THE BULLETIN OF

THE CENTER FOR HOLOCAUST STUDIES

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

Volume 4, Number 1 Fall 1999

JEWS IN AUSTRIA DURING THE NAZI-ERA AND AFTER 1945

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Referring to the attitude of most Austrians toward their role in the Holocaust as that of victim, art historian Hilde Zaloscer expressed her disappointment following her return to Austria from foreign exile in words of bitter sarcasm:

> Victims? There was no such thing! Everyone knew that Austria itself had been Hitler's first victim. Herr Karl, who always found a way to make the best of the situation for himself, under Hitler and afterwards, Herr Karl is everywhere.

Austria had succeeded in portraying itself as the "first victim of Nazi Germany" in accordance with the Moscow Declaration signed by the U.S., Great Britain, and the Soviet Union in 1943. Nevertheless, the political leaders involved, as well as the Austrian population, were fully aware that this theory was an extremely tenuous one and little more than a half-truth. But the emphasis upon the "Victim Myth" was of great importance to the negotiations with the Allied occupation powers which took place in conjunction with the signing of the *Staatsvertrag* (Austrian State Treaty). While the Moscow Declaration had pointed out Austria's complicity in Nazi crimes and called upon its people to contribute to their own liberation, the passage referring to shared guilt was conspicuously absent from the *Staatsvertrag*.

By 1948 at the very latest and thus by the beginning of the Cold War, Austria was recognized as a partner of the Western Powers. In contrast to Germany, Austria could forego the process of proving its commitment to democracy through the particular treatment it accorded Jews or its special relationship to the State of Israel. Zionist organizations and the World Jewish Congress (WJC) also treated Austria much more indulgently than they did Germany. While Jewish communities in Germany were condemned as having been founded illegally and their members summoned to mass exodus, the Jewish Community of Vienna was accorded full recognition as a WJC member. *Realpolitische* considerations led even Israel to subscribe to the Allied position—in 1952, four years after its founding, the Jewish state officially renounced any claim to reparations payments from Austria (though it supported individual restitution).

Despite the fact that Austria ultimately succeeded over the course of 50 years in passing itself off as Nazi Germany's first victim, it was precisely the so-called "Jewish Question" which posed the greatest threat to this shaky construction. In order to prop up the victim myth, any form of reparation payment had to be refused, and attention directed away from Austrian participation in the Shoah.

The following discussion will show the unique characteristics of the persecution of Jews in Austria. I will then consider the problematic nature of Jewish life in Austria after 1945. Finally, I will discuss why Jewish men and women, despite the traumatic experiences most of them suffered, were prepared to resettle in Austria, and how Austria and the Austrians dealt with them.

"Suddenly, it was open season on Jews."

These were the words used by an Austrian survivor to characterize the so-called "*Anschluß*," when German troops marched into Austria in March, 1938. While the exclusion of Jews from German society had progressed gradually since 1933, so that Jews were still able to plan their escape to some extent (for example, the Hawara Agreement with Palestine permitting Jews to take property with them), events in Austria transpired with deadly speed. Even those who had vigilantly observed the situation in Germany were unable to imagine the monstrous proportions of what was to come. It had at least been possible for Jews to survive in Germany until 1938, even in the face of the numerous restrictive measures. For example, Ari Rath, an Austrian who later spent many years as editor of the *Jerusalem Post*, recalls visiting his relatives in Berlin in December 1937 and enjoying a merry New Year's Eve celebration.

In interviews and biographies, Austrian Jews consistently report that, more than anything, the "wild" rampages of the Austrian populace and the vicious Aryanizations that broke out immediately following the *Anschluß* were among their most bitter human disappointments and ineradicably stamped their image of Austria. Not infrequently, it is emphasized that Jews often sought the protection of German soldiers from the wild Austrian mobs, and many initially greeted the implementation of German law in post-annexation Austria so that persecution would at least proceed according to set rules.

It is interesting to note the existence of reports of Austrian Jews going on vacation to Berlin during the period following the *Anschluß*: As George Clare put it, looking back on a visit he paid to friends in Berlin in September, 1938:

> It seemed unbelievable to me, but it was true—in Berlin, in the very den of the lion, it was still permitted for Jews to amuse themselves in cinemas, theaters and cafes.... They were allowed to own cars and businesses.... With each passing day, the impression grew stronger...that a Viennese visitor in Berlin had the feeling of having emigrated and of having escaped from Hitler's grasp.

Whereas postwar Austrians preferred to portray their country as attacked and subdued, their Jewish fellow citizens recall the great enthusiasm which prevailed when German troops marched into their land, as well as the sudden and eerie metamorphosis of human beings—of enemies who had shortly before been neighbors, of the all-too-seldom appearance of those ready to help them.

As Hans Safrian has shown, Austria also served as the training ground for the deportations which followed. Eichmann and his henchmen, a disproportionately high number of Austrians among them, first perfected their methods in Vienna before going on to make Berlin *judenrein* (free of Jews).

In Vienna in 1938, there lived approximately 200,000 Jews representing about 15 percent of the city's population and constituting one of the largest, richest, and most important Jewish communities in Central Europe. Of these, 130,000 were able to flee—many only at the last moment; over 65,000 suffered a horrible death in concentration and extermination camps. Approximately 2,000 men and women found some way to survive in Austria, mostly in Vienna—in hiding, in so-called mixed marriages, as half-Jews, or as Jewish functionaries. Even to this day, we know precious little of the fate of this extremely heterogeneous group, sometimes called *Restjuden*; therefore I would like to examine its composition a little more closely.

The overwhelming majority of this group had severed virtually all ties to the Jewish Community prior to 1938; many were baptized or married to non-Jewish partners. Some became aware of their Jewish descent only through the persecution they faced when it suddenly began in 1938. During the Nazi era, most were sentenced to forced labor, but lived in constant fear of being sent to concentration camps, even at the last moment. Pressure was constantly applied to the "Aryan" marital partner to file for divorce, the consequence of which was the deportation of the Jewish family members. It is interesting to note that the number of "Aryan" women who divorced their Jewish husbands was far lower than that of "Aryan" men who were not prepared to sacrifice their careers for the sake of a Jewish wife.

Relatively few Jews survived as so-called U-boats—that is to say, submerged beneath the surface. Despite the fact that many of these individuals suffer to this day from the consequences of this extreme psychological stress, for a long time their persecution was not recognized as grounds for compensation.

A special problem was posed by those Jews who, either forced by means of violence and terror or enticed through the dispensation of privileges, cooperated with the SS. As doctors, bureaucrats, auxiliary policemen, or simply as officials of the Jewish Community, they were considered by many to bear a share of the guilt for the persecution of their fellow Jews. During the early years of National Socialist domination, co-operation with Nazi persecutors, particularly in matters of welfare and exit visas, was necessary and sensible; this co-operation later proved to be collaboration in a process leading directly to extermination, or, at the very least, collaboration that allowed the machinery of extermination to function more smoothly. Doctors or members of the "Council of Elders" (*Ältestenrat)* were accused of having manipulated deportation lists, removing the names of individuals they favored and substituting those of poor or politically undesirable Jews.

In 1945, the Allies placed leading functionaries of the "Council of Elders" on trial; in camps for Jewish Displaced Persons, "courts of honor" were convened and Jewish Capos were executed. Trials took place in Vienna as well, where the defendants included members of the "Council of Elders" and doctors on the staff of the Jewish hospital. An unequivocal decision, however, could not always be reached. Some Jewish functionaries had sincerely attempted to prevent the worst; others, such as the Viennese Rabbi Murmelstein, were described as extraordinarily brutal and going far beyond the call of their dubious "duty."

In this discussion of Jews in National Socialist Austria, it is also incumbent upon us to mention the thousands of Jewish slave laborers in Austrian concentration camps—25,000 at liberation. Major industrial concerns, some still in operation (for example the VÖEST steel company, then known as the *Hermann-Göring-Werke*), were built with Jewish slave labor for which Austria refused to pay any form of compensation. Finally, among the taboo subjects of Austrian history are the death marches of Hungarian Jews who were driven through parts of Austria to Mauthausen; 80,000 were shot and buried in over 300 widely-scattered mass graves. These events, however, have been shrouded in persistent silence to this day.

A New Beginning, With No Illusions

The author Hugo Bettauer published his novel *City Without Jews* in 1922; by 1945 this prophesy had practically become reality. The Jewish Community of Vienna numbered fewer than 4,000 at the end of 1945. For Jews, Vienna had become a place haunted by specters, a charnel house. "Wherever I go, there flutter about me the garments of the dead" wrote Friedrich Torberg. The rebirth of Jewish life took place neither with illusions nor with faith in the long-term survival of a Jewish community. The Austrian government showed no sense of responsibility to the survivors. Nevertheless, thanks to financial support from the American Joint Committee, Jewish institutions could be set up to provide clothing, housing, medical care, and other basic needs of the survivors. "We weren't concerned about anything, except our very survival" were the words of Leon Zelman, today head of Vienna's Jewish Welcome Service.

Particularly striking was the community's high median age. Those who returned were not young people ready to start a new life, but rather the elderly, the sick, or those whose attempts to establish themselves in exile had failed. Those over 60 years of age accounted for 29 percent as compared to only 9 percent under 25. In 1952, the Jewish Community included only 200 children. The celebration of a wedding or Bar Mitzvah was a rarity, though funerals were a common occurrence. "It was said then that the Viennese Jewish Community would become a burial society," reminisced President Ivan Hacker in 1983.

Life After Survival—The Return of Concentration Camp Survivors

The Austrian government expended little effort to assist the return of former concentration camp inmates. Those who were able marched on foot, mostly in groups, often through regions where fighting was still going on. Having survived the murderous SS, women had to now contend with an additional lurking danger. Some were able "to escape only by the narrowest of margins from being raped by their Russian liberators, while others, it must be concluded, had less good fortune and were forced to undergo, at the end of their concentration camp existence, this one additional trauma," in the words of Ruth Klüger.

Physically exhausted and severely malnourished, many died in the weeks following liberation. Some came back to Austria only to search for their family or friends. Others remained, often rather by chance, because they did not know where else to go or were too weary to push on. The Jewish Community included 1.730 camp survivors in 1945; by 1952, only 970 remained.

Arriving in Austria following an arduous trek, the concentration camp survivors were quickly brought to the realization that they were despised and unwelcome in their own homeland. The *KZler* (concentration camp inmates) were considered criminals by a broad segment of the population. "They must've been up to something no-good or they wouldn't have been locked up" was a widely held opinion. Jews, moreover, continued to encounter the old anti-Semitism; the only thing new was the label for them—"Hitler's unfinished business."

Many Jews and, of course, Gypsies could certainly have benefited from special care and treatment programs; however those persecuted "on racial grounds only" were initially excluded from the state victims' welfare system. Even the *KZ-Verband* (Survivors' Association) which had already been set up in 1945 refused admission to those victimized "only" because they were Jews, as well as to other groups of victims such as Gypsies, homosexuals, or women who had come to the aid of slave laborers, or who had hidden Jews. Politically persecuted concentration camp survivors, often of Jewish descent as well, saw themselves as active opponents of National Socialism and wanted to set themselves strictly apart from those whose resistance had been of a "merely" moral nature or who "had permitted themselves to be led to the slaughter like sheep." Even in the camps, political prisoners, many of them Jews, distanced themselves from Jews imprisoned on racial grounds only. Jewish survivors refer repeatedly to this shocking anti-Semitism even among their fellow victims.

Political resistance, as meager as it actually had been, was blown up to major proportions in the immediate postwar period to serve as a foundation for the Austrian Victim Myth, whereas Jews persecuted on the basis of "race" alone were an embarrassment clearly pointing to Austrian complicity. Following intervention by the Jewish Community, Jews were finally redefined as "politically persecuted" and accepted for membership in the Survivor's Association. Gypsies and all other groups of prisoners were long refused assistance.

Returnees

Austria showed little interest in the return of those who had been expelled. Indeed, both leading government officials and 46 percent of the Austrian people were negatively disposed to the return of Jews. Aside from a few individual exceptions, no one became actively involved in repatriation efforts. Only in the case of "nice" Jews, those of political or cultural distinction, were invitations expressly offered. Only those who were specifically summoned by the Austrian government or a political party had the chance to return during the immediate postwar period. The Allies had severely restricted travel, transportation possibilities were extremely limited, and many were simply unable to finance their passage.

Members of the Austrian resistance groups in France, Belgium, or England, as well as soldiers and civilians attached to the Allied Armed Forces were among the first exiles to set foot again on Austrian territory. Brutally expelled in 1938, they came back in 1945 as victors and liberators—but also as "traitors to the fatherland" in the eyes of many Austrians. For soldiers and resistance fighters, the return to Austria was fraught with ambivalent feelings. The pleasure of confronting as a conqueror one's former persecutors could never really be enjoyed to the fullest. "My feelings vacillated between cold and hot. It was funny. Very ambivalent. There were memories of persecution and, at the same time, beautiful recollections of my childhood," was how Ernest Bonyhadi depicted his arrival as an American soldier. Resistance members suffered yet another disappointment—rather than regarding the Allies as liberators, most Austrians felt their land had been occupied once again.

As a broad generalization, the readiness to return from emigration abroad can be traced back to, above all, the hardships of life in the countries of exile, but also to age and illness, career problems, and the hoped-for return of "Aryanized" assets. In the period up to 1954, for example, 20 percent of the exiles in Shanghai returned to Austria, while only 4 percent of those in Western European lands and Great Britain made the decision to come back. By the end of the war, there were 45,000 Austrian expatriates living in the U.S. and a mere 0.2 percent of these returned. Israel proved to be another difficult land of exile for Austrians: economic crises, the constant threat of war, and the hot climate caused especially the elderly to return.

For the most part, the process of "reemigration" ended in the 1960s. But some exiles constantly shuttle between disparate existences, no longer able to feel at home anywhere. "Wavering between two worlds, there can be no return" is how the author Maria Berl-Lee ended her poem *"Wanderin zwischen zwei Welten"* ("Wanderer between two worlds"). I must emphasize that a total of only a few thousand of the 130,000 exiles came back. Most of the emigrants considered returning to Austria a "matter of character." Despite the longing felt by many for their former homeland—at least, for their beloved landscapes and familiar *Kultur*—they frequently refused even a short visit. "One does not return to a country from which one was so brutally expelled. One does not visit a land that was once one's home" was

a conviction shared by many. In contrast to the Austrians, who gradually began to perceive themselves as victims, hardly anyone abroad lent much credence to the Victim Myth. Much more attention was paid to the diligence Austria displayed in carrying out its task. A popular joke in Israel was that Austria had indeed been ravished, but it had nevertheless enjoyed it.

Back to the Party

The Socialists and Communists, many of who had been summoned by their parties to return and take part in the reconstruction of a new, democratic, and perhaps socialist Austria, constituted a very special group of exiles. As early as the 1920s and 1930s many had already exchanged their Jewish identity for a Communist or Socialist one. Faith in their respective political ideologies became a sort of new religion. Even in the aftermath of the Shoah, many resisted the slightest acknowledgment of a Jewish identity. They did not want to be relegated to a Jewish ghetto, but rather to be recognized and accepted as Austrians.

For a brief period in 1945, the *KPÖ* (the Communist Party of Austria), for the first time in its history, had governmental positions to dispense to its members and, thus, made great efforts to recall those who would toe the party line. Within the *SPÖ* (the Socialist Party of Austria), the deals had already been cut—the members who had remained in Austria allocated all functions among themselves. Returning exiles were perceived as competitors and it was feared that their return would cause an ideological shift to the left within the party. Furthermore, they wished to avoid a repeat of their experience during the First Republic, when the *SPÖ* had been decried as the *Judenpartei* (Jewish Party). Even emigrants with long years of allegiance and service to the party were advised that perhaps remaining in sunny California wasn't such a bad idea. Others, such as future chancellor Bruno Kreisky, were shunted off to the diplomatic service. Even into the 1960s, he continued to harbor doubts that a Jew would ever be able to become *SPÖ* party chairman.

Despite the difficulties, and in contrast to those who were persecuted because of their Jewish descent alone, these political exiles found acceptance within a community and could reestablish connections in familiar surroundings. In return, they were prepared to accept numerous contradictions and to shut their eyes to blatant anti-Semitism.

Jews who were loyal party members also shaped the policies of the Jewish Community until well into the 1980s. Initially in 1945, the community's leadership was comprised of former members of the Council of Elders. Following a sort of "de-Nazification," the Communist politician Ernst Fischer, who briefly served as a cabinet minister in the postwar period, appointed a long-time fellow party member to the post of president of the Jewish Community; serving alongside him were other Jews of predominantly leftist political affiliation. Whereas the *KPÖ* sank into political insignificance following the first Austrian postwar elections in November 1945, Communists retained their posts in the Jewish Community until 1948. Following massive intervention by the WJC, the Communists were replaced by Social Democrats. While the Communists had owed their primary allegiance to the *KPÖ*, the Social Democrats were loyal to the *SPÖ*, for which they were rewarded with such perks as a desirable apartment or the honorary title of *Hofrat*. Strongly assimilated even prior to 1938, these men regarded themselves first and foremost as Communists or Social Democrats after the Shoah as well, and their tie to Judaism can best be described as one to a community sharing a common fate.

Moreover, in order to be able to live in Austria, they made every effort to overlook or to downplay anti-Semitism. Even when Simon Wiesenthal criticized Chancellor Kreisky for naming four former Nazis to posts in his cabinet and currying political favor with Friedrich Peter, a former member of the SS and the leader of the *FPÖ* (Austrian Freedom Party), the Social Democratic leadership of the Jewish Community remained loyal to the *SPÖ* and accused Wiesenthal of provoking anti-Semitism. According to Ambassador Hans Thalberg, it was only during the bitter confrontation surrounding the 1986 election of Kurt Waldheim that many finally realized that they had been taken in by an illusion for over 40 years.

Assimilation despite the Shoah

Nevertheless, the make-up of the democratically elected leadership of the Jewish Community casts an edifying light upon Austrian-Jewish consciousness in general. Despite the Shoah, the majority of Austrian Jews strove to assimilate. Indeed, many of the Viennese Jews who had returned from exile felt close ties to Judaism as a result of their persecution and expulsion, though they had little contact with collective Jewish life. Only a very few Viennese Jews followed a strict orthodox lifestyle or considered themselves to be Zionists. Zionist organizations as well as orthodox religious life were sustained by Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe, who complained of being treated as inferiors and less-than-welcome newcomers by Viennese Jews. The Zionist newspaper *Tribüne* scornfully charged that the Jews of Vienna would rather contribute to the reconstruction of St. Stephen's Cathedral than to building up the State of Israel.

The desire for assimilation manifested itself in a relatively high rate of resignations from the Jewish Community, in the modest interest in participation in Jewish life, and in the increase of so-called mixed marriages. The Jewish Community also criticized the fact that children were not being officially registered as Jews.

Despite their concerted efforts toward assimilation, returnees lived in—often unconscious—isolation from the non-Jewish society. Their circle of friends consisted of like-minded individuals, of men and women who had shared similar experiences. "I only got together with our people," said a woman who had returned from exile in Moscow. In response to the specific inquiry of what she meant by "our," she indicated that she meant not all Communists, but rather Communists of Jewish descent. One of her party comrades expressed a similar sentiment.

In order to avoid being exposed to anti-Semitism, it was better to steer clear of certain bars, inns, and *Heurigen* (wine taverns). As Gertrude Putschin phrased it, certain feelings of mistrust were raised by contact with non-Jews. Upon meeting such people for the first time, they were subjected to a sort of test. "Was this one a Nazi or not? What was really their attitude: well-meaning, merely tolerant or were they anti-Semites? It was very difficult. One really had to be careful to avoid being caught in some way in an unpleasant bind."

For others, though, feelings of affection for Austria were reduced to a love of its language, *Kultur*, and landscape or, even further, to love for their native city. "I never became estranged from Vienna," said director Peter Loos, "only from the Viennese." For the librettist Peter Herz, this led to the attempt to flee into the past, into the world of operettas, Viennese *Lieder*, and summer vacations in Bad Ischl. As he formulated it, "one became weary, a passive bearer of injustice rather than an active resistance fighter." Despite it all, many former exiles stress the fact that they have never regretted their return to Austria and could never imagine another country as their homeland. Especially in old age, life in Vienna seems to many to be more pleasant and, above all, more secure than in New York or Tel Aviv.

Separated by a Rift—Anti-Semitism despite the Shoah

During the immediate postwar years, anti-Semitism was directed primarily at Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe, some of whom were actively involved in black market dealings. Not just the Austrian government, but also assimilated "Austrian Jews" tried to keep these refugees out of the country. The long history of conflict between traditional Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe and assimilated Viennese Jews proceeded unabated in Austria even after the Shoah.

A new target was provided by the arrival of the first wave of returning exiles, who were regarded as competitors for jobs and housing. In Vienna, over 60,000 apartments had been "Aryanized" and many new "owners" were alarmed by the sudden possibility of losing "their" homes. With the beginning of reparations negotiations in 1952, widespread anti-Semitic prejudices were directed especially at the "rich emigrants" who wanted to drive Austria to the brink of ruin while living there tax free. The exiles were repeatedly accused of having lived the good life abroad, safe from the falling bombs, while the Austrians were starving. The author Hilde Spiel was greeted with these words upon her return from England: "The *Frau Doktor* did the right thing by getting out. The air raids alone...three times the entire city was ablaze!" In 1958, the Jewish Community bitterly complained that "the press has recently been conducting a highly diversified smear campaign against emigrants (...) such that the very word emigrant has become a term of disparagement. The Austrians simply can not forgive them for not waiting to be sent to the gas chambers and then not apologizing for still being alive."

These prejudices were not only widespread among the "common people." Even Chancellor Leopold Figl, himself a concentration camp survivor, accused the exiles of "having spent their time lounging in their club chairs instead of suffering for Austria." Karl Gruber, then Foreign Minister and a former resistance fighter, voiced the opinion that "compensation for former Austrian Jews would constitute unjustly preferential treatment over those who remained or were stuck in concentration camps."

It was precisely this process of repudiating Jewish demands, I think, as well as the criticism leveled from abroad and frequently by Jewish organizations rejecting Austria's role as victim, that led to a new sense of national consciousness in Austria during the 1950s and 1960s. Though hardly subject to scrutiny by scholarly research up to now, the reparation payment demands submitted to Austria by Nahum Goldmann, the president of the WJC and successful negotiator with Germany, called Austria's victim role massively into question. The WJC was charged with wishing to destroy Austria. This finally went so far that Austrians began to regard themselves as victims not only of the bombs, the war, and the ravages of the Russians. They now felt that their country was, above all, the victim of a wealthy, world-encircling Jewry.

Waldheim and the Breakdown of the Victim's Role

For many survivors, the bitter confrontation surrounding the election of Kurt Waldheim reopened old wounds. However, a basic transformation in Jewish consciousness—as well as in the basic attitudes of many segments of the Austrian population—also became apparent. While even members of the older generation of Jewish survivors were now prepared to defend Austria, the younger generation emerged in the public forum to pursue the fight against anti-Semitism.

It gradually became clear that leading politicians as well as representatives of the Catholic church would be forced to acknowledge Austria's historic role of complicity. Chancellor Franz Vranizky's 1991 speech addressing Austria's shared responsibility for the crimes of the Third Reich had a resounding effect at home as well as abroad. Fundamental changes were also taking place in Austrian schools and universities: mostly younger members of the faculties of history, German, political science, journalism, and psychology have displayed increasing engagement in research related to the phenomena of National Socialism and anti-Semitism.

By the end of the 1980s, the Jewish Community had gradually developed into a moral authority. On the one hand, this could be traced back to a new generation assuming positions of public leadership among Jews and non-Jews alike. On the other hand, the Austrian Victim Myth, thoroughly discredited in the wake of Waldheim's election, played a not insignificant role. Faced with massive criticism, particularly from abroad, Austria could no longer elude its historic responsibility. Nevertheless, it was as late as 1995 before the "National Fund of the Republic of Austria for the Victims of National Socialism" was set up. In relatively unbureaucratic fashion, a wide variety of victims' groups were the initial recipients of token payments of 70,000 Austrian Schillings (approximately $5,700). Some 10,000 applications have been received from individuals throughout the world, of which 1,348 have been processed to date. In view of the advanced age of the applicants, this process constitutes a race against time.

The gradual development of the Jewish Community into a moral authority in Austria has coincided with the disintegration of the Victim Myth. However, this has brought with it the concomitant danger that Jews could once again be instrumentalized in the defense of Austria. To this day, politicians differentiate between Jews who are prepared to show Austrians forgiveness and those said to be perhaps "bent on revenge." Just as dangerous are the various forms of philo-Semitism, a rather late-emerging, though increasingly common phenomenon in Austria.

I would like to mention, in conclusion, however, that in the wake of the Waldheim Affair, some, but certainly not all, taboos have been demolished in Austria. For example, a museum exhibition recently brought in from Germany documenting war crimes committed by the Wehrmacht in the Balkans and Soviet Union unleashed extremely heated discussions. Although personally invited to do so, no major political figure dared to attend the opening or to participate in the discussions. World War II veterans and their families continue to constitute an enormous voter potential. The destruction of the myth of participation in an honorable and just war would mean severe losses at the polls.

[This work was first presented at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in April, 1996.]

Letter from Salzburg

by David Scrase
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This final "Letter from Salzburg" inevitably leads to reflection, to stock-taking. How has the place changed since I last lived here sixteen years ago—if at all? Austria is, after all, a very conservative country, and Salzburg is no bastion of liberal or progressive thought. Has my view of the country, the town, and the people changed during my year living here? Such questions preoccupy me constantly. But two matters emerged to dominate the latter part of my stay, and it is these two items that I want to begin with.

As I promised in the last *Bulletin*, I wish to come back to the Wilkomirski affair now that I have once again used his work, *Fragments*, in the classroom. Student response to the book was positive—they read it without knowing any of the background. One student stopped me in the street to say he thought it was "a great book." When I revealed the wider ramifications of its genesis and reception, there was considerable disappointment, bafflement even, but, I think, little anger. There may even have been relief as we went on quickly to discuss the next and last book assigned, *February Shadows* by Elisabeth Reichart, whose setting is Mauthausen and whose topic is the Austrian second generation's attempt to get at truth as the first generation continues to think in terms of their own "victimhood" (see Helga Embacher's article in this issue of *The Bulletin*) despite the very clear evidence of their participation in killings.

February Shadows has as its background the *Mühlviertler Hasenjagd* ("The Mill District Rabbit Hunt"). In February 1945, a group of some 500 Soviet prisoners of war, realizing that they were all doomed and had little to lose, broke out of their compound in the Mauthausen camp, hoping to find refuge in the last weeks of the war with the local population. With very few exceptions, however, this local population helped with the brutal round-up of the prisoners, killing with their farming implements if no other weapon was available. Only nine survived. It is not so much the escape and the subsequent "rabbit hunt" that provides the central action of the book (it takes up very little space) as the attempt to get at the truth of her own family's involvement by a daughter born just after the war that is central.

This book, rather challenging stylistically, appealed to the students primarily because of the locality of the action, our field trip to Mauthausen, and, especially, the visit of Bernard Gotfryd, a survivor of this camp and its satellite work-camp Gusen II. Bernard, known to many of us because of his book *Anton the Dove Fancier and Other Stories of the Holocaust* (a new, expanded edition is due out in early 2000, The Johns Hopkins University Press) and because of Todd Hall's dramatization of Gotfryd's story "On Guilt" put on by UVM students, let me know that he would "give his right arm" to be able to come on the planned field trip. He accordingly flew over from New York, stayed for five days, visited my class, and went back to the scene of indescribable misery and hurt for the first time in over fifty years. A brave man.

The students found his visit to be the highlight of my course. Bernard was a willing witness, patiently explaining and describing his experiences. The visit to the camp on a swelteringly hot day was illuminating—although the sun, the many trees and bushes, and, above all, the cheerful birds (not to mention the emptiness of the camps, the absence of the thousands of victims) all combined to make the scene rather unreal. Bernard, a professional photographer with *Newsweek* for many years, busily took pictures in less than optimum lighting. He also wrote a short piece about his feelings on this first visit fifty years and more later. I hope that we will be able to publish it (or a revised version) in the next issue of *The Bulletin*. The students and I were most grateful to Bernard Gotfryd for coming into a setting that awakened so much pain, opened so many old wounds; and for adding so much to an enlightening and informative field-trip.

If I try to sum up the impact of this most recent year in Salzburg, it is, I think, the change in attitudes concomitant with the change in generations. The Victim Myth that Helga Embacher deals with so pertinently is shattered and is rapidly disappearing. The newspapers regularly feature articles relating to the Holocaust and do not hide the Austrian role in its perpetration. As Embacher points out, the Waldheim affair played a major role in this unmasking, and, as her final paragraph states, the Wehrmacht Exhibition reinforced this shift in emphasis from victim to active and willing perpetrator through the lively discussion it generated. Together with two colleagues, Embacher has edited and written a book about the impact of the exhibition in Salzburg. Nowhere in Austria did it generate more discussion. I was privileged to be present at the publisher's reception marking the book's publication, and the excitement was palpable. The University of Salzburg has a group of very active Holocaust scholars, including Embacher, Albert Lichtblau, and Daniela Ellmauer, who attest eloquently to the new generation's willingness to come to terms with their nation's past.

I leave Austria with good feelings and with hope.

THE CENTER FOR
HOLOCAUST
STUDIES
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

Reports

Sixth Annual 1999 "Holocaust and Holocaust Education" Summer Seminar

Robert Bernheim

An eclectic mix of eighteen educators and university students spent one week at the University of Vermont contemplating and studying historical and pedagogical questions and issues central to the Nazi Holocaust. The seminar, in its sixth summer, combines lectures and discussions by area scholars in the fields of history and literature with the insights and eye-witness testimony of Holocaust survivors and rescuers to provide numerous points of entry into this field of study.

The academic presentations by noted scholars and authors established a solid foundation for the poignant and penetrating acumen of those who witnessed the Nazi terror first-hand. Academic contributors this year included Frank Nicosia of St. Michael's College, Wolfgang Mieder of the University of Vermont, Yehudi Lindeman of McGill University, Lawrence Langer, professor emeritus from Simmons College, Steven Rogers of the Office of Special Investigations, and East Thetford author Barbara Rogasky. Survivor testimonies were offered by Henia Lewin, a former University of Vermont instructor in Hebrew and Yiddish, Simon Barenbaum of East Middlebury, Michael Bukanc of Essex Junction, Yehudi Lindeman of Montreal, and Aranka Siegal, author-in-residence from Westchester county, New York. Marion Pritchard of Vershire also spoke about her work as a rescuer in the Netherlands during World War II.

In addition, local educators with experience teaching the Holocaust in Vermont schools shared examples from their curricula, and discussed methods of introducing this subject to students at a variety of grade levels. Rob Kunzman of Champlain Valley Union High School, Miles Heller of South Burlington High School, and Whitney Kaulbach of Lamoille Union High School all took part in this forum.

For the first time this year, the Center for Holocaust Studies at the University of Vermont offered stipends so that those living beyond the community range of UVM would be able to take part in the summer seminar. As a result, participants were drawn from a wider geographic base, and some who might not have stayed for the optional evening lecture series were able to do so. Stipends may also be available for next summer's seminar, tenatively scheduled for the end of June.

Special thanks are to be extended to Bruegger's Bagels for their generosity during the week.

What Did the Allies Know? When Did They Know It?

Frank Nicosia
St. Michael's College, Vermont

There has been no end of comparisons between the Holocaust and World War II on the one hand, and the response of the international community to Serb atrocities against Albanians in Kosovo on the other. NATO has likened its motives in the bombing campaign against Serbia to the Allied campaign against Nazi Germany during World War II. But was NATO's policy toward the Kosovo crisis really comparable to the war against Hitler's Germany? Did the Allies wage war against Nazi Germany to save the Jews between 1933 and 1945? Or was the end of the Holocaust merely the by-product of an Allied effort, the sole purpose of which was the defeat of the Axis powers?

On 29 June 1999, Professor Richard Breitman delivered the keynote lecture "Western Intelligence Organizations and Knowledge of the Holocaust" as part of the annual summer seminar of the UVM Center for Holocaust Studies. Professor Breitman is perhaps the leading authority on Allied knowledge of Nazi Germany's mass murder of the Jews in Europe during World War II. His most recent contribution on this subject is his book *Official Secrets: What the Nazis Planned, What the British and Americans Knew*, published by Hill & Wang in 1998.

Breitman began his lecture by addressing the oft-repeated comparison of Kosovo to the Holocaust and World War II, arguing that they are not comparable at all. For the Allies, Breitman asserted, World War II was not about the Jews and their survival, as perhaps it was for the Nazis. Thus, saving Jews was never a consideration in Allied strategic planning during the war. The end of the killing of Jews and other victims was the natural consequence of the military defeat of Nazi Germany, and nothing more.

The unwillingness of the Allies to consider the Jewish catastrophe during World War II naturally raises questions about how much the Allies knew and when they knew it. Breitman cautioned the audience that the response of the Allies was naturally conditioned by the kind of information they possessed, and there were indeed limits to that information. To understand, therefore, what the Allies knew, one must determine what sort of information was available to them at the time. Until some 20 years ago, however, most believed that the world outside of German-occupied Eastern Europe knew little if anything about the extermination of the Jews that began in earnest in 1941 and 1942, so that there was no reason to expect any action.

Scholars have since discovered that Allied intelligence agencies were in the business of amassing this kind of information, and that they provide an excellent source of information on the mass murder of the Jews, how much the Allies knew about it, and when they first learned about it. For example, Professor Breitman noted that the Polish underground and Vichy France were important sources of information on the implementation of the Final Solution in Eastern Europe. But the focus of his lecture was on British and American intelligence agencies and the enormous amount of information on Nazi mass murder that they managed to accumulate during the war. American intelligence

Book Reviews

Victor Klemperer. **I Will Bear Witness: A Diary of the Nazi Years, 1933-1941.** Translated and with a preface by Martin Chalmers. New York, NY: Random House, 1998. Cloth, $29.95. ISBN: 0-679-45696-1.

When the two volumes of Victor Klemperer's *Ich will Zeugnis ablegen bis zum letzten: Tagebücher 1933-1945* were published in Germany in 1995 the response from both scholars and non-specialists was immediate and overwhelmingly positive. Likewise, the English-language publication of the first volume of Klemperer's diary has been warmly received by scholars around the world. As living memory of the Shoah fades, we find ourselves in an era replete with memoirs, video testimonies, feature films, and historical monographs describing, interpreting, and sometimes even trivializing the Nazi onslaught against Europe's Jews. Why, then, the popularity of a 500-page diary by a little-known East German scholar?

Klemperer's work is a highly nuanced and exhaustively detailed account of how Nazi anti-Jewish measures in the years 1933-1941 affected one assimilated Dresden Jew and those around him. No mere chronicler of the first nine years of Hitler's rule, Klemperer devotes as much of his journal to self-examination as to description of the events around him. Moreover, the work contains countless insightful observations about the character of the Nazi regime, the German public's response to it, and the reactions of Jews in Klemperer's milieu to the state's growing power and ferocity. Not least, the diary was never intended for publication, and it therefore exhibits an unvarnished immediacy and reliability as a historical source lacking in some of the memoir literature.

Born in Landsberg an der Warthe (today Gorzów Wielkopolski, Poland), Victor Klemperer (1881-1960) was the eighth and youngest child of a rabbi who would later be called to the Reform synagogue in Berlin (the renowned conductor Otto Klemperer was a cousin). Klemperer went on to study philology and philosophy, converted to Protestantism at age 31, and completed his doctorate in 1914. He then served at the front and as a military censor during World War I. In 1920 he accepted a chair in Romance languages and literature at the Technical University of Dresden—a chair he would hold for 15 years until he was forced to retire by the Nazis in 1935. Klemperer regarded himself as patriotic, liberal, and above all German in his cultural, intellectual, and ethnic allegiance. What saved him from death under the Nazis was not his loyalty to Germany, however, but his marriage of many years to the "Aryan" musician Eva Schlemmer. In fact, Klemperer and his wife survived the entire Third Reich in the Dresden area, and left only (on their own accord) after the destruction of the city by Allied bombs in February 1945. Returning from Bavaria after the war, Klemperer once again settled in Dresden, resumed his academic career, joined the Communist Party, held professorships in Greifswald and Berlin, and even sat as a People's Deputy in the parliament of the German Democratic Republic.

The diary begins in 1933, when Klemperer is still in the midst of university politics and expressing his apprehension and disdain for the political direction his country is taking. In the early stages of the work Klemperer introduces in detail his wife, family, friends, and enemies, thereby providing a window to the complexities of his own character and identity. The reader will likely be struck by Klemperer's detailed descriptions and complaints of the banalities of everyday life: housekeeping duties, his wife's poor health and apparent hypochondria, the phases of depression they both suffer, his ongoing attempt to manage personal and professional responsibilities. Likewise, the bourgeois sensibilities of the Klemperers come to the fore, as they lament their increasingly "proletarianized" lifestyle resulting from the ever-increasing legal and financial burdens imposed upon them by the Nazi state. Such details, however, grant Klemperer's audience an intimate familiarity with his personality and lend the manuscript a rare degree of immediacy that, in this context, leads the reader to a better understanding of the physical, but especially the psychological torment that the couple endures in the face of incremental, yet ever increasing discrimination and injustice.

Despite the intimacy of his narrative, Klemperer quickly emerges as a remarkable witness to and analyst of the Nazi state and its consolidation of power. His prescient characterizations of the regime and the course it will take anticipate in remarkable fashion not only future events, but also the analyses of subsequent scholars. Klemperer's Nazi state is not a monolith, but a dictatorship fraught with conflict and inconsistency; his German populace by and large does not offer the unflinching support that the regime claims for itself, but instead celebrates Hitler's victories and, out of fear or indifference, often withdraws into private life as much as possible. Klemperer's recurring descriptions of the public mood towards Hitler, the Party, the war, or Jews are varied and admittedly often contradictory. The author is, on the one hand, quick to note what he perceives as attitudes and acts of compassion or courage on the part of non-Jewish Germans, be they friends or strangers. More prevalent, however, are his discussions of collective apathy, cowardice, and the ease with which the German people could be seduced by the Nazis and their propaganda. Initially convinced that the Nazis and their followers were thoroughly un-German, Klemperer claims in his entry of 5 April 1938:

> How deeply Hitler's attitudes are rooted in the German people, how good the preparations were for his Aryan doctrine, how unbelievably I have deceived myself my whole life long, when I imagined myself to belong to Germany, and how completely homeless I am.

Thus, although deeply committed to the German culture and "spirit" of his education and calling, Klemperer increasingly asserts that his Germany is fertile ground for the growth of National Socialism.

No less intriguing is the author's recognition of the modernist elements of the Nazi state and society. Technological progress (which fascinates him) coexists with civic ignorance and cowardice, while scientific advancement shows a menacing dimension:

> And with every day that passes I am again and ever more strongly disturbed by the trite antithesis: such tremendous things are being created, radio, airplane, sound film, and the most insane stupidity, primitiveness and bestiality cannot be eradicated—all invention results in murder and war.

Similarly, Klemperer offers a particularly acute analysis of fashionable trends in the language of the Third Reich, which he refers to as the *Lingua Tertii Imperii*, or "LTI." Noting throughout the hyperbolic, euphemistic, anti-intellectuall and ultimately deceptive turns of the regime's propaganda machine, Klemperer intended his entries on language to serve as the foundation for his 1947 work *LTI: Notizbuch eines Philologen*, which analyzed the corruption of the German language through the addition of Nazi terms and slogans.

Perhaps the most poignant aspect of Klemperer's diary is the contradiction between his self perception as a "true" German and his growing sense that his nation and culture have abandoned him. Firmly convinced that the natural state of German-Jewish relations had been one of symbiosis, Klemperer is as ardent an opponent of Zionism as he is a champion of German culture. The Germany to which Klemperer is so committed is not, of course, the Germany of National Socialism. Rather, his perception of Germany is colored by his allegiance to the rationalism of the French Enlightenment and the liberalism of the revolutions that followed in its wake. "Liberal and German forever," Klemperer writes of himself in November 1939. Here is the most tragic irony to emerge in the first volume of the diary, for Klemperer appears bound to this culture and nation, but is forced to its periphery by the physical isolation of incremental anti-Jewish legislation and the intellectual isolation imposed upon him by a compliant and cowardly academic establishment. It is this sense of isolation—from friends, family, and professional duties—that time and again brings Klemperer to despair. At the same time, however, it is his courageous devotion to his scholarship, his diary, and his posthumously published autobiography that gives him hope and resilience.

Victor Klemperer's diaries stand in a unique group among first-hand accounts of the era. The immediacy and pathos of his narrative enlivens what, for many students of the era, can easily become an abstract chronology of the Nazi state's anti-Jewish measures. At the same time, however, the author maintains clarity of expression and a certain scholarly restraint as he paces the reader through the first nine years of Nazi rule.

Klemperer's experiences, it must be noted, were not necessarily typical. Although his plight in the 1930s was shared by many German Jews, his survival was exceptional. According to Martin Chalmers' preface to the diary, of the 4,675 Jews registered in Dresden in 1933, 1,265 remained in the city in late 1941. Klemperer was one of only 198 registered Jews living in the city in February 1945, all of whom survived to that point because of marriage to a non-Jewish spouse. The others had been deported to ghettos and camps in the east, where all but a few met their deaths. Not only would Klemperer survive (as chronicled in the second volume of his diaries, scheduled to appear in English later this year), but he would return to Dresden and, with his wife Eva, work to rebuild their lives and at least a part of the Germany from which he could not separate himself.

It may come as a disappointment to some that Klemperer's diary offers few simple explanations for the character of and motivations for the German onslaught against Europe's Jews. Readers seeking confirming evidence of Daniel Goldhagen's "eliminationist" anti-Semitism will be frustrated, and although Klemperer includes many individual examples of kindness and resistance on the part of non-Jews, the search for a more courageous and altruistic German people will be equally fruitless. Klemperer's is not the voice of reductionist historical explanation; it is the lonely and often quixotic voice of a scholar struggling with his complex identity under the shadow of destruction.

Jonathan Huener
University of Vermont

Helen Fremont. **After Long Silence.** New York, NY: Random/ Delacorte, 1999. Hardcover $23.95. ISBN: 0-385-33369-2.

In many ways it is difficult for those of us who came of age in the 1960s and 1970s to understand our parents and the world in which they grew up in the 1930s and 1940s, whether they lived in the shadow of the Holocaust or under the cloud of the Great Depression. Helen Fremont's attempt to understand her family was made all the more difficult by the secrecy that partially shrouded its heritage. *After Long Silence* is the result of her attempt at comprehension, and is both a memoir and a detective story.

The memoir recounts her childhood in the Midwest, where she and her sister went to Catholic schools, and attended church on Sunday. For Fremont and her sister Lara, it felt natural to leave church before Communion, to say, for example, the Lord's Prayer in any one of six languages, to be the only Catholics at a Jewish wedding.

Young children are, in general, accepting creatures. If parents declare Communion and Confirmation are newfangled American customs, so be it. Family stories are taken at face value: Grandparents were killed by bombs; parents meet in Poland, are separated by the war, and find each other again in Rome. Children also work to make information fit their own experience: Concentration camps, like the ones your parents were in, were places where people were made to think intensely. However, sooner or later, most children become curious and begin to ask questions. The answers Fremont received were unsatisfactory digressions, attempts to divert her attention. She came to view these responses as a sign of family dysfunction.

The detective story begins when a chance conversation leads Fremont to wonder if perhaps her parents are Jewish. Now adults in their thirties, she and her sister begin to trace their family's past. They discover that their family was not caught up by accident in the turmoil of World War II, as they had been led to believe. Rather, they were Orthodox Jews. Fremont feels as if she has found the explanation for her family's dysfunction—her parents had been living a lie for the last fifty years.

Fremont and her sister learn how their grandparents and other relatives perished, but also that several cousins survived the Holocaust. They speak with neighbors from their father's hometown. But no matter how much they learn, they remain unsatisfied, a not uncommon state for the children of survivors. As a

survivor from their father's hometown tells them, "My son is a rabbi in Colorado...He says I didn't tell him enough about the Holocaust. But I told him enough."

Fremont's parents eventually begin to tell their stories, independently of one another. Fremont and her sister supplement what they hear with research. They also travel to Poland, visiting the family's hometowns, taking pictures. Their parents and aunt interpret the trip as a desire to see the towns where their families live. They view the slides eagerly, talking about various buildings. But a view of the vandalized Jewish cemetery in Busk silences them.

This very silence in the face of all things Jewish is the barrier Fremont attempts to pierce, an attempt that is generally successful. She pieces her family's history together like a quilt, the thread of her imagination stitching the snippets of her parents' stories to her knowledge of their characters and to her historical research. The work she creates is not only plausible, it is fascinating.

Her father, a former decathlete, was one class away from completing his medical studies in Poland when the Soviets invaded in 1939. (He would later complete medical degrees in the Soviet Union, Italy, and the United States.) During his six years in Siberia, his knowledge of medicine helped him survive. His care for a fellow prisoner eventually aided in his own survival when he returned to Poland.

Fremont's aunt Zosia had converted to Catholicism in 1935, in order to be able to marry the Italian count she loved. Fremont's mother, Batya, was sent to Rome, to live with her sister and brother-in-law while she studied at the university. But both women were in Poland when the Russians invaded. It was then that they began to change identities, playing whatever role would enable them to survive. Zosia finally managed to return to Rome in 1942. Later that same year Batya escaped Poland disguised as an Italian soldier.

Fremont traces the outlines of her parents' story. As she obtains more facts, she also comes to understand that secrets were kept out of the desire to protect other family members, not only from possible anti-Semitism, but from the psychological cost such revelations might bring. Although her father would have liked to talk more of his experiences, he had promised her mother he would not. Her mother refuses to talk about it, because Zosia had decreed they should not, and because she is afraid Zosia will not be able to handle the knowledge that their past has been discovered. Batya's concern is justified. Eventually Zosia reveals a secret of her own: she cannot remember anything before Petlura Day, the day in 1941 when Ukrainians massacred many of the Jews of Lvov while the Germans looked on. Zosia cannot even remember Batya's original name.

Fremont's mother also adamantly denies the designation her experience could entitle her to: "I have no numbers! I am not a survivor." Although she has many memories of her experiences, she would rather turn her back on the past, an attitude not uncommon to those of her generation of any heritage. (Indeed, it is one strongly held by the reviewer's own New England grandmother.) Zosia, in contrast, wishes she could remember: "One needs to remember. One needs one's roots."

Fremont is a public defender in Boston. Her desire to know and pursue the truth is, after all, one of the ideals to which the law aspires. Yet it is all too easy to hold others to a higher standard than oneself. This reader welcomed her decision not to re-enact her elders' silence. Although she wants to protect them from the burden of possibly unwelcome knowledge, she decides to tell them she is a lesbian. Her mother accepts the announcement in typical fashion, "You don't know." Zosia, on the other hand, feels that finding someone to love is more important than the sexual orientation of that person.

After Long Silence illustrates well some of the effects the Holocaust has on the children of survivors. Fremont has satisfied her need to discover the truth about her family. However, that knowledge brings with it further tensions. She encounters difficulties trying to reconcile her sexuality with her Judaism. A young rabbi she meets with assures her that now she has a Jewish identity she will want to renounce her lesbianism. Discovery of the truth may not, after all, set one free.

Fremont tells her story gracefully. There are perhaps a handful of paragraphs that seem overwritten and lacking in emotional truth. She moves with certainty between her own memories of childhood, her family's past, and her research and writing process. Her imaginative reconstructions of her parents' experiences ring true.

Ultimately Fremont reveals her true inheritance, which is much more than places and dates, photos and mementos, and more even than cultural or religious identity. Her heritage is the pattern of family relationships—the closeness between sisters, whether Zosia and Batya or Helen and Lara; the anger of a daughter at her mother's protectiveness, anger that grows to understanding only when the daughter gains a certain maturity. Fremont even replicates her elders' desire to protect those near to them from hurt; the "Author's Note" reads, in part, "I have changed the names, locations, and identifying characteristics of a number of individuals in order to protect their privacy." These patterns endure through the passage of time, changes of identity, and geographic separation. The tension between Helen Fremont's desire to protect her family and her desire to know the truth have produced a fine work.

Katherine Quimby Johnson

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Ellen Land-Weber. **To Save a Life: Stories of Jewish Rescue.** CD-ROM. Arcata, Ca: Humboldt University, 1998. $20 plus shipping. Available at www.humboldt.edu/~rescuers

The literature of the Holocaust is vast. For the most part the focus is on its victims or its perpetrators. Only a small body of work concerns itself with the topic of rescue, that is, saving Jewish lives. One reason, of course, is that such stories are too few in number. Ellen Land-Weber informs us that only one tenth of one percent of the population of Nazi-occupied European countries saved persecuted Jews. Therefore, their acts of courage stand out and show an individual heroism when it was more common to turn a blind eye to the persecution of the Jews.

Inspired by the example of Humboldt State University professors Samuel and Pearl Oliner, who have interviewed hundreds of such rescuers of Jews, Ellen Land-Weber has focused on a handful of brave people who saved a dozen individuals. In recording their stories, she presents us with profiles of rescuers as ordinary women and men who took extraordinary risks. The individuals were from several European countries.

The result is a balanced and carefully researched work that is available on CD-ROM and the Internet. Land-Weber shows each life within the complex reality of the war and the Holocaust. In order to clarify the different individual situations, she has added both useful historical timelines and specific background information that one does not normally find in biographical or autobiographical accounts. The appended maps are particularly helpful, delineating, for example, geopolitical events like the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia in 1938-39. In addition, Land-Weber has provided short bibliographies of important reference works in each chapter.

All of the above qualities make Land-Weber's project a perfect teaching and learning tool for a culture course. It could also be employed in a special lecture on the subject of German history, integrated into German studies courses, or used as source information for student projects. This particular CD-ROM text is easy to navigate and would be a great asset in libraries and classrooms of schools and universities.

A further valuable aspect of this project is that it serves as an antidote to a contemporary ethos that seems to encourage the pursuit of individualism. *To Save a Life* shows that altruism and personal risk for something greater than oneself are values that enrich and ennoble a civilization. As a microcosm of a colossal historic event that we still struggle to comprehend, these personal stories will help build a bridge to the next generation in secondary and post-secondary education, for Land-Weber has provided examples that celebrate "the potential of the human spirit." In addition, *To Save a Life* is, perhaps, slightly less harring in the classroom, because it deals with life rather than death, but it does not efface the reality of the Holocaust.

Karin Doerr
Concordia University, Montreal
and Gary Evans
University of Ottawa

ANNOUNCEMENTS

People in the News

Robert Rachlin, Esq., partner in the firm of Downs Martin and Rachlin and chairman of the Center for Holocaust Studies Advisory Board, has received a grant from the Finlandia Foundation Trust in support of his research in Finnish archives. We hope to publish the results of his research in a future issue of *The Bulletin*.

Michael Schaal, M.S.W., a member of the Center for Holocaust Studies Advisory Board and the Chair of the Gathering Steering Committee, was interviewed by *U.S. News and World Report* for an article on parallels between the Holocaust and the recent genocide in Kosovo. The article, "A hideous déjà vu from the greatest evil of all: Many see the Holocaust in Kosovo," by John Marks appeared in the edition published 26 April 1999 and is available on-line at www.usnews.com/usnews/issue/archives/htm.

Publication

We are pleased to announce the publication of ***Breeding Better Vermonters: The Eugenics Project in the Green Mountain State*** by **Nancy Gallagher**. Gallagher's background in biology and her graduate work in history come together in this study of Henry F. Perkins' Eugenics Survey of Vermont. This work is available from the University Press of New England. Look for a review in a future issue of *The Bulletin*. Gallagher, wife of Faculty Steering Committee member Connell Gallagher, is an active supporter of the Center for Holocaust Studies and worked as a graduate teaching fellow for Doris Bergen's course on the Holocaust.

Spring Symposium

German Medicine and Ethics under National Socialism

April 8, 2000
Carpenter Auditorium
Given Building
The University of Vermont
College of Medicine

Mark your calendars for this all-day event, sponsored by the Center for Holocaust Studies and the University of Vermont College of Medicine.

Speakers will be:

Garland Allen, Washington University in St. Louis
"The Ideology of Elimination: American and German Eugenics, 1900-1945"

Michael Kater, York University
"A Criminal Profession in the Third Reich: Toward a Group Portrait of Physicians"

Henry Friedlander, Brooklyn College
"Physicians as Killers in Nazi Germany: Hadamar, Treblinka, and Auschwitz"

Robert Proctor, Pennsylvania State University
"Why Did the Nazis Have the World's Most Aggressive Anti-Cancer Campaign?"

William Seidelman, University of Toronto
"Dementia of the Academe: The Continuing Legacy of Medicine in the Third Reich"

Support for this symposium has been provided thanks to the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Miller.

Those who receive *The Bulletin of the Center for Holocaust Studies* at the University of Vermont will receive registration information in the mail this fall. All others are asked to contact the Center at (802) 656-1492, or by e-mail at uvmchs@zoo.uvm.edu.

To The Editor

To the Editor:

In his discussion of Binjamin Wilkomirski's retrieved memories, Mark Pendergrast states (p. 3) that it would be impossible for Wilkomirski's *Fragments* to be genuine memories because "no one remembers anything" before the age of three on account of infantile amnesia. Although I am not qualified to comment on most of the issues raised in Mr. Pendergrast's article, his statement about infantile amnesia is incorrect. I have many vivid memories from the first three years of my life which have never required any effort to retrieve, as they were never forgotten. They include dreams. Several memories can be documented as memories of real events from entries in my mother's baby book (a sort of diary she kept of my infant and early childhood years), and from known dates, such as the move from one house to another. I am completely opposed to the practice of using special techniques to "retrieve" (create?) memories and would never go to a practitioner for that purpose.

I am aware that many persons lend support to the theory that infantile amnesia is impenetrable and universal by claiming to be unable to remember anything from earliest childhood, sometimes even up to age seven. As a psychoanalyst, I mistrust attempts to find physiological explanations for such phenomena as infantile amnesia that may be more emotionally determined. Individuals are not all the same in their rate of development, and my experience demonstrates that the hippocampus either does not operate on the rigid schedule that Mr. Pendergrast states, or is not responsible for the retention of memories from the first three years of life. Judgments about other people's mental life should not be based on a generalization that does not apply to everyone.

Katharine More
Sharon, Vt.

Mark Pendergrast replies:

In response to Katharine Moore: Infantile amnesia is a real phenomenon, though perhaps I should not have stated categorically that no one recalls anything before the age of three. The earliest claims made by memory expert Ulric Neisser go back to just prior to three years of age.

I know, however, that many people are quite convinced that they do recall events from an earlier time, even back to one year old or before. "You may be right about most people," I have heard repeatedly, and then they go on to tell me their most cherished early memory. And who am I to say that all such memories aren't really memories? I suspect that they are usually the product of imagination, based on stories told by family members and well-rehearsed over the years. The fact that the events can be corroborated does not mean that the memories themselves are accurate.

Jean Piaget, the famous child psychologist, had a vivid memory of a traumatic event that took place when he was two years old. "I was sitting in my pram, which my nurse was pushing in the Champs Elysees, when a man tried to kidnap me. I was held in by the strap fastened around me while my nurse bravely tried to stand between me and the thief. She received various scratches." Piaget recalled how her face looked, how a crowd gathered, how a policeman with a white baton appeared, how the would-be kidnapper fled. But the entire episode turned out to be a fabrication. When Piaget was 15, his former nurse, newly converted to the Salvation Army, wrote to the family confessing that she had faked the scratches. There had been no kidnapper. Piaget concluded that he must have heard detailed accounts of the story as a child and created his own "visual memory" of an entirely fictitious event.

Various explanations for infantile amnesia have been given over the years. Freud thought we repressed such memories. Some psychologists think that the narrative or cognitive self, with its time sense and focus on life's milestones, doesn't develop until three or so, which matches Piaget's concept of a "preoperational period." But today most neuroscientists believe that it can be explained biologically. The hippocampus in the mid-brain and the prefrontal cortex do not mature until several years after birth. We know from studying adults with damaged hippocampi —who cannot recall meeting the same person who visits day after day—that the hippocampus is necessary to transfer short-term into long-term memory.

One more comment. Katharine More writes: "As a psychoanalyst, I mistrust attempts to find physiological explanations for such phenomena as infantile amnesia that may be more emotionally determined." I think that is an unfortunate and even alarming attitude. Therapists frequently hypothesize that highly charged, traumatic, emotional events must account for memory lapses. Such unproven theories led to the recovered memory craze, which Ms. More and I appear to agree was a terrible mistake. So let me rephrase her statement. As a science writer, I mistrust attempts to assign psychological explanations to phenomena such as infantile amnesia that can be more readily explained physiologically.

About the Authors

Robert Bernheim is currently a doctoral candidate at McGill University in Montreal, and is the coordinator and instructor of the seminar "The Holocaust and Holocaust Education."

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THE CENTER FOR HOLOCAUST STUDIES
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

The *Bulletin of the Center for Holocaust Studies* is published semiannually by The Center for Holocaust Studies at the University of Vermont. All correspondence, including address changes, should be sent to: The Center for Holocaust Studies, Old Mill A301, The University of Vermont, P.O. Box 4055, Burlington, VT 05405-4055.

Editor: Professor David Scrase
Associate Editor: Katherine Quimby Johnson

The Center for Holocaust Studies at the University of Vermont was established in 1993 to honor the scholarly and pedagogical legacy of Raul Hilberg, professor emeritus of the Department of Political Science at the University of Vermont. His monumental work, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, changed the way historians and students around the world view the Holocaust. Since Dr. Hilberg began his work at the University of Vermont in the late 1950s, what was a reluctance to confront the facts of the Holocaust has given way to a hunger for the truth.

Bulletin of the Center for Holocaust Studies at the University of Vermont, Volume 4, Number 1

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EVENTS TO NOTE

Eighth Annual Hilberg Lecture

"Questioning the Perpetrators"
Gitta Sereny
12 October 1999
8:00 p.m.
Carpenter Auditorium
Given Building
University of Vermont
College of Medicine

The Hilberg Lecture is free and open to the public.

Symposium

"German Medicine and Ethics Under National Socialism"
April 8, 2000
Carpenter Auditorium
Given Building
The University of Vermont
College of Medicine

(See page 14 for more information)

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