Lifting the Veil of Silence:

Carl Lutz and His Forgotten Mission to Save the Jews of Budapest During the Second World War

Carl Lutz at the bomb-ravaged British legation after the liberation of Budapest, February 1945.
https://www.google.com/search?q=carl+lutz&rlz=1C5CHFA_enNL867GB871&sxsrf=ALeKk02c2P37kIVg0thRTifP6_w0j0EBIA:1592232367555&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjWzqvlh4TqAhWyqHEKHcwIDWYQ_AUoAXoECCEQAw&biw=1437&bih=744#imgrc=FWicMufi2jK1iM

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Introduction

On a sunny spring day in 1977, a small group of people gathered for an intimate ceremony in the 'Garden of the Righteous' at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, Israel's official memorial to the Holocaust.[1] The purpose of the gathering was to posthumously memorialize the efforts of a member of the 'Righteous Among the Nations' by planting a tree in his honor.[2] The honoree in question was Carl Lutz who had become the first Swiss citizen to be recognized by Yad Vashem in 1965 as a result of his efforts that secured the survival of tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews.[3] Despite this prestigious honor, hardly anyone today knows his name, let alone who he was and what he accomplished. Indeed, it is very likely that the present reader is pondering that very question since Lutz has been largely forgotten. Individuals who undertook similar rescue missions, such as the German industrialist Oskar Schindler and the Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg who worked alongside Lutz in Budapest, have both acquired worldwide recognition as a result of their efforts, while the Swiss has, for the most part, remained a figure shrouded in historical obscurity.

The forgotten legacy of Lutz leads us to a seminal question: why is it that certain figures in history are remembered while others are consigned to the proverbial 'dustbin of history?' As the question already suggests, memory invariably possesses two faces: remembering and forgetting.[4] While these elements are effectively two sides of the same coin and inextricably

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[1] Alexander Grossman, 'Expose', 1977, Nachlass Alexander Grossman 86 (hereafter NL Alexander Grossman), Archiv für Zeitgeschichte (hereafter AfZ) ETH, p.1.
[2] Ibid.
[3] https://www.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%206455.pdf.
[4] For more on the reciprocal relationship between remembering and forgetting see Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2004).

linked, the latter is to be of central concern in the thesis to follow. Yet, due to the limited scope of this work and to ensure analytical depth throughout, a general treatment of such a vast topic is beyond the remit of this thesis and consequently the case of Carl Lutz will instead serve as a case-study thereof.

Just like collective remembrance, collective forgetting has acquired extensive scholarly attention, especially in regards to episodes of official censorship.[5] Yet the process of forgetting not only encompasses active suppression but also occurs in a more passive form that generally revolves around unofficial suppression which often manifests itself in neglectful treatment, a subject that is in need of further academic investigation.[6] Given how debates over collective memory formation have been closely linked to Holocaust issues, there have been studies in this realm focusing on how the events of the Second World War have been portrayed in national narratives. [7] While having established that numerous formerly belligerent European states succumbed to an attitude of "collective amnesia" in the decades following the war[8], far less well academically established is the way in which self-serving constructions of "patriotic wartime memory"[9] have influenced the collective consciousness of this epoch in non-combatant states.[10]

Any official acknowledgement of indirect complicity in the Jewish genocide has waited, in several cases, until the turn of the twenty-first century to begin receiving public attention in certain neutral western states. Such delayed national awakenings have not only hampered public

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[5] Peter Burke, 'History as Social Memory' in Jeffrey K. Olick et. al.(eds.) *The Collective Memory Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 192.
[6] Aleida Assmann, 'Canon and Archive', in Olick, *The Collective Memory Reader*, 334; Burke, 'History as Social Memory', 192.
[7] Regula Ludi, 'Waging War on Wartime Memory: Recent Swiss Debates on the Legacies of the Holocaust and the Nazi Era,' *Jewish Social Studies* 10 (2004), 117.
[8] Saul Friedländer, 'The Holocaust' in Martin Goodman (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Stud*ies, 413.
[9] Term coined by Pieter Lagrou, *The Legacy of Nazi Occupation: Patriotic Memory and National Recovery in Western Europe, 1945-1965* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
[10] Luc van Dongen, 'Swiss Memory of the Second World War in the Immediate Post-War Period, 1945-48' in Georg Kreis (ed.), *Switzerland and the Second World War* (London: Routledge, 2000), 261.

awareness but also academic research since many of the key archival documents remain inaccessible to researchers.[11] It is evident then that additional academic work needs to be devoted to clarifying how unofficial and/or inadvertent suppressions of memory have manifested themselves in these non-partisan states.

Switzerland represents a central reference point in this aforementioned propensity. While questions of collaboration have ostensibly been part of both academic and public discussions in regards to its role in the Second World War, these deliberations remained remarkably homogeneous and dominated by a mythologized narrative of an Alpine dwarf successfully resisting the Teutonic giant on its northern border until the 1990s.[12] Only with increasing international pressure that followed detailed revelations of Switzerland's close economic ties with Nazi Germany (and particularly its trade of looted gold and the existence of countless dormant Jewish accounts in Swiss banks) was Bern effectively forced to "undertake a radical reappraisal of its recent history."[13] This banking controversy sparked renewed interest (both national and international) in Switzerland's policies during the war and even induced Swiss officials to commission an international panel of historians, known as the 'Bergier Report,' to undertake an extensive examination into its wartime relationship with Nazi Germany.[14] Nevertheless, even today, Switzerland tends to shy away from discussing the sensitive intricacies of its involvement in the Holocaust, including even its more positive episodes, as the empirical case to follow will abundantly demonstrate.

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[11] See Swiss Federal Archives: https://www.recherche.bar.admin.ch/recherche/#/en/search/simple.
[12] Georg Kreis (ed.), *Switzerland and the Second World War* (London: Routledge, 2014), 1.
[13] Alan Cowell, 'Dispatch: Switzerland's Wartime Bloody Money', *Foreign Policy* 107 (1997), 133.
[14] Jean-Francois Bergier et al., *Switzerland, National Socialism and the Second World War: Final Report* (Zurich: Pendo Verlag, 2002).

Carl Lutz's story both encapsulates and amalgamates a number of the historical debates discussed above. As a Swiss diplomat stationed in Budapest between 1942 and 1945, Lutz helped nearly 10,000 Jews legally emigrate from Nazi-occupied Hungary; further, his use of less official methods has been credited with saving additional tens of thousands Jewish lives, making his humanitarian efforts the largest civilian rescue operation during the Holocaust.[15] Yet while Lutz was rewarded for his efforts by the state of Israel only one year after the inauguration of 'The Righteous Among the Nations', it was only in 2018, almost 50 years after his death, that Switzerland, the country he served in a diplomatic capacity for the entirety of his professional life, deigned to honor him.[16] Mirroring the lack of public attention given to his efforts, Lutz has also been neglected in the historiography of the Holocaust. Bringing greater scholarly attention to such a significant historical persona would thus in itself be a justifiable undertaking. Despite profoundly impacting the fate of the Jewish population in Hungary, only a handful of books have been written on his actions and only a single one of those has appeared in English - a translation which presents a more emotional than scholarly delineation of his rescue efforts.[17]

By providing an account of his mission, this thesis will add an additional, non-German work to the narrow historiography on Lutz. But this investigation is interested in answering a particular question that has never been tackled in an academic work on Lutz before: To what extent is it possible to determine the factors that led to Carl Lutz's humanitarian efforts in Budapest being all but forgotten by his own homeland? In attempting to answer the question, this inquiry aims to make historiographical interventions on four interrelated levels that connect to

[15] For more, see: Theo Tschuy, *Carl Lutz und die Juden von Budapest* (Zurich: Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 1998).
[16] https://www.thelocal.ch/20180213/carl-lutz-swiss-schindler-who-saved-62000-jews-honoured-with-room-in-federal-palace.
[17] See Theo Tschuy, *Dangerous Diplomacy: The Story of Carl Lutz, Rescuer of 62,000 Hungarian Jews* (Cambridge: Erdmans, 2000).

the broader debates outlined earlier. First and in its most limited sense, it will introduce not only a new but nuanced element to the historiography on Lutz. Second, the matter of Switzerland's actions during the war and how they have been dealt with not only deserve further historical scrutiny but are in fact inseparable from the case of Lutz. This thesis thus hopes to cast some light on how Switzerland has confronted its historical involvement in the Holocaust and whether Lutz's treatment can be regarded as symptomatic of a more general Swiss reluctance to come to terms with their own 20th century past.

Third, by studying a rescue operation, this thesis aims to make a contribution to the historiography of the Holocaust which has been, as a whole, disproportionately focused on three principal groups: perpetrators, victims and bystanders.[18] Consequently, individuals and groups who actively worked to save the lives of the primary targets of the Third Reich's racist policies have only relatively recently started to garner more extensive attention from historians. Despite their limited numbers, rescuers played no negligible role in how the Holocaust developed for thousands of persecuted Jews and their relative importance is not adequately reflected in the current historiography; hence this case-study aims to add to ongoing efforts to remedy this imbalance.

In effect, all these aforementioned topic areas relate back to the central issue of memory; thus, fourthly and finally, this thesis aims to make a specific contribution to the currently limited literature on the issue of unofficial and/or inadvertent suppression of historical memory in order to better understand the factors leading to historical amnesia by considering how a national hero of historical significance was impacted by such polices in a neutral state following the Second World War.

[18] Roni Stauber (ed.), *Collaboration with the Nazis: Public Discourse After the Holocaust* (Tel Aviv: Routledge, 2011), 1.

A central methodological lens to be used to provide preliminary answers to such issues will employ the analytical construct of collective memory. Although this thesis is specifically concerned with the process of how a society at large has failed to memorialize an extraordinary humanitarian's contributions, it is only by considering the basic elements behind the creation of a collective consciousness of an event that we can hope to gauge why these factors failed to crystallize in the case of the individual under study. The concept, first devised by Maurice Halbwachs, has proven particularly controversial, leading certain scholars to completely deny its explanatory value.[19] Since only individuals are capable of remembering, projecting memories of a single person onto a society as a whole is undoubtedly problematic; indeed, that is not what this thesis aims to do. Rather, as studies show, a generation that has experienced the same seismic historical events often do share a broadly similar and inter-subjective conception of that past.[20] This rings especially true of the epoch under study since active top-down attempts at constructing official national memories of the Second World War were pervasively directed at the public as a whole and not simply towards specific individuals; in fact, the construct of group memory has especially been applied to studies on the Holocaust.[21] A national memory in this sense, specifically pertaining to Switzerland's past and present population, is what is under investigation here.

Moreover, to clarify a concept which is often criticized for its ambiguity, collective memory will be employed by breaking it into two of its component parts: political memory and cultural memory.[22] While in no way claiming to ascertain any unerring understanding of the

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[19] See Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Picador, 2004).
[20] Aleida Assmann, 'Re-framing Memory: Between Individual and Collective Forms of Constructing the Past' in Karin Tilmans et al. (eds.), *Performing the Past: Memory, History and Identity in Modern Europe* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 41.
[21] Paula Hamilton, 'A Long War: Public Memory and the Popular Media' in Susannah Radstone and Bill Schwarz (eds.), *Memory: Histories, Theories Debates* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), 300.
[22] Assmann, 'Re-framing Memory', 42-43.

Swiss public's conception of the 20th century, by studying key elements of the political and cultural sphere, both central ingredients in constructing a public consciousness of historical figures, I hope to shed some light on why Lutz has not found a prominent place within the public remembrance of Switzerland. To support any inferences arrived at, the concept of political culture will also be applied to better understand how the political climate informed both the public and academic legacy accorded to a national figure of such potential historical significance.[23]

Since a significant portion of this investigation centers around the actions of a diplomat and how his relationship with the federal government evolved, the documentary legacy Carl Lutz posthumously left to Yad Vashem (and made available in digitized form by the Swiss Federal Archives and the Archives of Contemporary History of the ETH Zurich) will underlie the heart of this investigation. The three dossiers, comprised in aggregate of over 200 pages, are of a miscellaneous nature but are particularly valuable for this study since most record official correspondence between Lutz and the Swiss foreign office that were composed in the aftermath of his mission; as a result, they provide valuable insight into the post-war relationship between the diplomat and his political superiors.

At the same time, sources of this nature cannot and will not exclusively be relied upon to address the main research question since certain diplomatic documents pertaining to this episode remain classified in the Swiss Federal Archives while the cultural sphere necessarily requires a different set of sources. While this lack of complete documentation poses problems for acquiring a comprehensive understanding of both Lutz's actions and especially the particularities of the debates and decisions that took place in government headquarters, this limitation has been

[23] Stephen Welch, *The Concept of Political Culture* (London: Macmillan, 1993).

overcome, at least in part, by consulting an eye-witness account of the mission which cites several documents divulging Bern's deliberations.[24] When this thesis turns to cultural rather than political mediums of remembrance in the final chapter, Swiss newspapers and academic works will be utilized to gauge in what ways the consul has been portrayed in the public sphere.

Finally, although the literature on Lutz is limited, it is important to beware of one characteristic that a number of the works possess. Perhaps because Lutz has been so extensively overlooked, there has been a tendency amongst authors to study Lutz and his efforts uncritically - in other words, he is at times portrayed in the existing literature as an infallible saint-like figure. While not aiming to detract from his considerable accomplishments, this investigation nevertheless hopes to present a more balanced account of Lutz and his diplomatic activity in Budapest than such uncritical accounts provide.

The thesis to follow will be structured around three chapters to be ordered thematically. Because it is attempting to understand why Carl Lutz has largely been neglected, it is important to first underscore just how mystifying it is that he has been given such scant attention by his own homeland. Hence, chapter I will concern itself principally with outlining the nature of his rescue mission by answering the following questions: what exactly did Lutz undertake, how was he able to successfully carry this out, why was he determined to put his career and life at risk for this humanitarian venture and, finally, what impact did his actions have on the outcome of the Holocaust in Hungary? Only by answering these queries can one truly understand why the neglect of this historical persona (especially by his native country) is so surprising. Chapter II will then take a political focus on the years following his diplomatic mission in Budapest to consider how his actions were interpreted by the Swiss government and to surmise whether it is

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[24] See Alexander Grossman, *Nur das Gewissen: Carl Lutz und seine Budapester Aktion: Geschichte und Porträt* (Waldgut, 1986).

more apt to characterize the government's attitude towards the diplomat as inadvertent or deliberate neglect and to suggest reasons for the nature of his treatment. Finally, chapter III will adopt a cultural focus by examining key transmitters of knowledge to the public sphere through considering Lutz's portrayal in academic writings, newspapers and movies.

Having outlined the subject under study and the means by which I intend to approach it, let us now turn to the man and the mission that form the focus of this investigation.

Chapter I
The Man and the Mission

The years spent on diplomatic assignment in Budapest between 1942 and 1945 were not only the most challenging years of Carl Lutz's professional life but also represented the pinnacle of his 44 year-long career in the diplomatic service of Switzerland. These three years shaped his legacy and make narrating his story of such significance. Still, we can only hope to comprehensively understand why his diplomatic mission unfolded the way that it did if we also have some knowledge of who the man was who arrived in Budapest in January 1942. This requires a glance at both his personal and professional life preceding Budapest.

Carl Robert Lutz was born in 1895 in the canton of Appenzell in northeastern Switzerland into a large Methodist family where a religious upbringing at the hands of his devout mother proved particularly influential throughout his life.[25] At the age of 18, without having attended any higher secondary education, Lutz opted to leave his small hometown of Walzenhausen for the United States of America where, after holding several manual jobs, he eventually began studying theology and later law and history at George Washington University. Choosing to uproot his life by leaving for an unknown land without companionship or knowledge of English at such a young age attests to Lutz's determination to achieve something grander than what his hometown proffered.

For an impressionable young man who had seen scarcely more of the world than the Alps, the formative years he spent in the U.S. left an indelible mark and realization: the rhetorical skills to inspire large audiences required to pursue a calling as a pastor were lacking

[25] Erika Rosenberg, *Das Glashaus: Carl Lutz und die Rettung ungarischer Juden vor dem Holocaust* (Munich: Herbig, 2016), 16-18.

which unwittingly opened the path towards a career as a diplomat. It is almost as though this particular career path chose him rather than vice versa since his first experience of this profession occurred when he took a summer job at the Swiss legation in Washington. A post that was meant to last a couple weeks was eventually extended over a period of years to diplomatic positions in Philadelphia and St. Louis.[26]

It was his next post, however, that proved most decisive in determining his eventual stationing in Budapest. Despite having pleaded for a return to Europe for quite some time due to his deteriorating health, his wishes were not heeded, a theme that was to re-emerge in the succeeding years of his service. Instead, in 1934, he was sent half-way across the world to Jaffa in the British mandate of Palestine. While initially a diplomatic position of little significance, this all began to change with the Nüremberg Laws of 1935 since, as Lutz noted in a 1939 report to his superiors in Bern, Palestine was now the destination of choice for German Jews fleeing the National-Socialist regime.[27] With the outbreak of war in 1939, the importance of Lutz's position in Jaffa grew exponentially since, with the breaking of diplomatic relations between Britain and Nazi Germany, the latter requested that neutral Switzerland represent its interests in the middle-eastern state.

A brief authorial intrusion is merited at this point. When one state breaks off diplomatic relations with another, it is common practice to request a third state to become a foreign representative to protect its interests since it no longer has a diplomatic presence in the country. Neutral states have long been viewed as uniquely equipped to represent warring states, making Switzerland a logical choice for such a diplomatic role due to the fact that it was the first state to

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[26] Rosenberg, *Das Glashaus*, 24.
[27] Report cited in Rosenberg, *Das Glashaus,* 39.

be internationally recognized as holding the legal status of a permanent neutral.[28] Moreover, ever since this international recognition in 1815, Switzerland has amassed a wealth of experience representing the interests of states that have no diplomatic representation. For instance, during the First World War alone, Switzerland agreed to adopt this diplomatic position for twenty-five countries.[29] Since it will be referred to often in this thesis, it is important to note that serving such foreign interests is also classified as acting as a ‘’protecting power’ or as providing ‘good offices’.[30]

The acceptance of this position meant that, virtually from one day to the next, Lutz became responsible for an office of 30 diplomatic officers and for protecting the interests of 2,500 Germans in internment camps as well as 70,000 Jews holding German passports. The importance of the new task could not be ignored by the Swiss authorities who elevated Lutz to the status of a vice-consul, the title he was to hold in Budapest as well.[31]

In this position, his primary preoccupation became negotiating with both the British and German authorities about repatriating additional family members of Jews who had fled Germany for Palestine, no straightforward task since the British had imposed a strict quota of 75,000 immigrants to Palestine for the next five years.[32] It was in Jaffa that Lutz gained experience with immigration-documents which would prove crucial for his mission in Budapest. But his time spent in Palestine was not only essential for this reason but also because he developed professional relationships that would prove invaluable later on. Not only did he garner knowledge of providing good offices for belligerent states but the very nations he was

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[28] John Deyer and Neal Jesse, ‘Swiss Neutrality Examined: Model, Exception or Both?’, *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* 15 (2014), 62.
[29] Raymond Probst, ‘The “Good Offices” of Switzerland and Her Role as a Protecting Power’ in David Newsom (ed.), *Diplomacy Under a Foreign Flag: When Nations Break Relations* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1990), 25.
[30] https://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/fdfa/foreign-policy/human-rights/peace/switzerland-s-good-offices.html.
[31] Rosenberg, *Das Glashaus*, 41-43.
[32] Rosenberg, *Das Glashaus*, 38.

representing (first German and then British interests) were also the key entities he would later negotiate with in Budapest.[33] But perhaps most decisive for its impact on the diplomatic rescue mission in Budapest was Lutz's successful negotiations with British officials in Palestine that ensured that 2,500 German nationals were not deported as enemy aliens.[34] In this way, he built a foundation of trust that was to prove imperative in Budapest. Indeed, a letter Lutz received in June 1941 from Dr. Otto Eckhardt, who had been the German General Consul in Jaffa at the time, illustrates the bond he had been able to successfully forge with German officials[35]: "You [Lutz] were able to, under the most difficult of circumstances, execute your mandate with the utmost excellence and success."[36] Without such relationships, it is difficult to imagine how Lutz would have enjoyed the trust of the German authorities to allow him years later to have intimate meetings with high-ranking German officials, such as Adolf Eichmann, to negotiate the emigration of persecuted Jews out of Nazi-occupied Budapest.

When his diplomatic assignment in Jaffa came to an end after five years, Lutz served a brief stint in Berlin representing the interests of Yugoslavia before the Swiss authorities assigned him to the Hungarian capital.[37] From the outset, this was a mission of a different caliber. While previously Lutz had been stationed in peripheral positions as a low-ranking diplomatic officer, this time he was sent because he was considered the best man for the job in light of experiences amassed in Palestine; the assignment was, after all, once again to represent the interests of states that had broken off diplomatic relations with Hungary, which included the United States and Great Britain.[38] Thus, on 2 January 1942, Lutz arrived in Budapest as the head of the Department

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[33] Carl Lutz, 'Expose', Nachlass Carl Lutz (hereafter NL Carl Lutz) 349, Archiv für Zeitgeschichte (hereafter AfZ) ETH, p. 37.
[34] Leo Schelbert, *Historical Dictionary of Switzerland* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014), 232-233.
[35] Unless otherwise stated, all translations from German to English have been carried out by the author.
[36] Cited in Rosenberg, *Das Glashaus,* 44.
[37] Carl Lutz, 'Expose', NL Carl Lutz 349, AfZ ETH, p. 37.
[38] Tschuy, *Dangerous Diplomacy*, 7.

of Foreign Interests of the Swiss Legation tasked with an extensive mandate: protecting the interests of twelve anti-Axis states.[39]

For the first two years of his diplomatic task in Budapest, his professional and personal experiences were, in the words of Lutz himself, "relatively normal."[40] As head of the Protecting Power Department, he had the task of ensuring that any citizens of the states he was providing 'good offices' for were taken care of, that their rights and interests were protected while also keeping various embassy buildings under diplomatic protection.[41] Working from the headquarters of the American Embassy, Lutz preoccupied himself in the first weeks with representing the interests of 600 American and 300 British citizens, a task made more difficult because neither the U.S. nor the British government had given his department the autarky to make independent decisions in difficult instances. Lutz often voiced his frustration about bureaucratic barriers in times of urgency and felt that, if removed, the enhanced autonomy of diplomats like himself would have saved thousands of lives. Here, as later, Lutz found creative ways to overcome these obstacles. For instance, he recognized anyone as a U.S. citizen as long as they had a letter indicating that they had relatives across the Atlantic who were actively working to get them back home. To highlight just how significant these actions were, the words of a British citizen protected by Lutz are illuminating: "He (Lutz) not only afforded personal protection to the British and Americans, who looked to him as their only hope of salvation…"[42]After he successfully repatriated hundreds of individuals who would otherwise have been left to the harsh realities of war, Lutz's 'first' rescue effort was immediately

[39] Carl Lutz, 'Expose', NL Carl Lutz 349, AfZ ETH, p. 37.
[40] Carl Lutz, 'Aufzeichnungen über die Rettungsaktion im Kriegswinter 1944', 24 February 1949, 14325 Diplomatic Documents of Switzerland (hereafter DDS), CH-BAR E 2800 (-)1982/120 60, Swiss Federal Archives (hereafter SFA), pp.1-2. 2.
[41] Grossman, *Nur das* Gewissen, 15.
[42] Carl Lutz, 'Expose', NL Carl Lutz 349, AfZ ETH, 52.

celebrated in the Swiss press.[43] This, it will be seen, stands in stark contrast to the general silence of the contemporary press concerning his efforts to rescue Jews rather than western gentiles in the years to come.

Of utmost significance for the eventual Jewish rescue mission was the fact that, virtually from the beginning of Lutz's arrival in Budapest, he worked closely with the Palestine Office stationed in the capital city. Seeking to enable Jews to leave Hungary for Palestine, Lutz assisted in this operation by issuing emigration letters to thousands of adolescent Jews and children.[44] According to statistics from the Swiss Federal Archives, Lutz's efforts facilitated the emigration of up to 10,000 individuals up to March 1944.[45]

The relative stability that had defined his activities in Budapest was completely thrown on its head on March 19, 1944 when the Wehrmacht invaded and occupied Hungary.[46] While the fascist regent ruler Mikolos Horthy had aligned himself with Nazi Germany (in no small part in the hopes of revising the terms of the Treaty of Trianon)[47] and became an Axis Power in 1940, it had maintained a certain independence. Because Horthy had failed to have the Hungarian Jewry deported to Polish concentration camps combined with rumors of Hungary's possible abandonment of the Axis Powers, Adolf Hitler reacted by transforming Hungary into a German satellite state.[48] Horthy's intransigence had given rise to a unique situation in eastern Europe: unlike most of its neighbors, Hungary's Jewish population was left relatively intact (there were

[43] Ibid., 15-16.
[44] Tschuy, *Dangerous Diplomacy*, 7.
[45] Ibid., ix.
[46] Deborah S. Cornelius, *Hungary in World War II: Caught in the Cauldron* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011), 277.
[47] Ibid., 30.
[48] Saul Friedlander, *The Years of Extermination: Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1939-1945* (New York: HarperPerennial, 2007), 617.

still roughly one million Jews in Hungary in 1944).[49] The arrival of Adolf Eichmann and his *Sondereinsatzkommando Ungarn* sought to rectify this situation with immediate effect. Anti-Semitic laws were immediately implemented and, on May 14, the first full-scale deportations of rural Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz commenced, with between 12,000 and 14,000 individuals transported each day.[50] Meanwhile, up to a quarter million Jews in the city of Budapest were awaiting a similar fate.[51] It was against this backdrop that Lutz's mission to rescue the Jews of Budapest began.

Establishing the precise details of how the rescue mission came about and how it developed is no straightforward task principally because of the number of the sources currently available to the historian: two central sources are to be relied upon in order to piece together the series of events. The first is a diplomatic document written by the Swiss vice-consul and addressed to the head of the Swiss legation council in Bern in 1949, containing a report in which Lutz delineates in great detail the nature of his rescue mission.[52] In light of the fact that Lutz never published a memoir or any other extensive account of his efforts in Budapest, this nine-page report represents the most detailed description of his efforts from his own perspective available to scholars. Having access to the perspective and insights of the protagonist of this historical episode undoubtedly makes it one of the most invaluable pieces of historical evidence for this investigation. Without this key piece of evidence, it would be impossible to ascertain any concrete understanding of what his precise motivations and methods were in mitigating the effects of the Holocaust in Hungary.

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[49] Carl Lutz, 'Aufzeichnungen über die Rettungsaktion im Kreigwinter 1944', 24 February 1949, 14325 DDS, CH-BAR E 2800(-)1982/120 60, Swiss Federal Archives (SFA), pp. 1-2.
[50] Friedländer, *The Years of Extermination*, 615.
[51] Ibid., 619.
[52] Lutz, 'Aufzeichnungen über die Rettungsaktion im Kriegswinter 1944', 24 February 1949, 14325 DDS, CH-BAR E 2800(-)1982/120 60, SFA, pp. 1-11.

At the same time, the document poses significant problems. For one thing, the fact that the author of the source is also the very person whose efforts are being investigated here means that it must be read with utmost caution since such after-the-fact testimonials are often prone to self-serving descriptions. But the source is additionally problematic not only because it was composed five years after the events occurred but also because it commences with a letter in which Lutz requests that his future post be in a less demanding diplomatic position.[53] Did Lutz specifically tailor the narrative of his report in order to better his chances of acquiring a postbellum diplomatic post in Germany or Austria, as he expressed a desire for in the letter? Did he potentially engage in hyperbole when describing his experiences in Budapest in order to increase the level of sympathy amongst his superiors in order to enhance the chance that his wish be granted? The fact that an earlier report by Lutz in which he delineated his mission for his superiors in more concise fashion provides an analogous narrative of events suggests that these answers cannot be answered in the affirmative.[54] Nevertheless, the fact that he opted to write a second report with a specific agenda does mean that these questions cannot be ignored when assessing the source's value.

The second principal source available to the historian is an account of Lutz's rescue mission composed by the journalist Alexander Grossman stationed in Budapest who both actively and passively experienced the events he describes.[55] The author not only provides first-hand knowledge of events in excruciating detail and includes extensive transcriptions of several interviews he conducted with Lutz but also cities several sources providing insight into the

[53] Ibid.
[54] See Carl Lutz, 'Bericht der Schutzmachtabteilung der schweizerischen Gesandschaft, Budapest, über ihre Aktion zur Rettung der jüdischen Bevölkerung im Kriegswinter 1944, 1 July 1945, DDS 14327, FDA CH-BAR E 2800(-)1982/120 60, pp. 1-7.
[55] Rosenberg, *Das Glashaus*, 63.

perspectives of officials in Bern and German leaders in Hungary, making it invaluable to this investigation. At the same time, the source also poses potential pitfalls that must not be ignored. Foremost amongst these is the fact that the account can effectively be regarded as a panegyric to Lutz since the author aims criticism at the vice-consul's superiors but refrains from including any critical observations about Lutz. This is undoubtedly due to the fact that the author was a close collaborator of Lutz in Budapest and a friend in later life.[56] While the criticism of Swiss officials is in fact of value for this investigation, the overwhelmingly positive portrayal of Lutz and his mission raises questions about the objectivity of these accounts, making it difficult to establish with absolute certainty the details of the rescue operation. This issue will be overcome primarily by closely comparing the narrative of events provided by both accounts in order to differentiate between facts and assertions that are more likely to be of sycophantic origin.

The actual organizational basis of the diplomatic rescue mission began only after the German occupation of Hungary, which Lutz himself maintained was "very late."[57] Despite being in Budapest since 1942 and being in close contact with the Palestine Office, he was only approached by Moshe Krausz, its director, in March 1944 about the idea of setting up a department for Jewish emigration to Palestine. Hence the organizational basis of the mission only came into motion when the deportations in the provinces were already underway.[58] Lutz was determined to provide assistance for all Hungarian Jews wanting to emigrate to Palestine and who were in possession of an emigration certificate. But first he had to find a way to enable his own participation; operating in such a capacity was outside his assigned mandate and he had no authorization from the Swiss authorities, or states whose interests he was representing, to

[56] Rosenberg, *Das Glashaus*, 158.
[57] Grossman, *Nur das Gewissen*, 54.
[58] Ibid.

engage in such a task. As many times thereafter, he found a way to operate in a legal gray zone: since Palestine was a British mandate and the Jews he was to assist were all vying to emigrate to that state, he could maintain that he was nominally serving British interests.[59] His proven ability to negate bureaucratic obstacles was one of the leading reasons why Lutz's efforts were remarkably successful in comparison to rescue attempts by other humanitarians.

For several weeks, Lutz worked to engage himself in various negotiations on behalf of all Jews who desired to emigrate to Palestine. He was swiftly able to arrange a meeting with Dr. Edmund Veesenmeyer, the German ambassador to Hungary, because he had received instructions from Berlin to view Lutz as a sympathetic ally due to his former position in Palestine where he had represented German interests.[60] Since the ambassador could not make a final decision, he arranged a meeting between Lutz and Adolf Eichmann, a key organizational figure in the execution of the Holocaust. Lutz now requested that the German authorities allow up to 8,000 Hungarian Jews, who were in possession of an emigration certificate for Palestine, to be allowed to leave Hungary in spite of the travel restrictions. Somewhat surprisingly, Eichmann showed himself open to this possibility and assured Lutz that he would likely receive the affirmation from his superiors.[61] Lutz then made his way to the Hungary's foreign ministry's headquarters where he was told that they too would accept this proposal if the emigrants could provide proof that they had been afforded official sponsorship from the Swiss embassy.[62] Thus

[59] Lutz, 'Aufzeichnungen über die Rettungsaktion im Kriegswinter 1944', 24 February 1949, 14325 DDS, CH-BAR E 2800(-)1982/120 60, SFA p. 2.
[60] Grossman, *Nur das Gewissen*, 75.
[61] Alexander Grossman, 'Generalkonsul Lutz – zum 75. Geburstag', 1970, NL Alexander Grossman 86, AfZ ETH, p. 57.
[62] Rosenberg, *Das Glashaus*, 114.

both the German and Hungarian authorities consented to allow "a contingent of 5,000 units" to be placed under Swiss protection for eventual emigration.[63]

Now that authority had been granted, the key problem remained to put a plan for evacuation into practice. This was made especially difficult by the fact that while Lutz had received permission to rescue at least a proportion of the Jews of Budapest from his immediate superior (the Swiss ambassador Maximilian Jaeger), he was working without the knowledge or consent of the Swiss Federal Council in Bern.[64] Lutz then came up with an ingenious solution to overcome this obstacle: in light of the fact that he had not been granted the authority to issue individual passports, he created 'collective passports' and 'protective letters' instead. Lutz, along with hundreds of aides from Zionist organizations in Budapest, worked nights to create these collective passports, each of which contained the names and photographs of one thousand Jewish individuals who had been spared from mass deportations and were in possession of a Palestinian emigration certificate.[65] Once named on a collective passport, people were issued with a protective letter that bore the official stamp of the Swiss embassy.[66] This letter effectively placed them under Swiss diplomatic protection to ensure that they were not deported or exploited as labor for the German war effort until they could leave Hungary for the 'Holy Land'.[67]

The news of Lutz's efforts spread rapidly amongst the Jewish population of Budapest and resulted in enormous crowds amassing on the square before his headquarters desperate to the point that they almost tore the clothes off of his back as he attempted to enter the building.[68]

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[63] Lutz, 'Aufzeichnungen über die Rettungsaktion im Kriegswinter 1944', 24 February 1949, 14325 DDS, CH-BAR E 2800(-)1982/120 60, SFA, p. 3.
[64] Lutz, 'Aufzeichnungen über die Rettungsaktion im Kriegswinter 1944', 24 February 1949, 14325 DDS, CH-BAR E 2800(-)1982/120 60, SFA, pp. 2-4.
[65] Ibid., 4.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Rosenberg, *Das Glashaus*, 112.
[68] Lutz, 'Aufzeichnungen über die Rettungsaktion im Kriegswinter 1944', 24 February 1949, 14325 DDS, CH-BAR E 2800(-)1982/120 60, SFA, p. 5; See figure 2 in the Appendix.

Such poignant scenes, along with a secret meeting with the German Legation Councilor Gerhardt Feine, seem to have been instrumental in inducing Lutz to enhance the size of his rescue efforts. It must be remembered that when Nazi deportations occurred, the perpetrators aimed for a minimum of public attention.[69] This meant that, despite rumors of the bestiality of the SS, Lutz initially only had a vague idea of what was occurring in the rest of Hungary and how Berlin intended to deal with 'the Jewish question.' His eyes opened when Feine, with whom Lutz had developed a close relationship, revealed highly classified documents, including excerpts of the decisions made at the Wannsee conference. As Lutz observed: "Had I not read Feine's document with my own eyes, had I not heard Feine's comments with my own ears, I would have refused to believe what was being said about the egregious German regime."[70] Despite making the error of initially being too trusting of the promises of Nazi representatives in Budapest, Lutz again showed his ingenuity: once he saw the true face of Nazi policy towards the Jews, he began interpreting the 5,000 "units" the Germans had agreed to allow to emigrate as designating families rather than individuals thus allowing him to issue up to 45,000 protection letters.[71]

Although there were large numbers of Jews in possession of Swiss protection letters (as well as forged protection letters made by Zionist organizations), the question still remained how best to ensure their long-term survival since, once Horthy had temporarily brought a halt to all deportations in the provinces in July, the Germans consequently refused to allow any Palestinian emigration unless the deportations eastwards continued.[72] This question became all the more imperative in October when a military coup d'état overthrew Horthy's government and brought

[69] Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe 1933-1945* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1993), 215.
[70] Cited in Rosenberg, *Das Glashaus*, 104.
[71] Lutz, 'Aufzeichnungen über die Rettungsaktion im Kriegswinter 1944', 24 February 1949, 14325 DDS, CH-BAR E 2800(-)1982/120 60, SFA, p. 5.
[72] Rosenberg, *Das Glashaus*, 119.

the Hungarian extreme right-wing Arrow-Cross party to power.[73] Lutz once more undertook exhaustive negotiations to safeguard that further deportations were delayed until the new regime eventually came to recognize the legality of the Swiss diplomatic documents.[74] With the incremental realization that Jewish emigration was becoming increasingly untenable (the new Hungarian regime was only willing to allow further emigrations if they were diplomatically recognized as a state by Switzerland),[75] the priority was to save as many of the remaining Jews as possible from deportation and forced labor, which at this late hour only the protective letters could ensure.[76] The letters became increasingly similar to the functions afforded by actual Swiss passports (indeed, when reading such letters it purposely created the impression that the Jew under protection was a Swiss national) and being in possession of such documents became ever more the difference between life and death.[77]

As several eyewitness accounts attest, on multiple occasions these letters saved people from certain death when brought to the Danube to be executed were saved because they were in possession of a Swiss protective letter.[78] On several occasions, Lutz himself drove to the location of the forced marches to bring as many Jews as he could under protection by presenting protective papers. The effectiveness of these documents is attested by a diplomatic document sent from the head of the German police in Budapest to the foreign ministry in Berlin. It states that the end result of such interventions by members of the Swiss legation during 'death marches' meant that by the end of the day "the majority of those being marched had

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[73] Robert Rozett, 'International Intervention: The Role of Diplomats in Attempts to Rescue Jews in Hungary' in Randolph H. Braham (ed.), *The Nazis' Last Victims: The Holocaust In Hungary* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998), 144.
[74] J. Szatmari, 'Auszeichnungen Aus Ungarns Dunkle Tagen', NL Carl Lutz, AfZ ETH, p.12.
[75] Louis-Edouard Roulet and Philippe Marguerat (eds.), *Diplomatic Documents of Switzerland*, Vol. 15, doc. 292.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Lutz, 'Bericht der Schutzmachtabteilung der schweizerischen Gesandschaft, Budapest, 1 July 1945, 14327 DDS, CH-BAR E 2800(-)1982/120 60, SFA, p.1.
[78] Hirschi, *Under Swiss Protection*, 100.

disappeared."[79] In this sense, it is justifiable to call these letters, as Lutz himself once referred to them, as no less than life-saving documents.[80]

The protective letters were also essential because they granted access to the more than 74 safe houses that Lutz placed under diplomatic protection.[81] Thousands of Jews were given shelter there and survived in these extraterritorial entities until the Russian liberation of Budapest in January 1945. The most famous example of such a shelter was the so-called Glass House. Already in July, Lutz had ensured that this building came under Swiss diplomatic protection to be used as the headquarters of the 'Emigration Department of the Swiss Legation' (but also as the headquarters of Palestinian Office). But it became much more than an office. Already in the first days after coming under Swiss protection, more than 2,000 Jews flocked to the Glass House and found refuge there.[82] In the aftermath of the right-wing coup, this number grew to roughly 3,000 individuals who lived out the war, making it the building that saved the largest number of Hungarian Jews.[83]

Once again, Lutz himself was directly involved in this outcome. With Budapest increasingly turning into a fully-fledged war zone with the arrival of Russian forces, all diplomatic staff were requested to leave the city. An ally in the German embassy, however, informed Lutz that he had ordered the remaining German and Hungarian forces to not enter Swiss safe-houses as long as a member of the Swiss delegation was present.[84] Thus, Lutz was faced with a difficult decision: abandon Budapest for his own safety or remain in the interest of

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[79] NL Alexander Grossman 86, AfZ ETH, p.168.
[80] Lutz, 'Bericht der Schutzmachtabteilung der schweizerischen Gesandschaft, Budapest, 1945, 14327 DDS, CH-BAR E 2800(-)1982/120 60, SFA, p.1.
[81] Ibid., p. 2.
[82] Rosenberg, *Das Glashaus*, 150.
[83] Anges Hirschi and Charlotte Schallie: *Under Swiss Protection: Jewish Eyewitness Accounts From Wartime Budapest* (Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2017) 15.
[84] Lutz, 'Aufzeichnungen über die Rettungsaktion im Kriegswinter 1944', 24 February 1949, 14325 DDS, CH-BAR E 2800(-)1982/120 60, SFA, p.8.

countless Jewish individuals. By choosing the latter, Lutz, at great risk to his own life (he and his wife were threatened at gun-point and came close to being killed by Russian bombings on several occasions), remained in the cellar of the British delegation in grueling circumstances until February 1945 simply to ensure that the thousands of Jews residing in the Swiss safe-houses were spared.[85] The Swiss rescuer's actions were aptly characterized by the words of one survivor: "...his life mattered to him less than saving the lives of others."[86]

Through all these difficulties and obstacles, it was no doubt Lutz's early upbringing and his consequent inalienable trust in "a higher power" that inspired him to keep toiling on behalf of people whose lives were mortally threatened.[87] In the end, his rescue mission speaks for itself: of roughly a quarter million Jews residing in Budapest at the time, Lutz has been credited with rescuing between 40,000 and 50,000 (the precise numbers are very difficult to estimate and tend oscillate; but what remains important and indisputable is that he saved tens of thousands of lives).[88] While the success of this mission depended on hundreds of collaborators, without Lutz's leadership this operation would not have been as successful and the Holocaust in Hungary would have had an even higher death toll. To illustrate just how successful Lutz's mission was and to highlight how surprising it is that he is far less well known than other rescuers, it is pertinent to briefly compare his with other rescue missions.

Being Lutz's Swedish collaborator in Budapest, Raul Wallenberg is perhaps the most insightful comparison. In much of Holocaust literature, Wallenberg is credited with initiating protective letters and it is often his name that is remembered when historians discuss Holocaust

[85] 'Unvollständiges Tagebuch von Carl Lutz von Weihnachten 1944 bis zum 12. Februar 1945', Lutz, Carl, 1939-1948, B.24.15, SFA, p.7.
[86] Hirschi, *Under Swiss Protection*, 353.
[87] Lutz, 'Aufzeichnungen über die Rettungsaktion im Kriegswinter 1944', 24 February 1949, 14325 DDS, CH-BAR E 2800(-)1982/120 60, SFA, p.5.
[88] See Randolph L. Braham, 'Rettungsaktionen: Mythos und Realität' in Brigitte Mihok (ed.), *Ungarn und der Holocaust. Kollaboration, Rettung und Trauma (*Berlin: Metropol, 2006), 15–40.

rescue missions in Hungary.[89] And yet, Wallenberg only arrived in Budapest when Lutz's rescue operation was already well underway and it was the Swedish diplomat who adopted his Swiss colleague's methods by issuing protective letters from his own delegation to save Jews in Budapest. In contrast to Lutz, he is generally estimated to have saved between 4,000 and 35,000 Jews.[90] Oskar Schindler, likely the most famous of these 'good Samaritans', has been estimated to have saved just over a thousand Jewish lives.[91]

Why was Carl Lutz able to save so many more lives than other heroic humanitarians? Arriving at a viable answer certainly involves a consideration of a series of factors. Of central importance is undoubtedly the fact that Lutz recognized that bypassing bureaucratic barriers was essential for saving as many lives as possible which became his overwhelming priority and for which he effectively stopped at nothing: when he was once informed in the middle of the night that a group of incarcerated Jews were at risk of dying from suffocation, he arrived at the spot and managed to save a number of Jews who were not under his direct protection.[92] Thus, although his diplomatic status afforded a necessary degree of protection to carry out such acts, he was not a 'traditional' diplomatic rescuer who solely saved persecuted individuals through paperwork alone but flexibly adopted whatever role was deemed necessary to save lives.

Lutz was also exceptional for a different reason, namely his paradoxical status of being known and unknown simultaneously. In regard to the former, by having been in Budapest longer than Wallenberg, he had more time to establish close connections with Zionist organizations without whose collaboration he could not have operated effectively. Moreover, his past

[89] See for instance John Bierman, *Righteous Gentile: The Story of Raoul Wallenberg, Missing Hero of the Holocaust* (London: Penguin Books, 1996)
[90] https://www.britannica.com/biography/Raoul-Wallenberg.
[91] https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/oskar-schindler.
[92] Lutz, 'Aufzeichnungen über die Rettungsaktion im Kriegswinter 1944', 24 February 1949, 14325 DDS, CH-BAR E 2800(-)1982/120 60, SFA, p.8.

diplomatic activity had made him known and trusted, a condition Wallenberg could not rely upon. At the same time, however, due to the fact that Lutz was not the head of the Swiss legation but in a less high-profile diplomatic role also proved significant since he could operate more discretely, a crucial component for such clandestine rescue operations. The dual nature of his diplomatic identity separates Lutz from other rescuers, including his closest counterpart Wallenberg, and contributed heavily to making him an exceptional rescuer of the Holocaust.

Such comparisons are not meant in any way to detract from the value of other missions or to posit that Lutz's work was more important or indeed that any operation's success can be measured solely by looking at statistics – rather, it is once more to reiterate a point that cannot be stressed enough: although Lutz spearheaded the most extensive civilian rescue mission Holocaust history, he remains by far the least known. How can this be explained? Perhaps the words of Robi Farbi, a Hungarian Jew who assisted with the operation, can serve not only as a reminder that Lutz remained a part of many survivors' individual memories but also, particularly what he says near the end of the quotation, to introduce a central factor to be examined in the next chapter to explain the consul's forgotten legacy:

> ...Carl Lutz is one of the basic examples of human goodness from the twentieth century... Later in Switzerland, Carl Lutz was told that what he did was wrong. He was found guilty for being good, for answering the call of his conscience in the spirit of a free Swiss thinker, saving the freedom of thousands of people...[93]

Now we shall turn to the role of the government in Bern to examine how political memory influenced shaped Carl Lutz's conspicuous absence from Swiss collective memories.

[93] Cited in Hirschi, *Under Swiss Protection*, 64.

Chapter II

The Political Face of Memory: Lutz and The Swiss Government

Upon arrival back in Switzerland on 5 May 1945, Lutz and his wife were expecting, at the very least, to find a representative from the Swiss foreign ministry at the airport to welcome them home after a tumultuous three years in Budapest. But despite having distinguished himself as the savior of thousands of Hungarian lives, no political figure was there to receive them; instead, the first words Lutz and his wife heard on Swiss soil were: "Do you have any goods to declare?"[94]

This episode foreshadows the type of treatment that Lutz was to receive from his government in response to his Hungarian mission. Over the course of his mission in Budapest, Lutz's relationship with his direct superiors in the Swiss foreign office progressively worsened. As Lutz exclaimed on several occasions while in Budapest: "The government has once again left me twisting in the wind."[95] Nevertheless, he certainly did not anticipate the treatment that he was about to be subjected to. Only his native Walzenhausen recognized Lutz as an honorary citizen in 1963 while the federal government got around to officially honoring his efforts in 2018, seventy-three years after the conclusion of the consul's mission.[96]

A key question arises: how best to characterize this sort of treatment and what factors motivated the government to behave in this way? Was the absence of recognition simply the

[94] 'Haben Sie Etwas zu Verzollen?', *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 3 March 1972, 19.
[95] Letter Carl Lutz to Legationsrad Kohli, 10 December 1944, 14326 DDS, CH-BAR E 2800(-)1982/120 60, SFA.
[96] https://www.thelocal.ch/20180213/carl-lutz-swiss-schindler-who-saved-62000-jews-honoured-with-room-in-federal-palace.

result of inadvertent neglect or was it more deliberate in nature? In order to come to grips with how and why Bern handled the diplomat in this manner, it is imperative to understand the nature of the political culture of post-war Switzerland. To do so, a brief consideration of Switzerland's role in the Second World War is necessary since the immediate post-war period was profoundly shaped by these events.

From the summer of 1940 to autumn 1944, Switzerland was in the unenviable position of being completely surrounded by Nazi Germany and its allies.[97] Since its overriding priority was to safeguard national survival, one way Switzerland went about doing so was by establishing bilateral trade relations with Germany.[98] Yet it was not only in the economic sphere that Switzerland adopted a collaborative strategy with its northern neighbor: its refugee policy was also amended to the disadvantage of persecuted Jews seeking safe-haven. At the behest of Swiss officials, Germany added a 'J' to passports belonging to Jewish individuals so as to allow Swiss immigration officials to distinguish between 'Aryan' visitors and persecuted Jews, enabling them to refuse entry to the latter.[99] This policy culminated with the Swiss government's decision in August 1942 that the 8,000 existing refugees had ensured that the "boat was full" and that Switzerland would therefore turn any away additional refugees seeking asylum.[100]

As a result of such policies, Switzerland came under increasingly negative international scrutiny in the immediate aftermath of the war. Initial reports about Switzerland's close economic relations with Nazi Germany, its banks purchasing looted gold during the war and its 'selective' refugee policy raised questions about Switzerland's complicity in the destruction of

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[97] Detlev F. Vagts, 'Switzerland, International Law and World War II', *The American Journal of International Law* 91 (1997), 469.
[98] Alan Cowell, 'Dispatch: Switzerland's Wartime Bloody Money', *Foreign Policy* 107 (1997), 132.
[99] Jaques Picard, *Die Schweiz und die Juden 1933-1945: Schweizerischer Antisemitismus, jüdische Abwehr und internationale Migrations- und Flüchtlingspolitik* (Zurich: Chronos, 1994).
[100] Dennis F. Mahoney, 'Personalizing the Holocaust: "Das Boot Ist Voll"', *Modern Language Studies* 19 (1989), 4.

European Jewry. Although these particular issues were provisionally settled through the 'Washington Agreement' of 1946 where Switzerland agreed to pay 250 million francs to the Allied powers as punishment, the agreement was far from the end of the matter, as we shall see later. More significant in terms of Switzerland's immediate post-war policy was the fact that her reputation had been tarnished as a result. In the aftermath of a war which included genocide, the "moral standing of neutrals" suffered since it was deemed unethical to have been a bystander during a war with such horrendous atrocities.[101] A tarnished reputation meant that the Swiss government's leading post-war priority was to rehabilitate its international standing.

Bern initially believed that the best way to refashion its image was to deflect focus from pejorative details of its war policies by constructing an embellished narrative that centered on internal resistance and humanitarian activity.[102] Opting not to publish a 'White Paper' containing documents pertaining to Switzerland's wartime foreign policy, it was instead decided that a historian commissioned by the Federal Council would write a series of essays emphasizing Switzerland's humanitarian efforts during the war, an approach which has been described by the Swiss historian Peter Hug as "nationally exaggerated humanitarian activities."[103]

Given that humanitarian aid was highlighted as a means to rectify Switzerland's tarnished international image, one might rightfully ponder why Lutz's mission was not invoked for this purpose? Could an official blessing of his rescue mission not have served in rehabilitating Switzerland? After all, this was one of the main bright spots of Switzerland's role in the Second World War since the largest civilian rescue mission of the period was spearheaded by a Swiss diplomat playing a leading role in hindering the Nazis' complete execution of the 'final solution'

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[101] Vagts, 'Switzerland, International Law and World War II', 466.
[102] Sasha Zala, 'Governmental Malaise with History: From the White Paper to the Bonjour Report' in Georg Kreis (ed.), *Switzerland and the Second World War* (London: Routledge, 2000), 315.
[103] Cited in ibid.

in Hungary. The fact that government officials chose to wholly neglect a mission that could very well have advanced the country's interest makes unearthing the Swiss government's motives for overlooking Lutz's efforts all the more intriguing.

It is important to note that the incentive to publish a selective report on Switzerland's wartime activities was driven not only by the broader aim of rehabilitating its reputation but also served a more immediate purpose: to placate the Allies in the hopes of being admitted to the United Nations.[104] When this goal failed to bear fruit, officials in Bern adopted an even more uncompromising policy towards enumerating events of the past. Turning over a new leaf was believed to be best achieved by discouraging renewed public attention to its role in World War II since this might have undermined the officially sanctioned collective memory of war the state had carefully forged up to 1948. One of the principal ways in which the government sought to control the narrative of the past was by restricting access to archives. Indeed, until the mid-1970s, the government succeeded in obstructing independent scholars from writing on Switzerland's wartime polices; access to archival sources was solely granted to historians specifically selected by the government.[105] Although these polices were not devised with Lutz's mission specifically in mind, such maneuvering certainly helped ensure the consul's neglect at the hands of researchers and the wider public.

Lutz himself still proved determined to see his mission recognized. After several weeks in hospital to mitigate both the physical and mental scars accumulated in Budapest, Lutz actively sought out a meeting with his superiors at the foreign office in order to debrief them on the nature of his mission. Yet Max Petitpierre, the new foreign minister with whom he was seeking to meet, was busy with the diplomatic challenges invoked above. It was, after all, Petitpierre who

[104] Zala, 'Governmental Malaise with History', 316.
[105] Ibid., 312.

was spearheading the policy of refashioning Switzerland's foreign policy towards 'image rehabilitation.'[106] With a foreign office concerned with negotiating the Washington Agreement and determined to leave the past behind, Lutz was unable to find an audience. Thus the immediate post-war realignment of Switzerland's foreign policy helps explain much of the initial neglect he was exposed to.

But Switzerland's post-war 'rebranding' remains far from a sufficient explanation to clarify why Lutz's efforts were not recognized by his government. After all, many formerly belligerent European states, at the forefront of which was Germany, also needed to adapt themselves to an emerging bipolar world order where leaving the details of the past behind was deemed crucial to ensure national unity and international integration. Indeed, in the first decade and a half after the war, the Federal Republic of Germany was recalcitrant towards expending energy on scrutinizing the Third Reich's policies.[107] And yet this did not stop the West German state from awarding Lutz the Cross of Honor of the Order of Merit for his service in Budapest.[108]

This was far from the only award bestowed upon him by foreign states: as discussed earlier, in 1965 Israel awarded him the greatest honor for gentiles who saved Jews from the Holocaust and additionally named a street after him; in May 1948, the twelve states whose interests had come under the auspices of Lutz's department in Budapest expressed their gratitude, with the United States even awarding him the prestigious Liberty Bell for extraordinary courage; in 2004, George Washington University posthumously awarded him a medal of honor; at the conclusion of the war, the Hungarian National Council directed an

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[106] Alois Rikilin et al. (eds.), *Neues Handbuch der Schweizerischen Aussenpolitik* (Bern: Haupt, 1992), 61.
[107] Jeffrey Herf, 'The Emergence and Legacies of Divided Memory: Germany and the Holocaust Since 1945' in Jan-Werner Müller (ed.), *Memory and Power in Post-War Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 189.
[108] Meir Wagner and Moshe Meisels, *The Righteous of Switzerland: Heroes of the Holocaust* (Hoboken: Ktav, 2001), 189.

investigation into the efforts of the Swiss legation in Budapest and consequently published a white paper outlining how its members had initiated a rescue operation that saved thousands of lives and awarded Lutz a medal; in 1990, after the fall of communism, a statue in honor of Carl Lutz was erected where the Jewish ghetto in Budapest had stood, conveying an angel (representing Lutz) coming to the aid of a man in need; in 2005, the Carl Lutz foundation created a memorial room to him in the 'Glass House' in the Hungarian capital.[109]

But while Lutz received extensive international recognition, his native country's government continued to ignore him. This can partly be explained by the fact that honoring a foreign hero rarely has negative consequences. In contrast, for Swiss officials, there were potential pitfalls to honoring him. After all, the mission could not be directly credited to the Swiss government since the consul was not working for the Swiss legation but representing foreign interests and, most problematically from the government's perspective, he had executed a mission without being granted authorization to carry out such a task.

Lutz was well aware that he would have to justify his unofficial activities and consequently wrote an extensive report on the journey home which he promptly sent to the foreign office upon arrival in Switzerland. But the report remained unread.[110] For three years Lutz waited for a reply; when it was still not forthcoming, he sent a copy to the head of the Swiss Justice Department, Dr. Heinrich Rothmund, in May 1948. Some days later he received the first official answer from a member of the Swiss government: "I can only tell you how thankful we have to be for the way and manner in which you conducted your operation in Budapest during the war for the persecuted victims of the Nazi regime. In this way you were able to ensure the

[109] Wagner and Meisels, *The Righteous of Switzerland*, 188-189.
[110] Grossman, *Nur das Gewissen*, 190.

survival of numerous human beings."[111] These two sentences of gratitude, which did not stem from the federal council itself, is the sum total of the recognition he ever received from his home country at this time: not a public letter thanking him on behalf of the government but rather a private correspondence which was not self-initiated but in reply to Lutz's repeated inquiries. Moreover, the bulk of the letter took on a defensive tone and was devoted to justifying Switzerland's refugee policy during the war. As head of the justice department, it had been the insistence of the letter's author that all Jewish passports be marked with a 'J.'[112] Thus, in an ironic turn of events, the very man who had done most to ensure that Jews were not granted asylum in Switzerland and who had come under severe public criticism after the war for his xenophobic policies was the first high-ranking member of the Swiss government to express gratitude to the individual who had done more than any other Swiss to safeguard Jewish lives. Years of governmental neglect of this nature goes a long way in explaining why Lutz and his service rescue operation have remained outside the public eye and why his service has largely been forgotten.

Nevertheless, it would be misleading to simply characterize the government's treatment of Lutz as inadvertent neglect since he was not completely ignored. This is illustrated most strikingly by the fact that, although he could not arrange a meeting with his superiors and no one read his mission report, the Swiss authorities nevertheless ordered him before a judge tasked with undertaking a judicial investigation of the Swiss legation's activities in Hungary. Since it was already evident that Lutz had failed to strictly adhere to their diplomatic mandates, the purpose of this investigation was likely aimed at finding an appropriate punishment for such nonconformist behavior. Luckily for Lutz, the judge did not see eye-to-eye with Swiss political

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[111] Cited in Grossman, *Nur das Gewissen*, 191.
[112] Ibid., 230.

leaders. Having realized that, at great personal risk, the diplomat had saved thousands of innocent Jewish lives, the judge proceeded to severely criticize the government for calling an investigation in the first place and maintained that it was an insult to have heroic men like him questioned for wrongdoing.[113] The judge's stinging rebuke ensured that leaders in Bern did consequently refrain from overtly punishing Lutz; yet no apology for the accusation was ever issued and no reappraisal of Lutz's mission ordered.[114]

Even more suggestive that there was a strong element of intentional indifference towards Lutz can be found in a letter written by the Swiss foreign ministry in 1956. In regards to Lutz's rescue mission having used protective passes it asserted: "It [the foreign ministry] has no knowledge of any documents of this nature."[115] This is a falsehood since, as discussed earlier, Lutz had not only sent details of his mission to the foreign office but had also attached two collective passes as exemplars. That the foreign ministry did indeed have knowledge of this report and the passes is underscored by another foreign ministry letter to Lutz in 1949 in which they informed him that they would not be returning the two collective passes he had sent them.[116] Such misleading statements cannot simply be classified as inadvertent neglect but rather as a deliberate attempt to obfuscate matters by feigning ignorance of a mission they were certainly well aware of.

Such active neglect in the immediate years after the war was crucial since it created a layer of silence which subsequently perpetuated ignorance of his deeds in the years to follow. In 1957, the Federal Council tasked the jurist and economist Professor Carl Ludwig with writing a report on Switzerland's refugee policies from 1933 to the present day. Lutz and his rescue

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113 Tschuy, *Dangerous Diplomacy*, 261.
114 Ibid.
115 Cited in Grossman, Nur Das Gewissen, 193.
116 Printed in Grossman, *Nur das Gewissen*, 194.

mission did not receive a single mention in the entire report. As correspondence between Lutz and Ludwig elucidates, this omission was not a deliberate decision on the part of the professor. The latter states that he "sincerely regrets" not being able to include Lutz's "brave and invaluable activity", the reason being that he had no prior knowledge of it and that no one in Bern had ever alluded to it.[117] Here, then, is a clear example of how refusing to acknowledge the rescue mission by Swiss authorities hindered the dissemination of this historical episode and fatally impacted the knowledge thereof, even amongst Swiss academics.

Ludwig promised to call attention to Lutz's actions at the national council meeting where refugee issues were to be discussed, certain that knowledge of the mission would be of interest since it demonstrated the positive influence of Swiss diplomacy on the fate of Hungarian Jews. And indeed, at the meeting of the national council in March 1958, the Federal Councilor Dr. Markus Feldmann ended his talk by noting: "Let me now bring your attention to a further document that has heretofore been little known", referring to Lutz's Budapest report; he then read aloud a portion of the report to indicate what the consul had achieved in Budapest.[118] The fact that an individual who became a member of the federal council only seven years after the war had no prior knowledge of this mission vividly illustrates how the initial silence surrounding his mission ensured that Lutz's contributions had all but been forgotten at the highest governmental levels in Switzerland within a decade after the end of the Second World War.

Notwithstanding the active neglect from his own government, international events once again ensured that he was not fully forgotten outside Switzerland. The Eichmann Trial in 1961 not only reinvigorated public and academic interest in the Holocaust but, somewhat

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[117] Letter from Dr. Carl Ludwig to Carl Lutz, 3 March 1959, NL Carl Lutz 349, AfZ ETH, p. 54.
[118] Grossman, *Nur das Gewissen*, 223.

unexpectedly, directly impacted Lutz.[119] In light of the fact that Lutz had held two meetings with Eichmann in Budapest, the latter chose to call Lutz as a possible defense witness.[120] The reason appears to be that the largest rescue operation of the Holocaust had occurred in Budapest whilst Eichmann was in charge; consequently, the defense believed that it could be used to argue that Eichmann had enabled the rescue mission since it had occurred under his watch.[121] Upon receiving a formal request from Eichmann's lawyer, Lutz wrote to the foreign ministry asking whether he would in fact be allowed to participate in the trial in Jerusalem. Somewhat unsurprisingly, foreign minister Petitpierre replied that Lutz's active involvement at the trial would be "unwelcome" but that a written report answering specific questions would be allowed as long as it were passed to the federal council for vetting first.[122]

Despite his poor health, Lutz recognized that his participation at such a celebrated trial represented an opportunity to acquire world-wide recognition for his mission and to underscore its successful nature even in the challenging circumstances of dealing with notorious individuals like Eichmann.[123] And, as newspapers attest, when his connection with Eichmann became public knowledge, there was a spike in articles on Lutz and his Hungarian mission.[124] Had Lutz testified in person at a trial of such extensive international renown, no doubt his rescue mission would have gained far greater public and academic currency. Preventing Lutz from engaging actively in such a trial was likely motivated by concerns about Switzerland's public image – testifying on behalf of a prominent Nazi might very well have reinvigorated questions about Switzerland's ties with Hitlerite Germany. However, seeing that their reply made explicit that any report by Lutz

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[119] 'Nobelpreis damit zusammenhängende Korrespondenz mit Bundesrat Wahlen, Muggli, Prof. Dr. Ludwig, Prof. Dr. Tier,' NL Carl Lutz 349, AfZ ETH, p. 48.
[120] Letter from Dr. R. Servatius to Carl Lutz, 29 March 1961, NL Carl Lutz 349, AfZ ETH, p. 62.
[121] Letter from Franz Strabler to Dr. R. Servatius, 7 June 1961, NL Carl Lutz 349, AfZ ETH, p. 73.
[122] Letter from Max Petitpierre to Carl Lutz, 22 April 1961, NL Carl Lutz 349, AfZ ETH, 69.
[123] Letter from Prof. Dr. Carl Ludwig to Carl Lutz, 15 April 1961, NL Carl Lutz 349, AfZ ETH, p. 57.
[124] 'Der Todesmarsch ungarischer Juden, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung,* 2 June 1961.

needed to be first vetted by the foreign office indicates that a key consideration was also to safeguard that details of Lutz's mission were not to be placed in the spotlight in unadulterated form.

How can the government's active hinderance of Lutz be explained? The fact that the bulk of sources written from the perspective of the government are currently classified makes answering this question exceedingly difficult. Nevertheless, one available document is of immense value in providing insight that allows for a preliminary answer to this intriguing question. As a letter written by the Swiss foreign office to Lutz in 1949 makes evident, it was the manner in which the rescue mission was executed that was of central concern to the government. The missive maintains that Lutz had been tasked solely with representing the interests of countries that had broken off diplomatic relations with Hungary and that issuing Swiss collective passes to non-Swiss citizens had gone beyond that mandate. The letter thus openly accuses Lutz of having "exceeded his authority" *("Kompetenzüberschreitung")* during his mission in Budapest.[125] After all, he had not only executed his operation without receiving authorization from Bern, but blatantly ignored orders from the federal government to slow down his rescue attempts.[126]And yet, without going beyond his mandate, the mission would have likely proven unsuccessful since, as discussed earlier, a key reason that enabled Lutz's rescue mission to operate effectively was that he, unlike other rescuers, prioritized saving lives over following the letter of the law. Even so, the government proved uncompromisingly harsh and unwilling to condone any notion of rule-breaking, no matter the circumstances involved.

As the foreign office letter makes evident, the legality of the consul's decisions appear to have been the single issue worth considering in terms of what Lutz had achieved in Budapest;

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[125] Letter printed in Grossman, *Nur das Gewissen*, 194.
[126] Tschuy, *Dangerous Diplomacy*, 260.

not a single word was devoted to praising his bravery or his humanitarian efforts that had saved thousands of lives. Since he was later ordered to appear before a judge, Lutz's rescue activities were clearly deemed illegal. An unsanctioned mission could not, ipso facto, be credited to the Swiss government and thus it was unlikely that Bern was going to make much effort to bring attention to, let alone celebrate, the memory of a diplomat who had effectively disobeyed orders, even if for humanitarian purposes. Consequently, the very factor that had made Lutz's mission extraordinarily successful also proved to be a key reason why it was actively disapproved of and effectively ignored by the Swiss government. Acquiring state approval is undoubtedly a vital ingredient for ensuring that any country's historical episodes are officially recognized and remembered – that Lutz and his mission were given no such support by the Swiss government must be cited as a major factor to explain why his story has remained relegated to obscurity for decades.

Now, one might question the premise as to whether not following orders constitutes a grave enough offence to deserve such harsh treatment, given that it was done for a humanitarian cause. Such an attitude, however, grossly underestimates the extent to which the sense of abiding to rules underlies Swiss bureaucracy. In an article on German political culture in the nineteenth century, Margaret Lavinia Anderson discusses the concept of "Gesetzsinn" - the collective communal sense that laws and rules exist to be obeyed.[127] But this same sense of respect for regulations is equally strong in Switzerland's political culture where breaking established rules amounts to no less than a lack of patriotism even if for a good cause, as a federal councilor voiced in 1957: "Loyalty to one's country is more important than one's obligation to

[127] Margaret Lavinia Anderson, 'Voter, Junker, Landrat, Priest: The Old Authorities and the New Franchise in Imperial Germany', *The American Historical Review* 98 (1993), 1460-61.

humanity."[128] Moreover, it has been argued that distinguishing oneself in the diplomatic profession by becoming too prominent represents a death sentence for Swiss diplomats.[129] Problematically for Lutz and his subsequent post-war political treatment, his rule-bending activities violated both of these unspoken assumptions. What mattered most to the Swiss government was not that Lutz had followed his conscience; instead, what mattered was that he had not only failed to follow the course of action instructed by higher authorities at the purported behest of the nation's interest but that this failure to adhere to orders concomitantly threatened to publicly distinguish Lutz as one of the country's most outstanding diplomats.

Just how seriously such 'threats' were taken by the Swiss government can be most clearly conveyed by the fact that Lutz was far from the only individual to be officially reprimanded for ignoring orders for humanitarian reasons during the Second World War. After deciding that Switzerland could not accept any more refugees in 1942, border patrolmen were instructed to turn back anyone who was seeking asylum in Switzerland. However, one police captain, Paul Grüninger, proved unwilling to follow such orders since he knew that by doing so he was sending thousands of people to their death. Consequently, Grüninger decided to not turn back a single individual who sought to escape persecution in Germany, in the process saving roughly 2,000 lives.[130] When his activities were reported to his superiors in Bern, he was removed from his position with immediate effect. Only decades later was he morally rehabilitated by the Swiss government, but his pension was not reinstated. When knowledge of his punishment reached the Swiss public, a popular movement emerged which raised 100,000 Swiss Francs for Grüninger

[128] 'Der Beobachter Schweigt Nicht', *Der Schweizerische Beobachter*, 15 September 1957.
[129] Cowell, 'Bloody Money', 141.
[130] Jean-Francoise Bergier et al., *Switzerland, National Socialism and the Second World War: Final Report* (Zurich: Pendo, 2002), 109.

and his family.[131] The same fate befell a nurse who worked for the Swiss Red Cross who helped hundreds of young Jews to escape Nazi-occupied France; upon the news of her efforts reaching her superiors, she was promptly fired.[132] These selected examples (there are several more cases) illustrate quite strikingly that there was not only a moral discrepancy about following one's conscience between the Swiss government and sectors of the population, but that the former was ruthless towards individuals who strayed from the government's protocol, no matter the ethical motivations.

To understand the actions of the Swiss government towards Lutz, a discussion that occurred between the consul and retired minister Rothmund is also worthy of consideration. A word of caution is necessary since the account of the discussion comes solely from Lutz and there is no way of objectively assessing the accuracy of what he recalled. Nevertheless, based on what is known of Rothmund's policies, the account reads plausibly. At their meeting, the consul sought clarity as to why the Swiss government had not been willing to respond publicly to his Budapest report and, by extension, his mission. Rather than giving a straight answer, much like the government had done so far, Rothmund chose to deflect the question. Instead, he began discussing Hitlerite Germany and observed: "...National Socialism, apart from certain transgressions - achieved a lot."[133] Such a sympathetic description of a regime that was responsible for the deaths of millions of human beings is indicated as coming from one of the most influential members of the Swiss war-time government. The existence of such thinking that smacks of anti-Semitism within the highest quarters of the Swiss government at this period in time was far more widespread than often presumed, as shown by the seminal study by the Swiss

[131] Grossman, *Nur das Gewissen*, 52-53.
[132] David E. Gumpert, 'Switzerland Begins to Confront Its Own Holocaust Past', *Forward* (2014).
[133] Cited in Grossman, *Nur das Gewissen*, 192.

historian Jacques Picard.[134] Such prejudicial thinking might well explain why a rescue operation which saved thousands of Hungarian Jews was not regarded as worthy of much consideration after the fact.

The government's stance towards Lutz did begin to soften over time, with 1958 being an important turning point. A key reason for this change was the role played by federal councilor Feldmann. At the National Council meeting of March 1958 alluded to above, Feldmann made an important assertion: "There are two ways to solve a problem like the one we are facing today [referring to Switzerland's past refugee policy]. One can suppress uncomfortable memories...But one can also adopt a different approach; one can endeavor to, as far as is feasible, establish facts and strive to come as close to the truth as possible...The Federal Council has chosen the second path."[135] Such a statement is effectively an admission from him that the Swiss government was initially guilty of adopting the first path and that it had now chosen a more transparent one. Significantly, Lutz was at last morally rehabilitated at this meeting, thirteen years after the end of his diplomatic mission. Using the case of Lutz to underscore its new course of action suggests that there was an understanding among officials that Lutz had been a victim of the Swiss government's myopic tendency to suppress inconvenient historical memories.

And yet, even after this proclamation, it was often Lutz's tenacity rather than the government's clemency that ensured his incremental rehabilitation. For instance, Lutz was promoted from the position of Vice Consul to General Consul in 1961.[136] Although indeed a rare feat for any Swiss diplomat, this was not the gesture of appreciation it has sometimes been made

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[134] See Picard, *Die Schweiz und die Juden*.
[135] Cited in Grossman, *Nur das Gewissen*, 7.
[136] 'Korrespondenz mit Herrn Botschafter v. Fischer wegen Ernennung zum Berufs-Generalkonsul', 15. July – 27 October 1959, NL Carl Lutz 349, AfZ ETH, p.29.

out to be.[137] As correspondence between Lutz and the foreign ministry illustrates, he made repeated applications until this request was granted and specifically referred to his mission in Budapest to justify his promotion to his superiors.[138] When his promotion was eventually granted, he was informed that his salary would not be increased accordingly but would remain at the level of a Vice-Consul.[139] Thus, although treatment of Lutz can be said to have improved, it must be conceded that the declaration by the federal council was at best half-hearted in nature.

It took another thirty-seven years after the speech by Feldmann and twenty years after Lutz's death for Switzerland to finally and officially apologize for its treatment of Lutz in 1995.[140] To understand the timing of this apology, context is of crucial importance since the immediately preceding and succeeding years were of central significance for Switzerland in relation to its international standing. Despite the signing of the Washington Agreement in 1946, the issue of unclaimed Jewish assets in Swiss banks had continued to fester in the background. In 1962, a new Swiss law was enacted that required its banks to investigate the existence of unclaimed assets in the bank accounts of Holocaust victims. In 1985, a report published by the Swiss National Bank noted that Germany had sold more than 1 billion francs worth of gold to Switzerland during the war, conceding that the government likely knew that the gold was looted from victims of the National Socialist regime. Having located nearly 40 million Swiss Francs in such dormant accounts, in 1996 a New York Senator initiated an investigation into Bern's economic relations with the Nazi regime. Finally, after bank archivists in Switzerland were

[137] For a newspaper article defending the Swiss government's treatment of Lutz, see: David Vogelsanger, 'Carl Lutz und die Offizielle Schweiz', *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 12 February 2008.
[138] Letter from Carl Lutz to Bundesrat Max Petitpierre, 12 May 1959, NL Carl Lutz 349, AfZ ETH, p.41.
[139] Grossman, *Nur Das Gewissen*, 190.
[140] Tschuy, *Dangerour Diplomacy*, xii.

caught shredding documents, the state of New York threatened Switzerland with financial sanctions, leading major banks to promise to donate 100 million francs to Holocaust survivors.[141]

Even before these events, Swiss officials were aware of mounting international pressure; crucially, in 1995 the president of the World Jewish Congress expressed his determination to ensure that Switzerland made amends for its economic collaboration with Hitler, which not only prolonged the war but the Holocaust.[142] Now that Switzerland's financial dealings with the Nazis were being made public knowledge around the world and Switzerland's relations with Germany were ever more being defined as one of collaboration and complicity, a story of a Swiss diplomat saving thousands of Jewish lives undoubtedly proved attractive as a means to mitigate the negative publicity Switzerland was receiving. In other words, now that the 'dirty laundry was being aired', there no longer was any hesitation to bringing public attention to Lutz's mission. Thus the timing of the resulting public apology to Lutz's legacy is difficult to reduce to coincidence, a view also shared by sectors of the Swiss press today.[143] The fact that not only Lutz but also Grüninger received an official apology and acquired public recognition for their humanitarian service on the semi-centennial of the end of the Second World War speaks all the more for such an image-enhancing motivation.

Nevertheless, it took the Swiss government another twenty-three years to actually honor Lutz in any concrete capacity. In 2018, a room in the west wing of the Swiss Federal Palace, the epicenter of Swiss foreign policy, was named the 'Carl Lutz Room.'[144] Although a prestigious honor, it not only pales in comparison with the honors bestowed upon him by Hungary and Israel

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[141] Cowell, 'Bloody Money', 136-137.
[142] Bernhard Schär and Vera Sperisen, 'Switzerland and the Holocaust: Teaching Contested History', *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 42 (2010), 651.
[143] Daniel von Aarburg, 'Das schwierige Verhältnis der Schweiz zu Carl Lutz', *SRF*, 2014.
[144] https://www.thelocal.ch/20180213/carl-lutz-swiss-schindler-who-saved-62000-jews-honoured-with-room-in-federal-palace.

but it is also imperative to bear in mind that this room is far from the public eye and therefore does little to promote the public memory of Lutz amongst the Swiss population. To forge long-term cultural memories, governments generally establish "trans-generational communication" through the use of visible objects such as monuments, museums and libraries meant to anchor memories of a given individual or event by continuously reactivating recollections through their public positioning.[145] Discussing the significance of such public works' for enduring memory production one scholar observes: "…after the official memos and speeches are forgotten, the history books ignored, and the powerful are dust, art remains."[146] If there were a single monument to Lutz in any major Swiss city, it is reasonable to assume that the public would be far more knowledgeable of his story than is currently the case. Until such a public honor is sanctioned by the government, wide-spread lasting knowledge of his legacy will continue to suffer.

This chapter has sought to establish the manner and extent to which Lutz was forgotten, to characterize the nature of his treatment, to suggest motivations as to why he was treated with active neglect by the government and, most importantly, to begin to answer the central question as to why Lutz has been kept covered by a veil of silence for so long. There is no denying that the role of the government is of absolute centrality in answering this question. Bern's active neglect of Lutz's mission has meant that the political arena, one of the central spheres capable of promoting public consciousness, has actively refrained from advancing his memory and therefore bears a substantial portion of the responsibility for the lack of remembrance surrounding Lutz's humanitarian efforts. In light of the deliberate nature of this neglectful

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[145] Assmann, 'Re-framing Memory', 43.
[146] Viet Thanh Nguyen, *Nothing Ever Dies: Vietnam and the Memory of War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), 12.

treatment, it is apposite to characterize the government's engagement with Lutz's story as bordering on one of "organized forgetting."[147] Nevertheless, there are other, non-governmental, elements that need to be factored into the equation as to why a historically significant persona is not remembered by his own nation. To these we shall now turn.

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[147] For more on the concept of organized forgetting, see Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1996).

Chapter III

The Cultural Face of Memory:
Lutz, Histography and the Arts

Responding to Switzerland's treatment of Carl Lutz, Simon Wiesenthal, Holocaust survivor and famous Nazi hunter, wrote in the foreword to Theo Tschuy's book: "...the memory of his [Lutz's] action was suppressed, and for almost fifty years it remained buried in the archives. The consul became a non-person."[148] As seen in the previous chapter, passive neglect is too tenuous a term to characterize the conscious but subtle manner in which the Swiss government dealt with Lutz's mission; thus this provocative statement certainly holds a kernel of truth. Nevertheless, claiming Lutz's treatment to be an example of outright governmental suppression undoubtedly oversteps the evidence: the Oxford English dictionary defines suppression as "Withholding or withdrawal from publication or the public sphere."[149] If one considers suppression from this point of view, then it would indeed be misleading to characterize the treatment of Lutz in this way since a consideration of contemporary Swiss newspapers underscores that, unlike the government, the press did not wholeheartedly neglect Lutz.

It might be objected that newspapers cannot be seen as the most accurate indicator to determine whether the government actively suppressed Lutz's memory, given the fact that Switzerland has a long tradition as a liberal democratic state with a strong independent press; after all, as several historical episodes attest, even if a democratic government internally

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[148] Simon Wiesenthal in Theo Thuy, *Dangerous Diplomacy*, xii.
[149] *Oxford English Dictionary:* https://www-oed-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2443/view/Entry/194729?redirectedFrom=suppression#eid.

suppresses knowledge of a certain event, a free press is often still able to publish collateral information. Little known today, however, is the fact that, during the period 1943-1949, Switzerland effectively ceased to be a parliamentary democracy.[150] Instead, as a consequence of the emergency situation given rise to by the war, the federal council was granted emergency powers and effectively ruled the Confederation by decree.[151] In this situation, seven ministers had power to make decisions and enact decrees without consulting parliament; in effect, they were able to curb civil liberties including freedom of speech and the press.[152] Unwilling to surrender such formidable executive power in the immediate aftermath of the war, the councilors ensured that this political status quo remained in place until 1949.[153] Therefore, if the government had been absolutely determined to fully suppress Lutz's memory by ensuring that his war-time rescue actions did not reach the public through the press, it certainly would have been in a strong position to do so in the first four years after the war. And yet, already in August 1945, the *National Zeitung* in Basel published an article on Lutz's activities in Budapest entitled 'Rescuers: Diplomats and the Press'.[154]

Press coverage on Lutz did remain limited for the first fifteen years after the war but given that articles sprang up from time to time means that this limited news coverage should be understood as a by-product of the active neglect from the government outlined in the last chapter rather than as government-directed censorship. A further factor to consider is that during this period, and symptomatic of how the print media often seems focused on printing sensational stories of a negative nature, it was far more concerned with the ramifications of Switzerland's

[150] Niklaus Stettler, 'The 1946 National Public Survey as a Democratic Challenge' in Kreis, *Switzerland and the Second World War*, 283.
[151] David Eugster, How Swiss Direct Democracy Made a Comeback After Authoritarian Rule, *Swissinfo* (2019).
[152] Georg Kreis ed., 'Swiss Refugee Policy, 1933-1945', 105.
[153] Daniel Di Falco, 'Das Schöne an der Not', *NZZ Geschichte* (2020), 44-49.
[154] 'Diplomaten und die Presse als Lebensretter, *National Zeitung*, 25 August 1945.

refugee policy and particularly with Dr. Rothmund's controversial passport agreement with the Nazi regime.[155] As a result, Lutz's story was more frequently than not published in peripheral newspapers with specific audiences such as the *Israelitisches Wochenblatt*.[156] This situation began to change with the confluence of international events, particularly the Eichmann trial and Lutz's nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize which elicited press attention to his earlier efforts in Budapest. For instance, a Swiss tabloid newspaper, *Sie und Er*, conducted an extensive interview with Lutz and printed a multi-page article on his mission in response to these milestones. The newspaper even implicitly commented on the neglectful treatment he had received by the Swiss state by entitling the article "Today I am Allowed to Speak."[157]

Lutz's death in 1975 seems to have been another catalyst in redirecting attention towards his rescue efforts. Subsequently, the print media carried his story into the 1980s as well as the following decade where there was ever more extensive media coverage of Lutz's story in no small part due to the renewed attention given to Switzerland's wartime policies in the wake of the banking scandal. But over this period there was also a change in the purpose of the articles since they no longer simply told the narrative but also aimed criticism at the Swiss government's lack of support for his mission. Just how important this aspect became is shown, for instance, by an article in the *Luzerner Neuste Nachrichten*. Before even mentioning that his rescue mission was devoted to rescuing Jews, the article made explicit that the "brave consul" had "disregarded orders from Bern."[158]

[155] Joseph Baumgartner, 'Newspapers As Historical Sources', *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society* 9 (1981), 256.
[156] 'Schutzengel Konsul Lutz', *Israelitisches Wochenblatt*, 4 March 1949.
[157] 'Ich habe nicht umsonst gelebt' Sie und Er (1961) in NL Alexander Grossman 86, AfZ ETH, p.43.
[158] Lukas Vogel, 'So kämpfte der Mutige Konsul gegen die Nazi-Barbarei', *Luzerner Neuste Nachrichten*, 14 May 1988.

In the aftermath of foreign countries awarding the Swiss consul various awards and accolades, press commentaries became increasingly critical of the way in which he was treated by his own government and raised questions why his native land had not honored him as well. Appraisals became particularly vociferous after Lutz was commemorated with a sculpture in Budapest, with a Swiss newspaper's headline exclaiming: "Carl Lutz...receives a monument in Budapest - only Switzerland struggles to honor its heroes."[159] Reacting to the same award, the *Oltner Tagblatt* provocatively observed: "In foreign states they are honored...Switzerland is ashamed of its heroes."[160]

Having thus established that Lutz's story not only received attention from Swiss newspapers but even reached the point where the government was openly scolded for its treatment of a heroic figure indicates that there must have been a general awareness in Switzerland both about his rescue operation and subsequent treatment. Far more difficult to ascertain is how widespread this news coverage was circulating among the Swiss population. What can be said is that, despite the press lamenting that Lutz should not be forgotten, the coverage was too sporadic to elevate the diplomat to a figure of national consciousness or indeed to put effective pressure on the authorities to recognize Lutz as a figure worthy of celebration. To this day, his name is rarely recognized in the public sphere, including in Lutz's hometown: a survey conducted in 2013 showed that half of the local people interviewed had never even heard of their honorary citizen.[161] Thus the press on its own, particularly if its efforts are not coordinated with or supported by the central government, is an inadequate tool to enshrine an individual in a modern culture's collective memory.[162]

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[159] Susi Koltai, 'Nur zuhause tut man sich mit Helden schwer', *Die Weltwoche*, 4 July 1991.
[160] 'Im Ausland werden sie geehrt…Schweiz Schämt sich ihrer Helden', *Oltner Tagblatt*, 9 May 1990.
[161] Jörg Krummenacher, 'Walzenhausens Respekt vor Carl Lutz,' *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (2013).
[162] John B. Thompson, 'Tradition and Self in a Mediated World', 348-351.

Delving deeper into this assertion, a consideration of the nature of print media as a societal source of knowledge is apt. First, newspapers are by their very nature ephemera – they are meant to be read on a given day and replaced a day later by another issue. Given the fact that social memory formation usually manifests itself generationally means that to forge long-term memories of an event requires that it be transmitted by one of memory's loci, with "inter-generational story-telling" being one of the most effective.[163]. While newspapers help bring attention to momentary phenomena, lasting cultural impressions rely on "secondhand memory" being forged which newspapers are unlikely to create.[164] This means that succeeding generations will come to learn of this same issue by means other than daily media. Moreover, printed articles are usually short and easily overlooked, a fact which is particularly important in the case of Lutz since articles on his mission rarely received more than a couple of paragraphs. Thus while newspapers can be extremely effective at awakening public responses to current events, for that event to become truly embedded in the collective memory of a nation requires them to be complemented by other, long-lasting cultural products.[165]

That contemporary newspaper coverage of a person's deeds is not the only or, indeed, even the most significant cultural factor that determines whether an individual is remembered is also made evident from a consideration of Oskar Schindler's path to near universal recognition. Having become far and away the most immediately recognizable example of a 'good Samaritan' of the Holocaust, his dominance within this category is underlined by the fact that a book devoted to delineating a multitude of less-known Holocaust rescue missions, including that of

[163] Olick ed., *The Collective Memory Reader*, 311.
[164] W. G. Sebald, *On the Natural History of Destruction* (New York: Modern Library, 2004), 89.
[165] Michael Schudson, 'The Past in the Present versus the Present in the Past'

Lutz, is entitled *The Other Schindlers*.[166] Like Lutz, Schindler was awarded the honorary title of 'Righteous Among the Nations' and the German Federal Republic's Order of Merit in 1966 and, as with the Swiss consul, recognition from Israel and Germany did little in overturning the general paucity of knowledge that initially surrounded his rescue mission.

Instead, it was the 1993 award-winning Hollywood movie with world-renowned director Steven Spielberg that burgeoned general knowledge of Schindler's operation.[167] The importance of the movie in solidifying the collective memory of his efforts is also shown by the fact that it proved to be a key catalyst in stimulating additional academic work on the German industrialist: many of books written on Schindler were published in the aftermath of the movie's emergence. Because of popular culture's mass audiences, it is a potent tool to bring widespread attention to historical events and personae, particularly since historical topics have become increasingly popular for viewing audiences.[168] The fact that no movie or award-winning documentary has been devoted to Lutz is an important factor to consider when attempting to understand why he has been largely forgotten in the public sphere. Ironically, the one documentary clip that is available on Lutz is entitled "The Swiss Schindler", once more underscoring how the German's preeminence within the category of Holocaust rescuers has come at a cost to others, including Lutz.

Not only visual but also written material can be of central importance in engendering cultural remembrance of an event.[169] The initial impetus for *Schindler's List* was a novel that

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[166] See Anges, Grunwald, *The Other Schindlers: Why People Chose to Save Jews in the Holocaust* (Gloucestershire: The History Press, 2011).
[167] Mark Gudgel, 'Complicating the Narrative: Oskar Schindler, Schindler's List and the Classroom' in Ari Kohen and Gerald J. Steinacher (eds.), *Unlikely Heroes: The Place of Holocaust Rescuers in Research and Teaching* (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press), 200.
[168] Lynn Hunt, *History: Why It Matters* (Cambridge: Polity, 2018), 116.
[169] For more on the influence of writing, canon and archive as technologies of memory see: Aleida Assmann, *Erinnerungsräume: Formen und Wandlungen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses* (München: C.H. Beck, 2010).

delineated Schindler's rescue mission.[170] But this argument can also be applied to academic works. Highlighting the powerful link between the state and academia, both sides of the post-war 'Iron Curtain' initially ignored troubling events of the 1940's by regarding the past effectively as a different country - an attitude which was reflected in scholarly circles.[171] Although recent scholarly works have successfully challenged the traditional view that academic discussions of the mass murder of European Jewry were an aporia that suddenly emerged during the early 1960s by underscoring that the topic of genocide was in fact already widespread in European and American post-war discussions, the general scholarly consensus nonetheless locates the trial of Eichmann in 1961 as the decisive turning-point in altering how such atrocities were perceived and a leading catalyst that brought the Holocaust to the center of historical scrutiny.[172]

That the perception of the Holocaust as a topic of leading interest was still developing even then is shown by Raul Hilberg's 1961 monumental work, *The Destruction of the European Jews*[173] since he was initially unable to find a publisher for his work in several countries: for instance, in Germany, his book was not published until 1990 and in Israel not before 2007.[174] This widespread delay in dealing with issues relating to the Holocaust surely impacted the fact that stories such as Lutz's also did not find fertile ground to be disseminated to a wider audience.

Yet Hilberg's work is important for a more specific reason for unearthing why Lutz has been largely forgotten. It was the American scholar who divided the 'participants' of the Holocaust into three principal groups: 'perpetrators, victims and bystanders.' Once his book reached widespread audiences, it was quickly hailed as the authoritative work on the Holocaust

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[170] See Thomas Keneally, *Schindler's Ark* (New York: Scribner, 2000).
[171] Judt, 'The Past is Another Country,' 83.
[172] David Ceserani, *After Eichmann: Collective Memory and the Holocaust since 1961* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 1-2.
[173] Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (London, 1961).
[174] Frank Bajohr and Andrea Löw, *Der Holocaust: Ergebnisse und neue Fragen der Forschung* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 2015), 2-3.

and Hilberg as the preeminent scholar thereof.[175] Consequently, the three terms he coined became a standard framework which Holocaust scholars relied upon to investigate the mass murder of Jews in Europe.[176] The focus on these three principal groups, particularly on perpetrators, has had the effect of significantly reducing scholarly attention to groups peripheral to his triangulation, such as rescuers.

The focus of Hilberg's work became representative of early Holocaust scholarship. Even when the Holocaust gained increasing currency in both the public and academic spheres, the stories of rescuers were, for several reasons, generally ignored by academics. For one thing, rescuers were generally assigned a peripheral role to the 'bystander group', which has received the least attention of the three groups.[177] But there were more pressing reasons to further motivate their omission. By attempting to save groups being persecuted by the state, rescuers represented a manifestation of resistance. This proved particularly problematic since one of the central apologetic narratives emerging after the war was that resistance under totalitarian regimes was effectively impossible and thus stories of humanitarian rescuers contradicted the validity of such arguments.[178] Additionally, there was a concern that focusing on the positive stories of rescuers might mitigate people's understanding of the gravity of atrocities that had been committed. This was a fear shared by some Holocaust survivors, with one even writing to historian Martin Gilbert to warn that "…the focus is shifting away from the crimes."[179]

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[175] Jonathan A. Bush, 'Raul Hilberg: In Memoriam', *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 100 (2010), 662.
[176] Christopher R. Browning, 'From Humanitarian Relief to Holocaust Rescue: Tracy Strong Jr., Vichy Internment Camps, and the Maison des Roches in Le Chambon', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 30 (2016), 211.
[177] Rene Schlott, 'Raul Hilberg and His "Discovery" of the Bystander' in Christina Morina and Kijn Thijs (eds.), *Probing the Limits of Categorization* (New York: Bergbahn Books, 2019), 40.
[178] Ari Kohen and Gerald J. Steinacher (eds.), *Unlikely Heroes: The Place of Holocaust Rescuers in Research and Teaching*, 2.
[179] Cited in Roy G. Koepp, 'Holocaust Rescuers in Historical and Academic Scholarship' in Ari Kohen and Gerald J. Steinacher (eds.), *Unlikely Heroes: The Place of Holocaust Rescuers in Research and Teaching*, 16.

Over the last thirty years of Holocaust research, such a limited approach has evolved further. Scholarship on the Holocaust has not only expanded thematically and geographically but Hilberg's three terms have been problematized and shown to be overly simplistic. The line between who constitutes a perpetrator and who a bystander is now considered to be blurry at best with a multiplicity of roles carried out by individuals and groups not directly covered by this trilogy. As a result, each term has been given additional shades of complexity and a number of sub-groups have been subsequently scrutinized to highlight the multiplicity of roles that many people could and did play.[180]

One such actor is the humanitarian rescuer.[181] Although initially studied primarily by other academic fields such as sociology, in the past few decades historians have begun paying more attention to such acts, particularly from an angle of resistance,[182] and in the process engendering a substantial multi-disciplinary literature.[183] Nevertheless, such efforts have appeared relatively late and if one considers Holocaust scholarship as a whole, rescuers have still received, relative to other groups, less historical scholarly attention and remain to this day effectively a "small subset of Holocaust studies."[184] That reduced historical attention has been devoted to rescuers is understandable given the fact that in relative numbers they represent a minority compared to aggregate size of the other actor groups. Rightly or wrongly, however, this belated attention has proven to be detrimental for the recognition of individuals such as Lutz; therefore, to overturn the ignorance that currently characterizes his story, more scrutiny needs to

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[180] Frank Bajohr and Andrea Löw, *Der Holocaust: Ergebnisse Und Neue Fragen Der Forschung* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 2015), 7.
[181] Browning, 'From Humanitarian Relief to Holocaust Rescue', 211-212.
[182] For more on this see: Nathan Stoltzfus, *Resistance of the Heart* (London: Rutgers University Press, 1996).
[183] Koepp, 'Holocaust Rescuers in Historical and Academic Scholarship', 15-22.
[184] Ibid.,

be devoted to this subgroup by historians, especially given the fact that *Täterforschung* (perpetrator research) has reemerged in the last decade as the key area of focus once more.[185]

The minimal space occupied by Lutz in Holocaust historiography has lain bare the fact that the tripartite focus has impeded extensive general and academic knowledge of rescue missions. If extensive historical attention had been given to such individuals, then why are there to this day only two biographies devoted to the most extensive rescue mission of the Holocaust, neither of which was written by a specialist of this period? Moreover, it is important to note that most of the works written on Wallenberg were composed by journalists rather than historians.[186] The limited attention given to diplomatic rescuers in general can also be discerned from considering recent influential works on the Holocaust. For instance, a later Hilberg work on the Holocaust devotes two chapters to humanitarian activities: one on helpers and one on Jewish rescuers. And while he briefly refers to the method of using Protective Passes in Hungary, Lutz is never mentioned by name. Even the two more famous righteous gentiles are overlooked: Schindler gets but one mention and Wallenberg none.[187]

Other, more recent, monumental works on the Holocaust show the same pattern. *The Years of Extermination*, the third volume of Saul Friedlander's highly acclaimed three volume work published in 2007 that aimed to write an integrative account of the Holocaust, mentions Lutz only once, makes two references to Wallenberg and completely neglects Schindler.[188] Narrowing the scope of investigation to these three rescuers certainly is a limited viewpoint to adopt but Schindler and Wallenberg do represent individuals with some of the best-known rescue

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[185] Stone, *Histories of the Holocaust*, 4.
[186] Tanja Schult, *A Hero's Many Faces: Raoul Wallenberg In Contemporary Monuments* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 41.
[187] See Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders*.
[188] Friedländer, *The Years of Extermination*, xv.

operations and are therefore suggestive of a larger trend. Moreover, one could object that these are general works and not specialized on this particular topic-area. Yet this is precisely the point: award-winning studies with the largest readership which are therefore most conducive to enhancing general knowledge of Holocaust events seem to rarely prioritize rescue missions in their narratives. This characteristic of Holocaust historiography, to belatedly direct attention to diplomatic rescuers and to continue to ascribe them a secondary role compared to the original tripartite has, in combination with the factors alluded to earlier, contributed to ensuring that Lutz's story has failed to acquire broader scholarly attention and, by extension, public knowledge and remembrance.

If one does turn to works specifically devoted to rescuers, a further important aspect to consider about the nature of the literature on humanitarian activities emerges which helps explain Lutz's historical 'disappearance': the portrayal of Lutz's actions in relation to Wallenberg's. As briefly discussed earlier, Wallenberg worked alongside Lutz in Budapest and was also responsible for saving thousands of Jewish lives by issuing protective papers and establishing safe houses. Despite being in the same place, at roughly the same time, and employing similar methods, Wallenberg, unlike Lutz, has received widespread fame for his efforts. Winning many of the same awards as Lutz, Wallenberg crucially received further forms of recognition that illuminated his story to the general public. Not only have numerous streets and schools around the world been named after him, awards and stamps bear his name and, as of 2008, 31 large public monuments raised in honor of his efforts are to be found in a dozen countries around the world.[189] Moreover, in 1982 he was made an honorary citizen of the United States (only the second person to be so elevated) and in 2012 was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal.[190]

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[189] Schult, *Raoul Wallenberg In Contemporary Monuments*, 1.
[190] Michael Dick, 'Raoul Wallenberg: The Making of An American Hero', in *Unlikely Heroes*, 111.

Even if the number and nature of these awards did have an effect on the crystallization of the Swede's place in collective memories, there are also several discrepancies between Lutz's and Wallenberg's careers that help explain their differing treatment. For one thing, before arriving in Budapest, Wallenberg was already better known than Lutz since he came from a prominent diplomatic family in Sweden.[191] Moreover, Wallenberg had been sent to Budapest by the Swedish government as a special envoy with the explicit task of issuing protective passports; in other words, he was working with the full authorization and support of his government back in Stockholm. This is a crucial point to consider since, as the previous chapter attempted to demonstrate, had Lutz been operating with the full backing of the Swiss government, he would very likely not have received the lukewarm post-war treatment that he did. Additionally, Wallenberg has found a prominent place within popular culture; not only have several movies been made about him and his mission, but a song has been dedicated to him and even a starship in the influential *Star Trek* television series bore his name.[192] As discussed earlier, popular culture should not be underestimated as a difference-maker between general amnesia and popular memory of an event.

Perhaps most importantly, while both Lutz and Wallenberg remained in Budapest until the Russian army conquered the city, the Swede never returned home and the details of his death, likely at the hands of the Russians, remains a source of conjecture to this day.[193] Yet paradoxically, his physical disappearance and presumptive death have had a positive effect on his legacy; in the words of one scholar, his unfortunate fate led to eternal life.[194] The fact that a

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[191] Paul Rühl, 'Der Fall Raoul Wallenberg: Der Stand der Erkenntnisse aus russicher Sicht', *Osteuropa* 50 (2000), 365.
[192] Schult, *Raoul Wallenberg In Contemporary Monuments*, 69.
[193] Rühl, 'Der Fall Raoul Wallenberg', 366.
[194] Schult, *Raoul Wallenberg In Contemporary Monuments*, 58.

prominent diplomat vanished under mysterious circumstances drew attention to this individual, interest which was enhanced by the fact that the story of his disappearance was even co-opted as anti-Soviet propaganda since Russia was blamed for his death.[195] Most significant is the fact that, as it is so often the case with death (especially when it occurs in the context of someone sacrificing their life for a cause), Wallenberg's demise lifted him to a martyr-like status. Indeed, as the Holocaust historian Randolph L. Braham has argued, ever since Wallenberg's presumed death in 1947, a persistent mythologizing of his Hungarian rescue mission has proceeded apace.[196]

The myth-induced legacy of Wallenberg ultimately played to the detriment of Lutz. The Swede's fame in itself might not have been problematic; however, the fact that both rescuers were operating in the same city and using the same methods has come at great cost to the manifestation of Lutz's memory. Because Wallenberg's story acquired not only greater but also earlier attention than Lutz's, the Swede has in the existing academic literature frequently been falsely credited with being solely responsible for the survival of the Jews of Budapest. The extent to which Wallenberg has overshadowed Lutz is illustrated by a book by Philip Friedman. Despite devoting an entire chapter to the Holocaust rescue operations in Hungary, it does not make a single mention of Lutz.[197] Wallenberg, on the other hand, is center stage: the chapter is entitled "Raoul Wallenberg: Hero of Budapest."[198]

Even today, while Lutz is perhaps known in certain specialized scholarly circles, he continues to be overlooked in comparison to Wallenberg. A 2019 work on Holocaust rescuers

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[195] Randolph L. Braham, 'Rescue Operations in Hungary: Myths and Realities', *East European Quarterly* 34 (2004), 183-184.
[196] Braham, 'Rescue Operations in Hungary', 183-184.
[197] Philip Friedman, *Their Brothers' Keepers* (New York: Nebu Press, 2011).
[198] Friedman, *Their Brothers' Keepers*, 115.

adorned its cover with an image of Wallenberg and devotes a chapter to him. Lutz, on the other hand, is referenced once in the introduction to the work.[199] It appears then that since Holocaust rescue operations in Hungary already had, both in the public and academic sphere, identified its key protagonist in Wallenberg, there has been but little incentive to continue investigating the nature of humanitarian activities in Budapest or indeed to reexamine them in order to, at the very least, begin balancing the scales between the contributions of these two individuals. Thus the dominance of Wallenberg not only helps elucidate why Lutz's contributions were forgotten but also why they continue to be consigned to scholarly neglect today.

That Wallenberg's legacy detracted attention from Lutz is also underscored in the case of the Nobel Peace Prize. Although Lutz initiated the humanitarian mission, Wallenberg's fame ensured that initially only the Swede was nominated for the prize (at that time, posthumously awarding the prize was still allowed). Realizing the injustice of nominating Wallenberg but not Lutz, Professor Geoffrey Tier, a member of the British embassy in Czechoslovakia, intervened by writing to the Nobel Prize Committee in April 1948 and making the case that, although Wallenberg was a deserving candidate, it was the leading members of the Swiss legation in Budapest that "led all the rest" and therefore also needed to be in contention for recognition.[200] Tier had a personal interest in advancing the nomination of Lutz since, as a British subject in Budapest, his interests had been defended by Lutz: "It is a difficult matter for me adequately to express the debt of gratitude which my wife and I owe you…"[201] Nevertheless, the tacit recommendation that Lutz was just as deserving as Wallenberg was made all the more powerful

[199] See Ari Kohen and Gerald J. Steinacher (eds.), *Unlikely Heroes: The Place of Holocaust Rescuers in Research and Teaching*.
[200] Letter from Prof. Dr. Geoffrey Tier to Nobel Prize Committee, 9 April 1948, NL Carl Lutz 349, AfZ ETH, p.53.
[201] Letter from Prof. Dr. Geoffrey Tier to Carl Lutz, 30 March 1945, NL Carl Lutz 349, AfZ ETH, p.51.

since Tier had spent the entirety of the war in Budapest and therefore witnessed both the contributions of Lutz and Wallenberg first-hand.

Lutz was consequently nominated for the peace prize on this occasion as well as two further times. In 1959 Pater Pire, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, gave Lutz assurances that he would vouch for Lutz for that year's peace prize.[202] Three years later, Lutz received the same assurances from an Austrian politician, Professor Ernst Kolb.[203] Such external support was important since the Swiss government had informed Lutz that it was unwilling to advocate for him without external support out of fears that such an action might seem to violate its neutral status.[204] In 1961, the Swiss government finally advocated on behalf of Lutz, but to no avail.[205]

The outcome of this Nobel episode served to reinforce his neglect rather than his memory. Although he received enhanced press coverage during the nomination process, the winners, not the nominees, are remembered. Given the status of the Nobel Prize, it is unequivocal that, had he won the prize, the attention given to his mission would have burgeoned and helped bring greater international attention to his activities; as well, he would have been only the fourth Swiss citizen (additional Swiss organizations have been nominated) and the first since 1902 to become a laureate. It is not unreasonable to conjecture that an outcome such as this might very well have put sufficient international pressure on official Switzerland to follow suit and manifestly honor his humanitarian efforts.

When the Swiss government officially offered its apologies to Lutz in 1995, it did enhance public knowledge of this persona's humanitarian contributions with the very first

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[202] Letter from Carl Lutz to Bundesrat F. Wahlen, 22 May 1959, NL Carl Lutz 349, AfZ ETH Lutz, p.58.
[203] Letter from Carl Lutz to Bundesrat F. Wahlen, 26 January 1961, NL Carl Lutz 349, AfZ ETH, p.59.
[204] Ibid.
[205] Letter from Dr. R. Servatius to Carl Lutz, 29 March 1961, NL Carl Lutz 349, AfZ ETH, p.62.

scholarly work published on him appearing that very year.[206] At the same time, it is evident that an apology was far from sufficient for remedying years of neglect. The fact that Lutz still remained a figure of negligible importance in many quarters is shown by the so-called Bergier Commission, an international panel of historians tasked by the Swiss government with investigating Switzerland's role in the Second World War. While the more limited 1957 report by Carl Ludwig had made no references to Lutz and his mission, the Bergier report, published in 2002 and composed of 524 pages, mentions Lutz on a single occasion towards the very end. The general neglect of Lutz that it reflects shows once more that missions like his are rarely a priority for historical investigations, an element of central consideration if one hopes to come to a more holistic understanding of the insubstantial nature of Lutz's historical identity both in Switzerland and abroad.

Although Lutz's own role in forging his legacy has generally been ignored, his behavior is also necessary to consider in order to answer the present research question. As made implicit throughout, attaining recognition, particularly from his home country, was crucial to Lutz and he certainly did not simply sit idly by and accept his status of anonymity. He made repeated attempts to have the status quo reversed by writing to the government to ensure that they consider the merits of his mission; he fiercely fought for his own candidacy to become a Nobel laureate; he sought involvement in the Eichmann trial primarily because of the attention he would have garnered; he desired answers from his superiors as to why he had been neglected for so long. And yet, at the same time, it would be misleading to suggest that he did not play a part in his own eventual erasure from cultural memory since a series of decisions he made can be

[206] See Theo Tschuy, *Carl Lutz und die Juden von Budapest* (Zürich: Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 1995).

viewed in retrospect as misjudgments in so far as their impact on the legacy of his mission is concerned.

As discussed in the first chapter, the mission report Lutz sent to the foreign office commenced with a request that for his next diplomatic mission he be stationed in a less demanding post. His request was granted when he served as Consul General in Bregenz, Austria from 1954 until his retirement in 1961. While such a choice is understandable given the toll his experiences in Budapest had taken on his health and technically represented a promotion in his diplomatic position, it nonetheless placed Lutz on the periphery of the diplomatic field. By wishing to attain a position of low importance well outside the post-war spotlight, he unwittingly facilitated the process through which his mission could be neglected. While it is unlikely that Bern would have granted him a position of greater importance even if he had vied for one, the fact that he led the charge in acquiring such a post-war position certainly reflects the retiring nature of Lutz's character that pejoratively influenced his concomitant desire to be remembered. Thus while he proved particularly successful at overcoming bureaucratic barriers during his mission in Budapest, he showed no such dexterity in 'playing the system' when he returned home.

But perhaps the most detrimental decision taken by Lutz was never to publish an account of his mission. While no stated reason is given as to why he wrote no memoir, there is no doubt that taking a more active approach to the formation of his legacy by composing an account of his efforts would have proven beneficial and far more effective in promoting his memory than basing his hopes on a government that had shown itself time and time again unwilling to support his mission both during and after the war. That such a decision would likely have made a difference can be extrapolated from the fact that several rescuers that had also been neglected

after the war did in fact acquire incremental recognition by publishing a narrative of their rescue operations.[207]

Lutz's post-war behavior makes it appear as though he was operating under an assumption that his story would eventually acquire recognition even without proactive action on his part. Such optimism proved fatally flawed and meant that the final years of his life were defined by an embittered attitude towards his own government. Reflecting his disappointment and animosity, he opted to posthumously leave all his personal documents, not to a Swiss archive, but to the country that had bestowed upon him the greatest honor: Israel. This decision can again be viewed as counter-productive in so far as it initially hampered potential independent Swiss historical research. Thus, although desiring the contrary, Lutz's post-war decisions about the preservation of his legacy need to be factored into any explanation as to why he was been forgotten by his home country.

Finally, the concept of memory itself needs be discussed as an explanatory factor. As previously discussed, collective memories initially anchor themselves to entire generations and are consequently passed on as "secondhand memory", in the words of W.G. Sebald.[208] When an event occurs on home soil or is brought to the public's attention by extensive media coverage, then the contemporary generation has at the very least a semblance of first-hand knowledge of that event, which undoubtedly facilitates the formation of a common recollection to become anchored within national consciousness.

What is particularly problematic for the crystallization of Lutz's story in Swiss collective memory is the fact that it was, from the very start, effectively a secondhand memory: Lutz's mission occurred in a foreign country and did not attract media attention at the time of its

[207] Koepp, 'Holocaust Rescuers in Historical and Academic Scholarship', 17.
[208] W. G. Sebald, *On the Natural History of Destruction* (New York: Modern Library, 2004), 89.

undertaking. Consequently, within the Swiss public there never were any eye-witness experiences of what he accomplished, meaning that his efforts were never tied to individual, let alone collective, memory of the war for the Swiss public. This general ignorance, coupled with the fact that the first generation to actively hear of his mission often only had secondhand knowledge of the war, made the job of quietly but successfully neglecting his mission that much simpler for the Swiss authorities. Of crucial consideration for understanding the widespread lack of remembrance surrounding the consul's efforts is the fact that Lutz's mission was in fact not forgotten by the Swiss public; it was never remembered to begin with.

Having considered the formation of public memory from a cultural perspective, it too has shed light on important issues that help explain Lutz's national as well as more general anonymity. Although the cultural sphere has done more to create a basis of knowledge of his mission, this chapter has again sought to highlight the crucial aspects that were missing for a more enduring crystallization of memory to take place. What is worthy of particular emphasis is the question of the nature of suppression with which this chapter began. From a cultural perspective it is pertinent to conclude that active suppression is untenable as an argument to explain his historical neglect. Whether it be in newspapers or academic literature or Lutz's own decision-making, the lack of attention given to his mission almost has invariably resulted from the consequence of pre-existing factors that unwittingly inhibited further dissemination of his story, rather than being the result of barriers set up maliciously with the intent of transforming the consul into a non-person. In other words, from a wider lens, the case of Lutz and his forgotten mission needs to be understood primarily both as an unofficial suppression of historical memory and a consequence of cultural factors beyond the reach of any single individual.

Conclusion

Let us return to the question raised at the very start: why are certain potentially significant individuals and events forgotten? This thesis has sought to make a contribution to this broad question by having specifically investigated why the most extensive rescue mission of the Holocaust has been largely forgotten. Directing this question primarily, yet not exclusively, towards Switzerland, it has aimed, through an examination of Lutz's post-war treatment using both a political and cultural lens, to emphasize that no single factor can fully elucidate the absence of a collective remembrance of this rescue operation. Only by surveying a spectrum of miscellaneous elements that include factors as diverse as organized political laxity, a lack of cultural artefacts to create long-term collective memory manifestation, the protagonist's ineffective agency in shaping his own legacy and the ever-present but incalculable historical regulator of misfortune can one begin to formulate a general explanation for this surprising neglect.

At the forefront of the response provided here has lain the Swiss government. Not only did its post-war policy of national image rehabilitation and selective remembrance of the war impact Lutz by diverting governmental focus to other matters, but it has also been argued that such neglect ultimately derived from a deliberate but subtle intention to not commemorate a diplomat who had stepped out of line by acting without specific governmental authorization. Even when Bern came around to eventually honoring the consul, the commemoration itself generally made little impact since it occurred outside the public eye of a population already completely lacking any first-hand memory of the individual in question, thereby dampening any widespread recognition of his efforts that a more grandiose celebration might have aroused. Such

government-induced political neglect acquired a certain self-sustaining dynamism which inevitably perpetuated more neglect. Benignly but effectively ignoring Lutz and his humanitarian efforts created a sort of glacial impetus which inexorably crossed into the cultural sphere and inhibited non-governmental efforts to commemorate his service by augmenting journalistic as well as academic ignorance through restricting free access to archival material that could have been used to remedy this lacuna.

Yet political neglect, even if of a deliberate character that perpetuates forgetfulness, has been shown to be insufficient alone to plumb the factors underlying Lutz's consignment to oblivion. Cultural factors have also been shown to have fed into the silence surrounding the consul's rescue mission whilst concomitantly serving to underscore the unofficial nature of its 'suppression'. While newspapers did ensure that an occasional flicker of light continued to illuminate the story and safeguard it from complete obscurity yet they still proved ineffective in creating any sort of viable long-term memory manifestation. Simultaneously, historiography has all but reduced Lutz and his mission to an untold episode. The dominance of Hilberg's trilogy of Holocaust 'actors' proved decisive in delaying historical attention being given to rescuers and consequently helped build in a further layer of obscurity; at the same time, the global preeminence of other humanitarian rescuers, especially Wallenberg, has overshadowed Lutz's efforts and ensured that even today there is not a single work dedicated to him by a historian.

The widespread ignorance that resulted from such indifferent treatment in key elements of the political and cultural sphere further contributed to his legacy never taking root in the popular cultural domain of novels and movies, mediums of great potency for engendering large-scale public awareness. All of the factors highlighted in this thesis need to be taken into account in order to appreciate how such a 'perfect storm' of historical lethargy arose which unwittingly

retarded the dissemination of his legacy and consequently perpetuated the ephemeral nature of his memory.

At the same time it must be conceded that, given the problems of archival accessibility raised earlier, this thesis cannot claim to have provided a definitive answer to an investigative process that remains in its infancy; the factors broached are tentative in nature and necessarily based upon a certain degree of reasoned conjecture. What this thesis has aimed to do is to unearth evidence-based suggestions as to why his rescue mission, something that by right ought to be an object of national pride for Switzerland, has been shrouded in a condition of obscurity for so long. These indicators are not meant to be final but instead designed to open up avenues of scholarship that will hopefully induce further research on this topic and thereby help remove the veil of silence still currently lingering over the collective memory of Lutz's mission.

Apart from the case-study itself, other avenues of scholarship to be opened relate to the four broader debates to which this thesis has also sought to make historiographical interventions. First, drawing attention to post-war Swiss revisionist policy has not only served as a key contextual component of the causal factors behind Lutz's treatment, but has also aimed to provide greater insight into how one non-belligerent state has wrestled with the legacy of the war. At the same time, the argument has also sought to balance the scales between the paradoxical dichotomy of Switzerland's traditional reputation as a safe haven for the persecuted on the one hand and its recent image as a ruthless war profiteer on the other. Since the emergence of the banking scandal in the 1990s, much of the literature on Switzerland's wartime polices has acquired a polemical tone, which has to an extent been reflected here when discussing Bern's policy of turning a blind eye to historically inconvenient truths. However, such a one-sided view has also been implicitly challenged by bringing attention to an episode that

ought to be a central component of Switzerland's legacy of the Second World War. Beyond Lutz himself, several Swiss citizens, a few of which were alluded to herein as well, were behind some of the most extensive humanitarian rescue operations of the Holocaust. Bringing more attention to such heroic figures is key to establishing a more nuanced portrayal of Switzerland's actions during the Second World War.

Second, because this thesis has at its most fundamental level investigated a mission of a neutral-state rescuer of Jews, it has also sought to make a contribution to the already capacious literature on the subject of the Holocaust. On one level, the delineation of the details of Lutz's operation has been designed to add a crucial component to a subset of the historiography that has only over the last two decades begun to acquire greater historical attention. That Lutz's operation has effectively been completely overlooked in the extant Holocaust literature on rescue efforts certainly represents a substantial omission that, if rectified by further study, would comprehensively add to our understanding of not only what enabled such rare acts of resistance to occur but also what factors separated the successful from the exceptional; after all, one cannot claim to fundamentally comprehend the elements that made rescue attempts successful if the largest rescue operation of the Holocaust is not part and parcel of such studies. By bringing additional attention to the motivations and methods used to execute Lutz's mission, this thesis has aimed to take a first step towards shedding more light on this subject area.

At the same time, highlighting the individual role played by Lutz in saving the lives of tens of thousands of Jews has also aimed to redirect some attention back onto individual agency. Particularly with the rise of the functionalist school of thought, recent Holocaust studies have tended to be based on frameworks centered around institutional and group structures. While the role of individuals has remained important, this has been mostly true of those accused of

perpetuating crimes against humanity. Particularly within the realm of rescue, collective and organizational efforts have risen to the fore at the cost of individual humanitarians. While Lutz's mission certainly represented a collective effort, it is indeed questionable whether such an extensive and successful diplomatic rescue mission would have crystallized without the consul's innovative techniques, a factor which would have ensured that the course of the Holocaust in Hungary would have taken a very different turn. Thus although investigations on the Holocaust are consistently expanding into structural avenues of research, it is also important to not underappreciate the role of less abstract agents of historical change. One determined individual can and did make a monumental historical difference.

Third, by underscoring that Lutz's lost legacy was and continues to be the result of benign neglect rather than outright suppression, this thesis has contributed to a lacuna within memory studies where official suppressions of memory have generally been examined at the expense of unofficial instances of such phenomena. While there undoubtedly was an interest at the top levels of the Swiss government in relegating Lutz's efforts to an unappreciated oblivion through mostly subtle means, the archival evidence currently available does not lend credence to any assertion of an active campaign specifically devised to cover up his mission. As this thesis' focus on the cultural sphere in particular has made evident, a significant reason why his mission has been forgotten is due to factors that were not deliberately put in place for this purpose but rather negatively impacted his memory as a by-product of their functions. Thus, this thesis has aimed to demonstrate how neglect emanating from various societal levels, even if unofficial in nature, can be a potent recipe to sentence even potentially heroic historical personas to obscurity, adding to the broader debate of what exactly are the factors that determine historical amnesia.

Ultimately, however, the overt aim of this thesis has been to counteract the very condition that made the pursuit of this investigation pertinent in the first place: to remove the veil of silence that has descended over Lutz's mission by writing on a forgotten humanitarian figure that has otherwise been wholeheartedly neglected. By doing so, I have sought to write on a heretofore unexplored area and present a more balanced portrayal of Lutz wherein he acquires agency in determining his post-war fate, which will hopefully induce further historical research. After all, in the end, additional scholarly attention is imperative in helping ensure that Lutz's story comes to life within the collective memory of the Swiss public. While archival inaccessibility continues to hamper attempts for greater empirical clarity, the restricted documentation will be made openly available by the year 2025. If by then there has arisen at least a sufficient preliminary awareness of this individual's humanitarian contributions, it can be hoped that knowledge of Carl Lutz's exceptional mission will truly begin to be unveiled and become part and parcel of Swiss collective consciousness.

Given that the current generation is the least well informed about Switzerland's role in the Second World War, Lutz's prophetic words of advice may be heeded at last: "The new generations need to be illuminated with the truth of the past in all its meaning."[209] The 'truth' of that past remains incomplete without the story of Carl Lutz and his efforts to save the Jews of Budapest.

Word count: 19,679

[209] Cited in Grossman, *Nur Das Gewissen*, 14.

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Appendix

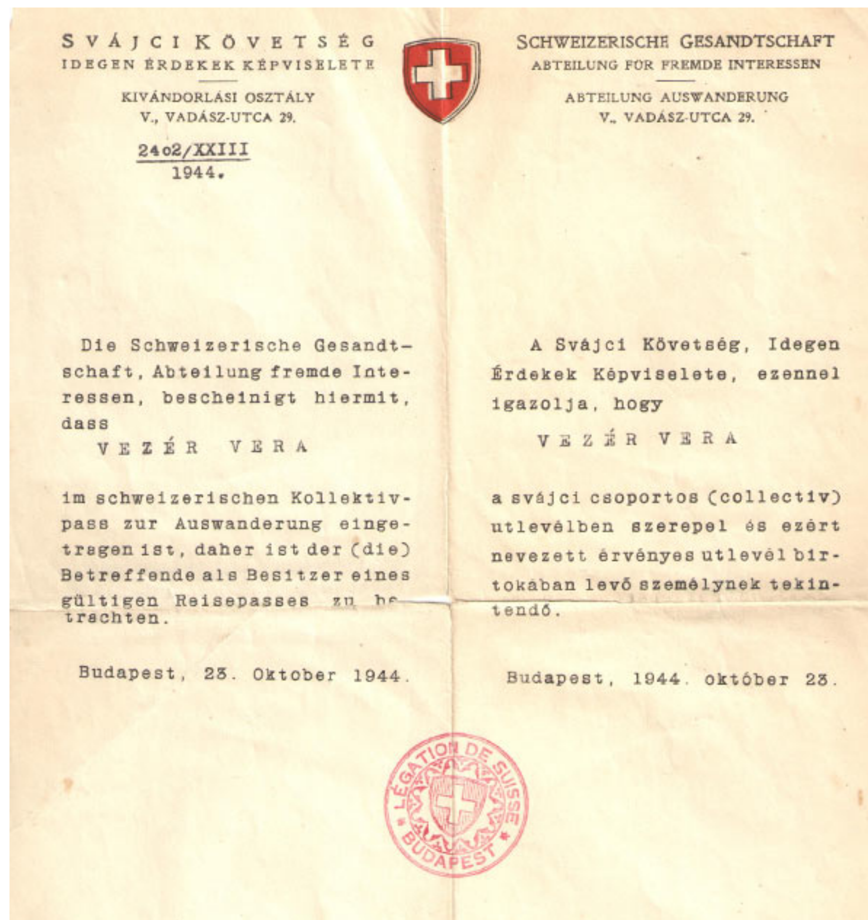
Figure 1: Carl Lutz in Budapest, 1944

https://www.google.com/search?q=carl+lutz&rlz=1C5CHFA_enNL867GB871&sxsrf=ALeKk01stylH0wAMW0vxXeF_E4j2upp-Vw:1592142335511&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwim2NuyuIHqAhWSyaQKHQXgD7AQ_AUoAXoECBgQAw&biw=1318&bih=695#imgrc=I_XN01C9L3GQ6M

Figure 2: Crowds gathering in front of the Emigration Department of the Swiss Legation',

Budapest 1944

https://www.google.com/search?q=carl+lutz&rlz=1C5CHFA_enNL867GB871&sxsrf=ALeKk01stylH0wAMW0vxXeF_E4j2upp-Vw:1592142335511&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwim2NuyuIHqAhWSyaQKHQXgD7AQ_AUoAXoECBgQAw&biw=1318&bih=695#imgrc=W_omNCKMHQ1DTM



SVÁJCI KÖVETSÉG
IDEGEN ÉRDEKEK KÉPVISELETE

KIVÁNDORLÁSI OSZTÁLY
V., VADÁSZ-UTCA 29.

SCHWEIZERISCHE GESANDTSCHAFT
ABTEILUNG FÜR FREMDE INTERESSEN

ABTEILUNG AUSWANDERUNG
V., VADÁSZ-UTCA 29.

2402/XXIII
1944.

Die Schweizerische Gesandtschaft, Abteilung fremde Interessen, bescheinigt hiermit, dass

V E Z É R V E R A

im schweizerischen Kollektivpass zur Auswanderung eingetragen ist, daher ist der (die) Betreffende als Besitzer eines gültigen Reisepasses zu betrachten.

Budapest, 23. Oktober 1944.

A Svájci Követség, Idegen Érdekek Képviselete, ezennel igazolja, hogy

V E Z É R V E R A

a svájci csoportos (collectiv) utlevélben szerepel és ezért nevezett érvényes utlevél birtokában levő személynek tekintendő.

Budapest, 1944. október 23.

LÉGATION DE SUISSE
BUDAPEST

Figure 3: Exemplar of a Swiss collective passport employed by Lutz

https://www.google.com/search?q=carl+lutz&rlz=1C5CHFA_enNL867GB871&sxsrf=ALeKk01stylH0wAMW0vxXeF_E4j2upp-Vw:1592142335511&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwim2NuyuIHqAhWSyaQKHQXgD7AQ_AUoAXoECBgQAw&biw=1318&bih=695#imgrc=2ncVLQEkkaZe2M

Figure 4: Lutz, his new wife and stepdaughter in Bern, 1949
https://www.google.com/search?q=carl+lutz&rlz=1C5CHFA_enNL867GB871&sxsrf=ALeKk01stylH0wAMW0vxXeF_E4j2upp-Vw:1592142335511&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwim2NuyuIHqAhWSyaQKHQXgD7AQ_AUoAXoECBgQAw&biw=1318&bih=695#imgrc=lmL9SyG8ofHqZM