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Colwell, David. 2001-2002.

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Send him the
long articles
from JDC archives



IMPORTANT MESSAGE

FOR HAF
DATE 8/9/01 (Thurs) TIME 2:15 A.M.
M Chaplain David Colwell

OF _____

PHONE 703-601-4449

AREA CODE

NUMBER

EXTENSION

☒ FAX

☐ MOBILE

703-601-4455 (fax)

AREA CODE

NUMBER

TIME TO CALL

TELEPHONED		PLEASE CALL	
CAME TO SEE YOU		WILL CALL AGAIN	
WANTS TO SEE YOU		RUSH	
RETURNED YOUR CALL		SPECIAL ATTENTION	

MESSAGE here is a fax number for
the materials you wanted to
send him.

SIGNED

BFA



FORM 3002S
MADE IN U.S.A.

IMPORTANT MESSAGE

FOR HAF

DATE 8/7/01 TIME 10:00 A.M.

M Chaplain Colwell

OF _____

PHONE in D.C. 703-601-2449

AREA CODE

NUMBER

EXTENSION

☐ FAX

☐ MOBILE

AREA CODE

NUMBER

TIME TO CALL

TELEPHONED		PLEASE CALL	
CAME TO SEE YOU		WILL CALL AGAIN	
WANTS TO SEE YOU		RUSH	
RETURNED YOUR CALL		SPECIAL ATTENTION	

MESSAGE wants to talk to
you about The Survivor's
Talmud and about your
book as it relates to that
Talmud

SIGNED BA



FORM 3002S
MADE IN U.S.A.

8/2/01
called
10 AM

was at
Army Talmud
ceremony
in Norfolk
with his chief
has copy of my book
from Amazon

we talked for an hour

Lt. Col.
Chaplain David Colwell

703-601-4449 -

Staff of Army Chief of Chaplains



10 January 2002

The Story of the U.S. Army Talmud

By: Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman

At the Chrysler Museum in Norfolk, VA on May 22, 2001 there took place a unique ceremony to dedicate an exhibit. The object of the exhibit was an edition of the basic volume of Jewish law called the Talmud which was published in Germany by the U.S. Army shortly after WWII. There ceremony also honored Leonard Strelitz, a leading citizen of Norfolk and a national leader of American Jewry. A group of his friends had acquired a set of the Army Talmud (19 volumes in all) and Leonard's widow Joyce, together with these friends arranged for the exhibit. Representing the U.S. Army at the ceremony was the Chief Chaplain.

The publication of the 19-volume set of the Talmud by the Carl Winter printing plant in Heidelberg, Germany, sponsored by the United States Army, was a phenomenon, a rarity, an incredible story which can only be understood in the context of post-war Jewish experience in Europe. Here is the context.

The insane cruelty of the Nazi regime murdered the largest portion of European Jewry and burned millions of books as well as people. The ragged survivors in 1945 had no homes to which they could return to their past, no land of refuge which could serve as their future, no hopes on which to build a new life. They were called refugees or survivors or displaced persons, DP's – and they wandered throughout Poland, Lithuania, Romania and the eastern provinces of Russia.

There was no State of Israel yet, but there was an underground force called Haganah, one of whose functions was to protect the Jews living in Palestine, and another function was to help organize the ragged band of wandering Jews of Europe. The safest

place of refuge was the American Zone of occupied Germany. The American flag and the American Army betokened safety. And the Haganah acted as the shepherd, helping the hapless to cross borders, moving westward, using trains, trucks and basic foot-power.

When the war ended in 1945, General Eisenhower visited some concentration camps, was visibly upset and turned to a Jewish chaplain, Major Judah Nadich, to give him advice as to what the army could do to offer relief to these bedraggled remnants. The idea was born that the commanding General needed an Advisor on Jewish matters. Eisenhower was going home. His successor was 4-star General Joseph McNarney. The idea was formalized at the War Department in Washington and a civilian official was appointed with the title of Advisor on Jewish Affairs to the Commanding General. The Advisor carried a simulated rank of two-star General, which entitled him to have a uniformed officer as his deputy. The advisor was Rabbi Philip Bernstein of Rochester, N.Y., and he called me from Berlin to become his deputy. Our office in the I.G. Farben building in Frankfurt was next door to General McNarney's office.

In July 1946 more than a year after the war was over, a pogrom took place in the Polish town of Kielce. Forty-two Jews were murdered and laid out around the fountain in the town square. This started a flight of panic. McNarney sent Bernstein and myself to Poland to assess the degree of panic and its effect on people fleeing to get into Germany. We wrote a report to McNarney estimating that 150,000 Jews would be fleeing toward the American Zone. McNarney sent Bernstein to Washington to obtain direction from President Truman, who immediately ordered McNarney to keep the border open and accept all Jews in flight.

That humanitarian decision resulted, during 1946-1947, in the establishment of 64 Jewish DP camps throughout the American Zones of Germany and Austria containing 250,000 Jews, some from as far east as Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan in Russia.

This large DP population was supported by the U.S. Army, the Jewish Agency of Palestine and the Joint Distribution Committee. The DPs created an overall body of their own, called The Central Committee of Liberated Jews in Germany, to which General McNarney gave a charter of recognition.

The Central Committee had a chief rabbi, Samuel Snieg and his assistant Rabbi Samuel Rose, both of whom had lived through Dachau. These two men generated a plan for printing the Talmud and gathered their arguments in a plea to the U.S. Army:

“Would the Army make a major effort in rebuilding that culture which the Nazis had sought to obliterate, thus vindicating the finest principles for which American democracy stands? Would the General print the Talmud in Germany? An edition published in Germany under the auspices of the American Army of occupation would be an historic work and make a tremendous contribution to the morale of the DPs.”

Then the two DP Orthodox rabbis turned to Philip Bernstein, the Advisor to the commanding General, beseeching his assistance and intervention. Though a Reform rabbi, Bernstein took on their cause, as did I. On August 29, 1946, in his official capacity, he submitted to General McNarney a short “Memorandum on Publication of the Talmud.” By October 8, McNarney’s Headquarters justified the “extensive undertaking” to General Lucius Clay, the military Governor of Berlin. Thus began the inevitable march through channels until the project landed on the proper desk of Colonel William Paley (later head of CBS), the director of information control. His approval followed, but he pointed out there was an incredible shortage of paper. The number of Army libraries functioning in Germany was 50, and that was the number of Talmud sets which the Army would provide, so the DP’s in their camps who wanted to study the Talmud could go to the nearest American library and draw out a volume or two at a time, since each set contained 19 volumes.

The official authorization came on February 4, 1947, when General McNarney explained to Rabbi Bernstein and me that the original request for 3,000 sets was not possible, but that 50 sets could be provided at this time at Army expense and, McNarney continued, "It has been further agreed that the American Jewish Relief Agencies will provide at a future date the paper stock for the subsequent printing of all copies of the Talmud in excess of the 50 sets."

That opened the door for the Joint Distribution Committee, American Jewry's major relief agency, and the Vaad Hatzala (Orthodox) to move into the picture. The Joint provided two sets of the Vilna Talmud (no easy matter, since no Talmud was being printed in the U.S. and none was to be found in Europe), to be photocopied and plates made. The Joint also scoured Sweden for paper – all this at its expense.

The actual printing started in November 1948 and the first volumes were planned to be sent to the U.S., for two international conferences, one by the Joint and one by the United Jewish Appeal, as well as presentations to President Truman and General Eisenhower. Two other volumes were targeted for President Chaim Weizmann and Chief Rabbi Isaac Herzog in Israel. The publicity prepared for all these events never occurred. The War of Independence was raging in the new State of Israel, and publicity fanfare did not seem appropriate. In May 1949, General Lucius Clay received his volume, as did General Mc Narney, as did President Weizmann and Rabbi Herzog. Various numbers have been offered as to exactly how many sets were actually printed. There seems to be no official number.

The Paris office of the Joint accepted the responsibility of shipping sets to various destinations. All told, Paris thought it had 650 sets for export. The destinations were as follows:

500 – to Israel

50 – remaining in Germany for army libraries

60 – to U.S. and Canada

22 – France and Algeria

10 – Italy

5 – Hungary

5 – Morocco

3 – Tunisia

5 –1 each to South Africa, Greece, Yugoslavia, Norway and Sweden

660

Rabbis Snieg and Rose, Rabbi Philip Bernstein and myself were each given a set in appreciation for our direct and active involvement in the final success.

Rabbis Snieg and Rose wrote the dedication printed in the first volume.

“In 1946 we turned to the American Army Commander to assist us in the publication of the Talmud. In all the years of exile it has often happened that various governments and forces have burned Jewish books. Never did any publish them for us. This is the first time in the thousands of years of Jewish history that a government has helped in the publication of the Talmud, which is the source of our being and the length of our days. The Army of the United States saved us from death, protects us in this land, and through their aid does the Talmud appear again in Germany.”

MODE = MEMORY TRANSMISSION

START=AUG-10 11:22

END=AUG-10 11:24

FILE NO.= 015

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-THE WEXNER FOUNDATION ND-

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21 751 3739- *****

FAX TRANSMITTAL



551 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10022
(212) 355-6115
(212) 751-3739 Fax

DATE: 8/13/01

TO: Chaplain David Colwell

FAX #: 703-601-4455

Number of Pages (including cover sheet): 6

FROM: RABBI HERBERT A. FRIEDMAN

Message: Dear Chaplain, Attached is copy of the
report I sent to the Army Talmud ceremony.
If you have any questions, please call
1-800-355-6115. Best regards.

FAX TRANSMITTAL

THE WEXNER



HERITAGE FOUNDATION

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