

HOLOCAUST

Prepared By Ner Le'Elef

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THE HOLOCAUST – A SPEECH SUGGESTION

Most of the book of Iyov (Job) describes the great suffering of Iyov and the attempts of his three friends to comfort him. Iyov's friends try to give him reasons why G-d has let him suffer so, but Iyov rejects all these explanations. At the end of the book, in the last chapter, G-d praises Iyov and condemns his friends. This seems strange because it was his friends who were defending G-d and Iyov who would not be comforted. The Malbim (last chapter, verse 7) explains that although Iyov's friends were giving all sorts of explanations, deep down they did not believe these explanations themselves. They had lingering doubts about whether G-d is, in fact, righteous in his ways, and they were rationalizing to Iyov a logic that was really, for them, only skin deep.

Iyov, on the other hand, was just the opposite. Deep down Iyov believed in the total righteousness of everything that G-d does in His world. But he was honest enough not to accept any answer which did not strike him as being totally true. He would rather leave things unanswered and continue his search for the true answer. G-d praises such a man, condemning those whose facile and superficial attempts at rationalizing human tragedy are not even believed by themselves.

We see from this that when dealing with the Holocaust we are allowed to ask tough questions and we are allowed to leave them unanswered. We must be careful not to clutch onto explanations that may satisfy us for the minute but are not what that horrendous event is really all about. Better to, Iyov-like, continue the search.

But search we must. We are enjoined to understand the meaning of such a cataclysmic event in Jewish history. We, the Jewish nation, have always sought to explain the deeper meaning of history, for how else to feel the moral and spiritual messages which Divine Providence is transmitting to us through events of this sort? For three to four decades after the event, the great Sages restrained, in the main, from giving this kind of explanation. The matter was too fresh; we were too close to have any real understanding of things. But as time passes and some distance is created, explanations are beginning to emerge.

Our expectations are not to fully answer every last question we have. Only Moses merited seeing ultimate explanations behind why people suffer. Yet, some understanding is indeed possible.

When G-d created the world, He did so with 10 Sayings of Creation. Later, we were to see a second 10 – the 10 plagues. The ten plagues confirmed that G-d not only created the world once, but also continues to play an active role in the running of the world, the idea of Divine Providence. He is involved in our lives. He is the G-d of history, controlling the unfolding of His Divine plan.

There is yet a third "ten", the Ten Commandments, or more accurately the ten sayings of Sinai. These represent the inner, spiritual content, the purpose of the previous tens.

We, as mortal and limited humans, had no part in the first ten, the ten Sayings of Creation. Indeed, even the second ten, the ten plagues of history, we experienced but we did not control. We can respond to events and sometimes we can even initiate them, but we do not control the destiny of the Jewish people. It is the third ten, the Ten Sayings or Commandments of Sinai which are truly ours. The Torah was given to man, and he determines what his own inner spiritual and moral reality will be, ultimately determining that of the world.

So when we say of the Holocaust, “Never again!” we have to understand what we are saying. If we mean that we will control history never to allow another Holocaust, then surely the events since the Second World War have made a mockery of that statement. The Rwandan genocide in the late 90s killed a million and a half people at a rate greater than the rate at which the Nazis killed the Jews. Mao’s Cultural Revolution killed over twenty million. Hundreds of thousands have been killed in Senegal, the Congo, Uganda and dozens of other places. Cambodia killed a million and a half. There have been more people killed in wars since the Second World War than during the war. And the carnage shows no signs of abating. So those who stand up and shout “Never again!” make a hollow, arrogant and insensitive cry. While millions die, they mouth their empty slogan.

But there is a plane which we do control, the last, moral and spiritual ten. Here there is an awful lot of history that we can express. Every Jewish community we build, every Yeshiva we establish is a slap in the face of Hitler and his evil. Our goodness will prevail. His evil is long gone; Nazism has been consigned, with others who challenged us, to the ash heaps of history. Emile Fackenheim has stated that we should not give Hitler a posthumous victory and indeed, we have not. Our world has seen an unparalleled expansion of new communities, of new centers of Torah study, of new interest by Jews in their Judaism. Hitler’s scars are felt, they are felt deeply – beyond words. But the Jewish nation has won the war. As A.H. Heschel put it: “Let the blasphemy of our time not become the eternal scandal. Let future generations not loathe us for having failed to preserve what prophets and saints, martyrs and scholars have created for thousands of years. The apostles of force have shown that they are great in evil. Let us reveal that we are as great in goodness.”¹

¹ Note: Heschel would have done well to listen more closely to his own words.

CHAPTER A: NAZI GERMANY AND THE HOLOCAUST: A HISTORICAL SUMMARY

The numbers of people murdered by Stalin's tyranny far surpass those killed in the Nazi camps. The numbers of Mao's victims are yet greater. Pol Pot killed a far higher proportion of the population than Hitler did. Yet, even after thinking about Stalin, Mao and Pol Pot, to turn towards Hitler still seems to be to look into the deepest darkness of all.

Jonathan Glover in Humanity, A Moral History of the Twentieth Century

Humanity, A Moral History of the Twentieth Century: By Jonathan Glover:

In Europe at the start of the twentieth century most people [shared two beliefs about man and society. Firstly, they believed that] there was a moral law, which was self-evidently to be obeyed. At the end of the century, it is hard to be confident about the moral law.

The other belief, in moral progress, has also been undermined. The problems have come from events. ... The mutual slaughter of the First World War, the terror-famine of the Ukraine, the Gulag, Auschwitz, Dresden, the Burma Railway, Hiroshima, Vietnam, the Chinese Cultural Revolution, Cambodia, Rwanda, the collapse of Yugoslavia [all showed that mankind remains a brute and a beast]....

Barbarism [was certainly not] unique to the twentieth century: the whole of human history includes... every kind of ... cruelty. But, [in the twentieth century, technology meant that] the decisions of a few people can mean horror and death for hundreds of thousands, even millions, of other people. These events shock us not only by their scale. They also contrast with the expectations, at least in Europe, with which the twentieth century began. One hundred years of largely unbroken European peace between the defeat of Napoleon and the First World War made it plausible to think that the human race was growing out of its warlike past. In 1915 the poet Charles Sorely, writing home a few months before being killed in battle, found it natural to say, 'After all, war in this century is inexcusable. Philip Larkin's late-century comment was 'Never such innocence again.'

i - History of the Holocaust

After World War I, Germany had to pay \$23 billion in war reparations. Considering that Germany had mortgaged its resources for the next 20 years, it was an impossible demand and it broke the economy. The result was that Germany went into hyper-inflation, unemployment soared out of control, and the country went wild with rival factions fighting in the streets.

The political situation in Germany was extremely unstable. The writings of Trotsky and Lenin reveal the efforts that the 'communist international' was putting into Germany. Everyone was sure that Germany was the next country to become communist.

In this climate, small nationalist folk parties started to spring up. All of them had similar agendas on their platform: 'Democracy had to go to regain law and order. These

parties claimed that it was not that Germany lost World War I; rather, the soldiers on the front lines had the rug pulled out from under their feet.

Who did that? Those wheelers and dealers back home - the Jews¹. Jonathan Glover² describes how 'Hitler blamed the defeat [of the Germans in WWI] on a stab in the back, the betrayal of those at the front by Jewish agitators for revolution. Boiling anger dominates Mein Kampf: It would have been the duty of a serious government, now that the German worker had found his way back to his nation, to exterminate mercilessly the agitators who were misleading the nation. If the best men were dying at the front, the least we could do was to wipe out the vermin.

The nationalism was tribal, based not on a shared culture but on racial unity.... Hitler's hatred of cosmopolitan variety comes out in his reaction to inter-war Vienna: 'I was repelled by the conglomeration of races which the capital showed me, repelled by this whole mixture of Czechs, Poles, Hungarians, Ruthenians, Serbs and Croats, and everywhere, the eternal mushroom of humanity, Jews and more Jews.'

In 1933, approximately nine million Jews lived in the 21 countries of Europe that would be occupied by Germany during the war. By 1945, two out of every three European Jews had been killed. Had the Nazis had their way, every remaining Jew would have been killed as well. In addition, the Nazis killed hundreds of thousands of Roma (Gypsies) and at least 250,000 mentally or physically disabled persons. As Nazi tyranny spread across Europe from 1933 to 1945, millions of other innocent people were persecuted and murdered. More than three million Soviet prisoners of war were killed because of their nationality. Poles, as well as other Slavs, were targeted for slave labor, and as a result, almost two million perished. Homosexuals and others deemed "anti-social" were also persecuted and often murdered. In addition, thousands of political and religious dissidents such as communists, socialists, trade unionists, and Jehovah's Witnesses were persecuted for their beliefs and behavior and many of these individuals died as a result of maltreatment. However, the Final Solution was a plan directed only at the Jews.

The events of the Holocaust occurred in two main phases: 1933-1939 and 1939-1945.

a. 1933-1939:

On January 30, 1933, Adolf Hitler was named Chancellor of the German government by the aged President Hindenburg who hoped Hitler could lead the nation out of its grave political and economic crisis.³ Hitler was the leader of the right-wing National Socialist

¹From the beginning until here, based on an article by Rabbis Eliyahu Essis and Shmuel Silinsky on the Aish Web site.

²in *Humanity, A Moral History of the Twentieth Century*. Until the end of the next paragraph is a direct quote from Glover.

³A biography of Hitler, adapted from the NY Times: Hitler was born in an inn at Braunau, Austria, close to the German frontier, April 20, 1889. His father was Alois Schickelgruber, the illegitimate son of Alois Hitler. The future Fuehrer's parent was originally a peasant, but later entered the Austrian customs service. He was married three times, his third wife, who was also his niece and ward, being twenty years younger than her husband. She was the future dictator's mother. Seven children were born of the three marriages contracted by Hitler's father, who died of pulmonary hemorrhage at the age of 66. His three wives died of weak chests. Two of Hitler's brothers and a sister died in childhood. A niece of the Fuehrer committed suicide. A half-brother had no progeny. The German dictator himself never married. At the age of 16 he suffered from lung trouble. On his mother's side there were

several eccentrics in the family. In general, the family showed definite tendencies to illness and mental instability. By the time Hitler was 19 yrs old, both his parents were dead. Hitler found himself alone and friendless, without any means of earning a living and quite unprepared for the battle of life. He had been a failure at school and was unable to pass examinations. ... From 1909 to the outbreak of the First World War, Hitler led a wretched existence. ... He spent nights on park benches, harassed by the police. He was an outcast among outcasts, eating at a monastery soup kitchen. ... Then came the war. It lifted Hitler from obscurity into a state of exaltation. *"To me those hours were like a deliverance," Hitler wrote of the outbreak of the war in Mein Kampf. "I am not ashamed to say that, overcome by a storm of enthusiasm, I fell on my knees and thanked Heaven from an overflowing heart."*

A year before, in Salzburg, the Austrian doctors had rejected him for military service because of physical weakness. He now volunteered for the German Army, and, when accepted, felt a sense of power and of great things to come. At the front, where he served as a dispatch carrier, he was rewarded with the Iron Cross. Because his superiors did not take him seriously he was not advanced beyond the rank of lance corporal. He was gassed, and the end of the war found him in a hospital in Passewalk, Pomerania. He viewed with pain the collapse of the German Empire. His hour had not yet struck, but he felt that his day would come. His confidence in himself was as great as his sense of frustration.

In 1919 Hitler was assigned to the task of keeping an eye on a little band calling itself the German Labor party. Hitler joined this group and was followed soon thereafter by several hundred officers and former officers whom Ernst Roehm, at that time a captain on the staff of the Military governor of Bavaria, had instructed to become members of the organization. This little party developed ultimately into the German National Socialist party, the organization forged by Hitler as the instrument for the achievement of power.

He went about making speeches bemoaning the wrongs done to Germany, appealing to audiences and stirring them with the promise of new power and greatness to come. The extremism of his utterances and promises made little impression at first. The poor lance corporal was treated as a circus performer. People laughed at him and his dreams. ...

"By shrewd and constant application of propaganda, heaven can be presented to the people as hell and, vice versa, the wretchedest existence as a paradise," he wrote in *"Mein Kampf"*.

Hitler's extraordinary success as a mob orator lay in his uncanny ability to strike the most sensitive chords in the hearts of the masses. ... Long before he had dreamed of achieving power he had developed the principles that nations were destined to hate, oppose and destroy one another; that the law of history was the struggle for survival between peoples; that the Germans were chosen by destiny to rule over others, and that the great mass of the people were mediocrities immersed in a low materialism and destined to be dominated by a higher social type. The Jews he regarded as particularly inferior and a danger to all other peoples....

Stubbornly, persistently, Hitler toiled at the task of building his movement. ... Hitler's first "Putsch" on Nov. 8 and 9, 1923, in Munich, known as "the beer-cellar Putsch," was a failure. Believing his "Tag" had arrived, Hitler forced his way into an assembly of high-ranking Bavarian generals, Ministers, Government officials and politicians in the rathskeller of the Munich City Hall on the evening of Nov. 8 and, brandishing a revolver, fired a shot into the air, announcing that his revolution had begun. There followed a skirmish next day in the center of the city between several thousand of Hitler's followers and the police. Hitler was caught and tried for treason. The sentence was five years' imprisonment in a fortress. He served only a few months and was paroled, returning to political activity. After the fiasco of the Munich "Putsch" it seemed as if Hitler's cause was irretrievably lost.... He was at work on *"Mein Kampf"*, begun in prison, but at the same time continued quietly at the task of rebuilding his shattered group and developing the foundations for his mass movement.

Within the next seven years he obtained a huge following, which came to number 3,000,000. It was built along military lines, with army corps, regiments and companies. The men wore uniforms and were subject to strict military discipline. This army consisted of the Storm Troops, who wore brown shirts, and the Black Guards, representing more carefully picked formations, wearing black shirts. These troops acted as the Hitler police at public meetings and demonstrations, attacked Jews in the streets of Munich, broke up meetings of the opposition, staged street brawls with Communists and

republicans, beat up leaders of other parties and, in general, conducted a reign of terror with which the authorities found it increasingly difficult to cope, in proportion as the political aspect of the Nazi movement gathered strength. The nation was thrown into a state of veritable civil war. ...The same methods that Hitler subsequently used against other nations--intimidation, violent and abusive propaganda, coercion and terror--were applied by the Nazis to their political opponents in Germany. ...The factor that gave his movement this great impetus was the economic crisis that broke over the world in 1929 and struck Germany with particular severity. Nearly 7,000,000 unemployed, added to the millions of impoverished middle-class people and the hundreds of thousands of professionals and jobless intellectuals, provided a setting made to order for Hitler....After his electoral victory of 1930 Hitler moved to consolidate his position with the Reichswehr. ...There was talk of Hitler's being taken into the Government, but he persistently refused, saying he would not rule unless he was able to command all authority. At the same time, however, he declared that he would attain that power by "legal" means only, that he had no intention of carrying out a coup d'etat.

In 1931 Hitler was received by President von Hindenburg for the first time. ...He appeared to have won the President's confidence by speaking enthusiastically of the army and expressing his profound interest in its welfare, while pledging fealty to the aged executive. ...The situation became more acute when Hitler, despite his flattering of Hindenburg, who, he had hoped in vain, would call him to the Chancellorship, announced his own candidacy for the Presidency in the spring of 1932. In that campaign he intensified his agitation against the republic, the Versailles Treaty and the Government's fulfillment policy. The whole world saw in the campaign a life-and-death struggle between the Nazis and the republic, as, indeed, it was. Hindenburg, running for a third term, emerged victorious, with 19,000,000 votes against 13,000,000 for Hitler. At the same time, however, Hitler registered his greatest electoral triumph from the point of view of votes received. From then on he was, indeed, a power not to be ignored. ...He was biding his time for the final blow at the republic. "The Chancellorship or nothing!" he demanded....

General von Schleicher, army chief, fearing a union of the Hitlerites and Communists, against whom the army would be unable to stand, forced von Papen's resignation and himself assumed the Chancellorship. Von Schleicher's was "the second Cabinet of monocles." Powerful elements in the army and around von Papen, bent on helping Hitler to the Chancellorship, refused to support von Schleicher, however, who thereupon demanded another dissolution of the Reichstag and a general election. Hindenburg refused, and on the advice of his son, Oskar, and General von Blomberg, who subsequently became Minister of War in Hitler's government, called Hitler to Schleicher's place. This was on Jan. 30, 1933. Hitler's goal was attained.

Upon calling Hitler to the Chancellorship, Hindenburg instructed him to form a coalition Government with other parties of the right. He was to observe the Constitution and rule only with the consent of the Reichstag. Hitler accepted these terms, with the proviso that new Reichstag elections were to be called so he might once more seek the approval of the electorate. Hindenburg was pleased by this ostensible desire of Hitler to seek the support of the majority. In fact, he was delighted.

The Reichstag was dissolved and in the campaign that ensued the Nazis unleashed a flood of propaganda eclipsing anything that had gone before. With the machinery of Government in their hands and in command of the National Treasury, with the prestige of authority behind them, the Nazis were able to terrorize the electorate and so cripple the campaign activities of other parties as to command the advantage.

The Nationalists, having helped Hitler to power, now saw themselves completely outmaneuvered by the Nazi chieftain.

One of the most shocking events in the history of the Nazi regime came on the evening of Feb. 27, 1933, a week before the elections. On that evening the Reichstag building suddenly went up in flames. Part of the building collapsed. The fire, it was determined, was of incendiary origin, for a great deal of inflammable material was used to start the conflagration. Hitler announced that Communists were the incendiaries, while Goering proclaimed that documentary material to prove this charge would soon be made public.

The burning of the Reichstag produced a profound impression. Masses of people believed the Communists were actually responsible. More than ever they looked to Hitler as the savior of the

German Workers Party (the Nazi Party). By 1933, it had become the strongest party in Germany, even though, reflecting the country's multi-party system, the Nazis had only won 33 percent of the votes in the 1932 elections.

Once in power, Hitler moved quickly to end German democracy. He convinced his cabinet to invoke emergency clauses of the Constitution which permitted the suspension of individual freedoms of the press, speech, and assembly. Leaders of the opposition were either murdered or arrested. The Enabling Act of March 23, 1933, forced through a Reichstag already purged of many political opponents, gave dictatorial powers to Hitler.

In 1934, within six months of appointing Hitler chancellor, Von Hindenburg died.

Hitler then also became president of Germany and declared the Nazi party the only legal party. He established the first concentration camp, Dachau, just outside Munich, for the few who dared oppose him.

He stated:

*"I want the young to be violent, domineering, undismayed, cruel. The young must be all these things. They must be able to bear pain. There must be nothing weak or gentle about them. The free, splendid beast of prey must once again flash from their eyes."*¹

Despite these draconian measures, Hitler had become enormously popular. He had managed to turn the economy around and create a sense of national pride.

In 1933, the Nazis began to put into practice their racial ideology. Echoing ideas popular in Germany as well as most other western nations well before the 1930s, the Nazis believed that the Germans were "racially superior" and that there was a struggle for survival between them and "inferior races." They saw Jews, Roma (Gypsies), and the handicapped as a serious biological threat to the purity of the "German (Aryan) Race,"² what they called the "master race."

Jews, who numbered around 500,000 in Germany (less than one percent of the total population in 1933), were an "inferior" race who were the source of Germany's problems, including the economic depression and the country's defeat in World War I (1914-1918).³

nation, and, indeed, in the elections a week later he won his greatest victory, but with only 43 percent of the votes cast.

...Widespread belief in Germany and abroad, on the basis of extensive investigation, was that the Hitlerites themselves set fire to the Reichstag, with van der Lubbe as their tool, to enhance their chances in the election.

After the election Hitler proceeded at full steam toward establishment of his dictatorship. ... He was now the "legal" dictator of Germany. On June 27 he threw Hugenberg, leader of the Conservatives, out of the Government and the Nazis ruled supreme. Ostensibly, the dictatorial power wrested by Hitler from the Reichstag was for four years, until April 1, 1937, but actually it meant the end of democracy in Germany.

¹ Adolf Hitler, quoted in Alice Miller, For Your Own Good: the Roots of Violence in Child-rearing

²The term "Aryan" originally referred to peoples speaking Indo-European languages. The Nazis perverted its meaning to support racist ideas by viewing those of Germanic background as prime examples of Aryan stock, which they considered racially superior. For the Nazis, the typical Aryan was blond, blue-eyed, and tall.

³On April 27, 2001, the C.I.A. made public a file on Hitler which included a prewar description of the Nazi leader as a "border case between genius and insanity" and the prediction that he could become the "craziest criminal the world ever knew." (The report is based on an interview with an informer,

In the early days, the Nazis just wanted the Jews out. In fact, they were helping Jews to emigrate to what was then Palestine. But later the exit doors were shut.

Signs of the times: "Parks Not For Jews." "Jews Aren't Wanted." "Proudly Announcing the Re-Opening of a Former Jewish Business, Now Owned By a German."

The German scientific community got on the bandwagon with pseudo-scientific presentations. The theory was that Jewish features could be scientifically determined. Many Germans were measured to absolve themselves of the "taint" of Jewish genes. Store windows displayed a device that could be placed on a person's head. Twirl the dials, and it was guaranteed to tell whether the person was an Aryan or a Jew. Apparently, Jewish heads are round and fat, and Aryan heads are narrow and thin. A person could buy it for a few marks.¹ Using skillful propaganda, the Nazis brought German anti-Semitism to a fever pitch.

The Nazis introduced the idea that the Germans were Aryans, the super-race and everyone else was sub-human. The Poles were fit to be slaves. The worst were the Jews.... blamed the Jews for "two great wounds upon humanity: "Circumcision of the Body and Conscience of the Soul."

The Nazi propaganda paper, *Der Sturmer*, revived the "Blood Libels." The church would warn their constituents: "Watch your children 6-7 weeks before Passover... Everyone knows that just before Passover Jews need the blood of a Christian child, maybe, to mix in with their Matzah." The attitude taught to the children was, "Just as one poisonous mushroom can poison a whole family, one Jew can poison a whole town or a whole country!"

Der Sturmer was running contests encouraging German children to write in. One little girl wrote, "People are so bothered by the way we're treating the Jews. They can't understand it, because they are God's creatures. But cockroaches are also God's creatures, and we destroy them."²

Hans Bie, who said he discussed Hitler's growing megalomania with Dr. Sauerbruch at a party in 1937. According to the memorandum, Dr. Sauerbruch was reported to have said that "from close observation of Hitler for many years, he had formed the opinion that the Nazi leader was a border case between genius and insanity and that in his opinion the decision would take place in the near future whether Hitler's mind would swing toward the latter.") Yet, against this must be measured the fact that Hitler understood perfectly who the Jews were and what their role in history ought to be: *Adolf Hitler, A Letter on the Jewish Question* (This was Hitler's earliest extant political statement.)...The final objective must be the complete removal of the Jews. *Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf*. ...Then I came to Vienna. [Gradually], I encountered the Jewish question... If, with the help of his Marxist creed, the Jew is victorious over the other peoples of the world, his crown will be the funeral wreath of humanity and this planet will, as it did thousands of years ago, move through the ether devoid of men. Eternal Nature inexorably avenges the infringement of her commands. Hence today I believe that I am acting in accordance with the will of the Almighty Creator: by defending myself against the Jew, I am fighting for the work of the Lord.

In April 1945, the Fuehrer wrote his political last will and testament: Above all, I enjoin the government and the people to uphold the racial laws to the limit and to resist mercilessly the poisoner of all nations, international Jewry.

¹ *Scientific Hatred*, Rabbi Eliahu Ellis & Rabbi Shmuel Silinsky

² *The War Against the Jews*, Rabbi Eliahu Ellis & Rabbi Shmuel Silinsky

Up to this time, especially in Germany, Jews had seemingly been making tremendous gains in liberty and rights. Germany was on the cutting edge of everything at the turn of the century. Education, science, technology, you name it - Germany was there. And Jews were in the forefront.

From 1901 until 1933 there were 37 German Nobel Prize winners - 11 of them were Jewish. The first three atomic bombs were built by Jewish scientists. Two of them - Teller and Einstein - were people that Hitler threw out.¹

Between 1933 and 1939, about half the German Jewish population and more than two-thirds of Austrian Jews (1938-1939) fled Nazi persecution. They emigrated mainly to Palestine, the United States, Latin America, China (which required no visa for entry), and eastern and western Europe (where many would be caught again in the Nazi net during the war).

Many Jews failed to leave when they could². Things were tough but they thought it couldn't possibly get any worse. Germany was considered the pinnacle of civilized living. More than in any other country, German Jews had been making progress in human rights and integrating into the society. No one at this point could imagine what was about to happen³.

In 1933, new German laws forced Jews to quit their civil service jobs, university and law court positions, and other areas of public life. A boycott of Jewish businesses was instituted.

The Nazis inherited a strong legal tradition, and they continued to ensure that everything they did was consistent with the law. In German eyes, it required legislation to allow one to abuse Jews, and legislate the Nazis did. In 1935, the Nazis passed the Nuremberg Laws, thereby legalizing anti-Semitism. Jews had their citizenship revoked, denying them recourse in the courts. On one occasion, a court invalidated a Jewish manager's contract, ruling that his racial characteristics rendered him unfit for the job.

The "Nuremberg Laws" defined Jews not by their religion but by the blood of their grandparents. During the Holocaust, even those with one out of four Jewish grandparents were killed. Between 1937 and 1939, the noose tightened further. Jews could not attend public schools, go to theaters, cinemas, or vacation resorts, or reside, or even walk, in certain sections of German cities. Jewish businesses and properties were either seized outright or the owners were forced to sell them at bargain prices.

¹ *Scientific Hatred*, Rabbi Eliahu Ellis & Rabbi Shmuel Silinsky

² On Tisha B'Av 1938, Ze'ev Jabotinsky gave a speech to the Jews of Warsaw. Here, according to Lone Wolf: A Biography of Vladimir (Zeev) Jabotinsky by Shmuel Katz (Barricade Books), is what he said: "For three years I have been imploring you, Jews of Poland, the crown of world Jewry, appealing to you, warning you unceasingly that the catastrophe is nigh. My hair has turned white and I have grown old over these years, for my heart is bleeding that you, dear brothers and sisters, do not see the volcano which will soon begin to spew forth its fires of destruction. I see a horrible vision. Time is growing short for you to be spared. I know you cannot see it, for you are troubled and confused by everyday concerns...Listen to my words at this, the twelfth hour. For God's sake: let everyone save himself, so long as there is time to do so, for time is running short."

³ This and two previous paragraphs from the Aish Web site, by Rabbis Eliahu Essis and Shmuel Silinsky

On November 9, 1938, following the assassination of a Nazi official by a Polish Jew, *Kristallnacht* (the "Night of Broken Glass") took place. Synagogues and Jewish-owned stores were destroyed. Young Nazis rampaged through Berlin, killing Jews at random. At the end of *Kristallnacht*, more than 90 Jews were dead.

b. Nation and Race

Ideas of nation and race were central to the Nazi ideology which gave content to the anti-Semitism and meaning to the killing. The Germans saw themselves as a nation that went all the way back to the Germanic tribes of Roman times. Glover¹ points out that Tacitus wrote *Germania* in AD 98. In contrast with the decadence of Rome, he praised the rough, brave warrior tribes who lived in the inhospitable German Forests. Already then, Tacitus talked of the racial purity of the Germans:

The Germans themselves, I am inclined to think, are natives of the soul and extremely little affected by immigration of friendly intercourse with other nations...For myself I accept the view that the peoples of Germany have never been tainted by intermarriage with other peoples, and stand out as a nation peculiar, pure and unique of its kind. Hence the physical type, if one may generalize at all about so vast a population, is everywhere the same- wild, blue eyes, reddish hair and huge frames that excel only in violent effort.

For some Nazis, Glover continues, *Germania* was a sacred document. In 1943, Heinrich Himmler ordered an SS unit to take time out from the war in order to ransack an Italian villa in an unsuccessful search for the original text of *Germania*.

In the 1807, when nationalism was surging all over, Johann Gottlieb Fichte gave his 'Addresses to the German People'. Fichte thought the Germans had a living language because they were primordial in a way other peoples were not. They had kept 'the primordial language of the ancestral stock', while most other languages had become mixed. Only in people with a living primordial language did philosophy influence life, only German philosophy could create the national consciousness which the age required. The German identity had to be preserved: 'If you go under, all humanity goes under with you, without hope of any future restoration.'²

The Nazis backed this up with a supposedly 'scientific' system of beliefs based on Social Darwinism. Social Darwinism supposedly showed how the Germans could improve their superior gene pool. In the beginning, it took the form of encouraging those with 'good' genes to have children and to prevent, through sterilization, those with hereditary defects from doing so³. It was championed by Fritz Lenz, Professor of Racial Hygiene at Munich,

¹In *Humanity, A Moral History of the 20C*.

²Glover in *Humanity*.

³In 1933, the Nazis introduced a sterilization law, with compulsory sterilization for 'congenital mental defects, schizophrenia, manic-depressive psychosis, hereditary epilepsy, hereditary chorea, hereditary blindness, hereditary deafness, severe physical deformity, and severe alcoholism. Fischer and Lenz were both involved in examining possible candidates for sterilization. Lenz was confident of his own assessment of people's genetic potential. He thought he could tell musical from non-musical people instantly by their appearance. Size of head showed degree of intelligence and size of chest showed degree of vigour. Genius required a head circumference of at least 56 centimeters. Great men tended to have long noses. (Glover in *Humanity*)

who thought that 'as things are now, it is only a minority of our fellow citizens who are endowed that their unrestricted procreation is good for the race'¹.

Based on Nietzsche, Hitler believed that modern society had eliminated natural selective pressures. Nature should be allowed to weed out the weak and leave only the strong. However, modern medicine had begun to artificially save even the weakest and most sickly at any price. But sooner or later, nurture would correct this situation. A stronger race would drive out the weak, for the vital urge must replace the false Jewish attributes of mercy and compassion with the humanity of Nature which destroys the weak to give his place to the strong².

The Nazi doctor, Hoche, made use of a chilling comparison between a disabled person and a defective bodily part:

"The state organism as a whole, with its own laws and requirements... [is like] a self-contained human organism which, as we doctors know, abandons and rejects individual parts which have become worthless or damaging."

The opposite side of the sterilization program was Heinrich Himmler's Lebensborn program, which aimed at more births of the 'right' sort of children. Members of the SS were exhorted to have more children, especially sons. Lebensborn homes provided support for the resulting large families, and also for racially preferred single mothers. About 200,000 Polish children, designated as racially good types were stolen as part of the program³.

The first systematic round-ups of German and Austrian Jews occurred long before World War II began⁴. Shortly after *Kristallnacht*, approximately 30,000 Jewish men were deported to Dachau and other concentration camps, and several hundred Jewish women were sent to local jails.

In July, 1938, 32 nations gathered in Evian, France, to discuss the Jewish refugee problem. The conference was a total failure. With the exception of the Dominican Republic, no concrete offers of refuge were made. The Jews simply had nowhere to go.

In March, 1938, the Nazis entered Austria; one month later, 99.7% of Austria voted for union with Germany⁵. The Austrians expressed their fervor in widespread riots and attacks against the Austrian Jews numbering 180,000 (90 percent of whom lived in Vienna).

About 500 children of mixed (African/German) racial backgrounds and 320,000 to 350,000 individuals judged physically or mentally handicapped were subjected to surgical or radiation procedures so they could not have children. Supporters of sterilization also argued that the handicapped burdened the community with the costs of their care.

Homosexuals and Jehovah's witnesses were arrested and imprisoned. Germany's 30,000 Gypsies, who were defined by race as "criminal and asocial" were sterilized and confined in special municipal camps.

¹Glover in Humanity

²ibid

³Glover in Humanity

⁴Although at that stage nobody realized that the end of this process was going to be Genocide.

⁵On March 11, 1938, the Nazis invaded Austria. On March 13, the incorporation (Anschluss) of Austria with the German empire (Reich) was proclaimed in Vienna. Most of the population welcomed the Anschluss.

In September 1938, England, France and Italy met to discuss Hitler's demands for German-speaking southern part of Czechoslovakia, Sudetenland and agreed that Hitler could annex it if he stopped there. This was despite the fact that Czechoslovakia had a mutual treaty with Britain and France. Neville Chamberlain wrote in a letter to his sister, describing Hitler, "Now here is a man, a true statesman, a man I feel I can really trust." Hitler read the signs and took over the rest of Czechoslovakia in March 1939. The Western Alliance was silent¹.

c. 1939-1945:

On September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland and World War II began. Within one month, the Polish army was defeated, and the Nazis began their campaign to destroy Polish culture and enslave the Polish people, whom they viewed as "subhuman." There were massacres of university professors, artists, writers, politicians, and many Catholic priests. To create new living space for the "superior Germanic race," large segments of the Polish population were resettled, and German families moved into the emptied lands. Jews, and some Poles, were imprisoned in concentration camps. The Nazis also "kidnapped" as many as 50,000 "Aryan-looking" Polish children from their parents and took them to Germany to be adopted by German families. Many of these children were later rejected as not capable of Germanization and sent to special children's camps where some died of starvation, lethal injection, and disease.

As the war began in 1939, Hitler initialed an order to kill institutionalized, handicapped patients deemed "incurable." Special commissions of physicians reviewed questionnaires filled out by all state hospitals and then decided if a patient should be killed. The doomed were then transferred to six institutions in Germany and Austria, where specially constructed gas chambers were used to kill them. After public protests in 1941, the Nazi leadership continued this euphemistically termed "euthanasia" program in secret. Babies, small children, and other victims were thereafter killed by lethal injection, pills, and by forced starvation.

The "euthanasia" program contained all the elements later required for mass murder of European Jews: an articulated decision to kill, specially trained personnel, the apparatus for killing by gas, and the use of euphemistic language like "euthanasia" which psychologically distanced the murderers from their victims and hid the criminal character of the killings from the public.

In 1940, German forces continued their conquest of much of Europe, easily defeating Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, and France. On June 22, 1941, the German army invaded the Soviet Union, and by September, was approaching Moscow. In the meantime, Italy, Romania, and Hungary had joined the Axis powers led by Germany and opposed by the Allied Powers (British Commonwealth, Free France, the United States, and the Soviet Union).

We do not know for sure when orders for the 'final solution for the question of the Jews' were given. It may have been as early as 1941 or as late as 1942. Many historians think that the decision took place in late January 1942 at a villa in the Berlin suburb of Wannsee. It

¹Adapted from the Aish web site.

is possible, however, that what was already an internal decision then became formal state policy.

Hitler charged Himmler and the S.S. with the implementation of the Final Solution¹. Himmler had this to say:

I did not feel that I had the right to exterminate the men—that is, murder them, or have them murdered—then allow their children to grow into...threatening our sons and children. A fateful decision had to be made. This people had to vanish from the [face of the earth]. For the organization in charge of the [killing], it was the hardest decision we have had to make so far. It has been executed—as I may say—without damage to the spirit and soul of our men and leaders. This danger was very real. The path between the two existing possibilities, either to become too brutal and to lose all respect for human life, or else to become too soft and dizzy and suffer from nervous breakdowns—the path between this Scylla and Charybdis was frightfully narrow.

Now, in the Soviet Union, mass murder of the Jews at improvised sites began in earnest. The most famous of these sites was Babi Yar (today part of a park in Kiev, the Ukraine) where an estimated 33,000 Jews were murdered. Nazi occupation also resulted in the mass murder of more than three million Soviet prisoners of war as well as thousands of gypsies, handicapped and psychiatric patients.

Walter Reich, in the NY Times (29, June 2002), explained that the main goal of the German Einsatzgruppen (mobile killing units) was to turn the Jews in the Soviet Union into landfill:

In large measure, they did. Having raced in behind the invading German Army in June 1941, these mobile killing squads proceeded to fill ravines, quarries, trenches, ditches and pits in Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia with the bodies of more than 1.3 million Jewish men, women and children. When most of us think of the Holocaust, we think of Auschwitz. But the industrialized, largely hands-off method of killing Jews at Auschwitz and the five other gassing centers in Poland were developed to a great extent because of what the German leadership saw as the too hands-on experience of the Einsatzgruppen in the Soviet Union -- individual bullets shot into individual Jews by individual Germans, or by the local police they oversaw. In Babi Yar, a ravine in Kiev, the Einsatzgruppen shot 33,771 Jews in just two days. The work was bloody and sometimes, even for these hardened killers, demoralizing. Auschwitz was the final solution to the Final Solution.

In Masters of Death, Richard Rhodes shows how for the Einsatzgruppen, murdering human beings was primarily a problem of logistics, engineering, and efficiency. In fact, how they approached some of their technical challenges illustrates what they did and who they were. For instance, when people who were shot at the edge of a pit would fall in, on top of those who had been shot a few moments earlier, their bodies would crumple every which way. This resulted in unused -- and therefore, from the point of view of efficiency, wasted -- space between the bodies. It meant digging more pits than if the bodies had fallen into neat rows.

¹Following Himmler's arrest by British troops in May 1945, he committed suicide.

Rhodes describes how Friedrich Jeckeln, an SS and police general, solved this problem. Jeckeln called his solution Sardinienpackung -- sardine-packing. "Today we'll stack them like sardines," he informed a colleague at a killing site in western Ukraine. As that colleague later described it, "The Jews had to lie layer upon layer in an open grave and were then killed with neck shots from machine pistols, pistols and rifles. That meant they had to lie face down on those previously shot."

And here was another logistical challenge the Einsatzgruppen overcame: shooting women holding infants. How do you kill both at the same time? One solution to this problem, Rhodes explains, was devised at a killing site in Latvia: mothers with infants had to hold their babies over their heads; one man shot the mother, one the child.

Rhodes notes that more than a few of the killers enjoyed their duties. A woman from a town near Minsk saw a young German soldier walking with a year-old baby impaled on his bayonet. "The baby was still crying weakly," she later recalled. "And the German was singing." In some sites in Lithuania, after "Jewish actions," schnapps was distributed and group photos were taken. Often, the killers celebrated with dinner parties at local inns.

And, after the war, a Krakow police official testified that members of the border police were, with some exceptions, "quite happy to take part in shootings of Jews." The official went on: "They had a ball! . . . Nobody failed to turn up."

But for many of the killers it was, in fact, a difficult task. Heinrich Himmler, the head of the SS, who was in charge of the project of murdering all Jews and who, as Rhodes notes, witnessed some of the killings himself, was troubled by what such individualized killing might do to his men. True, he frequently exhorted them to be "hard" -- though the work was unpleasant, he said, it was necessary for the future of Germany. But he wanted to find a way to ease the psychological burden on his men. This was accomplished first by gas vans, which were more impersonal, and then by the still more efficient gas chamber system, in which Germans could release gas into vast spaces filled with Jews and force other Jews to pull out the corpses before gassing them in turn¹.

Following the invasion of Poland, three million Polish Jews were forced into approximately 400 newly established ghettos. In Warsaw, Lodz, and other places, Jews were

¹ The above paragraphs are all from Walter Reich in the NY Times reviewing Rhodes' book. In Masters of Death, Rhodes presses upon us a model of how people become violent, that was developed by a criminologist, Lonnie Athens, who based it on interviews he held with incarcerated violent criminals. Having come across Athens's then-obscure theory some years ago, Rhodes embraced it and devoted his 1999 book, Why They Kill, to it. Now, in Masters of Death, he applies it to the Einsatzgruppen and to those who sent them to kill.

As Rhodes summarizes it, Athens believes that a person who becomes violent goes through a four-stage socialization process: (1) brutalization by an authority figure through violence or the threat of violence, seeing others undergoing such subjugation, being instructed in how to be violent and being told by already violent people that one must be violent when one is provoked; (2) the realization that "resorting to violence is sometimes necessary in this world," and the resolution to use violence in the face of imminent danger; (3) the carrying out of serious violence against someone in response to a provocation; and (4) the resolution "to attack people physically with the serious intention of gravely harming or even killing them for the slightest or no provocation at all." At this point, Rhodes notes, the person's "violent socialization is complete."

The readiness to obey orders to kill by unquestioned authorities; the diffusion of responsibility for killing; and the anti-Semitic ideology that was widely embraced in German society and that construed Jews as subhuman and mortally dangerous to German Ideology and motivation, combined with psychological mechanisms like rationalization, can be enough.

confined in sealed ghettos where starvation, overcrowding, exposure to cold, and contagious diseases killed tens of thousands of people.¹ In Warsaw and elsewhere, ghettoized Jews made every effort, often at great risk, to maintain their cultural, communal, and religious lives. The ghettos also provided a forced labor pool for the Germans, and many Jews (who worked on road gangs, in construction, or other hard labor related to the German war effort) died from exhaustion or maltreatment.

Between 1942 and 1944, the Germans moved to eliminate the ghettos in occupied Poland and elsewhere, deporting ghetto residents to "extermination camps," killing centers equipped with gassing facilities, located in Poland.

The six killing sites were chosen because of their closeness to rail lines and their location in semi-rural areas, at Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka, Chelmno, Majdanek, and Auschwitz-Birkenau. Chelmno was the first camp in which mass executions were carried out by gas, piped into mobile gas vans; 150,000 persons were killed there between December 1941 and March 1943, as well as June to July 1944. A killing center using gas vans and later gas chambers operated at Belzec, where more than 600,000 persons were killed between May 1942 and August 1943. Sobibor opened in May 1942 and closed one day after a rebellion of the prisoners on October 14, 1943; up to 200,000 persons were killed by gassing. Treblinka opened in July 1942 and closed in November 1943; a revolt by the prisoners in early August 1943 destroyed much of the facility. At least 750,000 persons were killed at Treblinka, physically the largest of the killing centers.

But the biggest killing center of them all was Auschwitz-Birkenau, which also served as a concentration camp and slave labor camp. More than 1.25 million were killed at Auschwitz-Birkenau, and 9 out of 10 were Jews.

Between May 14 and July 8, 1944, 437,402 Hungarian Jews were deported to Auschwitz in 48 trains. This was probably the largest single mass deportation during the Holocaust. A similar system was implemented at Majdanek, which also doubled as a concentration camp and where at least 275,000 persons were killed in the gas chambers or died from malnutrition, brutality, and disease.

¹The most famous was the Warsaw Ghetto. Warsaw was a city in which the 335,000 Jews represented about one third of the population. More Jews were herded into Warsaw, so the Jewish population rose to about 450,000. These Jews were thrown into the slum area of town, 2.3% of the city area, and walled off. There was no sanitation. Pestilence would sweep through. Life in the ghetto was intolerable. If a person was not fit for work, then he did not get food tickets. That meant death by starvation. Over 75,000 people died of disease and starvation. The Jews of the ghetto had no idea what the Germans had in mind. At first, they thought the Nazis were trying to starve them to death or kill them off with plagues. The ghettos were run by Jewish councils, (Judenrat) who were responsible for carrying out Nazi orders. The transports bound for Auschwitz and other concentration camps would come, and the Nazis would ask for 1,000 Jews. The Council's rationalization was, "If we did not send off the one thousand, they would ask for two thousand." In fact, not only the one thousand went, but the two thousand went, too. And not only the two thousand, but the council members went and their entire families went also. In the end, everyone from the ghettos was swept away. It must be noted that in spite of the unbelievable ghetto conditions, Jewish life - to the extent that it could - went on. The Torah studies, circumcision, Shabbos and holiday observance - all still went on, in spite of the fact that getting caught could mean death (The Ghettos, by Rabbi Eliahu Ellis & Rabbi Shmuel Silinsky)

Rudolph Hoess¹, the commander of Auschwitz, said this about the place: *Himmler...When in the summer of 1941, he himself gave me the order to prepare installations at Auschwitz where mass extermination could take place...It was certainly...monstrous order.*

This gassing set my mind at rest...I always shuddered at the prospect of carrying out exterminations...We were to be spared all these blood-baths, and that the victims too would be spared suffering until their last moment came...Eichmann's description of Jews being mown down by the Special Squads...have taken place. Many members of the Einsatzkommandos, unable to endure wading through blood any longer, had committed suicide.

On one occasion two small children were so absorbed in some game that they quite refused to let their mother tear them away from it. Even the Jews of the Special Detachment were reluctant to pick the children up. The imploring look in the eyes of the mother, who certainly knew what was happening, is something I shall never forget. The people were already in the gas-chamber and becoming restive, and I had to act. Everyone was looking at me. I nodded to the junior non-commissioned officer on duty and he picked up the screaming, struggling children in his arms and carried them into the gas-chamber, accompanied by their mother who was weeping in the most heart-rending fashion. My pity was so great that I longed to vanish from the scene: yet I might not show the slightest trace of emotions.

I had to do all this because I was the one to whom everyone looked, because I had to show them all that I did not merely issue the orders and make the regulations but was also prepared myself to be present at whatever task I had assigned to my subordinates.

The Reichsfuehrer SS sent various high-ranking Party leaders and SS officers to Auschwitz so that they might see for themselves the process of extermination of the Jews. They were all deeply impressed by what they saw. Some who had previously spoken most loudly about the necessity for this extermination fell silent once they had actually seen the "final solution of the Jewish problem." I was repeatedly asked how I and my men could go on watching these operations, and how we were able to stand it.

I had many detailed discussions with Eichmann concerning all matters connected with the "final solution of the Jewish problem," but without ever disclosing my inner anxieties, I tried in every way to find Eichmann's innermost and real convictions about the "solution."

Yes, every way. Yet even when we were quite alone together and the drink had been flowing freely so that he was in his most expansive mood, he showed that he was completely obsessed with the idea of destroying every single Jew that he could lay his hands on. Without pity and in clod blood we must complete this extermination as rapidly as possible. Any compromise, even the slightest, would have to be paid for bitterly at a later date.

In the face of such grim determination I was forced to bury all my human considerations as deeply as possible.

Indeed, I must freely confess that after these conversations with Eichmann I almost came to regard such emotions as a betrayal of the Fuehrer.

¹After the war the Polish government tried him, condemning him to death. While in prison Hoess wrote his autobiography, from which the excerpt is taken. He was hung at Auschwitz in 1947.

On arrival to these camps, prisoners were forced to undress and hand over all valuables.¹ They were then driven naked into the gas chambers, which were disguised as shower rooms, and either carbon monoxide or Zyklon B (a form of crystalline prussic acid,

¹Yitzhak Arad, "Operation Reinhard" Camps: ... system of secrecy and deception and the technique of extermination used by the Nazis. ... the Nazis succeeded in keeping the purpose of the transports, their real destination, and the fate awaiting the deportees a secret...In fact, the SS who took part in Operation Reinhard were required to sign a special declaration of secrecy. The millions of Jews who were taken from their places of residence, ghettos or transit camps did not in any way know that they were being brought to extermination camps nor did they know what fate awaited them. Most of them had not even heard of the existence of such camps. Rumors about the death camps did, it is true, reach Warsaw and other ghettos in Poland, but the public for the most part did not want to believe them. Even most of those who escaped from the trains that were on their way to the extermination camps did not know the trains' real destination. ...When they got off the train at the camp platform they were met by a heavy guard of SS men and Ukrainians, but their eyes immediately encountered the large sign announcing the following in Polish and German: Jews of Warsaw, for your attention! You are in a transit camp (Durchgangslager) from which you will be sent to a labor camp (Arbeitslager). As a safeguard against epidemics you must immediately hand over your clothing and parcels for disinfection. Gold, silver, foreign currency and jewelry must be placed with the cashier, in exchange for a receipt. These will be returned to you at a later time upon presentation of the receipt. For bodily washing before continuing with the journey all arrivals must attend the bathhouse. This announcement was also delivered to the prisoners orally by a SS officer, who also announced that the old and sick for whom walking was difficult would be transferred to a field hospital (lazarett) near the train platform; they would be assisted by Jews who worked in the camp. He promised that in the hospital the old and infirm would receive medical attention. From the moment a "shipment" of several thousand people set foot on the platform until its total liquidation in the gas chambers, no more than an hour or an hour and a half passed, sometimes even less. During that time the men were separated from the women and children; they were ordered to undress, and their clothing was arranged in packages; they handed over their valuables; the women's hair was shorn, and the people were led to the "showers," which of course were the gas chambers. They were forced to do all of these things at a run, under a hail of shouts, blows and bullets from the SS men and the Ukrainians, and the barking and biting of dogs. The suddenness and speed with which all of this was done, the constant running, and the atmosphere of terror and threat put the people in a state of shock that kept them from thinking about what was happening around them or from taking any action of resistance. This method was used with all the extermination transports that arrived in sealed freight cars in the latter part of 1942 from the territory of the General-Government in Poland and from the occupied territories of the Soviet Union. A slightly different method was used for transports that arrived from Western Europe, the territory of the Third Reich, Czechoslovakia and the Balkans from the end of 1942 until the middle of 1943. These transports arrived in passenger cars. Upon arrival they found an "ordinary" railway Station with signs pointing to ticket windows, tables indicating the departure times of trains to various destinations and other normal station installations -- all, of course, fake. The alighting from the train was carried out in a polite and calm manner. The camp personnel encouraged the arrivals to write postcards to their families and friends telling them that they had come to a labor camp; they were even given an address for receiving mail ...After the postcards were sent, everything having been done in a peaceful and polite atmosphere, the situation changed radically: a torrent of shouts, blows, dog bites and bullets rained down on the people, who were stricken by an even greater shock and paralysis than that felt by the Jews from Poland and the Soviet Union. In this way they were driven toward the gas chambers. It is thus clear why those hundreds of thousands of Jews were unable to organize and respond. It is equally clear why the underground that carried out the uprisings was formed by some of those few Jews who had been selected from the transports to work for a certain period at various jobs in the camp. They came to know what was happening in the camps and what fate awaited them; in addition, they had the time to organize their resistance.

also used as an insecticide in some camps) was used to asphyxiate them¹. The minority selected for forced labor were, after initial quarantine, vulnerable to malnutrition, exposure, epidemics, medical experiments, and brutality; many perished as a result.

The Germans carried out their systematic murderous activities with the active help of local collaborators in many countries and the acquiescence or indifference of millions of bystanders. However, there were instances of organized resistance. For example, in the fall of 1943, the Danish resistance, with the support of the local population, rescued nearly the entire Jewish community in Denmark from the threat of deportation to the East, by smuggling them via a dramatic boatlift to safety in neutral Sweden.² Individuals in many other countries also risked their lives to save Jews and other individuals subject to Nazi

¹Pgs 967-976 from Raul Hilberg's *The Destruction of the European Jews*: Gassing would begin with a command. At Treblinka a German would shout to a Ukrainian guard: "Ivan, water!" This was a signal to start the motor. The procedure was not necessarily fast. With no room to move in the small chambers, the victims stood for thirty or forty minutes before they died. According to one Treblinka survivor, people were sometimes kept in the chambers all night without the motor being turned on. At Belzec, where Oberscharfurer Hackenholt was in charge of the motor, a German visitor, Professor Pfannenstiel, wanted to know what was going on inside. He is said to have put his ear to the wall and, listening, to have remarked: "Just like in a synagogue." When the Auschwitz victims filed into the gas chamber, they discovered that the imitation showers did not work. Outside, a central switch was pulled to turn off the lights, and a Red Cross car drove up with the Zyklon. An SS man, wearing a gas mask fitted with a special filter, lifted the glass shutter over the lattice and emptied one can after another into the gas chamber. Although the lethal dose was one milligram per kilogram of body weight and the effect was supposed to be rapid, dampness could retard the speed with which the gas was spreading... In Crematorium II (new number) at Birkenau, the fillings and gold teeth, sometimes attached to jaws, were cleaned in hydrochloric acid, to be melted into bars in the main camp. At Auschwitz the hair of the women was cut off after they were dead. It was washed in ammonium chloride before being packed. The bodies could then be cremated

²However, as Sam Ser writes in the Jerusalem Post May 2205: *Denmark apologizes for sending refugees to camps*: Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen apologized on Wednesday for the fact that his country sent at least 19 Jews who had sought refuge in Denmark to Nazi concentration camps between 1940 and 1943.

"Today, we know that Danish authorities in some cases took part in sending back people to suffering and death in concentration camps," Fogh Rasmussen told some 5,000 people gathered for a ceremony marking the 60th anniversary of the surrender of Nazi troops in Denmark.

"On behalf of the government and the Danish state, I would like to take this opportunity to regret and apologize for these acts," he said.

Fogh Rasmussen called the deportations "shameful" and "a stain on Denmark's otherwise good reputation."

The apology follows the publication a few weeks ago of a lengthy book on the subject by Danish researcher Dr. Vilhj Imur m Vilhj Imsson. *The Reverse of the Coin – The Fate of Jewish Refugees in Denmark, 1933-1945* is the fruit of nearly eight years of research, part of which Vilhj Imsson carried out as the leader of a team hired by the Danish government to determine the fate of several dozen refugees deported by Denmark during World War II.

"There was no law, no need and no demand for the expulsions of Jews," Vilhj Imsson told *The Jerusalem Post*. "The Nazi occupants in Denmark were not at all interested in taking back the Jews whom the Danish authorities wanted to get rid of."...

The findings have been a blow to Denmark's national morale because it prides itself on having saved its more than 7,000 Jewish citizens from deportation in 1943 – when deportation was at the request of Nazi Germany – by secretly sending them to safety in Sweden.

persecution. One of the most famous was Raoul Wallenberg, a Swedish diplomat who led the rescue effort which saved the lives of tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews in 1944.

Resistance movements existed in almost every concentration camp and ghetto of Europe. In addition to the armed revolts at Sobibor and Treblinka, Jewish resistance in the Warsaw Ghetto led to a courageous uprising in April-May, 1943, despite the fact that it was ultimately doomed to failure.

In general, rescue or aid to Holocaust victims was not a priority of resistance organizations whose principal goal was to fight the war against the Germans. Nonetheless, such groups and Jewish partisans (resistance fighters) sometimes cooperated with each other to save Jews. On April 19, 1943, for instance, members of the National Committee for the Defense of Jews in cooperation with Christian railroad workers and the general underground in Belgium attacked a train leaving the Belgian transit camp of Malines headed for Auschwitz and succeeded in assisting several hundred Jewish deportees to escape.

From mid-1942 on, it was apparent to all the parities that the Nazis would eventually win. By 1944, the Germans were losing on all fronts. The German generals were desperate for supplies and reinforcements and troop trains. Yet, it was more important to them to kill the Jews. The last great transport involved shipping 450,000 Hungarian Jews off to Auschwitz in eight weeks.

With retreat, the Germans tried to cover up the evidence. They took the bodies out of mass graves, burned them and plowed the areas. They tried to destroy the camps, disassemble them. They took the remaining Jews on "Death Marches," deeper into German territory.

During the final days, in the spring of 1945, conditions in the remaining concentration camps exacted a terrible toll in human lives. Even concentration camps never intended for extermination, such as Bergen-Belsen, became death traps for thousands (including Anne Frank who died there of typhus in March 1945).

Hitler committed suicide in April 1945. On April 29, 1945, in his underground bunker, Adolf Hitler readied himself for death. Instead of surrendering to the Allies, Hitler had decided to end his own life. Early in the morning, after he had already written his last Will, Hitler wrote his Political Statement¹. The following afternoon, Hitler and Eva Braun committed suicide.

Hitler's political statement stated that he had only acted for the sake of his country². He denied ever wanting war and blamed the whole thing on the Jews³. "Moreover," Hitler

¹The Political Statement is made up of two sections. In the first section, Hitler lays all blame on "International Jewry" and urges all Germans to continue fighting. In the second section, Hitler expels Herman Goring and Heinrich Himmler - and appoints their successors.

²More than thirty years have now passed since I in 1914 made my modest contribution as a volunteer in the first world war that was forced upon the Reich. In these three decades I have been actuated solely by love and loyalty to my people in all my thoughts, acts, and life. They gave me the strength to make the most difficult decisions which have ever confronted mortal man. I have spent my time, my working strength, and my health in these three decades.

³ It is untrue that I or anyone else in Germany wanted the war in 1939. It was desired and instigated exclusively by those international statesmen who were either of Jewish descent or worked for Jewish interests. I have made too many offers for the control and limitation of armaments, which posterity will not for all time be able to disregard for the responsibility for the outbreak of this war to be laid on me. I

stated, "I do not wish to fall into the hands of an enemy who requires a new spectacle organized by the Jews for the amusement of their hysterical masses¹."

Hitler ended by saying: "Above all I charge the leaders of the nation and those under them to scrupulous observance of the laws of race and to merciless opposition to the universal prisoner of all peoples, International Jewry. - *Given in Berlin, this 29th day of April 1945, 4:00 A.M.*"

Berlin was captured on May 1, 1945, and on May 8-9 the German forces surrendered and World War II was over.

have further never wished that after the first fatal world war a second against England, or even against America, should break out. Centuries will pass away, but out of the ruins of our towns and monuments the hatred against those finally responsible whom we have to thank for everything, International Jewry and its helpers, will grow.

Three days before the outbreak of the German-Polish war I again proposed to the British ambassador in Berlin a solution to the German-Polish problem - similar to that in the case of the Saar district, under international control. This offer also cannot be denied. It was only rejected because the leading circles in English politics wanted the war, partly on account of the business hoped for and partly under influence of propaganda organized by International Jewry.

I have also made it quite plain that, if the nations of Europe are again to be regarded as mere shares to be bought and sold by these international conspirators in money and finance, then that race, Jewry, which is the real criminal of this murderous struggle, will be saddled with the responsibility. I further left no one in doubt that this time not only would millions of children of Europe's Aryan people die of hunger, not only would millions of grown men suffer death, and not only hundreds of thousands of women and children be burnt and bombed to death in the towns, without the real criminal having to atone for this guilt, even if by more humane means.

After six years of war, which in spite of all setbacks, will go down one day in history as the most glorious and valiant demonstration of a nation's life purpose, I cannot forsake the city which is the capital of this Reich. As the forces are too small to make any further stand against the enemy attack at this place and our resistance is gradually being weakened by men who are as deluded as they are lacking in initiative, I should like, by remaining in this town, to share my fate with those, the millions of others, who have also taken upon themselves to do so.

¹Hitler continued: "I have decided therefore to remain in Berlin and there of my own free will to choose death at the moment when I believe the position of the Führer and Chancellor itself can no longer be held.

I die with a happy heart, aware of the immeasurable deeds and achievements of our soldiers at the front, our women at home, the achievements of our farmers and workers and the work, unique in history, of our youth who bear my name.

That from the bottom of my heart I express my thanks to you all, is just as self-evident as my wish that you should, because of that, on no account give up the struggle, but rather continue it against the enemies of the Fatherland, no matter where, true to the creed of a great Clausewitz. From the sacrifice of our soldiers and from my own unity with them unto death, will in any case spring up in the history of Germany, the seed of a radiant renaissance of the National Socialist movement and thus of the realization of a true community of nations.

Many of the most courageous men and women have decided to unite their lives with mine until the very last. I have begged and finally ordered them not to do this, but to take part in the further battle of the Nation. I beg the heads of the Armies, the Navy and the Air Force to strengthen by all possible means the spirit of resistance of our soldiers in the National Socialist sense, with special reference to the fact that also I myself, as founder and creator of this movement, have preferred death to cowardly abdication or even capitulation.

May it, at some future time, become part of the code of honor of the German officer - as is already the case in our Navy - that the surrender of a district or of a town is impossible, and that above all the leaders here must march ahead as shining examples, faithfully fulfilling their duty unto death."

Some of the concentration camps were turned into camps for displaced persons (DPs), which included former Holocaust victims. Nutrition, sanitary conditions, and accommodations often were poor. DPs lived behind barbed wire, and were exposed to humiliating treatment, and, at times, to anti-Semitic attacks.

After the war, masses of Jews were forced to wander from the U.S.S.R. to Poland and from there, along with Jewish survivors in Poland to the DP camps in Germany, Austria, and Italy. They were joined by some 50,000 D.P.'s who had been found by the liberating forces in Germany's concentration camps. Their number consequently swelled through spontaneous and partly organized flights to some 250,000 because of the hostility of the local Polish population, especially after the Kielce pogrom. It took years before these camps were gradually evacuated by emigration, mostly to Israel and the United States.

Goebbels, when he was put to death, said, "I am happy to go to my death, because we brought down six million Jews with us."

This mentality makes the reality horrifyingly clear. The Nazi war was based on the Jews¹.

The Nazi legacy was a vast empire of murder, pillage, and exploitation that had affected every country of occupied Europe. The full magnitude of the Holocaust, and the moral and ethical implications, of this tragic era are only now beginning to be understood more fully.

ii - Children in the Holocaust

It is estimated that as many as 1.5 million children were murdered in the Holocaust. 1.2 million of these were Jewish. In addition, tens of thousands of Gypsy children and thousands of institutionalized handicapped children were murdered under Nazi rule in Germany and occupied Europe.

Chances of survival were somewhat higher for older children, since they could potentially be assigned to forced labor in concentration camps and ghettos.

A few thousand German and Austrian Jewish children were able to escape the Nazi net, since they were sent abroad in "Kindertransports" to the Netherlands, Great Britain, Palestine, and the United States before 1939.

The Nazi quest for a biologically homogeneous society already in July 1933 included the Law to Prevent Offspring with Hereditary Defects. In ever escalating legislation, mentally and physically handicapped children were vulnerable to sterilization prior to 1939 and to murder in the so-called euthanasia program after 1939. Eugenic and racial measures also extended to the small number (ca. 600) of German mulatto children (the offspring of German women and African French colonial troops occupying the Rhineland in the 1920s). These Afro-German children were registered by the Gestapo and Interior Ministry in 1937 and they were all brutally sterilized in German university hospitals that same year.

Children's euthanasia began in 1939 and continued throughout the war. At least 5,000 German and Austrian children were killed in these programs.

During the Holocaust, the children were among the prisoners at highest risk. They frequently witnessed the murder of parents and siblings. They faced starvation, illness, brutal labor, and other indignities until they were consigned to the gas chambers. That any of these

¹ The above three paragraphs adapted from Rabbis Ellis and Salinsky on the Aish Web Site.

Jewish children survived at all and also created diaries, poems, and drawings in virtually all ghettos and concentration camps is truly remarkable.

Some children were killed immediately on arrival in concentration camps and killing centers; some were killed shortly after birth. A few were born in ghettos and camps and surviving, such as the three year old Stefan Georg Zweig born in the Cracow ghetto and carried in a specially prepared rucksack through the concentration camp at Plaszow to Buchenwald in 1944, where he was hidden and protected by German communist prisoners. A fourth category of children, usually above the age of 10, were utilized as prisoners, laborers, and subjects for Nazi medical experiments. Thus, of the 15,000 children imprisoned in the Theresienstadt ghetto, only about 1,100 survived.

Children sometimes also survived in hiding and also participated in the resistance (as runners, messengers, smugglers).

iii - Changes in Holocaust Literature¹

Many thousands of books have been written on the Holocaust. The scholarship on Nazi terror has progressed through at least three distinct stages.

The first stage began at the end of the Second World War and lasted until the late 1960s. In the scholarship of this time Hitler was considered firmly in command of a smoothly functioning, monolithic state and party apparatus that controlled the German population by means of unrestricted terror.

The most famous writer of this period was Hannah Arendt. Totalitarian societies, she stated, create "a system of ... spying where everybody may be a police agent and each individual feels himself under constant surveillance." "The secret police ... sees to it that the victim never existed at all²."

The second stage of Holocaust studies was from the 60s to the 80s. German scholars started to come to grips with their own recent history. This caused considerable pain and controversy and created much acrimonious debate in the media.

The thinking was now that Hitler now was not in total control of the situation. Hitler's top brass were now portrayed as having been rent by internal divisions, overlapping jurisdictions, and conflicting goals. The population was also seen as having been more diverse and less anti-Semitic, with not everyone agreeing with what Hitler was doing. The discussion was more about the Germans than the Jews and the Holocaust moved from the center to the periphery of the debate.

Many Germans, it was shown, had been appalled by the barbarous *Kristallnacht* pogroms of November 9 and 10, 1938; that reaction forced the Nazi leadership to put pressure on and later murder the Jews in greater secrecy. Only a few dyed-in-the-wool Nazis, it was now believed, had been animated by the Jews' misfortunes. Most Germans seemed to have cared little about the issue. As the British historian Ian Kershaw explained in one of his two influential books published in the early 1980s treating the mood and morale of the German citizenry, "the road to Auschwitz was built by hate, but paved with indifference."

¹ Based on *The Gestapo, Jews, and Ordinary Germans* By Eric A. Johnson

² Many scholars soon elaborated on Arendt's Orwellian argument.

In contrast, the newest perspective has a far more negative view of the role played by common German citizens. They have shown that the Gestapo often had less manpower, fewer spies, and less means at its disposal to control the population than had been assumed. The Gestapo had to rely heavily on the civilian population as a source of information. Angry neighbors, bitter in-laws, and disgruntled work colleagues frequently used the state's secret police apparatus to settle their personal and often petty scores. In the words of the German scholars Klaus-Michael Mallmann and Gerhard Paul, who in 1991 published an exemplary study of the everyday activities of the terror apparatus in the Saarland:

Neither the propaganda nor the terror were totally effective. There were many niches left over in which the people could conduct themselves quite normally. Their behavior inside of these ... spaces ... had nothing to do with resistance and opposition.

Several works have appeared in recent years that investigate the role played by judges, prosecuting attorneys, and the courts in helping to keep the population in line. Whereas some judges used their authority almost benignly, others eagerly pushed for maximum penalties for minor misbehavior. A mild political offense like listening to the BBC during the war could lead to anything from an acquittal to a referral to Roland Freisler's feared People's Court (*Volksgerichtshof*) in Berlin, where the death sentence was the expected outcome.

Landmark books published in the early and mid-1990s by the American scholars Christopher R. Browning and Daniel Jonah Goldhagen have demonstrated chillingly that ordinary Germans were also more active than previously believed in the perpetration of the Holocaust. A fierce scholarly debate ensued. In *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*, Goldhagen contends that German citizens willingly killed Jews during the Holocaust because they were motivated by what he claims was a historic and uniquely German "eliminationist anti-Semitism." One of Goldhagen's foremost critics is Christopher Browning, who argues in *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* that Germans acted no differently than people from any country might have acted in their extreme situation. Nevertheless, though he comes to different conclusions, much of the empirical evidence he employs in his equally graphic portrait of the murderous activities of reserve German policemen during the Holocaust differs in only minor ways from the evidence Goldhagen presents. Thus, both Browning and Goldhagen relate essentially the same scenario: sizable numbers of ordinary, often middle-aged German civilians, with little to no ideological indoctrination or training, were called up for brief periods during the war as reserve policemen all over eastern Europe to shoot thousands of defenseless Jews at point-blank range and then allowed to return to their normal civilian lives and families in Germany.

In Germany in the last few years, a haunting exhibition has been attended by large audiences. This exhibition documents the regular German army's direct involvement in the criminal atrocities perpetrated against Jewish and other eastern European civilians during the Second World War.

It is undoubtedly true that, as Mallmann and Paul note, "the greatest amount of dissent did not develop into opposition and resistance activity ... that the basic support of the Third Reich functioned until the bitter end." But it is also true that many people—among them Communists, Socialists, Jehovah's Witnesses, clergymen, and others—acted consciously and bravely at various times during the Third Reich to try to undermine the Nazi

regime. Even though they were unsuccessful, they, their efforts, and their suffering should not be forgotten.

The key to understanding the sometimes brutal, sometimes quasi-legalistic, but always effective Nazi terror lies in its selective nature. Never implemented in a blanket or indiscriminate fashion, it specifically targeted and ruthlessly moved against the Nazi regime's racial, political, and social enemies; at the same time it often ignored or dismissed expressions of nonconformity and mild disobedience on the part of other German citizens. This dualistic treatment of different sectors of the German population helped the Nazi regime garner legitimacy and support among the populace. Indeed, many Germans perceived the terror not as a personal threat to them but as something that served their interests by removing threats to their material well-being and to their sense of community and propriety. This acceptance helped guarantee that the leading organs of the terror, like the Gestapo, would not be hampered by limitations to their manpower and means.

Most Germans suffered not at all from the terror. There was no need to target them because most Germans remained loyal to the Nazi leadership and supported it voluntarily from the beginning to the end of the Third Reich, if to varying degrees. Although some Germans strongly agreed with the regime's anti-Semitic and antihumanitarian policies, many did not. In the same vein, some Germans voluntarily spied on and denounced their neighbors and coworkers to the Nazi authorities, but the overwhelming majority of German citizens did not. Furthermore, civilian denunciations were typically made for personal and petty reasons against normally law-abiding citizens whom the Gestapo seldom chose to punish severely, if at all. It remains true, however, that the civilian German population figured heavily in its own control, and its collusion and accommodation with the Nazi regime made the Nazis' crimes against humanity possible.

It is necessary not to overlook the ordinary German population's complicity in Nazi crimes. It is also necessary to realize that most Germans were motivated not by a willful intent to harm others but by a mixture of cowardice, apathy, and a slavish obedience to authority. After the war Gestapo officers and other Nazi authorities tried to justify their participation in Nazi crimes by arguing that they had been similarly motivated. The backgrounds, motivations, and actions of Gestapo officers who cruelly, efficiently, and willfully implemented the Nazi terror uncovers the hollowness of their alibis. If they are not to be held accountable in historical memory, then almost nobody can be.

iv - Comparison of Nazi Decrees With Previous Era

Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of European Jews*:

TABLE I *Canonical and Nazi Anti-Jewish Measures*

CANONICAL LAW - NAZI MEASURE

Prohibition of marriage and sexual intercourse between Christians and Jews, Synod of Elvira, 30B

Jews and Christians not permitted to eat together, Synod of Elvira 30B

Jews not allowed to hold public office, Synod of Clemont, 535

Jews not allowed to employ Christian servants or possess Christian slaves, 3d Synod of Orleans 538

Jews not permitted to show themselves in the streets during Passion Week, 3d Synod of Orleans 538

Burning of the Talmud and other books, 12th Synod of Toledo 681

Christians not permitted to patronize Jewish doctors, Trulanic Synod, 692

Christians not permitted to live in Jewish homes, Synod of Narbonne, 1050

Jews obliged to pay taxes for support of the Church to the same extent as Christians, Synod of Gerona, 1078

Prohibition of Sunday work, Synod of Szaboies, 1092

Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor, September 15, 1935 (RGB1 I, 1146.)

Jews barred from dining cars (Transport Minister to Interior Minister, December 30, 1939, Document NG-3995)

Law for the Re-establishment of the Professional Civil Service, April 7, 1933 (RGB1 I, 175.)

Decree authorizing local authorities to bar Jews from the streets on certain days (i.e. Nazi holidays), December 3, 1938 (RGB1 I, 1676.)

Book burnings in Nazi Germany.

Decree of July 25, 1939 (RGB1 I, 969.)

Directive by Goring providing for concentration of Jews in houses, December 28, 1938, (Borman to Rosenberg, January 17, 1939, PS-69)

The “Sozialausgleichsabgabe” which provided that Jews pay a special income tax in lieu of donations.

Jews not permitted to be plaintiffs, of witnesses against Christians in the Courts, 3d Lateran Council, 1179, Canon 28

Jews not permitted to withhold inheritance from descendants who had accepted Christianity, 3d Lateran Council, 1179, Canon 26

The Marking of Jewish clothes with a badge, 4th Lateran Council, 1215, Canon 68 (Copied from the legislation by Caliph Omar II [634-44], who had decreed that Christians were blue belts and Jews, yellow belts.)

Construction of new synagogues prohibited, Council of Oxford, 1222

Christians not permitted to attend Jewish ceremonies, Synod of Vienna, 1267

Jews not permitted to dispute with simple Christian people about the tenets of the Catholic religion, Synod of Vienna, 1267

Compulsory ghettos, Synod of Breslau, 1267

Christians not permitted to sell or rent real estate to Jews, Synod of Ofen, 1279

Adoption by a Christian of the Jewish religion or return by a baptized Jew to the Jewish religion defined as heresy, Synod of Mainz, 1310

Party purposes imposed on Nazis, December 24, 1940 (RGB1 I, 1668.)

Proposal by the Party Chancellery that Jews not be permitted to institute civil suits, September 9, 1942 (Borman to Justice Ministry, Sept. 9, 1942, NG-151.)

Decree empowering the Justice Ministry to void wills offending the “sound judgement of the people,” July, 31, 1938 (RGB1 I, 937.)

Decree of September 1, 1941 (RGB1 I, 547.)

Destruction of synagogues in entire Reich, November 10, 1938, (Heydrich to Goring, November 11, 1938, PS-3058)

Friendly relations with Jews prohibited, October 24, 1941 (Gestapo directive, L-15)

Order by Heydrich, September 21, 1939 (PS-3363)

Decree providing for compulsory sale of Jewish real estate, December 3, 1938, (RGB1 I, 1709)

Adoption by a Christian of the Jewish religion places him in jeopardy of being treated as a Jew, Decision by Oberlandesgericht Konigsberg, 4th

Sale of transfer of Church articles to Jews prohibited, Synod of Lavour, 1368

Jews not permitted to act as agents in the conclusions of contracts between Christians, especially marriage contracts, Council of Basel, 1434, Session XIX

Jews not permitted to obtain academic degrees, Council of Basel, 1434, Session XIX

Zivilsenat, June 26, 1942 [*Die Judenfrage (Vertraulich Beilage)*, November 1, 1942, pp. 82-83]

Decree of July 6, 1938, providing for liquidation of Jewish real estate agencies, and marriage agencies catering to non-Jews (RGB1 I, 823)

Law Against Overcrowding of German Schools and Universities, April 25, 1933 (RGB1I, 225.)

CHAPTER B: WAS THE HOLOCAUST UNIQUE?

Between June and December 1941, the Einsatzgruppen and associated support units murdered some 500,000 Jews in what had been eastern Poland and Russia. A second sweep through the occupied territory, lasting from fall 1941 through 1942, annihilated close to 900,000 more. Meanwhile, Hitler had ordered the systematic extermination of all Jews in the Nazi grip. The directive, issued on July 31, 1941, by Reich Marshal Hermann Goering instructed Reinhard Heydrich, chief of the Reich Security Main Office, to organize “complete solution of the Jewish question in the German sphere of influence in Europe”. The organization of the deportations was assigned to Adolf Eichmann.

Advanced planning for the extermination of the Jews took place in Berlin on January 20, 1942, at the Wannsee Conference. The Germans established six extermination centers: Chelmno, Belzec, Majdanek, Treblinka, Sobibor, and Auschwitz. Although exact figures are hard to come by, it has been established that during the war, the Nazis killed between 5 ½ to 6 ½ million Jews.¹

i - The Claim and its Critique

The idea of the uniqueness of the Holocaust² has become an unquestioned assumption amongst secular, Federation and Zionist circles. The Holocaust was not unique because of the number of people killed per se. In fact, other human-made tragedies of the 20C have seen even more people die.³ But never before, they claim, was there ever an attempt to annihilate the entire Jewish race.¹ (We will show elsewhere that this is not so.)

¹ *Six Million: The Problem with Numbers*, by Rabbi Benjamin Blech: Do the enormous numbers of the Holocaust depersonalize it?

One of the first ways in which people try to convey the enormity of the horror of the Holocaust is to recite a number. They will tell you that six million perished. But that is wrong – for a remarkable reason.

There is a law in the Jewish religion about counting people. If, for example, it has to be determined whether a sufficient number for a *minyan*, a quorum of ten needed for prayer, is present, Jews do not recite a special verse of ten words, apportioning a word to a person, to determine whether the required number has been reached. Never are you allowed to point to a person and say, “You’re one, you two, you’re three” because that would turn a person into a number and not a unique individual created in the image of God.

Interesting, isn’t it, that the first thing the Nazis did when they turned Jews into concentration camp inmates was to replace their names with a tattooed number. They would no longer have a personal identity but just a cold statistic suitable for extermination.

Six million is meaningless because we as men and women can’t identify with a number. We can’t empathize with a row of zeros. We can’t picture the faces of mothers who had children torn from their breasts to have their brains bashed in front of their eyes; we don’t visualize little children tortured before they could ever enjoy their years of life and love. Six million is so incomprehensible that it is a fact beyond meaning.

²The term holocaust derives from the Septuagint, *Holokaustos* (“totally burnt”) (Some claim that this is the Greek rendering of the Hebrew *olah*.) Later the term lost its theological nuance and simply denoted sacrifice or vast destruction, especially by fire.

³In 1928 Joseph Stalin introduced his five-year plan to industrialize the Soviet Union and establish collective farming. Millions who resisted were killed; famine killed millions more. The total deaths between 1928-1932 were as high as 25 million.

In 1965, Chinese leader Mao Tse-tung announced a program to accelerate industrialization and force agriculture to collectivize. He called the reforms the Great Leap Forward. Similar to Joseph Stalin’s

Others dispute this. Peter Novick in The Holocaust in American Life claims that the Jewish insistence on the uniqueness of the Holocaust amounts to Holocaust possessiveness. Many African Americans, for example, were resentful that the powerful Jews were able to erect a national Holocaust Museum on the Mall in Washington whereas no such memorial existed to the suffering of blacks under slavery.

Novick claims that "the notion of uniqueness is vacuous," since all historical events are both like and unlike other events. "The assertion that the Holocaust is unique – like the claim that it is singularly incomprehensible or unrepresentable – is in practice deeply offensive. What else can all of this mean except 'your catastrophe, unlike ours, is ordinarily incomprehensible; unlike ours is representable.'" But he says that invoking the Holocaust to inspire Americans to act decisively in places like Bosnia and Kosovo can have the opposite effect as well. Since compared to the Holocaust most other events do not look bad, we risk becoming desensitized to "lesser" forms of suffering around the world².

Five Year Plans in the Soviet Union, the program fails to achieve its goals and leads to widespread famine. Some 20 million Chinese die.

(One's imagination is staggered if one considers what might have happened, if during the Franco-German War of 1871 a Hitler, rather than a Bismarck, had guided Germany. If that Hitler of several decades earlier had succeeded in overrunning the same countries that were overrun between 1917 and 1945, and if he had had the same program of murdering the Jews from the Atlantic to the Russian Pale of Settlement, the genocide of the Jewish people would have been almost total. There would have been no Israel today, and the other present-day largest concentrations of the Jewish people – the New World, the Soviet Union, and the British Commonwealth – would have consisted, at best, small, struggling communities.)

¹The eminent Jewish philosopher, Emil Fackenheim, offers a concise outline of the distinguishing characteristics of the Holocaust in his book To Mend the World, (IN: Indiana University Press, 1994)

- The "Final Solution" was designed to exterminate every single Jewish man, woman and child. The only Jews who would have conceivably survived had Hitler been victorious were those who somehow escaped discovery by the Nazis.
- Jewish birth (actually mere evidence of "Jewish blood" - one is considered a Jew even if only one grandparent is of non-Aryan descent) was sufficient to warrant the punishment of death. Fackenheim notes that this feature distinguished Jews from Poles and Russians who were killed because there were too many of them, and from "Aryans" who were not singled out unless they chose to single themselves out. With the possible exception of Gypsies, he adds, Jews were the only people killed for the "crime" of existing.
- The extermination of the Jews had no political or economic justification. It was not a means to any end; it was an end in itself. The killing of Jews was not considered just a part of the war effort, but equal to it; thus, resources that could have been used in the war were diverted instead to the program of extermination.
- The people who carried out the "Final Solution" were primarily average citizens. Fackenheim calls them "ordinary job holders with an extraordinary job." They were not perverts or sadists. "The tone-setters," he says, "were ordinary idealists, except that their ideals were torture and murder." Someone else once wrote that Germany was the model of civilized society. What was perverse, then, was that the Germans could work all day in the concentration camps and then go home and read Schiller and Goethe while listening to Beethoven.

Other examples of mass murder exist in human history, such as the atrocities committed by Pol Pot in Cambodia and the Turkish annihilation of the Armenians. But none of those other catastrophes, Fackenheim argues, contain more than one of the characteristics described above.

²There are those who argue the exact opposite. Consider the following article by David Fohrman in the Jerusalem Post, (September 11) –

[Today, we are faced with] the perversion of the Holocaust to such an extent that it is turned against the Jews, as was the case at the United Nations Conference on Racism, and as articulated by the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in his brutal statement that the Holocaust does not give the right to Israelis (read: Jews) to carry out another Holocaust against the Palestinians. (Please spare me from the hypocrisy of the African nations which have been committing genocide against each other for years.)

But the more substantive critique of the claim of uniqueness is presented by R Yitzchak Hutner, Zi'l:

ר' השואה: הרב יואל שוורץ, הרב יצחק גולדשטיין
און ר' יצחק הוטנר... המילה 'שואה' באה לציין אסון מיוחד, שאין להשוותו לשום דבר לפניו או
וריו... גישה כזאת הינה רחוקה מהשקפת התורה. חורבן יהדות אירופה הינו חלק אינטגרלי של
היסטוריה שלנו, ואין אנו מעיזים לבדד אותו ולשלול ממנו את החשיבות המונומנטלית שיש לו עבורנו.
חורבן יהדות אירופה, פרקי הדרכה בהוצאת מכון "אור מאיר", שכפול, חיפה תשמ"א).
א ראינו טעם בשימוש במונחים ארוכים ומסובכים יותר (כגון "חורבן יהדות אירופה בשנות ת"ש-
ו"ה).
עשה נסיון... להעמיד את בסיס קיומו של העם היהודי על יסוד לאומי חילוני בלבד, נעשה נסיון לראות
את ההיסטוריה הארוכה שלו, כאילו לא הייתה אלא תולדותיו של אחד העמים העתיקים.
וואה הראתה שאין יהודי יכול להימלט מן הגורל היהודי. "והעולה על רוחכם היו לא תהיה, אשר אתם
מרים: נהיה כגויים. אם לא ביד חזקה ובזרוע נטויה ובחמלה שפוכה אמלך עליכם" (יחזקאל כ', ל"ב-
ל"ג).

Claiming the uniqueness of the Holocaust takes it out of Jewish history. It removes from our ability to see that G-d is weaving a thread of Hashgacha throughout all history which will ultimately be resolved in the coming of Moshiach. It is this attitude which prevents some of us from placing the Holocaust as one of the great tragedies to be mourned on Tisha B'Av, determining that instead it should have its own stand alone day – Yom HaShoah. A Torah Jew believes that all of history is meaningful, that it is all leading somewhere. The Holocaust was a momentous event, so momentous that it did, as we will show, change history in fundamental ways. But it did so as a part of history, a history of the Jews, which in any case does not follow normal laws of sociology and history.

Therefore, if we want to show how the Holocaust was unique, it is not as a unique event in Jewish history but as a cataclysmic expression of anti-Semitism. It is anti-Semitism which is a unique form of hatred and it is here that we can distinguish a very different approach of the Nazis to the Jews as compared with their attitude to other people like the Gypsies or the Poles, Russians, non-Soviet Communists, and gypsies. Compared with these there is no question that the Jews suffered a particularly terrible fate¹:

It is not enough that the Louis Farrakhans and the David Irvings of this world spew forth their virulent anti-Semitism by either denying the Holocaust or belittling it, now we have political figures such as Annan leading the fray. Annan, the Finnish foreign minister, and all the Muslim countries have promulgated the disgusting notion that we Israelis are the new Nazis, and the Palestinians the new Jews.

This sort of transference is nothing less than abhorrent. (Not to mention that we are no match for the Arab brutality against each other: Jordan killing 20,000 Palestinians in one week, or Syria killing 5,000 Christians in two days!) But such transference has received its "respectable" cover for years, even in the United States, through a more subtle, but equally distorted interpretation of the Holocaust - a transference that is the universalization of the tragedy.

In the late 1960s, during the height of the Vietnam War, a number of plays appeared on Broadway such as notable playwrights as Arthur Miller, Peter Weiss and Robert Shaw. In each play, the writer used the Holocaust to illustrate man's inhumanity to man. During the 1960s, the Holocaust became equal to the napalming of the Vietnamese countryside, persecution against Blacks, Communist baiting, a yes, suppression of Arabs by Israelis. Shaw himself wrote in 1968: "I see Auschwitz as a universal instrument that could have been used by anyone. For that matter, the Jews could have been on the other side of the Nazis."

¹This is not an issue of whether Nazi anti-Semitism was unique viz-a-viz other forms of anti-Semitism rather it is to refute claims that the Nazis did not only murder Jews – they also targeted Gypsies and even Poles

1. The destructive will of the Nazis was aimed at the totality of the Jews as Jews, and consequently the victims included women, children, and old people, while it was directed at only a part of the other groups.
2. The "Final Solution" for the Jews was to be achieved immediately, during the war, whereas decisions on the ultimate fate of other peoples were postponed until after victory.
3. There appeared to be very little opposition to Nazi anti-Semitism in the broader German population. In this respect, the Germany of the 1930's was different from that of the 1880's, when anti-Semitism had been revived. Then, a group of 75 distinguished citizens had protested solemnly against the new wave of anti-Semitism. No such protest was forthcoming in 1932 and 1933 when such protests were still possible.
4. Hitler's anti-Semitism emerged after two centuries of Western Civilization stressing the rights and freedom of all mankind. Germany was the leader of this civilization. It therefore set new standards of acceptable depravity for all mankind.¹
5. Hitler's war against the Jews had priority over his war against all other enemies. In the Jewish case alone there was an absence of inhibitions or conflicting considerations, which played a role in Nazi persecution of non-Jews. Thus, despite the critical manpower situation, particularly in the armament industry, the directive was given in December 1941 by the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories that "as a matter of principle no consideration should be given to economic interests." In another critical area, the shortage of rolling stock, Himmler and Eichmann insisted that despite urgent requirements by the armed forces, priority should be given to deportations. Indeed, here the insatiable destructive will of the Nazis reached apocalyptic dimensions. Indeed, as we will show later, only if we understand that the Nazis saw this as a spiritual war with the Jews, can we make any sense of their actions.
6. Like all great Anti-Semites, Hitler seemed to really understand what the Jews were all about and what their role in history is. Nazism declared that the fate of nations – of the world, even – depends on their attitude to the Jews. The war itself was proclaimed by Hitler to be a war against "international Jewry," and the anti-Nazi allies themselves were afraid to take a firm and principled stand against this rabbleroising, lest it be said that they were

¹Nancy Gibbs: And while the Reich lasted 12 years rather than 1,000, its spores still survive a multiply. "The essence of Hitlerism--racism, ethnic hatred, extreme nationalism, state-organized murder--is still alive, still causing millions of deaths," wrote U.N. Ambassador Richard Holbrooke when he reluctantly nominated Hitler as the century's dominant character. "Freedom is the century's most powerful idea, but the struggle is far from over." In fact, if impact were measured only in number of lives lost, one argument goes, Hitler would fall behind his fellow despots, Stalin and Mao. There are those who insist that Hitler is not the century's dominant figure because he was simply the latest in a long line of murderous figures, stretching back to before Genghis Khan. The only difference with technology: Hitler went about his cynical carnage with all the efficiency that modern industry has perfected.

If all Hitler had done was kill people in vast numbers more efficiently than anyone else ever did, the debate over his lasting importance might end there. But Hitler's impact went beyond his willingness to kill without mercy. He did something civilization had not seen before. Genghis Khan operated in the context of the nomadic steppe, where pillaging villages was the norm. Hitler came out of the most civilized society on Earth, the land of Beethoven and Goethe and Schiller. He set out to kill people not for what they did but for who they were. Even Mao and Stalin were killing their "class enemies." Hitler killed a million Jewish babies just for existing. (In Time Magazine, end of the Millennium edition, 1999)

fighting for the Jews in a “Jewish war.” It is virtually certain that rescue possibilities were neglected for fear of anti-Semitic propaganda.

Still, this does not mean that there were not previous attempts of similar intensity annihilate all of world Jewry, with a similar understanding of the opposition between Jew and the Torah they stood for on the one hand and the Galut Civilization on the other. In fact the Roman attempt at the time of the destruction of the 2nd Temple and during the Bar Kochba revolt had a far more realistic chance of a total genocide of all Jews. For at that time all Jews live under the Roman Empire. The Nazis, on the other hand, never had a realistic chance of reaching the largest community of Jews at that time, i.e. the Jews of the USA.¹

Similarly, the whole of world Jewry stood to be wiped out by Haman’s decrees and in fact this very plan was in an advanced stage of preparation before it was thwarted. Here too the whole of world Jewry stood to be wiped out. The fact that this plan was miraculously thwarted before it was implemented, while the Nazis’ destruction destroyed 6 million lives before it was stopped makes for an obvious distinction – we do not mourn for our brethren in Purim – we rejoice; while the Holocaust remains a tragedy of unfathomable proportions. Even at this point, the effect on the Jews, rather than the attempt by our enemies which is the real focus of any distinction. This is our third point above, i.e.:

The impact on the Jews was unique:

So we may conclude that while Nazi Anti-Semitism was uniquely different to the hatreds of other peoples, it was not uniquely different to other forms of Anti-Semitism. Because G-d in His Divine Wisdom allowed such an event to take place at a specific place in history, and in particular *בעקבותא דמשיחא*, the impact of the Holocaust on the Jewish people was quite profound. So the uniqueness of the Holocaust is not so much a function of how the Nazis were. Rather it reflects the impact on the Jewish people:

Rabbi Yaakov Weinberg (*The Jewish Observer*, June 1976) claimed that:

1-In terms of changing forever the way the Jewish nation needs to operate, the Holocaust was comparable to the destruction of the first and second Temples²;

¹Certainly many of the Nazi decrees are comparable to anti-Semitism of an earlier era.

Raul Hilberg (*The Destruction of European Jews*) makes the comparison:

The Nazi destruction process did not come out of a void; it was the culmination of a cyclical trend. We have observed the trend in the three successive goals of anti-Jewish administrators. The missionaries of Christianity had said in effect: You have no right to live among us as Jews. The secular rulers who followed had proclaimed: You have no right to live among us. The German Nazis at last decreed: You have no right to live.

The German Nazis, then, did not discard the past; they built upon it. They did not begin development; they completed it.

(See Appendix 4 for a comparative table between previous anti-Semitic decrees by the Christians and those of the Nazis.)

²The destruction of European Jewry a generation ago was one of those singular occurrences in Jewish history that left the Jewish people permanently changed in both substance and image. It fits in the category of such national tragedies as the Churban Bayis Rishon—the destruction of the First Temple, which brought to a close an era when G-d’s immediate presence had been felt in every moment of every Jew’s life; and the Churban Bayis Sheini—the destruction of the Second Temple which also diminished the status of Klal Yisrael in ways that affected its essence, removing from Jewry the vital contact with the divine that had been provided by the daily avoda (sacrificial service). These changes did not merely affect Klal Yisrael in degree, but in essence. Loss of the Beit Hamikdash not only reduced the number of mitzvot that Jewry could perform, but struck at the quality of Jewish existence. So affected, Klal Yisrael responded to these events by convening the 17th of Tamuz and the Ninth of Av as days of fasting and mourning; not merely for the loss of millions of lives that took place on those days, but for the loss that was suffered in our national existence, and in Creation, as well.

2-In terms of our response to G-d's Providence, the Holocaust was unique. The why previous Jewish tragedies always meant, "For what sin did we deserve this?" Whereas the 'why' of the Holocaust meant, "By what right did G-d do this to us?" The former was judgement on ourselves, the latter on G-d Himself.¹

ii - Studies of the Holocaust

a. Because of the uniqueness of Anti-Semitism, Western scholarship cannot explain the Holocaust:

Rabbi Meiselman: Western thought lacks the proper categories for an understanding of this historical phenomenon. Rabbi Yisrael Salanter, the founder of the *mussar* movement distinguished between two types of warfare. The first is motivated by strictly material considerations, such as the pursuit of wealth and power, while the second type grows out of the spiritual incompatibility between *kedushah* and *taharah*, sanctity and purity, on the one hand, and *tumah*, moral destruction and depravity, on the other...Hitler viewed his war against the Jews as his primary war...The idea of spiritually-based warfare which is part of the *מלחמה לה' בעמלק מדר דר*, the war of God and Amalek, does not fit into the framework of traditional Western political analysis and so remains totally inexplicable according to the terms. Hence Western thought has glossed over the Nazi war against the Jews and some people have even denied that it took place.

b. Why was there no comprehensive treatment of the Holocaust by Orthodox until recently?

Rabbi Moshe Meiselman: One of the most sinister secondary effects of the Nazi destruction of European Jewry was that it effectively traumatized much of the Jewish people into silence. The Holocaust robbed us of the talented individuals who would have been able to confront the events of 1939-1945 and explain them. It left in its wake a generation of survivors who had no choice but to devote themselves entirely to the task of rebuilding what had come so near to being lost altogether. So, for a time at least, there simply were

¹ [In the case of the destruction of the First and Second Temples,] no questions were asked, because the answers were clear before a question could be uttered. We knew the "Why"; we knew it in our beings, in our minds, in our hearts, in our souls. It was not necessary for us to articulate them, for we lived with the knowledge that the "Why" was the ongoingness of our special relationship with G-d. Thus Jewry could face tragedy with a confidence that they were a source of strength, ultimately leading to the full redemption.

The most recent Churban, however, is unique in many ways. It was the first time since the Churban of Bayis that a tragedy had befallen Klal Yisroel that has permanently affected its very essence; since 1945 Klal Yisroel can never again be the same. Our areas of function, the nature of our problems, the methods we employ to solve them, even our very feelings have all undergone a permanent change because of Churban Europe.

For the first time in its existence, Klal Yisroel did not recognize with its customary clarity, certainty and self-awareness that it was to react to the events as an Am Hashem, a Torah nation. For the first time the question "Why" is posed because of loss of that clarity of insight. Klal Yisroel failed to recognize instinctively that this Churban also has its place in the continuity of its destiny, that its very horror is a part of our ongoing relationship with G-d, and that its very uniqueness is the truth of G-d's agonizing love for us.

Ironically, never since the Churban of 1900 years ago has it been so abundantly clear that all that happened occurred by the workings of the direct hand of G-d. Nonetheless, the question "Why" was posed. —Not the "Why" of our Rabbis of old: "Why was the land destroyed?" —the search for the specific sin that earned destruction, which only G-d could pinpoint. But the "By what right?" —subjecting G-d Himself to our judgement, wherein human intelligence presumes to evaluate Divine justice.

resources to devote to a serious evaluation of the Holocaust. But that was some forty years ago. Today the distance we enjoy from those dreadful events obligates us in a very different way.

c. Should we be silent now?:

Rabbi Meiselman:

In Judaism... silence has never been viewed as the appropriate response to catastrophe... Jewish thought has always chosen to confront history and attempt to see in the hand of God.¹

The *Chumash* itself donates entire sections to detailed portraits of the hand of God in history. These prophecies of catastrophic destruction resulting from the failings of the Jewish people and of miraculous rebirth furnish us with historical guidelines by which subsequent historical events are to be understood.

Indeed, the Prophets applied these guidelines to the major historical events of their own period. So, for example, Jeremiah, Isaiah and Ezekiel viewed the rise of Babylonia, the destruction of the First Temple and the Jewish people's subsequent exile as consequent to Israel's national abandonment of God and the Torah and their embrace of idolatry. The events of the Second Temple period—the events of Purim, Chanukkah and, ultimately, the destruction of the Temple itself, culminating in our present exile—were also interpreted by Chazal in terms of divine intervention. More obvious and immediate interpretations based on political and economic causation were never viewed as either significant or relevant to Jewish history.

Indeed, all throughout Jewish history we find the same willingness to confront historical catastrophe and search for its causes and meaning in terms of the spiritual failings of the Jewish people. The Expulsion of 1492 from Spain and the Inquisition which followed and the Jewish massacres resulting from the Polish uprising of 1648-1649... entire books were written in attempts to evaluate these events in uniquely Jewish terms.

Moreover, the Rambam explains that recounting these events serves a valuable purpose, for the introspection that results from recounting stories of destruction can produce seeds of change in our behavior, change that will reverse the destruction we ourselves have brought about. Similarly, in the introduction to his commentary on *Eicha*, Rav Yaakov Lisa (the author of *Nesivtoth haMishpat*) tells us that the recounting of our sufferings would be nothing but masochistic—if not for the constructive results that are consequent to this introspection. To change our ways is the only real purpose of the Jewish preoccupation with the history of our own suffering.

Jewish law and thought obligates us...to confront, evaluate..."

Today, there has been not only a great thriving of Holocaust studies in academic circles, but also within Orthodox circles. To some degree, this indicates that we have arrived at the appropriate historical era, the first time when any in depth perspective is possible.

¹Yet we should be careful about being arrogant; arrogant in our questions and arrogant in our answers. The Chazon Ish upon being questioned on the reasons for the Holocaust, he responded "Can someone blithely dismiss a difficult Tosefos if he can barely translate a Mishnah? The layman might be infuriated when he sees a tailor cutting good material; he is simply too ignorant to understand that the tailor is making a new garment. It is true that we are too small and puny to understand the ways of G-d, but we must recognize that even history's most incomprehensible and barbaric eras are but a part of the Divine plan. Could we but see the complete design, we would understand each of its parts." The unqualified amongst us attempting answers must be aware that we may be attempting to describe a whole elephant based on our vision of the bottom of one of its legs (Ed.)

ר השואה: הרב יואל שוורץ, הרב יצחק גולדשטיין
 רים ל"ב, ז': "זכור ימות עולם, בינו שנות דור ודור"
 כתב הרמב"ם: שתבוא צרה ויזעקו עליה ויריעו, ידעו הכל שבגלל מעשיהם הרעים הורע להן.
 אין זו רק מצוה פרטית...אלא אחד מעקרי האמונה הוא "שהוא יתעלה יודע מעשה בני אדם ולא
 ניהם"...עיקר העשירי "שהוא יתעלה משלם גמול טוב למי שמקיים מצוות התורה, ומעניש מי שעובר
 אזהרותיה" (שם, העיקר האחד עשר). ההתבוננות במאורעות העוברים עלינו, הן לטוב והן למוטב, היא
 בוננות בדרכי ההשגחה וחיזוק האמונה בהשגחה.
 לא די ב"וידעת היום" אלא צריכים "והשבות אל לבבך"...כי ה' הוא האלוקים אף "בארץ
 נחת".
 ולדעת כמה ממוני המצות, מצוה מתרי"ג מצוות היא "להצדיק את הדין על המאורע, בין בגופו
 'בבניו בין בממונו, שנאמר "וידעת עם לבבך כי כאשר ייסר איש את בנו ה' אלוהיך מייסרך" (דברים
 ה') וקבע זה בליבו, ויכוף ראשו וישתוק, שנאמר "וידם אהרן" (ויקרא י', ג'), ולא יצדיק נפשו
 ולוקים, גם לא יאמר מקרה הוא, כי אז ילק עמו ה' יתברך בחמת קרי, אלא יפשפש במעשיו וישבו
 שובה, וזה חלק עיקרי ממצות "ואהבת את ה'", דכתיב בכל מאודך, ודרשו ז"ל "בכל מידה ומידה
 הוא מודד לך" בין טוב בין יסורין" (יספר חרדים, מנין המצוות, פ"א אות ל"א).
 השואה...אין חילול ה' גדול מזה, וחייבים אנו לקדש את השם ולמעט חילול השם עד כמה שהדבר
 א בדינו.

ר השואה: הרב יואל שוורץ, הרב יצחק גולדשטיין
 "ילקוט מעם לועז" (דברים חלק ג', עמ' תתקע"ז) "שבכל דור ודור עומדים עלינו לכלותינו, הכל
 א עמלק, שמתלבש בכל פעם באומה אחרת", ובוה ביאר שם מדוע נצטוונו דווקא בנסירת איבה
 מלק ולא לשאר צוררי ישראל, כי כולם בכלל מצוה זו. וכך נמסר...רבי משה סולובייצ'יק שדיק מלשון
 מב"ם בהלכות מלכים ה', ה' שלא כתב על עמלק "יכבר אבד זכרם", כדרך שכתב בהלכה הקודמת שם
 ניים שבעת העממים.
 גדולה מזו: אומרים בשם הגר"א שהגרמנים נחשבים לספק עמלקים, ומסופר על הגאון רבי יוסף
 ים זונפלד שנמנע מטעם זה מלהקביל את פניו של הקיסר הגרמני בזמן ביקורו בירושלים בשנת תרנ"ט
 זרא דארעא דישראל" ח"א ע' ר').
 ל "ספר החינוך" כותב: "משרשי המצוה: לתת אל ליבנו שכל המיצר לישראל שנאוי
 נ הקדוש ברוך הוא, וכי לפי רעתו וערמת רוב נזקו תהיה מפלתו ורעתו, כמו שאתה מוצא בעמלק,
 שהתחיל הוא להזיקם, ציונו ב"ה לאבד זכרו מני ארץ ולשרש אחריו על כלה" (מצוה תר"ג).

iii - The Nazis Understood the Uniqueness of the Jews

a. Hitler's vision for the world:

Hitler had a definite vision of what he wanted to impose on the world:

Those who see in National Socialism nothing more than a political movement, know scarcely anything of it. It is more even than a religion -- it is the will to create mankind anew.

In Chapter D I, we have placed these ideas in their historical context, showing that these ideas had been building up in German society for over a century. There was a certain messianic fervor about Hitler's ideology:

Providence has ordained that I should be the greatest liberator of humanity. I am freeing man from the restraints of an intelligence that has taken charge, from the dirty and degrading self-mortifications of a false vision known as conscience and morality, and from the demands of a freedom and personal independence which only a very few can bear.

Instead of a world in which people care for each other and the universal rights of man, Hitler had a Nietzschean vision of a world of the survival of the fittest, where the strong would rule the weak:

In a natural order the classes are peoples superimposed on one another in struggle instead of living as neighbors. To this order we shall return as soon as the after-effects of liberalism have been removed.

They refer to me as an uneducated barbarian. Yes we are barbarians. We want to be barbarians; it is an honored title to us. We shall rejuvenate the world. This world is near end¹.

b. Nazism as a Function of G-d's Anti-Semitism

As we explained, the Holocaust has to be understood in the context of the uniqueness of anti-Semitism in general.² Anti-Semitism is a hatred inexplicable by usual sociologic explanations. The Nazis reflected this hatred by prioritizing 'the war against the Jews' over the war against the Allies and by regarding it as a total war. As Hitler put it:

"The struggle for world domination will be fought entirely between us – between Germans and Jews. All else is facade and illusion. Behind England stands Israel, and behind France, and behind the United States. Even when we have driven the Jew out of Germany, remains our world enemy."

The Nazis understood very well what force the Jew stood for and what the implications for the unfolding of history were. The Jews have a special relationship with G-d and therefore are subject to meta-historical forces which have to do with the ultimate purpose of the world and the achievement of that purpose by Divine Providence. The Jewish people are G-d's main instrument for the ultimate resolution of history and the Holocaust was an important link in that chain. Certainly, Hitler and many of his cohorts understood that the Jews represented the forces of spirituality which, as long as they were alive, would doom the Nazi plan to destruction.

Hitler said: "If even one Jewish child survives, without any Jewish education, without a synagogue and no Hebrew school – it is in his soul." Hitler made it clear that Germany must be purged of Jews at all costs:

"The internal cleansing of the Jewish spirit is not possible in any platonic way. For the Jewish spirit is the product of the Jewish person. Unless we expel the Jewish people so that they will 'Judaize' our own people within a very short time."

Hitler understood that the Jew remained with his Pintele Yid – that even when assimilated he still had a core which remained pure: "Even had there never existed a synagogue or a Jewish school or the Old Testament, the Jewish spirit would still exist and would exert its influence. It has been there from the beginning, and there is no Jew – not a single one – who does not personify it."

The Jews had to be killed, the Nazis reasoned, because there was no other way for the Nazis to rule the world with their anti-Torah ideology.

The Nazi Stress saw this in very literal terms: "If we lose this war, we do not fall in the hands of some other states but will all be annihilated by world Jewry. Jewry firmly decided [fent entstlossen] to exterminate all Germans. International law and international custom will be no protection against the Jewish will for total annihilation [total Vernichtungswille der Juden]."

The flip side to this was the Nazi vision of themselves as the new chosen race, a vision which the Jews were preventing.

c. The Jew and the Nazi – Total Conflict

¹ Quotes gleaned from the Aish HaTorah seminar on the Web, World Perfect:

² For a full discussion on anti-Semitism see the Ner LeElef publication, Israel and the Nations.

Hitler definitely understood that the Jews represented the civilization energy which, left to express itself, would sap the Nazis of their power. He clearly saw that Jewish and Aryan civilizations were in total conflict:

"With the Jew, there is no coming to terms, but only the hard 'either-or'" (Mein Kampf, 1925, Volume 1, p. 225). This conflict was, he thought, going to lead to the destruction of the Jews. "If international finance Jewry in and outside Europe should succeed in once again plunging the nations into a world war, then the result will not be the victory of Jewry, but rather the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe!" (Reichstag speech, January 30, 1939)

"We see clearly that this war could only end with the extermination of the German peoples, or that Jewry must disappear from Europe. ... The result of this war will be the annihilation of Jewry. ... For once the ancient Jewish law will come into play: an eye for an eye; a tooth for a tooth." (Speech of January 30, 1942 as monitored by the Allied monitoring service)

In order to enact his plan, Hitler had to dehumanize the Jew. The Jew was not only a contaminator, a murderer – but sub-human, a parasite:

"This contamination of our blood, which hundreds of thousands of our people blindly ignore, is used by the Jew today according to plan. These black parasites of the people deliberately violate our inexperienced, young blond girls and thereby destroy something that cannot be replaced in this world." (Mein Kampf, 1925, Volume 2, pp. 629-30.)

"Was there any excrement, any shamelessness in any form, above all in cultural life in which at least one Jew would not have been involved?" (Mein Kampf, 1925, Volume 1, 61.)

Theoretically, far greater hatred should have been felt for the East European Jew, with his peculiar appearance and garb, and his special language, than for the assimilated Jew who would-be Frenchman or German doing his best to get away from his Jewishness. But it was not so. "Foreignness" and "difference" were not therefore a real factor in Nazi antisemitism. Nor were the Germans pure racists. A German woman could marry a Japanese without polluting German "blood and honor", whereas she would be liable to severe penalties if she had relations with a Jew.

Just like Haman, and unlike Pharaoh, the goal became total destruction of the Jewish people. As Heinrich Himmler put it:

"We came to the question: what to do with the women and children? I decided to find a clear solution here as well. I did not consider myself justified to exterminate the men - that is to kill them or have them killed - and allow the avengers of our sons and grandsons in the form of their children to grow up. The difficult decision had to be taken to make this people disappear from the earth." (Speech at Posen, October 6, 1943)

d. Nazis Chosen Nation

Heinrich Himmler believed that Aryans had not evolved from monkeys or apes like other races, but had come down to earth from the heavens, where they had been preserved in ice from the beginning of time. He established a meteorology division which was given the task of proving this cosmic ice theory. He also thought he was a reincarnation of Heinrich the First.

This was no different to Haman, and his vision of the Amalekites as replacing the Jewish people as the new chosen nation. Rav Tzadok HaCohen goes so far as to say that Haman dovetailed to HaSh-m, saying, "See, the Jews have messed up. They no longer keep your commandments and no longer deserve to be your chosen people. Choose me instead."

iv - The Jews - Not Subject to Usual Historical Forces

a. Judaism agrees with the Nazi's understanding of who the Jews are.

Just as the real AntiSemites see their conflict with the Jews as a spiritual one, the correct Jewish response is also to see the conflict as spiritual. The Torah perspective is that we do control, by our spiritual level, our own destinies:

Rabbi Meiselman: At the time of Purim, Haman promulgated a decree against the Jewish people after having convinced Achashvarosh that the Jews had to be destroyed. In response Esther asked, *מה זה ועל מה זה*, which the Talmud interprets to mean: "What did I do wrong?" There was an immediate act of soul-searching. The Biblical basis for Esther's response is found in Sefer Devarim (soon after the Torah introduces the idea of *hes panim*). There in parshat *האזינו*, the verse says, *לו חכמו ישכילו זאת*. If only they were intelligent they would understand—*בינו לאחריתם*—they would see down to the end things—*איכה ירדוף אחד אלף ושנים יניסו רבבה*—How can one pursue a thousand and two multitude? How was it possible that there was a Holocaust of six million Jews? How was possible that the Jews didn't succeed at revolt? The Torah asked these questions thousands of years ago and responded: because God "sold us out" and "turned us in." Esther understood that if there was a decree against the Jewish people it was because God has "sold them out."

וואס תלכו עמי קרי ולא תאבו לשמע לי...natural causation...The economics of Germany, the geography of Egypt, the social structure of Babylon, the strategic position of Rome are said to account for what happened in history. Accordingly, the verse is interpreted: "and you will view your national calamities as the product of natural historical forces and you shall be unwilling to listen to Me..."

The Chumash completely rejects this type of explanation of history and views it not only as wrong, but, more seriously, as sinful. *קרי*—Keri, a deterministic historical understanding of persecution, amounts to an obstinate refusal to listen to God—*לא תאבו לי*—which borders on idolatry. God goes on to say, "If you refuse to listen to Me, I shall intensify my blows through what appear to be natural, economic, or military disasters until sooner or later, you will have to listen, for you will ultimately see the hand of God in history..."

The notion that the salvation of humanity lies in understanding natural processes, grasping historical processes—this, too, is the worship of Nature.

This understanding of the world, according to Keri is appropriate when speaking about the nations of the world. *אשר חלק ה' אלקיך אתם לכל העמים תחת כל השמים*.

But the historical destiny of the Jewish people has nothing to do with these natural processes.

In his *Nefesh Hachaim*...*והיי עולם נטע בתוכינו*. Rav Chaim translates this in the most literal of terms: "The life of the universe has He planted within our (the Jewish people) midst." This means, Rav Chaim explains, that the amount of *קדושה* and *רוחניות*, sanctity and

¹ Rabbi Meiselman continues: In an understanding of persecution, the Chumash says, *תשא עיניך*, *השמימה וראית את השמש ואת הירח ואת הכוכבים כל צבא השמים ונדחת והשתחווית להם ועבדתם*. "Do not your eyes to the heavens and see the sun, moon and stars, all heavenly constellations, for you may be led astray and bow down to them and serve them. God has assigned these laws, i.e. the laws of nature, to all the nations under the heavens." It is possible, when contemplating natural processes become overawed by Nature and even come to worship it. What this meant two or three thousand years ago was ancient paganism. But there are more sophisticated—and contemporary—ways of worshipping Nature.

spirituality, in this world is not determined by God. It is, rather, determined by the Jewish people. The power to create the sanctity of the universe or, ח"ו, to remove it is in our hands. This same idea is expressed in Vayikra והייתם קדושים ואלקיכם והתקדשתם כי אני ה' אלקיכם. "For I am the Lord, your God. And you shall make yourselves holy and you shall be holy, for I am holy." To this verse Rashi comments: קדשו עצמכם למטה "Sanctify yourselves first down this world and then I, God, will respond." Man creates sanctity. God merely responds¹. ...

[In the case of the First Temple and Second Temples,] the Nefesh Hachaim (quoted in the Zohar) explains that the Jewish people themselves drove the sanctity from the Temple through their own actions. By the time that Nebuchadnezzar הרשע or Titus הרשע came to destroy the Temple, the Holy of Holies, the Holy of Holies, there was simply no spirituality left. We, by our own actions, had removed it and left nothing but a building, and empty shell to be conquered. In this way, we made the destruction of the Temple possible. And in this way, later in our history, we made possible other calamities.

Maimonides, in explaining the Talmudic dictum "God has nothing in this world but the four amoth of halakhah," claims that all of world history is controlled by the needs of the four amoth of halakhah. World events revolve around the Jewish people and their spiritual needs and destiny and not vice versa. Hence, concludes Rav Chaim of Volozhin, the dynamics of the entire world lie in the hands of the Jewish people. This is the meaning of the phrase: "and the life of the world has he placed in our midst."

v - *The End of Edom – Uniqueness of Evil*

a. **Were the Nazis Amalek?**

There is a tradition from the GRA that the Germans are Amalek. This is thought to be the reason why, when Kaiser Wilhelm 2nd visited Jerusalem in 1898, Rav Yosef Cha Zonnenfeld refused to go out to meet him. However, even if the Germans (or the Nazis) were not Amalek, they were certainly Edom. Germany, in fact, was the leader of Western Civilization at the time – i.e. the leading country of our Galus Edom experience. It is through this prism that we conduct the discussion below.

b. **Anti-Semitism – The Evil of Edom**

"Before Hitler, we thought we had sounded the depths of human nature," argues R. Rosenbaum, author of "Explaining Hitler." "He showed how much lower we could go, and that's what was so horrifying. It gets us wondering not just at the depths he showed us but whether there is worse to come." Hitler confirmed for us that evil does exist. It moves among us; it leads us astray and deploys powerful, subtle weapons against even the sturdiest souls.

The specific evil of the Nazis was their anti-Semitism.² In fact, the Western World has been responsible for most of the serious anti-Semitism of the last two thousand years.

¹Rabbi Meiselman continues: Consider, for example, the destruction of the First Temple. The Prophet Jeremiah urged the Jewish people to repent and warned them that if they failed to do so the Temple would be destroyed. But the Jewish people were unwilling to believe him. After all, the Temple was a holy place, a place whose inner precincts were so holy that virtually no one could enter. How, then, could the Babylonian army succeed in entering such a place? (The question is expressed many times in Eichah and in the Kinoh.)

However, once we realize that sanctity in this world does not have an absolute existence but is something we create, or, ח"ו, destroy, the answer becomes clear.

² Prejudice, it seems, is a standard fare of life. In his folksong entitled "National Brotherhood Wee Tom Lehrer sings: Oh the Protestants hate the Catholics, and the Catholics hate the Protestants, and the Hindus hate the Moslems and everybody hates the Jews.

This is because the Western World, as Edom, represents the Galus civilization, only the (and the last) in the history of the world.

Exile is not just a historical tragedy whereby a foreign nation kicks the Jews out of land. In fact, we regard the Greeks as imposing one of the exiles. Yet the Greeks never physically exiled us. However, they did exile us spiritually in the sense that Hellenistic culture rapidly took root on the very holy Israeli soil where Judaism ought to have been strongest. But there is more to the story than this.

In his book Civilization, Kenneth Clark defines an active civilization as one that seems to produce a high level of energy, civilization energy, as I like to call it. Every civilization has its own energy system which inevitably seems to run out. Civilizations seem to peak at a certain point and then go into decline. As Mark Twain would have it: "The Egyptian, the Babylonian, and the Persian rose, filled the planet with sound and splendor, then faded to dream-stuff and passed away; the Greek and Roman followed; and made a vast noise, and they are gone; other people have sprung up and held their torch high for a time, but it burned out, and they sit in twilight now, or have vanished."

Sometimes, however, a nation seems to draw on the same civilization energy as the Jews. They seem to be locked into the same energy system. This causes huge conflict, for there is then not enough civilization energy to go around. If the Jews express themselves, and develop their Torah civilization, the twin nation will find itself on the wane, their very existence at stake. Should the Jews weaken and the twinned civilization take up the slack, the Jews will feel themselves totally dominated by this alternate civilization.

These twinned nations are called the exiles. The exile dynamic is summarized quite succinctly by the Sages: "כשזה קם זה נופל."

In this song Lehrer expresses a truism, that hatred for the Jew is uniquely commonplace. The question is: Why?

What lies behind these millennia of hatred? Why has the undercurrent of anti-Semitism bubbled and boiled and exploded against Jews everywhere, time and again throughout history? Historians propose six possible reasons. When we study such theories, it is important to distinguish between a "cause" and an "excuse." The difference is not difficult to recognize: When one thing *causes* another, if you remove the cause, the effect should vanish. If, on the other hand, one thing is an *excuse* for another, then taking away the excuse will change nothing -- the effect will remain.

A child who is chronically late to school may say in his defense, "But I don't have a watch. How can you expect me to get to school in time if I don't even have a watch?" If his parents would buy him a watch and he would still be late for school, then it will be clear to all that his lack of a watch was just an excuse for his lateness, not its cause.

Concerning anti-Semitism, if we succeed in identifying the *cause* of anti-Semitism, then eliminating that cause should put an end to hatred for the Jews. However, if we can eliminate that which we have identified as the cause -- and the hatred remains -- then we know that what we thought was a *cause* was in fact merely an *excuse*.

The Big Six -- Are They Causes or Excuses?

Historians and sociologists have come up with numerous theories to explain the recurrent pattern of antipathy towards Jews. In this presentation we will explore the six most common theories which have been set forth as the principal causes of anti-Semitism, hence the term "The Big Six."

Economic: We hate Jews because they possess too much wealth and power.

Chosen People: We hate Jews because they arrogantly claim they are the chosen people.

Scapegoat: Jews are a convenient group to single out and blame for our troubles.

Deicide: We hate Jews because they killed Jesus.

Outsiders: We hate Jews because they are different than us.

We hate Jews because they are an inferior race.

Let us examine these six frequently given reasons and determine if they are truly causes or excuses:

The Maharal (מהר"ל נצח ישראל פיי"ד) explains that there is no such thing as a mediocre energy level for the Jews. Either we are in the driver's seat, controlling global resources, down into the abyss we go, ruled and controlled by others. In this respect we are the inheritors of Adam, the first man. Of him it was said in בראשית וגוי: - that would rule over the fish of the sea. But the Hebrew word for "rule" is ambiguous; it can also mean to descend. In fact ruling and descending are simply opposite poles of the same idea force. Should he merit, man rules; should he not, down he goes.

This has to do with the Jewish nation's great potential; when it goes unfulfilled, it is as if the Jewish people have denied their own reality and therefore are subjugated to the lowliness of nations. But this very subjugation is a sign of their potential greatness.

The Gemorrah in Kesuvos reports that the great Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai once saw a maiden collecting barley from amidst the animal dung of the Arabs. Upon inquiring further he discovered that she was from one of the most prestigious, wealthy families of Jerusalem now reduced to total poverty. Upon learning this he exclaimed, "Happy are you, oh Israel, the time that you do the will of G-d, no nation is able to rule you; yet when you disobey His will, you are handed over to the animals of the Gentiles."¹

Here we learn of real anti-Semitism. The anti-Semite who runs down the street and yells "You dirty Jew" is not the problem of the Jews. The anti-Semite who understands what the Jew and his civilization is all about, and that he, the Gentile is in fundamental competition with the Jew for limited spiritual resources, he is the one to be feared.

The Nazi's hatred and fear of Jews was totally unjustified in terms of material or political power. "It was a metaphysical fear of the true mystery of G-d's ...presence in history as revealed in the continued survival of Israel....The hiding G-d of history was a repudiation of everything Nazi Germany stood for." (Eliezer Berkowitz - The Hiding G-d of History)

The Communists, for all their claim that they opposed all religion, proved to be much more anti-Jewish than anti-Christian. Haman, the evil advisor to the king in the Purim story of Esther certainly understood what the Jews were all about. All of these intuitively consciously knew that the destruction of Judaism was an essential prerequisite to the free expression of their Machievellian dreams.

"How did the Christians historically explain the miraculous survival of the Jew? Or two possibilities - or G-d's chosen people - which they couldn't accept, or the work of the devil, which they proposed. A perverse recognition of Jewish uniqueness." (Eliezer Berkowitz - The Hiding G-d of History)

Real anti-Semitism, then, is rooted in a real recognition of who the Jews are. In the characteristic brevity the Sages pointed this out with a play on words. מינין-Sinai, when we became who we are, sounds the same as שנאה-hatred, i.e. anti-Semitism.

Europe, and its Western inheritors, was the fourth and final exile, the exile of Edom Esau. It was here that the final competition for civilization energy between the Jews and the nations of the world was to take place. The difference between this clash and previous clashes lies in the ambitions of Western civilization. Western man is committed to providing a total paradigm and complete explanation for all aspects of reality. The Babylonians, the Persians and the Greeks all had their areas of greatness. They wanted to rule, they were materially acquisitive or, in the case of the Greeks, they wanted to dictate philosophical and intellectual pursuits. In the areas through which they defined their own greatness, they would not brook the cultural challenge provided by the Jews. Should the Jews decide to subjugate themselves to the exile-civilization in these areas, that civilization was perfectly happy to let the Jews do their own thing in other areas. The very concept of a total mastery of reality did not occur to them.

Not so the Romans and those that came after them. One reason that the church became an impediment to the development of science throughout the Dark Ages is just because they claimed to control scientific reality along with everything else. Science was not allowed to challenge them because all true knowledge of science was already a part of Christian doctrine, or so they thought. Indeed, Western repositories of knowledge lay with the monks and other clergy who alone were able to read and had access to libraries.

In our post-Renaissance day, it is easily seen that Western claims to expertise include economics, sociology, psychology, biology, architecture, physics, philosophy and any other sub-category of knowledge conceivable. Even the counter-cultural (politically correct) movement to pluralism, rampant on many campuses in the States today, is rooted in the idea that the West is capable of studying, indeed representing all cultures, within a small square mile of college buildings.

In the second verse of the Torah where there appear the four words relating to the four exiles as we previously explained, the word relating to the fourth exile is תהום, the depth ("And there was darkness on the face of the depths.") The word תהום means a type of open ended depth or abyss, the bottom of which cannot clearly be seen. This means that we cannot clearly see when this exile will end. All the other exiles had a clearly defined and relative short time span. Soon they lost their momentum and joined the ash heaps of history. Yet this exile seems always to renew itself - it takes on national, religious, cultural, ideological and even scientific forms of expression. But the underlying continuity is there.

As Jews, we know this all too well. In this exile we have been to hell and back many times over. Our own civilization energy has been seriously sapped and our attempts at a resolution, so trustworthy in previous exiles, continue to fail us.

Although the Americans have taken over the mantle of Western leadership, the Germans were clearly in the saddle until World War II. The German genocide represents the most obvious expression of the clear and total clash of two civilizations, Jewish and German, at a time when there was every reason to believe that they were getting closer. Ironically, it was just this closeness which brought them into such conflict. In the end, Aryanism wanted to replace the Jews as the Chosen nation of the world, the beacon of light from which ultimately everyone was to benefit. This claim was made all the more credible by the great progress the Germans had made in every field, cultural and scientific. German chosenness was ultimately going to compete with G-d Himself; it would show that G-d and the Jews is less than Aryan godism on its own. The German bet that that was so was all or nothing. If they were wrong there was no place at all for the Aryan idea. It was not simply a question of being victors or defeated in a war.

The fact that the Germans found themselves so down and out post World War I, the great depression of the thirties, the political realities of the German parties - all these facts had their place. But as Daniel Jonah Goldhagen shows in his "Hitler's Willing Executioner" the Holocaust was a result of a long-standing and ever-growing anti-Semitism that existed among the German population. It was the "ordinary" German, not just the SS officer, who was animated by the anti-Semitism that was the driving force and near success of the genocide idea.

The idea of the Jewish and Western civilization competing for the same civilization energy is expressed somewhat mysteriously by Chazal as הלכה בידוע שעשו שונא את יעקוב. The word halacha, used as an expression for definitive Jewish law, surely is out of place here. It is certainly unprecedented as a usage in this way. Rather, the word means that this is an intrinsic reality. In other words, even if Esau does not consciously show or even feel hatred toward Jacob, there is a deeper underlying tension. It is a definitive reality defined by a deeper spiritual realm known as halacha. Just as surely as Jewish law (halacha) which is a spiritual reality ultimately dictates the realities of the physical realm as well, so this particular spiritual reality can be discerned in the world around us.

In the Bible book of Daniel, Daniel has a dream in which he sees four animals. The four beasts are understood by Daniel to refer to the four exile civilizations. The description that dream is as follows (Daniel chap 7):

"In the first year of Belshazzar, King of Babylon, Daniel dreamt a vision and his visions of his head as he lay on his bed: then he wrote down the dream. Daniel spoke and said, I saw in my vision by night, and behold the four Winds of the heaven stirred up from the seas, diverse from one another. The first [representing Babylon] was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till its wings were plucked off, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made to stand on its two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it. And behold another beast [representing Persia], a second one, like a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth: and thus was said to it, Arise devour much flesh. After this I beheld, and lo another [representing Greece], like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a bird; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it."

All this Daniel sees in one coherent vision, one after the other. But here Daniel seems to break off, repeating the fact that he saw visions of the night, before going onto the fourth animal. This seems to imply that the fourth animal was different from the other three, more powerful and threatening, as indeed the description implies. Daniel continues:

"And this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast (the final Roman/Edomite exile/civilization), dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth; it devoured and broke in pieces, and stamped the residue with its feet:"

This civilization, unlike previous ones, would broach no competition - its desire for control over a total reality made it hugely destructive. There is ultimately a thin line between total reality and total destructiveness.

"It was different from all the beasts that went before it; and it had ten horns. When I considered the horns, and behold, another little horn appeared amongst them, before which three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots:" Some understand the horns to represent nations or civilizations. This new Roman civilization overcame three previous civilizations. "And behold in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things. Certainly, the Greeks spoke great wisdom as well. However, this "horn" appeared to be more comprehensive in its wisdom. Each one of the previous three animals represented one particular human faculty; none of them are depicted as having speech. The fourth beast is a speaking beast. The Maharal¹ explains speech as the point at which an abstract spiritual/intellectual idea gets translated into physical sound through physical mechanisms: mouth, palate, tongue, larynx, etc. This ability to combine the spiritual with the physical is a uniquely human faculty. By describing this fourth beast as a uniquely speaking beast, the fourth exile-civilization is shown to have the capacity to get right down close to the essence of the human condition.

The Rabbis of the Midrash actually understand that this fourth beast was not only seen in a separate vision, but was seen on a separate night as well. Rabbi Yochanan stated that this was because it was equivalent to all the other exile civilizations combined; Reish Lakish stated that it was in fact bigger and more powerful than the other civilizations combined.

The beauty of Daniel's prophetic imagery demands completion: "As I looked, thrones were placed, and an old man sat, wearing a garment as white as snow, and with hair like pure wool: his throne was fiery flames; with wheels of burning fire; a fiery stream came out in front of him: thousands upon thousands of servants served him; tens of thousands stood before him: they sat in judgment and books were opened. I looked then because of the sight of the great horn which spoke:"

¹ Ner Mitzvah

This fourth exile-civilization had sub-cycles of the previous three civilizations with it. It underwent a Babylonian stage, a Persian stage and finally, the stage which we are currently experiencing, the Greek stage of this Roman-Edomite exile. (See Rav Yitzch Hutner) This means that our current stage is one in which the most intellectual expressions of this cycle would take place.

In fact, the Maharal (Netzach Yisrael, chap 18) tells us that this civilization received Shefa Elohis - a G-dly bestowal of heavenly blessing. This is an astonishing statement about a civilization that has been the greatest challenge to Judaism since the giving of the Torah at Sinai. True, the Maharal explains that this blessing is to facilitate the unwitting development of the resources of the world to prepare it for the Messianic era. Similarly, Maimonides states that the reason that G-d facilitated the expression of a Jesus and a Mohammed was to introduce the Messiah idea into the nations of the world, the better to ensure a speedy acceptance of the Messiah when he will in fact arrive. (Hil Melachim, Chap 10 in the uncensored versions.)

c. The Holocaust as a preparation for the Messianic era

Rabbi Chaim Feuerman and Rabbi Yaakov Feitman wrote the following article in The Jewish Observer, October 1977, "*Holocaust*":

Whereas our entire history has been replete with various instances of persecution in different civilizations, empires and nations—varying only in intensity, means and ferocity—recent history has shifted dramatically in two new areas.

The first of these epochal changes involves the shift from generations of gentile mistreatment of Jews, which, if unwelcome, was nevertheless expected and indeed announced by our oppressors—to an era where promises of equality were made and then broken, rights were granted and then revoked, benevolence was anticipated, only to be crushed by cruel malevolence.

The French Revolution...The Treaty of Versailles...
In Russia, too, Lenin has signed in 1917 the Soviet Minority Rights Law...This, too, was soon abolished in the 1920's by Stalin...

England, too, entered the 20th century by revoking a promise made to Jews in the form of the Balfour Declaration...

On March 11, 1812, Prince Karl August von Hardenberg had issued his famous edict emancipating Prussian Jews, but by 1919...Gottfried Zur Beek (Ludwig Müller) used Hardenberg's definition of a Jew in drafting proposals for anti-Jewish legislation. The proposals culminated in 1935 in the so-called "Nuremberg Laws"...

This historical period culminated in the Holocaust...From trust in the gentile world the Jewish nation was cruelly brought to a repudiation of that trust...

ויאמר ד' אל משה הנך שוכב עם אבותיך וקם העם הזה וזנה אחרי אלהי נכר הארץ וגו' והסתרתני מהם והיה לאכול ומצאחו רעות רבות וצרות ואמר ביום ההוא על כי אין אלקי בקרבי מצאונו הרעות זלה (דברים לא: טז-יז).

“the lure of strange nations and trust in them”...This follows *Unkelos* who translates ארעא עממי literally “the temptation of the nations.” The “great evils and troubles” which are the direct result of trusting and relying upon the gentile world signify the impetus for the next immediate stage in Jewish history, a unique point in the *teshuvah* repentance process: *Then shall they declare: it is because my G-d has not been in my midst that these evils have befallen me.*

Here, there seems to be *teshuvah* (repentance); yet, no real admission of wrongdoing has been made. In effect, what we encounter in this passage, unique in the Torah, is a kind of *teshuvah/non-teshuvah*, a leaning toward *teshuvah*.

The *Ramban*...the implicit significance of no longer claiming innocence is that the road to repentance has been cleared and one is ready for formal acceptance of guilt and a positive commitment of the future. This, then, is a stage of *teshuva*, a kind of *teshuva* readiness that *Knesses Yisroel* will reach in future days before it achieves total repentance.

Thus, there is revealed to us both the chronology and the impetus for the *teshuva Acharis HaYamim* (the End of Days). The very first step will be reached by *Klal Yisrael* through their repudiation of their earlier infatuations with gentile ways. In our terms, this is when the Jewish people moves toward repentance because of disappointment in the gentile world. This can only come about through promises rescinded, rights revoked, and anticipation aborted. The pain and anguish at the time of these shattered illusions is all too real and tragic; yet the events themselves serve to bring us to the recognition that "it is because my world has not been in my midst that these evils have befallen me." This the *Ramban* sees as the necessary prerequisite to the final step of *teshuva* when "they will add to their earlier regret the complete confession and total penitence."

Our "age of *baalei-teshuva*"...*teshuva* seems to "be in the air."...The second of two new directions...

For centuries, indeed millennia, gentile persecution of Jews took one of two forms but the two never worked simultaneously. Either Jewry had to contend with the "Yishmael" nations of the East or was persecuted and expelled by the nations of the West. Never in history did the nations of the Occident join forces with those of the East for the purpose of destroying Jews.

With World War II, this long epoch was brought to a crude and malevolent close. In 1923 Hitler wrote *Mein Kampf*, spelling out his belief that the Jewish people should be wiped out. This was read by Haj Amin el-Husseini, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, who found most significant alliances of modern times. There is ample documentation that not only did the Mufti visit Hitler and his top aides on a number of occasions, but indeed visit the Auschwitz gas chamber incognito with Adolph Eichmann to check on its efficiency.

The extent of the Mufti's influence upon the Nazi forces may be seen in a crucial decision made by Hitler at the height of the war. Railroad trains were much in demand by the Axis, and Hitler's troops badly needed reinforcements in Russia. Yet, soon after he landed in Berlin in November 1941, the Mufti demanded that all available resources be used to annihilate Jews. The choice: *Juden nach Auschwitz* or *Soldaten nach Stalingrad* was to be resolved his way...Two months later (January 20, 1942...) at the Wannsee Conference, the formal decision was made to annihilate all Jews who had survived the ghettos, forced labor, starvation, and disease.

Eichmann simply wanted to kill Jews; the Mufti wanted to make sure they never reached Palestine. In the end, the "final solution" was the same...At one point, Eichmann even seemed to blame the Mufti for the entire extermination plan, when he declared, "I am a personal friend of the Grand Mufti. We have promised that no European Jew would enter Palestine any more."

וילך עשו אל ישמעאל ויקח את מחלת בת ישמעאל בן אברהם אחות נביות על נשיו לו לאשה
(אשית כ"ח. ט.)

"And Eisav went unto Yishmael and took Machlas the daughter of Yishmael Abraham's son, the sister of Nevayos, in addition to his other wives, for a wife" (Bereishit 28:9)

We may learn from this passage that it was inevitable for the forces of Eisav and Yishmael to combine. We are now living in the midst of that pivotal moment in Jewish history.

There are three different portions of תוכחה (*Bechukosai*, *Ki Savo* and *Nitzavim Vayeilech*).

The pattern of Jewish history throughout the ages is רבן—גלות—גאולה—Destruction—Exile—Redemption, and no event requires new categories or definitions.

Since the *churban* of European Jewry was a *tochacha* phenomenon, an enactment the admonishment and rebuke which *Klal Yisroel* carries upon its shoulders as an integral part of being the *Am Hanivchar*—G-d's chosen ones, we have no right to interpret these events as any kind of *specific punishment for specific sins*. The *tochacha* is a built-in aspect of the character of *Klal Yisroel* until *Moshiach* comes and is visited upon *Klal Yisroel* at the Creator's will and for reasons known and comprehensible *only to Him*. One would have been a נביא or תנא (a prophet or a Talmudic sage), to claim knowledge of the specific reason for what befell us; anyone on a lesser plane claiming to do so tramples in vain upon the bodies of the *kedoshim* who died על קידוש ה' and misuses the power to interpret and understand Jewish history.

vi - The Question

Hashem...called on Moshe and told him to go to Pharaoh and tell him that the G-d of Israel said to let His people go to the desert and celebrate a holiday to His Name. Pharaoh refused the request, saying to Moshe that the children of Israel want to sacrifice to their G-d because they are lazy. He thereupon ordered that their work be increased. He commanded that they no longer be given the straw to make the bricks and that they should have to gather all the necessary quantities of straw themselves, but the number of bricks that they had provided each day would be maintained. When the Israelites could not meet that order, they were beaten by the slave-masters who shouted, "Why did you not complete your quota of bricks as you did yesterday and the day before?"

When Moshe saw what had resulted from his mission he said to Hashem, "Why have you done harm to this people, why have you sent me? From the time that I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your Name, he has dealt harshly with this people, and You have not saved them. And Hashem said to Moshe, "Now you will see what I shall do to Pharaoh, that because My Strong Hand he will send them out."

In the sentences quoted, the Hebrew word for the question "why" differs. In one sentence the word is מדוע. In the other sentence it is למה. Targum Onkelos translates each of them differently. In the earlier posuk, "Why did you not complete your quota of bricks?" Onkelos translates מדוע as מא דין meaning "What is this?" In the posuk "Why did you do harm to this people?" Onkelos translates למה, why, as למא דין, which means "to what is this?"

There is clear distinction between these two questions. In a cause and effect relationship, the question "why" may be directed at the past cause or it may be directed at the future effect.

The question "Why did you not complete your quota of bricks?" is directed at the cause. What was the cause for your not completing your quota of bricks? The question Moshe, "Why did You do harm to this people?" is directed at the effect. For what effect do You do harm to the people, for You have not saved Your people?

Moshe did not ask מדוע. He asked למה. He asked the purpose, he did not question the cause.

The martyrs of the Holocaust did not ask מדוע. In the midst of the Holocaust a song of pleading was on the lips of six million. They sang the plaintive words from the Psalms of David: "My Lord, My Lord why did You leave me." The word in the song for why is למה.

Therefore when we seek to understand the Holocaust, the question מדוע—what were the past causes that Hashem judged, and why did He permit the Satan to destroy six millions of His children?—is not the question. It is not the subject of this study.

The question that we may ask is למה—what purpose did Hashem intend to achieve as a result of the Holocaust? The answer to that question is revealed to man with the passage of time.

CHAPTER C: REASONS FOR THE HOLOCAUST

We must learn not only to answer the questions, but also to question the answers.
(Shraga Silverstein A Candle by Day)

The following is a death-camp description by one World War II survivor:

The Holocaust stands at the center of the events of our generation and in many ways at the center of Jewish history in its entirety. The quintessential element that distinguishes this event was the search for God. Every Jew who remained in the ghettos and the camps remembers the God syndrome that shrouded everything there. From morning till night we cried out for a sign that God was still with us. From the depths of our tragedy, in the face of the piles of dead bodies of our brethren, and in the gas chambers, in the face of the most inconceivable wickedness ever perpetrated, we screamed: "Almighty God! Merciful Compassionate God! Where are You?" We sought Him, but we did not find Him. We were always accompanied by the crushing and unsettling feeling that God had disappeared from our midst.

Many people have taken up the battle cry that it is not possible to believe in God after the Holocaust. But, as Viktor Frankl points out, "The truth is that among those who went through the experience of Auschwitz, the number of those whose religious life was deepened...by far exceeds the number of those who gave up their belief. ... Just as the small fire is distinguished by the storm whereas a large fire is enhanced by it - likewise a weak faith is weakened by predicaments and catastrophes whereas a strong faith is strengthened by them¹."

¹ The Unconscious God, p. 17

On a wall in a cellar in Cologne, Germany, where Jews had hidden from the Nazis, there was found an inscription. The anonymous author who perished with his fellow victims left behind these words: "I believe in the sun even when it's not shining. I believe in love even when not feeling it. I believe in God even when He is silent." Of all the difficulties Jews had to endure during the Holocaust, perhaps the hardest of all was the apparent absence of God. Jews cried, and their Creator did not seem to hear. Jews prayed and there was no response. Jews died *al kiddush Ha-shem*, sanctifying the name of the Lord with their last breath on earth, and the heavens only responded with silence. How could the Jews continue to believe? Is it conceivable for a compassionate God and the concentration camps to co-exist?

"Is There a God After Auschwitz?" The wonder is not that there were Jews who lost their faith after Auschwitz. Far more remarkable is the fact that many Jews continued to cling to their faith and maintain their belief in their divine Ruler of the Universe. After the war, Richard Rubenstein pronounced God dead in his daring work, *After Auschwitz: Radical Theology and Contemporary Judaism*. He pointedly asked the question that would remain to this day the single greatest challenge to the monotheistic faith that the Jews had championed since their father Abraham:

"I believe that the greatest single challenge to modern Judaism arises out of the question of God after the death camps. How can Jews believe in an omnipotent, beneficent God after Auschwitz? Traditional Jewish theology maintains that God is the ultimate, omnipotent actor in the historical drama. It has interpreted every major catastrophe in Jewish history as God's punishment of a sin of Israel. I fail to see how this position can be maintained without regarding Hitler and the S.S. as instruments of God's will. The idea is simply too obscene for me to accept."

How, then, has God survived in the face of this rational onslaught? To believe that the Jews suffer as punishment for sin is indeed brutal insensitivity compounded by ignorance. It is, as Jewish theologians have suggested, destroying European Jewry yet one more time, besmirching these Jews after their death even as they were degraded and murdered in life.

Jews have been able to maintain their faith because the Holocaust affirmed a fundamental belief of Judaism that makes religion all the more necessary. The Holocaust proved the failure of man, not the failure of God. In giving man free will, the option to do either good or evil, God effectively ties His own hands to prevent humankind from becoming merely puppets. What the world witnessed in the 1940s

The Torah says in numerous places that the sins of the Jewish nation lead to G hiding Himself, which in turn lead to great tragedy and suffering¹:

was how low it could sink when it forsakes ethics and law, and that moral conscience is the great gift of the Jews to mankind. Far from delegitimizing God, the Holocaust made clear that without H and His teachings, the earth could not survive. (*The Silence of God*, Rabbi Benjamin Blech)

¹ Nathan T. Lopes Cardozo, Thoughts to Ponder Number 53: 16 Tamuz, 5760; July 19, 2000: *T Holocaust: Divine Retribution*: For some years now there has been a major debate among religious thinkers if the Holocaust should be seen as a divine punishment. Pointing to the Torah's warning (Vayikra 26, Devarim 28) that the divine curses would come true if a widespread violation of the laws of the Torah would occur, some thinkers maintain that the Holocaust is clearly the result of the Jewish people transgressing the laws of the Torah.

Looking into these verses and reading their midrashic comments, it would indeed be difficult to deny the marked similarity between what happened in the Holocaust and the predictions of the Torah.

Nevertheless, this position could be challenged. Rabbi Yeshaya Karelitz, z.l., one of the great halachic authorities of our generation, known for his multi-volume halachic works called "Chazon Ish" discusses the problem of heresy and deliberate violation of Jewish law and its halachic consequences in today's society. In the olden days heretical views or deliberate violations of Torah law were penalized, and people guilty of such views or deeds were not permitted to join some of the community's religious ceremonies or fulfill certain religious functions. Now, however, such halachic rulings, according to Rabbi Karelitz, z.l., could no longer be applied without hesitation.

"(Such laws) only applied at times when the divine presence was clearly revealed such as in the days when there were open miracles and a heavenly voice was heard, and when the righteous would operate under direct divine intervention which could be observed by anybody. Then the heretics were of a special deviousness, bending their evil inclination towards immoral desires and licentiousness. On such days there was (the need) to remove this kind of wickedness from the world, since everybody knew that it would bring divine retribution to the world (including) drought, pestilence and famine. Even at the time of "divine hiding," in which faith has become weak in people, there is no purpose in taking such action (harsh measurements against heretics and violators), in fact it has the reverse effect and will only increase their lawlessness and be viewed as the coercion and violence (of religious fanaticism). And therefore we have an obligation to try to bring them back with 'cords of love' (Hoshea 11: 4) (Chazon Ish, Yoreh Deah, Hilchot Shechitah 2:16)

This unprecedented statement is, we believe, of major importance. Chazon Ish maintains that we cannot compare earlier and surely the biblical periods with our own days. In these earlier days, faith was strong and people did not doubt its foundations. Divine intervention was clear and consequently there was no reason why one should doubt God's existence and the truth of His will as stated in the Torah. Heresy and the violation of the Torah's precepts could, therefore, only be the result of deliberate rebellion against better knowledge. One knew that one was violating the words of the living God, since no doubt existed concerning His existence and will. As such, there were proper reasons to take action against those who broke the covenant and spoke heresy. They knew that they were falsifying the truth. It was purely their physical desires which made them travel this road.

This, however, is no longer the case. God's presence is no longer as exposed as it was, and much of what happens to man and mankind seems to be random, without any indication that it is the work of the Lord of the Universe. Therefore, one can no longer call heretical views the result of deliberate viciousness. These views may, in fact, be the honest consequence of careful deliberation which is clouded by the confusion of not knowing how to see and understand the workings of history and matters such as personal tragedy.

For several centuries, so-called "academic studies" of the Torah have undermined the authenticity of the Torah, convincing a great number of well meaning people to believe that there was proof that the Torah did not reflect the will of God. As such, there was no longer a reason to live by its precepts.

This is no longer deliberate heresy but intellectual confusion.

As such, it is difficult to argue that the Holocaust was caused by divine anger for the violations of Torah precepts and deliberate heresy. The curses in the Torah are meant to come down on those who, against better knowledge and with the full understanding that they were violating the will of God, decided to do so -- not on those who are confused or the victims of others' misunderstandings.

In דברים לא טו ואילך¹, G-d said to Moses, “When you go and lie with your ancestors this nation shall rise up and stray after the alien gods of the land into which they are coming they will abandon me and violate the covenant that I have made with them. *I will th display anger against them and abandon them. I will hide my face from them and they will be [their enemies] prey.* Beset by many evils and troubles, they will say “it is because God is not in our midst that these evils have befallen us.” Yet on that day I will keep my countenance hidden, because of all the evil that they have done in turning to alien gods. Therefore write down this poem and teach it to the people of Israel. Make them memorize so that this song will be a witness for the Israelites.”²

It would seem from here that the answer to at least national Jewish tragedy is clear – it is our sins which have caused this.

ויאמר משה, הקדמה: והנה מלפנים בישראל בכל הדורות, כשהגיעה עת צרה ליעקוב, חקרו ודרשו: זה ועל מה זה, איזה עוון גרם להביא לידי כך, לשים לב לתקן ולשוב אל השם יתברך, כדמצינו בקראי נלמוד, וכן אחר גלות שבאניא חיבר הקדוש רבי יוסף יעבץ הספרדי ספר אור החיים מיוסד על כך, קור את העוונות שגרמו את הצרות והגלות

However, the Sages and later commentators make it clear that this is not the end of the story. Firstly, the fact that the Torah gives us an answer does not mean that this answer is exhaustive. It may be the explanation for some suffering, but not necessarily for all suffering. Nor does it explain the specific measure of suffering. Secondly, it does not explain the suffering of the individual. For only at a national level is suffering directly related to righteousness. But at an individual level we see that sometimes the righteous suffer and the evil prosper. According to one opinion in the Gemorrah, even Moshe Rabbeinu was not granted an explanation for this. Even according to the second opinion, which says that Moshe Rabbeinu was granted this as a special gift, this gift was to Moshe Rabbeinu and not to all of us:

ברכות ז. וא"ר יוחנן משום ר' יוסי שלשה דברים בקש משה לפני קב"ה ונתן לו ... בקש להודיעו כי... ונתן לו שנא' הודיעני נא את דרכיך אמר לפניו רבש"ע מפני מה יש צדיק וטוב לו ויש צדיק ורע לו רשע וטוב לו ... ופליגא דר' מאיר דא"ר מאיר שנים נתנו לו ואחת לא נתנו לו

R.S.R. Hirsch says that there is no real מחלוקת between Rav Yossie and Rebbe Meir. From a human standpoint, there is no answer; only from the השם's standpoint which is above time is there an answer. השם says: There is a place near Me - only if you could see everything from my perspective, above time, could you understand.

(ז) ויאמר ד"אל משה הנך שכב עם אבותיך וקם העם הזה חונה אחרי אלוקי נכר הארץ אשר בא שמה ברבו ועזבני עז את בריתי אשר כרתי אתו. (יז) וחרה אפי' בו ביום ההוא ועזבתים והסתרתים בו ביום ההוא ועזבתים והסתרתים פני שם והיה לאכל ומצאהו רעות רבות וצרות ואמר ביום ההוא הלא על כי אין אלוקי בקרבי מצאוני הרעות האלה. (יח) כי הסתר אסתיר את פני ביום ההוא על כל הרעה אשר עשה כי פנה אל אלוקים אחרים.

² Allswang, The Final Revolution, p. 48-51: Is it possible that the Bible, thousands of years prior, knew of the Nazi Holocaust? Using the computer, one can see that the aforementioned Biblical passage contains more than it openly reveals. Beginning from the third Hebrew letter Hay (ה) in the passage and counting four sets of 50 letters downward, the 50th letter of each set (together with beginning letter Hay) produces the Hebrew letters Hay, Shin, Vav, Aleph, and Hay (השוואה). Its transliteration HaShoah which means in English The Holocaust. The number 50 is also significant (in Jewish tradition) for it represents, among other things, the number of days between the Exodus from Egypt and the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai. Correspondingly, the word Nazi (In Hebrew, the letters are Nun, Tzadi and Yud [נצ"י]) is found in equal intervals of 49 letters (7 x 7; seven and multiples of seven are, traditionally, significant) in the Biblical passage dealing with rebuke and punishment for failing to observe the Torah.

The application of this to the Holocaust is laid out by Rabbi Meiselman:

Six million Jews were murdered during those years. There are six million individual tragedies that cry out to be explained and understood. About these six million individual stories Job tells us, אין בידנו. We have no explanation, no solutions, no understanding. All we can know is that God guarantees us that there is a tzidduk ha-din, a reckoning of justice down to the finest detail.

One day, even the suffering of individuals may become comprehensible. חתם סופר: "My back you will see" - sometimes we can discern ה'שם's way in retrospect. "My face may not be seen" - as the events are unfolding¹.

But 'in retrospect' may mean only during the Messianic Era, or even later. Indeed we would expect (and are relieved to realize) that G-d's logic is much deeper than our own that we cannot understand everything that He does².

But for now, individual suffering is beyond our comprehension. National suffering, however, can be somewhat understood. This is because the reward for an individual is not this world; rather, it is in The Next World. Our suffering in this world is only a means. We get what we need to grow, not what we are supposed to get as a reward. However, national well-being in this world is specifically tied to Torah-observance³.

When Chazal looked at the destruction of the First and Second Temples, they did not say לא בידנו, that we cannot grasp what happened. Rather, Chazal state clearly that the First Temple was destroyed because of עבודה זרה, גלוי עריות, שפיכת דמים, idol worship, illicit relationships, and the spilling of blood. They are no less explicit in telling us that the Second Temple was destroyed because of שנאת חנם, causeless hatred. (Rabbi Meiselman)

...As nations... Our reward is here and now⁴...

¹ In Rabbi Frand pg. 229

² Rav Nachman of Breslav

³ This explains, according to Rabbi Meiselman the very different ways in which catastrophe is dealt with in the Book of Job and in the Book of Lamentations. In the Book of Job, Job questions, "How does God run the world? Where is justice?" He is told time and again that the way God executes reward and punishment in this world is beyond human comprehension. Chazal often echo this approach. The words may differ, but the message remains the same: לא בידנו. It is not within our grasp to understand why righteous people suffer or why evil people prosper. The Gemara in Brochos tells us that Moshe Rabbeinu asked God, דינני נא את דרכך, "Show me Your ways," (referring specifically to the suffering of the righteous and the success of the wicked). God responded, כי לא יראני האדם וחי. Man in this life can never truly understand God's ways. The limitations placed on us by our material existence limit even the greatest of us, even Moshe Rabbeinu himself, and the greatest of mysteries is beyond us. In Sefer Eichah, the Book of Lamentations, however, this issue is approached in a very different way. Yes, Eichah says, there is destruction, there is catastrophe—but whenever we find destruction there must necessarily be sin. Sin and destruction go hand-in-hand and parallel one another.

⁴ In the beginning of the fifth chapter of Hilchoth Taanith, the Rambam explains the reason for the four fasts that occur during the year: צום גדלי', עשרה בטבת, שבועה עשר בתמוז, תשעה באב. He says we fast in order to rethink history...Scrutinize and repair the source of our misfortune.

Rabbi Meiselman continues that this is why the first paragraph of the Shema, which בלשון יחיד, does not deal with the earthly consequences of actions, whereas the second paragraph, dealing with the Tzibur and therefore in לשון רבים, does¹.

So what was the great sin of the Jewish people that merited a Holocaust? Ma Gedolim have answered: assimilation. Assimilation as an individual act is breaking the fundamental covenant with G-d to serve Him by practicing Judaism and to educate the next generations to do so. National assimilation is tantamount to the destruction of the whole Jewish people.

Rabbi Meiselman:

The Netziv, in his commentary to the Haggadah, details for us the process of assimilation which took place while the Jewish people were in Egypt. First, the Jewish people said, "Let us be like the Egyptians." Then, פסקו מלמול...

Ultimately the gentile world will simply not accept our assimilation. (Did the Jewish people try harder or achieve a greater degree of assimilation than in Spain prior to 1492, or Western Europe before the mid-20th century?)

It is not so much that G-d sends anti-Semitism as an antidote to assimilation. Rather, anti-Semitism is a function of us losing our special Providential care that has led to our miraculous survival. (= הסתר פנים)

The moment we begin treating ourselves as just another nation, then we, like the rest, become subjects to natural processes. We become governed by the natural laws of history and according to the laws of history, the Jewish people simply should not exist. We should have perished three thousand years ago during our total subjugation in Egypt—like any other conquered people of the ancient world.

At the beginning of the century, R. Meir Simcha ha-Cohen wrote that those people who said that Berlin is Jerusalem and that German is the chosen language were, according to the unique rules of Jewish history, setting the German people up to destroy us²."

Others said the same thing. In a Jewish Observer article, Rabbi Noson Sherman quoted the Maggid of Kelm as saying: "Because of the sin of Geiger's Reform Code Jewish Law, another law will emerge from Germany. It will say that every Jew, without exception, must die. May G-d protect us!"

¹ Rabbi Meiselman: An answer is suggested by most rishonim, the basic medieval commentators, their comparative understanding of the first two sections of the Shema.

...ואהבת את ה' אלקיך, addresses the individual...gives us commandments we must follow, but makes no mention whatsoever of any reward or punishment. The second section, on the other hand, deals for us what will happen if we do not observe the mitzvot. An account is given of direct material reward and punishment.

Many commentators, chief among them being the Sefer Ikkarim, explain that God judges us on two levels, as individuals and as members of groups.

Even though there is reward and punishment on an individual level, God has an infinite amount of time in which to reward or punish. ...למען יאריכון ימיו...עולם שכולו ארוך.

...מה רב טובך אשר צפנת ליראיך "How great is Your goodness that You have hidden for those that fear You."

...Simply, a mystery...There are a countless number of considerations...This is why the promise of material reward and punishment is missing from the first section of Shema, which is addressed to the individual.

²"Modern man thinks that Berlin is Jerusalem, but the fierce storms of destruction will emanate from Berlin and leave but a scant remnant. The survivors will disperse to other countries and Torah will strike new roots and young scholars will produce undreamed of accomplishments."

Reb Chaim Ozer Grodzensky of Vilna wrote¹, “Faith in G-d has weakened in o time. Reform began in Western Europe and its influence has spread eastward. Our nati has suffered increasing persecutions, but instead of learning our lesson and returning Torah, the irreligious are growing in numbers and audacity. As they refuse to repent, o suffering increases. And people wonder why this is our lot!”²

Others, such as the Grand Rabbi, Reb Dovid Moshe of Chortkov and t להבחל"ח Satmar Rav, look beyond Berlin. They see Jewish and secular-nationalism and Zionism. seeking to be “like all the nations,” these ideologies have corrupted the ideal that must set t Jewish nation apart.

Rabbi Meiselman:

It is stated in Sanhedrin that the ultimate Redemption will definitely occur in unconditional manner. The Talmud counterposes this with the statement of the Tanna w says: תשובה גאלין אלא בתשובה that Israel will only be redeemed through teshuvah. T Talmud then speculates that if this is true, that if our teshuvah is the prerequisite j Redemption, then maybe that Redemption will never come because maybe we will never teshuvah on a national basis! But, the Gemara answers: מלך שגזירותיו קשה א מעמיד עליהם כהמן הרשע וישראל עושים תשובה “He will impose upon them a king whose decrees are ruthless as those of Haman the Evil and they will be force to repent.” As much as we’ll w to assimilate and as much as we’ll attempt to assimilate, we won’t be allowed to. The natio of the world will resist us and force us to be a different nation. This then is the counterfor at work on our behalf—ולען שיעמדה לאבותינו וזהיא שיעמדה לאבותינו—that that which has enabled us to survi all attempts at assimilation has been the efforts of all the nations of the world to destroy ו שלא אחד בלבד עמד עלינו לכלותינו.

That in every generation someone has said to the Jewish people who wish to be just every other nation... We will stop you, we will destroy you. And then, just then: קב"ה מצילנו מידם. God arranges the destruction to prevent our assimilation and then, not only saves from annihilation, but also plants at that very moment the seeds of our redemption.

The catastrophic destruction that He will unleash upon us will paradoxically...enal us always to survive.

¹ As quoted by Rabbi Sherman, ibid.

² The Chofetz Chaim also predicted other aspects of the unfolding of Hashgachas Haboreh. T years before World War II—in 1929—someone commented to the Chofetz Chaim on the tragedy World War I, when 12 million people had lost their lives. Hitler was still four years away from pow genocide was a term that could be found only in dust covered unabridged dictionaries. And t Chofetz Chaim said:

“Twelve million? That’s child’s play! The real thing will begin in ten years.”

“What can we do in ten years?” asked his guest.

“Eretz Yisrael—there it will be safe.”

The Chofetz Chaim explained with a parable. Two villages shared in the cost of a fire engine. It w stationed in one of them, but if a fire broke out in the other village, the fire engine would cor speeding to the rescue. Once a fire broke out and the apparatus was called. The answer was, “\ can’t come now. Our village is burning. As soon as the fire is put out here, we will come to help yo In the same way, in ten years the fires will be burning everywhere. G-d will see to it that it is safe Eretz Yisrael—because that is His village.

Military historians are indeed at a loss to explain why Rommel, the most brilliant of military leade conqueror of Egypt and Libya, did not swoop down on Eretz Yisrael as it lay helpless before him. T Chofetz Chaim foretold why: “G-d will see to it that it is safe in Eretz Yisrael—because that is t village.”

The Chofetz Chaim’s questioner was astounded, “That means our generation will see a miracle! W are we worthy of it?”

“Hashem will be testing us,” was the answer. (As quoted by Rabbi Sherman, Jewish Observer.)

Rabbi Meiselman:

The obvious question is: Now that the people recognize the problem and admit the error, why does God respond by hiding His face yet again? The Ramban offers an answer: there is a big difference, he explains, between realizing that a wrong has been committed and articulating what, exactly, the wrong is and taking steps to remedy it. Similarly there is an interim between the time in which the people realize that there is something wrong and the point at which they are ready to take the next step and right that wrong and begin the process of real change. Only after that point has been reached, the Ramban says, will *hester panim* cease. *Hester panim* continues even beyond destruction.

There is the *hester panim* of destruction and there is the *hester panim* of redemption. God remains withdrawn even in redemption in order to allow the Jewish people to articulate the wrong and to take steps to rectify it.

The Talmud in *Yomah* says that the Cherubim on the *Aron Kodesh*, the Holy Ark, actually changed positions, depending upon the relationship at any given moment between God and the Jewish people. When the Cherubim faced each other, it was a sign of great love between God and the Jewish people. When there was no great love between God and the Jewish people, the Cherubim turned away from one another.

Another section of the Talmud states that when the Babylonian conqueror came into the Holy of Holies, he saw the Cherubim facing one another, embracing. He was contemptuous of the Jewish people for having this kind of image in their holiest place.

These two passages ostensibly seem to contradict one another. At the moment of destruction, the Cherubim should have been facing away from one another, as the Gemara indicated, since it was a time of anger and discord between God and the Jewish people. Instead, at the very moment of catastrophe and destruction, they are described as not only facing one another but intertwined in an embrace! This embrace could only symbolize a moment of the greatest love of God for the Jewish people.

But there is no contradiction here. When God separates himself from the Jewish people and he allows destruction to befall us, it is, as we have seen above, part of the process towards ultimate redemption. At the very moment the destruction is completed, there is an immediate turnaround and the path towards *teshuvah* and consequent redemption opens.

Until the actual destruction of the Temple, the two Cherubim were probably turned away from one another. But at the actual moment of destruction, they turned to face each other again, because God had punished the Jewish people only out of a love for them and their ultimate destiny. *כי כאשר ייסר איש את בנו ד' אלקים ייסרך*, "For in the same manner as a man punishes his son does the Lord, your God, punish you."

Punishment from God is a result of love. And, as such, punishment from God brings His love closer, creating an arena for us in which we may respond. The regeneration following the destruction is a direct by-product of that love.

This regeneration occurs according to the guidelines that the Ramban explains earlier in describing the two stages of our response to God's Hand in history—responses paralleled by the two different kinds of *hester panim*.

In the first stage, we come to an understanding of how we—as a nation—we are responsible for our destruction. Then, in the second stage, we respond practically, correct the underlying errors that led to the destruction in the first place. And, all the while, the unique aspect of Jewish history is at work: that at the time of destruction itself, God is making possible our return and ultimate redemption out of His great love.

Rabbi Meiselman:

When we decide that we do not wish to be a separate nation, we, in essence, deny our special relationship with God.

To the degree that we sanctify ourselves, God protects us from the natural laws history.

Suffering of the Innocent

We explained above that while we can explain why the Jewish nation as a whole suffered the Holocaust, we cannot explain why any individual in the Holocaust underwent that form of pain. Still, there is some understanding of why it is that when national tragedy strikes it will perforce include the righteous as well as those more deserving of punishment.

Before embarking on this discussion, however, it is important to stress Judaism's unique sensitivity to any pain. For the mind of a Jew, there is philosophically no difference between a stubbed toe and great suffering. And for the heart of a Jew, the stubbed toe also requires our concern and attention:

ערכין פרק ג טז :

היכן תכלית יסורין אמר רבי אלעזר כל שארגולו בגד ללבוש ואין מתקבל עליו ... אפילו נתכוונו למזוג מין ומזוג לו בצונן... הושיט ידו לכיס ליטול שלש ועלו בידו שתיים

"One human tragedy is not as heartbreaking as a tragedy multiplied a million fold. A man who murders one person is not as guilty as a mass murderer ... but justice and injustice, guilt and innocence, are matters of degree only for man ... an absolute G-d cannot be a tiny bit unjust ... Once the questioning of G-d over the Holocaust is motivated by the vastness of the catastrophe, the questioning itself becomes ethically questionable. It is of course not humane to query G-d about the suffering of the many rather than the few, but it is not more humane... To suggest that one could put up with less evil and less injustice, but not with much, is cruelly unethical. Indeed, the Holocaust was only possible because man was willing to tolerate less than a Holocaust. ... The question is not why the Holocaust, but why a world in which any amount of suffering is extant. (Eliezer Berkowitz, The Hiding G-d of History)

Above we brought Rabbi Meiselman who explained that there is a distinction between reward and punishment of the individual and that of the community. The individual ultimately gets his reward in the future, in Olam HaBa, whereas the community receives reward in this world. However, the community is made up of individuals. In the Holocaust everyone suffered. Even if we find communal sin, does that mean that each individual was responsible? What about great and holy persons? To this Rabbi Meiselman answers:

"It does not follow that each individual who suffers as part of the community is necessarily guilty of that sin.

In Egypt... ולא יתן המשחית לבא אל בתיכם... The Jewish people, as part of Egyptian society, were subject to the same punishment... However, by painting their doorposts and hence separating themselves from the Egyptians...

Similarly, the Talmud in Shabbos states that at the time of the destruction of the First Temple, God told the angels of destruction to go among the people and inscribe on the foreheads of each individual Jew a "ת". On the foreheads of the צדיקים, the righteous people they were to write a black "ת" for תורה and on the foreheads of the רשעים, the evil people they were to write a red "ת" of blood. The angels were then instructed to kill the people who were marked with the red "ת". The Attribute of Justice came to God and asked, "Why are You killing these and sparing these?" God answered, "There is a very simple reason. These are evil people and these are pious people." (What is noteworthy here is that it was not the מדת הרחמים, the Attribute of Mercy, that came to God and complained. It was, instead, the מידת הדין, the Attribute of Justice. One would have thought that Justice would have been satisfied.)

The Attribute of Justice continues, “How can You spare the righteous? At least they should have protested. They are not one hundred percent pure.” In His defense of the righteous, God said, “I guarantee that the evil people are so evil, there is nothing the righteous could have done to stop them.” The Attribute of Justice responded, “You, God, know everything. You know that protest would have been futile. The righteous did realize that their protest would have been futile. Their lack of protest was due to their lack of concern.” Whereupon God changed His mind and replied to the Attribute of Justice, “You are right.” Consequently, when the people were killed during the destruction of the First Temple no distinction was made between the righteous and the evil.

Even though not every individual was guilty of the community sin, since no individual was absolutely free of sin, none were spared. Furthermore, at the time of the punishment, the righteous, even though less culpable, were punished first. God is more exacting and more demanding with them.” It does not follow that each individual who suffers as part of the community is necessarily guilty of that sin.

Avraham pleaded for Sodom. We are told that if there had been ten righteous men in the city, then it would not have been destroyed. Were there not ten righteous people in Europe who could have protected European Jewry?

The Zohar says that only because of the special merit of Avraham would Sodom have been saved. Only a unique tzaddik on the level of Moshe Rabbeinu or Avraham Avinu is able, through his prayers, to bring about such a salvation. In fact, the Zohar points a finger at Noah. Noah also had that capacity and thereby could have prevented the flood.

The fact that the Jews of Europe were not saved does not imply that they lacked ten righteous people—only that they lacked someone of this stature to pray for them.

Furthermore, there is a fundamental difference between the way God deals with the Jewish people and the way He deals with other nations. The Talmud tells us that one must read the portion of the Tochachah before Shavuot. The process of accepting the Torah also includes the acceptance of the unique aspects of Jewish history with its cycle of destruction and rebirth. What Moshe Rabbeinu prevented for the Jewish people and Avraham Avinu attempted to prevent for Sodom was a destruction of anger with no potential for rebirth. The Tochachah tells us that subsequent destruction, emerging from God’s love, has a serious corrective aspect.”

The Rambam explains in his דעת תבונות that the ultimate purpose of the world, and therefore of each individual in the world, is the תקון הכללי. There are times in history when the תקון הכללי requires that evil reigns. This is all as a preparation for evil’s ultimate demise. The greater the expression of the evil, the greater the revelation of G-d’s Oneness when causes the evil to disappear. At times like this צדיקים may suffer as a result of the general situation. When this happens, not even their זכויות will protect them from great suffering or suffering for which they will be rewarded many times over: firstly for the actual suffering, secondly for the love and faith with which they accept the suffering and thirdly because of the תקון הכללי which will benefit the whole world.. However, HaShem never allows a צדיק suffer unless there is something, לפי מידת הדין, to be תולה the suffering from. Therefore, I may judge a צדיק - לפי חוט השערה צדיק (pg. 109 in the R Chaim Friedlander edition)

עוד שיתעלם ויסתיר פניו האדון ב"ה, ויניח לרע להתגבר עד הגבול האחרון שאפשר להתגבר, דהיינו עד רבן העולם, ולא עד בכלל, הנה זה יהיה טעם יותר להיגלות ולהיראות אח"כ אמיתת יחודו ית'. ... וכל תגברת הרע, הנה גם הטובים יצטרכו לעמוד תחת עוני הרע, לא מפני שהדין כך, אלא שהשעה צריכה [ך] ... ואדרבה אנשי רע יצליחו... ואחר זה יגלה ממשלתו... ואז יקבלו הצדיקים שכרם ולא קודם. אך אם הוא מנהג לפי השכר ועונש, אז לא יהיה אלא טוב לטובים ורע לרעים, אמנם אין כאן מה

נרום תיקון גמור להנהגה שיבטל מציאות הרע, כי למה יבטל? ... וזה טוב ל[צדיקים] ודאי, שאז יקבלו ר: יותר גדול [לא רק על שקבלו יסורין באהבה אלא ג"כ על שהשתתפו לא רק בתקון עצמם היינו תקון רט אלא ג"כ בתקון ושלימות הכללי(ת)]

ת תבונות שם ס' קסח –קע: והנה הוא ית"ש יודע שלהשלים הבריאה הזאת צריכים שני דברים: ברת ההארה, דהיינו הגברת ההשפעה וריבוי, והעלמה ומיעוט. כי יש ענינים שנתקנים בריבוי ההארה השפעה, ויש ענינים שנתקנים אדרבא בהעלם ומיעוט, בהניח לרע התגבורת הגדול... ואין הדברים האלה וימים במעשה ובזכות, אלא בתכונת הבריאה ומהותה... ואמנם כלל תיקון הבריאה חילק אותו האדון ה בין כל הנשמות... שיש אדם שיגיע לו מצד שורש ענינו להיות מושפע בריבוי השפעה... ויש אדם ניע לו מצד שורש ענינו להיות מושפע במיעוט ההשפעה... ואמנם לכלל ההנהגה הזאת שאינה פונה אל כות והחובה, אלא... למה שמצטרך להשלמת הבריאה... קראוה החכמים ז"ל "מוזל"... אמנם... אין ר זה נוהג אלא בעולם הזה, אך בעולם הבא אין שם אלא שכר המעשים... (ואפילו בעוה"ז)... הוא ית' נהג פעם בדרך השכר ועונש (שהיא ההנהגה המתגלית) ופעם בדרך המזל... (ו)אף גזירות המזל לא יבואו א על ידי ענין מה (חטא כל שהיא לפי מדריגת האדם) המתחסר אל השכר ועונש שיוכלו ליתלות בו (כגון י שלא ריחם על הבהמה שהובל לשחיטה)... אמנם תוכיות כל הסדרים והחוקים נקשר בענין התקון ללי... כי אינם שתי הנהגות הפכיות ומתנגדות (ס' קסח - קע הוצאת הרב פרידלנדר)

כללים ראשונים לה: ובאחרית הגלות הקב"ה משתמש הרוב מזאת (מהנהגת המזל) כי הכוונה אז לתת זון כללי לכל העולם, ועל כן צריך שיתנהג בהנהגת היחוד, שכן ההעלם הגדול יולד הגילוי הגדול, ויהיה ימות ניתן לעולם. (מובא בהארה 474 שם) והוסיף הרב פרידלנדר דברים אלה פותחים פתח להבין את זירות הקשות שירדו על דורנו

ובכללים ראשונים לד: בעוה"ב ודאי כל אחד מקבל לפי מעשיו... ואמנם עדיף כוחם של אלו ותקנים בדרך זה, שכמו שמה שקרה אותם אינו לפי מעשיהם כי אם לפי מציאות ההנהגה הקבועה לל, כך השכר לא יהיה לתת להם לבד טוב, אלא לתקן מציאות ההנהגה הכללית. ואז יהיה להם שכר ול מכופל, שגרמו תיקון כללי להנהגה, ותועלת לעולם כולו מכח מעשיהם, שהנהגה הכללית נתקנה.

זון הכללי Since at that time the final (דעת תבונות דף קפ) . יסורים are of this sort of חבלי משיח has to be made, even צדיקים may suffer for this reason:

ת תבונות (דף קצג): בזמן תוקף עקבות משיחא, לא יקשה עלינו אם הצדיקים נשפלים השפלה גדולה, ס בני האדם צועקים ולא נענים... כי כל זה נולד לפי שאין הצדיקים יכולים אפילו בזכותם לתקן ולקולים ההם, כי השעה גורמת לכך, וכדי להליד מזה התיקון השלם שיהיה אחר כך בגילוי יחודו ית' ו שביארנו

כלים However, the *Daas Tvunos* further explains that even then HaShem uses the ת. תקון הכללי He requir at least the most minor of עבירות to "hook" the יסורין onto. Therefore, he uses the standard חוט השערה. They : needed for the grander תקון. But the minor עבירה allows המשפט to deliver the יסורין (Rav Chaim Friedlander in his notes on the *Daas Tvunos* gives an example of Rebbe w when a calf that was about to be slaughtered ran into his arms, sent the calf back to slaughtered saying that that was what it was created for. Because there was an element cruelty in Rebbe's response, he subsequently suffered greatly for many years. However, tl was not the reason for his suffering, just the way in which it could be delivered.) Accordi to this when the Gemorrah says that the case of צדיק ורע לו is referring to a יק שאינו צדיק it means to say that it is only because he is an אינו גמור that allows for the יסורין for t to be delivered.

We need to understand those גדולים who have pointed to specific עבירות of ישראל as a reason for there being a holocaust. One cannot say that everyone who suffers "deserved" this kind of unbelievable pain, death and torture. Although the תוכחות do t: about a direct correlation between מצוה observance, or the lack thereof, and פנים (as indeed is testified to by all our history), nevertheless, the particular severity of t holocaust seems only comprehensible in the context of the special יסורים of דמשיחא

In Hitler, Nancy Gibbs wrote:

There is a more nuanced, even insidious, argument for Hitler's pre-eminence: that good and evil are dependent on one another. It is a fundamental tenet to many religions that evil, while mysterious, may clear the way for good, that the soul is perfected only in battle, that pain and ecstasy are somehow twins, that only a soul--or a century--that has truly suffered can truly realize joy. Again we sense this instinctively--the pleasure we feel when a tooth stops hurting reminds us that we live our life in contexts and contrasts, and so perhaps you can argue that only by witnessing, and confronting, great evil were the forces of light able to burn most bright.

There are theologians and historians who have made this point. Most explicit are those who have called him God's punishment of European Jews for their secularization, though some have gone on to argue that it was mainly because of Hitler and the Holocaust that the biblical prophecy was fulfilled and the state of Israel born--only Western guilt on so massive a scale could have cleared the way to the Promised Land.

CHAPTER D: WHERE WAS MAN? THE PLACE OF NAZISM IN EUROPEAN HISTORY

*It is a blessing to governments,
that human beings do not think for themselves.*
Adolf Hitler

*It was surely obvious thirty years ago that Man cannot depend on
Man, Jews cannot depend on Man, and Jewry cannot depend on
other nations –not on their humanity, their innate goodness, their
sense of justice, nor on their sense of human dignity.*
Rabbi Yaakov Weinberg¹.

Many have asked the question: How did the Germans, who were the greatest European cultures at the time, descend so quickly into Nazism². Although there was political process to this (see appendix), this cannot account for the seeming loss of reason a sudden descent into the abyss. This question is based on the myth that reason alone can guarantee our moral well-being.

Donald B. Calne points out the limits of reason: Reason is a biological product — tool whose power is inherently and substantially restricted. It has improved *how* we things; it has not changed *why* we do things. Reason has generated knowledge enabling us fly around the world in less than two days. Yet we still travel for the same purposes that drove our ancient ancestors — commerce, conquest, religion, romance, curiosity, or escape from overcrowding, poverty, and persecution.

To deny that reason has a role in setting our goals seems, at first, rather odd. A personal decision to go on a diet or take more exercise appears to be based upon reason. The same might be said for a government decision to raise taxes or sign a trade treaty. But reason is only contributing to the "how" portion of these decisions; the more fundamental "why" element, for all of these examples, is driven by instinctive self-preservation, emotional needs and cultural attitudes. (Within Reason Rationality and Human Behavior)

i - What did the Germans know?

¹ in The Jewish Observer: A Churban of Singular Dimensions (June 1976)

² A fuller understanding of the situation would involve the following questions:
How did the central instrument of the terror, the Gestapo, function? How powerful and how pervasive was it? How did other "justice" organs work, such as the prosecutors' offices and the "Special Courts" (Sondergerichte) set up to try political offenses in the Third Reich? What biases did they display? Who carried out the terror, and how responsible and culpable were they individually? What kinds of backgrounds did Gestapo officers, for example, come from? What was their mentality? Were they, they claimed after the war, simply "normal" police officers who only followed orders and did their duty with regard to the existing laws and without any particular malice on their part? How did individual German citizens respond to the Nazi terror? What differentiates the people who protested against it from those who acted to support it? How involved were common German citizens in the policing and control of their fellow citizens? What motivated citizens to denounce their neighbors, work colleagues, and relatives? How often did such denunciations occur? How did the degradation, expropriation, and mass murder of the Jews play out in individual German communities? How much were common citizens involved? What did they and the local Nazi officials know about the fate of the Jews? What happened to the perpetrators in the Federal Republic after the war? How did they seek to avoid prosecution, resume their careers, and reclaim their pensions? Who helped them achieve the goals?

The Red Cross at Theresienstadt, Arthur J. Magida (Moment Magazine December 1999):

Maurice was one of six International Red Cross workers who visited Theresienstadt, the Nazi's model Jewish settlement. Model, indeed! ...

...On June 23, 1944 the Nazis decided to turn the concentration camp into a pretense haven for Jews, a charade of caring and compassion where *Juden*- those poor misunderstood Jews, who only the Nazis knew how to treat properly- would get medical care and decent food and proper clothes and earn decent livings as cobblers, tailors, teachers, and dentists.

This was theater at its most absurd. What the Nazis pulled off at Theresienstadt was not "banal" -that simple, disarming adjective Hannah Arendt used about Adolf Eichmann when he was being tried in Jerusalem. This didn't smack of the commonplace and the ordinary, but of a weird genius that just about defied category, all in the service of a Solution that was getting precariously close to Final.

The glory for the Nazis- and the shame of Maurice Rossel- is that he fell for it. I wrote a glowing report to his superiors in Geneva exonerating, almost praising, the Nazis for what they were doing at Theresienstadt, not knowing, of course, that 7,500 Jews had been shipped to Auschwitz a week or two before he arrived to make it less crowded. And that week or two after he left another 15,000 would be sent in cattle cars to that same destination...

The world needs to look into the face of Maurice Rossel and see this man who saw what hardly anyone on earth had the "privilege" of seeing: Not only Theresienstadt, but Auschwitz, the death camp par excellence, which he visited unannounced in 1943. During his surprise visit, he chatted amiably for half an hour with the "elegant" commandant as he drove through rows of walking corpses. Rossel didn't notice anything amiss; his admiration for the commandant of Auschwitz remains unabated even today...

He is still upset that they were characters in a play, that his tour of Theresienstadt was really a concatenation of death: a macabre choreography. Those conniving Jews wore black suits and waitresses' white uniforms in the restaurant where he ate lunch. The Jews who greeted the Red Cross guests wore a black suit and a top hat. Jewish children performed opera for Rossel and played on swings in a playground (Rossel didn't know it, but that playground had been erected just before he arrived; it was ripped down a week later)...

... "I got nothing. I still don't understand how people who knew they were doomed were...playing along with the hoax."

"They played under threat," Lanzmann explains. "They were starving to death."

"The ones I saw weren't thin."

"You're saying they share some of the blame."

"It's not for me to judge, but I am amazed, yes, that hundreds of people were forced to playact and it came off."

"Do you regret your report today?"

"I couldn't have made any other. I'd sign it again today."

"Knowing everything that I told you?"

vii - Allies of the Germans¹

The year 1944 heralded hope for the free world, as it was believed that Hitler would soon be defeated. But for Hungarian Jewry, the year would bring annihilation.

¹By Alexander Zvielli, in Jerusalem Post, May 1, 2000

Their slaughter was so fast that it still pleads for an inquiry. Between May 15 and June 8, 1944, no fewer than 437,000 Jews were deported from Hungary. The majority were murdered in the gas chambers of Auschwitz-Birkenau or shot in front of hastily-dug cremation pits.¹

How was it possible that the Nazis could successfully organize the killing of so many victims at a time when Germany was clearly heading for defeat? Why wasn't there even the slightest resistance? Who perpetuated the Nazi-imposed secrecy? We know that the Nazi extermination machine was well-oiled and experienced at that time, but to what extent was the tragedy of Hungarian Jewry affected by the actions and nonactions of the Jewish leadership themselves?

Approximately 63,000 of Hungary's 800,000 Jews lost their lives even prior to the German occupation of Hungary on March 19, 1944. Of these, close to 42,000 were laborers deployed along the Ukrainian front. Twenty thousand "alien" Jews were deported in August 1941 and subsequently slaughtered.

Between May 15 and July 9, 1944 more than half a million Jews were deported from Hungary. In Hungary-ruled northern Transylvania, Hungarians and Germans jointly deported to Poland almost all of the 150,000 Jews living there. Only 15,000 returned after the war.

At least 250,000 Romanian and Ukrainian Jews were killed during the Shoah. A minimum of 55,000 Jews were killed during the summer of 1941 in southern Moldavia, Bessarabia and Bukovina by Romanian and German units; and another 70,000 Romanian Jews were killed or died in the deportation to Transnistria under Romanian administration.

¹Encyclopedia of the Holocaust and Yad Vashem: On April 25, 1944, as a desperate measure to increase the supply of goods into the country, the Nazis offered to permit one million Jews to leave Hungary in exchange for goods obtained outside of Hungary. Included in this deal was a request for 10,000 trucks for civilian use or for use along the eastern front. Adolf Eichmann and the upper echelons of the SS, including Heinrich Himmler approved this proposal which would allow the Jews to leave Hungary for any Allied occupied country, with the exception of Palestine. (The Nazis had promised the Grand Mufti Hajj Amin Al-Husseini that he would prevent Jewish immigration to Palestine.) ... The offer was not seriously considered because the Allies believed it to be a trick and did not want to negotiate with the Nazis. The British press stirred opposition to the proposal, calling the "monstrous offer" to exchange goods for Jews blackmail.

²*Study: Up to 380,000 Jews killed in Romanian Holocaust.* By Grig Davidovitz, Haaretz Correspondent: The number of Jews murdered during the Holocaust in territories controlled by Romania has not been finally determined. Nevertheless, the commission concludes that between 280,000 and 380,000 Romanian and Ukrainian Jews were murdered or died during the Holocaust in territories under Romanian control," according to a wide-reaching 400-page report submitted Thursday to Romanian President Ion Iliescu by an international commission set up to investigate the Romanian Holocaust. The commission is just one step, which some are calling the most important, in a process of improvement of relations between Romania, Israel and the Jewish world. This comes in the wake of a decline over the past year after the Romanian government declared that "there was no Holocaust inside Romania's borders" and when Iliescu said in an interview with Haaretz "the Holocaust was not unique to the Jews." ... Under immense pressure, Romania agreed to create an international committee to investigate the fate of its Jews and Gypsies.... It is not a coincidence that the report does not pinpoint the exact number of Jews killed by Romania during the Holocaust. "There was serious disagreement over the numbers," said a source close to the commission. The differences in the numbers were also the result of differences in interests. Romanian historians, carrying with them findings supporting lower numbers while Israeli historians provided data indicating that close to 400,000 were murdered. Commission members decided in the end not to make a decision regarding the exact number of murdered Romanian Jews. ... The report said that "between 45,000 and 60,000 Jews were killed in Bessarabia and in Bukovina by Romanian and German forces. Between 105,000 and 120,000 Jews died during forced deportation to Transnistria. Between 115,000 and 180,000 Jews were killed in Transnistria and at least 15,000 Jews were murdered in a pogrom in Iasi and as a result of other events." ... The report places unmistakable blame on the Romania's Holocaust-era Antonescu regime for the crimes. "The orders issued by Antonescu facilitated death sentences for the Jews of Bessarabia and Bukovina," the report read. "Romania is responsible for the murder of more Jews than

The Hungarian and Romanian fascists willingly assisted the Nazis in robbery, torture, deprivation, and cold-blooded murder of tens of thousands of Jewish victims, many of whom perished from thirst and hunger under inhumane conditions.

Six decades after these tragic events, Braham says, the Hungarian, Romanian and Ukrainian governments and their people still prefer to blame the Germans rather than confront the truth.

any other nation during the Holocaust, aside from Germany. Romania carried out genocide against the Jewish nation. The fact that some of Romania's Jews survived does not change this reality."

viii -Did the Germans Suddenly Become Anti-Semitic?

In her book Between Dignity and Despair, Marion Kaplan vividly illustrates how the Holocaust began with seemingly inconsequential acts of humiliation.

a. A Century of German Anti-Semitism Prior to WWII:

Nazism did not rise in a vacuum. Above we described why there is an intrinsic conflict between Galus Edom and the Jews. There was no question that Hitler had understood this conflict.

But Nazism did not rise in a vacuum. The history of Christian anti-Semitism for one long precedent. More specifically, anti-Semitism was gradually on the rise in Germany and Austria from at least the 1880s onwards. Essentially, the Nazis added nothing to the anti-Semitic literature of the 1880's and 1890's. As early as 1881, Eugen Dühring had suggested genocide as a solution to the 'Jewish problem' in his popular volume *Die Judenfrage*.

b. Social and Political Changes

U.S. News and World Report, December 2, 2002

Margaret MacMillan argues in her new book, Paris 1919: Six Months That Changed the World, that Versailles has been given a bum rap. At the top of their list is the "reparations myth." John Maynard Keynes, among others, even argued that it was Allied foolishness in setting the payments so high that crushed the German economy. Even MacMillan and the other historians think not. "Whatever the treaty," she argues, "Germany would have been an unhappy place in the 1920s." Reparations were initially set at \$33 billion. But MacMillan maintains that Germany paid only about \$4.5 billion in the entire period between 1918 and 1932. Slightly less, she points out, than what France paid after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71-with a much smaller economy.

Some historians have gone even further. Stephen Schuker, author of America's 'Reparations' to Germany, 1919-1933, believes the Germans, by using the proceeds of American loans to pay off their debts in Europe, ultimately paid no reparations at all. And when the Germans defaulted, Schuker argues, American bankers had effectively paid reparations to Germany. Indeed, according to Schuker's calculations, the total net transfer from the United States to Germany in the period of 1919-1931, adjusted for inflation, "amounted to almost four times the total assistance that the United States furnished to Germany under the Marshall Plan from 1948 to 1952." In any case, the majority of the delegates at the conference felt the initial figures were fair. European wars had ended reparations payments for centuries. And, after all, Germany had declared war on France, and the other way around. "The war was fought on French soil and in French towns," MacMillan says. "It destroyed French mines and farmland and the French transportation network. Why should they pay for it?"

MacMillan and others also believe that Germany, contrary to the conventional wisdom, was not politically emasculated by the treaty. Many historians now believe that Wilson stayed as close to his declared principle of drawing boundaries on the basis of ethnicity as was economically and strategically feasible at the time. Czechoslovakia and Poland, for example, both of which were created by the peace conference, could not have survived ethnic homogeneity. The Czechs needed the mountains to the north, the Sudetenland, to protect their cities in the valleys below, and the Poles, to be commercially viable, required access to the sea. As a result, tens of thousands of those ethnic Germans living in the middle ended up Czech or Polish. If the Allies had drawn boundaries

ethnicity alone, Boston University historian William Keylor points out, they would have made postwar Germany bigger than it was in 1914. And that, after four years of fighting a millions of deaths, “was politically impossible.” When you look at Europe at the end of 1914 says Keylor, author of the forthcoming A World of Nations: the International Order Since 1945, it comes as close to an ethnographic map as any settlement before or since.

Although we cannot explain Nazi anti-Semitism in terms of the social and economic changes that were hitting Germany at the time, they do provide a context and they contribute to the rise of Nazism to power to begin with.

Some of these changes were as a result of the earlier, Industrial Revolution, which brought enormous changes in the society. The loss of traditional stability made man increasingly uncertain of his real identity and true wishes, made dependent upon unsurveyable impersonal forces.

Reason has not succeeded in preventing or curing the neurosis of the modern world and many began to believe that intellectualism was the essence of that neurosis. There was no single clear voice of reason; in fact, the sword of reason had been employed to defeat every possible cause, and no evil action has ever lacked intellectuals to offer a rational justification for it. As great a philosopher as David Hume’s view stated that reason is simply the handmaid of passions. From the age of the romantics up to the time of Freud and Jung clever men took great pains to lay bare, with the help of magnifying glasses, the irrational impulses that lay behind every idea and every decision. Philosophers, economists, and historians would not rest in their earnest endeavor to prove that ethical concepts as well as political and social ideas were just a function of historical processes and a rationalization of interests. It was this type of thinking which prepared the ground for the racial theories which followed.

The industrial revolution had also made life harder for many in Germany. Many farmers became unskilled wage laborers in town where many remained unemployed.

The latter said to themselves, and to others: we came to this town at the same time as the Jew, or even before him and here he has already moved to a better neighborhood while we are stuck forever in the stinking slums. It must be because Rothschild or the “world Jewish government” looks after its Jewish agents while nobody cares about us. Others said we went to the same local elementary school as the Jew, and here he is a doctor or a lawyer while we seem to be doomed forever to be ordinary workmen or servants. The Jew cannot have succeeded in business by honest means; his success must be due to some dirty trick, fraud or crime. Such reflections lead to one clear conclusion: all those principles of “free competition,” economic “Manchesterism,” all those principles of the French Revolution that we all fought against, are the devil’s work, and nobody gets anything out of them except the Jews. Much was said and written on these lines in the 19th century. Just as many voices were to be raised in Soviet Russia: we all fought for the revolution, while only the Jews enjoy the fruits of the struggle. In the wake of the revolution the Jews multiplied in Moscow and Leningrad and here they are filling all the government jobs. It is no accident that anti-Semitic propaganda took as its slogan the protection of the “ordinary man.”

In the 1880’s the German Court preacher Adolf Stocker initiated the start of a mass anti-Semitic movement. Kaiser Wilhelm I himself expressed his satisfaction with the preacher’s efforts to put the Jews in their right place, for he thought they had become far too impertinent.¹ However, the Kaiser hastened to add, although it was true that the Jews had

¹ Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of European Jewry*:

Stocker was determined to provide the lower Middlestand with a species of nonproletarian socialism that would bring it back into alliance with the Protestant conservatives. To that end, he founded a Christian Social Workers Party 1878, and undergirded it with a broad program for social

been granted too many opportunities, this was a *fait accompli*; these rights and be incorporated into the statute book of Germany and he (the Kaiser) had sworn to uphold the constitution. Similar opinions were voiced in the Reichstag when a petition with a quarter a million signatures was introduced, demanding an end to Jewish emancipation in Germany

reform: trade corporations, government-controlled insurance schemes, prohibition of Sunday work and a number of other "welfare" ideas that yet fell short of classic Marxism...

The groups from which Stocker recruited his followers were, in fact, entirely lacking in social cohesion and unity of purpose. Cohesion and purpose, therefore, were the qualities Stocker taught the instantly and instinctively to attribute to the Jews...

It was Stocker, too, who rekindled social anti-Semitism: during the 1870's and 1880's restrictive placards began to appear in the leading hotels, and resorts of Germany; and anti-Semitic epithets were mouthed without hesitation by civil servants, shopkeepers, schoolteachers, and even professors...

There were politicians in the Hapsburg Monarchy equally willing to exploit white collar anti-Semitism. They were concentrated, for the most part, in two rival groups: the Pan-German Party and the Christian Socialist Party. Of the two, in the 1880's and 1890's it was the Christian Socialists backed by the full power of the Austrian Catholic clergy, who achieved the greater degree of prestige especially in the capital of Vienna. They were led by Dr. Karl Lueger, a man quite similar in ideology and purpose to Adolf Stocker. In some ways, in fact, Lueger surpassed Stocker in calculating demagoguery and political acumen. He was elected as mayor of Vienna several times during the 1890's, although it was not until 1897 that emperor Franz Josef, who feared the "antisocial" consequences of Lueger's anti-Semitism, finally confirmed him in office...

Lueger avoided appeals to racism; nor did he ever actively persecute Jews after he assumed office as mayor. But throughout his career he maintained a steady drumbeat of anti-Semitic abuse and vilification, shrewdly identifying the Jews with the despised upper middle class... For it was for Lueger that Hitler learned the expediency of bypassing the established, more cautious classes, and appealing rather to economic groups that felt themselves threatened with loss of status- groups that were willing, therefore, to fight vigorously...

...In the spring of 1881, persuaded that anti-Semitism was an indispensable weapon for wooing lower-middle-class support, the Chancellor permitted himself to observe: "I should like to see the State which for the most part consists of Christians- penetrated to some extent by the principles of the religion it professes." In November of that year Bismarck informed his Minister of Agriculture that "while he was opposed to anti-Semitic agitation he had done nothing against it because of his courageous stand against the Progressives." With these words Bismarck provided German anti-Semitism with a necessary ingredient: respectability.

It was, therefore, with Bismarck's tacit approval that the leadership of the German Conservative party turned increasingly in the 1880's to Stocker's Christian Socialists- a marriage of convenience which anticipated the twentieth-century alliance between the German nationalists and the Nazis. In 1892 Stocker engineered his most effective coup: he persuaded the conservative leaders that they must endorse the cult of Jew-Hatred if they wished to channel a mass movement of disgruntled white-collar workers into their party. Accordingly, at the Tivoli Convention of 1892, the Conservatives adopted a mildly anti-Semitic plank, deprecating "Jewish influence" in national life. This success came too late for Stocker, however; within a month of the Tivoli convention he was fired by the new Kaiser, Wilhelm II, for "irresponsible extremism"- the extremism of socialism, not anti-Semitism. With Stocker's disgrace the Christian Socialist movement sank into oblivion. But organized anti-Semitism, Jew-hatred was respectable now; it had been endorsed by the aristocratic Conservative party, and was destined, as a result, to endure as a basic political weapon of the German right.

¹Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of European Jewry*

In 1879, Wilhelm Marr, a sensation-mongering journalist and the son of a Jewish actor, published a pamphlet which he called *Der Sieg des Judentums über das Germanentum*- "The victory of Judaism over Germanism." In this tract, which brimmed over with the most vulgar kind of scurrility, and which first launched the term "anti-Semitism," Marr warned that the Jews were not only perpetually at war with the Germans, but that they were winning that war. According to Marr, the Jews were born materialists; they developed industry and commerce in order to achieve world domination, and they cultivated liberalism as the facade for their activities. Marr himself may have been scum; but his followers and successors, many of whom joined his Anti-Semitic League, were not. Ernest Dühring, Otto Ammon, and Ludwig Wilser were university professors, and they supplied quasi-anthropological

In the elections of 1893, the anti-Semites reaped a considerable success, setting up the Reichstag a 16-man faction. The Dreyfus case rocked France.¹

Above all, anti-Semitism was absorbed by wide sections of society in Germany and Austria. Among civilian groups only a small liberal minority, "The Party of Free Thinkers" (*Die Freisinnige*), opposed it in actual practice – earning thereby the nickname of "The Jewish Defender's Brigade." The chief political obstacle to the supremacy of anti-Semitism was the Social-Democratic party, which had fought it continuously since the end of the 19th century. Its weight of opposition was great and helped to restrain anti-Semitism as a public phenomenon. But, with the defeat of the Social-Democratic party as a ruling party in the days of the Weimar Republic, all the dams burst at once. All the fears of the middle and lower middle-class Germans, fears of economic crisis, social revolution, and Russian rule over Europe – all streamed into the flood waters of anti-Semitism on which the Nazis were born to power. And with the aid of racism and Social Darwinism the way was made plain for the extermination of the Jews.

c. Freeing the Instincts

A new value was placed upon subconscious drives. This found expression, for example, in Nietzsche's philosophy² and Freud's psychoanalysis. Ultimately, it pervaded the

and quasi-historical "evidence" that the German blood mixture was in danger of contamination by sexual contact with Jews. (Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of European Jewry*)

¹Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of European Jewry*: France, [anti-Semitism was linked, to some degree] to the revival of a dangerous conservative nationalism. It is a basic axiom of French history that the great Revolution of 1789 never really ended. Throughout the course of the nineteenth century, royalists and clericals fought bitterly, and with occasional success, to stem the liberal tide. They managed to dispose of the first two French Republics, and were convinced that the third, which had been rather precariously established out of the shambles of the Franco-Prussian War, was equally vulnerable. Nor were the conservatives unsuccessful in developing an appealing intellectual rationale. The Positivist August Comte censured republicanism for its inefficiency. What France needed, Comte insisted, was a political-intellectual dictatorship of philosopher-kings, men capable of formulating national policies on the basis of science and technology rather than on the basis of popular whim. Hippolyte Adolphe Taine appealed to French nationalism and pride, both grievously wounded by the Prussian victory in 1870, by extolling the virtues of militant Statism, and by assuring Frenchmen that they bore the same relation to the national State that the single cell bore to the mature organism. Monarchy, Aristocracy, and Catholicism, declared Taine, were the historical influences that had shaped the French nation; it was a nation, he warned, which was now being seriously debilitated by dangerous notions of democracy...

² Nietzsche was, technically speaking, no racist; he actually warned his followers to have no part in the "mendacious race-swindle." But if Nietzsche was not actually a racist his writings lent themselves to use by those who were. He observed, for instance, that "in the Latin *malus*...the vulgar man can be distinguished as black-haired, as the pre-Aryan inhabitants of the Italian soil, whose complexion formed the clearest feature of distinction from the dominant blonds, namely, the Aryan conquering race." He revealed, as we have seen, in the concept of the "blond Teutonic beast," and urged castration for decadents. In 1899 Nietzsche lost his mind; his friend Overbeck found him in his humble furnished room in Turin, plowing the piano keyboard with his elbow, singing and shrieking demented self-glorification. It was during those last years, when Nietzsche was unable to defend his writings against misinterpretation, that sizable numbers of Germans began to twist his ideas into fashionable theories of superior races and species. Most of the soundest scholars resented a condemned racism as a hoax and a disaster to society and State. But there were not lacking respectable historians, men like J. G. Droysen, Constantine Frantz, and Heinrich von Sybel, who subscribed to notions of German superiority and conversely, of Jewish inferiority. (Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of European Jewry*)

conscience of that entire generation. Freud's theory was transferred from the individual to the public arena. Freud himself never said this, but many of his readers concluded from his courageous analysis of instinct that control of these instincts was a thing of the past, and that man could give his drives free reign. Many applied this interpretation not only to sexual drives, but also to related primitive instincts, such as cruelty and violence.

d. The Decline of the West

Perhaps the most typical expression of the years 1918-1933 was Oswald Spengler's historical survey *The Decline of the West*. The first volume appeared in 1918, the second in 1922. Having learned from Nietzsche, Spengler drew a picture of world history in outline and frequently in brilliant colors. Cultures were like living organisms subject to laws of growth, rise, decline, fading, petrification, and death.

Arthur Dinter published a novel, Sin Against the Blood, in 1918. Within two years more than a hundred thousand copies were sold. This novel included a wealth of pseudoscientific footnotes and explanations.

The hero is an "Aryan" natural scientist. From his second marriage, to a fellow non-Jewess, a child is born which shows definite "Semitic" racial characteristics. This is due to the fact that the second, non-Jewish, wife had had sexual intercourse with a Jewish officer in her youth. According to a natural law laid down for the occasion by the author himself, every drop of Jewish blood has forever polluted pre-German blood, or at least for many generations. The hero, suffering this horrible fate, discovers that Jews exploit such facts systematically in order to taint and corrupt the Aryans. His first (Jewish) wife's father had systematically made "pure blond virgins" bear children from him. The fact was proven by his correspondence, found after his death. This correspondence, in many fundamentals, parallels the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, which first made their appearance in Germany at the time. Both works speak of a group of elders who have at their disposal the army of Jewish middle-men and above all the press of the world.

Consequently, the prosperity of the German people depends upon their liberation from the Jewry. The book's Aryan hero ultimately kills his former father-in-law. In court, he declares: "If the German people do not succeed in getting rid of the Jewish vampire, which they have nurtured unwittingly with their heart's blood- if they do not render him impotent, which can be done by simple, legislative means, then they will perish in a predictably short time." The jury accepts the German patriot's noble motives with understanding and proclaims him not guilty...

Soon Streicher's magazine, the *Stürmer*, was to add pornographic, sadistic caricatures to the fray. Slogans and songs reflected Treitschke's formulation that "the Jews are a national misfortune." The National Socialist slogan became, "Germany awake, Judas drop dead".

e. Social Darwinism, Racism and Nietzsche

Raul Hilberg, The Destruction of European Jewry:

German racism grew out of the "Aryan" myth, a myth which found its "scientific" beginnings in the eighteenth century. It was the Frenchman Buffon who created the modern concept of genus and species; while Camper, a Dutchman, tentatively suggested that there were basic differences in physiognomy between groups of human beings. The Semitic languages were identified and classified at the end of the eighteenth century, and in 1833 the German Franz Bopp traced the Romance, Germanic, and Slavic tongues back to a common Aryan source. Here science ended and pseudoscience began, for European scholars erroneously assumed that a common language meant a common race. A. F. Pott a

Theodore Posch reconstructed a mythical Aryan people, blond and blue-eyed, who apparently migrated to Europe from Central Asia. Then in 1855, Count Joseph Arthur de Gobineau, French diplomat, published a widely influential two-volume book entitled *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines*. In this treatise Gobineau argued that “the history of mankind proves that the destinies of people are governed by racial law.” He deduced that civilization flowed back to the Aryan race, ostensibly the purest and most creative of the historic races of the world. Gobineau concluded that the descendants of the Aryan race were now to be found only in Central Europe. Gobineau’s curious idealization of a mythical people had not yet reached its final apogee, however. During the second half of the century the legend of Aryan superiority was taken over by a number of German historians and anthropologists, nearly all of whom were conservative and nationalists in their political orientation. It was hardly surprising that these scholars—Friedrich Ratzel, Karl Lamprecht, Leopold von Ranke, Ernst Curtius, and others—should have identified the Germans as the living representatives of the Aryan race, or that the vernacular of pseudoscience should have been employed to accentuate the alleged differences between the modern German Aryan and his non-German and non-Aryan neighbors.

The racists found a basis of comparison within Germany, too, by fastening upon the least popular of Europe’s ethnic groups. It was a comparison between the boundless superhumanity of the German people and the “debilitating subhumanity” of the Jewish people.

How can the race difference of a German and a Slav, of a German and a Dane (wrote Otto Wigand in 1858) be compared to the race antagonism between children of Jacob who are of Asiatic descent, and the descendants of Teut Hermann, who have inhabited from time immemorial; between the proud and tall blond Aryan and the short, black-haired, dark-eyed Jew! Races which differ in such degree oppose each other instinctively, and against such opposition reason and good sense are powerless.

Yad V'Shem Book:

One of the founders of Social Darwinism was the great English thinker Herbert Spencer. In his book Social Statistics of 1850, Spencer presented human competition as biological necessity. The weak elements in society have no right to exist, or in his own words: “The whole effort of nature is to get rid of such, to clear the world of them, and make room for better.” Spencer and those who thought like him took up terms like “the struggle for existence” and “the survival of the fittest,” “the artificial preservation of the least able to take care of themselves,” “if they are sufficiently complete to live, they do live and it is well they should live. If they are not sufficiently complete to live, they die, and it is best they should die.”

Because of the influence of Social Darwinism, people began to look down on the accepted social values such as love of one’s fellow-man, charity and mercy. Competition and the “struggle for existence” were raised to the level of supreme values. Facts were steadily amassed on the physical characteristics of human groups. A large number of anthropologists accepted the premises of Social Darwinism. A new theory developed which claimed to be a scientific discipline. This was the “race theory.”

The great composer Richard Wagner’s¹ son-in-law, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, completely ignored physical facts and defined races by mental characteristics: the creative

¹Wagner himself was highly anti-Semitic. He warned that the German people faced “racial degeneration.” “We should seek to take earnest account of this (degeneration),” he wrote, “if we wish to explain the decay of the German folk which is now exposed without defense to the penetration of the Jews.”

loyal, responsible race is the German; the corrupt, parasitic race is the Jewish. Chamberlain's book *The Foundation of the XIX Century* (*Die Grundlagen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*) ...enjoyed mass circulation and mass success in Germany.¹

The point of departure in Chamberlain's system was the repudiation of reason as the criterion of ethical judgements and of scientific verifiability as the ultimate test in the determination of empirical facts instead of relying on subjective intuition, direct sensate unmediated experience, and sound common sense. Science was limited to abstract general laws, thus cutting man off from reality; it must be replaced by life itself "which is more stable, more firmly grounded, more comprehensive, and the quintessence of all reality" whereas even the most precise science describes an attenuated, highly generalized and longer unmediated reality. The roots of life .. nature...go down far deeper than could be reached by any knowledge."

Even in the USA, these theories were taken up and assimilated. The leading American racialist, Madison Grant, claimed that "the amount of Nordic blood in each nation is a very fair measure of its strength in ways and standing in civilization." The efforts made in America to close the gates of the country to immigration and to prefer Northern Protestant immigrants to all others were founded on the teachings of such racialists.

At first, race theory paid only limited attention to Darwin and Darwinism. In a way this new teaching of evolution and permanent change through adaptation and selection contradicted the theory which saw the races as permanent and unchanging elements of human history. For this very reason Nietzsche, whose philosophy and psychology contain many biological and Darwinist ideas, logically aspired to a mixed, all-European race, incorporating all the finest hereditary traits. An important place in this was reserved for the Jewish element. Still, only crude distortion and reinterpretation could make his superman into an ideal for defenders of Aryan race purity.

However, when at the end of the 19th century Darwinism penetrated into all fields of culture, it began to play a fatal role also in race theories. Most important, Darwinism gave unwittingly, scientific credibility to race theories.

In 1900, the industrialist Alfred Friedrich Krupp financed an essay contest on the subject: "What conclusions may be drawn from the principles of the theory of heredity, with regard to the inner political development and legislation of states?" First prize was awarded

¹Chamberlain was, in one sense, answering a burning question which Wagner was grappling with. In his discourse on *The Jews and Music*, Wagner dwells on the contradiction between reason that teaches men to view the Jews as human beings like all other humans – in this case like all other Germans – and the stubborn fact that the actual Jews whom he was around were in his eyes not German-speaking Orientals, despite 2,000 years they had been living in Germany. This led the composer to cogitate on what was more real: the abstract idea, pure reason, postulating the unity of mankind, or the concrete fact of group peculiarity? The unity of the human species, or racial uniqueness? What should be, or what is? ...

In *Die Grundlagen* Chamberlain traced the history of the Aryan race with impressive, if spurious documentation. He sought to "prove" that the most cherished creations of nearly every civilization were the result of German-Aryan influence. Even Jesus was transformed into an Aryan. The Jews, Chamberlain insisted, were a race of cheap-jacks, who produced nothing of value in their entire history, not even the Bible; he warned that it was their mission on earth to contaminate the German racial stream, and to "produce a herd of pseudo-Hebraic mestizos, a people beyond all doubt degenerate physically, mentally, and morally." It was necessary that the Germans fight back, therefore, not merely to survive, but to conquer; for they were destined to be a people of masters, to govern the "chaotic jungle of people..." these ominous words won for Chamberlain the warm approbation of his friend and admirer Kaiser Wilhelm II. They were words that ultimately became the central refrain of twentieth-century German history. Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of European Jews*

to the Bavarian physician and scientist Wilhelm Schallmeier for his book Heredity a Selection in the Life History of Nations.

Schallmeier saw first to establish that one human organ had developed excessively the brain. Because of this he inferred that "the nation's moral sense is distorted in favor of the individual whence it "rejects out of hand any sacrifice for the sake of the race."

Originally, natural selection acted in favor of the evolution of higher organisms. However, in modern society, where there is humanitarian interference in the natural processes, it no longer fulfilled this purpose. Because of this, conscious, systematically guided selection must be instituted, i.e. selective breeding.

The proponents of these views came to call themselves "race hygienists" and "eugenicists." The theories and claims for planned breeding and extermination of racial harmful elements were eventually transferred from the racial hygiene of the individual to racial policy in general, to the struggle between races and nations. The ruling race was accorded the right to apply these precepts to racial minorities.

Education alone would never liberate the Nordic-Germanic racial nature from the Jewish-Christian heritage. Inter-marriage had to be stopped and selective breeding applied. Christianity remained imprisoned in its Jewish source and all of western culture had fallen prey to a "Judaization of the nations" (*Verjudung der Völker*). Therefore, there was no way out of the impasse except to negate Christianity together with Judaism.

In 1884 Theodor Fritsch established a new Anti-Semitic Center in Leipzig, which was a powerful transmitter of the growing Aryan race propaganda. Racial anti-Semitism was to be "a pioneer in the creation of a new religion," and German children should be taught that the Germans were "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people." From the theological point of view, Christianity was dependent on the continued existence of the Jews (however lowly and wretched) as the living witness of the truth of its own belief and herein lay the diabolical power of the Jew. "We need the strong, the healthy, and the who are filled with the joy of life. Leave the kingdom of heaven to the lowly, as long as we can keep this world."

It was Christianity, with its doctrine of grace that taught that it is not in man's power to be master of his empirical nature. This has paralyzed the spontaneous power and moral energy of the people and thus done incalculable harm to life. All of this was absorbed from the Jews and Judaism. The German character was not only deep, upright, diligent, and enterprising but the essence of profundity, probity, and courage. Jewish blood was defined as the essence of lust, German blood as the essence of purity and nobility.

Houston Stewart Chamberlain taught that we know what is right through instinct and intuition, blind forces beyond the reach of the concept and prior to the understanding and discursive thought. Subjectivism now invaded all areas of thought. It was not important, Chamberlain declared, whether or not objective data can be found to verify or disprove what we feel in our hearts. "The rules of logic or the rational axioms of science cannot determine the reality or assess the value of phenomena: I need not bother about definitions; race is my business." Truth is found in the irrational impulses of our inner life. Intuition is made the goal of cognition and its method as well. The concept of race was later translated into the concept of "blood".

Other elements were then added. Ernest Renan showed the essential difference between Semitic and Aryan languages, revealing basic differences in the spirit and mental life of the two racial groups; Count Gobineau purported to prove the inequality of the respective roles of different races on the stage of world history; and Chamberlain added a new philosophy of history.

In racial theories, life, that is to say reality, is possessed only by organic entities, in other words races. This was true of animals and was also true of human beings. There was

no unity in the animal realm between fishes and birds. And the same was true of the various human races in the world. To mate animals of differing species would be to breed monsters or mongrels. In the same way, mixed marriages between members of different human races violated the laws of nature, which take their vengeance by giving birth to defective offspring.

The doctrine of race gives rise to a kind of mysticism which expands its boundlessness. Blood becomes the real primary cause that determines the whole personality of its bearer. The individual becomes nothing but a splinter of that great rock, the race. Thinking is speaking with one's blood: man does not fashion his individual character out of his free will, with the help of his autonomous power of decision and clear reason. His plans, role, actions are determined for him by the great organism of which he is part.

The Nazis had a preference for the *Jude* in the singular rather than for *Juden* in the plural, when speaking of the Jewish people. They are to be eliminated not for any crime committed by each of them or all of the members of the group together at that hour and that place, but for the crime of having been born into that collective entity.

Alfred Baumbach, who was one of the first Nazi theoreticians in the Faculty of Philosophy at Berlin University, proclaimed that "the theory of race" was the Copernican revolution of modern times.

Nietzsche

Friedrich Nietzsche was a great philosopher who even today has an esteemed place in the history of Western Philosophy. There is no doubt that he also influenced Nazi ideology in a very direct way. In The Genealogy of Morals, Nietzsche anticipated the evil of the Nazis with great enthusiasm:

As the will to truth thus gains self-consciousness – there can be no doubt that that morality will gradually perish now; this is the great spectacle in a hundred acts reserved for the next two centuries in Europe – the most terrible, most questionable, and perhaps also the most hopeful of all spectacles.

In Humanity, A Moral History of the Twentieth Century, Jonathan Glover wrote the following:

The books Nietzsche wrote were published between 1872 and 1895 and he died in 1900. Nietzsche saw that the idea of a moral law external to us is in deep trouble. He wrote of the death of God, and took for granted that religious belief was no longer a serious intellectual option. He thought the implications of this, particularly for morality, had not yet been understood. Like rays of light from a distant star, its implications had not yet reached us. Nietzsche's own outlook included intermittent racism, contempt for women, and a belief in the ruthless struggle for power. He rejected sympathy of the weak in favor of a willingness to trample on them.

Nietzsche saw a shift in the concept of goodness, away from the aristocratic nobility towards compassion and love of one's neighbor, as the catastrophic triumph of the Jewish-Christian tradition. This was the long-term triumph of the Jewish people over their more warlike conquerors. They had preached the virtues of the poor and weak: 'With the Jews there begins *the slave revolt in morality*: that revolt which has a history of two thousand years behind it and which we no longer see because it has been victorious.' Nietzsche saw the victory of the Jewish slave morality as a kind of poisoning: 'Everything is visibly becoming Judaized, Christianized, mobized (what do the words matter!)'. The progress of this poisoning through the entire body of mankind seems irresistible. He believed the world has no intrinsic meaning. We can either live with meaninglessness or we can try to create our own meaning and impose it on the world. Or, more realistically, we can try to impose our own meaning on a small part of the world, in particular on our own lives.

The collapse of the idea of an objective meaning leaves us free to create our own lives and ourselves. Self-creation is how the 'will to power' expresses itself in human life as Nietzsche sees the will to power throughout nature. Moral restraints on self-creation are the result of self-deception. The idea of loving your neighbor is a disguise for mediocrity. Egoism is essential to the noble soul, and he defines 'egoism' as the faith that 'other beings have to be subordinate by nature, and sacrifice themselves to us'. The great majority of men have no right to existence, but are a misfortune to higher men.

Struggle was not merely to be accepted, but was also noble. Zarathustra says, 'You should love peace as a means to new wars. And the short peace more than the long... You should ask: is it the good cause that hallows even war? I tell you: it is the good war that hallows even a cause.'

Modern European man, after centuries of Christianity, is a 'measly, tame, domestic animal.' Christian morality's rejection of the law of the jungle had almost ruined the human species: for Nietzsche, it was more than time for that morality to be overturned. To see others suffer does one good, to make others suffer even more: this is a hard saying but an ancient principle, mighty, human, all-too-human principle to which even the apes might subscribe; for it has been said that in devising bizarre cruelties they anticipate man and are, as it were, his 'prelude'. Without cruelty there is no festival... The rejection of sympathy for the weak taken to encompass even participating in their destruction: 'The weak and ill-constituted should perish: first principle of *our* philanthropy. And one shall help them to do so. What is more harmful than any vice? Active sympathy for the ill-constituted and weak – Christianity.'

f. The Supremacy of Nationalism

Raul Hilberg, The Destruction of European Jewry:

In 1870 ... a powerful German Empire suddenly emerged from a chaos of independent, factious sovereignties, and cast its shadow over all Central Europe. The new empire was an authentic political miracle [brought into being by the] miracle-maker named Otto von Bismarck, the "Iron Chancellor" of Prussia. Bismarck's achievement was all the more remarkable in that he was not obligated to invoke the liberal-romantic tradition of 1848. Instead, he forged the new Germany out of the "blood and iron" of the Franco-Prussian War. He appealed to the national pride and the voluntary allegiance of Germany's principalities, producing the bogey of a common French enemy. The ruse worked; the states of Germany rallied to the Prussians' cause- and then remained with Prussia when the war was over. When some trappings of democracy were adopted to make the new empire more palatable- the houses of Parliament, for example, and universal suffrage- German "constitutionalism" was largely a sham. Parliament could not initiate legislation, nor could it demand ministerial recall. Only the Kaiser was permitted to appoint the officials from the arch-conservative Prussian Junker class...

...For sixty years before the emergence of the empire, Kant, Fichte, Herder, and Hegel had argued that the needs of the Christian-German State took precedence over the needs of the individual. Droysen and Ranke delved deep into German history to support this contention. Now, in one massive *coup de main*, Bismarck validated all the theorizing that had gone before. If conservative nationalism had been a respectable philosophy in pre-Bismarck days, it seemed positively irrefutable after 1870.

Among the supporters of statism was the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, one of the most provocative writers of his time, and certainly among Germany's most brilliant stylists. Profoundly impressed by the growth of the German State-machine, Nietzsche was unsurprisingly in his contempt for the "outworn" values of the old order- "philistine slave-morality"

democracy, and middle-class self satisfaction. After all, none of these “ornaments” Western civilization had contributed to Germany’s ascendancy. Nietzsche’s most celebrated works, *The Will to Power* and *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, provides the intelligentsia of Central Europe with morbidly attractive slogans: “might makes right,” “blond beast,” “superman.” Distorted and misappropriated by Nietzsche’s more impressionable readers, these were slogans that eventually became the ideological tools of aggressive nationalism.

Nietzsche was joined in his contempt for “nineteenth-century morality” by Henri Von Treitschke, perhaps the most eloquent and formidable of pre-Nazi Germany ideologists. Treitschke envisaged the State as the true embodiment of mind and spirit, as an all-embracing self-determined entity, unbound by rules of behavior or morality, by any limitation save its own carnivorous power to grow. The State was, in sum, the “divine will” as it “exists on earth.” The writings of Nietzsche and Treitschke were extraordinarily influential. Indeed, they became Scripture for tens of thousands of young German intellectuals who thus buttressed the political triumph of conservative nationalism. Only a few additional weapons were needed to render the Leviathan-State impregnable. One of these weapons was anti-Semitism...

... The “diabolization” of the Jews may have been declining in a world growing progressively secular; but it still endured with enough strength, even in Central and Western Europe, to stigmatize the Jews as a people apart, a people under a historic cloud of suspicion barely to be tolerated. Occasionally these old suspicions flamed into active hatred. ...

Even before Jew hatred was systematically exploited as a political weapon, a number of German nationalist-conservative ideologists had prepared the intellectual groundwork for modern anti-Semitism. It was Treitschke, for example, who encouraged German conservative nationalists to identify the Jews with the twin dangers of liberalism and internationalism, identification which had merely been toyed with by conservatives during the 1848 period. What stakes could the Jews possibly have in the future of the German State, Treitschke asked? Were they not everywhere revolutionists of atheists? In a series of articles in the *Preussische Jahrbuch* in the autumn of 1879, Treitschke called attention to the growing power of “Jewish solidarity,” to the emergence of a separate German-Jewish caste. Accordingly, he warned his countrymen that Germany must be transformed into a Lutheran *Kultur-Staat*, a cleansed of all “cosmopolitanism” influences. Treitschke argued, too, that an international “network of Jews was using liberalism to fasten a stranglehold on German life; after all we were big business and dynamic capitalism if not Jewish creations? It was a theory which exercised an irresistible appeal to the lower middle class, the people who most feared modern capitalism...

Raul Hilberg: The idea of a political grouping based only on radical and racial anti-Semitism was first propagandized by Moritz Busch, Bismarck’s press attaché in the Foreign Office and later by Wilhelm Marr and Ernst Herici, in the 1870’s... In 1887, however, Otto Boeckel was elected to the Reichstag, the first anti-Semitic deputy who remained independent of official Conservative State...

...This brand of racist anti-Semitism failed to achieve the older Judaeophobia; but the growth of respectable political movements willing to pay homage to the “idea” of racialism indicated that its time was coming.

One of those movements was Pan-Germanism. While never a large movement, it reflected the sentiments of Kaiser Wilhelm II and of an influential group of German industrialists and army officers...

...Indeed, the League ultimately made its orientation quite clear when it officially barred Jews from membership...

...In Austria, the leadership of the movement was Georg von Schoenerer, the son of a wealthy railway pioneer, and heir to a newly created patent of nobility... he was one of the most effective rabble rousers of modern times. In fact, he pioneered many standard Nazi

propaganda techniques: Pa-German songs, post cards, beer mugs, matches, signboards. With the aid of these techniques he built up a network of followers throughout Austria...It was Schoenerer's hope that Austria's German population would ultimately be provoked into mass uprising against the "obstructionist" Austria government- for the sake of "ridding the country of the Jews." Once this was accomplished, Schoenerer was convinced, union with Germany would follow automatically...

After World War One, "respectable" German politicians and thinkers of the postwar period, puzzling over the meaning of mighty Germany's defeat, were no less influential in laying the intellectual groundwork for Nazism than were the extremists. The German-Jewish statesman Walter Rathenau arrived at the conclusion that Germany's strength, its primeval barbaric energy, was somehow undermined by the "arid" rationalism of Western Europe. Thomas Mann, the eminent novelist and essayist, was no less concerned about the debilitating effects on Germany of Western "overintellectualization." Count Herman Keyserling frankly admired the Nietzschean conception of the superman; while the historian Oswald Spengler warned that democracy was the most enervating of modern political systems. Indeed, it has become apparent in retrospect that the ruthless and destructive nihilism of Nazism was merely a crude vulgarization of the original parent: German reactionary nationalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Anti-Semitism in the early 1920's seemed at first to be merely the reaction of disgruntled conservatives to the triumph of the Weimar Republic... Even the brutal assassination of Walter Rathenau by Nazi hooligans in June 1922 appeared to be simply a savage and futile manifestation of nationalist frustration. The widespread circulation of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, the physical assaults upon the Jews in universities and secondary schools, were not taken too seriously, even by the Jews themselves. Many of the leaders of the German-Jewish community actually preferred to lay the onus of these Jewish hatreds on some eighty thousand Eastern European Jews who had entered Germany between 1917 and 1920 as refugees from Ukrainian nationalism. "The Oriental horde camped on the Brandenburg sands," Walter Rathenau had called them. "*Die Ostjuden sind unser Unglück*," "the Jews of Eastern Europe are our misfortune," was a frequent German Jewish explanation. Had not 100,000 Jews, one in every six of the population, served in the German armies, they asked? Had not 10,000 Jews died for the Fatherland? Had not 35,000 Jews been decorated for bravery? Surely the revival of Jew-hatred could be no more than a passing phase. As soon as the *Ostjuden* became acculturated, as soon as the Weimar Republic proved its viability, anti-Semitism was bound to disappear.

They were blissfully ignorant of the social disintegration that was everywhere at work in the German world. The traditional religious and moral values of the countryside seem innocuous and meaningless to many distraught and lonely German shopkeepers, fighting for survival in the modern industrial jungle. Philosophers like Nietzsche and Treitschke had long since urged the abandonment of conventional morality; their disciples gathered now in small political or cultural groups, and shrilled their contempt for the values of orderly government, law, or social restraint. The leaders of these splinter groups- men like Henrich, Forst Bockel, Ahlwardt, even von Schönerer- were the true predecessors of Nazi nihilism...

Even more important, the Jews could be depicted now as menaces to Pan-German internationalist ideals. Were not Jews "international" bankers: the Rothschilds, Oppenheims, Selimanns, and others? Were not Jews like Bleichroder, Ballin, and Cassel international go-betweens for diplomatic negotiations? Were they not employed through the Zionist organization, for German peace overtures during the World War? The Jews- whether as bankers, peace makers, or intellectuals- were a symbol of the common interest of European people. It was a symbol that Pan-German expansionism, a driving international movement under purely German control, could not possibly tolerate. Moreover, if the Pan-German

whether of the von Schönerer or of the Nazi variety, made claims to the status of an elite they were obliged to project for themselves an international enemy making similar claims "chosenness." The eradication of this foe provided the perfect excuse for Nazi movements outward. It was surely no accident that Nazi diatribes were not directed simply at "the Jew" but rather at the "international Jew." By identifying the Jew as their supranational enemy, the Pan-Germans, the Nazis, lent justification to their own supranational ambitions...

...Was there any shady undertaking, any form of foulness, especially in cultural life in which at least one Jew did not participate? On putting the probing knife carefully to the kind of abscess one immediately discovered, like a maggot in a putrescent body, a little Jew who was often blinded by the sudden light...

... "There can be little doubt," writes Hitler's distinguished biographer Alan Bullock "That Hitler believed what he said about the Jews; from first to last his anti-Semitism is one of the most consistent themes in his career, the master idea which embraces the whole span of his thought..."

...But over and above everything else the Nazi program demanded that Germany "Aryanize" itself, guard itself from "blood poisoning" by the "Jewish race." ...The lewd, lascivious, and pornographic anti-Semitism which pictured the Jew lying in wait to ravish the naive, blonde Aryan maiden became one of the most effective images in the Nazi racial arsenal...¹

ix - What Kind of People Were Involved?

The Aish Web site reports:

Perhaps the most inexplicable of all the aspects of the Holocaust - the question that forces us to come to grips with the very meaning of the word "civilized" - is the realization that took place in the twentieth century and was the work of so-called "cultured," "civilized" highly educated Germans.

"The death camps," as Franklin Littell pointed out, "were designed by professors and built by Ph.D.s." Nazis tortured by day and listened to Wagner and Bach at night. They put down a violin to torture a Jew to death. They used their advanced scientific knowledge to design crematoria and, most amazing of all, they had highly skilled people devise the most fiendish medical experiments to test levels of pain, how long someone could be immersed in freezing water before dying, and even, as the infamous Dr. Joseph Mengele (chief "physician" at Auschwitz) was fond of doing, performed gruesome experiments on twins such as sewing two children together to create a "Siamese pair" and to measure their reactions.

Romain Gary, author of The Dance of Genghis Khan, bitterly came to this shocking conclusion: "In the ancient times of the Simbas, a cruel, cannibalistic society, people consumed their victims. The modern-day Germans, heirs to thousands of years of culture and a civilization, turned their victims into soap. The desire for cleanliness, that is civilization."

The Holocaust was different because it came at the hands of those we would have been certain were incapable of committing atrocities. The Holocaust forces us to rethink the meaning of culture not rooted in a religious or ethical foundation.

In The Architects of Annihilation: Auschwitz and the Logic of Destruction, the authors assert that the Holocaust was the logical outcome of certain strands of mainstream German thinking and practice. Much that the authors recount sounds disturbingly familiar because of what they call the "bloodless legacy" of all Nazis: the requirement for citizens

¹Raul Hilberg, The Destruction of European Jewry

register with the local police; the regulation of agricultural markets; Volkswagen car designations such as "special needs school" and often the very concepts and vocabulary of economic rationalisation. Also, the officially approved word policing that in the 1940s produced such euphemisms as the infamous "final solution" is echoed now in our acceptance of censorship by the politically correct.

It should be no surprise that this legacy persists, because it was continued after the war by some of the very same people. They were not as a rule Nazis, those senior officials and their clever young men who accepted the elimination of the Jews (and 70,000 insane, plotters, gypsies and others) as a perhaps regrettable but necessary first step towards restructuring Europe. Nor was it barbarism that prompted them. Rather, it was a combination of the worship of rationalism in its most pervasive modern form, an uncritical belief in state planning, allied with personal ambition and material comfort. The architects of Auschwitz would not have seemed monsters, but might have been uncomfortably like some you might meet in Whitehall departments or town halls: reasonable-sounding men in suits.

Otto Donner, for example, was a gifted economist whose strategies for paying for the war included the elimination of those representing a "dead cost" to the state. By October 1945, however, he was helping the Americans with the economic regeneration of the new Germany. By 1947 he was a professor in Washington; by 1952 he had a senior position at the IMF; and until 1968 he served as German executive director for the World Bank. Recalling their wartime work, one of his colleagues wrote in 1955 of his wish that "succeeding generations might once again be entrusted with tasks such as those that we were privileged to fulfill with upright hearts, impassioned energy and painstaking labour".

The awkward truth is that these functionaries and managers, who mostly escaped Nuremberg, were as necessary for the creation of a peaceful post-war Germany as they had been to the Nazi regime. The man from the ministry always wins, whether during the post-war trial run in Austria when Jewish businesses were reduced by 83 percent within months under the name of economic rationalisation, or in ensuring the efficient operation of the transport company that conveyed mental patients to the death camps. "Rationalisation" was the responsibility of the RKW, which exists today as the Board for the Rationalisation of the German Economy.

Raul Hilberg, The Destruction of the European Jews:

The German administration, however, was not deterred by the pressures of other assignments; it never resorted to pretenses like the Italians, it never took token measures, like the Hungarians, it never procrastinated, like the Bulgarians. The German bureaucrats worked efficiently, in haste, and with a sense of urgency. Unlike their collaborators, the Germans never did the minimum. They always did the maximum.

Indeed, there were moments when an agency's eagerness to participate in the decision-making led to bureaucratic competition and rivalry. ...

Every lawyer in the RSHA was presumed to be suitable for leadership in the mobile killing units; every finance expert of the WVHA was considered a natural choice for service in a death camp. In other words, all necessary operations were accomplished with whatever personnel were at hand. However one may wish to draw the line of active participation, the machinery of destruction was a remarkable cross-section of the German population. Every profession, every skill, and every social status was represented in it. We know that in a totalitarian state the formation of an opposition movement outside the bureaucracy is next to impossible; however, if there is very serious opposition in the population, if there are insurmountable psychological obstacles to a course of action, such impediments reveal

themselves *within* the bureaucratic apparatus. We know what such barriers will do, for they emerged clearly in the Italian Fascist state. Again and again the Italian generals and consuls, prefects and police inspectors, refused to co-operate in the deportations. ...

If we were to enumerate the public and private agencies which may be called the "German government" and all those agencies which may be called the "machinery of destruction," we would discover that we are dealing with identical offices.

The ministerial civil service wrote the decrees and regulations which defined the concept of "Jew."

The Foreign Office negotiated with Axis states for the deportation of Jews to killing centers; the German railways took care of the transport; the police, completely merged with the party's SS, was engaged extensively in killing operations.

The army was drawn into the destruction process after the outbreak of war by virtue of its control over vast territories in eastern and western Europe. Military units and officers had to participate in all measures, including the killing of Jews by special mobile units and the transport of Jews to the death camps.

Industry and finance had an important role in the expropriations, in the forced labor system, and even in the gassing of the victims.

David Gates in Newsweek, March 6, 2000:

Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's Hitler's Willing Executioners bears the subtitle "Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust." This was a direct challenge to the influential Ordinary Men (1992) by the University of North Carolina's Christopher R. Browning. Browning had argued that such factors as peer pressure, careerism and unquestioning conformity led large numbers of everyday people to participate in murdering the Jews of Europe. Goldhagen, on the other hand, blamed a long German tradition of "eliminationist" anti-Semitism—in his view, uniquely German pathology. Scholars continue to disagree about Goldhagen's methodology and conclusions, but since his book was a best seller in both the United States and Germany, new books about the Holocaust seem obliged to take account of his thesis—and even a survivor's diary written before Goldhagen was born now seems to have retroactive relevance to the issues he raised.

Eric A. Johnson, in Nazi Terror: The Gestapo, Jews and Ordinary Germans (640 pages, Basic) disagrees with Goldhagen on the prevalence and uniqueness of German anti-Semitism, but does credit him (and Browning) for emphasizing that hundreds of thousands of "ordinary" Germans participated in the Holocaust—and were free to opt out. He shows that the Gestapo was no all-seeing Orwellian presence terrorizing citizens into compliance. Only 1 percent of non-Jews were ever investigated; most Germans' experience of the Third Reich was "entirely unlike that of [the Nazis'] targeted enemies." In this context, Johnson says Germans' silence about the Holocaust—which many knew about—was "deplorable" but in some ways understandable... More than from active anti-Semitism, the silence resulted from lack of moral concern about the fate of those... perceived as outsiders and from a tradition of obsequious submission to authority."

Jay Y. Gonen's forthcoming The Roots of Nazi Psychology (240 pages, University Press of Kentucky) accepts Goldhagen's thesis. Gonen, a retired University of Cincinnati psychology professor, argues that German myth and history fostered "shared group fantasies of Jewish treachery. Like Goldhagen, he believes that anti-Semitic ideology alone can account for the Holocaust. "People do not gas other people," he writes, "or shoot them or smash their skulls out of mere obedience to orders. People do not engage in wholesale murder out of administrative momentum, or in retail killing out of bureaucratic inertia." On the other hand, the editors of The Holocaust Chronicle (768 pages, Publications International, Ltd.) heavily criticized, sidebar-intensive new history, accuse Goldhagen of failing to do research that

would place German anti-Semitism in context; they call his claimed "radical revision" previous scholarship "specious." In a recent New York Times Magazine piece on German rescuers of Jews, the German novelist Peter Schneider noted that Goldhagen's hundreds of thousands of willing executioners "don't add up to 80 million"—the population of the Third Reich. And Browning's new volume of lectures, *Nazi Policy, Jewish Workers, German Killers* (174 pages, Cambridge), pointedly relegates Goldhagen to a couple of footnotes.

Still, the contemporaneous diary of Victor Klemperer, a Jewish professor and historian who lived through the Holocaust in Dresden, sounds at least partially Goldhagenesque today. In *I Will Bear Witness* (544 pages, Random House), the sequel to his well-received first volume published in 1998, Klemperer is shaken by reading about 19th century German anti-Semitism, and comes to consider Nazism "a malignant growth out of German flesh, a strain of cancer, just as there is a *Spanish influenza*." And yet he senses that a few Germans are truly anti-Semitic; in March of 1942, he guesses it's about one in 50. This may or may not be wishful thinking, but in entry after entry he does get kind words from "Aryans" on the street. So which is worse: Goldhagen's theory of near-total anti-Semitism, Browning and Johnson's theory of near-total indifference? Looking at it that way, even skeptics can see Goldhagen's appeal. If he's wrong, what happened in Germany can happen anywhere.

In his book *Nazi Terror: The Gestapo, Jews, and Ordinary Germans* (Feb 2000), E. A. Johnson repeatedly points to Hitler's widespread popularity and to the depressingly few instances of overt resistance. But he emphasizes that to identify ordinary Germans too closely with the Holocaust is, in a sense, to excuse or diminish the culpability of those most directly involved. Johnson concludes that the officers of Hitler's secret police were anything but ordinary men.

Members of the Gestapo, he says, were chosen for their reliability. They were zealous Nazis, fanatical anti-Semites, violence-prone true believers; they had volunteered for the Gestapo and enjoyed wielding power over others. Most of the older officers had been policemen in the Weimar period and because of their longstanding (and often illegal) Nazi credentials had survived a purge after Hitler took power in which two-thirds of their colleagues were removed. These were men who did not simply follow orders. They had taken responsibility for determining who would live and who would die. They tortured and murdered. They go-getters among them, and there were many, eagerly took time out from their regular duties to participate in mass exterminations in the east. And after the war they tend to be unrepentant.

"It took nearly the entire German population to carry out the Holocaust." Yet he also observes that "most Germans did not want the Jews to be killed. The Gestapo's policy was that nontargeted Germans were left pretty much alone. Johnson's statistics show that very few of these Germans -- in Krefeld the figure was about 1 percent -- were ever bothered by the Gestapo. Most of them didn't fear the Gestapo, or even know anybody who had had a run-in with the secret police -- and not because laws weren't being broken. Low-level defiance, Johnson shows, was extremely common: people told Hitler jokes, they listened to BBC broadcasts, they went to swing clubs and danced to decadent American music. But the Gestapo had more important things to worry about.

This is not to say that they were unaware of the Holocaust; Johnson demonstrates that millions of Germans must have known at least some of the truth. But, he concludes, "a terrible Faustian bargain was struck between the regime and the citizenry." The government looked the other way when petty crimes were being committed. Ordinary Germans looked the other way when Jews were being rounded up and murdered; they abetted one of the greatest crimes

of the 20th century not through active collaboration but through passivity, denial and indifference.¹

"One wonders how so many people could find the courage to dance to forbidden swing music . . . and communicate their discontent with their government and society myriad ways, but could not summon the courage and compassion to register abhorrence and thereby break the silence about the systematic murder of millions of defenseless and innocent men, women and children."

There were those who resisted, and we have described some of their heroic efforts in the section called *The Righteous Gentiles*. However, these were by far a minority of the German population or of any of the populations where deportations were carried out. The only exception was Italy, whose glorious chapter appears under *Responses of the Axis Countries* below.

a. Intellectuals at the Forefront

Donald B. Calne: *Within Reason, Rationality and Human Behavior*

How was it possible that Germany, the home of Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Goethe, Leibniz, and Kant, could become a nation driven by hatred and complicit in the worst crime against humanity that the world had ever seen? The conflict remained with me and gradually matured into a series of questions. Does reason direct what we do? If we think more, do we behave better? In short, could the nightmare of the Second World War have been avoided if the leaders of National Socialism had acquired, in some miraculous way, a sudden capacity for more reason?

Sadly, the facts do not support this. The intellectuals of Germany were among the first to embrace National Socialism. Wagner and Nietzsche blazed the trail in the nineteenth century, and by 1933 large numbers of university faculty were ready to champion National Socialist ideology. Other representatives of the educated classes, the lawyers and physicians, and even more practical leaders, the industrialists, joined the throng. Many Europeans outside Germany looked on with approval. In some respects Hitler was expressing a widespread and influential sentiment that permeated the thinking of European intellectuals. The National Socialist movement was not conceived by ignorant people; its roots lay in the intelligentsia. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that if the leaders of National Socialism had achieved a dramatic increase in their capacity for reasoning in 1939, their regime would simply have pursued its policies with a more intelligent war machine; the goals would not have changed. National aggrandizement, territorial expansion, and institutionalized racism would have continued with more efficient weapons. The management of the "final solution to the Jewish question" was entirely dependent upon the ability to harness a product of reason.

¹ Most Germans suffered not at all from the terror.... most Germans remained loyal to the Nazi leadership and supported it voluntarily from the beginning to the end of the Third Reich, if to varying degrees. Although some Germans strongly agreed with the regime's anti-Semitic and antihumanitarian policies, many did not. In the same vein, some Germans voluntarily spied on and denounced their neighbors and coworkers to the Nazi authorities, but the overwhelming majority of German citizens did not. Furthermore, civilian denunciations were typically made for personal or petty reasons against normally law-abiding citizens whom the Gestapo seldom chose to punish severely, if at all. It remains true, however, that the civilian German population figured heavily in the regime's own control, and its collusion and accommodation with the Nazi regime made the Nazis' crimes against humanity possible. It is necessary not to overlook the ordinary German population's complicity in Nazi crimes. It is also necessary to realize that most Germans were motivated not by a willful intent to harm others but by a mixture of cowardice, apathy, and a slavish obedience to authority.

— modern technology — to the problem of mass transportation, the safe manufacture and containment of Zyklon B, and the engineering of incinerators that could be fueled by the continuous ignition of melting human tissues. “

It was, in fact, what might be called imaginative realism.

Jonathan Glover: A Moral History of the Twentieth Century

The 1920s and 1930s were a time of greatness in philosophy written in the German language. Ludwig Wittgenstein. Hans Reichenbach. The Vienna Circle. Karl Popper. K. Jaspers. Herbert Marcuse, Theodor Adorno. All these philosophers were political opponents of the Nazis, or were Jews, or were married to Jews. They were all removed from their posts: they went into exile or were killed. Their ideas spread round the world, sometimes posthumously, sometimes through their writing and teaching in exile. But they were no longer there, at German and Austrian universities, to ask the necessary questions.

The philosophers who remained were not of the same order. Many saw the relationship between philosophy and Nazism in very different terms. Some thought, as Fichte had done, that philosophy was tied to a distinctively German cast of mind. The German Philosophical Society in 1934 accepted ‘the duty to use the power of German philosophy for the construction of the German worldview.’ This national approach stressed characteristics appealing to the Nazis. Some supported ‘the organic world-view’, based on ‘a real integration of Destiny, History, Blood.’ Others urged the superiority of will and action over reason and thought. Professor Lothar Trolldenier wrote that the absolute dominance of the world of action was a chief characteristic of the Aryan race, which didn’t stem from clever intellectualizing. To a greater or lesser extent aware of this reality, all German philosophers have acknowledged the primacy of actions over pure thought: *action is all, thought nothing*.

The archetypal Nazi philosopher was Alfred Baumler. Baumler saw Nazism as the expression of Nietzsche:

And if today we shout ‘Heil Hitler’ to this youth, at the same time we are also hailing Nietzsche. In 1933 he joined the ideological office of the Nazi Party and was given the chair of Philosophy and Political Pedagogy at the Humboldt University in Berlin. Baumler’s inaugural lecture was given in the presence of two SS men and a Nazi flag. There, after the lecture finished, Alfred Baumler led his audience out of the building, and across the Unter den Linden, to join the Nazi book-burning.

Martin Heidegger was the most famous philosopher to support the Nazis. In 1929 he wrote, ‘either we will replenish our German spiritual life with genuine native forces as educators or we will once and for all surrender it to the growing Judaisation in a broader and narrower sense’.

Heidegger won the 1933 election for Rector of the University of Freiburg. Academic freedom was rejected: After the war Heidegger’s response was silence punctuated by occasional bits of high-flown evasiveness which sought to minimize his own role, to imply that there was still something good at the core of Nazism, and to suggest that the Nazi atrocities were not anything very special. He said: To those and those alone who take pleasure in focusing on what they see as the shortcomings of my rectorship, let me say this: themselves these things are as little account as the fruitless rooting around in past efforts and actions, which are so utterly insignificant within the planetary will to power that they can even be termed miniscule.

In 1946, one year after even the most sheltered person knew about Auschwitz, Heidegger wrote his *Letter on Humanism*. In it, he said, ‘Perhaps the distinguishing feature of the present age lies in the fact that wholeness as a dimension of experience is closed to us. Perhaps this is the only evil.’ The story is dismal. The anti-Semitism. The Nazism. The

betrayal of Baumgarten and of Husserl. And then, afterwards, the mixture of silence a grandiose evasion.

Gottlob Frege's book The Foundations of Arithmetic was a revolution in the philosophy of mathematics. Some of his essays mark the start of modern philosophy of language. His *Begriffsschrift*, published in 1879, laid the basis of modern formal logic. It influenced Russell, Wittgenstein and all subsequent logicians and philosophers of mathematics and of logic. In their history of logic, William and Martha Kneale say that his work 'contains all the essentials of modern logic, and it is not unfair either to his predecessors or to his successors to say that 1879 is the most important date in the history of the subject'. Michael Dummett claims that questions about knowledge, which Descartes made people see as the most fundamental in philosophy, have been displaced in that role by questions about logic and language. He credits Frege, together with Wittgenstein, with ending the Cartesian period in philosophy.

Much Western philosophy in recent times has been divided into the 'analytic' tradition started by Frege and the 'continental' tradition coming partly from Heidegger.

In 1924 Frege was in his mid-seventies. That year he kept a diary, which reveals him to have been an extreme nationalist. He thought Germany needed a strong leader to escape from French oppression. He was also anti-Semitic. On 22 April he wrote about his hometown of Wismar. He looked back nostalgically to his boyhood days when a law banned Jews (except at the time of the fair) from staying in the town overnight. On 24 April he was regretting that the Reich had developed 'the cancer of Social Democracy'. His anti-Semitism came out again on 30 April: 'One can remember that there are the most worthy Jews and still regard it as a misfortune that there are so many Jews in Germany and that in the future they will have full political equality with German citizens.' He goes on to express sympathy with the wish that the Jews in Germany 'would get lost, or better would like to disappear from Germany.' He was also worried about another question: 'How can one reliably distinguish Jews from Non-Jews? Sixty years ago it would have been comparatively easy. Now it seems to me undoubtedly difficult.' (The Nazi's answer to this problem was the yellow star.) Frege suggested that the thing to do was to concentrate on the kinds of jobs in which Jews did much harm. Removing Jews' civil rights would exclude them. After this, it is unsurprising to find that he was a reader of *Deutschlands Erneuerung* (Germany's Renewal), an extreme nationalist journal edited by Houston Stewart Chamberlain and others.

For those of us who have that hope, the story of Frege is disheartening. It shows how even superb work in philosophy can leave the rest of a person's thinking unaffected.

Why were the intellectuals the ones to get involved?

"It was basically common sense that kept the mass of the people in Britain and America less liable than the intelligentsia to delusion about the Stalinists. As Orwell says they were at once too sane and too stupid to accept the sophistical in place of the obvious. But common sense by itself has its vices, or inadequacies. First, it can go with parochialism. Chamberlain was not alone in failing to understand that Hitler was capable of acts incredible to his Birmingham City Council or other 'plain, shrewd Britons.' Similarly, this philistine 'shrewdness' inclines to the view that there is 'something to be said on both sides' in international disputes. (In the Nazi case, the Germans of the Sudetenland had a legitimate wish to join Germany; but to put this in the scale was to unjustifiably counterbalance the essentials of National Socialism.) And then, common sense can decline into muddleheadedness if it is not well integrated with the critical faculty, with an open-ended fund of knowledge and with a breadth of imagination adequate to unfamiliar phenomena.

On these matters, as we have said, the inexplicit habits of mind of the public are often more sensible than the prescriptions elaborated in the minds of the intelligentsia.

Dostoevsky writes of a human type "whom any strong idea strikes all of a sudden and annihilates his will, sometimes forever." The true Idea addict is usually something rough, describable as an "intellectual." The British writer A. Alvarez has (and meaning it favorably) defined an intellectual as one who is "excited by ideas." Ideas can indeed be exciting, but the use of the intellect might be thought to be primarily one of subjecting them to knowledge and judgment—especially on the record of our century.

Robert Conquest W. W. Norton & Company, *Reflections On A Ravaged Century*:

"Intelligence alone is thus far from being a defense against the plague. Students, particular, have traditionally been a reservoir of infection. The Nazis won the German students before they won the German state, and there are many similar examples."

b. The Medical Profession

The medical atrocities committed by the Nazis are one of the most unknown facts about the Holocaust. Why? Many people just can't understand how doctors could have killed thousands upon thousands of human beings. The radical thinking which underlay Nazi medicine did not start exclusively in Germany. The distinction between Germany and other countries is that the former country took action to implement its pseudo-scientific dogma.

The Nazi euthanasia program centered on individuals with mental illness, alcoholism, schizophrenia, etc. These "feeble minded" individuals were considered racially inferior and as using up the resources of Germany. The claim was made not just by the government, but by scientists, academicians, and doctors of Nazi Germany. To "preserve" the health and future of Aryan blood, it was imperative that these "feeble minded" individuals be eliminated. The mercy killing of the "feeble minded" would actually free them from their own misery.

c. The Legal Profession

Yitzhak Breitowitz, in his review of the Hitler's Justice: The Courts of the Third Reich by Ingo Muller (Harvard University Press, 1991)¹ had this to say:

Muller argues that the extent of active resistance was dismally small, that many jurists were active collaborators in the worst excesses of the Nazi regime beyond the call of duty and most shocking of all many of the offenders successfully reintegrated themselves into the judicial system of West Germany. ... He also argues that, to a large extent, many of the Nazi attitudes survive intact in the law today. ...

Rather than being an aberration, much of the jurisprudence of the Nazi era stemmed directly from authoritarian attitudes prevalent among the educated middle class in Weimar Germany and that were enthusiastically embraced by its jurists and legal scholars. Starting in 1933, ... legalization of euthanasia and sterilization, the creation of concentration camps, the ruthless crushing of political opposition, the cancerous growth of racist and anti-semitic laws, labelling Jews as civilly-dead are introduced in rapid succession with nary a word of protest from the lawyers and judges who then proceed to apply the laws as routinely as one would apply some technical provision of the Internal Revenue Code. The death penalty was meted out for even trivial offenses if the State (read: judge, read: the Nazi party) regarded it

¹In 1987, Ingo Muller, an official in the Justice Department of Bremen and a former law professor, published a meticulously documented work in German, *Hitler's Justice*, which became a best-seller in Germany. The full review appears on the Web site JLaw.com and is copyrighted.

offense as "undermining the security of the state" or the purity of the Aryan race. Thus, L Katzenberger was executed for merely maintaining a friendship with a German female tenant (pp. 113-115)¹. ...

The brutalistic Nazi regime implemented its "crimes" not through sheer force alone but through a patina of legality; statutes were duly enacted, regulations drafted by competent and often talented legal technicians, judicial opinions were carefully crafted all to explain and justify what would otherwise be nothing more than state-sponsored terrorism. ... [The rhetoric of the "rule of law" ... served a vital legitimizing function for the Reich. Legalism lent the Reich's excesses the appearance of respectability and legality, a sense of continuity with the Weimar traditions of the past, a sense of false comfort and security to the citizen that the reality of barbaric terror was in fact cabined by civilized traditions and orderly procedures which at least externally bore superficial resemblances to comparable institutions in other countries and those that had previously existed in Germany itself. So too, the killing of the Jews had to be 'legal' and any advantage that accrued to any German had to likewise:

"A number of SS men—not many—have transgressed against that order, and they will be condemned to death mercilessly. We had the moral right vis-a-vis *our* people to annihilate [*umzubringen*] *this* people which wanted to annihilate us. But we have no right to take a single fur, a single watch, a single mark, a single cigarette, or anything whatever. We don't want in the end, just because we have exterminated a germ, to be infected by that germ and die from it. I will not stand by while a slight infection forms. Whenever such an infection spot appears, we will burn it out. But on the whole we can say that we have fulfilled the

¹Nor was this persecution limited to Jews. Two Greeks, one 19 and the other 20, were shot removing a pair of discarded shoes from an abandoned bombed-out building (p. 169). Where the Nazi regime could not obtain its desired results through the official judicial system, it simply created special courts not subject even on paper to the minimal constraints of due process. The most infamous of these was the People's Court specializing in expeditious justice against those who questioned the wisdom of the Fuehrer (even if the "attack" was nothing more than a casual comment made over the dinner table). When all else failed - and for some reason an accused was acquitted - the doctrine of preventive detention allowed for his immediate rearrest by the Gestapo on no legal grounds at all. We read in astonishment that the Gestapo would often arrest a person in the very courtroom in which he had just been acquitted. To the extent this practice elicited protest, the Gestapo was merely requested to wait until the defendant left the room in order not to assault the dignity of the court (pp. 175-176). In a sense, being acquitted was even worse than a conviction; while prison sentences had fixed terms, preventive detention was functionally equivalent to a death sentence following torture. Under the infamous "night and fog" decrees, persons simply vanished without trace and even their families were not notified (pp. 170-173). Basic notions of fundamental fairness in the enactment of criminal legislation simply didn't exist. Post-facto laws were common; people could be punished for acts that were not even criminal when they were committed. Indeed, people could be punished even for acts that were never made expressly criminal if such acts were "similar" to those that were (doctrine of analogy in criminal law). The state had the right to appeal an acquittal or what it regarded as a lenient sentence. Or it could simply forego the appeals route altogether and invoke preventive detention. Contrary to the central idea that conduct proscribed as criminal should be identified with specificity, criminal statutes were often phrased in vague, general terms that could, and often did, apply to virtually anything given defendants no advance warning that their conduct could be prosecutable. Rules of evidence (at least on the prosecution side) were nil; defendants were routinely convicted and even sentenced to death through uncorroborated hearsay or guilt by association. (In one case, a defendant was sentenced on the basis of out-of-court growling of a dog) (p. 166). Nor was there any notion of a meaningful right to counsel. Attorneys for the defense were regarded, and regarded themselves, as agents of the state and would have no hesitation to turn against their "client." Nor were these miscarriages of justice limited to the sphere of criminal prosecution. Even routine cases of contract, labor law, the issuance of drivers' licenses, and child custody were permeated with the racist hatreds that were at the core of National Socialist ideology.

heavy task with love for our people and we have not been damaged in the innermost of being, our soul, our character.”

This legitimization could well have been a potent psychological factor in deluding German people into accepting what was going on. It was also an important first step; had Hitler been unable to operate through the established legal institutions of the country in likelihood much of his program would have been nipped in the bud. It was only by wresting control of the legal structure that the Third Reich was ultimately able to ignore it. . (Moreover, couching political and religious persecution in "laws" and having those laws enforced through judicial proceedings create a sense of bloodless abstraction - where the application of a given statute becomes an exercise in technical skill rather than the imposition of unjust suffering on a human being - and this in turn could be partial explanation why many judges just did their job without ever considering just what it was they were doing.)

Second, we like to think that civilization, a sophisticated legal system and respect for the rule of law stand as firm bulwarks for the protection of individual liberties against infringement by the state. Yet Muller's book reminds us of the disheartening truth - the fragility of even long-standing legal systems and the fact that not only will they crack under stress but may in fact be enlisted as a potent tool in the legitimization of oppression and the powers of evil. Remember: the Nazis did what they did not by ignoring law but by manipulating it.

Third, the book reminds us that contrary to the self-serving assertions of postwar jurists¹, the extent of resistance to the Nazi terror on the part of the legal profession was minuscule. While many jurists were removed and executed because they were Jewish and other judges resigned in protest over attacks on their pension rights, Muller claims that at most one jurist officially protested Nazi injustices and was forced to take early retirement (pp. 195-197). Nor is it wholly true that jurists were simply "victims" of their "positivistic" orientation to mechanically follow and apply the law. While legal positivism may well have contributed to a psychological detachment from the antisocial consequences of their rulings and in an emotional sense may have made it easier for judges to live with their consciences, the creative and enthusiastic application of Nazi doctrine was closer in many cases to active and coequal collaboration than to passive acquiescence. It is also argued that jurists had a meaningful choice; resisting National Socialism would not only have cost them their careers but their lives as well. It is significant, however, that in the one case of recorded resistance that of Kreyssig early retirement was all that was required and if many more judges had truly protested the tenets of Nazism, one wonders whether Hitler, at least in the early years of the Third Reich, would have had the effrontery to even dismiss them.

¹In the aftermath of the war, there were a number of attempts made to justify or at least excuse the conduct of the legal profession, the most prominent of which was the work authored by Hubert Schorn, a former County Judge. Schorn argued that: (1) judicial resistance to the arbitrary edicts of the Reich was in fact widespread; (2) judges were "victims" of their legal training which stressed "positivism," a definition of law that was divorced from any moral vision and which must automatically be obeyed and mechanically applied; (3) judges were legitimately fearful of losing not only their jobs but their lives and thus acted under duress; (4) judges retained their position in the hope of belief that they would be better than any successors the Nazis would have chosen. Many have noted the inconsistent strands of Schorn's argument (akin to the criminal defendant who asserts both that he didn't commit the crime and that he was forced into doing it through duress) but his work provided virtually every jurist of the Nazi era with a panoply of excuses to choose from. Still others maintain that the Nazi regime was sui generis - a temporary aberration that was disconnected from either the German past or its present.

While members of the legal profession are not all equally culpable¹, the message that emerges from Muller's book is crystal-clear. Neither the bar nor the judiciary made any organized attempts to oppose any aspects of Hitler's regime; the bar and judiciary as bodies heartily endorsed racial exclusionary policies; the number of individual resisters was extremely small. The very best that can be said for the legal profession is that they had impact in stopping Nazism and in all likelihood, had complicity in its growth. The choice between impotence and culpability - they were certainly not an active force for good.

The question that Muller does not answer, and on which we can only speculate, is whether widespread legal resistance would have made a difference. On one level, of course, the answer may be irrelevant. The duty to oppose evil does not depend on any calculus of success. On another level, I would submit that resistance may very well have been effective. Particularly in the early years of the Reich, the 1935-1936 period when Hitler was still consolidating his power, the legitimization of his decrees by the courts and the legal profession was a crucial element in extending the government's authority. Each small victory, each incursion into personal liberties without protest enabled Nazism to extend its insidious tentacles further. The policy of appeasement in domestic affairs worked as effectively as it later did in the area of foreign policy with the same disastrous results. Perhaps more so than for any other segment of German society, the judiciary's abdication of responsibility was not only a personal moral failure but a catastrophe for the world at large. (Again, however, to speak from hindsight - if anything, this should teach us to be vigilant about our own liberties ...

[After the war] many jurists with strong affiliations to Nazism were reinstated and many cases promoted. Initial postwar appointments of opponents of the Reich were later rescinded on the grounds of disloyalty to the state while faithful civil servants of the 1933-1945 period were given priority in hiring. To take one extreme example, an S.S. trooper involved in atrocities against the Jews in the Ukraine turns up again 25 years later issuing rulings against Communists and student protestors (p. 217). A former Nazi winds up as head of the Central Office of State Administration for the Prosecution of National Socialist Crimes and serves in that capacity for six years (p. 215).

Perhaps even more disturbing than continuity of personnel - which due to the number of Germans pledging allegiance to Nazism was essentially an administrative necessity - is the strong undercurrents of hostility found in many judicial decisions against opponents of the Reich; the continuing insistence of the courts that actions taken pursuant to the laws of the Reich were "legal" in accepting the defense of legal necessity; and in the refusal of the Bundestag to this very day to set aside the judicial decisions of the Nazi era, even those of the infamous People's Court. Muller also demonstrates how postwar courts have shown remarkable solicitude and forgiveness for the administrators of Nazi justice while taking an unusually hard-line on other radical groups. Victims received little or nothing through the postwar judicial system while perpetrators continued unscathed through retirement or natural death. Finally, much of the legislation currently on the books embodies racial concepts drawn directly from National Socialist policy with only cosmetic changes². ...

¹Undoubtedly, Muller paints with a fairly broad brush. Certainly, there were many judges who openly and enthusiastically embraced the racist tenets of National Socialism. Witness the performance of Roland Freisler, the President of the People's Court whose rantings were so offensive that the Nazis themselves refused to release a film of his proceedings originally made for public relations purposes (p. 150). Others, equally if not more culpable, were rank opportunists willing to jump on a bandwagon to advance their careers (pp. 41-45). Others may indeed have adopted a stance of relative passivity out of sheer fear and yet a final group went along with their business in corporate law with little or no daily involvement in racist/Aryan policies.

²The author has taken well-defined positions on a sharply-debated and controversial period of modern history and indeed, as previously noted sometimes overstates his case. He fails to acknowledge,

x - How could ordinary people become murderers?

How could it happen? How could one single person, Adolf Hitler, succeed in staging a whole world according to his own personal worldview with death and destruction as the appalling consequence? How was it possible to convince so many millions of his divinity status that they were willing to sacrifice both their own lives and the lives of other human beings for this faith?

On the Aish Web Site:

Perhaps the most inexplicable of all the aspects of the Holocaust - the question that forces us to come to grips with the very meaning of the word "civilized" - is the realization that this took place in the twentieth century and was the work of so-called "cultured," "civilized," highly educated Germans.

"The death camps," as Franklin Littell pointed out, "were designed by professors and built by Ph.D.s." Nazis tortured by day and listened to Wagner and Bach at night. They played down a violin to torture a Jew to death. They used their advanced scientific knowledge to design crematoria and, most amazing of all, they had highly skilled people devise the most fiendish medical experiments to test levels of pain, how long someone could be immersed in freezing water before dying, and even, as the infamous Dr. Joseph Mengele (called "physician" at Auschwitz) was fond of doing, performed gruesome experiments on twins such as sewing two children together to create a "Siamese pair" and to measure their reactions.

Romain Gary, author of *The Dance of Genghis Khan*, bitterly came to this shocking conclusion: "In the ancient times of the Simbas, a cruel, cannibalistic society, people consumed their victims. The modern-day Germans, heirs to thousands of years of culture and a civilization, turned their victims into soap. The desire for cleanliness, that is civilization."

The Holocaust was different because it came at the hands of those we would have been certain were incapable of committing atrocities. The Holocaust forces us to rethink the meaning of culture not rooted in a religious or ethical foundation.

In **Chapter H – Responses** we consider whether the Holocaust could happen again. We bring a frightening example of a Canadian teacher who won over his students to a Nazi ideology. Other examples of this abound. They point to the fact that whole societies can easily lose their moral bearings and that Western society is not only no exception to this, it has the most disgraceful history of all.

Having said that, let us look at some of the factors which contributed to this nightmare:

a. Deep rooted anti-Semitism:

For example, the West German reparations policy nor does he mention East Germany's fairly rapid purging of Nazi elements from its government. Some of his readings of current West German legislation seem unduly condemnatory, particularly in view of West Germany's strong rules against Neo-Nazi propaganda and its renewed commitment to human rights. The book preceded such reconciliatory (although largely symbolic) gestures as the formal apologies by East Germany and Austria for atrocities committed during the Holocaust (though technically these do not involve West Germany). On balance, however, Muller's points are well-documented and worthy of our careful consideration and scrutiny. ...

The American sociologist Daniel J. Goldhagen titled his heavily discussed book "Hitler's Willing Executioners". He demonstrates how radical the anti-Semitism of not just the Nazis, but many of the German police forces who participated in the extermination of Soviet Jews was. These policemen were not members of the SS, but simply "ordinary Germans" who more or less accidentally landed in these death-patrols, and are seen as evidence of the depth of the anti-Semitic tradition in Germany.

The Jew as Conspirator and Criminal:

Jews were portrayed as being part of a world conspiracy and as a criminal people, one that would destroy the Germans (and perhaps all others) if the Germans lost the war. When the Russians made their 1940 pact with the Germans, they were at pains to tell the Germans that the Soviet Administration had been purged of all Jews³.

The Jew as Sub-Human:

The Nazis were told repeatedly that the Jews were not really humans. They were animals to be transported in cattle trucks. They were vermin and plague who were in danger of infecting everyone else.

Glover brings the following examples:

One SS pamphlet drew on the creatures of the nightmares: from a biological point of view he seems completely normal. He has hands and feet and a sort of brain. He has eyes and a mouth. But, in fact, he is a completely different creature, a horror. He only looks human with a human face, but his spirit is lower than that of an animal. A terrible chaos runs rampant in this creature, an awful urge for destruction, primitive desires, unparalleled evil monster, subhuman.

Nazi films intermingled shots of Jews with shots of rushing hordes of rats. Hans Frank, when Governor of Poland, called it a country 'which is so full of lice and Jews'. A Hitler wrote about Vienna after the First World War: 'Was there any form of filth and profligacy, particularly in cultural life, without at least one Jew involved in it? If you cut even cautiously into such an abscess, you found, like a maggot in a rotting body, often dazzled by the sudden light – a little Jew!'

Lice and vermin also carry disease. It was a common Nazi device to liken Jews to disease-bearing creatures, or to disease itself. Hitler himself again provides an extreme case. In conversation over dinner one evening, he said, 'The discovery of the Jewish virus

¹ Hilberg: In the culmination of this theory to be a Jew was a punishable offense (strafbare Handlung) thus it was the function of the rationalization of criminality to turn the destruction process into a kind of judicial proceeding.

² Stress: If we lose this war, we do not fall into the hands of some other states but will all be annihilated by world Jewry. Jewry firmly decided [fest entschlossen] to exterminate all Germans. International law and international custom will be no protection against the Jewish will for total annihilation [totaler Vernichtungswille der Juden].

Hilberg: In the minds of the perpetrators, therefore, this theory turned the destruction process into a kind of preventive war.

³ The Destruction of the European Jews by Raul Hilberg:

If a power was friendly, it was believed to be free of Jewish rule. In March, 1940, after Ribbentrop had succeeded in establishing friendly relations with Russia, he assured Mussolini and Ciano that the Soviets had given up the idea of world revolution. The Soviet administration had been purged of Jews. Even Kaganovich (the Jewish Politbureau member) looked rather like a Georgian.

one of the greatest revolutions that have taken place in the world. The battle in which we are engaged today is of the same sort as the battle waged, during the last century, by Pasteur and Koch. How many diseases have their origin in the Jewish virus!... We shall regain our health only by eliminating the Jew.'

Friedrich Uebelhoer, ordering the setting up of a ghetto in Lodz, said that 'we must burn out this bubonic plague.'

Raul Hilberg (The Destruction of European Jews):

One of the principal means through which the perpetrator will attempt to clear his conscience is by clothing his victim in a mantle of evil, by portraying the victim as an object that must be destroyed.

The Nazis needed such a stereotype. They required just such an image of the Jew. It is therefore of no little significance that, when Hitler came to power, the image was already there.

Luther's book About the Jews and Their Lies:

Herewith you can readily see how they understand and obey the fifth commandment of God, namely, that they are thirsty bloodhounds and murderers of all Christendom, with full intent, now for more than fourteen hundred years, and indeed they were often burned to death upon the accusation that they had poisoned water and wells, stolen children, and to and hacked them apart, in order to cool their temper secretly with Christian blood.

And:

Now see what a fine thick, fat lie that is when they complain that they are held captive by us. It is more than fourteen hundred years since Jerusalem was destroyed, and this time it is almost three hundred years since we Christians have been tortured and persecuted by the Jews all over the world (as pointed out above), so that we might well complain that they had now captured us and killed us—which is the open truth. Moreover we do not know to this day which devil has brought them here into our country; we did not look for them in Jerusalem.

This is Luther's picture of the Jews. First they want to rule the world. Second, they are arch-criminals, killers of Christ and all Christendom. Third, he refers to them as "plague, pestilence, and pure misfortune."

In 1895 the Reichstag was discussing a measure, proposed by the anti-Semitic faction for the exclusion of foreign Jews. The speaker, Ahlwardt, belonged to that faction.

"Every Jew who at this moment has not done anything bad may nevertheless under the proper conditions do precisely that, because his racial qualities drive him to do it."

Glover (A Moral History of the Twentieth Century) talks about circles of confirmation, of how the Germans subjected the Jews to conditions which then confirmed in themselves that the Jews really were animals:

For example, people going to the camps were crushed together in freight cars without lavatories for a journey which could take days or weeks. Sometimes they would be let out for a short time to relieve themselves. Primo Levi describes the response when this happened during a stop at a station in Austria. The SS escort did not hide their amusement at the sight of men and women squatting wherever they could, on the platforms and in the middle of the tracks, and the German passengers openly expressed their disgust: people like this deserve their fate, just look how they behave. These are not *Menschen*, human beings, but animals—it's clear as the light of day.

The policy of selecting prisoners to run the crematoria may also have served to confirm the Nazi view of the prisoners. As Levi again puts it: 'it must be shown that the Jew is the sub-race, the sub-men, bow to any and all humiliation, even to destroying themselves. The message was 'we can destroy not only your bodies but also your souls.' Years later Franz Stangl, the Commandant of Treblinka, was asked, 'Why, if they were going to kill them anyway, what was the point of all the humiliation, why the cruelty?'" His answer was, "The condition those who actually had to carry out the policies. To make it possible for them to do what they did.'

b. Distancing and blurring of responsibility:

When Hitler delegated the assignment of Genocide to Heinrich Himmler, he immediately started to blur his own responsibility. It was with very mixed feelings that Heinrich Himmler accepted the task which the Führer put on his shoulders. The Reichsführer-SS found it "un-Germanic" to exterminate whole people, but he nevertheless accepted the task because he put his oath of fidelity to Adolf Hitler as Führer higher than his inner moral voice. Indeed, his reward for doing it was as high as it could be in the Third Reich: Heinrich Himmler was promised the very society-constituting Führer Myth after the death of the Führer.

The Reichsführer-SS then tried to repress his gnawing doubt through delegating the organizing responsibility to his right hand, Reinhard Heydrich, who was used to taking care of the more dirty work that belonged to building up the Third Reich. Neither he nor his collaborators in Berlin murdered Jews themselves. They had others to do it; and these could also after the war claim that they just had followed orders.

Hannah Arendt concluded her analysis of the trial of Adolf Eichmann - one of the key persons in the bureaucratic process where human beings were reduced to mere figures - in her famous book on the banality of Evil in 1961 with the following words:

The trouble with Eichmann was precisely that so many were like him, and that that many were neither perverted nor sadistic, that they were, and still are, terribly and terrifyingly normal. From the point of view of our legal institutions and of our moral standards and judgment, this normality was much more terrifying than all the atrocities put together, for it implied ... that this new type of criminal, who is in fact *hostis generis humani*, commits his crimes under circumstances that make it well-nigh impossible for him to know or to feel that he is doing wrong.

Another aspect of this distancing was the way in which the killing took place. Modern warfare has become industrialized, and this industrialization helps remove the responsibility of taking others' lives from the individual soldier. The Nazis were the ultimate example of this. The Einsatzgruppen (special task forces) entered the Soviet Union behind the invading armed forces in late June 1941 and began shooting Jews where they were found. Roughly 500,000 Jews were killed in this way between July and December 1941. At that time, the sheer number of Jews to be killed and the effect on the police of shooting women and children caused other methods to be investigated, culminating in the establishment of death camps such as Auschwitz, Treblinka and Sobibor in early 1942, to which Jews were transported and gassed with carbon monoxide or prussic acid (Zyklon B). This way of killing cast an easier load on the consciences of those doing the killing. (Culled and edited from the Holocaust History Project on the web at holocaust-history.org)

c. Division of Labor

Jonathan Glover, A Moral History of the Twentieth Century:

Division of labour made evasion of personal responsibility easier. Those who rounded up Polish Jews from their homes, and were also made to shoot them, were acutely aware of participating in atrocity. But those who rounded people up had far less of this when the killing was done elsewhere by other people.

One strategy of evasions narrows the focus of attention to bureaucratic matters. Officials in the Reichsbahn sent carefully worked-out bills to the government department in charge of transporting Jews in freight cars to their deaths. The fare was third class for each person, except for half-price tickets for children under ten and free travel for those under four. It was business as usual on the Reichsbahn: a return fare for the guards and a one-way fare for the Jews.

d. Denial

Jonathan Glover, A Moral History of the Twentieth Century:

One way people deny the nature of what they are doing is by having a taboo against talking about it. Himmler referred to this in a speech in 1943: I want to mention here very candidly a particularly difficult chapter. Among us it should be mentioned once, quite openly, but in public we will never talk about it...It was with us, thank God, an inborn gift of tactfulness, that we have never conversed about this matter, never spoken about it. Every one of us was horrified, and yet every one of us knew that we would do it again if it were ordered and if it were necessary. I am referring to the evacuation of the Jews, to the extermination of the Jewish people. ...

Jews deported to their death were 'evacuated,' 'resettled,' or 'sent to the East'. Their death camps were 'work camps' or 'concentration camps'. Those selected for death were to be given 'special treatment'.

The SS doctors who carried out these selections were able to do so partly through a sense that Auschwitz was morally separate from the rest of the world, that it was 'extraterritorial' as one doctor put it. Rudolph Hoss, the Commandant of Auschwitz, was asked by Fritz Hensel, his brother-in-law, how he was able to function in such a place. He said that Hensel could not understand, as he belonged to a different world: 'Here you are on another planet. Don't forget that.'

e. Separating duty from Personal Feelings

Raul Hilberg:

When the trials of war criminals started, there was hardly a defendant who could not produce evidence that he had helped some half-Jewish physics professor, or that he had used his influence to permit a Jewish symphony conductor to conduct a little while longer, or that he had intervened on behalf of some couple in mixed marriage in connection with an apartment. While these courtesies were petty in comparison with the destructive conception which these men were implementing concurrently, the "good deeds" performed an important psychological function. They separated "duty" from personal feelings. They preserved a sense of "decency." The destroyer of the Jews was no "anti-Semite."

Oswald Spengler once explained this theory in the following words: "War is the primeval policy of all living things, and this to the extent that in the deepest sense combat and life are identical, for when the will to fight is extinguished so is life itself." Himmler remembered this theory when he addressed the mobile killing personnel at Minsk. He told

them to look at nature: wherever they would look, they would find combat. They would find it among animals and among plants. Whoever tired of the fight went under.

Jonathan Glover, A Moral History of the Twentieth Century:

Because the motions held back by the barriers can be so powerful, it was easier to admit no exceptions at all. Primo Levi has pointed out that the Nazis included even women in their transports to the death camps. It was not necessary for the Nazi policy to remove people well past bearing children and with little time left to live, but to have allowed exceptions might have opened the emotional floodgates. Rigid exclusion of consideration of the individual case made things easier for those carrying out the policy.

Once the killing began, however, the men became increasingly brutalized. As combat, the horrors of the initial encounter eventually became routine, and the killing became progressively easier. In this sense, brutalization was not the cause but the effect of the men's behavior.

Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*

f. Loyalty, solidarity and nationalism:

The American historian, Christopher R. Browning shows that an important contributing factor was the psychological pressure of obedience and demands for solidarity amongst the Nazis.

g. Duty and Morality

To teach man the future of man as his will, as dependent on a human will, and to prepare for great enterprises and collective experiments in discipline and breeding... for that a new kind of philosopher and commander will sometimes be needed, in face of whom whatever has existed on earth of hidden, dreadful and benevolent spirits may well look pale and dwarfed.

Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil

Religion:

Jonathan Glover, A Moral History of the Twentieth Century:

The Nazis were not amorality. They thought of themselves as living by a positive Christian morality, which gave them a strong sense of their own moral identity.

Although they drew heavily from him, the Nazis disagreed with Nietzsche about the death of God. Hitler himself retained a belief in a supernatural power and at times he seemed to think that he himself had some supernaturally ordained destiny: 'If my presence on earth is providential, I owe it to a superior will.' And in a speech in Linz in 1938 he said, 'I believe that it was the will of God to send a boy from here into the Reich, to make him great, to raise him up to be the Führer of the nation.'

But Hitler was passionately hostile to Christianity. He accepted a broadly Nietzschean account of Christianity as a conspiracy of Jews. Although he was passionately hostile to Christianity, Hitler said that he did not 'want to educate anyone in atheism.' A Nazi was encouraged to be a *Gottgläubiger*, a believer in God. Adolf Eichmann, taking the view that

‘the G-d I believe in is greater than the Christian G-d, left the Protestant Church a registered as a *Gottgläubiger*. Eichmann also spoke of the ‘reevaluation of values prescribed by the government.’ And Joseph Goebbels used the same phrase: ‘Children of revolt, we confront ourselves with a poignant tremor. We have been through revolution, through revolt to the very end. We are out there for the radical reevaluation of all values.’ Hitler thought conscience was a Jewish invention. The effort to break free from the constraints of conscience was one of the central aspects of the Nazis’ own reevaluation of values. He believed in crossing the moral or emotional barriers against cruelty and atrocity. ...

Puritan:

Jonathan Glover, A Moral History of the Twentieth Century:

One of the Nazis’ most incongruous features is their capacity for moral disapproval, vehement even when disproportionate or inappropriate. When Eichmann was in Jerusalem a police officer lent him a copy of *Lolita*. After two days he returned it, indignantly describing it as ‘quite an unwholesome book’. Hitler, too, was strongly against prostitution and ‘filth’. No, anyone who wants to attack prostitution must first of all help to eliminate its spiritual basis. He must clear away the filth of the moral plague of big city ‘civilization’ and he must do this ruthlessly and without wavering in the face of all the shouting and screaming that will necessarily be let loose... Theatre, art, literature, cinema, press, posters and window displays must be cleansed of all manifestations of our rotting world and placed in the service of moral, political and cultural ideas.

Moral:

The Nazis drew from Nietzsche and they drew from Kant, although in a highly distorted way. Despite his interrogation Eichmann claimed to believe in ‘fulfilment of duty’, saying, ‘in fact it’s my norm. I have taken Kant’s categorical imperative as my norm, I did long ago. I have ordered my life by that imperative, and continued to do so in my sermons to my sons when I realized that they were letting themselves go. He made a similar remark at his trial, and when asked about this by Judge Raveh, he said that he had read the *Critique of Practical Reason*, and gave a decent account of the Categorical Imperative: ‘I meant by my remark about Kant that the principle of my will must always be such that it can become the principle of general laws’¹.

Sense of Duty

Jonathan Glover, A Moral History of the Twentieth Century:

The sense of duty was important. As Martin Bornmann put it, ‘But you know, do you, that in my dictionary DUTY is written in capitals. And Eduard Wirths, one of the leading Nazi doctors in Auschwitz, wrote to his wife in 1945, ‘I can say that I have always done my duty and have never done anything contrary to what was expected of me.’ ...

¹Glover continues: Kant, who believed that people are to be treated as ends in themselves and not merely as means, would have been appalled by this particular Kantian. But there is a side of Kant which the Nazis could claim a sort of adherence: the emphasis on obedience to rules for their own sake. Kantian rules are supposed to be generated purely rationally, in a way that is independent of their impact on people. And they should be obeyed out of pure duty, rather than out of any sympathy for people. For Kant, to act out of feelings of sympathy for others is to act on a mere inclination rather than out of duty, and so to do something without moral worth. The Nazis produced a grim variant of this austere, self-enclosed morality.

The view that duties are quite independent of any other concern for other people, a yet that they are binding, gave rise to a striking piece of moral indignation in Franz Stan, the Commandant of Treblinka. When Gitta Sereny interviewed him after his trial, she ask him about his reputation for being superb at his job: 'Would it not have been possible for yc in order to register *some* protest, if only to yourself, to do you work a little less 'superbly' She reports that this was one of the few questions that made him angry: 'Everything I did c of my own free will I had to do as well as I could. That is how I am.'

h. Did the excuse "I was just following orders" hold any water?

We have to understand the Nazi 'morality of duty' to understand the excuse, 'I w just following orders' in context. A TV series in the fifties on German TV about t Holocaust interviewed former SS officers. One woman, a guard at Bergen-Belsen, was ask is she had any regrets, if she had done anything wrong in her life.

" 'Me? Anything wrong in my life? I just did what I was told.'"

Nevertheless, it was clear that, in the main, Germans were free to refuse to particip in the atrocities.

By 1939 Hitler had authorized doctors to carry out "mercy killings" on "incurabl patients. Candidates for death were rounded up in postal vans or buses and shipped to killi centers. Once doctors rationalized killing the feeble for the community's "benefit" – it was small logical leap to use the gas chambers against prisoners. The Nazi doctors supervised t entire killing operations at Auschwitz, from the "selections" of new arrivals, to the inserti of the gas canisters into the chambers, to the removal of corpses for cremation.

But the doctors were not forced to do this. The following written and witness testimony was made by Dr. Hans Munch, SS Doctor at Auschwitz: "I was exempt frc performing selections because I had refused to do so." ... And what were the consequences a Nazi doctor was caught helping a Jew who worked for him? Munch doesn't know. "May nothing," he concedes. (Moment Magazine, Oct. '99, pg. 65, 75)

Perhaps we can understand this issue better by taking a closer look at the t countries who refused to cooperate with the Nazi Genocide, Denmark and Italy. Jonath Glover, in Humanity, A Moral History of the Twentieth Century, tells the story.

In 1943, at the Jewish New Year, the Gestapo planned to round up all the Jews Denmark. An official in the German embassy leaked the plan to Danish politicians, who tc the leading rabbi. He warned everyone to leave the synagogue and to tell all Jews to hi until transport to Sweden could be arranged. The Danish people gave massive support. Je were stopped on the streets and given keys to people's homes. One ambulance driver we through the Copenhagen phone book and drove to the houses of people with Jewish names take them into hiding. Doctors and nurses produced false medical records and hid Jews hospitals. Taxis, ambulances, fire engines and other vehicles were used to take them to t coast. Of the 7,800 Jews in Denmark, 7,200 were hidden and helped to escape. Sweden ma it clear that Jews would be welcomed and that boats in the rescue could fly the Swedish flag

The rescue of the Danish Jews was helped by the fact that their numbers we relatively small, by the closeness and cooperation of Sweden, and by the warning. There also reason to believe that that German authorities in occupied Denmark were not keen on t round-up and that a body of opinion in Berlin thought it would be unwise, partly because the likely Danish response. Immediately after the occupation, the German authorities sen report to Berlin that steps against Jews would paralyze or seriously disturb economic life.

Most countries are not monolithic and there were cases of betrayal of Jews by Dan There was also a Danish Nazi Party of about 22,000 people. Despite these qualifications, t

large number of Danes involved in the rescue suggests that much was owed to the climate of civil courage among the Danish people.

After the attempt to round up the Jews, the faculty and students at the University of Copenhagen agreed to suspend all classes 'in view of the disasters that have overtaken our fellow citizens.' The Danish Church was equally uncowed. The Bishop of Copenhagen issued a statement on behalf of all the bishops of Denmark, who had it read from the pulpit in their churches. Part of it read:

Wherever Jews are persecuted because of their religion or race it is the duty of the Christian church to protest against such persecution, because it is in conflict with the sense of justice inherent in the Danish people and inseparable from our Danish Christian culture through centuries.

The second case which Jonathan Glover brings is the Italians. The Nazis expected the Italians to cooperate in rounding up Jews for deportation. When the Nazis demanded this from the Italian forces in Croatia, Mussolini wrote 'nulla osta' (no objection) across the paper about it; but other Italians often had different ideas. The Italian forces in Croatia interned the Jews for their own protection. General Roatta told the people interned at Kraljevice that, if he had submarines at his command, he would take them to Italy, where they would be safe.

When the Croatian Ustase were carrying out massacres, the Italian army sometimes saved the victims. Against orders, Lieutenant Salvatore Loi, with a corporal and two soldiers saved 400 Serbs about to be killed, and protected a fleeing column of Serbs and Jews. Colonel Umberto Salvatore disobeyed orders by turning a blind eye. General Ambrosio invited refugees to return: 'The Italian armed forces are the guarantors of their safety, their liberty and their property.'

Baron Michele Scamacca, of the Italian Foreign Office, rejected a suggestion that Jewish refugees should be driven back to Croatia 'for obvious reasons of political prestige and humanity'. Jonathan Steinberg, who describes these events, comments on the way that the 'obvious' reaction goes all the way up from Lieutenant Loi and his soldiers to the high officials of the Foreign Office, and rightly says this chapter of glory in Italian history makes up for a good many defeats on the battlefield.

The Italians made masterly use of bureaucratic obstruction. The Office of Civil Affairs of the Second Army had a document about how to seem to comply without actually doing so. And large complications were created about judging the 'pertinence' of Jews in occupied territory. One document said that the region would 'respond (without too much haste) to the Supreme Command'. There were endless delays while local commanders told the Germans that they had not yet had orders. When the Germans went higher up, the senior officials expressed surprise that their instructions had somehow not got through.

Italians occupying part of France blocked French efforts to implement the Nazi Jewish policy. The Italian High Command, backed by the Foreign Office, forbade the French to intern Jews or to impose the yellow star. And so it went on. To the constant exasperation of the Nazis the Italians used every kind of obstruction and delay, combining deviousness with insistence on their rights as an occupying power.

The Jews in Italian-occupied Croatia had not been made to wear the yellow star. Mussolini was pressured to agree that they should be treated just as they would be in the German-occupied part of the country, but this was resisted right down the line. Count Luigi Pietromarchi, the senior diplomat responsible for occupied territories, wrote in his diary that he had agreed with the liaison officer with the Second Army 'ways to avoid surrendering to the Germans those Jews who have placed themselves under the protection of our flag'. A colonel argued that 'our entire activity has been designed to let the Jews live in a humane way', and that handing them over was impossible 'because we would not be true to our obligations we assumed'. The army's attitude was expressed in another document which said:

that 'the Italian army should not dirty its hands in this business'. The German authorities said they wanted the Jews in Mostar thrown out of their homes to provide houses for German mining engineers. The reply came that it was 'incompatible with the honor of the Italian army to take special measures against Jews'.

Jonathan Steinberg comments on how, in the Italian culture, "the primary virtue humanity so visible in these episodes is often surrounded by secondary vices found hardly all in Germany:" un-punctuality, bureaucratic inefficiency, evasiveness and corruption. He says that no sane person who has ridden a German bus or used a German post office would voluntarily use the Italian equivalents. But at that time in Germany the secondary virtues efficiency and incorruptibility were harnessed to inhuman ends. In Italy, the secondary vices were in service to the primary virtue of humanity.

i. Did the excuse "I didn't know" hold any water?

It has sometimes been thought that most Germans and Austrians did not know what happened to the Jews and others who were taken away. The truth is more terrible. Many were willing to take part and many others knew well what was being done. There were administrators, typists, drivers, workmen and others, who did not kill people but provided necessary back-up. They usually knew what was going on, but kept their consciences quiet with the thought that their own role was harmless.

Near the death camps, people could not escape knowing. At Mauthausen there were thick plumes of smoke in the sky, day and night, and an appalling smell. Sister Felicitas, who lived nearby, said, 'The people suffered dreadfully from the stench. My own father collapsed unconscious several times, since in the night he had forgotten to seal up the windows completely tight.' She described stores of bones, often dumped in the river, and how tufts of hair blew onto the street out of the chimney.

There was a degree of local revulsion, but people who expressed concern for the victims sometimes seemed more concerned for themselves. One woman near Mauthausen saw people who had been shot taking several hours to die. She wrote to protest: 'One is often an unwilling witness to such outrages. I am anyway sickly and such a thing makes such demand on my nerves that in the long run I cannot bear this. I request that it be arranged that such inhuman deeds be discontinued, or else be done where one does not see it.'

Others went beyond acquiescence. They were enthusiastic. In April 1945 Jews forced into labour were moved away from the advancing Soviet army and marched toward Mauthausen. At Eisenberg stones were thrown at some of them by townspeople coming out of the cinema. Others were ordered to run down a hill. A squad of local militia opened fire and killed 200 of them. An observer noted a festive mood among the militiamen before the massacre: 'it was for the men of the company seeming a special joy to be able to seize the weapons'. The squad leader said, 'Today we are going to have some fun.'

When prisoners in Mauthausen escaped, many local people enthusiastically joined the hunt. A priest in Allerheiligen described one man laughing as he shot a prisoner pleading for his life. The grocer in Schwertberg collected seven recaptured prisoners from the local church and shot them one at a time in the courtyard of the town hall. In Tragwein, the butcher's daughter said, 'Drive them right inside onto the meat bench, we'll catch right up like the calves.' Afterwards the local people used to talk of the escape as the 'rabbit hunt'.

j. Honesty

Jonathan Glover, *A Moral History of the Twentieth Century*:

The SS saw the very repulsiveness of what they did as evidence of a devotion to duty which made criticism particularly unfair....

Eichmann was committed to honesty and doing his duties without any personal gain. At the end of the war, he sent his men home and gave the remaining money to his legal adviser, 'because, I said to myself, he is a man from the higher civil services, he will be correct in the management of funds, he will put down his expenses...for I still believed that accounts would be demanded someday.' Sometimes at his trial he congratulated himself on his refusal to act for personal gain, as when he wanted to learn Hebrew: 'It would have been easy to say, let's grab a rabbi and lock him up and he'll have to teach me; but no, I paid thirty marks per hour, the usual price.'

Himmler too attached great importance to SS members not stealing anything from Jews for themselves, in contrast to the ease with which he felt he could justify their other actions: We had the moral right vis-a-vis *our* people to annihilate *this* people which wanted to annihilate us. But we have no right to take a single fur, a single watch, a single mark, a single cigarette or anything whatever. We don't want in the end, just because we have exterminated a germ, to be infected by that germ and die from it. I will not stand by idly while a slight infection forms. Whenever such an infected spot appears, we will burn it out. But on the whole we can say that we have fulfilled this heavy task with love for our people, and we have not been damaged in the innermost of our being, our soul, our character.

k. Morality of Toughness and Violence

Jonathan Glover, *A Moral History of the Twentieth Century*:

"I want the young to be violent, domineering, undismayed, cruel. The young must have all these things. They must be able to bear pain. There must be nothing weak or gentle about them. The free, splendid beast of prey must once again flash from their eyes."¹

The Nazis attacked the other restraining human reasons: sympathy. Their propaganda extolled the replacement of compassion by hardness. Compassion is misplaced sentimentality. The Nazis made hardness towards others the test of a strong will.

In those carrying out atrocities, hardness was a defense against the horror of what they were doing, like the hardness of soldiers in combat, but the Nazi hardness was also something aspired to and deliberately cultivated. Cultivation of the ability to overcome feelings of sympathy was central to SS training. A man was ordered, for example, to shoot the dog he loved, or better – to kill him with a knife. Rudolph Hoss described a time when two small children were so absorbed in a game that they refused to let their mother tear them away from it to enter the gas chamber. 'The imploring look in the eyes of the mother, who certainly knew what was happening, was something I shall never forget.' Hoss says, 'I might not show the slightest trace of emotion', and describes how he nodded to a junior non-commissioned officer, who carried the screaming, struggling children into the chamber, followed by the mother. This is the reality behind the vague Nietzschean rhetoric about the triumph of the will over the emotions.

After Himmler saw the shooting in Minsk, Obergruppenfuhrer von dem Bach-Zelewski said to him, 'Reichsfuhrer, those were only a hundred...Look at the eyes of the men in this Kommando, how deeply shaken they are! These men are finished for the rest of their lives. What kind of followers are we training here? Either neurotics or savages!' A former Wehrmacht neuropsychiatrist, who had treated many such soldiers, estimated that 20 percent of those doing the killings had psychological problems such as severe anxiety, nightmare tremors and numerous bodily complaints, he said these were like the combat reactions of ordinary troops, except that they were more severe and last longer. Their greatest psychological problems were related to shooting women and children. But the fact that

¹ Adolf Hitler, quoted in Alice Miller, *For Your Own Good: the Roots of Violence in Child-Rearing*

percent did *not* report these problems is grim testimony to the power of psychological mechanisms of adjustment.

Because the motions held back by the barriers can be so powerful, it was easier to admit no exceptions at all. Primo Levi has pointed out that the Nazis included even women in their transports to the death camps. It was not necessary for the Nazi policy to remove people well past bearing children and with little time left to live, but to allow exceptions might have opened the emotional floodgates. Rigid exclusion of consideration of the individual case made things easier for those carrying out the policy.

Once the killing began, however, the men became increasingly brutalized. As combat, the horrors of the initial encounter eventually became routine, and the killing became progressively easier. In this sense, brutalization was not the cause but the effect of the men's behavior.¹

1. Sense of Meaning

Hitler addressed psychological needs going beyond materialism and economics. People need a system of beliefs to make sense of the world and sometimes the most helpful system is a simple one. Johannes Hassebroeck, Commandant of the camp at Gross Rose, valued this in what the SS taught him: I was full of gratitude to the SS for the intellectual guidance it gave me. We were all thankful. Many of us had been so bewildered before joining the organization. We did not understand what was happening around us, everything was mixed up. The SS offered us a series of simple ideas that we could understand, and we believed in them.

People wanted their lives to add up to something, to contribute to something larger than themselves. Many Germans found Nazism gave their lives a meaning and a purpose. Glory came from participating in the project of national renewal, in helping to build the Thousand-year Reich. The beliefs were held with great intensity and sustained some Nazis through running the death camps and the resulting trials. Before his execution, the Commandant of Auschwitz, Rudolf Hoss, wrote to his wife that he still believed everything he had done.

Part of the appeal of the SS to relatively unsuccessful people was that they were able to feel appreciated and important. Joseph Kramer, a camp Commandant, had been unemployed for nine years apart from brief periods as a door-to-door salesman. His wife said: The Party promised solutions to all his problems. From the day he understood this, he gave himself over to Nazism with all his heart. I think he remained ever grateful to the movement. Without the Party and the SS, he would have remained a failure for the rest of his life... The movement gave him great hope. He would say that, for him, Nazism was a deeply emotional experience. The movement caught him. It allowed him to believe in himself once again.

There is a need for transcendence: for something that reaches to the soul. Even the most cruel and brutal functionaries sometimes gave inarticulate expression to the side of the Nazism appeal. Interviewed many years after, Hans Huttig, a camp Commandant, said: 'Today it seems so cruel, inhuman and immoral. It did not seem immoral to me then: I knew

¹Christopher R. Browning, Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland

very well what I was going to do in the SS. We all knew. It was something in the soul, not the mind.'

xi - The Church

a. The Pope

Recent evidence has emerged to show that Pope Pius the 12th knew fairly early on the Final Solution plan. Clearly he did not act to prevent the holocaust, though recently he has even been accused of being a sworn anti-Semite¹ and of actively supporting the rise of t

¹ On October 5th, 1999, the Jerusalem Post reported:

In 1917, the future Pope Pius XII, the Pope during world war 2, was then Eugene Pacelli, papal nuncio in Germany. Weeks before Succot in 1917, the chief rabbi of Munich, Dr. Werner, approached Eugenio Pacelli in need of a favor. The Italian government was barring the export of the palm from that the Jewish community had bought from an Italian supplier. The rabbi thought the Church could help.

"The Israelite community [is] seeking the intervention of the pope in hope that he will plead on behalf of thousands of German Jews," Pacelli wrote to his superior in a letter sent by a slow, overland route to Rome. Pacelli said he had warned the rabbi of "wartime delays" in communications and added that he did not think it appropriate for the Vatican "to assist them in their exercise of their Jewish cult."

The community got no assistance.

A new book, *Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII*, argues that this small Succot incident "betrays subsequent claims that Pacelli had a great love of the Jewish religion and was always motivated by its best interests."

The following is based on an article by Emily Eakin in the NY Times, Sep. 1, 2001:

In the year 2000, the Vatican announced that it would beatify Pope Pius IX. However, to an audience of Catholic women in 1871, Pius IX referred to Jews as "dogs" who went around "barking in all the streets" and "molesting people everywhere."

The Catholic Church had for centuries sanctioned prejudice and oppression ranging from forced baptisms and conversions in the 19th century to expressions of virulent racial hatred in the 20th. Brown University historian, David I. Kertzer remarked: "If the Vatican never approved the extermination of the Jews — indeed, the Vatican opposed it (albeit quietly), the teachings and actions of the church, including those of the popes themselves, helped make it possible."

If a Jewish child was known to have been secretly baptized, Mr. Kertzer says, he or she would be taken into police custody, given a new name and raised a Catholic.

These practices, Mr. Kertzer argues, were the inspiration for the racial laws enacted by the Nazis and the Italian Fascists in the 1930's. After the fall of the Papal States in 1870, he writes, the church's hostility toward Jews began to take another, in some ways more disturbing form: no longer simply loathed as unbelievers, Jews, now freed from papal rule, became hated symbols of secular modernity. As proof, he cites Catholic publications with close ties to the Vatican, including "L'Osservatore Romano," the Vatican's daily newspaper, and "Civiltà Cattolica," the Jesuit biweekly considered to be the unofficial voice of the Pope. Among the charges leveled against them, Jews were accused of being world dominators, tyrants, thieves, liars, communist conspirators and money grubbers. They were also said to engage in ritual murder or blood libel, which involved draining the blood of Christians for use in Passover bread.

By the turn of the century, some Catholic reporters were using the term "anti-Semitism" with approbation. "In its original form, anti-Semitism is nothing but the absolutely necessary and natural reaction to the Jews' arrogance," the Vienna correspondent for "Civiltà Cattolica," wrote in 1900, adding, "Catholic anti-Semitism — while never going beyond the limits of moral law — adopts necessary means to emancipate the Christian people from the abuse they suffer from their sworn enemy."

Such tactics, Mr. Kertzer insists, were condoned by church officials at the highest level. Drawing on correspondence from the period in the Vatican archives, he describes how the Holy See gave behind-the-scenes support to the overtly anti-Semitic Austrian Christian Social party, bestowed a papal blessing on the author of an anti-Semitic book and, in 1900, turned down a request from the Archbishop of Westminster and several prominent English Catholics to issue a public refutation of the Jewish ritual-murder myth.

Nazis to power.¹ (The Pope was the church's emissary to Germany from 1929 until became the Pope.) The current Vatican has denied this¹ and has made efforts to distance its from any associations with the Nazis.

Indeed, where others have portrayed his predecessor, Pope Pius XI, as a courageous defender of Jews — one who tearfully told an audience of Belgian pilgrims in 1938: "Anti-Semitism inadmissible. We are all spiritually Semites" — Mr. Kertzer depicts him as a pontiff whose moral outrage was tempered by his allegiance to traditional church culture, where vilification of Jews was routine.

In Mr. Kertzer's view, the famous hidden encyclical against anti-Semitism commissioned by Pius shortly before his death in 1939 included anti-Jewish stereotypes and was "less than a ringing condemnation." (The encyclical was never published: Pius XI died without releasing it, and his successor, Pope Pius XII, who maintained diplomatic ties with Hitler, did not pursue it.)

¹The British Writer Jean Cornwell, *Hitler's Pope, The Secret Story of Pius the 12th*, 1999. Cornwell claimed that Pius XII not only failed to speak out against Nazi persecution when he was pope but, as papal nuncio in Berlin in the 1920s and secretary of state in the 1930s, helped Hitler to power by suppressing German Catholic resistance to the Nazis. The Vatican denounced the book, describing it as "trash."

Cornwell actually began his research as an attempt to exonerate the Pope from any guilt. He did it with the blessing of the Vatican who opened its war-time archives to it. However, as a result of his research, he changed his mind. Cornwell's book, published by Viking Press in 1999, was excerpted in the American magazine *Vanity Fair*, giving it a wide and popular audience.

Cornwell had previously written a book, *Thief in the Night*, a best-seller about the death of Pope John Paul I that was sympathetic to the Vatican.

Cornwell, a Catholic, said in the *Vanity Fair* article that his original intent had been to prove that Pius XII was honorable. Instead, Cornwell wrote, he found that Pius XII, who was Pope from 1939 until 1958, associated Jews with Bolshevism. From the time that he was in his early 40s, Pius XII nourished a suspicion and contempt for the Jews for political reasons. This was, Cornwell said, "a scorn and revulsion consistent with anti-Semitism."

Eugene Fisher, director of ecumenical and interreligious affairs of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops is intent on proving that Pius XII was not an anti-Semite.

The word "cult," he said, referring to the 1917 letter about Werner's palm fronds, "was not a pejorative term." "This was a period when Catholics would not go into Protestant churches, or you would get excommunicated for standing up at a Protestant wedding," Fisher said in Washington. "It has to do with the theological closedness of the Catholic Church of the period. It has nothing to do with personal animosity toward Jews."

Cornwell's thesis has also been attacked by Pierre Blet, a Jesuit historian. Blet's book, *Pius XII and the Second World War: According to the Archives of the Vatican*, which was published just a few months later, in October 1999. Blet is the only surviving member of a team of Church historians that was commissioned to look into the Vatican's World War II archives to produce an 11-volume study. Blet has argued that Pius XII did not speak out more forcefully for fear of worsening the fate of Catholics and Jews in Germany and Nazi-occupied countries.

Blet also contends, in the Jesuit journal *Civiltà Cattolica*, that the "apparent silence hid a secret activity carried out [by Pius] through nunciatures [Vatican embassies] and episcopates to avoid, or at least limit, the deportations, the violence, the persecutions."

"Public declarations by Pius only would have aggravated the fate of the victims and multiplied the numbers," Blet wrote.

That was echoed by Reverend Vincent A. Lapomarda, the coordinator of the Holocaust collection at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts. In the summer issue of *Commenta* Lapomarda wrote: "It is not clear that Jewish leaders wanted words as much as actions from Pius XII." As Marcus Melchior, chief rabbi of Denmark, declared, "If the pope had spoken out, Hitler would have probably massacred more than six million Jews and perhaps 10 times 10 million Catholics." He was referring to the grandfather of then Israeli cabinet minister Michael Melchior, who is revered for helping save the Jews of Denmark.

Cornwell begs to differ: Pius XII, Cornwell wrote, is "not a saintly exemplar for future generations, but a deeply flawed human being from whom Catholics, in our relations with religions, can best profit by expressing our sincere regret."

Throughout the war, Pope Pius XII refused to unequivocally condemn the Nazi slaughter of the Jews; and after the war the Vatican was involved in the "rat-line" - the odious underground railroad that smuggled "anti-Communist" Nazi war criminals and sympathizers from Europe to Latin America together with loot plundered from Jews and other victims of Nazism. Many asylum requests were made directly to the Argentine ambassador by the Vatican's Secretariat of State and other senior Vatican officials. One explanation given for this behavior is that the Vatican believed that, during the most crucial parts of the war, the Nazis were actually going to win. But this cannot explain Vatican behavior later on.²

The Pope was in fact given daily written briefings of Nazi atrocities by the British envoy to the Holy See, Francis D'Arcy Osborne.³ The reports, which reflected the BBC broadcasts at the time, were intended to counter Italian and German propaganda. They provided the Pope with a detailed account of Jewish deportations, mass killings, and "inhuman experiments."⁴ The Pope's Christmas Eve homily in 1942 condemned extermination "by reason of nationality or race" but failed to mention the words Nazi or Jew.

Shmuley Boteach *Turning the Other Cheek*, Jerusalem Post April 2, 2004: Pius XII, failure, far from being merely a product of a personal prejudice against the Jews... was indicative... almost callous indifference to the value of human life in favor of papal authority and the preservation of Church property...

...Pius never once objected the presence of German military units in the city. Later when the Americans entered Rome and posted a single tank near the Bernini colonnade

¹ In a defense of the Pope, the N.Y. Times Book Review (Oct. 24, '99, pg. 4) printed the following 'letter to the editor' by George Sim Johnston: "...The Jewish scholar Pinchas Lapide estimates that the Vatican saved 400,000 Jewish lives, more than all other relief efforts put together. Pius ordered that all monasteries and convents be opened to hide Jewish refugees, and the Vatican coordinated a wide effort to obtain passports and other documents to help thousands of Jews to escape. At the end of the war, many prominent Jews, including the chief Rabbis of Rome and Jerusalem, publicly thanked the Pope for what he had done, and when Pius died in 1958 Golda Meir gave him a moving eulogy at the United Nations.

When attacking Pius's "silence" about the holocaust, critics never mention that in 1942 the Roman Catholic hierarchy of Amsterdam did exactly what Pius is faulted for not doing: it spoke out publicly against the Nazi treatment of the Jews. The Nazi response was a redoubling of roundups and deportations. The International Red Cross and Jewish relief agencies were in complete agreement that relief efforts on behalf of the Jews would be more effective if the parties involved remain relatively silent. ...

² (U.S. News & World Report, Nov. 15, 1999, pg. 44)

³ This was recently revealed by documents found in 2000 in a Rome flea market.

⁴ When Osborne took up his post as British envoy to the Vatican in 1936, he regarded Pius XII "saintly." The diplomat found refuge inside the Vatican walls when Mussolini entered the war in June 1940 and continued monitoring Allied broadcasts, compiling what he called "British wireless news" for the pope.

In October 1940, he warned the Pope that the Germans were "actively promoting antisemitism in Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria." By 1941 the tone became more dramatic, as the Nazis committed "atrocities in the name of the myth of the superior race... They are conducting experiments on sick and mentally deficient children in Germany."

Noting that Hitler had vowed to "liquidate the Jews for at least a thousand years," Osborne informed the pope that Jews in Poland were being murdered and deported in huge numbers, adding that some were being given "special permits" to travel by rail, "but only by slow trains."

This prompted Osborne to intensify his campaign, informing the pope unequivocally in 1942: "In Slovakia, 77 percent of the Jewish population has been deported to an unknown destination which probably signifies death." He added: "The number of Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto has been reduced by 400,000 since last July - there are barely 35,000 left."

Pius, according to Monsignor Giovannetti, telephoned the Vatican secretariat three times have the tank removed. Evidently, the site of hundreds of German tanks over the previous nine months never elicited a protest.

When the Nazis committed the heinous war crime of executing 335 Roman citizens many of them Jews but most of them Catholic,... then he said absolutely nothing...

He even granted a secret audience to Supreme SS Polizeiführer Wolff, who had served Himmler as chief of staff and was then serving as the chief of the entire persecutory apparatus in occupied Italy. That Pius realized he was doing something that others would regard as scandalous and immoral is attested to the fact that the meeting took place in great confidence, and Wolff came dressed in disguise. Years later, Wolff had this to say about the meeting: "From the Pope's own words I could sense the sincerity of his sympathy and how much he loved the German people."

...Pius XII... watched quite literally as the Germans, on October 16, 1943, rounded up more than 1,000 Jews of Rome, nearly all of whom would perish by gas a few days later at Auschwitz... many... trucks... parked, not more than 100 meters from Pius's window....

In April 2000, it was reported that Ministers acting for wartime leader Winston Churchill appealed to Britain's leading Roman Catholic family to persuade the Vatican to abandon its support for Hitler. The 1940 documents, which were found at the Public Record Office in the 1990s, show that ministers asked Lord Fitzalan, uncle of the then-duke of Norfolk, to urge the pope to denounce the Nazis and support the Allied cause.¹

In 1998, Pope John Paul II made an apology of sorts for the failure of Catholics to have done more during the Holocaust². "Anti-Semitism", he exhorted, "must never again

¹ One letter to Lord Fitzalan from Lord Halifax, then British foreign secretary, contrasts the valuable contribution made by British Catholics to the war effort with the pope's continued silence. Halifax warned Fitzalan that the pope's appeasement was leaving Catholics outside Britain with the impression that a Europe dominated by Hitler was the pope's preferred outcome to the war.

² Previously, the papal document, called *We remember: A Reflection of the Shoah* was assailed by many in the Jewish community for failing to address the Vatican's official silence during the Holocaust and was also criticized for its defense of Pius XII. *We Remember* is a 14-page statement that took years to produce, was called an act of repentance. It did not address the silence of the Vatican during the Holocaust, but referred to the rescuers and included Pius XII.

"Those who did help to save Jewish lives as much as was in their power, even to the point of placing their own lives in danger, must not be forgotten," it said.

"During and after the war, Jewish communities and Jewish leaders expressed their thanks for all that had been done for them, including what Pope Pius XII did personally or through his representatives to save hundreds of thousands of Jewish lives.

Many Catholic bishops, priests, religious and laity have been honored for this reason by the State of Israel."

Scholars such as Dina Porat of Tel Aviv University have challenged the Vatican's claim that "hundreds of thousands of Jews" were rescued.

But, even overlooking the troublesome number, inserting Pius XII in *We Remember* opened Pandora's box, said Rabbi A. James Rudin, interreligious affairs director for the American Jewish Committee.

"When you defend someone as controversial as the wartime pope using historical documents, you invite other historians to use historical documents to take a totally different position, which is exactly what these two books reveal."

The combustible imbroglio over Pius XII is expected to flare in a public debate over the two books, as the defenders and detractors within the Catholic world tussle over the beatification of Pius XII, with Jewish opinion hovering fitfully overhead.

"There's very little problem in critiquing a pope of 300, 400 years ago," said Dr. John T. Pawlikowski, professor of social ethics at the Catholic Theological Union at the University of Chicago.

allowed to take root in any human heart." The Pope vigorously defended the role of Pius XII during the Holocaust, crediting him with saving "hundreds of thousands of Jewish lives."¹ Along with this is an increasing openness in making its archives available for further research, although this is still tightly controlled.²

"But the problem is, for many people, it is almost a shattering experience to have this pope challenge in this way because it challenges the very basic faith assumptions," including the doctrine of papal infallibility.

"Questions such as whether he should have been more public in criticizing the Nazis, whether he should have acted earlier, whether he should have spoken out simply to maintain the Church's moral integrity whatever the practical consequences - all these questions are valid and should be pursued in a non-polemical fashion," Pawlikowski wrote last year in the Catholic publication *Commonweal*.

However, Pawlikowski said in an interview that he feared that attacks on Pius XII "certainly have the potential of creating the most serious problem in the Catholic-Jewish dialogue since the Auschwitz convent conflict crisis."

"I think that people on the Catholic side, even those of us who certainly have defended the importance of doing an honest and thorough critique of Pius's papacy, feel that this is such an exaggerated attack, that these sorts of attacks are so exaggerated and don't have nuance and are fundamentally shallow from a scholarly point of view," said Pawlikowski, a member of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council since 1980.

It was not only Jews about whom Pius XII was silent. He did not speak out in defense of Polish Catholics or against euthanasia, historian Michael Marrus has noted. The Vatican, wrote Marrus in *The Holocaust in History*, professed neutrality and was intent on safeguarding its institutional interests and the Church's jurisdiction.

The most vocal critics of Pius XII during the actual period of the Third Reich were Poles, for the same reasons as the Jews - namely that he did not speak out publicly but only through diplomatic channels on behalf of the non-Jewish Polish victims who were overwhelmingly Catholic, said Pawlikowski, a priest of the Servite Order. The Polish criticism became so intense that the Vatican commissioned the Jesuits to prepare a defense of the pope.

¹Then in his Good Friday address of that same year, he made an unprecedented statement that to the Jewish people "has been crucified by us for too long. ... Not they, but we" are responsible for the death, "because we are all murderers of love." Another priest, Father Cantalamessa, addressing the same event stated that, "anti-Semitism is born not of fidelity to the Scriptures but of infidelity to them. The timing of the statement for Easter, a traditional time for anti-Semitic outbursts, added weight to the statement. Jewish bodies, although they welcome the statements against anti-Semitism have rejected the attempts to sanctify the Holocaust role of Pius the 12.

²In 1963 a play called *The Deputy*, by Rolf Hochhuth, a German Protestant writer changed thinking about the role of the Pope in the Holocaust. The play portrayed Pius XII as too fearful to publicly challenge the Nazis. Before the Hochhuth play, which was translated into more than a dozen languages, *The New York Times* had run editorials calling Pius XII heroic, and "all the things written about Pius by Jews were universally positive," Bemporad said.

That play not only jarred non-Catholic thinking, it also compelled Pope Paul VI to convene a commission to examine the Vatican archives. Blet was among the Catholic scholars who spent some 15 years, from 1965 to 1981, compiling the volumes.

"They released 5,100 pages in the 1960s and 1970s, in reaction to *The Deputy*, but then they stopped. That is not all there is," Rudin said. "This is the time to bring together competent Jewish and Catholic scholars to go over the appropriate documents. That's the only way we are going to get a kind of closure on this issue."

There have been numerous calls for the Vatican to open its archives. That is a ticklish subject, in part because it fails to take into account that 18 months ago the Church made a limited offer to which Jewish groups have yet to respond.

Cardinal Edward Cassidy, the head of the Vatican Commission on Religious Relations with the Jews met with a group of Jewish leaders right after the Church released its Shoah statement and proposed that a joint Catholic-Jewish team investigate the 11 volumes that had been compiled after *The Deputy*.

The situation has become significantly more complicated because the Vatican has sought the beatification of Pius XII, the first step towards making him a saint.

Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *If This Is a Saint...*: January 7, 2005: Imagine that a person at some risk to himself, saves an infant from a burning car in a rural area. The parents are dead. We would call him a hero.

But then he decides to keep the child and raise her in his god's way. The man does not inform the authorities. When the desperate child's relatives come looking for her, even knocking on his door, he denies any knowledge of the child's whereabouts. The man's initial good deed has become a crime. He is a kidnapper.

A document from the archives of the French Catholic Church has just been published that shows Pope Pius XII to have been like this man when Jewish relatives — and parents — came frantically knocking demanding their children. In October 1946, a letter containing papal instructions was sent to the papal nuncio in France, Cardinal Angelo Roncalli, the future Pope John XXIII, a man of known compassion for Jews, who was working to reunite Jewish children hidden in Catholic institutions during the Holocaust with their parents, relatives and Jewish institutions. The letter ordered Roncalli to desist and to hold on to the Jewish children: "Those children who have been baptized cannot be entrusted to institutions that are unable to ensure a Christian education."¹

Pius XII's intent to deprive Jewish parents of their children was made unequivocal: the children have been entrusted [to the church] by their parents, and if the parents now cla

According to Bemporad, Cassidy said that if there were aspects that the scholars thought the volume did not cover, they could look for them in the archives. There were no restrictions on which historians the Jewish community could ask to do this work.

So far, there haven't been any takers. That prompted Cassidy, last February in Baltimore, to report that "our suggestion last year that Jewish and Catholic scholars study together the material from the archives already made available to the public has been completely ignored."

"When Cardinal Cassidy hands you on a silver platter the opportunity to go into the archives in an organized systematic way, and we don't even respond to that, does that make any sense?" Bemporad asked.

Bemporad said that he had read sections of these 11 volumes and come to the conclusion that "this is not a whitewash; but there is enough material to raise significant questions."

However, he said, "It is my conviction that if this group gets together and investigates the material as it comes up that there are real questions about the conduct of Pius XII, I do not believe that the Catholic Church would ignore them and proceed with this beatification process."

"On the other hand, if it is loose, shooting from the hip, unthinking condemnation, all that it will do is speed the process of beatification because they are going to come to the defense of the pope, and those elements in the Catholic Church who are for some kind of objective rational way of dealing with it will be treated as if they are disloyal to the pope," said Bemporad, who has been engaged in activities with the Vatican and in interfaith work for more than two decades.

The Church's partner, the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations, has become moribund, acknowledged the new chairman Seymour Reich. However, he said, the committee is in the process of organizing a team of scholars to undertake the research with the Vatican.

"It's a first step," Reich said. "If indeed the scholars find the 11 volumes wanting, then I would think the Vatican would have to take it a step further."

¹In the most well-documented case in France, two Jewish boys, Robert and Gerald Finaly, were sent in 1944 by their parents to a Catholic nursery in Grenoble. The parents perished at Auschwitz. Family members tried to get the boys back in 1945, but in part because they had been baptized, it took an additional eight years and a long legal battle to prevail over the church. (*Saving Jewish Children, at What Cost?*, Elaine Sciolino and Jason Horowitz, January 9, 2005)

them back, they can be returned, provided the children themselves have not been baptized. should be noted that this decision of the Congregation of the Holy Office has been approved by the Holy Father."

Because not returning baptized Jewish children was presented as a general church principle and policy — decided upon by the church's authoritative Congregation of the Holy Office (to which popes had, in the words of the HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism, granted "unlimited competency in matters of faith and morals") and personally approved Pope Pius XII — it stands to reason that this kidnapping policy was transmitted and meant to be implemented across Europe. Still not known is the extent to which Roncalli or other church officials actually implemented the Vatican directive. The documents relevant to the church's policy (including those pertaining to this letter to Roncalli) remain sequestered in the archives of the Vatican and in the archives of the national churches.

During the Holocaust unknown thousands of Jewish children gained refuge in Catholic monasteries, convents and schools — though not at the behest of this antisemitic pope. They were saved by local heroes, priests and nuns (who have been justly celebrated in Yad Vashem and others), who also baptized an unknown number of the children under their care. It is well known that Jewish survivors or their relatives and heirs, in many though not all cases, had great difficulty retrieving their children. It was suspected that the church had a policy to steal these Jewish children for Jesus. A survivor of Auschwitz, persecuted because she was Jewish, was, according to Pius XII, not supposed to get her own child back because she was Jewish.

Now we have a smoking gun: this chilling document. It reveals that the pope's and the church's policy was, in effect, to kidnap Jewish children, perhaps by the thousands. It exhibits Pius XII's striking callousness towards Jews' suffering. Its plain purpose was to implement a plan that would cruelly victimize the Jews a second time by depriving these bodily and spiritually wounded survivors of the Nazi hell of their own children.

The document cannot surprise anyone familiar with the antisemitic Catholic Church during this period or with Pope Pius IX's infamous precursor kidnapping in 1858 of the year-old Jewish child Edgardo Mortara of Bologna, which led to a European-wide revulsion and protests against the church. But this recently published document does remove what Pius XII has, until now, enjoyed: plausible deniability. For 60 years, the church and its officials have worked hard to deny the many crimes and other outrages against Jews before, during and after the Holocaust committed by Pius XII, bishops and priests.

Pope Pius XII, by ordering a criminal deed — that children illegally and permanently be separated from parents, relatives or their legal or spiritual guardians — made himself a criminal. So did any bishops, priests and nuns who might have promoted or participated in the kidnapping of Jewish children. No person is above the law. A religious leader or head of government today who would engineer a criminal conspiracy of this kind would be put in jail.... Many crimes, today and in the past, have been committed in the name of religion. Pius XII and the church kept this religious policy of denying Jewish parents their children secret from the world, precisely because they knew that it would be seen as outrageous and criminal. Religious robes should not cloak a person and his deeds from being called plain what they are.... The Vatican should finally stop the decades-long stalling and obfuscation about fully opening its and its national churches' archives during the Holocaust to scholars and journalists. It should stop pretending that its sole transgression was not having done more to save Jews, and that its sole act of public penitence need be issuing wan apologies for acts of omission. Surely this papal letter to Roncalli, which dribbled out, is not the only or incriminating document in the church's vast secret archives. Moreover, isn't it not indisputably clear that the church should stop its henchmen from vilifying Jews and other

who have rightly called for the church to be open and truthful about its and its officials' past and recent crimes?

... And with this authoritative Catholic Church document from its own archives, we know that Pius XII, commanding his subordinates to steal Jewish children from their parents and relatives, made himself into at least one of the most rampant would-be-kidnappers in modern times — not to mention a person bereft of fundamental human empathy for broken Jewish parents in search, after years of suffering, for their children.

b. Catholic Clergy

The Case Against the Nazis, January 2002:

In the 1920's, as they battled for power, the Nazis realized that the churches overwhelmingly Christian Germany needed to be neutralized before they would go anywhere. Two-thirds of German Christians were Protestants, belonging to one of 28 regional factions of the German Evangelical Church. Most of the rest were Roman Catholics. On one level, the Nazis saw an advantage. In tumultuous post-World War I Germany, the Christian churches "had long been associated with conservative ways of thought, which meant that they tended to agree with the National Socialists in their authoritarianism, their attacks on Socialism and Communism, and in their campaign against the Versailles treaty" that had ended World War I with a bitterly resentful Germany.

But there was a dilemma for Hitler. While conservatives, the Christian church "could not be reconciled with the principle of racism, with a foreign policy of unlimited aggressive warfare, or with a domestic policy involving the complete subservience of Church to State." Given that these were the fundamental underpinnings of the Nazi regime, "conflict was inevitable," the summary states. It came, as Nazi power surged in the late 1920's toward national domination in the early 30's.

According to Baldur von Schirach, the Nazi leader of the German youth corps that would later be known as the Hitler Youth, "the destruction of Christianity was explicitly recognized as a purpose of the National Socialist movement" from the beginning, though "considerations of expedience made it impossible" for the movement to adopt this radical stance officially until it had consolidated power, the outline says.

Attracted by the strategic value inherent in the churches' "historic mission and conservative social discipline," the Nazis simply lied and made deals with the churches while planning a "slow and cautious policy of gradual encroachment" to eliminate Christianity. The Roman Catholic Church, centrally administered from Rome, posed a different problem for the Nazis, whose relationship with that church in the 1920's had been bitter. In 1929, when Germany was under Hitler's total control, the Nazis made "unmistakable overtures" to the Christian churches in general, and to Catholics in particular.

Having already witnessed fairly smooth relations after the 1929 Lateran treaty between Mussolini's fascist regime and the church in Italy, many German Catholics "accepted the Nazi proposition" of peaceful coexistence. In July 1933, a Concordat was signed between the Reich and the Holy See.

"For the first time since the Middle Ages, the Reich itself had entered into agreement with the Roman Catholic Church," the outline says. "Moreover, the new treaty was apparently entirely to the advantage of the church. In return for the retreat of German Catholicism from the political scene, the church was guaranteed, by international treaty, freedom for Catholic organizations [and] maintenance of denominational schools and youth education."

All Hitler seemed to demand in return was "a pledge of loyalty by the clergy to the Reich government and a promise that Catholic religious instruction would emphasize the patriotic duties of the Christian citizen." Of course, the churches stayed in Hitler's good graces for only as long as the Nazis considered their cooperation expedient. Soon after Hitler assumed dictatorial powers, "relations between the Nazi state and the church became progressively worse," the outline says. The Nazis "took advantage of their subsequent increasing strength to violate every one of the Concordat's provisions."

In 1937, Pope Pius XI denounced Nazi treachery in an encyclical that accused Hitler of "a war of extermination" against the church. The battle had been joined on some frosty Nazi street mobs, often in the company of the Gestapo, routinely stormed offices in Protestant and Catholic churches where clergymen were seen as lax in their support of the regime.

The dissident pastor Martin Niemöller spoke openly now against state control of the Protestant churches. He was arrested and imprisoned in 1937 for using his pulpit for "underhand attacks on state and party." When a judge acquitted him, "on leaving court he was arrested by the Gestapo and sent to a concentration camp where he remained until the end of the war," says the outline.

... once they had total power and set off to launch a world war, the Nazis made secret of what lay in store for Christian clergymen who expressed dissent.

In Munich, Nazi street gangs and a Gestapo squad attacked the residence of the Roman Catholic cardinal. "A hail of stones was directed against the windows, while the mob shouted, 'Take the rotten traitor to Dachau!'" the outline says, adding: "After 1937, German Catholic bishops gave up all attempts to print their pastoral letters publicly and instead had them merely read from the pulpits."

In 1994, the German and Polish bishops issued a statement saying that "the Church as a whole offered no effective resistance to Nazi persecution and extermination." Despite the secrecy, the truth, even if not the whole truth, about the physical destruction of millions of Jews, known to certain party and government officials quite early, gradually spread all over Germany, mainly through military men on leave. A pastoral letter of Catholic bishops, August 19, 1943, condemned "murder of innocent people" (although without direct mention of Jews), and the Confessing Church did the same two months later. This indicated that the second half of 1943 the knowledge of mass murder was widespread. Yet, the reaction of the churches can be characterized as mild, vague, and belated¹.

For more than four decades, the theologian and historian of religion Richard Rubenstein has been arguing that the Church, which sought a completely Christian Europe, might have disapproved of the Nazis' methods but was not unhappy with the results. Goldhagen also attacks what he calls the Church's "Bible Problem," the scriptural basis for the tradition of enmity, including an association of Jews with the devil and with all forms of evil — the most basic of all accusations — the charge that the blood of Jesus Christ was on the hands of the Jews.²

One person who stood up to the Nazi terror was the Rev. Josef Spieker of Cologne, the first Roman Catholic priest to be sent to a concentration camp. Spieker had been an early opponent of the Nazis, and after he delivered a sermon in October 1934 declaring, "Germany has only one Führer. That is Christ," the authorities decided they had had enough. Spieker was arrested and imprisoned several times which included a spell in solitary confinement at

¹ The deportation of the Jews from Germany which was going on for years never elicited any protection from the churches.

² Forward, January 2003: Daniel Jonah Copenhafer — The Holocaust and His Catholic Problem

in a concentration camp. Finally in 1937, he was forced to leave Germany, fleeing to Chi feeling all the while that he had been abandoned not just by his country but by his church well.

Archbishop Roncalli, who later became Pope John XXIII, built a legacy of friendship with the Jews not by rejecting his Catholicism, but by emphasizing others aspects of religious tradition — most specifically, the notion of Jews as God's creations, deserving love and dignity. Thus, as apostolic delegate in Istanbul throughout the war years, he worked with Yishuv emissaries in an attempt to save the Jews. He wrote documents arguing that Jews were co-religionists and fellow countrymen of Jesus — quasi-official papers that eventually helped save some Jewish lives.¹

As national president of the Women's Division of the German Student Christian Movement from 1933-35, Mother Basilea — one of the two founding members (then known as Klara Schlink)—refused to comply with Nazi edicts barring Jewish Christians from meetings.

Later, during the war, she put her own life at risk by speaking publicly about the "unique destiny" of the Jews, whom she continued to describe as "God's people." Twice she was summoned for questioning by the Gestapo, but managed to avoid arrest.

In 1947, Mother Basilea established the Sisters of Mary, to do penance for the role that the Church played in the Holocaust. Mother Basilea—who died in 2000—gathered documentation of the concentration camps and would read it aloud to the sisters along with passages from the scriptures.

Moreover, says Sister Pista, "Mother Basilea prayed with us over 40 years on the Israel prayer, which we pray as Christians when the Sabbath begins on Friday nights: 'We do not love your Chosen People; we have sinned previously; our hands are stained with blood.'

Thus inspired, the two sisters came to live in Jerusalem in 1957, serving voluntarily as nurses at Sheba Hospital in Tel Hashomer. "They felt the depth of the pain," says Sister Pista "because many of the women they served turned to the wall when they came to the room."

Then on April 18, 1961—three days after the start of the Eichmann trial—the sisterhood dedicated Beth Abraham, a small guest house on Rehov Ein Gedi in Jerusalem where Holocaust survivors can come for rest and relaxation. Today the sisterhood comprises 200 nuns, most of whom live at the order's headquarters at Kanaan, Germany.

In April 2001, hundreds of Christians, led by the Sister of Mary, came to Jerusalem to publicly confess the role that Christian antisemitism played in the Holocaust.

c. Italian Churches

We have already talked above if Italy is an example of what resistance against Nazi anti-Semitism could achieve. Both the Catholic Church and the local population have a good track record on this. In the strategically located city of Turin, Monsignor Vincenzo Barale conducted rescue activity for Jews streaming into Italy from France. The refugees received food and money and were assisted by priests from surrounding villages. However, one refugee who had received aid informed on him. Monsignor Barale was arrested and thrown into jail.

High level Catholic officials as well as ordinary clerics extended a helping hand. Monsignor Quadraroli, a secretary at the Vatican, issued countless false IDs to refugees and sent them to the convent on Via Cicerone to be fed and sheltered. And in northern Italy Abraham Cohen, on the run from the Nazis, recalled the assistance he received from unknown clerics: "The Catholic Church helped me a lot. They found a place for me to stay."

¹ ibid

and a priest went with me from Ivrea to Azeglio on a bicycle. . . There we found another priest who arranged a place for me to hide."

When the Nazis launched their roundup of refugees in Italy late in 1943, Nath Cassuto, the chief rabbi of Florence, urged Jews to leave town or go into hiding. Seven years later, while testifying at the Adolf Eichmann trial, the rabbi's sister recalled: "My brother went from house to house to warn them to hide themselves in convents¹ or in lit villages, under false names." Hundreds of Florentine Jews took his advice and survived.

These religious institutions also provided sanctuary for countless Jewish children whose parents were shipped to labor or death camps. However, many of these children were subject to vigorous missionizing and in some cases, after the war, refusal to return them to their parents or to Jewish representatives. Still, this was not always the case. There are certainly cases of genuine assistance, without ulterior motives.²

d. Protestant Churches

"Pray for the defeat of my country. Only in defeat can we atone for the terrible crime we have committed." These searing words were said by Bonhoeffer, a prominent Lutheran pastor, who was among the few clergymen in Nazi Germany who dared to raise his voice to oppose Adolf Hitler.

As early as 1933, Bonhoeffer exposed Hitler's political moves to undermine the constitutional rights of the German people, especially the Jews. He also believed that the church had a responsibility to offer unconditional aid to victims of state action, and took an active role in smuggling Jews into Switzerland. He later participated in a plot to kill Hitler. But Bonhoeffer's efforts and voice were stifled when he and his family were murdered by the Nazis in 1945.

Another courageous cleric was Martin Niemöller. Like most pastors, Niemöller openly welcomed Hitler during his first year in office, but severed his support when Hitler issued his racial decrees. Joining other disaffected ministers of various Protestant denominations, Niemöller helped found the Confessing Church in 1934.

The new Confessing Church took an outspoken stand against the Nazi's assault on human rights and was instrumental in helping Jews find safe havens.³ In 1936, the leaders of

¹ Convents, monasteries, orphanages and other church institutions throughout occupied Europe were some of the very few "ready-made" safe harbors that Jews could turn to when escaping Nazi raids, arrests or terror. There are also isolated examples of refugees who found shelter and protection in these church havens in Poland to Belgium and France and the Balkans.

² Susan Zuccotti, Holocaust historian, gives a very balanced view in assessing the overall picture: "When the Germans finally retreated from Rome after nine months of occupation, at least 1,700 Jews arrested in Rome had been deported. Over 10,000 had survived. Every survivor owed his life to one or usually to several, heroic non-Jewish supporters. But except for those caught in that first unexpected roundup in October, most deportees could also trace their tragedy to non-Jews who had, in the last analysis, failed to provide support."

However, there's no denying that the network of Catholic institutions played a significant role in providing asylum for Jewish refugees. "In no other occupied Catholic country," says Paldiel of Yad Vashem, "were monasteries, convents, shrines, and religious houses opened to the fleeing Jews, with their needs attended to, without any overt intention to steer them away from their ancient faith, solely to abide by the preeminent religious command of the sanctity of life. Through this, they epitomized the best and most elevated form of religious faith and human fidelity."

³ Amongst the refugees they aided were film producer Max Krakauer and his wife, who were sheltered and moved from one place to another with the help of over 40 persons, most of whom were pastors of the Confessing Church. According to Mordecai Paldiel of Israel's Yad Vashem, "There is no other

of the Confessional Church sent a memorandum to Hitler, saying: "When blood, race, nationality and honor are regarded as eternal values, the First Commandment obliges the Christian to reject this evaluation." Not too many days later, the leaders of the church were arrested, including Pastor Niemoeller, who was sent to Sachsenhausen and later to Dachau.

More than 800 other pastors and prominent laymen of the Confessional Church were arrested in 1937, and hundreds more were thrown into jail over the next several years.¹

In the weeks and months following Kristallnacht, Prelate Dr. Hermann Maas of Heidelberg and Pastor Heinrich Gruber of Berlin helped hundreds of terrified Jews emigrate to England via Switzerland. To let the Jews know they were welcome, Dr. Maas had a mezuzah affixed to the doorpost of his house. He was also busy at the pulpit, speaking out against Nazi anti-semitism. His underground activity and outspoken stance led to his arrest in 1944 at the age of 67. He survived a stay at a labor camp and returned home after the liberation. Dr. Maas was among the first Protestant clerics in the post-war years to state that Christianity's centuries-long tradition of theological Jew-baiting laid the ground work for Hitler's campaign of hate and terror.

Among the Catholic clergy, Clemens August von Galen, the bishop of Munster, criticized the Nazi euthanasia program, forcing Hitler to cancel it. However, he remained silent on the deportation of Jews. Other Catholic clergymen who took a strong stand against the Nazi's racial decrees were Bernhard Lichtenberg, a priest at the St. Hedwig Cathedral in Berlin, who was arrested for praying for the "poor persecuted Jews." He was shipped to Dachau where he died. Conrad Cardinal Count von Preysing of Berlin, in a pastoral letter, denounced Nazi persecutions in the following words: "Every human has rights that cannot be taken from him by an earthly power."

But these were lone voices in a land where silent and uncritical obedience to political leaders had become the accepted way of life as most of the churches were caught up in the zealous nationalism sweeping Germany. The Nazi-controlled German Christians Faith Movement dominated mainstream churches by mixing dogma with politics and proclaiming "In the person of the Fuhrer we behold the One sent from God who places Germany in the presence of the Lord of History."

Early in 1938, Bishop Marahrens of Hanover sent a letter to all pastors in his diocese ordering them to swear personal allegiance to the Fuhrer. In the months that followed, the vast majority of Protestant clergymen took the oath and bound themselves legally and morally to comply with the commands of Adolf Hitler.

William L. Shirer, in his monumental The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich, offers a penetrating analysis of the German psyche and character during those years:

"It would be misleading to give the impression that the persecution of Protestants and Catholics by the Nazi State tore the German people asunder or even greatly aroused the vast majority of them. It did not. A people who had so lightly given up their political and cultural and economic freedoms were not, except for a relatively few, going to die or even risk imprisonment to preserve freedom of worship."

recorded rescue story in which so many clergy participated in the rescue of two Jews, fugitives of Nazi terror."

¹Other clergy also criticized the Nazi regime from their pulpits and paid the price. In Wuertemberg, Landbischof Theophil Wurm, who raised his voice to protest the Nazi's attempts to create a "New hybrid religion," was promptly thrown into jail. In Oberleuninggen, following the destruction and riots of Kristallnacht in 1938, Pastor von Jan told his congregation: "Much evil has been done, openly and covertly. . . Property has been taken, honor of neighbors sullied, lives taken." Shortly after his sermon, his vicarage was broken into and the pastor arrested. And in Munich, Bishop Hans Meiser shared a similar fate for supporting an anti-Nazi manifesto.

He adds that the Germans in the Thirties were seduced by the glittering success Hitler in creating jobs, generating a vibrant economy and restoring Germany's military might.

Shirer, one of the very few perceptive journalists who were on the scene in Germany during these critical years, candidly sums up the mood of the country at this juncture: "Not many Germans lost sleep over the arrests of a few thousand pastors and priests or over the quarreling of the various Protestant sects."

It was this apathy and moral indifference in Germany that empowered Hitler and fueled his military juggernaut that was poised to roll inexorably over Europe.

e. Churches in Other Countries

France: When the Vichy regime took over France in June 1940, many Catholic prelates embraced the new administration because its Premier, Marshal Petain, spoke theological terms of repentance and expiation of sin. And they were quiet as a church mouse when Vichy issued its anti-Jewish decrees four months later.

But their indifference took a dramatic turn in the summer of 1942, when Jules-Gera Saliege, archbishop of Toulouse, lashed out at Vichy's anti-Jewish measures. In his not-so-famous pastoral letter, the archbishop said: "There is a Christian morality, there is a human morality that imposes duties and recognizes rights. . . Why does the right of sanctuary no longer exist in our churches? . . . The Jews are real men and women. They are our brothers like so many others."

The letter galvanized the faithful and helped to influence and shape public opinion and action. Sheltering refugees and children in monasteries and convents became a church industry. Besides feeding and clothing the Jews, the church institutions became clandestine factories turning out identification documents, certificates of birth, baptism and marriage showing "Aryan" lineage, ration books and even driver's licenses.¹

Greece: The Greek Orthodox Church of the Soviet Union made no attempt to rescue Jews², whereas the Bulgarian Greek Orthodox Church denied the government the right to persecute Jews on the grounds that "the fate of the latter is in the hands of God, not men."

¹ One of the highly-organized rescue networks was operated by Father Marie-Benoit, a Capuchin monk in Marseille, who coordinated the refugee activity with frontier smugglers, guides and rescue groups, and is credited with saving thousands of Jewish children.

In the mountain town of Ville-la-Grand near the Swiss border, the fathers of Ecole Francois, a Catholic seminary, sheltered hundreds of refugees safely around German guards and into Switzerland. One of the teachers, Father Louis Favre, would place the refugee children in the classroom and disguise them as pupils, with the adults posing as visiting parents. But Father Favre was arrested by the Gestapo, tortured and shot in July 1944.

The widespread rescue activity by Catholic institutions drew this strong accusation from Jacques Marcy, a pro-Nazi journalist: "Every Catholic family shelters a Jew. . . Priests help them across the Swiss frontier. . . Jewish children have been concealed in Catholic schools; the civil Catholic officials receive intelligence of a scheduled deportation of Jews, advise a great number of refugee Jews about, and the result is that about 50 percent of the undesirables escape."

² However, in Athens, Archbishop S.B. Damaskinos headed a group of 29 organizations that petitioned the prime minister to stop the deportation from Salonika.

³In Bulgaria, after a deluge of protests and appeals from parliamentarians, clergymen, intellectuals and ordinary Bulgarians, King Boris III rescinded the deportation order issued by the pro-fascist government. Thus the entire Jewish community survived the war. About 45,000 Bulgarian Jews emigrated to Israel after that country was established in 1948.

The same church in Rumania, although anti-Semitic, opposed the deportation and a slaughter of the Jews. The Metropolitan of the Idrainian Uniate Church in Lvov, Andreas Szeptyc in a pastoral letter of July 1, 1943, expressed the expectation that the newly established Ukrainian government would care for the needs of all citizens "without discrimination reasons of religion or nationality". In the following years he openly condemned mass murder of Jews and was active in rescuing operations. Protestant churches in Allied countries were outspoken in their protest. In the Roman Catholic Church, the local hierarchy and the Vatican nuncios in certain capitals displayed more actively in rescue efforts than did the Vatican.

England: In Great Britain Arthur Cardinal Hinsley, the seventy-six year old bishop of Westminster and Britain's leading Roman Catholic prelate, persisted in decrying the Western world's failure to respond to the slaughter of the Jews until death took him in March 1943.

USA: After the initial news of the Holocaust broke, the Protestant and Catholic churches in the USA remained nearly silent. The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, an organization through which twenty-five Protestant denominations cooperate in programs of common concern, began late in 1942 to consider practical aid to the Jews. This "Day of Compassion" did not take place, however, until May 1943.

Slovakia: Slovakia was the only European country from 1939-1945 ruled by a priest and Catholic nationalist group. This came with extremely anti-Semitic violence and discriminatory laws against the Jews. Slovakia paid Germany DM 500 per each deported Jew, "to cover transportation costs and vocational training." In fact, the Jews deported from Slovakia were handed over to the SS and sent straight to their deaths in Nazi camps. Jozef Tiso, the priest and politician who became the president of Slovakia, stated "What we did, we did in the spirit of Christianity".

xii - Responses of the Axis and Occupied Countries

The attitudes of local populations toward their Jewish neighbors ranged from active help through apathy, to direct hostility. There were many factors that went into this including the risks involved in sheltering Jews and the temptation to acquire Jewish property. The risks varied in particular areas from the threat of the death penalty to detention in a concentration camp. There were lower risk "Aryan-looking" Jews, or persons whose pronunciation did not betray their "race," or persons who had "Aryan friends."

In the late 1930's there was already a marked increase in anti-Semitism across central and eastern Europe¹. Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Poland, Lithuania,² and Latvia

¹ The establishment of the Nazi regime came at a time when the nations of East and Central Europe were involved in a crisis of democratic institutions, and the emergence of nationalist and authoritarian parties was aided by Nazi support. Failure by the world to react to the anti-Jewish policies of Germany served as a signal to other states which followed the German example.

² For its size - half that of Germany - and its population - barely 3 million - the Lithuanians slaughtered more Jews in a shorter time even than the Wehrmacht, their role models. This record is not in question, and at the time of its operation was probably a source of national pride. Of thousands of Vilnius' Jewish citizens in 1940, fewer than 20 survived. ...

The history of the time is not totally black... Chune Sugihara is one person who put humanity before orders. In 1940, as vice consul for the government of Japan, he learned that hundreds of Jews fleeing Poland and Germany for Kovno, where he was stationed, were in desperate danger as the Germans approached. He issued the few printed visas he had in his office, then, with the assistance of one clerk and his wife, and an old-fashioned Remington typewriter, he typed several thousand

increased anti-Jewish propaganda; and in Italy which relinquished its opposition to an Semitism in 1938, adopting Germany's racial principles.

However, when it came to the implementation of the Nazi genocide of the Jews, distinction must be made between German-created satellites (Slovakia and Croatia), a German allies like Italy and non-occupied France. While the former actively participated the destruction of their Jews on the spot or in their deportation to the death camps, the latter were more circumspect.

All the satellites did the "preparatory work" for the Final Solution on their own, with the German inspiration and guidance and some even had special commissioners for Jewish affairs. In France and Italy, though, the situation was a little more complex. In non-occupied France the government at first refused to deliver Jews of French citizenship for deportation although the overall war record of the French is quite disgraceful. The Italians did much better, and played a sterling role which the Germans played in preventing Nazi atrocities. Even the Fascist republican government had practically no part in the deportations to Auschwitz, which were solely a German project.

In other places, Jewish citizens were sometimes saved, while non-citizens were deported². Hungary, notorious for its Jewish labor battalions, deported some 12,000 alleged non-Hungarian Jews to the German-administered Ukraine as early as August 1941 in full knowledge of the fate awaiting them, and Hungarian local occupation authorities shot some 4,000 Serbian Jews in Novi Sad, without authorization from Budapest. However, Hungary did not give in to German demands for total deportation of Hungarian Jewish citizens prior to the entry of the German army on March 19, 1944, and the Jews in Budapest remained mainly unharmed. (See below, Hungary.)

a. Poland

In July, 2001, sixty years after as many as 1,600 Jews were killed in eight hours in Jedwabne, a village in northeast Poland, the nation's president offered a strong apology: "It was not Nazi soldiers, he affirmed, but ordinary Poles who beat, stabbed and, finally, burned their fellow villagers alive in a barn. A recent book by a Polish-American scholar, Jan Gross (called Neighbors), and a documentary on the killings, assert that while Nazi soldiers were in Jedwabne and encouraged the massacre, it was the townspeople who on July 10, 1941, planned it and carried it out³. After a Polish outcry against the book, an official

more. Dismissed from his post, he was seen as his train moved out still issuing the precious paper through his carriage window. In all, 6,000 refugees reached Shanghai. ...

¹ See above, in the section, I was just following orders, where we detailed this point.

² In Bulgaria, the Jews of Bulgaria proper remained practically untouched, although Sofia Jews and Jews from three other towns were displaced and removed to the provinces, and Jewish property was confiscated. However, in the Bulgarian-occupied Greek and Yugoslav territories, the Jews were shipped to the East, mostly to Treblinka. In Rumania, a country where the most cruel pogroms took place in Dorohoi, Jassy, Bucharest, and Odessa following occupation by Rumanian-German troops, the Jews of the Regat and southern Transylvania remained substantially unharmed, these areas being far from the war front and consequently from German influence. As for the Jews from the other provinces with German military presence, they were shipped not to the Polish extermination camps but to Transnistria, ostensibly for forced labor, and 40 percent of them survived.

³ 100 surviving witnesses to the massacre confirmed that a village mob of at least 40 gathered in Jedwabne to take part in a planned crime of murdering up to 1400 Jewish residents. "Germans helped herd Jews to the village marketplace, he said, "but that was the extent of their active role."

government requiry in 2002 confirmed Gross's claims. (12 people were tried and convict by a Polish Communist court in 1949 for aiding the Germans.) The new evidence has cor as a blow to Poles' sense of themselves during the war and now as one of the Easte European nations that has made the most progress since the fall of Communism. Before t war, Poland was the home to some three and a half million Jews, the largest populati outside the United States. Three million of these were murdered during the holocaust¹. The are only 20,000 Jews left in Poland today. A fifth of Poland's population died during the si year war.

"This was a particularly cruel crime," the president, Aleksander Kwasniewski, said a rainy ceremony in the village of Jedwabne, broadcast live on Polish television. "It w justified by nothing. The victims were helpless and defenseless." "For this crime, we shou beg the souls of the dead and their families for forgiveness," he said. "Today, as a m citizen and president of the Polish republic, I ask pardon in my own name and in the name those Polish people whose consciences are shocked by this crime."

His apology angered many Poles, who saw themselves primarily as victims and bra resisters caught between the Nazis and the Soviets during the war.

In Jedwabne, many villagers, including the parish priest, boycotted the ceremor And the nation's Roman Catholic Church was not officially represented, amid reports that t nation's highest prelate, Cardinal Jozef Glemp, has said that Jews should apologize f collaborating with Soviets in Poland from 1939 to 1941. In May, leaders of the Polish Rom Catholic Church expressed sorrow at the killings in Jedwabne, though it was not an offic apology.

"We do not apologize," read a sign on several doors in town. The priest, Edwa Orlowski, said: "These are all lies. I am spending the day quietly at home. It is Holocat business. It is not my business".

At the site of the barn where most of the victims died, burned alive, a new six-fo high monument made of stone was officially unveiled. In Polish, Hebrew and Yiddish, t new inscription reads: "To the memory of Jews from Jedwabne and the surrounding ar men, women and children, inhabitants of this land, who were murdered and burned alive this spot on July 10, 1941." The inscription does not explicitly blame the Polish townspeopl

b. Italy

We have already discussed the generally positive role of the Italian Church towar saving Jews. The broader Italian population also has a good track record of acting w humanity in the areas they controlled². Under constant German pressure, the Italians, in t wake of Ribbentrop's personal intervention with Mussolini, agreed to establi concentrations camps for Jews in their military zone of Croatia and on the Dalmation Islar but the treatment of the inmates was humane. Jewish refugees fleeing France and Yugoslav found friendly reception among the Italian people.

¹ Numerous Jews in this region, around Bialystok, sided with the Soviets, and when the Red Army le local Poles, encouraged by the Germans, took their revenge.

² i.e. in Italian- and Albanian-controlled areas of Yugoslavia and the Italian-occupied French bor zone.

This is all the more remarkable given that the Fascist government was becoming more militant anti-Semitic¹, seeking to identify itself increasingly with its German ally in respect of German racist policy. However, the lack of public and church support meant that in practice the policy was never fully implemented.

(Southern Italy was under Allied control for most of the war².)

c. Hungary

Until 1944, despite severe anti-Semitic restrictions, Hungary had permitted its large Jewish population to live in a semblance of peace. It had even served as a refuge for several thousand Jews from Poland and Slovakia. But on March 19, 1944, fearing that Hungary would defect to the Allies and angry at its failure to deport the Jews into Nazi hands, Hitler sent occupying forces into that nation. Adolf Eichmann arrived in Budapest soon afterwards and drawing on extensive Hungarian collaboration, set his operation in motion. On May 19 mass deportations to Auschwitz commenced³.

Directly after the deportations started, the WRB urged the five neutrals, the Vatican and the International Red Cross to assign additional diplomatic personnel to Hungary. T

¹ The Ethiopian war and the proclamation of the Empire, the pro-Arab inclination of Italian foreign policy, and above all the progressive tightening of the Italian-German alliance led to a reversal of position, invalidated previous considerations, and dealt a decisive blow to the precarious equilibrium upon which the relations between the Fascist regime and Italian Jewry had resisted for almost fifty years.

² Where the Allies gained a foothold in Italy, the situation was different. By November, refugees were streaming across the Adriatic Sea from Yugoslavia to southern Italy. Few were Jewish (the Nazis had exterminated most Yugoslav Jews.) (Ackerman learned of the military's order to slow the refugee flow into Italy. If it closed, the chance for an outlet from Hungary would also disappear. In Washington Morgenthau called the situation to Roosevelt's attention at a Cabinet meeting. The President responded instantaneously that under no circumstances should the refugee flow across the Adriatic be hindered. Directly afterward, instructions went to the military in Italy to lift the restrictions discouraging the influx.) To help relieve the pressure, the President agreed to a WRB proposal to move a thousand refugees from Italy to an emergency internment camp in the United States. He also ordered an intensive search for havens in the Mediterranean area, including in Italy itself. Allied military authorities quickly found that they could accommodate many more refugees in Italy than previously estimated. They also initiated steps to open a camp at Philippeville, in French North Africa to harbor up to 7,000 people. And UNRRA, which had recently taken over the Egyptian camp, increased their capacity from 30,000 to 40,000.

³ Peter Adler, *A conspiracy of silence*: The Jerusalem Post, Literary quarterly, Winter: ...Vrba and Wetzler... compiled a detailed report.... About Auschwitz... what awaited Hungarian Jews once they arrived: immediate death by gassing. This was the first reliable eye-witness account, and it was delivered with haste to the Vatican, as well as to the US and British authorities and the International Red Cross. On Vrba and Wetzler's insistence, it was also delivered to the Hungarian Jewish leadership. The idea, as Vrba would later explain, was that once informed about the Nazis' plans, Hungarian Jews would resist. If each and every one of them cast a stone, there would be a hail of stones, Vrba said. Unfortunately, this never happened. Just as they were reading the Auschwitz Protocol – as the Vrba – Wetzler report would become known – the Hungarian Jewish leaders were involved in delicate negotiations with Mr. Final Solution himself – Adolf Eichmann. ...they were trying to get a deal that would allow them, their families and their friends to leave Hungary unscathed, with most of their worldly possessions, and in exchange the Nazis would get trucks and other such non-lethal material from the Allies. ..."blood for trucks." ...the result was that about 1,700 Hungarian Jewish leaders, with their families and friends, ended up in Switzerland, while almost half a million unsuspecting Hungarian Jews ended up dead in Auschwitz....

presence of a larger number of foreign observers might act as a restraining influence. Sweden and the Vatican soon complied; the IRC did eventually. Spain, Portugal, Switzerland, and Turkey did not. The WRB also appealed to the neutrals to grant protective citizenship documents to Hungarian Jews who had family or business ties to their countries. Turkey did not participate, but the cooperation of the other four ultimately contributed to the safekeeping of thousands of Jews.

From Washington, a barrage of threats and warning buffeted the country. By July, along with Germany's declining military situation, Horthy finally decided to stand up to the Nazis and insist that the deportations halt. By then, the Hungarian provinces had been cleared. Almost 440,000 Jews were gone. But most of Budapest's 230,000 Jews were still in the capital. The appeals from the Pope and the king of Sweden, stimulated in part by the WRB, had been especially important in stopping the deportations.

Palestine visas offered some protection. The Swedish, Swiss, Spanish, and Portuguese legations provided thousands of protective documents and visas. (Zionist youth groups forged thousands of additional papers.) The neutral legations, the church, and the Red Cross all protected thousands of Jews by keeping them in buildings that they placed under the extraterritorial jurisdiction.

xiii -Righteous Gentiles

There were many instances of individuals or whole towns of people who risked their lives to save Jews. More than 80 "righteous diplomats" from 24 countries were responsible for rescuing over 150,000 people during the Nazi era. These diplomats mostly defied the orders of their governments to issue visas to every country in the free world. They included Raoul Wallenberg of Sweden, Sugihara of Japan, Hiram Bingham of the US, and Aristides Sousa Mendes of Portugal, who worked in Bordeaux and lost his job and property after issuing 30,000 visas in June 1940, including 10,000 to Jews.

Mendes' son said: "My father did what he did because, as he said, 'I'd rather be with God against man than with man against God.'" The former diplomat died in poverty in Lisbon in 1954.

More than half the 84 diplomats were fired by their governments for their actions.

One of the most notable righteous Gentiles was Raoul Wallenberg, the Swedish humanitarian who helped protect thousands of Hungarian Jews. Wallenberg established safe houses and issued Swedish diplomatic papers to more than 30,000 Hungarian Jews before he was arrested by the Russians in January 1945¹. After the war he subsequently disappeared.

¹Working with a staff of over 300 people, largely volunteers, Wallenberg developed relief projects, but threw most of his efforts into plans to bring Jews under Swedish protection. Soon after arriving in Budapest, he rented a building, applied Swedish extraterritorial status to it, and used it as a safe haven for several hundred Jewish religious leaders. He also persuaded the Swedish government to allow the legation to issue special protective passports to Hungarian Jews. With time, he brought several additional buildings under Swedish extraterritoriality and expanded the passport scheme. In these means, Wallenberg ultimately saved at least 20,000 Jews.

For three precarious months after Horthy terminated the deportations, conditions for the Budapest Jews, though bad, remained survivable. Then, in mid-October, with the Russians only one hundred miles east of the capital, Horthy moved for an armistice with the Allies. Reacting swiftly, the Nazis forced him to resign as head of state by threatening to kill his son. They then installed a puppet regime under Ferenc Szalasi and the fascist Arrow Cross party. Almost immediately, the fervidly anti-Semitic Arrow Cross unleashed a reign of terror against the Budapest Jews. Two months before the Red Army conquered the city, the Arrow Cross killed more than 10,000 Jews, and left them in the streets or in the Danube's freezing waters. The Nazis needed labor 120 miles to the west. So they drove approximately 40,000 Jews on foot, through bone-chilling rains, toward Austria. On the march, 15 to 20 percent either died or fell out from exhaustion and exposure and were shot. Those who reach

presumed killed by his captors.¹ Another righteous Gentile was Oskar Schindler, made famous by the book Schindler's List and the subsequent movie.

Working together with Raoul Wallenberg in Hungary was Swiss vice consul Carl Lutz, who helped 62,000 Jews survive. The nuns of the Sacred Heart Convent in Budapest also saved Jews².

One of the most remarkable cases of Gentile resistance to the Holocaust was the King of Denmark. When the Germans went into Denmark, the first thing they did was require the Jews to wear a yellow badge. In protest, the Danish king put on a yellow badge. All the Danes followed suit and put on yellow badges. When it became known that the Germans were going to send the Jews to the camps, the Danish underground, at great risk to themselves, mobilized anything that could float. In sailboats, fishing boats, whatever they could find, they evacuated almost all of their Jews into Sweden. Of the approximately 7,400 Jews in Denmark, only 180 - who were primarily older people - were caught by the Nazis. They were put into one of the "best" concentration camps, Theresienstadt. For the rest of the war, the Danish king wrote to the Germans every single week, asking how each and every one of his Jews were, and what their condition was. At the end of the war, 100 of them had made it through.

Bingham, working in France, helped save more than 2,000 Jews, including artists Marc Chagall and Max Ernst. He was transferred to Argentina and resigned in 1946 to protest the State Department's refusal to address the issues of Nazi gold and war criminals being transported to Latin America.

Selahattin Ulkumen, the Turkish consul general in Rhodes, interceded when the Nazis rounded up the Greek island's Jewish inhabitants. His wife died from injuries she suffered in a Nazi bombing that was in retaliation for his rescue of 42 Jewish families in July 1944.

Pastor Pierre Charles Toureille headed one of the major French refugee relief agencies during the Nazi occupation of France in World War II, while clandestinely rescuing hundreds

Austria but were judged unfit for hard labor were pushed back across the border into Hungary and driven into the woods to die of starvation, exposure, and disease. The horrible consequences of the marches, especially the high death rate among the women, finally became too much even for Szalasi. On November 21, he stopped the deportations.

The Szalasi period put Raoul Wallenberg to his severest tests. The day after the Arrow Cross came to power, his mostly Jewish relief staff completely disappeared. The next day, he located them, one by one, and moved them to safer locations. At about the same time, the Szalasi regime declared all the protective passports void. Wallenberg managed to get that ruling retracted. Once an armed patrol entered an area of Swedish-protected houses and began to seize Jews, Wallenberg appeared and shouted, "This is Swedish territory...if you want to take them, you will have to shoot me first." The Jews were released. Again, when he learned that eleven people with Swedish passports had been put on a train for Austria, Wallenberg pursued it by automobile, caught it at the last stop before the border, and took the eleven off. At the time of the ghastly marches to Austria, he carried food and other supplies to the victims. And he succeeded, by various pretexts, in removing hundreds of Jews from the columns and returning them to protected houses in Budapest.

Mid-February 1945, about 120,000 Jews remained alive, a significant accomplishment. Raoul Wallenberg was directly responsible for rescuing the 20,000 Jews. His example influenced others to expand their operations. Another 70,000 Jews survived in the Budapest ghetto. Plans were underway for the last-minute destruction of the ghetto and its inhabitants. Wallenberg's threat of postwar punishment in a confrontation with the SS commander of Budapest may have been the decisive factor in stopping that scheme.

¹For more information see <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Academy/2393/> Note: Use of the intermarriage is by Rabbinic sanction only.

²Based on an article by Alexander Zvielli in the Jerusalem Post, April 3, 2001, The Swiss gentile who refused to remain 'neutral':

of refugees, most of them Jewish. He was in constant danger and was interrogated persistently by Vichy and Gestapo authorities.¹

Tourelle used the network of local Protestant pastors to hide families until they could be passed over the border to Switzerland and to Spain.²

Le Chambon-sur-Lignon was a remote village in south central France of about 2,000. Andre Trocme was the Protestant pastor of Le Chambon, who, with his wife Magda, was instrumental in building a rescue network in Le Chambon and neighboring villages that ultimately provided safe havens for 5,000 Jews, many of them children, fleeing Nazi terror.³

¹French, Czech and German governments later awarded him honors, and he was given an award from Yad Vashem as one of the Righteous Among the Nations.

Pastor Tourelle came from a family of Huguenots who themselves have a history of persecution a martyrdom under centuries of rule by reactionary Catholic monarchies, and a tradition of providing refuge for hounded peoples.

Their Protestantism was Calvinist, with its severe sense of duty to God's law, not man's, and to the belief that they have a special role in doing God's work-which always placed them under suspicion during times of national instability and testing of political loyalties.

² From his home and office in Lunel, near Nimes, he traveled constantly across southern France and into Switzerland, where he coordinated aid from Swiss relief organizations. Bending over a typewriter on his lap, he sent out voluminous correspondence necessary for maintaining the network. He had to calculate constantly the next moves of the Vichy and Nazi authorities, while maintaining a law-abiding appearance. Knowing that all mail was inspected by the government, he kept most names as information in his head, frequently destroying records when a new interrogation threatened him and his family.

He had periods of despair-helping so few when tens of thousands were being destroyed in France. He wrote to a friend that his activities had cut him off from his wife and children. At the end of the war, he broke from the French Protestant church and emigrated with his family to the US. He took several pastoral positions, then served as a missionary in Africa and Europe for 20 years. He died in 1976, at age 76.

³ In some hamlets, there was not a single farm which did not shelter a Jewish family. Cimade, a Protestant relief agency, headed by Madeleine Barot, set up a family residence at the Hotel Cote Fleuri, on the outskirts of the village. The Quakers, in cooperation with Pastor Trocme, established a boardinghouse for young children. And Secours Suisse launched two farm-schools for older children of the refugees. In addition, nearby Catholic convents and monasteries also participated in the rescue effort.

But this clandestine activity didn't escape the attention of the French police. Early one morning in August, 1942, the police arrived in the village with three empty buses, and demanded that Pastor Trocme provide them with the names of the hidden Jews.

Trocme replied, "No, I cannot. First, I do not know their names - they often changed their names - and I don't know who they are. And second, these Jews, they are my brothers." The police searched the village for three days, but arrested only one refugee, an Austrian who subsequently was released because he was only half Jewish.

It was months later that Trocme was arrested and spent several weeks in a Vichy detention camp. In some hamlets, there was not a single farm which did not shelter a Jewish family. Cimade, a Protestant relief agency, headed by Madeleine Barot, set up a family residence at the Hotel Cote Fleuri, on the outskirts of the village. The Quakers, in cooperation with Pastor Trocme, established a boardinghouse for young children. And Secours Suisse launched two farm-schools for older children of the refugees. In addition, nearby Catholic convents and monasteries also participated in the rescue effort.

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There were several other instances of whole villages in France, Belgium, Italy and even Germany helping to save Jews.¹

Lucien Steinberg, French historian and researcher, observed: "I would like emphasize that the majority of the Jews saved in France do not owe their rescue to Jewish organizations. The various Jewish bodies which worked with such great dedication managed to save only a few tens of thousands, while the others were saved mostly thanks to the assistance of the French population."

On December 18, 1938, the Swiss Association of Jewish Refugees declared that the problem of looking after the refugees had become almost unmanageable. The Swiss decided to tighten the border control in order to stem the flow. Jewish refugees without a visa were to be returned to Germany.

It was at this point that Captain Paul Gruninger, President of the Swiss Polish Association—a veteran of 25 years of distinguished police service—refused to compromise his conscience. He instructed border guards to allow Jews to enter, and he authorized their stay. Frequently Gruninger reached into his own pocket to help them financially. He bought a pair of shoes for a little Jewish boy; he took another girl to a dentist and paid the bill. On his activities became known, Gruninger was brought to court and fined. He lost his pension and was sentenced to a heavy fine.

The struggle for his rehabilitation lasted for over 50 years. Although he died in 1975, he was only rehabilitated by the Swiss in 1995².

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¹ Thimory, a French village of 350 inhabitants near Orleans, offered a shield of protection for a 2 year-old Auschwitz survivor identified only as Moschkovitch, and his family. They lived openly in the village, using their own name. He recalled: "All the people of Thimory knew that we were Jews, from the mayor and the school teacher to the last farmer, and including the sister of the priest. . . We never denounced although there were many people there, not to say a majority, who thought well of Pétain and his Vichy government."

Nicole David was a hidden child with a Catholic family in Belgium when she was six years old. In 1942, her father arranged for her to hide with him in Besine, a Belgian village of 150 residents. "The village was hiding at least 30 Jews," she wrote later. "Eudor Clobert, the mayor; and the priest, whose name I can't remember; and Maurice Pochet, who kept the village shop; saved many lives, provided Jews with false papers, food and communications. The whole village was very good."

The citizens of Secchiano, a close-knit village in central Italy, banded together to shelter Wolf and Esther Fullenbaum and their four-year-old daughter, Carlotta. Their presence was common knowledge and even a source of pride among the 600 villagers. Housed on the second floor of a schoolhouse, the refugee family received food and supplies from storekeepers and neighbors. Even though the village priest was arrested for hiding other refugees, not one citizen ever betrayed the Fullenbaums, who remained in Secchiano for more than a year and survived the war.

Ruth Rubenstein, another hidden child who spent some time in a Catholic convent in Belgium, was later placed with the DeMarneffs, a Belgian couple who had no children. "They lived in a village near Brussels and were very nice and kind to me," she recalled. "The DeMarneffs passed me off as a niece from Italy. Later I learned that the whole village knew I was Jewish and they all protected me."

Gisela Konopka, originally from Berlin, Germany, joined the anti-Nazi underground when she was a college student. She later married and with her husband escaped into France and stayed in Montauban, a village in northern France. "Montauban was like a miracle," she remembered. "Catholics, Protestants, the entire village opened its homes, gave us false papers, rations, all the things you needed. . . We ate blackberries and suet and bread, and the farmers gave us milk."

² 41 Swiss non-Jews have been awarded a Righteous Gentile title by Yad V'Shem. They challenged the policies of closed borders and "neutrality." They struggled hard—under dangerous conditions—to protect their Jewish wards; hid or smuggled them to safety, and never allowed themselves to be deterred by scorn, threats or reprisals.

Similarly, Friedrich Born, an IRC official in Hungary, defied his superiors' orders and saved over 6,000 Jewish children in Budapest, risking his life in numerous encounters with the Hungarian Arrow Cross murderers.

Anne-Marie Piquet wrote in her autobiography: "My conscience was more important than the law. I saw Jewish children whose parents were in jeopardy or missing, or had already been deported. I saw poor innocent creatures who had been thrown into the dust of history by the malice of the times. In a shattering way I realized the consequences of the French anti-semitism and so-called Swiss "neutrality" which was nothing but a cool and calculating waiting game for things to change.

"In the face of the dreadful persecution of the Jews and the deportation of Jewish children to German extermination camps, I did what I had to do."

One person, George Mantello, managed, in the most remarkable circumstances, to save from certain death the remnants of an entire community, that of Budapest, with surviving 140,000 Jews. (He is the subject of a book, George Mantello, El Salvador, a Switzerland's Finest Hour by David Kranzler.) George Mandl (he subsequently changed his name to Mantello) received a basic Jewish education. In 1942 he was appointed first secretary at the El Salvadoran embassy. This conferred on him diplomatic status with the right to travel anywhere.

Mantello's achievements put the lie to the thesis enunciated by William D. Rubinstein in his book, The Myth of Rescue: Why the Democracies Could Not Have Saved More Jews from the Nazis (New York: Routledge, 1997)

Britain, of course, compounded matters by slamming shut the doors of *Eretz Yisrael* at the moment of greatest need, when multitudes of Jews might yet have been saved had they been able to reach that safe haven. In this manner, Britain was almost as complicit in Hitler's destruction of European Jewry as were the Arabs at whose instigation the infamous "White Paper" was issued. Just how callous the British attitude could be in the face of the most heinous act of butchery that the world has ever seen is perhaps best revealed by the remark of British Deputy Prime Minister Clement Attlee, in 1942. Privy as he was to all the intelligence coming out of Eastern Europe, he could still declare, "The Jews are always desirous of putting themselves at the head of the queue of the suffering"!

Switzerland in 1944. Mass popular protests were staged, objecting strenuously to the continued deportation of the Jews to Auschwitz and condemning the Hungarian government for its role. These protests were led by church and communal leaders who, in turn, had been energized by Mantello (not, as it is noted, by the Swiss government). Grassroots Swiss pressure led the Hungarian government to suspend further deportations, despite the threats and blandishments of Eichmann and his cohorts. Thus, in what was perhaps the greatest single act of rescue, the last remnants of Budapest Jewry were spared the fate of their brethren.

xiv - Responses of the Allies and Neutral Countries during the War

David Wyman¹ writes: *The Holocaust was certainly a Jewish tragedy. But it was not only a Jewish tragedy. It was also a Christian tragedy, a tragedy for Western civilization, and a tragedy for all humankind. The killing was done by people, to other people, while still other people stood by. The perpetrators, where they were not actually Christians, arose from Christian culture. The bystanders most capable of helping were Christians. American non-Jews knew about the Holocaust at the end of*

¹ The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust 1941-1945:

1942.¹ They did not care, or saw the European Jewish catastrophe as a Jewish problem, one for Jews to deal with.

Hitler did not believe the Western democracies capable of defending the principles they espoused--and as they wavered and appeased and betrayed in the face of his expansion Hitler appeared to be right.²

The Allies feared that by openly helping Jews they would play into the hands of Hitler's propaganda about a "Jewish war." Consequently, the Allies single-mindedly upheld the view that a general victory alone could save the Jews. Thus, while the synthetic rubber works seven kilometers from Birkenau was bombed in April 1944, and the town of Auschwitz thirteen kilometers from Birkenau in July 1944, as well as the hospital and SS barracks in Birkenau some 15 yards from the extermination sites on December 24, 1944, no action was even undertaken against the unguarded camp installations easily recognizable by the smoking funnels of the crematoria. Actual rescue operations were undertaken by members of the Allies very late. President Roosevelt established the War Refugee Board on January 22, 1944. In any event, for the victims of the Polish-Russian area, these activities were of no avail. The attitudes of neutral states toward admission of victims or intervention in their favor changed with the fortunes of war.

Raul Hilberg³ writes of the tendency in public statements to link the Jewish fate with the fate of other peoples, such as the reference in a declaration by President Roosevelt to "the deportation of Jews to their death in Poland or Norwegians and French to their death in Germany;" and finally the lawyers' invocation of the "act of state" doctrine to show that at least some of the German measures against Jewry were nothing special—they were "acts of government" by the "authorities of the German state" or at worst "government persecution...under the municipal law of another state."

The Moscow Declaration, signed by Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin, managed to omit any reference to the Jewish disaster. This document, drafted in October, 1943, contains the public warning that "Germans who take part in the wholesale shooting of Italian officers or the execution of French, Dutch, Belgian or Norwegian hostages or of Cretan peasants, or who have shared in slaughters inflicted on the people of Poland or in the territories of the Soviet Union which are now being swept clear of the enemy, will know that they will be brought back to the scene of their crimes and judged on the spot by the peoples whom they have outraged."

The Allied governments always knew that they could be charged with a shortage of action in the case of the Jewish catastrophe. They therefore sought to alter the historical picture before them by claiming that it was not specifically the Jews who were undergoing catastrophe. Right after the end of the hostilities, we find also the notion that during the war the Jews had been "kicked around" but that "since the war the situation has changed and the Jews are now on top and the other fellow is beaten down."

The London delegates were unwilling to recognize the destruction of European Jewry as a crime *sui generis*; in the end they were not even able to cover the prewar anti-Jewish decrees under the count of aggression. During the trial the prosecution failed completely

¹News of the existence of a plan for the systematic extermination of Europe's Jews reached the United States in August 1942. Sent from Switzerland, the shocking revelation circumvented State Department roadblocks and came into the hands of American Jewish leaders. They found it credible. State Department officials, however, were skeptical. They asked the Jews not to publicize the disclosure until the government had time to confirm it. Not until late November was the news, along with corroborating evidence released to the press.

² In Time Magazine, end of the Millennium edition, 1999

³The Destruction of the European Jews

establish any connection between these decrees and the “conspiracy” to make war. The “crimes against humanity” were deadwood.

a. Would the Allies have taken in the Jews if they could have?

Most of the following has been culled from David Wyman, The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust 1941-1945:

The American State Department and the British Foreign Office had no intention of rescuing large numbers of European Jews. On the contrary, they continually feared that Germany or other Axis nations might release tens of thousands of Jews into Allied hands. Any such exodus would have placed intense pressure on Britain to open Palestine and on the United States to take in more Jewish refugees, a situation the two great powers did not want to face. Consequently, their policies aimed at obstructing rescue possibilities and dampening public pressures for government action.

Until the Nazis blocked the exits in the fall of 1941, the oppressed Jews of Europe might have fled to safety. But relatively few got out, mainly because the rest of the world would not take them in.

Starting in July 1941, America’s gates were locked. The United States did not take rescue action until January 1944; immigration was held to about 10 percent of the legal immigration that was allowed according to the quota limits at that time. This amounted to only 21,000 refugees in the three and one-half years the nation was at war with Germany.¹

While America’s immigration quotas in 1944 allotted to countries of occupied Europe were 91 percent unfilled (more than 55,000 unused slots that year), the nation opened

¹American immigration policy grew out of three important aspects of American society in the 1930s: unemployment, nativistic restrictionism, and anti-Semitism.

Thus 90 percent of those quotas—nearly 190,000 openings—went unused while the mass murder of European Jewry ran its course.

Law mandated the quota limits. But the severe restraints that the State Department clamped on immigration were not. They took the form of administrative regulations and at times purely arbitrary State Department innovations. President Roosevelt had the legal power at any time to modify the restrictions and open the quotas to full use. He did not do so, possibly out of concern that restrictionists in Congress might lash back and enact the restrictions into law. More likely, he was just not interested and found it convenient to leave immigration policy to Breckinridge Long and his associates.

A sizable proportion of them were people who had already reached safety in the Western Hemisphere and had waited there for over a year for an opportunity to move on to the United States. Exact statistics are not available, but in late 1942 and in 1943 about 40 percent of the refugees admitted to the United States were in that category. The year-by-year numbers follow, based on fiscal years that ended on June 30. The figures for fiscal 1941 are presented for purposes of comparison; that year closed just as the stringent immigration restrictions of July 1941 were imposed. The first five months of fiscal 1942 preceded America’s entry into the war, so immigration in those months is not included in the overall wartime total of 21,000.

Fiscal year	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945
Refugee Immigration	28,927	11,702	5,944	5,606	4,793
Percentage of quotas used	47.5	19.2	9.8	9.2	7.9

(refers to quotas assigned to countries of Axis-dominated Europe)

gates to 1,000 fugitives from extermination. Eight months before, Sweden had welcomed 8,000 Jews from Denmark. Sweden's population and her land area were each about one twentieth that of the United States. An American offer of temporary refuge "for all oppressed peoples escaping from Hitler" would have put pressure on other nations to open their doors. And, a point of signal importance, Spain and Turkey might have agreed to act as bridges of safety once they were certain that the refugees would move right through.

b. When did the Allies know?

Most of the following has been culled from David Wyman, The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust 1941-1945:

Authenticated information that the Nazis were systematically exterminating European Jewry was made public in the United States in November 1942.¹ President Roosevelt c

¹Up until then, it was easy to believe the Nazi propaganda that deportations were for labor. The massive deportations from Europe in 1942 were one step in the still-secret program of genocide. The Nazi explanation – labor service in an unnamed destination in the East – seemed plausible at the time. It especially appeared to make sense in the view of the poor response to the Vichy government's effort to recruit 150,000 French workers to go to Germany to help fill the labor shortage there.

American and British intelligence knew of specific Nazi plans to deport and execute the Jewish citizens of Rome a few days before the orders were carried out, but took no action. Historians Richard Brightman and Timothy Naftali arrived at this conclusion after studying secret Allied documents that were recently declassified. Apparently British intelligence overheard a telephone conversation between Nazi officers in Berlin and Rome in which the officers ordered their subordinates to hurry and begin the deportations. The historians say it is unclear whether or not the intelligence could have been used to save the lives of Rome's Jews.

However, the historian Yitzhak Minerbi says there is no doubt that as many as half of the 1,200 Roman Jews who were murdered could have been saved if the British had relayed the information about Rome's Jews via BBC radio, the report says.

Sam Ser, Jerusalem Post, July 2005: *Did the Allies Bury Early Intelligence on Holocaust?* Recent reports on Holocaust intelligence are rehashing difficult questions regarding how much the Americans and the British knew about Nazi atrocities.

A question debated for years by historians and Jewish groups is not how much the American government knew of the plight of European Jewry, but how soon the government knew of it, and what the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt did so little to stop it until the war had practically ended.

One example of the historical "what-ifs" inspired by such knowledge is whether the large-scale destruction of Hungarian Jewry, which came only toward the end of the war, could have been prevented or limited.

The issue is not merely one of governmental responsibility, either. As Laurel Leff argues in *Buried by the Times*, released earlier this year, the Times itself frequently downplayed or even ignored reports of Hitler's crimes against humanity.

"If only *The New York Times* were a little more aware of its own history, and a little more honest," Rabbi Abraham Cooper, associate dean of the Simon Wiesenthal Center told *The Jerusalem Post* Sunday.

"There is no doubt whatsoever that, had the details of what was going on in the camps and ghettos been paid more attention, it could have impacted in expanding the priorities of the war effort," Cooper added. "The rate and scope of what was going on in the camps and the ghettos could have been curtailed."

Scholars: U.S. gave tips on Holocaust low priority in '42: Hitler's plan kept quiet for months (Richard Willig, May 2004): U.S. intelligence officials learned within months of the U.S. entry into World War II that Nazi Germany planned mass killings to eliminate Jews, scholars reviewing newly declassified reports said Thursday. But the U.S. government gave the information low priority in August 1942, the scholars concluded, not acknowledging that Germany had a plan to exterminate Jews until six months later.

nothing about the mass murder for fourteen months, and then moved only because he was confronted with political pressures he could not avoid and because his administration stood on the brink of a nasty scandal over its rescue policies.

Information regarding mass murders of Jews began to reach the free world soon after these actions began in the Soviet Union in late June 1941, and the volume of such reports increased with time. The early sources of information include German police reports intercepted by British intelligence; local eyewitnesses and escaped Jews reporting underground, Soviet, or neutral sources; and Hungarian soldiers on home leave, whose observations were reported by neutral sources. During 1942, reports of a Nazi plan to murder all the Jews – including details on methods, numbers, and locations – reached Allied and neutral leaders from many sources, such as the underground Jewish Socialist Bund party in the Warsaw ghetto in May; Gerhard Riegner's cable¹ from Switzerland in August; the eyewitness account of Polish underground courier Jan Karski in November; and the

later. "It was an intelligence failure," said Richard Breitman, an American University Holocaust historian who studied the documents. "The early information was not assimilated or used correctly." Breitman was part of a team of scholars, citizens and government officials who reviewed more than 240,000 pages of documents at the National Archives related to Nazi and other World War II crimes. The material was from files of the FBI, CIA and its predecessor, the Office of Strategic Services. The documents show a federal intelligence unit was formed to interview Jews who immigrated from Axis countries in 1941 and 1942. One, Joseph Goldschmied, described how Germans seized money and property from Jews in his hometown, Prague, Czechoslovakia, and sent thousands to die in the Theresienstadt detention camp. "If Hitler remains true to his program of destroying all European Jewry -- he will have achieved this goal soon," Goldschmied said in August 1942.

¹ Yad Vashem / Wiesenthal Center: The World Jewish Congress (WJC) representative in Geneva, Gerhard Riegner, obtained information from a German manufacturer, Eduard Schulte — who had connections in Hitler's general headquarters — indicating that Hitler had decided to systematically annihilate all of European Jewry, and that gas was being used to attain this goal. After Riegner gathered further information about his source, he approached the American Consulate in Geneva with the report. He handed the deputy-consul a cable and asked him to forward it to Stephen Wise, an American Jewish leader. The cable contained the information that Riegner had obtained from Schulte concerning the plans for the murder of European Jewry: Received alarming report that in Fuehrer headquarters plan discussed and under consideration according to which all Jews in countries occupied or controlled by Germany numbering 34 million should after deportation and concentration in the east be exterminated at one blow to resolve once and for all the Jewish question in Europe. Action reported planned for autumn; methods under discussion including prussic acid. We transmit information with all necessary reservation as exactitude cannot be confirmed. Informant stated he has close connections with highest German authorities and his reports generally speaking reliable. The sources of Schulte's information are not known and the cable contained some inaccuracies. For example, mass murder of Jews had been going on since June 1941, and gassings had been taking place since September 1941. The cable spoke of a future "blow" under "consideration" whereas the extermination that had been begun was an ongoing process. Moreover, the cable itself indicated that the information may not have been true. The last sentence had been introduced into the cable at the insistence of Dr. Paul Guggenheim, a senior member of the WJC living in Geneva. Nevertheless, the cable was a breakthrough, because it confirmed seemingly inconclusive information about the mass murder that had reached the West previously. The State Department received the cable but decided not to transmit messages from "private individuals". On August 28, the second addressee of the cable, Sidney Silverman, a member of the British Parliament, sent a copy of the cable to Wise. The Assistant Secretary of State, Sumner Welles, summoned Wise and asked him not to disclose the information until it could be verified. Wise agreed, yet he informed a number of cabinet ministers, President Roosevelt, Court Justice Felix Frankfurter and Christian clergymen. On November 24, when the U.S. government was finally convinced, Wise broke the news of the cable, together with other supporting information, to the press. Thus, more than another year passed until the information, which was already available, led to action.

eyewitness accounts of 69 Polish Jews who reached Palestine in a civilian prisoner exchange between Germany and Britain in November.

On December 17, 1942, the Allies issued a proclamation condemning the "extermination" of the Jewish people in Europe and declared that they would punish the perpetrators. Notwithstanding this, it remains unclear to what extent allied and neutral leaders understood the full import of their information. The utter shock of senior Allied commanders who liberated camps at the end of the war may indicate that this understanding was not complete.¹

Washington Post, July 2001:

The West may have been informed about Nazi Germany's plans for the Holocaust months earlier than previously thought.

"It has been decided to eradicate all the Jews," says a newly declassified document believed to have been obtained by British and American intelligence by March 1942.

Previously, historians have generally judged that the West didn't learn until August 1942 that the Holocaust was happening.

The newly declassified document is the translation of a dispatch in which the Chilean consul in Prague, Gonzalo Montt Rivas, told Chilean officials of a German decree that Jews living abroad could no longer be German subjects and that their property would be transferred immediately to the Nazis.

In the memo written Nov. 24, 1941, Montt described the decree as follows: "The Jew [residing abroad] loses German nationality immediately. . . . The fortune which the Jew obtains in this manner will serve to solve the questions in connection with Jews," he wrote in Spanish.

Then, interpreting the decree and other developments, he reflected: "The German triumph [in the war] will leave Europe freed of Semites."

The dispatch was obtained by British intelligence agents and an English translation ended up in American files by March 20, 1942.

c. What did the Allies do?

Most of the following has been culled from David Wyman, The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust 1941-1945:

The War Refugee Board, which the USA established to save Jews and other victims of the Nazis, received little power, almost no cooperation from Roosevelt or his administration, and grossly inadequate government funding. Through dedicated work by a relatively small number of people, the WRB was able to help save approximately 200,000 Jews and at least 20,000 non-Jews.²

¹ Yad Vashem

²The WRB staff acted with "enormous drive and energy." The WRB played a crucial role in saving approximately 200,000 Jews. About 15,000 were evacuated from Axis territory (as were more than 20,000 non-Jews) at least 10,000, and probably thousands more, were protected within Axis Europe. WRB-financed underground activities, WRB diplomatic pressure, backed by its program of psychological warfare, were instrumental in seeing the 48,000 Jews in Transnistria moved to safe areas of Rumania. Similar pressures helped end the Hungarian deportations. Ultimately, 120,000 Jews survived in Budapest.

The results of other WRB programs, though they unquestionably contributed to the survival of thousands more, can never be quantified, even roughly. These actions include the war-crime warnings and the shipment of thousands of food parcels into concentration camps in the last months of the war. Furthermore, news that the United States had at last embarked upon rescue must have encouraged many Jews and reinforced their determination to outlast the Nazis if at all possible.

Poor though it was, the American rescue record was better than that of Great Britain, Russia, or other allied nations. This was the case because of the work of the War Relocation Authority, the fact that American Jewish organizations were willing to provide most of the WRB's funding, and the overseas rescue operations of several Jewish organizations.

Big Business

(Compiled from Reuters and the NY Times, Feb. 2001) - IBM Corp. is bracing itself against charges raised in a new book and lawsuit that the firm's tabulating machinery and German business unit were instrumental in helping Hitler systematically identify and select victims of the Holocaust.

The book, entitled IBM and the Holocaust: The Strategic Alliance Between Nazi Germany and America's Most Powerful Corporation, was written by Holocaust investigator Edwin Black, who was aided by a far-flung team of 100 researchers.

Historians have known for decades of Nazi use of Hollerith tabulators -- the mainframe computer of its era -- but the book sheds light on IBM business dealings and the lengths to which it may have tailored its machines to meet Nazi requirements.

IBM was named in a lawsuit filed on behalf of five Holocaust victims. The suit asserts that IBM knowingly supplied technology used to catalog death camp victims and aided in the "persecution, suffering and genocide" before and during the Second World War.

"Hitler could not have so quickly and efficiently identified and rounded up Jews and other minorities, used them as slave laborers and ultimately exterminated them, without IBM's assistance," Hausfeld said in a statement on Sunday.

"IBM and the Holocaust" claims that IBM did business with Adolf Hitler from the earliest days of his rise to power. IBM's German subsidiary, Dehomag, was IBM's No. 1 sales territory in the 1930s, despite an international boycott of the Nazi economy. Although it has long been known that IBM's German arm, which was taken over by the Nazis, had cooperated with the regime -- and, indeed, was in a consortium of companies making payments to survivors and victims' families -- Black says that the American parent was fully aware of the use to which the technology was put. And after the Germans surrendered, Black says, IBM's U.S. office was quick to collect profits made during the war by the subsidiary called Dehomag.

The book highlights the statistical hunger underpinning the Nazi drive to locate, identify and classify its enemies. IBM, as a nearly exclusive supplier of database equipment to the Third Reich, fed this hunger not out of Nazi sympathies per se but from a desire to dominate global markets for its products, Black argues. Black describes how Hollerith machines proliferated throughout German government and business during the 1930s, allowing the Nazis to cross-index names, addresses, genealogy charts and bank accounts of their citizens. He asserts that IBM remained in control of Hollerith technology, as well as its exclusive punch cards and spare parts, throughout the era.

On the other hand, numerous WRB plans that might have succeeded collapsed because the rest of the government did not provide the cooperation legally required of it by Executive Order 9417. It could not wield the diplomatic influence that was needed; its approaches to foreign governments and international organizations always had to be filtered through the basically negative State Department. Moreover, the President took little interest in the board and never moved to strengthen it. And it was always hobbled by the government's failure to fund it properly.

The book includes a gruesome description of how concentration camps used IBM punch cards to categorize victims: homosexuals rated No. 3, Jews No. 8, Gypsies No. 12 and so on. Each prisoner received a unique Hollerith punch card number.

The punch cards and counting machines, says Black, were provided to Hitler's government as early as 1933, and were probably used in the Nazis' first official census that year. The technology came in handy again in 1939 when the government conducted another census, this time with the explicit goal of identifying and locating German Jews — and finally, Black alleges, in tracking records at Nazi concentration camps.

It's this specificity of purpose, says William Seltzer, an expert in demographic statistics at Fordham University, that provides the most damning evidence. "Microsoft is responsible for every spreadsheet made with Excel," Seltzer told TIME.com. "But if someone is doing custom designing of a database, they have to know what's going on. With the punch cards, Dehomag had to design a card for every piece of new information that the government wanted."

The charges against IBM are hardly unique. Many U.S.-based multinationals including Ford Motor Company, Coca-Cola and Colgate-Palmolive, have weathered charges of aiding and/or operating for profits under the Nazi regime. A few years ago, when a lawsuit was brought against Ford, the company fought (and won) for a dismissal, but not before acknowledging that its German subsidiary used labor from the Buchenwald concentration camp to build vehicles. Ford's U.S. offices maintain they were not responsible for what went on after its assets were seized in 1941 — a claim many companies, including IBM, make the face of such accusations.

In Seltzer's mind, IBM's claims that they "lost control" of the German affiliate during the war don't ring true at all. "IBM says they lost control during the war, but that depends what you mean by 'war,'" he says. "Certainly after Germany invaded Poland in 1939, they were still very much in control, and even coordinated transfer of equipment from occupied Poland to Romania. Then, after the U.S. and Germany entered a state of war in 1941, IBM arranged to have conservators run the German subsidiary — with the understanding that the profits would be turned over to IBM. So IBM had control in spirit but not in law."

Seltzer believes, as does Black, that the Germans could not have operated IBM machines without the company's help; the technology was just too new.

Of course, not everyone agrees with Seltzer's assessment — least of all IBM.

Christopher H. Schmitt, *The Profits of Plunder*: U.S. News and World Report March 24, 2004: In the mid-1930s, with Hitler in power and Germany rearming for the epic clash that lay ahead, the Nazis had a problem: They desperately needed dollars to finance American imports.

They found a solution in an elaborate currency trading scheme that funneled Jewish assets to Germans in the United States — with American financial giant Chase National Bank today known as JPMorgan Chase, leading the way.

American business dealings with the Nazis have slowly come to light in the postwar years. IBM, for example, supplied information-sorting machines that enabled the Nazis to track Jews, and Ford Motor Co. admits that its German subsidiary used slave laborers. . .

The Nazis offered a deal to Germans in the United States: Return home and swap your U.S. dollars for German marks. With unfavorable exchange rates, though, the swap didn't make financial sense. The Nazis sweetened the deal with exchanges at a rate far above the market value. But somebody had to pay for the higher rate. The Nazis tapped the Jews.

Chase — with Winthrop Aldrich, a future U.S. ambassador to Great Britain who served as president of the War Relief Fund, at the helm — got a cut of the deal. The bank won't

right, along with four other companies, to serve as middlemen enlisting Germans in the plot. The firms collected easy commissions of up to 7 percent.

The scheme ran its course in June 1941, when the United States froze German assets. All told, \$22.5 million was raised; for its part, Chase National earned \$503,000 in commissions, equal to about \$7 million today. But the FBI finally discovered the scheme in October 1940. Later, two Chase executives opened up their files during a late-night session with the feds. The FBI did obtain valuable counter-intelligence information on Nazi spies and sympathizers, says Goda, but ended up dropping the case after a Chase attorney threatened to reveal sources and methods used by the investigators.

Today, JPMorgan Chase apologizes for the actions of Chase National, calling the scheme deeply troubling.

d. What did the Allies not do?

Overview

Walter Reich in the Jerusalem Post, April 20, '01:

... By 1942, it was clear to Allied governments that Europe's Jews were being murdered by Nazi Germany. Reports of mass killings by mobile killing squads in the Soviet Union, and then of the use of gas chambers, were transmitted to Allied capitals. And news of the annihilation of millions of Jews eventually appeared in American and British newspapers.

Yet in government circles and in the press, the information was marginalized and sometimes suppressed. Government officials often dismissed or ignored it, and newspapers relegated the news, when it was given at all, to brief reports. In the summer of 1942, for example, The New York Times reported on an inside page that more than 1 million Jews had been killed.

Even in the midst of a world war, this was major news. Why, then, was so little attention paid to it? Anti-Semitism no doubt played a role. So did the desire by Allies to focus on military matters and to avoid giving the impression, as some had charged, that the war was being fought on behalf of Jewish interests.

Self-censorship on the part of newspapers was also significant. The publisher of the newspaper whose foreign reporting was a model for others - The New York Times - was Arthur Hays Sulzberger, whose family had come to America in the late 17th century, and who was less than comfortable with his Jewish identity, and who preferred not to focus on matters Jewish.

Marvin Kalb has pointed out in a fine paper on the journalism of the Holocaust that in the Times, "the murder of millions of Jews was treated as minor league stuff, kept at proper distance from the authentic news of the time." In the summer of 1944, Kalb notes, the Times published "authoritative information" to the effect that 400,000 Hungarian Jews had been deported to their deaths, but this news appeared as only four inches of copy on Page 1.

But the main reason so little attention was paid in America and Britain to the ferociously focused and industrialized murder of the European Jews was probably the audacious and almost unbelievable nature of this immense genocidal project. How could a civilized and cultured nation as Germany carry out so savage and inhuman an enterprise ...

Some have argued that, in any case, the Allies could have done little more to save Jews than win the war, and that such acts as bombing the rail lines into Auschwitz, if they

were possible at all, would have had a value that was more symbolic than practical. Even this were true, they would have been acts that would have ennobled those who carried them out and given at least some hope to victims, who would have realized that the world was aware of their desperate plight.

One would imagine, in the aftermath of this history, that evidence of genocide would quickly mobilize nations to effective action. Yet such evidence became available as the genocide in Rwanda unfolded, and it failed to stir the action that could have stopped it. To be sure, the Holocaust was invoked by President Bill Clinton to justify military intervention in Kosovo; but what was happening in Kosovo wasn't genocide, and the invocation of the Holocaust was used in a circumstance for which it was convenient, but to which it simply didn't apply.

World Response to the Holocaust: The Holocaust—A Guide for Teachers, Gary J. Grobman:

In the aftermath of the Holocaust, the civilized world was shocked to see photographs of unimaginable horror; skeletons of victims stacked in piles of hundreds and thousands of living skeletons describing unspeakable brutality and atrocity, and searching for the truth to what would permit this to occur without intervention. Could an event of this magnitude have occurred without the knowledge of the Allies? If the Allied governments knew this was taking place, why was nothing done? Why was there such deathly silence?

The American press had printed scores of articles detailing mistreatment of the Jews in Germany. By 1942, many of these newspapers were reporting details of the Holocaust stories about the mass murder of Jews in the millions. For the most part, these articles were only a few inches long, and were buried deep in the newspaper. These reports were either denied or unconfirmed by the United States government. When the United States government did receive irrefutable evidence that the reports were true, U.S. government officials suppressed the information. U.S. reconnaissance photos of the Birkenau camp in 1942 showed the lines of victims moving into the gas chambers, confirming other reports. The War Department insisted that the information be kept classified.

Photographs of mass graves and mass murder, smuggled out under the most dangerous of circumstances, were also classified as secret. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill called for the death camp at Auschwitz to be bombed. He was ignored. Hundreds of thousands of innocent Jews could have been saved had the Allies agreed to bomb the death camps or the rail lines which were feeding them.

Desperate for war material, the Nazis offered the British a million Jews in exchange for 10,000 trucks. When asked why he had refused to negotiate the deal, a British diplomat responded, "What would I do with one million Jews? Where would I put them?"

Escaped prisoners from the death camps filed reports on what was occurring. Again many of these reports were suppressed.

Eventually, President Roosevelt, under pressure from the public, agreed to issue a statement condemning the German government for its genocidal policy against the Jews. Other support followed. The Pope requested that his diplomats help hide Hungarian Jews. In September 1944, the British bombed factories and the railroad lines of Auschwitz.

Could actions of the Allies have prevented the Holocaust or limited the destruction of six million Jews and five million other innocent civilians? There is no question that the silence and inaction of the world community in the face of irrefutable evidence resulted in a senseless loss of millions of lives.

e. Bombing Auschwitz

In 1944, the United States War Department rejected several appeals to bomb the Auschwitz gas chambers and the railroads leading to the death camp, claiming that such actions would divert essential air power from decisive operations elsewhere. Yet in the few months that it was turning down the pleas, numerous massive American bombing raids were taking place within fifty miles of Auschwitz. Twice during that time large fleets of American heavy bombers struck industrial targets in the Auschwitz itself, not five miles from the gas chambers.¹

In 2002, Michael Beschloss published The Conquerors: Roosevelt, Truman and the Destruction of Hitler's Germany 1941-1945 (Simon & Schuster), in which he provides a surprising new account of what the president actually knew and what he said and did (as reported in Newsweek).

¹Could the death factories have been located from the air? The four huge gassing-crematorium installations stood in two pairs, spaced along the westernmost edge of the Auschwitz complex, just outside the Birkenau section of the camp. Two of the extermination buildings were 340 feet long, the others two-thirds that length. Chimneys towered over them. Descriptions of the structures and of the camp's layout, supplied by escapees, were in Washington by early July 1944. Beginning in August 1944, detailed aerial reconnaissance photographs of Auschwitz-Birkenau were available at Air Force headquarters in Italy.

In sum, the only real obstacle to precision bombing of the death machinery would have been that Auschwitz had little flak defense until after the August raid. Only then were heavy guns added. In any case, the most likely operation would have combined a strike on the gas chambers with a regular attack on the industries. In that situation, the German guns would have concentrated on the aircraft over the factory area, five miles away from the planes assigned to the death installation.

One procedure would have been to arrange for some of the heavy bombers on one of the larger Auschwitz strikes to swing over to the Birkenau side and blast the killing facilities. Heavy bombers flying at their normal altitude of 20,000 to 26,000 feet could have destroyed the building. Even complete accuracy was rarely possible from such height. Some of the bombs probably would have struck nearby Birkenau, itself a heavily populated concentration camp.

Jewish leaders in Europe and the United States, assuming the use of heavy bombers and the consequent death of some inmates, wrestled with the moral problem involved. Most concluded that the loss of life under the circumstances was justifiable. They were aware that about 90 percent of the Jews were gassed on arrival at Auschwitz. They also realized that most who were spared for the work camps struggled daily through a hellish, famished existence as slave laborers and were won over in a matter of weeks. Once unfit for hard labor, they were dispatched to the gas chambers. The bombing might kill some of them, but it could halt or slow the mass production of murder.

Heavy bombers were not, however, the only choice. A small number of Mitchell medium bombers which hit with surer accuracy from lower altitudes, could have flown with one of the missions to Auschwitz. The Mitchell had sufficient range to attack Auschwitz, since refueling was available on the Adriatic island of Vis, 110 miles closer than home base back in Italy.

An even more precise alternative would have been dive-bombing. A few Lightning (P-38) dive bombers could have knocked out the murder buildings without danger to the inmates at Birkenau. The P-38s proved they were capable of such a distant assignment on June 19, 1944, when they dive-bombed oil refineries at Ploesti, making a 1,255 mile round trip from their bases in Italy. The distance to Auschwitz and back was 1,240 miles, and stopping at Vis shortened that to 1,130. Furthermore, in an emergency, lightnings returning from Auschwitz could have landed at partisan-held airfields in Yugoslavia.

The effective means of all for destroying the killing installations would have been to dispatch about twenty British Mosquitoes to Auschwitz, a project that should have been possible to arrange with the RAF. This fast fighter-bomber had ample range for the mission, and its technique of bombing at very low altitudes had proven extremely precise. In February 1944, for instance, nineteen Mosquitoes went out to break open a prison at Amiens to free members of the French resistance held there for execution. The first two waves of the attack struck with such accuracy, smashing the main wall and shattering the guardhouses, that the last six planes did not bomb.

By the summer of 1944, Adolf Hitler and the Nazis had murdered millions of Jewish leaders implored Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt to try to slow the killing by bombing the death complex at Auschwitz and the railroad lines that supplied it.

For almost two years, Churchill and FDR had been quietly receiving evidence of Hitler's ghastly effort to remove an entire people from the face of the earth. Churchill appeared interested in a military strike against the camps. He told his foreign secretary Anthony Eden, that Hitler's war against the Jews was "probably the greatest and most horrible crime ever committed in the whole history of the world," adding: "Get everything out of the Air Force you can, and invoke me, if necessary." In July 1944 Churchill was told that U.S. bomber pilots could do the job best, but that it would be "costly and hazardous".

But America was the senior partner in the alliance. Washington would have to make the call. Today FDR's most stalwart defenders insist that the best way to save Jews was to win the European war as quickly as possible. Some argue that bombing might have or briefly stopped the slaughter, before the Nazis rebuilt the camps or used other swift and brutal means of killing Jews—and that it would have killed Jewish inmates. But the eloquent Auschwitz survivor Elie Wiesel wishes that the Americans had bombed Auschwitz, noting that he and his fellow inmates "were no longer afraid of death—at any rate, not of that death".

In Washington, Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau, Jr., was heartsick over what he was discovering about the murder of the Jews of Europe. Morgenthau was Roosevelt's closest friend in the government and only the second Jew in U.S. history to be in a presidential Cabinet. He was, however, so unobservant a Jew that he had never attended a Passover Seder.

Morgenthau had long refrained from jeopardizing his friendship with Roosevelt, which he called the "most important thing" in his life—by special pleading on Jewish matters. After World War II began, FDR had privately said to Morgenthau and a Catholic appointee, Leo Crowley, "You know this is a Protestant country, and the Catholics and Jews are here under sufferance." He bluntly told them it was "up to you" to "go along with anything I want".

But the Holocaust had radicalized Morgenthau. Even if it meant antagonizing Roosevelt, the Treasury secretary was bent on trying to slow the killing and also crush postwar Germany with a plan to make the conquered country "stew in its own juice." When Secretary of War Henry Stimson told Morgenthau that his plan was too harsh on the Germans, Morgenthau replied that it was "not nearly as bad" as sending people "to gas chambers".

Morgenthau consented to have his former aide John Pehle, director of the War Refugee Board, cautiously explore whether bombing Auschwitz and/or the rail lines might save a serious number of Jewish lives. The matter was referred to Assistant Secretary of War John McCloy, who had so exasperated Morgenthau by refusing to let the U.S. military help save Jewish refugees that Morgenthau had privately denounced McCloy as an "oppressor of the Jews." (McCloy had vehemently denied the charge).

McCloy saw the Auschwitz bombing proposal as a flagrant violation of FDR's demand that U.S. military resources be used only for direct efforts to win the war. Flatly and repeatedly, McCloy said no.

After 42 years of denying that he had ever discussed the issue with the president, 91-year-old McCloy, stated in 1986 that he had indeed raised the possibility of bombing Auschwitz with Roosevelt. He died three years later. McCloy said, "I remember talking one time with Mr. Roosevelt about it, and he was irate. He said, 'Why, the idea!... They'll or move it down the road a little way.' " (This referred to the prospect that the Nazis would have built other death mills to continue the killing.) McCloy recalled that the president "made very clear" to him that bombing Auschwitz "wouldn't have done any good".

According to McCloy, Roosevelt told him that bombing Auschwitz would “provocative” to the Nazis and he wouldn’t “have anything to do” with the idea. McCloy said that FDR warned him that Americans would be accused of “bombing these innocent people at Auschwitz, adding, “We’ll be accused of participating in this horrible business!”

John McCloy was a man so respected that he was once called the “chairman” of the American Establishment. His firsthand testimony is the first serious evidence we have that was Franklin Roosevelt who made one of history’s most crucial decisions—and of the president’s rationale in making it. Based on McCloy’s account, FDR made his decision about Auschwitz after little or no consultation with his key advisers. Historians will probably argue until the end of time whether or not Auschwitz should have been bombed.

f. The British

Adolf Eichmann offered the Allies the lives of a million Jews in exchange for 10 thousand trucks. Joel Brandt was allowed to take this offer to the British. He went to Aleppo where the British authorities arrested him. Brandt said, ‘Please believe me: they have killed six million Jews; there are only two million left alive.’ British officials rejected the proposal. They said he could not return to Hungary. His reply was: ‘Do you know what you are doing? This is simply murder! That is mass murder. If I don’t return our best people will be slaughtered! My wife! My mother! My children will be first! You have to let me go!... I am here as the messenger of a million people condemned to death.’

Even with hindsight, the decision was a difficult one. Suppose the trucks made life easier for Hitler to win the war? Suppose the blackmail was repeated and turned into a regular source of Nazi war supplies? Could Eichmann be relied on to keep his word?

Any adequate decision about the offer would have to be taken with the seriousness appropriate to what was at stake: the lives of a million men, women and children. It might be right to turn down the deal, but with full emotional appreciation of what this meant such a decision would be agonizing. It is hard to see that the actual decision was made with this seriousness. In June 1944 representatives of the Jewish Agency met the British Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden. They asked for some signal to be sent to Germany that the rescue of the Jews could be discussed. Eden said he could not act without agreement of the American and Soviet governments. He said he ‘doubted’ that the deal was possible and expressed his ‘profound sympathy’. Someone imaginatively and emotionally engaged might not have offered this conventional condolence.

The impression that on this question Eden had a stunted moral imagination reinforced by his earlier response to a plea to rescue the Jews in Bulgaria: he said, ‘Turkey does not want any more of your people.’ His imagination seems to have been stunted partly by anti-Semitism. His private secretary said that he loved Arabs and hated Jews. And Eden himself wrote in a private note that ‘if we must have preferences let me murmur in your ear that I prefer Arabs to Jews.’

And, where British ministers were responsive, they sometimes had to work against the anti-Semitism of their officials. The Colonial Secretary proposed to try to rescue Jewish children from Bulgaria. One of the Colonial Office’s officials, J.S. Bennett, commented: ‘It is difficult to prevent a convincing case on *security* grounds against letting in *children* proposed here; particularly in view of our reception of Greek (non-Jewish) children...What is disturbing is the apparent readiness of the new Colonial Secretary to take Jewish Agency “sob stuff” at its face value.’ Mr. Bennett’s response to eye-witness reports of what the Nazis were doing was to write: ‘Familiar stuff. The Jews have spoiled their case by laying it on too thick for years past.’ One wonders what the Nazis would have had to do for Mr. Bennett to find Jewish anguish justified.

Sometimes the political inadequacy seems to have come not from anti-Semitism but from the human responses being shriveled by bureaucracy. A Foreign Office official, R.T. Latham, explained the refusal to allow entry to some more Jewish refugees: 'I am afraid there is next to nothing we can do...in any case we simply cannot have any more people let into the UK on merely humanitarian grounds...Furthermore these refugees, pitiable as is their plight, are hardly war refugees...but simply racial refugees.'

g. Helping non-Jews

Analysis of the main rescue proposals put forward at that time but brushed aside by government officials yields convincing evidence that much more could have been done to rescue Jews, if a real effort had been made. The record also reveals that the reasons repeatedly invoked by government officials for not being able to rescue Jews could be put aside when it came to other Europeans who needed help.¹

The American Military had long since decided on a policy that they were not going to be involved in rescue activities. This decision also extended to bombing the railroad to Auschwitz. This, despite the fact that the railroad was also used for military traffic and that an attack on Auschwitz could open the way for inmates to escape and join the resistance forces.

In early September, pressure built once more for bombing the railroads, this time the lines between Auschwitz and Budapest, where the last large enclave of Hungarian Jews was threatened with deportation. Entreaties came from Vaad Hahatzala, the Orthodox rescue committee. Rabbi Abraham Kalmanowitz, anxious for the appeal to reach the WRB as soon as possible, telephoned, even though it was the Sabbath. Kalmanowitz offered to travel to Washington immediately.² The military's response was that air power should not be diverted from vital "industrial target systems". In reality, Auschwitz was definitely a part of the target systems.³ By April of 1944, the GAF was a defeated force. Allied air power had wrecked Hitler's fighter plane force by the spring of 1944. After this, U.S. bombers were never deterred from bombing a target because of probable losses. In late June, eight important oil plants were bombed on ten occasions between July 7 and November 2. Among them was the industrial section of Auschwitz itself, less than five miles to the east of the gas chambers. The weather was excellent.⁴

¹Near the end of the war, an American Army tank unit went out of its way to rescue a herd of valuable Lipizzaner horses. The Germans had seized the horses in Vienna and transported them to Czechoslovakia. The U.S. Senate later cited the unit for its "heroic efforts" in saving the horses.

²When Akzin relayed the plea to Pehle, he took the opportunity to spell out, in polite terms, his dissatisfaction with the War Department's inaction regarding the bombing requests.

³Mitchell medium bombers and Lightning dive-bombers had sufficient range to strike Auschwitz from Italy, as did British Mosquito fighter-bombers. Unknown to the outside world, Himmler in late November ordered the killing machinery destroyed. On January 27, 1945, the Russian army captured the camp.

⁴Anti-aircraft fire and the 19 German fighter planes there were ineffective. Only one American bomber went down. Air strikes in the area were extensive. Many of them passed within forty miles of Auschwitz soon after leaving their targets. Deportation of the Budapest Jews would have taken roughly three weeks, in addition to several days of preparations. An alarm would have reached the outside world in time for cuts in those railroads to have been of some help, even if the bombing had been sporadic. In his situation, the United States could readily have demonstrated concern for the Jews. Without risking more than minute cost to the war effort, the War Department could have agreed to stand ready, if deportations had resumed, to spare some bomb tonnage for those two railroads.

Available figures indicate that 100,000 Jews were gassed at Auschwitz in the week after the August 20 air raid on the camp's industrial sector.¹ More significant, though, is the fact that no one could tell during the summer of 1944 how many hundreds of thousands more would die at Auschwitz before the Nazis ceased their mass murder.

Bombing proposals were diverted to non-military objectives. Exceptions occurred quite often. For instance, the Allied military moved 100,000 non-Jewish Polish, Yugoslav and Greek civilians to camps in Africa and the middle East and maintained them there. Again, the American and British armies in Italy supplied thousands of refugees with food, shelter, and medical care.²

As Soviet forces neared Warsaw at the beginning of August 1944, the Polish Home Army rose against the Germans. (The Home Army was a non-Communist resistance force linked to the Polish government in London.) The Russian advance suddenly stopped, however, and the Red Army remained about ten kilometers from Warsaw for weeks while the Nazis decimated the unaided and poorly supplied Polish fighters.

Polish officials in London put intense pressure on the British government to do something about the situation. Although Air Marshal Sir John Slessor, the RAF commander in Italy, argued that supply flights to Warsaw from Italy would result in a "prohibitive rate of loss" and "could not possibly affect the issue of the war one way or another," the British government ordered the missions run.

American bombers dropped 1,284 containers of arms and supplies on Warsaw. Most 288 containers reached the Home Army. The Germans took the rest. More than a hundred heavy bombers were tied up for nine days. The report's closing paragraph dealt with the question:

Despite the tangible cost which far outweighs the tangible results achieved, it is concluded that this mission was amply justified. America kept faith with its Ally.

In the fall of 1944, Jewish women who worked at a munitions factory inside Auschwitz managed to smuggle small amounts of explosives to members of the underground. The material was relayed to male prisoners who worked in the gas chamber and cremation area. Those few wretched Jews then attempted what the allied powers, with their vast might, would not. On October 7, in a suicidal uprising, they blew up one of the crematorium buildings.

h. How did the American Public React?

provided bombers were already scheduled to fly near them on regular war missions. As it happened on ten different days from July through October, a total of 2,700 bombers traveled along or within easy reach of both rail lines on the way to targets in the Blechhammer-Auschwitz region.

¹If the date is set back to July 7, the time of the first attack on Blechhammer, the number increases to some 50,000. Requests for bombing Auschwitz did not arrive in Washington until July. If, instead, the earliest plea for bombings the gas chambers had moved swiftly to the United States, and if they had drawn a positive and rapid response, the movement of the 437,000 Jews who were deported from Hungary to Auschwitz would most likely have been broken off and additional lives numbered in the hundreds of thousands might have been saved.

²The war effort could be deflected for other decent purposes as well, such as art. Kyoto, the ancient capital of Japan and a center of culture and art, was on the Air Force target list. In spring 1945, Secretary of War Stimson asked McCloy, "would you consider me a sentimental old man if I remove Kyoto from the target cities for our bombers?" McCloy himself prevented the planned bombing of Rothenburg, a German town known for its medieval architecture.

A lack of popular pressure in the USA: The American public was generally ahead of the government in its support for rescue activities¹. But real public pressure was lacking. Strong popular pressure for action would have brought a much fuller government commitment to rescue and would have produced it sooner. Several factors hampered the growth of public pressure. Among them were anti-Semitism² and anti-immigration attitudes both widespread in American society in that era and both entrenched in Congress; the media's failure to publicize Holocaust news³, even though the wire services and other news sources made the most of the information available to them; the near silence of the Christian churches and almost all of their leadership; the indifference of most of the nation's political and intellectual leaders; and the President's failure to speak out on the issue.⁴

Initially when the war was running heavily in the German's favor, the obstacles mounting potentially effective programs of aid must have seemed insurmountable.

¹In 1942, a "Day of Mourning and Prayer" was observed in twenty-one foreign lands and throughout the United States. Several radio stations were silent for two minutes. During the morning, half a million Jewish union laborers, joined by non-Jewish fellow workers, halted production for ten minutes. A noon one-hour radio program was broadcast. Late in the afternoon, NBC broadcast a special quarter-hour memorial service around the nation. Many newspapers reported the day's event and its significance, though for the most part inconspicuously. Soon afterward, a delegation for a Temporary committee succeeded in meeting with President Roosevelt despite a definite reluctance on his part. He read aloud a two page letter. The only action proposed in the letter, however, was the issuance of warnings about war crimes. Roosevelt readily agreed to issue the war crimes warnings. He then asked for other recommendations. The Jewish leaders had little to add; this part of the conversation lasted only two minutes.

²American anti-Semitism, which had climbed to very high levels in the late 1930's, continued to rise in the first part of the 1940's. It reached its historic peak in 1944. In Washington Heights, almost every synagogue was desecrated... In Boston, three years of sporadic property damage, cemetery desecrations, and beatings turned into almost daily occurrences in 1943. Most flagrant were the violent attacks on Jewish children by teenage gangs.

Pamphlets, in buses, subway stations, industrial plants, public buildings, army camps, schools, and numerous other places. The most recurrent theme involved the widely disseminated slander that Jews shirked military service, stayed home, and prospered while Christian boys were sent off to fight and die.

Passive anti-Semitism would have worked little damage but in the Holocaust crisis it meant that a large body of decent and normally considerate people was predisposed not to care about European Jews nor to care whether the government did anything to help save them. The United States did emphasize the conclusion that an extermination process was underway...

³On the evening of July 21, 1942 – one day before the eve of Tisha B'av, 20,000 people crowded Madison Square Garden, while thousands more stood outside, to protest the Nazi atrocities. President Roosevelt sent a message...

Other mass meetings were organized.

The New York Times (which was owned by an assimilated Jew) placed a sizable part of its report of the Madison Square Garden meeting in the middle of page 1. But nothing on that page indicated that hundreds of thousands of Jews had been murdered. In fact, Jews were barely mentioned, and the event came across as no more than a "mass demonstration against Hitler atrocities." The Chicago Tribune provided substantial publicity prior to the Chicago mass meeting, but to report on the demonstration, itself, while comprehensive, offered little understanding of what had caused the meeting. The Los Angeles Times, on the other hand, publicized the demonstration in Los Angeles more than a week and made it clear that the issue was the "terrible mass murder of the Jews in Nazi-controlled Europe." Many people simply could not believe them. This stemmed from the abuse of the public's trust by British propagandists during World War I.

⁴Roosevelt sufficed with a general warning to the Axis, such as on August 21, 1942, that perpetrators of war crime would be tried after Germany's defeat and face "fearful retribution."

i. American Congress and Politicians

Most of the following has been culled from David Wyman, The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust 1941-1945:

Although liberal congressmen, both Democratic and Republican, had generally sympathized with the persecuted Jews throughout the Hitler years, few had been willing to press for increased immigration or other measures to aid them. But liberals had not attempted to block the few small steps that the President had taken. Southern Democrats and conservative Republicans, on the other hand, had consistently resisted Roosevelt's moves to help Jewish refugees¹.

Illustrative of the power of congressional conservatives to thwart proposals to help European Jews and of the failure of liberals to challenge that power, was the fate of legislation introduced into the House in September 1942 by Emanuel Celler, a Democrat from New York. Appalled by press reports of the mass deportations from France, Celler, who hoped to convert the widespread indignation aroused by that news into practical action, introduced a bill called for opening America's doors to refugees in France who could prove they were facing roundup, internment, or religious persecution at the hands of the Nazis or the Vichy authorities. Celler's measure went to the House Committee on Immigration where it languished almost unnoticed while the great crisis in France passed.

Seventeen months of systematic, cold-blooded murder ran their course between the time the *Einsatzgruppen* were turned loose on the Russian front in June 1941, and the day in late November 1942 when the extermination plan was confirmed for the world.

Fourteen additional months of mass murder were to pass before President Roosevelt and his administration, although fully cognizant of the ongoing genocide, could be persuaded to act. And when they did act, it was only in response to pressures that could no longer be disregarded.

During Roosevelt's press conferences (normally held twice a week) not one word was spoken about the mass killing of European Jews until almost a year later. The President had nothing to say to reporters on the matter, and no correspondent asked him about it.

In November 1941, in the midst of months of mass terror against Jews in Rumania, Cavendish W. Cannon of the State Department's Division of European Affairs spelled out the reasons why the United States should not support a proposal to move 300,000 Jews out of Rumania to safety in Syria or Palestine. He specified, among other problems, that "endorsement of such a plan [was] likely to bring about new pressure for an asylum in the western hemisphere" and that, because atrocities were also under way in Hungary, migration of the Rumanian Jews would therefore open the question of similar treatment for Jews in Hungary and, by extension, all countries where there has been intense persecution. Cannon added, "So far as I know we are not ready to tackle the whole Jewish Problem." In May 1943, Robert C. Alexander of the State Department's Visa Division described rescue proposals as moves that would "take the burden and the curse of Hitler."

In May 2, 1942 a nationwide Day of Compassion for the Jews of Europe was held. In Boston's Protestant churches hardly responded. By the eve of the Day of Compassion, only eight Boston-area clergymen had agreed to center services around its theme. In New York City the outcome appears to have been even more meager. In Pittsburgh none of them had planned anything. November 1942 – the Allies had seized the initiative in the war and were clearly on the road to victory, while the German slaughter of the Jews continued relentlessly. At Auschwitz, four huge new gas chamber-crematorium installations had been

¹The more pro-Jewish, pro-Israel consensus amongst the Democrats as opposed to the Republicans was only reversed recently, during the Clinton and Bush years.

into operation, increasing the already high rate of mass killing to a capacity estimated 6,000 to 12,000 murders and cremations per day.

During 1942 the patterns of the American government's response to the ongoing annihilation of the Jews became evident. The State Department had shown itself to be entirely callous. Most members of Congress seemed to know little and care less. And the President, who was well aware of the catastrophic situation, was indifferent, even to the point of unwillingness to talk about the issue with the leaders of five million Jewish Americans.

j. The genocide finally addressed – the Bermuda Conference saves 630 refugees

The Bermuda Conference grew out of the public reaction in Britain to the reports that the European Jews were being exterminated. The main impetus came from Christian church leaders and from the Parliament. Agreement finally came on Bermuda, a location that would shield the conferees from public opinion, the press, and Jewish organizations because wartime regulations restricted all access to the island. Strictly prohibited was any special emphasis on Jews.

The conference decided to set up a camp for refugees from the camps. Almost a year passed before the camp went into operation. Ultimately, it provided a haven for only 630 refugees. Yet, in the end, the camp constituted the Bermuda Conference's only concrete contribution to the rescue of Jews.

Breckinridge Long concluded that the conference's pretense of careful consideration of all possibilities for action had quitted the clamor for rescue. But he was wrong. Proponents of rescue were not deceived by that trick. What had subdued them was the Anglo-American demonstration of utter callousness. It had smashed hope and made continued efforts seem futile. The calm was that of despair.

At about the same time, the State Department persuaded Latin American governments to halt nearly all immigration from Europe.¹ The reason given was the need to safeguard hemispheric security. Yet the department's information sources had no reports of Nazi agents or subversive activities among refugees in Latin America.

In the summer of 1944, with sizable funds finally in hand, the Intergovernmental Committee undertook its only substantial project of the Holocaust Years. It granted hundreds of thousands of dollars to the Joint Distribution Committee. The JDC, working through the underground, used the money to support groups engaged in hiding Jews, providing them with supplies and helping some to escape from Axis territory. Before the war ended, the ICR had transferred \$1.28 million to the JDC for such projects in France, Rumania, Hungary, and northern Italy.

The committee for a Jewish Army responded to the Bermuda Conference by convening another conference. Its announced aim was to do what the earlier conference should have done—bring experts together to seek all possible ways to save European Jews. Stephen Wise attempted to persuade Episcopal Bishop Henry St. George Tucker, who had agreed to play a prominent part in the conference to withdraw. Tucker did not. In any event

¹ *The Plight of the Refugees: The Refugee Ship St. Louis* "...with 900 Jewish refugees aboard, steaming back towards Germany after a tragic week of frustration at Havana and off the coast of Florida. She is steaming back despite an offer made to Havana yesterday to give a guarantee through the Chase National Bank of \$500 apiece for every one of her passengers...Had consular visas...The others all had landing permits for which they had paid; they were unaware that the permits had been declared void in a decree dated May 5. Only a score of the hundreds were admitted. At Havana the *St. Louis's* decks became a stage for human misery. Relatives and friends clamored to get aboard but were held back. Weeping refugees clamoring to get ashore were held at guarded gangways. All these 900 asked for was a temporary haven...Before they sailed virtually all of them had registered under the quota provisions of various nations, including our own.

the committee for a Jewish Army assembled an imposing list of conference participants. The new Emergency Committee soon opened a two-pronged campaign: national publicity and lobbying in Washington. William Randolph Hearst in late August ordered the thirty-five newspapers in his chain to publish the first of many major editorials supporting the Emergency Committee and appealing for nationwide backing for its proposals. The Emergency Committee efforts to reach the President met blank walls.

On October 6 Orthodox Rabbis arrived in Washington. The vice president, Henry Wallace, met them there. Some rabbis sobbed audibly as their petition was read in Hebrew and English, then handed to Wallace. Roosevelt had a light schedule that day, and most of the afternoon was open. Moreover, he was aware that a delegation of rabbis hoped to visit him at four o'clock (or at any time convenient to him). Shortly before the rabbis arrived, Roosevelt slipped away to Bolling Field to observe a ceremony incorporating forty Yugoslavs into the U.S. Army Air force and dedicating four bombers that they would fly. He then left for a five-day weekend at Hyde Park.

Something was done that October for Jews. The 8,000 Jews in Denmark escaped death and freedom because Danes were willing to risk their lives for them and the Swedish government was willing to incur Germany's wrath to give them sanctuary. The Moscow conference of American, British, and Russian foreign ministers neared adjournment. Even the stern war crimes warning that emerged from the conference failed to mention the Jews. Yet it named several other peoples.

The next afternoon, Roosevelt told Undersecretary of State Edward R. Settinus, Jr. that he thought more could be done for Jewish refugees. The president suggested additional refugee camps and small offices staffed by Americans in Spain, Portugal, North Africa, Italy, and Turkey. This marked Roosevelt's first initiative to help the stricken Jews.

Apparently, the Emergency Committee had forced the issue on the President. Samuel Rosenman, his chief speech writer, and Eleanor Roosevelt both noticed that the large advertisements were disturbing him. The President complained that the Uncle Abraham cartoon in particular had hit below the belt.

The day after he spoke with Settinus, the President left for the conferences at Cairo and Tehran. In his absence, the State Department demolished his refugee plan by detouring it to the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees. The ICR pondered it for six weeks, agreed to a truncated version, and then did not act for another four months. Roosevelt's next move would come only when events forced it on him, in January 1944.

The one department of the USA government which was serious about rescue efforts for the Jews was the treasury. However, throughout the war, it was undermined by the British, the State Department and the President. At one stage the British thought that a Treasury initiative could lead to a serious American rescue drive. The British Foreign Office then stepped in. The resulting message was described by Morgenthau as "a satanic combination of British chill and diplomatic double-talk, cold and correct and adding up to a sentence of death."

An eighteen page memorandum on State Department obstruction was written, entitled "Report to the Secretary on the Acquiescence of this Government in the Murder of the Jew." Led by DuBois, the Foreign Funds Control staff prepared this searing indictment, which charged that the State Department was "guilty not only of gross procrastination and willful failure to act, but even of willful attempts to prevent action from being taken to rescue Jews from Hitler." For example, the State Department held back an effort by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee to transfer funds to Switzerland for relief and rescue. Later, the Treasury forced the State Department to issue a license for the JDC.

Another project caught in the State Department maze in 1943 was the Goldmann plan, probably the most ambitious of the wartime proposals to aid Jews inside Europe.

September, Nahum Goldmann of the World Jewish Congress asked Breckinridge Long to help in providing food and medicines to Jews still alive in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the Balkans. The aid, to be channeled through the International Red Cross, would cost about \$1 million. Goldmann stated that American Jewish organizations could furnish \$2 million. He hoped the U.S. government might supply the other \$8 million. Long submitted the proposal to the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees. Diverting the project through the IC meant indefinite delays and no results. Ansel Luxford of the Treasury Department described the State Department's handling of the Goldmann plan: "Long first tossed it into the waste paper basket; namely, the Inter-governmental Committee."¹

The State Department's treatment of the Goldmann plan differed markedly from the quick allotment earlier in 1943 of \$3 million from the President's Emergency fund for transportation to Mexico and maintenance there of up to 28,000 non-Jewish Polish refugees.

Why did the State Department respond so inadequately to the Holocaust? A combination of incompetence³, apathy⁴, feeling there was not much that could be done anyhow, fear of a great exodus, anti-alienism⁵ and support for Great Britain and her policies all contributed.

¹By January 1944, nothing more had happened concerning the Goldmann plan. When a Jewish leader inquired about it, Long explained that the ICR had approved some of its projects, but no government funds were currently available for them. Yet, less than two months earlier, Long had testified to a congressional committee about the Goldmann plan, citing it as important evidence of the State Department's vigorous efforts for refugees. He stated unequivocally that "we have agreed to finance half of the cost. It would be \$3 - \$4 million for each government." Moreover, in January, when Long insisted that no government funds could be found, a Treasury Department inquiry confirmed that \$1 million remained available in the most obvious account for such undertakings, the President's Emergency fund. The other side of the Goldmann plan collapsed in January when it became clear that the British government had no intention of participating.

²The Riegner, Joint Distribution Committee, and Goldmann proposals were not the only plans that were bottled up in the State Department. A fifty-page State Department internal memorandum of July 1943 summarized several rescue projects then under consideration. Only two ultimately succeeded and they concerned non-Jewish refugees. One involving Jews, the refugee camp in North Africa, could provide a minor benefit, but only after a thirteen-month delay. None of the other projects advanced beyond the preliminary stages.

³Close study of State Department records leaves one with the impression of a poorly administered agency where initiative and imagination were scarce. Furthermore, the absence of any comprehensive approach to rescue meant that opportunities for action were handled in piecemeal fashion. Even then they were usually fumble.

⁴Much of the top and middle-level leadership seemed little moved by the European Jewish catastrophe. Cordell Hull was uninterested in and uninformed about his department's rescue policies (it is striking that almost nothing about refugees appears in the voluminous Hull files in the Library of Congress.)

⁵The State Department's policies arose to some degree from the personal anti-alien, anti-immigrant attitudes that prevailed among those involved in refugee affairs. Breckinridge Long was an extreme nativist, especially with regard to eastern Europeans. His subordinates shared his anti-alienism. Their attitudes influenced not only visa policy but the department's entire response to the European Jewish catastrophe.

The extent to which anti-Semitism was a factor is more problematic. The fact that few Jews held State Department posts points to a generally anti-Semitic atmosphere. But direct proof of anti-Semitism in the department is limited. There is no doubt about the existence of anti-Semitism among American consuls overseas. It was widespread.

⁶Closely related to the fear of a large exodus of Jews from Axis Europe were two other aspects of the State Department's response to the Holocaust. One was the visa policy that shut the United States

Under such circumstances, large-scale removal of Jews appeared impossible; y public pressures for action could not be kept down. The State Department's solution to th quandary was the Inter-Government Committee. Proclaimed as the international engine rescue, its ineffectiveness hidden behind a supposedly necessary veil of secrecy, it provided an excuse for State Department inaction. Rescue proposals could be relayed to it w confidence that nothing significant would develop, that no outflow of Jews would result.

On January 22, 1944 the War Refugee Board was established.¹ Why did it take fourteen months from the time Stephen Wise announced the news of extermination, November 1942, until an American commitment to rescue was won? First, State Department officials did what they could to choke off the growth of public pressure for rescue. Second, most Christian leaders, secular and religious, were indifferent. Finally, American Jewry failed to forge a united and sustained movement for rescue.²

all but a tiny trickle of refugee immigration. The other was the department's quiet, but unwavering support for Britain's policy of very tight limits on refugee entrance into Palestine. Thus two of the most likely havens of refuge were virtually closed. And other countries were provided with justification for their own barred doors.

¹The Emergency Committee to Save the Jewish People of Europe initiated the proposal. Endorsements by many major newspapers across the country helped build public support. Five days of hearings were held. Breckinridge Long testified at a closed meeting of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. "a rather complete rejoinder" to the claims of earlier witnesses that little was being done to rescue Jews. Long's testimony was made public. It ignited a burst of criticism. Long claimed that "we have taken into this country 580,000 refugees." People familiar with the situation knew that over 250,000 had come and many of them were not Jews.

The furor over his inaccurate testimony helped end his control over refugee policy. The emergency committee worked almost alone for a passage of the Rescue Resolution. Zionist leaders acting through the American Jewish Conference, ever hampered its progress. They pressed Congress to replace it with one closer to their own specifications. They maneuvered for an amendment calling for opening Palestine to Jewish refugees. The Palestine issue had been intentionally omitted from the legislation because it was so controversial.

²*Could We Have Stopped Hitler?*: Edwin Black: In the enormous shadow of guilt that seized American Jewry after the Holocaust, the answer all too often has been, "We didn't do enough." We are quick to shoulder the onus of self-blame for having been timid citizens, afraid to stir the waters in uncertain prewar times. [However,] Immediately after Hitler's rise to power, American Jews mounted a formidable economic war to topple the Nazi regime.

Just weeks after Hitler assumed power on January 30, 1933, a patchwork of competing Jewish forces led by American Jewish Congress president Rabbi Stephen Wise, civil rights crusader Louis Untermeyer, and the combative Jewish War Veterans, initiated a highly effective boycott of German goods and services. Each advanced the boycott in its own way, but sought to build a united anti-Nazi coalition that could deliver an economic deathblow to the Nazi party...The boycott unnerved the Nazis, who believed that Jews wielded supernatural international economic power.... Whether or not this new boycott actually possessed the punishing power to crush the Reich economy was irrelevant; what mattered was that Germany perceived the Jewish-led boycott as the greatest threat to its survival--and reacted accordingly. On August 7, 1933, an official delegation of four German and a Palestinian Zionists and one independent Palestinian Jewish businessman were ushered into a conference room at the Economics Ministry in Berlin.... The Nazis wanted to know how far the Zionists were willing to go in subverting the boycott. The Zionists wanted to know how far the Reich was willing to go in allowing them to rescue German Jews.... the Transfer Agreement was born... The Transfer Agreement permitted Jews to leave Germany and take some of their assets in the form of new German goods, which the Zionist movement would then sell in Palestine and eventually throughout much of the world. The German goods were purchased with frozen Jewish assets held in Germany.... The Transfer Agreement enabled both Germany and the Jewish community in Palestine to achieve key objectives.... Jews could not enter without a so-called Capitalist Certificate, provided they possessed the equivalent of \$5,000 The more German goods Zionists sold, the more Jews could get out of Germany and into Palestine, and the more money would be available to build the

This order, which carried the force of law, should have opened the way for a powerful rescue campaign. But the WRB did not receive the cooperation that was promised. Consequently, its capacity for rescue was always substantially less than it should have been.

The War Department was skeptical that the military should take a role in their rescue. But the board had to press constantly to obtain State Department cooperation and even th

Jewish State. The price of this commerce-linked exodus was the abandonment of the economic war against Nazi Germany.... The Transfer Agreement tore the Jewish world apart, turning leader against leader, threatening rebellion and even assassination.... By the end of April 1933, total Reich exports were down 10 percent as a result of the boycott. But the economic war against Germany still lacked cohesiveness. The boycott question also divided the American Jewish community. Germany, the besieged Jewish community opposed the boycott. the Transfer Agreement was adopted on August 24 as official policy. ...

But as the days progressed, the plight of German Jewry became more and more desperate. Nazism's stranglehold on Germany appeared all the more irreversible. European anti-Semites everywhere were following suit. Jewry seemed finished in Europe. A Jewish homeland in Palestine seemed the only answer.... In the end, however, Wise bowed to Zionist pressure and simply backed down. The boycott was abandoned.... Ultimately, the war did force an end to Transfer, but not before some 55,000 Jews were able to find a haven in Palestine.

Those who would condemn the Zionist decision to enter into a pact with Hitler have the luxury of hindsight. In 1933, the Zionists could not have foreseen the death trains, gas chambers, and crematoria. But they did understand that the end was now at hand for Jews in Europe. Nazism was unstoppable. The emphasis now became saving Jewish lives and establishing a Jewish State.... | one can say what combination of factors might or not might have stopped Hitler. What is clear, however, is that American Jewrywere... ultimately, divided.

¹The War Refugee Board did achieve some significant breakthroughs.

In early 1943, the State Department and the British Foreign Office had brushed aside a Rumanian offer to release 70,000 Jews from terrible camps in Transnistria and turn them over to the Allies. Later in 1943, after evacuating 6,400, the Rumanians gave in to German pressure and ceased their operation. 48,000 Jews still alive in Transnistria were safeguarded. Rumania surrendered to Russia on August 23, and two weeks later the Soviets took control of Bulgaria. The Jews of Rumania and Bulgaria needed aid, but they were safe. In 1944, the Jewish Agency brought out 2,000 more Jews. But the British halted this exodus, insisting that, with the Germans gone, Jews in Rumania and Bulgaria were now safe and thus not eligible for admission to Palestine.

In all, nearly 7,000 Jews left the Balkans and reached Palestine via Turkey under the aegis of the WRB.

Hirschmann of the WRB affected far larger numbers by negotiating to break up the abominable Transnistrian camps and bargaining for the greatest possible protection for Jews who were still alive in Rumania and Bulgaria. Hirschmann pointed out that the very formation of the WRB had accomplished something else of importance. Its birth, according to numerous Jews passing through Turkey, had "injected new life and hope into...refugees throughout the European continent." One group of fugitives explained, with obvious emotion, "for two years there had been only one phrase on everyone's lips, 'when are the Americans coming?'"

After Turkey, Spain appeared to be the most important escape hatch from Axis Europe. Deportation of Jews had continued. Spanish authorities discouraged it by incarcerating the fugitives. Their inmates were "sleeping, despite the bitter cold of winter, without blankets on cold concrete floors crowded together with inadequate sanitary facilities, and forced to subsist on a starvation diet." In one prison, three toilets served 1,900 men.

An inmate described conditions at the largest camp, Miranda de Ebro: "we sleep on the floor, with a mattress, without pillow, tortured by innumerable flies and bedbugs. Everything is covered with the stratum of dust which, when raised by the wind, penetrates everywhere and especially in the face. The most terrible thing is the almost complete lack of water."

The War Board representative, Hayes's, refused to send a representative to Spain. Hayes also tried to keep funds for rescue from going into Spain, not so much because he was anti-Semitic, but because he wanted to stop Spanish sales of strategic materials to Germany. He also intended gradually to swing Spain away from the Axis and toward the Allies.

could never count on it. Yet, that cooperation was vital, both to secure the crucial assistance of the American diplomatic missions abroad and to carry on negotiations with neutral and allied governments.

In spring 1944, under WRB pressure, the State Department opened negotiations with Germany concerning inclusion of Jews in the next general American-German exchange. Ultimately, in January 1945, 800 Germans interned in the United States and Latin America were exchanged for 800 American and Latin American citizens. Among the latter were 100 Jews from Bergen-Belsen who possessed Latin American passports. A key obstacle to large exchanges was that few Germans in the Western Hemisphere would agree to repatriation.

With time, it became evident that the Nazis considered Jews who held Latin American papers a potentially useful commodity. They might be exchangeable for some of the tens of thousands of German citizens resident in Latin America. So the Nazis put these supposed Latin American Jews into special exchange camps with other interned civilians of other nationalities. Conditions there were livable, and, most important, the Jews seemed safe from deportation.

The Germans were confiscating the passports of several Latin American nations from Jews in Vittel. The Swiss government had failed to protest. Switzerland represented the interest of most belligerent Latin American nations in matters concerning Germany. The board drafted a telegram instructing the American legation in Bern to press the Swiss to prevail upon Germany to accept Latin American documents as valid unless they were actually repudiated by the Latin American governments.

Middle-level State Department officials blocked the telegram for almost seven weeks. The Union of Orthodox Rabbis in New York received information that the Polish Jews in Vittel had been isolated for deportation. Three rabbis hastened to Washington. The rabbis got nowhere with the State Department. Then they went to Morgenthau. Upset by the long delays, and shaken when the oldest rabbi "completely broke down and...wept, and wept, and wept," Morgenthau phoned Hull and persuaded him to force the issue. In Bern, the first secretary of the American legation, George Tait, echoed objections: "*I do not like this matter at all in any of its aspects. This group of persons has obtained false papers to which they have no claim and has endeavored to obtain special treatment which they would not otherwise have received. We are being placed in the position of acting as nurse-maid persons who have no claim to our protection.*"

But Tait was quickly overruled. The other telegram initiated negotiations with fourteen Latin American governments. It asked each to affirm the passports issued in its name and to insist to the German government that holders of its documents be protected. After prolonged negotiations, which the Vatican seconded, thirteen Latin American states consented. No solid data are available concerning the number of Jews thus saved, but the board's own guess of about 2,000 is reasonable.

The British refused to establish a parallel rescue committee to work with the WRB. Only grudgingly did they cooperate with the board's efforts to evacuate refugees from the Balkans through Turkey to Palestine. They attempted to restrict the activities of the WRB representative assigned to southern Italy. And they persistently tried to block the board's program of licensing private agencies to transmit money to Europe for rescue and relief projects¹.

¹Probably the most crucial difficulty to confront the WRB concerned funds. From the beginning, the board acted mainly as facilitator and coordinator of projects carried out by the private organizations. Even when it initiated rescue operations itself, it usually called on the private agencies to fund them.

In sum, government funding was very limited, the board's work was mainly administrative and the Board required that the predominately Jewish private agencies finance and implement most projects. Rescue had finally become official government policy¹. The American Jews, through contributions to their own organizations, had to pay most of the costs. In its sixteen months of action, the War Refugee Board spent \$547,000 of government funds, drawn from \$1,150,000 set aside for it in the President's Emergency Fund. In addition, the President allotted the board \$1,068,750 specifically to buy and ship food parcels to concentration camp inmates. By contrast, the Joint Distribution Committee spent an excess of \$15,000,000.

k. The American Military

Most of the following has been culled from David Wyman, The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust 1941-1945:

In Sweden, the WRB came too late; comparatively few Jews remained alive in the northern tier of Europe by 1944. And the obstacles to reaching them and getting them out of Axis territory were immense. It rescued only 1,200 people, none of them Jews. Non-Jewish escapees reported that many Jews could have fled on WRB boats, but they suspected a German trap and would not take the risk. The board helped bring 15,000 refugees out of Norway. Again, none were Jews.

Until August 1944, the Swiss government restricted the entry of Jews. Social welfare organizations, Christian church groups, newspapers, and some political leaders argued on humanitarian grounds for opening the borders to all fleeing Jews. At the end of 1944, some 27,000 Jewish refugees were safe in Switzerland – so were approximately 20,000 non-Jewish refugees and about 40,000 interned military personnel. The stringent policy was caused by the government's fear of antagonizing Germany (a compelling problem, given Switzerland's economic and military vulnerability) and by its anti-Semitism that was widespread in Swiss society. The number of Jews turned back will never be known.

Yet, despite this, the WRB accomplished more in Switzerland than it was able to in Spain, Italy, Sweden. Because of its location close to much of Nazi Europe, the small mountain nation became the nerve center of the board's overseas work. It was the best corridor for sending funds into Europe. From a discretionary fund of \$250,000 supplied by the Joint Distribution Committee, McClellan financed numerous undercover programs: relief operations in Axis territory, production of false documents, an underground courier service, and escape projects. (The escape work required small-scale bribery of border officials and police as well as payments to "passeurs" who guided refugees through the mountains and across the Swiss border.) Operations extended into France, Germany, Italy, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. They enabled thousands of endangered people in Axis Europe to survive and other thousands to escape. The nearly 8,000 Jewish orphans who were hidden in France in Christian homes, contributed to their maintenance. When the Nazis unleashed a campaign to track them down for deportation, WRB money helped persuade minor officials and local authorities to cooperate in keeping the hunters off their trail. WRB money enabled the escape of 2,000 Jews from Hungary into Rumania and of a few hundred others into Yugoslavia. The facilities of Swiss, Swedish, and Turkish diplomatic couriers and even the papal nunciature's pouch were made available to smuggle the Hechalutz funds into Axis territory.

In August 1944, complex negotiations between Swiss Jewish leaders and Nazi officials led to the release from Nazi concentration camps and delivery to Switzerland of nearly 3,000 Jews. Finally, in April 1945, another 1,400 camp inmates, mostly non-Jewish French women, reached Switzerland.

¹Nevertheless, even at this stage, the American government ignored huge opportunities to engage in rescue activities. To generate pressure for measures to save the Hungarian Jews, the American Jewish Conference held a mass demonstration in New York City on July 31. More than 40,000 people packed Madison Square Park and adjoining streets for two hours in oppressive late-afternoon heat. Stephen Wise, other prominent Jews, and a few non-Jews spoke for swift actions to save the remnant of European Jewry. The crowd endorsed a call for immediate implementation of the Horthy offer to release the Hungarian Jews. But none in the seats of power listened, except the War Refugee Board, which was already doing what it could.

The American Military clearly saw its priority in winning the war. Their attitude was: First we must win the war, and then we can save the Jews. Even after it became known that the Holocaust was taking place, the military went so far as ignoring their instructions from the political echelons on this issue. For example, the War Department had knowingly set aside the executive order that established the War Refugee Board. When the Bermuda Conference had originally recommended a refugee camp in North Africa, the War Department and the Chiefs of Staff had resisted the plan largely because they thought it might lead to more such requests. They claimed that shipping could not be spared, food supplies in North Africa were inadequate, and an influx of Jews might anger the Arab population and necessitate military action to maintain order.¹ Yet General Eisenhower, who was on the scene, saw no problem about keeping order; and at that very time the Allies were transporting thousands of non-Jewish refugees to camps in Africa and providing for them there.

Months later, the Allied invasion of Italy opened new opportunities to rescue Jews but again the military was negative. In fall 1943, Yugoslav partisans freed 4,000 people, mostly Jews, from Nazi internment, and moved them to the Adriatic island of Rab. Because the Germans seemed likely to capture the island, the State Department, at the request of the World Jewish Congress, asked the military to help get the refugees to Italy. The Joint Chiefs of Staff replied that Allied forces in Italy were already overloaded with refugees to care for and action to aid those on Rab "might create a precedent which would lead to other demands and an influx of additional refugees."

Even the State Department, not known for its pro-Jewish opinions, was taken aback. Stettinius warned Hull that if the response to the Rab situation accurately reflected military policy, the United States might as well "shut up shop" on the effort to rescue any more people from Axis Europe. He thought the President should inform the military that rescue was "extremely important...in fact sufficiently important to require unusual effort on their part and to be set aside only for important military operational reasons."

No such thing happened. Soon afterward, the War Refugee Board was formed and, as has already been noted, the War Department unilaterally decided against involving the military in rescue. It was this policy - never disclosed to the WRB - that extinguished Rosenheim's pleas for railroad bombing.

I. Britain

There is no consensus on Britain's policy towards Jews during World War II. Some historians assail the wartime British government as virtual accomplices in mass murder. Others feel that Britain did as much as it could considering the circumstances². The record is mixed and therefore confusing. On the one hand, Britain received over 60,000 Jewish refugees from Nazism; but it also barred the way to Jews trying to reach Palestine.³

¹For example, Professor Michael J. Cohen of Bar Ilan University has written a fierce critique of Winston Churchill's policy on the Jewish question.

²The American historian William Rubinstein, who now teaches at the University of Wales Aberystwyth, has written two books in which he acclaims Britain, and indeed the English-speaking world as a whole, as affording havens of refuge and tolerance for Jews fleeing persecution.

³Based on an article by Bernard Wasserstein in the Jerusalem Post, May 2000. Britain completed exchanges with Germany. Germans from Egypt, South Africa, and Palestine went to Europe in return for Jews sent to Palestine. ... A third exchange took place in July 1944. But only 463 Jews were involved in the three transfers combined. The Nazis had 4,000 more Jews cleared to go, but the British lacked exchangeable German citizens.

The British confiscated wartime bank accounts of Jewish refugees, many of whom they never returned. After the war, they delayed prosecutions under the War Crimes Act. In the end, only a few prosecutions were undertaken. It is perhaps no coincidence that Holocaust denier, David Irving, resides in England. On the other hand, the British instituted a national day commemorating the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. The establishment of a commemoration or a memorial is the most painless way to atone for a damning history doing nothing positive and much negative in the face of the Nazi massacre of the Jews.

Let us take a closer look at the British legacy to see why we make such a claim.

In 1942 Home Secretary Morrison replied to an inquiry by a member of Parliament that Jews in England who were rendered stateless by German decree would still be treated as German nationals because the United Kingdom government did not recognize the competence of an enemy state in time of war to deprive its citizens of their nationality.

In 1944 British military authorities in Belgium interned about 2000 Jews as "enemy aliens." When Sidney Silverman, M.P., intervened with the Earl of Halifax in Washington he was told that the measure was dictated by "military necessity." I suppose he felt that it was a military necessity to prevent Jewish refugees from reaching Israel, sinking their boats and locking up those who had survived the nightmare of Europe to begin a new life behind barbed wire in Cyprus.

Throughout the war, foreign minister Eden consistently rejected even calling on the Germans to let the Jews leave Europe, declaring it "fantastically impossible¹," and he was not taken by the proposal to send food to European Jews. To a suggestion that Britain help removing Jews from Bulgaria, Eden responded icily, "Turkey does not want any more of your people." Incredible though it may sound, what lay behind Eden's adamant opposition was the plea that the Allies call on Germany to release the Jews was the fear that such an effort might in fact succeed.²

Even if one accepts Eden's contention that transportation was not available, can anyone doubt that Jews would have walked, if necessary, across the Balkans and out through Turkey? Shipping and other resources were somehow found for non-military purposes when the Allied leadership so desired.

Ten days after Eden's discussion with Roosevelt and the other statesmen, the British government announced plans to take 21,000 non-Jewish Polish refugees to East Africa. There were some of the 100,000 non-Jewish Polish, Yugoslav, and Greek refugees whom the Allies moved to sanctuaries in the Middle East and Africa during World War II.

The war strengthened British determination to minimize Jewish immigration to Palestine. Unrest there or elsewhere in the Moslem world could hamper military operations, threaten supply lines, and drain off British troops to maintain order. The British realized that the Jews could not turn against them. The Arabs might. A few months before, 1,600 refugees "illegally" landed from the Atlantic were deported to Mauritius, 4,500 miles away from the Indian Ocean. A few of these rickety ships disappeared en route to Palestine; the *Salvador*, for instance, sank in the Sea of *Marmare*, dooming 200 refugees.

¹Wise and Proskauer went to see both Eden and Welles, separately, on March 27, 1942. Proskauer stressed the request that Britain and the United States call on Germany to permit the Jews to leave occupied Europe. Eden rejected that plan outright.

²In December 1943 the British government opposed a plan for evacuating Jews from France and Rumania. Six months later, the British war Cabinet's Committee of Refugees declined to pursue any possible arrangement for the exodus of large numbers of Jews from Nazi Europe, partly because it could "lead to an offer to unload an even greater number of Jews on our hands."

To avoid risking Arab animosity and to make the 75,000 openings last as long possible, the British intentionally kept the White Paper quota under-subscribed. The British tactics were similar to the State Department's visa-control methods. Groups of Jews coming from Axis controlled territory were excluded on the grounds that they were likely to infiltrate with enemy agents. (No such agents were ever found, nor did the British have evidence that there were any.) Moreover, Palestine entry certificates were issued or through normal channels, making it almost impossible for escapees to receive them.

An incident in early 1942 brought the consequences of the White Paper policy sharply to the world's attention. Crowded onto a small vessel, the *Struma*, 769 Jews fled Rumania for Palestine in December 1941. But they had no Palestine entry certificates. They so reached Turkey and apparent safety; however, the boat's engine quit there and could not be repaired. For two months, the refugees waited off Istanbul, their fate in the balance. The Turkish government refused to let them land without assurance that they could proceed to Palestine. And British administrators, quietly determined not to encourage any more "shiploads of unwanted Jews," forbade their entry there. Despite the captain's insistence that the *Struma* was unseaworthy, Turkish authorities had it towed out of port in late February 1942. Once on the open sea, the crippled boat was torpedoed or struck a mine and broke up. Only one person survived the wreck.¹

The British Colonial Office explained that since the refugees had come out of Axis territory, Nazi agents might have been planted among them. It added that supplies were short in Palestine. Passengers could have been interned in Palestine and checked before release. Polish, Yugoslav, Czech, Greek non-Jewish refugees had been admitted to Palestine from Axis territory. A confidential memorandum by the British Foreign Office more closely approached the truth concerning the exclusion of the *Struma* refugees; to bypass the system of "regularized admission" of Jews to Palestine would involve a risk of dangerous repercussions on the non-Jewish populations of the Middle East.²

Sam Ser, Jerusalem Post, July 2005: *Did the Allies Bury Early Intelligence Holocaust?* Recent reports on Holocaust intelligence are rehashing difficult questions regarding how much the Americans and the British knew about Nazi atrocities.

The New York Times on Sunday highlighted a lengthy analysis by a top historian at the National Security Agency, the US communications/cryptology intelligence service, who suggests that a combination of incompetence and anti-Semitism prevented the Allied intelligence services from identifying the unfolding Holocaust in Europe.

In *Eavesdropping on Hell*, Robert J. Hanyok of the NSA's Center for Cryptologic History claims that the British intercepted – and then buried – information detailing mass murders of Jews as early as 1941. Anti-Semitism is mentioned as a probable element, but not the sole motive, in the mishandling of such information.

The *Times* quotes a memorandum, cited in Hanyok's 167-page analysis, from a British cryptologic official, dated September 11, 1941, on German massacres of Jews in the Soviet Union: "The fact that the police are killing all Jews that fall into their hands should now

¹It is quite possible that a Russian submarine torpedoed the *Struma*. A Soviet military report credited the sinking to the submarine Shch-213, noting that three of its crew particularly distinguished themselves in the action. Later the Russians insisted that the *Struma's* passengers were Nazi agents being infiltrated into the Middle East.

²Secretly, however, the British decided to modify the policy and permit refugee ships that reach Palestine in the future to land. It specified that Jews who managed to reach Turkey would be allowed into Palestine. And counted against the White Paper quota. No public announcement was permitted. The lack of publicity guaranteed that the concession would help only a very small number of refugees.

sufficiently well appreciated. It is not therefore proposed to continue reporting the butcheries unless so requested." ...

But the worst indictment of the British concerns the Joel Brand story. On May 1944, four days after the mass deportations of Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz started, a small German aircraft touched down at Istanbul and discharged two Hungarian Jews. One, Joel Brand, was a leader of the Relief and Rescue Committee, a Hungarian Zionist organization involved in refugee aid and small escape projects. The other, Andor ("Bandi") Grosz, convert to Christianity, made his living as a small-time secret agent.

Grosz's orders, which emanated from the SS, were to arrange for a meeting between high Nazi officials and upper-level American and British officers to discuss a separate peace between Germany and the Western Allies. The real objective of Brand's mission is still unclear. But recent scholarship indicated that it, too, was an attempt by SS Chief Heinrich Himmler to bypass Hitler and use the Zionist leadership as a channel to contact the Western Allies concerning the possibility of a separate peace.

Adolf Eichmann gave the proposal that Brand carried to the Zionists of the outside world to him in Budapest. On its face, it was fantastic. Eichmann offered to release one million Jews in return for 10,000 trucks (to be used, he stated, on the eastern front) and sizable amounts of coffee, tea, cocoa, and soap. He also mentioned the possibility of an indefinite amount of foreign currency. Eichmann told Brand that he would let an initial group of several thousands Jews leave Hungary as soon as the Allies agreed to send the trucks.

None of Eichmann's requirements were hard and fast, however. This convinced Brand that further negotiations could, and must, be pursued. In his view, the only way to stop the death trains was for him to return to Budapest within a very few weeks with some indication that the Allies did not reject the scheme. He believed that trucks were essential, that the deportations might be halted if Britain and America expressed an interest in further negotiations.

Jewish leaders in Palestine recognized that Eichmann's conditions could not be met but hoped that something useful might come out of the Nazi overture. During June and July they pressed the British to keep the negotiations going and to send Brand back to Budapest. The Nazis would not conclude that the proposal had been rejected. Hirschmann, who interviewed Brand in Cairo on orders from the War Refugee Board, took the same position as did Steinhardt. In Washington, Morgenthau and Pehle, with the express concurrence of President Roosevelt, strongly supported continuing negotiations in the hope that Eichmann's offer might be the forerunner of other proposals.

In Britain, however, the proposition drew implacable opposition. Within the Cabinet Committee on Refugees, fear surfaced that negotiations might "lead to an offer to unload an even greater number of Jews onto our hands." The Foreign Office took the position that the scheme was either blackmail or an attempt to disrupt the war effort by sending out a flood of refugees. Accordingly, it should not be pursued any further.

Then, in mid-June, the Soviet government, which had been informed of the Eichmann offer by the British and Americans, declared that it was absolutely impermissible "to carry any conversations whatsoever with the German Government on this question." This conclusion was reinforced when the British interrogation of Grosz in Cairo indicated that Himmler's real objective in the affair had been to extend feelers regarding a separate peace. The British saw it as a trap, an attempt to split the Western Allies from the highly suspicious

Soviets. The Foreign Office, rushing to scuttle the entire risky business, leaked the story to the press.¹

m. France

Approximately 80,000 Jews in France – about 25 percent of its pre-war population of 330,000 – were murdered in Nazi death camps, executed in French prisons, or died from starvation, exhaustion and disease in French internment camps. France was involved with some degree of wartime collaboration that aided in the deportation of these Jews to concentration camps – mostly Auschwitz – from which only 2500 returned. On the other hand, two thirds of the Jews survived, primarily due to the aid given by French men and women from all segments of society.

Other reasons cited for keeping the death figure relatively "low" (compared with Poland and Holland), was a smaller German military presence, a vague goodwill by French officials and a more vociferous church. (See under **Response of the Church – France**)

Paulette Fink, an active member of the French underground that saved Jewish refugees from Poland, Hungary and Romania, recalled the reception and aid of the Frenchmen: "We were passing the children from one to the other, a chain with many links: priests and nuns, monasteries and convents, Catholic schools, some on farms to work as farmhands with no pay²."

¹The Brand affair produced two concrete results. Not long after Brand left Hungary, Dr. Rudolf Kasztner, a leading Hungarian Zionist, informed Eichmann that a report from Turkey indicated acceptance in principle of the German offer. Now, said Kasztner, the Nazis should provide evidence of their seriousness. At the end of June, after extracting a sizable ransom from Hungarian Jew Rudolf Kasztner, Eichmann permitted a special transport of Jews to leave Hungary. Supposedly bound for Spain for freedom, the train instead delivered its passengers to Bergen-Belsen. The second ransom transaction to emerge from the Kasztner-Eichmann negotiations involved some 18,000 Jews scheduled for deportation to Auschwitz. They were diverted to labor projects near Strasshof, Austria. About 75 percent of them survived the war. The War Refugee Board decided to pursue the matter indirectly, through Saly Mayer, the Joint Distribution Committee's representative in Switzerland.

In August 1944, Mayer succeeded in bringing out 318 of the Hungarian Jews held in Bergen-Belsen. In early December, the other 1,368 people in the original transport from Hungary also reached Switzerland. Apparently, Mayer's repeated insistence that their continued internment was impeding the discussion finally persuaded the Germans to let them go. Beyond that, the negotiations had little or no practical effect.

²The experience of Denise Caraco provides keen insight into the workings and psychology of rescue operations. The daughter of Jewish parents from Marseille, the university student joined Eclaireurs Israélites de France (Jewish Boy Scouts of France). Her task was to search the surrounding countryside and find families willing to take and hide a refugee child. At first, she placed the child with French Jewish families. "But," she explained, "not all French Jewish families wanted to be bothered. Far from it."

She later met Father Marie Benoit and Pastor Jean S. Lemaire, both of whom provided Jewish rescuers with personal letters of introduction that facilitated movement from one hiding place to another. She also worked with scores of assistants, both Jewish and non-Jewish who supplied and delivered food to the sheltered refugees.

Summing up her first-hand experience in the field, Caraco offered a penetrating analysis of rescue work:

"No matter how effective Jewish rescue organizations were in helping people escape the camps, finding hiding places, in supplying food and false papers and visiting people in hiding, and in obtaining funds, especially from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee in the United States, they could never (italics are hers) have worked without the help from thousands of non-Jews. Where else could we have hidden our people?"

The deportations from France in 1942, especially those from the Vichy, or unoccupied Zone, were more fully exposed to the scrutiny of the outside world than any other Holocaust development.

Peculiar status of Vichy France, which was partially autonomous and maintained diplomatic relations with the Unoccupied Zone, yet bypassed Vichy censorship by dispatching their reports from Switzerland.

Lacking sufficient forces to carry out mass seizures, the Nazis had to secure the collaboration of the Vichy government. The price of that cooperation was the exemption of French-born Jews from deportation, at least temporarily. Left vulnerable were 75,000 Jewish men, women, and children, most of whom had already endured a variety of horrors in their attempts to escape the Nazis.

Many of the children left behind in Paris were hidden. Nearly 4,000 of them, aged two to fourteen, were sent to "unknown destinations," packed into windowless boxcars without adult escort, without food, water, or hygienic provisions.

The outrage of Church leaders...it broke out even within the ranks of the police many of whom resigned or accepted dismissal rather than round up Jews. The military governor of Lyon was removed because he refused to send his troops to hunt Jews.

Although the protests failed to stop the evacuations, they may have contributed to the fact that the Nazis never undertook large-scale removal of France's native-born Jews. Moreover, the denunciations voiced by church leaders and spread by local clergy shattered the secrecy that the Vichy regime tried to impose by banning the news from the French press and radio. Several religious leaders sent out pastoral letters calling on church members to help Jews. Many French families took in Jews and hid them. Children especially could be concealed, and, despite some betrayals and disasters, about 8,000 were saved by the combined efforts of Jewish organizations, private families, schools, youth groups, Catholic convents and monasteries.

Interfaith cooperation flourished. The head of the Jewish Boy Scouts in France came to the leader of a Protestant youth federation and simply stated, "Mademoiselle, I have 6 foreign Boy Scouts to be hidden from the Police." They were hidden. Le Chambon-sur-Lignon, a Protestant village, successfully concealed scores of Jews, despite persistent police searches as well as government threats to reduce the town's food rations. Again, a force of Protestant and Catholic social workers broke into a prison in Lyon and "kidnapped" children who were being held there with their parents for deportation. The parents signed releases placing their children under the care of a Christian organization, with the assurance that it was simply acting as a protecting cover. The parents were deported the next day; the children were hidden in convents. When Pierre Cardinal Gerlier, archbishop of Lyon, refused an order to surrender the children, Laval struck back by arresting Father Pierre Chaillet, a member of the cardinal's staff. Cardinal Gerlier responded by again instructing the priests of his diocese to conceal Jews. His personal commitment and prestige enabled him to foil Laval; the children remained hidden and Father Chaillet was released. Americans also spoke out vigorously against the deportations.

n. Switzerland

Jer. Report, Dec. 12, 99

Report: Swiss Helped Nazis By Shutting Borders To Fleeing Jews By Marilyn Henry

By closing its borders to desperate Jews fleeing the Germans, "Swiss officials help the Nazi regime achieve its goals, whether intentionally or not," an international panel of historians said in December, 1999, releasing a long-awaited report on Switzerland's World War II refugee policy.

"The victims of Nazi persecution were not the focus of Switzerland's humanitarian commitment, neither during the war nor after it," said the commission led by Jean-Franco Bergier, a Swiss historian. Swiss officials "became involved in the crimes of the Nazi regime by abandoning the refugees to their persecutors," Bergier claimed.

There was no evidence that accepting many more refugee-seekers would have put neutral Switzerland in danger of "invasion by the Axis or caused insurmountable economic difficulties," the Bergier commission said in its 350-page report. "As we see it," the panel said, "anti-Semitism represents a particularly significant reason why the persecution of the Jews was either not given the attention it deserved or, despite knowledge of the facts, produced no reaction for the benefit of its victims."

One of the central legal problems of the Swiss refugee policy was its use of certain clauses of the German racial laws, including the "J" stamp, the commission said. The Swiss Federal Council on Friday reaffirmed its 1995 apology for its wartime refugee policy, which it said was "marred by errors, omissions, and compromises." "Nothing can make good the consequences of decisions taken at the time, and we pay our respects before the pain of those who were denied access to our territory and were abandoned to unspeakable suffering, deportation, and death," the council said in a statement read by Ruth Dreifuss, the Swiss president. Dreifuss, whose father helped provide a safe haven for fellow Jews, said the findings filled her with "immense sadness."

However, the government also said that the Bergier commission did not place enough importance on "undeniable historical realities." Switzerland, a country of 4 million, feared a possible Nazi invasion and was concerned about the "necessity of maintaining foreign trade to ensure the country's survival."

Saul Friedlander, an Israeli who survived the war hiding in France, was one of the nine members of the panel, which also included historians from Switzerland, the US, Britain and Poland. "What is alarming in the report is the extremely high level of anti-Semitism among the Swiss authorities," Friedlander said. "Switzerland even adopted the Nazi terminology of Aryans and non-Aryans."

Switzerland saved 21,000 Jews out of a total of 51,000 civilian refugees, including many Jews who illegally entered the country and were allowed to remain. Officials thought of the refugees more as a security risk than as people who were persecuted and need protection, the report said. More than 24,000 refugees who reached Switzerland were sent back. However, the panel cautioned, "the exact number of people Switzerland could have saved from deportation and murder remains unknown."

The Bergier report is filled with anecdotal evidence of the plight of the refugees. There are stories of the rare conscience-stricken officials, like Willy Zehnder, a border guard stationed in the Jura region who saved lives by pointing refugees to a place where they would be safe from German patrols and told them where they could enter Switzerland without being noticed. For this, he was reprimanded.

There also are cases from the canton of Geneva in 1942 in which refugees were brutally expelled and at times handed over directly to their persecutors. "It should be kept in mind that those responsible were later convicted in court for their actions," the report said.

"For persecuted people, the journey to the Swiss border was already fraught with great danger. When they reached the Swiss border, Switzerland was their last hope," the commission said. "By creating additional boundaries for them to overcome, Swiss officials helped the Nazi regime achieve its goals, whether intentionally or not."

Reaction from Jewish organizations was swift and positive. The Anti-Defamation League, World Jewish Congress, and the Simon Wiesenthal Center commended Switzerland for confronting its history.

A second issue with which the Swiss ultimately had to come to terms was the dispossession of Jewish wealth. Between January 1939- June 1945 (World War II), after the Nazis exhausted their own gold reserves (estimated at \$120 million), they turned to the gold reserves of the conquered European nations and the looted assets of individual civilians- and transferred around \$400 million to the Swiss National Bank in Bern. The Swiss Bank bought \$176 million in gold from Germany, which used the foreign currency to finance its war effort.

In May 1946, after the war, Switzerland contributed \$58.1 million in gold for the reconstruction of postwar Europe according to the Washington agreement. The Swiss also agreed to donate funds from dormant, heirless bank accounts to Holocaust survivors. This was considered the end of the issue until 1962 when the Swiss located dormant, heirless accounts worth about \$2 million. Although Jewish organizations suspected that other accounts still existed, it was only in 1992 that the World Jewish Restitution Organization was formed to coordinate Holocaust-era claims on behalf of survivors. It launched an international campaign for further investigation into Swiss wartime activities.

Then in May 1996, the Volcker Commission, created by the Swiss Bankers Association, was created to investigate Holocaust victims' assets in Switzerland. In September of that year Senator Alfonse D'Amato of New York asked the federal government to renegotiate the Washington Agreement. He was the first American politician to publicly revisit the issue. In October, Holocaust survivor Gizella Weisshaus filed the first U.S. class action lawsuit against Swiss banks, seeking to reclaim money from an account opened during World War II. Two weeks later another class action suit was filed by three class plaintiffs in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York. The complainant accused the Swiss Union Bank of knowingly accepting looted assets and preventing the recovery of these assets.

In May 1997, Undersecretary of Commerce Stuart Eizenstat released a government report, rebuking Switzerland for bankrolling the Nazi military and failing to help Germany victims. In response, the Swiss Bankers Association released a list of 1,756 dormant accounts valued at approximately \$42 million. Switzerland then established a fund worth \$200 million for Holocaust survivors and began compensating claimants. In addition, Swiss banks agreed to pay survivors and their relatives more than \$1.25 billion. (Lawyers representing Holocaust survivors file petitions agreed to collect no more than \$25 million of that sum!)

Neutral Switzerland, fearing a flood of refugees, began imposing border controls on refugees from Germany and Austria in 1938, and by 1942 had closed its borders entirely to people persecuted "for racial reasons only." Although some 300,000 people were sheltered in Switzerland between 1938 and 1945, many thousands of others were turned away at the border. Helping rejected refugees to enter the country was a criminal offense. A major government-commissioned report by historian Jean-Francois Bergier concluded in 2001 that Switzerland "got involved in (Nazi) crimes by abandoning refugees to their persecutors" even though the Swiss government knew by 1942 of the Nazis' "final solution" and that rejected refugees would likely face deportation and death. The Swiss government formally apologized to Jews for its World War II policies but it took almost 60 years after the end of World War II for Switzerland to grant a pardon to those who were imprisoned or fined for helping Jewish refugees to enter the country. The law, passed in Jan, 2004, annuls all sentences issued during the war to those who smuggled refugees into Switzerland or sheltered them without permission, but gives no right to compensation. A government study carried out to help lawmakers decide whether to pass the legislation concluded that most of those who help refugees enter Switzerland acted out of personal conviction rather than for money.

o. Holland:

Holland has possibly the best record of fighting the Holocaust and trying to save the Jews. Examples are the massive and effective rescue operation bringing Denmark's Jews to Sweden by sea, organized by the local Danish Resistance movement in October 1943; the widely observed protest strike in Amsterdam on February 2 and 26, 1941, initiated by the communist Party as a demonstration against the deportation two days earlier of some five hundred Jews to Buchenwald and then to Mauthausen – the only strike of this sort in all Europe, and the efforts of tens of thousands of Dutch people to give help to the persecuted Jewish population over the years.

Yet on the other hand, these efforts helped only a small proportion of the Jews. More Dutchmen were Nazi collaborators than were active in the resistance. Relative to the population, Holland had the most Waffen SS volunteers in Western Europe.

The myth of Holland's benign wartime attitude toward the Jews feeds partly on the Anne Frank story, a tale of bad Germans and good Dutchmen. It ignores the probability that like many other Jews, she was betrayed and thus sent to her death by Dutchmen, who earned a few extra guilders for their efforts.

The Germans murdered more than 100,000 Dutch Jews, that is, 75 percent of the Dutch Jewry, a higher percentage than in any other Western European country. On German orders before the Jews were deported, their property and assets were looted systematically. Dutch officials served the Germans, some with great zeal. The High Court of Justices appointed by the prewar government ignored the constitution and approved discrimination against the Jews. The government-in-exile made less effort than its Norwegian colleagues to try to save the Jews. In five years of radio speeches from London, Queen Wilhelmina devoted a mere five sentences to the fate of her Jewish subjects.

The main issue today is not that few of the Dutch were heroes, but that the Dutch government continues to deny its legal, moral, and financial responsibility for what happened.

The first postwar Dutch governments made no particular effort to help the Jews whose plight was much worse than that of the average Dutchman. Jews had to fight to return war orphans to family members or Jewish institutions. In another example of insensitivity, 18 months after the war some stateless Jews of German origin were held in the same camps as Nazis and their collaborators.

In 1997, the government established several commissions of inquiry to investigate looted Jewish property and its restitution. Their reports do not address the extent of the government's responsibility for the fate of the Jews during the war. But they do reveal how democratically elected Dutch governments and important institutions behaved immorally toward the Jews when this was profitable.

One example was that the government had not returned most of the taxes taken from looted Jewish accounts, even for the years after the owners had been gassed. From the report of the main commission, financial analysts can deduce that possessions looted from the Dutch Jews and not returned total about 10 billion guilders (\$5 billion), half of which derives from expropriated businesses. The report avoids mentioning this figure, however. Isaac Lipschitz, the leading Dutch expert on Jewish war claims, called the commission's recommendation to allocate 250 million guilders to the Dutch Jews "insulting." If this commission's conclusions are accepted, Holland will have to live with "the unbearable thought" – in the words of another commission – that it let its Jews finance their own deportation: Money was looted from Jewish accounts to build, maintain, and operate the camps of Westerbork and Vught whence Jews were sent to their deaths in Auschwitz and other camps. After the war, the Dutch democratic government bought these camps at a discount of 80 percent from the

Jewish community. The present value of this discount alone is more than 400 milli guilders.

During the war, the Dutch Stockbrokers' Association offered the German occupiers the opportunity to sell securities looted from the Jews on the Amsterdam exchange, thus obfuscating the identity of their true owners.

The post-war government failed to restore the rights of victims of persecution.

A few days before the Dutch parliament reconvened after the war, the government rushed through a change in the existing law to prevent renumeration.

The first post-war Dutch Prime Minister Schermerhorn commented to former Y Vashem director Yizchak Michman that one could not expect him - as a socialist - to restore money to Jewish capitalists.

In March, 2000, the Dutch government issued a document in which it apologizes to those who suffered in the Holocaust, stating explicitly, however, that this does not presuppose those responsible of having 'wrong intentions' even where it could be proved that Jewish owned securities had been bought in bad faith, virtually no securities were restored to the rightful owners until 1953."

Finally, in January 2000, Prime Minister Kok apologized for the Dutch role in the Holocaust.

However, the government's recent recommendation to pay the Dutch Jews 400 milli guilders in restitution is far below a realistic contemporary value of the monies illegally and immorally withheld from their Jewish owners. This sum represents about 5% of the current value of the assets looted and not restored. It is probably between 35% and 40% of the monies the Dutch Jews should have rightfully received from the government on the basis of the commission reports, which established only the nominal value of what was withheld¹

p. Canada

On April 10, 2000, on a visit to Yad Vashem, Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien apologized for Canada's failure to provide a haven for Jews during the Holocaust.

"Yes, errors were made in the past," Chretien said during a visit to Yad Vashem. "Even as you know, Canada is the most open nation today for refugees all over the world."² (I know Canada was horrible to the Jews but it will be nice to other people. Canada remains staunchly pro-Palestinian, anti-Israel government.)

Canada has a long-standing reputation as a haven for old Nazis, many of whom settled there shortly after World War II. But the Canadian government was reluctant to let even one Jewish refugee from the Nazis. At the 1938 Evian Conference on how to deal with the Jewish refugees the Canadian delegate wrote: "The trouble is that the more that is done for them the more of them there will be... So nothing will be done by Canada."

Until 1994, Canada made some, though not great, efforts to prosecute Nazi war criminals, with little success. But after the acquittal that year of former gendarme Capt. Irvin Finta, the commander of Hungary's Szeged ghetto accused of killing more than 8,000 Jews, the Canadian Justice Department changed its focus to identifying suspected war criminals and repatriating them or deporting them to the countries from which they entered Canada.

¹Based on articles in January and March, 2000 by Manfred Gerstenfeld in The Jerusalem Post.

²"As prime minister of Canada, I pledge to you that Canada will take a leading role to ensure that such atrocities never happen again," Chretien stated.

This method, used by the United States, has helped Canada reverse its reputation of leniency with Nazi war criminals, de facto a Nazi safe haven. In the year 2000, for example, Canada revoked the citizenship of Helmut Oberlander, a former SS death squad member.

The NY Times

Consider this: On July 2, 1944, *The New York Times* reported that 400,000 Hungarian Jews had been murdered by the Nazis, and that another 350,000 were to be exterminated within weeks. A useful item of information, obviously - and one the editors of the *Times* chose to run at four column inches, and that on page 12.

Much the same went for the paper's editorials. According to Susan Tifft and Al Jones, authors of *The Trust: The Private and Powerful Family Behind The New York Times* from 1941 to 1943 the *Times* made editorial mention of the fate of the Jews under Nazi Germany exactly nine times. "Editorials concerning the Warsaw resistance and subsequent ghetto uprising... referred obliquely to 'the Poles' and 'Warsaw patriots.' "

None of this was for lack of better information. As with today's media critics, in the early 1940s the *Times* found itself under a barrage of criticism from Jewish media watchdog groups, "most of whom disagreed violently with the *Times*' coverage." Yet, almost defiantly the *Times* persisted in underreporting the fate of European Jewry mainly because publisher, Arthur Sulzberger, feared being accused of "special pleading" on behalf of the Jews and felt he had to "lean over backwards to be objective and balanced in its stories about Jews."

Sulzberger, at the time also a vehement anti-Zionist, "was vigilant about correcting any suggestion that he or the paper might represent Jewish interests," write Tifft and Jones. In his memoir, *The Times of My Life and My Life With The Times*, former *Times* editor M. Frankel notes that this "past hung over us for decades."

Never again would the paper fail to forewarn of impending massacre (although that largely what happened in its coverage of the Indochina wars) or obscure the plight of the oppressed. Still, in its coverage of the Middle East over the years, the *Times* remain remarkably skeptical of Israeli actions and intentions, as if its postwar endorsement of Zionism was issued on a probationary basis.

xv - Responses of the Allies and Neutral Countries after the War

There is a difference between punishment and vengeance.

The Bible commands the pursuit of justice. Punishment is not vengeance. It is making a statement of principle. To condone wickedness is to encourage it. And so the world that had sinned with both deed and with silence strove to redress its wrongs after the defeat of Nazi Germany. To its credit, the civilized world regained its voice in the post World War II era. (Rabbi Benjamin Blech, quoted on the Aish Web site)

The UN declaration, signed by the three main Allies and the governments of eight occupied countries, was issued on December 17. It committed the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union for the first time to postwar persecution of those responsible for crimes against the European Jews.

a. The Nuremberg Trials

In early October 1945, the four prosecuting nations -- the United States, Great Britain, France and Russia -- issued an indictment against 24 men and six organizations. The

individual defendants were charged not only with the systematic murder of millions of people but also with planning and carrying out the war in Europe.

The list of the accused was to some extent arbitrary. The defendants represented the major administrative branches of the Third Reich and included prisoners held by each of the four prosecuting nations.¹ Twenty-one of the indicted men eventually sat in the dock in the Nuremberg courtroom starting November 20, 1945. One of those named, labor leader Robert Ley hanged himself before the trial began. Another, the industrialist Gustav Krupp, was judged too frail to stand trial. Martin Bormann, who as Adolf Hitler's private secretary was one of the most powerful Nazi leaders, was nowhere to be found. He was tried in absentia and sentenced to hang if he should ever turn up. Bormann apparently died as the Soviets entered Berlin -- his remains were identified there in 1972 and he was declared dead by a German court the following year.

On October 1, 1946, the judgement was read: 12 of the defendants were sentenced to death, 3 sentenced to life imprisonment, 4 given prison sentences ranging from 10 to 30 years, and 3 were acquitted.²

¹Thus, although most of the figures were prominent in the Nazi killing machine, however, Hans Fritzsche, who was held by the Russians, had been a relatively minor official in the Joseph Goebbels propaganda ministry but was included, along with Admiral Erich Raeder, to appease the Russians.

²Karl Doenitz: Supreme Commander of the Navy; in Hitler's last will and testament he was made Third Reich President and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. Sentenced to 10 Years in Prison.
Hans Frank: Governor-General of occupied Poland
Sentenced to Hang
Wilhelm Frick: Minister of the Interior
Sentenced to Hang
Hans Fritzsche: Ministerial Director and head of the radio division in the Propaganda Ministry
Acquitted
Walther Funk: President of the Reichsbank
Sentenced to Life in Prison
Hermann Goering: Reichsmarschall, Chief of the Air Force
Sentenced to Hang
Rudolf Hess: Deputy to Hitler
Sentenced to Life in Prison
Alfred Jodl: Chief of Army Operations
Sentenced to Hang
Ernst Kaltenbrunner: Chief of Reich Main Security Office whose departments included the Gestapo and SS
Sentenced to Hang
Wilhelm Keitel: Chief of Staff of the High Command of the Armed Forces
Sentenced to Hang
Erich Raeder: Grand Admiral of the Navy
Sentenced to Life in Prison
Alfred Rosenberg: Minister of the Occupied Eastern Territories
Sentenced to Hang
Fritz Sauckel: Labor leader
Sentenced to Hang
Hjalmar Schacht: Minister of the Economics
Acquitted
Arthur Seyss-Inquart: Commissar of the Netherlands
Sentenced to Hang
Albert Speer: Minister of Armaments and War Production
Sentenced to 20 Years in Prison
Julius Streicher: Editor of the newspaper Der Sturmer, Director of the Central Committee for the Defence against Jewish Atrocities and Boycott Propaganda
Sentenced to Hang
Constantin von Neurath: Protector of Bohemia and Moravia
Sentenced to 15 Years in Prison

Subsequent Nuremberg proceedings were held by the Americans, in which the Military Tribunals tried Nazi judges, industrialists, and Einsatzgruppen personnel, among others.

b. The Creation of the Tribunal and the Law Behind It

Each of the accused were charged with one or more of the following:

Count I: Conspiracy to Wage Aggressive War

Count II: Crimes Against Peace

Count III: War Crimes

Count IV: Crimes Against Humanity¹

Only the fourth of these dealt with the Holocaust per se, and applied to defendants responsible for the death camps, concentration camps and killing rampages in the East.

Initially, most of the Allies considered the crimes of the Nazis to have been beyond the scope of human justice -- that their fate was a political, rather than a legal, question. Winston Churchill, for example, said in 1944 that they should be "hunted down and shot." The French and Soviets also supported summary executions. The Americans, however, pushed for a trial.²

In August 1945, the British, French, Americans and Soviets, meeting in London, signed the agreement that created the Nuremberg court, officially the International Military Tribunal, and set ground rules for the trial.³ It was agreed that there would be three categories of crimes for which the accused were tried: crimes against peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

Acts are deemed war crimes only when they were a violation of the laws and customs of war, affecting the rights of fighting forces and the civilian population in occupied territory or in the course of warlike actions. Crimes against humanity, on the other hand, were defined as applying to acts against any civilian population -- including the population of the country that commits the acts, and commits them on its own soil -- at any time, in times of peace as well as in times of war.

What distinguishes crimes against humanity from other crimes are the extraordinary brutality and diversity of means that the Nazis employed to commit these crimes, the

Franz von Papen: One-time Chancellor of Germany
Acquitted
Joachim von Ribbentrop: Minister of Foreign Affairs
Sentenced to Hang
Baldur von Schirach: Reich Youth leader
Sentenced to 20 Years in Prison

¹Initially, crimes against humanity were understood to be crimes committed by a government against its own people, and there was some question as to whether the concept could be applied internationally. Their inclusion in the London Charter, the basis of the Nuremberg trials, was a novel extension of the concept.

²A faction within the U.S. government led by Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson had won a domestic battle over the U.S. position on punishment of the Nazis. The other faction, led by Henry Morgenthau, the Jewish secretary of the Treasury, supported a harsh plan designed to prevent Germany from ever rising again as an industrial power.

³The London Charter of the International Military Tribunal, was named to avoid using words such as "law" or "code" in an effort to circumvent the delicate question of whether the trial would be *ex post facto*.

unprecedented policy of persecution and extermination on which they were based, and the fact that while initially they were related to a policy of aggression, they exceeded by far the definition of war crimes in the traditional sense.¹

The crimes all have in common the element of "inhumanity": the cruel methods that were employed and the unprecedented purpose of mass extermination of victims simply belonging to a certain group (or being classified, by the criminals, as belonging to that group) without the victims committing any offense whatsoever.

c. A Crime Against the International Community

Every crime is an offense not only against the victim, but also against the established order of the country in which it takes place. Similarly, every international crime, especially when it is a crime against humanity, is an attack on the international community as a whole threatening the safeguards of its peace and indeed its very existence. Nevertheless, what distinguishes crimes against humanity from the other categories of crimes is that "inhumanity" rather than the injury they inflict upon "humanity" as a worldwide community. This was why they were designated as crimes against "humanity" in the abstract sense of that term.

The idea of crimes against humanity has, as its legal precedents, the Hague and Geneva Conventions.

The principle of humanity and the punishment of inhumane acts is valid under all circumstances and takes precedence over every national law and every bilateral or multilateral international agreement²; it is a universal and cogent principle, which is not subject to challenge and cannot be deviated from by unilateral decision; it can be changed or replaced only by a humanitarian principle that is of an even higher order (as stated in the 1969 Vienna Convention on Treaties). Therefore, the definition of inhumane acts as being criminal in nature does not depend on the legal system or established policy of the country in which such acts occur. No one can claim that he was simply following orders or that he was obeying the law as it existed in that land at that time.³ In this respect, too, crimes against humanity are *sui generis*, different from other criminal acts.¹

¹Among the victims of the Nazi crimes against humanity were populations for which the laws and customs of war provide no protection -- such as nationals of neutral countries, stateless persons, and nationals of countries that were partners in the Axis and, of course, nationals of Germany itself. Above all, most of the victims of the Nazi crimes against humanity were Jews, who, prior to the Nuremberg Trial, were not deemed to have protection based on international law.

²The element of humanity and the condemnation of and punishment for inhumane acts are not recent innovations in international law, the dictates of human conscience having long been regarded as one of international law's sources. Thus, the Petersburg Declaration of 1868 stated that the dictates of humanity must take precedence over the needs of war; and the fourth Hague Convention (1907) specified that in situations not specifically provided for in the convention, the civilian population and the fighting forces would also be protected by the principles of humanity and the dictates of societal conscience. This principle has since been reconfirmed time and again in various international treaties and conventions, such as the 1949 Geneva Convention and the 1977 Supplementary Protocols. The International Military Tribunal extended this principle to apply also to criminal acts that are not war crimes, in order to provide protection to every civilian population and to every individual, irrespective of his nationality and his country's policy and laws.

³The question was asked whether those who committed these crimes can be held accountable for them when they were simply obeying the law of the land. It is true that in a certain respect the crimes defined by the IMT charter are of a political character, since their planning, preparation, and execution were possible only in the framework of operations, guidelines, initiatives, and decrees emanating from and authorized by the political administration of a state. This, however, is no reason to treat them

d. Nations Take Stock

Although many nations ignored or denied their contribution to the Holocaust (or at least their failure to take action), by the turn of the millennium things began to turn around. In 1998, some 17 nations and numerous European enterprises had established historic commissions to examine their Holocaust-era histories. There were efforts to recover assets from Swiss, Austrian, French and German banks, European insurers and German industry, all part of what became known as "closing the final chapter of the Holocaust" before the end of the century.

In April 2001 the Simon Wiesenthal Center's Israel office graded 18 countries on their performance over the past few years in prosecuting Holocaust perpetrators.

Syria and Sweden received a failing grade, while the US netted an "A". The report harshly criticizes Syria and Sweden as "total failures" for refusing "to even investigate, let alone prosecute or extradite," Nazi war criminals². It gives a scarcely better "D" grade to Austria, Australia, Scotland, Estonia, and New Zealand for an "insufficient and unsuccessful effort," citing limited prosecution efforts it said were unsuccessful.

Those countries receiving a "C" grade, characterized as having "minimal success which could have been greater; additional steps urgently required," include Great Britain, Argentina, Lithuania, Latvia, Croatia, and Costa Rica. "B" grades, for having an "ongoing prosecution program with at least moderate success," include Germany, France, Italy, and Canada. Only the United States received an "A," for having a "highly successful proactive prosecution program."

The center's Israel head, Ephraim Zuroff, said there's a distinction made between countries upon whose soil the crimes were committed and those where Nazi criminals to

persons responsible for these crimes as political criminals in the accepted sense of that term since their acts were linked to the theory of racism and to other inhumane concepts that have precedent in the annals of mankind. Thus it was declared, in legal theory and practice, that such criminals may be tried by any country that does not want to, or has no reason to, extradite them for trial in other countries or by international tribunals.

Furthermore, their status is like that of other categories of criminals to whom the principle of universal jurisdiction and punishment applies. Nor may these criminals seek to justify their acts by claiming that they were performing their official duties or acting on orders from their superiors. One restriction that the IMT charter did impose was that in order for crimes against humanity to be tried, they had to be related to war crimes or crimes against peace, either as side effects of such crimes or in support of them.

Many legal experts and human rights activists seek to abolish this restrictive condition in the codification of international criminal law. They point out that while this condition applied to those tried at the Nuremberg Trial and the Tokyo trial of major Japanese war criminals, it should not be applicable to other criminals charged with crimes against humanity, and consequently their prosecution should not be linked to war crimes or crimes against peace. Indeed, such a link was conspicuous by its absence in Allied Control Council Law No. 10, of December 20, 1945, and in the laws of other countries, among them Israel's Nazis and Nazi Collaborators (Punishment) Law 571 of 1950.

("Encyclopedia of the Holocaust" ©1990 Macmillan Publishing Company New York)

¹"Encyclopedia of the Holocaust" ©1990 Macmillan Publishing Company New York

²The report criticizes Syria for consistently denying that Alois Brunner - responsible for the deportation to death camps of 128,500 Jews from Austria, Greece, France, and Slovakia - is living in the country "despite abundant convincing evidence to the contrary." The report notes that he was recently sentenced in France in absentia to life imprisonment for the third time, and that Germany, Austria, Slovakia, France, and Poland are currently seeking his extradition.

refuge. "The countries in which the crimes were committed often have difficulty facing the fact that there were local collaborators who played such an important role in the murders," said, "except, obviously, in Germany and Austria, where the people themselves committed the crimes.

"In post-Communist Europe this is especially pronounced. People there prefer to dwell upon the crimes committed against them by the Communists rather than the crimes they committed against the Jews in the Holocaust.

The report criticizes Scotland for failing to prosecute alleged Lithuanian death squad officer Anton Gecas (Antanas Gecevicius), currently residing in Edinburgh, as "an inexplicable travesty of justice, which will only be corrected if Scotland accedes to the request submitted last month for Gecas' extradition to Lithuania, or if the British government changes its policy on Nazi war criminals."

Britain two years ago did convict Byelorussian policeman Anton Sawoniuk for participation in the murder of the Jews of Domachevo, Belarus, and sentenced him to life imprisonment, but "no other cases have been prosecuted in the United Kingdom, and the government has already closed down the special investigations unit which operated Scotland Yard," the report adds.

"Although it is quite clear that changing from criminal prosecution to a policy of denaturalization and deportation of the Nazi criminals currently living in Great Britain would yield far more successful results, the government has heretofore refused to take such a step.

e. France

For a long time France did not give any recognition to its role in the Holocaust, claiming that it was occupied by the Nazis during the war and the Germans were to blame for anything that happened to French Jewry. This position began to change in 1995 when President Jacques Chirac apologized for wartime collaboration that aided in the deportation of 76,000 – 82,000 Jews to concentration camps – mostly Auschwitz – from which only 25 returned. In 1997, France appointed a commission under the chairmanship of the former politician and resistance leader Jean Matteoli to look into wartime assets which were confiscated from Jews and other citizens. The commission's interim report states that about \$100 million in bank accounts and about \$560 million in stock shares were stolen from their rightful owners. However, the French people, many Jews amongst them, have been opposed to litigation in the States to recover the money. Many share the sentiments of late President Francois Mitterrand who spoke privately of the "powerful and noxious influence of the Jewish lobby", though current French opinion is to strongly disapprove that kind of attitude.

f. Argentina

For many decades after the war, Argentina served as a safe haven for ex-Nazis. In May 2000 the President of Argentina, Fernando de la Rúa, apologized for the Argentine serving as a haven for Nazi war criminals.

Beginning in 1992 under former President Carlos Menem, Argentina began to clean itself of the stains on its past linked to its post-war role when it gave refuge to at least 11 Nazis and collaborators. These included Dr. Joseph Mengele, the Auschwitz doctor whose experiments on prisoners earned him the name "Angel of Death." Finally, in June 2000 Argentina finally apologized for providing refuge to these Nazis as well as to their assets. However, Argentina still denies being the regional hub for the Nazis' financial ties to Latin America during the war.

In February 1945, three months before Germany formally surrendered, the U. Treasury Secretary wrote the Secretary of State: "More recent reports indicate clearly th Argentina is not only a likely refuge for Nazi criminals but also has been and still is the foc point of Nazi financial and economic activity in this hemisphere."

In 1994, a car-bomb of the AMIA Jewish community center killed 84 people a wounded some 200.

g. USA

There has been no reaction by the USA government to its failure to do more prevent bloodshed. The rise of Communism as a result of the war further complicated thing However, the USA has the best track record of prosecuting Nazi War criminals.

¹After the war, several lesser-known Nazi officials became associated with what is known as t Gehlen Organization, a postwar intelligence operation run by Reinhard Gehlen, one of Hitle generals. The unit was partly financed by the United States and used to conduct espionage again the Soviet Union. At the time, the historians said, Americans defended the practice on utilitari grounds, because of the perceived seriousness of the Soviet threat to the West. Europe governments also used Nazis in the Cold War, and some German intelligence officials sought to u their wartime knowledge of the Soviet Union to ingratiate themselves with the Western powers.

Comfort to the enemy: Charles Fenyvesi, U.S. News and World Report, May 24, 2004: ...A team scholars pored over the last batch of 8 million World War II documents to be declassified unde 1998 law and produced U.S. Intelligence and the Nazis, a book that reveals the deep postwar ti between former Nazi enemies – many of them war criminals, and their Allied conquerors.

...Leopold von Mildenstein preceded Eichmann as head of the SS bureau that was set up to elimin Jewish influence from German life. Otto Alberecht von Bolschwing helped 13 leaders of Romani ultrafascist Iron Guard escape the country after a pogrom that left 600 Jews dead. Theodor Saevec ordered the shooting of civilian hostages in Italy. In the Netherlands, Erich Rajakowitsch expropriat Jewish property and deported Jews. Aleksandras Lileikis ordered the death of thousands, if not te of thousands, in the Lithuanian city of Vilnius.

The CIA knew about most, if not all, of the men's crimes before their recruitment. But it didn't' mat because the United States was fixated on a new enemy – the Communist Party. The Soviet Uni was "a black hole for U.S. intelligence," then CIA Director Richard Helms later explained, "and ' scrambled for information." Bolschwing managed to convince the CIA it needed his Romani contacts, while the agency approached Rajakowitsch because after the war he ran an export-imp firm in Milan trading with East Germany and China.

The intelligence value of the others was less clear, but the benefits to these former Nazis were not In return for protection, "the CIA got very little," says Naftali.... The Gehlen Organization, the C funded West German intelligence service, hired at least 100 former members of the SS and t Gestapo. Many of them succumbed to Soviet blackmail. Those, in turn, recruited others as doul agents. Ultimately, says historian Gerhard Weinberg, 'the Gehlen Organization was run fr Moscow."...

According to Kopkow, Heinrich Himmler, the head of both the SS and the Gestapo, may have thoug that he, too, would be shielded by the allies. Himmler had attempted some last-minute peacemakii which included releasing a few thousand Jews from the death camps. Kopkow reported that on M 4, 1945, Himmler addressed 15 SS officials who had fled Berlin for the north. "[T]otal military defeat a fact," Himmler acknowledged. But, he continued, "the possibility might exist that the Allies wo leave a small preserve to a still existing German government." Instead of swords, its men would wi hammers, and their assignment would be Germany's reconstruction.

Himmler had "delusions," says Breitman, who wrote a biography. But the newly declassified Briti and American documents, rich with CIA justifications for protecting Nazi war criminals, makes o wonder if Himmler's notion of a hidden Nazi zone for diligent workers was more than just a fantasy.

Scholars: U.S. gave tips on Holocaust low priority in '42: Hitler's plan kept quiet for montl Richard Willing, May 2004: Scholars reviewing newly declassified reports... The material was fr files of the FBI, CIA and its predecessor, the Office of Strategic Services... The scholars said t declassified documents also show: 1) The CIA recruited as intelligence sources 23 Germans w

xvi - Responses of Germany after the War

Today, anti-Semitism has become a dirty word in all Western countries, including, some degree, Germany. But German anti-Semitism did not simply disappear overnight with the end of the war.

In The Destruction of the European Jews by Raul Hilberg states that when, in 1951, the new West German government offered to pay reparations to the Jews, it was buying silence.

One newspaper called the figure of 6,000,000 deaths “exaggerated” and proposed 1,000,000 as a “fair estimate.” Another publication, explaining that the Jews were racially weaker than Aryans, attributed the deaths to the hardships of warfare. According to the sophisticated SS investigator Hauptsturmführer Dr. Morgen, the Jews destroyed themselves—completely, and almost without any outside help.

When West German Chancellor Adenauer was ready to begin sovereign negotiations in the United States, his advisors believed that the “success” of his mission “would depend in large measure on the attitude of Jewish groups toward him.” Thus the offer to pay reparations was made also with a view to buying Jewish good will.

In addition to that diluted theory of Jewish world rule, there are occasional but noteworthy references to Jewish “criminality.” Within the Bavarian Tyrolean region there have been recurring allegations of criminality in their crassest form: the Jews are still accused of ritual murder.

The Gestapo, Jews, and Ordinary Germans by Eric A. Johnson (Basic Books):

“The Gestapo in Cologne was exceptionally weak. The calm, elderly officers who came to them and did not undertake any of their own initiatives,” testified Dr. Emanuel Schäfer on Tuesday July 6, 1954, the first day of his trial before a Cologne jury court for assisting in the deportation of the Cologne Jews to the death factories in the east in 1941 and 1942. Tried along with Schäfer were two other former leaders of the Cologne Gestapo, Franz Sprinz and Kurt Matschke. In the course of the previous several years, the state prosecutor's office had investigated more than one hundred former Cologne Gestapo officers for their part in the mass murder. But in the end only these three men were put on trial, and their sentences would be light. The scenario would prove to be similar in the rest of Germany.

Of the 13,500 deported Cologne Jews, only 600 survived. Despite the appalling proportions of this mass murder, few Germans appeared to have been particularly interested. The newspaper headlines on the following day seemed almost tired and apologetic for having to report on such commonplace events. “Again a Gestapo-Case in Cologne,” read the headline in the Cologne newspaper *Kölnische Rundschau*.

The trial was over in four days. Schäfer, the fifty-three-year-old former head of the Cologne Gestapo from October 1940 to January 1942, during which time the Jewish “evacuation” to the east was organized and set in motion, maintained that he had not adhered to the existing laws, that the Jews had been well treated, and that he had no personal

appeared to have perpetrated war crimes. 2) The U.S. Army protected an additional 100 German spies, including their leader Reinhard Gehlen, who had knowledge of Soviet Russia. 3) The FBI and CIA helped Nazis or Nazi collaborators with intelligence value elude war-crimes prosecution. 4) The agencies pressured the Immigration and Naturalization Service to let war criminals working with American authorities resettle in the USA. American intelligence recruited the ex-Nazis in the Cold War fight against communism, some documents show. The professors say many of the ex-Nazis had little long-term value.

responsibility because he was only following orders from higher party and SS officials. In his words:

The Nuremberg Laws were well known at that time to all judges and attorneys. Today they are thought of as criminal. The Jews were placed outside of the German community because of the laws. This was indeed wrong, as I now know, but at the time it was the law of the land. In an official discussion with the Gauleiter Grohé after a bombing attack, I learned that the Jews were to move out of their homes to make space for people who had been bombed out of theirs. The Jews were then given lodgings in the fortress in Müngersdorf. After this time, an order came from Heydrich that they were to be evacuated.

Although Schäfer had presided over the planned and well-orchestrated murder of thousands of Cologne Jews, the wrongful arrest and incarceration of thousands of other Cologne citizens, and many other misdeeds of the rankiest order both in Germany and abroad during his prolific career, the court was partially persuaded by his defense. Many other countries, like Yugoslavia, Poland, and the Soviet Union, demanded that he be deported and stand trial for his leadership role in the deaths of thousands of their citizens during the Third Reich. But he was not deported. Instead, the Cologne court convicted him of *schwere Freiheitsberaubung* (aggravated deprivation of liberty), a crime of much less gravity than abetting mass murder, the prosecution's original charge against him in the official indictment. For his crimes he was to serve six years and nine months in prison, minus the time he had already spent in jail awaiting trial. In addition, he would have to forgo his civilian rights for an extra three years after he was let out of prison.

The fifty-year-old Sprinz and the forty-six-year-old Matschke got off even easier. Their defense was similar to Schäfer's. After Schäfer had been sent to Belgrade in the winter of 1942 to preside over the elimination of the Serbian Jews, Sprinz replaced him. Sprinz then oversaw the remaining "evacuations" of the Cologne Jews and stayed in his post in Cologne until February 1944. In trying to justify his actions, he asserted that he had never been an anti-Semite and that "the 'Jewish parasitism' was only one of the problems to be solved." He had "never thought that a 'biological solution' [which he called the annihilation of the deported Jews in gas chambers] would be used." Furthermore, he testified, he was "personally of the opinion" that he "had really nothing at all to do with the Jewish transports." As he put it, he did not wish to intercede in the already well organized process. Once I did observe the preparations for a transport of 800 Jews, which took place in the Cologne trade center. Nurses were on hand and a doctor. Of course I did not notice any enthusiasm." As Schäfer had done therefore, he defended himself by claiming that he was not involved in the physical aspects of the deportations themselves, that the Jews were well treated as long as they were in Cologne and that he did not and could not have known what was to become of them after they had been deported. And most important, he had only passed along orders from those above him to those below him in the chain of command. Convicted of the same minor offense that Schäfer was convicted of, Sprinz was given a three-year prison sentence minus the time he had already served awaiting trial.

Matschke was also convicted of the same offense but received only a two-year sentence. Although he admitted to having been the head of the section of the Cologne Gestapo dealing with Jewish affairs from 1943 on, he had only been involved, he said, in the transport of the small number of Jews who were still residing in Cologne after the mass deportations had been completed in late summer 1942. From all that he had heard about the transports, everything had proceeded smoothly, he explained, and he had acted in an official capacity only and thus bore no personal responsibility. "There had been no protests, complaints and everything had taken place without a hitch. In my department, everything proceeded along purely official lines."

In the typewritten summary of the final judgment in the case, the court made it clear that it did not believe that these men held more than marginal responsibility for what finally happened to the Cologne Jews. Compared with the guilt of the people who were truly responsible—who remained unnamed but whom the court referred to as the "leading perpetrators"—the responsibility of these men was deemed only modest. The "leading perpetrators," on the other hand, bore such "unending guilt that their deeds could not be punished adequately by any earthly court." The court pointed to several factors that served to reduce even further the share in the guilt attributable to Schäfer, Sprinz, and Matschke. All these men had led supposedly "unobjectionable lives," and each of them had made some effort to ease the hardships faced by the unfortunate Jews. Their guilt lay mainly in their foolish, but understandable, adherence to an ideology and a leadership that had led them astray. It is left for the reader of this document to assume that the court believed these men had alibis that they had not known that the Jews were to be murdered after they were deported. It is important to point out here that this document has never been made public and that this particular reader is one of the first to gain access to it.) The court ruled that these men were not the truly guilty culprits because each had merely followed orders from his superior. Schäfer and Sprinz had served at such a high level of command that they had little to do with the actual deportations; and Matschke came so late to the Cologne Gestapo as to have been involved in only a limited number of deportations. The identities of the truly guilty culprits remained unspecified.

This verdict settled the case at the time. It also set a precedent for the trials and investigations in other German localities that came several years later. It made clear that the new German state was not about to exact heavy penalties from a large number of past wrongdoers. The cases against former Gestapo and SS men and Nazi Party officials would, with few exceptions, be confined to handing out mild sentences in individual cases of wrongdoing in relatively minor but highly specific matters, as opposed to heavy sentences for the many people involved in more momentous, though less well defined, acts of inhumanity.

The Cologne prosecutor's office chose to put only three top Gestapo leaders, comfortable targets, on trial ... [despite] the ample grounds to incriminate many more people than were finally put on trial. ... In Cologne as elsewhere in Germany, "normal" Gestapo officers and other former Nazis and Nazi sympathizers would never have to face justice by putting the most stupendous crime of the century into motion.

For example, Karl Löffler, the head of the "Jewish desk" of the Cologne Gestapo during the deportations of 1941 and 1942, and his counterparts in other German cities, such as Richard Schulenburg of the Krefeld Gestapo, were spared by this precedent.

Karl Löffler had been the head of the Jewish desk for the Cologne Gestapo in the early 1940's; Richard Schulenburg held the same job for Krefeld. Both had been directly involved in the deportations, and both knew exactly what they were doing. Johnson calls them "local Eichmanns." At their denazification proceedings they were classified as "minor offenders" and deprived of their pensions. Both men appealed and won compensation for their years as police officers, as well as lighter classifications: Schulenburg was listed as "fellow traveler," and Löffler received a full exoneration. Not yet satisfied, both applied to have their years with the Gestapo included in their pensions. In the mid-50's they won their point -- and then they appealed again, this time to have their pensions reflect the promotions they had received when they were deporting Jews to the death camps. Once again they were successful. There is no satisfactory ending to this story. "Fully rehabilitated and fully compensated," Johnson tells us, "each man lived for several more years to a ripe old age."

Of the various Western European Jewish communities, the most important in the pre-Hitler era had been that of Germany itself. At its apogee in 1925, it comprised 564,000

individuals, and 503,000 even as late as 1935. Then, during the first six years of Nazi rule 350,000 Jews fled the country, leaving some 214,000 by 1939. Of these latter, 180,000 perished in Hitler's concentration camps. Possibly 20,000 others survived in Europe including those who had been confined to the "privileged" concentration camp Theresienstadt, or had gone underground. But the figure was uncertain. Since the majority of survivors were *Mischlingen*, children of mixed marriages, they appeared to be linked to the Jewish community by only nominal ties; the reconstruction of Jewish life in Germany presumably would have been the least of their concerns. Anyway, Germany was in ruins, and there appeared to be little inducement for them to remain. Almost every German Jew of intellectual, scientific, or academic stature had left Germany during the 1930s or had perished in the Holocaust. It was unlikely that any of the 350,000 German Jews who had departed for other lands would be persuaded now to return.

Of the 16,000 or 17,000 who remained, at least half had married non-Jews, and the children of these couples rarely were brought up in the Jewish faith.

Then, from 1952 to 1961, West Germany experienced a totally unexpected influx of over 20,000 Jews. Approximately a fourth of them came from East Germany.

"There are millions of good Germans," he observed calmly, "and for that matter, there are plenty of bad Jews." His rationale was one I had heard from nearly every other Jew I had met in Germany. "One cannot live in the past, worrying about who was a Nazi and who was not. I have received much help from many good Germans, and I admire and love that people."

A law passed by Bonn in 1961 offered former German Jewish citizens an immediate grant of approximately \$2,000 and every assistance from the housing authorities upon their repatriation to West Germany or West Berlin. Those who accepted were generally the old, sick, or destitute. By the early 1960s, they were making their way back at the rate of nearly one hundred a month.

A significant minority of German Jewish lawyers returned...Herbert Weichmann became mayor of Hamburg and rose to the presidency of the Federal Bundesrat. E. Kaufmann became Adenauer's legal adviser...Kurt Glaser became a senator of public health for Hamburg. Joseph (Asher) Neuberger, a returnee from Israel, served as minister of justice for North Rhine-Westphalia, and later as a judge on the federal Supreme Court.

Although most of the quarter-million Jewish displaced persons who were located on German soil after the war had gone to Israel by the early 1950s, some fifteen thousand Polish, Hungarian, or Romanian Jews remained as permanent residents.

"We have never encountered a single episode of anti-semitism during our entire life in Germany."

"We must reject Hitler's plan to make Europe Judenrein."

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s...forty-five synagogues were built or restored.

Unlike the early 1950s...in the 1960s and 1970s it was public opinion that prodded the government to launch new programs for German reeducation.

...*Aktion Sühnezeichen*—Operation Penance...a group of influential German pastors who demanded that Nazi guilt be accepted by all German youth. Aktion Sühnezeichen encouraged acts of contrition ranging from individual gestures of personal "atonement and penance" to an organized interest in Judaism. Between 1959 and 1967, several thousand young men and women performed menial, unpaid work for Jewish institutions throughout Western Europe and in Israel. A new order of German Protestant nuns, the Ecumenical Sisterhood of Mary, worked quietly in Jewish old age homes and private homes both in Germany and in Israel.

By the late 1960s and early 1970s, a German publisher seemed almost duty-bound to publish at least one Jewish title a year.

On November 9, 1966, a district court in Vienna sentenced Wilhelm and Hoha Mauer, forty-eight and fifty-two years old, to prison sentences of twelve and eight years respectively for their participation in the wartime mass murder of the Jews of Stanislaw, eastern Poland. What was startling about the trial was not the mildness of the sentences, but the fact that the defendants had been found guilty at all. In an earlier trial the previous spring the Mauer brothers had been acquitted by a jury of their neighbors in Salzburg, many of whom were subsequently revealed to be ex-Nazis themselves. The presiding judges refused to accept the verdict. Remanding the Mauers to prison, they asked the Austrian high court to authorize a new trial. The court concurred and also ordered a change of venue. According to reports in October and November, the Mauers were retried in Vienna and found guilty. Had it not been for the pressure of world opinion, the brothers probably would have been acquitted at the second trial as well. Even so, the sentences, for the murder of thousands of Jews, were an insult to intelligence and justice.

...Late-nineteenth-century...Vienna's Mayor Karl Lueger...Jews were excluded from all municipal offices and non-Viennese Jews were briefly denied the right to live in the capital. By the turn of the century, several flagrantly anti-Semitic political parties had emerged. In 1907, a parliamentary motion to exclude Jews from gymnasia and universities...a convention of university deans passed a resolution in 1925 to bar Jews from any academic post. By 1936, two years before the Anschluss, 537,000 Austrians were registered Nazis in a population of seven million.

About a third of the functionaries, working for the SS extermination program were Austrians, and almost half the six million Jewish victims of the Final Solution, ultimately were killed by Austrians.

At the Potsdam Conference in 1945, the Vienna government was exempted from reparations payments. Once Austria regained its sovereignty in 1955, most of its Nazi war criminals had been granted amnesty by various presidential decrees. Austrian Nazis who were tried and convicted in other lands enjoyed full civil rights upon returning home.

Only the briefest mention of the Nazi past—the period between 1918 and 1945—appeared in Austrian school texts. Professors with flagrant Nazi backgrounds were permitted to continue teaching.

The nation's attitude of self-forgiveness was particularly evident in its treatment of Jewish financial claims. As late as 1935, the Viennese Jewish community was Europe's third largest, numbering 200,000, nearly 3 percent of Austria's population. At the time of the Anschluss in March 1938, at least 185,000 Jews were still living in the Austrian capital, and at the outbreak of the war, perhaps 66,000. By then, 48,000 Jews had already been deported and some 4,000 managed to emigrate; but of the rest, only 9,000, or one out of seven, survived. Together with those who had perished, or had fled earlier by the tens of thousands, the survivors had been cruelly despoiled by the Nazi regime. In 1946, the Austrian government committed itself to the full restitution of property to Nazi victims. Yet it so became evident that Jewish claims fell into a different category. When Jews pressed their appeals, they were officially informed that they were entitled only to properties "identifiable in Austria; otherwise, they would have to look to Germany for restitution. Under this guideline, a Jew who had left a store filled with goods would receive back nothing but an empty storeroom. Before the war, most Viennese Jews had rented their flats. According to the law, they were not entitled to restituted housing in the postwar years. Subsequent Austrian restitution laws made no provision to compensate Jews for the exorbitant and confiscatory taxes imposed on them after the Anschluss. Nor was recognition given to heirless Jewish property; this reverted to the state. To the tens of thousands of Jewish survivors abroad claiming restitution, the Austrian government emphasized that transfers to foreign countries "would constitute a burden on the Austrian economy."

This coldly uncompromising stance was based upon a premise accepted by the nation's two major political parties from the beginning, namely, that Austria itself had been a victim of aggression.

The single concession extracted from Vienna by the Jewish Claims Conference was a "relief fund" for Austrian Jews who could prove they had lost their liberty—that is, who had actually been confined in concentration camps. At that, Vienna established the fund or after the Claims Conference persuaded West Germany to contribute half its capital; a payments to the Jewish victims never exceeded half the amount paid out in German indemnifications for the identical damage. In this fashion, then, survivors of one of Europe's oldest, largest, and most distinguished Jewish communities were essentially disenfranchised from *Wiedergutmachung*, whether financial or moral.

The precarious history of Jewish fortunes in Vienna is kept alive almost exclusively by street markers, plaques, and old buildings.

Vienna's importance in postwar Jewish life has been essentially as a transit point for Jews from the East. Twenty years later, the influx of *Ostjuden* comprised 80 percent of Vienna's 12,000 Jews.

Two-thirds of its members are over sixty. They are uncomfortable when Israeli personalities appear on the television screen....that Simon Wiesenthal receives contributions from Jews in Vienna. Bruno Kreisky, a Jew, served as Austria's chancellor.

...Often admitted to journalists that "there are two things I can never achieve [Catholic] Austria because of my Jewish origin: to become head of my party or to become the nation's chancellor."...He became both. In fact, Kreisky no longer meaningfully identified himself with the Jewish people

...September 28, 1973, two Palestinian terrorists kidnapped three Soviet Jewish emigrants. Kreisky...worked out the "compromise" of closing the Jewish Agency hostel at Schonau Castle.

Kreisky...he had a brother living in Israel...A public opinion poll in November 1973 revealed that 70 percent of adult Austrians nurtured anti-Semitic feelings, and of these, 60 percent felt that it would be best if there were no Jews at all in Austria.

Meanwhile, by the mid-1970s prosecution of Nazi criminals had come to a standstill. A new criminal code of 1974 all but foreclosed the possibility of future trials, and the department in the ministry of the interior that dealt exclusively with these crimes was terminated. Nor have there been significant changes in restitution laws during the last two decades. A final codicil was passed in 1975, entitling victims of Nazi persecution who had received no restitution under any law to payments of 15,000 Austrian shillings—about \$1,000. The effect of this feeble gesture in any case was dissipated in 1982 and 1983 by a spate of antisemitic violence.

h. Responses of Austria After the War

On November 9, 1966, a district court in Vienna sentenced Wilhelm and Herta and Paul Mauer, forty-eight and fifty-two years old, to prison sentences of twelve and eight years respectively for their participation in the wartime mass murder of the Jews of Stanislaw, eastern Poland. What was startling about the trial was not the mildness of the sentences, but the fact that the defendants had been found guilty at all. In an earlier trial the previous spring the Mauer brothers had been acquitted by a jury of their neighbors in Salzburg, many of whom were subsequently revealed to be ex-Nazis themselves. The presiding judges refused to accept the verdict. Remanding the Mauers to prison, they asked the Austrian high court to authorize a new trial. The court concurred and also ordered a change of venue. According

in October and November, the Mauers were retried in Vienna and found guilty. Had it not been for the pressure of world opinion, the brothers probably would have been acquitted in the second trial as well. Even so, the sentences, for the murder of thousands of Jews, were an insult to intelligence and justice.

The single concession extracted from Vienna by the Jewish Claims Conference was a "relief fund" for Austrian Jews who could prove they had lost their liberty—that is, who had actually been confined in concentration camps. At that, Vienna established the fund or after the Claims Conference persuaded West Germany to contribute half its capital; the payments to the Jewish victims never exceeded half the amount paid out in German indemnifications for the identical damage. In this fashion, then, survivors of one of Europe's oldest, largest, and most distinguished Jewish communities were essentially disenfranchised from *Wiedergutmachung*, whether financial or moral.

The precarious history of Jewish fortunes in Vienna is kept alive almost exclusively by street markers, plaques, and old buildings.

Vienna's importance in postwar Jewish life has been essentially as a transit point for Jews from the East. Twenty years later, the influx of *Ostjuden* comprised 80 percent of Vienna's 12,000 Jews.

Two-thirds of its members are over sixty. They are uncomfortable when Israeli personalities appear on the television screen....that Simon Wiesenthal receives contributions from Jews in Vienna. Bruno Kreisky, a Jew, served as Austria's chancellor.

i. Responses of Poland after the War

Poland had 3.5 million Jewish citizens before the war, comprising 10 percent of the population. Some 3 million were killed in the Holocaust, along with more than 3 million non-Jewish Poles. Most Jewish survivors fled in the 1950s and 1960s amid communist-sponsored anti-Semitic propaganda. Some 20,000 Jews live in Poland now.

Until recently, Poles were taught to believe they were always heroic victims - never collaborators in Nazi-era atrocities. Then, in 2000, a book, called Neighbors showed that the Poles had actively participated in the atrocities.

Soon after, in May 2001, in a formal ceremony, Poland's bishops finally apologized for the 1941 massacre of Jews in northeastern Poland. The Roman Catholic church has been blamed for fueling anti-Semitic fervor that led to pogroms like the one in Jedwabne on June 10, 1941 in which 1,600 Jews were murdered. President Aleksander Kwasniewski also issued an apology. The government also initiated a probe to see if charges should be brought against any living participant.

CHAPTER E-FAITH AFTER THE HOLOCAUST

i - What was Lost?

In Poland, Germany, and the bordering countries, the 3,000 *kehillot* with the intellectual elite was so depleted that the few struggling remnants were deprived of the traditional rabbinical, literary, scholarly and informed lay leaders.

The world Jewish population now would have reached or exceeded 20,000,000.

a. Faith

And I prayed to the G-d in whom I no longer believed. (Elie Wiesel, Night)

Viktor Frankl: The truth is that among those who went through the experience Auschwitz, the number of those whose religious life was deepened...by far exceeds the number of those who gave up their belief. ... Just as the small fire is distinguished by the storm whereas a large fire is enhanced by it - likewise a weak faith is weakened by predicaments and catastrophes whereas a strong faith is strengthened by them. (The Unconscious G-d, p. 17)

Wiesel was raised as a Vishnitz Hassid and maintained his religious observance at Auschwitz, even to the extent of trading his precious few slices of bread for a set of phylacteries. Despite everything, Wiesel remained a man of faith. In September 2002, he declared: "I still believe that God is a God of justice and a God of mercy."

In this, Wiesel is not an isolated example. With him in the children's section at Auschwitz were some 100 youngsters from Orthodox and traditional homes who also kept their faith.

"I didn't become irreligious but more religious," Wiesel said. When asked how he remained sane, he said, the answer he always gives is, "What saved me was Torah study. Later, when he began to study philosophy, he had a crisis of faith and came to the conclusion that one cannot have absolute confidence in people. He did not, however, lose his trust in God."

Like Wiesel, Amital, the head of the Har Etzion Yeshiva in Alon Shvut and the founder of Meimad, the dovish religious political party, has many questions about the Holocaust. Nothing in the world, not the State of Israel and not the Messiah, can justify the deaths of so many children," he said. Yet with all that he saw and experienced, he, too, retained his faith¹.

ii - Can it be Regained?

The following article appeared in *Ultimate Issues*, Winter 1986-87, ***God and the Holocaust***:

Now, let us clearly understand the question. It means, first of all, that were it not for the Holocaust, the person who says, "I cannot believe in God because of the Holocaust" would in fact believe in God. ... Were it not for the Holocaust....

In 20 years of work in public Jewish life, I have never met a Jew who did not go through the Holocaust who firmly believed in God prior to the Holocaust and who stopped believing because of it. And for every religious Jew who lost his faith, there was

¹As reported by Greer Fay Cashman in the *Jerusalem Post*, Sep., 28, 2002

irreligious Jew for whom the Holocaust actually served as a catalyst to faith in God and Judaism.

Nothing about the Holocaust renders it alone, as opposed to all other unjust suffering in history, an argument against faith in God.

In Elie Wiesel's oft-repeated words, "Not every victim was a Jew, but every Jew was a victim."

Why is faith in God possible though He allowed thousands of innocent Jews to die in the Russian pogroms, but not when he allowed 6 million to die under the Nazis? At what number does faith become impossible? At 3 million? At 265,000?

Since Judaism and human reason both insist that every human being is an end in itself, the "number" argument against God is meaningless. What kind of reasoning is it that holds that if a Jewish family is killed by Nazis between 1939 and 1945, God does not exist but if the same family were killed by any other anti-Semites, at any other time, then God does exist?

From a *human* standpoint, killing 6 million people is 6 million times more grievous a sin than killing one. But from the standpoint of a God who could stop the murder of one or a million equally easily and for whom every individual is sacred, the question of why He could not stop the murder is identical.¹ Either faith is destroyed the moment one innocent Jew is killed, or it is not destroyed at any number—provided that, from a Jewish perspective, at least one Jewish person survives. Obviously if a holocaust were to kill all or so many Jews that the Jewish people died out, the question would be Jewishly valid.

Finally, even in terms of numbers, the Holocaust does not present the unique questions we think it does. For example, nearly one out of every three Jews was killed in Eastern Europe between 1648 and 1655 in the Chmielnitzky pogroms.

The next objection to faith in God after the Holocaust is, "How can one believe in a God who allowed 6 million Jews—*His own people*—to be slaughtered?"

¹ *Wrestling with Suffering*, Rabbi Nechemia Cooper Smith: Behind The Question "Why do bad things happen to good people?" This ancient question is built upon a number of unspoken axioms. Without positing the following three attributes about God, the inquirer really has no question. God must be: 1) all good, 2) all knowing, 3) all powerful. If you remove any one of these attributes, the question disappears. If God isn't all good, He can do evil and even enjoy inflicting pain. Is there any wonder why bad things happen to good people? If God isn't Omniscient, bad things occur because He does not know everything that is going on in the world. If He knew about it, He would certainly put a stop to it. If God isn't Omnipotent, bad things happen because there are forces in the world beyond God's control. Diseases and natural disasters are too mighty for God. We can only call God to task for events that are in His hands. If one believes in an Omnipotent Being who is all good and all knowing, then the question "Why do bad things happen to good people?" poses a real challenge. Our goal is trying to reach some kind of understanding of suffering without removing one of these three essential characteristics of God. Is it only in the aftermath of the Holocaust that we are justified in questioning God's fairness? Or after the death of a baby? Just how much pain must occur to legitimately raise the question "Why do bad things happen to good people?" The Talmud gives the example of a person who reaches into his pocket with the intention of getting a coin and instead pulls out a smaller coin. Forced to reach into his pocket a second time, he experiences minor discomfort. The Talmud declares that this added exertion is enough reason to necessitate asking, "Why is this happening to me? What did I do wrong to deserve this?"

Any amount of pain poses the same theological question, even the stubbing of a toe. Philosophically, the dull aches in life demand an explanation as much as the major crises. After all, if God is all good, all powerful and all knowing, why should my daughter get a paper cut?

Furthermore, minor examples of discomfort are more conducive to delving into the issue of suffering since they diffuse the emotional tension, making it easier to focus on acquiring intellectual clarity.

There are a number of responses.

First, I am unaware of any Jewish source that holds that God has ever saved, promises to save, every Jewish individual from persecution. What God *has* promised is that the Jewish *people* will survive all attempts to destroy it.

Any Jew who believes that God took the Jews out of Egypt can say with equal validity that God took the Jews out of Hitler's Europe. God did not take most of the Jews out of Egypt. Jewish belief does not hold that God saves every, or even most, Jews. He saved the Jewish people.

Second, only if one is unaware of—or tends to ignore because of our proximity to the Holocaust—how horribly Jews have suffered at the hands of Jew-haters in the past can one hold that it is the Holocaust that makes belief impossible.

The following is a contemporaneous description of a typical day during the Chmielniczky pogroms:

Some of the Jews had their skins flayed off them and their flesh flung to the dogs. The hands and feet of others were cut off and they were flung onto the roadway where carts ran over them and they were trodden underfoot by horse...And many were buried alive. Children were slaughtered in their mothers' bosoms and many children were torn apart like fish. They ripped up the bellies of pregnant women, took out the unborn children, and flung them in their faces. They tore open the bellies of some of them and placed a living cat within the belly and left them alive thus, first cutting their hands so that they should not be able to take the living cat out of the belly...And there was never an unnatural death in the world that they did not inflict upon them.

Third, claiming to lose faith in God because of God's allowing 6 million Jews to be killed can smack of racism. The Cambodian Communists murdered one out of every three Cambodians, just as the Nazis murdered one out of every three Jews. Yet I have never heard a Jew say, "I cannot believe in God because He allowed 2 million Cambodians to be murdered."

Why does the murder of millions of innocent Jews challenge God more than the murders of millions of non-Jews? Does a Jew believe in a God who allowed the Soviets to murder ten million Ukrainians but not in one who allowed the Nazis to murder 6 million Jews?

How could God stand by and allow the Holocaust to occur?

God gives people freedom of moral choice.

If that leaves us unsatisfied, let us consider the alternative—that God prevents every bad act from ever taking place. Would we really want to live in such a world, where people had no freedom to do anything wrong?

If God should have stopped the Nazis from murdering Jews, should He not also stop each of the murders taking place today on the streets of America? And why stop at murder? Why should we believe in a God who lets rape take place? Or beatings? Or child abuse?

Would we prefer to live in a world where evil was impossible? Is being a 'good' automaton preferable to being a free human being? Would we rather be loved by free people or by love-robots?

On the holiest day of the Jewish calendar, we read the story of the Ten Martyrs, ten great rabbis tortured to death. During their horrible tortures, the prayer book tells us a voice screamed out from heaven, "Is this the Torah and its reward?" And God answered, "Keep silent, or I will destroy the world." God was right. If we want a world in which hurting good people is impossible, the world in which we live would indeed have to be destroyed.

"Where is God?" a Hassidic rebbe asked his followers. "Everywhere," one responded. "Wrong," said the rebbe. "Within us," called out another. "Wrong again," said the rebbe. "God is wherever we let Him in." The Nazis did not let Him in. Hence, we experienced during the Holocaust what we perceive as *Hester Panim*, a hiding of God's face as an eclipse of the divine. But God no more hides when there is evil than the sun hides during a solar eclipse. The sun is exactly where it was the day before. It is we and the moon that have moved. So, too, it is people's behavior that hides God. He is always there, as is so clear when we are around people of goodness and purity.

Man, not God, poses the great Holocaust question. That is why abandoning faith in God while retaining faith in humanity is logically perverse. God never built a gas chamber and He has begged us not to. Humans who loathed God built the gas chambers—to destroy the people who gave mankind the God who loathes evil.

iii - What is the Appropriate Response to the Holocaust?

"Five hundred years from now, it won't be Hitler we remember," says theologian Martin Marty. ".... In five centuries, we'll look back and say the story of the century was the survival of the human spirit in the face of genocide."

WITNESS FOR LIFE, ELIE WIESEL, p. 174:

On June 6, 1972, Shlomo Elie Wiesel is born. For Elie, the arrival of his son was an event of immense personal joy filled with profound spiritual meaning.

It was for Elie the ultimate expression of Jewish faith to have a child. It was an act of "supreme defiance"; it proclaims his hope in the future. He declared that he might not have dared to bring a new life into the world if he had not been Jewish. But he is a deeply religious man.

Now Elie's view of himself as a link in the long history of the Jewish people also includes the next generation: "I was the only son. I cannot break the chain. It is impossible that 3,500 years should end with me, so I took these 3,500 years and put them on the shoulders of this little child."

Understanding the Holocaust, Rabbi Yitzchok Berkowitz

A central pillar of Jewish belief is that nothing happens in a vacuum. History has meaning, oppression has meaning, suffering has meaning. We are a people whose essence is meaning. It's the lifeblood of who we are and what we stand for as a nation.

If this is true – and the Jewish people have fought to preserve this truth for 3,500 years – then the Holocaust must have meaning as well. Beneath the suffering and pain of the Holocaust lie the seeds of understanding our unique mission as Jews even today.

This is not to suggest that any one explanation will ever fully help us to come to terms with the persecution and murder of millions of innocent people....

Still, it does mean that we must try to contend with the Holocaust on a number of levels. For with every victim an entire world was lost; with every survivor, a new lesson must be learned. In this light, the meaning of the Holocaust is as varied as the human heart itself.

But we must also wrestle with the Holocaust from a larger perspective, a perspective that includes the history of the Jewish people. For the Holocaust is the story of the Jewish nation under siege. It was a war to destroy the Jewish people and the message we have been trying to bring to mankind from time immemorial....

"You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." These are the words that describe the Jewish people's unique covenant with God. We have been chosen to be a light unto the nations, an eternal people bearing a message of God's morality: "Love your neighbor."

as yourself"... "Justice, justice shall you pursue..." "Do not afflict the widow and the orphan..." "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore..."

Being chosen means you are different. Your laws are different, your ways are different, your history is different. Being chosen means holding fast to that message through all the peaks and valleys of history for all the generations. It means living for the truth of the message and dying for the truth of that message. It means holding ourselves to a high standard – in the way we think, the way we speak, the way we act, the way we dress, the way we eat.

It means honoring our Creator in the way we conduct ourselves in public as well as in the privacy of our home. In the way we raise our children and take care of our old. In the laws we live by and the values we are trying to impart to the people – and nations – around us.

When the Jewish people lives up to its potential as a light unto the nations, the moral fabric of the entire world is improved. The nations of the world will see the beauty of Jewish values and will praise us and want to emulate our ways.

At such times, anti-Semitism may still rear its ugly head, but no power in the world will be able to harm us. And the Almighty Himself will turn over heaven and earth to attest the fact of this awesome truth....

But if that light is lacking, then the moral fabric of the world quickly sinks into decay. And then it is only a matter of time before the Jews are seen as little more than an irritating reminder of an old-fashioned, restrictive morality, an enemy of the "new world order" that the world wants nothing to do with the Chosen People and their God.

Where was God during the Holocaust? As a people, we declare that God was right there – pleading with us to pay attention, never letting us forget how much work remains to be done in this world.

After the Holocaust, is there a Jew on earth who would choose to be born a Nazi instead of a Jew? After the Holocaust, is there a Jew on earth who does not see the need for a nation of teachers? Who else will help mankind rise above its potential for such cruelty if not the Jews?

More than anything else, the Holocaust was a clarion call to the Jewish people. Remember your covenant, be a light unto the nations. Show the world what it means to be given the gift of life, what it means to be created in the image of God, what it means to live according to the values of justice and mercy, what it means to be a nation dedicated to these goals.

iv - What was learned from the Holocaust?

The following article appeared in Ultimate Issues, Jul.-Sep. 1989, *Lessons of the Holocaust*:

Nothing has actually been learned from the Holocaust.

There are at least two reasons for this. One is that just about everyone who writes about the Holocaust describes it as "incomprehensible" (an "eruption of the irrational" by "a nation gone mad")—and it is not possible to derive any lessons from the incomprehensible.

The other reason is that the lessons of the Holocaust are too frightening, too disturbing to confront.

Historians, theologians, and others who call the Holocaust incomprehensible do so for a variety of reasons. One is that most of those who write about the Holocaust are essentially secular and humanist in their approach to understanding human nature. Such individuals tend to

to have a relatively optimistic view of human nature (humanists believe in humans). They see good as normal and rational, and evil as mad or irrational. If this is their view regarding daily evil, it is infinitely more so regarding the systematic torture and murder of millions of innocent men, women and children.

Another reason is that these writers regard the motivation for the Holocaust—as anti-Semitism—as irrational. Therefore, for most observers, something irrational (anti-Semitism) caused something incomprehensible (the Holocaust).

But what if these two suppositions are wrong? What if evil is neither irrational nor incomprehensible? And what if anti-Semitism is neither irrational nor incomprehensible? In such cases, the Holocaust may be quite comprehensible.

And so it is.

Since evil is part of human nature—evil may be as “normal” as good—eruptions of evil are hardly incomprehensible. The questions historians and thinkers need to ask are why men do evil but under what circumstances is evil likely to express itself, how can we work to prevent it, and why do the evil so often focus first on Jews?

As for anti-Semitism, throughout their history, Jews have regarded it as a quite comprehensible reaction against a people that brought God and universal moral law into the world. The Talmud explained Jew-hatred nearly 2,000 years ago by noting how similar the Hebrew words for hatred (*seelah*) and Sinai (*seelah*) sound. The great hatred of the Jews emanates from Sinai, where the Jews received God-based ethical laws to which all mankind is held accountable.

The Catholic historian of antisemitism, Father Edward Flannery, also understood this. “It was Judaism,” he wrote, “that brought the concept of a God-given universal moral law into the world...The Jew carries the burden of God in history, [and] for this has never been forgiven.” In *The Jewish Mystique*, Ernest van den Haag similarly summarized the roots of anti-Semitism: “[The Jews’] invisible God not only insisted on being the one and only a all-powerful God...he also developed into a moral God...The Jews have suffered from their own invention ever since.”

Even anti-Semites have acknowledged this. The father of German racial theory, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, wrote, “The Jew came into our gay world and spoiled everything with his ominous concept of sin, his law, and his cross.” He was echoing Richard Wagner’s words: “Emancipation from the yoke of Judaism appears to us the foremost necessity.” And Hitler defined his mission as the destruction of the “tyrannical God of the Jews [and His] life-denying Ten Commandments.”

The Nazi attempt to murder all the Jews was precisely what the Nazis called it: “The Final Solution to the Jewish Problem.” Hitler concluded that all previous solutions—assimilation, conversion, persecution, and expulsion—had failed to rid the world of the Jewish problem. Only the actual killing of every Jew would work. Consequently, historian Lucy Davidowicz showed in *The War Against the Jews*, the Nazis were more interested in killing Jews than in winning World War II.

The most obvious, and perhaps the most important, lesson to be derived from the Holocaust is that the human being is not basically good.

To me, this is so obvious that I feel foolish noting it. Yet, few people—Jews included—have incorporated this basic principle into their views on life.

It is this lingering belief in human goodness that has led to the contemporary predilection for blaming anything except human nature—society, socio-economic forces, class warfare, weapons, parents, television—for the evil that people do.

Jews who are estranged from Judaism and its view of the human being locked in a permanent battle between his good and evil inclinations are among the most delinquent in the area. That is why the question I most frequently hear from Jews about the Holocaust is, How

can I believe in God after the Holocaust? That question is surely worthy of a response, but is a question that lets the real culprits—people—off the hook. God did not throw children onto pyres of fire; God did not build the gas chambers, or man the death camps' or conducting freezing experiments on fully conscious men and women. People did.

Whenever I meet someone who claims to find faith in God impossible, but who persists in believing in the essential goodness of humanity, I know that I have met a person for whom evidence is irrelevant. Yet, those who continue to believe in humanity—after the Holocaust, Communist genocides in the Ukraine, Cambodia and elsewhere, black slavery and so much more evil—are considered rational, while those of us who believe in God are dismissed as elevating faith over reason.

Only faith in man's innate goodness can explain why people are not obsessed with one issue—how to make good people. This is not simply some abstract moral question—it is an issue of pure self-interest: if we do not make good people, we or our children will be hurt. On purely selfish grounds, this ought to be our greatest concern.

All our other social preoccupations—better education, conquering poverty, fighting drugs—are less important than raising the next generation to be good people. Yet, instilling goodness in young people is for most individuals and societies, including our own, a low priority compared to instilling brightness, talent, patriotism, happiness, religious faith, or some other value independent of goodness.

As absurd as most people's reluctance to learn this lesson is, the Jews' inability to learn it is beyond belief. If any group should be preoccupied—no, obsessed—with instilling good in people it ought to be the Jews, the targets of the Holocaust, and the most consistent targets of evil in history. Yet in America today, Jews, more than any other group, support *value-free* education; Jews, more than any other group (polls consistently indicate that Jews are the most secular group in America), believe that people need not feel morally accountable to God and religion; Jews, in short, more than any other group, believe in humanity.

Another unsettling conclusion from the Holocaust is that two of the most esteemed Western values—education and art—are morally irrelevant. The only education that can make people more moral is moral education.

Professor Peter Merkl of the University of California at Santa Barbara studied 50 Nazis and found that Germans with a high school education "or even university study" were *more likely to be anti-Semitic* than those with less education (Political Violence Under the Swastika, Princeton University Press, p. 503).

A study of the makeup of 24 leaders of Einsatzgruppen, the mobile killing units that killed nearly 2 million Jews prior to the use of gas chambers, showed that the great majority were well-educated: "One of the most striking things about the Einsatzgruppen leaders' makeup is the prevalence of educated people, professionals, especially lawyers, Ph.D.'s" (Irving Greenberg in Auschwitz: Beginning of a New Era? Ktav, p. 17).

These findings should not surprise us. Almost the only support for the other great butcher—Joseph Stalin—also came from the well-educated.

For the many in our society who link Ph.D.'s and university education with human decency, these lessons are important indeed. And, again, if there is one group that needs to learn this lesson, it is the Jews. No group venerates education, degrees, titles and elite universities more than Jews—despite the fact, moreover, that some of the greatest hostility toward Jews, today in the guise of anti-Zionism, is found at these universities.

The same holds true for art. It is very sobering that the most artistically cultivated society in Europe unleashed the Holocaust. The commandant of Auschwitz was an accomplished pianist who played Schubert *Lieder* on the piano each day after supervising that day's gassing of thousands of Jewish families and the indescribable medical experiments on the Jews and Russian prisoners of war.

One of the greatest conductors of this century was the Berlin Philharmonic's Herbert von Karajan. His interpretations are noted for their beauty. Yet, Von Karajan had joined the Nazi Party in 1932, even before the Nazi Party came into power, and rose to *kappelmesser* under Hitler.

To cite one of many other possible examples, Norway, which suffered terribly at the hands of the Nazis, had almost no Nazi supporters. One of the very few who did support Nazism, even while the Nazis ruled over Norway, was that country's most gifted writer, Knut Hamsun, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature.

The most common argument against religion is that it has been used to commit much evil, e.g., the Crusades, the Inquisition, Khomeini, and religious conflicts in Northern Ireland and Lebanon.

This is true, and religious people cannot explain it away by claiming that all the people were not really religious. People can be both religious and evil. Moreover, many religious people who are not evil do not regard fighting evil and promoting goodness as important as promoting the right faith. And while all major religions seek the good, not all are equally concerned with good and evil. Salvation, faith, surrender to God, ego denial, attaining truth are some other, more important, concerns.

On the other hand, another lesson of the Holocaust is that the amount of evil committed by secular ideologies dwarfs religion-inspired evil. In this century alone, millions of innocent people have been murdered, tortured, and enslaved by secular ideologies—Nazism and Communism—than by all religions in history.

Yes, Christianity laid the foundations of Western Jew-hatred—foundations that were used well by Hitler and the Nazis. But it was Nazism, a secular and anti-Christian ideology, not Christianity, that built the gas chambers. That many Christians were either evil enough to actively support Nazism or merely foolish enough not to appreciate how anti-Christian—to mention evil—Nazism tells us much about these Christians, but it does not negate the secular and anti-Christian nature of Nazism. (Even today, after all the revelations about Communist evils, including repeated attempts to destroy Christianity and other religions, there are Christians who refuse to see the evil and anti-Christian nature of Communism.)

Thus, centuries of Christian anti-Semitism on the one hand and the Nazi hostility to Jewish and Christian values on the other proved lethal to Jews. God without ethics and ethics without God are both dangerous to Jews—and to the world.

The Holocaust is far more a challenge to Christianity than to Judaism. To be the chosen victims of the greatest eruption of evil in history is a vindication of the moral truth of Judaism, and corroborates the Jewish role in history as bearing witness to God and His Commandments. As a Jew, I am proud to know that Hitler hated the Jews, just as I am proud to know that the Soviet Union hated the Jews, and that the Ayatollah Khomeini and the Muslims who follow his teachings hate the Jews before all others.

On the other hand, while the Holocaust was not catastrophic for Christians, it was a challenge to Christianity. Nazism was, in its essence, anti-Christian, but tens of millions of European Christians and their leaders—*after 1,500 years of Christianity*—did not see it that way.

The ability of millions of Protestant and Catholic Christians, with some blessed exceptions (whom Jews and Christians must study and forever recall), to view Nazism as a Christian ally; the rise of Nazism in the heart of Christendom; and the silence of the church during the Holocaust are serious problems for a serious Christian, and one reason why so few post-war West Europeans take Christianity seriously.

Moreover, the moral tragedy of the Holocaust may signify more than apathy and hostility to Jews. The Christian world has generally been silent in the face of evil even when fellow *Christians* have suffered. While just a few million Jews made the world aware of the plight of Jewish people, nearly a billion Christians left the world ignorant of the plight of Soviet Jews.

Christians. Worse, while Soviet Christians were denied the right to teach their children Christianity, and other Christians languished in the gulag, the National Council of Churches defended the Soviets (see, for example, "U.S. Visitors Praise Church in Soviet," *New York Times*, June 21, 1984) and the Rev. Billy Graham's public reactions to Soviet oppression fellow Baptists in the Soviet Union were worse than non-supportive; they were callous. Liberal Christians have supported the Sandinista repressors of Christianity in Nicaragua. And only in the last months has the Vatican finally come out vigorously in opposition to the decimation of the Maronite Catholic community in Lebanon. Recognizing evil and crying out against it do not seem to be as primary a Christian instinct as personal kindness or concern with salvation.

All this notwithstanding, both the Jews and the world need a vibrant and morally concerned Christianity. When Christianity fails, we get Nazism, Communism, secular emptiness, hedonism, cults, and conversion to religions far less sympathetic to Judaism and its values. Indeed, Christians remain the primary communicators of *our* Bible to the world. Jews do not spread the Ten Commandments nearly as much as Christians do (the American Jewish Congress actually supported the U.S. Supreme Court decision banning the posting of the Ten Commandments in public schools.)

Moreover, the secular, democratic, liberal democracies were not one iota better than European Christendom. Had they opened their borders or bombed Auschwitz's gas chambers (they did bomb Auschwitz's manufacturing plant!), innumerable Jews would have been saved. Hitler had every right to believe that the democracies didn't care about the Jews. Therefore Jews who cite Pope Pius XII's silence, but do not cite the horrible record of the hero, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, are selective indeed in their condemnations, and open themselves to charges of preferring to attack the Catholics' leader rather than the liberal leader.

Finally, while remembering Christian sins during the Holocaust, Jews should also remember much else about Christians. First, among those who did rescue Jews, believing Christians were disproportionately represented. Second, while nine out of ten Jews were murdered in Catholic Poland, five out of six Jews were saved in Catholic Italy. These epochal changes have taken place both within the Catholic church and in much of Protestantism regarding Jews and Judaism. Christians, especially in the United States, are among the Jews' greatest allies today. And, finally, it was an ideology that opposed Jewish and Christian values, not Christianity, that made the death camps.

I have never understood how a person could know the horrors of Auschwitz and yet embrace pacifism, the belief that all killing is wrong. The Allied soldiers who killed Nazis saved millions of innocent people from being murdered and from fates even worse than murder. Those soldiers engaged in the holiest, most moral behavior that men could have engaged in between 1939 and 1945. So long as there is evil that can only be stopped by killing, the Holocaust must forever banish pacifism from the vocabulary of moral people.

Of course, it is tragic that nations spend precious funds on armaments, but armaments are not the moral problem. Nations that do evil are the moral problem. The tanks, grenades and bombers that liberated Auschwitz were instruments of mercy as surely as bandages and medications.

In America today, Jews, thanks to our numbers and influence and to the society's unparalleled openness and freedom, have the greatest opportunity in 2,000 years to have impact on a major—indeed the world's most influential—society. Instead, we have the pitiful spectacle of non-religious Jews trying to convert America to secular liberalism thereby undermining Judaism and Christianity and opening up millions to other religious extremist politics and cults.

Asked what the world has learned from the Holocaust, Elie Wiesel is reported to have said, "That you can get away with it."

Blanket of Trust: Howard Schultz, Starbucks Chairman:

When I was in Israel, I went to Mea Shearim, the ultra-Orthodox area with Jerusalem. Along with a group of businessmen I was with, I had the opportunity to have an audience with Rabbi [Nosson Tzvi] Finkel, the head of a yeshiva there [Mir Yeshiva]. I had never heard of him and didn't know anything about him. We went into his study and waited ten to 15 minutes for him. Finally, the doors opened. What we did not know was that Rabbi Finkel was severely afflicted with Parkinson's disease. He sat down at the head of the table and, naturally, our inclination was to look away. We didn't want to embarrass him. We were all looking away, and we heard this big bang on the table: "Gentlemen, look at me, and look at me right now." ...His speech affliction was worse than his physical shaking. It was really hard to listen to him and watch him. He said, "I have only a few minutes for you because I know you're all busy American businessmen." You know, just a little dig there. Then he asked, "Who can tell me what the lesson of the Holocaust is?" He called on one guy, who didn't know what to do—it was like being called on in the fifth grade without the answer. At that point the guy says something benign like, "We will never, ever forget." And the rabbi completely dismisses him. I felt terrible for the guy until I realized the rabbi was getting ready to call someone else. All of us were sort of under the table, looking away—you know, please, excuse me. He did not call me. I was sweating. He called on another guy, who had such a fantastic answer: "We will never, ever again be a victim or bystander."

The rabbi said, "You guys just don't get it. Okay, gentlemen, let me tell you the essence of the human spirit. As you know, during the Holocaust, the people were transported in the worst possible, inhumane way by railcar. They thought they were going to a work camp. We all know they were going to a death camp. After hours and hours in this inhumane corral with no light, no bathroom, cold, they arrived at the camps. The doors were suddenly wide open, and they were blinded by the light. Men were separated from women, mothers from daughters, fathers from sons. They went off to the bunkers to sleep. As they went into the area to sleep, only one person was given a blanket for every six. The person who received the blanket, when he went to bed, had to decide, 'Am I going to push the blanket to the five other people who did not get one, or am I going to pull it toward myself to stay warm?'"

And Rabbi Finkel says, "It was during this defining moment that we learned the true power of the human spirit, because we pushed the blanket to five others."

And with that, he stood up and said, "Take your blanket. Take it back to America and push it to five other people."

Jewish World review, April 8, 2003, Dennis Prager: *Dear Germany: Have you Learned Anything?* There is no question that the vast majority of Germans are ashamed of Nazism and the Holocaust. But I am now as certain as I am sad that you learned nothing about good and evil from it, and that you are as confused morally today as you were when you supported Hitler. Not because you are evil, but because you cannot recognize evil.

This is stunning. Unlike the Japanese, who have ignored their atrocities against the Chinese and Koreans, you confronted your evil. You taught the next generations of Germans about Nazism and about the Holocaust.

It is therefore incredible that all that education about evil has produced a generation that shies away from judging, let alone confronting, evil. It boggles the mind that a nation that was liberated from Nazism solely by armies waging war should embrace pacifism, that a nation that saw what appeasement of evil leads to now embraces it.

I was sure that some German leaders would stand up and say, "My fellow German we know a Hitler when we see one, and Saddam Hussein is one." But no German stood up say this. Instead one of your leaders compared the American president to Hitler.

I was sure that some German leaders would stand up and say, "My fellow German we know genocidal anti-Semitism when we see it, and we see it in the Arab world." But German leader stood up to say this either. ... But I think that I speak in the name of many Americans in saying that we expected more of you. Because of what we did for you after World War II and during the Cold War. Because you, of all people, know that Americans are a decent people. And especially because of your experience with evil. How could you have produced a Hitler and not recognize another one just one generation later? How could you know firsthand about torture chambers and children's screams and not ache to end them in another country? How could you side with amoral France against your friend America?

There is, it would seem, only one answer. Nazism taught you nothing. Instead of learning that evil must be fought, you learned that fighting is evil.

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▶ *In What Way Ought Our Faith Be Different?*

The following article appeared in *Ultimate Issues*, Winter 1986-87, *God and the Holocaust*:

Now, let us clearly understand the question. It means, first of all, that were it not for the Holocaust, the person who says, "I cannot believe in God because of the Holocaust" would in fact believe in God. ... Were it not for the Holocaust...

In 20 years of work in public Jewish life, I have never met a Jew who did not go through the Holocaust who firmly believed in God prior to the Holocaust and who stopped believing because of it. And for every religious Jew who lost his faith, there was an irreligious Jew for whom the Holocaust actually served as a catalyst to faith in God and Judaism.

Nothing about the Holocaust renders it alone, as opposed to all other unjust suffering in history, an argument against faith in God.

In Elie Wiesel's oft-repeated words, "Not every victim was a Jew, but every Jew was a victim."

Why is faith in God possible though He allowed thousands of innocent Jews to die in the Russian pogroms, but not when he allowed 6 million to die under the Nazis? At what number does faith become impossible? At 3 million? At 265,000?

Since Judaism and human reason both insist that every human being is an end in itself, the "number" argument against God is meaningless. What kind of reasoning is it that holds that if a Jewish family is killed by Nazis between 1939 and 1945, God does not exist but if the same family were killed by any other antisemites, at any other time, then God does exist?

From a *human* standpoint, killing 6 million people is 6 million times more grievous a sin than killing one. But from the standpoint of a God who could stop the murder of one or a million equally easily and for whom every individual is sacred, the question of why He could not stop the murder is identical. Either faith is destroyed the moment one innocent Jew is killed, or it is not destroyed at any number—provided that, from a Jewish perspective, the Jewish people survives. Obviously if a holocaust were to kill all or so many Jews that the Jewish people died out, the question would be Jewishly valid.

Finally, even in terms of numbers, the Holocaust does not present the unique questions we think it does. For example, nearly one out of every three Jews was killed in Eastern Europe between 1648 and 1655 in the Chmielnicki pogroms.

The next objection to faith in God after the Holocaust is, “How can one believe in God who allowed 6 million Jews—*His own people*—to be slaughtered?”

There are a number of responses.

First, I am unaware of any Jewish source that holds that God has ever saved, promises to save, every Jewish individual from persecution. What God *has* promised is that the Jewish *people* will survive all attempts to destroy it.

Any Jew who believes that God took the Jews out of Egypt can say with equal validity that God took the Jews out of Hitler’s Europe. God did not take most of the Jews out of Egypt. Jewish belief does not hold that God saves every or even most Jews. He saves the Jewish people.

Second, only if one is unaware of—or tends to ignore because of our proximity to the Holocaust—how horribly Jews have suffered at the hands of Jew-haters in the past can one hold that it is the Holocaust that makes belief impossible.

The following is a contemporaneous description of a typical day during the Chmielnicki pogroms:

Some of the Jews had their skins flayed off them and their flesh flung to the dogs. The hands and feet of others were cut off and they were flung onto the roadway where carts ran over them and they were trodden underfoot by horse...And many were buried alive. Children were slaughtered in their mothers’ bosoms and many children were torn apart like fish. They ripped up the bellies of pregnant women, took out the unborn children, and flung them in their faces. They tore open the bellies of some of them and placed a living cat within the belly and left them alive thus, first cutting the hands so that they should not be able to take the living cat out of the belly...And this was never an unnatural death in the world that they did not inflict upon them.

Third, claiming to lose faith in God because of God’s allowing 6 million Jews to be killed can smack of racism. The Cambodian Communists murdered one out of every three Cambodians, just as the Nazis murdered one out of every three Jews. Yet I have never heard a Jew say, “I cannot believe in God because He allowed 2 million Cambodians to be murdered.”

Why does the murder of millions of innocent Jews challenge God more than the murders of millions of non-Jews? Does a Jew believe in a God who allowed the Soviets to murder ten million Ukrainians but not in one who allowed the Nazis to murder 6 million Jews?

How could God stand by and allow the Holocaust to occur?

God gives people freedom of moral choice.

If that leaves us unsatisfied, let us consider the alternative—the God prevents every bad act from ever taking place. Would we really want to live in such a world, where people had no freedom to do anything wrong?

If God should have stopped the Nazis from murdering Jews, should He not also stop each of the murders taking place today on the streets of America? And why stop at murder? Why should we believe in a God who lets rape take place? Or beatings? Or child abuse?

Would we prefer to live in a world where evil was impossible? Is being a ‘good’ automaton preferable to being a free human being? Would we rather be loved by free people or by love-robots?

On the holiest day of the Jewish calendar, we read the story of the Ten Martyrs, ten great rabbis tortured to death. During their horrible tortures, the prayer book tells us a voice screamed out from heaven, “Is this the Torah and its reward?” And God answered,

“Keep silent, or I will destroy the world.” God was right. If we want a world in which hurting good people is impossible, the world in which we live would indeed have to be destroyed.

“Where is God?” a Hassidic rebbe asked his followers. “Everywhere,” one responded. “Wrong,” said the rebbe. “Within us,” called out another. “Wrong again,” said the rebbe. “God is wherever we let Him in.” The Nazis did not let Him in. Hence we experienced during the Holocaust what we perceive as *Hester Panim*, a hiding of God’s face, an eclipse of the divine. But God no more hides when there is evil than the sun hides during a solar eclipse. The sun is exactly where it was the day before. It is we and the moon that have moved. So, too, it is people’s behavior that hides God. He is always there, as is so clear when we are around people of goodness and purity.

Man, not God, poses the great Holocaust question. That is why abandoning faith in God while retaining faith in humanity is logically perverse. God never guilts a gas chamber and He has begged us not to. Humans who loathed God built the gas chambers—to destroy the people who gave mankind the God who loathes evil.

CHAPTER F - JEWISH RESISTANCE

Those Not Interned

Those Interned

a. Those Not Interned

It was extremely difficult for anyone in Europe to know and believe the horrors what the Nazis were doing. To show this, we take an example of responses by the leaders of Dutch Jewry.

From July 17 to August 1942, at least 10,000 of the total 15,760 deportees had perished in the gas chambers or from exposure and ill treatment. Those in faraway Amsterdam, which might as well have been on another planet, saw fit to record in their minutes: "Finally, the first report of a case of death in Auschwitz is received by the meeting. Schmidt's words had also suggested that many of the rest, and quite probably the majority would return to the Netherlands after Germany's defeat (as to which no one had the least doubt), though as early as January 1939 Hitler had spoken about the "extermination of the Jewish race in Europe" and there was hardly a Nazi leader who had not echoed the sentiments on many occasions. Thus on June 15, i.e., a good six weeks before his address on August 2, Schmidt was "loudly applauded" for declaring before a district assembly of the N.S.D.A.P and N.S.B. (the Dutch Nazi party) that the destruction of Jewry "will continue until the last Jew had disappeared" – but these and similar effusions were generally dismissed as mere figures of speech, as general declarations of hostility that might lead to humiliating persecution, and ill-treatment but that did certainly not reflect a set determination to eradicate every Jew in person.

This misconception might have been avoided had Jewish and Non-Jewish circles in the Netherlands not refused to give credence to the B.B.C *Radio Oranje* (the official Dutch Broadcasting service from London) when it reported the mass murder of Jews in Eastern Europe. On June 26, 1942, the B.B.C., and one day later Radio Oranje, basing themselves on the Polish authorities, gave news of the killing of more than 700,000 Jews. A month later on July 29, *Radio Oranje* first mentioned the subject of gas chambers. It is true that many Dutchmen did not make it a regular habit to listen to broadcast from London; the Jews among them had been forced to hand in their radio receivers early in 1941. Moreover, at the time the illegal newspaper – all of which gave prominence to the reports from London – still had much smaller circulations than they were to enjoy during the last phase of the war. Incidentally, the Communist underground paper *De Waarheid* which was read by thousands had anticipated the B.B.C. when, early in June, it published the news that in territories like the Ukraine where millions of Jews had lived only a few years earlier, "not a single one had survived – men, women, children and old people have been exterminated one and all."

When something, and perhaps a good deal, of all this percolated through to the leaders of the Jewish Council, they dismissed it all as mere exaggeration and as anti-German war propaganda.

Their reactions did not change even six months later when, on December 17, 1942, the government of the United Kingdom, the United States, and the Soviet Union together with seven of their allies, including the Netherlands and the French National Committee, broadcast the following report on events in Eastern Europe:

“In Poland, which the Germans have turned into their chief slaughterhouse, all Jews with the exception of a few skilled hands needed for war work, have been systematically dragged out of the ghettos set up by the invaders. Of these people, no word or sign has been heard again. The stronger have been worked to death in labor camps. The weaker have been left to die of cold and starvation, or else subject to mass murder. The number of victims estimated at many hundreds of thousands.”

Only six days earlier, once again on the authority of the Polish government, the B.B.C. and Radio Oranje had mentioned the figure of a million victims.

Remarkably enough, the Allied report made no mention of such extermination camps as Auschwitz-Birkenau, Belzec, Treblinka, and Majdanek, although they had been in existence for many months. No less remarkable were the reactions of the two presidents of the Jewish Council. When one of them, A. Asscher, was told about the broadcast, he informed Professor Cohen (his co-president) and others that while he thought the Germans capable of every kind of horror, he could not credit even them with this sort of thing: “as far as I am concerned, the reports are nothing but English propaganda, with the sole intention of inciting the world against Germany.” Professor Cohen has described his own reaction in the following words:

“The fact that the Germans had perpetrated atrocities against Polish Jews was one reason for thinking that they behave in the same way toward Dutch Jews, firstly because the Germans had always held Polish Jews in disrepute, and secondly because in Holland, unlike Poland, they had to take notice of public opinion.”

Hence, Schmidt’s pronouncement of August 2, 1942 about “clearing the rubble in the empty towns”; hence the requests to the Jewish Council to run vocational training courses; hence permission to write letters to the deportees. The Germans made a practice of forcing Jews in the extermination or labor camps to send letters or postcards to their families on arrival at the camps or later, with the brief message that their life was quite reasonable or at least quite tolerable. For those who wanted to believe the best, and believe it at all costs, it was said that the letter, more than anything else, weighed far heavier in the balance than the amount of rumors about German threats of ‘extermination.’

The whole thing went so much beyond the powers of human imagination that as I myself once put it:

“Our mind, once having grasped the facts, immediately spews them out as something utterly alien and unnaturally loathsome.” Remember the Jehovah’s Witness who had lived by the side of the gas chamber and the crematorium in Birkenau: “one day we would believe with our own eyes, the next day we would simply refuse to do so.” This tallies with many post-war accounts, one from a man who, in Birkenau, formed part of a group which saw the chimneys smoking, day in and day out: “The people themselves,” he wrote, “pretended that the place was a brickyard or a soap factory. This mass delusion lasted for four weeks.” At that time, this man was the only one who dared to face what was, in fact, the unbearable truth.

These defense mechanisms spring from deep and inherent qualities shared by mankind: a love of life, a love of family, a fear of death, and an understandable inability to grasp the reality of the greatest crime in the history of mankind, a crime so monstrous – in its execution rather than in its gigantic scope – that even its perpetrators were unable to dwell on their activities for too long.

b. Those Interned

Small numbers of Jews were rescued by

- 1) organizing mass rescue flights (Denmark)
- 2) granting Jews special status (Sweden and Swiss protective papers)
- 3) joining resistance groups (the Marquis in France; partisans in the Polish-Soviet area.)

Individual escape was also occasionally possible from labor camps, death trains, even from death camps like Auschwitz, and perhaps most surprisingly, for the few survivors of the uprisings in the death camps of Treblinka and Sobibor. The long-term consequences of bribing German officials were of no decisive importance.

Yitzhak Arad, *Jewish Prisoner Uprisings in the Treblinka and Sobibor Extermination Camps: Acts of Resistance and the Organization of the Revolt in Treblinka*:

The first act of resistance, which is mentioned in many testimonies, was the killing of SS Unterscharführer Max Bialas by the Jew Meir Berliner on September 10 or 11, 1944. Meir Berliner had arrived in Treblinka from Warsaw a few days before in one of the transports of the "big Aktion." At that time it was the practice to take out several hundred people from each transport to work arranging the belongings of the murdered; the same day or a few days later, the group was liquidated and was replaced by other people selected for new shipments. At the evening roll-call of the prisoners, Max Bialas instructed those who had arrived that same day to line up on the side. It was not clear who was to be liquidated: the new arrivals or those who had arrived earlier. At that moment Berliner jumped out from the ranks of the prisoners, lurched toward Bialas and stabbed him with a knife. A great commotion followed. The Ukrainian guards opened fire. Berliner was killed on the spot, and in the course of the shooting more than ten other prisoners were killed and others were wounded. When the tumult subsided the prisoners were lined up again for roll-call. Christian Wirth, who was in Treblinka at the time, arrived on the scene accompanied by Kurt Franz, the second in command of the camp. Ten men were removed from the ranks and shot on the spot in full view of all the others. On the following day, during the morning roll-call, another 150 men were taken out, brought to the Lazarett and shot there. Max Bialas died en route to the military hospital in Ostrow. (Ibid., 231-232; Testimony of Eliyahu Rosenberg, Yad Vashem Archives), 0-3/4039.)

Following this event a new practice was introduced; a permanent group of Jewish prisoners was now retained in the camp to carry out all physical labor. The daily execution of Jewish prisoners was now of limited scope and encompassed mainly the infirm and weak who were no longer able to work and those who had committed violations even of the most minor sorts. The place of those who were killed was taken by new men selected from the transports slated for annihilation, which continued to stream into the camp.

The lesson learned by the Jewish prisoners who worked in the camp was that the cost of a courageous act like that performed by Berliner was very high--more than 160 Jews were executed in reprisal for the killing of one SS man. In light of the fact that the Germans had also changed their methods, instances of this sort did not recur. It became clear that individual, spontaneous acts like that of Berliner, however admirable, were not the way to rescue, nor could they even slow down the annihilation activities in the camp....

At the end of October or beginning of November, two Treblinka prisoners, assisted by others, managed to escape on the freight train carrying the personal belongings of the murdered out of the camp. At the end of November or beginning of December, seven people from the group that worked on the station platform were caught trying to escape by train. They were taken to the lazarett and shot there by Kurt Franz. The camp prisoners were called to a special roll-call which Franz informed them that for each escapee ten Jews working

the camp would be shot. (Gitta Sereny, Into that Darkness--From Mercy Killing to Mass Murder, London, 1974, p.196.)

At the beginning of winter, under cover of darkness, another four prisoners escaped. They slipped out of the barrack, cut the barbed-wire fence and got away. As an immediate reprisal twenty sick people were taken out and shot on the spot. (Wilenberg, op.cit., pp.33-37)

Yitzchak Arad: *Revolt in Treblinka*:...The groups of fighters acted separately... : fire to the large fuel tank, and when it exploded all the nearby buildings caught fire... and immobilized an armored vehicle in the garage. The prisoners' quarters and the warehouse were also set aflame, and the group working in the potato silo hurled hand grenades at the quarters. The explosions and gunshots were heard in all parts of the camp. Prisoners began running in the direction of the square and the eastern and southern fences of the camp. The Ukrainian guards and SS opened fire from the guard towers and elsewhere, and some of the insurgents who were armed returned the fire. Several Ukrainians were wounded and their weapons taken from them. The few grenades and meager ammunition that the rebels had were running out very quickly. The camp was going up in flames and in total disarray, and the prisoners began to break through the fences and get themselves over the anti-tank obstacles, throwing blankets and coats on the barbed wire. Many of those fleeing in the area of the fences were hurt and fell, but the others trampled over them and continued to run. All the members of the "organizing committee," ... and other members of the underground who were actively involved in the revolt, were the last to make for the fences; most of them were killed and fell within the camp....

On the day of the uprising there were 850 prisoners in the entire camp. About half, including most of the members of the underground, were killed trying to escape, gunned down in the camp itself, between the fences or near them. About 100 prisoners decided to remain in the camp and made no attempt to escape. Despite the heavy gunfire, about half of those who tried to escape did manage to get over the fences. ...The pursuit, the combing of the area and the roadblocks resulted in the capture of most of the escapees, most of whom were shot on the spot. ... of the 850 prisoners in the camp, it is probable that at least 100 escaped and successfully eluded the pursuit forces. This estimate is higher than the figure generally accepted until now. On October 20 most of the remaining Jewish prisoners were transferred to Sobibor, where they were killed. Another 25-30 prisoners remained in Treblinka and were shot there a few days later. In order to cover up the crime, a farm-house was built on the site of the camp, trees were planted, and a Ukrainian peasant was employed to guard the deserted place. (Sereny, op.cit., pp.249-250; Franciszek Zabicki, 'Rozbiór obozu w Treblince', Warsaw, 1977, pp.94-95)

Uprising in Sobibor: ...the rest of the prisoners sensed that something was afoot, but they still did not know what. According to the plan, the prisoners of war and the members of the underground, some of them armed, took up position in the front rows. The operation plan was now disrupted. A truck that had arrived from outside the camp appeared in Camp 2 and came to a halt near the building of the camp headquarters. The driver, Oberscharführer Bauer, spotted a dead SS man lying there and then saw a prisoner running from the building. He immediately opened fire on him. (Testimony of Biskowitz, Eichmann's Trial.) At the same time the commander of the Ukrainian guard, a Volksdeutsche from the Volga area, appeared at the roll-call square. The insurgents attacked him and killed him with an axe blow. The rest of the prisoners became panic-stricken. The Ukrainian guards, who now realized what was happening, opened fire. At that point ... began stage two of the revolt. With cri

of Come on! Hurrah! the insurgents broke toward the gate and the fences, and from that moment on there was no control over what happened. Some of the insurgents broke open the main gate and escaped from there southwest toward the woods. Another group broke through the fences north of the gate. The first of this group triggered the mines, were wounded or killed, but the others who crossed the area where the mines had already exploded, managed to flee, as they stepped over the bodies of their comrades.

Of the 600 prisoners who were in the camp on the day of the uprising, 300 managed to escape. About 150 were killed by the guards' gunfire or by the mine explosion. Approximately 150 sick prisoners and those from Western Europe and Germany, who had not been let in on the preparations for the revolt, and those who did not manage to escape remained in the camp area. Some of them got hold of weapons and continued to fight until they were killed. Some of those who were caught on camp grounds were shot that very same day. The others, including the prisoners in Camp 3 (the area of the gas chambers) who had taken no part in the uprising, were shot on the following day when the chief of staff of Operation Reinhard, Hermann Hofle, arrived in the camp from Lublin. (Rutkowski, op.cit. pp. 42-43; Ruckerl, op.cit., pp.196-197.)

In the week following the escape, 100 of the 300 escapees were captured or shot to death. (Rutkowski, op.cit., p.43.) It was a great achievement on the part of the insurgents that 200 of them did manage to get away. ... However, despite the relative success, the vast majority of the escaped prisoners did not live to witness the day of liberation. Some were caught and killed at later stages of the escape, and others died as fighters in the ranks of the partisans. It is estimated that from all the escapees from Sobibor, only about fifty survived until the day of liberation.

The attitudes of the Jewish victims toward the Nazi terror varied with their age, political affiliations, religious convictions, and opportunities of avoiding the terror. The elements of Jewish existence were fundamentally different from those of their non-Jewish neighbors, namely: isolation from the outside world; the absence of the possibility to continue normal economic activities; detention of large masses in ghettos and Jewish quarters; obstacles to hiding because of high degree of Jewish recognizability by type and appearance; circumcision; strong family ties which frequently jeopardized the family as a whole; the reluctance of non-Jews to be identified as Jewish sympathizers; no government in exile allied with the anti-Axis coalition; and difficulties in communicating with other Jewish communities, and especially those in the free world.

Roughly speaking, the victims fall into two categories: those gradually conditioned by various inhuman methods to a loss of their physical and mental powers of resistance (e.g. the Polish areas), and those surprised by sudden attack (e.g., in the U.S.S.R. and Serbia). In these polarized categories they are frequently characterized as *heroica* and martyrdom (*kiddush hashem*). The *heroica* embrace resistance in all its manifestations: attempts at evading Nazi terror by forged documents; procuring foreign passports; attempts at circumventing the Nazi orders which imposed restrictions affecting daily life along with ingenious devices intended to halt or slow down, the Nazi policy of starvation and emaciation; attempts at preserving Jewish life by all possible "illegal" means, including bribing Nazis; spiritual resistance, preserve human dignity in the face of Nazi terror, including the establishment and maintenance of "illegal" educational institutions on all levels, and preserving records of the Holocaust for future generations; participation in armed resistance movements, and creation of Jewish armed groups, which involved difficulties and dangers both from the Nazis and

fellow partisans¹; the difficulties and dangers both from the Nazis and fellow partisans; the ghetto fighters who fought for Jewish honor without any hope of survival manifested in the Warsaw Ghetto uprising; and the acts of armed resistance in the extermination camp Auschwitz and outright revolt in Treblinka and Sobibor. The dangerous flights of Jewish inmates from extermination camps were a form of resistance that brought the story of the slaughter of a people before the world. Decorations for bravery given to Jewish members of the Allied armies² and partisans were disproportionately numerous, due largely to the

¹ *The Jewish Underground*, by Rabbi Eliahu Ellis & Rabbi Shmuel Silinsky: Some Jews managed to flee, escape, or otherwise hide from the Nazis. Some took to the woods, and were among the founders of the "partisan" movements, the guerrillas fighting against the Germans from the woods. The Germans did not have endless forces, and they could not go into all the forests to flush everyone out. Certain areas were simply left cordoned off.

The biggest problem for the Jewish underground was that they did not get Allied support like other nationalist groups. Those groups were getting money, weapons and supplies flown in. In addition, the Jews were not only fighting the Germans, but they were also fighting the locals. There were many gangs who swore that they would kill any Germans they found... and also any Jews. The Jewish resistance was fighting on both ends.

² Steve Lipman, *The Chance To Fight Back*. The Jewish Week, 04/09/2004: "Most people had relatives over there," Whiteman says. "They didn't know there were [death] camps, but they knew what [the Nazis] were doing. They wanted to rescue as many people as possible. There was tremendous passion to overcome Hitler." In their ranks were men like Henry Kissinger, the former secretary of State, and countless other Jews who risked their lives and comfort here to return to Europe in U.S. uniforms. The number who volunteered to return to Europe in khaki during the war ... may be as many as 10,000," says Deborah Dash Moore, professor of religion at Vassar College and author of the forthcoming "GI Jews: How World War II Changed a Generation" (Harvard University Press). Like all Jewish soldiers, the foreign-born ones faced particular risks if captured. "Every Jewish soldier had the H [for Hebrew] on his dog tag," Lerner says, and were often used in intelligence work. "They made a vital contribution," Berenbaum says. "It intensified their American identification, and it intensified their feelings as a Jew." It hastened their adaptation to America, too. "They had the great agent of Americanization — World War II," Berenbaum says. And it gave them a psychological advantage. "They probably are less wounded" than Holocaust survivors and other refugees who, to some degree, were unable to shed their identities as victims. "Because they had the opportunity to fight back."

About Face (aboutfacefilms@aol.com)... tells the story of a score of European-born veterans cull from some 200 who were interviewed for the film and a visual archive. The first known documentary on the subject, it relates soldiers guarding German soldiers from their hometowns, liberating relatives from concentration camps and meeting their future spouses among the survivors.

Source Unknown: The Palestinian Jewish parachutists were a group of British-trained volunteers who were dropped behind enemy lines in Nazi-occupied Europe during the last two years of World War II. In 1942 the Jewish Agency for Palestine applied to the British for assistance in sending Jewish volunteers to Europe, who as emissaries of the Yishuv (the Palestinian Jewish community), would help to organize local resistance and rescue operations among the Jewish communities. The British were unwilling to send the hundreds of volunteers envisioned by the Jewish Agency, but ultimately agreed to train a few units of Jewish parachutists who were recent immigrants from certain target countries that they wanted to infiltrate. The British Special Operation Executive (SOE) intended to deploy the volunteers as wireless operators and instructors on their liaison missions to the partisans while the British Military Intelligence branch (MI9) planned to use them to locate and rescue Allied POWs and escapees. Both branches consented to the volunteers' dual role as British agents and Jewish emissaries. The candidates were selected from the ranks of the Palmach (the strike force of the Jewish military underground), Zionist youth movement activists and Palestinian Jews already serving in the British army. Of the 240 men and women who volunteered, 110 underwent the training program that commenced in Cairo in March 1943. Because of certain operational difficulties, only 10 of the trained volunteers (including three women) were sent on missions to Europe. Nine of the Jewish parachutists were sent to Romania, three to Hungary, five to Slovakia, ten to Yugoslavia, the

realization that they fought an enemy not only of their country, but also of their people. This applies even more so to the Palestinian Jewish Brigade and the Haganah parachutists, among whom were Emma Sereni and Hannah Szenes.

The overwhelming majority of those called upon to assume the functions of members of the Judenrat did so out of the traditional sense of Jewish communal responsibility. They became gradually apprehensive of the dangers inherent in this office, as exemplified in the dicta contained in secret Nazi documents referring to the German Government, but undoubtedly of general applications:

- 1) "The Judenrat is to be made fully responsible in the precise meaning of the word for the implementation according to schedule of all directives, present and future"
- 2) "Whenever difficulties arise, the dissatisfaction of the Jews is directed against the Jewish administration and not against the German supervisory organs." The Judenrat therefore, served as a hostage group for the "good behavior" of the communities and as a lightning rod for Nazi misdeeds.

The process by which the members of the councils became gradually more and more submissive has been strikingly formulated by Rezső Kasztner: "Step by step, they were made tractable. In the beginning, relatively unimportant things were asked of them, replaceable things of material value like personal possessions, money, and apartments. Later, however, the personal freedom of the human being was demanded. Finally, the Nazis asked for life itself." This gradualism demands, coupled with ever-increasing terror, was an ingenious and effective psychological device.

It is difficult to imagine that the ghettoized masses could have basically existed at all without the presence of the Jewish council. Whether sympathetic or unsympathetic, or even opposed to resistance, the councils contributed directly or indirectly to the resistance movements by their very presence. In the Eastern areas *the resisters* infiltrated some council organizations, using council-issued identification and police cards. In the last phase of its existence the Judenrat in Slovakia became an organ of resistance and rescue for all of Europe.

The crisis came when and where the Judenrat was called upon to assist in deportation to the death camps, particularly after the destination of the deportees was already known. In the meantime the original composition of the Jewish councils had changed considerably, with the lowering in the level of character, judgment, and the ability of members. Some of the members committed suicide or refused to cooperate and were repressed. There is no evidence that where there were no Jewish councils (e.g. in the first phase of the German invasion in the U.S.S.R.) or where their help was not solicited, the percentage of losses was lower due to the lack of "assistance." Nor were the Nazis impressed by the supreme self-sacrifice of Adam Czerniakow, chairman of the Warsaw Jewish Council, who committed suicide on learning of the forthcoming deportation of Warsaw Jews for extermination. Further, there is no evidence that the replacement of members of councils less inclined to "cooperate" by those more inclined to do so (as, e.g., the replacement of Artur Rosenzweig by David Guttmann in Cracow) had any influence on the final outcome. The special privileges recorded by the Nazis

to Italy and two to Bulgaria. The first group was dropped into Yugoslavia in May 1943; the last was dropped in southern Austria on the last day of the war. Of the 32 volunteers, twelve were captured. Seven of the twelve were subsequently executed, including Haviva Reik in Slovakia and Hannah Szenes in Hungary. The Jewish parachutists succeeded in making contact with the various national resistance movements in the Balkans, including Tito's partisans in Yugoslavia. Several were active participants in the Slovak National Uprising. Others succeeded in aiding Allied POWs in Romania and organizing immigration to Palestine in the immediate post-liberation period.

council members notwithstanding, the percentage of victims among the members of the Jewish councils were practically the same as that of their constituencies. In the final analysis the Nazis had sufficient time to complete their task with or without the Jewish council, witnessed by the fact that the process of destruction of the Jews was practically complete long before the end of the war or even before Himmler's orders to stop extermination.

i - What should the Jewish Response Have Been

Jews grasped at the illusory hope of a continued Jewish existence in Nazi Germany. They undertook measures of self-help that included vocational training and retraining, establishing the Judischer Kulturbund, and centralizing Jewish representation in the Reichsvertretung.

During this period, some 280,000 Jews emigrated despite the psychological difficulties inherent in such a decision for a community deeply rooted in Germany, notwithstanding the limitations on emigration (e.g. the immigration quota law in the United States, the "white paper" of 1939 on Palestine, and restrictive action by most European governments). While the official Nazi German line was to get rid of the Jews, the potential emigrant had to overcome various difficulties. More "efficient" emigration procedures (including threats of internment in concentration camps, followed by actual internment) were instituted only in 1938.

a. World Jewry

On the international level, Jewish organizations pressed unsuccessfully for their adoption by the Assembly of the League of Nations (1933) of a resolution confirming the principle of protection of minorities and obliquely condemning Germany for their treatment of the Jews. They initiated the Benheim Petition in the League of Nations, whose successful conclusion suspended the application of German Racial Laws in Upper Silesia for over five years. They pressed for action by the Assembly of the League of Nations in favor of "refugees from Germany, Jewish and others," and for the appointment of a High Commissioner to protect the refugees and investigate possibilities for their emigration. Their last effort, along with the special conference in Evian, proved useless. A boycott of German goods and services was spontaneously begun by Jews in various countries, but it lacked a worldwide apparatus and its influence on the German economy was of no decisive consequence.

ii - Did They Go like Sheep to the Slaughter?¹

¹IN-DEPTH FEATURES: *Who Did the Rescuing During the Holocaust?* Yisroel Spiegel: The Zionist and secular propaganda systems... wanted to entrench in the masses the idea that the Holocaust was conclusive proof against the chareidi worldview and proof for the "realistic" approach, i.e. secularism, in ensuring Jewish continuity in such a cruel world.

This first step in their campaign was the "charge" that European Jewry went like sheep to the slaughter. The secular leadership ignored the fact that they had no means of defense, and there was no possibility in the world to stand up against the mighty Nazi war machine, the overwhelming enemy which, at the peak of its power, subjugated entire countries from when the war broke out until the beginning of its downfall in the marshy, Russian winter. In the methodical path of destruction of the Nazi war machine were whole populations. First and foremost of course, the six million Jews were murdered, but also tens of millions of people from other nationalities, including hundreds of thousands of prisoners, mainly Russians, who were killed brutally. Many Russians were commanded to dig holes which afterwards became mass graves, after they were shot down with machine guns. Not one of them rose up against his captors and murderers even though they were trained soldiers. The mocking, contemptuous complaint against holy Jews of walking like sheep to the slaughter was aimed at glorifying the mythological "sabara," a Zionist, secular creation, fearless, and promising.

"No more!" meaning that after the Jewish state, the Zionist vision, nothing like this will ever happen again.

A few years ago, when Ehud Barak was the commander-in-chief of the army, he said in his speech Poland at the annual March of the Living program, that the State of Israel had arisen late, and may if it had been set up before the Holocaust it would have been prevented, meaning to say that the State would ensure the reality that "this will not happen again."

With time, secular propaganda stopped using this mocking, insulting tone when they mentioned the six million Holocaust victims. Several incidents caused this, including the horrible murder of 11 Israeli Olympic athletes in Munich 28 years ago, when they were killed, unfortunately, in the same way, "like sheep to the slaughter." Neither their Zionism, their Israeli-ism, nor their physical and military training helped them.

...But later, something else happened as a result of an argument about Zionist failures to rescue Jews during the Holocaust. This argument underwent various changes, one of which was that it was impossible to save Jews from the jaws of the Nazi murderers, a claim that was intended to remove blame from Zionist leaders.... There is something very puzzling here: This is the very movement that fought and won for itself recognition from the entire world as the only representative of the Jewish nation as a whole, managing to shunt all others (including chareidi Judaism and the historical Agudat Yisroel) aside, branding them as sectorial organizations that cannot speak for the entire Jewish people.

This is the movement whose followers took credit for acquiring international consent to establish Jewish state and for the formation, development, and settlement in Eretz Yisroel.

If this was such a powerful and successful movement, how did it come to be so weak and worthless regarding the rescue of Jews from the Nazi fires? If this was such a powerless movement, how could it found kibbutzim and yishuvim, dry up marshes and cultivate desert, set up underground movements in Eretz Yisroel, enlist hundreds and maybe thousands for the Jewish brigade in the framework of the British army, and finally--the deciding feat--the establishment of the Jewish State?... we are talking about tendentious, false propaganda, occasionally changed according to the needs at that particular time.

When it was found necessary to glorify the idea of power and conquering, they belittled the millions of Jews who were in the hands of the enemy and only someone who could take the credit for an act of "rebellion" or an "uprising," real or imaginary, beneficial or harmful, earned acclaim. Only they die of "hero's death" in the ghettos, while all the others, as they say, "went like sheep to the slaughter" which had, for them, the worst connotations. We will not repeat here the insulting expressions that this official propaganda, inspired by Zionist leaders, attached to the *kedoshim* and *tehorim*. Hy'd investigators and historians who did not tire of going through archives, newspapers of that time and protocols of Zionist institutions, and their findings formed a horrifying picture: the intentional silence about the Holocaust, criminal apathy, preference for the establishment of Israeli settlement and the position that "the State in process" stands above and beyond all cries for help.

Then a new period began for the propaganda of the establishment. Suddenly it was decided that the stature of the institutions that had seen themselves as "a government in formation" before the establishment of the State, and as official and representative leadership of the Jewish nation in the world, were to be minimized. Suddenly, they began claiming that essentially the victims were themselves guilty because they had not listened to warnings of the foreseen and they did not hurry to leave the Valley of Tears and make *aliya*, which would have served them as a "safe harbor." They were "blameworthy," and particularly the rabbanim and *admorim* were chosen as the most guilty because, according to them, they had forbidden their numerous followers from going to Eretz Yisroel. What did they want? For us to break through the fortified walls of the Nazis in order to save them? Were we qualified for this? But if they had come to Eretz Yisroel, they now speculated, they would have been saved -- exactly as the half a million Jews who lived there before the outbreak of war were safe!

Lies follow falsehood and confrontation follows confrontation. Much has already been written about this. For one thing, that in occupied Europe besides chareidi Jews (whose number was large even though they were still only a minority amongst all Jews) millions of non-chareidi Jews lived: Zionists, secularists, religious, Bundists, Communists and so forth, who were far from heeding the voice of rabbis and *admorim*. Why didn't they make *aliya* in order to be saved?

Also a lot has been written about the fact that the still-small Jewish settlement in Israel was rescued from Nazi persecution and dangers of destruction, *R"l*, only through an obvious miracle, because the Nazi advance came to little more than a step outside of the borders of Eretz Yisroel. It was only Hitler's craziness that drove him to launch a surprise attack against Russia that enticed him to shift |

In her book, Between Dignity and Despair, Marion Kaplan shows that far from seeming inevitable, the Holocaust was impossible to foresee precisely because Nazi repression occurred in irregular and unpredictable steps until the massive violence of November 1938. The Nazi hierarchy did not complete plans for the "Final Solution" until 1941. How could German Jews expected to know in 1938 - much less in 1933- that gas chambers awaited them?"

What is Jewish Resistance?¹

In the first decades after the war, Jewish heroism was bound to the notion of Jewish resistance. Those who participated in armed resistance against the Nazis were likened to a new tough breed of Zionist Jews, and their heroism was attributed to a shedding of the "passive" Diaspora-like behavior. Those who did not resist with arms (or at least flee the Nazi onslaught) were regularly portrayed in the literature as having gone to their deaths "like sheep to the slaughter"².

However, since the 1980s, Holocaust writers increasingly recognized that it was one of many legitimate Jewish responses. "Spiritual resistance" and the Jews' daily struggle to survive the Holocaust was also resistance.

resources away from the Middle Eastern front at the last minute -- and that is how salvation came to Eretz Yisroel and its Jewish settlement

An additional significant historical fact is that the gates of Eretz Yisroel were really closed to Jews. Only a few, and only at certain times, were given *aliya* permits ("certificates"). Even that small amount of *aliya* permits was under the firm control of the Zionist movement and the Jewish Agency, who restricted the chareidi population to only six percent of these immigration certificates. How could chareidi Jews have made *aliya* and saved themselves?

...It happens to be that in the mass of the grim and depressing story of the efforts to save Jews from the Holocaust horrors, one bright point, which is impossible to invalidate or shake because of its validity, always shines through. It is the series of amazing Jewish rescue efforts planned and carried out by chareidi Jews, such as Vaad Hahatzala in the United States, led by HaRav Eliezer Silver, whose story we opened the article with, and Tzeirei Agudas Yisroel in the States (together with whom some people from the Revisionist movement worked), and individual Swiss activists, who were also chareidi, above whom hovered with heroic strength, Rav Weissmandel zt"l, who accomplished what he did within occupied Europe.

It is a brilliant historical fact that is, of course, like a bone stuck in the throat of all the proponents of Zionist propaganda. Besides what it teaches -- that even then there were Jews who put aside all calculations, put themselves in terrible danger by transgressing laws, paying bribes, forging documents, everything possible for the higher purpose of saving Jews -- it topples the whole house of cards upon which they based their revised, false history. Yes, real rescue was carried out unfortunately, only at the margins. One must not think that it was possible to save six million Jews when there were around 10 million Jews in the range of danger. No, this was such a huge matter that no one could say that it was possible to deal with the whole thing or even with most of it.

..."At some stage, around 1949, the way they related to Holocaust survivors changed. But that happened," Yoav Gelber says, 'when they began to realize that the future of Zionism depends on the last survivors making *aliya*. Only then did they begin to take an interest in European Jewry -- not because they were worried about their fate, but because they worried about our fate, here in Eretz Yisroel.'"

¹Based on an article by Robert Rozett in the Jerusalem Post, Apr. 24, 2003

²Around the time of the Adolf Eichmann trial in Jerusalem (1961), three books surfaced that openly attacked Jews for their purportedly shameful behavior during the Holocaust: Raul Hilberg's seminal volume, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, Bruno Bettelheim's *The Informed Heart*, and Hann Arendt's report on the Eichmann Trial, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*.

Eck was probably the first to use the term Kiddush HaChayim (sanctification of life) to express some aspects of this kind of resistance. In time, this more encompassing treatment of resistance, which also includes armed resistance, engendered the Hebrew term Amidah explained by Dworzecki as "a comprehensive name for all expressions of Jewish 'nonconformism' and for all the forms of resistance and all acts by Jews aimed at thwarting the evil design of the Nazis."

Even where there was active resistance, it was not always the best thing. As Levis puts it¹: "The urge to fight was more emotional than logical; the preferred course of action was the honorable one, even when it was not necessarily the most practical or productive in the rescue of large numbers of Jews."

Jewish resistance can be an inclusive term denoting all of the diverse forms of Jewish nonconformity and rescue.

As Michael Marrus showed, there were many different types of resistance: "Symbolic Resistance, or I remain what I was; Polemic Resistance, or I tell the truth; Defensive Resistance, or I aid and protect; Offensive Resistance, or I fight to the death; (and) Resistance Enchained, or freedom fighters in camp and ghetto."

Like Sheep Why Didn't You Fight, By Sam Halpern (a survivor gives his personal answer to this often-asked question):

When I was first brought to Kamionka, there were Russian prisoners of war [some of whom the German had decided to kill.] ...

There was nothing the Russian could do in the face of many armed German soldiers. Polish soldiers, whose army had been swiftly defeated at the start of the war, faced the same situation. I saw four or five German soldiers control a thousand Polish POWs. Later on in Kamionka, a small number of Germans did whatever they wanted with Russian soldiers, men who had been trained to fight battles. High-ranking officers were reduced to powerless ordinary men when confronted with the lowliest German soldier and a gun. When the tide turned and the Germans began losing the war, I beheld the same sight in reverse: hundreds of mighty German soldiers, who only weeks before took life or saved it as their mood dictated, were now herded about passively by a few Russian soldiers with weapons.

These soldiers had all been trained to fight, to use firearms, to survive under the harshest conditions. If they could not resist imprisonment, how were we Jews - a civilian population, with little or no firearm experience and no weapons, a tribe of merchant artisans, scholars, women and children, all weak from starvation and exhaustion - able to rebel against a well-equipped army? If you are under the gun, there is little you can do.

Certainly, there were a few, wonderful exceptions. The Warsaw Ghetto uprising, the first of its kind among a civilian population in Poland, is the most famous. Even in Warsaw however, organizing to fight did not take place when there had been half a million Jews in the ghetto. Only when almost the entire ghetto had been liquidated and death was at hand did a few thousand remaining residents - right-wingers, leftists, Bundists, religionists, atheists, Jews of every political and religious stripe - band together, under the leadership of Mordechai Anielewicz, to fight since they knew their days were numbered. They realized they would r

¹ Fighting Back: Lithuanian Jewry's Armed Resistance to the Nazis, 1941-1945

²Presented as a paper at the Yad Vashem 1993 conference, "Major Changes Within the Jewish people in the Wake of the Holocaust," he employed a system for classifying resistance first present by Swiss historian Walter Rings.

be able to beat the German army. But if they were going to die, they would at least take some Germans with them.¹

Those of us in Kamionka who were young and still strong would have been more than willing to fight in an organized fashion if we thought we had the slightest chance of making a difference. For months after learning of the German defeat at Stalingrad, we waited for the partisans who were rumored to be in the vicinity. It would have been a great honor, a tremendous opportunity, to join them, to fight to save the lives of innocent Jews and non-Jews under German occupation. We had heard that the partisans liberated a camp not far from ours. Many Jews had joined their ranks immediately. In the end, though, the partisans did not come near Kamionka until the camp had already been liquidated.

Should They Have Tried To Escape: A survivor explains that freedom was not worth the horrible price, by Sam Halpern:

...Arie and I often spoke of escape. The simple reason we did not try, until the very end, was that we did not want to save two lives at the expense of scores of others. We had seen what often happened when other Jews escaped and their flight was discovered.

¹ Mitchell G. Bard, The Complete Idiot's Guide to World War II, 2nd Edition. NY: Alpha Books, 2001. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum; Israel Gutman, ed. Encyclopedia of the Holocaust Vols. 1-4. NY: Macmillan, 1995. In 1942, Hitler decided to liquidate the ghettos and, within 18 months, had the more than two million Jews who'd survived the ghettos deported to death camps.

The Germans ordered the Jewish "police" in the Warsaw ghetto to round up people for deportation. Approximately 300,000 men, women, and children were packed in cattle cars and transported to the Treblinka death camp where they were murdered. This left a Jewish population of between 55,000 and 60,000 in the ghetto.

In April 1943, the Jews learned the Germans planned to deport all the people who remained in the Warsaw ghetto to Treblinka. A group of mostly young people formed an organization called the Z.O. (for the Polish name, Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa, which means Jewish Fighting Organization). The Z.O.B., led by 23-year-old Mordecai Anielewicz, issued a proclamation calling for the Jewish people to resist going to the railroad cars.... The Jews in the ghetto believed that what had happened in January was proof that by offering resistance it was possible to force the Germans to desist from their plans. Many thought that the Germans would persist in unrestrained mass deportations only as long as the Jews were passive, but that in the face of resistance and armed confrontation they would think twice before embarking upon yet another Aktion. The Germans would also have to take into account the possibility that the outbreak of fighting in the ghetto might lead to the rebellion spreading to the Polish population and might create a state of insecurity in all of occupied Poland.. ...The ghetto fighters were warned of the timing of the final deportation and the entire Jewish population went into hiding. On the morning of April 19, 1943, the Warsaw ghetto uprising began after German troops and police entered the ghetto to deport its surviving inhabitants. Seven hundred and fifty fighters armed with a handful of pistols, 17 rifles, and Molotov cocktails faced more than 2,000 heavily armed and well-trained German troops supported by tanks and flamethrowers. After the Germans were forced to withdraw from the ghetto, they returned with more and more firepower. After several days without quelling the uprising, the German commander, General Jürgen Stroop, ordered the ghetto burned building by building. Still, the Jews held out against the overwhelming force for 27 days. On May 8, the headquarters bunker of the ZOB at 18 Miła Street was captured. Mordecai Anielewicz and a large number of his colleagues were killed in the fighting, but several dozen fighters escaped through the sewers.

On May 16, Stroop announced the fighting was over. He said his forces had captured 56,065 Jews and announced that he was going to blow up the Great Synagogue on Tłomack Street (which was outside the ghetto) as a symbol of victory and of the fact that "the Jewish quarter of Warsaw no longer exists."

Approximately 300 Germans and 7,000 Jews were killed in the uprising, and another 7,000 Jews were deported to Treblinka. The outcome was preordained, but the dramatic act of resistance helped raise the morale of Jews everywhere, if only briefly.

Once, a landsman from a town not far from Chorostkow ran away while working the road. The next day, Hauptsturmfuhrer Rebel came into the camp and ordered everyone into the yard. It was raining and very cold, but we were made to stand there, without moving from five until seven o'clock in the morning. Then Rebel stood in front of us in the center of the yard, facing the inmates.

"A man ran away today," he thundered. "You will all pay the price." We were frightened for we knew how the Germans punished.

"You, you, you, and you," the hauptsturmfuhrer pointed at four Jews randomly. "Himmel commando, shoot them!" A Ukrainian police officer, only too happy to oblige, dragged the men from the line and shot them right in front of us with one bullet each to the head. They wanted to frighten us, and they succeeded.

"If any of you think of running away, the blood of your fellow Jews will be on your head," the SS officer screamed at us.

These monsters actually had the audacity to blame us for trying to save our lives. In the end, no matter how twisted this logic was, Jews would die if we ran away, and I said to Arie that I would never consider escaping: "I will not have others killed because of my decision." Arie agreed. He too did not want to live with the death of other Jews on his conscience.

Of course, when I was wildly galloping with Chestnut in an open field or thick forest I thought of running away. Who wouldn't have, in my situation? However easy it would have been for me to escape, I did not. I could not stand the thought that others might die because of a selfish act of mine; then too, I had no place to go. It might be argued that in the end almost everyone was killed, and so my escaping would not have made a difference. It is true that almost everyone was killed. But that was because the German barbarians were obsessed with their notions of racial purity. No one was killed because Sam Halpern decided to look out for himself alone. For me that has made all the difference.

The Silence of the Lambs, by Rabbi Benjamin Blech

The Jews were rounded up and herded like cattle to the slaughter. For some, strange enough, that makes the victims guilty of becoming accessories to their own murder!

Yes, it is true that the Jews didn't rise up en masse against their executioners. Like the rest of the world, which couldn't believe the horrors of the Holocaust even once they were over, the Jews couldn't imagine the extent of the Nazi atrocities until it was too late to do anything about it. They believed they were going to be resettled and given an opportunity to be granted life in exchange for labor. They believed the sign at the entranceway to Auschwitz that proclaimed, "Arbeit Macht Frei" – "Work makes one free." They believed they were being herded into the synagogue to be addressed by the Nazis, not to be doused with gasoline and burned to death.

And when they finally suspected the worst, no one in the world would help them. They could get no guns; arms to defend themselves were unavailable. If one rose up to fight, a thousand would be cruelly punished and tortured. Jews were not led like lambs to the slaughter. They were deluded, as was the world. They were isolated, and they were abandoned.

And yet these "lambs" managed an unparalleled demonstration of courage in the revolt of the Warsaw Ghetto. They were able to hold off the Nazis longer than it took the Germans to conquer all of Poland.

Mordechai Anielwicz, who died with his colleagues in the command bunker at Mila Street, Warsaw, at age 24, wrote in the last entrance of his diary: "The last wish of my life has been fulfilled. Jewish self-defense has become a fact. Jewish resistance and revenge."

have become actualities. I am happy to have been one of the first Jewish fighters in the ghetto. Where will rescue come from?"

Rescue never came, but the Jews proved that given the slightest opportunity, they would fight to the death to protect and preserve their people....

The Destruction of the European Jews by Raul Hilberg:

Rabbi Leo Baeck, [noted] after the war:

I made it a principle to accept no appointments from the Nazis and to do nothing which might help them. But later, when the question arose whether Jewish orderlies should help pick up Jews for deportation, I took the position that it would be better for them to do it, because they could at least be more gentle and helpful than the Gestapo and make the ordeal easier. It was scarcely in our power to oppose the order effectively.

When Baeck was in Theresienstadt, an engineer who had escaped from Auschwitz informed him about the gasings. Baeck decided not to pass on this information to anyone in the ghetto city because "living in the expectation of death by gassing would only be harder."

iii - Kiddush HaShem Bechaim Ube'Mitah

1. Kiddush & Chillul HaSh-m

Sanctifying G-d:

זָרָא כָּבֵד לֵב (אמר): ונקדשתי בתוך בני ישראל¹

Not to desecrate His name:

זָרָא כָּבֵד לֵב (אמר): ולא תחללו את שם קדשי²

All of our Avodas HaShem ultimately impacts on these two commandments,³ for Kiddush HaSh-m in its broadest terms means "any action that makes G-d's truth more apparent"⁴ and this is achieved every time we do His Will – כי האדם לא נברא רק לעבוד בוראו (Chinuch).

However, these are not simply commandments. Rabbeinu Yonah explains that the primary purpose in this world is to sanctify G-d's name:

רמב"ם ספר המצוות מ"ע ט ובפ' ה מהל' יסודי התורה הל' א; חינוך מצוה רצ"ו; סמ"ג; סמ"ק; אמנם הרב סעדיה גאון לא מנע מצוה זו דכל מקום שיש לאו ועשה רק מונה אחד מהם ובמצוה לג מנה את הלאו חלול ד' (ר' ירוחם פישל פערלא שם) וכתב הרב ירוחם פישל פערלא שלרס"ג שכל יהודי חייב מטעם מצוות אהבת השם למסור את נפשו על ע"ז גילוי ז'ת ושפיכות דמים אבל שאר מצוות לומדים מקדוש השם.

מב"ם לאוין ט"ג: ... והוא הפך קדוש ד' ומקורו מלא תחללו את שם קדשי (ויקרא כב לב); בה"ג ל"ת קלז, סמ"ג לאוין סמ"ק פה; רס"ג ל"ת לג, חינוך מצוה רצה

בזמן נא – הנה המצוה העיקרית היא קדוש ד'. כי היא כוללת הכל, כל המצוות וכל עניני עבודת ד' תוכנם הוא קדוש (מכתב מאליהו ח"א עמ' 22-3) ובכד הקמח: ואין ראוי לשום אדם לחפץ כבוד בעולם הזה כי אם לכבודו יתברך שתדל במעשים שיתקדש בהן שם שמים ולא שיחולל בסבתו

⁴Rabbi Scheinman wrote the following article in The Jewish Observer, September, 1980, "Bikrei Ekodesh": The Six Million "Kedoshim":

רבינו יונה שערי תשובה שער ג ס' קנח: ואמרו חז"ל כי עון חלול ד' גדול מכל העבירות, ולא יתכן להתכפר בתשובה ויסורין. ואמרו רבותינו ז"ל אין מאריכים בפרענות לעונש חלול השם אחד שוגג ואחד מזיד ועתה התבונן גודל חויבנו לקדש את השם, כי עיקר מה שקדשנו השם יתברך בתורתנו ובMitzvosיו והבדילהו להיות לו לעם – כדי לקדשו וליראה ממנו, ראוי שיהיו מקדישיו קדושים, בשגם הכלים שעובדים בהם לפני השם יתברך צריכים להיות קדש, כמו שנאמר ולא תחללו את שם קדשי ונקדשי בתוך בני ישראל אני השם מקדשכם. שים לבך להבין, כי הענין שאמרנו מפורש במקרא הזה

Our Sages said that the sin of Chillul HaShem is the greatest of transgressions ... And now reflect on how great is our obligation to sanctify G-d's name, for the main reason why G-d sanctified us with His Torah and Mitzvos to be a nation to him is in order to sanctify Him and to be in awe of Him....

In fact, by keeping His Torah, we, the Jewish people, are called G-d's witnesses. According to our Sages, the testimony we are giving is to His very existence². It was for this reason that we were taken out of Egypt to become a nation and keep G-d's Torah³. This applies in particular to a Gezeiras Shemad when there is an attempt to wipe out the Jewish people or to get them not to keep His Torah.

2. Ordinarily, a person who is told, "Either you eat pork, or I will kill you" (and so with any Mitzvah other than the big three), is required to eat the pork and save his life. According to the Rambam he is required to sin, and is a sinner if he gives up his life. For it is written וחי בהם that we are to live by the Mitzvos and not die for them. However, if he (and others) are threatened with death if they are caught keeping a particular Mitzvah (e.g. Shechita) (not during a גזירת שמד – see the next point below) and he tries to keep the Mitzvos without being caught, then, even though he risks his life, this is praiseworthy⁵.
3. However, if there is a גזירת שמד, even for the smallest observance or custom and even in private he should give his life. This is true even if the non-Jew is telling the Jew to transgress for his, the non-Jew's, own pleasure or benefit⁶.
4. There is a special level of Kiddush HaShem which is called Kiddush HaShem BeRabim, when the Kiddush HaShem is done in front of ten Jews⁷ or with ten

זעיה מג י: אתם עדי נאום ד'

זיקתא דרב כהנא: אתם עדי נאום ד' ... כי אני הוא, לפני לא נוצר קל, ואחרי לא יהיה. תני ר' שמעון בר יוחאי: אם ש עדי אני ראשון ואחרי לא יהיה, ואם אין אתם עדי כביכול אין אני ד'.

נוך רצו: ולשון ספרי: על מנת כן הוצאתי אתכם מארץ מצרים שתקדישו את שמי ברבים. ופרא, אמור, פ"ח פיסקא ו: על תנאי הוצאתי אתכם מארץ מצרים על תנאי שתמסרו עצמכם לקדש את שמי

וב"ם הל' יסודי התורה פ"ה הל' א: ואם מת ולא עבר הרי זה מתחייב בנפשו ושם הל' ד: כל מי שנאמר בו יעבור ואל יהרוג ונהרג ולא עבר הרי זה מתחייב בנפשו

ל' הספר חמרא וחיי סנהדרין עד ע"ב ד"ה ומה שהקשה: ומה שהקשה שם הרב כסף משנה בסוף לשונו מההיא דרב נא בן תרדיון שמסר עצמו ללמוד תורה ודבי יהושוע בן לוי לסמוך זקנים ודברי המדרש מה לך יוצא ליסקל וכו' נראה א קשיא שהם לא היו מוסרים עצמם על מה דלא מחייבי גו'

ז' חמרא וחיי על סנהדרין עד ע"א

מ' סנהדרין עד ע"ב לומד היקש של תוך תוך מהבדלו מתוך העדה הזאת לונקדשתי בתוך בני ישראל. ועדה היא עשרה אמר עד מתי לעדה הרעה הזאת

knowledge of ten Jews¹. In fact, any time a Jew is being asked to publically purposefully desecrate Judaism, he is required to give up his life instead. This applies at all times and for any mitzvah².

5. Although strictly speaking this concept of Berabim needs ten Jews and not non-Jew the concept also extends to acting as described above also in front of non-Jews³.
6. A person who is unwittingly the vehicle of Kiddush HaSh-m is still considered have fulfilled the Mitzvah in all its glory. We learn this kind of “passive” *Kiddush Hashem* from G-d’s declaration of “*Bikrovei Ekodesh*” in regard to Aharon’s so Nadav and Avihu. Through suffering Divine retribution, they became instruments Divine revelation. *וידם אהרן: And Aharon was silent: “He found comfort in the Kiddush Hashem that resulted from their death⁴.”*

We encounter many examples of this type of *Kiddush Hashem*:

- A person who is *Mechallel Hashem* is forgiven only through his death: He had lifted his hand audaciously, defying the existence of the Deity. Only when he himself crumbles into nothingness is a proper perspective restored.
- One says “*Kaddish*” after the passing of a close relative, for an intimate encounter with death brings a person closer to the realization that this world was created by the Almighty and is ruled in accordance with His will. The surviving relative expresses verbally his humility before G-d’s eternal sanctity. If this death can help others comprehend G-d’s Omnipotence, it surely is a great *zechus* for the deceased⁵.

Acts of Kiddush HaSh-m During the Shoah:

Toward the end, Reb Avrohom Grodjensky, Mashgiach of Slabodka, and Reb Elchonon Wasserman, were in the same ghetto together with their students. The execution date had arrived and they spent their last hours together. Rav Grodjensky asked Reb Wasserman to deliver a talmudic discourse on “Kiddush Hashem” the commandment sanctify the Name of G-d in death. Rabbi Wasserman was surprised at first, but he acceded to the request. When he was finished, Rabbi Grodjensky delivered his last “mussar” (ethical discourse, and the group surrendered their souls from a spiritual summit far above Na ability to profane.

Reb Elchonon Wasserman’s last moments have been recorded by an eye witness: Rabbi Efraim Oschry of New York:

הל' יסודי התורה פ"ה הל' ד

גירי מובא בספרחמרא וחיי סנהדרין עד ע"א: שהרי אסתר נקראת בפרהסיא

וב"ם הל' יסודי התורה פ"ה הל' ב: אם נתכוון להעבירו על המצוות בלבד ... ואם אנסו להעבירו בשדה מישראל ג' ועל יעבור ג' וכן להנאת עצמו מותר לעבור שהרי הגמ' קורא לאסתר בפרהסיא ואומר שכיון שלהמאת אחשוורוש היתה להעבירה על דתה, היתה מותרת

ע"פ שהחייב של קדוש ד' הוא בעצם לקדש את השם לפני עשרה ישראלים דווקא, מ"מ המושג של קדוש ד' וחלול ד' י' לפני גוים ג"כ עיין רמב"ם הל' יסודי התורה פ"ה הל' יא בסוף ובפ"א מהל' גזילה ואבידה ובתוס' ב"מ פז: ד"ה א ובשו"ע יו"ד ס' רלב ס' יד וכן בגיטין מו. וברש"י סנהדרין כו: ד"ה אוכלי ובשאר מקומות.)

⁴Rabbi Scheinman, in The Jewish Observer, September, 1980, “*Bikrovei Ekodesh*”: The Six Million “*Kedoshim*”

⁵Both examples were brought by Rabbi Scheinman, in The Jewish Observer, September, 1980 “*Bikrovei Ekodesh*”: The Six Million “*Kedoshim*”

“In heaven they seem to consider us great tzaddikim, for it seems that we have been chosen to atone with our bodies for Klal Yisroel. If so, we must repent, sincerely and fully, now, on the spot. Time is short. We must realize that our sacrifice will be a more perfect one if we hallow ourselves. In that way we will save the lives of our brothers and sisters in America. Let none of us think an impure thought which would render us unfit as a korban. We are now able to fulfill the greatest of mitzvos... ‘You scorched her with fire and with fire You are destined to rebuild her.’ The very fires that consume our bodies are the fires that will rebuild the Jewish nation¹.”

Rabbi Oshry concludes: “And so they marched proudly to their death, thirteen of the great sages of Israel with Rabbi

The Chassidic Grand Rabbi, Reb Klonymos Kalman Shapiro of Pia’chena, was one of the powerful spiritual forces of the Warsaw Ghetto. During Purim 1941, he told his disciples that the “Zohar” likens Purim to Yom Kippur because, just as a Jew must fast on Yom Kippur whether he likes it or not, so must he rejoice on Purim even if there is nothing to be happy about!

In a similar vein, the grand rabbi, Reb Shlomo of Slonim looked for a way to dance on a Purim when he was a prisoner in a concentration camp. He challenged his Nazi guards to a dance contest. They showed their prowess. Then the rabbi danced as though he were in another world, singing the Purim song: “Shekol kovecha lo yevoshu...those who place their hopes in You will never be shamed and humiliated.”

Perhaps the most amazing incident of all involves Rabbi Aharon Rokeach זצ"ל, the Grand Rabbi of Belz. When he was told that the last known survivor of his immediate family, his oldest son Reb Moshe, had been thrown into a burning synagogue and gone to a fiery death, the Belzer Rebbe exclaimed, “The Creator in His mercy has allowed me to share in the sacrifices of my people!”

Rabbi Norman Lamm, introduction to The Holocaust and Halakhah by Irving Rosenbaum:

Jewish heroism is sadly incomplete unless adequate attention is paid to those whose courage was expressed in living as well as dying with dignity, in an often quiet but always

¹A slightly different and embellished version of the events and Rav Elchonon’s speech is recorded by Rabbi Oshry, in *Hurban Lita* (New York, 1952): On the eleventh of Tamuz, 5701 (July 6, 1941), he was sitting with a group of rabbis and *roshei yeshivah*, great Torah scholars, who were gathered in the Kovno ghetto, giving a *she’ur* in the tractate *Niddah*. All present were so deeply engrossed in this subject matter that they did not react for a moment when a band of Lithuanian fascists broke into the room. The Lithuanians were enraged and began to fire their rifles; then the rabbis rose from their places, trembling. One of the Lithuanians taunted them, ‘You were organizing a revolt in order to go to Israel. But we caught you! You will not escape! Come with us!’ They were lined up ready to be marched away when Rabbi Wasserman turned to his fellow prisoners and said, in his quiet and tranquil voice, ‘It appears that in Heaven they view us as *tzaddikim* [righteous men] worthy to atone with our lives for the people of Israel. We must, therefore, immediately repent here and now, for the time is short and the Ninth Fort [the place for execution] is near. We must remember that we will truly be *mekadeshei ha-shem*, those who sanctify God’s name. Let us therefore go with heads erect; let us, God forbid, have no unworthy thoughts, which like *pigul*, unfit intention, in the case of a sacrifice rendered it invalid. We are now about to fulfill the greatest commandment- that of *kiddush ha-shem*. The fire which will destroy us is the flame out of which the Jewish people will be rebuilt.’ Rabbi Oshry concludes: “And so they marched proudly to their death, thirteen of the great sages of Israel with Rabbi Elchanan Wasserman at their head. That day they were slain in the Ninth Fort.”

fierce resistance to the Nazi program of psychological humiliation and degradation visit with special relish upon the Reich's Jewish victims. ... the magnificent ... courage ... believing Jews who summoned up an unbelievable and invincible dedication to G-d, Judaism, and to life itself. They tapped that mysterious and mystical reservoir of the Jew's spirit which has been the Jew's surest promise of survival. The faith of the Jew in his G-d and his Torah and his people was pitted against the diabolical archenemy ... And this faith often remarkably often!- triumphed over the demons unleashed in this "enlightened" century. The Nazi's secular messianism went up in flames in Berchtesgaden while Jews still proclaimed their confidence in the coming Messiah. What is most remarkable, to the point of taxing credibility, is the staggering psychological stamina and spiritual invincibility of the Jews who sought guidance in Halakhah (Jewish law) from their few remaining rabbis. Questions (*she'elot*) on fine points of Jewish law were directed to a scholarly rabbi, and answers or responsa (*teshuvot*) were offered. Dedication to Torah was expressed not in the abstract, but in the minutiae of daily life ... People stood ready to offer up not only their own lives but even the lives of their only surviving children if this was the decision of Halakhah. The ancient *Akedah* motif- the sacrifice of Isaac by his father, Abraham- was played out in its terrible magnificence... (From the introduction by Rabbi Norman Lamm)

Rabbi Oshry relates that the Jews of Kovno continued to pray and study together [despite the fact that they risked their lives]. On Rosh Hashanah of 5703 (September 1, 1942), they sounded the *shofar* without fear even though the Germans might hear it; and not only did they assemble in the synagogues to pray, but they even organized services in the ghetto hospital. The leaders of this endeavor, in fact, were the "assimilated" doctors, who paid no attention to the German decree and were willing to risk their lives for the *mitzvah* of prayer.

[Even] on the weekdays and Sabbaths, Jews in Vilna, Warsaw, Kletzk, Lodz, Kolomay, and other ghettos risked their lives for the sake of prayer. In bunkers, cellars, underground tunnels and specially constructed hiding places (*malinehs*), they assembled to pray in spite of the German interdiction against public worship. If there were no *siddur*, someone would write one from memory or from a torn and tattered copy which was still to be found. One Moshe Berkowitz from Zhelikov, whose entire family was destroyed, was hidden in a bunker near Warsaw for some time. His companion there writes that Berkowitz spent months laboriously writing a *siddur* so that, "God forbid, the world should not remain without a *siddur*." In the *siddur* he also inscribed the names of his lost loved ones so that God forbid, the world should not remain without a remembrance of those who gave their lives for *Kiddush Hashem*." Not only in the ghettos but in many of the labor and death camps daily *minyanim* for prayer were conducted morning and evening.

At the Eichmann trial, Zalman Kleinman testified to an incident indicating the interpretation of *yhoreg ve'al ya'avur* as it applied to prayer, which was given not by the *Sefer haHinukh's* "great and wise man," but by a young boy at Auschwitz.

One day I was lying on my bunk in the children's block at Auschwitz, and I saw one of the officials of the block coming with a thick rubber truncheon to beat someone. I jumped off my bunk to see whom he was going to beat. Beatings were given for every "sin," and the number of blows was according to the severity of the crime. This was the first time the rubber truncheon was used. Generally they would use a stick, which often would break in the middle of the beating... I wanted to see how the rubber truncheon worked; perhaps someday I would meet up with it myself. The official approached one of the bunks. The boy who was there already knew what was in store for him... He bent over and the beating began. The rest of us watched and counted. The boy neither cried nor screamed, he did not even sigh. We wondered; we did not understand what this meant. The count passed twenty-five- this was the

usual maximum number of blows. When the count reached forty, he began to beat the boy the head and feet. The boy neither sobbed nor cried out- a fourteen –year-old boy- and didn't cry.

The official finished fifty blows and left wrathfully. I remember a tremendous welt on the boy's forehead made by the rubber truncheon. We asked him what he had done incur the beating. He replied, "It was worth it. I brought some *siddurim* to some of my friends so they could pray. It was worth it!" He said not another word. He got up, returned to his bunk and sat down.

The continued study of Torah was an even more remarkable phenomenon during the Holocaust. The emphasis on prayer is perhaps explainable, even in non-halachic terms, as a natural human reaction to terror and trial. But the persistence of Torah study in the ghettos and concentration camps is understandable only with the framework of halachic Judaism. Saadia Gaon's dictum that "we are a people only by virtue of the Torah" was an operative principle to the Jews in the Holocaust. There was no point in national survival- or perhaps even in individual survival- if the Torah should perish. ...

In the Vilna ghetto, for example, the Jews established a regular school system. During one such examination in Talmud, when the students were vigorously discussing a complicated subject, *Ye'ush shelo mida'at*, thirty meters away from the examination station and SS guard unaware of what was going on.

In the Dautmorgan camp in the south of Germany there was a group of *Yeshi Bahurim* who would get together at night to study *mishnayot*. Like the rest of the camp inmates, they were bone-tired from the work in the clay pits, close to starvation, covered with vermin because they had not been able to wash for months. Yet one of them, a thin, white-faced lad from Navordok, would recite out loud chapter after chapter of *mishnayot* from memory, and the rest of them would repeat each saying.

In Garlitz, one of the camps in the Fross-Rosen complex, Yankel Pick studied Talmud during the daily march from the "block" to the machine factory where he worked. The distance was about six or seven kilometers. Each day he would declaim in a strong and vigorous voice the *she'ur be'halakhah* (Talmud lesson) which he had selected from the vast store of talmudic material in his memory. He would arrange for some of the other inmates of Block T, also former students of Torah, or *hasidim*, to march alongside him each morning en route to the factory and each evening on their return. Their feet matched to the melody of the Talmud study. It was as if the *niggun*, the melody, was a marching song.

In the labor camp of Plaszow, the Germans set up a factory for the manufacture of brushes. In it they employed the skilled Jewish craftsmen of Cracow, who managed to set up a *she'ur* in the *daf yomi* (a lecture on the page of the Talmud assigned to daily study). This is how it was done. A pocket-size *Horev* edition for the Talmud was concealed in the box in which the brushes were packed. The workmen all sat alongside the long table and read the page of Talmud aloud so that all could hear. He also held ready at hand a half-completed brush, so that it would appear that he was working if the Nazi inspectors should come suddenly. While they were not able to maintain the regular *daf yomi* schedule, since they had only one volume of the Talmud, they did manage to conduct the "class" almost on a daily basis.

In the Warsaw ghetto, it was not a brush factory but a cobbler's shop which served as the house of study. In his diary of the Warsaw ghetto, Hillel Seidman describes the scene of Hoshana Rabbah (the seventh day of the Succot festival), October 2, 1942.¹

¹Now, here I am in Schultz's "shop." The people are driving in nails and saying Hoshanot (prayer). Here are assembled, thanks to one of the directors, Abraham Hendel, the elite of the Orthodox rabbinical religious scholars, Orthodox social workers, and well-known Hasidim. Here you see sitting at the wooden block and mending shoes (the work consists mostly of pulling out nails with pliers) the

Jacob Frankel, an accountant, describes what transpired in Buchenwald:

Do not think that the most expensive commodity in Buchenwald was bread. My experience taught me that there was a much more valuable kind of merchandise there- a pair of *tefillin*. I myself took part in a transaction involving the extraordinary price for a pair of *tefillin* of four complete rations of bread. To tell the truth, this was a partnership ventured which all of us, the *hasidim* of Gur, were involved. We who had resided on 'tier numt four' of the block were the purchasers. A Ukrainian *kapo*, a *pogromchik* like all of them, was the seller. We had reached Buchenwald in transport directly from Auschwitz. This was in the last stages of the war, when people were sent not only to Auschwitz, but also from it to other concentration camps. At the *selektion*, which had been made in the shadow of the crematoria, everything had been taken from us. There was no opportunity to smuggle a single pair of *tefillin*. What were we, this *hevrayah* of Gur *hasidim* gathered together on the uppermost tier of the wooden bunks, to do now? How could we hold fast without *tefillin*? God helps! A Ukrainian *kapo* had stolen a pair of *tefillin* from the SS storehouse and was prepared to sell them- for no less than four rations of bread...

... In Buchenwald, to forgo a few rations of bread was tantamount to committing suicide. Was this permitted according to the *din*? As an accountant I was accustomed to work with figures. My calculations showed very clearly that in Buchenwald, to give up four rations of bread meant dying within a week or at most two. Nonetheless, I went to the *kapo* and informed him I was prepared to give him two rations as a down payment. He refused and wanted the full payment in advance. Soon another *hasid*, Abraham Eliyahu Weiss, Aleksander *hasid* who came from one of the ghettos near Lodz, became my partner. It took several days until the two of us were able to save up four rations of bread. But the *kapo* kept his word and brought us a small pair of *tefillin* wrapped in paper. We quickly inspected them and then prayed in them with an ecstasy which it is impossible ever to experience again in our lives...

Rabbi Joshua Aronsohn describes how *tefillin* were put on in Auschwitz:

Kozieglower rebbe, Yehuda Ariele Forman, the former rosh yeshiva of Yeshivat Hakhamay Lublin. The Jew is sitting here, but his spirit is soaring to other worlds. He does not stop studying from memory and his lips keep moving all the time. From time to time he addresses a word to the Plesecz rebbe, the author of Hovot Hatalmidim, who is sitting just opposite him. And then a quiet discussion of religious subjects follows. Gemara and biblical texts are quoted, and soon there appear on the blackboard, or rather in the minds and mouths of the geonim the Rambam, the Rabad, the Tur...and we care now about the SS men, about the Volksdeutsch supervisor, or about hunger, misdeeds, persecutions, and fear of death! Now they are soaring in higher regions, they are not in the "shop" 46 Nowolipie Street where they are sitting, but in lofty halls..."

Scultz's "cobbler shop" was not the only house of study in the Warsaw ghetto. There are at least ten known locations where such illegal cells concerning which documentation is fragmentary. Similar groups existed in the ghettos of Cracow and Lodz. One group of young Hasidim in the ghetto of Cracow sat night and day in a cellar, absorbed in study. Following the liquidation of the Cracow ghetto, they were forced out of the cellar and killed by the Gestapo.

Leib Garfunkel, a member of the Aeltentestrat of the Kovno ghetto, writes that the Talmud was studied regularly and enthusiastically in the two remaining synagogues of Kovno, as well as in temporarily organized minyan. The study sessions were led by former yeshiva students and learned laymen.

The principal study time was in the evening, when the men had returned from the forced-labor details, starving and frozen... In the ghettos there were some who could not under any circumstances reconcile themselves to not studying Torah all the day long, so they concealed themselves in various hiding places in order not to have to go to the forced labor. The labor office of the Aeltentestrat, which had the responsibility of providing the quota of workers, ultimately allowed these people to be free from fulfilling their forced-labor obligations.

When we arose in the darkness of the night, we had just managed to wash, the block leaders and their helpers were hurrying us along to the forced-labor detail. There were long queues of prisoners waiting on line, not for bread or coffee, but to fulfill the *mitzvah tefillin*. We appointed a special “guard” whose job it was to make sure that no one kept a *tefillin* on for longer than it took him to say the one verse of *shema yisrael*, so that no one would be able to fulfill the *mitzvah*.

Moshe Brachfeld writes:

After some time we were taken to another camp, where there were about two thousand Jews from Munkacs and other places. They did not have even one pair of *tefillin*. How great was their joy when they discovered that we had brought a pair with us. About five hundred Jews recited the benediction that first day, and so it was every day thereafter. The pressure was so great that we were compelled to divide the set of *tefillin*. One group used only the *shel rosh*, the head *tefillin*, and the other the *shel yad*, the hand *tefillin*. Understandably, each group recited only the one benediction appropriate in each case. There was no other way; we felt it was better that each one should fulfill at least part of the *mitzvah* than that only some should be able to fulfill it completely. This was really an elixir of life for us.

I recall a Jew from Munkacs, Reb Aharon Veider, who arose at two o'clock in the night so that he could pray in the *tefillin*. He was able to pray as much as he desired without interruption. Then at about 3:00 a.m. toward morning, the round of those who put on *tefillin* had already begun. It lasted usually until 5:30, the time of the block inspection. I and my brother were the last to get there. Nonetheless we saw to it that the *tefillin* were brought to the place where we worked. There tens of Jews were able to use the short noon-hour break to pray on the *tefillin* in a concealed place.

Moshe Fuderman describes how in Dachau, in the “summer block,” there were twenty-two men who put on *tefillin*. “Even though we had to put them on in the darkness of the night, we relied on the opinion of the *Rav* of Kovno who, when asked by those in the forced-labor detail whether it was permissible to pray before dawn (since they had no alternative), replied in the affirmative and declared, ‘Would that my portion (in the hereafter) be with them.’”...

iv - The Sabbath

One of [Rabbi Oshry's] students, a certain Reb Ya'acov, came to him during the period when starvation was rampant in the Kovno ghetto with the following *she'elah*. He had the opportunity of working in a forced-labor detail in the ghetto kitchen, rather than in the more arduous construction work at the airfield which the Germans were constructing near Kovno. However, in the kitchen he would be forced to violate the Sabbath by cooking. (On the other hand, if he did accept the kitchen assignment, his already weakened body might be strengthened by the opportunity of getting somewhat more of the “black soup” which the Germans provided for the Jewish workers. Would cooking on *Shabbat* be permitted under these circumstances? Since the lighter labor and the increased food ration might keep him from dying of starvation, would this not be considered a case of *pikuah nefesh*, saving of life which overrides the prohibitions of Sabbath Labor? He further inquired if he himself might eat the soup which he cooked on the Sabbath, since ordinarily a Jew is forbidden to derive any benefit from the product of labor performed by him on the Shabbath...

...For a time, at least, others in the Kovno ghetto managed to avoid Sabbath labor. Rabbi Elhanan Person, a survivor of that ghetto, writes:

Many made great sacrifices in order to keep the Sabbath. They agreed to perform the most difficult labor during the week in order to be given freedom from work on the Sabbath. There were those who gave up on the special food rations which were distributed to the

who would work seven days (including *shabbat*) at the airfield in order to avoid desecrating the Sabbath- this at a time when hunger was too great to bear.

Similar sacrifices are recorded of the Jews in the other ghettos of Nazi Europe. Even in the concentration camps, some individuals managed to avoid working on *Shabbat*. The brushmaker in the labor camp of Plaszow “were particularly zealous in the observance *Shabbat*...under circumstances which it is impossible to imagine. The Germans had set for a production quota for each week. We worked madly to complete the required number during the six weekdays so that on *Shabbat* we could appear to be working at full speed whereas reality we did not work at all. Only when the German manager made a sudden inspection (*Shabbat*) did we turn on the machines, since *pikuah nefesh* was involved...”

... Some did not eat their daily bread ration so that on Friday night they could have bits of bread (*lehem mishneh*) over which to recite the *Kiddush*...

In his book *Dignity to Survive*, Yona Emanuel recounts of his mother: On Friday night of Shabbat Nachamu, 1944, Chana Emanuel was subjected to a trial by members of the *Judenrat* in Bergen-Belsen for the offense of breaking camp rules by cooking a portion porridge for her youngest child. She had prepared the food for her daughter on a day which camp inmates were being collectively punished and no food had been provided. The trial was conducted entirely by Jews who served as prosecuting and defense attorneys, judge and court clerks. Contrary to the norm, Chana Emanuel’s trial was exceedingly brief. She waived her right to present a defense and accepted the verdict of forfeiture of her bread ration for a number of days. When later asked why she had made no attempt to defend herself or plead mitigating circumstances, Chana Emanuel replied that the clerk recording the minutes of the trial was Jewish. Had she spoken, he would have proceeded to transcribe everything she uttered. Accordingly, she resolved to remain silent and accept further privation, rather than cause additional desecration of the Sabbath on the part of a fellow Jew.¹

... In her testimony at the Eichmann trial, Rivkah Kuper describes the lighting Sabbath candles at Auschwitz:

When we arrived on the eighteenth of January 1943 we were put into the blocks Birkenau. They had previously been horse stables... Among the first things we sought were two ends of candles. Friday night we gathered together on the top tier of our block. There were then about ten or twelve girls... We lit the candles and began quietly to sing Sabbath songs... we heard choked sobbing from the tiers of bunks all around us. At first we were frightened, then we understood. Jewish women who had been imprisoned months, sometimes years, gathered around us, listened to the songs. Some asked us if they might also recite the blessing over the candles... From then on, every *shabbat* we lit the candles. We had bread, there was nothing to eat, but somehow we managed to get the candles. And so it was on all holidays. We fasted on Yom Kippur in Auschwitz. True, we ate no *matzot* on *pesach* but we traded our rations with the other prisoners for potatoes so that on *pesach* we could at least fulfill the commandment of “thou shalt eat no *hametz*”²...

¹The youngest Emanuel child, Bitya, was barely three years old in 1942, when the extermination of Dutch Jewry began. As the danger escalated, her parents placed Bitya with a childless non-Jewish couple in the countryside. One day, Bitya and the woman caring for her visited the Emanuels. When the assembled family members recited the Grace After Meals, Bitya’s caretaker whispered prayer while making the sign of the cross and Bitya followed her example. Bitya’s parents refused to send the child back into hiding in a non-Jewish home. They informed the older children: “We receive you children as a deposit from Hashem. We do not know when we will be obligated to return the deposit, but...we will return you as Jews” (p. 126). At the age of five years and four months, Bitya died of starvation in Bergen-Belsen and returned her soul to God. It was for preparing food for Bitya that Mrs. Emanuel was subjected to the earlier described trial.

²...Rabbi Oshry describes the consequence of his ruling:

On Friday, March 2, 1945 we reached Mauthausen... in those last few difficult weeks that we spent in the concentration camp, some of us worked in the unloading of cars of grain for the warehouse. A number of times, our small group succeeded in taking a little bit of wheat from the warehouse. The religious Jews among us gave up their bread rations in exchange for that wheat. In this fashion they accumulated a small quantity of wheat for *Pesah*. They crushed the grains of wheat with a hammer into a kind of flour. They baked it into *matzot* and so, some tens of Jews were able to conduct the two *sedarim*.

Late at night, when the guards had left our block, several tables were set up in the washing room. We lit two candles, each participant received one small *matzoh*. One of them began reciting the Haggadah in tremulous voice, the rest repeated it after him weeping, their voices choked with sobs. Thus did a small group of Jews, in the shadow of death, conduct the two *sedarim* in the Mauthausen concentration camp.

Rabbi Samson Stockhamer, one of the well-known rabbis of Warsaw, was taken, after the loss of his entire family, to a work camp in the south of Germany. An eyewitness describes how:

On the Festival of Passover, 5705, the last Passover of his life, he refused to eat any *hametz*. I knew that this abstention from *hametz* was tantamount to fasting for eight days. This would lead to complete weakening of his strength and endanger his life. I tried to persuade him to eat something because of *pikuah nefesh*, the saving of life. I said to him, "this is one of the sins which is in the category of *yehorag ve-al ya'avur*, where one must sacrifice his life rather than violate the commandment." He replied, "I know the law. But I have another very important reason. There are 2,500 Jews in this camp. It is only right that at least one of them should refrain from eating *hametz*. If you know of another one who lets *hametz* pass his lips, then I will think the matter over. But I doubt if such a person is to be found. Therefore, the obligation rests upon me to be the one Jew out of 2,500 who observes the prohibition of *hametz* on *Pesah*. I fulfill this obligation joyously and with love." Indeed, food entered his mouth all eight days of Passover, except for a little water. It was indeed miraculous to see how his powerful will overcame the weakness of his body and how he continued to work at the forced labor together with his fellows..."

Rabbi Joshua Greenwald tells of his concentration-camp experiences:

I learned that one of the inmates had a *siddur*. I went to him secretly with a bit of paper that I had found... I copied the *shemoneh esreh* of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. (

Once I had instructed my students that they could fulfill the mitzvah of the Four Cups with tea sweetened with saccharin, they accepted upon themselves the obligation of aiding others to fulfill the great mitzvah of the Four Cups, which corresponds to the four expressions of redemption. They distributed sweet tea to all those who did not have even this beverage in order that they, too, should be able to fulfill this practice, which symbolizes redemption; thereby strengthening their spirits and rejoicing their hearts with the hopes that the day was not far distant when they, dwellers in darkness and in the shadow of death, the prisoners of the ghetto, would merit redemption from their enemies who had vowed to destroy them...

In Warsaw, on the very eve of the Great Ghetto Revolt of Passover 1943, the Piazerski rebbe convened a *bet din* to declare that legumes were permissible because it was a *sha'at ha-deh* an emergency situation. Also on the eve of that Passover, in the midst of the pre-revolt tensions, the rebbe of Sokolov, Rabbi Benjamin Morgenstern, came to one of the Jewish officials asking immediate and urgent help. He had prepared many "bills of sale" for the mekhirat *hametz* of Jews in the ghetto, and now, when it was incumbent upon him to transfer all of it to a gentile, there was no one to be found in the ghetto. None of the Poles had come to the Warsaw ghetto that day. The official Abraham Handel, prevailed upon one of the Polish drivers, one Stanski, himself an anti-Semite, to acquire all the ghetto *hametz* for a substantial bribe.

At the risk of their lives, that same Passover eve a group of Hassidic rabbis, including the Piazerski rebbe and the rebbe of Sokolov, adhered to ancient Custom and drew well water (*mayy shelanu*) for the baking of *matzah*...

Rosh Hashana we prayed in one of the blocks without the Germans finding out. I recited the *shemoneh esreh* from my handwritten copy, and the rest of the prisoners, about two thousand men, repeated it after me quietly amidst tears and sighs and sobs. We had barely finished our prayers when we were compelled to go out to that day's forced-labor task... On the eve of Yom Kippur, at sunset time, the Germans took us out for an "inspection." Knowing that this was a holy day, they kept us there until it was dark so we were not able to eat the morsel of bread which we had hidden and put aside to prepare for the fast... we were worried that we would not be able, God forbid, to fast and to fulfill the *mitzvah* of the day properly. On that night we prayed in the same place as we had on Rosh Hashanah. However, on Yom Kippur morning we were unable to finish. In the middle of *Shemoneh Esreh*, the murderers broke their weapons drawn. We tried to run away in different directions, but not everyone was able to escape. Those who were caught were beaten murderously. *Ne'ilah* we were able to pray in hidden spots without any disruption... After Yom Kippur our hearts were overjoyed that we had had the merit of fulfilling the commandment of fasting.... At the time I really understood what *kiddush ha-shem* was... As I observed the sacrificial spirit of even Jews who had been irreligious in the past trying now to fulfill the commandments of God and rejoicing in fulfilling the will of their Creator...

... The fourteen hundred boys who had been condemned to be sent to the crematorium and were locked up in one of the blocks learned that I had a *shofar*. They began to cry out and plead bitterly that I should enter their block and sound the one hundred blows for them in order that they should have the precious *mitzvah* of *shofar* in their last moments. They did not know what to do. For it was a very dangerous situation. If the Nazis should come suddenly and find me among them, there was no doubt that they would take me to the crematorium... the lads cried out bitterly, "*Rebbe, rebbe*, come, for God's sake; have pity on us; let us have the merit of this *mitzvah*, in our last moments." The entreaties of the boys could not allow me to rest... I decided not to turn them away empty-handed. I began to bargain immediately with the *kapos*. After many entreaties and for a substantial sum which was gathered together, they agreed to my request. But they warned that if I heard the gate bell sound, the signal that the SS men were coming, this would mean that my fate would be the same as that of the boys; for then they would not let me leave the block under any circumstances.

I agreed and I went in to the boys. I took the precaution of stationing my son outside to watch and see if the SS men were approaching the gate. If he saw them he would run and warn me so I could leave immediately- even if it should be in the very midst of sounding the *shofar*.

The truth be written, this decision did not conform to the Halakhah, for I well knew that according to halakhah, I should not have taken even the slightest risk for the sake of sounding the *shofar*. But after we had seen with our own eyes, thousands of people killed and burned, or falling dead in the field from the hard labor, like sheaves after the harvest, my life had no worth at all, and this was the reason for my coming to this decision... After the sounding of the *shofar*, when I was about to leave the block, one boy stood up and cried out: "The *rebbe* has strengthened our spirits by telling us that 'even if a sharp sword rests on a man's throat, he should not despair of God's mercy.' I say to you, we can hope that things will get better, but we must be prepared for them to get worse. For God's sake, let us not forget to cry out *shema yisroel* with devotion at the last moment"...

... On Yom Kippur in Stutthaus, the Jews in the camp were made to stand lined up in an open field from dawn until late afternoon. Then the Nazis brought out pots of hot, fragrant stew made with carrots, potatoes, and meat. The inmates had not seen the like of such food for years. Each person could have as much as he wanted. The wonderful smell of the stew tempted the weary, starving Jews that it was difficult to resist. This encouraged each other

overcome the temptation: "Let us not be seduced... Let us show that even starving as we are in this camp, we will not sell our sacred day." There were some who were so weak and felt that they were overcome by the intoxicating aroma and could not resist; they looked down the ground in shame, and ate. The rest of the prisoners, among them Jews, who had never before fasted on Yom Kippur, did not succumb. They fasted and stood on their feet until nightfall. Toward evening, at *ne'ilah* time, the men of the camp drew close to each other and conducted the *ne'ilah* prayers, and repeated over and over again to each other, "This year Jerusalem." ...

Suddenly we saw a group of men. At their head was an old Rav, wrapped in his tallit and holding in his hand an open siddur. He passed before us as a figure from out of this world, and called aloud: "Be comforted, be comforted, my people." (Chayim Lazar, quoted by Schonfeld.)¹

Pain and...fear...kept us awake...The moon shone through the window...and gave the pale, wasted faces of the prisoners a ghostly appearance. It was as if all the life had ebbed out of them. I shuddered with dread, for it suddenly occurred to me that I was the only living man among the corpses.

All at once the oppressive silence was broken by a mournful tune. It was the plaintive tones of the ancient "Kol Nidre" prayer. I raised myself up to see whence it came. There, close to the wall, the moonlight caught the uplifted face of an old man who, in self-forgetful, pious absorption, was singing softly to himself...This prayer brought the ghostly group of seemingly insensible human beings back to life.

We sat up very quietly, so as not to disturb the old man, and he did not notice that we were listening...When at last he was silent, there was exaltation among us, and exaltation which men can experience when they have fallen as low as we had fallen and then, through the mystic power of a deathless prayer, have awakened once more to the world of the spirit. (Szalet, quoted by DesPres.)²

Ernst Papanek, Austrian socialist educator and self-confessed total ignoramus Jewish matters:

It was pure arrogance in our part to think that we could decide whether the Orthodox orphans would get kosher food or not. [These forty children, between 11 and 13 years age] were tied together by the most powerful common background we ever saw...Despite everything, the Orthodox children were always the most confident of their ultimate triumph and the least scarred by their persecution. They knew who they were, and what they were persecuted for. They did feel different, they did feel special, they did feel that they had been chosen by G-d to fulfill some Almighty purpose. In one sense they didn't have to win over anybody or anything. They won by being³.

¹ Quoted by Rabbi Joseph Elias in The Jewish Observer, October 1977, *Dealing With "Church Europa"*

² Quoted by Rabbi Joseph Elias in The Jewish Observer, October 1977, *Dealing With "Church Europa"*

³ Quoted by Rabbi Joseph Elias in The Jewish Observer, October 1977, *Dealing With "Church Europa"*

In Sosnowitz, Moshe Merin wanted the Jewish Council to make up a list of thousand Jews to be handed over for deportation. When the *Rav* of the community, Raf Yeshaya Englard, blocked him in this, Merin made up the list himself and in revenge, put Rabbi Englard and his family on it. At the last moment, he apparently reconsidered and offered to take Rabbi Englard off the train. But the *Rav* asked whether he would substitute others in his place and, upon receiving a positive reply, insisted on going to his death¹.

“The Nazis did not want only to destroy the Jew; they aimed to destroy his spirit and everything he stood for. In this they glaringly failed².”

Rabbi Joseph Elias wrote the following article in The Jewish Observer, October 1977, *Dealing With “Churban Europa”*:

The point is made by Hilberg and Dawidowicz, among others, that Jews historically have become conditioned not to use violence. Be that as it may—in Nazi Europe mass resistance was out of the question. Foot quotes de Gaulle as calling resistance a “bluff that worked”—and that only under the very special conditions that existed in France. A limited amount of sabotage and underground work was possible in Eastern Europe, and was indeed done; but on a mass scale, resistance—except just prior to liberation—could at most be a heroic but suicidal gesture of defiance and revenge.

Moreover, Garlinski, in his meticulous account of underground work in Auschwitz, stresses that it took months to set up any organization—and therefore Jews, unlike other prisoners, were unable to do so; they were destined for the crematoria and had an average life expectancy of three months. They did not even have the time to make those basic adjustments to the surrealistic and horror-laden underworld of Auschwitz (“another plane which alone held out a hope of survival (DesPres). Sereny points out that the Nazis fiendishly provided entirely different receptions in Auschwitz for Jews from Eastern and Western Europe, playing on their different world outlook in order to totally disorganize and overwhelm them. In the same way, the Nazis turned the treatment of the Jews in the ghettos into a devilish art, alternating murder with promises of a respite, deliberately creating confusion and uncertainty, and after every “Aktion” fanning hopes of survival for those that remained.

And yet, as we read the accounts of those terrible days, we are made to realize by the writers that there was a possibility of a resistance of a different nature than is usually envisioned. The Nazis did not want only to destroy the Jew; they aimed to destroy his spirit and everything he stood for. In this they glaringly failed...

Schonfeld quotes Efraim, a standard-bearer of secularism, whom the Holocaust brought to the gates of repentance:

From where did the thousands of Jewish police (kapos), who served the Germans in the concentration camps and the ghettos, come? The survivors of the Holocaust all concede that they originated from the underworld and from the maskilim—the very people who denounced their “unenlightened” brethren for their more traditional garb. Did not the maskilim harbor the same feelings of scorn and even hatred as their masters, the Nazis?...Here one must record the blatant fact...that Torah-true Jewry—Jews wearing t

¹Quoted by Rabbi Joseph Elias in The Jewish Observer, October 1977, *Dealing With “Churban Europa”*.

² Rabbi Joseph Elias in The Jewish Observer, October 1977, *Dealing With “Churban Europa”*.

traditional rabbinical or hassidic garb—never held positions in the Jewish police force, who administered ghetto Jewry, and never served as *kapos*.

Actually, there were some isolated cases of *Kapos* emerging from among the religious ranks, but they were a rarity indeed.

It is important to note that Trunk indeed points out that the *Judenrats* and ghetto administrations were largely dominated by assimilationists (the Jewish police in Warsaw was commanded by a *Meshummad*, and the Vilna Ghetto by Jacob Gens whose wife was Lithuanian Christian) or Zionists (Merin, the “ruler” of Sosnowitz, for instance, was a Revisionist, and Rumkowski, “the king of Lodz,” a General Zionist). From the various studies there emerge many reasons why they played such a dominant role in the ghettos (and later as *kapos* in the camps). They had a better secular education, often were professionals and knew German; not only those who only realized their Jewish identity when the Nazis took over, but a good many secularized Jews who had played a role in Jewish life, in a way felt closer to their new masters than to the poor, ragged, old-fashioned Jewish masses; their ambition and power-seeking was not restrained by Torah considerations; and they had confidence in their own ability to decide what was right and wrong.

In the beginning, most *Judenrat* members meant well; but as the Jewish council emerged more and more as impotent tools of Nazi persecution, their more idealistic members sought to get out or resisted the Nazis and were killed. With some notable exceptions, those who remained deluded themselves that they were doing a good thing. By preparing the lists of Jews who were sent to their deaths, they thought that they were saving other Jews. But in reality they merely stoked the crematoria.

It is noteworthy that in connection with their work—as for instance in the case of Abba Kovner, head of the *Hashomer Hatzair* in Vilna—there appears again the infamous policy of “selective rescue.” Dessler, the Vilna Jewish police head, wrote in his diary (quoted by Schonfeld):

Those who were deported were chosen by my Jewish police for I wanted to save the young and the intelligentsia. But when the time came for a breakout to the forest, Kovner promised to exit fifty of his friends from the organization exclusively...Tens of your healthy, strong people gather in the courtyard and plead before Kovner that he permit them join those leaving, but he threatens them with his revolver and chases them away. (Laz quoted by Schonfeld)

What a contrast to the role played by the Rabbis, as outlined by Trunk and others!

In Sosnowitz, Moshe Merin, mentioned above, wanted the Jewish Council to make a list of a thousand Jews to be handed over for deportation. When the *Rav* of the community, Rabbi Yeshaya Englard, blocked him in this, Merin made up the list himself and in revenge put Rabbi Englard and his family on it. At the last moment, he apparently reconsidered and offered to take Rabbi Englard off the train. But the *Rav* asked whether he would substitute others in his place and, upon receiving a positive reply, insisted on going to his death. To take the contrast, in Auschwitz, between Eliezer Greenbaum, son of Yitzchak Greenbaum whom we mentioned before, an all-powerful *Kapo* who, according to K. Tzetnik’s testimony, delighted in murdering religious Jews (he was later killed by Jews in *Eretz Yisroel*, according to Schonfeld), and Rabbi Meisels who took his life into his hands to fulfill the last request of a few hundred boys marked for extermination, and blew *shofar* for them on *Rosh Hashanah*.

Of course, the Merins, Kovners, Greenbaums, *et al* were a relatively small number and it has been argued that they, too, were victims of a situation too immense for them—but the fact that such figures could appear is a tragic demonstration of how low it is possible to fall when Torah is forsaken. Just as the drift away from Torah deeply affected the rescue efforts of Jewry in the free world, so it cruelly affected the Jews under the Nazi heel. Again

assimilation to a non-Jewish world and its values not only helped prepare for the disaster, but accompanied and worsened it.

v - Acts of Jewish Resistance

Certainly, there were many stories of Jewish heroism in a physical sense: The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising (popularised in Leon Uris' *Mila 18*) which we bring below; Jews who joined the partisans¹; Jews who escaped the camps or who gave their lives defying orders. But, to stress again, much more important than the physical heroism was the spiritual heroism.

Jewish Resistance to the Nazi Genocide: For most of the Jews who died in the gas chamber, the issue of resistance was not an issue at all. Until as late as mid-1942, the Jews were unaware that the Final Solution was being implemented. Stripped of weapons, facing starvation and disease, the prospect of deportation combined with offers of food was an incentive for Jews to board the trains which took them to their deaths. Most believed what they were told that they were going to be relocated to work. For virtually all, the reality that they faced immediate death did not occur until the doors of the gas chambers were sealed, the lights were turned off, and the smell of gas was perceived. By then, it was too late. Those who did resist, either by running from the trains, or attacking their captors, faced certain death. Some took advantage of this option and were summarily executed on the spot....

For others, deciding not to commit suicide but rather to make an attempt at survival amidst the hopelessness and despair of this situation was their resistance. Those that resisted more actively found that any success resulted in unintended consequences. The Nazis practiced the doctrine of collective responsibility. Thus, if a Nazi soldier was murdered by

¹ Jewish Partisan Educational Foundation: Between 20,000 and 30,000 Jews escaped the ghetto and work camps of Nazi-occupied Europe, fleeing to the forests for shelter where they formed groups and fought back against the Nazis and their collaborators. These brave Jews are known as the Jewish Partisans.

It is important to note that for most victims of the Holocaust, the chance to escape and join the partisans never came. Only very few Jews had the means and the opportunity to escape, and even then, the choice was difficult. Most of these young people were their families' lifelines for survival from the ghettos and camps, smuggling in available food and information whenever possible. The Nazis and their collaborators also used a method called Collective Responsibility to deter Jews from escaping the ghettos and camps. Collective Responsibility meant that for each person who escaped, 10 to 25 remaining people would be killed or executed, beginning with the escapee's family.

Daily survival in the forests was very difficult. Exposure and starvation posed as great a threat to the average partisan as did discovery by a Nazi patrol. Shelter was a small dugout in the ground. Adequate clothing and food were scarce. The winter months meant enduring freezing temperatures but welcoming snow, as it masked the smoke from a campfire.

In the face of these challenges to survival, which often meant risking death to seek or steal food from local villages, the Jewish Partisans organized to sabotage and resist the Nazis. Their missions, carried out in military-style units, were very successful in destroying thousands of trains. Apart from mining train tracks, partisans sabotaged communications lines, exploded Nazi-controlled farms and power plants, and successfully rescued scores of other Jews still imprisoned in ghettos and camps. Many Jewish Partisans fought alongside local groups also resisting the Nazi occupation. Making themselves known to other groups held many risks, however, as anti-Semitism was widespread in the rural areas where Jewish Partisans hid and carried out their missions. Many thousands of Russian soldiers, trapped in Eastern Europe after Hitler invaded Poland, escaped and formed partisan groups. These Russian partisan groups greatly aided many Jewish Partisans in their struggle to fight and survive in the forests. Among the Russians, however, there was also anti-Semitism.

Though people of all ages became Jewish Partisans, many were very young. Children as young as nine years old fought, and many Jewish Partisans were between the ages of 17 and 25. Most commonly, men and boys carried out all partisan missions, although in some camps, girls and women worked and fought alongside them.

Jew, not only was that Jew executed, but also his family, and perhaps a hundred other Jew. As a result, few Jews even considered carrying out this active resistance for fear of reprisals.

While there were examples of courageous armed uprisings in the ghettos, resistance also took forms without weapons. For many, attempting to carry on a semblance of "normal" life in the face of wretched conditions was resistance. David Altshuler writes in Hitler's War Against the Jews about life in the ghettos, which sustained Jewish culture in the midst of hopelessness and despair.... The writings and oral histories of survivors of the labor and concentration camps are filled with accounts of simple sabotage. Material for the German war effort, for example, might be mysteriously defective, the result of intentionally shod workmanship by Jewish slave labor.

Despite the myth to the contrary, Jewish armed resistance to the Holocaust did occur. This active resistance occurred in ghettos, concentration camps, and death camps. Many of those who participated in resistance of this type were caught and executed, and their stories will never be told. However, there are many verifiable accounts of major incidents of Jewish resistance:

Tuchin Ghetto: On September 3, 1942, seven hundred Jewish families escaped from this ghetto in the Ukraine. They were hunted down, and only 15 survived.

Warsaw Ghetto: By 1943, the ghetto residents had organized an army of about 1,000 fighters, mostly unarmed and without equipment. They were joined by thousands of others, mostly the young and able-bodied, still needed for forced labor. By that time, the half-million original inhabitants had been depleted to about 60,000 as a result of starvation, disease, and deportation.

In January 1943, the S.S. entered the ghetto to round up more Jews for shipment to the death camps. They were met by a volley of bombs, Molotov cocktails, and the bullets from a few firearms which had been smuggled into the ghettos. Twenty S.S. soldiers were killed. The action encouraged a few members of the Polish resistance to support the uprising, and a few machine guns, some hand grenades, and about a hundred rifles and revolvers were smuggled in.

Facing them were almost 3,000 crack German troops with 7,000 reinforcements available. Tanks and heavy artillery surrounded the ghetto. General Heinrich Himmler promised Adolf Hitler that the uprising would be quelled in three days, and the ghetto would be destroyed. It took four weeks. The ghetto was reduced to rubble following bomber attacks, gas attacks, and burning of every structure by the Nazis. Fifteen thousand Jews died in the battle, and most of the survivors were shipped to the death camps. Scores of German soldiers were killed. Some historical accounts report that 300 Germans were killed and 1,000 wounded, although the actual figure is unknown.

Bialystok Ghetto: Jewish paramilitary organizations formed within the ghetto attacked the German army when it was determined that the Nazis intended to liquidate it. The battle lasted just one day, until the resisters were killed or captured.

Vilna Ghetto: Some inhabitants of the Vilna Ghetto began an uprising against the Nazi captors on September 1, 1943. Most participants were killed, although a few escaped successfully and joined partisan units.

Treblinka: Seven hundred Jews were successful in blowing up the camp on August 2, 1943. All but 150-200 Jews perished, as well as over 20 Germans. Only 12 survived the war.

Sobibor: Jewish and Russian prisoners mounted an escape attempt on October 14, 1943. About 60 of 600 prisoners involved in the escape survived to join Soviet partisans. Ten S.S. guards were killed and one wounded.

Auschwitz: On October 7, 1944, one of the four crematoria at Auschwitz was blown up by *Sonderkommandos*. These were workers, mostly Jews, whose job it was to clear away the bodies of gas chamber victims. The workers were all caught and killed.

a. Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

In April 1943, the Warsaw Ghetto uprising broke out. It was, as Moshe Arens described it, a desperate battle that pitted a small group of Jewish fighters against the might of the German Army, a battle for the dignity of man and the honor of the Jewish people. Prior to the uprising, more than 300,000 of Warsaw's Jews had been dispatched from the Warsaw Ghetto in the summer of 1942 in the "Great Liquidation."

The commander of the German assault on the ghetto was SS-Gruppenfuehrer Major General. Juergen Stroop. He "declared victory" over the Jews on the evening of May 16 and to celebrate his victory he dynamited the great synagogue on Tomalckie Street, abandoned to its Jewish worshippers.

What remained of the ghetto - after the Germans had used flame-throwers to burn down many of the buildings - was dynamited, leaving only a heap of rubble where the ghetto that had once housed more than half a million Jews.

As Elie Wiesel² put it: *A few hundred Jews ... rose against what were then the mightiest legions in Europe. Without tangible help from anyone, without training, without any real military experience, they waged a war that will be remembered by future generations as one that, for one moment, made the enemy tremble.*

All other underground movements in occupied Europe received strategically valuable assistance from London, Washington and Moscow, where special units took care of their needs and paid attention to their concerns: vital links were established, special plans dropped sophisticated weapons and precious radio transmitters, logistical support was made available, agents smuggled through borders and brought money and information... Only the Jewish underground was neglected, isolated, ignored. Its heroic warriors were the loneliest victims of the most inhuman of wars.

A single airdrop, an occasional rescue mission would have proved to them, and to their enemy, that they were not forgotten. But the truth is that they were forgotten.

Moshe Arens adds: "When the revolt in the ghetto broke out in April 1943, all Warsaw was aware of the fighting. The news of the revolt was transmitted to the Allied capitals by the Polish underground, but no help came for the Jewish fighters - not from the US or England, nor from the Soviet Union; not even a sign of recognition or acknowledgement by the Allies of the battle raging in the ghetto. The Jewish fighters in the Warsaw Ghetto were unknown soldiers, isolated from the world. Only two years later, at the end of the war, did their valiant battle receive universal recognition."

Wiesel continues: *When this story is told to today's students, they respond with disbelief and frustration. After all, the Allies had spent gigantic sums and invested extraordinary efforts organizing and financing armed resistance against Germany. Why were Jewish groups, even from the purely pragmatic aspect, so totally disregarded instead of being included in their war effort? Is it that they were given up from the outset? Or that no one trusted their military capacity, their bravery, even their loyalty? Is it possible that the Allies simply did not care?*

¹ Jerusalem Post, Apr. 24, 2003, THE CHANGING FACE OF MEMORY: Who defended the ghetto
By Moshe Arens

² Jerusalem Post, Apr. 24, 2003, THE CHANGING FACE OF MEMORY: They did not die alone
By Elie Wiesel

One reads Mordechai Anielewicz's letters to his comrades on the Aryan side, or his appeals to Jewish leaders in Palestine and America, and one wonders: Where did he find the strength to overcome despair?...

From Antek Zukerman, the second in command of the uprising ... I learned a lot about the concept of dignity in times of distress and oppression. Why did all Jewish fighters insist on the importance of "saving Jewish honor" in resisting the murderers? Didn't all heroes perish as martyrs and all martyrs as heroes? Was dying with a gun in the hand worthier than with a prayer on the lips? Most of my questions remained questions.

b. Jewish Socialists and Communists:

For the actively secular Jewish sector, whose major groups were the socialists, various shades of the different Zionist organizations, to belong to the democratic Social International, previously an element of strength in the fight against "classic" anti-Semitism was no source of aid. No effective help was forthcoming from members of the international during the Nazi period, neither from the socialist leaders in exile nor from socialist partners in some government in exile. Jewish Communists, having great difficulty in accepting Moscow's characterization of the Nazis as "lovers of peace" prior to the invasion of the U.S.S.R., painfully returned to the Jewish fold after the invasion of the U.S.S.R.. Resentment toward them by other parties was intensified when the Soviet authorities murdered Jewish Socialist leaders.

vi - American Jewry

Rabbi Joseph Elias (in The Jewish Observer, October 1977):

Ben Hecht's Perfidy shook the Jewish world when it appeared; yet it was a toned down version of the original. "If this had been published the world would have learned that the leaders of the Jewish people—the best known, most respected leaders of Zionism—we actually criminals, said Ben Hecht...One who fought with all his might against our rescue and publicity campaigns was Rabbi Stephen Wise, president of the various Jewish congresses." Since Elie Weisel recorded this interview in 1959, so much material has come to light that it is almost unbelievable that Stephen Wise's name is remembered anywhere without anything but shame (Korman's introduction to *Hunter and Hunted*, whose publication was sponsored by the Bnei Brith Commission on Jewish Adult Education, still presents him as the champion of rescue efforts—the sources gathered by Korman are of vastly greater value than his introduction).

If the Jews in North America had not been so concerned with what the non-Jews thought, they would have screamed and yelled and would have broken down doors in an effort to save their brethren. But they didn't. The behavior of North American Jewry during the Holocaust is a result of the same psychology that underlies assimilation. The fact that American Jews were too busy being accepted by the non-Jews is what paralyzed the rescue efforts on behalf of Europe's six million.

It is no small wonder that the leaders of the fight for silence were Steven Wise and his followers, the ones who were leading the drive for assimilation, and that the leaders of the protests and rescue efforts were the same European Orthodox Jewish rabbis who later spearheaded the rebirth of Torah in the United States.

Modified from JEWISH ACTION Spring 5673/2003:

In *Orthodox Rescue Revisited*, Jewish Action Spring 2003, David Kranz demonstrated at length that American Orthodox Jews were the segment of American Jew most involved in rescue. The "Orthodox response" was in sharp contrast to what leading Holocaust historians have called the mainstream Jewish leadership's "complete paralysis" (Raul Hilberg) and inability "to break out of a business-as-usual pattern" (David Wyman). True, Ephraim Zuroff wrote a book claiming the Orthodox focused on saving their fellow Orthodox brethren and, in particular the leading Rabanim (the implication being Orthodox indifference to the non-Orthodox).¹ But, in an extensive review of Zuroff's book in *Jewish Action*, David Kranzler made ten points conclusively refuting this.

Zuroff seems unaware that the Vaad ha-Hatzala was only one aspect of the Orthodox response. Many of the rabbis who led the Vaad—such as Rabbi Aharon Kotler and Rabbi Reuven Grozovsky—were also active in Agudath Israel. In the latter capacities, each was involved in numerous general rescue initiatives.

True, the Vaad ha-Hatzala was initially formed for the purpose of rescuing 3,000 Torah scholars trapped in Vilna in 1939, a task in which no other group evinced more than minimal interest. The Jewish Agency, for instance, with nearly 70,000 Palestine certificates to distribute, did not issue even one to any of these Torah scholars.

In order to rescue the Torah scholars, the Vaad sought to procure Above Quota Emergency Visitors' Visas. The special visas program came about as a result of the efforts of the Jewish Labor Committee, for instance, and succeeded in rescuing 2,000 personalities—Labor leaders, artists and intellectuals by procuring these visas, and the work

¹*Thy Brother's Blood: the Orthodox Jewish Response during the Holocaust* (Brooklyn, NY, 1998). Zuroff writes, "For more than a year after the leaders of American Orthodoxy learned of the details of the Final Solution in September 1942, the Vaad ha-Hatzala allocated all its rescue funds to approximately 900 refugee rabbis and yeshiva students in Central Asia and 450 in Shanghai, all of whom were simultaneously being assisted by other Jewish organizations. In other words, in the wake of that news one would have thought they would immediately alter their particularistic rescue strategy but the rabbis initially did no such thing. Toward the end of 1943, the Vaad finally began to send funds for rescue work into occupied Europe, and did indeed attempt to promote a more activist rescue approach by the American Jewish community. Yet if we examine its allocations for 1944, we see a very strange fact. During the period from January 1 to October 31, 1944, the Orthodox rescue committee did indeed transfer \$420,000 to Switzerland for rescue work in Nazi-occupied Europe; but at the same time it spent \$265,000 on relief for the rabbis and yeshiva students in Central Asia and Shanghai. At no point did the Orthodox leaders draw the obvious conclusion from the terrible news emanating from Europe and decide—at least temporarily—to stop sending funds to Torah scholars not in danger of being murdered, devoting instead every penny they raised to saving as many Jews as possible—regardless of religiosity and/or affiliation—from almost certain death at the hands of the Nazis and their collaborators." (*Hareidi Hagliography Vs. Holocaust History*)

Dec. 15, 2002: *Out of the Inferno*, Reviewed By Ephraim Zuroff: The manner in which [Rabbi Yoel Yitzhak Schneersohn, the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe] Schneersohn's life was saved was quite extraordinary in historical terms. The rescue was actually organized by Abwehr (German military intelligence) operatives under direct instructions from Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, upon the initiative of Helmuth Wohlthat, a German economist who had good relations with US State Department official Robert Pell. In December 1939, they arranged for German officers to take the rebbe and his entourage from Warsaw to Berlin, ostensibly as suspected spies who had to be interrogated. He stayed in the Nazi capital long enough to receive new Latvian passports, and were thereupon allowed to board a train for Riga, where they arrived safely on December 16, 1939. Although the Nazis did occasionally allow certain Jews to leave occupied territory (usually in return for large sums of money), he was one of only a few rabbis to do so. At no point is the absolute priority given to Schneersohn's rescue ever explained. While the reasoning may be absolutely obvious to Chabad adherents and other followers of rebbes, it is a question which deserves attention as far as regular readers are concerned. Similarly, how can one justify expending even a small amount of resources and energy to try and save the rebbe's library at a time when the rescue of lives should have taken precedence?

Jewish Congress similarly saved 100 top Zionist leaders. At the same time, no more than forty Torah scholars were saved under the program. Zuroff sees nothing wrong with the elitism and particularism of secular groups. Yet, when the Orthodox are forced to redress the imbalance, he immediately pounces on them.

Rabbi Leo Jung and Zeirei Agudath Israel, under the leadership of Mike Tress, were among the pioneers of securing affidavits of financial support and immigration visas. The visas saved several thousand Jews, religious and non-religious alike, from the flames of Europe. Agudath Israel of America was the only organization to defy the British boycott of occupied Europe and continue to send food packages to religious and non-religious Jews in Polish ghettos through 1941, despite weeks of picketing by the entire American Jewish establishment.

In addition, it was the Orthodox who broke the silence on the Nazi extermination campaign in Europe and who pushed for a unified stand of all Jewish groups to pressure the American government to act. On August 28, 1942, Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, the preeminent American Zionist leader, received a telegram from Gerhard Riegner of the World Jewish Congress detailing the Nazi plan to exterminate European Jewry. Wise did nothing other than send the information to the State Department for confirmation.

Jacob Rosenheim, head of World Agudah, received similar information from Orthodox representatives in Switzerland describing the deportation of 100,000 Jews from Warsaw to the crematoria. On the basis of this cable, Rabbi Abraham Kalmanowicz immediately pressured Wise into calling an emergency meeting of thirty-four American Jewish organizations. At that meeting, Wise accused the rabbis of spreading "atrocity tales" and did not divulge the Riegner cable that fully corroborated Rosenheim's information. In addition, he adjured all present at the meeting to silence in order to avoid pressuring President Roosevelt.

Only the Orthodox placed rescue at the top of the communal agenda. At the May 1942 Biltmore Conference of all American Zionist organizations, the rescue of European Jewry was not even on the agenda. At a January 1943 planning session for the forthcoming gathering of the American Jewish Conference, rescue again was not on the agenda. Only the insistence of the Orthodox and the Jewish Labor Committee was it given a minor place. The resolutions of the American Jewish Conference—which took place a full year after Wise received proof of the destruction of European Jewry—focused almost entirely on the creation of a post-war Jewish state in Palestine.

Among non-Orthodox groups, only the Revisionists, led by Peter Bergson, emphasized rescue. The mainstream Zionists fought Bergson, urging the Roosevelt administration to deport or draft him, and pressuring politicians to avoid him. Nathan Goldman of the World Jewish Congress told the State Department that Wise "regarded Bergson as equally as great an enemy of the Jews as Hitler." An aide to Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau Jr. wrote that "every (Jewish) organization is more interested in their fight with some other organization than with the objective of saving Jews....I wouldn't be surprised to see Bergson killed." Only the Orthodox worked hand-in-hand with Bergson. Together they planned the extraordinary march of 400 rabbis on Washington, D.C., on October 19, 1943, the sole public protest of the Roosevelt administration's indifference to the fate of European Jewry.¹ The Rabbis' March was condemned by Wise and the entire Jewish establishment.

¹ "Make way for the rabbis." It was probably the first time the station master at Washington, D.C. Union Station had shouted these words. But the crowd before him was unlike any ever seen in the nation's capital. Four hundred rabbis converged on Union Station two days before Yom Kippur, 1943, in a stirring display of unity to rescue Jews from Nazi extermination.

The march led to the introduction of the Bergson-sponsored Rescue Resolution Congress. That Resolution, in turn, was the primary catalyst for the creation of the War Rescue Board (WRB). Historian David Wyman credits the WRB with saving between 100,000 and 200,000 Jews. Once the WRB was created, the rabbis and Orthodox lay leader Irving Bunim and Mike Tress continually pressured it to participate in various "ransom schemes developed by Orthodox Jews in Europe-Rabbi Michael Ber Weissmandl in Slovakia, Isaac and Recha Sternbuch in Switzerland and Dr. Yaakov Griffel in Turkey-permitting the necessary money transfers.

Throughout the war, the Orthodox were willing to use any means, regardless of legality, to save Jewish lives-any Jewish life. Those illegal means, which were eschewed by mainstream Jewish groups, including using the diplomatic codes of the Polish-government-in-exile (to ensure the fastest possible information from Europe that was free of American government censorship), making illegal wire transfers to starving Jews in Axis-controlled territory, procuring fake South American passports for Jews in Nazi captivity (which eventually proved the difference between life and death for tens of thousands of Jews) and engaging the Nazis in ransom negotiations. Rabbi Weissmandl used such negotiations to delay the deportation of Slovakian Jewry for nearly two years and to halt the deportation of Hungarian Jewry.

In the summer of 1944, the Orthodox pressured the JDCC into paying for the ransoms demanded by the Nazis as the "ransom" for releasing the Kastner train (with human cargo of nearly 1,700 people from Bergen-Belsen) to Switzerland. (Originally, places on the train organized by Rudolph Kastner were limited to those with Zionist credentials but of particularism that does not trouble Zuroff.) In the last years of the war, the Sternbuch cooperated with Swiss fascist Jean-Marie Musy as an intermediary with Heinrich Himmler in order to ransom a train with 1,210 inmates from Theresienstadt. The Musy negotiations came to an end after Saly Mayer, the head of the JDC in Switzerland, and Natan Schwab Hechalutz publicly condemned paying a price to the Nazis even to save Jewish lives.¹

The march was the brainchild of 33-year-old Hillel Kook (b. 1910), a Jerusalem-born nephew of Abraham Isaac Kook, former chief rabbi of Palestine, who arrived in the United States in 1940. For reasons known only to him, once here, Kook took the Americanized name Peter Bergson. Purchasing full-page ads in American newspapers criticizing British limitations on the number of Jews who could emigrate to Palestine, then under British rule, and pleading for Allied action to rescue European Jewry, Bergson and his associates known as the Bergson Group - used the mass media to arouse public interest and influence the Roosevelt administration to intervene against Hitler. More provocatively, Bergson called for the formation of an international Jewish army, which would fight under Allied auspices to liberate European Jewry.

One of Bergson's most spectacular initiatives was the 1943 March of the Rabbis. Despite his Orthodox background, Bergson himself was not observant, nor were most of his followers. They understood, however, the powerful visual impact of hundreds of Orthodox rabbis with their black coats and hats converging on Congress and the White House.... On the advice of his aide FDR, who was scheduled to attend a military ceremony, intentionally avoided the rabbis by leaving the White House through a rear exit while they marched silently in front. When Roosevelt's decision not to encounter the rabbis became known to the press, reporters interpreted Roosevelt's actions as a snub, adding a dramatic flair that transformed the protest rally into a full-fledged clash between the rabbis and the administration.... Bergson's skillful appeal to American public conscience, including the rabbi's march, worked as nothing previously had to bring about a change in White House policy toward the Holocaust. Bergson's militancy, Morgenthau's insider access and the rabbis' willingness to take united political action combined to move FDR to action after three years of his insistence that only when the Allies defeated Hitler could European Jewry be saved. (American Jewish Historical Society)

¹Marie Musy was formerly president of Switzerland. In fall 1944, Sternbuch asked Musy, who had turned strongly pro-Nazi in the 1930's, to intercede with Himmler for release of the Jews in Nazi

American Jewish leaders worked to publicize the European Jewish situation and pressed for government rescue steps. But their effectiveness was importantly diminished by their inability to mount a sustained or unified drive for government action, by diversion of energies into fighting among the several organizations¹, and by failure to assign top priority to the rescue issue.² Some organizations seemed so automatically loyal to the President³ or the priority of Zionism⁴ that they actually undermined some rescue effort

concentration camps. Musy agreed. Himmler agreed to release virtually all the Jews, in weel trainloads of about 1,200, if a token payment of 5 million Swiss francs (\$1.25 million) were placed in a Swiss bank in Musy's name. The next day, a train arrived at the Swiss border carrying 1,210 Jews from Theresienstadt. In the meantime, in mid-February, Musy received word from Himmler's headquarters that the project would be halted unless articles appeared in the Swiss and American press giving credit to the Germans for releasing the Jews who had come out of Theresienstadt. Such reports were published. But if Himmler's purpose was to cultivate American opinion in preparation for a peace approach, his tactic backfired. The press reports came to Hitler's attention, and he snuffed out the project, ordering that not one more Jew was to leave German territory. More Jews did get out, but the Sternbuch-Musy-Himmler agreement was dead despite several weeks of determined effort by Musy to revive it.

The Brand, Mayer, and Sternbuch-Musy episodes all raised the troubling problem of ransom. The WRB adamantly opposed paying the Nazis to let Jews out. The primary reason, of course, was that the compensation could aid the Axis war effort. WRB policy allowed bribery of lower officials at border guards on the grounds that saving lives outweighed any tiny advantage the Nazis might gain from those transactions. But that was quite different from payments of millions of dollars for strategically important goods.

There was some concern about Vaad Hahatzala's illegal use of Polish communication lines. "We have never wanted to stop it, because they get results." Vaad Hahatzala pursued ransom arrangements in defiance of board policy. Sternbuch did not shy at deception or illegality.

¹For example, much of the American Jewish leadership had decried the Committee for a Jewish Air Corps as recklessness and sensationalism as well as gross effrontery in presuming to speak for an American constituency. Concern now arose that the Bergsonites would seize the leadership of the languishing effort for rescue. The inertia of the preceding several weeks dissolved rapidly. Awareness of the CJA's plan to hold a demonstration at Madison Square Garden on March 9, Wise and the American Jewish Congress scheduled a March 1 mass meeting at the same location. To complete this display of disunity and rivalry, the Jewish Labor Committee in late February held many small meetings of its own throughout the New York metropolitan area.

²In the end, the American Jewish Congress carried out very few of its plans. Why? For one thing, cooperation from non-Jews was meager. In addition, some Planning Committee members had reservations about marches and other mass action projects, fearing they "might make the wrong kind of impression on the non-Jewish community." Probably most important, the American Jewish Congress was trying to do too many things with too few capable people.

³Wise's autobiography, completed shortly before he died, shows that Roosevelt remained his hero until the end. It also leaves the clear impression that after about 1935 Wise was unable to be critical of, or even objective about, the President. Despite all evidence to the contrary, he was convinced that FDR was personally anxious about the persecuted European Jews in the 1930's that he wanted to do everything possible to rescue Jews during the Holocaust years, and that he fully, though quietly supported the Zionist movement. Wise's myriad responsibilities, which attested to his importance in American Jewish life, may also have hampered his effectiveness. Reason indicates, and some observers at the time suggested that he should have passed some of them on to others.

⁴Throughout December 1942, the organization most active in developing rescue proposals and seeking support for them was the Zionist oriented American Jewish Congress, aided by its affiliate the World Jewish Congress. A special Planning Committee was formed that designed an ambitious campaign to arouse public opinion. Effective pressure could then be brought on the government to induce it to act. The Office of War Information was to publicize the extermination news.

Most Zionist resources, however, continued to be concentrated on the postwar goal of a Jewish state in Palestine.

Besides direct rescue work, there were rallies, pageants, newspaper advertisements, etc.

Because of this, Agudath Israel of America and the Union of Orthodox Rabbis withdrew from the conference before it convened. In its withdrawal statement, the Union of Orthodox Rabbis declared that the conference should raise a "powerful outcry over the destruction of the Jewish people and demand immediate means for the rescue of Jewish lives." Rescue was added to the agenda only in late July, a month before the conference met, and then only after persistent hammering by the Jewish Labor committee. Even then, the conference's executive committee turned down a Labor Committee appeal to make the extermination of the European Jews the central issue.

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver was probably the most militant of the front echelon of American Zionist leaders. By the time of the conference, he was engaged in a power struggle that would eventually see him supplant Stephen Wise as the leader of American Zionism. Silver had not participated in the Jewish leadership's efforts for government rescue action. Goldman warned that the demand for a Jewish Commonwealth would hurt the rescue effort because it would only harden British and Arab resistance to Jewish immigration into Palestine. And it would do nothing to save the European Jews.

In the end rescue was added to the agenda, but received little more attention. The conference had done no preparatory work on the rescue problem. Its Rescue Committee, which was not convened until halfway through the sessions, decided it could not formulate a program on such short notice. Instead of plans for action, it discussed the proper contents of a resolution. This despite the admonitions by a leader of the World Jewish Congress that "unless we do our job, there may be no Jews for whom a postwar scheme of things is necessary." A paper resolution is what emerged.

A Zionist victory had come at a high price. It ended the possibility of cooperation with the non-Zionist Orthodox groups. And it eliminated or weakened the involvement of other important organizations. In addition, in many local Jewish communities it reawakened old Zionist versus non-Zionist animosities that had been dormant.

A Louisville rabbi asserted that the American Jewish Conference had

Wrecked Jewish unity in the United States. We were getting pretty close to harmony and genuine whole-hearted cooperation all over the country. We all wanted maximum help for Jews everywhere and were getting it. Was it imperative that just now the Jewish Commonwealth idea should have been pressed and everything else made secondary to it?

From the end of the war, then, until 1952, the Joint disbursed \$353 million in supplies and services to reconstruct the shattered lives of Jews overseas. It was a Jewish Marshall Plan. And like its counterpart, the aid supplied by American Jews was responsible for nothing less than the revival of Europe's most cruelly mutilated people.

It was the Joint Distribution Committee...that accepted the task of supplying provisions...by the summer of 1947, that the Joint was providing succor to a vast commonwealth of 750,000 desperately impoverished Jews.

Rabbi Joseph Elias wrote the following article in *The Jewish Observer*, October 1977, *Dealing With "Churban Europa"*:

The failure of the Jewish establishment is well documented not only by Shonfeld but also by others. It was due partly to the love of its leaders for publicity and pronouncements, while, at the same time, showing incredible pettiness and lack of imagination or sensitivity in dealing with the immense and urgent demands of rescue. The handling of the St. Louis is one instance; and another is the failure to help Papanek to rescue most of his orphans from Europe—the picture of the American organization and their attitudes, drawn in *Out of the Fire*, is truly devastating.

More fundamental, however, were two basic premises to which the secular establishment was firmly committed: (1) the only way to aid the Jews of Europe is to help the Allies win the war, and (2) nothing may be done for rescue which might in any way interfere with the efforts for a Jewish State in Palestine (Shonfeld, from whom the passages quoted in the next few paragraphs are taken).

The first premise quoted was based on quasi-patriotic considerations—and (as explicit in the statements of Sali Meyer, in Switzerland, and Chief Rabbi Ehrenpreis in Sweden) on the fears of assimilated leaders that a wave of uncouth, backward Eastern European immigrants would sweep into the Western World and endanger the status of the acculturated modern Jews. These leaders resolutely closed their eyes to the fact that by the time of an Allied victory practically no Jews would

be left to be saved. Stephen Wise in 1943 effectively blocked a promising chance to save 70,000 Roumanian Jews. In 1944, when public pressure built up for the creation of a special War Refugee Board, he testified before Congress against this proposal—and when 400 Rabbis led by Rabbi Eliezer Silver and Rabbi Avrohom Kalmanowitz marched on Washington in support of the idea, it was Stephen Wise and his associates who persuaded Roosevelt against receiving the Rabbis.

In his fine study of the Jewish community in Shanghai, D. Kranzler points out that the only place on Earth where German Jews could go without visa in the nineteen thirties was Shanghai—until the American government, with the active support of the Jewish organizations, asked the Nationalist government in 1939 to stop emigration to Shanghai! Sali Meyer, representative of the Joint and the Zionist Organization in Switzerland, blocked efforts for admission of more Jews to Switzerland, and a Ehrenpreis did the same in Sweden.

The second premise governing the policies of Jewish leaders was eloquently defined in 1943 by Yitzchak Greenbaum, member of the Jewish Agency—and curiously enough—chairman of the Rescue Committee in Jerusalem: “When they asked me, couldn’t you give money out of the United Jewish Appeal funds for the rescue of Jews in Europe, I said, No!, and I say again, No!...one must resist this wave which pushes the Zionist activities to secondary importance.” But it was not only a question of finances; in the words of Chayim Weizmann, in 1937, “The hopes of Europe’s six million Jews are centered on emigration. I was asked, can you bring six million Jews to Palestine? I replied No...From the depths of the tragedy I want to save two million young people...The old ones must pass...They were dust, economic and moral dust in a cruel world...Only the young shall survive.”

There was enunciated the fateful policy of selective rescue which, for instance, led Henry Montebello, executive director of the UJA, to refuse to support Revisionist efforts to bring any and all escapees to Eretz Yisrael: “Palestine cannot be flooded with old people...or with undesirables.” (We shall touch further upon some of the consequences of this policy in Nazi occupied Europe; here it only remains to point out that this policy, which also governed the partisan distribution of certificates before the war, was the major factor in limiting Orthodox aliyah, rather than rabbinic opposition.)

The abandonment of the diaspora, and the writing off of those considered useless to the future, stalled the actual rejection of rescue possibilities which might have lessened the pressure for the opening of the gates of Palestine. Rescue work suffered further from conflicts over how to react to the closing of the doors of Palestine by the British (Ruth Kluger describes the conflicts within the Zionist movement on whether illegal rescue work should be undertaken), and the American prohibition on transfers of funds to enemy territory (Kranzler and Trunk record the hesitation of the Joint to circumvent this law, in contrast to the Vaad Hatzalah which found ways of transferring needed funds even before the U.S. government officially approved). The sabotage of Joel Brand’s rescue mission in deference to British wishes, is of course the most extreme instance of sacrificing Jewish lives to political considerations.

When the conference finally did address the rescue issue, two of its first steps were attacks on Bergsonite activities, and a third was elimination of the Joint Emergency Committee. During the same weeks, the American Jewish Conference interfered with the Rescue Resolution itself. First Stephen Wise, and Herman Schulman pressed leading senators to replace it with legislation more agreeable to the conference’s leadership. When that failed, conference officials attempted to have an amendment concerning Palestine attached to the resolution. After that fell through, they worked behind the scenes to frustrate the legislation. Above all the Rescue Commission could point to in its eighteen month existence were a mass meeting in Carnegie Hall to commemorate the First anniversary of the Warsaw ghetto revolt, and an impressive outdoor demonstration. Although the American Jewish Conference had no role in rescue operation, various other Zionist groups were responsible for a larger part of the rescue activity that was carried out in Europe. Among the most effective were the Jewish Agency for Palestine, the World Jewish Congress, and the Hechalutz (labor Zionist). The JDC and some Orthodox committees were also importantly involved in rescue efforts.

In early 1944, the Jewish Labor Committee, hoping to join the fight against the White Paper with its participating in the campaign for Jewish statehood, asked the conference’s Interim Committee to divide the Palestine Commission into subcommittees. One would lead a united movement against the White Paper and for unlimited refugee immigration into Palestine; the other would carry on the Zionist drive for a Jewish commonwealth. Earlier, a similar suggestion had been submitted by a nonpartisan group within the conference. The Interim Committee refused, explaining that the two issues were too closely lined to be separated. Thus an opportunity was missed to broaden the struggle to end the White Paper, a rescue step that all Jewish groups could support.

Under Silver, the AZEC developed over 400 local councils, directed by volunteer leaders. They cultivated relations with their congressmen and senators as well as with local political leaders. They organized forums, provided speakers for Jewish and non-Jewish groups, obtained favorable editorials in the local press, mounted rallies, and when necessary send deputations to Washington.

These local councils secured pro-Zionist resolutions from scores of city governments, dozens of state legislatures, large numbers of Jewish organizations, and thousands of non-Jewish groups, including churches, labor unions, business federations, and fraternal associations. On a short notice from the AZEC national office, the locals were able to rain letters and telegrams to Congress, the White House and the State Department, from non-Jews as well as Jews. Politicians expressed astonishment at the amount of public interest shown. By the fall of 1944, three quarters of the members of both the Senate and the House were on record in support of establishment of a Jewish commonwealth. The American Zionist Emergency Council proved that American Jewry could build a highly capable pressure organization, attract great energies, focus them on Washington, and provide the financial support for a nationwide campaign. But no comparable drive for rescue was even attempted.

The Zionist leadership concluded that little hope for rescue existed. Reinforcing the Zionist's choice was their view of Jewish history through the centuries of the Diaspora. Abba Hillel Silver clearly expressed the view in his speech to the American Jewish Conference. The chain of disasters that made up the history of the Dispersion, he reminded his listeners, extended far beyond Hitler and the present mass slaughter. It encompassed two thousand years of world hatred and murder of Jews. No end to "this persistent emergency in Jewish life" would come, Silver warned, until Jewish homelessness ceased. And that would occur only with the creation of a Jewish state. The state offered the only real solution to the ceaseless tragedies that dominated Jewish history. The Zionists made their choice. Events would show, however, that they had misread the signs concerning rescue. Substantially more was possible than they recognized. Their insight into the past and their dedication to the future hampered their vision of the present. A similar assessment was made in Palestine. A scholarly study based on the files of the Rescue Committee of the Jewish Agency has shown that the Zionists who controlled that body concluded in 1942 that almost no useful rescue action was possible. They decided that nearly all the limited funds available to the Jewish Agency should continue to be devoted into the development of Palestine.

Rabbi Meyer Berlin publicly accused Zionist leaders of intentionally obstructing the Rescue Resolution. They asserted that the Zionists turned to indirect methods, such as bringing in the controversial Palestine question, because they did not dare openly to oppose a measure to rescue Jews. This view took on added cogency in late December when the American Jewish Conference, in its stinging press release, disparaged the rescue resolution but stopped short of outright opposition.

The key reason was their extreme animosity toward its sponsor, the emergency Committee. They recognized that success for the resolution would bring prestige, additional popular support, and more strength to the Bergsonite faction.

¹It was not only American Jewry that did not do enough. One of the saddest cases is Sweden. Rescue efforts could not count on much help from the small, but comfortably situated Swedish Jewish community of about 7,000. The main Jewish communal organization was not very interested in rescue. Olsen believed the Swedish Jews feared that an influx of refugees would put a financial burden on them. They also worried that anti-Semitism, not then a problem, would develop if many Jews came in. Olsen reported that the Swedish Jews had been "most apathetic" to the rescue of the Danish Jews in October 1943. They had done nothing for the Norwegian Jews who managed to flee to Sweden. And even when thirty Jewish orphans reached Sweden from Central Europe in 1943, the Swedish Jews "did not want to be bothered." The Children went into Christian homes. Olsen persuaded the Swedish government to bring in the 150 Jewish refugees from Finland. He developed an aid program for needy refugees in Sweden, three fourths of whom were Jewish. From January 1944 until April 1945, Jewish refugees in Sweden numbered about 12,000, roughly 8,000 from Denmark, 1,000 from Norway, and 3,000 who had come from Central Europe before the war. In April 1945, two groups of concentration camp inmates were transferred to Sweden. Jews who the Nazis had deported from Denmark. Soon afterward, 7,000 women, half of them Jews, arrived in Sweden from the Wretched Ravensbruck camp.

CHAPTER G- RESPONSES

As the Holocaust enters the larger domain, it ceases to be the particular inheritance of the Jewish people.

Adapted from an article by Michael Berenbaum in *Moment Magazine*, December, 2000.

The past quarter century represents a major shift in Holocaust consciousness. When identification with the Holocaust was once a particularly Jewish phenomenon, it is now a concept owned by the world. Where once the Holocaust was the driving force behind the Jewish community, it has now been relegated to the sidelines. Though all Jews must come to terms with the Holocaust, it is no longer the tie that binds. The Holocaust has gone mainstream, a sea change that affected film and art, literature and scholarship—and of course the creation of memorials and museums. Two examples:

- More than 14 million people visited the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC during its first seven years. About eight in ten visitors are not Jews. That means more than 50 percent of the American Jewish community has visited the museum.
- Sixty-five million Americans saw *Schindler's List* when it first aired on network television in 1997. It was three hours and 15 minutes long, but it was broadcast without commercial interruption to one of the largest audiences in television history for a non-sports event—a tribute to both the power of the film and the event depicted.

Today, nations have been dealing with Holocaust-related issues and apologizing for the past like never before. Corporations and banks have made monetary compensations. Churches have made theological and liturgical changes to reflect Holocaust sensitivity. Scholarship is proliferating, teaching has intensified, and museum attendance is up not only in Washington, but in almost every city that has a Holocaust museum.

Forty years ago, publisher after publisher rejected Raul Hilberg's magisterial work *The Destruction of the European Jews*. Today so many books pour out that scholars find it difficult to keep up. Well-attended Holocaust courses are taught at virtually every major university. Jewish and non-Jewish students fill these courses. Millions of students study the Holocaust in high school; 22 states have mandated its study. Three of the last five documentaries to win Academy Awards deal with the Holocaust and include survivor testimony (*One Survivor Remembers: The Gerda Weismann Klein Story*, *The Last Day*, *A Long Way Home*).

Last January, the Swedish prime minister convened an international conference of heads of state and delegations representing 46 countries to consider Holocaust education. In a changing Europe, increasingly heterogeneous and pluralistic, fearful of bigotry and hatred toward the foreigner and the outsider, chose the Holocaust as the historical event by which to transmit values to a new generation.

In March Pope John Paul II visited Yad Vashem, the Jerusalem Holocaust museum, and apologized for anti-Semitism by Christians. Even more striking, the 80-year-old pontiff inserted a note into the Western Wall, placing Roman Catholicism squarely against anti-Semitism. Surely, he did not say all that could be said about the church and the Holocaust, but in the modern world, gestures often outweigh words.

In April, the defeat of Holocaust denier David Irving in his libel suit against scholar (and former *Moment* columnist) Deborah Lipstadt, surely diminished what Lipstadt characterized as the growing assault on truth and memory, and may mean that we can finally focus less on Holocaust denial and more on Holocaust education.

There were more front-page stories in the *New York Times* relating to the Holocaust the first six months of the 21st century than during the entire 12 years of the Third Reich.

The Holocaust has become a defining moment of 20th-century humanity, from which the world is learning about what we are as individuals, about the human capacity for good and evil, and about the power of states and institutions to shape the world in hideous ways.

In a world of moral relativism, the Holocaust has taken its place as an absolute. We may say we don't know what is good or what is bad. But we do know that the Holocaust was evil, absolute evil. The term "Holocaust" has been appropriated by many who are attempting to call attention to their suffering—the black holocaust, the holocaust of the American Indians, the holocaust in Kosovo, Rwanda, Bosnia. "Holocaust" is the nuclear bomb of moral epithets. And, the more we sense the relativism of values, the more we require the Holocaust as the foundation for a negative absolute, absolute wrong. And as relativism has increased over the past 25 years, having a negative absolute has become more critical. That is why many have rediscovered the importance of the Holocaust for contemporary moral education. And that is why Holocaust deniers refute an event that by all standards of rationality cannot be denied. It is in this function as negative absolute that the Holocaust may loom largest in the coming years.

The level of innovation in some of the programs at Holocaust museums and other educational institutions can be surprising. In Los Angeles's Museum of Tolerance, police officers are shown how the Holocaust was in part a police action against a civilian population. At the Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC, Naval Academy students are lectured on military ethics, and on just and unjust order. In San Francisco, the Anti-Defamation League holds sessions for lawyers to discuss not only the rule of law but the values that underlie our laws. Medical schools across the country teach not only about Nazi medical experiments, but also about the German medical community's participation in the 4 program—the planned murder carried out by German physicians, of mentally retarded, physically disabled, and emotionally distraught Germans who were seen as an embarrassment to the myth of Aryan supremacy. Schoolchildren are taught about the Holocaust and the way we treat those who are not like us. The Catholic church continues to consider the role that Christianity has played in promulgating anti-Semitism. In short, the Holocaust is taught for its own sake, but also in an instrumental way, raising issues such as pluralism, tolerance, democracy, respect for human dignity and human rights, and medical and legal ethics. In Bosnia the Nuremberg trials are cited as a precedent. In France, the failure of the 1938 Evian Conference to help Jews fleeing Hitler became a means of rallying diplomatic support for the boat people escaping Cambodia and Vietnam. In Rwanda the government is using the Holocaust to learn how to retain the memory of the atrocities its people endured, as survivors of the genocide want to hear from Holocaust survivors about how to rebuild in the aftermath of mass murder. One need not approve of each instance of its invocation to understand how the Holocaust is regarded as morally significant throughout the world.

Within the Jewish community many who seldom agree with each other share the view that the Holocaust occupies too dominant a place in Jewish consciousness.

Those who want to emphasize the universal message of the Holocaust are angered by definitions of the Holocaust as a particular Jewish experience. They argue that we must deal with all the victims of Nazism and not just the Jews; that we must consider slavery and what my feminist friends call man's inhumanity to people in general, as well as genocide. Some Jews are embarrassed by Holocaust particularism. They see it as a covert way of proclaiming Jewish chosenness or an undisguised way of saying, as in Lamentations 1:12, "Is there a pain like mine?"

Some are concerned that a too-pervasive consciousness of the Holocaust portrays Jews as sufferers, as victims, not as independent actors. Yet visitors' responses to the U.S. Holocaust Museum do not sustain this apprehension. Visitors report a deep respect for people that can confront such suffering and transform it into testimony, into a call to conscience. They don't see the Jews as victims. They see the Jews as a people who have overcome suffering.

Left-wing Israeli critics are disturbed that the Holocaust has been used to support Israeli policies with which they disagree—regarding the occupation of the West Bank.

Middle-aged and younger Jews saw Lieberman's acceptance as a candidate for vice president mirroring their own experience in the workplace and in the community. For acceptance of Jews is the reality they have experienced from birth.

Twenty-five years ago, the story of Holocaust and redemption resonated within the lives of many Jews. Today, the Jewish people enjoy the fruits of their empowerment and the freedom of the global universe. Many contemporary Jews—who have chosen to remain Jews—have internalized these messages. They don't believe that they need the Holocaust to reinforce these values.

i - Rebuilding

The following article was adapted by an address by Rabbi Yaakov Perlow, as it appeared in *The Jewish Observer-Our Generation: Churban Plus-One* (June 1976):

Churban Europe can be a natural, effective medium for *chinuch* (education) in our homes and schools. The more we study it, the deeper it will touch us, the better Jews we will be. It will imbue us with a sense of humility and unworthiness. It will refine our character, deepen our *Ahavas Yisroel*. It will uplift the quality of our *Yiddishkeit*. It will implore us to conduct ourselves with greater modesty, to curb the excesses of luxury and extravagance so rampant today: When thousands are spent for flowers and other frills at *heimishe* Jewish weddings—sometimes by the very survivors of Auschwitz themselves—such conduct, aside from its moral arrogance, profanes the memory of the *Churban*, and is a betrayal of the ideal for which our parents and teachers lived and died.

Above all, the *Churban* must finally awaken within us—individually and as a community—a deep sense of history, an ever conscious feeling that we are part of the greatest enigma of Jewish history.

The worst of the Nazi fury was visited upon Polish Jewry; over 95% was wiped out. Yet soon after V-E Day in 1945 its greatest surviving leader, the Gerrer Rebbe זצ"ל—once sick, alive only through miracles—wrote to his followers in America and Europe:

Nation of G-d, be strong despite the suffering and be confident that He will be good to us. In the worst of days, look ahead to better times that once were and that will be again. We must hope that good times will come from now on.

The main thing is to know that, just as the curses of the Torah come to pass, so, too, its blessings and consolations will be fulfilled—as Rabbi Akiva remarked when he saw the ruins of the Bais Hamikdash. G-d is testing us by concealing His Divine Presence from us—He will reward us for withstanding this difficult test. Have faith in G-d and strengthen your Torah study and prayer. Then G-d will surely give you strength.

His letters made no attempt to answer the question: "Why did it happen?" Instead he was concerned with: "What are we to do now?"

Rabbi Nosson Sherman, *Jewish Observer*: Our greatest saw no accidents in history. *History is G-d's tool, not His master.* ...Look... backward, but only to identify the seeds of destruction so that they would not again take root. ...

ii - Teaching Our Children

Teaching Churban Europa to our Children

Adapted from The Jewish Observer May 2003, By Rabbi Feitman:

Rabbi Yaakov Perlow, the Novomisker Rebbe, שליט"א has taught us that the *manhigei hador* (leaders of the generation) immediately after the *Churban* felt that explanations, *hashkafa* and interpretations of the *Churban* were a part of the rule. "*Hanistaros LaHashem Elokeinu.* The secrets of G-d must remain with Him." (*Devar* 29:28) These answers will in truth not be known until *Moshiach* arrives. Therefore, the mandate of that generation was to concentrate on the things that fall under the rubric "*Haniglos lanu ule'vaneinu*- That which has been revealed and given to man."

It was a time to rebuild, to start families, to engage in LIFE. And so, the *zekeinim* could not engage in theology or explication. They simply allowed the present to become the future without dwelling upon the painful past. In their wisdom, the *Gedolim* knew that too much preoccupation with death and the past would paralyze the colossal task which had to be undertaken-literally the recreation of the Jewish world. *Chazal* tell us that "there is a Heavenly decree that one forgets about the tragedy of a death so that life can go on."

In the late 1940's, my *Rebbe*, Rabbi Hutner זצ"ל, once greeted a recently arrived survivor by standing up and declaring, "If you lived through the war and the camps and you still cover your head, you are truly a great *tzaddik*."

The events of the *Churban* had to be set aside temporarily but decisively so that the Jewish world could be rebuilt. This is one explanation for the silence of the post-*Churban* generation.

I believe that another answer is based upon an insight taught to us by Rabbis Mordechai Gifter זצ"ל, the Telzer Rosh HaYeshiva. The Midrash records that Rabbi Yehoshua Hanassi explained a certain verse in *Eicha* twenty-four different ways. Just one generation later, Rabbi Yochanan was able to explain the same verse in sixty ways. Why this discrepancy? Our sages explain that *Rebbe*, who was one generation closer to the *Churban*, was only able to discuss the tragedy intellectually until he had derived twenty-four interpretations. He would then break down and weep. Rabbi Yochanan, just a generation later, was that much more removed from the sensations of the event and was able to discuss and analyze the same verse without such emotional upheaval.

Rabbi Gifter used this Midrash to criticize the "emotional bankruptcy" that permits one to speak so casually about the *Churban Europa*. This Midrash, however, may also help us understand the relative silence of our *Gedolim* during the two decades or so after the Holocaust. Their quiescence resulted from a profound state of *aveilus* for a lost world and the spiritual grandeur that disappeared with it. Aharon's response to the tragic death of his sons was silence (*Vayikra* 10,3), and *Yechezkel* (24,17) was commanded to "be silent from groaning" upon the sorrowful passing of his wife. Sometimes silence is the most eloquent eulogies.

I recall one Torah Umesorah convention at the annual session when we were privileged to ask Rabbi Yaacov Kaminetzky זצ"ל our hashkafa questions. One principal re-

and inquired, "Rebbe, how do we explain the holocaust to our children?" Reb Yaak responded sharply with a query of his own: "*Und ihr farshteit yeh?* (And you yourself understand?)"

One of the most crucial reasons to teach about Churban Europa at the present time relates to the dangerous new trend in world anti-Semitism. Our children need to understand these phenomena in the ancient context of "*Halacha b'yadua sheEisav sonei l'Yaakov*—it is the Law that Eisav hates Yaakov."

They adopt new guises from generation to generation and from setting to setting. They may call it Pan-Arabism or anti-colonialism. They may be campus liberals or Biblicist reactionaries. Their target, under whatever banner, is Jews, and we must learn to accept it as part of our destiny as the children of Yaakov. Most importantly, the metastasizing anti-Semitism should be an impetus to Teshuva if we have the wisdom and courage to recognize what is happening before our eyes.

But there are other reasons to begin teaching Churban Europa now. The Holocaust deniers are growing in strength and numbers and those who misinterpret, distort and pervert its meaning and message are publishing and publicizing their dangerous fabrications at every opportunity.

Another reason to study the *Churban* is to teach children to be *mitzta'er b'tzarasei shel yisroel*—to share the pain and suffering of *Klal Yisroel*. The Rambam (*Hilchos Teshuva* 3,11) writes severely of those who "abandon the ways of the congregation of Israel including in this category those who do not feel the anguish of the community. Our children have become disconnected from this catastrophic event and we must help them become aware of the scope of the tragedy, which befell us so recently, yet seems so distant to a generation largely unmoved by what is now known as the Holocaust. I have seen you people complete a Holocaust Museum tour without a tear or even a shudder.

It is well-known that a virtual Holocaust Industry has been created by this late *Churban*. Thousands of books, numerous films, museums, lectures and experts vie for the attention of those who do express interest in this subject.

From the Torah standpoint, a great deal of this media onslaught is based upon misunderstanding of one of the most seminal events of Jewish history. Now that *Gedolim Yisroel* have indeed granted us insights into the *Churban*, a vehicle must be created to allow this generation to study and absorb their words.

Survivors abhor any exposition of the Holocaust even remotely using the terminology of reward and punishment, certainly considered cornerstones of Torah philosophy. The reason for this abhorrence is that, of course, such talk hurts. We are not talking of someone who was killed in 1096, 1492 or 1648. We *seem* to be indicting someone's mother, husband or child.

In truth, we are doing no such thing, for even the approaches to the *Churban* that speak of retribution, extinction, do not indict any individual. On the contrary, all Torah perspectives recognize that "when the Angel of Death is given free reign, he makes a distinction between the righteous and the wicked" (*Bava Kamma* 60a).

Our *Gedolim* have taught us that *Klal Yisroel* "was meant to go through world history and keep alive the teachings of *Hakadosh Boruch Hu*...When we fall short...the *mida hadin* of *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* enters the scene to recall us to our noble task and make rectify our failings." They have referred to the "indisputable decline" in *Klal Yisroel's* spiritual stature since the advent of the *Haskala* movement, and the prediction of consequences in writings such as the *Meshech Chochma* and the *Ramchal*. The details of this analysis of Jewish history are certainly beyond the scope of this limited article. Suffice it to say that our *Gedolim* have taught us that accepting some sense of responsibility for our fate in major events is unavoidable for the believing Jew. A more thorough exploration of this

accountability actually forms the most essential part of the *hashkafa* portion of the Holocaust curriculum itself.

Studying Churban Europa in depth with a teacher properly trained in this sensitive subject provides many opportunities to disseminate fundamental teachings of Judaism.

Tzidduk Hadin- Teaching children the elemental lesson of accepting the will of G. This applies both to personal events and to a decree upon *Klal Yisroel*. Whatever Hashem does is purposeful and for the best.

The interconnection of all of Jewish history- Learning that what had happen during World War II was not an isolated phenomenon or singular event, but part of a pattern of Jewish history.

Appreciating the loss- A Torah-true Holocaust curriculum details the horrific tragedy of losing a thousand-year tradition of *yeshivos*, *kehillos*, *minhagim* and family structure.

Spiritual heroism- While no one denigrates those who resisted the Nazis with whatever methods available, the world has until recently totally ignored the astonishing courage demonstrated by those who blew *shofar* in Auschwitz, lit Chanuka candles in Bergen-Belsen, and all those who maintained their faith in that purgatory. There are lessons here in *Kiddush Hashem* for a lifetime.

Disappointment in the gentiles- Rabbi Hutner זצ"ל taught us that one of the primary lessons of Jewish history is learning not to be enamored of the gentiles and their ways by recognizing their unreliability throughout the ages. The *Churban* is certainly an eloquent template to discover and study the failure of western civilization to contain or even resist the Nazi genocide.

Ashreichem- Rabbi Pam זצ"ל insisted that study of the Holocaust end on the positive note of the greatness of *Klal Yisroel*. The astounding rebirth of Torah after the *Churban*, the miraculous and heartening resurgence of the *She'eiris Hapeleita* (the community Survivors), the heroism of Rabbi Aharon Kotler and others in rebuilding is a story worthy of inspiring all future generations, but must be told in the context of the *Churban*.

Never Again, Rabbi Benjamin Blech (Aish HaTorah):

What is this seeming obsession Jews have to remember the Holocaust? Jews are a people of memory. In the Ten Commandments they are commanded to "remember the Sabbath day." In the Bible they are told to remember the exodus from Egypt, as well as the Amalekites who attacked them as they wandered in the desert. Memory is the key to survival. Indeed, as the philosopher George Santanya so perceptively put it, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

That is why the Jews feel a special obligation today to add yet another commandment of "remember" to their liturgy. Remember the Holocaust - so that its millions of victims at least have the gift of living in our memories. Remember the Holocaust - so that as the philosopher Emil Fackenheim has demanded, we do not give Hitler a posthumous victory by having us forget our past and our heritage. Remember the Holocaust - because, in the words of Elie Wiesel at the dedication of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington in 1993, "To forget would mean to kill the victims a second time. We could not prevent their first death; we must not allow them to be killed again."

iii - Building Memorials¹; Holocaust Studies

¹To date there are numerous Holocaust Memorials throughout North America: Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington D.C. (Jewish Holocaust Memorials in North America, by Jordana Rothstein)

June 26, 1999

Web posted at: 1:38 a.m. EDT (0538 GMT)

LOS ANGELES (CNN) -- A prominent U.S. rabbi says Germany should build Holocaust museum to teach German youth about what happened during that period in history.

Rabbi Marvin Hier, dean of the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles, said he approves the German parliament's plan to build a Holocaust memorial in Berlin, but he said it should also build a museum to teach German youth what happened.

"That they are going ahead with the memorial is a good thing but I don't think it perpetuates the memory of the Holocaust in the country where it happened," Hier said.

"There are Holocaust museums in the United States and Israel and Germany needs one to basically educate tens of thousands of young people to change their way of thinking," he added.

The German parliament on Friday backed a U.S. design for a central monument in Berlin to the Holocaust's six million Jewish victims, signaling an end to 10 years of argument.

Jewish groups said they welcomed parliament's backing of a design by U.S. architect Peter Eisenman that envisages a maze the size of four soccer fields filled with 2,600 pillars and giving the impression of a huge graveyard.

Richard Bernstein, *Holocaust Legacy: Germans and Jews Debate Redemption* (October 29, 2003): BERLIN— It might seem obvious, at first glance anyway, that a German affiliate of a company that once supplied poison gas to the Nazis should not be subcontractor for the very memorial now being constructed in Berlin to the Nazis' millions of victims. That, at any rate, is what the Memorial Foundation for the Murder of the Jews of Europe, which has overall responsibility for the memorial, decided in the case of the chemical company Degussa, which was to have provided the anti-graffiti material being used to protect the 2,700 concrete steles that are to be placed. After what was described as a long and agonizing meeting, the 23-member board of directors of the Memorial Foundation decided last week not to use the Degussa anti-graffiti product. They did so because a company affiliated with Degussa called Degesch was identified as a supplier of Zyklon B gas pellets which were used in the gas chambers. It happens that Degussa, a company based in Düsseldorf that is the world's largest maker of specialty chemicals, employing some 48,000 people worldwide, has had an exemplary record in examining its wartime past and making restitution to victims of the Nazis.

Most important in this regard, Degussa was one of the 17 German companies that created the Foundation for Remembrance, Responsibility and the Future, which raises millions of dollars for a special fund to be distributed to victims of concentration camps and slave labor during the Nazi period.

So the issue quickly seemed less than clear, and many questions have been raised: At what point, especially 60 years later, has a company earned exoneration for its past behavior? Why should Degussa be singled out when so many other German companies — Daimler-Benz (now DaimlerChrysler), for instance, Siemens or even an American company, I.B.M. — also collaborated with the Nazis?

The Holocaust Memorial project, which, after many years of discussion, was approved by the German parliament in 1999.... Even after that, there were fierce arguments about the memorial's location, cost, design and even the materials used in its construction.

Work on the project, designed by the American architect Peter Eisenman, finally began this year in a large open field in central Berlin, a few hundred yards from the

Brandenburg Gate and adjacent to the site of the future American Embassy. So far, about of the 2,700 memorial steles have been installed, and work is expected to be finished in 200

Degussa said that it "regrets" the Memorial Foundation's decision "but respects it. But the company also said it would be difficult to explain the decision to its employees, given its record of the recent past.

In an editorial to be published Thursday, Michael Naumann, co-editor of the weekly newspaper *Die Zeit*, expressed irritation at people who insist on a sort of eternal and insurmountable German guilt.

"After four decades of intensive research, after many Holocaust movies and books, nobody can accuse the Germans of remaining oblivious to their history," Mr. Naumann writes. "Some of the accusers and those who would educate us about history have turned into impersonators of their own righteousness. They have usurped the role of victim."

The competing principle is that, whatever the abstract rights and wrongs of the decision involving Degussa, the most important element in the picture is the feelings of the Holocaust survivors themselves.

"You can't say anything against this argument, in my opinion," Klaus Hillenbrand, editor of the newspaper *tageszeitung*, said. "You can't argue to the survivors that Degussa has become a very fine company, so you have to change your view of this case.

"It's a personal question," Mr. Hillenbrand said. "If there are survivors of the Holocaust who feel this way, you just have to accept it."

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The Presence of the Past History and the Holocaust still weigh heavily on contemporary Germany.

In May 2000, the Imperial War Museum in London opened a new, permanent exhibition devoted to the history of the Holocaust. This was the first effort of its kind by a national institution in Britain. The only previous national Holocaust memorials in Britain have been a stone inscription in Hyde Park, frequently the object of antisemitic daubing, and a voluntarily sponsored museum, Beth Shalom. The new exhibition is a British analogue to the National Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC and Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.

Forward, April 11, 2003: *A Monumental Failure at Belzec*, by Rabbi Avi Weiss. Several years ago the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum decided to build a Holocaust memorial for the 600,000 Jews murdered at Belzec.

Last June, I warned on these pages that "Despite assurances by museum officials that 'we are being careful in construction not to disturb any human remains,' anyone familiar with the Belzec terrain, saturated in its depth and breadth with the ashes and bones of the Jewish dead, knows that this is well nigh impossible."

With the recent publication of Andrzej Kola's book "Belzec: The Nazi Camp for Jews in the Light of Archaeological Sources," no one involved with the memorial project can claim ignorance of the desecration that has occurred.

Kola documents how, in anticipation of creating the Belzec memorial, 2,227 very deep "bore holes" were sunk every 16.25 feet in a systematic grid encompassing the Belzec site. Former museum chairman Miles Lerman, whose organization co-published the book, writes in the foreword that "it was necessary to conduct archaeological research in order to thoroughly examine the topography of the former camp, so as to exclude areas with human remnants. So that we in commemorating, do not violate the memory of those whom we wish to commemorate."

Yet countless violations did occur — as described in the book itself. Page after page of Kola's book describes what was found in the name of "archaeological research." In Grave Pit Number One, at a "depth of about [6.5 feet] burnt human bones and charcoal were mixed together." In Grave Pit Number Thirteen "there was a layer of bodies in a wax-transformation." Grave Pit Number Sixteen "contained crematory ashes in layers with sand." A colored map with red circles indicates where remains were found. Red circles are everywhere.

One cannot read Kola's account without wondering what possessed the Holocaust museum to become involved in an effort that so blatantly desecrated the remains of the dead. What did the drillers do when they hit bone or "wax-fat"? How did they dispose of the disturbed remains? Why did they continue to systematically and obsessively drill every few yards when they knew full well what lay under their feet? And was there a rabbi standing by to monitor the treatment of the dead or even to whisper a prayer over their tortured remains?

In the end, the museum's new chairman, Bush-appointee Fred Zeidman, decided to transfer the project from his federal institution to the private American Jewish Committee. One can only hope this move heralds a new path for the museum, a path that focuses on its mandate of remembrance and education and refrains from involvement in international adventures. The museum's mandate does not include building memorials in death camps thousands of miles from Washington.

As for the AJCommittee, if it intends to pursue the memorialization at Belzec with honor, it must completely reject the trench memorial. This huge trench, proposed by the museum, being planned for the soil of the camp itself — soil suffused throughout with the remains of Holocaust victims. Similarly, the AJCommittee must replace the secret, closed process that led to the decision to build this trench. In its place it should initiate a process that is completely transparent, and open to the input of all interested parties and constituencies. We believe that this would lead to a memorial adjacent to the sacred soil, not on top of it.

Furthermore, the AJCommittee must sever all connections with those complicit in the digging — or countenancing the digging of — holes into the victims' remains. This includes former museum officials, some of whom, according to the transfer agreement between the museum and the AJCommittee, maintain their involvement in the project. Had any individual defiled the dead at, for example, the World Trade Center, that person would surely have been barred from continued involvement in the memorial effort there. The same must be true at Belzec.

BY MICHAEL BLUMENTHAL

My son, the 9-year-old grandson of grandparents who fled Nazi Germany just in the nick of time, has been slapped only once in his life. Just last week, for that matter, right here in Berlin, by a man we shall call Krauss.

A child being slapped—even, as here, by a stranger—is hardly a newsworthy item, but this is Germany, and this child is Jewish, and the slapper in question is a very German fellow indeed. So I find myself—against some of my own most heartfelt convictions and wishes—reflecting upon this incident in a way which, albeit unpleasant, is true to my actual feelings and, I believe, a testimony to the burdens and difficulties "innocent" Germans face, even today.

I have spent much time in my adult years—my family's experiences in Nazi Germany notwithstanding—speaking out on behalf of the innocence of Germans who had no part, and who could have had no part, in the horrors of the not-too-distant German past. I have said, more than one occasion, that I find being anti-German to be a sin as grievous as being anti-Semitic—or anti-any other race, religion, ethnicity or belief system.

So it grieves me that Herr Krauss's slap of my son the other day--and I accept I word that it was a very light slap, aimed only at keeping the children in our building from playing in areas off limits to them--has an uncomfortable resonance for me, seeing as it also the first time in my son's entire life that anyone has physically struck him. That the slap was administered here, in Germany, by a German, forces me, reluctantly, to re-examine my own convictions.

What would have been my response had the same thing happened in our present home state of Texas, or in our previous home city of Boston--or even in Israel, where we resided for a year with our son? Yes, of course, I would have been--as I was with Krauss--outraged. And I would have responded in the very same way: by charging over to Krauss's apartment yelling at him at the top of my voice in our communal yard to the effect that "Nobody, but nobody, hits my son," demanding that he come to my apartment and apologize (which he did), and then letting his superiors know what had taken place.

Yes, I would have done all that. And, then, I suppose, the incident would have disappeared, more or less, from my consciousness. The slap would have been forgiven, and life would have gone on, more or less (albeit more warily of Krauss), as it had before. But that isn't what happened this time--not here, not now, not with me. For this, something in my consciousness keeps repeating, is my Jewish child, being hit for the first time in his life here in Germany--and by a German who hardly knows him. Something in me--though it is not something I like, or admire, or would choose to have there--something in me wants to make more of this than merely an unfortunate event.

And here in the form of my own reluctantly participating person, I once again see that it burdens the Germans--even utterly innocent Germans, those far more "innocent" than even Herr Krauss--are up against. They are up against history, up against a past which will not go away and probably should not. They are up against the sins of their fathers, whether they be their actual fathers or not.

Now, in the persons of myself and my son, I can once again see why Germans--and might add, Israelis--are held to a higher burden of proof when moral and racial matters are at stake: because even the actions of utterly "innocent" Germans, unborn in the Nazi period, today resonate backward into a past which, like it or not, is theirs as well. Like the wife beater who, raising a hand to caress his wife is already somehow under suspicion, contemporary Germans--Krauss included--are forced, often unjustly, to live with the burden of past horrors. Not even the most well-intentioned and enlightened non-Germans who live among them can avoid the human and natural tendency, when negative occasions such as these arise, to remember and invoke that past.

Should I perhaps, as I considered doing, not write about this incident at all? Would the greater wisdom have been merely to let it pass, leave it behind and move on? Perhaps; but to do so would also be to repudiate one of the sacred obligations of my writerly trade: the obligation to speak the truth, as the poet Matthew Arnold once put it, "of what we feel indeed," rather than of what we merely wish we felt. My writerly instincts also tell me that I had more people throughout history spoken that truth, many of history's tragedies might have been avoided.

"How do I know what I feel," said the writer E.M. Forster, "until I've seen what I've said?" And so I, too, the son of German Jews residing here in Germany once again, needed to write these words in order to articulate my true, albeit unpleasant, feelings. I have, in fact, forgiven Krauss. But what is harder to forgive--or overlook--is the reality this has forced me once again, to face: not only the reality of the German past, but also the heavy human burden of helping not only Germany, but ourselves, to come to terms with it.

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iv - Holocaust Judaism

Peter Novick, author of The Holocaust in American Life, claims that the Holocaust is not Israel, not religion, not culture, is what most unites American Jews. Since the Eichmann trial (1961) and the Six Day War, the case for a strong Israel became linked with the Holocaust. In 1978, for example, AIPAC sent a copy of the novelized version of the Talmud series "Holocaust" to every member of Congress. This made the case for Israel more simple, black and white, although the events in Lebanon and the Intifada weakened that case somewhat.

Another Holocaust stress was introduced as a result of the rising concern with intermarriage and assimilation. For young Jews who were turned off to synagogues, Hebrew classes and mainstream Jewish organizations, "the Holocaust looked like the one item on the stock market with consumer appeal." A 1998 survey by the American Jewish Committee found that the Holocaust far and away the most important "activity" in the Jewish identity of American Jewry.

Novick claims that whereas it is correct, in a sense "to say that for Jews to forgive Hitler's victims would be to grant him a 'posthumous victory' ... it would be an even greater posthumous victory for Hitler were we to tacitly endorse his definition of ourselves as despised pariahs by making the Holocaust the emblematic Jewish experience."

Rabbi Moshe Sherer wrote the following article in the *Jewish Tribune: The "Empty Plate" of Holocaust Judaism* (May 7, 1987):

It is hurtful to observe how out of all the 613 mitzvos only one has survived – *zochor ess acher ossoh l'cho Amolek*.

And the truth is, a Judaism which is built solely on memories of the Holocaust is in fact not even a *ner tomid* for the *kedoshim*. It is no more than the flame of a match, which is extinguished only seconds after it has been struck...

Jews who settled in America decades ago...When the shuls started to empty they were those who consoled themselves with the *kaddish-zoggers* and *yortzeit-yidden*. At least they filled the empty seats. There were Rabbonim and baalei batim in the community who lived with the hope that the *yortzeit* and the *kaddish* would help to bring back the Jew to the Synagogue. This was not to be.

The *yortzeit* and *Kaddish-Jews* were a passing phase. It did not last more than a generation. The children of those Jews who never saw the inside of a Shul, either on Shabbat or Yom Tov, and certainly not on any other day of the year, who only used the Shul for *kaddish* and *yizkor*, for the most part didn't bother to even say the *kaddish* for their departed parents.

In this sense we can perhaps explain the above mentioned medrash which takes the *zochor* and places opposite the "*zochor ess acher ossoh l'cho amoleik*" the "*zochor ess yom hashabbos l'kadsho*." The medrash thereby underlines that although both demand from the Jew a "*zochor*," they are however "*ainon shovin*." The remembering of Shabbos is described as a "dish full of all good things" and the remembrance of Amolek as an "empty dish."

The children of those who survived the churban, the "children of the Holocaust," are still interested in the events of the last war. Their children, however, without the other "*zochor*" which is "full of all good things," the "*zochor*" of *Yom Hashabbos l'kadsho* and the other mitzvos will not remember the "*zochor ess acher ossoh l'cho Amolek*" either.

Those who still follow the Demjanjuk trial and the renewed revelations of all the bitter terror of a Treblinka cannot suppress the thirst for *nekomah*.

...Vengeance is not ours. Even if an “Ivan the Terrible” and all the other executioners of Treblinka and Auschwitz were hanged a thousand times, in what measure does it appease the innocent blood of six million *kedoshim*? And even this, as is quite evident, is not accomplishable.

The only meaningful *nekomoh* therefore against the Jew-haters who have attempted to destroy us is to build up and reinforce Klal Yisroel and ensure its continuity, to resuscitate the original Jewish lifestyle and spirit which was that of the *Kedoshim*.

The Gaon Rav Yitzchak Hutner *zt”l* once pointed out that the Jewish Nation designated by two names: “*Am Seridei Cherev*” and “*Am Medushnei Oneg*.” Those Jews who include themselves only in *yizkor* perpetuate our glory as “*Am Seridei Cherev*.” It is only the “Shabbos-Jews”, those who engross themselves in Torah, who can bring us to the aim of becoming once again an “*Am Medushnei Oneg*”.

Eliahu Salpeter wrote the following article in Haaretz, July 19, 2000, *The Paradox of German Jewry*:

The first time since the Holocaust, matriculation examinations are being administered in a Hebrew day high school. Those looking for symbolism may be interested to know that the downtown Berlin building housing the high school was once a transit station for Berlin Jews who were then sent to the death camps. There is another paradox in the fact that, while Germany is paying billions of deutsche marks in reparations to Holocaust survivors and their heirs, Germany’s own Jewish communities are facing a serious financial crisis that threatens their ability to provide services.

v - Can we forgive the Germans?

Reaction of Israel to Germany

The Destruction of the European Jews by Raul Hilberg:

For a while, at least, Israel kept its distance from Germany. No diplomatic representatives were exchanged. Germans could not easily visit Israel, and the German language, as well as German music, was barred from public performance there.

Two factors were chiefly responsible for the emergence of these reactions: One was the concentration of survivors in Israel—every seventh inhabitant of Israel was incarcerated in a German concentration camp; every third Israeli lost one or more relatives in the destruction process.

Rabbi Meiselman:

When you blame the victim, aren't you absolving the perpetrator of his guilt?

Chazal say clearly that the enslavement in Egypt was a consequence of the Jewish people’s attempt to assimilate. Nevertheless, the Egyptian people were punished very severely. The fact that God set us up as vulnerable to evil people does not excuse the people who perpetrate this evil. These are two separate issues.

There is no limit to the number of evil people that are trying to destroy us.

God creates our vulnerability, and once we are made vulnerable, the forces of history seem to dictate that there are people who will take advantage of that vulnerability.

Dennis Prager (Ultimate Issues, Winter 1986-87):

Arguments that we should “forgive and forget” since “it’s already forty years,” or one caller to my radio show put it, “the war is over” are immoral. Who are we to appropriate the right to forgive such evil? Only the victims have that right, and they were permanently silenced. And why should we forget? This would be an outrage to the memory of the six million Jews and the other victims who ask that at least we not ignore them in death as we can

in their agonized life. And as for the war being over, yes, surely the war is over. But I want the Nazis punished for gassing and burning millions of people. That has nothing to do with war.

vi - Could the Holocaust happen again?

A demonstration of the vulnerability of teenagers to Nazi propaganda comes surprisingly, from Canada in the 1970s and 1980s. Jim Keegstra taught a class in the High School in Eckville, Alberta. He was a Bible-reader and a member of the Diamond Valley Free Gospel Church. He decided that Jews, by denying that Christ was God, were calling God a liar.

Mr. Keegstra's outlook influenced his teenage class. One young woman wrote in her essay: 'Hitler was one of the most successful people in the world ever to go against the Jews. If people would have been listening, he could have rid the world of Jews forever. It's funny how people never want to hear the truth.' Mr. Keegstra added the comment: 'But the Jews control the press, mass media, and the propaganda'. One young man wrote a paper about the Jewish plots for world government, to abolish marriage and confiscate private property, and the Jewish assassination of Abraham Lincoln. Another student wrote that Jewish-controlled thugs rode around in packs, bashing in children's heads, raping and drowning women, and cutting open men's stomachs so they would bleed to death. The writer suggested, 'In my opinion, this must come to a dead halt...We must get rid of every Jew in existence so we may live in peace and freedom.'

Some parents complained and Keegstra's teaching was stopped. His replacement, Dick Hoeksema, found the students kept asserting Keegstra's point of view. Hoeksema raised this with other teachers and found that Keegstra had persuaded many of them. 'I would say World War Two started because Hitler invaded Poland and they'd say, "No, Hitler liberated Poland." I was starting to think that I was crazy. That I was the only person who thought that way.' The school library had many books supporting Keegstra's view. When Hoeksema took into class a book with pictures from the Nazi camps, they were dismissed as fakes. Evidence from other books was rejected because all textbooks were censored by Jews. Keegstra's removal was further evidence of the conspiracy. One member of Keegstra's class had his mind changed by a trip to Dachau paid for by a Calgary businessman, but for some this was more evidence that the Jews were determined to eradicate knowledge of their conspiracy.

The world community signed a convention in 1948 with the intention of preventing new genocides. Nevertheless, all over the world there are today wars going on against groups who, according to the men in power, do not belong to their society. These wars often have genocidal character because the 20th century has become the century of total war, a genocide, where war is no longer carried out between armies alone, but is also aimed at the civilian population - or parts of it - which is pointed out as the enemy.

In April 2000, the NY Times reported that in the Bujumbura area of Rwanda about 80 percent of the local population, more than 300,000 people, had been uprooted from their farms and moved into more than 55 local camps by force since September of 1994. Conditions were awful and many were dying. These camps were only for the majority Hutu and were guarded by Tutsis, who controlled the government. With the Hutu farmers in the camps, the Tutsis claimed, rebels would be deprived of food and shelter. Violence would subside. The camps would prevent a holocaust, the leaders said; surely that greater good outweighed the inconvenience to a few hundred thousand Hutu peasants.

The international community has not only not done anything about this; it has not even protested. It has largely gone along with this exercise in moral relativity. One reason that the camps seem in fact to have quieted the violence near the capital. Another reason may be that the bar of suffering in Africa is so high that almost anything seems preferable to more

murder -- even inhuman encampments. It was little more than half a decade ago, after all, that at least 500,000 Tutsis were exterminated in Rwanda.

vii - Is America Different?

In his book Chutzpah, Allan Dershowitz claims that as far as accepting Jews as Jews goes, America is indeed different. Although he carefully documents the history of Anti-Semitism in America, he shows how all of this had been overcome. The time has come, claims, for Jews to assert themselves more; not less.

viii -Holocaust Claims

A conservative estimate of Jewish material losses is 12 billion dollars at values of that time. Only a small part of the property was returned and only part of the damage caused loss of life, health, liberty, and profession was compensated.

While the promises of restitution and compensation contained in the peace treaties with the Allies with former Nazi satellite in Eastern Europe remained paper promises, Germany concluded a separate "reparation agreement" with Israel in 1992 and enacted restitution and compensation legislation.

In **DIASPORA**, Howard Sachar wrote as follows:

By 1951...there was a certain obscenity in the contrast between Germany's revived affluence and the near-bankruptcy of little Israel. Fully 100,000 of the Jewish state's new immigrants were living in tents. The issue of German compensation plainly had assumed new urgency.

In March 1950...the principle of collective reparations...a Jewish claim for \$1 billion...calculated on the basis of Israel's role in absorbing half a million Jewish victims of the Nazis at a per capita expense of \$3,000.

Menachem Begin, leader of the right-wing opposition, warned direly of violence. Ben-Gurion went ahead with his plan. But Ben-Gurion did. "Let not the murderers of our people also be their heirs!"

September 10, 1952...The "Treaty of Luxembourg"...three related, but separate agreements. The first, between Israel and the Bundesrepublik...Bonn would provide Israel with goods and services equivalent...\$700 million, to be transmitted in annual allotments over fourteen years. The second...property restitution to individual victims...The third protocol...Claims Conference...payment of DM 450 million to the Conference--through Israel--for the rehabilitation of Nazi victims living outside Israel.

There was virtually no area of Israel's economy that was not transformed by the shipments--of industrial equipment, telecommunications, housing materials, vessels and harbor facilities, power-generating plants. Rescued from the threat of insolvency, the Zion republic subsequently entered its period of major economic growth. These Claims Conference allocations helped underwrite Jewish communal revival in some forty countries, particularly in Western and Central Europe.

Thus, of the German "rehabilitative" funds allocated by the Claims Conference in the first decade, some three-quarters were applied exclusively to social welfare, including cash relief, medical care of the aged, child care, resettlement assistance, and vocational training. The remaining Conference expenditures, approximately \$20 million, were devoted to cultural and educational reconstruction. Dozens of synagogues and community centers were built or enlarged with this money. Some 165 Jewish schools were constructed or refurbished. Each year, scholarship funds enabled 15,000 to 18,000 students to attend Jewish day schools, teachers' training colleges. Local communities were provided with subventions for cultural and educational programs. Money still went far in the early postwar decades, and the Claims Conference staff administered it imaginatively.

German funds to individual survivors...

The Bundesrepublik paid...approximately one dollar...for each day a person had been imprisoned in a Nazi concentration camp or confined to a ghetto or forced to wear the yellow star. Payments similarly were made to individuals whose education had been interrupted under the Nazis....whose careers had been destroyed.

Under the provisions of the BEG, the beneficiaries were not limited to former citizens of Germany, but included all victims of Nazism who had been "stateless persons" as of January 1, 1947. This signified in practice all Jews who had not returned to their former countries. For example, a Polish Jew who had returned to Poland was not eligible; his payments obviously would fall into the hands of the Communist regime. But if, as was usually the case, he had gone to Israel, the United States, or other non-Communist nations, he was eligible. A French Jew returning to his former homeland could not claim; but a French Jew settling in non-Communist lands beyond France could. Moreover, Jews who resumed their citizenship in their former West European homelands—that is, French Jews, Belgian Jews, Dutch Jews—were covered by bilateral treaties subsequently negotiated and signed between Bonn and some twelve Western governments. Under these agreements, the Bundesrepublik agreed to pay a total of one billion marks. Accordingly, Jews who resumed their lives in these various nations applied directly to their own governments for compensation.

...Payments...amounted each year to over 5 percent of Germany's national budget. By 1984...had exceeded DM 60 billion.

ix - Slave-labor compensation deal reached

In December 1999, Germany reached a DM 10 billion (NIS 21.4b.) deal to compensate Nazi-era slave and forced laborers. [The fund will involve] contributions from the German government and industry to be supplemented with funds from the US corporations whose German subsidiaries used slave and forced labor during the war, sources said. ...

The next, and difficult, step is to determine who will qualify and how much they will receive. ... The government had previously argued that Germany has paid DM 100 billion in reparations, primarily to Israel and Jewish victims, and could not spend more while it is cutting social programs and pensions. ...

It is estimated that 130,000 Jewish survivors will be eligible for the fund, one source said. German industry first proposed the fund last February and, in exchange, demanded that the US government provide legal protection against war-era claims.

The fund would make a distinction between slave and forced laborers. The difference in compensation and the types of labor covered remain a sore point with Central and Eastern European governments. "No one questions that there was a different kind of persecution of slave laborers, who were in concentration camps, as opposed to forced laborers," said a Czech official who has been involved in the talks. "But the forced laborers should get compensation that is dignified," he said yesterday. "If it is only 1,000 or 2,000 marks, it would not be perceived as such."

He added that Central and Eastern Europe lag behind the West in getting reparations from Germany. "The Nazi victims in the Czech Republic were not compensated until 1998," he said. "If there is a [forced labor] settlement, it should reflect this historical fact."

Jewish victims will get at least DM 15,000, according to one of the lawyers representing survivors in the US. ... Forced laborers who worked for Volkswagen and

Siemens have been compensated by individual funds set up by those companies. The laborers got DM 10,000 each.

In Germany, Lothar Evers, the head of a German group working for "forgotten" Nazi victims, said the narrowly defined categories laid out in the proposal for the German fund will mean that only 20 percent to 30 percent of survivors will receive compensation.

In March 2000, it was announced that some 240,000 Nazi-era slave laborers would receive compensation from the fund. Forced laborers - primarily non-Jewish Eastern European compulsory workers who were not detained in Nazi camps - are expected to get DM 5,000 each. The largest number of these workers are in Poland and Ukraine.¹

Negotiations often pitted Jewish against non-Jewish victims, because the (non-Jewish) labor claims would have been, in part, at the expense of (Jewish) property claims. "The future fund will function as a compulsory tax on survivors, will take away money that is theirs, and will act as a whitewash for German industry, rather than for history and remembrance," British historian Michael Pinto-Duschinsky said.

The agreement hinges, in part, on legal protection from the US, Israel, and Central and Eastern European governments. However, British survivors said that they would pursue their claims in European courts.

Although some touted the agreement as a victory for justice, others pointed out that the war had already been over for 55 years. The surviving Nazi victims were old and dying. Justice should have come a half-century ago, when hundreds of thousands of survivors would have been able to use the payments - however symbolic - to rebuild their lives, not ease the pain at twilight.

Only a few German companies paid minimal compensation after the war. Germany, whose reparations programs specifically did not mention compensation for labor, for decades had refused to entertain the prospect of additional government labor payments. That position was undercut in 1997, when a landmark ruling from a German court paved the way for Auschwitz survivors to sue Volkswagen for compensation for slave labor. Class-action lawsuits were subsequently filed in US courts against German industry, and advocates for Nazi victims insisted at an international forum on Holocaust-era assets, in December 1998 in Washington, on compensation for forced laborers. Even then, the German government, which already has paid hundreds of billions of marks in reparations, argued that the industry itself had to pay and to confront their moral and historical responsibilities.

No sum can truly "compensate" anyone for the horrors that Nazi Germany inflicted, but even those who might believe that a price tag can be placed on such suffering would not consider DM 15,000 a fair price. But fairness to victims is not a key factor here. Nor does there appear to be any regard for an honest historical reckoning about the extent to which companies profited from their collaboration with the Nazis. Many are certainly wealthy today. A proposed merger between Deutsche and Dresdner banks would create a German financial powerhouse with more than \$1.2 trillion in assets. According to *Forbes* magazine, DaimlerChrysler, Volkswagen, Siemens, Allianz, and Deutsche Bank are among the top 50 of the world's largest companies.

When it first announced its payment plan in February 1999, German industry called it "a gesture of reconciliation," and a "humanitarian" venture that would help former forced laborers who were still living. It rejected any legal basis for labor claims against German industry. It said, however, "German enterprises recognize their moral responsibility, particularly where forced labor had to be performed under particularly harsh conditions and

¹The fund would also set aside DM 700m. for the so-called "future fund," which would be used for unspecified educational, social, and cultural projects. The agreement also set aside funds for property claims, German bank accounts, and war-era insurance policies.

cases where enterprises cooperated in discriminating against people who were persecuted racial grounds during the Nazi regime."

In closing this deal, Germany's industrial giants are getting off incredibly light. Together, they will pay DM 5b. into the fund, and as more companies agree to participate the per-company share grows smaller. Considering that many of these companies have billions of marks of profits each year, the payment can hardly be called more than symbolic. A considering that, after the war, an Allied report recommended liquidating Deutsche Bank and indicting its officials as war criminals, it is ironic that it will pay less to resolve its Holocaust era claims than did two Swiss banks, which have settled their claims for \$1.25b.

See also chapter *E vi* for a history of Swiss bank accounts.

In May 2000 a group of American companies that had factories in Nazi Germany announced that it plans to establish a fund that would aid people who suffered persecution under Hitler's rule, a gesture that comes as more American multinational corporations acknowledge having benefited from slave labor during World War II. The fund, to be set up under the auspices of the United States Chamber of Commerce, is at least partly intended to head off class-action lawsuits against well-known American companies that had subsidiaries in Germany during the war or later purchased companies that had operations there.

At least 50 American companies operated factories in Germany during the years that the Nazis were in power, which began in 1933. American companies continued doing business in Germany after war broke out in 1939. Some remained there until late 1941, when the United States entered the war. The German government then nationalized most such factories, but they were returned -- sometimes badly damaged, in other cases improved -- just after the war. Some companies received dividends from their German operations that were paid when the war ended. Others were spared considerable expense restarting their German factories because slave labor had been used to keep the plants in working order. For example, General Motors, Exxon-Mobil and Kodak are among a growing number of American multinationals that say they have found evidence that their subsidiaries used forced labor during those years. Ford, a leading target of lawsuits because of its big German subsidiary and its founder's early sympathy for Hitler, has already pledged money to the German reparation fund and has led the effort to start an American shadow fund, people involved in the effort said.

x - Current Nazi Prosecution

Practically every month, Nazis are still being tracked down, almost 57 years after the end of World War II. The US, and to a lesser extent Canada, had received the best results prosecuting Nazi war criminals not for war crimes or genocide but for immigration and naturalization violations, which are easier to prove. During the period under review, the US obtained six convictions and Canada three. Germany has a special agency to facilitate prosecution of Nazi war criminals and obtained two convictions for murder during the period under review. During this time, one new case was filed and nine new investigations were initiated.

Sweden is among the worst offenders in refusal to prosecute Nazi criminals, due to its statute of limitations on murder. The Swedish government in principle refuses to investigate let alone prosecute, Swedish Nazi war criminals or such criminals, mostly from the Baltic states, who found refuge in Sweden after World War II.

Legal experts have questioned the Swedish statute of limitations, indicating that international law might apply relating to crimes involving genocide. The Swedes are al

unwilling to change the law. On the other hand, Sweden is a world leader in education on the Holocaust.

Only Syria has such a bad record¹.

The other states receiving a failing mark were Venezuela and Colombia².

Poland recently established an Institute for National Remembrance. During the period under review, Poland had one conviction for genocide and 48 investigations were begun.

Among the states characterized as having only minimal success were Lithuania, France, and Italy. In Lithuania not a single Lithuanian Nazi war criminal has ever sat one day in jail.

"In practice, a Nazi in good health can be certain that he will remain free until he is too ill not to be put on trial," Zuroff said.

As for Italy and France, in both countries it has proven extremely difficult to take legal action against local Nazi collaborators. Great Britain and Scotland, Croatia, Estonia, Costa Rica, Austria, and Australia, were all graded as having made insufficient or unsuccessful efforts. Australia in particular, to which hundreds, if not thousands, of collaborators and criminals fled after World War II, has failed to take successful legal action against a single one. In Austria 10 new investigations were opened, but no convictions were obtained and no new cases were filed.

"The center's experience has been that the existence of political will to bring Nazi war criminals to justice is an absolute prerequisite for the successful prosecution of Holocaust perpetrators," Zuroff said.

xi - Holocaust Denial³

Ben S. Austin, *A Brief History of Holocaust Denial*: The very first Holocaust deniers were the Nazis themselves. As it became increasingly obvious that the war was not going well, Himmler instructed his camp commandants to destroy records, crematoria and other signs of mass destruction of human beings. He was especially adamant with regard to the Jews still alive who could testify regarding their experiences in the camps. In April 1945, he signed an official order (which still exists in his own handwriting) that the camps would not be surrendered and that no prisoner "fall into the hands of the enemies alive." Apparently Himmler knew that the "Final Solution" would be viewed as a moral outrage by the rest of the world.

Historian Kenneth Stern (1993:6) suggests that many top SS leaders left Germany at the end of the war and began immediately the process of using their propaganda skills to rewrite history. Shortly after the war, denial materials began to appear. One of the first was Friedrich Meinecke's *The German Catastrophe* (1950) in which he offered a brief defense of

¹It has been denied that the notorious Nazi criminal, Alois Brunner, is living in Damascus, despite convincing evidence to the contrary. Brunner was recently sentenced in absentia to life imprisonment in France, which is seeking his extradition, along with Germany, Austria, Slovakia, and Poland.

²During the period under review, from January 1, 2001 to March 31, 2002, the Simon Wiesenthal center submitted a list of 18 suspected Nazi war criminals from the Baltic states who had emigrated to Venezuela and 11 similar suspects to Colombia, but both states have not responded.

³It is interesting to note the words of General Dwight D. Eisenhower: "The same day I saw my first horror camp, I visited every nook and cranny. I felt it my duty to be in a position from then on to testify about these things in case there ever grew up at home the belief or assumption that the stories of Nazi brutality were just propaganda."

the German people by blaming industrialists, bureaucrats and the Pan-German League (essentially antisemitic organization begun by von Schoerner in Vienna prior to young Adolf Hitler's arrival there) for the outbreak of World War I and Hitler's rise to power. Meinke was openly antisemitic; nonetheless he was a respected historian. ... Paul Rassinier, former a "political" prisoner at Buchenwald, was one of the first European writers to come to the defense of the Nazi regime with regard to their "extermination" policy. In 1945, Rassinier was elected as a Socialist member of the French National Assembly, a position which he held for less than two years before resigning for health reasons. Shortly after the war he began reading reports of extermination in Nazi death camps by means of gas chambers and crematoria. His response was, essentially, "I was there and there were no gas chambers." It should be remembered that he was confined to Buchenwald, the first major concentration camp created by the Hitler regime (1937) and that it was located in Germany. Buchenwald was not primarily a "death camp" and there were no gas chambers there. He was arrested and incarcerated in 1943. By that time the focus of the "Final Solution" had long since shifted to the *Generalgouvernement* of Poland. Rassinier used his own experience as a basis for denying the existence of gas chambers and mass extermination at other camps. Given his experience and his antisemitism, he embarked upon a writing career which, over the next years, would place him at the center of Holocaust denial. In 1948 he published *Le Passage de la Ligne*, Crossing the Line, and, in 1950, *The Holocaust Story and the Lie of Ulysses*. In these early works he attempted to make two main arguments: first, while some atrocities were committed by the Germans, they have been greatly exaggerated and, second, that the Germans were not the perpetrators of these atrocities -- the inmates who ran the camps instigated them. In 1964 he published *The Drama of European Jewry*, a work committed to debunking what he called "the genocide myth." The major focus of this book was the denial of the gas chambers in the concentration camps, the denial of the widely accepted figure of six million Jews exterminated and the discounting of the testimony of the perpetrators following the war. These three have emerged in recent years as central tenets of Holocaust denial. While none of these arguments were new, Rassinier did introduce a new twist to Holocaust denial. Having argued that the genocidal extermination of six million Jews is a myth, he asked who perpetrated the myth, and for what purpose. His answer: the Zionists as part of a massive Jewish/Soviet/Allied conspiracy to "swindle" Germany out of billions of dollars in reparations.... The claims of Rassinier can be easily refuted and have received full treatment by Deborah Lipstadt and other reputable historians. Briefly, however, Rassinier offers little evidence for most of his claims, he totally disregards any documentary evidence that would contradict his claims and attempts to explain away the testimony of survivors as "emotional exaggeration" and the testimony of accused war criminals as the result of "coercion." For instance, he completely ignores Hitler's stated agenda in *Mein Kampf* (1923) and his famous and oft-quoted speech of 1939 before the German Reichstag:

"Today I want to be a prophet once more: If international Jewry inside and outside of Europe should succeed once more in plunging nations into another world war, the consequence will not be the Bolshevization of the earth and thereby the victory of Jewry, but the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe."

Similarly, he disregards the speeches of Himmler, such as the address given to the leaders of the SS in 1943:

"I also want to talk with you, quite frankly, on a very grave matter. Among yourselves it should be mentioned quite frankly, and yet we will never speak of it publicly....I mean the clearing out of the Jews, the extermination of the Jewish race." (Quoted in Jack S. Spielberg, *Hitler and Nazi Germany*, 3rd ed., 1996:282).

App's major contribution to Holocaust denial lies in his codification of denial in eight fundamental tenets (The following are adapted from Deborah Lipstadt, 1994:99-100):

Emigration, not extermination was the Nazi plan for dealing with Germany's "Jewi problem." His main evidence for this assertion is that if Germany had planned to extermination, no Jews would have survived.

No Jews were gassed in any German camps and probably not at Auschwitz either. I argued that the crematoria were designed to cremate those who died from other causes natural illness, etc.

Jews who disappeared during the years of WWII and have not been accounted for c so in territories under Soviet, rather than German, control.

The majority of Jews who were killed by the Nazis were people whom the Nazis h every right to "execute" as subversives, spies, and criminals.

If the Holocaust claims have any truth, Israel would have opened its archives historians. Instead, he claims, they have preferred to continue perpetuating the Holocau "hoax" by utilizing the charge of "antisemitism" against anyone who questions it.

All evidence to support the Holocaust "hoax" of 6 million dead rests upon misquot of Nazis and Nazi documents.

Burden of proof argument. It is incumbent upon the accusers to prove the 6 milli figure. Instead, App argues, Germany has been forced to prove that the 6 million is incorre This argument rests upon App's (and others') assertion that reparations paid to Israel Germany are based on the 6 million figure. He consistently refers to the reparations as Zionist "swindle."

Jewish historians and other scholars have great discrepancies in their calculations the number of victims. App takes this as evidence that the claims are unverified.

The above assertions stand as the fundamental tenets of contemporary Holocau denial....

On April 11, 2000, a judge in Britain's High Court ruled in favor of Deborah Lipsta professor of Modern Jewish and Holocaust Studies at Emory University in Atlanta in a lit case brought against her by British historian David Irving, The judge said he was a raci anti-Semitic denier of the Holocaust who had deliberately and repeatedly distorted historic evidence in an effort to cast Adolph Hitler in a favorable light.

The libel case, which sought to differentiate between legitimate history a ideologically motivated misrepresentation, had been closely watched by historians and othe alarmed at the rising tide of neo-Nazis and Hitler apologists around the world who argue tl there was no deliberate Nazi effort to exterminate the Jews and that the Holocaust never to place.

The case concerned Lipstadt's 1994 book titled Denying the Holocaust: The Growi Assault on Truth and Memory, in which she described Mr. Irving as a dangerously shod historian who manipulated history to downplay the Holocaust and Hitler's role in it.

Mr. Irving, the author of more than 30 books on World War II and the Holocau sued Ms. Lipstadt and her publisher, Penguin Books, charging that her book had irrevocat damaged his reputation and would make it hard for him to get his work published in t future.

But Justice Gray said, in essence, that Mr. Irving, 62, did not have a case. challenging Mr. Irving's argument that any historical misrepresentations he might have ma in his work were inadvertent mistakes rather than deliberate distortions, the judge said that many occasions Irving's treatment of history was "perverse and egregious."

Among other things, Mr. Irving has said that there were no gas chambers Auschwitz - Jews who died there suffered from typhus, he argues -- and that Hitler neitf ordered nor approved the Nazis' plans to exterminate Europe's Jews. In fact, Mr. Irving h argued, Hitler did not know about the extermination program until at least 1943. And wh

Mr. Irving has acknowledged that many Jews died during World War II, he has also said that it was logistically impossible for the number to have been in the millions.

In the early years of his career, Mr. Irving wrote a number of admired books, notably Hitler's War (1977), and Justice Gray today praised his dogged use of primary sources and said that "as a military historian, Mr. Irving has much to commend him."

But in recent years, Mr. Irving's views have become more and more extreme and has been linked with right-wing groups and neo-Nazis.

In 1992 he was fined and banned from Germany after he was convicted under the German law that makes Holocaust denial a crime. He has also been refused entry to Canada, Italy, Austria and Australia.

"I am not at all anti-Semitic," Irving claimed. "It is not anti-Semitic to be critical of the Jews."

Apart from derailing a pseudo-scholar, Irving's judgment clears the way for serious Holocaust researchers to pursue some important debates. Scholars such as Dr. Peter Novich, for example, have provoked serious debate by suggesting, in a detailed history of the place of the Holocaust in American public life, that memory of the Holocaust has been tailored to serve such agendas as support for Israel against its Mideastern foes. "There's been a movement over the past decade to begin looking very seriously at the ways in which the Holocaust has been 'marketed' and used in support of contemporary political goals," says TIME religion correspondent David Van Biema. "As difficult as that notion may be for some people to engage, it's an important and reasonable topic for discussion. A ruling that excludes Irving from the realm of legitimate historical scholarship creates more space for serious discussion among academics who accept the basic truths of the Holocaust, but who're asking important questions about the ways in which its legacy may be used or misused."

The very fact of the trial was troubling, as if the fact of the Holocaust needed proving. Books denying a systematic Nazi effort to annihilate the Jewish people appeared in France as early as 1948, and other books denying the Holocaust appeared in Argentina, the US, Germany, and England. Evidently, the phenomenon is impervious to mountains of survivor testimony and evidence that has only grown over the years.

Millions of people have visited Holocaust museums in many nations, or seen films such as "Schindler's List." Yet the persistence of Holocaust denial 50 years after the event indicates that it is like a weed that must continually be uprooted rather than allowed to spread.

Lipstadt herself places the problem in its proper proportions. "I don't believe Holocaust denial is a clear and present danger," Lipstadt argues, "it's a clear and future danger. When there won't be anybody around to say 'This is my story, this is what happened to me,' it will become easier to deny."

In this ongoing battle, the utter defeat of David Irving in court is a gratifying milestone. Irving was perhaps the most dangerous of the deniers because he was an established historian and was able to maintain some credibility by adamantly rejecting the charge that he was a Holocaust denier.¹ Irving testified that he believed that as many as five million Jews died in the war, and admitted during the trial many, if not most, of those who died were shot or gassed.

Yet Grey's verdict was all the more devastating in that it accepted Irving's talents as a military historian and his argument that not every dispute over the numbers of the

¹At the beginning of the Lipstadt trial the Los Angeles Times gave equal credibility to the overwhelming historical evidence on the Holocaust and a fringe group of deniers, or self-described "revisionists." Even after the trial, they called Irving a controversial historian. "He is not controversial. He is discredited and disgraced." (Holocaust historian, David Berenbaum) Berenbaum charged that the Times story "portrays the deniers as persecuted lambs who are harassed because of their ideas. You can't seem to get the story right. Why?"

murdered can be termed Holocaust 'denial.' Despite this and the high standard of proof required by British libel law, the judge found that it is "incontrovertible that Irving qualified as a Holocaust denier."

The Holocaust has been on trial before. In 1980, for example, Mel Mermelstein, Holocaust survivor, attempted to claim a \$50,000 reward offered by a group of Holocaust deniers to anyone who could prove that Jews were gassed at Auschwitz. When they did not pay, Mermelstein sued and won.

This trial was the first, however, to squash a brazen attempt to enshrine Holocaust denial with real historical and academic legitimacy.

APPENDIX C:

i - Reading List

Peter Novack, The Holocaust in American Life, Houghton Mifflin, 1999

a. Overview

The Encyclopedia Judaica. Its entry on the Holocaust - narrative, maps, a photographs - provides sufficient material for anyone who needs a solid basic overview of the subject.

Martin Gilbert's The Holocaust: A History of the Jews of Europe During The Second World War (Holt Rinehart Winston).

Nora Levin's The Holocaust: The destruction of European Jewry 1933-1945 (Schocken)

The War Against The Jews 1933-1945 by Lucy Dawidowicz.

Leni Yahil's The Holocaust: The Fate of European Jewry 1932-1945 (Oxford University Press, originally published in Hebrew).

The definitive three volume The Destruction of the European Jews by Raul Hilber (Holmes & Meier).

Art Spiegelman's cartoon novel, Maus

b. Hashkafa

Rabbi Yoel Schwartz – השואה (in Hebrew, though it has also been translated) Comprehensive treatment of why the holocaust happened and what our response ought to be from a Torah perspective.

c. Heroism and Inspiration

There is a vast Torah literature on this today, and it would be difficult to choose some books from the other. CLS has a whole Holocaust series, and all the Torah publishers have Holocaust literature.

M. Prager, Sparks of Glory, (Shengold, 1974), and M.D. Weinstock, Light in the Darkness (Horizon Publ., 1972), Stories of Kiddush Hashem during the Holocaust.

Irving J Rosenbaum, The Holocaust and Halckhah (Ktav, 1976), Halachik questions asked and answered during the Holocaust especially quoting Rabbi Ephraim Oshry. Includes many inspirational stories.

M.R.D. Foot, Resistance 1940-1945 (McGraw Hill, 1977), *a survey of the resistance efforts against the Nazis*

d. What did the Jews know:

Ben Hecht's Perfidy (Julian Messner).

Alex Weisberg's Advocate for the Dead: The Story of Joel Brand (Andre Deutsch) also published by Criterion under the title Desperate Mission: Joel Brand's Story as told by Alex Weisberg;

The Summer That Bled: The Biography of Hannah Szenes by Anthony Masters (Grove Press);

Shake Heaven & Earth: Peter Bergson And the Struggle to Rescue the Jews of Europe by Louis Rapoport (Gefen).

Shabtai Teveth's Ben-Gurion and the Holocaust (Harcourt Brace);

The Seventh Million by Tom Segev (Hill and Wang);

And Were We Our Brothers' Keepers: The Public Response of American Jews to the Holocaust 1938-1944 by Haskel Lookstein (Hartmore House).

e. What did the Allies know?

David Wyman, The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust 1941-1945.

While Six Million Died: A Chronicle of American Apathy by Arthur Morse (Random House), which tells the no longer shocking story of what FDR didn't do to save the Jews from destruction.

Martin Gilbert's Auschwitz and the Allies: A Devastating Account of How the Allies Responded to the News of Hitler's Mass Murder (Henry Holt);

Walter Laqueur, The Terrible Secret: Suppression of the Truth about Hitler's 'Final Solution' (Penguin);

Beyond Belief, Deborah Lipstadt (Free Press).

f. The Arabs and the Holocaust

Joseph Schechtman's The Mufti and the Fuehrer: The Story of the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and His Unholy Alliance with Nazism (Thomas Yoseloff).

g. What did The Germans know?

For what the average Germans knew, Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's controversial book Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust

The Gestapo, Jews, and Ordinary Germans, Eric A. Johnson

(<http://www.randomhouse.com/vintage/read/executioners/>).

G. Sereny, Into that Darkness—From Mercy Killing to Mass Murder (McGraw Hill, 1974), *the story of the creation of the Nazi murder machine.*

h. What the Church Knew

John Cornwell's Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII (Viking).

i. Hungarian Jewry and the local population

For decades now, Randolph Braham, distinguished professor emeritus of political science at City College (New York), has made a most significant contribution to the scientific historiography of the Holocaust in general and the tragedy of Hungarian Jewry in particular by publishing 24 books on the subject.

Braham's books include: The Days Of Woe And Destruction: The Tragedy of Hungarian Jewry - Essays, Documents, Depositions, and the recently released The Nazis and the Jews of Hungary.

Last Victims: The Holocaust in Hungary. (Rosenthal Institute of Holocaust Studies and the Graduate School of the City University of New York. They are distributed by Columbia University Press.

j. Web Sites

Please note: Usage of the Web is by halachik authorization only.

<http://www.ushmm.org/> has a good overview history of the holocaust (which we use heavily in our appendix).

The Jewish Student Online Resource Center's Holocaust pages (<http://www.us-isra.org/jsource/holo.html>), which feature an easily manageable list of useful topics. Informative and concise.

<http://www.yad-vashem.org.il/>

<http://www.wiesenthal.com/>

For young adults

<http://www.euronet.nl/users/jubo/holocaust.html> which discusses that question, while keeping tabs on books on subjects of interest to younger readers.

Art Spiegelman's cartoon novel, Maus, on the web:
(<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Atlantis/2671/>)

Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's controversial book, Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust (<http://www.randomhouse.com/vintage/read/executioners>) Random House's Web page for the book. The publisher's study guide and suggested discussion topics are thought-provoking and, in my opinion, should be printed out and included with the book.

The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous (<http://www.jfr.org/>) is an organization that provides recognition and thanks to these special people. Commendably, the JFR provides monthly financial assistance to 1,700 aged and needy Righteous Gentiles in 30 countries.

Raoul Wallenberg, the Swedish humanitarian who helped protect thousands of Hungarian Jews (<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Academy/2393/>).

The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (<http://www.claimscon.org/>) has a guide to compensation which it says is designed to outline and clarify some of the major current programs.