

An Untold Story of a Pittsburgher Behind Nazis' Black Curtain

He Confronted Himmler to Save Jewish Lives

[Editor's Note: David Glick, a prominent lawyer and a veteran leader in general community affairs, as well as in Jewish affairs, had a fascinating personal experience in helping to rescue Jews who were menaced by Hitler and the dread Nazi SS Secret Police before World War II. There is enough for several novels in his exploits, which are little known. The Chronicle is proud to present a resume of his efforts in his own words—the words of a man who confronted the cruelly deadpan Heinrich Himmler, SS boss, in a mission to save Jewish lives. For years, Mr. Glick has been reluctant to allow newspaper reporters who knew the story to write it. However, he has agreed to have the Chronicle publish this resume published in the Harvard Law Bulletin. The Chronicle believes this article is a contribution to the history of the background to the holocaust that engulfed the Jewish people in the time of the Nazi terror. It comes at a time when the history of that period is being re-examined in the wake of the trial of the arch-murderer, Adolf Eichmann. This is the first of three articles.]

By DAVID GLICK

EARLY IN THE year 1936, Max Warburg of Berlin and Hamburg, Germany, communicated with his brother, Felix Hamburg in New York, telling him that conditions and circumstances under which the Jews of Germany were compelled to exist had reached a point where it was necessary to attempt to have an American citizen come to Germany and act as a liaison between the German Jews and the officials of the large German cities.

By decrees issued by the Nazi government, all Jews had been discharged from all civil service. After that, there slowly followed more decrees forbidding the employment of Jews as professors in universities, as lawyers, as physicians, and as jurists. Benefits in sick funds and health insurance were cancelled. In private enterprises, management had been dragooned into discharging all Jewish employees.

Finally there was the beginning of almost total confiscation of property. A decree had been issued which denied a Jew the right to call upon any German official unless ordered to do so. Furthermore, the Jews of Germany were not permitted to meet with Jews of foreign countries, nor were Jews of foreign countries permitted to meet with Jews of Germany. Because of these decrees, official and unofficial, the Jews were classed outlaws as well as outcasts.

My brother, Peter (who had been Secretary of Labor in Pennsylvania), met with Messrs. Felix Warburg and Paul Baerwald in New York City and volunteered to go to Germany and make the attempt to act as liaison. They dissuaded him when they learned he had five children. My brother Peter then called me and I went to New York and met with Messrs. Warburg and Baerwald.

If I went to Germany, it would be my task to try to bring to the attention of the Nazi officials any suggestion, recommendation or assistance I thought should be given the Jews that would enable them to migrate to other lands. I suggested to Messrs. Warburg and Baerwald that my first objective should be to meet with Mr. Himmler, who was the chief and head of the Gestapo. The reason was obvious, for within a few days, the Secret Police would pick me up, ask my purpose in coming to Berlin and any attempt to explain would only result in my being told to leave the country. Both men agreed with my suggestion.

I left for Germany early in April, 1936. When I arrived in Berlin, I registered at the Esplanade Hotel, which was directly across the street from the United States Consulate. After I was settled at the hotel, I called upon Mr. William E. Dodd, our Ambassador to Germany, a truly patriotic

main entrance to the headquarters, there was posted this sign, "JUDEN HABEN HIER KEIN EINTRIT" (Jews cannot enter here). Geist snarled at this sign. I just "wondered." Even though I was with an American Consul and therefore under complete protection, I am sure that, at that time, I must have been tense and nervous, for during the previous few days, I had seen the parades of the Brown Shirts, the Black Shirts, the thousands of swastikas and flags flying from all buildings in Berlin and could feel the oppression of a totalitarian government.

Mr. Geist suggested that he do all the talking, that I was to give

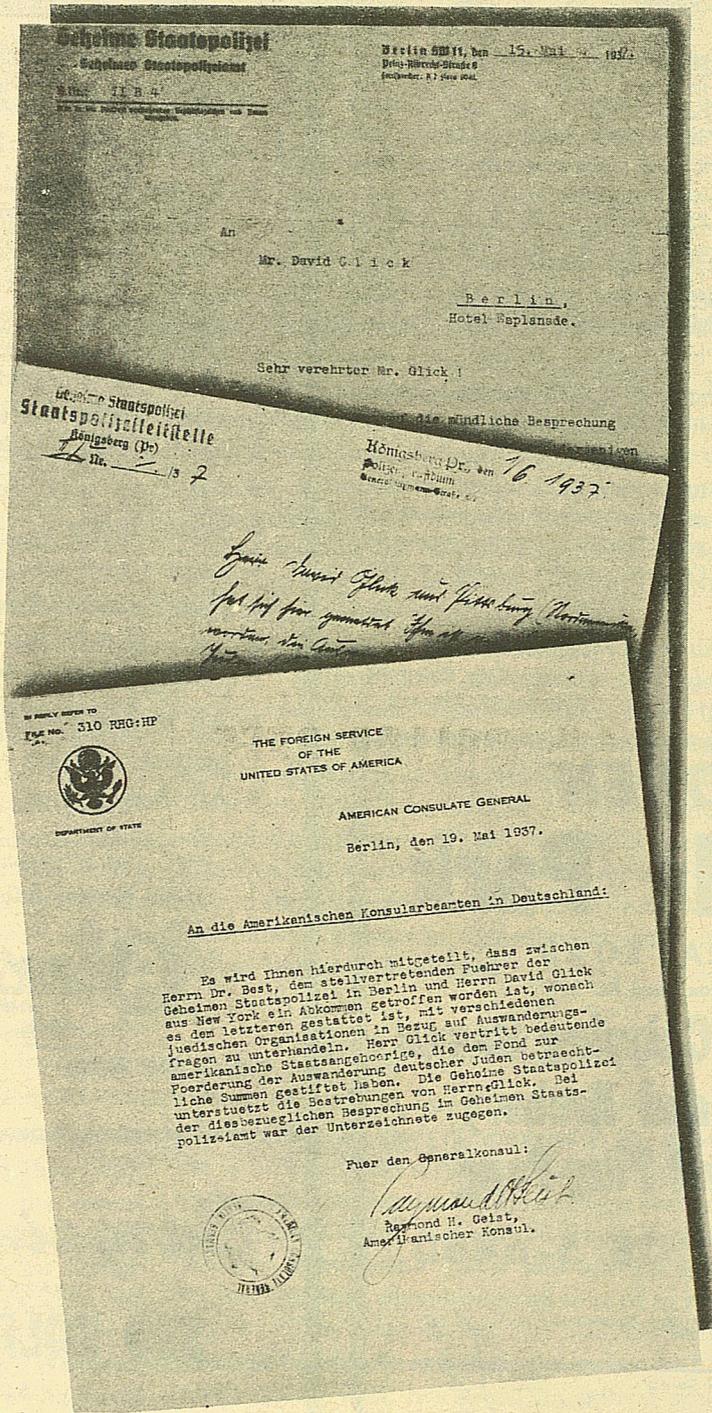
Geist told Himmler that I was in Berlin at the request of two men; that there had been no publicity given to my trip to Berlin; that no publicity was intended; that my work would be done quietly; that I would make no speeches or propaganda upon my return to America, nor write any articles.

My purpose was specifically to give help to the Jews of Germany to assist them in leaving Germany for other parts of the world with as much of their property as possible under the laws of Germany.

Next week Mr. Glick describes a one-man Community Chest from Bolivia.



DAVID GLICK
He crisscrossed Germany.



PAPERS — The exchange of many letters were necessary. Above, letters from Nazi Gestapo and the American Consul in Berlin.

American and a remarkable man, who took advantage of every opportunity in speaking to the small group of Americans in Berlin, stressing the nature and significance of democratic institutions.

This, of course, had made him unpopular with the Nazi officials. I explained to Mr. Dodd the purpose of my coming to Germany. He wished me well in my work and told me that he, as Ambassador, could not be of any help; that it would be the task of the American Consul to arrange a meeting with Mr. Himmler.

I then called upon Mr. George S. Messersmith, the United States Consul General, an outspoken and fearless representative of our country, and his First Assistant, Raymond Geist, the United States Consul.

I recall vividly that on the

no indication to Himmler that I could speak German fluently. Geist was to tell Himmler my purpose in coming to Berlin in German, then relate to me Himmler's reply in English, and I would speak to Geist in English. This arrangement worked satisfactorily and gave a kind of semi-official appearance to my visit.

I explained to both these officials the purpose of my visit to Germany and requested that they try to arrange an interview with Mr. Himmler. They reacted enthusiastically and immediately phoned Himmler without disclosing to him the purpose of the call, simply asking for an interview. The interview was granted and a few days later, I drove with Mr. Geist to the headquarters of the Gestapo at No. 8 Plince-Albrecht-Strasse.

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