

REJECT SCHINDLER'S CHARGES

NEW YORK (WNS) -- Rabbi Alexander Schindler's charges that rightwing religious fundamentalist groups foster anti-Semitism in the United States and called "false and absolutely without foundation" by the Rev. Jerry Falwell, head of the Moral Majority. At the same time, Rabbi Abraham Hecht, president of the Rabbinical Alliance of America, called Schindler's charge "both scurrilous and insane." He said that "As one who has met and cooperated with the Moral Majority I can safely state that the ominous threats by Schindler's fantasy are totally unfounded and devoid of proof."

Schindler, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC), referred to the "chilling power of the radical right" in an address in San Francisco where the UAHC Board was meeting. He observed that it was "no coincidence that the rise of rightwing Christian Fundamentalism has been accompanied by the most serious outbreak of anti-Semitism in America since the end of World War II."

Falwell, in a statement from his headquarters in Lynchburg, Va., said Schindler's assertion that "my activities in the Moral Majority movement have helped to create a climate which has led to anti-Semitic incidents in the United States was 'false and absolutely without foundation.'" "I do not have to prove to Rabbi Schindler or anyone else of my longstanding friendship for the Jewish people in America and around the world, and my strong and continuing advocacy of the cause of Israel," Falwell said.

He noted that two weeks earlier he received an award from Premier Menachem Begin of Israel "in recognition of many years of service to Israel and the Jewish people everywhere." The award from the Jabotinsky Foundation, was also given to 99 other prominent Americans. But one of the awardees, Sen. Frank Church (D. Idaho) refused to accept his because Falwell was one of

the recipients. Sen. Carl Levin (D. Mich.) also criticized the award to Falwell.

Hecht asserted that, contrary to Schindler's view that the rightwing Christian groups are a disaster for America and the security of American Jewry, "these leaders are men of integrity, sharing many traditional beliefs of the Jewish people..... values (which) have long ago been rejected out of hand by Schindler and his ilk." Commenting on Schindler's view that there is a link between rightwing Christian groups and the increase in anti-Semitic acts, Hecht said "This equation is as valid as stating that inflation is caused by the affluence of the Jew." He added that Schindler's "ir-

religious policies are a much greater threat to the existence and future of the Jewish people than any other religious group in America, past, present or future."

Schindler was also criticized by Nathan Perlmutter, national director of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith for "looking at the fundamentalists as a monolithic group." He said, "I respectfully remind Rabbi Schindler that the Soviet Union, the prime exporter of anti-Semitism, is neither Christian nor fundamentalist..... There are good Christians and bad Christians, good Jews and bad Jews. To hear some of the talk lately we'd also have to say there are foolish Christians and foolish Jews."

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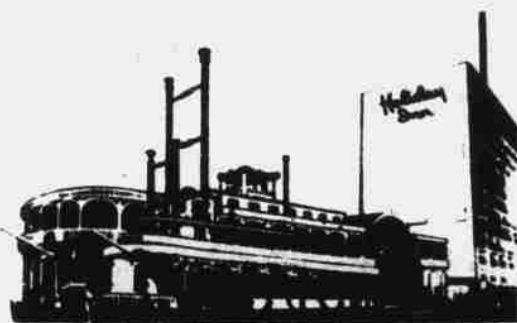
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