, is too sacred and too unique for us to pass by and we must, therefore, be extremely judicious and cautious. The political implementation of our mandate which has been endorsed by so many members of Congress should be accomplished soon, lest the impact and commitment of the White House to this project be sidetracked. I would, therefore, urge that we not delay in getting the appropriation from Congress and the endorsement of the public fund-raising and campaigns which will have to be mounted shortly. I trust you will understand the spirit in which I have written this letter. As a member of the Commission, I will, of course, abide by the consensus of all of my colleagues, but I did want to register my views with you.

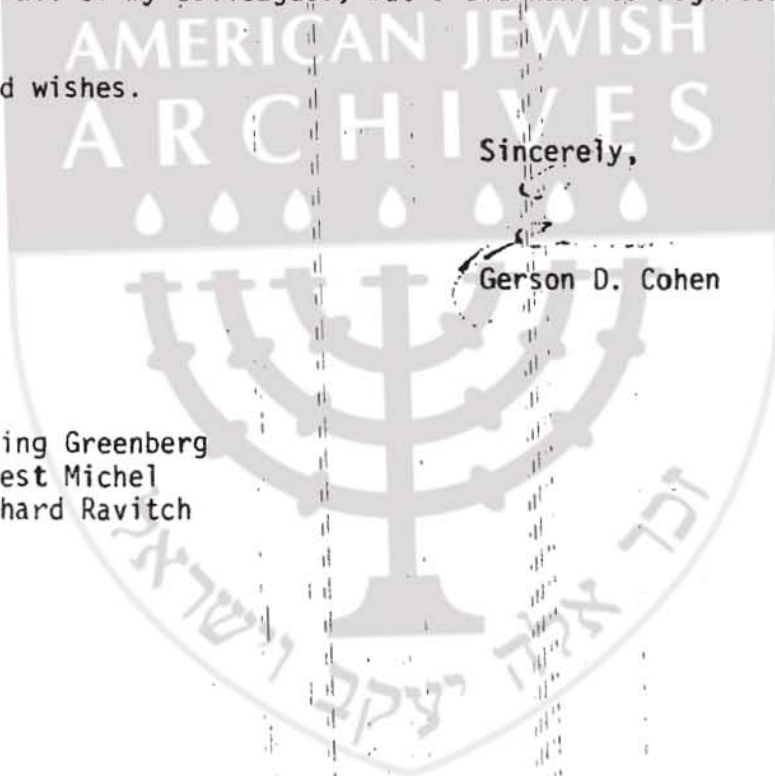
With all good wishes.

Sincerely,

Gerson D. Cohen

GDC/lg

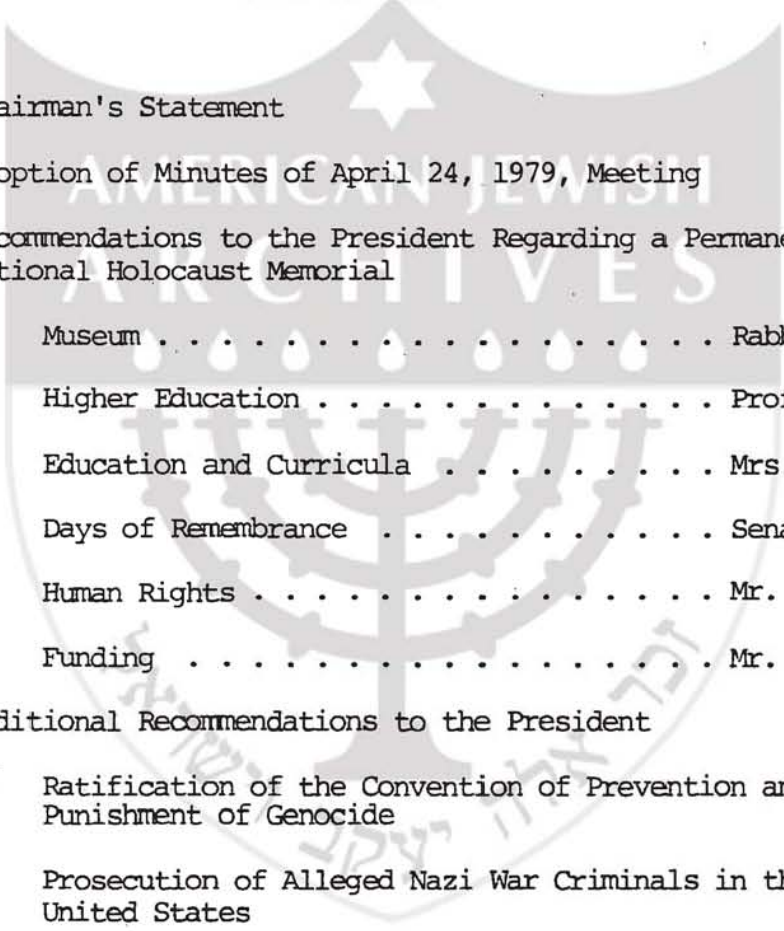
cc: Dr. Irving Greenberg
Mr. Ernest Michel
Mr. Richard Ravitch



PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON THE HOLOCAUST

Meeting of June 7, 1979
Room 2010, New Executive Office Building
Washington, D.C.
10:00 A.M.

A G E N D A

- 
- I. Chairman's Statement
 - II. Adoption of Minutes of April 24, 1979, Meeting
 - III. Recommendations to the President Regarding a Permanent National Holocaust Memorial
 - A. Museum Rabbi Bernard Raskas
 - B. Higher Education Professor Raul Hilberg
 - C. Education and Curricula Mrs. Kitty Dukakis
 - D. Days of Remembrance Senator John Danforth
 - E. Human Rights Mr. Hyman Bookbinder
 - F. Funding Mr. Frank Lautenberg
 - IV. Additional Recommendations to the President
 - A. Ratification of the Convention of Prevention and Punishment of Genocide
 - B. Prosecution of Alleged Nazi War Criminals in the United States
 - C. Extension of the Statute of Limitations
 - D. Preservation of Jewish Cemeteries in Eastern Europe

V. Report on the Fact-Finding Mission Mr. Sigmund Strochlitz

VI. Completion of the Commission's Work and the Implementation
of its Recommendations



Public Information Summary

Meeting of the President's Commission on the Holocaust

New Executive Office Building
Room 2010
726 Jackson Place, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

Thursday, June 7, 1979

ATTENDEES

Commissioners:

- Mr. Elie Wiesel, Chairperson
- Mr. Hyman Bookbinder
- Ms. Kitty Dukakis
- Mr. Benjamin Epstein
- Rabbi Juda Glasner
- Professor Raul Hilberg
- Mr. Frank Lautenberg
- Senator Claiborne Pell
- Mr. Arnold Picker
- Rabbi Bernard Raskas
- Ms. Hadassah Rosensaft
- Mr. Bayard Rustin
- Ms. Marilyn Shubin
- Congressman Stephen Solarz
- Mr. Mark Talisman
- Professor Telford Taylor
- Mr. Glenn Watts

Advisors:

- Mr. Miles Lenman, Co-Chairperson
- Dr. Franklin Littell, Co-Chairperson
- Mr. Benjamin Meed, Co-Chairperson
- Ms. Sylvia Becker
- Mr. Irving Bernstein
- Dr. Yaffa Eliach
- Mr. Aaron Goldman
- Cantor Isaac Goodfriend
- Ms. Grace Grossman
- Mr. Richard Krieger
- Mr. Steven Ludsin
- Mr. Jay Schechter
- Mr. Wilton Sogg
- Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum
- Mr. Solomon Zynstein

White House: Mr. Edward Sanders, Senior Advisor to the President
Mr. Seymour Bolten, White House Liaison

Commission Staff: Dr. Irving Greenberg, Director
Dr. Michael Berenbaum, Deputy Director
Mr. James Gross, Special Assistant to Regional
Director, National Capital Region, Department
of the Interior
Ms. Marian Craig, Staff Assistant
Ms. Charlita Lindsay, Secretary
Mr. David Solomon, Intern

Guests: Mr. Abraham J. Bayer, National Jewish Community
Relations Advisory Council
Rabbi Laszlo Berkowitz for Senator Rudy Boschwitz
Mr. Sam Bloch, World Federation of Bergen-Belsen
Survivors Associations
Dr. Donald Kommers for Father Theodore Hesburgh
Ms. Adele Liskov for Congressman William Lehman
Mr. Jan Nowak, Polish American Congress
Ms. Marsha Rogers for Senator John Danforth
Ms. Avital Scharansky
Mr. Shelby Solomon for Congressman James Blanchard
Mr. Michael Steiglitz
Ms. Alice Tetelman for Congress William Green
Mr. Eli Zborowski, American Federation of Jewish
Fighters, Camp Inmates, and Nazi Victims

PROCEEDINGS

The meeting was convened at 10:20 a.m., on Thursday, June 7, by Mr. Elie Wiesel, Chairman of the President's Commission on the Holocaust.

After restating the purpose of the Commission: to perpetuate the memory of the victims of the Holocaust in order to prevent future genocides, Mr. Wiesel spoke of the dilemma of the particular and the universal stating his belief that the universality of the Holocaust lies in its uniqueness.

Mr. Wiesel moved to the agenda items.

The minutes of the April 24, 1979, Commission meeting were adopted, and the six subcommittees reported on their proposed recommendations to the President for a permanent National Holocaust Memorial.

Higher Education: Dr. Raul Hilberg, Co-Chairperson, reported that this Subcommittee recommends that the Education Foundation undertake a series of fellowships and grants for research and travel for scholars and a series of fellowships and grants for graduate students, interships and training, including matching grants to institutions or to faculty who would work with such students. Activities of the Endowment for Higher Education should include fellowships and grants for research and travel; project funding (for example, an encyclopedia on Holocaust studies and monographs; document series similar to IMT Blue Volumes - translations into English from other languages); oral histories; and a visiting faculty program.

The Subcommittee recommends that a publishing facility be part of the Education Foundation with priority being given to out-of-print classics, selective support for new works of special merit, publication of survivors' accounts when appropriate, and publication of documentary and photographic books.

Also recommended as part of the Education Foundation is a conference facility for use in training and teaching, an assembly place for scholars of the Holocaust, public conferences with the Holocaust and its implications for humanistic and public policy issues. The Subcommittee recommends, however, that highest priority be focused on academic scholars' conferences.

Following serious discussion, the Commission adopted unanimously the recommendations of the Subcommittee.

Education and Curricula: Ms. Kitty Dukakis, Co-Chairperson, reported for the Subcommittee. It also concurs that an Educational Foundation or Institute be included as an integral part of the National Holocaust Memorial. In its education and curricula aspects, the Foundation would pursue educational work through grants, extension services, joint projects and research and explore the issues raised by the Holocaust for all areas of human knowledge and public policy. The Foundation would nourish such work in all sections of the country within many existing institutions, both academic and educational, as well as with the growing network of institutions that deal with the Holocaust. The Washington center should function as a clearinghouse.

This work would include support and evaluation sources for the development of Holocaust curricula now going on at all levels of public and private schooling. It would include bringing together educators, curricula developers and scholars through consortia, conferences and teacher training.

The Subcommittee strongly urges the adoption of the study of the Holocaust as part of the public school curricula in every school system within the Nation. The Educational Foundation should be

charged with the responsibility for stimulating the development of the appropriate curricula resource material and to work cooperatively with those school systems that desire to implement the study of the Holocaust and with those voluntary organizations now working in this area.

In recognition of the broad significance of the issue and of the powerful educational role of the media, the Subcommittee recommends that the Foundation should offer both development grants and prizes for work in the arts, literature and the media.

After considerable discussion, the Commission unanimously passed the recommendations.

Days of Remembrance: Dr. Michael Berenbaum reported for the Subcommittee which recommends that the Days of Remembrance of Victims of the Holocaust be proclaimed in perpetuity, to be held annually during the week commencing on the Sunday preceding or the Sunday of the internationally recognized Holocaust Commemoration Day.

The Subcommittee further recommends that the National Holocaust Memorial be charged in its charter with the continuing responsibility to recommend to the Nation means of commemorating the Days of Remembrance. It feels that this mandate is integral to the work of the Memorial Institution.

Rabbi Juda Glasner introduced a motion calling for the addition of the ninth of Av as a Day of Remembrance. The Commission commended this day which is commemorated as a Day of Remembrance by some segments of the orthodox Jewish community. The motion, however, was defeated.

After additional discussion, the Commission adopted the original motion unanimously without amendment.

Human Rights: Mr. Hyman Bookbinder, Co-Chairperson of the Subcommittee, reported that the Subcommittee recommends that a Committee on Conscience composed of distinguished moral leaders of America be appointed by the President to meet regularly at the National Memorial to the Holocaust. This panel would receive reports of any genocide or potential genocide around the world. If it found a condition of genocide, the panel should have access to the President, the Congress and the public and the media to alert the national conscience and national policy makers to the presence of genocide (actual or immediately potential) and thus stimulate worldwide action to prevent this destruction.

The Subcommittee wishes to reaffirm the principles of the Nuremberg Trials as universally valid principles, including in particular the principle of personal responsibility of individuals for crimes against humanity.

The Subcommittee further wishes to reaffirm that the principle of protection of human rights is a matter of international concern and responsibility.

The Subcommittee joins with the Commission and the President in urging the Senate of the United States to ratify the Genocide Convention.

The Subcommittee recommends that the contemporary international law concepts of crimes against humanity and related subject be codified.

The motions were unanimously adopted by the Commission following discussion.

Museum: Rabbi Bernard Raskas, Co-Chairperson of the Subcommittee presented the following report.

The Subcommittee recommends to the Commission that a national Holocaust Memorial Museum be erected in Washington, D.C. The museum will have to be of symbolic and artistic beauty, visually and emotionally moving in accordance with the solemn character of the Holocaust. It would use exhibits and projection displays to inform and to emotionally move the visitors to the phenomenon of the Holocaust. The projection and the program will operate at multiple levels so as to impact the casual visitor and to have room for more in-depth exploration by those so moved.

The museum can appropriately incorporate exhibits reflective of the Holocaust with primary focus on the six million Jews (in uniquely total fury, all Jews were designated for destruction) as well as the other millions of victims of the Holocaust. Indeed it may incorporate some changing displays to dramatize areas of current concern.

The museum should incorporate a special emphasis on the American aspect of the Holocaust. This record includes the lack of response (exclusion of refugees, denial of the Holocaust, etc.), such responses as the War Refugees Board, the liberation of the camps, the reception of survivors after 1945, the lives that were rebuilt, the development of a new sensitivity to the Holocaust as well as a growing respect for multi-ethnic, multidimensional American culture. The study and projection of the Holocaust should incorporate the life and culture of the victims and not just the destruction process. Similarly, the extraordinary efforts to preserve human dignity and life during the Holocaust, the heroic resistance efforts, and the response of renewed life after the event also should be emphasized.

The museum should include a library, an archive of Holocaust materials, computer linkage to existing centers of Holocaust documentation and a reference staff. This will enable both the general public and scholars to pursue the study of the record of the Holocaust. Conference facilities would be desirable.

The Subcommittee proposes that this museum become an autonomous bureau of the Smithsonian Institution. Like the Smithsonian, it would offer extension services to the public, to scholars, to other institutions. Like the Smithsonian, it would offer diffusion of knowledge of this event for the improvement of humanity in areas of ethical responsibility, political and governmental process, civic and religious solidarity. The Commission instructed the staff to pursue this connection. However, the guiding principle in this exploration should be preserving the autonomy and particularity of the memorial.

The motion was adopted unanimously following discussion by the Commission.

The public was invited to participate and Mr. Jan Nowak, Formal Liaison Representative of the Polish-American Congress spoke.

"The Polish-American Congress fully supports President Carter's initiative and his idea to commemorate six million Jewish victims of the Holocaust as well as five million non-Jews who were murdered for no other reason than their nationality or race.

"We also fully recognize that unspeakable tragedy and sufferings of the Jewish people in the last war were of a magnitude without precedence in the history of mankind.

"I saw it with my own eyes and what I saw will remain in my memory to the end of my life. I witnessed not only the Holocaust but also indifference of the Western world.

"I was relieved to hear reassurance in the opening remarks of Chairman Elie Wiesel that this noble venture will not convey a wrong notion that only death and martyrdom of Jews should be remembered while the genocide of remaining five millions of other nationalities could be forgotten.

"No other people suffered more through discrimination, prejudice and hatred than the Jews. We share the goal of this distinguished Commission to do all in our power to prevent recurrence of the Holocaust in the future.

"It is therefore of vital interest to all of us -- as Chairman Wiesel pointed out so rightly earlier -- that this monument should not divide, but unite, that it should not be allowed to generate controversy and sense of injustice."

Professor Yaffa Eliach responded to Mr. Nowak's remarks.

"Indeed, many Poles did suffer, and, indeed, there were many Poles -- and not only Poles -- that are the righteous among the nations. And I think that while the Jewish issue, the destruction of six million Jews, is unique from its legal aspect, not only the numerical quantity of six million individuals, it is important to remember the righteous among the nations and their attitude, not only toward the six million victims, but those that survived. Because almost every individual that survived, somewhere, someplace, there was a righteous individual.

"And I think that in the recommendations they should be included, either as a special exhibit or a special place, in the recommendations of the Commission on Museum and also the Committee on Education. I think there should be special dedication to the righteous among the nations."

The Chairman thanked Mr. Nowak for his remarks and asked the Commission to reflect upon them.

Funding: Mr. Frank Lautenberg, Co-Chairperson reported for the Subcommittee. The Subcommittee concludes that the overall program of combining a physical memorial and an education foundation with a broad range of programs and joint projects is achievable in terms of necessary funding.

The Subcommittee recommends that funding be carried out by a public-private partnership involving both government participation and private sector fund raising such as was done for the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and other major memorials. Government participation should be in the form of seed money up to a million dollars for broad design of facilities as well as program and a challenge grant to be matched by fund raising in the private sector, phased-in over a three-year period. The Subcommittee proposal assumes government maintenance of the memorial and government grant of the land for the memorial.

The Subcommittee recommends that the Commission request the direct moral support, endorsement, and the involvement of the White House for its fund raising efforts.

The sources of the funds should include individual large contributors, foundations, associations, institutions, corporations and civic organizations, churches and synagogues as well as a broad-based program of fund raising throughout America to secure wide public support necessary for this project.

The motion was unanimously adopted by the Commission following serious discussion.

The Commission also agreed on several other recommendations to the President:

A. Ratification of the Genocide Convention:

The President's Commission on the Holocaust joins with the President of the United States in urging the Senate of the United States to ratify the Genocide Convention.

B. Prosecution of Nazi War Criminals in America:

Since the end of World War II, more than 200 individuals accused of direct complicity in genocide and other Nazi crimes have lived with impunity in America. The failure to prosecute them or to take steps to withdraw American citizenship where they have obtained it by fraud and denial of their past record is unworthy of the high human-rights ideals of our country. The allegation that some of these alleged criminals found not only refuge but also employment under the auspices of various U.S. agencies lends dramatic emphasis to the moral necessity for finally resolving this issue.

Furthermore there is a grave danger that the history of the Holocaust will be revised or rewritten (indelibly when the case has exhausted all appeals) in our courtrooms due not only to the loss of the case but more seriously to the ill-prepared and ineffective performance of the prosecuting trial lawyers at denaturalization and deportation cases of alleged Nazi war criminals. This is apparently the result of bureaucratic indifference, inadequate staffing or lack of priority for prosecutions. For example, in the case of the U.S. versus Feodor Fedorenko, the presiding judge held that the defendant himself was "a victim of Nazi aggression" and that the eyewitnesses to his alleged atrocities at Treblinka death camp were not to be believed and in fact had conspired against the defendant.

The President's Commission on the Holocaust recommends to the President that the Government by direct intervention and executive action take steps to:

- 1) Assure high priority to the issue of Nazi war criminals in America.
- 2) Insure adequate funds and staffing for the Office of Special Investigator charged with the responsibility of investigating and prosecuting accused Nazi war criminals in our midst.
- 3) Assign experienced trial counsels who are more able to contend successfully against defense counsels employed by alleged Nazi war criminals.
- 4) Insist that all government agencies render accessible all records and testimony related to the issue.
- 5) In addition, the United States Government should exert full diplomatic influence to support the abolition of the statute of limitations for Nazi war criminals in West Germany under which some of the accused would presumably be tried.
- 6) Full diplomatic efforts be made to assure the cooperation of other governments in obtaining material relevant to ongoing investigations and trials of alleged Nazi war criminals since that information is vital to the prosecution efforts.

C. Statute of Limitations:

Knowing that in crimes of the magnitude of the Holocaust the exercise of justice knows no time limit and that the perpetrators of such crimes must not be allowed to walk this earth with impunity, the Commission calls upon the Government of West Germany to abolish the Statute of Limitations for Nazi war criminals. The Commission also asks the President to use the diplomatic influence of the American Government to encourage the Government of West Germany to abolish the Statute of Limitations.

D. Jewish Cemeteries Abroad:

Among the few remaining physical remnants of Jewish life in Eastern Europe are the cemeteries. In recent years,

these cemeteries have been destroyed by new building projects, housing developments, and road construction. The Commission, therefore, recommends the following:

- 1) In recognition of the sanctity of the physical remains of the Jewish communities of Eastern Europe and in recognition of the right of the dead to a final resting place, that the State Department continue to express its concern about the situation that none of the cemeteries be destroyed and, further, that they be maintained in a suitably respectable manner.
- 2) That in cases of specific grievances, the State Department undertake to express its concern to those governments involved about specific cemeteries.

At the request of an Advisory Board Member, the Commission directed the staff to investigate the feasibility of a commemorative stamp to be issued on Yom Hashoah in 1980.

Mr. Miles Lerman, Co-Chairperson of the Commission's Fact-Finding Mission Subcommittee, stated that the overseas mission will take place July 29 through August 13 and will include visits to Warsaw, Treblinka, Maidanek, Auschwitz, Krakow, Kiev, Moscow, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. The per person cost will be approximately \$2,650 to be borne by each participant.

Mr. Wiesel reported that he would suggest to the President that a Board of approximately 10 to 12 members be appointed, after the Commission's charter expires on August 15, to implement the Commission's recommendations. The Board would work with the Executive Staff and Congress to develop final legislation for the National Holocaust Memorial; form the nucleus for a Governing Council; recruit work teams; set up the fund raising mechanism; develop future commemorations; identify an appropriate site; define space and location needs and building plans; and coordinate the approach to Congress for authorization and appropriations.

The meeting was adjourned.



President's Commission on the Holocaust

Office of the
Director

June 27, 1979

Dar Marc:

Enclosed is a copy of a proposed project I received from my friend and colleague at Wesleyan University, Andrei Markovits. Andy has done some very serious work on the impact of the Holocaust on Germany and his proposal is serious. If you know of any source for possible funding for him, I would appreciate your calling it to my attention.

I know that you have worked hard in trying to arrange a papal audience for the Commission. Thank you for your efforts and this special consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Michael Berenbaum
Deputy Director

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum
National Director, Interreligious Affairs of
the American Jewish Committee
165 East 56th Street
New York, New York 10022

The German Telecast of "Holocaust": Long Term Institutional Impact

Research Proposal submitted by:

Andrei S. Markovits (Assistant Professor, Department of Government, Wesleyan University and Research Fellow, Center for European Studies, Harvard University)

and

Christopher S. Allen (Doctoral Candidate, Department of Politics, Brandeis University)

Aim of the Project:

We are interested in analyzing the long-term responses by different societal institutions such as parties, unions, churches and the business community on the one hand, and the state on the other to the television series "Holocaust" in the Federal Republic of Germany. Moving beyond the scope and framework of our article and others of its genre both in the United States and in Europe, we propose an in-depth analysis of the long-term impact of the program's ramifications upon German public life.

The emotional and sensational dimensions permeating Germany at the time of the telecast necessarily have faded. Of much greater significance for German-Jewish relations and Germany's coming to terms with its past are the concrete, but less headline-prone measures undertaken by German institutions and opinion leaders. The events surrounding the program's telecast should be seen as a trigger to potentially new policies and attitudes toward the Jewish community and Germany's past. Thus, for instance, "Holocaust" has already demonstrated its impact by causing lawmakers to extend the statute of limitations for crimes committed during the Nazi era. This, however, represents only one aspect of a slow process which has to be analyzed in detail and over a longer period of time.

Specifically we propose a thorough investigation of the programmatic measures initiated by the three large German parties, the SPD, FDP and CDU/CSU; the German Trade Union Confederation DGB and some of its major constituent member unions; the three business federations BDA, BDI and DIHT; the Protestant and Catholic Churches; and the media. Furthermore we will analyze state policies on the federal and Länder levels, especially with respect to educational and cultural programs. Lastly, the German case will be highlighted by a comparative overview of the Swedish, French, British and, above all, Austrian reactions and long-term developments following the telecast of "Holocaust".

Implementation of the Project:

Having accumulated some expertise in this area (Markovits lived in Austria for eight years, has published numerous articles on German

and Austrian politics, and Jewish affairs; Allen has spent considerable time in Germany researching the German political economy and, with Markovits, has written extensively on the trade unions and on human rights in Germany) we feel that we possess the requisite qualifications in addition to the interest necessary for the successful completion of the project. We already have gathered extensive data on the German, Austrian, French and Swedish reactions to "Holocaust". We anticipate the following timetable as appropriate for the course of the project:

June 1, 1979 - August 1, 1979: Markovits already in Germany on a Ford Foundation Grant studying trade unions, will gather data and conduct interviews with the help of a German research assistant.

September 1, 1979 - June 1, 1980: Markovits and Allen analyzing existing data in Cambridge, Mass. and writing short articles and reports dealing with aspects of the research.

June 1, 1980 - July 1, 1980: Markovits will return to Germany for follow-up interviews and an assessment of the institutional policy changes which have transpired during the intervening year.

July 1, 1980 - September 1, 1980: Markovits and Allen complete the analysis of the project in the form of a long monograph or book.

Budgeting of the Project:

- German research assistant between June 1, 1979 and August 1, 1979 at DM 10 per hour for 100 hours totalling DM 1,000	\$530
- Research assistant in Cambridge between September 1, 1979 and May 31, 1980.	\$2,000
- Markovits' round trip air fare to Germany from Boston between June 30, 1980 and July 1, 1980.	\$600
- Markovits' European travel expenses.	\$600
- Markovits' per diem allowance at DM 80 per day for 30 days totalling DM 2,400.	\$1,260
- Transcription of interviews and other typing expenses	\$750
- Miscellaneous.	<u>\$300</u>
TOTAL	\$6,040

Forthcoming in
The Jewish Education
(April 1979)

TV SERIES "HOLOCAUST" CHALLENGES GERMAN CONSCIENCE

AMERICAN JEWISH
By
ARCHIVES

Andrei S. Markovits, Düsseldorf

and

Christopher S. Allen, Köln

Markovits, an Assistant Professor of Government at Wesleyan University, regularly teaches a course on European fascism. Presently on leave in the Federal Republic, he is engaged in a research project on the German trade unions.

Allen, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Politics at Brandeis University, is currently researching aspects of the German political economy.

The week of January 21-27 may yet prove to have presented modern German history with one of its most significant events. The American-made docu-drama "Holocaust", causing nothing short of a "great divide" (grosse Zäsur) as one of West Germany's leading intellectuals referred to it, captured the nation's rapt attention. Whereas over 100 previously televised documentaries and numerous educational programs on Germany's Nazi past attracted but a handful of viewers thus remaining confined to a rather self-selected intellectual audience, a much maligned Hollywood melodrama succeeded in catalyzing hitherto silent aspects of German conscience, thereby opening public debate on an unprecedented scale. Nothing in recent memory has underlined the continued relevance of the Nazi past to the German present as have the telecast of "Holocaust" and the overwhelming response by the viewing public. This, once again, highlights how a proper understanding of contemporary German society entails an awareness of its response to the National Socialist era.

Ironically, few people expected such a positive and comprehensive reaction, especially since the film's German experience was fraught with problems. Following its controversial showing in April 1978 on American television, where it received mixed reviews yet proved a huge commercial success, WDR, the largest of the West German regional television networks paid over 1 million DM (\$ 550,000) -- second only to the 1.3 million DM (\$ 750,000) for "Roots --

to secure the broadcasting rights. WDR's initial intention of airing the film jointly with the eight other regional publically supported networks ran into immediate difficulty. Four of the eight refused to show the film on a simultaneous national basis over the most highly watched "First Program" (ARD) justifying their decision by questioning "Holocaust's" cinematic merits, its historical accuracy and its "suitability" for the German viewing public. Minor discrepancies such as an American ring to a German telephone, faulty depiction of SS uniforms and the use of a brass doctor's "shingle" instead of the more authentic porcelain one became parts of a larger political disagreement reflecting party loyalties and the accompanying divergent views regarding the past and its present implications. A compromise solution relegated the showing of "Holocaust" to the "Third Program", which unlike the "First" and "Second" is regional in nature. Although four common air times were established by the nine independent headquarters, the demoting of the film to the "intellectual ghetto" of the "Third Program" represented more than a symbolic act. Similar to American Public Television this channel's viewing percentage remains confined to a small number. Furthermore, the air time between 9 p.m. and 12 p.m. seemed an additional obstacle to a large audience. It is in this context that the following figures are nothing short of sensational: more than 40 % of all German television viewers -- roughly 15 million people -- watched the program every night; in excess of 35,000 telephone calls (four times the number reported by NBC during the film's American

showing) were received by the stations; an equal amount of letters and telegrams had been sent; and the 20,000 information booklets published by the government accompanying the show disappeared in an avalanche of orders reaching 255,000, most requested by those under 35, an age group particularly eager to attain knowledge about this period.

From the acrimonious debates following the acquisition of the film by WDR it had become evident that "Holocaust" touched a raw nerve in the German public. Although reactions were largely positive and became increasingly so during the course of the series, negative opinions regarding the showing of "Holocaust" persisted. This even reached violent dimensions in the bombing of two television transmitters by neo-Nazi groups during a preparatory documentary entitled "Final Solution" shown three days prior to the film's first presentation. Letters and editorials published by some of the country's conservative newspapers echoed a disdain for the film's "Kitsch" and its typical American Hollywood sentimentality. Explicitly accompanying these elitist and xenophobic criticisms were the often heard desire finally to forget the past, refrain from making the Germans the sole culprits for WWII and its atrocities -- Dresden was mentioned frequently in this context -- and the concern for the Federal Republic's tarnished international image by association.

In marked contrast to these views, most liberal and left-leaning periodicals wholeheartedly supported the

film's showing. Many members of the governing Social Democratic Party, including Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, regarded this event as a healthy and necessary part of the Federal Republic's political development. Following each of the four nightly presentations a panel of five different (thus a total of twenty) distinguished German and international academics concurred in the unique importance of "Holocaust's" showing in the present German context. Differing in their modes of analysis and highlighting often contradictory opinions in their attempts to explain the horrors of National Socialism, they nonetheless contributed intellectual insights of rare quality in two-hour discussions. Commentary of this caliber is, alas, absent from American television.

This expertise, of course, reflects more than acquired knowledge; most importantly, it testifies to an ongoing process in quest of a new German identity which necessitates a thorough coming to terms with National Socialism. The painful and hitherto woefully deficient attempts toward this end have been highlighted during this week in January. Nowhere was this better manifested than in the extensive discussions regarding the film itself. The contradictory bind wherein Germans have by definition found themselves in an honest reconciliation process with the past was characterized by two related themes: the movie's American origins and its fictional nature. Regarding the latter, the drawbacks of its personalization of history led to overly melodramatic effects which, in turn, trivialized the horrors of the Holocaust. German viewers would thereby

not learn to understand the fate of Germans and Jews but identify -- with antipathy or sympathy -- with the Dorf or the Weiss families, respectively. The horrors of Theresienstadt and Auschwitz remained gory spectacles and seemed almost secondary to the fates of the film's main protagonists. The structures of National Socialism became a backdrop, its causes were left unexplained. The general tenor of a prime time soap opera created an atmosphere inimical for reflection or discussion and rather encouraged crying but for the wrong reasons. Even without the tasteless interruptions of American commercials "Holocaust" may thus represent a prototype for which Theodor Adorno's warning words of it being barbaric to write poetry after Auschwitz seem most appropriate.

True enough, the horrors of the Holocaust can never be fully conveyed by any medium. All experts emphasized this fact in the course of every discussion explaining that the film's explicit brutality still never came close to reality. Maybe this is the martyrs' only way to gain their ultimate dignity. Yet we also owe it to their memory to approximate their fate as best we can and disseminate all available information to the widest possible public lest the world forget. In this case it is precisely the very drawbacks of "Holocaust" mentioned above which enabled its success, especially in Germany. Hollywood's simplification allowed a large segment of the German population a genuine empathy with the immediate human destruction of the Jews. Mrs. Weiss' final walk to the gas chambers --

albeit in unrealistically good health and in full possession of her long hair, both historically inaccurate -- expressed more about Auschwitz to a large number of Germans than the most authentic documentaries. Given the particular nature of National Socialism's relations to contemporary German life, the benefits derived from a mass produced film with all its historical liberties may outweigh the rigors of a carefully researched report.

Furthermore, it is precisely the movie's American origins which allowed it the freedom of poetic licence, sometimes bordering on glibness. Paradoxically, these drawbacks had an educational value in Germany where a certain naiveté and detached neutrality -- both prerequisites for a popular success of such dimensions -- would have been morally inexcusable, politically unfeasible and historically impossible. Not only would the Germans themselves have rejected a German "Holocaust", moreover so would the rest of the world, especially the Jewish community, which would rightfully regard such an endeavor as a mockery of the six million victims. Therefore, to answer one of the major contentions raised in Germany since the film's acquisition; a German production of a "Holocaust" has remained impossible, at least until the week of January 21, 1979.

Despite numerous noble attempts to examine particular aspects of WWII the Holocaust has remained largely taboo in the Federal Republic. Shame and fear have either fostered a repression of this period or created an

unquestioned sense of guilt in a large segment of the population. As a result one finds simultaneously an ignorance at an aggregate level accompanied by extensive detailed knowledge by individuals who directly experienced National Socialism. The film verified both characteristics. Thus, for instance, sophisticated clarifications regarding the important difference among the Wehrmacht, the Einsatzkommandos and the Waffen-SS on the one hand contrasted with shocking unawareness concerning the occurrence of the Holocaust on the other. Whereas some viewers provided valuable historical documentation from personal collections corroborating the atrocities -- an ex-SS officer, for instance, sent his private pictures of a burning synagogue filled with Jews to confirm the reality of a similar scene in the movie -- others still could not quite fathom how Germans could commit such crimes.

Clearly, the current role and self-perception on the part of the Germans lie at the heart of these tensions. One question -- hitherto often thought though rarely articulated -- seems definitely answered for all Germany as of January 1979: The Holocaust did in fact happen. As to how it did may unfortunately not find such an easy answer. Discussions heard in German restaurants and train stations, however, represent an important milestone in this lengthy and painful process. Individuals who until now remained silent about the "Endlösung" may find a psychological and structural need to discuss the "Holocaust" not only as a film but as a tragic and integral part of German history.

Although no single word -- as no form of any expression -- can do justice to events of this magnitude, the linguistic adoption of the English term "Holocaust" in lieu of the German "Endlösung" is significant since the former connotes a particular human tragedy whereas the latter reflects the bureaucratic euphemism of the Nazis themselves.

Questions as to who knew and who did not (or did not want to know); who willingly helped the Jews or looked the other way; and who dissented against the Nazis or collaborated with them may finally leave their accusatory finger-pointing, holier-than-thou stages and provide the basis for a comprehensive evaluation of National Socialism's implications for the twentieth century. A variety of approaches toward this end have been evident in public debate. Discussions, for example, have focused on a wide array of themes ranging from the temporal and cultural manifestations of cruelty to the particular formations of German authority patterns culminating in a frequently pernicious and complex relationship vis à vis the state, best known under the phenomenon of Obrigkeitsstaat. Most importantly, concrete demands were voiced for a series of German-made documentaries and dramatic presentations explaining the role of the Jews in modern German history and showing their contribution and relationship to German culture.

All of this necessitates an examination of the Third Reich in the larger contexts of fascism and anti-Semitism. Whereas both are analyzed independently of each other in a large body of serious literature presently available in the

Federal Republic, few comprehensive studies exist which attempt to show their symbiosis in the German case. Most recent works of fascism emanate from Marxist scholarship, the relatively recent revival of which in and of itself reflects National Socialism's pervasive legacy of repression. In the understandable quest for the long-delayed structural explanations of the Nazi period, most Marxist analyses interpret anti-Semitism too epiphenomenally and as secondary to German fascism. The literature on anti-Semitism on the other hand too often focuses on ideological and psychological dimensions of the Holocaust.

Although true that fascism and anti-Semitism do not necessarily determine each other's existence -- witness Mussolini's Italy, Franco's Spain and Salazar's Portugal for the presence of the former and the absence of the latter; and France during the Dreyfus period, Tsarist Russia and post WWI Poland for the obverse -- the Holocaust demonstrates conclusively that in Germany the two are inextricably linked to each other. While the establishment of Auschwitz required a highly developed fascist state apparatus, the conception of the "Final Solution" achieved a structural life of its own apart from the political and economic prerequisites of fascism.

Just as the relationship between fascism and anti-Semitism is crucial to an understanding of German history so too do these factors influence contemporary German life. For one, the German nation has again become fragmented just as it has been throughout most of its history. Since the

foundation of the Federal Republic entailed a claim to represent all of Germany, West Germany must also explicitly bear the responsibility for the German past. East Germany, on the other hand, has enjoyed the luxury of an easy reckoning with history. Due to its equating of fascism with capitalism the German Democratic Republic has absolved itself of the legacy of the Third Reich. Hence the GDR saw no compulsion to broadcast "Holocaust" just as it has refused consistently to pay reparations to individual Jews and to the state of Israel. Repeated telephone calls from citizens in the GDR able to view West German television testified to the more problematic -- indeed genuine -- attempts on the part of some East German citizens to come to terms with the past than the regime would admit.

Contrary to the situation in East Germany the effects of the Third Reich on the Federal Republic prevail much more strongly with various repercussions on German political behavior. For example, one cannot understand the comparatively cooperative posture of post-WWII organized German labor without placing this phenomenon in the context of the destruction of the labor movement at the hands of the Nazis and the subsequent isolation of left union members during the ensuing Cold War, in itself a direct result of National Socialism. One can also not understand the long-term reticence of the Federal Republic to exert international political influence commensurate with its global economic importance. Only now are there slow signs of the Federal Republic's emergence from the "economic

giant/political dwarf" syndrome. Most *à propos* for the continuing legacy of National Socialism is the current debate among the German people and in the Bundestag concerning the expiration on December 31, 1979, of the statute of limitations concerning Nazi war crimes. Chancellor Schmidt and numerous other Social Democrats -- in contrast to the conservative opposition -- have seized upon the showing of "Holocaust" to campaign for the extension of this statute of limitations.

Most importantly it is Germany's young people, especially in institutions of higher learning -- traditionally bastions of status quo and reaction -- who have become major spokesmen for the process of continued democratization. It is not surprising that "generational politics" has had the most extensive implication in West Germany through profound criticism and negation of the present consumer society. It is more than coincidence that both the theory and practice of this negation closely followed the teaching and writings of German-Jewish victims of and emigrés from the Nazi dictatorship. The German New Left, even more than its American counterpart, bore the burdens of its parents' silence. Rejecting capitalism meant not only an assessment of the emptiness of a purely materialistic existence, but also included a coming to terms with -- in an albeit hindered manner -- the previous generation's past.

The young intellectuals' noble conviction, never to allow the past to repeat itself, led to some oversimplified emotional identifications with the world's victims. Thus, for example, it was almost de rigueur for the German left to

support blindly the state of Israel until 1967. In this spirit of victim identification German radicals switched sides in the late sixties to support the cause of the Palestinians, the world's "new Jews". This uncritical stance also must be analyzed in the context of unresolved hence oppressive guilt concerning the Holocaust. Unable to understand completely the Nazi past as a consequence of their parents' silence many young Germans lashed out against the older generation. Their attack was grounded in response to a guilt created by their parent's actions for which they had no responsibility. Additional opposition derived from generational conflict as their parents once again failed to support a new group of victims, in this case the Palestinians. "Holocaust" hopefully will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of events in the Middle East and demonstrate their direct relationship to German history which is inextricably tied to the creation of the state of Israel.

One of the major and most encouraging differences between Bonn and Weimar consists in the inherently antinationalist attitude on the part of the German intelligentsia. Rabid nationalism and the blind following of authority have been replaced by the accoutrements of an advanced cosmopolitan culture and a healthy skepticism. It is precisely the latter which has blown the whistle on recent attempts to curtail democracy in the Federal Republic.

A major unfinished business in West Germany remains its hitherto deficient way of coming to terms with recent

history. The most fruitful approach to this endeavor lies in an understanding of the present reality's nature as an outcome of the past. Therefore, one should neither deny history nor wallow in guilt, rather try to comprehend the past's implications upon contemporary German life. The film "Holocaust", having possibly triggered this process on a large scale, may have thus made a more significant contribution than its Hollywood architects ever thought possible.



history. The most fruitful approach to this endeavor lies in an understanding of the present reality's nature as an outcome of the past. Therefore, one should neither deny history nor wallow in guilt, rather try to comprehend the past's implications upon contemporary German life. The film "Holocaust", having possibly triggered this process on a large scale, may have thus made a more significant contribution than its Hollywood architects ever thought possible.

Addendum: "Holocaust's" success has not remained confined to the Federal Republic of Germany. A spill-over effected France where over 70% of the television viewers followed the four episodes. The event received extensive coverage in the country's press and there were numerous public debates and related events before and after the program's showing in mid-February. One television panel featured German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt who, in no uncertain terms, affirmed the "special responsibility" of the current German government and the German people towards the victims of the Third Reich. One aspect of this "responsibility" has manifested itself in the ongoing dialogue between France and West Germany which has reached well beyond the level of governmental summits. The concrete results of this development were partly revealed in a recent opinion poll in France where the largest number of respondents, when asked which country in the world was France's best friend, mentioned the Federal Republic of Germany. Given the tragic history between these two countries, this result, despite the usual limitations and qualifications which accompany most opinion polls, is nothing short of significant. Furthermore, the tenor of the debate in France focused on an analysis of France's role in the Holocaust--after all the great French documentary "The Sorrow and the Pity" originally made for French television has yet to be aired in the country--its own atrocities in Indochina and Algeria, the role of terror and racism in general. The expected--and partly plausible yet shallow--German-baiting was replaced by a mature process of self-evaluation.

A possibly even more important country to have seen the film was Austria where the show was televised between March 1 and March 4. Preliminary results indicate that the interest and initial response reached German levels. In a sense the showing of "Holocaust" could have even more

far-reaching and beneficial implications on Austria which, unlike the Federal Republic, has never really even tried to come to terms with its past. World events spared Austria from the collective agony and problems of guilt so characteristic for West Germany. After all, the evil German Nazis invaded a poor helpless country, a la Czechoslovakia and Poland. "The Rape of Austria" as one British historian called it, has remained an excellent excuse and legitimation, vis a vis the world and herself.

of Austria's innocence

Viennese pastry, "Gemütlichkeit", beautiful music and scenery have covered up successfully the deeds of Eichmann, Kaltenbrunner and lastly Hitler himself. Maybe "Holocaust" will dispell this notion of victimization of Austria on the part of ^{Nazi} Germany and initiate a serious and broad-based analysis of Austria's own, and to a large extent willing, role in the atrocities of the Third Reich.



Dr. Kristina Zerges
Hella Dunger, M.A.

Postanschrift: TU Berlin - Sekr. TEL 10 - Straße des 17. Juni 135, D 1000 Berlin 12

FACHBEREICH 1

Institut für
Medien-
wissenschaft
und Literatur-
soziologie

Fachgebiet
Germanistik

Sept 1979

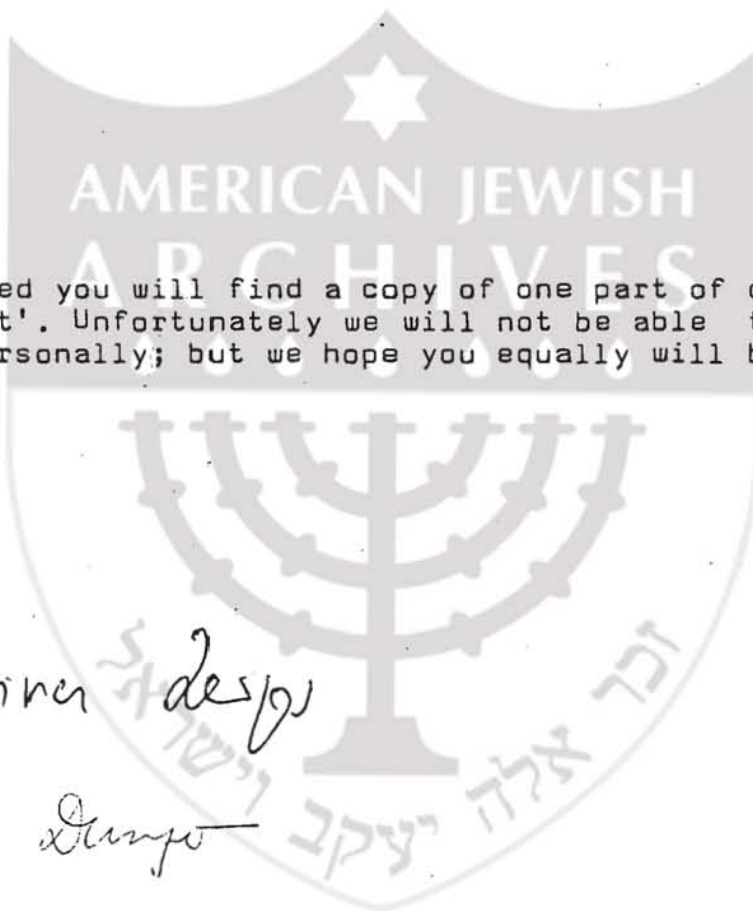
Dear Sirs,

enclosed you will find a copy of one part of our studies on 'Holocaust'. Unfortunately we will not be able to present it to you personally; but we hope you equally will be interested to read it.

Sincerely,

Kristina Zerges

Hella Dunger



Dr. Kristina Zerges

Hella Dunger, M.A.

Postanschrift: TU Berlin · Sekr. TEL 10 · Straße des 17. Juni 135, D1000 Berlin 12

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Datum

H O L O C A U S T I N Q U I R Y

A M E R I C A N J E W I S H
A R C H I V E S
K R I S T I N A Z E R G E S / H E L L A D U N G E R

T E L E P H O N E I N Q U I R Y I N B E R L I N (W E S T) *

The Institute for Media Research and Literature-Sociology of the Technical University of Berlin (West) carried out a telephone inquiry immediately after the last transmission of 'Holocaust' (on the weekend of Jan. 27th and 28th, 1979). The inquiry was designed to win an impression as to the extent of the television audience; its impression and its evaluation of the series.

The inquiry was based on 1213 persons, whose names were selected by random choice from the Berlin telephone directory. A postcard was sent to each of them a week before the transmission of the series, informing them of the inquiry. In order to avoid influencing them, 'Holocaust' wasn't mentioned in the text of the postcard. In general they were informed that the institute was planning an investigation of the television habits of the citizens of Westberlin, and that, in this context, it was hoped they might answer some questions.

Interviews lasting about 15 minutes could be carried out with 821 of the selected Berliners, which is an astonishingly high participation (68%) for a telephone inquiry. This clearly revealed, as did the great number of viewer telephone calls to the stations trans-

* German translation published in: Bild der Wissenschaft 6/79
Stuttgart 1979

mitting the series, during and after the transmission of the individual episodes, and the 'open-end-discussions', the strong interest of the viewers as well as their concern and mental and emotional preoccupation with the material. Even more impressive was the willingness of the viewers and the general public to speak about their reaction to the 'Holocaust' transmission.

More than half of the people questioned (54.2%) watched the series, or episodes of it, despite the fact that it was shown at a very late hour, and dealt with a 'negative' theme, and was telecast as a part of the so-called 'minorities' programme. Shown diagrammatically, according to the times of transmission of the individual episodes (and also in comparison to the viewer participation in the U.S.A. in Spring, 1978), we have the following statistical comparison:

	Telephone Inquiry Berlin (West)	Teleskopie		U.S.A. (NBC)
		BRD	Berlin/West	
Monday, 22.1.1979	36.7%	32.0%	30.0%	27.1%
Tuesday, 23.1.1979	37.0%	36.0%	38.0%	32.7%
Thursday, 25.1.79	39.6%	39.0%	47.0%	30.3%
Friday, 26.1.1979	42.3%	41.0%	36.0%	34.9%

The total number of viewers constantly increased during the week, however the structure of the viewing public remained unchanged.

The interviewees said that the reason they had not seen all four parts of the series was most frequently 'lack of time' (36%). Thus the question can be allowed if the percentage of the television public watching the series wouldn't have been higher if the placing of the transmission times had been more considerate of viewing habits (instead of transmitting all four episodes within one week, and at a relatively late hour).

Of the interviewees, who had decided not to watch 'Holocaust',

the time at which it was transmitted was a factor in their decision; however there were generally other reasons which were more important in their choice:

+ Not interested in the theme	71 (abs.)	8.6%
+ Hadn't known about the transmission	6 "	0.7%
+ Saw other programme transmitted at the same time	8 "	1.0%
+ Had no time	71 "	8.6%
+ Other reasons	190 "	23.1%

Given as 'other reasons' were such trivial factors such as, 'television broken'. But there were also arguments directly rejecting the series. Most frequently named of these were: too horrible (the theme); too demanding; too exciting; too trivial; rejecting of films of the Nazi-era; one already knows about the material; the material is too gripping, emotionally too upsetting; one is tired of the theme; one suffered too much during the second world war; the film isn't accurate; it's finally time to be finished with the discussion of the Nazi-era, and to have peace and quiet; it would be better to show films about the horrible acts perpetrated on Germans during the war. It was most frequently elderly women (65 and older) who documented their mechanism of mental repression, and suppression, with such answers. Here is a graphic representation of the viewers and non-viewers of the series, according to age and sex:

'Holocaust' viewers
(n=445)%

Age	< 18	19-34	35-46	47-64	> 65
male	5.1	28.1	26.4	26.4	14.0
female	3.2	25.0	17.0	26.1	28.7

'Holocaust' non-viewers
(n=367) %

Age	<18	19-34	35-46	47-64	>65
male	2.6	21.6	21.6	25.9	28.4
female	3.8	16.0	16.0	26.3	38.0

In comparison to the series, the 'open-end-discussions' weren't as broadly followed by the public. Only 16% of the viewers of the series stayed regularly in front of the TV-sets to follow the discussion. 37% of the viewers watched it occasionally; the reason generally given for not following the discussions was the lateness of the hour of their transmission. The tendency was basically the same for the reception of the discussions as for the individual episodes of the series - - the amount of viewers tended to increase continually as the series progressed. On Jan. 22nd, 22.1% of the viewers also watched the discussion; on Jan. 23rd it was 24.4%; on Jan. 25th it was 27% and on Jan. 26th (for many spectators the beginning of the weekend) it was 34.2%.

The majority of the viewers considered the discussions relevant and informative for the judging and evaluation of the series, although the form and organisation of the discussions was often negatively criticised, as consisting of too many foreign words, which were difficult to understand, and as projecting an image of professors and experts talking to each other, with little or no regard for the interests and level of the general audience.

Most of the viewers were stimulated to watch the series by information received from television magazines or newspaper articles. Also influential were allusions of friends, relatives and colleagues at work. This is a further indication of how intensive the public discussion of the series was, and how much the viewers discussed the series with one another. The novel upon which the series was based wasn't at all influential in stimulating viewers, in fact none of the participants in the telephone inquiry had read the novel or even heard of it. There was some limited interest under the viewers to read the novel

in the near future, but this was somewhat higher under the viewers of the series than in the total number of participants in the inquiry, as can be seen by the following table:

Interest, to read the novel	total sample (n=821)	'Holocaust' viewer (n=445)
Yes	27.2%	35.1%
No	44.0%	38.9%
Don't know	18.9%	18.0%
No answer	10.0%	8.1%

Although the viewers exhibited a thoroughly positive reaction to the series, they were not without criticism of it. It was possible to recognise in the telephone conversations that the most important factors in the positive reaction of the viewers were: feeling oneself affected; being shaken, upset; emotional experience, feeling of the fate of the Jewish main characters; and the alleged lack of knowledge over the dimension of the Nazi horrors and annihilation.

When asked about the most memorable scenes, and the scenes which made the strongest impression on them, most viewers named the portrayal of the various methods of killing and destruction of humans, in the following order: gas chambers, execution by shooting, torture, the burning of living victims in the synagogues. Next came: the situation in the concentration camps and the ghettos, but also the portrayal of the resistance -- in the Warsaw ghetto, at Sobibor, and by partisans.

It was singularly noticable in the answers to this question that particularly the older viewers were strongly impressed by the pictures of the 'Reichs' crystal-night. It would appear after evaluation of the material from the interviews that their own experience of these events was particularly important. The rape scene, in contrast, did not seem to move the viewers to the same extent as many of the other events.

The sympathies for the persons of the drama were clearly distributed: the father of the Jewish family, Dr. Josef Weiss, was

named as the most sympathetic male figure about 180 times; his youngest son, Rudi, the resistance fighter, was named about 90 times. The sympathy for the figures Karl Weiss, Moses Weiss and Kurt Dorf, the uncle of Eric Dorf, were evenly divided. Each was named about 25 times.

By the female figures of the drama the sympathies of the viewers were mainly attached to members of the Weiss family. The mother, Bertha Weiss, was most often named, being mentioned 154 times; her daughter-in-law, Inge Helms-Weiss was named 98 times and Helena was mentioned by 41 of the viewers. Characters who could be seen as representatives of the Nazi regime were hardly mentioned in this connection. Eric Dorf was mentioned seven times, his wife Martha only twice. This tendency was observed equally in male and female viewers.

The attribution of sympathies to the various characters remained noticeably constant through all four evenings of the transmission, as can be seen in the following tables:

Sympathies for the male characters

	Seen Monday	Seen Tuesday	Seen Thursday	Seen Friday
Josef	40.5%	38.5%	39.4%	39.8%
Rudi	21.5%	26.0%	21.5%	20.8%
Karl	3.0%	3.3%	4.0%	3.5%
Kurt	4.6%	5.0%	5.2%	5.5%
Moses	5.3%	4.6%	6.5%	5.5%
Erich	0.6%	1.7%	1.5%	1.8%

Sympathies for the female characters

	Seen Monday	Seen Tuesday	Seen Thursday	Seen Friday
Berta	33.8%	36.1%	36.6%	38.7%
Inga	25.3%	25.0%	24.9%	22.5%
Helena	10.3%	13.1%	11.1%	9.5%
Anna	0.6%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%
Female artist	0.6%	1.0%	1.8%	0.9%
Marta	0.3%	0.7%	0.6%	0.3%

It may be possible to explain this phenomenon by reference to the principle of construction of American television series: simply structured and easily understandable constellations of characters; insignificant psychological development of the main figures; and a relatively simplistic black and white portrayal in the characteristics of the figures.

This principle of construction allows (and helps) the viewer to take clear positions in regard to the characters, and helps him identify with them. Thus it is impossible to determine if the strong expressions of sympathy for the Jewish figures in the series is an indication of the dismantling of antisemitic prejudice without an examination of the effect of the film over an extended period.

A similar problem is encountered in the attempts to interpret the answers to the question regarding the statute of limitations. The following results were obtained from the viewers to the question, 'are you in favour of the statute of limitations being implemented for Nazi criminal offences?': 21.3% of the interviewees answered positively, 54.7% were opposed, 18.8% were unable to decide and 5.2% gave no answer.

If we compare the decisions of the viewers of the series with those of the non-viewers, regarding the question of the statute of limitations as applied to Nazi offences, it would appear that the film influenced the opinions. It can be seen from the following table that the 'Holocaust' series has reduced the amount of the 'undecided' interviewees, and that most of them have become opposed to subjecting Nazi offences to the statute of limitations.

	viewers (n=445)	non-viewers (n=367)
In favor of the statute of limitations	20.7%	22.7%
Opposed to the statute of limitations	63.1%	44.5%
Undecided	12.1%	26.2%
No answer	4.0%	6.6%

It is also apparent that age and sex are very important in the forming of opinion regarding this question. That can be seen from the results of the following survey tables:

'Holocaust'-viewer (n=445)

Age	No answer	In favor of the statute of limitations	Opposed to the statute of limitations	Undecided
<18	36.7%	10.0%	46.7%	6.7%
19-34	1.7%	19.0%	71.6%	7.8%
35-46	1.1%	26.3%	56.8%	15.8%
47-64	1.8%	20.5%	64.3%	13.4%
>65	2.2%	20.7%	63.0%	14.1%

Non-viewer (n=367)

Age	No answer	In favor of the statute of limitations	Opposed to the statute of limitations	Undecided
<18	36.8%	10.5%	7.9%	44.7%
19-34	-	25.4%	49.2%	25.4%
35-46	4.8%	20.6%	60.3%	14.3%
47-64	1.1%	29.2%	50.6%	19.1%
>65	5.1%	21.2%	41.5%	32.2%

This is an amazing result: if we further analyse the results we see that the series influenced the younger viewers against application of the statute of limitations for Nazi crimes, but in the group of 35 to 46 years old persons it had a totally different effect. In this group the percentage of viewers who were undecided increased.

But, what is still more important, is that the percentage of persons who were in favor of application of the statute of limitations increased through the viewing of the series. What caused this phenomenon can not be determined by the inquiry and the analysis of the results.

In general it is possible to ascertain that the 'Holocaust' series instigated a development, a process of learning, in the interviewees. It is, however, not possible to predict how long this effect will last. That will certainly be influenced by future treatment of the problem; that is, if there are any; and what sort of treatment it is given.

It will not only be essential to develop a "capability for sorrow", but also to investigate and uncover the ideological, political and economic causes of fascism in Germany at the time under discussion. Only then will there be a genuine chance to fulfill the wish of so many viewers, which they uttered with almost imploring urgency, that "the time never be allowed to return".

Who saw "Holocaust"? Who didn't?

Socially statistical data regarding viewers and non-viewers according to the Berlin telephone inquiry:

	Total sample (n=821) %	Viewer (n=445) %	Non-viewer (n=367) %
<u>Sex</u>			
Male	43.0	52.8	31.6
Female	49.6	42.2	58.0
<u>Age</u>			
under 19	8.5	6.7	10.4
19 to 34	21.3	26.1	16.1
36 to 46	19.5	21.3	17.2
47 to 64	24.7	25.2	24.3
65 and over	25.9	20.7	32.2
<u>Family situation</u>			
married	51.2	56.6	44.7
single	16.9	18.4	15.8
widowed	18.1	14.6	22.3
divorced	6.8	5.8	8.2
getrennt lebend	0.7	0.7	0.8
<u>Religion</u>			
Protestant	56.3	56.2	56.1
Catholic	10.5	11.7	9.0
Jewish	0.5	0.7	0.3
Other confession	1.9	2.2	1.6
No religion	25.0	25.8	24.3
<u>Size of household</u>			
1 person	28.6	24.3	34.1
2 persons	34.7	36.0	33.2
3 persons	16.8	20.2	12.5
4 persons	10.0	12.6	6.8
5 or mor persons	3.1	3.1	3.8

	Total sample (n=821) %	Viewer (n=445) %	Non-viewer (n=367) %
<u>Profession</u>			
Self-employed	4.6	5.6	3.5
Official, civil servant	7.8	10.3	4.6
Employee, white collar	28.6	31.7	25.1
Worker, blue collar	8.6	8.8	8.7
Pensioned	26.8	21.1	33.8
Housewife	8.3	7.9	9.0
Student, pupil, apprentice	5.4	8.1	2.1
Unemployed	0.4	0.2	0.5
<u>Education</u>			
Lower (grade) school, without completion; apprenticeship unfinished	12.1	9.2	15.3
Lower school completed, apprenticeship completed, professional training	37.5	37.8	37.6
High school, without degree, professional school	28.9	30.3	27.2
High school degree, university without degree	6.3	8.3	3.8
University with degree	7.8	9.0	6.5
<u>Professional situation</u>			
Fully occupied (employed or self-employed)	43.8	49.2	38.4
Partially occupied (half-days, etc.)	5.6	5.8	5.4
Temporarily unemployed	1.0	0.9	1.1
Drawing pension	28.3	23.1	35.1
In professional training, including professional training school	0.7	1.1	0.3
At school or university	3.7	5.2	1.9
Without profession, housewife	9.4	9.0	10.1

DIE AUTOREN

Werner Büdeler („Skylab“) wurde 1928 in Berlin geboren. Er ist Fachpublizist für Raumfahrt und Astronomie, produzierte zahlreiche Fernsehsendun-



gen aus diesem Bereich und ist Autor verschiedener Sachbücher.

Cornelius Keller („Einzelne Atome“), geboren am 16. August 1931 in Donaueschingen, studierte Chemie an der Technischen Hochschule Karlsruhe und promovierte dort 1957. Er habili-



tierte sich 1964 und wurde 1970 zum Professor für Radiochemie an der Universität Karlsruhe ernannt, wo er seit 1959 auch im Kernforschungszentrum tätig ist. Hauptarbeitsgebiete sind Festkörperchemie, Komplexchemie und Metallurgie der radioaktiven Elemente. Seit 1975 ist er Leiter der Schule für Kerntechnik im Kernforschungszentrum Karlsruhe.

Hella Dunger („Holocaust“), Jahrgang 1951, studierte Germanistik, Geschichte, Politikwissenschaften und Pädagogik. Sie ist Doktorandin am Institut für Medienwissenschaft und Literatursoziologie der Technischen Universität Berlin.



Kristina Zerges („Holocaust“), 1944 geboren, war im Buchhandel und Verlag tätig, ehe sie Germanistik, Psychologie, Politologie und Linguistik an der



Freien Universität Berlin studierte. Dort arbeitet die promovierte Medienforscherin heute als wissenschaftliche Assistentin.

Tilman Ernst („Holocaust“), Jahrgang 1942, studierte Psychologie, Philosophie und Soziologie in Frankfurt (Main), Heidelberg und Gießen. 1969 erwarb er in Frankfurt das Diplom für Psychologie. Von 1969 bis 1971 war er Studienleiter bei Contest, dem Institut für angewandte Psychologie und Sozio-



logie in Frankfurt/Main. 1972 und 1973 war er Mitglied der Forschungsgruppe „Jugend und Politik“ an der Universität Gießen. Seit 1973 leitet er das Referat Unterrichts- und Medienforschung in der Abteilung Planung und Entwicklung an der Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung in Bonn.

Klaus R. Scherer („Unter Wie bürgernah sind unsere A Jahrgang 1943. studierte Psy Soziologie und Volkswirtsch an der Universität Köln und don School of Economics an



Sciences. 1966 erwarb er das für Volkswirtschaft mit sozialwissenschaftlicher Richtung. Er führt Studien an der Harvard University in den Vereinigten Staaten von dort und promovierte dort 1971 dem er zunächst als Professor an den Universitäten von Pennsylvania und Kiel tätig war, ist er seit 1973 an der Fachbereich Psychologie der Universität Gießen.

Marlene Maurhoff („Univer: dritten Alters: Studieren mit Engagement gehört den Alten chisch Behinderten, für die sie nalistin eine Verbesserung der erreichen versucht. Die Basis: blizistischen Arbeit bildet eine sche Ausbildung in Altenpflege

Es schlossen sich ein Fre chenstudium und eine Tätigke



teraturübersetzerin an. In den Jahren vertrat sie ein großes p trisches Landeskrankenhaus als referentin.

Frau Maurhoff hat zum The schiedene Beiträge in Fachzeits und Büchern veröffentlicht. c arbeitet sie in den entspre Gremien bei wissenschaftlich tersuchungen zum Problemerk tenbetreuung“ und „psychisch derte“ mit.



Sept 27th

President's Commission on the Holocaust

Office of the
Director

September 6, 1979

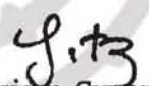
Dear Marc:

Enclosed is a draft of the final report of the Commission. I would appreciate receiving your written comments no later than Monday, September 17.

Our meeting with the President is tentatively scheduled for September 27th at 10:30 a.m. Please save the day as we expect to confirm it soon. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

With every good wish,

Sincerely yours,


Irving Greenberg

Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum
National Director, Interreligious Affairs of
the American Jewish Committee
165 East 56th Street
New York, New York 10022

Suite 7233, 726 Jackson Place, NW, Washington, D.C. 20503
202-395-7343

DRAFT



President's Commission on the Holocaust

September 27, 1979

Office of the
Chairman

Dear Mr. President:

It is with a deep sense of privilege that I submit to you, in accordance with your request, the report of your Commission on the Holocaust. All of us have brought to this project our experiences and memories. Never before have we given so much of ourselves to a subject that is meant to go beyond ourselves.

The focus of our task is memory -- our own and that of the victims during the era of unprecedented evil and suffering. If we are to remember the Holocaust, it is not only because of the dead; it is too late for them. Nor only because of the survivors; it may even be late for them. Our remembering is rather an act of generosity, aimed at saving men and women everywhere from apathy to evil, if not from evil itself.

We wish, through the work of this Commission, to reach and transform as many human beings as possible. We hope to share our conviction that when war and genocide unleash their hatred against any one people or peoples, all are ultimately engulfed in the fire.

With this conviction and mindful of your mandate, Mr. President, we have explored during the past several months of our existence the various ways and means of remembering -- and of moving others to remember -- the Holocaust and its victims, an event that was intended to erase memory.

Our first question is purely rhetorical: Why remember, why remember at all? Is not human nature opposed to keeping alive memories that hurt and disturb? The more cruel the wound, the greater the effort to cover it, to hide it beneath other wounds, other scars. Why then cling to unbearable memories that may forever rob us of our sleep? Why not forget, turn the page, and proclaim: let it remain buried beneath the dark nightmares of our subconscious. Why not spare our children the morbidity of our collective burden and allow them to start their lives free of nocturnal obsessions and complexes, free of Auschwitz and its shadows?

DRAFT

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These questions, Mr. President, would not perhaps be devoid of merit could the Holocaust be uprooted from history and forgotten. But it cannot. Whether we want it or not, the Event must and will dominate all future events. Its centrality in the endeavors of our contemporaries remains undisputed. Philosophers and social scientists, psychologists and moralists, theologians and artists: all have termed it a watershed in the annals of mankind. What was comprehensible before Treblinka is comprehensible no longer. After Treblinka, man's ability to cope with his condition was shattered; he was pushed to his limits and beyond. Whatever has happened since must therefore be judged in the light of Treblinka. Forgetfulness is no solution.

Treblinka and Auschwitz, Majdanek and Belzec, Buchenwald and Ponar, these and other capitals of the Holocaust kingdom must therefore be remembered, and for several reasons.

First, we cannot grant the killers a posthumous victory. Not only did they humiliate and assassinate their victims, they wanted also to destroy their memory. They killed them twice, reducing them first to ashes and then denying they had done so. Not to remember the dead now would mean to become accomplices to their murderers.

Second, we cannot deny to the victims the fulfillment of their goal, their *idee fixe* to bear witness. What the merchant from Saloniki, the child from Lodz, the rabbi from Radzimin, the carpenter from Warsaw and the scribe from Vilna had in common was the passion, the compulsion to tell the tale -- or to enable someone else to do so. Every ghetto had its historians, every deathcamp its chroniclers. Young and old, learned and unlearned, everybody kept diaries, wrote journals, composed poems and prayers. They wanted to remember and to be remembered. They wanted to defeat the enemy's conspiracy of silence, to communicate a spark of the fire that nearly consumed their generation, and, above all, to serve as warning to future generations. Instead of spitting on the mankind that betrayed them, the victims still dreamed of redeeming it, with their own charred souls. Instead of giving up on man and his possible salvation, they put their faith in him. In spite of all logic, in spite of reason, they opted for humanity and chose, by means of their testimony, to save it from renewed temptations that might result in the ultimate catastrophe, the nuclear one.

Thus third, we must remember for our own sake, for the sake of our own humanity. Indifference to the victims would result, inevitably, in indifference to ourselves, an indifference that would, in the end, no longer be sin but, in the words of our Commissioner Bayard Rustin, "a terrifying curse" and its own punishment.

The most vital lesson to draw from the Holocaust era is that Auschwitz was possible because the enemy of the Jewish people and of mankind-- and it is always the same enemy -- succeeded in dividing, in separating, in splitting human society, nation against nation, Christian against Jew, young against old. And no one cared. In Germany and other occupied countries, most spectators chose not to interfere with the killers; in other lands, too, many persons chose to remain neutral. As a result, the killers killed, the victims died, and the world remained world.

Still, the killers could not be sure. In the beginning they would make a move and wait. Only when there were no reactions did they make still another move and then another. From racial laws to medieval decrees, from illegal expulsions to the establishment of ghettos and then to the invention of deathcamps, the killers pursued their plans only after realizing that the outside world simply did not care about the Jewish victims. Later they decided they could do the same thing, with the same measure of impunity, to other peoples as well. As always, they began with Jews. As always, they did not stop with Jews alone.

Granted that we must remember, Mr. President, the next question your Commission had to examine was done with profound soul-searching: Whom are we to remember? While our members maintained that all the dead deserve to be included in our memory, they also came to see the moral imperative for special emphasis on the six million Jews. While not all victims were Jews, all Jews were victims, destined for annihilation solely by virtue of the fact that they were born into Jewish families.

During our journey to Poland and Russia -- a full description of which is included later -- we observed that Jews are but rarely mentioned on public monuments. In Kiev's Babi Yar, for instance, where nearly 80,000 Jews were murdered in September 1941, the word Jew is totally absent from the memorial inscriptions. Officials, when questioned, asked: Why single them out?

Our Commission believes because they were the principal target of Hitler's Final Solution that we must remember the six million Jews and, through them and beyond them but not without them, rescue from oblivion all the men, women and children who perished in those years in the camps and forests of the kingdom of night.

The universality of the Holocaust lies in its uniqueness: the Event is Jewish, yet its interpretation is universal. It involved even distant nations and individuals who lived far away from Birkenau's flames or who were born afterward.

Our own country was also involved, the valiant American nation that fought Hitler and Fascism and paid for its bravery with the lives of hundreds and thousands of its sons and daughters. Sadly but realistically, however, the judgment of history is harsh, and our great government was not without blemish. One cannot but wonder what might have happened had the then American President and his advisors demonstrated concern by appointing in 1942 or 1943 a President's Commission to prevent the Holocaust. How many victims, Jews and non-Jews, could have been saved had we changed our immigration laws, opened our gates more widely, protested more forcefully? More than any other great power, the United States could have stopped the hangman on more than one occasion; it did not. Why not? This aspect of the Event must and will be explored thoroughly and honestly within the framework of the Commission's work.

The question of how to remember makes up the bulk of our report. Education, research, commemoration: these are our areas of concern. I hope that our recommendations will be acceptable to you, Mr. President, reflecting as they do the joint thinking of the members of the Commission and its advisors over a period of seven months.

During that time, we held meetings and hearings and studied known and undisclosed material. Our aim was to reach a consensus among our diverse membership, which includes academicians and civic leaders, Christians and Jews, native Americans and survivors from the deathcamps who found a welcome and a refuge here and who now, as American citizens, enjoy the bounties of our democracy.

Special attention was paid to the opinions, views, and feelings of the latter, the survivors, who alone know the problems from the inside and who ask for nothing more than the opportunity to express their gratitude. "Our adopted country was kind to us," says Commissioner Sigmund Strochlitz, "and we wish to repay in some way by helping to rebuild a strong and human society based on equality and justice for all." Their willingness to share their knowledge their pain, their anguish, even their agony, is motivated solely by their conviction that if they were lucky even to go on living their survival was for a purpose. Every survivor sees himself or herself as messenger and depository of secrets entrusted by the dead. Each one fears he or she may be the last to remember,

the last to warn, the last to tell the tale that cannot be told, the tale that must be told in its totality, before it is too late, before the last witness leaves the stage and takes his awesome testimony back to the dead.

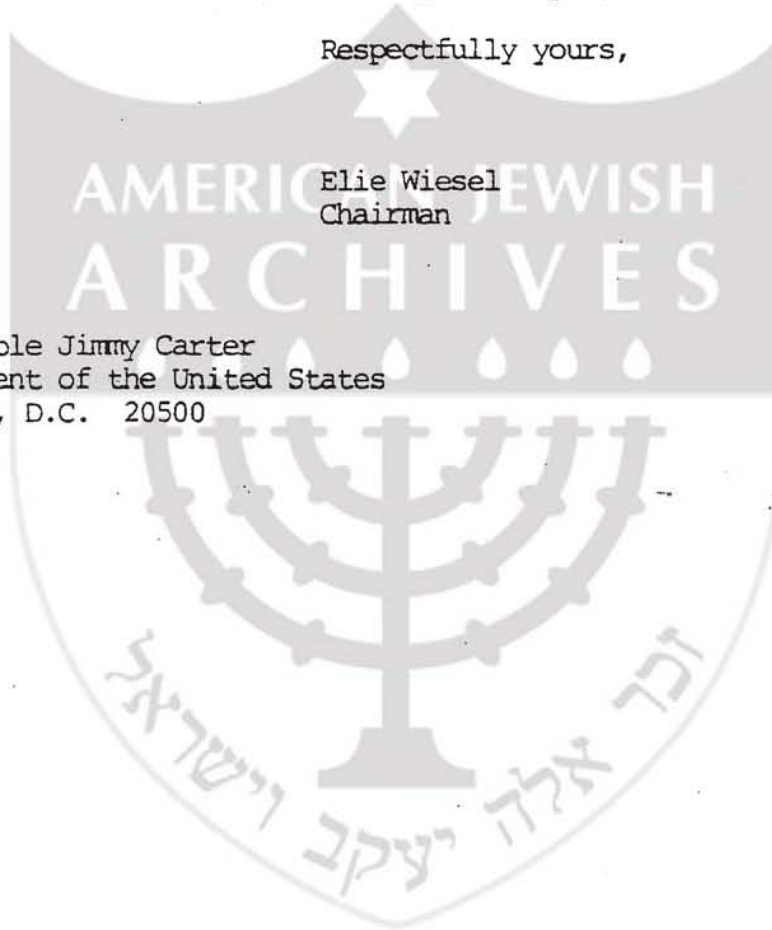
In the hope that you will enable this testimony to be brought to the attention of the American people in the form of appropriate ways of memorializing the Holocaust victims and understanding the events leading up to the catastrophe so as to forestall its recurrence, I submit the attached report to you, Mr. President.

Respectfully yours,

Elie Wiesel
Chairman

AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES

The Honorable Jimmy Carter
The President of the United States
Washington, D.C. 20500



James J. Blanchard

John C. Danforth

Hyman Bookbinder

Lucy S. Dawidowicz

Rudy Boschwitz

Kitty Dukakis

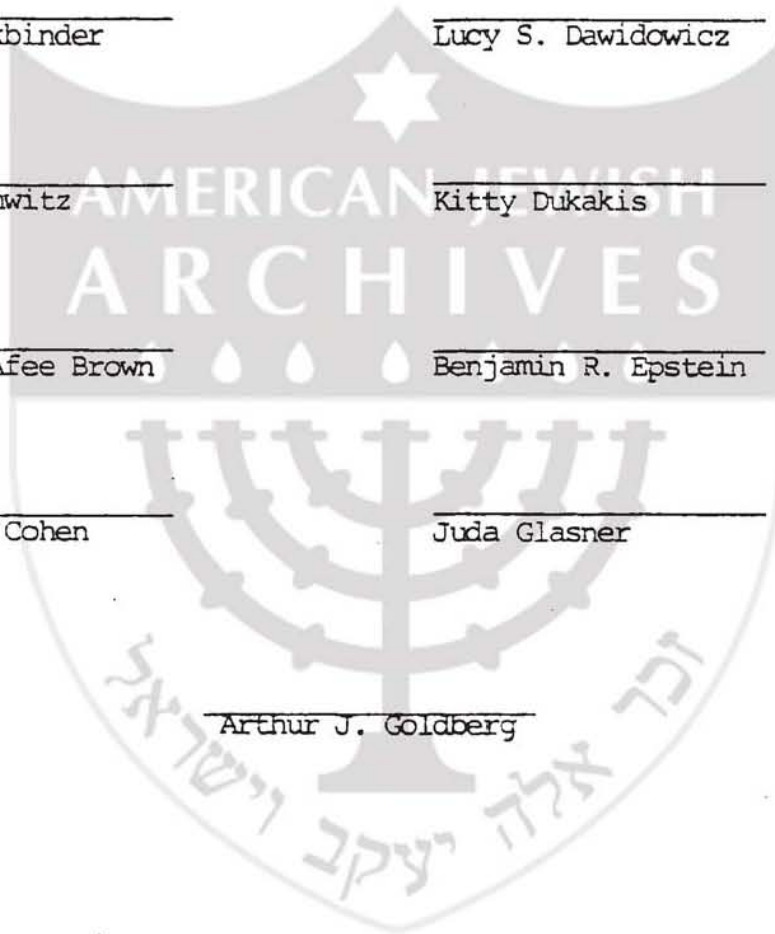
Robert McAfee Brown

Benjamin R. Epstein

Gerson D. Cohen

Juda Glasner

Arthur J. Goldberg



Alfred Gottschalk

Norman Lamm

S. William Green

Frank R. Lautenberg

Theodore Hesburgh, C.S.C.

William Lehman

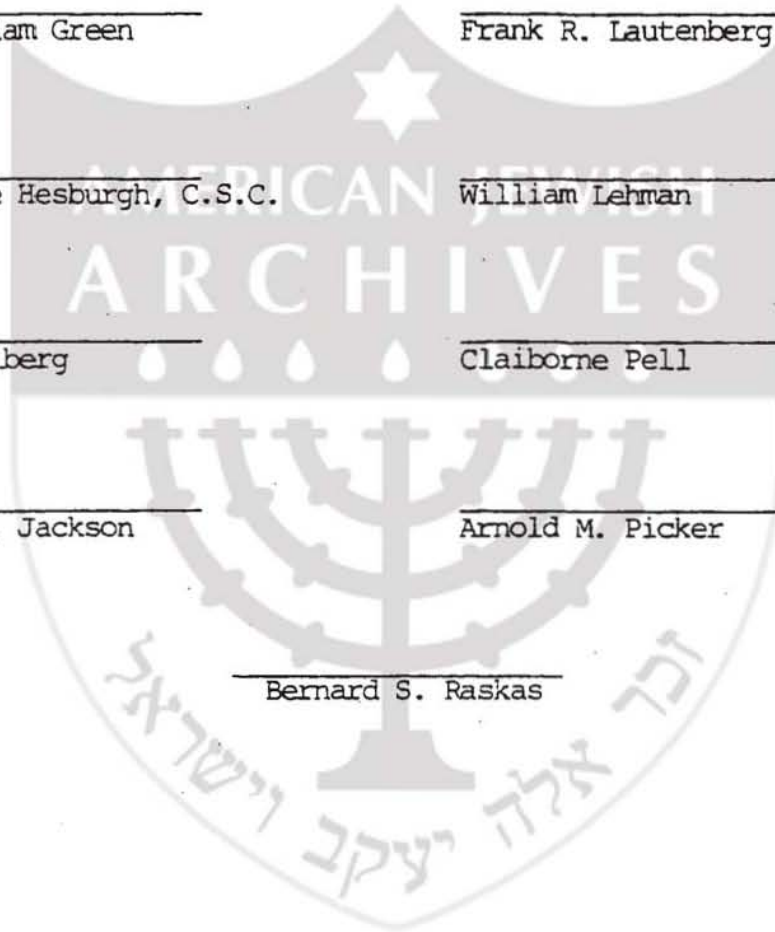
Raul Hilberg

Claiborne Pell

Henry M. Jackson

Arnold M. Picker

Bernard S. Raskas



Hadassah Rosensaft

Sigmund Strochlitz

Bayard Rustin

Richard B. Stone

Marilyn Shubin

Mark Talisman

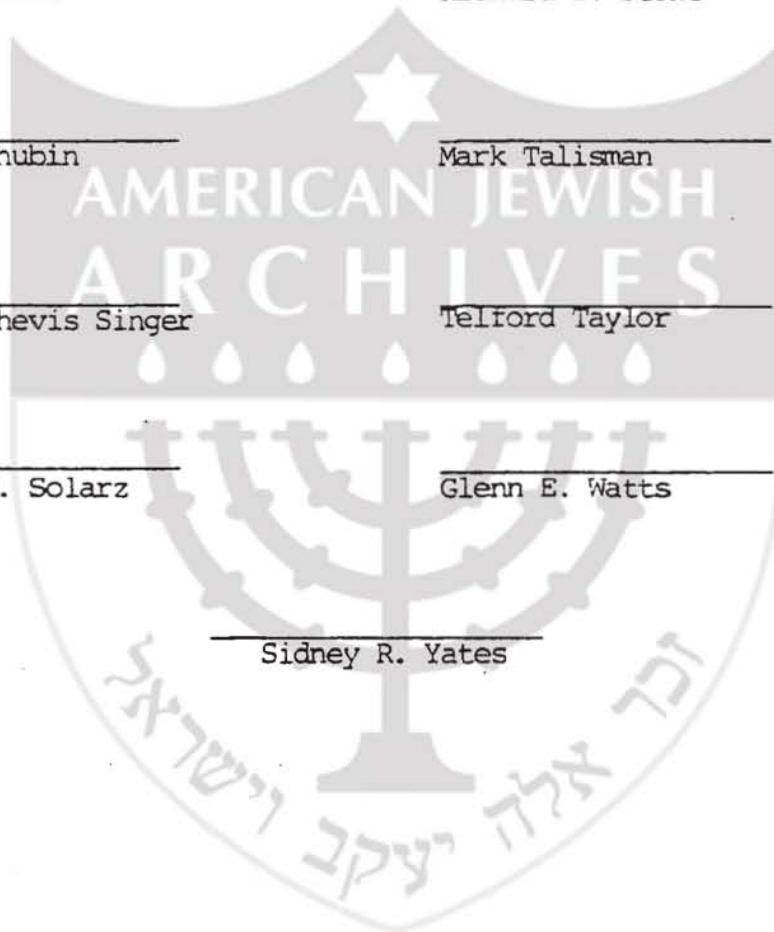
Isaac Bashevis Singer

Telford Taylor

Stephen J. Solarz

Glenn E. Watts

Sidney R. Yates





Naming is a distinctly human power — it is the way we organize and appropriate reality, the manner in which we come to terms with the world and construct a common universe of discourse. The word "Holocaust" is taken from the Greek word holokaustos meaning burnt whole and is used in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Bible) for the Hebrew word Olah, a burnt offering unto God. While the Yiddish-speaking victims of the Holocaust named their experience Churban, an utter destruction, and their Israeli brethren termed it Shoah, catastrophe, English-speaking people have chosen to denote the nature of the event more than its implications in the use of the word "Holocaust."

The Holocaust was the systematic, bureaucratic extermination of six million Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators as a central act of state during the Second World War. As the process unfolded, millions of other people were swept into this net of death. It was a crime unique in the annals of human history, different not only in the quantity of violence — the sheer numbers of people killed — but in its manner and purpose as a mass criminal enterprise organized by the state against a defenseless civilian population. The decision was to kill every Jew anywhere. The definition of Jew as target for death was not limited by geographic boundaries but was applied because of the "crime" of Jewish existence. A hitherto unbreachable ethical and political code was violated, and the moral landscape of human existence has been permanently altered — henceforth, the extermination of millions of citizens, subject population or of a total people will be forever among the capacities and temptations of government.

The concept of the annihilation of an entire people, as opposed to their subjugation, was unprecedented. Never before in human history had genocide been a pervasive government policy unaffected by territorial or economic advantage and unchecked by moral or religious constraints. Ordinarily, acts of violence directed against a populace are related to security or geographic acquisition, hostilities diminishing when the enemy surrenders. However, Nazi violence was intensified after subjugation, especially in Poland and other parts of Eastern Europe. Moreover, Jews possessed no army nor were they killed in an effort to win a war. Indeed, the destruction of European Jewry frequently conflicted with and took priority over the war effort. Trains that could have been used to carry munitions to the front or retrieve injured soldiers were diverted to transport Jews to the death camps. Even after the Nazi defeat on the Russian front when it became evident that the Germans had lost the war, the killing of Jews was intensified in a desperate attempt at complete annihilation. Clearly, genocide was an end in itself independent of the requisites of war.

In the Nazi program of genocide, Jews were the primary victims exterminated not for what they were but for the fact that they were. (In the Nuremberg Decree of 1935, a Jew was defined by his grandparents' affiliation. Even conversion to Christianity did not affect the Nazi definition of a Jew.) Unlike the Gypsies, who

were killed when residing in Poland but not in Hungary or Rumania, Jews were exterminated regardless of geographic location. Many Poles were murdered and their children subjected to forced Arayani-zation (adoption by German families and assimilated into German culture), yet Jewish children were given no alternative to death. There is evidence to suggest that the Nazis intended to wipe out other peoples, such as the Slavs; had the war continued, Jews might not have remained the last victims of Nazi genocide, but they were certainly the first.

The Holocaust was not a throwback to Medieval torture or archaic barbarism but a thoroughly modern expression of bureaucratic organization, industrial management, scientific achievement, and technological sophistication. The entire apparatus of the German bureaucracy was martialled in service of the extermination process. The churches and health ministries supplied birth records to define and isolate Jews; the post office delivered statements of definition, expropriation, denaturalization, and deportation; the economic ministry confiscated Jewish wealth and property; the universities denied Jewish students admission and degrees while dismissing Jewish faculty; German industry fired Jewish workers, officers, and board members and disenfranchised Jewish stockholders; and government travel bureaus coordinated schedules and billing procedures for the railroads which brought the victims to their deaths. The process of extermination itself was bureaucratically systematic. Following the

mob destruction of Kristallnacht, a pogrom in November of 1938 in which at least thirty-six Jews were killed, twenty thousand arrested, thousands of Jewish businesses looted and burned, and hundreds of synagogues vandalized, random acts of violence were replaced by organized, passionless operations just as the angry, riotous actions of the S.A. gave way to the disciplined, professional procedures of the S.S. which by 1943 substituted massive, impersonal factories of extermination for mobile killing units. The location and operation of the camps reflected calculations of accessibility and cost-effectiveness, the trademarks of modern business practices. German corporations even profited from the industry of death. Pharmaceutical firms tested their drugs on camp inmates unrestricted by the fear of their effects, and companies competed for contracts to build ovens or supply gas for extermination. (Indeed, they were even concerned with protecting the patents for their products.) German engineers working for Topf and Sons supplied one camp alone with forty-six ovens capable of burning five-hundred bodies per hour.

Adjacent to the extermination camp at Auschwitz was a privately owned, corporately sponsored concentration camp called I. G. Auschwitz, a division of I. G. Farben. This multi-dimensional, petro-chemical complex brought human slavery to its ultimate perfection by reducing human beings to consumable raw materials from which all mineral life was systematically drained before the bodies were recycled into the Nazi war economy; gold teeth for the treasury,

hair for mattresses, and fat for soap. In their relentless search for the least expensive, efficient means of extermination, German scientists experimented with a variety of gasses until they discovered the insecticide Zyklon B, which could kill two thousand people in less than thirty minutes at a cost of one-half-cent per person. Near the end of the war, when expenses had to be cut still further, "cost-accountant considerations" led to an order for living children to be placed directly into the ovens or thrown into open burning pits in order to save gas. The same type of consistency, ingenuity, and control that facilitate modern industrial development were rationally applied to the irrational, to the process of destruction.

Some scholars have maintained that the Holocaust was also a byproduct of a modern, industrial society in that it reduced an excessive population maintained and rendered superfluous by modern technology. Whether the old or the infirm, the young, the under-educated, the over-educated, the unemployed, or any racial, religious, or ethnic group, a section of the population can be politically defined as expendable in a time of economic turmoil and social unrest when a reduction in population would be financially beneficial.

During previous centuries, excess populations were alleviated through immigration to less populated regions, but by 1920 the frontiers had receded and the new world no longer absorbed the overflow from the old. When Germany could not ship out a population she wished to eliminate (no country was willing to accept Jews), she

took the next fatal step and sent them up in smoke. In a world of increasing over-population, the inclination to duplicate the Nazi option and once again exterminate millions of people remains a hideous threat. We must therefore recall the course of the Holocaust and heed its dire warning.

The Holocaust could not have occurred without the collapse of certain religious norms; increasing secularity fueled a devaluation in the image of the human being created in the likeness of God (or more basically, an erosion in the fear of God). Ironically, although religious perspectives contributed to the growth of anti-Semitism and the choice of Jews as victims, only in a modern secular age could anti-Semitism lead to annihilation. Many other peculiarities of modern living made their small contributions to the Holocaust: the bi-furcation of the human personality reflecting the specialization and compartmentalization of our times helped people, incredibly, divorce themselves from their work, become loving husbands and fathers in the evening while murdering other peoples' children in the day. Complex operations and the division of labor that split activities into fractions of the whole permitted thousands to participate in a grand bureaucracy of death without feeling responsible. (We witness an Eichman who claimed he never personally killed a single person, employees who insist they did not know what they were doing, and executioners who explain they were only following orders.)

In studying the Holocaust we can hope to immunize ourselves against the diseases particular to the twentieth century. Whether the product of technology or a reaction against it, the horror of the Holocaust is inextricably linked to the conditions of our time. It is therefore incumbent upon us to examine this monstrous aberration.





The American philosopher George Santayana has argued that those who forget history are condemned to repeat it. The Holocaust reveals a potential pathology at the heart of Western civilization and the gruesome consequences of the total exercise of power. Remembering can instill caution, fortify restraint, and protect against future evil or indifference. The sense of outrage in the face of the Holocaust expressed in the declaration "Never Again," never again to the Jewish people nor to any other people, must be informed by an understanding of what happened and how it happened.

Although we have no guarantees that those who remember will not repeat history, the failure to remember the past makes repetition more likely. Nothing more clearly illustrates the veracity of this claim than Hitler's alleged response to those in his government who feared international opposition to genocide, "Who remembers the Armenians?" Indifference to that previous attempt at genocide in the twentieth century may have fortified those who questioned the impact of extermination if not its wisdom or necessity. Conversely, memory can avert future errors. Perhaps it is no accident that the government official most responsible for a fundamental shift in American policy toward the plight of the Jews, Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, Jr., was the son of the former Ambassador to

Turkey during the Armenian massacre in World War I. (It was at the behest of Secretary Morgenthau that a report was prepared for the President on the murder of the Jews.)

To remember the Holocaust is to sensitize oneself to critical political lessons. Nazism was facilitated by the breakdown of democracy, the collapse of social and economic cohesion, the decline of human solidarity, and an erosion of faith in the power of government and leadership. Recalling these danger signals intensifies our concern for the health of the body politic and the processes of democracy, the forums of government, and the importance of human and social values.

Similarly, by remembering the excesses that so marked the Nazi era, we learn again the importance of limits, of checks and balances. We renew our appreciation for moral and philosophical guidelines, for the need to consider the human cost of scientific experimentation. We strengthen our belief in inalienable individual rights. We may also come to understand that a universalistic ethic unbalanced by respect for particular variation is ultimately tyrannical. Recollection enhances our tolerance for ethnic diversity and pluralism.

But remembering is not easy for either the individual or the group. Confronting the Holocaust threatens to sear our souls and challenges the security of our perceptions, the complacency of our reality. It introduces a tone of somberness and melancholy into human discourse and heightens our awareness of the

precariousness and vulnerability of life as well as its value. Not only has the moral landscape of human reality been altered by the Holocaust, the further advance of technology and the dawn of the nuclear age now threaten the very ground of being itself. The lessons of the Holocaust focus on the dangers inherent in the ends and means of a technological, bureaucratic society. Its study reflects and encourages a commitment to sanity and humanity.

Americans have a distinctive responsibility to remember the Holocaust. Millions of our citizens had direct family ties with its victims, our armies liberated many concentration camps and helped rehabilitate their inmates, and thousands of survivors made their homes in America. On the negative side, although America assumed a leadership role in rehabilitation after the war, until 1944 our failure to provide adequate refuge or rescue proved disastrous to millions of Jews.

In a 1943 memo presented to Franklin Delano Roosevelt, three senior officers of the Department of the Treasury accused State Department officials of neglect and acquiescence.

[State Department officials] have not only failed to use the Government machinery at their disposal to rescue Jews from Hitler, but have even gone so far as to use this Governmental machinery to prevent the rescue of these Jews.

They have not only failed to cooperate with private organizations in the efforts of these organizations to work out individual programs of their own, but have taken steps designed to prevent these programs from being put into effect.

They not only have failed to facilitate the obtaining of information concerning Hitler's plans to exterminate the Jews of Europe but in their official capacity have gone so far as to surreptitiously attempt to stop the obtaining of information concerning the murder of the Jewish population of Europe.

They have tried to cover up their guilt by:

- (a) concealment and misrepresentation;
- (b) the giving of false and misleading explanations for their failures to act and their attempts to prevent action; and
- (c) the issuance of false and misleading statements concerning the "action" which they have taken to date.

This memo was written at the height of the war when the industries of death were working twenty-four hours a day to eliminate European Jewry yet when there was still time to save Hungarian Jews. This document marked a turning point in American policies toward the Holocaust for it moved the President to appoint the War Refugee Board. Prior to entering the war, America reacted to Nazi atrocities with guarded outrage and quiet diplomacy. Isolationists considered the Nazi treatment of Jews a German domestic matter. When emigration was still part of the Nazi approach to the Jewish question, American officials erected paper walls by rigidly enforcing both quota regulations and obscure passages of the immigration laws so as to minimize the number of people admitted. Even children were denied admission or any form of preferential treatment. American consular officers demanded that immigration applicants produce certificates of good

character from their government even though the Nazis considered Jewishness itself criminal. The civic virtue of the American separation of church and state which blinds our laws to the religious affiliation of an individual was misapplied. Instead of being recognized as refugees, German Jews were considered citizens of a hostile nation and were thus excluded. Government conferences were called, issuing public utterances of displeasure toward the Nazis, but these pronouncements tended to diffuse public pressure and give the appearance of action rather than substantively altering the situation. The international conference held at Evian in 1938 demonstrated the unwillingness of all the nations involved to receive Jews. The United States refused to relax its immigration laws or to borrow on future quotas, Great Britain failed to open the doors of Palestine to immigrants, and Canada, Argentina, France, Australia, New Zealand, and Panama among thirty-two nations were similarly unwilling to help significantly. Ships of refugees seeking a harbor were turned away from port after port. The Nazis viewed ineffective Western action as tacit compliance if not silent assent for their policies.

Failures of communication included the State Department's closing of secured embassy lines to private organizations, thus blocking the transmission of vital information confirming the existence of extermination camps and the plans to completely exterminate Jews. A procedural memo thereby blocked critical intelligence. The State and War Departments did not realize or assimilate the fact that the Holocaust was distinct from

the general German war effort. Eyewitness accounts, reports from informed sources, and oft-repeated Nazi promises to exterminate the Jews were not integrated to form the basis for action.

Within the life of this Commission, the controversy as to why Auschwitz was not bombed was raised once again. Considering the documents that have been recently declassified, a more thorough analysis of American policy can now be undertaken. If we are to respond correctly to crises in the future, we must examine both the errors and the successes of our past and the reasoning that led to our decisions.

America did play a major role in bringing Nazi criminals to justice. Herbert Pell, the United States representative to the War Crimes Commission, was the driving force behind the American assent to charge war criminals with crimes against humanity. The Nuremberg trials represent a new international moral standard for they reflect the conviction that each individual is responsible for his actions even in times of war.

Americans recognized early the need to confront and remember the Holocaust. It was General Eisenhower who insisted that the concentration camps be fully documented and photographed, and General Patton demanded that Germans in surrounding towns be forced to visit the camps. For more than six years following the war, American soldiers managed the displaced persons camps, aiding in the survivors' recovery. These and similar efforts were among the

most honorable in our nation's chronicles. Our armed forces witnessed not only the depths of despair and depravity but the resurgence of the human spirit, the yearning to live in freedom.

In reflecting on the Holocaust, we confront a collapse in human civilization, its causes, its processes, and its consequences. The Holocaust alerts us to the dangers of modernity, the ghastly alternative to its bounteous fruits. As we analyze the American record, we study our triumphs as well as our failures so as to defeat radical evil in honor of democracy and human values.





On November 1, 1978, President Carter established the President's Commission on the Holocaust and charged it with the responsibility of submitting a report "with respect to the establishment and maintenance of an appropriate memorial to those who perished in the Holocaust, to examine the feasibility for the creation and maintenance of the memorial through contributions by the American people, and to recommend appropriate ways for the nation to commemorate April 28 and 29, 1979, which the Congress has resolved shall be "Days of Remembrance of Victims of the Holocaust." The Commission, chaired by Elie Wiesel, consisted of thirty-four members including survivors, lay and religious leaders of all faiths, historians and scholars, five Congressmen and five Senators, and was aided by a twenty-seven person Advisory Board. It began its operations on the 15th of January, 1979, holding its first meeting one month later on the 15th of February. Subsequent to the first meeting, the Commission divided into a series of working subcommittees: Museum and Monument, Secondary Education and Curricula, Higher Education and Research, Human Rights, "Days of Remembrance," Fact-Finding and Travel Mission, and Funding, which met to formulate and refine the Commission's recommendations. Each of the subcommittees was co-chaired by a member of the Commission and the Advisory Board. The subcommittees' formulations were then presented to a separate

meeting of the Advisory Board on April 10th and to the Commission as a whole on April 24th.

In addition, during the first weeks of the Commission's life, suggestions were solicited from thousands of Americans specially interested in the Holocaust. The Commission contacted many survivor organizations and individual survivors, a broad range of civic, labor, and religious leaders, Holocaust scholars, educators, and ethnic groups particularly concerned with the Holocaust, such as those in the Polish-American community who were subject to Nazi persecution and Black, Armenian and native Americans whose historic experience makes them particularly sensitive to the issues raised by the Holocaust. In our solicitations and dialogues, we collectively sought to formulate what might constitute an appropriate memorial to all those who perished in the Holocaust without diluting the individual destiny of the victims. In many respects, the findings of the Commission reflect the collective wisdom of all who offered their advice; these proposals are the fruits of extended dialogue. The degree to which the consensus of the Commission was matched by popular agreement was indeed remarkable.

During this formative period, several Congressmen held district hearings on the work of the Commission, and scores of witnesses came forward to testify, including survivors, teachers, clergymen (Christians as well as Jews), civic and political leaders, scholars, educators, theologians, artists, and writers. After the Commission

had reached its preliminary conclusions, additional hearings were held to check the results of its deliberations with the American people. Within the first three months the Commission planned many of the activities held during the Days of Remembrance and developed models for future commemorations of the Holocaust. The Days of Remembrance activities culminated in a National Civic Service held in the Capitol Rotunda on April 24th, the internationally recognized memorial day to the Holocaust. A report on the Days of Remembrance follows.

The second Commission meeting was held on the 24th of April to refine the proposals of the various subcommittees, then charging the staff and committees to develop final recommendations for the June meeting. On the 7th of June, the Commission met a third time, voting unanimous approval for the proposals contained in this report. It further decided that prior to the submission of its report to the President and the Secretary of the Interior, a fact-finding trip would be undertaken at each Commissioner's personal expense to visit sites of annihilation and Holocaust memorials in Europe, the Soviet Union, and Israel to insure that the Commission would be informed by what other countries have done, to lay the foundation for future cooperation between our endeavor and other memorial and scholarly institutions, and to pay tribute to the victims of the Holocaust by visiting the places of their death and those dedicated to their memory. A report of the fact-finding mission is appended to these recommendations.

Throughout its work the Commission's efforts have been in service of memory, in the hope that in remembrance may lie the seeds of transformation and renewal.



MUSEUM

The Commission recommends that a National Holocaust Memorial Museum be erected in Washington, D.C. The museum must be of symbolic and artistic beauty, visually and emotionally moving in accordance with the solemn character of the Holocaust. It should use exhibits and projection displays to inform and illustrate, operating on multiple levels so as to impact the casual viewer and engage in greater depth the more serious visitor.

The museum exhibits would focus on the six million Jews exterminated in the Holocaust since Jews were the Nazis' principal targets, yet related sections of the museum would treat the millions of other victims. Some changing displays could be included to dramatize areas of current concern.

The museum should place special emphasis on the American aspect of the Holocaust — the absence of American response (exclusion of refugees, denials of the Holocaust, etc.), the American liberation of the camps, the reception of survivors after 1945, the lives that were rebuilt in this country, the development of a new sensitivity to the Holocaust, and the growing respect for the multi-ethnic, multidimensional aspects of American culture. The treatment of the Holocaust should incorporate the life and culture of the victims and not just the destruction process. Similarly, the extraordinary efforts to preserve human dignity and life during the Holocaust, the heroic resistance efforts, and the response of renewed life after the event should not be omitted.

The museum should house a library, an archive of Holocaust materials, computer linkage to existing centers of Holocaust documentation, and a reference staff. Such facilities would enable both the general public and specialized scholars to study the record of the Holocaust. Conference rooms, a lecture hall, and audio-visual equipment would also be provided.

The Commission proposes that the museum become a federal institution, perhaps an autonomous bureau of the Smithsonian offering extension services to the public, to scholars, and to other institutions.

Because of the magnitude of the Holocaust, its scope and the critical issues it raises, the Commission felt that the only appropriate monument would be a living memorial that would speak not only of the victims' deaths but of their lives, a memorial that could transform the living by transmitting the legacy of the Holocaust.

The three components of the living memorial would be a museum/memorial, an educational foundation, and a Committee on Conscience. A monument alone might commemorate the victims, but it is insufficient to explain the process that culminated in extermination, to document the dimensions of the crime, or to analyze causes and confront implications. A monument alone could not speak to the present or inform the future. The successful museum memorials in other countries suggested to the Commission that this model is indeed worthy of replication.

The museum itself would present an experiential encounter with the Holocaust through pictorial accounts, films, and other visual exhibits within a framework that is not merely reportorial but analytic, encouraging reflection and questions of significance. Furthermore, the museum would provide a fluid medium in which to apply historical events to contemporary complexities; the museum would not be a static presentation but an evolving understanding. Recent technological innovations in computers and informational banks now make it possible for the visitor to become an active learner and to initiate processes of inquiry.

While the Commission has reached no specific conclusions as to the exact programmatic content of the museum -- such conclusions await the creative imagination of designers, planners, and architects working in cooperation with scholars and survivors -- it has formulated guidelines for the content of the museum.

Life as well as Death: The museum will treat the lives and culture of the Jews before and during the war, their religious practices, their social and political convictions, and their economic character in order to recreate a vision of the world that was lost. The museum should not become solely a chronicle of human degradation and atrocity without regard for what was destroyed.

The Universal and the Particular: The Jews were Hitler's primary victims against whom the total fury of the Holocaust was unleashed. To dilute or deny this reality would be to falsify it in the name of misguided universalism. Nevertheless, Jews were not the only people to suffer; others died for their convictions or affiliations in a mechanism designed for the destruction of Jews. The Commission felt that the museum should incorporate displays on the Poles, the Gypsies, and other groups victimized during the Nazi occupation. Similarly, the museum will speak of the heroic people of the nations who risked their freedom and their lives to save Jews from arrest and incarceration, of the Danish people and their noble efforts at rescue which resulted in saving ninety-two percent of the Jewish population of Denmark, or of Raoul Wallenberg, the

Swedish diplomat living in Hungary who saved thirty-thousand Hungarian Jews. The sad failure of human solidarity must also be told, the betrayals, the failure of the underground to provide arms for resistance, the cooperation of local populations in isolating and executing Jews, and the cooperation and cooptation of leadership.

The universal implications of the Holocaust involve the challenge it represents to Western civilization and to modern, scientific culture. What threatened one people in the past could recur to another people or, indeed, to all humanity. The lessons of the Holocaust therefore speak to the entire world.

The American Experience: This museum would be an American national institution and should thus reflect the American role during the war including American accomplishments, such as the War Refugees Board which saved thousands, military successes that led to the liberation of the camps, the reception of survivors, or the support for a Jewish homeland, but it must also confront our nation's failures. The museum should deal, for example, with the inability of Americans to believe that the Holocaust was happening or to translate information into effective action.

An Understanding of the Holocaust: The museum should not merely trace the role of the bystander but should study both perpetrators and victims, delving into such issues as the collapse of the Weimar Republic and the rise of Nazism or the reasons for the choice of the Jew as victim. It should stress the mechanisms of social control and psychological manipulation that were perfected by the Nazis.

Location: The Commission resolved that the memorial should be built in Washington, D.C., the capital of the country and the seat of government, for the issues illustrated by this museum affect all Americans, raising fundamental questions about government, the abuses of unbridled power, the need for national unity, and the fragility of social institutions. By presenting these subjects within our nation's capital, the museum can hopefully contribute to a strengthening of democratic processes while reminding us of the social potential for violence.

Model: The Commission inquired as to an appropriate location for the memorial within the rubric of current governmental activities, and the model of an independent institution or an autonomous bureau of the Smithsonian both matched the anticipated range of activities. One basic component of the memorial is a museum to tell the story of the Holocaust and to confront its implications. Along with its related activities, such a museum would parallel the services offered by certain federally sponsored institutions and by the Smithsonian. For example, the Holocaust Center would sponsor curriculum development and educational programs analogous to those of the Alliance for Education in the Arts, a program of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts which connects school systems throughout the nation with a center of performance and instruction through a wide variety of outreach programs. The Kennedy Center library is linked to the Library of Congress, providing research facilities and informational systems retrieval that service both the casual student and the serious scholar, as would the archival resources of the

Holocaust Institution. Like another bureau of the Smithsonian, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, the National Holocaust Memorial would become a center of learning, hosting conferences and stimulating Holocaust-related research. As does the National Gallery of Art, the Holocaust Institution would work cooperatively with local museums and resource centers throughout the country, encouraging growth and offering assistance. The relationship between these institutions should be one of cooperation and mutual nourishment, the National Institution playing a central coordinating role.

An association with the Smithsonian Institution either as an autonomous bureau or in a working cooperative relationship might be desirable by virtue of a shared concern. Dedicated to the diffusion of knowledge among men, the various divisions of the Smithsonian celebrate the triumphant achievements of human history and creativity: the evolution of the human species (The National Museum of Natural History), the increasing human control of environment (The National Museum of History and Technology), the aesthetic genius of the human imagination (The National Collection of Fine Arts and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden), and the extension of the boundaries of human civilization to the skies and outer space (The National Air and Space Museum). If the present branches of the Smithsonian represent the triumphant accomplishments of civilization, the Holocaust illuminates an alternate dimension of human experience, as well as the power of life to resist and renew itself. The Holocaust raises basic questions about human nature and its capacity for evil, and

the fact that this process of destruction was committed by one of the most cultured and technologically advanced societies adds a somber dimension of depth and doubt to the progress celebrated by the Smithsonian. The connection of the Holocaust Memorial with the various parts of the Smithsonian would allow the presentation of a more complete picture of human civilization, a greater vision of its promises and dangers. Far from being tangential to the mission of the Smithsonian, a National Holocaust Memorial Museum could be complementary to it.



EDUCATION

The Commission recommends that an Educational Foundation be included as a dominant part of the National Holocaust Memorial to pursue educational work through grants, extension services, joint projects, and research, and to explore the issues raised by the Holocaust for all areas of human knowledge and public policy. The Foundation would nourish such work in all sections of the country within existing programs, both academic and educational, as well as within the network of institutions that deal with the Holocaust. The Educational Foundation would also develop appropriate curricula and resource material while working cooperatively with those school systems that wish to implement the study of the Holocaust. The Washington center would also function as a clearinghouse for the exchange of information.

The work of the foundation would include support and evaluation for the Holocaust courses presently offered in public and private schools and would bring together educators, resource consultants, and scholars through consortia, conferences, teacher-training workshops, and summer institutes. The Commission strongly urges that the study of the Holocaust become a part of the public school curricula in every school system in the country. Finally, in recognition of the powerful educational role of the media, the foundation should offer development grants and prizes for work in the arts, literature, and the media.

In the area of higher education, the foundation would undertake a series of fellowships for research and travel available to scholars and graduate students as well as matching grants for institutions or faculty who would work with such students. The activities of the Endowment for Higher Education would involve project funding, translations into English of important foreign works, oral histories of survivors and liberators, and a visiting faculty program.

The Commission recommends that a publishing program be part of the Education Foundation with priority given to out-of-print classics, new works of special merit, survivors' accounts, and documentary or photographic books.

The Holocaust museum is a central component of the living memorial, yet its impact is usually confined to a single, non-sustained encounter with the material on display. The Educational Foundation is designed to rectify the limitations of the museum by introducing the study of the Holocaust into junior and senior high schools as well as universities and stimulating the development of resources for the teaching and study of the Holocaust. Research would be encouraged, and the interaction of scholars and educators promoted. The Commission is convinced that the teaching of the Holocaust is a critical dimension of the living memorial.

Given the limited nature of Federal involvement in school systems and the state supervision of curricula offerings, the Educational Foundation would confine itself to developmental and supportive functions, yet the Commission strongly urges the incorporation of Holocaust courses within existing social studies units. Standard history textbooks should be encouraged to deal with the Holocaust as a substantive part of their treatment of World War II.

The need for an Educational Foundation is intensified by the rapid growth in the number of colleges and secondary schools teaching the Holocaust. Within the past five years course offerings have increased fifty fold, and it is estimated that by 1985 over a thousand school systems will have specific courses on the Holocaust. The proliferation of such courses means that an intensive teacher-training effort is needed. The Holocaust is now handled on the

college level within a variety of departments -- literature, history, philosophy, religion, psychology, and sociology among them -- yet there is only one graduate program in Holocaust studies anywhere in the United States. (Temple University offers a Ph.D. religion with a specialty in the Holocaust.) University instructors trained in a variety of disciplines are teaching the Holocaust without adequate preparation, and on the high school level many of the teachers assigned to courses in the Holocaust are purely self-taught. Given the difficulties in Holocaust instruction, both with respect to the mastery of material and its emotionally charged nature, adequate preparation is essential.

The expenditure of funds during this sensitive stage in the development of Holocaust studies can have a magnified effect on the projects undertaken and set standards in the field. New materials could be widely disseminated.

Unlike in other more established fields of study where an extensive interchange of information has been customary, in Holocaust studies curricular have been most often developed from scratch without access to resource material or scholarly expertise. The absence of a communication framework has left colleagues isolated from each other, unaware of their related endeavors. The investment of critically needed funds at this stage could stimulate cooperation and improve quality.

Growing interest in the Holocaust has welcomed the publication of scores of new books each year, yet research funds are scarce

(and Holocaust-related research usually involves travel to various libraries and documentation centers as well as the mastery of foreign languages). Through its financial support of scholarship, the foundation could stimulate research in the field and considerably lessen the burden on individual scholars. An archive and library equipped with information retrieval systems would reduce the need for travel and hasten access to scholarly material. Through the creative use of grants, the foundation could insure that archival and documentary material is more readily available. Links could be established with other centers throughout the world.

The publication facilities of the memorial would concentrate on those works which, though of critical importance to the field, are not commercially viable in the private sector. The recent financial strains on university presses have resulted in shortened publication lists and the closing of many presses, accentuating the need for a publication series on the Holocaust. University presses are reluctant to undertake extensive projects, such as monograph series, because of economic constraints.

The Commission strongly recommends that the foundation be charged with funding oral history projects of survivors living in America as well as American soldiers who liberated concentration camps. This uniquely American aspect of the Holocaust will be lost with the passage of time and the death of those involved if such projects are not initiated soon. A few, small attempts of this

nature have been made, such as the oral history projects of Emory University and the American Jewish Committee, but these undertakings were handicapped by limited resources and the absence of a coordinating repository for materials.

The Educational Foundation might sponsor or co-sponsor social scientific research on the effects of trauma on survivors and their children, or it might commission musical or artistic activities relating to the Holocaust. Similar creative input might improve the quality of media presentations on the Holocaust.



The Commission recommends that a Committee on Conscience composed of distinguished moral leaders of America be appointed to meet regularly at the National Memorial to the Holocaust. This Committee would receive any reports of genocide (actual or potential), and in their event, the Committee should have access to the President, the Congress, and the public in order to alert the national conscience, influence policy makers, and stimulate worldwide action.

Of all the issues that the Commission addressed, none was as perplexing or as urgent as the need to insure that such a totally inhuman assault as the Holocaust — or any partial version thereof — never recurs. The Commission was burdened by the knowledge that thirty-five years of post-Holocaust history testify to how little was learned. Only a conscious, concerted attempt to learn from past errors can prevent recurrence to any racial, religious, ethnic, or national group. A memorial unresponsive to the future would also violate the memory of the past.

In the years following the Holocaust, Americans repeatedly explained: "We didn't know. We didn't understand the magnitude of the problem. If only we had known, something would have been done." The Commission feels morally compelled to help reduce silence and ignorance, trusting in the moral responsiveness of the American people so that even when evil cannot be eliminated, perhaps it will be alleviated.

The Commission understands that genocide has both a legal and political definition. It well knows the potential for the

politicization of such a Committee, but the risks entailed are worth taking if such a Committee can provide maximal exposure for dangerous developments, raising, in one scholar's words, an "institutional scream" to alert the conscience of the world and spark public outcry. Open hearings might be instituted in the event of major offenses so that early reports would not be suppressed, as they were between 1941 and 1943. This Committee should not duplicate the roles of existing human rights agencies, whether national or international, but should concentrate upon genocidal situations, transmitting information and advocating strong action on the part of America or the United Nations.

The recent experience of the Boat People illustrates the unique role that the Committee on Conscience can play. Speaking for the Commission on the Holocaust, the Chairman appealed directly to the President of the United States to intervene on behalf of the Boat People. He was also named to the delegation at the recent conference at Geneva. Among others, these actions helped to bring about international relief activities. One need not presume that the Commission would be the lone voice to redress an outrage; the media, by the persistence of its reporting, has continually focused attention on the plight of the Boat People. Yet the voices which spoke from the authority of the Holocaust and its memory resonated with a special clarity. Because of Evian (a conference of thirty-two nations held in 1938 that failed to rescue the Jews when Hitler flung that challenge in the world's face), the recent Geneva

Conference on the Boat People was conscious of the price of inaction. Because the Vice President, the Chairman of the Geneva delegation, was sensitive to the failures of the past, his somber address invoking the specter of Evian commanded a greater urgency. He said:

"Our children will deal harshly with us if we fail. The conference at Evian forty-one years ago took place amidst the same comfort and beauty we enjoy at our own deliberations today. One observer at those proceedings -- moved by the contrast between the setting and the task -- said this:

'These poor people and these great principles seem so far away. To one who has attended other conferences on Lake Geneva, the most striking thing on the eve of this one is that the atmosphere is so much like the others.'

Let us not be like the others. Let us renounce that legacy of shame. Let us reach beyond metaphor. Let us honor the moral principles we inherit. Let us do something meaningful -- something profound -- to stem this misery. We face a world problem. Let us fashion a world solution.

History will not forgive us if we fail. History will not forget us if we succeed."

DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE

The Commission recommends to the President that the Days of Remembrance of Victims of the Holocaust be proclaimed in perpetuity to be held annually, commencing on the Sunday of (or preceding) the internationally recognized Holocaust Commemoration Day.

The Commission further recommends that the National Holocaust Memorial be charged in its charter with the continuing responsibility to develop means of commemorating the Days of Remembrance. This mandate is integral to the work of the Memorial Institution.

The President charged the Commission to implement the Congressional resolution calling for the observance of April 28 and 29, 1979 as Days of Remembrance. The authors wanted the observance "to occur on days when Americans worship in the churches and synagogues of the nation, to coincide with the internationally recognized Holocaust Commemoration Days, and to mark the anniversary of a significant American involvement in the Holocaust, namely, the liberation of Dachau by American troops." Mindful of the legislative intent and the task of commemorating events so shattering they defy description, the Commission felt it advisable to extend the commemoration period to an entire week so as not to isolate the American Holocaust days from international days and to include the period of time when American religious observances have traditionally been held.

The programs initiated by the Commission were built upon the foundation of two decades of commemoration activities, intensified this year by governmental involvement. Given the limited resources of the Commission, the number of activities were restricted, those

undertaken providing models for future years. Working on its own and in cooperation with several states, communities, and national organizations, the Commission organized the following activities:

A National Civic Holocaust Commemoration Service in the Capitol Rotunda. President Carter led the leaders of the nation and invited guests in a memorial service that included music from the Holocaust sung by the Atlanta Boy Choir, a Presidential address, remarks by the Vice President, an address by the Chairman of the Commission, a candle-lighting ceremony, and appropriate prayers.

In the State of Minnesota, the Commission developed a model for state observances. With the help of the local community and state leaders, a series of programs were instituted including:

An exhibit of Holocaust art in the Interchurch Center of Minnesota.

A conference and teacher workshop, featuring Professor Raul Hilberg as the keynote speaker and scholar in residence, addressing "The Implications of the Holocaust for Western Society."

A state civic ceremony similar to the national ceremony, held in the state capital with an address by the Governor and a Commissioner.

An ecumenical Christian service of commemoration with the participation of all major Christian churches.

A Jewish service of commemoration with the participation of all the local synagogues of Minneapolis-St. Paul.

A series of documentaries and Holocaust films shown on public and network television.

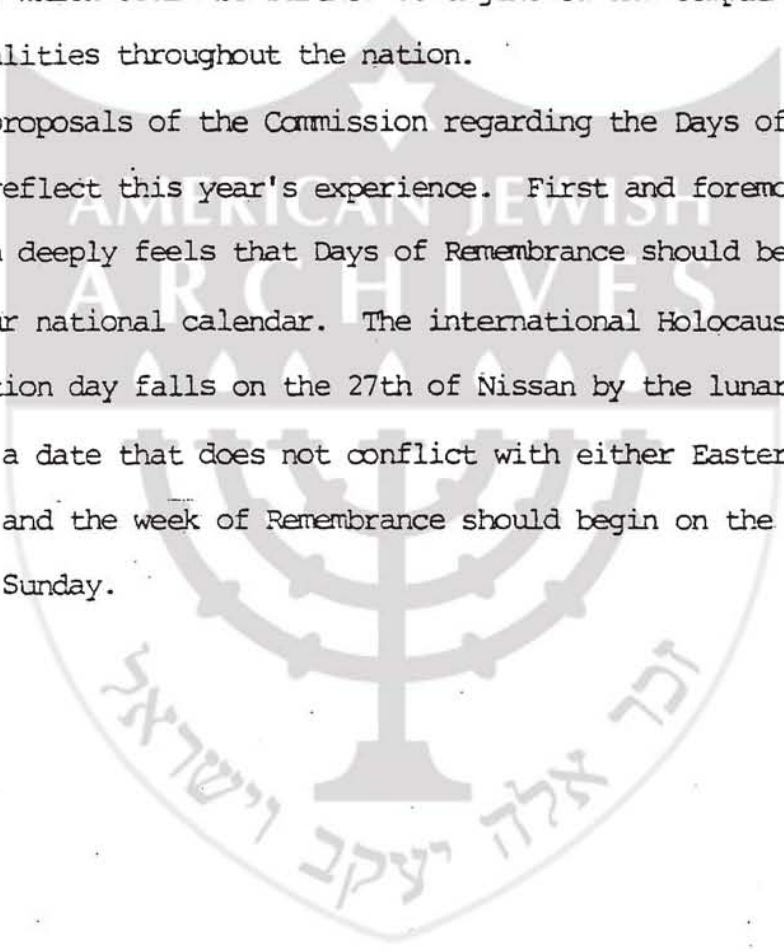
Similar statewide activities were held in Connecticut and New Jersey with a member of the Commission or its Advisory Board representing the Commission at the services in the state capitol.

The Commission also participated in the largest Holocaust commemoration service in North America held annually in New York at Temple Emanuel and sponsored by the survivors' organizations of New York City. Over twenty-five thousand people attended. The Commission joined in the Holocaust commemoration service at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., at which Senator John Danforth, an ordained Episcopal Minister, was the guest preacher. A special liturgy and litany was composed for the occasion which was shared with all Episcopal ministers throughout the United States. As a model for future possibilities, the Commission has worked with the City of Somerville, Massachusetts, which held a series of commemorative and educational assemblies within their high schools including films and talks by survivors. The

Commission also helped the National Educational Television network select Holocaust documentaries and related films for broadcast throughout this week.

In sum, a variety of programs for the Days of Remembrance were developed, which could be further strengthened and complemented in other localities throughout the nation.

The proposals of the Commission regarding the Days of Remembrance directly reflect this year's experience. First and foremost, the Commission deeply feels that Days of Remembrance should become a part of our national calendar. The international Holocaust commemoration day falls on the 27th of Nisan by the lunar calendar, a date that does not conflict with either Easter or Passover, and the week of Remembrance should begin on the preceding Sunday.



FUNDING

The Commission concluded that the combined physical memorial and education foundation with its broad range of programs and joint projects is achievable in terms of necessary funding.

The Commission recommends that funding be carried out by a public-private partnership involving government participation and private fund-raising such as was done for the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and other major memorials. The Government should provide seed money (up to one million dollars) for the broad design of facilities and program plus a challenge grant to be matched in the private sector over a three-year period. The Commission requests direct moral support, endorsement, and involvement by the White House in this effort.

The sources of the funds should include large individual contributors, foundations, associations, institutions, corporations, civic organizations, churches, and synagogues as well as a broad-based fund-raising project throughout America to secure wide public support.

In accordance with the President's guidelines and in light of the general significance of the Holocaust, the Commission concluded that funding for the memorial should be principally supplied through public subscription. Despite the size of the project, the Commission felt that extensive public support is available.

While funding will be primarily private, the issues raised by the Holocaust are so fundamentally tied to public policy that its funding, like its impact, must involve our national life. Federal participation is deemed crucial to the mobilization and channeling of public concern.

A land grant and governmental status would symbolize Federal commitment while leaving the major responsibility for funding and initiative to the American people through the private sector,

as was the case in the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars or the National Gallery of Art. The dialectic of a government-private partnership, a national center with grass-roots programming, and an academic endeavor with ethical exploration would in itself be an extraordinary cultural and political model.

The estimated funds for the museum/memorial, for endowing or capitalizing both continuing programs and one-time building costs, and for the acquisition and computerization of scholarly archives would total forty to fifty million dollars to be raised primarily by private funds. Approximately one-half would go for construction and capital outlays.



Additional recommendations for governmental action in other branches or departments were deemed by the Commission as appropriate and morally necessary forms of remembering the victims of the Holocaust.



Ratification of the Genocide Convention:

The President's Commission on the Holocaust joins with the President of the United States in urging the Senate to ratify the Genocide Convention.

The Geneva Conference Convention itself was the outgrowth of the worldwide moral revulsion consequent to the revelation of the full enormity of the Holocaust. The Commission believes that the knowledge that perpetrators would be held responsible for the crime of genocide may play some role in preventing future programs of genocide. Moreover, the punishment of criminals for the genocidal activities of World War II has been criticized on the grounds that genocide was not a crime recognized by international law prior to 1939. Removal of any doubt as to responsibility is another small step to preventing a recurrence.

Prosecution of Nazi War Criminals in America:

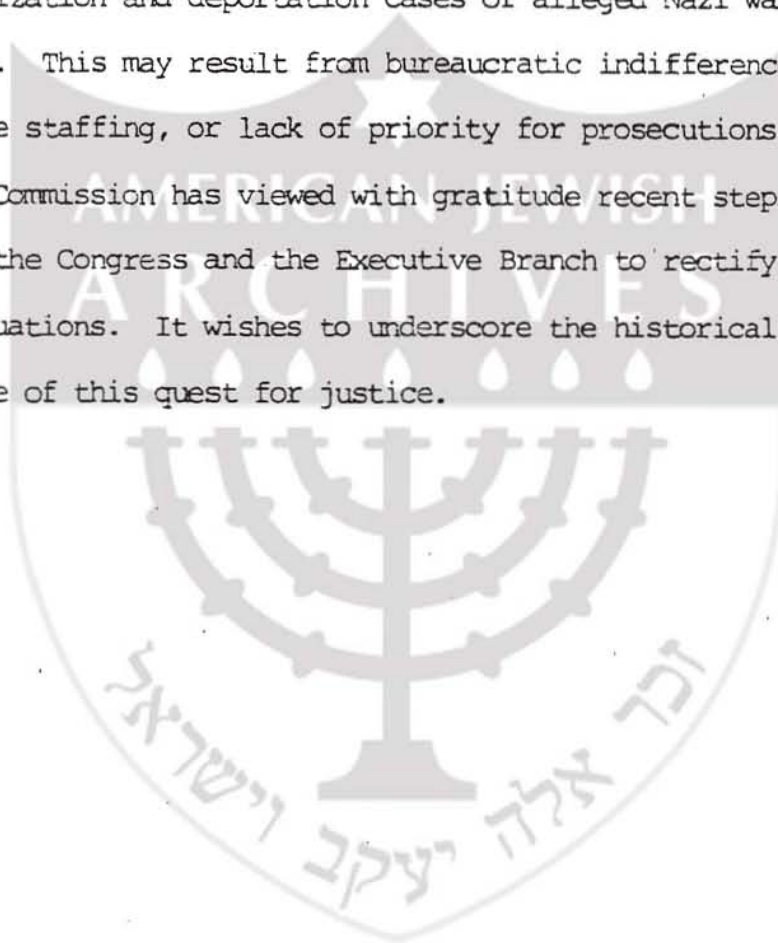
The President's Commission on the Holocaust recommends direct governmental intervention to:

1. Assure high priority to the investigation and, if warranted, prosecution of Nazi war criminals in America.
2. Insure adequate funds and staffing for the Office of Special Investigator charged with the prosecution of accused Nazi war criminals in our midst.
3. Assign experienced trial lawyers to the prosecution staff.
4. Insist that government agencies render accessible all relevant records and testimony.
5. Exert diplomatic influence to assure the cooperation of other governments in obtaining material pertaining to ongoing investigations and trials of alleged Nazi war criminals.

Since the end of World War II, more than two hundred individuals accused of direct complicity in genocide and other Nazi crimes have lived in the United States, free from prosecution or deportation in cases where their American citizenship was obtained by fraud or denial of their past record. The allegation that some of these criminals found refuge and employment under the auspices of various U.S. agencies lends dramatic emphasis to the moral necessity for finally resolving this issue.

Furthermore, there is a grave danger that the judicial record will falsify history (indelibly when cases have exhausted appeal) as a result of ill-prepared, ineffective prosecuting attorneys (hampered by insufficient funds) at denaturalization and deportation cases of alleged Nazi war criminals. This may result from bureaucratic indifference, inadequate staffing, or lack of priority for prosecutions.

The Commission has viewed with gratitude recent steps taken by the Congress and the Executive Branch to rectify these situations. It wishes to underscore the historical importance of this quest for justice.



Jewish Cemeteries Abroad:

The President's Commission on the Holocaust recommends that in recognition of the sanctity of the physical remains of the Jewish communities of Eastern Europe and the right of the dead to a final resting place, the State Department should continue to express its concern over the destruction of cemeteries, urging that they be maintained in a suitably respectable manner.

One of the few remaining remnants of Jewish life in Eastern Europe are the cemeteries. In recent years, these cemeteries have been destroyed by new building projects, housing developments, and road construction. The Commission strongly urges that pressure be brought to bear so that vandalization will be prevented, markers will be repaired or supplied where missing, and grounds maintained as befitting the memory of the dead.



APPENDIX

TRAVEL TO EASTERN EUROPE AND ISRAEL

On July 29, 1979, fifty-seven members of the Commission and the Advisory Board, their spouses, and special consultants to the Commission departed on a fourteen-day working mission to study memorials and museums to the victims of the Holocaust, to visit the sites of destruction, and to meet with government leaders and institutional directors whose commitments and undertakings parallel the work of this Commission. Traveling at their own expense to Poland, the U.S.S.R., Denmark, and Israel, the Commission confronted the past and its commemoration to further inform its own recommendations.

In Warsaw the Commission began its agenda with a ceremony at the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Tribute was also paid to the Polish losses during the War at the Nike Monument prior to a series of meetings with Polish officials. At a session with the Minister of Justice, the painful and critical issues of justice and truth were explored, justice to those who perpetrated the crime and truth in understanding the roles of the criminals, victims, and bystanders. An exchange of Polish and American documents was discussed, and a tour of some of the Polish archives conducted including critical documents and photographs, Nazi manuals and albums. In the evening the Commission attended a performance by a remnant of the Jewish theater of Warsaw. The play was a lyrical and musical interpretation of Chagall's paintings. The performance was in Yiddish, a language understood by few of the actors, for an audience that is no longer.

Heavily subsidized by the Polish government, this troupe recalls the great theatrical tradition of the Yiddish stage.

The following morning the Commission traveled to Treblinka, the site of an extermination camp at which some eight-hundred-thousand Jews were killed. (Unlike Auschwitz, Treblinka was restricted to Jews.)

The camp was destroyed near the end of the war as the Nazis tried to eradicate all traces of their crime. The Polish government has built an extraordinary, impressive monument on the site, a total environment of remembrance. Identical slabs of stone, suggesting railroad ties, lead the visitor to the center of the camp where two enormous stone forms stand beside each other separated by only a narrow opening. A shattered menorah is engraved near the top of the monument, and on all sides, stretching as far as one can see, are hundreds of rough-hewn, jagged stones of various shapes and sizes each inscribed with the name of a different Jewish community obliterated during the Holocaust. Beyond the central granite stones, a flat, rectangular representation of charred and disfigured bones is set in a ditch some two-hundred feet in length to symbolize the burned pyres of those who had been gassed. The power and effectiveness of this sculpture at Treblinka convinced the Commission of the importance of a monument.

Throughout the journey in Eastern Europe, members of the delegation would share their impressions and their anguish. A scholar would explain the relationship between the geographic

location of a camp and its proximity to population centers, or a survivor would recollect one of his wartime experiences -- stories of betrayal and torture, anxiety and loss, desperation and agony, and some of hope and rescue.

On the third day of the trip the Commission traveled to Auschwitz, the largest and most infamous of the extermination camps. Over four million people were annihilated at Auschwitz. An enormous railroad complex was located at the entrance to the camp, and the sturdy brick construction of the barracks attests to its intended function as a continuing institution of subjugation and liquidation. Only with great difficulty could the survivors of Auschwitz on the Commission re-enter the camp, passing the walls and electrified barbed wire, the torture chambers, the hospital for medical experiments, and the gas chambers where their loved ones were murdered. A few kilometers away at Birkenau words of prayer were recited, wreaths laid, and spirituals sung, yet all attempts at verbalization seemed inadequate.

The visit to Poland was concluded by a series of meetings with the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Polish Academy of Science, the Januz Korshak Committee, the Ministry of Monuments, the Combatants Organization, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as the curators of the Museum at Auschwitz and the Jewish Museum in Warsaw at which the need to remember the Holocaust was discussed and the groundwork laid for future

cooperation between the American and Polish governments, including the exchange of archival information and scholarship, educational resources for teaching, films, and publications. A number of Polish documentaries on the Holocaust were also viewed. The Commission was pleased by the general interest and encouragement it encountered and by the mutual commitment to remember.

Before leaving Poland, the Commission visited the Jewish cemetery in Warsaw, the burial place for over one-half-million Jews who died in Warsaw in the centuries preceding the liquidation of the ghetto. Seven hundred years of Polish Jewish culture are represented by the graves of scholars and rabbis, writers, teachers, political leaders, artists, scientists, and actors. An empty field devoid of any marker is the mass grave of some hundred-and-fifty-thousand Polish Jews who perished from starvation or disease during the war before the ghetto was destroyed. The general neglect of the cemetery, its disrepair and its vandalization, disturbed the Commission, and our concerns were expressed to the appropriate authorities.

The Commission traveled from Poland to the Soviet Union, first visiting Kiev in the Ukraine where one-hundred-thousand people were massacred by the Nazis at Babi Yar beginning on the first day of the Jewish New Year in 1941 and continuing for ten days until the Day of Atonement. Eighty-thousand Jews were killed there within earshot of downtown Kiev. The monument at Babi Yar is most impressive, set in the center of the ravine where the victims

were buried. However, in both content and inscription the memorial is devoid of any reference, direct or oblique, to the fact that Jews were killed at Babi Yar. Shocked by this conspicuous omission, the Commission was alerted to the dangers of historical falsification or dilution.

In Moscow the Commission met with the National Archivist, the Writer's Guild, the Soviet Academy of Sciences, the Institute of the History of World War II, the Deputy Minister of Culture, the War Veterans' Organization, and the Solicitor General to explore the difficulties in writing about the Holocaust, of sensitizing people to pain and suffering without feeding a sense of morbidity, encouraging despair, or developing an immunity to pain. Furthermore, discussions were conducted pertaining to archival exchange and scholarly interchange. In a meeting with the Solicitor General, Mr. Roman Rodenko, the Commission addressed itself to the trials of Nazi war criminals. (Mr. Rodenko was the chief prosecutor at Nuremberg.) Before leaving Moscow, a wreath was placed at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

For its last stop in Europe, the Commission traveled to Denmark to present a scroll of tribute to the Danish people and their government. The scroll read as follows:

In tribute to the Danish people and their government whose actions during the Holocaust served as a moral beacon of light in a world of total darkness. Your noble behavior has illuminated the moral landscape of humanity. May your deeds serve as a reminder of courage and human solidarity to a world still desperately in need of such lessons.

In casual conversation and in formal declarations, the Danish people frequently repeated that they had done nothing extraordinary or heroic in saving Jews and protecting their property. One accountant explained that he needed no congratulations for refusing to embezzle funds or steal his clients' money. When compared to the complete cooperation of the Nazi economic ministry in the confiscation of Jewish holdings, the Danish humility toward their responsibility and integrity was striking. During the Holocaust, the ordinary became extraordinary.

Notwithstanding, indisputable acts of courage were not absent. The Commission presented a scroll of honor in absentia to Raoul Wallenberg, a junior diplomat from the Swedish legation who coordinated a large-scale rescue operation in which thirty-thousand lives were saved. Among many daring and innovative acts, Wallenberg rented buildings for Jews and flew the Swedish flag above them to declare them part of the Swedish Embassy, thus granting Jews diplomatic protection. He also issued Swedish passports to thousands of Jews in Budapest to prevent their deportation. Wallenberg was taken prisoner by the liberating Russian armies immediately after the war, and neither his presence in Russian prisons nor his fate have ever been satisfactorily clarified. (The Russian government produced a death certificate indicating that Wallenberg died in jail in 1947, but his death was never confirmed, and reports of his whereabouts have periodically circulated as recently as last year.) The scroll presented to Wallenberg read as follows:

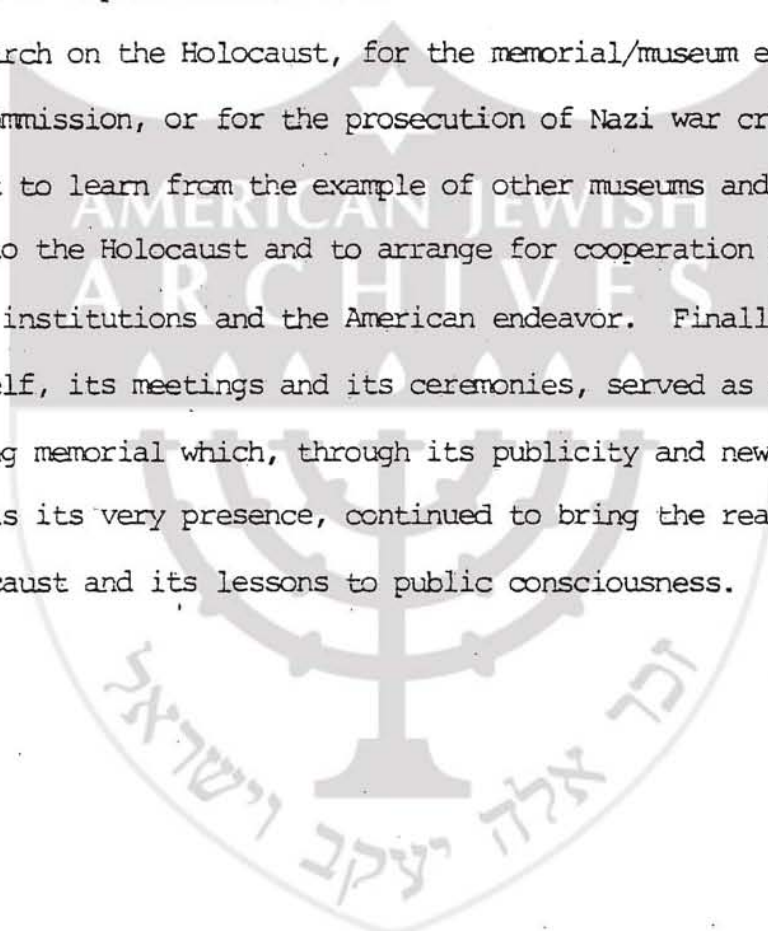
In tribute to Raoul Wallenberg, a man of rare daring and imagination, whose deeds saved thirty-thousand Jews in Budapest. His heroism and character have shown the world what could have been done and what should have been done. His compassion and courage will be remembered forever. For his actions, he paid with his freedom, if not with his life. This scroll is presented to his sister in his absence though conscious of his presence.

The Commission also toured the Museum of Danish Rescue and Resistance in Copenhagen.

The final leg of the trip brought the Commission to Israel where it visited Yad Vashem, the Israeli National Memorial to the Holocaust, consisting of a museum, memorial and sculpture garden, archives, documentation center, research facilities, and educational resources. Subcommittees of the Commission met with the staff and leaders of the institution who shared the fruits of their vast experience as had Danish, Polish, and Russian institutions. In addition, the Commission viewed the Museum of the Diaspora to examine their sections on the Holocaust and their use of modern media and display techniques, computer learning, and aggressive, engaging presentations. Having been in Warsaw, the Commission included in its itinerary the Warsaw Ghetto Fighters' Memorial at a kibbutz in the Galilee founded by survivors of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. The kibbutz also houses a general museum on the Holocaust. The Commission visited Mashuah, an experimental education institution designed to teach the Holocaust to both adolescents and adults through creative curricula, seminars, films, and educational materials developed by Mashuah. Nes Amim, a moshav founded by Dutch Christians and

dedicated to atonement for the Holocaust, was also among the places visited. The Commission's work in Israel concluded with a meeting with the President of Israel at his home.

During the two weeks of work abroad, the Commission was able to secure or explore access to some archival records and documents for research on the Holocaust, for the memorial/museum envisioned by the Commission, or for the prosecution of Nazi war criminals. It sought to learn from the example of other museums and memorials devoted to the Holocaust and to arrange for cooperation between existing institutions and the American endeavor. Finally, the trip itself, its meetings and its ceremonies, served as a part of the living memorial which, through its publicity and news coverage as well as its very presence, continued to bring the reality of the Holocaust and its lessons to public consciousness.





President's Commission on the Holocaust

Office of the
Director

October 4, 1979

Dear Marc:

With the ambiance of last Thursday's meeting still fresh in our minds, it is with a deep sense of honor that I enclose a copy of the remarks of the President of the United States and our Chairman.

You will receive a formal, printed copy of the Report to the President within the next month.

Best wishes for a happy and healthy New Year.

Sincerely yours,

Michael Berenbaum
Deputy Director

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Interreligious Affairs of the
American Jewish Committee
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SEPTEMBER 27, 1979

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
PRESENTATION OF THE FINAL REPORT
OF THE PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON THE HOLOCAUST

The Rose Garden

2:15 P.M. EDT

Mr. Chairman, the beauty of your words and the solemnity of your thoughts and the importance of the work of this Commission are all very impressive.

Eight months ago, I asked Elie Wiesel, and a distinguished group of Americans, some from the Congress, to take on an awesome responsibility. Jim Blanchard of Michigan and others said they couldn't be here because there is a vote pending in the House, but they have served well, along with a broad cross-section of Americans who have gone into this effort with a great deal of dedication and who have produced a report that will solve problems and picture for us proper actions in the future.

This is an awesome responsibility that you have performed. I asked this group to recommend a fitting memorial in the United States to the victims of the most unspeakable crime in all of human history -- the Holocaust. Rarely has a Presidential Commission faced a more sobering or a more totally important challenge. This event of the Holocaust, the crime against humanity itself, has no parallel in human history. A philosopher wrote that human language itself breaks down when confronted with the monstrous challenge of describing this evil.

So I want to pay a special tribute, on behalf of our Nation, to all those who have contributed to this effort and for the tremendous service that you have performed.

Your very work as a Commission is part of a living memory to the victims of the Holocaust. Your grappling with the meaning of this event has helped bring new understanding and moral vision to all who must confront this question. Your historic trip to the concentration camps in Eastern Europe, at the Babi Yar in the Soviet Union, has helped to arouse the conscience of the world and held remind us once again we must never forget. And I know our country appreciates the fact that many of you went on those trips, not at Government expense, but at your own expense.

MORE

Out of our memory and understanding of the Holocaust, we must forge an unshakeable oath with all civilized people that never again will the world stand silent, never again will the world look the other way or fail to act in time to prevent this terrible crime of genocide.

In addition to the Jewish people who were engulfed by the Holocaust simply because they were Jews, 5 million other human beings were destroyed. About 3 million Poles, many Hungarians, Gypsies, also need to be remembered. To memorialize the victims of the Holocaust, we must harness the outrage of our own memories to stamp out oppression wherever it exists. We must understand that human rights and human dignity are indivisible. Wherever our fellow human beings are stripped of their humanity, defiled or tortured or victimized by repression or terrorism or racism or prejudice, then all of us are victims. As Americans, we must, and we also will speak out in defense of human rights at home and everywhere in the world.

And I might add that as Americans we must share the responsibility for 40 years ago not being willing to acknowledge that this horrible event was in prospect.

And I think that the action of this Holocaust Commission is long overdue, because we have not had a constant center which could be visited by Americans of all faiths and all races to be reminded of our omission in the past, to have the memory of this horrible event kept vivid in our minds, to prevent a recurrence of such an action anywhere on earth in the future.

In view of the 6 million Jewish victims of the Holocaust, it is particularly appropriate that we receive this report during the High Holy Days, just prior to Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. Yom Kippur is a day and a time for looking back. It is a time for reflection. It is a time for remembrance. But it is also a time for the reaffirmation of life, a time for looking ahead.

So I will consider this report most carefully and will respond personally to this Commission and to the people of our Nation with my personal prayer that the memory of the Holocaust shall be transformed into a reaffirmation of life. And as President, I can pledge to you that I will do everything in my power to carry out the recommendations of this report.

The Members of the Congress will be intensely interested in arousing support in the Legislature. And I am sure the people of this country will be looking with anticipation to this reminder of the victims and also a warning that this horrible event will never again occur on earth.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and all the members of the Commission. (Applause)

PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT OF THE
PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON THE HOLOCAUST

AMERICAN JEWISH
TO
ARCHIVES
THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

BY
ELIE WIESEL
CHAIRMAN

The Rose Garden
The White House
Washington, D.C.

September 27, 1979

Mr. President, Ambassador Evron, Distinguished Members of the Senate and House, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Thirty-eight years ago on September 27th, 1941, during the "aseret yemei teshuva," what we call in our tradition the Days of Repentance, thousands of Jewish men, women and children were led through the sunny and peaceful streets of Kiev to be slaughtered at a place called: Babi Yar. For ten days — from Rosh Hashannah, the Jewish New Year, until the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur — the massacre continued. The procession seemed endless. The killers killed, the victims tumbled into ditches, and creation somehow remained unchanged and undisturbed.

What took place in Kiev, Mr. President, was repeated elsewhere in hundreds and hundreds of towns and villages in the Ukraine, Lithuania, Byelorussia, Poland. All over Eastern Europe the process of destruction went on and on and on. Entire communities perished overnight. Families disappeared. Ancient dynasties whose lineage could be traced back to King David and Moses were swept away with the winds of ashes. And God Himself must have covered His face in pain and anguish. Were they but a spasm of history? A tear in the ocean? An experiment of eternity in death?

In the course of our study, Mr. President, we tried to capture some of their silent outcries. We asked them for guidance. We returned to some of the sites where they perished. And all those who were there came away changed.

Mr. President, we were struck first by the beauty of the surroundings; the hills around Treblinka, the skys over Birkenau, the silence in Auschwitz. The killers had chosen the most beautiful sites and the most poetic words for their most hideous crimes.

We were struck by the proximity to cities and villages. Treblinka, Mr. President, is a 2-hour bus or train ride from Warsaw. Babi Yar is part of Kiev. Buchenwald is near Weimar. Auschwitz is close to Cracow. Ten-thousand human beings were being murdered and burned every day, and nearby, life went on as usual.

How was all this possible? We do not have the answer, Mr. President. Perhaps there is none. Any given answer must be the wrong answer. But the members of your Commission believe, Mr. President, that we must seek an answer and this will not be easy. Unprecedented and unparalleled in magnitude, the Event of Auschwitz and Belsen

is still surmounted by a wall of fire which no outsider can penetrate. All one can do is come close to the gate.

Some are living gates, the survivors. They alone know what happened. And they are ready and willing to share their knowledge; they know that they survived only to tell the tale, only to bear witness.

The words of the dead, too, are gates. Documents, poems, messages, diaries, letters, prayers, meditations; through them one can feel something of what they felt as they were waiting for the angel of death, for the Messiah.

I confess, Mr. President, that I belong to a traumatized generation and a traumatized people.

As a Jew, I was — and am — distressed by the tragic fate of the Jewish people; after all, they alone were destined to be totally annihilated; they alone were totally alone.

However, as a Jew I also came to realize that although all Jews were victims, not all victims were Jews.

But this is perhaps the first lesson we may draw from the Event, Mr. President, that although Jews were the first to be killed, they were not the only ones; others followed. The murder of one group inevitably provokes more murder.

We must also learn from what happened that words must be taken seriously. The time lapse between the antisemitic slogans in Berlin and the death industry in Treblinka was only 10 years.

We must take seriously all those who threaten other people today and all those who threaten the Jewish people today. From words to deed, the distance is not great.

We must also learn the dangers of indifference and neutrality. In times of evil, indifference to evil is evil. Neutrality always helps the killer, not the victim.

And we must learn the importance of stressing the moral dimension of all human endeavors. We have seen that scientists, scholars, physicians, politicians, and artists murder children, and still enjoy the cadence of a poem, the beauty of the painting. Culture without morality can easily push mankind to darkness, not redemption.

Yes, Mr. President, there are urgent lessons to be learned from this awesome event. And yet, and yet. We, the members of your Commission and their advisors are aware of our limitations. We have acquired some knowledge, but what are we to do with that knowledge? What are we to do with the whispers of men and women going to their graves? With the wisdom of ghetto children who knew more about life and death than the oldest of my teachers? What are we to do with the sounds of the dead; the mute dreams of the living? What are we to do with them?

We must share them, and we understood this most intensely when we visited Poland, Soviet Russia, and Israel. Birkenau arouses man's most secret anguish. Jerusalem symbolizes our most fervent hope, and, therefore, we are attached to Jerusalem in such love and admiration. We must share whatever we receive with conviction and dedication if mankind is to survive.

Thus, Mr. President, it is with a profound sense of privilege and hope that on behalf of the President's Commission on the Holocaust and its Advisory Board I present to you its report. And for your own historic initiative, Mr. President, it is submitted to you with infinite gratitude.

