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United States Holocaust Memorial Council

INTERNATIONAL LIBERATORS CONFERENCE

The first International Liberators Conference, sponsored by the United States Holocaust Memorial Council, was held October 26-28, 1981 at the Department of State in Washington, D.C.

This unique conference was the first to honor members of the Allied troops involved in the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps in the spring of 1945. Official delegations from the United States, Belgium, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Yugoslavia, the United Kingdom, the U.S.S.R. as well as the World War II Jewish Brigade along with representative liberators from across the United States participated in this historical event.

The opening ceremony included addresses by the Secretary of State, the Council's Chairman, the Honorable Elie Wiesel, and ranking dignitaries from Great Britian, France, and the U.S.S.R. At the concluding ceremony a scroll and special medal, struck for this occasion, were presented to each of the official delegations to commemorate its country's role in the liberation.

Plenary sessions on October 27 and 28 included eyewitness accounts of the liberation by high-ranking military personnel, doctors, nurses, chaplains, survivors, war correspondents and members of war-crimes tribunals.

A commemorative pamphlet of the Conference, containing a complete schedule of events of the conference, a brief history of the liberation of the concentration camps, maps, photographs and quotations from liberators, was distributed to the participants. Also, the entire conference and many oral histories were video-taped and will become a permanent part of the museum.



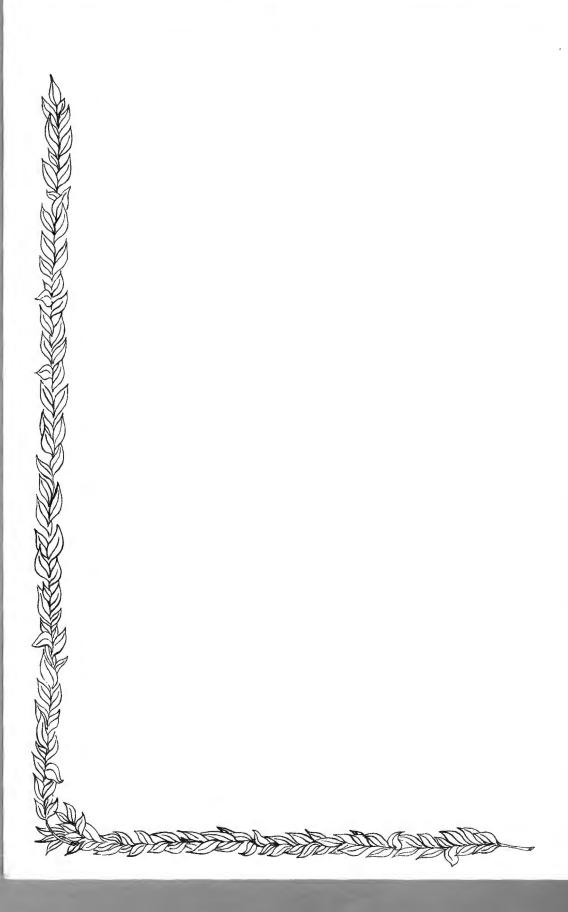
United States Department of State Washington, D.C. October 26–28, 1981

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 29, 1981

I am proud to join in tribute to those who liberated the Nazi concentration camps and are attending the International Conference of the Liberators sponsored by the United States Holocaust Memorial Council.

This Conference is the first to honor members of the Allied troops who liberated the death and slave labor camps in the Spring of 1945. By joining with delegations from other allied nations, our country will help to put into clearer focus our memories of the overwhelming tragedy and unspeakable evil the liberators discovered.

Men of goodwill must never passively accept a great. wrong but, instead, must follow the lead of those who actively contributed to stopping the murder, degradation, and tyranny of the camps as the liberators did. They are to be commended for their courage and determination in helping bring to an end the Third Reich's program of atrocities.

By increasing public awareness of the Holocaust, this Conference serves as a stark reminder to the world's conscience of what transpired during that period of history and will strengthen our resolve to prevent mankind from sinking into that ultimate horror again.

In this notable and most worthy event, you have my every wish for a productive and enlightening Conference and your continued progress in this important work.

Sincerely,

Ronald Rengon



La Maison Blanche

Le 29 septembre 1981

Je suis fier de participer à l'hommage rendu à ceux qui ont libéré les camps de concentration nazis et qui prennent part à la Réunion internationale des libérateurs organisée par le Conseil des Etats-Unis pour la remémoration de l'holocauste.

Cette réunion est la première à honorer les membres des forces alliées qui, au printemps de 1945, ont libéré les camps de la mort et de l'esclavage. En se joignant aux délégations d'autres nations alliées, notre pays aidera à préciser nos souvenirs de la tragédie épouvantable et de la cruauté innommable que les libérateurs ont découvertes.

Les hommes de bonne volonté ne doivent jamais accepter passivement une grave injustice. Ils doivent, au contraire, à l'instar des libérateurs, aider activement à mettre fin au meurtre, à l'avilissement et à la tyrannie des camps. Il faut louer ces libérateurs du courage et de la détermination dont ils ont fait preuve en aidant à faire cesser les atrocités du Troisième Reich.

En donnant au public une conscience plus profonde de l'holocauste, cette réunion rappelle des plus vivement au monde ce qui s'est passé durant cette période de l'histoire et renforcera notre ferme décision d'empêcher que la genre humain ne retombe dans cette horreur sans égale.

Je saisis l'occasion de cet événement notable et méritoire pour souhaiter sincèrement que votre réunion soit productive et édifiante et que vous continuilez à faire progresser cette tâche importante.

Ronald Reagon

БЕЛЫЙ ДОМ Вашингтон

29 сентября 1981 г.

С чувством гордости и я отдаю должное тем, кто освободил гитлеровские концентрационные лагеря и кто участвует в Международной конференции освободителей, организованной Американским Советом по сооружению памятника гекатомбе.

Настоящая конференция — первая, чествующая те союзные войска, которые весной 1945 года освободили лагеря смерти и рабского труда. Вместе с делегациями других союзных гочударств, нашей стране удастся яснее изложить наши воспоминания о той бесподобной трагедии и том невообразимом эле, которые застали освободители.

Люди доброй воли никогда не должны бездейственно сживаться со злом. Напротив, они должны следовать тем, кто деятельно помогал прекратить убийства, унижение и насилие лагерей, как это сделали освободители. Честь и слава им за то мужество и ту целеустремленность, с которыми они помогли положить конец программе зверств третьего рейха.

Привлекая общественное внимание к гекатомбе, настоящая конференция служит грозным напоминанием мировой совести о свершившемся в тот период истории и укрепит нашу решимость не допустить новое падение человечества в те бездны неповторимого ужаса.

В этом знаменательном и важном начинании примите мои наилучшие пожелания о плодотворной и осведомляющей конференции ровно как и о дальнейших успехах в этом важном деле.

С уважением

Ronald Reagon

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October 1981

To the Liberators of the Camps:

On behalf of my friends, the survivors of the ghettos and death camps, and on behalf of the entire Council, I bid you a heartfelt welcome.

You were the first free men to discover our world of terror. You will never forget what you have seen, just as we shall never forget the anguish, horror, outrage, and deep compassion expressed by your every look and gesture.

Did you know, could you imagine, what your coming meant to us? Life, of course, but something more: the dawn of hope, the beginning of a belief that waiting is not always in vain and that, despite the loneliness of the survivors, and despite the dead lying under the ashes, human solidarity is still possible.

Assuredly, for six million Jews and for their comrades who resisted and were massacred by the common enemy, you came too late, but in our eyes you soldiers and officers of the Allied forces personified mankind's noblest qualities, the need for freedom and, even more, the thirst for liberation.

You were living proof that, despite the attempts by the Nazis to dominate man by making him inhuman, despite the efforts by Hitler's Germany to govern through fear and terror and to serve Death by making Death its servant, sovereign nations were able to unite in the same struggle, inspired by the same ideals, to fulfill the same promise.

We told you then, and we repeat it today as we welcome you among us:

Thank you, thank you a thousand times, for fighting for the honor of mankind.

Elie Wiesel Chairman

Octobre 1981

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Aux libérateurs des camps:

Au nom de mes amis, survivants des ghettos et des camps de la mort, au nom du Conseil tout entier, c'est avec émotion que je vous souhaite la bienvenue.

Vous étiez les premiers hommes libres à découvrir l'univers d'épouvanti qui fut le nôtre. Ce que vous avez vu, jamais vous ne l'oublierez, de même que nous n'oublierons jamais la peine et l'horreur, la colère et la compassion graves que reflétaient chacun de vos regards, chacun de vos gestes.

Saviez-vous, pouviez-vous deviner ce que votre arrivée signifiait pour nous? La vie, bien sûr, mais autre chose aussi: un début d'espérance, un commencement de rêve que l'attente n'est pas toujours vaine, et que, pardelà la solitude des rescapés, par-delà des morts enfouis sous la cendra, la solidarité humaine demeure possible.

Certes, pour les six millions de Juifs, pour leurs camarades résistants massacrés par l'ennemi commun, vous étiez arrivés trop tard; mais à nos yeux, vous représentiez—vous, soldats et officiers des armées alliées—ce qui, dans l'humanité, illumine a face la plus exaltante: son besoin de liberté, et plus encore, sa soif de libération.

Vous avez apporté la preuve vivante que, contre la tentative nazie de dominer l'homme en le déshumanisant, contres les efforts de l'Allemagne hitlérienne de régner par la peur et la terreur, de servir la Mort en se servant d'elle, il était possible pour les peuples souverains de s'unir dans la même lutte, au nom du même idéal, pour justifier la même promesse.

Nous vous l'avions dit alors, nous vous le répétons aujourd'hui en vous accueillant parmi nous:

Merci, mille fois merci, d'avoir combattu pour l'honneur de l'homme.

Elie Wiesel



United States Holocaust Memorial Council

Освободителям лагерей

С душевным волнением приветствую вас от имени моих друзей, переживших заключение в гетто и в лагерях смерти, и от имени всего Совета.

Вы — первые свободные люди, наткнувшиеся на тот мир страха и ужаса, которым был тогда наш мир. Никогда вам не забыть того, что предстало тогда перед вашими глазами, также как и мы вовеки не забудем те жалость, ужас, гнев и сострадание, которые таились в каждом вашем взгляде, которые выражались каждым вашим жестом.

Знали ли вы, могли ли вы осознать, что для нас ваше прибытие означало? Конечно, жизнь — но не только жизнь: оно означало возвращение надежды, грезы о том, что не всегда ожидание тщетно, что за одиночеством уцелевших, за погибшими под пеплом таится человеческая солидарность.

Конечно, для шести миллионов евреев, для их товарищей по сопротивлению, зверски убитых общим врагом, вы пришли слишком поздно; но в наших глазах вы — офицеры и солдаты союзных армий представляли все то, что наиболее сильно вдохногляет и воодушевляет людей: вы олицетворяли стремление человека к свободе, его жажду освобождения.

Вы принесли нам живое доказательство того, что в борьбе против попыток гитлеровцев обесчеловечив людей покорить их, против училий гитлеровской Германии установить господство страхом перед собой и террором, против служения смерти пользуясь ей же, суверенные народы смогли объединиться для совместной борьбы, во имя общего идеала, для исполнения единого обещания.

Приветствуя вас сегодня у нас, мы повторяем то, что мы вам говорили тогда:

Спасибо, тысячу раз спасибо за то, что вы сражались за честь и достоинство человека!

Эли Визель

Председатель



October

Last year, as a presic to establi: develop 6 determine of the Alli Elie Wiese with organ

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We thank in this co your gove life to place





October 1981

Last year, when the United States Holocaust Memorial Council was created as a presidentially appointed Federal agency, it was mandated by Congress to establish a national memorial/museum in Washington, D.C., and to develop educational programs about Nazi genocide. The Council was determined that among the presentations of the museum should be the story of the Allied liberation of Nazi concentration camps. To this end, Chairman Elie Wiesel has charged the Council's Committee on International Relations with organizing and convening this first International Liberators Conference.

We welcome you to this unprecedented occasion, which you will help make an enduring part of history. Thirty-six years ago, you took part in the liberation of the most terrifying network of slave-labor and death camps that man has ever devised. Now you are assembled for the first time ever on such a scale with your former comrades in arms, and with official representatives of the nations that allied themselves against Nazism.

Your accounts here of what you saw when the camps were liberated, your recollections of your feelings, will be recorded for posterity. These transcriptions and tapes and films will be housed in the memorial/museum so that in years to come your children and grandchildren and generations yet to be born will remember not only the horrors of the Holocaust but also your efforts and the efforts of others like you to bring the oppressor to his knees.

We thank you for taking the trouble to travel great distances to participate in this conference. Its climax will be a long-deserved tribute to you and to your governments for the valor you displayed a generation ago, in bringing life to places designated for mass death.

Sincerely,

Miles Lerman

Chairman of the Committee on International Relations, United States Holocaust Memorial Council; Coordinator of the International

Liberators Conference

Mark Taluman

Thiles Ferman

Mark Talisman

Co-Chairman of the Committee on International Relations, United States Holocaust Memorial Council; Co-Coordinator

of the International Liberators Conference

L'an dernier, lorsque le Conseil des Etats-Unis pour la remémoration de l'holocauste a été établi en tant qu'agence fédérale créée par la Président, le Congrès lui a donné pour mission de fonder à Washington un musée commémoratif national et d'organiser un programme éducatif sur le génocide nazi. Le Conseil était résolu à présenter notamment dans ce musée un historique de la libération par les Alliés des camps de concentration nazis. A cette fin, Elie Wiesel, président du Conseil, a chargé le comité pour les relations internationales d'organiser et de convoquer la première réunion internationale des libérateurs.

Nous vous souhaitons la bienvenue à cette réunion sans précédent qui, avec votre concours, revêtera elle-même une importance historique. Il y a trentesix ans, vous avez pris part à la libération du réseau le plus terrifiant de camps de la mort et de l'esclavage que l'homme ait jamais conçu. Aujourd'hui, vous vous réunissez, pour la première fois en si grand nombre, avec vos anciens campagnons d'armes et les représentants officiels des pays qui se sont alliés contre le nazisme.

Le récit que vous nous donnerez de ce que vous avez vu lors de la libération des camps et de votre souvenir des sentiments que vous avez éprouvés sera conservé pour la postérité. Ces textes, bandes magnétiques et films seront conservés au musée commémoratif afin que, dans les années à venir, vos enfants, vos petits-enfants et les générations qui les suivront se souviennent non seulement des horreurs de l'holocauste mais aussi des efforts que vous et d'autres comme vous ont déployés pour anéantir l'oppresseur.

Nous vous a remercions d'avoir bien voulu venir de si loin pour assister à cette réunion. Son point culminant sera l'hommage bien mérité qui sera rendu à vos gouvernements aussi bien qu'à vous pour la bravoure dont vous avez fait preuve, il y a une génération, en apportant la vie aux lieux qui avaient été destinés à l'extermination en masse.

Thiles Freman

Veuillez accepter l'expression de mes sentiments distingués.

Miles Lerman

Président du Comité sur les Relations internationales du Conseil des Etats-Unis pour la Remémoration de l'Holocaust; Coordonnnateur de la Réunion internationale

des Libérateurs

Mark Talisman

Coprésident du Comité sur les Relations internationales du Conseil des Etats-Unis pour la Remémoration de l'Holocaust; Coordonnnateur adjoint de la Réunion

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В прошлом году, при учреждении Американского Совета по сооружению памятника гекатомбе (Совет находится на положении федерального ведомства, сотрудники которого назначаются президентом страны), Конгресс США поручил Совету создать национальный музейпамятник в г. Вашингтоне и разработать программы, освещающие зверства гитлеровского геноцида. Совет твердо поставил себе целью в число экспонатов музея включить историю освобождения союзниками нацистских концлагерей. В этой связи председатель Совета Эли Визель поручил Комителю по международным сношениям при Совете организовать и созвать первую Международную Конференцию освободителей.

Мы вас приветствуем на этом беспрецедентном начинании, которое с вашей помощю прочно войдет в историю. Тридцать шесть лет тому назад вы участвовали в освобождении самой жуткой, когда либо созданной человечеством, сети лагерей рабского труда и смерти. Теперь впервые столько из вас собралось со своими бывшими товарищами по оружию и с официальными представителями государств, вошедших в союз провив гитлеровщины.

Рассказанное вами здесь об увиденном при освобождении лагерей, воспоминания о ваших чувствах, будут зафиксированы для последующих поколений. Эти протоколы, магнитозаписи и кинофильмы будут храняться в музее-памятнике, чтобы в предстояащие годы дети и внуки, равно как и ещё не родившиеся поколения, помнили не только о кошмарах гекатомбы, но и о ваших училиях и об училиях других преодолеть и покорить угнетателя.

Мы благодарны вам за то, что вы не отказались прибыть издалека для участия в настоящей конференции. Её истоком явится давно заслуженное прославление вас и ваших правительств за проявленную вами поколение назад доблесть, когда вы принесли жизнь в места, предназначенные для массовой смерти.

С уважением

Thiles Leman

Maйлс Лерман

Председатель Комитета по международным сношениям Американского Совета по сооружению памятника гекатомбе

Координатор Международной конференции освободителей

Mark Taluman

Марк Талисман

Сопредседатель Комитета по международним сношениям Американского Совета по сооружению памятника гекатомбе

Заместитель Координатора Международной конференции освободителей

International Liberators Conference Eyewitness Accounts of Liberators

Department of State Washington, D.C. October 26-28, 1981

MONDAY, October 26, 1981

10:00 am to 4:00 pm Registration

7:00 pm

Opening Ceremony

Greetings

Loy Henderson Conference Room

Invocation

Posting of Colors

Singing of "America the Beautiful"

Opening Address

Responses

Concluding Address

TUESDAY, October 27, 1981

9:00 am

Plenary Session—

Eyewitness Accounts

Military

Doctor

Nurse

Statesman

Chaplain

Liberator

11:30 am

Lunch

1:00 pm to 2:30 pm

Panel Discussions

War Correspondents

Medical Personnel

Military

Loy Henderson Conference Room

Loy Henderson Conference Room

Room 1105

Room 1107

3:00 pm to 4:30 pm Panel Discussions

Historians Loy Henderson Conference Room

Chaplains Room 1105 Resistance Room 1107

5:30 pm to 7:30 pm

Diplomatic Reception Eighth Floor Diplomatic Rooms

WEDNESDAY, October 28, 1981

9:00 am to 10:10 am Panel Discussions

War Crimes Tribunals Loy Henderson Conference Room

Survivors & Liberators Room 1105 Uprisings Room 1107

10:15 am to 11:30 am Panel Discussion Discovering the "Final Solution"

"Final Solution" Loy Henderson Conference Room

11:30 am Lunch

2:30 pm

Memorial Tribute Loy Henderson Conference Room

Presentation of Scrolls and Medals

Concluding Remarks

Names of participants to be announced

Réunion Internationale des Libérateurs Témoignages des Libérateurs

Programme

Département d'Etat Washington, D.C. 26–28 octobre 1981

LUNDI 26 octobre 1981

10 heures à 16 heures Inscriptions

19 heures Cérémonie d'ouverture

Discours d'accueil

Salle de conférences Loy Henderson

Invocation

Parade des drapeaux

"America the Beautiful"

Discours d'ouverture

Résponses

Discours de clôture

MARDI 27 octobre 1981

Séance pleinière Témoignages

Salle de conférences Loy Henderson

9 heures

Membre des forces armées

Médecin

Infirmière

Homme d'Etat

Aumônier

Libérateur

Survivant

11h30

Déjeuner

13 heures à 14h30

Discussions de groupe

Correspondants de guerre

Salle de conférences Loy

Henderson

Personnel médical

Salle No. 1105

Militaires

Salle No. 1107

15 heures à 16h30 Discussions de groupe

Historiens

Salle de conférences Loy Henderson

Aumôniers

Salle No. 1105

Résistance

Salle No. 1107

17h30 à 19h30

Réception diplomatique

Salons diplomatiques

Huitième étage

MERCREDI 28 octobre 1981

9 heures à 10h10

Discussions de groupe

Tribunaux de crimes de guerre Salle de conférences Loy

Henderson

Survivants et libérateurs

Salle No. 1105

Soulèvements

Salle No. 1107

10h15 à 11h30

Discussions de groupe

Découverte de la "Solution finale"

Salle de conférence Loy

Henderson

11h30

Déjeuner

14h30

Hommage commémoratif Salle de conférences Loy

Henderson

Présentation des parchemins

et des médailles

Discours de clôture

Les noms des participants seront annoncés plus tard.

МЕЖДУНАРОДНАЯ КОНФЕРЕНЦИЯ ОСВОБОДИТЕЛЕЙ ВЫСТУПЛЕНИЯ ОЧЕВИДЦЕВ-ОСВОБОДИТЕЛЕЙ

Фосударственный департмент г. Вашингтон

ыц - ыў октября 1981 г.

Понедельник, 26 октября 1981 г.

10.00 - 16.00 ч.

Регистрация

19.00 ч.

Открытие конференции —

Приветствие

Конференции-зал "Лой Хендерсон"

Духовное воззвание

Поднятие флагов

Пение гимна "America the Beautiful"

Вступительная речь

Ответные речи

Заключительная речь

Вторник, 27 октября 1981 г.

9.00 ч.

Пленарное заседание — Рассказы очевидцев Конференц-зал "Лой Хендерсон"

Военнослужащий

Врач

Медицинская сестра

Государственный деятель

Капеллан

Освободитель

Уцелевший

11.30 ч.

Обед

13.00 - 14.30 ч.

Обсуждение и прения

Военные корреспонденты

Конференц-зал "Лой Хендерсон"

Медицинский персонал

Зал № 1105

15.00 - 16.30 ч.

Историки

Конференц-зал "Лой Хендерсон"

Капелланы

Зал № 1105

17.30 - 19.30 ч.

Торжественный прием в гостиных государственного департамента

Среда, 28 октября 1981 г.

9.00 - 11.30 ч.

Обсуждение и прения

Суды над военными преступниками

Конференц-зал "Лой Хендерсон"

10.15 - 11.30 ч.

Восстание

Зал № 1107

Разоблачение "окончательного Конференц-зал "Лой Хендерсон"

решения" 11.30 ч.

Обед

14.30 ч.

Преподнесение грамот

В память о погибших —

и медалей

Конференц-зал "Лой Хендерсон"

Заключительное слово

Фамилии докладчиков будут сообщены в дальнейшем.

THE RESIDENCE OF THE PARTY OF T

THE LIBERATION OF THE NAZI CONCENTRATION CAMPS

"I have just seen the most terrible place on the face of the earth . . ."

New York Times, August 27, 1944

"Dear Friends, prepare yourselves for freedom."

From an underground newspaper, handwritten by Jewish prisoners of Dachau, early 1945.

n the last months of World War II, a shock of horror spread through the advancing units of the Allied forces as they came upon a dark network of concentration camps, annihilation centers, slave labor camps and massacre sites. As the war-hardened soldiers pressed the collapse of the Thousand Year Reich, the reality of the evil against which they had fought overwhelmed them.

But why? Had Hitler and his cohorts made a secret of their determination to destroy every last Jew, and to kill and enslave the people of conquered lands so that the Germans could rule the world? On the contrary, reports of Nazi atrocities had been well circulated among the Allies in the West and East throughout the war.

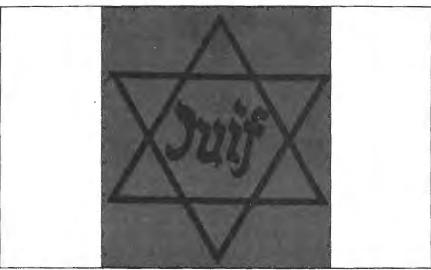
Still, nothing had prepared the liberators for their first sight of the Nazi



Dachau prisoners cheer American liberators.

Les déportés de Dachau font un accueil chaleureux aux libérateurs américains. Заключенные лагеря Дахау приветствуют американских освободителей.

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The yellow star which Jews in Nazi-occupied countries were forced to wear for identification, and which also made them targets for humiliation and violence.

L'étoile jaune que les Juiss vivant dans les pays occupés par les nazis étaient contraints de porter aux sins d'identification et qui faisait des Juiss la cible d'humiliations et d'acts de violence.

Желтая звезда, которую должны были носить евреи в странах, оккупированных нацистами, в качестве опознавательного знака, и из-за которой они становились мишенью унижения и насилия.

concentration camps—seeing the corpses "piled like cordwood," as many liberators would later remember, smelling the pervasive stench of death and degradation, stumbling through the rubble of buildings used for torture and murder. The liberators arrived too late for millions of victims. For the few living skeletons who miraculously had survived, the liberators arrived not a moment too soon.

Throughout the countries occupied by Germany during World War II, millions of people suffered torment and death. Among those designated by the Nazis for persecution were Gypsies, Slavs, Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals, and political opponents. Of all the Nazi victims, however, the Jews were the primary targets. That antagonism followed centuries of anti-Semitism, which European Jews had endured, centuries of enforced ghettos, conversions, expulsions, and pogroms.

Until September 1939, the Nazis tried to compel German Jews and those in the conquered countries to emigrate. The Jews were isolated, ruined economically, and terrorized. But many Jews who attempted to leave were turned back by countries that refused to accept them.

Over the next several years, increasing numbers of Jews were sent to concentration camps, the main purpose of which at that time was to confine, punish, and intimidate prisoners. Then with the annexation of a major part of Poland at the outbreak of the war, the Nazis established ghettos in which to concentrate that country's large Jewish population as well as Jews from the West who were now being deported. Conditions became increas-

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A list of the numbers of Jews in European countries whom the Nazis planned to kill, prepared for the Wannsee Conference, January 20, 1942.

Liste du nombre de Juifs se trouvant dans les pays européens et que les nazis se proposaient de tuer, dressée pour la conférence de Wannsee tenue le 20 janvier 1942.

Списки евреев в европейских странах, которых гитлеровцы собирались убить, составленные для конференции в Ванзе, состоявшейся 20 января 1942 г.

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ingly severe; ultimately, a half million Jews died in the ghettos or while

trying to escape through the forests.

In June 1941, the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union brought millions more Jews under Nazi control, some of whom had escaped eastward in the earlier period. At the same time, Europe became virtually sealed to Jewish emigration, leaving the Jews no escape routes. The Nazis intensified their efforts to make Europe "free of Jews." Following the German army into captured Russian territory, German mobile killing units and collaborators would march thousands of Jews in a single day to the outskirts of a town, line up the men, women and children at the side of ravines, shoot them, and then bury the victims (some still living) in mass graves. Nearly two and one-half million Jews were killed close to their homes in the year that followed the invasion of Russia.

Even that method of mass killing was not adequately efficient for Nazi purposes. The Nazis established annihilation centers at Treblinka, Sobibor, Belzec, Majdanek, Auschwitz and Chelmo. There, the victims were asphyxiated by gas in trucks and other sealed chambers. Most of the annihilation centers were reserved exclusively for Jews who, already weakened and dispirited by Nazi persecution, were transported by cattle cars from Western and Eastern Europe and as far away as Greece. In addition, resistance fighters, political prisoners, captured soldiers, and other people considered by the Nazis to be inferior and enemies of the Aryan state were also tortured and murdered at the annihilation centers. Within hours of their arrival, people were transformed from mothers, fathers, sons, and daughters into ashes. Personal goods, including the gold dental work extracted from the bodies before they were burned, were recorded, packed, and transported to Germany.

This assembly-line murder was unprecedented in the history of human violence, accomplished as it was with extraordinary efficiency, emotional detachment, and even pride. Although the details were kept secret, the implementation of the mass murder required the involvement of many outside the annihilation centers. The German railways managed the transportation, billing the appropriate agency of the Reich for the one-way trips of the millions of victims. Chemical companies kept rigorous production schedules providing ample supplies of Zyklon B gas. Manufacturers designed the crematoria and advertised their company names on the metal

doors of their products.

The largest of the annihilation centers, Auschwitz-Birkenau, became a multipurpose camp, where those who were physically able were forced into slave labor in special factories built along the perimeter of the camp. German industrialists thereby made enormous profits by exploiting the slave labor supply. And when the slave laborers were worn down by malnutrition, inclement weather, and inhumane living and working conditions, they joined the long lines of victims taken directly from the trains to the gas chambers. Not even war production, however, took precedence over killing Jews. As expressed by the Ministry of Eastern Occupied Territories, "Economic questions should not be considered in the solution of the Jewish question."

Another honored institution of German civilization, science, also

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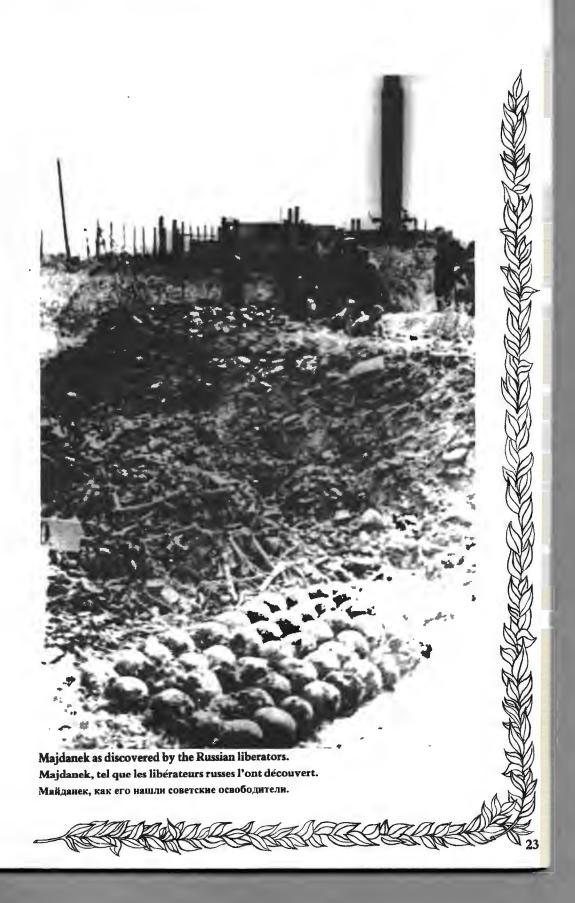


Aerial photo of Auschwitz taken six months before the camp was liberated. Photographie aérienne d'Auschwitz prise six mois avant la libération du camp. Лагерь Освенцим, снятый с воздуха за шесть месяцев до его освобождения.

became an instrument of torture and murder. Unspeakably horrible and scientifically dubious experiments conducted at Auschwitz and other camps perverted the scientist's quest for knowledge and the physician's responsibility to heal into the most brutal sadism.

The constellation of concentration camps grew in number, size, and variety of purpose. In 1939 there were six small camps; by 1944 there were twenty large complexes with 165 satellite camps and hundreds of slave labor camps and transit centers across Eastern and Western Europe. Speaking of that development, SS Chief Heinrich Himmler said, "Just such examples show how our business has grown."

By the fall of 1943, however, the course of the war had begun to turn. Soviet forces had pushed back the Nazis' eastern lines. Heroic rebellions by doomed prisoners in some of the camps weakened the Nazi machinery of murder. While still attempting to be as thorough as possible in killing the remaining Jews, the Nazis also attempted to conceal all traces of their crimes



by dismantling several of the annihilation centers, by murdering the last survivors or shipping them west to other camps, and by disinterring and burning bodies at the sites of massacres.

In July 1944, the Soviet Army crossed the Bug River. On July 22, it captured Lublin and liberated Majdanek—the first liberation of a functioning annihilation center. One month later, a report on Majdanek appeared in the American press. The *New York Times* journalist, W. H. Lawrence, described the gas chambers, left in operating condition by the Nazis who were forced to retreat in haste:

As we entered the camp the first place at which we stopped obviously was the reception center and it was near here that one entered the bathhouse. Here Jews, Poles, Russians and in fact representatives of a total of twenty-two nationalities entered and removed their clothes after which they bathed at seventy-two showers and disinfectants were applied.

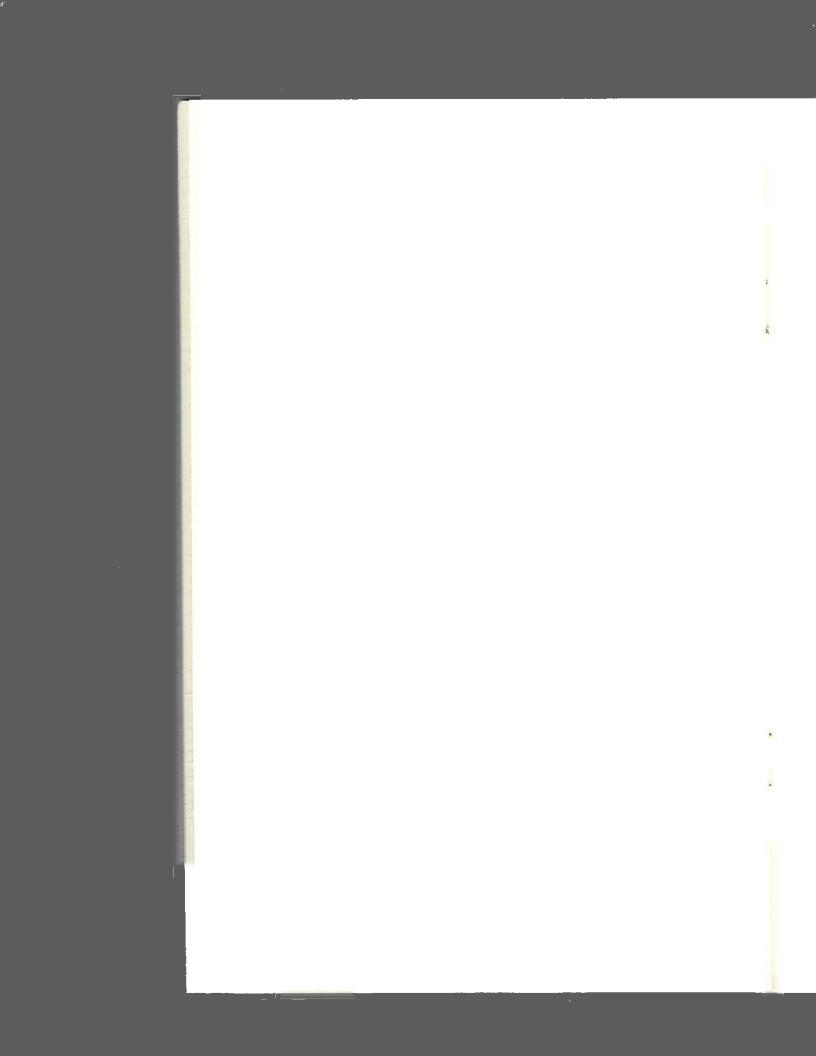
Sometimes they went directly into the next room, which was hermetically sealed with apparatuses in the roof, down which the Germans threw opened cans of "Zyklon B," a poison gas consisting of acid crystals, which were a light blue chalky substance. This produced death quickly. Other prisoners were kept for long periods; the average we were told was about six weeks.

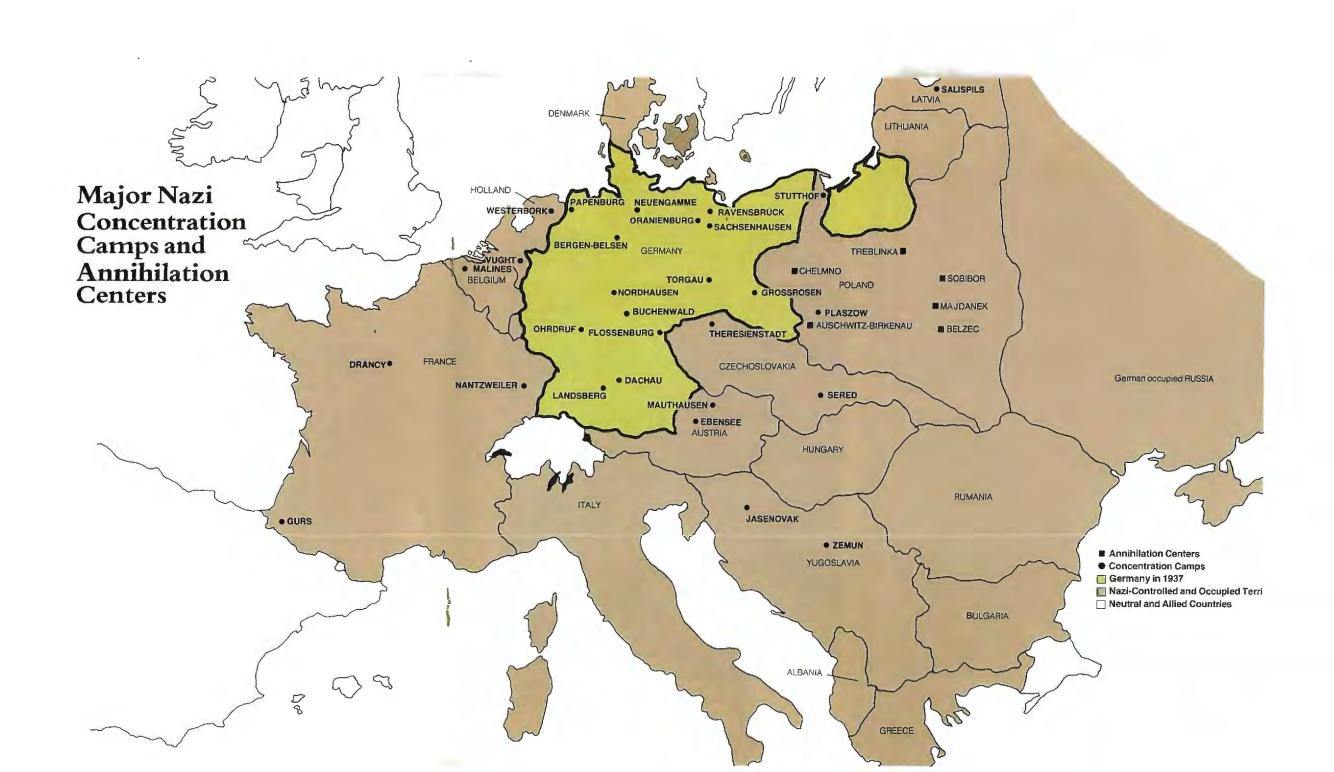
Near the shower house were two other death chambers fitted for either Zyklon gas or carbon monoxide. One of them was seventeen meters square and there we were told the Germans executed 100 to 110 persons at once. Around the floor of the room ran a steel pipe with an opening for carbon monoxide to escape at every twenty-five centimeters.

We were told the victims always received a bath in advance of execution because the hot water opened the pores and generally improved the speed with which the poison gas took effect. There were glass-covered openings in these death chambers so the Germans could watch the effect on their victims and determine when the time had come to remove their bodies. We saw opened and unopened cans of Zyklon gas that bore German labels.

Although the end of the war was in sight, the carnage continued at other camps through the summer and fall of 1944. Between May and November 1944, one-half million Hungarian and Slovakian Jews were gassed. In November 1944, Himmler ordered the dismantling of the gas chambers and crematoria. At first, Himmler was disappointed by the estimate of six million Jews killed, which was given him by a lieutenant colonel of the SS, Adolph Eichmann. The figure fell short of the eleven million which in 1942 Himmler had designated to be killed. He decided, however, that for all practical purposes, the Nazis had "solved" the Jewish question.

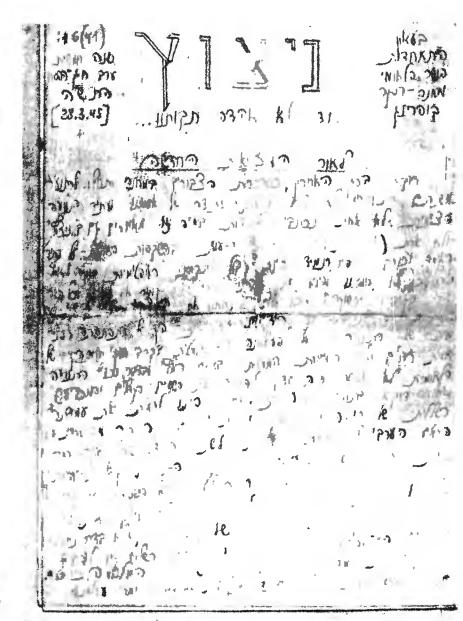
By January 1945, the Allies in the West were standing at the Rhine and, in the East, crossing the Vistula River. At the end of the month, the Soviet Army liberated Auschwitz. Several nights before, the Nazis had rounded up 60,000 prisoners and marched them westward, leaving behind 6,000 who were too weak to walk. Thus began the infamous death march—the sick,







Enfants d'Auschwitz photographiés peu après leur libération. Дети в Освенциме, снятые вскоре после их освобождения.



A page from a handwritten Hebrew newspaper entitled "Nisos" ("The Spark") circulated in a satellite camp of the Dachau complex in early 1945. Despite unrelenting persecution, prisoners maintained hope for liberation.

Une page de "Nisos" (L'Etincelle), journal clandestin rédigé en hébreu dans un camp satellite de Dachau au début de l'année 1945. En dépit d'une persécution implacable, les déportés gardaient l'espoir d'être libérés.

Страница из написанной от руки на иврите газеты "Нисы" ("Искра"), распространяемой в одном из лагерей дахауского комплекса в начале 1945 г. Несмотря на беспощадное преследование, заключенные не теряли надежду на освобождение.

starved, and half-naked prisoners were forced to trudge long distances by foot through the winter cold and snow. Some were then shipped in open railroad cars to concentration camps not yet liberated by the Allied forces. The few who survived were cramped into the already overcrowded camps of Buchenwald, Bergen-Belsen, and Dachau.

Throughout the winter of 1945, the Nazi front contracted. As the Allied forces approached, partisan groups and camp undergrounds helped liberate more concentration camps and slave labor camps located in Russia, the Ukraine, the Baltic States, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Germany, Austria, Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, and France.

On April 4, 1945, the Fourth Armored Division's Combat Command A of the American Third Army liberated Ohrdruf. A week later, other units of the Third Army liberated Buchenwald. The Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in the European Theater, General Dwight D. Eisenhower,



A gun smuggled into Buchenwald. In many camps, prisoners rebelled and fought their way to freedom.

Un revolver passé clandestinement à Buchenwald. Dans de nombreaux camps, les déportés se sont révoltés et battus pour leur liberté.

Оружне, тайно пронесенное в Бухенвальд. Во многих лагерях, заключенные восставали и вырывались на свободу.

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General Dwight D. Eisenhower and General Omar Bradley view conditions at Ohrdruf several days after its liberation.

Le général Dwight D. Eisenhower et le général Omar Bradley examinent la situation à Ohrdruf, plusieurs jours après sa libération.

Генерал Двайт Эйзенхауэр и генерал Омар Брэдли осматривают Ордруф несколько дней после его освобождения.

and General Omar Bradley visited General George Patton on April 12, and together they toured Ohrdruf. Eisenhower, in a letter to Chief of Staff George Marshall, wrote:

The things I saw beggar description . . . The visual evidence and the verbal testimony of starvation, cruelty, and bestiality were so overpowering as to leave me a bit sick. In one room, where there were piled up twenty or thirty naked men, killed by starvation, George Patton would not even enter. He said he would get sick if he did so. I made the visit deliberately, in order to be in a position to give first-hand evidence of these things if ever, in the future, there develops a tendency to charge these allegations merely to "propaganda."

On April 15, the British Army and Canadian units liberated Bergen-Belsen. A hospital was promptly set up and valiant efforts were made to save the few who had survived. Epidemics of typhus and other diseases that had gone unchecked under the Nazis now were difficult to control. Many of those who survived the Nazi torment were so weak that, even where the Allies immediately set up large-scale medical facilities, as the British did,



The British liberating Bergen-Belsen.
Les troupes britanniques libérant Bergen-Belsen.
Англичане освобождают Берген-Бельзен.



Liberation of Mauthausen by American soldiers.
Libération de Mauthausen par les troupes américaines.
Освобождение Маутхаузена америкаискими солдатами.

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they proved to be inadequate to the task. Tragically, thousands who lived to be liberated died in the weeks following their liberation.

As the Allied forces converged on remaining Nazi fighting units, they liberated Flossenburg, Ebensee, Landsberg, Mauthausen, and Oranienburg and other camps in Germany and Austria. Again Eisenhower wrote Marshall of the "conditions of indescribable horror," adding, "I have visited one of these myself and I assure you that whatever has been printed on them to date has been an understatement."

The liberation of Dachau on April 29 deeply affected the soldiers of the 222nd U.S. Infantry Regiment and 42nd Infantry Division who entered the



One of 150 prisoners burned to death at Gardelegen just before the 102nd Infantry Divison of the U.S. Ninth Army entered.

Un des 150 prisonniers brûlés vifs à Gardelegen, peu avant l'arrivée au camp de la 102e division d'infanterie de la Neuvième armée américaine.

Один из 150 заключенных, сожженных в Гарделегене незадолго до входа 102-ой пехотной дивизии Девятой армии США.

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A survivor being registered at Vaehingen Camp, liberated by the French on April 8, 1945

Inscription d'un survivant du camp de Vaehingen, libéré par les Français le 8 avril 1945.

Регистрация уцелевшего заключенного в лагере Фэинген, освобожденном Французами 8 апреля 1945 г.

camp. Their feelings were reflected in the headlines of an army newspaper published several days later—"Dachau Gives Answer to Why We Fought." As the soldiers entered the gates, they came upon thousands of corpses in varying degrees of disintegration. Some prisoners had been shot within hours of their arrival. In Gardelegen on the very eve of its liberation, the SS took precious time before making its escape to lock prisoners in a barn and burn them alive.

Nazi Germany unconditionally surrendered on May 7, 1945. The last ghetto and concentration camp, Theresienstadt, was not completely liberated for another few days.

Millions of people were caught in the Nazi inferno. Few survived. Of the more than four million Jews in Eastern and Western Europe who were deported to concentration camps, only two percent remained alive to be liberated by the Allied forces. The Nazis destroyed one-third of world Jewry and most of the major Jewish cultural centers that had thrived for centuries. About one million others were brutally killed in the Nazi concentration camps. An additional one and one-half million Soviet prisoners of war died of starvation and exposure in German army camps. Millions of civilians died behind German lines as a result of malnutrition and disease, including the hundreds of thousands in Soviet cities under Nazi siege.

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The Jewish Brigade. La Brigade juive. Espeŭckas бригада.

Following their liberation from the concentration camps, the few survivors, soon to be called "Displaced Persons" (DPs), became a major preoccupation of the newly formed Allied military governments. Jewish chaplains of the armed forces contributed to the physical rehabilitation and improvement of morale of the survivors, as did the Jewish Brigade from Palestine, attached to units of the Allied forces. Also, Jewish and interdenominational welfare organizations sent representatives and assistance.

Following their liberation, and after they had gathered sufficient strength, some of those who had survived the Nazi camps returned to their homes in towns and villages across Europe. With their friends and families, they began reconstructing a devasted Europe. Most Jewish survivors, however, were left homeless, with nothing of their past to reclaim. Some returned to discover only physical traces of the familiar—"the stone horseman on the square, the bronze clock on the tower." Strangers now lived in their homes, and looked upon the Jewish survivors with hostility. In the period following the war, there were Jews who survived and returned to their hometowns only to be killed in new anti-Semitic pogroms.

Many of the Jewish survivors, hardly recovered from malnutrition and debilitating diseases, soon demonstrated the courage and commitment to start again. The DP camps resonated with life-affirming activities. Many survivors of the Holocaust, including Jews who had been in hiding or who had escaped to the East, now tried to make their way to Palestine, although

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it was still closed to Jewish immigration. The new State of Israel eventually received 300,000 survivors. The United States, whose restrictive immigration laws had had tragic consequences for many trying to flee Nazi Europe, became a homeland for about 137,000 Jewish survivors. About 50,000 more Jewish survivors settled in other countries, including Canada, Australia, and the countries of Central and Latin America.

Eventually, too, the liberators of these survivors returned to their homes. They, too, had been traumatized by their experiences—as witnesses to the evidence of a unique persecution and as restorers of life to a ravaged remnant. Present as they were at the historical moment of transformation when the gates were opened and victims became survivors, the liberators became partners with the survivors in an inescapable mission: to remember and remind the world that there lurks anywhere, anytime, a potential for unthinkable inhumanity.



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The first wedding of Bergen-Belsen survivors shortly after the liberation.

Premier mariage de survivants de Bergen-Belsen, peu après la libération.

Первая свядьба уцелевших заключенных Берген-Бельзана вскоре после освобождения.

THE LIBERATOR AS WITNESS*

lthough differing in size, the Nazi camps all carried into effect the same pattern of death by hard labor, starvation, hanging, strangulation, disease, brutality, gas chambers, gallows, and filthy and unsanitary conditions, which meant inevitable death eventually to every imprisoned person. . . . We found that this entire program constituted a systematic form of torture and death . . . almost beyond the power of words to describe."

That is how the Nazi death and slave labor camps are remembered by former Congressman Ed. V. Izac of San Diego, a World War I Congressional Medal of Honor winner. Izac headed a Congressional committee that had been invited by General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, to inspect the camps just after they were liberated. His recollections, and those of other eyewitnesses, corroborate what is known of Nazi intentions and activities from other sources.

Common to all the American soldiers—and what they recall quite clearly—is the horror that assaulted them at their first sight of the camp gates and stayed with them, gaining in intensity, as they explored the compounds. Five major themes emerge from their recollections.

Too Late For Too Many

Descriptions of the suffering of the unfortunate victims appear in every testimony. Most painful for the liberators was the sight of those deliberately murdered only hours before they would have been freed. As Captain James May of Atlanta, Georgia, a witness of Tausha and Dora-Nordhausen, remembers, "Just before the Americans came in, the SS fired these barracks with the men locked inside. There were some bodies caught up on the barbed wire, the fence, where they had tried to escape, and these . . . had been machine-gunned by the SS." A liberator of Landsburg, T/5 William Buckley of Elliston, Kentucky, reports, "We couldn't save the lives of the prisoners. We got there too late. No one was alive when we found the camp."

Those liberators who found the living among the dead felt a great sense of relief, even achievement that some victims had cheated the Nazi murderers. These former soldiers express pride that their military action helped save some of the internees. Members of the 102nd Infantry Division tell of finding a train of cattle cars, all locked, all containing the dead, except one—a carload of 92 living Jewish children. Nine hundred Jewish women were saved by the 16th Armored Infantry near Kassel only 24 hours before

they were scheduled for annihilation.

Liberators of all camps describe the terrible physical condition of the survivors and the poignant loss of those who died after liberation. Battalion Surgeon (Captain) Lawrence Thouin of Anaheim, California, remembers,

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^{*}Professor Fred W. Crawford, The Center for Research in Social Change, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.

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"What would tear your heart out was coming from within those boxcars, a faint whisper. As a doctor I knew those were not whispers but sounds from human beings who somehow . . . had been able to sustain life. . . . My primary duty there was to save any of these Jewish persons who had that spark of life."

Devices For Murder

The conditions under which the victims lived, slaved, and died, the evidence of inhumanity—the camp guards' human souvenirs, the many means of torture and of death-stunned and horrified the witnesses almost to disbelief. Colonel William W. Quinn, an intelligence officer, was so shocked that he authorized the publication of Dachau in May 1945, so that people would always have a record of the death camp at the time it was liberated. Today, Lieutenant General (Ret.) Quinn of Washington, D.C., reaffirms what he saw, "Dachau, 1933-45, will stand for all time as one of history's most gruesome symbols of inhumanity. There our troops found sights, sounds, and stenches horrible beyond belief, cruelties so enormous as to be incomprehensible to the normal mind. Dachau and death are synonymous." And Lt. Edmund Murtha of Bel Air, Maryland, a Mauthausen witness, recalls, "The atrocities were endless. . . . It must have been hell on earth to the inmates. The reaction of us all was absolute shock—horror revulsion—disbelief. Many became ill at the sights and smells of Ohrdruf. We heard that General George Patton himself was nauseated enough to vomit." Upon seeing torture devices and trophies of human organs and skin at Mooseburg, S/Sgt. Curtis Whiteway of Plainfield, Vermont, recalls, "I cried and my men cried."

Hatred For The Nazis And Those Who Remained Silent

Despite the passage of many years, many liberators still retain fury toward the Nazis and their sympathizers. Battle-hardened combat veterans repeatedly expressed their anger and hatred at those responsible for the atrocities in the camps. "I have an unforgiving hate of everything Nazi," says Captain Walter Shield, Jr., of Tucson, Arizona, who liberated a slave labor camp near Schwabmunchen. "The camp is permanently imbedded in my mind; a feeling of anger and outrage became a permanent feature of my personality where the Nazis were concerned," Lt. Colonel Stephen Gonczy of Chicago, Illinois, a Dachau witness confides.

A Flossenburg witness, Captain Richard Deneau of Point Lookout, New York, reports, "I still feel anger against those who remained silent while the camps and the gas chambers were busy. The shock was so deep that I don't think I shall ever be free of the scenes I witnessed."

Sympathy For The Victims Of Oppression

The awful effects of the Nazis' "Final Solution to the Jewish Question" were indelibly impressed upon the liberators. As Congressman Izac emphasizes, most of the Jews in the camps in Germany had been murdered by April, 1945. The liberators soon learned that the Germans' anti-Semitism crossed national boundaries as they came upon Jews from every country the Nazis had occupied. In the words of PFC. Russell McFarland, a liberator of

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Dachau from Portland, Texas, "It made me aware that Jews have been kicked around, tortured, beaten, run out of a lot of countries; [yet] they still exist and are more united now. I admire them for their stamina, their togetherness, their brains. They may truly be God's chosen people."

T/5 Wilmer Whipple of Seattle, Washington, reports that what he saw at the camps at Wels and Buchenwald "made me more compassionate with all mankind."

Bearing Witness To The Holocaust

The liberators' accounts stress both the realization and the impact of their experiences. The sights they saw have never left them, they will bear witness always, if only by their own knowledge, that the death and slave labor camps existed. Their memories intensify their deeply felt hope that such cruelty never will be allowed to occur again.

Sgt. Arthur Goldberg, Southfield, Michigan, a Buchenwald witness, describes the impact of this experience in these words: "What I saw at the camp is no longer an isolated incident. It is in context with the total event of the Holocaust as we now know it. I saw it with my own eyes, and have pictures that I took. It is still very real to me. I grieve over it, still, and I cry a lot—real tears—as I am doing now."

SFC. Glenn Goslee of Fort Wayne, Indiana, a liberator of Ohrdruf has said, "These things shouldn't happen in the civilized world." A Gardenlagen witness, T/Sgt. Monroe Erickson of Irene, South Dakota, declares, "I hope and pray that nothing like this will ever happen again." Pvt. Edward Young of Flora, Mississippi, a Dachau witness remarks, "It was an experience that will always be with me." And a Buchenwald witness, Dennis Wile of Tallahassee, Florida, warns, "Can it happen again? Absolutely!"

"It made me determined to strive for the 'right' and to respect people of all races, religions," said T/5 Raymond Murray of Cleveland, Tennessee, a liberator of Nordhausen.

Thousands of American soldiers, nurses, Red Cross and United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration workers, Congressmen and reporters, as well as eyewitnesses of the other nations of the Allied forces, saw the Nazi concentration camp horrors. They know the Holocaust happened. Hatred of the Jew ultimately brought the merciless Nazi forces to torture and kill the non-Jews of Europe as well. The world must not forget.



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TESTIMONIALS



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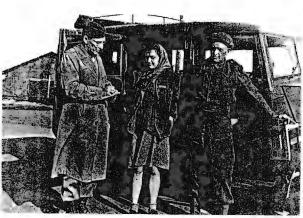
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"I am aware that there are those who denied that such places existed, but I know what I saw and I know the condition of the men I cared for and I saw those rows of dead and dying."

Reverend Roy A. F. McDaniel, S.S.C. Company B, 329th Med. Bn., 104th Infantry Division Osawatomie, Kansas





"A bitter memory impels me. It comes from the closing days of World War II and the event on which it is based happened at a town called Belsen. This thing that happened is an important thing and if you can understand it and draw a lesson from it and teach that lesson to others, you will have achieved a greater human use than Rockefeller or Einstein.

"We drove that last mile to the camp with a British lieutenant of

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artillery. He told us that his regiment had been pulled out of the battle to take care of the people in the camp. They were dying, he said, by the thousands, and I thought he was exaggerating.

"Watching, I became aware that the tempo of everything inside the high wire enclosure was slow, like slow-motion, and I felt embarrassed at moving normally because wherever we looked we saw people who walked as if they were in pain, and they were bent from the shoulders forward, not from the back as with age, but as if bearing some insupportable burden.

"As we drove down that road between the barracks, I forgot everything but the sight of what was all around me. We noticed piles of something lying before each barracks, up against the fence beside each gate, and in a bit we came to a truck that was collecting these piles. It was a German army truck and the men working on it were wearing SS uniforms and a British soldier with a bayoneted rifle stood on the ground behind the truck directing them. The piles before each barracks were dead men and women. In one pile would be three or four and in another pile there would be eight or nine and in another pile there would be eighteen or twenty maybe and it was like that down the street as far as we could see, for about a half a mile, I suppose.

"This was a man's barracks. We smelled it long before we got there, and then we walked through a plain door into a room about twelve feet high and forty feet long and twenty feet wide, and we saw that hundreds of men were jammed into the bunks that crowded every foot of space.

"The noise that began as soon as we walked inside the door was terrifying at first and I saw that it came from men in their bunks who were so thin and sick that they couldn't get out of bed so they beat their mess tins against whatever would make a racket. Some of them screamed and some cried and some just whimpered.

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"But I had never seen such men as these. They were skeletons and their faces were all the same again, just like skulls with skin on them, but in some of the bunks the men didn't beat their tins at all and just lay still. Some of their eyes were closed and that was terrible and some of their eyes were open and that was worse.

"While I was looking at all those things I saw figures sliding over the filthy floor at the other end of the room and as they came into the light I saw that they were men who were too ill to stand or even crawl and so they were carrying their mess tins in their mouths while they dragged themselves through the sewage on the floor toward the food kettle before the soup was all gone. Their faces were indescribable because there were no cheeks or chin muscles but only skin and their lips were like paper tapes, and their bodies kept threshing about like animals out of the swamp age. You could see their eyes asking, begging, entreating . . . You wanted to help and you did what you could but your clean American hands didn't want to touch them for they were alive with lice and their rags were soaked with drippings, and still you had to do something. So you remembered that there were twenty thousand others for whom things had to be done, too, and before you could lift a finger another thousand would be dead right here in this block of barbed wire, and you felt stifled and sick because you were so helpless.

"We got back into our car and the lieutenant directed us to the improvised cemetery. The dead were all being put in one huge grave that the British had dug. Already, the first grave with 5,000 bodies had been covered. Now, they were filling the second. Our road ran along the edge of the camp past the ovens where the Germans cremated their prisoners, and out to a clear space close against the high wire boundary. A watch tower with a machine gun mount stood over the barracks but it was empty now.

"We saw the grave long before we reached it. A truck was backed up to it like a garbage truck at an American dump and SS guards were standing up high and swinging corpses back and forward and back and forward and then letting them go so that the bodies sailed far out toward the center of the hole. The grave was about ten or twelve feet deep and it was about thirty by fifty feet in size, and all the earth was piled up on two sides and the ends

were open so the trucks could get up close.

"The truck finished its job and pulled away and we walked up slowly, and I felt tight and funny inside and I didn't really want to go any closer because I didn't want to see what I had to see, and my driver was about eight feet behind me and I knew he felt the same. Finally, I got where I could see inside the grave and then I walked ahead until I could look straight out over and down into it and I didn't feel anything at all except Jesus Christ Jesus Christ Jesus Christ and I kept saying that to myself because I couldn't think of anything else.

"You can see one or two dead people or fifteen or so in a morgue and you feel an intense, personal relationship with death and with them, but the feeling for these 2,000 was altogether different. After the first shock, you got over feeling that these were people anymore. They were so thin and so dried out that they might have been monkeys or plaster of Paris and you had to keep saying to yourself, these are human beings, and even when you said it your mind was not believing it because nothing like this had ever

happened before and it just couldn't happen.

"I heard the driver being sick behind me and the lieutenant said we ought to get back and as I started to turn away I saw a body move. It was in the pile that the truck had just left and I saw an arm move and I yelled at the lieutenant and he looked and said he didn't see anything. But I saw the arm move. The man was either alive or he had fallen such a way that his arm had been in balance and now it simply slipped to another position. I wanted to make certain but the lieutenant said it was no use. Even if he was alive and we pulled him out there was no place to put him, no nurses to take care of him, nobody to feed him, and if he somehow got well physically his mind was probably gone. The war was still just down the road a piece and there were ten thousand sick ones back in the barracks who might be saved if we worked hard enough."

Curtis Mitchell

Colonel (Ret.)
Special Messenger for the War Department
Deland, Florida





"In the early hours of the 17th of April I was awakened by a liaison officer from Headquarters Second Army. He informed me that we were to proceed to Bergen-Belsen where there was a concentration camp which had been liberated by the 11th Armoured Division on the 15th. On arrival we were to initiate action to deal with the very large numbers of sick we would find there. He knew that Typhus Fever was present and that starvation was

universal but he could give me little information beyond this.

"I decided to set off for Belsen almost immediately and instructed the unit to follow on behind and rendezvous with me at a point selected off the map close to where I had been told the camp lay. Although I had heard of German concentration camps I had very little idea what I was likely to find when I arrived there but it was difficult to imagine how my two-hundred-bed unit could hope to achieve much with the sort of numbers I envisaged we might encounter. Little did I realize that I was about to be faced with the greatest test of my career, with a situation that would remain engraved on my memory for the rest of my days and that would instill in me a lasting abhorrence not only of those who had perpetuated this crime but also of those who had condoned it.

"The camp was liberated, as we have already seen, on the 15th of April by the 11th Armoured Division. Brigadier Glyn Hughes, the Deputy Director of Medical Services of Second Army at the time, visited the camp shortly after its liberation. Just after his arrival and while he was interviewing Kramer he heard sounds of firing. Taking Kramer with him he went to investigate this and found SS guards shooting at internees by a potato patch. He ordered Kramer to have the firing stopped. Many dead and wounded were lying about with no attempt being made to do anything for the wounded. Judging from the number of dead with gunshot wounds that we came across later this type of unprovoked shooting at random was a not uncommon occurrence.

"The dead lay literally everywhere—where they had simply fallen down and died, where they had been dragged and piled and amongst the living inside the huts. Piles of dead, some of these piles were three or four feet high and covered large areas of ground, were most frequently in the women's laager. When I was sent home in June to give a talk on Belsen at

the Royal Society of Medicine I went to see a news film of Belsen which was then showing in London. One of the shots showed a pile of dead. A woman sitting just in front of me turned to her neighbor and said 'they must have been put like that for the picture.' I had difficulty in restraining myself. What had happened was this. Until about March the dead had apparently been cremated but during this month the mortality rate rose so sharply that the crematorium could no longer cope. The dead were then gathered into piles and burned in the open but this was discontinued when military personnel in the adjacent barracks objected to the smell. Large pits were then bulldozed out and the dead were dragged to them for burial as described by Mr. Le Druillenec. But as the death rate and the physical incapacity of the internees increased, and this was most marked in the women's laager, the dead were simply dragged as far away from the huts as possible and dumped. As exhaustion increased the distance the corpses were dragged diminished and the piles around the huts grew. By the time we arrived even this had got beyond the power of many hut occupants and hundreds of dead lay in the huts amongst the living.

"At first sight the task allotted to my small unit with its handful of doctors, sisters and orderlies seemed totally impossible. At least 70% of the internees required hospitalization and one of the first things I did was to ask Headquarters Second Army for twelve hundred bed hospitals although I realized that, with the war still in progress, there was no possible chance of

"It was apparent to us that our capacity to deal with individual patients would be extremely limited and that our principal effort would have to be directed to preventing, as far as possible, further loss of life from starvation and disease. To achieve this aim there were several priority tasks. These were as follows: (a) to institute suitable feeding for all internees, and (b) to prevent the further spread of typhus and other infectious or contagious

diseases by every available means.

"The last of the sick in the Horror Camp were evacuated on the 18th of May. They were transferred to the building which had been the Officers Mess—now known as the Round House—which we had equipped to receive them. They were accompanied by the students and internee nurses who had been running the temporary hospital in the Horror Camp and who now became responsible for the Round House. Between the 21st of April when we started and the 18th of May we had admitted a total of 13,834 patients; of this number 1,844 died after admission.

"On our recommendation the Horror Camp was then completely destroyed by fire. This was the only possible end to a place that had seen so much human misery, degradation and terror and which was still heavily contaminated with disease-carrying germs. The burning was done by flame throwers which accounted not only for the huts but for the rags and filth littering the ground. We had a ceremony for the burning of the last hut and I had the satisfaction of directing the flame thrower and pressing the button.

with my wife in 1969 I was interested to see several bus loads of German school children being shown around. I should have been even more inter-

"I have returned to Belsen on two occasions since. During the last visit ested if I could have heard what was being said to them and been able to watch their reactions. Although it does not quite measure up to the garden of tranquility which I had hoped it might become, the place is clean and well cared for, a reasonable resting place for the thousands who lie buried there.

"I have heard it suggested that now, after all these years and in the very changed international situation prevailing today, Belsen and all that it stood

for should be forgotten and the area closed to the public.

"I am utterly opposed to this proposal. In my opinion Belsen and the other concentration camps must never be forgotten not only because of the millions of Jews who suffered and were exterminated in them but as a reminder of the incredible bestiality and cruelty which happened once 'in this enlightened age' and which must never be permitted to happen again."

John Johnston Major General (Ret.) East Sussex, England

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL COUNCIL

he United States Holocaust Memorial Council was created by a unanimous Congress in 1980 to memorialize the six million Jews who perished in the Holocaust, and the millions of other victims of Nazi brutality. The Council will establish a memorial/museum in Washington, D.C., plan an educational foundation, and propose a Committee on Conscience to help prevent genocide against any people anywhere in the world.

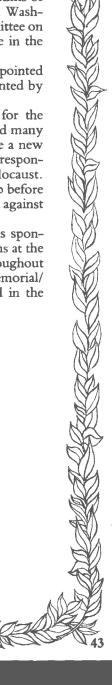
The Council is composed of 60 members, 50 of whom are appointed by the President. Ten others are members of Congress, five appointed by

the Speaker of the House and five by the President of the Senate.

In speaking of the special meaning that the Holocaust has for the United States, President Carter noted that American troops liberated many of the concentration camps, and that the United States has become a new homeland for many survivors. He also said this country must bear responsibility for not having done more to save victims of the Holocaust. President Reagan, at a recent convocation, spoke of the need to keep before us the memory of the Holocaust so that we may always be on guard against tryanny and violence.

Since it was established, the Holocaust Memorial Council has sponsored annual national Days of Remembrance, with commemorations at the White House and on Capitol Hill, and in many communities throughout the country. Currently, the Council is developing plans for the memorial/museum, which will be established by private funds and located in the

nation's capital.



CONSEIL DES ETATS-UNIS POUR LA REMEMORATION DE L'HOLOCAUSTE HISTORIQUE

e Conseil des Etats-Unis pour la remémoration de l'holocauste a été créé en 1980 à l'unanimité des voix du Congrès afin de commémorer les six millions de Juifs qui ont péri dans l'holocauste et les millions d'autres victimes de la brutalité nazie. Le Conseil établira un musée commémoratif à Washington, D.C., préparera la création d'une fondation éducative et proposera un Comité de la Conscience afin d'aider à prévenir tout génocide contre tout peuple de tout pays du monde.

Le Conseil se compose de 60 membres, dont 50 ont été nommés par le Président. Les dix autres sont des membres du Congrés, dont cinq nommés par le Président de la Chambre des Représentants et cinq par le Président du Sénat.

En parlant de la signification particulière que l'holocauste revêt pour les Etats-Unis, le Président Carter a fait observer que les troupes américaines ont libéré un bon nombre des camps et que les Etats-Unis sont devenus la nouvelle patrie de nombreaux survivants. Il a ajouté que les Etats-Unis doivent admettre qu'ils auraient dû faire encore davantage pour sauver les victimes de l'holocauste. Au cours d'une récente réunion officielle, le Président Reagan a parlé du besoin de garder l'holocauste à l'espirit, de sorte que nous soyons toujours sur nos gardes contre la tyrannie et la violence.

Depuis sa création, le Conseil pour le remémoration de l'holocauste a parrainé les Journées annuelles nationales du Souvenir qui ont inclus des cérémonies à la Maison-Blanche et au Capitole, ainsi que des commémorations dans de nombreuses collectivités du pays tout entier. Actuellement, le Conseil élabore un projet de musée commémoratif, dont le financement sera assuré par des fonds privés et dont le siège se trouvera dans la capitale des Etats-Unis.

Исторические данные

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Совете США по сооружению памятника гекатомбе

В 1980 г. Конгресс США единогласно учредил Совет по сооружению памятника гекатомбе с тем, чтобы почтить память шести миллионов евреев и миллионов других жертв, зверски умерщвленных гитлеровцами. Совет сооружает музей-памятник в г. Вашингтоне, основывает фонд просвещения и учреждает специальных Комитет совести, задачей которого является предупреждение геноцида любого народа, где бы то ни было в мире.

Совет состоит из 60-и членов, из которых 50 назначаются Президентом США. Остальные 10 — члены Конгресса, из которых пять назначаются спикером палаты представителей, а пять — председателем сената

Говоря о специальном значении гекатомбы для Соединенных Штатов, Президент Картер подчеркнул что к концу войны американские войска освободили целый ряд концентрационных лагерей. Он указал на то, что для многих уцелевших Соединенные Штаты превратились в новую родину и признал, что США не избежать ответственности за то, что в свое время не были приняты все возможные меры для того, чтобы спасти всех жертв гекатомбы.

На недавнем собрании, Президент Рейган заявил, что мы должны неутомимо хранить воспоминание о гекатомбе для того, чтобы не ослабевала наша бдительность против тирании и начилия.

Со времени своего учреждения Совет устраивает ежегодно, в национальном масштабе, "Дни памяти", котоые отмечаются и в Белом Доме и в Конгрессе, а также и во многих городах и селениях страны. В настоящее время Совет разрабатывает планы для музея-памятника, который будет сооружен в г. Вашингтоне на частные средства.

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The United States Holocaust Memorial Council has enjoyed the assistance of many government agencies. To the Honorable James G. Watt, Secretary of the Interior, and to his staff, to the Honorable Alexander M. Haig, Jr., Secretary of State, and to his staff, the Council expresses its special appreciation.

The following cooperated in providing documentation on the liberation of the concentration camps: The Center of Military History, Defense Audiovisual Agency, the National Archives, the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., YIVO in New York, and Yad Vashem and the Ghetto Fighters Museum in Israel.

Appreciation is also expressed to veterans across the United States for the photographs and personal accounts of the liberation which they willingly shared with the Council. The following organizations assisted the Council in making this most important contact: the American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Catholic War Veterans, and the Jewish War Veterans.

Professor Fred Crawford of the Center for Research in Social Change at Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia, and Professor Yaffa Eliach of the Center for Holocaust Studies, Brooklyn, New York, have done the pioneering work on the liberators of the concentration camps. As advisors to the International Relations Committee in planning the International Liberators Conference, their assistance and that of their very professional and dedicated staffs was invaluable.

The logo for the International Liberators Conference was designed by Dr. Mark Podwal, Dan Reisinger, Phyllis Goodnow, and Lou Stovall. The design and technical production of this publication were done with care and skill by Lou Stovall, Tom Bellucci, and Alvin Rosenbaum.

"We remember." "Nous nous souvenons." Мы помним

