

Eved Hashem – Gadol BeYisrael

HaGaon HaKadosh

HaRav Chaim Michoel Dov Weissmandel ZTVK "L

(4. Cheshvan 5664/ 25. Oktober 1903, Debrecen, Osztrák–Magyar Monarchia –
6 Kislev 5718/ 29. November 1957, Mount Kisco, New York)

Евед ХаШем – Гадоль Бейсраэль

ХаГаон ХаКадош ХаРав Хаим-Михаэль-Дов Вайсмандель;

Klenot medzi Klal Yisroel, Veľký Muž, Bojovník, Veľký Tzaddik, vynikajúci Talmid Chacham. Takýto človek príde na svet iba raz za pár storočí. **„Je to Hrdina všetkých Židovských generácií – ale aj pre každého, kto potrebuje príklad odvážneho človeka, aby sa pozrel, kedy je potrebná pomoc pre tých, ktorí sú prenasledovaní a ohrození zničením v dnešnom svete.“**

HaRav Chaim Michoel Dov Weissmandel ZTVK "L, je najväčší Hrdina obdobia Holokaustu. Jeho nadľudské úsilie o záchranu tisícov ľudí od smrti, ale tiež pokúsiť sa zastaviť Holokaust v priebehu vojny predstavuje jeden z najpozoruhodnejších príkladov Židovskej histórie úplného odhodlania a obete za účelom záchrany Židov. Nesnažil sa zachrániť iba niektorých Židov, ale všetkých. Ctil a bojoval za každý Židovský život a smútil za každou dušou, ktorú nemohol zachrániť.

Nadľudské úsilie Rebeho Michoela Ber Weissmandla oddialilo deportácie viac ako 30 000 Židov na Slovensku o dva roky. Zohral vedúcu úlohu pri záchrane tisícov životov v Maďarsku, keď neúnavne pracoval na zverejňovaní „Osvienčimských protokolov“ o nacistických krutostiach a genocíde, aby „prebudil“ medzinárodné spoločenstvo. V konečnom dôsledku to ukončilo deportácie v Maďarsku a ušetrilo desiatky tisíc životov maďarských Židov.



Reb Michoel Ber Weissmandel bol absolútne nebojácny. Avšak, jeho nebojácnosť sa nenarodila z odvahy, ale zo strachu ... neba. Každý deň, až do svojej smrti ho ťažil smútok pre milióny, ktorí nemohli byť spasení.

„Prosím, seriózne študujte Tóru,“ povedal HaRav Chaim Michoel Dov Weissmandel ZTVK "L svojim študentom, "spomína Rav Spitzer. **„Veď zomrelo mnoho tisíc vašich vrstovníkov, a na vás leží zodpovednosť vyplniť stratené!“**

HaRav Chaim Michoel Dov Weissmandel ZTVK "L opísal tento tragický príbeh vo svojej knihe Min HaMeitzar, Мин амецар (Из теснины), Min Ha Metzar (from the depths of distress).

„Len cez Tóru je náš Národ Národom!“ (Rabbi Saadiah Gaon).

Ak stojí Israel, nie je to preto, že Boh je pevnou materiálnou podporou, ale preto, že ho jeho B-h nesie na orlích krídlach svojej Všemohúcnosti.



PRO MEMORIA.

„Tak vedie cesta naša životom medzi nebesami a zemou; hľadme, aby nám tá cesta bola ku cti pred nebesami a zemou.“

HaRav Chaim Michoel Dov Weissmandel ZTVK "L, je pre nás a našich potomkov toho žiarivým príkladom.

Via Vitae, Дорога Жизни, Lebensweg.

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**HaGaon HaKadosh HaRav Chaim Michoel
Dov Weissmandel ZTVK "L.**

„Vita enim mortuorum in memoria est posita vivorum. Жизнь умерших остается в памяти живущих. Das Leben der Toten wird in der Erinnerung der Lebenden gelegt. The life of the dead lies in the memory of the living.“

(Cicero's Orations, Philippicae 9, 10,)

I. Pars

Rabín, ktorý chcel zastaviť Holokaust

Autor: Marek Čejka

70. let po osvobození Osvětimi není od věci připomenout si polozapomenutý příběh rabína Weissmandla z bratislavské "Pracovní skupiny", kteří se velmi aktivně snažili zastavit Holokaust, avšak jeho snahy narazily přinejmenším na nepochopení ze strany svobodného světa.

Chajim Michael Dov Weissmandl, חיים מיכאל דב ויסמנדל

25. října 1903 – 29. listopadu 1957 - 4. chešvan 5664 – 6. kislev 5718



Ultraortodoxní Židé (charedim) byli za druhé světové války jednou z nejvíce ohrožených skupin židovského obyvatelstva – byli bezbranní svým pacifismem, velmi často chudí, a nejen že byli ohroženi nacisty, ale často se netěšili ani přízni místního obyvatelstva. Navíc byli (na rozdíl od asimilovaných Židů) zcela jasně rozeznatelní podle svého vzezření (vždyť z pohledu některých „jakoby vypadli“ z různých antisemitských karikatur) a vzhledem k hluboce intelektuálnímu životnímu stylu na tom nebyli obvykle ani fyzicky příliš dobře, takže měli horší šanci přežít válečné útrapy.

Po druhé světové válce bylo vyčítáno evropským ultraortodoxním rabínům, že nedostatečně motivovali své příznivce, aby zavčas uprchli z nacisty okupované Evropy do bezpečí, zvláště do Palestiny, neboť sionismus byl v přímém rozporu s jejich vírou. Za války však nečinili chyby zdaleka jen rabíni, ale také politici mnoha zemí, které zůstaly svobodné, a chyby činili i činovníci sionistického hnutí mimo Evropu. Záchrana a pomoc židovským uprchlíkům ze strany svobodného světa (včetně prvorepublikového Československa před válkou) je poněkud temnou stránkou dějin Západu. Pro přistěhovalecké kvóty byla řada židovských uprchlíků navrácena do nebezpečné Evropy, a pokud za války docházelo k jejich záchraně, bylo tak někdy činěno i značně selektivním způsobem.

V Evropě i jinde tehdy žila řada vynikajících osobností – ať už Židů, či Nežidů, jež si byly dostatečně vědomé válečných genocidních nebezpečí a projevíli odvahu, která pomohla zachránit řadu lidských životů. Jedním z nich byl rabín **Michael Dov Weissmandl**, který mezi ostatními rabíny té doby vynikal svým aktivismem. Za války se pokusil zachránit co největší počet Židů, a to i za cenu toho, že musel vyjednávat s nacisty a uplácet je.

Rodák z Uherského Debrecína strávil velkou část svého života mezi Trnavou, Nitrou a Bratislavou na dnešním Slovensku. Jeho rodina patřila k nechasidskému směru ortodoxního židovství. V Trnavě se později také oženil. Vzal si za ženu dceru svého učitele rabína Samuela Davida Ungára (1886–1945), posledního představeného původní nitranské Ješivy.

Mladý a vzdělaný Weissmandl se stal odborníkem na staré manuskripty a při této činnosti navštěvoval různé knihovny a hodně cestoval. Při těchto příležitostech zavítal i na Oxfordskou univerzitu. V Anglii si také vybudoval dobré kontakty (mj. i na biskupa z Canterbury), které mu později pomohly v jeho záchranných aktivitách. Po anšlusu Rakouska se Weissmandlovi podařilo pomoci šedesáti rabínům, které nacisté vyhnali z Rakouska, a Československo je nebylo ochotno přijmout. Weissmandl pro ně dokázal obstarat britská víza.

Druhá světová válka



Během druhé světové války Weissmandl své aktivity zesílil, jak jen to bylo v podmínkách Slovenského štátu možné. Během války se pohyboval mezi Nitrou a Bratislavou, a to až do roku 1944, kdy musel nastoupit do transportu. Od roku 1942 stál Weissmandl společně se sionistkou **Gisi Fleischmannovou** v čele tajné

„Pracovní skupiny“. Tato byla velmi zvláštním spojenectvím: vedle ultraortodoxního Weissmandla zde působili levicoví intelektuálové a sionisté. Skupina během války usilovala o záchranu co největšího počtu Židů, a to i způsobem, který během války i po válce mnozí považovali za „nemorální“ – tedy například prostřednictvím úplatků představitelům Slovenského štátu či samotným nacistům. Po válce Weissmandl tvrdil, že kdyby byla ze strany zahraničních sionistů větší ochota, stačilo najít ve správný čas několik miliónů dolarů a transporty do koncentračních táborů by byly v roce 1942 zastaveny. Doufal v takzvaný „Plán Evropa“, jehož prostřednictvím by byly zastaveny židovské deportace po zaplacení vysokých úplatků nacistům, včetně důstojníků SS.

Weissmandl později obvinil sionistické činitele, že nechtěli přispívat na záchranu Židů, pokud neodejdou do Palestiny. Weissmandl se za války zaměřil i na spojenecké politiky a sionistické činovníky a snažil se je více motivovat k většímu zájmu o osud východoevropských Židů. Přes Švýcarsko rozeslal mnoho varovných dopisů, např. britskému premiéru Churchillovi, americkému prezidentu F. D. Rooseveltovi, sionistickým vůdcům v Palestině a papeži Piovi XII., aby posílil jejich zájem o židovské osudy. Nedostalo se mu ale relevantní odezvy. Neúspěšně také vyzýval Spojence k bombardování železnic vedoucích do Osvětimi.

15. května 1944 poslal Weissmandl sionistickému vedení v Palestině dopis [totoho znění](#):

A vy – naši bratři v Palestině a ve všech svobodných zemích, vy, kdož stojíte v čele svobodných národů – jak můžete mlčet, když dochází k takovým vraždám? Jak můžete mlčet, když už téměř šest miliónů Židů bylo zavražděno? A mlčíte, když další tisíce jsou právě vražděny a tisíce čekají na smrt? Jejich zmučená srdce volají o pomoc a nařikají nad vaší krutostí: “Vy sami jste vrazi pro své kruté mlčení. Máte v rukou prostředky, kterými to můžete zastavit hned teď. Pro krev miliónů a slzy stovek tisíc vás žádáme a prosíme, abyste jednali hned teď!”

((**Pozn.** That is the order of events in Auschwitz to which...12,000 Jewish souls...will be taken daily to be choked, to be burned, and to be manure for the fields. And you, Brother Jews! And you, ministers of state in all countries! How can you keep quiet at this murder in which up till now some six million Jews have already been murdered and even now tens of thousands more are being killed every day?! From the desolation in their souls, the murdered Jews cry out to you: ‘You are cruel! You are murderers, because of your cruel silence and because you do nothing!’ ... in the name of the blood of the millions and the tears of the millions, we beg you, we plead with you, we claim

and demand of you: do something immediately!)... extract from one of his letters (Fuchs, p. 170, FUCHS Abraham (1984), The Unheeded Cry: The Gripping Story of Rabbi Weissmandl, ArtScroll History Series, Mesorah Publications, Brooklyn.))

Weissmandl se také dostal na Slovensku do kontaktu s Židy, kterým se podařilo uprchnout z Osvětimi a kteří mu sdělili svá hrůzná svědectví. Weissmandl se pak jejich výpovědi pokoušel rozšiřovat do Švýcarska, Turecka a Palestiny, aby se dostaly dál k lidem svobodného světa. V té době ale málokdo věřil, že se takováto zvěrstva opravdu dělá. Bratislavská „Pracovní skupina“ na sklonku války spolupracovala i se sionistou **Rudolfem Kastnerem (Kasztnerem, Rezső Kasztner)** (1906–1957), který za války vyjednával o osudu Židů mimo jiných i přímo s „architektem Šoa“, obersturmbannführerem SS Adolfem Eichmannem. Jedním z výsledků jeho práce byl tzv. Kastnerův vlak. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kastner_train) Kastner válku přežil a po vzniku Izraele se stal státním úředníkem. Nakonec však byl proti němu v Izraeli zahájen vykonstruovaný soudní proces, v němž byl mimo jiné uznán pro své válečné aktivity vinným z toho, že údajně „prodal svoji duši ďáblu“. Byl sice později očištěn izraelským Nejvyšším soudem, ale byl zanedlouho zavražděn Zeevem Ecksteinem, mj. bývalým členem radikální sionistické skupiny Lechi (mezi její vůdce patřil i pozdější izraelský premiér Jicchak Šamir). V Izraeli dodnes vyvolává Kastnerův příběh emoce. http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Kasztner_Rezso

Během války dostával Kastner instrukce i od „Pracovní skupiny“ a rabína Weissmandla. Vzhledem k tomu, že Weissmandl zastával podobnou politiku záchrany, je i pohled na něj v dnešním Izraeli velmi nejednoznačný. V hodnocení efektivity „Pracovní skupiny“ se historici šoa dodnes rozcházejí. V každém případě šlo během války o dost ojedinělý čin, jehož důsledkem byla záchrana mnoha lidských životů.

Weissmandl se nakonec málem sám stal obětí Šoa i v pravém slova smyslu, neboť byl v roce 1944 (po obsazení Slovenska Německem po potlačení Slovenského národního povstání) on i celá jeho rodina donuceni zařadit se do transportu do Osvětimi. Během jízdy se Rabínovi podařilo vyskočit ven z nákladního vagónu. Při seskoku si sice zlomil nohu, přesto dokázal vyhledat pomoc, neprozradit se a schovat se v tajném úkrytu v Bratislavě. Později se dostal díky Kastnerovým aktivitám v nákladním automobilu do bezpečí neutrálního Švýcarska.

Poválečné období v USA

Po válce se Weissmandlovi podařilo obnovit s přeživšími Židy (mj. se svým švagrem Šolomem Moše Ungárem) Nitranskou Ješivu přímo na Slovensku. Vzápětí ji však chtěl přesunout do Palestiny (tehdy stále ještě pod britskou správou). Jeho žádost však byla odmítnuta a Ješivu tak nakonec přestěhoval do USA. Ta působila zpočátku v Sommerville ve státě New Jersey, ale později byla přesunuta do Mount Kisco ve státě New-York. Nitranskou Ješivu koncipoval jako soběstačnou zemědělskou usedlost ("Yeshiva Farm Settlement").

V USA Weissmandl také znovu založil rodinu: oženil se s Leou Teitelbaumovou (1924–2009) ze slavného Rabínského rodu, se kterou měl další děti. Poté, co se v USA dostal Weissmandl pod vliv učení satmarského Rabína Joela Teitelbauma, stal se jeho názor na sionismus ještě kritičtější než dříve. Kvůli ztrátě celé rodiny během války a nespokojený s výsledkem své činnosti trpěl těžkými depresemi. To také zhoršovalo jeho

zdravotní stav a srdeční problémy. Rabín nakonec zemřel ve Spojených státech v relativně nízkém věku 54 let.

Rozšířenou verzi portrétu rabína Weissmandla najdete v knize "[Rabíni naší doby](#)", Rozsah - 304 stran. Vydavatel Barrister and Principal, 2010, Cena: 99,-.

Recommendation

Marek Cejka's Middle Eastern Pages

<http://blizky-vychod.blogspot.com/2015/01/rabin-ktery-chtel-zastavit-holokaust.html>



II. Pars

Oxford Chabad Society

Rabbi Michael Weissmandl: A Rabbi from Oxford's Bodleian Library who saved Jews from the Holocaust

By Rabbi Eli Brackman

Michael Dov Weissmandl (1903–1957) was a scholar and expert of Hebrew manuscripts, who visited Oxford during the 1930's, and played an instrumental role in attempting to save Jews from the Nazis during the Second World War.

This article will illustrate how Rabbi Weissmandl's visits to Oxford served him his rabbinical ordination, possibly the first rabbi to be ordained from his research at the Bodleian library, and offered him the groundwork to attempt to help save tens of thousands of Jews from the Nazis in Slovakia and millions in Europe.

Rabbi Weissmandl was born in 1903 in Debrecen, Hungary, and a few years later his family moved to Tyrnau, Slovakia. In 1931, he moved to the Slovakian town of Nitra to study under the rabbi of Nitra and dean of the last surviving yeshiva in Nazi occupied Europe, Rabbi Shmuel Dovid Ungar (1886 – 1945), whose daughter he later married.

Before moving to Nitra, he studied at the yeshivah of Rabbi Joseph Zvi Dushinsky, who was chief rabbi of Galanta, Slovakia, until around the First World War. (Rabbi Dushinsky was fourth or fifth cousin to political scientist Dr. Michael Pinto-Duschinsky, currently living in Oxford.)

Rabbi Dushinsky later moved to Israel and was known for his strong opposition to Zionism, and spoke to the newly-formed United Nations against the creation of the Zionist State.

In the 1930's, in Rabbi Weissmandl's work in deciphering Hebrew manuscripts and comparing printed works with the manuscripts, he travelled to Oxford three times to do research at the Bodleian library collection of Hebrew manuscripts. On one occasion he helped the librarian identify the author of a new manuscript they had just acquired and been misattributed by the scholars at the library.

This scholar was most probably Eric Otto Winstedt, who was Keeper of the Oriental Collection, including the Hebrew holdings, during the 1930's. As E.O. Winstedt was principally a Latinist and Gypsologist, rather than Hebraist, Rabbi Weissmandl's assistance must have been appreciated, as well as other rabbis who visited the Bodleian library earlier, like Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook.

During his visits to Oxford, he recorded variant readings from the Hebrew manuscripts as well as hundreds of unpublished rabbinic responsa which he intended to publish. As an expert of Hebrew manuscripts, he gained much respect from the librarian, allowing him considerable access, during non-visiting hours, to the Hebrew collection for his research.

It appears that Rabbi Weissmandl was not uninterested in the people around him while he was in Oxford. He related that he became acquainted with a non-Jewish scholar in Oxford, who had an exceptional knowledge of Talmud, allowing him to quote entire tractates from memory. It is likely he then would have also got to know other prominent Jewish members of the university community in the 1930's, as Sir Isaiah Berlin, who had then received a prize scholarship at All Souls College.

His work in Oxford seems to have included, among other things, preparing a new edition of *Kikayon de-Yonah*, a Talmudic commentary, by 16th century Rabbi Jonah T'omim, who was born in Prague and acted as rabbi in Grodno and Pinsk, Lithuania. In 1648, because of the Chmielnick pogrom, Rabbi Teomim fled to Vienna, Nikolsburg, Austria, and finally Metz, Lorraine, before he passed away in 1649.

The editing new edition of *Kikayon de-Yonah* seems to have been for the publishing of the 3rd edition of *Kikayon de-Yonah*. The first edition was edited in Amsterdam in 1690 by the son of Rabbi T'omim, Joshua, and the second printing was in 1712 at Hanau, Germany.

In less than a year, according to his biography, *An Unheeded Cry (Artscroll)*, Rabbi Weissmandl reviewed the fifteen tractates of the Talmud included in the above-mentioned book which was ultimately printed by the governors of the Nitra Yeshivah with Rabbi Weissmandl's notes, glosses and emendations.

At the end of the volume, Rabbi Weissmandl added notes to *Shulchan Aruch* (Code of Jewish Law) *Even Ha-Ezer* (Laws of Marriage and Divorce) on the basis of a manuscript he had discovered in Oxford.

The manuscript with these notes can be in fact found listed in Adolf Neubauer's *Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian and in the College Libraries of Oxford* (Published 1886) entry number 761:1 (p. 149): "R. Yonah T'omim's Novellae on Ebben ha-Ezer, and some other casuistic notes."

Thus, it appears, Rabbi Weissmandl was not just comparing the second edition of this work with the original manuscript but intended to add an unpublished manuscript of the same author that was exclusively found at the Bodleian library.

In his biography it mentions his motivation to prepare a new edition of this work was due to the fact that students were studying this work as a basic text at the Yeshiva of Nitra in Slovakia, under the tutelage of his father-in-law, Rabbi Ungar.

It is therefore possible that Rabbi Weissmandl heard that there existed this additional rare unpublished manuscript by Rabbi T'omim in Oxford and this discovery and pursuit to publish it seems to have been a central reason for his travel to Oxford.

It is, however, interesting to note that the Bodleian Library doesn't appear to have in its collection the main work by Rabbi T'omim, *Kikayon D'Yonah*, on the *Talmud*. It would therefore seem that the comparing of the published edition to the original manuscript was not the reason for his coming to Oxford when working on the third edition of *Kikayon D'Yonah* but rather just for the publication of the additional unpublished manuscript on *Shulchan Aruch* that Rabbi Weissmandl wished to add to his new edition.

Indeed, from the following story about his ordination, it is clear that he was undertaking many different Hebraic academic studies as his purpose for coming to Oxford, in addition to the expanding of the the work of *Kikayon D'Yonah*.

His research and intense study of unpublished Hebrew manuscripts in Oxford in fact led to his rabbinical ordination before his wedding.

In January, 1937, (14 Shevat, 5697), Rabbi Weissmandl married Bracha Rachel, the daughter of his teacher Rabbi Samuel David Ungar. For the tenaim (engagement) party, which was held some time earlier, the bridegroom had returned from England, where he had been pursuing his research in Oxford.

At the celebration, he gave a brilliant lecture which lasted for two and a half hours. In his discourse, he discussed the legal aspects of *siulonot* (gifts which a man gives his future bride). At the beginning of his talk, he recounted that in Oxford he had found manuscripts containing several problems on the subject raised by an ancient Torah sage, Rabbi Simon Sharabi.

Rabbi Weissmandl intended to resolve these questions. He proceeded to explain, on the basis of the manuscript sources he had discovered, the custom of the Jews of Oberland (Upper Hungary) not to commit the engagement conditions to writing.

Rabbi David Meisels of Satoraljuajhely (northern Hungary, near the Slovak border), who was present at the celebration, was so impressed that, as a wedding gift, he granted the bridegroom rabbinical ordination in appreciation of his deep knowledge of Jewish law and scholarship of the Torah.

In 1939, Slovakia became a puppet clerofascist state from 14 March 1939 to 8 May, 1945, as an ally and client state of Nazi Germany. It appears that at the beginning of 1939, Rabbi Weissmandl was at Oxford working on the manuscripts and it would have been convenient for him to stay the war in Oxford away from harm.

It therefore astonishes one that while at Oxford, Rabbi Weissmandel volunteered on 1 September 1939, shortly after the invasion of Poland by Germany together with Slovakia, to return to Slovakia as an agent of World Agudath Israel to help rescue the Jews of Slovakia and other Jews of Europe.

It is interesting to speculate whether Cecil Roth who had just returned in 1939 to Oxford as reader in Jewish Studies was an inspiration for him to return to Slovakia to aid the Jewish community there under the Nazis. It is known that as early as 1933, Cecil Roth was vocal and active against the Nazis, as he penned a letter of protest to the London Times against Hitler's declaration to boycott Jewish establishments.

Due to Rabbi Weissmandl having spent considerable amount of time in Oxford and likely became acquainted with the British establishment, it gave him the ability to assist with attempts to save Jews from the Holocaust.

This happened when the Nazis gathered sixty rabbis from Burgenland, bordering Slovakia. Czechoslovakia refused them entry and Austria would not take them back, leaving the stranded on the border. Rabbi Weissmandl flew to England, where he was received by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Foreign Office, and succeeded in obtaining entry visas to England for the sixty rabbis, saving them from the Holocaust.

When the Nazis, aided by members of the puppet Slovak government, began its campaign against the Slovakian Jews in 1942, members of the Slovak Judenrat formed an underground organization called the Working Group. The group's main activity was to help Jews as much as possible, in part through payment of large bribes to German and Slovak officials.

This Working Group during the period of WWII was led by Rabbi Weissmandl after he moved back to Slovakia, together with Gisi Fleischmann.

The transportation of Slovak Jews was in fact halted for a long time after the Working Group arranged a \$50,000 ransom deal with the Nazi SS official Dieter Wisliceny.

At Weissmandl's initiative the Working Group was also responsible for the ill-fated Europe Plan which would have seen in late 1942 large numbers of European Jews rescued from the Nazis by paying the Nazis one to two million dollars ransom to stop most transports. The Germans asked for a 10% down payment, which unfortunately was never made.

The Working Group played a central role in distribution of the "Auschwitz Report" in spring 1944, which ultimately led to its publication in Switzerland. That triggered a major Swiss grass roots protest in the Swiss press, churches and streets. It was a major factor in President Roosevelt, Winston Churchill and others threatening Hungary's Fascist regent Horthy with post-war retribution if he doesn't immediately stop the transports. At the time 12,000 Jews a day were transported to Auschwitz.

In 1944, Weissmandl and his family were put on a train headed for Auschwitz. Rabbi Weissmandl escaped from the sealed train by sawing open the lock of the carriage with an emery wire he had secreted in a loaf of bread. He jumped from the moving train, breaking his leg in the process, and hid in a secret bunker in suburban Bratislava, from

where he was taken by Rudolf Kasztner and his Nazi associate Kurt Becher to Switzerland.

In 1946, Rabbi Weissmandl left Switzerland for the U.S.A, where he re-established the Nitra Yeshiva.

As his former teacher Rabbi Joseph Zvi Dushinsky, Rabbi Weissmandl was also known for his strong opposition to Zionism, and also spoke to the newly-formed United Nations against the creation of the Zionist State. In his biographies it attributes this to the fact that he felt that the Zionist leadership allegedly frustrated some of his plans in rescuing Jews from Nazi Europe.

It seems that a possible reason for this was also due to his former esteemed teacher Rabbi Dushinsky's influence, albeit for similar reasons.

Rabbi Weissmandl passed away in 1957.

Recommendation

https://www.oxfordchabad.org/templates/articlecco_cdo/aid/1378317/jewish/A-Rabbi-from-the-Bodleian-Library-who-saved-Jews-from-the-Holocaust.htm

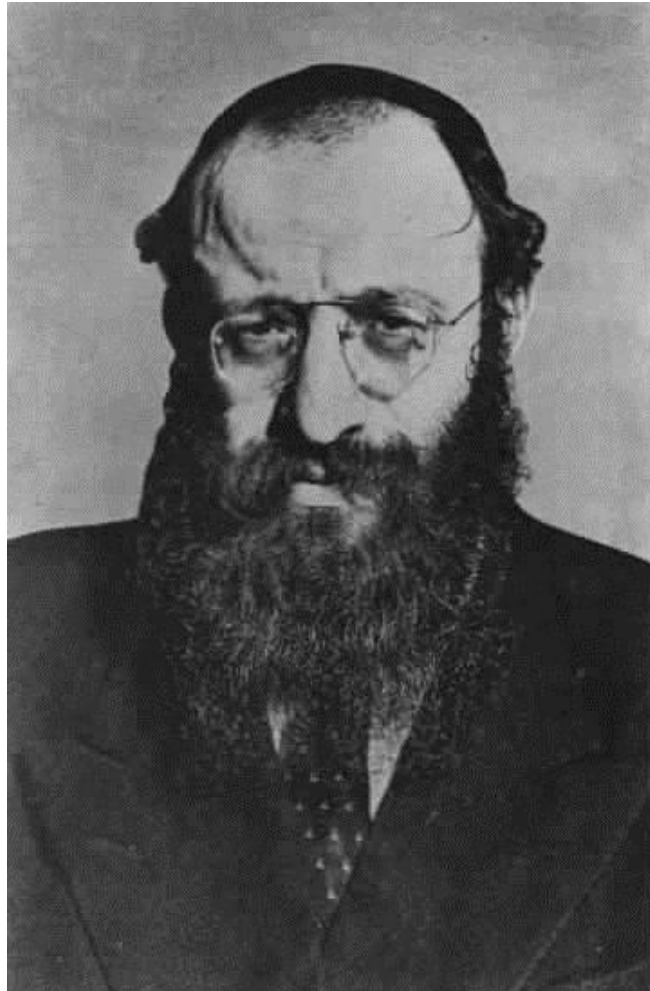


III. Pars

Chaim Michael Dov Weissmandl

Began 1946
Role Rabbi
Ended 29 November 1957
Positions Rosh yeshiva

Denomination Orthodox
Yeshiva Yeshiva of Nitra
Name Chaim Dov



Birth name Chaim Michael Dov Weissmandl
Born 25 October 1903 Debrecen, Hungary (1903-10-25)
Parents Yosef and Gella Weissmandl
Died November 1957, Mount Kisco, New York, United States

Chaim Michael Dov Weissmandl (Hebrew: **חיים מיכאל דב וויסמנדל**) (25 October 1903, Debrecen, Hungary – 29 November 1957, Mount Kisco, New York) (known as **Michael Ber Weissmandl**) was a rabbi and shtadlan who became known for his efforts to save the Jews of Slovakia from extermination at the hands of the Nazis during the Holocaust. Thanks to the efforts of his "Working Group", which bribed German and Slovak officials, the mass deportation of Slovak Jews was delayed for two years, from 1942 to 1944.



Largely by bribing diplomats, Weissmandl was able to smuggle letters or telegrams to people he hoped would help save the Jews of Europe, alerting them to the progressive Nazi destruction of European Jewry. It is known that he managed to send letters to Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt, and he entrusted a diplomat to deliver a letter to the Vatican for Pope Pius XII.



He also begged the Allies to bomb the rails leading to Auschwitz, but to no avail. He believed that if the Hungarian Jews would resist, then only a small number of them



would be deported, as the Germans in 1944 could not garner enough soldiers to leave the front and deal with the Jews simultaneously. Of around 900,000 Hungarian-speaking Jews, close to 600,000 were murdered.

Early life



Michael Ber was born in Debrecen, Hungary on 25 October 1903 (4 *Cheshvan* 5664 on the Hebrew calendar) to Yosef Weissmandl, a shochet. A few years later his family moved to Tyrnau (now Trnava, Slovakia). In 1931 he moved to Nitra to study under Rabbi Shmuel Dovid Ungar, whose daughter, Bracha Rachel, he married in 1937. He was thus an *oberlander* (from the central highlands of Europe), a non-Hasidic Jew.

Weissmandl was a scholar and an expert at deciphering ancient manuscripts. In order to carry out his research of these manuscripts, he traveled to the Bodleian Library in Oxford, England. It is related that he was treated with great respect by the Chief

Librarian of the Bodleian after an episode when he correctly identified the author of a manuscript which had been misattributed by the library's scholars.

World War II and the Holocaust

While at Oxford University, Weissmandl volunteered on 1 September 1939 to return to Slovakia as an agent of World Agudath Israel. Later he was the first to demand that the Allies bomb Auschwitz. When the Nazis gathered sixty rabbis from Burgenland and sent them to *Czechoslovakia*, Czechoslovakia refused them entry and Austria would not take them back. Rabbi Weissmandl flew to England, where he was received by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Foreign Office. Explaining the tragic situation, he succeeded in obtaining entry visas to England for the sixty rabbis.

The Working Group

When the Nazis, aided by members of the puppet Slovak government, began its moves against the Slovak Jews in 1942, members of the Slovak *Judenrat* formed an underground organization called the Working Group. It was led by Gisi Fleischmann and Rabbi Weissmandl. The group's main activity was to help Jews as much as possible, in part through payment of large bribes to German and Slovak officials. At Rabbi Weissmandl's initiative already in 1942 the Working Group initiated high-level ransom negotiations with the Germans (ref. Fuchs and Kranzler books). The transportation of Slovak Jews was in fact halted for a long time after they arranged a \$50,000 (in 1952 dollars) ransom deal with the Nazi SS official Dieter Wisliceny.

Some historians, for example Dr. Abraham Fuchs and Prof. David Kranzler, accept Weissmandl's opinion that the ransom and bribes were successful. Israeli historian Prof. Yehuda Bauer wrote in 1981 book that he thought the bribes influenced Germany's position regarding deportation, but in a 1996 book he expressed skepticism about whether the bribes were a key factor in stopping the deportations. However, later in a 2002 book Bauer writes that it was not the bribing of Wisliceny that stopped the deportations, but the bribing of the Slovak officials by the Working Group that stopped it.

At Rabbi Weissmandl's initiative, the Working Group was also responsible for the ambitious but ill-fated Europa Plan which would have seen large numbers of European Jews rescued from their Nazi captors. An agreement was negotiated with the Nazis in late 1942 and one to two million dollars ransom was required to stop most transports. The Germans asked for a 10% down payment. Unfortunately the down payment was never made. Nothing came of it. Sally Mayer, the JOINT representative in Switzerland, was unwilling to provide the down-payment since currency transfer to Nazis was illegal. Another opinion is that Heinrich Himmler intervened in August 1943. Also the Jewish Agency, contrary to Nazi stereotypes of Jewish wealth, had an available budget of \$160K US/month (40K Pounds) for rescue efforts and simply did not have the money. Friling gives the amount demanded for temporarily halting the transport as \$3 million USD.

The Working Group also played a central role in distribution of the "Auschwitz Report" in spring 1944, which ultimately led to its publication in Switzerland by George Mantello. That triggered a major Swiss grass roots protest in the Swiss press, churches

and streets. It was a major factor in President Roosevelt, Winston Churchill and others threatening Hungary's Fascist regent Horthy with post-war retribution if he did not immediately stop the transports. At the time 12,000 Jews a day were transported to Auschwitz. Among others rescued as a result of the Working Group's activities were Rebbe Aharon Rokeach of Belz, and Rabbi Yoel Teitelbaum of Satmar.

Since the business of the Working Group required a continuous supply of large sums of money, they turned to the international Jewish organizations for help, via their representatives in Switzerland. Weissmandl claimed that too little money was provided too late and that this was due to the indifference of those he asked. Specifically, he accused the Zionist organizations of refusing to assist in saving Jews unless they were to go to Palestine. Weissmandl supported his allegations by quoting letters from memory, and some historians such as Bauer had doubt in the accuracy of his account. Other historians, such as Fuchs and Kranzler, accepted Rabbi Weissmandl's word. Friling however points out various statement by members of the Zionist leadership to the contrary, asking that any and all doors be opened for the rescue of Jews. For example, they pleaded that Polish children sent to South Africa, why not Jewish children - South African Prime Minister Jan Smuts refused. Allies ferried Italians from Ethiopia to Italy, why not Jews on the return? Similarly ships carrying armaments to Allied troops in North Africa returned empty to America. Their pleas were ignored.

Deportation

In 1944, Weissmandl and his family were rounded up and put on a train headed for Auschwitz. Rabbi Weissmandl escaped from the sealed train by sawing open the lock of the carriage with an emery wire he had secreted in a loaf of bread. He jumped from the moving train, breaking his leg in the process, and hid in a secret bunker in suburban Bratislava.

Rudolf Kasztner and his Nazi associate Kurt Becher took Weissmandl from his Bratislava bunker to Switzerland. This was highly unusual for both Kasztner and Becher. There is some speculation that Kasztner and Becher sought to reinforce their alibis for the predictable post-war trials. There is debate whether there was a reason for Kasztner to imagine that he would be put on trial as a Nazi-collaborator. See the film *Killing Kasztner* for details of his trial and subsequent murder and a reversal of the verdict. Today Kasztner is controversially recognized for saving the lives of thousands of Jews at Yad Vashem.

Personal recovery

After the war, Weissmandl arrived in the United States having lost his family and having been unable to save Slovak Jewry. At first he was so distraught that he would pound the walls and cry bitterly on what had befallen his people. Later he remarried and had children, but he never forgot his family in Europe and suffered from depression his entire life because of the Holocaust.

His second marriage was to Leah Teitelbaum (1924/5–9 April 2009), a daughter of Rabbi Chaim Eliyahu Teitelbaum and a native of Beregszász, Hungary. With his second wife, Weissmandl had five children.

An innovative American yeshiva

In November 1946, Weissmandl and his brother-in-law, Rabbi Sholom Moshe Ungar, re-established the Nitra Yeshiva in Somerville, New Jersey, gathering surviving students from the original Nitra Yeshiva. With the help of Rabbi Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz, Rabbi Weissmandl bought the Brewster estate in Mount Kisco, in Westchester County, New York and moved his Yeshiva there in 1949. There he established a self-sustaining agricultural community known as the "Yeshiva Farm Settlement". At first this settlement wasn't welcome by its neighbors, but in a town hall meeting, Helen Bruce Baldwin (1907–1994) of nearby Chappaqua, wife of New York Times military correspondent and Pulitzer Prize winner, Hanson W. Baldwin, impressed by Rabbi Weissmandl, defended its establishment and wrote a letter-to-the-editor to the New York Times regarding it. Weissmandl designed the community's yeshiva to conform with Talmudic accounts of agricultural settlements, where a man would study Torah continuously until an age suitable for marriage, whereupon he would farm during the day and study in the evenings. While this novel approach was not fully realized, the yeshiva flourished. Currently, the settlement is known as the Nitra community.

Later life

During his later years, Weissmandl suffered from chronic heart disease and was frequently hospitalized. He suffered a severe heart attack in the early winter of 1957 and was hospitalized for several weeks. Upon his release, he attended the yeshiva's fundraising banquet, and then was readmitted to the hospital. His health deteriorated and he died on Friday, 29 November 1957 (6 Kislev 5718) at the age of 54. His second wife never remarried.

Statements

In a letter, dated May 15, 1944, addressed to the Zionist leadership in Palestine (under British rule) Rabbi Weissmandl called on the Zionist leadership to take stronger action on behalf of European Jewry which was systematically being destroyed by the Nazi lead genocide:

And you - our brothers in Palestine, in all the countries of freedom, and you, ministers of all the kingdom — how do you keep silent in the face of this great murder ? Silent while thousand on thousands, reaching now to six million Jews, were murdered. And silent now while tens of thousands are still being murdered and waiting to be murdered? Their destroyed hearts cry to you for help as they bewail your cruelty. Brutal you are and murderers too you are, because of the cold-bloodedness of the silence in which you watch.

Books

Two of Weissmandl's books were published posthumously.

□ *Toras Chemed* (Mt. Kisco, 1958) is a book of religious writings that includes many commentaries and homilies, as well as hermeneutic material of a kabbalistic nature. Included in this book are the observations that led to what is called the Torah Codes.

□ *Min HaMeitzar* (Jerusalem, 1960) is a book that describes Rabbi Weissmandl's war-time experiences. The title consists of the first two words of Psalm 118:5, meaning "from the depths of despair", literally "From the Straits". This is the main publication in which Weissmandl's accusations against the Zionist organizations appear.

In 1958, Rabbi Weissmandl republished the magnum opus of Rabbi Jonah Teomim-Frankel, *Kikayon D'Yonah* with his own footnotes and glosses. In the introduction to this volume, Rabbi Weissmandl gives an emotional history lesson.

<https://alchetron.com/Chaim-Michael-Dov-Weissmandl>

Recommendation

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Dov_Weissmandl



IV. Pars

Раби Хаим-Михаэль-Дов Вайсмандель

Автор: Рав Александр Кац

Выдающийся исследователь Торы, руководитель нью-йоркской ешивы Нитра в годы Второй Мировой Войны занимался изучением буквенных кодов, скрытых в тексте Пятикнижия. К этим исследованиям его привели отдельные высказывания и намеки, содержащиеся в книгах кабалистов прошлых веков.

Раби Хаим-Михаэль-Дов Вайсмандель (5664—5718 /1903—1957/ гг.) — выдающийся исследователь Торы, руководитель нью-йоркской ешивы *Нитра*. Родился в г. Братиславе.

В годы перед второй мировой войной был одним из ведущих преподавателей ешивы словацкого города Нитры, возглавляемой его тестем.

В этот период он занимался изучением буквенных кодов, скрытых в тексте Пятикнижия. К этим исследованиям его привели отдельные высказывания и намеки, содержащиеся в книгах кабалистов прошлых веков. Так, например, величайший кодификатор и знаток сокровенного учения р. Моше Исерлис из

Кракова (Рамо; см.) сравнивал структуру книг Пятикнижия с храмовой менорой. Размышляя над этим уподоблением, р. Вайсмандель обнаружил целый ряд удивительных закономерностей. Оказалось, что если отсчитать сорок девять знаков от буквы *тав*, завершающей первое в Торе слово *Берешит* (В начале), то пятидесятой будет буква *вав*. После следующих сорока девяти букв — пятидесятой окажется *рейш*, а при дальнейшем подобном отсчете — пятидесятой будет буква *эй*. Вместе буквы *тав*, *вав*, *рейш* и *эй* составляют слово Тора. И точно так же в конце книги *Берешит*: если отсчитывать по сорок девять знаков, начиная от буквы *тав*, завершающей слово *везот* (и вот, *Берешит* 49:28), то пятидесятые буквы — *вав*, *рейш* и *эй* — вновь сложатся в слово Тора.

Во второй книге Пятикнижия получился тот же результат: в начале книги при отсчете от буквы *тав*, завершающей слово *Шмот*(Имена), и в конце книги при отсчете от буквы *тав* в слове *тхелет* (голубая шерсть; *Шмот* 39:8). В третьей книге *Ваикра* — в ее центральной по расположению разделе *Кедошим* — р. Вайсмандель обнаружил закодированное точно таким же способом произносимое четырехбуквенное Имя Всевышнего. Коды в двух последних книгах, *Бемидбар* и *Дварим*, оказались зеркальными — подобно тому, как одни ветви меноры зеркально отражают другие. В этих книгах — и в начале, и в конце — слово Тора было зашифровано с помощью того же кода, но с обратным порядком букв: *эй*, *рейш*, *вав*, *тав* (*Цафунот Атора*, *Ашалхэвет*, 24 с.12)

Р. Вайсманделю было также известно высказывание Виленского Гаона (см.) о том, что все последующие события закодированы в Торе. По свидетельству учеников, Виленский Гаон мог указать, где именно в Торе закодированы имена каждого из великих еврейских мудрецов. Так, например, сохранилось его указание на то, что в стихе «Умножились Мои чудеса в стране Египетской» (*Шмот* 11:9) закодировано имя великого законоучителя р. Моше бен Маймона (Рамбама; см.), жившего именно в Египте, — первые буквы слов этого стиха (*ребот мофтай безрец мицраим*) составляют имя Рамбам. Пользуясь уже проверенным методом, р. Вайсмандель обнаружил, что при последовательном отсчете сорока девяти букв от *мем* в слове Моше, содержащемся в этом же стихе, пятидесятые буквы складываются в слово *Мишнэ* — первое слово из названия основного алахического труда Рамбама *Мишнэ Тора* (Повторение Торы). Код второго слова в этом названии — Тора, начинался несколько стихов спустя с буквы *тав* в слове *ото* (его) (*Шмот* 12:11). Сосчитав количество букв, разделяющих коды первого и второго слова в этом названии, р. Вайсмандель был потрясен: расстояние составляло ровно шестьсот тринадцать букв — по числу заповедей Торы, кодифицированных Рамбамом. Более того, р. Вайсмандель отметил, что во всем этом отрывке повествуется о принесении пасхальной жертвы, которое совершалось в четырнадцатый день месяца нисан, — а именно

этот день и был датой рождения Рамбама (*Сарей амеа 1:7; Цафунот Атора, Ашалхэвет, 24 с.13*).

Вдохновленный всеми этими открытиями, р. Вайсмандель продолжил свои исследования. Для этой цели он записал текст Пятикнижия особым образом — на маленьких листках, на каждом из которых он разместил по десять строк, состоявших ровно из десяти букв. Таким образом, на каждом листике получалось по сто букв — два раза по пятьдесят, и благодаря такому расположению коды как бы проступали из-под привычного текста Торы (*Цафунот Атора, Ашалхэвет, 24 с.11—13*).

Свои открытия р. Вайсмандель записал уже во время второй мировой войны, когда он скрывался в тайном убежище. Впоследствии его ученики опубликовали эти рукописи, озаглавив книгу *Торат хемед* (Желанная Тора) (Д. Вицтум *Амеймад аносаф с.12*).

Р. Вайсмандель перешел в подполье вскоре после прихода гитлеровцев в Словакию.

Он создал подпольную группу, получившую название *Квуцат аавода* (Рабочая группа). Эта организация проводила рискованные операции по спасению еврейских жизней не только в самой Братиславе, но и по всей Словакии (*Ки эш кадха беани с.20*).

Р. Вайсмандель сыграл одну из решающих ролей в оповещении правительств западных стран о преступлениях, совершаемых нацистами в отношении евреев. С того времени, как зимой 5702 /1942/ года началась массовая депортация словацких евреев, он скрывался в подземном убежище около Братиславы, сохраняя связи как с другими подпольщиками, так и с евреями, легально живущими в гетто. Когда той же зимой в Братиславе появились первые беженцы из Польши, рассказавшие о массовом истреблении евреев в концлагерях и в варшавском гетто, р. Вайсмандель записал их свидетельства, а несколько месяцев спустя сумел переправить эти записи в нейтральную Швейцарию, представителям американского *Ваадааацала* (Комитета спасения). Это были первые сообщения о массовых убийствах, просочившиеся на Запад (*Ки эш кадха беани с.134; Бесетер раам с.43,77; R. Nachman Zakon The Jewish Experience p.200*).

Р. Вайсмандель надеялся, что, когда о преступлениях нацистов станет известно в свободном мире, страны-союзницы немедленно протянут евреям свою руку помощи. Но в игру вступили политические расчеты: руководители США и Англии опасались, что, если они вмешаются в войну на данном этапе, предприняв специальные меры по спасению еврейского населения, это только «будет лить воду на мельницу Гитлера, который с самого начала утверждал, что

вся война и была затеяна по указке евреев» — в результате «будет подорван всенародный — и даже международный — консенсус относительно смысла и целей войны с гитлеризмом». Парadoxально, но такой же позиции придерживались и лидеры светских еврейских организаций — они боялись, что демократическим режимам не удастся мобилизовать народ на войну — «ведь не каждая английская или американская мать согласится, чтобы ее сын рисковал своей жизнью “ради каких-то евреев”». Лишь в начале зимы нового 5703 /1942/ года правительства Советского Союза, США и Великобритании все же выступили с совместной декларацией, в которой предупреждали руководителей Рейха об ответственности «за запланированное истребление евреев» — однако к этому времени большинство евреев Европы уже было уничтожено (Йеуда Бауэр *Постигая прошлое*, с.18; А. Данилова *Рассекреченная мораль*, МИГnews 5.07.2000 с.20).

Приблизительно в то же время р. Вайсмандель писал из своего братиславского убежища в Землю Израиля, р. Моше Блюю (см.), возглавлявшему иерусалимское отделение организации *Агудат Исраэль*: «Ну, что я могу сказать — тридцать-сорок процентов всего еврейского народа уже убито. И, по великим нашим грехам, из мира изучающих Тору уничтожено восемьдесят-девяносто процентов. И знай, что вызволить даже одного человека отсюда, значит спасти его от уничтожения — страшного и жестокого. ...Мы сейчас стараемся спасти, переправив в Венгрию, гаона и праведника из Белза (р. Аарона Рокеаха /Белзер Ребе/; см.), ...и, возможно, также раввина Менахема Зембу (в те дни находился в варшавском гетто; см.). Великая заповедь спасти оставшихся раввинов — выдающихся знатоков Торы и праведников» (*Бесетер раам* с.60).

В 5703 /1943/ году, убедившись, что на скорую помощь союзников рассчитывать не приходится, р. Вайсмандель приступил к осуществлению своего широкомасштабного плана по спасению сотен тысяч евреев, получившего кодовое название «Европа».

Через своих доверенных людей р. Вайсмандель вступил в контакт с эсэсовским генералом Дитером Вислицени, возглавлявшим нацистскую администрацию в Братиславе. Нацист принял крупную взятку, собранную евреями, и согласился приостановить отправку в лагеря смерти двадцати четырех тысяч евреев из различных районов Словакии. Ободренные успехом еврейские лидеры предложили Вислицени, имеющему доступ к главе СС Гиммлеру, прекратить уничтожение евреев Европы в обмен на «компенсацию» в два-три миллиона долларов. Для того, чтобы начать предметные переговоры с Гиммлером, который якобы был готов на контакты с представителями союзников, Вислицени потребовал задаток в двести тысяч долларов. И тогда р. Вайсмандель и его соратники обратились за помощью к самым богатым еврейским организациям — Всемирному Еврейскому Агентству (Сохнуту) и американскому Джойнту. Но

реакция оказалась самой непредсказуемой: чиновники Джойнта обвинили «попрошак из Восточной Европы» в том, что они «хитростью и обманом пытаются выманить деньги... из кармана у порядочных и наивных евреев Запада». Представители Сохнута также не проявили заинтересованности — причем, главным противником проекта был сионистский лидер Давид Бен-Гурион. «Мы должны понимать, — писал р. Вайсманделю швейцарский представитель Сохнута, — что все народы стран-союзниц щедро проливают свою кровь, и если мы не принесем своих жертв, то чем завоюем право присутствовать за столом переговоров при послевоенном переделе мира и требовать для себя Землю Израиля?! И поэтому с нашей стороны было бы глупостью — и даже наглостью — добиваться, чтобы гои, проливающие свою кровь на войне, позволили бы нам, ради спасения нашей крови, перевести деньги во вражескую страну! Нет, Земля Израиля будет куплена для нас только кровью — кровью всех еще оставшихся в Европе мужчин, женщин, стариков, и младенцев» (Р. Вайсмандель *Мин амецар* с.95—96; Йеуда Бауэр *Постигая прошлое*, с.18—19). Позднее Сохнут все-таки выделил деньги на осуществление этой сделки — но к тому времени ситуация в нацистской верхушке изменилась, и Гиммлер направил своего адъютанта к генералу Вислицени с приказом прекратить переговоры с еврейскими представителями. Через генерала Вислицени р. Вайсманделю стало известно, что один из духовных руководителей мусульман Палестины, иерусалимский муфтий Хадж-Амин эль-Хусейни, убедил Гитлера и его ближайшее окружение довести уничтожение евреев Европы до конца — чтобы уцелевших «не смогли перевезти в Палестину». Впоследствии эту информацию подтвердил и куратор нацистской программы «окончательного решения еврейского вопроса» Адольф Эйхман (Р. Йоэль Шварц, р. Ицхак Гольдштейн *Ашоа* с.123,245).

После того как реализация плана «Европа» сорвалась, р. Вайсмандель бежал из Братиславы и достиг г. Будапешта, где евреи все еще находились в относительной безопасности.

Он перешел венгерскую границу по тайным горным тропам в Карпатах, воспользовавшись помощью профессиональных контрабандистов. Хотя Венгрия и являлась верным сателлитом гитлеровской Германии, части вермахта и СС там не размещались, и евреи продолжали свою обычную общинную жизнь. В их среде господствовала иллюзия, что их страна так и останется «одиноким островком избавления» в залитой кровью Европе. Обосновавшись в Будапеште, р. Вайсмандель помог переправиться на этот «островок избавления» многим беглецам из стран, оккупированных нацистами, — при проведении спасательных операций он сотрудничал с р. Йоэлем Тейтельбоймом (Сатмарский Ребе; см.), возглавлявшим работу *Ваадаацала* (Комитета спасения) в венгерской Трансильвании. Одновременно р. Вайсмандель разрабатывал новый план: по каналам, установленным еще в Словакии, он возобновил контакты с Адольфом

Эйхманом, а затем связал его с руководителями еврейской общины Будапешта, в частности, с высокопоставленным сионистским функционером доктором Израэлем Кастнером. На этот раз переговоры велись об обмене сотен тысяч еврейских узников концлагерей, обреченных на смерть в газовых камерах, на необходимые Германии грузовики и тракторы-тягачи (*Ки эш кадха беани* с.134; *Бесетер раам* с.74,77,82—83,90).

Весной 5704 /1944/ года Венгрию внезапно оккупировали части вермахта, и сразу же началось быстрое и планомерное уничтожение евреев этой страны.

С момента, когда началась высылка венгерских евреев в лагеря смерти — сначала из района карпатских гор, а затем и из других участков страны, р. Вайсмандель разослал по различным общинам сотни писем, в которых предупреждал: «Прячьтесь, оказывайте сопротивление и убегайте, но только не давайте поместить себя в гетто — потому что оттуда вас отправят на истребление» (*Бесетер раам* с.43).

Р. Вайсмандель также скрывался, но был схвачен и заключен в концентрационный лагерь Серед, а затем отправлен на «поезде смерти» в лагерь уничтожения Аушвиц (Освенцим).

По дороге он уговаривал своих спутников совершить побег, убеждая, что при этом некоторые смогут спастись — а в противном случае, погибнут все. Однако его спутники были парализованы страхом, и в конце концов, ему пришлось выпрыгнуть из поезда одному. Он вновь скрывался, продолжая деятельность по спасению других евреев (*Ки эш кадха беани* с.134).

В этот период р. Вайсмандель сумел передать на Запад карту концлагеря в Аушвице, составленную им по показаниям двух евреев, совершивших побег из этого лагеря. Р. Вайсмандель призывал союзников разбомбить газовые печи Аушвица и подъездные пути к нему — по его убеждению, это могло бы спасти жизни многих тысяч жертв, ведь в этих печах уничтожали до двенадцати тысяч евреев ежедневно. Но союзное командование, сославшись на технические причины отказалось от проведения такой операции. В последующий период самолеты союзников разбомбили множество военных и гражданских объектов в окрестностях Аушвица, но хотя бы один удар по газовым печам и подъездным путям к лагерю нанесен так и не был (*Ки эш кадха беани* с.7; *Бесетер раам* с.44; R. Nachman Zakon *The Jewish Experience* p.200).

В конце войны, зимой 5705 /1944/ года, р. Вайсмандель был спасен на «поезде Кастнера».

В результате инициированной им сделки между Эйхманом и доктором Кастнером было переправлено в Швейцарию более полутора тысяч еврейских узников, и он был включен в этот список — в обмен нацисты получили партию грузового транспорта (*Ки эш кадха беани* с.134; *Бесетер раам* с.82—84).

Потеряв в годы Катастрофы всю семью, р. Вайсмандель эмигрировал в США. Он создал в Нью-Йорке ешиву, назвав ее *Нитра* — в память о словацкой ешиве, в которой он преподавал до войны.

Р. Хаим-Михаэль-Дов Вайсмандель умер в 5718 /1957/ году.

В 5720 /1960/ году в Нью-Йорке вышла в свет его книга *Мин амецар* (Из теснины), в которой он подробно рассказал о своих попытках «приостановить» Катастрофу.

с разрешения издательства *Швут Ами*,

<http://www.shvutami.org.il/#sthash.3EkVTRBq.dpbs>

Из цикла „Еврейские мудрецы“

https://toldot.ru/rabbanim/rabbanim_7524.html



V. Pars

Harav Chaim Michel Dov Weissmandel ztz”l

By David Sofer

Harav Chaim Michel Dov Weissmandel was the chareidi rav of the kehillah of Nitra in Slovakia. During the period of Churban Europa, he dedicated himself to efforts to save what he could of European Jewry. To his great sorrow, he was not given the assistance he hoped for from the Jews of the free world, which possibly could have stalled or halted the extermination of the Jews of Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

Hagaon Harav Chaim Michel Dov Weissmandel was born in Debrecin in Hungary in the year 5664 to his father Reb Yosef. When he was a young boy the family moved to Tirnau where his father served as a shochet. Harav Weissmandel first learned in the local cheder in Tirnau, and when he grew older, he travelled every day by train to the nearby town of Sered, in order to learn Torah from his teacher Harav Dovid Vasly.

In the year 5701, when he was thirty-seven years old, his father Reb Yosef was niftar. On the Friday prior to receiving the news, shortly before Shabbos came in, a person approached him and asked him several times for the name of the mother of Avraham Avinu. The person kept asking the same question, and then added that if he did not receive an answer, it would cause him great anguish. On Motzoei Shabbos, Harav Weissmandel received the bitter news of the petirah of his father. Later on that evening, he found the reference in maseches Semachos that said, “Imtalai the daughter of Karnebo, the mother of Avraham Avinu...” is a segulah in a time of danger. Harav Weissmandel understood that at the time that he had been asked the question, his father had fallen gravely ill and taken to his bed, from which he would not rise again.

In the year 5676, not long before he reached the age of bar mitzvah, Harav Weissmandel prepared his bar mitzvah pshetl by himself. His modest grandfather, who

was aware of the brilliance and sharpness of his grandson's mind, was concerned that the delivery of his droshah would cause his grandson to fall into the trap of pride, and therefore he promised his young grandson that if he would refrain from speaking, he would give him a large sum of money. Harav Weissmandel agreed to his grandfather's request, and with the money he bought himself the sefer 'Rabbeinu Bachaye' on the Torah. Towards the end of his life, Harav Weissmandel came full circle, when he learned from that very sefer at the time of his yetzias neshamah. Thirty-six years later, he delivered the bar mitzvah pshetl that he had refrained from giving, to the talmidim of his yeshivah. The talmidim were astounded at the penetrating and profound droshah, and even more amazed to hear that this was the bar mitzvah pshetl that their Rosh Yeshivah had held back from giving at the request of his grandfather.

Harav Weissmandel's main teacher of Torah was Harav Shmuel Dovid Ungar, the rav of Tirnau and later of Nitra. As a bachur in yeshivah, he was already fluent in Shas and Poskim. He had an extraordinary grasp of the halachos of mikvaos, which demanded a thorough knowledge of the mathematical calculations which were necessary in order to know how to correctly build a kosher mikvah. Harav Weissmandel was also the originator of the concept of 'codes' in the Torah, consisting of uniform gaps between certain letters that revealed hidden messages.

Harav Weissmandel frequently travelled to gedolei Torah in Poland and Lithuania. In the course of his travels, he merited to spend time in the presences of the Chofetz Chaim ztz"l, Maran Harav Chaim Ozer Grodzinski ztz"l, Harav Elchanan Wasserman Hy"d, the Gerrer Rebbe ztz"l and the Lubavitcher Rebbe ztz"l. In Shevat of the year 5697, when he was thirty-three years old, Harav Weissmandel married the daughter of his rebbi Harav Shmuel Dovid Ungar. Even prior to, and also following his chasunah, he was active on behalf of his father-in-law's yeshivah, the Nitra Yeshivah, and he became like his right hand. There were even periods during which he himself delivered the main shiur in the yeshivah.

The most distinguished period of Harav Weissmandel's life was undoubtedly that during the Second World War, when his activities on behalf of his fellow Jews involved putting his own life in extreme danger with an exceptional level of self-sacrifice. Harav Weissmandel was the moving force behind the 'Working Group' – an organisation whose purpose was to bring about a halt in the extermination programme for what remained of European Jewry, by means of bribes given to the Nazis y"sh. Together with him in the Working Group were other Jews espousing many different hashkofos and ideologies; a Reform 'rabbi', secular Jews, Zionists and others with various differing points of view. Despite this, they were united by their shared purpose which overrode any differences that would otherwise have caused conflict between them. Harav Weissmandel and the Working Group were active in four main areas:

- 1) The raising of fifty thousand dollars of bribe money to pay for the Wisliczeny plan. Wisliczeny was the German commander in Czechoslovakia, appointed to oversee the expulsions from Slovakia at the end of the summer of 5702. Owing to the intervention of the Working Group, during the next two years, no harm befell the Jews of Czechoslovakia.

- 2) In the year 5703, Harav Weissmandel and the Working Group conducted negotiations with Wisliczeny for a halt to the extermination over all of Europe. The Germans demanded a payment of two million dollars for this. Behind all the dealings

was the evil Himmler himself, who was looking for a way to emerge unscathed from the war with something of humanity salvaged in order to save his life. Harav Weissmandel and his partners endangered their lives in this embroilment, since they promised this enormous sum even as their coffers were entirely depleted. They hoped that the Jews of the free world would open their purses generously. In the meantime they had to stall and present lies to Wisliczeny to keep him interested in the plan's execution. Eventually, however, the plan did not come to fruition, since the Working Group was simply unable to raise the required sum.

3) After the deportation of Slovakian Jewry to Poland, Harav Weissmandel together with his fellow rescue workers succeeded in establishing a connection with those who had been transported there. This they achieved by making use of couriers who were prepared, in return for payment, to enter Poland or the Ukraine and report back on the eventual fate of the deportees. Some of these couriers were even members of the SS, who acted solely for pecuniary motives. They would even transfer to the deportees objects of value which they would in theory be able to use to barter in the lands to which they had been expelled. But when the couriers returned from Poland and the Ukraine, they reported back on the barbaric and cruel murder of the vast majority of the deportees there. The news of what was transpiring in Eastern Europe was then passed on by Harav Weissmandel to Gizi Fleischman, who was the representative of the Joint Distribution Committee in Slovakia, and further on to Jewish organisations in Switzerland and Kushta, Turkey.

4) During the deportation of Hungarian Jewry in the year 5704, Harav Weissmandel sent tens of detailed letters and telegrams abroad to the free world, informing them of the transports that were leaving every day. He also sent diagrams of the Auschwitz extermination camp and the transportation links leading to it. He begged on the one hand for a transfer of funds in order to deal with the Germans, for the ongoing negotiations between the Hungarians and the Nazis; and on the other hand, he appealed to the Allies to bomb Auschwitz and the railway stations and tracks that led to it. He hoped desperately that the Jews of the United States would act to fulfil his wishes and exert pressure on their government.

In the year 5704, the members of the Working Group were arrested. Some of them were sent on train transports to Auschwitz, and others managed to escape. Harav Weissmandel succeeded in sawing off a piece of the train carriage transporting him to Auschwitz, and managed to jump from the moving train. After his escape, he found refuge in a bunker in Pressburg-Bratislava.

After the war, he came out with fierce criticism of the Jewish organisations of the world; the Joint, the World Jewish Congress, the Zionist Agency – who had acted totally inadequately to save European Jewry. Harav Weissmandel was totally broken by his experiences, and was close to a breakdown and severe depression. His heart could not withstand the thought of all that had transpired, and he suffered several serious heart attacks. He eventually settled in the United States and opened a yeshivah there, for which he remained personally responsible until his last days, alongside his work of documenting the terrible events of the Churban.

Harav Weissmandel was niftar on the 6th of Kislev in the year 5717. He left behind his sefer 'Min ha'Meitzar', in which he revealed all the trials he underwent in the course of his rescue work, which was ultimately largely unsuccessful. This sefer was a damning indictment of the Zionist establishment as guilty of inaction during the crucial war

years. In addition, he authored a special 'kinah', lamentation, for Tisha b'Av in which he mourned the cruel and unnatural deaths of the Jewish people in the terrible years of Churban Europa.

Recommendation

<http://www.tog.org.il/en/Article.aspx?id=525>



V. Pars

Oxford Chabad Society

**Michael Dov Weissmandl: Remembering an Oxford
Rabbi Who Saved Jews from the Holocaust**

Essays by Rabbi Eli Brackman

The University of Oxford did more for Jewish refugees than any other single university in England,[1] claims recently published research by Oxford historian Laurence Brockliss. By the time the war broke out, the university had taken in no less than fifty German Jewish refugees and had given them financial support. Most of the German Jewish refugees who initially arrived were physicists and of international reputation.

The bringing over of refugees began when Frederick Lindemann, anticipating the purge of Jewish academics in 1933, saw an opportunity to set up Oxford, ahead of Cambridge, as a centre for low temperature physics by recruiting German Jewish academics to come to Oxford to work for the Clarendon Laboratory that he headed. This included the Breslau five: K.A.G. Mendelssohn, his assistants Francis Simon and Nicholas Kurti, and their doctoral pupils Heinz and Fritz London, as well as Heinrich Kuhn and Erwin Schrodinger. One of the first Jewish exiles to arrive in Oxford was Hans Krebs, who went on to win a Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1953[2].

Despite taking in Jewish academics fleeing the Nazis, deep-seated racism and protectionism nevertheless persisted in Oxford against non-British nationals gaining posts at the university, the classicist Eduard Fränkel (Freiberg) was the only exile to gain a permanent university post, at Corpus Christi at the end of 1934. It was in 1938-9 when the university attitude mellowed to a degree. In November 1938, they were reported to have been supporting twenty-seven refugees, which was more than any other university in England, including Cambridge, besides London's combined colleges. In the whole of France only nineteen were being looked after. Society for the Protection of Science and Learning (SPSL), established by London School of Economics (LSE) in 1933 to support academics in exile, reports that Oxford in 1938, when a number of Oxford fellows had joined the society, persuaded colleges to open their doors more widely. SPSL in 1939 announced a national appeal for funds and the Vice Chancellor of Oxford graciously allowed the Sheldonian theatre to be used as a venue for a meeting where they addressed the 'problem of the refugee scholar' in Oxford. At that time, nine of the men's colleges – All Souls, St John's, Magdalen,

Merton, Christ Church, Oriel, Lincoln, Queens, Balliol, and two women societies - LMH and Somerville, were all supporting at least one scholar in exile. All Souls was supporting four academics, including lawyers Fritz Buchart, Evan Kantowitz, Martin Wolff and Max Grunhut between £300 and £400 per annum. Other colleges were giving a token contribution clarifying that they would mostly likely not increase in the future pleading poverty. Wadham, for example, gave nothing at all.

At the end of 1938, Biblical scholar Godfrey Driver of Magdalen wrote to a number of leading academics at the university suggesting that a common relief fund be created. Subsequently, in February, 1939, the University Council established the 'Information Bureau for Refugee Studies'. The aim was to bring people to Oxford to be put to use, with the prospect of re-emigration. On 8th March, 1939, it was announced that Oxford had given more funds towards refugees (£3,765) than any British university. The beneficiaries of this effort included a range of Jewish academics[3] as well as German orientalist and pastor Paul Kahle who arrived in 1939 after being persecuted by the Nazis for his wife helping a Jewish neighbor during Kristallnacht in 1938. Kahle was subsequently dismissed from the University of Bonn in 1939 after hiring Rabbi Yechiel Yaakov Weinberg as an assistant. Student refugees at Oxford included Karl Leyser, Heinz Koepfler, a chemist Mrs. Jaeger, Joseph Doppler, who was killed near Dunkirk and Franz Ludwig Carsten at Wadham. This is an overview of the extent that Oxford undertook to accept Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Europe before the War.

Michael Dov Weissmandl

In contrast to this movement of Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi persecution of Jews in Europe in the 1930s and settling in Oxford, is the fate of an heroic individual who moved in the opposite direction: travelling from the comfort and security of Oxford into the eye of the storm, returning to his home country Slovakia to try and save as many Jews as possible from the Holocaust, despite great danger to his own life. Rabbi Michael Dov Weissmandl (1903–1957) was a scholar and expert of Hebrew manuscripts, who visited Oxford during the 1930s, and played an instrumental role in attempting to save Jews from the Nazis during the Second World War. This second part of the article will illustrate how Michael Dov Weissmandl's visits to Oxford served him his rabbinical ordination, possibly the first rabbi to be ordained from research at the Bodleian library, but also offered him the groundwork to attempt to help save tens of thousands of Jews from the Nazis in Slovakia and millions in Europe.

Michael Dov Weissmandl was born in 1903 in Debrecen, Hungary, and a few years later moved with his family to Tyrnau, Slovakia.[4] In 1931, he moved to the Slovakian town of Nitra to study under the rabbi of Nitra and dean of the last surviving yeshiva in Nazi occupied Europe, Rabbi Shmuel Dovid Ungar (1886 – 1945), whose daughter he later married. Before moving to Nitra, he studied at the yeshivah of Rabbi Joseph Zvi Dushinsky, who was chief rabbi of Galanta, Slovakia, until around the First World War.[5]

In the 1930s, Michael Dov Weissmandl travelled to Oxford three times to do research at the Bodleian library's collection of Hebrew manuscripts, comparing printed works with the original manuscript. As an expert of Hebrew manuscripts, he gained much respect from the librarian, allowing him considerable access, during non-visiting hours, to the Hebrew collection for his research. On one occasion he is known to have helped the librarian identify the author of a new manuscript they had just acquired and been misattributed by the scholars at the library. This scholar was most probably Eric Otto Winstedt, who was Keeper of the Oriental Collection, including the Hebrew

holdings, during the 1930s. As E.O. Winstedt was principally a Latinist and Gypsologist, rather than Hebraist, Weissmandl's assistance must have been appreciated, as well as other rabbis who visited the Bodleian library earlier, like Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, who also visited Oxford, referring to it in his works as the 'City of Books'.^[6] During his visits to Oxford, Michael Dov Weissmandl recorded variant readings from the Hebrew manuscripts as well as hundreds of unpublished rabbinic responsa which he intended to publish.

It appears that Rabbi Weissmandl was not uninterested in the people around him while he was in Oxford. He related that he became acquainted with a non-Jewish scholar in Oxford, who had an exceptional knowledge of Talmud, allowing him to quote entire tractates from memory. Weissmandl's work in Oxford seems to have included, among other things, preparing a new edition of Kikayon de-Yonah, a Talmudic commentary, by 16th century Rabbi Jonah T'omim, who was born in Prague and acted as rabbi in Grodno and Pinsk, Lithuania. In 1648, because of the Chmielnick pogrom, Rabbi Teomim fled to Vienna, Nikolsburg, Austria, and finally Metz, Lorraine, before he passed away in 1649.

The editing of the new edition of Kikayon de-Yonah seems to have been for the publishing of its 3rd edition. The first edition was edited and published in Amsterdam in 1690 by the son of Rabbi Jonah T'omim, Joshua, and the second printing was in 1712 at Hanau, Germany. In less than a year, Rabbi Weissmandl reviewed the fifteen tractates of the Talmud included in the above-mentioned book which was ultimately printed by the governors of the Nitra Yeshiva with Rabbi Weissmandl's notes, glosses and emendations. At the end of the volume, Rabbi Weissmandl added notes to Shulchan Aruch (Code of Jewish Law) Even Ha-Ezer (Laws of Marriage and Divorce) on the basis of a manuscript he had discovered in Oxford^[7]. Thus, it appears, Rabbi Weissmandl was not just comparing the second edition of this work with the original manuscript but intended to add an unpublished manuscript of the same author that was exclusively found at the Bodleian library.

In his biography it mentions his motivation to prepare a new edition of this work was due to the fact that students were studying this work as a basic text at the Yeshiva of Nitra in Slovakia, under the tutelage of his father-in-law, Rabbi Ungar. It is therefore possible that Rabbi Weissmandl heard that there existed this additional rare unpublished manuscript by Rabbi T'omim in Oxford and this discovery and pursuit to publish it seems to have been a central reason for his travel to Oxford. It is, however, interesting to note that the Bodleian Library doesn't appear to have in its collection the main work by Rabbi T'omim, Kikayon D'Yonah, on the Talmud. It would therefore seem that the comparing of the published edition to the original manuscript was not the reason for his coming to Oxford when working on the third edition of Kikayon D'Yonah but rather the publication of the additional unpublished manuscript on the Code of Jewish Law, Shulchan Aruch, that Rabbi Weissmandl wished to add to his new edition.

Indeed, from the following story about his ordination, it is clear that he was undertaking many different Hebraic academic studies as his purpose for coming to Oxford, in addition to the expanding of the the work of Kikayon D'Yonah. His research and intense study of unpublished Hebrew manuscripts in Oxford in fact led to his rabbinical ordination before his wedding. In January 1937 (14 Shevat), Michael Dov Weissmandl married Bracha Rachel, the daughter of his teacher Rabbi Samuel David Ungar. For the engagement (tenaim), which was held some time earlier, the

bridegroom had returned from England, where he had been pursuing his research in Oxford.

At the celebration, he gave a brilliant lecture that lasted for two and a half hours. In his discourse, he discussed the legal aspects of *sivlonot* (gifts which a man gives his future bride). At the beginning of his talk, he recounted that in Oxford he had found manuscripts containing several problems on the subject raised by an ancient Torah sage, Rabbi Simon Sharabi. Weissmandl intended to resolve these questions. He proceeded to explain, on the basis of the manuscript sources he had discovered, the custom of the Jews of Oberland (Upper Hungary) not to commit the engagement conditions to writing. Rabbi David Meisels of Satoraljuajhely (northern Hungary, near the Slovak border), who was present at the celebration, was so impressed that, as a wedding gift, he granted the bridegroom rabbinical ordination in acknowledgement of his deep knowledge of Jewish law and scholarship of the Torah.

Although immersed in Hebrew manuscript research and Torah study at Oxford, he was not uninterested in his surrounding and the fate of his people in Europe. While in Oxford, it is possible he became acquainted with other prominent Jewish members of the university in the 1930s, such as Sir Isaiah Berlin, who had then received a prize scholarship at All Souls College. It is unclear whether he would have met Jewish historian Cecil Roth who moved to Oxford in January 1939 as Reader in Post-Biblical Jewish Studies, having studied at Merton College for a DPhil in 1924. Zionist leader and director of Marks and Spencer, Harry Sacher supported Roth's position, in order to provide Jewish leadership and hospitality for Oxford's students.[8] As early as 1933, Cecil Roth was vocal against the Nazis, and penned a letter of protest to the London Times against Hitler's declaration to boycott Jewish establishments. Weissmandl would have almost definitely been aware of the debate and discussion and subsequent influx of Jewish refugee scholars to Oxford from Nazi Germany throughout the 1930s. Despite the comfort and security of Oxford, in 1939 Michael Dov Weissmandl felt he could no longer be at peace living in Oxford working on Hebrew manuscripts while his community was in danger in Europe. Perhaps he was inspired and motivated by the efforts of the non Jewish University community in Oxford, in successfully taking in, and paying bursaries to, a significant number of Jewish academics. On 14 March 1939, Slovakia became a puppet clerical-fascist client state of Germany that lasted until 8 May, 1945. Shortly after the invasion of Poland by Germany, together with the newly created Slovak Republic, on 1 September 1939, Weissmandl decided to return to Slovakia as an agent of World Agudath Israel, the political arm of Orthodox Judaism. Agudath Israel had its support base mainly in Eastern Europe, to help rescue the Jews of Slovakia and other Jews of Europe.

Due to Michael Dov Weissmandl having spent considerable amount of time in Oxford and likely became familiar with the British establishment, it gave him the ability to assist with attempts to save Jews from the Holocaust. This happened when the Nazis gathered sixty rabbis from Burgenland, bordering Slovakia. Czechoslovakia refused them entry and Austria would not take them back, leaving the stranded on the border. Weissmandl flew to England, where he was received by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Foreign Office, and succeeded in obtaining entry visas to England for the sixty rabbis, saving them from the Holocaust.

When the Nazis, aided by Catholic priest, Father Jozef Tiso, head of the Slovak government, began deportation of Slovakian Jews in March, 1942, members of the

Slovak Judenrat formed an underground organization called the Working Group. The group's main activity was to help Jews as much as possible, in part through payment of large bribes to German and Slovak officials. Weissmandl was a leading member of this Working Group during the period of WWII, together with his relative Gisi Fleischmann. In June, 1942, through a mediator they approached the Gestapo expert on Jewish affairs attached to the German embassy at Bratislava, Dieter Wisliceny, with a bribe of \$50,000. This bribe was accepted, half of which had to be paid within two weeks, allowing the transports to stop for seven weeks. The second installment could not however be raised and three further Slovakian transports were sent to Poland in September. Finally, the funds were raised, though two further transports were sent to Poland after the money was paid. In total, 58,000 Jews were deported to Auschwitz in this period, 50,000 in June and a further 8,000 in September. After that no more deportations left for two years. The delay of the 8,000 Jews was due to the initiative of Weissmandl. It is debated what role the bribe played in the stopping of the transports for the two year period, as the Prime Minister Ludin refers to Church pressure and corruption of Slovak officials through bribes exempting up to 35,000 Jews for economic reasons, as reasons for the stopping of the transports.[9]

At Weissmandl's initiative the Working Group was also responsible for the ill-fated Europa Plan which would have seen in late 1942 large numbers of European Jews rescued from the Nazis by paying the Nazis one to two million dollars ransom to stop most transports. The Germans asked for a 10% down payment, which unfortunately could not be raised.[10]

According to Rudolph Vrba, the Working Group played a role in the distribution of an "Auschwitz Report" in 1944. The report was an accurate account of Auschwitz and the deportation and plans for the extermination of one million Hungarian Jews. On 18 May, 1944, Weissmandl sent the report to the Jewish leaders in Turkey, Switzerland and Palestine, with a demand that was passed on to the Allies to bomb train lines to Auschwitz. Although the Allies flew over Auschwitz many times in the late Spring of 1944, the proposal to bomb Auschwitz was rejected by the British Foreign Office, though supported by Churchill and similarly vetoed by Washington, due to it being regarded a 'civilian' target.[11] A few weeks earlier, however, on 25 April, Rudolph Vrba, another Slovakian Jew, who escaped from Auschwitz on 7th April, 1944, together with Alfred Wetzler, wrote a report about the camp, of which he was an eyewitness. Vrba claims that his report was passed on to Papal Nuncio in Slovakia, who took it to Geneva, where it was passed on to Pope Pius XII, as well as President Roosevelt and Winston Churchill. Papal Nuncio subsequently handed a letter from Pope Pius XII to Hungary's Fascist regent Admiral Horthy protesting the deportations of Hungarian Jewry. In addition US Secretary of State Cordell Hull threatened Horthy with post-war retribution if he doesn't immediately stop the transports. At the time 12,000 Jews a day were being transported to Auschwitz. Due to these reports the transportations were stopped whereby 400,000 Jews were killed instead of the intended million had the transports been allowed to continue. Vrba writes that he met Weissmandl in secret in Bratislava and that, in addition to his efforts with the Auschwitz report, Weissmandl singlehandedly saved hundreds of people from deportations.[12]

In August 1944, Weissmandl was captured by the S.S., together with his family, and was put on a train to Auschwitz. Weissmandl escaped from the sealed train by sawing open the lock of the carriage with an emery wire he had hidden in a loaf of stale bread.[13] He jumped from the moving train, breaking his leg in the process, and hid

in a secret bunker in suburban Bratislava, from where he was taken by Rudolf Kasztner and his Nazi associate Kurt Becher to Switzerland. In 1946, Weissmandl left Switzerland for America, where he remarried and re-established the Nitra Yeshiva. Rabbi Michael Dov Weissmandl passed away in 1957.

While Holocaust historians question the extent of the success of Weissmandl's efforts in terms of lives rescued on behalf of Slovakian and Hungarian Jewry, his willingness to leave the comfort and security of Oxford and return to Slovakia to make every effort to save Jews in Europe is an inspiring demonstration of placing the life of others before one's own, considered beyond the call of duty in Jewish law. It is interesting to speculate whether he could have applied for a position at the Bodleian Library or moved to London with his family, so as not to have to return to Europe once the War broke out. As one of the great pre-War rabbis in Europe, the discussion in Jewish law regarding putting one's life in harm's way to save another would have no doubt been familiar to him.

Love thy neighbour

The moral imperative to help a person in need, in Jewish teaching, is based on Leviticus:[14] "Love your neighbour as yourself" and:[15] "Do not stand idly by the blood of your neighbour". This injunction however is restricted[16] by the further injunction: "You shall therefore keep my statutes and my rules; if a person does them, he shall live by them".[17] Rabbi David ben Zimra, also called by his acronym Radbaz (1479-1573), writes in a responsa[18]: "a person who endangers one's life to save another is a pious fool". The view of Maimonides is that one is not required to leave a city of refuge (where one is protected, according to Jewish law, from the revenge of family members of a victim who he accidentally killed), even to save the life of the entire Jewish people.[19] Rabbi Meir Simcha of Dvinsk (1843-1926), known as Or Sameach after his commentary on Maimonides, writes[20] that the view of Maimonides is in fact that one is not required to risk one's own life to save the life of others. This question whether one needs to risk one's own life to save another is the subject of a dispute between the Jerusalemite and Babylonian Talmud, in which Jewish law decides according to the latter, that one need not put one's own life at risk to save the life of another person even from certain death.[21] Rabbi Moses Ze'ev of Grodno (d. 1830) in his work Aguddat Ezov qualifies however that when in doubt whether there is actual risk one should not err on the side of caution.

In the case of Weissmandl, in September 1939, when he left Oxford for Slovakia, the War had only just broken out and the fate of the Jews of Europe was not yet sealed. The mass shootings in Eastern Europe took place in 1941 and the Wannsee Conference to discuss and implement the Final Solution took place in January, 1942. Nevertheless, from 1933 onwards when the Nazis rose to power, particularly after Kristallnacht on 9 November, 1938, and the invasion of Poland by the Nazis together with Slovakia in 1939, leaving Oxford – a place where refugees had been coming for protection – for Slovakia, to help save European Jewry was a decision that put his life at risk, even if he didn't envision the possibility at that time of being sent to Auschwitz with his family. This was a display of immense piety, as Radbaz states:[22] Fortunate is the portion of a person who causes himself harm to save another person's life. Whether Weissmandl saved one person or thousands, Jewish teaching considers the virtue of saving even one life the same as saving an entire world.[23] While Oxford is remembered, rightly so, positively as a place that went further than other similar institutions in the UK to save Jews fleeing Nazi Germany for safety, Weissmandl should equally be remembered as a

person of enormous courage and vision who left Oxford and went beyond the call of duty to save Jews at such a tragic period in Jewish history despite great danger to his own life.

Footnotes

[1] *Ark of Civilization: Refugee Scholars and Oxford University, 1930-1945*, Ch. 3, Laurence Brockliss. The research in this paper about Jewish refugees in Oxford in the 1930s is from the above chapter, delivered at a lecture at the Oxford University Chabad Society in March, 2017.

[2] In the first two years after the Nazis came to power, six with an arts background found a home at Oxford, including political scientist and lawyer Albrecht Mendelssohn-Bartholdy at Balliol in 1934, historian Ernst Kasire and economist Jacob Marschak at All Souls, educationalist Elisabeth Blochmann at LMH, philosopher Raymond Kobansky at Oriel from January 1934, and classicist Eduard Fränkel (Freiberg), the only exile to gain a permanent university post, at Corpus Christi at the end of 1934. Oxford reader in Celtic, Paul Jacobsthal, arrived in 1935, becoming Reader of Celtic archaeology in 1937. Philologist Rudolf Pfeiffer arrived in 1937 due his Jewish wife Lili (nee Beer).

[3] Botanist Kurt Wohl arrived in March 1939. Some older refugees were unable to find a home at Oxford, like philosopher Georg Misch, who was briefly at Magdalen, and neo-Hegelian Richard Kroner, briefly at Corpus. Other academics supported by Oxford when the war broke out included lawyer Gerhard Leibholz, supported by Magdalen, professor of politics Harmon Zeigler, philologist Jacob Leib Teicher, Pedro Bosch Gimpera, Viennese surgeon Julius Schnitzler, mathematician Robert Remak and Italian historian Arnaldo Marmigliano, Philologist Paul Maas, legal scholar Fritz Pringsheim, classicist Felix Jacoby, who was supported generously by Christ Church, also arrived in 1939. Middle Eastern archaeologist Claude Schaeffer arrived in 1940 after the Fall of France. Musicologist Egon Wellesz arrived in England after the Anschluss and arrived in Oxford in 1942 after being kept as an enemy alien in the Isle of White until 1943.

[4] *An Unheeded Cry (Artscroll)*. See this biography for many of the details mentioned in this article.

[5] Rabbi Dushinsky was fourth or fifth cousin to political scientist Dr. Michael Pinto-Duschinsky, currently residing in Oxford.

[6] http://www.oxfordchabad.org/templates/articlecco_cdo/aid/457395/jewish/Rabbi-Abraham-Isaac-Kook.htm.

[7] The manuscript with these notes can be in fact found listed in Adolf Neubauer's Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian and in the College Libraries of Oxford (Published 1886) entry number 761:1 (p. 149): "R. Yonah T'omim's Novellae on Ebben ha-Ezer, and some other casuistic notes."

[8] *The Jews of Oxford*, David M. Lewis, p. 64.

[9] *A History of the Holocaust*, Yehuda Bauer, p. 339-340.

[10] *Saving one's own: Jewish rescuers during the Holocaust*, ch. Slovakia.

[11] *A History of the Holocaust*, Yehuda Bauer, p. 241; 351.

[12] *Escaped from Auschwitz*, Rudolph Vrba, p. 274. On page 275, Vrba describes his meeting Weissmandl: "I found myself facing a tall, dark man with exceptionally vivid eyes. He was only about forty, but his heavy black beard made him look older. I felt at once that I was in the presence of a very remarkable personality, in spite of his shabby clothes, his collarless,

buttonless shirt, his mu-stained trousers and battered shoes. One, I noticed, was tied with string, The other was not tied at all. He greeted me in Slovak, which amazed his students because normally he spoke only Hebrew and insisted on an interpreter translating into Hebrew anything said to him in any other language. Then, dismissing the students in his room with a gesture, he said: “So you have escaped from Auschwitz. Therefore I must address you as the Ambassador of 1,760,000 people.”

[13] Escaped from Auschwitz, Rudolph Vrba, p. 274.

[14] 19:18.

[15] [Leviticus 19:16](#).

[16] Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat 426.

[17] [Leviticus 18:5](#).

[18] 3:627.

[19] Mishneh Torah, Laws of murder 7:8.

[20] Or Sameach commentary to Mishnah Torah (ibid).

[21] Choshen Mishpat, Pischei Teshuva 426:2.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5.



Min Ha'Meitzar

Min-Ha'Meitzar, Hebrew for from the straits, is book of testimony written by Rabbi Weissmandl, post-mortem in 1957.

In this book, Rabbi Weissmandl writes his recollection of the events. He included in it as many letters as he could find prior to his death. Also included are a few letters, written by Gisi Fleischmann that were translated from German to Hebrew.

The testimony written by Rabbi Weissmandl is heart-breaking:

"Anybody that hears about this can go crazy. Because if he *does not go crazy, he must have been crazy to begin with.*"

"Brothers, Are you out of your mind? Do you have any idea what sort of hell he are going through? Why are you holding back the funds that are so crucial to us?"

from **Min-Ha'Meitzar**

Recommendation

<https://www.weissmandl.org/>

Min HaMeitzar, Мин амецар (Из теснины), Min Ha Metzlar (from the depths of distress).

Min HaMeitzar (Jeruzalem, 1960, New York 1961, publikovaná v Hebrejščine) je kniha, ktorá opisuje skúsenosti HaGaon HaKadosh HaRav Chaim Michoel Dov Weissmandela ZTVK "L, v časoch vojny.

Veľa kníh bolo publikovaných, prečítaných a zabudnutých. Existuje však jedna kniha, ktorá nesmie zdieľať tento osud. Toto je kronika z vojnových rokov 1942 až 1945, tak vhodne pomenovaná " Min HaMeitzar " (Z „hlbín zúfalstva“, doslova "Z úžiny"). Názov sa skladá z prvých dvoch slov v Žalme 118: 5, čo znamená "z hlbín zúfalstva", doslova "Z úžiny".

Len veľmi málo ľudí si túto knihu prečítalo. Zdedené skutočnosti, ktoré sa v nej objavili, nie sú zatiaľ dostatočne známe.



**„Vďaka vytvoreniu svojho „Europa plánu“
HaRav Chaim Michoel Dov Weissmandel ZTVK "L,
presvedčil nemecké a slovenské orgány, aby odložili hromadné
deportácie Židov na dva roky.“ ČO JE "PLÁN EUROPA“?
Bol to plán, ktorý mohol zastaviť gigantický stroj Holokaustu
nielen na Slovensku, ale v celej Európe!!!**

**Rav Weissmandel bol najväčším hrdinom Holokaustu. Keby
medzinárodný liberálny svet a svetský židovský svet
uskutočnili záchranné plány - ktoré zahrňali veľkorysé úplatky
nacistickým vodcom a bombardovali cesty do Osvienčimu - žili
by milióny Židov, ktorých životy boli zmarené
v koncentračných táboroch.**

**Len veľmi málo ľudí dnes vie o jeho brilantnom a komplexnom
úsilí a záchranných plánoch, pretože Rav Weissmandel je
zámerne ignorovaný po celom svete, tými, ktorí si radšej
pripomínajú tých, ktorí hovorili veľa, ale robili málo.
táto kniha hovorí pravdu a učí ako zabrániť opakovaníu.**



מן המצור

זכרונות משנות תש"ב-תש"ה לפ"ק
לח"ר הגאון הצדיק המפורסם
שמסר נפשו בעד הצלת ישראל
מוהר"ח מיכאל דוב ווייסמאנדל זצ"ל

בהוצאת «אמונה» ניו יורק תש"כ לפ"ק

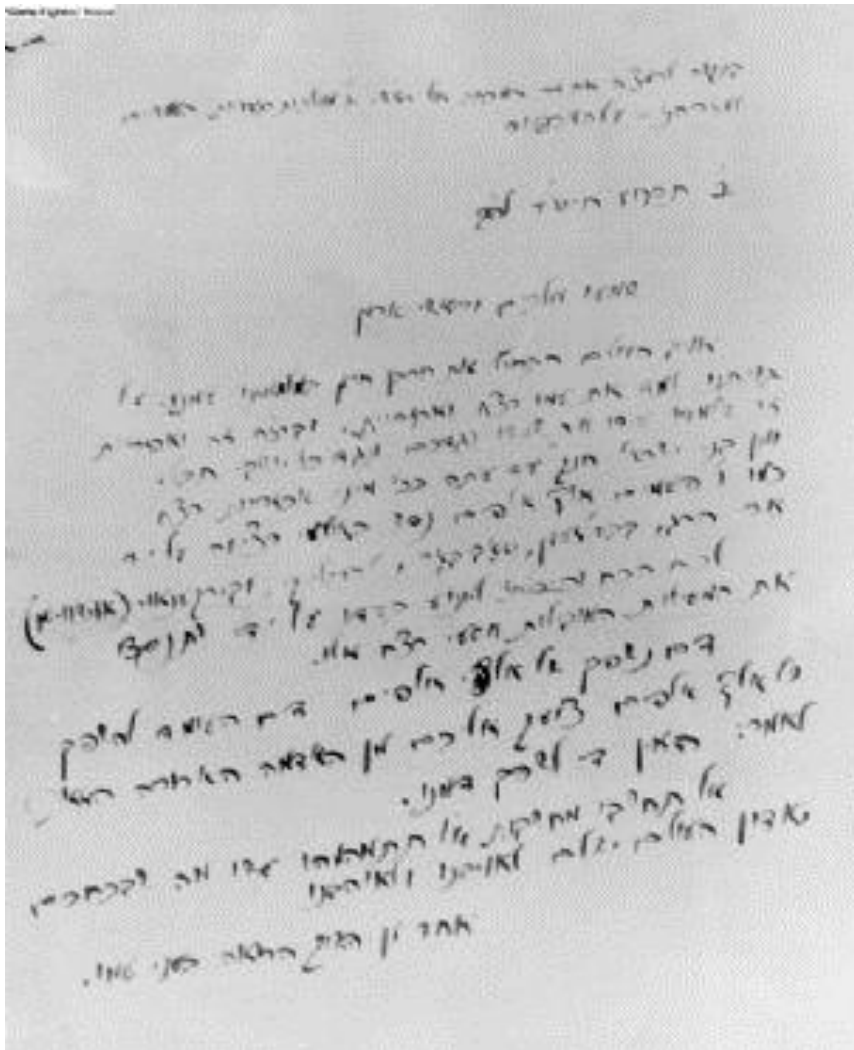
התנן

בה לטא למב.

שלום וברכה,

יש כלן מקום להצלה ברורה ענ פלם
 של איוה מחשלה נייטרלי - הדלל לפעול
 שהצירים של הליזפה יקבלו פקידה לטן פנקסים
 כללו למאות משפחות - התן זה אפשר
 להצל בניה פשוט אלפים נפשות -
 התן אפשר שהציר של ארצכם
 כלומה שווין שהוא פארלאגרפרייטער
 שהתן כמוהו יקבל פקידה לטן עיינצברעק
 לבל מי שיש בידו איוה פעם דרום
 אמעריקא או איוה ווידום או לאי
 או למתורסיסיום יהי כשיה או מוויף
 התן זה אפשר, לענן אלף אלפים נפשות
 התן דה אפשר -

Tammuz 1944



List Rebe

Michaela Dov Weissmandela z Bratislavy, požadujícího bombardování železničních tratí vedoucích do vyhlazovacích táborů. Kat. 8224-25964

A letter written by Rabbi Michael Dov Weissmandel of Bratislava requesting the bombing of the railroad tracks leading to the extermination camps.

Catalog No.: 8224

http://www.infocenters.co.il/gfh/notebook_ext.asp?book=1445&lang=heb&site=gfh



Gratias tibi valde, Toda Raba, Poděkování, Благодарности, Vielen Dank, Thanks you very much,

Источник, Quelle:

1/ **MEZI ZASLEPENÝMI BLÁZNY** (1998) -Trilogie – Scenárista Martin Šmok, Režisér Petr Bok dokumentární trilogie věnovaná životu a práci Michaela Weissmandla, vynikajícího ortodoxního rabína ze Slovenska, který za druhé světové války zachránil tisíce slovenských a maďarských Židů před Holokaustem a usiloval o záchranu všech evropských Židů;

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=muiHogUO32w>

Mezi zaslepenými blázny část 1

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oAUw4VEJiCA>

Mezi zaslepenými blázny část 2

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nW7Tyi4PGQE>

Mezi zaslepenými blázny část 3

2/Marek Cejka's Middle Eastern Pages

<http://blizky-vychod.blogspot.com/2015/01/rabin-ktery-chtel-zastavit-holokaust.html>

3/ Oxford Chabad Society, By Rabbi Eli Brackman

https://www.oxfordchabad.org/templates/articlecco_cdo/aid/1378317/jewish/A-Rabbi-from-the-Bodleian-Library-who-saved-Jews-from-the-Holocaust.htm

4/ <https://alchetron.com/Chaim-Michael-Dov-Weissmandl>

5/ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Dov_Weissmandl

6/ Рав Александр Кац Из цикла „Еврейские мудрецы“

https://toldot.ru/rabbanim/rabbanim_7524.html

7/ <http://www.tog.org.il/en/Article.aspx?id=525>

8/ Oxford Chabad Society, By Rabbi Eli Brackman

Michael Dov Weissmandl: Remembering an Oxford Rabbi Who Saved Jews from the Holocaust

https://www.oxfordchabad.org/templates/articlecco_cdo/aid/3659256/jewish/Michael-Dov-Weissmandl-Remembering-an-Oxford-Rabbi-Who-Saved-Jews-from-the-Holocaust.htm

9/ **Web na pamiatku Rabína Weissmandla**, <https://www.weissmandl.org/>

10/ https://www.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%203502.pdf

11/ List Rebe Michaela Dov Weissmandela z Bratislavy, požadujícího bombardování železničních tratí vedoucích do vyhlazovacích táborů. Kat. 8224-25964

A letter written by Rabbi Michael Dov Weissmandel of Bratislava requesting the bombing of the railroad tracks leading to the extermination camps.

Catalog No.: 8224;

http://www.infocenters.co.il/gfh/notebook_ext.asp?book=1445&lang=heb&site=gfh

11/ Auschwitz Protocols, „Yad Vashem“,

https://www.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%205784.pdf

12/ USHMM Auschwitz Protocols Zurich Switzerland

<https://www.ushmm.org/collections/the-museums-collections/collections-highlights/mantello-rescue-mission/auschwitz-protocol>

13/ Claude Lanzmann:

Hermann Landau talks about the rescue work of Rabbi Weissmandel, as well as rescue efforts based in Switzerland and the U.S. He describes Weissmandel as an increasingly desperate man who would not hesitate to bribe the Nazis or commit violence if it would help the

Jews. <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn1003916>

14/ Claude Lanzmann:

Siegmunt Forst escaped Vienna and moved to New York after the war broke out. He talks about his dealings with Rabbi Michael Weissmandel, a Slovakian Jew who tried desperately to tell the world what was happening to the European Jews.

Weissmandel begged American Jewish leaders and others for money with which to bribe the Nazis. Lanzmann is interested in the individual and collective choices about whether to resist and/or to rescue, and in this interview and others he clearly views Weissmandel as an important figure.

<https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn1003913>

15/ **TheEuropa Plan**, Dr. Efraim Zuroff, <http://www.shalom-magazine.com/Print.php?id=440306>

16/ Rabbi Chaim Michael Dov Weissmandl,

<https://www.geni.com/people/Chaim-Michael-Dov-Weissmandl/6000000004681147394>

17/ NEŠLO O ŽIDY, ALE O KŠEFT, Matěj Stránský

<https://www.respekt.cz/tydenik/2003/41/neslo-o-zidy-ale-o-kseft>

18/ Ben Hecht (nar. 28. Február 1894, zom. 18. Apríl 1964)

<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/ben-hecht>

19/ Ben Hecht;

Hecht did more to help Jewish Holocaust refugees and the nascent State of Israel than most American Jews at the time

http://www.aish.com/j/sod/Stars_of_David_Ben_Hecht.html

20/ Perfidy by Ben Hecht

<https://emetnews.org/documents/perfidy.pdf>

21/ Perfidy <https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Columnists/Power-and-Politics-Perfidy-revisited>

22/ The Unheeded Cry. by. Dr. Abraham Fuchs
https://www.weissmandl.org/TheUnheededCry/TheUnheededCry_Index.htm

23/ Letter by Rabbi Weissmandel to He-Haluts Headquarters in Geneva; Rabbi Announces Deportation of Hungarian Jewry
<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/rabbi-announces-deportation-of-hungarian-jewry>

24/ „E két kötet nem csak könyv: a magyar Holocaustban a könyvek könyve” – írta Mezei András 1997-ben Randolph L. Braham professzor „A népirtás politikája” című munkájáról.

Ha valaki a magyar holokauszttal kapcsolatban kutat, ír, érdeklődik, első dolga fellapozni „a brahamet” és megnézni, hogy az adott kérdéstről mi szerepel a két vaskos kötetben.

„A népirtás politikája” a legapróbb részletekig feltárja a magyar zsidók 1944–1945-ös sorsát.

<https://moly.hu/konyvek/randolph-l-braham-a-nepirtas-politikaja-i-ii>

25/ Randolph Louis Braham (geb. als Adolf Ábrahám, mit dem hebräischen Namen Avraham ben Itzhak ben Aryeh; December 20, 1922 – ges. November 25, 2018)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Randolph_L._Braham

26/ Randolph L. Braham: A népirtás politikája I-II.A Holokauszt Magyarországon.Holokaust v Maďarsku
Randolph L. Braham: A népirtás politikája I. kötet
http://mek.oszk.hu/11500/11506/pdf/11506_1.pdf

27/ Randolph L. Braham: A népirtás politikája II. kötet
http://mek.oszk.hu/11500/11506/pdf/11506_2.pdf

28/ FREY DÓRA: AZ AUSCHWITZ-JEGYZŐKÖNYV (Auschwitz Protocols). EGY MÉG MINDIG KEVÉSSÉ ISMERT TÖRTÉNETI DOKUMENTU
http://www.eszmelet.hu/frey_dora-az-auschwitz-jegyzokonyv-egy-meg-mindig-kevesse-i/

**Zomrieť ako Židia bude musieť
každý z nás, ale žiť ako Židia – treba vedieť!**
