

Ronald Reagan Presidential Library  
Digital Library Collections

---

This is a PDF of a folder from our textual collections.

---

**WHORM Subject File Code:** TR123-01  
(Trips: Economic Summit, Bonn, 05/03/1985-05/04/1985;  
Bonn, West Germany, 04/30/1985-05/06/1985)  
**Case file Number(s):** 314720-315199  
**Box Number:** 5

---

To see more digitized collections visit:

<https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/digitized-textual-material>

To see all Ronald Reagan Presidential Library inventories visit:

<https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/white-house-inventories>

Contact a reference archivist at: **reagan.library@nara.gov**

Citation Guidelines: <https://reaganlibrary.gov/archives/research-support/citation-guide>

National Archives Catalogue: <https://catalog.archives.gov/>

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

JV

↓  
Mr. Alex Seith  
WLS-TV  
190 North State  
Chicago, IL 60601

314732

YI 4620

TR12301

NDO16

CO05402

PA001

PR003

FE00601

BE00304



THE WHITE HOUSE

12 May '85

Dear Alex:

Appreciated the support in Bitburg.

From the early surveys, American -  
by better than 3-2 - agree with Seith  
& Reagan - and Bush.

Best,  
Pat

May 7, 1985

Mr. Patrick Buchanan  
Director of Communications  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

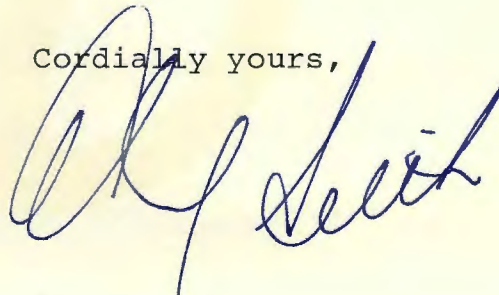
Dear Pat:

In my commentary yesterday, I explained the value of the President's visit to Bitburg.

Afterwards, every call to the switchboard was positive, with people saying over and over again in different ways, "It's about time someone told Reagan's side of the story."

By the way, my news director was so pleased that he is having me on ABC's half hour local talk show called Eyewitness Forum this next Sunday and giving me additional time to make these points and others.

Cordially yours,



Alex Seith

ARS/jg  
Enc.

COMMENTARY

BY ALEX SEITH, MAY 6, 1985

When President Reagan announced plans to visit Bitburg cemetery, a lot of us gave him hell.

Because we say never again to Adolf Hitler's abuses of German nationalism--abuses that caused the holocaust and World War II.

But we should give Reagan some credit.

Because we're threatened by new abusers of German nationalism.

They dominate West Germany's Social Democratic Party, the major opposition to Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

Like Hitler, they tell a dangerous lie--that Germans can never enjoy national pride until Germany is united.

They promise unity by ending friendship with America and accepting control by Moscow.

Chancellor Kohl says Germany united under control of Moscow would be just as dangerous as Germany under Hitler.

Kohl's Social Democratic opponents used to agree.

But, since 1982, they've been making it politically risky to be pro-American.

That's why Kohl wanted the drama of Reagan's visit to Bitburg--to remind West Germans that friendship with America is better than unity under Moscow.

By going in spite of criticism, the President helped Kohl show millions of Germans that America is not a fair weather friend.

And they both told the new abusers of German nationalism--Never again.

COPY WRITTEN MATERIAL--MAY NOT BE REPRODUCED OR USED WITHOUT  
THE PERMISSION OF ALEX SEITH OR ABC.

314733

JV

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Date:

To: Biff

These look  
like 6 official  
invitations  
to the Pres  
from the German  
trip - assume  
a part in  
files -

ANNE HIGGINS  
Special Assistant to the  
President and Director  
of Correspondence  
Room 94, x7610

314733

3300

3100

TR 12301

2534-0

100 01-0

1861



*Der Bundespräsident und Freifrau von Weixsäcker*

*bitten*

*J.J.E.E. den Präsidenten der Vereinigten  
Staaten von Amerika und Frau Reagan*

*aus Anlaß des Wirtschaftsgipfels Bonn 1985*

*zu einem Abendessen*

*am Samstag, dem 4. Mai 1985, um 20.00 Uhr*

*in die Villa Hammerschmidt, Bonn.*

Smoking  
Langes Kleid



---

Aus Anlaß des Bonner Wirtschaftsgipfels 1985

Der Bundeskanzler  
der Bundesrepublik Deutschland  
gibt sich die Ehre

S.E. dem Präsidenten der Vereinigten Staaten  
von Amerika Herrn Ronald Reagan  
zum Abendessen am Freitag,  
dem 3. Mai 1985 um 20.00 Uhr einzuladen  
Palais Schaumburg  
Hallstein-Zimmer

---

*Zur Eröffnung des Bonner Wirtschaftsgipfels 1985*

*Der Bundeskanzler der Bundesrepublik Deutschland  
gibt sich die Ehre*

*S. E. den Präsidenten der Vereinigten Staaten von  
Amerika Herrn Ronald Reagan*

*zu einem Empfang  
in Schloß Augustusburg, Brühl,  
am Donnerstag, dem 2. Mai 1985, um 18.30 Uhr einzuladen.*

Antwort auf beiliegender Karte *p.m.*  
bis 19. April 1985 erbeten  
Tel. (02 28) 17 33 85

Dunkler Anzug

~~Es wird gebeten, die Anfahrt bis 18.15 Uhr zu beenden.~~  
Diese Einladung gilt in Verbindung mit dem Delegations-/Personalausweis als Einlaßkarte.



---

Aus Anlaß des Bonner Wirtschaftsgipfels 1985

Der Bundeskanzler  
der Bundesrepublik Deutschland  
gibt sich die Ehre

S. E. dem Präsidenten der Vereinigten Staaten  
von Amerika Herrn Ronald Reagan  
zum Mittagessen am Samstag  
dem 4. Mai 1985 um 13<sup>00</sup> Uhr einzuladen  
Bundeskanzleramt  
Speisesaal

---

Aus Anlaß des Bonner Wirtschaftsgipfels 1985

Der Bundeskanzler  
der Bundesrepublik Deutschland  
gibt sich die Ehre

S. E. dem Präsidenten der Vereinigten  
Staaten von Amerika Herrn Ronald Reagan  
zum Abendessen am Donnerstag  
dem 2. Mai 1985 um 20.15 Uhr einzuladen

Schloß Falkenlust

Aus Anlaß des Bonner Wirtschaftsgipfels 1985

Der Bundeskanzler  
der Bundesrepublik Deutschland  
gibt sich die Ehre

S.E. den Präsidenten der Vereinigten Staaten  
von Amerika Herrn Ronald Reagan  
zum Mittagessen am Freitag  
dem 3. Mai 1985 um 13<sup>00</sup> Uhr einzuladen  
Palais Schaumburg  
Kleiner Kabinettsaal

JV 1

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

April 29, 1985

1110  
TR12301  
1005400  
IN001  
NDE16  
ST032  
ST036  
ST045

MEMORANDUM FOR MITCH DANIELS

FROM: CECI COLE

SUBJECT: State Legislative Action Regarding Bitburg Visit

LD/

Activity in direct response to the President's upcoming visit to the Bitburg cemetery in West Germany has taken place in only three state legislatures that we are aware of: New York, New Jersey, and Vermont. Nationwide, nine state legislators have written the White House about the matter.

In New York, Democrats have introduced a very strongly worded resolution urging the President to cancel the stop. Further, a highly-respected Democrat is urging the other public officials and members of the Jewish community to accompany him to Germany where he will appear at Bitburg when the President does and protest his presence there.

Sponsoring the New York resolution is Senate Minority Leader Manfred Ohrenstein, an actual Holocaust escapee and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the New York State Holocaust Exhibit and Resource Center, who is more of an outspoken showman. Initiating the trip to West Germany is Assemblyman Alan Hevesi, President of the National Association of Jewish Legislators, who is said to be more respectable, wise, and less of a grandstander than most. Hevesi, who represents the Forest Hills/Queens district, is currently Deputy Majority Leader of the Assembly, and has been rumored for Speaker. This is the only reason New York political veterans say they can guess why he would be at the head of such a move. At least 14 Democrats, no Republicans, have announced they will join the trip.

Politically, the Bitburg visit is hot in New York as the state has a very large Jewish community, the largest percentage of concentration camp survivors of any U.S. state, and approximately 8% of the U.S./German population.

Republicans hold a nine seat edge in the New York State Senate, and are the minority party in the Assembly. Concern is high among Republican Senate incumbents, particularly, that the Bitburg issue will be harmful electorally for many of them considering the large Jewish populations of their districts. They have formally conveyed their intention to buffer as much as possible the Democrats' efforts to pass this resolution or otherwise embarrass the President, but feel many of their number many need to sign onto a less strident resolution to preserve their own political livelihoods.

Senate President Warren Anderson and Senate Finance Committee Chairman John Markey plan an attempt to have the resolution shunted to committee.

In New Jersey, the State Assembly today passed a mild resolution urging the President not to go to Bitburg. The resolution was sponsored by Democratic Leader John Paul Doyle.

In Vermont, on Friday, April 26, the House of Representatives (where the GOP holds a six-seat advantage) passed a resolution which called on the President to reconsider his trip to Bitburg. It also called on the citizens of Vermont to communicate their concern for this planned visit directly to their Members of Congress. The Vermont Senate is not expected to consider this resolution.

The House resolution was cosponsored by three Democrats: Micque Glipman, Tim Corcoran, and Peter Youngbaer. GOP Representative Gwen Bronson was responsible for watering down the Democrats' first draft, which called on the President to cancel, as opposed to reconsider his visit to Bitburg.



Arthur S. Bechhoefer, Director

1617 19th Street, N.W., #2  
Washington, D.C. 20009  
202-667-6628

1128 E. Bluff Drive  
Penn Yan, New York, 14527  
315-536-7895

314768

4300

TR123.01

CO054.02

PA001

ND016

FI003

May 9, 1985

PY1

Hon. Donald T. Regan  
Chief of Staff to the President  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Regan:

It is unfortunate that President Reagan's visit to the Bitburg cemetery caused such a furor. With a little foresight, it could have drawn enthusiastic support from Christians and Jews, conservatives as well as liberals.

That outcome is still possible with a few well chosen words spoken at a news conference or similar situation. If you are interested in more detail, call me at my Washington address.

Sincerely,

Arthur S. Bechhoefer

**From:** Arthur S. Bechhoefer  
Independent Investors Forum  
1617 19th St., N.W.  
Washington DC 20009

---

**MCI Mail**

The nation's new postal system.

**Overnight Delivery<sup>1</sup>**

000118787885129192127700001\*

**To:** Hon. Donald T. Regan  
Chief of Staff to the President  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

**CONTROL #: 880-000241**



THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

→ Tom Dawson FYI

Pl note likely guest  
appearance by NY State  
legislators on site of  
Pittsburg event.

Mitch D.

4/29

Thanks

JV

May 17, 1985

Dear Elsa:

Just a quick line to say a heartfelt thank you for your kind letter. I regret very much the media effort to raise a firestorm over the Bergen-Belsen, Bitburg trip. It actually turned out alright and certainly wasn't a big blunder in planning. From the first moment Chancellor Kohl asked me to do it, I felt it was the morally right thing to do.

Your letter was a very warm and kind reassurance and I'm most grateful.

Sincerely,

RON

Mrs. Elsa Sandstrom  
Apartment 112  
8860 Villa LaJolla Drive  
La Jolla, California 92037

RR:AVH:NM:pps

RR Dictation

850517

314934

5300

TR123-01

C0054-02

PA001

NDO16

PR003

PR00502

**HANDWRITING FILE**

To Mrs. Elsa Sandstrom 2860 Villa LaJolla Dr.  
#112  
La Jolla Calif. 92037

Dear Elsa

Just a quick line to say a ~~heartfelt~~ heartfelt  
thank you for your kind letter. I regret very  
much the media effort to raise a firestorm  
over the Bergen Belsen, Bitburg trip. It actually  
turned out alright and certainly wasn't a big  
blunder in planning. From the first moment  
Chancellor Kohl asked me to do it I felt it was  
the morally right thing to do.

Your letter was a very warm & kind  
reassurance and I'm most grateful.  
Sincerely Ron

# ELSA SANDSTROM

May 6, 1985

President Ronald Reagan  
The White House  
Washington, D. C. 200

Dear Mr. President -

Being an early riser, I had the good fortune to catch the German cemetery ceremonies live on television. If your emotions ran high, ours were overwhelming! Tear-filled eyes and a lump in the throat! The memories will remain forever . . . we heard and saw our President in what, we are sure, history will record as one of his finest hours. HE was with you, as surely as HE was with that mother in that little German cottage.

May God continue to bless you and protect you and our First Lady. She was wonderful, too.

Sincerely,

  
Elsa Sandstrom (Mrs.)

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee . . ." (Isaiah 26:3)

"In quietness and in confidence shall be thy strength . . ." (Isaiah 30:15)

314935

VI

4670  
5300

TR 123-01

CO054-02  
PA001  
SP  
ND016  
PR003  
ED  
PR005-02



RONALD REAGAN

Dear John

Thank you very much for your kind words, I am truly grateful.

I believed in what I was doing at both Bergen Balcon & Bitburg. Attached are the speeches I gave. The 1<sup>st</sup> was at Balcon, the 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Bitburg Air Base where our soldiers are housed with the Germans.

Thanks & Best Regards

Ron

FROM  
THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Mr. John A. Howard  
President  
The Rockford Institute  
934 North Main Street  
Rockford, Illinois 61103

850517

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

TO: *Biff*

FROM: **KATHY OSBORNE**  
**Personal Secretary**  
**to the President**

DATE: *5-17*

*Can you please  
mail for the POTUS.  
your copies attached*

*Thank*



THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary  
(Bitburg Air Base, Federal Republic of Germany)

For Immediate Release

May 5, 1985

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AT BERGEN-BELSEN CONCENTRATION CAMP

Federal Republic of Germany

12:10 P.M. (L)

THE PRESIDENT: Chancellor Kohl and honored guests. This painful walk into the past has done much more than remind us of the war that consumed the European continent. What we have seen makes unforgettably clear that no one of the rest of us can fully understand the enormity of the feelings carried by the victims of these camps.

The survivors carry a memory beyond anything that we can comprehend. The awful evil started by one man, an evil that victimized all the world with its destruction, was uniquely destructive of the millions forced into the grim abyss of these camps.

Here lie people -- Jews -- whose death was inflicted for no reason other than their very existence. Their pain was borne only because of who they were and because of the God in their prayers. Alongside them lay many Christians -- Catholics and Protestants.

For year after year, until that man and his evil were destroyed, hell yawned forth its awful contents. People were brought here for no other purpose but to suffer and die. To go unfed when hungry -- uncared for when sick -- tortured when the whim struck -- and left to have misery consume them when all there was around them was misery.

I'm sure we all share similar first thoughts. And that is: What of the youngsters who died at this dark stalag? All was gone for them forever. Not to feel again the warmth of life's sunshine and promise; not the laughter and the splendid ache of growing up; nor the consoling embrace of a family. Try to think of being young and never having a day without searing emotional and physical pain -- desolate, unrelieved pain.

Today, we've been grimly reminded why the commandant of this camp was named, "The Beast of Belsen." Above all, we're struck by the horror of it all -- the monstrous, incomprehensible horror. And that's what we've seen, but is what we can never understand as the victims did. Nor with all our compassion can we feel what the survivors feel to this day and what they will feel as long as they live.

What we've felt and are expressing with words cannot convey the suffering that they endured. That is why history will forever brand what happened as the Holocaust.

Here, death ruled. But we've learned something, as well. Because of what happened, we found that death cannot rule forever. And that's why we're here today. We're here because humanity refuses to accept that freedom of the spirit of man can ever be extinguished. We're here to commemorate that life triumphed over the tragedy and the death of the Holocaust -- overcame the suffering, the sickness, the testing, and, yes, the gassings.

We're here today to confirm that the horror cannot outlast hope -- and that even from the worst of all things, the best may come forth. Therefore, even out of this overwhelming sadness, there must be some purpose. And there is. It comes to us through the transforming love of God.

We learn from the Talmud that, "It was only through

MORE



suffering that the children of Israel obtained three priceless and coveted gifts: The Torah, the Land of Israel, and the World to Come." Yes, out of this sickness -- as crushing and cruel as it was -- there was hope for the world as well as for the World to Come. Out of the ashes -- Hope. And from all the pain -- promise.

So much of this is symbolized today by the fact that most of the leadership of free Germany is represented here today. Chancellor Kohl, you and your countrymen have made real the renewal that had to happen. Your nation and the German people have been strong and resolute in your willingness to confront and condemn the acts of a hated regime of the past. This reflects the courage of your people and their devotion to freedom and justice since the war. Think how far we've come from that time when despair made these tragic victims wonder if anything could survive.

As we flew here from Hanover, low over the greening farms and the emerging springtime of the lovely German countryside, I reflected -- and there must have been a time when the prisoners at Bergen-Belsen, and those of every other camp, must have felt the springtime was gone forever from their lives. Surely we can understand that when we see what is around us -- all these children of God, under bleak and lifeless mounds, the plainness of which does not even hint at the unspeakable acts that created them. Here they lie. Never to hope. Never to pray. Never to love. Never to heal. Never to laugh. Never to cry.

And too many of them knew that this was their fate. But that was not the end. Through it all was their faith and a spirit that moved their faith.

Nothing illustrates this better than the story of a young girl who died here at Bergen-Belsen. For more than two years Anne Frank and her family had hidden from the Nazis in a confined annex in Holland where she kept a remarkably profound diary. Betrayed by an informant, Anne and her family were sent by freight car first to Auschwitz and finally here to Bergen-Belsen.

Just three weeks before her capture, young Anne wrote these words: "It's really a wonder that I haven't dropped all my ideals because they seem so absurd and impossible to carry out. Yet I keep them because in spite of everything I still believe that people are good at heart. I simply can't build up my hopes on a foundation consisting of confusion, misery and death. I see the world gradually being turned into a wilderness. I hear the ever approaching thunder which will destroy us too; I can feel the suffering of millions and yet, if I looked up into the heavens I think that it will all come right, that this cruelty too will end and that peace and tranquility will return again." Eight months later, this sparkling young life ended at here at Bergen-Belsen.

Somewhere here lies Anne Frank. Everywhere here are memories -- pulling us, touching us, making us understand that they can never be erased. Such memories take us where God intended his children to go -- toward learning, toward healing, and, above all, toward redemption. They beckon us through the endless stretches of our heart to the knowing commitment that the life of each individual can change the world and make it better.

We're all witnesses. We share the glistening hope that rests in every human soul. Hope leads us, if we're prepared to trust it, toward what our President Lincoln called, "the better angels of our nature." And then rising above all this cruelty, out of this tragic and nightmarish time, beyond the anguish, the pain and the suffering for all time, we can and must pledge...

Never again.

END

12:18 p.m. (L)



THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary  
(Bitburg Air Base, Federal Republic of Germany)

For Immediate Release

May 5, 1985

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AT BITBURG AIR BASE

Federal Republic of Germany

3:33 P.M. (L)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. I have just come from the cemetery where German war dead lay at rest. No one could visit there without deep and conflicting emotions. I felt great sadness that history could be filled with such waste, destruction and evil. But my heart was also lifted by the knowledge that from the ashes has come hope and that from the terrors of the past we have built 40 years of peace, freedom, and reconciliation among our nations.

This visit has stirred many emotions in the American and German people, too. I've received many letters since first deciding to come to Bitburg cemetery; some supportive, others deeply concerned and questioning, and others opposed. Some old wounds have been reopened, and this I regret very much because this should be a time of healing.

To the veterans and families of American servicemen who still carry the scars and feel the painful losses of that war, our gesture of reconciliation with the German people today in no way minimizes our love and honor for those who fought and died for our country. They gave their lives to rescue freedom in its darkest hour. The alliance of democratic nations that guards the freedom of millions in Europe and America today stands as living testimony that their noble sacrifice was not in vain.

No, their sacrifice was not in vain. I have to tell you that nothing will ever fill me with greater hope than the sight of two former war heroes who met today at the Bitburg ceremony; each among the bravest of the brave; each an enemy of the other 40 years ago; each a witness to the horrors of war. But today, they came together, American and German, General Matthew B. Ridgway and General Johanner Steinhoff reconciled and united for freedom. They reached over the graves to one another like brothers and grasped their hands in peace.

MORE



To the survivors of the Holocaust: your terrible suffering has made you ever vigilant against evil. Many of you are worried that reconciliation means forgetting. Well, I promise you, we will never forget. I have just come this morning from Bergen-Belsen where the horror of that terrible crime, the Holocaust, was forever burned upon my memory. No, we will never forget, and we say with the victims of that Holocaust: "Never again."

The war against one man's totalitarian dictatorship was not like other wars. The evil war of Nazism turned all values upside down. Nevertheless, we can mourn the German war dead today as human beings, crushed by a vicious ideology.

There are over 2,000 buried in Bitburg cemetery. Among them are 48 members of the SS. The crimes of the SS must rank among the most heinous in human history. But others buried there were simply soldiers in the German army. How many were fanatical followers of a dictator and willfully carried out his cruel orders? And how many were conscripts, forced into service during the death throes of the Nazi war machine? We do not know. Many, however, we know from the dates on their tombstones, were only teenagers at the time. There is one boy buried there who died a week before his 16th birthday.

There were thousands of such soldiers to whom Nazism meant no more than a brutal end to a short life. We do not believe in collective guilt. Only God can look into the human heart and all these men have now met their Supreme Judge and they have been judged by Him as we shall all be judged.

Our duty today is to mourn the human wreckage of totalitarianism and today in Bitburg cemetery we commemorated the potential good in humanity that was consumed back then, 40 years ago. Perhaps if that 15 year old soldier had lived, he would have joined his fellow countrymen in building this new Democratic Federal Republic of Germany devoted to human dignity and the defense of freedom that we celebrate today. Or perhaps his children, or his grandchildren might be among you here today at the Bitburg Air Base where new generations of Germans and Americans join together in friendship and common cause, dedicating their lives to preserving peace and guarding the security of the free world.

Too often in the past each war only planted the seeds of the next. We celebrate today the reconciliation between our two nations that has liberated us from that cycle of destruction. Look at what together we've accomplished. We who were enemies are now friends; we who were bitter adversaries are now the strongest of allies.



In the place of fear we've sown trust, and out of the ruins of war has blossomed an enduring peace. Tens of thousands of Americans have served in this town over the years. As the Mayor of Bitburg has said, in that time, there have been some 6,000 marriages between Germans and Americans, and many thousands of children have come from these unions. This is the real symbol of our future together, a future to be filled with hope, friendship, and freedom.

The hope that we see now could sometimes even be glimpsed in the darkest days of the War. I'm thinking of one special story -- that of a mother and her young son living alone in a modest cottage in the middle of the woods. And one night as the Battle of the Bulge exploded not far away, and around them, three young American soldiers arrived at their door -- they were standing there in the snow, lost behind enemy lines. All were frostbitten, one was badly wounded. Even though sheltering the enemy was punishable by death, she took them in and made them a supper with some of her last food.

And then, they heard another knock at the door. And this time four German soldiers stood there. The woman was afraid, but she quickly said with a firm voice, "...there will be no shooting here." She made all the soldiers lay down their weapons, and they all joined in the makeshift meal. Heinz and Willi, it turned out, were only 16; the corporal was the oldest at 23. Their natural suspicion dissolved in the warmth and the comfort of the cottage. One of the Germans, a former medical student, tended the wounded American.

But now, listen to the rest of the story through the eyes of one who was there, now a grown man, but that young lad that had been her son. He said, "The Mother said grace. I noticed that there were tears in her eyes as she said the old, familiar words, 'Komm, Herr Jesus. Be our guest.' And as I looked around the table, I saw tears, too, in the eyes of the battle-weary soldiers, boys again, some from America, some from Germany, all far from home."

That night -- as the storm of war tossed the world -- they had their own private armistice. The next morning the German corporal showed the Americans how to get back behind their own lines. And they all shook hands and went their separate ways. That happened to be Christmas Day, 40 years ago.

Those boys reconciled briefly in the midst of war. Surely, we allies in peacetime should honor the reconciliation of the last 40 years.



To the people of Bitburg, our hosts and the hosts of our servicemen, like that generous woman forty years ago, you make us feel very welcome. Vielen Dank. (Applause.)

And to the men and women of Bitburg Air Base, I just want to say that we know that even with such wonderful hosts, your job is not an easy one. You serve around the clock far from home, always ready to defend freedom. We are grateful and we are very proud of you.

Four decades ago we waged a great war to lift the darkness of evil from the world, to let men and women in this country and in every country live in the sunshine of liberty. Our victory was great and the Federal Republic, Italy and Japan are now in the community of free nations. But the struggle for freedom is not complete, for today much of the world is still cast in totalitarian darkness.

Twenty-two years ago President John F. Kennedy went to the Berlin Wall and proclaimed that he, too, was a Berliner. Well, today freedom-loving people around the world must say, I am a Berliner, I am a Jew in a world still threatened by anti-Semitism, I am an Afghan, and I am a prisoner of the Gulag, I am a refugee in a crowded boat foundering off of the coast of Vietnam, I am a Laotian, a Cambodian, a Cuban, and a Miskito Indian in Nicaragua. I, too, am a potential victim of totalitarianism.

The one lesson of World War II, the one lesson of Nazism, is that freedom must always be stronger than totalitarianism and that good must always be stronger than evil. The moral measure of our two nations will be found in the resolve we show to preserve liberty, to protect life, and to honor and cherish all God's children.

That is why the free, democratic Federal Republic of Germany is such a profound and hopeful testament to the human spirit. We cannot undo the crimes and wars of yesterday, nor call back the millions back to life, but we can give meaning to the past by learning its lessons and making a better future. We can let our pain drive us to greater efforts to heal humanity's suffering.

Today I have traveled 220 miles from Dergen-Belsen, and, I feel, forty years in time. With the lessons of the past firmly in our minds, we have turned a new, brighter page in history.

One of the many who wrote me about this visit was a young woman who had recently been Bat Mitzvahed.

She urged me to lay the wreath at Bitburg Cemetery in honor of the future of Germany. And that is what we've done.

On this 40th anniversary of World War II, we mark the day when the hate, the evil and the obscenity is ended and we commemorate the rekindling of the democratic spirit in Germany.

There's much to make us hopeful on this historic anniversary. One of the symbols of that hate -- that could have been that hope, a little while ago, when we heard a German band playing the American national anthem and an American band playing the German national anthem. While much of the world still huddles in the darkness of oppression, we can see a new dawn of freedom sweeping the globe. And we can see in the new democracies of Latin America, in the new economic freedoms and prosperity in Asia, in the slow movement toward peace in the Middle East and in the strengthening alliance of democratic nations in Europe and America that the light from that dawn is growing stronger.

Together, let us gather in that light and walk out of the shadow. Let us live in peace.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

END

3:46 P.M. (L)

# The Rockford Institute

934 North Main Street Rockford, IL 61103  
815/964-5053

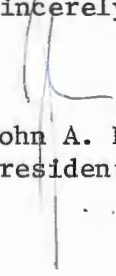
May 6, 1985

The Honorable Ronald Reagan  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Ron:

Bless you for not knuckling under to what someone has called the "deployable indignation" of the left. As a twice-wounded veteran of the 1st Infantry Division in WWII, I applaud your gesture symbolizing forgiveness and unity.

Sincerely yours,

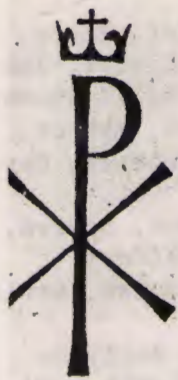


John A. Howard  
President

JAH/pw

Enc:





# CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

515 Franklin Avenue

River Forest, Illinois 60305

366-7730

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
OAK PARK, IL  
PERMIT NO. 201

THEODORE R. GRACIA, RECTOR

The Rockford Institute  
934 N. Main  
Rockford, IL 61103

The Third Sunday of Easter

April 21, 1985

## FATHER FORGIVE THEM

The President has created a great stir with his planned trip to Germany. The proposed visit to a German war cemetery and to place a wreath in memory of German war dead was no doubt made for political reasons. After all, Mr. Reagan is a politician as well as head of state, and the two persons and positions are forever being mingled. It is obvious that in the minds of many people the business of the wreath to memorialize the dead who fought in support of the Third Reich is a mistake and overshadows any political gain which might be achieved. The political foes of the President seem to be making hay over the embarrassment the incident has caused, and the professional fault-finders of the media and fourth estate seem almost gleeful that the "Great Communicator" has, at least in this instance, not communicated very well. Or to put it another way: has communicated only too well a right wing, hawkish insensitivity to the suffering memories of war veterans and holocaust victims.

All the above may or may not be true. Nothing, not even a belatedly scheduled visit to lay a wreath in a Concentration death camp, will still the furor. The President might as well quit explaining this reasoning and live with the consequences. Cancellation of the trip will only bring out the other side of the political spectrum, and would certainly damage our national rapport with a large segment of the West German population. To get back to politics, it might even endanger the touchy situation with regards to the deployment of Cruise and Pershing missiles in West Germany. No, all of the emotional and political flak is not entirely the raw conscience of bitter and hurtful memories forty years old. There is still the cold war and the struggle for the present and future. Regardless of what one thinks of Ronald Reagan, he shall be gone from the direction of American Foreign policy in four years time. And there is an even chance that the positions he espouses shall also be replaced by the choice of the voters of the Republic. But the insensitive and pragmatic politics which emanate from Moscow will still be in place. Amidst all of the expressed moral indignation being thrown at the President, remember the politics.

Now I shall stick my neck out. As a veteran, I see nothing so awfully wrong with placing a wreath as a memento to German World War II dead. It has been forty years. How long are we to carry a grudge? Yes, there are Waffen SS dead buried in the cemetery. But let us not get so morally pure and self-righteous as not to recognize the fact that some American G.I. s didn't also shoot, out of hand, German prisoners. True, we had no death camps comparable to Dachau and Treblinka, but I have a few Japanese friends, American Citizens, who suffered the indignity of imprisonment and the loss of their civil rights and what amounted to confiscation of their property during World War II. It is easy to fault the horrors of Hitler's Third Reich because they flaunted their evil before the world and recorded their vile behavior for posterity a thousand years from now. But go back a century and extermination was the policy of an expansionist American towards the Indian. And we do have a record of three centuries of black slavery in our national closet. To our credit we did fight to destroy the Nazis scourge, but only after we ourselves were threatened. We have also for the past forty years maintained the best of diplomatic relations with regimes around the world which are as reprehensible as the Hitler gang. Politics and nationalism can be an awful combination. Yes, they can birth a golden age. They can bring forth the stench which was Hitler's twelve year monstrosity. It can be Emancipation, or Wounded Knee or Me Lai, and South Lebanon. It can be delightful suburbs or city slums; death camps or famine in the Horn of Africa. History is a difficult phenomenon and we are all caught up in the process. There are rights and wrongs and no one, no system has a complete monopoly on either side of the ledger of Judgement.

What is really surprising in the climate of our conservative Christian era is that no one has quoted Jesus: "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone." Commentators, Veterans, Holocaust survivors would all be muted in a silence of a guilty conscience. But then, there is the "Politics." There is an election for high national office in 1988, and it's never too early to score points. That, of course, was the thing which so many years ago put Jesus on the



cross. The issue was religious, poisoned with the political. Here was a Messiah who came out for decency and peace and bread and health and good news for the burden bearers of the political system. So they crucified Him because He threatened their ambitious schemes to make war. He talked about reconciliation when they wanted to cut throats. He talked of the people of God when they wanted to proclaim theories of Master Race. So they put Him on a cross and they reviled Him with insults, thorns, nails and vinegar. And they would have felt justified if He had called them dirty names and cast doubt on their parentage. Instead He prayed for them: "Father forgive them."

I realize the legitimated claim of politics. I can appreciate with some degree of sympathy the anger and hurt of veterans. I can't even begin to feel the hurt of a holocaust survivor. And I really make no defense of the President's political blunder. I can only stand with them all at the foot of the cross and hear a broken, anguished Prayer: "Father Forgive them."

TRG

#### AROUND CHRIST CHURCH

1. We had a glorious Easter at Christ Church. Our thanks to all who took part in the preparations which always go with "liturgical" service. Altar Guild, Choir, Acolytes, Clergy, Seminarian. There were the contributors for the flowers, and we shall publish that list when we can get it all together.

2. Mr. Edwin Simpson underwent surgery at West Suburban Hospital on Wednesday, April 17. He came through the surgery well, but will be in the intensive care unit for several days. Gladys, who has had some medical problems this last winter, is up and about and surrounded by a host of family and friends. So please keep both Ed and Gladys in your prayers.

3. On clout street two communicants of Christ Church were elected to public office in the recent elections. Norman Johnstone was elected to the village park board, and Ann Hawley was elected River Forest Township Assessor. Our congratulations to the winners.

4. In the congratulations corner David and Jane Fleming announce the birth of their second child, a son, John Stewart. Young master Fleming arrived at 1:08 AM, March 25. He weighed in at 8 pounds, 10 ounces and was twenty inches from head to toe.

5. Father and Emily did the proud parent routine when daughter Nancy had an article printed in "New Dial", the trade journal for "Dial-America Corporation", a telemarketing firm. A copy will be posted on the narthex bulletin board when available.

#### 6. PARISH INTERCESSIONS

##### BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES:

April 21 - William Havell  
24 - Richard and Patricia Millett  
25 - James and Helen Allen  
26 - Amy Towle  
- Alice Wilber

THE SICK: James, Patricia, Claire, Sylvia,

Maude, Allen, Florence, Violet, Betty, Anne, Harold, Elaine, Ryan, Gladys, Imogene, Edwin, Katharine and Philil Thomas.

THE SHUT-INS: Ivy, Juanita, Vera, Arthur, Isabella, Stella, Alberta, Roberta, Gertrude, and Eleanor.

THOSE IN SERVICE: Arthur, Matthew, Edward, Larry, Thomas, Robert, and Jeffery.

THOSE AWAY AT SCHOOL: Debbie, Louise, David and Diana.

FOR ALL TRAVELERS: Those who go daily to work or school or places far away, especially John and Mary, Richard and Muriel--that God will grant to all a safe journey and return to their home and Altar.

A THEATER PARTY-- See Enclosed Flyer!

#### THE HYMNAL FUND

Thanks to a generous response from lots of people, the hymnal fund was over-subscribed. We got bogged down during Lent with more to do than our part-time secretary could handle, but in the near future all the donors will be suitably acknowledged and thanked. The books are due this fall and each one will be marked with a book plate to designate the donor or memorial.

UNITED THANK OFFERING: The Spring INGATHERING is scheduled for this Sunday, April 21. We do hope that all the women of the parish will respond with their THANK OFFERING. A UTO letter with an enclosed Blue Envelope were mailed last week. The monies received are presented at the Diocesan Ingathering which is held at the time of the Diocesan ECW Convention, May 7-8 at Nippersink Resort Manor.

#### THIS IS ALSO PENCE SUNDAY

Please return your old and filled pence can to Church on Sunday, April 21. New ones will be available. Pence is a reminder to say Grace at meal time. Half of the monies received stay in the parish. In the fifty three years of the Pence Program, Christ Church has raised more than \$35,000 for work in the parish and the Diocese.

#### SPRING AHEAD

Sunday, April 28 is the day to set your clocks ahead one hour.

#### THIS WEEK AT CHRIST CHURCH

April  
Sunday 21 7:30 AM Holy Communion  
10:00 AM Holy Communion, Sunday School, Coffee Hour  
No services Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday.  
Friday 26 9:30 AM Holy Communion  
Saturday 27 9:30 AM Holy Communion

Please pick up your pledge statements if you have not received yours yet. Thanks.



315035  
YE 4690  
TR123-01  
SP951  
PR00502

May 23, 1985

Dear Mr. Schifter:

Thank you very much for your letter of April 28.  
It was kind of you to write and I'm most grateful.

I was sorry about the furor that was raised over my visit to Bitburg and to Bergen-Belsen, all of it based on a misunderstanding of my purpose. Certainly, I intended no forgive or forget regarding the Holocaust and those responsible for it. The interesting thing is that today's Germany doesn't seek this either. Not only have they preserved the death camps and the evidence of the horrors committed there, they bring schoolchildren every year to see the camps so there will never be a repeat.

I'm enclosing the speeches I made that day, first at Bergen-Belsen and then at the Bitburg Air Base where our airmen serve with a German unit on the NATO line.

Thank you again for your letter. It meant a great deal to me.

Sincerely,  
**RONALD REAGAN**

The Honorable Richard Schifter  
6907 Crail Drive  
Bethesda, Maryland 20817

RR:AVH:NM:pps

RR Dictation (Sample)

**HANDWRITING FILE**

850528

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 23, 1985

Dear Mr. Schifter:

Thank you very much for your letter of April 28. It was kind of you to write and I'm most grateful.

I was sorry about the furor that was raised over my visit to Bitburg and to Bergen-Belsen, all of it based on a misunderstanding of my purpose. Certainly, I intended no forgive or forget regarding the Holocaust and those responsible for it. The interesting thing is that today's Germany doesn't seek this either. Not only have they preserved the death camps and the evidence of the horrors committed there, they bring schoolchildren every year to see the camps so there will never be a repeat.

I'm enclosing the speeches I made that day, first at Bergen-Belsen and then at the Bitburg Air Base where our airmen serve with a German unit on the NATO line.

Thank you again for your letter. It meant a great deal to me.

Sincerely,

The Honorable Richard Schifter  
6907 Crail Drive  
Bethesda, Maryland 20817

To Hon. Richard Schifter 6907 Crail Dr.  
Bethesda Md. 20817

Dear Mr. Schifter

Thank you very much for your letter of April 28. It was kind of you to write & I'm most grateful.

I was sorry about ~~and~~ the furor that was raised over my visit to Bitburg & to Bergen-Belsen all of it based on a misunderstanding of my purpose. Certainly I intended no forgive or forget ~~of~~ regarding the Holocaust & those responsible for it. ~~Just that today Germany~~ ~~which~~ The interesting thing is that Today's Germany doesn't seek this either. Not only have they preserved the death camps & the evidence of the horrors committed there, they bring school children every year to see ~~from~~ the camps ~~and~~ so there will never be a repeat.

I'm enclosing the speeches I made that day, first at Bergen-Belsen & then at the Bitburg Airbase where our Airman serve with a German unit on the NATO line.

Thank you again for your letter. It meant a great deal to me.

Respectfully  
RR

April 28, 1985

President Ronald Reagan

Dear Mr. President,

?  
Do we have  
an address on him  
I'd like to respond.  
RR

I am writing you from Ottawa, where I am leading the United States delegation, your delegation, to the human rights conference convened as a followup to the Helsinki Accord.

I am writing you, also, as one who lost his own father and mother and most of his close relatives in the Holocaust.

I have just heard Donald Regan, on TV, describe your personal feeling of hurt. It's an understandable feeling. As one who has carried another feeling of hurt with him for over 40 years, let me just say this: No one can speak for the Jewish community and I won't purport to do so. But there are, I am sure, a good many of us who know that no other President has understood Jewish concerns as well as you and no other President has acted on this understanding as well as you have. That's what is important, whether you do go to the Bitburg Cemetery or whether you don't.

I, for one, am proud to have been associated with the Administration which bears your name and continue to be proud of that fact.

God bless you!

Richard Schifter





THE WESTIN HOTEL  
Ottawa

April 28, 1985.

President Ronald Reagan

Dear Mr. President,

I am writing you from Ottawa, where I am leading the United States delegation, your delegation, & the human rights conference convened as a follow-up to the Helsinki Accord.

I am writing you, also, as one who lost his own father and mother and most of his close relatives in the Holocaust.

I have just heard Donald Regan, on TV, describe your personal feeling of loss. It's an understandable feeling. As one who has carried another feeling of loss with him for over 40 years, let me just say this: No one can speak for the Jewish community and I won't purport to do so. But there are, I am sure, a good many of us who know that no other President has understood Jewish concerns as well as you and no other President has acted on





THE WESTIN HOTEL  
Ottawa

---

2/

this understanding as well as you have. That  
is what is important, whether you do go to  
the Bitburg Cemetery or whether you don't.

I, for one, am proud to have been associated  
with the Administration which bears your name  
and continue to be proud of that fact.

God bless you!

Richard Schifter