



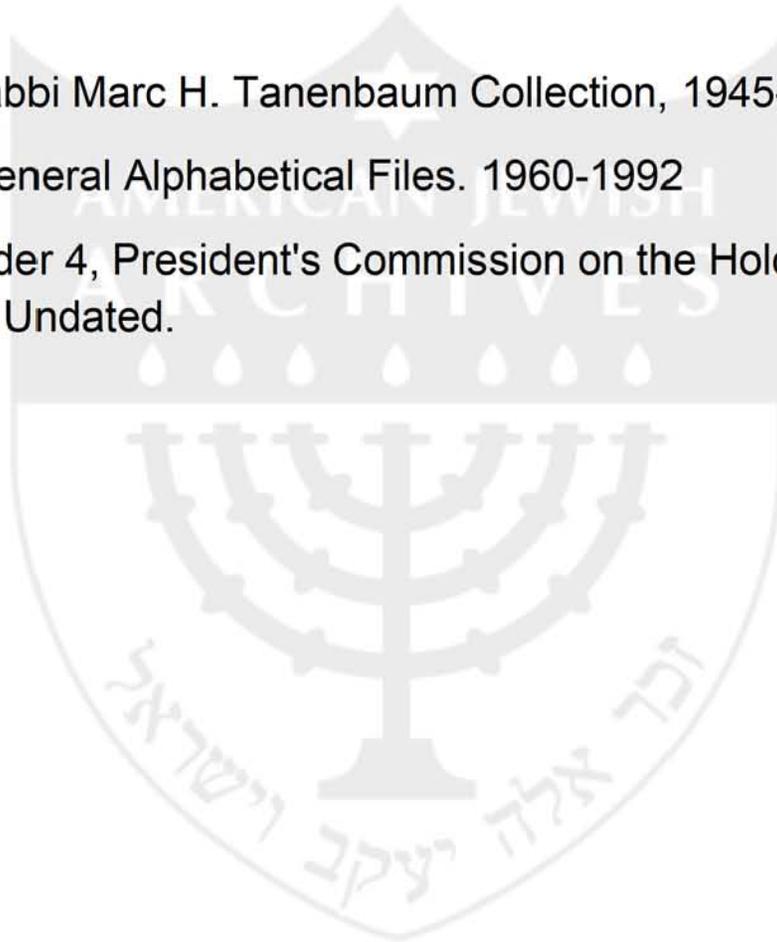
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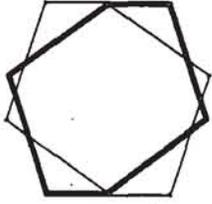
Preserving American Jewish History

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Box 89, Folder 4, President's Commission on the Holocaust,
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The Graduate School and University Center
of the City University of New York

Ralph Bunche Institute on the United Nations
Graduate Center: 33 West 42 Street, New York, N.Y. 10036
212 790-4222

February 1, 1983

TO: Members of the Commission on the Holocaust

FROM: Seymour M. Finger *S.M.F.*
Director, Commission on the Holocaust

1. After the meeting of June 2, 1982, I proceeded, as agreed, to commission papers by qualified scholars on relevant subjects for inquiry. (A list of papers and scholars is attached. This is, however, a partial list. Other papers are still in preparation and will be made available to the Commission as soon as they are completed.) Meanwhile, for two-and-a-half months, I reviewed the tentative draft in the light of comments made by the Commission at the meeting and those submitted in writing (these included written comments sent by the Chairman, Justice Arthur J. Goldberg, and distributed before the June 2 meeting) and I thereupon made revisions suggested by Justice Goldberg and other Commission members and substantiated by the scholarly research available. No revision -- not even a tentative one -- was made in response to pressure. My aim was to have a revised draft, plus the scholarly research papers already prepared, ready for the next meeting of the Commission.

2. During the same two-and-a-half months, upon instruction from the Chairman, I made repeated requests to the principal sponsor for funding. According to the agreed schedule, funding was already two months overdue when the Commission met June 2. The Chairman also talked to the principal sponsor twice on the need to honor his commitments. We had run out of funds by June and had a substantial amount of unpaid obligations even then. In fact, had it not been for a grant from the Merit Gasoline Foundation the June 2 meeting could not have been held, just as this meeting could not be held were it not for the fact the Chairman had undertaken to cover the expenses of this meeting. Meanwhile, we had substantial commitments for additional papers which would become due in the fall of 1982. Since the terms of the grant commitment were not met, continuation of further research became impossible. The Chairman decided on August 19 that he had no alternative but to terminate the work of the Commission. In his letter to all Commission members, including the grantor, Justice Goldberg stated:

/...

Of course, every member of the Commission on the basis of his own knowledge of what occurred and information Dr. Finger would be glad to supply from the research already done, is free to write and publish a scholarly report. I, with the assistance of Dr. Finger, intend personally to write and publish an article on this subject. [assuming of course that the Commission's work was not funded].

The Chairman made it clear that all members of the Commission could publish their own versions. That provision applied equally to the grantor, who is an Honorary Vice Chairman. Moreover, all of the research material of the Commission would be lodged with the Ralph Bunche Institute on the U.N. and be available to all members of the Commission and be made a matter of public information.

After the Chairman's letter, outlining the sole reason for terminating the work of the Commission, was mailed to all members of the Commission, no members of the Commission, including the grantor objected to the accuracy of his statement as to the reasons for terminating the Commission, under the given circumstances.

3. Contrary to certain press reports no Jewish organization attempted to exert pressure on me or on the Chairman to alter the report or distort its conclusions. Certain members of the Commission who have affiliations with these organizations made comments on the draft, as did other members who have no such affiliations. Since all members serve in an individual capacity, not as representatives of any organization, comments by all members received equal treatment, based solely on their merits. No one, including those who made comments, even intimated that the report should be tailored to avoid embarrassment to any American Jewish organization.

4. A statement has been made by the grantor that Dr. Merlin, who was engaged by me to produce a preliminary draft, was "insulted" by the Chairman. Because of the size of the Commission, the Chairman ruled that it would be a "donnybrook" to hear every staff member, including Dr. Merlin, respond to criticism of the draft by members of the Commission. However, in a conversation with me while the meeting was in progress, he asked me, as director of the Commission and the person responsible for the appointment of Dr. Merlin and the rest of the staff, to reply to any unfair attacks by Commission members. This I did on behalf of Dr. Merlin and the staff as a whole.

5. The Chairman stands by his commitment, included in his press statement of January 19, 1983, to make funds available to complete the scholarly study which the Commission authorized.

/...

Press stories about the dissolution of the American Jewish Commission on the Holocaust have begun to verge on the ludicrous. Indeed, it is reported to me that the American-Arab Relations Committee, which throughout the years has shown its animus toward Israel and the American Jewish community, has offered to finance the study -- an offer which, if made, would obviously be unacceptable given the record of that organization.

In light of the situation, I have decided that I will personally provide and assure the provision of the funds required for the Commission to complete its scholarly study. Accordingly, I have instructed Ambassador Finger, research director of the study, to reconvene the Commission in New York on February 9, 1983.

There are, to date, a few relatively small contributions from individuals and from the Holocaust Survivors in Cracow. These are not very substantial; nevertheless, the Chairman has directed that the work go forward, in keeping with his commitment to meet the financial obligations involved. However, the Chairman and I have stated in prior Commission meetings and have emphasized in all media that such contributions must be from reputable sources and have no strings attached. Moreover, no contributions are acceptable from organizations whose former activities are the subject of our study; this is obviously necessary to avoid any conflict of interest.

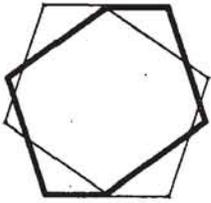
6. The grantor on January 26 told a reporter that he would be willing to provide the balance of the funds. This is what I attempted to get him to do over a two-and-a-half month period last summer, without success. He said he had withheld the funds because "Samuel Merlin had resigned under immense pressure." In fact, Mr. Merlin had decided in April to terminate his work for the Commission in order to devote himself to projects of his own. This was many weeks before there was even a hint of criticism of him from any member of the Commission. He even refused my offer in April to serve as a consultant on an ad hoc basis.

At our first meeting with the grantor before the Commission was established, the Chairman made it clear that no one, including the grantor, would have any control over the Commission's findings except the Commission itself. As director I engaged various researchers on a consultant basis. Any decisions as to engaging new researchers or continuing existing commitments would be made by me, under the general guidance of the Commission and no one else.

7. The Chairman has prepared, with my assistance, a draft report for consideration by the Commission. It will be recalled that, at our June 2 meeting, he stated his intention to write such a draft and invited other members to submit their own drafts of all or any part of the projected report. We have received no drafts from any other members, but we have had a number of useful comments and criticisms. Inasmuch as very preliminary drafts which were never even submitted to the Commission have been made available to the press, it seems to the Chairman and me appropriate that this report be distributed at the February 9 meeting. It is hoped that the members of the Commission will submit either their own versions of the draft, if they deem it advisable, or comments, criticisms or reservations. It would be desirable that this be done with all deliberate speed. And, it should be borne in mind that the additional scholarly papers will be made available to members of the Commission as soon as they are produced. After the scholarly papers are submitted and distributed, and after a due lapse of time to allow Commission members to do their individual work, the Chairman and I, will submit a revised draft in light of the suggestions, revisions and criticisms that may have been offered. This revised draft will, of course, be distributed to the Commission at a subsequent meeting. This is in no way to deter any Commission member from filing a dissent if he or she deems it necessary.

8. The Chairman stated at our first meeting that the work of the Commission would be done without fear or favor so that, in the interest of history and the transcending importance of the subject of our inquiry, our work should as far as possible establish the truth of what occurred and document its findings. This continues to be our objective.

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COMMISSION ON THE ACTIONS OF AMERICAN JEWS DURING THE HOLOCAUST

Papers by Scholars

1. Antonescu's reported offer to release 70,000 Jews from Transdnistria (September 1942-February 1943 and subsequent developments) Dr. Hava Eshkoli
2. Slovakia and the "Europa Plan" (1942-1943) Dr. Livia Rothkirchen
3. The Bermuda Conference (April 1943) Dr. Monty Penkower
4. The campaign for a governmental rescue agency.... (1942-44) Prof. Aaron Berman
5. The War Refugee Board (January 1944-45)
6. Horthy's reported offer to release the Jews from Hungary (July 1944) Dr. Bela Vago
7. The Joel Brand Mission and other Nazi ransom offers; negotiations with the enemy (May 1944)...
8. The Biltmore Conference and the American Jewish Conference Dr. David Shpiro
9. The American Jewish Committee and the Joint Distribution Committee Dr. Edward Pinsky
10. The World Jewish Congress Dr. Monty Penkower
11. The American Jewish Congress
12. The Zionist organizations Dr. David Shpiro
13. The Jewish Labor Committee Dr. David Kranzler
14. The Orthodox Rescue Committee
15. The Emergency Committee to Save the Jewish People of Europe Lisa Kovitch
16. Prominent Jews (Bernard Baruch, Louis Brandeis, Benjamin Cohen, Felix Frankfurter, Sidney Hillman, Herbert Lehman, David Niles, Joseph Proskaver, Samuel Rosenman) Profs. Richard Breitman and Alan Kraut



United States Holocaust Memorial Council

Office of the
Director

February 4, 1983

MEMORANDUM TO U.S. HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL COUNCIL MEMBERS

FROM: Seymour Siegel
Executive Director

President Reagan addressed some 200 Jewish leaders at the White House on February 2. I am enclosing the text of his remarks, which mention the work of the Council and the American Gathering and the importance of commemorating the Holocaust and its victims.

For Immediate Release

February 2, 1983

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
IN A
MEETING WITH JEWISH LEADERS

February 2, 1983

The East Room

10:07 A.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning, and please sit down. And thank you very much. I've just had the opportunity to hear from your leaders regarding the future of the Middle East and world Jewry, and I thank you all for coming to the White House today. We're honored to have you. And I want to take a few moments now, if I could, to discuss some thoughts of my own about the critical issues that we face together.

First, let me say again how honored I am that the leaders of American and world Jewry many of you whom I've known over the years, are meeting together here.

This week marks the 50th anniversary of Adolph Hitler's rise to power. It's incumbent upon us all, Jews and Gentiles alike, to remember the tragedy of Nazi Germany, to recall how a fascist regime conceived in hatred brought a reign of terror and atrocity on the Jewish people and on the world, and to pledge that never again will the decent people of the world permit such a thing to occur. Never again can people of conscience overlook the rise of anti-Semitism in silence.

Americans can be proud, I think, that our government is moving forward to build a memorial in our nation's capitol to commemorate the Holocaust. Those who perished as a result of Nazi terror, millions of individual men and women and children whose lives were taken so senselessly, must never be forgotten.

I'm aware that, in April, American Holocaust survivors and their families will gather in Washington to thank our country for what it has done for them. And this gathering should touch the heart of every American.

You know, perhaps better than I, that the defeat of the Third Reich did not present a final triumph over bigotry and prejudice. Even today in the free world we hear of swastikas painted on synagogues, of holy books and scrolls desecrated by hoodlums, and of terrorist attacks. We see Jewish schools in Europe forced to employ armed guards to protect children, and many congregations, even in this country, hiring guards to protect worshipping during the high holy days. These things bear witness that the fight, even in the free world, is not yet won.

In totalitarian societies, and particularly the Soviet Union, Jews face even greater adversity. Despite the rights enumerated in the Soviet constitution and in the Helsinki agreements, Soviet Jews are denied basic rights to study and practice their religion, to secure higher education and good jobs, or to emigrate freely. Heroic men and women like Anatoly Shcharansky, who openly proclaim their Jewish pride and desire to emigrate, are subjected to brutal harassment and imprisonment.

MORE

But, just as Soviet Jews will not forget their own heritage, nor abandon hope for freedom, we will not forget them. We will not, as the Western democracies did four days*ago, turn a deaf ear to distant pleas for help.

There are those who suggest that a new era of improved East-West relations is possible because the new Soviet leadership shares Western tastes. Well, yes, we're told that Mr. Andropov drinks Scotch and fine French wines and listens to jazz and rock and roll and reads Western literature. Frankly, it doesn't appear to affect Soviet policy in Poland or Afghanistan.

But make no mistake, we seek better relations with the Soviet Union. We pray for the day when all Soviet citizens will enjoy basic human liberties, improvement in that area. And the Kremlin knows this would do much better for East-West relations.

My administration has persistently maintained pressure on Soviet authorities to live up to their agreements. Specifically in the CSCE Review Conference, our representative, Max Kampelman, has continued to raise, not only the emigration issue, but also to challenge those Soviet internal practices which deny Soviet Jews and other citizens as well their basic human rights and violate the letter and spirit of the Helsinki Accords. Secretary Shultz has also discussed these issues with Foreign Minister Gromyko. Those of us who believe in better relations with the Soviet Union, yet, at the same time, value freedom and human decency, we've made it plain now we want deeds, not rhetoric and repression from the new Soviet leadership. We've had enough of words. There's no better way for them to begin than by releasing the prisoners of conscience in Siberia and restoring Jewish emigration to the levels of the late 1970's. And I might add, they could give us an accounting of one of mankind's true heroes, Raoul Wallenberg.

Let me now turn to a third item that I wanted to discuss with you, the Middle East. America's commitment to Israel remains strong and enduring. And, again, I ask you to focus on deeds. Since the foundation of the State of Israel, the United States has stood by her and helped her pursue security, peace and economic growth. Our friendship is based on historic moral and strategic ties, as well as our shared dedication to democracy. We've had disagreements, as would be expected between friends, even between good friends. Our friendship continues, however, and there should be no doubt that America's commitment to Israel's security remains as it always has been.

Over the last year, our diplomats and Marines have been engaged in a campaign for peace and security in the Middle East. As I said last September, we believe that the events of the past year have created new opportunities for peace that must not be lost. The current political fluidity and general desire to break the cycle of terror and war present a special chance to bring peace to this long-troubled region. It's vital to the United States, to Israel and to all those who yearn for an end to the killing that we not let these current opportunities pass by.

MORE

*decades

The proposals I made to build an enduring peace are strongly rooted in the history of the region and are designed to promote negotiations that are designed to promote negotiations that will achieve a solution acceptable to all the parties. They are based on an historic U.S. commitment to Israeli's security. They reaffirm the Camp David Accords which deem that peace must bring security to Israel and provide for the legitimate rights of the Palestinians.

Our proposals are founded on the Camp David process and United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, which produced the region's first meaningful peace treaty, ending the state of war between Egypt and Israel.

Israel and Arab leaders must take the necessary risks for peace to take root and bloom if we are to succeed. It is riskier to do nothing, to let this time pass with no tangible sign of progress.

We share with Israel three goals in Lebanon: A speedy withdrawal of all foreign forces, a strong central government for Lebanon with jurisdiction over all its territory and full and effective guarantees that Southern Lebanon will no longer be used as a staging ground for terrorist attacks against Israel.

To achieve these goals will require negotiating flexibility by all of the parties.

With respect to the broader peace process, again, great courage and some risk will be required on both sides. Israel must be prepared to engage in serious negotiations over the future of the West Bank and Gaza. As I've stated previously, the most significant action demonstrating Israel's good faith would be a settlements freeze. On the other hand, King Hussein should step forward, ready to negotiate peace directly with Israel.

Each of these steps is independent but related. And for all three, the time to act is now. The fight against anti-semitism, the struggle for Soviet Jewry and the search for peace and security in the Middle East require courage, sacrifice and tenacity from all parties.

There are ample excuses for those who do not share our goals or dedication; but if history is the guide, those who see opportunities for peace and pursue them, who see injustice and condemn it, who fight for liberty will in the end prevail.

We're making the future in which our children will live. Only the courage to act will insure that it is a more peaceful, secure and free world.

The Talmud tells us: "The day is short, the work is great. You don't have to finish the work. Neither are you free to desist from it." And also from the Talmud: "For God could find no vessel which was full of blessing as shalom, peace."

America knows God's blessings. Our cup truly runneth over. We seek only to share the blessings of liberty, peace and prosperity.

Now, my schedule is such I wanted to hear further from you with regard to your views, had, as I say, a brief opportunity before our meeting here with your leaders. But I am going to have to depart.

END

10:17 A.M. EST

THE JEWISH WEEK

and The American Examiner

ONE PARK AVENUE / NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016 / Tel: (212) 686-2320

May 7, 1982

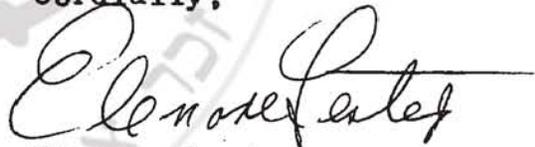
Rabbi Marc Tannebaum
American Jewish Committee
165 East 56 St.
New York, N.Y.

Dear Rabbi Tannenbaum,

I heard you several weeks ago at Prof. Braham's class at the City University Graduate Center and was struck by a number of things you said. It occurred to me that you might want to see and comment on my book, Wallenberg: The Man in the Iron Web, now being released by Prentice-Hall. I am enclosing my N.Y. Times Magazine article on Wallenberg, published two years ago.

I shall see that a copy of the book reaches you.

Cordially,



Elenore Lester
(Managing Editor)

[start]

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The New York Times



THE LOS ANGELES TIMES
HOLOCAUST

HOLOCAUST

By Elenore Lester and
Frederick E. Werbell

During the late fall of 1944, five men sat down to dinner in the Budapest home of Lars Berg, a Swedish diplomat. Adolf Eichmann was present with an aide. The others were 32-year-old Raoul Wallenberg, then a special attaché to the Swedish legation, and another Swedish diplomat. A strangely civilized dinner party for an uncivilized time.

"It seemed like an ordinary, pleasant dinner party," Berg said of that event recently. "We drank brandy. No voices were raised. But we could see the Russian artillery fire from our window."

Berg, today the second-ranking diplomat in the Swedish Embassy in Brasilia, remembers one exchange between young Wallenberg and Eichmann that was anything but casual table talk.

Wallenberg said, "Look, you have to face it. You've lost the war. Why not give up now?"

Berg recalls that Eichmann argued at first, then said that he knew the end was near but that he would continue to do his job even though he would probably be killed.

Then Eichmann faced Wallenberg and said, "Don't think you are immune just because you are a diplomat and a neutral."

A few days later, Wallenberg's car, which was well known in Budapest, was rammed by a German truck and demolished. But Wallenberg wasn't in it at the time.

When Wallenberg spoke to Eichmann about the incident afterward, Eichmann said, "We'll try again."

Raoul Wallenberg had incurred Eichmann's wrath because his mission in Budapest directly conflicted with Eichmann's. A scion of one of Sweden's most illustrious families, often referred to as "the Rockefellers of Sweden," Wallenberg had been sent to Budapest on July 8 by the Swedish Government on a special one-man mission to save Jewish lives.

It was a time in the destruction of European Jewry for chunching at slender straws. The Nazis, clearly losing the war, were obsessed with wiping out the remaining Jews under their control. Desperate attempts were launched to save Jewish lives. Thirty-two commandos from what was then Palestine parachuted into Yugoslavia in the vain hope of making their way to Hungary to rescue Jews; their mission failed. Joel Brand, a Hungarian leftist Zionist, futilely tried to arrange an exchange with the Nazis of trucks for Jews. The Roosevelt Administration, prodded by Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau Jr., finally recognized the plight of the

Elenore Lester writes frequently for this Magazine. Frederick E. Werbell is a rabbi who was born and brought up in Sweden. At work on a book about Raoul Wallenberg, they both did research for this article, which was written by Miss Lester.

Wallenberg as a young man, 19 years before going to Budapest on a mission of mercy—saving Jewish lives. Here, Jews freed from a camp by Wallenberg in December 1944.



KÖNIGLICH
SCHWEDISCHE GESANDTSCHAFT



ARBEITSBESCHEINIGUNG

Die Kgl.Schwedische Gesandtschaft be-
scheinigt hiermit, dass Frl.

Agnes Mandl

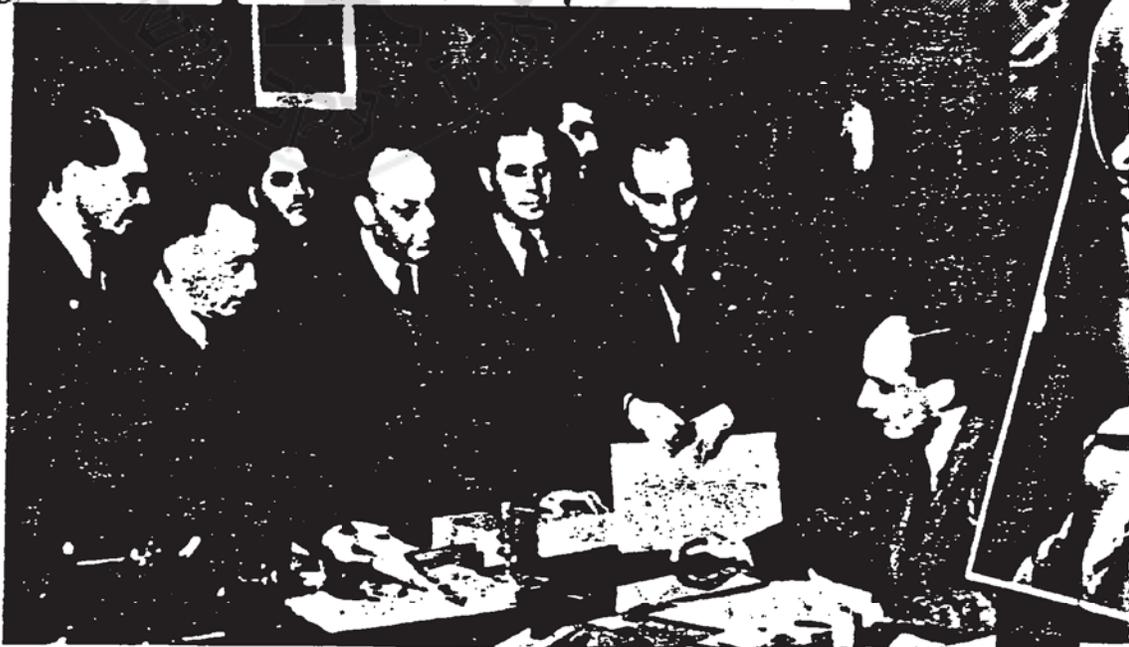
bei der Repatriierungsabteilung der Gesand-
tschaft und des Schwedischen Roten Kreuzes
ständige Arbeit leistet.

Budapest, den 11. August 1944.

Name: *Agnes Mandl*



Raoul Wallenberg
Schwedischer Gesandtschafts-
sekretär.



Top: As a young girl, Agnes Mandl was issued a pass by Raoul Wallenberg that saved her life; today, as Mrs. Agnes Adachi (bottom, left), she lives in Forest Hills. Right: Wallenberg, seated, meeting with the Jewish Council of Budapest. Opposite page, far right: Hungarian Jews, wearing mandatory yellow stars, line up in front of the Swedish Embassy to apply for protective passports. Inset: Adolf Eichmann, who was sent by Hitler to bring "the final solution" to Hungary.



Jews and in January 1944 formed the War Refugee Board to work on a limited number of rescue projects. Ira Hirschmann, a delegate from the board, was sent to Turkey and, working with the International Red Cross, succeeded in getting thousands of Balkan Jews released from camps. The board also asked the Swedish Government if it would send a representative to Budapest whose special function it would be to aid the rescue project. The situation in Hungary then was desperate.

The pro-Nazi Hungarian Government, sure of Hitler's defeat, had made surrender overtures to the Western Allies, to keep out the Russians, who were approaching rapidly. The Germans vetoed surrender and installed a more compliant Prime Minister. Besides, there was unfinished business: bringing "the final solution" to almost 900,000 Jews in Hungary, the last large remaining Jewish population in Europe. Hitler had become enraged by their continued existence in Hungary, his supposed ally. In March 1944, he had sent in German troops; he also had sent Eichmann to supervise the Jewish operation. By July, some 400,000 Jews had been deported from the countryside to be gassed in Auschwitz and Birkenau; 300,000 more remained in various deportation centers and concentration camps. In Budapest, 200,000 others had been penned in ghettos in star-marked houses, waiting.

By late fall, Germany's situation became so critical that it was no longer possible to transport Jews in cattle cars to Auschwitz. Eichmann solved that problem by starting a series of "death marches" to Sajószabotz, an infamous camp at the Austrian border, 120 miles from Budapest. So many thousands died in ditches along the way that some Nazi leaders objected. Even Heinrich Himmler, at this point certain of the collapse of the Third Reich, forbade further liquidation of the Jews. But Eichmann persisted, aided by the Hungarian Nazis, Prime Minister Ferenc Szalasi's Arrow Cross Party. Between 10,000 and 15,000 Jews were killed by Arrow Cross street gangs roaming the city, pulling people out of houses, shooting them in the streets and dumping them in the Danube. Frozen corpses floated in the river alongside blood-streaked ice floes.

By January 1945, Sweden's Raoul Wallenberg had distributed Swedish passports to at least 20,000 Budapest Jews and he had sheltered 13,000 of them in "safe" houses, which had been rented by Wallenberg and which flew the Swedish flag. These 20,000 Jews thus came under the protection of the Swedish Government and most were spared the massacre that engulfed 90,000 other Budapest Jews.

In carrying out his rescue operation, Wallenberg cared little for his own safety and yet seemed immune to harm by the Germans. He stood on top of a deportation train handing out Swedish papers to all the hands that could reach them, then insisted that the people holding them be allowed off the train. With his own hands, he pulled people out of "death marches" to the Austrian

Hegeff 1/1/45

Head Raoul Wallenberg in Budapest by Per Anger, Inset: Boettger



Jewish Encyclopedia Archive. Courtesy of Yod Yotkan. www.YVO.institute for Jewish Research

border or brought them bread, soup and medical supplies in the middle of the night when he had no more passports to give out.

Wallenberg did not look like a hero. His manner was subdued and business-like, his face sensitive, his voice usually soft. Unlike the tall, blond Swedes at the embassy, he was of medium height, dark-eyed and his dark hair was thinning.

If the Germans never stopped Wal-

lenberg, the Russians apparently did. They were immediately suspicious of him. They knew of his capitalist family background. They wondered about his apparently charmed life under — and his influence with — the Nazis. They wondered, too, about who furnished the large sums of money he used in his rescue operation. And finally, they wondered whether he might be an American spy.

On Jan. 17, 1945, three and a half

weeks after the Russians entered Budapest on Christmas Eve, Wallenberg and his driver, Vilmos Langfelder, and two Russian officers set out for Debrecen, some 120 miles east of Budapest. Wallenberg wanted to get the Russians' help in dealing with the Arrow Cross gangs. Neither he nor his driver ever returned.



Wallenberg acted with such passion

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Left: Hungarian women and children arriving in Auschwitz. Inset, far left: Wallenberg rented this Budapest house and others — some with his own money — and turned them into havens for condemned Jews. Above: Wallenberg at age 3 with his mother. Below: Nina Lagergren and Guy von Dardel, Wallenberg's sister and half brother, will participate in an international forum on the case in Stockholm on May 2.



and humanity that Albert Einstein recommended him for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1949. The Swedes made only a low-keyed, intermittent effort after World War II to get the Russians to tell what had become of him, but there are several thousand Hungarian Jews around the world who can never forget what he did. Wallenberg's name is being resurrected today mainly because his immediate family and their friends, supported by a handful of ex-

perts on his case, believe that he is still alive in the Soviet Union, a prisoner for 35 years.

Just last January, the release in Sweden of Foreign Ministry documents dealing with the Wallenberg case between 1945 and 1949 revealed enough missed diplomatic opportunities to cause one of the leading dailies, *Aftonbladet*, to denounce the "betrayal" of Wallenberg and to prompt former Prime Minister Tage Erlander to say

that it is time to recognize him as "one of the greatest Swedes of our time."

On May 2 and 3, the Free Raoul Wallenberg Committee, primarily made up of influential Swedes and Americans, will hold an international hearing in Stockholm, designed to focus on the most recent signs that Wallenberg may be alive and to induce the Soviet Union to produce him if he is, or to offer a satisfactory explanation of what be-

President Carter and Israel's Prime Minister Menachem Begin have expressed interest in the case, as have Senators Claiborne Pell, Frank Church, Daniel Patrick Moynihan and some British Members of Parliament. Some 100 religious, educational and community organizations in the New York area have launched a campaign to acquaint Americans with the Wallenberg case and to have information about Wallenberg (Continued on Page 28)

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WALLENBERG

Continued from Page 25

included in Holocaust studies programs.

The Sakharov Human Rights Committee, which is a co-sponsor of the May 2 forum, is sending representatives to Stockholm. The novelist Elie Wiesel plans to attend. Gideon Hausner, who prosecuted Eichmann in Israel for crimes against humanity, will participate, as will the Nazi-hunter Simon Wiesenthal, who has been interested in Wallenberg's disappearance for 12 years and who refers to him now as "a holy man."

Wiesenthal says that it is more important to find Wallenberg than to find Nazis, and he believes that Wallenberg must be regarded as alive unless the Russians can furnish better evidence than they have of their claim that he is dead. Wiesenthal is particularly concerned that the Stockholm meeting should not turn into "an anti-Communist assembly," but should be an effort solely directed at learning "the whole truth about Wallenberg."

In 1944, Wallenberg became the counterforce to Eichmann in Budapest. The neutral embassies were the Budapest Jews' only lifeline. Switzerland, Spain, Portugal and the Vatican had assisted Jews, but on a far more limited scale than Wallenberg's operation. They had set up a few safe houses and issued protective passports to those Jews who had the initiative and the contacts to obtain them. After Wallenberg's arrival, they stepped up their efforts. The Vatican representative in Budapest, for example, did away with the requirement that Jews be baptized before they could be helped. In all, the neutral embassies saved about 20,000 Jews.

Wallenberg had pulled together a staff of some 400, nearly all Jews, to give out passports, gather information, distribute supplies and protect the 32 safe houses he had set up on the Pest side of the Danube, where most of the city's Jews lived — plus special shelters housing 8,000 children. What is more, Wallenberg issued passports wholesale. Theoretically, these papers indicated that the holders were about to be admitted to the issuing countries; passport holders were deemed to be under the protection of the issuing countries and therefore exempt from deportation. It didn't always work. In a country long known for anti-Semitism, the Arrow Cross gangs were able to function with little resistance from the general population. Christmas Day 1944 was marked by the machine-gunning and beating with rifle butts of 78 small children in one of the shelters Wallenberg had set up.

It was Wallenberg's shrewdness, courage and dedication that allowed him to succeed as much as he did. His role was twofold. He had to give terrified Jews the feeling that they could save themselves; and he had to deal with the Nazis, at times winning secret

friends among them, and at other times confronting them with threats as to what would happen to them after the war. He could when necessary confront Nazis head on with a blaze of moral authority. For example, he confronted Arrow Cross thugs with their rifles poised and shouted, "Cowards! Slob! What criminal arrogance! How dare you enter a Swedish-protected house! Nothing takes place here without my permission!" He dressed "Aryan-looking" Jewish young men in S.S. uniforms and set them to guarding safe houses. They hustled off groups of Jews headed for deportation and led them to safety, telling guards they had "higher orders from headquarters."

Wallenberg turned up along the route of death marches with his large car and his driver. The impact of his presence was described recently by Susan Tabor, a librarian at the Hebrew Union College.

"He gave us the sense that we were still human beings," she said. "My mother and I were among thousands taken one night to stay at a brick factory outside Budapest. There was no food, no water, no sanitation facilities, no light. Then Wallenberg appeared and said he would try to return with passports, or 'safety passes,' as we called them, and would also try to get medical attention and sanitation facilities. Soon afterward, some doctors and nurses came from the Jewish Hospital.

"The point about Wallenberg is that he came himself. He talked to us and showed us that one human being cared about what was happening to us."

Wallenberg's presence on the scene was also a reminder to the Nazis that their depravity was being observed and recorded. He verbally reminded them that the United States had announced that it would treat those committing outrages against civilians as war criminals, not as soldiers. At one point, as the Russians were beginning to penetrate into Pest, the Germans and the Arrow Cross men plotted a last-minute extermination of the ghetto. However, one of Wallenberg's contacts, a member of the Budapest police department and a leader of the Arrow Cross, objected. He warned the German commander that if the action was carried out, Wallenberg would see to it that they would all be judged as murderers. The action was called off. Because of this episode, Wallenberg is also credited with indirectly saving an additional 70,000 Jews living in the central ghetto in Pest.

Russian units entered Budapest on Christmas Eve of 1944, taking the city house by house, the fighting raging on until February 14. Wallenberg was living on the Pest side of the Danube, near the two Jewish ghettos. On Jan. 10, his colleague at the legation, Per Anger, urged him to move with the Embassy to the safer Buda side, where the neutral

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embassies were located and where there was less chance of meeting up with roving Arrow Cross gangs. Wallenberg refused.

On or about that night, Wallenberg turned up at a house which flew the flag of the International Red Cross at 18 Benczur Street, on the Pest side of the river. Among the 25 prominent Jews who had already found refuge there was Steven Radi, today a New York businessman.

"He looked pale and thin — exhausted," Radi recalled. "He said the Nazis were looking for him. He asked if he could stay. Of course, he was well known to everyone. I think he stayed for about a week. He had a very soft way of speaking, but when he spoke people listened. We just talked about the war, what was going on out there.

"Then, about the 15th, the Russians came. They came up through the basement. They were going house to house that way. They looked at our papers. They were polite. The soldier who looked at Wallenberg's said he would have to call a higher officer. The

higher officer looked and asked him to come with him to headquarters. Wallenberg left with him without taking any of his personal things. We thought he'd be gone for a couple of hours, but he stayed away two days. When he came back, he was with two Russian officers. He seemed all right and in a good mood and said he had to go to Debrecen. That was where the Russians and the provisional Hungarian Government had set up headquarters. He took his things and left with the officers and his driver. That's all I know. I always thought he died in the street fighting."

Radi believes Wallenberg feared only the Nazis. However, Charles Wilhelm, today a lawyer in Brussels, who also saw Wallenberg just before he left, is certain that he was less calm than he appeared when he went off with the Russians. Wilhelm recalls Wallenberg saying, "I don't know whether I am in custody or a guest."

According to other witnesses, Wallenberg insisted on stopping along the way at an office he had set up on Tatra Street. An assistant reported that Wallenberg handed him a large sum of money and asked

him to take care of people as well as he could since he didn't expect to get back for eight days. He also stopped at the Swedish Hospital and inquired about conditions there. He never returned.

When the Russians took Budapest in February 1945, they questioned the members of the Swedish legation intensively as to who Wallenberg was, what he was up to and especially where his money came from. The Swedes said it came from the United States, knowing that Wallenberg's mission had indeed been initiated by the American War Refugee Board. This did not go down well with the Russians. The Soviet Union and the Americans were already wary of each other's postwar motives in Eastern Europe.

Knowing that Budapest was now in Russian hands, Wallenberg's mother, not having heard from him in some time, inquired about him at the Soviet Embassy in Stockholm in February 1945. Ambassador Alexandra Kollontay assured her that her son was safe in Moscow, suggesting that it would be best to keep the matter quiet.

Keeping the Wallenberg matter quiet and low-keyed seemed to become one of the objects of Swedish diplomacy over the years. Perhaps as a result, the Swedish Government has managed to extract only three contradictory official statements on Wallenberg from the Russians.

The first was delivered on Jan. 16, 1945, the day before Wallenberg disappeared: "Measures have been taken by the Soviet military authorities to protect Mr. Raoul Wallenberg and his belongings."

On Aug. 18, 1947, Deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Vishinsky stated in reply to Swedish inquiries that Wallenberg was "not known in the Soviet Union" and was assumed to have died during the fighting in Budapest.

On Feb. 6, 1967, after several released Soviet prisoners claimed to have had encounters with Wallenberg, Deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko said that a search of the archives of Lubyanka prison had turned up a report dated July 17, 1947, stating that a prisoner, known as "Walenberg" had died in his cell the previous night of a heart attack. The Swedish

Government was never shown a copy of this report, nor did it ever receive an explanation of why 'Walenberg' had been imprisoned in the first place.

Nevertheless, reports kept coming in that Wallenberg was still alive. On a visit to Moscow in January 1961, Nanna Svartz, an eminent Swedish professor of medicine, discussed the Wallenberg case with a Russian colleague Dr. A. L. Myasnikov. He said that Wallenberg was in a mental hospital. On the basis of this information, Swedish Prime Minister Tage Erlander requested permission from Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev, to send a Swedish doctor to Moscow to bring Wallenberg home. Khrushchev angrily retorted that they knew nothing about Wallenberg in the Soviet Union. Myasnikov later said that Dr. Svartz had misunderstood him. Dr. Svartz saw Myasnikov three more times before his death, but she could never persuade him to retract his denial. She plans to attend the Stockholm hearing.

Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn's contribution to the Wallenberg story is perplexing. In "The Gulag Archipelago," he de-

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A group of Hungarian Nazis, who had made threats against Wallenberg, standing near the Swedish Embassy in January 1945.

scribes an encounter in prison with a Swede known as Erik Arvid Andersen, who said his father was a billionaire (Solzhenitsyn expresses skepticism) and who had been sentenced for a long term. However, the encounter supposedly took place in the early 1950's and Andersen's personal history is nothing like Wallenberg's, aside from the family wealth.

When Solzhenitsyn came out of the Soviet Union, he discussed the case with Swedish authorities and visited Wallenberg's mother. According to Wallenberg's half-sister, Nina Lagregren, he encouraged the family to persist in their efforts to locate and free Wallenberg.

It was, in fact, Wallenberg's mother, Maj, who remained until her death last year the strongest force behind the Wallenberg movement, and who never believed that he could be dead. She kept the family thinking of him constantly, never celebrating a family occasion without remarking, "If only Raoul could be with us." In 1970, she appealed to the American State Department to make an inquiry. The matter was researched and a report written, awaiting Secretary Henry Kissinger's signature. The report was never signed, as a Swedish journalist discovered last year. Mr. Kissinger's office was queried about this some months ago. Several weeks

later, the reply came back: "No comment."

The last report that Wallenberg was seen in Russia came two years ago from Jan Kaplan, a Russian Jew who said that in 1975 in Butyrka prison he had met a Swede who had been in prison for 30 years but was in good condition. When Kaplan's account (in a letter to his daughter in Israel) became public, Kaplan was rearrested in the Soviet Union and has since disappeared. Kaplan's story is one of some 15 accounts of sightings of Wallenberg over the years.

The recently released Foreign Ministry papers show that the Swedes evaded many opportunities to press the Russians and endured countless rude rebuffs when they did press. They even failed to try to obtain information from released Soviet prisoners who had reported seeing Wallenberg in the Soviet Union.

The papers also show that, in April 1945, Averell Harriman, the United States Ambassador in Moscow, and Secretary of State Edward R. Stettinius Jr. offered Staffan Söderblom, the Swedish Ambassador in Moscow, help in the Wallenberg matter. The American Government felt a responsibility since Wallenberg had been sent to Budapest at the request of its War Refugee Board. However, Söderblom refused

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Lars Berg, a colleague of Wallenberg's at the Swedish Embassy, also took part in the rescue mission, which saved 90,000 Jews.

the offer, saying the Russians were doing everything possible.

About a year later, Ambassador Söderblom had a private audience with Stalin. As the Swedish press noted recently, Söderblom appeared more eager to impress the Foreign Ministry and appease Stalin than to resolve the Wallenberg case. In his report, Söderblom noted that although Stalin does not normally talk to ambassadors, he received him cordially and listened sympathetically.

Söderblom said that he told Stalin, "I personally believe that Wallenberg was the victim of an accident or robbers in Budapest." He did not offer, by way of exchange, to take up with his Government any matter of interest to Stalin. He thus, as was not lost on the Swedish press, offered Stalin an easy out; as Söderblom noted in his report, Stalin wrote Wallenberg's name on a piece of paper and promised to look into it. And that was that.

Sweden's former Prime Minister Tage Erlander, in a recent television interview, said the conversation was ill-advised because it tied the hands of lesser Soviet officials who might fear to act on a matter in which Stalin had shown interest.

In 1949, Secretary of State Dean Acheson, responding to an appeal from Wallenberg's half-brother, again offered

American support. Again the offer was refused — by a new Swedish Ambassador in Moscow, Rolf Sahlman, who reported home, "We cannot drive tandem with the Americans."

The Swiss behaved differently when one of their diplomats was taken by the Russians at about the same time that Wallenberg disappeared. Getting no response to their queries, the Swiss took into custody two Russians, known to be spies. Adding six other Russian defectors, the Swiss made an exchange for their diplomat.

During the early 1950's, the Russians hinted to the Swedes that an exchange of individuals was possible. A Swedish chargé d'affaires, Ulf Brack-Holst, reported that he had inquired about Wallenberg and got the response that the Russians were interested in certain people in Sweden. Now the Swedes had an opportunity to reply and request Wallenberg in exchange. However, Swedish Foreign Minister Bo Osten Unden felt it expedient simply to turn over all the people the Russians asked for, except five who were seriously ill, asking nothing in return.

Even Dag Hammarskjöld, Secretary General of the United Nations, rejected an opportunity to plead Wallenberg's case, as was revealed four years ago in the memoirs of Carl-Fredrik Palmstierna, who served as personal secre-

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tary to King Gustav Adolf. Prompted by the Wallenberg Committee, Palmstierna tried to persuade the King to ask Hammar skjold to take up the Wallenberg case. The King threw it back in Palmstierna's lap and told him to ask Hammar skjold himself. Palmstierna reached Hammar skjold by phone.

"He answered in a stream of crystal-clear phrases that the fact that he himself was a Swede made it doubly difficult for him to put the case of a compatriot to the Russians," wrote Palmstierna.

Palmstierna attributes Hammar skjold's attitude to "that damned Foreign Ministry spirit!" that always regarded the issue as if it were a matter of "declaring war on Russia for the sake of Wallenberg."



The Wallenberg case is one of the most baffling and complex to have come out of the aftermath of World War II. What many find even more baffling is how a young man born into extraordinary comfort and security should have been willing to risk his life to save people who were so remote from his milieu. His one Jewish ancestor (who had converted to Christianity in the 18th century) doesn't begin to explain his motivation. The factors that shaped his humane heroism are not easily accessible. Nothing that he did up to the point at which he went to Budapest indicated the intensity of his compassion.

Early in life, Raoul Wallenberg had shown enormous intellectual curiosity. As a boy, he was an omnivorous reader and his education was supervised closely by his grandfather. (His father, a Naval lieutenant, died of cancer at the age of 23, three months before Raoul was born on Aug. 4, 1912.) His grandfather, Gustav, who served as Sweden's Minister to Japan and Turkey, wanted Raoul to have a good command of several languages and saw to it that the young man spent vacations in England, France and Germany, among other places.

Wallenberg family members not only founded Sweden's Enskilda Bank, but distinguished themselves as bishops and diplomats. Raoul's grand-uncle was Swedish Foreign Minister during World War I; another grand-uncle had been Swedish Minister to the United States.

In 1918, when Raoul was 6, his mother married Fredrik von Dardel, director of Sweden's Karolinska Hospital. The von Dardels had two children, Guy, now a prominent nuclear physicist and a visiting professor at the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center, and Nina, who is married to Gunnar Lagergren, an administrator of the Swedish royal court and the court's representative on legal issues affecting the crown.

The Wallenbergs had a family tradition of studying in the United States and Raoul studied architecture at the University of Michigan, graduating in 1936.

John Paul Stusser, who was Wallenberg's art teacher at Michigan, now retired, recalls him as a brilliant student with considerable artistic talent. Stusser once told Wallenberg he ought to be a painter, but the reply was, "No,

we're all bankers in my family." Wallenberg went on to explain that it was family tradition to study or work in other jobs before members settled into the family business. Thus, Wallenberg's grandfather had been a stoker in a Pittsburgh steel mill.

A Michigan classmate of Wallenberg's, Sol King, now a retired architect in West Palm Beach, Fla., recalls him as warm, friendly, not in the least snobbish, with an Americanized predilection for hot dogs and sneakers. "We were both," King says, "very, very serious about our work and exchanged notes or information." Wallenberg won the top architectural award in his class, a medal given by the American Institute of Architects. In 1972, when King learned what Wallenberg had done in Budapest and how he had disappeared, he financed a series of annual lectures in Wallenberg's name at the school of architecture they had attended.

In 1935, after Wallenberg spent a summer of travel in Mexico, his grandfather sent him to work for a business firm in South Africa for a year, then to work in a Dutch bank in Haifa for a year, where he met German refugees and became sensitized to the Jewish problem.

His state of mind on returning home may be deduced from this recollection of the actress Viveca Lindfors, who remembers dancing with him in Stockholm in 1937, when she was 16 and Wallenberg 25.

"He took me up to his grandfather's office and I thought he wanted to seduce me," she says. "Instead he started telling me, almost in whispers, what was happening to the Jews in Germany. I was such a dumb girl! I just didn't understand it and didn't believe it. I thought he was trying to win my sympathy or something."

Raoul's younger sister, Nina, says he hated working at the family bank. He was "full of life and fun and said he couldn't bear sitting at a desk all day, saying 'no' to people. He hated boundaries, loved travel and the sea. He was an anti-club — loved reading and Chaplin and the Marx Brothers."

Raoul hoped that through the family business he could get a job that used his architectural training. Instead Raoul became involved in an export business with a Hungarian Jew, Koloman Lauer, who since the outbreak of war could no longer travel between Budapest and Sweden. Wallenberg traveled for him, getting to know Budapest and its people.



Toward the end of the war, the Allies could no longer ignore the irrefutable evidence of Auschwitz. There were a number of last-minute plans to rescue the remaining Jews of Europe. The idea of bombing the railroad lines that led to Auschwitz and the crematories was rejected because, according to the Allies, military resources could better be employed elsewhere. Exploring another route, Herschel Johnson, United States Ambassador to Sweden, and Iver Olsen, Director of the War Refugee Board in Sweden, asked the neutral Swedes if they would send someone on a rescue mission.

The Swedes agreed and Wallenberg was selected because he spoke German like a German and knew Budapest well. He had no diplomatic training, but he had a broad education in the United States and Europe.

Wallenberg was told that whatever money he needed would be made available. At first, he planned to go in August. However, when he read Swedish Foreign Ministry reports of the deportation trains and other horrors, he decided to leave at once. According to Nina Lagergren, he asked his superiors in the Foreign Ministry for carte blanche to use whatever methods he found necessary.

When he arrived in Budapest, he was an unprepossessing man. Despite his slightly balding head, he looked too young and sensitive for the nightmarish job ahead. Wallenberg's methods immediately disturbed his colleagues. Lars Berg, who was also at the Swedish legation in Budapest, recalled recently that he and his colleague Per Anger did a lot of arguing with Wallenberg.

"You see, we each had our own people to take care of," Berg explained. "Sweden was neutral so it was up to us to represent the interests of citizens of other countries who were in Hungary at the time. Anger had the United States, Britain, France. I had the others, China, the Netherlands, Belgium, Norway, Denmark and a thousand captured Russian soldiers."

The legation had already given out several hundred protective passes to Budapest Jews who had some sort of business or family connection with Sweden. When Wallenberg came, he was ready to give them out to anyone who asked.

"We were afraid there would be an inflation of the passes, they would no longer mean anything," said Berg. "We used to sit and argue about this, but Wallenberg always got his way because he was extremely persistent and said it was a matter of saving lives."

Wallenberg kept in touch with the Vatican and the neutrals — Switzerland, Spain and Portugal — each of which had its own area in Budapest with protected Jews. He also maintained contact with the Budapest police and the Nazis. These connections may have rung alarm bells for the Russians.

The Swedish diplomat Berg remembered that when the

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BRITAIN
ENGLAND SCOTLAND WALES

Continued from Page 39

Russians came, he was brought to the Soviet secret police for intensive questioning — a good part about Wallenberg. They asked him whether it wasn't a fact that Wallenberg belonged to a great capitalist family and Berg had to say yes. He still feels today that the Russians simply couldn't believe that Wallenberg's only purpose in coming to Budapest was to save lives — and Jewish lives at that.

Another reason for the Russians' suspicions was suggested by Wallenberg's stepfather, Fredrik von Dardel, in a book published in 1970, "Facts Around a Fate." Wallenberg, at heart an architect and city planner, had drawn up a plan for the rehabilitation of Budapest. He wanted to use the people he had worked with through the war to set up a relief and rehabilitation organization. He itemized the things that had to be done: searching for lost families, caring for orphans and war victims, fighting epidemics, distributing food, restoring Jewish property and business (how this must have irked the Russians), repatriation and emigration, restoring cultural values, constructing business and industry. He had more than likely spoken about his plan during his own interrogation. It was why he wanted to get to Debrecen: to get the Russians' approval to begin.

Despite his astuteness, Wallenberg may not have imagined at that time that the Russians had their own plans for the area and would take a dim view of the plan of a member of a famous capitalist family.

Some analysts believe that it would be impossible for a person to survive 35 years of Soviet imprisonment and still be sufficiently intact physically and psychologically that the Soviets would not be embarrassed to release him. However, others point out that there have been cases of people who have come out of the Soviet Union after many years in reasonable health. The Free Wallenberg Committee hopes to bring to the Stockholm meeting a Spaniard who was released by the Soviets last year after 35 years.

Dr. Boris Zoubok, a Russian émigré psychiatrist now associated with Columbia Presbyterian Hospital, has seen a number of prisoners come out of the Soviet Union after prolonged terms physically and mentally intact. He believes that a man with Wallenberg's

resources might well be used in some distant labor camp to perform work that is badly needed, such as tutoring the children of prison personnel.

Because of the obscurity surrounding the case, it has been difficult for Jews to honor Wallenberg appropriately. The Hungarian Jews, suffering extreme losses and not knowing the details of the case, accepted the idea that Wallenberg had been killed in the street fighting. The Budapest Jews attempted to put up a monument to Wallenberg in 1946, but it was spirited away by the Russian-dominated Government the night before the dedication was supposed to take place.

In Israel at the Holocaust memorial, Yad Vashem, trees are planted honoring "righteous gentiles," those who risked their own lives to save Jews. However, Mrs. von Dardel didn't want such a memorial because she felt it made her son seem to be dead. In fact, many of those honored in this way are living.

Last year, Mrs. von Dardel and her husband died within two days of each other at the ages of 87 and 83. Nina Lagergren and Guy von Dardel promised their parents they would carry on the work of fighting for Raoul, and they accepted the tree planted in Raoul's name on the "Street of the Righteous Gentiles." In addition, Hungarian Jews now living in Sweden planted a woodland of 10,000 trees in a special area behind the memorial.

There are more personal memorials to individuals' minds. Annette Lantos of San Francisco, who for several years has campaigned to rouse American Jews to become active on Wallenberg's behalf, says that even during the three decades she believed he was dead, Wallenberg was "a legend in our home." Her husband, Tom, an economics professor, and at present a candidate for Congress, worked on Wallenberg's staff. Mrs. Lantos, then a child of 12 in Budapest, and her mother had Portuguese papers and managed to get out of the country with them, but she feels they both owe their lives to Wallenberg. Mrs. Lantos's father was one of many who were dragged out of a "safe" house and killed on the street by Hungarian Nazis.

"For many years I've lectured on the Holocaust," she reports, "and I've always talked about Wallenberg. He not only saved our lives, but our belief in mankind and the power of good." ■

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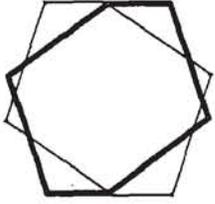
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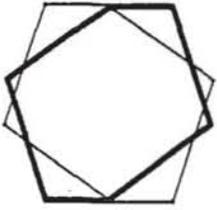
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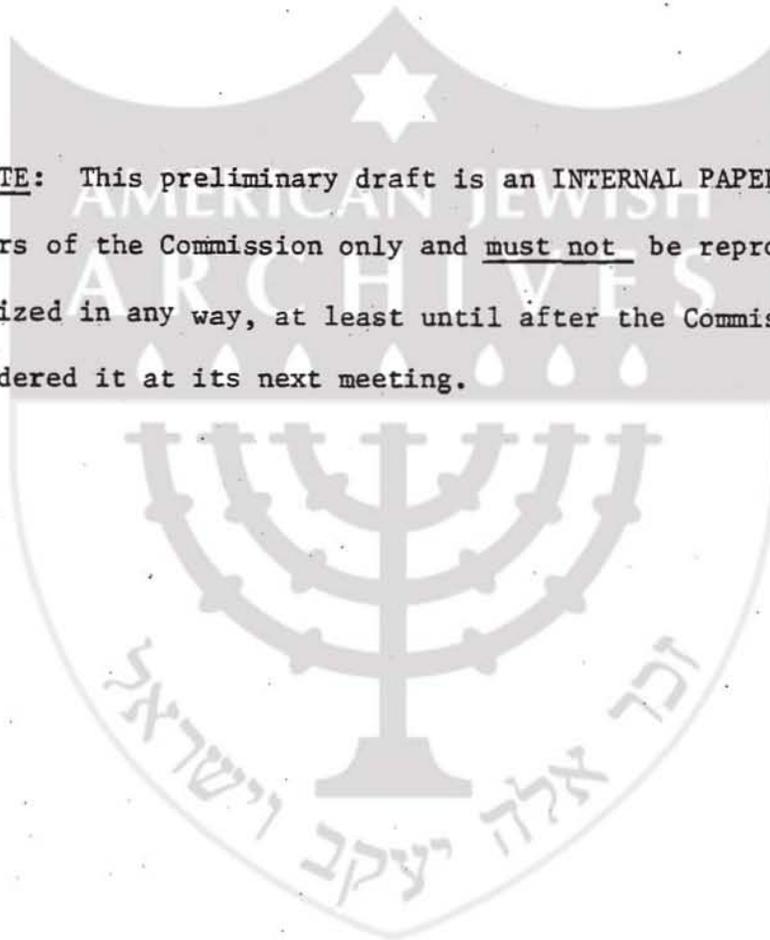
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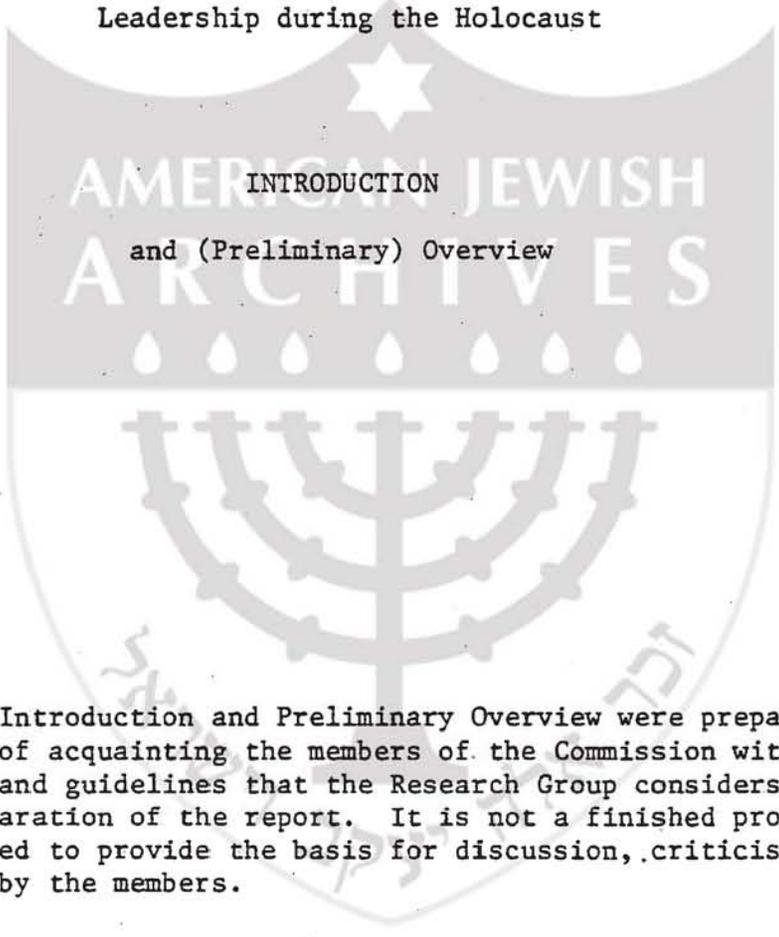
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REPORT OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMISSION ON THE HOLOCAUST

The attitudes and actions of the American Jewish
Leadership during the Holocaust



INTRODUCTION
and (Preliminary) Overview

NOTE: This Introduction and Preliminary Overview were prepared for the purpose of acquainting the members of the Commission with the orientation and guidelines that the Research Group considers useful for the preparation of the report. It is not a finished product; it is designed to provide the basis for discussion, criticism and suggestions by the members.

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PREFACE

The American Jewish Commission on the Holocaust was formed in 1981 on the initiative of a number of American Jewish leaders. It was created with a view to conducting an objective inquiry into the actions and attitudes of American Jewish leaders and organization concerning the Holocaust during those years of World War II when that great tragedy was impending and in progress. The underlying aim of the initiators of the project was not to make moral judgments but rather to enable later generations to learn from this experience whatever might help prevent a similar tragedy from ever again befalling the Jews or any other people.

Former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Arthur J. Goldberg accepted the Chairmanship of the Commission. On his invitation, 35 distinguished Jewish leaders from many walks of American life consented to serve as officers and members. The Report that follows is the result of their joint deliberations and of the scholarly work done under their direction.

The Commission's membership of 35 is larger than originally intended. While the Commission was being established, it was suggested that additional members should be named, representing American Jewish organizations; thus the actions of those who had led these organizations during the years under consideration would not be left exclusively to the evaluation of scholars who might not be sufficiently aware of the terrible dilemmas the Jewish leadership faced in that period. The organizers of the

Commission viewed this concern with sympathy and considered it legitimate; hence, members were added. Though the members are in many cases officials of Jewish organizations, each served the Commission in an individual capacity and not as a representative of an organizations.

The Approach to the Task

We have not presumed to sit in judgment, nor to render a verdict, on the actions discussed in this Report. Our objective has been more modest: to record and publish the truth, as nearly as we could determine it, as to what American Jewish leaders did, and what indeed they might have been able to do in all the circumstances, to mitigate the massive evils of the Holocaust. We have sought thus to help complete the historical record of these terrible events--a record to which future decision-makers may turn for guidance.

It is a striking fact that the voluminous published material on the Holocaust contains not a single work dealing primarily with the role of one of the most important groups involved in the story--namely, those who were at the helm of the major Jewish organizations in the United States. The role of every other key group and leader involved has been thoroughly studied: Franklin D. Roosevelt and the U.S. State Department; Winston Churchill and the British Foreign Office and Colonial Office; the Vatican and other Christian church authorities; the International Committee of the Red Cross--and, of course, the Nazi hierarchy and the rulers of the other Axis powers and of Nazi satellite

and conquered countries. Books and essays have been published on the parts played by all these actors in the drama. No comparable studies of the role of American Jewry exist.

This is not to say that the role of American Jewish leaders has not been touched upon in histories of the Holocaust. But references to them appear only as parts of a larger tableau. Moreover, some otherwise excellent books about the Holocaust have been somewhat misleading in this regard. An example is While Six Million Died, a best-seller by Arthur D. Morse, a pioneer in the field. He was the first to undertake thorough research on the role of the U.S. government in these events. His vividly written book created a sensation with its well-documented revelations of the indifference and callousness of the Administration, not sparing President Roosevelt himself. However, the book is not completely accurate in its treatment of American Jewish leaders. They are pictured wearing a halo of saintliness, trying everything humanly possible to save the Jews of Europe, yet knocking their heads against a wall of official indifference. There is no question that American Jews suffered deep agony over the issue and made many laudable efforts; but their actions deserve a more balanced and objective treatment than is to be found in such works.

The Process

The process of preparing the Report, as well as the background papers and documents on which it rests, went through three phases.

1. A Research Group collected the documentary and background material and prepared first drafts.

2. The Research Group's drafts were evaluated by a Review Committee composed of scholars and specialists in the field. The Committee's criticisms and suggestions were taken into account, and in many cases incorporated, in revised drafts.

3. The Commission evaluated the drafts submitted to it, made decisions and issued instructions to the Research Group. On that basis the present Report was prepared and submitted to the Commission, which gave its approval.

The analysis, findings and conclusions in this Report reflect the general consensus of the Commission. Undoubtedly, no two Commission members would have written this Report in exactly the same way; differences of emphasis and nuance are inevitable. Where members wished to enter individual reservations on specific points, these are duly recorded.

Methodology: The Importance of Intangibles

Contemporary American historians take pride in adhering strictly to fact. They are the heirs of Leopold Ranke, who insisted that history should present past eras "as they actually were." Of course, in an absolute sense this is beyond human capability. What we know of the past is at best an approximation--patterns of meaning pieced together

by historians from the vast mountain of facts, or seeming facts, accessible to them. The patterns and approximations are often vague and ambiguous; moreover, they are frequently challenged as contrary facts come to light and new questions are asked. True, historians now have an unprecedented abundance of archival documentation, and easy means of copying it; but these too are mixed blessings. The documentation on any major historical topic has become so voluminous that no one scholar or writer has the time or mental capacity to sift through all or even most of it. Hence the historian will often rely on assistants to do the research and summarize it; he then selects what he considers pertinent. He also cites relevant research done by his predecessors. These methods, however necessary, offer many occasions for errors of fact and interpretation which may long remain undetected.

Aware of these pitfalls, which confront all historians, the Commission and its Research Group sought to minimize them by encouraging the scholars engaged in this project to rely not alone on documents but also on their own knowledge of, and insight into, the period under study and to take fully into account intangible factors. From their knowledge of the institutions and personalities involved, what role seems to have been played by settled attitudes, traditional priorities and molds of thought, particular methods of adopting and executing policy, or habitual concepts of individual, group or community self-interest? To what extent were events shaped by individual personalities--their scruples and apprehensions, their imaginative or routine behavior, their readiness or reluctance to

face increasingly obvious realities, the presence or absence of willpower and determination when confronting mighty governments? It seemed to us that the combination of careful documentation with analytical evaluation of such intangible factors was the approach most likely to produce an accurate and just perspective on the men and women who led American Jewry during the Holocaust, and on their role in the events they influenced or tried to influence.

The Project and Its Critics

From the first announcement of the Commission's establishment, widespread expressions of support and encouragement were accompanied by a variety of critical or apprehensive comments. Four of these in particular merit discussion here. It was suggested:

1. That no good purpose can be served, after nearly four decades, by opening up old wounds to examine a situation of unprecedented horror and cruelty about which nothing can now be done--and which in any case was created not by Jews but by the monstrous enemy of the Jewish people.

2. That there is no use in inquiring into the acts, or the failures to act, of the American Jewish leadership of that period, since the circumstances converged in a way that made the rescue of the Jews impossible, and thus it would have made no difference how that leadership acted.

3. That any allotment of responsibility or guilt, no matter how minimal, to the Jewish community would to that extent diminish the

the absolute guilt of the Nazis and their accomplices and the overwhelming responsibility of the Allied governments. One should not, it is argued, provide the enemies of the Jews with such ammunition, nor extenuate the judgment on those authorities who turned away from the Jews in their greatest hour of need.

4. That it is unfair and perhaps even unscientific to inquire into the behavior of American Jewry in this case unless it is done within the framework of a larger comparative study of ethnic minorities under stress (such as the Irish, the Poles, the Japanese, etc.)

In partial response to all of these objections, it should be said again that the Commission was not created to render judgments of guilt or innocence, but rather to explore and assess the historical record. In addition, certain specific comments are in order:

As to opening old wounds, the Commission believes the wounds will not heal of themselves. No corporate body, whether ethnic, social or religious, can develop in a healthy and positive way unless it has the courage to inquire critically into its own past. The past contains the seeds of the present and many of the elements of the future. It is imperative to know what happened in the past in order to orient our policies and actions now and in times to come.

As to the second and third points, the primary responsibility of Adolf Hitler for the Holocaust is beyond dispute, and nothing in this Report alters or mitigates in the least that judgment of history. Nor does this Report suggest that anything American Jews could have done

would have saved more than a fraction of the Holocaust victims. Nevertheless, if it should appear possible in retrospect that even tens or hundreds of thousands might have been saved by actions they could have taken, such a possibility would warrant exploration. Indeed, even if we now conclude that such efforts had no chance to save anybody, those who could not know this in advance had a moral obligation to try their best.

As to the fourth criticism, a broad study embracing all major ethnic groups would require years to conduct and would probably be a futile exercise, since there is no parallel between the Holocaust and even the worst sufferings of other minorities in the present century. In no other case was a whole people singled out for systematic annihilation. Therefore the points of comparison could only be tangential. Moreover, the principle suggested would rule out evaluation of the actions of any human entity in history--say, the British government during World War II--except as part of a comparative study of all the other actors on the stage. Such studies may often have value, but they are clearly not the only valid or appropriate approach to the writing of history.

The Commission anticipates that the publication of the present Report may give rise to further criticism. The Commission will not regard this as an offense against it but as a natural reaction to the discussion of such an emotionally charged subject as the Holocaust. Whether the reaction is favorable, negative, or mixed, the Commission believes its main goal has been achieved; the policies and actions of

the American Jewish leadership during the Holocaust years have at long last been examined in depth and laid before the public. In performing this service we have sought to transfer the Jewish leaders of that period from the twilight of mythology to the daylight of historical reality—a light in which individuals and groups with normal human virtues and foibles, strengths and weaknesses, can be seen active within the limits of concrete circumstance.

In pursuing this task we have not hesitated to speculate, in the light of all the facts, on what might have been done but was not. We realize that this conscious decision opens the Report to criticism from some historians and others who hold as a matter of principle that speculation has no place in the writing of history, which should be confined to the record of what actually took place and is subject to documentary proof.

In our view this widespread historian's view, weighty though it is, cannot be taken literally. No human action can be understood in its full significance until it has been compared with alternatives that appear to have been open to the actor. This method of considering plausible alternatives is necessarily beyond the reach of proof—yet without it history would be no more than a frozen, static panorama of death, a world where free will and intelligent judgment had no place, and from the study of which no lessons can be learned to guide posterity.

In this spirit the members of the Commission agreed not only to examine what was done, but also to engage in informed and responsible speculation on what other things could have been done to save the Jews of Europe or to minimize the dimensions of the cataclysm.

A Note on Documentation

The Commission decided, instead of merely citing archival sources, to reproduce, within the limits allowed by space, the actual texts of the most pertinent documents. In almost all cases these appear as appendices. Most are presented unabridged and without paraphrases, even including some material that is repetitious. Thus the reader, by being less dependent on the interpretations of intermediaries, will be better able to make his own evaluations of this complex story and to gain a more direct impression of the character and views of key individuals and of the circumstances in which they acted.

Obviously, only a limited amount of the documentation could be reproduced. Where a matter is treated on the basis of archival material not reproduced, the source is indicated either in footnotes or in page notes at the end of the report. Similarly, where the Report relies on other writers, we have given the name of the author and his work, and often also the documentary source on which he drew.

CHAPTER I

The Drama and the Actors

To gain a clear perspective on our subject it is necessary to recall its historical setting. The Holocaust was a uniquely horrible chapter in the global tragedy that culminated in the Second World War. The perpetrators of the Holocaust, its 6 million victims, the Allied governments and Jewish communities who responded, or failed to respond, to it--all these were also actors in that larger global drama.

Nazi Aggression and the Flight from Reality

The international political circumstances and attitudes which led to World War II also, to a great extent, paved the way for the Holocaust. These circumstances can be briefly summarized:

--Germany, defeated, disarmed and punished for its war guilt in World War I, and wracked with economic distress--yet still, in its underlying strength, the chief power of Europe--sought a leader out of its troubles. In 1933 it embraced the demagogue Adolf Hitler with his virulent antisemitism, contempt for democracy, and advocacy of world domination by a German master race.

--France and Britain, exhausted and demoralized by the heavy cost of their 1918 victory, based their policy toward Hitler on wishful thinking. They discounted his frank declarations of his aims and did nothing effective to stop his treaty-breaking rearmament program and

his bloodless, step-by-step territorial advances in 1936-39. As Winston Churchill later wrote, these two powers, while Hitler's armies were still much weaker than theirs, engaged in a "five or six years' policy of easy-going placatory appeasement"--only to take their stand at long last on Poland, when Nazi military might was fully marshaled--thus precipitating "an obviously imminent war on far worse conditions and on the greatest scale."*

--Stalin, the Soviet dictator, signed in August 1939 his cynical pact with Hitler, partitioning Poland between them.

--The United States, in the throes of the Great Depression, followed an isolationist foreign policy. Most Americans were unwilling to be drawn into European power struggles or to take sides between Hitler and his intended victims. Not until the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 was this attitude largely dissipated.

This long and feckless flight from reality by the Western powers, during the years when Hitler's Germany was openly preparing its onslaught, placed the Allies in a position of grave weakness when the worldwide battle was finally seen to be inevitable. The weakness was political as well as military, and led Britain in particular to resort to diplomatic maneuvers which might not even have been considered had London been leading from strength. An instance, especially pertinent to our story, is Britain's White Paper of May 17, 1939, cutting back sharply on, and

* Winston Churchill, The Second World War, 19 , Vol. I, p. 311-312.

promising to end entirely within five years, Jewish immigration into the Palestine Mandate. It was clearly an attempt to compete for the favor of the Arabs, then under increasing influence from Germany. Thus the appeasement of Hitler, which had already put millions of European Jews in peril of their lives, was further compounded by a step which cut off all but a relative handful of those same Jews from their most likely avenue of escape. This policy--to which the United States made no objections--was to become a major stumbling block to the rescue of Jews from the Holocaust, and hence a contributing cause to countless deaths.

Indeed, the same flight from reality, from the beginning of Hitler's rise to power in the 1920s, characterized most Western official and public responses--Jewish and non-Jewish alike--to Hitler's notorious Jew-baiting and mounting persecution of Jews, and even to his announced determination, by one means or another, to rid Europe of the Jews. Even in Germany and Austria many Jews could not bring themselves to read the handwriting on the wall. Up to 1941, when Hitler's policy was to drive the Jews out rather than to kill them, only a minority left. Bruno Bettelheim, who was an inmate of Dachau and Buchenwald, writes that in Buchenwald in 1939 there was a saying: "There are only two ways to leave the camp--as a corpse or as a Jew"*--meaning that Jews who could show that they had the desire and the means to leave the country were released. There is abundant

* Bruno Bettelheim, "Freedom from Ghetto Thinking," Midstream, Spring 1962, Vol. III, No. 2.

documentation showing that many more Jews could have left Germany and Austria and some German-occupied countries before the end of 1941, had they sought to do so.

Why, then, did only a minority even of the German and Austrian Jews actually emigrate during those years? There were several factors at work. Many older Jews were reluctant to leave friends, family and familiar surroundings, and were inclined to clutch at straws of hope that the madness would pass. Moreover, to leave Germany a Jew initially had to give up 80 per cent of his property and savings--and later all except 10 Reichsmarks. Finally, most potential countries of refuge were in the throes of the Depression and put up formidable barriers to immigration or even temporary haven. As became clear in July 1938 at the 32-nation conference on refugees at Evian, France, the numbers of Jewish refugees governments would admit were pitifully small compared with the numbers who needed rescue. These restrictive policies, which were exploited in Nazi propaganda, encountered little dissent from American Jews, who did not look with favor on the influx of multitudes of new immigrants.*

All these circumstances combined to hold the prewar flight of Jews from Nazi control to a relative trickle. Only 37,000 (among them was Albert Einstein) fled Germany in 1933 after Hitler came to power. By 1938 only about 150,000 had left. Some 350,000 then remained--about half of them over 45, since usually it was the younger generation who

* See Saul Friedman, No Haven for the Oppressed (Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1973), p. 50.

emigrated at the urging of their elders. In 1938—especially after the brutal Kristallnacht rampage in Munich in November of that year--and the prewar months of 1939, about 200,000 additional Germans left, while approximately the same number of Austrian Jews came under German rule as a result of the March 1938 Anschluss.

Then, with the outbreak of war in September 1939, an already alarming picture changed drastically for the worse. Hitler's empire expanded dramatically, absorbing additional millions of Jews in Poland immediately, and soon afterward in other parts of Europe. Simultaneously, the doors of escape were locked from the inside as the Nazis closed their frontiers, which thereafter could only be passed with help from the outside.

Although Western governments at last somewhat relaxed their barriers against immigrants and refugees, no country even then would go as far as to open its borders to large-scale resettlement of European Jews--their only hope, as it turned out, of escaping virtually total destruction. Thus Hitler's formal decision of January 1942 to slaughter all Jews coming under Nazi control--the "Final Solution"--was taken only after it had become evident that other countries were not prepared to accept them.

The American Jewish Leadership in the Crucial Years

To understand how American Jewry responded to these tragic developments, it is necessary first to recall something of the nature of Jewish organizational life in the United States. From the days of the Landsmannschaften

(mutual aid societies of Jews from particular European towns or districts) to the present, Jewish organizational life in America has never been monolithic, and certainly was not so in the period under study. Not only between Jewish organizations but also within them, vigorous debate, tensions and rivalries were common. Attempts to unify the Jewish community to meet the challenge of catastrophe in Europe were short-lived. Nevertheless, as will be seen below, it is possible to discern common tendencies--always allowing for variations and exceptions--in the ideas and attitudes of leading Jews and Jewish organizations in America.

The chart on page names the major Jewish organizations (and leaders) that were active in the United States in that period. From it the reader can see how complex and shifting, indeed often chaotic, these bodies were in their internal structure as well as in their interdependent and overlapping relations with one another. The list of leading figures in each organization testifies further to the same effect. Some leaders played multiple roles in several organizations, some of which nevertheless competed with each other.

It should also be borne in mind that most Jewish organizations in this country were not independent bodies but branches of world bodies. Also, some key leaders on the American Jewish scene were not Americans. For example, Dr. Nahum Goldmann, who came from Germany, served all through the war years in the U.S. as the representative of the Jewish Agency. At the same time he was a leader of the World Jewish Congress and took part in all American Zionist institutions, as well as in various ad hoc organizations Zionist and non-Zionist. Rabbi Maurice

Perlzweig, a British citizen, represented the English Section of the World Jewish Congress in the United States. Leon Kubowitzki, a Belgian, and Arieħ Tartakower, a Pole, served with the leadership of Rabbi Wise as the administrators of the World Jewish Congress, and were also major shapers of its policy, especially in the field of rescue and relief.

Similarly, the leaders of the World Zionist Organization, all of them very active on the America scene, were not Americans. Dr. Chaim Weizmann, an Englishman, was president. David Ben-Gurion, a Palestinian, was head of the Executive Committee of the Jewish Agency with its headquarters in Palestine. Rabbi Meir Berlin, a Palestinian, was president of the World Mizrakhi and a member of the Jewish Agency. They spent a good deal of time in the U.S. during the war. Some of the most important Jewish political initiatives were originated by such men. The initiator of the Biltmore Program of 1942, which played such an important part in the American Jewish community's support of the Zionist cause, was Ben Gurion. And the real originator of the American Jewish Conference of 1943, which attempted to unite American Jewry behind the Biltmore Program, was not Henry Monsky, president of B'nai B'rith, as many historians assert, but Dr. Weizmann, working discreetly behind the scenes.

Given these circumstances, the historian often finds it difficult to distinguish between the American Jewish leadership and the leadership of international Jewish organizations. For the same reason it is difficult to locate responsibility, as between the world bodies and the American

institutions, for the success or failure of relief and rescue efforts on behalf of the Jews of Europe.*

Conflicting Priorities, Relief, Rescue, and Zionism

If the Jews of Europe were psychologically unprepared for the Nazi onslaught that enveloped them with the outbreak of World War II, the same was at least equally true of Jewish organizations in the United States. Nevertheless, many of these organizations did important work in response to the new emergency. Outstanding among these was the Joint Distribution Committee, a long-established Jewish relief agency linked somewhat ambiguously to the American Jewish Committee as the latter's operating arm in the relief field. It was active all through the six years of the war in various programs of relief and, to some extent, rescue of European Jews. Before Pearl Harbor the neutral status of the United States enabled "the JOINT" to operate in almost all the countries of Europe, distributing funds to local JDC committees in Poland, the satellite states and several occupied countries. It helped with food parcels, medicines, clothing, educational programs, and the transfer of thousands of refugees to safer places. It was prescribed by a legalism to which the American Jewish Committee and the leaders of the JOINT in

* The members of the so-called Bergson Group, all of them Palestinians led by Peter Bergson, are a case apart. They had no interest in internal Jewish affairs in this country. Moreover, they operated in this country within the framework of a non-sectarian organization whose composition was almost exclusively American and substantially non-Jewish. However, as later chapters will show, they tried their best during the war years to arouse U.S. officials to deal with the Holocaust and the Palestine question.

New York adhered without reservation or qualifications. Yet, in the course of complicated and unexpected development, the JDC got involved indirectly in activities beyond the traditional definition of philanthropy. In 1944, this even included efforts to save Jewish lives through intricate negotiations with high-ranking Gestapo figures—a move made with the approval, and perhaps even the guidance, of the War Refugee Board, an official U.S. government agency. Such JDC operations were complicated and secretive, but it seems safe to say that its work saved many thousands of Jewish lives.

Prominent among the other Jewish organizations which engaged in European relief and rescue operations was the World Jewish Congress with its American section, the American Jewish Congress, both headed by Rabbi Stephen Wise.

Another significant organization was the Jewish Labor Committee, a left-oriented group influenced by the Polish Jewish Socialist Bund. It claimed to represent 756 labor unions with 500,000 workers. It was the Jewish community's closest contact with the powerful American labor organizations. Still another was the Orthodox Rescue Committee, working both independently and with the assistance of the JOINT. The latter group sent food, clothing and money for Jews struggling to survive in Poland and elsewhere, even when such actions violated Allied regulations. The Orthodox Rescue Committee worked with particular zeal and effectiveness in the rescue of Eastern European rabbis and rabbinical students.

The American Jewish Congress, the Zionist organizations and others carried on propaganda, lobbying, and fund-raising work in support of European Jewish relief and rescue programs, including mass meetings in Madison Square Garden and contacts in Washington with the President and the State Department.

Postwar planning was an important activity of many of these groups. The strongest concentration on postwar planning was carried out by two leading American Jewish organizations, the Zionists and the American Jewish Committee (AJC). In the case of the Zionists this meant planning for the creation of the Jewish National Home in Palestine. The Zionist Organization of America (ZOA), while not the richest or most influential of American Jewish groups, was the best organized, with hundreds of chapters from coast to coast. Its disciplined membership (it claimed some 250,000 in 1942) were keenly concerned over the tragedy of Europe's Jews and waited for a cue to act to help rescue them to help rescue them and bring them to Palestine. Tragically, when the order was finally given, it was almost irrelevant to rescue; the mass slaughter was an accomplished fact.

Very different in character was the American Jewish Committee, a long-established group of rich and generous Jews in major cities. It had excellent contacts with the Roosevelt Administration. Its members were treated by the latter with special consideration for several reasons: the stature of their former and even contemporary leaders such as Joseph Proskauer and Felix Warburg, their dignified style of

quiet diplomacy, and--perhaps most important--the fact that they created the least embarrassment to the Administration. It had no mass membership, and no field operations except through its link to "the JOINT." Unlike the more forthright AJC of today, it seldom took public positions even on issues of Jewish and other human rights, its field of primary concern. Its postwar planning was focussed principally on the restoration or advancement of Jewish rights, particularly in Europe, where precious few were to survive to enjoy any rights at all.

Viewed as a whole, the record of the work of all these groups leaves no doubt that many American Jewish leaders were profoundly affected by the catastrophe facing the Jews in Europe, and made significant efforts to deal with it. What they achieved, though small when measured against the enormous need, must not be dismissed as insignificant. As the Talmud declares, every Jew saved counts as if a whole world was redeemed.

That much being said, the fact must be faced that what the millions of Jews of Europe needed, and only a small proportion of them got, was rescue. Until late in the war, when Zionism began to dominate Jewish efforts--without achieving its hoped-for major impact on the rescue problem, as we shall see in a later chapter--Jewish efforts were predominantly aimed at traditional refugee relief. Indeed, the distinction between refugee relief and rescue was often blurred, both by the Allied governments and the Jewish organizations.

The typical beneficiary of the American Jewish organizations then operating in Europe was a person who had escaped from Nazi-dominated parts of Europe, was living in a less than legal status in a strange country, and needed food, clothing and shelter. But the problem facing millions of European Jews at that time was precisely how to become refugees—that is, how to escape from Nazi areas where they were in daily peril of physical attack, deportation and death. Only a small proportion could hope to escape by clandestine means. Escape on a large scale was conceivable only if authorities in the Nazi-allied countries could be induced to permit it to happen. The crucial need was to apply whatever pressure or inducement might cause these authorities to resist Nazi orders for deportation of Jews, to stop physical mistreatment of Jews on their own territory, and to consent, openly or secretly, to a mass exodus of Jews to Allied or neutral countries. And there was a corresponding need to persuade Allied and neutral countries to let them in.

This crucial need was not met. Opportunities which might have been realized if promptly seized were acted on only slowly and timidly or not at all, while the Final Solution ran its relentless course. These missed opportunities will be examined later in this report.

CHAPTER II

What the Jewish Leadership Knew, and When

The record: no dearth of information

It would be redundant for this Commission to enter lists and partake in polemics as to what the Jews knew about the Holocaust, and when. The whole subject is an open record--those who wanted to know, knew approximately almost day by day what went on under Hitler's domination. Those who chose not to know pleaded ignorance, hence innocence. Excellent books continue to be published containing scientifically supported evidence of the events as they occurred, based on thousands of documents from primary sources, official archives of governments in half a dozen countries, as well as several Jewish and non-Jewish organizations. The two most recent books--and the most complete as to information available to the public, and the most painstaking in their research, are: The Terrible Secret - Suppression of the Truth about Hitler's 'Final Solution' by Walter Laquer (Little Brown & Co., Boston, Toronto, 1981) and Auschwitz and the Allies - How the Allies Responded to the News of Hitler's Final Solution, by Martin Gilbert

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(Michael Joseph, Rainbird, London, 1981). These volumes are very informative and shed some new light on the sequence of events, and the psychology of people often subconsciously incapable of comprehending the nature and meaning of things they knew. They also tell a lot about the failure of the Western powers to doing anything substantive to rescue great numbers of Jews doomed to the gas chambers.

*Perhaps even more detailed, from a chronological point of view, are two important studies. One is a doctoral dissertation by Haskel Lookstein, American Jewry's Public Response to the Holocaust 1934-44: An Examination based upon Accounts in the Jewish Press and Periodicals. (Degree date: 1979, Yeshiva University, University Microfilms International, No. 8007269. Ann Arbor, Mi., 1981).

The second is an essay by Mr. Alex Grobman, Director of the St. Louis Center for Holocaust Studies, titled: What Did They Know. The American Jewish Press and the Holocaust, 1 September 1939 - 17 December 1942. Published in American Jewish History, March 1979, pp. 327-352.

Though their topic was to canvass the Jewish and Anglo-Jewish press in the U.S., in many cases they also indicated the news which appeared in the general American press. Dr. Lookstein did it almost invariably, parallel with the dates and events reported in the Jewish press. From these two studies one gets an almost complete day-by-day report of what the American Jews and certainly the leadership could have learned of what happened to the Jews in Europe

A vast panorama of unfolding events from the point of view of the activities of the JDC is presented in Dr. Yehuda Bauer's American Jewry and the Holocaust -The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1939-1945. Wayne University Press, Detroit, Mi., 1981.

See also Bauer's article "When Did They Know?" in Midstream, April 1968, pp. 51-58. In this article he reproduces a facsimile of the Report of the Bund Regarding the Persecution of the Jews, May 1942 (from Folder No. 15 - Polish Underground Study - item 26) and a translation of the document in English.

Also relevant are David Wyman, Paper Walls, America and the Refugee Crisis, 1938-41, Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1969, and Randolph Braham, The Politics of Genocide, New York: Columbia University Press, 1981.

For all their very considerable merits, these books are not vital instruments for our purpose. The governments of the democratic nations and the USSR, the international organizations of great prestige and moral power like the Vatican, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the leadership of major Jewish organizations did not need, in the late 30's and all through the war years, to read Wyman, Braham, Laqueur, Gilbert, et al to become informed of what was happening. They knew enough to act or rather counteract, had there been enough compassion and a will.

What Hitler intended to do with the Jews--or rather, his two alternatives--either to get rid of them by forced emigration and expulsion, or by extermination--was known from the very beginning of his career. One knew or could know about it from his Beer Hall speeches in the 1920's (that the Jewish problem cannot be solved emotionally but "scientifically")* from Mein Kampf (published in 1925)**; through

*John Lukacs, The Last European War, p. 3, n. 18 (Anchor Press, Doubleday, Garden City, New York, 1976).

"Jews are physically, intellectually and especially morally inferior to Aryans (i.e., seemingly to European non-Jews. They are in fact sub-human....(they) constitute a mortal danger and must be destroyed." Werner Cohn, "The 'Aryans' of Jean-Paul Sartre," Encounter, December 1981, p. 872.

**"Today I will once more be a prophet (i.e., when he prophesied that one day he will rule Germany and beyond, the Jews laughed at him - but they laugh no longer Ed.) If the International Jewish Financiers inside and outside Europe should again succeed in plunging the nations into a world war, the result will not be the bolshevization of the earth and the victory of Jewry, but the annihilation of the Jewish race throughout Europe." (italics added, q. in Lukacs, The Last European War, p. 430). Hitler repeated the statement more or less verbatim several times, but he confused the date when he first pronounced it. He thought he said it first on September 1, 1939, when he invaded Poland.

See appendix no.

his murderous addresses before and after he became Chancellor (on January 30, 1933); from the Nuremberg Laws of September 15, 1935; from the Kristallnacht of November 9-10, 1938; from his most quoted speech before the Reichstag on January 30, 1939 (celebrating the anniversary of his accession to power; and the last one he delivered in peace time); from the news about the invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939; and the invasion of the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941.

Informed American Jewish leaders knew about the concentration camps virtually from the beginning--and they knew about the Wannsee Conference of January 20, 1942. They knew it from the correspondence from Rabbi Weissmandel (from Slovakia) by 1942, and of course they knew it from Riegner's and Lichtheim's reports from Switzerland and scores of other sources, not to speak about the accounts in the general and Jewish press.

In the archives of most of the major Jewish organizations there are large scrapbooks and files with thousands of clippings, and many reports from Switzerland, London and Palestine with details of the extermination process. Often these reports contain copies of accounts (letters and documents) received from occupied territories under German official or actual domination--Italy, Vichy (France), Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Romania, and Germany itself. If Richard Lichtheim's (the Jewish Agency's representative in Switzerland) letters and reports would be published,* it would suffice to show how much and how early

*Hundreds of letters by him from Geneva containing detailed and almost always extremely accurate reports of what was going on in Europe are to be found in the Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem. A few selected letters will be reproduced as appendices to this report.

the Jewish leadership knew of what went on. The same, though to a lesser extent, would be a collection of Riegner's reports and letters.

For the American public at large, the very enormity of Hitler's crimes, exceeding normal human comprehension, may have diminished the reaction. People react, selectively, to man-sized threats. It is not giant tragedies that plumb our emotional depths; it is, rather, the plight of single human beings. In a week when 3,000 people were killed in an earthquake in Iran, a lone boy falls down a well-shaft in Italy and the whole world grieves. Six million Jews are put to death, and it is Anne Frank, trembling in her garret, who remains stamped in our memory.

As for the American media, they were hampered by wartime limitations on communications and the fact that they could have no reporters in Nazi-occupied territory where the criminal slaughter of the Jews was taking place. Moreover, there was a certain skepticism about atrocity reports in wartime, given the experience in World War I with false stories about alleged German atrocities in Belgium. This time the atrocities were even worse than the reports, but the media were still reacting to their earlier experience.

Nevertheless, a devastating testimony as to the knowledge of the Jewish leadership and governments and international institutions in the free world of the systematic destruction of the Jewish people of Europe was delivered recently by Dr. Jan Karski, a legendary Polish hero of World War II at the International Liberators Con-

ference (October 26-28, 1981).* In his address he relates how in September 1943 he left on his last mission on behalf of the underground to the Government in Exile in London. Before leaving it was arranged, through bribing the SS guards of the Warsaw ghetto, to smuggle him in so that he could observe firsthand what was going on there. At the end of his stay he received a message from two Jewish leaders of the Warsaw ghetto representing the two mainstreams of Jewish political life--the Socialist Bund and the Zionists. When he reached the free world he spent several months in delivering the message, as well as the details of what he witnessed personally in the ghetto. He enumerates whom he has seen and spoken to. The list is extremely impressive: it included Roosevelt and Churchill, the leaders of international organizations, and the Vatican, as well as the shapers and makers of public opinion. He spoke to the great and mighty and also to the most prominent Jewish leaders, as well as to public audiences. During the war he published a book which was a selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club, and he wrote articles in 1943-1944 in the most prestigious newspapers and magazines in the U.S. and Great Britain. Since we think it is worthwhile to reproduce his testimony in full as an appendix to this report, we will quote here only the last paragraphs of his address which expresses most vividly with tragic sarcasm his bewilderment, which is also a personal "J'accuse:"

*See appendix no.

....The Lord assigned me a role to speak and write during the war, when--as it seemed to me--it might help. It did not.

Later, however, when the war came to its end, I learned that the governments, the leaders, scholars, writers did not know what had been happening to the Jews. They were taken by surprise.

The murder of six million innocents was a secret. A "Terrible Secret" as Laqueur reports.

Then, I became a Jew. Like the family of my wife, who is sitting in the audience--all of them perished in the ghettos, concentration camps, gas chambers--so, all murdered Jews became my family.

But I am a Christian Jew. I am a practicing Catholic. And, although not a heretic, still my faith tells me:

The Second Original Sin had been committed by humanity; through commission, or omission, or self-imposed ignorance, or insensitivity, or self-interest, or hypocrisy, or heartless rationalization.

This sin will haunt humanity to the end of time. It does haunt me. And I want it to be so.

The question is not just when and what they knew, but what did the Jewish leaders in the U.S. do about it. This study deals with that crucial question. It is crucial because it is linked to the haunting and transcending question whether a substantial number of Jews could have been saved.

Contemporary Leaders Castigate Their Own Institutions

Perhaps the most telling indication that rescue activities were not handicapped by lack of knowledge by the Jewish leadership is the vehement criticism leveled by some outstanding personalities within the establishment against their colleagues. At this

point we shall quote only one. Others will be reproduced in the context of the chapters dealing with concrete situations.

Hayim Greenberg, revered leader of Labor Zionism and editor of the weekly Der Yiddisher Kemfer and The Jewish Frontier, a monthly in English, published in the February 12, 1943 issue of his Yiddish journal a long essay titled "Bankrupt" from which we are reproducing a few extensive excerpts:*

The time has come, perhaps, when the few Jewish communities remaining in the world which are still free to make their voices heard and to pray in public should proclaim a day of fasting and prayer for American Jews. No--this is not a misprint. I mean specifically that a day of prayer and of fasting should be proclaimed for the five million Jews now living in the United States. They live under the protection of a mighty republic governed by democratic laws. They move about freely through the length and breadth of the land. The vast majority of them have enough food to eat, clothes to wear and roofs over their heads. And if any wrong is committed against them, they are free to protest and to demand their rights. Nevertheless, they deserve to be prayed for. They are not even aware what a misfortune has befallen them, and if they were to look at themselves with seeing eyes they would realize with shock how intolerable this misfortune is. This misfortune consists of the vacuity, the hardness and the dullness that has come over them; it consists in a kind of epidemic inability to suffer or to feel compassion that has seized upon the vast majority of American Jews and of their institutions; in pathological fear of pain, in terrifying lack of imagination -- a horny shell seems to have formed over the soul of American Jewry to protect and defend it

*) H. Greenberg was not only the leader of his party in the U. S. but was "the acknowledged spokesman of Labor Zionism the world over. His influence transcended party, and he was generally regarded as one of the important Zionist thinkers of his generation.... Many of his essays... are counted among the classics in Zionist literature." (Encyclopaedia of Zionism and Israel, Vol. I, pp. 431-32).

Both periodicals he edited were of a high journalistic and literary standard. Their influence was felt among audiences not only in the U. S. but also in Palestine and in pre-World War II Europe. The English translation of the essay "Bankrupt" was done by the late Shlomo Katz, editor of Midstream, who published it with his comments in the March 1964 issue.

against pain and pity. At a time when the American Jewish community is the largest and most influential in the world, at a time when the eyes of millions of Jews in Europe who are daily threatened with the most terrible and degrading forms of physical extermination are primarily turned to American Jewry, this American Jewish community has fallen lower than perhaps any other in recent times, and displays an unbelievable amount of highly suspect clinical "health" and "evenness of temper." If moral bankruptcy deserves pity, and if this pity is seven-fold for one who is not even aware how shocking his bankruptcy is, then no Jewish community in the world today (not even the Jews who are now in the claws of the Nazi devourer) deserves more compassion from Heaven than does American Jewry.....

The basic fact is evident to any Jew who has the courage to look at the situation as it is: American Jewry has not done -- and has made no effort to do -- its elementary duty toward the millions of Jews who are captive and doomed to die in Europe!....

The murder of two million Jews (the reader should bear in mind that this essay was written in February, 1943, two years and three months before the rampaging Germans were finally quelled. Ed.) with the most inhuman methods of torture and degradation which sadistic fantasy has ever devised, still has not sufficiently impressed those among us who have donned the shtreimels of Jewish guardianship, those who have assumed responsibility for Jewish interests, so that they could sit down around one table and look into each other's eyes and together try to do something to rescue at least one percent of the doomed millions. There have even appeared some Zionists in our midst who have become reconciled to the thought that it is impossible to stay the hand of the murderer and therefore, they say, it is necessary "to utilize this opportunity" to emphasize to the world the tragedy of Jewish homelessness and to strengthen the demand for a Jewish National Home in Palestine. (A Home for whom? For the millions of dead in their temporary cemeteries in Europe?)

As Hans Habe put it, "All evil takes place with the tacit connivance of the good."*

*The Mission, N.Y., Coward McCann, 1966.

CHAPTER III

Three Fatal Misconceptions

Quite commonly, after some great disaster, those who look back on the event find it hard to imagine how people could have been so blind as to allow an evil to happen that hindsight shows to have been wholly or partly avoidable. Hindsight, however, is a poor guide to understanding. We can better grasp why the American Jewish community dealt with the Holocaust as it did if we examine which dominated their thinking in different phases of the tragedy, and all of which proved fatally erroneous. At the outset, it was supposed that Nazism was not essentially different from the many forms of antisemitism of the past. Then, after this belief was disproved, it was widely believed that Hitler's program to exterminate the Jews was supported by his allies and satellites in Europe, who therefore could not be looked to for any cooperation. Finally, from start to finish American Jews clung to the mistaken belief that the American and British governments were friends of the Jewish cause.

1. Nazism Was Not Mere Antisemitism

The persistent belief of Jews--both leaders and common citizens, both in Europe and elsewhere--that Nazism was only an especially bad outbreak of antisemitism was not implausible at the time. Hitler,

despite his notorious, lifelong, obsessive hatred of the Jews, sharpened his persecution of them only by gradual stages. The first extermination camps began operating in Poland late in 1941; the "final solution" was officially decided on at the Wannsee conference of January 1942. The eight or nine preceding years of Hitler's rule had been marked by a long sequence of persecutions: anti-Jewish laws, vitriolic rhetoric, expulsion from the professions, confiscation of property, more or less controlled violence which peaked in the Kristallnacht of November 1938--a multitude of cruel measures to force the Jews of Germany to emigrate. Despite mounting evidence of the Nazis' unique savagery, most Jews continued--at all events until the invasion of Poland--to think of these persecutions as being in the classic tradition of antisemitism--perhaps more calamitous than in the past, but nevertheless survivable.*

Even as the war went on and word of the mass slaughters began to spread, this deeply inculcated perception of antisemitism obscured the vision of Jews in Europe and America. There were prayers for deliverance, even some fasting and other acts of protest. But the general response was to act as if this war of total annihilation was antisemitism writ large. Jewish leaders, many of them Rabbis, delivered sermons in those years, especially at the Passover feast,

*There were exceptions. One was "The Book of Miracles", a story by the dramatist Ben Hecht, written in 1938 and published in 1939. It gives a vivid and essentially true prophecy of the mass horror that would begin more than three years later.

laying stress on these words from the Hagadah: "And that promise has stood our father and ourselves in good stead: for more than one persecutor has risen against us to destroy us; but in every generation there are those who stand ready to annihilate us. But the Holy One, blessed is He, always saves us from their hands."

Expatriating on this quotation, typical sermons asserted that all the enemies of the Jews disappeared from the scene of history, but the eternal peoples survives despite all tribulations. This would be the case with Hitler also.

It is important to recall what those basic features were which this too-complacent view overlooked, and which made the Nazi attitude toward Jews unique in its horror. Two points of difference from traditional antisemitism deserve particular stress.

First, classic antisemitism in Christian societies contained a strong religious ingredient: "The Jews are an accursed people because they killed our God." But this attitude also implied in many cases--as in Spain before and during the Inquisition--a practical solution: conversion to Christianity. The Nazis did not offer any such choice. In fact, they made little or no distinction between people of Jewish culture, or even of Jewish ancestry--even those who were converts to Christianity or had no religion--and orthodox, observing Jews. Thus, as Bruno Bettelheim has observed, the term "martyrs" cannot be applied to the millions of Jews killed by the Nazis, because a martyr is one who chooses to die rather

repudiate his faith.*

Second, Nazism differed radically from traditional antisemitism in its scope, duration and intensity. In other countries, discrimination against Jews sometimes continued for generations, but with ups and downs. At times in Czarist Russia, for example, legislation against the Jews fell into disuse. At other times, acts of violence against Jews (euphemistically called "excesses") were instigated from above; the police were ordered not to interfere while the mob proceeded to plunder, rape and murder. But what was instigated from above was also controlled from above, and stopped when the order was given. The agonies of the pogroms in Russia were tragic, and inspired literature; their scope, compared to what happened under the Nazis, was minuscule. The largest and most infamous pogrom in our century, in April 1903, lasted about 30 hours. It left 47 dead and 92 injured. Some women were raped. About 1,500 stores and homes were looted. Then the Czar's troops appeared and the mob dispersed. This was the pogrom that aroused a storm of protest from citizens and rulers throughout the Western world, including mass meetings in New York, Philadelphia and Chicago and indignant messages to the Russian government from the German Kaiser and President Theodore Roosevelt. "Forty years before the Nazi deathcamps," comments the historian H. M. Sachar, "the murder of

*Bruno Bettelheim, "The Holocaust - Some Reflections, a Generation Later" Encounter, December 1978, pp. 7-19.

forty-five (sic) Jews could elicit this kind of shocked reaction from the Christian world."*

The Jews also suffered inordinately during the Russian revolution. Tens of thousands became refugees and about a hundred thousand were killed. Later, under both Stalin and Khrushchev, the deep-rooted antisemitism in Great Russian culture was used as a weapon in the power struggle, and there is ample evidence of prejudice against Jews in the Soviet Elite to this day.

It was centuries of this kind of historical experience which, indeed, had its counterpart in most countries of the Christian and Muslim worlds--that conditioned Jewish views of the Nazi persecutions. In other times and places, the Jews deep conviction of God's special favor and protection, and of their destiny to outlive their oppressors, was undoubtedly a source of courage to endure the many calamities, mercifully limited in scope and intensity, that were visited on them. But in the presence of what proved to be a virtually limitless cataclysm, this age-old faith was misplaced, and certainly contributed to the Jews undoing--inhibiting their leaders from taking timely and appropriate action by means that, as we shall see later in this Report, might have been available to them.

*H. M. Sachar, The Course of Modern Jewish History, Dell Publishing Co., New York, 1958, p. 248.

2. Hitler's Allies Did Not Support Extermination

Next among the misconceptions that afflicted American Jewish leaders was the notion that Hitler's allies and satellites in Europe agreed and cooperated with him in his program to exterminate the Jews. This was not at all the case. As will be shown later in this Report, this misconception undoubtedly inhibited rescue efforts that would have depended on the cooperation or tacit acquiescence of authorities within the Nazi empire.

In reality, when it came to backing for their Final Solution, the Nazis had almost no allies outside of Germany itself. Each of the countries overrun by the Nazis had its own culture and personality, and attitudes toward Jews varied widely; but all had this in common: they differed with Hitler on what to do with the Jews.

On this question, Hitler's allies and satellites can be roughly divided into three categories: some were free of antisemitism; some were steadily antisemitic; some were intermittently so. In the first category were Finland, Denmark, Italy and Bulgaria. Finland provides an example of how such countries sometimes reacted to German pressure on this issue. When Heinrich Himmler attempted to induce the Finns to deport their 2,000 Jews, Foreign Minister Rolf Witting refused to give the matter any consideration.* Until the

*Lucy Dawidowicz, The War Against the Jews, p. 374.

war ended not one Finnish Jew was deported or molested in any way. Significantly, when the Nazis were told off in this manner, they did not persist.

Examples of the steadily antisemitic category were Hungary and Rumania. Jews for centuries had been envied and hated by the dominant cultures; anti-Jewish laws were promulgated; at times Jews were victims of killings and other atrocities; pogroms were not unknown. But in neither country could the public imagination descend so far as to contemplate the extermination of the Jews. The Hungarian and Rumanian governments found various ways of resisting Nazi pressure to cooperate in the Final Solution. Much of the tension that arose between Hitler and the Hungarian dictator Horthy concerned policy toward the Jews, and it seems certain that Horthy's resistance, and that of his premier, Kallay, to demands on this issue influenced Hitler's decision to invade Hungary in March 1944. A similar story can be told in the case of Rumania. The Rumanians ruthlessly deported at least 160,000 Jews from the territories they occupied during their invasion of Russia, and about 90,000 of these died; but they refused to permit the Nazis to deport Jews from Rumania proper.

In such attitudes on the part of local authorities in Nazi-occupied Europe--and many similar examples could be given--lay important possibilities for American Jewish organizations to gain local cooperation in the rescue of Jews. Unfortunately, these possibilities, for the most part, were not seized or even believed

to exist. A famous instance, discussed in detail later in this Report, is the failure of the Jewish leadership to respond effectively to a Romanian offer to release 70,000 Jews from Transdnestria. Of this incident Nahum Goldmann was later to write in his autobiography that the Jewish leaders and organizations "lacked the courage, vision and resolution to risk a radical and drastic move. In all my years in Jewish politics I have never felt so impotent, so grimly bitter, as I did over this. All of us who spoke for the Jewish people in those days--and I emphatically include myself--bear a share of guilt, some of us a heavy share, some a lighter one."

Studying this record, it is difficult not to conclude that, in regard to Hitler's unwilling allies and satellites as in so many other aspects of the story, Jewish leaders were not so much misinformed as they were blinded by their habitual fears and sense of insecurity, especially in relations with the Allied governments.

3. Hitler's Fores Were Not the Jews' Friends

The old saying that "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" has often proved true in war and politics, at least in a limited tactical sense. Even those who share few yet other common interests often cooperate to defend themselves--and each other--against a common enemy. During World War II the Jewish leaders of the Western world, including the United States, assumed that their relationship with the governments allied against Nazi Germany was of this character. They were tragically mistaken.

The record shows that the Allied governments were well aware of Hitler's extermination policy but, except for a single, brief and eloquent joint statement on the mass slaughter of Jews issued in December 1942, a full 11 months after it had begun, remained for the most part studiously silent and evasive on the subject. They made little or no attempt until very late in the war to rescue Jews from the Holocaust, and in some cases actively obstructed such attempts by others. Their attitude on the subject was construed by the Nazi authorities as tantamount to acquiescence or even approval.

This Allied attitude was foreshadowed well before the extermination program began. We have already referred to the prewar unwillingness of Western governments, as late as 1938, to admit large numbers of Jewish refugees. After war began in 1939, foreigners in Britain who were nationals of countries under German control--including Jews, despite their status as persecuted victims and pariahs in the Nazi state--were classified as "enemy aliens" and even, for a time, placed in detention camps. In effect, British officialdom--a quarter of a century after calling for creation of a "Jewish national home"--was unable to perceive the Jews as a nation or people. Instead they were treated as nationals of the states which had stripped them of all their rights. Thus arose an anomaly: among the peoples against whom Hitler had declared total war there was one, the Jews, whose very existence the makers of Allied war policy could not bring themselves to acknowledge.

At the same time the British government, in pursuit of its aim to conciliate the Arabs, invalidated all certificates of entry into Palestine that had already been issued to Jews. (During 1940 thousands of desperate Jewish refugees, bound for Palestine in defiance of this policy, arrived in overcrowded ships only to be deported by the British authorities to the island of Mauritius and interned there.) As enemy aliens, Jews were also generally barred from entering territories of the British Empire. True, some Jews who had fled from German-controlled territory were admitted to Britain as refugees. An even more restrictive policy toward admitting refugees, including Jews, was enforced by the United States at that time. In general, the posture of both governments toward Jews fleeing from Hitler's grasp during that "phony war" period was one of evasion and obstruction. Admission of a Jew to either British or U.S. territory was extremely difficult.

In 1942 and thereafter, when the plight of Europe's Jews had become truly desperate, the British and American official attitudes remained much the same. The two governments had first-hand intelligence on the Jewish condition in Nazi-occupied lands and were currently informed on steps to carry out the "final solution." (One key report alerting them to Hitler's fateful decision came through Gerhart Riegner, Geneva representative of the World Jewish Congress.) Yet at no time did they acknowledge this monstrous policy as an official Nazi war aim or declare their intention to thwart it. On December 17,

1942, the date of the one and only Allied statement of protest mentioned above, Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Paul Goebbels wrote in his diary: "At bottom...I believe both the English and the Americans are happy that we are exterminating the Jewish riffraff."

Throughout the war, there is abundant documentary evidence of a determination on the part of the British and American governments to avoid this issue. It is notable, for example, that both the British Broadcasting Corporation and the U.S. Office of War Information reported the Nazis' mass slaughter of millions of people beginning in 1942, but did not mention that the main targets of this horror were Jews. Even more significant is the fact that the death camps, whose inmates were chiefly Jewish, were never subjected to Allied bombing. On several occasions synthetic oil, rubber and other war production plants in the large complex at Auschwitz were bombed, but the death camps were left untouched--except once, by mistake. One Auschwitz survivor has testified that he and others hoped to be bombed by the Allies, not only because there might be a chance of escape in the confusion but because even if the themselves were killed they might first have the consolation of seeing Germans killed--and in case it was better to die by bombing than to be gassed. Erich Kulka, another inmate at Birkenau (that part of the Auschwitz complex where most of the gassing and cremating took place) later told the historian Martin Gilbert:

"We saw many times the silver trails in the sky....All the SS men would go into the bunkers but we came out of our huts and prayed that a bomb would fall, or soldiers and weapons will be parachuted, but in vain.

"Whenever there was a raid the SS ran away. We were always left alone, completely alone. Perhaps we could run away. But being totally powerless and feeling helplessly forgotten, we had nowhere to go."*

The attitude which such actions revealed, especially in the case of the U.S. State Department, was aptly characterized in the title of a memorandum dated January 18, 1944 entitled On the Acquiescence of This [i.e., the U.S.] Government in the Murder of European Jews. The memorandum was written by Josiah E. Dubois, then assistant general counsel of the U.S. Treasury Department, and addressed to Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgentau Jr.** To substantiate the charge of acquiescence--in contrast to mere inattention or indifference--the memorandum gave specific facts about State Department actions and summarized them as follows:

- (1) They have not only failed to use the Governmental machinery at their disposal to rescue Jews from Hitler, but have even gone so far as to use this Government machinery to prevent the rescue of these Jews.
- (2) 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.
- (3) 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.

*Martin Gilbert, Auschwitz and the Allies, p. 308. London, Michael Joseph Rainbird, 1981. See also Herbert Druks "The Allies and the Jewish Leadership on the question of Bombing Auschwitz," Tradition, Award Books, New York, pp. 273-74.

**Although the memorandum was signed by Dubois' immediate superior, Randolph E. Paul, Dubois was its author. See documents numbered The full text of the memorandum is in the Morgenthau Diaries, Book 693, FDR Library, Hyde Park, N.Y.

- (4) 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.

A sample of the frustrations Jews experienced in Washington appears in a reported conversation around the end of 1943 between the young Palestinian Peter Bergson, and the then Under Secretary of State, Edward R. Stettinius Jr. The conversation was reported by Bergson to Rabbi Meir Berlin, who recalled it during his oral briefing of the Jewish Agency Executive Committee in Jerusalem soon afterward:

Bergson told me what Stettinius asked: Why do you attack in print the American Government? You are certainly aware that there is a war going on in the world. Bergson told him: I am glad that my activities shock the Government. What would you do if you were in Brazil and you heard that tens of thousands of Americans are being slaughtered, and you knew that something can be done to rescue them, but one does nothing? Wouldn't you be as mad as hell? ("rote'akh") The same is the case with me. That is why I am acting. Stettinius told him: What do you demand? Bergson said: I have written forty letters and received no answer. Read those letters and you will know what I want, what I demand. Stettinius said: Write one more letter and I promise you an answer.*

*Minutes of the executive Committee of the Jewish Agency, Jerusalem, January 16, 1944. From Jewish Agency files, Zionist Archives, Jerusalem.

In justice it should be recalled that U.S. policy on this question was not completely static throughout the war. An important development was the creation of the War Refugee Board by Executive Order 9417, January 22, 1944. As noted in Chapter I, this body succeeded in relaxing the application of curbs on the sending of money abroad, and on contacts with enemy authorities, in such way as to facilitate rescue efforts by the JOINT and other Jewish organizations. In January 1944 President Roosevelt's executive order creating the WRB was sent by the State Department to U.S. diplomatic posts abroad with accompanying instructions to help in the rescue of the Jews. On receiving this instruction in Ankara, Turkey, the same Ambassador Laurence Steinhardt who, earlier in Moscow, had actively obstructed the granting of visas to such people now worked aggressively to carry out his new instructions.

The tragic fact, however, is that this improvement in policy came too late to do very much good. By mid-1943, Polish Jewry had been nearly wiped out, and by November of that year the "Greater German Reich" (embracing prewar Germany, Austria, Luxembourg, and parts of Poland, France and Belgium) had been officially declared Judenrein, or purged of Jews; and the slaughter of Jews in occupied Soviet areas had been enormous.

After the war ended, a rather callous attitude characterized the behavior of at least some Allied authorities toward the Jewish survivors whom they found in Nazi camps. In July 1945 President Truman sent Earl G. Harrison, dean of the University of Pennsylvania Law School who was then the U.S. representative to the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, to investigate the conditions of displaced persons in Germany. After inspecting the "DP" camps operated by the U.S. military occupation forces, Harrison wrote an eloquent report which includes these words:

As matters now stand, we appear to be treating the Jews as the Nazis treated them except that we do not exterminate them. They are in concentration camps in large numbers under our military guard instead of S.S. troops. One is led to wonder whether the German people, seeing this, are not supposing that we are following or at least condoning Nazi policy.*

The Western Allies were not alone in displaying such attitudes. Neutral Switzerland, for example, forced Jews arriving at its border to turn back to certain death--even though, as Swiss authorities have since acknowledged, they could have admitted these people without jeopardizing Swiss security. As for the Soviet Union, its attitude seemed one of total indifference and acquiescence. Well informed by his underground in Germany, Poland and elsewhere in Eastern Europe, Stalin did nothing to save or help the Jews, either during the period of the Nazi-Soviet pact or later during the Red Army's victorious war against Germany.

*"The Plight of the Displaced Jews in Europe," the text of a Report by Earl G. Harrison to President Truman, September 29, 1945, p. 12. For a detailed description of the condition of the Jewish DP's see Leonard Dinnerstein, "The U.S. Army and the Jews: Policies Toward the Displaced Persons after World War II," in American Jewish History, March 1979, pp. 353-366.

Much has been said elsewhere in extenuation of these attitudes, especially on the part of the Western Allies. For example, it has been pointed out that during the years after Dunkirk and Pearl Harbor the Allies were on the defensive world-wide, had great armies to raise, great battles to fight and great losses and suffering to endure, and hence could not attend to all the woes of a world at war. Later, the argument goes, when the tide of battle had turned, the vast strategic effort of defeating the Axis powers had to take an absolute priority. In addition, the plea is often made that Allied politicians, though not antisemitic themselves, had to take realistic account of a considerable amount of antisemitism among their own peoples; and that too explicit actions or declarations in support of the Jews would have aroused this latent prejudice, creating tension and division in Allied ranks and impeding the war effort. Some argue that this would have been all the more true because the discrediting of false atrocity tales in World War I had predisposed many honest people to disbelieve what in this case proved to be the terrible truth about Hitler's "final solution." Finally, some argue that, given the dispersal of Jewish populations all over Europe, and the merciless nature of the Nazi regime, the Allies could have done little or nothing to save the Jews in any case.

To weigh all such exculpatory arguments and draw conclusions concerning them would go beyond the purpose of this Commission. They certainly cannot all be taken at face value. For example, public opinion in both the United States and Britain included not only antisemitic

elements but many enlightened influences also, and many non-Jewish as well as Jewish voices in both countries were raised against the official policy of inaction. Numerous examples of such dissenting voices will be found in later chapters.

The point most relevant to our inquiry, to which the facts reviewed above overwhelmingly attest, is this: The governments allied against Hitler were well and currently informed about the tragic fate of the Jews and did little or nothing to mitigate it; and this callous attitude was disguised by pretending that the problem did not exist--indeed, that there was no Jewish people as such. It would be grossly unjust and inaccurate to go further and charge that responsible Allied leaders actually shared the Nazi aim of extermination and, as Goebbels wrote, were "happy" to see it carried out; after all, Jews in the Western democracies continued to enjoy full rights of citizenship and many held high positions. But the evidence is conclusive that the United States and British governments in particular were not friends of the Jews and did not look on them as allies in the common struggle.

Against this factual background, we must now examine the response of the American Jewish leaders and their organizations. Despite individual differences, the evidence that they generally shared a mistaken view of the Allied governments as friends and allies of the Jews is beyond dispute. Again and again their governments assured them that the cause of Jewish survival was identical with the cause of Allied victory; and they accepted these assurances. After Pearl Harbor, Jewish organizations, as loyal Americans, bought war bonds, contributed to the American

Red Cross, and offered prayers for a speedy victory. Roosevelt and Churchill, as the great champions of democracy and foes of Hitler, were their heroes. Their mourning when Roosevelt died on the eve of victory was profound and poignant. Though often disappointed and in some cases even bitter about official evasion and inaction, they remained unwaveringly loyal to the Allied cause and, in most cases, subordinated Jewish rescue work even to the most unreasonable and hampering governmental decisions. For example, until the much-belated creation of the highly effective War Refugee Board, U.S. regulations forbade the transfer abroad of money, or even of food, clothing or medicine, lest it fall into enemy hands. Yet money was often vitally needed for bribing neutral or enemy officials to allow Jews to escape across frontiers, or for the purchase or forging of false documents for escaping Jews, or for sending food relief to Jews still under Nazi occupation. Similarly, all contacts with the enemy were banned, although such contacts were often essential to successful rescue work. Some organizations, to be sure--such as the Orthodox Rescue Committee and the Jewish Labor Committee--evaded the regulations and managed to transfer money to neutral countries for such purposes. On occasion certain European agents of the Joint Distribution Committee and the World Jewish Congress also found ways to circumvent currency restrictions and the ban on enemy contacts when rescue work required such steps. But much more could have been done for the rescue of Jews, without in any way damaging the war effort, if Jewish organizations and leaders

had more often dared to defy or circumvent such bureaucratic obstacles, or had lobbied more effectively to get them removed sooner.

It is true that Jewish leaders were frequently in contact with U.S. officials and made representations on behalf of European Jewry as effectively as they felt they could in the circumstances. But they quickly became aware of the limits of official willingness to act, and adjusted to those limits. Indeed, many American Jews, like their government, shied away from the overwhelming fact of the Holocaust. Hollywood, an industry dominated by Jews, did not produce a single film on the subject during World War II. To some extent this avoidance was also practiced by the most prestigious Jewish-owned newspapers, The New York Times and The Washington Post. It was in such an atmosphere that Rabbi Stephen Wise expressed his frustration in September 1942 in a letter to Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter:

I don't know whether I am getting to be a Hofjude [a court Jew], but I find a good part of my work is to explain to my fellow Jews why our government cannot do all the things asked or expected of it.*

Why did Jewish leaders act in such a reticent fashion at that crucial moment in their people's history? Why did they allow themselves to be persuaded that the Allied governments had their cause at heart?

A part of the answer may lie in response patterns built up during centuries of the Diaspora. Lacking a national power base of their own, Jews were still restrained by a history which had taught them not to

*Stephen Wise, Servant of the People, Selected letters edited by Carl Hermann Voss, p. 250. Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society of America, 1969.

draw attention to themselves and to seek accommodation with the ruling powers. When they entered the political arena, they usually did so not as Jews pursuing legitimate Jewish interests, but either as mainstream politicians, assimilated to the dominant culture, or else as idealists fighting for the rights of all men.

Compared with present-day American Jewry, the Jewish community in the United States in the years before 1945 had little political power. It could not compare with that of today in wealth, self-confidence or political activism. As we shall see in the next chapter, the triumph of Zionism, more than anything else, would later bring these qualities to their present state of development.



CHAPTER IV

Jewish Attitudes and Priorities in Europe and America, 1880-1945

The misconceptions and want of self-confidence described in the preceding chapter shed some light on American Jewish leaders' limited response to the Holocaust, but they fall short of a real explanation. Why did these delusions prevail? Why was the Holocaust not faced with more steadfast courage and purpose? For a fuller understanding we must turn back to the history of the Diaspora in Europe and America, especially in the decade after 1880. The large-scale migrations of that period set up tensions within world Jewry, and between Jewish communities and the Western powers, which would strongly affect the attitudes of Jewish leaders throughout the Hitler era.

Eventually, the tensions among Jewish communities were largely resolved, and their morale and self-confidence greatly enhanced, by their united concentration on the cause of Zionism. That was the first great and successful political struggle in modern times by world Jewry for a Jewish cause. Already before and during World War II Zionism had begun to move the American Jewish community toward a decisive break with its long habit of submission. Unfortunately, this transformation did not progress far enough or soon enough to give American Jews the courage and strength to lead the way to the rescue of European Jewry against the contrary priorities and overwhelming prestige of the wartime Allied governments. As will be seen below, Zionism was seen for a time

as the most promising means of rescue; but when this proved largely an illusion it competed successfully with the cause of rescue for priority in Jewish efforts. Thus it emerged as an alternative to the massive rescue efforts that were not made, and as partial atonement for the millions who were not saved.

Jewish Mutual Aid: Philanthropy and Self-Interest

There is an ancient Jewish tradition expressed in the words kol Israel arevim ze bazeh--all Jews are responsible for each other. If one community of Jews is in deep trouble, it is the duty of the others to help the afflicted and oppressed. This commitment was especially characteristic of the emancipated or quasi-emancipated Jews of Eastern and Central Europe in the 19th century.

In the 1880's the migration of Jews took on a mass character. Between 1881 and 1914, 2,370,000 Jews,* almost all of them driven by persecution and poverty, migrated from Eastern to Western Europe and the Americas. Of that figure more than two million came to the U.S.** Such an unprecedented human flood required tremendous philanthropic relief--transportation, shelter, hygiene, and jobs. The rather small emancipated Jewish communities in Germany, France, Great Britain and the U.S. established emergency agencies and spent large sums to meet the needs of the arrivals.

* Standard Jewish Encyclopedia, p. 1338/2.

**Ibid., p. 1910/1.

Also at this time, there began the first modern projects of Jewish colonization. Two outstanding philanthropists, Baron Edmond de Rothschild and Baron Maurice Hirsch, spent large fortunes on such projects.

Rothschild's effort in Palestine triumphed with the establishment of the State of Israel; Hirsch's, in the Argentine, failed.

These great enterprises of Jewish philanthropy made history on a large scale. They resettled about 2.5 million Jews, virtually created the mighty American Jewish Community which grew to 6 million, and contributed decisively to the building of the Jewish National Home in Palestine. But they were not entirely altruistic. All the European committees did everything possible to divert the flood of migrants to further destinations--chiefly to North America. The Hilfsverein der deutschen Juden, organized in 1901, had no other purpose than to help the East European Jewish emigration to the United States and elsewhere. So aided, by 1925 the Jewish community in the United States had grown to 4,500,000.

The fact is that the typical emancipated and well-to-do Jew of Western Europe, although quite likely religious and proud of his cultural and ethical Judaism, could not identify with the "Yiddishe Folk" of Eastern Europe's ghettos and shtetlach. He was embarrassed by these fugitives with their exotic way of life, orthodox religiosity, outlandish garb, Yiddish jargon, loud conversation, bizarre ways, and lowly and undignified occupations--moneylenders, pawnbrokers, itinerant peddlers of junk ("alte zakhen"),--their only means of livelihood. And he worried lest the hard-won rights and opportunities of his emancipated Jewish community be endangered by too great an influx of such people.

The French author, Bernard Lazare, although later an ardent champion of Dreyfus and an active Zionist, gave a vivid expression of such feelings of embarrassment and disavowal: "... thanks to these hordes with whom we are confused, it is forgotten that for almost two thousand years we have lived in France ... What I want to insist upon publicly is that we have nothing whatever in common with these (Jews) who are constantly thrown in our faces, and that we must abandon them."* He did not abandon them, but neither did he embrace them.

As in Western Europe, so also in the United States the "old" Jewish communities did not feel happy with the growing influx of newcomers. The first Jewish settlers to arrive on these shores, almost exclusively Sephardim, did not look with benevolent eyes on the arrival of the German Jews in the mid-19th century. The latter, in turn, were not enthusiastic about the masses of Polish, Romanian and Russian Jews who came from the 1880's on.

Soon European philanthropists who shipped immigrants, together with funds for assistance, to America began to receive agitated telegrams. The Americans insisted that they themselves must determine the scale and nature of the influx. Local committees began to turn back individuals or groups who might become public charges, and to demand that only young, able-bodied and skilled workers come to them.** Like similar communities

*Quoted in David Vital's The Origins of Zionism, p. 210, and note 11 giving the source.

**Zosa Szajkowsky, "Attitude of American Jews," Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society, pp. 221-280, summarized by Ben Halpern in The Idea of the Jewish State, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961, pp. 124-125.

in Europe, they were concerned lest the new immigrants jeopardize their status and the integration they had achieved as citizens in the land of freedom.

But such attitudes had no effect. Finding that they could do nothing to stem the flow or direct it to other places, the old-timers proceeded to organize to aid the newcomers, and to disperse them throughout the country, trying to minimize concentration in the big cities of the Eastern seaboard. The American Jewish philanthropists who led this effort are many, and their names are famous in history for generosity and compassion.

The situation changed with the end of World War I, and still more so after the start of the great Depression. America's gates were no longer wide open, and gradually the immigrant flood was reduced to a trickle. The system of immigration quotas by country of origin was instituted under pressure from labor and other interest groups. Jewish organizations fully backed this policy. There can be no doubt that the old attitudes survived to affect the mind-set of American as well as Western European Jewish leaders during the Hitler era, and hence their response to the fate of Jews in Eastern Europe. Many of the Jews who had risen, some of them in a single generation, from obscurity to high and influential positions in American life--in business, the professions, arts and sciences, even the Supreme Court and the Cabinet--looked on massive Jewish immigration as a threat to their status. Among American Jews of West European origin, the old prejudice against East European Jews remained especially strong. Laurence Steinhardt, a proud Jew and

active Zionist, during his service as U.S. ambassador in Moscow from 1939 to 1941, applied the strictest possible criteria to visa applications from Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe and characterized such people, according to a high State Department official of that time, as "entirely unfit to become citizens of this country .. lawless, scheming, defiant--and in many ways unassimilable."

As later parts of the Report will show, there is evidence that such attitudes among some American Jewish leaders, along with other and nobler motives, played their part in stimulating U.S. support of the Zionist movement before and during World War II; but that they also helped to discourage efforts to rescue East European Jews who were seen as likely to settle in the United States.

Other factors also worked toward the same result. Antisemitism, always present in American society, became virulent among some Americans mostly of German ancestry, after the rise of Hitler. Nazi propaganda about the Roosevelt "Jew deal," trumpeted from Berlin or fabricated in New York City's Yorkville, home of the German-American Bund, gained wide currency. Less intense, but real, prejudice against Jews was common among large percentages of the American public, as numerous opinion surveys showed: for example, in April 1938, 58 per cent in a Gallup poll thought the Jews were to blame for what was happening to them in

Germany; and in July 1942, 44 per cent thought Jews held too much power and influence in America.*

It is doubtful whether such polls truly captured public attitudes, and virulent antisemitism with its Nazi armbands and torrents of hate propaganda was confined to a numerically small element with even smaller influence. But Jews perceived these phenomena as threatening a repetition of what had happened in Germany--also on a small scale at first--and felt threatened. Moreover, such was their underlying sense of insecurity that they tended to respond not by attacking the source of the threat but rather by avoiding actions that would make them conspicuous.

Reinforcing this caution, especially in regard to events in Europe, was the prevailing mood of isolationism in the United States. At a time when the U.S. government, in the name of non-interference, forbore to put pressure on Hitler not mistreat the Jews, many American Jews hesitated

*The statistics and the results of the polls are given in many publications. The most complete one seems to be Jews in the Mind of America by Charles Herber Stemer and others, published for the American Jewish Committee by Basic Books, New York and London, 1966 (second printing) in collaboration with the Institute of Human Relations Press, Chapter V, pp. 110-155. Paper Walls - America and the Refugee Crisis 1938-1941, by David S. Wyman, The University of Massachusetts Press, 1969. See his index under anti-semitism, especially, pp. 14-23. The Politics of Rescue by Henry L. Feingold, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, N.J., 1970. See index under antisemitism, especially pp. 8-9. No Haven for the Oppressed by Saul S. Friedman, Wayne University Press, Detroit, 1973.

to speak out on this issue. When isolationism--even after war mobilization had turned unemployment into a manpower shortage--demanded strong U.S. curbs against immigration (some groups were even demanding that Congress abolish immigration into the United States completely), fear of such a backlash acted as a restraint on American Jews, deterring them from calling for a change in immigration policy in favor of the endangered Jews of Europe. (Britain, meanwhile, was pressing unsuccessfully for just such a change in U.S. policy in hopes of relieving the pressure for Jewish emigration to Palestine.)

From the perspective of today, when a self-confident American Jewish community speak out unhesitatingly on questions affecting Israel and other Jewish concerns, and when the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith and other Jewish organizations direct the spotlight on publicity at the least manifestation of antisemitism, it may seem strange--perhaps even inconceivable--that American Jews of the early 1940s could have been frightened by propaganda charges that, for example, the war was being fought in the interests of a chimerical conspiracy of Russian Bolsheviks and Jewish Wall Street financiers. But such charges were not dismissed as laughable at the time. American Jewish leadership, sincerely afraid of such accusations, thought the best way to combat them was to keep a low profile. In 1940 some went so far as to suggest cancelling or curtailing their programs of relief for the Jews in Europe and giving the money saved to the drive for evacuation of children from Britain.

The more assertive posture of today still lay in the unseen future, to be called into existence chiefly by the dramatic success of Zionism, the staunch patriotism demonstrated by American Jews in World War II and, to a degree, the Warsaw ghetto uprising of 1943.

Zionism, American Jewry, and the Jews of Eastern Europe

Since the Zionist movement played such a decisive part in shaping American Jewish responses to the Holocaust, it is important to recall some pertinent facts about the aims of this movement and of those who led it. Although Zionism was never monolithic, its leaders during the crucial years--Chaim Weizmann, David Ben-Gurion, and the leaders of the Histadrut and the parties of the Zionist left--were at one in their attitude toward the Jews of Eastern Europe. They all rebelled against the conditions which made the Eastern Jews what they were, but they were not enthusiastic about the people who were victims of these conditions. Indeed, their attitude in this respect was not unlike that of the emancipated Jews of Central and Western Europe, already described. Zionist literature was pervaded with scorn toward the pitiful creatures of the ghettos. Even years after Hitler's advent to power, the Zionist leadership, except for the militant Vladimir Jabotinsky, opposed any idea of a swift evacuation of the masses of European Jews to Palestine. Various arguments were made. First, by pronouncing that their aim was emigration, Zionists might forfeit all rights the European Jews might have in their countries of residence. Second, the evaluation of millions

or even hundreds of thousands in the course of a decade, or even a generation, seemed to be a wild dream--if for no other reason than that the British would never permit it. Third, Jews had made tremendous contributions to Poland other countries of Eastern Europe and should stay where they were needed.

Overriding all such circumstantial arguments was a more fundamental ideological belief in a certain Zionist ideal--one which had only limited relevance to the predicament of the Jews of Eastern Europe. Zionism, as perceived by Weismann and the others in control of the movement during the 1930s, was a revolutionary ideology aimed not so much at the physical rescue of the Jewish people as at their gradual moral transformation. The true Zionist would be an idealist, ready for self-sacrifice--a pioneer who "ascends" to Eretz-Israel, expecting to lead a hard life there and to transform the country from neglected wasteland into a fertile oasis. He would revive the Hebrew language. He would be a man with a keen sense of social justice and equality, whose life is an example for others; a man who strives to make equality not just a dream for the end of days, but a reality here and now; a man of dignity, generous and fearless.

Such was the aim and pride of the leaders of Zionism. And this was why, if immigration to Palestine had to be limited for reasons beyond their control, they wanted the immigrants to be young, strong and spirited--the best pioneer material.

Moreover, the Zionist leaders expected that the creation of this new Zionist society would be a long, slow process. They contemplated bringing only thousands, not hundreds of thousands, to Palestine each year. The limits on the rate of Jewish entry to Palestine were thus as much of Zionist as of British making; and the Zionists' fierce fight against the White Paper of 1939 was motivated not by its small annual quota of 15,000 but by its promise to the Arabs that after five years all Jewish immigration would stop.

By 1941 these Zionist views were reinforced by a more urgent consideration. Rommel's forces were then almost at the gates of Cairo, and a Nazi thrust from Egypt into Palestine was considered a real possibility. Large numbers of Palestinian Jews enlisted in the British forces not only to help defeat the Nazis, but also to save Zionism in Palestine. Thus the image of the strong, self-reliant Zionist was further reinforced, while that of Palestine as the haven of millions of oppressed Jews seemed less realistic than ever.

In fact, the latter idea had long since been abandoned by Weizmann as an impossibility. As early as 1936, and again at the Zionist Congress in Zurich in August 1937, he frankly foretold the doom of the vast majority of the Jewish people in Eastern Europe. He spoke emotionally about their grim condition and the great responsibility which the leadership had to assume for their fate. He divided them into categories: those who would have to be abandoned and wait for the Messiah at the "end of days," and those whom the Zionists should help to save themselves

by immigrating to Palestine. He recollected his testimony before Britain's Peel Commission when it came to Palestine in November 1936:

I told the Royal Commission the hopes of six million Jews are centered on immigration to Palestine. One of the members of the Royal Commission asked me: Do you intend to bring all of them into Palestine? I answered: No. I am acquainted with the laws of physics and chemistry, and I know the force of material factors. For our generation I divide the number six by three, and this will be the measure of the abysmal Jewish Tragedy. Two million of the youth who stand now on the threshold of life and already have lost their elementary right - the right to work - these two millions we wish to save. The old ones will pass, they will adjust or not. Today they are dust, economic and moral dust in this cruel world.*

One can picture the anguish of Weizmann, a revered leader of world Jewry, as he contemplated this unprecedented human disaster, yet spoke of it with resignation. He offered no plan for rescue of the threatened majority; instead he concentrated on how to save two million. Had even this aim been achieved, the dimensions of the disaster would have been much less. But in the summer of 1942, when the magnitude of the Holocaust became evident, the Zionist leadership was not prepared either organizationally, financially, or psychologically to attempt--not over decades but in a time frame of months or even weeks--the rescue of the whole Jewish people of Europe counting in the millions. Both because the levers of Allied power were in the hands of non-Jews to whom the fate of the European Jews was not of the first importance, and because their own minds were so strongly set on other goals, they proved unable to adopt the drastic new measures which the emergency required.

*From the official protocol of the 20th Zionist Congress, August 3-16, 1937, Second Meeting, pp. 32-33.

Zionism and Rescue: American Debates, 1942-43

It was in 1942 and 1943 that Zionism became a dominant theme in American Jewish debates. It was one of the two leading themes then being discussed under the rubric of "postwar planning"--a term which in itself suggests how little most leaders were preoccupied with the immediate problem of the Holocaust being perpetrated during those same years. The other postwar planning theme, which was given top priority by non-Zionist organizations, was the assurance of full civil and political rights for Jews in the postwar world.

These two questions of postwar planning dominated the wartime history of American Jewry: the Biltmore Conference held in New York on May 9-11, 1942, and the American Jewish Conference, August 29-September 3, 1943, also in New York. Neither was convened for the purpose of rescue, nor was rescue chiefly on the minds of those present at either conference. Even when various groups of different ideologies deliberated explicitly about what could be done to alleviate the disaster of the European Jews, the minutes show that their hearts were not in the task. Many speakers seemed to view the cataclysm not as the overriding issue to be grappled with, but rather as an argument to prove the validity of this or that disputed aim or ideological truth position. Only at rare moments it seemed to dawn on the participants that the Holocaust was the most urgent problem; then this perception would fade into what to them seemed larger, transcendent imperatives.*

*See Isaac Neustadt-Noy, The Unending Task: Efforts to Unite American Jewry from the American Jewish Congress to the American Jewish Conference, Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis University, 1976 (unpublished doctoral dissertation).

Of the two major themes under debate, only Zionism, as we have seen, had a significant bearing on the question of the rescue of European Jews. In fact, in early 1941, a year before the Biltmore conference--and before the Final Solution was adopted--advocates of a Jewish state in Palestine were speaking of the rescue of Europe's Jews as their major purpose. It is useful, therefore, as we conclude this chapter, to recall how the debate on Zionism developed in that crucial period, and what its actual impact on the rescue problem proved to be.

Although the building of a Jewish state in Palestine remained the central preoccupation of the Zionist leadership, they denied any intention of turning their backs on the desperate plight of Europe's Jews. On the contrary, they argued that none of the rescue plans thus far formulated was practicable, and that the only realistic possibility of rescuing Jews in considerable numbers, though not in great masses, was to open the way for the admission of more Jews into Palestine.

There was no unanimity in the Zionist camp as to how to go about this. The Biltmore program, backed by Ben-Gurion and adopted with the help of the American Zionists led by Rabbi Silver, called on Britain to transfer immediate to the Jewish Agency the administration of Palestine, including responsibility for immigration and absorption. Thus the doors of Palestine would be thrown wide open by the Jews themselves and considerable numbers of Jews would be saved.

Weizmann, who knew England better than Ben-Gurion, considered

the Biltmore approach no less fantastic than the grandiose rescue plans suggested by others. He favored personal, quiet diplomacy to induce the British government to relent on the White Paper policy and permit larger numbers of Jews to enter Palestine under British rule.

The Biltmore Program has its place in history as a milestone on the road to the creation of the State of Israel. As a means of rescue, however, it ended in failure. Weizmann's ideas--which, although rejected at the Biltmore, were pursued by him in London--failed, too, yielding very small, hardly visible results.

A clear understanding and evaluation of the Zionist approach of that period is offered by historian Noah Lucas, a lifelong Zionist, in his illuminating book The Modern History of Israel:*

....In the spring of 1942, Ben Gurion's persistence was rewarded. The American Zionist movement endorsed the goal of Jewish statehood in a manifesto known as the "Biltmore Program."

....But while the purpose of statehood was understood then [early in 1941] to be the rescue of Europe's Jews its adoption as a political goal, in time, subtly relegated rescue to secondary status, since the requirements of the political struggle were not necessarily identical with those of rescue. Once the achievement of statehood became the overriding goal of the movement, the Zionist real politik developed a rigorous logic and momentum of its own in which humanitarian considerations were subordinate....

By the end of 1942 little doubt remained about the enormity of the Nazi purpose. By this time the Zionist movement itself was transformed....the struggle for a Jewish state became the

*Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1974.

primary concern of the movement....

....The movement for Jewish statehood received from Hitler an irresistible spark of fanaticism....at just the time when a Jewish state had become irrelevant to the masses of European Jewry for whose salvation it had been conceived.

Mr. Lucas explained that this new conversion to Revisionism ("In effect Ben Gurion had come round to a view of Zionism essentially the same as Jabotinsky's") fitted in excellently with the mood and character of American Jews. Worst of all, it absolved them morally from drastic action to obtain mass rescue of the Jews of Europe:

....Their (American Jews') sense of security as members of American society did not....attain a level that would have enabled them to campaign for the liberalization of immigration laws to accomodate masses of Jewish refugees. Their desperate desire to rescue the Jews of Europe was conveniently structured by the Zionist program in a way that involved only helping Jews to reach Palestine, without impinging upon their lives in America. Thus the identification with political Zionism exactly answered to their needs and those of the Zionist movement. They were mobilized and energized on behalf of what they regarded as a foreign philanthropic enterprise [Jewish statehood], with little knowledge of or interest in the political situation in Palestine.*

Thus, the Zionist movement can be seen as a mixture of triumph and tragedy. It was a great national liberation movement culminating in the establishment of Israel against what appeared to be insuperable obstacles and dangers. For this, enormous credit must be given to Weizmann, Ben-Gurion, Wise, Silver and Goldman. But Israel's birth came too late to save the millions of Jews slaughtered by the Nazis. The question must be raised as to whether the concentration on the

*Ibid., pp. 189-190.

goal of a Jewish state at the crucial moment did not unduly divert the compassion and energy of the Jewish people and their friends from the urgent task of rescue. The Commission believes that it did.



CHAPTER V

Could Nothing More Have Been Done to Save the Jews

In earlier chapters we have noted how little was done, or even attempted, by most Jewish organizations--with some important exceptions--to save European Jews from mass death in Hitler's holocaust. We have noted misconceptions that prevailed in the American Jewish leadership: first that Nazism was no more than an extreme case of antisemitism; then, when this comforting illusion was shattered, that the Allied governments were reliable friends of the Jews and, conversely, that there was no use in dealing with Hitler's allies and satellites on the subject. Underlying these misconceptions, as we have also noted, were the American Jewish leaders; attitudes of insecurity and group self-interest. Most of them were intent on maintaining the gains of the Jewish community in America, and were loath to risk these gains by too vigorously prodding a clearly unwilling U.S. political establishment to go to the rescue of world Jewry--especially since this might require opening American doors to large numbers, perhaps millions, of Jewish refugees. We have also seen how American Jewish leaders, even while the Holocaust was known to be under way, gave their highest priority to the cause of Zionism--a cause which drew its chief emotional impulse from indignation over the fate of Europe's Jews, yet in the end achieved little to lessen the extent of Hitler's program of mass slaughter.

Only then, when it was too late to save the doomed millions, did American Jewry achieve the self-confidence and assertiveness to challenge the U.S. political establishment on a major issue, namely, U.S. policy in Zionism's two-front struggle with the Arabs and with Britain.

All these aspects will be examined more fully in subsequent parts of this Report.

As we conclude this introductory overview, one question remains. It is posed by the title of this chapter: Could nothing more have been done to save the Jews? Was nothing lost by not trying harder? Given all the obstacles of Nazi power and Allied governmental unwillingness to act, could even the most assertive and imaginative efforts by American Jewish leaders, in concert with like-minded and influential non-Jews in Britain and America, have rescued Jews in great numbers?

This is one of the most crucial questions toward which this entire Report is directed. Each reader must answer it for himself in the light of the relevant facts and considerations, which the Report endeavors to set forth, and of his own sense of fair judgment.

The Commission for its own part, has felt obliged to reach its own conclusion on this question and to make it known. That conclusion is that in all probability substantially more could have been achieved toward the rescue of the Jews of Europe if the American Jewish leadership had faced the fact of the Holocaust sooner and

more frankly, had correctly perceived the attitudes of the Allied governments, had given the problem the top priority it manifestly required, and had shown greater assertiveness and perseverance in confronting official indifference and evasion.

The considerations on which this conclusion is based have been suggested in preceding chapters and will be set forth in greater detail later in the Report. Here it is sufficient to recall two contrasting schools of thought on the subject which found expression at the time and have competed for acceptance ever since.

"Nothing Could Be Done"

One school of thought--the one that dominated Jewish councils at the time--took the line of least resistance, i.e., that under the circumstances nothing effective could be done by the Jews in America and its leadership, or indeed by anybody else, in this terrible situation. The Jewish people of Europe were trapped as as if in a house on fire from which there was no exit. Every conceivable door of escape was locked, often on both sides. The Final Solution was under the sole control of Hitler and his Nazi cohorts. Thus it would be useless to place the Jewish plight among the priorities of the Allies, who in any case, especially from 1940 to 1943, had plenty of troubles of their own. They were fighting a war for survival against tremendous odds. If too many Jews entered Palestine they feared, the Arab world might rise in revolt and join the Axis. Within the United States there was fear lest national

unity be undermined if the isolationists and antisemites were provided with fuel for their inflammatory charge that Roosevelt had plotted to drag America into the European war under the pressure of the Jews.

This school of thought, on which much Jewish historiography has been based ever since, depicted each suggestion or plan concerning mass rescue as unrealistic.* After 1941, it is argued, the Germans would not permit any Jews to leave territory under their control; hence, any attempt by the Jewish leadership to test, let alone carry out, any or all the many rescue plans would have been futile. Thus the energy, courage, imagination, or resourcefulness of the Jewish leaders is not the issue. The key was in the hands of the Nazis, who held it fast and would release their grip.

The other school of thought, then as now, rested on different premises. It was well expressed by Lord Davies in a speech to the British House of Lords in March 1942 in which he said:

In this tragic conflict we must be for or against the Jewish people; there can be no neutrality. Our attitude towards them becomes the test of our professions and the sincerity of our war aims. It strikes at the root of our morale, and if we abandon them we abandon everything, because Hitler has chosen to make them his special target. Whether we like it or not, and however inconvenient it may be, the Jewish people has become the personification of the issues involved in this world struggle between right and wrong, between good and evil. If we desert them...we betray our avowed war aims.

*See, for example, Schlomo Abronson, "The Quadruple Trap," Ha'aretz, April 30, 1981; Henry Feingold, "Who Shall Bear the Guilt for the Holocaust: The Human Dilemma," American Jewish History, September 1979; and Lucy Dawidowicz, "American Jews and the Holocaust", New York Times Magazine, April 18, 1982.

Surely it is the height of folly to repudiate our principles and coldshoulder our friends in order to curry favor with neutrals or potential enemies.

In the same vein, and even more pertinent to our discussion, was a speech by Leon Henderson, then a high official in the Roosevelt Administration, in October 1943 at a tribute in New York to Sweden and Denmark for having rescued the Danish Jews. The most relevant excerpts from his address, which is reproduced in Appendix _____, are these:

For years the leading Allied governments have known that the major political weapon of Nazi bestiality was extermination of the Jews....Saving the Jewish people of Europe is a war issue of the first rank. This issue has been avoided, submerged played down, hushed up, resisted with all the forms of political force that are available to two powerful governments....

What is the real reason for inaction...? [A]s for ourselves [the United States], I can think of nothing but bad advice....Some part of the bad advice comes from advisers who are Jews. These are the timid men. these are the shrinking men; these are the men who do not want their problem distinguished. But this is not a Jewish problem....The President needs to know how we Americans, Jew and non-Jew, feel about it; and I have no difficulty out of my long experience to know that once it is apparent to the President, the result would be different.

...There are members of Congress who are sympathetic. Senator Gillette, Senator Langer, Senator Johnson. There are Congressmen like Celler, Somers, and Will Rogers Jr. You and I know the majesty of our Legislature, once it is aroused, is a powerful potential in the formation of international policy....

There are other things we can do. Let the United Nations, with all solemnity and force, tell Hitler, and everyone who assassinates the Jew, that they are being set down for trial for murder for that particular crime. Let...the United Nations of Europe open the doors to the slaughterhouse of Europe from the outside...so that all the world--enemy, neutral, friend--may know their clear intent to save the Jews....

If this be a war for civilization, then most surely this is the time to be civilized.

Henderson's speech was a clear affirmation that something could be done, given the will to do it, even at that late date. This Commission agrees with that view; and the earlier the facts were faced and the attempt made, the greater would have been the result. Even if one were to argue that Henderson was too optimistic about the prospects for successful rescue, by every standard of human decency the efforts should have been made.

In order to judge specifically what could probably have been done, it is necessary to examine concrete proposals and opportunities. For this purpose the repeated offers from various satellites and the Nazis to release Jews, either for ransom or unconditionally, will be discussed in depth in later chapters of this Report.

One general observation, however, seems in order as this preliminary overview concludes. The Allied governments ought to have taken an affirmative attitude toward all the proposals and opportunities that arose to rescue the Jews of Europe; and American Jewish leaders were gravely derelict in not relentlessly pressing them to do so. The Allied authorities, by their generally evasive attitude, merely left the reality or unreality of these openings forever in doubt. How much more intelligent it would have been to say: "Yes, of course, we will accept any Jews released from territories under Nazi domination, and the more the better." If the proposals then proved false, such a reply would at least have put the Allies in a humanitarian light instead of one of indifference

or even acquiescence. Conceivably, it might have resulted in the rescue of additional tens or hundred of thousands. Indeed, action in the 30's might have saved millions.

The attitude of the Allied governments at that time leaves an inescapable implication that they avoided probing the offers and feelers that were received precisely because they feared some of them might prove genuine and would have to be acted on in ways that would conflict with other interests or priorities. Many Jewish leaders, indeed, perceived the official attitude in exactly this way, yet did not summon the will to challenge it.

Dr. Nahum Goldman, former president of the World Jewish Congress (during the war he served as official representative of the Jewish Agency stationed in the U.S.) admitted, years afterward, that "...Our generation did not do its duty, and I include myself too....Most of the people did not understand the danger of Nazism. We did not warn of the possibility of death camps. Our imagination was too limited.... When the first news came on the murder of European Jewry, American Jews did not react."*

In The Autobiography of Nahum Goldmann - 60 Years of Jewish Life, (N.Y., Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1969) he speaks "with deep sadness and despondence" about

the most tragic period in Jewish history and with the total failure of what might be called the leadership of the Jewish people....

*Davar, September 14, 1966. Quoted by Lacqueur in The Terrible Secret, p. 186.

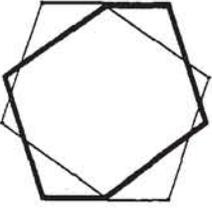
....It is not merely that our generation and its leadership did not succeed in preventing the mass murder of six million Jews. No people can be held responsible for defeats and failures that happen because of unavoidable external circumstances. Yet for a people and its leaders shortsightedly to refuse to believe in an imminent catastrophe or to have denied its truth because they feared it is indubitably a sight of inadequacy and an inability to face facts. (p. 145...)

For the rest, all broad conclusions on these issues are probably forever beyond the reach of conclusive proof or disproof. The Commission's views as stated here, however, were not arrived at lightly. For substantiation, the reader is referred to the detailed case studies and supporting documents in the remainder of this Report. On that basis, each may form his or her own conclusions on this, one of the most tragic episodes in human history.

As for the broader responsibility of humanity in general, Jan Karski, a Polish Catholic, put it succinctly: The Second Original Sin had been committed by humanity, through commission, or omission, or self-imposed ignorance, or insensitivity, or self-interest, or hypocrisy, or heartless rationalization.

This sin will haunt humanity to the end of time. It does haunt me. And I want it to be so.

#



The Graduate School and University Center
of the City University of New York

Ralph Bunche Institute on the United Nations
Graduate Center: 33 West 42 Street, New York, N.Y. 10036
212 790-4222

17 May, 1982

Rabbi Marc Tannenbaum
American Jewish Committee
165 East 56th Street
New York, New York 10022

Dear Rabbi Tannenbaum:

The next meeting of the Commission will be a luncheon session at the Grand Hyatt Hotel, Wednesday June 2nd at noon. We shall discuss the enclosed materials in order to provide guidance to the research staff.

I look forward to seeing you.

Sincerely,


Arthur J. Goldberg

P.S. Please respond by the enclosed card and stamped envelope by May 28th.

DENIS J. DONOHUE
43-12 56th STREET
WOODSIDE, N. Y. 11377
3/13/83

Rabbi,

The enclosed is from
last Sunday's (N.J.)
"Courier-Post."

Have a Jewish friend
who insists Pope Pius
XII did not do nearly
enough to save Jews
during the Holocaust.*
Would appreciate
your comments on
msg. Adam's column

Respectfully,

Denis Donohue

*
I was an infant
at that time.

Who is blaming U.S. Jews for passivity in Holocaust?

It may be a hot summer for American Jewry this year. Why? Because a controversial study on the American Jewish response to the Holocaust may be issued by then. Regardless of its conclusions the study is already sure to evoke bitter recriminations.

The signs of a family squabble are already emerging.

Thus toward the end of the last year, the American Jewish Commission on the Holocaust was disbanded by its chairman, former Supreme Court Justice Arthur J. Goldberg. The reason given was lack of funds. At the time it was alleged that Jack Eisner, a survivor of a Nazi death camp who became a successful businessman in America, had withdrawn his pledge of funds for the project.

Eisner admitted his change of mind but said it was due to his disenchantment with Mr. Goldberg, who allegedly was knuckling under pressure to soften the commission's sweeping criticism of American Jewish organizations. An original inflammatory report had indicated American Jewry failed to mobilize its resources fully to rescue fellow Jews in Europe from the horror of the Holocaust.

IN THE WAKE of bad publicity on the breakdown of the Holocaust commission, Arthur Goldberg decided to reassemble it in January and underwrote it on his own. He thereby preempted an Arab group that was eager to put up the money to finance the study.

Recently a preliminary report from the revived commission revealed that American Jews are again criticized for their failure during World War II "to mount an all-out sustained mobilization for rescue."

However, that painful pronouncement was softened somewhat by this observation: "Even if American Jews had been united and organized and had taken more action on behalf of the European Jews, would it have made a major impact on rescue? We doubt it. The number who could have been saved once the Holocaust started was extremely limited — by Hitler's determined, systematic plan of . . . extermination and his physical control over almost the entire Jewish population: by the acquiescence or

**MSGR.
S.J. ADAMO**



For the Courier-Post

indifference of the United States, British, Soviet and almost all other governments; and by the lack of concern and human solidarity on the part of the overwhelming majority of non-Jews."

ALREADY A Jewish researcher named Samuel Merlin has called the new report "a whitewash" and "a mishmash of contradictory statements." But Merlin himself has been castigated for indulging in "Monday morning quarterbacking."

Certainly anyone who was an adult in the late '30s and early '40s will recall the wave of anti-Semitism then sweeping not only America but most of the world. Under such conditions any outcry by the American Jewish leadership would not only have been unproductive but probably counterproductive.

The truth is that no one, neither Jew nor non-Jew, ever dreamed that anything like the Holocaust would happen. Not since the Mongol invasions of the Middle Ages had there been anything remotely resembling the mass murder of children, women and men of all ages. Nor did anyone suspect that the Holocaust was a dress rehearsal for liquidating other non-Aryan people. In fact, some five million Slavic people were exterminated in the Nazi death camps.

THE HOLOCAUST then was such a monstrous act of madness that the miracle is that so many European Jews were saved. That was done through the efforts of countless good people. Beyond that it is doubtful that anyone in anyway could have done any more than was done in the face of the Nazi juggernaut.

So why try to find fault with others? It only serves to diminish the guilt that belongs to Hitler and his mad henchmen.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE SHOWING OF "HOLOCAUST"

The nine and one half hour serial drama, Holocaust, was shown on television in 24 nations, and in the theaters in a 25th, South Africa. In addition, the right to broadcast Holocaust had been purchased in 16 more countries, as of the preparation of this study, but apparently had not been shown in those nations.

The number of viewers of the series, from those nations in which specific audience size figures are available, totals almost 200 million, and the total number of viewers that the series garnered was clearly in the area of 200 million or more.

In Europe, Holocaust was shown in:

1. West Germany
2. Austria
- 3.. Italy
4. England
5. The Netherlands
6. Belgium
7. Switzerland
8. Denmark
9. Greece
10. Spain
11. Portugal

The right to broadcast Holocaust was purchased by Yugoslavia, and the series was seen by many East Germans when it was shown on West German television. The U.S.S.R., although it did not air the show, nonetheless printed a critical commentary on the series in the official press.

In Scandanavia, Holocaust was shown in:

1. Sweden
2. Norway
3. Finland (for which no data was available.)

In North America, Holocaust was shown in:

1. The U.S.A.
2. Canada (but only on one Canadian station, in Toronto; many other Candaians, however, saw Holocaust on American stations.)

In Latin America, Holocaust was shown in:

1. Mexico
2. El Salvador
3. Venezuela
4. Brazil
5. Uruguay
6. Trinidad & Tobago

The right to broadcast Holocaust was purchased in:

1. Puerto Rico
2. The Dominican Republic
3. Costa Rica
4. Guatemala
5. Panama
6. Columbia
7. Peru
8. Equador
9. Chile
10. Argentina

Very little data was available on the Latin American reactions to Holocaust.

In Asia and the Pacific, Holocaust was shown in:

1. Israel
2. Japan
3. Australia

The right to broadcast Holocaust was purchased in:

1. Turkey
2. Thailand
3. South Korea
4. Hong Kong
5. The Phillipines

The Audience That Holocaust Drew
(Where Figures and Dates were Available)

<u>Nation</u>	<u>Broadcast Period</u>	<u>Audience Size</u>
United States	April 16-19, 1978	120 million
West Germany	Jan. 22-26, 1979	20 million (plus 3 million East Germans)
Canada	April 16-19, 1978	2.5 million (in Toronto only--others saw American broadcast)
Austria	March 1-4, 1979	2.2 million
Italy	May 20 - June 7, 1979	21 million
England	Sept. 3-6, 1978	19 million
Israel	Started Sept, 11, 1978	1.5 million
Spain	June 20-29, 1979	--
The Netherlands	April, 1979	--
Belgium	Started Sept. 13, 1978 on the French-language network Oct., 1978 on the Flemish-language channel	2 million --
Switzerland	April, 1979	.5 million

Greece	April, 1979	3 million
Sweden	March 8-11, 1979	4 million
Norway	April, 1979	---
Japan	Oct. 15-18, 1978	15.6% average rating
Australia	July 1978	72% share
Brazil	Dec. 1978	aired on nation's largest network



FUNDING

The Funding 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 Commission 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 Commission requests the (1) direct moral support, (2) endorsement, and (3) 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.

We should seek a date 12 months from the adoption of the report for completion of Phase I which includes the general design of the facility and program, with the establishment of an interim body to continue the work begun. This will then be managed by a permanent organization structured to continue the work recommended by the Commission.

Comprehensive list of the Projects included in the
Recommendations of the President's Commission on the Holocaust.

A National Memorial

Located in Washington, D.C. of symbolic and artistic beauty incorporating a display of and learning experience about the Holocaust designed so that both the casual and the serious visitor would be able to experience its contents at various levels of depth.

This National Memorial should also house a library (with an active relationship to Library of Congress) containing books, microfilm of documents, private papers, oral history, testimony, and newspapers, a map collection, photographs, films; computer linkage with existing centers for exchange of archival information.

Conference facilities for meetings and resources for teacher training workshops should also be included.

Programatic Suggestions for National Memorial

Extension Services to include all forms of Holocaust education and teacher training. Special emphasis on the following:

Development of curricula for 7th-12th grades through grants, through creative use of resource material, through consortia of educators and curricula developers, and through sustained work with the state boards of education and local school districts.

Resource material and personnel should be available for both scholars and teachers, for textbook publishers and for interested laypeople.

Sponsor or co-sponsor scholarly conferences and conferences on the Holocaust and Humanistic Public Policy Issues.

Publications including: out of print classics, selective support of new works of special merit, survivor accounts, documentary and photographic books, journals.

Oral history projects including both survivors and liberators with a major emphasis on coordinating and cross referencing existing oral history projects.

Fellowships for research and travel,
Project Funding i.e. translations, monographs, document
series.

Encyclopedia of the Holocaust.
Support for ongoing research.

Visiting faculty program.
Graduate Student fellowships, internships, and training.

Traveling Holocaust Exhibits.
Regional workshops for teacher training and for scholar
retraining.

Summer institutes.

Media development projects.
Awards in recognition of major achievements in Holocaust
scholarships, art, music and the media.

Days of Remembrance programming and activity in cooperation
and in nurturing relationship with Churches, Synagogues, schools,
and civic entities including states and municipalities.

Work toward coordination as well as nurturing existing
regional and local Holocaust education resource centers. The
Washington Center's work should complement, not duplicate existing
work.

Committee on Conscience to warn and act in the future in case of
actual genocidal situations or where potential genocide is in
process.

HOLOCAUST COMMISSION REPORT - LESSONS

by Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum

story

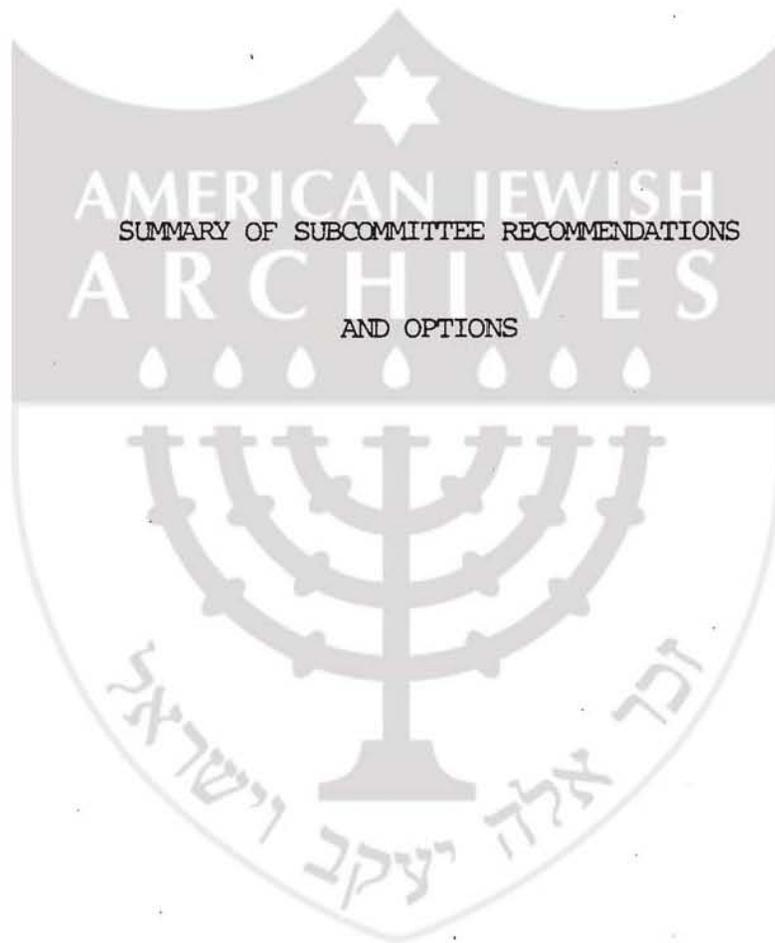
In a front-page ~~review~~ in the New York Times, excerpts

provided from the latest version of the American Jewish Commission on the Holocaust report. Prepared by Justice Arthur Goldberg and Ambassador Seymour Finger, this final version which is to be printed shortly, appears to be more balanced, fair-minded, less ideological and polemical than the earlier drafts which precipitated so much ugly publicity.

One sees that balance in the treatment of the role of American Jewish Committee leadership during the tragic Nazi period: "It would be a grievous error to conclude that the leaders of the AJ Committee were not concerned about the fate of the European Jews," the report declares (p. 37). "They never stopped trying, through quiet diplomacy, to persuade American ~~xxx~~ government officials to help in the rescue of Jews. That their efforts made little impact, may, in fact, be an indictment of that Government's attitude rather than of the AJ Committee's aims."

Rather than indulge in destructive polemics about the past, the useful thing to do, it seems to me, is to use this report in order to learn lessons about how to cope with the present challenges that face world Jewry - the security of Israel, the liberation of Soviet Jewry and the Falashas, combatting the PLO and anti-Semitism in Central and South America. The AJ Committee, for one, plans to hold a national conference to seek to do just that.

Revised



Museum and Monument:

- | | |
|---|---|
| A. A national museum/memorial located in Washington incorporating display of and learning experiences about the events of the Holocaust and its meaning to the Nation so that people would not merely look at some esthetic representation but would have to encounter and learn about the Holocaust. | Locate either in D.C. or New York.
Move toward all components at once.
Split of research & museum |
| B. That this museum be of symbolic and artistic beauty, appropriately designed to be visually and emotionally moving in accordance with the solemn and extraordinary character of the Holocaust which it memorializes. | New York has academic infrastructure.
Life that was destroyed.
Particular/universal balance. |
| C. That the museum be a center of research and education about the Holocaust and its implications; that it do so by incorporating a library or archival materials as deemed appropriate by further development. | |
| D. That it be part of a network of institutions teaching and researching the Holocaust, but that it complement, not duplicate, such institutions and that it reach out to them and to the country as a major extension service. | |
| E. That its services include an educational foundation or institution to stimulate, service and complement education and research about the Holocaust, including commemoration & resource centers as well as teaching, curriculum development & scholarship through challenge & matching grants, fellowships, stipends & support. | |

<u>Subcommittee Proposal</u>	<u>Options Seriously Considered by the Subcommittees</u>
------------------------------	--

Education and Curricula:

- | | |
|---|---|
| A. The creation of a flexible educational entity whose scope would include all forms of Holocaust education with extension services. | Problem of local autonomy and local responsibility.

Specificity: Universal/particular. |
| B. The initial emphasis be placed on developing curricula for 7th through 12th grades. | Armenian experience.

Problem of regionalization. |
| C. That this entity be responsible for bringing together periodically a consortium of educators and curricula developers. | Scope of endowment -- mechanism for affecting its realization. |
| D. That the Commission make available its expertise to publishers of textbooks. | Priorities: what should be undertaken when and by whom. |
| E. That the educational institute should specifically have a foundation attached to it which would enable it to serve as a central hub and nourisher of a national network of institutions devoted to Holocaust education & commemoration. | |
| F. That the institute should have a mechanism of stimulating study and research of the Holocaust through grants in support of specific programs, or other appropriate forms of support, such as matching grants, challenge grants, funding for research, scholarships, local and regional projects. | |

Human Rights:

- | | |
|---|---|
| A. That since the highest expression of an appropriate memorial to the victims of the Holocaust is to prevent apathy in the face of a potential recurrence for any human group, the memorial program for victims of the Holocaust incorporate | Problems of language and restrictiveness, should it relate only to genocide or to other violations of human rights. |
|---|---|

Human Rights (cont'd.):

the creation of a Committee on Conscience to alert the American government and people of massive violations of human rights which have the potential of becoming (or are actually) genocide or of dimensions that approach the Holocaust when these violations are either government directed or government tolerated.

- B. That the Commission's recommendations reaffirm the Nuremberg principles as universally valid principles, including in particular the principle of personal responsibility of individuals for crimes against humanity.
- C. That the principle of protection of human rights is a matter of individual concern and responsibility.
- D. That to the government, ratification of the Genocide Convention and other human rights conventions be proposed and that earmarking of funds in the appropriations of the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Science Foundation be proposed for research relating to crimes against humanity.
- E. That to the private sector, propose the commission of the codification of contemporary international law conceptions of crimes against humanity and related subjects.

Funding:

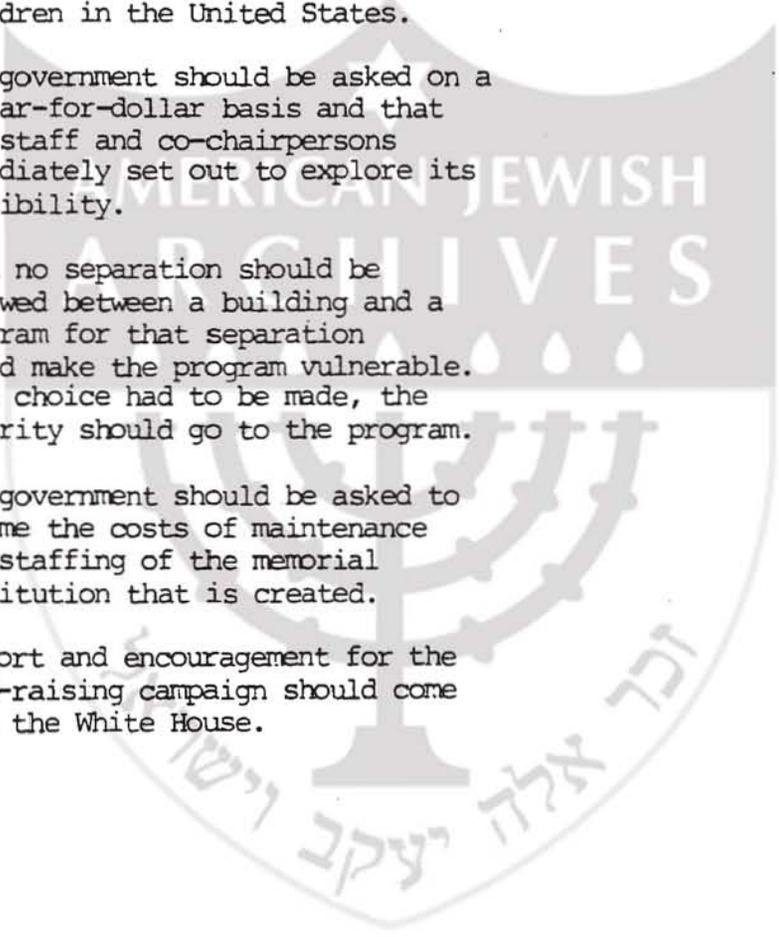
- A. The campaign for the memorial is achievable with funds coming from five sources: (1) corporations; (2) individual subscriptions; (3) government; (4) foreign government; and (5) foundations.

Subcommittee Proposal

Options Seriously Considered
by the Subcommittees

Funding (cont'd.):

- B. Program should be broad based and educational including the possible participation of all school children in the United States.
- C. The government should be asked on a dollar-for-dollar basis and that the staff and co-chairpersons immediately set out to explore its feasibility.
- D. That no separation should be allowed between a building and a program for that separation would make the program vulnerable. If a choice had to be made, the priority should go to the program.
- E. The government should be asked to assume the costs of maintenance and staffing of the memorial institution that is created.
- F. Support and encouragement for the fund-raising campaign should come from the White House.





United States Holocaust Memorial Council

REPORT FROM THE DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE COMMITTEE

June 24, 1983

Dear Council Members:

I reported to you in April that we are well on our way to fulfilling our responsibility of creating a new American tradition--the national observance of Days of Remembrance. As a result of several months of follow-up work, we now are able to be more specific about this accomplishment.

But first, a personal note: I was deeply moved as I reviewed the materials that have come into our Washington office. From every state we have reports of observances of Days of Remembrance sent to us by Governors, Mayors, Federations, colleges and universities and other organizations. We have programs and news articles, speeches, essays, poetry and readings. We are witnessing new expressions of involvement from the Christian community. We read of week-long symposia timed to coincide with Yom HaShoa. We learn of resolutions in state legislatures and educational programs in the schools. We learn of statewide commissions on the Holocaust already at work planning Days of Remembrance commemorations for 1984.

In short, we can feel enormous pride in the breadth and diversity of commemoration in 1983 and in the diversity and strength of the organization that we are helping to create. In only three years, commemoration of Days of Remembrance has become an American tradition.

PROGRAM - NATIONAL COMMEMORATION DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE

Washington, D.C., April 11, 1983

Address:

The Honorable Ronald W. Reagan
President of the United States

Presentation of the Scroll of Remembrance:

Benjamin Meed, President of the American Gathering of Jewish
Holocaust Survivors

Address:

Elie Wiesel, Chairman
U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council

Suite 832, 425 13th Street, NW Washington, DC 20004
202-724-0779

Remarks:

Sigmund Strochlitz, Chairman
Days of Remembrance Committee

Candle Lighting Ceremony:

Steven A. Ludsin, Member
U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council

Council Members

Survivors

Children of Survivors

Irving Bernstein
Hyman Bookbinder
Kitty Dukakis
Cong. William Green
Cong. Steven Solarz
Julius Schatz

Fred E. Diament
Ludwik Brodzki
Sam Halpern
Abram Shnaper
Abba Beer
Herman Taube

Howard J. Butnick
Anna Scherzer
Susan Kent
Saba Silverman
Jeanette Binstock
Helene Frum

El Moleh Rachamin:

Cantor Isaac Goodfriend
Cantor of Ahavath Achim Congregation, Atlanta, Georgia

Kaddish:

Rabbi Seymour Siegel, Executive Director
U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council

Closing Prayer:

Rabbi Alfred Gottschalk, President
Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, Ohio

Holocaust Remembrance Project - National Council of Churches

For the second year, the Office of Christian Jewish Relations of the National Council of Churches has encouraged extensive educational activities among its member denominations. This year, Director David Simpson reports, the activities were both extensive and meaningful. He says:

"A project that began as a modest effort to encourage churches and ecumenical agencies to conduct Holocaust Commemoration services in local communities has now emerged into an ongoing educational program touching all aspects of the life of the religious community with every intention of becoming a permanent element of the internal educational program of the churches." Further, Simpson notes: "...it has been the creative influence giving new direction to the ways in which the churches in the United States educate themselves about their relationship to Judaism and engage in an increasingly positive dialogue with the Jewish community."

Specifically, Simpson's office working with our Committee prepared extensive materials for circulation to churches and ecumenical councils. These materials were used by:

United Methodist Church
Presbyterian Church in the U.S. and the
United Presbyterian Church USA
American Baptist
Lutheran Church in America
Episcopal Church
Southern Baptist Convention
Roman Catholic Church (through the Secretariat for
Catholic-Jewish Relations)

STATISTICS - NATIONAL COMMEMORATIONS OF DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE

(Note that these figures include only those institutions that have reported their activities to the Council's Washington office and include all reports received by June 1983.)

States - Governors of 50 states issued proclamations and/or held commemorative ceremonies. Ceremonies also held in District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

Cities - Mayors of more than 150 cities issued Proclamations proclaiming week of April 10-17 as Days of Remembrance.

Interfaith Ceremonies - 65 ceremonies in 23 states

Federations/Community Centers/Community Councils - Nearly 150 Jewish organizations sponsored commemorative programs, services, or symposia.

Universities - There were observances, programs, and/or symposia on nearly 50 campuses.

Looking Ahead

The Days of Remembrance Committee is meeting on June 29 to review Days of Remembrance commemoration in 1983 and to set plans for observances in 1984. We have gathered an active and able group of workers throughout the country and we expect that we will continue to report ever more widespread observances of Days of Remembrance in communities throughout the United States.

Finally, I am attaching some examples of speeches delivered in commemoration of Days of Remembrance 1983.

With all best wishes,


Sigmund Strochlitz

EXCERPTS FROM ADDRESSES - DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE 1983

President Ronald Reagan, Washington, D.C., April 11, 1983

"We are here, first and foremost, to remember. These are the Days of Remembrance, Yom HaShoa. Ours is the only nation other than Israel that marks this time with an official national observance. For the last two years I've had the privilege of participating personally in the Days of Remembrance Commemoration as President Carter did before me...."

Elie Wiesel, Chairman, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council, April 11, 1983

"Friends, we speak in the name of incommensurate sufferings that lend a moral dimension to our testimony. And, therefore, in the name of that testimony we have to say certain things. Later we shall speak about our sadness. But first let us speak of our pride, the State of Israel. When the entire world closed its gates to us, there was only one land and one nation and one people ready to embrace us--Israel. And, therefore, to remember means to be faithful to Israel. Israel is the only country in the world that is threatened militarily by her enemies and politically by her friends.

"May I repeat what we have said so many times. When we tell our tale of despair and fear and terror and death, our aim is not to arouse pity....What we seek is understanding, awareness, sensitivity. What we seek is to convince people to know that what happened once--and because it happened once--must not happen again to any people...."

"Our tale, so Jewish in spirit, is universal in scope. We talk about our Jewish tragedy because the Jewish tragedy is equal to none. But we do not forget that once killers began killing Jews, later, differently, they also killed others...."

"There were a few, very few people to whom we feel so grateful that their names will be inscribed in our memory until the end of all time. But remember, my friends, they served as an indictment: they proved that it could be done. It was possible to save Jews, but not enough tried. Not enough dared.

"My friends, we use memory for the sake of mankind. We use words for the sake of future generations. It is up to us to use these words, not as weapons, but as prayers. It is up to us to use these words to create hope instead of hopelessness. It is up to

us to take this event, the most tragic in history, and see to it that it not divide us but unite us all. For after all, when all the tears have been restrained and contained, and all the shouts have been stifled, and all the words have been used, remember the tale of our sadness may negate sadness. A tale of despair ultimately will be a tale against despair."

Sigmund Strochlitz, Chairman, Days of Remembrance Committee
Washington, D.C. April 11, 1983

"We came to this nation's capital with our children and grandchildren, citizens of the two greatest democracies in the world, Americans, Canadians, proud and committed Jews, survivors, free men and yet chained to a traumatized past that should have provided changes affecting all possible areas of human behavior.

"We dreamed of those changes in the ghettos of Warsaw, Cracow, Bendzin, Wilno, Auschwitz, Treblinka, Moujdanek, and Ponary. Most of us at that time still youngsters but already without families, plunged into a state of gloom. Betrayed and forgotten, but hoping and dreaming....

"In those 40 years, we survivors of an event that in its scope and evil was unprecedented in the history of mankind, have shown bravery far beyond anything many might have imagined possible.

"Our courage in those fateful war years expressed in different forms and on various levels and our determination after the war to help rebuild a world that destroyed our past and everything that was dear to us, will go down in history as the greatest act of faith in the destiny of mankind. Our Chairman, Professor Elie Wiesel, expressed our faith in mankind speaking last year in the White House: 'For a Jew who went through the war to bring a child into this world was a very great act of faith, for we had all the reasons in the world to give up on man, on humankind; to give up on civilization, to give up on everything.'

"We did not. We raised families, defying and challenging the notion that we were defeated, that we lost faith....

"We who did not perish leave it to you our children and grandchildren, the sacred task of lighting six candles every year.

"You will be keeping alive the memory of those who died --forever."

Secretary of Labor, Raymond J. Donovan, Washington, D.C.,
April 15, 1983

"We tend to try and forget the past when it is unpleasant. When our memories conflict with our own self image, we try to bury those memories. But when we do that, we do ourselves a disservice.

"Holocaust survivor and author Elie Wiesel has said that, 'If someone suffers and he keeps silent, it can be a good silence. If someone suffers and I keep silent, then it's a destructive silence. If we envisage literature and human destiny as endeavors by man to redeem himself, then we must admit the obsession, the overall dominating theme of responsibility...that we are responsible for one another. I am responsible for his or her suffering, for his or her destiny. If not, we are condemned by our solitude forever, and it has no meaning. This solitude is a negative, destructive solitude, a self-destructive solitude.'

"This is the meaning of the Holocaust, and that is why we commemorate that event. While the remembering is painful, it is only by remembering that we prevent its reoccurrence.

"There were millions of victims of the Holocaust, and such vast numbers have a way of blinding us to one simple fact: that each of those six million victims was a unique person--an individual with hopes, dreams and aspirations. Because of man's inhumanity to man--because of man's hatred and intolerance--those unique individuals have been lost forever."

Roland W. Lanoue, Chairman, Interfaith Sensitivity Council on the
Holocaust, Little Rock, Arkansas, April 10, 1983

"It is quite fitting that we proclaim Yom Hashoah--The Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust--together, here, in the Capitol building of our state. This setting reminds us of two important American values which through continued diligent nurturing will preserve our country as a light unto the nations of the world. The first value is that of democratic pluralism which inhibits the state from exercising the totalitarian tactics that brought about the Holocaust. The second is religious freedom which allows for both the diversity of religious heritage and the legitimate pressure of moral suasion upon the government. So it is with abiding protection of these values that we together stand here and declare to the world--NEVER AGAIN."

Governor George Deukmejian, California, April 14, 1983

"Since 1979, a national Days of Remembrance has been observed. This week, April 10 to 17, has been designated for this year's Days of Remembrance, and I think it is important that we Californians join in this somber observance. Let us pause to reflect on this sad chapter in human history in which six million Jews were murdered as part of a systematic program of genocide, while millions more suffered, yet thankfully survived.

"As one whose ancestors suffered a similar tragedy, I know how important it is to remember these atrocities and to make sure they never happen again.

"We who cherish the freedom and opportunities of this great country must never become complacent. We must always be on guard against new forms of tyranny and strive to overcome injustice, prejudice and violence."

**Professor Harry Cargas, Member, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council,
at Eastern Illinois University**

"Every survivor has a story. It is an ongoing martyrdom. We must honor them for having survived."

Gerda Haas, Survivor, Waterville, Maine, April 10, 1983

"I want to spend the rest of my life touching other people's lives, opening their eyes at last to what happened during the Holocaust so that religious freedom is never again taken for granted."

Governor Harry Hughes, Baltimore, Maryland, April 10, 1983

"This program has been designated as a memorial observance for the six million Jewish martyrs who perished in the Holocaust.

"This is proper. It is also timely, for it comes just a few days before the April 19 anniversary of the 1943 uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto.

"It therefore enables us to honor the memory of those who were lost in the Holocaust and to draw fresh inspiration from those who survived the uprising.

"But the payment of that honor and the drawing of that inspiration are meaningful only if we acknowledge this day as something more. They are meaningful only if we--those of us in

this place, and others in places far beyond this memorial, Jews and non-Jews alike--recognize this as a day of rededication to an idea.

"That idea is the foundation of every major religion and every enduring philosophy of the civilized world.

"It is the idea that every branch of humankind is part of the same sacred tree of life.

"It is the idea that a disease attacking any branch of that tree threatens the tree itself...."

Kitty Dukakis, Member, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council, Boston, Massachusetts, April 15, 1983

"I have just returned from Washington where over 15 thousand Holocaust survivors gathered to bear witness and to commemorate in order that the future never again permit such brutality. On Wednesday at a formal ceremony on the steps of the Capitol a National Museum on the Holocaust was formally established. As Elie Wiesel, Chairman of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council, has said, 'The visitor to this Museum must leave it a changed person with a heightened sensitivity to the dangers of anti-Semitism, racism, intolerance, and tyranny.'"

Abe Landau, Survivor, New Bedford, Massachusetts, April 10, 1983

"I am a survivor of the Nazi concentration camps. The number on my left arm reads 141242.

"I am one of the fortunate ones. I survived Hitler's "Final Solution." At 14 I was put in my first concentration camp. I was an inmate in 17 of them. For five and a half years I worked from four in the morning until nine at night, subsisting on watered soup, living through hunger, pain, torture. Just before the war ended, I was marched from Buna to Glievice. Seventy-five percent of those who began the march with me never finished. I am one of the fortunate ones.

"Yes! I keep reminding myself it was a miracle from God...I am alive. The number on my arm won't let me forget my past. I can no longer enjoy the luxury of silence. Whenever I have the opportunity, I must tell. I am now recording my story on tape in the hope that soon this will be transcribed and edited into a book. Most young people to whom I speak have no personal memory of what happened. Many of them want to see my tattoo--the symbol of Nazi dehumanization. They are generally filled with disbelief."

**Mayor Gerald Blessey, Biloxi, Mississippi, Week of
April 10-17, 1983**

"We remember now the horror of six million Jews murdered, but do we remember or understand the collection of individual actions that resulted in a social condition in which this horror could occur?"

"Indeed, the Mosaic Law and the United States Constitution warn us of this point: We will all suffer in the long run when we deny any individual his or her individual freedom. In this sense, both the Ten Commandments and the Bill of Rights are not just rules to be obeyed but warnings about good and bad choices that, little by little, make either a happy, constructive nation, or a sad, destructive one.

"The proof of this prophecy about human behavior was evident in World War II. Because the responsible, educated, powerful, enlightened, affluent, intelligent, decent people of the world failed to preserve, protect and defend the Jews in the early days of the Nazi rise, in time arrogance and disrespect for the law of individual rights became so unbridled in the Nazi camp that eventually far more non-Jews than Jews suffered and died worldwide in the insanity of the war and its aftermath.

"There is no escape from social responsibility. Not to decide is still a decision.

"Taking down walls that separate races, religions, and individual neighbors is a process composed of many little steps...Will your generation take down the walls that close out the joy that different cultures can share?"

**Sam Fried, Accepting Proclamation from Governor Robert Kerrey,
Omaha, Nebraska, April 13, 1983**

"Governor Kerrey, Chief Justice Krivosha, and all Honored Guests:

"I accept this proclamation on behalf of...the six million Jews who were our mothers and fathers, our sisters and brothers, and for over one million small children who perished in the Nazi death camps.

"As we remember the millions of innocent victims who perished during the Holocaust, let us never forget that the Holocaust was the culmination of centuries of bigotry, hatred, and festering

anti-Semitism that finally reached its peak in the 20th century....

"In our day many American families have again experienced the struggles associated with hard times. We have seen the resurgence of pockets of bigotry in the United States and in this region.

"Just as in another land and in another time economic troubles were the excuse and occasion of scapegoating, discrimination, and bigotry which culminated in the Holocaust, all of us today are challenged to remember that lesson of history.

"On this day of remembrance we must pledge to never again be silent and to be ever vigilant against all tyranny. So that history will judge us as people who are truly civilized."

Governor Mario Cuomo, New York State, April 15, 1983

"Why is the world so ready to turn its back on those victimized and martyred by Nazism? So willing to obscure or excuse or deny the reality of the war against the Jews? Or to forget the lessons of the final solution?

"It is the silence that makes today's ceremonies so necessary.

"That forces the rest of us to remember--no matter how hard it is to do so.

"To remember with raised voices the helpless, mute victims, degraded, murdered, incinerated--the ghastly summation of centuries of anti-Semitism.

"And to remember those who stood up in history's darkest, most abysmal corners and fought back against hopeless odds.

"In the Warsaw ghetto. In the Minsk ghetto. In Bialystok, In Kleck. In a thousand unrecorded places.

"The squads of Jewish Partisans.

"The prisoners who revolted in Treblinka. In Sobibor. In Auschwitz.

"The nameless freedom-fighters who kept their proud, passionate spirit alive until machines and sheer numbers ground them into earth.

"Fallen but still uncrushed.

"Scattered but not obliterated.

"The seeds of a new and ancient nation.

"Unconquered, unconquerable...."

The Rt. Rev. Ned Cole, Episcopal Bishop of Central New York,
Syracuse, New York, April 10, 1983

"In the beginning let me say,, with all candor, I am not happy to be here. As a member of the human race, I am ashamed that events have occurred in our lifetime which make it necessary to have such a gathering as this. But happen they did. To deny it, to ignore it, to forget it, would be dishonest and inhuman. As the American philosopher George Santayana said, 'Those who forget history are condemned to repeat it.' Therefore I speak for part of the Christian community in this area that we are thankful to those who have recommended there be, and those who have planned, this Holocaust Remembrance Day...."

Armost Lustig, Survivor, Syracuse, New York, April 10, 1983

"When I returned to Auschwitz-Birkenau recently, the first time since 1944, a new horror took possession of me. Auschwitz-Birkenau as a museum, as a giant reservation commemorating human brutality, does not evoke in one's imagination even a shadow of the fear, anxiety, and hopelessness which a single moment of this death factory induced while still in full operation. Auschwitz-Birkenau, this empty, silenced camp, the largest man ever built for man, has the effect of a calm burial ground. The dead do not talk. The land is almost beautiful, whether grassy or covered with snow. Memory that serves the living betrays the dead. It is not in the power of the living to give voice to the dead. Time works against the innocent. Time toys with what happened yesterday. Time clears the mind to gain space for what will happen tomorrow. The image of the dead a person has who loiters in a cemetery is no image of the dead but only their faded picture."

Alfred Stern, Survivor, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania,
April 14, 1983

"Do not let six million dead and us haunted survivors down.

"There's no comparison in history. If anyone has the right to hate, we do. But I feel no hate. I feel sorrow. We are haunted by it."

Governor Charles S. Robb, Richmond, Virginia, April 7, 1983

"To sanctify their suffering, we must remember. To protect ourselves, we must remember. To enlarge the conscience of our descendants, so they may remember, we must remember.

"For all the grandparents who perished in the ghettos of Warsaw and Riga, for all parents butchered in the pits at Spilve and Babi Yar, and for all the little children who starved in the ghettos of Lodz and Lublin, and for the millions of innocents, who trainload upon trainload, were gassed in the death factories of the German-occupied East--for all the families torn asunder, the dreams blotted out, the lives cut short--for all the living that was denied, in this incalculable, irreparable loss to humanity, we in this generation, and those in every generation, who will live in the thousands of generations that will come through a thousand millenia, must willingly, consistently, relentlessly--remember, remember, remember."

Governor John D. Rockefeller IV, Charleston, West Virginia, April 1, 1983

"Bigotry, such as that portrayed by the Nazi Germans, provides a breeding ground for tyranny to flourish, and we must remind ourselves frequently of the horrors of World War II to prevent another Holocaust...."

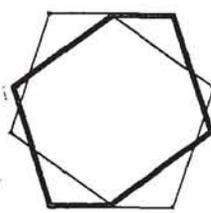
EXCERPTS FROM LETTERS

Mayor Norman Ciment, Miami Beach, Florida, May 27, 1983

"Your organization should be highly commended for bringing the annual Holocaust observance to its present strength and accomplishment. We must be ever vigilant and begin now to train our younger leadership who have no memory of the Holocaust, so that they may continue this observance in perpetuity."

Mayor Joseph S. Daddona, Allentown, Pennsylvania, June 10, 1983

"...you may be assured of my continuing cooperation in regard to your efforts. I am convinced we constantly must be reminded of the Nazi era, in order to avoid a repetition, and thus my reason for wanting to participate in activities which provide reminders to us all."



The Graduate School and University Center
of the City University of New York

Ralph Bunche Institute on the United Nations
Graduate Center: 33 West 42 Street, New York, N.Y. 10036
212 790-4222

June 20, 1983

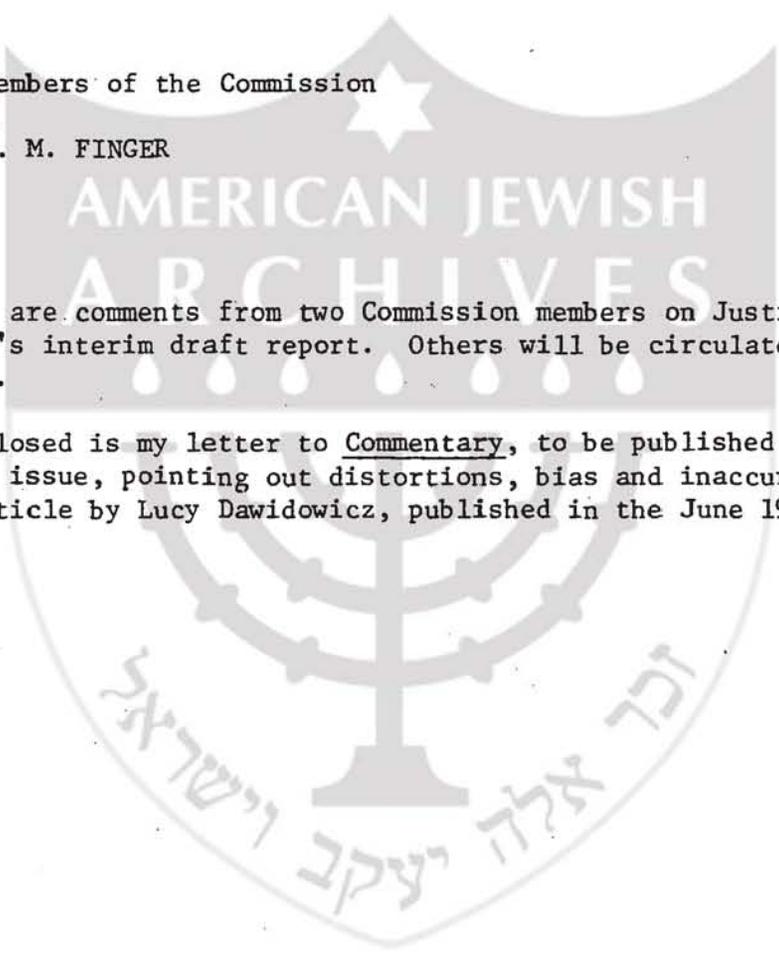
TO: Members of the Commission

FROM: S. M. FINGER

Enclosed are comments from two Commission members on Justice Goldberg's interim draft report. Others will be circulated as received.

Also enclosed is my letter to Commentary, to be published in its next issue, pointing out distortions, bias and inaccuracies in an article by Lucy Dawidowicz, published in the June 1983 issue.

SMF.ap



Rec 4/11/83

JEWISH NATIONAL FUND

42 EAST 69TH STREET
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021
PHONE: (212) 879-9300

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

April 8, 1983

Mr. Seymour M. Finger
Director
The Graduate School & University Center
of the City University of NY
Ralph Bunche Institute on the United Nations
Graduate Center
33 West 42nd Street
New York, NY 10036

Subject: Draft Interim Report on the Holocaust
Your Memo of February 9, 1983

Dear Mr. Finger:

This is my first opportunity to put in writing my reaction to the very impressive report that was prepared by the American Jewish Commission on the Holocaust, chaired by Justice Arthur J. Goldberg.

I find the report an excellent review although it included most of the facts already known. I think it was fair in trying to describe the difference in the structure of the Jewish Community during that period and the community of today. Nevertheless, one felt the absence of dramatic forceful meetings in Washington to express the agony and frustration of the American Jewish Community at the lack of meaningful response on the part of the American Government.

I could not help wondering, however, if the time has come for the community to consider other methods than that

*Copy sent to AJC
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April 8, 1983

of mass demonstrations. Governments make their decisions behind closed doors, and very often the public is deceived by their statements. It is obvious that we have not found the answer to this dilemma.

I look forward to attending future meetings.

Sincerely,



Charlotte Jacobson
President

CJ:aj



Rec. 5/16/83



HARRISON J. GOLDIN
COMPTROLLER

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER

COPY

May 12, 1983

Dr. Seymour M. Finger, Director
Ralph Bunche Institute
The Graduate School (C.U.N.Y.)
33 West 42nd Street
New York, New York 10036

Dear Dr. Finger:

Many thanks for sending me Justice Goldberg's monograph respecting the attitudes and actions of American Jewry during the Holocaust. As he correctly points out, the American Jewish community at that time was not nearly so sophisticated, informed and influential as it is today. Indeed, while some Jewish leaders may have known about the "final solution" in 1942, it is doubtful that the same can be said about the Jewish community as a whole.

Clearly, much could and should have been done at many levels to try and save European Jewry. A contemporary example of the kind of wide-ranging activities that are possible on behalf of a "hostage" Jewish community is the campaign today to free Soviet Jewry.

Whether such actions by the American Jewish community would have been effective--indeed whether the American Jewish community felt too exposed to undertake them--is an appropriate subject for conjecture. But the potential efficacy of such efforts is a matter separate and apart from the question of who knew what and what might have been done. And the sad truth is that precious little effort was made.

Could we have helped loosen immigration restrictions with demonstrations, protests and massive marches? To be sure, nothing was to be gained by compromising the overall war effort. But a more activist American Jewish community, for example,

Dr. Seymour M. Finger
May 12, 1983
Page Two

might have prodded the Roosevelt Administration to bomb the rail lines leading to the extermination camps, delaying, or perhaps avoiding altogether, the deaths of many.

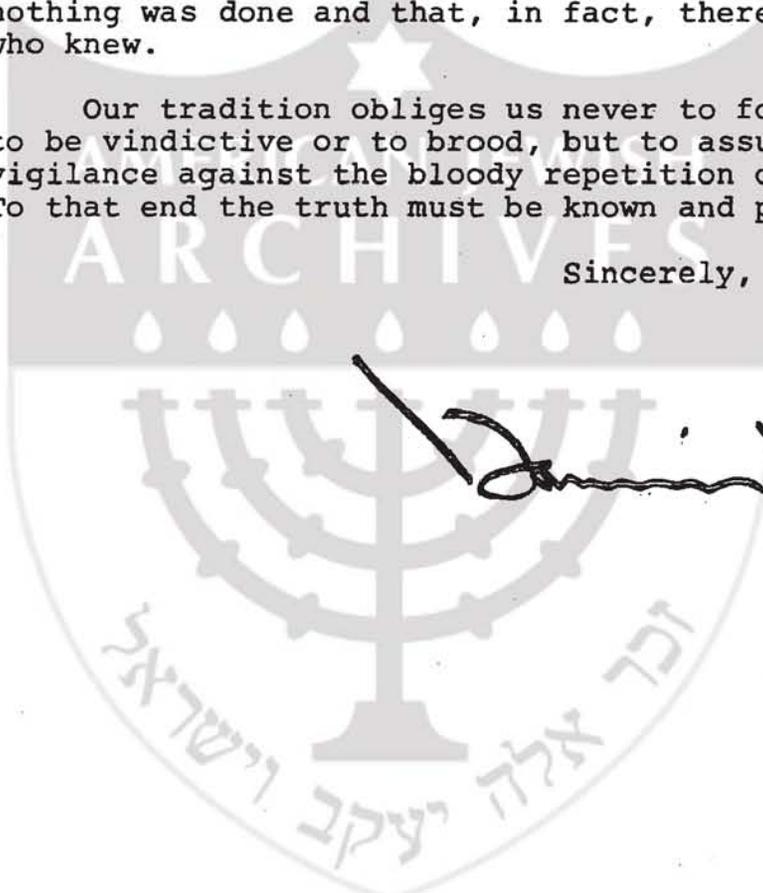
Surely, we cannot say precisely how we would have acted. But noone can gainsay that virtually nothing was done and that, in fact, there were some who knew.

Our tradition obliges us never to forget, not to be vindictive or to brood, but to assure our vigilance against the bloody repetition of tragedy. To that end the truth must be known and prevail.

Sincerely,



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Seymour M. Finger', is written over the lower right portion of the document. The signature is fluid and cursive.



COPY

33 West 42nd Street
Room 1640
New York, New York 10036

June 3, 1983

Editorial Office
Commentary
165 East 56th Street
New York, New York 10022

To the Editor:

In "Indicting American Jews" (Commentary, June 1983), Lucy Dawidowicz herself makes an unfair and inaccurate indictment of the American Jewish Commission on the Holocaust.

Dawidowicz makes much of the term "Commission", stating that commonly a government creates a Commission. Her point would apply to a totalitarian state, where non-governmental organizations exist only by sufferance or subterfuge. In the United States non-governmental groups have long played a significant role and often have names like commissions, Congresses, committees and councils, notwithstanding the fact that there is an official U.S. Congress, a National Security Council, Congressional and Executive Branch Committees and official commissions. There are, for example, the American Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Committee, the Synagogue Council of America, the Commission to Study the Organization of Peace, and the Commission for the Ratification of the Genocide Convention. Justice Goldberg himself has headed many such non-government organizations, characteristic of a healthy democracy. He was President of the American Jewish Committee, 1969-70 and has since served as Honorary President; is Honorary Chairman of the American Friends of Hebrew University; was Chairman of the U.N. Association of the U.S.A., 1968-70 and has since been Honorary Chairman; was Chairman of the Board of the Synagogue Council of America, 1969-71, of the Jewish Theological Seminary, 1965-69, and of the International Education Association, 1969-70; and has served with great distinction in many other non-governmental organizations, including the United Steelworkers and the A.F.L.-C.I.O. His record of service in the wartime OSS, and as Secretary of Labor, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, U.S. Permanent Representative to the U.N. and Ambassador at Large are well known and respected. In a democracy both governmental and non-governmental organizations have their place. That Ms. Dawidowicz should attack a man with such an exemplary record of public service without even bothering to interview him to determine the validity of allegations is astonishing and deplorable.

She also attacks my credentials. With a minimum of inquiry or research, she could have ascertained that I have authored or edited four scholarly books since 1975, served on or managed a number of panels like the Commission, written many chapters for scholarly books

/...

edited by others and published numerous articles in academic journals including Orbis, International Organization, the American Journal of International Law, and Middle East Review. While I have not previously written on the Holocaust, I have had first-hand experience with its consequences during my wartime service in Europe and my subsequent Foreign Service assignment in Germany issuing visas to survivors. In 1971 I received the Humanitarian Award from the American Committee for the Rescue of Iraqi Jews for my work on their behalf while serving as an Ambassador at the U.S. Mission to the U.N. In April I testified in Newark, along with Professor Raul Hilberg, in the trial of a Baltic-American charged with entering the U.S. illegally and having participated in the murder of hundreds of Jews. I am also a consultant to a number of American Jewish organizations.

On the prehistory of the Commission which, she says, "I have had (without other corroboration) from Finger himself," Dawidowicz is grossly inaccurate. Perhaps that is because our only discussion of the subject was in a brief telephone conversation in February 1983. She never bothered to interview me in person in preparation for her article, nor did she even telephone Justice Goldberg, let alone see him. I did not turn the task of writing the proposal over to Merlin, as she alleges; I did it myself.

I did commission Merlin to do much of the research and prepare a preliminary draft. After all, he has been deeply immersed in the subject and accumulating files for over forty years. I was also impressed by his knowledge and thoroughness when we had worked together on Middle East subjects. I was fully aware of his former Irgun connections; however, I knew that he had broken with Begin three decades ago. Moreover, the members of the Commission, including Justice Goldberg, were identified with every Jewish establishment group in the country; consequently, I was confident that any bias on Merlin's part would be counterbalanced by the Commission and my own editing.

As an additional precaution, we added an Academic Review Committee. My communication of November 2, 1981, to which Dawidowicz refers, did not indicate that "something had gone wrong," as she alleges. This was only a month and a half after the Commission's first meeting and our work had scarcely begun. The suggestion of an Academic Review Committee came from one Commission member, a respected friend of mine, and I accepted it because it made sense and provided an additional guarantee of objectivity. Incidentally, her statement that I invited her to be a member of the Academic Review Committee is not true. I challenge her to produce a letter or any other evidence of such an invitation.

Justice Goldberg did in August 1981 invite her to become a member of the Commission. Jack Eisner's office, which was handling the replies, informed me (apparently erroneously) that she had accepted; consequently, I included her name among prospective members in a preliminary list made up in early September. When she telephoned me to protest that she had not accepted, I apologized and immediately deleted her name. She knows this is true because the New York Times of September 23, 1981, to which she refers in her article, did not list her among the members. We would have welcomed her, criticism and all, but the panel of 34 members is sufficiently knowledgeable and distinguished as it stands.

She is also grossly inaccurate with respect to the preliminary draft submitted to the Commission for the June 2 meeting. It was no longer Merlin's draft; I had revised it three times, in response to suggestions from the Academic Review Committee and the Chairman. It was certainly not "an effort to ensure the Irgum's place in history as the sole defender of the Jewish people in its darkest hour," as she alleges. In 76 pages there was only one paragraph about the Bergson (Irgum) Group, indicating that they were Palestinians and, consequently, not one of the American Jewish groups to be studied.

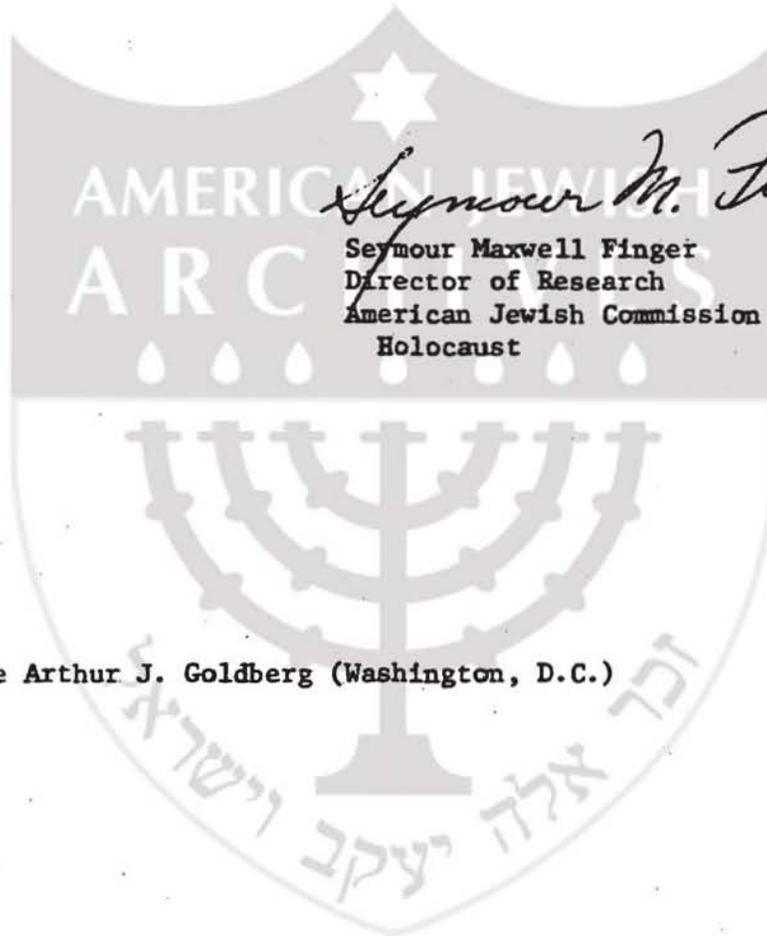
Another error is the statement that Merlin resigned because he felt he was insulted at the June 2 meeting. In fact, he had resigned a month earlier because of the pressure of other work to which he was committed. His letter of resignation had been circulated to members of the Commission before the meeting.

"As a consequence," she writes, "Eisner (who, it turned out, was a strong Merlin partisan) stopped the flow of money." This, too, is inaccurate. Eisner had been behind in his commitments since January. Moreover, for more than two months after the June 2 meeting and his subsequent conversation with Goldberg that day, he kept promising to provide further financing. When I phoned him August 19 to inform him of Goldberg's decision to dissolve the Commission because we were no longer in a position to meet our commitments, Eisner said: "You would have had a check tomorrow." All of this information, except Eisner's comment on August 19, was in my "lengthy capitulation" to the members of the Commission of February 1, 1983, to which Dawidowicz refers and of which I sent her a copy, at her request. But she chose to ignore any facts in the memorandum which did not fit in with her prejudgement. (Incidentally, our agreement with Eisner stipulated that he would have no control over the content of the report.)

As a further indication of her attitude, Dawidowicz asked me in her one phone call during the past 18 months, why her favorite member had been dropped from the Commission. I informed her that, far from being dropped (no member has), he had been invited to the February 9 meeting and had been sent all documentation.

also mention that all of the papers are being done by reputable, experienced scholars, none of whom has any connection with the Irgun, the Revisionists, the leftists, Merlin or the Institute for Mediterranean Affairs.

Yes, the work of the Commission is going forward. Unlike Ms. Dawidowicz's article, its conclusions will be carefully weighed, thoroughly researched and devoid of malice or bias.



Seymour M. Finger
Seymour Maxwell Finger
Director of Research
American Jewish Commission on the
Holocaust

SMF:to

cc: Justice Arthur J. Goldberg (Washington, D.C.)

A LITANY OF REMEMBRANCE OF VICTIMS OF THE HOLOCAUST

SERVICES

O God, Creator, Redeemer, and Teacher; Source of Life and Truth, and of Love and Power; in Whom we live, and move, and have our being,

BLESSED BE YOUR HOLY NAME.

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, whose designs are beyond understanding, whose glory is without blemish, whose compassion for the sin of humanity is inexhaustible,

HAVE MERCY ON US.

Mercifully hear our prayer which arises from the anguish in our souls in recalling the Holocaust in which millions of our brothers and sisters, your children of the House of Israel, were slaughtered and burned. Expand our minds that we may grasp the full horror of this reign of darkness, and touch our hearts with true grief, penitence and resolution that we may remember and never forget.

MAY WE REMEMBER LORD, AND NEVER FORGET.

The burning synagogues, the brownshirts, the jackboots, and the Yellow Star of David,

MAY WE REMEMBER LORD, AND NEVER FORGET.

The arrests at midnight, the uprooting of millions from ancestral soil, and the destruction of families,

MAY WE REMEMBER LORD, AND NEVER FORGET.

The ghettos, the starvation, the wretchedness and the faith,

MAY WE REMEMBER LORD, AND NEVER FORGET.

The thick smoke from Auschwitz, Dachau, Buchenwald; the mountains of bones, and the lingering stench of death,

MAY WE REMEMBER LORD, AND NEVER FORGET.

O Loving God, whose compassion fails not and whose mercy is like the wideness of the ocean, we draw near to you acknowledging our acquiescence in the evil of the Holocaust. For we watched and we listened. We saw and we heard. We knew and we understood. Yet we stood by for too long as spectators sprawled in apathy. Forgive us Lord.

FORGIVE US LORD.

For closing our eyes to the cruelty and inhumanity against brothers and sisters,

FORGIVE US LORD.

For stopping our ears to their cries,

FORGIVE US LORD.

For sealing our lips from protest against the tyrannical abuse of power,

FORGIVE US LORD.

For standing still in the presence of evil,

FORGIVE US LORD.

For the hatred and prejudice and fear which dulled our senses,

FORGIVE US LORD.

For betraying the life unto which you have called us,

FORGIVE US LORD.

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid, by your love burn away from within us the roots of evil which bear such evil fruit, that such a reign of darkness shall never again occur.

From arrogance, group hatred, racism, and prejudice,

GOOD LORD DELIVER US.

From the savage exploitation and the casual belittlement of other human beings,

GOOD LORD DELIVER US.

From cautious rationalizing and aloofness in the presence of evil,

GOOD LORD DELIVER US.

From tolerating injustice and from making peace with tyranny and oppression,

GOOD LORD DELIVER US.

From hardness of heart, from numbness, and from the unconcern which makes us cry "Am I my brother's keeper?"

GOOD LORD DELIVER US.

O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come, we pray that the broken fragments of our world may be restored to wholeness and that the vision of your heavenly city of love, peace and unity may become a reality on earth.

LORD MAKE US INSTRUMENTS OF YOUR PEACE. WHERE THERE IS HATRED, LET US SOW LOVE; WHERE THERE IS INJURY, PARDON; WHERE THERE IS DISCORD, UNION; WHERE THERE IS DOUBT, FAITH; WHERE THERE IS DESPAIR, HOPE; WHERE THERE IS DARKNESS, LIGHT; WHERE THERE IS SADNESS, JOY.

And finally we pray for the martyred ones, that their memories may be to us a challenge and an inspiration,

LORD, HEAR OUR PRAYER.

(silence is kept for a space)

Exalted, compassionate God, grant perfect peace in your sheltering presence, among the holy and the pure, to souls of our brethren, men, women and children of the House of Israel who were slaughtered and burned. May their memory endure, inspiring truth and loyalty in our lives. May their souls thus be bound up in the bond of life.

MAY THEY REST IN PEACE.

And let us say:

AMEN.
