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RECOVERED MEMORIES AND THE HOLOCAUST: ON BINJAMIN WILKOMIRSKI'S FRAGMENTS

by Mark Pendergrast

Then he gave me a great swing and lifted me onto his shoulders... I was so happy. I couldn't even describe it... But suddenly he began to run crazily straight ahead, and I got frightened. He broke through the circle of amazed children, running for the wall that marked off our playground, took tighter hold of my feet, lifted me up over his head, and came to a stop for a moment at the wall. He was still holding on to my feet in the air and I flew forward like a loose bundle, clean over his head, until my forehead hit the stone. That's when he let go of me and went away. He was still laughing.

—Benjamin Wilkomirski,
Fragments: Memories of a Childhood, 1939-1948 (17)

In the spring of 1998, I read the passage above with sympathetic horror. I had taught a college course on the Holocaust, and I had helped to edit *The Aftermath*, a Holocaust memoir by Henry Lichtenich. Here, in *Fragments*, was further testament to man's inhumanity during that terrible time. Wilkomirski wrote movingly of his childhood in the concentration camps of Majdanek and Auschwitz. "Rarely has a time of ultimate horrors been depicted with so searing a child-eye's simplicity," wrote one critic, "coupled with adult emotions stripped naked by experiences beyond all reason." (Ross 1997). In the *New York Times Book Review*, Julie Salamon wrote that Wilkomirski injected "well-documented events with fresh terror and poignancy. Constructed like flashes of memory, the book unfolds in bursts of association, the way children tell stories" (Salamon no date). *Fragments* won the Award for Non-fiction given by the *Jewish Quarterly* and has been hailed by critics around the world.

As I read, however, I couldn't help wondering about some passages, including the one above, in which the young Wilkomirski—apparently only two or three years old—survived having his head bashed into a wall. Then I read the

back cover of the book. "Only in adulthood did [Wilkomirski] find a way to recover his memories." Oh, no, I thought. *Recovered memories*: I realized that I was probably reading a book filled with false memories of the Holocaust—not necessarily lies, but perhaps delusions, created either alone or with the help of psychotherapy.

As the author of *Victims of Memory: Sex Abuse Accusations and Shattered Lives*, I knew that subject all too well, having spent several years researching it. In the course of the research, I learned a great deal about human memory, and I concluded that so-called "massive repression"—in which years of traumatic childhood events are completely forgotten, then recalled later in adulthood—is probably a myth. Unless people suffer organic brain damage, they do not forget the worst events of their lives, particularly if the traumatic events were repeated for years. There will never be a way to prove that massive repression does not occur, since one cannot prove a negative. There is, however, no scientific evidence to support the theory of massive repression, nor any convincing anecdotal evidence.

Memory is a confusing, fascinating topic. Our memories are subject to distortion and reshaping. We do not record the past in neat computer-like bits and bytes. It is almost impossible to discuss the mechanisms of memory without employing misleading metaphors. Plato compared the mind to a wax writing tablet, the advanced technology of his era. For Freud, the brain functioned something like a giant plumbing system or steam engine, with uncomfortable material shafted away in the cesspool of the subconscious and leaking out when the pressure reached a critical point. Modern researchers have used other metaphors: the mind as a giant filing cabinet, videotape, or computer (Pendegrast 1996, 71-117; Roediger 1980).

The trouble with all such comparisons is the implication that we remember everything that has ever happened to us—every smell, sound, sensation, joy or trauma has been encoded somewhere in the brain, and, if only the proper command or button is pushed, it will all come flooding back. Pop psychologists have repeatedly promulgated this notion, as in this passage from *Unlocking the Secrets of Your Childhood Memories* (Leman and Carlson 1989, 14): "Every experience we've had since birth has been recorded and tucked away safely in our brains. Like the most sophisticated computer in the world, the brain retrieves [memories] whenever we need them."

But the brain does not function that way, as every modern memory researcher knows. "One of the most widely held, but wrong, beliefs that people have about memory is that 'memories' exist, somewhere in the brain, like books exist in a library, or packages of soap on the supermarket shelves," writes psychologist Endel Tulving, "and that remembering is equivalent to somehow retrieving them. The whole concept of repression is built on this misconception" (Tulving 1995).

British experimental psychologist Frederic Bartlett first made this point in his classic 1932 text, *Remembering: A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology*. "Some widely held views have to be completely discarded," he asserted, "and none more completely than that which treats recall as the re-excitation in some way of fixed and changeless traces." To the contrary, he held that remembering is "an imaginative reconstruction" (1932, vi, 204, 213). Bartlett's general conclusions have been confirmed by modern researchers such as Endel Tulving, Elizabeth Loftus, Ulric Neisser, and a host of others. In other words, the human species has evolved a brain that is adaptable, malleable, versatile and imaginative, but not always accurate. We literally "re-member," patching together the puzzle bits of our past. When we picture what happened, we are engaging in re-vision.

That is not to say that our memories are utterly inaccurate. By and large, they serve us relatively well. We may not get all the details precisely correct, but we generally recall major events accurately. We tend to remember most

clearly the worst and the best events of our lives, which makes sense from an evolutionary standpoint. It stands to reason that, in order to survive, we recall the good things in order to attempt to replicate them, and we remember the bad in order to try to avoid them in the future. Normally, we recall the highs and lows of our lives, with very little in between.

Indeed, there is evidence that traumatic events tend to be recalled better than others. In the last decade, scientists concerned with the mysterious inner workings of the brain have produced many interesting studies. None either prove nor disprove the existence of repressed memories, though work on the chemistry of highly emotional memories tends to verify the 1891 observation of philosopher and psychologist William James: "What interests us most vividly at the time is... what we remember best. An experience may be so exciting emotionally as almost to leave a scar on the cerebral tissues" ([1891] 1952, 438-439). In other words, strong emotions (whether positive or negative) produce strong memories, less subject to distortion and decay than normal memory.

That is not to say that we remember every terrible thing that ever happened to us. People who have undergone prolonged trauma never forget the experience—they know very well what happened to them in general—but they probably do not recall every horrific episode, since they all tend to blend together. I have not had a very difficult life, but I had had teeth as a child, and I had gone to the dentist. I vividly recall the fear, the feeling of the needle pumping novocaine, the sound of the drill. But I could not tell you about many specific visits, nor which teeth were decayed. Similarly, those who were victims of prolonged sexual abuse, or who endured for years in concentration camps, may not recall everything that happened, but they certainly know what happened to them in general.

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, however, a troubling form of psychotherapy convinced many people that they had been raped throughout their childhoods and had completely repressed the memories. If they had the "symptoms"—depression, troubled relationships, eating disorders, or almost any other problem—they must stem from such repressed memories. These therapists encouraged patients to "remember" these hypothetical traumatic events through pseudoscientific methods such as hypnosis, sodium amylal interviews, dreams, or misinterpretation of panic attacks or vague bodily pains.

Memories retrieved under hypnosis or sodium amylal are often contaminated mixtures of fantasy and truth. In many cases, outright "confabulations"—the psychologists' term for illusory memories—result. As the 1989 *Comprehensive Textbook of Psychiatry* stated, "An overwhelming body of research indicates that hypnosis does not increase accurate memory, but does increase the person's willingness to report previously uncertain memories with strong

conviction.... There is a high likelihood that the beliefs of the hypnotist will somehow be communicated to the patient in hypnosis and incorporated into what the patient believes to be memories, often with strong conviction" (vol. 2, 1516).

When a subject agrees to be hypnotized, he or she tacitly agrees to abide by the suggestions of the hypnotist. This state of heightened suggestibility can work quite well if the goal is to stop smoking, lose weight, enhance self-esteem, reduce perceived pain, or improve one's sex life. But it is not an appropriate method for retrieving supposedly repressed memories. Unfortunately, many recovered "memories" of sexual abuse, multiple personalities, alien abduction, and past lives have been produced through hypnosis, in which the subject tends to fulfill the expectations of the hypnotist. Nor is it necessary to call it hypnosis, since guided imagery, visualization, meditation, or even prayer can produce the same false memories in a trance state (Pendegrast 1996, 120-129).

Hypnosis is clearly the leading method to encourage a belief in recovered "memories"—though it is certainly not necessary to enter a hypnotic trance in order to create false memories. Simply by believing that something must have happened, many people can visualize it, particularly if they are among the 10 percent of the population who are fantasy-prone. The retrieval of "memories" becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy of sorts. "Told that memories will return as streams about abuse, people obsess over them and then, predictably, dream about them. Told that they may have panic attacks or 'body memories,' they worry themselves into them" (Pendegrast 1996, 27-69; Lynn 1997, 305-336).

Knowing all of this, I was extremely concerned about the Wilkomirski book, particularly because the author appeared to believe in many myths about memory—that it can be massively repressed, that clear visualizations equal reality, that memory is pristine, that fragmentary images must be real. "My early childhood memories are planted," he wrote, "first and foremost, in exact snapshots of my photographic memory and in the feelings imprinted in them, in personal psychotherapy and has espoused (and taught) recovered memory therapy. His therapist may have helped him visualize these scenes and create so-called 'body memories' (physical sensations interpreted as memories) to accompany them. Thus, his earliest memories are, as Wilkomirski puts it, 'a rubble field of isolated images and events... mostly a chaotic jumble, with very little chronological fit' (1997, 4). But with effort, Wilkomirski has taken these "isolated images" and formed them into a coherent narrative.

Such descriptions echo that of Renee Fredrickson in her 1992 book, *Repressed Memories*, one of the most disturbing texts on how to recover "memories" of sexual abuse. Fredrickson's description of "magical memory work"—

actually a form of hypnosis—is detailed and reveals the hypnotist under the guidance of a therapist or friend, you yourself, close your eyes, and relax, breathing deeply, to picture some kind of abuse. "If nothing surfaces, we bit, and then give your best guess in answer to the questions [of your guide]. If you feel resistance or skepticism to go past it." Afterward, your guide should follow with questions to "fill in any blanks." "You should consider any scene you envisioned as a 'freeze-frame photograph out of sequence.' You want to develop a sequenced show, showing the action from beginning to end.... need to let yourself imagine or picture what might have happened to you." Fredrickson advises: "Avoid being tentative about your repressed memories. Do not just tell in express them as truth" (1992, 109-112, 204).

Wilkomirski has apparently followed that advice. In his book as non-fiction rather than as a work of imagination. On April 20, 1998, I wrote identical letter Holocaust scholars Elie Wiesel, Lawrence Langer, R Hilberg, and David Srause, expressing my doubts at *Fragment*. "The book quite possibly contains a mix of real and confabulated memory, but most of it appears to be confabulated," I wrote. "We learn at the end of the book that his birth certificate says that he was born on Feb. 1941. It may be incorrect, but I imagine it is probably close to his real birth date. That would mean that he was four when he was liberated from the camps. Consequently he would be subject to the period of infantile amnesia that is most of the time he purportedly recalls here in *Fragment*. Therefore, it is unlikely that he remembers much about his time in the camps—assuming he really was in camps, for which we have only his word."

The period of "infantile amnesia" refers to the time before the age of three, when no one recalls anything, cause the hippocampus—an area of the brain essential long-term memory—is not yet sufficiently developed. Nonetheless, many "recovered memories" of sexual abuse have come from that improbable time period, such as tress Roseanne Barr's accusations that her father abused her in the crib when she was six months old (Pendegrast 1996, 113-115).

I concluded my letter: "I would very much appreciate it if you would have a look at the book and render your opinion.... It is important that Holocaust scholars cast light on claims such as this, which dilute the reality of the horror by turning it into the stuff of fiction."

Raul Hilberg called me. Only days after receiving my letter, he said, he had attended a Holocaust symposium Notre Dame at which Benjamin Wilkomirski spoke. In his speech, Wilkomirski outlined a method used to recover memories that purportedly enabled people to remember accurately back to one year of age. "I was the only one who sat on hands during the standing ovation," Hilberg told me. Hilberg expressed grave doubts about several historical aspects

the book, but he wanted to study the German edition before going public with his concerns.²

Then, on Aug. 27, 1998, Swiss writer Daniel Ganzfried—himself the son of a Jewish Holocaust survivor—published an article in the Zurich paper, *Die Weltwoche*, in which he revealed that Wilkomirski was born in Switzerland in 1941 as Bruno Grosjean, the illegitimate son of Yvonne Berthe Grosjean, a Christian. He was given up for adoption in 1945, taking the name of his adoptive parents, Doesseker. Ganzfried found pictures of the young Bruno at a villa in Zurichberg in 1946, two years before he supposedly came to Switzerland. Thus, Wilkomirski/Doesseker was adopted, as he wrote in his book, but he apparently had loving adoptive parents, not the unfeeling foster parents described in *Fragments* (Ganzfried 1998).

Doesseker studied the Holocaust intensively, collecting an impressive library and interviewing many survivors. In the "Afterword" of *Fragments*, the author described his "years of research, many journeys back to the places where I remember things happened, and countless conversations with specialists and historians [which] helped me to clarify many previously inexplicable shards of memory." In other words, he had indeed visited Majdanek and Auschwitz, but only as a tourist. In the midst of a mid-life crisis and severe depression, Bruno Doesseker had sought therapy. Somewhere in the process, like those who recover memories of "past lives," Doesseker created a new past and identity based on his extensive research (Ganzfried 1998; Boyes 1998; Wilkomirski 1997, 154-155).

It is now widely recognized that *Fragments* is a work of fiction, but it is unclear whether Wilkomirski/Doesseker was perpetrating an intentional hoax or—as I suspect—the truly has come to believe in his recovered "memories" (Friedergrast 1996, 151-196). Daniel Ganzfried believes that the story is a simple lie. He points out that Wilkomirski/Doesseker hired a lawyer who attempted to block research into his real past: "I believe that this is a really banal case [in which] a mediocre musician ventured out, trying to be something really special," Ganzfried wrote to me (1999). Raul Hilberg agrees that this is a case of conscious fraud, since Doesseker accepted money from the Swiss state when his biological mother died: "I believe he is just using the whole recovered memory as a tool," Hilberg told me, "not that he believes it necessarily" (1999).

Nonetheless, I doubt that Wilkomirski/Doesseker is consciously lying. It is probable that he has released his memories so thoroughly that they have become real to him. He has unconsciously incorporated many elements from books and interviews, just as many who incorrectly identify themselves as having multiple personalities often include scenes from the movie *Sybil* in their own "memories." Swiss psychologist Alice Miller, author of works such as *Resisted Knowledge: Facing Childhood Injuries*, has promoted the notion of repressed memories, and it would

not surprise me if Wilkomirski/Doesseker had been influenced by her books. His primary therapist was Meonika Matta, a Zurich practitioner who believes in "relectic" methods. In addition, Wilkomirski/Doesseker may have also entered therapy with Elishur Bernstein, who lived in Zurich before departing for Israel, and who is an exponent of recovered memory therapy (Dreyfus 1999). Bernstein and Wilkomirski give presentations together.

Thus far, despite all the publicity about the book's inaccuracies, no one has focused on how the author arrived at his false memories. I suspect that he retrieved—or fleshed them out—then under a form of hypnosis during his psychotherapy, coupled with his obsession with the Holocaust and emotional visits to the sites of concentration camps.³ He has certainly absorbed many of the stereotypical plattitudes of the incest survivor movement: "It is so easy to make a child mistrust his own reflections, to take away his voice," Wilkomirski wrote in *Fragments* (1997 154), echoing Alice Miller and every other recovered memory guru.

Now that *Fragments* has been publicly debunked, Wilkomirski/Doesseker won't submit to interviews, but he apparently claims, via third parties, that he has always recalled these horrors. Yes, he was in therapy, but only for personal problems (Alhof 1998). Such an assertion is highly suspect, probably a rationalization and yet another rewriting of the more recent past. If he has always remembered all of this, why would he allow the publisher to call them recovered memories on the book's back cover? Why would he stress the fragmentary, chaotic nature of his "memories," writing about how "the first pictures surface one by one, like upbeats" (1997, 5)? Why would he have referred to recovered memories in speeches? In November 1997, Wilkomirski/Doesseker spoke at a Holocaust conference in Vienna, along with Israeli psychologist Elishur Bernstein, on "The Problematics of Identity of Surviving Children of the Holocaust: A Proposal for the Interdisciplinary Cooperation between Therapists and Historians." They asserted that, using their method, even preverbal memories could be recovered accurately fifty years later (Lau 1998).

But if Wilkomirski/Doesseker truly believes in his "memories," how do I explain his having taken inheritance money when his biological mother died? How do I explain his trying to thwart Daniel Ganzfried's research into his past? As far as the money goes, it is no surprise that people will accept money, regardless of the source. It also does not surprise me that Wilkomirski/Doesseker would actively try to avoid facing his real past. During my research for *Victims of Memory*, I found cases in which women were medically examined and found to be virgins—yet they insisted that their "memories" of childhood rapes were accurate. Rationality is not one of the hallmarks of recovered memory. When people invest in a belief system and have based their very identity on it, it is astonishing how diffi-

cult it is to shake them, even with the best logic.

Wilkomirski/Doesseker is not unique in casting himself in the role of false historical victim. During my research, I uncovered several such cases. Psychiatrists treating World War II veterans found that leading patients to dramatically "relive" fictional events seemed to help them as much as recalling a real trauma. One man who had been in a tank regiment vividly visualized being trapped in a burning tank. "This had never actually happened, though it must have been a persistent fear of his throughout the campaign," his doctor noted (Sargant 1957, 51). Similarly, under the influence of sodium amytal, a 35-year-old Vietnam combat veteran "lived out" a feared fantasy of having been captured and tortured by the Viet Cong, though nothing like that had actually happened to him (Pridmore 1988, 268-269).

An even more interesting war-related case occurred recently. In a Vietnam veterans' support group, Ed recounted how he had watched a buddy's head explode during a firefight. He had relived this and other harrowing memories in therapy. But when one of his group members called Ed's parents for help in staging a surprise birthday party, his mother said, "What? He's in a veterans' recovery group? But he was rated 4-F. He never was allowed to go to Vietnam!" Even when confronted in the group, however, Ed maintained that his story was true. He had fantasized his "flashbacks" so successfully that they had become real (Friedergrast 1996, 136). Psychologist Michael Yapko reports a similar case in which a man convinced his wife, his therapist, and apparently himself that he was experiencing excruciating flashbacks to his imprisonment in a Vietcong bamboo cage. After he committed suicide, his widow tried to locate his official military record and discovered that he had never been in Vietnam (Yapko 1993, 31-32).

During my research for *Victims of Memory*, I contacted Elie Wiesel, Lawrence Langer, and Raul Hilberg to ask whether they had ever encountered cases of massive repression, in which Holocaust survivors had totally blocked memories and did not recall their time in the camps at all. None had.

In his 1978 memoir *When Memory Comes*, Holocaust survivor Saul Friedlander tells how, when he was seven years old, in 1939, his family fled Czechoslovakia. Three years later, his parents left him in a Catholic seminary. Friedlander's memories of some parts of his past are hazy—when he was ill, for instance—but he never forgot the most searing moments of his life. "It took me a long, long time to find the way back to my own past," he wrote. "I could not banish the memory of events themselves, but if I tried to speak of them or pick up a pen to describe them, I immediately found myself in the grip of a strange paralysis" (Friedlander 1978, 102).

Similarly, in his extensive interviews with Jewish "war orphans" of World War II, some of whom had spent time in concentration camps, Hans Kellison found no cases of mas-

sive memory/repression, even though his psychoanalytical orientation led him to believe in repression. Instead, Kellison's case studies reveal children who usually recalled all too well what had happened to them, unless they were simply too young, such as the child born in 1941 "whose recollections of his first years in various hiding places were very patchy," wrote Kellison. "His memories revolved around his last hiding place, where he lived with an elderly married couple" (71). Another child, born in 1942, spent a brief time in Auschwitz, but he did not remember it or his parents (who were killed there), only the succession of hospitals afterwards (149-151). On the other hand, a girl born in 1938, who was separated from her parents when she was five years old, had "clear memories" of her parental home (173).

In *Massive Psychic Trauma*, a 1968 work edited by Henry Krystal, that psychiatrist wrote: "Many memories of persecution have become hypnagogic [intrusive], at the same time occurring with such clarity and being so threatening that the patient cannot be sure that the old horrors have not, in fact, reappeared." Most Holocaust survivors have "indelible memories," he observed. But Krystal also claimed to observe "far-reaching memory defects with total or partial amnesia for various traumatic events, marked vagueness of the capacity to recollect, and the emergence of acute episodes of confusion and anxiety when urged...to remember what the events were" (329). I suspect that Krystal and his colleagues, who presumed the existence of repression, confused "repression" or "amnesia" with an inability to recall specific episodes in a flood of horror. Certainly, no Holocaust survivors have ever forgotten the trauma they endured, as a totality.

In time, I hope that Wilkomirski/Doesseker will be able to reclaim his real past and embrace his adoptive parents, whom he has apparently vilified unjustly as part of his revision of his personal past.

Notes

¹ Experts on hypnosis disagree on whether hypnotic subjects actually enter a special trance state, or whether they are simply engaged in role-playing in a believed-in ritual. Regardless, a belief in hypnotically-enhanced memory makes people more suggestible.

² Hilberg points out that the English translator made some passages stronger than the original German. Thus, in the passage about his head being swung into a stone wall, the original merely said *die Mauer* (the wall), without specifying what it was made from. Still, surviving such a blow seems unlikely, and Hilberg has determined that there was no wall at all in that particular camp. (Hilberg, 1998, May, and 1999, January.)

³ Wilkomirski/Doesseker has apparently believed in some version of his Holocaust memories for many years. On a recent edition of the television show "60 Minutes" (7 February 1999), a former friend asserted that he had written a screenplay about his

life as Holocaust survivor as far back as 1983. She thought he was "a very sick man" for whom this was "his truth." His former high school girl friend called him a compulsive liar who sought attention. Perhaps, then, he simply latched onto "recovered memories" as a convenient handle for his "truth."

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FRAGMENTS RECONSIDERED

by David Scrase
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In these pages (*Bulletin*, vol. 2, No. 1 (Fall 1997), p. 4) I recently reviewed Benjamin Wilkomirski's *Fragments* favorably. In the meantime it has gradually become all but absolutely certain that Wilkomirski did not experience the camps, is not Jewish, and is, in short, an impostor. The scandal surrounding Wilkomirski and his book has been the subject of articles in the *New York Times*, in newspapers in Germany, and, especially, in Wilkomirski's native Switzerland. The scandal was featured on American television ("60 Minutes") and also on Swiss television.

As such scandals go, it is fascinating. It is not a matter of a literary hoax; it is also not a forgery. If Wilkomirski had labelled it fiction, it could have been accepted in the same way as Cynthia Ozick's *The Shawl* is accepted, more or less powerful writing with a Holocaust setting. Even Elie Wiesel's *Night*, which is clearly autobiographical, is termed a "novel"—although there are relatively few fictional deviations or intrusions in the work. Louis Begley also wrote his personal memoir *Maritime Lies* as a work of fiction, although he, too, largely recounts the truth (the "lies" of the title refer to the life of deception needed in order to survive by "passing").

The case of Wilkomirski is different. He is almost certainly an impostor, but did he deliberately set out to be one? Did he consciously strive to deceive? Or has he lived his own lie to such an extent that he has ended up believing it? He appears to be a very sick man, who has indeed deceived not just his readers and his audiences, but also himself. And he seems to have been aided and abetted (perhaps unwittingly, one might hope) in this self-deceit by his psychiatric counselors.

Time will tell whether Holocaust denial will profit from this affair (I very much doubt it), whether recovered memory will have been dealt a serious and lasting blow, or whether every critic who lauded the work will inevitably conclude that the memoir we thought was powerfully and well written was, on the contrary, nothing but a shoddy and exaggerated deceit. For my part, I have so far not felt up to re-reading it, but I have put it on my reading list for my upcoming Holocaust course. May it continue to prove to be a learning experience, in whatever way, for both me and my students.



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HOW WERE THEY SAVED?

FINLAND, THE SECOND WORLD WAR, AND THE JEWS

by Robert D. Rachlin¹

Early on 6 November 1942, Finnish officials rounded up twenty-seven foreign refugees, the majority non-Jewish, and delivered them to the German freighter *S/S Hohenhorn*, anchored in the Gulf of Finland at Helsinki. Valpo, the Finnish State Police, itemized the human freight in German. Each was identified by name, occupation, birth date, and county of "former" citizenship. Seven of the twenty-seven were listed as *Jude, Jew*.²

Of the seven Jews transported on the *Hohenhorn*, only one, Georg Kollman, survived. Kollman was liberated from Auschwitz at age thirty-three, weighing seventy-two pounds. At a 1947 war responsibility trial held in Turkey, Finland, Kollman told how the passengers, who included his wife and infant son, were carried to Tallinn, Estonia, and then to Birkenau, part of the Auschwitz complex. Kollman's wife and child had been separated from him during the voyage to Tallinn. Two passengers were sent to Auschwitz. One had been shot trying to escape.³

Fifty years later, on the eightieth anniversary of Finland's independence, Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen apologized for Finland's role in this event to the Jewish community in Helsinki's old synagogue.

From 1941 to 1944, the Wehrmacht and Gestapo were present in force on Finnish territory. Yet, other than the seven deported Jewish refugees, no other Jew in Finland, citizen or refugee, was turned over to the Nazis. Why? The Jews of Finland were not overlooked at Wannsee, when the decision was taken on 20 January 1942 to implement the *Eindlösung der Judenfrage*, the Final Solution of the Jewish Question. Finland's 2,300 Jews were listed with those of every other European country, over eleven million in all (Wannsee, 1982).

Chief credit for scholarship about this aspect of Finnish history belongs to Hannu Rautkallio, whose *Finland and the Holocaust: The Rescue of Finland's Jews* (1987) is the only book-length study in English of the wartime Jews of Finland. This is an adaptation of his *Ne Kolehdeksän* (The Eight) (1985). His *Suomen juutalaisten aseveljet* (The Finnish-Jewish Brotherhood-in-Arms) (1989) details the military participation of the Jewish community in Finland's war effort against the Soviet Union.

The other major work is Elna Suominen's *Kuoleman laiva* (The Death Ship) (1979). This author knows of no other book-length studies of this facet of Finland's war years. All students of this period in Finland must start with Rautkallio and draw heavily on his archival research.

Background of the Finnish Jewish Community

From the Middle Ages, Finland was part of the kingdom of Sweden. Sweden first admitted Jews in 1782, but restricted residence to four cities. Finland became a grand duchy of Russia in 1809 with Sweden's defeat in the Napoleonic Wars. In 1858, Russia allowed soldiers to settle with their families wherever their military service ended. These "cantonists" were the nucleus of the present-day Finnish Jewish community. They dwelled in Finland under temporary license and severe restrictions. The Russian government issued a decree in 1889 that specifically addressed the presence of Jews in Finland. Certain named Jews were to be allowed to remain there at the sufferance of the government, but only in Helsinki, Tampere, and Turku (S. R. Cohen 1968, 130).⁴ Their occupations were strictly limited. They supported themselves chiefly as dealers in second-hand clothes.⁵ Children were allowed to stay in Finland only for as long as they lived with their parents and remained unmarried.

There appears to have been no restraint of religious worship. Jews held services at the island fortress of Sveaborg (Finnish: Suomenlinna) outside Helsinki, and the authorities granted the Jews permission in 1885 to build a synagogue (S. R. Cohen 1968, 130). This grant contrasted with the Russian policy to discourage the Jews from putting down roots in Finland. It suggests that the animosity to the Jews existed in considerably milder form in Finland, indeed in Scandinavia generally, than in most of Europe.⁶

In 1918, shortly after Finnish independence, Jews were accorded full rights of citizenship. By an act of Parliament concerning "Mosiac Confessors," promulgated 12 January 1918, Jews were for the first time allowed to adopt Finnish citizenship. In the 1920s and 1930s, the Jewish population of Finland peaked at about 2,000. It appears to have declined thereafter, although the Wannsee Protocol

gave the number 2,300.¹ Acculturation was gradual. In the first years of settlement, Jews spoke mainly Yiddish or Russian. Finnish Jews later adopted first Swedish, then Finnish.²

Jewish Participation in Finland's Wars

In 1939, the Soviet Union demanded that Finland cede territory to protect Leningrad from land and sea attack. Finland refused. On 30 November 1939, three months after conclusion of the German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact, Soviet troops invaded Finland. The "Winter War" began with stunning victories by the outnumbered Finns, but Soviet superiority in men and arms soon turned the tide in favor of the aggressors, forcing Finland, after a few months' fighting, to sue for peace. The price of peace was major territorial concessions to the U.S.S.R., including western Karelia, which remains part of Russia.

After Norway's capitulation to Germany in June 1940, both Sweden and Finland acceded to Germany's request that its troops be permitted transit. On 22 June 1941, with troops garrisoned on Finnish soil, Germany attacked the Soviet Union. Both Germany and Finland then undertook joint hostilities against the U.S.S.R. Finland's "Continuation War" and its participation with Germany in hostilities against the U.S.S.R. ended with an armistice agreement signed on 19 September 1944. This agreement was no more than a unilateral imposition of extraordinarily harsh terms by the Soviet powers.³

Of the two thousand-or-so Jews in Finland in 1939, three hundred men were sent to the front. Many did not return. A 1995 statement by the Jewish War Veterans of Finland puts the number of Jewish dead at twenty-three,⁴ to Jewish soldiers and officers fought alongside *Hyffer*-SS troops and had frequent and even cordial contact with them. Jewish medical officers treated wounded Germans. Leo Skumik, a Jewish major in the medical corps, risked his life transferring an entire SS field hospital under enemy fire to a safer location (Raukallio 1989, 201). He, one other Jewish officer, Salomon Klaas, and Dina Poljakov, a nurse, were awarded the German Iron Cross, which all refused to accept.

Near the front lines in Eastern Karelia, where German troops had arrived to reinforce the Finns, a small synagogue was established. Known as *Scholka's shul*—*Scholka* was the nickname of a soldier, Isak Smoler—the small, round hut with a chimney pipe protruding through a high conical roof was the site of regular Sabbath services, complete with a Torah scroll for the weekly reading. Nearly German soldiers did not interfere, and some reportedly showed respect for the worship (Raukallio 1989, 202).

Participation in hostilities alongside Germans was not a simple matter for the Jewish soldiers, who surely knew of Nazi racial policies and were increasingly aware of the extent and barbarity of Nazi measures against the Jews of

Germany and the occupied territories. News of the exterminations was widely disseminated as early as 1942 in Sweden (Koblik 1988, 146), despite Hitler's frequent outbursts of anger at press criticisms. At least two newspapers in Sweden, *Coleborgs Händelse* and the extremely anti-Hitler *Tross Allt!* persistently published reports of German atrocities. Similar concerns about the press exposed in Finland, where the Swedish-language press appears to have taken the lead in exposing Nazi brutality.⁵

A 1997 Finnish video documentary *Davard* includes many interviews with Jewish ex-military personnel. Their fear of Germany was overshadowed by a passionate purpose to preserve Finnish independence and retake the lands wrested from Finland by Stalin in the Winter War. The motivation of Finnish Jews fighting beside Germans is summed in English by the Jewish War Veterans of Finland: "The very special fact in this whole matter was that whenever conquered Finland the Jews would be the losers. Their only hope was that Finland stays [sic] independent and that was worth fighting for (Livison and Mäso 1995)." Marshal C. G. Mannerheim, commander-in-chief of Finland's armed forces during the Winter War and Continuation War, paid tribute to the fallen Jewish soldiers by appearing, at his own request, at the synagogue in Helsinki on Independence Day, 6 December 1944. In a large room of the Helsinki synagogue there is a bronze statue of Mannerheim. Other mementos of Mannerheim, including a plaque, are visible in the synagogue.

Anti-Semitism in Finland

Finland, like other countries, has not been immune to anti-Semitism. Although the sentiment never seems to have become widespread or ripened into violence. To some scholars, Finnish anti-Semitism is a subset of a prevailing national xenophobia. According to Karmela Liebkind, a professor of social psychology at the University of Helsinki, "Finland is a distinctly xenophobic country and has been so for centuries."⁶ Tapani Harjainen, professor of Semitic languages at the University of Helsinki notes: "The fact seems to remain that in the young Republic all minorities suffered from prejudice and xenophobia to some extent but evenly distributed. (Harjainen n.d.)"

He adds this interesting observation, which recalls Nazi ideology identifying Jews with Bolshevism: "a significant number of the Soviet leaders and well-known Bolsheviks were Jews, and this fact easily led people to the following conclusion: because he is a Jew he must be a Bolshevik, and as such an enemy of Finland."

Raukallio acknowledges the "latent anti-Semitism to which no nation is totally immune" (1987, 84), and mentions the airing of anti-Semitic views by *Ajón Suunta* ("Trend of the Times"), published by the extreme right-wing IKL (*Isänmaallinen Kansantietäjä*, or "Patriotic People's Movement") (49). IKL became adept at using code

words whose meaning was clear. IKL members of Parliament challenged the arrival of Jewish refugees in Finland, complaining that it was unreasonable for Finland to become the homeland of refugees "whose kinsmen hold decisively influential positions in both the political and economic life of big nations" (cited in Raukallio 1987, 79). In case the IKL's meaning escaped anyone, it demanded to know specifically how many refugees were Jews (80).

Early advocacy of Jewish civil rights was met in some quarters with hostility (Raukallio 1987, 11). Abusive references to Jews erupted in the national legislature only a few years before the turn of the century (17). Anti-Semitism in Finland from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century must be viewed in the context of Finland's status as a dependency of Czarist Russia. Czar Nicholas II was notorious for his hatred of Jews, and the fifty years preceding Finland's independence were an era of violent pogroms in Russia proper.

Finnish attitudes toward minorities in general and Jews in particular can be more accurately assessed in the relatively aseptic environment of the present era, in which Finland is prosperous, independent, and at peace. According to the Institute for Jewish Policy Research, post-war anti-Semitism has had limited currency in Finland, with no reports of violence. IJPR's 1997 report on Finland reports that in 1975 a Finnish translation of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and other anti-Semitic books were published in Turku.⁷ In 1993, the report continues, 138 tombstones in the Turku Jewish cemetery were desecrated, prompting strong condemnation by both the government and the media.

Present-day Finnish attitudes toward minorities in general are reflected in the *Report on Finland*, issued in 1997 by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI). This report, which was written by Professor Liebkind, devotes special attention to the Roma, Gypsies and Sami communities.⁸ It encourages more police training in discrimination issues, relaxation of strict language requirements for employment, and greater public commitment to combat racism. Since this report, there has been an influx of Somali refugees to Finland. The author has received anecdotal reports of racial tensions in areas where these refugees have settled.

In summary, Finland, while not free of ethnic/racial tensions, including anti-Semitism, does not experience them widely. Conversations with prominent members of the Helsinki Jewish community have convinced the author that anti-Semitism is not new, and has not been, within living memory, a source of serious concern to Finnish Jews. The emergence of the Jewish community from a life of small trade to economic prominence has not been accompanied by a rise in animosity toward its members. The absence of strong, indigenous anti-Semitic party accounts for the safety of the wartime Jewish community in Finland. But other factors must be taken into consideration.

Finnish Awareness of Nazi Atrocities

In addition to the press reports already mentioned, there is evidence that Finns were aware of the breadth and extent of Nazi measures against the Jews in Germany and German-occupied lands. Just which Finns were aware of what is not always clear. What *is* clear is that government officialdom was on notice of these actions as early as the fall of 1941, owing to a visit by Valpo officer Olavi Vihertluoto to Estonia that October. Two months earlier, the German *Heeresgruppe Nord* drove the Red Army out of Estonia. Vihertluoto was in Estonia to interrogate Estonian communists about trips they had made to Finland. While there, Vihertluoto met with Gestapo personnel. Conversations touched on the Jewish Question. Vihertluoto asked his German interlocutors about the noticeable absence of Jews in Estonia, but was met with evasions. The grim details were disclosed ultimately, not by Gestapo personnel, but by openly anti-Semitic Estonian police collaborators, who revolved in narrating what had occurred. Vihertluoto's report to Valpo recited that the Estonians, including one Mikson, had told him there were hardly any more Jews in Estonia: "All the male Jews have been shot. After the capture of Tartu, 333,600 Jews and Communists were shot... Mikson, that is, related that the same morning I had last visited the central prison they had taken 80 Jews in trucks into the woods, ordered them to kneel down at the edge of a pit and shot them from behind."⁹

Raukallio, disposed to judge Finnish action and inaction benignly, acknowledges (1987, 136) that Valpo knew of the atrocities by virtue of the Vihertluoto report, but concludes that Valpo viewed these events as an anomaly, more characteristic of Estonian virulence toward the Jews than representative of explicit German policy. At his post-war trial, Valpo chief Arno Anttoni insisted that, although he had seen the report, he never read it. The absence of documentary evidence of specific knowledge means little. It is unlikely that Vihertluoto, clearly affected by what he had learned, could have refrained from orally relating the grisly details to his colleagues.

Less than a month after Vihertluoto's Estonia trip, his boss Anttoni went to Tallinn as guest of the Gestapo and met with local Gestapo chief Martin Sandberger. This began collaboration between Anttoni for the exchange of information about refugees and political prisoners. Anttoni later denied that his interactions with Sandberger involved the Jewish Question, but later events dispel any residual doubt about Anttoni's knowledge of the Final Solution.

Anttoni's Collaboration with the Gestapo

The Wannsee Conference took place 20 January 1942. Thereafter, examination of Europe's Jews was the express policy of the Third Reich. SS-*Obergruppenführer* Richard Heydrich had presided over the conference and, as chief of

the security police and the *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD), was responsible for implementing the program. At Heydrich's official invitation, Anthon made his first trip to Berlin two and one-half months after Wannsee. These meetings focused on "close collaboration between the State police organizations of the two countries" (Rautkallio 1987, 153). Was the Jewish Question included in this "close collaboration?" Rautkallio notes that Heydrich himself was out of the country at the time. Rautkallio implies that Heydrich's absence precluded consideration of the Jewish Question. This inference is weakened by the presence of Gestapo chief Heinrich Müller, whose sphere of activity certainly included the Final Solution. The post-war evidence of Friedrich Panzinger, a high official of the German security police, further dispels doubt. Panzinger testified that the Gestapo demanded placement of all Jewish Finnish citizens in German custody and described Anthon as quite willing to comply. Anthon agreed that "the Jews should be surrendered to the Gestapo" (Rautkallio 1987, 156-57). Müller was among the fifteen participants in the Wannsee Conference. With the deadly resolves of that meeting fresh in his mind, it is improbable that Müller ignored Finland's Jews during Anthon's visits.

Nazi Demands

Did the Nazis demand the surrender of Finland's Jews? This is a central issue in what scholarly debate exists about the status of the Finnish Jewish community during the war. Cohen and Svensson's article (1995) has this headnote:

This article discusses how the Finns turned over foreign Jews to Nazi Germany in November 1942. The article explores the possibility that the extradition was part of a much larger intended delivery of foreign and Finnish Jews into Nazi hands and provides an alternative interpretation to Hannu Rautkallio's *Finland and the Holocaust*, the only work on this subject in English.

Rautkallio had concluded that the Nazis "left Finland out of their *Endlösung* grand design" (1987, 259) and characterized as a "myth that the SS leadership and Hitler himself had actually demanded the handing over of Finland's Jewish population" (237).

Cohen and Svensson dispute Rautkallio's contention that the Nazis put no pressure on Finland to abandon its Jews to them.²⁸ They cite a February 1943 communication from German Foreign Office Undersecretary Martin Luther, whom the Wannsee Protocol reported as worried about Scandinavian resistance to the Final Solution (see above, p. 7 and note 5). Luther replied to concerns expressed by Berlin's minister in Helsinki that Germany's Jewish policies were arousing Finnish public opinion. Luther replied, urging the envoy to remind the Finns that "the struggle against Bolshevism also represents in every regard a

struggle against Jewry."²⁹ This is hardly tantamount to a demand for Finland's Jews, although it shows that Finland was not exempt from Germany's anti-Jewish policies. Rautkallio dismisses the exchange out of hand, saying that the minister "apparently imagined" that the SS and Himmler were exerting pressure on Finland with respect to its Jews and "was, of course, mistaken" (1987, 253).

Himmler Visits Finland

Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler, with his control of the police mechanism, wielded power in the Third Reich second only to Hitler. Himmler's unwavering commitment to the Final Solution is beyond question.³⁰ In part seeking a vacation, he visited Finland in July 1942, apparently at the urging of his masseur, Felix Kersten, a Finnish national.

Kersten has been the focus of vigorous controversy. He contends in his memoirs that he exerted a decisive influence over Himmler with respect to the Jewish Question and claims credit for saving Finland's Jews. Kersten, according to Rautkallio, "has spun yarns as well as altering, adding, and eliminating facts" (1987, 164).³¹ According to Kersten's diary, Himmler's trip to Finland was undertaken partly to discuss the Jewish Question with high Finnish officials (Rautkallio 1987, 160). In what Rautkallio calls "another version" of the incident, Kersten refers to a conversation in which Himmler relates that Hitler ordered him to fly to Finland to demand surrender of the Jews (160).

Why did Himmler travel to Finland? Rautkallio contends that "Himmler wanted information on certain matters pertaining to the Finnish economy" (1987, 162). It is doubtful that the second most powerful man in Germany would make a trip to Finland to collect economic data. At the very least, the trip had a ceremonial purpose. Himmler was received by Prime Minister J. W. Rangell, President Risto Ryti, and Marshal Mannerheim. During a conversation with Rangell, Himmler is said to have raised the issue of Finland's Jews, to which Rangell reportedly replied: "*Wir haben keine Judenfrage*" (We have no Jewish question). Rangell's alleged declaration to Himmler, whether historically accurate or not, is reported in many accounts of the period.³²

Rautkallio reports that years later "some surprising features" connected with Himmler's trip were discovered, but that "so far it has not been possible to substantiate them" (168). The "surprising features" relate to an incident where some Finnish soldiers photographed the contents of Himmler's briefcase "with all its interesting papers" (168-69). Rautkallio gives no details and predicts that what the characters are a detective story "will probably remain a mere curiosity" (169).

A typescript bearing the name of Captain Veikko Stjöhlm may cast some light on the "detective story."³³ Stjöhlm, according to the typescript, served in Finnish counterintelligence. The typescript describes various in-

quiries during Himmler's visit as well as the briefcase episode. It is unclear from the typescript which of the events Stjöhlm described he witnessed and which he is repeating from hearsay. The context in which the briefcase episode is described suggests that Stjöhlm participated in it:

"The briefcase contained, not documents regarding SS-troops fighting on the Northern front, but information identifying 2,300 Finnish citizens of Jewish origin. This was immediately related to the President [Ryti], the Commander-in-Chief [Mannerheim], and the Prime Minister [Rangell]."

Taken at face value, the report shows that Finland's Jews were on Himmler's agenda. This purpose seems more probable than a field trip to collect data. On the other hand, the reference to "information identifying 2,300 Finnish citizens of Jewish origin" (2300 juutalaista syntyperältä olevan Suomen kansalaisten henkiluetteloa) arouses suspicion. 2,300 is the precise figure given in the Wannsee Protocol for the population of Finnish Jews, a number that was almost certainly exaggerated by at least four hundred. Furthermore the Finnish word translated as "information," "*henkiluetteloa*," implies at least a basic level of detail, such as names and addresses.³⁴ If there were fewer than 2,300 Jews in Finland, where would names and addresses for 2,300 have come from?

The typescript goes on to describe meetings between Himmler and Rangell and Himmler and Mannerheim. Himmler tells how Rangell took Himmler for a trip to Rangell's villa. During the trip, Himmler tried to initiate discussion of the Jewish Question, but Rangell quickly changed the subject. The conversation with Mannerheim on this subject is reported to have terminated more decisively. According to Stjöhlm, Mannerheim replied firmly to Himmler's initiation of discussion about the Jews: "Not even one single Jewish soldier will be taken from my army to be turned over to Germany. That cannot happen except over my dead body."

Mannerheim's resolute response to Himmler is in character. According to a Valpo report cited by Rautkallio (1987, 163), the impertuous marshal made an overpowering impression on Himmler. Indeed, there is evidence that Mannerheim was held in awe by Hitler himself, who flew to Finland earlier that year to congratulate Mannerheim on his seventy-fifth birthday (Ertfurth 1979, 157). Whatever the exact words spoken on that occasion, Mannerheim's part in shielding Finland's Jews from Germany is widely acknowledged (Eliazar 1984, 156; Encyc. Jud. 1971, 1298). Professor Lecker had told the author: "Finland is very often dependent on single individuals in crucial positions... Such individuals—and no form of popular sentiment—were the only thing that rescued Finns [i.e., Finnish Jews] during the war. Mannerheim was one of those..."³⁵

Raut Hilberg (1985, vol. 2, 447) points out that as late as 5 July 1943,³⁶ Eichmann set a deadline of 3 August

1943 for application of the Final Solution to ten jagged countries, including not only neutral Switzerland and Sweden, but also partner-in-arms Finland. Hilberg adds (fn. 87) that "Finland, an Axis partner, was the only European ally that was never pressured into deporting its Jews." While Germany may never have threatened Finland, it seems clear that German officials charged with implementing the Final Solution never abandoned Finland as a target. It remains to seek an explanation for the undeniable fact that, as Hilberg puts it (554) "the destruction process never did reach more and independent Finland."

How were Finland's Jews Saved?

Simple explanations are tempting, but usually wrong. Many factors combined to exempt Finland's Jews from the Final Solution.

1. Finland's status as a voluntary co-belligerent.

While Finland never embraced Nazi ideology or the whole of German war aims, it shared a common enemy: the Soviet Union. Finland was a vital element of Hitler's tactical designs on the U.S.S.R., controlling the land approaches to Leningrad from the north and bordering on the sea approach via the Gulf of Finland to the west. Although Finland's participation in the mutual war effort with Germany was limited to that region of the Eastern Front where Finnish territory was in play, participation was vigorous and enthusiastic. Hitler's admiration for Mannerheim, as well as the esteem in which Finnish soldiers were held by their German counterparts, may have moderated Nazi plots against Finland's Jews. As German liaison chief Waldemar Erfurth wrote (1979, 100): "The Finnish brother-in-arms were highly respected everywhere in Germany and their performance for the common cause honestly appreciated." Erfurth noted that there was an impression in Germany that the Finns could get whatever they wanted from Hitler (100). It is not likely that Germany's complaisance toward the Finns rested so much on sentiment as on geopolitical necessity. In Italy, an avowed ally of Germany with respect to all its war aims, over 7,500 Jews were lost to the Final Solution.

2. The small size of Finland's Jewish community.

According to Gideon Bolotovskiy, chairman of the Central Council of Jewish Communities in Finland,³⁷ Finland's Jews never reached "critical mass" sufficient to warrant German attention. Germany placed greater weight on maintaining a good working relationship with Finland than on an anti-Jewish initiative that would risk disrupting the military collaboration by provoking public and official Finnish opposition. But small size did not protect the Jews of Norway, thirteen hundred according to the Wannsee Protocol. About half of Norway's Jews perished.

3. The free press.

Despite government anxiety about German anger at press reports, the Finnish press remained generally untrammelled during the war. Finns were told of

German measures against the Jews. Frank press reports from Sweden were also widely read in Finland. In both Sweden and Finland, however, the government sought to moderate press reports critical of Germany.

4. *Opposition of Finnish leaders.* Two prominent members of the cabinet, K. A. Egeholm and Väinö Tanner—both leaders of the dominant Social Democratic Party—opposed measures against the Jews. They were joined by Prime Minister Rangell and Marshall Mannheim. Less prominent Finns also played a part. Tanner, in his memoir of the Winter War (Tanner 1957, 136), relates how Santari Jakobsson, mayor of Lauritsala, not far from the Karelian Isthmus, went to Sweden to rally support for the Jews. Tanner adds sympathetically: “The trip cost Jakobsson his official position in Lauritsala.” As early as February 1939, Finnish and Swedish language newspapers in Finland carried an open appeal to readers to furnish financial assistance to Jewish refugees. Bishop Aleksi Lehtonen of Tampere was one of the signers (Raukkaliho 1987, 83).²⁰

5. *Swedish public opinion.* Sweden preserved its wartime neutrality by walking a thin line between opposition to German racial policies and avoiding provocation that might lead to a German attack. The same considerations moderated the activism of the Sweden’s state Lutheran Church, whose chief prelate, Archbishop Erling Eiden, was torn between aversion to Nazi racial policies and patriotic resolve to refrain from compromising Sweden’s delicate relationship with Germany (Koblikh 1988, 79–115). Sweden supplied iron ore to Germany and had granted Germany transit rights for its troops traveling from occupied Norway to Finland. Certain elements of the Swedish press were outspoken, a fact that did not escape high German authority in Finland (Erfruth 1979, 133–54). There is evidence that opinion in Sweden may have restrained the Soviet Union both in its wartime and post-war policy toward Finland (Nevala 1994, 114 and fn. 81). Swedish public opinion may have moderated German, as well as Soviet, conduct in Finland.

6. *Low profile of Finnish Jews.* Nazi propaganda trumpeting allegations of pervasive Jewish economic influence would have had little resonance in wartime Finland. The Jews of that era were mostly small businessmen with little effect on the Finnish economy.²¹ In few European countries did the indigenous Jewish population play so small an economic and political role. Demanding so inconspicuous a community would have been unconvincing.

7. *Rarity of overt anti-Semitism.* Anti-Semitism was a minor current in the flow of Finnish life. When Jewish refugees began to arrive in the late 30s, there were isolated eruptions of anti-Jewish sentiment among the urban intelligentsia. This may have flowed from worry about competition from among the refugees.²² But whatever subterranean anti-Semitism existed in Finland was not strong enough to burst into overt action or popular calls for anti-Jewish measures.

8. *Jewish participation in Finland’s wars.* The Finnish leadership resisted Nazi schemes against the Jews largely because Finns recognized and acknowledged Jewish patriotism. Finland’s wartime activities were grounded on a steadfast commitment to its territorial integrity. All other considerations were subordinate. Mannheim’s open homage to the Jewish community in 1944 shows that patriotism outweighed any impulse to accommodate the ideology of Finland’s co-Belligerents.²³ Finland could hardly be expected to view as suspicious aliens Jews who were loyally fighting and dying for their country. Nazi thugs calculated to cast Jews in that role would have conflicted with the wartime experience of ordinary Finns.

Raukkaliho does not offer an explicit answer, although he implies that there were two reasons why the Finnish Jews were spared: (1) Finland’s commitment to Western democracy and individual rights, and (2) the military collaboration with Germany (1987, 169–70). The latter indisputably played a prominent part in the salvation of the country’s Jews. But the commitment to democracy and individual rights, while genuine, furnished uncertain support. France, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Norway all had democratic traditions whose longevity dwarfed that of Finland, independent and democratic for only twenty years. Democratic traditions did not shield French, Dutch, Belgian, and Norwegian Jews. In France, which arguably gave birth to the very notion of individual human and political rights, over sixty-four thousand Jews were delivered to their deaths. The Netherlands, a bastion of liberalism, saw over one hundred thousand murdered.

Finland erected few obstacles to full integration of its Jewish population. Yet pre-war Germany, in which largely assimilated Jews for generations had figured prominently in business, the professions, scholarship, and the arts, had a history of official and semi-official anti-Semitic initiatives long predating Hitler. Assimilation was an ineffective antidote to anti-Semitism.

When the evidence is examined impartially—to the extent the impartiality is possible in this context—it appears that the salvation of Finland’s Jews rested not on generalized nobility of the Finnish people or on any single broad feature of Finnish culture. Rather, the accident of Finland’s situation between two warring totalitarian powers, combined with Finland’s decision to make Germany’s cause her own to a strictly limited extent, together with a recognition by Finland’s leaders of the participation of the Jews in that effort won Finnish Jews a reprieve that, happily, outlasted the Third Reich. Had Germany won the war, or even defeated the U.S.S.R., there is no reason whatever to suppose that Germany would have spared Finland’s Jews the fate of their brothers and sisters in all other lands where the Third Reich held sway.

As Livson and Maiso wrote: “. . . whoever con-

quered Finland the Jews would be the losers.” The Jews’ safety lay ultimately in an independent Finland.

Notes

¹ Acknowledgment: The author is indebted to his colleague, Attorney S. K. M. Laitinen of Minneapolis for her kind assistance in translating certain documents and passages from Finnish to English.

² An example: “Hauptert, Heinrich, Kaufmann, geboren 26. 11. 1886, wohn. deutscher Staatsangehöriger. Jude.” (Hauptert, Heinrich, merchant, born 26 November 1886, formerly Austrian citizen, Jew.) The refugees were evidently not entitled to the protection of citizenship anywhere: before each designation of nationality appeared “*worn*,” (formerly).

³ There was an earlier incident involving refugees. On 18 August 1938, sixty Jewish refugees arrived in Helsinki aboard the *S/S Albatros* from Stern seeking asylum. Nine days later, all sixty were denied entry.

⁴ Most Finnish Jews live today in one of these three cities. The economic restrictions applied to all ex-cantonists, not just Jews. A military decree issued in 1858 allowed ex-soldiers settled in Finland “to earn a living by selling home-made handicrafts, bread, berries, cigarettes, second-hand clothes, and other inexpensive textile products” (Hartvainen n.d.).

⁵ One of the architects of the Final Solution expressed doubts that these measures would be easily manageable in Scandinavia: “*Unterstaatssekretär (Marin) L u t h e r v e i l l e hierzu mit, daß bei holländischer Behandlung dieser Problems in einigen Ländern, so in den nordischen Staaten, Schwierigkeiten aufzutauchen werden, und es sich daher empfiehlt, diese Länder vorerst noch zurückzulassen*” (Assistant Undersecretary of State L u t h e r in this connection calls attention to the fact that in some countries, such as the Scandinavian states, difficulties will arise if these problems are dealt with thoroughly and that it will be therefore advisable to defer action in these countries.) (Wannsee 1982, 9–10).

⁶ Wannsee (1942, 6). Harvilland (n.d.) reports that in 1939 there were 1,700 Jews in Finland.

⁷ Finland has two official languages, Finnish and Swedish. Finnish is the native language of about ninety-four percent of the population and Swedish of about six percent. The Jews settled chiefly in the south and southwest where Swedish linguistic and cultural influence was strong. To this day, some elderly Jews in Finland still speak Swedish as the language of choice. Yiddish, sadly, has largely disappeared.

⁸ For a transcript of the “negotiations” between the Finnish delegation and Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov, see Pain and Enckell, 1971.

⁹ Aron Livson and Harry Maiso, “Jewish War Veterans of Finland” One-page typescript, 1995. Raukkaliho (1989), 241, lists twenty-two. Raukkaliho (1989), 199, also gives the number of total participants as “about three hundred.”

¹⁰ Pressures from Germany against critical newspaper accounts in Finland increased in 1944, as the tide of war turned against the Third Reich. In April 1944 Hitler imposed an arms embargo against its Finnish “comrades-in-arms” in the wake of Finnish press criticism of German evacuation of the collection and installations of Tartu University in Estonia (Erfruth 1979, 137). Two months later, *Svenska Pressen* was suppressed for three months

for giving offense to the Germans (ibid., 143). Upon (1965, 96) argues that despite “occasional brief items” about anti-Jewish measures in Europe, there was no comment or discussion. He concludes that Finns “could have formed no adequate picture of what was happening to European Jews. . . . In short, nothing that might be offensive to Germany could appear.” This view is unconvincing, in light of the reports that appeared in Sweden as well as in Finland. As early as 1938, *Helsingin Sanomat*, the leading Finnish-language daily in Helsinki, reported on 7 September 1939 German efforts to banish Jews from Germany. Raukkaliho (1987, 49–51) cites several Finnish press reports that prove awareness in Finland of Nazi anti-Jewish policies.

¹¹ Kamela Liebkind, E-mail to author, 19 January 1998. Accessible on the World Wide Web: www.oni.org/community/jpr/WRe/Europe/finland.htm.

¹² The Saami population is concentrated mainly in Lapland. Travel report: “About the trip on official business made by me to Tallinn between the 1 and 12 days X 1941 on orders given me by the chief of the State Police.” 21 October 1941. Cited and quoted in part by Raukkaliho (1987, 134–35).

¹³ William Cohen is the son of a survivor, Dr. Walter Cohen, whose somewhat abusive behavior while a refugee in Finland is the subject of twenty pages in Raukkaliho (1987).

¹⁴ Cohen and Svensson (1995, 83), quoting from Christopher R. Browning, *The Final Solution and the German Foreign Office* (New York: Holmes & Meier), p. 153.

¹⁵ Himmler showed a willingness to deviate from an uncompromising commitment to the Final Solution toward the end of the war when Germany’s defeat was imminent. Hitler became increasingly abstracted from reality, and Himmler saw an opportunity to trade Jews for a separate peace with the Western Powers. See the account of negotiations between the Swedish Red Cross and Himmler in Koblikh (1988), chapter 4.

¹⁶ Raukkaliho’s cynicism toward Kersten was not shared by the World Jewish Congress, which credited him with saving 3,500 Jewish lives. Letter from General Secretary A. Leon Kibonowitzki to Kersten, 4 December 1946, cited by Raukkaliho (1987, 61, fn. 67).

¹⁷ Cohen and Svensson report that Himmler raised the Jewish issue with Rangell, but that the Valpo official who overheard this “could not hear Prime Minister Rangell’s response” (75).
¹⁸ This typescript was given to the author by Harry Maiso, general secretary of the Jewish War Veterans of Finland in Helsinki on 21 October 1998. An article on the same subject by the same author was published in the organ of the Federation of Finnish War Veterans, *Sotaveteraanit* (The War Veterans), April 1994, p. 41, under the title “*Suomen vastarintaväikin kaappasi Himmlerin sotakuori*” (Finnish counterintelligence snatches Himmler’s briefcase”).
¹⁹ The author owes this insight to Ms. Laitinen.
²⁰ Kamela Liebkind, E-mail to author, 19 January 1998.
²¹ Quoting a communication from Etchmann to von Thadden in the Foreign Office.
²² Gideon Bolotowsky, interview by author, Helsinki, 18 October 1998.
²³ Bolotowsky (see n. 23) credits Tanner and Egeholm. He is not convinced that Mannheim deserves credit. Bolotowsky told the author that Abraham Stiller, wartime head of the Helsinki Jewish community, related to Bolotowsky how he (Stiller) went disguised as a clergyman to Mannheim to seek help in protect-

ing the Jews. Mannheim replied, according to Stiller, that he had no influence in the matter.

²⁷ Bolotowsky, see n. 25.

²⁸ Bolotowsky, see n. 25.

²⁹ It must be added, however, that by the time of Mannheim's visit to the synagogue, an armistice had been concluded between Finland and the U.S.S.R., a condition of which was Finnish co-operation in driving the remaining German troops out of Finland.

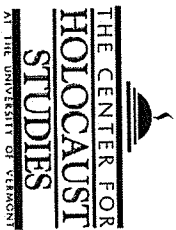
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LETTER FROM SALZBURG

by David Scrase
University of Vermont

It should not have come as a surprise to me, but it did. There had been some discussion in the newspapers about an Austrian government-sponsored *Historiker-Kommission*, which would look into the questions of expropriation of property and of forced labor in Austria during the Nazi era. The names of the Austrians appointed to this commission were largely known. It was also known that a distinguished foreign expert would be appointed in consultation with international Jewish organizations and Simon Wiesenthal. On 30 October I opened my newspaper, saw the headline "Historians' Commission All Set" and read that the distinguished foreign expert was to be Raul Hilberg. As it turned out, this was not in the end the case. Due to other commitments and pressures Raul declined to serve. Instead the Israeli historian Avraham Barkan was appointed, only to himself withdraw on the grounds of advanced age, travel problems, and difficult deadlines. The Commission is, accordingly, still not complete.

There is no shortage of official reactions to the past, although in many instances these reactions, like the current readiness to deal with reparations (if that is the word) for the expropriations, and the exploitation of slave labor, seem to be coming a little late. A Salzburg woman, for example, has just now finally been successful in obtaining rehabilitation for her father who, as a Jehovah's Witness, had refused to serve in the Wehrmacht and had thereupon been executed by guillotine in 1940. The daughter expressed her relief at the fact that her father is now, some 58 years and more after his death, officially seen as a victim of National Socialism and not a criminal. The local press devoted considerable space to this tragic human interest story, including a facsimile of the father's last letter, which begins: "I is with heavy heart . . ."

The same newspaper also published an article inspired by a man, now 78 years old, who remembered his disappointment at the Catholic Church's official advice in March 1938 to vote "yes" in the referendum to confirm Austria's membership of the Greater German Reich. The man told also of his pride when the same Cardinal Imtizer, who encouraged the "yes" vote then, a mere six months later, preached at a huge rally and told the 10,000 faithful that their *Führer* was not Adolf Hitler but Jesus Christ. A day later the Hitler Youth stormed and vandalized the Archbishop's Palace in Vienna. The man interviewed by the reporter was arrested and taken to Mandauhaus, proud to have shouted "*Heil imstrem Bischof*" (Hail to our Bishop)

at the gang of Hitler Youth. The little man got caught, the Cardinal went free. Shortly after the Hitler Youth attack on the Archbishop's Palace, Cardinal Imtizer underscored his newly asserted antagonism to the Third Reich by initiating a *Hilfestelle für nichtarische Katholiken* (Aid for non-Aryan Catholics)—too little, too late? We do well to consider what Pope Pius XII was doing and saying at this time, but also what Bishop Galen and, in particular, Provost Liechtenberg said and did.

There is also a current controversy involving a church in the province of Burgenland, which borders on Hungary. A petition had been started to remove a woman from a lay position in the Lutheran Church on the grounds that she had criticized her church for the lack of any reaction to the Holocaust as it was going on. The Lutheran Synod quickly intervened and not only voted overwhelmingly in her favor but took the opportunity to emphatically confirm what she had said. Moreover, the Lutheran Synod specifically castigated the founder of the church, Martin Luther, for his own virulent and prominently stated anti-Semitism.

Protestants in Austria are, of course, a tiny minority (five percent of the population). There is one Lutheran church in Salzburg, and, like the Jews, the Protestants of Salzburg were discriminated against and expelled. This happened in 1588 during the reign of Archbishop Wolf Dietrich, who, however, soon found it expedient to ease up and then reverse himself.

The Jews had been expelled much earlier, namely in 1498 and, as it was bluntly stated, for *ewige Zeiten*—for eternity. (In the event, "eternity" proved to be just shy of 200 years, because the first residence permit issued to a Jew after this point was in the year 1695.) There had been numerous recorded pogroms since the establishment of a permanent Jewish community in Salzburg in 1267. The great plague of 1348 was a time when it proved particularly expedient to blame the Jews, and to discriminate against them through the law—Jewish men were now obliged to wear a "horned hat", the women were to carry bells. But the Jews of Salzburg were able to thrive sufficiently, and an unofficial ghetto was created in 1377 when a whole street received the name Judengasse. Around the year 1400 a cemetery was created, but then, in 1404, there was a new pogrom, and Jews were burned. (It was a time of burnings—Jan Hus was burned in 1415, and Joan of Arc in 1431.) In the 1430s the city expelled the Jews from the building in the Judengasse in which the Hebrew school and the synagogue were situated. There is a curious memorial (of sorts) to this expulsion, which few people know about or even, probably, see. For me, this is one of the most remarkable sights in a city known for its visual beauty. To the hostile, anti-Semitic, and ignorant citizens round them, the tiny Jewish ghetto and the synagogue, in particular, were known as *die Hölle*—hell! The Jews were, as far as the Christian population was concerned, damned simply by

definition. When the expulsion had taken place, a brewer moved his business into the former synagogue. He now called his brewery and its beer *Holbräu*. Beer under this name is still brewed in Salzburg, but at a different site. But there has long been a restaurant owned by the brewer in the spot where the synagogue stood, and in its ornate wrought iron sign is a Star of David! (The whole building in which the restaurant is to be found is now the downtown Salzburg Radisson!) Strangely enough, the *Holbräu* is not the only Salzburg Brewery to use the Star of David in, or in this case, as its logo. The *Sternbräu*, also with premises right in the middle of downtown Salzburg, sports a large neon Star of David prominently rising from its restaurant and beer hall.

Curiosities!—with a wealth of history and not a little tragedy behind them. In my last "Letter from Salzburg" I mentioned how the Allies had officially decreed Austria Hitler's first victim. Now I learn that the U.S. Mail service issued a 5 cent stamp honoring Austria and showing a red-white-red flag on a blue background.* They did so in 1943! At the time, of course, the "Austrian" flag was the swastika of Greater Germany. A few weeks ago the weekend edition of the Salzburg newspaper ran a brief supplement on one of the quarters of the city, a clearly defined neighborhood not far from the city center but separate from it because of the massive Mönchsberg with the *Festung*, or castle, on top of it. Much of the information given in the supplement concerned restaurants, shops, amenities. But, right at the end, they printed an extract from the diary of the then mayor of Salzburg, who lived in this neighborhood. The extract printed covered 4 May–5 May, when the US Army rolled into the broken city. The mayor described the white flags displayed by the citizenry, but added that more and more red and white flags began to appear. The same people who had enthusiastically welcomed Hitler in March 1938 waving the swastika were now just as enthusiastically dissociating themselves from the Third Reich. The old flag they were waving was soon to become their new flag. *Plus ça change, plus c'est le même chose...*

Last one think that the local newspaper is long on non-Jewish victims of National Socialism and short on the Jewish victims, let me also stress the reactions to 9 November, with all its anniversaries. There were two lengthy articles on the *Kristallnacht*, but not a mention of those many other events of 9 November, including the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the 1923 *Bierhalle Putsch*, German television, too, has broadcast a number of Third Reich and World War II programs. There was a series on "The Generals," including Manstein, Paulus, and Ulde. The program was merciless on Manstein's narrow professionalism. This was a man willing to oppose Hitler's military decisions, but unwilling to react to the crimes he was certainly aware of and which were perpetrated under his command. But these programs were nowhere near so critical as a three

part series on the *Waffen SS*, in which many, now aged, former SS officers were interviewed. Each program began with a statement that some of these officers remain unpunished and will put forward repugnant notions—it all sounded eerily like the disclaimers on American public radio about obesity. But to read too much into this parallel trivializes the effect of Germany's national trauma, which is deep and all-pervasive.

*Editors' note: This stamp was one of a 1943-1944 U.S. Postal Service issue commemorating "The Overrun Countries." The other countries were Poland, Czechoslovakia, Norway, Luxembourg, Belgium, France, Greece, Yugoslavia, Albania, Denmark and Korea.



RECOVERED MEMORIES AND THE HOLOCAUST

(continued from page 6)
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THE GATHERING OF HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR FAMILIES

by Michael P. Schaal, M.S.W.

Background

The Gathering of Holocaust Survivor Families originated from a proposal by Michael Schaal to the University of Vermont Center for Holocaust Studies in the Fall of 1994. The Gathering meets each April at UVM. The participants are members of three generations of Holocaust survivor families and their spouses/partners. Most of them come from New England, Quebec, and upstate New York, but some have travelled from other parts of the United States and Europe. Sometimes three generations from the same family attend. Often participants are individuals, couples or smaller family units.

The Gathering allows the generations of Holocaust families to come together and share common experiences and perspectives that come from either having survived the Holocaust, grown up in a Holocaust survivor family, or being a spouse/partner of someone who is part of a survivor family. Each generation has different shared characteristics due to its own situation. Of course, the individuals in each generation vary greatly in personality, outlook, and life experience.

Except for one artistic event on Saturday evenings, which is open to the public, participation in the annual Gathering itself is limited to members of survivor families.

In 1996 a Gathering Steering Committee of diverse and capable individuals, representing all three survivor generations, was formed. The Steering Committee plans and organizes the annual Gatherings and Gathering-related programs under the auspices of the University of Vermont Center for Holocaust Studies. Four annual Gatherings have been held at the University. The Steering Committee is currently planning the Fifth Annual Gathering, "Extending the Legacy: What Does it Mean?" which will take place on 24-25 April 1999.

The Gathering and the University of Vermont

The relationship between the Gathering and the University is a unique and important collaboration between members of the community, most of whom are not affiliated with UVM, and the University, specifically the Center for Holocaust Studies. The Steering Committee plans and implements Gathering-related programs. While some programs and events are limited to survivor family participation, others are open to the University community and the

public. All members of the Gathering Steering Committee are volunteers; the Center for Holocaust Studies is represented by several UVM faculty members. In addition, each year two student interns receive academic credit for their participation in the organization of the spring Gathering. The Center for Holocaust Studies supplies staff, resources, monetary and administrative aid, and intangibles, such as counsel and support. The Administration of the University has voiced its strong support for the efforts of the Gathering Steering Committee. The Administration of the University has voiced its strong support for the efforts of the Gathering Steering Committee. In turn, the Steering Committee offers support for the University, not only from self-interest, but also from a sense of gratitude and citizenship.

Outreach

At the conclusion of the Third Gathering in 1997 participants agreed on the importance of sharing the experiences and perspectives of survivors and their families with the public.

The first public educational event jointly sponsored by the Gathering of Holocaust Survivor Families and the Center for Holocaust Studies was held in the fall of 1997. "An Intergenerational Dialogue" consisting of representatives of the second and third generations of survivors was held on a Sunday afternoon. The goal was to share with the public some of the experiences of being a part of a Holocaust family and how the Holocaust has affected the panelists. The panelists ranged in age from 12 to 73. The audience, which had the opportunity to ask questions and interact with the panelists, consisted of University students, faculty and staff, and members of the greater Burlington community.

In the same spirit of service, this past fall the Gathering again offered a public program, jointly sponsored by the Center for Holocaust Studies at UVM. "The Legacy," a panel discussion was held on Sunday, 25 October 1998 from 2:00 to 4:00 P.M. in Carpenter Auditorium at the UVM College of Medicine. Local high schools and middle schools, churches, and synagogues had been notified of the event, and the auditorium was filled with people of all ages. Most of the panelists, six survivors, five of whom survived concentration camps, were in their 70s and 80s. They discussed how they wish the Holocaust and the experience of being a Holocaust survivor to be remembered now and in the future. The time is fast approaching when there will be no survivors of the Holocaust to tell their stories and to share what they learned as a result of their extraordinarily painful experiences. "The Legacy" offered a unique opportunity for the public to learn and reflect on issues that have contemporary as well as historical meaning. Feedback about "The Legacy" program has been overwhelmingly positive. A video is available for educational purposes (contact the Center for Holocaust Studies for

information.) (For more on "The Legacy", see the article by Penny Schull, p. 19.)

Philosophy

The members of the Gathering Steering Committee believe that part of the legacy of the Holocaust is to bear witness to those who perished in the Holocaust and in their name, and in the name of those who survived, to tell their story. It is also to tell the story of family members born after the end of the Holocaust who grew up experiencing the aftermath and, to some extent, continue to do so. The perspective of survivors and members of their families is different from that of the historian. It is subjective and personal. It is the story of individuals and families. It is the story of people who were present during unforgettable historical events and their children and grandchildren. It is as much about today as about the past. The legacy is relevant when we think of the genocides in Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda and Kosovo. It is relevant in the United States and Canada as well. The legacy is applicable whenever there is hatred based on culture, religion, sexual preference and ethnicity.

An interesting and important tension exists within the survivor family community, especially among survivors themselves. On the one hand, there is the intense desire for the public and future generations to see the Holocaust as it was, a unique series of historical events unparalleled in scope and scale and in the havoc and horror it created for its victims, and the lasting impact that it has had on history, and especially on the Jewish people. Those who hold this position rightfully fear that the word "Holocaust" is being used to describe any kind of oppression or any kind of murder. The concern is that the Holocaust will thereby be diminished and diffused and that truth and history will ultimately be distorted.

On the other hand, for others, there is a deep conviction that the Holocaust instructs us and compels us to confront the conditions that spawn the hatred, bigotry and violence that in turn create injustice and sometimes lead to genocide. Those of us in the survivor family community, academics, and the makers of international governmental policy must study and apply what we have learned about the Holocaust, in order to assure that present and future threats of genocide are minimized and, ultimately, that genocide be eliminated from the planet. Some would argue that the elimination of genocide is an overly idealistic and naïve goal. Yet, for those who experienced the suffering or grew up in families where the ramifications of the Holocaust were and are constant companions, there is simply no other choice.

Clearly, there is no real contradiction between the two positions. In fact, one can hold the uniqueness of the Holocaust in mind and guard against diffusion (acknowledging real and sometimes unbearable suffering, while still

noting differences between the Holocaust and those who suffered in other circumstances before 1933 and after 1945), and, at the same time, insist that the conditions leading to genocide be vigorously addressed, that human rights violations be intolerable, and that crimes against humanity first be stopped and then legally prosecuted. To act on only one of the positions with the limited perspective that each holds, without including the other position in thought and action would be ultimately irresponsible.

These are some of the issues and questions that the Steering Committee grapples with as the annual Gathering and fall programs are created and shaped. The process is one of thinking as clearly as possible about the ramifications of what is offered, in the illuminating light of history.

Other questions offer the Gathering Steering Committee opportunities for reflection: How can a group of volunteers be thoughtful, and act decisively and wisely to address the diverse needs of three generations of survivors and family members? How can the subjective perspective of survivor family members enhance the furthering of the Holocaust legacy, and at the same time, not be in conflict with the legitimate objective role of the historian? How might this Gathering of Holocaust Survivor Families differ from others in North America and around the world? Finally, there are ongoing individual questions for many members of survivor families, who have already decided that it is not enough to simply share one's personal history: "What do I do with and about that personal history? How can I utilize and transform personal experience and make a contribution, in my own way, to family, community, society, and the planet?"

REPORTS

THE LEGACY

Sunday, 25 October 1998, the Center for Holocaust Studies and the Gathering of Holocaust Survivor Families presented "The Legacy: Survivors of the Holocaust Respond to the Question: How Would You Want Your Experiences Remembered by Future Generations?" The panel discussion with audience participation was held from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m., in Carpenter Auditorium, Given Building, at the University of Vermont College of Medicine.

The panel consisted of six survivors: Selma and Chiam Engel, Gina Gotfryd, Liselotte Ivy, Jack Pomerantz, and Thaddeus Stabholz. The discussion was facilitated by Michael Schaal, chairperson of the Gathering of Holocaust Survivor Families Steering Committee. The panelists come from varied backgrounds. Selma Engel was born in Poland, Liselotte Ivy in what is now the Czech Republic; the other panelists come from various parts of Poland. The Engels were among the group of prisoners who escaped from the extermination camp Sobibor. Jack Pomerantz escaped capture after the Nazi invasion of Poland by fleeing into the Soviet Union. Gina Gotfryd, Liselotte Ivy, and Thaddeus Stabholz survived concentration camps. Today the Engels live in Connecticut, Gina Gotfryd in New York, Liselotte Ivy in Quebec, Jack Pomerantz in New Jersey, and Thaddeus Stabholz in Ohio.

KZJ

Focussing on the Future: On the Legacy Panel

Penny Schull
Trinity College of Vermont

The purpose of "The Legacy" panel was to provide the survivors with a forum to frame their legacy for future generations. The panel's desire was expressed succinctly by Chiam Engel, "We do and did our part. It's now time for the younger generation to continue the legacy."

No one listening to these individuals would have reason to guess their past. On the surface they showed no visible scars of the horrors they endured. It wasn't anger that

peered from beneath their experiences, but rather compassion and humanity. "My legacy is that we should learn to tolerate each other regardless of religion or color," noted Jack Pomerantz. "We have to be good to each other," added Liselotte Ivy.

Their need to insure that we denounce discrimination and show sensitivity towards the plight of others was pronounced. Listening to their stories, we were clearly reminded of the consequences of hatred and intolerance. "... We can't solve anything with hate," reminded Selma Engel. They spoke of the importance of respecting and understanding diversity, the absence of which is a stark reminder of the past. "We don't want to repeat history; this should never happen again," said Gina Gotfryd.

The survivors' courage and resiliency was moving. Despite the profound consequences of the Holocaust they were able to rebuild their lives. They believe that they and others who experienced first-hand the atrocities of the Holocaust must share the lessons of their painful past. "The stories need to be told to all generations because we won't be here in the future to tell it," Chiam Engel explained. "Tell the young generation and future generations... it is important that the word gets spread," voiced Gina Gotfryd. Selma Engel added: "This is the reason we are here today. My legacy is that this will be remembered."

The panelists further stressed the need for continued public education on the Holocaust: "I speak to many children and I hope that if I touch one child, they will remember me and tell their children," explained Liselotte Ivy. Chiam and Selma Engel continue to speak to students about their experiences in Sobibor. Liselotte Ivy is a speaker for the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre. Thaddeus Stabholz is the author of *Seven Hell's* and Jack Pomerantz is co-author of *Run East: Flight from the Holocaust*. "My legacy when I survived was to write a book to be able to tell as many people as possible what happened," Jack Pomerantz said.

The survivors offered the audience unique insight into the experience of genocide. Their individual stories and eyewitness accounts were compelling, and their message was clear. As Dr. Thaddeus Stabholz reminded us we must "forgive, but never forget." We must all become stewards of the legacy.



UVM AND THE CENTER FOR HOLOCAUST STUDIES WELCOMES PETER HAYES, THE SEVENTH ANNUAL RAUL HILBERG LECTURER

On 27 October 1998 the University community welcomed Prof. Peter Hayes as the seventh annual Raul Hilberg Lecturer. Initiated by the Center for Holocaust Studies in 1992 to honor the scholarly and pedagogical legacy of Professor Emeritus Raul Hilberg, the lecture series continues to bring the most authoritative and prominent scholars in the field to the UVM campus.

A native of Boston, Professor Hayes received his bachelor's degree from Bowdoin College and continued his education as a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University, where he earned the Master of Arts degree in the Honours School of Politics, Philosophy, and Economics. In 1974 he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from Yale University. Hayes has held teaching positions at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Wesleyan University, and since 1980 has served as Professor of History and German at Northwestern University. Among the many fellowships and awards he has received are research grants from the Social Science Research Council, the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst, and the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation. Most recently, he was the J.B. and Maurice C. Shapiro Senior Scholar-in-Residence at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Peter Hayes' publications include his prize-winning book *Industry and Ideology: IG Farben in the Nazi Era* (Cambridge, 1987) and dozens of articles in scholarly journals. In addition, he has edited the highly-regarded *Lessons and Legacies* collections that are frequently used in undergraduate Holocaust studies curricula. Currently, Hayes is completing a comprehensive study entitled *Profits and Persecution: German Big Business and the Holocaust*, and, in recognition of his scholarship, the Degussa Corporation of Frankfurt has commissioned him to write its history in the Nazi era.

Entitled "Culture and Context: The Shoah, Germans, and Us," Hayes' lecture addressed a question basic to any study of the Holocaust: How was it possible? As Hayes outlined to his audience, scholars and students have tended to explain the origins and execution of the destruction process in terms of "culture," that is, in terms of the beliefs, attitudes, and mentalities of the perpetrators and German people, or in terms of the "context" in which they lived, fulfilled their functions in society, and reacted to the forces acting upon them.

While undertaking extensive research into the behavior of corporate executives under the National Socialist regime, Hayes noted that he has been drawn to this very is-

sue in attempting to understand the responsibility of German corporate leaders in the plunder, exploitation, and murder of Jews. What was the culture and context of their action or inaction? What attitudes did they hold, and what were their motivations? Not surprisingly, Hayes' confrontation with these questions led him to an analysis of anti-Semitism among corporate executives, and it was this anti-Semitism and the varying forms that it took that provided the basis of his lecture. According to Hayes, German anti-Semitism in 1930s was not at all a "uniform phenomenon." To illustrate this point, Hayes offered brief descriptions of four individuals in the German corporate world and their responses to the persecution of Jews. Fritz Koesler was a patriotic industrialist and chairman of the board of a Frankfurt corporation. Koesler's diaries make clear that he, although suspicious of Jews and their role in German society, rejected the Nazi creed of racial superiority and firmly believed that German Jews were being treated unjustly. These attitudes notwithstanding, Koesler did nothing to aid the Jews under his charge when they were subjected to removal from their positions.

Hermann Leyerzapf was a young Nazi, a firm believer in the National Socialist mission, and a Party member since 1928. In 1934 he joined the very firm headed by Koesler and befriended during his daily commute to Frankfurt a man named Ernst Eichwald who was, according to Nazi definitions, a Jew. In 1935 Leyerzapf was informed by the NSDAP that his fraternization with a Jew was inappropriate for a Party member, and he was ordered to terminate this relationship. Leyerzapf refused, and was consequently expelled from the Party. Why would a young activist risk his Party affiliation and all its advantages for a friendship with a Jew? Was it because of higher moral principle—because he believed that the Jews were being treated unfairly? Hayes contended, based on a recent interview with Leyerzapf, that his obstinacy was, quite simply, rooted only in his personal friendship with Eichwald.

The third example cited by Hayes was that of Fritz Gajewski, a model corporate manager who rushed to join the NSDAP in May 1933. Shortly thereafter, a Nazi union leader in his factory demanded that all Jewish laboratory directors, foremen, and managers be dismissed. Refusing this demand, Gajewski continued to employ Jews as long as he could, and no Jew was fired from his firm until April 1938, when the regime declared their dismissal. Gajewski did not, however, maintain his standards. His factory subsequently utilized Jewish slave labor, and in his capacity as an IG Farben board member, Gajewski voted for the construction of the massive Monowitz chemical works as part of the Auschwitz industrial complex. Why would this man undertake risks to protect Jews, and subsequently make decisions that aided in the process of their destruction? Hayes suggested that Gajewski perceived those Jews he chose to protect in the early years of the regime as people

much like himself—scientifically trained, managers, and colleagues of sorts.

A prominent textile executive and almost 70 years of age when the Nazis came to power, Georg Mueller-Oerlingshausen stands as the only corporate executive in the realm of Hayes' research who recognized what was at stake as the persecution of German Jews began. When the NSDAP demanded, in the spring of 1933, that all Jews be removed from the National Association of German Industry, Mueller-Oerlingshausen was infuriated, and wrote a letter to the association stating in effect, that it was necessary to defy the Nazi state on this issue, even if it meant destroying the Association's influence in the German economy and society.

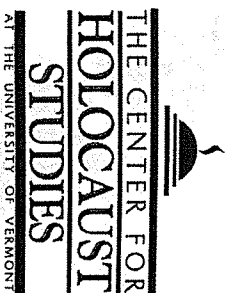
Hayes effectively used these examples to illustrate a central truth about the way the destruction process began. In his words, "Nazism and the hatred that it unleashed was not brought to power by the strength of that hatred alone." Rather, it was the ambivalence and irresolution of men like the first three cited above that sustained the regime, helped it prosper, and enabled the wheels of destruction to turn. Introducing a presentist element and, at the same time, reflecting on the recent bearing and death of Matthew Shephard in Wyoming, Hayes suggested that in our own society the numbers and public voice of the "haters" will wax and wane, yet "[t]he real problem that societies face is the irresolution or ambivalence of the non-haters to the hatred." "The question that is posed by the Shoah" he concluded, "is...repeatedly: who will defend whom? That is the question that the weighing of culture and context makes us face. That is what the Germans, and the Shoah, even now, have to do with us."

HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR EMIL LANDAU MEETS WITH UVM STUDENTS

After a semester of participating in a course entitled "The Holocaust," taught by Jonathan Huener at the University of Vermont, we have the honor of providing a student perspective on the recent visit of Emil Landau, a Holocaust survivor. The Center for Holocaust Studies at the University of Vermont arranged for Mr. Landau, a survivor of four Nazi concentration/death camps, to address our class. For some time now, Mr. Landau has maintained an active relationship with UVM's Center for Holocaust Studies; he is a frequent visitor and guest speaker at both the University and schools in the area. Mr. Landau is indeed more than qualified to speak on the issue of the Shoah. Born in 1925 in Witten, Westphalia, Landau was deported to Theresienstadt at the age of seventeen. From Theresienstadt he was deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1944, moved to Czechowice in August 1944, then marched to Gleiwitz, and finally deported by train to Buchenwald, where he was liberated in April 1945. Suffering from typhus and malnutrition, Landau spent his first post-war year recuperating in Switzerland before returning to Germany in July 1946. Mr. Landau emigrated to the United States in December 1946 and currently resides in Danvers, Maine. From 1969 to 1989, Mr. Landau was the owner and operator of Printing Techniques, Inc., a firm that developed and offered technical solutions to the printing industry. An expert in color reproduction, Landau, who is semi-retired, is currently the president of Michael Manufacturing Inc.

Mr. Landau visited the class on 2 December 1998. We were immediately struck by his smiling and jovial demeanor. He appeared to be a happy man. After reading Holocaust scholarship and memoirs, we perhaps expected someone rather solemn, unsure of himself and possibly emotionally and psychologically scarred from his experiences. Emil Landau did not appear this way, but struck us as someone who has come to accept his past and has moved forward with life. Our first impressions of this man were reaffirmed during the course of the discussion period. We were enthralled.

Allowing Mr. Landau plenty of time for open, informal discussion, Professor Huener provided only a brief introduction of our speaker. In order to engage the entire class in discussion, Landau did not prepare a formal speech. Instead, he calmly recounted a few experiences, specifically from Auschwitz-Birkenau, and proceeded to state, "You can ask me anything." We could, he said, feel free to ask him any type of question and he would respond with an honest and forthright answer. The majority of our discussion centered around two topics that we had discussed pre-



quently throughout the semester. The first was Primo Levi's "gray zone" as outlined in his last book *The Drowned and the Saved*, and the problem of judging the actions and behavior of people involved in the Holocaust. Both of these topics can be emotional and controversial; Landau, however, did not hesitate to address either of them.

A student raised the concept of Levi's gray zone and asked Mr. Landau if he considers himself a victim or a survivor. Although it is a broad and complex subject, involving the judgment of others from a subjective standpoint, the student was interested in understanding how Mr. Landau was able to survive his incarceration in Auschwitz and elsewhere. With a smile, Mr. Landau recounted an incident where prisoners were selected for deportation from Birkenau to Czestochowice, a sub-camp of Auschwitz. Young, thin, and desperately hoping to flee the horror of Birkenau, he decided to do what he could to survive. During the lineup, in order to appear more robust, he purposefully stepped between two emaciated prisoners and was chosen for transport to Czestochowice. Landau recounted other instances where he was forced to make decisions regarding his survival, stating "I am a survivor. You be the judge of my actions." As outsiders to the experience of being a prisoner in a concentration or death camp, we cannot judge Landau, but feel that he was courageous and fortunate to survive. We do not feel qualified to judge the actions of others who lived in such harsh and desperate conditions. But, where does one draw the line between perpetrator and victim?

The second main topic Landau discussed was resistance. As a class we had discussed the various types of resistance that had existed during the Shoah and were thus intrigued by the opportunity to receive first-hand knowledge about the subject. Although one question alluded to the lack of armed resistance, Landau felt strongly that one must first define resistance in order to discuss it. He stated, "There was always resistance." According to him, resistance began at a personal level, whether it involved brushing one's teeth, remaining clean, getting enough to eat or joining a resistance movement. Clearly, resistance existed on a number of levels. Furthermore, Landau mentioned that armed resistance was insufficient without outside aid, and that instances of armed resistance were futile attempts, for those who fought were easily outnumbered by the Nazis. It became clearer to us that although armed resistance was rare, it is also important to recognize and appreciate other forms of resistance.

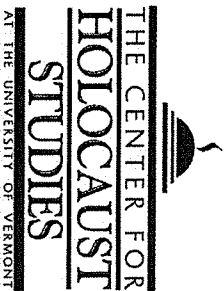
Emil Landau added an experiential aspect to our course by bringing the subject of the Holocaust to a personal level. Through the recounting of his first-hand experiences we were able to develop a sense of empathy, an appreciation of the Holocaust that we could not grasp from a text, encyclopedia, or even a memoir. Survivor testimony of the Holocaust provides a vivid, intense recollection of

the past. We are grateful to Mr. Landau for sharing his story with our class, and we wish him continued success in bringing his message to others.

Lynn Gareau and Debbie Stevens-Tuttle

In addition to meeting students in the "The Holocaust" (History 190), Landau was hosted in the "History of Modern Germany" (History 139), met with students from UVM's History Club and the Living/Learning program in Holocaust Studies, and spent a day at Lamotte Union High School in Hyde Park, Vermont.

JDH



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Henry Lewin is one of three people to receive this year's Covenant Award for Exceptional Jewish Educators. The Covenant Foundation is a program of the Crown Family Foundation and the Jewish Education Service of North America and the award is given to educators whose endeavors reach out to communities at large, "building bridges between our past and our future," in the words of the Covenant Foundation.

Lewin is a member of the Advisory Board of the Center for Holocaust Studies at the University of Vermont and a lecturer in Hebrew in the Department of German and Russian. She is on sabbatical this year, serving as in-house Yiddish educator at the National Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, Mass. During the 1997-99 school years she is also teaching Yiddish at Hampshire College and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.



Due to its substantial size, this issue of the Bulletin of the Center for Holocaust Studies contains no book reviews. Book reviews will resume with the next issue.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Lynn Gareau and Debbie Stevens-Tuttle ("Emil Landau Visits UVM") are both students at the University of Vermont. Ms. Gareau is a senior majoring in psychology and Spanish and Ms. Stevens-Tuttle is a junior majoring in anthropology.

Jonathan D. Huener ("UVM Welcomes Peter Hayes") is Assistant Professor of History at the University of Vermont and a member of the Advisory Board of the Center for Holocaust Studies at the University of Vermont.

Mark Pendergrast ("Recovered Memories and the Holocaust") is an independent scholar and investigative journalist. He is the author of four books, including *Victims of Memory*, a critique of recovered memory therapy. Pendergrast lives in Vermont.

Robert D. Raichlin, Esq. ("How They Were Saved") is a Senior Partner in the firm of Downs, Raichlin and Martin in Burlington, Vt. and the Chair of the Advisory Board of the Center for Holocaust Studies at the University of Vermont.

Michael P. Schaal M.S.W. ("The Gathering") is a psychotherapist and organizational development consultant in private practice in Burlington, Vt. He is the Chairperson of the Steering Committee of the Annual Gathering of Holocaust Survivor Families and a member of the Advisory Board of the Center For Holocaust Studies.

Penny Stitull ("The Legacy") is Assistant Professor in the Sociology and Criminal Justice Program at Trinity College, Burlington, Vt., and a member of the Gathering Steering Committee.

David Scrase ("Fragments Reconsidered") ("Letter from Salzburg"), Director of the Center for Holocaust Studies at the University of Vermont, is currently on leave, serving as Director of the New England Universities in Salzburg program.

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		<p>"Raising the Ashes" - a film by Michael O'Keefe Discussion to follow, led by Ginti Stern Thursday 15 April 1999 7:00 p.m. Burlington College, 95 North Street 802-862-9616</p> <p>"Escaping Warsaw" Presentation of an Original Play by Jennifer Bloomfield Saturday, 24 April 24 1999 8:00 p.m. Royal Tyrer Theatre</p> <p>"Shadows of World War II" Tenth Annual Harry Kahn Lecture Madeleine May Kunin, U.S. Ambassador to Switzerland Monday, 26 April 1999 4:00 p.m. Carpenter Auditorium, Given Building University of Vermont</p>

EVENTS TO NOTE:

Anne Frank Exhibit
Burlington City Hall
Throughout April
Sponsored by The City of Burlington
and Saint Michael's College
For more information, contact
The Office of the President,
Saint Michael's College (802) 654-2211
or Prof. Francis Nicosia (802) 654-2249

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