Miller Center Welcomes New Faculty to UVM
by Jonathan Huener
UVM Associate Professor of History

In 2006 the University of Vermont began efforts to recruit new faculty for the Carolyn and Leonard Miller Center for Holocaust Studies. This was made possible by a $5 million gift from Leonard Miller, University of Vermont Class of 1951, and his late wife Carolyn. The process is now complete, and we are delighted to announce that during the current academic year we will welcome four outstanding new faculty to UVM.

Professor Francis R. Nicosia has joined us this semester as the Raul Hilberg Distinguished Professor of Holocaust Studies. A historian of German Zionism and antisemitism, Frank is best known for his books *The Third Reich and the Palestine Question* and his recent *Zionism and Antisemitism in Nazi Germany*, which appeared this year with Cambridge University Press. In addition, Frank has co-edited or co-authored five other works, and is currently working on a comprehensive study of Nazi Germany’s Middle East policy.

In January 2009 Alan Steinweis will join us as Professor of History and as the new director of the Carolyn and Leonard Miller Center for Holocaust Studies. A Holocaust scholar of broad interests and expertise, Alan is author of *Art, Ideology, and Economics in Nazi Germany: The Reich Chambers of Music, Theater, and the Visual Arts* and *Studying the Jew: Scholarly Antisemitism in Nazi Germany*. He comes to us from the University of Nebraska, where he is currently Hyman Rosenberg Professor of History and Judaic Studies, and where he has served as editor for the monograph series *The Comprehensive History of the Holocaust*, published by the University of Nebraska Press and Yad Vashem. We eagerly await the publication of his latest work, *A German Pogrom: The Kristallnacht in History and Memory*, forthcoming in 2009 from Harvard University Press.

The Miller Center and the UVM History Department will also welcome in January 2009 Associate Professor Susanna Schrafstetter, a scholar of modern and contemporary European history whose research has focused on nuclear diplomacy, the legacy of Nazi crimes in European international politics and, more recently, compensation for victims of Nazi crimes. She is author of *Die Dritte Atommacht: Britische Nichtverbreitungspolitik im Dienst von Statussicherung und Deutschlandpolitik: 1952-1968* and co-author of *Avoiding Armageddon: Europe, the United States, and the Struggle for Nuclear Nonproliferation*. Susanna likewise comes to us from the University of Nebraska, and has also taught at the University of Glamorgan, Wales.

For the spring semester 2009 we will also welcome Professor James Waller, who will serve as the first Miller Visiting Distinguished Professor of Holocaust Studies. A social psychologist at Whitworth University, Jim has distinguished himself as a scholar of comparative genocide and is best known for his highly acclaimed book *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing*. He will teach a course on the psychology of genocide and present two public lectures.

All these colleagues bring to the University of Vermont a wealth of teaching experience, and with our expanded course offerings, we expect the number of undergraduate students with a minor field in Holocaust studies to grow.
significantly. Moreover, the addition of Frank, Alan, and Susanna will dramatically strengthen our Master of Arts program in European history.

Our work in recent months has also been enhanced by the addition of Mr. Philip Pezeshki as the Center’s new administrative coordinator. A graduate of Miami University with a master’s degree in public administration from the University of Wyoming, Philip has adjusted to his new responsibilities with skill, dedication and, not least, a sense of humor.

On February 18, 2009, Frank Nicosia will present the inaugural Raul Hilberg Distinguished Professor Lecture in the Waterman Memorial Lounge. We will be using this event and the reception to follow as an opportunity for friends of the Miller Center and members of the community to meet and welcome our new colleagues.

“The Maiden and the Tree: Anne Frank & the 21st Century” by David Barnouw
War Documentation Center, Amsterdam

A lecture review by Christine Nold and Helen Wilbur

On April 1, 2008, David Barnouw presented the lecture “The Maiden and the Tree: Anne Frank and the 21st Century” to an audience of faculty, students, and community members. Barnouw, the foremost scholar on Anne Frank, co-edited The Diary of Anne Frank: The Critical Edition and works for the War Documentation Center in Amsterdam. He is also serving as a visiting professor at the University of Vermont during the fall 2008 semester.

Barnouw began his lecture by acknowledging the importance of the late Professor Raul Hilberg to the University of Vermont campus, noting that it was an honor to speak at the home of the author of the first standard work on the Holocaust. He introduced himself as someone who was born “after the war,” yet was strongly influenced by his father’s and grandfather’s experiences in Nazi-occupied Europe. His lecture outlined the story of Anne Frank’s diary, including the transformation of the text, its translation into theater and film, and its legacy both in the U.S. and Holland.

On June 12, 1942, Anne Frank received a diary for her thirteenth birthday, and on that date she began to record what would arguably become the most well-known Holocaust narrative. In his lecture, Barnouw stressed the importance of recognizing that Anne Frank was a teenager who was often more concerned with her personal relationships and fascination with movie stars than with the war. In addition, he spoke of Frank as a young literary figure and noted that her writing improved significantly over the course of the two years covered by her diary. Although Barnouw introduced Frank’s story, the focal point of his lecture was the story of her diary.

Barnouw drew attention to Frank’s March 29, 1944, entry in which she referenced a radio broadcast regarding planned use of diaries and letters after the war. Following this broadcast, Frank began revisions to her diary in preparation for future publication. Though Anne Frank herself made the first edits, the Diary would undergo many additional editing stages prior to publication, the first by her father Otto Frank. The Diary was first published in Dutch, followed by German, and Barnouw commented in particular on the difficulty of studying Otto Frank’s German translation from Dutch to German. The Diary was next translated into French and ultimately English, with publishing companies adding additional levels of editing at each of these stages.

One of Barnouw’s other areas of focus was the dramatization of Frank’s story through film and theater, beginning with a Broadway premiere in 1955. As part of this process, a number of people, including Otto Frank, various scriptwriters, and directors, competed for control of Frank’s story. These competing interests further transformed the Diary to fit national and personal concerns. Barnouw stated that in the United States Frank’s story was generalized to fit an American audience. In particular, explicit references to Frank’s Jewish identity were minimized. In Holland, Frank’s story was used to further the myth of resistance, i.e. that the Dutch were unwilling participants in Nazi-occupied Europe.

While many academics are quick to criticize various alterations in Frank’s story, Barnouw noted that it is certainly not unusual for Hollywood to reinterpret historical events. He also suggested that Frank herself would have enjoyed such interpretations, and delighted to imagine herself as a model or a movie star. In addition, Barnouw stressed that these transformations should be viewed not as a trivialization of Frank’s story, but as an essential part of the story of the Diary. Through his analysis, Barnouw showed how various individuals and communities are able to extract different messages from a single source.

Christine Nold received her M.A. in History from UVM in May 2008. Helen Wilbur received her M.A. in History from UVM in May 2008.
“Remembering Raul Hilberg”
A Conversation with
Christopher Browning and Saul Friedländer

Lecture reviews by
Alex Lehning and Jonathan Schwab

Friends, family, colleagues, and community members gathered on April 13, 2008, to remember the life and honor the work of Professor Raul Hilberg, a distinguished political scientist and UVM faculty member from 1956-1991. The event, “Remembering Raul Hilberg: A Conversation with Christopher Browning and Saul Friedländer,” was hosted by the University of Vermont’s Carolyn and Leonard Miller Center for Holocaust Studies. Associate Professor of History Jonathan Huener provided an introduction and detailed some recent changes at the Center, including the appointments of Francis R. Nicosia as the Raul Hilberg Distinguished Professor of Holocaust Studies, and Alan Steinweis as Professor of History and Director of the Center. Associate Professor of History Susanna Schrafstetter will also be joining the UVM Department of History.

Huener noted that Prof. Hilberg had provided the “map and compass” for the formal academic discipline of Holocaust Studies. He also remarked on the dual nature of the afternoon’s “public conversation.” The discussion should be considered not only a look back at the efforts of Hilberg, but also a look forward to the future of Holocaust Studies at UVM, including growing student interest in the undergraduate minor and the addition of faculty members, he said. Nicosia as he introduced the two speakers, and added that there could be “no better way to pay tribute to Raul Hilberg and to the future of Holocaust Studies at UVM than to have the two leading historians of the Holocaust today speak about Hilberg’s legacy.”

Christopher Browning is the Frank Porter Graham Professor of History at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He identified Hilberg as the “founding father” of Holocaust Studies. Browning said that Hilberg’s pioneering work, The Destruction of the European Jews, represented an “academic conversion” and “intellectual turning point” for his own research and publications. He also emphasized Hilberg as a mentor and a friend, a historian who stubbornly pursued and expanded upon his groundbreaking research, despite some controversy and professional discouragement. Furthermore, Hilberg often anticipated and guided “important strands of future study,” which only increased his constructive influence on the development of the field, according to Browning. One of these areas was the American response to the Holocaust, a topic that is increasingly addressed by historians and other academics. Browning noted that Hilberg was often heavily criticized for his analysis of the actions of Jewish Councils under Nazi occupation. In practice, however, Hilberg was open to new interpretations and responded to his detractors in subsequent editions. He expanded on, but did not detour from, his conclusions about Jewish resistance and responses to the Nazis, while maintaining high standards in the uses of historical evidence and documentation. The later editions of Hilberg’s groundbreaking study often re-focused his thinking on the motivation of perpetrators, and conveyed his thoughts on examples of “modern genocide,” said Browning. He concluded that The Destruction of the European Jews was monumental, and so influential that it often overshadowed Hilberg’s later works that sought to portray the “human experience.”

Saul Friedländer is a Professor of History at UCLA and a Pulitzer award-winning historian of the Holocaust. He is also a Holocaust survivor. Friedländer praised Hilberg’s commitment to his work, noting as well that he “changed or nuanced his big ideas, but never abandoned them.” In particular, Friedländer praised Hilberg’s text for identifying the role of “self-propelled party, state, economic, and military bureaucracies” as the “internal logic of the Nazi system.” He described the often “hostile” environment that Hilberg faced, but also the enormous influence of both his writing and innovative exploration of archival sources. Friedländer noted that criticisms were possibilities for reexamination, but also matters of opinion. Like Browning, Friedländer acknowledged that his reading of Hilberg altered the direction of his own career. He also argued that beneath the sometimes detached manner of Hilberg’s writing was a deep sense of compassion for the victims of the Nazis, and a determination to offer well-written and well-researched scholarship on the history of the Holocaust, despite “public indifference and intellectual hostility.” Friedländer admitted that while he sometimes disagreed with Hilberg’s assessments or use of evidence, the latter was truly the “founder” of Holocaust studies, both in North America and throughout the world.

Both speakers provided not only personal reflections, but also analysis of Hilberg’s scholarly contributions, as well as some of the inevitable debates that always accompany path-breaking scholarship. The event concluded with a question and answer session, which featured discussions of Hilberg’s work, its reception, and the nature of the field of Holocaust studies. Browning and Friedländer again commented on the lessons and legacy of Hilberg – a strong intellectual work ethic, genuine historical curiosity, and the determination to accurately and articulately pursue the truth, regardless of the consequences. To remember Raul Hilberg that afternoon was to both honor his work and to recognize the intellectual debt owed to him by countless students and scholars of the Holocaust, both past and present.

Alex Lehning is a graduate student in the Department of History at UVM. Jonathan Schwab received his M.A. in History from UVM in 2008.
In his September 15, 2008, lecture, “Comradeship and Sex in Hitler’s Military,” Professor Geoffrey Giles of the University of Florida lectured on the largely unexplored topic of the persecution of homosexuals in the German military during the Third Reich. Focusing on the years 1935-1945, Giles addressed the Nazis’ effort to clearly define homosexuals and homosexuality. Before 1935, proof of either oral or anal penetration was what defined homosexuality. After the revision of the law in 1935, scientists, government officials and military personnel could not reach a consensus on what constituted a “true” homosexual or a punishable homosexual act. To further complicate matters, Nazi propaganda advocating male bonding and camaraderie often possessed ambiguously homoerotic overtones. These mixed messages, combined with the inability of the law to clearly delineate appropriate and inappropriate behavior, lead to a general confusion over what would lead to one being labeled a homosexual. Unlike the Jewish “problem,” homosexuality was not wholly characterized as a degenerate genetic condition. The Nazis believed that most culprits consciously chose to be homosexual or were victims of seduction. Only a portion of the guilty was thought to possess a genetic disposition toward this behavior. Because of these assumptions, Nazi policy towards homosexuals differed greatly from the regime’s policies towards the Jews and other “undesirables.” While there is no doubt that the persecution of homosexuals escalated under the Third Reich, Giles made clear that this was not a simple matter of extermination, but a far more intricate problem.

After 1935, the law criminalizing homosexuality expanded beyond oral or anal penetration to encompass any act that could be construed as overtly sexual. While there was a great impetus to expel homosexuals and homosexual elements from the military, Professor Giles asserted that a mere accusation would not automatically result in one’s conviction, dismissal, or internment. By drawing upon specific court cases, Professor Giles clearly illustrated that even the most homoerotic acts were not necessarily considered homosexual in nature. One case in 1938 involved the trial of two soldiers who were discovered naked in bed together. Though the revision of the law in 1935 stated that any act—a look, a touch, a word—could be deemed a homosexual act, the court exonerated them, ruling that their actions were not necessarily proof of homosexual activity. Additionally, even if one was convicted of a homosexual act, this surprisingly did not prove that the individual was a homosexual. In another case, one officer, after kissing and mutually masturbating with soldiers in his battery unit, was tried and sentenced to death, not because of what he had done but because of his intention to desert. The courts ruled that in spite of his actions he was not considered a genetically hopeless homosexual. Rather, it was decided that his youth and immaturity led him to these aberrant actions, and had he not intended to desert he would have been sentenced to five years in a penitentiary for his deeds. To some degree, these small allowances stemmed from a need to explain away the burgeoning number of homosexual acts in the Third Reich.

After the revision of the law in 1935, the number of suspected homosexuals ballooned. Heinrich Himmler, the leader of the SS, estimated the number to be between one million and two million in Germany alone. In order to account for this alarming figure, the Nazis differentiated between different types of homosexual activity. Though homosexuals were often stereotyped as perverted pedophiles who preyed on the vulnerable and naïve, there did exist a general, if somewhat muddled, system of classification. Those diagnosed with a genetic disposition towards homosexuality were considered “true” homosexuals. These individuals faced the harshest punishments of extended jail time or even execution. Individuals with only one isolated incident of homosexuality were not yet considered “true” homosexuals, and could in some cases restore their honor by fighting on the front lines. Between these two classifications were those individuals suspected of a genetic disposition. These individuals were often kept for surveillance in punishment units, while repeat offenders, or those deemed “incorrigible,” could face castration.

In spite of these somewhat flexible definitions of homosexual behavior, the Third Reich continued to escalate its policy of persecution. One should not doubt the severity of the Nazi program against homosexuals merely because all suspects were not automatically deported to concentration camps. Not all accusations led to conviction, but the accused faced multiple interrogations, consistent harassment and the very real possibility of internment and death. Such incidents as the execution of SA leader Ernst Röhm in 1934 during the Night of the Long Knives encouraged violence against homosexuals. Part of Hitler’s justification for the murder of Röhm was to ensure the safety of children in the Hitler Youth, thus perpetuating the image of the homosexual as a sexual predator. As Giles noted, executions of offenders occurred until the very end of the war. Additionally, those unfortunate enough to be sent to the camps were forced to wear the infamous pink triangle with the hope that others would emotionally isolate them, thus increasing the likelihood that they would die.

In drawing together these points on the nature of the Nazis’ persecution of homosexuals, Professor Giles asserted that had the Germans won the war, this abuse would only have intensified. Fascism thrived on the fear of the enemy,
and though Professor Giles conceded that one cannot claim that there was a Holocaust of homosexuals, he did conclude that, had Hitler prevailed, homosexuals were sure to have been the next target for the thousand-year Reich. Yet the very real problems of implementation he discussed lead to a larger question of how the Nazis would have implemented such an enormous project. One cannot know if the Nazis would have been willing to sacrifice millions of their own “Aryan” nationals in an effort to eliminate homosexuality. Yet, in spite of these difficulties, their message was clear, namely that there was an ideal to which all should conform. Those who could not pay with their dignity, their honor, and very often with their lives.

Michelle Magin is a graduate student in the Department of History at UVM.

This lecture was held in conjunction with the United States Memorial Museum’s travelling exhibition on the persecution of homosexuals in Nazi Germany.

“The Netherlands and the German occupation: Myth and Reality”
by David Barnouw
War Documentation Center, Amsterdam

A lecture review by Nathan Gondelman

On the evening of September 25, 2008, the Center for Holocaust Studies presented a lecture by David Barnouw of the Center for War Documentation in Amsterdam, and currently a visiting Professor of Holocaust Studies at UVM. The lecture examined some of the myths related to the German occupation of the Netherlands during World War II.

As Professor Jonathan Huener mentioned in his introduction, Professor Barnouw is a historian at the center of two recent trends in Holocaust studies. First, Professor Barnouw focuses much of his study outside of the German Reich—on the “geographic periphery” of the Holocaust—and particularly the Holocaust in the Netherlands. Certainly, much has been written about the Holocaust as it played out within the Reich proper, as well as Eastern Europe, but until recently a great deal less attention has been paid to the Holocaust in peripheral areas like the Netherlands; this recent change is due to the research and work of scholars like David Barnouw. Furthermore, Professor Huener noted that Professor Barnouw is at the center of another recent trend in Holocaust Studies, namely the examination of national memories of the Holocaust in various countries since 1945. The study of a nation’s memory of the Holocaust, and how it considers its history of compliance, resistance, collaboration, rescue, and so forth, has gained considerable attention from historians in recent years. And once again, Professor Barnouw’s research is at the center of this growing area of research.

Professor Barnouw opened his lecture by dividing the myths about the German occupation of the Netherlands during World War II into three different categories: short-term, medium-term, and long-range myths that have marked the Dutch national memory of the Second World War since 1945. Many of these myths came into being during the war, some remained for decades thereafter until they were debunked by historical research, and others remain very much alive in the Dutch national conscience today.

Perhaps the first short-term myth to be shattered was the idea that the Netherlands was somehow neutral prior to the German invasion in May of 1940. Though the Dutch people may have considered themselves and their country neutral, the Dutch government understood that Germany, not the Western Allies, represented the greatest danger to the Netherlands. In addition, the Dutch government had received a fair amount of evidence indicating that the Germans would, indeed, violate Dutch “neutrality” in conjunction with other military operations undertaken by the Wehrmacht in the West.

The German conquest of the Netherlands, which took all of five days, was such a resounding and shocking defeat that many myths appeared which helped rationalize the relative ease with which the Germans were able to subdue the Netherlands. One such myth promoted the idea that there had been a massive betrayal of Dutch soldiers who were, in reality, closet Nazis. This tale, of course, was apocryphal, but Professor Barnouw noted actions by the Dutch government that seemed, on some level, to corroborate such myths. In fact, on the first day of the German invasion of the Netherlands, fifty thousand to sixty thousand Dutch citizens, as well as all Dutch Nazi party members, were interned by the Dutch government due to unfounded fears about collaboration and subversion. Afterwards, a myth came to light alleging that all of those interned were subsequently liberated by the advancing German armies and, in turn, became collaborators. Professor Barnouw debunked all of these spurious claims and noted that, in reality, there were only between two hundred and three hundred Dutch citizens who truly collaborated with the Germans.

In terms of the purely military aspects of the conquest of the Netherlands, Professor Barnouw also noted quite a few additional myths. The failure of the Germans to capture a dam in central Holland for a few days was perceived by some as a small moral victory for the Dutch when, in fact, the attack on the dam only failed because the Germans were ill-prepared and had not expected their advance to proceed so rapidly. Furthermore, many Dutch viewed the bombing of Rotterdam by the Germans on the third day of the
invasion as cowardly and inhumane, since Rotterdam was purported to be a city without soldiers. Moreover, casualty counts by the Dutch were estimated to be over thirty thousand. Barnouw refuted these two myths with the evidence that Rotterdam did indeed have soldiers stationed there, and that only eight hundred people were actually killed in the bombing raid.

Once the Germans had subdue the Netherlands, and Western Europe had begun a four-year period of relative silence, numerous myths about the German occupation were generated. Professor Barnouw specifically noted the myth of Dutch economic collaboration which has plagued the Dutch national psyche for years. The notion of Dutch economic compliance was that because many Dutch worked in factories which helped the German war effort, they were economic collaborators. Professor Barnouw noted that because the Germans were sending their factory workers to the front, and replacing them with Dutchmen, economic collaboration was unavoidable. Even before the war, as Barnouw pointed out, Germany was the main trading partner of the Netherlands. Thus, it is unfair for the Dutch national memory to be plagued with guilt about an economic relationship that was, unfortunately, an unavoidable reality.

Professor Barnouw also went into depth about some of the myths which have, at one point or another, infiltrated the Dutch national memory about anti-German resistance during the occupation. One such claim is that Dutch communists had been inactive in the Dutch resistance movement until June of 1941, when Germany invaded the Soviet Union. Of course, the incontrovertible fact that Dutch communists did indeed participate in the February 1941 strike in Amsterdam debunks this myth. On a larger scale, Professor Barnouw pointed out that, following the war, the polarization of Dutch society among Calvinists, Catholics, and Social Democrats was largely ignored in the national memory about Dutch resistance. The reality is that, even during the war, the pamphlets distributed by the Dutch resistance contained blatant examples of polarization — signifying, in turn, a polarized resistance.

Professor Barnouw noted that sympathy for a small country like the Netherlands under German occupation did a great deal to foster a heroic image about the Dutch resistance. However, despite this romantic conception of Dutch resistance during the war, the unfortunate fact is that seventy-five percent of Dutch Jews were killed in the Holocaust — a much higher percentage than in the Netherlands’ reputedly more anti-Semitic Western European neighbors.

Even as the military battleground once more found its way onto Dutch soil in the autumn of 1944, more myths continued to arise. When British General Bernard Montgomery’s “Operation Market Garden” failed to reach its objective that fall, to rationalize the seemingly-impossible German victory, rumors and accusations of double-crossing and betrayal circulated that the Allies had ignored intel-
the euthanasia program, the systematic murder of mentally and physically handicapped people, both in Germany and in some occupied territories. It was here, Professor Weinberg noted, that the Nazis began to experiment with different techniques of systematic mass murder. After all, how does one kill vast numbers of people, dispose of their bodies, and hire the people to carry out these grisly tasks in an efficient manner? The Pope knew about this program, and Weinberg explained that hospitals and institutions owned and operated by the Catholic Church were used by the Nazis in the killing of these people. Despite numerous protests, both within Germany and abroad, the Pope did not publicly speak out. The only mention of this program by the Pope was in an article published on December 6, 1940, where he stated that euthanasia was “…contrary to Divine Law.” This was far from a condemnation of Nazi policy which claimed hundreds of thousands of lives.

The third example took place in Croatia after Yugoslavia was dissolved following the German conquest. The killings were directed against Eastern Orthodox Christians in April 1941, and were often organized and led by Catholic priests, not the Germans. Large numbers of people were slaughtered during this outburst of violence. Weinberg noted that Pope Pius XII did not condemn this, even during his meeting with the Croatian Fascist leader, Ante Pavelic.

Next was the program to mass murder the Jews of Europe, known as the “final solution,” which began in the fall of 1941 and claimed the lives of some six million Jews. The Vatican soon became aware of the systematic mass murder of the Jews by the Germans. However, even after the Allies publicly condemned these killings in late 1942, the Pope remained silent.

The fifth and final killing program that Weinberg mentioned began in 1942, and was directed against the more than one hundred thousand forced laborers brought into Germany from all over occupied Europe. Initially, when female workers became pregnant, the Nazis sent them home. However, as the war dragged on, such women were forced to have abortions, while any of their children who were born were simply murdered. These murders, as in the euthanasia program, were at times carried out in Catholic hospitals and institutions. Since the Pope did not publicly condemn the abortions and killings, the nuns and their Bishops responsible were left without ethical guidance. There is no concrete information as to when the Pope learned of this program, but Professor Weinberg guessed it was sometime in 1943.

Upon completing his examination of these five killing programs, Professor Weinberg turned to possible explanations for the Pope’s silence. One was that the Pope wanted to protect Vatican finances. Weinberg argued against this interpretation, especially since the first two programs actually had a negative impact on Church finances.

Another possible explanation was the belief that the Nazis would seize the Vatican and imprison the Pope. Professor Weinberg thought this highly unlikely. During programs one and two, Italy was not in the war, and during the later programs, it was Germany’s ally. Since the Germans did not occupy Italy until the fall of 1943, it is unlikely they would have invaded Italy just to capture the Pope. All of these killing programs had been underway before Italy’s surrender. It is also important to note the Germans were obsessed with maintaining a healthy morale on the home front. Had they taken action against the Catholic Church or the Pope, the Catholics in Germany, roughly 40 percent of the population, might have been outraged.

Another explanation could be that the Pope’s fear of Communism led him to remain silent. The Pope probably viewed Nazi Germany as a barrier against ‘Godless’ communism. However, at the beginning of the first three killing programs, Germany and the Soviet Union were allies. As the end of the war approached, the Pope might justifiably have feared the spread of communism.

Professor Weinberg found these explanations to be inadequate. He suggested some answers for the Pope’s inaction that might be found in his personality and experiences. Having lived in Germany and seen the effects of the late nineteenth-century Kulturkampf (culture struggle), in which the German government tried to crush the Catholic Church in Germany, Pius XII took an increasingly conciliatory approach towards the German state. He also never directly served the people as a local priest, remaining out of touch with their struggles and never having to make difficult choices. One example of this was when the Nazis made it illegal for priests to issue Polish forced laborers the sacraments during Catholic masses in Germany. Many priests turned to the Pope for guidance, but found none. Professor Weinberg noted that six priests were sent to concentration camps for disobeying the Nazis and issuing the sacraments anyway.

The lecture also considered the Catholic Church’s involvement in helping Catholic Nazis and anti-communists escape from Europe to South America and Australia after the war. Professor Weinberg pointed out that the Church was more involved here than it had been when the Nazis were rounding up Jews.

So why didn’t the Pope speak out against these barbarous crimes? It is likely that doing so might have saved lives in the limited room in which he could maneuver. Since the Pope had foreign policy and legal experience, he might have achieved some success. But, Professor Weinberg concluded that the Pope was favorably disposed towards Germany, afraid of the war’s outcome, and fearful that the Catholic Church would somehow suffer if he took action.

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My Tainted Blood
by Hubert C. Kueter

A book review by Katharine Quimby Johnson

This review must begin with full disclosure: Hubert Kueter taught me German. I am one of many Colby College students to whom he taught the trick of making such sounds as the soft “ch” found in “ich” and “spricht.” I am one of the first group of students he invited to his newly opened restaurant, Johann Sebastian B, for an end-of-the-semester meal of Rotkohl, Sauerbraten, Knödel and Apfelstrüdel, followed by a celebratory Bowle, the flames caramelizing the sugar cone held above the spiced wine (this was when the legal drinking age was 18).

For all his obvious attachment to German culture, Herr Kueter, as we called him, seldom shared personal anecdotes. Only one instance springs to mind, in connection with a class discussion of a short story that mentioned a particular card game. While the title of the story and the name of the game escape me, I still remember Herr Kueter’s tale of a harrowing train ride when his fitful sleep was punctuated by the slapping of cards while this game was played. I seem to remember him mentioning that he was traveling from that part of Germany that became part of Poland after the war. I am sure I was not alone in assuming, in those days when the Cold War was still reality, that he was escaping Soviet-occupied East Germany.

With My Tainted Blood, Kueter reveals why he did not talk about his past for nearly 70 years. He was born in 1930, in Breslau, to a father who played viola in the Silesian Philharmonic and a mother whose family belonged to the Breslau cultural establishment. Katherina Sachs’ grandmother had been awarded membership in the Laiendamen for patriotic activities during the 1866 war with Austria and her aunt was the first woman to receive a doctorate from the University of Breslau. Theirs was a happy, prosperous extended family that began to shrink suddenly, in 1933, as relatives emigrated.

It would be two years before Kueter learned why. As his mother explained, under the Nuremberg Laws, she, a descendant of the Sachses and Immerwehrs, was considered a “racially full Jew,” even though her ancestors had converted to Christianity three generations earlier. Because his father was “Aryan,” Hubert was considered ein Mischling ersten Grades, someone who, in his mother’s words, had “tainted blood.” She also asked him to promise never, ever to reveal his Jewish heritage.

It is telling that the book appears over a decade after Katherina Kueter’s death in 1995 and no less significant that Kueter relies on a family history she wrote to provide background to his story. (Her journal from the 1930s and 1940s is another source.) The tension between keeping his promise and telling the truth also led Kueter to create an alter ego, Horst, to narrate his story. In addition, as the introductory “Author’s Note” explains, he fictionalized “certain superficial facts” and some of the characterization, “so as to go deeper into the human condition as a whole.” Unlike purported memoirs later debunked as fiction, this work declares its fictional components even as it remains true to the author’s experience.

At a young age, to fear that your friends might have no use for you if they knew your full identity, to be reminded by posters you pass every day on your walk to school that the society in which you live has no use for people they say are like your mother, inevitably diminishes your sense of self and your willingness to trust others. But Kueter was also made to feel important and responsible. With his “Aryan” looks, his mother and grandmother felt he might be “the savior of all of us,” and indeed, after his “Aryan” father died in 1936, his existence protected his mother. As the sole surviving parent of a half-“Aryan” child, Katherina would not be subject to deportation until after the child turned 14. However, as the holder of a food-ration card stamped J, she did receive a smaller food allotment than would an “Aryan.”

Smaller rations were a problem, and not only because they made physical survival more problematic, but also because, for Kueter, good food was a key to a good life. My Tainted Blood opens with a description of his grandmother Sachs’s 65th birthday feast and features tales of stealing a Christmas goose, fishing with hand grenades, and foraging for mushrooms in the forest. While musicians raised in similar circumstances clung to the German repertoire, for Kueter, food was the principal carrier of German culture. Unlike many boys, especially growing adolescents, he was not only interested in eating, but also in how the food was prepared; recipes for a number of traditional German dishes are scattered throughout the volume.

After the Soviets took Breslau from the Nazis, mother and son remained in the city, until some recovered loot brought them to the attention of black marketeers. A certain division of booty financed their escape to the American Zone, with the help of several Russian officers who had decided to try life under capitalism. In and around Munich, Horst returns to school, continues to forage, makes friends, and falls in love for the first time.

Even in Bavaria, though reunited with family, Horst feels like and is treated by many of the natives as an outsider. On the one hand he feels the resentment shown refugees, who require a share of the local resources, and who, moreover, have Prussian accents. On the other, as much as he enjoys having somewhat more access to food, to his taste, Bavarian Semmelknödel (bread dumplings) will never be as delectable as Silesian Kartoffelklösse. Eventually, his mother decides they will emigrate, “In America we can
live without fear. That’s the primary consideration here.” However, even in America, safe though it may be, Horst is not to tell people they were part Jewish. The volume closes as the train leaves Munich.

_My Tainted Blood_ shows that, while being labeled _ein Mischling ersten Grades_ helped this individual survive in Nazi Germany, living with the stigma took an emotional toll, even on an otherwise intrepid, ingenious child.

_Katherine Quimby Johnson is a member of the advisory board of the Carolyn & Leonard Miller Center for Holocaust Studies and a freelance writer and editor whose work appears in Edible Green Mountains._

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**Good Neighbors, Bad Times: Echoes of My Father’s German Village**

_by Mimi Schwartz_


_A book review by David Scrase_

The name Harry Kahn is known to the friends of the Carolyn and Leonard Miller Center for Holocaust Studies because of the endowed lecture in his name, which is given annually. For some of us, Harry and Irene Kahn are still a distinct presence, even though Harry died two decades ago and Irene moved away from Burlington to the Washington area, where she resides in an assisted living facility. She is ninety-four years old. When I first got to know them in the early 1970s, I knew they had fled Hitler’s Germany just before the war. I was struck by Irene’s tight control—over her own life, over our conversations, and over the extent to which she was willing (or not willing) to speak about the past. I do not remember her talking about Rexingen, the Swabian village where she grew up.

Harry was a little more forthcoming, but avoided the details. He at least talked about Rexingen and Beisingen, where he had grown up, and they both spoke a little about the first few months out of Germany, which they spent in England before they finally found refuge in the US. There was one specific item that they both spoke of, namely the Torah from the Rexingen synagogue, which they smuggled out of Germany and which they presented to the Ohavi Zedek synagogue in Burlington. If they gave me any details, I did not remember them. Much later, after Harry’s death, Irene did speak about those terrible years. She did tell me that the Torah had been rescued after the pogrom of November 9-10, 1938, by the local gendarme who brought it to them, thus preserving it from complete destruction.

When I was given _Good Neighbors, Bad Times_ by their children Hazel and Max when it came out early in 2008, I hoped to learn more about the Jews living in Rexingen during the 1930s, and I did. I hoped the book would prove to be authoritative, and it is. It tells a unique story grippingly, though not sensationaly; it raises all the right questions and provides some of the answers. Readers need not be personally invested in the specific events in Rexingen (as I was), for they will soon be drawn into the community and find themselves engaged and fascinated by what Mimi Schwartz has to say.

I must confess that a preliminary leafing through the book left me suspicious, if not skeptical: a picture of “the village Torah” with the caption “rescued by the Christians during Kristallnacht, and now in Memorial Room in Israel” seemed to suggest that either Harry and Irene had been wrong all those years or Mimi Schwartz was relaying false information. I need not have worried: there were two rescued Torahs.

Schwartz starts out with the stories her father, a former resident of Rexingen, had told during her childhood and adolescence. She wondered whether they could be true. There was only one way to find out, so she began a quest to locate as many of those people who lived in Rexingen during those “bad times” as possible and interview them. Twelve years later this book appeared. It describes life as it was and as it developed for the Jews who lived in this small, mainly farming community. The village inhabitants (two thirds Christian, one third Jewish) were, as Schwartz had often heard her father say, indeed “good neighbors,” for the most part. The author is not content with a broad generalization, however, but continually reveals the subtleties and all the aspects of life in an increasingly dire situation for both Jews and gentiles. She does so clearly and eloquently. _Good Neighbors, Bad Times_ is to be highly recommended for both the scholar and the general reader.

_David Scrase is Professor of German, and was the Director of the Carolyn and Leonard Miller Center for Holocaust Studies at UVM from 1992 until 2006._
Joachim Prinz, Rebellious Rabbi: An Autobiography - the German and early American Years
Edited and Introduced by Michael A. Meyer

A book review by Frank Nicosia

This is the autobiography of Rabbi Joachim Prinz, one of the most influential leaders in the Jewish community in Germany during the tumultuous and tragic years between the World Wars. Of course, autobiography can be problematic as a literary genre, especially when used as a primary source by historians. One cannot always rely on such works for balance, accuracy, and objectivity, for it is usually focused on the persona of the author, real or imagined, and always subject to selective memory. Still, the informed student of history must endeavor to wade through the autobiographer’s assertions and analysis in order to obtain some degree of understanding of the individual life and its historical context. With this in mind, Joachim Prinz’s autobiography is a valuable addition to the literature on the modern history of German Jewry before the Shoah.

Born into an assimilated Jewish family in the small village of Burkhardsdorf in Upper Silesia in 1902, Joachim Prinz and his family moved to the town of Oppeln in 1909 where he lived for eleven years. The initial section of this book is devoted to his childhood and youth, with a particular focus on Prinz’s strained relations with his father, a businessman, who during those early years was materially supportive but openly disappointed with his son’s decision to become a rabbi. After graduating from high school in Oppeln in 1921, Joachim Prinz entered the conservative Jewish Theological Seminary in Breslau and, simultaneously, the University of Breslau. He spent a year at the University of Berlin in 1922, and then went on to receive a PhD in Philosophy from the University of Giessen in 1924. He completed his examinations for the rabbinate and began his work as a rabbi at the Friedenstempel in Berlin in 1926.

In his high school days in Oppeln, the young Joachim also joined the Zionist youth movement Blau-Weiss. This was, perhaps, a part of his youthful rebellion against his father’s secular and assimilated Prussian identity and culture. Indeed, Zionism formed the basis of his political activism in the Jewish community both as a university student and a young rabbi in Berlin in the late 1920s and 1930s, prior to his emigration from Germany in 1937. Nevertheless, while Prinz may have rejected to some extent the Prussian/German national identity of his father and of his parents’ generation, he most certainly did not reject their secular German culture. For Prinz’s lifestyle and social preferences and activities would reflect a secularism that was uncommon even among rabbis of his generation in Germany; at the same time, his Zionism would remain very much in line with the secular and left-of-center political Zionism that had long been dominant among Central European Zionists, as well as within the World Zionist Organization and its leadership. Indeed, that he remained very much a part of this culture is evident in the fact that when he emigrated from Germany with his wife and son in 1937, he chose in the end to go to the United States rather than to Palestine.

The main section of the book deals with Prinz’s eleven years as a rabbi in Berlin, from 1926 to 1937. These years are, of course, the most intriguing, centered as they are on the demise of the Weimar Republic and the rapid rise of Hitler and National Socialism to power in Germany. Prinz’s life and work as a rabbi in Berlin during those years provide a lens through which the reader can begin to understand the deleterious effects of these events on the German Jewish community, about one third of which lived in the Reich capital. Despite his desire to call the reader’s attention to his own role and growing influence within the Jewish community, in Berlin and throughout Germany, he does provide a unique perspective on, and penetrating insight into, the steadily deteriorating position of Germany’s Jews during that period. Much of his work was centered on promoting the message and activities of the Zionist movement in Germany, particularly among younger German Jews of his generation. Indeed, several of his publications during those years, as well as his many lectures and sermons in Berlin and throughout Germany, were part of his effort to deal with the crisis of German Jewry through Zionism. In particular, his book Wir Juden (We Jews), published in 1934, was his most successful and most controversial publication. In it, Prinz proclaimed that Jewish emancipation and assimilation had been a disastrous failure, and that Jewish nationalism and the reconstitution of Jewish national life in Palestine was the only solution to the dire situation in which the Jews of Germany had found themselves.

Joachim Prinz was a complex man. He possessed strong opinions and was fiercely independent. He exhibited a political activist approach to the Rabbinate in Germany at a time when a certain kind of political activism among Jews in Germany was increasingly possible and evident, while at the same time it rapidly diminished among the larger non-Jewish population in Germany. His tireless efforts in support of Zionist activities and re-education, particularly among Jewish youths, were encouraged by Nazi policy-makers determined to accelerate Jewish emigration from Germany during the 1930s. Prinz provides an intimate look at Jewish life in Germany during the perilous Hitler years, from the inside, from someone who, as a rabbi and community activist, was in touch with so many Jews in Germany from all walks of life.
The one glaring disconnect in Prinz’s narrative remains his decision to immigrate to the United States in 1937. Of course, the painful question of emigration from Germany is one that all German Jews had to face during the 1930s, and one that more than 250,000 actually made. But his departure for the United States in 1937 and his decision to remain there for the rest of his life is never explained. Notwithstanding his strong Zionist views and consistent activism in the Zionist movement, stretching from his high school years in Upper Silesia through his high-profile professional life in Berlin during the waning months of the Weimar Republic and the first four and a half years of Hitler’s rule, Joachim Prinz did not follow the thousands of German Jews he had counseled to give up on emancipation and assimilation, and to go to Palestine. Again, the puzzle here is not the fact that he went to the United States instead of to Palestine; rather it is the fact that he never once explains why.

Rabbi Prinz settled in the Newark, New Jersey area and became the rabbi at Temple B’nai Abraham in Newark in 1939. He remained active in Zionist affairs both internationally and, for a while, in the Zionist Organization of America. He often worked with Rabbi Stephen Wise, and served as president of the American Jewish Congress between 1958 and 1966. In drawing the appropriate lessons from his experience in his native Germany, Prinz became a leading figure in the civil rights movement in the United States during the 1950s and 1960s. His congregation moved from Newark to Livingston, New Jersey, in 1973.

But Prinz was clearly out of his element in the United States, and hints repeatedly of his general disappointment with American culture and, in particular, with American rabbis, their level of education and their general knowledge and understanding of the larger world. In other words, he clearly missed many of the elements of the academic and intellectual environment of which he had been a part, personally and professionally, particularly during the troubled final years of the Weimar era.

Joachim Prinz retired from the rabbinate in 1977, and passed away in 1988 at the age of 86. In spite of his considerable sense of self-importance in the Jewish communities in which he lived in Berlin and New Jersey, Joachim Prinz remained throughout his adult life a tireless advocate for the values of democracy and human equality. As such, his narrative about his life and the times in which he and his family lived provides a rich and penetrating glimpse particularly into Jewish life in Germany during the pre-Nazi and early Nazi years.

Frank Nicosia is the Raul Hilberg Distinguished Professor of Holocaust Studies, a member of the Department of History, and Interim Director of the Carolyn and Leonard Miller Center for Holocaust Studies at UVM.

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**Upcoming Events**

**Inaugural Raul Hilberg Distinguished Professor Lecture**

“The Third Reich and the Middle East: Arabs, Jews, and Nazi Race Policy”

by Professor Frank Nicosia

Wednesday, February 18, 2009

**Fifth Miller Symposium**

“The Law in Nazi Germany”

Sunday, April 19, 2009

“‘The Conundrum of Complicity: German Professionals and the Final Solution’”

Konrad Jarausch, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

“Justice Destroyed: Jewish Lawyers’ Plight in Nazi Germany”

Douglas Morris, Assistant Federal Defender, Federal Defenders of New York, Inc.

“Nazi Morals and Nazi Law: ‘Race Defilement’ in Front of German Courts”

Raphael Gross, Jüdisches Museum, Frankfurt am Main/Leo Baeck Institute, London

“The Dagger of the Assassin Hidden Beneath the Robe of the Jurist’: Murderous Lawyers at Nuremberg”

Harry Reicher, University of Pennsylvania, Scholar-in-Residence, Touro Law School

“Judging German Judges in the Third Reich”

Kenneth Ledford, Case Western Reserve University

“The Court as an Instrument of Terror: Roland Freisler and the Volksgerichtshof”

Robert Rachlin (moderator), Downs Rachlin Martin PLLC, Burlington/Vermont Law School

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