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Young Leadership Cabinet lecture. November 1972.

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The program this morning is going to be that I am going to try just a little tiny bit, because we haven't much time. We are going to look at a very short film right here in the same room and then going to make a quick trip through the museum, and then the Cheder Hashemot, room of the names, and we are supposed to wind up in the Ohel Yiskor, at eleven o'clock. It's about nine now, so we've got two hours to do these things, including listening to me. The hope is that by the time it's over you will have some type of a concept of what happened, how it happened, who failed in preventing it from happening, what your relationship to it has to be, and the most important thing of all, is it's relationship to Israel, which point I've already made.

I would like to try and tell you a little bit about it, and obviously when I say a tiny bit, all I can do is to make some allusions. There are about eighty universities in the U.S. today where there are courses given on the Holocaust, and I hope that you go to one of those universities. If so I can only urge you to take the course, because then you will go through the solid bibliography of what you have to read. You have to read some basic texts, such as Reitlinger's "Final Solution," Hilberg's "Destruction of the European Jews," Schirer's "Rise and Fall of the Third Reich," and Steiner's "Treblinka," Halberstam's "Justice in Jerusalem," Hersey's "The Wall". There's no sense my giving you the whole list but there are fifteen or twenty books you have to read and then you will have a very good grasp of the whole subject.

If you really want to get serious, then I would recommend the names of other things that you should read, in order to go ^{back} deeper into the nineteenth century, back to see how this thing could possibly have happened. Hitler didn't come full blown out of Minerva's brow. The intellectual roots of anti-Semitism in Germany and the intellectual roots of Hitler's basic ideas came from about half a dozen other people. You ought to read a German philosopher by the name of Fichte, who talked about how decadent the Jews are. You should read a German philosopher by the name of Hegel, whose whole theory written in big heavy dull books, can be expressed in one sentence: the state is everything in life and what the state orders you to do is holy. Once you nail that down as a basic precept in peoples' minds, you have them in your hands, haven't you, you can do anything with them. You ought to read a German philosopher by the name of Treitschke, who talked about the glory of war. He taught that there is nothing holier than war. It's the condition in which man shows the best in him, acts at his finest, makes

sacrifices, goes hungry, helps comrades, does all work that he never does in peace. If you start to train a whole generation of people to believe that war is glorious, you get a certain attitude going, don't you? You ought to read Nietzsche, Übermensch and Untermensch, Superman and Inferior Man, and each is terribly important to understand. You ought to read Richard Wagner, anti-Semite of the highest order. His music is not played to this day in this country. His operas tell of the German Teutonic gods of the Niebelungenlied, the Teutonic religion of war, the gods of war, in a misty foggy German forests of the north. These scenes make great opera settings, they also make great Nazis. And you ought to read the Frenchman Gobineau, who developed the whole theory about the Aryan race. Hitler didn't think it up. Finally you ought to read an Englishman by the name of William Chamberlain, who thought that Hitler was God. When Hitler was in prison in Landsberg in 1925, writing his book, "Mein Kampf," William Chamberlain was writing a book in which he said, that it was all wrong to claim that Jesus was a Jew. Jesus couldn't have been a Jew, no way, because everyone knew how bad the Jews were. There was only one true messenger of God, not even Jesus - but Hitler. I'm not making these things up and I'm not talking about people who lived in asylums. I'm talking about people who were famous for a hundred years. The intellectual roots of Nazism go back to the nineteenth and early twentieth century. It would pay you to learn some of those roots.

Now I would like to try to explain to you the three basic elements of Hitler's period when Germany was lying defeated under the Weimar Republic, in the nineteen-twenties, when inflation was killing the country, when four billion German marks equalled one American dollar. One of the stories of the inflation told that when you went to the bank you took a wagon to carry the couple of dollars you needed to buy food and you had better not leave the wagon with the money on the sidewalk. because somebody would take the money out, put it on the sidewalk, and steal the wagon. Money had no value, unemployment was rife, millions of people were hungry, Hitler hired them, put brown shirts and black shirts on them, paid them money, gave them a job and created a mass organization for himself, almost overnight, in a matter of a few years. He got his first financial support quickly enough, from a lady of very high culture, Madam Helena Bechstein, whose family made pianos. She gave him the first sixty thousand dollars, with which he bought a newspaper called Völkischer Beobachter. Once he had a newspaper in his hand, printed his propaganda, saying: all you unemployed, all you people who live in the glory of Germany, all of you who believe that the Jews stabbed us in the back in World War One and that's why we lost the war; all of you who hate the lousy Jew Rathenau who came in and became the

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Minister of the Weimar Republic which imposed on us the Versailles Treaty, that made us knuckle under and that made our great Germans become low and forced us to pay these reparations to the Allies, all of you who are true Germans, rise up, join my party. Go to the nearest Nazi party office, give your names and addresses, get the uniform free, get a little salary to buy cigarettes and beer and hot dogs and you are on your way. I'm not joking that's how he did it. He built a mass organization of millions.

Number two, was what I call mass hypnosis. If you put a quarter of a million people out on a field, start beating a thousand drums, start waving black and red flags in the light of search lights, make everybody stand still and start to say in a low voice, gradually increasing into crescendo, Sieg Heil, Sieg Heil, Sieg Heil, and then get the whole quarter million voices going in unison, you know they will hypnotize themselves. The showmanship, with its lights, flags, drums, shouting, is all so primitive but so basic, then they start singing the song about Jewish blood spurting from the tips of their knives, the song called after Horst Wessel, a Nazi youth killed in a street fight whom Goebbels turned into a glorious hero. You get a mass of people singing that kind of song with such words, well, you know what it does, it just takes the cortex out of the brain, it's like doing a lobotomy--nobody thinks there is mass hypnosis.

The third method is the cold, calculated deliberate use of terror. Once you have a gang on your side through mass hypnosis, then you turn them loose for mass terror, and boy, the human animal loves it. But in order to teach people this use of terror, you have to do it yourself, and Hitler decided very early on in the game to give some rather clear demonstrations. His closest friend was an S.A. captain named Ernst Röhm, who was a homosexual, who had a jolly bunch of boys who used to go down to cabins on the Starnbergersee south of Munich and have lovely weekends together. Hitler ordered him killed, to show that no one, even a close friend was beyond his wrath. Hitler used terror to frighten and to break spirit. He controlled 80 million Germans through terror.

Now that we have seen the methods Hitler used to leverage himself into power--building a mass organization, hypnotizing it, and teaching it to govern through terror--we must turn to the haunting question of the total failure of the rest of the world to oppose him. The Western democracies failed, the Christian Church failed, the Jews of America failed, everybody failed, and that's how six million of us wound up in the oven. The story of the failure of the western democracies you can and should learn, because most official papers have been or are now being declassified after twenty five or thirty years. The state papers even of presidents and the paper:

of Winston Churchill, are now beginning to be made public and you can go into the library and start to read them. There is one book called "While Six Million Died," which describes the failures of the State Department and President Roosevelt. He was a bloody awful hypocrite, by the way, terrible man in regard to the whole Jewish question. He made himself appear to be a friend of the Jews. Actually he wasn't. My father and mother, like every Jew in America, of that generation, adored him, yet he did nothing to help save Jews. "While Six Million Died", tells of the bankruptcy of American policy in the thirties and forties.

Just take the one point, concerning the many times England and America were asked by Jewish leaders to go in and send bombers from American bases in Italy over to southern Poland, to destroy Aushwitz. This was not even as far away as the bombers were going into Romania, to bomb the oil fields that were feeding the German war machine. Many planes and many crews were sacrificed to bomb out the fields at Ploesti. Jewish leaders asked for bombers to go in and blow out the camp at Aushwitz. One cynical answer given was that Allied planes might kill the twenty or thirty thousand people who were in the camp at any given moment. The obvious answer to that was that once the total installation was destroyed, it could never be rebuilt under wartime conditions, and millions of people would have been saved. All the Jewish leaders ever got were hypocritical answers that - neither the American airforce nor the British airforce was willing to risk planes or crews to go in and bomb a camp which was not a military objective. No, it wasn't a military objective, it was just a Jewish crematorium.

The failure of the Church, began in 1935, when the Pope made a Concordat with Hitler, the essence of which was that the spiritual leader would not say anything against the military dictator as long as Hitler didn't touch the Catholics in Germany. That's high religious morality and ethics isn't it? I think, and here I will give you my own personal opinion, I think this bankruptcy, this moral and ethical bankruptcy, on the part of the church in the twentieth century, is going to cause its death. We won't live long enough to know, but if some sort of science fiction would ever give us a chance to look ahead to the twenty-second or twenty-third century, to see the state of affairs in the Christian ^{church} world, and if it is indeed at that time, a weak and irrelevant institution, I believe we could find the beginnings of its weakness and the origins of its death, in the middle of the twentieth century.

As for the actions of American Jews, don't get me started, just don't get me started. If I asked you where were most of your fathers, when this was going on, you would tell me quite rightly, that they were fighting in World War Two. That would be the right timing, I should think. If I would ask you what your Grandfathers

were doing, they were probably sixty, sixtyfive years old at the time. If any of them are still alive, you ~~can~~ go back home and ask them, what they did in America in the nineteen thirties and nineteen forties to protest, to try to break Hitler, and to try to save Jews in Europe. I think their record is going to turn out to be just as dismal as I know it to be, but maybe you don't know it, because you haven't asked anybody, but you go and ask.

I would like to finish by making the last point. If we understand Hitlers' methods; if we understand that the European Jews couldn't do anything about it, once they were trapped; and if we understand that the rest of the world didn't do anything about it, then the last question which remains for you and me is simply this: What shall we do about it from now on? The past is the past, it's over, it happened. What should our posture and position be now? I'd like to suggest two or three things.

Number one; what are the lessons, that we ought to learn out of this Holocaust, the attitudes we ought to develop? We must remember what happened, study it, learn it, never forget it, teach it to our children, from generation to generation, till the end of time. The motto of this place (Yad V'shem) is one little Hebrew word which is on the pin that they give you: "Zachor". Remember what happened. If you don't know what happened, then learn it. Once you learn it, don't forget it. Ignorance is an unforgiveable sin, in regard to this subject, indifference is equally unforgiveable. It is a cheap argument to say that you don't want to hear about it, because it is too ugly - that argument is disgusting and treasonable. Any Jew who says that, should get out of the Jewish people. The Holocaust happened to you in the same sense that we read in the Hagada of Pesach that every Jew is to feel that he himself experienced the slavery in Egypt. Learn it, remember it, don't ignore it, don't say it's too hard to stomach, go over it and stomach it..And learn it and remember it.

Number two: don't waste time on revenge, because that's a negative and wastful emotion. I think it's stupid for Jews to ventilate their feelings on the Holocaust by saying "you'll never see me buying a German car". There was a time when it was important not to buy a German car, when Rabbi Stephen Wise tried to organize a boycott against Germany in nineteen thirty five, and to break Germany economically, but the Jews of America didn't go along with it, because they didn't understand the meaning of active resistance. Nineteen thirty five, if you didn't buy a German car, on principle, you were making a serious statement; nineteen seventy five, if you don't buy a German car, what's the difference? You can't break Germany economically any more and the people from whom you don't want to buy the car aren't even guilty of the crime ^{thirty} ~~forty~~ years ago. Look, I can understand it, from one point of view, it's pure emotion to say: I'm never going to put foot on German soil; I'm not going to talk the German

language; I won't buy German products; I won't have anything to do with Germans; I won't listen to German music. If you feel such strong emotions today, it's O.K., but really useless, negative, not a constructive attitude; it isn't going to help face future problems.

Number three: the main thing, is to learn the lesson that Jews can rely only upon themselves and that Jews need to have a center of power and independent force with which to protect themselves, if they have to rely on themselves and nobody else is going to help them.

We are creating such a center of power and independent force for the protection of Jews, and I hope Judaism, here in Israel. You do the same in America. Build your American communities into power centers of independent Jewish force. Jewish force is definable in many ways. In Israel it includes carrying a gun, and in America it includes teaching your kids Hebrew, because that is also a source of power. If, in the Diaspora you don't need a gun, then the next best thing with which to defend yourself, is the language, which will enable you to jump here, blend in here, and pick up a gun here. In nineteen forty eight, people coming here out of the camps in Germany and from the camp in Cyprus, in the month of July, six weeks after independence, ^{were} given guns in their hands, to go and take part in the battle to liberate the road up to Jerusalem. They were stopped at that police station at Latrun, which battle we lost, that's why we never had the road to Jerusalem for the next nineteen years. One of the reasons for the failure in the battle at Latrun was that these refugees were inexperienced in the use of weapons. O.K., you can't blame them for that. But the second thing is, they didn't understand the commands of the commanders, and terrible tragedies took place because there was such weak communication between these hundreds and thousands of eager men who for the first time were able to fight for themselves, but it was a Tower of Babel. The battle field was covered with hundreds of dead, because people were going tight and were not knowing where to go. A Tower of Babel is something which one shouldn't have today in this world. Build a strong community today in America; build your day school; build your educational institutions; that's the best form of defence, education is defence, and if you people are going to be the leaders of the American communities, and of the future, then you've got to know what the priorities are and they are not with such things as hospitals and maybe not even with community centers. Defence lies in education. Don't you ever forget it.

O.K. those are the three lessons: learn what happened; don't bother to take any revenge on anybody; just make damned sure that in the future we are stronger and able to rely on ourselves more than we were before.

Answers to Questions:

1. You said, "we are trying to get a coalition together of all the Jewish organizations and while you were saying these words, what went through my mind was Warsaw Ghetto nineteen hundred and forty three, and how it took month and months and months for the Jewish organizations inside the Ghetto, where they were already in prison, to try to work out their differences in order to create a Jewish fighting organization against the Nazis. When did they finally get it created? - only in the last month. Five hundred thousand people were packed into the Ghetto. You know who created the fighting organization finally, - only the last fifty thousand. It took four hundred and fifty thousand dead bodies to convince Zionist and Religionist, Bundist and Socialist all to get together in a coalition. If you are in trouble and want to make a coalition, do it in fifteen minutes, and if anybody doesn't want to join you forget it, and go fight with what you got. O.K., sorry for the explosion but this business of Jews ^{not} agreeing ^{with each other} is a dreadful thing.

2. I don't think there could be a Holocaust in the United States. Holocaust means genocide. If you Jews in the United States, six million of you allow yourselves to be rounded up again, to be led to the pen again, I think I would go out of my mind. I do not think that a Holocaust in America is possible because I think that you have learnt the lessons of the first Holocaust and would not permit a second one to take place. We in Israel wouldn't allow it either. If there were a dictator in America who meant to commit genocide among you and you were not organizing yourself to fight back we would try to figure out how we could go over there and fight back for you or with you. If you are asking me where there is any possibility of a Hitler developing in the United States, that's a complicated political question we haven't got the time to go into now, but I don't think so. American democratic tradition is too old and too strong.

3. There were three brothers in our family. We were quite poor, in the depression of middle thirties, my father had little work, the mortgage on our house could not be paid and the bank foreclosed it. Yet ~~forxxxxxxx~~ my father signed for three young German refugee boys and so now there were six of us. And my mother tried to find bread for six of us instead of three of us. So there were lower middle class and poor Jews in America who rallied to the cause of rescuing and bringing into the United States around a hundred and fifty thousand German Jews, from nineteen thirty three onwards.

4. I would rather not talk about Hannah Arendt. She is a bad woman in my book. Her thesis is that the Jews cooperated with their slaughterers through some deep death wish

That's ridiculous, as far as I'm concerned. Her description of their being willingly victimized by their non-resistance, just flies in the face of reality. Hers is a kind of psychological approach which causes me to vomit. I can't stand it. I think that she was a self-hating Jew. If that's not a satisfactory answer, I'm really sorry, but I can't stand those intellectuals who blame the victim. It's just too cheap and easy a way out. Blame the murderers, not the victims. The most one can say about the victim is that perhaps they didn't fight back enough, although they also fought back, even without weapons. They fought in partisan units, they fought in underground units, they fought in ghettos and forests, with the Maquis in France in the underground. I would like to finish the point by saying this, and you can think about this: the point at which a Nazi soldier in uniform bangs on the front door of your house and tells you to go outside and get in the truck, is the point at which you have to decide whether to go into the kitchen and grab a knife and try to stab him, because that's your last chance. Why didn't most people do it then? Because they figured while there was life there was hope and they didn't know what might happen. Maybe you can jump off the truck, and anyway if you stab him, his comrades will shoot your wife and kids, right there in the kitchen in front of you so that finishes the whole ball game. So the most you can say is that most Jews did not resist at the moment of capture, and I think that that accusation is unfair, because it goes against human nature. For Arendt to make the general accusation that she does, ~~handly~~ ^{namely}, that the Jews somehow by their nature and by their inner psychological compulsions were really willing co-conspirators with the murderers is garbage.

5. As for the UJA, all I want to tell you is that for the rest of your life you must understand that those initials stand for two things: that the Jewish people is a united people, with all responsible for each other; and that the Jewish people has created a vehicle for its survival in the middle of the twentieth century, the State of Israel, which belongs to all of us, and we must do everything we can to try to keep it strong. So if you act in accordance with those two principles, you will become the defenders of the Jewish people and the Jewish nation and the Jewish religion. And that's really what we're asking you to do.

A HOLOCAUST BIBLIOGRAPHY

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