

SWISS NATIONAL BANK ADMITS IT HELPED NAZI WAR MACHINE DURING WWII
By Tamar Levy

GENEVA, April 16 (JTA) -- The Swiss National Bank has admitted, in a study written by its former archivist, that it helped finance the Nazi war machine during World War II by accepting more than 1.6 billion Swiss Francs' worth of gold looted by the Nazis from Jews and from the treasuries of occupied countries.

The study, by Robert Vogler, just published in the Bank's quarterly bulletin, demonstrated that while the Third Reich had the equivalent of no more than 22 million Swiss Francs' worth of gold when the war started in 1939, it exchanged gold for 1.638 billion Swiss Francs in transactions with Swiss banks between 1939 and 1945.

The Allied powers had warned the Swiss that the Germans were selling their gold stolen from the Belgian National Bank, among others, and from Jews deported to Nazi concentration camps. The bank gold was in the form of coins; the gold of the concentration camp victims was melted down from teeth fillings, eyeglass frames, wedding rings and other personal jewelry.

The Nazi Reichsbank sold most of its gold to Swiss banks to pay debts and to pay for vital war material such as fuel, chrome and tungsten purchased from Portugal, Spain and Rumania. Those countries refused to accept gold. They demanded Swiss Francs instead to buy items available only in neutral Switzerland during the war.

Claims Bank Was 'Extremely Naive'

A spokesman for the Swiss National Bank declared this week that the Swiss bankers of the war period showed a serious lack of political sense and must have been "extremely naive" to accept the claim by Reichsbank president Emil Puhl that Germany's sudden gold windfall was legitimate. It was on the basis of Puhl's word that the Swiss government permitted the banks to enter into transactions with the Third Reich.

Vogler, in his study, drew on documents from the Swiss National Bank which were classified secret until five years ago and on a book, "Looted Gold From Germany" by historian Werner Rings.

He appeared to question whether the Swiss bankers were really acting out of incredible naivete when he observed that "Only so-called looted gold could explain the difference (in Germany's gold reserves before and after 1939) even if one adds the gold 'legally' taken over from Austria in 1938 and Czechoslovakia in 1939."

According to Vogler's study and Rings' book, 300 tons of Belgian, French and Polish gold was shipped from Dakar, Senegal, to occupied France whence it was transported to Berlin, melted and recast into Prussian coins bearing a pre-war date. The coins were shipped to Switzerland in exchange for Francs.

The trading continued until the end of the war. The Swiss deal with Germany was terminated by an

agreement signed in Washington May 1, 1946 by the U.S., Britain and France. Switzerland pledged to put at the disposal of the three Allied powers 250 million Swiss Francs payable in gold in New York. The Allies issued a receipt to Switzerland for all the gold it acquired during the war from Germany.

JUDGE ORDERS MAN TO BE EXTRADITED TO ISRAEL TO BE TRIED FOR WAR CRIMES

NEW YORK, April 16 (JTA) -- John Demjanjuk, a retired automobile worker accused of complicity in the murder of hundreds of Jewish inmates while a guard at the Treblinka concentration camp in Poland during the Holocaust, was ordered extradited to Israel to stand trial for war crimes.

U.S. District Court Judge Frank Battisti, sitting in Cleveland, Ohio, placed Demjanjuk into custody and revoked his bond. The extradition was requested by Israel. It was stayed until May 1 to allow Demjanjuk, a Ukrainian, to appeal. A final extradition decision must be made by Secretary of State George Shultz.

Israel has sought the extradition from the United States of war criminals living in the United States under the terms of a U.S.-Israel extradition treaty signed in 1963. Under Israeli law, Demjanjuk could be executed if convicted of war crimes.

Demjanjuk, 65, of Seven Hills, Ohio, maintains that he was not a prison guard at Treblinka and that he was captured by the Germans and held a prisoner of war. He denied aiding the Nazis.

The Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations said Demjanjuk allegedly ran the gas chambers at Treblinka in 1942 and 1943 where some 900,000 Jews were killed. His sadistic behavior earned him the name "Ivan the Terrible" by prison inmates.

Demjanjuk came to the U.S. in 1952 and lost his U.S. citizenship in 1981 when it was determined that Demjanjuk lied on his immigration papers to conceal his war activities. Last year he was ordered deported by the U.S. Immigration Court and the Justice Department moved to send him to the Soviet Union, a decision which is under appeal.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center issued a statement saying Battisti's decision "represents a significant step in the long process of making a man who operated the gas chambers at Treblinka ... finally stand before the bar of justice."

Israel has been seeking the extradition of Demjanjuk since 1983. Should he stand trial in Israel, it would be the first such trial there of a former Nazi since Adolf Eichmann was tried and executed in 1961 for his war crimes. (By Kevin Freeman)

BONN DEFENDS PROPOSING TO REAGAN THAT HE VISIT MILITARY CEMETERY

By David Kantor

BONN, April 16 (JTA) -- Government spokesman Peter Boenisch said today that it was not important whether Chancellor Helmut Kohl knew or not that former Waffen SS soldiers were buried at the military cemetery of Bitburg when he proposed to President Reagan that he visit the site. (Late Washington story, P. 3.)

Answering questions on the TV "Tageschau" prime time news edition, Boenisch said that a cemetery is a site

of reconciliation, and it was wrong to start splitting the dead into categories. "We are not going to start a de-Nazification process with the dead," the government spokesman said.

Boenisch said that the Chancellor was not hurt by criticism from Israel or from the American Jewish community over his behavior concerning the President's visit. The government spokesman pointed out that the Chancellor understands the difficulties of some people regarding the reconciliation process between Germany and its former enemies.

Boenisch pointed out that the intended purpose of Reagan's visit was to concentrate on the future rather than to look only at Germany's Nazi past. Alluding to a possible change of attitude, the government's spokesman confirmed that Bonn and Washington were now talking about a possible visit by Reagan to the site of the former Dachau concentration camp near Munich. He rejected a reporter's suggestion that Bonn should have insisted on such a visit in the first place.

KOCH RETREATS FROM EARLIER STATEMENT THAT HE DID NOT OBJECT TO REAGAN'S VISIT TO GERMAN MILITARY CEMETERY

By Rochelle Saidel

NEW YORK, April 16 (JTA) -- Mayor Edward Koch has retreated from his statement last week that he did not object to President Reagan's planned visit to a German military cemetery. Speaking at City Hall ceremonies yesterday to launch Jewish Heritage Week here, Koch said his approval had assumed the cemetery was only for the German army and did not include SS members.

"It would be an outrage for the President to go to a cemetery where members of the SS are buried," he said. "The SS was Hitler's first line for destroying Jews."

Koch made his remarks in response to author Elie Wiesel, one of two recipients of this year's Sam Levenson Memorial Awards. In accepting his award, Wiesel had said that part of Jewish heritage was "speaking truth to power" in the tradition of the Prophets.

Wiesel, who is chairman of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council, said that in that spirit he was telling his friend, the mayor that he was sure that Koch did not have all the facts when he made his statement of approval of Reagan's visit.

Wiesel said the cemetery was not just for military, but was "filled with tombstones of SS men. These same SS killed American war prisoners who had their hands tied behind their backs," he said. "The SS was declared criminal in Nuremberg by international law, and the President ought not to pay them homage by visiting their graves."

In addition to Wiesel, a Levenson Award was presented to Father Bruce Ritter, a Franciscan priest who is founder and president of Covenant House, an international child care agency that operates short-term crisis centers in New York City.

The Levenson Awards are presented annually to an outstanding Jewish and non-Jewish citizen who emulates the striving for goodwill and concern for others that was characteristic of the late Sam Levenson, New York State Attorney General Robert Abrams, chairman of the Jewish Heritage Week, said. Comedian Alan King, last year's award winner, made the award presentation to Wiesel and Ritter.

Other participants in the ceremonies included City Council President Carol Bellamy, who read a City Council proclamation, and New York State Senator Donald Halperin (D. Bklyn), who read a New York State Senate resolution declaring the week of April 21-28 as Jewish Heritage Week.

QUEEN ELIZABETH'S RELATIVE IS DAUGHTER OF FORMER NAZI SS MAJOR

By Maurice Samuelson

LONDON, April 16 (JTA) -- Princess Michael of Kent, a cousin by marriage to Queen Elizabeth, is the daughter of a Major in the Nazi German SS, it was disclosed here today. The revelation is a grave embarrassment to the royal family, coming as it does as the country prepares to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the war against Hitler.

Commenting on the revelation, made in today's Daily Mirror newspaper, the Queen's press office at Buckingham Palace said that it had come to the Princess as a "total surprise and a total shock." However, the Daily Mirror found it "unbelievable" that Princess Michael never knew about her father's SS background.

Her father, Baron Gunther von Reibnitz, joined the SS in 1933, at the very beginning of the Third Reich, and was a personal friend of Reichschancellor Hermann Goering. He is believed to have died two years ago. Members of the SS were declared to be war criminals by the Nuremberg war crimes tribunal.

Von Reibnitz married a Hungarian countess in 1941 and the princess, then Marie Christine von Reibnitz, was born in early 1945. Her father was said to have been "shattered" by his war-time experiences and built a new life in Mozambique. His daughter was married and divorced before marrying the Queen's cousin, Prince Michael, in 1978. The father was not present at their wedding.

Von Reibnitz's SS membership was discovered by Philip Hall, a historian who is preparing a book on the backgrounds of members of the royal family. His suspicions were aroused by officially inspired articles, published earlier this year on Princess Michael's 40th birthday, suggesting that both her parents were Austrian, even though her father was a German.

Disclose Fascist Working For British Government

The revelations followed yesterday's disclosure by the same newspaper that Denis Pirie, for 25 years one of Britain's leading fascists, is employed as an advisor on exports at the British Ministry of Trade. He has been sent on a week's leave while the government investigates the revelations.

Pirie, 45, was a key figure in the virulently anti-Semitic National Front movement and was said to be responsible for promoting the slogan "Boycott Jewish supermarkets." Although he claims to have ceased his Nazi activities, he was recently involved in discussions about forming a new neo-Nazi organization called "Our Nation."

MURPHY MEETS WITH PERES AND SHAMIR

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, April 16 (JTA) -- Premier Shimon Peres and Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir had a joint meeting here yesterday with the Reagan Administration's top Middle East aide, Richard Murphy, the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs.

But Murphy, who arrived from Amman where he met with King Hussein of Jordan over the weekend, and the

two Israeli leaders, issued no statement following their meeting. Murphy apparently did not bring with him, or did not show his Israeli hosts, a list of seven prominent Palestinians who have been proposed as members of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation in future negotiations with the U.S. and Israel.

Israel has no objections to a joint delegation, provided that the Palestinians on it are not members of the Palestine Liberation Organization. But Israel balks at the idea, proposed by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, that the joint delegation talk first to Reagan Administration officials, in Washington or Cairo, and sit down only later with the Israelis. Israel insists that it must be included from the outset in any negotiations.

West Bank sources said today that Murphy presented a list of potential Palestinian negotiators to Jordanian and PLO officials in Amman and that the list was under study at a meeting of the PLO executive committee now taking place in Baghdad. The names correspond to those mentioned on Kuwait television over the weekend.

List Of Potential Palestinian Negotiators

They are: Mayor Elias Freij, of Bethlehem, a leading Palestinian moderate who has long preached peaceful co-existence between Israel and the Palestinians; the deposed former Mayor of Gaza, Rashad A-Shawa; three Palestinian academicians currently living in the U.S. where they teach at prestigious universities -- Prof. Edward Said, Hisham Sharabi and Walid Khalidi; Hikmat El-Masri of Nablus, a former Deputy Speaker of the Jordanian Parliament; and Nabil Shath, who presently lives in Egypt.

Shath is the most problematic of the proposed negotiators inasmuch as he is an advisor to PLO chief Yasir Arafat and a member of the Palestinian National Council which is dominated by the PLO.

El-Masri also may be unacceptable to Israel. He said on Israel television yesterday that he would not join a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation without the prior approval of the PLO. He added that if he did join, he would consider himself a representative of the PLO. Similar statements were made off the record by several of the other Palestinians on the list.

It was not clear today whether Murphy would have any political talks with Palestinian leaders while he is in the region. The U.S. Consul General in East Jerusalem, Wat Cluverius, invited about 30 prominent Palestinians to a reception tonight in honor of Murphy. They are said to represent different political outlooks. But the event appeared to be more a social than a political occasion.

The American diplomat, the highest ranking Reagan Administration official to visit the Middle East in recent months, is expected to make assessments that will help the Administration decide whether to resume an active diplomatic role in the region, as it is being urged to do, notably by Mubarak.

REAGAN TO VISIT SITE OF A NAZI CONCENTRATION CAMP

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, April 16 (JTA) -- President Reagan will visit the site of a Nazi concentration camp when he goes to Germany in May, White

House Chief of Staff Donald Regan told a delegation of Jewish leaders today. Kenneth Blalkin, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, told reporters after the White House meeting that the decision was welcome and that Regan confirmed the President's deep appreciation of the meaning of the Holocaust.

But Elie Wiesel, chairman of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council, said that Regan cannot "balance" his planned visit to the Bitburg military cemetery where soldiers who fought for Nazi Germany, including members of the SS, are buried, with a visit to a concentration camp site.

Wiesel said either homage is paid to the victims of the Holocaust or "we do something other." He said it is "inconceivable" that the President would lay a wreath where SS members are buried even if their "tombs are among others."

But as he said at a meeting of the Holocaust Council in New York yesterday, Wiesel seemed to shift the blame from the President, saying that Regan was "ill-advised" by others. Wiesel also rejected refusing the Congressional Gold Medal which he is scheduled to receive from Regan on Friday.

Jewish groups had been angered after Reagan's statement at a press conference March 21 that he had rejected a proposal to visit the site of the Dachau concentration camp because he wants to mark the 40th anniversary of the end of World War II as a reconciliation of former enemies and not a "reawakening of the memories" of the war. Criticism grew sharper with veteran groups joining in late last week when it was announced the President would lay a wreath at the German military cemetery.

The White House announced yesterday that Regan had sent Deputy Chief of Staff Michael Deaver and William Henkel, director of Presidential Advance, back to Germany to inspect sites that could be added to the President's itinerary. At the same time it was stressed that the President intends to go through with his visit to the cemetery and had received a letter from West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl urging him to do so.

Shultz Defends Reagan's Objectives

Meanwhile, Secretary of State George Shultz defended today the President's objectives in his trip to Germany as a means not to forget the Holocaust but to demonstrate that the U.S. believes that the values and government that has developed in West Germany in the last 40 years will prevent the "horror" of the Holocaust from happening again.

Answering a question after a luncheon speech to the National Press Club, Shultz said Reagan's "objective is to say, here we are on this 40th anniversary and we know it's the anniversary of a military victory. We know that during the war an awful lot of people were killed and insofar as Jews residing in Germany were concerned, they were subjected to an ultimate horror for which there is no excuse. It is almost impossible to imagine it. But we shouldn't forget it."

But Shultz said the President also wants "to say that we should think of this time, the last 40 years and the time ahead of us, as a time when a new beginning was made, a beginning in Germany, at least in the Federal Republic of Germany, of a democratic form of government, of the establishment very deeply of a set of values that would not permit that horror to happen again."

REFORM RABBI AND EVANGELICAL MINISTER DEBATE ROLE OF RELIGION IN POLITICS

By Judith Kohn

WASHINGTON, April 16 (JTA) -- The "Christian right" -- although not necessarily anti-Semitic itself -- is helping to create a climate of opinion that is bad for Jews, Rabbi Alexander Schindler, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations told a prominent evangelical leader at a public forum Sunday night.

In a "debate" on the role of religion in politics sponsored by the Reform movement's Religious Action Center in Washington, Schindler told the Rev. Pat Robertson that Jews object not to the right of religious groups to participate in political discourse, but to the style and tone of the arguments the fundamentalist Christians put forward.

"There is too much hyperbole. Everything is cast in apocalyptic terms," Schindler said. Issues such as abortion and prayer in public school are far too complicated, he told Robertson, to brand the participants in the debate as either for or against God and religion.

The debate, which drew some 1,500 people to the Washington Hebrew Congregation, opened a three-day consultation on conscience by the Reform movement here. The convention is being attended by some 300 rabbinical and lay leaders from around the country, and will include meetings with numerous members of Congress on both domestic and foreign policy issues.

Minister Stresses Love For Israel

Schindler's comments followed an address by Robertson, in which the minister, whose television program, the "700 Club," draws millions of viewers every week, took pains to emphasize the "love that we have for Israel" and to assuage a pronounced uneasiness among many American Jews about what they perceive as an attempt by evangelicals to break down the barrier between church and state.

As an example of his own organization's commitment to Israel, Robertson said, the television station run by his group in southern Lebanon produced the camera footage contradicting a claim by CBS television that Israelis had deliberately fired at two of their cameramen while searching a Lebanese village for terrorists last month. The CBS crewmen were killed, prompting immediate condemnation by the network.

However, after a visit to the scene of the incident and consultation with Israeli officials, vice president of CBS, Ernest Leiser, subsequently acknowledged that the Israeli soldier who fired at the crewmen could have mistaken them for terrorists.

Debate Fails To Bridge Gap

But the debate, which actually took the form of two consecutive addresses with a few brief rebuttals thrown in as asides, did little to bridge the gap between the Christian fundamentalists and those Jewish leaders who are reluctant to regard them as allies.

Overtures to the Jewish community by evangelical leaders such as Moral Majority founder Jerry Falwell, who was initially scheduled to appear as Schindler's opponent but cancelled due to illness, have raised differences about whether the evangelical support for Israel should open the way for active cooperation between the two groups.

The issue of prayer in public schools, actively supported by the fundamentalists and endorsed by the Reagan Administration, has been a particularly strong bone of contention.

But Robertson, who was invited at the last minute to appear in Falwell's place, said that Jewish objections to prayer in school was the product of a legitimate but misplaced fear.

"Inside of the Jewish people there's a fear -- it may be on the surface, it may be under the surface, but it's a strong fear that somehow, some way, we're going to go back to what happened in Germany, or what happened during the Spanish Inquisition, or what happened in England, or what happened in any other country," Robertson said.

He added, "There's a fear way down deep inside, and what often comes out of that fear is, let's get away from all religion because it may break out and come against us."

Robertson Sermon Cited

Citing from a sermon by Robertson himself, Schindler responded that the hyperbole and "absolutistic terms" used by the fundamentalists give Jews good reason to fear. Robertson was quoted in his address as saying that "the Constitution of the United States is a marvelous instrument for self-government by Christian people, but that the moment you turn it into the hands of non-Christian people and atheistic people, they can use it to destroy the very foundation of our society."

The minister later said he had been quoted out of context and that his comments had actually been a paraphrase of a statement by President John Adams, a framer of the Constitution. By "Christian," Robertson explained, he himself had been referring to a shared Judeo-Christian faith.

But Robertson said that as a minister, he could not attack other clergymen who have made statements which embarrassed him. His explanation was an apparent reference to a sermon by Rev. Bailey Smith, in particular, in which he said that God does not hear the prayer of a Jew. After his comments had caused a stir, the minister retracted his statement and later made a well-publicized visit to Israel.

Absolutistic Language Is Bad All Around

Schindler maintained Sunday night that "this extreme and absolutistic language of the Christian right creates a climate of opinions which is hostile to religious tolerance. Such a climate is bad for civil liberties, bad for human rights, for interfaith understanding and for mutual respect among Americans. Therefore, it is also bad for Jews."

Although Robertson's commitment to Israel was undoubtedly sincere, Schindler told the minister, and although the "Christian Right" is not a monolith but a "companionship" of like-minded individuals and groups, "we simply have no other choice but to interpret you and to lump you with the others, especially when the words of moderation which you so beautifully speak are so vitally contradicted by those with whom you confer, or whom you endorse, or on whose letterhead your name appears."

The debate was mediated by Rabbi Joshua Haberman, who has been in the forefront of efforts toward cooperation with the evangelical movement.