



THOMASARLEGE.COM

Law Enforcement and Society: Lessons of the Holocaust

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Anti-Defamation League have joined forces since 1999 to develop training models for recruit, in-service, and command-level law enforcement officers as well as federal judges. The resulting program, *Law Enforcement and Society: Lessons of the Holocaust*, examines the history of the Holocaust and encourages law enforcement officials to reflect upon their personal and professional responsibilities in our pluralistic democracy. The Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Metropolitan Police Department, the Federal Judicial Center, and Prince George's County Police collaborated in designing the training, which has served more than 20,000 officers from nine local police agencies in the Washington, D.C., region and has achieved national recognition from the International Association of Chiefs of Police and the United States Department of Justice. Plans are also currently under way to develop a pilot to replicate the program in other states across the country.

The core components of each training session are (1) a guided tour of the Museum's Permanent Exhibition, which traces the history of the Holocaust from the Nazi rise to power through the end of World War II and its aftermath (1933–45); (2) a discussion with participants, led by Museum historians and educators, on the abuse of power under the Nazis and the role of police within the Nazi state; and (3) an interactive examination of the important and difficult role of police in American society today, led by Anti-Defamation League educators.

This unique program, which features local students who serve as tour guides for police, encourages a new dialogue between law enforcement personnel and the community in an era when the challenges for all are greater than ever.

Photo: Metropolitan Police Chief Charles Ramsey (far right) with cadets.

QUOTES FROM PARTICIPANTS:

“ [I would like my men to understand that our] oath of office stands for something... something very sacred...something they must never, ever violate. For when police officers violate their oath, there are indeed consequences. The Holocaust is probably the most extreme example of just how horrific and far-reaching those consequences may be. But even small ethical violations on the part of police officers can result in people’s rights being denied, their confidence in the police being eroded, and their communities being made less safe. That is an extremely critical lesson for our officers—and one that this training drives home. The true power of this training lies in its call to action. ”

—Metropolitan Police Chief Charles Ramsey

“ I have spent four informative days at the Museum, studying, evaluating, and weighing the events that occurred during this horrible event. The end result reinforced and reminded me of the outstanding work that we do and the arduous task of protecting the rights and privileges of every human being....We do not police as Nazi Germany did, and because of that, we are the front line in the fight for sustaining democracy. ”

—Trainer, Prince George’s County Police

This program has been made possible by the support from the following contributors:

The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation

Sheila Johnson Robbins

Roslyn and Leslie Goldstein

Stanley and Susan Chesley

Fred S. Zeidman

The Mervin G. and Roslyn G. Morris Educational and Philanthropic Fund

Gail and Maurice Gaspar

The May Family Endowment for Civic Responsibility Training



*For additional information, please contact
Lynn Williams, Director of Community Partnerships,
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum,
tel 202.488.0492, e-mail lwilliams@ushmm.org.*