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## THE BULLETIN OF


 THE CENTER FOR  
**HOLOCAUST**  
**STUDIES**

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

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OCT 10 2000

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Volume 5, Number 1

Fall 2000

## LETTER FROM GERMANY

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For three weeks beginning in mid-June I was privileged to be a Fulbright Fellow participating in a seminar on *History and Memory: Jewish Past and Present in Germany*. The intensive seminar, arranged by the German-American Fulbright Commission, took us to four main locations: Berlin, Leipzig, Frankfurt, and Munich. With the exception of the weekends each day involved either presentations by scholars, rabbis, and figures prominent in German-Jewish life, or visits to museums, synagogues, or Jewish community centers. There were twenty-five participants in the group, all of them U.S. citizens, all of them scholars, and all but one (who was from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington) university professors. Our disciplines were mixed: German studies, history, art, music, Jewish studies, and political science. It was a fascinating experience, not only because of the information and personalities set before us, but also because of the commitment, interests and backgrounds of the lively group of scholars.

We spent the first week in Berlin. Once again the capital of Germany, Berlin thrives and throbs with almost frenetic activity—especially new construction. Buildings are going up everywhere; it seems, some are complete, but not yet fully integrated or utilized.

The *Jewish Museum*, designed by the “deconstructionist” architect Daniel Libeskind (b. 1946 in Lodz and the child of survivors) is a case in point. After much wrangling and dispute, and no fewer than five name changes (largely connected with political-financial machinations, but also reflecting a change in mission from being a museum for Berlin Jews to a museum for German Jews), the museum was opened in January 1999. Each month some 35,000 visitors, a large proportion of them German, crowd in to see, as we did, an building devoid of any exhibit. What attracts them, and what attracted most of our group (with

some considerable reservations), is a building laid out in a jagged zig-zag interrupted by a series of five “voids,” as Libeskind calls them. These voids, spaces that the visitor crosses or passes, but cannot enter, are meant to conjure up all aspects of Jewish life that are missing in Germany. Libeskind also makes great use of inclines and lighting. The windows, such as they are, are generally narrow slits. Everything is asymmetrical. Outside, a monumental garden “sculpture,” for want of a better word, conveys the experience of emigration and exile. Somehow, as one wanders through a maze of giant, leaning pillars, one experiences a feeling of vertigo suggestive of the rocking of a ship on the high seas.

Most of our group found the museum *per se* an effective architectural statement. The space, however, did not seem designed to house exhibits. Certainly many of us could not envisage one there. Were there ever to be an exhibit—and we were assured there would be—some felt that it would either be overpowered by the building, or that the building would be rendered ineffective by the exhibit. The architectural correspondent of *The Boston Globe*, who recently singled the museum out for special praise, is skeptical that an exhibit, scheduled to open in 2001, will come to pass.

We were privileged to be introduced to the history of the building’s design by the architect’s wife, Nina. In the absence of her husband, who was stranded at Heathrow airport with an expired passport, I hardly think that Libeskind could have done better than Nina, who was articulate, informed, close to the project, and yet still a mite objective. We also heard a presentation by Tom Freudenheim, the deputy director of the museum. The director, by the way, is W. Michael Blumenthal, Secretary of the Treasury during the Carter administration, who was born in Berlin.

The other building saga that has periodically been on the news in the U.S., and has been of tremendous interest in Germany, is that of the Holocaust Memorial to be built in Berlin. The competition for this structure was won by another American architect, Peter Eisenmann. We were given the historical background to the monument by Michael S. Cullen, a man intimately connected with the evolution of the project and the author of a book (in German) on the subject. In regard to the perception outside Germany that the delay seems to suggest that the Germans do not want such a museum, Cullen pointed out that there is no national World War II monument in the United States, and no decision or statement from Washington on the subject. There is no rush, Cullen said, there is time.

We spent a morning at the villa on the Wannsee, where the infamous conference on the "Final Solution" took place. It now houses a complete and full permanent exhibition on the Nazi era in the villa. An exhibit on the grounds presents the history of this general quarter of Berlin, home to wealthy industrialists, some of whom were Jewish, in the prewar era.

Our group also heard a lecture by Michael Friedman, the vice president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, and a colorful character with his own TV talk show. He painted a relatively positive picture of the position of Jews in current day Germany, but was on the whole less informative than Andreas Nachama, the Chairman of the Berlin Jewish Community.

The general picture emerging at this early stage of our seminar was that the number of Jews living in Germany has risen considerably since unification a decade ago, from about 30,000 to anywhere from a low estimate of 70,000 to a high estimate of 120,000. In other words the Jewish population has at least doubled, if not quadrupled. The greatest number of these Jewish immigrants came from the former Soviet Union. The presence of a "J" (J) in their passports gives them priority to leave the country of their birth and enter Germany, where immigration laws are favorable to them. Most of these Jews are not practicing, know no Hebrew, and are unaware of even the rudiments of Judaism. Some show an interest in acquiring this background, but many do not. Some use their "Jewish identity" for the "perks" it affords them. As we learned when we visited Potsdam, some Jewish communities are 100 per cent Russian. Their cultural identity is Russian. One rabbi, whom we met is often asked to check whether the Russian Jewish immigrant is, in fact, Jewish, or whether a "Jewish" identity has simply been taken on for convenience and expediency. Much the same picture is painted in a recent (6 August 2000) article in the *New York Times*.

The rabbis and Jewish community leaders we met throughout our travels gave a relatively glib picture of the situation for Jews in Germany. A Jew has everything that could be desired: kosher food, a place to worship, equality, opportunity. When pressed on the subject of anti-Semitism they responded by saying it was not really a problem. Yes, there were right-wing extremists (as there are everywhere), but there were no other signs of anti-Semitism. The rabbis tend to be orthodox. One, whom we met in Frankfurt am Main, was a Lubavitcher from Israel. Publicly he told us that Jews can lead a satisfactory life in Germany. During his years living in Frankfurt he had observed not one single act of anti-Semitism firsthand, although, to be sure, people sometimes ask him why he wears an overcoat in the summer! Privately, however, he revealed different thoughts. He wished there were no Jews in Germany, and he lived each day, one at a

time, hoping to go somewhere else. A rabbi in Munich (born in Crown Heights, Brooklyn) was upbeat publicly and much less negative privately.

There were other lectures on the foreign policy of the "Berlin Republic" (the name contains a clear echo of the Weimar Republic) on German and Jewish memory after the Holocaust (by Steven Aschheim), on the work of the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation to further awareness of the possibilities for Jews in Germany, and on the work in Germany of the American Jewish Committee (AJC). The latter was given by Delid Berger, the director of the AJC, and formerly the German correspondent for NPR. There was also a visit to the Moses Mendelssohn Center for European-Jewish Studies, where its director, Julius Schoeps, and two students talked about Jewish Studies in Germany.

In the area of the New Synagogue on the Oranienburger Strasse is the Jewish high school (*Gymnasium*), situated in the same building it occupied until 1938. This year saw its first graduating class—the first in Germany since 1938. Eighteen students graduated, one third of them not Jewish. In an article I read containing interviews with three students (two of whom were Jewish), great satisfaction emerged. The students were very content, and would have no hesitation in sending their own children to the school. Forty per cent of the pupils at this Jewish school are non-Jews.

In my free time while in Berlin I sampled the food in two of the Jewish restaurants, went to the synagogue on the Oranienburger Strasse and visited the museum in the same building. I traveled to the outskirts to Sachsenhausen, a camp had not hitherto seen. The camp is situated in the former Eastern Sector, just north of Berlin. During the years it operated in the Third Reich (1936-1945) Sachsenhausen was used primarily for political prisoners, both from Germany and, increasingly, from abroad. Europe Jews were taken there at the time of *Kristallnacht* and thereafter, and, as time went on, the camp was used increasingly for them and the other groups deemed "racially inferior." There were gasings, in addition to killings by other means. Over 200,000 prisoners were incarcerated in Sachsenhausen during the nine years it existed as a Nazi camp. Over 43,000 died there.

Sachsenhausen is of great interest for a number of reasons, not least being its uses and development since 1945. For five years, until 1950, it was used by the Soviet occupational forces to house Nazi war criminals. Of the approximately 60,000 inmates, more than 12,000 died of malnutrition and disease. Later the East German People's Police and People's National Army used the site. In 1956 plans were drawn up to establish a National Memorial on the site, which opened in 1961. The Memorial took the form of a museum and a number of different commemorative monuments. The museum stressed the Nazi persecution of socialists, above all, and emphasized the role of the Red Army in vanquishing Nazi Germany. Then, in 1990, the museum came under the purview of the newly united Germany, and has since been partially renovated. Work continues at this time. In 1992 right-wing radical skinheads set fire to one of the buildings two days after the museum was visited by Yitzhak Rabin. The damage has not been repaired. Instead the burned wood is now visible behind a plexiglass shield and an account of the arson attack informs the curious visitor.

What this all means is that the site currently is a time capsule of the events in, and concerning, Germany from 1933 to the present. I personally would like to see the museum remain

exactly as it is because of what the variety of exhibits offer. To eradicate all signs of how the site was misused by the East Germans will remove a fascinating and important piece of history—just as to have eradicated all signs of the skinhead attack would have obscured a problem instead of revealing it.

From Berlin we went to Leipzig in the former Eastern Zone of Germany. Here we visited the Simon Dubnow Institute for Jewish History and Culture and engaged in a discussion with its director, Dan Diner. We were able to visit the attractive Brody Synagogue in the Keil Strasse. This colorful building from 1903/04 shows a pronounced eastern influence. It was so close to other buildings that it was not burned down in November 1938. The interior was, however, desecrated and badly damaged. Because of the Leipzig Fair and the hordes of foreign visitors, however, the Nazis had the congregation restore the interior in time for the Fair in 1939. It was used for storage during the war, towards the end of which it was destroyed by bombs. It was rebuilt and restored during the nineties, and was rededicated in 1993.

A tour of Leipzig was illuminating and instructive, and our short time in the city was capped with a fascinating account by the wife of the pastor of the Reformed Church of Leipzig of the events leading up to the fall of the Wall in 1989. The city of Leipzig and its churches were the center of the movement that toppled the regime, and the Reformed Church, together with the Nikolaikirche (Church of St. Nicholas), was vital to the success of the movement.

From Leipzig we traveled to Weimar and Buchenwald just outside that city. Buchenwald and its notoriety are both well-documented and well known, even so the immensity of the place was starkly chilling. I sensed that the group was more devastated by its visit to this chilling site than by any of the others.

Frankfurt am Main was one of the major centers of Jewish life in pre-Nazi times. Even with all the losses, it now offers us a great deal. We visited one of the Jewish museums, whose exhibition was well arranged and effective. We then went on to the West End Synagogue, Jewish school, and Community Center, complete with kosher restaurant. The architect who designed the complex, Salomon Korn, is also the Chairman of the Frankfurt Jewish Community. His explanations and the responses to our questions were excellent. It was at the kosher restaurant that we met Rabbi Menachem Klein, the Lubavitcher from Israel whom I mentioned above.

After this we went to the huge cemetery Rat-Bell, which was spared desecration by a decree from Frankfurt's mayor. A number of Rothschilds are buried here, as well as many other well-known Jewish dignitaries. Our tour was given by Jakob Horowitz, a Polish survivor who settled in Frankfurt after the war. A more engaging character than this retired stonemason we could not have chosen. The wall around another cemetery in Frankfurt is now a memorial with the names of all the victims from Frankfurt and its environs engraved on small metal tablets and set into the wall at about head height. They are in alphabetical order, and I was able to find a few names known to me. Another in our group, one who had used our free time to search for her roots, was amazed to find the names of some of her relatives.

Munich saw the end of our intense experience. One highlight here was the tour of part of the city. Hitler's city, one might say, by an architect who was able to point out many aspects of the buildings that others might ignore. Michael

Brenner gave a cogent presentation on Jewish history in Germany and the situation in Munich in particular.

In our free time I went to Dachau. Many criticize the memorial museum, calling it sanitized, unclear, spoiled by monuments erected by the various churches. Certainly the exhibit loses much if you have no German—the English labels and commentary are not in themselves adequate. But as long as one reads German, the information is all there. As for the Christian monuments, Dachau was, of course, the camp for Christian opponents. Sachsenhausen is, perhaps, the more interesting presentation. But Dachau is very informative.

It was in Munich that we met Rabbi Steven Langsam, and toured the synagogue and the Cultural Center of the Israeli Community. Rabbi Langsam, born in Crown Heights to emigre German Jews, speaks German well and seems content to be in Germany. His attempts to start a Jewish *Gymnasium* have so far come to naught. It is not because of money, ironically—the state would provide. It is because the community is not sufficiently committed. A new Jewish school in Bavaria would be "state-recognized" (state approved) but not "state-recognized" (recognized by the state). Recognition would not come until the first graduating class emerged. The community members apparently see a risk here and simply send their children to the state schools that are already "recognized."

But Munich is known more as the city that Hitler adopted, the city where the Nazi movement was born, took hold and flourished than as a "Jewish" city. Part of the "Flourishing" of Munich personally supervised by Adolf Hitler, was the design and building of the *Haus der Deutschen Kunst*, (now simply *Haus der Kunst*), the huge, monumental neo-classical art gallery designed to house "Aryan" art, which was used, or rather abused to exhibit "degenerate" art. A well-informed guide described its history and was good at pointing out the artistic shortcomings of the architect, Paul Ludwig Troost, who did not live to see his design realized and who therefore also missed the infamous exhibition.

Paradoxically, almost, Munich is also the city of one of the better-known resistance movements—"The White Rose." There is a White Rose Foundation, which, together with an exhibition space, is housed in the university where the resistance group was centered. The Chairman of this foundation is Franz Josef Müller, a member of the original group. Müller escaped execution (probably because of his age—he was seventeen), and was imprisoned from 1943 until the end of the war. Much of the White Rose resistance took the form of anti-Nazi leaflets, and tensinles of such leaflets, made of some durable material, have been let into the pavement of the piazza in front of the university building where the first members of the group were arrested. They provide a subtle but fitting memorial.

We did so much, heard so many stimulating talks, saw so many interesting things. Above all, we learned so much. Time was, alas, too short. Two conflicting views were heard again and again. On the one hand, the prognosis for German Jewry is bleak. The great influx of Russian Jews is not yielding truly Jewish communities. On the other hand, there is hope that somehow the larger numbers will ultimately turn into viable communities who will be German-speaking Jews. It all depends on the new generation of Russian Jews: they will certainly be less Russian and more German. Will they be more Jewish?

# "TIME HEALS ALL WOUNDS" ? THE PROVERBIAL APHORISMS OF ARTHUR FELDMANN

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Now living in Paris under the name of André Chadenroy, which represents a Hebrew translation of his German name into French orthography, Arthur Feldmann was born on 14 July 1926, in Vienna. His parents were Eastern European Jews who had settled in the Austrian capital, where Feldmann went to a Jewish high school. In 1939 the family emigrated to Palestine, where the young Feldmann continued his education. He also spent two years at the kibbutz Ginegar, and in 1947 left for Paris to study German and English literature as well as Political Science. He became a teacher and taught in various cities in France, and eventually he and his wife settled down in Paris.

Living in exile in France and writing in German, Feldmann did not find it easy to break into the German literary world. Some of his aphorisms and short prose texts appeared in such renowned intellectual journals as *Neue Deutsche Hefte*, *Neue Rundschau*, and *Akzente*, but the actual breakthrough did not come until 1993. That year his first book, with the satirical title *Kurzweilichen aus der Mordendegrube oder Die große Moderschau der nackten Könige* ("Nonsense in Brief from the Murderers' Den or The Fashion Show of the Naked Kings"), appeared, issued by a small publishing house in Munich. The source of all quotations in this essay, it contains 1,066 aphorisms and epigrams dealing with such varied subjects as Nazi Germany, the Holocaust, the threat of a nuclear war, and various anxieties and worries of modern life in industrial societies. The title of the book clearly indicates that many of Feldmann's texts express a severe cultural pessimism, figuratively indicated not only by the image of a den of murderers but also by the allusion to Hans Christian Andersen's well-known fairy tale "The Emperor's New Clothes." But while Feldmann's short texts are replete with biting satire and irony, there is also the element of hope that perhaps individuals, if not humankind, might just be able to learn from negative experiences. This is also true for Feldmann's second volume of prose, entitled *Durchleuchtung oder Zwischen Sinn und Wahnsinn: Satiren, Galdgenhumoristen und andere Vertriegenheiten* (1997), where the title and subtitle ("Dargon Taming or Between Sanity and Insanity: Satires, Grim Humorous Sketches and Other Eccentricities") again help to explain the social and moralistic purpose of these prose messages to people of the modern age. He is presently working on a third volume of aphorisms and essays.

Feldmann's major goal is to force his readers into critical reflection, and he accomplishes this by frequently citing well-known Bible passages or proverbs, which he puts into an unexpected context or which he alters in such a way that they express innovative insights. The Biblical "tree of knowledge" motif inspired Feldmann's aphorism "When God created the tree of knowledge and thought that Adam and Eve would not eat of its fruit, he was still lacking in knowledge of human nature" (39). There is a hint of intellectual humor present in this text, but this is not at all the case when Feldmann "plays" with the proverbial

expression "After me the deluge": "The deluge was the first attempt of a final solution for the question of mankind" (12). Doubtless Feldmann has the Holocaust in mind here, since he goes so far as to set the second part of his aphoristic statement into italics, where the "question of mankind" is meant to allude to the so-called Jewish question. This is probably also the case with yet another Biblical as well as proverbial aphorism: "These days' Plague can no longer wash his hands in complete innocence without fear" (98).

As is the case with most aphoristic writers, Feldmann quite often manipulates the wisdom of folk proverbs into new truths. This can be achieved by at times absolutely minimal changes in the existing proverb. An obvious example is his variation of the European proverb "All that glitters is not gold" to the provocative "Not everything that is gold glitters" (47). The following pairs of twisted aphorisms and original proverbs show that Feldmann's linguistic and structural proverb alterations do contain new meanings and are not mere nonsensical plays with words:

- "If need be man will gladly live by bread alone" (48)
- "Man does not live by bread alone"
- "Where there is a way, there is also a will!" (65)
- "Where there's a will, there's a way"

"One looks gift horse immediately in the mouth" (87)  
"Don't look a gift horse in the mouth"

While these aphorisms are perhaps a bit humorous or only partially serious, some texts are deadly serious. They comment on murder and death, and occasionally there are direct references to the horrors of the Holocaust. A proverbial aphorism like "All beginnings are difficult—the first smoke as well as the first murder" (68) does not necessarily refer to the Holocaust, but when one recalls Feldmann's fate as an emigrated Jew, he might have been thinking of the beginning of the Holocaust in general or even of the first massacres by one of the special killing units. The suffering of the Jews in the extermination camps who eventually found their tragic ends in the gas chambers is expressed with deep irony in the following text: "The number of deadly tortures is unlimited—Everybody is supposed to find happiness according to his own fashion" (7). This is reminiscent of the proverbial inscription, "To each his own," on the main gate of the concentration camp of Buchenwald but also more particularly of the famous statement of Frederick the Great regarding religious tolerance, which here receives a macabre distortion.

Even more explicit in its allusion to the Holocaust are two aphorisms that Arthur Feldmann has structured around the proverb "Time heals all wounds." The proverb in its original meaning is actually a rather positive and hopeful statement. But that is not the way Feldmann sees matters: "Time heals all wounds. Death does so also" (25). Some physical and above all spiritual wounds cannot be healed by the passing of time, only death can bring liberation from these pains. In this aphorism Feldmann argues somewhat against the wisdom of folk wisdom in which Feldmann has a second text based on this piece of folk wisdom in which Feldmann has to acknowledge its unfortunate truth when connecting it with the repression of memories of the criminal Holocaust: "How quickly time heals all wounds, even those of the most gruesome genocides, in the memories of the non-affected" (68). And if that were not already clear enough, Feldmann the engaged exile author adds the following non-proverbial text to his reflections on

the Holocaust: "Perhaps quite a few people will soon say: 'In the death camps things really weren't so bad. At least there one didn't have to wait for death very long'" (73). To be sure, such aphorisms are very satirical or ironic, but they do not take on a cynical flavor. Arthur Feldmann is too much of a moralist and idealist than that. As a concerned and clear-sighted prophet of sorts he has only good intentions for his fellow man and is well aware of his own shortcomings: "The good satirical writer uses a broom that does not always sweep in front of his own door" (124). As the original proverb has it, "Let each one sweep in front of his own door," and Feldmann is at least willing to consider his own problems first before sitting in judgment of others.

Feldmann delights in using animal metaphors to depict human behavior indifferently, as the ancient tellers of fables used to do. This gives the author the opportunity to make ironic or satirical comments about life in the technological age, where people appear to ignore their own human limitations while at the same time mistreating each other: "Even a flying bird is held by the earh like a dog on a leash" (35). "Every being has its place in this world in the jaws of another" (7; an allusion to the proverb "Big fish eat little fish"), and "The wolf is a man to the wolf" (76). The last aphorism is a so-called anti-proverb based on the Latin original "Homo homini lupus," which became current in the English language as "Man is a wolf to man." But the proverb as well as the aphorism express the depressing reality that there is no apparent difference between humans and other animals when it comes to rapacity, greed, and the survival of the fittest.

The aphorisms by Feldmann are marked by skepticism, pessimism, and despair about a world where people act like wild beasts that are absolutely out of control. To express the frustrations and contradictions of modern existence, Feldmann has formulated seemingly contradictory aphorisms that once again force his readers to come to terms with their own behavioral patterns. Often he incorporates proverbial expressions that add a certain metaphorical and thus an indirect aspect to these thought-provoking statements: "When someone turns blind, he has the unique opportunity to look reality squarely in the eye" (8) (turning a blind eye; looking something squarely in the eye). "He who reaches the goal has deviated from the path" (36) (to tread the straight and narrow). "One can really get quite ill at times from all the many necessary ills" (82) (a necessary evil), and "One has to pay for one's life in cash or in installments" (8) (to have to pay for something).

Not even love seems to be a force that might heal sick humanity in Arthur Feldmann's negative worldview. "Does love for one's neighbor mean hate for that person's neighbor?" (62) he queries skeptically, and then he follows this with a cynical text that shows how love turns to hate: "They were one body and one soul. All of a sudden one became two, two mouths, four lips, and sixty-four gnashing teeth" (94). But that is not to say that love is impossible. Without this positive force humankind would be utterly lost and lonely. And if one looks hard enough, one finds at least a few aphorisms that express a glimmer of hope in Feldmann's view of modern life. One such statement is this last one in which the author acknowledges love by means of direct reference to a few clichés: "They love each other—so much so that otherwise sulking expressions are suspended and intertwined around them, they are like children who must imitate everything — they will be done, your will be done, I have no will any more, you have no will anymore"—it's all the same" (92). Such

texts are rare, however, and if love does get its due, it is certainly not one that is saccharine or perfect but rather one that is surrounded by the multifaceted problems of the day and age.

As a modern aphoristic writer with an impressive intellect and a masterful command of language Feldmann demands a lot from his readers. He wants them to think about his often paradoxical statements and then perhaps get engaged in bringing about changes for the better. As a satirical author he clearly does not just point to the ills of the times, but he also wants to improve matters and bring about positive change. When one considers that he has written his brief, witty sayings in his mother tongue during several decades of self-imposed exile in France, his linguistic abilities are indeed extraordinary. It is to be hoped that Arthur Feldmann will finally become better known in the German-speaking world. He certainly belongs to a group of exiled Jewish aphoristic writers like Felix Pollak in Wisconsin, Erwin Chargaff in New York, and Elazar Benyotz in Jerusalem (see *The Bulletin*, Spring 1998) who remained faithful to the German language while living away from Austria. Their aphorisms are demanding in language and thought, and they provide their readers with deep insights into the socio-political ups-and-downs of the twentieth century, and so the Holocaust understandably and importantly plays a major role in their invaluable insights.

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The Center for Holocaust Studies notes with sadness the passing of Jack Pomerantz, a participant in the panel discussion, "The Legacy: Survivors of the Holocaust Respond to the Question: How Would You Want Your Experiences Remembered by Future Generations?" held at the University of Vermont in October 1998 and sponsored by the Center for Holocaust Studies and the Calhoun of Holocaust Survivors Families. At that time Mr. Pomerantz said that his book, *Ran East: Flight from the Holocaust*, written with Lyric Wallow White, was part of his legacy, allowing him to tell as many people as possible what happened. He hoped that people would learn to tolerate each other, regardless of religion, tradition, or color, so that there would be fewer such tragedies in the world.

## REPORT

### THE MILLER SYMPOSIUM

by Dan Brown

8 April 2000 was a long day, a very long day. Yet, from the welcoming address by UVM President Judith Ramaley at 8:30 a.m. to the engaging and engrossing question period following Dr. Seidelman's presentation late that evening, a question period cut short only because of an oncoming blizzard, it was an extraordinarily informative and stimulating experience. We can only be grateful to Leonard and Carolyn Miller for sponsoring it.

The subject of the Miller Symposium, "German Medicine and Ethics under National Socialism" brought together five outstanding scholars, each of whom, as exhaustively as time permitted, dealt with a particular aspect of the subject. Often enough we may forget just how all-pervading, even to the most minute facets of political and private life, and how overarching, how diabolical National Socialism was. One must conclude that this all-pervasive program had already been worked out in considerable detail before 1933.

As speaker after speaker made so frightfully clear, German medicine was complicit, and even at times a driving force in service of National Socialism; the record is utterly overwhelming. One wonders how many of these German physicians had had, before 1933, Jewish professors in the course of their medical studies, Jewish fellow students, and, inevitably, Jewish friends. How many had been reared as practicing and believing Christians? One wants to believe that there must surely have been some German doctors who, while perhaps not courageous enough to speak out, were without further culpability. The record, however, seems to indict an entire profession.

Garland Allen, Professor of Biology at Washington University in St. Louis, spoke on "The Ideology of Elimination: American and German Eugenicists, 1900-1945." The detailed account of the American eugenics movement throughout the first half of the twentieth century surprised many in the audience. German eugenicists derived much from the American movement, from Margaret Sanger and Planned Parenthood through the eugenic foundation of U.S. immigration laws of the 1920s, to forced sterilization programs, to IQ testing, and the concomitant studies of race, gender, and intelligence. To realize today what was morally questionable in the American eugenics movement and its influence on National Socialism is not to confound a misguided democracy with an utterly totalitarian state. German eugenicists eliminated those deemed "unfit" in vast numbers, and German medicine not only provided the rationale, but all too often, performed the execution.

Agan, "National Socialism's consistency is striking. Once those deemed unfit had been eliminated, the German, "Aryan" population was to become as strong, as healthy, as German medicine could possibly make it. Robert Proctor, Professor of the History of Science at Pennsylvania State University, detailed the surprising success of "the world's most aggressive anti-cancer campaign." German Medicine, about sixty years ago, established beyond cavil the link between smoking and lung cancer. Consequently smoking was banned in most public places. A German woman, for example, would scarcely dare light a cigarette in a restaurant under the ubiquitous postings "Deutsche Frauen

rauchen nicht" (German women don't smoke). Cancer research was without doubt a triumph of German medicine, even though that triumph must be seen as serving the National Socialist ideology.

This substance and enthusiastic commitment to participation in, and direction of an ideology, so at odds with the Hippocratic Oath, was virtually catalogued by Henry Friedlander, Professor of History at Brooklyn College of the City University of New York, in his presentation "Physicians as Killers in Nazi Germany: Hadamar, Treblinka, Auschwitz." The so-called T-4 program, run by physicians, was the senseless killing of the disabled, together with infants and children, often in the hospitals themselves. In Treblinka at first there was but one physician, later none. At Auschwitz there were many, whose job it was to select those to be killed and those who were, for a time, to be kept alive as slave labor. SS physicians took part all stages of the process, although physicians who did not belong to the SS certainly cooperated and participated actively, motivated by ambition, arrogance, and greed, as well as ideology.

Michael Kantor, Professor of History at Toronto's York University, took as his subject "A Criminal Profession in the Third Reich: Toward a Group Portrait of Physicians." The statistics are unarguable. While Nazi Party membership never exceeded nine per cent of the German population, more than one-third of German physicians were members. Seven per cent joined the SS. Of course, there was professional pressure to do so, and real advantages to be gained. One remembers, for example, that Herbert von Karajan, the eminently celebrated symphonic conductor of the post-war era, became a Nazi party member in 1934, as did Kurt Georg Kiesinger, Chancellor of West Germany from 1966-1969. However, this in no way excuses the medical profession, so many of whose members were not only Nazi Party members, but killers, helpers and killers themselves.

William Seidelman, himself a physician, spoke on "Demerits of Academic: The Continuing Legacy of Medicine in the Third Reich." Seidelman's ability to confront German medical facilities and research institutions in Germany and Austria today has often been discomfiting for those he questions. It happens that, despite the war, a continuity exists between the medical facilities in Germany today and those that existed during the Nazi period, although Seidelman has discovered no reference to the Nazi period in German and Austrian medical schools. In one case a medical faculty had had examinations conducted on 1,651 brains in its possession, specimens taken from children killed between 1933 and 1945! The dementia in Dr. Seidelman's title refers to the feigned ignorance or total unconcern for the provenance of such specimens. German medical facilities simply took whatever they "inherited" from their 1933-43 predecessors. One understands all too well why German and Austrian medical facilities have regularly become disconcerted by the prospect of a visit from Dr. Seidelman.

Much was elucidated during the question periods following the each scholar's presentation. All in all, these were not happy topics, but ones that require much more scholarly research and public attention. After attending this symposium, one came away with an unforgettable experience; indeed, just as one should have.

Editor's Note: A volume based on the lectures given at the Symposium is planned. Look for an announcement of its publication in a future issue of *The Bulletin*.

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### WHERE WE STAND

by David Scrase, Director

When Professor Raul Hilberg retired in 1991, the occasion was fittingly celebrated with the wonderfully stimulating "Hilberg Symposium: Perpetrators, Victims, and Bystanders," out of which emerged the book, *Persecutions on the Holocaust*, containing the lectures we all heard as well as three more papers by scholars who attended the Symposium but who did not deliver lectures. The principal organizers of the event and the editors of the volume, Professors James Pacey and Allan Wertheimer received well deserved credit for their efforts. It was the supreme scholarly and educational experience of my time at the university.

Later the same year, then Dean Howard Ball (whose review of the *Encyclopaedia of Genocide* appears on page 10) secured some start-up funding and formed a committee to establish a Center for Holocaust Studies. What emerged is by now familiar to most of you.

The committee decided at the outset to broaden our mission to include the general public and not just the students at the university. We have accordingly offered not only an ever-increasing array of courses for students at the University of Vermont but also arranged events for the citizens of the greater Burlington area. Of prime importance in this category is the annual Raul Hilberg Lecture, typically delivered by a scholar of world rank.

Also honoring Raul Hilberg and in his name is the Visiting Scholar program, which brings a world-class scholar—Saul Friedlander was the last—to campus for a week or more while the or she delivers a public lecture, leads discussion groups, visits classes, and engages in a multitude of stimulating activities. For seven years there has been an annual summer seminar for teachers who wish to offer courses on the Holocaust at their schools. We have arranged concerts, art displays, Gatherings for Survivors and their families. In the spring of the year 2000 we put on the first Miller Symposium, which was devoted to the vexing question of medical ethics and the Nazi doctors. A second Miller Symposium is now being planned.

We also arrange for speakers to visit schools in northern Vermont (and sometimes even farther afield) to share their knowledge with students learning about the Holocaust.

In the fall of 2000 we are hosting a Japanese Fulbright Scholar, Professor Yasuhiro Tera, who is spending three months in the U.S. gathering information on how to establish a Holocaust studies center. He will be spending his time in Washington, New York City, and Burlington, and visiting Montreal.

We have also established a publication record. This *Bulletin* is a regular feature, which, we hope, is an informative and interesting source of information. In 1994 we published our book, *The Holocaust: Inroads to Essays*, originally designed to accompany the Summer Seminar. We have also co-sponsored two volumes of the Kahn Lectures, the annual presentations honoring the late Harry Kahn, Professor Emeritus from the Department of German and Russian. We are currently preparing *The Holocaust: Personal Accounts*, a volume of testimony by people with firsthand experience of the Holocaust. All our contributors reside in Vermont, or have connections with the Center, and are, therefore, known to many of you.

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Our intention is to continue with these activities, spreading knowledge of the Holocaust to young and old, to school and university students, and to foster relationships with scholars from all over the world.

We are grateful to all those who contribute to our program, and especially to those of you (and you know who you are) to whom we can turn in a crisis, or whenever there is a major event that needs funding. We would also like to thank the many people on whom we rely for contributions of a non-financial nature. Agan, you know who you are, and there are so many of you that it would be impossible to do justice to your efforts or to name you all. We would, however, be remiss in not mentioning the Faculty Committee that established our organization, its mission, ground rules, and policies, and which continues to oversee matters internally. We would also like to thank the Advisory Board, which meets regularly, acts energetically in regard to all major events and activities, and gives unstintingly and uncompromisingly of time, energy, and expertise.

We have, of course, received great encouragement, impetus, and support from the University of Vermont, and we are very grateful for it. But, in common with similar centers throughout the nation's universities, the main funding for our programs stems from you, our loyal supporters. We are privileged to count among our friends a number of major donors, who ensure that we continue to offer a first-rate program. It would not be proper for me to mention any of these friends by name, since some wish to remain anonymous. It would also not be appropriate for me to state just how much each event costs. But I would like to convey some idea of the general financial picture by stating a few facts about the production of this *Bulletin*, which you are now holding in your hands and reading, more or less avidly. We print 1,250 copies twice a year. Our mailing list comprises some 1,180 names. Most are from Vermont, but many are from elsewhere in the US as well as Canada, Europe, Japan, and other nations. Our mailing alone costs about \$250.00. The printing amounts to approximately \$1,170.

I would, accordingly, like to extend an invitation to you all to make a contribution to our program. Any contribution, of any amount, is gratefully received and helps us to continue our work. Contributions, which are tax-deductible, should be made payable to the Center for Holocaust Studies and should be mailed to: The Center for Holocaust Studies, Old Mill A301, The University of Vermont, P.O. Box 4055, Burlington, VT 05405-4055. Thank you.

### Holocaust Era Insurance Claims

The deadline for filing Holocaust era insurance claims is 31 January 2002. The claims process is the result of the work of the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims to provide Holocaust victims, survivors, and their heirs and beneficiaries with a means for filing claims on unpaid life, education, and dowry insurance policies. The Claims Resolution Process has been designed to make it as easy as possible for claimants to achieve a fair and prompt resolution of their claims. For more information on the Holocaust Era Insurance Claims Process or to request a claim packet, call 1-800-957-3203 or visit the web-site [www.icdic.org](http://www.icdic.org). The web-site contains a great deal of useful information, in a number of different languages.

## REPORTS - SUMMER LECTURES

### GROWING UP IN THE WARSAW GHETTO AND SACHSENHAUSEN

by Katherine Quimby Johnson

On 27 June 2000 Lou Shulman shared his experiences of the Holocaust with a small but appreciative audience consisting of students, UVM faculty and staff, and members of the general public. His presentation was held in conjunction with "The Holocaust and Holocaust Education," a course offered by the Center for Holocaust Studies through the Division of Continuing Education for the past seven years.

Shulman was born in 1927, and was ready to start the seventh grade when war broke out in September 1939. At that time he spoke fluent Polish, as well as Yiddish. The beginning of the war marked the end of his formal education. He did, however, pick up the German language, and learned other, more painful, lessons.

As we listened to his story, various unifying threads emerged, including shoe-making and repair. Chief among these threads is the central role his father played in the story of Shulman's survival. A shoemaker in the Polish army, his father was constantly on the lookout for the next best chance for a sizeable family, which included his youngest sister and her child, as well as his wife, son, and two daughters. If it appeared to be safer in the city, he moved them there. If eastern Poland was said to be safer, then off they went.

At one point in their travels a Christian friend, one Mrs. Zajackowska, offered to take the younger sister in and care for her as her own. But at the last minute Shulman's mother could not bear to be parted from her child. Nor would she be parted from her sister-in-law, who had been her companion throughout her married life. When the family eventually separated, the two women and the young children remained in the country side. They did not survive.

Shulman and the older of his sisters moved to the Warsaw ghetto. Shulman's father used his craft to his advantage and found work as a shoemaker with a veterinary supply depot for the Waffen SS. As Shulman said more than once, "the Germans liked cavalry boots." The father was housed in the attic of the villa that was the depot's headquarters, not in the ghetto. After a time he was able to bring Shulman out of the ghetto to join him, on the condition that the fourteen-year-old do a man's work. Shulman's sister remained in the ghetto until the day before the ghetto uprising, when she sent word to her father, who came with one member of the SS and brought her out.

While he was at the supply depot, Shulman did all kinds of manual jobs, from shining shoes to stoking the tiled stoves that heated the villa, to tending chickens. He was also the unit whipping boy and was often beaten when the officers were drunk. If he complained to his father, though, he was reminded that this was safer than being out on the street, where he could be arrested and shot on the spot.

As the Red Army approached, Shulman's father was transferred along with the Waffen SS unit. The children were left behind, locked in a bathroom. Shulman briefly took over his father's

role as chief protector when they were released two days later by a guard with a submachine gun. Shulman grabbed the gun barrel before the guard could fire and yelled to his sister. They both ran, then split up, with Shulman drawing the guard away from his sister. A Pole who had worked in the depot kitchen found Shulman refuge with her stepfather.

After the Warsaw uprising in 1944 Shulman was rounded up by Ukrainian collaborators and shipped to Sachsenhausen as a Polish-Christian. He took the name of Jan Zajackowski, after the woman who had offered to take in his younger sister. (The older sister, who was working as a Polish forced laborer in Germany, also chose this as her Polish name.) While he was at Sachsenhausen, Shulman worked putting hobnails into boots, then on anti-tank weapons. He was sent on the death march from Sachsenhausen towards Lubbeck, and was liberated by a Russian Jewish soldier. After hearing his first Yiddish in months, Shulman was so tongue-tied he could barely form the words.

He returned to his home village in May 1945 to find his sister already there. His father, who had been liberated in Austria, had been told that his children had been executed, but met a former neighbor who informed him otherwise. His father returned to their village in August. Out of approximately 4,000 Jews who lived there before the war, about 100 returned. In spite of his father's services to the town before the war, they were not well received and decided to leave Poland. They traveled through Czechoslovakia to Salzburg, where they spent a few years before emigrating to the United States.

Shulman's story reminded us that anti-Semitism is expressed in many ways and as many anti-Semitic, pre-war Polish anti-Semitism was not as extreme as Nazi anti-Semitism, but it persisted and grew stronger after the war. The fact that a few individual Poles offered to help the Shulman family does show that not everyone was an anti-Semite. In fact, the behavior of the Ukrainian collaborators towards the Poles also shows the extent of ethnic intolerance. Random acts of kindness may benefit a few individuals, but they are not enough. No one should have to make the sorts of decisions Shulman's father made over and over. No one should be faced with the choice Shulman's mother confronted. No fourteen-year-old should have to put up with beatings in order to live.

## ANNOUNCEMENT

Professor Francis Nicotria of the History Department at St. Michael's College in Colchester, Vermont, and a member of the Center for Holocaust Studies advisory board, has received a Charles Revson Foundation fellowship for research at the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) for the fall 2000 semester. He will be completing work on a book on Zionism and anti-Semitism in the Third Reich. Professor Nicotria is also co-author of *The Columbia Guide to the Holocaust*, along with Prof. Donald Niewyk of Southern Methodist University, published in September 2000. His first book, *The Third Reich and the Palestine Question*, was published in paperback in August 2000 by Transaction Publishers of Rutgers University.

### THE SHOAH AND POLISH-JEWISH RELATIONS

by Chris Wladen

Despite the rainy June evening, more than fifty people attended Professor Jonathan Huener's lecture entitled "Pain, Prejudice, and the Legacy of the Shoah: Recent Perspectives on Polish-Jewish Relations." His talk began with the background to the present scene and led to more recent debates on the theme.

Professor Huener set the chronological beginning of his lecture with the German invasion of Poland in 1939. Previously Poland had been seen as a haven for Jewish settlement, while Jews did not live in a perfect society, they were not expelled from their homes. By the end of World War II, ninety per cent of Polish Jews had been killed. It is inevitable that the survivors would be critical of the role played by ordinary Polish citizens who, many survivors felt, had not done enough to stop what they must have seen going on around them.

Interestingly, for the first two years of the occupation, many Poles felt that they were suffering more than the Jews. Examples given included the large number of Poles sent to forced labor camps, privations inflicted upon the Polish population, and the random acts of violence carried out on Poles. In addition, Jews had their own administrative institutions, subject of course to Nazi supervision, while the Poles were allowed no political or cultural representation. Moreover, Auschwitz was a camp originally established for Polish political prisoners. From the Poles perspective, they had suffered extensively during the war. Unlike in countries such as France, they were not allowed to form their own collaborationist, Nazi-controlled government.

Although Huener emphasized the level of Polish suffering, he also stated that the experiences of the Jews and those of the Poles cannot be equated. The Jews of course, lost vast numbers of their people to extermination, a loss that goes far beyond the concept of deprivation.

Emphasizing the scope of the killing in occupied Poland, Professor Huener quoted Raul Hilberg, "Almost everywhere in Poland, Jewish death was proximate." The question derived from this quotation might be: How could Poles everywhere be aware of the extermination process, yet fail to stop it? Assistance was not the norm, but rather the exception. The penalty for Polish assistance to Jews was death, a sentence often extended to include family members.

The first years of liberation offered an opportunity for the study of Polish-Jewish relations, but this was abruptly ended by the newly-installed Stalinist government. In addition, violent anti-Jewish actions were committed after the liberation: between 1945 and 1947 nearly 1,500 Jews were killed in anti-Semitic attacks. Understandably, many of the remaining Jews in Poland emigrated to western Europe, Palestine, and the United States.

Certain post-war Polish attitudes toward Jews were complicated by the Polish appropriation of Jewish property during the occupation. When property owners returned after the war, their claims were often resented. Many Poles had assumed that these Jews would never return.

In 1947 a memorial site and museum was opened at Auschwitz, which serves as an example of how the history of the occupation was put to political use. Only one room in the exhibit

was devoted solely to the Jewish experience; it was later closed. In the late 1960s, during Poland's "anti-Zionist" campaign, the Polish government attempted to exploit a new Jewish exhibit to regain international favor, but it was transparent in its hypocrisy: The history of the Auschwitz site suggests the absence of fruitful debate on Polish-Jewish relations.

The 1980s was a fruitful decade for healing to begin. The rise of the Solidarity movement revived Polish nationalism, but also called for greater cultural openness and self-examination. The 1983 film "Shoah" although initially condemned by many Poles, was widely viewed and brought many to reassess their assumptions about the occupation. Finally, the Auschwitz centenary controversy sparked further debate over the issue of Polish-Jewish relations.

Professor Huener sees new opportunities and new challenges arising from the fall of Communism in 1989 and suggested that as the debate continues there will be a movement toward historical truth. The legacy of pain will not disappear, but there is reason to hope for the end of prejudice.

## CALLS FOR CONTRIBUTORS

### Jewelry Stories

Roma Ceblum Brons, a Montreal writer and a Holocaust survivor, is seeking unusual personal stories from the Holocaust era about jewelry that was hidden, salvaged, found after the war, or attached to a significant personal event. She can be contacted by phone at (514) 933-6219, by e-mail at roma\_brons@ympanet.ca, or in writing at R. Brons, 21 Sawyer Street, Westmount, Quebec, Canada, H3Z 1V3. She would like to find enough interesting and unusual stories to compile a publishable collection. The stories would be published in the contributor's own words or rewritten by the author. Contributors whose stories are chosen for publication would receive two copies of the book.

### Polish Tailcoat Project

Each fall since 1996 Ginni Stern of Shelburne has participated in The Bearing Witness Retreat, a five-day interfaith gathering for peace held on the grounds of Auschwitz-Birkenau. The Polish Tailcoat Project began after she learned that the few remnants of Jewish culture in Poland after the Holocaust had often been exported from that country. Wanting to reverse that process, Ginni Stern began collecting Jewish prayer objects to leave in Poland in 1998. That first year she collected eighteen donated Tailcoats, including one from her Polish-born uncle, whose mother and sister died in Auschwitz.

Ms. Stern would be happy to receive donated Tailcoats to take to this year's Bearing Witness Retreat. All Tailcoats are treated with the proper respect and care. Donors may specify what type of person may receive the Tailcoats. Donations should be sent to Ginni Stern at P.O. Box 367, Shelburne, Vermont, 05482, U.S.A. no later than 23 October 2000. For more information about the Tailcoat Project, contact Ms. Stern at gsterne@soovm.edu or at (802) 899-1146. For more information about the Bearing Witness retreat, to be held on 13-18 November 2000, see [www.peacemakercommunity.org](http://www.peacemakercommunity.org).

## BOOK REVIEWS

Chamy, Israel W., ed. *Encyclopedia of Genocide* (Two Volumes). Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1999. 720 pages. Hardcover \$175.00. ISBN 0-87346-928-2.

This is an excellent, well-written, and carefully edited compilation of material on the substantive topic of genocide studies. Included are hundreds of entries such as: definitions of genocide; comparative studies of genocides throughout history; especially those that occurred in the twentieth century; the major perpetrators of genocide, past and present (from Genchis Khan to Klaus Barbie, Pol Pot, and General Pinochet); genocide deniers; the prevention of genocide; international law and genocide; and the prevention of genocide, to name just a few.

This is also a very different and exciting-to-use encyclopedia. Its two volumes contain not only the traditional entries found in such a resource, i.e., summaries of the extant knowledge in a typical area or field of study about genocide, but also many very controversial entries that force the reader to confront one's predetermined views about genocide and genocidal events. Israel W. Chamy, the Editor-in-Chief, is the director of the Institute on the Holocaust and Genocide in Jerusalem and the prime mover in creating the field of genocide studies. He wanted to do more than edit an encyclopedia of genocide that consisted only of traditional entries.

As the notes in the introduction, the Encyclopedia of Genocide also includes "Feature" entries, that is, analyses, reinterpretations, and/or human-interest essays that examine basic concepts and issues associated with genocide studies. They include contemporary news accounts and first hand assessments of the event. The third type of major entry is the "Source Document." These valuable materials are the texts of important documents (court opinions, telegrams, treaties, reports, proclamations, and protocols) integral to a deeper understanding of the genesis of a genocidal event. Finally, there are photographs, artwork, poetry and prose, maps and tables that provide additional insights into the particular issue being examined.

The two-volume encyclopedia is just over 700 pages long, divided into two parts. Part I, only about 50 pages, is titled "Definitions of Genocide and the Study of Genocide." Part II, which takes up the balance of Volume I and all of Volume II, over 600 pages in total, is entitled "Genocidal Events, Intervention, and Prevention." Under a given topic (a definition, biographical entry, or genocidal event), there is a set of traditional entries, followed by Features in many cases, and by Source Documents for the important topics. Finally, there are cross-references and a succinct bibliography (books, monographs, UN Reports, law review articles, and the like) that is quite up to date on genocidal topics.

The first fifty or so pages contain many of the interesting and controversial "Features" in the encyclopedia. The editor places the Holocaust (the Nazi slaughter of Jews, Gypsies, and other groups between 1939 and 1945) in a special category of genocide. For him, the Holocaust was the "archetypal transformative event in the history of Western civilization." Genocide itself is given an all-inclusive scope and definition. The "generic" definition of genocide presented by Chamy is more than

the traditional purposeful physical extinction of a people, including their essential cultural, religious, and social foundations. For Chamy, *all* events of mass murder, when not occurring in the course of military action against the military forces of an avowed enemy, accompanied by a typology that subdivided the different configurations or classes of conditions, are genocidal. Whether the terror inflicted on a group is because of class, political views, race, color, religion, territory and colonization, or as an aspect of an "aggressive" war, it is genocide nonetheless.

Furthermore, Chamy suggests prosecuting and punishing the perpetrators of genocide according to the degree of genocide. Analogous to differences in the American criminal justice system between murder, first degree and murder, second degree, he suggests there should be indictments for genocide, first degree; genocide, second degree; and genocide, third degree. Prosecutors, judges, and jurors must evaluate the extent, the degree of premeditation, the totality of commitment, the single-mindedness of purpose, the resoluteness to execute the genocidal policy, as well as persecutory cruelty before charging the perpetrator in an international court. Clearly, these and other definitions in Part I of the *Encyclopedia of Genocide* are serious food for thought for students of genocide.

There are, Chamy confesses, some shortcomings in the encyclopedia's first edition, problems that will be remedied in the future. For example, while almost three dozen major genocidal events are examined in Part II, including an absolutely first-rate examination, replete with numerous source documents, of the Turkish extermination of their Armenian population, he acknowledges that not all the major twentieth-century genocides are examined. Mass murders of groups of people in China, India, and Africa were not examined in the first edition, but will be in later editions. However, the genocidal events included in the encyclopedia, from the Adana massacre to the Ukrainian and Yugoslavian genocides are treated quite well. Among many others, the materials on the Armenian genocide, the Holocaust, Native American genocides occurring in Canada, the U.S., South America, and Mexico, the Rwandan and Cambodian genocides, are well documented, with Features and Important Source Documents.

The two-volume *Encyclopedia of Genocide* is a powerful, controversial addition to genocide studies scholarship. It is an extremely well-edited set of books, with entries written by almost ninety genocide and Holocaust scholars, including M. Cherif Bassiouni, Yehuda Bauer, Yehoshua Dardian, Ben Kiernan, and Elie Wiesel. Without a doubt, the *Encyclopedia of Genocide* should be a required addition to any genocide studies program library.



Howard Ball  
University of Vermont

Kurt Grubler, *Journey through the Night: Jakob Litzner's Holocaust Memoir*. (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2000) \$24.50. ISBN 00-0231191.

When reviewing a book, the reviewer must attempt to provide the reader with essential information pertinent to the book under review. With regard to fiction, information concerning the plot may help a potential reader decide to read the book or not read it. A fairly detailed plot summary may be appropriate, but the nearest suggestion of what the book is about may be better. How is the book written? How does it compare to other, similar, books? If the book is not fiction, the approach will be slightly different. In such cases an appraisal of the text's accuracy is often of prime importance. If the subject is the Holocaust, there are still other constraints, beginning with the question of factual or fictional representation of fact. Post Wilkomirski (see *The Ballerina*, Vol. 2, No. 1 and Vol. 3, No. 2) everything is now different. Authorship becomes more important. Is the book a memoir? Is it a memoir that has been changed, slightly changed, radically changed? Where is the line dividing fact from fiction? The questions are limitless.

*Journey through the Night*, subtitled *Jakob Litzner's Holocaust Memoir*, has a clear chronological story line, which may be briefly stated. Litzner, a Jewish stamp dealer living in Munich during the thirties, faces all the evils Jews suffered during the Third Reich: expropriation, concentration, and deportation. From Munich Litzner is deported, or makes his own way, to Poland and then to Zbaraz in Galicia. Here he witnesses the many *Molotov* against the Jews as their population is brutally reduced from over 5,000 to only a few hundred. With certain death near, Litzner finds refuge (one day before the final liquidation) in a damp and dark cellar, where he spends almost a year until liberation comes in March, 1944. Throughout these years of ordeal, Litzner, his companion and later wife, Janina Komgold, and his stepson Richard Komgold are aided by food packages and money sent to them by his former business partner Christine Hintenrayer, a gentle German living in Munich. So much for the story, which is written in an engaging style throughout and shows considerable narrative skill. The book contains introductory and background material, photographs and documents, a postscript, notes, and historical information.

The cover of the book and the title page suggest that the author is Kurt Nathan Grubler, and this is where the questions begin. Only if one carefully reads the copyright page is it clear that Grubler is, in fact, not the writer of the story, but the translator and editor of a German manuscript written by Jakob Litzner. As is revealed in the Foreword by Reinhard Zachau to what I will call the "Grubler edition," the story first appeared in German in 1948 under the title *Aufzeichnungen aus einem Erdloch* (Notes from a Hole in the Ground) with the authorship attributed to Jakob Litzner. It was then reprinted in 1992 under the title *Jakob Litzners Aufzeichnungen aus einem Erdloch* with the authorship given to Wolfgang Koeppen. This "reprint" caused a considerable stir in Germany at the time because of the question of authorship, memoir, and ownership. In the meantime Reinhard Zachau, a professor of German and chair of the department of German at the University of the South in Seaview, Tennessee, has tracked down two original manuscripts (in the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington and in Grubler's possession), which are the basis for the translation here under review. He has seriously questioned the right of Koeppen to lay

claim to a text that he merely edited. His findings appear in summarized form in this Foreword and are helpful to the reader who wishes to know something about the background of the main text.

There is one major problem evident with this publication. How is it possible for Grubler and the Continuum press to make it seem that the author of this book is Grubler as they simultaneously criticize the German publisher and Koeppen for taking the authorship of the German text away from Litzner? (Interestingly, the German publisher of Koeppen's 1992 version is the Judischer Verlag section of the major German publishing house Suhrkamp—the very publisher responsible for Wilkomirski's book.) Zachau's arguments sometimes appear inconsistent. On the one hand he can write that "Koeppen's account of *Jakob Litzners Aufzeichnungen* [...] as a novel turns out to be a fabrication since his narration follows minutely Jakob Litzner's 'Mein Weg durch die Nacht'." Then, one page later, he writes: "Consequently, it is now possible to classify Koeppen's text as an elaborate fictionalization [...]" What else is a novel, if not an elaborate fictionalization? One further shortcoming is the copy editing (or the lack thereof), especially with regard to the foreword—Zachau's English is not that of a native speaker.

The account of Jakob Litzner's fight to survive is fascinating and of considerable interest to anyone interested in the Holocaust, but the last word on the question of its authorship has probably yet to be written.

David Scrase  
University of Vermont



AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

The *Ballerina of the 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.

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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 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 research 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.

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 at the University of Vermont  
 Vol. 5 No. 1

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**Events to note**

- Monday, 2 October 2000**  
 4:30 p.m. • Waterman 413  
 \*Fractured Identities:  
 Jews and Austrians after the Shoah\*  
 Professor Helga Erbacher  
 Department of History, University of Salzburg
- Wednesday, 18 October 2000**  
 4:30 p.m. • Old Mill, John Dewey Lounge  
 \*Polish Society and the Holocaust\*  
 Professor Antony Polonsky  
 Department of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies,  
 Brandeis University
- Tuesday, 24 October 2000**  
 8:00 p.m. • Carpenter Auditorium  
 University of Vermont College of Medicine  
 Ninth Annual Hilberg Lecture  
 \*The Holocaust: From Event and Experience  
 to Memory and Representation\*  
 Professor Ormer Barov  
 Department of History, Brown University

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