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HOLOCAUST  
STUDIES  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

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Volume 4, Number 2

Spring 2000

## MY SALZBURG JOURNEY

by Bernard Gofryd

At the beginning of this summer I was invited by Professor David Scrase to speak at his Holocaust studies class at the University of Salzburg and to go on a day trip with the students to visit Mauthausen Camp.

In all these years, fifty-five in fact, I never had a desire to visit any of the six camps I was an inmate of during World War II. This time it didn't take me long to make a decision. Not knowing what to expect and how I'd react, it was time, I thought, to see what it is like.

After a brief introduction, Prof. Scrase read a story from my book, *Anton the Dove Fancier*, entitled "Three Eggs." This was the first time I heard that story read aloud, and it moved me deeply. Suddenly the characters in the story came alive. I then gave my talk and the students asked some questions. I was impressed with some of them and their knowledge of Holocaust literature, especially the work of Primo Levi and Elie Wiesel.

The following morning I met Professor Scrase and we walked over to the University, where his students and the bus that we took us to Mauthausen camp were waiting. I found a seat next to a pretty and somewhat reserved student from Milan, Italy. There were some lively and cheerful American students who created a picnic-like atmosphere, which made me feel at home. They asked lots of questions and there was good conversation.

Halfway to Mauthausen we made a short stop at St. Florian, a several centuries old church and monastery. It was a most interesting, but frigid, guided tour through long, white-walled corridors, and moldy, dust-covered chambers full of massive furniture, with elaborate hand-carved gilded bedsteads. The church itself was an amazing masterpiece of craftsmanship, with a ceiling of rare frescoes, and hand-carved woodwork of highly

detailed shapes of most imaginative religious images.

After the tour was over, we had lunch at a nearby *Gasthaus* where I tasted my first local beer. For me, a non-beer drinker, I must admit that it was better than I expected.

When the bus was nearing Mauthausen, I could feel my heart pounding faster. I didn't know what to expect, and there was a good deal of anxiety and anticipation. I walked up to the main gate flanked by two watch towers, and managed to take a picture of Prof. Scrase with his students. There was an overabundance of light, too much contrast. I was hoping for an overcast day when the light would be well balanced.

I asked the lady guide why there was no sign over the gate. She didn't think that it was important to have one. "Everyone knows what it is," she said.

I tried very hard to remember what it was like in August of 1944 when I arrived at Mauthausen in a cattle car with a transport from the Wieliczka salt mines in southern Poland. The guide pointed out that if I arrived by train, I must have walked on steep roads for close to five kilometers before I reached the camp. I remembered that it was a long and difficult walk, but never realized how far it was. We had to carry the dead bodies of prisoners who had died in transport. It was very hot, and we were starved, and there was no food or water. So much I remembered.

I located the area in front of the crematorium and the gas chamber where we were assembled upon arrival in August of 1944, waiting for the selection. It was very stuffy and most of us had difficulty breathing. I could still hear the commands shouted by the SS men, and the sounds of the wooden sticks hitting us over our backs and heads. I don't understand how anybody was able to come out alive.

We followed our guide to the tiny gas chamber, no larger than 15 x 15 feet. The Nazis would pack between 60 and 80 people into such a tiny area, she told us, describing in graphic detail the whole killing process. I stood there in shock, listening to every word, and images of people in my transport who perished in Mauthausen kept coming back.

At some point the guide mentioned how helpful the local people were to the prisoners with food. She should have known better. There was no contact between the local people and the prisoners. It was *wartzeit*. I couldn't help but tell her that in my case the opposite was true. In the nine months I spent at Gusen, every day, on our way to the Messerschmitt plant, we were greeted by the local people with garbage, rocks, and insults. She responded with, "Well, there were such and such." How true, except that there were more of the kind I experienced in St. Georgen.

She should have also known that in February of 1945, five hundred Russian prisoners of war who, in an act of desperation, broke out of Mauthausen, met their fate at the hands of local people, who hunted them down and hacked them to death with axes and pitchforks. There were nine prisoners, however, who were hidden by some local good Samaritans. This episode comes out in a book entitled *February Shadows* (1984) by Elisabeth Reichart, an Austrian author.

The outer walls are covered with memorial plaques, in different languages, some of them already deteriorating. The camp grounds display countless statues and memorials erected by different nations. There is a large bronze memorial, and an impressive monument from the Russian people, and many other monuments, small and large. There was no time, however, to investigate each one individually.

On one of the walls inside one of the few barracks still standing, I noticed a blueprint of the camp. With the guide's help I was able to locate the quarantine area where I was confined in 1944. It had to be Barack #17 or #18, but neither of these barracks is left. The whole area turned into a cemetery. In fact, the entire camp is one huge burial ground filled with human ashes.

I kept walking and taking pictures, but most of the time I felt a kind of numbness. I felt as if I had lost my awareness, yet subconsciously I knew that the place looked familiar, that I had seen it before. The voices of Prof. Scrase and the guide brought me back to reality.

I was wondering what it would have been like if I were to come here alone, and realized how good it was to be in the company of young students. They were comforting and reassuring.

At the end of the visit we went inside a small auditorium to watch a movie made after the liberation of Mauthausen. Nothing revealing, nothing different from any other films of camps after liberation. I had seen before, except some interviews with survivors who had come back to visit. Piles of dead bodies in mass graves, or emaciated prisoners, like walking skeletons going nowhere. One interview, however, with an American GI, whose unit liberated Mauthausen, moved me to tears. He was able to say much, just one sentence, "I hope that nobody ever in the future will have to see what I saw when we liberated this camp on May the 5th, 1945." And then, he broke down and sobbed.

It hit me hard. This was the moment when I identified with the whole horror I had experienced fifty-five years ago. The ex-G.I. had spoken for me, and cried with him.

The tour was coming to an end. I followed some students

along a narrow stone-lined path, and soon we were descending a long, steep row of stone steps where we were to meet the bus that would take us to our next stop, Gusen.

It wasn't until I met Prof. Scrase at the bottom of the steps, and he informed me, that I realized this was the infamous Mauthausen stone quarry. Those were the steps at the stone quarry I climbed for three long weeks carrying heavy rocks on my bare shoulders. Six round trips daily up the 112 steps, a total of 126 round trips. Now it was overgrown with tall weeds and trees; it hardly looked familiar. I stood there for a minute disbelieving my own eyes. Why wasn't I able to recognize it?

It was a short ride to Gusen, where I spent nine months slaving at the Messerschmitt airplane factory in the underground tunnels of nearby St. Georgen. There is nothing left of Gusen Camp, and the tunnels are sealed. I was told, "There's a memorial the size of someone's backyard, behind a stone wall displaying a large wooden cross, and two monuments side by side, Polish, French, or Russian. And a crematorium oven enclosed by a decorative, wrought iron fence, where one could see some plastic flowers someone had placed inside the oven. A shiver went up my spine.

What about the future, when my generation of survivors will be gone? Will anyone be able to learn the truth by viewing these relics? And who will tell them that it was like to be incarcerated, dehumanized, and starved?

My journey came to an end. I tried hard to deal with my emotions. However, it is only beginning to manifest itself now, some weeks after the trip was over. After I returned home. What was it I was looking for and what was I to find besides my nihilistic memories? I keep asking myself. I don't think I'll ever know.

Written September 1999

## EDITORIAL NOTE

While I was in Austria during the academic year 1998-99, I corresponded with Bernard Gotfryd, who, together with his wife Gina, has shown great interest in the Center for Holocaust Studies. I told him that I would be teaching a course on the Holocaust and that I would be taking the class on a field trip to Mauthausen. I was a little surprised when Bernard wrote back that he would "give his right arm" to be able to accompany us. The matter was soon arranged, and Bernard flew in to Salzburg, setting foot on Austrian soil for the first time since being liberated from the Mauthausen camp system in 1945. I admitted his courage in making the decision to come, but I felt apprehensive about his visit from the outset. It was not simply the camp visit. He would, after all, be constantly in contact with Austrians—most of them, to be sure, too young to have been among the guilty, but certainly capable, in their innocence, of touching raw nerves, or being painful, in their ignorance, of "having you been in Austria before?" was one of the first questions from the hotel owner, for example. The guide in Mauthausen was, for the most part, well-informed and sensitive. But, as you can read in Gotfryd's account, she greatly magnified the "kindness" of the local population.

My overriding impression as I observed Bernard Gotfryd during his visit was his loneliness as he faced up to the past and tried to deal with his emotions. I am glad he was able to make the

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### HOLOCAUST ERA INSURANCE CLAIMS

This past summer and fall the Center for Holocaust Studies agreed to act as a local organizational contact for the Holocaust Victim Assets Litigation (Swiss Banks) and the Austrian Bank Holocaust Litigation. Notice was sent to temples and synagogues in the State of Vermont and to residents of Vermont whom we know to be survivors or members of survivor families. We have agreed to perform a similar service for The International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims, and expect to receive information packets from that office in the next few weeks. If you or a member of your family would like to receive one of these packets, please send your name and mailing address to The Center for Holocaust Studies, Old Mill A301, The University of Vermont, P.O. Box 4055, Burlington, VT 05405-4055. The commission's web site ([www.iahc.org](http://www.iahc.org)) contains current information, as well as some useful links for anyone interested in the Holocaust.

### BAILEY-HOWE LIBRARY RECEIVES FEUER COLLECTION

Faculty Steering Committee member Connell Gallagher picked up 30 cartons of books from former UVVM philosophy professor Lewis Feuer, who taught here in the 1950s. Feuer, author of 20 books and hundreds of articles on John Dewey, Karl Marx, Albert Einstein, James March, and Banach Spinoza and many other topics, also taught at the University of California at Berkeley, the University of Toronto, and the University of Virginia before retiring to the Boston area. The primarily twentieth-century collection covers a wide range of topics including studies of the philosophy of social organization, history of physical sciences, student movements, Judaism and anti-Semitism, communism and socialism, and it is rich in the works of contemporary American Jewish intellectuals. The collection also includes many volumes from his wife Catherine, a professor of Russian, on Russian literature and Eastern European culture. Gallagher is currently reviewing the volumes for addition to the UVVM libraries.

### NEW PUBLICATION:

The Center for Holocaust Studies and the Department of German and Russian proudly announce the publication of *Shifting Paradigms in German-Jewish Relations (1750-2000): Harry H. Kahn Memorial Lectures (1995-1999)*, edited by Wolfgang Mader and Hazel Kahn Keimowitz. The volume costs \$10.00 and is available from The Center for Holocaust Studies, Old Mill A301, The University of Vermont, P.O. Box 4055, Burlington, VT 05405-4055.

### WEB SITE:

The Center for Holocaust Studies web site has a new address: [www.uvm.edu/~vnmichst/](http://www.uvm.edu/~vnmichst/). Information on future events, as well as an index to past issues of *The Bulletin*, is available at that site.

## REPORTS

### HANS MOMMSEN PRESENTS HILBERG LECTURE

Dan Brown

Professor Hans Mommsen's Raul Hilberg lecture, delivered on 12 October 1999, had as its subject "The German Resistance Against Hitler and the Holocaust." In brief, while there assuredly was a resistance against Hitler, this resistance concerned itself but marginally, if at all, with the fate of the Jews, with, of course, some few important exceptions. To a large extent, as Mommsen made clear, it was because so many Jews were identified with Bolshevism. The "resisters," however, came mostly from the upper classes and the higher military, these often from old noble families, all of whom were inveterate opponents of communism and ingrained defenders of capitalism. And so it was that there could be confirmed opponents of Nazism who were still themselves anti-Semites.

As indicated above, some members of the resistance were indeed appalled by the treatment of the Jews, e.g. Dietrich Bonhoeffer and some Roman Catholic leaders. However, the Kreisauer Kreis, a group based at the Kreisau estate of the famous Moltke family, concentrated on plans for a new German constitution and government to come about after the fall of the Hitler government.

Carl Goerdeler, who would probably have become chancellor if the plans of the Kreisauer Kreis had come to fruition, was a central figure in Professor Mommsen's lecture, and a rather ambiguous one. Goerdeler, who had become Oberbürgermeister (head mayor) of Leipzig in 1931, retained that position until 1937, i.e. for four years after the Nazis had come to power, only to "resign" in protest against some act of anti-Semitism. Mommsen clearly sees Goerdeler's role as ambiguous.

This ambiguity arises from the very title of the lecture that conjoins resistance against Hitler with resistance against the Holocaust. There might well be two lectures, one primarily concerned with resistance against Hitler, the other primarily with resistance against the Holocaust.

To his great merit, the lecture made clear that the two "resistances" were not at all necessarily the same. There were clearly those who wanted and planned to overthrow the Hitler regime so as to form a new German government to their liking, e.g. the Kreisauer Kreis, and those whose primary concern was indeed the Holocaust and its concomitant inhumanity; these without necessarily any political ambitions of their own, e.g. some members of the Protestant Bekennende Kirche (Confessing Church) as well as the *Wesiger Rose* (the White Rose). So much more could be said, and so many more names could be named, especially those (relatively few) who could be at once members of both "groups."

For anyone somewhat familiar with the historical background, Professor Mommsen's lecture certainly encouraged more thought together with more research.

## ONE COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITY

Sarah Combs

Johanna Liebhmann is a woman of incredible strength and perseverance. On 9 November 1999, she provided students of History 190 (The Holocaust) and History 95E (Women's History) as well as a group of local high school students, an inside account of a life saved during a time when so many were lost. Liebhmann showed us that human kindness has a power all its own, and when hope seems lost, can emerge to unlock the door, for which, for so many, there was no key.

Born in Germany in 1924, Liebhmann grew up in a period known for its poverty, despair, and disastrous economic conditions. She entered a world where poverty was common and wealth unheard of. "Beggars came to our first floor apartment begging for food, while cars were pushed on the streets collecting clothes for the poor," she recalled.

Liebhmann continued by explaining briefly the vast measures of dehumanization inflicted upon Jewish citizens in Germany. She discussed aspects of anti-Jewish legislation and the process of segregation from the rest of society. Liebhmann outlined the emergence of Adolf Hitler, explaining that he appeared to arise out of nowhere, but was well-accepted because of Germany's political instability. Liebhmann made note of some aspects of National Socialism's appeal in Germany. The notion of an unjust Treaty of Versailles was instilled in the German population, and Nazis were quick to blame Jews for society's trials and tribulations.

In 1940, Liebhmann and her family, among 6,500 other Jews from southwestern Germany, were transported to France. The deported family consisted of six women, including her 92-year-old grandmother. Liebhmann and her family were forced to sign over all of their possessions, except travel provisions and one hundred Marks, to the German government. They were then put in railroad cars and sent to an unknown destination.

After a three-day trip, Liebhmann found herself at the gates of Gurs, a concentration camp located near the Spanish border in unoccupied France, originally intended for Spanish refugees from the Civil War. The conditions at Gurs were not unlike those in other camps, but also not as extreme. Prisoners kept their own clothes, were able to write and receive letters, and social service agencies were allowed to function in the camp. Because of these "privileges," Liebhmann was able to establish a life there.

The main function of OSE (*Organisation Secours aux Enfants*), a Jewish social service agency working in the camp, was to relocate children to a safe living environment where they could lead a more normal life. A social worker from this organization asked Liebhmann's mother if Hanne could be sent to the village of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon. Hanne's mother had already relinquished one child—her older brother had been sent to the United States in 1937 (the later enlisted in the U.S. Army and died in the Battle of the Bulge). However, her mother agreed to let Hanne take this opportunity. On 7 September 1941, after eleven months of living in Gurs, Liebhmann left for Le Chambon.

Upon arrival Hanne was immediately accepted into the open arms and lives of the townspeople. She was told by her surrogate

family, "Even if it means we have less to eat, we want to help more of you." Most of the other refugees who accompanied Liebhmann enrolled in local schools, but she abstained, due to her lack of proficiency in French. Liebhmann instead acquired a job, and immediately started to earn money.

Almost a year after moving to Le Chambon, Liebhmann learned that her mother had become gravely ill while at Gurs. At the end of July 1942, Liebhmann left to visit her. Her itinerary enabled her to stay several days at the camp, but upon arrival she became aware of the current state of affairs at Gurs: the camp was being liquidated. Liebhmann managed to spend one hour with her mother, before she and all other prisoners were deported. Liebhmann became caught up in the confusion and was almost deported, but managed to escape. The last memory she has of her mother is of the "train doors slamming shut, and a little white handkerchief fluttering out," with the words her mother last spoke, namely that she would never come back, echoing in her head. Liebhmann later learned that of the 6,500 people deported that day, destined ultimately for Auschwitz, only two survived.

Liebhmann had met the man who would become her husband in the camp, and told him, "Come to Le Chambon and you will be safe." He arrived after her return to Le Chambon, and two weeks later, round-ups of Jews in the village began. Liebhmann left her future husband to the French Resistance, and she herself went into hiding. At one point, she hid in an amoire in a kind farmer's home, and while remaining absolutely quiet, overheard the conversation between the farmer and a policeman. The latter asked, "Are you hiding anybody, any Jews?" "I am not hiding anybody; I am not hiding any Jews; I do not know what Jews look like," the farmer replied. He then proceeded to offer the policeman some red wine while Liebhmann, terrified, shuddered upstairs. To her relief, the policeman refused and left without a word.

In February of 1943, with the help of relatives, Liebhmann carefully came out of hiding after receiving an entrance visa to Switzerland. What seemed a golden opportunity was soon ruined by her inability to obtain an exit visa from occupied France, which was a vital key to her safe passage.

Undeterred, Liebhmann left Le Chambon and arrived in a city just minutes from Geneva, which was located near the French-Swiss border. Once again, Liebhmann was saved by the tremendous courage and selflessness of another human being. She was escorted by a man and his family, carried across a brook, and given Swiss coins for the streetcar. He bestowed upon her his kindness and, ultimately, the knowledge necessary to reach Geneva safely.

Liebhmann made it to Geneva, and from there was placed in a refugee work camp, where she was given rations and some money in return for her labor. Soon after, her future husband arrived in Switzerland and immediately contacted her. In 1945, they were married just weeks before the conclusion of the war. Less than one year later, their daughter was born.

In a world where personal human sacrifice, integrity, and selflessness were almost unheard of, Hanne managed to find a way whose citizens' moral strengths outweighed their fear. We had been invited to explore one woman's battle of endurance in a world where life had little value. We were shown through her eyes how powerful kindness actually can be.

## AUSTRIA AND ISRAEL: A RELATIONSHIP IN THE SHADOW OF THE HOLOCAUST

Helga Embacher  
University of Salzburg, Austria

*This article is based on the book Granvaterungen, Beziehungen zwischen Österreich und Israel im Schatten der Vergangenheit (Vienna: Picus, 1989), co-written by Embacher and Margit Reiter. That book in turn relies to a considerable degree on more than fifty interviews which Embacher and Reiter conducted with Austrian and Israeli diplomats and politicians.*

Though the official diplomatic relationship between the two states started relatively early and—compared to the difficult German-Israeli relationship—was not publicly controversial, it had a deeper meaning. My thesis is that the special nature of the relationship between Austria and Israel is essentially characterized by the after-effects of the Shoah. The Austrian-Israeli relationship also demonstrates the fragility of Austria's conception of itself as the "first victim of Nazi Germany" and its problems in dealing with the Nazi past and anti-Semitism "after Auschwitz," as well as Israel's ambivalence in dealing with Austria and the Shoah. Here I want to discuss the very important early phase of the relationship between the two states.

### Victims, Accomplices, and Perpetrators

Israel was founded in 1948, three years after the end of National Socialism. As a Jewish state, it became a refuge for thousands of Holocaust survivors. Its conception of itself has been inseparably connected to Jewish experiences during the Shoah. The Shoah became an integral part of Israel's collective memory and dominated its policy.

In Austria it was different. Everyone tried to exclude the Shoah from the collective memory. Austria had succeeded in portraying itself as "the first victim of Nazi Germany" (the so-called *Ogyerthese* or victim thesis) in accordance with the Moscow Declaration signed by the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union in 1943. The official version of the *Auschluff* in March 1938 particularly emphasized the invasion and occupation of Austria by the German Army and overestimated the role of the Austrian resistance, whereas the enthusiastic participation of many Austrians in National Socialism, in the "Aryanization" of Jewish property, and in the murder of Jews had to be concealed. Nevertheless, Austria's identity after 1945 constituted a highly problematic construction and it was precisely the so-called "Jewish Question" which posed the greatest threat to topple this shaky structure.

### Diplomacy in the Shadow of the Holocaust

In Austria hardly anyone showed interest in the first "Israeli-Arab War" and in the founding of the State of Israel. Austrian pilgrims, who were among the first to visit Israel, viewed

the new state as the "Holy Land," unaware of the fact that most of its inhabitants were Jews. Karl Harl, the first Austrian diplomat (General Consul) in Israel, complained repeatedly that Austrian politicians as well as the media ignored his reports. He had the feeling of writing only for the *Staatsarchiv* (State Archives).

On the other hand, the diplomatic relationship between the two states started relatively early. While the official Israel rejected every kind of relationship with Germany until 1965, it treated Austria much more indulgently; following the policy of the Allies, Israel also accepted the Austrian *Ogyerthese*. Golda Meir, then Foreign Minister of Israel, held the opinion that it would be unfair to throw Austria into one pot with the aggressor Germany. A member of the Likud even expressed the opinion that if ever Israel had to sit at one table with the Germans, all Austrians should have to become honorary citizens of Israel. In 1950 Austria and Israel initiated their official diplomatic relationship; Israel opened a consulate in Vienna, Austria a general consulate in Tel Aviv. One year earlier, Israel had already proposed concluding an economic agreement with Austria and asked the Austrian government for a line of credit. In 1952, the same year Austria granted Israel loans totalling \$100 million, Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett officially announced that Israel would not demand reparations payments from Austria. Just before the beginning of the restitution negotiations (*Wiedergutmachungsverhandlungen*) for individual victims that also started in 1952 between Austria and the Claims Committee (21 organizations representing former Austrian Jews), this political exchange meant an important relief for Austria. Indeed, the official Israel kept more or less silent during this long negotiation process, even when leading Austrian politicians displayed blatant anti-Semitism.

Israel's cultural policy was also based on the *Ogyerthese*. While German films and books—e.g. by Thomas Mann or Heinrich Heine—were forbidden, films and books on Sissi (a nineteenth-century Princess Diana) sold out in Israel. Austrian films could be shown even if their leading actresses had appeared in Nazi propaganda films. The differing treatment accorded to Germany and Austria was also demonstrated by Israel's passport law. While the new passports given to Israeli citizens were not valid for visits to Germany, they allowed entry into Austria without any problem. In 1968 Israel abolished the visa for Austrian citizens, while Germans born earlier than 1928 still needed a visa. This favorable treatment was given, even though it is well-known that the number of Austrians involved in the extermination of the Jews was disproportionately high.

### Between Shoah and Realpolitik

Why did Israel treat Austria much more indulgently than Germany and why did she accept the *Ogyerthese*? The following explanations may help explain why. Unlike Germany, Austria was a small and poor country from which Israel could not expect substantial reparations. On the other hand, Israeli politicians were very much interested in an Austrian loan, because their economy was on the verge of collapse. At the same time, there was still strong resistance to negotiations with Germany. The young state had not only to fight a war in 1948, but also to integrate hundreds of thousands of refugees. Another problem was Israel's international isolation, especially at the beginning of the Cold War, which included the outbreak of anti-Zionism in Eastern Europe and the progressive withdrawal of support from the USSR. Meanwhile, the U.S.-Israeli relationship continued to be re-

garded as "ambivalent." Therefore, Austria was also of great importance for diplomatic exchange. "In the Türkenschanzpark (a park in the 9<sup>th</sup> district of Vienna) you could meet diplomats from Eastern Europe and—if they trusted you—you were able to get important information," remembered the Israeli diplomat Gideon Yarden. Vienna, the Western city most accessible to Eastern Europe, was regarded as the "Brücke ins gelobte Land" (bridge to the promised land) by Eastern European Jews. Long before Vienna served "Russian Jews" as a transit town,<sup>3</sup> Israeli diplomats appreciated the Austrians' support for Jewish refugees from Eastern European states. Between 1945 and 1948 more than one hundred thousand Jews from Eastern Europe passed—sometimes illegally—through Austria; smaller numbers followed in the 1950s.

To explain Israel's official position during the negotiations between Austria and the Claims Committee, we also have to take into consideration conflicts between Israel and Jewish organizations in the Diaspora. Nahum Goldmann, president of the World Jewish Congress and spokesman for the Claims Committee, gained a lot of influence during the negotiations with Germany. Israel showed little interest in supporting Goldmann as a representative of the Diaspora and the influential American Jews, who were gradually trying to assert their influence upon Israeli politics.

It is of further interest that politicians and diplomats in Israel also regarded the relationship with Austria as a psychological "test case" for the expected negotiations with, and for a diplomatic approach to, Germany. In the early 1950s, some politicians such as Ben-Gurion were already thinking of establishing relations with Germany, but there was still a strong opposition even to negotiations and accepting reparations from the "former Nazis." As Austrian General Consul Karl Hart pointed out, "Austria was regarded as most *unverwundt*, i.e. similar, because of its Nazi past, to Germany. Therefore the development of relations with Austria was a way of testing the opinion of the Israeli population towards Germany from a psychological and political point of view." In this manner Austria would prove helpful in any future approach to Germany.<sup>4</sup>

Israel's official policy towards Austria included an apparent acceptance of the *Oggyerhase* and was strongly shaped by the considerations of *Realpolitik*. However, if we look deeper into the matter we can see that very few really believed in the *Oggyerhase*. Not only the media and a broad segment of the population but also Israeli politicians and diplomats refused to accept Austria as the first victim of Nazi Germany.

### Israel's Media and Their Image of Austria

Although Israel's official foreign policy was based on the Moscow Declaration, individual politicians and diplomats could not follow this interpretation of Austria's Nazi past. For example, Ari Leventy, co-founder of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, tried to force Austria to add a *Fremdenverkehrs-Kleiner* (declaration of friendship) to the credit contract in 1950. In this declaration, Austria was to have expressed regret for the persecution of the Jews because, as Leventy pointed out, Israel has to take into consideration what had happened in the past. He himself spent the *Reichskriegsarchiv* in November 1938 in Vienna and still remembers the wild rampages against the Jewish populace by the Austrians. Or Arie Eshel, the first Israeli consul in Vienna, took an extremely critical position towards Austria again and again, he expressed the opinion in the Austrian press that the found Austria's

persecution of the Jews unquestionable and utterly abhorrent. He also spoke critically about anti-Semitism in Austria after the Shoah, especially among young people. But in the end he had to follow the official line of the Foreign Ministry. In our interviews, all the leading Israeli diplomats in Austria also emphasized that they never believed in the Austrian *Oggyerhase*.<sup>5</sup> Israel's ambivalent position towards Austria became visible even in the area of sports. As late as 1955, Foreign Minister Moshe Sharet rejected football games between Austrian and Israeli teams to avoid "unpleasant incidents." But as soon as football games were permitted, Austrian teams became very popular in Israel. Games were invariably sold out and tickets were available only on the black market.

Austria's image in the Israeli press deviated markedly from the official foreign policy. "Austria was regarded as anti-Semitic and there were many resentments," the journalist Moshe Meisels, a former Austrian, remembers. In 1948 stores selling products "made in Austria" were burnt down. When Karl Hart arrived in Israel, an anti-Austrian demonstration took place in front of the Austrian Consulate. In the early 1950s, the Israeli press continually criticized Austria's view of herself as victim and the way she dealt with her past. During the *Wieder gutmachungs-verhandlungen* (restitution negotiations), when Austria refused to pay any form of compensation to her former Jews, most newspapers in Israel drew attention to the long tradition of Austrian anti-Semitism; they pointed out how Austrians welcomed Hitler in 1938 and took part in the "Aryanization" as well as in the persecution of Austrian Jews. The newspaper *Davar* cynically described the distinction between Austria and Germany: the people in Berlin were stupid enough to believe the nonsense of their Führer about *Rasse, Blut und Ehre* (race, blood and honor), while the Austrians were more pragmatic, feeling that Hitler's *Weltanschauung* gave them license to rob the Jews and to kill them, so that they could not come back to claim their property. The journalist Emanuel Unger, a former Austrian, held the opinion that the "average Austrian was depending on his *Weltanschauung* (extent of intoxication), either an anti-Semitic, an anti-Socialist, or an anti-Nazi."<sup>6</sup>

During the negotiations, which were interrupted repeatedly by Austrian politicians, the Israeli press even changed its attitude towards Germany as compared to Austria. While Germany was and—almost more important—for its unexpectedly high reparations and—almost more important—for its clear confession of guilt for the Shoah, Austria was not only criticized for its rejection of restitution payments, but also for its "flight into a lifelong lie."<sup>7</sup> Austrian diplomats in Israel tried to weaken this criticism by mobilizing old anti-German prejudices. They emphasized that most of the journalists in the Israeli press who dealt with Austria's past were born and raised in Germany; as former "Prussians" they could not be regarded as objective towards Austria. However, most of them were former Austrians with vivid memories of being persecuted by their fellow countrymen.

### A Resistance Fighter as the First Austrian Diplomat in Israel—A Real Representative of his Country?

The Austrian historian Ernst Hanisch characterized Austria's dealing with its past as a long period of silence that did not ease until the 1980s and the "Valdeheim Affair."<sup>8</sup> The negative image of Austria in the Israeli press obviously did not affect Austria's concept of itself. Nevertheless, Austrian politicians and diplo-

mats were fully aware that the *Oggyerhase* was a very weak argument at best or, if not fraudulent, a half truth. But they also knew that the emphasis on this theory was of great importance to avoid the payment of reparations and to obtain a State Treaty. Therefore the official line of Austrian foreign policy also had to be in accordance with the *Oggyerhase*. Austrian diplomats were told to emphasize that in the new Austrian state there was no place for anti-Semitism and that most of the leading Austrian politicians had shared the suffering of the Jews in concentration camps.

While Germany sent Rolf Paul, a representative of the soldier generation, as its first ambassador to Israel, Austria appointed the resistance fighter Karl Hart (his two successors were also known opponents of National Socialism). Sending a Nazi victim as representative of the "new" Austria to Israel was intended to ease the rapprochement between Austria and Israel, as well as to hide Austria's role as an accomplice of Germany during the Nazi period. While resistance fighters and surviving Jews were not appreciated in Austria, some of them were used to represent the "other Austria" abroad. Opponents of National Socialism were sent not only to Israel, but also to Paris, London, and Washington.

Karl Hart, a well-known Social Democrat, fled Austria and spent the Nazi period in France. He can be described as a representative of the "politically persecuted" Austrians. As a long-term member of the SPÖ (the Austrian Social Democratic Party) he felt very close to the socialist party line and also to the "new" Austria. Like many other—even Jewish—resistance fighters he regarded Austria as the "first victim of Nazi Germany" and identified himself with the suffering of the Jews. "Though married to a Jewish woman, he actually was unable to understand the singularity of the Jewish tragedy. He totally underestimated the effects of the Shoah on Israel's concept of itself and was unable to understand the rift between Jews and non-Jews. In his reports and private letters, he rejected any form of payment to Jewish organizations or to the State of Israel and demanded a form of personal help for all victims of the Nazis. At the beginning of the negotiations he confessed, "Sure, I'm for justice, but I'm more concerned about the Austrian unemployed than the Israeli mortars with which Arab villages are shelled." Hart also recommended that Austrian politicians take advantage of the antagonism among Jewish organizations and between Israel and the Diaspora.

Hart painfully felt that his mission had failed. Although he believed in Austria's *Oggyerhase* (role as victim), he finally had to recognize the great effect of the Shoah on Israel, namely that the legacy of the Jewish dead is still very much alive, and "there can't be any argument against dead people, especially when they were murdered." Repeatedly he wrote that the Official Israel hates Austria and that he sees no chance of developing a friendship between the two nations. Karl Hart left Israel in 1955 concerning his successor in Israel, he gave a last piece of advice to the Austrian Vice Chancellor Adolf Schärf: "It would be best if you could find a young man for the job, as little anti-Semitic as possible, because here he will turn into an anti-Semitic no matter what."<sup>9</sup>

While Hart presented his negative view, diplomatic relations between Austria and Israel improved steadily. In effect, Israel was the force behind this improvement, for Austria actually showed little interest in Israel in the late 1950s. Especially after the signing of the State Treaty in 1955, the Second Republic felt

released from its Nazi past and strong enough to ignore the Jewish State. But more than 40 years later, due to the "Valdeheim Affair" in 1986, leading politicians as well as representatives of the Catholic Church were forced to acknowledge Austria's historic role of complicity. Austria also could no longer ignore Israel. Chancellor Franz Vranitzky's 1991 speech addressing Austria's shared responsibility for the crimes of the Third Reich had a resounding effect at home as well as abroad. In November 1992 Hebrew University in Jerusalem decided to award the Austrian chancellor an honorary doctorate. In 1993 Vranitzky gave a "historic speech" in Israel; he was the first Austrian chancellor to visit Israel officially.

During the "Valdeheim Affair," Israel also had to distance itself from its former foreign policy line toward Austria. "It had to deal with criticism for having treated Austria as the 'first victim of Nazi Germany'" and for not having scrutinized Kurt Waldheim's past. Waldheim's great contribution stemmed from his scandalous demise; he began the process whereby Austria's role as Hitler's first victim, so convenient to both Austria and Israel as they sought to establish a mutually advantageous relationship in the post-War period, was revealed for what it was—a total lie.

### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Sissi was an nickname of the beloved Empress Elizabeth, wife of Emperor Franz Joseph of Austria. She was assassinated by an Italian anarchist in 1898. She is the never-ending subject of many films and books, especially during the 1930s and again in 1998, the centenary of her death.

<sup>2</sup> Between 1960 and 1973 more than 160,000 Jews left Eastern Europe via Vienna, among them 70,000 from the USSR.

<sup>3</sup> Most of the leading Israeli diplomats in Austria were born in Europe—in Germany, Czechoslovakia, or Hungary. They still had vivid memories of Austrian behavior during the Nazi period. Ambassador Peter Aron and his wife survived in Hungary and his father-in-law was killed in Burgenland when Hungarian Jews were driven through Austria to the Mauthausen concentration camp. Avigdor Dagan, born in Czechoslovakia, finally came to the conclusion that the *Oggyerhase* was a very "sensitive matter" (*heikle Sache*) and it did not make sense to talk about it to Austrian politicians.

<sup>4</sup> The impact of Jörg Haider and the Freedom Party on Austro-Israeli relations provides ample evidence that the Holocaust continues to dominate diplomacy.

### Suggested Further Readings Available in English:

- Frankel, Josef, ed. *The Jews of Austria. Essays on Their Life, Their History and Destruction*. London: Vallentine, Mitchell, 1967.
- Mitlen, Richard. *The Politics of Antisemitic Prejudice: The Waldheim Phenomenon in Austria*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1992.

### EDITORIAL NOTE

*continued from page 2*  
journey back, and I admire him for his courage and fortitude in facing the consequences; I am sure that the continents to be touched by this visit to this day and it is still coming to terms with the painful experiences of his few days in Salzburg and Mauthausen.

## BOOK REVIEWS

John Cornwell, *Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII*. New York: Viking, 1999. Hardcover, \$29.95. ISBN: 0-670-88693-9.

Of the many sub-topics in the study of Nazi Germany and the Holocaust, none has been more controversial and shrouded in mystery than the relationship between the Vatican and the Third Reich. John Cornwell's *Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII* attempts a definitive answer to questions about Eugenio Pacelli, Pope Pius XII from 1939 to 1958, and his relationship with National Socialism, the Jews, and the Final Solution. Was Pacelli sympathetic toward fascism and Nazi Germany? Why did he work to neutralize political and social Catholicism and the autonomy of the Catholic Church in Germany? What were his attitudes toward the Jews? Why was he silent on the persecution of the Jews in Germany before 1939, and the extermination of the Jews during World War II? These and other related questions are particularly sensitive and troubling for Catholics today, among them Cornwell, as the Vatican considers Pacelli's beatification and canonization amidst the persistent controversy and doubts about his prewar and wartime activities and policies.

*Hitler's Pope* is the most recent effort in a series of works on this question since it was raised by Rolf Hochhuth's play *Der Stellvertreter* (*The Representative*), first staged in 1963 and published the following year in English as *The Deputy*. Historical fiction with very little documentary evidence, the play portrays Pius XII as heartless, cynical, and sympathetic to Nazi Germany. The controversy surrounding the play resulted in the rapid publication of a number of studies dealing with Pius XII and the Vatican during World War II. In 1966, Saul Friedlander's *Pius XII and the Third Reich*, a rich collection of mainly German documents (reports of German ambassadors to the Vatican) with the author's commentary, concludes that the Pontiff's sympathy toward Germany was undiminished by the criminal nature of Hitler's regime and his policies toward the Jews. Fallout from the Hochhuth play in 1964 also prompted Pope Paul VI to order the publication of Vatican wartime documents. The 11-volume *Attes et Documents du Secret d'Etat relatifs à la Seconde Guerre Mondiale*, published between 1963 and 1981, raised considerable doubt about its completeness, but it did provide important information about Vatican policy. Gunther Lewy's *The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany*, also appearing in 1964, questions the ethics of papal ambiguity and diplomatic language in the face of such unprecedented evil. Carlo Palombi's *The Silence of Pius XII*, first published in Italian in 1965, charged Pacelli with silence in the face of the Croatian government's mass murder of Serbs, Jews, Muslims, and Gypsies during the war.

The first author to defend Pius XII was the Israeli Pinchas Lapide in 1967. His book, *The Last Three Popes and the Jews: Vatican help for the Jews during the Holocaust*. In 1980, however, Walter Laqueur's *The Terrible Secret* claimed that the Vatican was well informed about the extermination of the Jews, and that its claims of ignorance about the Final Solution were lies. For his writings, British Church historian Owen Chadwick used extensive collections of British and French diplomatic docu-

ments as well as the complete papal files. In his *Britain and the Vatican during the Second World War*, published in 1986, Chadwick generally defends the Pope's silence, describing Pacelli as a sensitive, holy man trapped in an impossible dilemma.

Much of the controversy surrounding *Hitler's Pope* stems from the author's exclusive access to hitherto unused Vatican documents, beyond the eleven volumes of the Vatican's self-selected and self-edited wartime documents, the *Attes*. These new sources, the book's dust-jacket claims, make this latest treatment of the subject "... a firm and final indictment of Pius XII's papacy and its consequences for the Catholic Church today." Those new sources do indeed contain important new information and perspective on Eugenio Pacelli, the Papacy, and its relationship with Germany during the years between the World Wars. This, of course, inevitably sheds important light on the critical question of Pius XII and the extermination of the Jews of Europe during World War II. But the reader comes away from this otherwise excellent study with the feeling that the new evidence, important as it is, does not provide the "smoking gun" that proves beyond a doubt that Pacelli was sympathetic toward the persecution if not the mass murder of the Jews.

Cornwell relies primarily on two new documentary sources in the Vatican: firstly the collection of sworn depositions for the beatification of Pius XII, and, secondly, Vatican documents relating to Pacelli's activities as a Vatican bureaucrat between 1913 and 1917, and as papal nuncio in Germany between 1917 and 1922. Most of the information these new sources yield does not really relate specifically to Pius XII's knowledge of and silence on the Nazi extermination of the Jews during the war. Cornwell's arguments that Pius XII possessed unequivocal information about the Final Solution, that he refused to speak out against Nazi crimes, and that his policy of neutrality and silence reflected his fears of Marxism, ambivalence toward the Jews, and determination to preserve the institutional Church, are not new. These conclusions can be drawn from many of the same sources used by previous authors, and seem beyond dispute. However, the book's real contribution is to be found in the larger historical context it provides, one that lends considerable support to the above indictment of Pacelli and the Vatican during the Holocaust. It does this through an examination of Vatican policies and politics within the context of the Church's Code of Canon Law of 1917. This lens effectively supports his argument that Pius's failure to respond to the persecution and eventual annihilation of the Jews was not merely personal, but to a large degree institutional.

The Vatican's 1917 Code of Canon Law embodied the primacy of papal authority over all Catholics. Pacelli's papal predecessors readily followed this policy before 1939, with his firm support. He eagerly pursued a Concordat with Hitler's regime, signed in 1933 when he was Cardinal Secretary of State, the most powerful position in the Catholic Church next to the Pope. The Concordat reflected the common interest of the Vatican and Hitler in neutralizing any form of autonomous political and social Catholicism in Germany, undermining the Catholic Center Party, Catholic unions, youth and other organizations that supported the Weimar Republic and that might have resisted the Nazi police state. Rome's determination to assert its unchallenged authority over all Catholics, especially in Germany, was complemented by its obsession of resisting communism and ending the Center Party's alliance with the Social Democratic

Party in defense of the Weimar constitution. These objectives were predicated on a community of interests with Hitler's regime that ultimately made Vatican neutrality and silence in the face of growing Nazi brutality and atrocities inevitable, six years before Pacelli became Pope in 1939.

Therefore, silence in the face of Nazi persecution of the Jews was characteristic of Vatican policy even before Pacelli became Pope in 1939. There was no protest from Rome against the persecution of German Jews before the war, including the anti-Jewish boycott of April 1933, the state of anti-Jewish legislation between 1933 and 1939, and the *Kristallnacht* pogrom of November 1938. While Pius XI's 1937 encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* (*With Deep Anxiety*), which Pacelli had a hand in preparing, condemned the treatment of the Church in Germany and Nazi racial ideology, it did not explicitly condemn anti-Semitism and Nazi treatment of the Jews. Nor was there any protest against the brutal persecution of non-Jews, including the forced sterilization of the handicapped, and the incarceration of political, religious, and other enemies in concentration camps. Even Catholic and Protestant clergy in Germany who resisted Hitler and were imprisoned or murdered received little political support from Rome. The efforts of some Catholic clergy to speak out against the extermination of the handicapped between 1939 and 1941, and the mass killings of Catholic priests in Poland after 1939 were met with silence from Pacelli, who was now Pope Pius XII. Cornwell also points to the reluctance of Pius XII to intervene on behalf of Jewish converts to Catholicism before and during the Final Solution, or the murderous policies of Germany's ally Croatia after 1941 as it exterminated its Jewish, Serbian, Muslim, and Gypsy populations.

*Hitler's Pope* is a masterful treatment of the interplay of Pacelli's personal attitudes toward Nazism, Marxism, and the Jews, and the political interests, culture, and forces of the modern papacy as an institution that Pacelli, along with his papal predecessors, helped to create and nurture. His ambivalence toward the Jews was not merely the product of traditional Catholic fear and distrust, or popular political theories that linked Jews to Bolshevism. It was also conditioned by a political culture in the Vatican that placed a premium on the preservation of absolute papal authority over all Catholics, and the political survival of the institutional Church. The author does recognize the many instances of assistance to the Jews during the war, including Vatican warnings to the Slovakian and Hungarian governments to halt deportations of Jews, and the actions of thousands of Catholic clergy, including some in the Vatican, who helped to rescue and hide Jews. He sees these efforts as praiseworthy and even heroic, but as treatment of the symptoms rather than of the chronic disease itself. Pacelli's personal attitudes notwithstanding, Cornwell concludes that "... his failure to respond to the enormity of the Holocaust was more than a personal failure, it was a failure of the papal office itself and the prevailing culture of Catholicism" (p. 295).

Inevitably, people want to know more about Pacelli's personal attitude toward the Jews: Was he an anti-Semite and, if so, what was the nature of his anti-Semitism? Did he approve of Nazi persecution of the Jews between 1933 and 1945? His defenders have argued that he consciously pursued a policy of neutrality and public silence, even in the face of mass murder, as the only realistic way of preserving the Church and helping the Jews and other victims. They contend that to have openly protested

the policies of the Nazi regime would have made matters worse for both the Church and the victims it was trying to help. Pacelli's silence was meant to help the Jews, they conclude, and did not reflect an antipathy toward them.

Cornwell rejects this thesis by contrasting Vatican silence on the plight of the Jews during the war to the Pope's post-1945 policy of public condemnation of the Soviet Union for its treatment of Christians in the USSR and eastern Europe. If Pacelli's strategy toward the Nazis was to appease, against the communists after 1945 it was to publicly condemn. The *Kristallnacht* pogrom and the extermination camps in Poland met with the Vatican's silence, while the Soviet Union's brutal crushing of the Hungarian revolution in 1956 met with its public condemnation. As evidence of Pacelli's anti-Semitism, this may be merely circumstantial, but it demonstrates his ambivalence toward the Jews and his belief that their fate was their problem alone. Thus, ambivalence rather than a blind hatred explains Pacelli's attitude and policies toward the Jews, according to Cornwell. It was conditioned by a multi-layered community of interests between the Catholic Church and fascist states, galvanized by their fierce anti-communism. After all, Pacelli as Pope Pius XII was generally silent in the face of Nazi persecution of Catholics as well, also in stark contrast to his outspoken defense of Christians in communist eastern Europe after 1945.

*Hitler's Pope* deserves much praise, even if it does not deliver incontrovertible proof that Pius XII was a "willing executor." It does not attempt to do this, and it is unlikely that anyone will be able to, even with unimpeded access to the Vatican archives. This is, however, a fascinating history of the modern Papacy that Eugenio Pacelli, Pope Pius XII from 1939 to 1958, was so instrumental in shaping. Cornwell examines Pacelli's complex character within the context of the Vatican's political culture and institutions in the twentieth century. He offers new evidence and perspectives that lend considerable support to earlier conclusions that the Vatican of Pius XII, by virtue of its detailed knowledge of German crimes against humanity and its refusal to speak out against them, was complicit in the destruction of Europe's Jews. Cornwell's observation that Pacelli was "... not a saintly exemplar for future generations, but a deeply flawed human being..." (p.384), also constitutes one Catholic scholar's firm opposition to the beatification and canonization of Pope Pius XII.

Frank Nicotia  
St. Michael's College

### **Guarioni and the Legend of Anderle** a two-act play written & performed

by Marvin Fishman  
Sundays, 16 April 2000  
St. Michael's College McCarthy Arts Center  
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This play dramatizes the anti-Jewish cult of Anderle as seen through the eyes of its progenitor, a prominent 17th-century physician and Renaissance man, Hypolyt Guarioni. It is the true story of the anti-Jewish cult that flourished in Europe for more than 350 years, and still survives today.

Supported by The UVA Center for Holocaust Studies.

Ernestine Schlant. *The Language of Silence: West German Literature and the Holocaust*. New York: Routledge, 1999. Paper, \$30.99. ISBN: 0-415-92220.

How do you deal with the Holocaust when you come from the culture that perpetrated it? That is the question Ernestine Schlant, Professor of German and Comparative Literature at Montclair State University, considers in this masterful study. Working from the premise that literature is "the seismograph of a people's moral positions," Schlant demonstrates that deeply inculturated cultural beliefs have often been at odds with West German public policies about, and declarations and even demonstrations of, responsibility for the Holocaust.

Schlant uses the term "Holocaust" in an inclusive sense. As she defines it, the Holocaust not only encompasses the actual, horrible annihilation of millions. It also includes the condition of all Jews in Europe, namely, their status as targets designated for annihilation. Schlant also refers to this condition as "concentrationary," a useful adjective derived from the French *internement concentrationnaire*.

The popular understanding has it that Germans tried to forget the Holocaust. However, this study makes it clear that was not the case. (Constance Braun's essay, published in *The Bulletin of the Center for Holocaust Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 2, Spring 1997, makes the same point.) One way or another, knowledge of the Holocaust permeates German culture, leading to various strategies for coping with the enormity of the crime.

Writing in the 1960s, Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich diagnosed West Germany's cultural malaise as "an inability to mourn." The post-War focus on the present and future and its concentration on physical and economic well-being had emotional consequences, namely apathy, indifference, and denial, repression, and de-realization of the past. Schlant demonstrates how the "inability to mourn" operated in successive generations in West Germany. Even though each generation has attempted to come to terms with the past, each has been unable to achieve affective change, meaning that the crimes of the Holocaust and their victims remain un mourned.

The treatment of Jewish characters in West German literature is one indication of the lack of affective change in its post-War culture. Schlant's careful readings of texts reveal how even the most adept writers (Günter Grass, Alfred Andersch, Peter Handke) were unable to make the imaginative leap into a character's skin if that character was Jewish.

What might be termed a failure of creativity is attributed to different causes, depending on the generation to which the writer belongs. In writers born before World War II, (Böhl or Kooppen, for example), it indicates the honorableness with which stereotypes were absorbed. Thus, even though Jewish characters in post-War were frequently depicted in a positive light, they were still regarded as "the other." Schlant interprets such portrayals as expressions of 1950s philo-Semitism, which, while preferable to anti-Semitism, still denied Jews their full status as fellow human beings.

Writers from the generation of 1968, vehemently rejecting their parents and all they stood for, felt victimized by what they perceived to be Fascism's ongoing existence in the family and society. They equated their victimization with that of the Jews in the Holocaust. In regarding themselves as fellow victims, they not only refused to accept responsibility for the deeds of the

perpetrators, they also they denied the uniqueness of the Jews' situation.

The absence of German-Jewish dialogue on the Holocaust, or even the expression of a desire for such a dialogue, further indicates the extent of West Germany's "inability to mourn." Even after the Holocaust became a subject for open discussion, with the rise of documentary literature in the 1960s, the focus is on the perpetrators of the Holocaust and the inter-generational dialogue is intra-German. Not until the broadcast of the American mini-series "Holocaust" in 1979 would the German public begin to express empathy for the victims.

Within these general categories, however, a few authors and works give indications of attempts to imagine what it would be like to be a Jew in the Holocaust and in the post-War era. Hermann Lenz's novel *New Times* not only demonstrates how knowledge of Nazi misdeeds is repressed, but renders a careful, detailed portrayal of the affective impact of the Holocaust on the narrator's Jewish lover and her family. Gert Hofmann's novel *Yaelchenfeld* uses a child as observing narrator to show the Jewish title character as both the other (as seen by the child) and as a fellow being in all his humanity. In fact, this novel demonstrates three aspects of the language of silence—of the victim, who is diminished into the silence of death; the perpetrator, who keeps silent from recalcitrance; and the bystanders, who keep silent from shame at their failure to act on their knowledge.

In the 1990s, an era that saw German reunification, the re-emergence of a Jewish presence in Germany, and regular commemorations of the Holocaust, three novels appeared that not only portrayed fully imagined Jewish characters, but that also demonstrated the beginnings of a Jewish-German dialogue. Even though it has many of the characteristics of the autobiographical novels written by the generation of 1968, Bernhard Schlink's *The Reader* closes with a victim of the Holocaust making declarations about gestures of atonement. Peter Schneider's *Cowhills* examines the dynamics of German-Jewish friendships. W.G. Sebald's *The Emigrants* explores the relationships of Jews and non-Jewish Germans, when both are emigrants, living in either the United States or England.

Post-War political conditions in each of the German-speaking perpetrator countries led to each taking a different approach to the Holocaust. Austria took refuge in its official designation as "Hitler's first victim," (see Embacher's "Austria and Israel," pp. 5-7). East Germany absolved itself on the grounds that fascism was an outgrowth of capitalism, and it was a communist state. Switzerland proclaimed anew its historical neutrality and tradition of democracy. As a result, each country took a different approach to the irrevocable need to address the past and its consequences.

Schlant wisely decided to restrict her investigation to only one of these countries, West Germany. In general she keeps within her designated parameters. The lone exception is the chapter on generational discord and the autobiographical novels produced by the generation of 1968, which tends to wander back and forth between Austria and West German writers.

Aside from that one lapse, it is obvious that a great deal of care was taken in the production of this book. It is well-written, pleasantly free from typographical errors, and provided with useful scholarly apparatus. The bibliography lists primary sources available in English translation, including the novels of Sebald, Schlink, and Schneider. Unfortunately, none of the works of Gert

Hofmann or Hermann Lenz are currently available in English.

*The Language of Silence* is an excellent study of the Holocaust and West German literature. Using a minimum of theoretical jargon in a subject area ripe for deconstructionist obfuscations, Schlant provides close readings of texts while attending to the historical and authorial context out of which they arise. Specialists may take issue with minor points of interpretation, but the comprehensive argument is well reasoned and presented. Indeed, because of the primacy of the Holocaust in shaping West German culture, this book provides a substantive English-language introduction to post-War German literature and the society in which it arose.

Katherine Quinby Johnson

## EDITORIAL NOTE

Ernestine Schlant introduced her book, *The Language of Silence: West German Literature and the Holocaust*, to a small, invited audience at UVM on 16 December 1999. Her presentation was well-received and followed by a brisk question and answer period. We hope to bring Prof. Schlant back to UVM for a public lecture at some time in the future. The Center is most grateful to Joan Smith, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and Peter Welch, Esq., for their invaluable help in arranging this event. D.S.

Nancy L. Gallagher. *Breeding Better Vermonters: The Eugenic Project in the Green Mountain State*. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1999. Paper, \$21.00. ISBN: 0-87451-952-7.

Those familiar with the role of the race hygiene movement, along with its intellectual and social foundations, as one enabler of the Nazi genocide, understand that Germany had not been alone in the embrace of Mendelian genetics and Social Darwinism. By the turn of the twentieth century, the idea of eugenics, or "artificial," as opposed to "natural," selection, found prominence not only in Germany but in Great Britain, the United States, and elsewhere. Nancy Gallagher's *Breeding Better Vermonters* brings close to home how the eugenics movement functioned in the first three decades of the century and its effect on the state. In this case Vermont, as it formulated biopolitics. Readers with UVM connections meet up with a cast of characters now largely familiar through their names on campus landmarks. Indeed, any own department of affiliation, anthropology, contains the George Henry Perkins seminar room, named after the father of Henry F. Perkins, the major architect of the eugenics movement in Vermont. Moreover, a portrait of George Perkins graces this seminar room, and each year the "George Henry Perkins Award" goes to the top graduating senior in Anthropology at UVM. As Gallagher emphasizes, the "Christian Darwinism" incorporated in George Perkins' anthropology course (the first such course in the United States, according to UVM Professor emeritus William Mitchell) exemplified the profound intellectual influence of the father on the son. In the context of this familiar setting, Gallagher affirms most cogently the problematic nature of the interrelationship of science, scientists, and public policy.

The implications of the eugenics movement in Vermont are highly disturbing when we recollect, along with Robert Proctor, among others, that the foundations of the Nazi biopolitics of racism and xenophobic nationalism had been established within German life and culture by many of the leading scientists of Germany well before the advent of Hitler. While Vermont was no breeding ground of fascist genocidal endeavor, Gallagher demonstrates the potential slippery slope between academic eugenics and state-sponsored race hygiene programs. This is suggested particularly by the policies and attitudes aimed at the Achenaki and Franco-American communities during the eugenics movement in Vermont, the reverberations of which continue to this day. Gallagher's achievement is to read carefully between, on the one hand, an overly facile usage of the Nazi metaphor, and, on the other, a relativistic whitewash of the racism and class bias implicated in the eugenics movement in Vermont. She achieves this by tracing the chronology of the integration of the movement into the political context of an era of "progressive reform" in Vermont and by placing the movement within its broader historical context in the United States.

Eugenics was born in the late nineteenth century on the heels of the Darwinian synthesis of biological evolution. Imbued with the notion of human progress promulgated in the Enlightenment, Social Darwinism came to propose that "better breeding" practices would encourage another carry-over from the Enlightenment, "human perfectibility." By the turn of the century, this new language of biological determinism had infected Europe and the United States, informing serious concern about the genetic well-being of human populations, expressed in terms of "race betterment" and "race suicide." By the 1920s, the paradigm of eugenics sufficed many academic, utopian, and public population policies, culminating in the passage of state sterilization laws: it is chilling to note that just such a law was passed in Vermont in 1931, two years before the 1933 Law for the Prevention of Progeny with Hereditary Diseases was passed in Germany. In 1925, a Eugenic Survey of Vermont had been set up by Henry Perkins, Chair of the UVM Zoology department. It was this privately funded survey of family pedigrees, conducted over an eleven-year period, that led to the notorious 1931 sterilization law intended to eradicate the fertility of those deemed socially and physically "degenerate." The Eugenic Survey also addressed the "timid-grant question" which had become dominant in the United States in the 1920s. However, by the 1930s, the purpose and meaning of eugenics had changed, in large part due to growing concerns over the implications of eugenics policies forcibly demonstrated by the rise of the Nazi state. Gallagher weaves a narrative that portrays all the nuances of the evolution and demise of the eugenics movement in Vermont, most directly in tracing the intellectual career of Perkins, and, most poignantly, in depicting the nefarious impact of the sterilization law and other "reforms" on the lives of individuals, their descendants (or lack thereof), and their communities in Vermont. She forces us to not fall back on our liberal snuggles, but, instead, to "best safeguard against injustices of the past" by demonstrating "our willingness to confront our connection to this history prior to disowning it" (p. 8).

It is noteworthy that the Eugenic Survey also addressed a concern of Henry Perkins and others about the demise of a Yankee Protestant heritage that supposedly had shaped the "vernic history" of Vermont. Indeed, the Survey was expanded in 1928 into a Vermont Commission on County Life, which attempted



to make use of so-called Protestant Yankee values and ancestry to rejuvenate rural communities. A final report by the Commission, "Rural Vermont: A Program for the Future," compiled in 1931, advocated a form of "human conservation" in favor of the fertility and quality of the "pioneer stocks" who had settled Vermont in the Eighteenth Century. As Gallagher emphasizes, the Report excluded even the slightest recognition of two major sets of previous Vermont inhabitants: French Canadian settlers and Native Americans (Abenaki). The conjunction between cultural nostalgia and "eugenic" sentiments in the Vermont of the 1930s resonates with the *wolfsch* and Nordic ideology coupled with racial hygiene programs in the Germany of the 1930s. While ultimate programmatic similarities do not run that deep, the commonalities of cultural yearnings remind us to heed Gallagher's warning to confront, not disown, this piece of the past in Vermont. It is useful to be reminded that in Germany, until the 1920s, there had been less concern with Jews and "Nordics," and more concern with a declining birthrate and a perceived rise in mental illness. Until the conservative nationalists took over, there was not a sharp line between the Nordic (anti-Semitic) movement and the eugenic movement in Germany. There are numerous and obvious reasons why Vermont did not propel itself down a slippery slope, but Gallagher informs us of the existence of that slope in the context of the socio-politics of Vermont at that time.

Gallagher documents how the eugenics movement infused attitudes about child welfare laws, public relief, and public education in Vermont, a legacy that remains today, despite the demise of the term "eugenics." Key to her exposition is a demonstration of how the supposedly objective, scientific agenda of eugenics, in an era of "progressive social reform," became interwoven with long-standing prejudicial attitudes and narratives. This is especially evident in the case of the Franco-American and Native American communities and the selective remembering and forgetting which came to mark the master narrative about Vermont's early history and identity.

Anxiety had surfaced with the intrusion of "foreign," Catholic immigrants, primarily from Quebec, a community especially targeted by the Eugenics Survey. The impact on the Abenakis was perhaps even more negative, given that the Native American presence in Vermont has not been formally acknowledged to this day. As the Eugenics Survey forced people to conceal their identities, the Abenaki became an invisible community marked by a legacy of shame. Ironically, perhaps, given the Perkins connection, the UVM Anthropology department has redressed some of this legacy: of the Eugenics Survey. In 1983, Professor Peter Woolson published a report on the Franco-American community for the Vermont State Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. The publication in 1982 (second edition, 1994) of *The Original Vermonters: Native Inhabitants Past and Present* by Professors emeriti Hayland and Power is a major document in the recent resurgence of the Abenaki community and its attempt to achieve public recognition and to foster cultural identity.

Anthropology as a discipline, however, was not so quick to address intolerance in the 1930s. Indeed, it was not until 1938 that the American Anthropological Association finally passed a resolution against Nazi racism. Gallagher briefly mentions the significant role of the anthropologist Franz Boas, of German Jewish origin, who from 1933 until his death in 1942 was a forceful, but lone, voice against anti-Semitism in American scientific

circles. In Germany at that time, of course, Social Darwinism remained in full swing. Indeed, anthropologists were at the forefront of implementing Nazi biopolitics in both its eugenic and genocidal phases. The Kaiser Wilhelm Institute of Anthropology (KWVI), founded in 1927, became an academic bulwark, drawing on the authority of science to aid and abet the culmination of genetic "inferiors," first German and then non-German, as defined by Nazism. In 1943, for example, the head of the KWVI procured research funds for his former assistant, Dr. Mengele, to study proteins and eye color at Auschwitz. Earlier in 1941, Himmler decreed that only physicians trained in anthropology could carry out selections and supervise killings at Auschwitz. These are chilling reminders of the need to recognize the potential terrors of the politics of science. Just as Robert Proctor argues that we focus not on how Nazism corrupted science, but on how scientists participated in the construction of Nazi racial policy,\* so does Nancy Gallagher ask that we examine the apologetic function of science in the eugenics project in Vermont. There can be no attempt at appeasement on our part, but, rather, a recognition that, as George Stein notes, it is a form of Kuhnian anamnesia or historical whitewash to simply claim that it was pseudoscience, not "real science," being practiced in either Germany or in Vermont. Gallagher's emphasis on placing the eugenics movement in its political and cultural context rightfully dissuades us from smugly disowning past connections between academics and public policy. Indeed, as she notes in closing, "eugenic consciousness" has been reawakened in present-day, intense debates about the social applications of modern human genetics research. Nancy Gallagher has our gratitude for her precise historical insight on a close-to-home manifestation of the fight in Western consciousness, one which contributed to the nightmare of biopolitics that became the Holocaust. The lessons we draw from *Breaking Better Vermonters*, it is to be hoped, will inform present and future questions that arise from "eugenic consciousness."

Carroll Lewis  
University of Vermont

\*Robert Proctor, author of *Cancer Wars, How Politics Shapes What We Know and Don't Know About Cancer*, as well as a number of works on medicine in Nazi Germany, will be speaking at the Miller Symposium on 8 April. See below, page 14 for further information.

Nancy Gallagher, author of *Breaking Better Vermonters*, is scheduled to present the Emerson Lecture, sponsored by The History Forum of the University of Vermont, at 7:00 p.m., 28 February 2000 in Memorial Lounge, Warrenman Building.

## MOUSE FEAST

Johannes Bobrowski  
Trans. David Scrase

Moise? Trumper is sitting on a little chair in the corner of his store. The store is small and it is empty. Probably because the sun, who is always dropping in, needs the space, as does the moon. So the moon comes in, too. He's come in, right through the door. The latch hardly moved at all, maybe it didn't move because the moon was coming in but because the tiny mice are running and dancing around on the thin boards of the entry. So the moon has come in, too, and Moise said "Good Evening, Moon!" and now they're both watching the mice.

They put on a different show every day, those mice, sometimes they dance like this, sometimes like that, always on all fours, with their pointed heads and their thin little tails.

But my dear Moon, says Moise, that's not everything, they've got a tiny little body, too, with all that stuff inside! But perhaps you can't understand that, and, what is more, the routine isn't different every day but exactly the same and that, I think, is not really so very surprising. It's much more likely that it's you who is different every day even though you always come through the same door and it's always dark by the time you settle in here. But now keep still and pay attention.

You see, it's always the same. Moise drops a crust of bread at his feet, and the mice dart in, closer and closer, some of them stand up on their hind legs and sniff a bit. You see, that's the way it is. Always the same. So the two old men sit there, happy, and at first they didn't hear the shop door open. Only the mice heard it and disappeared, are gone, just like that and so quickly that you can't tell where they went.

There's a soldier standing in the doorway, a German soldier. Moise has good eyes, he can see a young man, a schoolboy really, who doesn't quite know what he's doing here, now that he's standing in the doorway. Let's see how those Jews live, he probably thought when he was standing outside. But now there's the old Jew sitting on his little stool, and the shop is filled with moonlight. Would you like to come in Mr. Lieutenant, sir, says Moise.

The boy shuts the door. He's not surprised that the Jew can speak German, he just stands there, and when Moise stands up and says: Come and sit down, another chair I don't have, he says: Thanks, I don't mind standing, but he takes a few steps until he's in the middle of the store and then three more steps to the stool. And since Moise once again offers him the stool, he sits down. Now keep quiet still, says Moise, as he leans back against the wall.

The crust of bread is still lying there and, just look at that, there they come again, those mice. Just like before, no slower, exactly like before, a few steps, then a few more, standing up and sniffing, with the slightest hint of a tiny snort that only Moise hears and perhaps the moon, too. Exactly like it was before.

And now they've found the crust again. A mouse feast, modest to be sure, nothing special, but not something that happens every day, either.

There they sit and watch. The war is already a few days old. The country is called Poland. It's very flat and sandy. The roads are bad, and there are lots of children here. What else can we say? The Germans have come, so many you can't count them; there's one of them sitting here in the Jew's shop, a youngster, with a baby face. He has a mother in Germany, and a father who's still in Germany, and two little sisters. Now we're getting to see the world, he's probably thinking, now we're in Poland and later perhaps we'll head for England, and this Poland really is just like Poland's supposed to be.

The old Jew is leaning against the wall. The mice are still gathered round their crust. When it has grown even smaller an older mother mouse will take it home with her and the other baby mice will run after her.

You know what, says the moon to Moise, I've got to go. And Moise knows that the moon is uncomfortable because of that German sitting there. What the heck does he want? So Moise just says: Stay a bit longer.

But it's the soldier who now gets up to go. The mice run away, it's impossible to say where they all disappear to. He considers saying goodbye and so he lingers in the store and then simply walks out.

Moise doesn't say anything. He waits for the moon to start speaking. The mice are gone, have disappeared, mice can do that. That was a German, says the moon, you know how things are with these Germans. And because Moise is still leaning up against the wall and doesn't say anything, he goes on a little more insistently: You don't want to run away, you don't want to hide, do you? That was a German, you saw that. Don't tell me the boy isn't a German or at any rate not a bad German. That no longer makes any difference. What's going to happen to you people when they spread across Poland?

I heard you, says Moise. It's now totally white in the store. The light fills the space right up to the door in the back wall. Where Moise is leaning, totally white, so you could think he's merging more and more with the wall. With each word that he says.

I know, says Moise, you're quite right, I'll be in trouble with my God.

1962

\*In German the name Moise and the plural of "mouses" (Mäuse) have the same sound.

Johannes Bobrowski, 1917-1965, was born in Tilsit, in what was then East Prussia, on the border with Lithuania. After two years of work service and military training (1937-39), he was drafted into the German army. On the day of capitulation he was taken prisoner by the Red Army and spent the next few years, until Christmas Eve 1949, in a Soviet prisoner-of-war camp. In a short creative life he enjoyed great popularity and success in both East Germany, where he settled, and West Germany. His major theme was "the German guilt in Eastern Europe."

D.S.

## The Miller Symposium:

### German Medicine and Ethics under National Socialism

8 April 2000  
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College of Medicine

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Eugenics, 1900-1945"

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

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

Robert Proctor, Pennsylvania State University  
"Why Did the Nazis Have the World's Most Aggressive  
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William Seideman, University of Toronto  
"Dementia of the Academic:  
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Daniel Brown, having taught Greek and Latin for a number of years, is now a Continuing Education student at The University of Vermont, where he is attempting to master German and Art History.

Sarah Combs is a third-year psychology student at The University of Vermont.

Helga Embacher, Professor of History at The University of Salzburg, is a specialist on the Holocaust. Her article "Jews in Austria During the Nazi-Era and After 1945" appeared in the previous issue of *The Bulletin*.

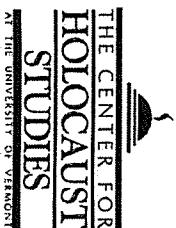
Bernard Gottfyrd is a survivor of six camps in Poland and Austria. Some of his experiences are contained in his book, *Anton the Dove Fancier and Other Tales of the Holocaust*, which will be available in a new, revised edition (Johns Hopkins, Spring 2000). Mr. Gottfyrd, retired after more than thirty years as a staff photographer with *Newsweek*, has visited and spoken with students at UVM several times. In 1998 one of his stories, "On Guilt" was dramatized by Todd Hall and given a stage performance in the Royall Tyler Theatre (see *The Bulletin*, Vol. 3, No. 1, Fall 1998).

Katherine Quimby Johnson is the administrative assistant for the Center for Holocaust Studies at The University of Vermont and a writer.

Carroll Lewin, Professor of Anthropology at UVM, is a member of the Center for Holocaust Studies Advisory Board.

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David Sraese, Director of the Center for Holocaust Studies and Professor of German and Russian at The University of Vermont, is the author of *Understanding Johannes Bobrowski*, (University of South Carolina Press, 1995) and other translations of poetry by Bobrowski.



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

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



**UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT,  
VOLUME 4, NUMBER 2**

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