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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

JV

~~320975~~  
320975  
TR123-01

June 11, 1985

TO: BEN ELLIOTT/AGNES WALDRON ✓  
FROM: ROWENA ITCHON *RI*  
RE: A REQUEST BY BETH FLOM TO MEET WITH  
THE PRESIDENT DURING HIS TRIP TO NEW JERSEY

---

I spoke with Mrs. Barbara Flom, the mother of Beth Flom, the young girl who had written the telex to the President on his visit to Bitburg Cemetery. She mentioned that her daughter had received a letter from the President, and that her daughter had not meant to embarrass the White House by saying that her quote in the letter was taken out of context in the Bitburg Speech.

Mrs. Flom also told me that some of the local press might have received a copy or were read some parts of the President's letter to Beth Flom. Beth Flom had showed the letter to her teachers and Mrs. Flom believes that possibly one of her teachers had spoken to the press. The Floms did not show the letter to the press.

Mrs. Flom is now requesting that her daughter Beth meet with the President privately during his trip to New Jersey. She did not say what the nature of Beth's conversation with the President will be, only that her daughter would like the opportunity to meet with the President.

Flom Residence: (201) 536-5296  
Answering Service: (201) 536-6933

320975  
4612  
TR123-01  
SP951  
PR00502  
F600202

PK

May 22, 1985

Dear Beth:

I hope I haven't caused you any embarrassment, and if I have, I humbly apologize. You were more than kind and I'm truly grateful. Unfortunately, I didn't get to read your entire message until after my return from Europe which explains the out-of-context quote. One of our people, meaning to be helpful, forwarded the quote I used without reference to the rest of your telegram.

I want you to know that in truth I think I did what you intended -- laid the wreath in recognition of the peace that has existed for these 40 years and the friendship between former enemies. However, I have never suggested a forgive-and-forget attitude. We must never forget the Holocaust nor can I find it within me to forgive the actual perpetrators of that horror.

However, what I think we should all recognize is that modern day Germans do not ask us to forgive or forget. I was impressed by their maintenance of the camps so all can see. They bring their own school children every year to the camps and tell them the whole story and why they must resolve this shall never happen again.

It is true that I once said those buried at Bitburg were also victims of the hatred generated by the Nazi evil. But I included everyone who died because of that war; the victims of the bombings by both sides, etc. Never, however, did I equate them with those who endured the Holocaust horror.

**HANDWRITING FILE**

Revised letter



Beth, you spoke of a harsh reality you now face. Do you know that John Adams, one of our founding fathers, wrote "The Hebrews have done more to civilize men than any other nation."

I'm enclosing copies of the speeches I made that day, the first at Bergen-Belsen, the other at Bitburg.

Again, I thank you for your kind telegram. Please give my regards to your family and God bless you.

Sincerely,

**RONALD REAGAN**

Beth Flom  
55 Church Road  
Morganville, New Jersey 07751

Revised Letter

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 22, 1985

Dear Beth:

I hope I haven't caused you any embarrassment, and if I have, I humbly apologize. You were more than kind and I'm truly grateful. Unfortunately, I didn't get to read your entire message until after my return from Europe which explains the out-of-context quote. One of our people, meaning to be helpful, forwarded the quote I used without reference to the rest of your telegram.

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However, what I think we should all recognize is that modern day Germans do not ask us to forgive or forget. I was impressed by their maintenance of the camps so all can see. They bring their own school children every year to the camps and tell them the whole story and why they must resolve this shall never happen again.

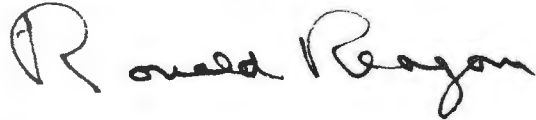
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Beth, you spoke of a harsh reality you now face. Do you know that John Adams, one of our founding fathers, wrote "The Hebrews have done more to civilize men than any other nation."

I'm enclosing copies of the speeches I made that day, the first at Bergen-Belsen, the other at Bitburg.

Again, I thank you for your kind telegram. Please give my regards to your family and God bless you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ronald Reagan". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the word "Sincerely,".

Beth Flom  
55 Church Road  
Morganville, New Jersey 07751

To Miss Beth Flom 55 Church Rd.  
Morganville N.J. 07751

Dear Miss Flom

I hope I haven't caused you any embarrassment and if I have I humbly apologize. You were more than kind ~~to send the message~~ and I'm truly grateful. Unfortunately

I didn't get to read your entire message until after my return from Europe which explains the out of context quote. One of our people meaning to be ~~helpful~~ helpful forwarded the quote I used without reference to

the rest of your letter. I want you to know that in truth I actually did what you suggested - laid the wreath in recognition of the peace ~~that has existed~~ <sup>that has existed</sup> for these 40 years and the friendship between former enemies. However I have never suggested ~~that~~ a forgive & forget attitude. We must never forget the Holocaust nor can I find it within me to forgive the actual perpetrators of that horror.

However what I think we should all recognize is that modern day Germans do not ask us to forgive or forget. I was impressed by their maintenance of the camps so all can see. They bring their own school children every year to the camps and tell them the whole story and why they must resolve this shall never happen again.

It is true that I once said those buried in at Bitburg were also victims of ~~the~~ <sup>the hatred</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>generated</sup> by the Nazi evil. But I included everyone who died because of that war; the victims of the bombings by both sides etc. <sup>HOWEVER</sup> Never and I equate, <sup>THEM</sup> ~~them~~ with ~~the~~ <sup>WHO</sup> those who endured the Holocaust horror.

Both you spoke of a harsh reality you now face. Do you know that John Adams one of our founding fathers said, "The Hebrews have contributed more to world civilization than any other people who ever lived."

I am enclosing copies of the speeches I made that day, the first at Bergen Belsen the other at Bitburg.

Again I thank you for your kind letter. Please give my regards to your family & God Bless you.

Sincerely  
R R



JOHN ADAMS QUOTE

"We may be reduced to hard necessity the two most powerful and enterprising nations that ever existed are now contending with us. The two nations to whom mankind are under mere obligations for the progress of science and civilization [show] to any others except the Hebrews. This consideration affects me more than the danger of either or both. I accepted the Hebrews, for in spite of Bollingbrook and Voltaire I will insist that the Hebrews have done more to civilize men than any other nation. If I were atheist and believed in blind eternal fate, I should still believe that fate had ordained the Jews to be the most essential instrument for civilizing the nations. If I were an atheist of the other sect who believe or pretend to believe that all is ordered by chance, I should believe that chance had ordered the Jews to preserve and propagate to all mankind the doctrine of a supreme intelligent, wise, almighty sovereign of the universe, which I believe to be the great essential principle of all morality and consequently of all civilization. I can't say that I love the Jews very much neither. Nor the French, nor the English, nor the Romans, nor the Greeks. We must love all nations as well as we can, but it is very hard to love most of them."

-- Source: Letter from John Adams  
to Mr. Van der Kemp, Feb. 16, 1809

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

May 23, 1985

NOTE TO KATHY OSBORNE

Kathy, unfortunately it has been necessary to re-do 3 letters the President signed personally:

- The letters to Reverend Miller and Mrs. Keller concerning the Treasury tax proposal required some technical changes re tax on life insurance values and cap on interest deductions on second homes; and
- the letter to Mr. Atkins concerning Gorbachev had a misspelling.

Also, the John Adams quote in the letter to Beth Flom, which the President dictated but had not yet signed, had to be corrected.

David L. Chew

*original*

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

**TO:** David Chew

**FROM:** **KATHY OSBORNE**  
**Personal Secretary**  
**to the President**

**DATE:** 5-17-85

For you to see before it  
is mailed out. RR  
personally wrote.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 17, 1985

Dear Beth:

I hope I haven't caused you any embarrassment, and if I have, I humbly apologize. You were more than kind and I'm truly grateful. Unfortunately, I didn't get to read your entire message until after my return from Europe which explains the out-of-context quote. One of our people, meaning to be helpful, forwarded the quote I used without reference to the rest of your telegram.

I want you to know that in truth I actually did what you suggested -- laid the wreath in recognition of the peace that has existed for these 40 years and the friendship between former enemies. However, I have never suggested a forgive-and-forget attitude. We must never forget the Holocaust nor can I find it within me to forgive the actual perpetrators of that horror.

However, what I think we should all recognize is that modern day Germans do not ask us to forgive or forget. I was impressed by their maintenance of the camps so all can see. They bring their own school children every year to the camps and tell them the whole story and why they must resolve this shall never happen again.

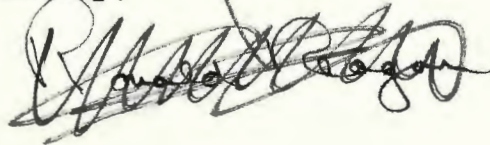
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Beth, you spoke of a harsh reality you now face. Do you know that John Adams one of our founding fathers said, "The Hebrews have contributed more to world civilization than any other people who ever lived."

I'm enclosing copies of the speeches I made that day, the first at Bergen-Belsen, the other at Bitburg.

Again, I thank you for your kind telegram. Please give my regards to your family and God bless you.

Sincerely,



Beth Flom  
55 Church Road  
Morganville, New Jersey 07751





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WHRC

JOHN ADAMS  
II

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II  
1784-1826

PAGE SMITH



GREENWOOD PRESS, PUBLISHERS  
WESTPORT, CONNECTICUT

the most complete and effective revelation of God, would triumph, reinforced by such elements of other religions as could prove themselves in the court of reason and common sense.

It was the Jews, even more than his beloved Greeks, Adams felt, who had done the most to civilize men. "If I were an atheist," he wrote Van der Kemp, "and believed in blind eternal fate, I should still believe that fate had ordained the Jews to be the most essential instrument for civilizing the nations." They had preserved and propagated "to all mankind the doctrine of a supreme, intelligent . . . almighty Sovereign of the Universe, which I believe to be the great essential principle of all morality and consequently of all civilization. I can't say that I love the Jews very much neither. Nor the French, nor the English, nor the Romans, nor the Greeks. We must love all nations as much as we can, but it is very hard to love most of them," he concluded.<sup>11</sup>

Adams was also much concerned with what might be called the sociology of religion—how religion worked to give order and purpose and dignity to man's common life. His forebears, for instance, had not been great men but they had been honest and upright ones. "What," he asked Rush rhetorically, "has preserved this race of Adamses in all their ramifications, in such numbers, health, peace, comfort, and mediocrity?" It seemed to him it was religion, "without which they would have been rakes, fops, sots, gamblers, starved with hunger, frozen with cold, scalped by Indians, etc., etc., etc., been melted away and disappeared." It was the rigor and discipline of Calvinism that had preserved them in a hostile environment, that had given form and meaning to their lives and to those of all New Englanders.<sup>12</sup>

In the area of politics, although Adams had formally renounced them and no longer read political theory, he did not cease to speculate about the political behavior of man. He was reconciled at last to party bitterness and faction. "In the struggles and competitions of fifty or sixty years, in times that tried men's hearts and brains and spinal marrow, it could not be otherwise," he wrote Rush.<sup>13</sup> Parties provided a means of releasing, in a more or less systematic way, the passions generated in a democratic society.

Adams professed to see a pattern in party politics. There would be an alternation. One party, representing the more conservative side, would hold power for some twelve years and then there would be "an entire change in the administration," with the more radical side taking over for a similar period. Jefferson and his supporters, he thought, might hold power for sixteen years; but then, inevitably, there must be a reaction. "Our government will be a game of leapfrog of factions, leaping over one another's back about once in twelve years according to my computation," he predicted.<sup>14</sup> He observed that a party was frequently never so near defeat as when it had carried everything before it. Parties, like people,

6. December 30, 1800, *Works*, IX, 575-76.
7. December 13 and 25, 1800, *Tudor Papers*, MHS.
8. JA/Stoddert, Quincy, March 31, 1801, *Works*, IX, 582-83.
9. Berlin, November 25, 1800, APm.
10. January 3, 1801, APm.
11. December 26, 1800, MHS, *Proceedings*, XX, 361.
12. February 4, 1801, *Works*, IX, 96-97.
13. December 17, 1800, APm.
14. TBA/AA, January 24, 1801, APm.
15. January 20, 1801, *Tudor Papers*, MHS.

## CHAPTER LXXXIII

1. APm.
2. Jefferson/Pierce Butler, August 11, 1800, Jefferson, *Writings*, ed. Ford, VII, 449-50.
3. To John Breckenridge, December 18, 1800, Jefferson, *Writings*, ed. Ford, VII, 468-69.
4. Hindman/McHenry, January 17, 1801, McHenry, *Correspondence*, 489-90.
5. Burr/Smith, December 16, 1800, quoted, Beveridge, *Marshall*, II, 539.
6. January 15, 1801, *New Letters*, 262-64.
7. February 3, 1801, *New Letters*, 265-66.
8. February 3, 1801, APm.
9. AA/JA, February 13, 1801, APm.
10. AA/JA, February 21, 1801, APm.
11. January 26, 1801, *Works*, IX, 93-94.
12. February 4, 1801, *Works*, IX, 96.

## CHAPTER LXXXIV

1. Stony Field, March 24, 1801, APm.
2. JA/Benjamin Stoddert, March 21, 1801, APm.
3. JA/Mercy Otis Warren, July 20, 1807, APm.
4. April 16, 1801, APm.
5. September 9, 1801, APm.
6. May 23, 1801, APm.
7. May 8, 1801, APm.
8. May 30, 1801, APm.
9. May 31, 1801, APm.
10. September 15, 1801, APm.
11. July 13, 1801, APm.
12. August 20, 1801, APm.
13. JA/David Sewall, January 12, 1803, APm.
14. To Van der Kemp, March 3, 1804, APm.

15. November 5, 1804, APm.
16. "The Adventures of a Nobody," written July 1840 and later, APm.
17. November 16, 1804, APm.
18. November 6 and 22, December 7, 1804, APm.

## CHAPTER LXXXV

1. February 27, 1805, APm.
2. January 22, 1817, APm.
3. June 5, 1812, APm.
4. APm, reel 188.
5. APm, reel 188.
6. To Van der Kemp, August 23, 1806, APm.
7. JA/Rush, September, July 23, 1806; February 2, 1807, APm.
8. JA/Rush, January 21, 1810, APm.
9. November 4, 1815, APm.
10. JA/JQA, November 15, 1816, APm.
11. JA/Van der Kemp, February 18, 1809, APm.
12. July 12, 1812, APm.
13. January 9, 1812, APm.
14. February 5, 1805, APm.
15. JA/Rush, May 1812, APm.
16. JA/Rush, August 1, 1812, APm.
17. JA/Rush, October 22, 1812, APm.
18. To Waterhouse, December 25, 1817, APm.
19. August 1, 1812, APm.
20. To Rush, June 12, 1812, APm.
21. December 19, 1815, APm.
22. JA/Madison, June 17, 1817, APm.
23. JA/Oliver Wolcott, November 17, 1823, APm.
24. To Noah Webster, February 6, 1816, APm.
25. To Judge Dawes, February 3, 1818, APm.
26. December 15, 1815, APm.
27. To Van der Kemp, April 20, 1812, APm.

## CHAPTER LXXXVI

1. February 6, 1805, APm.
2. Philadelphia, February 19, 1805, *Letters of Benjamin Rush*, II, 890.
3. September 16, 1810, APm.
4. July 24, 1805, APm.
5. April 15, 1808, APm.
6. February 25, 1808, APm.
7. JA/Rush, February 25, 1808, APm.
8. January 25, 1806, APm.
9. December 27, 1810, APm.
10. July 3, 1812, APm.
11. September 16, 1810, APm.

## Student letter-writer has Bitburg P.S. for Reagan

By TONY BURTON

Beth Flom, the 13-year-old Jewish girl quoted by President Reagan as supporting his controversial visit to the Bitburg cemetery in Germany, says she opposed the visit and that her words had been taken out of context.

Beth, of Marlboro Township, N.J., said, "I think the way he used it was not right. He used it out of context, without making it clear that I disagreed with him going to the cemetery. I'm disappointed in that."

But she added Tuesday, "I'm extremely happy that he mentioned my letter and I don't think that the way he used it was intentional on the President's part."

Reagan mentioned the telex from Beth during his speech Sunday after the wreath-laying at the cemetery that holds the bodies of 49 SS men.

**BETH'S FATHER**, Robert, a financial consultant and a Reagan supporter, said she was particularly concerned with the Holocaust because he had a step-brother and step-sister who had been in a Nazi concentration camp in Poland during the war. They survived.

In the letter to Reagan on April 21, Beth made it clear she disapproved of the Bitburg ceremony. She suggested that if he went through with it, the wreath should be laid "in honor of the future of Germany"—not the soldiers buried there.

During his Bitburg speech, Reagan said: "One of the many who wrote me about this visit was a young woman who had recently been bat mitzvahed. She urged me to lay the wreath at Bitburg cemetery in honor of the future of Germany, and that is what



Beth Flom says President quoted her letter out of context.

we have done."

"He gave people the impression that she approved of the visit," Flom said. "She didn't."

**BETH**, AN eighth-grader, wrote the letter after her social studies class discussed the controversy. Beth wrote in part: "Although I understand your position, I cannot bring myself to agree with your solution. I don't feel it will avoid more conflict with the survivors of concentration camps and the Jewish organizations who also disagree with your decision.

"I have read that you have tried to overcome the protests by also visiting a concentration camp. When that didn't still the protests, you then said you would lay the wreath in a cemetery in honor of the innocent Germans. However... How do you know which soldiers are innocent... (It) has still left many people unsatisfied."





5/22  
Anne,  
pls. re-do +  
return asap  
the  
sure

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

May 17, 1985

Dear Beth:

I hope I haven't caused you any embarrassment, and if I have, I humbly apologize. You were more than kind and I'm truly grateful. Unfortunately, I didn't get to read your entire message until after my return from Europe which explains the out-of-context quote. One of our people, meaning to be helpful, forwarded the quote I used without reference to the rest of your telegram.

I want you to <sup>intended</sup> know that in truth I actually <sup>I think I did</sup> did what you ~~suggested~~ -- laid the wreath in recognition of the peace that has existed for these 40 years and the friendship between former enemies. However, I have never suggested a forgive-and-forget attitude. We must never forget the Holocaust nor can I find it within me to forgive the actual perpetrators of that horror.

However, what I think we should all recognize is that modern day Germans do not ask us to forgive or forget. I was impressed by their maintenance of the camps so all can see. They bring their own school children every year to the camps and tell them the whole story and why they must resolve this shall never happen again.

It is true that I once said those buried at Bitburg were also victims of the hatred generated by the Nazi evil. But I included everyone who died because of that war; the victims of the bombings by both sides, etc. Never, however, did I equate them with those who endured the Holocaust horror.

Beth, you spoke of a harsh reality you now face. Do you know that John Adams, one of our founding fathers, <sup>wrote</sup> ~~said, "The Hebrews have contributed more to world civilization than any other people who ever lived."~~

I'm enclosing copies of the speeches I made that day, the first at Bergen-Belsen, the other at Bitburg.

Again, I thank you for your kind telegram. Please give my regards to your family and God bless you.

Sincerely,

Beth Flom  
55 Church Road  
Morganville, New Jersey 07751

"the Hebrews have  
done more to civilize men  
than any other nation."

1-003012A111 04/21/85

ICS IPMWGWD WSH

00481 04-21 1136A EST

PMS WHITEHOUSE DC

1-002985B111-001 04/21/85

ICS IPMWGWD WSH

RETRIEVAL REPLY: 1-002035I111 TWX ESL62838120

PMS PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN

WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON DC 20020

ATTN: PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN

FROM: BETH FLOM, AGE 13

RE: TRIP TO GERMANY, SUGGESTION

5 APR 21 All: 59

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

AFTER RECENTLY BECOMING A BAT-MITZVAH, I HAVE SUDDENLY BEEN FACED WITH THE HARSH REALITIES OF BEING A JEW. I HAVE REALIZED AND COME TO GRIPS WITH THE FACT THAT THIS IS A NON-JEWISH WORLD. THIS HAS PRIMARILY FOCUSED MANY OF MY RELIGIOUS INTERESTS ON THE HOLOCAUST.

THE OTHER DAY, DURING A DISCUSSION IN MY SOCIAL STUDIES CLASS, I BROUGHT UP WHAT I THOUGHT WAS AN INTERESTING POINT REGARDING YOUR FORTH COMING TRIP TO GERMANY. I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE IT WITH YOU, AS A POSSIBLE SOLUTION TO THE CONTROVERSY THAT HAS ARISEN.

ALTHOUGH I UNDERSTAND YOUR POSITION, I CANNOT BRING MYSELF TO AGREE WITH YOUR SOLUTION. I DON'T FEEL IT WILL AVOID MORE



CONFLICT WITH THE SURVIVORS OF CONCENTRATION CAMPS AND THE JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS WHO ALSO DISAGREE WITH YOUR DECISION. I HAVE READ THAT YOU HAVE TRIED TO OVERCOME THE PROTESTS BY ALSO VISITING A CONCENTRATION CAMP. WHEN THAT DID NOT STILL THE PROTESTS, YOU THEN SAID YOU WOULD LAY THE WREATH IN THE CEMETERY IN HONOR OF THE INNOCENT GERMANS. HOWEVER, THE PEOPLE BURIED THERE ARE UNKNOWN SOLDIERS. HOW DO YOU KNOW WHICH SOLDIERS WERE INNOCENT AND WHICH WERE S.S. MEMBERS? ALTHOUGH IT WAS VERY CONSIDERATE OF YOU, IT HAS STILL LEFT MANY PEOPLE UNSATISFIED.

SINCE YOUR OTHER APPROACHES WERE UNSUCCESSFUL, MIGHT I RESPECTFULLY SUGGEST THAT IT WOULD BE FITTING THAT YOU LAY THE WREATH IN HONOR OF THE FUTURE OF GERMANY. THIS WILL HELP TO PLACE THE PAST BEHIND THEM AND WILL ALLOW GERMANY TO DEAL WITH THE BITTER MEMORIES OF THE DESTRUCTION OF THEIR COUNTRY. ON THE OTHER HAND,

IT WILL NOT DEGRADE THE FEELINGS OF ALL THOSE JEWS WHO SUFFERED THROUGH THE MANY YEARS OF TORTURE. WE MUST ALL REMEMBER SO THAT IT WILL NEVER OCCUR AGAIN.

I HOPE THAT YOU AGREE WITH MY SOLUTION AND ARE ABLE TO PUT IT TO GOOD USE. I FEEL IT WILL SATISFY ALL WHO ARE IN DISAGREEMENT WITH YOU, AS WELL AS THOSE WHO ARE NOT.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.

SINCERELY,

BETH FLOM

55 CHURCH ROAD

MORGANVILLE, NEW JERSEY 07751

TELEX 314 874 INT CPA (ROBERT I. FLOM, CPA)

1138 EST

1144 EST



To Beth Flom - With every good  
wish, my appreciation & Very Best Regards,  
Ronald Reagan

sincerely,

/s/ Beth Flom

June 18, 1985

President Ronald Reagan  
The White House  
Washington, D.C.

AUH

8/10

Dear Mr. President:

At this time I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your letter of apology. I was quite excited when I received it. This then caused me to sit and think. In what other country would a citizen like myself be able to first, be quoted by the President of their country then, have him apologize to them personally? In most cases, a letter sent by a fourteen year old girl is just overlooked, but I was an exception and consequently I am extremely honored.

In addition to being quoted, receiving your letter was just as much of a thrill. For the President of the United States to apologize to me was not necessary, but you took the time to. This means a great deal to me and I don't think your thoughtfulness will ever be forgotten.

Although your letter to me was publically released, I feel I should inform you that I did not provoke the attention. I am still uncertain as to how the press got hold of the letter, but I was quite upset when I was notified. I just feel it is my place to tell you that, in my opinion, your letter to me should have been kept confidential. I understand through the newspapers that you feel the same way. In fact, no comment regarding your letter was ever made by my family or myself.

In conclusion, I would once again like to thank you for your time and caring. It is very much appreciated.

Sincerely,

/s/ Beth Flom



June 18, 1985

President Ronald Reagan  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

At this time I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your letter of apology. I was quite excited when I received it. This then caused me to sit and think. In what other country would a citizen like myself be able to first, be quoted by the president of their country then, have him apologize to them personally? In most cases, a letter sent by a fourteen year old girl is just overlooked, but I was an exception and consequently I am extremely honored.

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In conclusion, I would once again like to thank you for your time and caring. It is very much appreciated.

Sincerely,  
Beth Flom  
Beth Flom



The Floms  
55 Church Road  
Morganville, New Jersey 07751

July 10, 1985

Ms. Roewena Itchon  
Speech Writer's Research Office  
Room 100  
Executive Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Ms. Itchon:

I am writing with regard to our previous conversations relative to my daughter Beth's telex to the President concerning Bitburg.

I have enclosed a note which Beth has written to President Reagan thanking him for his personal attention and response. It was written some time ago; however, we delayed sending it because of the hostage situation in Lebanon, and all of the associated demands that placed on the White House.

Beth is quite anxious to have the President know how proud and touched she was to receive his attention. She would like to be certain that he actually sees her note. Might we impose upon you to use the proper channels so that Beth's note will reach the President.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and attention.

Sincerely,

*Barbara Flom*

Barbara Flom

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TR123-01  
1-6013-06  
PR00502

May 23, 1985

Dear General:

Thank you very much for your letter and the enclosed document. I'm very pleased to have the latter and appreciate your generous words in the former.

May I also say once again how deeply grateful we all are for your willingness to be with us at Bitburg and how greatly you honored us with your presence.

Nancy sends her very best, and from both of us, to Mrs. Ridgway our thanks and regard.

Sincerely,  
RONALD REAGAN

General M. B. Ridgway, USA, Ret.  
918 Waldheim Road West  
Fox Chapel  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15215

RR:AVH:NM:pps

RR Dictation (Sample)

HANDWRITING FILE

850528

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

May 23, 1985

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Sincerely,

General M. B. Ridgway, USA, Ret.  
918 Waldheim Road West  
Fox Chapel  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15215



To General M.B. Ridgway 918 Waldheim Rd. W.,  
Fox Chapel - Pittsburgh Pa.

15215

Dear General

Thank you very much for your letter and the enclosed document. I'm very pleased to have the letter and appreciate your generous words in the former.

May I also say once again how deeply grateful we all are for your willingness to come to Bitburg and how greatly you honored us with your presence.

Nancy sends her very best and from both of us to Mrs. Ridgway our thanks & regard.

Sincerely  
RR

GENERAL M. B. RIDGWAY  
918 WALDHEIM ROAD W., FOX CHAPEL  
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA 15215

13 May 85.

Dear Mr. President,

Through the courtesy of Mrs. Reagn, here is the document I cited.

It has my respectful answers to the two major criticisms of the present relations between the President and the JCS:

minimizing the time for reaching your decisions in crucial situations, and

ensuring that you have the views thereon of your land, sea, and air military advisors, all of them.

May God's richest blessings be with you and Mrs. Reagan in your continuing leadership of our Nation with wisdom, integrity, and high courage. It was the greatest honor to stand by you at BITBURG.

With great admiration and highest respect,

Sincerely,



M. B. Ridgway  
General, U.S. Army,  
Retired.

Encl.

The President

The White House

Washington, D.C.

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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

TR

May 14, 1985



MEMORANDUM FOR PATRICK BUCHANAN

FROM: Marshall Breger (MB)

The enclosed summary from The Jerusalem Post International addition of May 11, 1985 may interest you.

Enclosure





No. 1,279 • WEEK ENDING MAY 11, 1985 • IYAR 20, 5745 • SHABAN 20, 1405

## Reagan at Bergen-Belsen speaks of 'the incomprehensible horror of the Holocaust'

# The Bitburg furore: Will it fade away?

**Jerusalem Post Staff and Agencies**

Despite the controversy aroused by President Reagan's wreath-laying ceremony at the Bitburg military cemetery, where 49 SS troops are buried, the White House liaison to the Jewish community of the U.S., Dr. Marshall Breger, insisted this week that "the negative fallout" would not last. Reagan's record of sensitivity on the Holocaust and support for Israel would prove more significant than Bitburg, he said.

At the same time some 250 veterans of the Waffen SS Death's Head Division, gathering for a reunion in West Germany, lauded the president's decision to go ahead with the ceremony despite the protests. "We were soldiers like all the soldiers in the war and I think that's what the president is trying to say," said SS veteran Ger Hofer.

Reagan went to Germany as a gesture of reconciliation on the 40th anniversary of the defeat of the Hitler regime. Sources in the small Jewish community in West Germany said they feared an increase in anti-Semitism as a result of the affair. They said the

media were stressing the Jewish role in the protests over the ceremony.

In Israel, Prime Minister Peres added his voice to those criticising Reagan's decision, while he emphasized that the president "remained a friend."

Reagan's visit to Bitburg was twice cut down: once from half an hour to 15 minutes and then finally to seven minutes. Some 800 Jewish demonstrators from the U.S., Israel, Britain and European countries tried to demonstrate against the president; but a barrier of police and security forces prevented them from approaching too near.

Deborah Halpern of New York told Reuters: "I am here to protest at a president who is upsetting Jews and disgracing the American people." Sarah Kastel, 48, from France, said: "I cannot accept that Reagan has come to honour the people who killed my parents."

Earlier, at the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, there were about 200 protesters chanting slogans against Reagan. They were kept well away from the presidential party behind a police roadblock. Anti-Nazi campaigners Serge and Beate

Klarsfeld were among the protesters. Klarsfeld told reporters that his wife Beate, who had tried to lie down in the road, had been carried kicking and struggling to a police van.

At Bergen-Belsen, speaking with emotion, Reagan said that mankind must never again be plunged into "the incomprehensible horror of the Holocaust." But he said that out of the ashes and darkness of Nazi evil, hope and promise will rise.

"We are here today to confirm that the horror cannot outcast the hope, and even out of the worst of all things, the best may come forth."

Reagan's visit to the concentration camp, where more than 100,000 people, mostly Jews, were murdered by the Nazis, was preceded by scenes of tension and anguish when 11 American Jews, who held Sabbath services in the Bergen-Belsen documentation centre, refused to leave in advance of the Reagan visit. The group sang in Hebrew and danced in a circle beneath huge photographs of naked emaciated concentration camp victims.

Eleven police officers discarded their sidearms and waited respect-

fully for the Jewish ceremony to end. They then asked the party to leave, which it did quietly. New York Rabbi Abraham Weiss accepted the hand offered by a young, bearded police officer.

West German newsmen said the handshake between the rabbi and the policemen was the friendliest scene they had ever seen in their years of covering major police actions.

The police offered the Jewish group the use of a bus and invited them to return to Bergen-Belsen the following day, after the presidential visit was over.

Reagan, accompanied by his wife Nancy, toured the Bergen-Belsen documentation centre and travelled the grounds of the camp in a limousine, flanked by hundreds of security men. They stopped and paid their tribute at a Jewish memorial, bearing Hebrew inscriptions and a Magen David.

Later, Reagan and Chancellor Kohl flew across Germany to an American Air Force base and from there by motorcade to the Bitburg cemetery. There they placed a large wreath in front of a monument.

Reagan was in the cemetery about seven and a half minutes. Several thousand persons lined the streets as the motorcade returned to the base. Some of the crowd jeered, chanted and whistled, others cheered as the presidential motorcade sped by.

"It's hard to believe" proclaimed one large banner in English near the path of the presidential motorcade.

About 20 minutes before Reagan passed through the centre of the town a group of 25 German police equipped with riot gear briefly charged into about 200 Jewish students and their supporters. The scuffle broke up after about five minutes and no arrests were reported. The members of the Jewish group wore yellow stars in imitation of the identifying badges Jews were forced to wear during the Nazi persecution.

Defending the president, Jewish adviser Marshall Breger said in Washington: "This is the president who has moved conceptually forward the U.S.-Israeli relationship to one of strategic cooperation -- making Israel part of the American geopol-

(Continued on page 2)

## U.S. promise on extra aid



(Continued from page 1.)

A delegation of West German mayors visiting Israel were divided over the Reagan visit, with some being in favour of the Bitburg ceremony and some against; but in New York Dr. Alois Mertes, minister of state in the West German Foreign Ministry, said that the strong Jewish reaction to the visit had contributed to a rise in anti-Semitism. He said he had been fighting prejudice for years and he did not want anyone - Jews or non-Jews - "to give food to this prejudice."

Before Reagan left for his visit the House of Representatives voted by 390 to 26 urging him to call off his plans to visit Bitburg and lay a wreath there.

Israel's Deputy Foreign Minister Ronnie Milo took part in a protest outside the West German Embassy in Tel Aviv last week.

Israel TV said Milo's participation in a public demonstration outside a foreign embassy was unprecedented in Israeli diplomatic history.

In Tel Aviv, a demonstration outside the U.S. Embassy organized by the leftwing Mapam party was timed to coincide with the visit by Reagan to the Bitburg cemetery. Mapam leader Victor Shemtov handed a protest letter to an embassy staffer. He afterwards criticized Reagan's statement that the soldiers buried in Bitburg were "also victims of Nazism."

U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz is this week placing a wreath at a new monument at Yad Vashem, the Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem, honouring the 1,500,000 Jews who fought in the Allied Forces in World War II and the partisans who fought in the ghettos and forests.

Shultz came to Israel for ceremonies marking the fortieth anniversary of the end of the war, and he will be holding talks with Prime Minister Peres and other leaders. Also on the secretary's schedule is a ceremony honouring the "Righteous of the Nations," Christians and others who helped Jews during the Holocaust, at risk to their own lives.

Both these ceremonies are part of a week of events, marking the defeat of Nazism, organized by the Israel Government, Yad Vashem, the World Zionist Organization and several partisans' organizations from Israel and abroad. Among the events: a Western Wall ceremony, a mass rally at the Yad Eliahu stadium, a reception at the presidential residence in Jerusalem, symposia and visits to sites of different memorials. (Honouring Evil page 12)

(Compiled from reports by Wolf Blitzer in Washington, Wladimir Struminski in Bonn, Walter Ruby in New York, and Post staff in Israel.)

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## reinforced



war inquiry  
behaviour is also  
(Karen Benzian)

definitely" to protest against the Moslem offensive in the south; and Nabih Berri, leader of the Shi'ite Amal, and Druse leader Walid Jumblatt also stayed away "because of the security situation."

In contrast to Sidon, where alleged collaborators with Israel were shot in street battles, the Amal Shi'ite militia, which took over Tyre without a fight, arrested 30 alleged collaborators whom they said would be put on trial.

Despite the plight of the Christian refugees, Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin was adamant that the IDF would only defend the security zone. Jezzine, he stressed, was outside the zone, "but if a village in the security zone, or an SLA position is attacked, we will intervene with all our might to evict the attackers," he said.

Prime Minister Peres said that "humanitarian aid" would be extended to the Christian refugees, "but we have no intention of committing ourselves militarily or interfering politically."

With the final withdrawal from Lebanon imminent, there were renewed demands for an official commission of inquiry into the Lebanon war. As Likud ministers warned that such an inquiry would destroy the national unity government, and Peres too made his opposition to an inquiry clear, Communications Minister Amnon Rubinstein filed a formal request for a cabinet discussion on the subject.

Minister without Portfolio Ezer Weizman and Health Minister Mordechai Gur said they favoured a probe and the opposition Mapam and Citizens Rights Movement were polling Knesset members to set up an inquiry.

On the Likud side Industry and Trade Minister Ariel Sharon, who, as defence minister during the war is the prime target for an inquiry, repeated that he was in favour, provided it also included the "behaviour of the opposition during the war." But Deputy Premier Yitzhak Navon and Energy Minister Moshe Shahal both said an inquiry was unlikely.

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## y invest in Haifa

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The Washington Times Pentagon correspondent also said that the hulls for the three proposed Israeli submarines "will be built in another country, probably West Germany, and finished in Israel."

Israel, it said, would "install systems such as sonar and fire-

tical military analysis. This is the president who has moved directly to assist the Israeli economy by shifting from a grant/loan mix to all grants in foreign aid."

Breger cited, in this context, Secretary of State George Shultz's pledge that Israel will not have a liquidity crisis. "This is the president who has arranged for a supplemental \$1.5 billion for Israel without any foreign policy strings or foreign policy linkage. This is a president who even, when he disagreed with Israel on a matter like the change in location of the U.S. embassy in Israel, has never allowed that disagreement to affect his support for significant matters, like foreign aid or strategic cooperation."

In short, Breger believes that Reagan's overall support for Israel will eventually overshadow his decision to visit Bitburg. The Jewish community, he said, will realize this when the dust settles and tempers cool down. He insisted that the Jewish leadership was already coming to recognize this even if the rank and file were still very upset.

"This is a president who has shown fidelity to Israel even when there has been disagreement," he said.

Breger went on to cite Reagan's support for Soviet Jewry and other matters of specific Jewish concern. "So I think that time will give us some context, and that context will show that the president has been strongly concerned about and strongly committed to Israel and to the Jewish people. And the president has made clear his views on the Holocaust."

In Israel, Prime Minister Peres told high school children that "when a friend makes a mistake, the friend remains a friend, but the mistake remains a mistake." Israel, said Peres, was not opposed to reconciliation, but this does not mean forgetting or blurring the past.

President Herzog described the visit as "a very sad affair" and attributed it to bad advice. Deputy Premier David Levy said that the president's behaviour "does not befit a great leader."

In Tel Aviv the World Conference of Partisans, Jewish Fighters and Concentration Camp inmates called on Reagan not to enter Bergen Belsen, if he visited Bitburg the same day.

In the U.S., Howard Friedman, president of the American Jewish Committee, condemned the president's statement that the German soldiers buried in Bitburg were as much the victims of Nazism as the inmates of concentration camps.



The President has seen \_\_\_\_\_

*Mr. Roper* **TR**

May 6, 1985

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Dear Mr. President:

Congratulations on standing by your commitments in Germany. You were superb. History will applaud you in time; most Americans do already.

Love to Nancy and best to you.

As ever,

*Chuck*

(Lydia says the same thing)

Dictated in London  
Typed in Los Angeles

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PROOF 3

May 28, 1985

Dear Bill:

Following our phone conversation, I received your Bitburg column which appeared in the New York Daily News May 9th. So now another thank-you is in order.

Thank you very much, my friend, for your kind and, as always, eloquent and well-chosen words. I especially loved your "tag line," the final paragraph about being owed an apology I'll never get.

Sincerely,

RON

Mr. William F. Buckley, Jr.  
150 East 35th Street  
New York, New York 10016

P.S. Keep this up and I may transfer you from Kabul to Bermuda.

HANDWRITING FILE

RR:AVH:SEV:pps  
RR Dictation

850529

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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New York, New York 10016

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To Wm. F. Buckley Jr. (We have his address)

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Sincerely Ron

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May 28, 1985

Your Excellency:

Thanks to a member of my staff, Ed Hickey, I was privileged to read your generous words about me and my visit to Bitburg as they appeared in the press. There are no words to express my gratitude. They were especially appreciated because of your own war-time service.

In spite of all the press furor, I felt from the beginning that the trip was the morally right thing to do. And now having done it, I'm even more convinced. One heartwarming result has been the responses I've received from veterans of World War II, some of whom had been POWs. All were supportive.

My heartfelt thanks again.

Sincerely,  
RONALD REAGAN

The Most Reverend Philip M. Hannan  
Archbishop of New Orleans  
7887 Walmsley Avenue  
New Orleans, Louisiana 70125

RR:AVH:SEV:pps

RR Dictation

**HANDWRITING FILE**

850529

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Archbishop of New Orleans  
7887 Walmsley Avenue  
New Orleans, Louisiana 70125

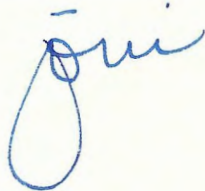
RR

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Kathy

the following is the address you asked  
about:

His Excellency The Most Reverend  
Philip M. Hannan  
Archbishop of New Orleans  
7887 Walmsley Avenue  
New Orleans, Louisiana 70125



70 His Excellency The Most ~~Reverend~~<sup>Rev.</sup> Philip M. Hannan —  
Archbishop of New Orleans - 7887 Walmsley Ave.  
New Orleans La. 70125

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My heartfelt Thanks again.

Sincerely RR

1 1

Name	Date
Tami Stevens	6-7-85
Lynn C. Kato	4-28-86