

Prof. RUBENSTEIN

BOBINE 345

TA RUBENSTEIN 1

A: I should start?

Q: Yes.

A: This is Wakulla springs, wild life sanctuary, and it is one of the most beautiful spots in the US. It is the way Florida, or at least the way the northern Florida was before it became as settled as it is now. I suspect that 150 years ago, most of Florida looked like this. As you see, the kind of wild life we have here: the trees and the , and also occasionally you'll see all kinds of alligators and other wild animals. And they have been kept this way where the rest of Florida has changed. For people like me it is a great source of tranquility to be able to come down here, to simply come to this spot every so often. I am glad that we can talk in this particular area.

Q: Yes, and do you think that it fits to talk about the Holocaust in this place?

A: Well, if one wants to talk about ~~phases~~ opposite, I would say that what the Holocaust represents is the dialectic screen opposite of this, because what we have here is an area in which nature has been completely unchanged, and what the Holocaust represents the most extreme form of man-made action and man-made project with a peculiar kind of destructiveness and with a peculiar kind of calculation, which was never present in nature and could never be present in nature. So that it is as appropriate a spot to talk about the Holocaust as any that I know. If this is the place of nature, then the Holocaust represents the most extreme form of the city of man and its radical destructiveness.

A: Yes?

A: So why not talk about it here?

Q: Why not, yes. diff....Attends. Coupe un instant.....

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A: Well, the wild life here is something quite different from any place else in the US. You've got more species of birds, for example here, than practically anywhere else. You've got all kinds of animals in these forests here. And nobody is allowed to come in and to disturb them or to create a problem for them.

thema, was already at stake even before the actual extermination started, even before the war, even in the years 1937-1938, when Hitler was expelling the Jews, wanted to expel them, and when nobody wanted to take them.

- A: Well, many of the ideas that I've formulated I am indebted to the late political philosopher Hanna Arendt, who has also expressed these ideas in her book. But it would seem to me that one of the fundamental differences between the 20th century and any previous period, is that in the 20th century there are no such things as human rights apart from political rights. And when you deprive a person from political rights you are in effect depriving that person from human rights. And this pervades my entire book. I...yes, I would totally agree with you that fundamental step that made possible the Holocaust was the denial of political rights to the Jews of Europe. Now whether the denial of political rights automatically leads to extermination or not, is a question which depends on the decision of those in power. But when you deny a person political rights, what you really say is that the normal protections of the law, the normal protections of due process in your community are no longer available to those people, and the people who had lost the rights were left to the absolute mercy of people who control the monopoly of the instruments of coercion within their country. And of course this means they are left openly to the mercy of the government bureaucracy or police.
- Q: You mean that in a world of nation-states, to be deprived of state citizenship, this means of political rights.
- A: absolutely, and....
- Q: ...is to be immediately in danger of death.
- A: is to be....it certainly used to be....Immediately in danger of the arbitrary exercise of power by those who possess power. And since the arbitrary exercise of power entails as its ultimate expression the ability to inflict death upon a person, when you deny a person citizenship, what you've really done, is that you've

said that this person is outside of the normal
 protections of the community. I simply...It's one
 of the reasons why as soon as the state of Israel
 was created, the first thing they did was to enact
 what was called the Chok HaShvut, the law of the
 ingathering. What the Israelis understood, because
 of their deep and bitter experience is that if
 a Jew were deprived of his citizenship, or were not
 able to have any citizenship, he will be subject to
 that kind of arbitrary treatment which could lead to
 death. And therefore they decided that any Jew could
 get citizenship in Israel, simply by coming to the
 Israeli consulate and declaring his allegiance to
 that country. What they were trying to do was simply
 trying to react to that situation. Another thing
 which I talk about in my book, which is quite para-
 doxical but is related to the whole question of
 statelessness, there is a sense in which no crime
 was committed in Auschwitz. I believe something worse
 than worse than a crime, something more obscene than
 a crime was committed. But in a crime you violate
 the laws of a community, and if you are deprived
 of all membership in a community, or if the community
 designates you as an outlaw, which every stateless
 person basically is, then there is no way to commit
 a crime against you. There's a great deal of talk about
 metaphysical concepts like 'crimes against humanity'
 but crimes generally speaking are offences against
 the law for which there are some means of retaliation
 in the law. And if you have neither a law which
 prohibits you from doing something, or a means of
 retaliation that's effective in deterring you from
 doing something, then you don't have anything, that's
 realistically a crime other than rhetoric. And I
 believe that not only does the statelessness of
 1936-1937-1938 become a prelude to mass-murder,
 it also becomes a prelude to a situation in which
 mass-murder is possible without it being a crime.

Q: You mean that....let's say the Nazi violated no law when they shipped the people to the extermination centres, because they were already made outlaws.

A: Well, number 1. they certainly violated no German law at the time. The Nazis were acting in accordance with German law. Some people would say that they were violating God's law, but a law which carried no penalty

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Q: Okay.

A: Also, if you say that God's law was violated, again you have a law which carries no penalty, and what is even more significant is that those who were regarded by most Europeans as representatives or interpreters of God's law did not feel that this was an event that they wish to comment upon negatively. So that there was an almost total silence throughout Europe of all the churches and of all the other groups. More important even than that is the Reich Citizenship Law of November 25, 1941, which decreed that all Jews who leave the Reich and go beyond its quarters, immediately lose their citizenship. The law did not state that if people were involuntarily taken from the Reich, that that made a difference. What the law provided for was an effective means to remove Jews from Germany and to deprive them of all human rights at exactly the same moment that they were removed. Once that law was in effect, there was absolutely no limit to the modes of behavior which could be exercised against them by those who were an authority over them. Those were ~~parallel~~ ^{powerful} which ~~inutibecaserhappdag~~ to be the SS. So that here again you have a situation where death sentence can be given to large numbers of people by bureaucratic organization and bureaucratic definition. And there is that sense that without firm citizenship in a national community, in which you have rights, you are totally deprived of all rights, these days. I might also add that the paradox, which Hanna Arendt pointed

out, is that this is a product of our having become civilized. In a world with open spaces where people could form ad hoc communities the loss of citizenship was much less dangerous than it is today. But in an essentially closed world, where there is no open space, in which you either have your card of identity or your passport or you're absolutely nobody, you really have no human status, therefore every civilization of mankind has condemned millions, perhaps hundreds of millions of people to the potential loss of all the rights of humanity, simply because bureaucracies can't designate at will groups that they will say are no longer part of the community.

Q: Yes. Is it true that....precisely; and this is connected with what you say, that the...when stateless committed crime, committed an offence, he was more protected.

A: Well, very frequently in certain parts of Europe, I believe this was true in France, where a person was better off when he had no citizenship rights. If he committed a crime, in which case he was considered a criminal, the normal rights of criminals were then given to him. And as long as a person had the rights of a criminal, that person was in a much better condition than when that person reverted to the condition of being a stateless person who had no rights whatsoever.

Q: This means that he entered that...in the realm of the law.

A: By becoming a criminal you entered in the realm of law which penalized you but at the same protected you and gave you a human status and a human definition. All criminals had human status and human definition, whereas a person who is a citizen of no country, really has no human status and has no human definition. So that it really was better to commit a crime. Now of course in Poland, it didn't make any difference, it was a question of hastening your death, but before the war, it did make a difference. If you were a criminal you were better off than if you were merely a law abiding stateless person. And the worst thing in the world was to be a law abiding stateless person.

Q: Yes. But could you elaborate more about your idea of surplus livestock, surplus people.

A: Well, if you look at the population in Europe, in 1750, you find that there are about 150 million people. By 1914 there are 400 million people in Europe including in European Russia. And there are in addition 200 million people with European background who are living in non-European land. What meant that where in 1750 there were a 150 million people of a common stock, by 1914 there were 650 million people. In addition to that, industrialization and technology had changed the rhythm of agricultural and urban life, so that people were coming off the land at large numbers and coming into the cities. And very frequently they were coming into the cities where their labour could not be absorbed. In 1891 the successor of Bismarck, the German Chancellor, made the statement: Germany must export goods or export people. Fortunately in the 1890's it was possible to export people. Large numbers of people who could find no meaningful role in Sicily or in parts of Germany or in Poland could come to North and South America, where a relatively open and untamed country waited for their industry and their efforts. But by the middle of the twentieth century, especially with the world depression, there were literally hundreds of millions of people whom the economic and political systems of various so called civilized countries of the world, simply could not absorb. And these people by virtue of the fact that they could look to the system for nothing that would assure them any kind of human dignity were a potential source of instability in every country, and some thing had to be done with those people. There are several things you can do with such people: one thing that I mention in my book is that I don't believe that it is any accident that 100 million people have died in the wars of the 20th century. This was....

Q: A very bloody century.

A: Well, it was...has been the bloodiest century. To me the century opens with the battle of Verdun, where 500,000 Frenchmen and 500,000 Germans died on either side. And immediately after the battle of Verdun the second battle of this starts, where the British try to break through the German lines, and with 400,000 French and 400,000 German and 500,000 English men being killed in nine months. If we compare that to the 50,000 Americans who were lost in ten years in Vietnam, you get some idea of the enormity of what took place. Now, I ask the following question: is it in fact that many people were sacrificed at Verdun and also in Gallipoli, what that a decision which was only taken by a commander like Von Falkenheim on the German side, or Sir Douglas Haig on the English side? I am convinced that at some level that kind of waste of human life was perceived as tolerable by the ruling establishments of Germany, France and England. Otherwise it would never have been tolerated and if you realize that there was this mentality in Germany, Caprivi had said that Germany must export people or goods, what comes across is that they saw their own people as expendable, not merely foreign people. Now if you then turn and look at what Hitler was writing and what he was studying even as a youth - one of the things that fascinated me recently was to find out that he was studying German population movements to Argentina as a young boy. He was very much concerned with....his whole concern for Lebensraum, his whole concern for clearing out Eastern Europe so that the Germans could populate it, and exterminating the population along the way. I don't think that very few people in Europe were as aware of the problems of surplus people to the extent that Hitler and some of the Nazi cadres

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were. Another thing that I think is relevant in this is that if you look at the leadership of the Nazi party Karl Dietrich Bracher, whose book on dictatorship is one of the best books on the subject, points out that very largely the people of that leadership were people who made politics as their vocation, but who had then not been able successfully to make politics their vocation, may not have had a vocation at all. Suppose Hitler had not succeeded to become the leading in Germany politician, what was he trained for? What about Heydrich, what about Himmler? You go down the list and you find that these are all people who themselves were potential urbanized surplus people. What they did was to seize the mechanisms of power to say that if anybody was going to be surplus, it was not going to be us. Now, what about the Jew as surplus people? Well, many people will argue that Jews contributed to Germany, there were many distinguished doctors and lawyers and there were many distinguished scientists that Germany sacrificed, but in the 1920's, if you look at the groups which were most violently anti-semitic, it turns out that the groups tend to be the urbanized petit bourgeoisie strata of lower middle class professionals who were most likely to be endangered by economic instability and by unemployment, as was the case. Same thing was true in Poland where the universities were the most violent centres of anti-semitism. People perceiving the Jew as a competitor, people conceiving the Jew as a foreigner decided that if anybody is going to be surplus, it's going to be them rather than us. Another element of this picture, that if you look where Adolf Hitler gets his basic ideas, he gets them in Vienna, but what basically was Vienna at the turn of the century? Vienna was the point where Jews were no longer able to find a livelihood in Poland, especially in Austrian Galician part of Poland, could come hoping

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to find a new life in the capital city, which meant the Vienna had a Jewish population of several hundred thousand, whereas it had a minimal population a century before. And these were people who, if they could not find work in Vienna then went on to new world. But they were perceived as especially dangerous precisely by those elements of the urbanized bourgeois society, which themselves had to fear that they could find a place inside.

Q: Even by the Jews.

A: Even by the Jews. I might...I might also add that here again, you have the same phenomena I was talking about before. So were talking about if you're depriving a person of his citizenship, you deprive him of his human rights. And we said this is a product of civilization. Surplus people is another product of civilization. A subsistence economy does not engender large numbers of surplus people where technical rational triumphs....

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Q: You can go.

A: How? Well, just as the denial of human rights follows the laws of citizenship, and this is an expression of civilization, not its opposite, so one of the products of advanced technological civilization is surplus people. The contradiction - to use a Marxist term - between production and consumption is such, that the number of people needed in the labour process is always less than the number of people that are produced for the labour that has to be done. That means a modern society always has a surplus...

Q: Yes. Yes. But what I...what I wanted to say is this

what you say is absolute truth, and this is the ground....

A: This is the ground for it.

Q: Yes, yes, this is the ground for... But in the same time, the Western democracies, let's say in 1938, when they convoked this Evian conference, showed a kind of humanitarian concern for the fate of the refugees....

A: I don't believe that. I don't believe that the Western democracies...

Q: I agree too.

A: ah....I don't believe that the Western democracies convoked the Evian conference for any other reason than rhetoric. And I'm convinced that the last thing that either England or the US wanted was a large number of foreign Jews to enter their country. If you consider Roosevelt's situation it is very very clear. Roosevelt was elected through a coalition of north-eastern ethnicities, including Jews, and labour and other groups. It was a road for bringing not a New Deal, but a Jew Deal, because for the first time, Jews in large numbers entered American political life. There were over 12 million of American unemployed, which at that time constituted about 25% of the working force. One of the elements of his coalition, labour, was ultimately against the entry of more than a token number of Jews, and the result is, I am convinced, that the Evian conference was merely a way of preventing anything from happening, rather than a way of bringing people in.

Q: A way of not acting.

A: It was a way of appearing to act, whereas in fact one wasn't acting. One wasn't...it wasn't the style to say: well, now look here, we really don't want all those Jews, but what they did do was to appear to do something. In reality they did nothing. Now, if you look at the situation, when Goebbels said that he was convinced that the democracies regarded what

the Germans were doing us a benefit, getting rid of the Jewish riff-raff, I think Goebbels was absolutely correct. He made that statement, I believe in '42 or '43, he wrote it in his diary.

Q: Yes, but Hitler made the same statements, as a matter of fact. And he made them earlier., in 1939 1940.

A: The other thing one has to consider is the situation in Poland, which is a prepossession. In 1936-37 and '38, all of the dominant figures in Polish political life are saying that Poland's number one problem is: how to get rid of its Jewish population which it regards as a surplus population, as we said in our conversation before; the Madagascar plan was originally not a German plan but a Polish plan, Poland was demanding a colony or colonies from the League of Nations, where they could ship off their Jewish population. August Cardinal who was the Patriarch of all Poland at the time, demanded a policy of absolute apartheid between Polish Christians and Polish Jews. And in 1939, a month or two before the beginning of the war, Josef Voss who was the foreign minister said that Poland's number one problem was how to eliminate its Jews. Well, when the Germans came and said; you want to eliminate the Jews, we'll teach you how to eliminate the Jews, the Poles then said; oh, this isn't what we meant. But in fact, if you want to eliminate people, there is really only one way to eliminate people and that's to exterminate them which the Germans understood. You can say that the Germans were more logical than anybody else. Nobody wanted them and the Germans felt: well, if nobody wants these people, the simplest thing is simply to get rid of them. You create factories of death in which you find the most modern and the most

efficient means of getting rid of large numbers every day.

Q: Could we say that if the Western Powers, and Latin America would have opened the gates to the Jews before the war, could we say that the situation would have been radically changed and that maybe the Holocaust would have been avoided.

A: I have...I have no doubt that had the Germans any feeling that there was any real opposition to the Holocaust, their whole attitude would have been different. If you look at the difference of German behavior at its worst in France and....

Q: Because as a matter of fact, to oppose Hitlerian policy towards the Jews there was only one way; it was to open the gates.

A: Exactly. And if you look at German policy in France even during the war, it was not characterized by the total barbarity that it was characterized in the east. And the Germans were always sensitive to Western opinion. And once...one signal which the Germans got very loud and clear, and that signal was: we really don't care what you do with the Jews. On the contrary, as I write in my book, I'm convinced that the British government considered it a positive benefit that the Germans were eliminating the Jews, because had the Jews survived, there would have been the problem of all of them descending on Palestine and destabilizing the situation where the British still wanted Palestine as a link to....

Q: we have to change.

(at the beginning of the Bobine plan dueto type)

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A: Well, Josef Beck is a very good example. As foreign minister of Poland in 1939, with the Germans

practically at the gate, he said that Poland's number one problem was how to eliminate the Jews. And if you look at every country in both Europe and the US; there was no place for them to go, and certainly the death sentence was established when the British declared that with the exception of 75,000 people in the next five years - the white paper of May 1939 - that they could not enter Palestine....

Q: This was the real death sentence.

A: That was the death sentence, yes. And from the British point of view, every Jew that was killed in Europe was a Jew that would not create a problem for them in Palestine. So that the more one looks at the Holocaust, the more one begins to see profound complicity of all of the nations of Western Europe and America, rather than simply something done by the Germans. Of course, there is a great deal of difference whether you talk about the person who actually uses the weapon or who the person who consents to use the weapon, but in the modern period, weapons are only part of the story, part of the story is arranging the conditions and creating the structures in which people will automatically die. And a decision not to admit people, a decision to categorize them as stateless, these are decisions which can result in people automatically dying, and they are just as murderous as...as using a gun or using a gas chamber.

Q: Yes, you are completely right, but one is very very struck because there was not only the Evian Conference, but there was later on in 1943 the Bermuda conference which opened the very day that...there was uprising of the Warsaw ghetto. And before the conference, the British said to the

Department of State an aide-memoire saying: but what will happen if we succeed? This means if Hitler changes his policy of extermination in a policy of expelment of....

A: But we know...

Q: ...extrusion.

A: We know that they...we know that they did not want to succeed. And one of the people that there is a great role of investigation is the role of Brecken... Breckinridge Long, who was the Assistant Secretary of State or the Undersecretary of State in the US at the time, who was determined to do every thing he could first of all to keep any news of what was happening out of the US and then to prevent any positive action from being taken for any of these refugees conferences. But it is quite clear that they wanted the process to go on. It was a Final Solution not only for the Germans but also for everybody else in Europe and it was so understood. If I may also say, it also explains the whole question of Jewish resistance. There was no realistic possibility of Jewish resistance in Poland since resistance would have only been possible had the native population wanted to be of assistance to the Jews. But since the native population saw the German action as a positive benefit and as a fulfillment of the long range Polish policy, they were not going to do anything to impede the Germans from killing Jews. Now, some people say, well the Poles also suffered from the Nazis. That's absolutely correct. And it is also true that the Nazis would have eventually exterminated them. Nevertheless, it's quite fair to say that 95% of the Polish population regarded the extermination of the Jews as something which the Germans were doing on their behalf, and regarded that as a positive benefit.

Q: This is absolutely true. The Holocaust in Poland took place in full light. Everybody knew what was going on. All the Poles. And this...we have seen

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this when shooting in Poland. But about Roosevelt. What do you think about him, because he was very well aware of the extermination already in 1942. The creation of the WAB took place only at the beginning of '44.

A: You see, Roosevelt, like any great leader, was not thinking in moral categories. He was thinking in terms of what he regarded as the imperatives which would guide and preserve the destinies of his country. And if that meant five or ten or twenty million people were going to die, then those people were going to die. I would not, in my estimation from what I've studied, come to the conclusion that Roosevelt was actively hostile to the Jews. I don't believe that was the case. It was rather the case that he saw the entry of any significant group of Jews into the US as detrimental to what he believed would be the long range stability of his political coalition. And he... they constituted to him an unassimilable group. He also, as you know, did everything he could to prevent the Jewish settlement in Palestine from achieving any kind of political independence. He actually sent General Marshall to a congressional committee to stifle debate during World War II. So that Roosevelt was acting from the prospectively ^{what} raison d'etat, as the best way to say/he was acting for. But it was perfectly clear that he was not prepared to do anything whatsoever to help the situation short of simply stopping it when the American army gained control. But the reason he stopped it was simply because he couldn't in any way accept responsibility for that kind of behavior. Not because he disapproved of it as long as the Germans were doing it.

Q: Yes. Because at this time, when he started to, the political pressure seemed to be very strong and he had to....

A:

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A: Yeah, I think that....that the more one studies the history, read American newspapers, read the pressures that were on the President, read the pressure groups that were dealing with the President, I think you find that the under certain rhetoric that we must do something, there was a profound practical decision to do nothing and to let the situation take its course. One other thing, of course, that you can always point to is that there were ways of disrupting the process. There may not have been long range effect in altering the final solution, but when you compare the effort made for the fruitless bombing of Dresden, with the kind of effort that might have been made, at least to halt, to slow down the process in Poland, and both were physically and militarily just as possible, it is perfectly clear that nothing was done to slow down the process that could have been done.

Q: You mean the bombing of Auschwitz and of the railroad?

A: The bombing of Auschwitz, the bombing of the railroad. Of course, the problem is that it can be said that that wouldn't have really altered anything very much, but the bombing of Dresden really had no military value whatsoever. If nothing else, the bombing of Auschwitz, the bombing of the railroad would have had a symbolic value and would have shown the Germans that...that what they were doing was really a matter of horror to important people in the US.

Q: You mean re...retaliatory bombing with a meaning?

A: Yes. I....

Q: You explained that the bombing of Dresden was made on behalf of the Jews who....

A: No, no, no. On the contrary. What I'm saying is that the bombing of Dresden really had no significance. There was no significant military or political gain in doing this. There was neither...there was no message in it. And...

Q: I see. But one could have given a message.

A: Well, had...one of the ways to have given a message

would have been an attempt to destroy some of the death factories and to destroy some of the installations leading up to the death factory. This was never done, so that the message which the Germans got all the time was that whatever were the areas of conflict between Germany and the Allies, as long as the war continued, the death camps were not one of them.

Q: Yes. This was not the concern.

A: Right.

Q: Look in the camera
(plans de coupe)

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Q: Yes, and could you elaborate more about the... about the churches?

A: I think....

Q: ...and the loss of God.

A: I...I think that when we ask why the churches of Europe responded as they did to the Holocaust one has to realize that the churches perceived the Jews fundamentally as denying and rejecting that which was absolutely central, not only to their belief, but also to their conception of constituted Human salvation. The message of Christianity is that Jesus of Nazareth is the savior of mankind and only in and through him is mankind truly and properly saved. The Jews on the other hand said that Jesus of Nazareth was a member of their community, but had no special divine significance. This contradiction between the two understandings of Jesus of Nazareth was bound to create problems from the very beginning of Christianity and it did so that you get for example in the fourth gospel: Jesus is saying to the Jews: you are of the devil, and your father is of the devil, and he was a murderer. And this is why Jesus says

that Jews are not able to believe in him. Now, if you start out with two traditions which are so absolutely contradictory to each other, then naturally the tradition which has the greater power is going to try to limit the influence of another tradition. And this is precisely what happened in Europe. The churches always conceived of the Jews as a competitive group and also a group which negated their point of view. That being the case, you could not expect that the churches could regard the Jews as a positive influence within Christian Europe. They had to either be contained, converted, or if neither contained or converted, they had to be expelled. Now when Hitler came and proposed his program of radical anti-semitism, and from 1919 the elimination - he used the word Entfernung of the Jews - this was something which the churches did not see as unwelcome. Since the churches saw that from their perspective, the Jews were a group which were an unwelcome cultural and religious influence in Europe. They did not enquire too deeply as to what the word Entfernung meant, what Hitler proposed by elimination. It's quite clear that no Christian group advocated the radical extermination of the Jews by mass murder. On the other hand it is quite clear that many of the great Christian leaders regarded the Entfernung, the elimination of the Jews as a positive benefit. But once you say that a particular goal is desirable, then the only way that is left to debate is the means that you're going to employ. And what Hitler was saying was that if you really want this goal, I am the person who has the right means, and the means were of course mass-murder. If you add to this the fact that one of the historical proofs that the churches had that it is true and that Judaism is false, has been that Jews have suffered and that God has been punishing them. That being the case, whatever there has been mass Jewish disaster from the time of the fall of the temple in Jerusalem

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right to the modern times, the churches always interpreted this as a sign of God's displeasure, and God's punishment of the Jews. And if you ask; what the sin that the Jews have committed, then the answer is always

plans must of the springs.)

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Q: Okay.

A: I think that the response of the churches has got to be seen as a question of the difference between ends and means. Both the Nazis

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A: I think that in understanding the responses of the church one has to understand that where the vast majority of church leaders regarded god as desirable, namely the removal or extermination of the Jews, they did not understand that this was lived murder - number one. And number two - they did not understand murder as a means of attaining the goal. But it is very important that we understand that this distinction actually is present. That one of the reasons for the process of the churches is that they did not regard the Nazi promise of the removal of the Jews as something undesirable, they regarded it as something desirable. What I tried to do in my own thinking is to ask myself: well, what would I be like if I were on the other side of my work - a church leader, instead of a Jewish thinker. And I can imagine that in the 1930's as a church leader I would say that the Jews represented a cultural and religious danger to my to my institutions and I would want to limit their influences as much as I can. And then if somebody of the name of Adolf Hitler had come along and said: well, I will help you to eliminate them, and I will help you to el...to limit their influence. It could

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imagine that if that were *my goal*, I would not enquire too closely as to *what* the means were going to be. Now after the fact, when we know what means were employed for that goal, and the means and the end are seen as inextricably woven together, then it's difficult to say that: yes, in those days we were for the goal but we weren't for the means, because it is now apparent that the goal and the means were connected together. And that's why there's a great deal of confusion. But in reality, most of the church groups did not regard the elimination of the Jews as something terrible.

Q: Completely true, but not only after the fact, but during the facts. Because what is striking is that they were absolutely aware of the extermination as soon as the extermination entered in full force. In Poland it was very clear, the extermination...

A: Polish... Polish Catholic church knew exactly what was happening. *The communication* between the various branches of the church and the Vatican was excellent. The Vatican had an excellent diplomatic sources.

Q: The Polish priests were the best informers.

A: ...and that being the case there was no mystery as to what was going on, but *there was* complete silence. Now, as people will say: this priest or that priest had saved Jews, or this bishop or that bishop tried to save Jews, this was true, in individual instances, but in terms of overall policy, there doesn't seem to be any doubt that the policy was to permit the thing to take place. And there were both theological reasons for that and cultural reasons as well. I think this by the way is one of the things which makes the whole question of the Holocaust such an agonizing one. Because if in fact, the leading repository of the moral conscience of the world did at the time regard this as of not sufficient significance to *operate* moral opinion, I can only conclude that in the opinion of the *leaders* of the time - the religious leaders, it was not an immoral or a wrong thing to do. And this also says something about the whole problem of the Holocaust. I think *there are also other elements*

in this, and I think that the churches politics were somewhat . That they certainly saw what a tremendous threat to the classical traditions of European civilization Stalin and the communists were, but they had no real understanding of how profoundly the National-Socialist also represented in the long run a radical threat to everything they stood for. But they were so blinded by the Stalin and the communists, and they were so convinced that Stalin and the communists basically represented some sort of a Jewish plot, that they blurted to, as what I regard, as an equally great if not a greater threat to human future, which is national Socialism. This was especially true of Rius the AII, who - we have to remember - was in Munich at the time of the Munich Soviet 1940. He was continuously involved in German politics from World War I to his appointment as Papal secretary of state in the early 30's, and was known as being not only pro-German, but also pro German conservative, so that his attitude to all this was to do everything he could to limit the embarrassment that would to the German government and probably also had more sympathy for what was going on than he's ever...then he's ever been able to come into print.

TA Rubenstein 11

(plans mute)

BOBINE 351

TA Rubenstein 12

(plans to mature -mute)

TALAHASSEE 11

SONS SEULS RUBINSTEIN

LANZMANN: Could you say how this Holocaust was really the product of highly developed technological society, and the product at the same time of bureaucratic work?

RUBINSTEIN: Both technology and bureaucracy can be seen as the result of practical rationality, in which human affairs are ordered in such a way that you divide labour and organise people to get a task done with maximum efficiency, but also with the greatest degree of impersonality. In the case of the industrial process or the agricultural process, what it means is that there is a large-scale division of labour and people are no longer doing work simply the way they used to do it when people lived on their own farms and lived on a kind of subsistence. The result is that there is never an exact fit between the number of people that a society needs and the amount of labour that has to be done. Inevitably, in every technological society the number of people tends to outrun the number of jobs; and you get surplus people.

When it comes to the Holocaust as a bureaucratic exercise - in the whole modern period what has happened is that people have been organised rationally: Governments are able to establish categories of people, they are able to identify large numbers of people, they are able to create bureaus which can manage them and can find ways to implement Government decisions without any regard to whether you like or dislike this person, or whether

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this is a person whom you have any kind of personal relationship or contact with. What happened with the Holocaust was that it was a complete bureaucratic exercise from start to finish. The very first bureaucratic element in the Holocaust was to distinguish between Germans and Jews, both in Germany and in other countries. The minute this distinction, which was a paper distinction, was made, the process was set in order. The second thing was to create a bureaucratic organization which was to supervise the Jews. First it was a question of depriving Jews of their property and depriving them of their rights within German society, and then later other societies; but they were the bureaucracies that did all this, and did this very, very efficiently. Finally there were bureaucracies which notified Jews that they were to be collected to a certain place and taken to Poland, where they were to be exterminated. Among the bureaucracies involved were the banks, which received the deposits of Jewish money, the Post Office, which delivered the notices, the railroads, which also took part - all these bureaucratic operations. The other thing, which for a long time people didn't understand, is that in order to kill Jews you didn't necessarily have to hate them. All you had to do was do your job as part of a bureaucracy. If the job involved sending out notices that Jews were to report at a certain point on a certain day, then that was your job. That helped to kill people. If your job was to collect them, and even if your job was to kill them, all

this was done without any kind of passion.

C.I. (?)... the 'Einzelaktionen'.

R. Even with the Einzelaktionen it got to the point where you simply did the job, and you focussed not on the people you were doing the thing to, but on getting the job done. This is what I call part of the 'bureaucratic imperative'. In a bureaucracy, what is important is not the consequence of what you do on people, what is important is that you fulfil your designated role in the division of labour as effectively and efficiently as possible. Another aspect of bureaucracy is that bureaucracy also makes it possible for people to evade responsibility, since there is what Max Weber called a 'hierarchy of superinsubordination of authority and command', and any person down the line of bureaucracy can say 'I am doing this because this is what I was told to do,' and somebody higher can say 'I am doing this because I was told by somebody higher up...'; but what happens in a bureaucracy is you end up with nobody being responsible for what actually takes place; what people are responsible for is doing their segment of the work. So finally you get a situation where a police bureaucracy, which is basically what the SS was, collects people together, and the final bureaucratic element is of course the actual murder. But there are other bureaucratic elements in addition: for example, when you collect people in the Warsaw ghetto and then somebody in Berlin decides what the caloric intake of these people is

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to be, this is what I call white murder. You are able to murder people on paper by deciding just exactly how much medical supplies they are going to get, how much food they are going to get, and this has predictable results; but you don't ever have to see the results. This thing takes place without your ever seeing it.

To see this as impersonal, to see it as devoid of any moral responsibility, and also to see it as thoroughly modern is, I think, the point. Another aspect of this which I always talk to my students about is that if you look at an American corporation which looks at its balance sheet and says 'Well, if we continue to pay people 4 dollars an hour in Lynn, Massachusetts we're going to lose money. But if we shut down the factory in Lynn, Massachusetts and open a factory in Taiwan where we only have to pay people 20 cents an hour, we're going to make a profit'. That corporation is not going to consider the social effect of what happens when it closes down the factory in Lynn, Mass. but 1 000 or 2 000 families may all of a sudden find themselves surplus as a result. The ultimate expression of this is when, instead of saying 'We're going to hire stop hiring people at 4 dollars an hour and start hiring people at 20 cents an hour,' you are able to create a situation in which you tell people 'if you work for us you might live, but if you don't work for us we're going to kill you on the spot'. This is precisely what the Germans did with one of their

bureaucracies, the economic bureaucracy of the firm of I.G. Farben which literally worked people to death at a death camp/slave labour factory at Auschwitz itself. This is another example of bureaucracy, and it carries the logic of bureaucracy to its ultimate conclusion, where goals are always impersonal and the effect on people is always secondary to meeting the goal; in the case of the people at Farben they had two goals: one goal was to produce synthetic rubber, which they were never able to do and the second goal was to use people and eliminate people at the same time. But it only carries to its logical conclusion the same idea which is involved when you start to figure ways of minimising your labour costs and close factories in the United States and open them in Taiwan, or wherever. All this thoroughly modern; it could never have happened in a feudal economy, it could never have happened in a purely agrarian economy, but in a society where everything is done in terms of a cold, calculated, rationalised decision of what you want to do and how many people are required to do it and under what conditions are they going to be required to do it - then there is hardly anything you cannot do with millions of people, including eliminating them, without any passion, without any sense of moral responsibility - and, which is even worse, without any institution to say 'No'.

C.L. What is interesting is that this highly-developed modern state needed, as a matter of fact, as a ground to kill, a rural society such as Poland.

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R. Yes, that's another thing which we haven't talked about -

I have been to Poland, I have lectured at the Catholic University of Lublin and at catholic institutions in Warsaw, Lublin and Cracow, and I was convinced when I saw the Poles that they were too traditional and too emotional to carry off anything as cold-bloodedly rational as killing 10 000 people a day in death camp factories. The Germans could do this. So what you get is a kind of symbiosis of a people who are overwhelmed by hatred and want to get rid of the Jews but don't have, beyond the naked emotion, any knowledge of how it is to be done, with a people who really didn't hate the Jews as much as the Poles - and this is something that is not always understood; that compared with the Polish hatred of the Jews, the Germans weren't all that full of hate. The paradox is that a person who is cold-bloodedly rational is a much more dangerous opponent than a person who just hates, because hatred you can lose, but rationality can sustain itself for long, long periods of time. It is this conjunction of Polish emotion coming together with German rationality that makes the 'final solution' a realisable product; and this is precisely what happened there.

(fin sons seuls Rubinstein)