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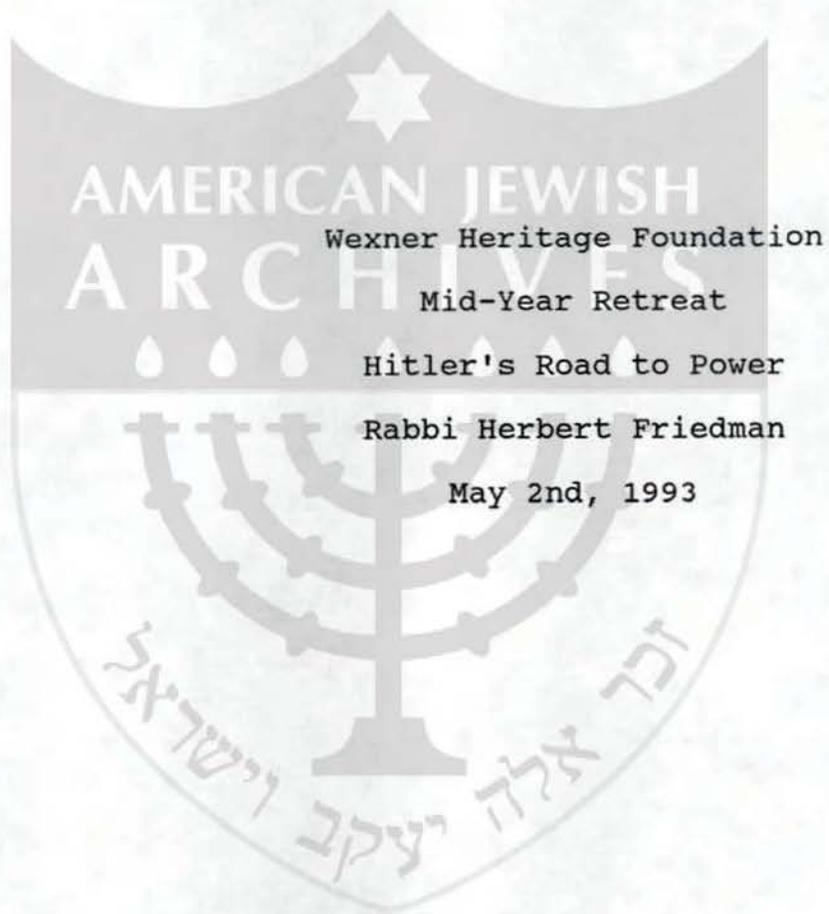
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"Hitler's Road to Power." 2 May 1993.

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Wexner Heritage Foundation

Mid-Year Retreat

Hitler's Road to Power

Rabbi Herbert Friedman

May 2nd, 1993

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Rabbi Herbert Friedman:

Hitler's Road to Power is the announced title, but of course it's the same old business.

Before I begin my speech, I'd like to make a few remarks. So we're going to go around

Hitler's Road to Power and before it and after it -- so I'd like to start for one moment in 1947.

Thousands of people came to Riverside Park on the west side of New York to dedicate a site for a monument. 1947. Two years after the war ended. The New York Times wrote the next day, "It is fitting that a memorial to six million victims of the most tragic mass crime in history should rise in this land of liberty."

The monument was never built.

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The city's bureaucracy aborted the idea, and the city's Jews didn't fight hard enough.

Neubold Morris, who was then the city's parks commissioner objected "Monuments in the parks of New York should be limited to events of American history."

A whole generation later, in 1979, President Jimmy Carter that American history should indeed include this event, and the Congress unanimously approved his proposal that a council be appointed to plan and build a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in the nation's capital.

Last week, another President, William Jefferson Clinton dedicated that museum with the thought that it would serve to remind the American people of its moral duty to combat evil and "whatever other insanity lurks ahead."

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The museum is a stunning creation. Powerful in form and content. Bold and proud. Standing firmly in the very heart of America, linked to the most sacred symbols of American strength and independence: the Capitol, the White House, the monuments to Washington, Lincoln and Jefferson. The memorial rises exactly where it should be.

And I believe that all Americans will benefit as this museum sends forth its message that protection of human life, human dignity and human rights is indeed the foremost expression of America's raison d'être, and the foremost duty of all civilization on this planet.

And now, let's turn to the study of Hitlerism which has fascinated the world since he came to power in 1933, exactly sixty years ago. Thousands of books have been written about him, and one would think there is little left to say.

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But just a few years ago, an academic argument broke out among German historians who seek anew to understand the man and his deeds.

Two points of view are in conflict. One group is called the Intentionalists, and the other group is labeled the Functionalists.

The Intentionalists say that it was Hitler's intention, from the very beginning, to kill every Jew he could get his hands on.

Professor Hilberg whom you will hear tomorrow has unearthed a letter written by Hitler in 1919. Can't go back much earlier than that when you seek to know what the man's intention was.

It happened in a unit to which Hitler belonged where a soldier wanted to know why Germany had lost the war, the first war. The company commander assigned Hitler to write a reply.

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Hitler's answer, dated September 16th, 1919, is his first explicit writing about the Jews.

Lengthy. He stated that the Jews were exploiting other nations, undermining their strength, and infecting them with racial tuberculosis.

He went on to talk about anti-Semitism which in one form just managed to create a few pogroms and did nothing very serious, or what he called the anti-Semitism of reason, which would result in a series of legal measures aimed at the eventual elimination of all Jews. Close quote.

That was 1919. Harold Fleming in his book tells about an interview in which a retired major asked Hitler in 1922 "what do you want to do to the Jews once you have full discretionary power?"

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"Hitler, who until then had spoken calmly, underwent a total transformation. His eyes no longer saw me, but instead bore past me and off into empty space. His explanations grew increasingly voluble until he fell into a kind of paroxysm that ending with his shouting as if he were talking to a whole gathering, not just me."

"Once I am really in power, my first and foremost task will be the annihilation of the Jews. As soon as I have the power to do so, I will have gallows built in rows at the Marienplatz in Munich, for example -- as many as the traffic allows. Then the Jews will be hanged indiscriminately, and they will remain hanging until they stink. They will hang there as long as the principles of hygiene permit.

"As soon as they have been untied, the next batch will be strung up, and so on down the

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line until the last Jew in Munich has been exterminated. Other cities will follow suit, precisely in this fashion, until all Germany has been completely cleansed of all Jews."

1922. It was even before his putsch.

Thirdly, Joachim Fest in a new biography of Hitler tells of an episode in 1924 when a Nazi from Czechoslovakia came to Lansberg near Munich where Hitler was in jail after the putsch had failed. The Nazi asked Hitler whether his attitude toward Judaism had changed since his imprisonment.

Hitler replied "Yes, yes, it's quite right that I have changed my mind about the way to fight Judaism. I have realized that hitherto I have been much too mild! In the course of working out my book, Mein Kampf, I have come to realize that in the future the most stringent methods of struggle must be employed

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if we are to fight through successfully.

"I am convinced that this is a vital question, not only for our people, but for all peoples, for the Jews are the pestilence of the world."

Well, these three quotations from 1919, 1922, 1924 would clearly and undeniably provide evidence that from the earliest moments of the founding of the Nazi Party and his ideology, Hitler expressed the intention of mass murder and total extermination.

Now on the other point of view, the Functionalists make two basic points. One: no document was ever signed by Hitler ordering genocide. No document that has ever surfaced up to now. And secondly, that the original plan did not call for a mass extermination but rather for the resettlement of Jews to two places -- what was called the Lublein Reservation way off in Eastern Poland on the

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Russian border; secondly to the island of Madagascar off the East Coast of Africa in the Indian Ocean.

When these two plans failed, and the historic reasons why they failed are too complicated for us to go into at the moment, the Functionalists say that the Nazis had no choice but to begin shooting and gassing.

Christopher Browning portrays the Functionalist position as "a planless, radicalization" meaning instead of resettlement on the island of Madagascar, you got no choice except to kill!

"A planless radicalization along the twisted road to Auschwitz." No one denies that the Nazi policy was anti-Jewish. But they say extermination was not the plan. And another proof they offer is that German Jews were even allowed to emigrate if they had someplace to

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go -- that was the problem -- as late as
October 1941!

And half the Jews of Germany, that is 300,00
out of 600,000 did manage to get out!

That plan for mass expulsion to the wastelands
of Poland, moving Jews out of Germany, West
Prussia and Silesia, was to make room for the
Volksdeutsch being brought in from Austria and
Czechoslovakia, and Hitler once said "The
Jewish question is really a space question. I
have to get rid of the Jews in order to take
in my own people!"

Himmler wrote a six-page memorandum to Hitler
in May 1940 saying "This method, resettlement,
is still the mildest and the best if one
rejects the method of physical extermination
of a whole people as being un-Germanic and
impossible. Himmler! 1940!

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I keep talking about these dates always to have you put in the back of your mind the thought that the world had many, many opportunities.

Hitler came into power in 1933, and seven long years later in 1940, Himmler is still saying, well, resettlement is better than extermination!

Hitler accepted resettlement and told Himmler to go on and go do it, but it never happened.

And as for that Functionalist argument that Hitler never gave a direct order either orally or in writing, Fleming has a good chapter entitled "The Art of Dissembling." He explains that there was a code language employed in which phrases were used such as:

[SPEAKS IN GERMAN]

in other words the, the leader thinks, the leader wishes, the idea of the leader is do

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this, that or the other thing. And never a direct order.

But whenever Himmler, who was Hitler's number two, heard that phrase,

[SPEAKS GERMAN]

the Fuhrer wants or wills, he interpreted to all of the people below him Heidrich, and Eichmann, and all down the line, that this was a direct order coming from Hitler, but by evasion and camouflage, Hitler attempted to avoid and evade responsibility.

He once said to the chief of staff in his chancelry, "The Fuhrer's chancelry must under no circumstances be seen to be active in this matter." What was the matter? The matter was a decision in 1939 to practice euthanasia, that is kill, every seriously disabled and insane person among the German population! Not just Jews!

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And the method to kill them was by gas. And for two years, it was a very successful method!

And there was a presaging, there was a warning that by later on, this was '39 to '41 -- later on, '42 to '45, gas indeed would be used, but the Fuhrer's chancelry was never to be connected with that experiment.

And the lie was so enormous that nobody questioned the fact that the famous department T-4 which was Himmler, Heidrich, Eichmann, who had offices there in the chancelry, their work was taking place from the very building where Hitler was denying that anything was happening.

All things considered, I certainly, for one, cannot accept the Functionalist argument. Furthermore, it seems to me to be an academic argument; a tempest in a teapot.

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I believe what he clearly said in 1919 is more relevant than what he vaguely hinted at in 1940.

Murder was in the air. The Einsatzgruppen started shooting in July, '41. And do you know how many SS members of those firing squads were required to shoot hundreds and hundreds of thousands of Jews-- there were only three thousand dedicated, sadistic Nazis in the Einsatzgruppen -- that's all you need.

Three thousand men killed almost a million men by rifle fire before it became aware that each bullet cost eight cents and that the method would have to be changed. And that's when shooting shifted to gassing.

Carbon monoxide vans were not efficient. Death camps were constructed. Finally the super-efficient gas Cyclone B which had been used back in the euthanasia problem on the--

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experiment on the, on the insane was introduced as the ultimate weapon destroying millions in the three years between 1942/1945.

Hitler had the Final Solution in his mind in July, '41. With the Wannai Conference in Berlin, that famous one, was delayed until January, 1942; was attended by fifteen men, eight of whom possessed Ph.D degrees.

They decreed the Final Solution, according to Hitler's wish. So much as far as I'm concerned for the Intentionalist, Functionalist academic ping pong.

There's one interesting footnote to this period: on November 28th, 1941, when the Final Solution was already fixed in Hitler's mind and the Wannai Conference was just a few weeks away, he received a special visitor: Hadjamein Hussein, called the Grand Mufti of the Arab World -- incidentally, the

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grandfather of the present Faisal Husseini, who is sitting this very day in this very city as the head of the Palestinian Delegation to the Mideast Peace Talks!

Mufti expressed himself as follows according to the official German record of the meeting: the Arab nations were deeply convinced that Germany would win the war and that the interests of the Arab World would consequently be safeguarded.

The Arabs were moreover natural allies of Germany as could be seen by their mutual enemies! Namely, the British, the Jews, and the Communists!

They are your enemies, Mr. Hitler, they are our enemies in the Arab World. As a result, the Arabs were prepared to collaborate wholeheartedly with Germany and to lend support to the war effort, not only through

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perpetrating acts of sabotage and encouraging political destabilizations, but materially, by forming an Arab Legion.

So was the presentation of the Grand Mufti. The Fuhrer then made the following declaration requesting the Mufti to lock it deep in his heart:

Number one -- he, the Fuhrer, would carry on the fight until the last traces of Jewish, Communist European hegemony over the world had been obliterated.

Number two -- in the course of this fight, the Germany Army would, at a time that could not yet be specified, but in any case, in the clearly foreseeable future, gain the southern exit of the Caucasus. And I'll explain that in a minute with the map which you all have on your seats.

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Number three -- as soon as this breakthrough was made, the Fuhrer would offer the Arab World his personal assurance that the hour of liberation had struck. Thereafter, Germany's only remaining objective in the region would be limited to the annihilation of the Jews living under British protection on Arab land.

And that was the promise that Hitler gave to the Mufti. To wrap up some small details, the Mufti subsequently met with Himmler and Eichmann; all very neat.

If you would take that map, let me show you what Hitler was referring to in point two. This map was designed at 551 Madison Avenue-- a few weeks ago. This is not a map from any Nazi document; this is a, a drawing of what the military intention was.

Nazi Germany, if you look at the top, was moving eastward, attacking Russia and got

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stuck at the battle of Stalingrad. You see where Stalingrad is.

The intention was to come down south, you see, where the dotted line is, and that's the Caucasus that Hitler was referring to. He guaranteed that the German Armies would find an exit from the south-- to the, through the southern end of the Caucasus.

Okay. At the same time, the date on the map is correct, 1942, if you look to the left side, the Germans came across into North Africa, and Rommel fought his way going eastward, look at where that me-- where that arrow on the bottom of the page goes, to El Alamein, and that's where Montgomery stopped him.

The intention was to go on through and from Egypt in a dotted line to the same objective, so the Pinczer Movement was that one Nazi Army

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would come down through the Caucasus from Russia; another moved eastward across North Africa, and had both armies prevailed, where were they supposed to meet? In Palestine.

That would have ended that.

So this is what he told the Mufti. This was his intention. This was his military strategy. It would accomplish two things: it would win the war for him against the Russians and against the British, because at that point he was doublecrossing the Russians -- he had had a, a non-aggression pact with them which he broke!

So he would have won the war, and he would have destroyed Palestine and the Jews. I think this is a very important map.

That's all the background of whether it was Hitler's Nazi intention based upon his

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ideology, or whether it was just accidental, getting pushed into a corner, not knowing what to do with the Jews, and so what he's got to do is kill them.

Nonsense.

Hitler's rise to power began in nineteen hundred and twenty three when he made his putsch. Putsch took place November 8th and 9th, the same date that occurred many years later with the Kristallnacht which took place on the same day. This was 1923.

Kristallnacht was fifteen years later, but Hitler had a way of trying to pound things into people's heads by similarity of anniversaries. Coincidences are not coincidences when you deliberately stage them that way.

There was a beer hall called the Burgerbraukeller which I used to visit

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periodically to look at the sign on the wall which described that this beer hall was in existence from nineteen hundred-- from, from twelve hundred and something, and it described the long history of what happened in all those years, and then it came to 1933, stopped. Not a word cut into the wooden wall.

And suddenly it begins "And in 1945, when the bombing stopped," I mean, what bombing? What happened between 1933, 1945? No reference to World War II. Nothing.

And when the bombing stopped, the Burgerbraukeller was restored and the nice German people came back to drink their beer here, and-- so you have no notion that this was the place where Hitler started!

It doesn't exist any more. They built a subway in Munich, and so the beer hall's been torn down.

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The beer hall is two hundred yards away from the Esar River where there is a short bridge going across, leading into the heart of the City of Munich, and on the side of the bridge there is the Deutsches Museum which was a technological museum, something like the Smithsonian here, and there was a thin string of twelve German police, headed by a sergeant, who, when Hitler came out of the beer hall with a couple of thousand ragtag veterans from World War I, led by a truck with a 50 calibre machine gun on the cab of the truck -- that sergeant who said to Hitler "Where is your license for this parade?" -- Hitler pointed to the machine gun and said "that's my license. Open up and let us pass." There was that one split second in history, and if that sergeant had shot him, that would have been the end of it, wouldn't it?

So when do you shoot? How do you know whom to shoot? How do you recognize who is dangerous

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and who isn't dangerous? These are all the key questions in history.

Anyhow they let him through, and down they went, straight through town, Streicher was on the corner holding a rally; Streicher saw that Hitler had more people than he did. That was the moment that Streicher joined Hitler.

I mean, Hitler picked up his supporters on the way, and they came down toward the Residenzplatz where there's a big German monument to the soldiers of World War I called the Feldhenhalle in front of the Odeonzplatz, and if you go to Munich, I would love you to go there and see it, because you can visualize it all in your mind, and that little side street, the Residenzstrasse comes, funnels into a very narrow channel.

The Nazis came down that street, and there was a much thicker line of police, and those

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police did indeed shoot. Hitler was arm in arm with a man by the name of Schoiber Richtel who was a doctor and a friend of his, a fanatical Nazi, and he was shot and killed, went to the ground, pulled Hitler down with him, dislocated Hitler's shoulder, which is how Hitler missed being shot.

There is a fellow who was a supporter of Hitler by the name of Putzi Humpfschtengel, a graduate of Harvard; a big, six and a half foot art historian who had been brought to Hitler's attention by a group of artists and literati.

Hitler was funded primarily by a woman by the name of Bechstein whose family made pianos. She was very rich, and she gave him the money, but when-- in 1920, two years, three years before the putsch, with which to buy a newspaper. The Volkeshpairbakter, and with that newspaper, Hitler began to collect

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supporters.

Daily paper, lots of propaganda-- building up an organization, and Mme. Bechstein was, was responsible for that, and she was responsible for bringing Humpfstengel to him.

Humpfstengel picked Hitler up, put him in a little VW and took him to the family villa south of Munich at the Staunbergerse, but somebody saw the license plate, and by two days later the cops were there, and they arrested Hitler, and they put him in, brought to trial, and, and he was put in jail for five years. He served nine months in which he wrote the first draft of Mein Kampf.

So he's out of the game. 1923. He became the chancellor of Germany in 1933. Ten years later. Five of the ten years he lost trying to rebuild, rebuild, rebuild. So really it was a meteoric rise.

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And how did he do it? What were his methods?

Number one, he built a huge army, Sturmabteilung, SA Brown Shirts. Hitler, there were two armies, there were the Brown Shirts and there were the Black Shirts. Black Shirts were the Schutzstaffel, SS; the Brown Shirts were the Sturmabteilung, the SA. SS came later. The first army was Brown Shirts.

Who were they? All the unemployed from-- in the Great Depression and Inflation at the end of the Weimar Republic, and the way Hitler recruited them was very simple: schnapps, wurst, cigaretten - three things. You didn't have to give anybody money. If you gave them some whiskey and you gave them some, some-- hot dogs and some cigarettes and you gave them a set of clean clothing to wear, the SS Army grew to four million within a matter of months!

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Remember those three things. If you ever need to recruit a private army, that'll do the trick!

The leader of the SA was a captain by the name of Elmst Wurm. All the rank titles are all from World War I. He was Hitler's closest friend. He was his first follower. He was his devoted lap dog. He was the one who did the most.

So, the first thing you do is by organizing a private army for yourself. The army was ten times larger than the armed forces of the Weimar Republic.

The second thing you do is practice mass hypnosis. And this great army would be brought together -- I mean, think three hundred and sixty five people here today was a large number to try to handle at one time and one place.

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Bring a quarter of a million people together.
Put them in the Koenigsplatz. Build a stadium
for them in Munich, in, in, in Nuremberg where
the, where the Olympic Games were held in
1936.

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How did the world not boycott? But the world
didn't. And the United States sent Jesse
Owen, and even though he was Black and Hitler
didn't want him to run, because the Blacks are
also a degenerate race -- not as bad as the
Jews, but almost. But because the United
States sent this runner, then he was allowed
to run. Close parentheses.

When you ask questions, how does the world
permit something to happen, you can't get a,
a real answer, because there is no real answer.
The answer is lassitude. The answer is not
willing to upset the boat. There-- you know
all the answers.

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You build a stadium. You take a big open square. You put a quarter of a million people in it. You call this at dusk, and as the sun is going down and the darkness is beginning to creep up, you put up your charismatic demagogue -- I mean, Hitler's orations were absolutely stupendous.

A quarter of a million men, in uniform, standing, in rank -- I mean, just think of it.

And then the torches begin to get lit, and then men come up and down the rows between the ranks and pass torches to each other, and more torches get lit, and it's getting darker outside, and pretty soon the whole sky is black but the whole stadium is in flames.

And then the drums start to beat, and the tattoos start going, and then slowly but surely the rhythm increases, and it goes from lower to higher, to higher, to higher, and the

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crowd is starting and it's Seig Heil, Seig Heil, Seig Heil, SEIG HEIL!

Everybody's hypnotized! You can do anything with them!

And then the speech comes quietly, not in a harangue, telling them what you want them to do. And this went on in city after city after city, year after year after year, and Germany was hypnotized. Asking how does a man take control of a nation of - whatever it was at that time, I think sixty million people. Build yourself a private army, and then you go into mass hypnosis.

And then the third thing that you do is you appoint a blocleiter, that is a small fuhrer in every single apartment house. The German word for apartment house is a bloc, B L O C, I think it's spelled.

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You have one person there, like that concierge lady who sits in every French apartment house. Try to keep anything secret from her. Can't be done.

The blocleiter looks at the mail. The blocleiter monitors the radios by walking up and down the stairs and listening at every door to see who was listening to BBC, who was listening to forbidden, who is doing things, who is receiving mail from abroad which is forbidden -- all the things where there were no human rights in Germany. No civil rights whatsoever. They were all taken away in March of 1933. Tell you about that in a minute.

So you plant your spies, one in every apartment house in the country. One in every small village in the country. In the village post office, looking at the mail.

Nobody escapes the microscopic attention of a

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police state. And the blocleiter system served efficiently for twelve solid years. From '33 to '45.

He got money from the industrialists to keep this whole machine going. He got money from the sale -- Fritz Teissen who was the largest steel manufacturer in Germany was the most important industrialist who supported him.

The Army stayed away from him. The Army in Germany was a Prussian elite, nobility-cast, and they had no use for vulgarians. He was an Austrian corporal. Who was he? Nothing!

But from the literati, interestingly enough, from the intellectuals, interestingly enough, from the industrialists, interestingly enough - he found his support. And, of course, from the unemployed: his mass army.

He began winning local elections. And we can

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go very quickly to 1933 where, in the form of a coalition government which you and I understand perfectly well from all our knowledge of how elections work in Israel, the Nazi Party --

[SPEAKS IN HEBREW?]

I'm not making any comparison. I'm just explaining to you what a coalition, what a coalition government is and reminding you that you know what a coalition government is.

The Nazis, and I want to be accurate about this, won 43.9 percent of the election. The Nazi Party. And a very small party called the Nationalists won 7.9. So with 43 point something, and with 7 point something, you reach 51.8 percent. And you form a government.

And the Nazi Party and the Nationalist Party made a coalition and formed a government, and Hitler said, "And therefore I want to be

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chancellor, and I will accept nothing less!"

There was a man who was the vice-chancellor by the name of Fritz Von Pappen, and Von Pappen said okay. Let's let him be the chancellor. I will try to persuade the president, Von Hindenburg - (Von Hindenburg was the great German war hero. Von Hindenburg was 80 something years old; he was rapidly losing all the marbles. He was not sure who was parading down on the street below the presidential palace. He thought it was veterans of his World War I divisions who were coming to pay their respects to him. Half the time he wasn't sure what he was seeing or what he was listening to.)

But he was persuaded that the small Nationalist Party plus Von Pappen who was one of the Prussian aristocrats whom Von Hindenburg trusted would, in Von Pappen's words, tame Hitler. "Don't worry, Mr.

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President. Appoint him the chancellor. We will keep him tame."

And so it happened! And on January 30th, 1933, Hitler was appointed Chancellor. By six months later Hitler was writing a letter to Von Pappen which said in essence: don't bother me with your complaints that my SS are too rough. Don't bother me with anything. Don't bother me that my enabling act is too dictatorial. As a matter of fact, shut up! And don't try to tell me what to do.

So, obviously Hitler was not tamed, and Von Pappen made one of the most egregious errors that could ever be made in German politics. The sergeant who didn't shoot at the bridge, and the Von Pappen, who aided and abetted Hitler's rise to power through a mistaken political judgment were equally guilty.]

One man didn't do something, and the other man

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did do something!

So, you know, you have to be careful.

A few weeks after Hitler was Chancellor, a plot was set on foot which the Reichstag Building which is the German legislature -- it's like the Capitol Building -- was set on fire. A Dutch young boy, Communist, half-wit, was found wandering, stumbling around the building, was arrested, was accused of starting the fire.

Hitler made a speech in which he said that these Communists must be exterminated. Every Communist deputy in the Reichstag shall be shot tonight. He terrorized the country, just as he had terrorized the whole Nazi Party many years earlier when he decided that Captain Wurm, the head of the SA was too powerful -- his best friend! -- so he, Hitler, led a delegation of Black Shirts, SS, down to the

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lake where there was a great big homosexual orgy going on, because most of the top leaders of the SA were in, were homosexuals, but of, but not of the kind that you and I might know today.

They were, they were ruffians. They, they were really vulgarians, and Hitler used that as an excuse. He barged into the place right in the, in the beginning of dawn, put a pistol on the table and said to Van Wurm "Use it on yourself." And Wurm said "You want to shoot me, shoot me. I'm not going to do it to myself."

So Hitler walked out of the room, sent in two SS officers who shot him.

Hitler had no problem doing anything like that.

And so, when it came to the Communist deputies

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the night of the Reichstag fire, shoot them all, tonight, a hundred and fifty of them were shot.

The next day, the remaining deputies in the Parliament passed what is called in the history books the Enabling Act, and the Enabling Act gave Hitler the power to run Germany. The Enabling Act suspended all civil rights.

Can you imagine a parliament passing a bill as follows: The following acts are permissible, are legally permissible: 1. Restrictions on personal liberty. 2. Restrictions on the right of free expression of opinion, including freedom of the press; on the right of association and assembly.

Permissible are violations of the privacy of postal, telegraphic and telephone communications. Permissible are house

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searches. Orders for confiscations of property. And any other rights are permissible beyond any legal limits which have heretofor prevailed.

You wipe out all civil rights! You want to open up a concentration camp? You quote that paragraph.

The Enabling Act of February 28th, 1933, one month after he took office, gave him the power to dominate Germany. And that was it. And with his coalition, and then throwing out his coalition partners and, and telling them they didn't count, and telling them to shut up -- Hitler ran the country.

I haven't got time to take you through the war. He consolidated his power from 1933 to 1939; all the things that happened then you remember.

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The way Chamberlain caved in and gave Hitler Czechoslovakia; the way Kristallnacht destroyed the morale of the remaining Jews in Germany; the way the United States was isolated.

The United States Ambassador to the United Kingdom, Joseph Kennedy, was an isolationist!

The strongest public voice in America, Charles Lindbergh was an isolationist! Nobody in America wanted to fight Hitler!

And so he just went on doing everything he wanted to do! He went into the Tsarland and took it, and nobody said anything. He took Czechoslovakia. He made the Anschluss with Austria. He just kept building power, power, power, doing what he wanted to Germans, to Jews, inside Europe, gobbling up territory and finally making his deal with Russia for non-aggression which he thought would give him a free hand to turn and fight against everybody

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else on the European continent.

When the war started, Hitler had two wars. One war was the strategic war for world conquest, and the other was the elimination of the Jews, and Hitler fought them both in parallel fashion, thank God.

Because he was defeated in both of them, even though we suffered the losses we did in the Holocaust. But he did not obtain world conquest, and he did not obtain the elimination of all the Jews in the world.

He did take Poland, France, Belgium, Holland, Scandinavia inside of a few months. By June of 1940 he had all of them in his pocket. And then he turned to take England, and by September he lost England. That was that famous Battle of Britain in the air where, where Churchill said "So many owe so much to so few."

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He was talking about five hundred British pilots who beat the German Luftwaffe off.

And without control of the air, Hitler couldn't take England. And that's when he turned and went eastward and attacked Russia.

As he went on, trying to win the war against his enemies, he kept doing his war against the Jews. Because he put in so much energy, resources, manpower, money, and nervous tension into that war against the Jews, some losses took place on the military front.

And so in a sense, his war against the Jews cost him to a certain extent his military objectives.

There was one plot to assassinate him. Didn't happen until July of '44. Failed. And then by a year later, April of '45. The war was over. Hitler committed suicide on April 27th

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of 1945, and Germany surrendered ten days later on May the 8th.

I would like to tell you very quickly what I think the lessons of that whole period are. And there are four failures. Those are the lessons.

The failure of the Germans to stop Hitler early in the 1920s. Number two, the failure of the Western democracies to stop him in the 1930s. Number three, the failure of Christianity -- and I received an interesting letter from a fellow who said why was I condemning the whole Christian religion; I could pick out some Christians - not Christianity. But I make the blanket condemnation because of two facts: number one, Pope made a concordat with Hitler on July 8th, 1933.

Within five months of the time that Hitler is

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in office, the Pope is making a deal with him saying don't you - in essence - these are not the words of the pact, but this is the essence of it -- don't you touch the millions and millions and millions of Catholics in Germany. Don't touch the monks, don't touch the monasteries, don't touch the parochial schools, leave the Catholic system alone.

And that why I use the generic word all Christianity.

And in return, the Catholic Church, from the Vatican on down, will not condemn you or enter into any political conflict with you publicly in order to shape world public opinion against you.

Now the way the Catholic Church is organized, the Church speaks for hundreds of millions of Catholics. They don't deny that.

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Let me at the same time make the point that was, that I was reminded of, that there were individual Christians in Germany -- most outstanding example is a man by the name of Deitrich Bonhoffer who was one of the founders of the Evangelische Confessioneskirche -- the Evangelical Confessional Church, which was an example of honest, upright German Christians trying to fight this devil.

There were others. There was the White Rose Group at the University of Munich, and there were other individuals. There was a Pastor Niemuller whose record is a bit more spotty. He, he did fight Hitler to a certain extent; he did wind up in a concentration camp. Bonhoffer was executed; Niemuller was not. But, but even though he fought Hitler, Niemuller's record of anti-Semitism is too clear to avoid.

He was an anti-Semite; he was against Hitler

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for other reasons.

The Protestant Church was deadly silent. The Protestant Church is not organized in any way so that any one head of it can make a deal with the Nazis and the Catholic Pope did, but in their silence, they were equally morally guilty.

So it's the failure of the Germans, the failure of the Western democracies, the failure of Christianity, and fourthly the failure of the Jews in the Free World to stop Hitler. And you all know that story.

Well a half century has gone by, and all these are lessons of the past. I would like to leave you with a question: what is the lesson of the future for your generation?

You're the ones who count now. You are the ones who can turn history around; who can

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change darkness into light. Almost all of my generation, that is those who experienced the horrible event on its periphery, as did I, or others who actually walked through the flames and emerged alive, have passed from the earth, or we soon will.

Another decade, two at the most, will end the epoch as all the final witnesses perish. But remember that the Children of Israel collectively is an imperishable People. Thus you will carry the message of the murder to your immediate children and they to theirs, and the generations will roll forward, bearing the memory of this blackest moment in all our history.

Now the main purpose of memory is not only to give stern warning to the world that we shall never permit this to happen again, for we have entered a new era possessing new powers of resistance, both physical and psychological.

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The main purpose of memory is to invigorate ourselves to enthuse and inspire and encourage ourselves to maintain our mission of building a better world. That's what we're here for.

The blackness which the barbarians sought to impose on the world by eliminating us will be turned around by our survival and by the light of our idealism, by our belief that humankind can conquer evil.

We, the Children of Israel, have overcome Hitler by surviving. We shall conquer our present fascination with the temptations of assimilation; we are rebuilding Zion. And we shall remain true to our faith and tradition. That is the lesson of the Holocaust for your generation and your childrens'.

May you live proudly as Jews, holding aloft the light of Judaism in all its liberal meanings, so that the entire world will

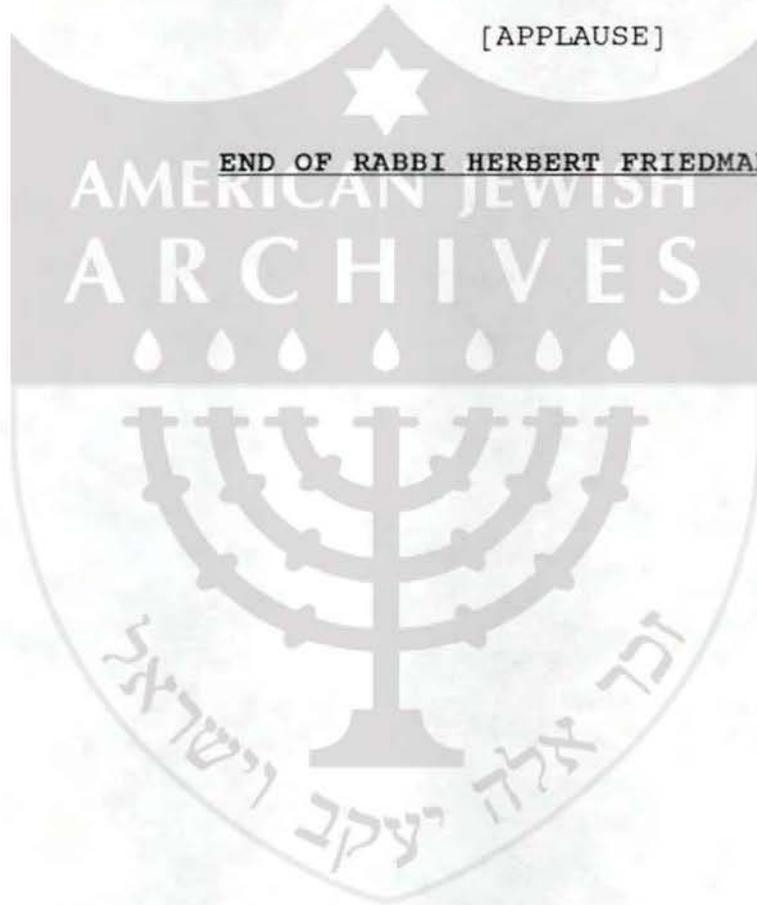
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inherit its blessings of peace, justice and
mercy. That is your charge. Go fulfill it.

[APPLAUSE]

END OF RABBI HERBERT FRIEDMAN ADDRESS



HITLER'S ROAD TO POWER

Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman
Washington, D.C. - Mid Year Retreat
May 2, 1993

In 1947 thousands of people came to Riverside Park, on the Westside of New York, to dedicate a site for a monument. The N.Y. Times wrote the next day, "It is fitting that a memorial to 6 million victims of the most tragic mass crime in history, the Nazi genocide of the Jews, should rise in this land of liberty." The monument was never built. The city's bureaucracy aborted the idea, and the city's Jews didn't fight hard enough. Newbold Morris, the city's parks commissioner, objected that "monuments in the parks should be limited to events of American history."

A generation later, in 1979, President Jimmy Carter decided that American history should include this event and the congress unanimously approved his proposal that a Council be appointed to plan and build a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in the nation's capital.

Last week another President, William Jefferson Clinton, dedicated that museum with the thought that it would serve to remind the American people of its moral duty to combat evil and "whatever insanity lurks ahead."

The museum is a stunning creation, powerful in form and content, bold and proud, standing firmly in the very heart of America, linked to the most sacred symbols of American strength and independence, the Capitol, the White House, the monuments

to Washington, Lincoln and Independence. It rises exactly where it should be.

I believe that all Americans will benefit as this museum sends forth its message that protection of human life, human dignity and human rights is indeed the foremost expression of America's raison d'être and the foremost duty of all civilization on this planet.

And now we turn to our study of Hitlerism, which has fascinated the world, since he came to power in 1933, exactly sixty years ago. Thousands of books have been written about him, and one would think there is little left to say. But just a few years ago an academic argument has broken out among German historians who seek anew to understand the man and his deeds. Two points of view are in conflict. One group is called intentionalists and the other is labelled functionalists.

The intentionalists say it was Hitler's intention, from the very beginning, to kill every Jew he could get his hands on. Professor Hilberg has unearthed a letter written by Hitler in 1919.

"In the unit to which Hitler belonged, a soldier wanted to know why Germany had lost the war. The company commander assigned Hitler to reply.

Hitler's answer, dated September 16, 1919, is his first explicit writing about the Jews. In this lengthy memorandum, he stated that the Jews were exploiting other nations, undermining their strength and infecting them with racial tuberculosis. He went on to discuss anti-semitism, making a distinction between an anti-semitism of emotion, which could give rise only to temporary eruptions, or pogroms, without leading to a solution of the Jewish problem; and an anti-semitism of reason, which would result in a series of legal measures aimed at the eventual elimination of the Jews."

Gerald Fleming, in his book, tells of an interview in which a retired major, Josef Hell, then a journalist, asked Hitler in 1922: "What do you want to do to the Jews once you have full discretionary powers?" Hitler, who until then had spoken calmly, underwent a total transformation:

"His eyes no longer saw me but instead bore past me and off into empty space; his explanations grew increasingly voluble until he fell into a kind of paroxysm that ended with his shouting, as if to a whole public gathering: "Once I really am in power, my first and foremost task will be the annihilation of the Jews. As soon as I have the power to do so, I will have gallows built in rows -- at the Marienplatz in Munich, for example -- as many as traffic allows. Then the Jews will be hanged indiscriminately, and they will remain hanging until they stink; they will hang there as long as the principles of hygiene permit. As soon as they have been untied, the next batch will be strung up, and so on down the line, until the last Jew in Munich has been exterminated. Other cities will follow suit, precisely in this fashion, until all Germany has been completely cleansed of Jews."

Joachim Fest, in a new biography of Hitler, tells of an episode in 1924, when a Nazi from Czechoslovakia, had come to Landsberg, where Hitler was in jail after his failed putsch. The Nazi asked Hitler whether his attitude toward Judaism had changed since his imprisonment. Hitler replied:

"Yes, yes, it's quite right that I have changed my mind about the way to fight Judaism. I have realized that hitherto I have been much too mild. In the course of working out my book I have come to realize that in the future the most stringent methods of struggle must be employed if we are to fight through successfully. I am convinced that this is a vital question not only for our people, but for all peoples. For the Jews are the pestilence of the world."

These three quotations, from 1919, 1922, and 1924 would clearly and undeniably provide evidence that from the earliest moments in the founding of the Nazi party, Hitler expressed the intention of mass murder and total extermination.

From the other point of view, the functionalists make two basic points - one, that no document signed by Hitler ordering genocide has ever surfaced; and secondly, that the original plan called for resettlement of Jews to the Lublin Reservation in eastern Poland, and to the island of Madagascar, but when these plans failed, the Nazis had no choice but to begin shooting and gassing. Christopher Browning portrays the functionalists position as a "planless radicalization along the twisted road to Auschwitz." No one denies that the Nazi policy was anti-Jewish, but extermination was not the plan. German Jews were even allowed to emigrate (if they had someplace to go) as late as Oct. 1941 and half the Jews got out (300,000 of 600,000).

The plan was for mass expulsion to the wastelands of Poland - moving Jews out of West Prussia and Silesia, to make room for Volksdeutsch being brought in from Austria and Czechoslovakia. Hitler said to Colin Ross on March 12, 1940: "The Jewish question is really a space question. He too would welcome a positive solution - but this was not possible when he had not sufficient space for his own people." Himmler wrote a six-page memo to Hitler in May 1940 saying: "this method, resettlement, is still the mildest and the best, if one rejects the method of physical extermination of a whole people as un-German and impossible." Hitler accepted resettlement and told Himmler to go ahead with it.

As for the functionalist argument that Hitler never gave a direct order, either orally or in writing, Fleming has a good chapter entitled "The Art of Dissembling." There was a code language employed, in which phrases were used such as: The Fuhrer thinks, or the Fuhrer wishes, or the idea of the Fuhrer is, etc, etc, - and whenever Himmler, who was Hitler's #2, said "der Fuhrer wunscht", everyone understood this was a direct order. By such evasion and camouflage, Hitler attempted to avoid and evade responsibility. He once said to the Chief of Staff of his Chancellery office "the Fuhrer's Chancellery must under no circumstances be seen to be active in this matter" (of the euthanasia program 1939-1941 for crippled and insane, wherein gas was first employed). The enormous lie was that the Department T4 for running the concentration camps was located in the very same Chancellery building. Heidrich and Eichmann had their offices there.

All things considered, I certainly cannot accept the functionalist argument. Furthermore, it seems to me an academic tempest in a teapot. No functionalist takes the position of denying the Holocaust ever happened, as does David Irving and other radical writers. All the functionalists are saying is that Hitler got cornered into a position which was not his intention from the beginning. I believe what he clearly said in 1919, not what he vaguely hinted at in 1940.

Murder was in the air. Einsatzgruppen started shooting in July '41 and only 3000 of them killed hundreds of thousands. Carbon monoxide vans lumbered across the countryside. Death camps were constructed. And finally the super-efficient gas

Zyklon B was introduced as the ultimate weapon, destroying millions in the three years of 1942-45. The Wannsee Conference in Berlin in January 1942, attended by 15 men, half of whom possessed PhD degrees, decreed the Final Solution, according to Hitler's wish, So much for the intentionalist - functionalists academic ping-pong.

There is an interesting footnote to this period. On Nov. 28, 1941, with the Final Solution already determined in Hitler's mind, he received a special visitor, Haj Amin Husseini, called the Grand Mufti of the Arab world, incidentally the grandfather of the present Faisal Husseini, sitting this very day in this very city as the head of the Palestinian delegation to the Mid-East peace talks. The Mufti expressed himself as follows, according to the official record of the meeting:

The Arab nations were deeply convinced that Germany would win the war, and that the interests of the Arab world would consequently be safeguarded. The Arabs were, moreover, natural allies of Germany, as could be seen by their mutual enemies: the British, the Jews, and the communists. As a result, the Arabs were prepared to collaborate wholeheartedly with Germany and to lend support to the war effort, not only through perpetrating acts of sabotage and encouraging political destabilizations, but materially, by forming an Arab Legion.

The Fuhrer then made the following declaration, requesting the Mufti to lock it deep in his heart:

1. He (the Fuhrer) would carry on the fight until the last traces of Jewish communist European hegemony had been obliterated.
2. In the course of this fight, the German army would -- at a time that could not yet be specified, but in any case in the clearly foreseeable future -- gain the southern exit of the Caucasus.

3. As soon as this breakthrough was made, the Fuhrer would offer the Arab world his personal assurance that the hour of liberation had struck. Thereafter, Germany's only remaining objective in the region would be limited to the annihilation of the Jews living under British protection in Arab lands.

To wrap up some details, the Mufti subsequently met with Himmler and Eichmann. Very neat.

And now we go back to Hitler's Road to Power from the Putsch in 1923 to the Chancellorship in 1933 - a remarkable saga of recovery from utter defeat to the height of political success, in a single decade.

