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Bitburg cemetery. Ronald Reagan, 1985.

For more information on this collection, please see the finding aid on the
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June 13, 1985

The Honorable Edward M. Kennedy
Senator from Massachusetts
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Kennedy:

Thank you for sending me your remarks made on the
Senate floor in the aftermath of the Bitburg visit.

As always your words were to the point and effective
and I am grateful to you.

With warm good wishes, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

EDWARD M. KENNEDY

May 23, 1985

Rabbi Alexander Schindler
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10024

Dear Rabbi Schindler:

I wanted you to see a copy of my remarks on the Senate floor last week on the disturbing suggestions of a resurgence of anti-Semitism after President Reagan's unconscionable visit to the Nazi military cemetery in Bitburg.

I was particularly distressed to read Marvin Kalb's report of his personal encounters with such anti-Semitism in Germany in the wake of the President's trip. I am also concerned by suggestions that the trip may have contributed to a similar resurgence of anti-Semitism in this country.

It was insensitive enough that the President planned the trip -- but it is even worse that he refused to cancel it, and worst of all would be the unacceptable consequence that a new round of anti-Semitism has been stimulated.

As always, I am grateful for your friendship, and I hope you find my remarks in the Senate on point.

With best regards,

Sincerely,



Edward M. Kennedy



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 99th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 131

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 1985

No. 63

Senate

"NEW" SS WREATHS, OLD ANTI-SEMITISM

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, 10 days ago, over the strong objections of many of us in Congress and large numbers of Americans across the country, President Reagan went through with his controversial visit to the Nazi SS cemetery in Bitburg, a visit that reopened old wounds from World War II and dishonored the 6 million innocent victims of the Holocaust.

Bitburg was no ordinary military cemetery, because World War II was unlike any other war. The sheer depravity of the Nazi attempt to exterminate the Jews has set that war apart from any other conflict in recorded history.

We are all aware today of the fanatical hatreds that threaten the security of Israel and that are poisoning the hopes for peace in the Middle East. And we are also aware of the long and unhappy history of intolerance which still flourishes at the extremist fringe of American politics. In recent years, I have spoken on many occasions about the importance of tolerance and the fragile relationship between faith and freedom in our society and in every other nation on Earth. When discrimination is permitted to flourish anywhere, liberty is diminished everywhere.

Sadly, one of the consequences of the Bitburg visit has been a new stirring of the ancient evil of anti-Semitism. I read with deep concern the extraordinary article by Marvin Kalb in

yesterday's New York Times about his personal encounters with anti-Semitism in Germany in the days immediately following the President's trip to Bitburg.

Thomas Jefferson taught us that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. And in this troubled time of controversy over the meaning of reconciliation and remembrance, it is clear that eternal vigilance against anti-Semitism is one of the most important guarantees of liberty in our own day and generation.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the article by Marvin Kalb may be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the article was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the New York Times, May 14, 1985]

NEW SS WREATHS, OLD ANTI-SEMITISM

(By Marvin Kalb)

WASHINGTON.—The controversy over the Reagan visit to Bitburg is receding, no longer a front-page embarrassment. But do you hear an echo from the past?

I visited the cemetery the morning after President Reagan and Chancellor Helmut Kohl placed wreaths of reconciliation in front of its chapel. For years, the cemetery had been largely ignored; now, it was an instant shrine, a focus of political debate. Small flower pots marked many flat graves, 49 of them honoring Waffen SS troops. By the end of my visit, many hundreds of Germans and occasional Americans from the nearby Air Force base paused before the wreaths. Some took pictures. Mothers hushed children. A religious air seemed to saturate the scene.

But look and listen: all around there were the sights and sounds of the new Germany—and old. Six feet to the left of the President's wreath stood an equally impressive one. Across its banner: "To the Waffen SS who fell at Leningrad." No more than a foot to the right of the Chancellor's was another wreath: "For the fallen comrades of the Waffen SS."

These two wreaths had been placed in the chapel, out of sight, hours before the President arrived. They were restored to their original places of honor only hours after he left. In the ensuing tranquility, the Waffen SS could again be honored in the springtime sun.

A middle-aged visitor from Nuremberg said the Waffen SS were simply soldiers—young conscripts doing their duty. "Let them rest in peace. For us, a dead soldier is a dead soldier, not a hero."

A native of Bitburg, who looked to be in his 20's, expressed a view I was to hear with disturbing regularity. "We Germans and Americans had been cooperating very well"—he lowered his voice—"until the Jews began to make trouble."

Another Bitburger zeroed in on Elie Wiesel. "Imagine the nerve of a Jew lecturing President Reagan. I saw him on television, making trouble the way they all do."

An old woman complained that Mr. Reagan had spent only eight minutes at the cemetery. "You know why the visit has to be cut back? Because of the Jews." She stalked away to join a group of friends nodding in agreement.

A man with a cane stopped and said: "If they don't like it here, the Jews, let them go away. We were better off without them in Germany." There are only 28,000 left, he was reminded. "Too many," he replied.

The people of Bitburg are pleased that Mr. Reagan came to visit, that he didn't yield to pressure. But it's clear they resent their new notoriety—and equally clear whom they consider responsible for the unwelcome change: the Jews and the media. The Jews are seen as a group separate from Germans and Americans—an indigestible lump, a foreign body. The media are seen as intrusive and irresponsible and, somehow, controlled by the Jews.

So it went. A few days later, a Munich newspaper editor explained that anti-Semitism is an "anthropological phenomenon" in Germany. The controversy seems only to have uncorked the venom once again. There is a sad irony. Bitburgers consider themselves remarkably enlightened. In 1933, when Hitler won a critical election, this conservative Catholic town voted overwhelmingly against him.

Is Bitburg an aberration? It is impossible to judge and dangerous to generalize. But a number of leading West German politician and professors—several close to Mr. Kohl—think anti-Semitism was on the rise even before Bitburg. "The Jews were getting too impertinent," one politician said, citing, among other things, their opposition to West German tank sales to Saudi Arabia. "We've listened to them much too long. It's enough."

The pursuit of reconciliation by way of Bitburg has been a failure. What should have been obvious from the beginning is that reconciliation is a long process—not a single photo opportunity, an event, a moment frozen in time. Bitburg, exposing clumsiness and poor political judgment in Bonn and Washington, in the process lifted the scab on dark corners of recent German history. There is a time to know when to leave well enough alone.

As I entered the cemetery, I noticed a sign: "Please do not disturb the peace and rest of the dead." Too late.

[Marvin Kalb is an NBC News correspondent.]

Thank you
sharing your
thoughts

1700 Pine Valley Dr. #221
Fort Myers, Fla. 33907
(813) 481-7443

June 12, 1985

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, Pres.
Union Of American Hebrew Congregations
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, N. Y. 10021

Dear Rabbi Schindler:

WELCOME HOME! WE HOPE THAT YOUR TRAVELS WERE SUCCESSFUL AND ENJOYABLE!
Thank you for your prompt note in reply to my letter dated May 27, 1985.
It is my hope that when you have had more time, you will take the opportunity to comment on its contents in some depth.

As a Jew and an active member of my Reform Congregation, I am very much concerned with the matters cited in the referenced letter. From the UAHC news releases and Reform Magazine articles, I know that our movement is also vitally concerned. I am also happy to know that the Reform movement wants to enhance and increase "grassroots" participation in improving inter-faith as well as intra-faith relationships. My letter is but a small effort toward that end. Your comments and guidance would be most valuable in this matter.

It is my sincere hope that you will respond to my suggestion and plea.

SHALOM,


Leo Cooper

Butbaum

June 7, 1985

Mr. Leo Cooper
1700 Pine Valley Dr., #221
Fort Myers, Florida 33907

Dear Mr. Cooper:

I've just returned from extended travels and found your letter of May 27 awaiting me. I am grateful to you for taking the time to share your thoughts with me.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

1700 Pine Valley Dr. #221
Fort Myers, Fla. 33907
(813) 481-7443

May 27, 1985

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, Pres.
Union of American Hebrew Congregations
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10021

Dear Rabbi Schindler:

Thanks to Mr. Richard Cohen, we are in receipt of your NEWS RELEASE, dated May 19, 1985, concerning the promotion of "interreligious understanding at the church and synagogue level." (Congregation - people level).

Having read many items on this subject from the Reform Movement, ADL and other Jewish organizations (very little from Christian sources), I have acquired a deep and wide-ranging interest in this matter. The above release touched a responsive cord in me. Especially as it related to the attitude of the Christians toward the matter; and equally disruptive to an interfaith dialogue is the "inbred" attitude of the Jews towards the "Goyim." And not without cause, I may add.

However, we need not remain forever in a "Goyeshe Gehanim," if we so will it. I believe that the time is ripe to act NOW. The Christian world appears to be receptive. But are we, the Jews?

The Holocaust Commemoration Programs throughout the world may be a good place to start. I suited action to the word. I had the privilege of handling publicity and public relations for our local program. In preparing material for a TV interview of a participating Presbyterian minister and myself, I posed the question, "What can we do to build on this event? Why not develop an ongoing ecumenical grassroots program - in church, synagogue, Sunday school and pulpit? Why not develop a program that will provide mutual knowledge about each other's Faith, and with that knowledge will come, we hope, mutual understanding and mutual respect?"

As a result, I have come up with an idea for a 5 to 8 week seminar, 2 hours one night each week. Subject "Fountains of Faith." Discuss origins of Faith; what it means to each person professing a particular faith; what has religion done to and for humanity. All faiths would participate in

these seminars, through their clergy and or lay people. Judaism, Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, et al would be covered. But emphasis would be placed on the first three listed above .

To further bring it down to the "people" level, I propose to establish ecumenical "Chavurrah" groups to discuss basic subjects of their direct concern in their personal interactions and interfacing. This is where I believe tangible and "feelable" results can be achieved.

I have not as yet discussed the idea with anyone. I am just working it out in my mind and on "scratch" paper.

Rabbi Schindler, if I have given you enough information about what I hope to do and achieve, I would appreciate your own personal comments and suggestions. They would be most welcome.

Incidentally, we have Temple Chavurrah Group which meets at each other's homes. We met last night and discussed "Human Transplants and Hallacha." At another time we discussed "From Sinai to Synagogue: The Torah Odyssey." I think we can do the same thing in improving interfaith relationships. What do you think?

With best wishes for your continued success in bringing "humanism" into humanity, I am yours in

Shalom,



Leo Cooper

P.S. Rabbi, I received four articles prepared by Rabbi Irving Greenberg, President of the National Jewish Resource Center, titled, "Will There Be One Jewish People In The Year 2000?" It set me to thinking. Let's stop asking questions and belittling one another. Let us instead declare that we are Jews, better yet, Hebrews, the name given to ^{us} when God made the Covenant with Abraham to make a "Great Nation" everlasting. Let us declare ourselves one Hebrew Nation united in the State of Israel, no matter where we may live - in what country.

Then whether we divide ourselves into Reform, Conservative, Orthodox or Humanists, it will not matter - because we are Hebrews FIRST- a Hebrew Nation first. If the Arabs can call themselves an "Arab Nation," regardless of country of residence, so can we Jews. Let us eliminate the term "Diaspora." We are no longer wanderers. We have a country to return to if we wish to. What do you think, Rabbi Schindler?



Leo

HOLOCAUST PROGRAM -- PERSPECTIVES SHOW -- WINK -- TV (TAPED 3/28/85 SHOWN 3/31/85)

PARTICIPANTS: Dr. John R. Hunt, Pastor, Faith Presbyterian Church
Mr. Leo Cooper, Board Member, Jewish Federation of Lee County.

SUGGESTED OUTLINE OR TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. ANNOUNCEMENT: Holocaust Program, Sunday, April 14, 1985, 3:00 p.m., Faith Presbyterian Church, 4544 Coronado Pkwy, Cape Coral. Dr. John R. Hunt, Pastor. Community invited - urged to participate and attend.
2. The HOLOCAUST as a worldwide cataclysm.
3. How, when and where did it all begin...with Hitler or long before?
4. Should the whole world share the blame for this catastrophe?
5. Is the Holocaust just a Jewish tragedy, or is it Christian tragedy also?
6. How are the Christian and Jewish Communities in Lee County working together to commemorate the Holocaust and millions of Christians and Jews who perished in it during the Nazi era in Germany?
7. Can this joint event (The Holocaust Memorial Program) serve as a stepping stone toward a better understanding and appreciation, as well as greater knowledge and cooperation between the Christian and Jewish communities for the common good?
8. How can we begin NOW - to build upon this annual event, so that another Holocaust can never happen again, anywhere in the world?

June 6, 1985

Mr. Thomas C. Gordon
Post Office Box 653
McCloud, VA 96057

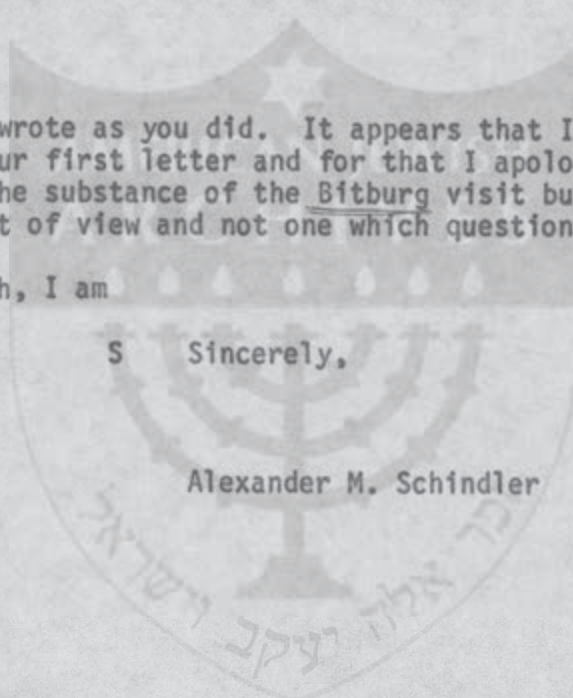
Dear Mr. Gordon:

I am glad that you wrote as you did. It appears that I completely misjudged you by your first letter and for that I apologize. We still disagree on the substance of the Bitburg visit but at least it is a disagreement of view and not one which questions motivations.

With every good wish, I am

S Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler



P.O. Box 653
McCloud, CA 96057
June 1, 1985

Alexander M. Schindler
Union of American Hebrew Cong.
838 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY

Dear Rabbi Schindler,

Now hold on, Rabbi, what's fair is fair. Read me out for you have made a harsh and unjust accusation in your letter of May 24th.

In my last paragraph, where I alluded to the cowards of this Nation who fled the Country rather than serve the Colors, I did NOT have in mind American Jews, nor do I believe, in all fairness, you can say I even inferred or implied the same. As a matter of fact I was actively interested in cataloging the names of those deserters, that were made public in one form or another, and none to my recollection had a Jewish surname. That's to my recollection, I repeat, although at the time I was not interested in the ethnic background of any of those involved.

Secondly, I will not give you that old crapola about "my best friends, etc" however, my son-in-law is Jewish and my two grandchildren are being reared in your Faith. During both WW2 and Korea I served with several Jewish men and am proud to have done so. One needs no baptism certificate to enter a foxhole. I hope this puts to rest any further thoughts of anti-Semitism on my part. With these rubrics established please let me briefly address your comments on the President's visit to Bitburg. I beg your patience.

If you do not believe that anti-Semitism was rife in Germany during Herr Wilhelm's time, I have a used car that may interest you. All Adolf did was take the lid off. It was always there, Rabbi, always! As for the President to

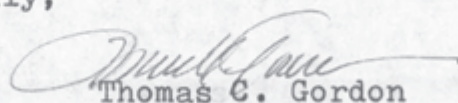
have visited an unknown's tomb, what guarantee is there that he would not have been honoring an SS trooper there, also? As for Adenauer's tomb, there was no reconciliation to be made in the case of Herr Adenauer. He was the first pro-westerner of the reconstruction and it is not the NEW Germany with which we wish to reconcile. The purpose was to ameliorate, to forgive if not to forget. Turn the page, Rabbi, what is past is past. Believe me, if it would bring back your kin and my brother (June 9th, Normandy) I would join you in a barefooted walk on Mecca, sackcloth and ashes to boot! You mention the "head of the SS". I thought that was Himmler and if you refer to the military commander of the SS and not the civilian (Reichfuhrer) head, then I must say that, if my memory serves me, he never lived to see the surrender. Whoever did send the cable to the President, I would venture to say he never received a response.

No, Rabbi, I feel that much of your, and other's, hostility towards the President's decision has been exacerbated by political frustration at the expense of coolheaded logic. There is much anti-Semitism in the Nation today, I am ashamed to admit it but if the political arm of Jewry wants to zero in on someone, why not pick on Jesse Jackson, for instance? It appears to me that you and others were very, very lenient with the Big Black Jew Hater, who busses Arafat and Qaddafi. Why is that, Rabbi? The question is not rhetorical, either.*

For my part, if my letter offended you, it was not so intended. I was at the end of my patience with all the hype over the President's visit. I consider him to be an honorable man and, for once, I would like to see us all behind him... just once and to hell with all this ethnic sensitivity. My family were Scottish Catholics who had very tough sledding in their adopted country for no other reason than that they were Papists and had a strange accent.

By the way, for a good background on anti-Semitism in Germany, "back when", I suggest Gordon Craig's "The Germans". Also, I went to Camp Carson, CO. with the 14th Regiment to train as a ski trooper. I gave it up and took back my hobnails. I picked up one Purple Heart in WW2 and two more in Korea plus two Silver Stars. Retired in '59 with 22 years service. Just for the record. Meanwhile, Shalom, Rabbi, Shalom!

Respectfully,


Thomas C. Gordon

* AGAIN - WHY ??



Butler

May 24, 1985

Mr. Thomas C. Gordon
Post Office Box 653
McCloud, CA 96057

Dear Mr. Gordon:

Since you had the courtesy of at least appending your signature and your address I will answer you, although I am really not in the custom of responding to the kind of diatribe you sent me. Allow me to make the following comments:

1. You say that the President did not offer "absolution" to anyone. However, the SS read it precisely that way and so, I'm afraid, did most of the Germans. This is what our soundings from Germany reveal. The head of the SS cabled Chancellor Kohl and President Reagan to thank them both for their "exceedingly generous gesture to the SS," and immediately after the cameras left the Bitburg cemetery, giant wreaths from the SS were placed alongside those placed by President Reagan. If nothing else, this proves the moral misjudgment which our President made.

2. I have absolutely no animosity toward the people of Germany. They have a right to lead their lives. I don't believe in collective guilt and no reasonable person can. A different monument could well have been chosen. Note that when Kohl visited Mitterand of France they paid their respects on the battlefield of Verdun. Those were the Kaiser's troops not Hitler's who fell, along with the veterans of the allied army. Then why did the President not go to a Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, which abound in Germany or he could have made a visit to Adenauer's grave, the central piece of his reconciliation visit instead of making it an afterthought which no one noticed. Adenauer is the true symbol of the newer Germany and not the SS.

3. Your final comment concerning the "cowardly, hedonistic, unpatriotic Americans who fled this country rather than answer the call to the Colors," leaves no doubt that you had American Jews in mind and that, sir, is a slander. Among the other medals I earned as a ski trooper in our armed forces was a purple heart with cluster. I'm afraid that your prejudices keep you from recognizing the truth.

Your truly,

Alexander M. Schindler

P.O. Box 653
McCloud, CA
96057

*File
under Mr
Allen Bond
meeting*

May 12, 1985

Rabbi Alexander Schindler
Union of American Hebrew Congregations
838-5th Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10021

Dear Rabbi Schindler,

I was not surprised at your comment as quoted in TIME magazine concerning the President's trip to Germany. That you were capable of such sentiment was a forgone conclusion but that you were ill-mannered enough to voice it did give me a start.

It is well known that the Hebrew electorate has been seething in frustration since November of 1984 and much of this ill advised rhetoric has been born of that frustration. Reasonable people do not conclude, as do you, that the President was offering "absolution" to anyone. However, and I offer this in all due respect, that absolution, as you call it, is a grace that should occupy most of your waking thoughts. We must forgive if we expect to be forgiven and that, dear Rabbi, is a truism found in all religions.

The people of Germany, today, are not those against whom your animosity should be focused. Erect your monuments, depict the horror on tablets of bronze and marble and do whatever else seems right and proper to you but get off the backs of the German people. They have a right to begin anew without wearing the perpetual hairshirt. And should you be so inclined as to lecture me let me say that I was in the Third Army in '45. I saw it and I know what it was. The stink still lives in my memory. The President did not eulogize four dozen Waffen SS

men. What he did was offer a bit of dignity to the German people in honoring their fallen soldiers. Are you so niggardly in spirit that you would deny them even that?

In closing I risk engendering your outrage: I wouldn't trade one German soldier who died for his country for all the cowardly, hedonistic, unpatriotic Americans who fled this country rather than answer the call to the Colors. American Jews seem to have fallen to the left of the road, Rabbi, and this dismays me. Rather than support a return to morality Jews have ignored the movement simply because its leaders are of the Christian faith. But that's another story. Turn your face forward, Rabbi Schindler. Nobody is absolving anyone...nobody is "forgetting" but we have pressing problems on the road ahead.

AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES

Yours truly,


Thomas C. Gordon



Bitburg

May 20, 1985

Mr. Mosh Frey
2133 Wallace Avenue
Bronx, NY 10462

Dear Mr. Frey:

Since you provide a return address to your letter, I will answer it, though your diatribe scarcely deserves an answer.

Aren't you ashamed to write as you do that Reform and Conservative Jews are responsible for the Holocaust. That is a chilul hashem - a moral obscenity. I am really surprised that you did not join President Reagan at Bitburg to provide absolution for the SS. I expect your kind of letters from Nazis and not from fellow Jews.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

Bias NY May 13 85

Rabbi A.M. Schindler
New York

Dear Mr. Frey -
Since you provide a
return address to your
letter, I will answer it
though you date be scarcely
deserves an answer.

Dear Rabbi Schindler

Aren't you ashamed
to write as you do that
Reform & Conservative Jews
are responsible for the Holocaust.
That is a child's hoodlum -
a moral obscenity.

Enclosed find

a copy I mailed to Rabbi Kuperman
in reply to appeal to Ahava Israel.

It is the modern Korahs such as the
Conservatives & Reform that had brought
the Holocaust and it is a strong warning
to the generation and the next generation.

And where do you have the Hutepek to declare
of riding on Shabus is legal when a man
by the name of Colofred in Barnadber
section of the Torah was stoned to death by
the command of G.D.

Its High time you stop teaching Corruption
Or face the fate of Colofred or bring another
Holocaust

Yours truly

Mosh Zuckerman

I am really surprised that you did not join the Naagom at Bithburg
to provide additional to the SS. I respect your letter. I believe from the
Mishna that we know today's Jews.

In reply to Rabbi Allen Kuperman, in defence of conservatism and Chavav Israel, I wish to remind you of a great comic artist, Rube Goldberg, who used to draw characters and called them "IKE & MIKE". They looked alike and I am referring to the reforms and conservatives. They may vary in their service and ideology, but both are akin on corruption of Torah Judaism and they are truly the modern day Korah's.

For those that are not familiar with the story of Korah, I will explain this in brief. According to (Numbers, Cap. 16-38) Korah and his followers of 250 came to Moses and challenged his leadership; but in reality he was challenging G-d. Naturally, Moses was shocked because both were of the tribes of Levites; so he commanded Korah and the Priests to give an offering of incense separately and explained he will accept the decision of the Almighty. As he finished speaking, warning them whatever happens, is the decision of the Almighty. A fierce fire arose on the Korah's and the earth opened up underneath and swallowed the company of 250 into a burning furnace.

In Europe the corruption started with the Reform and later with the Conservatism. Despite the fact that we are warned in the Torah (Lo so sus, Min Hadaver, yumin usmol). Thou shall not turn from the commandments, right or left, but the modern Korah's have been rampant in the corruption of the Torah.

Perhaps, Rabbi Kuperman would do well to take a refresher course in the Torah. He will find the many warnings given by the Lord in (Deut. Cap. 28-63). As the Lord rejoices over you to do good and multiply you, so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you and bring you to naught.

It is ironic that in Korah's destruction there was 250. In the modern Korah's, in Europe, it was six million that the Lord rejoiced to destroy. Unfortunately, it was forewarned and it was no accident. As a well educated Christian minister stated "Hitler was the rod in G-d's hand."

It is also significant that according to the Book of Esther, Hamen wanted to satisfy his revenge against Mordechai and built NOOSES to destroy all the jews. However, Mordechai did not corrupt Torah Judaism as the modern Korah's, but placed his faith in G-d. The result was that Hamen, himself was hung on the Nooses that he built and Mordechai was appointed Premier of the biggest empire of that day.

Perhaps, if you will look up the history before the Holocaust--about 1000 Jews got visas to Cuba and were refused entry. The 2 ships were floundering in the hope of finding refuge in one of the 29 countries of North and South America, including the U. S. and Canada. Finally 1 ship was accepted in England and the other ship was accepted in France and wound up in the Gas Chamber.

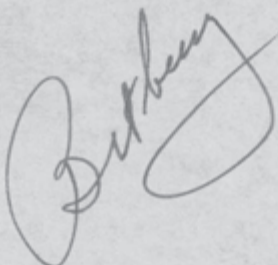
Now, Heaven forbid, if an evil character like Hitler should arise again and Jews get outclassed like in Europe, where will the good Rabbi Kuperman and the six million Jews escape, if the good Lord should choose to rejoice in the destruction after going contrary to his covenant, as we are warned in Leviticus (cap. 26-27).

Thanks to reform and conservatives we have now what is called the Jewish Alchoholics in large numbers that did not exist in the past. We have intermarriages today estimated at about 35% - which is a loss to Judaism and is as bad as Schmadt.

Again, I wish to call your attention to (Numbers Cap 15-33). A man was gathering sticks on the Sabbath (this was right after the Israelites were sentenced to remain 40 years for giving evil report) with regards to the land of Eanaan. This man was put in a WARD for it was not declared what to do with him.. Moses commened with G-d and it was declared that the Congregation should stone him to death according to the Statute of the Lord. Sabbath violation is a Capitol Punishment; so where does Conservatives have the chutspa to go on the media to tell the public that it is legal to ride a vehicle onthe Sabbath and cause corruption and destruction of Chavas Israel that you write of so gloriously,

I will close this letter with the warning given by Moses in his last days; I call Heaven and earth to witness this day against you that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore choose life that both thou and thy seed may live.

Therefore, I say, let us choose life and in the words of the great prophets, Isaih and Jeremiah of doing away with corruption and abomination with the hopes that the Almighty will send us Holeyeh Hanovi and rebuild the Bais Mamikdosh and bring back the glory of the past.


May 15, 1985

Mr. Bernard H. Ober
84-09 35th Avenue
Jackson Heights, NY 11372

Dear Mr. Ober:

I thank you for your recent letter in regard to declaring May 5 as a "Day of Perfidy." It was good of you to share your thoughts with me.

Let me note that we will, of course, give serious consideration to your suggestion. Obviously, I share your views fully in regard to what has transpired. It was a moral abomination and a perversion of history. You are absolutely correct. We must make certain that not only our people remember, all peoples must remember the Holocaust and the millions of lives which were taken, Jewish and non-Jewish.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

Bernard H. Ober
84-09 35th Avenue
Jackson Heights, NY 11372

May 10, 1985

Rabbi Alexander Schindler
Union of American Hebrew Congregations
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, N.Y., 10021

Dear Rabbi Schindler:

After President Reagan's Bitburg visit, I had a conversation with Rabbi Bernhard Cohn of Congregation Habonim, where I am a member. Rabbi Cohn agreed with me that the desecration of the memory of the six million martyrs of our people will only too soon *be forgotten* by the general public.

Rabbi Cohn also agreed with a specific recommendation I made for collective action, and suggested that I write to you about it.

My recommendation is this: American Jewish Congregations, of all denominations should declare May 5th as a "Day of Perfidy". The annual commemoration of that (secular) date should continue at least as long as Ronald Reagan remains in office. The "Day of Perfidy" should be recalled each year with the maximum publicity and paid advertisements in influential media that we can, collectively, muster. The terrible sacrilege perpetrated on our martyrs must be kept alive in the public's mind.

Rabbi Schindler, I saw something on television that really drives home the need to keep awareness of this outrage alive: Jim Jensen of CBS, who was in Bitburg covering the event, reported that an elderly man called him over to proudly show him his SS medals - saying that he now felt "rehabilitated" by Reagan's action.

Please, Rabbi Schindler, take the first step toward collective action by officially institutionalizing an annual commemoration of the infamy committed on May 5th. The Third Reich came into being because too many good people did nothing. Let us do something.

Respectfully Yours

Bernard H. Ober

Bernard H. Ober

*Thanks for
shaking your
finger at
them. We
will certainly
take them into
consideration
for our
place in
history.*

*Reagan
Administration
policy
etc.*

HYMEN DIAMOND

ATTORNEY AT LAW
4409 RUTH DRIVE

MONROEVILLE, PA. 15146

TELEPHONE: 412-372-3555
412-372-2360

May 13, 1985

Rabbi Alexander Schindler, President
Union of American Hebrew Congregations
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10021

Dear Rabbi:

Thank you for your letter of May 8.

The mention in prayers of the Holocaust to which your letter refers is too diffuse to have any permanent effect. It is something like the recitation on Yom Kippur in orthodox and conservative ritual of the torture inflicted by Hadrian and others on the rabbis. We should not kid ourselves. A determined effort is being made to erase the memory of the Holocaust. Reagan has already stated categorically that such matters as the Holocaust should be forgotten. He must have been tutored by Kohl, who desired to retain his hard-core support on the extreme right from people who yearn for the glories of the Nazis. Reagan's speeches after the uproar are PR manure; they mean nothing. Latent anti-Semitism emerged in Reagan's address to the White House staff which I viewed on TV. Reagan referred to the demonstrations and then said something to the effect, that if you saw these people, you realized that we were right. The people he referred to were, according to The New York Times, Jews, many of whom wore the six-pointed yellow star that the Nazis had compelled Jews to wear. Unless effective action is taken, the story of the Holocaust will end up as obscure as the story of the torture of the rabbis.

What I am proposing is a holiday like Pesach, but more sophisticated. There should be kiddush and Shekechyannu. Then there should be repetition of the story of the Nazi regime, its genesis and its demise. Events such as is presented in the copy of my enclosed letter of May 7 to William Block should be narrated. In addition, the rise and prevalence of the philosophy of anti-Semitism, "Le Juive", Austin, Chamberlain, etc., etc. should be told. There should also be the touching passages which appear in Shirer's Third Reich of execution of Jews. The brutal treatment of Masarik by Chamberlain and Deladier after the Munich surrender should be described. By giving people a feel of what really happened, the story of the Holocaust will be preserved and renewed. Very few will sit down and read the story of the Nazis in a book like Shirer's.

Rabbi Alexander Schindler
May 13, 1985
Page 2

There has not even been made an effort to teach this story in schools
or even Jewish Sunday schools.

Sincerely,

Hymen Diamond

Hymen Diamond

Enc.
HD:vm



May 7, 1985

Mr. William Block, Jr.
The Pittsburgh Post Gazette
50 Boulevard of Allies
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Dear Mr. Block:

During his recent visit to Germany, Reagan repeatedly said that the Holocaust must not happen again. This is a wish which ignores the complexities that gave rise to the Holocaust. Another holocaust will not happen only if Reagan and people like him are willing to refrain from taking the action which would bring on a holocaust.

I am reasonably certain that Neville Chamberlain did not want the Holocaust to happen. But, he was unwilling to take the action which would have prevented the Holocaust. We are told that Chamberlain was an appeaser. He was more than an appeaser; he was a devoted supporter of Hitler and the Nazis. When the opportunity presented itself to stop the Nazis in their tracks, he refused to take the necessary action. A detailed report on Chamberlain's inaction appears in Shirer's, The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich.

Under the Versailles treaty, Germany was barred from arming. Chamberlain took no action to enforce this treaty against the Nazis who were recognized at that time as thugs.

An opportunity to stop the Nazis in their tracks arose when the Nazis marched into the Rhineland. A regiment of French or British troops would have frustrated that effort. Under British influence, no action was taken. It is reported that Ribbentrop, later hanged at Nuremberg, spent the night before the invasion as a guest of Edward VIII.

Many, if not most, of the upper level officers of the German Wehrmacht were decent people who wanted to rid Germany of Hitler and his Nazis. In a section entitled, Birth of a Conspiracy Against Hitler, (pg. 505, Fawcett Crest Book), Shirer describes the efforts of these officers beginning about 1937. On Aug. 18, 1937, Ewald von Kleist arrived in London to explain the plans of the officers. On the advice of Neville Henderson (pp. 515, 516),

Mr. William Block, Jr.
May 7, 1985
Page 2

the British ambassador in Berlin, Kleist was not received by upper level officials of the foreign office. When Chamberlain heard of the plan, he wanted to inform the Nazis but was talked out of this move by Henderson.

Franz Halder was chief of staff during most of WWII. In an interview with US Captain Sam Harris after WWII, Halder reported that in the fall of 1938, the officers had planned to oust Hitler and his Nazis and to try them before the German people. The ouster was to be carried out in Berlin under the command of Von Witzleben. On Sept. 28, 1938, Witzleben visited Halder to receive the final detailed instructions (pp. 555, 556). While they were talking, the news came that Chamberlain had agreed to come to Munich. Chamberlain had cut the ground from under these officers. It appears that Chamberlain, when he fantasized that he had achieved "peace for our time", missed an opportunity to prevent WWII. This would seem to make Chamberlain the world champion chump of all time.

Chamberlain's Munich surrender was not just appeasement. It turned over to Hitler facilities for obtaining formidable arms, the Czech Skoda works in which tanks were produced. These tanks rumbled into France in 1940.

Based on Reagan's past performance, I doubt that he would take the action to preclude a holocaust against Jews or others. He has actively supported the repressive regimes in El Salvador, Guatemala, Argentina, before Alfonsin, South Korea, etc. Why should he take any action to prevent a holocaust against any of such so-called "friendly" governments. At Bitburg, Reagan has taken the first step to become reconciled with the Nazis, apparently because a large part of Kohl's support is from Germans who still hanker after the glories of Hitler. Reagan repeats, ad nauseum, that West Germany is a democracy. Germany was a democracy when its free citizens hoisted the Nazis into power.

Sincerely,

Hymen Diamond

HD:vm

Butler

May 8, 1985

The Rev. William A. Norgren, D.D.
Ecumenical Officer
The Episcopal Church Center
815 Second Avenue
New York, New York 10017

Dear Reverend Norgren:

I am deeply grateful to you for sharing with me the very fine resolution adopted by the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church and reaffirmed on the 40th anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi extermination and concentration camps. It is an important statement and I thank you for sharing it with me, even as I express my appreciation to the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church for their meaningful message of this resolution. We must all do our utmost to work towards a world in which racism and religious bigotry have no place. We must all work towards equality and justice for all.

With thanks and kindest greetings, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler



THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH CENTER

815 SECOND AVENUE/NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10017

Telephone: (212) 867-8400
Cable Address: FENALONG, N.Y.
Telex: 971271 DOM FOR MIS NYK

May 3, 1985

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler
President, Union of American Hebrew Congregations
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10021

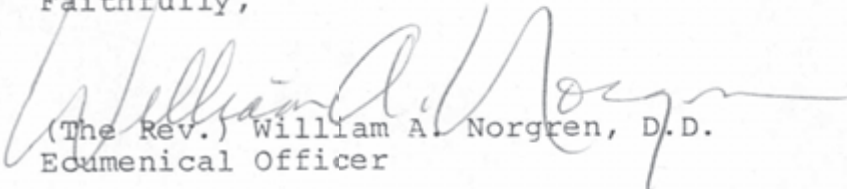
Dear Rabbi Schindler:

The attached resolution, on the 40th anniversary year of the liberation of Nazi extermination and concentration camps, was adopted by the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church at its meeting in February, 1985 and reaffirmed at its meeting April 17-19, 1985.

Resolved, That the Executive Council in this 40th Anniversary year of the liberation of the Nazi extermination and concentration camps, encourage all Episcopalians and all people of good will to ponder anew the horror that is racism and religious bigotry and rededicate themselves to purging from their own souls and society all traces of such racism and religious bigotry, including and especially all anti-semitism; and be it further

Resolved, That in the Lenten and Easter season, all Episcopalians are called to remember, in prayer and action, that God the Father creates all humankind equal, that God the Son enlightens every human who enters the world, and freely gave Himself up as a sacrifice on behalf of all humanity equally, and that God the Holy Spirit goes where He wants, and not in accordance with divisions contrived by humans, and that racism and religious bigotry are utterly incompatible with belief in Christ -- a fact all Christians must each reflect in world and deed.

Faithfully,


(The Rev.) William A. Norgren, D.D.
Ecumenical Officer

WAN:ag
copy to Ms. Annette Daum

Confidential

May 8, 1985

Hymen Diamond, Esq.
4409 Ruth Drive
Monroeville, PA 15146

Dear Mr. Diamond:

Thank you for your letter of May 3rd suggesting a manner in which to commemorate the Holocaust lest future generations not remember. I appreciate your having shared your thoughts with me.

Yom Hashoah is now commemorated by the Jewish people and it has become an important date on the Jewish calendar. Congregations and communities all over the world commemorate this dark day in the history of humanity on Nisan 27.

The Gates of Prayer, the new Reform Sabbath, Festival and Weekday Prayerbook includes a special service which is to be used on Tishah Be'av and Yom Hashoah. Many congregations of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations hold special services on Nisan 27 to recall the Holocaust. Some congregations utilize this special service on the Shabbat closest to Yom Hashoah, including it in their regular Shabbat worship. I do not know if any of the other Jewish religious movements have a special service for Yom Hashoah as part of their Prayerbooks but I do know that it is a day of special remembrance throughout the Jewish world.

Again, thank you for sharing your thoughts with me. With kindest greetings, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

HYMEN DIAMOND

ATTORNEY AT LAW
4409 RUTH DRIVE

MONROEVILLE, PA. 15146

TELEPHONE: 412-372-3555
412-372-2360

May 3, 1985

Rabbi Alexander Schindler
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10021

Dear Rabbi:

The thought has occurred to me that an effective way of commemorating the holocaust so that it will not be forgotten is to establish a formal holiday like Passover or Purim. A ritual could be established similar to the Seder during which selected passages from Shirer's Third Reich or like reliable works could be read. I am familiar with the Third Reich and could help select pertinent passages.

It seems to me that unless such a practice is adopted, the holocaust and everything else connected with it will be forgotten. The pedants of the academic community say that history should not be written until 100 years after it happens. This, of course, is nonsense. It perpetuates history as a Mississippi of falsehoods. In 100 years Hitler will be regarded as a great hero in Germany and maybe elsewhere and only those who read a footnote in some obscure book will learn of the holocaust. Reagan and Kohl have already started this process by, in effect, arranging for a conciliation with the Nazis.

Sincerely,



Hymen Diamond

HD:vm

Boston University

University Professors
745 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, Massachusetts 02215
617/353-4566



Elie Wiesel
Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities

April 28, 85

BT

Dear Alex —



April 25, 1985

Dear Elie:

Just a note to express my appreciation for the sensitive and most effective manner in which you have spoken throughout this difficult period. As always, I am most admiring of you.

With gratitude and warm regards, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

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

Bitberg

✓

April 26, 1985

Dr Ellis J. Mischel
181 Summit Avenue
Summit, NJ 07901

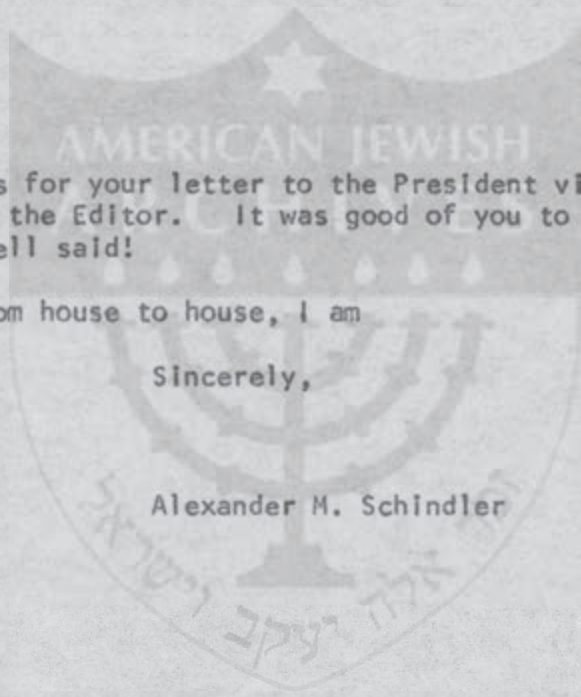
Dear Ellis:

Just a word of thanks for your letter to the President via the New York Times Letter to the Editor. It was good of you to share your comments with me. Well said!

With fond regards from house to house, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler



Ellis J. Mischel, M. D.

181 SUMMIT AVENUE
SUMMIT, NEW JERSEY 07901
TEL. 273-0818

Letter to the Editor - NY Times

Dear Mr. Reagan:

There you go again, Mr. President.

Anthony Lewis called your decision to visit the Bitburg Military Cemetery a blunder and another one of your "gaffes", the act of a "Hollow man" - NEW YORK TIMES op-ed section, April 21, 1985. I do not believe that you are stupid, insensitive or hollow. You are much too smart for that. He, Lewis, lets you off the hook too easily. Its much too pat an excuse for you to hide behind. Sigmund Freud taught the world that we are ruled more by our deeper, unconscious feelings and thoughts than not. So, Mr. President, where are you coming from?

Mr. President, you will just have to realize that we Jews are a questioning people - admittedly a bit more suspicious than usual especially when issues of anti-semitism surface. Hitler, I'm not painting you with that same brush (he was a house painter, wasn't he?), was called a crack pot and maniac, yet, for all of his crazy ideas he damn near conquered - and destroyed - the world.

Why are we Jews the way we are? History has made us this way. I was born in America - I'm proud and thankful for it. I grew up in a small resort town in the 30's where a fashionable hotel was graced with the sign "No dogs or Jews Allowed". We Jews have suffered the whiplash of discrimination and persecution from the beginning of recorded time. Our enslavement in Egypt, our exile in Babylonia, our torture at the hand of the Roman Tyrant and of the Spanish Inquisitor, our banishment to the ghettos of Europe, all the way through the middle ages down to, and most horrendous of all, our Holocaust experience during World War II. So, Mr. President, you'll just have to realize - even if you can't understand our long history of suffering and humiliation. I, as you did, lived through the Great Depression. We Jews were for the most part staunch supporters of Franklin Roosevelt - even idealized him. More recently we were shocked to hear of his indifference toward our slaughter in Hitler's Europe. My idol was shattered. The American Jews have for the past forty years enjoyed a Golden Age of freedom unprecedented in our history. But the rise of the Neo-Nazi party with its march in Skokie, anti-semitic slurs by people the like of Louis Farrakan and from the Moral Majority, and repeated acts of synagogue desecration leave us feeling uneasy, and reawaken fears that it can happen here. You will have to realize - not understand - that all these happenings, including your recent remarks, make us feel very skittish. And we begin to wonder whether, deep down, you too are one of them - we challenge you to prove us wrong.

and my fellow Americans
I challenge you, Mr. President, to don the Star of David following the kingly example set by the good King Christian X of Denmark during World War II.

Ellis J. Mischel
Ellis J. Mischel, M.D.
Psychiatrist & Psychoanalyst
181 Summit Avenue
Summit, NJ 07901

Conkey

✓

April 26, 1985

Congressman Bill Green
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Green:

Many thanks for sharing with me the copy of your statement on the commemoration of Yom HaShoa. I appreciate your having done so and I thank you and admire you for the fine comment in the Congressional Record.

With warm regards, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler



BILL GREEN
15TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

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Washington, D.C. 20515

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GRAND CENTRAL POST OFFICE BUILDING
110 EAST 45TH STREET
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10017
(212) 826-4466

April 19, 1985

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, President
Union of American Hebrew Congregations
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10021

Dear Rabbi Schindler:

I am enclosing a copy of the statement I made this year for the commemoration of Yom HaShoa.

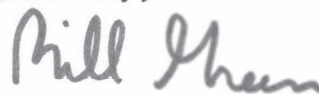
As a Member of the Holocaust Memorial Council it was a great honor to participate in the National Civic Commemoration here in the Capitol.

We must never forget that during World War II, 6 Million of our people died and 1,078,162 U.S. soldiers were casualties. Many of those soldiers died liberating Europe and the camps from the tragedy of the Third Reich.

I am deeply distressed by the itinerary of the President's upcoming trip to Germany. I too believe that Germany has been a reliable NATO ally during the last 4 decades; however, that in no way changes history!

It is because of History that we mark the "Days of Remembrance". We bear witness to those events so that we do what we can to assure that they will never happen again.

Sincerely,



Bill Green
Member of Congress

BG:hp
Enclosure



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 99th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 131

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, APRIL 18, 1985

No. 46

• Mr. GREEN. Mr. Speaker, I address this distinguished body today both as a Member of Congress and of the Jewish community. I rise, on this Day of Remembrance, to honor and commemorate those who suffered the atrocities and inhuman cruelty of the Holocaust.

This year we mark the 40th anniversary of the liberation of the concentration camps in which 4 million of our

people were gassed, and where an additional 2 million died of starvation, disease, and torture during the Second World War. I therefore believe it fitting, as we reflect on the horrors of 40 years ago, that we recall the worlds of those brave men and women who were the liberators, or witnesses, if you will, of the victims of Hitler's atrocities.

"They were the first free men," Elie Wiesel has said, "to see the world of horror." Although they have spoken simply of what they confronted, the sense of anger and profound sadness which their words convey are testimony to the enormity of the tragedy which they uncovered. The following are statements taken from testimony of U.S. Army Veterans given at the International Liberators Conference in 1981:

Anton Bild, a soldier involved in the liberation of Dachau recalled that:

After six months of combat duty with the Seventh and Third Armies, I thought I could take just about anything. But to be confronted with the realization of the concentration camp Dachau was an earth shaking, cataclysmic event in my life. It was a day for me when humanity failed miserably in the world. As we approached the camp and came into the railroad siding, I was confronted with these thirty or forty boxcars crammed with people that had starved to death in the cars. No one should have to face a death like this.

The recollections of Richard Elberfeld, a liberator at Bergen-Belsen, are no less horrible to contemplate. "We found thousands of unburied bodies when we went in. We found other thousands of people who were near death, who were in the huts or the fields . . . I had no idea anything like this really existed."

Other eyewitnesses to the horror of the camps speak of lingering and tormenting memories. Kenneth Colvin, assigned to the 515th Medical Clearing Company, administered emergency medical treatment in many of the camps. "We didn't talk much about what we saw," he recalled. "It wasn't until about 15 years after the war that this thing hit me. I started getting nightmares. About 2 years ago I thought I could handle it. I went back to Katzen Friedhoff. All that was left of that camp was half of the crematoria door, and I just collapsed when I saw that.

Some recollections, such as that of Leon Freeman, a liberator at Buchenwald, evoke an overwhelming sense of sadness. Noticing the pitiful condition of small groups of people gathered along the road as the 76th Army Division to which he was attached approached the camp, Mr. Freedman recalled that:

It became clear to us that something dreadful had happened. As we approached this huge complex of buildings with barbed wire fences, we began to notice a very distinct foul odor . . . And shortly before coming to the gates we had noticed some railroad cars on a siding. One was partially opened up. We could see bits of clothing. We noticed that it was composed all of chil-

drren's clothing, shoes, sweaters, hats, mittens, coats, clothing of all description, only of children. We couldn't seem to understand it. We saw no children.

Many of the eyewitness accounts focus on the response of the victims to the arrival of their liberators. Many greeted their rescuers with only dazed silence. For others it took several days before they would be convinced that their tragic ordeal was finally over. Marie Ellifrity, who served as a nurse at Mathausen, related that still others, a few days after the liberation, "simply laid down and died. They refused to die as prisoners, they wanted to die in freedom, and so, after they were convinced of who we were and why we were there, they simply laid down and died."

Perhaps most disturbing of all is testimony which speaks of the indifference of the outside community to the plight of the victims. Reginald Ashby of the 11th Armored Division, liberators of Gausen One, recalled that for him:

The most shocking thing that took place was the indifference to the civilian population to what had been going on in the camp. They seemed to have been well aware of what had been going on. I couldn't then, and I can't now, come to any conclusions as to what could have possibly gone on in their minds to have permitted something like this to take place. There are no words to describe this kind of condition. It's beyond comprehension, what people can do to people.

Another liberator, Alexander Breuer, recalled that because he spoke German he had been ordered to join a team designated to negotiate the surrender of Weimar. In their negotiations with the city's mayor, Breuer recalled that the subject of Buchenwald had been brought up as an aside. "Incidentally," the Americans were informed, "there is this place called Buchenwald." The mayor was asked to bring them to the camp and escort them through it. Although he knew of Buchenwald he had never seen it; he was unaware of its enormity. Three days after his visit he took his own life.

The Rabbi Gunter Plaut, attached to the 104th Timberwolf Division, which liberated the camp at Nautthausen on April 11, 1945, stated his belief that until that morning many of our men didn't really fully understand what the war was all about. Reflecting on what he himself had seen on that morning, Rabbi Plaut felt it to have been too enormous a crime against humanity to be the responsibility of man alone. "I believe," he said, "that God must also share a measure of responsibility. His responsibility is and was that He gave us the freedom to decide. He gambled on us in a sense . . . and in this instance He lost."

The events which these men and women have recalled represent the most tragic and shameful ever to have occurred. They describe a world from which all compassion and sense of human dignity and worth had been

driven out, a world of abysmal horror and loneliness for the Jewish people. The crimes of Nazi Germany were of such a magnitude that they must never be forgotten, and such that they can never be forgiven. In the anger, outrage, and sadness which their testimony expresses, however, we can also extract a measure of hope that events such as these will never be allowed to occur again.

Thus, it is of paramount importance, on this Day of Remembrance, that we refresh in our minds the tragic memory of the Holocaust and vow to do what we can to assure that it will never happen again.

✓

April 26, 1985

Biburg

Ms. Alice Alpert, Administrator
The Community Synagogue
150 Middle Neck Road
Port Washington, NY 11050

Dear Ms. Alpert:

Many thanks for sharing with me the text of the telegram sent by the Officers and Trustees of The Community Synagogue to the President. It is important that all of us speak out on his pending visit to Biburg cemetery. I am grateful to you for bringing your message to my attention.

With warm regards, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler



The Community Synagogue

TEMPLE BETH AM

150 MIDDLE NECK ROAD • PORT WASHINGTON, NY 11050

Rabbi Martin S. Rozenberg

April 23, 1985

Cantor Jacob Yaron

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, President
UAHC
838 Fifth Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10021

Dear Rabbi Schindler,

Last night the Board of Trustees of The Community Synagogue approved a resolution condemning the remarks and proposed action of President Reagan regarding his forthcoming visit to a German cemetery. This resolution was communicated to the President, by telegram, with the following message:

"Mr. President,

To equate the SS and their victims as you did, is to distort history and dishonor all those who gave their lives to fight the Nazi horror.

To visit Bitburg and pay the SS homage, is to exalt wickedness. As Elie Wiesel said, "that place is not your place". Visit the graves of resistance fighters, of Konrad Adenauer, of those who said no to the Nazi war machine in their own way, great or small. But honor not the SS.

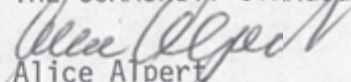
With respect sir, we urge you to change your mind, for you are wrong.

Respectfully,

The Officers & Trustees of
The Community Synagogue
Port Washington, N.Y. 11050 "

Very truly,

THE COMMUNITY SYNAGOGUE


Alice Alpert
Administrator



Union of American Hebrew Congregations

PATRON OF HEBREW UNION COLLEGE—JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION
838 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 (212) 249-0100 CABLES: UNIONUAHC

NEWS RELEASE For Immediate Release

Contact: Richard Cohen
(212) 758-6969

Statement by Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, President

Union of American Hebrew Congregations

On President Reagan's Decision to Visit a German War Cemetery

"The President's idea of paying his respects to German soldiers who died fighting Americans, while refusing to honor the memory of the Jewish and other concentration camp victims at Dachau, is an incredible act of callousness.

"The President wants to symbolize reconciliation with the new Germany, a worthy goal. But that purpose neither requires nor is enhanced by a decision that insults the men who gave their lives in the war against Nazi tyranny, and that seeks to bury the memory of Nazism by pretending it never happened.

"The President should visit Dachau. He should visit the graves of the allied soldiers who fell in liberating Europe from the scourge of Hitlerism. And he should call on the German people never again to permit itself to be ruled by a regime that symbolizes for all time the obscenity of man's inhumanity to man.

"Only then can there be reconciliation with the past and hope for the future."

4/12/85

X

X

X



איחוד
ליהדות
מתקדמת
באמריקה

Union of American Hebrew Congregations

PATRON OF HEBREW UNION COLLEGE -- JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION
838 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 (212) 249-0100 CABLES: UNIONUAHC

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Richard Cohen
(212) 758-6969

Statement by Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, President

Union of American Hebrew Congregations

On President Reagan's Decision to Include a Visit to a Nazi Concentration Camp
During His Trip to Germany

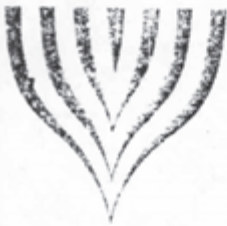
"President Reagan's decision to pay his respects to Jewish and other concentration camp victims, even if it comes late, is a welcome act. But by insisting on going through with his visit to a Germany cemetery where SS men -- Hitler's stormtroopers -- are buried, he makes meaningless his gesture in honor of those who fell before Nazi savagery.

"The President wants to symbolize reconciliation with the new Germany, a worthy goal. But that purpose neither requires nor is enhanced by undue courtesy to the German war dead, whose goal it was to enslave America and the rest of the free world.

"It is enough that our country spent billions to rebuild Germany from the rubble of World War II, that John F. Kennedy proclaimed himself 'ein Berliner' and that America is paying for the maintenance of tens of thousands of U.S. troops, at the cost of billions of dollars annually, to defend West Germany and Western Europe.

"The President should salute the American and Allied dead who gave their lives so that freedom may triumph over despotism. He should by his presence recall the fate of those who suffered and perished in the camps. But to stand with head bowed at the graves of Nazi war criminals is to demean the sacrifice of those who died at their hands. That is no way to commemorate the 40th anniversary of V-E Day."

4/17/85 AJP



איחוד
ליהדות
מתקדמת
באמריקה

Union of American Hebrew Congregations

PATRON OF HEBREW UNION COLLEGE - JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION
838 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 (212) 249-0100 CABLES: UNIONUAHC

NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Richard Cohen
(212) 758-6969

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Comment by Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, President
Union of American Hebrew Congregations
On President Reagan's Statement of April 18
On Visiting Bitburg Cemetery

"I am outraged by President Reagan's statement that the German soldiers buried in Bitburg cemetery were victims of Nazism just as those who died in the concentration camps. It insults not only Jews and others who suffered and perished in the camps, but every American and Allied soldier who gave his life to liberate Europe from the Nazi death grip.

"To equate the fate of members of the German army bent on world conquest with that of six million Jewish civilians, including one million innocent children, is a distortion of history, a perversion of language and a callous offense to the Jewish people.

"The President has made a terrible statement that brings shame to the American people."

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4/18/85



איחוד
ליהדות
מתקדמת
באמריקה

AMS

Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism

UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS—CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS
838 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 (212) 249-0100 CABLES: UNIONUAHC

April 22, 1985

The Honorable Ronald Reagan
The White House
Washington, D. C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

At its meeting in Washington on April 17, the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism - representing rabbinic and lay leadership of the Reform Jewish movement - unanimously adopted the following resolution and asked that it be transmitted to you.

By calling to mind the murder of six million Jews, the Holocaust symbolizes for all of us the ongoing and ever present danger of human beings sinking to the depths of subhuman brutality. For us Jews in particular, it represents a searing image that must never be extinguished from the memory of the nations of the world.

We members of the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism, gathered in Washington, therefore join fellow Jews and other Americans in expressing our outrage and protest at the President's decision to visit a cemetery where men who sought to conquer the world in the name of an unconscionable ideology lie buried. We appreciate his decision to commemorate the victims by visiting one of the concentration camps, but urge that he seek reconciliation with contemporary Germany elsewhere than upon the graves of Nazi soldiers.

Sincerely,

Harris Gilbert
Chairman

Chairman
Harris Gilbert
Director
Albert Vorspan
Associate Director
Rabbi David Saperstein

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NATIONAL FEDERATION OF
TEMPLE SISTERHOODS
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF
TEMPLE BROTHERHOODS
NORTH AMERICAN FEDERATION
OF TEMPLE YOUTH
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
TEMPLE ADMINISTRATORS
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
TEMPLE EDUCATORS
AMERICAN CONFERENCE
OF CANTORS
ASSOCIATION OF REFORM
ZIONISTS OF AMERICA

HG:rh

ארגאניזאציע פון יודישע נאצי-געליטענע אין אמעריקא, אי.אן.
Jewish Nazi-Victims Organization of America, Inc.

הסדה בער באש והסדה אינו אכל
סמית י"ב

*The Bush Was Burning in Fire
But Was Not Consumed (Exodus 3:2.)*

CHAIRMAN
DR. HILLEL SEIDMAN

SECRETARY GENERAL
FELIX LASKY

Bush

April 17, 1985

373 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10016
Tel: 683-7246

MORRIS AARONS

~~ROBERT A. MORSE~~
LEGAL COUNSEL

Editor .
New York Times
229 West 43rd Street
New York, N.Y. 10036

To the Editor:

Since your headlined your today's lead editorial *Respect for Truth* (etc..) I would like to draw your intention to a pertinent basic truth in this matter, which is somewhere overlooked either of ignorance or intentionally. This is the participation of the regular German army, the so called Wehrmacht, in the mass killings of Jewish men, women and children. Especially in Russia they were during the initial months of their occupation the only ones who committed the murder of the whole Jewish population, starting June 22, 1941, the day of the beginning of the war of Germany against their hitherto allies, Soviet Russia.

There were no gas chambers in invaded Russia. There were no Auschwitz there. The German soldiers gunned down all the Jews caught. They threw Jewish children alive into the graves which they forced their parents to dig.

These horrendous atrocities were the work of the German army under the command of their officers on the order of their commanders-in-chief.

This historic truth was established beyond doubt, by reputable and reliable German historians on the basis of scrupulous scholarly research, of official documents, of German eyewitnesses' reports.

They are contained in a number of voluminous books published by the German Institute for Contemporary History in Stuttgart, Germany.

To name only a few of these publications:

Hermann, Max, and Krausnick, Heimut. *Deutsche Geschichte der Juersten Vergangenheit*. Stuttgart: Deutscher Verlag, 1969.

Jodl, Alfred. "Das deutsche Tagebuch des Chefs der Wehrmachtfuehrungamtes." *Die Welt als Geschichte*, Stuttgart, 1952.

Kranhals, Hans von. "Die Judenvernichtung in Polen und die Wehrmacht." *Wehrwissenschaftlich Rundschau*, No. 15, Stuttgart, 1965.

Krausnick, Heimut, and Wilhelm, Hans H. *Die Armee und der ideologischer Krieg*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlaganstalt 1980.

———. *Die Truppe des Weltanschauung Krieger: Die Einsatzgruppen und die Schutzpolizei, 1939-1942*. Stuttgart: Institut fuer Zeitgeschichte, 1981.

Krausnick, Heimut. *Dokumentation zur Vergassung der Juedischen Opfer des Nationalsozialismus*. Stuttgart: Bundeszentrale fuer Heimatdienst, 1968.

I quoted some passages of these reports in English translation, in my United Nations: Perfidy and Perversion (M.P. Press, New York, 1982) of which I am submitting to you some parts,

Since these facts were purposely and maliciously hidden, Bonn was able to conceive and to try to implement the shameful scheme to do away once for all with Germany's guilt of the most horrendous mass murder in the annals of mankind, committed by their duly elected national government and its army.

Thus the German Chancellor, the connivance of some ignorant or insensitive American officials, managed to induce the President of the United States to honor the most cruel German warriors and by this to dishonor their martyred victims.

On the way they committed an insult to the revered memory of the heroic American fighters for freedom of all nations by comparing the Bitburg graves of mass murders with our National Cemetery in Arlington.

Another fallout of the well planned "blunder": they made a mockery of the well meant multi-million dollars memorials.

ENCLOSED

AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES

Sincerely,

Hillel Seidman

Hillel Seidman

Dear Rabbi Schindler

y'll call

you on this

Cordially

Hillel

Massive research has been conducted regarding the role of the Wehrmacht on the Russian front. Two German historians, Professors Helmut Krausnick and Hans Heinrich Wilhelm, have written of their findings in *Die Armee und der ideologischer Krieg* and *Die Truppe des Weltanschauung Kriegeres*. The information that follows is derived from the aforementioned sources.³

Four weeks prior to the German invasion of Russia, June 21, 1941, Field Marshal von Lieb was supplied with a detailed map of the Jewish population under Soviet rule in the areas of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. In his report of November 5, 1941, concerning the food situation in the occupied territories, the Commandant of the 339th Infantry Division, Lieutenant General Hiduelka, recommended the "liquidation of superfluous mouths of the prisoners, the gypsies, and the Jews." Subsequently, the military commander of the region of Slonim reported on January 25, 1942, that he managed to get rid of thousands of unnecessary mouths. Thus, in a short time, the Wehrmacht succeeding in cleaning up the territory under its rule, however, only in the locations that harbored less than 1,000 inhabitants. In view of the unwillingness of the army to conduct actions in the villages, the commander issued an order to concentrate all the Jews of the region into two or three cities.

Facts and Figures

The statistics regarding the number of Jews killed exclusively by the army units prior to the arrival of the special murder commandos, the S.D. Einsatzgruppen, are as follows:

About 10,000 Jews were killed at the end of July 1941 (only a month after the invasion) in the district of Glubokoye, White Russia. The same number were murdered by the army in the neighboring districts in Byelorussia. In the region

of the Prypet Marshes, 13,788 Jews were gunned down by the army. In the small village of Laguisk, the soldiers slaughtered 920 Jews.

Not only the infantry divisions committed the slaughter but also the navy and the air force. In Libawa, Latvia, the marines conducted the massacre of the Jews. In Borysov, many members of the German air force arrived from the neighboring air-force base and volunteered to participate in the killing of Jews. There were many other instances where German officers and soldiers volunteered to massacre Jews. But, for the most part, the slaughter was a disciplined and orderly affair conducted under the command of Wehrmacht officers.

Brest-Litovsk, Begin's Birthplace

In this study, the names of famous Jewish communities, of historical centers of learning and creativity in every field of human endeavor, emerge as the sites of unspeakable cruelty committed against Jews by German army units. Let us dwell for a moment on one of these cities that I once visited in 1937, which had gained fame as a result of its illustrious rabbis and great Talmudic scholars (eg, the Soloveichik family). It has become the focus of attention more recently as the birthplace of Menachem Begin. The city is Brest-Litovsk, known in Yiddish as Brisk.

The detractors of the Israeli Prime Minister often mention that Begin's entire family was slaughtered there and that Begin has been unable to forget it. Certain diplomats, politicians, commentators, and journalists hold his refusal to eradicate this terrible experience from his consciousness against him. They are quick to brand Begin as an example of a "Holocaust mentality," "Holocaust syndrome," or simply of paranoia. In September 1981, *Newsweek* quoted Begin disapprovingly as recalling the slaughter of his father and 500

UNITED NATIONS

other Jews. The magazine also recounts that Begin confronted Mrs. Margaret Thatcher with a description of the Germans who pushed his parents into the river and opened fire with machine guns from both sides, until the river became red with blood.⁴

Interestingly, Begin did not say that the Nazis opened fire; he deliberately chose to say "the Germans." Who, then, committed the murder, and when and where did it occur? In Auschwitz, Treblinka? Profs. Krausnick and Wilhelm provide the answer.

The rounding up of these 500 Jews took place in Brest-Litovsk (Brisk) by the 162nd Infantry Division of the Wehrmacht, in July 1941, not quite a month after the Germans invaded the city on June 28, 1941. In 1941, the S.S. killers had not appeared yet, nor were the gas chambers in Auschwitz in operation.

Wehrmacht units did not always operate alone; reinforcement was provided by the S.D. Einsatzgruppen. This reinforcement assumed various forms. The military commandant of the city of Makiopol reports: "8,000 Jews were killed by the S.D. The houses emptied of Jews were taken over by the local army command. The clothes and underwear of the Jews killed were amassed by the soldiers and, after being washed, will be delivered to the military hospital."⁵

The military commandant of the city of Gankoi, in which Jews of the surrounding villages were concentrated as well, asked the S.D. to clean up the city because of the danger of hunger and epidemics. The S.D. refused because of lack of manpower. The military commander then ordered the military police to close in on the Jews, and the S.D. gunned them down.

In the course of the slaughters, the line of demarcation between the S.D. and the Wehrmacht became blurred; both worked together, in harmony and cooperation. Profs. Krausnick and Wilhelm mention the following: "An example of the

PERFIDY AND PERVERSION

rousing inclination of the officers and soldiers to attack civilians, particularly "Jew Bolsheviks", was the events in the city of Human [in the Ukraine, famous as the residence of Reb Nachman of Bratzlav] in September of 1941. The Einsatz commando prepared a major action for September 22-23, 1941. However, the Ukrainian militia, together with German soldiers, conducted the pogrom on September 21, to the dismay of the commando, who complained about it. He maintained that owing to the haste with which the pogrom had been carried out, it had not been methodical enough and, therefore, many Jews and Communists learned of the danger and escaped. (The pillage of the possessions of the murdered Jews and the destruction of their houses was done exclusively by the Wehrmacht.) The S.D. complained further that because of the Wehrmacht's action, they managed to slaughter only 1,412 Jews. As a result of this complaint, Field Marshal von Runstedt, the commander-in-chief at the Soviet front, issued an order to the effect that the massacre of the Jews should be left to the S.S. and the S.D. Einsatzgruppen alone."⁶

The commander of the 6th army ordered all the Jews to be concentrated in Bialocerkiev and asked the Einsatz commandos to slaughter them. On August 20, 1941, division 295 of the infantry passed by the city. There was a dispute between the various officers as to who should complete the killings of the few surviving children. The chief army commander solved the dispute by issuing a written decision: "We have to look at the liquidation from the ideological point of view, which compels us to liquidate the Jewish women and children as well, because we have to eradicate this race."

General List, the commander of the 14th army, issued an order of the day in which he stated that "the Einsatzgruppe fulfilled its task successfully. Cooperation between the armed forces and security units is vital for the army to secure the hinterland" (behind the front).

Bitburg

April 24, 1985

Mr. Donald I. Trott
20 Geneva Court
Wayne, NJ 07470

Dear Mr. Trott:

Many thanks for your letter of April 19. I appreciate your having shared your thoughts and concerns with me.

Your letter came at a most propitious moment and I plan to bring your suggestion in regard to black or yellow armbands to be worn on the day of the visit to Bitburg to the attention of leaders of Jewish communal organizations. We will be meeting this very day to discuss this situation and the response of our community.

With thanks and kindest greetings, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

Witt

20 Geneva Court
Wayne, NJ 07470
April 19, 1985

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler
President, Union of American
Hebrew Congregations
835 5th Avenue
New York, NY

Dear Rabbi Schindler:

I am writing to you as one who shares your concern over the impending visit of the President of the United States to officially pay homage to the remains of instruments of Nazi terrorism.

I believe it important for the world at large to know that a large segment of the American people will not renege on their commitment to preserve the memory of the Holocaust victims and remain united in solidarity in their sense of repulsion at the acts of inhumanity committed by the Hitler government.

Accordingly, I urge you, as a representative of Jewish leadership within the United States, to urge all Americans who share our sense of outrage to wear black (or possibly yellow) armbands on the day of the President's proposed visit as a highly visible symbol of lack of support for the President's action.

Very truly yours,

Donald I. Trott

Donald I. Trott