

Carl Lutz: The Quiet Conscience of Budapest

Carl Lutz was not a soldier on the battlefield, nor was he working under a Nazi guise to deliberately sabotage the Holocaust. Rather, as a diplomat from neutral Switzerland, he was sent to Budapest, the Hungarian capital, in January of 1942 to represent the many countries that had cut off Hungary following its alignment with Nazi Germany (Lutz). Acting beyond the fighting and struggle of the war, Carl Lutz was beyond any doubt a hero of the Holocaust whose actions were nothing short of repairing a broken world.

Lutz was not sent to Budapest for the purpose of helping Jews; however, by the time he and his wife fled Hungary, he had saved tens of thousands of Jews from Nazi persecution (Carl). In 1944, Germany invaded Hungary and encouraged the deportation and death marches of Jews to German concentration camps (Lutz). Using his position as Vice-Consul, Lutz issued and authorized over 50,000 letters declaring Jews under Swiss protection and extending letters to protect whole families (Museum). Lutz put his own career in jeopardy by overreaching his power to help Jews escape persecution, and this heroic aspect of Lutz's character shows itself clearly when Lutz himself was put in danger. Towards the end of 1944, the Soviets invaded Hungary. Lutz remained at the risk of his life to continue issuing letters of protection to save Jews (Lutz). Lutz had no obligation to risk his life for the Jews; this was never his mission or objective, and he had already done so much for them. He saw his personal mission through to the end of the war in Hungary, acting as a genuine hero for the Jews.

The need for heroes such as Lutz and their actions indicates that the world they tried to improve was completely broken. However, it is thanks to the efforts of those like Lutz that the world was able to heal. Lutz's aid to the Jews did not stop at helping them escape their situation. He rented and established 76 buildings to feed and support Jewish refugees under his protection

(Lutz), including the Glass House, which protected around 3,000 Jewish refugees (Carl). These safe havens allowed the Jews to survive and pass their stories down to family and friends, ensuring that the Holocaust would never be forgotten. By helping Jews survive, Lutz ensured that the memory of the Holocaust would act as insurance that a genocide on a similar scale would never happen again. It is in this way that Lutz contributed to repairing the world from the destruction of the Holocaust.

Carl Lutz's actions definitively place him in the role of a hero, saving tens of thousands of Jews, and from the memory of the Holocaust he helped to save, he worked to repair the world. In a city consumed by violence and brutality, Lutz acted as a moral counterweight, courageously standing for what was right in Budapest.

Works Cited

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