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World Jewish Congress, 1971-1996.

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AUSTRIA REFUSES TO PAY COMPENSATION FOR PLUNDERED JEWISH PROPERTY (Synopsis of article in the Israeli press)

On 16 April 1996 the Israeli financial daily *Globes* published a special investigative feature by Itamar Levin on plundered Jewish property in Austria. Levin made extensive use of records housed in the Austrian State Archives in Vienna. He estimates the present-day value of Jewish property at US \$15 billion.

On the eve of the Anschluss there were 185,000 Jews in Austria of which some 126,000 succeeded in escaping before the war. The balance were murdered. Austria has traditionally presented itself as Hitler's first victim. However history belies that wishful thinking. While Austrians represented 11% of the population of Greater Germany, they accounted for some 35% of the personnel of the death camp apparatus. Hitler, Eichmann and many other leading Nazis were native Austrians.

Levin describes the process by which Jewish property was Aryanized (plundered) -- a process which was initiated a mere 6 weeks after the German union with Austria. Jews were forced to declare all property valued over 5,000 marks. In 1940 that property, with an estimated value at that time of US \$1.5 billion, was taken over. In today's terms this property would be worth some US \$15 billion -- a reasonable estimate when we take into account the fact that we re dealing with the assets of 185,000 people. This property includes, real estate, bank accounts, precious stones, insurance policies, etc.

The outstanding evidence of the magnitude of these holdings are the questionnaires collected by the Nazi authorities from the Austrian Jews. These documents are filed in cartons according to the a distinct system. For example: 1-181 private property; 331-363 industrial enterprises; 808-841 commercial enterprises. All told there are 1,568 cartons of material pertaining to the plunder of Jewish property in Austria. Significantly, these archives are accessible to all who desire to examine them. Two years ago the Austrian archives published a book with the names of 60,000 Viennese Jews who completed the questionnaires, their birthrates and the number of their individual dossier.

Jews who succeeded in emigrating were forced to sell their holdings for ridiculously low prices, but also had to pay exit tax. To maintain appearances, on departure they had to sign a declaration that they had sold their property.

In accordance with a 1953 agreement between Austria and German, German property in Austria was turned over to the Austrian authorities. At the same time, Austria assumed responsibility for all compensation claims of former Austrian nationals. Jewish communal property has been restored to the Jewish community.

Over the years, however, Austria, has paid what amounts to a small fraction of what it actually owes its former nationals. Saul Kagan, the director of the Claims Conference, charges that Austria has done everything to escape having to deal with Jewish claims against Austria. Austrian Jews in Israel claim that the Israeli government — in consideration of political factors in its east-west policies — has been reluctant to act on their behalf and to pursue Jewish claims. Instead of leading these efforts, it has relegated this matter to international Jewish organizations. Moreover, unlike Germany, Austria paid its Holocaust survivors a one-time lump-sum payment of \$7,000 — and this only at the end of last year.

The recent establishment of a special Austrian-Jewish foundation to aid survivors is certainly a positive step. The foundation, headed by Hannah Lessing, has been the recipient of modest payments from the Austrian government. But the question of the vast amounts of property seized by Austria which played a zealous role in the Holocaust awaits resolution.





COMPTROLLER OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK 1 CENTRE STREET NEW YORK, NY 10007-2341 (212) 659-8500

ALAN G. HEVESI COMPTROLLER

DRAFT

May 1, 1996

The Honorable Jean-Pascal Delamuraz President of the Swiss Confederation Bundesrat Ost CH - 3003 Bern Switzerland

Dear President Delamuraz:

As City Comptroller, I am the chief financial officer of the City of New York, as well as the custodian, the investment adviser and/or a trustee of the various New York City pension funds. In these capacities, my Office maintains financial relationships with Swiss banks through credit facilities, short and long term investment relationships with U.S. subsidiaries of Swiss banks and our pension funds' ownership of shares of various Swiss banks.

There is increasing evidence that for the past fifty years certain Swiss banks have had on deposit many millions of dollars of unclaimed assets of Holocaust victims and that these banks may have been less than forthcoming in returning these monies to the survivors and rightful heirs. Some remain unresponsive to the questions that have been raised about these hidden assets of European Jewry.

Accordingly, I ask that you initiate an investigation of all Swiss banks and financial institutions to determine the extent and rightful owners of any of these assets on deposit at these institutions. I also urge you to press the Swiss Bankers Association to conduct its own examination of all its members and that you monitor and oversee such an investigation. Last, I ask that your government establish formal contact with the appropriate representatives of the Jewish community, mutually agree to guidelines and commit that the Swiss government and banking industry will not make any unilateral announcements about the claims or establish any settlement decisions without agreement from the representatives of the Jewish community.

I look forward to your comments on this important matter. Sincerely,

Alan G. Hevesi

AGH: ew





COMPTROLLER OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK 1 DENTRE STREET NEW YORK, NY 10007-2341 (212) 669-3500

ALAN G. HEVES! COMPTROLLER

DRAFT

May 1, 1996

Rainer E. Gut Chairman of the Board CS Holdings Nuschelerstrasse 1 PO Box 669 8021 Zurich Switzerland

Dear Mr. Gut:

As City Comptroller, I am the chief financial officer of the City of New York, as well as the custodian, the investment adviser and/or a trustee of the various New York City pension funds. In these capacities, my Office maintains a financial relationship with Credit Suisse as it acts as a counterparty to our bonds, my Bureau of Asset Management conducts short term trades and has investment management contracts with your U.S. subsidiaries and our pension funds own 171,830 shares in your bank.

There is increasing evidence that for the past fifty years certain Swiss banks have had on deposit many millions of dollars of unclaimed assets of Holocaust victims and that these banks may have been less than forthcoming in returning these monies to the survivors and rightful heirs. Some remain unresponsive to the questions that have been raised about these hidden assets of European Jewry.

Accordingly, I ask that you initiate an internal investigation to determine the extent and rightful owners of any of these assets on deposit at your bank. I also urge you to press both the Swiss government and the Swiss Bankers Association to conduct such an examination of all Swiss financial institutions and that you fully participate and cooperate with such

investigations. Last, I ask that you establish formal contact with the representatives of the Jewish community, mutually agree to guidelines and commit that your bank will not make any unilateral announcement about the claims or establish any settlement decisions without agreement from the appropriate representatives of the Jewish community.

I look forward to your comments on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Alan G. Havesi

AGH: ew



EDIZILE THE WICTHAY NEED IT WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS 501 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022 • (212) 755-5770

Memorandum from

Consultation of the WJC Executive New York, May 2, 1996

Agenda

- Opening remarks: President of World Jewish Congress 1) Chairman of WJC Executive Chairman of Jewish Agency for Israel
- Nazi era assets in Switzerland 2) (proposed agreement with the Swiss Bankers Association)
- Restitution and compensation: 3)
 - a) Germany
 - b) Austria
 - a) Norway
 - b) Hungary
 - c) Central and Eastern Europe
 - d) Western Europe

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MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

BETWEEN

THE WORLD JEWISH RESTITUTION ORGANIZATION
and
THE WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS
representing also the
JEWISH AGENCY and Allied Organizations

and

THE SWISS BANKERS ASSOCIATION

- (1) An Independent Committee of Eminent Persons will be appointed. Three persons will be appointed by the World Jewish Restitution Organization (WJRO) and three persons will be appointed by the Swiss Bankers Association (SBA). The Committee of six will jointly appoint a Chairperson. Furthermore, each side will nominate two alternates.
- (2) The Chairperson will administer the budget of the Committee which will be funded by the SBA.
- (3) The Committee of Eminent Persons will appoint an international auditing company; this company must be licensed by the Federal Banking Commission (FBC) to operate in Switzerland. The SBA will assure the auditors unfettered access to all relevant files in banking institutions.
- (4) The Committee of Eminent Persons will instruct the auditing company as to the scope of its duties. It will examine the methodology of the individual banks, the Swiss Bankers Association and the Office of the Ombudsman as regards the search for accounts and assets in question. The Independent Committee will also be authorized to retain the services of other experts, as necessary. The Independent Committee will publish progress reports from time to time.
- (5) The parties of the agreement will cooperate to assure that the Swiss Government will deal with the question of looted assets in Swiss banks or other institutions which were not reported or returned under the relevant laws during the years before, during and immediately after the Second World War.

- (6) All negotiations will be handled in an environment of absolute discretion and secrecy, with a view of reaching an amicable resolution of all issues.
- (7) As soon as the contents of this Memorandum are agreed upon, there will be a summit meeting of the presidents and their delegations to affix their signatures and to announce the names of the members of the Committee and the scope of its task to the public.

Signed and agreed: New York, New York, May 2, 1996

AMERICAN JEWISH

Edgar M. Bronfman

Dr. Georg F. Krayer

Avraham Burg

Dr. Josef Ackermann

Israel Singer

Hans J. Baer

WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

CONGRES JUIF MONDIAL . CONGRESO JUDIO MUNDIAL

501 MADISON AVENUE NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022-5602

April 30, 1996.

CABLE: WORLDGRESS, NEW YORK TELEPHONE: (212) 755-5770

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21 Jabotinsky Street **JOHANNESBURG** 7 Anerley Road

MELBOURNE 5 Queens Road MOSCOW

71 Varshavskaye Schosse

78 Ave. des Ch. Elysees

Mr. Kjell Colding Secretary General Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs 0 s 1 o, Norway

Dear Mr. Colding,

Thank you for your letter of March 27, 1996. I am grateful that the Norwegian Government is taking action to deal with the longstanding question of compensation for Jewish properties seized in Norway during World War II. In light of Norway's special concern for human rights issues and the pursuit of world peace, I attach great significance to the assurances that your government will spare no effort in clarifying the facts.

We regard this as an important task of righting the wrongs committed against Norwegian Jews during the Holocaust and also a fulfillment of a historic commitment given to the World Jewish Congress in 1944 by the Norwegian Government in Exile, in London.

As you know, I am also the president of the World Jewish Restitution Organization and we are currently very active in the ongoing negotiations and efforts to secure restitution of Jewish property in both Eastern and Western Europe. This organization represents an umbrella of world Jewish organizations including Jewish survivors in Israel and the world. We therefore request that a representative of our organization be invited to take part in the committee's deliberations in order to present an overview of the efforts of the WJRO across Europe.

I look forward to further cooperation and coordination between us.

Edgar M. Bronfman

Eya M. Bronduran

President



Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs
The Secretary General

Oslo, 27 March 1996

Edgard Bronfman President World Jewish Congress 501 Madison Avenue, 17 th Floor New York, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Bronfman,

I am taking the liberty of writing to you personally to notify you and your organization in advance of measures being taken in Norway with regard to the property of the Norwegian Jews confiscated during the second World War by the Quisling Nazi-government.

I am aware of the importance attached to this issue by the World Jewish Congress and I wish to assure you that the Norwegian Government will spare no effort in clarifying the facts of this case.

Later this week an independent committee of inquiry will be appointed. It will have seven members two of whom, Mrs. Berit Reisel and Mr. Bjørn Bruland, have been appointed by the Jewish Congregation in Oslo. The committee's mandate is to carry out a full investigation into what happened to the property of the Norwegian Jews during and after the war. The committee will be assisted by a full time secretariat. It will submit a report to the Government within one year. When the committee has completed its work the Government will decide further measures.

As soon as the details of the mandate have been finalized and the members confirmed we will forward English translations of the relevant documents.

I am pleased to note that throughout this process the Government has co-operated closely with the Jewish congregation in Oslo, which has represented the Norwegian Jewish community.

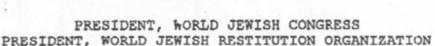
Yours sincerely,

Will Colding

Kjell Colding

DRAFT TESTIMONY





Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs
United States Senate

April 24, 1996

E

Mr. Chairman, I want to commend you for holding these hearings and for the outstanding job your staff has been doing in ferreting out information long lost or concealed. What you are doing is of great historic significance. Our collective mission here is nothing short of bringing justice. We are here to help write the last chapter of the bitter legacy of the Holocaust.

Today, Mr. Chairman, I am acting in my capacities as President of the World Jewish Congress and as President of the World Jewish Restitution Organization. I am also testifying on behalf of my Co-chairman, Mr. Avrum Burg, the Chairman of the Jewish Agency.

The WJRO was created in 1992 by the leading international Jewish organizations and the survivor's groups to coordinate claims for the return of property and the transfer to the Jewish people of heirless holdings. We also work to secure for individual Jews no longer resident in the countries in question the same rights that would obtain for local Jews who remain. With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I would like to submit as part of my formal testimony, the list of the international organizations that make up the WJRO. [List to be appended]

The WJRO has also been designated by two successive Prime Ministers to represent the State of Israel in these matters. It has also concluded agreements with Jewish Communities in several countries in order to coordinate restitution efforts.

I hope it will not sound presumptuous of me, Mr. Chairman, but I speak to you today on behalf of the Jewish people. With reverence, I also speak on behalf of those who cannot speak fo themselves.

The issue before us today, the one I want to talk to you about, can be summed up in a single word: Justice.

Fifty years after the Holocaust, as Germany and the collaborationist countries have sought to face their responsibilities and make restitution, there remains the glaring void in the behavior of the banks of Switzerland.

Just a year ago today, the bipartisan leaders of the United States Congress declared in a letter to the Secretary of State, and I quote:

> "It should be made clear to the countries involved that their response on this [restitution] matter will be seen as a test of their respect for basic human rights and the rule of law, and could have practical consequences on their relations with our country. It is the clear policy of the United States that each should expeditiously enact appropriate legislation for the prompt restitution and/or compensation for property and assets seized by the former Nazi and/or Communist regimes. We believe it is a matter of both law and justice."

President Clinton has declared:

"We must confront and, as best we can, right the terrible injustices of the past. I thus support the efforts of the World Jewish Restitution Organization and the World Jewish Congress to help resolve the question of Jewish properties confiscated during and after the Second World War."

Mr. Chairman, I wish to personally commend Ambassador Stuart Eizenstat for his contribution to this effort. President Clinton assigned him a special mission to assist in this task while he was the United States Representative to the European Union, and although he returned to Washington earlier this month to become Undersecretary of Commerce for International Trade, he will continue his efforts as Special Envoy on Property Claims in Central Europe. He has been doing an outstanding job serving the interests of all Americans, not only Jews.

I would also like to take this opportunity of adding that the European Parliament has added its voice to that of the United States, expressing the same view and declaring that restitution is a matter of justice which must be fulfilled.

Mr. Chairman, as the Congressional letter made clear, what today's hearing is about is "respect for basic human rights and the rule of law." Nothing less.

I am not here to talk about whether there is only \$32 million remaining in Swiss banks belonging to Holocaust victims and survivors or, as may be closer to the truth, several billion. Nor am I ready to endorse those who say the mecords were purposely destroyed and the money confiscated.

When I met with the Swiss Bankers Association last September in Bern, I was struck by one comment they made to me. "Mr. Bronfman," they said, "we do not wish to hold on to one Swiss franc that is not ours."

I told them that I certainly agreed with that sentiment. I explained to them that the World Jewish Congress initiated activity aimed at the recovery of Jewish property even before the war in Europe ended. In November 1944, Dr. Nahum Goldmann, the co-founder of the World Jewish Congress raised the issue at the War Emergency Conference in Atlantic City. He declared then:

"The principle that Jewish assets must be given back to their legitimate holders wherever possible must be regarded and inviolable."

Now that the Swiss Bankers have told me they accept this universal principle, Mr. Chairman, I ask that you, your Committee, this Congress and our Government to help the Swiss Bankers fulfill their own wish not to hold on to a single Swiss franc that is not their own.

A word of concern, Mr. Chairman: time is running out for those who will be the primary recipients of this restitution. Knowing you as I do, I am confident that your investigation will be thorough and will result in the full exposure of the facts.

At the meeting in Bern in September, I did not discuss dollar amounts. What I sought was an impartial audit. I came away thinking that we had agreed on that, but in February, the Swiss unilaterally announced they had done their own survey and had found only \$32 million -- an amount that defies credibility.

"Trust us," they told the victims of the Holocaust, "we looked into our records and our own vaults and that's all we could find."

One of the documents already uncovered and released by your own investigators, Mr. Chairman, suggests that at a single Swiss financial institution, the present value of deposits may be nearly that much alone.

Mr. Chairman, as you may know, heading these two organizations is not my only job. I am also a businessman, and a successful one, I am proud to say. I know that because I just paid my taxes and I know what a big bite they took, but I was glad to be able to pay that amount.

As a businessman, I deal with bankers quite a bit. The most important possession any banker can have is his reputation, the trust of his customers. If we cannot have faith in the integrity and trustworthiness, in the honor of the banker, to protect our deposits, to give a faithful and accurate accounting, then we must go elsewhere.

If the issue for the Jewish people, it must for the Swiss bankers also be an issue of trust.

What is urgently needed, Mr. Chairman, is a transparent mechanism to conduct a verifiable audit of all Nazi-era assets, Jewish and non-Jewish, in Switzerland and their disposition so that all the parties involved can be satisfied justice has been served.

The Swiss bankers cannot be permitted to come back and say, once again, that they will create such a process, but that they want to be the ones who appoint the auditors. Their repeated failure of integrity over 50 years has forfeited for them such a privilege. There must be an arm's-length process that is credible to the world.

There is already much to learn from the very beginning of the documents uncovered by your Committee and by others working elsewhere. They demonstrate that the Swiss were far from neutral. That their assistance to the Nazi war machine, through the clandestine conversion of looted gold into Swiss francs enabled the Germans to buy fuel and other raw materials they needed to prolong the war. Some estimates in testimony before the U.S. Senate hearings following the war suggest the cost may have been staggering in the lives of American soldiers, Allied soldiers, Jews and other civilians across that continent.

The Germans were looting synagogues, schools, museums and the bodies they were about to toss into the ovens. They snatched works of art. They took wedding rings and gold teeth and melted them down. They cast ingots that were falsely marked to appear as if they were pre-war gold and, as records are showing, they took it to bankers who were only too willing to look the other way.

Mr. Chairman, many Jews in Central Europe, and many others in those countries, saw the Nazis coming and made the trip to Switzerland because they thought their assets could be held safely there. They put their faith in Swiss neutrality and the integrity of that nation's banking system. And it appears they were betrayed.

Only through a full, fair and impartial audit can we uncover the truth. I would hope the Swiss bankers will cooperate in this as it appears to me to be the only way to deal with the crisis in confidence they have created and restore the reputation of the Swiss banking community that has been called into question by so many.

Mr. Chairman. I do not propose here a discussion of specific amounts of money. Yet, I believe that each dollar recovered represents a little piece of dignity recaptured not just for the survivors who will benefit, but for all mankind who will have demonstrated that it remains morally unacceptable for anyone to profit from the ashes of man's greatest inhumanity to man.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, and G-d grant you the strength and determination to finish this historic mission of serving justice for the victims of the Holocaust, the survivors and their heirs.



Testimony of

Stuart E. Eizenstat Under Secretary for International Trade

AMERICAN JEWISH

US Department of State Special Envoy for Property Claims in Central and Eastern Europe

Before the
US Senate Committee on Banking,
Housing, and Urban Affairs

April 23, 1996



TESTIMONY OF UNDER SECRETARY STUART E. EIZENSTAT SENATE COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

April 23, 1996

I would like to thank the Committee for the opportunity to testify today as part of its inquiry on the "status of assets deposited by European Jews and others into Swiss banks in the years preceding the Holocaust." I appreciate the leadership of Chairman D'Amato in bringing this important issue to the attention of the public and the Congress. The locus of activity on the Swiss institutions matters is with U.S. Embassy Bern, but I am happy to have this opportunity to inform you of Administration activity.

I have been the Department of State's Special Envoy for Property Claims in Central and Eastern Europe for over a year. I will continue to lead this effort under the guidance of the Secretary of State even in my new position as the Under Secretary for International Trade at the Department of Commerce. As Special Envoy, my task has been to promote the non-discriminatory, transparent, and just resolution of claims arising out of properties confiscated during and after the Second World War by the Nazis and their sympathizers or by the Communist governments in post-war Central and Eastern Europe. While the issue of possible accounts in Swiss institutions belonging to Holocaust victims has not been the primary focus of his massive, rate office and other State Department officials have expended many hours on this matter.

First, I would like to take this opportunity to tell you about my work as Special Envoy generally, my observations, and some of the problems I have encountered in this process. It is important to do this to set a context for the Swiss institution issue. I will address the matter of assets in Swiss institutions and then offer suggestions for the next steps which might be taken for a successful resolution of some of these matters. The Swiss Bankers Association has identified \$ 32 million in dormant accounts opened by persons living outside Switzerland prior to May 8, 1945. While investigations continue, simultaneously we must strongly encourage efforts to identify the owners/ heirs and to expeditiously distribute remaining sums so that those who are elderly and poor can live their last years with dignity.

Since being named as Special Envoy last year, I have made "fact-finding" missions to eleven countries: Belarus, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, the Slovak Republic, and Ukraine. I also traveled to Germany to discuss Holocaust survivor compensation. With the strong support of our Embassies in each country, I have been able to meet with senior officials of the governments involved, including Presidents, Prime Ministers, Foreign Ministers and other High-ranking officials. In these trips, I have highlighted the significance that the U.S. government -- both the Executive and Legislative branches -- attaches to this painful and complex issue and have stressed the importance of

resolving property claims in ways that are just, fair and non-discriminatory.

We recognize that the governments in the region face financial constraints as they struggle to reform their economies. We do not seek to dictate solutions or negotiating partners. Rather, we urge that governments address the question of promoting restitution and compensation of communal and private properties in ways that meet the expectations of local communities and are credible to international organizations, such as the World Jewish Restitution Organization (WJRO), which act on behalf of or in partnership with local groups, and which are fair to U.S. citizens with claims for property confiscated during the Nazi and Communist eras. The efforts I have made as a representative of the United States are beginning to show results.

Property Claims

In general, property claims can be divided into three categories: communal (e.g. synagogues, schools, community centers, hospitals — some countries divide this category into "religious" and "secular" property); 2) private property with heirs; and 3) the most difficult, private property without heirs.

Our initial focus has been communal property — the most promising category in the near term. The hope is that success with communal property can be used to build momentum in all categories, even though private property claims are quite different and often more difficult. I believe that international organizations including the WJRO and local Jewish communities share this priority.

Let me review some of my general findings in the area of property claims.

Many of the countries I have visited have started the process of returning communal property. For example, five already have some legislation in place, and three others have governmental decrees. Of the three with neither legislation nor decrees, two have promulgated draft legislation. In Poland, which had had the largest Jewish community in pre-War Europe, there still is no law on communal property restitution. However, the Polish Council of Ministers recently agreed on proposed legislation that is pending in the Polish Parliament. Still, a host of issues -- each country with its own twist -- remains and has impeded not only the Jewish community, but other religious groups like the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church, from receiving their property. Hungary and Romania are developing promising frameworks for action but follow-through will be critical.

For instance, in the Czech Republic, the restitution of communal properties under the control of the State is proceeding pursuant to decree by the Prime Minister. However, the restitution of communal property controlled by municipalities has proceeded much more slowly. The municipalities have been most reluctant to return income-producing properties and these would help the Jewish community rebuild its institutions and assist survivors. In a number of

other countries, implementation of restitution decrees is left to local authorities with little central government oversight. Slovakia has an excellent restitution law but restitution is very slow due to bureaucratic delays.

Additionally, in some countries, e.g., Latvia, Lithuania, and Ukraine, the law or decree provides only for return of "religious" communal property. We have urged a liberal interpretation of the term, pointing to the difficulty of drawing a line between the "religious" and the "secular" in terms of Jewish communal property. Many properties had "mixed" uses. While Lithuania appears to have followed this in its recent return of several hospitals and schools, implementation will need continued monitoring.

A variety of other problems have arisen in the return of properties. For example, in some countries, when persons or communities have attempted to reclaim properties, they have been asked (sometimes required): 1) to compensate current "owners" for significant improvements; 2) to contribute to the relocation of persons displaced by the return; and/or 3) to allow current tenants to remain for a lengthy period of time at rent-controlled rates.

Thus, while this category shows the most movement, it is far from complete. Continued U.S. government attention is important. On a positive note, I would add that we now are not alone in our efforts. In December 1995, the European Parliament of the European Union passed a resolution calling for Central and Eastern European states to adopt appropriate legislation regarding the return of plundered property so that the property of Jewish communities and others may be returned. In addition, in a speech in January, Sir Leon Brittan, the Vice President of the European Commission, noted the importance of Central and Eastern European countries "tackling" property restitution issues in the context of minority rights issues as they progress toward membership in the European Union.

Regarding private property, the most common problem is inclusion of citizenship and sometimes residency requirements in legislation/decrees. Such requirements exist -- or are contemplated -- in one form or another in many countries I have visited (e.g., the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Romania, and the Slovak Republic). Depending on the country's citizenship laws and whether claims by non-resident dual citizens are allowed, the citizenship requirement poses huge hurdles for claimants. Claimants who emigrated to the West and Israel, including American citizens who owned property themselves or whose relatives had property confiscated by either the Nazis or the Communists, have encountered great difficulties. Even where these requirements do not exist, there have been complications. For example, in Estonia and Latvia, foreigners cannot own land, but can receive title to residences. While these laws may change, this will take time.

Outreach Efforts to International Organizations and Local Communities

Working with local and international communities has been another important component of this initiative. Local Jewish communities and international Jewish organizations often have somewhat differing approaches. We believe that any settlements made must meet the expectations of local Jewish communities, be credible to international Jewish organizations acting on their behalf or in partnership with local communities, and meet the needs of other claimants. International organizations can offer small local communities support in identifying property to be claimed and the maintenance of restituted property. International organizations also are important in that they represent the larger Jewish community's interest in resolving these difficult issues. Organizations which have been helpful in this regard include the WJRO through, for example, its assistance in identifying properties to be claimed and the Joint Distribution Committee and the Jewish Agency in assistance in social and educational services.

At the same time, local Jewish communities have a deep, historical understanding of their communities and their countries and wish to rebuild their lives and to provide a future for their families. In my discussions with all parties, I have emphasized the advantages -- and the need -- for cooperation between the local and international communities and will continue to seek to facilitate such cooperation. Divisions only complicate the restitution effort and make it difficult for governments to place their trust in the process.

Assets in Swiss Institutions

Turning to possible Holocaust-era assets in Swiss institutions, to the extent such assets exist, they could prove to be a source of assistance for an aging, destitute population in Central and Eastern Europe and perhaps their heirs. These survivors have been largely uncompensated, unlike survivors in the West and in Israel, since the end of World War II. To provide a possible source of assistance for these persons, as well as to ensure that monies are returned to rightful owners, it is important that the U.S. government facilitate the development of just, transparent, and non-discriminatory processes for resolutions.

While the U.S. Embassy in Bern is the primary point of action on this issue, I have been involved in this matter since a conversation last summer with then Ambassador M. Larry Lawrence. In several follow-up conversations with Embassy Bern by me and my staff in the U.S. Mission to the European Union, officials have told me about their efforts to urge openness and transparency in the review of dormant Holocaust-era accounts. I also have been in regular contact with Edgar Bronfman of the World Jewish Congress (WJC) and his top officials Israel Singer and Elan Steinberg, who have been the driving force behind this process.

A number of steps have been taken recently by the State Department and other interested organizations. First, after the February 7 release by the Swiss Bankers Association (SBA) of its survey results, Embassy Bern Charge d'Affaires, Michael C. Polt, met with Heinrich Schneider

and Andreas Hubschmid, the Deputy Secretary General and the First Secretary in Charge of U.S. Relations of the SBA, respectively. Charge Polt urged the SBA to create an open and transparent process to expeditiously complete the researching of remaining accounts. Charge Polt had also expressed special concern about the fee (300 Swiss Francs-- more than \$ 250 USD) charged for account searches, which SBA defended as necessary to distinguish inappropriate requests and significantly lower than the 2000 Swiss Francs (\$ 1600) that a bank can charge. Charge Polt indicated that Embassy Bern would continue to follow the issue with vigor.

Embassy Bern reported SBA's defense of its findings of a total of 38.7 million Swiss Francs or \$ 32 million (value calculated based on last date of activity in account) in dormant accounts opened by persons living outside Switzerland prior to May 8, 1945. SBA representatives stated that Switzerland was not nearly the important financial center prior to World War II that it is now. The SBA also pointed to earlier efforts undertaken to identify Holocaust victim accounts, including the return between 1945 and 1952 of 16 million Swiss Francs or \$ 4 million (current value) to persons from German or German-occupied areas and, following a 1962 Federal Decree, the return of an additional 9.5 million Swiss Francs or \$ 2 million (the 1962 value) to owners/heirs or -- where none existed -- to Jewish organizations.

SBA officials also strongly defended the survey's integrity to Embassy Bern representatives. They noted the independence of the Ombudsman's Office that studied the dormant accounts and the completeness of the survey — nearly all member banks in existence in 1945 responded.

Second, senior State Department officials met with Messrs. Schneider and Hubschmid of the SBA, and on several occasions with Swiss Embassy officials in Washington, to stress the need for transparency.

Third, in response to inquiries from the WJC, the Swiss Parliament's Legal Committee has become involved. The Committee has consulted the SBA, the WJC, and the Swiss Federation of Jewish Communities. After consultations, the "Unclaimed Assets" working group of the Legal Committee recommended dividing consideration of individual claims from the more general issues raised by unclaimed assets. With regard to individual claims, the Committee noted that the SBA Ombudsman's Office, in concert with Jewish organizations, would have a private firm oversee its research activities. The Committee concluded that this arrangement would adequately safeguard the interests of individual claimants. The Committee stated, however, that it would revisit the activities of the Ombudsman's Office at a future date.

With respect to the more general issue of unclaimed assets, the Committee recommended a closer examination of what has happened to assets deposited between 1933 and 1945 that remain ownerless, including the effectiveness of the 1962 Federal Decree on the treatment in Switzerland of assets belonging to foreigners or stateless persons persecuted on racial, religious, or political grounds. It also pointed to a need to clarify what constitutes appropriate action with regard to such assets. A meeting has been tentatively scheduled for May 2 between Charge Polt

and the Chairperson of the Parliamentary group in charge of the working group to discuss the issue further.

Fourth, more recently, Embassy Bern reported that some of the misunderstanding regarding unclaimed assets from the World War II era may emanate from differing uses of the term, "Swiss bank." For example, recent press reports pointed to documents allegedly evidencing deposits of some \$ 2.4 million by Romanian Jews in the Geneva-based Societe Generale de Surveillance (SGS). The SGS responded with a press release stating that it is not/was not a "bank." Therefore, it is not a SBA member or subject to SBA regulations. SGS officials subsequently told Embassy Bern that the Chief Executive Officer of the SGS during World War II was a prominent Jewish citizen who "may" have allowed Jews to maintain commercial accounts. Following the SGS revelations, Charge Polt met with Ambassador Anton Greber, who is in charge of the Swiss government's inter-agency group addressing the issue. Charge Polt pointed out that the SGS affair confirmed the need for a central process of investigation which would have a broad mandate to look into all possible remaining Holocaust victim assets, in whatever Swiss institutions might hold them.

Regardless of the outcome in the SGS case, this kind of difference in definition and interpretation underscores the need for overall coordination of a complete review of any possible Holocaust-era assets in Switzerland — whatever the holding entity. The goal of an unbiased accounting of the situation is shared, I believe, by the U.S. government and the Government of Switzerland. Embassy Bern continues to press the Government of Switzerland, most recently in an official demarche delivered on April 12, on the need for a thorough airing and resolution — once and for all — of this issue. We will continue our efforts with Swiss government representatives to encourage a fair and equitable resolution.

There was a positive step taken by the SBA on April 9 which I would like to note and for which I express our encouragement. In a letter to Israel Singer of the WJC, Mr. J.P. Chapuis, Secretary General of the SBA, and Mr. H. Schneider made several suggestions including the establishment of an independent commission to include distinguished members of the Jewish community and authorization for the commission to retain an independent accounting firm and other experts as necessary to issue a final report on assets held by Swiss banks. We hope these will be positive steps toward resolution of the matter before us. We encourage all interested parties to work together to make this commission function in an effective manner that will ensure a fair and just result.

I urge that we continue our initiative on three fronts -- government-to-government discussions, government facilitation with international and local organizations, and the rapid resolution of the issue of distribution of those accounts which have been discovered to date and then the prompt distribution of assets, while continuing the ongoing investigations.

On this final point, I believe that although the investigations should continue into property claims -- communal and private -- in Central and Eastern Europe, at this time the SBA

has identified approximately \$ 32 million in dormant accounts opened by persons living outside Switzerland prior to May 8, 1945. It would be only just to establish expeditiously an open process to identify the owners/ heirs of such accounts. As they are identified, distribution should be made immediately without waiting for identification of the entire universe of claims. In addition, after all claimants have been identified, if excess funds exist, we should consider distributing these funds to Holocaust survivors in Central and Eastern Europe. We understand that the SBA is already considering distribution of this excess to charity, one of which would be Holocaust survivors. Perhaps prototypes can be gleaned from earlier restitution systems. Each day, some elderly populations live in the most meager and heart-rendering manner, hoping to live and to die with dignity, without what the elderly often describe as "being a burden" to their families. While there is no need to cease any activity in investigating further possibilities, let us quickly and efficiently assist this vulnerable population lest our delay deny them their deserved dignity in a life already filled with suffering.

In closing, I would like to underscore that the United States government and this Administration will make every effort to ensure a full accounting and full transparency to be certain that all funds which can be traced to victims of the Holocaust or survivors of Nazi persecution are rightfully returned to their owners and that any excess funds where no claims are made are distributed in the fairest way possible to benefit those who suffered the most during World War II.

I look forward to working with this Committee toward achieving our shared goals and objectives.

UNANSWERED PRINCIPAL QUESTIONS

At the Senate hearings in Washington last week, a number of important issues concerning the identification of assets of Holocaust victims were raised and remained without an answer. The absence of a solution to these questions may to a large extent decreaste the importance of the planned measures to locate the accounts.

- * According to the agreement, an independent accounting office to investigate the procedure of the banks' reearch into Holocaust victims' accounts is to be set up. The problem is that the six great international audit chains act as auditos of the important Swiss banks. And also smaller chains count Swiss banks among their clients. Therefore it might well be that it will be impossible to find an expert and well-reputed accounting office that can deal with the issue. One possible solution would be to rely on one of the larger Israeli audit firms, whose members are indeed involved with the international offices but do not deal directly with Swiss banks.
- * Circumstancial evidence indicate the possibility that a majority of the accounts of Holocaust victims were closed by the Swiss banks in the 60s and the funds taken over by the banks, as Swiss legislation foresees in cases in which no contact with a client occurred for more than 20 years. The Bankers' Association admits that this theoretical possibility exists but states that this did not take place. It is difficult to check whether this is so; and if accounts were in fact closed, it will be almost impossible to prove the original extent of the assets.
- * Senator D'Amato, in the course of the hearings, referred to the fact that many Jews used Swiss representatives in order to open accounts. In such cases the accounts might yet be active, though they would be held in the name of that Swiss citizen. Swiss legislation does not recognize the existence of such representatives and stipulates that the holder of the account is its owner for all purposes. The accounts may thus remain in the hands of the representatives or their heirs and will never be identified.
- * An additional problem raised at the hearings and which remained without a reply is the question of valuables deposited in safe deposit boxes in Swiss banks. Such assets should remain in the safes until today, but the banks have not informed anything as to how they will if they will at all permit the identification of such safes.

A. J. Sherman

ARTHUR L. SMITH, Jr Hitler's Gold: The story of the Nazi war loot 174pp. Oxford: Berg. £19.50. 0854966013

Within the triumphant Wehrmacht formations that overran much of the Continent from September 1939 were specialist units poised to descend on the central banks in each country and confiscate all monetary gold in their vaults for the benefit of the expanding Reich. Aided by the swift pace of the Blitzkrieg, these units accomplished their mission with relative ease: the gold holdings of most central banks were known in banking circles before the war, and it was simply a matter of demanding access to central bank premises, verifying amounts, crating and shipping the gold to the Reichsbank in Berlin. Once in the hands of the Reichsbank and its expert staff, the confiscated gold was meticulously accounted for, sometimes resmelted to obscure its origins, and then transferred to such neutral nations as Sweden, Spain, Portugal, Turkey and above all Switzerland, for purchases vital to prosecution of the war. Gold ingots and coins looted fom the central banks of occupied Europe constituted indeed one of the Reich's most potent weapons, a liquid resource readily transmutable into scarce commodities, manufactured goods and other matériel for equipping the formidable German war machine.

The scale of these operations was for that time gigantic: some \$625 million in gold was stolen in the course of the war, approximately \$330 million of which was recovered, frequently in dramatic circumstances, by the Allied forces at the end of hostilities. The balance, some \$295 million, flowed into the neutral countries, again principally Switzerland, which despite increasing pressure from the Allies continued to pursue profitable commercial ties with Nazi Germany, long after it

became evident that the threat of invasion from an increasingly desperate Wehrmacht was no longer credible. Gold continued to play an important role in international diplomacy after the war as well: the initial impulse to punish Switzerland and other neutrals for their lucrative traffic in looted assets receded in the face of cold-war Realpolitik; the Tripartite Commission for the Restitution of Monetary Gold, established by Great Britain, the United States and France, relatively soon restored to West European central banks what could be recovered of their lost reserves. But the claims of regimes under Soviet domination further east were sturdily resisted, and have not to this day been fully settled. The Tripartite Commission, a 1945 relic still solidly frozen in the postures and preoccupations of the cold war, goes on with its obscure tasks in Brussels; and with the hedgehog instincts of all such durable bureaucracies refused the author of Hitler's Gold access to its records, despite the resourceful two-year campaign he mounted and has documented with the care evident throughout his monograph.

Although Arthur L. Smith, Jr, writes with sober restraint, the drama of his story emerges from the Reichsbank and other documents he has studied: it is not an edifying tale, recording as it does an unbroken, mutually profitable relationship throughout the war between the Reichsbank and leading Swiss bankers; deft dealing by the French, who saved their own gold reserves by obligingly handing over to the Germans Belgian and Polish gold confided to the Banque de France for safekeeping; Portugal's deliberate use of obviously resmelted stolen Dutch and Belgian gold; and enough unappealing characters and general chicanery to enliven several thrillers.

Without editorial comment, Professor Smith also records the stream of deliveries by the SS to the Reichsbank, amounting to some \$14.5 million in all, of gold and silver coins, jewellery, dental gold, spectacles and banknotes, in neat packets and larger crates, some bearing the identification marks "Lublin" and

"Auschwitz". This treasure too was unpacked, sorted, carefully entered in the Reichsbank ledgers by a staff of twenty-five to thirty individuals, who "were advised not to inquire into the source" of the loot, and for the most part escaped any further inquiry after the war. We are told as well how the Bank for International Settlements in Basle, a unique central bankers' central bank, originally established to help clear First World War reparations and other debts, worked closely with the Reichsbank, swiftly complying when asked a few days after the German occupation of Prague to transfer Czech gold on its books to the Reichsbank account; but refusing to honour an analogous order by the central banks of Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia to transfer their assets to the Soviet Russian State Bank, on the grounds that the order had been issued under duress. Indeed, the Bank for International Settlements, whose American President was able, in 1942, with the help of the German and Italian authorities, to travel through occupied Europe to home leave in New York and back to Basle, made only feeble efforts to trace the origins of the gold that poured into its coffers throughout the war; and even after the war maintained that the burden of proof was on the Allies to identify gold as looted before any negotiations could be initiated for its return.

The story is not quite ended: some gold that disappeared in the last chaotic days of the Reich is still missing; the Tripartite Commission has yet to return all its gold holdings to Poland, Czechoslovakia and Albania; Soviet sources may now yield valuable information; a number of German and Swiss officials who could unfold many tales resolutely maintain silence despite the advancing years. Professor Smith has rescued an instructive chapter of history from comparative obscurity, or worse, the cinematic school of gold-bug sensationalists: he has written a serious, carefully documented work, which at least until the Tripartite Commission finally opens its archives will remain definitive for most of the period 1938 to 1948.

THE MONEY TRAIL JEFFREY GOLDBERG Stolen Assets

Are Swiss banks holding on to money belonging to Holocaust victims? Edgar Bronfman Sr. and Alfonse D'Amato aim to find out.

RETA BEER RENTS AN APARTMENT IN JACKson Heights, Queens, for \$629 a month, and she works, even at her advanced age-she refuses to say exactly how advanced—as a guide for "VIP tourists" visiting New York City. She has very little money, though she began her life in privilege as the daughter of a Romanian-Jewish textile manufacturer who sent her to boarding school in Switzerland. He also sent his money to Switzerland, which, it turns out, was not a good idea.

Over lunch at El Quijote, the musty Chelsea Hotel restaurant where she brings her tour groups, Beer tells what happened to her father's money.

"As children, we were told by my father over and over again, 'Don't worry, you're provided for in Switzerland,' "she says. Playing it safe, Beer's father kept very little money in Romania, squirreling most of it away into a numbered Swiss bank account. In 1939, he became ill and, with his family, went to Budapest for treatment. He died there and the family was stranded; the war had broken out, and the Nazi-allied government in Romania had seized their property. "We had no money, and my father never

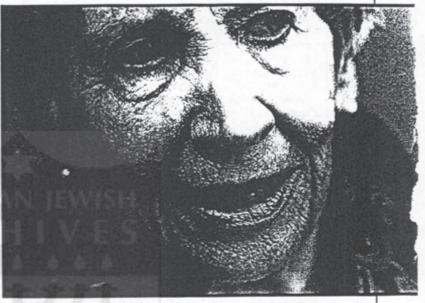
told my mother the number of the account in Switzerland. We lost the factory, everything."

She pauses for a moment to greet a waiter. "This is Adolfo," she says. "He's my favorite, but he has to change his name. It reminds me of you-know-who."

She returns to her story. The family, she says, moved to another part of Romania and lived out the war there. She came to America in 1951, never forgetting her father's invocation of the family's secret Swiss fortune. Finally, in the early sixties, she and her mother visited Switzerland, where, she says, "we went from bank to bank. But we didn't have the number of the account. We could prove that I was my father's daughter, but they would not say if my father had accounts with them. We were hitting up against a wall."

Of course, there is no way of knowing for sure, in the absence of corroborating documentation, if Beer's story is true, and in that fact lies the Swiss advantage. It is the principal irony of her story that the legendary Swiss secrecy practices, such as the assigning of numbers to accounts in lieu of names, began in the thirties as a concession to the banks' Jewish customers, who were looking to protect their assets from the Germans.

In any other country, a person in Beer's situation-in which a relative died in extraordinary circumstances-would, after offering proof of her own identity, be able to track down and recover her family's assets. But the Swiss, many believe, have been deliberately unforthcoming. Holocaust survivors and heirs of the dead who have taken on the Swiss banks see not just bureaucracy in their denials but greed. What else could explain, they say, the fact that of the 7,000 claims filed with Swiss banks immediately after World War II by relatives of



Greta Beer of Jackson Heights, Queens: "As children we were told by my father over and over again, 'Don't worry, you're provided for in Switzerland.' "

murdered depositors, only 200 were settled?

It is sometimes forgotten that in addition to being a genocide unprecedented in scope and precision, the Holocaust was also the world's greatest robbery. Billions in Jewish wealth were stolen outright by the Germans and their allies, and most of that wealth was never recovered. Today, Jewish organizations and individuals, partly spurred by the collapse of the Soviet bloc, are engaged in a full-scale effort to recover stolen buildings and possessions. And the Swiss are feeling the heat.

They are also learning that it might have been wiser to confront the issue a long time ago. Where they once found themselves entreated by a group of anonymous Jews with little or no documentation, the Swiss are now, half a century later, facing an unlikely pair of power brokers-Edgar Bronfman Sr. and Alfonse D'Amato, who seem intent on making the vaunted Swiss banking system squirm.

They might be succeeding. This week, Senator D'Amato is scheduled to hold Banking Committee hearings on the Swiss question, and even before the hearings begin he is talking about sanctions.

We can do this the easy way, or we can do it the very hard way," says D'Amato, who has a sharp eye for sitting ducks. "If we get the proper response, we'll never get into the kind of sanctions we could put into effect . . . but all the sanctions are at our disposal."

Bronfman, the Seagram's billionaire and president of the World Jewish Congress, was asked by the late Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin last September to represent the Jewish people in their claims against the Swiss banks, and he has been doing so with vigor. His name tends to open doors, especially in countries whose leaders are predisposed to believing that Jews wield extraordinary influence in world financial affairs.

Bronfman is ordinarily a discreet, behind-the-scenes player, but he couldn't contain his anger at the Swiss Bankers

"They've lied to me so directly and so often on this that I've had enough," Bronfman told New York. "I'm not going to let them off the hook. They've given us the usual kind of stonewalling. First, they said you had to have a death certificate. Someone with us screamed at them, 'Who should sign it? Hitler?' . . . This is a question of justice. You don't profit off the Holocaust."

Bronfman and D'Amato were unimpressed with the announcement in February by the Swiss Bankers Association that a check of bank records had turned up \$32 million in dormant accounts thought to have belonged to Jews who died in the Holocaust, money they apparently hoped to use to settle claims. The Swiss announcement did not specify whether that figure included 60 years of interest or not, and they still have not clarified the matter for the World Jewish Congress, according to Bronfman. And in any case, the number sounds extremely low. Bronfman thinks the banks may well hold billions of dollars in deposits made directly by Jews and in deposits of stolen Jewish money made by Nazis. Newly declassified American-intelligence documents from Operation Safehaven—a U.S. effort to track Nazi assets conducted at the war's endtend to support the view that more money is at stake than the Swiss are letting on. These documents, many of them still being analyzed at the National Archives, are the ammunition D'Amato says he will use against the Swiss.

One such Safehaven document contains a list of 182 accounts, "owned principally by Jewish persons," held in a single Swiss financial institution that in 1996 dollars would be worth about \$29 million, according to the WJC. The disposition of these accounts is unknown. It is one of the questions the WJC wants answered by the Swiss, who don't appear eager to take on their new adversary.

Bronfman was left with the distinct impression after a sitdown with Swiss-bank negotiators last fall that they were trying to buy off his group.

"I think they were trying to bribe us with this \$32 million," says Bronfman. "They were absolutely shocked when I said we weren't interested in the money but in the process.'

A spokesman for the Swiss Bankers Association could not be reached for comment, and a lawyer for the group, Marc Cohen, a special counsel at the impeccably connected Washington firm of Wilmer, Cutler and Pickering, declined to be interviewed. Oscar Knapp, the economics minister at the Swiss Embassy in Washington, says that his government is eager to learn just how much Jewish money is hidden away in his country's banks, but he called Bronfman's estimate of billions "very exaggerated," even accounting for accrued interest: He suggested that the Swiss government sees a public-relations disaster brewing in the bank imbroglio, however, and wants to see the matter settled. "There is no winning this case for the Swiss banks," he concedes.

The Bankers Association seems to be acquiring an understanding of the importance of appearances, and late last week, just a few days before the committee hearing was set to begin,

the association called for a new meeting with Bronfman and announced its intention to form an independent investigation panel-"including members of the Jewish community"-to scour Swiss banking records. "We and our members are deeply concerned that this important issue be approached and concluded in a sensitive, equitable, open, accurate, and professional manner," the association's letter to the WJC reads.

But Bronfman was unmoved by the letter, as was D'Amato. "I'm very suspicious of this group," Bronfman said. "I want this process to be verified at every step along the way." Said D'Amato: "I'm not going to say all of a sudden that I'm going

to take their good word on it."

The suspicion of Swiss maneuverings in this case comes against the backdrop of a series of revelations that strongly suggest that Switzerland was never the bastion of neutrality in

World War II it appeared to be.

The whole question of Jewish assets held by Swiss banks was revived in a book published by a Swiss Jewish historian last year entitled Switzerland and the Jews 1933-1945, and interest in the issue has been piqued further by the stack of Operation Safehaven reports. The 50-year-old documents, many now in the hands of D'Amato's Banking Committee, paint a picture of possible Swiss complicity with the Nazis, including, WJC officials suspect, the knowing hoarding of looted wealth in the waning days of the war.

One such Safehaven document, dated April 21, 1945, describes the activities of mysterious truck convoys guarded by S.S. troops that moved only at night through Austria on the way to Switzerland. An informant reported that the trucks were "believed to be carrying food stuffs, looted property,

machinery and the like."

Another document places an adviser to Hermann Göring in Switzerland in the last days of the war. The year before, the document states, the adviser "carried out an important financial transaction for [the S.S.]. This concerned the conversion of a large amount of French francs into Swiss francs and was of sufficient importance temporarily to affect the rate of ex-



Edgar Bronfman Sc., behind-thescenes mogul, takes on the Swiss.

"First they said

you had to bave a death certificate." said Bronfman. "Someone with us screamed, 'Who should sign it, Hitler?"

change."

Yet another wartime document is entitled "Objectionable Activities of Two Leading Swiss Banks During 1944," one of them being Credit Suisse. "Credit Suisse, Zurich, is the most frequent violator of the Allied Code of Conduct concerning Swiss banks. ... The following intercepts ... show that Credit Suisse per-

formed activities on behalf of the Nazis."

To what extent did Swiss banks knowingly serve as depositories for looted wealth? The Senate hearings would be the most searching attempt yet to answer that question. For the World Jewish Congress, however, the amount of money that may be involved is less important than the principle underlying the restitution campaign.

'Money is money, and I'm never going to deny that money is important, but this is a moral outrage," Bronfman says. These people think they can get rich off victims of the Holo-

caust, and that's disgusting."

For Greta Beer in Jackson Heights-who needs to pay the rent-principle is at stake, too.

"My father put his money in Switzerland because it was a bastion, it was a citadel, it was a 'neutral' country," she says. "This was my father's money."

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM:

American Legation, Bern

TO: .

Secretary of State, Washington

JUN 6 1949

DATED:

May 31, 1945 (Rec'd 5:36 p.m., June 1)

NUMBER:

2969

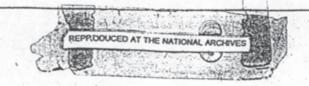
SECRET

Your circular cable dated April 7 regarding estimate of German assets has been given careful attention by the Legation. SAFEHAVEN. At the present time it is impossible, as the Department will appreciate, to make more than a refined guess with respect to the value of these assets for a number of reasons including:

(1) The traditional stock in trade of Swiss Bankers, Notaries. Realtors, Insurance Companies, attorneys, etc. is the concealment of assets.

- (2) Apparently the Government of Switzerland itself has no adequate record or appraisals, forms, values or locations of the total foreign assets located here or entrusted by foreigners to its nationals.
- of German assets which the Government of Switzerland pleaged to undertake has not been initiated as yet and full disclosure to Swiss authorities may be prevented by the concealment tradition.



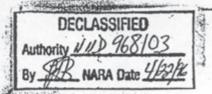


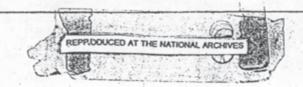
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List individuals and firms do not hold all the data necessary for SAFEHAVEN operations, including estimates of assets, as the latter were not imperative Proclaimed List work and, with a very limited Proclaimed List staff were not feasible to procure. A wider and more prompt coverage of possible leads and contacts has been precluded by the present shortage of SAFEHAVEN staff. The British some years ago destroyed for security reasons their then existing basic files and little data of use for this estimate is possessed by the French here.

In compliance with the request by the Department to furnish an estimate, the following figures however tentative and possibly not closely approximative are offered by the Legation although it is obviously limited by the circumstances enumerated above.

It is indicated by a review of files and published sources that German participation capital in 250 Swiss business enterprises totals 472,720,000 Swiss francs plus 11 with a capital of 19,487,000 reichsmarks plus one with a capital of 500,000 escudos and one with a capital of 5,000,000 goldmarks. There is no available information on capital of 95 other enterprises in which the Germans participate.





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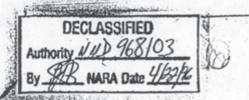
The distribution of German participation in the above cited 250 companies classified by character enterprises is as follows in millions of Swiss francs: manufacture textiles and their products 6; manufacture transportation equipment 6; insurance companies 15; wholesale retail 67; banks 9; manufacture chemicals and Allied products 15; holding and finance companies 330; manufacture machinery not including transportation equipment 11; 7 other categories each under 3 total 12.

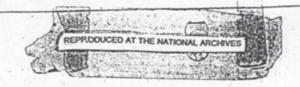
Since it is based on capital instead of net worth and because of complete luck of data on 95 enterprises, the above estimate of 472,720,000 Swiss francs is probably low by at least 250 to 300 million Swiss francs.

Including Gyro account, Reichsbank's balances in Swiss banks at mid-May amounted to about 50 million Swiss francs.

The property found at Consulates, Legation and other German organizations which have been closed may total 15 million Swiss francs.

(cash socurities) in Swiss banks in Switzerland at 500 million Swiss francs but they may range from 400 million to 700 million Swiss francs. It is impossible to obtain a more accurate estimate because of long established policy of bank secrecy. German share of Swiss blocked dollar accounts in USA is not included in this estimate of German private deposits in Switzerland. Out of total 5 billion Swiss francs blocked in



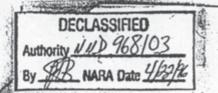


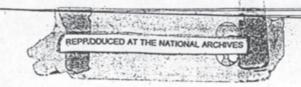
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the USA, we estimate the German share to be 100 million. Swiss francs plus or minus 50 million. The basis for these figures is an estimate by Swiss banker who identifies 25 million Swiss francs as German and an additional 500 million Swiss francs as property of foreign nationals including Germans permanently residing in Switzerland but he states he is not able to estimate how much of the latter is German.

Substantial amounts of securities, currencies, jewelry, gold, other precious motels and other valuables exclusive of works of art may be contained in banks safe deposit boxes registered in names of Germans or lawyers, notaries or other Swiss trustees. Furthermore, it is probable that similar properties are included in private safes. It is estimated that the total value of these assets in private possession and banks safe deposit boxes may total 500 million Swiss francs but may range from 400 million to 700 million Swiss francs. It is stated by the bankers that they are not able to do anything more than make a general estimate of these German properties in private possession and safe deposit boxes.

Experts from the British side refuse to make a guess of the total value of German owned and looted art objects but have strong indications of 53 paintings, valued at 2,200,000 francs, which are definitely looted; other sources indicate





-5-

the value of 10 other looted pictures as being 75,000 francs. Artists and titles of 58 more paintings ostensibly loot have been reported but have not been authenticated. The presence of several hundreds of other looted paintings is indicated by various reports. On the basis of the foregoing and taking into consideration other possible looted works of art apart from paintings plus those works of art which the Germans have long owned, the total value of these assets is estimated at 150 million Swiss francs but may range from 125 million to 200 million Swiss francs. German investments in real estate are estimated at 250 million Swiss francs but may range from 100 million to 350 million Swiss francs. The German interests in estates and trusts are estimated at 50 million Swiss francs but may range from 10 million to 70 million. German investments insurance policies and annuities are estimated at 200 million Swiss francs but may range from 50 million to 250 million. The files of the Legation do not contain adequate value information on these three categories and contain no basis on which to estimate them. The figures are included only because it is felt by informed persons that these items represent substantial amounts.

Based on scattered reports of friendly transit agents, Cerman merchandise transit and warehouse are estimated at 200 million Swiss francs but may range from 100 million to 250 million. The bulk is probably in listed enterprises and

warehouses

-6-

warehouses of the Swiss Covernment on which no reports are available to us as yet.

SAFEHAVEN report 18 gives patents registered in names of German nationals from 1931 to 1943. It is impossible to assess in monotary terms the value of patents and trademarks. Obviously primary significance is in terms of control potentialities to which we are giving special attention.

The foregoing figures give possible range of total of German Swiss assets in Switzerland of/1770 million Swiss francs to 3500 million with the model estimate about 2490 million Swiss francs. It is suggested that the figures given above be treated as confidential. Further SAFEHAVEN work would obviously be impeded by any public release at this time of the estimates given above.

ILARRISON!

DC/L: IDB: MEM

6/4/45

July 8, 1993 19 Tammuz 5753

Dr. Israel Singer
World Jewish Congress
501 Madison Avenue, 17th floor
New York, NY 10022

Dear Israel:

I'm sorry for the delay in getting back to you regarding the Abayudaya group and David Levine's plea in their behalf. Between my travels and finding time to discuss this matter with the proper staff members, who also travel constantly, it took some doing to discuss this situation.

This is an area of concern which is beyond our financial frame. Even the request for a rabbinical student is not as simple as it appears.

You ought to know that one of our staff members is familiar with the situation in Uganda. The bottom line is we do not believe this endeavor is one we should be pursue.

Sorry for the negative response. I am sure you understand.

With warm regards from house to house, I am

Sincerely,

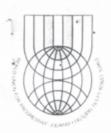
Alexander M. Schindler

Dru Greenwood

Commission on Reform Jewish Outreach

J'm incrosing Cliff's response to The kbayudaya community correspondence. His assessment seems on target to me.

Shore on with sorting believed to be welled for our be welled for our feet on



World Union For Progressive Judaism

האיגוד העולמי ליהדות מתקדמת

838 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10021 • (212) 249-0100 / 13 King David Street, Jerusalem, Israel 94101 • 2-203-452 FAX # (212) 517-3940 FAX # 2-203-446

June 21, 1993

FROM: Rabbi Clifford M. Kulwin

TO: Dru Greenwood

Thank you for the correspondence regarding the Abayudaya community. It is a situation with which I am somewhat familiar.

It will probably come as no surprise to you that my own opinion is that the proper course of action is benign neglect. This has nothing to do with any movement political matters (e.g. turf, ishut, etc.) but is based simply on what I consider the merits (or lack thereof) of the case. I might also add that I do not doubt Mr. Levine's account.

Engaging in an effort such as Mr. Levine requests involves assumption of a very large responsibility. It is not fair to "tease" a group of this nature without being prepared to marshall the resources necessary to follow the effort all the way through. What may start with a three month visit by a rabbinical student could ultimately reach its logical fruition with an airlift to Israel. Who will be prepared to sponsor all of this? If a commitment cannot be made to go all the way, is it just even to begin?

Further, it is impossible to judge what the impact of more formal Jewish contact will have on their living situation. How will tribes and other groups around them react? What will the government have to say? One may argue that their spiritual fulfillment will be enhanced but, even if they say that is what they want, is that proper at the expense of their general welfare? (And how does one evaluate such matters reliably?) Similarly, we Jews are essentially Western and middle class. If this group is to be brought into the Jewish people, the cultural conflicts to overcome will be awesome. Again, who will be responsible?

There are also political considerations within the Jewish world. Would such an effort, coming from the Reform movement, have an impact upon the movement in Israel? Or anywhere else in the world? I can easily imagine ways in which news of a Reform effort of this nature could be used against us in Russia.

Finally, there is an awkward cast to the allocation resources in such a direction when there are so many truly needy Jews already

Dru Greenwood June 21, 1993 Page Two

situated within the mainstream of the Jewish community. Are we entirely comfortable with the notion that funds which go to Uganda could have been used in Russia to create another religious school or establish another congregation, and that in a place which is clearly working its way toward communal self-sufficiency in the world's third largest Jewish community?

Dru, I could flesh all of this out a good deal but I hope have made my point clearly. I do not think this is an endeavor worth pursuing. If you wish I will be happy to discuss this matter further. For now, please let me know if the UAHC leadership continues its deliberation of the matter.

Sincerely,



May 4, 1993

FROM:

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler

TO:

Dru Greenwood

COPY:

The enclosed intrigues me. Is there anything you think can be done for these people to bring them officially into the Jewish fold? If you have any thoughts, by all means get in touch with me.

Jan Jah

April 13, 1993

World Jewish Congress
International Department of Information
501 Madison Avenue
17th Floor
New York, NY 10022

APO 11 9 1993

Dear Sir/Madam:

My name is David Levine. I am a Peace Corps volunteer teaching civil engineering at a technical college outside of Mbale, Uganda. A few months ago I was introduced to a community of African Jews known as the Abayudaya. An American college student from Brown University named Matthew Meyer recently wrote to you describing his encounter with the Abayudaya while spending the fall semester studying in neighboring Kenya. I too have had the great personal satisfaction of becoming friends with these people, to have attended Shabbat services with them, and to be welcomed into their homes with warm hospitality.

Shortly after I was introduced to the Abayudaya, I was shown photos of Matt's visit along with the historical account of the community (written by Israeli Ambassador to Kenya, Mr. Arye Oded and sent to you by Matt) and copies of news articles written about the community from Canadian and British Jewish news journals. Later, the community elders addressed me in their native Luganda language relating the story of how Samei Kakungulu the (founder of the Jewish community some 75 years ago) had fallen out with Christianity when he was a tribal chieftan assisting the British in pacifying other peoples and regions of the country. His rejection of the Christian Bible led him to study the Old Testament and eventually to observe Jewish customs and holidays. Kakungulu's meetings with other Jews travelling through Uganda enabled him to learn more of Jewish rituals than he might otherwise have learned on his own. Although this story is well documented in Mr. Oded's account, to hear this story proudly told to me by the community elders (many of whom fondly remember Kakungulu from the days of British colonial rule) was truly an interesting history lesson. Perhaps it is more interesting when one considers the fact that to this day Ugandans of all tribes and of all ages are aware and acknowledge Kakungulu's significant political accomplishments even if they don't realize that he abandoned Christianity for Judaism.

As I came to know the community better, I came to understand the Abayudaya's incredible eagerness to practice their faith and to learn more of Judaism. Yet, it is true that their desire to be better Jews is hampered in that they themselves are aware that the outside Jewish world does not recognize them as being Jewish as no one from the community has ever been formally converted. In spite of this and their isolation from the rest of the

Jewish world, they continue to observe the Sabbath on Saturday, to observe Jewish holidays, to celebrate Bar and Bat Mitzvot, to circumcise their young, to give Jewish biblical names to their children, to sing songs in Hebrew, and strive to learn more of Judaism. The commitment to Judaism that they display is a remarkable example of the power of human perseverance and faith.

I am writing to your organization at this time to urge you to investigate ways of furthering the Abayudaya's Jewish education perhaps eventually leading to full conversion of the community. From your distant office back in the states you may question their commitment, desire and maybe their motivation. I do not. I have attended Shabbat services with them before and after long walks to and from their synagogue under the hot equatorial sun. I have been welcomed into their mud hut homes and offered much more hospitality than I have ever given. I have had long conversations with them about Judaism, America, Israel, Uganda, and dozens of other topics. Most importantly, I have been welcomed into their lives simply because I am a fellow Jew and they so desperately want to make contact with other Jews. Admittedly, I haven't been much of a practicing Jew over the last several years and haven't been able to teach them much of Judaism. In fact, a number of the community members have a knowledge of prayer, customs, and history that surpasses my own. These people are poor by our standards and will always be so. Judaism is their source of strength that enables them to continue their lives in happiness inspite of their isolation and the persecution and abuse that they've previously endured.

The Abayudaya have struggled to raise funds for the completion of their partially finished brick synagogue. They have struggled to learn more of Judaism and to be united with the worldwide Jewish community. I have pledged to help them achieve these goals and to assist Matthew Meyer in his efforts. I request that the World Jewish Congress consider the possibility of sending a rabbi (perhaps a recently graduated rabbinical student) to live amongst the Abayudaya, to educate and to formally convert them. Alternatively, there is a promising young man of the community who practices Judaism with zeal and already knows a fair amount of Hebrew (not an easy thing to learn here in the middle of Africa) and would make a fine rabbi himself. Sending him to rabbinical school would be an option. I hope that you will be able to offer some form of assistance to the Abayudaya. I'm certain that anything you can do will be received with great joy and appreciation. If you have any questions or suggestions please feel free to contact Matthew Meyer at:

Box 5909 Brown University Providence, RI 02912 (until early May) 2201 Gilpin Avenue Wilmington, Delaware 19806 phone #: (302)652-6663 (after early May) Ji can be reached at:

Uganda Technical College-Elgon P.O. Box 940 Mbale, Uganda East Africa (until late July)

Your attention to this matter will be most greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

David Levine

U.S. Peace Corps Volunteer

AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

Hose Fr

May 4, 1993 13 Iyar 5753

Dr. Israel Singer World Jewish Congress 501 Madison Avenue 17th Floor New York, NY 10022

Dear Israel: AMERICAN IEWISH

Thank you for sending me David Levine's letter concerning the Abayudaya group in Uganda. I will send it around to some of our Outreach and other pertinent departments to see whether something can be done.

If so, I will get in touch with you, or perhaps David Levine directly.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

Copies of letter sent to:

Douid Relin

Dru Greenwood paid. & Oleff

melssin merians

Rabbi Eric Yappie

Rabbi Eric Yappie

Rabbi Reinard Hirsch

with covering memo attached

MEMORANDUM

May 4, 1993

FROM:

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler

TO:

COPY:

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April 13, 1993

World Jewish Congress
International Department of Information
501 Madison Avenue
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New York, NY 10022

APP 0 0 1993

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Your attention to this matter will be most greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

David Levine

U.S. Peace Corps Volunteer

AMERICAN JEWISH A R C H I V E S



501 MADISON AVENUE . NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022

February 15, 1991

Chairman

EVELYN SOMMER

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

Honorary Chairmen
RABBI JOSEPH KARASICK
JACOB KATZMAN
FRIEDA LEWIS
RABBI ARTHUR SCHNEIER
JACQUES TORCZYNER

Dear Alex,

Co-Chairmen, Executive Committee
CHARLOTTE JACOBSON
MOSHE KAGAN

We've just returned from the WJC Executive meeting in Jerusalem and your February 13 letter to Edgar just crossed my desk.

Vice Chairman, Executive Committee RABBI FABIAN SCHONFELD Edgar is out of New York right now, so until he gets back I hope you don't mind if I address the substance of your letter since it deals with the American Section by and large.

Treasurer LEON LEVY

EON LEVY

Secretary

RABBI MARC SCHNEIER

I'm sometimes accused of being too straightforward for my own good, but at the risk of continuing in that manner, you'll forgive me if I say that I think you are being misinformed by someone. The policy questions you appropriately raised were formally taken up in consultations of the American Section.

Executive Members
RABBI LOUIS BERNSTEIN
SAM BLOCH
JACOB DAVIDSON
RABBI ALFRED GOTTSCHALK
HAROLD OSTROFF

Let me begin with the second item in your letter -- Soviet Jewish emigration to Germany. On December 27 Ben Meed, the President of the World Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors, wrote a letter to Edgar as WJC President on this subject and asked for action (I've attached this now famous letter). Whether one agrees or disagrees with the letter, it was carefully worded so that it is unfair to suggest that it "condemns those Soviet Jews who chose to live in Germany." It asks the WJC to oppose a policy of encouraging mass settlement of Soviet Jews in Germany.

Executive Director
ELAN STEINBERG

The letter was considered by the regional branches of the WJC. The Executive Committee of the American Section met on January 2 where the letter was taken up. The Executive members at that meeting were: Rabbi Louis Bernstein, Jacob Krasner-Davidson, Charlotte Jacobson, Moshe Kagan, Jacob Katzman, Leon Levi, Rabbi Marc Schneier, Rabbi Fabian Schonfeld, Evelyn Sommer, Israel Singer, Elan Steinberg, Jacques Torczyner.

Member Organizations of the American Section:

AMERICAN GATHERING OF JEWISH HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS; AMERICAN JEWISH CONGRESS; AMERICAN JEWISH LEAGUE FOR ISRAEL; AMERICAN SEPHARDI FEDERATION; AMERICANS FOR PROGRESSIVE ISRAEL; AMIT WOMEN; ASSOCIATION OF REFORM ZIONISTS OF AMERICA; B'NAI ZION; CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS; EMUNAH WOMEN OF AMERICA; FEDERATION OF POLISH JEWS; FEDERATION OF RECONSTRUCTIONIST CONGREGATIONS AND HAVUROT; HADASSAH; HERUT ZIONISTS OF AMERICA; HIAS; INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF CHILDREN OF JEWISH HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS; JEWISH NATIONAL FUND; LABOR ZIONIST ALLIANCE; MERCAZ; NATIONAL COUNCIL OF YOUNG ISRAEL; NATIONAL FEDERATION OF TEMPLE SISTERHOODS; NORTH AMERICAN JEWISH STUDENTS' NETWORK; PIONEER WOMEN/NA'AMAT; POALE AGUDATH ISRAEL OF AMERICA; RABBINICAL ASSEMBLY; RELIGIOUS ZIONISTS OF AMERICA; UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS; UNION OF ORTHODOX JEWISH CONGREGATIONS OF AMERICA; UNITED SYNAGOGUE OF AMERICA; WIZO-USA; WOMEN'S LEAGUE FOR CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM; WORKMEN'S CIRCLE; WORLD FEDERATION OF HUNGARIAN JEWS, U.S.A. DIVISION; ZIONIST ORGANIZATION OF AMERICA

The meeting endorsed the letter as did separately the regional branches from Latin America, Asia-Pacific, and Israel. On the next day, January 3, the entire American Section was circularized by letter informing them of this decision (attached) and indeed at the general meeting of the American Section on January 28, endorsement of the letter was reaffirmed.

The New York Times wrote an article on the letter and correctly stated it was a letter sent to the WJC which had been endorsed by regional branches of the WJC. The article explicitly and correctly stated that the WJC as a body had not taken a position on the matter. In fact, our Jerusalem international Executive meeting of the last three days (which unfortunately you could not attend) reacting principally to the situation created by the Gulf War, did not take this or certain other important subjects up.

Turning not to your initial complaint about our position and press release on Vatican diplomatic recognition of Israel. Here let me react to your first sentence by saying "fair / Our position, both that of the American Section and the WJC internationally, is that which we supported and is the position of IJCIC as a whole.

This position was enunciated by Seymour Reich as IJCIC chairman to the media after the meeting with the Pope in December, namely, "The Vatican cannot normalize its relations with the Jewish people until it normalizes its relations with the Jewish State."

I am hurt that you state that our press release says "in effect that historic Vatican announcements on anti-Semitism don't mean anything unless and until the Vatican recognizes Israel." I am hurt for two reasons.

First, it doesn't say that. To the contrary the reference to this in the release says "Vatican condemnation of anti-Semitism is very important," but we do not accept such condemnation as a substitute for diplomatic relations.

Secondly, I am hurt because of the importance we attached, and dispensing with modesty, the role we played in securing this very Vatican condemnation of anti-Semitism. I say this, because as a participant at the International Liaison Committee meeting in Prague where the key Vatican statement emerged condemning anti-Semitism as a "sin against God and humanity," I can tell you of the unparalleled role played by Israel Singer in achieving their agreement to this statement. His personal involvement in the negotiating committee was nothing less than critical.

The American Section has repeatedly stated, most recently at its last general meeting of January 28, that the Vatican's refusal to establish diplomatic relations with Israel is "unacceptable." We have said we will not break off the dialogue because of it, but this position of theirs, we through the Section have said, is "unacceptable."

Our Press release of January 31 came about following the Vatican statement explaining why they refuse Israel diplomatic relations. As you know, the Vatican and Pope came under intense and unprecedented Italian criticism, including members of the Parliament of even the Communist Party, for his

failure to recognize Israel particularly following his initial failure to condemn the SCUD attacks against Israel. Even Chief Rabbi Toaff of Rome was at the forefront of these vocal criticisms. Our press release reacted in a timely fashion to the objectionable statement issued by the Vatican in conformity with the position of the American Section.

Let me state for the record, that the representative you designated to the American Section, Rabbi Philip Hiat, did not attend the last meeting of the Section where this subject was taken up and which endorsed the letter on Soviet Jews.

Alex, it's been too long since we last got together. In view of the fact that we're looking ahead to the WJC Assembly, if you don't mind I'll call your office so that Singer and I can get together with you to catch up on things and especially talk about the upcoming Assembly.

With best regards,

Elan Steinberg Executive Director

Encl. men. ES:oh



January 3, 1991

Chairman **EVELYN SOMMER**

Honorary Chairmen RABBI JOSEPH KARASICK JACOB KATZMAN FRIEDA LEWIS RABBI ARTHUR SCHNEIER JACQUES TORCZYNER Dear Friends:

The Executive Committee of the American Section met yesterday to consider policies and activities for the coming year.

Co-Chairmen, Executive Committee CHARLOTTE JACOBSON MOSHE KAGAN

Vice Chairman, Executive Committee RABBI FABIAN SCHONFELD

> Treasurer LEON LEVY

Secretary RABBI MARC SCHNEIER

Executive Members RABBI LOUIS BERNSTEIN SAM BLOCH JACOB DAVIDSON RABBI ALFRED GOTTSCHALK HAROLD OSTROFF

> Executive Director ELAN STEINBERG

Among the programs endorsed for the Section will be a series of briefings in Washington at the State Department, Pentagon, foreign embassies, OAS, and other institutions. The Executive also approved an American Section mission to Latin America as well as a joint meeting in Europe between the American Section and European Branch leaderships. detailed report and consideration of these and other items taken up will be given at the next general meeting of the Section.

One item we wish to bring to your attention is the attached letter to the WJC from the American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors on the subject of Soviet Jews emigrating to Germany. The Executive endorsed the position expressed in the letter.

The Latin American Branch of the WJC as well as the Israeli Branch - representing all the political parties - have also responded to the request for support by the American Gathering and have endorsed the letter. The International Executive of the WJC will take up this item when it meets in February in Jerusalem.

Motices for the next meeting of the Section will be sent out shortly.

Sincerely,

Elan Steinberg

Executive Director

Enclosures

Member Organizations of the American ES/ES: Oh

AMERICAN GATHERING OF JEWISH HIGLOCAUST SURVIVORS; AMERICAN JEWISH CONGRESS; AMERICAN JEWISH LEAGUE FOR ISRAEL; AMERICAN SEPHARDI FEDERATION; AMERICA; B'NAI ZION; CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS; EMUNAH WOMEN OF AMERICA; FEDERATION OF REFORM ZIONISTS OF AMERICA; B'NAI ZION; CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS; EMUNAH WOMEN OF AMERICA; FEDERATION OF FOLISH JEWS; FEDERATION OF RECONSTRUCTIONIST CONGREGATIONS AND HAVUROT; HADASSAH; HERUT ZIONISTS OF AMERICA; HIAS; INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF CHILDREN OF JEWISH HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS; JEWISH NATIONAL FUND; LABOR ZIONIST ALLIANCE; MERICAZ; NATIONAL COUNCIL OF YOUNG ISRAEL; NATIONAL FEDERATION OF TEMPLE SISTERHOOUS; NORTH AMERICAN JEWISH STUDENTS' NETWORK; PIONEER WOMENINA'AMAT; POALE AGUDATH ISRAEL OF AMERICA; RABBINICAL ASSEMBLY; RELIGIOUS ZIONISTS OF AMERICA; UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS; UNION OF ORTHODOX JEWISH CONGREGATIONS OF AMERICA; UNITED SYNAGOGUE OF AMERICA; WIZO-USA; WOMEN'S LEAGUE FOR CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM; WORKMEN'S CIRCLE; WORLD FEDERATION OF HUNGARIAN JEWS, U.S.A. DIVISION; ZIONIST ORGANIZATION OF AMERICA

Tel: (212) 239-4230 Fax: (212) 279-2926

American Gathering/Federation of Jewish Holocaust Survivors אמעריקאנער צוזאמענקום פעדעראציע פון דער שארית הפליטה אמעריקאנער צוזאמענקום פעדעראציע פון דער שארית הפליטה 122 WEST 30TH STREET SUITE 205 NEW YORK, N.Y. 10001

BENJAMIN MEED President

December 27, 1990

Mr. Edgar Bronfman
President
World Jewish Congress
501 Madison Avenue, 17th Floor
New York, New York 10022

Dear Edgar:

I take this opportunity to share with the World Jewish Congress the views of Jewish Holocaust survivors on a very serious matter concerning Jewish conscience and Holocaust memory.

We have always felt it is our collective obligation to assist and support in any possible way Jews in distress, and those seeking haven from situations of peril any place in the world. Therefore, the massive emigration of Jews from the Soviet Union to the State of Israel should be considered a modern miracle, deserving the fullest support from World Jewry.

At the same time, the last several weeks have raised the issue of large numbers of Soviet Jews seeking to emigrate to Germany. Those seeking "refuge" in Germany sadly, particularly the younger generation, are no doubt unfamiliar with the history of the Holocaust.

Surviving German Jews, who lived in Germany for generations, did not return after the Holocaust to rebuild their lives in Germany. And those who did return represented a totally insignificant number. Does this not say something?

For Jewish Holocaust survivors, Jews settling again in Germany cannot but provoke the most profound negative, painful and emotional reaction from us. Simply put, we cannot, in good conscience, encourage Jewish emigration to a country which, within our lifetime, was responsible for unparalleled crimes against our people.

(Over)

1990 is not 1938. If, in 1938, the State of Israel would have existed and the gates of the free world would not have been closed to Jews, Jewish survival would have been in significantly larger numbers. Today, there is a Jewish state, and more importantly, even by assuming national hardship for itself, the State of Israel is welcoming every Russian Jew with open arms.

While we recognize that there are individual circumstances of distress relating to such matters as family reunification or other personal circumstances, the resolution of individual cases must be left to his or her decision, but clearly distinguished from a policy of endorsing "mass settlement" of Soviet Jews in Germany.

Accordingly, in the name of the American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors, we urge the World Jewish Congress, through its member communities, to uphold this position of Jewish conscience and Holocaust memory.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Meed

NEWS

from

ATT: EDITOR



WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

501 MADISON AVENUE • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022 TELEPHONE: (212) 755-5770 TELEFAX: (212) 755-5883 TELEX: 236129 (WJC UR)

Refer to: Mr. Elan Steinberg FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE January 31, 1991

WJC CONDEMNS VATICAN STANCE ON ISRAEL

NEW YORK, JANUARY 31, 1991

The World Jewish Congress sharply criticized last week's Vatican statement reiterating its refusal to extend diplomatic relations to Israel as "a slap in the face to Jews worldwide."

Evelyn Sommer, U.S. Chairman of the WJC, said the Vatican position on Israel constitutes a serious setback to the future course of the dialogue with the Jewish people.

"We are making it absolutely clear that the Vatican cannot normalize its relations with the Jewish people until it normalizes its relations with the Jewish state," Mrs. Sommer said.

Pressured by demonstrations in Rome led by the Italian Jewish community, the Vatican issued a statement on January 25 on its relations with Israel. Italian Jews were angered by the Pope's failure to immediately condemn Iraqi missile attacks on Israeli civilians, and called on the Vatican to open diplomatic ties with Israel.

In its statement, the Vatican spoke of its "deep respect" for the State of Israel and cited contacts it has had with its leaders. But declaring that "nothing obliges it to maintain diplomatic relations with any particular State," the Vatican repeated its refusal to establish such ties with Israel.

Among reasons cited by the Vatican for refusing ambassadorial links with Israel were "the presence of Israel in the occupied territories, the relations with the Palestinians, the annexation of Jerusalem, as well as the general situation of the Catholic Church in Israel and the territories."

The WJC said that substantively nothing had changed in the Vatican's discriminatory attitude toward Israel: "The Vatican has diplomatic ties with numerous states with which it has political differences. Indeed, if the absence of political differences were a pre-requisite for diplomatic ties, then there would be no diplomatic relations between states."

"Moreover," the WJC added, "in 1948 when the State of Israel was established and it was not in possession of Jerusalem or the 'occupied territories,' the Vatican was still unwilling to establish ties. Its stated reasons are therefore spurious."

The WJC said its representatives to consions of the international Catholic-Jewish dialogue will clearly state that progress is being hindered by the Vatican's stance on Israel. "Vatican condemnation of anti-Semitism is very important, but we do not accept it as either a substitute or a cloak for their failure with regard to the Jewish State," Mrs. Sommer stated.





RABBI ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER • UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS

* PRESIDENT 838 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 (212) 249-0100

February 13, 1991 29 Shevat 5751

Mr. Edgar Bronfman President World Jewish Congress 501 Madison Avenue New York, NY 10022

Dear Edgar:

I just saw the attached press release from the WJC, quoting Evelyn Sommer as U.S. Chairman of the WJC, saying in effect that historic Vatican announcements on anti-Semitism don't mean anything unless and until the Vatican recognizes Israel.

These statements will properly be seen by the Vatican as "Pope-bashing" and they seem to undermine the works of IJCIC and I believe they also undercut the Catholic/Jewish dialogue to which the UAHC and our Inter-Religious Department are dedicated. Therefore, I must ask how such sweeping statements by WJC are undertaken without consultation with its constituent organizations, with the UAHC as well as NFTS and ARZA? Who authorized this position?

I feel the same about the statement condemning those Soviet Jews who chose to live in Germany. Were we asked, particularly in light of our position that Soviet Jews must have the full right of choice as to where to make their lives?

Frankly, as an officer of the WJC, I cannot justify continued membership in the American Section of World Jewish Congress unless we, as a constituent agency, are appropriately consulted on policy issues of such significance. We would not continue our participation in any umbrella organization unless our organizatinal autonomy and integrity are respected.

Cordially,

Alexander M. Schindler

BCC: A. VORSPAN



American Jewish Congress
Stephen Wise Congress House
15 East 84th Street
New York, NY 10028
212 879 4500 • Fax 212 249 3672

Office of the Executive Director

February 14, 1991

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

Dear Alex:

I read your statements on the appointment of Ze'evi to the Cabinet. It is reassuring to know that there are Jewish leaders around who have not lost their moral compass.

Kol Hakavod!

Your comments are in stark contrast to those of another Reform leader, Rabbi Joseph Glaser, who at the meeting of the Conference of Presidents stated angrily, "Why are we wasting all this time on such an unimportant matter." While that statement is undoubtedly an accurate expression of Joe's moral sensibility, one has to wonder whether, as Executive Vice President of CCAR, he was speaking for the Reform rabbinate, or whether they are even aware that this is how they are being represented at the Conference of Presidents.

In any event, this is intended as an expression of admiration for a kind of courage and integrity that is sadly all too rare in American Jewish life.

Sincerely,

Henry Siegman

HS:bl

cc: Rabbi Joseph Glaser

World Jew Congress nen File. Heirles Groperty uft

Who heards had

March 21, 1990 24 Adar 5750

AMERICAN IEWISH

Mr. Israel Singer World Jewish Congress 501 Madison Avenue New York, NY 10022

Dear Israel:

Thank you for the information on heirless Jewish property. I have no problem with your response. And, if what you told me concerning the Austrian agreement is correct, especially vis-a-vis process, this too is fine with me.

It was good chatting with you.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

CONGRES JUIF MONDIAL . CONGRESO JUDIO MUNDIAL

501 MADISON AVENUE NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022

March 19, 1990.

CABLE: WORLDGRESS. NEW YORK

TELEPHONE: (212) 755-5770

TELEX: 23 61 29 TELEFAX: (212) 755-5883

BUENOS AIRES Larrea 744 GENEVA 1 rue de Varembe JERUSALEM 4 Rotenberg Street LONDON 11 Hertford Street PARIS 78 Av. des Ch. Elysees ROME Piazza Scanderbeg 51

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

Dear Alex,

You are indeed an honoured vice-president of the World Jewish Congress and, as you yourself expressed regret over not attending the last meeting of the Executive, this perhaps is the reason that a "Missverständnis" has arisen over the grapevine.

There is no need for rumours here, because, by a unanimous resolution adopted at the Executive, an international commission of the WJC was established to deal with heirless Jewish property resulting from the Nazi plunders. The membership of the commission is in process of formation. I attach the working paper at the Executive which formed the basis for the creation of the commission.

Initially I am pleased to let you know that the President of Czechoslovakia, Vaclav Havel, has agreed in principle already, as a result of our recent visit in Prague, to open negotiations on the vast amount of heirless Jewish property still sitting in storage in warehouses in Prague.

The WJC commission has nothing to do with the work of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany and Austria. As you know, seriuous questions have been raised and brought to our attention regarding recent pronouncements of the Claims Conference, specifically undertakings which have been made without prior coordination or agreement with constituent bodies. While this is an important issue, and something we should perhaps discuss, it has no bearing on this international commission for which we need your input as to proper representation by the Reform community.



Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler March 19, 1990. Also with regard to the preliminary work of the commission, we distributed at the Executive, and I also attach here, information release on our efforts both with regard to the Wolf Haggadah and to prevent Christie's auction of Judaica items from Prague. Looking forward to a more thorough discussion on this whenever you have a chance, I am, with best regards, Israel Singer IS:hm

There are many heirless Jewish religious and cultural objects in Eastern Europe which, as a result of the Holocaust, are in the hands of the State, agencies of the State, private individuals, and churches and monasteries.

These artifacts of the Jewish patrimony were the property of Jewish individuals, institutions, and communities. They should be returned to the Jewish people.

Efforts toward obtaining the restitution of heirless and unclaimed Jewish property to the Jewish people were begun before the end of the Second World War, and the World Jewish Congress was a prime mover in these efforts from the outset. In the immediate postwar period a number of positive measures were enacted in certain East European countries. However, with the consolidation of the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe, those measures were not implemented. Sporadic attempts were made over the years to recover certain heirless property, notably from Poland, but with no concrete results.

The recent and ongoing events in Eastern Europe suggest that the time may be ripe to renew efforts to recover for the Jewish people these heirless religious and cultural objects. (It should also be noted that in the present circumstances there may be hope as well for/restitution of or compensation for immovable Jewish communal property that was appropriated by East European governments in the years following the Second World War; however, that aspect is beyond the scope of this discussion.)

Precedents

- 1. In 1946, in an important departure from the traditional assumption that heirless property escheats to the country in which it is located, the Allied Powers called on neutral countries to make available to Jewish organizations, international and American, 95% of the funds in those countries that had become heirless through the death of victims of Nazism.
 - 2. The following year the American Military Government in Germany promulgated

a law which provided that heirless Jewish property could be restituted to "international Jewish organizations," and the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization (JRSO) was authorized to claim and receive such assets. Similar successor organizations were subsequently established for the British and French zones of Germany. A total of several hundred million DM was distributed by these successor organizations for the relief and rehabilitation of Nazi victims in countries of settlement, including Israel.

- 3. Among the affiliates of JRSO in the U.S. Zone of Germany was Jewish Cultural Reconstruction (JCR), which was specifically entrusted with receiving, processing, and distributing Jewish cultural and religious property that had been plundered by the Nazis. After restoring property to the original owners wherever possible, JCR distributed several hundred thousand books, 1000 Sifrei Torah, thousands of ritual objects, and archival materials, mainly to Israel, but to other countries as well.
- 4. In the years since the end of the war, a number of countries have enacted and implemented measures enabling heirless property of Holocaust victims to be used for Jewish relief and rehabilitation, variously for local needs and for use abroad. Among these countries are Austria, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the U.K., and the U.S.
- 5. The 1947 peace treaties between the Allies and Hungary and Rumania each contained a clause providing for the transfer to domestic Jewish representative organizations of all heirless and unclaimed assets of Jewish individuals, organizations, and communities, such funds to be used for Jewish relief and rehabilitation in Hungary and Rumania. As mentioned earlier, these provisions were never implemented.

Current holdings

The full extent of the holdings in the various countries of Eastern Europe is uncertain. The European Jewish Congress is canvassing the various East European communities in this regard, and the World Federation of Hungarian Jews is also

investigating the situation in Hungary.

However, certain significant holdings are known, the best known of which is the <u>Prague</u> collection of tens of thousands of Jewish cultural and religious objects which were amassed by the Nazis to be exhibited in a museum devoted to the extinct Jewish race. These pieces are today in the hands of the State Jewish Museum, itself taken over by the Czech Ministry of Culture after the war.

In 1979 a Beth Hatefutsoth survey mission returning from <u>Poland</u> reported that well over 1000 Jewish ritual objects are to be found in 28 museums and a number of private collections in that country. In addition, the mission reported extensive collections of paintings and other works by Jewish artists, in Warsaw's Jewish Historical Institute and the National Museums in Warsaw and Krakow, as well as smaller holdings in other museums in the country.

The Beth Hatefutsoth survey mission also remarked that the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw "has about 800 manuscripts, mostly from Breslau and Vienna, only four of which are illuminated." (Today the world knows that one of those four was the Wolff Haggadah.) Mention was also made of "5000 photographs and graphics from the collection of the Jewish Museum in Berlin."

Finally, the survey mission cited the extensive Jewish archival material (documents and pictures) to be found in Polish State and municipal archives.

The importance of Jewish books and documents should not be neglected, and significant collections are known to exist in Warsaw, Krakow, and Wroclaw in Poland as well as Vilna and Lyov in the Soviet Union, among other places. However, with the exception of rare items, books and documents pose less of a problem than artifacts because they can be microfilmed or photocopied. What is needed is access to those books and documents and the possibility to copy them if necessary.

Potential difficutlies and obstacles

1. Notwithstanding the precedents cited above, the traditional assumption remains that heirless property reverts to the State. This may be the position

4

that will be adopted by the countries in question, especially in view of the time that has lapsed since the end of the Second World War.

- 2. This traditional assumption is applied all the more rigorously when objects of cultural or artistic value are concerned. Indeed, the Beth Hatefutsoth mission reported that Poland regards the Jewish cultural and religious material in its possession as "an integral part of Polish art and history and, with the exception of a few marginal items (sacred books, Torah fragments), will not permit the originals to be removed from the country."
- 3. Even if the countries in question were to agree in principle to the restitution of the heirless Jewish objects, they might return them to the depleted local Jewish communities, which might be prohibited from or unwilling to transfer them abroad.
- 4. It would be necessary to determine which parts of the various holdings were in the possession of the holder before the war, and which ones were heirless or unclaimed objects acquired as a result of the Holocaust.
- 5. As difficult as it will be to inventory the holdings in the hands of States or agencies of the State, it will be much more difficult as regards objects held by individuals or churches and monasteries.

Conclusion

In light of the above, the WJC Executive should consider the creation of an international commission which, with the involvement of the various East European Jewish communities, would attempt to quantify the holdings in question, put together a strategy for their recuperation, and decide on their distribution.

January 1990

from

ATT: EDITOR



WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

501 MADISON AVENUE • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022 TELEPHONE: (212) 755-5770 TELEFAX: (212) 755-5883) TELEX: 236129 (WJC UR)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE January 12, 1990

WJC WINS KEY LEGAL ROUND IN DISPUTE CVER RARE JEWISH MANUSCRIPT

NEW YORK, JANUARY 12, 1990

The Geneva Supreme court ruled in favor of the World Jewish Congress in its legal case against the Polish government overpossession of a rare Jewish manuscript stolen by the Nazis and which was almost sold at auction last summer.

The manuscript is the Wolf Haggadah, a medieval Hebrew text worth an estimated \$1 million, a retelling of the Jews' flight from Egypt in Biblical times.

The illuminated manuscript, dating from 13th century France, was from the collection of Albert Wolf, a prominent German Jew who willed it to the Jewish Community of Berlin in 1907.

It was stolen by the Nazis in 1938 and was discovered by Russian troops in 1944 in Glodzko, Poland, who turned it over to the Historical Institute in Warsaw.

A Montreal man, Nathan Hecht, who claimed to have bought the manuscript, sought to have the Swiss auction house of Habsburg Feldman put it up for sale last June in Geneva.

The World Jewish Congress, acting on behalf of the East and West Berlin Jewish communities, succeeded in having the Geneva courts seize the Haggadah to prevent its auction.

Last month the Geneva Tribunal of First Instance ruled that "no other party can offer a more likely claim" to the manuscript than the Berlin Jewish communities and the WJC.

Today's ruling by the Geneva Supreme Court fully validated the WJC position vis-a-vis both the Polish government and the claims of ownership put forth by Hecht.

The court confirmed the lower tribunal's order preventing the removal of the manuscript from Geneva and further ordered the Polish government and the representatives of the Montreal claimant to pay 1500 francs each for court costs.

"The central issue here is a moral one: Jewish patrimony belongs to the Jewish people," WJC said in a statement released in New York.

The World Jewish Congress, representing 70 Jewish communities around the world, called on Poland to give up its claims so that the Haggadah could be placed in the library of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

The WJC confirmed it has been in direct touch with the Polish government to settle the matter. It dismisses the claims of Mr. Hecht as frivolous.

from

ATT: EDITOR



WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

501 MADISON AVENUE • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022 TELEPHONE: (212) 755-5770 TELEFAX: (212) 755-5883) TELEX: 236129 (WJC UR)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE January 4, 1990

SALE OF JEWISH ARTIFACTS SUSPENDED

NEW YORK, JANUARY 4, 1990

Christie's, the famous London auction house, has informed the World Jewish Congress that it is not undertaking a controversial sale of items from the Jewish Museum of Prague.

Last September, the Czech government invited Christie's representatives to a visit through six national museums, including the State Jewish Museum, for discussions on drawing up lists of items from the museum collections for public auction next fall. Czechoslovakia sought to obtain badly needed hard currency in this manner.

The State Jewish Museum houses an unrivaled collection of books and ritual objects seized by the Nazis during World War II. The Nazis had intended to use these items to create a museum on "the extinct Jewish race."

The Jewish Museum's director said he had hoped, through Christie's, to sell 50 items, mainly textiles such as synagogue ark curtains.

Together with the newly elected president of the Czech Jewish community, Desider Galsky, the WJC said it was "immoral" to auction such items in view of their origin. "Jewish patrimony belongs to the Jewish people," the WJC stated.

Responding to these concerns, the director of Christie's, David Allison, has written the World Jewish Congress that "fears as regards the sale of items from the Jewish Museum in Prague are unfounded."

In his letter to WJC President Edgar Bronfman, Mr. Allison assured "that it is a fundamental principle of our business that we would never offer for sale any items with doubtful legal title." He added that Christie's "would not engage in any activity which injured the legitimate interests of any section of the public."

Mr. Allison confirmed that the visit of Christie's representatives to the Czech museums had taken place, but stressed that no further steps have been taken by the Czech side to promote the projected sales.

Meanwhile, WJC Executive Director Elan Steinberg disclosed that an international commission will be formed by the WJC Executive later this month charged with "securing for the Jewish people and protecting Jewish claims vis-a-vis heirless Jewish property and unclaimed Jewish patrimony arising from the Nazi seizures during the Second World War."

March 15, 1990 17 Adar 5750

Dr. Israel Singer Executive Vice President World Jewish Congress 501 Madison Avenue New York, NY 10022

Dear Israel;

I have heard from several sources reports which puzzled me, simply because I have no idea what is really developing, though I a Vice President of the World Jewish Congress.

Rumors have it that WJC is contemplating the formation of a Coordinating Committee which will, in effect, serve as the Claims Conference for Jewish properties in Eastern European countries, possibly also including East Germany.

Is this information correct? What precisely are your plans in this realm? What has already been done?

As a member of the Claims Conference Board, I am concerned lest there be a turf battle in the offing. Might I mention in this context that I have a great deal of confidence in Israel Miller and in Sol Kagan who have served for so long a time in this sphere and have a more than creditable record of achievement.

I am off to Roanoke Virginia this morning, but I would appreciate it if you were to let me have your answer in writing so that I can reflect on it when I return to my desk next week.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

bcc: Rabbi Israel Miller Sol Kagan Omaha Steaks

4400 SOUTH 96TH STREET
P.O. BOX 3300 • OMAHA, NEBRASKA 68103
PHONE 1-402-331-1010 • TOLL FREE 1-800-562-0500
TELEX NO. 48-4488 • CABLE ADDRESS: OMASTEAK • OMAHA NEBR.

5 September 1985

Mr. Sidney Gruber
Direct & C.E.O.
World Jewish Congress
One Park Avenue
New York, New York 10012

Dear Sidney:

Under separate cover, I am sending directly to your home one of our products. I have sent this out, not only for your enjoyment, but also for you to begin understanding the importance of "perceived value."

In order for someone to make a purchase, they must determine in their mind that the object they are buying has a perceived value in exchange for the dollars. This includes, not only the exchange or purchase of "real" items such as steaks or cakes, but also of memberships, newsletters, etc.

The customer must perceive a value before and after he makes a purchase. From the enclosed catalog, you will see how our Company creates that perceived value and-how we as a group must create a same type of perceived value in soliciting memberships or donations for our "cause."

I have asked Hellah to ask your opinion on the following points.

- What is the motivation for a Jewish person to visit the concentration camp memorial? (your own opinion)
- What is the motivation for a gentile to visit a concentration camp memorial? (your own opinion)

Think about these questions and give me your independent thoughts.

My brother Fred will be in New York on September 19 and 20 and wishes to meet you and the rest of the group. Please check your schedule and notify me as soon as possible (800/562-0500). More information will follow.

Yours very truly,

Alan D. Simon, President Omaha Steaks International

ADS/cm

cc: Rabbi Alexander Schindler



4400 SOUTH 96TH STREET P.O. BOX 3300 • OMAHA, NEBRASKA 68103 PHONE 1-402-331-1010 • TOLL FREE 1-800-562-0500 TELEX NO. 48-4488 • CABLE ADDRESS: OMASTEAK • OMAHA, NEBR. 5 September 1985

Mr. Israel Singer Direct & C.E.O. Word Jewish Congress One Park Avenue New York, New York 10012

Dear Israel:

Under separate cover, I am sending directly to your home one of our Chocolate Roulade and Raspberry Cream cake desserts, which you will find on page 25 of the catalog enclosed.

I have sent this out, not only for your enjoyment, but also for you to begin understanding the importance of "perceived value."

In order for someone to make a purchase, they must determine in their mind that the object they are buying has a perceived value in exchange for the dollars. This includes, not only the exchange or purchase of "real" items such as steaks or cakes, but also of memberships, newsletters, etc.

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My brother Fred will be in New York on September 19 and 20 and wishes to meet you and the rest of the group. Please check your schedule and notify me as soon as possible (800/562-9500). More information will follow.

Yours yery truly,

Alan D. Simon, President Omaha Steaks International

ADS/cm cc: Rabbi Alexander Schindler

U.S. GOV'T. INSPECTED #1198



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TELEX NO. 48-4488 • CABLE ADDRESS: OMASTEAK • OMAHA, NEBR.

5 September 1985

Mr. Elan Steinberg Direct & C.E.O. World Jewish Congress One Park Avenue New York, New York 10012

Dear Elan:

Under separate cover, I am sending directly to your home one of our products. I have sent this out, not only for your enjoyment, but also for you to begin understanding the importance of "perceived value."

In order for someone to make a purchase, they must determine in their mind that the object they are buying has a perceived value in exchange for the dollars. This includes, not only the exchange or purchase of "real" items such as steaks or cakes, but also of memberships, newsletters, etc.

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Yours very truly,

Alan D. Simon, President Omaha Steaks International

ADS/cm

cc: Rabbi Alexander Schindler

Ree Congres

(CONCENTRATION CAMP MEMORIAL)

ARCHIVES

ARCHI

CCM

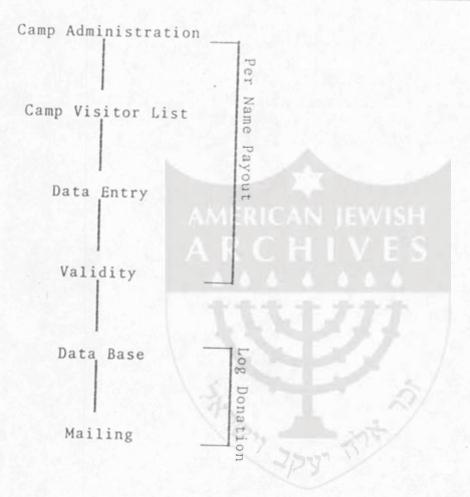
(CONCENTRATION CAMP MEMORIAL)

- Objective Capture names of all CCM visitors in order to solicit donations by mail.
- 2. Attributes:
 - a) Large potential cash flow
 - b) Simplicity
 - c) Easily Conceptualized
 - d) No Competition with other Jewish Charity Projects
 - e) No large staff requirement
 - f) Easy to test
- 3. Name Collection Procedure:
 - a) Have a guest list at each CCM which would be sent to processing center with some nominal compensation back to CCM.
- 4. Solicitation Procedure:
 - a) Name put on EDP
 - b) Use standard "KG" collection procedure
- 5. Test Procedure:
 - a) Collect at Dachau
 - b) Name on OSI computer using OSI's standard format
 - c) Design mailing and test
- 6. Problems Degree of success based on the following:
 - a) Morality
 - b) Identifiable
 - c) Believable
 - d) Emotional

EXHIBIT 1

DATA FLOW CHART

COMPENSATION FLOW CHART



ADS/cm

((

File Description and So	orts Length
Name	30
Add 1	30
Add 2	30
City	15
State	2
Country	10
Zip	9
1. Source	2
Date	5
2. Source	2
Date	5
3. Source	2
Date	5
1. Source	2
Date	5
1. Donation	5
Date	5
2. Donation	5
Date	5
3. Donation	5
Date	5
4. Donation	5
Date	5
Phone #	12
	199

File Sorts

Sorts:

- 1. Alpha
- 2. Zip
- 3. Phone #
- 4. Donation
 - 1. Decending 2. Ascending
- 5. Auto Duplication Multiple 1, 2, 3,

MAILING SIMULATION

Assumptions:

- 1. Dachau: 300 days @ 500 per day
- 2. Mail Quantity: 300 days @ 500 per day = 150,000 names
- 3. Assume 5% Return = \$25 each
- 4. 5% Return (7,500 names)
- 5. \$25 Donation $(7,500 \times $25 = $187,500)$
- 6. 5 year Life Mailing List no attempt to review or protect
- 7. 5 year test and stop
- 8. Revenue Flow only no costs
 - a) Mailing Cost \$200 per 1,000 *
 - b) Wages unknown

5 YEAR SIMULATION

1st year	2nd year	3rd year	4th year	5th year
187,500		250	17	
150,000	187,500			
112,500	150,000	187,500		
75,000	112,500	150,000	187,500	
_37,500	75,000	112,500	150,000	187,500
562,500	525,000	450,000	337,500	187,500 = 2,062,500

^{* &}quot;Non-profit" postage much less

ADS/cm

((

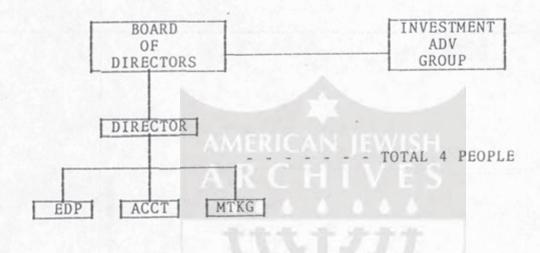
OTHER INCOME POSSIBILITIES

- 1. Mailing list rental @ \$50,000 per million names
- 2. Life membership graduated response
- 3. Telephone marketing in U.S.

ADS/cm

((

ORGANIZATION CHART



COMMENT: Morality - Must have moralistic member Board to control business greed.

ADS/cm



4400 SOUTH 96TH STREET
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July 24, 1985

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

Dear Rabbi Schindler:

Thank you very much for your letter of July 9, 1985.

Please forgive the late response, but I have been out of town, as you know.

I have turned your letter over to my brother, who will answer the various questions that you have. He will write you a memo detailing some of the thoughts in regard to the items we briefly discussed.

I do hope that this will be of service to you.

Our trip to Europe was fascinating, especially when we traveled into the Soviet Union.

I hope your trip to Europe and Israel was successful.

Yours very truly,

NATIONAL SALES DEPARTMENT

Stephen H. Simon Vice President Sales

SHS/ca

July 9, 1985

Mr. Stephen H. Simon, Vice President - Sales Omaha Steaks International 4400 South 96th Street Omaha, Nebraska 68127

Dear Mr. Simon:

I tried to reach you by phone the other day only to learn that you are on vacation and next week I'm off to Europe and Israel and won't be back muchibefore the middle of August.

I do want you to know that I pursued your idea with a number of agencies - the World Jewish Congress, and the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture - both of which might be proper recipients for the project which you described; and the leadership of both organizations is sufficiently interested to encourage me to pursue your ideas.

Could I conceivably prevail on you to write me a memo detailing some of the thoughts we discussed: the central idea; the management team which we might have to assemble in order to effect it; the kind of permissions which we need, from the German and Polish governments; the kind of front money which you think might be required.

Unfortunately, our trip to the airport didn't give me enough time to query you concerning some of these details and so I must ask you to set them down on paper. But I can tell you that the preliminary interest of the leadership of these organizations, as well as my own, is sufficiently great to warrant this further effort.

With all good wishes, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

D'le diche letter next hunday

Omaha Steaks International o

FOOD SERVICE DIVISION

STEPHEN H. SIMON

VICE PRESIDENT - SALES

4400 SOUTH 96TH STREET OMAHA, NEBRASKA 68127 PHONE (402) 331-1010 TOLL FREE (800) 228-9521

MU

September 11, 1985

Mr. Isi J. Leibler Asia Pacific Jewish Association G.P.O. Box 5402CC Melbourne, Victoria Australia 3001

ARCHIVES

Dear Isi:

Your letter of August 29th has just arrived and I am glad you received the information on Barnes prior to your departure from Australia.

I was unable to be in Washington for the Soviet Jewry meetings and, therefore, missed seeing you. This I much regret. I have been busy with all kinds of meetings here at the UAHC and since I am not on the Presidium, the Washington meetings did not get on to my schedule until it was too late to reprogram some critical meetings here.

Be that as it may, I trust that your trip was meaningful and that your visit to Beijing in November will be fascinating and worthwhile.

To you and all your loved ones I express fond good wishes for a Shana Tova, may you be inscribed in the book of life and may the New Year be blessed with health and happiness.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

ASIA PACIFIC JEWISH ASSOCIATION

G.P.O. Box 5402CC, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, 3001.

Tel: (03) 62 1254; (03) 62 0041. Telex: AA31838.

29th August 1985

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler President Union of American Hebrew Congregations 838 Fifth Avenue New York, N.Y. 10021 U.S.A.

Dear Alex,

Many thanks for your note dated 21st August 1985 informing me about the imminent departure of Barnes from India. I do very much appreciate your interest in the Asian area.

On the assumption that Shamir's visit to Tokyo is still on I am waiting to hear from Zwi Werblowsky, who is in Tokyo, as to whether his visit may perhaps have created some impact in foreign office circles which in turn will make the Japanese academics more amenable to hosting the projected Asian-Jewish Colloquium in Tokyo.

All being well I am also set to go to Beijing in November in what will at least be another interesting visit.

I hope we might meet in ten days in Washington.

If not Shana Tove to you and yours.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Isi J. Leibler

Son in loost.
You in loost.
I am informately
not on Prindium.
Nic posale good wales



Lavy M. Becker Consultants Ltd.

Lavy Becker Conseillers en Relations Humaines

1360 Rue Mazurette, Montreal, Que. H4N 2V8

July 5 1983

Dr. Gerhart Riegner World Jewish (ongress 1 Rue de Varembé Geneva Switzerland

Dear Gerry,

I know you must have been pained to hear of the death of Stephen Barber,
a colleague of yours of more than 40 years ago. I had come home from my (aribbean
trip on the Sunday night to find that he was in the hospital again. I saw him on
Monday afternoon and early Tuesday morning he was gone. I conducted the funeral from
our synagogue. Should you want to write to Erika, her address is 4600 Westmore rive.,
Wontreal, Que., H4B 129.

This was one of my more successful and fulfilling trips, by virtue of the changes I found in each of the three communities and how they handled them. (ommon to each is their pleasure in their association with W.C. They welcomed me warmly, planned meetings and gave me home hospitality beyond their norm. None of the three has commitments except to us, although Martinique may be reaching out. They see my presence as evidence of our concern for them, that we want to keep them within the stream of world Jewish participation and that they are not as isolated as they might otherwise feel.

Before I go on to report sketchily on each I want to advise you that I intend to respond to Kanee's pressure to write a more comprehensive piece on the whole (aribbean area, faum both the historical point of view and our rule with them in the cuitent period. The present report is not meant for publication.

Jews were resident in Martinique in its earliest days in mid-17th century. Since the Black (ode of 1685 in France, however, which denied residence in the colonies to all but (atholics, there has been no Jewish community in Martinique until the first settlers of 1968-69 began to create one. These settlers are the sons and daughters of former Algerian, Tunisian and Moroccan Jews who came to be citizens in France when their countries achieved independence in the mid 1950s. One of these settlers in martinique had his own Sefer Torah award which he gathered those who wished to pray together. When he left the island the others turned for help and received it from the (unsistoire in Paris. When I visited them in the fall of 1978 they had already created a small synagogue in rented quarters above stones. Now, not quite five years later, they have grown from 150 to a community of 450 individuals. Their community is still synagogued centered, now in a rented 15 room house with enough space for all their group activities.

This is an active, well-programmed Jewish community, motivated by their traditional Sefaradi background, their youthful parental concerns, and by the sheer joy of doing all the right things. A major factor is the energy, the character and the charm of their president, Jean (ohen, 33, unmarried, a pilot who flies the Caribbean islands.) I have his assurance that this message I bring you of their formal application to become an affiliate of the World Jewish (ongress is a decision of his officers and Board of Directors. He discussed this matter with Sage when he visited Paris some three months ago. They thought they might have an association with the French Section. I agree. Serge spould keep them informed of all activities in the French Section, feed them with published materials and help them to maintain a relationship with the Consistoire. From our part we should recognize that they are a full, operating, independent and vital Jewish community, no less so than Finland, Portugal, (uração and the like. I strongly support their application Attached are some items which indicate their vitality. For the record let me tell you a bit more about them.

Their strength of 450 includes all ages form babes in arms to adults in their mid-forties, none older. On the one hand they have no concerns for the aged and can concentrate on schooling, programming, celebrating and anticipating a long future on the island. On the other hand, since their older generation is in France, they may be motivated to a return to France. The balance to this potential may also be strengthened by the climate and ease of living. It will be interesting to watch its development. It is a new phenominan in Jewish history.

If I may judge by the Shabbat I spent with them, they have a core of some 50 individuals, mostly men, who are constant in their synagogue attendance . On festivals the attendance must be larger . And , as Jean Cohen advised me , some 90% of the community turns out for such celebrations as (harukah and Purim. They are synagogue centered and orthodox. Such is the format of their service in their synagogue where the women are placed behind a Mecritza. They have all the satisfactions that come from being a do-it-yourself congregation. They have no professionals, neither, rabbi, non canton, non reader, non teachers. But they do not feel bereft. For such requirements as marriage, brit, etc. they are able to turn to Rabbi Isaac (oher of Caracas who has already visited them at least twice and with whom they have a very warm relationship. He is Moroccan in origin, Sephardic in experience and young in spirit. It is a happy relationship.

It is obvious that Kashrut is important to them. Five years ago they had been importing packaged frozen kusher meats from N. Y. by air and keeping frem in freezers in their synagogue ante-room. Today, their vice-president Maurice Zerbib, has been persuaded to open a shop where only rosher products can be purchased. It can also serve meals. That he seems to be making a living is a tribute to the whole community, many of whom surely buy Kosher as a gesture to truse for whom it is max matter of principle. Among the latter is Elie Illuuz who serves them as Torah reader and teacher of both children and adults. It is a labor of love. That he had a period of residence in Israel undoubtedly strengthened his resolve to remain observant. He may be more knowledgeable than most of the others. His meager bookshelves at home include books of the Bible and a Julchan Aruch . O do appreciate his rule as a para-rabbi .

Jean (when is president not only of the Association Cultuelle Israelite Martinique but also of the Livns (lub . He has created some programming, camping trips, for example, in which the strength of both is combined. The mix of privileged and under-privileged, Jewish and Christian, black and white helps them to a prideful rule. His professional rule as a pilot has put him in close wuch with Jews in other islands. He has therefore been able to organize a formal Jewish community among the 100 Jews in Guadaloupe. We'll probably hear more about this in the near future. In the meantime they have a sort of parent-child relationship. The origins of both are

I have found warmth and devotion in nearly all the small communities I have visited. But it is frequently pooled with tiredness, lack of excitement and little inspiration. Jean (when and Martinique are different. Selfless, efficient, skilled, he has harnessed the strengths of the whole community. I do not fail to recognize that Martinique benefits from the simple factor of growth, new accretions, generally inspiring. But it would not be so without his and others sense of inspired excitement.

By the way, both Martinique and Jamaica were sensitive enough to insist on paying my hotel bill, the latter expecting me to send them books and other materials.

Martinique did it without any quid pro quo.

It is no longer news that Jamaica is drastically smaller than a decade ago. Non, in the light of general Jewish history which has recorded our many migrations, is it news that the reduction in size comes from both emigration and defection. What did strike me as unusual is that those who remain adhere so intensely to the vestiges of Jewish organizations and Jewish life . Of the nine directors of their United Congregation of Israelites, i.e., their community, who met with me at lunch, six have mixed marriages. Yet their intense feelings of Jewishness was obvious at every turn, in every conversation. All of them intend that their children shall be

Jewish, even if the Halacha does not favor them . Four or five years ago they were 500. Now they are 250. Yet the effort to conduct services, to continue Sabbath school, to observe the festivals remains as strong as ever. They have no rabbi, no Hazan, no reader, no trained teachers, no Jewish scholarship. Yet the desire to achieve them remains strong. On the other hand, that they have not been able to utilize their our Hillel Academy is difficult to accept .

This is a private school, initiated by Rabbi Bernard Hooker, 1965-1974. He was able to persuade his community that they should organize and support a school which would attain the highest standards, the best teachers, small classes, quality education, in secular and Judaic studies. It has now grown to include secondary schoold. They are efficiently housed, aesthetically located. There are no admission restrictions, religious nor racial. They have succeeded in their major aim. They are an excellent school. But they have failed in one of their major aims. There are no Jewish studies. The community is the pourer for it.

I am advised that 80% of the Jewish community are inetrmarried or in mixed marriages. This does create problems in decision making as to who may use the synagogue for a wedding, who may be buried in their cemetary, what form conversions shall take. They have a history of three hundred years of effort to follow halachic traditions, with controversy in almost every generation, They have almost fifty years of gradual diminution of such effort. Their "Acting Rabbi", devoted, hard working, is married to a Christian, their marriage performed in a church in English by a minister who responded to their wish to eliminate reference to Jesus. He comes of an old family and is a product of their one day a week Sabbath School, closely attached to the rabbis and the synagogue. He is thoroughly familiar with the order of service . Yet his knowledge of Judaica is limited .

Their three wardens, Press, Vice-Press and Treas, met with me at dinners They were joind at a working luncheon the next day by six of their ten directors, and a 7th director joind us at dinner at the some of the president . Each of these occasions gave us opportunity to discuss two major subjects, standards for conversion, and how to get a rabbi, full time, part time, retired, just graduated, what er. Such a rabbi would have to be liberal enough to live in Jamaica, and with their intermarried community, traditional enough to accept their Sephardi minhag, knowledgeable enough to teach them, understanding enough not to impose on them, and skilled enough to lead them out of the morass in which they find themselves . I am disheartened by their limited standards . I am encouraged by the intensity of their desire to "hang on" .

The report on Surinam must begin with some clarification of the political

The military coup that took place in 1980 shocked the country. That it was led by officers of lesser rank gave credence, however, to the belief that this was less a power play and more a genuine desire to eliminate the rampant corruption that developed since independance in 1975. Unfortunately they failed in their purported mission. Corruption continues. Power is just as concentrated. The people might therefore have elected a new government. But they weren't given the chance. In December 1982 the military power summarily executed a group of opponents and rendered a free election impossible. Men in uniform are everywhere. A nightly curfew has been imposed. Fear is the norm, hardly expressed. Everybody seems to be vaiting for the unknown .

Although Jour served in various ministries, none were political activists. They are in no special position vis a vis the government. They have been normally treated . The government still subvents the Hazar of each synagogue . They had no problem in getting licenses to import Passover products. They anticipate no restrictions other than those generally imposed, such as currency. The leaders of the Jewish

communities do not appear to be troubled.

There seems to be some improvement in their condition of Jewish life. Deaths and births have kept pace. There are still some 200 individuals, more or less equally divided between the Portuguese Sepharadim and the Dutch Ashkenazim. To digress for a moment, it is interesting to note in the reading of their histories, the controvresies that existed between Ashkenazim and Sepharadim in many of these old (aribbean communities, with eventual joinders and elimination of duplication. In Surinam the religious differences were eliminated much earlier than elsewhere. But the separation into two communities has continued longer, indeed to this day. Two sinagogues, two cemetaries, two presidents, etc. are still there. I think I see a glimmer of hope that the cooperation they have achieved may lead to amalgamation.

The Dutch Ashkenazim succeeded recently in raising enough money to repair and refresh their synagogue, built in 1835 on the site of the synagogue they inherited in 1734 Both communities are now praying together in this lovely synagogue, not only because the 1737 Portuguese Sephandic synagogue is almost uninhabitable, but because their experience of praying together in alternate synagogues over the last dozen years has given each a sense of comfort with the other. When they had difficulty in achieving a minyan except for Eastivals, the condition of the synagogues did not disturb them. Now that they have had a minyan each Shabbat for the last three years, they seem to have become inspired. Thus did they succeed in the refurbishing, and there is some hesitancy about repairing the older one despite their emotional ties to it. Three years ago, only the Hazan, the president and I attended a Shabbat morning service. Now, on this trip, not only were there 26 people in attendance, its composition was most encouraging. It had three girls and four women. Among the males were two boys recently Bar Mitzvah, a new convert by conviction (in his late twenties, a B.A. from Holland and an MBA from Yale, two teen agers, the two presidents, one of their largest benefactors etc. It does give me a sense of some revival. I cannot account for it. But I surely want to encourage them . This is another good illustration of Judaism's strength . Despite all the influences of environmental cultures, of marriages that are mixed, of viriority status, etc., they still cling to their roots and their people. E. J. Nassy, who rose early enough to pick me up at my hotel at 7 a.m. to escent me to the airport, is a direct descendant of the David Nassy who came to Joden Savannah in Surinam from (ayenne and was able, some years later in mid-17th century to deed many across of land to the Jewish community. Here he is still carrying some responsibility as a proud member of the community and the Jewish people. Many Jews in many parts of the world, in every generation, have abandoned us. But the Jewish people still lives.

I have a word to say about the future and I want to put it in writing.

(ommunities must and do find their our sources of inspiration. But they also find strength in their ties to the Jewish people. Israel, Zivnism, Brai Brith, etc. and especially WK are those ties. But it doesn't work if they stay home and we stay in our international offices. The key lies in visiting them. The visitor must be Jewishly knowledgeable and professionally skilled. I have done the job for 14 years as a layman, but my professional experiences as a rabbi and a social worker have come into play. Please forgive me if I appear to be self-praising. I do not mean to be. I know how much I have helped these communities. None of my reports can really convey it. By the time the next Plenum takes place I will probably have reached my 60th, and my 16th year in this spicific work in WK. You need to think of a replacment. Think of a professional. Such a person can be instructed to go more often than did I. Such a person will persuade you to apply a larger budget for such "Jewish life saving".

This report is an encouraging one. You will therefore understand my desire to send copies to Bronfman, Singer, Melamed, Tanenbaum, Jerner, (wajgenbaum, Roth, Lack, Kanee, Abramov, Korn, Hertzberg, Klutznick Shneimer, Janner, Grinflogel, Prinz, Dulzin, Levinsky, Kaplan, Faigon, Jaglom, Sultanik, Schindler, Shenker, Kelman, Brenner, Fidler, Kronitz Torcyrer, Lever

Gaon, Becker, Friedman



AU SERVICE DEPUIS 1864



ESTABLISHED 1864

PAR

Rabbi Alex, Schindler Union of American Hebrew Congregations 838 Fifth Avenue New York N. Y. 10027

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler

Joshua M. Dwork

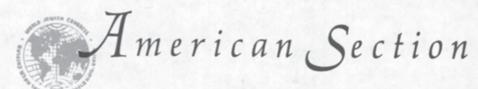
January 20, 1975

The UAHC receives a \$1,000. subvention from the American Section of the World Jewish Congress for two representatives on their Executive Committee as an allowance for the Plenary to be held in Israel in February. It appears that I will not be going and I will advise you if there is any change.

The WJC has deducted \$500. for our 1974 dues and the enclosed check for \$500. should be credited to our line for subventions. It is a contribution to our expenses.



WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS



15 EAST 84th STREET · NEW YORK, N. Y. 10028

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Executive Director
MAX MELAMET

January 15, 1975

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

Dear Rabbi Schindler:

I enclose a check for \$500.- (\$1,000.- less \$500.- dues for 1974) representing travel subsidy and per diem allowance for the delegation of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

As previously advised, the contribution is paid to each member organization of the American Section on the basis of its representation on the World Executive. The Union of American Hebrew Congregations is entitled to two representatives on that body. Therefore, I am remitting \$500.

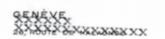
No further allowances of any kind will be paid in Jerusalem to any member of the American Section delegation.

The enclosed check is really no more than a contribution to the expenses of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

With best regards,

MM:ia enc.

Yours sincerely,
Max Melamet
Executive Director



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Paris, December 21st, 1970

Dr. Alex Schindler 838 Fifth Avenue New-York, N.Y. 10021

Dear Alex:

I hope you don't mind my calling you by your first name.

I am sending you herewith copy of my letter to Maurice. My gratitude to him for having prepared a positive decision of the Union applies naturally to you.

meeting. I am delighted that you will come to the Nice

Looking forward to see you, I am, with best wishes for the new year,

Most cordially yours,

cc.: Dr. M. Eisendrath

Paris, December 21st, 1970

Dr. Maurice Eisendrath 838 Fifth Avenue New-York, N.Y. 10021

Dear Maurice,

I tried to reach you before I left New-York on December 13th in the morning, but I could not get you.

I received in the meantime your letter for which I want to thank you and for the decision of the Union which you and your people have prepared so skilfully and effectively. Their joining is of the greatest importance for the Congress.

I am personally delighted to look forward to close cooperation with you in the coming years. I want also to thank you for your most gracious remarks about me in your message to the dinner. I am more than sorry that you cannot come to Nice, but I hope you can send Schindler. It would be very important for us to have one of your colleagues at the meeting of the Governing Council and the new commission on reorganization. He would have to be at NICE from Jaunary 4th till the deal is concluded and could fly back on the eight.

Wishing you very speedy recovery and all the best for you and your lovely wife for the New Year, I am most cordially

Yours,

April 9, 1971

Mr. Alvin E. Coleman 20 East 76 Street New York, N.Y. 10021

Dear Alvin,

Forgive me for not responding sooner to your letter of March 25th, but as you know I have been in the hospital and it is difficult for me to get to my mail; yet, I wanted to respond to your letter myself.

Alex Schindler told me that he wrote Rabbi Sobel a long letter, presumably intended for presentation to your Board, which spells out in great detail just what the World Jewish Congress is and what the reasons are which motivated our joining this organization. For your perusal and just in case you haven't seen this letter, I am attaching another copy. There is very little I need add to it or substact from it.

Your arguments concerning the World Union for Progressive Judausm would be most persuasive, were the World Union truly as representative as you think. Unfortunately, the World Union does not have congregations "wherever Jews live in considerable numbers." As a case in point, fundamentally we have only one really very active congregation in all of South America, and yet a million Jews live there whose problems must be the concern of the American Jewish community. Vast segments of European Jewry are without contact via the World Union for Progressive Judatsm. We have no congregation in many lands of that continent; in 'a word, there are problems of world Jewry and concerns which are properly ours which can only flow through our loose affiliation with the World Jewish Congress. I underscore the adjective "loose" because by joining the World Jewish Congress we do not in any sense surrender our autonomy. This is abundantly made clear in the constitution of the Congress. The Congress does not speak for us and we are not bound by its decisions or resolutions by any manner of means.

Obviously, no decisions of the Union Board are binding for all time to come, and if as you fear actions of the Congress prove to be "more divisive than productive" we will certainly have the opportunity to terminate our affiliation, and if this does transpire, why then I will be the first to recommend that we do so.

With cordial greetings, I am

Very sincerely yours,

mnE proud like you to answer. ARCHIVES

CONGREGATION EMANU-EL

of the City of New York

ONE EAST SIXTY FIFTH STREET . NEW YORK 10021 . 212 RH 4 · 1400

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

alors

March 25, 1971

Dear Maurice:

At the last meeting of the Temple Emanu-El Board of Trustees, March 23, 1971, the matter of the Union's recently announced association with the American Section of the World Jewish Congress was discussed. A number of trustees could not understand how membership in an international organization, about which there is so much divided opinion, should be dealt with as a casual matter of business, without prior reference to the Union Board for study and consideration. A near-unanimous vote in these circumstances can only be understood as being uninformed. This certainly was true in my own case.

Others expressed misgivings that a specifically religious organization like the U.A.H.C. should seek affiliation with an international body whose purposes, while specifically Jewish, are in no visible way related to the needs and programs of Reform Jews in the United States.

The U.A.H.C. is closely bound to the World Union for Progressive Judaism which is an international body whose interests have a special kinship with us. The World Union has congregations whereever Jews live in considerable numbers and surely we can learn all that is needed about the conditions under which Jews live through these contacts. We are not even in the dark about the Iron Curtain countries.

The discussion by our board indicated that there were strong doubts as to the wisdom of this affiliation, and fears were expressed that this relationship will be less productive than it will be devisive. Many individuals in all congregations and some congregations as units must find this new association distasteful to them and difficult to understand.

The Board with nearly all members present has asked me by unanimous vote to communicate its feelings to you and to urge that the association with the World Jewish Congress be at most pro forma and nominal and that it be terminated in the event that actions are taken by the Congress which might indeed prove greatly divisive.

Sincerely yours,

Alvin E. Coleman

Dr. Maurice N. Eisendrath

838 Fifth Avenue

New York, N.Y. 10021 FORMED BY THE CONSOLIDATION OF EMANU-EL CONGREGATION AND TEMPLE BETH-EL

February 8, 1971

Rabbi Ronald B. Sobel Temple Emanu El 1 East 65th Street New York, N.Y. 10021

Dear Ronald,

As always, it was a pleasure to chat with you. In re your request for information concerning the World Jewish Congress, let me say briefly that the Congress is an international Jewish umbrella organization with its headquarters in Geneva and with affiliates in more than sixty countries in all quarters of the globe.

With a few exceptions, the affiliates of the World Jewish Congress are all central representative bodies of entire Jewish communities. In France, England and the United States, there are sections of the World Jewish Congress. It is this American section which the Union of American Hebrew Congregations joined.

The sims of the World Jewish Congress are to insure the survival of the Jewish people and to strengthen its unity by coordinating the efforts of its member organizations in political, economic, social and cultural fields; to safeguard and secure the rights, status and interests of Jews and Jewish communities throughout the world and to represent member organizations and the interests of the Jewish people as a whole before governmental, inter-governmental, and international authorities.

As indicated, the World Jewish Congress is not a functioning organization but an umbrella organization, which means that the autonomy of constituent organizations is fully maintained. The World Jewish Congress, in effect, merely provides a forum where leaders of World Jewry can meet and exchange information about the progress and needs of their respective communities, and where they can gather whatever strength flows from the companionship of fellow Jews.

Why should the UAHC join this group? The reasons are self-evident, but they are well articulated by Maurice in his message to the Board of the UAHC. Let me quote the pertinent paragraphs:

"One of the brightest ideals which animated Isaac Mayer Wise was that of a unified Jewish community. His commitment to K'lal Yisroel has been a decisive force in the history of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. It has also been a paramount principle in my own career. While a rabbi in Toronto, I helped organize the Canadian Jewish Congress. As president of the UAHC, I have been deeply involved in every struggle on the American scene for the achievement of greater unity, cooperation, and harmony among all Jewish organizations.

"Today is has become urgent to increase cooperation and joint collaboration on the world Jewish scene as well. The situation in the Middle East, the ordeal of Soviet Jewry, and the fragile position of much of Latin Jewry - along with other international problems - require concerted action and attention by Jewish bodies throughout the world. The best available vehicle for such joint concern is the World Jewish Congress, which has invited us, along with all other major Jewish organizations in the United States, to be associated in its American section.

"Raithful to the vision of K'lal Yisroel, and determined to do all that we can to concert our energies effectively in behalf of our fellow Jews everywhere, I therefore recommend that we accept the invitation to associate the UAHC with the Congress through membership in the American section of this world Jewish body."

Maurice's recommendation was accepted unanimously by our Board. There was extensive discussion and all of it was favorable. You ought to know that among those who spoke firmly and strongly for our joining this international Jewish umbrella organization was Rabbi David Polish speaking for the Central Conference of American Rabbis) (whose Executive Committee recommended that the CCAR join in its own right) as well as Rabbi Nelson Glueck who even asked to be recorded as speaking in favor of this step.

I was wryly amused by your suggestion that the World Jewish Congress is but a Zionist organization, for most of the calls in criticism of our joining which I have received in recent days -- and they have been few, really -- have come from established Zionists who complain that the World Jewish Congress in its approach has not been in sufficient agreement with every aspect of Israeli governmental policy. It is true that at one point in its history the World Jewish Congress was consumed by the problem of establishing the State, but since the establishment of the State the building of a strong vital diaspora community has become the focus of Congress concern and activity.

The Congress, marginally noted, is also the only organization in the international sphere in which the Reform Jewish community does not have some kind of second-class citizenship. In many quarters we are totally ignored. Not so in the ranks of the World Jewish Congress. After all, the Congress was founded by a Reform rabbi - Stephen Wise -- and moreover, while its present president, Nahum Goldmann, is not a Reform Jew, Reform Jews are in the highest level of Congress leadership, and such names as Joachim Prinz and Philip Klutznick are bandied about as the likely successors to Nahum Goldmann.

This, then, is it. I hope that this information is helpful to you.

With affectionate good wishes, I am

Cordially,

Member Organizations of the American Section:

76 1000 1

THE AMERICAN JEWISH CONGRESS; AMERICANS FOR PROGRESSIVE ISRAEL; B'NAI ZION; FARBAND; HADASSAH; JEWISH RECONSTRUCTIONIST FOUNDATION; MIZRACHI-HAPOEL HAMIZRACHI; MIZRACHI WOMEN; PIONEER WOMEN; POALE AGUDATH ISRAEL; POALE ZION-UNITED ZIONISTS-REVISIONISTS OF AMERICA; RABBINICAL ASSEMBLY; UNION OF ORTHODOX JEWISH CONGREGATIONS OF AMERICA; UNITED VALUE CONGREGATIONS OF AM

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MEMORANDUM

		Date January 4, 1971	
From	Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler		
То	EXECUTIVE STAFF and REGIONAL	DIRECTORS	
Copy for information of_			
Subject			

As a result of the recent Board action, and stimulated by the recent national Jewish Post editorial on the subject, we received a number of inquiries concerning the reasons which motivated the UAHC to join the American section of the World Jewish Congress. Many of the people do not even know what the Congress is.

In response to such an inquiry by Baltimore Hebrew Congregation, I sent a letter to its president, Henry Fensterwald, which spells out our view on the subject.

It may be helpful to you in answering any questions you may receive concerning this issue.



838 FIFTH AVENUE . NEW YORK, N. Y. 10021 . (212) 249-0100

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, Vice President

December 31, 1970

Mr. Henry J. Fensterwald Baltimore Hebrew Congregation 7401 Park Heights Avenue Baltimore, Maryland 21208

Dear Henry,

As always, it was a pleasure to chat with you. In re your request for information concerning the World Jewish Congress, let me say briefly that the Congress is an international Jewish umbrella organization with its headquarters in Geneva and with affiliates in more than sixty countries in all quarters of the globe.

With a few exceptions, the affiliates of the World Jewish Congress are all central representative bodies of entire Jewish communities. In France, England and the United States, there are sections of the World Jewish Congress. It is this American section which the Union of American Hebrew Congregations joined.

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Why should the UAHC join this group? The reasons are self-evident, but they are well articulated by Maurice in his message to the Board of the UAHC. Let me quote the pertinent paragraphs:

"One of the brightest ideals which animated Isaac Mayer Wise was that of a united Jewish community. His commitment to K'lal Yisroel has been a decisive force in the history of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. It has also been a paramount principle in my own career. While a rabbi in Toronto, I helped organize the Canadian Jewish Congress. As president of the UAHC, I have been deeply involved in every struggle on the American scene for the achievement of greater unity, cooperation, and harmony among all Jewish organizations.

"Today it has become urgent to increase cooperation and joint collaboration on the world Jewish scene as well. The situation in the Middle East, the ordeal of Soviet Jewry, and the fragile position of much of Latin Jewry - along with other international problems - require concerted action and attention by Jewish bodies throughout the world. The best available vehicle for such joint concern is the World Jewish Congress, which has invited us, along with all other major Jewish organizations in the United States, to be associated in its American section.

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I was wryly amused by your suggestion that the World Jewish Congress is but a Zionist organization, for most of the calls in criticism of our joining which I have received in recent days -- and they have been few, really -- have come from establishment Zionists who complain that the World Jewish Congress in its approach has not been in sufficient agreement with every aspect of Israeli governmental policy. It is true that at one point in its history the World Jewish Congress was consumed by the problem of establishing the State, but since the establishment of the State the building of a strong vital diaspora community has become the focus of Congress concern and activity.

The Congress, marginally noted, is also the only organization in the international sphere in which the Reform Jewish community does not have some kind of second-class citizenship. In many quarters we are totally ignored. Not so in the ranks of the World Jewish Congress. After all, the Congress was founded by a Reform rabbi -- Stephen Wise -- and moreover, while its present president, Nahum Goldmann, is not a Reform Jew, Reform Jews are in the highest level of Congress leadership, and such names as Joachim Prinz and Philip Klutznick are bandied about as the likely successors to Nahum Goldmann.

This, then, is it. I hope that this information is helpful to you. Following our conversations I had a call along similar lines from Mrs. Dalsheimer. Accordingly, I take the liberty of sending her a copy of my letter to you.

If there is anything else I can do to help you, by all means let me know.

I appreciate your invitation to come to Baltimore Hebrew "one of these days." Nothing would delight me more. I would like to be there not when we have a difficulty to resolve but under more normal circumstances.

With affectionate good wishes, I am

Cordially,

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MEMORANDUM

Date January 4, 1971

From	Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler	
То	EXECUTIVE STAFF and REGIONAL DIRECTORS	
Copy for information of_		
Subject		

As a result of the recent Board action, and stimulated by the recent national Jewish Post editorial on the subject, we received a number of inquiries concerning the reasons which motivated the UAHC to join the American section of the World Jewish Congress. Many of the people do not even know what the Congress is.

In response to such an inquiry by Baltimore Hebrew Congregation, I sent a letter to its president, Henry Fensterwald, which spells out our view on the subject.

It may be helpful to you in answering any questions you may receive concerning this issue.



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Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, Vice President

December 31, 1970

Mr. Henry J. Fensterwald Baltimore Hebrew Congregation 7401 Park Heights Avenue Baltimore, Maryland 21208

Dear Henry,

As always, it was a pleasure to chat with you. In re your request for information concerning the World Jewish Congress, let me say briefly that the Congress is an international Jewish umbrella organization with its headquarters in Geneva and with affiliates in more than sixty countries in all quarters of the globe.

With a few exceptions, the affiliates of the World Jewish Congress are all central representative bodies of entire Jewish communities. In France, England and the United States, there are sections of the World Jewish Congress. It is this American section which the Union of American Hebrew Congregations joined.

The aims of the World Jewish Congress are to insure the survival of the Jewish people and to strengthen its unity by coordinating the efforts of its member organizations in political, economic, social and cultural fields; to safeguard and secure the rights, status and interests of Jews and Jewish communities throughout the world and to represent member organizations and the interests of the Jewish people as a whole before governmental, inter-governmental, and international authorities."

As indicated, the World Jewish Congress is not a functioning organization but an umbrella organization, which means that the autonomy of constituent organizations is fully maintained. The World Jewish Congress, in effect, merely provides a forum where leaders of World Jewry can meet and exchange information about the progress and needs of their respective communities, and where they can gather whatever strength flows from the companionship of fellow Jews.

Why should the UAHC join this group? The reasons are self-evident, but they are well articulated by Maurice in his message to the Board of the UAHC. Let me quote the pertinent paragraphs:

"One of the brightest ideals which animated Isaac Mayer Wise was that of a united Jewish community. His commitment to K'lal Yisroel has been a decisive force in the history of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. It has also been a paramount principle in my own career. While a rabbi in Toronto, I helped organize the Canadian Jewish Congress. As president of the UAHC, I have been deeply involved in every struggle on the American scene for the achievement of greater unity, cooperation, and harmony among all Jewish organizations.

"Today it has become urgent to increase cooperation and joint collaboration on the world Jewish scene as well. The situation in the Middle East, the ordeal of Soviet Jewry, and the fragile position of much of Latin Jewry - along with other ar Alex

international problems - require concerted action and attention by Jewish bodies throughout the world. The best available vehicle for such joint concern is the World Jewish Congress, which has invited us, along with all other major Jewish organizations in the United States, to be associated in its American section.

"Faithful to the vision of $\underline{K'lal\ Yisroel}$, and determined to do all that we can to concert our energies effectively in behalf of our fellow Jews everywhere, I therefore recommend that we accept the invitation to associate the UAHC with the Congress through membership in the American section of this world Jewish body."

Maurice's recommendation was accepted unanimously by our Board. There was extensive discussion and all of it was favorable. You ought to know that among those who spoke firmly and strongly for our joining this international Jewish umbrella organization was Rabbi David Polish speaking for the Central Conference of American Rabbis (whose Executive Committee recommended that the CCAR join in its own right) as well as Rabbi Nelson Glueck who even asked to be recorded as speaking in favor of this step.

I was wryly amused by your suggestion that the World Jewish Congress is but a Zionist organization, for most of the calls in criticism of our joining which I have received in recent days -- and they have been few, really -- have come from establishment Zionists who complain that the World Jewish Congress in its approach has not been in sufficient agreement with every aspect of Israeli governmental policy. It is true that at one point in its history the World Jewish Congress was consumed by the problem of establishing the State, but since the establishment of the State the building of a strong vital diaspora community has become the focus of Congress concern and activity.

The Congress, marginally noted, is also the only organization in the international sphere in which the Reform Jewish community does not have some kind of second-class citizenship. In many quarters we are totally ignored. Not so in the ranks of the World Jewish Congress. After all, the Congress was founded by a Reform rabbi -- Stephen Wise -- and moreover, while its present president, Nahum Goldmann, is not a Reform Jew, Reform Jews are in the highest level of Congress leadership, and such names as Joachim Prinz and Philip Klutznick are bandied about as the likely successors to Nahum Goldmann.

This, then, is it. I hope that this information is helpful to you. Following our conversations I had a call along similar lines from Mrs. Dalsheimer. Accordingly, I take the liberty of sending her a copy of my letter to you.

If there is anything else I can do to help you, by all means let me know.

I appreciate your invitation to come to Baltimore Hebrew "one of these days." Nothing would delight me more. I would like to be there not when we have a difficulty to resolve but under more normal circumstances.

With affectionate good wishes, I am

Cordially,