

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910808344303321
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Titolo	Rescuing the world [[electronic resource]] : the life and times of Leo Cherne / / Andrew F. Smith ; foreword by Henry A. Kissinger
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Albany, : State University of New York Press, c2002
ISBN	0-7914-8854-3 0-585-48600-X
Edizione	[1st ed.]
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (272 p.)
Disciplina	362.87/526/092 B
Soggetti	Human services personnel Human rights workers Refugees - Services for
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Description based upon print version of record.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references (p. 207-214) and index.
Nota di contenuto	<p>""Rescuing the World""; ""Contents""; ""Foreword by Henry A. Kissinger""; ""Introduction""; ""A Note on Sources""; ""Acknowledgments""; ""1. Setting the Stage""; ""2. Researching America""; ""3. Rescuing the Postwar World""; ""4. Combusting Spontaneously""; ""5. Uncovering Communists""; ""6. Lobbying for Indochina""; ""7. Confronting Genocide""; ""8. Sculpting the World""; ""9. Ransoming Prisoners""; ""10. Guiding Intelligence""; ""11. The Falling Curtain""; ""Notes""; ""Introduction""; ""Chapter 1. Setting the Stage""; ""Chapter 2. Researching America""</p> <p>""Chapter 3. Rescuing the Postwar World""""Chapter 4. Combusting Spontaneously""; ""Chapter 5. Uncovering Communists""; ""Chapter 6. Lobbying for Indochina""; ""Chapter 7. Confronting Genocide""; ""Chapter 8. Sculpting the World""; ""Chapter 9. Ransoming Prisoners""; ""Chapter 10. Guiding Intelligence""; ""Chapter 11. The Falling Curtain""; ""Selected Bibliography""; ""A. Books by Leo Cherne""; ""B. Selected Professional Publications with Leo Cherne as Author or Co-Author""; ""C. Selected Articles, Chapters, and Reports by Leo Cherne""; ""D. Selected Unpublished Manuscripts by Leo Cherne""</p> <p>""E. Selected Articles about Leo Cherne""""F. Selected Speeches by Leo</p>

Sommario/riassunto

Leo Cherne's life brimmed with paradox and improbability. He was born in the Bronx to a poor, immigrant, Jewish family, and yet rose to the heights of economic and political power in WASP America. A successful entrepreneur and an unofficial advisor to nine presidents, he nevertheless devoted the majority of his time to humanitarian causes, particularly the International Rescue Committee, which he chaired for forty years. From Hungary to Cuba to Cambodia, Cherne traveled across the globe on behalf of political refugees. A consummate networker, he also had the uncanny ability to attract and cultivate talented people before they became prominent, including such figures as John F. Kennedy, Ronald Reagan, Patrick Moynihan, Claiborne Pell, Tom Dooley, William Casey, John Whitehead, and Henry A. Kissinger. He was presented with the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1984 by Ronald Reagan, who proclaimed that although never elected to governmental office, Leo Cherne had more influence on American foreign policy than most elected officials. The underlying theme of his life was that one person, without family contacts or wealthy connections, could make a difference worldwide in political and humanitarian affairs.
