

Auschwitz Unfathomed

By Robert E. Segal

No combination of mind, heart, and soul seems capable of providing any completely acceptable explanation of the Holocaust despite all the serious efforts made by conscientious persons.

Of these efforts, the one taking the form of a four-day June, 1974 symposium on "Auschwitz: Beginning of a New Era," at the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine, New York, is perhaps the most ambitious and significant. The nightmare of the Hitler madness is too much to be absorbed; the possibility of a modified but deadly replay in the Middle East almost too fearsome to mention.

For many Jews, the pronouncement at St. John's by a famous survivor of the Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp, Professor Emil L. Fackenheim, who teaches philosophy at the University of Toronto, will be taken as the final word. "The very attempt to justify the Holocaust and explain it is obscene," he said. And then: "A Jew is forbidden to give Hitler posthumous victory; and to consent to despair is to give that victory. The moral-religious contradiction can be resolved only by affirmation that there can be no second Holocaust."

Another dramatic pronouncement attending the New York Conference could not be ignored even by earnest Christians and Jews who considered it too hard-hitting, too abrasive, too harshly arbitrary. It came from the Catholic scholar, Professor Rosemary R. Ruether of Howard University, who said: "It

was Christian theology which developed the thesis of the eternal reprobate status of the Jews in history and laid the foundation for the demonic view of the Jews which fanned the flames of popular hatred." She urged fellow Christians to devise a modified theology. Apparently, that formula would call for more than discharge of the Jew from his scapegoat role flowing from a 2000-year-old cry of deicide.

Leaving the intriguing and memorable scene at St. John the Divine for a moment, one is tempted to suggest, at risk of oversimplification, that Hitler's Holocaust moment came when a confluence of dynamic factors took over. The Fuehrer's psychic wounds had to find balm; his skill in exploiting the channelized wrath and long-germinating bigotry of his brother and sister "Aryans" reached its apogee in the Holocaust; his powers as indefatigable organizer and master propagandist with access to all the organs of communication were in full play; and an incredulous but disinterested world gave him little or no interference.

Had there been no World War I and no Versailles, we might have been spared in Hitler's time the killing of 6,000,000 (of whom a million were defenseless babies and small children). Had there been no worship in the cult of Nordic supremacy, no rapid development of the uses of cinema and controlled mass media for the sanctification of a fierce nationalism, the catastrophe might have been averted or postponed.

The Holocaust erupted. Nazi bureaucrats, insensitive to the slightest stirrings of

conscience, discharged their foul duties at the appointed time. The bag of anti-Jewish venom, centuries in process of expanding, burst all containment. History was obliged to register the most monumental act of inhumanity yet to darken its pages.

And the fire next time? Let all who are not Jews know for certain that if there are to be new Auschwitzes, the suffering will go far beyond Jewish death and the killing of non-Jews who happen to be in the path of the juggernaut. Any new Auschwitz will be universal in nature of casualty lists; final in its nuclear effectiveness, leaving no survivors to chronicle its impact, even in this feeble way, to explain its occurrence.

GERALD C. BERKMAN, M.D.

*Announces the opening of his
Office for the Practice of
GENERAL PEDIATRICS
and
ADOLESCENT MEDICINE
with Subspecialty in
NEPHROLOGY*
Offices located at Suite 705
VALLEY MEDICAL BLDG.
700 SHADOW LANE
LAS VEGAS
385-7166



**CORAL REEF
POOL SERVICE**

Complete Maintenance & Repairs

CLEANING - POOL SWEEPS
HEATERS, FILTERS, MOTORS, ETC.

736-7099

Every Jewish Home Should Be On the Subscription List of The



- It enlarges the fund of knowledge of Jewish affairs.
- It widens one's Jewish horizon and viewpoint.
- It deepens one's understanding of Judaism.
- It stimulates Jewish solidarity and Jewish loyalty.
- It promotes the highest interests of our people and our faith.
- It disseminates Jewish ideals.
- It affords a medium wherein the Jewish people can give expression to their charitable, social and cultural enterprises, to their national life and institutions, to their religious life and its various manifestations.

Subscribe Get Your Friends to Subscribe

LAS VEGAS ISRAELITE — P. O. BOX 14096
LAS VEGAS, NEVADA 89114

Dear Jack:

I am deeply interested in the welfare and growth of our Jewish Community.

Please add my name to your fast growing list of subscribers

Name (Print Clearly) _____
 Address _____ Apt. No. ____
 City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

One year (52 issues) _____ \$7.00
 Two Years (104 issues) _____ \$12.00
 (Please make checks or money orders payable to Las Vegas Israelite)

Payment enclosed Bill me later
 Optional: Good luck. Get lost.

EL MOROCCO Beauty Salon
and Boutique

LAS VEGAS MOST VERSATILE SALON
COMPLETE STYLING MALE AND FEMALE
SCULPTURED NAILS, INDIVIDUAL LASHES, PROFESSIONAL MAKE-UP,
PEDICURES, MANICURES, EXTRA ORDINARY BOUTIQUE
HAIR PIECES - 4 HR. SERVICE
734-6849 NO APPOINTMENT NECESSARY
OPEN 7 DAYS
MON. THRU SAT. 9 TO 8P.M.
SUN. 11 TO 6P.M.

2973 LAS VEGAS BLVD. SO.
