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[Text is not legible due to image quality]
Uptown *familial* fractions, headed by the American Jewish Committee, remembered the Germany of Beethoven, the Germany of Schiller, thought that power...

Q: Excuse me, you mean that these people belonging to the America Jewish Committee were originated....

A: Originally German, through their...their power and their presence had been dissipated over the years. There were not that many German Jews involved any more. Many downtown, many eastern Jews, or the sons and daughters of the eastern Jews were now in positions of power.

Q: In your me, you make a difference between the Uptown and the Downtown Jews?

A: Well, I use that division classification. It's an old classification. It goes back to the beginning of the century, when the Jews, the original German Jewish migration, moved to the east side. They were then called Uptown Jews, and it refers to Jews of the reformed persuasion. (Because American Jews were not only divided politically and culturally, but also religiously) who were of German background and thought they were established economically, much than the more recent arrivals, although the differences were beginning to shrink by the 1930's, it was beginning to grow much....Now, the east Jews, of course, were...had traditionally been stirred by loud and emotional display. As early as 1905...
Q: But this was the old traditional Jewish way...
A: Yes. The traditional...
Q: the pleading...
A: Right. Now, the issues I say were first on whether there was a menace. And then of course on more concrete things: the possibility of mounting a boycott against Hitler. And the cause was also political. Many of the uptown Jews were not as enamored by Roosevelt as were the sons and daughters of eastern Jews which had much more universalistic approach and had been since the beginning of the century drunk with the idea of democracy and the welfare state, the idea that government had a role to play in helping the poor. It was a philosophy their parents believed in and they, of course, bought it wholesale.
Q: Drunk 'drunk'?
A: Drunk with the idea of democracy, yes. I say drunk because Jews are the only ethnic community in the United States that had intra-group elections—two between 1910 and 1920 and one in the 1930s—to see who should rule the community, who should govern, as if there was a possibility in the voluntaristic setting that we had of forming American Jewry, as if one could order a Jew to his Jewishness. Of course this was highly impossible. I say 'drunk', because they really bought the idea that democracy would work, so much so that between 1903 and 1921 the Jews actually formed a Kehila reminiscent of the old Kahal, to govern themselves. This was a group that was coming to terms with America in a far different way than other ethnic groups. Now, the question of course is whether we can assign such a group responsibilities, as
Naftali Mann does, as Elie Wiesel often does, whether this
good actually failed. And I would suggest to you, that
a very close look at the documents indicates that perhaps
Naftali Mann is right, perhaps we were not quite ready
to accept the mantle of leadership, that had been
for a time, in Europe, if one goes so perispeusly, so
suddenly. Perhaps our leadership was not so very intelligent.
Perhaps it lacked stature, at those who talk of conscious
betrayal I think are being unjust, Perhaps unintelligence,
perhaps even lack of will, that betrayal — never. As a matter
of fact, one could safely say that every single one of the
antiques used later by the civil rights movement to move
the United government in a certain direction was initially
conceived by Jews during the 1930's. From theater techniques,
from mass protests. The problem was, of course, that the
administration was not attuned to a problem central
to our own camp. And that leads us to the second question
and that is: are we assuming American Jewry in the 1930's
are inculcated for action, which their power did not match,
are we tilting with windmills. And the reason why I say that
is an important question is because the assumption behind
the idea that American Jewry did not do enough, is based on
one of the basic facets of Jewish political culture in Europe.
And that culture is this: the assumption is this: that there
exists in the world a spirit of civilized goodness that is
ready to intercede for Jews, if Jews mobilize it. And what
happened is that we failed to arouse that spirit of civilization.
Now, we looked for it in the Oval Office, one looks for
it in the Vatican, one looks for it in London, but how Jews
come to the notion that between Kishinev and Auschwitz there
was such a spirit that
in the world, that could be
nationalized for them, is a strange phenomenon. and yet, if
one reads that famous letter...

Q: You mean the pogroms?
A: The pogrom of Kishinev, yes. If one reads the...the cable by
Louis Marshall to the Pope in 1915 asking him, please to
intervene to stop the deportations against Jews in Poland and
receiving very...no comment, or an indifferent answer, one could
understand that in 1942, when we asked the same thing, there
would be no answer. There was no spirit of civilization.

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Q: Go on.
A: Let me give you an example of what I mean by that illusion of
a civilized spirit. In 1917 a message was sent to Emile
Zygelboim in London, that he ought to do everything, including
starving himself to death with other Jewish leaders, to arouse
the consciousness of the world. What a bitter irony. Zygelboim
had already given up the idea that there existed such an anima
in Lenin. But the people sitting right on top of Trebliki
are still talking about the consciousness of the world. It
was such a difficult thing, such an all prevailing, to root it
out. And it has a long history in Judaism from the national
minority rights clauses at the treaty of Versailles, the idea
that Judaism can be protected, even in Poland, by legal clauses.
and that was a very very hard thing to get away with. It is the assumption on which the indictment against American Jews rests, that there existed such a spirit in the Oval Office, Roosevelt, and then we failed to rouse it. And I really seriously wonder if we are not misreading the New deal history. Now let us get to another point then on the illusion of centrality, another illusion in Jewish political culture. And that illusion is that the Jewish question, and that Jews in general are more important than they really are. It is an illusion that is the anti-Semitic imagination, which imagines that Jews have power behind the scenes and conspire to rule the world. Now, of course one could argue very simply, that a people who is really powerful does not lose one of three of its members in a catastrophe like the Holocaust, which is the surest evidence that this is an illusion. But paradoxically enough, Jews, perhaps because of their own weakness, would love to believe that because they own the New York Times or the own CBS, (which they don't really do), that they really have such power. It was in fact the reason why the whole question of priorities was so bad. Like a weak and vulnerable people that was destroyed in Auschwitz, not a people that had power anywhere in the world. And the fact is that they were powerless. And we define that powerlessness by saying: the surest meaning in the internation was a lack of options, the inability to have alternatives about what to do. Not only in Europe, but in America as well.

Q: Yes. You mean that this weakness and this powerlessness...
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Q: In America...

A: Precisely... and one could really see it from several points of view. In 1936, when Roosevelt entered his second New Deal, most ethnic groups lessened their loyalty to him. The Second New Deal was a more radical one, and by that time some people had had their fill. The Jews, on the other hand, together with blacks, actually increased their proportion of the votes. By 1940 Jews were giving over 90% of their vote to the New Deal.

Q: The Second New Deal.

A: To the Second New Deal. A new political party had to be created - the American Labor Party - so that Jewish socialists could give their votes to a man episcopalian without compromising their principles. It was a fascinating display. But it really means the following: that so strong was the Jewish love affair with Roosevelt (because of his domestic policy, not his foreign policy), that Jewish leaders, like Steinman, Wise and others, could not threaten Roosevelt with a...the loss of the Jewish vote if he did not do their bidding on the rescue issue. As a matter of fact, it was quite the reverse. The archives are full of letters of Jewish leaders, asking Roosevelt's secretary to please send a letter confirming him or supporting him for a position in a Jewish organization. Something was that bind that...that tied to Roosevelt that...it could not be removed and in a sense then Jewish leaders were dependent on the less certain rewards for loyalty. They hid in other words, a very very limited political leverage
at the New Deal, not because the issue was a minor one for the
Roosevelt administration, one which had a very low priority,
but because the Jews had in fact a disproportioned amount of
political leverage, but not enough to really change major
policies. Now one might argue, and I... I have argued this many
times, that in comparison to other American groups the Jews
did very well in the 1930s. One thinks b... for example of
the German Americans in 1916. The German Americans in 1916
were the largest single ethnic group in the United States.
They did none of the problems that American Jews had. They
were not fragmented, they were coherent, they had a voice and
they were instrumental in delivering the election of 1916 to
Wilson, who ran on the platform, ‘he kept us out of war’.
German Americans wanted America out of the war, “they did not
want America to declare war against the [laughter]. But a
month after Wilson was inaugurated in March of 1917, he was
compelled nevertheless to declare war. What happened to German
Americans? Well, Sauerkraut became liberty cabbage, hamburgers
became Salisbury steaks. German was dropped from the curriculum
and for a while it was very uncomfortable to be a German
American in the United States. The German Americans did not
succeed in changing a major American policy. The Poles did
not succeed in preventing the crime of Crimmus. And the Irish
Americans, the most political ascended group in the United
States, the one that had captured the local political machines,
the one that had shown that one could be unified through a
religious hierarchy — the Catholic Church — had only one intere
between 1880 and 1910, it was called twisting the tail - preventing a rapprochement between England and the United States, and yet, they were not able to do so. That rapprochement did take place. Compared to other ethnic groups, in other words, other immigrant groups, American Jewry did not do at all badly. And that is a far better comparison than one, I think.

Q: How they...were they agents in the 30's of a wave of anti-Semitism in the United States?

A: Yes, and of course that is another factor in...in...in the election of Jewish political power. The depression with the economic dislocation and of course released enormously new wave of anti-Semitism, which perhaps frightened American Jewry more than it should have. Our studies of the German American Bund today indicate that it was not as powerful as we thought.

Q: The German American Bund was the German Jew...to...

A: The German American...

Q: The German American...

A: Right. Fritz Kuhm. Now we have new work on that by Sunders Diamond, and he indicates that the entire membership of the German American Bund may have been only 9,000 with perhaps another few thousand hangers on. We had over...and...We had overestimated it. Of course there is always Father Coughlin and others. The point was that the anti-Semitism was able to make a great deal of noise by themselves and were able to do something else that we had not taken into consideration. They were able to link themselves to legitimate isolationism and amplify their political voice in that way. And that link
is borne out by Charles Lindbergh, who is an American folk hero. Charles Lindbergh in September 1941 made a speech in Des Moines, Iowa in which he warned America that Jews and Anglophiles are... and planning to get America into a war. It is an anti-Semitic message amalgamated with the isolationistic message, and therefore legitimized. It was that...

Q: And given strength.
A: That linkage that really made the anti-Semitic force very strong. And of course beyond the anti-Semitism there was an entire amalgamation of forces: one could say of anti-Semitism, xenonophobia (that was the refusal to take immigrants into the United States), isolationism - this kind of a spectrum, while a liberal immigration policy and early recognition of Nazi and ultimately interventionism existed on the other side. And Roosevelt delicately tried to balance between 1938 and 1940, this step between one and the other. In the case of the Jews it happened to be, he needed to be much more of the... the fox than the lion. And most... Perhaps the bitterest irony of all is that in the restrictionism of the New Deal, anti-refugee policy what we find is that it is a classical example of democracy at work. There seems to be very little question that the consensus in America, even as late as 1941, perhaps as late as 1944 was that refugees, whether they were children or adults, simply had no place in America while one third of the nation was ill-housed, ill-clothed and ill-fed. And if Roosevelt ever forgot it, there was always the Senator...
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and who needs refugees. And the other paradox is of course that in 1938 from all that we know, the American Jewish community itself was more American than Jewish, it too was facing of influx in Jewish refugees during the depression. It feared that as American compatriots. They had gone beyond that. According to Samuel Pickstein, to have proposed that we lift its Paper Wall, as one authority called it, one historian - David Wyman, would have probably resulted in a beathering with much more restrictive legislation.

Q: What do you mean exactly?

A: The series of bureaucratic and administrative measures that were implemented by the State Department, especially by Breckingridge Long, usually through the...through a... a necessity in the immigration law which gave the consul at the scene the last right to say who'd get a visa. The use of those devices, the use of screening devices, the use of a... security psychosis to stop refugees from coming here. By which it was more difficult to get a visa to enter the United States, which was not at war, then Great Britain that was at war.

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A: Let me get back a moment to this question of... of the refuge policy. I said before that it is a classical case of bureaucracy at work. The American people simply didn't want more refugees here, and for Roosevelt to have thwarted that would have involved a political risk which he was not willing to take, and therefore he developed what I have called a policy
of gestures. For example, the combination of the Austrian and German quotas in mid 1938 after the Anschluss, which involved a recognition of the Anschluss, but supposedly saved the Austrian quota. It may very well be that the Evian Conference itself... C: Can you elaborate more on this because it... A: Well, one of the things that... C: They didn't do it.

A: Yes, the recognition, I think in June of 1938, the combination of the Austrian and German quotas in a sense unofficially extended the recognition to the Anschluss, to Hitler's annexation of Austria, but Roosevelt did it, supposedly because he had not, the Austrian quota would have been lost, and this was stated in the press as one of the things that Roosevelt did to help the Jews and the refugees. Another thing was the extension of visitor's visas, visas of people who were here for six months were allowed to stay here in 1939. The most concrete example of this politics of gestures may have been the Evian Conference itself. We... The reason why the invitation was extended is still a mystery to us, we don't really know what went on in Roosevelt's mind. But a careful reading of the invitation shows how carefully worded it was. It states that the American government has no intention of raising its quota system, or allowing immigrants to enter outside of it. It doesn't expect anyone else to do that either. How could the conference then hope to succeed, no one knows, even if Roosevelt had had the idea that Latin America would welcome them in mind. Of course Latin America had the same reservations as the United States did. On the
question....

Q: ...you mean that this was a policy of make believe?
A: Yes, make believe, right. A policy perhaps designed to

reduce the Jewish voting public, Roosevelt was something,

then Roosevelt in fact was doing very little. It wasn't until

much later of course that the Jews discovered that he was
doing very little. Now the way that was done, outside of the

politics of gestures was the enormous gap between what

Roosevelt was saying, and what was actually happening on

the administrative level. When men like Breckinridge Long

and the middle echelon people of the State Department, who

actually had control....

Q: Breckinridge Long had a very powerful position inside the

State Department.
A: Yes, he controlled the serious, the

agencies that

were in fact the rescue program of America, if we can call it

that. Now on that level....

Q: One of the assistants was Robert Borden Benson.
A: Right.
Q: One of the assistants.
A: There were of course many, many others. There was a whole

series of them who....Ye, of course every Jewish mother

knew that the

State Department was not something...

where foreign service was not something that you prepare

for

a Jewish son for. Dentistry - yes, perhaps even a doctor or

lawyer, but not a career in the State Department, because

the State Department had a subtle anti-Semitism. W

Dodd

had actually pointed out that that was so, and Roosevelt him-

self did not trust the State Department and used it very often
as a ploy, so that researchers today still must go to the National Archives to examine what the State Department did, essentially repeating the same trip that Jewish rescue advocates made during the war, because we cannot get to Roosevelt directly. Now the use of a visa policy was very interesting, and now let me read you a quote, a statement by Breckinridge Long in a memorandum to James Dunn, written on June 26, 1940.

Q: Who is James Dunn?

A: James Dunn was a fellow official of the State Department, another undersecretary...and in which he describes exactly the policy he intends to follow. He says: "We can delay and effectively stop for a temporary period of indefinite length the number of immigrants into the United States. We could do this by simply advising the consul to put every obstacle in the way and to resort to various administrative devices, which would postpone and postpone and postpone...That is exactly what the State Department did. And it did so by security gambit, by using the idea that the Germans have infiltrated spies into the refugee stream, (although why they would want to be there, nobody knows) it was a very unsafe stream) but nevertheless that was done. A whole series of articles appeared in the press about German agents, Roosevelt himself in a fireside chat talked talked about fifth columns and Trojan horses, giving went to the security psychosis, so that by 1940 the security screening process in the United States was far more stringent than even Britain which was to worse. That prevented refugees from coming. And the other thing of course was the action of the consul. Now, by 1938 Jew after periods of respite when they
did not believe what was happening, Jews in Germany finally understood that they had to get out. And long and chaotic lines formed in front of consulates and the wonderful...

Q: After the Kristallnacht...
A: Like the Crystal Night... wonderful stories are told about... something we still allows humour, humour that is more bitter than funny, about the Polish Jew, the Ostjuden, in East Berlin, who finally gets the message and wants a visa for America. He comes to the consulate (he is 78 years old, bent, walking with a cane), opens the glass doors, makes his way painfully up to the desk, and adresses the American consul: "I need a visa. And the American consul says: where are you from? - "I" from Poland. He goes to his desks and looks up the chart - Poland. Come back in 8 years. (which of course makes sense as a death sentence for him). The Jew accepts the message and makes his way painfully back to the glass doors in front of the consulate. And just before he gets to them he has an idea, his head stretches up and he makes his way back and painfully to the consul's desk and tells him: when I come back in 8 years, still I come back in the morning or in the afternoon? That was the bitter story of... of how Jews were accepted by God in... in 1939. Now I want to just do not tell... address myself to this whole question of Jewish power and how things changed. Of course a weak people loves to believe its powerful. The Jews were the ones who created an all-powerful God. It took a weak people to conceive such a fiction. We would win in heaven what we can never win on earth. And the question of how things changed is fascinating.
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Q: Any, you mean?

A: Today, I think in a sense things are . . . do look better because one of the facts is that looking for Jewish weakness in the Jews has in fact given way, and that is the question of unity. We . . . the Holocaust itself has given Jews a bitter lesson in the price of disunity, and that is something that we have experienced. Today only 15% of American Jewry is foreign born. We have been processed through America, through its schools, through its army and we are more American than ever before, perhaps less Jewish as well. And therefore, of course the other factor is that Israel, and Israeli Jewry, and I don't say Zionism has finally given Jews who are no longer able to acculturate a religious modality, a secular, perhaps a civil religion in which they can believe. So at least on the issue of Israel, of which all political committees have noticed, there is a sense of unity and less division than ever before. Of course the price of this is not the question of survival - more strongly today than ever before, because as we become more secularized and more Americanized the whole question of recognizing a common Jewish interest becomes problematic.

I think that at least one of the problems has lessened, and that is the problem of fragmentation and disunity and discordence, although we can still see it.

Q: Could we say - excuse me - could we say that there was . . . let's say in the 1940s, something as a Jewish feeling today in America?
A: In the 1940's? There were Jewish leaders who had access to the oval office. Roosevelt was very close to Brandeis, for example, he called him old Isiah. And of course Stephen Wise, who made a political error by supporting Smith in 1928, much to Roosevelt's chagrin, and did not get back into Roosevelt's good graces until 1934 as one of Roosevelt's top advisors passed from the scene. But he had been accused of being upseous. And it wasn't until Silver came along with a love for Taft, for Senator Taft of Ohio, that the White House knew Roosevelt was not doing enough and that the Jewish vote and Jewish loyalty to Jewish resources and Jews as stockholders and merchants in all of American politics, that these kinds of leverage could be moved, that the whole question of Jewish power and power came up. I think that in the overall situation we must say that if one measures power by the number of actions it opens up for a community, American Jewry was fairly powerless, and is not much more powerful today. One of the problems perhaps with the entire idea. Most problem in American Jewry is that it side people think American Jewry a tool which it is not able to fulfill because it does not have the power and that is rather a serious thing to happen because we have a lesson of what happened...The last Jew who assigned us, American Jewry, a responsibility which we did not have the power to fulfill, paid for it with its life in a sense. That is German Jewry.

Q: Yes.

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A: I want to say a word about philanthropy as a... as one of the important and crucial blocks in a more effective response
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Q: Philanthropy?

A: Philanthropy, of the idea of giving money. You know, philanthropy the idea that private organizations should finance and fund the new haven of the refugees comes up again and again as late as the Bermuda conference. We find in the instructions of Balfour and later on that they are saying, remember that we can not pay for this, it must be paid by private agencies. Philanthropy has a special meaning for American Jewry, because it is the way American Jewry very often came to terms with its Judaism - by giving. And by the way, assigned to them first by the Zionists. American Jewry was viewed as a great service station in which one could fill up with money and hopefully with people eventually. We say that the currency of American Jewish history is currency, is money. And yet, during the 1930's, in the hull of depression, American Jewish philanthropy was badly strapped and could not really handle the enormous problem that the refugees posed. Not only wasn't it fully organized until 1938 when the United Palestine Appeal...

Q: The up...

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A: Well, eventually what happened was of course, it was soon apparent that Jews were locked in to an age old tradition of solving problems by throwing money at it. And by 1938 it becomes apparent that the refugee problem was so enormous that the private funding could not solve the problem.

Q: The old way...

A: The old way would not work and yet the Roosevelt administration
and others, even the British Guiana proposal for example, which Britain had proposed as a White Paper, was to be funded by Jewish money.

Q: Yes, that is interesting is that all the attempts, all the political attempts of the states, whether it was American or British, in order to help the Jews, all of them said we will not pay ourselves, the Jews have to pay.

A: Exactly.

Q: Exactly as the Jews had to pay for their own deportations.

A: Not almost as if we... it's almost as if one can hear the Roosevelt administration and the British government resonating the same line that is coming from Berlin. The image that Jews have a great deal of money. And it really comes out when Roosevelt calls Morgenthau into his office to say get me a list of the 1000 richest Jews in the United States. I am going to build a new United States of Africa. And the Jews will pay for it. Both sides fell so easily into the idea that there was in fact a great Jewish wealth that could be the Jewish problem.

Q: It was... it was... it was the same pattern...

A: The same pattern, right.

Q: That followed.

A: The same... the same imagination, the same images of the rich wealthy Jews, that can solve the problem with its money.

Q: And it was the same pattern too, I think, in another way. Because Hitler said I don't want the Jews. The Allied said: don't want them too. They have to be resettled.

A: Yes.

Q: Nowhere.
A: And the resettlement problem is really a of

B: But we come more closely to the idea of...of the centrality of money in this...for see, one of the fascinating things is that never far beneath the Nazi cosmology, that...whose centrality was the Jewish vexation, was a well honed commercial act as well, the love of Jewish money. And that gives the oil a lust...kind of ghoulish simmetry. Because it begins with an offer to ransom the Jews of Germany and ends with an offer to ransom the Jews of Hungary. And throughout we find a private offer to...to...to ransom individual families. Now, that rans are [sic] appraisal, the first one was very interesting because it posed a problem, an agonizing problem for the Jews of the world, which has to this day not been solved and leads to all the most problematic factors in the analysis discussion of the Holocaust. In the early months of 1933, when to Roosevelt's chagrin, George Sibley, who was his old friend from , succeeded against all predictions in establishing contact with the Germans, with Schacht, and out of these..."A: Schacht was...

Q: Schacht was...

A: Schacht was finance minister and president of the Reichsbank, and his assistant Helmuth Wohlfart. It is true that Schacht was then allowed to go by Hitler on January 1, 1933, and the negotiations were taken up by Göring.

Q: What was...what was the exact matter of the negotiation?

A: The question of how can German Jewry be gotten out of Germany. The question of penniless refugees, of how much wealth could be gotten out. Out of these three months of negotiations, which took place in Berlin and London, came the so-called statement
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of agreement, a peculiar thing... a non recognized agency
ought negotiating with a sovereignty about a group of Germany
own citizens, it's Jewish citizens. Now the plan is very
complex, it is based on the Nunnahrach agreement that was
made with the Zionist Agency in 1935, the Jews were forced
agreement for German capital goods and that way would be able
to bring out some of their money in form of goods, and of
could the German economy would profit by the sale of capital
machinery.

Q: This was the Nunnahrach agreement?
A: Yes, and that was of course the key to the Schacht proposal
to when Roosevelt heard the Schacht proposal, and heard the
mention of Jews, by the way, he was very chagrined and rather
vexed that his friend Calnek had mentioned the unmentionable.
He had mentioned what the Germans always talk about and what
the Roosevelt administration had never talked about Jews.

Q: He had mentioned the word.
A: He mentioned the word: Jews. The 'political refugees'
maxim had been applied and no one ever mentioned Jews. In
fact one could go through all the documents and very rarely
see the mention of the word Jews. While the Germans were
talking only about Jews, and converting Roosevelt himself to the Jewish faith, the Roosevelt ad-
ministration was reconverting the Jews to a bland category
called refugees, and so one could say that the
Jewish question was ground to dust between... between a
new terminology which hid the question from public view,
both sides.
Q: Even when the extermination... 
A: Even when...right. Of course the key word there is again the word resettlement which is used in the west as a solution to the Jewish problem, and also used in Berlin as a solution to the Jewish problem. It makes sense both really mean the same thing turning away some desired minority in an equatorian rain forest in the West, us, Germany of course, for the Nazis, a processed killing operation in specially designed death camps, using the most interesting management and productive techniques and even more praising it. But the problem that Hitler came out, the release of German Jewry by outside Jews, who would in a sense raise, that was a proposition used by Ludwig Berger. 
Q: But excuse me...excuse me, we must make the things clear. Schacht exactly came up with what proposal? 
A: Well the proposal is complex. The...the money of the German Jews would be put into a trust fund and their property, and that would be based on it which would then be bought by outside Jews. Now the point is that in the German...in the Nazi fantasy there was an outside Jewry that existed and was organized and had a presence on the money markets of the world, that could in fact buy out. 
Q: International Jewry. 
A: International Jewry, which is of course what their fantasy was all about Jew. And they would buy out the German Jews by buying these bonds and by buying the capital machinery. In this way, Germany would solve its exchange problem which would go to finance the Goering Four Year Plan, to rearm Germany, and
and the Jews would have their Jews. The discussion that took place in London was bitter and agonizing, because it really
emphasized a question of whether the Jews, the Jewish leaders, should cooperate in the destruction of a particular
Jewish community in Germany. Should they cooperate in their own... their own destruction? They did not yet know about
the Final Solution. It is a question that comes up more fully
after the war. In other words, the whole question of whether
the Germans... whether Jewish leaders really cooperated, really took
part in it, was raised as early as 1939 over the question of removing German Jewry. As
we were non-plussed. Let me read you a quote from...
Q: And were the Jewish leaders, lets say the Jewish American
leaders, were they aware of this terrible problem which....
A: Yes. I want to read you that quote from... from Rennebaum...
Q: Who was he?
A: Rennebaum was head of the boycott committee, was very
much opposed to the problem. I'll just a quote from this book:
"In furnishing this note... Rennebaum. Rennebaum, who later became
a victim of the Holocaust, urged simultaneously not to support the
Jewish proposal, less say... not procedures make the Jewish
victims agents of the Nazi government" which was precisely
of course, what the historiography of the post war period is
about, on this whole question of sheep to the slaughter. Did we cooperate. And the question comes up even before; in a
certain sense were almost compelled and forced into this kind
of problem which is a part of the Holocaust which is not
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fully understood: that part of the question of powerlessness is being compelled to do these kind of things and anything on touch in a sense turns...

Q: Did one can find the same ransom pattern all along the ex...

theory of the extermination.

A: Yes, well, do you cooperate with your own...with your own testers? Do you pay ransom for kidnapping? Should we have asked the German Jews?

Q: Well, this one was really very good.

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A: Well, aside from the question of a Jewish leadership being faced with the problem of having literally to remake Judaism to fit the Nazi idea of it in order to rescue the German Jews, there was another question: the execution of the problem. Because Jews lived in an anti-Semitic world. In the places stood the government of Poland, the government of Rumania, and the government of Hungary, carefully watching whether the Germans would get away with it, whether Jews could in fact be sold to enrich the coffers, the treasuries of these countries. And that was an important consideration, which made the whole negotiating in London decide to follow through with only a token of the agreement, much to the dismay of the German Jewish leaders, and of course the entire proposition was interrupted by the outbreak of the war. There is one last question that we ought to turn to: was it possible? Could we have done it? And I think...a fair minded historian would say that the whole Schacht proposal ransom which was
required a stable world and was supposed to take place over a few years was nonsense to begin with. There was no such possibility in the world. It was just another scheme to get Jewish money from outside Jews. And if one had to make a judgment on the position of Jewish leadership in that point, one would not say that it betrayed but they probably judged very carefully and were correct in not cooperating with the proposal. Of course the question of Evian is a crucially important one. We don't know...we knew the conference in a sense was foredoomed, that was no serious proposal, although fascinatingly enough a proposal comes from Trojillo to settle Jews in the Dominican Republic. It is one of the most comical stories in the Holocaust. Because while the Germans are taking Jews out of Germany one after the other, they are also in Czechoslovakia because they have bad blood, Jewish blood, a Fascisti which is ruining the folk. Trojillo welcomes Jews to the Dominican Republic, not because he loves Jews, but because he thinks that white blood will improve the racial stock of the Dominican Republic, which is plagued by blackness.

Q: Even if this white blood is Jewish.
A: Even if it's Jewish, so you see no matter... In a sense, they cannot win. They have... the question of blood makes the whole thing a circus. They have the wrong blood for Germany, the right blood for the Dominican Republic. And of course Myron Taylor may have been absolutely right, all the Jews really wanted was to live in a world that gave them no quarter. They lived the classic paranoid nightmare. They lived in a world that wanted to murder them and gave
that no haven. Sort of they...

Q: Do you think that if... let's say at the Evian conference real

A: There was a very important question, and of course we have a

Q: Do you think that the trip could have changed, that the

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because had a haven been offered, even a resettlement haven, the story might have been entirely different, although we don't know that for certain, but the Jewish conference of Europe did open up the question of resettlement and it became for Roosevelt, who was a great geographer, a wonderful stamp collector and who fancied himself a nation builder, became the solution. There was nothing seductive about tucking away an unpopular minority in some tropical rain forest where it could bother no one. The Jews...

Q: He liked the migrations.
A: Yes.

Q: The movements of population.
A: ...and even suggested in October 1939 in a meeting of the executive of the Intergovernmental Committee on Political Affairs, that they should think in terms of ten million. This was October, a month after the war had broken out. France and England were thinking whether they would survive, and he was calling them to think of the refugees, and of course they were thinking of no such thing. Roosevelt imagined that somewhere in Africa there could he built a...a United States of Africa, which originated in a proposal...recapitulated the American experience even to the extent of having it under British sovereignty. He thought in those large terms, visionary, in no way tied to the fact of the fact that the Jews were in fact ancient...not an ancient population with a good, perhaps as high as 60% of the population over the age of 40. Certainly not a pioneering population, and those who could pioneer had already been tightening off by the youth Aliyah, by the Zionist movement, so that it was very very difficult. And he hired and
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according to some there may have been as many as sixty
six hundred sixty six different resettlement proposals made
during this conflict, with Isiah Bowman who was introduced
to him by this one close Jewish friend, Henry Morgenthau,
the only Jew that would be accepted by Roosevelt's mother.

Q: Who was a geographer, Isiah Bowman?

At he was a geographer from John Hopkins University, who had
by the way almost no confidence at all that the idea of mass
resettlement could work. But Roosevelt scurried the earth:

California, the Atacococo Plateau in Venezuela,
a few African republics, Indeana, the British Guiana. In
dense the key word became resettlement, and that word
really requires a close scrutinizing. Resettlement became
the single code word for the Final Solution. In West...

Q: It is the word used before...

A: And it really meant the same thing. Because one could not
resettle a people against its will. Where mass resettlement
did work, as in Israel, as perhaps in Birobidge or perhaps
in the Crimea after World War I, or even in the Baron
Roth... Baron Hirsch settlements in Argentina, it had to
be in tandem with an idealism, a voluntary work, other-
wise it was simply a movement of people, like so many
cattle. What was done to the Greeks by the Turks and the
Turks by the Greeks, after World War I, it was in itself
a form of cultural genocide. In other words resettlement
would not have worked. And yet, one wonders. And this
in one of the great arguments: Was it possible in 1943,
for example, and is Benson right, to get the Jews out
anywhere, it matters. **This** The Zionists, of course did
FURTHER resettlement...
Q: To coup.

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A: Of course there is no question that Roosevelt and his fantasy about resettlement posed a special kind of problem to the Zionists. I think the rough estimate of how much it costs to resettle each Jew was about 2,400 pounds in Israel. The Zionists, perhaps in an unilaterally heavy way could not of course abandon Zionism and the idea of Zionism. They could not conceive of a state without Zionism or Zionism without Zion. The 1930's because of the Rescue of Jews, the pressure, really generated a whole new group of an ancient enemy that the Zionists thought they had gotten rid of by 1906 — the so-called territorialists. And of course the idea of resettlement was really a territorial idea.

Q: This means to resettle the people...
A: No...

Q: where ever it could be.

A: Right, not in Palestine. And the Zionists were very much afraid of that idea. And when Stephen Wise heard of the idea of making the former German colony of Tanganyika, in Kenya, a haven for Jews, he said no (in 1939), that he would never want the Jews under German again.
Because in 1939 there was an idea which the British had, of perhaps giving Tanganyka back to Hitler as a part of the appeasement policy. By 1941 of course he was singing a different tune. He would have accepted something other than Palestine. But for them the idea of abandoning it, was very very strange, was very difficult to accept. They...they sought it the only way they knew— they thought that if the White Paper had been pressed upon the Jewish people by British political fiat....

Q: The White Paper was...?

A: No, a move...a British policy in May 1939 of restricting land sale and immigration to Palestine, taken right at the peak of the crisis. I think that it was Ben Guri on who said in 1948...just to show you the dilemma it put the Zionists in, that they would...they would fight the White Paper as if there was no Naziism...

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A: The question of resettlement of course did pose an enormous problem for the Zionists. It meant that resources that would ordinarily be focused on the Yishuv, would have to go to the question of rescue...

Q: Yishuv means the Jewish Community in Palestine.

A: In Palestine. Now for the Zionists, the Yishuv was the best way of rescuing Jews. It seemed a logical answer to the problem. If only England had not curtailed immigra-
tion and land sale. And they had believe, in a sense were compelled to, that if the White Paper was pressed on to them by a political act, then it had to be undone, and at that time, in '43, we had Ben Gurion saying: we will fight the White Paper as if there was no Nazi Germany, and Nazi Germany – as if there was no White Paper. A terrible reality, a terrible problem of what to do. And yet, re-settlement which gave... disinterred the whole territorialist question. We find Wise saying in November of...23, 1933 after Kristallnacht, we find him saying about Tanganyka, a former German colony. "I would rather have my fellow Jews die in Germany, than live somehow, anyhow in the lands which bear the imprints of yesterday's occupation of Germany, in lands which may tomorrow be yielded back to Germany." That was another grandious, and I am sure that... Had Wise said it in 1943, he would not have made that statement. What to do? It may very well be that the charge or the indictment of the Zionists that they were... that they were... that in the Biltmore conference and subsequently in the American Jewish Conference that was organized in 1943...

Q: In order to do something...
A: to do something....
Q: the... rescue the people...
A: they had in fact already written off the Jews and were thinking exclusively in terms of a... a national homeland after the war.
Q: of the future...
A: of the future, right, and that... that... that may be so.
And yet, one has to match that with the prognosis, with the possibilities of another resettlement could have worked. I don't think that the question of the Zionist stand on mass resettlement really is an important one. It is a hypothetical question. The fact is that there were no mass havens for Jews being offered which could have been used, and that in order for mass rescue to have worked, we would have had to have mass resettlement, infiltrated...infiltration of individual Jews into existing societies and a more liberal immigration policy in both Latin America and the United States. Now, the issue comes up in 1943 with the so-called Bergson Group. A group of Israelis in America represent...representing the right wing... 

Palestine Jews.

...Palestinains at that time, right...who do the unthinkable as far as the Zionists conc...are concerned, and therefore create a tremendous conflict. They separate the homeland issue from the rescue issue, and in fact give priority to the rescue issue. For Zionists, the two were on a continuum; rescue was possible if Palestine would be open. The Revisionists argue that it cannot open up Palestine at the time, therefore we ought to get out the Jews by any means. Did the Zionists in a sense, make an error? Were they too heavy handed, were they too stuck in to their own ideological propigities in this case? That question will be argued for years to come. But whether or not it could have worked in the end really depends on whether such havens could have been materialized in 1943. And my...The truth is that no
It is not only the question of the haven, the question of the people to put it, as a matter of fact.

A: Yes. Could the Jews have pioneered? Could this have worked?

Myron Taylor says in 1939 what the Jews really want is to be given their peace and live peacefully in settled societies. They do not really want to pioneer, except in Palestine. And I think that Taylor...

Q: They want... they want to settle inside...

A: In settled societies, right.

...and they don't want to be resettled. This is completely true.

A: That's very important. There is another question that I think was a... was a key road block in the recent situation.

...that was a question of war aims and war priorities. If you look back in 1939: the Jews could not be easily welcome in the United States because of things that we already mentioned: the restrictive legislation, anti-Semitism, the effects of the depression and so forth. After the war, that... that rational change. The Jews cannot now be rescued because the fastest way to rescue Jews is through victory.

Q: In Weiz... when Weiz pointed out...

A: Yes. The fastest way to rescue Jews in other words, is through victory, and nothing can be done to interfere with that victory including the rescue of the Jews. Now when Weiz points out that this is so - the Jews will all be saved by the end of the war - there is no answer from
Washington. And yet, to have challenged that idea that somehow the Jews de...required a special strategy, a change in the priorities of war, to make it in fact what Hitler had called it, a war tol...to destroy the Jews, that could not have been done; the changing of the war aims.

Not a single one of the conferences that we have which discussed war aims and war strategies, from Argentia which produced the Atlantic charter to Tehran and to Yalta, ever discussed the idea that Jews,...that rescue of the Jews should become a war aim. As a matter of fact, Stalin and Roosevelt were very careful not to make the war against the Nazis a war to save the Jews. Perhaps they knew instinctively that that would have interfered with the mobilization war plans. For the Russians it became their great patriotic war and for the Americans it became the great crusade, not talking about Jews. To...The interesting thing is that only for the Jews is World War II the war against the Jews. Even today, the textbooks do not give the same kind of priority to follow the same priority about the Holocaust that were actually followed during the war.

And this brings up the question to whose history does the Holocaust belong and why didn't Roosevelt and Churchill and Stalin understand that...that what was going up in the chimneys of Auschwitz was a little bit of their world, that it was only symbolically Jews. And that the lack of confidence and the lack of moral in the Western World today may be somewhat...have been lost somewhere in Auschwitz. After all, what was happening? The things that
The western world produced to enhance life, production, technology, managerial techniques, were reversed to produce some many units of death per day. What else can be said but that Auschwitz is the modern world and its problems in microcosm. What are we? Are we becoming Muselman in any sense? Is that really mean bureaucratised standing room only kind of world that we live in? Is that happening today? But you know, leaders don't work on abstract philosophy, they work on a day to day reality. Roosevelt worried on the political reality: could he accept the refugees and the answer was: no, the question was could they survive. Until... until Stalingrad of February 1943, which marks the changing of the war, they were worried about their survival. They did not have the kind of... of depth to imagine it, and if they came back today, they would not understand why Auschwitz has suddenly become the... Auschwitz, not just the beaches of Normandy and not the camps of death march, but Auschwitz was in fact become the symbol of World War II. They did not....

Q: For who? For who?

At well, right now perhaps for the Jews, but I think ultimately we see that the totalitarian microcosm that it really was, it may very well be that more and more people will realize what happened in Auschwitz happened to everybody, and here is a different order of event and that our lives will never be the same again. And now, that may be a wishful thinking on my part, but there is reason to believe it. If of course there are other theories about it too. It may
in fact have been an unimportant event that happened to an unimportant and vulnerable people. That's another way of looking at it. I...I personally don't think so, and that's why I object to the so-called obscene analogy. Auschwitz is not Hiroshima, although one could argue that the...the components were the same. Anonymous dying by fire, use of technology, a race factor also present at Hiroshima, but Auschwitz is different. Auschwitz is different partly because it happened to a people that was different and were in a sense murdered for their difference. That's...that's the key point. So that when we constantly bring up the Armenians and today the Cambodians, those are all interesting atrocities and I do not take away the agony of them, but Auschwitz is something...something that has horrendous particularity.

The question of the strategy of...victory to save the Jews really put men like Stephen Wise in a bind. Let me read you something that Stephen Wise said at the introduction speech in the American Jewish Congress in 1943, to show you how he was bound by this question of...of war aims. "We are Americans, we have, first and last all the time. Everything else that we can and have, deeper and richer and strengthens, if that can be, our Americanism. As Americans and first and sternest task in common with all other citizens of our beloved country, with and with all the citizens of the United Nations, is to win the anti-Fascist war unless the war be won or else is lost. Now what had to be...happened for Jewish rescue is that a special case had to be made for Jews. The Nazi war machine was treating Jews specially, and to have said we want something special would have meant to derail that thing. For Jewish
Readers to argue this, would in a sense have placed their loyalty in jeopardy... that in the whole of loyalty in American Jew.

ROBINE 424

Mr Feingold 154

1: There is no question that the Straus... that Wise is a tragic figure.

2: Stephen Wise, you mean.

3: Yes, Stephen Wise. Because he is in a sense locked in by his Americanism. Therefore 'We are Americans first' really tells the entire tragedy. To have intruded into the American war aims, the additional and exceptional aim of saving Jews would of course... it could have possibly been interpreted as a... a kind of way away from a rapid victory and would have disintegrated the whole question of loyalty. That question was for Jews. It is another point too that one ought to make about Zionists and Zionism. In a sense the fact that the Holocaust proved the Zionists so... so terribly right, it was... a thing that Zionism could feed on, had they not predicted that the Diaspora was untenable for Jewry. And the figures were of course told in the increase in the membership of Hadassah and the general Zionist organization in the United States, from virtually nothing in the first decades of the 20th century, when after all, most Jews had voted with their feet to come to America, and not to Palestine to 1938 when the Zionist movement contained well over a 100,000 members and had in fact become the
center of gravity of American political life. And it had
not become so because of the compelling nature of Zionist
ideology about which American Jewry understood very little.
In any case, it had become so because the special idea,
the idea of a Jewish refuge and Jewish sovereignty and
Jewish power had a compelling logic of its own. Para-
suchly, Hitler proved, and that was a fantastic link
with them too, ...so that the Zionists in a sense were
caught by two kinds of things. One...
they had themselves their own raison d'etat, as a matter
of fact.

Precisely. They did not have to come to terms with what
really happened. Well, I think, that problem will really
never be resolved: what the Zionists should have done and
the question of territorialism and havens, or whether
the Bergeon Group which had suggested a separation of
the two was right, will have to be resolved at some
future time. I would rather like to turn to the whole
question of what happened when the news of Final Solution
was finally uncovered, after the State Department's attempt
to conceal it, and what the State Department then did
about it. And that really occurred the early months of
1943, when a ...a protests and public knowledge of the...
of the Holocaust and what was happening in eastern
Europe finally hit both British and American Jewry. It
was Anthony Eden who came to Washington at that time and
said that we must do something. The United States was
originally in favour of having such a conference in Ottawa.
and finally the idea of a conference was suggested to be held on Bermuda. An interesting choice, because Bermuda, an isle on the Carribean, was not accessible to the press and could be controlled. The conference was held and of course it goes down in the book as the mockery of the Bermuda Conference. The irony is of course that precisely while the conference was being held the Warsaw ghettos uprising is occurring.

Q: The very day.
A: ...The very day. Now, the conference is an amazing conference from two points of view. In that the American delegation is...is ordered by Breckingridge Long, in a serious,...in an agenda what they can do, to virtually do nothing. And it was this...this idea that nothing could be suggested. For example, the suggestion that a prisoner of war exchange for Jewish men in German camps be exchanged, or that the classification of certain Jewish inmates in concentration camps be changed to prisoner of war—a suggestion made by the World Jewish Congress—was not accepted. Instead we find amazing little things happening. There is a great fear for example that...among the British, the British representative Law, that suppose the Germans did follow through and did release a certain number of Jews, what do we do with these surplus people. More: If Hitler accepted a proposal to release perhaps millions of unwanted persons, we might find ourselves in a very difficult position. What to do with surplus people? Seems then interposed as to say: There was no doubt what—
ever that the Department of State would oppose negotiations with Germany. This was after all a total war, and one does not negotiate with the enemy. And Breckinridge Long went even further. When it came to the question of sending packages, food packages to the camps, he argued that to do so would be to mitigate, to help the German war effort, whose responsibility it was after all to feed those people in the camps, and he was opposed to that. There were other problems as well. Ships coming back from Europe were supposedly coming back empty, and at one point the representative of the Jews, Mr. Backer, suggested that these empty ships could bring back Jews to the United States.

But the American instructions were very very clear. If and when prisoners were released, they should be resettled as close to their former homes as possible.

Q: Prisoners, you mean refugees?
A: Refugees or inmates of camps. They should be resettled as close to their former places as possible.

Q: Close to which?
A: Close to their former places.

Q: Which means nothing.
A: Which meant of course nothing. Precisely. At the same time - and the most fascinating part of course was that the instructions to the American delegation insisted on continuing to use the name 'political refugee'. The instructions are very clear. No one is to use the term 'Jews' the problem was a problem not of race, or group or ethnic group or something like that, it was not a problem of Jews, it was a problem of refugees. The whole of political refugees.

A: The conference was held only because there was a Jewish
pressure from both parts of the American Jewry and British Jewry in order to do something.

Right. And yet they would not....And that by the way continued well into April 1944 when finally the immigration laws were circumvented, a ...a step which was considered impossible in 1939, and a proposal to create temporary havens is accepted. Robert Murphy, the American...Roosevelt sent to North Africa, is instructed by the State Department to seek refugees, that were in fact already saved, and he is told to get a good mix, meaning of course, not too many Jews.

f: Pardon. Je voudrai parler coup,

NY Feingold 155

At just thinking back on the Bermuda conference today is agony. How could it have been in the heat of 1943 when the death mills were grinding, that two nations, the United States and Britain, get together, fully conscious of the fact that they are giving a sop to the Jewish public opinion that had just discovered that a processed mass murder operation of their co-religionists is occurring in Europe. It is just fantastic and ridiculous the juxted position of the Warsaw ghetto uprising with the Bermuda Conference makes it all the more dramatic.

And yet, that is precisely what happened. A deliberate attempt to virtually do nothing, a continuation of the politics of gesture. So that one can say that if the Byian Conference was a part of Roosevelt's policy of gestures, the Bermuda Conference is an extension of
that and the addition of a cruel mockery, which it was actually called at the time by the Jewish press. The instructions to the American delegation literally said: we will do nothing. Every suggestion...And the British aide memoire said the same thing. Let me read you some notes from it: first of all, there was a continual...

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At the Evian Conference was a part or an extension of Roosevelt's policy of gestures, then the Bermuda conference was an extension, an even further extension of that and including as well a new element, a cruel mockery of what was happening in Europe. The invitation, the agenda, given to the American delegation and the British aide memoire to the British delegation to Bermuda, both are very clear in what they wanted. They wanted nothing. And to do that, they had to limit what the conference could do and by very very interesting it exactly that. They in effect not the question of what was happening in Hitler's death camps, but to rescue those Jews already found a precarious haven in such places as North Africa and Spain, not really addressing the problem entirely. They were...

[Feingold which...who were already saved.

already saved. They were very much afraid of making the war a war to save the Jews. Listen to Breckingridge Long, making certain in his diary that that would not happen. It that we are fighting this war on
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Account and at the instigation of our Jewish citizens? And
must of course must not happen. It must not be made a war
to save the Jews. And the British saying to their people;
I cannot be treated as though it were a wholly Jewish pro-
blem. The allegations that this was a refugee problem
and had nothing to do with race wr with Jews was continued
in Bermuda, and it was to be continued until 1944...
Q: And why, why... if they didn't want to do anything, why did
the conference take place?
A: Probably as a sop to an aroused of public opinion. It was
done at the suggestion of the British

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If both the British and American delegations were instructed
to do nothing at the Bermuda conference, why did the con-
ference take place?

Just is the interesting paradox faced by the by both
governments. In aroused public opinion required a response,
and that by the way itself is an interesting point.

Because it indicates that if a public opinion had been
aroused in the democracies, perhaps more might have been
done. No leadership would acted without such an opinion.

And here you have an example where it was. And yet, at
the same time the problem was to do something, to do
something while appearing to do something. And that was done
by very interesting way: by simply instructing the
deleagations to confine the problem so that it would not
even be focusing on the Jewish problem. Listen to the British aide-memoire on that point: "It cannot be treated as though it were only a Jewish problem"—that is, the points that will be handled at Bermuda—"...giving preference to one group or race would raise enormous criticism." Or the American delegation receiving instructions from Breckinridge Long: "If we handle the Jewish problem exclusively, it might be to the Nazi fascist propaganda" quote, unquote. Or Long talking about the possibility of bringing up the Jewish question exclusively again; quote "People might think that we are fighting this war an account and at the instigation of our Jewish citizens", and that was one thing that...

Unbelievable.

At...that had to be avoided. So that when we came along to it, we...we get every single point rejected by...by the Bermuda delegation; packages to food camps would relieve Hitler of the burden of feeding the inmates, as if they weren't being killed; the possibility of exchanging Jews as prisoners of war could not be discussed; even the question of entering perhaps into negotiations with Berlin on this question.

...on this question, could not be handled. Listen to...Haskins, the...part of the American delegation, talking about that...and if I could just find it here....

He is saying on the question of rescue through victory, which was the only point that the American delegatic...delegation could handle with some confidence, it would quote"not
only be foolish, it would be criminal" to negotiate with the Nazis. And this was a point kept throughout. So one by one every possible point of rescuing those people who needed rescue, instead of those who have found a precarious haven in refugee camps in Spain and North Africa, was discounted, and finally the Bermuda. Conference came to the one conclusion that Breckingridge Long wanted to come to: that is to disinter the Intergovernmental Committee on Political Refugees, which was originally created at Brian and which had done nothing except to clutter the rescue effort, and was in itself a reflection of the lack of will to rescue— to disinter that, to once again start the movement. So shameful was the...was the performance of both Britain and the United States at Bermuda, that they...the conferences merely and practically decided not to issue a press release, and that perhaps was a mistake, because it was this very neglect that alerted the Jewish public opinion that something awful, something horrendous had happened at Bermuda, that is that nothing had happened at Bermuda in the midst of the slaughter. And it was from this point on that an alert Jewish opinion finally brings enough public pressure to get a Congressional hearing on the whole question of...rescue. In November Breckingridge Long is called in executive session to that Congressional Committee which is holding hearings on the possibility of creating a commission on rescue. And Long, suffering from nervous tension perhaps, or
suffering from other things, vastly exaggerates the number of Jews admitted to the United States. Every delegation, by the way, is always citing almost as a what the United States has done for refugees. And he exaggerates the figure. The figure is published in the Jewish press and long is finally recognized, as many as others that were already recognized, as being the man who single handedly fed Roosevelt certain information and has single handedly taken upon himself to stop the entrance of Jews into the United States. His... His fingers are removed, his hand is removed from the rescue levers and in late December Henry Morgenthau is activated as a result of his too... monitoring the... 

Yes, this leads to the creation of the War Refugee Board. Of the War Refugee Board.

But I think that in Bermuda too they were... what is extraordinary, when one goes in the... in the details, in the... how cynical they... they were. Because when they imagined that Hitler can change his policy, they are spared to death.

As yes. For example, on this question of what would happen if Hitler... if the Germans would actually agree to extrusion, and this is in the British aide-memoire again. "There is possibility that the Germans or their satellites may change over from a policy of extermination to one of extrusion (of sending out the refugees), if that should happen..."

This means not to kill everybody.

... not to actually comply with what we
want - the rescue of the Jews. If Hitler...and this is a quote: "If Hitler accepted a proposal to release a billion of unwanted persons, we might find ourselves in a very difficult position." What would we do with the Jews, a problem that was continually to plague both the British and the United States. What would we do? In a sense one might almost say that the Germans in their Final Solution were solving a problem for the Western world as well, for the Allied world. Every Jew killed in a death camp in the east meant one less Jew required a haven in the west. An interesting tendum. The conclusion to resurrect the IGC of course is the completion of that mockery, and... of IGC is the International... Of the Intergovernmental Committee...

The Intergovernmental Committee.

That was Breckinridge Long's idea, stated in the original instructions to the American delegation.

Yes. But what is extraordinary, the time they spent in discussing how to get some people coming from North Africa, people...

Finally...

Q:...which have already been saved.

A: Ultimately that's what they came up with. The idea which... of perhaps temporary havens, which...which was finally suggested by a columnist of the New York Post, Samue Krafton, who used the argument: if oranges or carrots can be temporarily put up in American piers awaiting transshipment without a visa, why couldn't people have done the same thing. Roosevelt found the argument so
compelling that he used it ultimately to become more the
lion than the fox, and to circumvent the rules and to
build that refugee camp at Oswego at which 903...
Oswego, where is it?
- in New York State.
- in the State of New York.
A night, which is very cold, many of the refugees did not
like it, coming from Italy and from North Africa. And
703 refugees, a good mix - Roosevelt demanded from his
agent Robert Murphy in North Africa, lest...lest we think
that only Jews were in the refugee stream - and that
finally marked another great victory, a victory that
unfortunately came late...when the overwhelming portion
of American...of European Jews was already in ashes. In
April of 19...actually, in July of 1944 we finally did
circumvent the immigration laws, which in 1938 were
considered
- That could not be. So things had
changed, but they changed much too slowly, and as Stephen
Wise had pointed out, by the time...if we comply with
the rescue through victory gambit, strategy, they will
be no Jews left to enjoy that victory.
And do you think that the creation of the War Refugee
Board after...at the beginning of 1944 changed basically
the things?
- Well, I would say that in the final tally we would have
to say that at least the Jews of Budapest, who were saved
that less than half of Hungarian Jewry that was saved,
ow...its life in some degree to the War Refugee Board.
because at that time the... the separate components of
the... of the rescue effort, of all the witnessing nations,
of all neutral agents were brought together: Raoul Wallen-
berg was brought to Budapest, the delegations of the
embassies were... their staffs were increased, and money
was filtered into a sub-account in Hungary, and... So that
at least these Jews were saved. But even here, the problem
was... was a difficult one. It came too late, as Leon
Kubowitzki of the... the rescue agent of the World Jewish
Congress said, too little. And too late.

Q: Yes.

A: We could have had the refugee board in 1943 or 1942, it
would have made all the difference in the world.

Q: This is... this was not the case. And... Now, say what
you want to say about Auschwitz.

A: I'll try. I just want to say a word about bombing. I don't
think we can get it all in here. Bombing has become a...

central point in the... in the contemporary dialogue
on the Holocaust. Wherever one goes, in the magazines
and in Holocaust conferences, everyone is talking about
the bombing. Of course, it is understandable, because
bombing is a simple and... a clean way to have saved
the Jews in the absence of physical control of the
slaughter. Interdiction from the air might have saved
the Jews, and it has a compelling logic. And yet, a
jaundiced observer might look at it with a different
point of view. There is something seductive about the...
the conclusion that the bombing of Auschwitz could have
saved the Jews. No doubt though
Bombing is so fascinating a question because it encompasses a one small idea of all the problems of the witness. It simply required a very minor change in war priorities and strategies to bomb Auschwitz. And what has been argued is, that by the spring of 1944, when the 15th Air Force in Italy could already bomb, why wasn't that done? And of course the...the memorandum that came back from both the American and British Joint Staff was that it would in fact interfere with the winning of the war, it was of doubtful efficacy. It has been argued that if the airplanes were bombing so close to Auschwitz already, at five miles east of Auschwitz, to the main synthetic oil works, why could they not have bombed the rail line and the death machine itself. It's an interesting question. And of course, Auschwitz was not the only death camp, and the Germans had a very fast way of...fixing rail lines, and...in the spring of 1944 was rather late in time to consider such a question. And the interesting question is that the new theories do not really come to grips with the other part of the reason given by our commanders for not bombing Auschwitz, which was the fear of the escalation of terror. And indeed the Germans could have escalated terror. They had thought of Auschwitz, they could think of lynching American crews or...by bringing P.O.W.'s to the bomb sites, and so forth. The more interesting question is why didn't the Jewish rescue advocates
pick up the themes suggested by the governments in exile in November December of 1943 for retaliatory bombing.

The bombing of Amsterdam in July 1943 in retaliation of Auschwitz might have lifted that curtain of silence that made the question of getting Auschwitz believed so difficult. It is even reasonable to suppose that perhaps more rational Nazis in hierarchy might have come to conclusion that Auschwitz was not worth the bones of a single German city. At least the question would have been opened up, and yet we find that in March of 1943 the rescue advocates in their in their twelve point program at the Madison Square Garden rally did not take up the question of retaliatory bombing, which might have been a much more effective way...

It is not even a question of retaliatory bombings, the bombings took place. It was enough to say, we bomb because of the Jews.

Right. And the Germans, as a matter of fact, Goebbels had already made that link and had prepared a counter atrocity campaign in case the allies use that argument.

And yet, it was never used, and therefore the credibility problem, the problem of getting believed of what was really happening never really broke out to the public.

And without such a discussion, the question of rescue and stopping the slaughter became much more difficult.

And here is one of the keys to the...the whole problem of why rescue had died down. Not only the absence of will, but the absence of mind in many cases. And the mind not only of men like Roosevelt, but the mind of
...of our own rescue advocates. We simply did not think about it. Kubowitzki himself was opposed to the bombing of Auschwitz, because he thought that Jewish inmates should not be the first to suffer from Allied bombing.

Q: I know, I know the argument, but what is worse than to die in gas chambers.

A: Yes. What greater... of course the question of doubtful efficacy... for the Jews it meant... what greater atrocity, what greater cruelty than Auschwitz could have happened to the Jews, I am hard pressed to say. But of course the decision makers were not Jewish and did not think in those terms. The priorities were priorities and the truth in the matter was that Jews did not have power to change them. The Jewish question was a minor question in World War II and only the Jews was it a major question.

Q: Yes.

And we will see, years from now, whether it remains that way.

You are not supposed to talk, coup.

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Not met.

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The growing popularity of the bombing question is really very understandable, because it contains in one simple act the possibility of saving Jews. It is almost a question that comes out about... Here was a way, and we did not use it. And yet, if one really thinks about it, one wonders if it is true. One is reminded
of the Einsatzgruppen, for example, that operated behind the German lines after June 1941, killed at a much faster rate and without the technology of an Auschwitz. One is reminded how quickly the German railroad repaired rail lines, and one is reminded that Auschwitz was not the only death camp. And yet, it goes without saying that bombing a rail line and bombing Auschwitz would in fact have saved many Jews in the sense that at least the Germans or the Nazis didn't have known that the Allies opposed it. And yet, it came so dreadfully late in the war that one wonders if it really made a difference. It was suggested...

"Excuse me if I...one day, I have to object about what you said. First of all, in 1944 Auschwitz was the only death camp. Treblinka didn't exist, Belzec didn't exist, Sobibor didn't exist, there was Ushomir, yes, which was reactivated...." At this time...

...massive dying in other camps, perhaps not an organized death operation,....

It was not the same pattern.

Well, do you have the figures which balance the amount of dying through typhus and...in the end of 1944 in Ravensbruck as compared to the used up to November in Auschwitz? I would like to say that probably there were more deaths outside of Auschwitz, outside of the organized process than there was withing it. But that's really a minor point. Auschwitz is a symbol of course, it is very
is very important. It would have saved a great number of Hungarian Jewry. My point is not that...that the bombing would not have done some good. I think it would have done some good. My point is simply this: that at the end of the war, and we learn this from Albert Speer and from the evaluations of the bombing by John Kenneth Galbraith, that the whole saturation of bombing campaign, which began in 1943, did not really prevent the German war economy from being mobilized, and it was mobilized, by the way at a very late date, only in 1944. What I am saying is that when the governments in exile suggested to the British that the question ought to be retaliatory bombing, not necessarily for Jews, but that might have had a really greater effect, and was really a much simpler thing to do. Meanwhile, the saturation bombing of German citizens in 1943 has almost no meaning. We know today from the diaries of Goebbels and from the instructions of Himmler, that they in their minds had already associated the bombing of German cities with the Jewish plot, as they were willing to do this. That was part of their imagination. And Goebbels had already prepared a counter atrocity campaign in case such a film was made. Now, if the bombing of Hamburg or the bombing of Schweinfurth in the spring of 1943 was announced as a retaliatory act, it might have opened up the whole question of Auschwitz and raised that certain of silence...

Of why was it not done? This is the question.

And, why didn't the twelve point program, rescue program of March 1943 not do this? It is an interesting question.
why we did not...Maybe the Jews or rescue advocates were
not really accustomed to military strategy. It required
such a minor change. It didn't even require a change in
military strategy or military priorities to make such
announcements. A simple question of psychology of war.
And yet it was not done. And as I suggest it is a failure
of mind as well as a failure of... 

Q: Because this was specifically asked by the Jews of Warsaw
in September October 42.

A: The reason why it wasn't done, was
in the second part of McCloy's note, that bombing would
have created an even greater terror, a greater escalation
of terror than already existed. Now for Jews of course,
what greater escalation of terror existed we don't know.
but it was a very real fear of getting involved in this
kind of...this kind of who can do more. And if simply
did not...And the second part of McCloy's note, which
then does not deal with, actually states the reason. And
that was the reason given in 1942 for not announcing that
the bombing of German cities was a retaliation. It would
have been against war policy. It would have made the war,
World War II, the great patriotic war, a war to save the
Jews. And that is precisely what could not be done.

Q: Yes. Okay. It means one was not supposed to kill Germans
in order to kill...to save Jews.

A: Right. That's really where the failure came in.

Q: Of course, this is the real point.

A: And that's the...I am not saying that bombing of Auschwitz
was a...would not have saved Jews. I think it would have
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saved Jews and should have been done, but I think there
was an even easier way to do it, and that is to pick up
the whole theme of bombing of...of...of saturation bombing
earlier, which as it stands now, the Germans are beginning
to say is an atrocity. Dresden is becoming the equivalent
of Auschwitz. And Dresden really does not make sense with-
out looking at it in the light of Auschwitz. That is also a
point of the obscenology - why it was not picked up in Madison
Square Gardens, it is very difficult to say, except that
the Jews were not military people and did not think in
those terms. Food packages to camps - yes. Exchange of
prisoners - yes. Bombing. Interesting enough, when Horthy
did finally stop the deportations in July, he did so after
a raid on Budapest on June 3rd, which shows that at least
in the satellites which were particularly sensitive to
it, it could have worked. It was not the
bombing of Auschwitz that stopped Hor...the deportations
from Hungary, it is the bombing of Budapest, the trail-lines
from Budapest, and that is an important point.

Q: Right. Anyhow, there is a lot of noise which is made to-
day...about this.

A: Of course, one can be bright from hind-sight. But at that
time we didn't think of it. I'd say a failure not only of
will, not a crisis of will, a failure of will, but also
a failure of mind...I just didn't understand the Nazi men-
cality. I mean, there are those wonderful, wonderful
documents which indicate that...that the Hungarians are
worried...the Hungarian Americans will be tortured if they
identify the Jews. That's the way they are thinking. And
of course we are not thinking with... anything of that kind. We are taking Hungarian Americans and putting them on the radio - short wave broadcast to Budapest, say, don't let the gendarmerie cooperate in the deportation of the Jews. As if that mattered. Instead of saying to them, if you touch the Jews, you will be punished after the war, and remember, we have lots of Hungarians. The language that... failure... a dif... a... what... He called it culture bourgeois thinking. Just could not get beyond that. I think...