

From the archives of the
Simon Wiesenthal Center



Simon Wiesenthal – the Conscience of the Holocaust – helped bring more than 1,100 Nazi war criminals to justice, including the officer who arrested Anne Frank.

Remarks by Simon Wiesenthal Center Trustee
ELIZABETH TAYLOR
Recipient of Simon Wiesenthal Center Humanitarian Award
November 19, 1980 Beverly Hills, CA

We Shall Outlive Them

"My dear Simon Wiesenthal, distinguished head tableguests, ladies and gentlemen: I am deeply touched by this moving tribute. Words hardly seem adequate on such occasions.

I stand before you with mixed emotions, humbled that you have seen fit to bestow this unique honor upon me, and yet at the same time, so very sad because it brings back into focus that tragic epic in human history when death became so ordinary, when torture was so trite, silence so pronounced when the tears of children gushed forth like running streams, when leaders forgot to lead, when few cared, when men and women forgot they were formed in the image of G-d.

I am often tempted to speculate how fortunate I am to have escaped the horror, to have been spared the anguish. But when I think about it deeply, I realize I did not escape unscathed. None of us did. We were all in a sense there, hovering above the gates of Auschwitz, trying to shield ourselves from the magnetic pull of its destructive force that wanted to do us all in, Jew and Christian, black and white. It wanted everything we possess and cherish – our Van Goghs, and Rembrandts, our Tennysons, our Freuds and our Einsteins.

Today, a whole generation is growing up that does not know this, that has no memory of these events, that has no terms of reference to know how close we all came to the final curtain. Worse, around this new generation can be heard new ominous voices seeking to pollute their minds, to corrupt their values, to impair their future. In Europe and here in the United States, anti-Semitism is on the rise. Haters are running for public office pitting white against black, Christian against Jew.

When I read the script for the Simon Wiesenthal Center's film, *Genocide*, I could see the victims before my eyes, their voices speaking to me: 'Tell our story,' they said, 'Nay, not for our sake, for we are long gone, but for yours, so that you may live.' I have tried so very hard to tell of their agony and their heroism, and I hope millions of people will see and hear their profound message.

In conclusion, let me just say to the enemies of our people, wherever they may be, we say in the words of one of the victims, 'Mir Valen Zey Iberleben' – 'We shall outlive them.' And to the friends of mankind, wherever they may be, 'Chazak V'Hamatz' – 'Be strong and brave.' Remember that in the final analysis, they that sow in tears shall yet reap in joy."

Elizabeth Taylor was an early member of the Board of Trustees of the Simon Wiesenthal Center. She, along with Orson Wells, narrated the Center's first film *Genocide*, which won the Academy Award® for Best Documentary Feature in 1981. It was the first film on the Holocaust to win an Oscar®.