

The Rise And Fall Of The Jews Of Djerba And

Tunis

Part Five of a series

Meanwhile, in Tunis ...

Great places have wondrous beginnings. So it was with Tunisian Jewry. Four prominent Torah scholars set forth from southern Italy on a sea voyage to raise money for needy brides. They were captured by pirates who decided to give each of them up for ransom in a different Jewish community along the Mediterranean coast. One sage was ransomed by the Jews of Kairwan in Tunisia, where he was swiftly recognized as a luminary of the talmudic firmament, Rabbi Chushiel.

Kairwan, then the capital of North Africa, was a Torah city. Rabbi Donash ben Tamim, and his teacher Rabbi Yitzhak Hayyim lived there. But when Rabbi Chushiel arrived, the rabbis of Kairwan recognized his unique greatness and immediately appointed him chief rabbi.

In Kairwan, Rabbi Chushiel headed a prominent talmudic academy which produced outstanding halachists and talmudists for several generations. His major disciples were his own son, Rabbi Chananel, and Rabbi Nissim ben Yaakov. They all carried on extensive correspondence with the Gaonim of Babylonia (Iraq), the major bearers for the previous five centuries of the tal-

mundic tradition, but they were learned enough so as not to have to depend on Babylonian Gaonate for halachic decisions. Rav Hai Gaon (939-1039), the last greatest of the Gaonim of Babylonia, recognized Rabbi Chushiel's expertise and wrote him that he was an expert scholar halachist. He declared that questions could be addressed to Rabbi Chushiel and requested that copies of his responses be forwarded to Babylonia so that he and others might benefit from Rabbi Chushiel's erudition.

In recognition of his greatness the Babylonian Yeshiva bestowed upon Rabbi Chushiel the title Hosh Bey Rabbonon, Chief Rabbinic Authority.

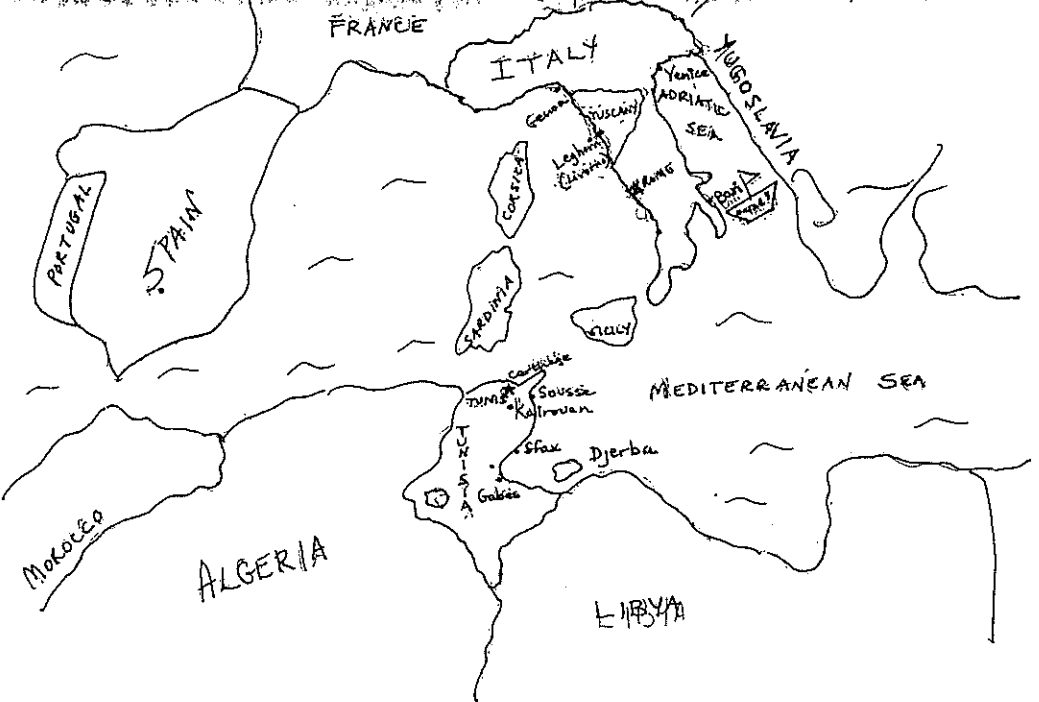
Rabbi Chananel, his son, succeeded him as dean of the yeshiva. He wrote a large abridgement of the Babylonian Talmud in which he wove interpretative commentary. His commentary was used extensively almost all the commentators of succeeding generations, especially Rabbi Yitzhak fasti (Rif), Rabbi Chananel's commentary appears in the Vilna edition of the Talmud which is the standard edition still being published today.



girl students presently in Cheder in Hara Kabira.



students presently in Talmud Torah in Hara Kabira.



The nearby community of Tunis, later the capital of Tunisia, achieved great renown in scholarly circles. *Ha'Iyan ha'Tunisi*, Tunisian profoundly became a by-word that recognized the quality of Jewish scholarship in Tunis. Tunis Jewry was further strengthened by the arrival of the Jews of Livorno (Leghorn) Italy, who were expelled from Spain in 1492 and from Portugal in 1497. From Spain and Portugal they fled to Lagnhorn and from there they found refuge in Tunis.

Other refugees from Spain and Portugal came directly to Tunis. Among them was Rabbi Avraham Zacuta, author of *Sefer Yuchasin*.

In 1710 the Livornian Jews who had arrived in the 16th and 17th centuries seceded from the Tunis community and constituted their own community. From this date all the Jewish institutions were duplicated. Each community had its own council of notables, rabbinic court, chief rabbi, cemetery, schools, and so on. Despite the division, Torah studies flourished in both communities and Tunis became noted for Jewish scholarship and writing.

The 19th century influx of new immigrants from the province of Tuscany, Italy, reinforced the Livornese community. And then came the Alliance.

Alliance Israelite Universelle was a Paris-based organization of Jews determined to spread the gospel of French secular culture to their culturally "deprived" brethren in the Orient. And their primary method for doing so was to open day schools for the children of each community and inculcate their secularist views in the children and through them into the community.

After fifteen years of arguing among the rabbis and influential lay people of Tunis, in 1878, some Jewish families of Italian origin accepted the project wholeheartedly, and a boys school was started. The old Talmud Torah building was given to the Alliance. The fifteen rabbis who had taught there were replaced with others who could teach "Hebrew."

Slowly the spiritual poison spread. In 1882 a girls school was established. By the end of the decade, two-thirds of the Jewish school population attended Alliance schools. In Tunis, the innocent children were

taught by atheistic teachers who striven them of all spirituality. In Jewish eyes, it is spiritual death. About such people did Sages declare, "Worse is he who leads you sin than he who murders you." The parents were deceived in believing that Alliance education would guarantee economic prosperity for their children.

But in fact the Jewish children of Tunisia were unable to assimilate the French spirit deeply enough. They suffered an inner conflict which left the young graduate of Alliance school unbalanced and uprooted. He was neither French nor Jewish. The Jewish instruction he had received had been sufficient to maintain religious identity. And ignorant of Judaism, he was ashamed of it. Yet he was not French, either.



Interior of the Ghibra synagogue in Djelba.

Traditional trades such as jewelry design, or processing precious metals, or dealing with wool were frowned upon by the Alliance graduates. So an agricultural school, an affiliate of the Alliance, was founded. It was unsuccessful because its graduates found themselves competing with other boys and girls who had had this occupation for generations. As a result they were left bereft of Torah and bereft of the economic advantage which the "enlightened" Alliance people had promised them.

Meanwhile, Back in Djerba

In the late 1940's the Djerban were prepared to accept two reforms, the establishment of a separate school which supplemented the yeshiva curriculum by offering instruction in grammar and in several non-religious subjects and the opening of a new school for girls. But it was not the rabbinic authorities who took the initiative for these reforms. Rather, they grew out of proposals submitted to them by a group of young people inspired by the Zionist ideals then in vogue, who were also promoting athletic and physical education. The latter proposals were



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not in strict keeping with the prohibition issued by the Djerban sages of yesterday.

Indeed in the 1950's and 60's the Zionists began to wreak havoc among Djerbans. Taking advantage of the Djerbans' fear of Arab nationalism which the Zionists made them believe would demigrate them to the level of second class citizens by destroying the French influence, and taking advantage also of the nationalization of foreign-owned property which affected Tunisian Jews economically, the Zionists persuaded them to emigrate to Israel. Many Djerbans had misgivings about going. Lawrence Reaner, author of *Eternal Springs*, writes that they seriously feared "that in Israel they might find themselves in a country not religious enough for their tastes." But the Zionists lied to them to assuage their fears of family control of religious education for their children. Some Djerban rabbis who could not be fooled or intimidated were harassed, threatened, and even beaten. Those of the Djerbans who left for Israel, were spiritually wiped out through Zionist deception and coercion.

In Djerba itself those Jews who remained have survived spiritually. Djerban Jews accepted Tunisian public schools, as noted following Tunisian independence. In Djerba today, an increasing number of children attend the government school. Consequently many Jews are involved in three educational systems during each day: first the yeshiva where the instruction is in Loshon Kodesh and Judeo-Arabic, then the Tunisian public school where Arabic and also French are languages of communication, and finally, the modern Jewish school for instruction in mathematics and grammar. Despite the variety of schools young Djerbans attend today, traditional education continues to govern the lives of the young. Very few of them do, in fact, complete the high school program of the public school. Now as before, most adolescents abandon their schooling at 14. A boy has by then completed the traditional core curriculum which acquaints him with Loshon Kodesh and prayers at age 5, the Pentateuch at age 7 and Halacha and the Babylonian Talmud as he reaches his teens.

Reb Michael Ber Weissmandel's personal story, as told in his book *Min Hameitzar*

Preface...

Hundreds of thousands could have been saved if the Zionists had heeded Rabbi Weissmandel's suggestions. But they did not. His work, however was not in vain, for finally his information reached Josef Mandel in Switzerland. Upon its publication, the deportations to Auschwitz stopped. But nearly six million Jews were killed before that day.

Included here are some of the letters which Rabbi Weissmandel sent to the Jewish Agency and the Joint, pleading for help in rescuing Hungarian Jews. His communications always included two important points: send money and bomb the railways. In addition, he stressed the importance of propaganda which would bring pressure on the Germans and Horthy to stop the deportations. The result of the release of the information supplied by Rabbi Weissmandel which Josef Mandel eventually received is proof of the efficacy of his plan.

Rabbi Weissmandel wrote constantly to the Agency and the Joint of the urgent need for action, pointing out that each day of delay meant another 13,000 deaths. In the first excerpt below from "Min Hameitzar," he recounts the efforts the Slovakian Jews made on behalf of the Hungarian Jews and the plans which they had devised. The five letters following this summary detail the plans. The Zionists' disinterest in the fate of their Eastern European brethren is evidenced by their lack of acknowledgment of receipt of the letters, although it was later ascertained that the letters were, indeed, received.

(Until this point was a discussion of the events in Slovakia regarding the deportation of the Jews and their annihilation. The progress and attempts to delay the deportation and destruction of Hungarian Jewry, and the history of the attempts to save them begin here. The author (ZU) intended to elaborate and divide it into chapters, but because we were unworthy, his time came and he did not have the opportunity to complete it. We are printing it in his words and writing with no additions or deletions.)

part four:

On the 24th of Adar, 1944, the Gestapo burst into Hungary in the form of occupation, yet they left the Hungarian Government as it was. A deadly fee immediately upon the Jews. For the general the Hungarian Government autonomous, it changed hands to not anti-Semites. It also immediately been known that the evil Eichmann and Sondertkommando had come to Budapest along with his aide Wisliceny.

On the following Shabbos, the 29th of Adar, after we had already welcomed Shabbos, I was in Nitza in our Rav's room, and a messenger came from adjoining apartment where there was telephone, saying in confusion that I travel immediately to Pressburg. Wisliceny had arrived there from Budapest and had something urgent to discuss regarding Hungary. I traveled on Friday and in the morning the architect Steiner and me that Wisliceny spoke with him at the and meanwhile left for Berlin. When he returned the following Monday he had a letter from me to some one in Budapest who would be suitable to deal regarding abolishing the decree about it enacted. According to Steiner, he said that the time had come to eat the fruits of our previous work.

At first I thought of the prominent Rabbis Shmuel Zanvel Kahane, head of the Orthodox Bureau. But news had spread Pressburg that he had fled to Romania. I asked several knowledgeable people they all said that the best person would be Rabbi Pinchas Friediger, who was head of Orthodox community in Budapest. Although I did not know him personally, I had heard him and decided to write to him. If he did want to undertake this mission, he would be able to refer me to someone who could

But I did not want to place all responsibility on the representatives of our group - the Orthodox - among communities in Budapest. There were

solis for this. One, it was known that the Gestapo in Budapest had had previous dealings with Germans of the Gestapo from the beginning of the war, long before this occupation. Secondly, we saw that here in Hungary, with all the doubts and differences among the parties, there was actually complete unity in every matter, and everyone had a particular job. Without this, there would have been no possibility of accomplishing anything. It stood to reason that we would have to do the same in Hungary. Therefore, I remained firm in my opinion that it was necessary to tell this to the representative of the orthodox community, this being Rav Friediger, one of the representatives of the Reform, meaning the community; and one for the Reform, meaning the community.

Someone wrote to the head of the Reform community; there was a lengthy debate among the Zionists as to whom they would recommend among their friends. There was a suggestion that we should recommend a man that wanted Kastner, and finally they agreed upon Nison Cohen.

I and I tried through my own and faithful friend Rav Shlomo to have a diplomatic messenger ready on Monday - for it was understood that we would give Wisliceny a letter praising him. Before it was necessary that a messenger come with a secret letter explaining all the subtle and negative reasoning.

I wrote the secret letter to Rav Friediger; it was a very long and detailed letter. I explained the entire involvement of the "escape Plan" and that in our opinion, if not those in charge of Jewish money in the world who were turning this down with contempt, there was a great possibility that we would not have the present situation in Hungary. We must work vigorously to prepare the large fund-raising organizations in the world for action. Yet we also had to respect that they would remain stubborn as they had until then. Therefore, it was necessary to gather immediately all Swiss and American money in Hungary to be had on the black market and to take it to Switzerland or

Some other place, so that it could be returned to the Germans, as if in the name of Jews of the free world.

We also explained that in Slovakia we were only able to accomplish this by influencing the Germans and the Slovaks, because one is not sufficient without the other. It would certainly be the same in Hungary. Therefore, they had to try forcefully to influence Horthy and other individuals in the new government as well. For if they (the Hungarians) demanded the deportations, our arguments with the Germans would amount to little.



Rabbi Michael Ber Weissmandel

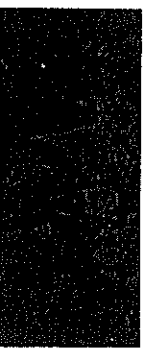
I also explained that we were worried that all the excitement about the dealings was misleading and deceitful. This was the sign (of good faith) -- if there were dealings, then there was no ghetto; if there were a ghetto, it is obvious that there were no dealings, and it was all just trickery and deceit. I explained that the killings began with the gathering of everyone into a ghetto, and after that there was no escape. This would not have been the case if it were possible to explain to everyone the meaning of Auschwitz, and that the ghetto was synonymous with Auschwitz; it would be necessary to bring everyone to the ghetto in chains. This would certainly be impossible before the public eye in Hungary,

thousand Jews. Of course it would have been possible to kill some Germans and Hungarian police, perhaps one hundred, perhaps two hundred, but as is obvious now in regard to the situation then it is very likely that the end result would have been that more of our Jewish brethren in Hungary would have been killed.

Therefore, why follow this path which would not bring any result and was full of danger for the multitudes? There was an easier and more certain way. A way which did not have to be identified with any Jew: to bomb the tracks leading to Auschwitz and Auschwitz itself from the air -- we had already lost five million Jews.

Was there the slightest doubt that our allies, who always were so good to the Jews and constantly berating their fate, would act immediately?

Was there the slightest doubt that our Jewish brothers in the "free world" would knock on every door, unceasingly, day and night to appeal to the government leaders in charge of such projects, in order to act on this plan? Wouldn't the destruction of these roads be militarily advantageous to them,



"There could be no more deadly ammunition... If Palestine were to be flooded with very old people or undisciplined", Henry Monitor, executive vice chairman, United Jewish Appeal.

even without taking into consideration the saving of Jews? Was it not a fact that on these tracks thousands of soldiers and war supplies came and went every day?

How about our Jewish brethren in Eretz Yisrael who were always boasting of their courage and might? Was there the slightest doubt of being able to find among them or among our strong-minded brothers in the United States or in Great Britain, hundreds or even thousands of youth prepared to join in this course of action, which was so sure, at

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least 95% or more? In the event they were captured, they could only be considered American or British captives; for it would be necessary to explain the destruction of these tracks as a means of stopping deportations of the Jews. It could be understood, for example, that they were ordered to bomb the train station for other reasons -- that it was needed for transport soldiers and military equipment. It would be absolutely no connection with deportation of Jews.

If there could have come from the destruction of the transport roads, from the Allied airplanes, an organization of the death chamber, Auschwitz and of the death chamber, Auschwitz itself, it would have been possible to organize support from the ground. Some courage would have entered into the broken hearts of the Jewish masses that had been sentenced to death. We have heard of a battle being won, where combatants fought without weapons, with their wives and children surrounded. With a fear of death, while the enemy of other hand were armed murder, surrounded by happy spectators.

If not for those in charge of Jewish money in the free world who were turning down with contempt, would not have the present situation in Hungary.

.....priests, the wicked Hungarian officers, Hungarian farmers, judges and doctors, the majority of that corrupt nation, Semites whose preachers had taught the for countless generations to rejoice at the spilling of Jewish blood. At their head Horthy, one of the primary architects of Hungary's anti-Semitism. All this being logic dictated that out of necessity, there should have been a joint action between Jews in this murderous country and the Jews of the free countries; in other words betwe

Why else would he reveal the secret of this murder for all to see, when then it had been a carefully guarded request of negotiations, to procure the requested merchandise.

.....I would entail a large number of personnel. For this purpose, I attached, an explicit point of Auschwitz, and I also wrote that it was necessary that there be complete agreement between the various factions, and show the Germans a trusting attitude, and inwardly suspecting them of every trick deal.

.....Since the messenger left secretly to deposit several hours before Wisliceny, I wrote in that letter that Wisliceny would bring a letter whose contents were not to remain things, and what must really be known was in this letter.

.....The letter I gave to Wisliceny was written in the holy tongue in a learned manner, and intended at warning and suspicion. I relied on the fact that Rav Friediger was a learned person who would possibly understand the message. I was afraid that this letter would get to the hands of the Gestapo before the secret one, and that the outcome of the first conversation would be embarrassing and difficult to correct. I remember that, aside from the hint hidden in the letter whose language I have forgotten, I wrote it in a famous act of a great scholar who had to write the praise of one not worthy, and he wrote it

in twelve lines so that the person receiving it would understand. I thought perhaps Rav Friediger also heard of this fact and, due to the brevity of the letter in Wisliceny's hand, would understand the hint.

.....There were two new developments on Monday. On Friday when Wisliceny spoke to Steiner they were still speaking at length of saving all Hungarian Jewry; on Monday, Steiner went to him with the letter, and he brought the news that in Berlin it was decreed that in regard to the Carpathian lands and all the land east of the Tisa River, nothing could be done. But if we would decide to deal, we could discuss the rest. Regarding the 320,000 Jews upon whom the decree had been finalized, there was a remote possibility that something could be done, such as postponing the deportations for weeks or months and, since the Russians were already at the border, they would be free. These were Wisliceny's words.

.....On Friday, Wisliceny had not explained any details of the deal, and on Monday he already had details.

.....Two kinds of money were needed, a small sum of 2 million dollars and a large sum of 10 million dollars. The money had to be backed by proof that it was from the free world -- from world Jewry. The large sum was openly going to the S.S. (so he mentioned explicitly -- not to the Reich -- only to the pocket of the S.S.), and the small amount was for those who were involved. For our insurance it was possible to pay the smaller amount over a period of 10 months, \$200,000 monthly. He concluded that the war would not last more than ten months. But the money for the individuals was of no value without the larger sum which had to be given in a lump sum, or at least in very large payments, and this too was of no value without the smaller sum.

.....The messenger had already left secretly, and there was no sight of another messenger for 3 or 4 days. Meanwhile, I returned to Nirra. I told our Rav everything. He was very suspicious of the terms. Yet, for our part we had to hold on to the rope with both ends, and to give them what they were demanding. It was quite possible that due to the situation of the war, the Germans had split into several factions and one faction was hoping to save

its skin by this action. However, they still had to keep the pretense of acting for the benefit of those who were more loyal to the evil one (Hitler) or for the evil one himself. There were many possibilities, for you know what was going on in their private circles? Practically speaking, we could not trust them and our main concern was to warn these wast of the Tisa River and help them escape.

The second secret messenger went, carrying a long letter. I described the new developments and warned them that the Germans' plan may have been formulated to lure us into a false sense of security. We had to make great efforts to tell the Jews in these districts that they were slated for murder, and to warn them not to enter the ghetto, even under threat, and that they should rather be killed than transgress. I remember that my letter caused a lot of confusion for in Slovakia everyone called these districts P.K.R., meaning Pad - Karpatska - Rus -- and this is what I wrote to Budapest. It took them a while to understand the meaning of these letters, for there they did not use this abbreviation. I wrote that they should make great efforts to help the multitudes to escape from there while there still was time, before the decree for a ghetto. We did not as yet know in Slovakia how difficult it already was for Jews to be able to travel from place to place.

No one can really understand a law until he has had a brush with it. Of course, logic would have it that one shouldn't move from one's house or place of hiding, even if warned of death on the spot, because the only other choice is Auschwitz. And yet, perhaps, it was decreed that the logic shouldn't work, or perhaps there was no logic at all due to the situation. During those early days it so happened that an acquaintance of mine came to ask advice regarding his parents in Ungvar, and he brought with him a gentle smuggler, hoping to bring his parents to Slovakia, which at that time was more secure than Hungary. I remember that he was a man eager to do whatever forgotten this person's name, but I know that he was a man eager to do anything for his parents. Suddenly I had an idea. I went to the Orthodox Bureau where there was a Hebrew typewriter and a stenciling machine. I wrote one page very clearly in the same style that I had written to Switzerland,

explaining that they were in any event to be slaughtered, and they should not to enter the ghetto. If they had a chance, they should break down the door and if the Germans killed some of them, would certainly be fewer murdered in it. I wrote the letter as if one who had escaped from the camp were writing it. I knew of two couples who had escaped. I wrote as if the letter came from Poland, made several hundred copies and sent them straight and simple man that it would be to his credit if would disseminate the letter when he arrived there. Naively, he did not tell him, and a few weeks later returned with great complaints and asked me to go to the Germans with this letter. According to him, someone on the Jewish side had sent this information to them, and he had already happened. I felt that it was necessary to tell the public the full truth, murdered, twenty or thirty people. He fled without his family because of the scandal.

The majority of the committee Pressburg opposed our involvement in Hungary. They said we were powerless; anything, and it was very possible that would endanger the remaining 30,000 Slovaks who were anywhere in need of mercy, when the deportations would come close to our border. Yet, I still felt that a prisoner could not free himself, and I would end -- for at that time the military situation was very good.

When he returned he said that he found that Friediger was the only person percentage enough for this, but he still found the bargaining very slow and suspicious with the old "Europe Plan." If we did expedite matters, not only would the 320,000 from east of the Tisa River be lost, but would lose everything. The date of deportations of the 320,000 was scheduled to commence in the beginning of the middle

Therefore, it was necessary for the Hungarians, too, to alert the outside world. It was sometime during the month of April that Dr. Abeles came to me with an understanding and self-sacrificing man who had excellent connections with the officers of the railways, who revealed the conditions between Slovakia and Hungary regarding the deportations. This man said that if someone would sacrifice his life in order to bomb the long tunnel between Kassau and Pressau, it would make this line useless for a number of years, and he could provide dynamite for this purpose. He set a price and I accepted this deal. We secretly began to make plans about this possibility. I did not even hint of this plan in the committee, because of those opposed to the entire matter of cooperating with Hungary. This individual, an excellent engineer, said that there was a daily train from Pressburg to Medzilobartza which traveled through a part of Hungary in the district of Kassau using this tunnel. It would be necessary to find someone willing to sacrifice his life, who would travel this route with dynamite and explode it in the tunnel so that the entire train would be dynamited along with it.

The Rov agreed with this matter in principle, but warned that the action must be taken in such a way that no Jewish name be associated with the entire matter, and that this destructive act seem like a deed of the Czech or Russian partisans.

I remember the righteous yeshiva student Rbb Yaakov Levi of Pressburg, a boy of eighteen, a great scholar, possessing all good traits, and very G-d-fearing, who heard of what was planned and came to me in the middle of the night ready to travel on this train. He had a premonition that he would not survive the war and wanted to accomplish something great with his death. I talked him out of it and at the end, he was killed the 20th of Elul, 1944 while lying on the riverbank of Nitra, hiding in the bushes learning from a Holy book. May G-d avenge his pure blood.

Meanwhile, a better idea came up. Someone in charge of guarding the railway tracks near the tunnel was ready to cooperate for a large sum of money. as I remember 2 million Slovakian kronen were to

be paid after the deed. A small group of dedicated boys were ready to work with him. Suddenly Kovatsch, a member of the secret committee and in charge of the Ustrednah who had done several good things called me -- and closed the door, put his hand on the telephone and said that this plan had been discovered, and it posed a great danger to the remainder of Jews in Slovakia. Some hint of these matters had been heard by the Slovakian police and if I did not give him complete assurance that I would stop, he would have to notify the Slovakian police. He said that he had been called by the evil Vashak, who told him the Germans were ready to renew the decree and deport the remaining Jews of Slovakia even before the Hungarian deportations begin. In reference to the bombing, it was vital to know that there were two openings on the Hungarian side as well as the opening on the Slovakian side, and it would not be sufficient to destroy just this rail line for they had many routes going directly from Hungary. Therefore it was impossible to do a complete job except in Hungary.

In reality, that very day or the day afterwards, Wisliceny came rushing to Pressburg saying that he had received an order to put an end to the remaining Jews in Slovakia, even before the Hungarian Jews. By bribing him and the Slovaks we were able to get a reprieve. But a great fear descended upon all of us. I wrote these things to Budapest with the idea that they organize a series of bombings with great care so that no Jewish name be tied with it -- only in the name of the Hungarian holdouts from the previous government. They were not to declare that it was done to prevent the deportation of the Jews, for it was April and the deportations had not yet begun. It was imperative to make it seem that the bombings were to stop transports of German soldiers.

Today I see that this was a futile idea. Had they begun this course of action, they would never have completed it, for the wicked Germans' strength was still great at the time. Note what they did to Horthy a half year later, and to the Slovakian partisans 10 months later. It is very likely that the damage would have been much greater than any advantages under the circumstances, and even the small remainder left in Hungary would possibly not

be alive today. What did they accomplish Warsaw? The killed a few Germans, and can estimate how much they increased fire of hate and fury.

But one thing was very clear and that is that it would have been very easy to be these routes from the air. We saw with our own eyes how the Allied bombers reign over Slovakian and Hungarian air space with no opposition, when they bombed factories whose destruction they felt was important to the war effort. They once bombed railway station in Debrecin, not for the purpose of hampering deportations but military reasons, and automatically deportations were delayed there for two weeks. If only there had been one more bombing at the time in Debrecin, they would have again had to delay the deportations, at so on.

Of course there was another reason to destroy the ghettos from within, or even in towns and villages, was impossible. What was possible was only a matter of "I will myself along with the Philistines," but only an opposite way "a Philistine will die along with all of us," one German along with

According to Wisliceny heard in the midst of conversation with Kasne Brandt, that the main Jewry was with the Zionists and not with the Rabbis and that the joint and the Zionists were one and the same.

hundred of workers from within the hell of murder and between the many leaders in charge of Jewish money and influence might the delightful freedom in the Allied countries, Switzerland and Turkey. These then would be the normal courses of action that the logical mind could prefer:

It is true that the Germans were regarded to exchange lives for money, regardless upon thousands of lives for twelve million million dollars, cash in advance at the beginning of Nissan 5704 (the end of March 1944), don't ask any questions -- How? -- don't argue and don't be too smart. If we were willing to give over the lives or even one of the lives, the money had to be here, here, in this murderous land. After all, who would know what was in the minds of these wicked ones: the discord, jealousy and hatred among them. Each one of them had already seen by the middle of 5704 (1944) that their downfall was near and they were all solving for an avenue of escape because the day of judgment was at hand. So, if they said that they were willing to negotiate, it was possible that they just may have been telling the truth. However far-fetched -- it was a possibility, nevertheless. Who was to judge that there was no possibility? On one hand it was a question of money, on the other hand it was a question of 12 or 13 million dollars, while on the other hand it was a question of thousands of lives -- Jewish lives -- men, women, older people, children, pregnant and nursing women, babies and infants still nursing. Today they are all alive and the murderer says there is no tomorrow unless we do business -- money in place of lives, your brothers' money in the tree world in place of the souls here in this living hell.

2) Actually to limit the deportations, through the destruction of the tracks bringing the transports to Auschwitz and through the destruction of the death chambers in Auschwitz itself, and to carry out this act of destruction continuously and systematically. It was necessary to bomb alternately first one and then the other. In addition, the main damage should have been done by air, with Allied cover destroying the railway

If it were true that the Germans were prepared to exchange lives for money, thousands upon thousands of lives for 12 or 13 million dollars cash in advance don't ask any questions. How? Why? Don't argue and don't be too smart.

everywhere in the wicked man's (Hitler) rule, the intention being to halt the transport of military supplies -- a military strategy -- and not for the sake of halting the deportation of Jews.

There should also have been ground support for this destruction, with the cooperation of the non-Jewish internal enemies of the wicked man. This destruction should also not have been done with the intention of halting the deportation of Jews, but rather for the purpose of the war in general.

Already, during the month of April we had informed Switzerland concerning the contract made between Hungary and Slovakia, by way of their railroad administrators and the 180 transports that were mentioned earlier. We also let them know the routes the transports would take, which was the Kashaw - Pressau - Sandz - Cracow, Auschwitz route, and we constantly asked them to implore the Allies to destroy these routes.

On May 16, 5704 (1944) we wrote them again about this route and all the other routes that might possibly be utilized by the Germans and described them at length. We also drew a map of Auschwitz, together with the gas chambers and ovens as they

Every day we sent out
one or two or three
telegrams, sometimes from
Nitra, sometimes from
Pressburg... Sometimes we
addressed it to (Salv)
Mayer, sometimes to
(Nathan) Schwab.

appeared from an aerial view.

We now know for sure that the letter reached Switzerland the next day. Together with this letter we sent the key to a secret code to make sure they would understand telegrams and letters sent openly by mail. Every day we sent out one, two or three telegrams, sometimes from Nitra, sometimes from Pressburg, sometimes from somewhere else. Sometimes we addressed it to Mayer, sometimes to Schwab and sometimes to our trusted, dear friend, Mr. Lebowitz who would turn it over to them. After a while, we even sent it to our dear and revered friend Huga Rosenbaum to give it to them. Every day the telegrams would tell the story of the transports and the routes they would take, with a request and a demand to bomb the routes. We know today for sure that all the telegrams reached their destination.

We wrote letters, long ones and short ones, open and coded. We sent them secretly with diplomatic envoys. We wrote letters blaming and cursing, but it was for naught. Not even the slightest thing on any project of destruction ever materialized.

On the contrary, we became a joke in the eyes of the murderous Germans who commonly said that the best way to insure

safety for the military transports would be put Jews on them and write in big letters, this is a transport of Jews to the death camp then the transport could be assured that Allies would not bomb them.

To be able to bring the non-Jew partisans into such an act of destruction is very difficult. Some of them, although enemies of the evil one, who hated passionately, nevertheless rejoiced in our over this war of his with the Jews, such as priests and their followers, the Poles, Slovaks and some of the Czechs. Others were afraid to place themselves in great danger than they already were in as partisans by taking part in any destructive mission on behalf of the Jews. In order to obtain cooperation from them for any mission of value, money was required. Without money there wasn't anyone willing to do a thing. The need was for large amounts of money, we had written in the letters that we sent the countries on the outside.

Today, ten years have already passed and all the nations from the East and from the West are taking pains to pay respect to the murderous nation -- these man-eating Germans. They hide their documents with the evidence that is in them. But even without this, it has already become known that the wicked doctor, the man Kersten, who was the personal physician of the wicked Himmler, related that Himmler told him that under no circumstances would permission be granted to the Jews in the camps (at the end of 1944) to leave to Switzerland as in Bergen-Belsen transports and Teresienstadt transports unless they would pay 50 Swiss francs in exchange for every ordinary Jew and 500 Swiss francs for every important Jew. -- "In order to buy trucks from Switzerland with this money." Who knows if this wasn't his intention six months before. We see that this amount itself was what his subordinate, the wicked Wisliceny, requested - 50 francs per head, 50 million francs for a million heads.

We can see today in the proceedings of the Nuremberg trial that the wicked Hitler and Himmler had agreed between themselves, explicitly and entirely to free the Hungarian Jews in exchange for merchandise.

We can also see that the chief executioner, the wicked Eichmann, sent Brandt in the middle of May to Turkey to insist to world Jewry that the next day he would begin the extermination of Hungarian Jews at the rate of 12,000 per day. The only emotion could be merchandise in exchange for lives. Why else would he reveal the secret of this murder plan, for all to see, until then it had been a very carefully guarded secret, if not for the purpose of negotiations, to procure the requested merchandise.

We can also see today in the German documents that are in the courts of the Nuremberg Tribunal that when the English radio (BBC) announced this German position, saying that the Germans gave us the trucks they were to use in exchange for Jewish blood would only be used on the Eastern front, the Allied response was that the English and the Americans would not enter into any negotiations whose purpose was to divide the West and the Soviet Government. They decided, however, that they had a deep love for and concern for the Hungarian Jews. When the wicked Ribbentrop and his aides heard this radio report, they asked those murderers, Himmler and his aides, what was the meaning of all this. They replied that all was going according to plan and the radio report was meant to camouflage the negotiations so the Russians would not be aware of what was going on. The truth however was a secret and they, the experts, know the dealings are for real.

How did Himmler and his aides know all this? They heard it from Wisliceny, and he heard it from us in Pressburg. When he heard the radio broadcast and angrily asked us its meaning, we gave him the above reply. Instead of money, answers, instead of merchandise, excuses and alibis. So went the entire negotiations from Sukkos 42 until the end of summer '44.

We also see that this was the amount for which Wisliceny, with the approval of his superiors, had sold the Slovakian Jews to freedom during the summer of 1942 -- \$50,000 for 35,000 lives.

Naturally, when the offer was brought to us in the beginning of Nissan, we tried in

every possible way to bring it to fitting with the treasurer in charge of Jewish charities in the "free world" in Switzerland and in Turkey, and through them with the treasurers in charge in Eretz Yisroel, England and the United States.

The lengthy, explicable letters which we wrote with regard to this matter from within the walls of the Nitra Yeshiva from the 24th of Adar until the middle of Iyar are no longer in our hands for they were lost, or are still hidden in the files of letters of the important organizations of world Jewry. When the massacres began in the middle of Iyar and Eichmann the murderer raised the price and means on Brandt's mission, we wrote in the letter of May 16:

"Remember that in the early days of the Hungarian occupation the wicked ones negotiated with the Jews to halt the murder through bribery. They asked for 60 million, but all we had to give were two (this is no mistake, only two). Because of this they became contemptuous of us, and according to many reliable sources, this is the main cause of their anger poured out here presently."

Two kinds of money were needed, a small sum of two million dollars and a large sum of ten million dollars.

Throughout the negotiations, it would have been possible to alter the actions of the Germans regarding the Hungarian deportations if money had come from World Jewry. But there was no one listening.

This was the first stage of the negotiations with the Germans, at a time when they still spoke of money only. In the beginning of May, they began to change their demands of money to that of goods. They mentioned merchandise for civilians, such as coffee, tea, cocoa, leather and in passing they suggested trucks. We, who became experts in excuses and delays, told them that everything was available; we had received positive answers from America on all terms. There was clear proof in a letter from "Mr. Ferdinand Roth" from Zurich, the secret leader of world Jewry, who wrote this explicitly on stationery from that famous hotel, telling Willy that in just a few days the matter would be drawn to a satisfactory conclusion.

Then suddenly we heard that Brandt was sent publicly on a mission to Turkey, by Eichmann. At that time we knew that all would be lost if the dealings were revealed to the Allied nations. Revealing this matter, even without the aforementioned reason, would be a gross absurdity for what could it accomplish. If they were asking for goods and not money, it was because their purchasing agents were being refused merchandise in the neutral countries. We, however, had possibilities to obtain these goods. The main object was money. When we would have the means to obtain the money, we would have the sharp-witheadness to have the goods. We would find Jewish businessmen who, when we gave them the money and explained to them it was necessary for the deliverance of one million lives, would know how to change this money into goods. Then there would be coffee, tea, leather or even trucks.

All this would be fine if everything transpired in utmost secrecy. If, however, the matter would become known in the higher political circles of the Allied nations, they would rejoice over this sure sign of Germany's weakening, which would be revealed to them through this transaction. But certainly no action would result from this, especially if the condition of verbal assurances from the Germans were revealed to them, i.e., that these goods would only be used on the Eastern war front. Naturally, we were terror-stricken. How was it possible to

What did they accomplish in Warsaw? They killed few Germans and who can estimate how much the increased the fire of hate and fury.

enter responsibly into such a risky mission. Even with all this, we still hoped it would be possible for Brandt to keep his mission secret, as the Germans themselves according to Wisliceny, had claimed the wanted.

Wisliceny explained that the manner of the business (Brandt's mission) was the result of the jealousy of the dealers on the German side and the envy of the agents on the Jewish side. Here is the account of this matter:

From the middle of the summer 1942 regularly wrote an account of the situation two or three times a week with advice and the demands that came up. In the second letter reviewed what was written in the first letter and added what was new -- and so on. Through Rabbi Binjamin Shlomo Stern from Pressburg, and Rabbi Zvi Halbrun from Meshulam from Zurich, our main worker, I organized a system of diplomats who would take the letters back and forth, mostly between Pressburg and Switzerland and occasionally also to Turkey. When the messenger came, I gave him all the letters. Mrs. Fleischman also wrote letters from time to time, and we gave them to the messenger. Slowly the matter became known to the various Zionist parties, and they also wrote letters to their confidants in the free world.

Other with Mrs. Fleischman's letters.

Suddenly in the summer of 1943, a new messenger arrived in Pressburg: a German, who was sent from the rescue committee members in Ankara, Barsas and Bader to Mrs. Fleischman, saying that he was reliable and trustworthy and we should give him letters. The messenger did not come through our own network, for we had never included a man in this system. In particular my alert and Rabbi Binjamin Shlomo warned us not to give him anything, either because he knew intuitively felt that he was suspicious, but warning was to no avail. Mrs. Fleischman said that they in Ankara were totally trustworthy. Obviously we did not know that and had never even heard of their names before. So, she gave over to him copies of all the letters she had written to Brandt during these times, from the summer of 1942 on. At last, even I wrote a long letter to tell them what had happened and to complain and express my dissatisfaction over the utter neglect and lack of attention by the intercessors in Switzerland and the other free countries in the matter of the European Plan and to oblige them immediately to tell everything to everyone. (The letter is included below.)

Months afterward, it became known to me that this messenger was an officer of the Wehrmacht and Gestapo in Budapest from the beginning of the war, long before the German occupation of Hungary. Kasner, Brandt and their cronies were caught in the web of espionage, messengers of mail and money for various rescue work in Hungary, before the occupation -- such as escape of Polish and Slovakian survivors and other matters.

The head of this group was the Gestapo member Schmidt. It was later discovered that he had made copies of all the letters sent from Pressburg to Ankara, and the copies all ended up in the hands of the evil Himmler. So it came to be that after the German occupation of Hungary, there were two connections between the Jews and their German murderers. One was the old connection of Kasner-Brandt with Schmidt from the Gestapo, and the other was the new connection of Rav Friediger with Wisliceny

from the S.S.

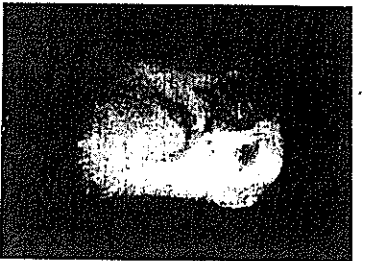
Friediger entered into the connection with Wisliceny and began the transaction by way of Pressburg -- and Kasner and Brandt came separately from Friediger and entered with the old connection of Schmidt, and proposed this transaction to Wisliceny on their own as if there were no other suggestions about this deal from anyone else. Of course, it was not in Schmidt's power to decide. However, as it seemed that he knew from the letters between Pressburg and Ankara that there had been dealings concerning the Europe Plan from before by Wisliceny, he went together with Kasner and Brandt to Wisliceny and pretended that he knew nothing, and suggested the same deal as if it were a new thing completely. The evil and clever Wisliceny also played dumb. In those days, each German was suspicious of his comrade in the same party and much more so of one from a different party. Immediately Wisliceny reported this to the murderer Eichmann, and Eichmann made a search of Schmidt and found a large sum of money and the copies of all our letters in his apartment.

Why should they (the Joint) give this money, which they need so badly now to buy a lamb and to build a pen on land they just purchased...



"Jews in Palestine" - Thousands of Jews in Palestine are worth more than all the money in the world.

Jews in Palestine - Thousands of Jews in Palestine are worth more than all the money in the world.



Rabbi Samuel David Ungar, Nitra Rav

did not put much faith, that we would receive the money from the Joint..

According to Wisliceny, he heard in the midst of his conversation with Kastner, Brandt and Schmidt that the main connection with world Jewry was with the Zionists and not with the rabbis, and only with their help would the transactions be brought to the desired goal; and that the Joint and the Zionists were one and the same. If he heard this from Schmidt or from Jews, I don't know.

However it may be - this rivalry was a great tragedy, possibly even a great crime. It seems that here the money was changed into merchandise and secrecy to public knowledge; repeal of deportations to emigration, and the mainstream of world Jewry in America and its substitute in Switzerland to the mainstream of Jewry in Eretz Yisroel and their substitutes in Turkey. And I still don't know for sure who came to whom. If Eichmann had suggested this trip to Brandt and the new method of the old transaction - merchandise from the Allies openly, instead of money from Jews secretly - this was a tragedy. However if one of the Jews suggested this to Eichman and he accepted, it is a crime.

In any event we had hoped that the community leaders in Ankara who knew of

the negotiations by way of our letters in also know how to hide the fact from the Joint. When Brandt and his friend Bondy arrived, they would change this cross business to a straight one and the knowledge of his mission would reveal secrecy with regard to the Allies and merchandise would switch to money or loans from the Allies, merchandise would be bought secretly. Leaving the coin would shift to repealing the deportation signifying that during wartime they would make a request at all for the emigrating Hungarian Jews even across the especially since they knew of the "Prin of the evil one concerning Eretz Yisroel his agreement with the Mufti. They would travel to Lord Moyne to ask him for a for a million Jews. But at the end Brandt would return in another day or two to say there was merchandise, and we did not enough to repeal the deportations to the inferno.

Days and weeks passed, and every the price was twelve-thousand Jews; there was no voice of protest and hope turned despair. Again a letter from "Ferdinand Rohl" to Wisliceny came which said that had agreed on everything, both merchandise and the trucks. We knew that there would be money, there would be merchandise, not only from outside of Hungary, but also from inside Slovakia and Hungary. Shrewd businessmen such as R Naffoi Terefi, Rav Yochanan Link and Abels entered into discussions, and the pointed out places of hidden merchandise Slovakia and Hungary worth many millions francs which they would be able claim to come from outside of the country for the transaction. The merchandise was hidden warehouses in Pressburg and Budapest.

Wisliceny accepted this plan and mentioned it to his superior. They promised 30,000 people for this merchandise - without trucks. But there could no longer be talk of repeating the deportations, since there were no trucks. Brandt still hadn't returned. There could only be talk of traveling across the sea by way of Germany, France and

as the terms of the "Reisebureau" report at the end of the summer of 1941 till mid-July 1942 as mentioned above. Wisliceny promised that when he returned to suggest, he would suggest this to Eichmann meaning that with the money from the merchandise would switch to money or loans from the Allies, merchandise would be bought secretly. Leaving the coin would shift to repealing the deportation signifying that during wartime they would make a request at all for the emigrating Hungarian Jews even across the especially since they knew of the "Prin of the evil one concerning Eretz Yisroel his agreement with the Mufti. They would travel to Lord Moyne to ask him for a for a million Jews. But at the end Brandt would return in another day or two to say there was merchandise, and we did not enough to repeal the deportations to the inferno.

Throughout the negotiations, it would have been possible to alter the actions the Germans regarding the Hungarian deportations if money had come from world Jewry. But there was no one listening. In fact, we sent many letters and telegrams; we had no answer. When the money did begin to come, it came slowly, and in limited quantities.

Suddenly a tragedy occurred and the English radio publicized Brandt's mission and refusal of the Allies to give the merchandise. This occurred at the same time that Horthy repealed the deportations. The Germans were very angry because they saw this as collaboration between world Jewry and the Allied nations and Horthy. Wisliceny came angrily to Pressburg, and there was no clear knowledge that the British grabbed Brandt and that everything said on the radio was false and we knew that everything was going along the best way possible.

However, then something else happened. The evil Wisliceny said that he had lost favor in the eyes of Eichmann, the evil one above him, because he was angry that he had dragged him into this phony business that brought shame to the Germans, instead of purpose, and the only remedy would be proof of the agreement of the State Department in Washington on this transaction. If there

would be such proof the whole thing would change, and they would give a command for the end of the annihilation completely. This news was brought to us through Steiner in the midst of Av (July, August) 1944. A few days after this, we heard it also from Kastner in Budapest. At the same time Wisliceny said that his chief was sending him away from Hungary to Romania as punishment, even though he wanted to return to Pressburg. This is also what the murderer Schmidt said to me Passach time 1945, when I traveled with the last group to Switzerland. He had met Wisliceny in the winter and he told him that he wanted to return to Pressburg during the Partisan war to oversee what was happening there, but Eichmann did not allow him to.

We then began to beg by letter, telegram and telephone to Switzerland that such a notice be sent, whether or not it were genuine. But again, all the pleading was to no avail. In the meantime, the connection with Wisliceny was broken. But I saw that what Kastner told me at the time was the truth: that the Germans finally agreed that a telegram from Sali Meyer corroborating the existence of such a directive would be sufficient. Kastner begged Sali Meyer when he met him on the 'bridge between Switzerland and Austria with Kurt Becher to send such a telegram. Meyer replied that he and Mrs. Meyer were famous for their honesty and integrity, and he would send such a telegram only if it were the truth.

to be continued in the next issue.

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Agudath Israel

Our Sages tell us, "Any union that is not based on Torah cannot endure."

The Enlightenment and Zionism, sweeping across the Jewish horizon, made catastrophic inroads on traditional Jewish life. The devastation threatened to engulf the entire Jewish world and caused our leaders to band together to repel this invasion.

The very nature of organization contains an inherent threat to the diversity that assures the continuity of Torah-true Jewish living. It was therefore with great trepidation that Rabbinic Sages undertook to found the organization which we know as Agudath Israel. By restricting Agudath Israel to a single purpose, the strengthening of Jewish observance, they minimized the risk and—insofar as possible—guaranteed success.

The reasoning and the fears of the sages who participated in the founding of this organization are expressed in the following letter by Rav Elchonon Wasserman, the Rav and Rosh Yeshiva of Baranovitch. He was wary of the usages of a modern organization and concerned about the problems it posed to Torah observance. Steeped in learning and tradition, a disciple of the sainted Chofetz Chaim, he was revered worldwide.

Rabbi Wasserman writes: "The path before us is clear and ready. The weapons are in our hands and it is within our power to spread and disseminate Torah knowledge and reverence for G-d and His works.... In this orphaned and pitifully weak generation who will take the lead and show the way? The only solution is for the pious to organize for one goal and for this aim only. As Maimonides said, 'In all my days I was defeated only by the master of a single craft.' This means that we should not be occupied with diverse aims and goals, but with one clear goal only. We do not perform mitzvos in bulk. The Mishna teaches that when the righteous act as individuals rather than in unison, it brings no good to them and no good to the world. Unity of action among the righteous is good for them and correspondingly good for the world. The individual who acts for himself only has no strength and accomplishes little, the community has a natural advantage over the individual. In the natural scheme of things, whatever bun-

den a person can carry, he can carry times as much if he shares the load.

Another: This is true in the realm of the physical as well. With the public participation great spiritual uplifting can be accomplished. Individuals who perform the mitzvot singly cannot be compared to the many who perform the mitzvot together. A unified effort sanctifies the name of the Almighty.



"חפץ חיים" — רבי ישראל מראדזקין זצ"ל

RAV YISROEL MEIR KAGAN — (Chofetz Chaim)

The most important of all principles the work of an organization of pious Jews must be the effort to spread the learning of Torah among Jews. But what do we seek instead? We make the irrelevant the central point and push the essential point aside. We become so preoccupied with the tools needed to implement the mitzvot that we never achieve the mitzvot themselves.

"The introduction to the work Chofetz Adam relates the story of the man who needed a garment. Requiring a needle to sew the garment, he embarked on a study of needle making and was so busy all his life learning how to make a needle that he died without the garment. In the same manner we busy ourselves with irrelevancies and minor matters and remain devoid of Torah. The Satan leads us on blindly, like the fleas

infest who 'hides' in the crowd of pursuers when the pursuers cry, 'catch the flea!' he raises his voice and adds his cries to theirs. 'Catch the thief!' So too does the Evil One with all the cunning in the world, so long as Torah is not learned and taught. For Torah study is like burning coals heaped on Satan's head... of all the anxieties and problems in the means, we forget the ends.

The holy Chofetz Chaim of blessed memory explained the words of our forefathers: 'I sojourned with Laban and I did not know his evil deeds.' Jacob was disappointed in himself for not having achieved heights in goodness as Laban had achieved in wickedness. We must carefully guard the evil behavior of Laban's disciples in order to learn how to attain the heights of righteous behavior.

To see that the programs of all the parts are mainly secular, and their attention is chiefly given to spiritual destruction and the dissemination of atheism. In the same way, with the same zeal, must we give our attention chiefly to spiritual work, to spread and disseminate the knowledge of Torah reverence for G-d. Those who rejoice at successes of the pious in secular matters could be told the story of the famous general who was victorious in a battle that his soldiers died on the battlefield. When he was congratulated on his victory, he remarked, 'One more such victory and we are lost.'

Successes in secular fields are very exciting, because they are gained at the expense of the spiritual. The energy spent on secular battlefields would have achieved greater results if it had been spent on the spiritual front."

In a letter to Agudah activists, the revered Chofetz Adam and his exhortations to all pious Jews to work for the common good of Judaism.

"The real reason for this spiritual plague of secularism is the spiritual weakening of the children of Israel by non-religious education. In America among the Jews who call themselves Orthodox the education is firm and even irreligious, since all the religious schools teach Jewish history in the



רבי אלחנן וויזניץ זצ"ל — ראש ישיבת ברנאוויץ
RAV ELCHONON WASSERMAN

well-known German fashion which is atheistic, and most of the teachers in these religious schools are irreligious. Even in the yeshivos there is an atheistic spirit since they teach Jewish culture and the teachers of this 'science' and the Orthodox rabbis not only do not protest, this atheistic teaching, they praise it inordinately. In such a situation it is hard to perceive an enduring growth... But we must not despair...

"We see this before our eyes today. We see people who persevered in the face of difficulty and work with self-sacrifice for the sake of G-d and they have His protection and are successful. They should restrict their endeavors to the field of education alone, and even here they should seek not quantity but quality. If they succeed in founding only one Bais Yaakov school for 100 girls in holiness and purity, they should not treat this lightly; a little dispels much darkness... The same holds true for the boys' education but should they decide to widen their spheres of endeavor into social service and politics, all will be lost. Rambam says, 'In all my life I was never defeated except by the master of a single craft.' I will mention the words of the holy Gaon of Vilna who told Rabbi Yoel of Amichslav, 'If you are stubborn, you will succeed.'

"They must be careful not to engage in quarrels with any other party, nor should they become too friendly with them."

"If they do as written above, G-d will grant them success in their efforts to raise and enhance His reverence. There is much more I can write them, but time is short."

Agudath Israel recently celebrated its over 70 years of existence. In celebrating its accomplishments, Agudath Israel published a documentary history of its past and present, repeatedly referring to the great Torah sages who founded and encouraged Agudath Israel. Many times they refer to Rav Elchonon Wasserman as the inspiration and influence of American youth. "Rab Elchonon's warm, selfless personality etched itself into scores of young American hearts. His influence was instrumental in the decisions of many to devote their lives to community service."

Invoking the great sages of the past creates an obligation to fulfill their decisive and learned exhortations. Has Agudath Israel done this?

Item: In this same celebratory volume Agudath Israel takes credit for the infamous Status Quo agreement regarding religious rights in the State of Israel. The article states... "Its adoption was a significant achievement and to this very day these principles are still observed to a lesser or greater degree."

Agudath Israel takes credit for a lesser or greater degree of observance of Shabbos in public life? Of observance of Kashus in government installations? Of marriage and divorce in accord with Torah law in turn governed by secular law? Of guarantees to respect the right to religious education as determined by a secular Ministry of Education?

Item: From the same book: "In 1965, Agudath Israel founded a committee of Orthodox lawyers... it developed into the National Jewish Commission on Law and Public Affairs... they have submitted amicus curiae briefs; for example, on behalf of a Seventh Day Adventist who was fired from his job because of his refusal to work on Sabbath, and for a Washington State College student who refused admission to law school on the basis of an affirmative action policy... although... not involving Jews."

Item: From the same book: "In the early days of the State of Israel, Agudath Israel decided that it should have a new dimension to its work: meeting the social service needs of the community. So Agudath Israel became a public agency of major proportions, serving the old and old, providing job counseling, and placement, serving Russian and immigrant, gaining unprecedented recognition and government aid advanced yeshivos, and winning new influence for Torah Jewry in legislative and executive departments, and international recognition as a decisive factor in the history of Israel."

Item: Support for Israel is a banner heard in the history book about Agudath Israel. "Prior to the Six Day War, Agudath Israel made use of its goodwill and influence in Washington to seek American guarantee for Israel's sovereignty just as it had guaranteed win Congressional support for Israel's defense needs and diplomatic position throughout the dangerous years of constant confrontation."

Item: From the same book: "A new project Project Cope, was begun in 1975 to deal with a problem of Jewish unemployment. Its purpose was to engage and train counselors to help unemployed and disadvantaged people develop their talents and find jobs. Typical was the Fresh Start Training Program for Displaced Homemakers...."

Item: From the same book: Concerned with the ever-deteriorating condition of many Jewish neighborhoods... Agudath Israel launched the Southern Brooklyn Community Organization... to stabilize and save Jewish neighborhoods... from continuous erosion.

In 1975 Agudath began sponsoring an annual November Breakfast Conference on Social Concerns to bring together grassroots Jewish community leaders, high level policy makers and administrators from all levels of government and Federal, state and city legislators for discussions of problems affecting communities.

What did Rabbi Wasserman say about their spheres of endeavor into social service and politics all will be lost."

shiva student, Moshe Sherer, who later credited the sage from Baranovsk as being one of the prime factors responsible for his decision to devote his life to the Jewish nation through the Agudath Israel movement."

From the New York Times and other publications: Rabbi Moshe Sherer, the Chairman of World Agudath Israel, sat on a commission to study the Holocaust. "This commission was created to conduct an objective inquiry into the actions of American Jewish groups and groups during the war years. The subject of this inquiry was to ascertain whether American Jewish leaders did anything for everything possible to save the Jews in Europe. 32 members sat on the commission representing a broad spectrum of Jewish groups—from Stella Adler, the 'Jewish' group, to 'Rabbi' Barbour Brinkner the Steins, to 'Rabbi' Wise Free Synagogue, to Labor Zionist representatives. With all these Jews sat Rabbi Sherer, as the official representative of the Torah party of the World, the spiritual heirs of Rav Elchonon Wasserman.

As the Chairman of World Agudath, as a man leading the movement founded to spread Torah solely to spread Torah, Rabbi Sherer did not fulfill the expressed policy of great gaon and tzaddik, Rav Elchonon Wasserman, who perished in the Holocaust! Typical was the Fresh Start Training Program for Displaced Homemakers...."

From its very founding, Agudath Israel's leaders were warned by the sages to stay away from politics or other fields that require cooperation with anti-religious elements. In his doctoral thesis, Agudath Israel in Poland, 18 16-39, An Orthodox Jewish response to the challenge of Modernity. Columbia V. 9791, Cershon Chaim Bacon writes the "explicit condemnation of any over-ly close relationship with Jewish secularist groups."

"Any compromise with secularist elements, even if the Orthodox did not have to alter their behavior in the slightest, might give the impression that they could some-

times follow the leadership of the secularists on other issues, that is they could 'follow Baal sometimes'."

"Separation from such legitimate elements cannot be called a lack of liberalism any more than can the quarantine of those with contagious disease."

Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman is quoted in this thesis stating that there must be a clear distinction between means and ends. The politicization of Orthodoxy was done only because it was a time of emergency. "The party was only a means for the preservation of Judaism, and was not an end in itself."

The Chofetz Chaim is quoted in this regard, "In the next world you will not be asked if you belonged to this or that group. A Torah Scroll will be placed in front of you and you will be asked—did you fulfill what is written here?"

In our own time, the 11 leading Sages of Agudath Israel expressly forbade orthodox rabbis' participation in mixed religious organizations and 'ecumenical' meetings. Under the leadership of Rabbi Moshe Sherer, careful distinction have been made between religious and non-religious collaborations in complete contradiction of the strictures of both Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman and the Chofetz Chaim.

Can Agudath Israel claim to be the spiritual heir of its founders when it is a "party like all other parties?"

Can Agudath Israel lay claim to Torah authority when it works alongside and cooperates with the Zionist enemies of the Torah?

Can Agudath Israel claim to represent Torah-true Jewry while engaging in activities antithetical to learning and spreading Torah?

Can Agudath Israel claim to be fulfilling its purpose of building education in Torah while it dissipates its energies and funds in building homes?

Can Agudath Israel claim to be living up to its founding goals of disseminating Torah while fighting for all sorts of achievements in the political, social, and economic arenas? Does Agudath Israel have the right to invoke Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman's memory to cloak its activities?

We think the correct answer to all of the above questions is "NO"! What do you think?

Full investigation planned

Americans vow to locate 'missing' Yemenite children

By LEV BERAPELD

Jerusalem Post reporter
Criticized that the authorities in Israel do not want to uncover the whereabouts of the missing Yemenite children, a group of American Jews of Yemenite origin has vowed to seek the truth. The group, which is one of the largest in the world, is the nucleus of the annual one and one-half day conference.

The group has invited several hundred officials to Israel in order to bring to light the truth about the disappearance of 500 Yemenite children in 1949-1950. The group is also seeking to bring to light the truth about the whereabouts of the children who were taken from their parents and socialized in the kibbutzim and other camps and transferred them to their families in the immigrant absorption centers and elsewhere.

An inquiry commission in the late 1960s eventually established that over 200 of the children had died, a least a score were simply unaccounted for.
Disatisfied with the commission's findings, the group is now seeking to bring to light the truth about the whereabouts of the children who were taken from their parents and socialized in the kibbutzim and other camps and transferred them to their families in the immigrant absorption centers and elsewhere.

A seven-man delegation from the P.O. headed by Rabbi Israel Grana, after a lengthy visit to the State of Israel, is expected to return to the United States in the next few days. The delegation is expected to bring back a report on the whereabouts of the children who were taken from their parents and socialized in the kibbutzim and other camps and transferred them to their families in the immigrant absorption centers and elsewhere.

Grana said that the objectives of the mission are to bring to light the truth about the whereabouts of the children who were taken from their parents and socialized in the kibbutzim and other camps and transferred them to their families in the immigrant absorption centers and elsewhere.

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Grana added that as soon as he returned to New York, he would begin a campaign to bring to light the truth about the whereabouts of the children who were taken from their parents and socialized in the kibbutzim and other camps and transferred them to their families in the immigrant absorption centers and elsewhere.

\$5,000 (Five Thousand Dollars) Reward

for the person who arranges an interview with any man or woman of the Yemenite "Disappeared"

More than 500 (five hundred) Yemenite Jewish children disappeared between 1949-1953 when tens of thousands of Yemenite Jews were brought to the "Promised Land".
Thought all were declared dead, none of the bodies were returned to the parents for burial.

None of the Yemenite parents believes his child is dead. The Torah teaches us that there is a Heavenly decree that a dead person be forgotten after 12 months and mourning ends then.
But a living person is not forgotten and mourning for him never ends.

These parents call their children "The Disappeared".
This took place not in Syria, nor in Iran; not in Iran, nor in Yemen. It took place in the state called Israel.

They believe that their children were kidnapped by Israeli government workers, with the connivance of the Israeli government, and given up or sold for adoption.
Corrupt officials, foreshadowed this tragedy. They stole the Yemenites' jewelry and antiques, even before they ever reached the Promised Land, while in Aden, waiting for the Silymsters to take them on the so-called "Operation Magic Carpet". Those who arrived were the lucky ones.

Thousands of these Jews, who were misled from hunger and neglect before ever making it to the air strip in Aden, and are buried along the hundreds of miles they had to walk.
And the worst was yet to come. Tens of thousands of these immigrants' children were forcibly torn from their religious roge. Youths whose innocence and pure religious sentiment was a people joy to behold were turned into criminals and street walkers.

The parents of "the disappeared" have finally received some media coverage, and for details of government investigations to date see Genocide in the Holy Land (576 pages)

now the Zionist establishment wants to divert attention from this kidnapping scandal being reported in the Israeli Press. The government is fabricating pernicious innuendoes, floods of distortions, and masses of unverified lies that Jews still remaining in "Arab Lands" are being persecuted.
Thank G-d it is not true.
Most Jews now residing in Islamic lands are much better off spiritually and materially than they would be if they left. And those who are presently in the Zionist state would have been better off materially as well if they had remained in their native countries.
The Nazi hunters have offered hundreds of thousands of dollars in bounty for bringing to light the names of Josef Mengele — man in their late 70's or early 80's — for the sake of bringing them to justice.
We are seeking young people in the prime of life. And our goal too is justice — the justice of granting aging parents their hope and prayer — to see their own children again before they die.
We cannot afford hundreds of thousands of dollars. Above however that incentive is necessary we are offering \$5,000.
It is time for Jews the world over to recognize that the Zionist policy of "normalizing the Jewish people" has led to the physical kidnapping of 500 Yemenite children whose parents mourning has never ended.
If you are in a position to help us defray the cost of this ad or have any knowledge of the whereabouts of these children please write to:
Neurei Karta of U.S.A.
C.P.O.B. 2143
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11202
In Europe to Neurei Karta
P.O.B. 351 London E5
or to Neurei Karta
P.O.B. 593 Jerusalem

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"He who leads one to sin is worse than he who kills him." Medrash Rabbah, Pinchas

GENOCIDE IN THE HOLY LAND

"The parents were killed by the Nazis, and under the hands of the Zionists the souls of these orphans are being killed. The Nazis severed the parents from their children in this world and the Zionists want to separate them in this world and the world to come. The Zionists are the most dangerous enemies of the Jewish people."

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