

REAGAN MARKS HOLOCAUST MEMORY

WASH. (WNS) -- President Reagan declared that the Holocaust reminds Americans that Israel is "a country that rightfully never takes its security for granted." Reagan, speaking at a White House ceremony marking Yom Ha-Shoah, Holocaust remembrance day, said that "today we are reminded that we must be sensitive to a history of a people whose country was reborn from the ashes of the Holocaust; a country that rightfully never takes its security for granted."

The White House ceremony followed a Holocaust remembrance program in the Rotunda of the Capitol. Both were part of the week long Days of Remembrance ceremonies which were conducted throughout the country under the sponsorship of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council. At both ceremonies, six candles were lit in memory of the six million Jews who died during the Holocaust.

Reagan noted that the "magnitude of what has brought us together" at the Capitol and the White House is a "tragedy of such proportion" that even now many cannot grasp the full horror of it.

Elie Wiesel, chairman of the Holocaust Memorial Council, noted that last year at a similar ceremony at the White House, Reagan strongly attacked those who want to deny that six million Jews were murdered in the Holocaust. But he said the effort continues, by rightwing fascists in the United States and leftwing intellectuals in France. "They all join in this insane need they have to deny that what we went through didn't happen."

Reagan noted that the number of persons killed was so long there is a need to look at the "humanity behind the numbers." He listed the names of several persons who died in the Holocaust and wondered what they would have contributed to the world if they had survived.

At the Capitol ceremony, House Speaker Thomas O'Neill (D. Mass.) also urged Americans not to think of Holocaust victims as numbers but as individuals. O'Neill also stressed the commitment of Con-

gress to the creation of a national Holocaust museum and living memorial to the Holocaust, one of the tasks of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council. Sen. Ted Stevens (R. Alaska), the Senate Majority Whip, said this nation will not remain indifferent to human suffering and human misery.

Wiesel, a Holocaust survivor and novelist, also pointed out that during the Nazi period the U.S., which has a record of taking in people from other countries, failed to take in the Jews. He also stressed that the crimes of the Nazis were known before the war ended and that Auschwitz was known to American Jews before it was known to him and other Jews in Hungary.

Sigmund Strochlitz, chairman of the Holocaust Council's Days of Remembrance Committee, said the knowledge of the Holocaust is increasing in the United States partially through the effort of Congress in establishing the Holocaust Council and setting the Days of Remembrance Week.

WASHINGTON DATELINE

BY TRUDE B. FELDMAN
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President Reagan Remembers

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- President Reagan -- with his very presence -- enhanced a somber, poignant and dignified ceremony at the White House recently. The occasion marked the 39th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.

The U.S. is the only country, besides Israel, that observes the "Days of Remembrance" which, ironically this year fell on Adolf Hitler's birthday. Elie Wiesel, chairman of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council, an outgrowth of a council established by President Jimmy Carter and made permanent by Congress, told the East Room audience: "We are trying to tell the story of the Holocaust because we believe if we tell the story, we shall save the world...."

As President Reagan and some 2000 guests, including survivors of the Holocaust, looked on in awe, six candles were lit by Sigmund Strochlitz, Elisha Wiesel, Benjamin Meed, Jeanette Lerman, Kalman Sultanik, Menachem Rosenzweig and Eli Zborowski. The six candles symbolized the six million people who perished at the hands of the Nazis.

"This gathering at the White House, and others across the nation, reflect the magnitude of what has brought us together," the President told the hushed groups, which included Nazi hunter Simon Wiesenthal. "There were millions of victims of the Holocaust. Such vast figures have a way of blinding us to the humanity behind the numbers. Today, we should think of those who are not with us. We miss them. God -- and only God -- understands how different our lives would be had they been permitted to live."

As one example, the President cited Isaac Rudashevski, a 15-year old Lithuanian trapped in a ghetto, who concentrated on reading and

writing and learning, rather than giving up hope. "Isaac did not survive," Mr. Reagan said. "One can only speculate what he might have become -- possibly an author, and the world might have been drawn a little closer because of his contributions."

"Even now, the voices of those who died can be heard....their voices from the past cry out for us...never to tolerate hatred or bigotry. And those who survived also remind us of heroism and dignity in the face of adversity, of truths discovered in the midst of pain and suffering. Today, we must choose how we will respond to the Holocaust."

"Let us tell the world we will struggle against the darker side of human nature; that with God's help, goodness will prevail and those who lost their lives will not be forgotten."

The President concluded: "Let us also bear in mind that the entire human family now faces the threat of a different kind of holocaust -- a nuclear holocaust. May the remembrance of past victims of man's inhumanity to man strengthen our resolve to seek a just and peaceful world for ourselves and our posterity."

Holocaust survivors Annamarie and her husband, Dr. Laszlo Sokoly, share President Reagan's sentiments about the monumental loss to the world by the slaughter of so many people.

Dr. Sokoly, in an interview, stressed: "If millions of people produced such qualitative talent such as we know today, can you imagine how many others from among the six million who were killed could have contributed to making this a better world?"

Egyptian Ambassador Ashraf Ghorbal, a special guest at the ceremony, told me that President Reagan expressed "the feelings of every human being on this earth...what we all feel on this awesome occasion."

Dr. Harvey Ammerman, neurosurgeon on the faculty of George Washington University School of Medicine, said the President's remarks were "most moving and showed a deep understanding of the huge tragedy of the Holocaust."

Sylvia and Alexander Hassan, long active in Technion (Haifa's Massachusetts Institute of Technology) described the program as "sad, but touching."

"It was hard to avoid crying," Mr Hassan reflected, "When one thinks of the enormity of those bitter years, particularly when thoughts cross your mind that many more lives could have been saved had other governments intervened."

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