

Ken Burn's New Film: Whitewashing FDR on the Holocaust

Jerry Gordon interviews Dr. Rafael Medoff on Ken Burns film whitewashing FDR and Holocaust. Dr. Medoff is the founding director of the David S. Wyman Institute on Holocaust Studies. He is the author of several books on related topics, and a columnist for the national Jewish Journal in the US.

This is an informative critical review of Ken Burns' PBS documentary, *The US and the Holocaust* with Dr. Rafael Medoff, founding director of the David S. Wyman Institute of Holocaust, author of *America and the Holocaust: A Documentary History*, *The Jews Should Keep Quiet: Franklin D. Roosevelt, Rabbi Stephen D. Wise and the Holocaust*, *We Spoke Out: Comic Books and the Holocaust*. Dr. Medoff is a national columnist for *The Jewish Journal*. Among the takeaways from the interview with Dr. Medoff are:

- Ken Burns PBS Documentary, *The US and the Holocaust*, like the earlier US Holocaust Memorial Museum exhibit, is a "whitewash" of FDR's abandonment of Europe Jews to the Nazi final solution during WWII.
- The State Department used less than half of available visas for entry of tens of thousands of eligible Jewish refugees, One example denying entry of the family of Otto Frank, especially Margot and Ann Frank, both of whom died in the Nazi concentration camp at Bergen Belsen.
- Notwithstanding the severe British White Paper restricting European Jewish emigration to Palestine during WWII, Britain let in 60,000 Jews including, 10,00 Kindertransport children and 15,000 Young Jewish women.

- The allies knew of the holocaust by bullets in eastern Europe, Ukraine murdering more than 1.5 million Jews by end of 1941.
- FDR was told by Polish resistance hero Jan Karski in a 1943 Oval office of his witnessing the Nazi extermination of Polish Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto and transit camp of Belzec and choice to save threatened Jews, when presented with the facts.
- Roosevelt snubbed more than 400 Orthodox rabbis who rallied before the White House in March of 1943, sneaking out the White House back door to avoid meeting them.
- The Bergson Group of Palestinian Jewish activists lobbied Congress for creation of the War Refugee Board, responsible for saving 250,000 Jewish lives during the holocaust, the only publicly authorized US agency funded by private Jewish aid groups.
- FDR was forced to create the War Refugee Board by executive order following the scandal of a Senior State Department Official Breckinridge Long who lied in testimony before Congress about admitting 580,000 Jewish refugees.
- In the spring of 1944 detailed information on the Auschwitz Birkenau killing provided by two escapees Vrba and Wetzler, coupled with allied reconnaissance photos of adjacent IG Farben artificial gas and rubber plant targets of the Allied bombing campaign, were available for planning special missions directed at bombing crematoria, rail and especially hard to repair bridges on rail approaches.
- The US War Office in early 1944 issued a policy denying rescue of threatened peoples, Jews as a diversion of the basic war effort on the alleged ground that ending the war would spare Jewish lives. This despite prayers of such Jewish prisoners at Auschwitz-Birkenau like CNN's Wolf Blitzer's father David, the Elie Wiesel who witnessed US bombers dropping bomb loads killing fellow slave laborers.

- The Burns Holocaust PBS and 2020 BBC documentaries misrepresent alleged differences among Jewish advocacy groups about bombing Auschwitz allegedly concerned about sparing prisoner casualties. The only difference was debate about alternatives using special operations troops versus precision bombing to destroy hard to repair rail bridge approaches to the killing center at Birkenau. That would have spared tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews from death in the spring and summer of 1944 in excess of the 100,000 spared by Heroic Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg in Budapest supported by the War Refugee Board.

- US pilots and navigators on the bombing runs to the IG Farben Plant, notably the late North Dakota US Senator and Presidential Candidate George McGovern used the chimneys of the crematoria at Auschwitz-Birkenau as way points on the final approaches and suggested they could be easily destroyed.

- The RAF Mosquito De Haviland Special Air Squadron Operation Jericho attack at the German prison at Amiens France on February 18, 1944 that freed 400 French resistance prisoners was cited by Jewish advocates as a precision bombing capabilities for an attack on the Auschwitz-Birkenau killing center.

- The White House commissioned a Gallup Poll in 1944, that revealed 70 percent of respondents favored providing temporary sanctuary for refugees. Transport was available for that on US merchant marine vessels returning from war supply missions. Instead, they brought rubble from war torn Britain as "ballast."

- Jews comprise over 90 percent of refugees rescued in Italy who arrived via ship from Naples in August 1944 and were housed in an abandoned US Army facility, Fort Ontario in Oswego, New York.