

## A Historiography of Allied Action during the Holocaust

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The role of Winston Churchill and the Allies in the Holocaust has proved to be problematic, and a clear consensus eludes contemporary scholars. Could Churchill and the Allies have done more for European Jews during the Holocaust? Would they have had to divert significant military resources in order to help the European Jews? Would this have potentially lengthened the war? If the Allies had done more for the European Jewry, how would the war effort have gone differently? These questions have been raised repeatedly by different historians, of different backgrounds and with different perspectives; they have all arrived at very different answers. While the literature abounds in studies which examine specific aspects of the Allied role in the Holocaust, there has been no overarching review of all the arguments, or an analysis of how they are complementary or opposed. In this paper I lay the foundation for such a review and for further historiography by establishing a schematic grouping of the scholarly work, and presenting some of the key arguments of seminal works in this ever-expanding field. I hope to shed some light on the issues that have plagued contemporary understandings of the Allied and Churchillian roles in the Holocaust.

In the years immediately following World War Two there was limited discussion of the Holocaust. After few decades, however, it became a serious topic of discussion. Survivors found ways to address their trauma, which enabled them to talk and write about their experiences. Holocaust survivor Eli Wiesel wrote his memoir, *Night*, in 1958; Imre Kertész penned his Holocaust memoir, *Fatelessness*, in 1975. Jewish thinkers, in particular, began to examine some of the theological issues that arose in Judaism as a direct response to the Jewish

experience in the Holocaust. In an article entitled “Theological Reflections on the Holocaust,” Michael Rosenak posits that in the post-Holocaust world there have developed five distinct theological interpretations and responses.<sup>1</sup> Simply put, they are: Nothing is wrong with Jewish theology and the Holocaust was God’s way of the punishing the Jews; something seems to be wrong, there was a problem, but God has not deserted the Jewish people forever; something is wrong and there is a serious problem with the Jewish relationship with God; something is radically wrong and God’s failure to intervene in the Holocaust threatens the entire structure of Jewish faith; and finally, Jewish theology is wrong, and “God is not only silent, but dead.”<sup>2</sup> Embedded in Rosenak’s study and in the writings of some contemporary Jewish figures is the idea that Jews as a group required time to process the trauma of the Holocaust and to start addressing its implications for the Jewish people as a whole. This processing began with Jewish theology.

While the post-Holocaust theological questions may not seem to relate directly to the study of the Allies’ role in the Holocaust, there is a parallel between them. The first negative analysis of the Allied role in the Holocaust took more than thirty years to appear. It was put forward by the Jewish historian David Wyman in his 1978 article, “Why Auschwitz Was Never Bombed.” Wyman’s study was followed by an explosion of analyses over the following three decades. Did it take thirty years for Jewish historians to digest the Holocaust before they could view the Allies, not as saviours, but as somewhat lacking in will to help the Jews? Did Wyman forfeit objectivity, analyzing events to support a pre-conceived notion that the Allies could have done more? Perhaps his negative view of the Allies’ role illuminates the fact that even historians needed time to recover from the enormity of the Holocaust and once they did begin the processing the trauma of this extraordinary event, it made possible the explosion in works on the Allied role in the Holocaust.

David Wyman’s “Why Auschwitz Was Never Bombed” opened up the discussions about Allied inaction. Published in the May 1978 issue of *Commentary*,

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Rosenak. “Theological Reflections on the Holocaust: Between Unity and Controversy” in *The Impact of the Holocaust on Jewish Theology* ed. Stephen Katz. (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 163.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 163-166.

the article made some bold claims, all of which have been subsequently challenged by various historians. Wyman's most challenged claim centered on the feasibility of bombing Auschwitz and the reasons bombing never occurred. Wyman asserted that the bombing of Auschwitz was feasible from July 1944 to October 1944 when weather began to worsen, which made bombing more difficult.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, Wyman claimed that the War Department never bothered to look into the feasibility of the bombing. If they had, he argued, they would have discovered that the 15<sup>th</sup> Air Force, located in Foggia, Italy, was in the midst "of a major bombing campaign in the region around Auschwitz" already and thus could have carried out a bombing campaign.<sup>4</sup> Wyman felt that the failure to bomb Auschwitz lay with the War Department's Operations Division, which, according to Wyman, never investigated such possibilities.<sup>5</sup>

What Wyman failed to do, and what has been contested consistently since his ground-breaking article was published, was analyze the true feasibility of bombing Auschwitz's gas chambers and crematoria. The resulting literature can be categorized into three groups: The first and largest group is the Holocaust historians, whose works have answered the questions without delving into detailed military logistics, and generally see the Allied actions in the context of the war, not by military feasibility. The second group is the military historians. Their analyses have focused more specifically on the actual feasibility of the hypothetical bombing of Auschwitz, but paid less attention to the political issues at stake in the decision to not bomb Auschwitz. The third group is the historians of British policy and leadership. This group includes those who have chosen to look at the Allied actions during the Holocaust from a public policy perspective. They have generally avoided getting into the specifics of the feasibility of the various solutions they have proposed, but instead focus on the political issues that affected the decisions made.

Attempting to find some middle ground, some historians do not fit into any of these groups. Stuart Erdheim's "Could the Allies have Bombed

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<sup>3</sup> David S. Wyman. "Why Auschwitz was never Bombed" *Commentary*, 65:5 (May 1978), 43-44.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

Auschwitz-Birkenau?” is a clear example of such a position, and will be discussed in detail later.

The three basic groups that I have identified have approached the questions raised by David Wyman in a radically different manner, and arrived at very different responses to the same basic questions. It is notable that within each group opinions vary on whether the Allies should have, and could have, done more for the Jews. One might expect a uniform opinion within each group, but that is not the case. By comparing the different groups, I will demonstrate that the different approaches are not ultimately irredeemably at odds, but can be used together to develop a more complete and coherent understanding of the Allied actions during the Holocaust.

Holocaust historians are by far the largest group, with many weighing in on Wyman’s work and the questions he raised. Some of the more notable contributors include Deborah Lipstadt,<sup>6</sup> William Rubinstein and Wyman himself. Wyman’s 1984 book, *The Abandonment of the Jews*, expanded his 1978 article. The title of this book does not leave much to the imagination: Wyman takes a firm stance on Allied actions during the war.

William Rubinstein’s book, *The Myth of Rescue*, takes serious issue with many of Wyman’s claims. In his introduction, Rubinstein states:

*All of the many studies which criticize the Allies (and the Jewish communities of the democracies) for having failed to rescue Jews during the Holocaust are inaccurate and misleading, their arguments illogical and ahistorical.*<sup>7</sup>

Rubinstein analyzes the “myth of rescue”<sup>8</sup> in great detail throughout the book. He dedicates an entire chapter to battling what he terms the “myth of bombing Auschwitz.”<sup>9</sup> In addressing the issue Rubinstein acknowledges that the historians who have claimed that Allied policy was dominated by underlying anti-Semitism,

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<sup>6</sup> This is the same Deborah Lipstadt who successfully defended herself in a law suit for libel initiated by the noted Holocaust denier David Irving.

<sup>7</sup> William D. Rubinstein, *The Myth of Rescue: Why the democracies could not have saved more Jews from the Nazis* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), x.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.

and complacency towards the plight of the Jews, have repeatedly presented the “failure” to bomb Auschwitz as an opportunity lost.<sup>10</sup>

Rubinstein points to reticence and hesitance, of both Jewish and non-Jewish parties, in his argument over why bombing was never seriously considered. He argues:

Virtually no one in the United States proposed bombing it [Auschwitz], or any other extermination camp, while significant numbers of Jews were imprisoned there, or were being sent there; in particular the War Refugee Board failed to suggest it.<sup>11</sup>

Furthermore Rubinstein suggests that aside from the fact that no one put forward a detailed proposal to bomb any extermination camp,<sup>12</sup> the bombing itself was logistically impossible prior to 1944.<sup>13</sup> In explaining the War Refugee Board’s (WFB) failure to propose the bombing of Auschwitz, he emphasizes two important facts. First, all the requests sent to the WFB proposed bombing rail lines that lead to Auschwitz,<sup>14</sup> even Wyman accepted that such plans were not particularly feasible within the time constraints, and would have had limited effect in any case.<sup>15</sup> Second, Rubenstein links the WFB’s refusal to propose bombing Auschwitz (until November 1944, when it was too late) to resistance to the idea within Jewish groups themselves.<sup>16</sup> Rubinstein supports his discussion of the bombing of Auschwitz with an analysis of the available intelligence needed to bomb it. He stresses that the Allies had no reliable maps or photographs of the camp.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Rubinstein, *The Myth of Rescue*, 157.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.

<sup>12</sup> Although no one, including the War Refugee Board put forward a detailed plan for any bombing the extermination camps, the idea was proposed by various people including Dr. Chaim Weizmann when he spoke to Anthony Eden, the Head of the British Foreign Office, on July 6<sup>th</sup> 1944.

<sup>13</sup> Rubinstein, *The Myth of Rescue*. 158.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 160.

<sup>15</sup> For an expanded explanation of the possibility of bombing the train tracks see David S. Wyman. “Why Auschwitz was never Bombed” *Commentary*, 65:5 (May 1978), 39-41.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

<sup>17</sup> It is interesting to note that in this section Rubinstein cites Dino A. Brugioni, an expert on Photo Analysis during World War II. Brugioni’s work has been cited by

Rubinstein continues his debunking of “the myth of bombing Auschwitz” by analyzing the actual military feasibility of bombing the target without killing a large proportion of the prisoner population at the camp. In particular, he cites the military historian, James H. Kitchens III, who famously took issue with all the various non-military historians who did a superficial analysis of the possibilities of bombing Auschwitz.<sup>18</sup> He caps his argument with a discussion of the Executive of the Jewish Agency, which included David Ben-Gurion, the future first prime minister of the State of Israel. Ben-Gurion and the rest of the Executive, save for one, felt that bombing Auschwitz was not a good idea. Their reservations centered on two issues: the possibility of killing Jews with the bombings; and the fear that if they were successful, but did kill Jews in the process, the Germans would then try and pin their atrocities on the Allied bombers, thereby escaping blame.<sup>19</sup>

Rubinstein concludes that bombing Auschwitz was not possible for a plethora of reasons. It is interesting to see how Rubinstein fits into the groupings I have set forth. He is certainly not a military historian, but he does look to include the actual logistical feasibility of the bombing mission in his argument. He cites Kitchens, a military historian, and uses military logistics to bolster his argument. However, they do not play a central role in his thesis that those who struggle with the Allied failure to bomb Auschwitz do so with hindsight; at the time the lack of bombing was not viewed as a lost opportunity. This trend, using military logistics to bolster arguments, has been used by proponents of both sides of the argument,<sup>20</sup> but for the scholars in this group, military logistics do not play a central role in their arguments.

The military historians present a different perspective. This group includes James H. Kitchens III, Rondall Rice and, to some extent, Richard

proponents of both sides of the argument over whether bombing Auschwitz was feasible, further adding to the confusion.

<sup>18</sup> Rubinstein, *The Myth of Rescue*. 176.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 179-181.

<sup>20</sup> Although it has been used by both sides it has been more successfully employed by the ‘not possible’ side than the ‘possible’ side, with the notable exception of Stuart Erdheim’s article “Could the Allies have bombed Auschwitz-Birkenau” which does fit into any of the groups, despite it being published in the journal, *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*.

Foregger.<sup>21</sup> I have included in this group those whose work was published in an academic journal that dealt with military history, and who provided a military analysis of the feasibility of bombing Auschwitz or helping Jews in general. As in the Holocaust studies group, the military historians are not all in agreement over whether bombing Auschwitz was feasible. Kitchens and Foregger generally argue that it was not feasible, while Rice argues that from a purely logistical standpoint bombing Auschwitz was in fact feasible.

Kitchens's "The Bombing of Auschwitz Re-examined" is the seminal work in this group. Kitchens published his article in the April 1994 edition of *The Journal of Military History*. In his article, Kitchens observes that "On one hand, most reviewers of *Abandonment* [Wyman's *The Abandonment of the Jews*] were schooled in refugee or religious history, or Holocaust studies and apparently knew little about air power."<sup>22</sup> In systematically and critically analyzing Wyman's sources and research, Kitchens paints a picture of a social and political historian who is well out of his element in trying to write military history. Kitchens is ruthless, and the separation he creates between his own research and that of Wyman is vicious. At one point, he writes that "[p]rimary sources are even weaker [in Wyman's *Abandonment*]. The bibliography, for example, simply lists the USAF Historical Research Center as an institution, and nothing indicates which of the facility's files were actually examined."<sup>23</sup> Kitchens goes so far to posit whether or not Wyman actually visited the USAF Historical Research Center.<sup>24</sup>

Kitchens begins his article by examining the Allied intelligence around the time of the proposed bombing. He looks to Dino Brugioni to explain the lack of photo intelligence.<sup>25</sup> Kitchens explains that the Auschwitz-Birkenau complex only appeared in intelligence photos accidentally and no one was tasked

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<sup>21</sup> Foregger is actually a retired physician, and his original contribution to this group came in his 1987 article "The Bombing of Auschwitz" which was published in the non-academic magazine *Aerospace Historian*, but his "Two Sketch Maps of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Extermination Camps" was published in *The Journal of Military History*.

<sup>22</sup> James H. Kitchens III. "The Bombing of Auschwitz Re-examined," *The Journal of Military History* (Vol. 58, 2: 1994), 240.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 243.

<sup>24</sup> Kitchens, "The Bombing of Auschwitz Re-examined," 243.

<sup>25</sup> This is the same Dino Brugioni that was used by William Rubinstein, and would later be used by Stuart Erdheim.

with locating them, so their appearance was not noted until long after the war.<sup>26</sup> Kitchens continues attacking the Allied intelligence argument by taking issue with the Vrba-Wetzler report<sup>27</sup>. In particular he points to the escapees' description of the crematoria and gas chambers. Kitchens states flatly:

Neither escapee was a trained observer, and their page-and-a-half description of Birkenau's crematoria was almost exclusively concerned with the ghastly details of the operation rather than militarily useful targeting data such as building structural design, materials, foundations, and the like necessary for the selection and placement of ordnance.<sup>28</sup>

The failure to mention structural design and materials is a telling blow, and even in the responses to Kitchens' article no one is able to rebut this point successfully.<sup>29</sup>

After his discussion of Allied intelligence, Kitchens talks about what would have happened had the Allies overcome the intelligence problem and proceeded with the bombing of Birkenau. This is where Kitchens, and other military historians, really differentiate themselves from the Holocaust historians. Kitchens provides detailed facts on bomb types, plane types, accuracy statistics, and the like, something that none of his predecessors (with the exception of Foregger) had done successfully.

Kitchens concludes by suggesting that

[w]hatever was said or not said, felt or not felt, about camp bombing among Allied politicians and bureaucratic organs in 1944 was, and is, largely irrelevant to what happened, or could have

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<sup>26</sup> Kitchens, "The Bombing of Auschwitz Re-examined," 246.

<sup>27</sup> The Vrba-Wetzler report is a written account of the atrocities that took place in Auschwitz by two Slovakian Jews who managed to escape from the camp.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 248.

<sup>29</sup> For Example, In Stuart Erdheim's "Could the Allies have Bombed Auschwitz-Birkenau" he takes issue with Kitchens point on structural design. Erdheim says that "Structural information was generally obtained by target intelligence personnel using whatever sources they had at their disposal" He goes on to list a host of sources that would not have likely been available when trying to determine this information about the crematoria and gas chambers at Auschwitz. Basically, he does not have a good response to this one specific point.



happened. In the instance of Auschwitz, military policy was driven by availability of intelligence, operational possibilities; by assert allocation, by the rules of war, and by conventional morality.<sup>30</sup>

It is clear that military possibilities, not a prioritizing of demands (helping Jews was at the bottom of the priority list), is a key difference between the military historians' approach and the approach of the Holocaust studies historians.

An article which seems to bypass the boundaries that I have created is Stuart Erdheim's "Could the Allies Have Bombed Auschwitz-Birkenau?" Erdheim's article was published in *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, which is not a military journal, yet the language in Erdheim's article closely resembles the language used by Kitchens and Rice in their military analyses of the logistics of bombing Auschwitz.

Erdheim dedicates much of his article to a review of the various claims made by Kitchens and Richard Levy<sup>31</sup> and systematically challenges them. Erdheim leaves no stone unturned, challenging Kitchens's arguments, logic, footnotes, and his sources. At one point in the article, Erdheim takes issue with Kitchens's claim regarding a lack of Allied intelligence. Erdheim implies that Kitchens misrepresented a portion of F.H. Hinsley's *British Intelligence in the Second World War*. Erdheim writes:

As for Kitchens' use of Hinsley to support his position on the minimal amount of Allied intelligence available on the death camps, he states that in the British decrypts of German wireless telegraphic messages known as ULTRA, there were 'scarcely any references to concentration camps.'<sup>32</sup>

Erdheim continues by presenting Kitchens's paraphrasing of one of Hinsley's footnotes. To counter this Erdheim presents the actual footnote in its entirety. It

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<sup>30</sup> Kitchens, "The Bombing of Auschwitz Re-examined", 266.

<sup>31</sup> Richard H. Levy wrote an article entitled "The Bombing of Auschwitz Revisited: A Critical Analysis". In his article, published in the winter 1996 issue of *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, Levy took issue with many of Wyman's original claims, focusing specifically on the Jewish Communities own hesitance to bomb Auschwitz.

<sup>32</sup> Stuart Erdheim. "Could the Allies have Bombed Auschwitz-Birkenau" *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 2, no. 2 (Fall 1997), 139.

immediately becomes apparent that Kitchens has distorted the meaning of Hinsley's work to prove his own point.<sup>33</sup>

Beyond an incredibly thorough challenging of the main arguments presented by Kitchens and Levy, Erdheim gets into the military specifics of the plan. He focuses on the planning process that would have been necessary had the Allies decided that bombing Auschwitz was worth considering. He structures his argument differently than his predecessors did. He asks:

From a strictly operational point of view, could the four extermination facilities have been destroyed from the air? If the answer is no, then the discussion is at an end. But if the answer is yes, or even maybe, then we can begin to ask the more compelling question of should such a raid have been carried out.<sup>34</sup>

Erdheim argues that those, like Kitchens and Levy, who have looked at it in the reverse order, do not follow the basic military procedure the Allies would have followed. Furthermore, he sides with Wyman in rehashing the various reasons that have been put forward in the hope of understanding the basic structure of Allied military priorities. He then concludes that “[a]ll of these point to reasons that had more to do with the Allied mindset than its military capabilities.”<sup>35</sup>

Upon my initial reading of Erdheim, I found myself quickly swayed by his arguments. They are logical, well-researched, and conclusive. Yet the more I thought about Erdheim the less sure I was of his work. Three aspects disturbed me most. First, despite conducting a thorough analysis of Kitchens's work, he presents an extremely weak argument regarding the potential to gather building structure information. This, in turn, significantly undermines his original position.<sup>36</sup> Second, the strength of Erdheim's work can be largely attributed to his impressive and persuasive military language, rather than his research or argument. Finally, for such a landmark article on military history to appear in a non-military journal casts serious doubts on its credibility. Unfortunately, the full intricacies of these criticisms are beyond the scope of this essay. However, with a

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<sup>33</sup> For a comparison of the two quotes see: Stuart Erdheim. “Could the Allies have Bombed Auschwitz-Birkenau” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* (Fall 1997), 139.

<sup>34</sup> Erdheim, “Could the Allies have Bombed Auschwitz-Birkenau” 154.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.

<sup>36</sup> See footnote 28.

proper understanding of how Erdheim's article fits into the schematic that I have proposed, a much deeper understanding of the historiography can hopefully be achieved.

The last group of scholars in the debates about the efficacy of the bombing of Auschwitz is the British policy and leadership historians. Some very important scholars in the field of British history have weighed in on this subject. Of particular note are Martin Gilbert, the eminent Churchill biographer, and Michael J. Cohen, who has taken issue with Gilbert on several issues concerning Churchill's relationship with the Jews.

These two take an interesting stance on the Allied actions towards Jews in the Holocaust. Martin Gilbert, in *Auschwitz and the Allies*, agrees with Wyman that the Allies could and should have done more to help the Jews. He speaks at length about the process in which the Vrba-Wetzler report reached the Western Allies, and how they failed to act on the information they had. In his analysis, Gilbert carefully exonerates Churchill of all wrongdoing in the matter. Gilbert uses an oft-quoted minute from 7 July 1944 in which Churchill tells Anthony Eden, the head of the Foreign Office, to "Get anything out of the air force you can, invoke me if necessary."<sup>37</sup> Gilbert later asserts that in sending this minute to Eden, Churchill had "given Eden the authority to follow up two of the Jewish Agency's requests, the bombing of Auschwitz, and the Stalin declaration."<sup>38</sup> Gilbert would later imply that the fault in Britain's failure to bomb Auschwitz lay with Sir Archibald Sinclair, Secretary of State for Air, and a bureaucracy, which never really took Churchill's request all that seriously.<sup>39</sup> As one continues through Gilbert's work, it becomes clear that he sides most closely with Wyman's arguments.<sup>40</sup>

Michael J. Cohen takes a similar stance to that of Wyman and Gilbert. Unlike his predecessors Cohen takes the argument a step further. He does this originally in his article "Churchill and the Jews: The Holocaust," as well as his

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<sup>37</sup> Minute from Winston Churchill to Anthony Eden, taken from Martin Gilbert. *Auschwitz and the Allies*. (London and New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1981), 270.

<sup>38</sup> Gilbert, *Auschwitz and the Allies*, 271.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*, 304.

<sup>40</sup> Gilbert makes a serious point of exonerating Churchill, but this should come as no surprise since he is the official biographer of Churchill.

1985 book, *Churchill and the Jews*. In both he places the blame directly on Winston Churchill. Cohen disagrees with Gilbert's argument that Churchill was plagued by the bureaucracy. To counter this claim, he cites Churchill's involvement in the airlifting of supplies to the Polish Home Army in August and September of 1944.<sup>41</sup> Cohen points out that "Churchill's government, at all levels, had learned only too well that the Prime Minister was not a man whose determination could be thwarted with impunity." On the contrary, "Churchill was a man with a penchant for delving into the most petty of administrative details, even at the height of the greatest crisis."<sup>42</sup>

Cohen raises an important point: when Churchill wanted something done, he made sure it happened. Cohen explains that in dropping supplies to the Polish Home Army, Churchill demonstrated his ability to make his decisions realized, whether or not they were reasonable.

In pointing to the Polish Home Army debacle, Cohen is takes a new approach to the bombing of Auschwitz. First, he avoids getting into military specifics; he focuses on Churchill's actions as opposed to whether bombing Auschwitz was actually feasible. Cohen's approach can be summed up as follows: Churchill was not particularly interested in helping the Jews, at Auschwitz, or at any other point during the war; his actions were dominated by pre-established priorities, which did not generally include Jewish concerns.<sup>43</sup> By presenting his thesis as such, Cohen avoids analyzing the military logistics, which play an important role in any discussion about the possible bombing of Auschwitz. As a result, his all-encompassing thesis does not do justice to the bigger questions of why the Allies did not do more to help the Jews. It is too easy to simply argue that Churchill did not care enough to seriously entertain the idea of doing so.

In this essay I have attempted to bring some coherence to a chaotic picture presented by historians with regard to the issue of the Allied role Jewish aid during the war. A group schematic makes it easier to understand why there are so many different answers to the same basic question: to what extent did the Allies seriously attempt to help Jews in the Holocaust, and why? In reviewing an

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<sup>41</sup> Michael J. Cohen. "Churchill and the Jews: The Holocaust," *Modern Judaism* 6, no. 1 (February 1986), 43.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 45.

admittedly small sampling of the seminal works in each of the groupings, I have illustrated some of the common arguments. Moreover, through my analysis of how differences can be seen in the works within each group, I have underscored the different perspectives of individual scholars. Consequently, I have promoted a deeper understanding of the historiography of the Allied response to the Holocaust. It is crucial to recognize that this essay only touches the surface by examining a select few of the many works in this field. It is my intention that it will therefore serve as a starting point for further, more in-depth research and analysis of the historiography.

### **Annotated Appendix 1:**

An expanded list of the major scholars, their works, and where they might fit into my schematic.

#### **Group 1: The Holocaust Historians: Those who looked at Allied actions in context of the war, as opposed to military feasibility.**

1. David S. Wyman
  - a. “Why Auschwitz was Never Bombed”: This article published in the May 1978 issue of *Commentary* is what started the controversy.
  - b. *The Abandonment of the Jews*. This book expanded on his earlier article
2. William D. Rubinstein
  - a. *The Myth of Rescue: Why the democracies could not have saved more Jews from the Nazis*: Probably the most comprehensive answer to the ideas put forward by Wyman.
3. Deborah E. Lipstadt
  - a. “Witness to the Persecution: The Allies and the Holocaust: A Review Essay”: Published in the October 1983 issue of *Modern Judaism*, Lipstadt focuses more on the Allied immigration policy than the bombing of Auschwitz
4. Richard H. Levy
  - a. “The Bombing of Auschwitz Revisited: A Critical Analysis:” In this article published in the winter 1996 issue of *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, Levy takes issue with many of Wyman’s original

statements and focuses in particular on the Jewish community's own hesitance to bomb Auschwitz.

5. Joseph Robert White
  - a. "Target Auschwitz: Historical and Hypothetical German Response to Allied Attack": This article appeared in the spring 2002 issue of *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*. White, after reading much of the literature surrounding the possibility of bombing Auschwitz, proposes various hypothetical responses had the Allies bombed Auschwitz.
6. Stuart Erdheim
  - a. "Could the Allies Have Bombed Auschwitz-Birkenau?" This article appeared in the fall 1997 issue of *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*. Erdheim does a thorough examination of the claim by James H. Kitchens III and Richard H. Levy regarding the logistics of bombing Auschwitz. As mentioned earlier I struggled in properly placing Erdheim's article as he does not really fit into any category.

## **Group 2: Military Historians: Those who used a Military Approach**

1. James H. Kitchens III
  - a. "The Bombing of Auschwitz Re-examined": In this article in the April 1994 issue of *The Journal for Military History*, Kitchens argues that bombing Auschwitz was not militarily feasible for a variety of reasons, and this, not prioritization, is what stopped the Allies from seriously considering bombing Auschwitz.
2. Richard Forreger
  - a. "The Bombing of Auschwitz": This article appeared in the summer 1987 edition of *Aerospace Historian*, which is not an academic journal. Nevertheless, Forreger's work has been cited by many of the key scholars, including Kitchens.
  - b. "Two Sketch Maps of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Extermination Camps": This article appeared in the October 1995 issue of *The Journal for Military History*. Forreger argues that the maps that the

Allies had of Auschwitz-Birkenau would not have been sufficient to bomb Auschwitz.

3. Rondall Rice

- a. “Bombing Auschwitz: US 15<sup>th</sup> Air Force and the Military Aspects of a Possible Attack”: In this article, which appeared in the 1999 issue of *War in History*, Rice argues that from a strictly logistical standpoint, bombing the crematoria and gas chambers at Auschwitz-Birkenau was feasible with minimal prisoner casualties.

**Group 3: Allied Policy and Leader Historians: The scholars whose approach has focused on Allied policy and Allied leadership in the decision not to bomb Auschwitz**

1. Martin Gilbert

- a. *Auschwitz and the Allies*: Gilbert’s extraordinary book deals in detail with the failure to bomb Auschwitz, and he shifts the blame from the Allied leadership, specifically Churchill, to the bureaucracy, all the while agreeing with Wyman that bombing Auschwitz was feasible.

2. Michael J. Cohen

- a. *Churchill and the Jews*: This book presents the Allied failure to bomb Auschwitz as a part of a recurring pattern which showed Churchill’s low placement of the Jews on his priority list.
- b. “Churchill and the Jews: The Holocaust”: This article appeared in the February 1986 issue of *Modern Judaism* and expanded on some of the ideas put forward in his book, written in 1985.
- c. “Churchill and Auschwitz: End of Debate?” This article appeared in the 2006 issue of *Modern Judaism*. In it Cohen addresses some of the heavy criticism he has faced over his previous articles and his book.

3. Bernard Wasserstein

- a. *Britain and the Jews of Europe: 1939-1945*: This 1979 book goes into some depth in addressing the proposals to bomb

Auschwitz, and puts forward the idea that saving the Jews was just generally not a priority for the British policy makers. Wasserstein does not view this as positive or negative, but simply as a statement of fact.