

## Help from the New World

### Image Foreground: Washington, DC

Hillel Kook (aka Peter Bergson) was a young emissary to the USA from the Yishuv sent by Ze'ev Jabotinsky to help set up a Jewish Army. He was joined by Samuel Merlin and Eri Jabotinsky. After learning about the tragedy in Europe they set up “*The Emergency Committee to Save the Jewish People of Europe*”. It made America aware of the Holocaust through creative, high impact public relations campaigns. The Bergson Group had dedicated supporters in Congress, and leading Broadway and Hollywood talent. Hillel Kook led a spectacular march of 400 Orthodox rabbis to Congress and the White House on October 6, 1943 calling for immediate rescue action. Despite obstruction by America's progressive Jewish leadership the Bergon Group's persistent lobbying and positive intervention by Henry Morgenthau and his staff at the Treasury the unprecedented activism broke through apathy and forced America to finally face the tragedy of European Jewry. President Roosevelt was forced to act and created the War Refugee Board in January 1944, which is estimated to have helped rescue over 200,000 Jews, in part through the Wallenberg mission.

### Image Background: Budapest during Winter 1944

Under the pro-Nazi Szálasi murder regime the remnants of Hungarian Jewry struggled to survive Eichmann's efforts to complete the Final Solution in Hungary. Despite great personal danger Raoul Wallenberg (Swedish diplomat, right) center, Carl Lutz (Swiss Consul, left center), other diplomats, the Zionist youth rescue underground and some brave Hungarians valiantly acted to protect the remnants of Hungary's Jewry. Recha Sternbuch (middle center), Swiss representative of the New York-based Orthodox Rabbis' Rescue Committee (Va'ad Hatzalah), distributed protective papers, smuggled Jews to safety across the Austrian-Swiss border and conducted late-1944 ransom negotiations with Himmler to save the lives of concentration camp inmates as Germany retreated.



Painting by Hanalisa Omer (2006)

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## Switzerland Awakens

### Image Background: Bratislava (in Slovakia)

Daily deportations of 12,000 Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz began on May 15, 1944. In late April 1944 a desperate Rabbi Michael Ber Weissmandl of the Slovak Jewish underground “Working Group” co-headed by Gisi Fleischmann sent copies of the “*Auschwitz Report*” to the major Jewish organizations in the free world. It was based on testimony of two escapees from Auschwitz and included Rabbi Weissmandl’s plea for the Allies to bomb the rail lines to Auschwitz and the crematoria.

### Image Foreground: George Mantello and Pastor Paul Vogt

Little was done with the Auschwitz Report until George Mantello (Mandl György, right), Secretary of El Salvador’s Consulate in Switzerland, obtained a copy via Moshe Krausz in Budapest, long after others have already received it. He immediately publicized it. This led to major grass roots protests in Switzerland. Swiss newspapers ignored strict Swiss censorship rules and there were 440 articles in 120 papers. Under leadership of Swiss theologians, including Pastor Paul Vogt (left), church sermons called for the end of the barbarism in Europe. A book “*Am I my brother's keeper?*” (“*Soll ich meines Bruders Hütter sein?*”) was published and sold out. An aroused Swiss people, university students, members of labor unions and women’s leagues staged unprecedented street demonstrations in Swiss cities. Within a few days this critical Swiss public outcry evoked the first major public response by political and religious leaders of the free world. A severe warning was issued by world leaders to Hungary’s leader Horthy. This was a major reason why Horthy stopped the transports to Auschwitz. Despite Eichmann’s renewed attempts to deport the Jews Wallenberg, Carl Lutz and the other neutral diplomats were able to rescue an estimated 140,000 Jews in Budapest.



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