

American Jewish Committee

Bobine 427

plans muets

Bobine 428

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NY 164

Q: Okay.

A: Right. This is the <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> Public Education and Information Department of the American Jewish Committee. It is primarily concerned with carrying a program of the Committee to the general public. We have a segment that deals with the press, we have a segment that deals with the radio and television, we prepare back ground materials, we prepare informational documents, we are...have press conferences here to inform the press, we send materials to newspapers and news magazines around the country, and it is our way of presenting issues that are important to the Committee through the media to the general public. As we walk down here, this is...we are coming to the Foreign Affairs Department.

Q: Foreign Affairs?

A: This department....

Q: Yes?

A: This department is concerned with issues affecting Jews in countries all over the world. We have specialists that are concerned with the Middle East, we specialists concerne with Soviet Jewry, we have other expersts that are par9 ticulari9y knowledgable about Latin Je...Latin American

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Jews and Jews in Europe and South Africa, wherever Jews live. And we are;...we monitor conditions of their.... existence, we monitor the rights and liberties under which they live. We concern ourselves with problems in which they are deprived of rights and liberties.

Q: How many...How many departments have you inside the building?

A: Well, we have...I have mentioned Public Education and Information, Foreign Affairs, we have a Domestic Affairs Department, which concerns itself with the general condition of American Society and the rights and freedoms of minorities within that society; we have a Jewish communal service department, which is concerned with the maintenance of Jewish identity and Jewish education; we have an Inter-religious Affairs Department ~~xxxx~~ which works with other religious groups and seeks to educate them about Jews and Judaism and to work with them towards a greater understanding and a reduction of stereotypes of Jews...

Q: Stereotypes? But it looks really like a government.

A: Oh no. It is not a government at all. It's an educational organization. We are primarily concerned with keeping track of and helping to maintain the rights and freedoms of Jews and of other minorities and groups in countries all over the world.

Q: Yes.

A: This is the Publications Section of the Public Education and Information Department. Here we prepare materials,

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pamphlets, booklets, background papers on a variety of issues of public interest. What you are looking at is a shelf of the more current materials that are now being distributed around the country. They are materials that are used in schools, they are used in adult discussion programs, they are also used as educational material with other groups who turn to us for information on subjects in which we have some expertise.

Q: Yes. But here you have very many people working here in the...in the building of the Committee?

A: I think we have something over two hundred people working here.

Q: Yes. It seems to be a very powerful organization, no?

A: We hope that it is a very effective organization. We try to be.

Q: Why is this so different than the American Jewish Congress? I mean, from the outside. I was in the building of the American Jewish Congress. It's a.....

A: Oh. The American Jewish Congress has it's own building and a staff that is in many ways similar. They, like us, have staff in their....

Q: Yes, but they are not so modern as you are.

A: Oh, probably because this building was built later.

Q: Yes..1.

A: ...their's is an older building.

Q: Yes. It is the only reason?

A: The ~~xxxxxx~~ only reason why the....the inside is not more modern? I really...I don't know...I...

Q: They have a complete other style.

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A: Well, we like to think that our style is an effective one for the work we are trying to do. We believe that we have very effective style. We believe that we have...the work we do is important and try to do it as capably as we know how to.

Q: ...to succeed really.

A: I hope so. Let me take you to our library.

Q: Yes.

A: This is our art division. This is where a number of the materials that you just saw outside are prepared. Mr. Schre<sup>2</sup> is our art director and this is where much of the translation of the text into the finished pamphlets takes place.

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Q: Okay, explain me what is this?

A: This is the Fund Raising Department of the American Jewish Committee, that arm of our agency which tries to raise the funds to pay for the work we do. A number of people to plan activities that will reach the general public and that the work we do is supported as so many other activities of so many other groups.

Q: But I do...Are you connected with the UJA or do you raise funds only you, only for the Committee.

A: We do both. We are connected with central bodies in different cities which allocate a certain amount of money of the general allocation to us. And in addition, in cities where there are no such allocations, we raise our own funds.

Q: And do you raise a lot of money?

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A: I can't tell you what our current budget is. I imagine that we raise a lot of money because it takes a lot of money to carry out our program.

Q: But could you talk about your programs, What....Because you seem to....you seem to go in many ways of research.

A: Some of our program is research and studies into the nature of prejudice and into the manifestations of anti-Semitism here and in other countries. Other programs involve helping Jews learn more about Judaism and to maintain a Jewish identity in a society where there are a lot of pressures for some of us for assimilation...

Q: Yes.

A: Other programs involve cooperation with other groups who are not Jewish on issues of interest...mutual interest.

Q: You work too for groups who are not Jewish?

A: Ah yes. We work for and with other groups who are not Jewish, because we have as a basic principle of our agency's work that the freedom and security of Jews is best when there is freedom and security for all groups.

Q: It is the reason why the....you have at the front door written 'Institute of Human Relations'.

A: That's correct. And to promote dignity of all people.

Q: But you...you focus on the...on the Jewish matters?

A: We focus on Jewish concerns, but we find ....found, as a matter of fact, through all the years of the American Jewish Committee's existence that Jewish concerns are concerns that are very general concerns for the most

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part and that we are simply an example of those concerns. And if we work for human rights~~x~~ for other minorities we are increasing the human rights of Jews, because we are helping to increase the climate in which human rights are important.

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A: Yes that is , you will see that.

Q: Okay.

A: The American Jewish Committee is fast approaching its 75th birthday so that we have a long history of activities in this country and abroad, and this is the room that keeps our records. Here we have background on most of the work that we have done, probably all of the work that we have done over all the years. We have information on anti-Semitism <sup>and</sup> ~~on~~ our efforts to combat it. We have information on our work during and before the creation of the state of Israel, we have a lot of material on our work to resettle and to rescue some of the Holocaust victims.

another woman: In front of you you have documents, very very important material on displaced persons. Someone is writing a book on this. He says we have the finest collection.

Q: About....

A: ...displaced persons, right. Right.

Q: This is very important.

A: You have any count on how many records or what numbers of records you keep here?

woman\* We have roughly ~~m~~ x

(unclear - many people talking together.)

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woman: Here I think, in this room - about twelve hundred...

A: ...twelve hundred, a couple of thousands...But downstairs, probably close....

(again many voices together about the number of documents)

Q: Yes, and most of them about the displaced persons?

Woman: No, no, no. It just happened you were looking at... you were looking in the boxes where that material was.

...everything the AJC has been involved in.

Q: Yes. And could you say...

A: In this particular room it starts in 1933, the beginning of the Hitler period.

Q: Ah, yes?

A: ....and upstairs, have they gone upstairs to the...the library. The historical documents are in the library and there we have all the records 1906 to 1938.

Q: Could you say that the American Jewish Committee has developed very much since the end of the war, since the Holocaust.

A: In growth? Oh, tremendous. We had a very small staff here in the 1930's, And in the 40's after the war really the membership ~~and~~...I mean the staff started to grow and grow. As the program grew, so did the takers...

Q: This means there is a direct link between the Holocaust and the growth of your activities.

A: Yes. Oh definitely. Oh definitely.

Q: And you work,...you said that you have a kind of foreign Department?

A: Yes we do have a foreign department, we have a Foreign Affairs Department which is concerned with the - as I

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explained earlier - the condition of Jews wherever Jews live.

Q: Yes?

A: ...and our interest is ~~xxx~~ in the human rights, in their freedoms, in their ability to practice their faith, to be Jews and to be good citizens of their countries.

Q: Yes, and you have a special sections for the...let's say the Arab countries, for the Soviet Union....?

A: We have staff specialists whose concern it is to keep on top of situation in various parts of the world. So that we have a Middle East desk, we have a Latin American desk, we have a Soviet desk, we have....

woman: International desk.

A: yes. And we are very much concerned with how Jews live, and that they live freely and without discrimination and without oppression wherever they come from.

Q: Yes. And you have a ...an information desk....advertisement desk?

A: Well, we have a department of Public Education and Information through which we try to reach the general public in this country and abroad to explain the things, the points of view and the information that we gather and deal with and try to

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(very much noise in the background)

A: This is our computer room. It's the room that makes it possible for us to reach our members, the subscribers

to our two magazines. We publish Commentary Magazine, which is a monthly and Present Times, which is a quarterly. all of them with very large circulations. And this is a.... . It makes it possible for us to run off the names of the people, names of our members, names of our various committees and our , and that aspect of our work which requires names and addresses in order to get the people. And this is what we do here.

Q: It is extremely modern, no?

A: Yes. It's modern.

Q: Astonishing. It is the Jewish strength.

A: It's American . It's the way American business operates. And we try to operate as efficiently as we can, and because the things we are doing is important and requires

Q: (unclear)

A: We have a print~~er~~, where names and addresses can ~~be~~ come in a list-like or we have tapes where the names and addresses can come out labeled and can go directly on envelopes.

Q: But you are a very rich organization, no?

A: No, we are not a very rich organization because the money that we collect is spent from one year to the next, and we have to collect

Q: unclear...

A: ...the money for our programs. And we are not rich because we do not have the money except as we...of carrying out our program.

Q: That's the best way.

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Q: But you have even a Christmas tree?

A: We have great many people on our staff who are not Jewish and...

Q: Ah, yes?

A: ...and who celebrate the Christmas holidays/ And just as we have a Hannukah party here and Hannukah decorations, we also have a Christmas tree and Christmas decorations.

Q: Yes. But your staff is not only Jewish?

A: No, not at all.

Q: And the...What is the percentage?

A: I really don't know.

Q: But the majority is Jewish at least?

A: Probably so, but I really could not be certain of that.

Q: Yes.

A: This part of the computer operation is that which feeds new information into the computer or makes corrections on addresses, names, changes of information of that kind, so that we can keep our operation current.

Q: Are you American born?

A: Am I American born? No, I was born in Bialystok, Poland.

Q: In Poland. And you came after the war?

A: I came before the war as a small child.

Q: And your family remained in Poland?

A: My family remained in Poland and perished in Poland.

Q: I thought that the...the people of the American Jewish Committee, the ...at least the founders, were mostly from German Jewish origin.

A: The founders were mostly from German Jewish origing, but

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over the years the American Jewish Committee has had leaders and members and staff from virtually every Jewish community in the world.

Q: Ah, yes. This is not....I mean the division that existed during the war~~xxxx~~ between the eastern Jews and the...

A: That is a division that has really disappeared in American Jewish life....a great many years.

Q: Yes. Really?

A: We don't measure....we don't measure our Jewish leaders or members or Jews generally in terms of that kind of origin division. It was important at the early period of American Jewish immigration and it disappeared very quickly - certainly I think well before World War II, and certainly since then.

Q: Certainly since. Before - I am not so sure.

A: Now, where else can I take you?

Q: Okay, in the Oral History.

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A: We are now in the Wiener Oral History Library of the American Jewish Committee, which houses the records and the Oral history interviews of many hundreds of people, important people and some who are less important, but who have played a role in American Jewish life over the years and in establishing the American Jewish Community. Mrs. Irma Krantz is the director~~x~~ of the Oral History Library and you may well talk with her about it.

Q: This means that you record...you record...

Krantz: That's right. We are trying to record the documents of total American Jewish experience . Of course that's a

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very broad job. So hopefully we are trying to get as wide a picture of as many different aspects of American Jewish life and our contribution to it. You might be interested in seeing where we house our transcripts. These are just... just some of the transcripts. These represent our Holocaust project, which is just one project of our library, and tells the story under a national of the humanities grant, which is a government grant to tell the story of the culture to America of Holocaust survivors who came here after the Nazi Holocaust. These represent the story of 250 of those survivors. And this is just one project of the library.

Q: And the culture.

A: That's right. The story of the...of the experience under Nazism, their arrival in America and how they have adapted to the American life. And this was part of our bicentennial celebration. It was done here for the American government. And here are our general biographies ~~which~~ which we ... a catalogue which covers 600 memoirs. And our memoirs are done originally on tape and then transcribed into a transcript form which is kept here, which are housed here. And they are kept here for the benefit of scholastic research, for people who come here to do books, to write researches and to learn more about the Jew of America.

Q: This means the purpose is really to keep alive the Jewish ...

A: That's right.

Q: ...experience and life.

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A: That's right....of how we have come here, how we...not so much how we have arrived, but how different emigration periods during the turn of the century with the large eastern European immigration - we have done that story under a collection that is called the Lautenberg collection. And so we have taken all these various aspects, we have done the story of American Jews in politics, in Government, we touch upon the American Jews in industry, and all facets...as many facets as we can reach....the regional Jews, how Jews across the country have established themselves in different areas and how their lives have developed and have become part of an American Jewish community and the total American community. & the original guide: Some of our more fascinating interviews involve American Jews in the arts. We have opera stars and composers and musicians and sculptures and writers and... they are talking about themselves and their own lives. And they make fascinating reading.

Q: Yes. And in science too?

A: And in science certainly. We have at least one or more Nobel Prize winners...

Krantz: The recent Dr. Rosalind Yalow, who has just won Nobel Prize for...as a nuclear physicist...in medicine has just finished her memoir. Dr. Roby has ....we have many other scientists, We have people who are outstanding in literature. As a matter of fact if you...I guess cameras can't run down and the names and the listings out there, where a very innovative library, the first library to add up a television, to be televised over

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the networks. We are the first library to have done ~~xxx~~ instant indexing and cataloguing of our library.

Q: And you are yourself American born?

A: Oh yes. Yes. I am...I am born ...I am born right here in New York, not very far away from where the library is situated and have never lived very far from it. This is my outreach into the world.

Q: The origin of your family, from where do you come?

A: My parents came from...My father came from Russia, my mother came from Hungary. My husband was the original director of this library, which is nine years old. He is now the chairman and I have become the director of the library. So we are team operation so to speak of. ...That's right. That's right. Thanks very much for having us here and coming in to visit our library.

(discussion in the background - illegible)

Q: An..and it was worth while.

A: Okay, I'm glad.

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A: This is the Brownstein library, probably one of the finest libraries on Jewish information in the world and this is Sima Horowitz, the chief librarian.

Q: All right.

Horowitz: Welcome to the library. Our library is primarily concerned with contemporary American Jewish problems. We have been in existence since 1939 and have built

up the finest collection on material concerned with the issues that are of concern to the American Jewish community. We also have material on other aspects. We are concerned with Israel and Middle East and....but primarily concerned with American Jewish Contemporary problems. In addition to our regular collection, we have some very interesting ~~specimen~~ special collection rooms, One of which is here....

Q: Yes. What is it?

A: This collection is what call our extremist collection. And it is a collection that we have been adding to over the years. It's concerned most importantly with anti-Semitism material. Now, this material...

Q: You mean contemporary anti-semitism?

A: Contemporary material, yes. But most important of ~~all~~ old anti-semitic material, American anti-Semitic material. This material we have been collecting over the years. People have been sending us material from wherever they have found it, and before we knew it, we had a master collection. We have examples of old anti-Semitic material, some very interesting examples of material that we have. For instance, we have here an encyclopedia called 'the Seals of Truth'. This is one of four volumes that were published, we have one of only two copies that are left here in the United States. This is called the Seals of Truth. It was published in 1931 by the National Socialist Party before it came to power. It is an encyclopedia of all German Jews, their history, their background, their education, to be used as propaganda material when the war began. One of the interesting things about this book is the....Now this is the star of David which stands for the Jewish people and this is a fish which is the official in-

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signia of the Catholic people. And this is the Catholic people trying to get out of the grip of the Jews. One of those samll little sides. Fortunately, this was only printed up to the letter P, and never used. We also have an anti-Semitic book in <sup>Braille</sup> ~~Braille~~ published in 19...

Q: In Braille.

A: Yes...in 1927...yes...published by the Stuermer, which was the official propaganda arm of the Nazi party.

Q: Why in Braille?

A: Well, so that nobody would be left without knowing all the terrible things about the Jews.

Q: It's unbelievable, no?

A: We also have a copy of all the issues of the Protocols of the Wise Men of Zion. The official document coming out in 1911. And we have tried to collect each new edition. We have a very recent edition from Argentina.

Q: Los Protocolos Sion. It's a very recent one.

A: Very recent - 1976. Just one of the examples of the anti-Semitic material that is coming out of Argentina.

Q: It is not finished, no?

A: No. Unfortunately not. In Greek...

Q: It's in Greek?

A: In Greek.

Q: It's a recent one too?

A: Yes. 1975.

Q: So the Protocols of the Elders of Zion too....

A: We have a photostate copy of the original protocols of the original protocols of the Wise Men of Zion.

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Q: In Russian.

A: Yes, in Russian, which was where the Protocols first... 1905. We also have the original works in archival collection, which the Protocols are supposed to be based on. In addition we try to collect contemporary anti-Semitism material....

Q: And there is.....a lot.

A: Oh definitely. Definitely. Each day we get new material to add to our collection. Some are interesting examples I will show you. This is an old piece of anti-Semitism, that was put out by the Stuermer. It is...

Q: A Nazi one.

A: Yes. It is a childrens book published in 1936 for young children. And you don't really have to understand German to understand the point that the publishers are trying to get across. The young handsome Aryan, the ugly old Jew. The wandering Jew. Here is the rich Jewish land lord evicting a poor man with his child for obviously not paying their rent. And we have a copy of a childrens book, again, published by the Stuermer for older children. As you see, the print is much more. There is much more of a story and less pictures. This is a picture of a Jewish financiers standing in the middle of town plotting to overthrow the ~~capitalistic~~ <sup>capitalistic</sup> system, carrying their money with them at all times because they don't trust the banks. Here is a picture of a young German schoolclass room and the children are learning how to identify a Jew.....by his big nose, by his hunchback, by his hand being out, by the star of David. Now to illustrate the point that I said about the fact that new material is being received

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constantly. This is a copy of anti-Semitic material which we received in 1976 by an organization called 'the White Power Publications' in Liverpool, West Virginia.

Q: In America?

A: In America. In America. This is a copy of the book...yes, of the book I showed you before. You will recognize the young Aryian and the dirty old Jew. This is a translation of the German text with the English. And this is a piece of material from 1936 reprinted two years ago to rekindle anti-Semitic feelings.

Q: But it is sold?

A: Very extensively. It has a very very wide circulation. Yes

Q: It is sold where, in the....?

A: No, no. I have no idea exactly. I assume it is advertised in the White Power Publication newspaper and you can send an order. I don't think it is truly in the book stores. We have almost all of the publications that are listed here. We also receive newspapers, periodicals, weeklies monthlies. They are all kept here, analysed and kept for future research. We have Henry Ford's famous attack on the Jews which was in his paper in Detroit of the Independent. We have all copies of that plus his final critic of what he said...I am sorry...which he addressed to Mr. Lewis Marshcall as a representative of the American Jewish community, who was the President of the American Jewish Committee. We have all the radio addresses of Father Coughlin, a famous famous anti-Semite. He was very very popular in the late 1930's, early 40's. All the material

on Gerald L. K. Smith. We have been collecting a great deal of material that has been published these days under the guise of anti- Zionism, which is in reality the same anti-Semitism. Material is coming out of the Middle East as well as out of Russia. An interesting new kind of twist towards the on anti-Semitism today is this material on the Holocaust, which claims that the Holocaust did not indeed take place. There was a killing of - yes, maybe perhaps a thousand or so people. But it didn't ...the killing of six million is a myth..

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