

The David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies

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About the Institute

Established in 2003 and based in Washington, D.C., The David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies has a unique mission: to teach the history and lessons of America's response to the Holocaust. Other organizations focus on the German perpetrators and their Jewish victims; the Wyman Institute focuses on the bystanders, those who could have helped bring about the rescue of Jews from Hitler. The Wyman Institute has a particular interest in bringing to public attention the minority of Americans who did speak out for rescue.

Through scholarly research, public events, publications, and educational programs, the Wyman Institute sheds light on how the American government, media, academics, churches, Jewish organizations, and others responded to the rise of Nazism and the Holocaust.

The Wyman Institute's Advisory Committee includes Nobel Prize laureate Elie Wiesel, eleven present or former Members of Congress, and other dignitaries. Its Academic Council features more than fifty leading historians of Jewish history and the Holocaust. The Institute also has an Arts & Letters Council, chaired by Cynthia Ozick.

Recent Achievements: A Sampling

- Played a key role in bringing about Congressional passage of legislation requiring the State Department to monitor and combat anti-Semitism around the world.
- Convinced the Newspaper Association of America to publicly apologize for its predecessor's failure to help German Jewish refugee journalists in the 1930s.
- Persuaded C-SPAN, Jordanian Television, The Nation magazine, and Teen People magazine to refrain from giving platforms to Holocaust-deniers.
- Designed the critically acclaimed exhibit *Cartoonists Against the Holocaust: Art in the Service of Humanity*, which teaches students about the Holocaust through 1940s editorial cartoons.

National Conference in June 2007 to Focus on Bergson Group

The Wyman Institute's fifth national conference, "Jewish Activists Who Shook the World: The Bergson Group, American Jewry, and the Holocaust," will be held June 17, 2007. This will be the first-ever conference on the impact and legacy of the Bergson Group, the maverick Jewish activists whose protests alerted Americans about the Holocaust and played a major role in the creation of the War Refugee Board, which helped save over 200,000 Jews from Hitler.

The conference will take place on Sunday, June 17, 2007, from 10 am to 5:30 pm, at the Fordham University School of Law, 140 West 62 St. (near Ninth Ave.), in New York City. Registration is just \$25 for the entire one-day event (\$15 for students). For more information and to register, please visit www.WymanInstitute.org or call (202) 434-8994.

David S. Wyman – Bio

The grandson of two Protestant ministers, David S. Wyman earned his Ph.D. in history from Harvard University, where he was a Woodrow Wilson Fellow. From 1966 until his retirement in 1991, he taught at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, where he was the Josiah E. DuBois, Jr. Professor of History and twice served as chairman of the Judaic Studies Program.

Professor Wyman is author of *Paper Walls: America and the Refugee Crisis 1938-1941* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1968) and the best-selling *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust 1941-1945* (New York: Pantheon, 1984). He edited *The World Reacts to the Holocaust* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), and *America and the Holocaust* (New York: Garland, 1993), a 13-volume set of documents.

The Abandonment of the Jews won the Bernath Prize of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations, the Saloutos Award of the Immigration History Society, the Anfield-Wolf Award, and the National Jewish Book Award, among other honors. It went through seven hardcover printings and a paperback edition, was translated into German, French, Hebrew, and Polish, and to date has sold more than 150,000 copies worldwide. U.S. government officials cited *Abandonment* as the inspiration for the 1985 rescue operation in which American forces airlifted 900 starving Ethiopian Jewish refugees from Sudan to Israel.

Rafael Medoff – Bio

Dr. Rafael Medoff is founding director of The David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies. He is the author of seven books about the Holocaust, Zionism, and the history of American Jewry. His textbook, *Jewish Americans and Political Participation*, was named an Outstanding Academic Title of 2003 by the American Library Association's Choice Magazine.

Dr. Medoff has taught Jewish history at Ohio State University, Purchase College of the State University of New York, and elsewhere, and served as associate editor of the scholarly journal *American Jewish History*. His essays have appeared in numerous academic journals and reference volumes, including the *Encyclopedia Judaica*.

About the Collaboration on *A Race Against Death*

Co-authors David Wyman and Rafael Medoff have been friends and colleagues since the early 1990s. Their many conversations about the history of America's response to the Nazi genocide led to their decision to collaborate on a book about the Bergson Group, based on a twelve-hour, tape-recorded interview that Professor Wyman conducted in 1973 with Hillel Kook (Peter Bergson). That book, *A Race Against Death: Peter Bergson, America, and the Holocaust* (New York: The New Press, 2002) was described by *Publisher's Weekly* as "a chilling account of U.S. indifference to the plight of European Jews during WWII." *The Jerusalem Post* called it "a document of unique historical significance and one of incredible human drama...A must-read for all Jewish leaders the world over, as well as for committed Jews and anyone interested in the response of American Jewry to the Holocaust."

Professor Wyman and Dr. Medoff are presently collaborating on another book, focusing on Josiah E. DuBois, Jr., the Treasury Department official who led the fight to expose the State Department's obstruction of refugee rescue opportunities.